South African Anti-apartheid Documentaries 1977 - 1987:

Some Theoretical Excursions

Thesis

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Contents

Abstract

This study examines anti-apartheid documentary production in South Africa between 1977 and 1987. These documentaries were produced by a variety of producers in order to record aspects of South Africa's contemporary social history, and as a means of contributing - in some way - to changing the conditions described. While the 'content' of the documentaries is historical and social, and their intention political, this study is aimed at elucidating how a documentary, as a representational system, produces meaning. The study is therefore located within the discourse of film studies.

My study is based on the theory that a documentary is the embodiment of several relationships: the relationship between social reality and documentary producers; the social relationships engaged in, in the production of the text; the relationship between the text and its audience[1], and the relationship between the audience and its social context. This informs my methodological approach in which analysis appropriate to each area of study is used. Using secondary sources obtained through standard library research, I pursue social and historical analysis of the 1970s and 1980s in order to contextualise both the producers of the documentaries, and their audience. The social relations of production of a text are examined using material gathered through extensive interviews with the producers and published secondary material. How this impinges on the documentary is ascertained through detailed textual analysis of 30 documentaries. For analytical clarity each chapter focuses on a specific aspect of documentary - although I do show how the various relationships impinge on each other.

This research finds that the documentaries faithfully reflect the anti-apartheid ideology dominant in the extra-parliamentary opposition in the period under discussion - to the extent that all forms of consciousness are framed by this discourse. An examination of the textual strategies used shows that they are bound by the conventions of broadcast television. They therefore construct a spectator-text relationship which is not consistent with the political concern that democratic relationships be established as the basis of a post-apartheid society. In other words, there is an inconsistency between the ideology espoused, and the way in which film- and videomakers, in their specialised field of production, practise their politics. This can be attributed to the over-riding political intention of the documentarists 'to record' what is happening, and to establish a popular archive which can be used by extra-parliamentary opposition groups in their struggle against apartheid.

Notes

1. Although aspects of exhibition are noted, it was beyond the scope of this study to engage in audience research.

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Introduction

The aim of this study is to examine anti-apartheid documentary production in South Africa between 1977 and 1987. The study is limited to productions that have been publicly exhibited at conferences, film festivals, and to audiences beyond those people about whom the documentaries are made. I am aware that documentaries perhaps more politically radical than those I discuss, have been made, but the responsibilities binding upon a researcher into contemporary cultural history has prevented me from examining these works.

The post 1976 surge of mass opposition to the state - marked by schools, rent, and consumer boycotts, and the strikes and mass stay-aways culminating in a low-level civil war in 1984/1985 - demonstrated conclusively the mass response both to the state's reform initiative, and to the repression which accompanied it. One aspect of these struggles was the communications network which developed between people and organisations. Don Pinnock has usefully identified three levels of communication: information, propaganda and culture[1]. He argues that:

> in the mid-1980s (there) was a shift in popular communication practices from mere propaganda to cultural struggle - a struggle which rapidly began penetrating deeper and deeper into the most sedimented layers of the African population. By educating, organizing and mobilizing people, this struggle served to escalate the tempo of conflict, bringing oppressed people to a point where every blow by the State was a focus for further mobilization[2].

This description accurately reflects the political processes happening 'on the ground'. But at another level, connected, but removed, were individuals and groups of film- and videomakers. They were connected enough to be aware of events and struggles in places which the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) television camera crews would not regard as 'newsworthy'. But they were removed enough to be able to stand aside of events and processes, to know that 'history' was in the making and ought to be recorded, believing this could serve or strengthen the struggle in some way. The body of anti-apartheid documentaries of the 1980s reflects this dual position of the film- and videomakers.

The aim of my study is to examine the anti-apartheid documentaries as texts, rather than to look 'through them' at their 'content'. In order to do this, it is necessary to see a documentary as "a message in circuit" and as "social conditions in practice"[3]. In other words, to see the documentary text as the embodiment of its socio-political and historical context; the consciousness of the person who produced it; the technology used; the process of its production; and a theory of production which is also a theory of human subjectivity. All of this constitutes what a documentary is. In order to examine this phenomenon - which is essentially a set of relationships - I will employ different methodologies to draw out different aspects of the relationship. My examination will proceed from the general to the particular, and could be seen as a series of phases, each of which isolates an aspect of the relationships encoded in a documentary. Phase one: the social relationships which are historically specific and

politically and economically determined (analogous to the 'historic real'[4]): I will start by looking at the broad political and economic conditions which impinge on the documentaries - through their makers and audience - in a general way. Then I'll look at conditions that are specific to documentary film and video production. The analysis here is sociological and historical. Phase two: the producer - society relationship (characterised as the 'profilmic event[5]): I focus on the producers and their processes of production using empirical data gained from interviews with the producers, or published reflections on their processes. Phase three: the producer-text relationship: By referring to critical secondary sources I review the debates concerning how the documentary as product ecapsulates this relationship. Using this textual and semiotic analysis I proceed to examine the anti-apartheid documentaries in this light. Phase four: the text-audience relationship: the meeting ground is consciousness/ modes of thought and perception mediated through and mediating experience. Here I use an ideological analysis to draw out the various systems woven into the text and through which it attempts to forge a relationship with the audience. But I need to stress that my analysis of four distinct phases is for analytical clarity only - as all four phases are simultaneously and mutually interactive: this is documentary. These four phases form the theoretical skeleton of this study.

From a close analysis of the texts, one of my arguments will be that while the documentarists adopt an anti-apartheid position - consistent with the hegemonic politics of the extra-parliamentary opposition - they do not reflect the emphasis on democratisation of all levels of social practice. Thus on the surface they reflect a political stance which is opposed to oppression, but their textual practice - the specialised work of the film- and videomaker - reveals an uncritical acceptance of a "top-down" way of communicating (educating and mobilising). The documentaries, for the most part, can therefore be seen to represent the 'liberal' elements that were drawn into the Front politics of uniting all classes against apartheid. The gains of this approach in film and video production are that members of the petit bourgeoisie with skills and access to equipment were drawn in on the side of the mass democratic movement. But because, for the most part, they articulate a theory of production rooted in an unegalitarian relationship between producers and audience, they have been unable - in my view - to produce documentaries that fulfil their own intentions of contributing to the liberation process. To quote Paulo Freire:

> Those who authentically commit themselves to the people must re-examine themselves constantly...To affirm this commitment but to consider oneself the proprietor of revolutionary wisdom - which must them be given to (or imposed on) the people is to retain the old ways[6].

But, as Chapter 1 shows the decade of the '80s ended with the formation of film and video organisations - which in their structure and commitment to theoretical and educational endeavour might lead to changes in the kinds of texts they produce.

In accordance with my theoretical overview set out above, by study proceeds as follows. Chapter 1 has three aims. It describes features of the political economy which the film- and videomakers have documented. It also describes the key areas of struggle in the 1980s, in order to show the context of both the producers and the audience of the documentaries. At this point a fissure is

noticeable: while the struggles raged around community issues, labour organisation and the education struggles, these are but sparcely represented in the documentaries. One reason for this is that my research excludes what I call 'process videos'. These videos, shot mainly by the Community Video Education Trust (CVET) in Cape Town between 1980 and 1986, deal with contemporary events such as political meetings and cultural events which were part of the process of building organisations. But beyond that, the organisers did not have a clear perception of what function the video, as a text, could serve. The videos consequently had limited screenings to the participants, and were never shown publicly. Another more complex reason for the disjuncture between the focus of the struggles and the focus of the documentaries, concerns both the nature of filmmaking and the class background of the documentarists. A film or video is necessarily the reconstitution of events and processes that have already happened. Because of the apartheid-nature of South African capitalist society, the film- and videomaking skills and equipment are in the hands of 'white', male, middle class producers, but the struggles that were occurring on the ground, were being waged by the black working class. The films therefore represent those aspects of the struggles to which 'outsiders' could gain access.

The second section of Chapter 1 focuses more narrowly on the factors which enabled documentaries to be produced at all. It concludes by tracing the cultural boycott of South Africa which was an important pressure on film- and videomakers to engage with the politics of film as a form of cultural struggle. The struggles of the 1980s - in education, the labour movement, and community organisation - culminated in the formation of mass organisations: the National Education Crisis Committee (NECC), the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), and the United Democratic Front (UDF) and National Forum (NF) respectively. These organisations represent the way in which political issues will be dealt with by the oppressed, as they form an inter- connected network of political structures which are being increasingly democratised. The formation of the Transvaal-based Film and Allied Workers Organisation (FAWO) in 1988, and the Natal Video and Allied Workers Organisation (NAVOW) in early 1989 could be seen as the political response of film- and videomakers to the call of the 1980s for democratic organisation as the means both of struggle, and as possible structures for social organisation in a post-apartheid South Africa.

Chapter 2 examines the way in which producers constitute themselves socially, and the differing processes of production they engage in. The chapter discusses the theories of production which underpin their production practices, and shows the political implications of the different forms of social production: community video-making groups, 'independent auteurs', and 'independent groups'. The section dealing with 'independent' producers shows that their independence is from accountability to local anti-apartheid structures, but not from the capitalist milieu which conditions the production and exhibition of their work overseas. In each case, I show how the institutional practices of the film- or videomaker affects the content and form of the documentaries they produce.

Chapter 3 seeks theoretical clarification on what precisely a documentary is. The 'common sense' view is that it is a form which 'reflects reality' or 'is a window on the world': in other words, that it simply 'shows' or 'records' social life. There is, however, a body of literature which refutes this view, and argues instead that a documentary is a structured argument using sounds and images to

convey a particular point of view. I review this literature, and end with a discussion on the distinguishing features of propaganda. The reason for this discussion is the popular confusion regarding the term. When used to describe SABC-TV documentaries, 'propaganda' implies 'lies'; when used to describe the media of the extra- parliamentary opposition, it is used defensively - because it refers to their 'truth'. In common use, documentary therefore comes to refer to a form that represents 'truth', whereas propaganda has connotations of 'lies'. My discussion dispels these myths and shows that both documentary and propaganda are forms of discourse distinctive in their mode of address and social use.

Chapters 4 and 5 examine the documentaries under discussion. Using the understandings gained in Chapter 3, Chapter 4 provides a textual analysis of the documentaries to show how they construct their arguments. One of the striking features of the anti- apartheid documentaries is that formally they are little different from the documentaries produced by SABC-TV or the BBC. I argue that as the social function of the anti-apartheid documentaries is radically different from those produced by SABC-TV and the BBC, that they ought to adopt stylistic strategies which reflect this difference. Referring to the social conditions of production mentioned in Chapters 1 and 2, I conclude Chapter 4 by trying to account for the dominant form of the documentaries.

I high-lighted the political issues that the documentaries deal with in Chapter 1, but I note in that chapter that I will show how these issues are dealt with in Chapter 5. The subtle difference between a mere description of content and its actual articulation in a text, is that the **text** is the place of convergence of many ideological influences which shape the representation of social life. Chapter 5 examines the documentaries in detail, and shows, inter alia, how the ideology of the extra-parliamentary opposition noted in Chapter 1 has influenced the authorial ideology, and how production practices noted in Chapter 2 have influenced the aesthetic ideology. These, together with the ideologies of the interviewees, are used to shape the 'content' of the documentaries. This analysis once more shows up the fallacy of regarding a documentary as a representation of the 'truth'. I conclude the chapter by referring to the social and political aims of the documentarists, and raise questions about how their documentaries meet the needs of their audiences.

Following from the discussion in Chapter 5, the Conclusion notes the poverty of audience research in South Africa. Without this empirical evidence there is no conclusive way of assessing the 'success' of the documentaries. All that I can point to is the disjuncture between documentary production as a class practice which at present is at a remove from the social struggles, but which the education and training programmes of organisations like FAWO and NAVOW may redress. In the absence of major empirical audience research, which this research recommends, I discuss the possible ways in which different documentaries contribute to the struggle for democracy in South Africa.

Notes

1. Pinnock D: Popularize, Organize, Educate and Mobilize: Some reflections on South Africa's left-wing press in the 1980s, Paper delivered at the 20th Annual Congress of the Association for Sociology in Southern Africa, Johannesburg, July 1989, p10.
2. Ibid.,p10.
3. Nichols B: Newsreel: Documentary Filmmaking on the American Left, Arno Press, 1980, p12.
4. The concept refers to 'social conditions': see Chapter 3 of this thesis.
5. The profilmic event refers to the interaction between the social phenomena and the 'camera'. See Chapter 3 for a full discussion.
6. Freire P: Pedagogy of the Oppressed, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1972, p36/37.

1. Contextualising Anti-apartheid Documentary Production (1977-1987)

Features of the political economy

The political response of extra-parliamentary opposition

- Workers' response
- Student struggles
- Community organisation

Anti-apartheid documentary production

- The availability of film and video technology
- The introduction of television
- The role of the universities
- The mass democratic movement
- The cultural boycott

1: Contextualising Anti-apartheid Documentary Production

> ...the dynamics of political struggles and social change affect the content and form of works of art, so that if we are to understand fully and appreciate the rise, development, concerns and styles of the literature of a nation, we must see that literature in relation to the history and struggles of its people, and in relation to the various ideologies that issue from socio-economic conditions. (Emmanuel Ngara[1])

This thesis is concerned with the production of anti-apartheid documentaries in South Africa between 1977 and 1987. Both the producers of these documentaries, and their local audience, are the products of the South African social system. The documentaries themselves represent the impact of the conditions affecting the producers, as well as the need of the newly formed community organisations for 'relevant' material that they can use organisationally. This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section deals with aspects of South Africa's social history which impinges on documentary production in a general way, and has two main functions. The first is to describe documented aspects of the political-economy; the second is to describe the forms of resistance of extra-parliamentary opposition groups in the 1970s and 1980s, as this provides the context of the makers and audience of the documentaries. The second part of the chapter will focus on factors which enabled the production of **documentaries** as one form of opposition and resistance.

Features of the political-economy

The conditions and the struggles engaged in by South Africans are the raw data of the documentaries. This raw data is framed formally and ideologically, as later chapters will show, to produce texts which are exhibited and used at festivals, conferences, workshops, and other places where people gather to organise against apartheid.

The roots of these struggles can be traced to the resistance of indigenous African groups to the colonial conquest of South Africa. This period, lasting almost two centuries ended with the subjugation of the Venda in the Northern Transvaal and Pondo in the Eastern Cape during the last decade of the 19th century[2]. Thereafter, the defeat of the Boers by the British paved the way for the industrial development of a South Africa 'united', but subordinate to imperial capital. As Belinda Bozzoli has shown, the South African state was founded on an economy based first on foreign mining capital, and which was later dominated by manufacturing (local English and later Afrikaner capital)[3]. The essence of this transformation was the control over land and labour. Control over labour was effected through wresting the land from the people, so that they were forced into waged employment[4]. The emergent state performed an important interventionist role. To ensure both mining profitability and an adequate labour supply to the different sectors of capital, a coercive system of influx control was imposed[5]. These controls not only regulated the allocation of labour, but also had an impact on the 'welfare' arrangements designed by the state for labour. As Stadler notes:

> Welfare and subsistence functions were directly linked and integrated with the controls over the the labour force, as an adjunct to the coercive measures used to create and maintain it[6].

To effect the function of labour allocation and distribution, 13% of the land was scheduled as inalienable reserves in 1913[7]. These areas were to act as a subsistence base for migrant workers. But, with the capitalisation of industry, and later farming, and the mass influx of Africans to the towns, the reserves became impoverished wastelands which now fulfilled a second function. Under the policy of separate development, the reserves, known as Bantustans in the 1960s, then Homelands, and today known as 'national states', served as the basis of the grand apartheid scheme[8]. This scheme saw the bits and pieces of land which had been set aside in 1913 and 1936 consolidated into ten ethnic geo-physical units[9]. These so-called 'national states' were the only places where Africans were allowed to exercise sham political and economic rights[10]. In other words, outside of the scheduled 13% of land set aside for exclusive African occupation, Africans were to be denied political rights and privileges. The high-point of apartheid social engineering was reached in 1978 when Connie Mulder, the then Minister of Plural Relations, declared: "one day there will be no black South Africans"[11]. By 1976 the Transkei had accepted bantustan independence. Four million Xhosa-speaking Africans were 'denationalised' by this act and became aliens in the land of their birth[12].

With the rise of monopoly capital a concomitant demand for skilled labour arose, and the reserve policy was elaborated further. They came to serve as the 'dumping grounds' for the so-called 'superfluous appendages' which in South African parlance referred to women, dependents, the unemployed, and unemployable: everyone who was seen as superfluous to the needs of the 'white' economy[13]. In the 1950s and '60s influx controls were refined and more stringently imposed. These controls operated alongside a mass resettlement scheme which saw over 3,5 million people forcibly relocated from white farms, urban townships and so-called black-spot areas which were, for the most part, farms bought in freehold by individuals or syndicates prior to 1913[14]. This history is the concern of documentaries such as And Now We Have no Land, Abaphuciwe, Reserve Four and Katriver: End of Hope. The flight of Africans from these impoverished reserves, despite the stringent influx controls, is shown in Lindy Wilson's Crossroads.

Another documented aspect of South Africa's political economy is the ghettoisation of South Africa's black population. In 1923, under the 'Natives' Urban Areas Act, all Africans outside the Cape were forced to live in 'locations' - segregated dormitory towns in the urban areas where Africans were denied freehold rights[15]. Prior to this date, Africans were not legally barred from owning their own homes: areas such as Sophiatown, Newclare, Lady Selbourne, Alexandra, Korsten, Fingo Village are testimony to this, and are steeped in cultural traditions of resistance[16]. These freehold townships, like the areas where so-called 'coloureds' and 'Indians' lived, traded and worked, were also anathema to the apartheid planners. They too fell under the forced removal scheme and the myriad laws which set out to divide and classify people racially and ethnically[17]. Once classified and relocated to segregated ghettoes, public goods and services and welfare arrangements conditioned the social welfare

arrangements hierarchically along racial lines[18]. The forced urban removals in the 1950s and 1960s from urban freehold areas like Sophiatown, District Six and Page View, and the dislocation and immiseration this caused people, are described in Freedom Square and Back of the Moon, District Six, Last Supper at Hortsley Street and Part of the Process. The treatment of these issues is examined in later chapters.

The land-labour dynamic described above is central to the political economy of South Africa, as it underpins the transformations of the state as it engages in struggles with the oppressed. Stadler notes the many interpretations of the relationship between the state and capital in South Africa, but endorses David Yudelman's description of the symbiotic relationship which exists between the state and capital. Both writers maintain that it is this relationship which is responsible for the continuity in South African state policy[19]. In this view, the changes in the political nature of the state in the 1970s and 1980s are attributed to the changing needs of capital, and mark changes "**in** the social and political order", but not changes **of** that order[20]. Stadler notes further that although capital had grievances about specific government policies, not until after Soweto 76' did they articulate these as urgent reforms: namely, the termination of influx control so that a free labour market could develop; the development of structures through which a 'responsible' black trade unionism could develop; and finally, the "extension of political rights to urban Africans"[21]. But, as he correctly argues, both the National Party and capital were "diametrically opposed to the radical reconstruction of the political economy". Their recommendations aimed merely to 'deracialise' the economy and stabilise the workforce[22]. P W Botha, who assumed power in the period following the upsurge of worker struggles in the 1970s, the student uprising against Bantu education in 1976/77 and the growing popular struggles which followed in the wake of these events, recognised that old-style apartheid had become obsolete, and in his words, South African whites would have to 'adapt or die'.

Unlike his predecessors, P W Botha was prepared to risk the Afrikaner multi-class ethnic alliance which had served Afrikaners for over thirty years[23]. A new allignment of political forces was forged in 1981 between monopoly capital, the military and the National Party, which shed its right-wing in 1982 when the Conservative Party was formed[24]. These political changes are referred to in documentaries such as Mayfair, Part of the Process and Chronicles of South Africa.

Popular worker struggles in the 1970s followed in the wake of the international oil crisis and the liberation of Mozambique and Angola, in which avowedly Marxist governments were established. Botha's accession to power in 1978 and his announcement of his reform package in the early 1980s was accompanied by a short-lived boom which saw the gold-price rise to over $800 an ounce[25]. But by 1982 the gold price slumped and the structural contradictions inherent in the economy re-emerged, but this time in a less repressive political climate. The Botha regime's attempts to co-opt 'coloureds' and 'Indians' by extending political rights to them in terms of the tri-cameral system, dominated the political scene at this time[26]. The tri-cameral system re-inforced the existing racial divide by establishing different legislatures for the whites, and their junior partners, the so- called 'coloureds' and 'Indians', but its major flaw was that it completely excluded Africans. On these counts tri-cameralism was rejected by the 'coloureds' and 'Indians', the latter group mobilising resistance for a boycott of

the 1984 elections under the aegis of the anti-South African Indian Council (anti-SAIC) election campaign[27]. This mass opposition of anti-apartheid forces in 1983/84, documented in The Struggle from Within[28], was a period of major significance as not since the 1960 banning of the African National Congress (ANC) and Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) had extra-parliamentary opposition had a legal space in which to mobilise. As my discussion below will show, this legal space was used by women, students, youth and civic organisations supported by a radicalised church, sport and cultural groups, to organise and oppose Botha's reforms - as the following documentaries show: This we can do for Justice and for Peace, Cry of Reason, Tomorrow's Parents, and No Middle Road to Freedom.

As domestic pressures mounted, so did international ones, spurred on by a re-invigorated ANC who urged mandatory sanctions not restricted to arms and oil[29]. These pressures and South Africa's continued dependence on gold and mineral exports and her continued need for foreign capital investments meant that the South African economy was highly sensitive to the vagaries of the world economy[30]. The threat of disinvestment and sanctions was real if the Botha regime failed to deliver on its reform package. With the centralisation and concentration of capital in the 1960s and '70s, the manufacturing sector became "increasingly inter-locked via the structure of corporate conglomerates into an intimate and dependent relationship with mining"[31]. The slump in the gold price in 1982 after the phenomenal rise in 1980 had severe implications for Botha's reform attempts[32].

For the purposes of contextualising the pressures on film- and videomakers, and the milieu of the audience who viewed the documentaries, it is necessary to look briefly at some of the socio-political and ideological implications of the political and economic crisis of the 1980s.

The economic crisis was structural, but triggered in the 1970s and '80s by the world recession in the wake of the oil-price rise and the slump in the gold price. This saw a rise in the balance of payments deficit. With a shortage of foreign exchange, local industry was unable to import capital goods and was forced to cut back on the mechanisation process. The intensification of manufacturing capital was seen by industrialists as a means to overcome the acute shortage of skilled labour[33]. This shortage had developed over years not only because Africans were forced into low-paid, unskilled menial jobs through the policy of job reservation, but also because Bantu-education decreed that 'education' for Africans should equip them to function as unskilled labourers only[34]. The capitalisation and intensification of manufacturing and farming threw thousands out of work in the 1960s and early '70s, as I have shown. The numbers of these marginalised people swelled in the 1980s with the cut-back of both local and foreign investment. These conditions, compounded by their exclusion from the tri-cameral system and the attempts by the state to impose a local authority system in the townships, fuelled black anger and opposition[35]. It was not only the state's attempt to limit African politics to local matters which was rejected, but built into this local authority system was an attempt, as local activists argued, to force Africans to finance their own oppression by making local authorities self- financing[36]. The only source of income available to local township authorities were rents and service charges. Newly elected township rulers were forced to raise rents and service charges to improve township conditions. This, added to the high cost of transport with the rise in the petrol price, mounting inflation, high interest rates and the massive rise in the price of goods and services

provided an explosive mix[37]. Across the country students joined parents, unemployed youth joined with student and civic organisations, and locally and together these groups supported worker struggles against low wages and rising unemployment. When the Lekoa township in Sharpeville announced a rent hike in 1984, what began as a peaceful march on the 4th September 1984 turned into a massacre as the township residents turned their pent-up anger against the collaborator councillors and the repressive and violent response of the security forces[38]. The Vaal uprisng signalled the beginning of a two-year period of civil unrest, violence and repression. This period saw popular engagement in rent, transport and consumer boycotts; squatter resistance against forced removals in the urban and rural areas; housing movements, as well as militant worker struggles over wages and union recognition - culminating in the establishment of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) in 1985[39]. Student school boycotts multiplied with the state's refusal to meet student demands and these intensified after 1984 as troops of the South African Defence Force (SADF) moved into the townships. Botha's policy of reform veered rightwards and was accompanied by a massive repressive crackdown. Two states of emergency were declared, over 30,000 activists detained under emergency regulations without trial, and the number of deaths mounted daily, exceeding 2000 by the end of 1986[40].

This brief overview has attempted to give in broad outline the context within which the films and videos of the late-1970s and 1980s were made, and which informed their audiences - some of whom were engaged in the struggles described above. As noted in the introduction, the focus of my thesis, chapter by chapter, narrows, until Chapters 4 and 5 are concerned primarily with the formal and ideological analysis of the documentary texts. In view of this, I will now elaborate on the specific cites of struggle, namely, the re-emergence of the black trade unions, the student and youth struggles and community-based organisation. An understanding of this context is important not only because it conditioned the production of documentaries and audiences for them, but also because the debates arising out of this context focused the need for the formation in 1988 of the Johannesburg-based Film and Allied Workers Association (FAWO), the organisational equivalent for film- and videomakers, of national organisations such as the Congress Of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), the National Education Crisis Committe (NECC) and the United Democratic Front (UDF) and National Forum.

The political response of extra-parliamentary opposition

Strict censorship laws, Christian National and Bantu education ensured that the history of worker struggles, like that of the banned organisations and its leadership was buried. Books on these subjects were banned, and the media quiescent in the face of laws proscribing the advancement, in any form, of banned organisations[41]. The Black Consciousness Movement (BCM), and the re- emergence of militant worker and popular struggles in the 1970s reversed this. Conscientising 'black people for black power' required that blacks reclaim their own history - the 'black renaissance' opened up new fields for artists and writers: signalled only in the film, The Two Rivers. Conventional wisdom was contested and the history of mass struggle dug up. In this first phase of the late 1960s and early 1970s, black consciousness ideology dominated, and black and white history and culture were separated. As most of the film- and videomakers are 'white', there was no place of entry for them, explaining in part

this absence in the documentaries. By the end of the 1980s the ideological context had changed, making film and video interventions possible. These changes can be understood in part by briefly reviewing the new arenas of struggle: the new unionism, youth and student movements, and the community-based organisations.

The workers' response

South Africa has a long tradition of militant worker struggles going back to the 1920s with the establishment of the Industrial and Commercial Workers Union (ICU)[42]. With the banning of the ANC and PAC in the 1960s, and the mass arrests, detentions, bannings and banishment of congress leaders, and their move into exile, the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU), a congress affiliate, was badly hit[43]. Workers were generally cowed into submission by both the spate of repressive security laws and the onslaught which aimed to keep Africans as cheap, docile workers.

The Durban strikes at the end of 1972-beginning of 1973, which spread nation-wide, marked the re-emergence of worker resistance and challenged economic conditions. From January to mid 1976, over 200,000 black workers struck work in South Africa[44]. Labour militancy forced the government, in 1977, to set up a Commission of Enquiry into Labour Legislation, under the chairmanship of Nicholas Wiehahn[45]. After the spontaneous strikes of 1973, workers began to organise, resulting in the formation, in April 1979, of the non-racial Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU), documented in Fosatu: Building Worker Unity[46]. Under FOSATU different unions joined together uniting not only the more skilled urban workers, but making a deliberate attempt to breach the divide between urban and migrant workers[47].

Central to FOSATU strategy was the organisation of workers at the point of production and their insistence on democratic structures[48]. FOSATU's initial insistence that backing struggles over wages and conditions should take precedence over worker-community struggles brought them into conflict with the political unions which followed the SACTU tradition. These divisions were further compounded by the publication of the Wiehahn Commission report on May Day 1979, recommending the recognition of black trade unions, bargaining procedures, the right to strike and the creation of an industrial court[49]. Through these procedures the government hoped to draw the unions into the official industrial relations system which had previously only been available to all non-pass bearing workers[50]. To be recognised under the Labour Relations Act unions had to be registered. Whether to register or not was furiously debated. Despite this, workers across the country and across industries were being organised and with or without registration companies were being forced to recognise the independent unions as strike action grew. The Fattis and Monis strike in 1979 threw into relief the need for FOSATU to rethink its strategy on political unionism, as the success of the strike was largely due to the support of the community organisations who boycotted Fattis and Monis products[51].

Between 1980 and 1982 FOSATU membership doubled[52]. The organisational work of unionists is recorded in Passing the Message. The popular support for worker struggles was demonstrated when in 1982, the death in detention of Neil Aggett resulted in strike action nation-wide - documented in A Film on the Funeral of Neil Aggett. As a 'white' trade union organiser this massive demonstration of people's anger across the racial divide reflected the shift from a Black Consciousness

(BC) ideology to the Congress tradition of non-racialism. Whilst so-called 'workerist' unions like FOSATU were moving towards a political unionism associated with unions under the South African Allied Workers Union (SAAWU) thus closing this divide, so the insistence on non-racialism advocated by these unions caused splits to occur between them and unions of the BC tradition. A wave of strikes in 1983/84 came to a head in the Vaal Triangle in September 1984 and continued through 1985/86[53]. The state responded to this and community opposition to the newly-installed community councillors and Tri-cameral Parliament by sending more than 7000 troops into the Vaal Triangle townships in 'Operation Palmiet'[54]. Unable to control the situation, the government declared a State of Emergency in June 1985. Despite this, and the banning and detention of unionists, the unions had embarked on a series of Unity talks, which finally culminated, in 1985, in the formation of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) - to which FOSATU affiliated[55].

The context in which a film like Wanne Dan must be viewed requires an understanding of the key debates and issues dividing workers - one of which is the political role of the unions[56]. FOSATU had adopted a policy of remaining independent of political organisation and not involving itself in community issues. But while COSATU did not affiliate to any political organisation, it did adopt the position of entering into alliances with political organisations around political issues[57]. This is evident, for example, in its support of the NECC and UDF's 1986 campaign of National United Action to popularise 'People's Education' and their call for students to return to schools[58]. At COSATU's second national conference in 1987 it adopted the Freedom Charter as "a guiding document which reflects the views and aspirations of the majority of the oppressed and exploited in our struggle against national oppression and economic exploitation"[59]. While it still did not affiliate to the UDF, it resolved to enter into "disciplined alliances" with mass-based community organisations which were non-racial[60]. At COSATU's third Congress in 1989 a resolution was passed that "COSATU would spearhead a two year campaign to involve and canvass the view of all sections of workers and the oppressed masses, culminating in the drafting of a workers charter"[61]. This resolution is in effect COSATU's response to the debates surrounding how working class leadership of the liberation struggle should be effected and ensured.

The Student Struggles

As we saw, concomitant with these developments in worker organisation, was the emergence of the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) on black university campuses, marked by the formation in 1969 of The South African Students Organisation (SASO). The focus of Black Consciousness was on the psychological liberation from racism, the espousal of an ideology advocating black dignity and self-determination, and a critique of capitalism[62]. The Black Consciousness critique of the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS) as a liberal and paternalistic organisation forced white students to confront their own racism and propelled the more radical student activists into concerning themselves with off-campus issues[63]. Matiwana and Walters note that the radicalisation of students occurred in the following way:

> through the Wages Commissions they were active in the promotion of the new black trade union movement, and through the Communities Commission (ComCom) they were active in community work. NUSAS had moved away from its previous strategy of protest politics to involvement with oppressed communities[64].

The writings of the new school of revisionist and neo-Marxist academics exposed students to the emerging race/class debate and this involvement of students in union organisation and practice underpinned the ideological challenge of liberal conventional wisdom on the one side, and the threat of black consciousness on the other[65]. There is little doubt, though, that outside of the unions radical whites were marginalised in the 1970s.

Stadler is equivocal about the precise way in which BC contributed to the development of revolutionary struggle, but he does say it may have provided a focus for the Soweto student rebellion of 1976[66]. The trigger which sparked the Soweto students' revolt was the Bantu Education Department's attempt to enforce the use of Afrikaans as the medium of instruction in black schools[67]. Students mobilised around strictly education issues in the 1970s, but at another level this was also an oblique response to the changed economic conditions of the 1970s, in which the prospect of unemployment for school leavers loomed large[68]. Given this perception, the students challenged the authority of their parents whom they regarded as "collaborators and tools of the system"[69]. Stadler notes that "the children turned to issuing instructions to their parents concerning strikes, stay-aways and boycotts". He comments:

> The children's revolt and the SSRC had a remarkable effect on Soweto's political organisation. Within a few months new organisations had appeared there: the Committee of Ten, the Black Parents' Association, the Teachers Action Committee, the Azanian People's Organisation"[70].

Kallaway adds that the "schooling crisis was the manpower crisis, and it was a fundamental dimension of the political crisis"[71]. The state and capital's perception of this crisis was the 'skills' shortage'[72]. Its response was the 1979 Education and Training Act, and the appointment of the de Lange Commission in the midst of the 1980 schools boycott. Kallaway describes the 1981 de Lange Report in the following terms:

> What Wiehahn and Riekert did for the establishment of a reformist initiative in labour relations and for control of the labour supply, de Lange has attempted for education, training and the supply of 'manpower'[73].

The essence of the 1979 Education and Training Act and the de Lange report, was an emphasis on technical education for blacks as well as a general upgrading of facilities. The Department of Education and Training's (DET's) budget increased from R27m in 1972 to R250m in 1981-1982[74]. The response of monopoly capital was to fund alternative education projects and scholarships for blacks. To quote Kallaway:

> As David B Dlouhy, the Country Officer for South Africa, United States Department of State, pointed out at a Symposium on 'Education Needs of Black SouthAfricans' in June 1981 there is at present almost an embarrassment of riches in this area, at least at the formal level[75].

But Kruss comments that the state simply expanded the provision of education, without addressing the students' educational and political aspirations[76]. She points to Hyslop's argument that these 'reforms' deepened, rather than resolved the education crisis[77]. The nature of student struggles in the 1980s differed from the revolts of 1976. In the 1980s students no longer saw themselves as the vanguard of the struggle and were able more consciously to link their demands for a complete transformation of the education system to the ongoing struggles of workers and community organisations. Thus, when in 1984, schools boycotts were resumed, primarily in the Vaal Triangle and the eastern Cape townships, students' struggles were enmeshed with parent and community struggles. The November stayaway in 1984 was testimony to this and the re-emergence of political unionism[78]. An escalation of boycotts and stay-aways nation-wide resulted in the declaration of a partial state of emergency in July 1985. The army policed the townships and schools, schools were closed and the Congress of South African Students (COSAS) - the largest national student organisation and UDF affiliate - was banned in August that year[79]. With the students calling for 'liberation before education', troops occupying most schools and thousands of youngsters jailed or in exile, the highpoint of the education crisis had been reached. Not only were millions of students growing up poorly educated, but many more were being denied re- entry into school owing to their political activism. In this climate resource organisations catering for the demand for people's education mushroomed and stimulated the need for film and video material which could be used 'to fill in' people's history[80].

Finally, in December 1985, the Soweto Parents Crisis Committee (SPCC) convened the first National Consultative Conference (NCC) on the Crisis in Education, at which an *ad hoc* committee for the National Education Crisis Committee (NECC) was formed. The Resolutions of this conference called for, *inter alia*, the rejection of apartheid education, 'People's Education for People's Power', and united action with the UDF, COSATU and other community organisations[81]. In March 1986 the NECC was formally constituted in accordance with its mandate from the NCC. In June COSATU called on workers to link up with the NECC and contribute to the formulation of 'People's Education'[82]. In late 1986 a campaign for National United Action was initiated by the UDF, COSATU and the NECC, and a new strategy of returning to school to consolidate centres in which 'People's Education' could be instituted. The ideological threat posed by these developments was clear to the state which responded by detaining the NECC leadership and student and SRC members *en masse*. This, and the banning of student organisations temporarily broke the back of mass student organisation. For the following three years the state had the upperhand.

The political gains of the education struggles in the 1980s was the establishment of a national organisation (NECC) which had links with the trade union movement and community organisations. The aim of the organisation was to elaborate new goals for black education, namely 'People's Education for People's Power' which was theoretically underpinned by Paulo Freire's pedagogy[83].

But as Johan Muller has noted, " 'People's Education' is less a concept with precise semantic content than the sign of a national educational and political movement in the making"[84].

Community Organisations

Another level of response to the economic and political changes of the 1970s and 1980s was the growth of community organisations.

In a major study of community organisations in the greater Cape Town area, Matiwana and Walters attribute this development to people's involvement in either the union movement, the student revolts or the Black Consciousness Movement[85]. They argue that the struggles that were engaged in in these arenas had the general effect of politicising people[86]. They also note that

> The African National Congress (ANC), banned in 1960, re-emerged as the political group with probably the greatest degree of popular support within the townships[87].

At grassroots level, the passing of the 1977 Community Councils Act, and the 1982 Black Local Authority Act became the focus for township opposition. Faced with rising consumer prices, inflation and the rise in the price of petrol and rent increases, representative civic organisations affiliated to the UDF were established both to challenge the legitimacy of local authorities, and to resist their futher immiseration[88]. Rent, bus and consumer boycotts were supported in increasing numbers, and as the security crackdown intensified, new forms of organisation emerged. Unable to mobilise the masses through meetings, civic organisations in association with workers trained in democratic structures began to establish alternative structures of people's power. Street, area and zone committees were formed to deal with local issues and co- ordinate national ones.

In this new context of mass mobilisation, there was renewed interest in the history of resistance in South Africa, and in Marxism. Matiwana and Walters note that by 1977 people who had been involved in the various struggles of the seventies were beginning to critique the Black Consciousness Movement's strategies and were turning to the theoretical works of Legassick, and Saul and Gelb[89]. They note that with this new direction, and with "the re-emergence of the ANC as a political force, the theory of a non-racial national democratic struggle began to find favour with many activists, and a start was made to rebuild a national democratic opposition movement which could unite and mobilise people regardless of race or class"[90]. The schools and consumer boycotts of the 1980s further mobilised people and made people conscious of the need for on-going mass-based organisations which found expression in the multitude of community, women's, students, youth and other organisations[91]. The documentaries dealing with community organisation and resistance are varied, but their diversity reflects the changing political situation in the 1980s. Examples of these documentaries are Awake from Mourning R'tla Bona, Ithuseng and Belville Community Health Project.

The government's proposed introduction of the Tri-cameral Parliament provided a further focus for national dissent, as country-wide people set up structures to oppose the elections. In January 1983 Allan Boesak, speaking at the conference of the Anti- South African Indian Council campaign, called for the formation of a united front to oppose the new constitution[92]. This ultimately led to the

formation of the United Democratic Front (UDF) in August 1983. The National Forum had met earlier, on the 11-12 June. These two groupings consolidated the structures set up by the individual organisations, and also marked the ideological splits within the extra-parliamentary opposition as a whole[93].

Anti-apartheid documentary production

An understanding of the struggles elaborated above is important, for a few reasons. First of all, they form the raw data from which the documentaries are constructed. Secondly, although some documentaries refer to these struggles only in passing to signal the historical context or 'oppression' - the struggles describe the conditions which formed the consciousness of the local audiences who view the documentaries. The audience response noted in Chapter 1 and in other parts of the thesis is a comment on their life's experience in relation to the way in which the documentaries have transformed social reality into a text. While audiences respond favourably to seeing issues that they can identify with, many working class audiences find the documentaries boring either because their focus is not specific to the experience of the particular audience, or because the documentary uses stylistic strategies which are unengaging. Chapters 4 and 5 will hone in on an analysis of the documentary texts. But in the second part of this chapter, I wish to point to factors which enabled film and video documentaries to be produced at all. The most important of these include: (a) the availability of film and video technology, (b) the introduction of television, (c) the universities, and (d) the emergence of the mass democratic movement. Of these, the first three factors could be seen as the preconditions for the development of the anti-apartheid documentaries. But the socio-political conditions described in the first section of this chapter, stimulated the production of the documentaries both as a response to the conditions, and as a means of furthering the aims of the emergent political movement. Sometimes the conditions are clear and direct in their influence, but for the most part their articulation is subtle and diffuse - so that often the influence is simply through the networks established through the culture of resistance which has re-emerged during the 1980s.

The availability of film and video technology

Because of South Africa's trade and cultural links with the West, it has been able to import the changing technologies of documentary production. In 1917, 35mm was established as the standard gauge for the film industry[94]. Land Apart, produced by Sven Persson, a Swedish director who had settled in South Africa in 1946, was the first 35mm documentary to challenge the National Party's interpretation of the South African situation[95]. But the cost of production prohibited the use of 35mm amongst independent producers, who turned to 16mm film. This format was developed as the means whereby silent films produced on 35mm could be exhibited in non-theatrical venues[96]. However, known to the industry as "substandard"[97], 16mm became the standard gauge used by film societies for exhibition purposes, but was also taken up by 'amateur' filmmakers as their standard gauge for production because it was much cheaper than 35mm. Super-8 was also used in this way in South Africa: for example, Wits Protest (1970-1974) was produced by university students Alan Mabin and

Keyan Tomaselli with the help of Aquarius, NUSAS's cultural wing, and The Other South Africa (1973) was produced by Tomaselli and funded by the Danish anti-apartheid movement[98]. Super-8 became the standard gauge which was used in introductory filmmaking courses at the universities, by individuals who wished to make films for which funding would be a problem, and by groups such as the Centre for Direct Cinema and Afrascope. Super-8 production was abruptly ceased in 1985 when Kodak disinvested, and was superseded by video-8 which was then used by the Centre for Direct Cinema. However, it was Super-8 and 16mm which were most commonly used by anti-apartheid documentarists, although 16mm became the established format when outside funding for projects became the major source of finance for these productions. Another factor favouring the use of 16mm was that the anticipated audience of these productions included a foreign audience, and thus 'high production values' became an important consideration in the making of the documentaries, especially when filmmakers hoped to sell their productions to foreign television stations.

The introduction of video technology in Europe in 1977/78 was potentially a breakthrough for independent documentarists, as this greatly reduced the costs of production. However, as it was developed and marketed as a playback technology, both the sound and image quality were inferior to what was accepted by the professionals in the film industry[99]. In South Africa video production courses were introduced at Rhodes University in 1980 as this became the most viable format, from a cost point of view, once Super-8 had been phased out. As Chapter 2 will show, video is most commonly used by community or university based groups, whereas 16mm remained the 'favoured' medium used by independent anti-apartheid documentarists. There are three possible reasons for this. Firstly, because of the high costs of production, the availability of foreign funding will determine whether a project can be undertaken on this format. Secondly, such funding will usually be obtained if the producer intends or hopes for foreign distribution and exhibition. And a third reason could be the ideology of professionalism - which advocates high production values - which independent filmmakers are more likely to have than their community-based colleagues. The choice of 16mm does have political consequences, as not only is production affected, but also local distribution and exhibition, made difficult by the limited availability of projectors. Most 16mm documentaries end up being shown on this format only at universities or film festivals where projection facilities are available. However, even though the documentaries are shot on this medium - for the reasons given - they are transferred onto video for local distribution and exhibition. While video technology therefore facilitates local distribution and exhibition - and considerably reduces any possible security risks and storage problems - one could argue that it is the form of anti-apartheid documentary *par excellence* precisely because the technology necessitates viewing in small groups. The advantage of this is that it makes possible a different 'event': a gathering for viewing and discussion in which the politics of the documentary is foregrounded. On the other hand, this emphasises the marginal nature of these productions, whereas the producers hope that the politics of their productions reflects not marginal interests, but those of the majority of the people. Just as holding a mass meeting is a powerful way of claiming a space and showing the legitimacy of the views of the people gathered, so is the projection of 16mm anti-apartheid documentary films in a hall.

The introduction of television

The introduction of television in 1976 was an influence on the development of the anti-apartheid documentary movement in so far as it was the spur to the development of film and television studies in universities - which the next section will deal with. However another aspect of the influence is that the views presented on SABC-TV were often what the anti-apartheid documentarists were challenging, either directly, as in the case of Kevin Harris's productions such as No Middle Road to Freedom and The Struggle from Within, or indirectly. Furthermore, because SABC-TV was one of the main producers of documentaries, the anti- apartheid documentarists often copied their style - which I note in Chapter 3 is marked by a mode of address that I refer to as 'international television address'.

The role of the universities

The universities have influenced the production of anti-apartheid documentaries both directly, and indirectly. One of the indirect ways is in its function as a place of research and critical thought and analysis[100]. The crisis in education in black schools marked by the 1976 Soweto uprising, and subsequent schools boycotts in the 1980s initiated debates about the 'relevance' of education. These debates fed into the perspectives of left academics, and were reflected in the renewed interest in the works of theorists such as Legassick, Saul and Gelb, Gramsci, Paulo Freire and Mattelart - to name but a few. Furthermore, the conferences convened by academics of the various disciplines also raised debates around pressing issues. Of particular importance to film and video producers was the 1984 Carnegie Conference which specifically called for films and videos as part of the research undertaking.

One of the more direct influences has been on the producers in their individual capacities, as students at the liberal English- language universities of Cape Town, Rhodes, Natal and the Witwatersrand. Virtually all the producers are university graduates, and most of them have acknowledged in interviews that their politicisation was through NUSAS, and through the political debates and courses that they pursued at university. This background, and their continued involvement in community organisations, influenced the content of the documentaries that were produced - as shown above.

Another aspect of the university's influence was that it was the institution which brought students into formal contact with film studies as both an area of cultural analysis, and as a practical means of production which they could learn. In this respect its influence was diverse, as each institution has its own approach which is governed by the way in which individual staff members have themselves been initiated into film studies. At the University of the Witwatersrand, for example, John van Zyl was the first person in South Africa to introduce a course on film studies as early as 1973. The course reviewed contemporary film history and theory: auteur theory, genre theory, semiotics. Five years later he went to the Anenberg School of communication in Philadelphia to research ethnographic film and the role of media in development[101]. This strand of theory subsequently fed into his courses and was taken up by Keyan Tomaselli who introduced ethnographic film study to Rhodes when he moved there in 1981, and to the Contemporary Cultural Studies Unit at Natal University in 1985. While such idiosyncratic developments can be traced, there were broad approaches which

characterised various universities: UCT viewed film as art and analysed 'great works' just as ' great works' of literature were analysed[102], and it housed the Community Video Resource Association (CVRA) which its sociology students used; Wits reviewed the social history of film as well as current film theory and offered Super-8 and 16mm courses[103]; Rhodes Journalism department offered video and Super-8 production courses, as well as theoretical courses which aimed, Tomaselli and Hayman note:

> to decolonise our curricula, to deconstruct what we take for granted, to question previous unquestioned practices, to rethink conventional wisdom and, most important, to understand how educational and productive structures have conformed behaviour, expectations and goals in terms of the exclusive needs of capital[104].

At the first National Student Film and Video Festival held at Rhodes in 1981, major differences of approach between Pretoria Technikon, the best equipped film school in the country, and the universities were noted. Tomaselli and Hayman summarised these differences in the following way:

> (1) the function of tertiary education in capitalist society; (2) a perceived over-concern with technical expertize in (3) isolation from the relationships which pertain between technique, technology, content and structure; and (4) how these are permeated by ideology[105].

In short, at the Universities of the Witwatersrand, Rhodes and Natal (the Contemporary Cultural Studies Unit from 1985, and the Media Attachment Programme from 1984), academics attempted a critical study of both film theory and practice, emphasising the way in which context affects both text and production practices. Through their courses, and journals like Critical Arts - which devoted at least three issues to Cinema - and the SAFTTA Journal, issues concerning the role of film and video as cultural struggle were mooted[106]. However, because Critical Arts was aimed largely at an academic audience, it failed to draw in practitioners who were not also academics. In my discussions with documentary producers, there seemed to be a three-way split between those who considered themselves, 'activists', 'filmakers' and academics. It is therefore difficult to say what precise influence the journals exerted on people who would later become producers of anti-apartheid documentaries. They did raise issues consistently through the 1980s which have contributed to the development of understandings which left filmmakers now acknowledge, even if they are not yet in evidence in the documentaries.

Yet another aspect of the universities' influence was the participation of academics in alternative, or outreach programmes - which will be looked at in the following section, and in Chapter 2. Stadler notes that a continued opposition to the imposition of Bantu Education in the 1950s was the development of alternative education programmes[107]. With education again becoming a major focus of struggle in the 1980s, educational, media and resource organisations were important forms of community organisation which used documentary films and videos in their programmes[108].

The mass democratic movement

As pointed out earlier, the growth of organisations and the debates about education in the 1980s were two of the greatest spurs to the production of anti-apartheid documentaries. As Cuban filmmaker and theorist, Julio Garcia Espinosa, noted:

> The camera depends on the gun. It is the Third World liberation movements which make a Third World cinema possible - not vice versa[109].

Without the social **need** for the productions, they would never have been made. In particular, the growth of community media organisations foregrounded the need for media relevant to the liberation struggle. 'Relevance' was interpreted in terms of content, and was articulated in the call for a people's history and the emphasis on oral history: the 'view from below'. This is reflected in the documentaries through the practice of 'letting the people speak'. But as I argue in Chapters 4 and 5, the methodologies used belie this stance as control and authority were still vested in the hands of the makers. The **need** noted above was interpreted in terms of material for both a local and foreign audience, and the documentaries reflect this dual perspective. Some are directed inwards to the local participants in their various struggles, and others, while useful for local audiences, are more obviously directed at foreign audiences. Those directed at foreign audiences find their way to foreign television stations, and video copies will be held by resource organisations and university departments for educational distribution. The productions aimed more specifically at local audiences tend to focus on specific issues, and will be distributed via the resource organisations and the community organisations involved in that particular area of struggle.

In addition to the above, the availability of funding, together with the assistance of university trained people, made possible the founding of film and video organisations[110]. In Cape Town the Community Video Resource Association (CVRA) was started in 1977; in Johannesburg, Afrascope was formed in 1981; in 1982 John van Zyl started teaching Super-8 at the Federation of Black Artists (FUBA); in 1984 Dynamic Images - a black video-training project - was started; in the same year the Centre for Direct Cinema - a Super-8 film group - started. In Durban the Media Attachment Programme was initiated at Natal University under the directorship of Costas Criticos in 1984. Each of these initiatives was responding - in different ways - to the growing political need for creating media about South Africa which represented the political needs of the oppressed. These producers will be the subject of Chapter 2. Here I simply want to note their presence as an influence on documentary production.

As the first section of this chapter shows, the political call of the 1980s was to unite people of common purpose in democratic, non-racial organisations. This, plus the international call of the ANC and anti-apartheid movements, was a pressure on film- and videomakers to organise - which they did, with the formation of the Johannesburg-based Film and Allied Workers Organisation (FAWO) in 1988, and the Natal Video and Allied Workers Organisation (NAVOW) in early 1989. In this final section I will trace the path of the cultural boycott of South Africa, and indicate how it, together with the force of local circumstances, contributed to the emergence of FAWO and NAVOW.

The Cultural Boycott

The discourse of the 1980s was about strategies of resistance. One strategy of opposition to the South African government by the exiled ANC and foreign anti-apartheid groups was the sports and cultural boycott. Conny Braam and Fons Geerlings traced the history of South Africa's isolation to Trevor Huddleston's appeal "for a cultural boycott of South Africa" in the British Observer newspaper in 1954[111]. This plea was responded to by Equity, the British actors' union, in 1956, British writers in 1963, and the British Musician's Union in 1964. In America similar action followed, and in 1969 the United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution 2396 requesting "all states and organisations to suspend cultural, educational, sports and other exchanges with the racist regime and with organisations and institutions in South Africa which practice apartheid"[112]. The cultural boycott now had official UN sanction. This strategy worked well and went unchallenged by South African activists until the 1980s when the new culture of resistance emerged through the practices of the newly formed community organisations. As Braam and Geerlings note, "the aim of the boycott was meant to deny pro-apartheid followers exposure, not to make the alternative culture invisible"[113]. In July 1982 academics, activists and cultural workers gathered in Gaberone for the Culture and Resistance Conference. Graham Hayman wrote a fairly comprehensive report on the conference in Critical Arts[114]. His criticisms were many and varied: the anti-academic stance of participants which prevented "refinement of definitions, interpretations, and practical suggestions"[115]; the emphasis on individual work instead of collective action[116]; the division among delegates based on their political analysis of the roots of oppression. He notes:

> the relationship between race and class was not solved while the latter was continuously trivialized in discussion. Part of the reason for this was the hostility towards intellectual analysis as well as 'class based' cultural responses to the South African situation[117].

However, Tomaselli notes that the conference "represented the first major attempt to locate media and cultural activities squarely within the struggle rather than on its periphery"[118]. This conference was followed in 1983 by the 'Cultural Voice of Resistance Conference' in Amsterdam of exiled South African artists and their Dutch colleagues to work on "a new filling-in of the cultural ties between Europe and (anti-apartheid) South Africa". Here an ANC spokesman set out their position:

> Indeed, we want that the voice of the cultural workers in the resistance should be heard clearly both by our people at home and by the international community. Obviously, we have no desire to isolate that voice within South Africa...We should therefore appeal that should anybody wish to relate to the cultural workers inside South Africa for the express purpose of encouraging these workers in their stand against apartheid, then that person should at least seek our opinion[119].

Statements like these indicated that while the cultural boycott was still an important part of the anti-apartheid struggle, there was a recognition that it needed to be applied more flexibly so that it did not isolate the very people it was aimed at supporting.

In South Africa the issue of the cultural boycott was extensively debated, and the December 1984 issue of the SAFTTA Journal was devoted to the question in relation to filmmakers and film festivals[120]. Sociologist, Ashwin Desai, acknowledged that the boycott was a strategy and therefore needed to be constantly reassessed. But he also commented that the "failure to mesh the call for even a selective boycott into organic social movements would encourage perceptions of the boycott-breakers as opportunists hiding behind progressive rhetoric"[121]. This attitude reflected the debates taking place at the time. The following issue of the Journal was flooded with both local and foreign letter responses. The Chairman of the South African Film and Video Institute noted that

> Individual members of the Institute complained about the content of the editorial, which according to them, was blatantly politically inspired and certainly had a very leftist appeal. The same trend was evident under the heading of "Cultural interventions: Beyond the Boycott" and although this was done on a question and answer basis, the message was clear and was certainly contrary to the feelings of Council members and individual members of the Institute[122].

The Association also received a phone call from the managing director of a supply company stating that he would only continue advertising in the Journal if he were assured in writing that forthcoming issues would not be 'political'[123]. The response from abroad came from academics, the writer of the The Colour Purple, Alice Walker, as well as film directors and producers. Their response was generally less conservative, but varied from support and congratulations to the Journal, to noting opposition to apartheid, but advocating freedom of cultural exchange[124].

Three years later, in April 1987 a national conference of film and video makers opposed to apartheid was called with the aim of establishing a national body and perhaps, ultimately, a National Film Institute[125]. As this was the first gathering of its kind, the main focus was on what people were doing, but this often highlighted differences in approach and these were debated. The conference seemed to be split along the following lines: (a) those who advocated a political use of the medium, and those who presented an apolitical/technicist position (John Hill's Film School and the Pretoria Technikon); (b) independent filmmakers who found it impossible to break into the industry or obtain funding for their projects which were often not in line with the aesthetics and politics of the industry; and (c) community organisations and teaching institutions which had specific goals based on the use-value of their productions. The conference concluded with a commitment from delegates to form regional structures. This conference was a spur to film- and videomakers to form organisations with a definite anti-apartheid commitment.

Later in 1987 the Weekly Mail newspaper organised a Festival of South African Cinema, screening documentary and narrative films, and including a special video section. The festival was important for the publicity it gave to this *oeuvre* which up to this time had not had a large public

screening - except for those shown mainly to academics at the 1984 Carnegie Conference. One of the problems of the festival was that all screenings were at the Market Theatre in the centre of Johannesburg, which caters for a particular middle class audience. This was certainly not the place to secure a mass audience for this work.

The Culture for Another South Africa (CASA) Conference followed hot on the heels of the Weekly Mail film festival. The CASA conference was organised by the ANC and the Dutch Anti-Apartheid movement. The aims of the CASA conference were "to become familiar with that 'other' culture,... and to give support to cultural workers striving for a non-racial society"; and to stimulate "open debate on the significance of culture in South Africa"[126]. Pallo Jordan stated the ANC's position:

> I speak today on the subject of culture, not in order to lay down an 'ANC line on culture'. My remarks today should rather be read as part of continuing dialogue amongst cultural activists, committed to the national democratic struggle in our country, to define jointly more clearly the role we would like culture and cultural workers to play in that struggle. If a 'line' has to be pronounced, it is our hope that such a 'line' will emerge from our collective endeavours here and not as an *ex cathedra* pronouncement from the ANC leadership[127].

When people were notified of the conference, an ad hoc committee was set up in Johannesburg of representatives of anti-apartheid film and video organisations to select people and work to represent them at the conference. In many ways, the Weekly Mail festival had acted as a preview of what was available. This body of work, and the people selected to go to Amsterdam, testified to a film network that had been established, even if there were as yet no formal organisations with recognised links with the mass democratic movement. However, this was to come the following year with the formation of the Film and Allied Workers Organisation (FAWO) in Johannesburg. The resolutions of FAWO reflect many of the resolutions on film of the CASA conference[128]. Indeed, the formation of FAWO could be seen as representing the "organic social movements" called for by Desai in 1984. Even though FAWO is a Johannesburg-based organisation, a branch was formed in Cape Town in 1989, and the Natal region formed a similar organisation, the Natal Video and Allied Workers Organisation (NAVOW), in early 1989.

That the Weekly Mail Film Festival in 1988 had a wide selection of foreign films testified to its credentials overseas as an institution opposed to apartheid. The theme in 1988 was 'A Cinema Under Siege', which some observers said was true of the festival itself, as organisers were harassd and films banned for either the Alexandra Arts Centre or the Market Theatre screening[129]. By 1989 the Festival had become an institution, and the Weekly Mail carried fraternal greetings and letters of support from a world community of filmmakers opposed to apartheid[130]. This certainly legitimised the efforts of local film and videomakers, and established the practice of selective support for those filmmakers and cultural institutions which were opposed to apartheid. Another feature of the 1989 Festival was that it

once more attempted to make a mass audience its constituency - in line with FAWO and CASA resolutions on access. As festival organisers Liza Key and Trevor Steele noted:

> moving away from established art cinema venues to the Lyric Theatre in Fordsburg, Kings Cinema and the Alex Art Centre in Alexandra, and the Black Sun in Orange Grove and the Joseph Stone in Athlone, reflects our determination to reach as broad an audience as possible[131].

However, as a member of the audience at some of the Cape Town screenings at the Joseph Stone Auditorium, it was clear that simply moving to working class areas will not of itself draw an audience that has limited disposable income for entertainment - albeit 'progressive'. And furthermore, judging by the numbers who came, it seemed that the 'patterns of pleasure' set up in dominant cinema and television need to be addressed and challenged through extensive visual education and the continued availability of a variety of cinematic approaches, before working class audiences will *en masse* choose the kind of 'progressive' international fare offered by the Weekly Mail Film Festival.

With the foregrounding of cultural struggle in the 1980s, the decade has ended with the formation of organisations of film and video makers. This will mark a new phase in the production of anti-apartheid productions, as a result of the greater co- ordination of skills, and the commitment to training, visual literacy education and access.

Conclusion

This chapter has outlined aspects of South African social history which the documentaries describe, as the focus of Chapters 4 and 5 will be on their formal and ideological treatment in the construction of a documentary text. It has also reviewed the main arenas of struggle in the 1980s as these have influenced the consciousness of both the documentary producers and their local audience. I have shown that the dominant political position of the extra-parliamentary opposition advocates the politics of a national democratic struggle, with the Freedom Charter as its guiding document. While this is reflected in the documentaries, what is not reflected is the drive towards greater democratisation of all levels of social practice which accompanied the development of new structures. The second part of the chapter focused more narrowly on factors which enabled documentaries to be produced at all. It concluded with an examination of the cultural boycott as one of the pressures which, together with the political changes locally, 'pressurised' film- and videomakers to organise into a political structure which is linked to the mass democratic movement. Chapter 2 will look at these producers in greater detail.

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2.Producers And Processes Of Production

Community Video Production

Community Video Education Trust (CVET)

'Independent' Producers (Auteurs)

'Independent' Producing Groups

Centre for Direct Cinema

Free Filmmakers

2: The Producers And Processes Of Production

An over-view of the producers of anti-apartheid documentaries reveals three main kinds of producers: (1) community producers who use video, (2) independent documentarists who mostly use 16mm film, but who sometimes use video, and (3) independent documentary producing groups who may use 16mm film, super-8, or video. The distinction between them is that they engage in different modes of production and have differing relationships with their 'clients'. While they share an anti-apartheid ideology, their different working methodologies reflect their different attitudes to their role in achieving a post-apartheid society, and the function their medium serves in the anti-apartheid struggle. Tomaselli notes that

> Various nuclei act as catalysts bringing filmmakers and communities together through production. This often involves white intellectuals working out of universities and churches who mobilise the privilege of their class and race to spread a knowledge of film and video and to provide access to equipment and stock[1].

The aims of the producers fall into two broad categories, which are sometimes integrated: (1) to produce a product, or (2) to train community producers of media. Each of these aims would be most efficiently achieved if the producers consciously theorized their aims and constructed a methodology which would ensure - as far as possible - their goals. The producers whose main goal is to produce a product are often concerned to do this for one of three reasons: (a) to produce a product for a local community/constituency for the purposes of mobilising, educating or organising it; (b) to produce a product aimed at a wider audience, also for the purpose of educating it about South African issues, and thus enlisting its support; and (c) to document local history as perceived by those who experience the events. Arguably, each of these aims should be premised on theories of knowledge pertinent to the aims. If the chief aim of a producer is the end product, then the productions ought to show evidence of theories of the text and audience reception, as this is the point at which the efficacy of their productions can be examined and tested. Products aimed at 'educating' their audience should be informed by theories of education; and those concerned with documenting history should be premised on a theory of historiography. If the aim of producing groups is to train community media workers, then one would expect a theory not only of production, but more explicitly of education. However, an examination of the text often does not reveal this theoretical concern, nor do the producers seem conscious of the theoretical underpinnings of their practice.

A feature common to all three forms of production is the conviction that subjects filmed should be seen as participants in the production. What distinguishes these different modes of production is the degree of participation, which ultimately informs the politics and aesthetics of the documentary that is produced.

Community Video Production

The aim of a participative methodology in community development is to stimulate initiative from within the community, so that members are themselves responsible for the changes that occur. Implicit in this model is a conception of 'development' which relates to the qualitative transformation in the power relations between people, and in so doing contributes to transformation, or 'development'. The pedagogy of Paulo Freire was one of the major influences which informed this approach[2]. In his view every theory of education is also a theory of Man (sic). He believed that human beings are capable of transforming themselves and their environments. His pedagogy was one which sought to encourage this transformative process. The key element of this process was the participation of the learners as "knowing subjects", rather than objects which were filled with information which another deemed was important for them. Thus the very process of education was transformative - a process which he described as "conscientisation"[3].

Berrigan pinpoints "the beginning of a community media methodology" to the Fogo Island (1967) process "in which a crew from the Canadian Film Board's Challenge for Change programme set out to record the events taking place in this isolated settlement in Newfoundland"[4]. What was important about this process for the development of community media as a distinct methodology, was that the film was used not simply to document what was going on, but was used as a "medium of dialogue" which "could help stimulate, and even mobilise, communities"[5]. The Fogo Island process exemplified, in Berrigan's view, Freire's approach. Berrigan argues that "uses of communications media which include two-way communication have been called community communications or community media"[6]. He defines community media in the following way:

> Community media are adaptations of media for use by the community, for whatever purposes the community decides. They are media to which members of the community have access, for information, education, entertainment, when they want access. They are media in which the community participates, as planners, producers, performers. They are the means of expression of the community, rather than for the community[7].

The two defining criteria of community video are **participation**, and **access**. He defines access as "the use of the media for public service", and participation as "a higher level of public involvement in the production process, and also in the management and planning of communication systems"[8]. These two criteria will be used in the analysis of South African producers who define themselves as community media groups. However, "community video", is understood differently by different groups depending on their ideology and theory of production. For example, "community video" as currently practised by the Community Video Education Trust (CVET) in Cape Town, is premised on organisational links between CVET and the organisations which approach it. Broadly speaking, there is an informal an largely unspoken, United Democratic Front (UDF) association and politics which informs CVET's decisions about the organisations for whom they will undertake productions. Within this unspoken political terrain, they will produce products with their comrades to

further the political objectives on which both CVET and the client organisation agree. Once such agreement has been reached, CVET operates as a quasi- professional production team who have the specialised skills needed to actualise the project at hand. Thus participation in the production is usually by executive members of the requesting organisation at the initial planning stages and during the editing process. The aesthetics of the production conforms pretty much to standard television documentaries - except that the "experts" are community organisers and officials opposed to apartheid, rather than representatives of the state.

There are three other organisations who consider themselves producers of "community video": Dynamic Images in Johannesburg, and the Media Attachment Programme (MAP) and The Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, both of the University of Natal in Durban. As these organisations tend to produce videos which are rarely screened outside of the organisation for whom they were made, a study of their production falls beyond the scope of this thesis. But an understanding of the philosophies and production processes of MAP, CCSU and Dynamic Images is important, as their conceptions of community video constitutes part of the political and cultural debate about the role that video production can play in contributing to social change in South Africa. An assessment of Dynamic Images' view of community video is difficult, as one interview with their members did not reveal much more than their concern that African people be trained in film and video production so that they can document their own experience. MAP's conception of community video is video produced by members of the community in association with a MAP facilitator who is skilled in production. Costas Criticos, the director of MAP explains it this way:

> The whole purpose...is that we feel that it is essential that at the end of the day the community gets a product that they own. And the only way that they can own it is if they participated in the production. They must actually participate in the decision-making [9].

The concept of "ownership" is important because it relates to the psycho- social benefits of this form of production. Production is engaged in not only to achieve social political ends, but also a different sense of personal/community self-worth which can contribute to the dynamic of social change. A pedagogy expounded by Paulo Freire which sees liberation as the creation of "knowing subjects" is at the heart of this approach [10]. The aim is the use of video to empower communities, by giving them a means of acting on their situation in order to understand it in a different way, or to change it in some way. One of the hoped for effects of participation in production is an increase in media literacy which can contribute to an understanding of how the dominant media construct their messages. The extent to which MAP achieves its aim is debatable. Criticos himself has described the process as "messy" and one that often does not achieve the aim of mass participation in the project [11].

A different approach is taken by the Contemporary Cultural Studies Unit. While they also engage in participative production with members of community groups who approach them for media products, they are concerned that the video products they produce will "engage dominant codes, conventional production practices and the idea of a passive, homogeneous audience"[12]. Fagier's definition of materialist cinema, that "In the cinema the communication of knowledge is attendant upon

the production of knowledge about the cinema", forms the basis of CCSU production practices [13]. What distinguishes CCSU's approach from both those of MAP and CVET is that CCSU is consciously trying to produce videos with a modernist aesthetic which foregrounds the construction of the video as a media text. Thus a different politics is being forged not only in production relationships, but also in the relationship between text and audience.

As noted above, community video is clearly understood differently by different practioners. I will focus on the practices of The Community Video Education Trust (CVET) in Cape Town in order to show how the history and structure of producing groups and their production processes, affect the kinds of videos they produce.

Community Video Education Trust

The Community Video Education Trust (CVET), formerly known as the Community Video Resource Association (CVRA) was founded in 1977 as the enthusiastic response to the screening of the Canadian Challenge For Change programme at the first Cape Town Film Festival. Challenge for Change was a project, developed at the National Film Board of Canada (NFB) in 1967, with the broad aims of providing "citizens (with) access to the media to express their concerns and needs and to create a dialogue with agencies of government involved in social programmes" [14]. What was innovative about the approach was that film and video communication were not seen as being for or to people, but with them [15]. The participation of ordinary people both in articulating their needs and in producing a film/video communication about those needs was what distinguished this form of documentary production from others produced by media professionals. In this respect "process" was regarded as more important than "product" - and these two words became key definers of the difference between "community" and "professional" productions [16]. However, as the project was jointly funded by the NFB and eight federal government departments, an implicit expectation of each new production project was that it would lead to some form of social change [17]. But writing in 1972, five years after the initiation of the official experimental project, Marie Kurchak suggested that the time was ripe for Challenge for Change to define "more clearly what it means by social change" and that "its work should be judged in terms of that definition" [18]. The issue of what role film/video actually plays in social transformation is contentious, and will be taken up with respect to local initiatives later.

Two projects seemed to have great impact on the Cape Town viewers in 1977. They were The Fogo Island Project (1967), and a film called You are on Indian Land (1969) [19]. The Fogo Island Project was the first of the Challenge for Change projects. It was undertaken by NFB filmmaker, Colin Low, with the isolated fishing community on Fogo Island, off the north-east coast of New Foundland [20]. He chose this community to initiate a pilot project because their economic and social situation was deteriorating, and the New Foundland government was formulating a policy "which could have the effect of relocating many of the people" [21]. The aim of the project was to stimulate community involvement in finding solutions to the social problems which faced them. Low's process was to shoot several hours of footage; screen the unedited footage for participants who then had the option of selecting what they were happy to have shown to other people; there were further screenings with wider sections of the community which encouraged debate between them about the issues raised in the

film; with the permission of islanders, the film was screened to official decision-makers whose responses were filmed and then shown to the islanders [22].

You are on Indian Land was special in that the Indian Film Unit - and the Cornwall Mohawks were involved in shooting and editing the film [23]. What is significant about the two films is that they both elucidateed a new process through which video could be used to stimulate discussion and action within local communities. This is what inspired the South African participants in the discussion following the screening of the Challenge for Change programmes [24]. In the wake of the 1976 schools' boycotts, with political activity centering on schools, and in communities, this new approach seemed an ideal catalyst to community action and organisation. With the aid of foreign funding the inspiration of Challenge for Change materialised in the establishment of the Community Video Resource Association (CVRA) at Cape Town University as an autonomous organization accountable to its funders. But the location of the organisation , housed in the university on the slopes of Table Mountain, was far removed from the Cape Flats - the place where the 'communities' it hoped to serve were located. This distance was not only geographical, but also signified the class differences between the CVRA staffers and the people whom they hoped would use the new media. These differences, as well as the then rapidly changing political situation, were factors which influenced the development of the organisation.

Interviews with founding members of CVRA have revealed that it went through at least three shifts in direction since its inception. I will focus on two of these, as it was during these periods that the organisation crystalised. The first of these periods is between 1980 and 1982 when CVRA was 'run' by Mark Kaplan. During this period, as the name suggests, the organisation was conceived of as a service organisation which made technical and training resources available to any organisation which approached it. The underlying philosophy was that media production should be democratised and decentralised so that ordinary people who were representative of the community (defined by themselves) or an organisation, determined how they wanted themselves represented and for what purpose. Here one can see the influence of the Challenge for Change project, for as one commentator noted, "At first, assistance from Challenge for Change meant money and equipment to the media-resource-for-the-community groups to enable them to produce programmes"[25].

Kaplan and Mike Gavshon (according to one source) started training groups based on specific projects. For example, "one group was making a video on the various kinds of transport"[26]. The training consisted of a mixture of technical training as well as understandings about how the media worked. Kaplan noted in an interview that they

> simulated exercises where we would pass the camera around, pass the sound gear around, talk about the project, talk about who the audience were, what sort of questions they needed to ask, what likely responses they would get - to give them a sense about filmmaking techniques in a traditional sense[27].

This process was followed by a shoot in which the group would go off unaccompanied by Kaplan. During the same week they would return to discuss the footage and the shooting experience. Kaplan said that he saw his role as "bridging the gap between what they had experienced and what was

actually captured on tape"[28]. Thus the nature of the training was to impart technical skills and to discuss the aesthetic options open to the crew in their coding of the events they were shooting and editing. Kaplan's rationalisation for this approach was that because the groups consisted mainly of adult users, the nature of their interaction was that he had "technical skills to pass on and they had social analysis which (he) did not interfere with"[29].

They also discussed the historical origins of the use of video - which Kaplan attributed to the United States military operations in Vietnam where video was "developed to see from the air what was going on on the ground"[30]. He thought it important to problematise the use of video - and an object lesson was the difference between the state's use of the medium and their own. He commented:

> This was very obvious to people who were using it because they would see when they went to a meeting...the state using video technology. Very often we would arrive at the same place and I'd be filming in one way and they'd be filming in completely another way[31].

However, the so-called 'technical skills' obviously had an aesthetic implication. Kaplan's influences were eclectic and gleaned from reading rather than from any training. He recalled that he had "ultra-leftist positions that he should never accompany the group or that commentary should be minimised"[32]. The rationale for this position was that these techniques were part of the aesthetic of traditional 'objective' documentaries, which was not the aim of the project as he perceived it. But many of his "positions were caste aside in the course of working with people", and often the influences on the groups were purely accidental[33]. He recalled an incident in which a group happened to be filming from inside a car because it was raining. Music happened to be playing on the tape deck while they were filming and it happened to "reinforce the image in a good way"[34]. This led to a more experimental use of music on the sound track.

The point to be stressed here is that this sort of training programme - where "90% of the users had never used the technology before" - was certainly the first of its kind in Cape Town, and possibly in South Africa[35]. Thus there were no local models which could be used. Instead, inspiration was drawn from the Challenge for Change programme, and even from "how video was used in South America and even North America and Canada"[36]. The specific influence here was a recognition of the difference between 'process' and 'product' videos. Kaplan maintained that "the manner in which one arrived at the finished product had all sorts of benefits"[37]. Added to this was the influence of the kind of technology that was used:

> reel to reel black and white sony roller type technology...it was a very time consuming process especially when one comes together once or twice a week and you edit maybe five edits before you leave again...So it might take up to six months to complete a video[38].

This technological constraint urged people to take the videos out and use them as they were shot, instead of waiting for a finished edited product. That most of these videos have been lost or simply have the status of "tons of footage" which has not been used since being shot, is testimony to

their function as serving short-term organizational ends. It is virtually impossible to assess the extent to which the goals of extending media education and production training to local communities to aid them in political organization and social development were achieved during this period. But that there were internal pressures and conflicts within th organisation is testimony to newly-felt social needs and pressures which Kaplan's co-worker, Liz Fish, felt ought to be addressed.

Once Kaplan left, co-worker Liz Fish, who had become involved in CVRA as a sociology student, took over the 'running' of CVRA [39]. She had reservations about how the project had run under Kaplan's direction and so initiated changes once he left. The main problem that Fish identified was the absence of accountability to the 'community' that the organisation was supposed to serve. She observed that the main orientation of the organisation was liberal-intellectual because of Kaplan's association with academics at UCT, and the main concern seemed to be the protection of the equipment, rather than its use. What was at issue was the use of equipment in situations where it might be seized by the police of be damaged in community action in which the police became involved. Given the context, of the 1980's schools' boycotts and community action, fears about the use of the equipment and accountability to funders were arguably valid. But both Liz Fish and her co-worker, Ingrid Scholtz, were products of the new orientation within the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS) - noted in Chapter 1 - to direct its energires toward community action. The changing politics of NUSAS, a white petit bourgeois organization, was one of the factors which contributed to the changing political terrain in which alliances across class and colour were being forged. In an interview she commented: "Community video...where's the community"[40]. It was this perceived gap that she and co-worker Ingrid Scholtz set out to remedy. As members of NUSAS they now had organizational access to embryonic community organizations, and they approached organizations with the aim of setting up a committee to whom they, as 'community activists', could be accountable. What they achieved was the transformation of CVRA from a white petit bourgeois organization into a community organization (which now has black and white staffers) - because they submitted to the politics of community organization.

One of the effects of the restructured relationship between CVRA and other community organizations was that they adopted a far more rigorous approach to production. The organization's orientation changed from being a source of media education and a video training facility to being production oriented. Fish noted in a interview that the activists members of the organizations with whom she works gain insight into media production, but that the mass of participants who are filmed do not because in CVRA's production process "there is no time"[41]. They are now more concerned "to get the message out...fill the gaps"[42]. Implicit in this re-orientation was a different conception of the political role that video could play in community struggles. For Fish the political resides "in the message", whereas for Kaplan and media workers like Costas Criticos of the Media Attachement Programme (MAP), the processes engaged in are part of the "message": praxis.

This new approach, in which CVRA - now CVET - organisationally linked to other community organisations for whom they produce video products, is exemplified in the production, Wanne Dan, which was undertaken for (with) the Cape Town Municipal Workers' Association (CTMWA).

During the 1987 work to rule of the cleaning workers of the CTMWA, Community Video Education Trust (CVET) were approached by the education officer of the CTMWA requesting that a video be made of this labour action[43]. It was regarded by members of the union as an historic event, as prior to this, labour disputes had been settled in court between the union and the Cape Town City Council. This was the first occasion on which the rank and file of the union had organised from the shop floor and demanded an action in which they were participants in the process of negotiation, instead of being recipients of a settlement. While this labour action was only taken by the cleansing workers - but one section of the union - it had the support of other municipal workers such as the electricity and sewerage workers. The prime aim that motivated the education officer to request the production of the video was so that it could be used as an organising tool. She wanted to have the process of the labour action documented, so that the video could be taken to the various depots where it could be used as the basis for discussion about which processes had been useful, and which had not.

CVET's philosophy regarding community video is that it involves "making videos with people about things that are real intheir lives...empowering the situation (the people) by watching it" (a video of the situation)[44]. Liz Fish believes that when people see themselves on the screen " it does a whole lot of things alongside organisation" [45]. Given this philosophy, her procedure is to spend as much time as possible with the people she is to film so that she can learn from them what it is that is important to them. She commented that "although people who are not holding the camera, they are scripting,they are telling you what they want you to see and what they want to show"[46]. On Wanne Dan, this process involved spending whole days with the workers so that the videomaker could attempt to enter into their experiences: being at the depot at six in the morning: hanging at the back of a reeking garbage truck and smelling the fumes; going to their homes to see the effects of their meagre wages on the family and talking to the wives about what it means to be a 'council wife'; talking to the men about what it feels like to be a council worker and have to wear 'afblaas' shoes, or to come home exhausted from running behind a truck, bending and lifting heavy bins all day. These experiences formed the basis of the visual imagery of the video, and were drawn upon to illustrate the spirit of the cleaning workers. Although the aim of this process of participation in the lives of the subjects was to enable them "to speak for themselves", Fish commented that one could " act as a catalyst if you act as a careful listener", but warned that "you also bring your own stuff into it"[47]. The videomaker's problem involved negotiating these three positions: letting the people speak; acting as a catalyst; and being self-reflexive.

The explicit political content of the video was obtained through interviews with the shop stewards and union officials, and by attending the various depot meetings and the final meeting at the Good Hope Centre. Once all this material was recorded,it was logged and the education officer and the CVET worker together decided which interviews and footage should be used. This became the basis for the script which was written jointly. This was a negotiated process in which CVET intervened on the basis of what material would work filmically. But, the understanding was that the client/executive official of the commissioning organisation had the final say on what went in and what did not. The basis for this decision was either political expediency in terms of union politics, or in terms of what was politically necessary in terms of the proposed aims of the production[48]. The one important

contribution made by CVET concerned the way in which the video was structured. The determining guidelines were based on what would draw in the audience. Wanne Dan starts with men running behind the garbage truck, bending to pick up the bins... so that the audience of CTMWA workers can recognise their image and so identify with the process shown. This intended identification is further enhanced by the choice of music - a popular Cape Flats group, The Genuines, playing an upbeat tune, Die Struggle. Thus the level of intervention that CVET makes in terms of the textual codes which are chosen both because they are a comment on the culture of the participant-audience, and because they form the means by which audience identificationis enlisted.

The difference between Kaplan's direction and Fish's, seems to centre around a conception of the political use of video as a means of communication. Kaplan seems to have favoured - albeit unconsciously - Mattelart's position that the people must be "producers of their own messages"[49]. Mattelart essentially puts forward a Leninist view of communications:

> in order truly to democratise communications, the receiver organised, must one day become a transmitter of his own practice [50].

He thus stresses that "each community should be helped radically to acquire materials and elementary technical training"[51]. The reason for this is to address the class relations of production so that new forms of production, appropriate to the needs of the proletariat, can be realised. Mattelart argues against the position that changes in the media can be wrought by "a mere inversion of the signs of the messages which they transmit" - which is arguably the direction in which Fish took the CVRA [52]. CVET has become a 'professional' left media organisation which produces media for - albeit with - other organisations. Mattelart makes the point that "bourgeois sociology of communications has retained from Lenin only the idea of making the press an instrument of agitation and collective action"[53].

Fish dropped the attempts at skill transference and media education that Kaplan had drawn from the Challenge for Change project. CVET now focussed on producing products to be used as organisational tools for the organisation or group requesting the video, but which could also be used beyond that group. Wanne Dan and Bellville Community Health Project exemplify this kind of production, in which community members participate in selecting the images which will be used to describe their culture and context; executive members of the organizations concerned shape the political 'message' that they wish to convey; and CVET has the last say on the formal construction of the text.

The value of these productions is at least two-fold. Firstly, as participative productions they provide another means through which people make an anti-apartheid culture: by becoming engaged in discussions about, and acting on, the material conditions which affect their lives. And secondly, the circulation of the videos, not only within the organizations which initiated their production, but also local and foreign film festivals circulates the knowledge about local responses to apartheid oppression.

Independent producers

Tomaselli defines independent production in terms of the following six criteria: (1)intention; (2) alternative exhibition venues; (3) they do not necessarily have censorship clearance; (4) low budget; (5) they deal with social realism and contentious conflicts from the point of view of the oppressed; (6) they try to "prepare the way for the not-yet-possible"[54]. This definition is summarised as "the general social practice of film and video making which operates outside the system in terms of methods of production, content and funding"[55]. While these criteria are generally useful, I would argue that some of the conditions refer more to community producers than to what I shall call 'independent' producers. For example, while all anti-apartheid producers are exhibited at alternative venues such as film festivals, university venues, church halls, trade union venues, I would argue that this applies specifically to community videos, and to some works of independent producers. Whereas most independent producers also have their work screened on overseas television networks and have their work distributed through foreign film distributors [56], this does not apply to work produced by community producers, although university staff associated with some of these productions may exhibit them overseas at academic conferences [57]. Furthermore, while community productions are 'low budget' productions, this does not apply to the work of independent filmmakers whose source of foreign funding and television rights enable them to make relatively more costly productions - evidenced by their large crews, who work as 'professionals'[58]. While this foreign funding does not inhibit the producers from dealing with "social realism and contentious class conflicts from the point of view of the oppressed", it certainly does inhibit them in terms of style, as productions are expected to conform to overseas television production codes [59]. Some filmmakers have suggested that while content is not prescribed, the angle is - to conform to the political expectations of foreign audiences who only have a television understanding of the conflicts in South Africa [60]. Thus I would argue that Tomaselli's summary definition of 'independent' production as "the social practice of film and video making which operates outside the system in terms of methods of production, content and funding", suffices only as a general description of all 'non-institutional' production, but does not allow for the different forms that independent production takes in South Africa. One of the problems with his definition concerns the phrase 'outside the system' which is not defined. It is ironic that producers who work 'outside the system' in South Africa, are easily incorporated 'into the system' overseas. This is possible because their mode of production and aesthetics conform to international television practice, and South Africa is currently a marketable commodity [61].

I would therefore describe the 'independence' of these producers (as distinct from community video producers) in the following way: (1) independence from the participation of their subjects in the production process; (2) their 'independence' in the initiation of the project - in other words, often they or agencies other than their subjects are the producers of the film; (3) they have a mode of production which is similar to that of commercial producers in so far as they have specialised crew consisting of a producer, director, camera operator, sound person, editor - in addition to any other production and administrative crew; (4)they obtain foreign funding or foreign television exhibition; (5) they tend to use the established codes of international television documentary television production, and tend therefore

to be unadventurous formally; (6) it is **their** production, as "ownership" in Criticos's terms rests with them; (7) there is no transfer of production skills and media education to those who are filmed; (8)the production crew work as professionals. This proposed definition contrasts radically with both Tomaselli's and Willemen's [62]. Willemen refers to the unanimously adopted Independent Film Makers Association (IFA) discussion paper in which they declare:

> We have to remain independent of the need to make profits in order to have real artistic independence. Whilst constantly fighting for access to more funds and equipment for its members, the IFA must also defend and develop this political independence and aesthetic independence. For it is in this respect that the work of the IFA members is particularly important, and it is in this respect that we try to use the term 'independent' meaningfully [63].

In view of this, he notes that this raises important questions about the "relation between independent cinema-television and the state, at present and in the foreseeable future the single most important source of funds for such independent practices" [64]. It is clear that the same problem would obtain for independent producers locally, but not *vis-a-vis* British television for example. Thus the nature of the political dynamics between states also conditions the nature of 'independent' production. Furthermore, at present, filmmakers do not organise themselves as 'independent' or 'community' producers, but simply as film and video producers opposed to apartheid [65].

Given that independent filmmakers are not requested by organisations to make productions, their motivations for undertaking productions vary[66]. Many view documentary not only as a means of recording what is happening, but also as a tool that has a place in the struggle against oppression. Gavin Younge, director of Abaphuciwe and Reserve Four commented:

> I came to the subject matter by virtue of living in Cape Town ... by watching the birth of an enormous impromptu housing settlement on the side of the road to the airport...just being outraged by certain aspects of that...being gradually made aware of the larger context of urban policy in the larger political reality ...
>
> I came to select that subject matter because it was real to my experience...it wasn't because I was casting around with some investment capital to make a film which I could sell overseas...
>
> I think the film **empowered** people, because all the time even though people had been subjected to certain things, they were resisting...I wanted that to remain as a central aspect in the film [67].

Paul Weinberg, one of the makers of Part of the Process, expressed similar sentiments:

> I was very conscious of Pageview and its destruction for a number of reasons...I was working at the Institute of Race Relations at the time...in the media department...and had personally gone to take photographs in that area. I also played cricket in Pageview with a team called Zilfickers... While we were playing our team-mates were leaving to Lenasia. It just became very clear that

> I with these skills could do something to agitate this process...and hopefully bring some resistance to it [68].

Harriet Gavshon, director of The Ribbon, was also motivated to produce a film through her personal involvement in the political events that were happening around her. Gavshon notes:

> My desire to make the film grew from my identification with the issues and concerns of the women. It was not merely an interesting subject to look at. For me, it was an issue which directly affected my own future as a South African woman [69].

Most of the filmmakers agree that the value of the documentaries they make is that they recorded people's experience 'in their own words'. This in their view is the 'power' of the medium. Through the process of being filmed, ordinary people have access to a mass medium through which they can express their own thoughts and feelings instead of being spoken for. It was this belief that the filmmakers respected. Lindy Wilson believed that it was not so much events that were being documented, but the people:

> the language, the interpretation...that's the quality of the people...and you can't take that away from them...the language is the reality [70].

This same humanist concern with the lives of people was the motivation behind her first film, Crossroads in 1978. She wanted "to document the lives of some people" because "it seemed likely that the government would eventually demolish the camp as it had destroyed others" [71]. She described her intentions in the following way:

> I particularly wanted the implications of the pass laws to be explained by the people affected, to enable them to articulate why they felt compelled to remain in Cape Town with their families, and to bring this evidence onto South African television so that people could judge the issue for themselves [72].

Kevin Harris, director of This we can do for Justice and for Peace, The Right Time, Tomorrow's Parents, The Struggle from Within, No Middle Road to Freedom, South Africa Now, Witness to Apartheid, Cry of Reason started out as an electrical engineer working for the SABC-TV, and later became one of their producers. But as he noted in an interview:

> I never considered myself an activist...so when I embarked as a filmmaker I didn't embark on that sort of a career...with the intention of being an activist. But what I wanted to do was to fulfil myself with integrity, in the belief that a filmmaker or a journalist has the right if you're a South African...I am a South African, I live in South Africa...as a journalist, as a filmmaker I see things that other people don't see and that process escalates and the more you see, the more you see. And I believe it's part of the responsibility of someone like myself in that position, particularly working at the SABC in the English Documentary Department...that one has a responsibility to confront society with those issues. That's all I wanted to do [73].

However, this ambition was thwarted at the SABC, and Harris was dismissed for allowing the transmission of an uncensored version of his programme on Baragwanath hospital [74]. As an unemployed producer he turned to "sympathetic" companies such as Anglo American for film financing, but eventually found the South African Council of Churches (SACC) who produced many of his films. Filmmakers Eddie Wes and Mark Newman, makers of The Two Rivers, were also concerned about the image of South Africa that was being presented, and that they wished to challenge. Wes noted in an interview that:

> We wanted to make a movie that didn't just show South Africa as this horrific, desperate place, but would also show South Africa as this place in which there was vibrance, excitement, creativity...We wanted to make a film about South Africa without using the word 'apartheid'...We wanted it to be shown on European TV as our budget necesssitated this [75].

Thus from these various views one could conclude that the motivation of independent producers is their personal stance to which they commit their skills as filmmakers.

It is difficult to make generalisations about the process of production which independent filmmakers engage in, as independent means - pretty much - that they can operate as they please. Sometimes the director is also the co- producer, camera operator and script-writer (Angus Gibson on Freedom Square and Back of the Moon, Eddie Wes on The Two Rivers); or director, co-producer and script-writer (Harrriet Gavshon, Lindy Wilson, Kevin Harris on their productions). However, the director rarely edits his/her own work. Most of the crew are professionals who are hired for each production, and the same crew need not work together on more than one production. As there are few professional camera operators and editors, directors tend to use those with whom they have established a working relationship (for example, in Cape Town, Jimmy Mathews and Mike Gavshon were often the cameramen used by Lindy Wilson). As independent **anti-apartheid** filmmakers, they would always go through 'the correct channels' of gaining accesss to people or situations they wanted to film. Thus while maintaining technical and decision-making control of their production they are sensitive - to varying degrees - to the people and situations they film. Foreign crews have been accused of 'moving in, filming, and moving out again', but sometimes local independent filmmakers work in the same way, as there are no institutional or organisational constraints on them. Furthermore, how they use the images they shoot is also entirely up to them - as is the distribution and exhibition network. In short, 'independent' means that they are answerable only to their own consciences, and producers who may be the links with distribution and exhibition networks.

'Independent' Documentary Producing Groups

My research has revealed two such groups: The Centre for Direct Cinema and Free Filmmakers both of whom are located in Johannesburg. Although they have an anti-apartheid ideology, they work towards this end in different ways.

The Centre for Direct Cinema

The Centre for Direct Cinema was set up by the French government as a training programme for aspirant filmmakers. John van Zyl, former director of the Centre, notes:

> The French department of Foreign Affairs decided that one of the things they would like to do would be to establish community documentary filmmaking organizations world-wide. They established twelve in places like the Phillipines, Kenya, Nigeria, Mozambique...and South Africa was going to be the last one [76].

It has been suggested that one reason why these centres were established was as a means of contributing "to French foreign policy with regard to non- French-speaking Third World countries" [77]. That the kind of film centre established was one specifically devoted to Direct Cinema practices (discussed below) is perhaps indicative of their desire to establish a 'non- political' film culture which could nevertheless be a local source of documentary material about South Africa. Thus, in 1984, under the directorship of Professor John van Zyl, the Centre for Direct Cinema was established at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits). Their reason for establishing the Centre at Wits was two-fold:

> The one was a practical reason...they wanted some sort of continiuty, they wanted the equipment looked after, serviced and so on. The other was an ideological reason: they thought the university would be a sort of neutral ground where various contending factions could come [78].

This seemed a politically safe decision as the students were drawn mainly from "the FUBA (Federation of Black Artists) group (chaired by Sipho Sepambla) and the ACTION THEATRE group (led by Benjy Francis)" which van Zyl notes "corresponded roughly to the United Democratic Front (UDF) and Black Consciousnss axes" [79]. Initially people were chosen in a haphazard way, but in 1985 people were chosen who were committed to filming, *per se*, rather than to the political use to which the medium could be put [80]. Politically, the group functioned as an independent organisation but their claims to community filmmaking lie in their independent membership of the various communities they filmed. Van Zyl noted in an interview that "each person is investigating his or her own cultural experience from the inside" [81]. This rather loose usage of the term "community" accounts for the nature of the projects undertaken: "the initiation of a female sangoma, the sangoma 'university' in Soweto, a football team owner in the old township of Kliptown, the clinics of Soweto, the childminders of Soweto, Bishop Tutu, a black migrant worker from Bophuthatswana working as a golf caddie, the 'twilight' children of Hillbrow, a newspaper vendor, two children growing up in a squatter camp, and a

ceremony amongst the Zanzibaris in Durban" [82]. However, despite its political independence, the organisation has a democratic political ethos:

> the whole thing functions on insanely democratic lines in that the ten people sit down and everything that happens is discussed by the ten people, votes are taken by the ten people...it's almost a collective decision that's taken [83].

While their political independence accounts in some measure for the subject matter, it cannot be seen independently of their training and funding which conditioned what was possible aesthetically and politically [84]. As van Zyl noted:

> You haven't got money...you must look in your own back yard...you've got to find subjects that are close to you [85].

In addition to weekly meetings at which projects were discussed, the training consisted of three to six month courses in Super-8 film production, focussing specifically on Direct Cinema techniques. The term "Direct Cinema" is used interchangeably in film literature with "Cinema Verite" but scholars have generally acknowledged a French strand, as practised by Jean Rouch, and an American strand, as practised by Robert Drew and Richard Leacock [86]. The term, cinema verite, was used by Jean Rouch to describe his film Chronicle of a Summer (1961) - a reference, Georges Saudol claims, to Dziga Vertov's Kino Pravda, or film truth [87]. The style of Chronicle of a Summer is marked by its reflexivity, with on-camera discussions between Rouch and his co-producer, Edgar Morin, and with their interviewees [88]. Their aim is to discover 'the truth' below the surface. To achieve this they act as probes, trying to penetrate the feelings and context of the people they interview. This approach is entirely different from that taken by Robert Drew and Richard Leacock who adhered to an aesthetic of complete non-intervention. They, too, sought 'the truth' - but for them it was the truth of the situation filmed: that which was revealed when the subjects were entirely engaged in their life's activity. Leacock described direct cinema/cinema verite in the following way:

> The closest I can come to an accurate definition is that the finished film - photographed and edited by the same filmmaker - is an aspect of the filmmaker's perception of what happened. This is assuming that he does no directing. No interference. In a funny sort of way, our films are the audience. A recorded audience. The films are a means of sharing my audience experience [89].

Thus while both filmmakers were concerned with elucidating a truth, their perception of film truth and how it can be achieved are quite different. Issari and Paul have summed up the difference in the following way:

> Rouch seeks to unmask truth through a process of deliberate self- revelation, while Leacock seeks to convey truth through capturing unguarded moments of self-revelation in the movement of real life. In other words, Rouch wants to explain the raison d'etre of life, whereas Leacock wants to let it reveal itself [90].

In South Africa, the Centre for Direct Cinema adopted Leacock's approach. John van Zyl described their method:

> A minimum intervention on the part of the filmmaker, a minimum amount of editing...all the emphasis goes on the research. You spend maybe three months on your research and then you go in and shoot in two days...because by that stage you know everything so well and then you don't need to have interviews because you understand it [91].

As empiricism forms the epistemological basis of this form of Direct Cinema, it makes critical intervention impossible. This has resulted in a form which van Zyl has described as "colloquial", and a content which shows the parochial aspects of South African life [92]. The filmmakers are **observers**, not commentators, so their work contributes to the historical archive of "what is", but can go no further.

In 1987 the French trainers raised funding for a project which they hoped they would be able to distribute overseas. This was the genesis of Chronicles of South Africa[93]. This production marked the ending of the formal connection between the French initiators and the Centre. Since then the Direct Cinema Group has been forced, for financial reasons, to forego its political independence in order to secure funding. Van Zyl noted in an interview that:

> The ideological and political problem that faces us at the moment is that in order to get funding we must clearly ally ourselves with the UDF. We must then work within a fairly loose, but acknowledged area of influence. This is something we haven't wanted to do before [94].

In 1989 the Centre for Direct Cinema changed its name to Film Education Programme, and accepted funding from the Kagiso Trust [95]. This, van Zyl notes, "brought the programme into contact with the UDF cultural desk, the soweto Civic Association, Cosatu, women's groups and student groups in both Soweto and Alexandria" [96]. It is too early to tell how these connections will affect the organisation, but it may well be the means of formalising the connection between it and the anti-apartheid community at large. This will no doubt affect the kinds of productions made, as well as the training of people who wish to use the medium with more specific political aims in mind. Van Zyl has asserted that "Direct Cinema methods are still basic to it", but it may well prove inadequate to the political tasks that are expected of it [97].

Free Filmmakers

The Free Filmmakers were formed in Johannesburg in 1985. They had no resources, no capital, no equipment, but "the idea that there were lots of people who, in their own way, were trying to survive outside the SABC and the trash feature film industry" [98]. One of the aims of Free Filmmakers was "to bring these people together in order to lend moral support and pool what we knew and what contacts we had" [99]. In this sense, their aims are entirely those of independent filmmakers the world over who try to 'make it' or build a 'national' film culture outside the constraints of the capitalist film industry. Filmmaker Angus Gibson commented:

> We didn't want funding because we didn't want to operate in the way that funded organisations usually have to...we didn't want to be accountable in a way that funded organisations often are. We wanted our independence [100].

In other words, the independence they sought was political or organisational. But, Free Filmmakers is not an apolitical organisation. They returned Channel Four funding for a proposed film on Soweto when the imposition of the second State of Emergency made it impossible for them to make the kind of film they intended [101]. Thus, ironically, while the are independent of organisational constraints, they cannot be independent of the state. The source of funding is another factor that conditions their 'independence'. Freedom Square and Back of the Moon was commisioned by Channel Four - the first commission outside Britain. Because the commissioning editor gave them free reign, Gibson feels that the film is theirs in its entirety. But, with their second big film, Singing the Changes - about the cultural boycott - Gibson noted that "because the producers had such a clear sense of what they wanted the film to be...I often felt like I was a token director...we were hired...we had little control" [102]. Clearly then, the independence of a group like this is conditioned by the relationship they have with commissioning organisations, and the politics of that organisation. Gibson noted that "Channel Four is moving to the right"[103]. This assessment of their politics, plus the fall in the "world commodity price" of the South African situation ("people are no longer absorbing documentaries from South Africa"[104]), has led to a questioning of the viability of independent organisations making documentaries. Gibson suggested that perhaps the new direction ought to be towards fiction filmmaking, as films like Cry Freedom and Mapantsula were the kinds of films about South Africa that were drawing large overseas audiences [105]. However, decisions about which genre to work in obviously depend on one's political intention, and one's purpose in making films.

An integral part of the motivation of Free Filmmakers in setting themselves up was to train aspirant black filmmakers. However, as the group has no organisational or institutional links, the people who are trained are mainly "friends...people we knew who wanted to make films...they'd worked in theatre, or were writers [106]. The training consists of learning on the job: "On Freedom Square we had a trainee in virtually every position...and we put up a full crew wherever we went...London, Lusaka" [107]. This method of training in itself necessitates the large budgets that are associated with independent productions. The trainees, regarded as part of the professional crew, are paid full rates. While this provides a marvellous experience for the trainees, it must be questionable whether this is a viable form of training - especially as it is so limited in its intake - in a "Third World" situation. However, the 'independence' of the organisation that provides the training absolves it of the responsibility of answereing these questions.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided an over-view of the main producers of anti- apartheid documentaries, and of the organisations which provide training in documentary making. It has attempted to show the ways in which these organisations and individuals work, and what their relationship to other anti-apartheid

political structures is. It is this relationship which conditions - to varying degrees - the form and social vision of the documentaries that are produced. This will be the subject of Chapters 4 and 5 respectively.

Notes

1. Tomaselli K G: Documentary and the Struggle for Realisms in South Africa, Media Information Australia, No 44, May 1987, p21.
2. In South Africa this influence is evident in Criticos C: Media, Praxis and Empowerment (p14), a chapter in Weil S and McGill I: Diversity in Experiential Learning: Theory and Practice, Open University Press, forthcoming; and Anderson P: The Tiakeni Report: the maker and the problem of method in documentary video production, Critical Arts, Vol 4 No 1, 1985, p34,36.
3. Freire P:

   (a) Cultural Action for Freedom, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1972.
   (b) Pedagogy of the Opressed, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1972.
4. Berrigan F J, 1979, op.cit., p15.
5. Ibid., p16.
6. Berrigan F J: Community Communications, Unesco, May 1981, p7.
7. Ibid., p8.
8. Ibid.,p19.
9. Criticos interview, op.cit., and Criticos C: Media, Praxis and Empowerment, op.cit, p23.
10. See Freire P: Cultural Action for Freedom, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1972; Freire P: Pedagogy of the Oppressed, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1972; Criticos C: Media, Praxis and Empowerment, in Weil S and McGill I: Diversity in Experiential Learning: Theory and Practice, Open University Press, England, forthcoming.
11. Interview with Costas Criticos, Director of the Media Attachment Programme (MAP), Durban, 1988.
12. Criticos C, Chetty A and Prinsloo J: Through the eye of the camera: a struggle to define community video process, paper presented at the 10th International Festival of Scientific, Technical and Art Films, University of Brussels, February 1988, p2.
13. Ibid., p2.
14. Ellis J: The Documentary Idea: A Critical History of English-Language Documentary Film and Video, Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1989, p273.
15. Ibid., p274
16. Kurchak M: What Challenge? What Change? in Feldman S and Joyce N (ed): Canadian Reader, Peter Martin Associates Ltd., 1977, p127. Reprinted from Take One, Vol 4. No 1 (Sept-Oct 1972).
17. Rosen E, Herman R, Moynihan K, McGrattan H: The community use of media for lifelong learning in Canada, in Berrigan F J: Access: Some Western Models of Community Media, Unesco, Paris, 1977. p88.
18. Kurchak M, in Feldman S and Nelson J (ed), op., cit. p128.
19. For a description of You are on Indian Land, see Ellis J, op. cit.,p274.
20. Kurchak M, in Feldman S and Nelson J (eds), op. cit., p122.
21. Ibid., p122.

22. Ibid., p122. There are similarities between this process of production and those of productions guided by Mark Kaplan at CVRA and Costas Criticos at MAP.
23. Ellis J, op. Cit., p274.
24. Mark Kaplan asserted in an interview with me (Grahamstown-Harare, 1988) that these discussions led ultimately to the establishment of CVRA.
25. Kurchak M, in Feldman S and Nelson J (eds), op. cit., p124.
26. Interview with Liz Fish, Cape Town, 1988.
27. Interview with Mark Kaplan, op. cit.
28. Ibid.
29. Ibid.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid.
32. Ibid.
33. Ibid.
34. Ibid.
35. Ibid.
36. Ibid.
37. Ibid.
38. Ibid.
39. Kaplan was forced to leave South Africa for political reasons.
40. Interview with Liz Fish, Grahamstown, 1989.
41. Interview with Liz Fish, Cape Town, 1988.
42. Ibid.
43. CVRA changed its name to CVET in 1987.
44. Interview with Liz Fish, Cape Town, 1988.
45. Ibid.
46. Ibid.
47. Ibid.
48. Ibid.
49. Mattelart A: Mass Media, Ideologies and the Revolutionary Movement, the Harvester Press, Sussex, 1980, p49.
50. Ibid. pxxvi.
51. Ibid., p50.
52. Ibid., pxxiv.
53. Ibid., pxxv.

54. Tomaselli K G: The Cinema of Apartheid: Race and Class in South African Film, Radix, Johannesburg, 1989, p196.

55. Ibid., p197.

56. Gavin Younge's Abaphuciwe is distributed by The Other Cinema in Britain and Southern Africa Media Centre, California Newsreel in North America.

57. Costas Criticos, John van Zyl and Keyan Tomaselli have all taken their students' work overseas to academic conferences and film festivals.

58. Some filmmakers have been hesitant to disclose their budgets, or can no longer remember them, but Gavin Younge was able to travel to Europe and America to secure television rights for his films; Lindy Wilson mentioned in an interview that she paid all her technicians the going rates - usually at overseas rates. The budget for The Ribbon, Harriet Gavshon's film, was considered low at R85,000.00 as her film was edited in London. The budget for Angus Gibson and William Kentridge's Freedom Square and Back of the Moon is probably the highest for an independent South African documentary to date: R300,000.00. These figures are to be compared with, for example, John van Zyl's estimate that a 30min Direct Cinema production would cost about R1,000.00.

59. Gavin Younge noted in an interview that one of the first things he learnt was how television worked. Gibson also noted how on Singing the Change he was a "token director", because the British producers knew exactly what they wanted. Hennie Serfontein is also familiar with Dutch television codes and these had to be observed as one of the stations was a co-producer of And Now We Have No Land.

60. Harriet Gavshon made this point at the public discussion, Isolation and Imperialism: Aesthtics, Politics and Identity in Contemporary South African Cinema, on the 20 August 1987, during the 1987 Weekly Mail Film Festival.

61. South Africa was a marketable commodity in the mid-1980's - hence the foreign television exhibition for Reserve Four, Abaphuciwe, And Now We Have No Land, Last Supper at Hortsley Street, Robben Island: Our University - to name a few of the independent productions. However, Gibson noted in an interview that the situation is changeing, and that South African documentaries are not as popular now (1989) as they were before - hence his suggestion that filmmakers ought to now use fictional narrative to explore the South African situation.

62. Willemen P: Presentation, in Macpherson D (ed): Traditions of Independence: British Cinema in the Thirties, BFI, London, 1980, p2.

63. Ibid., p2.

64. Ibid., p2.

65. See the Film and Allied Workers Organisation's (FAWO'S) constitution.

66. The term "filmmaker" is used with respect to independent producers as only Lindy Wilson's Ithuseng was shot on video.

67. Interview with Gavin Younge, Cape Town, 1988.

68. Interview with Paul Weinberg, Johannesburg, 1988.

69. Gavshon H: The Ribbon, ADA,5, 1988, pp30 - 31.
70. Interview with Lindy Wilson, Cape Town, 1988.
71. Wilson L: Why my film was banned, Index on censorship, 4/1981, p37.
72. Ibid., pp37 - 38.
73. Interview with Kevin Harris, Johannesburg, 1988.
74. This incident was widely covered in the press: The Rand Daily Mail, 13 October 1979; Sunday Tribune, 14 October 1979; Sunday Express, 14 October 1979;Rapport, 14 October, 1979; The Citizen, 19 October 1979; Beeld, 19 October 1979.
75. Interview with Eddie Wes, Johannesburg, 1988.
76. Interview with John van Zyl, then director of the Centre for Direct Cinema, Johannesburg, 1988.
77. Suggested by Professor Keyan Tomaselli in correspondence with me.
78. Ibid.
79. van Zyl J: "Cinema Direct" helps community film makers to document history, Group Media Journal, Vol 8 No 1, 1989, p16.
80. Interview with van Zyl, op. cit.
81. Ibid.
82. van Zyl, 1989, op. cit., p16.
83. Interview with van Zyl, op. cit.
84. In an interview van Zyl noted that the average (estimated) cost of a 30 minute production was R1,000.00.
85. Interview with van Zyl, op. cit.
86. Ellis J, op. cit., p225.
87. Issari M A and Paul D A: What is Cinema Verite?, The Scarecrow Press, Inc Metuchen, New Jersey and London, 1979, p12.
88. Ellis J, op. cit., p221.
89. Issari M A and Paul D A:, op. cit., p12.
90. Ibid., p108.
91. Interview with van Zyl, op. cit. He illustrated this with reference to one of the projects that formed part of Chronicle of South Africa: "Julie, the Australian woman, made a film about the Salvation Army hostel in Simmonds Street. She went and lived in the hostel, which is for men only, for about two weeks. She had to get herself deloused once a week." For a discussion of the formal aspects of Direct Cinema see my discussion in Chapter 4 of this thesis; and Eaton M (ed): Anthropology-reality-Cinema: The Films of Jean Rouch, BFI, London, 1979.
92. Interview with van Zyl, op. cit.
93. The title, Chronicles of South Africa, recalls Jean Rouch and Edgar Morin's 1960 film, Chronicles of a summer (Chronique d'un ete).
94. Interview with van Zyl, op. cit.

95. van Zyl, 1989, op. cit., p17.

96. Ibid., p17.

97. Ibid., p17.

98. Interview with Angus Gibson, memeber of Free Filmmakers, Johannesburg, 1989.

99. Ibid.

100. Ibid.

101. Ibid.

102. Ibid.

103. Ibid.

104. Ibid.

105. Cry Freedom 1988: a 35mm film about South African newspaper editor, Donald Woods and Steve Biko, the Black Consciousness activist - directed by British director, David Attenborough; Mapantsula 1988: a 35mm film set in the black townships about a gangster who becomes pliticised - directed by South African director, Oliver Schmidt.

106. Interview with Angus Gibson, op. cit.

107. Ibid.

3. Documentary: Theoretical Clarification

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Propaganda

3: Documentary: Theoretical Clarification

Documentary is popularly believed to be an exposition of the "truth" in which "reality" is depicted. However, in South Africa, State-produced social documentaries, per se, are generally not accorded this definition by people opposed to the state, being described by them as propoganda - a term used to denigrate the views contained in the documentaries. In this chapter I will clarify the theoretical issues which inform an understanding of documentary, thereby challenging the popular myths. I will review the literature and the debates which inform a discussion of (1) what a documentary is; (2) what its relation to truth and reality is; and (3) what the distinguishing features of propaganda are.

Documentary: The 'Common Sense' View

According to William Sloan,

> The term documentary is used in its broadest sense to refer to films that possess truth and project reality and are intended for non- theatrical use[1].

This is a fairly accurate and typical summation of the popular conception of documentary. These criteria, that they "possess truth", "project reality" and "are intended for...non-theatrical use" are the key problematics which a study of documentary should address. I shall turn to each briefly.

Truth

The documentary, Witness to Apartheid[2], by its title associates documentary with **evidence**. But this association is confusing because it suggests that the genre presents the 'truth'. Instead, what is evident are the **images** of whatever passed before the camera lens. This is its 'truth', summarised in the adage 'the camera never lies'. But this formulation confuses an **image** of something with the real thing. In order to assess the 'truth value' of the image we would have to discover its relation to the real.

From an analysis of documentary texts, Nichols has argued that the "proofs" presented are not self-evident proofs which can be tested by some external means, but that they are rather inter- textual "proofs" created by the audiences' subjective belief in the presenter(s) and/or interviewees[3]. Thus in South African anti-apartheid documentaries a particular paradigm of presenters and interviewees is used with whom the documentarists feel their audience can identify. For example, presenters will often either have a BBC-type voice of authority[4], or they will be identified as being associated with the politics of the mass democratic movement; and interviewees will often be 'the people', or political and organisational representatives of 'the people'. This designation persuades the audience that the evidence presented to them is 'the truth'. Furthermore, evidence is chosen precisely because it 'fits in' with a particular argument: creating a tautological statement. Nichols's conclusion is therefore, that documentaries should be analysed within the analytical framework of "rhetoric", which he reminds us is "concerned with pragmatic questions, how an argument can be made persuasively; it leaves decisions about its ultimate truth to other disciplines"[5].

This focus on rhetoric as the fundamental basis of documentary removes documentary from a discourse of 'objectivity' and 'impartiality' where it is popularly considered to be, and places it in the realm of ideology. Nichols notes that

> our acceptance of ("real or apparent") demonstration of truth will depend upon the interaction between the demonstrator's rhetorical skill and our own assumptions rather than procedures of a necessary and sufficient logic[6].

The key word here is 'assumptions'. In other words, the text is a negotiation between the addressor and the addressee. The 'success' of the text depends on the extent to which the addressee is interpellated by the text. Thus the persuasiveness or affectivity of the text is dependent on the appropriateness (for its audience) of its mode of address. As Nichols notes:

> To answer to an address where we do not fully live or live fully (the place of the self-as- subject, for example) is a profound distortion of self, a kind of schizophrenia[7].

The oppressed in South Africa are subject to this kind of schizophrenia (remarked on by independent filmmaker, Kevin Harris, in an interview) when they watch SABC-TV News or Network. The power of anti-apartheid documentaries lies in the fact that they provide an opportunity for the audience to be addressed differently from the dominant forms of address - which hail the public as anti-communist, anti-terrorist, anti-ANC, sexist, racist and so on.

The pleasure and popularity of anti-apartheid documentaries is due to the fact that they provide a different set of subjective identifications which their audiences feel a pleasure in taking up[8]. My criticism is that within the terrain of left politics in this country, an anti-apartheid ideology is the dominant representation, virtually to the exclusion of other frameworks such as class and gender. While this might be 'tactically correct' this is an inefficient use of the the visual media - which work at the level of ideology - for our consciousness is criss-crossed by many other discourses, as revealed in the documentaries[9].

Another aspect of the problem of 'truth' *vis-a-vis* documentaries noted by Blumenberg is that "traditionally the problem of truth is associated with objectivity: that is, how can a film most closely show events as they actually occurred"[10]. This formulation slides the notion of 'truth' into the depiction of the real and implies that surface events can adequately explain the import of social history. Blumenberg counters this by noting that the *sine qua non* of filmmaking is selection and editing, that is, construction, and not a mere "projection of reality". Further more, what is constructed by the filmmaker, is not 'reality' as is so often thought, but **meaning**, which is an interpretation through images and sound, and selectively edited, of what occured physically in time and space.

It is easy to conflate the depiction of images with the creation of meaning in the cinema, because the images look like that which they represent - unlike the signs of a natural language such as English. In other words, the signs used in visual communication are motivated, rather than arbitrary. For this reason their presence in a text is often seen, not as signifying something chosen by the

filmmaker (in relation to other images chosen and their placement into a syntagm), but as representing that which they resemble. This leads us to the next problem with which documentary has to deal, namely how to represent reality.

Projects Reality

Implicit in the phrase "projects reality" is the much larger problem of **how** one represents the real. Historically, this question was raised in the debate (in the 1930s) between Georg Lukacs and Bertolt Brecht, which was concerned with "opposed conceptions of what socialist works of art should be within a framework of declared political militancy"[11]. What was at issue, was differing conceptions of realism. Lukacs advocated a realism in which the 'whole' was able to explain the structural relations which gave rise to daily experiences, and a form which "manifests itself as immediacy, as life as it actually appears": a realism based on verisimilitude[12]. Brecht disagreed with this, regarding it as a programmatic attitude which did not allow formal experimentation. He also disagreed with Lukac's claim that a work of art should be an expressive whole which contained and reconciled the capitalist contradictions between "essence and appearance, concrete and abstract, individual and social"[13]. Brecht believed that art should expose these contradictions, so that they could be abolished in real life. He maintained that realism was a means for

> discovering 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 difficuties in which human society is caught up/ emphasizing the element of development/ making possible the concrete, and making possible abstraction from it[14].

Brecht argued that realism was an **attitude** or **goal** which could be expressed in any way:

> we shall allow the artist to employ his fantasy, his originality, his humour, his invention, in following them[15].

Furthermore, he urged that "our concept of realism must be wide and political, sovereign over all conventions"[16] and that "the criteria for popular art and realism must...not be drawn merely from existing realistic works and existing popular works..."[17], but noted that

> There is not only such a thing as **being popular**,there is also the process of **becoming popular**.[18]

Brecht is acknowledging the problem of sometimes having to build an audience. This is particularly pertinent in South Africa, where audiences are exposed to a very limited range of filmic expression, and often only to its most conservative forms.

The importance of this debate is that it marks 'the real' as a theoretical concept to be used in social analysis, rather than as a prescription for representation. One could argue that documentaries are no more 'real' than fiction, for both are symbolic representations. The problem to be elucidated is the

way in which documentaries construct discourses - not to argue that they are free of discourse as they are 'the real'.

Intended for non-theatrical use

The third defining feature of documentary noted by Sloan is that it is "intended for non-theatrical use". This phrase points to an **historical** use of documentary[19], but is not a necessary condition for **defining** documentary.

The foregoing analysis has attempted to show how film theorists writing in the late 1970s and 1980s have contested the popular misconception of documentary as being a channel for truth - except when it is used by political opponents. Nichols has suggested that documentary should rather be regarded as an argument. Another problem noted was that documentary images are often confused with the historical event because they **look** the same. The 'misleading' verb is that of 'seeing'. It is therefore important to unpack the process of 'seeing' upon which an understanding of the documentary is contingent.

The Rebuttal: Documentary As Discourse

The fishing nets that people make determine the kind of fish they catch[20].

In this section I will describe the processes which go into the making of a documentary, showing how these are derived from a selection and ordering of data chosen because they illustrate the thesis (stated or unstated) of the documentarist. I hope, further, to show how all film- and videomaking is contingent upon the technology used, being itself conditioned by the technological, political and economic constraints which allow some technologies to become popular and available, but not others.

Jean Paul Fargier's Approach

Arguing that the specific role that film plays in society is as a purveyor of ideology, Jean Paul Fargier notes the two-fold ideological function of cinema:

> (a) It reproduces, it reflects existing ideologies...
>
> (b) It produces its own ideology: the impression of reality...this illusion is the very substance of the specific ideology secreted by the cinema[21].

The cinema is a system of representation which not only reproduces other ideologies, but also posits an imaginary relationship between what is, and what is seen. The task of materialist film and videomakers is, in Fargier's view, to show up the specific ideology of the cinema, the impression of reality. He formulated this task in the following dictum:

> IN THE CINEMA THE COMMUNICATION OF KNOWLEDGE IS ATTENDANT UPON THE PRODUCTION OF KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE CINEMA[22].

Fargier argued that if film- and videomakers followed this dictum they would enable their audience to distinguish between social reality and the filmic representation of that reality. This would necessitate the use of a form which invites the audience to view actively and critically, instead of accepting passively what is being offered them.

Implicit in Fargier's criticism is a recognition that film/video is itself an autonomous system of representation, and that this system of representation is used to represent other representations. Theorists, Nichols (1980,1981) and Renov ("Rethinking Documentary: Toward a Taxonomy of Mediation"), have focused on the **way** in which documentary, as a system of representation, works.

There is a similarity between our individual process of theory building in order to explain social experience, and the process of documentary making[23]. We experience phenomena which we record, remember, re-order, and as a result of this process we construct an explanation which can account for the way we experience the phenomena. This is our theory, which can encompass what we have experienced and is of a higher logical type than the phenomena because it is also a metadiscourse about those phenomena[24]. Similarly, documentaries also begin with phenomena recorded on strips of film and sound tape (or by electronic signals on video tape). These are put together and re-ordered. The product is a textual system "distinctive in the manner of an ideolect (by the specific operations of style and formal structure)"[25]. Nichols's insight is that documentaries are also ordered theories or explanations which we expect to be sufficient to explain the social world to which they refer.

Thus when we view documentaries we have to **deconstruct** them in order to 'see' the processes of mediation which are frozen in the documentary image. Renov has noted four separate instances of mediation which create the 'meaning effect' of documentary: "the historic "real", the profilmic event, the text and the spectator[26]. Each of these terms connotes a determinate passage of transformation, no element of which has a 'natural' existence, but all of which are socially produced. Thus the documentary can no longer be seen as "possessing truth" and "projecting reality". Rather, it is a system of signification which uses images taken at a specific time and place, which are transformed into a profilmic event and produced into a text which is read by spectators under specific historic conditions. The **process** of transformation from event to text is hidden, and needs to be unmasked so that we can understand what a text reveals, and hides; and what effects it can have on us, and what effects it is incapable of producing. It is to these processes of mediation that I will now turn.

The instances of mediation

Film and videomaking is a **process** which is condensed into the series of sounds and images that appear on the screen. The screen sounds and images can be no more than signs which stand for things that have happened in some other place, at some other time. By analysing the process of film- and videomaking, Renov and McGarry have isolated the determinate points at which the film/videomaking process intervenes in what is happening and translates those events into a text[27]. What follows is a description of the four instances of mediation.

The Historical Real

Renov's view is shared by McGarry who lists the following "levels of coding: reality, the pro-filmic event, the film"[28]. The important contribution McGarry makes is to note that

> reality itself is already coded, first in the infrastructure of the social formation (human economic practices) and secondly by the superstructure of politics and ideology[29].

She insists that social reality is the result of human economic, political and ideological practice - it is not unmediated, natural, neutral 'reality'. This is demonstrated in Lindy Wilson's video, Ithuseng, which depicts a rural 'community' near Tzaneen in the Northern Transvaal. The images show the surface structure, the 'community' that we see, but the narrator, Mamphela Ramphela, comments that it is "a conglomeration of people who have been relocated to where they find themselves"[30]. The passive verb "have been relocated" is instructive as it indicates that the people have been acted upon by some other force. In this way Ramphela's words comment on how 'what is' came to be, and provides the historical, political and economic context which accounts for the images: 'reality' - in this case the 'community'- is the result of power relations in a social system governed by the needs of a capitalist economy and a racist politics. McGarry notes:

> It is thus a form of ideological mystification to speak of an innocent or neutral reality, apart from human practice, since that can only be an attempt to deny or obscure intention and process (politics)[31].

McGarry thus points to the political and economic situation prior to filming which constitute the surface phenomena that film and video technology are able to record. However, it must be remembered that film and video work on two levels simultaneously: (i) they are imprints of sound and images ordered into a textual system so they signify that system of part-whole relations; (ii) they are the imprints of sound and image whose referents are the social phenomena they are imprints of[32]. These two 'levels' signify two distinctive moments in the production of meaning of a documentary, namely (i) the filmic event, and (ii) the pro-filmic event.

The Pro-Filmic Event

The pro-filmic event refers to the interaction between the historic real (or social phenomena) and the camera[33]. Renov points out that the main issue in this regard is whether what happens in front of the camera is what would have been there if the cameras and crew had not been present. Generally, this is difficult to ascertain. It raises the issue of 'performance' for the camera. However, it is Rouch's view that "whatever he tries to be, he is only more himself"[34].

Two instances of 'performance' for the camera that come to mind are those of Piet Draghoender in Katriver: End of Hope[35] and the woman at the old-age home in I am Clifford Abrahams, This is Grahamstown. Draghoender's performance is a diatribe of Shakespearean proportions - reminiscent of King Lear on the heath. His outburst is occasioned by the camera and is partly for the camera - but one

feels, despite this, that it is his deepest response to being dispossessed of his land. The woman who employs Clifford Abrahams' grandfather at the old age home in I am Clifford Abrahams, This Is Grahamstown is also performing for the camera, being 'good' to the gardener, but in so doing she succeeds in displaying the essence of her paternalism and liberalism.

Two ways of trying to deal with the act of filming are either to minimise one's presence, or to acknowledge it. The American cinema verite tradition attempted to minimise its presence. This was aided by the newly developed light-weight Arriflex cameras which had sync sound, enabling smaller crews to record sound and image as unobtrusively as possible. It is worth noting McGarry's passing reference to the material conditions which make certain kinds of technology possible - a *sine qua non* of filmmaking which is often taken for granted:

> (We might also ask how and what the film equipment is able to record, and the historical why of that ability.)[36]

However, as will be pointed out in the next section, the camera is itself an instrument of coding, so the question of the kind of equipment or style of filmmaking is hardly a satisfactory solution to the problem of presence.

The other strategy open to film- and videomakers is to accept the effect of their presence and to acknowledge it: to the people they are filming, and to their audience. It is fairly standard practice now, with committed filmmakers, to work **with** the people they are filming. The nature of this participation is varied, and thus produces differing effects. For example, the videomakers of Community Video Education Trust (CVET) do not initiate the videos they make. Instead, they are approached by community or trade union organisers who ask them to make a video about some aspect of their organisation. Because of this, they enter into what will become the pro-filmic event as 'comrade', someone who has a common ideological aim, rather than as an outside 'filmmaker'. Indeed, one of their videomakers declared that for many years she had regarded herself as an 'activist first', and had only very recently been able to think of herself as a 'filmmaker'. Although there may be some 'performance' in the CVET videos, generally one does have the sense on viewing that the videomakers were privy to the personal confidences of those who speak[37].

A similar effect is achieved in Lindy Wilson's videos and films, even though she enters the profilmic event initially as an independent filmmaker. Well before she begins shooting she establishes a rapport with those she will film, and this becomes evident in the text of her films as we can see in the carpenter's lament in Last Supper at Hortsley Street.

> who built District Six...every road and every pole...was built from our **skill**..our hearts..our skill[38]

The essence of the problem seems to hinge on the **relationship** between the documentarist and those filmed - not the degree to which they play down their presence and their equipment.

The Text

The transformation of the profilmic event into a film or video text is predicated upon the use of film and video technology, sound technology, lighting and editing. This is often examined in the context of particular textual strategies, but I would like to present a broader context in which notions of 'the cinematic' should be viewed. Heath notes that:

> The process of cinema,.. is that of a process through which in particular economic situations a set of scattered technical devices become an applied technology then a fully social technology; and that social technology can, must, be posed and studied in its effects of construction and meaning...the process is that of a relation of the technical and the social as cinema

And later...

> Cinema does not exist in the technological and then become this or that practice in the social; its history is a history of the technological and social together, a history which the determinations are not simple but multiple, in which the ideological is there from the start - without this latter emphasis reducing the technological to the ideological or making it uniquely the term of an ideological determination[39].

This is quoted at length to show that what has become the technological in film/video today must be seen as the result of contingent historical, economic and political conditions. The technological is always conditioned. This is the foundation upon which a study of film/video technology must be based. To quote Comolli, "one could just as well propose it is the spectators who invent cinema: the chain that knots together the waiting queues, the money paid and the spectators' looks filled with admiration"[40]. What is crucial about this and other formulations is that the spectators are seen as an integral part of the 'cinematic apparatus' which not only implies the technology of the cinema, but also its institutional viewing situations.

In a seminal article, The Ideological Effects of the Basic Cinematic Apparatus, Charles Baudry sees the cinematic apparatus as producing two ideological effects: the ideology of representation, and the ideology of specularization[41]. **Representation** in the cinema is ideological, he maintains, because it presents an Italian Renaissance perspective which is a particular historical mode of representation as if it were **the** way of representing reality. Thus what is given as a representation of reality is presented as if it were the real. This is made possible by the developments in optics which can produce this perspective. Lenses of different focal lengths don't destroy this illusion, they are merely regarded as adjuncts to the 'normal' system of representation. One of the main characteristics of this system of representation is that it gives the effect of an endlessly unfolding space - but a space which never-the-less only 'makes sense' when viewed from a particular position. The space is always a 'space for...' - for an inscribed, but unacknowledged subject who is the author of that space. As James Spellerberg notes:

> The subject is implied because of the organization of continuous space which is organised by the look of the spectator[42].

Thus a subjective space is created: a space for someone outside of it, but who is already inscribed in that space, which is then misrecognised as the real. This is not 'the real', but an **effect** of a particular representation of space looked at from a particular position. What makes this operation ideological, is that it is hidden.

The second ideological effect noted by Baudry is that of **specularization**. The mode of representation described is dependent upon the inscription of the look of a subject. The subject posited is the subject of Lacan's Mirror Phase - a subject which misrecognises itself as being a unitary, undivided self[43]. Hence the effect of this kind of specularisation is that it is all- seeing and all-knowing. A position that is complicit with that of the dominant ideology which presents its view of the world as **the** view of the world.

This analysis of the "ideological effects of the basic cinematic apparatus" has largely been accepted by film theorists. But Comolli makes the point that this analysis privileges the camera with respect to the cinematic apparatus. Sound is conspicuously absent. However, Mary Ann Doane in her article,The Ideology of Sound Editing and Sound Mixing, addresses this issue[44]. She maintains that the conventions of sound recording, editing and mixing are organised around the principle of creating the 'impression of reality'. Thus music, special effects and even the buzz track are used in order to create the mood or feel of reality. She notes with interest the use of words such as 'mood' and 'feel' which relate to a different order of knowing - that of intuition. But this order of knowing is enlisted to support the more 'scientific' mode of knowing premised on sight. A mode which is more culturally acceptable as we happily say 'I see' to mean 'I know'.

Dialogue is the privileged sound and other sounds are made subservient to dialogue which must always be intelligible. However, as Doane points out:

> In the arguments over sound perspective, "realism" (as an effect of the ideology of the visible) is viewed as conflicting with intelligibility. If the demands of sound perspective are respected (that is, close-up sound "matches" close-up picture, long-shot sound "matches" long-shot picture), at a certain apparent camera-subject distance intelligibilty of dialogue will be lost[45].

Wollen makes the point that in silent films spectators were in a real sense outside spectators - separated from the 'real' action by the screen of the cinema[46]. They could watch, but they could not hear. However, with the coming of sound, their position changed from spectators (seers/ viewers) to "invisible guests": they were a co-presence, even though their presence could never be explicitly acknowledged.

The history of cinema, must therefore be seen as a history of the inscription of the subject into a system of representation. Baudry tends to suggest that this system of representation is, *de facto* ideological. However, others warn that the implication should not be that all cinema is necessarily

ideological because the technology used has historically created an ideological effect. Spellerberg notes:

> In Vertov and Goddard, showing the technology of the cinema has a positive ideological effect, but this is not necessarily the case in a different historical moment or in the presence of a different combination of forces. In Rouch's cinema, for example, the technology shown on the screen is reinvested in the field of "truth"[47].

The main point I would like to make with regard to the mediation from the pro-filmic event to the text is that we are dealing with an historical mode of representation which cannot merely be viewed as a technological operation - devoid of history and ideology. Rather, this is the starting point from which comments like Renov's must be viewed:

> Every filmmaking decision bears upon this discussion: when to turn the camera on or off, when or if to move it, how to compose or frame a shot, from what angle and with what lighting scheme, choice of lens, film stock, choice of sound strategy. All these variables precede even the first decision at the cutting table. Claims to truth and objectivity seem far removed from the arena of such practical concerns[48].

In the above quotation Renov lists the particular cinematic practices which create the representation of reality which inscribes the viewer.

The Spectator and Audience: the filmic event

The filmic event is that moment of viewing when the viewer comes into contact with the textual system and produces new meanings informed by the very context of viewing, and what s/he brings to the codes of the textual system. The two words used most commonly to describe the people who view films and videos are spectator, and audience. Each of these has a specific connotation. **Spectator** is used to describe the individual who views in a very specific way, determined as much by historical circumstances as by his or her own **subjectivity**. The term therefore emphasises the **subjective** way in which the film or video would be viewed. The word "subjectivity" has been taken from the discourse of psychoanalysis and is used to describe the locus of a multitude of ideological positions and experiences - in terms of class, gender, colour, personal history - which would influence the way in which the spectator interprets the sound-image patterns which s/he views.

Audience, on the other hand, refers to the collectivity of viewers gathered in a specific social space, at a particular historical time, both of which would be conditioned by economic, political and social factors. Here the emphasis is on the **social** experience of viewing, and the interpretation which arises out of this viewing situation, rather than on the individual experience. It must be noted, however, that each member of the audience is a also spectator.

Research into audiences has shown that interpretations of films and videos, or how they are read, vary a great deal depending on the spectator-text relationship and the viewing situation[49]. The following comment by a South African activist/spectator seems to support British research:

> Normally questions come up from what they saw, but sometimes other things crop up...sometimes they're not even related..or you wouldn't have thought of that when you look at the video...not **directly** related to the video...but somehow comes out of the video...[50]

Audience response has not been a major focus of this research, and is a neglected area in South African research[51]. However, here are some critical comments made by users of the South African anti-apartheid documentaries:

> Its use definitely attracts more people... Probably because it's not so boring to sit and listen to someone talking all the time..or to read a booklet on something...But you're just sitting and looking...and it's live...that's basically its attraction...

> From our side, the people who use the video, there could be a far more critical approach to the video....but in one instance we are thankful that the videos are there in the first place because a couple of years back we didn't have a thing to work with....but I still don't think that there should be an attitude...because it's something that we're not familiar with..something we didn't have before, that we shouldn't be critical towards it[52]...

The most obvious problem arises from the question of who the audience is and what their expectations are - based on their experience of television and the films they have seen at the cinema.

> A personal criticism that I would have generally is that the videos are in a sense often boring...because people's experience with videos is the commercial type of thing...and people tend to bore after a half an hour looking at it, so the videos are very useful if they are not longer than 20 minutes[53]...

Most of the foregoing comments refer to the content of the videos, as if the documentaries are a 'window on the world' which the audience merely sees through. However, what is significant about the following comments is that they refer to the profilmic event - the way in which the documentaries code the phenomena they have encountered:

> some of the videos are a bore to the students...I can't deny that...when you're forced to take the last couple of videos at ERIC just before June 16 or May Day...then you're forced to take something and you think oh not again...You've got a feeling of ..I'm not going to bore people again with it...because you've seen some of the reactions before...

> What I've thought about developing new ideas...couldn't the videos be a bit more stimulating in terms of...becoming a bit more abstract in its messages...not going for an event that is obvious in terms of the message they're trying to bring across...i.e. by perhaps giving a different interpretation of the event..I've always felt in that sense the videos are very biased...I understand the necessity of that in terms of organisation and education...but just generally if one looks at videos and looks at the development of

> videos...generally people have become very comfortable with videos, so I've just thought isn't it time to move on a bit...
>
> It should not be a drawn out thing...and lots of the videos tended to do that - they go into long speeches..and the people just think they could have gone to a mass meeting if they wanted to listen[54].

This viewer is commenting on the **style** of the oppositional documentaries. He is a politically committed activist, but he has noted the boredom of his audience because they have observed the repeated pattern in which the documentaries have transformed the historic real into a text. Chapter 4 will focus on the form of the documentaries and point out the structural features of this pattern and the ideological and political implications of it.

Before concluding this chapter I shall focus on the defining characteristics of propaganda, as it is a mode of discourse which is popularly associated with falsehood, when used by political opponents, and - for this reason - is acknowledged with embarassment when used by political comrades. Theoretical clarity on this issue will therefore serve to distinguish propaganda as but one form that documentary can take.

Propaganda

Neale dismisses liberal humanist descriptions of propaganda as inadequate as they fail to account for the ideologies of art, politics and the subject[55]. He offers, instead, an account of propaganda which can be summarised in the following way:

1. That propaganda produces a subject which is in struggle *vis-a- vis* a discourse or practice presented in a text;

2. That the textual discourse/practice be contemporary with the audience and be identifiable outside of the text;

3. That propaganda is a mode of intervention by a particular apparatus that is identified within the text and with which the subject can identify in opposition to the discourse/practices identified as alien and other, and which must be eradicated.

In his conclusion Neale notes:

> What has to be identified is the use to which a particular text is put, to its function within a particular situation, and its place within cinema conceived as a social practice[56].

A text which is not propagandist in and of itself can become propagandistic through its insertion into a particular place at a particular conjuncture.

In view of this understanding, one could therefore argue, with filmmaker Kevin Harris, that The Struggle from Within and No Middle Road to Freedom are propagandist texts, for the subject position produced is one in opposition to the diabolical South African government supported by its ideological arm, SABC-TV[57]. The apparatus we are encouraged to identify with is the 'progressive movemement', identified in The Struggle from Within as the Church associated with the South African

Council of Churches (SACC) and the United Democratic Front (UDF); and in No Middle Road to Freedom, with the Church and the African National Congress (ANC). The text itself is an intervention made by Harris and the SACC, and through being placed strategically in the network of international broadcast television. The visual device of the flames surrounding newspaper clips in No Middle Road to Freedom is particularly reminiscent of the British television production, The World at War.

From this analysis it can be seen that the field of enquiry into propaganda should not be 'truth/lies', but rather the same field that pertains to documentary in general, namely discourse. What distinguishes propaganda as a mode of documentary discourse is that it has a clearly identified political purpose, and thus addresses its audience to maximise its affectivity.

Conclusion

Theoretical writing of the 1970s and 1980s has challenged the popular view of documentary as 'a window on the world', and has shown instead that it is a highly structured argument predicated on the use of technologies that are themselves bound by technological, economic and political constraints. Furthermore, a theoretical study of propaganda has shown it to be a particular discourse, distinctive in its mode of address and strategic social use, rather than one that offers 'lies' in opposition to the 'truth' of documentaries.

On the basis of the foregoing analysis, Chapter 4 will analyse the form typical to anti-apartheid documentaries. It will raise questions about the implications of this form, and will give reasons for the prevalence of this form in South African anti- apartheid documentaries.

Notes

1. Quoted by Nichols B: Ideology and the Image, Indiana University Press, Bloomington 1981, p173.
2. Sharon Sopher and Kevin Harris: Witness to Apartheid, 16mm film and video, 1987.
3. Nichols B, 1981, op.cit. p174: three kinds of artistic proofs noted: ethical, emotional and demonstrative.
4. For example, the use of Janet Suzman as narrator in Lindy Wilson's Crossroads; or the narrator in Kevin Harris's The struggle from Within.
5. Nichols B, 1981, op.cit., p178.
6. Quoted in Nichols B, 1981, op.cit., p178.
7. Nichols B, 1981, op.cit., p182.
8. The word "pleasure" here implies that looking is an unconscious drive (scopophilia) which is activated in the cinema either in the form of voyeurism or narcissism (based on an identification with the image seen). See Mulvey L: Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema (1975) in Nichols B (ed): Movies and Methods Vol II, UCLA Press, Berkley, 1985, p305-315.
9. See chapter 5 of this thesis.
10. Blumenberg R M: Documentary Films and the Problem of Truth, Journal of the University Film Association, Vol 29 No1, Fall 1977, p19.
11. Aesthetics & Politics: Debates between Bloch, Lukacs, Brecht, Benjamin, Adorno, Verso, London 1980, p66.
12. Aesthetics and Politics, p39 see also Eagleton T: Marxism & Literary Criticism, Methuen, London 1976, p70.
13. Eagleton T, 1976, op.cit., p70.
14. Aesthetics & Politics,1980, op.cit., p82.
15. Ibid., p82.
16. Eagleton T, 1976, op.cit., p72.
17. Aesthetics & Politics,1980, op.cit., p85.
18. Ibid, p85.
19. The condition that they are "intended for non-theatrical use" points to the historical situation of the 1940s when British Documentary, in particular, was seen as a non-theatrical form, as opposed to fictional narrative which was the commercial form in which film was marketed. The purpose of the documentary was to educate and mobilise people, and Grierson asserted that a wider audience was to be found in Union Halls, Co-ops and Labour Clubs, than in commercial movie houses. It was therefore to these places of exhibition that he channelled the documentaries made under his auspices at the Empire Marketing Board (EMB), General Post Office (GPO) and Film Crown Unit.
20. Katamzi D: The Production of Knowledge - How do people make knowledge, University of Natal, Teach, Test Teach Programme, December 1988, p17.
21. Williams C (ed): Realism and the Cinema, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London 1980, p177.

22. Ibid., p182.
23. Nichols B: Newsreel: Documentary Filmmaking on the American Left, Arno Press, New York, 1980, p8.
24. Paper presented on knowledge production by members of University of Natal: levels of knowledge production: naming, metacognitive, epistemological.
25. Nichols B,1980, op.cit., p9.
26. Renov M: Rethinking Documentary: Toward a Taxonomy of Mediation, Wide Angle, Vol 8 No 3 & 4 p72.
27. Renov M: Rethinking Documentary: Toward a Taxonomy of Mediation, Wide Angle, Vol 8 No 3&4; McGarry E:Documentary, Realism and Women's Cinema, Women and Film, Vol 2 No 7, Summer 1975.
28. McGarry E, 1975,op.cit., p50.
29. Ibid, p50.
30. Wilson L: Ithuseng, video, 1984.
31. McGarry E, 1975, op. cit., p50.
32. Nichols B, 1980,op.cit., p9-14.
33. Nichols also uses this taxonomy. However Renov describes the pro-filmic event simply as what happens in front of the camera, and then refers to the text as the next stage of mediation. Nichols collapses these two stages into one, and calls it the pro-filmic event.
34. Quoted by McDougall D: Beyond Observational Cinema in Hockings P (ed): The Principles of Visual Anthropology, Mouton Publishers, Hague, 1975, p121.
35. See Appendix 3: Piet Draghoender's Lament; see Tomaselli K G and Sienaert E: Ethnographic Film/Video Production and Oral Documentation: The Case of Piet Draghoender in Katriver: The End of Hope, Research in African Literatures, Vol 20 No 2, Summer 1989, p242-251.
36. McGarry E, 1975, op. cit., p51.
37. See for example, Nana, Margaret and Mrs Abrahams; Wanne Dan
38. Wilson L: Last Supper at Hortsley Street, 16mm film, 1984.
39. Heath S: The Cinematic Apparatus: Technology as Historical and Cultural Form in De Laurentis T and Heath S (ed):The Cinematic Apparatus, Macmillan 1980, p6.
40. Comolli J-L: Machines of the Visible in De Laurentis T and Heath S, 1980, op.cit.,p122.
41. Baudry C: The Ideological Effects of the Basic Cinematic Apparatus, in Nichols B (ed) Movies and Methods Vol 2, University of California Press, Los Angeles 1985.
42. Spellerberg J: Technology and Ideology in the Cinema, Quarterly Review of Film Studies, Vol 2 No 3, August 1977.
43. See for example Wright E: Psychoanalytic Criticism: Theory in Practice, Methuen, London, 1984, Chapter 7.
44. Doane M A: The Ideology of Sound Editing and Sound Mixing, De Laurentis andHeath (ed), 1980, op.cit.
45. Ibid., p52 & p53. (The word 'subject' here refers to the person filmed.

46. Wollen P: Discussion, De Laurentis and Heath,1980, op.cit., p59.

47. Spellerberg J, 1977, op.cit., p299.

48. Renov M, op.cit., p75.

49. Morley D: The Nationwide Audience, Television Monograph No 11, the British Film Institute, London 1980.

50. Interview with user, Cape Town, June 1988.

51. Two examples of audience research is to be found in Godsell G, Hall R S, Tomaselli K G: A Report on the Industrial Relations Film, 'Indaba Ye Grievance', HSRC Research Finding PERS-392, Pretoria, 198; and Scott D and Criticos C: Hanging up the Nets: The Documentation of the Removal of the Durban Bay Fishing Community, Paper presented at the Oral History and Documentation Conference, Durban, July 6-9, 1988.

52. Interview with community group organiser, Cape Town, June 1988.

53. Interview with community group organiser, Cape Town, June 1988.

54. Interview with community group organiser, Cape Town, June 1988.

55. Neale S: Propaganda, Screen, Vol 18 No 3 Autumn 1977, p34.

56. Ibid, p39.

57. Interview with filmmaker, Kevin Harris, Johannesburg, August 1988:

> I would never say one is being totally objective...you're not because...more so in South Africa where you're dealing with propaganda...where you're making propaganda...because you're up against a system that relies so much on propaganda...Such a one-sided media situation, that you're constantly aware of ...a lot of your time is spent thinking what do people perceive and why do they perceive it...How do I counteract that?
>
> So immediately one's reference is how can I reach these people who have been protected from...prevented from seeing this and experiencing this...how do I hit them with it...There is a reference point which is a propaganda wave one gets twice a day from TV news...
>
> Harris K: The Struggle from Within, 16mm and video, 1984Harris K: No Middle Road to Freedom, 16mm and video, 1985

4. The Form Of The Anti-apartheid Documentaries

The structure of the documentaries

Mode of Address

a. Direct Address

b. Indirect Address

c. Mode of Address and Subjectivity

d. The politics of form

e. The visual mode of address: a lacuna in theory

Reasons for the dominant form

4: The Form Of The Anti-apartheid Documentaries

Chapter 3 showed that documentary, as a form of visual media, is not a 'window on the world', but a structured argument which uses the recorded sounds and images of social phenomena which are then ordered into a text about some aspect of social life. The 'success' of the argument depends on the shared assumptions between itself (the text) and its audience. To quote Kenneth Burke:

> the basic function of rhetoric (is) the use of words by human agents to form attitudes or induce actions in other human agents[1].

Rhetoric is the discourse through which speakers forge links with each other on the basis of shared attitudes, values and feelings.

This is clearly illustrated in CVET's Wanne Dan: a video about the Cape Town Municipal Workers Association's (CTMWA) work-to-rule[2]. The videomaker enlists the audience's support and identification by establishing the following shared understandings:

1. that wages are low; and that as a consequence, the working and living conditions of the workers and their families are terrible;
2. that the council ("Council") is an exploitative employer;
3. that worker unity and action is a means of redressing the situation;
4. that the audience is working class - evident by the language, music, speakers chosen - all of which affirms their culture.

The videomaker also assumes that the audience is familiar with and accepts two formal features of documentaries:

1. that the use of an English speaking 'voice of god' will convey authority, and that it will be accepted as a voice to speak to/for the viewers/participants;
2. TV news hierachies of presentation: news reader (anchor) to reporter in the field; reporter to witness. This pattern is followed in the following way: anchor (often the voice-over) to workers, or anchor - shop-steward - worker.

It is therefore on the basis of this implicit relationship that the text can proceed with its arguments. In this sense, the documentaries are also social theories - an issue which will be taken up more fully in the following chapter. This chapter will expound two viewpoints. Firstly, that the structure of the South African anti-apartheid documentaries is the same as that of documentaries broadcast on South African and British television, and that this has political consequences in terms of the kinds of authority and knowledge represented. And secondly, that the stylistic devices chosen to transform recorded data into a text interpellate the audience as recepticles for information, instead of critical discussants in a debate about aspects of contemporary South African life. I will conclude the chapter by providing an account of the reasons why this particular form is dominant, and what the possible alternatives are.

The Structure of The Documentaries

One of the distinguishing features of South African anti-apartheid documentaries is their **form**. One element of this form is their fairly standard **structure** which shapes all the arguments: a voice-over narrator presents the contextual and historical information as if it is 'the truth'; this is confirmed by interviewees who provide evidence in support of the voice-over narrator. This is illustrated with footage shot on location, and very occasionally with maps, diagrams and photographs. The significant features of this structure are that the sound track is dominant; it creates a tautological argument; and finally, the relationship between the sound and the image track is one in which a narrator (in non-sync) speaks over images in which there is no direct link between what is being said and what is seen. For example, in The Stuggle from Within, we see this footage: the News logo; a close-up (CU) of the words "P W Botha" on a notice board; zoom out to a long-shot (LS) of Botha disembarking from an aeroplane; midshot (MS) of him and his wife looking down at an unclear object; shots 5 and 6 are medium close-ups (MCUs) of him casting a ballot (smiling face); shot 7 is a three-quarter shot of Mrs Botha casting a ballot (smiling face); cut to a CU of a campaign car. The following narration is the accompanying voice- over, with Die Stem being heard on the sound track in shots 1, 2 and 8:

> Referendum day. Victory for Prime Minister Botha and an overwhelming endorsement by the white electorate for his new constitution designed to change the face of apartheid through the illusion of so-called reforms.For white South Africans the new constitution holds the promise of reacceptance by sectors of the international community; for South Africa's black majority it guarantees the final solution to Verwoerd's Bantustan policy[3].

In instances like this the narration is at its weakest, for it is obvious that the only relation between the sound and image is their marriage through editing: a filmic marker of the construction of a discourse. There are, however, some noteworthy exceptions[4].

Because this form is so typical of South African anti-apartheid documentaries, it is very easy to gain the impression that this is the only form available to documentarists. This structure is most typical of broadcast **television news** which developed from **radio** - a sound medium - rather than **film**, which started as a silent medium in which **visual images** formed the basis of the communication. Two of the most significant differences between film and television is that film works through its visual imagery, whereas television tends to work through the sound track and through images which are framed in close-up and medium close-up[5]. The structure of South African anti-apartheid documentaries therefore seems to be mainly influenced by television documentaries, rather than film documentaries which in Europe and America reached the status of 'art cinema' in the 1930s,'40s and '50s. The greatness of these American and European documentaries can be attributed to their visual style, in which lighting and editing are used to create a textual world which 'works' because the audience is invited to experience a situation, instead of being **told** how to respond to a situation that is delineated verbally.

However, in the South African anti-apartheid documentaries, because the sound track is the ordering principle and the visuals are simply illustrative of the audio track (logocentrism), this creates a text in which everything is organised to create a coherent "diegesis" which only 'makes sense' from one, unstipulated, position[6]. The place of the viewer of such a "diegesis" - no matter what it is about - is fixed, so that the viewer is unable to enter into a dialogue with the text, and can only agree or disagree with it, depending on his/her previously held views. This is the position which anti-apartheid documentaries create for their viewers, and is one that more radical documentarists should challenge - because one of the key issues arising out of the politics of resistance of the 1980s concerns the democratisation of all decision-making processes, and this should be reflected as much in film and video practice as in education or union politics.

While the sound track is one code that structures a documentary, **editing** is another. Editing is the practice of "selection, omission and compression" of sounds and images taken at differing times and places and ordered, Masterman notes:

> according to a narrative, thematic or aesthetic logic, which, is the creation of the filmmaker rather than an inherent quality of the original events[7].

Furthermore, it is through editing that new meanings can be created through taking sounds and images that were originally unrelated, and placing them in a relationship chosen by the documentarist. It is not only the placement that effects meaning, but also the **rhythm** of sound-image patterns within sequences, and the changing rhythms of the whole. Once again, there are noticeable differences between film and television editing, because the shooting of these two media is so different. Because the longer shots work better on film than television, the stylistic options - in terms of choice of shots, lighting and editing - available to a film documentarist are very different from those available to a video documentarist. However, for the most part, these distinctions are not noticeable in the South African documentaries - most of which are shot on 16mm film. One documentary shot on video, Women Without Men, stands out in terms of its attempts to adapt film stylistics to video[8].

Documentaries are therefore more appropriately thought of as arguments which are presented in order to persuade the viewer to the point of view presented in the documentary. **How** one is persuaded is therefore a key issue of the documentary form. As this is effected through the documentary's **"mode of address"**, it is to this that I will now turn[9].

Mode of Address

> The message has less to do with the literal meaning of statements...than with the kind of attittude elicited in the audience toward the speaker[10].

As 'documentary' refers to a visual medium composed of sounds and images, the notion of 'address' refers to that complex fabric of sounds and images which speak to, and thus affect the viewer. Two main modes of address, each of which positions the spectator in a slightly different way have been identified by Bill Nichols[11].

Direct Address

Direct address explicitly acknowledges the viewer as the subject to whom the documentary is addressed. This address can be either by a narrator or a character, in which his/her image is either syncronised with sound or not. A direct address by a narrator who is seen (in sync) creates the effect of an authoritative statement - not only because of what is said, but because of the persona of the narrator. Here emotional and ethical proofs are enlisted in the presentation of demonstrative proofs. This mode of address is not common in South African oppositional documentaries, but has been used, as the following illustration from The Two Rivers will show. The documentary begins with scrolled information on the screen that informs us that:

> The narrator of this film, Rashaka Ratshitanga, lives in Venda, a rural area of South Africa. Recently the South African government declared Venda an "independent state" in accordance with their policy of Apartheid. For his opposition to this policy, Rashaka has been detained incommunicado for prolonged periods by security police. Rashaka spent twenty years as a migrant labourer in Johannesburg and returned to Venda in 1975. He is a writer and a poet.

We then cut to a medium close-up shot of a man who starts speaking thus: " My name is Rashaka...", but his voice tails off into an African language. An English speaking audience is held simply by the intonations of the speech which sound incantatory. But then he says in English:

> This poetry is difficult to translate into English. It came from my father who was a man who believed strongly in his independence as a ruler of his area. It was his duty to settle various disputes and if someone would try to stay his judgement he'd call me to sit by him and say... I christened this boy Rashaka...which means that I will always do that which I believe is right. Even if you're a relative or friend this name will tell you that all of my actions are done as a free man[12].

This speech does not make logical sense - but through its circumlocutory discourse, and the tonal inflections of the voice, he is established as 'a poet'. This, together with other evidence provided on the screen - such as his opposition to apartheid which resulted in his detention - establishes the emotional and ethical proofs that will persuade us to the point of view offered by this man.

A direct address by a narrator who is not seen (non-sync) creates the traditional 'voice of God' effect. In other words, we see other images which a voice, seemingly speaking from no-where interprets for us. Implicit in this mode of address is the notion that this voice - speaking from nowhere, but being all-seeing and omniscient - knows, whereas we the audience do not know. The information it provides is **historical** and **contextual** which it generally presents as 'neutral' information, instead of a point of view. This mode of address is most common in anti-apartheid documentaries, and provides the anchor for other speakers. For example, the narrator's voice in Wanne Dan informs us:

> In July 1986 Municipal workers in Cape Town made headlines. For three weeks refuse piled high in the streets as cleansing workers worked to rule.

> Instead of running behind the refuse trucks for 6 hours each day, they walked. This was followed by similar action on the part of electricity workers who refused to work overtime in the heart of the stormy winter. Workers in other departments supported the action[13].

In the above example the voice is male and speaks standard English in tones and pronunciation which are associated with an 'educated' speaker. All of these qualities mobilise the viewer to respect, trust and believe in the authority of the voice, which functions as an emotional proof[14]. This voice is the anchor which orchestrates the other voices which are mobilised at his behest, and which maintains the coherence of the argument presented. In this case it provides a logical verbal structure for the video, and marks the stages of the labour action. However, it is worth questioning the use of English, given that most of the worker-witnesses speak Afrikaans or a mixture of English and Afrikaans. Does this voice in fact establish ethical and emotional proofs with the working class audience? Does this voice, acceptable to middle class audiences as an index of authority and knowledge, have the same credibility with a working class audience?

The argument of most anti-apartheid documentaries is presented and orchestrated by an unseen narrator[15]. Lindy Wilson's Crossroads, was made in 1978 about the informal settlement of Crossroads, on the outskirts of Cape Town. The voice-over narrator provides all the factual information which is illustrated with suitable images: sometimes black and white photographs, but mostly with footage shot on location. For example, this sequence of images taken from Crossroads - MCU of a man (Mr Tong ?) seated inside his home; cu of a photograph framed in a pink heart hung on a wall; three-quarter shot of woman standing outside a shack putting on a head-dress - is explained in this way by a voice-over narrator:

> Mr Tong lives in Crossroads. He has worked in Cape Town for 27 years, but he did not work for the same employer uninterrupted for 10 years. He did not qualify. His wife joined him in 1951. They lived as sub-tenants until they built their home here in Crossroads. If Crossroads is demolished they will have nowhere to go as a family[16].

This 'RADA voice' of the narrator, Janet Suzman, mediates what we see[17]. The voice is not the voice of the Crossroads community, but the voice of reason and concern speaking over the visuals to others of her class. The effect of this code - that particular voice and the device of voice-over narration - is that the voice-over legitimises what we see. It draws out the ordinariness of women sewing, children playing and men doing metal work - all out of doors. The voice-over implicitly equates these images of 'home' with a middle class notion of 'home': this is part of the plea of the film, and is supported by interviews with the women who state unequivocally that they want to be with their husbands - even if it means defying the law.

These voice-overs - typical of most other documentaries - conform to the norm of television address in which the defining characteristics of the presenter's mode of speech are his/her measured tones, with no noticeable trace of regional dialect or accent, and the use of standard English or Afrikaans: all of which are meant to connote impartiality and knowledge. However, this

representation privileges people of a particular class and educational background. By implication, only these people have the attributes of knowledge and 'impartiality'. It seems to me that this is one of the representations that anti-apartheid documentarists ought to be challenging, instead of merely accepting one of the conventions of international television address.

A final example of this mode of address can be seen in Kevin Harris's, The Struggle From Within[18]. The tone of this particular voice of an ex-SABC radio personality Michael Mayer, can only be described as epic: narrating or commenting upon events as in the old newsreel style and making contemporary events 'Historical'. These events will become part of the South African historical archive - if only because they were recorded as 'History'. Implicit in this is an emphasis on events and personalities, evidencing a particular theory of history, but one which does not elucidate the relationship between deep structures and the events and personalities that they throw up. The tone of the voice-over address is consonant with a relentless script which is dense not only with information, but emotive cues. Note for example the following excerpts taken from The Struggle from Within:

> August 1984: with the government's determination to force its will on the black people of South Africa in the face of simmering discontent at the growing burden of Apartheid evident in the sporadic flashes of unrest in the townships, the stage is set for confrontation on a national scale....
>
> In its campaign to promote the election in a calculated attempt to play down the opposition...SABC, a state monopoly of the state controlled media in South Africa deliberately ignores the massive groundswell support for the multi-racial UDF and its opposition to the new dispensation...
>
> To counter this reality through customary selective and biased reporting, the SABC propagates and sustains a mass deception in the name of so-callled national interest, a euphemism for government self-interest...
>
> With the miracle of life comes the hope for the future, but for the black child born into the apartheid system prospects are bleak, Disadvantaged from birth, the child grows to maturity in appalling social and environmental conditions. Denied the fundamental rights of equal opportunity and stripped of citizenship rights, he finds himself an alien in the land of his birth, condemned to the queues of the impoverished masses in the impoverished Bantustans, awaiting recruitment as migrant workers according to the needs of the economy of so-called white South Africa. The government's attainment of temporary regional security has served to diminish any motivation for meaningful internal reform. As Pretoria proceeds with the final phase of the Apartheid design with the implementation of their new constitution, the victims of the struggle somewhat disillusioned by recent trends in international relationships with the government of South Africa look to the outside world for support.

These passages are quoted at length to illustrate just how directive and verbose a narration can be. Once again the narration not only adopts a position of knowing, but speaks on behalf of "the struggling masses" and the "victims of apartheid". (Whether South Africans in struggle would like to have themselves characterised as "victims" is questionable.) But once again the very ordinary, daily

experiences which South Africans confront in a quite prosaic and determined way, are mediated through the codes of news reporting and the discourse of international television address[19]. What is striking for a South African viewer is that the tone of address is very much the tone of the SABC.

A documentary in which the voice-over takes a different position is Katriver:...End of a Hope[20]. It still uses the typical structure of a voice-over used in conjunction with supportive interviews, but the voice-over is very different from the seemingly 'objective' voice-overs which the other anti- apartheid documentaries try to emulate. **This** voice-over shows 'History' to be no more than **a** discourse - a mode of explanation. While retaining the function of a general explanation which links sequences, this voice-over is clearly not a neutral observer or the voice of 'History', but the voice of history from the people's point of view. This is clear from the affective epithets used in the explanatory discourse and by the inflections of tone. For example:

> Robert Godlonton was the **reactionary** editor of the Grahamstown Journal...These men **condemned** the Katriver people as a set of lazy paupers and Godlonton launched a **vicious** press campaign in support of the vagrancy law to drive the people into farm labour...
>
> Itwas the last stand of the **unfortunate** Xhoi nation. Ultimately it was doomed to failure, but it produced moments of **true heroism**...
>
> Solomon...was **so** kind he even erected a tombstone for his dog...but his methods of book-keeping did not improve...

The use of irony (Solomon was **so** kind...), choice of epithets and the inflections of tone show clearly that this voice-over is adopting a point of view. As the function of the voice-over is to provide the historical context, it signals that 'History', as a discourse, is also from a particular point of view - in this case, the 'people's. This effect is reinforced in this video, when for example, the image track shows a pen pointing to details on a map while the voice-over gives explanations. This creates the effect of people leaning over the map - the owner of the voice-over and us, the viewers. In this way the voice-over is not part of a hierarchy of discourses which it heads, but is simply one explanation from a clearly identified point of view: the people's. This interpretaion is reinforced by the way in which the film as a whole is framed between the opening and closing sequences - opening with a song, and closing with a 'valediction': the discourse of popular memory[21].

When direct address is used by a **character** in an interview situation (sync sound) we are positioned in relation to that character by the interviewer, or the text. Thus whatever credibility has been established by the text will be conferred to that character. In other words the power conferred on him/her is a power by proxy, but our responses are still not untouched by the visual elements of that address (emotional proofs). When such a character is used in a non-sync situation - as voice-over witness - then other responses (possibly ethical) come into play.

For example in Lindy Wilson's, Ithuseng, Dr Mamphela Ramphela is the social actor whose address contextualises what we see and hear[22]. One of the implications of this is that the video-maker has 'surrendered' a controlling or structuring feature of the documentary to one of the interviewees.

This could imply a more democratic way of video-making, by 'letting the people speak for themselves'. But it could also imply that the interviewee and the documentarist share a common perception of the problem. It implies a degree of trust in the 'credentials' of the person chosen and the interviewee - for she now not only speaks for herself, but for people (un-named) whom she represents, and for the documentarist.

We need therefore to ask what Ramphela's credentials are and how they are established in the video. Firstly, she speaks with an authoritative tone, intelligence and integrity. Secondly, she mentions her own banishment to Tzaneen as a result of her involvement in community projects in Kingwilliamstown. Finally, we hear of her association with Steve Biko, who, as she acknowledges, symbolises "strength, leadership, commitment". Our response to her is therefore based on textual evidence elicited on emotional grounds. Furthermore, we have the testimony of a male co-worker who was obviously inspired by her practices and decided to help her in spite of being "threatened" that he would get into trouble if he associated with her. All this, plus the success of the projects that she initiated, testify to her competence to speak for the community at Lenyenye.

However, all these pieces of evidence only 'make sense' and elicit our support if we are sympathetic to and understand the situation in South Africa from a particular political perspective. But this perspective is not clearly articulated in the video. This mode of address therefore positions the viewers as complicit with and in sympathy with the position put forward by the speaker. A response of **belief**, not criticism is evoked. This attitude of viewing is not unlike that elicited by the SABC or BBC. What is common to all these modes of address is that the audience is positioned 'on the right side[23]. The video seems to construct a closed text which does not allow the viewer to adopt a critical position vis-a-vis the text.

Another feature of this mode of address is that the interview is recorded on camera, on location. We not only hear the interviewee expressing her ideas, but we also see her in her environment: at work in the clinic, and at home with a child. The iconography of place, dress and gesture all contribute to our acceptance (or not) of her 'credentials'.

Another example of this form of direct address is evident in And Now We Have No Land, in which Barry Ngakane provides some of the historical information[24]. He is identified as a "retired leader and educationist". He embodies not only the voice of 'History' (without a subject as is so often the case of official histories), but the voice of history and experience. Speaking from memory and recalling the times of his father, he tells a story of land and cattle theft in a language that is, perhaps, appropriately 'biblical'[25]. This story establishes history as a discourse of the people: they possess their own history. Not only does Ngakane speak from this position, but so do the fieldworkers[26].

The practice of using the testimony of interviewees uncritically is problematic, because the voice of the interviewees becomes a surrogate for the textual voice[27]. The filmmaker does not separate the view of witnesses from the view of the text as a whole. Implicit in this is the notion which denies the text as a discourse, and simply presents itself as analogous to 'reality'. To quote Nichols:

> The world of witnesses, uncritically accepted must provide its own validation. Meanwhile the film becomes a rubber stamp...

> The film says in effect, "Interviewees never lie". Interviewees say "what I am telling you is the truth". We then ask, "Is the interviewee telling the truth?" but find no acknowledgement in the film of the possility, let alone the necessity of entering this question as one inescapable in all communication and signification[28].

An example, unique in the oeuvre of anti-apartheid documentaries, when the testimony of interviewees is called into question, is in a sequence in Witness to Apartheid[29] when a Mrs Botha is interviewed. As an icon she stands for the ordinary, sincere white South African. Her fear is that "the white population in South Africa will disappear...and ...we'll all become chocolate colour". Her understanding of the situation is that opponents of the regime "are confused by communist inspiring". Her solution is a "wipe-out just as we had at Sharpville". This interview is intercut with an interview with UDF representative Curtis Nkondo who is shot in close-up, seated at a desk in a book-lined room: an image which immediately casts doubt on Mrs Botha's characterization of opponents of the regime being "confused by communist inspiring". Nkondo counters her opinions:

> We're not fighting whites, we're fighting injustice. Remove injustice and you'll have peace...
>
> They always see a spectre behind every protest. I wonder whether one needs an agitator to feel hungry...I don't need an agitator to protest against low wages.

And when Mrs Botha advocates the "wipe-out", we hear her voice over black and white newsreel footage of the 1960 Sharpville massacre.

This is one of the most memorable sequences in the oeuvre of South African anti-apartheid documentaries because we have witnesses presenting different views which challenge the viewer to reach an independent assessment. This is also one of the few points in this particular documentary where the dialogue is directly related to the footage. In this case, the interviewee gives her interpretaion of the Sharpville massacre which we then see in monochrome. This leaves the viewer to form her/his own interpretation of the event. Here 'facts' are denied, and discourse is validated. In this way the filmmaker, through editing, has created a text which can be a dialogue with the viewers, instead of merely being a monologue.

Nichols notes that direct address is the mode "preferred by TV documentary, political films, and most sponsored or commercial films", as all of these have a specific agenda[30]. In South African oppositional films and videos this aesthetic device is dominant. The advantage of this mode of address is that it allows for 'analytic precision' because speakers will have had the opportunity to prepare exactly what they want to say. Stylistically, sound takes precedence over the image, and is used to comment on other discourses..

The main difference between a narrator and characters in direct address is that the narrator tends to link sequences, providing a logical thread through the whole. But characters are used within sequences, rather than between sequences. Often the testimony of characters is enlisted only as proof

of a general statement already made by the narrator, rather than as an autonomous source which can initiate a new perspective. This use of characters has political implications: it tends to validate existing power structures in which a recognised hierarchy is established. Members lower down the hierarchy only speak when called upon to support the controlling voice.

Furthermore, this tendency in South African anti-apartheid documentaries of assigning to the voice-over or well-chosen interviewees - but one stylistic device - the task of explanation is problematic for the audience. The effect of this practice is that the audience experiences explanation as a thing-in-itself, frozen in a single device which is simply inserted into the film, rather than being an organic, structural feature which we experience as we view the documentary[31]. In practice only a highly edited version of the verbal testimony of interviewees is used. The camera rests with them for just as long as they are useful to the documentarist's argument, and then they are dispensed with. This off-hand treatment of interviewees in some documentaries, similar to their treatment by authorities in social life, is the unwitting effect of the documentarist's reliance on the sound-track to articulate his/her argument, rather than using the array of codes which constitute the medium.

Indirect Address

Indirect address implies that the film/video's audience is **not** the acknowledged subject of the address. Traditionally this is the address used in cinema verite when the camera simply records the sounds and images that pass before it. This testimony can be used in a non-sync way over images that are usually illustrative of what the sound is saying.

But, as argued in Chapter 3, documentaries are not a 'window on the world', but a text which uses recorded **data**. Nichols reminds us that:

> Documentaries begin at an empirical level but need to move to a higher logical type - the deep structure that governs and explains the phenomena first recorded[32].

How this transition is effected is crucial. In Cinema Verite and Direct Cinema[33], or any form of Observational Cinema[34], there is no transition as the purpose is precisely to stay at the level of observing surface phenomena. Thus no **explanation** of the phenomena observed is offered by the documentary.

Implicit in this **showing** is the association of observation with "objectivity, truth, verification and evidence"[35]. Kuhn notes that observation takes place at three points: the camera eye, the camera operator's eye, and the audience's eye[36]. The first two points occur during filming, when footage or electronic signals are being produced. Chapter 3 showed that the camera eye is a technological instrument which we know is not neutral, but has a functional and ideological history. Furthermore, observational shooting usually implies that the camera operator is adopting a 'neutral', non-interventionist position vis-a-vis what is being shot. But this too is specious, as shown in this Chapter and Chapter 3, and will be shown in Chapter 5. The effect of the observational stance is that it positions the spectator specifically as an **observer**, in line behind the eye of the camera and camera operator[37]. But this position of the spectator - either as observer of the 'truth' rendered by the

'neutral' recording process, or as complicit in what and how the filmmaker 'views' - is a position of bondage unchosen by the spectator. Thus contrary to popular belief, the observational stance of 'allowing the audience to see for itself' is less democratic than styles which more obviously construct a text.

Typical South African examples of the use of this mode of address are in Mayfair[38] and Chronicles of South Africa[39] where the documentarists adopt the position of 'simply recording'. This style is associated with cinema verite or direct cinema and implies minimal intervention by the documentarists[40]. In Mayfair, which deals with the government's proposal to declare sections of the Johannesburg suburb of Mayfair an Indian group area, both these strategies are used. The direct cinema convention in which the documentarist acts as a catalyst in an already heated situation is evident in the scenes videoed in people's homes and on the streets:

> One of these days we'll have to put up tents and live like Soweto natives,...what can you do?
>
> There'll be bloodshed...Where must we go?

The cinema verite convention of not intervening in the social action at all is evident in the scenes of public meetings:

> We should demand an explanation for the reversal of this policy...
>
> the poor people in Mayfair will have to move...now rich Indians will move in...
>
> Ons het almal tesaam gelewe...hulle is nie onse klas...werkende klas...

However, although one can point to this **shooting** style which implies that the videomakers are simply 'recording' the views of the residents, in Mayfair they use an **editing** style which does not maintain the spatial and temporal integrity of what they have shot. This practice negates any claims to non-intervention or simply 'recording': proof once more that a documentary is an **argument**.

Chronicles of South Africa is shot in the same manner, and is distinctive by the absence of the voice-over or any other forms of direct address. Young argues that the weakness of this approach is that "it is based on an intimate, sympathetic relationship between the filmmaker and subject...not the eye of the aloof, detached observer, but someone watching as much as possible from the inside"[41]. He argues that it would therefore be "immoral and a betrayal of trust to make a film of this sort about people you disliked"[42]. However the irony and beauty of Chronicles of South Africa is the section on the Afrikaner Weerstand Beweging (AWB)[43]. For here indeed one has an intimate view of this neo-Nazi organization, but observational cinema is the perfect vehicle for their aggressive arrogance, as they are provocatively proud to display the symbols of their ideology. In fact, spectacle is an integral part of their aggression, and feeds off a voyeuristic camera. There can therefore be no "betrayal of trust". The only problem with this representation is that of its style: that it makes no intervention - irony, for example is not a part of the text. So AWB supporters will love the film because it displays

their values, and those opposed to this ideology could either see the documentary as a 'sell-out' by a 'progressive' documentarist, or could chuckle at the irony of the fascists revealing themselves in their true colours.

Although these two films are shot entirely through indirect address, most of the other documentaries contain sequences in which the direct cinema style is used[44]. Note for example the following scene from And Now We Have No Land, which deals with the forced removal of people from Mogopa, Nyanga and Driefontein. The camera shows a resident addressing a meeting of the residents of Mogopa, gathered under a tree:

> This land that is Mogopa is our birthplace. It is not trustland; it is not a reserve where we were settled by the government. Our forefathers bought it for future generations. It is time that our living conditions are improved and that we blacks get representation in parliament. Only that will undo all the harm[45].

When indirect address is used in this way in conjunction with direct address, it tends to mark this section as 'the real', and thus as indisputable evidence to validate the argument of the documentary. As Kuhn notes:

> Such a placing of the spectator as observer is dependent on means of signification which are effaced or denied in the text so that the image may be read as a transparent rendering of "reality". In this way the "truth" of the profilmic event is taken for granted by virtue of the operation of certain codes which signify **non-fiction authenticity** while at the same time constructing themselves as absent in the text[46].

Despite the misperceptions that direct cinema promotes through its description, in the dominant film discourse[47], of being a purely technological achievement which makes the rendering of an unmediated reality more possible, the main achievement of direct cinema was improved **sound** recording. As Marie observed, not only was sound synchronised, but it was **living** sound, or parole, not literary speech[48]. We not only see people on the screen, but hear their living speech. This 'raw' sound, rather than the interpreted sound of the middle class voice-over becomes a rich new element in contemporary documentaries. **How** people express themselves becomes not merely another 'recorded fact', but another independent affective element in the interpretation of the text. As filmmaker Lindy Wilson noted in an interview:

> the language, the interpretation...that's the quality of the people...you can't take that away from them...the language is the reality[49]...

This is clearly evident in a sequence in Last Supper at Hortsley Street when the evicted family return to District Six. We see them winding their way across the flattened landscape: stopping here, pointing there...remembering their past, and registering their present plight:

> I've got a weekly from Belhar in my pocket...I'll throw it here in District Six...and leave it here...look at the ships, look at the sea...my feelings are still here. There's not even a ghost to make you scared...This was our playground when I was a child...everything, it's all gone now...One day is one day...nothing is everlasting...Rome didn't last, Hitler didn't last...they won't last...Only the word of God lasts...this was the kitchen[50]...

And so the discourse continues: marked as living speech or parole by its very discursiveness and faltering tones. The camera can reveal no more than what is present: the deserted space, and the people making their way through it. For the most part they are silent. But silence too is an effect of being removed.

The relationship between direct and indirect address can be likened to that of first and third person narration in prose. Direct address takes the position of the author of the text, whereas indirect address is often marked as 'reality', that upon which the text has the power to comment (as does the first person narrator in prose). However, it must be remembered that it is the film/videomaker who orchestrates the whole: who selects both those who speak in direct address, and those who indirectly address us. It is this whole that presents the point of view and ideology of the film/videomaker. One could argue that a radical[51] film/videomaker is one who presents a text - that whole ensemble of direct and indirect address and image patterns - which allows the audience a place of entry to engage in a dialogue with the filmmaker as an "equally knowing subject"[52].

Nichols highlights the distinction between direct and indirect address by the different kinds of diegesis they create[53]. In documentary, the "diegesis"[54] is not the fictional plane of reality, but the rhetorical plane in which reality is constructed by and through argument which at times can enlist social reality in order to support its rhetoric. In this case social reality is marked by the use of indirect address for it addresses not the documentary's audience, but the world from which it was abstracted. On these occasions, the documentary's audience becomes an invisible guest, looking through the 'window' of the screen, privy to social reality in an apparently unmediated way.

Mode of address and Subjectivity

What is significant about both these modes of verbal address (and perhaps the visual address too) is that they speak from a unified, but unspecified, ideological position, and they place us in a unified, or coherent position. This mode of address is consistent with one of the conventions of realism which describes social reality as a unified whole. But as John Ellis notes:

> In essence, realism is a regime of unified portrayal: every criterion of realism aims at the same objective, to combine the elements of representation into a harmonious whole. This prevents the reading of the image, scanning it tosee its different elements and their possible conflicts or combinations, which is a central feature of modernist tendencies in other visual arts[55].

The general tendency in South African documentaries, as noted above, is to assign to the voice-over or interviewees - but one stylistic device - the task of explanation. If education and

politicisation are the aims of the documentarist, then the style and structure should order the documentary in such a way that by engaging with their array of formal codes (not just by being told by the voice-over or well-chosen interviewees), one engages with the documentary, a **symbolic** representation. This process of actively engaging with the style and structure of a documentary to produce meaning, would parallel our experiencing of the world so that we understand its structure (how phenomena are ordered) by engaging with its ordering. In this way the world could also unfold as a text before us which we attempt to 'read'/understand through our engagement with it. Through this interactive process we become participants - the key call of democratic media producers. If this is an on-going process in our daily lives, then we would not need leaders, teachers and prophets to interpret the world for us. And if documentary films were structured in a way that raised debates, instead of providing 'answers' (the domain of style), then this would be the politically educative role that they would play. The politics of reading a film becomes of the same order as the politics of reading social reality.

The Politics of Form

Documentary is not 'a mirror' or 'a window on the world', but:

> a message-in-circuit between viewer and screen: film is social conditions in practice, the practice of (ideologically or theoretically) knowing them[56].

It **is** its own practice - not a mere reflection of something else which has a validity which it does not have. Its meaning resides in this relationship, which can either be ideological (in which case it offers an imaginary relation to social life), or theoretical (in which case it presents a symbolic relation to social life). The determining factor is style or form, which is the interface between the film/videomaker and the audience. It is as much on the terrain of style or form, as on content (the two indissoluble elements that make up a documentary), that a film/videomaker is accountable to his/her audience. This notion of the film/videomaker's accountability and resposibility to his/her audience has been elaborated by Jay Ruby in his work on reflexivity, which he describes in this way:

> Being reflexive means that the producer deliberately and intentionally reveals to his audience the underlying epistemological assumptions which caused him to formulate a set of questions in a particular way, to seek answers to those questions in a particular way, and finally to present his findings in a particular way[57].

Art or history, like education, is never neutral: it can be used in the service of either liberation or domination. Ruby's point is that a documentarist who wishes to use the medium for the liberation of the viewer, should reveal to the viewer the basis of knowledge on which, and the process by which, s/he reached her/his conclusions. In this way the viewer is put in a position of being able to construct her/his own understanding of the situation. The viewer then becomes a **producer** of meaning, not merely a passive observer.

The following example will illustrate how a reflexive stance would have contributed to the audience's understanding not only of the social world which the documentary sought to describe, but how context conditions form. In Lindy Wilson's Ithuseng, she interviews Mamphela Ramphela extensively, so that Ramphela becomes a surrogate presenter. Tomaselli criticised this, stating

> This video tries to borrow the codes of the television presenter, without visually and directly exploring the relationship between the presenter, the camera and points of interest such as the clinic and the various activities she talks about[58].

He argues further that the presenter should have taken the camera to the places mentioned. But Wilson noted in an interview (22 July 1988) that they had to film in this way, because "she (Ramphela) wasn't allowed to go with me because she was banned". Wilson's 'failure', I would argue, is that she suppressed this information concerning the context of production. This information is vital not only because it directly concerns the politics of the situation she is filming, but also because it conditioned aesthetic choices which affect the viewer's understanding of the situation she wishes to present.

Another formal device for creating viewers who are producers of knowledge, is that used by de Antonio[59]. He creates his argument by editing together the views of various interviewees, so that the spectator has the responsibility of ferretting out the various strands that constitute the film's argument. But Nichols notes that

> the continued use of direct address (via characters) militates against a very radical shift from the place of the spectators in classical exposition[60].

The American group, Newsreel, used several narrators, so that every interviewee became a narrator. This strategy is different from de Antonio's in that the many 'narrators' simply became a surrogate for the textual voice. This device allowed 'the people' to speak for themselves, but encouraged a selective memory of historical events which were uncontested as each speaker spoke only from his/her experience[61].

The three strategies described above involve communication about the text as **text** - as a 'tool' which can be used in the process of exchanging knowledge about the social world - without confusing the images seen with a 'reflection' of that world. In many ways the production of knowledge through film or video documentary is little different from the production of knowledge through 'history', for example. Each constructs a representation or interpretation of reality which is based on selection and each addresses an audience. The **mode** of this address interpellates members of the audience as either active participants in the process of making things meanful in the world, or as slaves to a received 'history' or 'life' or 'fate'. Documentarists (and historians) who are concerned with transforming society, should not only give us a 'people's' view, but have an obligation to address us in such a way that we become active in the process of making meanings. What an audience should demand is not 'knowledge', but the means that enables us to become producers of knowledge.

There are signs that these ideas have - to a limited degree - influenced South African documentary practice and criticism. As film studies has become institutionalised in our universities, and as our academics attend foreign conferences where these issues are debated, so have these theories spread to South Africa, and gained currency with some documentarists and academics. For example, the videos I am Clifford Abrahams, This is Grahamstown, and Kat River...End of a Hope, both produced in the Journalism Department at Rhodes University, and the work of MAP and the CCSU are attempts to integrate theory and practice. While the critical work of Criticos, Maingard, Steenveld, Tomaselli, van Zyl and Watson - amongst others - owe their theoretical premises to a critical cultural studies.

The Visual Mode of Address: A Lacuna in Theory

Although I noted above that 'mode of address' refers to that fabric of sound and **image** patterns which makes up a text, most of the foregoing discussion privileges the use of the sound track. One reason for this is that visual narration in the documentary has not been extensively theorised[62]. Another reason for my silence on the visual mode of address is that the South African documentaries themselves tend to rely on the sound track. Very few documentarists allow the **camera** to narrate - instead the visual images are often there only to support or illustrate the sound track. South African Filmmaker, Eddie Wes, has attributed this tendency in South African anti-apartheid documentaries to the influence of **journalism** - as opposed to **film art**. As a discourse, journalism is founded on an empiricism which presumes that surface detail can explain the causal relationships which give rise to the phenomena we observe. Hence in the documentaries, the images are treated as 'signifieds', not as indexical signs. This has resulted in a highly conventionalised image track which tends to focus on events or people in an interview situation - or the now familiar shots of townships or the rural dumping grounds seen from a moving vehicle. A distinctive feature of this image track is that we always seem to be outsiders looking in[63]. This could be attributed to the fact that most of the filmmakers are outsiders vis-a-vis the situations being filmed. Because of the general political situation, there are very few black male filmmakers, and still fewer black women filmmakers[64]. As most of the situations filmed deal with the political and social effects of Apartheid legislation, this inevitably results in documentaries made by white middle-class filmmakers **observing** the situation of blacks. Because the anti-apartheid documentarists are not organisationally part of the struggles they film, they are unable to adopt stylistic strategies which mark the point of view of the documentary as one from within.

There **are** signs of experimentation in South African anti-apartheid cinema which show that some of our documentarists are confronting these problems[65]. This chapter has shown that most of the anti- apartheid documentaries are cast in a very uniform mold which has serious epistemological, and thus political, short-comings. The reasons for this are elucidated below.

Reasons for the Dominant Form of the Anti-apartheid Documentaries

The foregoing discussion on the form of South African anti- apartheid documentaries has shown their dependence on the form of **television** documentaries, rather than on that oeuvre of international film documentaries which reached its peak as a form of cinematic art in the 1930s, '40s and '50s. One reason for this is that the documentaries were made partly to challenge the representations of South African social life presented by state-sanctioned organisations like the SABC. But because the response by anti-apartheid documentarists was a reaction to the SABC, they appear to have got caught up in this form and have simply substituted one content for another, and one set of speakers for another[66]. Implicit in this attitude is the view that form and style are politically neutral - a view which is challenged by both film theorists and the theorists of the progressive press in South Africa[67].

Another aspect of this dependence on television is that one of the sources of funding for the independent documentarists is the sale of their documentaries to foreign television stations for broadcasting[68]. As discussed in Chapter 2, these documentarists have to emulate the style of international television address in order to have their documentaries screened abroad.

Another reason for the uniformity of style noted in this chapter is that very few documentarists started out as film- or videomakers[69]. They came to the medium out of their political commitment to show another reality, or 'the real truth about South Africa'. It is probably for this reason that their concern with **content** seems to over-ride a concern with **form**. In addition to this, because film and video are commonly seen as '**recording**' technologies, there is the myth that making a film or video is simply just a matter of turning the technology in the right direction. It needs to be noted that few people would regard themselves as poets or novelists simply because they can use a pen or typewriter - the technologies associated with written discourse.

Part of our poverty and oppression in South Africa is that we have been denied access to radical international cultural traditions which have fused the 'political' with the 'cultural'. So it is only now, since the mid-1980s, that the cultural has been recognised as having a part to play in the sphere of politics[70]. But this very formulation is one which still separates the cultural from the political - and ends up in a cultural politics which, for the most part, is governed by a focus on 'the message'. If the 'message' is 'right', then this in itself validates a particular mode of expression. I would argue that South African anti-apartheid documentaries have suffered from this particular attitude - precisely because the filmmakers have not engaged with the cultural debates that have taken place in countries which were trying to transform themselves into socialist societies - nor indeed with local theorists[71]. Furthermore, access to the works of many radical filmmakers is virtually impossible in South Africa. So, while it is relatively easy for us to obtain a film like Chiefs[72], which exemplifies the American Cinema Verite tradition, it is virtually impossible to obtain any of the works of Emile de Antonio who has struggled to find alternative strategies of representing his social world[73].

Furthermore, there are no specialist film journals in South Africa in which film aesthetics and practice can be discussed critically, and which would facilitate an exchange between film academics

and filmmakers[74]. It is noteworthy that when there has been this exchange - for example Film Comment in Britain during the 1940s, Cahiers du Cinema in France in the 1950s, and the theoretical writing of the Latin American, Cinema Novo filmmakers - it has stimulated the development of authentic national cinemas.

Furthermore, those documentarists who have had film training in South Africa are subject to the constraints of the film courses - most of which are primarily historical, rather than practical - which are dependent on the availability of foreign films. Even though a range of international documentaries is available, the anti-apartheid documentaries show little evidence of their influence[75]. However, it must be acknowledged that the documentaries that are available are limited to those made in the West, and often these are examples of the dominant forms. No Latin American or feminist documentaries are readily available in this country, and yet the producers of these documentaries have struggled to represent a reality in which they are marginalised by the state: the very problem facing South African anti-apartheid documentarists.

Finally, the general conditions of the South African state - which has used not only stringent censorship laws but also the declaration of a state of emergency to outlaw democracy - also affects the work of documentary film- and videomakers.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined the form of the anti-apartheid documentaries, and has shown how dependent they are on the structures and modes of address common to television. I have argued that this mode of address positions the viewer as a passive object to be filled with 'knowledge', rather than as an 'equally knowing subject' who can participate in debate. My argument has been that if the aim of the anti-apartheid documentarists is to educate and politicise their audiences, then formal strategies which transform the spectators from consumers to producers of knowledge should be used.

I have shown that there are different ways in which this can be achieved, as this is the area in which the documentarists' special skills and creativity come to the fore. A film or video documentarist does not only have to be a social scientist, but also a philosopher and artist, for this is what distinguishes this creative activity from that of making political speeches or drawing cartoons, or writing history. Each of these activities is distinctive in the mode of its articulation, but none need be mutually exclusive. Indeed, one of the most noticeable qualities of Latin American culture is the way in which the languages of poetry, politics, history, filmmaking, and philosophy are integrated. Here, for example is an excerpt from an interview with Argentinian filmmaker, Fernando Birri:

> It seems to me there's a relationship...which is the artistic expression of the ideological...This seems to me is another of our problems: as we acquire ideological lucidity about our problems perhaps we forget that we're working with sensitive materials...we're working in an expressive and artistic medium.
>
> I reject recipes because they don't seem to me rich enough. I think the reality of our continent is experimental...and the forms with which we are trying to get to know this continent, to interpret it and express it are also experimental[76].

And later he recalls Lorca's introduction of Neruda at the University of Madrid:

> When Lorca wasn't yet fully Lorca and Neruda wasn't yet fully Neruda, Lorca said of Neruda something like this:
>
> A poet closer to blood than ink; closer to death than philosophy...and who carries in his veins that grain of madness without which it's not worth living...[77]

This is quoted at length to illustrate the weltanschauung of Latin American filmmakers: not only are they rooted in a tradition of Marxist political philosophy, but also in the history of their own, and related, modes of expression. This has enabled them to link theory and practice, and produce art in politics and politics in art. Perhaps this is a direction we could follow?

Notes

1. Burke K: A Rhetoric of Motives, UCLA Press, Los Angeles, 1969, p41, quoted in Nichols B: Ideology and the Image, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1980, p178.
2. CVET: Wanne Dan, video, Cape Town, 1987.
3. Kevin Harris: The Struggle from Within, 16 mm film, 1984.
4. Mayfair, video, Bensusan T, Weinberg P, Morgan D, Schwegman W, Tilly B, 1983;
   Last Supper at Hortsley Street, 16mm, Lindy Wilson, 198?;
   R'Tla Bona, 16mm, Elaine Proctor, 1987;
   Chronicles of South Africa, super-8 and video-8, Direct Cinema, 1987;
   Robben Island: Our University, 16mm, Lindy Wilson, 1988;
   Freedom Square and Back of the Moon, 16mm, Free Filmmakers, 1988
5. Ellis J: Visible Fictions, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1982.
6. Nichols uses "diegesis" with inverted commmas to refer to the conceptual universe of documentaries.
7. Masterman L: Teaching the Media, Comedia, London, 1985, p165.
8. Larry Strelitz: Women without Men, low-band video, 1986:
   What makes this video memorable is its camera work and editing which work symbolically, as video poetry, rather than asa prose-text. In this way the theme- which deals with the life of rural women in the Transkei who live alone because their husbands are migrant workers - is evoked, rather than stated. For example, the very opening sequence sets the mood: wesee the moon rising slowly above the horizon: female symbol of cycles. A woman's voice tells us of her birth and a past better than present times. We cut to a close-upof a sangoma's face as she leads women and children in song.The camera backs off and pans slowly round, sensitive to the rhythm of the music and the occasion.
9. Nichols B: Ideology and the Image, Bloomington, Indiana, 1981: uses the term 'mode of address' to analyse the different ways in which the audience can be persuaded.
10. Ibid., p181.
11. Ibid., p182ff.
12. Eddie Wes and Mark Newman: The Two Rivers, 16mm, 1986.
13. Wanne Dan, op cit.
14. Nichols B, 1981, op cit, p174:
    emotional proof - dependent upon the speaker's appeal to the audience's emotions to produce a certain disposition.
15. List of oppositional documentaries in which argument is presented and orchestrated by an unseen (non-sync) narrator, or voice-of-God:
    (a) Productions by Kevin Harris:
    This We Can Do For Justice and For Peace, 1982; The Right Time, 1982; The Struggle From Within, 1984; No Middle Road to Freedom, 1985; Witness to Apartheid, 1986.
    (b) Productions by Gavin Younge:

Abaphuciwe, 1980; Reserve Four, 1984;

(c) Hennie Serfontein: And Now We Have No Land, 1984;

(d) Graham Hayman and Keyan Tomaselli: Kat River: The End of a Hope, 1984;

(e) John Berndt: District Six, 1978-1984;

(f) IMP Super-8 group: Part of the Process, 1982

16. Lindy Wilson: Crossroads: 16mm film, 1979.

17. RADA: Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, London.

18. Harris K: The Struggle from Within, 16mm film, 1984.

19. It is inconceivable that this address could ever be part of a film script.

20. Graham Hayman, Jeff Pereis, Keyan Tomaselli: Katriver: End of a Hope, low band U-matic, 1984.

21. Katriver: End of a Hope, 1984:

(a) The soldier's song:

Ragtime soldier
Early in the morning with my dixie on parade
6 0'clock at night with my rifle at my side
Ragtime soldier, happy as a man can be
Fighting for my King and country
Only for a shilling a day

(b) Piet Draghoender's Lament - see appendix

22. Wilson L: Ithuseng, video, 1984.

23. Walsh M: Re-evaluting Rossellini, Jump Cut, No 15.

24. Hennie Serfontein and Harriet Gavshon: And Now We Have No Land, 16mm, 1984.

25. His story:

> He began to collect a small herd. Amongst these cattle he had a beautiful Afrikaner cow which he called Kleintjie. One day we were herding the cattle when we saw somebody coming along by a horse-drawn cart. He looked at the cows and stopped, and called us to ask who the owner of the cow was. We took him to dad accordingly. He asked dad if he would be willing to sell this beautiful cow to him and dad said no, he'd only started collecting a few animals and he was not in a position to sell any. The farmer went away. A week afterwards he came back, and finding dad still unwilling to sell the cow, he said: "Do you know who I am? Do you know where I live? And what would you get if I stole her?" So dad thought that he had best give in. He gave in and an arrangement was made for him to take the cow to the white farmer's home which was in the East of Vereeniging...My father drove the animal there the next day, and when he got there, to his amazement, he found the whole countryside - the hillside and the valleys all swarming with animals that belonged to this man, who like Neaboth had envied the one cow my father had.

26. SACC Fieldworker, Joe Seramane, in And Now We Have No Land:

    They arrived here these Dutch immigrants in 1652. They said they wanted a plot to grow vegetables...Now we are asking for plots from them...after those 300 years. So they really cheated us from the start, because within a 100 years, 1752 they were in control. By 1820 they were just getting reinforcements and now after those wars of dispossession from 1820 - 1899 we have no land, and they have it all. And they can demarcate what they want.

27. Nichols B: The Voice of Documentary, in Movies and Methods Vol II, UCLA Press, Berkley, 1985, p266.

28. Ibid, p266.

29. Sharon Sopher and Kevin Harris: Witness to Apartheid, 16mm film: 1986.

30. Nichols B, 1981, op.cit., p183.

31. Nichols B: Newsreel: Documentary Filmmaking on the AmericanLeft,Arno Press, New York, 1980, p11.

32. Ibid, p10.

33. Jack Ellis: The Documentary Idea: A Critical History of English-Language Documentary Film and Video, Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1989, MIT Press, draws the distinction between Cinema Verite and Direct Cinema. Cinema Verite is associated with "complete non-intervention" on the part of the crew who simply 'record' what they are privy to; but Direct Cinema is associated with the work of Jean Rouch in which the filmmakers act as catalysts, probing the situation they are filming.

34. Observational Cinema is a generic term used by Colin Young in Hockings G (ed), Principles of Visual Anthropology, Mouton, The Hague 1975, to describe the shooting style adopted by anthropologists whose intention is not to disturb the situation they are filming.

35. Kuhn A: The Camera I: Observations on Documentary, Screen Vol 19 No 2, Summer 1978, p82.

36. Ibid., p82.

37. Ibid., p78.

38. Tony Bensusan et al: Mayfair, video, 1983.

39. Direct Cinema Group: Chronicles of South Africa, super-8 and video-8, 1987.

40. See note 33.

41. Young C: Observational Cinema, in Hockings P: Principles of Visual Anthropology, Mouton, The Hague, 1975, p76.

42. Ibid., p77.

43. AWB - Afrikaner Weerstand Beweging (Afrikaner Resistance Movement), "A semi-terrorist, Nazi-inclined organisation formed in 1979 and led by Eugene Terreblanche." Davies R, O'Meara D, Dlamini S: The Struggle for South Africa: A Reference guide to Movements, Organisations and Institutions, Zed Press, London, 1984, p156.

44. See for example: Abaphuciwe, Reserve Four, Ithuseng, R' Tla Bona, Crossroads, No Middle Road to Freedom, The Struggle from Within - to name a few.

45. And Now We Have No Land: Speech by a resident at a meeting in Mogopa.

46. Kuhn A, 1978, op.cit., p78/79.

47. See for example the articles by Young C: Observational Cinema and McDougall: Beyond Observational Cinema in Hockings G, op cit; Eaton M (ed): Anthropology - Reality - Cinema: The Films of Jean Rouch, BFI, London, 1979; Mamber S:Cinema Verite in America: Studies in Uncontrolled Documentary, MIT Press, Cambridge,Massachusetts, 1974; Marcorelles L: Living Cinema, George Allen and Unwin, London, 1973.

48. Marie M: Direct, On Film, No 8 Spring 1978.

49. Interview with Lindy Wilson, Cape Town, 22 July, 1988

50. Lindy Wilson: Last Supper at Hortsley Street, 16mm film, 1984.

51. The term 'radical' has been used in South Africa by Tomaselli: Strategiesfor an Independent and Radical Cinema in South Africa, Marang, Vol 4, Oct 1983, in association with the term 'materialist' to designate those films and videos which are reflexive. The reflexivity of the text therefore not only accords with Jay Ruby's description that it shows producer-process-product, but also with Fargier's view that a materialist film "starts from its own material nature (flat screen, natural ideological bias, audience) and that of the world, and shows them both in one movement" (quoted in Williams C: Realism and the Cinema, p184). The essence of these descriptions is that it addresses the spectator in a way that allows her/him to make a critical judgement on the basis of the epistemological knowledge that has been revealed. This distance between the spectator and the text constitutes the spectator's freedom in the moment of viewing.

52. A term used by Paulo Freire in Pedagogy of the Oppressed, Penguin, London 1972.

53. Diegesis is used to describe the fictional plane of reality in a narrative: the world of the screen which seems to unfold from nowhere and which we watch in a seemingly unmediated way. See Nichols, 1981.

54. Nichols B, 1981, op.cit., p206 uses "diegesis" with inverted commmas to refer to the conceptual universe of documentaries.

55. Ellis J: Visible Fictions, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1982, p9-10.

56. Nichols B, 1980, op.cit., p12.

57. Ruby Jay: The Image Mirrored: Reflexivity and the Documentary Film, Journal of the University Film and Video Association, Vol 29 No 4, 1977, p4.

58. Tomaselli K G: Documentary and the Struggle for Realisms in South Africa, Media Information Australia, No 44, May 1987, p24.

59. Films by de Antonio: Point of Order, 1962; Rush to Judgement, 1967; In the Year of the of Pig, 1968.

60. Nichols B: 1981, p197.

61. Ibid., p197.

62. Kuhn A: The Camera I: Observations on Documentary, Screen, Vol 19 No 2, Summer 1978. In this article Kuhn does address the question of the visual mode of address - but in relation to forms of Observational cinema when there is no verbal narration. But most forms of

documentary exist with commentary, and in this sense, discussion centres on the sound track, rather than on the visual track.

63. Two exceptions to this are Larry Strelitz's Women Without Men - see note 8 above, and Elaine Proctor's R'tla Bona which I discuss in Appendix 5.

64. There are no independent black documentarists, though black film- and videomakers do form part of collectives such as CVET in Cape Town; Free Filmmakers in Johannesburg; collectives working under the auspices of the Media Attachment Programme at the University of Natal, Rhodes University and the University of the Witwatersrand and the now defunct Afrascope; Dynamic Images and The Direct Cinema Group in Johannesburg.

65. See the discussion of R'tla Bona in Appendix 5.

66. Tomaselli K G: Documentary and the Struggle for Realisms in South Africa, Media Information Australia, No 44, May 198, p26.

67. Patel L: How small media can organise communities, Media Development, Vol XXXII, 3/1985; Tomaselli K G: Documentary, Struggle and Power Relationships, Cilect Review, April 1986.

68. This was noted in an interview with documentarist Gavin Younge and in a talk by Harriet Gavshon duringthe 1987 Weekly Mail Film Festival (See note 90 Chapter 2). South African anti-apartheid documentaries have been bought by British, American, French, German and Dutch television stations.

69. For example, Lindy Wilson is an educationist; one CVET videomaker commented in an interview that she had considered herself an activist first, and had only recently thought of herself as a filmmaker - after about 4 years in the job; Gavin Younge is trained in fine art, and has a reputation as a sculptor and art teacher; Hennie Serfontein is a newspaper journalist; and Kevin Harris started as an engineer in the SABC. Some of the documentarists who have had specialised training are Harriet Gavshon, Eddie Wes, Mark Newman and Elaine Proctor.

70. See Chapter 1 of this thesis on the cultural boycott.

71. Examples of these include the writings of Trotsky, Brecht, Ngugi wa Thiogo, the Italian Neo-realists, and the filmmakers whose work became known as Cinema Novo in Latin America, as well as the work of film academics at the Universities of Natal, Rhodes and the Witwatersrand.

72. Chiefs, 16 mm film, Leacock R, 1969. (USA)

73. Films by de Antonio: Point of Order, 1962; Rush to Judgement, 1967; In the Year of the of Pig, 1968.

74. Critical Arts was established in 1980 to fill this gap, but it has been more influential with academics than with film- and videomakers. Under the editorship of Keyan Tomaselli the SAFFTA Journal also attempted this role, but again it is not clear how influential this journal has been.

75. For example the Regional library in Cape Town has a compilation film called Documentary which illustrates the history of the documentary film, beginning with Flaherty's Nanook of the North and ending with Barbara Kopple's Harlan County, USA.

76. Chanan M (director): The New Cinema of Latin America I - Cinema of the Humble, 1983.

77. Ibid.

5. The Ideology And Social Vision Of The Documentaries

The ideology of the interviewees

a. Class consciousness

- Mayfair
- Belville Community Health Centre

b. Ideology of religion

c. Feminist ideology

d. Africanist romanticism

Authorial ideology

a. The problem of definition

b. The authorial ideologies

i. Class ideology

ii. Ideology of news

iii. Anti-apartheid ideology

- subject matter
- showing what is
- the voice-over

c. Authorial ideology: an expression of (African) nationalist struggle

Aesthetic ideology

5: The Ideology And Social Vision Of The Documentaries

Chapter 1 indicated the aspects of South Africa's social history that are recorded in the anti-apartheid documentaries. I noted there that I would show how this historical data is treated in the documentaries. In the introduction I explained that the difference between the description of content and its actual articulation in a text, is that the text is the place of convergence of many ideological influences which shape the representation of social life. In this chapter I will discuss the meaning of the anti- apartheid documentaries, paying particular attention to the ideological positions and social vision they articulate. Three categories of ideology are evident: that of the interviewees, of the 'author' of the documentary, and finally, what one might call the aesthetic ideology.

The ideology of the interviewees

The term 'ideology' has a range of meanings[1], but I will use it in the sense used by Goran Therborn:

> that aspect of the human condition under which human beings live their lives as conscious actors in a world that makes sense to them to varying degrees[2].

Ideology is therefore "the medium through which this consciousness and meaningfulness operates"[3]. In other words, ideology is not only a coherent system of thought, but also the very fabric of exchanges through which people establish the production of meaning. In a class society there will be contending ideologies, both within particular classes, and between classes. The different ideologies evidenced by the interviewees in the documentaries are indicative of changing class forces, as well as changing economic and social conditions which give rise to these different ideological responses.

The documentaries analysed below show that the subjectivities of South Africans are criss-crossed by a multitude of discourses which cannot all be subsumed under an anti-apartheid ideology. There is evidence of the following kinds of ideologies in the documentaries: (a) a class consciousness is shown in Mayfair, Bellville Community Health Project, Wannedan, Passing the Message; (b) a religious ideology is evident in Last Supper at Hortsley Street, And Now We Have No Land, Cry of Reason, This We Can Do for Justice and for Peace; (c) feminism in The Ribbon; a possible Africanist Romanticism in The Two Rivers. Particular circumstances, such as the making of a documentary - which in its very conceptualisation will embody the discourse of the producer/director - will activate some of these ideologies, but not others. This relationship between the producer and the interviewees, and the political intention of the documentaries is often not acknowledged. The effect of this is that particular ideological positions motivated by particular circumstances will be used to characterize a general ideological position, namely anti-apartheid struggle. What this section will show is that other ideologies are also present.

Class Consciousness

The class consciousness of the interviewees is a thread which runs throughout the documentaries, but perhaps surfaces more prominently in ones such as Mayfair, Bellville Community Health Project, and Wanne Dan and Passing the Message which deal specifically with labour organisation. It is worth noting, however, that where labour is **not** organised - as shown in The Tot System, the interviewees display no class consciousness, and the discourse of class is contained only in the voice-over which represents the ideology of the videomaker, Wilfred Schwarf.

Mayfair

Mayfair was produced for the Second Carnegie Enquiry into Poverty in South Africa in 1984. It is unique amongst South African films and videos in that it shows the contending ideologies prevalent in South Africa which are activated under critical circumstances.

The particular issue that the film focuses on is the Nationalist government's intention of declaring a section of the white suburb of Johannesburg, Mayfair, an Indian group area. This declared intention opened up a hornet's nest of ideological responses amongst the residents. The filmmakers' implied intention was simply to **show** these responses, but I argue below (as I argued in Chapter 4), that they do more than show the views of others: the video offers its own point of view. My concern here is to show that class consciousness is one of the ideologies which constitute the subjectivities of South Africans of all colours.

The video opens with the following explanatory statement scrolled across the screen:

> As part of the government's attempt to implement its reform initiative it was suggested that part of Mayfair be proclaimed an "Indian group area".
>
> Only those Indians who can afford to buy property will be allowed the privilege of staying in Mayfair, while the poorer white and black tenants will be forced out.
>
> The response of Mayfair residents was varied[4].

From this general 'introduction' we cut to a Conservative Party meeting addressed by the local member of parliament, Mr S P Barnard. He is applauded for his view:

> I have known Lebanese people, and Afrikaans people and all kinds of English people, but the one thing they all had in common...was to labour and toil for their families...[5]

His appeal to them is as **working class** people - not as 'whites' - and their response is similarly as **workers**. One irate man says that white artisans are unemployed because blacks are taking their jobs - but adds that the blacks are exploited by being employed at lower rates. The Conservative Party is obviously exploiting the situation to woo people from the Nationalists, but uses **class** identification as a means of interpellating its audience. Barnard ends with a rallying cry: "ons het môre" (we have

tomorrow :we have a future), but the "ons" here is clearly a **white**[6] working class "ons", whom the Nationalists are apparently abandoning in their 'reform' politics.

The videomakers cut between this meeting and another one organised by ACTSTOP - an organisation which was formed by, *inter alia*, members of the Transvaal Indian Congress to fight the proposed removal of people from the Johannesburg suburb of Fordsburg. Here the discourses of colour and class are once more evident. One speaker urges that "we should demand an explanation for the reversal in policy". But clearly, there is no reversal in policy: rather this proposed declaration could prove the government's integrity when it advocates a policy of 'separate but equal'! Another Indian speaker seems to be following the line set out by the Conservative Party:

> the poor people in Mayfair will have to move...now rich Indians will move in...The property owners who come in and take over should be exposed and our people defended[7].

But it is once more unclear who "our" people are. This line of argument is taken up by a 'white' resident who says:

> Ons het almal gesaam gelewe...dit is nie onse klas - werkende klas -....[8]

From these few statements it is clear that the subjectivity of people is not only interpellated through a discourse of colour - an effect of Nationalist Party ideology since 1948 - but also through a discourse of **class**, and the *vox pops* in the rest of the video illustrate this. White opinion ranges from youthful racism, the product of Christian National education (amongst other things):

> but the people aren't happy about it - it's our area...[9]

through simple non-racism:

> All these years we did grow up multi-racial...we are all South Africans...lots of white people also grew up amongst Indians and Africans...let the people live where they want[10].

to an unsophisticated view of socialism:

> this is supposed to be a free country, but have we got any freedom?...In my opinion they should do what Russia does: if one person's got a house, everyone's got a house; if one person's got a car, everybody's got a car, white, black ...no matter what colour...[11]

Despite the political confusion that is evident, the only political intervention that the videomakers are able to make is to frame all of this into a general anti-apartheid discourse articulated through the ACTSTOP organisation and the Transvaal Indian Congress - the two black political groups presented in opposition to the white Nationalist and Conservative Parties.

Bellville Community Health Project

Another video which shows the prevalence of a class consciousness amongst the oppressed is Bellville Community Health Project, scripted by the resident participants but videoed by the Community Video Education Trust (CVET). The intention of this video is clearly to encourage the development of community health projects. It uses the example of the Bellville Community Health Project, initiated by people living in Stilwaneysingel in Bellville, because they could not afford the high costs of private doctors which become "aanslae op onse werkende mense se lewens standarde" (an assault on our working people's standard of living)[12]. Under the present state system they are excluded from the hospitals and clinics as their incomes are too high for them to benefit from these as free services, and too low for them to afford to pay the required tariff.

The video's argument, presented in Afrikaans by one of the members of the health project, is simply that working class people - the people of Stilwaneysingel who work in the nearby factories, building sites and for the Bellville Municipality - cannot afford to pay the increasing medical fees which are a direct assault on their already low standard of living. Furthermore, the video shows the relationship between their ill-health and their housing and living conditions - which are all part of the same system. The participant presenter notes:

> die toestande in ons woon gebiede veroorsaak dat siektes maklik opgedoen en verspry kan word. Werkers vind dus dat hulle nie mediese koste kan betaal nie[13].
>
> (our living conditions are such that we get ill easily and the illnesses are easily spread. Workers therefore find that they can't afford medical costs.)

Their solution to the problem was to form an organisation in which they could take responsibility for their health needs at a cost that working people could afford. As the presenter notes:

> Dit het dis 'n noodsaaklikheid geword om mense to organiseer om iets te doen omtrent die stygende mediese koste en te veg vir beter mediese geriewe teen lae pryse wat almal kan bekostig. Ons kon nie langer toelaat dat ons lewe standard op die manier benadeel word nie[14].
>
> (It thus became a necessity to organise people to do something about increasing medical costs and to fight for better health care at costs that everyone could afford. We could no longer allow our standard of living to be lowered in this way.)

The video shows the process of organisation: the social and economic conditions which necessitate a radical solution; the house meetings to build an organisation which can meet their communal needs; the setting up of a project which consists not only of the clinic, but health education groups, a creche and planning meetings - thereby emphasising that health care involves a complex of social practices. In other words, we are not only given a description of "what is", but also an explanation of how that came to be. We see the process whereby the "what is" can be transformed

when people stop being the 'objects' of a health care system - and instead intervene as subjects who can make the situation meet their own needs.

Even though the focus of the video is on the Bellville community health project and the process of organising such a project, the strategy presented is available to the working class as a whole because the issue of health care is a universal one related to people's living and work conditions. Thus indirectly we see the relationship between community and class - for in this case 'the community' refers to people in a particular geographical area, but they rally together **as a community** because they have a common **class consciousness.**

Ideology of Religion

The discourse[15] of religion (Christianity and Mohammedism) is evident in many of the documentaries, especially those dealing with removals. Following Rude and Bozolli[16], I will regard these religions as part of the "derived ideologies" which people consciously and unconsciously resort to in order to 'make sense of' their world. Furthermore, Tom Bottomore et al remind us that "Gramsci distinguishes four degrees or levels of ideology: namely, philosophy, religion, common sense and folklore in a decreasing order of rigour and intellectual articulation"[17]. This concept of ideology helps to explain why people, in times of crisis, when faced with circumstances they cannot understand - such as being forcibly removed from places they have lived in for generations - resort to religion in order to try to make sense of what is happening to them. This consciousness is particularly evident in Last Supper at Hortsley Street, where a Muslim family's religious ideology sustains them. In one scene we are shown the religious world which this family inhabits by a depiction of sunset and the call of the Belaal. The camera shows us the father departing in his robes for the mosque, while his wife, similarly robed, prays at home. Her voice-over commentary explains:

> that's why we still stay here: our faith...our faith is great[18].

Later, on a return visit to their now bulldozed home, the scene provokes the father's reverie:

> I sit on the stoep and my mind is so relaxed...I see the seas and I see the boats...I see the wind how it blows on the mountain...But in Belhar there is nothing, only sand you see...Here you can hear the sound of the birds and the sound of the trains...but not in Belhar...you hear nothing..you hear only sadness and sufferings...I know what they do...on the other hand I do **not** know what they do...I will ask my Creator to forgive them...and Jesus also said, "O Father, forgive them for they do not know what they do"...And I will ask the same thing now: "O Father , forgive them, they do not know what they do"[19].

The light is low, and the camera reveals the mountain in long shot. From off-camera one hears the sound of the Belaal. The camera pans till it finds the young son standing with his hands over his ears, on the edge of a rock, intoning the call.

In an interview with Lindy Wilson she commented on the rhythms of the father's speech which echoed those of the Koran - as did the poetry of the language. It is this expressive texture, which

incorporates the "I" of the speaker, which Kaplan refers to as discourse - and which is the semiotic marker of the the religious ideology of the speaker. In Katriver: End of Hope, Piet Draghoender's lament at the end of the video is evidence of a similar religious discourse, except that he is invoking Christianity:

> I prophesy
> Not to the earth, but to heaven
> He who has done this evil to me will not live on this earth
> He will be punished above...and he will die below
> And be buried underground
> This I prophesy[20]

Once again it is the rhythms, idiom, and imagery of the language which alert us to the ideology which underpins this upsurge of emotion. One of Althusser's descriptions of ideology incorporates this semiotic aspect:

> An ideology is a system (with its own logic and vigour) of representations (images, myths, ideas or concepts, depending on the case) endowed with a historical existence and a role within a given society[21].

The ideological role that religion seems to play is to make people accept things the way they are as a sign of the ordering of the universe - by a power whose wisdom is infinite. Unable to understand their own experience, they trust that it has a logic beyond their own understanding: religion acts as a salve.

An appeal to Christian religious beliefs also forms part of the subtext of the film And Now We Have No Land. Residents express their consternation at the way their removal flies in the face of the state's rhetoric about such an act being based on Christian principles:

> But their Christianity is pretentious...because Christianity cannot do evil to man. Christianity must be protective, merciful to man. These white Christians have bitterly hurt us...so bitterly that our hearts will never be contented[22].

This speaker is struggling to find the fit between the dominant ideology which is supposed to be co-terminous with Christianity, and her own contingent situation. As she cannot equate the two, she has to concede that the state's ideology is devoid of Christianity:

> They do not serve God. If they were serving God...the way we begged...and prayed...their hearts could have been formented. They would not have removed us. They stole us[23].

As one of the producers of this film was the South African Catholic Bishop's Conference, we hear the church's view, expounded by clergyman, Reverend Alf Dlamini:

> This is some sort of a rotten immoral and unjust policy...in this that some of the people...for instance...some of the few men have gone out to work...and the

> church preaches that whatever God puts together nobody will put asunder...this by way of marriage...But with the Department of Co- operation and Development...whatever God keeps together, man and wife, this department can undo at a given time...as it shows iself at any resettlement area[24].

I have already suggested that the ideological role that religion plays for the oppressed is as a salve in times of crisis, but the Church itself has taken a far more militant view. The South African Council of Churches (SACC), the Sendings Kerk of the Nederduits Gereformeerde Kerk (NGK), and the South African Catholics Bishops Conference (SACBC) have all - in different ways - challenged the ideology of the state on the basis of its transgression of Christian teaching. The Churches which fall under the auspices of these institutions have initiated community programmes, media workshops, intervened at marches and demonstrations, and have generally attempted to transform Christianity from being a doctrine of passivity and acceptance to one in which it is legitimate to intervene in temporal affairs[25]. As the state has restricted avenues for opposition to it, so has the church filled the gap of moral authority and availed its space to those fighting apartheid. One of the institutional sources of this new theology is the South African Council of Churches (SACC), the producer, or co-producer of many anti-apartheid films. The discourse of these films is thus infused with a Christianity which is deemed to be the moral basis of the anti-apartheid stand. In This we can do for Justice and for Peace, Archbishop Desmond Tutu makes the point that his moral authority is the bible - which was introduced by the colonisers, but one that he is going to take seriously!

Feminist Ideology

Rosalind Coward notes that "the politics of feminism is about being a woman"[26]. Feminism is thus a politics based on gender[27]. She argues further that this is a legitimate basis for a politics as "society constantly recognises us as gendered subjects, albeit in a variety of very different ways"[28]. Given this definition of feminism, one could argue that this ideology is present in a film like The Ribbon which deals with the Black Sash's initiative of making a 'peace ribbon' to symbolise women's opposition to the continued military presence in the townships. The ribbon was used by the End Conscription Campaign (ECC) in some of their campaigns, as well as in other demonstrations. The Ribbon shows that the basis for communal political action amongst women was their identity as **women**, and as mothers. It was this consciousness which motivated women to endorse the politics of the End Conscription Campaign, for example, while maintaining their own autonomy as an organisation of women. Some of the women who participated in the Peace Ribbon initiative comment:

> This is part of the reason of mobilising women - because so many things are happening to our children - it doesn't matter what colour...[29]

> If we don't take action as women - this is going to happen forever. We are sensitive, we are women, we are mothers, we are preservation of life, we bear life and we have to protect that life...We know the pain of giving birth...we know the pain to see your child die[30].

This same consciousness is present in Awake from Mourning, which deals with the self-help projects started by women in Soweto during the period of community organisation after the 1976 uprisings. Ellen Kuzwayo explained it this way:

> Children started with peaceful protests...many were killed...After this mothers felt the need to come together...it was a time when the spirit of self-help amongst women was born...
>
> Women don't give up because of their children[31].

While it may be incorrect to describe the consciousness of the women of the rural Transkeian village of Tsakana as feminist, it is pertinent to point to their world view and culture as shown in Women Without Men. The opening shot - moon rise: a symbol of women's cycles and fertility - states the theme of the video. This is complemented by their observations on the sound track: that men are by tradition the heads of the household, but that "they are not cleverer than women"[32]. Furthermore, the actions of the women shown in the video endorse their view of themselves as being self-sufficient.

Africanist Romanticism

I have used the term "Africanist Romanticism" to describe the picture that Eddie Wes, the producer and cinematographer of The Two Rivers, painted of the ideological matrix which informed the participant-narrator's discourse in the video. Wes expressed it this way in an interview:

> He had made his choice, He'd worked and lived in the city. In the mid-seventies, he decided to go back to Venda...screw the city, the violence, the white man's world, I'm going back...that romantic vision which was, I think, part of Black consciousness...it was part of his conception. Rushaka's education was up to standard 6...he was totally self- taught. If you go into his hut there are just books and books and books. When we finally connected it was on black... the heart of romanticism. So yes, there is that element in it[33].

This view is supported by the narrator's personal discourse which is poetic and in the style of a traditional African story teller. Furthermore, the visuals support this view because of the associative images used: the drum, the songs, the ceremonies, the healers. The **tone** that is thus established is of a praise-poem to the past.

These are a few of the more coherent ideologies that the interviewees disclose. In addition to this, Tomaselli, has noted that

> The videos we (Contemporary Cultural Studies Unit - CCSU) have made with LAUCA quite unashamedly espouse socialism through the voices documented, even if these voices understand this state in a totally unanalytical, contradictory and unsophisticated way[34].

Furthermore, in Ithuseng, one could argue that the discourse which informs Mamphela Ramphela's understanding of community health care is influenced by socialist ideas:

> not as an absence of disease, but real health (which) implies total health of the total human being...spiritual health, physical health, mental health...touches on the involvement with human beings as a complete being[35].

Her health care also involved encouraging the development of a local brick-making group so that mothers could work near their children - thereby facilitating breast-feeding. She notes that the women have to understand "how the whole pattern of economics" affects their lives. The ideologies of the interviewees must therefore be seen as one level of discourse in the documentaries. How they contribute to the meaning effect of the documentary will depend on the way in which they are overlaid by and interact with the authorial and aesthetic ideology - and how they are decoded in actual viewing situations.

Authorial ideology

The problems of defining 'authorial ideology'

The word "author" in the context of film and video production must be understood very differently from the concept when applied to the writers of books, for example. As many people participate in the process of production, documentaries cannot be said to have authors in the same way that novels do. The authorial ideology is therefore necessarily infused with the ideology of the producers. As shown in Chapter 2, there are three main categories of producers, each of whom establishes different working relationships with their clients or participants; or in the case of independent documentarists, with their funders[36] and subjects. The relationship which forms the basis of the production process therefore also conditions the 'authorial' ideology. The access to people and organisations that this involves, as well as the projected local and overseas audiences, effectively function as the "institutional base" of these works. In the present historical circumstances, this base has an anti-apartheid ideology as the *sine qua non* of association with it.

Furthermore, while I can point to this general feature in the documentaries as an oeuvre, it must be noted that there are not only great differences of approach between the documentaries, but often within a documentary. The biggest contradiction is often between **what** is said and **how** - stylistically and formally - it is said. So, as shown in Chapter 4, most documentaries adopt a formal structure which establishes a hierarchy of authority (voice-over which gives point of view, supported by interviewees who confirm thesis of voice-over) which is used by the dominant culture, but then expects its credibility as an 'oppositional' documentary to be founded on what the people say - without establishing a framework within which statements can be judged. Thus oral testimony is resorted to unproblematically - as if it represents the truth, instead of a form of discourse which helps to establish the domain upon which a study of the person's or group's consciousness can be traced. In other words, methodologically there is little difference between the dominant culture's documentaries and anti-apartheid documentaries - except that the former place us on the side of the state, and the latter on the side of 'the people'. My argument is that the unstated assumption is one that equates 'the side

of the people' with an explicitly anti-apartheid struggle. That this ideological position is never contested or debated in the documentaries suggests that it is the dominant ideology which emanates from this 'institutional' source.

Despite the argument about the degree of authorship, there is a more fundamental debate on the very notion of authorship. Some theorists argue that even the audience could be regarded as the author of a work, as the meaning of the work is produced in the process of viewing: it is not inherent to the work.

The authorial ideologies

> The fishing nets that people make determine the kind of fish they catch[37].

In a situation where there are contending ideologies, the documentarist will project her/his own ideological stance which may or may not be homologous with the dominant ideology[38]. I would argue that this lack of "fit" is a result of authorial ideology being influenced by many ideologies which come into play at different times during the production.

Class ideology

The documentarist may be sympathetic to the political struggle of the people she/he is filming, but her/his own class background informs the visual language of the film, giving it a quality which estranges it from the situation filmed. This is evident in Robben Island: Our University, for example, where three ex-islanders, Neville Alexander (Unity Movement), Fikile Bam (ANC) and Kwedi Mkalipi (PAC), are interviewed in a drawing room with soft lighting - which speaks of the filmmakers' context, not that of the interviewees and their struggle.

In this regard one could also point to the personal ideology which informs the tone of Lindy Wilson's three latest documentaries, Last Supper at Hortsley Street, Ithuseng and Robben Island: Our University. These three documentaries have a far more intimate tone than any of the other anti-apartheid documentaries. A possible reason for this is her process of production which involves spending a long time with her interviewees. In this way she establishes an emotional rapport with them which colours the documentary. Furthermore, her focus seems to be on **people**, and only co-incidentally on situations. Thus the **humanist tone** of the documentaries is a sign of authorial ideology.

Ideology of News

News is presented as 'objective' information which journalists simply record and report. But studies have shown that journalists' interpretive frameworks and work procedures, and the standard news-story format all transform the data that is gathered[39]. This process is denied, and the news presented as if it were a mere 'record' of the facts. When documentaries are funded or co-produced by television stations, the ideology of news which informs their work feeds into the ideology of the documentarist. This is most clearly evident in Hennie Serfontein's And Now We Have No Land, where the very style

bespeaks of journalism: the dates and places printed on the screen, the maps, the updates. Each section of the documentary works like a news insert from the reporter on the spot - which Serfontein is.

There is also a hint of this influence in Harriet Gavshon's The Ribbon where she speaks to camera in a scene where protesters carrying the Peace Ribbon have been arrested. Both her body language and her rapid reporting of events emphasise the sense of immediacy and danger characteristic of television news-casts in war torn situations.

Another example of this influence is the television news conventions used in Sharon Sopher and Kevin Harris's Witness to Apartheid. The emphasis in this documentary is on interviews with people, either done formally or in vox pops. In this situation the framing of interviewees and the cutting between interviews is a sign of authorial ideology. For example, Sopher and Harris cut between a *vox pop* of a sincere, but racist Mrs Botha on a windy street on her way back from a shopping trip, and Curtis Nkondo. He is interviewed seated behind a desk in a book-lined room, and sub-titles give him the credibility of association with the United Democratic Front (UDF). The choice of location, framing and subtitling confer authority on him, but not on her. While the institutional ideology of broadcast news in democracies is to give 'each side' equal access, manipulating the codes which make up the **form** of documentaries allows subtle authorial comment.

Anti-apartheid ideology

I would argue that an anti-apartheid ideology is the dominant authorial ideology - which may be infused with the other two ideologies mentioned above, and possibly many other ideologies which are mobilised in the process of production. It is for this reason that I think the so-called "oppositional" documentaries are more appropriately called anti-apartheid documentaries. This ideological position is both implicitly and explicitly expressed in the following ways (a) choice of subject matter, (b) showing 'what is', (c) voice-over.

Subject matter

For analytical purposes the documentaries could be categorised based on their content: nine dealing with **removals**, four with **labour** issues, five with black **communities**, three with **women**, five with the **general political situation**, and two with the **church**. These categories indicate the political concern of the social documentarists, as they highlight the key mechanisms of oppression, the groups who suffer this oppression, and the means of resistance developed by people and organisations opposed to apartheid. The documentarists are concerned to expose this "apartheid reality" in the hope that an expose of conditions will encourage a moral outcry that would precipitate change but Tomaselli[40] has referred to the mere description of conditions as "substituting one realism for another". He further argues that

> Progressive publications, film and video initially avoided overt revolutionary discourse as this would have led to their immediate suppression. Subsequent to the launching of the United Democratic Front (UDF) in August 1983, however, content became much more challenging[41].

A study of Appendix 1 will show no significant shift in pre-1983 and post-1983 discourse. In fact, I would argue that the discourse of the documentaries remains unchanged, as does the political focus. From this it can be seen that the general tendency of the documentaries is firstly, to show various aspects of South African life from the point of view of those who experience these conditions; and secondly, the 'authors' of the documentaries provide an explanation for the situation in historical terms which foreground apartheid legislation. But, they do not show the inter-relation between the apartheid legislation of the various Nationalist Party governments and the development of capitalism in South Africa. In this regard, Tomselli has noted:

> What is largely omitted from productions is the relationship between events documented and processes operating within the political economy which have historically resulted in apartheid. Even films dealing with the uprooting of entire neighbourhoods like Diagonal Street and Mayfair, although locating explicit causation in apartheid legislation, neglect to examine the economic determinants of the legislation[42].

This position is common to most of the anti-apartheid documentaries, including Reserve Four, Mayfair, Page View, The Ribbon, Awake from Mourning, Freedom Square and Back of the Moon, to name but a few. This, for the most part, leads to a general political position which condemns apartheid and the Nationalist Party governments, but does not contain even the germ of a politics based on some other form of economic and political organisation. Thus the tone of the documentaries is an implicit - or explicit - criticism of what is. In so far as this is their political intervention, they do not go beyond an anti-apartheid plea - which is but one strategy of organisations such as COSATU and the UDF.

Showing what is

The choice of subject matter and the approach taken to it are inextricably linked - even though I have separated them for analytical clarity. So, following on from my previous argument, it is pertinent to note here Harold Wolpe's criticism of analyses of the South African political system, which he argues fall into one of three categories: they over-emphasise historical continuity; they have reductionist views of class and race; they privilege "the content and conduct of struggles, with little, if any attention being paid to the structural conditions and context of such struggles"[43]. It seems to me that this last category is one into which most of the anti-apartheid documentaries fall, thus providing us with the descriptions of subordinate cultures, but without being able to draw out the network of inherent[44] and derived ideologies which activate and cement these cultures, nor do they analyse the relation between these subordinate cultures and the dominant culture. While this is a fairly common feature of studies of South Africa, as noted by Wolpe, there are studies which avoid this pitfall, and which - if drawn upon - provide a paradigm of research and analysis which would enrich the insights offered by the documentaries because they do not remain at the level of phenomenal forms, but seek to explain the deep structures which give rise to them. Most notable in this regard is contemporary Marxist social science and historical research[45] in which Bozzoli, for example, explores the intimate

connection between capitalism as an economic system and the political and ideological forms which accompanied its specific development in South Africa. She notes:

> To a " Boer" in the 1900s,capital's hegemony might have been experienced as the dominance of British culture over his own; to an English white worker it might have been experienced simply as the dominance of capital over labour; or it might have appeared as the growing threat of cheap black worker competition. And to the Afrikaner workers of the depression years (and indeed to Afrikaners of all classes),as a new form of English- speaking domination. Perhaps most important of all is the fact that under both forms of hegemony blacks would have tended to see their domination only in terms of white racism[46].

This quotation is important because it shows the phenomenal forms of capital's hegemony over labour. Different people therefore **experience** this relationship differently, and it is on this basis that the ANC, for example, adopted its strategy of mobilising the oppressed on the basis of their 'national' oppression as blacks by whites. But O'Meara makes the point that the ideologies which arise from this "experience" and which guide people are but "partially adequate" because "they do not adequately represent the conditions of existence of such everyday experience'[47]. His argument is that the analysis of an ideology should therefore not merely remain at the level of "what is given" of everyday life, but should

> penetrate beyond the given to establish...the ensemble of prevailing underlying conditions which make the 'what is given' of everyday experience possible, and ..the forms and trajectory of social struggles which lead such conditions of existence to assume one ideological form rather than another[48].

This is clearly what is lacking in most of the anti-apartheid documentaries, as for the most part, they stay at the level of description of and response to everyday experiences. This is evident in Mayfair which adopts the style of 'showing' the responses of the residents of Mayfair who are threatened with removal. But by merely 'documenting' the views of the residents, the producers end up by reproducing a social explanation which is not adequate to the situation. The video opens with an explanatory statement, and is followed by P W Botha voicing the National Party view ("we are a nation of minorities"); the camera confirms this by cutting to the streets of Mayfair where it focuses on people of different colours; this is followed by Conservative Party leader, Andries Treurnicht voicing CP policy ("we reject power sharing...because to share power is to lose power"). Implicit in this juxtaposition is a tension between these two parties, but the ideological basis of this tension is not made clear, nor can it be inferred from the video's opening text which attributes the Nationalist's proposal to their Reform politics. So, from this opening sequence it is difficult to know what meaning the videomakers wish us to make of the sounds and images they have presented to us.

Speakers from two black organisations attempt to contextualise the local crisis into the general context of the removals under the Group Areas Act and Influx Control legislation. But this statement is

unable to explain the politics being articulated either by the Nationalists or the Conservative Party, or the muddled consciousness of the people on the street. Tomaselli suggests that

> The producers of Mayfair should have examined the context of the shifting class structure which created the conditions for unexpected government action on Mayfair. The analysis would have had to take account of a maturing economy which needs more skilled labour and professionals. This has led to the co-option by the state of the Indian and coloured 'population' groups which, together with the alienation of right-wing Afrikaners from the National Party, has resulted in a new political alliance[49].

But instead of adopting a materialist epistemology, the videomakers simply supply illustrative footage of removals from District Six and Crossroads in Cape Town. The viewer may well ask what s/he is to make of these images. They are not self- explanatory, and it is at the level of explanation that this video is inadequate, for the editing style suggests that an explanation will be forthcoming. As this does not happen, one of two explanations is possible: either the videomakers themselves do not have a coherent political position, or their chosen filmic 'style' - an incompatible combination of cinema verite/direct cinema shooting combined with "Griersonian" editing - is inadequate to the task of creating a text which articulates the complex of ideologies which they encountered.

The result is a text which is valuable for **showing** the contending ideologies (for example: class, ethnicity, nationalism) which constitute individual South African subjectivity, but it is unable to say anything meaningful about it - other than to throw up its proverbial hands by ending with a string of questions raised by residents, which the videomakers edit together as their final comment:

> Why is our government doing this to us?..
>
> For What?...

These are vital questions which the video raises, and to which it invites us, the audience, to find answers.

My argument is that generally, the anti-apartheid documentaries are regarded as 'oppositional' because they oppose the hegemony of the **apartheid ideology** of the dominant culture. They do not - in the main - oppose the class character[50] of the dominant culture which is premised on a capitalist economy in which the major contradiction is the relationship between capital and labour. Furthermore, Tomaselli makes the following observation of Mayfair:

> This video never explains causation or context: how did this suburb become multi- racial in the first place? How did the extreme right-wing racist Afrikaners come to agree to living among people they hate and typify as 'foreigners'? Why are significant numbers of this integrated community standing together to resist the government decision? Above all, why are whites going to be moved - the first time this has ever happened to an originally white area[51].

A failure to answer these kinds of questions has resulted in the production of documentaries which, for the most part, describe the surface phenomena of South African social life and foreground the **experience** of people[52].

This approach is also taken in Freedom Square and Back of the Moon - a film about Sophiatown - which starts with the following statement scrolled across the screen:

> In the 1940s and 1950s Sophiatown was the centre of a vibrant cultural and political world.
>
> Its jazz, journalism, ANC politics, proximity to the white suburbs singled it out as a target for the newly elected Nationalist government"[53].

This statement therefore suggests that some of the **responses** that people developed once they had migrated to the cities were responsible for their being the target of the government's policy of controlling urbanisation. As a socio-political explanation this is clearly inadequate, but the rest of the film simply takes off from this interpretation, and proceeds as a celebration of the memory of Sophiatown in which the 'cultural' is foregrounded as an expression of the vitality of the community:

> It was grand because it was Sophiatown - freehold - and close to the city...They wanted me to go because I had too much freedom, too much meeting, too much fantasy, too much easy access; white women and black intellectuals that meant trouble to the Boere's dream of an all white world[54].

But the film is silent on the inability of this vitality to prevent the crisis that befell it[55]. The very knowledge that people need, is absent. Instead we are invited to forget the rupture, and bathe in a particular set of memories. The film ends with a comment by Don Mattera, poet and ex-gangster, who looks to a human **essence** as the source of resistance:

> I want to tell myself the Boers have won when I see this - but then I hear voices and Sophiatown comes alive again: my mother and father and grandfather in the backyards. They haven't won...they will never win - not while men have memories; not while men can write down; while children can still be born[56].

The emotional tone of this closing statement is the binding thread throughout the film. But although it offers inspiration - like jazz - the film also provides evidence of the sublimation of bitter experiences which are left unacknowledged. Even though the film brilliantly represents 'the spirit' of Sophiatown, the structured absences have left some audiences[57] uneasy, as their own experiences of township life do not measure up to this rosy evocation of Sophiatown.

The four documentaries which deal with women simply **show** the consciousness of women as revealed in interviews with them, rather than to tease out the way in which a feminist consciousness imbricates with the consciousness of class, colour, or ethnic traditions. Nana, Margaret and Mrs Abrahams presents interviews with these three women in an unstructured way, and uses illustrative footage 'to fill in', without it being an organic part of the text which creates the meaning of the

'whole', which is more than simply what the women say. In this way the videomaker tries to efface her own position, by simply endorsing the views of the interviewees.

What these documentaries implicitly show is the way in which a feminist ideology is articulated amongst black women and some sections of white women. In the West, feminist politics has focused on the representation of women, and has embarked on campaigns which ultimately challenge the social roles and identity assigned to women in capitalist and/or patriarchal systems[58]. But in South Africa, women's struggles have been integrally linked with either the workers' struggle or anti-racist struggles: so that the power relation between men and women and the apparatuses of civil society which construct gender identity have not been a priority for those engaged in 'the liberation struggle'. In The Ribbon an underlying thread is that their demonstrations are part of the anti-apartheid struggle - which is articulated in the following way by one of the speakers at a rally:

> Let us mobilise all women - black and white - to march against racism[59]

Although The Ribbon and Awake from Mourning focus on the organisations and actions that women have engaged in in their anti-apartheid struggle, the documentaries - as a 'whole' - are not greater than the sum of their parts. However, what these documentaries do show is a set of images of women which challenge the dominant representation of women: for we see women planning, forming organisations independent of men, and participating in actions which have led to their arrest and imprisonment - thereby suffering conditions as harsh as those suffered by men, for in this respect the coercive state apparatuses seem non-sexist.

Another example of authorial ideological inflection can be seen in Robben Island: Our University. Here the intervention is not verbal, but visual. The one dominant image in the film (besides that of the interviewees) is of water washing the shoreline, and sweeping in amongst the rocks and seaweed. This is used as a technical transition device, but it also establishes the emotional tone of the film. It is this image: of the natural ebb and flow of the water (life) that becomes a metaphor for the speakers, focusing on their timeless dignity and quiet power, rather than on the socio-political conditions (which are not natural) which cause men of such stature and dignity to suffer imprisonment, which Fikile Bam describes thus:

> Imprisonment is a great waste of life and permanently mangles and scars the lives of even the very strong, and in my own life I know of things I have yearned for but which I can now no longer become or have, and that only after a mere 10 years behind bars[60].

The whole film has a timeless quality, because the material conditions which resulted in the prison experience are **assumed**, rather than stated, and the past is transformed through memory into an attitude which can be used to build the future. The only sign of the social context is given right at the end of the film by the sound of a resistance song - reminiscent of those sung at mass rallies or funerals - as the camera focuses on Table Mountain from the ocean and then pans across to Robben Island. The three ex-islanders intone a song of their own in Xhosa - as if in reply. Because the film is so equivocal

in its coding, it can be read in any way - and could either spur people in their resolve to fight a system which imprisons its best citizens, or allow a passive acceptance of 'the human condition'.

This approach of 'showing what is' obviously does not invalidate the experience, but raises questions about the social function of the documentaries. For, as Sanjines, a Bolivian filmmaker noted:

> The people are more interested in knowing **how** and **why** misery is produced; they want to know **who** causes it and **how** they can oppose them. They want to learn about the system of exploitation in its inner workings, since the undistorted historical truth has been systematically denied them[61].

Furthermore, an emphasis on **showing** exploitation implies that it is being shown to those who do not know that others are being exploited - and need documentary evidence. This audience may have many reasons for being interested in seeing the oppressive conditions in which others live - none of which may be related to their wanting to change these conditions. Similarly, if the emphasis is on showing the struggles that people have engaged in, then the documentary is arguably only useful to a wider audience if general conditions or modes of struggle are being illustrated. If this is not the case, then the documentaries tend to serve as 'home movies' for those who have participated in such struggles (if they get permanent copies and have access to viewing facilities); or they become part of a general historical archive; or they are simply a vehicle for the filmmaker's ambitions. If any of these speculations is the case, then one would seriously question the use-value of producing these capital intensive documentaries in a Third World situation. If documentary film- and video-makers were alert to contemporary Marxist sociology and historiography, they would help realise Tomaselli's belief that:

> A cohesive film and video culture will only emerge once (a) the restrictions imposed by the State of Emergency are lifted; and (b) like the historical experience of film and social movements elsewhere, theory (both social and visual) is used to identify directions and alternatives. Such theory would incorporate a critique of media and messages themselves, for otherwise a new semiotic tyranny will be the result.[62]

The voice-over

The use of the voice-over is the most overt sign of authorial ideology, and is used in conjunction with the other approaches so that the documentary becomes a seamless whole - which Nichols has correctly argued should be seen as an **argument**, rather than simply a 'showing' - even though 'showing' is one of the devices used in the construction of the argument.

Gavin Younge's Reserve Four deals with the removal of people from the Richard's Bay area known as Reserve Four. It shows that this area of land was demarcated for African occupation by the 1902 Zululand Land Commission, but it does not establish **why** in 1973 it was considered "badly situated" by the Nationalist Party Government, resulting in the 1975 legislation calling for the removal of the people from this area. In the first two-thirds of the film we are shown 'what is', and this is

useful as part of the historical archive of 'what was done' - implicitly - in the name of apartheid. The visuals provide the empirical description of what is; the voice-over provides an explanation of what we see, using a binary system which equates Reserve Four with well-being, and the resettlement camp with destitution; and the direct address by the witnesses confirms this: "before we were not so poor".

One section of the film deviates from this and gives "another reason" for the declaration of Reserve Four as a white area: the vast deposits of minerals worth millions of rands. The image track shows the open cast mining on the dunes and huge trucks transporting the ore to Richards Bay where it is processed. While operations are shown to be in South Africa, the voice-over informs us that they are not **of** South Africa, as they are owned by foreign multi-national corporations:

> Richard's Bay Minerals is owned by South African, Canadian and American interests...Mining and separation activities are owned by Tisson which is controlled by the Union Corporation of America and IDC of South Africa...the smelting operation is owned by Quebec Iron and Titanium Corporation of Canada which is two-thirds owned by Chemicot Corporation and one-third owned by Gulf and Western[63].

The removal is not only motivated by the needs of apartheid ideology, but also by local and foreign capitalists to exploit 'South Africa's' natural resources. But because the underpinning discourse has focused on apartheid legislation as the *bete noir* responsible for impoverishment, the voice-over describes capitalist exploitation as deviant South African behaviour:

> In **typical South African** fashion the people of Reserve Four have not benefited from the wealth of their ancestral land[64].

This isolates the people of Reserve Four from other groups of exploited people, such as their urban factory counterparts[65] or from people such as the native Americans who were similarly dispossessed of their land through colonial conquest and exploited by capitalist mining concerns. One could argue that by localising the issue to an apartheid phenomenon the film directs itself to a liberal audience which is opposed to poverty, but not the international economic system which produces it. The ideological position adopted by the makers of Reserve Four is one that is supported by Laurine Platzky and Cherryl Walker who did a major study on forced removals. They note:

> It is true that some of the categories of relocation discussed in this book are not unique to apartheid. The mass, often involuntary , movement of small-scale peasant producers and redundant farm workers off the land had been a feature of the capitalisation of agriculture around the world...Yet even these more global categories of removal have, in South Africa, taken place in a context and a manner that has been shaped by apartheid.[66]

In the documentary This we can do for Justice and for Peace the authorial ideology is hammered through a relentless voice-over which is anything but subtle. For example, in Justice and Peace, South Africa is qualified as "the land of apartheid". The use of the voice-over to articulate an anti-apartheid politics is also present in some of Kevin Harris's other films, such as, No Middle Road

to Freedom, Witness to Apartheid and The Struggle from Within. This technique, together with the position of the South African Council of Churches (SACC) which is dedicated to fighting apartheid and unjust legislation, leaves the spectator in no doubt about the ideological position of both Kevin Harris and the Churches affiliated to the SACC - who was a co-producer for many of Harris's films.

Another technical device which works in the same way as a voice- over, is written text scrolled across the screen. For example, in Cliff Bestall and Mike Gavshon's Passing the Message, about trade union organisation, the following appears on the screen:

> The black workers under the system of Apartheid continue to produce South Africa's wealth, while enjoying little of it...[67]

In this way the word, "apartheid", will signal a conceptual context for the viewers. It is interesting that Eddie Wes and Mark Newman decided to make a film about South Africa which did not use the word: and it does not appear in their film, The Two Rivers. Their task was to engage with the urban/rural and ethnic/national/socialist problematic without using the voice-over to clarify these issues. Instead, Wes has argued[68] that the issues are raised through the editing pattern which seeks not to provide an answer to the problem, but to open up the many positions which such a debate would have to take into account. I would, however, argue that they failed in this task as the film, through its editing, endorses the view of its participant narrator.

In the foregoing section I have tried to illustrate the sometimes subtle ways in which the authorial ideology privileges an anti- apartheid stance. It must be stressed that this 'privileging' works in conjunction with the viewing situations in which these documentaries are seen. The ideological stance is recognised as **the stance** precisely through its 'unspokenness'.

Authorial ideology : An expression of (African) nationalist struggle in South Africa

Given that the documentaries are **anti-apartheid** in their authorial ideology, I would argue that they should be seen historically, as analogous to the anti-colonialist works produced in the rest of Africa before the era of 'independence'. During this period (the 1960s), countries attained political independence from their European colonisers, but their economies remained tied to the world capitalist economy. The changes that resulted affected mainly the petit bourgeoisie, leaving the peasants and workers no better off than they had been under colonialism. That the surge of anti-apartheid documentary production adopts this political position is, I would argue, an expression - in artistic form - of the changing political consciousness of a section of the white petit bourgeoisie: instead of supporting a white nationalist position, they now espouse an African nationalism. David Craig notes that "the rise of a genre is likely to occur along with the rise of a class"[69]. While I would not argue that the rise of anti-apartheid documentary as a distinct genre is indicative of the rise of a **new** class, I would argue that it could be seen as marking a shift in the political alliance - but not necessarily in class alliance - of one section of the white petit bourgeoisie. This would explain the general observational tendency of the documentaries, and the stance they take of speaking for the oppressed. This would also explain a dominant stylistic, visual feature in which the camera always films from the

outside of a situation, so that the camera apparatus acts as a mediator between those who speak and....who? It is this affective device which contributes to the feel of the documentaries being pleas against a situation in which people have been morally wronged[70].

Another feature of the documentaries which leads me to the above conclusion is the choice of language. Most of them are in English, the language of the makers, and more generally of the petit bourgoisie as a whole - who would have had access to some level of formal education in which English is regarded as a 'national language'. Non-native English speakers are either interviewed in English or through a translator - both processes which involve, to varying degrees, denying the interviewees the affective meanings and values of their own mother tongue. Of all the documentaries viewed, only four, R'tla Bona, Bellville Community Health Project Wanne Dan and Katriver: End of Hope have the people speaking their mother tongue, Northern Sotho - for which English sub-titles are produced - Afrikaans and a mixture of English and Afrikaans respectively. But even in R'tla Bona, Wanne Dan and Katriver:End of Hope the contextualising discourse of the narrator is English.

Furthermore, the visual language adopted is also arguably one that is foreign to all but urban television owners. If one turns off the sound track, then virtually any meaning could be construed from the visual track as it - for the most part - is not used as a means of narration. But even if one does assume a degree of visual literacy among urban dwellers, based on their experience of television viewing, this is founded on the assumption that documentaries can and do inform. This assumption is no doubt rooted in the documentarists' own experience of acquiring information from films; or perhaps on their knowledge of the use of the medium in other historical situations, such as Britain in the 1930s and 1940s, or Canada's Challenge for Change programme. However it is worth considering one sceptic's concerns:

> Do we know anything essential about how knowledge communicated by film is internalised, retained and converted in behavioural change and problem-solving? Do we know anything about the relationship between educational film and the social context in which it is supposed to function? How much applicable knowledge do we have about the composition, the layout of the frame or the perception of moving pictorial information?[71]

It must be granted that these questions are raised in the context of rural audiences, and that contemporary anti-apartheid documentaries are largely used in an urban milieu where an as yet unresearched degree of visual literacy, based on television and cinema viewing, is taken for granted. But the point must be taken that we do not know the extent of this literacy, so that the above questions are pertinent to those of us who are researchers, rather than filmmakers.

It is worth pointing out the film evaluation dilemmas noted by one researcher:

> Main theme: Only our target audience can tell us if we have communicated the images and ideas which we intended.
>
> Dilemma No 1: Filmmakers make films for other filmmakers.
>
> Dilemma No 2: Filmmakers are not trained nor disposed to evaluation.

> Dilemma No 3: Each film is a new message which requires new evaluation.
>
> Dilemma No 4: We know very little about film literacy or what that term means.
>
> Dilemma No 5: Liking a film does not necessarily mean that the viewer learns from the film.
>
> Dilemma No 7: Film language would be different if the effect of culture was not overridden by the rules developed by filmmakers[72].

Given that the main motivation of most anti-apartheid documentaries is to "educate, conscientise and mobilise", these questions point to a gap in the research undertakings of academics concerned in this field.

Aesthetic Ideology

The aesthetic ideology, according to Eagleton, is that complex which constitutes "theories of literature, critical practices, literary traditions, genres, conventions, devices and discourses"[73]. Even though this definition is used to refer specifically to literature, I would argue that it could equally apply to cinema - which also has its movements, theories, genres and conventions. In other words the choice of form, style and genre is premised on a particular view of what cinema is and how it can represent the world.

All the anti-apartheid documentaries are based on the Realist claim "to show things as they are in reality"[74]. Lovell draws our attention to the "pluralism of realisms" in evidence, and explains this in the following way:

> One reason for the pluralism of realisms is that different realist movements have drawn on one or another of the epistemologies discussed in Chapter 1, namely positivism and realism, and while these are two different theories of knowledge, aesthetic theories and practices based upon them have not always been kept distinct[75].

This is the essence of the problem which Tomaselli refers to as "substituting one realism for another"[76]. As noted above, the methodology adopted by the state and by many anti-apartheid documentarists is little different. Peter Anderson makes the point that

> If video is to become cultural action for freedom, its core problem emerges as one of method[77].

In Lovell's terms, the documentaries produced by both the state and anti-apartheid producers are premised on a positivist or empirical epistemology. This is the same problem noted by Wolpe with respect to political analyses of South Africa. The way in which this is represented in documentary form, is the resorting uncritically to interviewees, and to descriptions of "what is". But Lovell notes that:

> Empiricism is premised on the existence of a knowing subject, source of the sense data which validated knowledge. This knowing subject and its experience are taken as given and unproblematic by empiricism, or where it is problematised, empiricism begins to be undermined[78].

In contrast with this, an aesthetic realism based on a **realist** epistemology would delve into the **causal** relationships between surface phenomena and the deep structures which give rise to such phenomena. This is evidenced in Katriver: End of Hope which Tomaselli describes in the following way:

> This video offers a detailed historical- geographical analysis which clearly locates the interviews within their class contexts, and the relationhip of that context to capital, the state and dispossession[79].

The same methodological procedures are present in I am Clifford Abrahams, This is Grahamstown[80]. It is worth noting that both these films were produced by members of Rhodes University who were theoretically concerned with the issues surrounding the representation of social history. This consciousness enabled them to experiment with an artistic realism which encompassed their historical materialist analysis of the situation they were filming. As these two films are exceptional in their approach to the aesthetic issues posed by films which have an explicitly political discourse, I shall turn to the more common production procedures which typify the issue. I shall use CVET's production of Wannedan as a case study which opens up the politics-aesthetics nexus faced by anti-apartheid documentary producers, and the way in which their aesthetic choices affect the audience. My reason for using CVET as a case study is that the videomaker, Liz Fish, raises issues that are pertinent to most anti-apartheid documentary producers.

From the description of the process of CVET's production procedure in Chapter 2 it is clear how the production procedure and the relationship between CVET and their 'clients' influence the outcome of the text. In addition to this, the videomaker was influenced by her perception of "what works". Fish claimed to have little knowledge of either documentary theory or history. Her models were the BBC and SABC-TV. From the BBC she learnt what "worked", but it also was what "one was working against" in so far as it presents "an authority that pops up and gives one a perfect package"[81]. Whereas, contrary to this, CVET "tries to get the people to speak for themselves - even if they have a comment, and by speaking to a number of different people one puts together a picture"[82]. This raises several theoretical/political/aesthetic problems. Fish recognised that 'local authorities' were being used and that there were "different levels of authority". The CVET approach was not to challenge authority *per se*, but to present different authorities, such as a council wife, a cleansing worker or a shop steward. The problem raised by using "local authorities" in this way centres on how the audience is asked to judge what they say: should their views be seen as representative of a group of people, or should their testimonies be seen as idiosyncratic? Fish acknowledged that she was "also trying to include debate" and that one way in which this could be achieved was by having "lots of interviews with different angles so that there's active, critical thinking on the part of the viewer instead of being

passively told"[83]. She believed that she managed to achieve this in Wannedan with respect to the two different views on the usefulness of the Good Hope Centre meeting. The union official thought it was useful because they had claimed a symbolic space, whereas one of the workers interviewed thought that it was a waste of time because nothing further was achieved with this meeting. Fish believed that by presenting these contradictory views the audience would be forced to engage with the issue for themselves. She noted that "people are very frightened of putting debate on video...they want a solid consistent line"[84], and maintained that part of her intervention in the political processes that she becomes involved in is to assert that "debate is powerful if you use it"[85].

This issue concerning 'authority' can take the form presented above - in the sense of raising the issue of who says what and on what basis the audience is asked to believe them. Another side to this issue is one concerning a more fundamental politics: the production of conscious viewing subjects. This issue is one which provoked the famous Brecht-Lukacs[86] debate and concerned strategies of representation. While both were in agreement about Realism as an epistemology, Brecht argued for representational strategies that severed audience identification, whereas Lukacs proposed an artistic realism based on verisimilitude. The debate is unresolved and centres around the different functions attributed to audience identification. Theorists[87] who adopt a psychoanalytic position based on Lacan would argue that the essence of identification is an unconscious process in which the spectator regresses into the imaginary, rather than the symbolic phase of infantile development. The pleasure thus derived by the spectator is through the gratification of unconscious desires. But Terry Lovell[88] points out that even Brecht's strategy of breaking audience identification is also based on the gratification of the specific desire of "knowing". She argues furthermore that this tradition of conventionalist critiques of realism presents progressive or revolutionary texts as ones "which make us think" rather than "which indulge us in pleasures"[89]. But she asserts that opposition to this view need not be based on an anti-intellectualism, but "it is simply to deny that pleasure is or ought to be always at the service of knowledge, and that politics is only served by pleasure through the mediation of knowledge"[90]. She notes further:

> The pleasures of a text may be grounded in an essentially public and social kind. For instance, pleasures of common experiences identified and celebrated in art, and through this celebration, given recognition and validation; pleasures of solidarity to which this sharing may give rise; pleasure in shared and socially defined aspirations and hopes; in a sense of identity and community[91].

While she acknowledges that these pleasures may be mobilised for reactionary purposes - as in Nazi Germany - she argues that "like the desires of the unconscious, they are not in themselves either progressive or reactionary; but a political aesthetics, which marxist aesthetics must be, ignores this dimension at its peril"[92]. The political aesthetics of CVET seems to be directed at creating this form of pleasure, for Fish talks consistently about the sense of validation that a video like Wanne Dan produces. She notes:

> What we're doing is empowering people where they are in the conditions in which they're in...to reflect on them and change those conditions. It's a much more real sense of power...it's reflective, not dreamland...it's looking in a mirror: here we are, it's a real kind of power - and it's limited[93].

The problem here, politically, is that Fish confuses the **potential** power of a different conception of the self with the actual power that individuals might have if the structural relations which underpin their role as workers in a capitalist society were addressed. She notes, too, the way in which the men's self-esteem grew during the process of both the work to rule and the videoing process. The political gains are not necessarily in achieving a better understanding of the political process engaged in, but in the process of self-realization - which as Lovell notes could be put to reactionary or progressive use.

The earlier description in Chapter 2 of the process of production demonstrated how the relationship between CVET and its client organisation influenced the video text. Politics and aesthetics were necessarily intertwined through the agency of CVET, which as a **video** producing organisation, has not only a political responsibility to its client, but also an aesthetic responsibility to its audience. Fish acknowledged that to produce a text which satisfied this dual responsibility in the craft of videomaking was extremely difficult. She noted that one of the discussions raised at the Culture in Another South Africa (CASA) Conference focused on "the delicate balance to develop as a filmmaker - to develop new ways as well as being a political activist in an organisation"[94]. One of the simple ways in which this tension was manifested in the production of Wanne Dan was in the decision about the title: the union wanted the rather prosaic "Living Wage", whereas Fish felt that "Wanne Dan" was evocative at both a denotative and connotative level. She points out that the problem is that "one is working with people who write speeches or books or pamphlets...and one is trying not to make the film a pamphlet, but a **film**, and that's very difficult because one has to teach people about the medium"[95].

And finally, in considering the aesthetics and politics of CVET's practice, we need to examine what Fish means when she talks about making decisions on the basis of 'what works' or not. As she has no specific training, but learnt 'on the job', as it were, the reasons for her decisions are largely pragmatic. For example, CVET's productions are limited to about 26 minutes in length as audiences can't take much more; or because in work-shop situation "a half hour video with an hour for discussion"[96] is ample; or because 26 minute videos can be used in schools where the periods are 30 - 40 minutes long. As far as interviews are concerned, "the information must come across quickly and dynamically and must be appropriate for its audience"[97]. Thus 'what works' is based on pragmatic decisions determined by the purpose of the video and its proposed audience. Because of the nature of CVET's role of producing videos for organisations, 'what works' is not a static evaluation, but one that is constantly changing. Another aspect to "what works" is that "what works" ought to be challenged and experimented with in the process of creating a "film culture". Noting the over-reliance on the verbal sound track in most videos, she asserted that CVET were trying to get away from this and create spaces in their video - such as "the very slow pace and the shots of just scenery in Loaded Dice, letting the pictures tell the story"[98]. But she noted that filmmakers need to learn to trust that images

could narrate. One of the problems in challenging "what works" and creating a new paradigm of "what works" was that South African filmmakers did not see and debate enough of each other's work. Each worked the same furrow, without much cross-fertilization, resulting in a fairly conservative film and video aesthetics.

The foregoing analysis of CVET's approach and problems shows (a) how the relationship between client and documentary maker affects the aesthetics of the product; (b) how film- and videomakers have an internalised concept of 'what works', which is often based on pragmatic decisions concerning the audience, aims and intentions of the production and their own aesthetic sense, which is often untheorised, but influenced by their past viewing experience; and (c) the issues concerning the effect the production - which encapsulates the producer-process-product nexus - has on the audience.

In conclusion, I would like to point out an observation made by Criticos about the effects on the audience of the participatory method of documentary production. His comment was that this mode of production encouraged "ownership" of the video by the community who had requested it[99]. As he provides no theorizing about what this means, one is left with the common sense understanding that the community regards the video **object** as their own. They are happy to be identified with the object and its representations: it is of them. An interesting problem is the way in which this relates to the concept of "empowerment" used by Fish to describe the effects on participants, as well as by Criticos in his paper, Media, Praxis and Empowerment[100]. By "empowerment", Fish implies an increased sense of self worth which the production of the video facilitated. Criticos does not define the way in which he uses the term, but it is used in the sense of providing knowledge which enables people to challenge the existing power structures[101]. A better understanding of these concepts would help to clarify the connections between production process, aesthetic ideology and audience response, which seems to be crucial in the field of anti- apartheid documentary-making which has the specific political intention of educating people about apartheid or mobilising them against it.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined the ideology and social vision which the anti-apartheid documentaries evidenced. It has done this by exploring the ideologies of the interviewees and the authors. It has also examined the aesthetic ideology and has shown how the dominant realist aesthetic used by the producers of anti-apartheid documentaries is based on the same epistemology as that of the state's productions. This results in the tension and inconsistency between the form and content of the productions. Furthermore, given the political role that the documentaries are intended to play, a focus on the nexus of politics and aesthetics, and how this interplay affects the audience has revealed a lacuna in research in this area. One of the conclusions of this chapter is, therefore, that the concepts of "ownership" and "empowerment", as used to describe the affect of participatory production processes on the audience, need to be researched more fully.

Notes

1. See for example:

   (a) Gramsci A: Selections from the Prison Notebooks, Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1971.
   (b)Larrain J: The Concept of Ideology, Hutchinson, London, 1979.
   (c) Hanninen S and Paldan L (eds): Rethinking Ideology: A Marxist Debate, International General/IMMRC, New York, 1983.
   (d) Williams R: Keywords, Fontana, London, 1976.
   (e) Nichols B: Ideology and the Image, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1981.
   (f) Bottomore T, Harris L, Kiernan V G, Miliband R: A Dictionary of Marxist Thought, Blackwell, 1983.
   (g) Therborn G: The Ideology of Power and the Power of Ideology, Verso, London, 1980.
2. Therborn G: The Ideology of Power and the Power of Ideology, Verso, London, 1980, p2.
3. Ibid, p2.
4. Bensusan T, Tilly B et al: Mayfair, video, 1984.
5. Ibid.
6. I identify the 'colour' of people in this video precisely because they express views that are not consistent with the popular expectation of what these 'colour' groups are supposed to think. Thus we have "whites" who are interpellated not on the basis of colour, but of class; and 'Indians' who speak a language of both "group" and class.
7. Bensusan T, Tilly B et al: Mayfair, video, 1984.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
12. Fish L (CVET): Bellville Community Health Project, video, 1987.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
15. Kaplan E Ann: Women and Film: Both Sides of the Camera, Methuen, New York & London, 1983, p19 defines **discourse** in the following way: discourse refers to the means of expression (i.e. the use of language and other sign systems in a spatio-temporal order) rather than to content. Discourse also contains, as its points of reference, the conditions of expression, a source of articulation ("I") and an addressee ("You").
16. Bozzoli B (ed) Class, Community and Conflict: South African Perspectives, Ravan Press, Johannesburg, 1987, p9:
    Blended with these are what Rude calls "derived ideas" - those "borrowed from others, often taking the form of a more structured system of ideas, political or religious, such as the Rights of Man, Popular Sovereignity, Laissez-faire and the Sacred Right of Property.
    As far as my argument goes, both Rude and Bozzoli use ideology as synonymous with derived and inherent ideas. In this sense, therefore they refer to religion (Christianity) as an ideology,

and it is in this sense that I use the term "religious ideology". In other words, Christianity and Mohammedanism are the ideologies "through which this consciousness and meaningfulness operates". (Therborn,op. cit., p2)

17. Bottomore T, Harris L, Kiernan V G, Miliband R (eds): A Dictionary of Marxist Thought, Basil Blackwell Publishers, Oxford, 1983, p222.
18. Wilson L: Last Supper at Hortsley Street, 16mm, 1984.
19. Ibid.
20. Hayman G and Tomaselli K G: Katriver: The End of Hope, video, 1984. See Appendix 3: Piet Draghoender's Lament.
21. Callinicos A: Althusser's Marxism, Pluto Press, London, 1976, p61, from Althusser L: For Marx, London, 1969, p232.
22. Serfontein H: And Now We Have No Land, 16mm, 1984.
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid.
25. The imagery of the anti-apartheid documentaries reflects the Church's involvement in the anti-apartheid struggle. For example, we see the church services of mourning or commemoration of those people who have been killed by police violence; the marches led by priests in their flowing robes; priests addressing crowds at mass funerals; priests intervening between protestors and the police; and priests in the communities threatened by removals.
26. Coward R: Socialism, Feminism and Socialist Feminism in No Turning Back: Writings from the Women's Liberation Movement 1975 - 1980, The Womens Press, London, 1981, p102.
27. Ibid, p103.
28. Ibid, p104.
29. Gavshon Harriet: The Ribbon, 16mm, 1989.
30. Ibid.
31. Austin C and Wolpert E: Awake from Mourning, 16mm, 1981.
32. Strelitz L: Women without Men, video, 1986.
33. Interview with Eddie Wes, Johannesburg, August 1988.
34. Tomaselli K G: notes on an earlier draft of this chapter.
35. Wilson L:Ithuseng, video, 1984.
36. For example, Angus Gibson noted that on Singing the Changes which was commissioned by the British Channel 4 television station, he felt like a "token director" as he had virtually no decision-making power; Gavin Younge also noted in an interview that one of the first things he learnt was the codes of television because that was what governed funding and exhibition.
37. Katamzi D: The Production of Knowledge - How do people make knowledge, University of Natal, Teach, Test, Teach Programme, December 1988, p17.
38. This section of the argument is based on Ngara's analysis in Art and Ideology in the African Novel, Heinemann Educational Books Ltd, London, 1985, chapter 11.

39. Cohen S and Young J: The manufacture of News: Deviance, Crime Waves as Ideology, Constable, London, 1973; Hall S, Critcher C, Jefferson T, Clarke J, Roberts B, Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the State and Law and Order, MacMillan, London, 1978; Tomita M and Bybee C: Theories of news, Jump Cut, No 34, p77-83.
40. Tomaselli K G: Documentary and the Struggle for Realisms in South Africa, Media Information Australia, No 44, May 1987, p26.
41. Ibid, p22.
42. Ibid, p22.
43. Wolpe H: Race, Class and the Apartheid State, Unesco, Paris 1988, p5.
44. Terms used by Bozzoli B: Class, Community and Conflict: South African Perspectives, p9: inherent ideologies are those which Gramsci refers to as "commonsense" and Rude describes as

> This inherent, traditional element is a sort of "mother's milk" ideology, based on direct experience, oral tradition or folk memory and not learned by listening to sermons or speeches or reading books.

Rude G: Ideology and Popular Protest, London, 1980.
Whereas derived ideologies are those belonging to a more systematic body of thought - such as socialism, Christianity.
45. See for example:
(a) Legassick M: Legislation, Ideology and Economy in Post- 1948 South Africa, Journal of South African Studies, Vol 1, No 1, 1974.
(b) Bozzoli B: The Political Nature of a Ruling Class: Capital and Ideology in South Africa 1890-1933, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1981.
(c) O'Meara D: Volkskapitalisme: Class, Capital and Ideology in the Development of Afrikaner Nationalism 1934- 1948, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, England, 1983.
46. Bozzoli B: The political nature of a ruling class: Capital and ideology in South Africa 1890-1933, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1981, p214.
47. O'Meara D: Volkskapitalisme: Class, capital and ideology in the development of Afrikaner Nationalism 1934-1948, Ravan, Johannesburg, 1983, p13.
48. Ibid, p13.
49. Tomaselli K G: The Cinema of Apartheid:Race and Class in South African Film, Radix, Johannesburg, 1989, p211.
50. See also Tomaselli K G, 1989, p211.
51. Ibid, p211
52. There are of course exceptions to this: for example Belville Community Health Project which was scripted by members of this project, and videoed by the then CVRA, discusses the need for its community health project in terms of the class needs of the community - which is what binds them as a class.
53. Gibson A: Freedom Square and Back of the Moon, 16mm film and video, 1988.
54. Ibid.

55. In an interview with me Angus Gibson, the director of Freedom Square, said how he had tried to probe this silence, but he could find no one who was able or who wanted to talk about this aspect of the Sophiatown experience. He commented:

> The thing was that in fact Sophiatown was a major ANC failure...there was a lot of anger towards the ANC because the feeling was that they'd puffed up the people's hopes that there would be resistance and that they could resist the forces against them, and then they'd turned round and said, "you must go"...it had not been a well thought out campaign...perhaps it was something people might want to forget...There is still this mystery - it has not been revealed.

56. Freedom Square and Back of the Moon, op. cit.

57. This was the experience of black student viewers at Rhodes University in Grahamstown.

58. Coward Rosalind: Socialism, Feminism and Socialist Feminism; Philips Anne: Marxism and Feminism in No Turning Back: Writings from the Women's Liberation Movement 1975-1980, The Women's Press, London, 1981.

59. Albertina Sisulu, President of the UDF, in Gavshon H: The Ribbon, 16mm film and video, 1988.

60. Fikile Bam: Life as a Political Prisoner, Monitor: Human Rights in South Africa 1988, Journal of the Human Rights Trust, Port Elizabeth, South Africa, p50.

61. Quoted in Burton J: The Camera as Gun: Two Decades of Culture and Resistance in Latin America, Latin American Perspectives, Vol V No 1, Winter 1978, p63.

62. Tomaselli K G, 1987, op.cit., p27.

63. Gavin Younge: Reserve Four, 16mm film and video, 1984.

64. Ibid.

65. Note the testimony of a woman factory worker, in Abaphuciwe, 16mm film and video, Gavin Younge, 1980:

> I have to check 200 jerseys a day from 7.30 to 4.00, standing all the time for R12.00 a week. The price of the jerseys...the cheapest was R22.00, up to R49.00...these people gain - but we gain nothing...I wasn't even paid the price of one jersey a week.

66. Platzky L and Walker C: The Surplus People: Forced Removals in South Africa, Ravan Press, Johannesburg, 1985, p67.

67. Bestall C and Gavshon M: Passing the Message, U-matic video, 1981.

68. Interview with Eddie Wes, Johannesburg, August, 1988.

69. Craig D (ed): Marxists on Literature, p160. Quoted in Ngara E: Art and Ideology in the African Novel: A Study of the Influences of Marxism on African Writing, p30.

70. The most obvious example of this occurs in Crossroads. But it is also evident in The Ribbon, Awake from Mourning, all Kevin Harris's films, Robben Island: Our University, Mayfair, Part of the Process, Reserve Four.

71. Fuglesang A (ed): Filmmaking in Developing Countries 1: The Uppsala Workshop, The Dag Hammerskjold Foundation, 1975, p12.
72. Giltrow D: Film research and field testing, in Fuglesang A (ed) op. cit., p59-60.
73. Eagleton T: Criticism and Ideology, Verso, London, 1978, p60.
74. Lovell T: Pictures of Reality: Aesthetics, Politics and Pleasure, British Film Institute (BFI), London, 1980, p65: quote from Williams R: Keywords, Fontana, London, 1976, p218.
75. Ibid, p65.
76. Tomaselli K G, 1987, op.cit, p26.
77. Quoted in Tomaselli K G, 1989, p212, from Peter Anderson: The Tiakeni Report: The Maker and the Problem of Method in Documentary Video Production, Critical Arts, Vol 4 No 1, 1985.
78. Lovell T, op. cit., p11.
79. Tomaselli K G, 1989, op.cit., p212.
80. L Steenveld: Video: Who Sees? A Way of Seeing I am Clifford Abrahams, This is Grahamstown, Department of Journalism and Media Studies, Rhodes University, Grahamstown, 1986.
81. Interview with Liz Fish, Cape Town, 1988.
82. Ibid.
83. Ibid.
84. Ibid.
85. Ibid.
86. Aesthetics and Politics: Debates Between Bloch, Lukacs, Brecht, Benjamin, Adorno, Verso, London, 1980.
87. Examples of such theorists would be Colin MacCabe, Terry Eagleton, Stephen Heath, E.Anne Kaplan, Annette Kuhn.
88. Lovell T, op.cit., p94.
89. Ibid., p94.
90. Ibid., p94/95.
91. Ibid., p95.
92. Ibid., p95.
93. Interview with Liz Fish, Cape Town, 1988.
94. Ibid.
95. Ibid.
96. Ibid.
97. Ibid.
98. Ibid.
99. Criticos C: Media, Praxis and Empowerment, p26: chapter in forthcoming book: Weil S and Mc Gill I (ed): Diversity in Experimental Learning: Theory and Practice, Open University Press.

100. Ibid.

101. Ibid., p9ff.

Conclusion

Film and video are representational systems which refer outward to the social world which they represent, and inward to their own processes of construction. The meaning of a film or video is not apparent - as naive definitions of documentary suggest. Instead, meaning is derived from a negotiated process between the viewer and the text. This thesis has focused primarily on the positions which the anti-apartheid documentaries, produced between 1977 and 1987, have constructed for their audience.

Chapter 1 attempted to give an understanding of the *zeitgeist* of the 1980s in order to contextualise the documentaries, their producers and audience. I described features of the political economy that the documentaries examine, and the arenas of extra- parliamentary opposition which characterised the 1980s. This is important in two respects. Firstly, it showed the trend towards the formation of national organisations through which mass democratic practices could be forged. This, plus the pressures of the international cultural boycott, I suggested, 'pressurised' film- and videomakers to form similar organisations which could transform film- and videomaking from privileged practices, to ones that are available to all South Africans. Secondly, extra-parliamentary politics pointed to a concern with the democratisation of, and need for, working class leadership of the liberatory process. While the formation of FAWO and NAVAWO show the film- and videomakers' concern to institutionalise the social relationships called for by the mass democratic movement, my examination of their documentaries shows that their textual practice constructed a spectator-text relationship which is not egalitarian.

Chapter 2 critically examined different categories of producers: community video producers, 'independent auteurs' and 'independent groups'. I showed how their differing processes of production and the relationship they have with their 'clients' or participants shaped the documentaries they made. While all the producers are committed to an anti-apartheid politics, their differing intentions and theories of production evidenced their differing understandings of what 'liberation' means and how a documentary can contribute to this process.

Chapter 3 showed the short-comings of a naive view of documentary which regards it as a purveyor of 'truth' and 'reality'. Contrary to this, I set out a theory of the documentary text which views it as a site of production, rather than mere 'recording. In this way it offered a materialist analysis of textual production - which I used in Chapters 4 and 5. These chapters focused on the textual practices of the anti-apartheid producers. A micro-analysis of this sort pinpoints the work specific to film- and videomakers. My analysis revealed that while the producers were unquestionably politically 'on the right side' as their work decried the apartheid system - their own textual practice revealed that they were dependent on forms and stylistic devices which were more appropriate for creating a passive audience. A text is a place of speaking - of address. How we are addressed establishes the relationship between the addressor and the addressee. This relationship - more than what is said - demonstrates the politics of the speaker. Chapter 4 used the concept of mode of address to analyse the political implications of the different modes of address used. My conclusions were that the dominant modes of address used by the anti-apartheid documentarists created texts which were monologues. The essence

of a liberatory pedagogy, or pedagogy **of**, not for the oppressed, as Freire stressed, is a dialogue between "two knowing subjects". In contrast, the anti-apartheid documentaries of the 1980s, for the most part, are built around knowledgeable authorities whom the audience is implicitly expected to believe - because the documentaries emanated from 'the right' institutional sources.

Chapter 5 approached the study of 'content' in a way different from sociological or historical descriptions of documentaries in which textual construction is denied. Chapter 1 indicated clearly the historical reality that the documentaries referred to. Chapter 5 was more concerned with how this history was used in order to create meaning. As ideology is the medium through which we make sense of the world, I approached an analysis of the meaning of the texts through an analysis of the complex of ideologies which reside in a text. My analysis was based on an analysis of the ideologies of the interviewees and the 'authors', and the aesthetic ideology. This analysis revealed once more the disjuncture between the politics of the producers, and the place their texts constructed for the audience. My belief is that the producers unwittingly constructed an unegalitarian audience-text relationship because they believed that merely advocating an anti-apartheid line was enough. This demonstrated that producers, for the most part, had an inadequate understanding of how **meaning** is produced through a textual system. Pointing to the very vague perceptions that producers have of how their documentaries assist in the liberatory process, I noted a lacuna in audience research, which this research strongly recommends.

Appendix 1

Chronology of technology, courses, productions and groups

1970 -1974	- Wits Protest, Super-8, K Tomaselli & A Mabin.
1973	- The Other South Africa, Super-8, K Tomaselli.
1974	-Land Apart, 35mm, Sven Persson.
1976	- Land Apart resubmitted as The South Africans, and passed.
	- Television introduced into South Africa.
1977	- Wits Drama Dept introduces super-8 filmmaking course.
	- Dark City (Alexandra Township), Super-8, Paul Weinberg assisted by Khausuleza Cultural Group.
	- Community Video Resource Association (CVRA, later CVET) established...a video making collective in Cape Town.
1977/1978	- Super-8 Co-operative formed in Cape Town under auspices of Community Arts Project (CAP).
	- District Six started as one of the Super-8 projects.
1979	- Crossroads, 16mm, Lindy Wilson, Cape Town.
1980	- Critical Arts started - a journal dealing specifically with cultural production (including the media).
	- Peerless Shirt Factory, video, 2nd & 3rd Industrial Sociology Students, University of Cape Town (UCT)
	- Fosatu: Building Worker Unity, 16mm, L Dworkin, D Coleman.
	- Abaphuciwe, 16mm, G and A Younge.
	- The Journal of the South African Television Technicians Association (SAFTTA) was founded.
1980/1981	- Atlantis and The Labour Process - two video projects undertaken by UCT sociology students with CVRA.
1981	- Afrascope, a Super-8 collective started in Johannesburg.
	- Passing the Message, U-matic video, Cliff Bestall & Mike Gavshon
	- First University Film abd Video Conference/Festival was organised by Keyan Tomaselli and Graham Hayman of the Journalism Department of Rhodes University.
1981/1982	- Part of the Process, Super-8, Paul Weinberg.
1982	- You Have Struck a Rock, 16mm, Debbie May, Georgina Karvallas, Cliff Bestall.
	- John van Zyl starts teaching Super-8 filmmaking FUBA.
	- This We Can Do For Justice and For Peace, 16mm, Kevin Harris.
	- The Right Time, 16mm, Kevin Harris.
1983	- Struggle of the workers at B & S Steel Factory, video?, Centre of Applied Legal Studies, Wits, & Georgina Jaffe
	- Mayfair, video, T Bensusan, Weinberg, D Morgan, W Schwegmann

1984 - Dynamic Images, a video training project formed in Johannesburg.

- Centre for Direct Cinema (Super-8) set up at Wits with J van Zyl as director.
- Second Carnegie Enquiry into Poverty in South Africa - films and videos screened at the conference.
- Ithuseng, video Lindy Wilson.
- Last Supper at Hortsley Street, 16mm, Lindy Wilson.
- Dear Grandfather, Your Right Foot is Missing, 16mm, Yunus Ahmed.
- The Tot System,video. Wilfred Schwarf
- Katriver:End of a Hope, U-matic video, Hayman G, J Peires, Tomaselli T.
- And Now We Have No Land, 16mm, Hennie Serfontein, for Catholic Bishops' Conference in co-operation with NCRV- television, Netherlands.
- Reserve Four, 16mm, Gavin Younge.
- My Name is Clifford Abrahams and this is Grahamstown, Graham Hayman, Keyan Tomaselli, Jeff Peires

1985 - The Struggle from Within, 16mm, Kevin Harris.

- Free Filmmakers formed.
- Shixini December, video, Graham Hayman & Pat McAllister.
- Afrascope raided by security police and films confiscated and used in Delmas Treason Trial,
- No Middle Road to Freedom, 16mm, Kevin Harris.

1986 - Witness to Apartheid, 16mm, Kevin Harris.

1986/1987 - Kodak disinvests, preventing further Super-8 use; video-8 introduced.

1987 - Weekly Mail Film Festival...South African section.

- Culture for Another South Africa (CASA) Festival, Amsterdam. - Chronicles of South Africa, Direct Cinema Group, video-8.
- Cry of Reason, 16mm, Kevin Harris.
- R'Tla Bona, 16mm, Elaine Procter.
- Sharpville Spirit, 16mm, Elaine Procter.
- Wanne Dan, video, CVET.
- The Ribbon, 16mm, Harriet Gavshon.

1988 - Weekly Mail Film Festival: Cinema Under Siege...South African Section, as well as seminars on censorship, media imperialism vis-a-vis South African cinema.
- Film and Allied Workers Organisation (FAWO) formed in Johannesburg.
- Robben Island: Our University, 16mm, Lindy Wilson.
- Freedom Square and Back of the Moon, 16mm, Angus Gibson and William Kentridge (Free Filmmakers)

1989 - Natal Video and Allied Workers Association (NAVAWO) formed in Durban.

APPENDIX 2

Documentaries Viewed: Listed by Subject Matter

1.Removals

1. Abaphuciwe, 1980. A comprehensive overview of removals: the political and economic foundations of removals; who is removed; the agents of removal; the responses of those removed.
2. Reserve Four, 1984. Thesis: removals result in impoverishment; history: boundaries drawn up by Zululand Land Commission in 1902....to 1973 declaration by Nationalists that it was "badly situated"...1975 legislation for the removal. But capitalist exploitation of mineral wealth described as a South African quirk.
3. Katriver: End of Hope, 1984. Discourse of class - but quite muddled explanation about history of the people who were forced to move.
4. And Now We Have No Land, 1984. Overview of removals: loss of citizenship and nationality; creation of Qua Qua, struggle and resistance to removal.
5. Crossroads, 1979. A plea by a concerned outsider for Crossroads to be seen as residents see it; an argument against the government's policy of migrant labour.
6. Part of the Process, 1982. About the removal of people from Pageview, in Johannesburg. People use discourse of class and "group" - but the film never takes this up as an issue, but instead endorses a politics based on "group identity".
7. Mayfair, 1983. People use discourse of class, colour and nation, but videomakers frame it all in the discourse of anti- apartheid politics. Useful for 'showing' responses to the threat of removal.
8. Last Supper at Hortsley Street, 1984. A personal account - foregrounds religious and personal aspects of social dislocation.
9. District Six, 1978-1984. Attempts a social history - but little on political organisation.

2. Labour

1. Passing the Message, 1981. Looks at how different trade unionists organise.
2. Wanne Dan, 1987. Report on the Cape Town Municipal Workers' work-to-rule; role of organisation to keep a strike going.
3. Fosatu: Building Worker Unity, 1980. Historical survey of development of Fosatu.
4. The Tot System, 1984. Labour conditions on Western Cape wine farms - discourse of class used by the interviewer.

3. Communities

1. R'Tla Bona, 1987. A report on the Learn and Teach Project in Tzaneen: focuses on where they are - reactions to creation of Bantustans; focuses on the wives of migrant workers and why they need to be literate.
2. Ithuseng, 1984. A report on Mamphela Ramphela's community health centre near Tzaneen.

3. Robben Island: Our University, 1988. Conversation between 3 ex-islanders: a member of the PAC, ANC and Unity Movement. But no discussion of the politics of the different organisations, but rather repect for their different positions. Emphasis on the "university" aspect of the island experience.
4. Freedom Square and Back of the Moon, 1988. About life in Sophiatown. Emphasis on the culture of Sophiatown: the gangsters, writers/journalists, musicians, very little of the political culture - except the reference to Freedom Square where political meetings were held; reminiscences of people about the place...and then the removal - but an absence regarding organisation against the removal.
5. Bellville Community Health, 1988. The organisation of a community health clinic in Belville because of the cost of services provided by hospitals such as Groote Schuur.

4. Women

1. The Ribbon, 1989. Organisation of the peace ribbon by Black Sash; use by ECC Campaign; mixed group of women who protest at the British Embassy - theme: Margaret Thatcher is also a woman; protest outside government buildings in Pretoria...arrest.
2. Women Without Men, 1986. Women in the Transkei: voice of wives of migrant workers. A poetic statement about the experience of such an existence.
3. Awake From Mourning, 198-. Inspired by the Soweto uprisings of 1976, 4 women decided in 1979 to give support to the self-help movement amongst black women.

5. General Political

1. Witness to Apartheid, 1986. An overview: interviews with "witnesses to apartheid".
2. No Middle Road to Freedom, 1985. Deals with the SADF raids into Maseru in 1982.
3. The Struggle from Within, 1985. General review of political situation, focusing on the referrendum in 1983.
4. Chronicles of South Africa, 1987. Collage of different aspects of life in South Africa.
5. The Two Rivers, 1987. Essay like - looks at history of Venda, and raises questions about the Homeland issue.

6. The Church

1. This We Can Do For Justice and For Peace, 1982. Focuses on the South African Council of Churches (SACC) role in fighting apartheid.
2. The Cry of Reason, 1987. A political 'biography of Beyers Naude which traces his history from dominee of the Nederduits Gereformeerde Kerk (NGK) to his involvement with the SACC.

Appendix 3

Piet Draghoender's Lament ....transcribed from Katriver: End of Hope[1]

Here it was all brown people, but they were all chased away
Not with their agreement, but against their will
Today I go. Also without wanting
I say...I prophesy
Not to the earth, but to heaven
He who has done this evil to me will not live on this earth
He will be punished above...and he will die below
And be buried underground
This I prophesy
[Cut to him looking out over his fields]
This is my place to the river
There stand my fields in fruit
This belongs to my sister's son
He planted mielies, beans, peas, potatoes
My uncle's son planted mielies down to the other side
[He turns to the camera periodically...the camera pans where he points, then returns to him]
So I feel bad that today I must leave the harvest
Look at the fruits [He gesticulates]
Look at the flowering
look at the yield of my uncle's son
It makes a person cry
It's sad to plant and not harvest
So I feel heartsore
But I resign to the greatest Master on earth
Who acts where you don't see
And I say to the King of Peace..to the Devil...to the enemy
I am guilty
This land was washed clean
By blood..the blood of my grandfather
There was a war
We gave our sons
Three sons for death
To make this place free
I chased my children to the court house
They examined them and sent them away
One was lost in the war

The others returned
So I feel heartsore
My father went to war
My grandfather
My father
My children
My father's children
My uncle's children
my aunt's children
Blood!
Blood to make this place free
And today we leave it behind without wanting to
But I say the Lord is so good
The Lord won't permit you to be taken like this
[He bends and scoops soil from between the mielies]
And be thrown away
And if this land be given to the enemy, throw it in that pigsty
[The camera cuts to a close-up of his face as he struggles to remember....and he utters]
Mr Stockenstroom!

Note

1. Transcription by Lynette Steenveld from the video on which her research was based. Another version is cited by Keyan G Tomaselli and Edgard Sienaert, "Ethnographic Film/Video Production and Oral Documentation: The Case of Piet Draghoender in Kat River: The End of Hope", Research in African Literatures 20:2 (Summer 1989): 252-262.

Appendix 4

Resolutions passed at the launch congress of the Film and Allied Workers Organisation on August 28, 1988.

I. Education and Training.

Noting that:

A. the state has control over the education system and the major broadcasting facilities;

B: the majority of South Africans have historically been and continue to be denied access to facilities and resources for both the viewing and the making of progressive films;

This congress resolves to establish an education and training committee with the view to

1. co-ordinating and assisting existing alternative film education, literacy and training projects;
2. establishing our own education and training programmes and structures in order to facilitate the growth of a more representative, innovative and progressive film culture and industry.

II. Distribution and Exhibition

Noting that:

A. a central concern of this organisation is to make film and video material accessible to all South Africans and to develop an awareness of conditions in Southern Africa by the distribution of progressive local film and television internationally;

B. film workers need exhibition and distribution structures;

This congress resolves to establish a Distribution and Exhibition committee to

1. co-ordinate the activities of and liaise with progressive organisations involved in distribution and exhibition of film and video.
2. look into the possibility of establishing structures for the exhibition and dissemination of local progressive films and to make available films from the history of the cinema - which will serve both the needs of film makers and users of films.

III. Research and Information

Noting that:

A. there is a broad area of legislation and information affecting funding, taxation, censorship, production, distribution, and other aspects of film making;

B. in South Africa we are largely isolated from events taking place within the international film community;

C. information of the above is of critical importance to the advancement of progressive film culture in South Africa.

This congress resolves to establish a Research and Information committee to

1. make the relevant information available to members and others who share our aims and objectives;
2. provide a centre for the dissemination of such information;
3. initiate and undertake research in areas lacking readily available information.

IV Production and Resources

Noting that:

A. there are many obstacles faced by progressive film makers in the financing, production and distribution of their films, and that this has had a retarding effect on the growth of a progressive film industry in South Africa;

B. film skills and resources are inaccessible to the majority of South Africans,

This congress resolves to establish a production and resources committee to

1. pool information and resources where possible to facilitate the production of films by our members;

2. utilize our collective skills in order to make film production more accessible to the majority of South Africans;

3. liaise with other committees to help create support structures for the distribution and financing of members' films.

V. Projects

Noting that:

A. members of FAWO need a forum to give the organisation coherence and unity,

This congress resolves to establish a projects committee to

1. provide a regular forum for discussion and debate about film related issues, to organise film screenings, to arrange social activities and to create opportunities for discussion with members of other cultural and political organisations.

VI. Political resolution

Noting that:

A. progressive film makers cannot separate themselves from the wider political struggle taking place in South Africa;

B. the onslaught by the State against the mass democratic movement is intensifying daily;

C. progressive film and video workers are under unprecedented attack;

D. the State's recent interest in the film industry is a move towards greater control of our work and a further entrenchment of its power.

This congress resolves to

1. use our collective film resources to struggle for a non- racial, non-sexist, unitary and democratic South Africa;

2. unite in defending ourselves and fellow cultural workers against attacks by the State.

VII. Censorship

Noting that:

A. the state is using censorship to further entrench its power and to retard the progress towards a free and just South Africa,

This congress

1. condemns the State's attempt to impose a register of journalists which will affect our members;

2. condemns the state's seizure of Cry Freedom and its restriction on A World Apart, The Stick, Battle for Algiers, Mapantsula etc. and its restriction and harrassment of the Weekly Mail Film Festival;

and resolves to

3. actively resist censorship of this type

4. to hold a symposium to discuss our specific position in relation to censorship and to help film makers deal with the problem of censorship.

VIII. Resolution on the Proposed State Subsidy

Noting that:

A. the state has expressed its intention to alter the method in which film production is to be subsidised and while acknowledging the inadequacy of the present subsidy system.

This congress

1. rejects in principle any subsidy system that relies on the evaluation of scripts by a government appointed body if it will be used to inhibit films expressing progressive sentiments and to promote films which represent the State and its activities in a positive light.

IX. Resolution on State Institutions

Noting that

A. the State and monopoly companies control the structures of production and mass communication in South Africa

This congress resolves to

1. have no dealings as an organisation with state institutions although acknowledging that some of our members through necessity will work through these structures

This congress further resolves to

2. call on our members to advance the aims and objectives of this organisation within these institutions and to aid the struggle for a progressive film culture in South Africa.

X. Resolution on national co-operation

1. Recognising that the Film and Allied Workers Organisation is a regional body but that film and video workers in other provinces are in the process of becoming organised

This congress therefore resolves to

A. inform the other regions of developments in the Transvaal;

B. encourage progressive film makers in other regions in terms of sharing research and collaborating on productions;

C. actively work towards the formation of a national body.

Appendix 5

Selected Film Analyses

Abaphuciwe: The Dispossessed

This 16mm film, shot by Gavin and Amanda Younge in 1980 with funds from the International University Exchange Fund (IUEF)[1], was edited in England by Chris Thomas, and bought by various overseas distributers[2]. In South Africa it is held by university departments and resource organisations.

The film attempts a comprehensive overview of removals: the political and economic foundations of removals; who is removed; the agents of removal; and the response to removals by those who have been moved or are resisting removal. The emphasis seems to be on providing as much information as possible. The structure of the film is simple: the voice-over track provides the contextual and analytical information which is illustrated on the visual track and supported by interviews - the voice of experience.

The film starts very powerfully with a woman witness giving an impassioned account of the police and board officials coming to move her community. The camera pans to people behind a high fence - staring out. These are the victims of forced removals. The voice-over narration accounts for this visual and verbal testimony: "removals are part of the apartheid master plan...removals to homelands they have never seen...In Zulu they call them the Abaphuciwe...the dispossessed", which is said as the titles come up: **Abaphuciwe: The Dispossessed.**

This introduction sets the pattern for the rest of the film: images and voices of testimony are explained by an unseen narrator. The rest of the film explains the issue in greater detail. The "apartheid master plan" consists of its labour policy which entails capitalist exploitation of workers:

> I have to check 200 jerseys a day from 7.30 to 4.00pm, standing all the time for R12 a week. The price of the jerseys...the cheapest was R22, up to R49...these people gain - but we gain nothing...I wasn't even paid the price of one jersey a week.

The other side of capitalist exploitation is unemployment when capital does not need labour, facilitated by influx control legislation which 'endorses out' those Africans who are unemployed and in the city 'illegally'. To illustrate this the camera focuses on the queues of unemployed waiting outside factory gates. A shot of a bus filled to capacity - on its way to the Transkei the voice-over informs us - forms the transition from the urban areas to the reserves. Here we are shown the impoverished conditions, epitomised by the image of the zinc lavatories in the open veld, and hear the testimonies of those uprooted:

> We were happy at Klipfontein where we lived before we moved here against our will...our furniture was thrown into trucks...our chickens died...our furniture was ruined...when we moved here our cattle died...we became sick from the polluted water...things are expensive in local shops...

So we starve...we were poor before, but not this poor...

The film touches on most of the key issues: the 'independent states' which accomodate the poor, unemployed and ill so that South Africa remains a healthy 'white' economy; the various types of removals: labour tenants thrown off white farms, or to make way for a dam; the indirect coercion: schools in the reserves but not in the African townships; the use of force: the melee during raids on Crossroads..."Is it necessary for the police to use teargas while there are children playing around the street?", asks one resident. And finally, the resistance to this process: exemplified by the women of Crossroads. This is the only time in the film when one of the witnesses takes over the function of the authoritative voice-over and speaks both as the voice of history and the voice of experience:

> Women think ay!...What are we going to do? In November 1975 the women start to do something.

In this section too, the narrator abandons narration and becomes simply an interviewer in a dialogue:

> Q: People are being moved all over the country - they're not being allowed to stay in the urban areas. Why are the people of Crossroads being allowed to stay?
>
> A: Because the community of Crossroads is strong...Outside the whole world knows what's going on in Crossroads - as women's committee we sent a message...We are South Africans...We want to be here as a family as all other nations...

The strength of the film is that it is comprehensive. The Other Cinema fly sheet describes it thus:

> a film which goes beyond the description of the horrors of Apartheid, to reveal its political and economic nature. For Apartheid is more than segregation, it is a system of control, designed to keep labour cheap, plentiful and powerless...The film documents removals and resistance in rare footage of bus boycotts, pass raids, police attacks and the demolition of squatter camps[3].

We see many places, hear many witnesses and the voice-over explains that which is not immediately observable. We are left in no doubt that forced removals are **forced**; that they are part of the exploitation and oppression of black South Africans; but despite all this there is spirit of resistance.

The weakness of the film is its organisation. The film is organised around its sound track - which consists of a relentless omniscient voice-over of 'History', interspersed with the voices of experience which 'prove' the wisdom of the voice- over. This split in functions does have the advantage of using one track to supply a coherent line of argument - which by implication challenges the line provided by the government. This oppositional role is made explicit when SABC television coverage of the Bophutuswana independence ceremony is undercut by the voice-over, and when a

South African Defence Force promotional film showing their military capabilities is similarly undercut. In these places the voice-over's role as a counter-discourse is explicit. For the rest of the film it presents its analysis as the only analysis in much the same way that SABC does. As members of the audience we are positioned either to believe it, or not.

The argument proceeds, block by block, but this is only discernible through repeated viewings. Given that the film is a didactic exposé for both local and foreign audiences who are unfamiliar with the arguments, this aspect of the film could have been highlighted through its style. For example, the voice-over narration could have been broken up so as to highlight the various aspects of the argument. Maps and diagrams could have been used to illustrate the numerous places mentioned, and to tie down the images. Instead, the film is shot in an episodic way with single images used to illustrate what is said. There is no narrative flow within the image track - either within or between sequences. This creates the effect of still photographs: we remember individual shots which create a chequered picture.

Another aspect of the film's style is its framing - mainly in medium close-up (MCU) and a few long shots(LS). The MCUs are used when people are interviewed on camera. This shot rather than close ups was used "to avoid the mug shots" common on SABC -TV[4]. But we end up with an endless stream of these shots so that people pass before us in a blurr. A few long shots are used as 'contextualising' shots, but only in so far as they provide a panoramic wide-shot - rather than as part of a sequence of shots which contextualises the world of the speaker. The effect of this camera style is to keep the audience at a remove from the people who address us. We end up being voyeurs looking in, rather than being drawn into the world of the film.

Ultimately we have to ask what contribution the film makes to social change in South Africa. By recording the testimony of those who have suffered removal it certainly exposes the forced nature of removals. If information is a catalyst for change, then it certainly succeeds. It received a favourable press abroad[5], and the following excerpts from reviews indicate that it is a useful resource for foreigners who are opposed to the apartheid oppression of black South Africans - if not their exploitation as workers in capitalist concerns.

> Whether or not the film will succeed in reaching its preferred audience, it is undoubtedly useful outside South Africa, particularly in balancing recent media reports of liberalisation for example, the granting of independence to reserves which amount to nothing more than crowded ghettos, unsuitable even for subsistence farming, thereby increasing their dependence on contract work and sealing their role within the system[6].

> The film evokes many moods: horror and sadness at the terrible losses endured; anger and determination to end those losses. It ends on the latter note and is therefore an exceedingly welcome resource for all who would contribute to the end of apartheid in South Africa[7].

It is undoubtedly a valuable part of the archive of the history of black South Africans.

One could argue that the film has a narrative structure: a beginning which is ruptured - a middle which accounts for the rupture in terms of the economic and political reasons for removals - and end

which does not restore an equilibrium with the beginning, but in which a certain transformation is apparent. The film starts with an address to camera by a distraught woman who has been removed. But the film ends with the women of Crossroads who have successfully resisted removals because they organised themselves. Solanas and Getino note that:

> Revolutionary cinema is not fundamentally one which illustrates, documents, or passively establishes a situation: rather it attempts to intervene in the situation as an element providing thrust or rectification. To put it another way, it provides discovery through transformation[8].

Given the transformation that takes place at the level of structure, one could ask whether Abaphuciwe is an example of revolutionary cinema. One could argue that the film is an intervention in so far as it asserts that, with organisation, successful resistance to removal is possible - despite the armed might of the state which the film so eloquently depicts. But this depends on whether the film is **affective** in its enunciation, which can only be ascertained through empirical audience research. The counter-argument is that the film treats its subjects no better than does the state. People are not filmed in a way which maintains their integrity. The film uses its witnesses simply as pieces of testimony to support an argument: albeit the case against forced removals. The effect is voyeuristic and shows up an imbalance of power. We watch them without being given access to them. As viewers we are held at a remove by the long shots. As we are not engaged by the text, it is a transaction which does not necessarily lead to action, the basis of social transformation.

Notes

1. For background to the removal of the Mogopa people, see Jaffee G: The Mogopa people: another dream smashed, Work in Progress 49, September 1987, p19-22.
2. See footnote 25 of Chapter 4.
3. See footnote 26 of Chapter 4.
4. This land that is Mogopa is our birthplace. It is not trustland; it is not a reserve where we were settled by the government. Our forefathers bought it for future generations. It is time that our living conditions are improved and that we blacks get representation in parliament. Only that will undo all the harm. (Mogopa resident at a meeting)

   Before this Land Act they lived on the farms and they were in a way competing with the general poor whites in farming, and there began a tendency among the white people to disapprove. The government decided... that it was going to prevent the black people from ploughing on the crop-share system and from the farmers keeping a large number of black people as crop tenants on their farms. The effect of this was to uproot hundreds of families from the farms...and you met these people along the roads...going where they did not know. (Ngakane)
5. The argument of the film:

   1) An example of the process of removal highlighted by the case of the Mogopa people;
   2) An historical account and official views which the people's experience belies;
   3) The creation of Bantustans through the resettlement of "surplus people" from the farms and cities - exemplified through the removal of people to Onverwaght in QuaQua. Social conditions - such as inadequate health care, malnutrition and unemployment - are shown;
   4) The growth of informal settlements in the cities because the homelands are economically, socially and politically inadequate: for example the settlement of the Nyanga bush in Cape Town.
   5) Resistance to removals: the case of the people of Driefontein.

And Now We Have No Land

This 16mm film was produced and directed by Hennie Serfontein in 1981, in association with the Southern African Catholic Bishop's Conference and the Dutch television station NCRV.

Like Abaphuciwe, the film attempts an overview of forced removals. The opening titles state the film's intention:

> This film deals with the forced settlement of 5,5m black South Africans, their loss of citizenship and nationality and their struggle for the land of their birth.

Constructed like a news story, this opening 'paragraph' outlines the angles to be taken: 1) forced settlement: the case of the Mogopa people[1]; 2) loss of citizenship: the creation of QuaQua through the settlement of places like Onverwaght; 3) struggle and resistance: the informal settlement in Nyanga bush, and the resistance of the people of Driefontein.

Other features of this documentary also reveal the codes of newsgathering and television news presentation. The titles stating places and dates eg Mogopa, midnight 28 November 1983; Mogopa Tuesday 29 November 1983; Mogopa Tuesday 14 February 1984; Pachsdraai February 1984; Bethanie March 1984, not only set out the chronology of events, but also connote the continual updates of a news story. This device ties down the words and images to a particular set of events, happening at a particular time outside of the text, as distinct from a general discourse on removals which the text itself generates. In this way the image track becomes integral to the discourse of the film, instead of it being a set of illustrations to an independent sound track as in Abaphuciwe.

However, like Abaphuciwe it observes the codes of television news presentation, marked as it is by a particular hierarchy of discourses: news presenter - reporter in the field - eyewitness. In And Now We Have No Land a similar pattern is established: a voice-over gives a general historical analysis; a fieldworker relates the general to the particular as shown in the images; this is then followed by witnesses who speak from their own experience. Although the voice-over is privileged with an omniscient view, this power is not associated with the state and its surrogates as is the case on SABC -TV. Instead, the opening voice-over is later revealed to be Barry Ngakane, described as a "retired leader and educationist". He embodies not only the voice of 'History'(without a subject as is so often the case in official histories), but the voice of history and experience. Speaking from memory and recalling the times of his dad, he tells a story of land and cattle theft - one of the many South African stories to be told - in a language that is, perhaps, appropriately biblical[2]. This story establishes history as a discourse of the people: they possess their own history. Not only does Ngakane speak from this position, but so do the fieldworkers[3] and the eyewitnesses[4].

Another feature of And Now We Have No Land is the camera style: the camera itself narrates, instead of merely illustrating, which is often the case. A variety of shots is used to set the context and then visually explore that context with close ups (CUs) and medium close ups (MCUs). In this way the camera explores space as a means of narration. Similarly camera movement and pace add a temporal dimension to narration: the camera will pause as it focuses on the crippled hands of a blind woman grasping her white stick; or while witnesses halteringly tell their story; or or will simply rest with

chickens picking at the dust. All of this is relevant to forced removals - as it forms part of the social fabric which the sound track cannot reveal. In this way sound and image are used to augment each other, instead of merely illustrating each other. This is the strength of this film: the camera gives us access to the lives of the people. In so doing it functions affectively.

The film is too long precisely because it functions in this way. Too many examples are given. The examples are 'necessary' for the logic of the argument presented on the sound track[5], but because each section is presented as a whole universe of experience in space and time, the presentation of successive cases does not allow the viewer to rest with any one, to give full consideration to it. In this way the filmmaker has underestimated the emotive power of each section and has presumed that the factual information on the sound track is more important than the visual evidence. Despite this, the filmmaker has used the image track well. Various government statements and proclamations are not merely assigned to the voice-over, but appear on the screen in the impersonal way in which they are issued from the seats of power. Juxtaposed in this way with the visual evidence of people's experience, the lying word of authority is exposed and placed in its proper perspective. Maps are also effectively used to illustrate the places mentioned. This device ties down the spoken and visual testimony and, ironically, makes it 'more real' for the viewer. Similarly, a sketch-map of South Africa is super-imposed on the image of a rural landscape to trace the journey made from Cape Town to the Transkei by those who have been forcibly removed from the informal settlement at Nyanga.

These stylistic devices constantly move the viewer between text and context. The technical capabilities of film/video enable it to record on location whatever the lens has focused on. But as a medium of communication it can be used to construct a discourse using those sounds and images to talk about something more than what is simply available to sensory perception. In other words, its power doesn't simply lie in its evidential capabilities - as shown in chapter 3 there are ample arguments to modify 'the camera never lies' thesis. The power of the medium lies in its use. Hence Eisenstein's and Brecht's admonition that the problem is not to say new things, but to present old information so that it strikes audiences anew - and in this way moves them to action.

One could argue that the film ends on a low note: a night shot of Driefontein in silhouette and mournful singing on the sound track - translated in subtitles:

> We the black nation weep for our land
>
> Children of Africa weep for the land.

Titles come up dedicating the film to the people of 28 places who have been removed or are under threat of removal. This ending is ambiguous: it is unclear whether the people of Driefontein have successfully resisted removal, and we leave them in the process of struggle; or whether their fate is sealed and all that is left is prayer.

As the Southern African Bishop's Conference is one of the producers of the film it is not surprising that the role of the church is prominent in the film. This produces a subtext: the clash of moral authority between church and state - made explicit by one of the clergy, Alf Dhlamini:

> This issome sort of a rotten immoral and unjust policy... in this that some of the people ...for instance...some of the few men have gone out to work...and the church preaches that whatever God puts together nobody will put asunder...this by way of marriage...But with the Department of Co- operation and Development... whatever God keeps together, man and wife, this department can undo at a given time..as it shows itself here at Nyanga, as it shows itself at any resettlement area.
>
> The people too are not fooled by the Christianity of the state:
>
> They do not serve God. If they were serving God...the way we begged ...and prayed...their hearts could have been formented. They would not have removed us. They stole us.

What is significant about the role of the church is that it is shown intervening not only on so-called 'moral' issues, but in political issues such as removals. Some Orders have collapsed the distinction between religious and political life. As the state acts in an increasingly autocratic and authoritarian way, and closes off the channels for civil redress by banning meetings and people, by detaining people without trial, and killing community leaders, so has the church acted on its moral authority which is recognised internationally as being 'above' the temporal authority of governments.

This film makes a valuable contribution to the *oeuvr*e of anti- apartheid film, as it not only shows us strategies of resistance, but also uses the specific codes of film to highlight these strategies.

Notes

1. After the project had been started it was discovered that the person who had made the initial offer of R5,000 was a South African police spy, as was Craig Williamson the IUEF contact person.(source: interview with Gavin Younge)
2. England: The Other Cinema and Concord Films; USA: California Newsreel; as well as by French, German and Dutch television.
3. The Other Cinema, London.
4. Interview with Gavin Younge, Cape Town, 1989.
5. Socialist Challenge, no 173, London, 20 November 1980; Morning Star, London, 7 November 1980 - in addition to sources cited below.
6. Imeson J: Monthly Film Bulletin, Vol 48 No 564, Jan 1981, London.
7. Morlan G: Southern Africa, Vol XIII No 7, Sept/Oct 1980.
8. Solanas and Getino: Toward a Third Cinema,Chanan M (ed): Twenty-five Years of the New Latin American Cinema, BFI, London, 1983.

Last Supper At Hortsley Street

This 16mm film, shot by Cliff Bestall with sound recordist Mike Gavshon, and edited by Jackie Le Cordeur, was directed by Lindy Wilson. It was presented at the Second Carnegie Inquiry into Poverty in South Africa in 1984, but was banned for a Cape Town and suburban arts festival - for which the proposed venues included Langa, Nyanga, Athlone and Woodstock - because it would "inflame feelings"[1].

Two features distinguish this film from many other South African documentaries: its perspective and camera style. Unlike other documentaries on removals, this film is less a dissertation on forced removals, than a 'short story' which deals with the thoughts, feelings and memories of people who must leave the home they love. The camera describes not only the topography of the landscape, but the fabric of the place: the cobbled streets; the cats that inhabit the dilapidated buildings; a place of mosques and churches; where friends drop in unannounced; and where children play, uninhibited, with the bits and pieces that make up their environment. All of this is reduced to a place of bulldozers and rubble, where only the mosques and churches stand, as even street signs have been removed to make way for the new signage which will deny other names and other places. Memory alone ensures that the past is not forgotten: it is made present through the recollections of two of the last remaining residents, a carpenter, Armien, and his wife, Latiefa.

The film does not function as an argument in the way demonstrated in chapter 3, for two reasons: there is no narrator who provides a logical argument; and secondly, the discourse of these participant witnesses is almost entirely the discourse of personal, individual feelings and thoughts. This can be seen in the vocabulary, sentence syntax, as well as the discursive way in which thoughts meander from reminiscences of the past to comments on what is immediate. This discourse is one which is conventionally found in essays or short stories, not in arguments.

The image track captures 'what is', providing the spacial and temporal cues for the construction of the 'plot' of this 'short story' which is composed of the following scenes: 1) in the family home; 2) a visit by a friend; 3) at home; 4) the removal; 5) Belhar; 6) the return visit. This structure offers a temporal progression - but there is no causal connection between scenes: the meaning of the film does not depend on the editing pattern. Instead, a meaning is the interpretation offered by the participant-witnesses - but there is no way of testing the 'truthfulness' or 'objectivity' of their memory. The film validates **their** memory and experience. It makes no comment on the relationship between individual memory and 'History'. In each of the scenes the camera is used to narrate the place - to describe it in such a way that it houses the memories and thoughts which the sound track records. Thus the relationship between sound and image is not denotative or illustrative, as in most other documentaries, but associative. Each scene opens up a space for reflection and memory, as will be shown in the following brief illustrations.

1. The family home: This scene sets the place which is at the heart of memory and reflection: Latiefa recalls her first meeting, as a shy young girl, with Armien who will become her husband; she recalls their marriage and the birth of their children. This past is juxtaposed with their present: "the community development was here again today...the group".

2. A friend visits. They sit around the kithen table talking: "if everybody had only stood together..if they had united...but they didn't...they wanted hot water...they can remove our homes, but not our feelings".

3. At home. The friend leaves and Armien and Latiefa sit outside their house looking at a book of photographs of District Six. These photographs also become a vehicle for reminiscences: the coon carnival on New Years Day; the home-made *konfyt;* Hanover Street; The Seven Steps; The Fish Market; Aunty Rosy's house; the shebeen. Each place represents a world of experience which memory casts in a particular light: "everybody was happy and gay...it was just **wonderful** in Hanover Street on New Years day".

The camera brings us back to the present, as we cut to sunset and the call of the Belaal: symbolic of the religious world which this family inhabits. The camera shows us Armien departing in his robes for the mosque, and Latiefa, similarly robed, prays at home. Her voice-over commentary explains: "that's why we still stay here: our faith...our faith is great".

This sequence is followed by supper: the last supper at Hortsley street at which the parents invoke the memory of the place as if it were already history: "which school did you go to?"

4. The move. This scene maintains the constant juxtaposition of times past and present; and of simultaneous events happening in different places. As one of the children plays unconcernedly, a huge removal truck comes into view in the background. The camera cuts to it and tracks with it till it is stationary. The camera then provides the omniscient view: one of the officials checking on the removal says, "wat se film mense is die?"; the children watch, play, squirm and cry; the mother watches and comments,

> for twenty years they've been trying to get people out...and they succeeded - even though we fought...you can't fight the law: he just goes on with his policies and his policies.

And as a fireplace, well-wrapped in blankets, is loaded onto the truck, she observes: "it's made from cast iron and very antique tiles". Finally everything is loaded, and the truck winds its way out of District Six and onto the highway. The father's voice on the sound track interprets what the camera observes:

> You see these trees here - who did build it? Who did build the trees and the poles you see in District Six? Every house here..every school, not the white people...but the black people, and the muslim people, and the coloured people...every road and every pole you see here was built with our skill...with our **skill**...our hearts ... our soul...our everything...And they just come and take it all away from us...our love...our happiness...They disturb our minds...they disturb our children's minds...

5.Belhar The area to which the family is moved is called Belhar - introduced to us through shots of people walking to the station at 6.00 am. A hand-held camera focuses on feet, and we trudge along with the people. As she is walking, one woman turns to the camera and says:

> Can't stick it anymore...when it comes to winter we're dredged wet...got to be in work because we got to find our way...walk like this old and young...it's terrible...run in the morning, run at night, and keep with the crowd.

The camera stays with the crowd and waits with them for the train. It moves about, revealing the scene, focusing on individuals and the group. We notice Armien as one of the group - not singled out for special attention, but we hear his thoughts:

> My feelings is way out...they put us in this uncivilised place...everything is mixed up...and hatred growing...who are the cause of all this? There must be somebody who is the cause...On the trains, in the roads ...they rob the people...they stab the people with knives, they rape the people...There's nothing there that protects us...but now we must wear weapons..to defend ourselves, our homes, our children...there's no phones...no nothing...no shops, there's nothing...it's a hard way.

This voice-over is not specifically related to the images we see - but taken together the sound and image patterns create an expressive unity which communicates the world of people who suffer removals. The visuals provide the exterior, surface world; the thoughts and reveries, the internal world. This internal world has often been deemed to be the domain of fiction, whereas documentaries are deemed appropriate for revealing the external world. This film collapses the distinction: sound and image patterns weave a text of past and present; external world and internal world; the individual and the social. The text is not organised into a 'coherent whole': it is simply multi-faceted. It shows the confusion felt by Armien, and his wife's assessment of their new house and her sense of dislocation. Being removed is essentially about being dislocated: taken out of one context and put into another - which is graphically shown in this film by the travelling shots down a boulevard in Belhar, with Table Mountain in the far distance. For Armien and Latiefa the mountain is the index of "civilisation", and the city's heart. This dislocation is poignantly expressed by this family as they have no political framework which can help them to understand the lot that has befallen them.

6. The return visit. Once more the mise-en-scene provides the space in which 'character revelation' is possible. We see the family winding its way across the flattened landscape. Stopping here, pointing there...remembering the past, and registering their present plight:

> I've got a weekly from Belhar in my pocket...I'll throw it here in District Six...and leave it here...Look at the mountain...look at the ships, look at the sea...my feelings are still here. There's not even a ghost to make you scared...This was our playground when I was a child...everything, it's all gone now...One day is one day...nothing is everlasting...Rome didn't last, Hitler didn't last...they won't last...Only the word of God lasts...this was the kitchen...

And so the discourse continues. The camera can reveal no more than what is present: the deserted space, and the people making their way through it. The children stop and play; bend to gather reeds; look about them; sit down dejectedly. For the most part they are silent. The family is silent.

Silence too is a part of being removed. The film ends as the sun sets, focusing on a few of the graphic images evoked by Armien's reverie:

> I sit on the stoep and my mind is so relaxed..I see the sea and I see the boats...I see the wind how it blows on the mountain...But in Belhar there is nothing, only sand you see...Here you can hear the sound of the birds and the sound of the trains...but not in Belhar..you hear nothing...you hear only sadness and sufferings...I know what they do...on the other hand I do **not** know what they do...I will ask my creator to forgive them...and Jesus also said, "O Father forgive them for they do not know what they do"....And I will ask the same thing now: "O Father, forgive them, they do not know what they do...

The light is low, and the camera reveals the mountain in long shot. From off screen one hears the sound of the Belaal. The camera pans till it finds the young son standing with his hands over his ears, on the edge of a rock, intoning the call. It is a poignant image: as the child has not spoken before, we are left to wonder what his thoughts and feelings are - what effect the removal has had on him.

Notes

1. No Festival light for District 6 film, by Marianne Thamm, Cape Times, 9 December 1986.

CROSSROADS

Crossroads, an informal settlement, began to grow on the outskirts of Cape Town in 1975. Filmmaker, Lindy Wilson, decided to "document the lives of some people" because "it seemed likely that the government would eventually demolish the camp as it had destroyed others"[1]. She describes her intention thus:

> I particularly wanted the implications of the pass laws to be explained by the people affected, to enable them to articulate why they felt compelled to remain in Cape Town with their families, and to bring this evidence onto South African television so that people could judge the issue for themselves[2].

The film operates on two levels. The first is a plea by a concerned outsider for Crossroads to be seen as the residents saw it. Firstly, as a place where wives and children could live with their husbands and fathers as a family - where they could share hardships and joy rather than being apart: the men in the city; the women and children in the reserves. And secondly, as a community - a collectivity of people living together, having built schools for their children, churches where they could worship, and a place where they could celebrate weddings and other traditional feasts.

The image track shows us Crossroads as a vibrant community, by focusing on children at school, people worshiping in churches they have built, women washing and sewing outside their homes; men doing metal work; bread and milk being delivered in the morning. This visual picture is constructed through a variety of shots which capture the living sense of the place. But it is the RADA[3] voice of the narrator, Janet Suzman, that mediates what we see. The voice is not the voice of the community, but the voice of reason and concern speaking over the visuals to others of her class. The effect of this code - that particular voice and the device of voice-over narration - is that it legitimises what we see: that draws out the ordinariness of women sewing, children playing, men doing metal work - even though it is outside and in the mud. The voice-over implicitly equates these images of 'home' with a middle class notion of 'home'. Her commentary is backed up by interviews with women who explain unequivocally that they want to be with their husbands - even if it means defying the Pass Laws.

The second level at which the film works is as an argument against the government's policy of migrant labour. The voice-over explains the history: the 1913 Land Act which allotted only 13% of the land to 70% of the people, hence the Reserves' inability to support its statutory population; the declaration of the Western Cape as a 'coloured' labour preference area, while both industry and the government required an increasing amount of unskilled African labour. The government's solution: the influx control laws stipulating which Africans had the 'right' to be in the city, so facilitating the migrant labour system. The only housing that the state sanctioned was 'single quarters' in barracks-styled hostels. But the women's solution was to move to town - to build the shacks of Crossroads where they could live as ordinary families.

The voice-over provides all the factual information which is illustrated with suitable images: sometimes black and white photographs, but mostly footage shot on location. This is interspersed with

interviews by an expert, Dr Francis Wilson, and the testimony of people who live in Crossroads. The voice-over dominates in its slow measured tones, accounting for the images within sequences and forming the link between sequences.

The people's voice, however, is not their own. Their testimony is dubbed in English, sometimes with a middle class voice. This stylistic device adds to the effect of someone speaking for them. This, together with the overpowering voice-over, subverts the filmmaker's intention of having the protagonists speak for themselves. It results in the tone of the film being a moral plea - aimed at those who are predisposed to be convinced by a RADA- voice backed by an expert: the 'real truth'. The underpinning discourse is therefore one of dialogue and negotiation, even though the film is a direct attack on the political and economic conditions which produce Crossroads.

The film was provisionally accepted for broadcasting by a senior SABC producer, but was then rejected by his colleagues[4]. On the 6 September 1978 the Directorate of Publications declared that Crossroads was "undesirable", and that the committee had "rejected it unconditionally"[5]. Most of the argument for its undesirability is based not on the representation of the issue, but on its exposure.

This struggle for exhibition demonstrates two things. Firstly, the belief by the filmmaker and the state that merely showing conditions in South Africa will lead to changes in practice. This is a contentious claim, and raises issues concerning the audience, the nature of the state, and the role that film can play within particular kinds of state.

The 'education' film was pioneered by John Grierson in post- war Britain, and was arguably effective because he was working within a state in which parliament was accountable to the electorate (**all** those over 18). Furthermore, there was a consensus about the norms and mores of political and social life. None of these conditions exists in South Africa: 'showing' and 'audience' are conditioned by the power relations within the South African state. The second issue which the banning and rejection of the film by SABC-TV raises is the power of the South African state: made manifest not only through the government's legislative and coercive control, but also through the workings of 'autonomous' bodies such as SABC television and the Publications Board.

One might well ask what the state has to fear from a film such as Crossroads. I suggest that they do not fear their own limited electorate will turn against them, but that a culture of the legitimacy of resistance will be forged. Furthermore, the filmmaker's belief that broadcast television is the medium that would enable people "to judge for themselves" is politically naive, as their judgements would be shaped by their socio- political milieu. The film is therefore far more useful as a 'teaching aid', directed to an audience that is committed to changing the conditions presented.

Notes

1. Wilson L: Why my film was banned, Index on Censorship, 4/1981, p37.
2. Ibid, p37/38.
3. RADA...Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, London.
4. Wilson, 1981, op cit., p38.
5. Ibid, p38: some of the reasons for undesirability are:

   4.1

   (a) Undesirable, aggravated one-sidedness...
   (b) Undesirable confrontation: Present:....
   (c) Undesirable confrontation: Future:...
   (d) Undesirable white reaction:...
   (e) Undesirable and prejudicial international reaction..
   (f) Undesirable inciting of foreign workers...

Katriver: End Of Hope

This video was produced for the Second Carnegie Enquiry into Poverty in South Africa in 1984. It was shot on low-band U-matic video and edited by members of the Journalism Department at Rhodes University, based on research carried out by Dr Jeff Peires of the History Department.

The video deals with the removal of the so-called 'coloured' people from the Katriver area of the Eastern Cape. The major weakness of the video is that it is historically confusing: it is difficult to follow the chronology of land settlement and dispossession. This major flaw can be attributed to the editing - the main technical device for ordering sequences - and to the voice-over narration which does not adequately signal the relation between sequences. For example, the video starts off with one of the residents singing a war-time song[1], and is followed by another resident recounting how his grandfather had been given land because they had fought in a war, but the viewer cannot be sure that the two wars referred to are the same. In fact, the voice- over does not draw a clear distinction between events and issues related to the 'Bont Oorlog', and to the Second World War.

However, despite this major flaw, one still comes away with the sense that the Katriver people were direct descendants of those who had once had land allocated to them by Queen Victoria. But, in addition to this, it also shows how this fact has many meanings. In the words of the local Commissioner, Stockenstroom, the reason the land was originally settled was

> to collect the remnants of the Hottentot race...to save them from extirpation...to civilise and Christianise them...

But the voice-over notes of this same settlement that it was "to be a buffer zone to protect white settlers". And a descendant of the settlers remembers it this way:

> In the Bont Oorlog my grandfather was taken to fight. When the war was over...Mr Stockenstroom took the captain and their soldiers and placed them here...and said the war is over, now I'm sending you home...Izak Draghoender...stay in Readsdale...It's your property that I give you...your inheritance for your dying...you made this place free...

The forces of dispossession were the wily manoeuvrings of capitalist tobacco farmers who wanted the fertile lands; the fact that people did not take legal transfer of their properties; a wily money lender who asked for land as a security against his loans; the creation of the Ciskei Bantustan by the South African government. All of this culminated in the 1980s threat of removal. In the words of Mr Dan Bailey, Chairman of the Katriver Association:

> Now we come to stand before this problem: the people have to be moved away. But we don't know where

The merit of this video is its mode of representation. It typically uses a combination of voice-over and interviews to tell its story, but the voice-over is very different from the 'objective' voice-over of most films and videos. As demonstrated above, it shows 'history' to be no more than **a**

mode of explanation. While retaining the function of a general explanation which links sequences, this voice-over is clearly not a neutral observer or the voice of 'History', but the voice of history from the people's point of view. This is clear from the affective epithets used in the explanatory discourse and by the inflections of tone. For example:

> Robert Godlonton was the **reactionary** editor of the Grahamstown Journal...These men **condemned** the Katriver people as a set of lazy paupers and Godlonton launched a **vicious** press compaign in support of the vagrancy law to drive the people into farm labour...
>
> It was the last stand of the **unfortunate** Xhoi nation. Ultimately it was doomed to failure, but it produced moments of **true heroism**
>
> Solomon...was **so** kind he even erected a tombstone for his dog...but his methods of book-keeping did not improve...
>
> The people lacked the formal knowledges and techniques to challenge this great public figure and his lawyer...
>
> **Crooked** agents, **greedy** shop keepers, and economic hard times knocked out the Katriver properties one by one...

The underlying assumption is that history is always a story from some-one's point of view: in this case the point of view of those who have experienced the events. This effect is reinforced on occasion, when for example, the image track shows a pen pointing to details on a map while the voice-over explains. This creates the effect of people leaning over the map - the voice-over and us the viewers. In this way the voice-over is not part of a hierarchy of discourses which it heads, but is simply one explanation from a clearly identified point of view: the people's. This interpretation is reinforced by the way in which the film as a whole is framed between the opening and closing sequences: the people's memory - opening with a song, and closing with a valediction[2].

Another feature of the sound track is the discourse of the witnesses: they tell stories, sing songs, read from letters, interrupt each other. They are not tied into the question/answer structure which is typical of most documentaries - in which the voice-over or the interviewer controls what happens, and which creates the effect of witnesses being used to support another's argument. Instead, the video opens up a space in which people can recollect and review their own history - it is an active process which the making of the video seems to have encouraged. This, together with the use of live location sound (birdsong, telephones ringing) which establishes the extra-textual reality, adds to the effect of allowing the audience to enter into the discussions that are in process.

The image track is also used in an imaginative way. When the voice-over provides contextual information, a range of kinds of images are used: live footage, diagrams, maps, monochrome photographs, and paintings. This creates a textured image track in which one is constantly aware of the interplay between sound and image. In this way the viewer is made aware of a text being created - of history being constructed, not merely 'recorded'. The camera assists in this, for not only does it

'capture' what is there, seemingly of its own unmotivated volition, but it is directed by those who speak: it pans to encompass what they want us to see. Because the camera is a 'detached' camera - an instrument directed not only by the videomakers, but also by the participants in the video - it is not inappropriate when we see the sound recordist in shot. In this way the videomakers also give viewers an insight into the very process of production.

The video thus works well at the level of style: it demonstrates a range of visual and aural options and the infinite possibilities of sound-image combinations which assist in meaning production. In this it differs markedly from most other videos produced during the mid-eighties, and demonstrates the involvement of those who were engaged in theoretical debates concerning video and film production.

Notes

1. See note 21 of Chapter 4.
2. See Appendix 3: Piet Draghoender's Lament

PART OF THE PROCESS

Part of the Process is the ambiguous title of a film, produced by the Inter-church Media Programme (IMP) Super-8 Film Unit in 1982, on the removal of people from Pageview in Johannesburg. The title could be interpreted as referring to the removals under the Group Areas Act being part of the Nationalist Government's process of consolidating their rule, or it could be referring to the film itself: filmmaking as part of the process of historical recovery and resistance.

The idea for the film came from members of the film unit. Their general motivation was that film could be used "to show the truth, injustice...to show specific issues like resettlement... inhumanities" which "through evoking compassion" could "bring about some kind of change"[1]. But Paul Weinberg makes it clear that merely 'documenting' is not enough. He added:

> I think that the question that also confronts photographers is: what is the solution...beyond poverty...beyond the horrors of apartheid...What are we working towards...Where do you identify ...what side do you take...and what stand do you take to bring that about?[2]

I would argue that Part of the Process is partially successful in its first aim: that of revealing a situation which the people who experienced it believed was unjust. The voice-over informs us that what we will witness is "Pageview in the last stages of destruction". The visuals show vast open spaces and buildings being demolished. Most of the Pageview scenes indicate that most of the people had already moved - though some families remain.

The structure of the video is fairly conventional: a voice-over provides the contextual/historical information which is supported by interviews with social actors, and by illustrative footage. The argument of the film equates the Pageview removals with those of District Six in Cape Town, as well as with the rural removals occurring nationwide. The voice-over informs us that although the Nationalist government is responsible for the Group Areas Act, "the concept of separate development goes back to the days of white settlement...to the Land Act of 1913". A witness, Chairman of ACTSTOP, Mr Saloge, explains the political motivation for the Group Areas Act:

> to destroy the unity that existed over the years within black groups

and adds that

> the **economic** reason why the Group Areas Act was implemented against the Indian...(was) an attempt to destroy the Indian as a trading group. The trading class offered up the early political leaders of the community...by destroying the trading class they hoped to destroy the political strength of the Indian.

From this it is clear that at least two political discourses are present: the discourse of "group" which the State initiated, and which is part of the consciousness of the oppressed, as well as a discourse of class - which cuts through "group" identity. This is evidenced later in the video when an unidentified witness states his objection to moving into the newly provided Oriental Plaza:

I feel that whether the Paza as a commercial centre is viable or not, or successful or not, is not the question involved. The question is that it should be a trading area where **all** races should be allowed to trade. Whereas the government saw fit to make it into a strictly Indian conglomeration of traders which I was not willing to accept.

The film never probes the ideological issues involved. In this respect it is stuck within a liberal conception of documentary as a genre which simply records events, offering 'truth' to the audience. In so far as the film refuses to engage in these debates - which the situation itself presented - it ends up endorsing a politics based on 'group identity' (the politics of the state). It presents "the community" as a homogeneous group - even though witnesses testify to the class divisions within the group. Furthermore, in an interview with Paul Weinberg, one of the filmmakers, he acknowledges that

> There was the Pageview Residents Association...there were two organisations...I remember the one was in conflict with the other but they "didn't show there was a split"[3].

This surely contradicts the filmmakers' one intention of showing the 'truth', and also their other concerning political solutions, or the question of "what are we working towards". The filmmakers themselves pre-empt this question - for instead of showing the ideological debates that the removal issue raised, they themselves chose a side, closed off the debate and presented the issue as an anti-apartheid struggle. As Weinberg himself noted in an interview:

> This was 1982...it was a time that a lot of thinking had gone into the reform process...how to win over a certain class of blacks, and Pageview was in a sense a testing ground.

This may well have been a view with hindsight, but the film gives no hint of this dimension of the conflict. Instead, it sticks to a fairly safe liberal politics: Pageview had been an 'open' area since the 1890s; in 1950 the Group Areas Act was passed; Pageview was subsequently declared a 'white' group area; the largely Indian population had to move; this caused economic hardship and severe social dislocation; they have been moved to Lenasia where conditions are terrible. All of this is supported by the spoken testimony of witnesses, with illustrative live footage, or black and white photographs.

Another discourse is also present: that of resistance. We are told in the first few minutes of the video that by the time the video is viewed, Pageview will have been destroyed. In other words, their resistance, if any, has been unsuccessful. But, as already noted, the particular discourse of struggle and resistance concerning Pageview is suppressed. Instead, what is invoked is the past history of resistance to Apartheid legislation. Thus the text provides us with a curious conundrum: what is present (the political conflicts) is made absent; what is absent (past campaigns) is made present. This 'device' - if it was conscious - provides a forum for old leaders to recall past struggles: but this also tends to reinforce the view that documentaries can capture 'truth' and that events frozen in memory yield only one meaning. Mr M Saloge, the last president of the Transvaal Indian Congress, recalls the protests to the 1946 Asiatic Land Tenure Act, the Defiance Campaign of 1952, and the anti-pass campaigns of

1960. This memory also allows another witness to reflect on the different forms that political struggle has taken:

> Because Vrededorp was a closely knit and well organised community - we were able to organise the people much better than now in Lenasia...

Another difference between the 1950s and 1960s and now...in the early days it was much more of a popular movement. But with the bannings of the 1960s, political struggle took on a different tone and a different content. Resort to the courts...more action was taken by individuals than at a popular level.

In this respect, the film is an important vehicle for a discussion about the strategies of struggle open to the disenfranchised - but it balks at more fundamental questions such as the point of view of memory, or the political philosophy which underpins particular strategies of struggle.

The voice-over operates like a deus ex machina who papers over conflicts and contradictions by foregrounding the past and by turning to a more positive present:

> Out of this another culture has formed. In 1980 there were protests in Lenasia by boycotting classes...Protests about racially oriented sports organisations...residents and civic organisations have been formed...In November 1981, 85% of South African Indians boycotted the government-established South African Indian Council elections...thereby pledging themselves to nothing less than a democratic, non-racial South Africa.

This is accompanied by illustrative footage of graffiti saying: "this system stinks"; a black and white photograph of a man holding a placard which reads: "normal cricket means sell-out - we don't need international cricket to survive"; a poster publicising an anti-SAIC meeting in Lenasia; and a banner at a public rally saying "a vote for the SAIC is a vote for Apartheid".

The video ends on a positive note showing footage of people at a public meeting applauding, while the voice-over sums up:

> People in the audience are from Lenasia. Theirs is one of the battles the people of South Africa have fought...until South Africa becomes a free and just society.

This sound and image combination could either be read as the people applauding the off-screen diegetic speaker, or the voice- over. The video ends with a long shot in soft focus of a mosque, while Indian music comes up on the sound track. This once more reminds us that although an anti-apartheid perspective has been presented, the film has left absent questions concerning ethnicity and class, and the more fundamental issue raised by the filmmaker himself:

> beyond the horrors of apartheid...what are we working towards?[4]

Notes

1. Interview with Paul Weinberg, Johannesburg, 18 August 1988.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.

FOUR FILMS BY KEVIN HARRIS: The Right Time,(1982); Tomorrow's Parents (1986); The Struggle from Within (1985), No Middle Road to Freedom (1985)

The The Right Time was made in 1982 by Kevin Harris in association with the Johannesburg Family Planning Association. It combines documentary and narrative fiction. Harris noted in an interview that he spent 10 months with members of a Soweto youth club discussing the problems of growing up in the townships. The fictional sections of the film derive from this collaboration. As Harris commented:

> From sharing all this information - them sharing it with me...I condensed it into 4 case histories...taking from all...of typical situations that lead to the situation of unwanted pregnancies. Then they themselves played the parts, they found the aunts and uncles, mothers and fathers...the houses...So the whole thing was very much their film - what they wanted to say about their situation...and I was just the transducer - the agent of turning that into a visual medium.

The four typical stories chosen are: 1) a teen-age love affair which ends in an unwanted pregnancy; 2) a migrant worker makes his schoolgirl lover pregnant and then deserts her; 3) a schoolgirl associates with 'the wrong crowd' and is sexually used by unknown men; 4) a young couple does it 'the right way' - labola, family planning, planned pregnancy. This section of the film ends with an English - speaking voice-over promotional statement for family planning. An English voice-over provides the documentary address, commenting upon the fiction which is played out to its audience. The film simultaneously proposes two addresses and two subjectivities - a young Sesotho speaking audience who would be drawn into the narrative fiction, and an English speaking audience, outsiders, watching a reconstruction of 'typical' township stories.

The next sequence deals with the consequences of these four situations, namely: difficult lives for the teenage couple; an abandoned baby for the unmarried schoolgirl; abortion and the end of childbearing for the third young woman; but for the last couple, a happy nuclear family two years later. This section ends with the English-speaking voice-over exhorting the viewer:

> As a young woman think how you'd like your life to turn out...

This is accompanied by single images of the choices made, reinforced by the voice-over: "the choice is yours".

The implication of the film is that township conditions create these situations. This has been alluded to within the narrative frameworks chosen. But once again documentary strategies are used to comment on the fictionalised inserts. The film ends with a voice-over address to the mothers who should have helped their daughters, and to the fathers and lovers:

> which of these men and the way they have behaved is most like you?
>
> The viewer is reminded by illustrative images from the four situations.

The film is a promotion for family planning within the context of black urban townships. Its tone is didactic. The visual images chosen give us an insight into adolescent lives in the townships, but the style of combining documentary and fiction is jarring, because one is unable to judge the extent of analogy.

In many ways the film undercuts Harris's process of discussion and participation. His choice of style contradicts his statement that:

> It wasn't my film ...it was what they wanted to say about their situation...and I was just the transducer - the agent of turning that into a visual medium.

The content of the fiction might have been what they wanted to say, but the content and the tone of the English voice-over was definitely the moralistic voice of bourgeois adult authority. And the tone of the address of the film as a whole is Harris's.

A follow-up was made four years later, called Tomorrow's Parents. Harris describes the film in the following way:

> Tomorrow's Parents looked at the new situation in the townships...after 1984, life in the townships just wasn't the same again. With troops occupying the townships, with the kind of war that the youngsters were engaged in...meeting with these youngsters and discussing and trying to clear the way to find out what we wanted to say...and what they wanted to say....Because they were putting their necks on the line, because what they were saying was that they were involved in the struggle, but what they were concerned about was the total anarchy and breakdown in moral standards which they felt was delaying the struggle, if anything...basically parent-child relationships in the present township situation.

The structure of the film is as follows:

1) context sketched through narration with illustrative footage;

2) a series of 'stories' about a break in communication between the youth and their parents told by individual youth and concluding with an 'ideal family' - linked by South African singer, Edie Niederlander's song Bitter Fruit;

3) A proposed 'solution' in the Marlborough House Youth Club discussion group - which becomes the title: "Tomorrow's Parents". The discussion focuses on issues such as contraception, pregnancy, alcohol abuse - which is then illustrated through the use of fictionalised accounts;

4) An imaginary playing out of 'ideal parenting' - the Western nuclear family;

5) "Is this only a black problem" - NO....images of fictionalised illustration to show that communication breakdown exists amongst all colour groups;

6) Conclusion: the English-speaking voice-over declares:

> We are all in this together...We must think about our responsibility to our children....bring people together in united action in the struggle...

The camera zooms out to a long shot of a black township.

Both these films illustrate the extent to which the filmmaker's political awareness and involvement subtlely shape a production. Harris is aware that economic and political conditions are responsible for the situation he describes, but he is unable to bring these to bear meaningfully. They are merely signalled to in the films, but the relationship between deep-structure and surface phenomena is not explored.

Tomorrow's Parents suffers from this in particular, because the situation in the schools and the parent-youth relationship were some of the major concerns of the Soweto Parents Crisis Committee. Admittedly this organisation was formed as a specific response to the situation in schools: the banning of the student organisation, COSAS; troops in the townships; the detention of students, teachers and workers; the impending 1985 Department of Education and Training (DET) final examinations. These were the issues and organisations which formed an important part of the fabric of the time that Harris's film purports to deal with, and that the voice- over alludes to in a sweeping introductory statement:

> Since the 1984 anti-rent campaign in the Vaal Triangle

And later:

> The solution of the unrest can only be changed if these things are changed.

These voice-over statements refer to a critical situation, but the film is unable to show the relationship between issues highlighted and the context. This division is formally expressed and maintained through the division between narrative fiction elements and the documentary voice-over . The narrative fiction elements describe or illustrate problems such as alcohol abuse amongst school-children; teen-age pregnancy; communication breakdown between parents and children. The documentary voice-over, which makes direct address possible, delineates the line of argument the filmmaker chooses to highlight - namely, that a lack of communication is at the heart of this disturbance, and "the solution" to the unrest can only be arrived at through the restitution of this "breakdown".

This argument is premised on the liberal notion that ideas are free-floating and can therefore have an effectivity independent of material conditions. Hence the concluding statement that improved communication between parents and the youth and amongst the youth themselves can redress the economic and political situation in the townships. Harris seems to be mistaking symptoms for causes. His film addresses the symptoms produced by the political and economic system, rather than focusing on the conditions which produce the symptoms. The film might be useful at the level of observation, but it fails to provide, within its structure, an explanation for the relationship between the phenomena it describes and the deep structure it alludes to. The only explanation provided is an idealist one, which is consonant with the organisations with whom Harris worked.

Later work included films like The Struggle From Within (1985) and No Middle Road To Freedom (1985), done in association with the South African Council of Churches (SACC). Harris describes The Struggle From Within:

> The Struggle From Within looked at the Referendum in 1983 to the Nationalist government riding the crest of the wave...Swooping into 1984, about to put the final bits of the puzzle into place, but ignoring black opinion...and the rise of the UDF....the elections, the blow up in the townships...

And of No Middle Road To Freedom (1985) he says:

> It kicked back to the 1982 SADF raid into Maseru...one of the really early ones - where children were shot in their beds and the father of the house was wrapped in a blanket and set on fire...very awful stuff...
>
> Then the Pretoria bomb blast which happened in 1983...so I just looked at this pattern that was being set up...
>
> Basically the hub of it was a meeting in Soweto where prominent leaders and people got together...in reaction to that raid...there was a service and anger and aspirations were expressed.

The distinguishing feature of both The Struggle From Within and No Middle Road To Freedom is that they use the codes of international broadcast television address. That this is an institutionalised discourse becomes apparent when one recalls and reflects on the discourse of Kevin Harris, the independent filmmaker. On speaking to Harris one is struck by his quiet sincerity:

> If they (white South Africans) could see, if I could show them then they would have to say the system is wrong and we can't be part of it...

Later Harris spoke of the "schizophrenia" of working in the townships by day, being confronted with that reality, and then returning to his white suburban home at night. As a filmmaker, his problem was "how do I show this". His chosen way is evident in The Struggle From Within and No Middle Road To Freedom, which I have described as using the "codes of international broadcast television address". What I am pointing to is the disjuncture between Harris's speaking voice and Harris's film voice as enunciated in these two films. This distinction foregrounds the question of 'the voice of documentary', which Bill Nichols describes in the following way:

> By "voice" I mean something narrower than style: that which conveys to us a sense of a text's social point of view, of how it is speaking to us and how it is organising the materials it is presenting to us. In this sense "voice" is not restricted to any one code, or feature, such as dialogue or spoken commentary, voice is perhaps akin to that intangible, moire-like pattern formed by the unique interaction of all a film's codes, and it applies to all modes of documentary[1].

I believe that in The Struggle From Within and No Middle Road To Freedom Kevin Harris forfeited his voice as a filmmaker. Instead we have the voice of 'international television

documentary', which presents itself as 'the voice' or 'no voice' - spoken from nowhere, simply presenting 'the facts'. Harris's choice of representation of the South African reality in No Middle Road To Freedom and The Struggle From Within is but one choice of many, conditioned by factors such as the mode of production of a film and its perceived place of distribution and exhibition. It seems that Harris's film can be accounted for by his own political position which can be described as liberal; his association with the SACC whose analysis is also liberal humanist in its appeal for "basic human rights"; and European and American TV stations who would also favour the broadcasting of a film premised on these understandings, and coded according to its 'norms'.

Notes

1. Nichols B: The Voice of Documentary in Nichols B (ed) Movies and Methods Vol II, University of California Press, Berkely, 1985, p260/261.

R'TLA BONA

R'Tla Bona (We will see), a 16mm film 'about' a Learn and Teach literacy project in Lenyenye, Tzaneen, in the Northern Transvaal, was directed by Elaine Proctor. This project is one of the satellite projects connected with the Ithuseng Community Health Centre which is the subject of the film, Ithuseng, directed by Lindy Wilson. Although the subject matter is fairly sim'lar, I wish to point out the differences between these two films which can be summed up in the following way:

> R'Tla Bona: an aesthetics of SPACE (via the camera) :
> decentred indirect address (cf Newsreel)
> : unseated English, Northern Sotho is crowned.
>
> Ithuseng : an aesthetic of sound
> :indirect address mainly by a single speaker who 'controls' the scope of the video.
> : English reigns - who is the audience?

One of the key features of R'Tla Bona is that the mode of verbal address is in Northern Sotho, with English sub-titles. English speaking viewers are made aware that the film is not primarily for them: they are welcome, but not the focus of the address. In Jean -Paul Sartre's words:

> the Third World finds itself and speaks to itself through his voice[1].

Not only is the dialogue in an African language, signifying its address to others of similar tongue, but there is also the sense that the dialogue is not for another, but for themselves. It is the dialogue of rural women, suffering exploitation, hunger, forced removals, illiteracy, unemployment: speaking to each other to try to find ways to alleviate this condition. We, through the camera, are merely bystanders: we overhear what they say, but we are not directly addressed.

The film starts off with a long shot (LS) of a man walking up a hill. He finally sits down, and speaking to an off-camera interviewer, explains the significance of the dusty, hilly, scrubby terrain we see:

> around here, Tzaneen, Lebowa is divided into about 5 pieces, and then
> Gazankulu is then also divided into 7-10 pieces. But one can't distinguish
> which is Lebowa and which is Gazankulu, because boundaries are ill-defined
> ...a river here, a road there, a wire line divides Lebowa and Gazankulu.

The audio track reveals that the seeming integrity of the surface geographical space cloaks a divided political reality. Spoken from atop a hill (indexical of the role he plays), this address in English contextualises the images we are about to see. Who is this address for? Is it significant that the contextualising voice is in English, but the voices of experience and detail are in N.Sotho. Is this perhaps indexical of the relationship between the speakers of these two tongues? Throughout the video there is an interplay between this voice which contextualises and explains, and the voices of experience.

The voices of experience are all in Northern Sotho. We hear them speaking from where they are: a mother washing her young son; two women on their way to the literacy centre; women sitting in the veld during a lesson; women in a wooden literacy centre cum creche; the gardener in his garden. Their locale is a visual sign signifying the place from which they speak: the place of poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, women without men; women struggling to bring up children in dry, dusty, barren conditions.

The style of the interviews is very different from that usually encountered in documentaries. Sometimes we see the interviewers in-shot, sometimes not. But the pattern is the same: people introduce themselves, pass homilies regarding themselves and their situation and only then does the 'interview begin. The questions asked by the Sotho speaking interviewer operate on two levels: the immediate, 'what is'; and secondly, how that came to be. With the gardener it proceeded like this:

Do you live here?...Where did you come from?...What place is this here?...Are there learning groups here where adult people teach each other to read and write?

And only then:

> Why did Dr Mamphele think it was important to contact Learn and Teach?...
> Why did you start this garden?

and with the literacy co-ordinator, Nancy Banyinyi and the women of her circle:

> "Oh Nancy Banyinyi, are you married into the Banyinyi family?
> Oh I see, your father was from the Vicki family?
> What do you use this room for?
> It can be taken away from you?
> What is your view of the Homeland system?
> Has this division affected your life in any way?
> Oh, they have troubled you!"

As viewers we become privileged eavesdroppers of a discussion between people who speak from the same place. There is a real sense of them talking to each other, not, as is usually the case, of an outsider trying to get inside information from the people or community she/he is interviewing.

The style of the answers is in similar vein: there is no rush. Often answers come by way of stories, some of them poignantly humorous. One woman was motivated to join the literacy classes because she couldn't read "beware of the dog" signs on farm gates and got bitten. Another couldn't read the prices of goods in supermarkets which are self-service and once had to put goods back because she didn't have enough money - she went home empty handed. Yet another received a letter from her husband and took it to a friend to read for her, but the reader deceived her and said her husband was angry with her and wanted her to return to her parental home - which she did, to the chagrin of her husband when he returned.

While these verbal stories are being told, the camera often tells its own - simply, and in the vernacular. It focuses on a child carrying one younger than himself: we follow the entrance, slight hesitation, bewilderment, eyes seeking someone; finding what they seek, the unsteady steps to the

object of that search; the precious cargo being handed over to a 'mother'. The child finds his own place to sit down and becomes part of the larger story being told. Generally, cuts are only used **between** sequences. Very few intra-sequence cuts are used, so that the visual style of the camera complements the verbal address. It is slow and measured, finding the ordinary: a dripping roof; an escaped chicken that must be caught; children playing; women returning at sunset with loads on their heads. This is the iconography of ordinary, everyday life. This is what exists beneath and between and beyond the verbal address which seeks to tie it down at points.

Between these two forms of verbal and visual address, between explanations of the general and details of the particular, certain understandings emerge:

1) Many people couldn't read and write.
2) Their needs to read and write.
3) The poverty - malnutrition - disease cycle.
4) How 'arbitrary' borders affect water rights which affect the survival of communities.
5) How the bantustan system divides people:

I am married to a Sotho man, but I am a Shangaan. If they move the Shangaan people out of Lebowa...what will become of me? Will they separate me from my children?

6) The violence of the bantustan system:

Before we were divided like this we could go to any hospital that was near our homes. Now we can only go to a hospital for Shangaan people...I know of children who have died on their mothers' backs. I have seen it.

7) "The authorities like this, but the people do not"..
8) "Terrible tension has developed since the homelands were established".

This list could be extended, but is merely illustrative of what is being conveyed. How we receive this information is determined by our political beliefs and our various contexts for understanding. There is no verification beyond an acceptance (or not) of the people who make these claims. The camera appears to find them randomly: some more articulate than others; some vocal, some not. No intra-textual or extra-textual proof is provided as would be expected of an academic (historical) discourse.

One could argue that there is once again the confusion between the relationship between sound and image. Sometimes the soundtrack indicates that we should not believe what we see; but for the most part it works in unison with the image track to create a diegesis which we interpret as life in the villages around Tzaneen. Our belief is based on the basic integrity imputed to sound recording and camera equipment. The Bazinian style of shooting further encourages this - and can of course be criticised on precisely these grounds.

This film not only offers a verbal and visual testimony to the conditions in Lenyenye and its surrounds, but also a different South African aesthetic, characterised by

1) the style of interview
2) the tone of the interviews
3) The use of stories as modes of telling
4) The use of the camera to tell its own story simultaneously to the one being told by the audio track - and not merely illustrative of it.
5) The use of live location sound to signify the historic real
6) An emphasis on groups, and not individuals

A few images puzzled me: the Learn and Teach group of women dancing and singing; the group of religious men dancing and singing; the group of people dancing and singing at the end of the film. It could be argued that these shots are motivated. They are certainly colourful, lively and the accompanying soundtrack is very engaging. But it seems to me that singing and dancing have become an almost obligatory sign to stamp the 'Africanness' of films and videos - in much the same way that the Chanchada films functioned in Brazilian cinema. It is a sign which says many things and has been used in many ways - not least of all by the state to connote the otherness of black culture. This great other then becomes known for its singing and dancing (the happy blacks myth is advanced), but not for their achievements in art, literature or political leadership. It is an image which, I think, should be well thought through before being gratuitously used.

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