



'Cultural Studies is an interdisciplinary field. It examines texts and sub-texts and their relationship to power relations within contexts'

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SOUTH Africa's liberation has brought with it the integration of CCMS into African organisations and initiatives. Centre Director, Prof Keyan Tomaselli and Lecturer and broadcasting authority, Dr Ruth Teer-Tomaselli are spearheading the Centre's integration into the international arena.

As the first resident South African invited to an African Council for Communication Education (ACCE) conference, a CCMS member was enthusiastically 'welcomed back into the fold' in 1992. Last year Prof. Tomaselli was elected onto the Council's Executive, the first time a South African had held this position. During the last two years CCMS staff have been invited to ACCE and other meetings held in Nairobi, Accra, Kitwe, Harare, Lusaka and Cairo.

Significantly, the next ACCE Biennial is to be held in South Africa in 1996. The contribution that Tomaselli has made to African media studies in Africa has been recognised in three other appointments.

Last year he began a three-time period as external examiner for the Department of Communication, University of Zambia. The University of Ghana's School of Communication has appointed him as external examiner and as external assessor of the School's research and staff for promotional purposes. He has

CCMS into Africa

also been co-opted onto the Training in Developing Countries Committee of the Centre for International Liaison of Film and Television Schools. The Committee meets in Accra in July 1995.

Lecturer in the Centre, Dr Ruth Teer-Tomaselli, a South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) Board member, has also made her mark.

She was appointed to the Technical committee, a grant-making sub-committee of the Federation of African Women Educators (FAWE), based in Nairobi. Membership of FAWE is normally restricted to the likes of Ministers of Information and University Vice-Chancellors.

Dr Teer-Tomaselli was one of two African delegates invited to a UNESCO Roundtable on the Cultural and Educational Functions of Public Service Broadcasting to be held in Paris in July. She went to Paris after presenting a paper on

party political advertising during the April 1994 elections at the Conference of the International Association for Mass Communication Research, in Slovenia, in June. Dr Teer-Tomaselli was chair of Democratic Education Broadcasting Initiative (DEBI).

"The foreign intake of African students into our MA coursework in Media Studies and Ph.D programmes has consolidated the Centre's relationship with Africa," says Prof Tomaselli. Students come from Kenya, Zambia, the SADCC states, and is even attracting students from Europe and the USA. These students "bring an exciting cosmopolitan atmosphere to the Centre's programmes and research," he continued. "Apartheid denied us this positive experience."

Zimbabwean, Beki Mpofu, for example, says, "CCMS's orientation develops the foundation I obtained at the University of Zimbabwe." Mozambican, Donald Guambe comments, "CCMS is the natural line of progression for those of us in Southern Africa wanting to pursue media studies at MA and PhD levels. Natal is an African University with first world standards and its fees are competitive vis-a-vis more expensive overseas universities to which our colleagues have gone and returned disappointed with the lack of interest in Africa."

Participatory TV with Community Station

by Kubeshni Govender

THIS year the Visual Voice ConFest went a step further by exploring the possibilities of community television with an experimental test broadcast. The initiative brought together the combined efforts of the Centre for Cultural and Media Studies, Film and Allied Workers Organisation (FAWO), Audio Visual Alternatives, Durban Arts Association and the Audio Visual Centre, UND.

KwaZulu Natal's first ever community station, called Greater Durban Television (GDTV) broadcast from the roof of the

Electrical Engineering building. The studio is basic, comprising two S-VHS players, a 486 computer, nine monitors, vision mixer, camera, and microwave link and sent out three sessions of broadcasting a day.

The Independent Broadcasting Authority granted the temporary license from June 21 to July 11. The general public were invited to submit videos for broadcasting. Programming was organised into themes including basic health, education, AIDS awareness, and housing and development. Mike Aldridge, a masters student

at CCMS and independent video producer, suggested that community television would give a boost to local video production houses as well as provide a niche for low cost advertising for local business. He added that such an initiative should be used as a tool for the integration of communities.

Dumi Ngubane, co-ordinator of FAWO, sees community television as an ideal opportunity for many FAWO trainees to make practical use of their skills acquired over many video and television courses hosted by the organisation.

Mastering new technologies to further Community media

THOUGH the emphasis of GDTV and the ConFest is on the local - community media - the event has been organised with the help of the global media. The World Wide Web, an interactive computer system, is relentlessly integrating computers, telecommunications, TV, film, photography, writing, music and so on into a single channel with multimedia functions.

This technological explosion calls for new kinds of artists, new kinds of academics, new kinds of scientists and even new kinds of accountants. And new kinds

As Durban's newly elected Metro Mayor, Mr Siphon Ngwenya, hosted an official function to launch GDTV. The following is an extract from Prof Keyan Tomaselli's speech at this occasion.

of relationships between communities and NGOs working with universities.

Technology, however, is not a cure-all. There is a disturbing tendency in the current era to dismiss the potential of anyone who is not a technocrat. Solutions emphasise technicity; more technology

is seen to be the answer to problems and disasters caused by earlier technology. Greater demands are made for technical education and more problems - technological, social and economic - tend to result from this. The belief in the omnipotence of technology, the free market as the only economic arrangement possible, and consumption for consumption's sake; proclaims the ability of the social order to gradually eliminate all chance of crises, to find the 'technical' solution to all its contradictions.

Chief amongst these is the relentless industrialising of education at the expense of its human face. Social problems are also caused by the technologising of solutions, the bureaucratising of society by government, and the centralisation of control.

Community media opposes these alienating forces and relocates agency with the individual-in-the-community. The community which is running GDTV and organising the ConFest comprises students, academics, NGOs, people from the townships and community organisations. It is this non-profit community which has marshalled the power and expertise of the global and connected these to the local.

Our students and their community associates and trainees are all technocrats - video and TV producers, information technology experts, electronic engineers - **but they are technocrats with a difference.** They understand that the way technology is used indicates whether or not the users are aware of the social implications of their actions.

Has Cultural Studies got it right?

FROM its early days in the 1950s, the most absorbing aspect of the British Cultural Studies (BCS) has been an attempt to bring together into a single intellectual perspective a conception of objectivity with one of subjectivity.

The aim of BCS was to theorise object and subject as culture, but the outcome has been to suggest that no such combination is possible.

Does this then nullify cultural studies? A big No, for post-modernism asserts that the age of comprehensive schemes and totalising theories is beyond our grasp. There is no objection on these grounds to following through the already established discipline of cultural studies, its ways of thinking about the interaction between the object and the subject.

Antony Easthope, a Professor at Manchester University, gave a seminar at the Centre, on the promises and lies of British Cultural Studies. Masters student Munyaradzi Hwengere summarises his interpretation of the relevance of Cultural Studies.

In fact at the risk of a certain academic imperialism, Easthope goes further to propose that cultural studies has got it right.

On one side there can be no return to the naive subjectivism of traditional literary study. On the other, at present, the social sciences and the study of history remain locked in some positivist notion of a science of history, analyses of social formation as impersonal and objective phenomena.

READERS' Digest has recognised the importance of the Centre's work with the donation of R115 000.

Editor-in-chief of the Readers Digest Book Division, Christopher Walton, handed the Centre's Director Professor Keyan Tomaselli the cheque at a function. Part of the donation will be spent on new DTP equipment in the information technology section in the Centre.

From left to right: Kubeshni Govender, Prof Keyan Tomaselli, Christopher Walton, Susan Manhando, Michael Aldridge, seated: Michael Cebekhulu.

PIC: Courtesy of the Natal Mercury



M-Net: Baby steps to big-foot status

THE pay-television industry in the 1990s is characterised by the ability of companies to operate globally, using their capital and other resources to gain an edge in an increasingly competitive and crowded market. Market forces have driven M-Net and MultiChoice Limited (which as of March 1995 trade as separate companies on the stock exchange), into the merger scenario. M-Net, MultiChoice and Richemont joined forces, to create a company called NetHold. This union was the first step towards a much larger merger to form a pay-television giant called PayCo.

NetHold owns Irdeto, FilmNet, ProNet and MultiChoice Europe. According to Koos Bekker, managing director of M-Net and MultiChoice Limited, the afore mentioned companies contributed the following to the PayCo merger: "MultiChoice Europe, FilmNet, MultiChoice Africa and Comtech [as well as] 20% of M-Net and 20% of Orbicom" (*Network Africa (3) No 2 February 1995:p1*). It is restricted from including any more of its holdings in the PayCo merger by clauses in the IBA Act. PayCo will be a pay-television company with channels and subscriber management service companies in forty-three countries all over the world.

M-Net has indeed come a long way from its modest beginnings in the mid-1980s, when in its first year of production it produced only five thousand decoders. What remains to be seen, is whether the PayCo merger will create significant employment for South Africans through the manufacture of decoders, and whether the export of said decoders will put money back into the country as M-Net and MultiChoice continue to become more globally oriented.

Masters student, Michele Tager, takes a closer look at the political economy of the broadcast media.



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Postgraduate degrees

CCMS now offers a revised two-year integrated curriculum with a strong professional and research orientation covering the Honours and Masters degrees in Media studies.

Components include: qualitative approaches to cultural and media research; sociology of media; democracy and development; political economy of the media and visual anthropology. Further options are available.

Professional skills courses include video production, information technology (DTP, hypermedia) and advertising law. Internships and research projects are included.

Entrance requirements:

A good undergraduate degree in any discipline. Entrants with Honours degrees in cognate areas will receive course credits at the discretion of the Director.

CCMS also offers a supportive environment for PhD study.

African 'myths' - serving whom?

NEGATIVE stereotypes of Africa exist and they are reinforced by the media in the portrayal of Africa in the West, according to Professor Wiley.

Prof Wiley spoke of the political economy of these stereotyped images, asking the fundamental question, "Whose class interests are served by such images?" Commercial industries are first on the list when it comes to benefits and financial gain, derived from negative stereotypes of Africa in general.

The travel industry emphasises the image of Africa as being 'wild' and 'untouched'. A caption stated that "Tarzan may not live here, but his animal friends certainly do".

A further industry is the circus. Generally one attends the circus to experience that which is different and extraordinary. It is interesting that an American circus advertised various attractions, including 'authentic Zulu warriors'.

The prevailing ignorance is obvious, and it is for this reason that the African Studies Centre places a high priority on ex-

Honours student, Sandra Dantes, reports on an amusing yet alarming lecture presented at the centre by David Wiley, a Professor of Sociology at Michigan State University. Prof Wiley, a Fulbright-Hays Senior Research Fellow, is also the Director of the African Studies Centre at Michigan State University.

tending knowledge about Africa and African culture into educational institutions.

Prof Wiley informed us that images of Africa are revealed in most media forms. An interesting survey showed that 85% of American std 5s, and 93% of std 10s believe that witch-doctors exist in South Africa. These statistics verify that an increase in the frequency of exposure to certain stereotypes has occurred.

A further statistic which was interesting, especially to the Visual Anthropology students, was that 33-40% of images shown to American undergraduate students of sociology and anthropology, are of pygmies and bushmen. The most common documentary shown to such students is 'The Hunters' by John Marshall. One

needs to understand the process of selection and reconstruction that results in a film which is not truly representative of the bushmen culture, yet is taken as true.

Prof Wiley says that a confused, segmented and unintegrated model of South Africa exists. There are contradictory perceptions of Africa as bush, and Africa as developed mining industries, etc.

What the Professor suggested is the need for interpersonal, cross-race interaction on television.

Prof Wiley stressed that the Western style of life, to which so many inhabitants of Africa aspire, is not necessarily a better way of life. In such a society success is equated with progress and accumulation of wealth. Happiness is no longer equated with factors such as health and survival.

Prof Wiley concluded by stating that we need to be studying various ideologies and images that have infested and infiltrated our past, and thereby introduce more African/Cultural studies into schools. By so doing one can set the agenda for change.

The New Protocol: Madam ToastBaasSM

by Dorothy Roome

AFTER graduating, students can be hindered by poor presentation skills as they go about their search for jobs. The Centre invited Toastmasters International to make a presentation explaining the advantages of improving speech communication among graduate students.

The speaker from Toastmasters International (TI) detailed how students could develop communication and interpersonal skills necessary in a corporate culture. In addition, he defined how students would learn to know an audience and tailor remarks accordingly. The irony here is that the speaker was oblivious to the extent to which the semiotics of his vocabulary reflected an apartheid discourse, which jarred the subjectivity of a post-apartheid multicultural audience.

Phrases such as "in your culture" when

addressing an Asian student reeked of the paternalism of the apartheid era.

The element of gender equality was also missing from the speaker's presentation. Certain terminology perpetuates the social construction of passive femininity unlikely to challenge existing corporate mores. Jocular comments such as "well, you wouldn't play soccer would you?" attempt to coopt a woman into the prevailing ideology of a woman's role in society being *exclusively* that of a 'gentle nurturer'.

Vehement discussion ensued about the appropriate forms of address for women at meetings, and it was stated categorically that to protect the sensibilities of visiting dignitaries from TI it was necessary to conform to the existing norm, 'toastmaster', regardless of gender.

The significance of TI's contribution in training people in the formal codes appropriate to corporate culture is recognised worldwide. However, it seems that this organisation has not updated its material to remain current with the linguistic and social changes in multicultural and gender issues.

News needs communities

by Muyaradzi Hwengere

MANY of the challenges faced by South African journalists have not changed much over the years, alluded Judy Sandison, editor of Natal Radio news.

In a seminar on the challenges in radio news, Sandison stated that classic issues such as the freedom of the press, freedom from intimidation and freedom of access are still a constant threat in South Africa.

For Sandison, however, the joy of being a journalist should stem, not from shying away, but rather from confronting the challenges posed by a rapidly changing and volatile South African environment.

In an era where a journalists safety is threatened by verbal abuse, attacks, telephone threats and political intolerance, journalists must strive to ensure credibility, fairness and balance in their work practices, said Sandison.

Sandison also emphasised on the need for media organisations to play their part. "News should be treated as a perishable commodity where appropriate technology, efficiency and speedy dissemination are always the guiding principles," she continued.

Sandison was, however, quick to point out that the information war has many battle fronts all to be fought simultaneously, thus community participation should be an integral part of the battle strategy.

"To meet the challenges posed by the new South Africa, journalists need the support and understanding from the community of their role as watchdogs and reflectors of societal issues," she noted.

Expect a radio boom

SOUTH Africa needs more radio specialists than there are to go around, but what is so special about radio? Programming and formatting manager for East Coast Radio (ECR), Dave Macleod came to the Centre to give some insider tips.

Stations live and die by how they are programmed and good programming translates into consistency. Running a station that successfully entertains, annoys or informs therefore hinges on the little known science of radio formatting.

Computerised playlists enable ECR presenters to follow the non-negotiable, prescribed playlist. "You can't allow your station to become dominated by one DJ," McLeod says, "because, he leaves - you lose the station." Instead, successful stations prescribe strict policies to maintain the station's identity and therefore the brand's image.

"Gone are the days when the DJ picked up a few favourites before heading to the studio." Stations are sold by a brand image and a formula of consistency.

Trends in the States show that broad audience, adult contemporary programming - characterised by smooth, safe formatting - does not survive in a highly competitive environment. Radio stations adapt to target specific audiences and air a narrower range of music.

But the local radio scene is megaHertz away from that of the States and, even with the de-regulation of the airwaves, it will probably stay that way. Macleod believes that the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) is being "grossly conservative" in allocating new stations' frequencies. New York City pulsates with a new radio station every half a Hertz. "We could accommodate 98 stations easily."

Macleod is convinced that a myriad of community specific stations could be feasibly supported. Labelling Radio Zulu, with its vast daily listenership of 5-million, as a monopoly, he becomes rather excited, "get just 10% of that market and you've got yourself a successful station."

Considering the challenges that lie ahead for ECR, McLeod draws attention to the 25% of KwaZulu Natal's population who do not listen to the radio at all. This provides quite a considerable market of radio in-active ears!

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