Body Language and Culture:
An exploration of the interface
in terms of power relations in
aspects of the South African
intercultural context

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Abstract

This thesis examines body language and social power relations of class, race and gender, in aspects of intercultural non-verbal communication in South Africa. It is an attempt to draw together studies of body language that arise within divergent, often isolated, disciplines and published works which have been divided between the popular and the scientific. A cultural studies approach is used because it explicitly links power relations and communication, and is therefore able to offer a framework in which disparate threads from different disciplines can be drawn together to facilitate a broader understanding of body language within its social context.

In Section I, popular and academic texts are examined in terms of epistemological and social power relations which are seen to inform their production and consumption. While in Section II, social power relations are examined, as they impact upon everyday experiences of body language in South Africa. Data in this section derives from interviews, observation and textual sources. There is an attempt to restore popular perceptions and experiences of body language as objects worthy of study.

It is concluded that power has an impact on body language in everyday life which has been largely ignored by academic studies of nonverbal communication. The impact of social power relations should be examined and cultural studies provides the best means to do so. Body language might, in turn prove a useful tool for cultural studies analysis.
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A revised version of that paper has since been published in the October 1994 issue of Communicare, and is to be reprinted, with their permission, on the UNISA Communication Course, as compulsory reading material.

None of the other material that follows has been published unless it is cited as such.

Finally, I would like to thank my students and my alter ego Cherry The Clown, for financial support, inspiration and for contributing material input.
DECLARATION:

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Unless otherwise acknowledged I bear the burden of the work that follows, good and bad.

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The only work of which I was unaware, until a very late stage, was that of Nancy Henley. Where she has been acknowledged, I had often arrived at the same, or similar, conclusions independently. I am reassured that she like those acknowledged above also examines body language and power, even if in a limited fashion.
DEDICATION:

TO THE ONE PERSON, WHO ALWAYS BELIEVED IN ME,
NO MATTER, WHAT I DID,
AND WHO WOULD HAVE BEEN PROUD OF THIS, TOO;
THOUGH HE WOULD NEVER ADMIT IT,
THANKS, DAD.

THIS ONE'S FOR YOU.

Ronald Owen Paxton Esquire
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INTRODUCTION

Body language is a topic that has not been studied extensively in South Africa. Yet it is one that has an important impact on communication, and therefore on the daily lives of most South Africans. It is not only in South Africa however that people of different cultures interact in close contact with one another. Applying a cultural studies perspective to body language leads to an increased understanding of everyday communication; whether such communication occurs in South Africa or beyond its borders.

It is argued here that such an application has benefits for the field of body language research. The aim of adopting a cultural studies approach to body language is to restore everyday bodily communication as an area worthy of academic appraisal, and to provide a unifying thread to unite previously disparate areas of enquiry.

In attempting to formulate the co-mingling of cultural studies and body language it is noteworthy that there are several strands arising from the cultural studies project that weave their way throughout the fabric of discussion. The primary thread is provided by power relations, which inform all of the subsequent threads. These include an examination of epistemology, discussions of major paradigms in the field, and of the South African socio-political context as a whole.

There are several questions that have to be dealt with before an attempt can be made to contextualise such an analysis in terms of aspects of the South African intercultural context. Before body language can be examined in any depth, it is important to develop a clearer understanding of just how the methods and practices adopted by students of bodily communication1 have informed and constructed their practice.

Body language studies have not previously examined power relations at the macro-level. Methodological problems have been responsible in a large part for the focus on interpersonal dyadic communication and small groups rather than on attempts to develop a macro-level understanding of body language or bodily communication.

The thesis is divided into two major parts. The first section provides the background to the theoretical discussion and questions guiding the research process. This discussion is supported by background and introductory information in three areas: body language, the cultural studies approach, as well as both past and present methodologies in these areas.
Chapter One defines the basic terms and scope of the enquiry by outlining areas of overlap between body language and cultural studies. The discussion centres around Richard Johnson's definition of cultural studies posited in Punter's *Introduction to Contemporary Cultural Studies* (1982). Brief references are made to Stuart Hall and Richard Johnson (as directors of the Birmingham School where British Cultural Studies was first established); to Lawrence Grossberg, an influential voice in American cultural studies; and to the work in progress at the Centre for Cultural and Media Studies at the University of Natal in Durban where I have been situated.

Johnson's understanding of the social moments involved in the production and consumption of social texts is linked, in this chapter, to areas of overlap with body language research such as: communication theory, semiotics, feminist theory and to broad questions such as ethnicity and intercultural communication.

Body language as a term is associated with popular texts and in Chapter Two, popular body language texts available in South Africa are examined in terms of their contents and themes. A detailed semiotic analysis of their covers is undertaken. This chapter demonstrates the influence on popular texts of social power relations, extant in the societies which produce and/or consume them. Two types of power relation are examined epistemological power and the relationship between popular and academic texts; and the social relations that are perceived to be important in everyday life.

A historical understanding of body language and the relationship between language and body language is central to many previous research approaches and to developments in the field of non-verbal communication studies. A discussion of such questions and approaches therefore forms the focus of Chapter Three. This section also introduces some of the methodological understandings that underpin later chapters. Phenomenological understandings of the body, developed by Maurice Merleau-Ponty in *The Phenomenology of Perception* (1962) are used here, along with the work of Marcel Jousse and R.G. Collingwood, to critique conceptions of scientific objectivity and the advisability of attempting a scientific examination of the body from a rarefied 'objective' distance.

Academic approaches to non-verbal communication are examined in Chapter Four to determine links to language debates, to popular works and their themes, and to social power relations. Ray L. Birdwhistell developed a structural methodology for the annotation and analysis of bodily communication in *Kinesics in Context* (1971), based on structural linguistics. A discussion of his work, together with that of Albert Scheflen (1972) and Adam Kendon, who have followed him in examining the interrelationship between language, gesture and social communication, provides some insight into communication in group contexts. A detailed understanding of social communication and the social context of body language, still has to be developed, as Kendon (1992) himself acknowledges.
Some reference is also made to the work of Nancy Henley (1977) in *Power, Sex and Nonverbal Communication*. Focusing on culture, power and the body as a site of power struggles and the development and expression of socio-cultural meaning, has been part of some feminist and philosophical work. Two works are reference points in this regard, that of Emily Martin *The Woman in the Body: A Cultural Analysis of Reproduction* (1987) and of Alison Jagger and Susan Bordo (eds.) *Gender/Body/Knowledge* (1989). Martin uses a cultural studies type of approach to study womans’ experiences of their bodies in contrast to that of the medical profession while Jagger and Bordo examine philosophical approaches and epistemological understandings of the body.

Erving Goffman’s *Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, offers some basic insights with regard to the social construction of roles and role behaviour. Semioticians also look at social codes as they mediate reality and allow us to interpret the world around us. This thesis argues however that applying such understandings in practice and attempting to include them in methodological constructions when looking at body language is often problematic.

The second section deals with South African body language in everyday lived experience.

One of the initial questions was to try to determine what is known and understood about body language in South Africa and to provide the basis for further research. Chapter Five therefore briefly outlines the research choices made in developing this project (further information is supplied in the appendix). The appendix thus deals with underlying hypotheses, and provides some analysis of research problematics. The question of epistemology and the hegemony of the dominant methodologies mentioned in Chapter One is developed throughout these methodological discussions. The limitations of the pilot study are acknowledged and possible alternative enquiries are mentioned.

Chapter Five provides an overview of the data that emerged from the pilot study. Some preliminary observations and inferences are made, based on the interview data, as well as on observation conducted over the past few years. Thematic links between textual knowledge contained in popular and academic texts and lived experience are detailed. These links are then examined more holistically in Chapter Six. Social power relations are discussed as dynamic influences on body language in the context of changes occurring in South Africa.

In conclusion, I provide an overview of the cultural circuits, based on Johnson’s understanding, that have been completed in the progression of the thesis and make suggestions for future research in the field.
Background to the Project

There is a growing realisation of the need to adopt a power-centred approach to many of the human sciences. Body language is an area that should benefit from being examined from a focus on power relations and how they impact on the production, dissemination and de-construction of meaning.

To try to examine the power relations operating on the project from the outset, I feel it is necessary to look at the seeds of the project itself. In an effort to make the biases in the project more ‘transparent’ to myself and to anyone intent on following the development of the research process, I begin by outlining its background.

My initial desire to study body language in South Africa arose out of a path of enquiry that developed from performance studies which included drama and dance, and their focus on the communication properties of the body. The desire to work on body language as a specific topic developed from experiences as a performer in a multi-cultural environment. Initially I wanted to understand different gestural and proxemic patterns that had proved to be barriers to communication between two colleagues and, if possible, to suggest ways that such communication could be improved.

The final hypothesis of this thesis is therefore underpinned by work on a paper that formed part of my Honours course in which I looked at dance studies and body language to determine whether there were any universals underlying culturally coded gestures, and concluded that this might be the case.

The need for further study in this area was supported by work and experience in two areas after completing my honours in Speech and Drama: firstly, as a second-language teacher and lecturer in colleges where staff and students hailed from diverse cultural backgrounds where I was able to engage in, and observe, multicultural communication on a daily basis; and secondly, as a performer both for and with people from many different sectors of South African society. The need to improve and understand non-verbal communication, as well as the underlying power relations influencing it has continued to be a guiding factor throughout the research process.

Following established academic practice, I began work on this project by conducting a bibliographic search during the course of which I discovered that very little had in fact been published about body language or non-verbal communication in South Africa. (The initial key-words used were body language, body communication, gaze, gesture, kinesics, non-verbal communication and power or status.)

This search yielded only three locally published papers on the topic. Attempting to source copies of texts produced elsewhere also proved extremely difficult. The only readily available texts were a few popular texts,
although these too, were not the newest editions. This situation was duplicated when looking at available video/film material.

Alongside the bibliographic search, I also began to look for film or video material. The initial assumption was that there should be a great deal of material available in this form, due to the visual nature of body language. Again very little local material was available. The only material available was extremely simplistic and often outdated - developed purely for consumption by the commercial sector, by those unlikely to be aware of how outdated their information actually was/is.

The first problem encountered during research was therefore that the texts available locally were often outmoded and inappropriate to the South African situation. An examination of the causes underlying this situation from a cultural studies perspective led to an explication of power relations operating in global economies, coupled with consequent perceptions of low socio-cultural self-worth on the part of many South Africans.

The lack of appropriate texts on body language could be ascribed to a number of factors. Much of the knowledge that is available or disseminated locally is outdated or even irrelevant before it reaches the South African market. Body language texts are no exception. This is due in part to the fact that South Africa like many so called ‘Southern’, ‘Third World’ or ‘Developing’ countries, has frequently been used as a dumping ground for outdated first world products. (Tomaselli et. al. Critical Arts 1989)

Due also to the isolation that South Africa experienced during the later apartheid years as a result of the cultural boycott, and more recently as a result of high taxes on imported books, many texts which were available elsewhere were simply not distributed in South Africa.

All of the above factors relate to the power relations that operate in global economies which affect ex-colonies such as South Africa. Being an ex-colony has also tainted the views of the local inhabitants towards their own artifacts or perceptions - there was a tendency to regard local as inferior and international or British artifacts of any nature as superior in quality and status. This inferiority complex has affected a large number of areas of South African life\(^1\). Such an inferiority complex might also have been reinforced by the pariah status of South Africa in the international arena resulting from international disdain for the adoption of apartheid policies.

The only cultural groups in South Africa which were historically resistant to the perception, that anything local was inferior to foreign colonial cultures, were those resisting colonial or post-colonial domination. The most obvious example was that of the Afrikaner. The heritage of the Anglo-Boer Wars, coupled as they were with a stern rejection of all that was not ‘Afrikaans’, indirectly led to the rise of Afrikaner Nationalism and
the subsequent development of the apartheid system itself. Cultural resistance against the British led the Afrikaners via the Ossewabrandwag (OB) and later the Afrikaner Weerstands Beweging (AWB), as the resistance movement was termed,³ to focus on their own heritage, language and culture, to the detriment of other cultures around them.

This was coupled with a heritage of cultural and economic degradation of local ways of life and knowledge, inherent in the proselytising manner of the logico-scientific Western views held by the early settlers and Colonial powers in the late nineteenth century. The destruction of local values during colonial periods is evident in many areas of Africa, as well as other ‘Third World’ and ‘developing’ economies.

The term ‘developing’ itself implies an imbalance, with the developed Northern hemisphere, Western Bloc countries viewing themselves as superior to the ‘undeveloped’ or ‘developing’ nations. Thus development and concomitant understandings of inferior/superior status between nations can be understood or ‘read’ in terms of the global power relations operating historically over a prolonged period. The importation of such things as Western dietary and farming practices have only recently been acknowledged as having devastating effects in Africa (ie. goats and desert spread etc.). South Africa is merely one area of Africa where the effects of farming produce and livestock unsuited to local conditions are gradually and grudgingly being acknowledged by the ‘experts’ such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. While it would be important to examine the possibility for changing policies in such organisations, this would have to occur over time. Processes which would reverse the advantages gained by Western and Asian power blocs in relation to ‘underdeveloped’ and ‘developing’ countries, whose markets, materials and labour they currently exploit, are likely to meet with strong sustained opposition.

The most important understanding required by those engaging in intervention on foreign soil should be an acknowledgement of the difficulties of gauging the dynamics operating in local conditions in any great depth from the perspective of a foreigner or outsider. Unfortunately the advantages of such interventions underpin the charity - dependency cycle, rather than the development of any real self sustaining growth in the process of development as it has occurred in the past.

While the detrimental effects of foreign interventions in local economies and cultures have been traced in a number of areas, particularly by African nationalist groups such as the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) or the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), such studies too have only been conducted if they appear to be expedient for the promotion of particular party or partisan positions. Non-Western body language has only been studied in areas/countries where it is economically expedient for Western economic and military purposes, ie. for Western empowerment. Japan & the Middle East in the 1970’s and ’80’s respectively were the focus of a great deal of body language research⁴. The East has always had a mystique and fascination for the West, but businessmen and politicians wanted to avoid mis-understandings due to mis-interpreting body language
in order to maintain economic and political links with these groups. The choice of these two powerful non-Western groups as subject matter was probably influenced by the economic relations hinging on oil in the Middle-East, and the technological advances made by Japan in the aftermath of the Second World War. Today the power of the yen is undisputed.

A further power relation that determines the subject matter of much body language research is that of accessibility or availability of the research population: only in the unusual event that extensive funding is available will certain populations be accessible. This is one reason for the predominance of studies of student and academic populations in a lot of the research on body language.

Body language in South Africa too has only been considered to be worthy of study when it might impact upon economic factors. Analysis has been limited to such efforts as a film produced by the Chamber of Mines about intercultural communication, and similar videos available mostly to businessmen. In both instances films or videos were produced locally by businesses or film-makers acting as consultants in the business sphere, who did not necessarily have, or wish to have, a very detailed knowledge of body language as a specialised area. The focus on development, growth and progress in the ‘new’ South Africa might lead to increased interest in communication which would include such factors as body language or non-verbal communication, but there is always the danger that such factors will be unduly influenced by financial constraints (as has been the case in a large number of areas of communication research.) What is required is a balance between the foci of research in order to look at areas that may not have been of primary financial importance. This is not to discount the fact that funding is a primary requirement of most research, and will always be an important constraint.

Many popular works on body language can be ‘read’ in relation to different power bases in society. Power relations operating globally and locally will be discussed throughout the thesis as they impact on body language, both in everyday situations and in their textual representations in whatever form. Aside from the political and social groups in South Africa, I will also be considering power relationships that act epistemologically in terms of ‘accepted academic practice’ and those relating to the ownership and control of the media (See Chapters One and Two). Gender relations are particularly important influences in our patriarchal society and they are discussed where applicable. It is argued that approaches developed by the likes of Merleau-Ponty and other writers who examine understandings of the social/ scientific and experienced body, including feminist writers such as Alison Jaggar and Emily Martin, could be beneficial to the development of body language research and to cultural studies, as they expedite a clearer understanding of the relationship between social power and bodily communication.

In the context of current changes in South Africa, it would appear that there is an erosion of the entrenched position of the white male power base with a number of challenges to this power base in different fields. The
Government of National Unity includes a significantly larger number of blacks and women than has been the case in the past. Media ownership and control has also shifted with the acquisition of 'The Sowetan' newspaper by a black company called NAIL. It remains to be seen, however, how well this challenge, together with affirmative action policies, will succeed against the powerful economic and political power blocs that are still largely dominated by white males.

One of the continuing challenges in this thesis, as is the case with much work in the cultural studies, is the dynamic nature of the subject matter under investigation. I have attempted as far as possible to retain an awareness of the changes that are currently taking place in South Africa, and of their implications for this study as well as for future developments in body language research.
NOTES

1. 'Bodily communication' was the title of a work by social psychologist Michael Argyle published in 1975, by (Methuen:London). This work examined the biological and cultural roots of bodily communication. In his preface Argyle stated that "I have done my best to write a book that is both scholarly and popular-scholarly in that all of the assertions are based on sound evidence and some of the main sources given, popular in that it is intended to be intelligible and interesting to the general reader." It would seem that this is where a lot of the problems for the field of body language studies lie. There is a recognised need, on the part of writers of body language texts, to write for a popular audience those who could find conclusions in these texts useful in everyday life. But in appealing to a popular audience, writers have not been accorded the status and recognition that their academic enquiry should earn them in the academic community.

2. It is tempting to speculate here about whether this complex will disappear with the advent of the 'New South Africa'.

3. A cultural movement that gradually became more strongly aligned with the political sentiments it engendered and endorsed.

4. The use of the Japanese and Arab groups as a focus of intercultural communication is illustrated in Michael Argyle's chapter Four entitled 'Cultural differences & uniformities in bodily communication'. In an extended comparative example he refers to studies of the Japanese and Arab non-verbal behaviour (pp. 87-94).

5. In McQuail (1989), Chapter One, mention is made of the fact that much mass audience based research is biased to answer questions that are of primary importance to the mass communicator. The Advertising Measure of Performance or AMP's provides an instance of such research.
SECTION I.
THEORIES AND TEXTS
CHAPTER ONE:

Rethinking Body Language in terms of Power Relations: Adopting a Cultural Studies Approach

Cultural studies has developed in an intimate if critical relationship to academic knowledges...Agenda of research have been found in the everyday life of subordinated social groups, or in sides of daily life which 'serious' analysis has ignored. Very often researchers have sought to understand personal pilgrimages or blocks. Cultural studies, in other words, has been formed in a highly contradictory relationship between academic knowledges and political aspirations.

(Richard Johnson 1986: 277.)

The focus of this chapter will be to work from Johnson's approach to cultural studies. This involves the rehabilitation of popular texts and 'everyday experience' of body language from their subordinate position as 'academic knowledges'. My studies also locate text/experiences, in terms of the cultural studies paradigm outlined by Johnson, in the context of power relations in South African society. It has been the intention of cultural studies to examine what was formerly regarded as unworthy of academic appraisal due to its designation as 'low' or 'mass' culture. Cultural studies is thus concerned with explicating the relation of power to culture and communication in whatever form (Punter, 1986: 9).

Body language studies have existed on the periphery of much academic debate. A cultural studies approach to body language is long overdue. There are three strands to this argument. Firstly, many unacknowledged areas of overlap exist between cultural studies and body language studies. Exploring and extending them would be mutually enriching for theorists. Secondly, body language studies offer an area of praxis with which to evaluate many cultural studies theories. Finally, emmeshing all these strands are the power relations that underpin both the academic discourses and the socio-economic contexts of the topics under discussion.

This chapter outlines two proposals: firstly, that an examination of power relations can provide a contextual thread to link body language studies and their social contexts; and secondly, that a cultural studies approach to body language is urgently required to provide a theoretical paradigm in which to conduct an examination of these power relations. Illustrations used will be drawn from applications of these theoretical constructs to a South African context. Before examining specific aspects of the debates that serve to link them, it is necessary to define the cultural studies project, and the term 'body language'.
cultural Studies

At the outset it is necessary to recognise that cultural studies, like the allied terms 'culture' and 'ideology' which it investigates, is a highly contested field which is continually repositioning itself contextually. Attempts at developing an overarching theory of cultural studies centre around the tension between the objective 'culturalist' perspective of the individual and the social forms or structures foregrounded by the structuralists'. Focus has shifted from an investigation of the three problematics within cultural studies outlined by Johnson (1979) to Stuart Hall's examination of culturalism and structuralism, which acknowledged that neither culturalism nor structuralism could provide a self-sufficient paradigm to study culture/ideology as their mutual antagonisms have no promise of an easy synthesis (Bennett, 1981: 36).

Johnson (1986: 277-307) resolves the central tension between culturalism and structuralism by viewing them as parts of a process represented as a circuit of the production, circulation and consumption of cultural objects.

What is then attempted is to examine specific 'moments' in the circuits of culture as represented in figure 1. Each moment depends on others and is linked to the whole but each involves distinctive changes of form, real transformations. These circuits exist in relation to the level of representation (related to production), ranging from public to private; and the level of abstraction (related to consumption), ranging from the concrete to the particular (Johnson, 1986: 284).

**FIGURE 1: The Circuit of Cultural Production/Consumption.**

![Diagram of the Circuit of Cultural Production/Consumption](image-url)

(Johnson, 1986: 284)
It is however of primary importance not to confuse this attempt to create a 'model' as an appropriation of cultural studies by the allied discipline of communication studies. What should always be remembered is that "Cultural Studies encompasses a set of approaches that attempt to understand and intervene into the relations of culture and power." (Grossberg, 1993). This kind of model should not be used in a rigidly fixed/fixing way that is often the case in communication studies. It serves merely as a tool that should demonstrate the very transitory, momentary nature of the relationship between socio-cultural and communication enquiries.

The application of cultural studies methods to body language provides an area of 'concrete analysis' (Bennett, 1981: 34), which could serve to demonstrate aspects of the operation of power relations at moments in these circuits:

To understand (different readings of cultural objects) properly - as transformations of meaning - we would have to grasp the specific practices through which the product was 'consumed' or 'read'. These conditions include all the asymmetries of power, cultural resources and knowledge that relate readers to both producers and analysts, as well as the more fundamental social relations of class, gender, race and age (Johnson, 1982: 284-5).

In refining cultural studies methods, in order to attain an understanding of different cultural objects, Beezer et. al. state that we must apply:

- techniques or methods of analysis from a variety of sources, (which) include methods of narrative analysis, commutation techniques, questions designed to probe the text/reader relation, discourse analysis and simple methods of content analysis. None of these are conceived of as watertight procedures which will yield inevitable results; rather our aim is to reveal the patterns, contradictions and tensions within the research material (Beezer, 1986: 95-96).

To understand the need to search for such patterns we need to know more about body language studies.

**Body language**

Due to the multidisciplinary nature of previous work on the topic, literature on body language can be found in such diverse areas of discourse as anthropology, dance theory, linguistics, semiotics, sociology and psychology, as well as in the popular press and magazines. Much of this work has been conducted in relative isolation (Davis, 1972: vii). Different discourses have used their own operational terminology which has resulted in duplication or replication of studies and often contradictory terminology.

The publication of Julius Fast's book, *Body Language* (1971) brought the term into popular parlance. Body language has been defined as an aspect of non-verbal communication. In certain instances 'body language' and 'non-verbal communication' are used co-terminously. In its widest understanding, body language can include gestures, movements and some aspects of dress (Goffman, 1959: 42), timing and spatial awareness.
(Edward Hall, 1955). While some would argue that the terms non-verbal communication and body language can be used interchangeably, to do so is to obscure their difference at the level of discourse in terms of power relations. Body language as a term is explicitly linked to power relations on two levels. Firstly, at the level of academic discourse it is linked to ‘popular’ works which have been disempowered in terms of the popular/scientific debate. Secondly, in its usage in popular works it has been associated, via marketing strategies, with the promise of personal empowerment of readers in the context of their social relations.

A Definition of Relations of Social Power

Due to its nature power is an aspect of our lives that we seem to be reluctant to challenge or question. Because power informs our actions at so many levels unpacking the complexities of its operation is the first step towards an understanding of social communication, and is a means of guarding against the abuse of such power. Power can be defined as the ability to influence another person to do what one wants them to do. Such a definition of power would be commensurate with that of persuasive communication.

Whether one person executes another’s wishes or not depends on their relative social-power relations. Power can either be exercised, in turn by social equals or by the dominant person in a hierarchical power relationship. At the instant that one person acts on another’s wishes, even if they are equals in all other respects - an asymmetrical power relationship would exist. The person who desires an action has more operative power than the one who carries out her/his wishes. Coercion is the last resort when one wishes to impose one’s will onto someone else and is usually adopted when other means of persuasion have failed. It is not the form in which power relations generally operate, in terms of the Western ideal of democracy. It is precisely because of the subtlety and pervasiveness of non-coercive social power that it is often difficult to analyses. I am interested in examining the operation of power which does not include the use of direct coercion or force.

One way that one person could exert control over another is because they can administer either rewards or punishments. Social power can thus relate to access to resources or rewards. One such resource is knowledge. A thread running through this text is that of the construction of academic and popular knowledge about body language. This knowledge is examined as it occurs in academic texts and practices or in popular texts and in everyday occurrences of body language or bodily communication.

There are several terms used to describe particular aspects of power relations which have been used by writers in the body language field (they are discussed by Henley, 1977: 20):

*Authority* suggests power that is legitimate in some way, such as through law or tradition. But it is power nonetheless, and its supposed legitimacy may be a screen for ruthless power, for example, in the patriarch, teacher or doctor.
*Dominance* is a term in psychological usage which often describes a personality trait. Dominance is a term used in psychologically based studies of individual behaviour. It is the tendency to seek to influence and control others. Dominance is a visible or obvious form of social power/position that refers most often to individuals and individual relationships.

Non-verbal communication studies have often focused on the most readily observable aspects of social power, namely *status* and *dominance*. Status refers to a visible representation of power, status does not necessarily include any real enforceable power, unlike authority.

As Henley (1977: 20) says:

> Status is not the same as power, though the two terms are often confused and, and sometimes used more or less interchangeably. Status refers to a person's social position, the judgement of that person by the social group (however these groups or positions are defined, and however it is measured). While status often goes with power, there are times when we can recognise them separately, as when an impoverished English Lord "commands" a certain respect locally, though he can no longer literally command services.

Henley also quotes Brown (1965) as stating that "Status ('social value') goes with the possession of characteristics valued by the society such as good looks, male sex, greater age." While this principle still holds good in the 1990's in my opinion, we would value youth, slenderness and material wealth, as well as certain forms of achievement in Westernised cultures. Theorists who have analyzed the body, in terms of social power, but not in terms of body language: such as Bourdieu, Foucault and Bhaktin offer valuable insights which have also proved useful for feminist theorists.

Pierre Bourdieu and Michel Foucault view the body as a practical direct locus of social control, through seemingly trivial everyday routines rules, practices and culture is "made body" and converted into automatic, habitual activity which puts it "beyond the grasp of consciousness...[untouchable] voluntary deliberate transformation" (Bourdieu, 1977: 94).

In his later works such as *Discipline and Punish* (1979) and *History of Sexuality* (1978), Focault reminds us of the primacy of practice over belief, the organisation and regulation of time, space and everyday bodily movement "are trained shaped, and impressed with the stamp of prevailing historical forms of selfhood, desire, masculinity and femininity" (Bordo, 1989: 13,14).

One can therefore argue on the basis of the understandings above that power relations operating in South Africa would influence body language in everyday lived experience.

The operation of power relations, at various moments in Johnson's cultural circuit, is demonstrated at both the academic and popular levels by the application of cultural studies methods and theories to body language.
studies in the South African context. Areas of overlap between the two foci of this chapter (body language & cultural studies) will be examined in terms of power relations operating at various moments delimited by Johnson.

Epistemology and Power

Body language was established as a subject of serious academic interest in 1872 via Darwin’s *Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*. Subsequent literature on body language has been divided in terms of ‘traditional academic disciplines’ (Davis, 1972: 3 and Davis & Skupien, 1982: xiv). The pervasiveness of these disciplines could themselves suggest the manner in which power relations within the western academic tradition have led to the continuation of divisions between researchers working in different areas - the politics of knowledge. As Foucault has argued (in Rabinov, 1984: 7), "Knowledge and the control of knowledge is inseparable from the question of power relations": the "effects of truth are produced within discourses which in themselves are neither true nor false but which serve the interests of the hegemonic class" (1984: 40). Further division between ‘popular’ and ‘scientific’ works may have been fostered by social science practitioners anxious to gain academic approval within the ‘scientific-academic’ paradigm. This situation is itself a result of a power relation. The respect with which the ‘scientific’ method is treated is due largely to the status which science has achieved within the Western academic tradition in the last two hundred years (Bedford & Wang, 1985: 436-8).

Privileging of academic knowledges has resulted in the subordinate position of popular texts relative to academic texts. Popular works may appear to be simplistic, in terms of the ‘scientific paradigm’, while specialised scientific works on non-verbal communication, which focus on a few variables in an effort to be ‘scientific’, may ignore the wider social context in which these variables may be operating. Power relations form a part of the matrix of these social contexts. A comparative analysis of titles of an academic and a popular work can serve to illustrate the initial difference in discourse. Academic writing on body language treats of power relations at a remove, as a second order discourse. Writers who publish for academic audiences, and who generally prefer the term ‘non-verbal communication’ tend to speak of ‘status displays’ or ‘manifestations of deference and respect’ and thus avoid dealing overtly with power relations in their attempts to attain objectivity. Despite the fact that such terms may appear to be more transparent in the context of academic debate at the micro-level of interpersonal communication, they are still removed from an examination of power relations at the macro-level of social structures.

On the other hand, by promising readers power over other individuals in social situations which involve interpersonal communication, popular writers touch on power relations at the micro-level. But they too, fail to deal with how power relations at the macro-level impact on the body language of individual members of a society. Neither academic nor popular body language texts take cognisance of the publication constraints
and the social practices that inform them, as I will demonstrate in Chapters Two and Three. Removing overt mention of value judgements from academic publications in an effort to obtain ‘objectivity’ may simply result in ignoring these ‘subjective’ values, which are nonetheless important variables operating in social contexts. Power relations are just one variable which has been removed from discussion, but not from life practices or daily reality - what Johnson terms ‘lived’ experience.

Massification and the Promise of Power

Power relations operating at the moment of production can be read as a media relation whereby the promise of power attained through knowledge of body language is held out in the popular media to the disempowered. Popular writers have avoided lengthy discussions and footnotes, one requirement of scientific-academic discourse, in order to appeal to a wider public; and as such may seem, in academic terms, to be dealing superficially with their topics. It may be that the commercial aspects of publication have led popular writers to offer their readers power over themselves and their communication situations, by offering them knowledge of how body language works. A possible reason why readers require vicarious empowerment is that they have been disempowered in industrialised society. The need to offer a substitute for power can be found in the old cliché of religion being the opiate of the people. In the modern world, this passifying function has been usurped by marketing and media practices.

Marketing

Popular works on body language have formed part of a market that includes the likes of Dale Carnegie, Norman Vincent Peale and the travelling show - the American mass market. This can be demonstrated by examining advertisements for other publications on the flyleaves of popular works. Such para-scientific associations have tended to reflect adversely on the image that is held, in both academic and popular circles, of body language publications.

As an inter-disciplinary enquiry, cultural studies challenges the established disciplines; a brief historical evaluation of popular and scientific works on body language studies (Davis, 1972, 1982) demonstrates that they are more interdependent than they initially appear to be. As I will demonstrate in the next two chapters, popular texts have an acknowledged debt to academic studies and practices, while they have also illuminated power relations which are a valuable area of exploration for future academic studies.

Academic studies rely on perceptions and understandings of body language that are derived from the everyday lived experience of members of the general populace, where possible. It is thus that the subordinate knowledges in ‘popular’ works and lived experience of body language can be rehabilitated via their historicity as I will demonstrate below, and in the chapters that follow.

Prior to Darwin, body language records can be obtained piecemeal from historical descriptions of dance and mime, books on manners, oratory (eg. early Greek and Roman writings) and occasional references in literature.
and art. While some would argue that knowledge accumulated by performers, by which I mean actors, dancers, and mimes, has had no influence on 'scientific' behavioral research, there are three notable exceptions. In the area of dance ethology, anthropologists, dancers and dance notators have collaborated to a degree. In the field of dance or movement therapy, many former dancers are becoming mental health professionals and participating in behavioural research. Finally, the theories and movement analysis system of Rudolf Laban, a noted dancer and choreographer, have influenced behavioural research (Davis, 1972: 1-11). It thus becomes apparent that in practice there has been a reliance by academics on what could be regarded as non-scientific sources. Popular writers have often trained in the sciences, (eg. Desmond Morris is a zoologist), or base their writings on 'scientific' studies despite their lack of extensive footnoting. In the interests of enriching research it would be fruitless to ignore contributions made by practitioners in any field. A great deal can be gained by examining popular and scientific works concomitantly.

Johnson's conception of 'public' and 'private' forms cuts across the popular/scientific divide. For Johnson, the public forms are those which range across the whole social surface; though they are differently attended to, understood and used by different social groups (Johnson, 1986: 287). In terms of this understanding, the media, academic and professional knowledges, discourses on high culture or high politics - are public channels which fertilise the discourse of 'public' forms.

Cultural moments which are dubbed 'private' are more hidden, both from the public gaze and the social worlds of others. These forms are not private in the sense that they are of personal relevance to individuals only, as the strength and limit of these 'private' forms lies in their particularity and concreteness. They are adapted to the life conditions and historically produced needs of particular groups. They are embedded in daily life. 'Private' matters do appear in public. They may even be given meanings similar to those through which they are lived by subordinated groups- they are private forms, publicly represented. This is why, once we understand cultural differences, subtle differentiated readings of public forms can be made. But public forms tend to frame and evaluate such representations in ways that bend them back to middle-class and male definitions of significance, or at least contain their potential for disturbance. Readers must still take into account the particularity of readings.

In general we should not assume that public-ation only acts in ways that seem demeaning to the relevant actors, or act, in practice to repress. One way to contain disturbance is to represent the experiences of social groups as pathological as problems not of society or of power but of the mal-adjustments of the social group (Johnson, 1986: 288).

Body language & Cultural Studies: Some Areas of Congruence
So far I have examined popular works on body language in order to rehabilitate them, by revealing their production (they should no longer be regarded as mal-adjustments to the academic process of writing). I now consider the "forms" and "readings" structured within academic knowledges by conducting a brief examination
of the following areas of overlap between body language and cultural studies practitioners, namely: semiotics; communication & media; social psychology, including body image and patriarchy; and the culture and ethnicity conundrum. These areas of overlap can be viewed as moments of consumption in terms of Johnson's model.

Semiotics
Visual anthropologists have been the most active in attempts to study body language as a signifying system through the analysis of film and photographic material in terms of semiotic theory. Semiotic analysis thus provides a complex link underpinning debates within cultural studies and body language via media and communication models and technologies. Studies of body language can include forms of signalling other than those that exclusively involve the body, such as costume, setting and props (Cohen, 1987; Goffman, 1959). Goffman deals with the ability of the individual to present many different social faces through his or her body language in different social environments.

One of the problems that has arisen with the treatment of body language as a signifying system is that the endeavour to ascribe specific meanings to specific instances can lead to a situation which ignores the contextual situation of such signs, as well as the continuity in their execution. Signs exist in the context of a dynamic social and communication systems, informed by many relations - power relations being primary.

While isolating body movements may break up an interaction into analyzable units, it must be remembered that such movements exist in isolation only in the eyes of the analyst. The attempts of social scientists to conform to 'scientific' practice, provides an instance when the operation of power relations within academia has led to the misuse of a linguistically derived method.

The scientific method is not always appropriate even to the physical sciences: as developments in quantum physics have shown, even the actions of subatomic particles are not always predictable. Abstracting linear methodology from the physical to the social sciences is inappropriate when such methodology is rigidly applied to human actions, precisely because human beings and social systems are always changing. In the social sciences it is only possible to examine moments in social processes. What must be remembered is that these process are in constant flux.

What must be avoided, in Johnson's view, are the structuralist foreshortening of Formalism, whereby the account of production is reduced. Semiology foreshortens when it neglects the human activity of producing and substitutes for all this the "productivity of signifying systems". Texts are abstracted from their discursive contexts, the surrounding social relations, and the particular historical moment, due to such foreshortening. Johnson (1986: 298) argues that in order to recover a fully social language theory it is necessary to go outside the French semiological traditions, to the critiques of Saussure marshalled by the Marxist philosopher of
language V.N. Volosinov\textsuperscript{18}. Volosinov saw in each word or sign a dialectic between the inner experience of the individual psyche and the ideological representation derived from the social and material conditions in which each individual exists. Meaning in this view is understood as part of a dynamic process rather than in terms of a closed system.

One method adopted/extended from semiotics by cultural studies is the development of an understanding of the research topic as a social text and the inclusion of a consideration of power relations in this process. Body language studies can thus be ‘read’ as socially constructed texts in order to deconstruct their contexts. The operation of this methodology was shown above in the ‘reading’ of titles and flyleaves of popular works, and will be demonstrated further in the chapters which follow. For a specific example of the operation of this methodology in the South African context see the section on ‘the semiotics of handbags’, in Chapter Six.

Communication

Communication studies have tended to concentrate on either the macro - (television, radio, newspapers, film, magazines) or micro-levels (interpersonal). Body language falls between these two enquiries. Drawing on structural linguistics and cultural anthropology, Birdwhistell argues that while body movement is one ‘channel’ of communication, it consists of culturally-learned units which are patterned in ways analogous to language and which serve in the maintenance, regulation, and definition of face-to-face group interaction. The ‘meaning’ of one’s movement is in this view to be found at the group level, in the effects the behaviour has, and its place in the stream of communication. Body language is one code within the culturally coded communication process, and should thus be deciphered at the multi-channelled social level (Birdwhistell, 1971). The kinesics research of Birdwhistell and some psychiatrists interested in small-group and family communication has resulted in discoveries of synchrony, regulation and organisation of group behaviour. This needs to be extended beyond an examination of the surface representation of the social contexts to the power relations in terms of which these groups operate. Birdwhistell spoke of culture and related body language to culture and language, but not to the power relations that order these social relations.\textsuperscript{19}

Cultural studies is also endeavouring to attain some understanding of media practices, production processes and effects, and is therefore dealing with communication theorists. Most body language practitioners have not been critical of the communication models which formulate or underpin their methodologies. Many fail to understand the pervasiveness of the Shannon and Weaver model of communication.\textsuperscript{20} Again, this seems to illustrate the dominance and persistence of certain methods and understandings of academic knowledges. The communicator-medium-recipient or CMR model (of Shannon and Weaver) was in essence an attempt to apply quantitative, linearly derived understanding, taken from the physical sciences to the human sciences. Cultural studies thus provides a critically reflexive framework for such an analysis by placing this model in its socially derived context.
Media Distribution Practices

Another moment of consumption can be understood by examining body language texts in relation to media distribution practices and the power relations that determine such practices. Many popular works, demonstrating with, and analysing, photographs extensively, in terms of the Western aesthetic, have been distributed internationally, the most popular in South Africa being:- Desmond Morris - Manwatching, Bodywatching; Julius Fast - Body language; and Alan Pease - Body Language: How to Read Others' Thoughts by their Gestures. Their popularity may be related to distribution and the accessibility of materials. The work of Edward Hall, is more widely read in the USA than it is in South Africa, where it is not readily available and is virtually unheard of by the general public.21

What is distributed may also be 'read' in relation to the ownership and control of the media. Globally, the Western media are controlled by white middle-class businessmen22, with headquarters in the Western business centres of London and New York.23 In South Africa the print and other media have been owned and controlled by white middle class interests albeit directly or indirectly (via government).24 The content of the popular books about body language that are distributed, both globally and locally, focuses on the attainment of control in two spheres - that of Western capitalist business and that of sexual conquest. The content of these texts reveals a bias towards the aspirations of the white-middle classes: success in business and in bed. The patriarchal structure of society and of big business (Johnson, 1986: 285) is therefore reproduced in body language texts. Men may read them to attain power in business and in bed; women may read them to manipulate men sexually in order to attain some power indirectly.25

These popular works have an immense appeal as they offer the private individual a key to interpreting the 'secrets' of those around them through the signs provided by the gestural, facial and postural movements or positions by means of which we communicate - both consciously and unconsciously. Body language has thus fallen within the scope of 'Pop-psychology'.

Inherent in the popular media presentation of body language, is the danger of stereotyping due to the time and image constraints of the media, whether on television or in the popular press and magazines. Stereotypes are foreshortened codes which perform a communication function in allowing individuals to control their private knowledge of others. They can also be seen to develop as a function of social tension. In South Africa, as is the case elsewhere, there is a need to place such signs in their wider context of economic instability, and concomitant social relations of distrust.

Psychoanalytic simplifications

Johnson argues that one of the gaps that has to be bridged in 'reading' texts, is that between readers and texts. In order to overcome simplifications inherent in psychoanalysis, resulting once more from the application of simple models to the complex of human actions, we need to look at how individuals construct internal
narratives, in order to "secure some objective continuity in the flux of events and meanings. This is how we struggle - individually or collectively - for some integrity or unity, for some control over our produced, fragmentary and contradictory selves." (Johnson, 1986: 300-1).

Body image is a term derived from psychological studies of how we view our bodies. In the First World, psychologists have studied body image in relation to disorders of compulsive control - compulsive physical fitness, anorexia nervosa and bulimia. These disorders have been linked to cultural phenomena. Ballet dancers and fashion models (e.g. Twiggy) as well as other prominent media figures, epitomise the physical ideal of Western culture (Vincent, 1979). This is not just the attainment of a visual image but also the ability to subvert the appetite or control the body in order to attain a desired goal (which would be the case with jockeys, dancers and models). The 're-presentation' (a term used to denote presentation in public form in the same way as Johnson uses 'public-ation') of the controlled thin, female form via the media and particularly as an aspect of Fashion, has been linked to masculine domination of the media and the subordination of women through their preoccupation with the attainment of a feminine ideal (French, 1985: 448), this preoccupation with the thin/controlled physical body is no longer an exclusively feminine concern: men too, feel pressured to attain this ideal physique.

The aforementioned compulsive disorders can be linked to power relations in terms of the individual's struggle for self-assertion and personal power in the face of social pressures which seem beyond individual control. They are found largely amongst pubescent white middle-class females, manifesting themselves precisely at the point at which they are struggling to attain a new adult understanding of their position as females within a patriarchal society. Another resolution of this conflict between masculine and feminine is found in the adoption of an androgynous persona, by prominent teen-media figures, like David Bowie, Michael Jackson, Grace Jones and Annie Lennox.

An example of a less drastic attempt to modify body image, can be found via 'power dressing'. The introduction and prevalence of shoulder pads in business suits in the 1980's can be viewed as an attempt by females to take on aspects of the masculine body image in order to compete for power and attention/respect in the male dominated business world (Speech by former Miss South Africa, Monica Fairall to Secretary's Forum UND, 1992.). Similarly, the perception that aggressive behaviour may be a 'desirable' male characteristic could result from the conflation of aggression with assertiveness. This conflation may be derived from the conflation of male dominance, with displays of male aggression. This behavioural manifestation is discussed further in Chapter Two. The denigration of the female form in the light of the patriarchal dominance of masculinity and male bodies is a focus of much feminist writing (French, 1985: 448-455; Johnson, 1986: 238; Bordo & Jagger, 1989; and Martin, 1987).
Some work on body image and power relations has been conducted within the feminist paradigm, in itself an interdisciplinary approach akin to that of cultural studies. This work has not been linked to that on body language as yet. Female emancipation in South Africa is an area which bears examining in this context. South Africa is an extremely conservative highly male dominated society.

Patriarchal control in South African terms has evinced certain peculiar manifestations. One of the popular perceptions of patriarchy has been mythologised (a la Barthes) in this way. In traditional African society African men have a right to the control of the bodies of their wives (Epstein, 1994). The understanding of women and children as the property of the male head of the family could offer an explanation for the particularly high incidence of rape and incest in South Africa. Amongst working class white Afrikaans-speaking males, an attitude of ownership of the bodies of wives and children, coupled with a sense of a loss of control in the current socio-economic context, may offer a partial explanation for the high incidence of family murders in this demographic category. This is actually a myth which is supported by media such as the TV series Death in the Family screened by the South African Broadcasting Corporation. In her analysis of the series and its topic, Janet Wilhelm, Sunday Times, November 14 1993, debunks the various myths, namely that family murder is: a new phenomenon; a South African phenomenon; an Afrikaans cultural phenomenon; the murderer usually belongs to the Dutch Reformed Church; substance abuse plays a big part; the family is close-knit; underlying cause is financial problems; the murder is an act of love; that the perpetrators never tell anyone of their intentions. Her article is supported by the findings of the HSRC in ‘The Phenomenon of Family Murder in South Africa’ and Prof. Roland Glaser’s ‘A Study of Selected Cases of Family Murder in South Africa’. The incidence of rape and incest in South Africa (SA) could be linked to an attempt by working-class males to overcome frustration arising out of their perceived socio-economic powerlessness. (cf. rape crisis studies)

In terms of Mead’s definition of psychology (Morris, 1934: 40), kinesics (body language in the context of group communication) forms part of the province of a psychology of social behaviourism. As body language also deals, on a sub- or un-conscious level, with the power relations experienced by the individual in society, it can be seen that cultural studies provides a valuable extension beyond the confines of psychological theory (Volosinov, 1973: 25-41).

Ideology, Culture and Ethnicity

In attempting to attain an overview of the interaction of social power relations and to provide what may be viewed as a completed circuit in terms of Johnson’s model, I discuss ideology, culture and ethnicity and how they may impinge upon an understanding of body language. The work of many semioticians, using psychoanalytic frames of reference, locates much of the encoding and decoding of body language in the individual’s sub-conscious. This coding of body language is seen to be linked to the internalisation of cultural and social processes, and thus to the level of ideology (Volosinov, 1973: 35). Body language, in this view,
constitutes a code, developed from the internalisation of social mores. Body language can thus provide a mode of understanding the inter-relationship of individuals and their socio-cultural contexts. Understanding the constructedness of the mode/code can lead to improved communication skills and a release from an ideologically defined construct (Johnson, 1986: 295). If the form is not seen as a closed system, change is possible.

A demonstration of the congruence between studies of body language and the power relations in social situations is offered via proxemics (Hall, 1955; 1966). This is a subcategory of body language defined as the study of the rules governing social distance - by which is meant the distance between various participants in different social situations and in different socio-cultural groupings. Proxemics clearly links to the individual’s internalisation of hegemonic controls and power relations in society.

The fundamental characteristic of South African society at present (akin to that of Eastern Europe) is instability and rapid social change. The basic concern of this line of enquiry is with what happens to ideological constructs in a period of rapid social change. An analogy can be drawn from somatic reaction to ideological understanding: in effect there seems to be firstly a retraction under stress, accompanied by a move towards conservatism in terms of ideology which is analogous to physical body movement. A human body will draw back from a stressful situation, in surprise or shock: the same retraction occurs in terms of social stress (Ivey, 1992). One reaction to the threat of unemployment is for the middle-classes to withdraw and to protect themselves, ideologically. This is why white Afrikaners formed their laager in the first place - they withdrew to consolidate their position in the face of the threat from the ‘swart gevaar’ which threatened them via job competition and the perceived threat posed by British domination, to their cultural identity. The re-emergence of Nazism and militant nationalism in Eastern Europe could in part be due to a similar response to a perceived loss of cultural identity in the face of European unity. What must also be remembered is that if a physical body cannot simply withdraw from a stressful situation that the next reaction is to lash out and fight. This is then the ideological reasoning behind the unleashing of violence by extremist groups (such as the CP and PAC in South Africa) when they perceive themselves to be under threat.

During periods of rapid social change, individuals may be unable to cope conceptually with the new social situation. As Dunn sees it, if the culture is moving very fast .. High Technology + Conservative Ideology = Right Futurism. There are intimate links, for example, between increased nudity in public advertising, the efflorescence of dance studios, charity marathons and recycled laissez-faire. Their common factor is the body, their common concept is the possessive individualism of Locke, their common myth Narcissus. "Around the body, which is entirely positive as the capital of divine right, the subject of private property is about to be restored." (Baudrillard, 1982, quoted in Dunn, 1986: 87).
Previous work in the cultural studies has focused on dress as a factor that visibly unites and identifies youth sub-cultures in their struggle against hegemonic codes (McRobbie et. al., 1981).

In terms of my approach ‘culture’ is not a static or even a necessarily coherent phenomenon: it is “subject to change, fragmentation, reformulation. It is both adaptive, offering ways of coping and making sense, and strategic, capable of being mobilised for political, economic and social ends.” (Tomaselli, 1989: 39) 28. Similarly, concepts of ‘race’ and ‘ethnicity’ are constructs which people use to make sense of the human condition. In discussing perceptions of body language, the focus is placed upon visual classification and distinction, closely aligned to a conception of ‘race’, which is prefigured on a somatic, physical differentiation. The concept of ‘ethnicity’ extends to include language and culture as well as somatic factors. Thus the concept of ethnicity moves beyond the immediately visible to the realm of social relations. Both ‘race’ and ‘ethnicity’ are constructions in terms of which we arrive at an understanding of the relations between different groups.

In a South African context cultural identity was clearly linked to a definition of racial identity, based on somatic description. This was institutionalised through the operationalisation of the ideological construct in the education, transport and legal systems amongst others.

There are two opposing notions operating here: that of the universal, which is applicable to all humankind, and that of the culturally or ethnically specific. Ethologists began to search for a universal understanding through comparative studies, of the body language of man and animals on the one hand, and of gestures in inter-cultural contexts on the other. While certain aspects of body language are universally applicable it is more often the case that the universal patterns are overlaid by culturally codified adaptations of these underlying behaviours. This is a theory that is supported by the investigations of social behaviourists like Birdwhistell (1973), Eibel-Eibesfeldt (1971) ; and the writings of Edward Hall. In the South African context this relation between universal and culturally codified behaviour can be demonstrated using a comparative example of contact behaviour in Zulu and Western traditions. In terms of the Zulu tradition of Hlonipha, or respect, one demonstrates respect by averting one’s gaze from that of a person of higher social status, and by squatting or lowering oneself in their presence (Krige, 1965: 30-31). Conversely in Westernised society, gazing directly at a superior on greeting demonstrates honesty and a willingness to communicate, and one stands to greet a superior out of respect. Thus gaze and changes in height are indicators of respect operating as indices of power relations which have been culturally codified. The specific codification may be related to the physical, material conditions that have framed spatial relations - namely to housing. To enter a traditional Zulu hut, one has to crouch down and it is not possible to stand inside them, crouching has subsequently been internalised in terms of Zulu social behaviour. Interestingly the understanding that housing built for whites allows the inhabitants to stand is encapsulated in the Zulu description of a white person as "one who exits a room standing". 29
Proxemics was discussed above as it related to the internalisation of hegemonic controls. Individuals relate to other individuals in terms of the rules of relation that have been developed within their 'particular' understanding of concrete 'lived' experience. An understanding of an individual's own identity is developed in relation to others either within one's own group or between one's own and other groups (see, for example, Bochner 1982). In order to make sense of the world we have to make these same/other distinctions. It is only through an understanding of our place in the power structure of society that we can define our modes of relation. Thus it is that the categories of age, class, gender, and race serve a 'real' purpose in the continuous construction of identity and relation, whether this is in terms of cultural relations, cultural products, power relations or the construction of a cultural or ethnic identity. Such constructions of social forms and relations are required by individuals and by societies to facilitate interaction within society. The only danger inherent in these constructs is that they become mythologised or reified once they have been constructed (Barthes, 1977: 165). If people allow these constructs to have power over them and to control their relations in a closed circuit, they will effectively disempower themselves. It is possible to conclude that in order to avoid this danger people need to become aware of these constructs and, in terms of the blurb of the popular body language texts, "learn to read the hidden codes in order to maximise their own potential" (the come-on for Lyle's (1990) book).

Culture, Body and Power
According to Johnson, there are three main forms of cultural studies research. Production related studies which imply a struggle to control, transform or counter the more separated kinds of cultural production in society; text-based approaches which focus on the nature of the cultural products themselves and research into lived cultures which has been closely associated with the politics of representation (Johnson, 1986: 303-4). In order to attain the most comprehensive possible understanding of these forms our readings must be as multi-layered as possible, identifying 'preferred readings' or 'dominant frameworks' as well as subordinated versions (Johnson, 1986: 305-6). Cultural forms must also be related to an analysis of social relations, so "a form of cultural analysis, influenced by structuralist insights, is combined with a strong sense of everyday cultural productiveness" (Johnson, 1986: 307).

If body language studies are examined as aspects of a continuous process with many areas of overlap it is important to see that any 'reading' and re-construction of body language must be conducted from an understanding of the moment in the cultural circuit, at which such a reading is made. As can be seen even from such a brief contextualization, there are a large number of factors influencing power relations and body language in South Africa and that much could be gained from examining the links between body language and the cultural studies project.

One of the strongest arguments for the examination of the dynamics of body language is the explication of the various formalised rules of encoding and decoding gestures. Once it becomes apparent that the universal
conditions underlying body language and many other cultural practices have been overlaid by culturally (hegemonically) determined practices, it might be possible to interact from a more critically aware perspective and thus be less bound by such social practices and the power relations that order them than is currently the case. This is the major project to be undertaken from the combined perspectives of cultural studies and body language.

In this chapter the theoretical basis for combining the cultural studies and body language perspectives is demonstrated. A relationship that will be examined throughout the thesis will be that between popular perceptions and texts on the one hand, and academic texts and studies, on the other. Power relations will be seen to inform all of these areas significantly. Johnson's understanding of the moments of production and/or consumption of cultural knowledge will be developed in tandem with these debates.

Due to the dynamic nature of the topic, there is a great deal of intertextual reference to body language between the popular texts, academic texts and lived experiences thereof. But in each of the chapters to follow the focus will differ.

In Chapter Two, popular body language texts are examined in terms of power relations, while in Chapter Three academic debates and texts, applicable to body language studies and power relations are discussed. In Section II these threads will be related to an initial examination of some perceptions/experiences of body language in South Africa.
1. This definition will be expanded upon in the chapters that follow.

2. Namely: class & manifesto marxism; the culture problematic and the structuralism /humanism debate.

3. Grossberg (1993), outlines some of the dangers inherent in the conflation of communication and cultural studies.

4. I cannot agree with Edward Hall (1959), that culture is communication, merely that communication is one of the most important facets of cultural experience.

5. The understanding of language used is that of a codified system which is constantly changing and transforming. For an explication see Chomsky’s understanding of a generative grammar (1957).

6. One which appears to be generally accepted in communication studies as well as in the social sciences generally.

7. Henley, like myself, defines power in terms of one person’s ability to exert an influence over another.

8. In this thesis group identity is defined in terms of a flexible understanding of cultural affiliation. There are two elements to this identity: that defined phenomenologically, through an individual’s personal experience; and that which owes its definition at least in part to the dominant social ideology to which surrounds and informs, individual conceptions or perceptions of self.

9. In this thesis ‘popular works’ refers to those works that have been published for ‘mass’ consumption. Authors would include Fast, Morris, Nierenberg & Calero and Pease, as well as any others with a ‘mass appeal’. Such works include a large number of illustrations and are phrased in colloquial rather than academic jargon. By ‘scientific works’, this researcher refers to those that have been published and presented for academic consumption in terms of the ‘scientific’ paradigm (Galileo, Francis Bacon, Descartes, Newton). Authors would include the likes of Birdwhistell, Edward Hall and Mehrabian. Extended discussions of these works appear in Chapter Two and Three.

10. Efram (1968) is an example of a scientific-academic work that avoids explicating the concept of power. Popular titles, such as Lyle (1990), demonstrate a more overt approach to power.

11. The idea of knowledge as power can be traced to Francis Bacon (1561-1626) when he stated his belief that science could contribute to mankind’s physical welfare by conferring power over nature in the following way: Knowledge and power meet in one, to establish and extend the power and dominance of the human race itself over the universe.


14. Hyphen in the original.

15. The link is made via semiotic analysis of subjects on film- ranging from sitcom actors to politicians on the news (Atkinson, 1984) and through semiotics to the presentation of the ‘actor’ (used in the generic sense) or person acting within the context of any scenario or environment.

16. Baum & Baum, 1975., provide an extreme example of an attempt to attribute precise meanings to particular gestures. Some highly codified movements, do signify specific meanings in certain instances, human behaviour may be influenced by so many factors aside from these which are immediately apparent, such as idiosyncratic habits. Therefore a rigid conception of, meanings without taking cognisance of contextual modifications, could be analytically disastrous.

17. In an interview with Martha Davis, Edward T. Hall (1978: 10), comments on the fact that subsequent research has not taken up his work on Proxemics as a whole system but have taken ‘little bits and pieces of it’, which has meant that they ‘are still left with fragments and a coherent system has been linearized. As soon as you linearize, of course, it goes off in one direction.’ Power relations and the operation of linguistic methods in the field of body language are examined in Chapter Three.

The closest that Birdwhistell comes to an acknowledgement that power relations may be a factor influencing communication is when he states that while "we do not wish to become involved in status and role theory, we must note that the broadest cross-referencing behaviour in the communication system relates directly to these aspects of interaction" (1970: 203).

In its simplest form this model treats of a sender, a medium and a receiver in all communication processes.

Research in the field.


The prominence of the West as a category for dividing the world may in itself derive from an internalisation of the writer's perspective on the Western side of the Cold War power bloc's.

For an explication of peculiarities of the South African media see Louw (1993) and Tomaselli (1986; 1989).

See Lynn Spender (1983) for some discussion of women and the media.

Black peril/ threat.

After their defeat in the Anglo-Boer War, the Afrikaners mobilised against the perceived threat to their heritage by the English language: this led ultimately to the formation of cultural and political movements.

This description was developed in reaction the South African situation. In South Africa ideological mobilisation, via cultural identity, has been used by interest groups in the pro- and anti-apartheid movements, as well as within ethnic minorities.

Research in the field. The Zulu word that expresses this concept is 'Phumalimi'.
CHAPTER TWO:
Promises of Power: An Examination of Popular Texts.

In accordance with established cultural studies practice, popular body language texts are perused to determine their worthiness as objects of academic appraisal. As the concern of this thesis is with power relations in aspects of body language in South Africa, this chapter will focus on the power relations informing the production and consumption of such popular works.

A Definition
By 'popular texts' I refer to body language texts that are in general circulation, which are intended for the popular or 'mass' market. Such books are distributed in paperback via the leading news-agents in major economic/metropolitan centers in South Africa, such as the Central News Agency (CNA). They are aimed at the general public in terms of their readership. Their audience or market differs from that of the academic publications on non-verbal communication, or even that of Argyle's (1975) text on "bodily communication" (a hardback which aimed at both academic and popular audiences). This chapter will examine some of the texts that have been encountered both in book shops, on home bookshelves and in discussions, whether the latter have occurred formally in interviews, or informally in conversations about body language.

There are six texts that fall into the category prescribed above: Body Language by Julius Fast (1970); How to Read A Person Like A Book, by Nierenberg and Calero (1973); Manwatching, by Desmond Morris (1978); Body Language by Alan Pease (1981); Body Language, by Jane Lyle (1990) and Gestures, by Roger Axtell (1991). The last book was not as well known as the other five, perhaps due to its having been published relatively recently or due to less widespread availability. After a brief description, each text will be discussed in terms of the following criteria:

- Where it was encountered and if interviewees mentioned it at all.
- What it appears to offer its reader, due to the way that it has been marketed.
- Its relationship to academic texts and practices.

These discussions provide the basis for arguments that will be examined throughout the thesis.

There are several correspondences between these popular works in terms of their titles, layouts, cover blurbs and relationships to popular texts in related fields such as psychology. There are also numerous thematic consistencies amongst the popular texts. A detailed analysis of the contents of each text being beyond the scope of the current thesis, only certain significant points will be highlighted. Specific aspects of each text relating to research findings will be mentioned where appropriate. Themes that will be elaborated elsewhere will merely be outlined here.
POPULAR THEMES

Themes in the popular texts on body language range from socio-biologism to business meetings and 'courtship'. Power relations inform the development and textual discussions of these themes.

Social Darwinism

One of the most prevalent themes encountered in popular texts on body language has been variously termed "socio-biologism", "Social Darwinism" or (more plainly) "evolution-ism". This theme is premised on the understanding that humans are animals and that our behaviour can be analysed as a progressive development from that of other animals.

The focus of this theme derives from Darwin's *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* (1872). Studies of animal behaviour and character formation are termed ethology. This focus is apparent in the popular texts because of their debt to the numerous scientific studies that compare animal and human behaviour. Animal studies are thus referred to in most of the popular writers when they examine "territoriality", and "dominance". Some of the popular writers make more explicit links to evolutionary theories. For instance, Fast cites a study in which Allen and Gardner taught a young female ape to communicate using deaf sign language as an argument for the "antiquity of body language and its supremacy over the spoken word" (Fast, 1970: 168).

The comparison of human and animal behaviour is particularly apparent in texts by Desmond Morris, which he ascribes to his training and experience as a Zoologist. Morris, in fact, became well-known for his Zoological series on Granada TV in Britain and for his controversial book *The Naked Ape* (1967), which views humankind as evolved 'naked' apes. The evolutionary theme continues in all of his popular works including *Manwatching*. The prevalence of evolutionism in the popular texts is due to the influential nature of this theory as an academic paradigm.

Business or Corporate Behaviour

The second most prominent theme is that of corporate relations. Here the focus is on achieving power through a knowledge and command of behaviour deemed appropriate in large corporations. The general norm for 'behaviour' favours an Anglo-American mould, in that Western, Capitalist practices are more or less assumed as the archetypal 'model' or context for such behaviour. In the interests of global economics, texts also tend to focus on the type of gestural variants and socially expected rules for "politeness" in countries such as Japan, the Middle East. In particular, Axtell's *Gestures: The DO's and TABOOs of Body Language Around the World* (1991) includes these and several other countries which a businessman is most likely to
visit. In this text, foreign behaviours are often regarded as variants of the ‘dominant’ Western norm. This is almost an Evolutionary assumption itself; however, the texts which have the greatest focus on Business as a topic have the fewest evolutionary foci.

Other popular texts which focus more on the business sphere are those by Pease, who heads a sales training and communications company; Nierenberg and Calero, who specialize in management negotiation training; and Lyle, who examines such topics as executive stress. Many academic studies of intercultural communication that did not arise from purely anthropological investigations arose out of the early needs of the United Nations organisation. There was a perceived need to understand the behaviour of people in different cultures in “the Global Village” envisaged by Marshall Mccluskan as a result of increased links between different parts of the world.

Sex or Courtship
This is a theme which many texts present as being of interest in the sphere of social relations. Fast describes “homosexual signals” and offers to answer the question: “What body language does a girl use to say ‘I’m available. I can be had’?" (1971: cover blurb). Pease promises to teach his readers “How to pick up a partner without being obvious” (1981: blurb). Many of the texts also deal with “quasi-courtship” behaviour (Schefflen, 1972, 1973), which is not intended to lead to courtship but is used instead to draw attention to the person using it in whatever context.

One of the most popularized images that could signal availability when used by a female is that of the half-off shoe. This image is referred to, by Pease, as the “shoe fondle” which “indicates a relaxed attitude and has a phallic effect of thrusting the foot in and out of the shoe, which can drive some men wild” (1981: 152-4). This ‘reading’ has been carried through into popular magazines, in isolation from the rest of the gesture clusters with which it might be associated during courtship, and it was mentioned conversationally by a more than one person in the context of sexual signalling. Allusions to the shoe fondle are also made by Nierenberg and Calero (1973: 126) and Lyle (1990:132). It appears to be one of the most popular and ‘fascinatingly’ Freudian behaviours.

Space
As a theme space relates closely to power and control via the notion of territoriality. All the texts deal with the notions of personal space (based on the work of Edward Hall). Many also deal with status and power in terms of such specific manifestations as height or of seating arrangements and bodily contact. Touch is closely linked with space, dominance and territoriality. Who may touch whom, and in what context, is often socially and culturally ‘prescribed’ by unspoken rules or norms of social behaviour.
Smiling

Seen as modified threat behaviour, smiling is a so-called "universal" behaviour, that has nonetheless been culturally patterned in terms of its extent, duration and the context in which it may occur. Smiling is associated with power due to its function as an 'appeasement' signal. It has been termed "the ultimate gesture" (Axetell, 1991: 111-3), because of its universal occurrence.

Gestures

Because they are specific forms of body language, gestures are referred to more frequently than other forms of body movement or attitude. Gestures are often the most visible, obviously learnt or codified behaviours.

Other thematic unities within the texts include the use of film stills or famous people and cartoon characters as illustrations. Humour like glamour and power is used to sell 'body language' as both a consumable product and a social 'skill'.

Gaze

That the eyes are the windows of the soul, seems to be a statement supported by the popular texts: a great deal of their content is devoted to gaze behaviour. Gaze is discussed in the context of dominance, contact, 'openness' or willingness to communicate, and occasionally in the context of intercultural communication due to the difference in cultural patterning of gaze behaviour in different societies and social contexts (Efran, 1968, 1966).

TITLES AND TERMINOLOGY

One of the most visible similarities between the popular works on body language is in their titles. Four of the six texts use the words "body language" in their titles, and three of them offer to teach their readers "how to read" body language. The term 'body language' and the marketing of these texts as self-help manuals is associated with social and epistemological power.

As mentioned earlier, the publication of Julius Fast's book, Body Language (1970) brought the term into popular awareness or parlance. Through its association with popular texts, the term body language is linked with power relationships in two areas. Firstly, in terms of the differences between academic and popular conceptions of the topic and, secondly, due to the power promised by popular texts to their readers through their knowledge of 'hidden dimensions' (see Hall, 1966) of social behaviour.

As an indication of what such a polysemous term as body language might refer, I provide a brief comparative diagram of terms and practices, demonstrating the relationship between academic and popular terms. This indicates the links to the epistemological 'power struggle' between the academic paradigm and popular knowledge which was introduced in the previous chapter.
Body Language and Non-verbal Communication (NVC).

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Most terms will be defined where necessary in their contexts of use. Further explanations are provided in an appended glossary.

As argued in Chapter One, the terms non-verbal communication and body language are not interchangeable. The difference between them occurs at the level of discourse in terms of power relations. The links between the term ‘body language’, popular works and academic discourse as well as its links to power/ knowledge debates, are examined further below.

Body Language as an Everyday Signalling System

In everyday communication we use our bodies constantly as we interact with one another. We might: smile or wave to greet someone, hunch up against the cold; wear a brightly coloured shirt to cheer ourselves up; or withdraw quietly to think something through. We are thus constantly providing ‘signals’ which other people around us can ‘read’ or understand in many different ways. Because our bodies communicate intentionally and unintentionally, reading and understanding body language can thus become an extremely complex process.

Academics investigating ‘nonverbal communication’ (the preferred term in academic use) have focused on either the individual emotional or psychological perspective or on the social perspective in terms of group communication. The operation of social power and its influence on body language is an under-researched area. It is the interrelationship between macro-level social power and micro-level body language that interests me here. Individuals involved in an interaction might view it from an emotional or psychological perspective.
analyzing body language from a group perspective could be seen as the meso-level. The operation of power will be seen to act at the macro-level and thus to influence interactions and perceptions at all levels in turn.

In order to arrive at some understanding of how readers' might be intended to appraise each text, I have adapted to describe and 'read' or analyse each of their covers. The readings offered here use descriptions of body language based on those in academic and popular texts, as well as two cultural studies methods, namely, semiotic and content analyses.

**SEMOTIC ANALYSIS**

Semiotic analyses examine messages, as signs, symbols or indices. In effect, the province of semiotics is the relationship between an object and how we symbolically represent it. Semiotic analyses will be used in this chapter to develop an understanding of what the object/subject (body) might represent in terms of socially constructed 'public' meanings as well as in terms of individual or 'private' understandings.

**At the Social 'moment'**.

Many different relationships are possible between the 'object' represented (termed the *signifier*) and the type of representation (or *signified*) it has. A symbolic relationship is one where the *signifier* bears no relationship to what it represents other than a conventional one. The word 'body' does not look like a 'body', nor is does it exhibit a natural relationship with what it represents. The complex and arbitrary nature of the relationship between a symbolic sign and its representation therefore rests on a socially learnt relationship. In each language or culture we learn to read certain signs in certain ways. 'Readings' of gestures and other forms of body language therefore have a social dimension.

There is a danger here if we operate reductionistically in simplistic semiotic terms. If 'the body' is merely reduced to a symbol, an object onto which we only socially inscribe meaning we lose a full understanding of the complexity of social/personal signs. In *Bodylore* (1993), various authors offer descriptions of *écriture féminine*. Some examine the ways women might inscribe culture onto their bodies or that women's bodies might be inscribed upon by cultural and social practices. This work is developed from the notion of 'reading' or 'writing' the body as a social text and an individual experience.

**At an Individual 'moment'**.

We cannot be sure that when one person writes or encodes the word 'body' that the image in his/her mind will correspond with that in the mind of someone who reads or decodes the word. Each image or symbol can also operate on a secondary level of representation. One person might be imagining the slim, trim form of a fashion model, while another could imagine a more 'Rubenesque' form, or even the large female form traditionally associated with African images of fertility. On the other hand, they might be imagining bodies.
of different genders rather than those with different aesthetic qualities. The interplay between 'individual' and 'social' moments/perceptions can be seen in that Fashion 'models' form part of Western marketing strategies and the aesthetics governing images of large-hipped Rubenesque or African bodies are both socially and individually constrained and constructed.

The images we perceive are influenced by our particular lived experiences, and even by our individual psychology and emotions, as well as by normative social conventions. Each phenomenological understanding of an experience or a symbol is the result of a dynamic relationship between individual experience and social practices. The fragmented forms used to represent bodies by an artist such as Picasso result from personal and social influences on his work. Body language texts present us with meanings which can be understood in terms of both social and individual experience. If they were not both socially and personally relevant they would be eschewed as irrelevant and unpublishable. Body language has to be relevant in terms of the public and private spheres delimited by Johnson (1986) for it to be marketable.

One of the dangers in examining the everyday or ordinary is that, like our own bodies, the norms with which we are so familiar in our daily lives are so close to us that we are hardly conscious of them (see also Hall, 1955). Over consciousness about the self or body, in everyday life would be regarded as socially abnormal, unacceptable and thus as dysfunctional. What is certain however is that, if people are living within the same linguistic and cultural community, there should be sufficient consensus among then that when someone in an interaction refers to 'the body' others will think of the human form rather than the form of a horse, cat or other animal.

We could also arrive at a conception of 'body image' (see Chapter One) in accordance with the norms of the dominant cultural group in a society. An example of a change in body image in South Africa that has recently emerged from four years of study by Ken Hubber is that:

the aesthetic and erotic body images of Africans are changing. Body parts typically eroticised in Western culture are now being similarly eroticised in African erotic imagery. This change is also seen in elements of the aesthetic body image. In this regard, Prof Hubber says the main change is the displacement of the large female body by a slimmer body of the aesthetic image (1994: 7).

As will be seen throughout this thesis, it is not the way that bodies are represented that is of principal interest. Primary interests include how our bodies communicate in terms of the social relations that constrain them; in terms of the power relations to which they give form; as well as those that construct and constrain our bodily communication. Thus it is that body image is only a concern insofar as it communicates something about social power relations in South Africa. So too, the popular texts that are available in South Africa can be read in terms of the power relations that constrain their production. I will attempt to read these popular texts at their moment of 'production' in terms of the constraints operating upon them in conjunction with
those operable at the moment of their ‘consumption’. It will be noted that the ‘production’ and ‘consumption’ of these texts are in fact part of a complex process that are not as readily separable from one another as might be imagined.

Semiotic ‘Readings’ and Popular Texts.
What is important too, in terms of the representations chosen and used on the covers of popular body language texts, is the relationship between these texts, their readers and those marketing or producing the texts. Publishers wish to sell such books to the ‘public’ so they would design the covers to convey an image that they believe such readers would find acceptable and desirable (Price & Roberts, 1987).

A semiotic analysis of the term ‘body language’ could reveal much about what the readers of such texts might expect. In popular Western (as in Anglo-American) understanding the ‘body’ most often connotes a sexually desirable female body. “Great Body!” is a term that men apply equally to two main objects of (their) desire - the female form and the ‘bodywork’ of a car. The conflation of these terms is often used in popular culture.

Feminist theorists have begun to examine such conceptions of the female body as objects of male desire in terms of the subordinate position of women in society and as representations of economic, cultural and political or power relations (Kappler, 1986). AIDS research in South Africa is also currently uncovering further evidence of such socio-cultural constructions of the female body, particularly in the black communities (Epstein, 1994).

While the term ‘body’ on its own could suggest a corpse, it is animated by its association with the term ‘language’. A dead body could not communicate.

READING INDIVIDUAL TEXTS:
One if the primary differences in the presentation of popular texts as opposed to academic tomes is in the use of the covers of the popular works as a marketing tool. What follows are brief analyses each of the covers of the various popular texts, to determine how they have been marketed and how commercialization might affect their covers and contents.

Reading a cover like a book.
a.) Body Language (Fast, 1972).

The first popular text that I encountered in South Africa was that of Julius Fast. This was also the book most frequently mentioned by interviewee’s during my research phase. Several respondents referred to it directly and it was referred to in numerous informal conversations.
The front cover of Fast's text can be described and read as follows:
The top third of the front cover is taken up with the title 'Body Language' in maroon script with the author's name in black, followed by a quote from the Daily Mail: "Shows how our bodies reveal our thoughts; attitudes; and desires". Thus an apparently reliable authority, influential in the formation of Public Opinion, the Daily Mail newspaper, supports the idea that body language reveals one's innermost secrets. Similarly, the Daily Express is quoted on the back cover as referring to "the silent language of love". This reference to the desirability of secret / unknown knowledge is a common marketing technique in these popular texts, and relates to Sapir's description of knowledge about bodily communication.

The bottom two thirds of the front cover are divided into four segments. There is a monochrome illustration in each segment featuring the same man and woman in what could be interpreted as a sequence of events. If one reads from right to left and top to bottom (as is conventional in the West where these texts have been produced) the sequence will be as follows:

Firstly, we see the man and woman in what appears to be an office scenario, then we see them during a lunch-break, followed by their strap-hanging on a bus and finally she is seated on his lap atop a fifties-style kitchen chair.

While this sequence might be 'read' as a courtship or office romance beginning at work and ending in an intimate, homely atmosphere, the illustrations could simply be a series of unrelated instances of body language, which indicate different contexts in which body language occurs primarily those of business, social and intimate relationships. I have chosen to interpret them sequentially in terms of a Western idea of how
an image should be read. The notion of ‘reading’ a social occasion as a text is dealt with in more depth elsewhere.

An examination of the body language in these illustrations will demonstrate some of the readings of body language offered by the popular texts. In the top left illustration we see what appears to be an office scenario. A man is seated leaning back looking up at a woman, who is standing above him to talk on the telephone. Height is often associated with displays of dominance and superiority (e.g. Pease, 1981: Chapter 14; Schefflen & Schefflen, 1972), but here this cue is qualified by the fact that they are not looking at one another directly or challengingy. Dominance is associated with competition and confrontation (see Schefflen & Schefflen, 1972) and thus with direct gaze, whereas submission and conflict avoidance are signalled by gaze avoidance. We are all familiar with gaze and conflict avoidance in crowded spaces such as lifts (elevators).

The man has one hand to his forehead almost shading his eyes and the other touching his stomach just above the centre of his trouser belt. These cues indicate relaxed appraisal on his part, as well as a possible sexual interest due to the proximity of the thumb to the genital region, both gesture and posture are indices of male dominance or control (e.g. Pease, 1981:123-6 & 130, and Schefflen & Schefflen, 1972). His knees are crossed and are angled towards her, which might be an indication of focus or interest in her, or in her telephone conversation. The woman is leaning over the man to listen on the telephone. Her hair is hanging down and almost touches his shoulder. She is holding the telephone, with her one hand and has a note-pad and pen in her other hand, which suggests a business environment. This hand is also self-touching as it is making contact with the elbow of the other arm. Self-touching could signal insecurity or a desire to be touched, but in either case these readings would have to be contextualised. The woman could be insecure about the person that she is speaking to on the telephone or about the man in the office with her. She has her face away from her co-worker, facing towards the readers but her head is tilted in the direction of both the telephone and him. Her eyes are angled down, but she seems to be looking at the telephone base rather than at him.

This illustration does not clearly and unambiguously indicate any relationship between the man and the woman other than that they are in the same locale and are aware of and accept one another’s presence. The fact that his legs are angled towards her - a signal of interest or attention (Fast, 1970; Schefflen & Schefflen, 1972; and others) could be due to spatial relations in a cramped office and not to any ‘romantic’ or personal interest he may feel for her. Her head could be tilted towards him or towards the imagined caller at the other end of the line. Because she is facing away from him she could be ignoring him or behaving coyly to disguise any interest that she might feel in him.

We therefore have to contextualise and qualify any judgments or readings of body language due to the number of factors that could impinge on any particular situation. Most of the body language texts stress the fact that one cannot simply understand a gesture, or expression or any form of body language in isolation
(Fast, 1971: 98-99; Morris, 1987: 36,39,45; Nierenberg & Calero, 1982: 7-11; Pease, 1981: 14-17). Unlike verbal language, very few body language behaviours have a 'stand alone' meaning. Everything has to be understood or 'read' contextually.

While a number of readings of the other illustrations could have been included here, only significant commonalities have been highlighted in the interest of concision. Patriarchal dominance is manifest in two of the interactions, on the front and back cover respectively. The man is the one reaching out and initiating contact with the woman in both cases. As the male he is the dominant person - the one most likely to initiate any form of social communication or contact (Henley, 1977: 5). In all the instances described the complexity and multiplicity of 'signals' mitigates against a single, simplistic reading of the interaction depicted.

In the last illustration at bottom right, the woman is seated on the man's lap atop a fifties-style kitchen chair. She is on the left and her torso is pulled slightly away from his body, her hands are around his neck and her head is resting on his shoulder. She could be kissing the side of his face or whispering in his ear - we don't know which, if either, is the case. She is looking out at us with one eye. He has his hands around her waist, with the one nearest us, on her hip. His eyes are closed and he has a blissful expression on his face. A romantic liaison is fairly clearly indicated. However, he might be more committed than she is: she appears a little cautious due to the lack of torso contact between them. This distance might signal either the early stage in a romance or a quarrel and a desire, on her part, to be distanced from the relationship. In terms of socialization too, women are traditionally more cautious than men about sexual relationships as they are most certainly the ones to 'bear' the consequences, thereof.

As can be seen from the descriptions above, any reading of body language can only be tentative and each interpretation of a particular gesture or action has to be contextualised with other gestures and actions as well as in the social and personal context of the individuals involved. The wording of the blurb on Fasts back cover seems to be deliberately aimed at arousing the readers curiosity about the 'secrets' of body language, and emphasises the social relationships that might be better understood with greater command of body language, whether familial or sexual. Family relationships are only mentioned once, but several references are made to "the personal secrets of strangers, friends and lovers".

Through this book the reader is promised the ability to "penetrate ... personal secrets" and "to make use of your powers" or to develop "powers" of discernment offered by the text. The journey of discovery is also promoted as an exciting and stimulating game "frightening, adventurous and revealing - but never dull".

The cover illustrations of all the texts show a man and woman, in their twenties or thirties. They appear to be middle-class, and are shown in the contexts of work and romantic/sexual relationships. We could therefore
assume that the target market for this text would fall into these categories. Reader's projected interests or goals are success in business and in sexual relations.

Contents

Fast's book is written in an accessible, often chatty style. While it does not use footnotes and is often anecdotal in the manner in which topics are introduced, the text displays a thorough knowledge of the important academic studies available at the time of publication. For instance, Fast provides an excellent summary of Birdwhistell's notation.

Fast examines the topic in terms of: the body as a message; animals and territory: space; body zones; smiles as masks; the healing properties of touch; sexual signals; and postures and their meanings. Gaze and intercultural communication are also examined. He asks if there is a 'language of legs', and deals with topics such as animal communication, faking body language and mental healing through body language (a link with pop-psychology). The power of the knowledge Fast provides is stressed throughout his text. Its value was also attested to by numerous respondents I spoke to who claimed to have read and used this work in their personal and professional lives.

b.) How to Read a Person Like a Book (Nierenberg & Calero, 1973)

Gerard I Nierenberg and Henry H Calero co-authored How to Read a Person Like a Book which was originally published 1973. The 1980 edition is the one surveyed here. It has a black cover with three colour photographs on the front.

The largest is of a blonde woman, in her twenties or thirties. She is smiling and has her arms folded. The other two photographs are superimposed over this picture, on the bottom third of the page.

In the photograph on the bottom left the same woman is lounging back on a large 'cottagey' chair that has two loose cushions on it. Her one hand is on the arm of the chair while the other is level with it on her thigh. She is smiling, and her knees are together and face the reader. The impression conveyed here is one of homely, relaxed friendliness. Her body is controlled in that she has her knees together, a typical controlled female posture. 'Girls' are taught to keep their knees together so that no one can see up their skirts, 'boys' are not taught instead not to look. The primacy of the male gaze, and the consequent restrictions this places on female behaviour have been discussed by numerous feminist writers (Kappeler, 1986). Gaze as social control is not generally included in discussions of gaze behaviour by theorists of nonverbal communication, Henley (1977) and Scheflen (1972) being exceptional cases.
In the picture on the right a man is standing with his torso facing us and his head tilted slightly to the left. He has short dark hair (in need of a trim) and a full beard. His attention is focused away from the reader as he is looking to the left, and his arms are folded fairly tightly across his chest with each hand gripping the opposite upper-arm. The contrast between these two pictures suggests different attitudes to the reader. While the woman seems friendly and open to communicate despite being 'laid back', the man appears distant and preoccupied with something else. This contrast can also be understood as a gender relationship. Women are generally supposed to smile and to be more communicative than men. In all three pictures there is an impression of lower or middle-class ordinariness. The two protagonists do not appear glamorous. They are wearing casual comfortable clothing and neither of them is wearing ostentatious jewellery. The woman is wearing only a small amount of lipstick and no eye make-up.

From this abbreviated analysis it would appear that the book has been marketed to appeal to lower middle-class readership in their twenties to thirties. The two smaller photographs are reproduced on the back cover along with the text discussed below. Examples of possible miscommunication, lying and the ability to discern emotional states such as nervousness and anger, are cited as reasons to "buy this book and learn to read others!"
Contents

From my examination of the text it appears that the contents of the book have been glamorized in the blurb which promises that: "self-revealing body movements are here illustrated by drawings from photographs of famous people in real-life situations." At first glance for a South African reader, no hint of fame is to be found in the illustrations. There are references to "Lincolnesque postures" (1973: 146), while baseball players (1973: 40,79), whose fame does not reach beyond America and Canada where the sport is played, are featured in the illustrations.

The text does, however, relate to real life situations in both 'public' and 'private' moments. An example is provided in a discussion of touch:

Our only conclusion is that the touching gesture is many things to different people - to some an endorsement, to others an interrupt signal. There are those who use it effectively to calm overly emotional persons. And many who use it as a reassurance touch, using it not only with people we like but also with our prized possessions (Nierenberg & Calero, 1980:123).

This quote relates to the use of touch in a complex number of ways and avoids being overly simplistic. Touch is recognised as having a number different 'meanings' for individuals and in different social contexts. This is but one instance in which a popular text does not support the rather stereotyped view that many academics have of them as being overgeneralized and simplistic.

That Nierenberg & Calero's observations are borne out in everyday communication is supported by my own experience. I have used touch effectively to diffuse socio-political tension. In one instance, touch was used to calm a drunk, highly emotive, young black male, in a volatile political meeting. He was disputing what I was saying due to the difference in our racial backgrounds. I reached out and touched him on the arm (a neutral contact area: touch studies are discussed below) and maintained this contact as I countered his argument. He then 'backed down' acknowledging that I was within my rights to have an opinion that differed from his own. Touch also seemed to reassure him of the fact that I regarded him as a human being - it was not regarded as being condescending, perhaps because there were two opposing social role relations in operation here. On the one hand I could be seen as dominant: as a white person in authority in that particular context initiating contact, but on the other this contact would be regarded as non-threatening due to my lack of status, in his eyes, occasioned by my female gender.

The lip-in smile and smiling as subordinate behaviour - are also described by Nierenberg and Calero (1973: 32). This is a smile that is particularly notable in Afrikaans-speaking women in South Africa. This type of closed-mouthed behaviour reflects repression, whether of the desire to talk, or due to a feeling that it would be unacceptable to talk, in a particular context. It might also be associated with repressed desires. A full
reading is only possible in the context of other gestures or of a 'cluster' of associated gestures, with similar readings. As Nierenberg And Calero state:

It is difficult for some people without in-depth exposure to nonverbal communications not to jump to immediate conclusions about others by only seeing their facial expressions or the way they walk or shake hands. Reserve your judgements. See how much more you can learn by knowing attitudes and gesture clusters (1973:33).

Thus it would seem that some of the insights offered by Nierenberg and Calero, apply in the South African intercultural context. If a reading such as the one above is mediated by the cultural studies perspective outlined in Chapter One, touch is seen to function both as an endorsement of personal worth and as an interrupt signal, which allowed me to take control of a volatile social situation and thus to attain the social goal promised by popular texts: power and control.

The business context of Nierenberg and Calero is due to the fact that the authors' interest in body language arose from their presentations of workshops and seminars on negotiation in the United States and abroad (1980: 5). The book is organised according to what Nierenberg and Calero describe as "gesture clusters - a series of related gestures is examined together with individual gestures" (1980:5). Aside from the introductory section on how to read gestures, the final chapters namely: "Relations and Circumstances" and "Understanding in an Environment", deal with how to read social contexts. Such a section on reading complex social situations is also offered by Pease (1981).

Other clusters focus on social relations such as cooperation and courtship as well as on personal or emotional characteristics such as "Confidence, Nervousness and Self-Control". The focus of this text is therefore split between individual, emotional concerns and social, relational ones. An over-emphasis on emotional or psychological factors which some academics suggest is a major problem in popular texts (see Schefflen & Schefflen, below) did not occur here. Nor is this popular text as simplistic as some academics claim all such texts are.

c.) Manwatching (Morris, 1978)

The work most often mentioned in interviews, after that of Fast was that of Morris. At first glance Manwatching is a glossy, lavishly illustrated 'coffee-table' book which is therefore most likely to be superficial in its treatment of body language.

On the front cover there is an air-brushed picture of a large female eye with a lilliputian naked man standing atop the lower eyelid looking at his reflection in the pupil of the eye as one might into a full-length mirror. We therefore have a self-reflexive image with mutual male/female gaze: in the words of the blurb, 'a new, different way of looking at your fellow man'.
The hair from the head of the female figure on the front cover seems to have been included as an illustration on the back cover, thus providing a larger female than male image. The predominance of female images occurs, too on the covers of Lyle and Nierenberg and Calero texts. The female form is often perceived, as I have stated, as an object of desire, which is used to market or sell goods.

Figure 3. Morris (1978)

MANWATCHING

A Field Guide to Human Behaviour

DESMOND MORRIS

Manwatching is related in the blurb, to Morris' earlier 'controversial' work The Naked Ape (1967). There is thus a reference to his fame. Further authority is derived from references to his status as 'Dr. Morris' and to the extensive nature of his travels, and research. The primitive or 'unconscious bodily movements' are contrasted with 'highly ordered modern society', which is consistent with his perspective as a zoologist. The public is emphasized in the listing of topics as "hunting, mating, status, territorial, leadership, ritual and taboo gesture and postures..." (blurb). Social ease is also proffered as a result of becoming a "manwatcher".

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Manwatching was intended to be a coffee-table glossy of the type that is put on display for people to page through, glance at and read only in snatches. The book has sixty-one divisions, by topic, excluding subdivisions references and the index. Chapters are divided according to gestures and gesture clusters that have similar origins or social uses. The evolutionary perspective is evident throughout the text. Morris also makes frequent reference to academic studies as well as to everyday experiences. There are hundreds of illustrations which often cover an entire page or even a double-spread. One of the illustrations is particularly memorable.
as it was gleefully shown to me by a young male (in his early twenties) minutes after I had been given a copy of the text. The picture in question is double-page picture of a ‘copulating’ couple (Ed van der Elsken: 248,9). In South Africa at the time the book was released here, nudity was heavily censored and this picture therefore elicited a great deal of attention, particularly amongst young males in their late teens or early twenties. A large proportion of the photographs used are from film stills or depict famous personalities such as Queen Elizabeth II or Jacqueline Kennedy-Onassis. These people would be familiar to a large number of readers through the mass media although they are most immediately recognizable in the Great Britain or America. Such images serve to sell magazines, popular body language texts or television air-time due too their glamour and subsequent "newsworthiness."

d.) Body Language: How to read other’s thoughts by their gestures (Pease, 1981)

Written by Australian management consultant Alan Pease this text was published in 1981, although the 1987 edition is the one referred to here.

Figure 4. Pease (1981)

The cover is a very bright yellow with orange and black text which is a style of presentation often used on the covers of management texts. There are three illustrations on the front cover. From left to right they depict: a very skimpily dressed and provocatively posed female; a man leaning back in his chair; and another man sitting astride a chair. These illustrations allude to sexual, business and personal relationships.

The skimpily dressed female is wearing a shirt that is open in front and knotted just below her breasts, leaving her midriff bare. She is wearing very short denim shorts and has a lit cigarette in her one hand. The
thumb of her other hand is hooked confidently, and suggestively, into the front pocket of her shorts (A gesture associated with aggressive masculine sexual display). Her hips are tilted to the left, while her face is turned towards the right and she is glancing back towards us, in a parody of coyness. This appears to be a really tough woman with a 'come and get it attitude'. The brazen display of her body is akin to the posturing of a model or a prostitute. The man, who is leaning back on his chair, is dressed in a three-piece suit. He has his hands clasped behind his head and one leg crossed over the other at the knee. He appears to be detached from - and superior to - whatever is going on around him. Nierenberg & Calero, Pease, Schefflen & Schefflen and others, all regard this posture as a dominant/superior cluster, signifying authority and control on the part of the person exhibiting such behaviour.

The last man, who appears to be the eldest, has an unpleasant close-mouthed expression. He is sitting astride a chair (also a masculine, dominant/superior signal) with his arms folded. He too, appears arrogant, supercilious and withdrawn. He also might be understood to be leering.

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Chapters other than the introduction and conclusion are divided according to body parts. Pease also makes very frequent references to power in the titles of his chapters as well as throughout his text. Pease speaks about the human palm as he says "palm power invests its user with a degree of authority and the power of silent command over others" (1981: 42).

In one very specific example he deals with handshakes, dominance and power. Using very clear illustrations, Pease demonstrates how one might move to neutralize an overly dominant handshake (46-53). He goes on to discuss controlling interactions via gaze (136), as well as table seating and dominance - plus mention is made of territoriality.

As will be found in many of the texts however, Pease tends to focus on Western masculine foci, of power such as the handshake. He is dealing with the context of Western Business and Western sexual signalling despite his location in Australia. Pease thus still falls within the ambit of the Western or British-American body language tradition which has as its forebears such academics as Birdwhistell and Schefflen. Pease in fact acknowledges his debt to Birdwhistell as an indirect formative influence (1987:1.)

e.) Body Language: (Lyle, 1990)

This book, also an A4-sized glossy, was mentioned specifically by one of my respondents, a young white male.

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The cover of Lyle's text can be semiotically analyzed to reveal an interest in sexuality and business. The picture of the woman on the cover of this particular text was cited by male respondents as that of "a woman with sexy legs". In terms of Lyle's own colour analysis the business suit, worn by the woman on the cover contains elements of control, mystery and domination due to its black colour. Elements of sensuality, passion and female sexuality are thus conveyed in the red of the scarf draped over the suit.

The head of the woman has been cropped from the picture so that the focus is just on her body and legs. The woman is sitting on a flat black surface that could represent a desk, and has long scarlet tipped nails. Her crossed legs suggest a "high degree of tonus" akin to that mentioned by Birdwhistell (1970), Schefflen (1972, 1973) and other academics in the body language field. The same cover illustration appears on the back of the book along with the a blurb that promises to "pep up your social and working life...attract a favourable response from others" and is "fun" too. It also provides a "how to..." list in the self-help tradition. The promise of this text, too can be summed up as success in one's social and working life.

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Thus like *Manwatching* there is a tendency for it to be regarded as a quick page-turner, in which the pictures are more important than the text, which detracts only slightly from the academic basis of both texts. Lyle is the least academic of the two, although she uses quotations from poems to give her text authority as Nierenberg and Calero do, Lyle's text lacks the depth of knowledge displayed in most of the other works. The preoccupations of modern executives and even of the New Age as part of a search for answers to the
problems of alienation and Western mind/body split are particularly apparent in Lyle's text. Lyle thus includes a chapter on stress and how it affects the body in Modern industrial society, and offers relaxation exercises. There is also a section on body shape and colour and clothing as signalling devices that indicate status, moods and emotions.

Colour as a signalling device has long been a facet of most popular cultures (as part of the practices and rituals of everyday life). Colours were regarded to be important message bearers in flowers, and dress, particularly during courtship in late eighteenth century Europe. In traditional African beadwork a similar system of messages via colour and decorative practices exists. It has been studied in terms of courtship rituals and social status. The recent revival in interest in such things as auras, aromatherapy and correct colour-coding and harmonies in dress and personality are popular expressions (in Western Mass Culture) of the need to return to the body and the senses. This is an expression of a post-modern yearning for pre-industrial life. Similar movements are visible in the traditions of the Romantic Pastoralist (such as Wordsworth), in the Art Nouveau movement - in a more constrained fashion - and in recent times in the Hippie movement in the 1960's and the New Age movement of the late 1980's and early 1990's. Richard Hoggart (1957) mentioned the residual yearning for a pastoral age of innocence on the part of the working classes in Britain at the beginning of this century.

At the macro-level of discourse science is opposed by nature and natural religion. The so called 'New Age' religion, green movement, and increased focus on the body via pornography links back to Dunn's argument in Chapter One.


Roger E. Axtell is a successful, well-travelled American businessman, writing for men such as himself. His interests are clearly reflected in the cover design of his text.

Axtell’s cover illustration features a smiling man in a business suit, with his legs crossed in a relaxed fashion. He is standing atop a globe and is shown with eight arms (rather like Shiva Hindu god of Dance). His many hands are using different gestures. Thus we obtain a clear visual picture of how happy the prospective reader, a businessman would be as a result of his understanding of all of these gestures. Axtell (according to the blurb) "is a former VP of Worldwide Marketing for the Parker Pen Company, with more than 28 years of travel experience abroad". His expertise and authority are further stressed by the references to his other previous publications on Do's and Taboo's in other contexts.
Like Lyle's text this work promises entertainment as well as education with "whimsical and informative illustrations by Mike Formwald." The reference on the cover reads: "Popular Reference/ Humour/ Travel". The Travel category provides a certain glamour for potential readers.

Figure 6. Axtell (1991)

![Gestures: The DIs and Uses of Body Language Around the World](image)

Roger E. Axtell

Contents

Axtell's text is one of the most simplistic I reviewed. This work is more of a catalogue, in the gestural dictionary tradition than any of the others. He deals firstly with "the Power of Gestures" in his introduction. Gestures are then dealt with in categories such as those of greeting or beckoning before they are divided up for quick reference in three different ways: Firstly, from head to toe; then in a short-list; and finally in a country-by-country listing. Brief reference is made in the latter to South Africa (1992:167) and Zimbabwe (1992: 169).

He refers briefly to the "amalgam of black African tribal, Dutch and English cultures as influences", states that the handshake is "still the commonly accepted form of greeting". Axtell refers to Nelson Mandela's 1990 tour of Europe and North America as 'publicizing' the "world recognised 'Black Power' salute of a raised right fist".

The bowl gesture is described as "reportedly a signal of humbleness or of supplications saying, in effect, 'The gift you may give me... will mean so much that I must hold it in two hands.'" Other behaviours that I would include as South African are mentioned by him as Zimbabwean. Namely that "long, direct eye contact...
considered somewhat rude, especially in rural areas" or that it is "an older tradition to give -or accept - a gift 
using both hands".

Axel seems to be unaware of the fact that handshakes differ amongst many black and white South Africans. 
The changing status of South Africa in the eyes of the world, post-1990, could account for the inclusion of 
South African body language in a popular text of this sort for the first time in 1991. 
Generally it would seem that these popular texts have a great deal in common with one another due perhaps 
to similarities in the target audiences and the social class and aspirations of the majority of their authors and 
publishers.

JOHNSON REVISITED & MARKETING STRATEGIES

The popular texts under discussion can be analysed in terms of Johnson's categories of age, class, gender and 
race, which in this instance at the moments of both their production and consumption relate both to (public) 
marketing strategies and to the (private) needs of their readers, although the latter are also represented in the 
'public' sphere. All of these categories and relations exist as aspects of constant dynamic interplay, thus 
cross-referencing continually.

* Age - most covers depicted people in their 20's to 40's, during the peak of their working and sexually 
active lives.

* Class - indices referred to the middle classes, who represent the social status quo in a Western Society.

* Gender was a prominent feature in the illustrations analysed. Male dominance and gender power relations 
were apparent, in conjunction with body language practices such as gaze, super-or subordination and 
particular postures and gestures.

* Race - although it was not stated above all the depictions discussed on the covers of texts where white 
(Whites were also in the majority in illustrations within the texts, too). These combined factors result in 
certain problems with respect to the South African market.

South African Applications

One of the most obvious problems for South African readers of these texts is that while there is a great deal 
of information about European and American body language, with some mention made of other countries. 
These books are texts, in English, and written from a largely male perspective (only one is written by a 
woman). Reference to Africa and African-ness is extremely rare. This is not unsurprising due to the absence 
of scholarship in this area - a reason for the current investigation. The popular texts appear to focus on 
Western studies and concerns. Popular Western interests including those of multinational corporations seem
to be the target markets of these texts. They are therefore not accessible to, or for, the majority of South Africans. With our high illiteracy rates it would seem that they will not be accessible to the general public in South Africa. Their cover designs and marketing strategies would only appeal to those who already operate within the parameters of Western culture.

One method of overcoming the limitations of both popular and academic texts is to attempt to contextualise them in terms of South African experiences, understandings and the prevailing Discourses operating here.

Despite these limitations there were several appeals which might serve to sell these texts within the broad parameters of the type of readership sketched above.

**Marketing Strategies/ personal appeals**

There seem to be several common marketing appeals used by the publishers of popular body language texts.

* Authority - Dr. Morris, is an acknowledged, "academic expert". He is backed by a great deal of experience. Similarly Axtell is the former vice-president of a global company, who is further supported by his extensive experience. Prior publication is cited to support most of the authors, too. Pease's blurb announces that "Over 700,000 printed in 16 languages". Personal qualification and 'mass appeal' thus provide credibility.

* Glamour is an appeal used rather in the same manner as newsworthiness in the mass media (Gans; Tuchman). Morris was a well known television personality and had been brought to public attention with the publication of *The Naked Ape* (1967), an often controversial text about humans as evolved ape's. As a Dr of Zoology, he also had an established academic reputation. Fast's cover blurb refers to illustrations of famous people. Pease in fact uses pictures that represent members of the British Royal family (Princess Diana, Prince Charles and Princess Anne) to illustrate his observations.

Glamour is thus associated with personalities who have fame or status in our society. In Jane Lyle's *Body Language* (1990) references are also frequently made to pop and film-stars as icons and indices of social conditions. Some mention too is made of the media and its ability to portray or convey certain conscious body language signals.

* Business relationships and success in this sphere are touted by Nierenberg and Calero, as management negotiators, Pease as a Management consultant and Lyle through the business-like cover picture and topics such as executive stress.

* Sex, and the possibility of sexual expertise, increased powers of attraction as well as the glamour associated with the Female form were used in the cover illustrations of most texts due to the predominance
of the female form. A particularly good example was provided by the woman's legs featured so strikingly on Lyle's cover. All the cover blurbs referred to particularly to sexual or romantic relationships, too.

* All of the above texts fall into the category of 'self-help' alongside the pop-psychology texts. Inside the back cover of Fast's Body Language a number of books in these categories are advertised for sale.

These are then examples of the type of pop-psychology book that have been marketed alongside body language texts. Further examples are to be found at the back of the next body language text under discussion.

* Power and fear are associated strategies, too. Henley (1977: 6) comments that - the promise of being able to 'read another's secrets' found on the cover of body language texts, makes people defensive about body language. As Henley concludes, "so every body is frightened and scurries to learn how to read other people's bodies; this knowledge is indeed power". Which is borne out in my own experiences when discussing my studies with people for the first time. They tend to respond by asking: "So, what's my body telling you?" while simultaneously adopting a 'closed' position with their arms crossed. Many even step back as they ask what there bodies are revealing. Thus knowledge/power is sold as such in popular body language texts.

Self-help texts relate to other popular works and inter-textually to some academic works on nonverbal communication.

Relations to other texts in the field
Fast's next book was titled 'The Body Language of Sex, Power and Aggression' (1977) which is not generally available in South Africa. It seems that Fast continued to focus directly on the themes of power and sexuality that are implicit in all the body language texts analyzed here, including his own. In fact Pease's text was published in the United States as Signals: How to Use Body Language for Power, Success and Love.

Several of the popular texts list books on their inside covers whose titles relate to power. A number of other texts written by the same authors use similar styles, layouts and cover designs to those described above. They are thus aimed at attracting the same readership. Pease book Talk Language (1985) co-authored with Alan Garner uses a similar style and layout to his Body Language. In 198 Bodywatching was published. Its cover design, layout and glossy format mirror that of Desmond Morris's Manwatching. Axtell published three other books of Do's and Taboo's prior to the one on gestures and they all deal with international topics such as International trade and International visitors.
RELATIONSHIP WITH ACADEMIC DISCOURSE

Style and method

All of the popular texts use a more informal, chatty language than do academic texts, but they do make reference to academic studies and utilize some academic methodologies. While they use no footnotes the authors discussed here make frequent general references to 'studies in the field' to support their views and occasionally mention specific texts and writers who have been influential on particular topics. All include references or bibliographies, while Axell, Morris, Nierenberg and Calero and Lyle each include an index.

Power Analysis

In a sense most of my work is concerned with the relationship between two discourses the academic and the popular. The question in this chapter is: what do popular texts tell us about power which academic texts do not. Popular texts promise insights into 'secrets' which is akin to the focus in academia on the personality factors influencing power, such as dominance. However, when popular texts promise us that we will learn to 'read' others; academia via simplistic semiotic analyses offers us the body and body language as a symbolic entity removed from social reality. Both academic and popular texts and enterprises can however be seen as academic practices which are constructed and constrained by personal and social power relations and practices. It is the operation of these power relations in particular moments in their practices that I will continue to examine throughout the text.

From the cover blur on Body Language and the Social Order (1972), an academic text, we gain some understanding of how popular texts might be viewed by academics:

The popular notion that body language is merely a series of unconscious signs which reveal a person's hidden feelings is false says Dr Albert Scheflen, a leading authority in the science of kinesics. Through text and photographs in this volume, Scheflen, with the assistance of Alice Scheflen, shows that body language, combined with spoken language, primarily serves to control human behaviour and to maintain social order.

In this extract we can also see the operation of social power relations. Scheflen is referred to as "Dr Albert Scheflen, a leading authority in the science of kinesics." Thus he derives status from his position as a 'doctor' in a 'scientific' field. His work is completed "with the assistance of Alice Scheflen" who is therefore not seen as a colleague of equal status. The book is touted as displaying behaviours "which man displays in common with the primates and other mammals". The generic term being exclusionary. Language is thus being used to promote Scheflen himself to allow him to dominate and acquire status as a male academic.5

The Scheflen's construction within hegemonic social power relations occurs despite their awareness that:

body language and related behaviour are used for political control, the indoctrination of people with institutional dogma, and the maintenance of power by blaming individuals for problems which actually originate in the social
order. The effect of these communication controls, Dr Schefflen reveals, often places individuals and minority groups in inescapable "bonds" and contrary to the desired result, creates strife and deviacy which disrupt the social order. (blurb:1972).

Schefflen and Schefflen do not proceed to examine popular works and what they actually represent in their text (see Chapter Three). Like a number of academics they seem to think that it is sufficient to make dismissive statements about such popular works - hardly a technique consonant with accepted academic practice. Popular texts do focus on the social/public as well as the personal/private, as demonstrated above.

Intertextuality

As a possible index of how academics might regard body language texts, I referred to two annotated bibliographies by Martha Davis (1972 & 1982). The only mention of Fast's text in Davis' bibliography is as a "popularized account of kinesics research" (Davis:1972). Manwatching is described as being "written for the lay reader" and she adds that it "describes the acquisition of nonverbal behaviours" and that "Gesture, gaze and other behaviours are presented in detail with reference to their emotional and social import". Nierenberg and Calero are referred to as "a lawyer and a businessman" who wrote "a popularized paperback on how to interpret the significance of gestures and facial expressions". No mention is made at all to power in her descriptions of any of the three texts listed. Similarly, no journal references or reviews were found of any of the popular texts examined here.

Thus the popular nature of the works under review is acknowledged by academics such as Davis and those colleagues who collaborated with her in the production of her bibliographies. Davis also refers to Fast's description of Birdwhistell's notation, which I mentioned above, as an example of intertextuality.

The only academic I have encountered thus far who examines and uses the insights about power found in popular texts is Nancy Henley. Henley, published Body Politics: Power, Sex and Nonverbal Communication in 1977. As an associate Professor of Psychology (at the University of Lowell, Massachusetts) it would seem that her interests might be consonant with those of the 'pop-psychology' texts that popular works on body language are often associated with. Her references to their work are discussed below vis-a-vis intertextuality between popular and academic texts.

Expanding on Henley:

Henley refers to Nierenberg and Calero's work fairly extensively, citing "their interpretation of a wide range of gestures, with special reference to negotiation, on having held hundreds of seminars with thousands of participants and having recorded 2,500 negotiating situations" (Henley, 1977: 126), as grounds for the authority of their work an hence for her references to it. I discuss Henley's references to Nierenberg and Calero as well as to indicate their relevance to South Africa where possible.
Henley refers to Nierenberg and Calero's discussions of male dominance in the context of several gestures or gesture clusters. Thus their reference to Scheflen's observation that "a speaker of status in a group may lean back in his chair, putting the palms of his hands behind his neck as he does so" is cited for its "relaxed aggressiveness" and its use as a particularly male gesture. Dominance and superiority are associated with gestures and positions such as "sitting with one's leg over the arm of a chair, straddling a chair backwards, sitting with one's feet on one's desk, and leaving the jacket unbuttoned, hand in pocket (thumb out)". Which indicate relaxation and ease on the part of he superior/dominant person, and are associated with expansive gestures too. The dominant person is seen as being at ease and in control of the particular territory and of the interaction taking place. A subordinate/submissive person would, in contrast to such expansiveness, exhibit 'closed' positions such as folded arms, buttoned coats and restricted 'tight' gestures they appear defensive and unwilling to change their minds. That these dominance indicators predominate in the cover illustrations of the popular texts has been alluded to above. There is also a great deal of intertextual reference between academic and popular texts apparent in Henley's descriptions.

Thus Nierenberg and Calero suggest that when women wear pants they are more likely to cross their knees over at the ankle- usually a male dominance/competitive (the so called "4-cross" described by Birdwhistell, 1955; 1970). Henley then adds that "social role expectancies rather than dress are the primary constraints on gender performances of nonverbal behaviour" (Henley, 1977: 142)\(^4\). She cites Birdwhistell (reference?), who states that there are very few anatomical differences between men and women's bodies that could cause them to behave as differently as they do, to support her views.

Henley (1977: 128), cites Nierenberg and Calero, who describe touch as an indicator of possession - a perception based on Scheflen and Scheflen (1972). Expanding on Birdwhistell's description of 'steepling', that of touching the fingertips together in a raised position. They describe it as: "the confident and sometimes smug, pontifical, egotistical, or proud gesture"(1973:91) used by the likes of Sherlock Holmes ... when educating his sidekick; record differences in height, or visibility of the steepling gesture as indicators of status noting that in an interaction dominant person: "stares at the other through his hands"(90). Women 'steeple' in a lower less dominant position than men use, according to Nierenberg and Calero (1973: 91). Like beard stroking, 'steepling' is often used by professionals to connote knowledge.

South African Applications

Beard stroking is an index of wisdom occurs in many diverse cultures including traditional African societies. Most of the other behaviours like the texts listed are Western or Eurocentric. I have extrapolated behavioural references (below) which are applicable in South Africa in my experience.

How these texts are understood and used by some of their South African readers, and the apparent interests of people in such topics in their daily lives will be debated further in Chapter Five. (Data Assessment).  

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Nierenberg and Calero note Darwin's observation that both humans and animals cock their heads in attentive listening, they then go on to say that "(f)rom a very early age women instinctively understand the significance of this gesture. They use it consciously when conversing with a male whom they want to impress - and they do." (quoted in Henley, 1977: 137). Lyle too comments on this view while Mary Key-Ritchie (19) notes that women are often depicted in a head tilted position in the popular press: "This head gesture may convey coyness or submissiveness, but it is so common that one can find such a head position in an group of women" (Key, 1975:112).

From my observations and from those of many people that I have spoken to over the years it would appear that this 'coy, head-tilting, and gazing up through the lashes at a male is a gesture which women, in all South African cultures exhibit, from an early age. I have also observed it as an attention getting behaviour in male children (in all cultural groups) and very occasionally in quasi-courtship, attention-getting behaviour of adult males - again in most cultural contexts.

Facial expressions are a primary indicator of expressions in hierarchical relationships, predominating over other forms of body language especially in long term superior/subordinate relationships according to Nierenberg and Calero (197-142-3). A boss, in their example, indicates nonacceptance of a subordinate's idea by raised eyebrows, slight twisting of the head, and a look of doubt. Like Scheffeln and Scheffeln they suggest a hierarchical arrangement of 'behaviour modifiers' (1972). Facial expressions are the first signal of disapproval, followed by a shift to body posture if this is unsuccessful, then escalating to the manipulation of objects in the environment and finally to a verbal communication as a last resort (142-3).

Conclusion
In this chapter, I have shown the practical operation of social power at various levels theorized in Chapter One, in terms of popular texts, and demonstrated the same in terms of relations between popular and academic texts. Academic texts and the debates surrounding them will be discussed hereafter. The language/body language relationship will be examined, in the next Chapter before I 'read' academic texts in similar vein to the examination of popular texts completed here.
NOTES

1. Accessing distribution figures or histories for these books was not possible via the sources at my disposal. Astell’s text was the only one distributed by a more upmarket chain, Adam’s booksellers, but which are equally as widespread.

2. They are cited as R. Allen and Beatrice T. Gardner of the University of Nevada, with no other referencing.

3. I am indebted to a conversation with my colleague Fr. N. Nkosi, for clarification of this terminological distinction.

4. What Richard Connell (Agenda: 1994) has referred to as the problem of the vanishing signifier occurs with so much emphasis on the signifier the signified tends to vanish. The problem is striking for that unavoidably bodily activity, sex. As Vance (1987: 21) carefully put it:

   “to the extent that social construction theory grants that sexual acts, identities and even desire are mediated by cultural and historical factors, the object of study—sexuality—becomes evanescent and threatens to disappear.”

This is a problem particular to gender studies which is trying to avoid reductive sociobiology on the other hand. As we in SA should be well aware overemphasis on socio-biology one of the factors that lead to the emergence of somatism which is experienced in such practices as racism and sexism.

5. Elle McPherson, one of the world’s “Supermodels” has such a “perfect body that she has become known as the Body”.

6. I am using high culture here perhaps it would be best to use the everyday rather than the more obviously culturally codified created object. In my view, what makes a great individual artist great is her/his ability to represent an everyday reality that ordinary people can relate to. Such artists are thus presenting and re-presenting their individual views of socially created reality.

7. Professor of Sociology at the University of Cape Town (UCT), whose research on the body is still largely unpublished at present.

8. In the 1940’s e. e. cummings associated women and cars in poems such as “She being Bran” (which refers to both a car and a woman); bikinis clad women often appear in pictures of cars particularly at motor shows; and a contemporary radio advert (Radio 5, November 1994) uses this conflation to arouse curiosity while advertising a motor oil.

9. If we take Birdwhistell’s statement that “Nothing ever happens” (1970) to its logical conclusion, we would then have to ask what exactly a corpse would represent. We might have to become “detectives”, in A. A. Berger’s sense, to do this.

10. For a brief introduction to a systems understanding of Public Opinion formation see Price, Roberts (1987), Chapter 25 in Berger and Chaffee.

11. Most respondents who supported its usefulness were men. One respondent who did not was a female academic in the field of applied linguistics. She dismissed it as a popular text, in similar fashion to Davis.

12. Young white female lecturers have mentioned authority problems with young black male students due to this patriarchal perception, something I too occasionally experienced as a second-language English teacher.

13. A facial expression which was remarked on in several contexts, in formal interviews and in casual conversation. An allied activity is the closed-mouthed way of speaking, also observed in Afrikaans-speaking women.

14. Some references were more vague, referring only to Desmond Morris as having published extensively in this and related areas.

15. The use of the masculine as a generic term favours a masculine world view, consistent with Morris’s background in the biological sciences.

16. The ‘New Age’ search for a natural holistic mind & body can be viewed as a reaction to the results of dualism, social stress and/or the classical alienation effect.

17. An instance of the extroversion to which such Body language and colour readings can be taken is found in Culbert (1987), the subtitle of which reads ‘UNDERSTAND PEOPLE’S SECRET MESSAGES’. This text was found on a sale in Adam’s campus bookshop not mentioned or read by anyone questioned. It probably seemed too ‘off-beat’ to be popular on campus.

In ‘science-speak’ it offers its readers ‘Colourgenics - the body language of colour’ with the promise that ‘...Whatever image you want to create or the message you want to convey, you can do it with the subtleties and secrets of the body language of....’
COLOUR. The cover picture here is of a smiling couple. The woman hanging onto the man’s shoulder. Slightly below him in level. There are bands of colour across their clothing.

18. The most simplistic is Calbert (1987).
19. Titles include: *The Art of Kissing* by Hugh Morris; *The Lancher Colour Text* by Dr Max Lancher & Ian Scott; *I’m OK, You’re OK* by Thomas A. Harris; *How to Develop a Super-power Memory* by Harry Lorayne and *Straight and Crooked Thinking* by Robert H. Thouless.

20. Four titles directly mention power including Lorayne’s *Pendulum Power*, while the other three deal with ‘healing energy’ and ESP, which are indirectly linked with cosmic energy and mind power in the publicity blurb on each text.

21. Despite the time that has passed since the Schellens wrote their text, male academics still have greater status than females in SA where this condition particularly carries across to all spheres in working life. Married women are inequitably taxed and salary scales also favour males even where workers have equal qualifications and expertise. This situation is supposed to be changing in the New South Africa, but change has yet to be implemented or experienced in everyday life.

22. Kindly provided by Eero Tarasti.

23. Despite extensive book searches I only recently (Nov 1994) obtained a copy of her work. There are a number of interesting and reassuring parallels between her work and mine to which I will refer to in the course of this thesis.

24. The dangers of stressing the social over the biological or vice versa have been noted by Connel, above.

25. During my work as a professional Clown entertaining children from different racial and class backgrounds throughout SA.
CHAPTER THREE


Apology: The word 'man', as quoted, is used as it was in the context of the periods or social milieu in which the authors of these quotations lived; it should therefore be understood to represent the 'human' and thus either both genders.

In this chapter I examine the relationship between verbal language and body language as it relates to academic discourse. The term body language has been rejected by academics in the past (in preference for such terms as non-verbal communication and kinesics) on the following grounds:

Firstly, as I argue in Chapter One, 'body language' is associated with popular works and perceptions which are rejected by 'academics' attempting to retain epistemological power. They reject such terminology because of its association of the popular with the simplistic. Secondly, body language does not follow the linguistic rules which verbal languages do. Because these linguistic structures are regarded as the academically accepted way to define language, body language has been rejected as imprecise or an anomaly.

Both arguments against body language as a term hinge upon one point, namely the operation of academic method. Reference will therefore be made to the debate about popular works and epistemology as the argument proceeds. In the previous chapter, I demonstrated the breadth and scope of popular texts, the value of many of their insights, along with their limitations. Their analyses of power relationships are of particular importance in highlighting a gap in the academic literature.

In this Chapter I attempt to open debate around the contention that body/gestural language should conform to the rules of verbal language. I argue that such a contention is a distortion of the actual relationship between body/gestural language and verbal languages. It will be demonstrated that in fact body/gestural language and pre-linguistic apprehensions or conceptions of the world could precede the conceptual understanding upon which all verbal language is based. This would preclude the use of linguistics as a means of appraisal of non-verbal or body language. A further aspect of this argument, against the use of structural linguistics as the sole arbiter of language, is that in ignoring the creative and generative aspects of language (cf. Barthes, Chomsky et al), formal structuralism distorts our understanding by fragmenting language and focusing attention on only one part, its structure. I argue against the use of any one understanding of language (verbal or otherwise) as a means to judge all forms of communication.
I will begin with an examination of the roots of structural linguistics to demonstrate how structural conceptions of the world (specifically semiotic and structural linguistic conceptions) gained precedence over those of the experiential. The founder of modern linguistics, Ferdinand de Saussure, based his study on two principles: "Principle I", or the principle of the arbitrary nature of the sign" (Saussure 1974: 68); and (2) what might be called (though Saussure himself did not name or isolate it as such) "the principle of the relational nature of all linguistic meaning" (Falk 1989:4). A problem arises with this because: "(1) from the idea that words do not have their meanings by virtue of their one-to-one correspondences with items in reality, it is inferred tout court that language cannot be held to relate in an intelligible or usefully discussible way with any extra linguistic dimension or 'presence' in reality at all." (Falk, 1989:6).

The function of the linguistic sign, Saussure tells us, is not one of uniting a verbal name with a pre-verbally differentiated item in the world, because - inter alia - this would oblige us to assume that ready-made ideas exist before words (Falk, 1989:6). Thus in terms of Saussurian linguistics, language has been removed from its relation to the real world: 3.

A further problem arises with the distinction Saussure made between langue (a languages relational system proper) and parole (our various speech acts, including all sound-qualities and psychological components which may feature in individual speech acts but which are nevertheless not a part of the language's relational system). The main philosophical problem to which this distinction gives rise is that the theoretical splitting apart of langue and parole, together with the Saussurian tendency to concentrate on the langue or system as the most interesting area of study leaves us with an object of study which has been 'incoherently abstracted from the nature of language as a living process' (Falk, 1989:10).

This further emphasises the disembodied nature of Saussure's view of language. Semioticians/semiologists have often fallen into this trap when discussing a sign. A demonstration of how removed from reality a representation can be is offered when an attempt is made to apply linguistic theory (semiotics, a la Saussure) exhaustively to Body Language - anomalies such as The Dictionary of Gesture arise. Because of the contextual situation of body language most gestures cannot be reduced to a simplified understanding and or be 'read' from only one perspective. Although it must be remembered that gesture is an area of body language where meaning is most likely to be codified symbolically, and thus to bear an arbitrary relationship to 'reality'.

The main problem with Structural linguistics then is not that it is inadequate as a linguistic theory but that it has been "... interpreted by Saussurian theorists as an exhaustive and (give or take certain qualifications) philosophically incontestable account of the nature of language." (Falk, 1989: 6). The implications of applying this understanding of language to other fields were not explored by structural linguists or by those who have uncritically adopted and applied their methods. The dangers inherent in applying this method to body language are discussed below. This is the constraint of the Structuralist perspective adopted in isolation. We need to be able to relate structure to reality. The question then is: How are we to make sense of our world if our language is distanced from lived or experienced 'reality'?
If we are to develop an understanding of a populated world around us we need to be an embodied subject and along with Falk, Hampshire (1959:47 ff.) and Merleau-Ponty (1962: Ch. 1. ff), I would contend that:

I can know about my bodily movements and my bodily situation in a specially direct way through the active interventions which I am able to make in the world around me. There is no way in which the distinction between myself and that which is not myself could arise on the basis of passive observation alone. It is only because we are bodies that we are able to perceive bodies (or any "thing" at all), and what holds the bodies which we perceive together as bodies is, on the most fundamental level, not the quasi-judgemental application of logical categories but the primitive awareness which we are able to have of them through our own bodies in the course of our bodily interactions with them (Falk, 1989:13).

The phenomenological approach holds that in order to experience the world around us we can only apprehend it first individually through our own bodies. In order to comprehend the behaviour and thoughts of others we need to be able to bridge the gap between their experience and ours, between self and other.

What is needed is to bridge the "inside-outside" dualism of human behaviour coherently, but without obliterating the distinction which it seeks to register, is some notion of the process of sympathy, or of pre-conscious imitative identification, which takes place below the level of any knowledge or criteria and which is the pre-logical and pre-conscious ground of all our inter-personal experience (Falk, 1989:14).

But such experience has been relegated by mainstream Western academia to the realm of "common-sense" thinking.

The notion of the emergence of meaning is almost entirely unmarked in our serious thinking, and tends instead to be confined to the - philosophically disreputable - level of folk-wisdom or religious superstition in the form of such notions as "intuition," "hunch", "presentiment", or "sixth sense" (Falk, 1989:15).

This occurs despite the fact that:

The most fundamental behavioural and experiential (we might say "vital") pre-condition which allows language itself to come about - to arise or evolve out of the merely "lived-in" awareness of animal life, and to create the whole realm of subjectivity and of an objective world - must ultimately (as Kant and Saussure both do not recognise) be a process of some kind of expressive bodily gesture. It is only if we remain at the level of bodily or animal movement but also invest it with signification that it can be possible for us to make the transition towards a discursive conceptual language.

Body language operates at the lived, experiential or concrete level. In our conceptions of 'body language' we try to define the unconscious - it cannot merely be dismissed as irrelevant, by academics. In popular understanding body language is acknowledged as having the power to influence and be influenced by social communication contexts. Why then has bodily communication been relegated to the realm of the 'popular' a subordinate position in terms of academic power relations? Why too, has bodily expression been dismissed in favour of language, and thence of linguistic method and structural logic?
R. G. Collingwood (1938: 243) argued that the mistake arose in the following way: "listening to a speaker instead of looking at him tends to make us think of speech as a system of sounds, ... but it is not: essentially it is a system of gestures made with the lungs and larynx, and the cavities of the mouth and nose... The language of total bodily gesture is... the motor side of our total imaginative experience." This focus on 'sounds' or 'phonemes' as units of communicable meaning was adapted, by Birdwhistell, to the study of bodily communication. He thus began to search for 'kines' as units of social bodily communication. Structural linguistics thus became the basis for investigations into bodily communication.

Birdwhistell was therefore working in opposition to Collingwood, who argued that speech is "only a system of gestures, having the peculiarity that each gesture produces a characteristic sound, so that it can be perceived through the ear as well as the eye. Every kind of language is in this way a specialised form of bodily gesture, and in this sense it may be said that the dance is the mother of all languages...". He goes on (1938: 243-47):

Different civilizations have developed for their own use different languages; not merely different forms of speech, distinguished as French from English and so on but different in a much deeper way ... The habit of going heavily clothed cramps the expressiveness of all bodily parts except the face; if their clothing were heavy enough only those gestures would retain their expressiveness which can be appreciated without being seen, such as those of the vocal organs; except so far as clothes themselves are expressive...the cosmopolitan civilization of modern Europe and America...has limited our expressive activities almost entirely to the voice and naturally tries to justify itself by asserting that the voice is the best medium for expression...

I said that "dance is the mother of all languages"; this demands further explanation. I mean that every kind or order of language (speech, gesture, and so forth) was an offshoot from an original language of total bodily gesture ... I mean that each one of us, whenever he expresses himself, is doing so with his whole body, and is thus actually talking in this "original" language of total bodily movement. What we call speech and other kinds of language are only parts of this "original" language which have undergone specialised development ... The language of total bodily gesture is ... the motor side of our total imaginative experience.

Thus Collingwood argued, as I do, for a more holistic view of experience and representation. The mind and body are not separate entities, language and reality are co-extant and co-constructed. What we need to see them as dynamic parts of a complex integrated system.

Many of Collingwood's viewpoints can in turn be related to the work of his contemporary, Marcel Jousse. Jousse was concerned with orality, a field that was also disregarded by mainstream academia, as body language has been. In 1925, Marcel Jousse published The Oral Style, which had an immense effect on the European continent but remained unavailable in English translation until recently. Several reasons, related to the operation of academic practice and power relations, may be cited for his lack of acceptance in academic circles. Firstly, while Jousse was lauded immediately after the publication of his first work, his tenacious insistence on the oral style, (a mnemonic style of presentation eschewing the written in favour of the oral) was in direct conflict with the established notion of the superiority of written texts. As an academic he was operating "in a culture based for ages nearly exclusively on the study of written texts" (Sienaert,1990:92).
Secondly, he published very little, 500 pages in all, so his impact was limited to his live audience. Lack of publication was in line with his focus on orality - Jousse spoke of himself as a paysan, a peasant favouring the return to 'original man' or le paysanisme. Finally, his major work, The Oral Style, was also an extremely difficult text, At around 200 dense pages interspersed with Hebrew, Arabic and Chinese in the original characters; it was also a string of quotations joined with linking paragraphs that used unusual terminology and thus resembled an annotated text. For these reasons he contravened accepted academic practice and was unacceptable to mainstream academia.

Jousse wished to uncover:

the permanent and universal psycho-psychological laws, the anthropological laws that unify what time, space and custom had separated in so many ethnic varieties. He consistently believed in and stressed a human, an anthropological continuity, refusing to see writing as a dividing invention in the history of humanity. To him, writing had not created a hiatus between oral- and written-style man, between orality and literacy, but the civilization of writing was preceded and shore up by an oral-style civilization. And as style implies laws of expression, it was his aim to unearth these stylistic laws from beneath the written texts or to discover them where the absence of writing had left them intact (Sienaert,1990:93).

Jousse starts from the idea of the primacy of bodily experience in human development. He quotes Aristotle (Poetics 14b): "it is from childhood on, instinctive for human beings to imitate, and man differs from other animals as the most imitative of all". Jousse posits that it is through the

... pressure of the universe, the constant impregnation of reality and being globally subjected to its actions, prior even to any awareness, man apprehends the reality that reverberates in him... on reception of reality, man is also animated by an energy that is released and that makes him react in the form of gestures.

Jousse developed what he called 'the anthropology of gesture' (Sienaert, 1990: 95). All information and all forms of human thought and expression are viewed as being gestural in origin. Man 'intuscepts', or plays out his receptions (impressions) through gesture and in this way is able to recall and understand them. "Play, then," Sienaert (1990: 95) points out of Jousse, "is the osmosis of man and the reality that imposes itself upon him; it is the way in which reality is progressively instilled into him from childhood. It is in the act of playing out, this play, that is at the origin of all art." Memory equals gestural replay in Jousse's view:

The original language is corporeal, it is the expression of the entire body, of the entire being, of the whole of man. The gestures by which man replays can be differentiated according to the body part of the body onto which the expression is transposed, according to which element of the human compound is called upon for ex-pres-ion of the im-pres-sion... Man went from corporage to manuelage to langage as global language was progressively concentrated in manual language and in laryngo-buccal language.

Understanding is thus experienced through a bodily re-play of observable, encountered social reality, a social world is thus realised through individual bodily experiences, interacting with one's perceptions of that social world. Bodily experience acts as an interface between the public and private spheres of existence.
Joussé declares that:

The shift from mimicking global, corporeal, and gestural language to laryngo-buccal language is the vital one, for at this point man moves away from anthropology into ethology: the initial global universal and spontaneous mimicry becomes localized conventional and socialized language. Living in a particular society ... man relates in the second place to his ethnic milieu. (Sienaert:90-96)

Underlying the codes of language and behaviour, in his view, are the anthropological laws which make up the oral style (le rhthme-minisme, le bilatralisme, le formalisme) all of which are profoundly rooted in the body (Sienaert, 1990: 96-97). This is in contrast to written expression. One could also argue along with Hall (1955) and Levi-Strauss, that the laws underlying our experience are culturally determined and codified. But culture is also mediated or experienced through the body, its phenomenology cannot be denied. Meaning which is constantly in flux is thus only momentarily fixed, it moves between 'embodied' personal experience and cultural/linguistic/social codes.

The danger inherent in encoding meaning is that these codes may be taken to represent a fixed reality of their own. Writing or graphic representation, according to Joussé, is removed from reality. The only expressions that are still in contact with reality are embodied experiences.

When global, anthropological immediate mimicry becomes localized, ethnically mediated language, socialized expression clouds the deep anthropological mechanisms to the point where they are forgotten. If all expression implies a process of abstraction - something drawn from reality, abstracted from reality - anthropological expression uses concrete abstraction, drawn directly from the real as opposed to algebraic abstraction, which is cut loose from reality. Such separation of the real and its expression becomes even more problematic with the introduction of writing, when gestural replay becomes graphic replay with the concomitant danger of such graphic replay replaying itself and its social restrictions rather than an experienced reality. (Sienaert, 1990:98).

The arguments of Phenomenologists such as Merleau-Ponty, of Collingwood and Joussé lead away from the scientific formalistic view of language to one that rests on the body; and thus to an understanding of the primacy of the body as an expressive tool that precedes written language and linguistics.

For too long the written text and Western academic thinking have cut us off, and prevented us from seeing another, more holistic view of perception and communication: one which would incorporate archetypical, mythical, intuitive and subjective understandings and thus re-establishes the primacy of creativity in communication. Cultural colonialism has led the West in Africa, and elsewhere, to posit their divided logico-positivist-scientific world view over the more holistic views extant in traditional African thought.

Both Collingwood and Joussé focus on the creative aspect of communication. Collingwood through dance, and Joussé through play. Ironically, the ancient Greeks, regarded as the ultimate arbiters of the Western academic tradition, revered both rhetoric and logic and studied gesture, verbal language and logic as necessary oratory tools. They also used mythology and the gods as a means of explanation. Western academic practice
has moved very far from its roots in attempting to split these vital aspects of communication, and has lost much in doing so.

In attempting to gain a more holistic view of the world there might be a counter tendency to over-romanticise the primitive, as a pure natural state of being. Communication is codified or structured even in terms of the oral style Jousse spoke of. It would seem that Saussurian linguistics is a rigid code, one which often proves to be too rigid when applied to studies of gestural/ bodily communication, as it ignores the exploratory, play and experimental aspects thereof. Assigning primacy to either body language or language as a form of communication has its dangers. It is better to comprehend language and body language as interacting communication systems while acknowledging the importance of the body and bodily communication within this complex.

The dangers of oversimplification and formalism are not unknown/ unheeded in academic debates about language. Birdwhistell himself was aware of these dangers. Attempts to theoretically overcome this problem include that of semiotician, Charles Saunders Pierce who describes levels of multiple signification through what he termed the phaneron. But in general these understandings have not filtered into use in academic practice/ praxis. Roland Barthes also made some attempt to discuss the mythical as a factor in everyday, or popular, communication, but again these understandings do not seem to have penetrated to the core of the academic/scientific method.

Language Origins Debate

Debates about the developmental primacy of language over body/gestural language form part of the 'speculative and wildly disparate' claims made about language origins. In a recent review of the field Parsi (1994,323-328) noted that the dominant paradigm in discussions of language origins, cognitivism has had a general anti-developmental origin and although some progress has been made using this paradigm, many or most problems remain open. However the emergence of connectivism and neural models may lead to a research focus on ontogenesis and the evolution of language rather than on adult level language competence. Structural linguistic enquiries are based on adult level competence unlike the views of Jousse who takes a developmental approach. Connectivism however has difficulty with higher abilities such as language and reasoning. I believe that such difficulties can be overcome using the understanding of language acquisition sketched above by Jousse, Collingswood and Falk.
ACADEMIC APPROACHES TO BODY LANGUAGE

Birdwhistell's Adaptation

In the field of body language, many people have worked on the premise that bodily communication is akin to language, that it is a type of non-verbal language of its own. In his work on human communication, Ray L. Birdwhistell posited that there was a structure to body language akin to that of language. Instead of linguistics he spoke of 'kinesics' (1955, 1970). Birdwhistell was concerned with the total communication process verbal and non-verbal and he assumed that bodily movements function as a kind of language - using a limited vocabulary of limited signs in any particular culture. He has accordingly used a linguistic rather than an experimental approach to analyse bodily communication. He analysed films of interaction that included both verbal and nonverbal interaction. The dangers of over abstraction implicit in this method are discussed above, as is his acceptance of the general academic hierarchical ordering of interests with linguistics and texts superordinate to a focus on the body and body/gestural language.

Birdwhistell examined body language in terms of language but not as a linear system rather as a system of social communication. He said that as "an anthropological kinesicist I am concerned with the learned and perceptible shifts in the body which contribute to the peculiar communication systems of particular societies." (1970:193). He defined a kine as "an abstraction of that range of behaviour produced by a member of a given social group, which for another member of that social group, stands in perceptual contrast to a different range of such behaviour." Unfortunately the danger here is that which occurs in many processes of abstraction, namely, that the portion abstracted is then regarded by other researchers or even by the abstractor as a 'standalone' unit, which it might not be. He therefore recognised the importance of context but seems to fall into the trap of academia, himself.

Muscular movements are organised into distinctly recognisable kines by different social groups (Birdwhistell,1970:193). Like phonemes which are recognised by using contrastive techniques Birdwhistell used a contrastive approach to define kines in a class according to the meaning that each kine appears to carry. He acknowledges however that elements that are undifferentiated might function in a contrastively meaningful way at a level other than the one at which they were originally analysed. A definitive interpretation of a 'kine' does not exist unless it is within the context of other kines and the parameters of particular social systems.

One of the biggest differences between language and body language in Birdwhistell's view was that of grammar. While language has a grammatical structure kinesics appears to be patterned but has no grammar analogous to that of language (1970:197). Birdwhistell however used the technique of contrast analysis developed for linguistic analysis (of phones and phonemes) to isolate meaningful kinomorphs and
kinemorphic constructions. In his words, the "raw unit of body motion is classifiable as a kine when it is seen to have differential value in a kinemorph" (1970:198).

He found that while there was an absence of a cross-referencing system similar to linguistic grammar and syntax, kinesic constructions were handled parakinesically (Birdwhistell, 1960) through the medium of stance. He defined 'stance' as a term that refers to "a pattern of total body behaviour which is sustained through time within which one or a series of constructions takes place". Stance subsumes position, locomotion and velocity. By Birdwhistell's account a change in stance is said to occur when any of these combinations is varied to such an extent that there an observable shift in the total message.

By its derivation from linguistic method, kinesics thus defines meaning in terms of changes or differences between basic units of meaning. Birdwhistell himself is constantly aware of the dangers inherent in using abstractions from a message flow to discern units of meaning that are in everyday experience not isolates at all. Most importantly for researchers examining social communication was his recognition that kinesics functions in a social context of group behaviour. He was aware that status and role theory inform 'the broadest cross-referencing behaviour in the communication system (1970:203). Birdwhistell described the broadest 'cross referencing signals' that tie together the least pieces of activity as the 'body-base' which he defined as "the basic image of other members of the social group which are modified by a body-set that is socially patterned" (1970:205).

Birdwhistell's views have been extremely influential in the development of social studies of nonverbal communication and are discussed further in the next chapter. He, like other researchers, was influence by linguistic, structural understandings and the adaptation of 'scientific methods' to the 'human sciences'.

Researchers in the field of nonverbal communication have been further conditioned to revere the experimental, scientific measuring devices adopted in the 'pure' or physical sciences such as chemistry or mathematics. Examples abound and only a few can be mentioned here. According to Argyle, for instance (1975:251-) Birdwhistell's linguistic method should be replaced by the 'experimental'. His grounds for suggesting this seem to be that what Birdwhistell did was too time consuming as "he spent 100 hrs on each second of film, taken at 48 frames per second". Argyle continues: "However there are now systematic research methods for tackling these problems: standard elements can be found by cluster analysis, as has been done for facial expression, and rules of combination by rule-breaking experiments."

A very brief content analysis of Scherer and Ekman's (1982) Handbook of methods in nonverbal behaviour research (lower case in the original) serves to illustrate the focus on 'measurement' of 'abstracted units' and the application of 'statistical' methods of analysis to the 'experimental' results. I am not attempting to deny the usefulness and reliability and thus the applicability of many of these methods. What must be stressed
however is that they should be counterbalanced by an acknowledgement of the social and personal relations and contexts within which human behaviour occurs.

Kendon and Calbris

Attempting to abstract from a complex reality using linear methodology often presents insurmountable problems for researchers in the human sciences, too. Thus I stress a cultural studies analysis serves to place these methods within the context of the power relations that have led to their predominance and acceptance. Over emphasis on logico-scientific method leads to a denigration of the often valuable insights offered by popular and personal experiences. Adam Kendon's (1992) review article "Abstraction in Gesture" where he discusses The Semiotics of French Gesture by Genevieve Calbris (1990), offers a few relevant points for discussion, particularly in its dismissive attitude towards her abandonment of an experimental method. This method required that subjects judge the meaning of a number of conventional gestures, presented to them outside their contexts of use. He has reservations despite the fact that:

The results, though useful are limited (perhaps inevitably so) by the shortcomings of the methodology employed. The author seems to recognise this, for she abandons this approach completely in the rest of the book. In the remaining six chapters she relies wholly upon her own observations of gestures, which she has made in all sorts of circumstances, including lectures, conversations in public places, and talk on television. Although we may complain here also on methodological grounds, these chapters nevertheless offer a great deal of insight into how co-verbal gesturing or gesticulation may function from a semiotic point of view. (Kendon, 1992:226).

Kendon's ambivalence towards Calbris's work stems from an unease with what might seem to be her 'loose methodological procedure' despite the usefulness of the results she achieves. Kendon stresses the need to rely on an experimental method, despite his acknowledgement of its limitations. He later denigrates the fact that, although she uses numerous examples,

none of these examples are derived from recordings to which the reader could be referred. Thus her analyses - although often very interesting and although they have a convincing air of plausibility, and though my hunch is that for the most part, they correctly reflect the ways in which Signifies gestural are connected to signifiers - must all be regarded at the level of hypothesis.' (230)

Secondly, Calbris has no systematic terminology or notation system for describing gestural movement patterns; despite the fact that "her descriptive techniques do serve her purposes" such "lack of precision in descriptive terminology does create problems" in Kendon's view. Despite his acknowledgement of the difficulties involved in movement description and that most "movement notation systems have yet to be adapted for use by students of gesture", Recording gestures would he feels, have led to a more rigorous description of them (1992: 231). Kendon therefore seems to be wedded to the notion of rigorous description above all else, a notion that stems from his adoption of Birdwhistell's methodology. Rigorous description
must however be accompanied by an awareness of the limitations of ‘descriptive’ abstractions. This could lead to simplistic listings of items, a trap that Calbris falls into without adopting description in its totality.

Calbris fails to contextualise when she subscribes to the notion of a gesture dictionary and seems to believe that the meanings of gestures can be ‘listed’ (1992: 235). This is an understanding which I debunk by citing the need to contextualise all readings of gestures. Kendon too, cites the need for a contextualisation of her work to explain why people gesture, what gestural options there are and what leads people to choose among them. He states that: “to explore this one must explore the place of gesture in its context of use” (1992: 231). Kendon defines contexts of use as contexts of occurrences of gestures - how it is placed both within the configuration of the actor’s behaviour and within the context of the discourse and the interactional system. This is akin to what I am doing in this thesis.

Despite his reservations Kendon feels that “None of these drawbacks seriously compromise the observations offered on the semiotic organisation of co-verbal gesturing or gesticulation” (1992: 231). Calbris sees a ‘phono-gestural parallelism’ that there are various ways in which gesture and the phonological organisation of speech can parallel one another’s as does Birdwhistell. Calbris seems to understand the symbolic nature of gesture as she ‘demonstrates the richly symbolic character of gesture, and suggests that it serves as a kind of pivot between the concrete and the abstract. Possible implications include the view that ‘thought is, at least partially imagistic in character’ (Kendon: 1992. Supported by Arnheim 1969). The issue of whether mental imagery is central to basic thought or whether it is derived from verbal descriptions remains to be settled. Bickerton (1990: 200) maintains/ conceives ‘that thought processes conducted entirely in linguistic terms could, before arriving at conscious levels, be translated into imagery.’ Kendon (1992) suggests that a study of the way in which speakers employ gesture, and what it is such gesturing expresses, can provide data that make a view such as Bickerton’s harder to maintain. Rather the uses of gesture so extensively attested to by Calbris suggest that visual and perceptuo-motor images are continually being mobilised as an integral part of the process by which we organise our meanings. McNeill (1985; 1987; forthcoming) supports this view too.

It would seem that there may well be individually experienced differences in visual/ linguistic primacy which account for the opposing positions so constantly contested on this view. Some people may be more visual than others. Such a reading may also account for the debate over the primacy of gesture over speech in speech pausing. In the words of Kendon’s final question: “Is the use of gesture a process that merely parallels what is expressed in words, or is it, as some observations indicate, a mode of expression that can complement and supplement what is expressed in words?” Only close studies of how gesture is deployed in the course of discourse can provide us with answers to this question (McNeill, forthcoming?). Therefore a real contextualisation of gesture and other forms of body language is currently being hinted at as a need in more than one field of enquiry currently surrounding or feeding into the body language arena. My own
attempts at finding the means that will best enable and direct such enquiries appear therefore to be both timeous and urgently required.

Beattie and Aboudan (1994:261) ask: "Could social context as an uncontrolled variable, explain the widely different theoretical claims made about the relationship between gestures and speech?" They conclude that "(s)ocial context can significantly effect the temporal; relationship between gestures, pauses, and speech, and those theorists wishing to use gestures as indices of processing in speech would do well to recognise the social dimension in their mapping of the computational stages of the mind." It is noteworthy that the 'social context' used in their experiment was that involving only one other person, who either interacted or simply listened to the participant. This experimental situation is, in my view, a limited communication environment: an instance of interpersonal dyadic rather than group or macro-level social communication. This work thus needs to be correlated with other more wide-ranging social observations.

Conclusions

Whether the gestural follows the spoken form, the spoken the gestural, or whether they arise from similar sources in the brain simultaneously remains to be resolved. Discussions of the relationship between gesture and language thus seem to be as circular as that of the chicken and the egg or the individual and society. The only solution I can see is to do as Johnson suggests and to examine the relationship from the positions of the two possible moments in turn, before restoring them once more to their positions in the continuous life flow or cycle of events. As researchers we therefore have to remain continually aware of the locus or positioning of our perspective when we choose to make an inquiry.

To look at body language from the perspective of the egg/chicken is to look at the experiential and at the perspective of the individual to examine, as far as possible the phenomenology of people in the communicating body in order to gain insights into their perceptions of what body language is like. My pilot study in Chapter Five offers some ideas in this regard as does Martin (1987) in her Chapter Three and Four. Then, turning to the perspective of the chicken/hen, we have to examine the social situation in which context body language exists. Here we will look at factors which construct or constrain this context. This examination will include socio-cultural factors such as age, class, gender and race all of which have been socially constructed and naturalised to a large extent in the data that is provided by our informants, themselves a part of this positioned perceptual flow.

Academics too need to be aware of their contextual positioning, as of that of body language itself. Some awareness is present but unfortunately we have to guard against it being obscured in the operation of social power relations whether in terms of academia or of popular texts and perceptions. According to Schefflen and Schefflen (1972:7), examining non-verbal communication is a recent innovation in academia and elsewhere.
Because academics were so involved with our special interest in language kinesic behaviour was hardly noticed until the 1950s and they virtually denied the territorial and dominance behaviours of humans until the late 1960s. The difference between man and animals is that Humans\textsuperscript{11} are able to use a greater number of gestures, in a greater variety of contexts than other ‘animals’\textsuperscript{12}. As noted in the previous chapter, courting gestures can be used to gain attention, as can gaze (see later) when used in a public context. Much of this is useful in the field of persuasive/inter-personal communication and is emphasised in such in popular body language texts.

Due to the operation of academic discourse and the constraints placed upon academics by the power relationships within which they operate, it might be possible that a researcher, aware of the limitations of her/his method, could still be constrained in or by their operation. This is the constraint of the Structuralist perspective in isolation. Such limitations can be overcome by understanding structure merely as a ‘moment’, within a complex socio-political dynamic.

The debates around the area of body language and language have been formative influences on academic and popular literature on nonverbal communication. In the chapter which follows academic texts are examined in relation to epistemological debates and themes which are also extant in popular texts. The examination is drawn together by the analysis and operation of social power relations.
NOTES

1. This argument was originally prepared and presented on 28 July 1994 at the Visual Voice Orality Conference, held at the University of Natal, Durban.

2. Some researchers working from the perspective of animal communication, such as Hockett (1960), who drew up a list of sixteen design features in language, support the view that linguistic is a matter of degree. Chomsky (1968) does not share this view believing that language has a complex grammatical structure, requiring innate neural structures and that it is totally different from any animal communication.

3. Falk discusses structuralist linguistics in a chapter headed "Saussurian Theory and the Abolition of Reality". His examination of semiotics leads into arguments which will be elaborated at a later stage in this text.

4. For some of the implications of this argument see Stuart Hampshire (1959) p. 47ff. and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, (1962), Part I, chapter 1 et seq.

5. Merleau-Ponty (1960: 111) has suggested that the operations of language are "a supreme instance of bodily intentionality". Also see Falk (1989: Ch.2).

6. At this point I need to acknowledge my own construction in terms of a dominant paradigm, that of systems theory within the current operation of academic discourse.

7. Jousse then proceeds to look for evidence of patterned, rhythmic and bilateral references in oral presentations and in verbal texts which correspond to these rules.

8. This is not to ignore the work on language origins outlined in Parsi (1994). The fields of enquiry outlined therein are: Gestures and language; Anatomy and Physiology; Comparison with non-human communication; Duality of patterning and other problems of glossogenesis.

9. Which is not to deny that they form a useful starting point from which the human sciences could progress.


11. My construction is added here.

CHAPTER FOUR:

Academic Approaches: Power and Nonverbal Communication

Certain academic practitioners in the 'body language' field have attempted to examine body language as social communication and in doing so, have touched on aspects of power relations. Those studies that have dealt in part with this topic have focused only on status, as a visible aspect of social power relations, or on dominance, a personality characteristic, rather than on the actual mechanisms and operations of such power relations. The scope and focus of much research has in itself been conditioned by the dominant paradigms of knowledge which support the status quo. I will examine and critique available studies that are relevant to social power relations and to intercultural communication, before attempting to gauge their applicability to the South African intercultural context.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE FIELD: The Need for a Power Centred Approach

In a survey of the literature it appears that there has been a great reluctance on the part of academics to deal with nonverbal communication in terms of 'power' as a variable. This might be due to a number of factors. The historical development of academic discourse and scientific practice may account in part for the de-emphasis on power, in academic texts, as might the actual power relations which inform social and academic practices. In academic discourse the Cartesian Mind/Body split has located scientific logic and academic thinking in the realm of the mind and disorder and emotionalism in the realm of the body. The mind in patriarchal Western 'Discourse' has also been located in terms of the control of 'Knowledge' in the hands of men. Men have dominated modern Western economic, social and academic spheres. The province of women became that of the emotional, the irrational and the body. The rise of medical science led to men controlling even the reproductive capacities of the body - as midwives were replaced by male medical doctors - and in religious spheres women were persecuted as witches while a male patriarchal, religion became the dominant mode. Feminist historians have recently begun to uncover these power relations in order to understand the way that 'Gender' oppression has worked through the politics of the body.

There have been many women theorists examining the dominant paradigms of knowledge about the body; unfortunately it is beyond the scope of this thesis to discuss them in any depth. Two inputs which particularly challenge the status quo are: Emily Martin's *The Woman in the Body* (1987) and *Gender/Body/Knowledge* (1989), edited by Alison Jagger and Susan Bordo. Both of these works support the argument I outline here. Male academics have been supported by, and seem largely to have supported, the status quo. They have generally avoided examining power relations in terms of the body. Notable exceptions
are Bakhtin, Focault and Merleau-Ponty. In terms of the intercultural aspects of communication and factors such as race and class, there have been very few studies which attempted to contextualise power relations. Research seems to favour those at the centres of social power - namely Western, white, males.

Consequently, only a minimal amount of research into black/white body language in America exists, and little has been published on Indian body language either. There have been a few observations about proxemics in India and about caste proscriptions on touch in inter-caste contact, untouchables not being allowed to touch those of higher status than themselves. There has therefore been very little in the context of the wide ranging field of body language studies that could ostensibly be extrapolated fairly directly to the South African context. However as South Africa exists within the context of global power relations, a number of paradoxical situations have arisen. Even in the new South Africa, as has been the case in Zimbabwe it seems that the economic power bloc will probably remain largely in the hands of white males - who will continue to operate in relation to the major power blocs of global capital. Even notions of how we should develop or progress in South Africa, as occurs elsewhere, are conditioned by Western ideology (Mody, 1990; Servaes, 1994 and others).

It is therefore useful to outline the development of academic debates in Britain or America about areas that relate to body language, social power relations and intercultural communication to determine the applicability of this work in a South African context. The value of adopting a power centred approach to body language studies becomes apparent when one examines the disparate enquiries that were undertaken in may separate areas. To understand the dynamic interactional nature of body language one has to see it in as part of a social system that includes and is informed by social power relations. In most cases however body language practitioners examine areas within the field according to isolated, particularistic interests according to themes or topics such as Time, Space or Gaze. Academic writers who have informed these debates are discussed below.

**EARLY WORKS**

Goffman and Hall : Space, Time and Culture.

In 1955 Edward Hall published the 'Anthropology of Manners' an account of cross-cultural differences in 'punctuality and distances'. This was the beginning of his work on space and time'. Hall explored culture and nonverbal communication in works such as *Beyond Culture* (1977), the *Handbook for Proxemic Research* (1974), *The Silent Language* (1959) and *The Hidden Dimension* (1966). One of the most significant aspects of Hall's work was its recognition of the need for anthropologists to study their own (American) culture rather than focusing on 'obscure tribes' (1959). It seemed that this was a preoccupation of a number of academics in divergent fields during the post-war era. It was also during the 'fifties that Hoggart advocated the study

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of popular literature and culture, in the *Uses of Literacy* (1957), which was the precursor of cultural studies. Hall viewed 'culture as communication' a view which is still pervasive today. This view pertained particularly in examinations of the mass media and popular culture, and in early propaganda studies. Perhaps it was due to the rise of the mass media and of propaganda that popular culture became an object of such scrutiny. A further historical impact that was directly influential in the work of Hoggart (mentioned in his *Reith Lectures On Culture*) and of Hall (1959), was the institution of the United Nations and their respective work on intercultural communication for it.

Erving Goffman was very influential in analysing 'social roles', and looked at the maintenance of these roles as well as how social status was evident in their operation, or practice. Goffman often used anecdotal data, derived from interviews with people in numerous fields related to psychology. A lot of his material was based on studies of mental hospitals, this is presented in such works as *Asylums and Stigma*. The *Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959) is useful with regard to everyday communication, as are *Interaction Ritual and Behaviour in Public Places: Notes on the Social Organisation of Gatherings* (1963).

Analysing material derived from anecdotes and observation was an anthropologically derived method used by both Hall and Goffman, which has since been adopted by many in the body language field, and which is included in the methodology employed in my pilot study. Goffman added to this methodology by introducing the analysis of advertising pictures in *Gender Advertisements*. This work provides a link with semiotic analyses of gender representation subsequently conducted by many feminists. Unfortunately the adoption of semiotics often led to foreshortened analyses, as discussed in Chapter Two. Much of Goffman's work deserves credit because his work "sets the stage for later research in communication and interaction" (Davis: 80).

Spatial and temporal dimensions of body language.

Similarly Edward Hall (1959, 1969) provides an initial framework for much subsequent research into nonverbal communication. The primary focus of Hall's work on the use of Space and Time as dimensions of communication experience has particular applications for intercultural communication. Hall's work has to be re-examined in terms of power relationships.

Space

The study of spatial relationships in human society is termed *proxemics*. Hall (1966) defined four typical American spatial zones.

*Intimate Distance*: 0 - 18 inches (0 - 50 cm.), for intimate interaction involving body contact, usually not conducted in public, such as love making, wrestling, comforting, protecting.

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Personal Distance: (1/2 - 1 1/4 m.) is the usual distance we maintain between yourselves and others. Close phase: 1 1/2 - 2 1/2 feet, people are usually bonded in some way such as by family membership. Far phase: 2 1/2 - 4 feet, the limit of physical domination, used for discussing subjects of personal interest and involvement.

Social Distance: 4 - 12 feet (1 1/4 - 4 m.), for informal or formal business.

Public Distance: (upwards of 4 m.) Close phase: 12 - 25 feet, it is possible to take action if threatened, usually consists of presentations to small audiences, brief impersonal messages. Far phase: 25 feet or more. Non-verbal gestures become more important, or speech amplification is used. When between non-strangers its generally out of necessity, as when one shouts across a playing field or from house to yard (Hall, 1966, Chapter 10, especially pp. 110-22).

Hall's zones have been useful analytic tools in many different contexts. They can also be 'read' in terms of power relations. People in positions of authority set the tone of an interaction, determining the proximal distance at which it will take place (Goffman, 1971:44) particularly if it has not already been formally codified. The hierarchical privileging of the most powerful person in a communication situation seems analogous to the hierarchy of 'turn-taking' in speech. Hall (1966:163) provides an example of such codification in the American military, where the distance a private had to stand from his superior was such that instead of being polite, the private was reduced to shouting which annoyed many of the superior officers. Hall also suggests that "Thirty feet is the distance that is automatically set around public figures". A distance often maintained by the use of bodyguards, but which is automatically accorded to powerful figures, out of respect. The example provided here is that immediately after the announcement of Kennedy's nomination for the American Presidency those in the room with him stepped back, keeping a respectful distance from him.

Gender is another power relation that is seen to influence spatial relations or proxemics. Stanley Jones (1971) found large sex differences in shoulder orientation during male/female interactions. Jones also noted that sex was a more influential variable than the 'sub-cultural' in determining proxemics. Class was also seen to be more influential on proxemics than race, in his study. He thus suggested that "class differences might override ethnic differences". A study by Dennis and Powell (1982) showed a steady increase in interpersonal distances between pupils from primary and 'intermediate' grades to junior high school. Older students had more status and thus interacted at greater distances. The importance of class rather than racial/cultural difference was also supported by observations on culture on the part of some of my respondents.

However, Baxter observed significant differences in spacing among American ethnic groups, in an observational study of proxemics at Huston Zoo. Mexican-Americans stood closest, followed by Anglo-Americans and Black Americans. (Baxter,1970:444-56). That interracial distances seem to be learnt was demonstrated by an investigation of black-white dyads in American schools. Henley states on the basis of studies by Baxter (1970) and Jones (1971) that: "This possibility underscores again the importance of status and power factors in non-verbal communication, compared with the ethnic differences that are so often touted" (1982:35-36).
Territoriality

Territorial displays in animal behaviour have been extrapolated and applied to studies of body language in many different areas. The importance of culture in human behaviour notwithstanding, the study of power relations in animal behaviour can offer important insights into human communication. The popular acceptance of Desmond Morris’s many works confirms the acceptability of such transpositions in popular experience. Schefflen and Hall transformed particular understandings of territoriality in their application of these categories to American Society.

Space is the most visible aspect of territoriality. Access to space is in direct proportion to power or status. Hall (1965:26) and Sommer (1969:17) in studies of Norway rats and chickens refer to the fact that higher status animal have greater access to territory than those of lower status. Most people would also acknowledge a metaphorical ‘pecking order’ in society. Hall also notes that throughout the vertebrate kingdom dominant animals seem to interact at greater ‘personal distance’ (1966:13) than subordinate ones, and that subordinate animals yield space to dominant animals. Research into animals ranging from primates to birds has been seen to support the operation of dominance. There are a number of dominance cues analogous to the dimension of spatial access. Such factors are listed by Henley (1977:29) as:

1. Dominant animals control greater territory.
2. They are freer to move in other animal’s or common, territory.
3. They are accorded greater personal (bodily) space.
4. Subordinates yield space to dominants when approached, or in passing.
5. Dominants occupy positions associated with, and/or controlling, desired resources.

Observations made by researchers in diverse circumstances provide some understanding of how these factors might operate in human society. Goffman (1971: Chapter 2) categorises eight types of ‘preserves’, both literal and metaphorical, that describe personal and situational spatial territories. Those with more power and rank have more extensive preserves. Basically the textual knowledge relates to lived experience in the societies in which these texts were written.

Reading from concrete/private lives

The large homes and ability to engage in extensive travel of the upper echelons of economic and political society in the West, exemplified by the lives of politicians and the ‘jet set’, provide an extreme example of ability to control territory. The access of the upper echelons of society to large ‘territories’ has been coupled with the need to restrict access to their persons and properties to such an extent that they are surrounded by
entourages, body guards and walled in by security fences. The need for such excessive protection of territories and boundaries could reflect an imbalance of power - why else would their territories be under such threat?

Hierarchical privileging in the west also relates to historical factors. Seating arrangements have been studied in terms of the hierarchical privileging of certain seats in terms of status. In the West this dates back to Medieval times when those of least status were situated furthest from the 'head' of the table, and the head of the household. The lowest status was associated with the greatest distance from the head and the salt, an extremely desirable resource. No one wanted to be placed 'below the salt'. Height and the head, as the topmost and most important bodily part, are associated with status. In Bodylet (1993), the symbolic link is made between the social body (the state) and the body of the 'head of state' (whether of a king or President) and the symbolic hierarchy of individual bodily parts. Two different contexts are used to demonstrate these associations that of John Kennedy’s death and of the symbolism of the King of Denmark’s body in Hamlet.

With the advent of the T.V. dinner the head of a household might no longer sit at the 'head' of the table, but in many contexts it is still an important position in Western society. Lott and Sommer found in a study of seating arrangements that there was a tendency for higher status subjects to take the head position at table, and for subordinates or lower status people to assign it to others (Lott and Sommer, 1969). Thus status has been correlated with personal space as is dominance although to a lesser extent (Henley, 1977: 33-4).

Time

In the Western world, time is regarded as a precious resource: that 'Time is Money', is a familiar cry. Time is a part of our everyday lives that is often manipulated in terms of political as well as economic power relations. According to Henley (1977: 43), time "is a political weapon". There are often a great many parallels between the uses and understandings of time and space in a society. Such a parallel is apparent in the activity of queuing. A "queue (space order) is formed to signify order of arrival (time order)" (Henley, 1977: 43). Hall remarks that there is often such a trade-off in other animals. Gellis supports this understanding when she says about gestures that refer to time that they do so as if it is space. To which Kendon (1992) comments that this also occurs in primary sign languages when he states that: "in many languages, expressions that refer to space are also used to refer to time".

Henley speculates on time zones analogous to Hall’s spatial zones for Americans. They are:
Public time, that engaged in anonymous and/or uninvolved interaction, such as asking direction. Corresponding to the spatial bumper around VIP's is a time bumper, we stand in line to shake their hand for a few seconds (0-15 Mins).

Social time, for impersonal business, as in making purchases or enquiring about services, may be from a few minutes up to 15 or so minutes.

Personal time, that amount of time by which members of our species ordinarily present ("space") themselves, may be from 15 to 30 minutes, the average duration of an appointment or interview.

Intimate Time, is the most extensive (as Intimate space is the least extensive). When longer appointments are kept, such as the typical 50 minutes for therapy or counselling sessions, the encounter takes on an intimate aspect, evidenced by the personal nature of the information that is passed. This is the 'far' zone for intimate time; the 'close' zone, the amount of time spent with our true intimates, is limited only by our tolerance for each other. And there is still a preferred limit (even on honeymoons) or amongst retired couples (Henley, 1982: 44-5).

Drawing from this demarcation of time zones, it seems that there is a limit to how much time we spend with other people. The limits are defined by our social and personal relationships with those persons. In interactions we spend the most time with those with whom we have intimate or personal relationships; and the least, in impersonal contact.

We also spend less time with powerful people and interact at a greater distance from them. There is a balance between equals, which is negotiated, but those with the most power can 'steal' the time of those at the bottom of the hierarchy. The time that an employee spends in the boss's office is regarded as interruptible. Telephones are the greatest intrusion in this regard.

Important people who have the most 'power' and status are seen to be busy people, whose valuable time is rationed out. People have to make appointments to see such people. This is probably the reason that faxes and cellular phones - as time saving devices - are such status symbols in the First world. Sitting in the waiting room of a doctor's surgery gives those waiting a sense of the relative unimportance of their priorities, in opposition to those of the doctor. What has to be examined, however, is whether the time of those waiting is in fact worth less than that of those for whom they may be waiting. The people who do the most waiting often have the most to lose, in economic terms, due to this waiting. Hourly-paid workers lose wages the longer they have to wait, as appointments can usually only be made during working hours. And it is often those employed in the lower echelons of society who are most discriminated against by institutional practices such as those of the state hospitals' where everyone in the outpatients section is given an appointment for the same arrival time as all the other outpatients for that day (Henley, 1982: ).

A women's time is often more restricted and is at the beck and call of her boss or husband (Henley: 53-4). Women often develop means of resisting the theft of their time. Activities such as 'knitting' can be conducted in public. Such activities are condoned because they consist of 'doing something useful' while a woman is waiting for something or someone. Knitting and sewing can also be used to provide a 'buffer'
between a woman and the demands of her husband and children. These activities can thus become a means of resistance and of escaping outside pressures. A discussion of quilting, by Jane Przybysz (Young, 1993:135-165) provides an instance of such resistance.

Viewed from the perspective of social power relations it thus seems that the general conclusion that can be read from space/time studies, when both categories are viewed as a resource, is that those at the top of the hierarchy, namely middle- or upper-class white males, have the most control over their time and of the time of those below them in the hierarchy. The people with the least amount of time, in American society at least, are black working-class females.

In African cosmology different notions of time pertain to those of the West, as outlined with reference to Calame-Griaule, above. African non-linear notions can conflict with Western notions of a linear progression of time, in their practical relations: in terms of economics, production and in informal contexts. Participants from Western or African contexts, may have conflicting expectations regarding the unspoken ‘rules’ of acceptable behaviour in certain instances. Such situations arise in the South African context: interactions that relate to time or space are also informed by the power relations that surround them.

Kendon (1992) makes reference to Calbris [who cites to Calame-Griaule (1987)] as establishing that “In certain African cultures the future is associated with posterity and hence is mentally situated behind oneself” (1992:239), and notes that this varies from one culture to another. Societies that have different conception of time or of the space/time relationship seem to use different gestures to refer to space or time as well.

Gaze

One of the most important socially and culturally patterned areas of nonverbal communication is in that of eye-contact (Efran, 1968). Gaze studies, like those of time and spatial relationships, have formed an area of interest for numerous academics. Many of those who have studied gaze have however included only the briefest allusions to social power. Generally in research into interaction between white persons, it has been found that conversants/speakers tend to look at the person with whom they are interacting more while listening than while speaking. Women generally are looked at, more than they look, and they tend to listen rather than talk in interactions with men. There thus seems to be a power relation governing gaze.

Kendon (amongst others) has established that when a speaker is nearing the end of an utterance; she/he will look away from the listener briefly, before returning to gaze at the other, on ending. This is a pattern that amounts to handing over to the other speaker. These gaze patterns differ in different intercultural contexts. In two different studies La France and Mayo found that Black American listeners gaze less at the speaker than
white listeners which occurs in both same and mixed-sex dyads. Both Scheflen (1972: 95-6) and Johnson (1971:18) corroborate the fact that Black Americans are reluctant to look another person directly in the eye. Kenneth Johnson (1971: 18) goes so far as to say that "... in the Black cultural context, avoiding eye contact is a nonverbal way is communicating a recognition of the authority-subordinate role.". Gaze avoidance as a sign of respect has been found in many non-Anglo cultures, such as in West Africa, Japan and amongst Puerto Ricans and Mexican-Americans (Goffman, 1971:45 and Scheflen, 1970:96).

As has been noted by Goffman and Johnson, as well as by many people in South Africa, miscommunication can occur inter-culturally/ interracially due to the fact that in Anglo-culture direct gaze is equated with honesty, whereas indirect gaze could represent inattention, aversion or dishonesty. Conflicting meanings might be assigned to gaze avoidance behaviour if a black and white South Africans are interacting. The black person might lower his/her eyes to indicate respect to a superior, while the white person could mis-read such gaze avoidance as a sign of avoidance, shiftiness or even insubordination. There therefore seems to be a difference in according to the literature on nonverbal communication in the duration of gaze that is perceived to be dominant in the black/ white culture. In black culture people are more likely to equate gaze with dominance/ threat and thus avoid eye contact with those perceived to be superiors.

In most cultures there is some evidence of a threatening gaze - the prolonged stare - known as the 'evil eye'. The evil eye also seems to be equated with threat in primate behaviour. Direct stares have been shown in the work of Exline (1972) to be equated with dominance and threat which is demonstrated in experiments with monkeys and with humans.

The problem then is how people distinguish between positive gaze, signalling liking and attentiveness, and an aggressive stare. There are a number of cues that contextualise gaze behaviour. Tilting the head to one side signifies attention - something women have been noted for (Lyle, 1990). If subordinates and young children stare they are not considered to be as rude as an equal or superior who does so (Exline;1975). Powerful and dominant people do not look at inferiors or equals as much as they are looked at by them in an interaction.

Power, gaze and sexuality are usually examined in the context of pornography, with the focus on the male gaze and its objectification of the female subject. The prohibition on female sexual gaze and power is encapsulated in ancient Greek mythology, a precursor to much Western culture and thought. The dilemma of power, gaze and sexuality was structured in the myth of Medusa. Medusa was a renowned beauty, who offended the gods with her arrogance and pride, and in punishment for this she was changed so that whoever looked at her turned to stone. Female gaze as a threat to social order are personified through the dire consequences associated with catching her 'evil-eye'. In the West beautiful women are supposed to be the objects of male gaze, not to take control and to gaze at others.
The themes of time, space and gaze have briefly been surveyed, but no attempt has been made to provide a holistic overview of social communication and to systematise disparate studies other than thematically. The lack of coherence of these themes arises from the attempts to isolate themes from their social contexts. As mentioned above, Birdwhistell studies bodily communication as a system, analogous to language and as such provides a more holistic view than that provided by studies of such isolated elements.

Birdwhistell in Context

Birdwhistell is one of the most influential researchers in the field with regard to social aspects of nonverbal communication; while his work has been criticised on numerous scores, it still throws valuable light on some facets of my research. His work was based on techniques of linear analysis, and looked at the operation of body language as a parallel form of communication to language. He examined language, body language and paralinguistics as parallel communication forms existing simultaneously in a social context. 'Kinesics' is the term that he coined for this study. Power relations as practices of the wider society that impact on 'kinesics' were not examined however. The body of Birdwhistell's work appears in Kinesics in Context (1970).

Birdwhistell developed a notation system for recording and analysing kinesics which is not always readily deciphered as extensive study is required before it can usefully be implemented by a researcher.

Birdwhistell acknowledged that:

while body motion is based in the physiological structure, the communicative aspects of this behaviour are patterned by social and cultural experience. The meaning of such behaviour is not so simple that it can be itemised in a glossary of gestures. It can be derived only from the examination of the patterned system of body motion as a whole as this manifests itself in the particular social situation (1970:173).

Birdwhistell regarded linguistic and kinesics systems as parallel "infracommunicational systems, not directly meaningful in themselves", a perspective that has been further elaborated by Stuart Sigman to include the notion of the multifunctionality of behaviour according to differing social contexts (1987: 9). The meaning of body language behaviour cannot simply be based on the behaviour of individuals but "must be based on an understanding of the patterns of interconnection of more than one actor" (Birdwhistell, 1970: 180). Individual variations can, however, only be understood once the range of permissible group variation has been established. Sapir's (1949:556) comment is still valid today:

gestures are hard to classify and it is difficult to make a conscious separation between that in gesture which is of merely individual origin and that which is referable to the habits of the group as a whole...we respond to gestures with an extreme alertness and, one might almost say, in accordance with an elaborate and secret code that is written nowhere, known by none, and understood by all.
Despite the fact that Birdwhistell seems to acknowledge the ability of all persons to understand body language, he felt that in explaining it folk or everyday explanations would fall into the trap of treating an abstracted unit as if it were by nature a thing in itself. He believed that within the folk or ‘everyday’ ideology any explanation of an aspect of body language would simply be "a statement of the respondent’s personal history", incapable of explaining the phenomenon in the larger pattern of social communication of which the respondent would remain largely unaware (1972: 184). As has been shown in previous chapters academic writers are more likely to fall into the trap of abstracting body language from its lived context than Birdwhistell may have supposed.

Popular responses are, in my view, still able to provide a great deal of raw material for the social scientist to peruse, in order to enable her/ him to discern patterns in lived experience. Popular texts, unlike popular explanations, are based on much of the work of social scientists such as Birdwhistell. They do not fall into these traps any more or less than academic texts do. In my own experience in even the briefest conversations about body language ordinary people are aware of the need to read body language in context.

Birdwhistell warned against various methodological/ conceptual errors that should be avoided by students of bodily communication. In his view it is an error to believe:

1. That each gesture like a word carries only one meaning.
2. That movement is ‘closer to nature’ than verbal communication - a fallacy, that relates to the primacy humans assign to verbal communication. In Birdwhistell’s view body language is not of necessity more primitive, universally understood, or a truer indication of what is going on in an individual’s mind than verbal communication. Nor does it follow that children exhibit more natural kinesic behaviour than adults. The effect of ageing and socialisation on bodily communication still has to be ascertained.
3. The ‘modifier’ temptation which holds that words are the primary form of communication which are merely modified by non-verbal communication. The primacy of verbal/non-verbal communication has not been positively established as outlined previously.
4. That one body part has primacy over another in a communication rather than examining them all as equally valid messageful communication organs. There could be considerable cross cultural variation as to which body part, if any, conveys ‘more’ meaning than another.
5. That informants or multiple judges who give one reason for their behaviour necessarily have the answers. Their ‘reasons’ should be carefully scrutinised by the social scientist. Agreement amongst informants merely indicates conventional understanding.

Conventional understanding is not necessarily something that should be denigrated. Informants can unwittingly provide insights into the operation of social dynamics. Thus the temptations or traps inherent in studying bodily communication described by Birdwhistell serve to further stress the need to adopt a cultural studies perspective, and to examine body language as it influences, and is influenced by, social power relations.

In his discussion of health indicators in two neighbouring Kentuckian communities, Birdwhistell demonstrates base-set characteristics but does not attempt to elaborate on the possible reasons for the different attitudes to ill health between these communities - he merely observes that ill health seems to be condoned more in
women and children in the poorer community, in which a 'stiff-upper lip' attitude towards ill health prevails. He fails to elaborate on any possible link between the economic life of the community and its attitude to health, though he seems to hint at such a link.

According to Birdwhistell "the classification of gesture types as indicators of cultural character tendencies must await systematic cross-cultural research" (1970: 214). He does not elaborate on this theme however. Birdwhistell is dismissive of 'folk' viewers perceptions, stating that "gesture" and "posture" and "facial expression" are probably the body motion events most accessible to the American "folk" [his primary subject/objects of study] (1970: 220). He warns that these aspects of bodily communication should only be examined in their widest context. Folk movers, however, seem to be aware of the categories he abstracted for analysis, such as 'motion qualifiers' because, in his experience, they have relatively little difficulty in seeing and 'explaining' their functions once they are demonstrated (Birdwhistell, 1970: 220).

That ordinary people initially seem to be unaware of some aspects of nonverbal communication is a function of the apparently unconscious level at which it occurs. This does not render ordinary people incompetent as communicators, nor does it render their comments about such communication invalid. There is a danger in the power relation here that would privilege the knowledge of 'the expert'. While no one can deny the usefulness of academic abstraction, such abstraction is not the province of academics alone, and it always carries with it the danger of losing sight of the lived context in which body language exists.

Culture and Communication

Birdwhistell does not subscribe to the notion that culture is communication rather that they "represent two different viewpoints or methods of representation of patterned and structured interconnectedness." (1970:251). He sees culture as focusing upon structure, and communication as upon process. He sees the relationship between communication and culture in terms of research:

Those who look at patterned human interconnectedness, as it were, from above and derive cultural generalisations from their observations will produce data which will be coextant ultimately with data derived by those who study it from below and who derive communicational generalisations. Communication is neither independent of nor merely another word for culture (1970:250).

In my view, culture is part of a social process, and both culture and communication obtain their relative significance in terms of the social power relationships that surround them. I agree with Birdwhistell that even the most apparently insignificant events in a communication context can have meaning. One is always communicating, as he said: "Nothing never happens" (1970). While not all culture may be communication, nor is all communication entirely culturally determined. It is extremely difficult to separate the one from the other in practice.
Historically, Davis (1972) shows that Birdwhistell (1952, 1968) was one of the earliest writers to focus on the

... social level as the proper level at which to study (communication research), not a psychological or physiological one, and that limiting the research to abstracted bits of behaviour or single "channels" such as speech activity may facilitate research but it is in itself distorting and incomplete. If communication, and body movement as one channel within it, is culturally coded, ultimately the code must be deciphered at the multi-channelled, social level.

If one needs to proceed at the social level, even the notion of 'channels' could be misleading due to the power relations and methodological implications/ restrictions inherent in the use of the transmission theories from which an understanding of channels derives. The danger in applications of Birdwhistell's work is that subsequent researchers ignore any attempt at holism, and simply operate from a linear, reductionist understanding of communication. Birdwhistell was well aware of the dangers of such reductionism and of the tentative nature of much of his theorising.

An instance of fixation on the linguistic method can be found in the work of Pike (1954, 57). He spoke of traditional systems of behaviour as an ‘emic system,’ derived from ‘phonemic’- the language sounds that belong to a particular language. Language and gestural parallels were also drawn in the work of Kendon and Schefflen (1972: 89-90), following Birdwhistell.

Schefflen and the Systems Approach

In contrast to a linear approach, Schefflen took a systems approach to body language. Schefflen breaks his work into manageable pieces from which he then gradually builds up a picture of the field. While he appears to critique popular works, Schefflen fails to acknowledge those power relations that constrain both academic and popular texts, as well as influence how their subject matter is perceived, by academic and popular audiences alike.

Schefflen, particularly in Body Language and the Social Order, adopts two perspectives: firstly, a systems form of analysis (based on his understanding of Einstein’s work, combined with the influence of Birdwhistell); and secondly, in Human Territories (Schefflen and Ashcroft, 1976), a systematic and cumulative examination of the operation of territorial behaviour in human society; moving from the micro-level of gaze and touch, and the idea of territorial points, to an examination of complex interactions.

Schefflen used photographs to illustrate his text, a more readily accessible medium than the notation of Birdwhistell, which has always been problematic. Notations are specialised and often take a long time for someone to learn. They are therefore less accessible to the general public or even to nonspecialist scholars/
academics/scholars from other disciplines. The problem with photographs is that they often have to be posed, although it is possible to build up extensive archives of 'candid shots' over time and with sufficient funding. A viable alternative is to use illustrations, another technique that Schefflen uses in common with popular body language texts in *How Behaviour Means* (1973).

**Schefflen and the Space/Time dimension.**

In his chapters on built territories Schefflen (1976) reflects on the relationship between human behaviour and social/spatial relationships in the British-American tradition, which he believes to have been concretised in 'the recent course of evolution' and have come to 'characterise furniture groupings of rooms, properties and larger divisions of fixed human space' in America (Schefflen, 1976:133). Schefflen briefly mentions institutional domains which are not readily visible but controlled by those who have a degree of institutional power over them, such as unions, mobs or gangs (1976:165).

Schefflen does not discuss how institutionalised power arrangements often designate or dictate the arrangement of towns and villages. Particularly good examples of the links between territories and social hierarchies are found in the design of medieval villages, and even in the arrangement of factories, schools and campuses around the central administrative and power centres. The institutionalized and ideological operation of social control located around the use of social space and the public presentation of the body is outlined in Foucault's work (1978; 1979). There is a need to add this perspective to body language studies. Schefflen mentions the fact that "particular ideas, beliefs, and values may spread across institutional and ethnic lines and come to prevail in certain places and land divisions. These systems of ideologies may influence the behaviour of all those who pass through or inhabit them". What Schefflen does not do is provide any examples of how such ideological systems might operate in spatial or territorial terms. In South Africa the power structures and ideology of apartheid have contributed to the arrangement of built spaces and cities to accommodate racial divisions of land tenure and ownership in the past. See Chapter Six for further discussion of this topic.

Schefflen does note that people of higher status could occupy either the central zone of a territory with a gradient of decreasing status proceeding outwards towards the periphery zone by zone (1976: 173) or that the opposite arrangement might occur, in the planning of American cities. In South African urban geography there was a policy of removing non-white racial groups away from the city centres, and even away from economic centres to homelands where they were supposedly to undergo 'separate development' away from the major economic stimulus'.

Schefflen acknowledges the influence of culture on communication when he points out that each division of property is "the seat of certain mores, customs, rules, laws, and agencies of enforcement, for the land
divisions are the holdings of governments" (1976:175). At each level of spatial arrangement in a society there are systems of regulation, such as laws, mores, economic regulation and sub-cultural traditions. In his view, behaviour at any level is influenced by the components and actions in the component spaces (1976:174). Such arrangements might be further complicated by the fact that people also carry their culture with them. "For example, ethnic peoples have migrated through many land divisions and their customs may appear in any property or neighbourhood, for they are carried there by the people who grew up in these cultures. Contexts are thus represented within us" (1976:174). Schefflen admitted that these were generalised observations "allowing the reader's experience to fill in the gaps" (1976:167).

Schefflen & Schefflen seem to be reacting to popular works on body language on the grounds that they are too focused on the psychological aspects of nonverbal communication and fail to provide a clear picture of the operation of social dynamics (1972). They therefore wrote Body Language and Social Order in response to a gap which they perceived in the popular works, which they saw as "How-to-Do it book(s) on seduction salesmanship or gaining popularity." (1972: iii). Like myself, Schefflen seems to see the need to examine both the individual and the social as elements of a dynamic system, in which body language occurs.

In the last few years a broad interest in body language has developed outside the formal sciences of man. Unfortunately, this has taken a largely psychological slant, such that bodily behaviours are merely given psychodynamic meanings. Thus, we are led to believe that crossing the legs "means" that one fears castration or that a particular facial expression or touch "means" that one loves his mother or the like. Such simplistic views ignore twenty years of research, a systems revolution in modern thought, the social, economic and political contexts of human behaviour and the cultural differences in American society. (Schefflen & Schefflen, 1972:iii)

As we can see in the context of changes in social concerns, one of the problems inherent in Schefflen and Schefflen's writings is a sexism apparent in their language and concerns. Genetics and culture combine in their view to influence facial expressions: culture thus overlays genetic inheritance. Some kinesics or gestures have come to be used with language and these representational patterns do not look like what they represent: they are symbolic.

Meta-communicational Actions

Bateson (1955) defined communication about communication as "metacommunication", Schefflen then modified the term to refer to "signals cues and monitors that influence the stream of activities as 'matabehaviours'" (1972:58). Dyads and groups are examined in order to discuss metacommunicaional signals. On examining Body Language and Social Order, it appears that metacommunications such as Schefflen & Schefflen discuss are related largely to personal and psychological factors that may eventuate in someone's mind or psyche. Despite their acknowledgement of a systems approach, Schefflen and Schefflen
resort to reductive linear approaches in practice. In one instance, when they discuss emotion as a metacommunicational affect they describe a woman in the following way:

This lady is showing an affect we might label as joy, excitement, or something of the kind. But without knowing the context, we cannot tell whether she is actively experiencing such an affect or acting in the way a vivacious and lively young woman might be expected to act at a party. (Schefflen & Schefflen, 1972:70).

Schefflen and Schefflen's analysis would be expanded by the inclusion of social power relations in their analysis. The precise nature of the expectations that are placed on a young woman in a social situation might be determined if the power relations operating on the particular social context are examined. Patriarchal power relations might determine the nature of her behaviour to some extent. Women are generally supposed to be pleasant creatures: 'smiling' is expected of them as they acknowledge their function as social appeasers and 'nice girls'.

There is no awareness of patriarchal power relations in Body Language and Social Order as evidenced in the language usage in their text. The terms 'one' and 'he' are taken to be the generic all-encompassing terms throughout the text. In one example the reader is encouraged to try an experiment and see what response he (my italics) will elicit from a stranger who is also defined by the masculine 'he' (1972:62). In another example Schefflen and Schefflen refer to the burlesquing of "male dominance or confrontation behaviour" (1972: 73) by a father and son. Male dominance was unquestioningly accepted, as 'given' a social norm which they do not question. Schefflen and Schefflen are therefore products of the prevailing social and academic system in which they live and work. Attempting to unpack the power relations such as gender and patriarchal power relations operating on social and academic discourse is a comparatively recent development in academia. For this reason the conclusions derived by social scientists working 'unknowingly' or unaware within the confines of these systems need to be re-examined in the light of power relations which were previously implicit in the work itself, and in the social context in which it is undertaken.

Schefflen demonstrates some awareness of race, age and gender as factors affecting gesture (1972:89-) but merely lists differences, without discussing the possible reasons for such differences. The 'Hippie' movement is briefly dismissed as is the Black power movement, without any discussion of the power relations that may be responsible for such reactionary behaviours (1972: 92). Schefflen notes that Black Americans show their palms more frequently than WASPS but does not connect this with what WASP women do. Submission and gaze behaviour have therefore to be re-examined with a conscious awareness of the social power relations that influence them.

The meta-levels of social understanding at which meta-behaviours and communications are formulated or determined need to be considered. Thus we need to examine primary social relations that operate at the meta-social level - namely the social, political and economic factors that influence the strata, hierarchies and
behaviours in society and thus interaction at the macro- and micro-level of body language. As I have attempted to demonstrate above, an understanding of power relations operating in the contexts in which we attempt to understand body language should enrich and improve scholarship on body language.

Scheflen does examine the operation of social power relations in his treatment of the psychological notion of the "double-bind". Binds and double-binding as well as deviancy are described by Scheflen (1972: Chapters 12 and 13) as the means of maintaining social and institutional control of individuals. Scheflen sees a "bind" as a situation that arises in the context of historical and economic relations or developments in the West. Such binds and controls have been carried into the colonial world and the global economies of which South Africa forms a part. The importance of understanding the cultural, verbal and non-verbal codes of the West has been recognised by the Japanese in their attempts to overcome the post World War II devastation of Japan. While attempting to understand these communication codes is extremely useful, there is still a danger that the absorption of such codes without an understanding of all the power relations that have led to their formation and continuance, is likely to be destructive for the society attempting such an absorption. There is thus a constant need to examine power relations in one's own and other cultures, before any large scale social reconstruction (such as occurred with the imposition of apartheid) is possible. The proposed Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) could fall into this trap although this is not to argue that acculturation is not a healthy adaptive practice in and of itself but rather that change cannot and should not be imposed bureaucratically upon a society. Societies constantly change due to the pressures of many interacting factors and not to the imposition of external rules or laws.

In Body Language and Social Order the conclusion is that the 'deviant behavioral explosions' which result when people can see no way out of a 'double bind' situation may provide useful dramatisations of social problems; which might lead in turn to an examination of such problems in the social system. Unfortunately the tendency of most people to individualise problems tends to preclude more useful socio-political analyses. An extreme example of such a reductionism is to be found in biologism - the reduction of problems to genetic, hormonal or somatic problems, the dangers of which should be seen in the context of racism particularly in South Africa. This understanding of the notion of containing deviancy can be correlated with the understanding of mis-reading, outlined in Chapter One. Scheflen warns against the abuse of knowledge in the social sciences and against biologist and psychological theories which "blame the victim's plight on processes or traits within his own body ... [whereby] the explanation of deviance becomes part of its causation and perpetuation" (1972: 201). Scheflen & Scheflen (1972: 203) then argue that social scientists need to be aware of the political consequences of their work.

There is an important implication here about the politics of being a therapist or theoretical scientist. If in these roles one makes disturbing statements about "how things are" or contributes a new concept, one is said to be "political" rather than "scientific". But we often overlook the fact that scientists who do not disturb by asking new questions and formulating new concepts are also political. They are political because they support and reinforce existing views of human nature (which are, of course, political).
Unfortunately, as I have demonstrated above, Schefflen and Schefflen themselves fall into the trap of sexism and along with most of their contemporary theorists in the area of body language, fail to distinguish between power, status and dominance as categories. While recognising the dangers of subscribing to the dominant paradigms they do not manage to escape them. The only way that such traps might be avoided is by constantly questioning one's own and other theorists work in terms of the prevailing power relations - whether social or academic.

**POWER, BODIES AND THE FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE**

It is both an indictment of the academy, and a support for my argument, that the most 'notable' works in the body language field seem to be those written by white male academics working in England and America. Even in the field it seems that women often perform much needed but lower status 'secretarial' functions, such as the compilation of extensive bibliographies by Martha Davis. Davis thus provides a service for the academic community perhaps at the expense of her reputation. Bibliographies are not usually cited as source material in references or bibliographies, even though they may contain valuable annotative commentaries, such as those which are referenced in this text. Feminist scholars have done a great deal of valuable work on the body and the social and cultural construction of the body as a central concern in their critiques of the prevailing imbalances in gender power relations, particularly in the Western academic tradition.

Academic texts that focus on the body as a locus of social power relations include the works of some feminists, and those of Foucault, Lacan, and Merleau-Ponty, all of whom have begun to unpack the connections between social power and the body. They have all worked in different areas and for different but particular reasons. I have attempted to draw together the understandings of power and the body developed by these theorists to frame my own study of body language. Mary Douglas' work on the body (1966, 1970), focuses on how the social body constrains one's perceptions and experiences of the physical body. Douglas is often quoted in feminist texts that examine the body, whether philosophical (Jagger & Bordo, 1989) or practical (Martin, 1987; Grau, 1993).

If one looks at it from a radical Focaullian perspective, the body cannot be known apart from specific systems of knowledge. It is not only given meaning by the discourse, but is wholly constituted by that discourse to such an extent that it vanishes as a biological entity and becomes instead a socially constructed product - malleable and highly unstable (Grau, unpublished paper 1993).

While it is important to note that Foucault's perspective allows us to see the socially constructed nature of the body, like Merleau-ponty I feel that we cannot ignore the individual's experience of his/her own body. The experience of the body or bodiliness is both an individual and a social experience. As cultural studies
has demonstrated, there is a need to balance individual and social perspectives in our understanding of people in society. Studies of the social body outside the field of body language are beyond the scope of this thesis but certain works have been influential in its compilation.

The work of Rudolph Laban, a dancer and choreologist who examined various body types and patterns of movement as representations of individual personalities as well as of habitual ways of behaving is particularly relevant. Laban sees conditions of production in factories and habitual movements in various working conditions as having particular effects on the characters and habitual movement patterns of those involved in such activities. Laban developed his own movement notation which works in terms of an understanding of various types of effort. It has the same drawbacks as those of Birdwhistell discussed above. Laban's work has been continued by the likes of Lamb and Rose, who developed its application in the field of management training. Their work thus links to the concerns embedded in popular body language texts.

Alexander technique provides the insight that body shaping changes characters and attitudes by releasing trapped energies that have become so as a result of habitual behaviours or body images. 'Rolfing' is a practice associated with this technique that aims to release trapped bodily energy and to re-shape a persons life by reshaping their body and their body/self image.

Emily Martin (1987) discusses the relationship between science as a cultural system and women's bodies in *The Woman in the Body*. Her work is particularly important from a cultural studies viewpoint, because she examines medical texts and contrasts their representations of the body with those of women from different races, classes and ages with those of the prevailing medical ideology. In a number of ways her work and its methodology run in tandem with my own, although she has not theorised her work in the same way. Her work could be seen to be an example of praxis in which the ordinary woman as the 'knowing subject' can shed much light on current academic debates about women, their bodies and medical practice.

As has occurred in the cultural studies tradition, Martin has questioned the dominant scientific paradigm of knowledge. She uses the reported everyday experiences of women to question prevailing Western medical discourse.

McRobbie is a cultural studies practitioner who examined feminist and youth issues in Britain in works such as *Feminism and Youth Culture* (n.d.) and *Feminism for Girls* (1981). McRobbie makes only very occasional rather sketchy references to body language. Her focus is on popular culture but includes music, dress and dance as manifestations of working-class teenage life in Britain. In only one McRobbie's works, *Zoot Suits and Second-Hand Dresses* (1989) is there any direct reference to body language. In an chapter entitled 'Don't Look Now' Richard Dyer provides an interesting examination of the male pornographic image. To discover why male pornographic images are not as successful (in engaging their intended audience) as female ones,
Dyer examines the socially codified prohibition on females gazing at men. That men look, while women are looked at, is the [Western] norm. This behavioral code is particularly apparent in courtship behaviour, and is encapsulated as such in a filmic example to which Dyer refers. Citing Henley (1977), for her descriptions of dominance and the male gaze, Dyer then notes the difference between active/passive gaze between images of male and female nudes. His use of body language is noteworthy because it is in the area of gaze, touch and power that correlations can be made with that of rape studies. Henley (1977) provides some discussion of rape in her first chapter.

The only work which I have recently discovered that deals directly with body language and power relations is that of Nancy Henley (1977). Working from a feminist perspective she focuses on power and gender in relation to body language. In her analysis of Birdwhistell’s descriptions of gender difference in Americans, Henley introduces the dimension of power into the equation. She demonstrates how a seemingly neutral description of gender difference in body positioning between men and women can be read to reveal the power relations operating on them (1977:135-6).

What she does not do is to analyse the historical progression of academic work on body language, nor does she acknowledge that there might be power relations operating on their and her work which could have accounted for such a lack of focus on power in academic texts on the body.

**Power and space**

While race dominance is a phenomenon that is well documented in the social (and political) sciences, very little has been written about the nonverbal ways or systems that serve to maintain and entrench these power relationships (Henley, 1977:5). Blaming the victim seems to be one way to remain blind to the fact that what are seen as ‘race’ or ‘gender’ problems are often the results of the very systems that form the social contexts for such problems. As William Ryan (1971) states in *Blaming the Victim*, the results of oppression should not be blamed on the victims but on their real origins in oppressive systems.

An example is the idea of apartheid ‘education’ versus black ‘stupidity’- although in this case regardless of their schooling, people of all races and most social strata were ‘inculcated ’ into obedience towards the state, via the government controlled education systems under apartheid.

Schefflen discusses ‘blaming’, or what he terms ‘scapegoating’, as a Western manifestation, visible at many levels in society, as a means of social control. A victim or scapegoat becomes the focus for blame for what is often an institutional problem. Schefflen uses the ‘drug problem’ of black Ghetto youth as an example. The youth have no real opportunities for social advancement and with their peer group become involved in petty crime to support drug habits. The drug syndicates and society at large benefit by having either a market or a scapegoat, while the wider social problems responsible for the immobility of the youth are ignored.
People become sidetracked into dealing with the 'drug problem' or blaming black youth rather than resolving issues surrounding this problem. Similarly, alcohol dependence in the working classes has always been a way to get the workers and society to focus on something other than the class system, as a problem. In colonial societies alcohol dependencies in aboriginal populations (eg. in Australia and South Africa) have often served as distractions from the wider causes of the social and economic problems in such dispossessed communities. Individuals too become scapegoated as 'deviants', as Schefflen & Schefflen (1972) and others have noted\textsuperscript{11}. Deviancy, as an extreme form of scapegoating or victimisation, serves to maintain the prevailing social order (Ericson, 1966). As 'victims' or 'deviants' their behaviour can be ignored and any threat it may pose to the prevailing social order is contained through their categorisation as "outsiders or others".

Violence

When a threat to social order is not contained, violence or symbolic action is taken. Violence can be avoided using nonverbal cues. Reciprocals of dominance/ submission can escalate to a confrontation or be used in quasi-dominance displays. It is noteworthy that animals would rather display aggression than fight to the death: humans unfortunately manage to murder members of their own species (Schefflen, 1970). Violence might be symbolically averted through the use of body language displays and indirect social controls, according to Schefflen.

There seems to be a confusion of power and sexuality, or aggression and dominance on the part of males (Henley, 1977). A number of studies seem to support the view that men often fail to distinguish between violence and sexuality. Male dominance seems to be seen as their prerogative, regardless of the responses or the rights of others. That men may also be less able to 'read' body language cues; and that patriarchal systems, epistemological, legal and cultural, support such male dominance may, in Henley's view, account for the tendency to excuse men for raping and to 'blame the victim', namely women when this violent crime against women's bodies is perpetrated. Rape is an extreme example of an instance where power relations could have a direct impact on the human body.

There is always a danger that any social control system can be taken to extremes. Bordo argues that anorexia, hysteria and agoraphobia are extreme manifestations of the ideological controls by means of which women are prevented, and prevent themselves, from challenging the social order. Not only is the victim blamed, but in her use of restricted social codes she places herself in a 'double-bind' her seeming escape from social control is merely its extreme manifestation. In attempting to take on aspects of masculine and feminine identity, women suffering from the above conditions literally tear themselves apart.

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Unfortunately research and media presentations of society tend to focus on social disorder and the ‘ills’ or victims thereof rather than on the social relations that constrain bodies and against or within which people may be acting or reacting. When attempting to understand extreme manifestations of victimisation or of bodily ‘disorder’, we need to look for differences in circumstances, not racial or sexual differences as Henley stated (1977:207). There are often more similarities between the sexes or between people from different racial backgrounds than people believe. The real differences between people are often in socio-economic positions - in power relations or power dynamics, and in their internalisation of the ideological, social systems of control that are manifest through their bodies. Body language studies have focused on outwardly apparent behavioral manifestations. There is a need to go beyond the level of appearance to arrive at an understanding of social power relations as they impact upon the body in order to begin to understand what impact these relations might have, and how they are experienced by individuals in everyday life.

Conclusion
Even in dealing with the power structures and practices of our societies, academics seem to have blinded themselves to power relations, by looking only at the surface at the appearances or status of individuals, or character traits such as dominance, both of which can more easily be explained away than the practice and norms which sustain power differences in societies.

Generally neither the popular nor the academic texts offer a critique or understanding of the power relations surrounding their publication/production - power relations in which they are enmeshed. Occasionally there are attempts by writers working in oppositional discourses to rehabilitate their own perspectives, goals and aims via an examination of social power relations. Feminist and homosexual scholars/researchers have worked to examine power and gender relations to uncover ways in which their bodies have functioned to support their social oppressions - as subordinate social groups. Interest in the body as an object worthy of study has been roused by the need to come to terms with HIV and AIDS and the threats that they may pose for the breakdown of socio-economic systems throughout the world, and thus for the global power relations.

In South Africa, we have only recently been able openly to examine some of the somatic and cultural oppressions that have existed alongside the apartheid system. What remains to be seen, in the context of social change in South Africa, is the extent and depth of this change and how it is reflected in the bodies of all the inhabitants of the ‘New’ South Africa.
NOTES

1. See Scheffen's reference to Einstein and field theory for a noteworthy nod towards the 'pure' sciences from the social sciences. Scheffen's work on Territories was also funded by the Albert Einstein.

'Socio-physics' is a term I coined devised to:

1) connote the connections between the social and pure sciences and the often extreme anomalies that result from attempts to combine the two, and

2) describe the space/time dimension of social communication.

2. Popular works cite seating arrangements in meetings/boardrooms as hierarchically structured arrangements.

3. Such institutional assignment of mass appointments at very restricted opening times serve to emphasize the importance of the state in the institutionalization of waiting. This occurs in most Government Departments in South Africa. Examples range from the Department of Inland Revenue (Income Tax) to the departments of Home Affairs and the Unemployment Offices plus many more.

4. Kenneth Johnson's (1971) article on Black American nonverbal communication patterns, (1982: 132) 'is descriptive and does not report "controlled" investigation, but it gives a good account of patterns to be observed in black culture ' according to Henley (1982: 132).

5. Noted in the chamber of Mines video and in numerous conversations.

6. In a recent exchange with a shop assistant, she said, "Oh, body language. That's when if I sit with my legs crossed towards someone, I probably like him, or maybe not, there could just be a draught. You'd have to watch for a while before you can tell, wouldn't you."

7. Industries were to be enticed through various incentives, such as low taxation, or subsidies, to locate to these homelands near a large pool of cheap labour - provided by the homeland residents. The most successful 'industries' enterprises in this regard were casinos and hotels featuring risque shows that were banned in the rest of South Africa, which could hardly be regarded as major growth industries.


9. This kind of person is of the kind referred to by Jagger and Bordo (1989), and is who I attempt to rehabilitate in this text; the knowledge of the ordinary, or everyday, with all its subjectivities resulting from the standpoint of the subject in the context of the prevailing social power relations.

10. Private schools would be outside of state control although they might still have been influenced by the prevailing ideology, such an influence would not have been as direct as in the state schooling systems. The poor educational facilities might in some way have contributed to undermine the ideology due to the lack of infrastructure and control in rural and township areas. A type of 'ghetto' resistance would probably have been in operation in such instances.

11. A number of studies (eg. Shorter, 19 ) have shown that women have been labelled as hysterics and deviants more frequently than men as have people from out-groups and those of low socio-economic status.
SECTION II
CONTEXTS AND CONCLUSIONS
CHAPTER FIVE

Getting Leads about Current Perceptions: Body Language in Everyday Experience

Perceptions of concrete /lived experiences of body language in South Africa are discussed in this chapter. The data used here include those collected in individual depth interviews, group discussions and in fieldwork\(^1\), as well as observations made by myself and others.

Anecdotal data was derived primarily from a total of thirty-two respondents. Nineteen people participated in depth interviews; while thirteen participated in the group discussions as well as continuing their input in conversations thereafter. For a more detailed description of the methodology, a copy of the interview guide and a breakdown of the pilot study in terms of race, class, gender and age, see the appendices.

The data itself was collected with as little imposition as possible on the part of the interviewers. The questions and probe suggestions were not intended to define the flow of the information gathered in the anecdotal material. The only exception to this rule occurred in seminar discussions of my methodology. Thus the topics referred to by respondents, and the amount of attention they focused on various areas in discussion, was manipulated as little as possible.

The initial interviews were conducted with respondents between the ages of twenty and sixty years of age, who had a tertiary education and lived in an urban area. Attempts were made to counteract this data bias. Firstly, I gained access to a few respondents in industry, although they too were within the same age and urban residential categories as the initial group. Secondly, I conducted some rural fieldwork. Finally, I spoke to some working-class respondents, providing further examples of an urban context. These interviews and discussions were supplemented by informal data collection and by observation. While a bias towards using university sample populations is inherent in many studies in the body language field, this is an insufficient excuse for limiting any study. The constraints aside, I feel that this study demonstrates the need to examine body language and popular perceptions thereof more widely.

While this study is insufficient to constitute a representative view of the South African population as a whole, the data seem to support my theory that the ‘ivory tower’ perspective needs to be examined further in the context of everyday life, particularly in terms of everyday experiences of body language. We need to examine popular texts and perceptions if we wish to understand the operation of body language in everyday life. To do so, it appears that there is a need to examine social power relations. Social contexts that include power relations, and their possible impact on interviewee’s perceptions are alluded to as are theories outlined in Section 1. I am attempting to see how various respondents may represent, relate to, or otherwise use,
'popular' understandings of body language and social power relations. The question is whether social power relations in South Africa impact upon everyday experiences and perceptions of body language or not.

Everyday Experience and Academic Perceptions

One of the hypotheses examined is that popular understandings of communication and self are not as simplistic as academics may have supposed them to be. The interview material seems to support my argument in Section I against such 'academic' pre- or mis-conceptions. However, the perceptions of the initial respondents might be more sophisticated than those of the population at large, due to their tertiary education, thereby contradicting my argument. It might be postulated that an understanding of these complexities might not be present in a sample where respondents did not have a tertiary education. Unfortunately, I was unable in the time available to obtain as many responses from people with only a primary or secondary level of education as I did from those with tertiary qualifications. This is a problem common to much research in the fields of body language and social psychology, and is one which should be taken into account when analysing their social data. On the one hand, if such social scientists eschew popular texts and perceptions as being simplistic and unrepresentative of society at all levels; it is problematic to assume, on the other hand, that conclusions derived from studies of academic and student populations can be generalised to everyday life and the general population.

Responses pointed to varied non-stereotypical conceptions of culture and cultural identity. While perceptions were couched in terms derived from the old Population Registration Act (1950), they were qualified to provide varied, personalised understandings of identity despite their use of these parameters. The analytic categories used in this study are: the three racial classifications Black, White, and Indian; with gender, class (and education) and age as social relations acting on, and in, these categories. These categories tend to form part of the cultural background of South Africans. Most people use racial classifications, or are aware of social class even if they reject these power relations. These parameters are not rigidly fixed, they merely provide focus points for analysis. Perceptions apparent in the data are examined as moments in a complex dynamic process, in terms of Johnson's understanding of cultural studies praxis. Too few 'Coloured' respondents were interviewed or observed for this category to be included.

A complex of relations is subsumed under each general category used below. A single category such as 'race' interacts with all the other social power relations in a particular way. 'Readings' of body language will always be more complex than analysis by category will allow. However an attempt has been made to focus from a particular perspective in each section, in order to examine what it is that such analytic categories might offer the body language practitioner.
RACE:

In South Africa 'racial' groups have been situated within particular social power relations in the context of historical relations, due to our colonial and apartheid history. Race includes a complex of other analytic categories such as ethnicity, and it interlinks with ideas of cultural, social and personal identity. As one respondent said: "being South African, one identifies oneself as race group because we're taught to see that way". Almost every South African that I interviewed or spoke to made a reference to their 'racial' classification, as used in the Population Registration Act. While people defined themselves in these broad categories they also qualified such definitions with reference to other factors. There also appeared to be some tension or resistance to these racial categories.

Black South Africans

Black people form the largest demographic racial category in South Africa. There are many possible subdivisions in this broad grouping, along tribal or ethnic lines. However, as this study was conducted in KwaZulu/Natal, the 'Zulu' group is the one specifically referred to unless otherwise indicated. As this is a pilot study, differentiations were not made between smaller groupings and only the widest range of body language that appears to be representative of other 'black' groups is included.

In South Africa the black population has historically been the "oppressed black majority". Their body language has thus been conditioned by their inferior status in the power structures of the past as well as by black African traditional behaviour and cosmology. Behaviours also demonstrate the processes of change, with assimilation of and resistance to what was the hegemonic 'white' grouping. Access to resources and cultural assimilation also differed according to processes such as Westernisation or urbanisation. Apartheid land policies also influenced access to resources. Many black people live in the rural areas as a direct result of the "homelands" policies of the previous regime.

From the Outsider's perspective

To provide some perspective on the richness of the cultural mix in South Africa where a great many of the people are from other countries (as migrant workers or immigrants), I decided to see what the perceptions of local culture and body language might be when viewed by an outsider living within the society. To this end I interviewed 'foreign' respondents as well, mostly middle-class students, who had been studying in South Africa for a year or two. One foreign student defined himself as follows:

Where I come from the culture's not very different from the Zulu culture because the Zulus are called protolubas in anthropology. But my people are less warrior-like than Zulus. They place more emphasis on work and very little on whether the man is handsome or not. What matters is the amount of work he can do for the community, he must be strong enough materially.
The idea that black African cultures are less individualistically orientated than white South African cultures comes through here. Unlike Western societies, the emphasis is on communities rather than on individuals. Whether they are more likely to be viewed as high or low context cultures (Hall, 1956) remains to be discovered.

References to the reputedly violent nature of Zulus can be traced historically in popular imagination to events such as the dloqume, supposedly caused by Shaka's warlike tendencies, and to the current media portrayals of violence in KwaZulu/Natal. Political mobilisation by the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) around the right of the Zulu to bear 'traditional weapons' would also strengthen this impression. Reference to the Zulu warlike nature was also made in many of the interviews. This would presuppose an aggressive posture and stance, which has been associated with the "Black Power salute", and the resistance and marches of the black urban youth. These are impressions that have been fostered by the media and thus exist firmly in South African popular imagination and experience.

VARIATIONS WITHIN THE BLACK COMMUNITY.

Rural/Urban Differences and Similarities

There is an observable difference between rural and urban areas and populations in South Africa. I have made some attempt to determine the extent to which body language might differ in such contexts. Two sources of information about rural black respondents were available. Firstly, many interviewees in the initial sample referred to rural/urban differences often in terms of traditional and modern behaviours. Secondly, I collected data during some rural fieldwork to counterbalance the bias towards the educated elite group found in my original sample. What follows are some of the most commonly discussed body language behaviours mentioned in terms of this rural/urban distinction.

Respect

Behaviours signifying the status and power relations in Zulu society are still used today, particularly in the rural areas and by the aged. According to a middle-aged rural woman, "respect is shown by having your hands on view at all times. Children must show respect for their elders by keeping their hands in view." Her remarks were supported by behaviour in rural meetings where I observed that anyone who entered a meeting or a room where someone else was speaking would enter, raise hands or eyebrows (in the classic eyebrow flash) in greeting and then sit hands on view, waiting for a chance to speak. Hands were held in front of people either clasped in their laps or at chest level. They were also frequently held one on each knee. Men
appeared to place their hands on their knees more frequently than women who seemed to favour clasping them. However, such a gendered difference is one that could only be substantiated after further examination.

In traditional black society it is considered 'good manners' to display both hands, thus demonstrating that one has no hidden weapons, which indicates a desire for peaceable relations (e.g. Morris, 1971). Thus when receiving something from someone either a two handed gesture is used, or more formally one hand is extended in the cupped position, while the other cups the forearm of the extended arm. In the West one usually extends one's hand to shake hands in greeting, and the two handed gesture is used only when a lot of things are being received. The traditional gesture thus flatters the giver for his/her largesse. Similar observations of respectful attitudes associated with the visibility of hands were reiterated by several interviewees with remarks such as: "rural African' students come into the office and sit down immediately, hands on laps".

Sitting or crouching down as a sign of respect for an elder or superior appears in the intercultural literature about the Zulu's as far back as early 1900's. Hlonipha and the tendency of inferiors to 'lower' themselves by sitting or squatting in the presence of superiors has been discussed earlier as have other Hlonipha behaviours, such as gaze avoidance. Two areas of behaviour, documented in the past in black traditional societies (Kringe, 1965), that might bear examination in this regard are those of walking through the centre of or skirting a group; or the tendency to announce one's physical presence and topics of conversation by talking loudly in public places.

What follows is an example of a similarity in behaviour that occurs in many African cultures and countries regarding respectful behaviour towards the aged. According to a foreign black male:

Most bantus, including the Zulu, have this way of greeting where the elbows have got to bend. It's the same in my country. Especially when you are interacting with older people you have to greet them this way [Bowing down]. I did it once in Jo'burg when I went to a township with a friend of mine and I had to greet her people. They understood what I meant.

I also recognised his demonstration of respectful behaviour as being one that I had often observed in both rural and urban black South Africans. Such behaviour has been remarked on by white South Africans too. In the past, black South Africans would often use such behaviours to indicate respect for white bosses or even towards whites in 'social' situations as an indication of respect.

There were a number of areas in which a young male respondent from Zambia felt that South African blacks, and Zulus particularly differed from his own cultural background. Some of his observations were supported by my own travels in other Southern African countries. Only some of the points he noted about his South Africa experiences were consonant with categories of interaction delimited by writers such as Hall, Morris.
and Fast. The areas that were mentioned by other writers and some other respondents were greeting behaviour, gaze, and sexual relationships. Two behaviours that only he mentioned were queuing and the exchange or payment of money. Quotations from his interview transcription are discussed below.

Greetings

He had this to say about greetings which he had observed:

A Zairian who had been here for three years taught me how young blacks greet each other. They raise one finger and it means a lot of things. I think that it’s saying ‘Hai!’ - its saying we are together and I appreciate you. It summarises a lot of spoken greeting formulas. In my country you don’t greet people by sight. You have to shake their hand and you have to kiss ladies. But you can’t greet a lady with your hands, it’s from the French, of the Belgians. You can kiss on the cheeks, not the mouth.

A comment could be offered here on the possible influence of Belgian colonialism on greeting behaviour in Zaire. Such an assimilation of behaviour could be explained as a result of the need by subaltern black Zairians to conform to the dominant, or hegemonic, colonial greeting behaviour. A similar process might be occurring in urban areas in South Africa, due to dominant Western practices in industry. Westernisation and urbanisation as possible influences on South African body languages are discussed further below.

There is also a common summarised nonverbal greeting used instead of the formal verbal ritual. The formal greeting proceeds as follows: one person says, “Sawubona” [I see you]; the other traditionally replies: “Yebo, sawubona.” [Yes, I see you]. In the shorthand, body language version, the first person acknowledges the other using an “eyebrow flash” and says, “Yebo!”, to which the other similarly replies” Yebo!”, also with an “eyebrow flash”. The eyebrow flash therefore seems to summarise the phrase “I see you” directly in a nonverbal form. This greeting behaviour is used between people who know one another as well as between complete strangers on the street. In KwaZulu-Natal it is often used by black South Africans not just within the black community but when greeting white South Africans, as well. Sometimes the eyebrow flash alone is used to acknowledge another’s presence. The eyebrow flash is a greeting that occurs fairly universally in human society, but it has a particular link with the Zulu expression.

Gaze

Most respondents mentioned gaze in terms of Hlonipha or respectful behaviour in black traditional society, with some reference to changes in this behaviour due to Westernisation and urbanisation. One foreign black student had a different perspective:

People don’t use their eyes in the same way as we do. At home you can’t look at someone from the corner of your eyes. Or if you look at someone from his feet to his head, you are insulting him. I don’t think it’s applicable here. I watch the way people look at you and they do that and they don’t have that weight in their
heart, of knowing what they're doing. Even ladies don't charm people with their eyes, it's very subtle. They specialize actually in that. I don't do it but I had to understand it to know whom I am entitled to buy.

Proxemics

Black and Indian South Africans tend to interact at closer distances than white South Africans do. Many white South Africans were aware of this:

One is aware sometimes with Black students who come into the office and sit down quickly because they want to get themselves at a the same or a lower level as you are as quickly as possible as a sign of respect. The lowered eyes, could be a body-space thing because very often black students will stand closer than white students. You have that kind of experience sometimes in queues.

Queuing is usually mentioned in body language texts as an instance to demonstrate *proxemics* it might also be a behaviour that has been assimilated from dominant British Colonial practice into South African behaviour. In my own travels in Malawi, I noticed a lack of queuing behaviour on the part of local black people when boarding buses. People did queue in the banks but even there many people seemed to jump queues and not wait their turn for service. One respondent, from Zaire commented on this behaviour as follows:

You don't queue in my country, you don't think about it: you just rush. You rush in the bus, you rush for anything, you push around and that's all. You don't stand in line. It's outside my behaviour. For example; yesterday, I stood just opposite the whole queue. People were looking at me in a very strange way at first I didn't understand why. Then I realized I must queue and I did.

The dynamic nature of culture, particularly in response to external influence, as well as changes in the respect shown to one's elders in traditional African society, were points made by many other respondents from different cultural backgrounds. The influence of the media and of Westernization and urbanisation on Africa and African culture is discussed below.

Change due to Westernisation and Urbanisation

A change in body language in the urban context was reported to have occurred. One respondent stated that:

One can't rely on the old stereotypes about cultural differences in non-verbal communication between whites and blacks. There was one article in particular of the type that was produced by a human resource consultant in industry and traded very heavily on stereotypes. That is both divisive and out of date now. Lowered eyes are more the exception now, as is the youngster who comes in and sits down without being invited. So one can't make a universal statement.

Dress

Dress has been mentioned particularly as an indication of the adoption of Western mores on the part of black South Africans. Generally full tribal regalia is only worn on ceremonial occasions such as during dances or
by "witch-doctors"/tribal healers or herbalists such as sangomas or inyanges. One respondent reported on the use of dress by one of her black students:

One of the youngsters came to a tutorial class that I was video-taping, dressed in a suit and tie. The whole class was abuzz when he arrived due to the juxtaposition of this formal dress in a non-formal university environment. I think he was doing it quite deliberately for effect. Clothes are essentially tied up with the image you're presenting.

A difference between black and white South Africans with regard to the formality of dress was noted on numerous occasions. White South Africans tend to dress more informally than is customary either in Europe or than Black South Africans do. There is therefore a demonstrable difference in costuming for similar social roles. An extreme example of attempts to fit in with what might be supposed to be the 'other' side could be found at many political funerals in South Africa during the late 1980's. White activists, who were often middle-class students and lecturers, would dress 'down' in order to be seen to identify with the black working-class. Black funeral attendees would demonstrate their respect for the dead by dressing 'up' so they would wear dark formal Western-style suits and dresses. Goffman (eg. 1959: 48) noted similar instances of dress as an indicator of role performances in Britain and America.

Western dress was also mentioned in a derogatory way by a foreign student, in terms of Zaire and South Africa, as a negative influence of Western culture on Africa:

I have problems with some of the Western behaviours. I think that there is a certain respect that the lady must give to her own body. I think it is first of all cultural, but I also think that's a basic requirement that the Bible gives us to dress yourself, to cover yourself. I think for everyone it is something for his sexual partner, but not everyone's allowed to see. That's not the Bible, but I think there are limits.

Note the respondent's equation of religion with the Bible and Christianity, but not with Western culture. This could be 'read' as an ironic response to 'Western' religion given the negative light with which he regarded Western dress codes. It must be understood, however, that Christianity in Africa is not necessarily a Western derivative.

Touch
There are several similarities and differences in tactile behaviour between black South Africans and other black Africans. According to one respondent:

Boys touch ladies much more [in South Africa], even when they're not very friendly. When I first came I thought it was a sort of fashion in Jo'burg. Every time you saw a lady, even in the street, you had to touch her somewhere. You would be insulting a lady in my country if you did that. Also a black man can't kiss a lady in public. A scene which confirms this happened in the library. There was one boy and one lady, they were kissing each other, in the library. There were three black guys sitting at the same table and they started laughing. I was there and I was looking. I have never seen a black man and a black lady kissing publicly.
I would concur that black couples are seldom observed kissing in public: courting behaviour is usually restricted to hand-holding. Only occasionally, when driving along at night, in passing a dark corner, a couple might be observed to be embracing. In Durban, which is a harbour town, one is uncertain about whether this is coupled with prostitution rather than the 'acceptable' behaviour of ordinary couples. Sexual mores of black South Africans were, however, reported to be more lax than those of black Zaireans:

It's very easy to sleep with a black lady in this country. There are no formalities. You can make a mistake, like a game. You can do that and then disappear in the morning. In my country you must first do 'the honours'. It almost happened to me. I'm not the only one who said this: my friend told me that you can have fun here.

The apparently casual nature of sexual relationships may be due in part the respondent's status as a foreigner, with all the 'romance' and enigma attached to that. It had been mentioned informally by white South African female acquaintances who have travelled in Europe and the UK, and was a comment made to me in the UK, too, that South African women travellers were viewed as "easy" and as "sexually available". On the one hand, South African travellers (of both sexes) might look for sexual partners while travelling, as a function of loneliness (or a desire for glamour and foreign romance), and a desire to find partners as a means to escape South Africa's political turmoil.

On the other hand, a possible explanation for the apparent approachability of South African women might be that they are conditioned to be too polite, and find it difficult to refuse any pressure from men. Submissiveness may be a result of their conditioning, due both to patriarchy and to the authoritarian schooling and legal system that existed in South Africa in the past, particularly during the apartheid era. The myth of the 'foreign traveller' also exists in many Middle Eastern and African countries where 'foreign girls', of any nationality, from British to Australian, are regarded as sexually available due to their transitory status as "travellers" [tramps].

**White South Africans**

Historically, whites formed the dominant class in South Africa. A discussion of White body language thus invariably relates to status and class. Much body language is consistent with Western Anglo-American traditions, outlined in detail in Section I. There are however particular behaviours peculiar to white South Africans.

**The Western influences: Gaze, Greeting, Dress and Respect**

Whites supposedly gaze more directly at one another during an interaction than either blacks or Indians do. This behaviour is associated both with dominance and with Western behaviours. Similarly white people generally greet using the handshake or a kiss (between women). There are several general trends apparent
in the white population, such as generally using Western-style dress and body languages, some of which have been mentioned above in contrast to black body language. Whites generally use the American ‘thumbs up’ when hitching a ride whereas rural blacks would wave down a vehicle using a palm-down wave, and urban blacks use particular taxi hailing signals with either one or two fingers raised. There are differences, however, within the broad category of ‘whites’ which may account for certain body language variants.

Time is usually scheduled according to the norms in Anglo-American traditions (Hall,) although there do seem to be regional variants in the ‘pace’ of life, acknowledged in urban ‘mythology’. Johannesburg as the most industrialised centre has the most frenetic pace, Cape Town is slightly slower, and Durban is regarded as the slowest and “the most laid back”.

White South Africans are seen to be more accustomed to touching others and to close physical contact than their European counterparts, as well as exhibiting a more loose-limbed walk (African style walk) than Europeans do. These could be absorptions of local African patterns, or reactions to a similar physical environment. These speculative readings were offered by colleagues who travel to or live in Europe and then return periodically to South Africa. Such readings have not been ‘tested’ scientifically.

Sub-cultures
Smaller immigrant populations such as the Greek, Italian, Jewish, Norwegian, French and Portuguese communities, which attempted to maintain a sense of religious, economic or cultural identity within the context of the wider South African society, were not officially recognised as separate communities. These cultural minorities were all subsumed under the ‘White’ or ‘European’ category in the population Registration Act, along with other groups such as English- or Afrikaans- speakers and those immigrant populations that did not band together to resist assimilation into the mainstream white cultural grouping. Unfortunately it is beyond the scope of the current study to take account of the cultural influences and body language behaviours particular to these smaller communities.

A South African of Greek origin mentioned Greek body language, as well as the black/ white distinction. He seemed to regard the Greek community generally as a sub-sector of the White community with occasional idiosyncrasies.

Non-verbal communication is very important cross-culturally: it is rude to look at a woman in the eyes. Kinesphere is important, and physical contact. In the Greek community a bear-hug is usual on greeting other males but not for most South African men.

Sub-cultural distinctions in South Africa are made not only according to ethnic groupings but also according to language, although ethnicity often includes linguistic factors.
Linguistic variations in White sub-cultures

It would appear that many respondents' perceptions were influenced by socio-political history. There seemed to be a sense in which self-definition occurs in relation to historically determined categories or groups. Complexities of group and self-identification are evident in the next two quotations. The first seems to indicate an understanding of culture as a dynamic entity, capable of changing with exposure to different influences:

I would describe my cultural affiliations as a mixture of Greek and others. I grew up in the Eastern Cape so I was exposed to white Afrikaner experience. The past ten years in Natal have provided some exposure to Indian culture and interfacing in the last two years with black South Africans at work has provided access to a black South African experiences. Personally, I view myself as a white English-speaking South African.

The second respondent said: "I grew up the product of a English-speaking father and an Afrikaans mother. It's a conservative background".

The cultural distinction between those of English and Afrikaans-speaking descent is an interesting one, carrying as it does a hint of the old animosities and rivalries that have their roots in the Anglo-Boer War. Some of these rivalries have been carried through to the present, as many English-speakers felt that their language distanced them from the apartheid regime. For some English-speakers, the lack of political power on the part of the majority of English-speakers may have seemed an abdication of responsibility for apartheid. The percentage ratio of English- to Afrikaans-speaking has commonly been cited as 40/60, with the predominantly Afrikaans-speaking Nationalist Party in political power during the apartheid era. However a significant minority of English-speakers had considerable economic power, as holdings in the Anglo-American corporation would indicate. The liberal opposition parties were also largely supported by English-speakers. There was therefore a constant tension between the power bases of the two language groups that continued long after the Anglo-Boer war.

In certain conservative rural white farming communities in areas of the former Transvaal and Orange Free State, the English/Afrikaans language-based cultural and political distinctions still seem to be strongly held. In these areas the majority of the farmers are Afrikaans-speaking.16 Historical conflicts over power between linguistic groups are apparent in the respondents descriptions of themselves and their allegiances to such groups.17 Differences are also apparent in the body language behaviour of English- and Afrikaans-speakers.18 According to one respondent, an Afrikaans-speaking woman reportedly counted on her fingers differently in different linguistic and socio-cultural contexts:

She noticed that on returning to a rural setting she would use a different finger sequence when counting. In an Afrikaans context she would count from small finger to thumb, with the small finger as one, whereas when counting in English she would count from the thumb to the small finger. She changed from one method to the other, only registering that she had done so while she was counting.
This is akin to the linguistic code-switching that occurs according to the setting or context in which speakers find themselves. The changing of paralinguistic behaviour alongside changes in the language used by a speaker has been noted previously by researchers when recording non-verbal communication in other countries (Kendon, 1992).

**Indian South Africans**

In South Africa there are certain cultural groups consisting of immigrant populations which might be regarded as minority cultures. One of the largest cultural groups, aside from those defined linguistically, is the Indian group, which was accorded the status of a separate racial classification in the Population Registration Act. Indian South Africans belong to many different castes and religions. In the context of South Africa as a whole, they have had to band together as a result of apartheid policies. There are two body language behaviours that have been noted particularly about South African Indians as a broad category.

Firstly, their sense of space seems to differ from that of most other South Africans. Spatial relations have been noted in various contexts. A black female respondent commented that on campus particularly she saw "hugging, people all over each other, especially Indians kissing everywhere". This behaviour, particularly in the public park on our university campus, was also noted by colleagues on numerous occasions. Speculative reasons for this behaviour that were offered included: "a reaction to religious oppression". This may apply in the context of Muslim Fundamentalist restrictions but not to my knowledge to Hindu and other Indian religions. This ‘kissing and cuddling’ might possibly relate to different conceptions of ‘public’ and ‘private’ space in the Indian culture to those of black or white contexts. These speculations have yet to be tested in formal investigation.

In terms of personal space, Indians have also been noted for their highly tactile communication. Many Indian women particularly touch the person with whom they are having a conversation, often holding hands while doing so. This seems to occur whether the person is a Hindu, Tamil or Moslem. In intercultural interactions, some white respondents have reported feeling uncomfortable due to the "touchiness" of Indians. Indians will often hold hands during a conversation, and such behaviour is particularly noteworthy in teenage Indian girls. These touch behaviours have been reported and observed in schools and in daily interactions in and around Durban, by myself and by colleagues.

Along with different spatial conceptions, South African Indians also have different concepts of time to that of white South Africans. Many Indians jokingly refer to this as ‘Indian’ time. Outside of their work environment, time is not as rigidly adhered to as it is in Western terms. At social gatherings ceremonies start when everyone is ready and guests often arrive at between half an hour to an hour later than the stated starting time. Scheduling and sequencing of events is not very rigid, changing according to the demands of
the moment. It is also fairly common, as it is in traditional African societies, for more than one event to occur simultaneously and for people to wander in and out of an event/concert or ceremony.

Along with many whites who visited or work in ‘Indian’ Schools regularly (whether as performers or educators), I noted spatial relations peculiar to Indian children. When they are asked to ‘line up’ or to stand or sit in an area, Indian children seem to have difficulty in relating to others in the spatial area and in judging how close to stand or sit, as well as where to place chairs. They often place rows of chairs so close together that it is impossible to walk between them. Black children also tend to sit much closer together than white children do.

The ‘Indian’ spatial relations outlined above may be due to cultural differences in proxemics. Some body language texts suggest that cultures in which people live in extended families or large communal homes, such as many South African Indian families still do, may relate at smaller proxemic distances than those in which nuclear families are the norm (Fast, 1970).

While it is common for teenagers of all races to go out in same-sex groups (Morris, 1978: 245), this behaviour persists in Indian society. There is a tendency for Indians, of whatever religious persuasion, to socialise in same-sex groups, probably as a result of restrictions traditionally placed on their contact with members of the opposite sex. In many homes, too, it is still the practice for Indian men and women to eat in separate rooms, with the women waiting on the men. In traditional African practice the men also tend to eat before the women.

In some instances people from what could be regarded as similar cultural backgrounds, namely Indian South Africans, might experience sub-cultural groups within this wide category as ‘other’ or different from their own. Geographic, religious and rural/urban differences played a part in the following experience:

I’m not a Muslim, my background is Hindu, but I’m not really. I lived in Durban all my life. I went to the Transvaal last year for one year, and it was a total cultural shock. I was living there in a Muslim community. They were very fundamentalist: the way women had to dress, their behaviour and their attitudes towards life are based strictly on the Koran. They did not like outsiders and made me feel unwelcome. They didn’t accept anyone in their community.

Religion is a factor that plays an important part in cultural identity and it acts as a social power relation in many societies worldwide. However it was not one that was mentioned in all sectors of the population interviewed. Occasionally Christianity and Westernisation were equated by some respondents, but it did not appear to significantly inform body language practices on its own.
CLASS:
Class, is a term that usually denotes those who have social status, and in classical Marxian usage, those who have differentiated access to the means of production. In South Africa at present class relations are unstable and undergoing change it its therefore extremely difficult to apply the clear-cut distinctions in this context. As the production and access to knowledge are themes throughout the thesis educational background is considered to be an indicator of class. University education is, in fact, generally associated with the professions and thus with the middle-classes.

Indians: Race and Class
Two educated Indian respondents described themselves in the following way:

My cultural background was Eurocentric. People think I should be talking about Indian culture, but most of my family are not very traditional. Some of the woman are submissive, but we’re not. I am aware of the Hindu culture but don’t know all the rituals. We’ve lived here for fifteen years but I don’t know people in the area where I grew up. I belong to University culture. Culture is not something you’re born with. I’m more English than anything else.

And then from another Indian respondent:

I was born in Durban. My cultural background is quite difficult. I’ve got one foot somewhere in India and the other foot somewhere in the Western Culture. I consider myself more Westernised than Eastern, although coming from the Indian community there are certain tenets, that are ‘Indian’. But after a university education, it seems some of the white bourgeoisie attitudes have rubbed off. So I’ve got the social mobility in mind, too.

In the case of the passages quoted above, two key elements seem to be representative of the Durban Indian community. Firstly, despite their allegiance to the ethnographic background of India, in the context of South African society, where Eurocentric principles were identified with the hegemonic white ruling class, it would appear that this power relation has been reproduced in terms of cultural allegiances. Secondly, there is a relationship to the Eurocentric nature of the prevailing educational culture in the South African university system, which originally derived from the British educational system. A similar experience was noted in the case of black respondents in very westernised professions. All of these respondents seemed to feel that their body language too would reflect the Eurocentric nature of their backgrounds.

From observation it would seem that this matter is in fact extremely complex; certain behaviours such as proxemics were seen to vary according to racial categorisation. Cultural allegiance demonstrated by Indian people in their use of Indian or Western dress indicates a shift along class, age and gender divisions. Most educated young Indians very seldom wear traditional dress. When it is worn at formal ceremonial occasions, it is usually the women who wear Saris, while the men wear Western style suits. People and behaviours were however seen to be influenced by exposure to different behavioural norms from different races, classes or backgrounds.
One question that arises when discussing race, ethnicity, background and cultural groups is the influence of what was once more crudely formulated as nature or nurture, by which I mean genetic inheritance versus environmental influence. This debate has particular relevance in South Africa, as apartheid advocated ‘separate development’ on the grounds of race. Race and racial identity were officially categorised (in the Population Registration Act) according to what the perpetrators of the Act regarded as irrevocably wedded genetic, somatic and cultural ‘propensities’.

Identity is, however, much more fluid, despite attempts to legislate or categorise it. In the two quotations above, cultural identity is defined in terms of experience, as a response to tertiary education and exposure to the hegemonic class whose perceptions may differ from or support the home environment of the respondents. As the hegemonic ‘class,’ many white practices have been regarded as desirable by upwardly mobile members of the other race groups. While there are class differences in the white community the proportion of working class to middle and upper class whites is perceived, by other groups, to be the lowest ratio of all the race groups. There is, however, a large majority of working class whites.

South African Indians were originally brought to South Africa as indentured labour and were regarded as ‘inferior’ to whites under the apartheid regime. Many Indians are however wealthy business people, many of whom have thus attained higher status than the majority of white South Africans. Indians as a group therefore seem to occupy an intermediary position between blacks and whites in terms of social class. Class distinctions do not rigidly follow racial lines, however. [A diagram of the class structure should indicate overlaps between the race groups rather than a hierarchical, pyramid structure with whites at the top as was believed to be the case in the past.]

Black South Africans are currently in the most dynamic relation to class of all the race groups. The majority of the population and of the potential workforce in South Africa, a large number of whom are unskilled and unemployed, are black South Africans. However with the current changes occurring in South Africa, the introduction of affirmative action, and the removal of legislation that previously hampered black entrepreneurs, the ranks of the black middle classes are growing. Black ‘returned’ exiles, many of whom have ‘Western’ professional qualifications gained while they were in exile, and the increase in bureaucratic, political posts in the new administration, will swell these ranks still further.

Particular indices of social class such as dress, demeanour or attitudes of superiority are all apparent as indices of social class in South Africa in much the same way as they are in the Western, capitalist parts of the globe. Fashion trends in Paris and Rome are reflected in the dress of the middle classes of whatever race group in South Africa, and many of these indices are influenced by the mass media (see next chapter).
Changes in *body image* amongst black South Africans, towards a more westernised image or aesthetic, seem to be occurring (Jubber, 1994), and Western dress is favoured by the middle class generally. A notable exception occurs with some black artists and politicians who use a more ‘Africanised’ dress to indicate their pride in, and allegiance to, Africa. A large sector of the White youth also use Afro-style dress and listen to ‘Afro-’ music now as well. The idea of ‘cross-over’ or stylistic mixes of African and Western styles in dress and music that originated in the early 1980’s, and has found favour in the ‘new South Africa’.

**Gender and class**

Women in menial low-level service occupations provide an indictment of their inability to gain power through their own independent efforts, via their employment. Women predominate in the “helping professions”, which are traditionally menial, poorly paid and most closely resemble women’s domestic labour - un(der)paid and powerless to act unless it is through others. Secretarial work and teaching fall into these categories.

Understanding body language in the workplace relates to class and to the power structures in society, as well as to those operant in particular contexts. The power relations implicit in South African society were mentioned specifically by a female manager, in the context of the workplace, which is where most South Africans interact with members of other cultural groups on an everyday basis:

> If they don’t look at you straight a person’s hiding something. But in the Black culture this is different. It depends on the rapport that you have with the person. If you’re dealing with a subordinate, you don’t get the same openness, particularly with a black person because of the cultural difference. But if you’re dealing with a person with whom you’ve got quite a good rapport, they’re more inclined to be open and the barrier isn’t so noticeable. Then you can make assessments. I think that the crucial thing is that rapport. You do it by eye contact and openness and hand gestures and because if the person’s not feeling intimidated by you or by your position, their hand gestures are going to be more extensive not defensive.

Personal relationships are regarded as an important prerequisite for understanding the body language of people with whom one is interacting as this leads to a greater desire to communicate more clearly. It is usually with strangers that people resort more to stereotypes in their communication. This respondent then continued:

> I had a couple of black guys working for me. One was older than the other and he was always very proper. The other was a younger guy and we had a rapport between us. He was quite an extrovert in his way and I never had that feeling that he was hiding his eyes, or hiding his thoughts. He was Westernised, we had a very nice relationship. The other non-white was an Indian chap, and he was very Westernised and we also had a super relationship. I felt I could read him, and I don’t know whether that’s naïve or because I liked him that I didn’t have the that sort of sense of a barrier. You can certainly sense a barrier with, be more specific about it with white people, because its easier. I think its a mistake I made when I was working: feeling when I was talking to black people that I wasn’t coming across, as some sort of powerful figure. I underestimated the perception of the seniority with which I was viewed; which makes people wary of responding openly. This applies even with whites but it’s less obvious.

As with many of the quotations, more than one relational dynamic is operant in the above example. Race, age and superior/subordinate power relations all interact to from a complex dynamic.
GENDER

Johnson's social categories include 'gender', by which reference is made to socially constructed understandings of masculinity and femininity. Gender, like race, is an important qualifier of social identity and power relations, which had resonances throughout the interview data, and which cuts across all of the other relations and categories in our patriarchal society. For instance, one female respondent identified herself as follows:

Being South African, one identifies oneself as race group because we're taught to see that way, but I'd probably identify myself as a woman in a culture, probably a white woman, in a culture that doesn't support white women or women, at all. I come from Afrikaans stock so I've got quite a multi-cultural family. I've also got Jewish ancestry.

The above respondent pointed to the view that despite the fact that white women may be perceived to be a privileged group in the context of the larger society, in a patriarchal society such as South Africa, some white women, along with other South African women, might perceive themselves as being disadvantaged due to their gender. Many of the inferences made here should therefore be qualified until they are substantiated by further research.

Spatial relations

Gender awareness is not in fact as prevalent in society as the above quotation may lead us to believe. From an informal study/debate conducted in 1994 that looked at responses to gender debates in several woman's magazines, it would seem that many middle-class South African women do not 'see' sexism or interpret sexist behaviour as a problem. Women are seemingly unaware of the dominant patriarchal world-views operating in South Africa. Their subservience to the dominant patriarchy seems to be evident in a body language behaviour that could be likened to what Scheflen described in territorial terms as "shrinking".

As one female respondent observed:

Women tend to have collapsed shoulders and collapsed chests. That's also an introverted thing vociferous women, are far more external and upright. They approach the world in a completely different way. Its a self-awareness which I'm sure will change. White men especially, have this ability to take space. I've experienced it often when a man enters a room. A man just takes over and bodily fills the room and women tend to shrink. That's an indication of gender relations. I'm sure that happens in all patriarchal cultures. There's a sense of having to take over space - an unspoken gender relation - a dynamic.

This quotation points to the assimilation of dominant perceptions of self worth on the part of South African women, which is demonstrated via their body language. There is both a kinesic and a proxemic element apparent in the above excerpt.

A sense of "taking space" has been noted in my own experience as a performer. When a performer is confident, outgoing and very expressive, particularly during or immediately after a performance, it seems that

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there is an observable change in their perceived physical size. This "expansiveness" occurs gesturally and kinesically and relates to an attitude of confident expression\(^4\). Both the observations above, and my own, demonstrate a relationship between individual phenomenology and the social relations that may impinge upon, and influence, self perception.

**Turn-taking: a Form of Deference**

An instance of gender difference that was readily apparent in black rural behaviour, and to a lesser extent in an urban context was turn-taking when speaking. Men tended to dominate formal proceedings at rural community meetings. To enable women to speak more freely researchers engaged in conducting rural research using the participatory rural appraisal methodology resorted to separating community groups into male and female groups (Cross *et al.*, 1994). Even at academic conferences and in seminars\(^5\) it was noted that there was a dearth of women, particularly black women, in academia, and that women were generally more reluctant than men to speak during general or public session discussions. The only academic arena in which a large proportion of the profession are women is the traditionally [in the West] gendered one of teaching.

**Gaze**

In most race and class groups there is an observable tendency for men to look at women, while women are more submissive and engage in gaze avoidance. Two black women mentioned the coy behaviour of young rural black girls during courtship. They demonstrated this behaviour as a complex involving lowered gaze, and nervous fiddling, either by drawing circles on the ground or chewing at a stalk of grass. This chewing is akin to nervous hair-chewing mentioned by Lyle (1990, 32).

**Dress**

Power dressing and 'cross-dressing' on the part of women are well documented means of cross-gender identification. Women may wish to pad their shoulders to appear larger or more powerful, or they might wear suits to compete in male dominated professions in order to seem like "one of the boys". An interesting reversal occurs when men 'cross-dress' as women. One of reasons that a man who is not a transsexual or homosexual might dress as a woman is to 'get attention'. Attention would be given them in the same way as it would if they exhibited "quasi-courtship" behaviour (Scheflen, 1972 and 1973). For all the changes resulting from the women's movement, many South African women are still very 'feminine' in their dress and demeanour.

**Topics**

There are a gender differences noted in a general review of interview data in terms of the topics discussed by respondents. Females tended to speakecdoto tally of relationships, such as those of the family, while male respondents, particularly younger men in their twenties, made frequent references to sexual relationships and
to sport. A demonstration of these observations can be found in the quotes below. Firstly, an older white woman in her fifties relates that:

Eyes are very important for me - the way they move. I'm able to tell by observing people or the interaction between couples the state of their marriage. There have been two specific occasions where I've said, "That marriage is in trouble". That has subsequently been confirmed because both divorced.

On the other hand in the view of a young black male in his early twenties:

Non-verbal communication - I wouldn't rate it very high. Maybe when you deal with ladies, generally, no. Perhaps if you are in a working team - because playing soccer you have to use particular behaviours to make the guy with the ball understand your intentions. I only use [body language] in a very specific context, like sport²⁸.

While body language was dismissed by this respondent, in favour of verbal communication, this may have occurred as a function of the subconscious nature of body language. Despite his dismissal of it, the young man quoted above went on to relate a large number of incidents where body language was important in the interaction or communication, which he dealt with in depth. Men are popularly supposed to be less aware of body language than women are. In fact, according to a group of rural black women, "the men don't know about it".

Experiences of Black Women

Two things that were readily observable in terms of power in rural communities, in the Natal Midlands were the subservience of women to their menfolk, and the importance of domestic harmony to women, which related to the need to pacify and please a man in the rural setting. The gender difference in topics was also apparent in the response of a middle-aged rural respondent. Describing how and when she would use non-verbal behaviour she enacted the following domestic scenario: she said that she would show her husband that she was sorry in the following way if she had offended him: First she would kneel beside his chair to remove his shoes when he got home, after asking him what he would like her to do for him. She demonstrated how she would ‘hurry-hurry’ to do it. Her ‘hurrying’ behaviour showed an exaggerated, forward body posture with a lot of flustered wriggle, and rushed breathing. She enacted this ‘hurrying’ as a rush to cook her husband’s favourite meal which she then mimed serving to him, with a two handed ‘bowl gesture’²⁷ as she knelt beside his chair.

Urban working class black women who were interviewed, were preoccupied with their families and spoke about courtship behaviour, coyness and dissatisfaction with men and thus marriage. They spoke of the respect and subservience it was necessary to show their menfolk and elders. Even urban workers (admittedly with rural childhoods), reportedly still knelt to serve food to their men, and to elders such as mothers-in-law²⁸.
Possible Change

An example of the transformation of a traditional social code pertaining to gender, dress, and bodily display occurred in the recent performance of a traditional dance. The dance performance was filmed as part of the "Dramaide Project" in the performance of a traditionally male war dance, three women were noted amongst the dancers. The performance was conducted in a rural area, and the women were distinguishable only on observation of their breasts. There was no differentiation made in terms of their dress or dancing. They were dressed in the traditional attire of Zulu warriors and carried spears, shields and knobkerries or fighting sticks, exactly as their male counterparts did. This was the first, and only time, during the project thus far that the transformation of this particular 'public' code, was observed, according to workers on the project. It is thus a specific rather than a general transformation, although it might result from and lead to a more 'liberal' attitude towards gender distinctions in traditional black African society. This is however a speculative point.

AGE

The final social power relation considered is that of age. Interview respondents ranged in age from their twenties to their late fifties/sixties. Most fell within the economically active sphere in terms of South African society as a whole. In addition, I have worked with children and youth of all race groups over the past nine years which has enabled me to collect observational data.

Topics

Sexual relations were often referred to by male respondents irrespective of their cultural backgrounds, although there was some evidence that this was a preoccupation that changed with age. Men over forty made less reference to women and sexuality, if they mentioned it at all. Young males in their twenties made the most frequent references to this topic.

Gaze

Young people are not supposed to maintain eye-contact with their elders in traditional Zulu society. However this is a pattern that appears to be changing particularly amongst the urban youth. Respondents who had some awareness of body language were aware of this gaze construction. They remarked on it as a matter of course, citing the difference in gaze behaviour between blacks and whites, as an example of culturally learnt behaviour; an awareness of which would be useful in intercultural communication. When questioned about their own experiences of such gaze avoidance behaviour, however, many people (of different classes, races and genders in rural and urban contexts) noted that:

- 'it wasn't that prevalent any more'
- 'it was only observable with older or more rural Zulus'
or that

'...the youth no longer did it'...

Urbanized black youth have been exposed to, and seem to have adopted, more direct gaze when dealing with whites. This transformation might also result from their 'militant' political awareness. Exposure to whites alone is not the only factor involved in transforming the body language of the youth. Gaze avoidance is still readily apparent in the behaviour of older black men and women in domestic service. Their exhibition of traditional behaviour could result from two social relations: their age and their subordinate /servile position in service.

Respect and Greetings

Age and status are factors which still determine who is accorded respect by urbanized blacks and by Westernized Indians. In both groups traditional behavioural forms are used to indicate respect. Traditional forms thus exist alongside the transformed. An example of the co-existence of body language forms would be the observance of traditional gestures of acceptance by black street vendors (in Central Durban) or by the children of a domestic worker visiting her in the city.

Afrikaans-speaking children display respect when greeting someone older than themselves. One colleague spoke of how his cousin, ten years younger than himself, would greet him as "Oom" [Uncle]. I have also been regularly referred to as "Tannie" [Auntie] by young Afrikaans-speaking children. These words are generally accompanied by shyness, gaze avoidance and subdued-stillness, and a 'respectful' inhibition of 'natural' childish-exuberance. English-speakers often find this behaviour disconcerting when it is directed towards them.

Black and Indian South Africans in their Fifties tend to be more respectful and deferential towards whites than other age groups. This might possibly be a result of the fact that they reached adulthood at the height of the Apartheid era, and have since continued this behaviour. According to people who regularly conduct research amongst black communities, "youth are not as respectful or accepting of whites, while women are more deferential than men." Or in the words of another respondent: "in the Black community, the kind of deference that a Black worker would pay his boss, is starting to go, because it's come with a mental attitude."

When asked to define who he would respect, a black respondent in his twenties replied that:

I would define older people as being above thirty-five. Perhaps because of my uncles, but some of my father's younger brothers are around thirty. And I joke with them which is even a bit against our culture. But culture is changing. They live in an area similar to that around Durban - not a country village. A lot of things happen now that were not acceptable in my father's generation.
Generally Black South Africans defined those that they would respect more in terms of relationships than of age. Many black women, both rural and urban, spoke of respect being due to their husbands or to their parents-in-law.

While the elderly have been respected in Indian and black African society the advent of the nuclear family and the old-age home in Western societies has meant that old white people are often lonely and feel neglected by society. They often seek reciprocal verbal and non-verbal communication from strangers.

Dress

There are numerous observable differences in dress for the different age groups within the various racial groups. Generally older people wear more formal clothing than children do. Among black South Africans, black men in their Fifties or older favour formal Western attire. Women in the same group, particularly in rural areas, favour skirts, berets, and jerseys or shawls. In the rural areas young women also wear similarly conservative attire. Contrary to some perceptions, traditional African beadwork is only worn on ceremonial occasions.

Urban black youth tend to wear American influenced casual clothing. Young urban black males can be differentiated according to their allegiances by their dress. Many of them wear political T-shirts; students tend to wear American Rap-styled clothing, as do many male coloured and Indian students. However, the biggest differences are to be found in the clothing that children wear at parties. White children wear casual ‘unisex’ clothing, whereas black and Indian children wear very formal elaborate styles. Little girls dress in “party frocks” while boys often wear miniature waistcoats and suits.

While they may range from berets [women] and hats [men and women] to baseball caps [urban youth], the trend is for black South Africans more than any other to wear headgear. In other groupings certain specific headgear may be worn for religious or secular ceremonies and traditional social practices, ranging from the headgear worn at Jewish and Moslem occasions to the traditional Lesotho herders’ hats. On Sundays members of African Independent Churches can often be seen in full regalia. Black South African widows often adopt formal mourning with black skirts, long-sleeved tops and shawls and black headgear (reminiscent of Greek widows).

Respondents noted that it is becoming increasingly difficult for older white women to find clothes suited to their generation as fashions tend towards more youthful trends\(^2\). Leisure-wear in the urban middle-classes of all race groups and most ages tends to be influenced by American trends towards T-shirts and shorts. American baseball caps for instance are worn by children and teenagers of all race groups with slight
modifications within the various groups. While change has been mentioned above with regard to the gaze behaviour of urban black youth, there are two instances in which other social categories are transformed and conflated with that of age and immaturity.

**Gender and Age - A Transposition of Forms**

Women and children are often ‘lumped together’ by association, as dependents of the active powerful male in ‘common-sense’ understandings of their social roles. Such a categorization may have been appropriate when women were entirely dependent upon men in our historical past. But women now make up a large portion of the South African work force. Migrant labour, in the black communities, high divorce rates in the white and other communities, and the large number of widows particularly in the Indian community are factors that mean women are often the ones on whom children depend. Yet in South African Law women have been legal dependents of their male relatives. Ludicrous anomalies result from the application of these laws. An African grandmother might be the ward of her grandson. A white women married in community of property would be unable to sign any sale, lease or hire purchase agreements without her husband’s permission, even if the money she uses in these transactions is her own, as an independent wage earner. Such formalist fixings of their dependency have meant that women and the men around them have often viewed themselves as being of lesser worth.

**Age and Race - A Conflation of Forms.**

That blacks were regarded as dependents, in the same way that children are, cited as a reason for the institution of apartheid, is a historical instance of category transposition. Its prevalence was linked to ideas such as ‘native’ lack of intelligence, and that the black person had a ‘genetically’ inferior brain. Such category transpositions were stated in defence of apartheid:

> There is nothing evil whatsoever in political segregation, which is merely to refuse the vote to an immature person or an immature and undeveloped nation, to people who don’t know how to use it. That is all it is. I would not give my vote to my three-year-old child, or to any five year old child, and it is nonsense to recommend that we should give votes to child-like Natives. - Senator the Reverend Miles-Cadman, OBE, Senate, February 16 1949 (Maclellan, 1990:)

Or in connection with the prevention of the sale of liquor to blacks:

> I think this is tantamount to providing facilities for children to drink. The act says that liquor cannot be sold to anyone under the age of 18 years. But many of the mature natives have the mentality of a child. Everyone knows that - Mr TB Bowker (United Party Albany) House of Assembly, May 3, 1962 (Maclellan, 1990: 72).

Such transformations of meaning as those above resulted from the ideological defense of what is now generally realized to be an indefensible practice, namely that of apartheid. Similar transformations occur during wartime in order to enable soldiers to dehumanise the enemy, and thus to degrade them to some ‘thing’ that they can kill. The process occurs in reverse with the anthropomorphism of animals when they become
our pets. We love them because they are like us. Recently this area has been explored philosophically in terms of Same/Other distinctions.

In the chapter thus far, the social relations of race, class, gender and age have been used to examine particular body language behaviours such as gaze, dress or greeting as well as any specific transformations or changes occurring in these forms have been noted. From the numerous correspondences between the sections above it can be seen that all of these social relations and body language forms exist in complex, interconnected and dynamic ways. Culture, body language and power relations can thus all be viewed as dynamic systems that interact with one another in diverse, complex ways.

**COMPLEXITIES OF CULTURAL DYNAMICS**

**The Complexity of a Cultural Definition of Self**

In Chapter One I offered a definition of culture as a phenomenon that is dynamic, adaptive, and strategic. In examining responses to questions of self-definition, an attempt was made to determine whether interviewees held a view of their cultural identity consistent with my definition. Many responses seemed indicate an understanding of the complexities of defining cultural identity. One respondent defined herself as follows:

> One’s cultural ID is over-determined. There are many factors which create your cultural identity. I’m situated within a white middle-class educated context. I have the privilege of a liberal Arts Education. I’m living in Africa at a particular time and place, then there’s the socio-political context and my personality. It’s a combination of all of those factors.

The above response might be used to support the contention that educated elite respondents such as this one would show a tendency and acknowledge complexities inherent in answering the interview questions, a tendency that I have pointed out as problematic in terms of my sampling.

In terms of South African identity, two of the social relations of race and class would be important factors in defining social identity and relations, in view of their conflation during the colonial and apartheid eras. As with many categories, it was evident that separating out a single definitive factor as a determinant of culture, or even separating a single social relation from others in which they dynamically interact, proves impossible.

**INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION**

Social power relations affecting body language South Africa highlighted above are examined as moments in the complex process of intercultural communication. Focus areas and discussion suggest links between the interview data and themes previously outlined (in Section I). One of the strongest arguments against the old
policy of the racial and cultural division of South Africa is that increased interaction leads to increased tolerance and acceptance. In the words of one black respondent: "I do interact with white people; I have nothing against them. They have their strengths and their weaknesses." While the above respondent claims that he was not prejudiced in his encounters, there was an awareness that such interaction could be problematic.

There seemed to be some awareness of problems involved in intercultural communication. One respondent's opening remark when asked about her experiences of body language was: "It is obviously easier to pick up the signals when dealing with other white people. It's not so easy when dealing with people whose faces and cultures are different, because its easy to fall into traps if you don't know the culture properly or understand the people thoroughly." In South Africa there are a number of cultural groups which have to be discussed. One of the negative tendencies of intercultural communication is that of negative stereotyping of an 'out-group' and of the domination of one group over another when a negative attitude develops.

One respondent cited reading about non-verbal communication in this context. She cited Ericson's studies of 'talking-down' in interactions between black American college students and a white guidance counsellor. She noted that: "Where responses weren't what the counsellor expected, he assumed that the listener didn't understand, and so he would re-cycle his explanation and make it simpler. This was resented by students who felt they were being patronised." Differences in the study she described were due to intercultural differences in listening patterns, rather than to the students' inability to understand the counsellor. In South Africa many differences and similarities in body language, outlined above, have been regarded as potential areas of conflict. These differences may be regarded as potential areas of transformation and understanding, depending on the perspective of communicators. Different perspectives are apparent, for instance, in the reactions to change discussed below.

**REACTIONS TO POLITICAL CHANGE AND POWER SHIFTS**

In the light of the current changes and the extremely dynamic nature of the political scenario, it was considered important to attempt to gauge the possible influence of political instability and changes in the political power relations on observable everyday body language in South Africa. Violence as a category was mentioned frequently in the interviews along with the perception that the Zulus were "war-like" (see above).

A few people in casual conversation mentioned an increased aggression, boldness and greater use of space on the part of black South Africans for a short period immediately prior to the April elections.

A white female manager said of change:

>You're taught that Black people will not respond in the same way as white people. Certainly the traditional blacks keep their eyes down because in their culture it's perceived to be wrong to look directly at the face of
a superior. I would guess that with the power shift that is taking place, and certainly amongst the younger people who perceive their power, that's changed significantly. That would be the normal reaction.

This was the reaction to change predicted by the above respondent:

The power shift is the crucial thing and I would think that white people are going to have to be very careful what they say and how they say it. You can say all sorts of things when you're in the driving seat, but once that's changed you've got to watch what you think. We just have to accept, and then try to establish relationships based on honesty, and wait for the political temperature to cool. Don't think its going to be easy. If a young white person wants to stay on in Africa, they have to accept this is Africa. You've got to see yourself as an African and go through the process of evolution that is facing Africa. If that means identifying with Black culture, so be it. Otherwise you've got to bail out, and start again in another country. I think that's going to be easier for young people than it is for us, in our fifties. It's a culture shock and an economic shock. You just have to watch the changes taking place on television and radio now, the music and the announcers are changing. It's becoming very Africanised and that's only the start.

This view should be contrasted with a commonly held view to the contrary, expressed by someone from a more conservative background, a white female who stated that: "I think communication is going to become more and more important and that we should understand the various cultures, but at the same time they've got to become more and more Westernised."

In the latter quote the speaker, of the same age and social status as the former, has a more conservative and stereotyped view of other cultures. She is referring to blacks, who can be regarded as her out-group, as 'them', while perceiving 'their' culture in a negative light. Brief mention has been made of stereotyping as a factor in intercultural communication.

There was some discussion in the above interviews of fears of "lowered standards" on the part of whites, as a result of changes involved in building 'the New South Africa'. Such fears are likely to inform the perceptions of many who hold more conservative or cynical views of the process of change in South Africa. Unfortunately in the area of political communication, views are volatile, ephemeral and difficult to analyse. Undertaking a full discussion of political communication thus falls outside the scope of my current thesis, but might bear future examination in terms of body language.

A former Zimbabwean academic, now living in South Africa, informed me of a body language response that he had noticed following the power-shift from a white to a black government in Zimbabwe. He noted that: "there was a change and White people no longer stood as tall, when walking in the streets. They seemed to hunch over and draw in on themselves, while Blacks seemed to get more confident and more upright." Hunching-up or shrinking is a factor that was noted by Schefflen as a behaviour that is exhibited by someone in unfamiliar territory (19). There is also a correlation between the above-mentioned power-shift in political terms, with power imbalances described earlier in the context of patriarchy and gender.
Two behaviours relating to insecurity in the face of change, and the context of violence and fear in large sectors of South African society, are territorial definition and a defensive type of 'backlash'. In a seminar session, discussion of territoriality centred around the definition of personal space and the prevalence of security fencing, discussants spoke of "high walls, gates and guard dogs", particularly in middle- and upper middle-class urban areas as well as on isolated large scale commercial farms.

Violence

The prevalence of violence, theft and instability in South African society, particularly in the tension between the 'haves' and 'have-nots', relates to the ability of people from different socio-economic groups to interact freely. In South Africa, as is the case with marginalised or powerless groups elsewhere, mass marches became a very visible means of expressing discontent and of highlighting an issue or viewpoint. Argyle (1975: 193-198) discusses the various types of non-verbal protest available, from striking by workers, through civil disobedience campaigns such as "sit-ins", to extreme forms such as terrorism, kidnapping and hijacking, to peaceful marches, both by political groups and by military forces. These have become facets of daily life in South Africa. The power shift occurred due to them and many people feel that they will gain more by continued protest than by any other means.

It must be remembered that body language could be 'misread' or 'mis-interpreted' in the highly emotively charged context of fear and violence. Relating an anecdote that she perceived to be particularly pertinent in terms of body language, one of the respondents spoke of her experiences during a student march at the height of the political tension in 1987.

It was 1987, and a whole group of students were marching down the road outside the reses with banners. The feeling of being part of the group was one of excitement and joviality amongst a very large number of students: there was no threat of violence. You feel very quickly if there is a threat of violence and there was a sense of solidarity and of togetherness. They blocked up the road with police cars and gave us the usual three minutes to disperse. It got quite violent. People got hurt and people got detained. I remember thinking that if the police had any sense of body language, they would have realised by looking at the march that there was no threat of violence and the action which they took would be totally unnecessary. It would have gone around Campus, fizzled out, and that would have been that. I remember being very aware that there was a need for a means of communication. I'm sure the police did what they did for other reasons as well: to make a point. The kind of violence that the police meted out was not in accordance with what the march was all about.

In contrast to the above-mentioned situation, one of the periods when most South Africans experienced what many respondents termed the "most smiling and relaxed body language" was in the period immediately following the elections in April 1994. This change in body language has observably continued to a certain extent thereafter.
Keys and guns are objects closely associated with insecurity and fear. They are two aspects of the dress or
object(s) of many South Africans that are often commented on by foreigners and citizens alike. It remains
to be seen whether the body language of people will generally become more or less expansive with changes
in the socio-political context. This is a conclusion which seems to be indicated by the material gathered thus
far.

The Media, Culture, Communication and Body Language.

Popular texts could influence, or react to, everyday body language. The mass media and advanced
technology, such as photography, film and video, have influenced the study of body language. In the
interview data the medium of television was perceived as a possible influence in the acculturation and
Westernisation of Africa. Television might act as an agent and an index of social change, and serves to
underscore and emphasise the visual and therefore non-verbal aspects of communication. The visual nature
of television and film and its possible effect on our awareness of body language, was a concern of one
respondent:

I think one of the things that heightens people’s awareness quite a lot are things like films on TV. So often,
what is being communicated is being communicated non-verbally, and you have something flashed onto the
screen for a very brief time and you’ve got to see it and analyze its significance in the whole development,
without necessarily any language being used.

This increased awareness of visual communication, including body language, on the part of performers and
film-makers, was apparent in an analysis of those respondents who had received drama training. McLuhan
also noted this effect when he suggested that "prolonged TV watching will increase sensitivity to facial
expressions and their meanings" (Argyle, 1975: 86).

Another respondent linked the media with changes in everyday body language stating: "I think the media
helps with the changes. Television is especially powerful." While this statement may be a simplification of
the relationship between the media and society, the media do seem to reflect changes in society, if not
influence them directly.

Distinctions between pulp media and popular texts were made by one respondent. He remembered reading
Fast’s Body Language in a positive light, but also reacted negatively to "oversimplifications" evident in
popular magazines as a medium.

What I don’t like is the simplification in womans’ magazines: articles that supposedly tell us how to read
"sexual signals" like a recent magazine article, can be very dangerous. Contextual setting is important, like any
communication. Verbally we can speak of being misunderstood, out of context. Shadow movement is the most
fascinating - what the fingers, or eyes are doing while you are talking or supposedly relaxing can betray you.
An example that relates to understanding contexts is of a girl I knew who was short sighted so she used to lean forward when she was talking to people, she also had a habit of pursing her lips so she got a reputation for being a tart when she was actually perfectly respectable and uninterested in chatting anyone up.

**Everyday perceptions of Body language**

This section begins with a brief overview of the ways in which various respondents defined the term body language. Responses quoted here, all with respect to question four in the questionnaire, hint at themes discussed in other areas of the chapter. Responses varied according to the amount of formal knowledge that each interviewee had of body language. The definitions must therefore be viewed in the context of prior exposure or knowledge. Most respondents acquired their knowledge of body language incidentally, in the course of studies or readings in their particular areas of specialisation and from everyday lived experience.

Few respondents cited direct textual knowledge of body language. Everyone related real experiential examples when speaking of it. Those who had received instruction had done so in the context of their work and of knowledge acquisition in other areas. The respondent who had the greatest academic exposure in the field - she has a Master’s degree with an emphasis on bodeiliness - was the most scathing about the term.

It's a very undefined and loosely used phrase. The way it's used ranges from quite erass simplistic women's magazines type jargon in a very simplistic sociological sense, through to people who try on the other end to ascribe deeper meanings to it. The term encompasses a lot of things.

The respondent did not prefer the term non-verbal communication, because it was not specific enough:

I think everything must be contextually defined. It's all contextually dependant: culturally, sociologically politically, psychologically. If you're looking at any type of bodily expression then you have to take into account at least all, if not some, of those contexts. I think body language is all those things, and I think it's quite an under-researched area. I think that there are a number of disciplines which touch on it. But it seems to me that nobody's quite cracked the nut. But a lot of people are interested in body language.

It would seem that despite her reservations, the need to contextualise an area of study that is as wide ranging as that of body language was strongly supported.

The following respondent had an awareness of body language arrived at through her studies of applied linguistics:

It's now accepted that to be communicatively competent in any language is not simply having command of the language structure. You have to have at least an understanding if not a command of the whole area of non-verbal communication. Part of the sort of cluster of cues that we use are non-verbal signals: gaze and presumably body orientation as well. Its difficult to separate out the non-verbal communication.
The views of the respondent cited above, about the interlinking of verbal and non-verbal communication, would be consistent with those of Birdwhistell, Hall and Pease. While the respondent made reference to the technical terms such as "proxemics" and "artefact kinaesthetic dimensions", in discussion she related body language specifically to her everyday environment and to "classroom interaction".

Predominance of Everyday Experience

Everyday examples and references predominated in interview responses. Particularly in the black communities, those who had not previously encountered 'body language' as a term initially found it confusing, and were unsure of what it was. They asked questions like: "Waving when you greet someone: is it important?", or, as one young black male respondent admitted; "I was worried: I thought you were doing a survey of people's sex lives." Despite their initial wariness, all of these respondents then proceeded to discuss body language at length and in great detail. They all had concrete lived experiences of body language and social power relations to relate.

Usefulness of Knowledge of body language in everyday life

All respondents found body language and an understanding thereof had been useful in their everyday lives. Foreign students said that: "when you come from outside you have to integrate yourself into the social framework of the society and you have to know these readings of behaviour." Many academics also stated that:

Studying non-verbal communication, realizing that it can communicate meanings that language doesn’t, has been enormously important to me. A heightened sensitivity is extremely important in getting by in the world.

Such sentiments were echoed by respondents from all spheres of life in South Africa. Popular body language texts stress the importance of an awareness of body language as a means of empowering the individual, both personally and professionally, as these respondents, did. Despite an acknowledged preference for reading academic rather than popular texts about body language, academic respondents used the same justification for increasing one's awareness of body language as popular texts do, namely, for personal and professional empowerment.

Interestingly, one of the respondents who was dismissive of popular texts was also wary of simplistic notions of body language, defined in her mind (alongside those of popular books) with simplistic stereotyped courses offered in industry. Another respondent who had been exposed to body language through these courses went on to critique them specifically for their failure to deal with power relations, which had a profound effect on
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most communication, particularly in the workplace. Aside from references to power, which will be discussed later, this respondent had the following to say about body language:

What I would understand by body language is the way people use their bodies, either to communicate on a non-verbal level, or how people use their bodies subconsciously to give messages. What I know about body language is that the way people behave when you’re communicating with them, if the receiver is sensitive to it, can enhance your understanding of what is being said. Whether that’s positive or negative depends on what’s being said and what body language is being conveyed.

A number of respondents had been exposed to body language through their training in drama and dance. They tended to focus on characterisation, and the importance of their drama training in improving their ability to ‘read’ people’s body postures and shapes. This approximates the promises made by popular texts.

One becomes aware of how one uses one’s body to portray characters, to portray feelings. From there you also tend to watch people’s bodies and look at how people say things that they don’t intend to say. So when you’re teaching you can see who’s getting bored by the way they’re sitting. People tend to communicate with their bodies often what they might not say with their voices. So I got my awareness from studying drama and just observing.

This ‘subconscious’ nature of much non-verbal communication is mentioned particularly in popular body language texts. In one instance that supports the notion of how unconscious we may be of our body language, a colleague mentioned that she had only recently become aware of the fact that she would yawn and stretch in boring meetings. She was unaware of her behaviour until it was remarked on, although her colleagues had evidently observed this behaviour previously on more than one occasion. Another respondent observed:

I studied Rudolph Laban’s theories of body dynamics. In drama you’re spending a lot of time looking at body shapes, body types, looking at forms of communication such as what Laban termed ‘the wall’ and ‘the table’, and seeing how people who use them confront life. Also I did a course in Alexander technique, which is all about how when people are given different bodies their psyche changes.

This quote links to discussions of how social power relations impact on body language in everyday communication. Thus respondents seem to confirm that bodily experiences are linked to the mind, psyche and sense of self. Phenomenology as posited by Merleau-Ponty, or the bodily apprehension of reality, was borne out in the data not only in quotes such as this, but in all the respondents’ relations to the categories of social power relations which have been seen to influence everyday body language throughout this chapter.
Reactions to Popular Texts

One of the popular texts that was most frequently mentioned was that of Julius Fast. Most respondents stated that its insights had been useful to them in their work and in social relations. An exception was the university lecturer who said: "There is that one little book called Body Language which I have but I don't think I've ever actually read. I prefer to come in at a slightly more academic level." Once again, the attitude of an academic towards a popular text was dismissive without the text actually being read and thoroughly examined.

Books mentioned by respondents were popular for two reasons. Either they discussed topics with which readers were familiar or in which they were interested, such as business or sexual and social relations; or they were memorable because of their readability. In mentioning a theatrical book on the body and communication, one respondent said: "I think that was quite an easily accessible book. It's so witty, it's well written, and its easy to read. I think that for me, was quite an interesting book; it stays in my memory." Humour and wit would therefore be successful in appealing to the audience of these popular texts. Availability was also an important factor determining the exposure of respondents to particular texts. This was mentioned as a reason for the lack of popularity of the works of Edward Hall, for instance.

Finally there were a number of respondents who felt that what they knew about body language was based entirely on their life experiences. As the words of a black male respondent, in his twenties testify:

In a formal sense I don't know much. Informally, I used to watch ladies. The way they attract people's attention. That I know a lot. It's very difficult to catch me in that area. It was very, very important to me not to get seduced unaware. I wanted to be on my guard.

Gender and age differences were apparent in the reasons that respondents cited for needing to understand body language. Female respondents cited social relationships, while male respondents, particularly those in their twenties, cited sexual relationships.

The need to know about body language in order to be more aware of the opposite sex was one that was particularly gendered. A young white male cited "chatting up girls" as a reason for his interest in body language. He then described a Jane Lyle's popular text Body Language as "The one with the girl with the great legs on the cover". It is obvious therefore that publishers of popular texts seem to have aimed at appealing directly to the young male sector of their target market. The gendered nature of the publishing industry has been discussed in Chapter One, while the effects of gender on body language were mentioned above.
Conclusion

Conclusions drawn from the above discussions should be useful in establishing the groundwork for future investigations. Power relations were seen to be important influences on body language and intercultural communication in some of the aspects of communication mentioned above. Even those respondents who made no overt mention of power demonstrated in their perceptions, topic choices and behaviour, the internalisation of some power relations. Where possible I have indicated areas that could provide focus points which need to be examined further. Such points could form hypotheses for setting up more detailed studies. Thus further surveys, analyses of filmed material, and photographic data could be accumulated and analysed using my hypotheses and methodologies.

I propose that the best way to fill the gaps in our current knowledge about body language is to look at the relationship between text and context, and perceptions of the world, with an examination of power relations threaded through such investigations. Even though I have put forward more questions than answers in my analysis thus far, doing so is an important part of academic practice. What I would advocate most strongly is that, on the basis of the results of my investigations the search and re-search for answers to these questions about relationships between body language, social power relations and intercultural communication continues.
NOTES

1. This fieldwork was conducted as part of the research into rural environmental needs conducted by the Rural-Urban Studies Unit (RUSU) at the University of Natal-Durban, which I was fortunate enough to be invited to participate in. The research was commissioned by the Land and Agricultural Policy Centre as part of a national investigation into Natural Resource Management (NRM).

2. An analysis of students at the University of Natal, conducted by Annecke et al. (1994), in conjunction with the Cultural Studies Unit, found very few ‘Coloured’ students on campus despite the fairly substantial coloured communities in Durban.

3. According to the Minister of the Interior Mr S. L. Moller, House of Assembly, June 12 1969: "The times in which one only had to be a White person to have an identity of one’s own now belong to the distant past. Under the present Government’s policy the Whites, Coloureds, Indians, Bantu etc. are all proud of their own identity." Quoted in a humorous collection of Apartheid era political statements (Macleman, 1990: 83).

4. Homelands were situated at a remove from major economic centres in attempt to separate the race groups, and to keep them under the control of separate leaders, such as tribal authorities, or in tribal ‘trust-lands’ administered very indirectly by the apartheid government.

5. Distinctions such as those between high- and low-context cultures (Hall, 1976: 79), or between individualistic and collectivistic cultures (discussed by Triandis, Waterman, Saleh & Gufrovil and others) are summarised in Gudykunst (1991, Chapter 3).

6. The Difaqane was perpetuated more by Mzilikaze’s Ndebele clan in fleeing Shaka, than by Shaka himself. The myth of Shaka and Zulu war-likeness has persisted, however.

7. The term African has often been used to refer to Black Africans.

8. I noted this in an examination of the available video material in industrial sources in Durban, as well as in the Chamber of Mines Video on intercultural communication.

9. Mentioned as an observation by visiting academics to the Centre for Cultural and Media studies, and also by South Africans who had lived and worked in Europe.

10. Factors that have been studied as aspects of political and persuasive communication such as ‘attitudes’ and ‘opinions’ might provide some insights about survey or interview situations and changing opinions, and they might serve to explain the unpredictable nature of opinion gathering.

11. Religion in Africa is a complex issue with parts of Africa being converted before Europe, other parts adhering to animistic religions, and others to Islam. Christ himself would today have been regarded as a Palestinian. While this debate is beyond the scope of this thesis, the possible influence of religion on body language is an area for future study.

12. According to one informant, Zambian television in the mid-1970’s avoided all references to sex or sexuality, to the extent that scenes depicting kissing in imported television programmes were censored.

13. From informal conversations.

14. In the compilation of short stories entitled Black and White, reference was made to the similarities between Afrikaans men and Bushmen.

15. During the 1983 United States presidential campaigns, the then-South African government, alarmed at the Democratic Party’s George Dukakis’s pronouncements on foreign policy toward South Africa, sent a delegation of business people of Greek origin to the US to persuade Dukakis that such policies would “harm his fellow Greeks in South Africa”. Needless to say, the delegation never even got close to Dukakis, and the whole episode became something of a joke in South African anti-apartheid circles.


17. A distinction is made in Rosaline Herschowitz’s (1986) report for the Human Sciences Research Council (report MM-118) “The Power motive and its expression in a group of English-speaking South African Women”, between the relative power of English and Afrikaans speakers in SA (p.157). She also discusses how powerlessness relates to the need for power. Age is recognised as an influential variable (7). "[Language] may also have an influence, because cultural differences exist between language groups." (18)
18. While English and Afrikaans were the two official languages during the apartheid era, the situation is now further complicated with the introduction of 11 recognised official languages, each of which could be identified with groups of differing statuses/power relations.

19. This area requires further study.

20. See unpublished studies conducted by students in the Centre for Cultural and Media Studies at the University of Natal.

21. The influence of Western behaviours and fashions also reportedly is becoming more apparent in India in large cities such as Bombay.

22. The television presenter Dali Tambo is a particularly well-known example.

23. The magazines referred to were the Femina and Fair Lady, both aimed at a middle-class, white female readership. The debate centred around advertising that was considered by some readers to be offensive. Among the reactions to a complaint about sexism two letters contained the responses "(Was this advert) sexist? I'm flabbergasted!" and "There is nothing sexist about the advertisement - in fact it flatters the woman depicted ... We must learn to laugh at ourselves." Fair Lady, 9 February 1994, Letters p.6.

24. Performers are seen as being "larger than life" by people of different races and sexes, when comparing the on and off-stage "presence" of performers.

25. This observation was made by myself on several occasions and by other women present at a gender discussion at a recent conference "Knowledge, Method and the Public Good" hosted by the Human Sciences Resources Council in Pretoria in July 1994.

26. The layout of Morris' Body Watching (1988) appealed to both of the topics mentioned here in the photo layout of the contents page there are two pictures one of a female nude the other of a male soccer player.

27. Not to be confused with that discussed by Schefflen (1973: 129-145) as a meta-signal of sexual fantasy, as it occurs when black South Africans give or receive gifts in many different contexts.

28. These women were both in their thirties (one early one late), each had six children, and were employed in service occupations such as shop assistants or a public service institutions.

29. An Aids education project that uses popular performance and video, conducted jointly by CCMS, The Drama Departments at Zululand University, and the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, and the Medical Research Council.

30. This has been observed in Durban’s West Street, close to the central post-office, on numerous occasions.

31. From observations made by myself and supported by the statements of interviewees.

32. In the West, women's fashions currently favour the little girl-look.

33. Under Roman-Dutch Law, the Native Code, and traditional practice in Indian and African societies - prior to the new South African Constitution.

34. The interview questions appear in the appendix.

35. Ronel Rensburg

36. For a brief overview of the field see Gurévitch and Blumler (1982) or Price, Roberts (1987).
CHAPTER SIX


Greetings! I am pleased
to see that we are different.
May we together become greater
than the sum of both of us.

Vulcan Greeting
(Star Trek)

See at a distance an undesirable person;
See close at hand a desirable person;
Come closer to the undesirable person;
Move away from the desirable person.
Coming close and moving apart,
how interesting life is!

Gensho Ogura
(Gudykunst, 1991: frontispiece).

Cultural studies adapts the semiological approach in the development of an understanding of the research topic as a social 'text'. The inclusion of a consideration of power relations, along with the focus on the dynamic nature of the process; attempts to overcome structuralist foreshortening in semiotic methods (discussed in Chapter Two). Body language studies and data are thus 'read' as socially constructed texts in order to deconstruct their contexts. This examination will highlight the dynamism of intercultural power relations and body language forms. Lived experience is a more valid means of understanding body language than looking at a text. Textual forms become 'fixed' whereas lived experience demonstrates dynamism and change.

In order to demonstrate how the added insights derived from an examination of social power relations provide a more complete picture than that provided by body language studies alone, this chapter will contrast these two perspectives when examining incidents drawn from everyday experience in South Africa. This is illustrated by a South African example of the operation of such a 'reading', which I have termed the 'semiotics of handbags', based on research in the field.

THE SEMIOTICS OF HANDBAGS

The Encounter
A professional black male in his mid- thirties is walking through town when he sees a bespectacled white middle-class female in her late forties approaching him. The man is a professional dressed in long pants and an open-necked short-sleeved shirt. He is carrying a folder-case under his arm. He is employed by a non-governmental organization (NGO), and is on his way through town to attend a meeting. The woman is
wearing a shirt-waist dress, pretty and functional. She has a large hold-all bag and a bunch of keys. She is a housewife, who is running errands for her family in town. He has a university education, while after high school she worked as a secretary before becoming a mother.

As she notices him, she shifts her handbag into a more secure grip - holding it firmly against her body. She hurriedly glances at him then away, as she moves rapidly past him; as she does so she angles her body slightly away from him.

What does this incident mean? Readings of this encounter will differ according to the 'moment' at which it is read. Such moments include private concrete moments and more abstract public ones. Personal experience and observation were combined with that of my respondents in deriving and examining this 'encounter'². A number of the readings of social relations were confirmed in discussion with a group of people from some of the different social relations analyzed (namely age³, race and sex). Members of the discussion group were all, as previously problematized, from the same educationally defined class - postgraduate students. The reading below is thus both 'private' and 'public', in Johnson's terms.

An Abstracted Text-based Reading
Abstracted knowledge contained in popular and academic texts provides an initial analysis of the encounter. The 'Semiotics of Handbags' refers to a 'gesture cluster' which includes an instance of objectics. This encounter could be read in three different ways:

Firstly as an instance of gaze avoidance between two strangers, who avoid mutual gaze, to avoid interaction. Nierenberg and Calero (1973: 135-6)⁴, state that such gaze avoidance behaviour varies contextually according to urban density, which varies from city to city, section to section, and country to country. For instance, mutual acknowledgement would occur between strangers in the American South, but not in New York city (1973: 136-7).

Secondly, this can be seen as an instance of gender dominance because the man in this interaction did not look away from the woman. His gaze, in contrast to the woman's gaze avoidance, can thus be read as an instance of gendered dominance/submission, if we refer to Henley (1977).

Finally, the use of the handbag is read as a defensive barrier signal. Such signals are noted in the popular literature as part of what is termed the 'body-cross' (Morris, 1978: 135). It operates in much the same way as the 'closed', 'folded arms' barrier signal that many people easily 'read' in everyday life. Therefore this encounter could be understood to be typical of that occurring in a large city between two strangers of opposite sexes.
The above text-based reading of a particular 'form' of behaviour rests on the concrete 'private' experience of individuals, which has been abstracted from such experience and produced in 'public' textual forms. Knowledge is transformed by the chain of its production and the other studies/knowledges on which it rests. For instance, gaze studies conducted by Argyle or Exline in the sixties and seventies have influenced the views of Nierenberg and Calero, and of Henley. In many studies, factors such as personality, liking or emotion are cited (Argyle & Cook, 1975). Academic knowledge has also influenced popular works, but South African experience occupies a different context. Most academic and popular works on body language are produced in America and Britain, and tend to focus on British-American experience, not on South African experience. To understand a South African reading of this encounter we therefore have to look at it in the context of the social power relations operant here.

Reading the Encounter in a Lived Context

The questions that need to be addressed are: How might the particular context of social power relations in South Africa transform such readings? What does a cultural studies perspective add to them? A deconstruction may be attempted in terms of class, race, gender and age.

* Class - Historicity is important here. For the black male, such an encounter could be embarrassing, as it will reinforce his position as a member of a subordinate class who are perceived as potentially dangerous to the white female, a member of the dominant class. Fear on the part of whites is emphasised in the context of social change, as whites are afraid of what will happen to them when the power order is reversed and they will be subordinated under what they perceive as black domination.

* Race - Race and power have been explicitly linked in South Africa. Because of the social engineering of apartheid (and the implementation of the Group Areas Act), race groups in South Africa have lived in racially separated areas. Lack of social contact has resulted in increased mistrust amongst different race groups.

* Gender - Females will often feel threatened sexually and socially. This perception, which derives from their subordinate power relation in a patriarchal society, is heightened if other fear factors such as darkness or loneliness of the locale are also present. This reading would be supported by much feminist work, and by that of Henley.

* Age - As an older women, the woman in the encounter would feel vulnerable to attack. Most victims of robberies or assaults are older woman who are alone at home, as she would be during the day. Most racial stereotypes of violence on the part of black South Africans can be traced to perceptions of black youth who are viewed as a particularly violent threat to existing power relations, due to the so-called 'Culture of Violence'. Black youth are perceived as politicised and as having moved away from the 'Culture of Education' to which white youth, are perceived by white South Africans to subscribe. Many conservative
middle-class whites however have stereotyped views that equate the ‘Culture of Violence’ with blacks of any/all ages.

**Historicity and Context**

The above example would be influenced by its historicity. In the first place, the fear of physical violence indicated in this reading could be related to the larger context of the current poor South African economy. Increased unemployment and frustration at the lack of economic opportunity could result in people wanting to lash out by reacting violently and aggressively. The experience and fear of crime is a real ‘every-day’ experience for all sectors of South African society.

Context is important: a cluster of other gestures associated with fear would confirm this ‘reading’, otherwise the concrete/ private nature of action may mitigate against its abstraction. Without any of the other fear indices, the woman in our example may have shifted her handbag due to physical discomfort. In the wider context of general mistrust and fear due to political and economic instability in South Africa, we see ‘private tension’ as a manifestation of the larger socio-economic tension to which it is related. It must always be remembered that this example, along with many others coexistent with it (such as the functioning of keys and guns in South African society, mentioned below), are merely ephemeral moments that be transformed at any time. An interpretation of a kinesic or gestural moment should not be frozen: its meaning is not fixed forever in a form that may not be sustainable in the changing context of actual communication practice.

To obtain an even clearer understanding of historicity and the effects of changing social relations on the encounter under discussion, it may be useful to consider how a similar encounter would have occurred and been experienced in the 1960’s, during the height of the apartheid era in the 1990’s. In that era both participants would have been more formally dressed. A typical black man would not have been a member of the middle-classes, the woman would probably have experienced less fear, as she would have regarded him as a ‘boy’ despite his age and thus as no threat to herself at all. He would have greeted her politely and raised his hat (black men wore them much more frequently in town in the ’60’s). Gaze avoidance might not have occurred as Durban would have been a smaller place and people would generally have been more friendly, than they are now. More subtle indices of change are apparent in the context of contemporary South Africa.

**Complexities of Reading and Change**

In the above example the four categories were discussed separately. In reality they undergo transformations, due either to interactive influence between power relations, or to social change.
Class
In the context of changing class relations the black man in the above encounter, might feel slighted when the woman moves her handbag away, as he would probably regard himself as a respectable member of the middle classes, in the context of the ‘new South Africa’. Alternatively, he could simply regard her apparent withdrawal as ‘typical of all whites’ as a result of previous experiences under the old system.

Race
There has also been a conflation of race and class under apartheid. The woman may have a stereotyped reaction due to her lack of previous exposure to members of the black middle-classes. Although there has always been some contact between people of various race groups in South Africa in the past, segregation prevented the development of a number of public contacts. The woman may have transferred her fear of black youth to that of all black people generally, a stereotyping that would result from the combination of media perceptions and lack of close social interaction between people of different races in the past.

Violence/Media
Violence might be increased in crowded urban conditions (such as the crowded migrant labour hostels) a factor discussed in terms of power and space allocation below. Media reporting of violence could contribute to the ‘fear’ experienced by the white middle-classes. In this particular example a stereotype is in operation in the everyday encounter. This stereotype resulted in a formalised foreshortening of the identity that the women apparently assigned to the man. As a black professional, the respondent who reported experiencing this and similar incidents, regarded himself as the woman’s equal (as an educated, professional member of the middle-class), he did not see himself as a threat to the woman. He thus felt demeaned by her behaviour - which he read as a rejection of himself (a psychological ‘moment’).

CULTURAL STUDIES READINGS OF OTHER BODY LANGUAGE FORMS
By examining the dynamic social power relations that surround and inform body language we are able to build up a wider more comprehensive understanding of he field than has previously been possible. In the section which follows, the categories of gaze, time and space will be used together with territoriality to demonstrate how such a comprehensive reading of body language at a social level might be arrived at.

A. Gaze
An experience-based reading is contrasted with a text-based one to demonstrate how the latter provides a more complete dynamic reading than textual readings alone. One of the most important culturally patterned areas of nonverbal communication is that of eye-contact. An example of an analytical fixing of a conception of body language that in fact transformed, with the changing social context or situation
surrounding and informing it, is provided by understandings of gaze behaviour between black and white South Africans.

Textual Reading:
In traditional black communities it is considered impolite for an person of inferior status to gaze directly into the eyes of a superior. Thus gaze avoidance was traditionally considered to be polite. In the West gaze avoidance is associated either with submission (in the context of coy quasi-courtship behaviour) or with dishonesty, a socially undesirable behaviour.

As has been noted in texts by Goffman, Johnson, and in everyday conversations by many people in South Africa, mis-communication can occur inter-culturally/ interracially. Conflicting meanings might be assigned to gaze avoidance behaviour if a black and white South African are interacting. The black person might lower his/her eyes to indicate respect to a superior while the white person could mis-read such gaze avoidance as a sign of avoidance, shiftiness or even insubordination.

Conflict can arise when these different readings are assigned to gaze. An incident someone recently mentioned, that illustrates these gaze dynamics, reportedly occurred in a conflict negotiation meeting between managers of two large organisations. A white manager was sitting forward gazing attentively at a black manager while he was speaking. The black manager suddenly broke off what he was saying and angrily accused the white manager of disrespect. He stated that he was twice the age of the white manager who should therefore not stare at him so disrespectfully. The other managers present, all of whom were white males, then laughingly explained that attentiveness, not disrespect had been intended. Once this had been explained they continued with the matter at hand in a more open and relaxed atmosphere.

Changes in Everyday Experience
It would also seem from responses gleaned in interviews, and in conversation, that gaze avoidance behaviour is not exhibited as readily by younger urban blacks (no sex/gender difference was mentioned). While the assertion that a change in body language has occurred must be tested more widely several speculative reasons could be offered for such a possible change. Acculturation could be occurring, within urban and peri-urban areas and as white cultural norms have been supported by the power structures in the past (whether economic or political) blacks might be attempting to assimilate more Western behaviours.

Alternatively, the changes could result from a new degree of assertiveness on the part of black South Africans due to a general power shift in South African Society. This shift could be premised on Mandela’s rise to power which dates from his release in 1990 and subsequent election as State President in April 1994. Alternatively, black assertiveness could be associated with rising ‘black consciousness’ and a sense of pride that has been fostered alongside militant anti-apartheid movements.

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It should be noted that all three of the possible reasons for change outlined here are derived from power shifts; whether from acculturation, where a hegemonic somatic behaviour pattern is assimilated by a subordinate group, or due to more overtly political power shifts. Such a change could not be as readily accounted for by a reading that took gaze patterns as being culturally or formally fixed with fairly fixed meanings in any society. To assimilate and explain such change it is thus necessary to examine the lived social relations in which body language is used, and to examine body language as it is experienced and not merely as it has been fixed in a text, whether popular or academic. The dynamic nature of experiences of body language is further demonstrated by a brief discussion of time in South African experience.

**TIME**

**Forms**

In African culture time is not viewed as an exhaustible resource. Differences in cultural time codes are apparent in African films and appear to be similar to the aboriginal concept of continuous time or 'Dreamtime'. Hall (1983) spoke of two different conceptions of time: that of American-European (AE) time which is linear, progressive and is capable of 'running out'; and what he termed ME time. The latter is a more holistic concept that exists within high-context cultures such as the Hopi Indians and the Japanese. 'African' and 'Indian' time more closely approximate ME, rather than AE, time.

Traditionally black South Africans view time as a ‘given’, as something that surrounds one constantly, not as something that one progresses through, or a resource that can be used up. Rural blacks will do something ‘when the time is right’, not necessarily because something has been scheduled to occur at a specific time. The distinction can often be made between rural communities that have a cyclic conception of time and Industrial societies that use a linear system. In black South African experience, therefore, if one exists in a rural context time is cyclic, seasonal events that exist around one and there is a sense of Kairros. There isn’t the same headlong race to progress that is characteristic if the Western Khronos. Indian time too seems to be closer to the African conception than to that of the West.

These different conceptions of time relate to different world-views. Those with a linear system relate to schedules and arrange time according to specific points, linear logic. Scientific world-views and pragmatism are all associated with the Western conceptions. On the other hand those experiencing cyclical time will order it in terms of remembered events which form points of reference and tend to operate more at the level of intuition, poetry and prophecy are favoured rather than Pragmatism and scheduling. When power relations favour one time system, rather than another, problems can result at the interface of these different conceptions.
Time and Economic Power

Different notions of time can work either for, or against, the institutionalized Western economic system. In South Africa the low socio-economic position of the majority of black South Africans can become a ‘double-bind’ (such as Scheflen & Scheflen (1972) describe). The worker who arrives late for work will often offend his/her boss by doing so. But if workers are simply excused whenever they do so on the grounds of cultural difference - production will be lowered, which is a problem in a production-centred economy. To simply conflate late arrival for work with a different cultural perception of the value of time is to lose sight of the many ways in which power relations and societal practices other than culture may influence an individual’s behaviour. To satisfy more than one perspective we have to look at the system surrounding an event such as late arrival.

Due to the economic segregation of different racial groups in South Africa under apartheid most poorly paid black workers are also situated furthest from central services and their places of employment. Low income people of whatever racial group will also be most reliant on public transport. They will also therefore have to spend even more of their time waiting for transport and being transported from one point to another. In my experience of travelling by mini-bus taxi\(^2\), if you ask what time a taxi will be leaving or arriving somewhere you will invariably be told that the taxi leaves when it is full and arrives when it gets there. Black workers will therefore be more susceptible to outside problems that will cause them to ‘lose time’ and ‘be late’ (both Western concepts). Workers in other groups will also be similarly hindered by the current inefficient public transport systems. The lack of value placed on workers time serves to reinforce their subordinate or lowly position in the social hierarchy.

This example used here could also link to Scheflen’s discussions of victimization (Scheflen & Scheflen, 1972). It is not enough either to blame or to excuse a victim on the grounds of a system: what is required is a more accommodating system, one that can take cognisance of differences or changes in categories or forms whether of nonverbal communication or of the power relations that surround it.

Changes

In the current context of lived experience in South Africa there is a need to acknowledge the many different time systems that are used concurrently. Many people often have to ‘switch’ from one understanding to another as they move from one social context to another. People who work in both rural and urban communities often mention this shift. There is a new source of possible conflict evident in the body language of the new bureaucracy. Recently people have spoken of shifts and that inevitably whites will be frustrated at being kept waiting by black managers and bureaucrats, who do so to demonstrate their newfound power in the view of these whites.
SPACE

Generally spatial relations differ amongst the different race groups observed in South Africa. White people understand space in a territorial fashion, in accordance with Western tradition, while blacks and Indians appear less possessive of space. This is apparent in the sizes of their respective kinespheres. Indians and blacks do not seem to feel that their "space is being invaded" when someone stands very close to them. If the crushes in black taxis and busses are a guide, then black people are the most accustomed to close proximal distances and shared space of all the race groups. Such proximal relations may be conditioned by social customs and/or by economic necessity, and social class, as transport for the poverty-stricken people in many countries around the globe is similarly cramped (although rush hour on Japanese trains may not result from poverty, it also relates to an overburdening of the available transport resources).

Possible Areas of Conflict

Whites have the largest Kinespheres of all the race groups. Whites have also been able to own the most desirable locations and homes as a result of apartheid policies, whereas the land tenure of other groups was legally restricted. Many foreigners spoke of the confidence with which most white South Africans conduct themselves. This confidence could result from an expansiveness and general ability to dominate large spatial areas. However this confidence is modified by gender relations, as are spatial relations in all races.

In public places particularly differences in the relative sizes of kinespheres are readily apparent. Many white South Africans still maintain a greater distance from those of other races than other racial groups do. People in the upper classes have also maintained larger spatial distances than those around them. These spatial relations thus approximate those in body language texts. At present no changes in spatial relations are apparent in South Africa as yet.

‘PUBLIC’ / ‘PRIVATE’ IDENTITY

Textual Understandings

According to the texts, based on studies in American and European society: powerful people can intrude into the space and privacy of the less powerful but not vice versa. This power relation is also evident in naming and addressing people. Using first names for servants who do not reciprocally call their bosses by their first names is an example of a similar invasion of privacy. Similarly, when service attendants wear name-tags in restaurants or petrol stations the nameless stranger who they have to serve are empowered by this. Employees in their position can only address those they serve respectfully as "Ma'am" or "Sir, which reinforces their servile status.
A Power-shift
An example of how similar behaviour might be influenced by a perceived power shift in South Africa is demonstrated by an anecdote from a white saleswoman working in a large department store in the Transvaal. She said that the day after the election (April 1994), a black male cleaner in the store came up to her and said: "Good morning, S.", addressing her by her first name. She was extremely surprised as he did not usually greet her and she was unaware that he knew her name. All she said in reply was "Hello". She considered that his behaviour was overly 'familiar'. She then reported that by the end of the week 'things were back to normal' and the cleaner did not approach her again. She explained his behaviour in terms of a perceived power shift as a result of his being able to vote. His reversion to the old pattern was accounted for by his realisation that "things hadn't really changed".

The entire encounter she described is informed by the fact that it occurred in the workplace where a hierarchy exists which placed her in a position superior to his despite the power shifts occurring outside the company, in the town or the country as a whole. Power relations at each of these levels could influence his perceived/actual position in terms of the relative power relations existing between them. At work these relations seem to be fixed.

In black body language, deferential gestures and postures associated with respect are also associated with power and exposure to others. With his hands raised defensively to the right of and above his face, a rural black man could seem defensive. As he does this, however, his exposed neck is turned towards the person he greets. His posture thus conveys a peaceable defensiveness, which poses no threat, as well as demonstrating his willingness to submit to the dominant person he is greeting.

TERRITORIALITY
Territorial control is one of the most visible means of determining power relations. While Schefflen began to correlate human territories from the smallest points of contact through touch to a brief reference to the structures of cities. He did not actually deal with the impact of social power relations on these territorial forms. A few observations of South African territories and the transpositions and transformations of territorial dimensions demonstrate the fluidity of the boundaries between social power relations and the dynamic nature of some territorial forms in South Africa.
Property Ownership: Land, Space and Race

In traditional society land ownership vested in the traditional leaders or 'chiefs' as trustees for the community or 'tribe', land usage was 'administered' by the chief. In these societies various checks and balances were built into the system to prevent despotism. However, during the colonial and Apartheid periods this system was eroded, chiefs gained more power, and it became possible for chiefs to gain control of the land. In the traditional system, once a family was allocated a portion of the tribal land they could not obtain more: only new family units (such as those resulting from a marriage) could be allocated land.

A different sense of community and spatial access thus existed to that in white land practices. Whites can possess spatial and territorial rights, which have to be bought; and it is possible for a person to buy more land if they have the capital to do so. Thus white ownership of spatial and territorial rights are linked to capital, or to inherited capital, not to family rights in a community. Mis-understanding of these relations has often led to conflict, both past and present.

Black South Africans were allocated land furthest from the economic centres under apartheid but this is changing. While people used to settle informally in 'white' group areas in the past, there has been increased movement into the city centres since 1990. Relocation of people often destroyed any sense of community that may have built up in an area, and contributed to alienation and the increased incidence of crime and violence. The Western Cape township Mitchell's Plain provides an example of such a shift: after their removal from District Six, people seemed to lose their sense of communitas due to the loss of gathering/meeting places.

Space and Time

Time and space can be seen to correlate in these different systems. In a cyclic time system land was shared and a sense of community adhered. Houses were also traditionally round. In a society where progressive linear notions of time prevail, individuals own property and the favoured shapes are geometric squares or rectangles. There is even a correspondence in terms of seating arrangements with round seating in a communal system and rectangular tables where the person at the head can be in control, in hierarchical systems. Power relations such as those relating to gender, class and age are also important aspects determining territorial access.

* Gender

Experientially

In South Africa most women are subject to gender oppression but for black women as for many low-income Indian and white women this situation has been further compounded by class and racial oppressions. At this
stage the map or picture of spatial relations as a form of body language is incomplete. A great deal of research has still to be done before any significant conclusions can be reached. Initial findings, however, seem to support those of Henley, particularly with regard to women in a similar educational /class background, namely those of educated, largely white middle-class females. This shrinking was found to occur in gendered relations in most racial groups, and is possibly an analogous form to the concept of ‘shrinking’ mentioned by Schefflen as a body posture adopted when someone is traversing unfamiliar territory.

Textually

Generally, women have less status, spatial control, privacy and less desirable territory, than men do (Henley, 1982: 36-7). The descriptions of gendered spatial relations by several South African respondents correspond with Henley’s conclusion that:

... a number of studies indicate that in situations of dominance, males have larger personal space than females do ... Not only women’s territory but their very bodily demeanour must be restrained and restricted spatially. Their femininity is gauged in fact by how little space they take up, while men’s masculinity is judged by their expansiveness and the strength of their flamboyant gestures (Henley, 1977: 38).

Thus it is that gender relations mentioned in texts have direct relevance when reading power relations in lived contexts. Distinctions have also been made between masculine and feminine forms, aesthetics and attributes in gendered notions of societal divisions. Round shared spaces are more ‘feminine’ whereas linear, angular shapes or forms are more masculine. Cultures could thus be read as being masculine or feminine.

* Class

In Everyday Experience

Class influences in South Africa are currently very fluid and are thus referred to very broadly. If a white landowner or boss felt able to take up a great deal of space due to his or her position in the past, a challenge is experienced when Indian or black South Africans do so because they do not recognise spatial ownership in the same way.

The imbalance between the ‘haves’ and ‘have-nots’ in South Africa is such that home-owners in middle- and upper-income areas, of whatever race, sex, or political persuasion, protect their properties extensively. This protection is seen in such obiectics as large bunches of keys and even of guns. Foreign visitors often remark on how many keys South Africans carry as well as the prevalence of security fencing, military uniforms (security guards included) and guns. These displays are visible reminders of the fears experienced by many South Africans. High crime rates and violence as well as a continuing level of tension and stress due to these factors and to insecurity about the future, ensure the maintenance of such ‘protective’ devices, some of which themselves contribute to the climate of fear which engendered them.
Age

Texts

In concurrence with Goffman's observation that "adults tend to have vastly larger territorial claims than do children" (1971: Chapter 2), it seems that, generally speaking white South African children do not own territories and that all rights regarding their access to space are controlled by those in authority over them.

Lived Contexts

However, this is vastly different in the urban townships where black youth have often gained control of areas during territorial and power disputes. I recall black colleagues in their forties and fifties being intimidated and searched in minibus taxis during the late 1980s, certainly an invasion of any person's kinesphere and personal spatial control. There are two particular historical influences that may have resulted in the unusual territorial power control of urban black youth. Firstly, militancy in the tradition of Soweto 1976 was used to mobilise black youth against other authorities or powerful groups including their elders, and, secondly, in the power vacuum after the detention of the United Democratic Front (UDF) Community activists in 1985 and 1986, the youth moved up in the anti-apartheid structure. These power threats were often resisted by the aged and in many instances bloody struggles arose (eg. Comrades). This is obviously a simplification (and I am indebted to a colleague, Craig Clark, for discussion of this point).

It might also be fruitful to examine the spatial rights of another group which has little economic and political power, that of the aged. Many blacks and Indians live in extended families where the grandparents might still have a place within the family home in their later years. In many rural areas the pensions of the grandparents are often the only income for black families (See Cross et al., n.d.). However, in the white community, nuclear families are the norm and the aged are thus often displaced. In the white communities, pensioners no longer participate in the economic and decision making of their respective communities. What spatial rights do they have? The bowed postures of the aged, particularly in the lower income groups, may correlate not only with the physical degeneration of their bodies, but also with their lack of status in society, and their economic dependency. Age can thus be correlated with class and economic worth as well as with social status in terms of power and territorial rights.

Race

In terms of housing, land restrictions and separate group areas, as well as economic pressures, have led many poorer black people to live in densely packed urban shacklands. One of the areas where the breakdown of apartheid control over land access can be most clearly demonstrated is in the changes occurring in the distribution and situation of such housing forms. Referred to as urban informal infill, such housing can be read as a challenge to hegemonic control of urban space (Harvey: The Urban Experience). In the apartheid era, 85% of the land was allocated for the use of 15% of the South African population. Group Areas
planning created buffer zones between the different group areas and shacks were generally sited in peripheral areas where they were hidden from the view of the urban elite (Davies, 1982).

Since 1990, however, there has been a process of land invasion akin to the protests preceding the removal of restrictions on access to public amenities, although informal settlement is seldom so consciously orchestrated (orchestrated occupation of land and buildings has also occurred - Cato Manor and the Cape Flats are two notable examples thereof). Shacks have become visible alongside the freeways surrounding Durban, Johannesburg and the other urban centres of South Africa. In Durban particularly, there has been a marked increase in informal dwellings in the inner city (Cross, Bekker, Clark and Richards: 1992).

Power shifts therefore seem to have resulted in observable shifts in spatial access and control in urban areas in South Africa. One instance of power relations that shift in relation to social power relations is in the displays of respect or politeness that manifest via discomfort.

**DISCOMFORT INDEX**

**Texts**

One of the ways in which respect is shown in many cultures is in terms of what Morris refers to as a discomfort index (1986). Power relations operating ideologically through cultural practices can be seen to inform most of our uses of space and time. Many correspondences exist in displays of power that have been examined as displays of status or dominance.

The ‘discomfort’ code was the way Morris described how much someone would, in colloquial terms, ‘put themselves out’ for someone as a sign of respect. In western tradition, bowing and curtsying, along with standing for hours in the presence of royalty, are means of assessing someone’s importance. The code of standing to be polite relates to the use of chairs and furniture in the West.

**South African Contexts**

In Zulu culture due to the type of architecture, squatting or lowering was associated with discomfort, and demonstrations of respect. Thus discomfort occurs differently due to differences in cultural forms at different historical moments. Curtseying and bowing are now archaic forms that are no longer as prevalent as they once were in the past, in European history, and using chairs has become common in Africa due to Western acculturation. An illustration of such a change was reported by friends during a field trip to a rural area in Southern Natal. A few of the researchers/field workers (in a multi-racial team) were stranded in a rainstorm one evening due to a vehicle break-down. While they were sheltering under the eave of a hut one of the occupants came out to offer them benches to sit on, which they gratefully accepted. When their transport finally arrived two-and-a-half hours later, one of the team then carried the benches back into the hut to find the entire family sitting on the floor. They had given up their only seating for the strangers. This is a fairly
extreme instance of a discomfort index, one which had been transformed by the use of 'Western-style furniture' but which is typically Zulu in origin.

Discomfort indices are often apparent in the context of peoples in their workplaces. Black South Africans will often refuse to occupy space in the same context as white South Africans who are their employers or supervisors and who have a higher rank in an organisational or work context. Domestic servants and factory workers will often avoid eating in the same place as, or sitting in the front of a car, with their foremen or employers. Older black workers particularly seem to experience discomfort if they do so. In several instances they endeavour to avoid this spatial proximity even when invited into closer contact. Many domestic servants eat either in another room from their employers or outside in the garden. This behaviour may result from entrenched codes of social/hierarchical separation or from previous experience of such segregation. The hierarchical separation between a driver and passenger is reversed in a Taxi when the passenger sits in the back while the driver takes her/him to an appointed destination. Spatial separation and discomfort are apparent in this example.

Thus we can see that an underlying rule or code whereby 'discomfort/respect' are associated has been modified or transformed in different societies, in the same way that Jousse described the 'fixing' of forms when written language is imposed on bodily experience. An underlying principle seems to have been modified in terms of ethnic differences apparent in the broader society that surrounds the body language practices. Such differences are subject to change following changes in social power relations.

POWER AND TRANSFORMATIONS OF FORM.

The Appropriation of Global Forms

In South Africa, there are many instances where power relations or media that have influences globally also influence local body language forms, which often adopt, adapt and transform them to suit local needs.

Handshakes and Power

Texts

On the whole most human beings experience laterality, in terms of handedness (Morris, 1978:). The world is made up of predominantly right handed people who fold their arms so that their right arm is uppermost. Allan Pease discussed the handshake as a gesture through which men can dominate one another. The dominant person in a handshake is the one who in popular parlance 'has got the upper hand'. He advises readers how to 'disarm' an aggressive or dominant handshake. The handshake is a Western greeting form that is often mentioned in popular texts, and it was associated with male use. Today women are beginning to use it more extensively.
Contexts

Handshakes have also been used to identify separatist groups, often functioning to identify group membership and thus to solidify group power. The masons and the Mormons reportedly use special handshakes. Specialized handshakes are used to challenge power and promote unity amongst black consciousness movements in America as well as in South Africa. Ritualised elaborate greetings, based on the handshake and mutual hand slap, are identifying factors in Black American sub-cultures, and are also used by street gangs, as membership signals. Examples of these forms have entered mainstream, middle-class awareness through their adoption and use by Rap groups, or through the teen rap sitcom ‘The Fresh Prince of Bel Air’, aired on M-Net, or through the film ‘Breakdance’ (1984 - Cannon Films). The media may similarly have influenced the adoption of American clothing styles mentioned in the previous chapter.

Transformed Emblems.

There are two specific instances where emblems used by organisations outside South Africa have been transformed by political parties within the country to suit their own purposes, due to their wider resonances. These are in the AWB and the Anti-Apartheid movements.

Nazi Emblems

The Afrikaanse Beweeging (AWB) uses an open-hand Nazi-like salute. This gesture is emblematic of cultural and political identity which is used even by young children outside political meetings. It has been reported that children, who are running around outside in their khaki party uniforms, stop playing and stand with their heels together and the arms raised as the strains of the Anthem of the old Boer Republics before the Anglo-Boer War (‘Oranje Blanje, Blou’) are heard. The ideological and symbolic connections between the ideals of the Nazis and the AWB have been noted and documented before. Brownshirts/ Khaki Uniforms, the Swastika and AWB logo, and the Nazi/AWB salutes, are three obvious correspondences, as are the ideals of a genetically ‘pure’ Aryan/white Afrikaner race. These resonances are deliberately used to enable the Afrikaner‘volk’ [people] to feel that they are part of a wider movement during and after the Second World War.

Black Power Salute

The clenched fist is associated in similar fashion with the Black power movement, as it existed in America, and with the anti-apartheid movement, in South Africa. Both groups used emblematic gestures that link with historical political movements, outside South Africa, whose causes might, very broadly, in terms of Nationalism and either Aryan/purity or black power respectively, be linked with their own. In South Africa these emblematic (Efron, 1972) gestural symbols or forms have been transformed by their local context of use, and now reflect the political/cultural identities of South African political groups and of their members.
Within local black political groups the black power salute has been transformed by the different sub-groups within the broader struggle. Visual distinctions are made according to membership of various trade unions and leftist political parties. Western body language might indirectly filter through to a wider South African audience through the media. They will obviously only reach those elite groups who have access to the media, and these elites usually have access to their aspirations for Western / capitalist economic power, although habits do not change as readily as fashions. Resistance to European Capitalism/ colonialism is less apparent in this elite group than elsewhere, as they may feel pressure to conform to the Western /Capitalist status quo.

Political leaders often use dress in conjunction with other body language to send more than one message simultaneously. At his inauguration as State President Nelson Mandela wore a Western style suit. Such suits are often worn by black South African males of his generation at formal occasions (Chapter Five). His suit was mediated by the use of many African elements such as the Mbongi, or praise singer, which preceded his speech. Mandela's suit seemed to reassure white South Africans and was possibly also aimed at the eyes of Western capitalist investors, who watched global Media coverage of the event. African dress may have alienated Western /Capitalist elements, being courted for their foreign aid/loans. Like most politicians Mandela often dresses to suit his audience wearing African-styled shirts when the occasion suits. Many instances of his choice of dress have been recorded over the past few years, and along with other politicians he appears to have become conscious of body language as a valuable means of enlisting voter support (Atkinson, 1984).

In societies where there are so many different influences, recourse cannot be made to simplistic linear analysis. South Africa along with the rest of Africa is growing and changing all the time. To describe 'South African culture' in totality not possible in this thesis. There will always be changes and perceptual shifts in all our readings and experiences of body language/ society and culture. What does remain is the sense of transformation and the need to understand the forces acting on our societies to bring about these changes.

CONCLUSION
Collingwood, Jousse and the likes of Levi-Strauss have attempted to find universal codes using binary oppositions, basing their premise on universal human laterality, as the natural source of such oppositions. In fact the basis for the idea of laterality has its roots in Bodily laterality and also in Cartesian dualisms inherent in Western philosophical traditions. They have also had to be careful of falling into the formalist, structuralist trap when so doing. This thesis argues for a modification of their views. Attempting to see natural human tendencies, beneath the modifications of social relations may be one of these temptations. But here there is a continuous expansion too: social codes are not fixed. The categories and forms used co-mingle and co-exist alongside numerous other forms as they are continually changing due to dynamic social power relations. Forms of body language are continually transformed by input at other 'moments' in the
cultural circuit: abstraction and lived experience feed into and from one another continually. Body language is thus continually changing in response to power dynamics in society.

To some extent behaviours might be seen to be universalizable. Submission, deference and sub-ordination are equated with lowering, while transition, transcendence and conquest are associated with height, ‘making it to the top’ and the concept of dominance or conquest abound. Thus in very basic terms the ‘universal dimension of height is one that is relevant to all societies. Men, as the taller physically of the sexes, have thus always claimed and maintained their gender superiority, at the level of Biologism. What we do need to dissect, however, are the relationships between such claims and their entrenchment in the social codes that sustain and maintain our daily interactions in different cultures which have rested on power relations based on distinctions or definitions such as the patriarchal ones. By examining the dynamic operation of social power relations on the body we should be able to understand and overcome many of the formalist fixings which are used in attempts to entrench hegemonic power bases in society.
NOTES

1. In accordance with Birdwhistell's (1970) distinction between an 'encounter' and an 'interaction'.

2. Only a narrow sample ranging from their early twenties to their mid-forties.

3. They are working from an observation by Goffman (1969).

4. These are what Johnson (1986: 284, 301) defines as the major social relations involving power.

5. Here we have been dealing with a black/white issue in the interests of simplification. Such an encounter could also occur in the context of the same racial group, where gender and class differences are still a factor. There is also a simplification in that the division in South African Society is not just between black and white.

6. "Media images and the literature on youth culture tend to show youth at their most active and most destructive. This has had the effect of reducing the entire spectrum of young people's experience to highly visible activities. There is a need to balance the picture by exposing the full range of activities in which youth participate, action as well as idleness and daydreaming; creativity as well as destruction. The media reports of the youth unrest conjure up images of the leaders of the mass movements, the judges of the kangaroo courts, the comrades running the street committees, the gangs of thugs which have closed the gaps created by the power vacuum since townships have become 'ungovernable'. Scant attention has been paid to the rank and file of youth who make up the majority." (Valerie Moller, 1991: 6).

7. However, there is a view that interaction may have contributed to the climate-setting which preceded many of the political changes that have occurred (Kane-Berman, 1991), although this work has been severely criticised for its pro-capitalist bias.

8. Noted in the Chamber of Mines video and in numerous conversations.

9. Both of these events could be read as symbolic of a change, firstly, in the status of black South African's and, secondly, in the political power relations with the acquisition and operation of the vote by black people in SA, and the resultant election of a Black State President.

10. Even in the physical sciences notions of time and space are not seen to be as rigidly fixed as they once were. The emergence of complexity theory thus rests on changes in the physical or 'pure' sciences. I have already discussed Schefflin's debt in this regard.

11. Examples can be found in the timing of ceremonies or events. If one asks a person at ceremony when the dancing/singing will begin. The answer is usually: "When it should".

12. Minibus taxis used in the townships, known in the local jargon as 'Zolabudds'. The name derives from the then-British (formerly, and now once again, South African) middle-distance athlete Zola Budd, and the incident which occurred between her and the US athlete Mary Decker at the 1984 Olympic Games, in which Budd and Decker collided. The transference of the name to the Toyota Hi-Ace minibus is a kind of backhanded acknowledgement of the common White perception of these vehicles as being the cause of many road accidents.

13. A term that has had unfortunate associations with barbarism, which are not intended here.
CONCLUSION:
Tying Together The Threads

In refining cultural studies methods, in order to attain an understanding of different cultural objects, Beezer et al. state that we must apply techniques or methods of analysis from a variety of sources. None of these are conceived of as watertight procedures which will yield inevitable results; rather our aim is to reveal the patterns, contradictions and tensions within (the) research material (Punter, 1986:95,96).

Some problematics and a route map for future research.

In Sections I and II this dissertation examined different aspects of body language. Initially, body language was theorized from Johnson’s cultural studies perspective. Thereafter both popular and academic texts were scrutinised from the perspective of power relations operating in, and on, academic discourse. Finally, the results of interview research into perceptions and experiences of body language were ordered and ‘read’ in terms of power relations impacting upon these lived experiences in the South African context.

Through the interviews I attempted to discuss and define the texts and/ or experiences that have impacted upon some people’s subjective perceptions of ‘body language’. The results were read in terms of the social power relations operating upon their relations with these texts and experiences.

To see how all these areas can be read as a complex of macro-, meso- and micro-level power relations, we now retrace our journey, in theoretical stages. This is done by re-reading the ‘moments’ in the discussion to see the numerous links between them.

Due to the dynamic interactive nature of such moments, it is possible to start anywhere on the circuit. All moments are equally valid and equally capable of being ‘read’ from, or being transformed into, other moments.

As academics, coming from a literary, text based tradition, it might be easiest to start with a reading of the textual forms in which body language is presented and re-presented. A body language text is presented as an object for "public" consumption due to its "public-ation". But the knowledge contained in these ‘public’ texts is constructed from and consumed at the level of 'private' subjectively experienced moments.

An academic might wish to acquire a tome like the Handbook of nonverbal behaviour research, for its use value, to enable him/her (academia is still male dominated) to set up or analyse a study or research project

\[2^* \text{Each moment depends upon the others and is indispensable to the whole} \] (Johnson, 1986:284).

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on nonverbal communication. But as a result of its availability or cost, such a textual resource might only be available from a library for a limited period. Thus he or she will have public constraints placed upon his/her private or subjective need to access a particular text.

**As forms/texts.**

In terms of Johnson’s circuit, a ‘body language’ text can be read as a ‘public’ cultural product. Body language texts are written in a largely Western cultural tradition. They focus on ‘body language’ practices experienced in the British-American cultural traditions. These traditions are also associated with the power relations that define capitalist, business interests, and Western academic discourse. But body language texts relate to experience and thus to some aspects of everyday lived experience in South Africa.

Each text was developed in terms of conditions acting on its production. Thus the conditions acting upon ‘public’ representations of body language in popular texts can be read in terms of the public representations of the private, concretely experienced lives of those consuming or ‘reading’ them. Power relations operating here include the asymmetries of academic and popular knowledges in terms of academic discourse. These power relations constrain the production and reception of the texts themselves.

The fundamental social relations of class, gender, race and age act upon both producers and consumers of these texts. These social relations, as well as economic power relations, were seen to act upon, and influence, the marketing of popular and academic ‘body language’ texts.

References were made, in my readings of these popular and academic texts, to Western socio-cultural influences on these texts, and to the power relations supporting my conceptions about such texts. The producers of these texts were middle-class whites. The majority of the authors and (presumably the publishers: Spender, 1983), were males, who predominate in positions of socio-economic power in the West and elsewhere. These males were found to bend representations of body language back to focus on their own power related interests - success in business and in bed. This is not to deny women’s interests in similar success. In terms of the operation of academic method, there was a deconstruction again of the concerns of the dominant group, here of white male academics in maintaining their privileged position. They therefore maintain the status quo and do not question the power relations upholding these positions.

Dominant literary paradigms in academic discourse are seen to have influenced ‘body language’ texts in many different ways.

Texts can be read as cultural forms. Popular and academic texts are records of different contexts or experiences due to the different constraints operating on them.
1. Popular texts deal with everyday experience and promise their readers power in the everyday context of social power relations. The production of these texts is also conditioned by social relations extant in social, sexual and business relations and practices because these are the primary spheres in which power operates in everyday life. The readership or consuming 'public' of popular texts act as indices of the social relations that inform these texts.

2. Academic texts are conditioned by the predominance of textuality and writing in academic discourse. Academic texts are thus removed from the lived bodily experience of the concrete reality of everyday life due to the process of abstraction and to that of writing, itself an abstraction from "reality". Academic texts operate at a certain remove from the context of experienced everyday reality, due to the notions of objectivity and abstraction and due to linguistic formalism.

Themes in body language texts include spatial and temporal relations, gaze, aspects of power relations such as dominance and territoriality and forms of intercultural communication.

To understand (different readings of cultural objects) properly - as transformations of meaning - we would have to grasp the specific practices through which the product was 'consumed' or 'read'. These conditions include all the asymmetries of power, cultural resources and knowledge that relate readers to both producers and analysts, as well as the more fundamental social relations of class, gender, race and age (Johnson, 1986:284-5).

Reading the texts as forms, we can see them as public presentations of body language that exist as texts at a level of analysis which can then be read in terms of abstract or universal principles, of the type encapsulated in the forms and operation of academic discourse.

Personal circuit

As an individual, one understands and experiences body language at several 'moments' on the circuit, many of them simultaneously. A person encounters body language as a subjective concrete experience, experienced phenomenologically, in terms of one's own bodily apprehensions; as well as in observations of others and in the social environment in which that person exists.

Experience predominates in everyday life. There is therefore a need to understand everyday "reality" as it is constructed/ experienced. Real experience can be comprehended in the mind, in terms of Volosinov's understanding thereof, as an apprehension in the mind of an individual. In the mind of an individual both the socially accepted meaning of a symbol and the meaning it has for that individual will be present at the same time. Bodily apprehension in the sense that Jousse, Collingwood and Merleau-Ponty discuss it, also allows for simultaneous apprehension of social and individual reality. In their view this reality is experienced through the body of an individual as she/he plays out their experience and acts or reenacts their reality which is at once both social and individual. Cultural studies attempts to resolve the tension between the individual
and the social and between Culturalist and Structuralist perspectives by looking at *praxis* the operation of theory in practical, real or concrete terms.

It seems that the mind and the body are united in activity: in concrete lived experience. In body language studies the academic and the popular texts both unite in their attempt to convey, abstract from, or explain, concrete lived reality.

Lived experience includes the operation of social power relations. Popular and academic texts relate and are constrained by these same social power relations. Popular texts promise their readers increased social power through the acquisition of the knowledge contained in these texts. It appeared from the responses of those who had read such texts that they seemed to fulfil their promise. Both academic and popular texts are constrained by specific power relations operation on them during their production. Academic texts conform to the standards of the academic discourse existing within particular disciplines and the operation of "scientific-academic discourse". Popular texts are constrained by commercial power relations in their publication for targeted audiences identified as suitable markets in terms of the publishing industry.

If we look at body language in terms of popular and academic perspectives we can thus examine power from the perspectives of territoriality as Chefflen does, or from the perspective of gender as Henley does. Here we are led to re-examine the old notions of time, space and gaze which also functions to define territorial control, dominance and spatial relations. Popular experience relates to texts and to power relations.

From observation, one might deduce that body language is both an experiential and a learned or acquired means of communication. In the context of multi-cultural relations in South Africa, differences could be observed between other individuals and oneself, as well as between individuals. At the level of abstraction an individual might 'read' these observed moments as being either culturally, or individually and subjectively, constructed. Whether observed or experienced body language is 'read' as resulting from experiences of social relations of class, gender, race or age, depends on the context in which a behaviour or action is observed, as well as the level of knowledge that a person has about body language.

Such knowledge might be acquired through abstraction from subjective experience, or from reported experience via other people, or through another medium either textual or audio-visual. Any means of acquiring knowledge is mediated by the power relations operating on the production and consumption of this knowledge. Any action might also have resulted from individual bodily characteristics or states that were extant at particular moments, but of which a person attempting to 'read' body language may be unaware.
Everyday experience

It is in the context of everyday experience that power relations attain their most importance. People do realize the importance of attaining power and control in their daily lives. Most people seem to be aware of the complexity of readings available in body language terms (Fast, 1971: folded arms and courtship). Texts and experience feed into and from one another. It would seem that a possible reason academics might denigrate popular texts and experience would be to use this as a justification of their own importance in relation to such texts. In everyday life people seem to evince different body languages according to their classes, races and genders due to the impact that social power relations have on people according to these relations. In everyday life in South Africa three other factors are also of major importance due to their historical significance in society. These factors are language or linguistic allegiances, religion and violence all of which exist within the context of social change.

Subjective experiences/ observations of body language as a concrete lived experience are thus transformed by social relations of which people are usually only aware at the level of abstraction.

Subjective bodily experiences of body language can also be ‘read’ as embodiments of particular social relations. As a white, middle-class female in her early thirties, particular social relations apply to my subjective experiences in particular contexts. My experiences as a trained actor, dancer and performer have, along with subjective concrete experiences in these spheres, shaped my abstractions and my ‘readings’ or consumption of popular and academic textual forms. In conjunction with the operation of academic and material-economic relations, my subjective experiences have resulted in the particular construction or ‘production’ of this text. The contexts of the various engagements with interviewees, is but one area in which my personal/subjective relations to the power relations in society would have affected responses to my enquiries.

We can therefore ‘read’ the transformations of experiences and social relations as they exist in terms of the various moments, and the intersections of these moments, in the process of the construction and creation of the current text.

Cultural studies

What of the relations of cultural studies as a practice at various of these moments? Firstly, cultural studies can be ‘read’ in terms of the following relations:

* historicity
* the operation of academic discourse
* associations with other academic disciplines
its praxis
and many more.

By ‘historicity’ I could refer to its origins in literary studies and thus in relation to the dominance of such studies in academic discourse. A ‘concrete’ realisation of this relation would be found in the use of methods such as content analysis, semiology and discourse analysis, amongst others.

Historically, the operation of cultural studies can be ‘read’ in terms of the social relations in the society in the context of which it is practiced. Thus cultural studies in post-war Britain exists in a slightly different relation to that of the ‘New South Africa’. There are, however, significant interrelationships between these historical moments, and between the power relations operant at these moments. The social relations of class, gender, race and age; of socio-political systems, and global economic relations, are both similar and different, at once connected and separable, under cultural studies analysis.

Body language

Body language has many intersections with cultural studies. As practices they both relate to the operation of academic discourse in a similar fashion. Power relations within this discourse resulted in certain methodological similarities. Fields or disciplines within these discourses such as:
* communication theories
* semiology/semiotics
* psychology
* conceptions of culture and ethnicity; and
* the operation of ideologies and social power relations constrain both cultural studies and body language practices. These numerous, previously unexplored, relations, between body language and cultural studies inform the readings of body language in this dissertation.

Body language texts

Impacts on the moments of production and consumption, of body language texts or forms are examined in terms of both popular and academic texts. The results of my study indicate that social power relations of class, gender, race and age intersect at these moments. Bourgeois, white males in the prime of their lives are influential positions in society, business, and academia. Their interests seem to have been best served by the production of these texts. It is also possible to read these texts in terms of middle-class female interests, too. Women need to know more about body language because they need to understand the operation of the power relations that serve to oppress them. Similarly, middle-class businesswomen have social and career aspirations similar to those of the men in their class.
In terms of the operation of academic method, 'mis-apprehensions' or different readings could occur depending on the readers perspective. A rural black woman did not understand why I wanted to speak to her about black culture or communication, when an interpreter, an urban, university educated black male, could more readily speak my language. That there might differences between his and her viewpoints that would be of interest to a researcher did not occur to her. Such a reading might also result from different conceptions of social identity. As a researcher in a Western academic tradition I would divide people up into sub-groups while this black woman might view her culture more holistically and as a deriving from a more communal identity.

Gender

It emerged that women, in terms of the operation of body language as a 'lived experience' were more aware of their bodies, and of body language generally, than men. Women were seen to be constructed in subordinate positions due to their bodies, which were regarded as sexual 'objects'. Their focus on their bodies as passive receptors of male dominance and on their children rather than themselves, due to reproductive and social patterning could serve as constraints in terms of a Western focus on economic production rather than on reproduction.

However, bodilyness and improved communication skills could also function as a means of resisting gender power relations. A woman can supposedly gain economic or social advantage by using her 'intuition', - a result of increased perceptual and communication skills. Rural black women in a group conversation reported that 'women know more about body language than men do' and that 'men were stupid' in this regard. A white professional woman also commented about the usefulness of her ability to 'read' body language signals, particularly in social situations. Men might ignored the communicative aspects of bodilyness, focusing instead on action: on sport or competitive skills.

Intertextuality: the dynamic nature of textual forms

In the chapters on body language in South Africa, 'readings' derive from the 'lived' or experienced social relations which define body language.

According to my findings popular and academic texts in body language studies do intersect a great deal more than might initially be supposed. Perhaps this occurs because they all deal with concrete 'lived experiences' and studies are based on the body and on everyday interactions which form part of popular everyday experience. There is thus a cross-fertilization between popular and academic forms in terms of ideas and information. The transformation of Knowledge from one form to another might be mutually empowering if
all concerned were more able to understand the construction of the moments at which their engagement with
body language exists, as well as its relationship to other moments in the cultural circuit.

It seems that Americans have overcome the bias in anthropology that Hall noted (1956). There is no longer
any bias towards not knowing about the body language and cultural practices found in their own cultures,
with a focus on studies of ‘foreign’/obscure or ‘other’ cultures. In body language studies the bias now
appears to have been reversed: despite a large number of small intercultural studies, the majority of studies
and texts deal with ‘own’ culture and only by analogy, or with reference to foreign glamour, with those other
than their own. In cultural studies a similar bias exists: thus it is that this thesis is an attempt to study South
African conditions from a power located position within the society. The limits and rewards of doing so are
noted where possible.

This text is not intended to be used as a power-tool, or an ideological weapon, in any negative sense. It is
a political intervention however in its attempt to re-focus interest in the body language field and to
rehabilitate, however partially, the popular, everyday or lived experience of body language in South Africa.
In many instances its weaknesses are in part due to the operation of academic discourse, and of my own
peculiar situation within the context of academic and social power relations that operate upon both myself
and my work. This is not to lay the blame for any of its failures or successes at any door other than my own.

To paraphrase Johnson (1986: 283), its value is pedagogic or illustrative, to explain why body language texts
and practices differ, and not to sketch an ideal approach, but merely one that might be useful. At most it is
a signpost for future transformations.

There has to be some cognisance in academic circles of what the lay person’s interests in body language
studies might be, as well as of their possible value to professionals and others in everyday life. Body
language and intercultural communication form part of the province of most peoples lives. Developing an
understanding of the popular understandings and of the lived experiences of those around us can only enrich
all concerned in their social interactions with others.

As body language theorists there is much to be learnt from the cultural studies approach. Conversely, cultural
studies could increase the range of its readings by adding yet another dimension to the techniques already
available. In the past cultural studies practitioners have studied the body in advertising, gendering of the
female body; have some understanding of the uses of dress in constructing group identity, in the sub-cultural
resistances of the Rock, Mod, Punk and other youth resistances to dominant culture. Tattooing as a practice
in working-class Britain might be a possible future topic [see Bodylore (1993) in this regard] for research.
Other future areas for research are also possible. These could include further interviews and discussions,
analysis of filmed material, particularly of so called candid films and pavement studies of interactions during
*its praxis
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To paraphrase Johnson (1986: 283), its value is pedagogic or illustrative, to explain why body language texts and practices differ, and not to sketch an ideal approach, but merely one that might be useful. At most it is a signpost for future transformations.

There has to be some cognisance in academic circles of what the lay person's interests in body language studies might be, as well as of their possible value to professionals and others in everyday life. Body language and intercultural communication form part of the province of most peoples lives. Developing an understanding of the popular understandings and of the lived experiences of those around us can only enrich all concerned in their social interactions with others.

As body language theorists there is much to be learnt from the cultural studies approach. Conversely, cultural studies could increase the range of its readings by adding yet another dimension to the techniques already available. In the past cultural studies practitioners have studied the body in advertising, gendering of the female body; have some understanding of the uses of dress in constructing group identity, in the sub-cultural resistances of the Rock, Mod, Punk and other youth resistances to dominant culture. Tattooing as a practice in working-class Britain might be a possible future topic [see Bodylore (1993) in this regard] for research. Other future areas for research are also possible. These could include further interviews and discussions, analysis of filmed material, particularly of so called candid films and pavement studies of interactions during
passing behaviour to determine durations of gaze and contact more accurately. Airport studies could be undertaken, although a number of variables such as the expense of flying would place limits on readings derived from this context. It might be possible to counterbalance airport studies with those undertaken in minibus/taxi ranks or railway station studies, although the latter could be dangerous in the context of the 'wars' between rival taxi organisations. People moving down rows in theatres, or at sports matches or other large events, might provide useful subjects for observations as long as one remained aware of the specificity of the context in which these observations are conducted.

Transformation and the appropriation of symbols/forms and identities in South Africa constantly occurs. Change is apparent in many forms of body language (noted in Chapter Six). This thesis may prove useful in the context of the examination of transformation of body image such as Jubber's work (Kiesow, 1994). Similar approaches might be adopted to examine body language in popular media such as magazines as well as in the appropriation of media images/fashions by people observed in everyday life.

There is a definite need to try to avoid university-centric research - a problem I also encountered. Thus the need is to examine everyday lived experience observationally and in terms of perceptions thereof. Both areas of study are required to counterweight one another. Thus the Americanization of South African youth in all race groups, with their adoption of mass cultural emblems such as baseball caps, or of music such as rap or break-dancing might be useful in the study of acculturation. Sport is an area of popular culture that has also been extremely influential, with the adoption of cricket, soccer and rugby from European traditions, and examinations of body language and bodily communication may provide further demonstrations of acculturation, whether towards or away from Western 'ideals'.

In all of these adoptions one can see the influence of economic power and the operation of global capitalism. The relative power relations of dance and sport are seen too: while dance formed an important part of tribal society, and part of the historical past of many black South Africans it has assumed a secondary importance in Western societies (see McRobbie), with a disproportionately higher amount of funding and media attention devoted to sport in contrast to dance forms such as Ballet. This has been read in terms of the gendering of these activities, with dance as the more aesthetic form (with the exception of skating and gymnastics, which are more aesthetic and 'effeminate'). Gender stereotyping of dance exists in South Africa in the Indian community, as well (Jay Pather, Jazzart in Grahamstown, July, 1992).

It would be interesting to study the behaviour of children with their peer group and with their elders. Such studies might in some measure establish the contextuality of social change. It would appear, from observations offered on other body language behaviours or gestures, that a type of code-switching could occur as individuals move from one context to another.
With the changing face of South African politics since April 1994, and the implementation of affirmative action policies, there should be further changes in the body language of people in all sectors of society, which will follow upon changing social power relations albeit gradually.

Intercultural studies can thus be read at several levels: that of the interpersonal or individual, at the inter-group level, and at the level at which social power relations inform social dynamics operating in and on a society. All social relations are historically and contextually defined. Groups and people both construct and act in accordance with social power relations.

Conclusion

At each of the moments examined in the thesis: popular, academic and experiential four perspectives are operant:

1. Cultural studies provides an understanding of different contexts. This has led to a focus on academic discourse, semiotics and the operation of the mass media.

2. Body language can be read in terms of different texts. In the academic the power relations are conditioned by writing and the focus on textuality in the popular works the focus is on commercial success while in everyday life it is constrained by social power relations including the operation of economic, sexual and other forms of power.

3. Experientially in South Africa the added contextual relations observed were those of language, religion and violence all of which operate within the context of instability and social change serving to anchor and surround experience.

4. Power is the thread that weaves all of these examinations in such diverse areas together.

They hang together spinning in space but with power and the possibilities of change they seem as if they will fly off at any moment and assume new but similar patterns in a different context.
RESEARCH PARAMETERS

In order to provide some understanding of the ‘lived experience’ of body language in South Africa it was necessary to obtain some insight into body language as it is experienced in the context of everyday life.

As there were no readily available texts on the subject, I undertook some initial research, of my own. What follows is an outline of the development of the pilot study.

Pilot study: problems and constraints.

There were several constraints upon this research process, in practical or concrete terms. In common with most academic research the constraints of funding, or lack thereof, of time and of access to research data had to be considered. Theoretical parameters were provided by the cultural studies paradigm, in the context of the particular theories of power relations outlined in Chapter One. This project is/was constrained by social power relations despite attempts to acknowledge them and to be as unbounded by them as possible.

Implementing a full scale practical study, which would involve conducting fieldwork and recording observable body language interaction in everyday situations in South Africa - would have been an ideal situation. As is always the case with setting up a practical study, there were large number of variables to consider.

Setting up a large scale study based on very little previous data could have proved disastrous. After evaluating various possible forms of research using the literature available on studies conducted elsewhere, and a careful consideration of the local practical constraints, a multi-pronged approach was devised. An initial interview study, was combined with group discussions. This material, based on phenomenological experiences together with some analysis of these perceptions is combined with observation to provide a view of body language operating at several moments in the South African cultural circuit. There was thus an attempt to balance the need for a database of articulated ideas and the need to understand observable ‘everyday behaviour’ with as little distortion as possible of the material observed. It is implicit in an understanding of this approach that all experiences are conditional. Material that is perceived, observed and analyzed is subject to the influence of selection, thus to ‘gate-keeping’ at any one of these moments.

Controlled experimentation
As with all aspects of human interaction or communication. Body language is an extremely complex phenomenon involving as it does the diverse bodies, cultures socio-political factors as well as the individual personalities of those engaged in communicating at any particular moment. The complexities of such a
communication would mitigate against a simplistic study. Even when conducted within the context of a single culture, factors such as age, gender and class would still be pertinent. The first problem is therefore one inherent in most attempts to 'scientifically' study a human phenomenon. Human nature and behaviour are not reducible to clearly differentiated factors and as such cannot be studied using the 'scientific method'. What had to be avoided was the trap of the 'controlled experiment', attempted in some psychological studies, where attempts to control a situation might in themselves prove a distortion of events. What can be recorded, however, in order to counterbalance biases inherent in observation are the perceptions of those involved in particular communication situations. Therefore the path chosen was one that is well established as technique of anthropological/ ethnographic research - that of the depth-interview. One of the major questions that had to be asked was that involving the cultural identities of communicators, a factor which might determine the prevalence and influence of cultural codes.

**Demographics**

The South African situation is complicated due to the multiplicity of ethnic /or racial groups and to the language and geographical spread of people from many diverse backgrounds. To obtain at least an initial database within the time and funding constraints, while obtaining a fairly representative sample of a society as complex as South Africa's, posed several problems. To avoid overly extensive travel the sampling area was restricted to the Greater Durban Area (DFR or Durban Functional Region and surrounds).

Because ours is a society in transition, it seemed important to consider the historical legacy of racial classification which is the residue of the apartheid system. Under apartheid laws (Population Registration Act 194- to 19) there were broadly considered to be five major racial classifications - Black, White, Coloured (mixed-race), Indian, and Other. Membership of these groups was judged according to the following criterion that focused specifically on descriptions of physical somatic characteristics. People were adjudged to be members of one or another group by consensus of opinion of their fellows.

The starting point for a working research definition of social groups or communities was thus taken as an idea of what these 'legally' defined groups represent in people's consciousness whether of themselves or of others. An area of future study might relate to the perceptions of racial stereotyping resulting from in- or out-group identification and changing attitudes over time - such a study was in this instance beyond the bounds of the current thesis.

In terms of these old definitions it was be of interest to see how people defined themselves and others, and to ascertain what influence, if any, these categories might have on current perceptions of various people interacting in and around Durban. Three of these categories are roughly in the majority in the DFR they are:

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3 See unpublished research by Alex Holt conducted in the Cultural and Media Studies Unit.
The black population of Natal Kwa-Zulu, largely composed of Zulu speakers but including some Xhosa and migrant workers from many other areas and ethnic groups.

The Indian Population consisting of three main linguistic and religious groups - Hindu, Muslim and Others.

The white group consisting largely of English and Afrikaans-speakers but which includes such subgroups as the Greek, French, Jewish and Bulgarian communities amongst others.

The basis of categorisation of these groups is ethnic which includes language and some cultural factors as well as the old somatic descriptions.

Several questions arise from the use of these categories. Firstly it should be acknowledged that membership of these groups, in terms of their real boundaries and actual memberships, is not clearly defined. But if one adopts a phenomenological perspective when conducting research it might be possible to decide whether such categories have been influential in the development of the self-images of South Africans who have defined themselves in relation to them either through acceptance or rejection of such categorisation / categories.

The overriding concern of this thesis is with intercultural communication and it was therefore considered to be sufficient for an initial survey to base the study on perceptions of body-language in intercultural contexts. It was decided to conduct depth interviews using ‘informants’ in the anthropological tradition.

Another important factor is the inherently ‘sub-conscious’ nature of bodily communication - many people are unaware of much of their bodily communications at a conscious level. Interviewees might therefore have had difficulty being articulate about their bodily communication; and making them conscious of it in an interview situation might lead to a distortion of self- or ‘over-consciousness’. To counteract this problem initial in-depth interviews were conducted with people involved with communication on a regular/ongoing basis, who would have regular exposure to inter-cultural communication, and might therefore be able to articulate their perceptions and experiences of it. The later interviews were then conducted with various respondents outside the academic community in an attempt to obtain a representative sample from the three major categories/groups listed above. An interview schedule was thus set up using informants from the following backgrounds/professions:

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4 It must be noted here that the Zulu nation like all nations is both a political and a socio-cultural construct. As such it is far from homogenous while still conforming to several general characteristics such as language and traditional allegiance to the Zulu King, although such characteristics are modified in the context of contemporary South Africa.
Academics - in the anthropological, media and performance fields.

Media Workers
Performers
Personnel Officers
Priests
Researchers doing inter-cultural / developmental field work
Social workers with intercultural experience
Teachers in second-language situations

An inherent characteristic of the initial interviews was that the people involved were all professionals who could therefore be considered to represent the views of the middle-class or status quo; although in the case particularly of the field-workers and a number of performers they were not all likely to be from middle-class backgrounds. Obtaining a view of the perceptions and understandings of the middle-classes and the status quo - despite the difficulties and the paradoxical nature of ascertaining just what the status quo might be in a transitional society - was one of the primary aims of this portion of the research project. The advantage of dealing with professionals was that they should be more likely to see the need for research and study while conversely the time pressures on them make arranging interviews a little difficult. While there are also gender and age biases inherent in using professional groups as sample it was felt that these difficulties could initially be dealt with during the data analysis - particularly as they represent a prevailing power relationship in South African society. Attempts to overcome the bias inherent in this contextual situation proved to be a constant challenge.

The initial trial interviews were set up after a list of possible interviewees had been drafted. Interviews were conducted face-to-face in an interactive interpersonal context. These interviews were audio recorded but could have been videoed, had facilities been available. Videos would have been useful but might have proved intrusive and would have required additional personnel and equipment beyond the current budget. In order to counteract the bias in the initial interviews some interviews were conducted with people from non-academic and from working-class backgrounds.

The data from these interviews was then coupled with observation conducted throughout the research period as well as from close analysis and discussion of points arising from these interviews. Points selected from the interview material were then tested using observation techniques and focus discussions with previous respondents and colleagues in the communication field to provide a degree of reflexivity in the research process.

Adopting a phenomenological approach, coupled with a cultural studies perspective, meant that interviewees/respondents were encouraged to act and speak for themselves. The interviews were therefore constructed
using an interview guide and probes designed to expand on the discussion. Interviewees were left to define the course and topics of discussion as far as possible.

Of the thirty-two respondents who participated there were eighteen interviewees and twelve seminar discussants.

A breakdown of the participants by age, race, gender and class appear below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>20's: 5</td>
<td>Black: 6</td>
<td>Females: 11</td>
<td>m/c: 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30's: 8</td>
<td>Col.: 1</td>
<td></td>
<td>w/c: 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>40+: 6</td>
<td>Ind.: 2</td>
<td>Males: 8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>White: 10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seminars</td>
<td>20's: 5</td>
<td>Black: 6</td>
<td>Males: 9</td>
<td>Middle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30's: 5</td>
<td>Col.: 0</td>
<td></td>
<td>class:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>40+: 3</td>
<td>Ind.: 2</td>
<td>Females: 4</td>
<td>all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>White: 6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key: Col. = Coloureds  m/c = middle-class
     Ind. = Indians       w/c = working class
APPENDIX TWO

QUESTIONS FOR DATA COLLECTION

Date .................................. Time ................................

An explanation: I am collecting impressionistic / anecdotal information for my thesis which is about Body language and Culture in the South African intercultural context.

All sources will be confidential.

1. Background
Who are you? What is your name and country / place of origin? How old are you? Which age group do you fit into? Are you in your teens, 20’s, 30’s, 40’s etc. What do you do for a living? How would you define / describe your cultural background?

2. South African experience
How long have you been in South Africa? If you have lived elsewhere: When and where did you stay? And for how long?

3. Communication
How important are the following aspects of communication on a scale of 1 to 5.? Could you rate them from 1 to 5 in terms of their importance for communication?
Analytic skills?
Body language?
Verbal skills?

(Probes: If an interviewee says that this is difficult to do ask them to explain why they find it difficult )

4. Body Language
What do you know about Body language? or non-verbal communication? If anything where did you learn about Body Language?

(Probes: If respondents ask what is meant by the term body language ask them to give their own definition. If they mention a) Books: Can you give names or titles ? b) Life: Can you give examples or describe times when you learnt something?)
5. Anecdotes

Do you have any impressions or experiences related to body language that you remember? What have you noticed about body language in SA? Go mad, any impressions are welcome, just talk.

Have you noticed any change in body language over time? (Change since Feb '90 is an implicit question here i.e. Since Mandela's release see if this is mentioned).

Note: This is a question guide and should not be rigidly adhered to. Discretion is required when probing. See Yow (1994) for guidelines.
APPENDIX THREE:

GESTURES OF POWER AND PRIVILEGE: EXAMPLES OF SOME NONVERBAL BEHAVIOURS WITH USAGE DIFFERING FOR STATUS EQUALS AND NONEQUALS, FOR WOMEN AND MEN.

* Behaviour not known

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Between Status Equals</th>
<th>Between Status Nonequals</th>
<th>Between men and Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intimate</td>
<td>Non-intimate</td>
<td>Used by Superior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Address</td>
<td>Familiar</td>
<td>Polite</td>
<td>Familiar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Demeanour</td>
<td>Informal</td>
<td>Circumspect</td>
<td>Informal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Posture</td>
<td>Tense (less Relaxed)</td>
<td>Tense</td>
<td>Closeness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Personal space</td>
<td>Closeness</td>
<td>Distance</td>
<td>Closeness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Time</td>
<td>Long</td>
<td>Short</td>
<td>Long (option)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Touching</td>
<td>Touch</td>
<td>Don’t touch</td>
<td>Touch (option)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Eye contact</td>
<td>Establish</td>
<td>Avoid</td>
<td>Stare, ignore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Facial expression</td>
<td>Smile?</td>
<td>Don’t smile?</td>
<td>Don’t smile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Emotional expression</td>
<td>Show</td>
<td>Hide</td>
<td>Hide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Self-disclosure</td>
<td>Disclose</td>
<td>Don’t disclose</td>
<td>Disclose</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Henley summarises her preliminary conclusions about power, sex and nonverbal communication in the above table. Such a tabulation might prove a useful tool once more data is available in South Africa. However there is a tendency to overlook dynamic interactive relations, when data is presented in this form alone.
APPENDIX FOUR

GLOSSARY

body language

This is a term associated with popular works on non-verbal communication because it was first used by Julius Fast as the title of his popular publication in 1970. It is used to refer to aspects such as chronemics, gesture, facial expression particularly gaze, haptics, objectics, proxemics, and to dress. Sometimes associated with paralinguistics, objectics, and taecesics in popular conceptions of the term.

I have chosen to use this term because of its association with popular texts, and through this with power relationships in two areas. Firstly, in terms of academic and popular conceptions of the topic and secondly, due to the power popular texts promise their readers through their knowledge of ‘hidden dimensions’ of social behaviour.

chronemics

A specialised field of non-verbal research, relating to the use and understanding of time. (cf. Greek Chronos). Many studies focus on cross-cultural differences in relation to time.

dress

What a person wears is taken to signal messages about their status, personality and social roles.

gaze

A specialised area of study within the field of body language or non-verbal communication that analyses the direction and duration of eye-contact between people engaged in communication.

haptics

like taecesics, an academic term referring to studies of touch behaviour. Concerns here include what constitutes acceptable touch behaviour in terms of who may touch whom, on what part of the body and under which conditions.

kinesics

A term originated by Birdwhistell to describe the physical interaction occurring in non-verbal communication. He saw this as being organised in a way akin to that of linguistics.

kinesphere

the bubble of personal space surrounding each one of us perceived to be our sphere of personal activity.

non-verbal communication
This term is used in academic practice to refer to the general field of study that includes areas such as chronemics, dress, gesture, gaze, haptics, objectics, paralinguistics, proxemics, and tacesics.

objectics

Examines the use and manipulation of objects as a form of communication. Someone who twists their pen around in meetings could be analysed in this field.

paralinguistics

This is an area of study that includes some verbal behaviour as it is used to describe aspects of linguistics that accompany spoken language. Thus timing, pitch and loudness (the so called prosodic elements of language) as well as vocalisations that occur during speech fall into this category.

proxemics

the study of spatial relationships between communicators during face-to-face interaction. Defined by Edward Hall (1955) as zones of intimate, personal, social and public interaction.
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