

**THE REPRODUCTION OF PATRIARCHAL IDEOLOGICAL HEGEMONY IN SOAP  
OPERA: A CASE STUDY**

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OPERA: A CASE STUDY**

**By**

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## ABSTRACT

This research analyzes the reproduction of patriarchal ideological hegemony in the soap opera Another World using Stuart Hall's theory of the mass media and his conceptualization of ideology. A structural analysis of five one hour video-taped episodes of Another World reveals how the soap opera text constructs meaning fulfilling the three functions of the mass media, and thus, reproducing patriarchy's hegemony. This research confirms Hall's theory of the mass media and the propositions which flow from his conceptualization of ideology. Moreover, this research is the first attempt to systematically apply Hall's theory to the study of soap opera. It goes beyond the generalizations of his theory to look at the particularities of soap opera which contribute to the reproduction of patriarchal ideological hegemony. However, it is seen that what is problematic to this research, and all research on soap opera, is a lack of a theory of the reader.

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## Chapter One

### Introduction

#### What is Soap Opera?

Soap opera is daytime television serial drama. In the United States, it is a form of television that appears continually throughout the year, five days a week without reruns (Cantor and Pingree, 1983: 19). As opposed to an episodic dramatic series, each soap opera episode does not contain a complete story. The series form of television presents a different story each week to be resolved by the few central characters around which it revolves. The stories of soap opera continue across episodes, and there are numerous stories occurring simultaneously involving many characters.

Soap opera has its own specific characteristics that make it distinct from other television forms. Its most distinct characteristic is that it "never begin[s] and never end[s]" (Cantor and Pingree, 1983: 22). The multiple plot lines continue for weeks, and the closure of one plot line always leaves room for the opening of another. Plot lines are interwoven developing in different stages keeping resolutions uneven. Even with the weekend breaks, there is no final closure in soap opera.

Soap opera has a relatively slow pace when compared to prime-time television (Cantor and Pingree, 1983: 23). This slow pace is due to its other characteristics. Repetition is the main delaying device. Plot lines are repeated daily by the use of character flashbacks and especially by character dialogue. Characters continually talk and re-talk plot lines. Moreover, this excessive reliance on dialogue causes soap opera to lack action. "What happens of [sic] soaps is usually told through conversation and not through the portrayal of events. There is little of the action-oriented, fast-moving violence so common in prime-time television" (Cantor and Pingree, 1983: 24).

However, not all dramatic serials are soap operas. The so-called 'nighttime soaps' of prime-time television are not soap operas (Cantor and Pingree, 1983: 25). They have specific characteristics that differentiate them from daytime dramatic serials. Daytime soap opera is directed toward an audience of women, thus its content reflects the concerns of women (e.g., romance, health, and children). The 'nighttime soaps' are directed toward a "more sexually heterogeneous audience" (Cantor and Pingree, 1983: 28). Therefore, they will reflect the concerns of both women and men. This results in prime-time serial drama going beyond domestic concerns and dealing with power, money, and big business (e.g., Dallas and Dynasty). Moreover, there is more action on 'nighttime soaps'

which makes their storylines move faster than that of daytime soap opera. "[E]very prime-time episode is packed with many crises and resolutions" (Cantor and Pingree, 1983: 27). Although the 'nighttime soaps' are derivatives of daytime soap opera, it can be seen that labelling them soap opera is a misnomer.

### A Brief History of Soap Opera

The history of soap opera is enmeshed with the history of American network radio and the demands of a capitalist economy. With the creation of network radio in 1923, for the purpose of selling advertising time to national corporations, the search began for a form of entertainment programming conducive to selling products (Allen, 1985: 101, 103). By 1931, experience had shown that serial radio was an effective way of drawing and maintaining an audience both loyal to the serial and its advertised products. (Allen, 1985: 105). Even more significant to the history of soap opera was the discovery in 1932 of women consumers. They made the majority of family purchases, and they spent most of their time at home with the radio (Allen, 1985: 107).

The use of daytime radio then became popular with corporations whose products were geared towards use in the household. Moreover, the 1930's were the Depression era and companies like Procter and Gamble were dependent on volume

sales to maintain profits. "Given the fact that Procter and Gamble's customers were overwhelmingly female, daytime radio seemed a logical and cost-effective advertising venue" (Allen, 1985: 108). Radio soap opera began to thrive between 1933 and 1937 as more corporations recognized its advertising potential (e.g., Pillsbury and General Foods). And the writers of radio soap opera "kept uppermost in their minds the function of their stories as advertising vehicles" (Allen, 1985: 118). Radio soap opera continued to thrive well into the late 1950's until the advent of network television.

The corporations who sponsored daytime radio soap opera did not turn immediately to television, waiting for proof of its ability to draw daytime audiences. However, the proof was there by 1960 and "television serials completely supplanted their radio antecedents" (Allen, 1985: 125). Today television soap opera still is a popular advertising vehicle that reaches millions of women, and it remains a popular form of entertainment for those women. Its longevity is due to its continuing ability to fulfill its economic function. Furthermore, soap opera's relative obscurity can also account for its longevity.

Part of the soap opera's success on television can be attributed to its "invisibility" to male opinion leaders, legislators, and regulators....[U]ntil the 1970s few academics bothered studying them, few commentators wrote about them, and the trade press found the seasonal prime-time network crapshoot more

exciting to cover than the much more static (albeit profitable) world of daytime programming" (Allen, 1985: 126).

Soap opera's relative obscurity and its failure to gain respect in the circles of respectability can be directly connected to its status as women's fiction.

### The Trivialization of Soap Opera

Women's fiction has never received the respect that men's fiction unquestionably receives. The celebration of men's fiction, while women's fiction is ignored or disparaged, can be seen within the general context of the trivialization of women's culture. "Speaking crudely, football and sport are 'important'; the worship of fashion, the buying of clothes 'trivial.' And these values are inevitably transferred from life to fiction" (Woolf, 1927: 128).

Soap opera as women's fiction has a long history of being categorized as 'trivial.' With its narrative roots in the domestic novel of the nineteenth century, the soap opera, from its beginnings in radio to its successful transition to television, has been marginal to the dominant male narrative forms. "[T]he soap opera was [and is] regarded as a form marked by its difference from normative (read, "male") categories of art and narrative, as something apart from, not

a part of, traditional narrative genres" (Allen, 1985: 138). The subject matter of soap opera's fictional discourse (i.e., women's concerns) is often excluded or trivialized in dominant fictional discourses (i.e., men's genres: the western, the spy thriller, the private eye) (Weibel, 1977: xx; Allen, 1985: 149). Moreover, the labels attached to feminine narratives (e.g., soap opera, romance stories, domestic novel) carry with them a notion of triviality issuing from "the masculine contempt for sentimental (feminine) 'drivel'" (Modleski, 1982: 14).

It is contended that this so-called 'sentimental (feminine) drivel' re-presents<sup>1</sup> women's culture; furthermore, soap opera re-presents a female **subculture** amid the dominant male culture. Allen (1985: 148) observes

women have in some sense formed a subculture in American society, a subculture defined by sex and in relation to the dominant male culture and united by a common set of experiences and imposed values. The domestic novel represents the emergence of a vehicle of public literary expression for the American female subculture...continued in later fiction, women's magazines, and soap operas.

All soap operas "qualify as manifestations of women's culture" (Cantor and Pingree, 1983: 27). Soap opera as a women's genre re-presents women's culture, the private sphere. The private sphere (as opposed to the public sphere of the dominant male culture) is the female subculture. This

subculture is the sphere of women's concerns: family, romance, health, the personal. It is these cultural values that soap opera speaks (Hobson, 1982: 32). Soap opera is the re-presentation of the world from a female perspective, and this is why the dominant male culture trivializes the genre. In 1940, one male critic equated soap opera with children's programming.

Through the long mid-afternoon, while I itched to listen in on Rep. Die's denunciations or Mr. Damrosch, Swansdown Flour, Bisquik, Dr. Lyon's Tooth Powder, Mazola...and Procter and Gamble kept me drugged with the insidious fascinations of "Valiant Lady," "My Son and I"... "Orphans of Divorce,"...and "Backstage Wife."...Then suddenly "Jack Armstrong, the All-American Boy," "Little Orphan Annie," and "Tom Mix" were upon me, and I realized it was the children's hour. Children's hour indeed! Hadn't the whole day been one long children's hour (Cook in Allen, 1985: 11)!

However, once soap opera is analyzed within its wider context, it is not so easily dismissed as trivial.

#### Soap Opera as a Cultural Product

Soap opera is a cultural product of the mass medium of television, and as such, it will re-present the meanings inherent in its culture (Fiske and Hartley, 1978: 17). As a cultural product, soap opera will respond to the conditions of its culture, reproducing those conditions through the representations in its text. The culture which surrounds the

soap opera is patriarchal; furthermore, patriarchal culture is the hegemonic culture (English Studies Group, 1980: 262-263). It will be argued in this work that soap opera, as a cultural text, will function to symbolically reproduce patriarchal ideological hegemony. "[T]he basic thesis that popular fiction has a particular work to do in the maintenance and struggle for hegemony is important. Gramsci insists that hegemony is struggled for in every sphere of society, even in those areas which seem most private and removed from the incursions of politics or the state" (English Studies Group, 1980: 265).

To dismiss soap opera as trivial is to view the genre in a narrow focus. The broader context of the genre must be recognized; that is, the conditions of its existence must be understood. By viewing soaps in this wider context, the genre's so-called triviality is brought into question.

### The Soap Opera Viewer

Viewer's of soap opera are predominantly women (Cantor and Pingree, 1983: 118). It is often said of this particular audience that soap opera provides an avenue of escape from their daily lives (Hobson, 1982: 119). This negative assessment of the soap opera viewer follows from the trivialization of the genre and from its location within mass culture. "Women are therefore seen as the passive victims of



the deceptive message of the soap operas, just as the ideology of mass culture sees the audience as unwitting and pathetic victims of the commercial culture industry" (Ang, 1982: 119). However, this assessment of the soap opera viewer is too simplistic. How can soap opera with its intense melodramatic portrayal of life's problems be an avenue of escape? More significantly, the reduction of this viewer to a 'passive victim' ignores the interaction the viewer has with the soap opera text.

Viewers do not passively watch soap opera. As Hobson (1982: 135) found in her study of soap opera viewers, they "contribute to their own understanding of the programme and make their own readings of what the production sets out to communicate. They work with the text and add their own experiences and opinions to the stories in the programme." Viewers do not necessarily accept dominant messages in the text in an unquestioning way. The message in the text "can be changed or 'worked on' by the audience as they make their own interpretation of a programme" (Hobson, 1982: 106). Although this analysis is not concerned with a theory of the reader, it does assume an active reader unlike the one proposed in the mass culture perspective. However, as will be seen in this research, the text's openness is limited, structuring the viewing experience towards the dominant point of view.

## Chapter Two

### Theory

#### Introduction

The theoretical orientation which informs this analysis of soap opera derives from the Cultural Studies approach. This approach places the mass media in their cultural context, arguing that the mass media reproduce the meanings of their culture. Stuart Hall's (1977) theory of the mass media explicates how the mass media reproduce the ideological structures of their culture, and thus, ideological hegemony.

The following will situate Hall in a broader tradition discussing key theorists of ideology: Marx, the Critical Theorists, and Althusser. Gramsci's conceptualization of hegemony will then be discussed as an alternative to domination theory. This is followed by discussion of Hall's particular conceptualization of ideology, indicating the influences of Althusser and Gramsci. Furthermore, Hall's theory of the mass media will be presented, revealing the additional influence of Gramsci.

Becoming more specific, patriarchy and ideology will be discussed in the context of hegemony. Then attention will turn to television and ideology. The circumstances and

conventions of television facilitate ideology; moreover, television is seen to reproduce ideological hegemony.

Given the above discussion, it is suggested that soap opera (as a product of television) will also reproduce ideological hegemony. Specifically, soap opera as a women's genre re-presenting women's culture will reproduce patriarchal ideological hegemony. It is shown that the soap opera text contains patriarchal ideology, and a brief review of the literature reveals that patriarchal ideology does struggle with an alternative ideology of liberal feminism to construct meaning within the soap opera text.

The hypothesis that soap opera will reproduce patriarchal ideological hegemony will be tested using Hall's theory of the mass media which necessitates analyzing how soap opera constructs meaning.

### Marx and Ideology

Marx's theory of ideology can be divided into three aspects: the conception of a dominant ideology, ideology as a distortion of reality, and the relationship between phenomenal forms and reality. The first aspect of Marx's theory of ideology is the conception of a dominant ideology.

Marx states:

The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the

ruling ideas: i.e., the class which is the ruling material force of society, is at the same time its ruling intellectual force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of mental production...the ideas of those who lack the means of production are subject to it. The ruling ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relationships, the dominant material relationships grasped as ideas; hence of the relationships which make the one class the ruling one, therefore, the ideas of its dominance (Marx and Engels, 1972: 136-137; emphasis in original).

Ideology is placed within the context of power and domination. Those with material power have the power to control representations<sup>2</sup> of reality. They use this form of power to legitimize the continuance of their dominant position in society and the subordinate position of others. Through its ideology, the dominant class represents its particular interests as the universal interests of all classes. This dominant ideology supports the class system of domination (Giddens, 1983: 19). However, the dominant ideology, as an expression of a class system of domination, must also express class struggle. By necessity, it must be contradictory expressing differing interests (Hall, 1977: 317).

Moreover, this ruling class/ruling ideas model of ideology posits ideology as a reflection of the material conditions of existence determined by the mode of production. Ideology comes to be determined by the economic, denying it autonomy.

The second aspect of Marx's theory of ideology poses ideology as a distortion of reality. "Consciousness can never be anything else than conscious existence, and the existence of men is their actual life-process. If in all ideology men and their circumstances appear upside-down as in a camera obscura, this phenomenon arises just as much from their historical life-process as the inversion of objects on the retina does from their physical life-process" (Marx and Engels, 1972: 118; emphasis in original). The 'camera obscura' metaphor suggests ideology is a distorted representation of reality inverting real relations. Similar to the ruling class/ruling ideas model, the distorted representation is directly translatable to concrete reality implying that ideas are only epiphenomena dependent on the economic for their existence (Mephram, 1974: 101). Moreover, the people whose consciousness is produced through the material relations of their existence have a false understanding of their circumstances; they possess false consciousness, for they live in distortion. The result of false consciousness is the dehistoricizing of the social, as it is presented as natural and universal (Ramirez, 1986: 98). Within ideology, and thus false consciousness, society is presented as an ahistorical entity hiding the precariousness of the social structure as a product of human construction.

The third aspect of Marx's theory of ideology is the

relationship between phenomenal forms and reality. Phenomenal forms are the categories which compose ideology. They arise from real relations, and at the same time, they conceal the real relations of people to their conditions of existence. Phenomenal forms are appearances, and as such, they only present a partial reality. For example, the phenomenal form 'wages' is an ideological category which makes invisible the basis of the real relation between capital and labour which is exploitation based on surplus value. The exploitative production process as the necessary real relation of capitalism is hidden. Instead, only the exchange of labour is visible in an apparently free market of free individuals exchanging a 'fair day's wage for a fair day's work' (Mephram, 1974: 103, 109; Hall, 1977: 323). Phenomenal forms conceal the contradictions of a capitalist social formation.

Phenomenal forms as ideological categories perform the "structural dislocation" or the "decentering of material practice" of the real relations of capitalism from the ideological discourses that re-present them. These phenomenal forms are not illusions, for they are materialized in social practice (Hall, 1977: 323-324). Individuals do act in a labour market exchanging their work for wages. Moreover, unlike the 'camera obscura' conception of ideology, phenomenal forms cannot be traced directly back to reality independently of one another. Phenomenal forms are

interdependent. Real relations are hidden in a "structure of appearances" or in the interconnections of phenomenal forms. The wage as a phenomenal form is not independent of other phenomenal forms. Once this ideological category is identified, it necessitates the analysis of other phenomenal forms to which it is inextricably connected. For example, the wage necessitates an analysis of the phenomenal form money. Money hides the real source of the wage from the labourer. It appears as if the capitalist's wealth does not derive from surplus value. And money necessitates the analysis of the phenomenal form commodity, whose exchange through the money form, hides the human labour inherent in the production of that commodity. Consequently, the real relations of production (i.e., labour exploitation) are hidden in the equivalent exchange of commodities for money in the market place (Mephram, 1974: 111).

Within Marx's theory of ideology, there are two conceptions of ideology. Ideology is viewed as a distortion of reality merely reflecting reality upside-down in an illusion. Ideology is equated with false consciousness. Then, ideology is viewed as a structure of appearances partially representing reality. Moreover, Marx reduces ideology to the economic. It can be seen in the work of later ideology theorists that two aspects of these particular conceptualizations of ideology have become problematic. The

critical theorists take up false consciousness with Althusser later arguing against both false consciousness and economic reductionism.

### Critical Theorists and Ideology

The critical theorists of the Frankfurt school (i.e., Adorno, Horkheimer, Marcuse) represented a shift from the economism of Marxism to the concern with ideology and culture. They were influenced by the mass society critique which concerned itself with "the decline of the 'organic community', the rise of mass culture, [and] the social atomization of 'mass man'" (Bennett, 1982: 32). Placing these concerns of the mass society critique within a Marxist framework, the critical theorists developed a critique of modern culture and the media.

This critique focused on the media's role in preventing the working class from developing a revolutionary consciousness (Bennett, 1982: 42). For the critical theorists, the working class consciousness has been thwarted by 'the culture industry' which constantly provides categories of thought (i.e., ideologies) for them to think reality. This prevents alternative categories of thought from occurring and threatening the status quo. Furthermore, high culture has lost its critical potential, for it has been reduced to low culture through the massified commodities of



the media which reproduce capitalism.

The products indoctrinate and manipulate; they promote a false consciousness which is immune against its falsehood....Thus emerges a pattern of **one-dimensional thought and behavior** in which ideas, aspirations, and objectives that, by their content, transcend the established universe of discourse and action are either repelled or reduced to the terms of this universe (Marcuse, 1964: 12; emphasis in original).

→ The critical theorists contend that mass culture creates a working class with a false consciousness through the dominant ideology of capitalism, disseminated by 'the culture industry.' However, the critical theorists, as intellectuals, did not possess this false consciousness. Despite this elitism, they did put forth ideology and the media as important vehicles in managing the contradictions of capitalism. And they did relegate Marxist economism to the background (Bennett, 1982: 46; McQuail, 1984: 63). Yet, they retained the notion of a dominant ideology creating false consciousness in the subordinate classes.

It is Althusser who argues against false consciousness while retaining the notion of a dominant ideology. And it is Althusser who places Marxist economism in the foreground arguing against it.

### Althusser and Ideology

Althusser's theory of ideology is part of an attempt

to rework classical Marxism (Grossberg and Slack, 1985: 88). He argues against the economic reductionism of classical Marxism contending that society is a structured totality not reducible to one single element, the economic (Hall, 1985: 91). The economic is not the essential center, the essential determinate, of the social formation, so the superstructures are relatively autonomous of it. In relation to ideology, this autonomy of the superstructures means that ideology has an existence of its own relatively independent of the economic. It does not merely reflect material relations.

Althusser conceptualizes ideology as a

system of representations...[which] have nothing to do with 'consciousness': they are usually images and occasionally concepts, but it is above all as **structures** that they impose on the vast majority of [people], not via their 'consciousness'....In ideology [people]...express, not the relation between them and their conditions of existence, but **the way** they live the relation between them and their conditions of existence: this presupposes both a real relation and an '**imaginary**', '**lived**' relation (1969: 233; emphasis in original).

This conceptualization makes an important distinction between real relations and imaginary relations. People's relationships to reality are imaginary, for there is no correspondence between the real relations of the social and how they are lived by people. As previously discussed in relation to Marx, the real relation in the capitalist social formation between employer and employee is exploitative.

However, people do not live the real relation. Instead, they experience reality through phenomenal forms. Phenomenal forms can be seen as the imaginary. A fair day's wage for a fair day's work is an imaginary relationship of people to their real conditions of existence, exploitation. People do not experience the real relation but rather live in the imaginary relation of phenomenal forms (i.e., ideology).

However, imaginary relations are not false consciousness. Althusser argues that ideology has 'nothing to do with consciousness', for it is as structures that ideology exists. "[People] 'live' their ideologies...not at all as a form of consciousness, but as an object of their 'world' -as their 'world' itself" (Althusser, 1969: 233; emphasis in original). Ideology represents and structures people's lived experience. It is real. Ideology, as lived experience, is material and has effects because it becomes inscribed in social practices.

→ Althusser (1971: 166) contends that ideology exists within social practices, specifically within the practices of the "ideological state apparatuses." ISA's are social institutions which reproduce the ideological structures of society. They include the educational system, the family, the church, and the mass media (Althusser, 1971: 143). The social practices of these ISA's are organized in rituals (e.g., marriage, a Sunday service, a school day) where people's

actions, predicated by their imaginary lived experience, are placed. Thus, ideology assumes a material existence within the ISA's as it is manifest in concrete practice (Althusser, 1971: 168-169). Since ideology has material effects, it cannot be false.

→ The mechanism through which ideology works is the subject for Althusser. Ideology only exists through its creation of subjects (Althusser, 1971: 170-171). Ideology produces experience for individuals creating places or subject positions for them within that experience. Individuals become subjects when they recognize their experience within ideology. This recognition invites or "hails" these individuals to occupy the subject positions created in the ideological structure. This creation of subjects is also called "interpellation." Moreover, individuals are "always already subjects" unable to escape ideology (Althusser, 1971: 172-174; emphasis in original).

However, Althusser's theory of ideology can only account for the reproduction of a dominant ideology. He places ideology at the center of capitalism functioning to reproduce its social relations of production. It is by "the massive inculcation of the ideology of the ruling class that the relations of production in a capitalist social formation, i.e., the relations of exploited to exploiters and exploiters to exploited, are largely reproduced" (Althusser, 1971: 156;

emphasis in original). Althusser does not account for the reproduction of ideologies other than the dominant one.

It is Gramsci who provides an alternative to the notion of a dominant ideology which pervades the work of the previous theorists.

### Gramsci and Hegemony

→ Gramsci's analysis of society is a project intended to discover how consensus is produced in a class society where power and dominance characterize class relations. His key concept, hegemony, provides the answer to the problem of the production of consensus. It runs counter to the ruling class/ruling ideas explanation for social consensus which posits a static dominant ideology legitimating the domination of one class by another. Rather, the structure of dominance of class society is achieved by cultural leadership not ideological domination. This is the central theme of hegemony (Mouffe, 1979: 193).

The nature of this cultural leadership is the ability of the dominant class, amid ideological struggle with subordinate classes, to establish an equilibrium where it successfully articulates the ideological elements of the subordinate classes to its value system. This articulation<sup>3</sup> creates a "successful hegemony" where a collective will is constructed among all classes so that the dominant class

"appears as representative of the general interest" acting on its behalf (Mouffe, 1979: 194). The antagonisms that exist between classes are transformed into mere differences which appear to be equally represented in a pluralist society. This is how consensus is produced. (The subordinate classes consent to their own subordination, for their interests appear to be the same as the dominant class, displacing inequalities in power.<sup>4</sup> The power of the dominant class lies in its ability to win consent for its dominance through ideological struggle, through its power to construct hegemonic ideology. Power becomes inscribed in ideology.)

However, the very nature of this cultural leadership predisposes it to a constant struggle to maintain power and dominance. Cultural leadership involves directing the collective will towards the interest of that leadership, the dominant class. Thus, it is a constant struggle to maintain the particular structure of the ideological elements that make up the collective will. For, there are other classes in society whose interests are in opposition to the dominant class', and they engage in a struggle to rearticulate the structure of ideological elements (Mouffe, 1979: 183, 192). (The dominant class, in order to maintain its hegemonic position, must constantly modify the collective will as new interests are expressed by rival classes for cultural leadership.) Hegemonic ideology is necessarily dynamic and

fluid, for it must readjust its elements to maintain the delicate equilibrium of hegemony and the production of consensus.

Gramsci's formulation of hegemony recognizes the diversity of ideologies that exist within any society. The differing conditions of existence (both social and material) of particular classes in society give way to differing definitions of reality -a multiplicity of ideologies. Hegemonic ideology is a dynamic and fluid structure of unequal, contradictory, and competing ideologies organized within the framework of the dominant class' definitions of reality. It is on the terms of the dominant class that subordinate realities are expressed. Ideology becomes central to the exercise of power and the production of consent.

It is Stuart Hall who blends the theorizing of Althusser and Gramsci to produce his own theory of ideology and the mass media.

#### Stuart Hall and Ideology

The emergence of the Cultural Studies approach brought to the fore the concept of ideology in relation to the analysis of the mass media (Hall, 1980a: 117). "This approach begins with the assumption that all cultural items, in the form of media content and cultural artifacts, contain elements of the processes and ideologies inherent in their

creation" (Belkaoui, 1979: 104). The mass media are analyzed in the context of their surrounding culture, for it is culture which contains the meanings that the mass media re-presents. Here culture is conceptualized as a form which structures meanings into definite relationships or ideological configurations. Therefore, culture can be said to embody the meanings which reproduce ideology. Culture is a "signifying practice" with "its own determinate product: meaning" (Hall, 1980b: 30; emphasis in original). As cultural products, the mass media come to embody the particular ideological configuration of that culture. Moreover, the mass media are seen as sites of ideological struggle where the production of meaning becomes an area of contention.

The key proponent of the Cultural Studies approach to the mass media is Stuart Hall. His theory of the mass media views the mass media as social institutions with central roles in the reproduction of ideology. Hall's view of the mass media derives from Althusser's conceptualization of them as 'ideological state apparatuses.' It is with this influence from Althusser that Hall (1977: 343) conceptualizes the mass media as "socially, economically and technically organized apparatuses, for the production of messages, signs arranged in complex discourses: 'symbolic goods'."<sup>5</sup>

The 'symbolic' dimensions of the mass media are their ideological dimensions, and Hall also draws on Althusser for



his conceptualization of ideology. Hall agrees with Althusser on many of the key notions involved in his conceptualization of ideology as discussed previously. Specifically, Hall (1985: 91, 99-100) concurs with Althusser that ideology is not reducible to the material relations of society. Ideology is a relatively autonomous level of the social formation. As clarified in the earlier discussion, ideology has material effects, for it is inscribed in social practices. Thus, following the logic of Althusser's argument, Hall agrees ideology cannot be false consciousness. Furthermore, Hall concurs that ideology imposes itself as a structure. "Ideologies are the frameworks of thinking and calculation about the world -the 'ideas' which people use to figure out how the social world works, what their place is in it and what they ought to do" (Hall, 1985: 99; emphasis in original). And as for Althusser, Hall (1985: 102), too, concurs that individuals are subjects created by ideology.

However, Hall eventually breaks with Althusser's conceptualization of ideology contending it is too functionalist (Hall, 1977: 337; Hall, 1982: 78; Hall 1985: 99). Althusser contends that the ideological state apparatuses only function to reproduce the dominant ideology without addressing the reproduction of ideologies which counter the dominant one. As Hall (1985: 99) observes, "[w]hen you ask about the contradictory field of ideology,

about how the ideology of the dominated classes gets produced and reproduced, about the ideologies of resistance, of exclusion, of deviation, etc., there are no answers [from Althusser]."

It is now that Hall turns to Gramsci's concept of hegemony to further develop his conceptualization of ideology, and thus, his theory of the mass media in society. Ideology, through Gramsci's concept of hegemony, becomes a "complex field (not a single, univocal structure)" (Hall, 1977: 333; emphasis in original). Moreover, ideology becomes for Hall "one of the key forms of contestation over the dispositions and struggles for power at different sites in society" (Grossberg and Slack, 1985: 90). Power becomes contested through a struggle over meaning, a struggle to signify reality in a particular way. This struggle over meaning emerges as the "politics of signification" (Hall, 1982: 78). Ideologies "contest one another, often drawing on a common, shared repertoire of concepts, rearticulating them within different systems of difference or equivalence" (Hall, 1985: 104). This is an active process where definitions of reality are constructed and reconstructed. The struggle is a social practice.

Refining his conceptualization of ideology under Gramsci's notion of hegemony, Hall is able to go beyond the 'dominant ideology' of Althusser. He retains the progressive

elements in Althusser's conceptualization of ideology blending them with the influences of Gramsci. He develops his conceptualization of ideology as a fluid structure of many competing ideologies struggling for preference to define reality. "Ideology is, for Hall, the web of meanings and discourses, the strings of connotation and their means of representation, within which social practices, consciousness, identities, and subjectivities are placed" (Grossberg and Slack, 1985: 89). It is Hall's conceptualization of ideology which will inform this analysis.

In summary, it is Marx's work on ideology which began the development of this important concept. Marx located his two conceptualizations of ideology within the context of power, domination, and class struggle. He conceived of a dominant ideology which served the interests of the dominant class by maintaining their dominant position in society. Moreover, Marx viewed ideology as an effect of the material relations of society totally reducible to the economic. In his 'camera obscura' metaphor, ideology became false consciousness. Yet, in his discussion of phenomenal forms, ideology became a partial representation of reality materialized in social practice, and thus, not false consciousness. From Marx's work on ideology, the notions of a dominant ideology, economic reductionism, false consciousness, and phenomenal forms became central concerns

of later theorists.

The critical theorists, in their critique of mass culture and its deleterious effect on revolutionary potential of the working class, conceptualized ideology following Marx's 'camera obscura' metaphor. Ideology for the critical theorists is false consciousness. The concern here is with the dominant ideology and its creation of false consciousness in the working class. This particular conceptualization of ideology does not go beyond Marx, and thus, it does not offer any critical insights or developments concerning the conceptualization of ideology.

With the advent of Althusser, the conceptualization of ideology does develop beyond Marx. There is a movement away from false consciousness and a treatment of the problem of economism. Althusser, in his critique, denied the reducibility of ideology to the material relations of society. He developed the conceptualization of ideology by arguing that ideology was relatively free of the economic. Furthermore, ideology was not false consciousness. It had real material effects as the lived experience of individuals. Here Althusser is seen to draw near to Marx's phenomenal forms, for imaginary relations can be equated with the partial representations of reality represented in phenomenal forms as the building blocks of ideology. And Althusser's introduction of the subject as the vehicle for ideology is a

further advancement in the conceptualization of ideology.

Despite the progressive elements in Althusser's work, he retained the notion of a dominant ideology. His concern was how, through the ISA'S, the dominant ideology was reproduced, and in turn, reproduced the status quo (i.e., the social relations of production).

Gramsci's development of the concept of ideology takes place within his conceptualization of hegemony. Ideology is no longer the static dominant ideology of the previous theorists. Rather, it becomes fluid and dynamic facilitating the hegemonic process. Ideology becomes the site of struggle for differing class interests. It becomes the locus of power, for whoever controls representations has the power to construct hegemonic ideology. This retains Marx's original placement of ideology in the context of power, but it goes beyond Marx's notion of a dominant ideology in the ruling class/ruling ideas model. Ideology, in Gramsci, is a delicate balance of conflicting interests directing the collective will toward the interests of the dominant class.

Stuart Hall combines the key conceptions of Althusser and Gramsci to develop his conceptualization of ideology. Ideology now is a structure or system of representations that creates subjects materializing itself in their social practices. Ideology is not static but ever changing. It is the site of power struggles among differing interests which

vie for the power to shape representations of reality. Hall locates this notion of ideology within the material site of Althusser's ISA's or specifically the mass media.

As previously noted, it is Hall's conceptualization of ideology that informs this research. And it is the position of the Cultural Studies approach that the mass media, as cultural products, embody the ideologies of culture which is the basis for this study. The above statements demand certain approaches to the topic at hand. Firstly, it is proposed that ideology will be found in the products of the mass media. Secondly, if ideology is not false consciousness but material, it is again proposed that ideology can be found within the material sites of the mass media. Thirdly, since ideology is a structure, it is proposed that it will be uncovered within the media in that form. This directs the research towards a particular methodology as will be seen in the following chapter. Fourthly, if ideology is an ever changing site of struggle, it should be found as such in the texts of the mass media.

#### Stuart Hall's Theory of the Mass Media

With Gramsci's conceptualization of the hegemonic process, Hall is able to take his theory of the mass media beyond their being sites and transmitters of ideology. Appropriating Gramsci's notion of hegemony, Hall (1977:

340-342) explicates how the mass media organize contradictory and competing discourses within the hegemonic ideology to produce, from a fragmented and plural reality, the sense of a social totality and social consensus, that is, ideological hegemony. This is Hall's theory of the mass media.

Hall (1977: 340-342) distinguishes three functions of the mass media which give them roles in the reproduction of the hegemonic process.<sup>6</sup> The first function of the mass media is to construct an imaginary social totality which is a ready-made whole free from fragmentation. The realities of disparate groups are homogenized, so the cleavages of society are masked as compatible differences. The 'ideological effect' of this imaginary social totality is the unifying of pluralities, so that they appear to coexist without antagonisms. All groups appear to have the same interests, for particular interests (i.e., those of the dominant group) are universalized. The construction of this social imagery presents a "world-of-the whole" (Hall, 1977: 341). A plurality of realities is made intelligible, so they can be apprehended as a coherent social whole.

The second function of the mass media in their reproduction of ideological hegemony is to articulate the diverse ideologies of a plural society. "Here the social knowledge which the media selectively circulate is ranked and arranged within the great normative and evaluative

classifications, within the preferred meanings and interpretations" (Hall, 1977: 341; emphasis in original). The management of alternative ideologies takes place in this ranking arena. They are contained or incorporated by the preferred ideologies. It is here the struggle over meaning takes place, for this is where it is 'decided' what ideologies will be allowed to define reality and how.

The third function of the mass media is the production of consensus. Consensus must be produced for the preferred rankings of ideologies within the hegemonic ideologies. The production of consensus is secured as "contrary views" are included within the preferred definitions of reality which allow disparate groups to "attach themselves" to this particular ranking of ideologies (Hall, 1977: 342). They recognize their own subordinated definitions of reality within the hegemonic discourse. This recognition produces consent to the preferred ranking, for their views appear to be equally represented. Thus, they consent to their own subordination effecting the reproduction of ideological hegemony.

However, the securing of ideological hegemony is not guaranteed. Given the nature of hegemonic ideology as a delicate balance of ideological elements constantly in struggle to establish meaning, subordinate groups will not necessarily decode ideological meaning as the dominant group



has encoded it. Hall (1980c: 135) states that "there is no necessary correspondence between encoding and decoding, the former can attempt to 'pre-fer' but cannot prescribe or guarantee the latter, which has its own conditions of existence." Hall (1980c: 136-138) establishes three positions a subject may assume from which to decode meanings: dominant hegemonic, negotiated, or oppositional. A dominant hegemonic decoding preserves the dominant or preferred encoded meaning. A negotiated decoding preserves generally the dominant meaning while decoding oppositional meaning at the situational level.<sup>7</sup> Finally, oppositional decoding preserves nothing of the original dominant encoded meaning.

Thus, the mass media as ideological state apparatuses do not necessarily succeed in the absolute reproduction of ideological hegemony. Reproduction is loose, leaving room for change, for the hegemonic process is a tenuous process of managing conflicting and changing interests. It is Hall's theory of the mass media which will be used as a framework within which to analyze how soap opera reproduces patriarchal ideological hegemony.

### Patriarchy and Ideology —

The discussion will now turn its attention away from ideology and class domination to ideology and gender domination. This, of course, necessitates a discussion of

patriarchy. Patriarchy is "the omnipresent system of male [dominance] and female subjugation...achieved through socializing, perpetuated through ideological means, and maintained by institutional methods" (Mitchell, 1971: 65). Patriarchy is a gender hierarchy of male dominance and female subordination. The ideological separation of the public and private spheres in patriarchal ideology is a legitimating device for this hierarchy (Jaggar, 1983: 241). It normatively constructs women in the private sphere of the family, the center of patriarchy's gender hierarchy (Mitchell, 1971: 99).

The ideologies of romance, femininity, domesticity, and motherhood "compose the matrix of patriarchal ideology" (Harrison, 1978: 192). The ideology of romance associates love with marriage. Marrying for love is the basis on which the roles of women in the private sphere are legitimated (Bland et al., 1978: 43). Moreover, the ideology of romance hides the economic aspect of the relationship where the man establishes dominance over the woman, instead presenting marriage as an "affective" relationship (Jaggar, 1983: 199). The ideology of femininity concerns female sexuality. It defines women as the sources of pleasure for men always being "attractive" and "available" (Winship, 1978: 136).

The ideology of domesticity posits women's place as in the home, establishing her central role within the family. Her role there is not only as a domestic labourer, but she

also must "[ensure] the sanctity of the home" (cited in Bland et al., 1978: 47). She is responsible for the emotional well being of all family members. Domestic ideology legitimates the private sphere as the 'natural' place for women.

The ideology of motherhood, in tandem with the ideology of domesticity, further places women 'naturally' within the private sphere. This ideology defines women as nurturers who are the virtuous protectors of the family. Female sexuality is denied in the ideology of motherhood. In this ideology, women are "sexually unavailable" (Winship, 1978:138).

Conceptualizing patriarchal ideology as a 'matrix' is to view it as a container of its composing ideologies which, by necessity, are fluid within it. The ideologies of romance, femininity, domesticity, and motherhood move in and out of preferred positions. There is no rank order among them. The ideology of romance moves into a preferred position within the matrix to legitimate the ideologies of domesticity and motherhood (Harrison, 1978: 192). For, the organization of women into the private sphere is predicated on their acceptance of the ideology of romance. Romantic love is the basis for women's dedication to the family and her domestic roles. Furthermore, the ideology of romance and the ideology of femininity are interdependent. In order to attain

romantic love, women must make themselves pleasing to men. It is only by defining women as pleasure givers, through the ideology of femininity, that the ideology of romance can work. Moreover, it is women's role in the family to please men because of romantic love.

Contradictions arise from this fluidity. The ideologies of motherhood and femininity are contradictions within the matrix of patriarchal ideology (Winship, 1978: 136, 148). The ideology of femininity demands that women be sexually available for men's pleasure. The ideology of motherhood demands that women be maternal and deny sexuality. These two demands for women are contradictory, establishing a binary opposition: the whore versus the mother (Jaggar, 1983: 260).

The hegemonic position of patriarchal ideology in our society is predicated on its ability to maintain these composing ideologies as the preferred meanings of women's subordinate position. As a hegemonic ideology, it has successfully incorporated and contained alternative meanings of women's conditions put forth by feminism in general (Jaddou and Williams, 1981: 109). The particular struggle over meaning which has taken place since the advent of feminism necessitates patriarchal ideology's incorporation of meanings in opposition to its definition of reality. Moreover, it necessitates a movement of the hegemonic

equilibrium allowing for change (i.e., not only allowing the interests of women greater voice but their actualization). Women's rights have been strengthened within patriarchy from women attaining the right to vote to their entitlement of an equal share of marital property. Only through careful management of the equilibrium can patriarchy retain its dominance. It has managed a delicate balance of conflicting interests.

#### Television and Ideology

Television is a medium of the mass media. Given Hall's theory of the mass media, television should reproduce ideological hegemony. Television is a social institution which produces 'symbolic goods' in the form of television programmes which cover a wide variety of genres. Television is a cultural artifact, and as such, it comes to re-present cultural meanings -ideological discourses. "Television, as one of the major mass media, is part of the communications apparatus whose primary thrust is ideological; that is to say, it constructs social reality and reproduces social relations" (deLauretis, 1979: 115). Television is a site for the struggle over and production of meaning.

The 'symbolic goods' which television offers can be seen as texts or messages which re-present cultural meanings. The text can only produce meaning through interaction with

the television viewer, and this interaction allows ideology to work (Fiske, 1982: 143-144). However, the interaction between the television text and the viewer takes place under particular circumstances and through particular conventions which facilitate the work of ideology. The television medium has particular characteristics which position the viewer to read meaning from the text unaware of the ideology at work. The "television medium presents us with a continuous stream of images almost all of which are deeply familiar in structure and form....It uses codes which are closely related to those by which we perceive reality itself. It appears to be the natural way of seeing the world" (Fiske and Hartley, 1978: 17; emphasis in original). It is the particular structure of television viewing and presentation which facilitates it as an ideological apparatus.

John Ellis (1982) looks at these particular circumstances of viewing television and the particular conventions of television to show how the work of ideology is facilitated through the structure of the medium. The viewing of television takes place mainly in the home. The domestic setting for television makes viewing an intimate activity done in the privacy of the living room (Ellis, 1982: 113). Furthermore, "the stripped-down image" of television, where details are absent, leads to the conventional close-up camera shots of the medium. This emphasis on the face in close-up

creates a sense of intimacy for the viewer (Ellis, 1982: 131). And it positions the viewer in an intimate relation to the television. The intimate positioning of the viewer is further established through the content of television. The focus on the family form<sup>8</sup> in television's variety of genres "produces a sense of intimacy, a bond between the viewers' conception of themselves (or how they ought to be) and the programme's central concerns" (Ellis, 1982: 136). Moreover, television's sense of being "live" enhanced by its conventions (i.e., segments following real time, self-contained segments, close-ups, sound continuity, and direct address) "gives the impression that these events are...co-present with the viewer, shared rather than witnessed from outside" (Ellis, 1982: 136-137). The televisual representation of reality appears to be that of the viewer; consequently, the fact that the viewer has been positioned in relation to the television from a point of view of intimacy is lost. The conventions which construct this viewing position appear natural, for they are how the viewer naturally perceives reality. The obviousness of perception allows socially produced meaning within the text to appear as the viewer's own, facilitating the work of ideology. Thus, it is not apparent that it is the television that produces the meaning for the viewer and not vice versa.

Television, being a domestic medium, must compete

with the domestic surroundings of viewers which may draw their attention away. The viewer is a casual viewer who 'delegates' his/her glance to television. Therefore, the particular mode of representation for television's meanings must attempt to keep the attention of the viewer (Ellis, 1982: 128). The use of sound (e.g., music and laughter) returns the viewer's attention to the television image. It signifies the important times to look, so the meaning of the text is not lost (Ellis, 1982: 162). The television must keep the attention of viewers in order to "recruit the interests of its viewers by creating a complicity of viewing: the TV look at the world becomes a surrogate look for the viewers" (Ellis, 1982: 163). Yet, this 'surrogate look' appears to be the viewers own natural way of seeing the world. It is not evident that this way of viewing the world is through the socially produced conventions of television based on the codes of realism. "The camera, like a magician, appears to read our mind, and our own act of reading, our necessary act of collaboration in this deceit, goes unnoticed and unnoted" (Nichols, 1981: 35). This, too, facilitates the work of ideology.

Television, as an element of the mass media system, can be looked at specifically in its role as reproducer of ideological hegemony. "Television is a human construct, and the job that it does is the result of human choice, cultural



decisions and social pressures. The medium responds to the conditions within which it exists" (Fiske and Hartley, 1978: 17). If television responds to the conditions within which it exists, it will most likely symbolically reproduce those conditions (i.e., the characteristics of its culture).

Todd Gitlin (1979) looks at the structure of prime time television to see how it expresses and supports ideological hegemony. Looking at the format and formula of prime time television, Gitlin (1979: 254) argues that the regularity of television programmes in terms of time, characters, and narrative form "convey images of social steadiness." This regularity "express[es] and cement[s] the obduracy of a social world impervious to substantial change." The 'ideological effect' is the naturalizing of the social so that it does not appear as a human construct, an historical structure.

The coming and going of television programmes fits into a consumer society where the audience has the illusion of choice in the programs that are produced for consumption. "In this way, the regular changes in TV programs, like the regular elections of public officials, seem to affirm the sovereignty of the audience while keeping deep alternatives off the agenda. Elite authority and consumer choice are affirmed at once -this is one of the central operations of the hegemonic liberal . capitalist ideology" (Gitlin, 1979:

254-255). Moreover, commercials constitute the viewer as a consumer rather than a citizen. "Public problems (like air pollution) are propounded as susceptible to private commodity solutions (like eyedrops)" (Gitlin, 1979: 255). Television privatizes the public.

Gitlin (1979: 256; emphasis in original) argues that "hegemonic ideology is maintained in the Seventies by **domesticating** divisive issues." On prime time television social conflict and social problems are dealt with by a few persons, and the solutions to these problems no matter how "deeply...located within society...will be solved among a few persons" (Gitlin, 1979: 262). The slants of programs are either "a legitimation of depoliticized forms of deviance, usually ethnic or sexual", or "a delegitimation of the dangerous, the violent, the out-of-bounds" (Gitlin, 1979: 261). Social conflict is "transported into the cultural system, where the hegemonic process frames them, form and content both, into compatibility with dominant systems of meaning" (Gitlin, 1979: 264; emphasis in original).

Hegemonic ideology is reproduced through these conventions of prime time television. The social world is presented as an unchanging nonconflictive whole. Viewers are constituted as private, non-political consumers. Social conflict and alternative social arrangements are contained in, or excluded from, the television message reduced to micro

level situations that can be dealt with outside of the political arena. "[H]egemonic ideology is extremely complex and absorptive; it is only by absorbing and domesticating conflicting definitions of reality and demands on it, in fact, that it remains hegemonic" (Gitlin, 1979: 264).

### Soap Opera and Ideology

It has been argued that television, as a mass medium, is an apparatus reproducing hegemonic ideology. Given that soap opera is one of the 'symbolic goods' produced by the social institution of television, it will be argued that soap opera will also reproduce ideological hegemony (i.e., patriarchal ideological hegemony).

As a form of television, soap opera, too, is a product of its conditions of existence. Soap opera exists on television among the myriad of commodities produced by television for mass consumption (Allen, 1985: 45). Soap opera is located in a capitalist society. Indeed, soap opera only exists because it draws an audience for advertisers. Soap opera serves an economic function (Intintoli, 1984: 73; Allen, 1985: 45). However, not only does soap opera exist because of capitalism's logic, its very form and content are shaped by this logic (i.e., profit over aesthetics, and don't offend the viewer/consumer).

The form of soap opera (i.e., narrative form and

visual form) is largely the result of its economic function. From soap opera's origins in radio to its transition to television, it has primarily been seen by its creators as an economic vehicle.

[I]t is clear that the idea of presenting continuing stories focusing upon domestic concerns of daytime radio was the result of the conjunction of corporate desire to reach a particular audience (women eighteen to forty-nine) and broadcaster's need to fit the daytime hours with revenue-generating programming. The soap opera represents a form of cultural production that has been fully penetrated by capital since the moment of its conception, a form driven and sustained by corporate imperatives (Allen, 1985: 128-129).

As an economic vehicle, soap opera was created for a specific category of women -housewives (Cantor and Pingree, 1983: 150). Soap opera, now conveyed by television, is viewed in a domestic setting during a particular time of the day when housewives most likely compose the majority of viewers. In 1981, seventy percent of the daytime audience were women eighteen years and older (Cantor and Pingree, 1983: 118). The form of the soap opera has emerged from these conditions of existence.

Soap opera has a fragmented narrative structure. The narrative structure of soap opera is characteristically segmented and repetitive with multiple plots. The segmentation of the narrative is accomplished by the constant switching from one plot line to another only giving short

segments of any one plot during the course of the soap opera's narrative. Repetition of the various plots takes place daily on soap opera. Repetition always occurs within episodes and across episodes. Characters constantly talk and re-talk plots. And if this repetition is not enough, some soap operas provide the viewer with a summary of events from previous episodes at the beginning of each new episode.

As noted previously by Ellis (1982), television as a domestic medium must compete with domestic surroundings for the viewer's attention. Moreover, the soap opera assumes a particular viewer -the housewife- whose domestic tasks cause her to view in a "distracted state" while she tends to her family's needs and household duties (Modleski, 1983: 70-71, 73). It is within this context that soap opera creators assume women to be viewing, thus the form of soap opera accommodates such a viewer. The 'distracted state' caused by the housewife's daily routine is accommodated by such narrative form. She can watch her favorite soap opera amid the many tasks which interrupt her viewing as the segmentation accommodates short viewing spans; moreover, the repetition of plots allows her to miss some segments without losing the storyline. And just as important, the use of excessive dialogue in soap opera instead of action to move the narrative allows the housewife to follow storylines by listening rather than viewing. This further accommodates her

distracted viewing state.

The fragmented structure of soap opera's narrative accommodates the viewing housewife in order to maintain her interest in the soap opera, so she is available to watch commercials. Commercials increase the segmentation of the narrative structure with their constant interruption. Soap opera is "crafted to fit commercials" (Intintoli, 1984: 76). Moreover, the continuousness of the narrative is an attempt to create a continuous viewer whose loyalty to a particular soap opera may translate into loyalty for the products advertised during that soap opera (Intintoli, 1984: 66).

The excessive use of close-up camera shots result from their quickness compared to complex time consuming long-shots; therefore, close-up camera shots increase production speed and reduce costs (Intintoli, 1984: 141). The use of location shots is kept to a minimum not because they are more expensive than the construction of exterior sets in the studio, but they interfere with the over-all production schedule of the soap opera. The less time used in production the more money that is saved (Intintoli, 1984: 137-138). Thus, soap opera becomes largely a world of interiors filled with talking faces.

The form of soap opera is determined by its economic function; however, as a residual effect, the soap opera's form facilitates the work of ideology. The fragmented

narrative structure accommodates the viewing conditions of the woman, and thus, it constructs a position for her in the soap opera text, a position of interaction with the text and its 'web' of ideology. The use of excessive close-ups and the continuous nature of the narrative construct a type of realism for the viewer where points of recognition can be established. This positions the viewer to construct meaning from the representations within the soap opera text which connote ideological structures.

The content of soap opera is also shaped by the logic of capitalism. Generally, content must be safe, yet it must attract an audience. Consequently, the narrative content must be contemporary but not offensive. The producers of soap opera are very aware of their audience. They have to tell stories that "minimize risk" (Intintoli, 1984: 102; emphasis in original). The stories presented in soap opera are within what the producers perceive to be the majority's view. They must keep within the perceived consensus. Dominant ideologies become encoded in the soap opera text only allowing subordinate ideologies to enter when social pressure is exerted by outside forces struggling over meanings (e.g., pressure groups, audiences). High ratings must be kept so profit is not threatened. Social and economic pressures 'decide' what ideologies are to be included in, or excluded from, the soap opera text.

Since producers of soap opera are very aware of their audiences and since that audience is primarily women, the content of the soap opera must sustain an audience of women in order for its economic function to be fulfilled. "The content of soap opera reflects its intended audience. The stories are women's stories, focusing on love, romance, childbearing, health and illness, manners and morals" (Cantor and Pingree, 1983: 28). Thus, soap opera is a women's genre which re-presents women's culture (Hobson, 1982: 32; Cantor and Pingree, 1983: 27). It is the 'symbolic' dimension of soap opera as meaning producer that incorporates the cultural sphere of women into its content. These 'stories' are the ideological discourses that construct the culture of women's daily lives; moreover, they are the composing ideologies of patriarchal ideology. As a genre that represents women's subculture amid a dominant men's culture, soap opera can be said to exist within the conditions of patriarchal culture. Thus, it can be asked to what extent does soap opera, as a cultural text, contain the ideological discourses of patriarchy.

In this research, it is argued that patriarchal ideology will be one of the ideologies struggling to make meaning within the soap opera text. Furthermore, it is hypothesized that the soap opera text will reproduce symbolically patriarchal ideological hegemony. This is



possible since the soap opera text, as a cultural product, will respond to its conditions of existence -patriarchy-reproducing its hegemonic ideology.

Although there is no research specifically focusing on soap opera and the hegemony of patriarchy's ideology, undertaking a brief review of the literature of studies focusing on the portrayal of women in soap opera indicates the existence of patriarchal ideology in the soap opera text. Moreover, it indicates that the hegemonic process is occurring in the soap opera text as an alternative ideology to patriarchy (i.e., liberal feminist ideology) is contesting the patriarchal definition of women, however limited. This liberal feminist ideology does not seek to destroy patriarchal ideology but rather works to redefine women within hegemonic patriarchy (Jaggar, 1985: 181).

(Recently, there has been an increase in the number of female characters occupying positions of power (i.e., high ranking occupations) in soap opera. However, closer inspection shows that this inclusion is on patriarchal terms. Arliss et al. (1983: 148-150) investigated the occupational roles of women characters on soap opera. They found 64% of male characters occupy positions of power in contrast to only 34% of the female characters. Therefore, female characters tend to occupy mostly subordinate positions despite their numerical balance with male characters (Rondina et al., 1980:

9).

Research has shown that female characters portraying traditional women in the domestic, familial, romantic context are approved while non-traditional (i.e., non-domestic) female characters are condemned (Tuchman, 1978: 13; Meehan, 1983: 124-5). Weibel (1977: 59) observed that female characters on soap operas who neglected their families in favour of the work world were punished in their personal lives (e.g., spouse's infidelity). Cantor and Pingree (1983: 90-91) found that on soap operas "[c]onservative, nurturing women tended to be good characters, while evil women were career-oriented and nontraditional in their behavior."

In these studies, inclusion of the alternative view of women's roles is included on patriarchal terms. It is framed in the dominant value system of patriarchal culture. At the same time that women in powerful positions are accepted, they are rejected. Traditional domestic roles for women are condoned while non-traditional roles are condemned. The age old dichotomization of women's roles into good and evil is drawn on to show that women belong in the private sphere. Entrance into the public sphere of men is to be evil and unwomanly. Weibel (1977: 60-1) states

'Good'...is associated with traits traditionally stereotyped as female, such as love, compassion, family, loyalty, and the willingness to sacrifice and suffer; 'evil', on the other hand, is associated with

traits long stereotyped as masculine -including cutthroat professional ethics, excessive involvement in work, neglect of family, infidelity, and so on.

While an alternative view of women's roles is included in the soap opera text, it is articulated to patriarchal ideology showing the correctness of the separation of the public and private spheres. It delegitimizes and depoliticizes the call for more powerful roles for women in society. Liberal feminist ideology is contained limiting its circulation in patriarchal ideology's matrix. It would appear patriarchal ideology is given preference to construct meaning within the soap opera text. The alternative ideology of liberal feminism is expressed only on the terms of patriarchal ideology. This reveals the hegemonic process at work within the soap opera text.

The research in this brief review of the literature does not explicitly address the issue of patriarchal hegemony. These findings can only tentatively point to the indication of the hegemonic process at work establishing a basis for the stated hypothesis. Therefore, it is the purpose of this research to explicitly address the issue of patriarchal hegemony in relation to soap opera.

### Conclusion

It is the reproduction of patriarchal ideological

hegemony within the soap opera text that is of concern. The interest is on the soap opera as a cultural text and how it re-presents cultural meanings. As a product of its conditions of existence, it is not the 'effects' that the soap opera has on its viewer that are of concern, but rather how the text constructs meaning to be 'read' by the viewer. Much literature on soap opera does not recognize the important 'symbolic' dimension of soap opera and is satisfied to look for the deleterious 'effects' of soap opera viewing. The 'effects' on the viewer include dissatisfaction with life (Kinzer, 1973); the harmful effect on children (Goldsen, 1975); and the distortion of reality (Buerkel-Rothfuss and Mayes, 1981). The soap opera as a cultural text which constructs meaning is ignored; therefore, these researchers do not address the issue of how soap opera constructs and re-presents cultural meanings. They are satisfied to quantify soap opera content analyzing the frequency of particular occupations (Gade, 1981); the types of sex roles portrayed (Turow, 1974; Hodges et al., 1981); the frequency of sexual behavior (Greenberg et al., 1981; Lowry et al., 1981); and the types of conversations found in soap opera dialogue (Fine, 1981). Quantifying the content of soap opera abstracts it from its structural relation to other elements of the soap opera, and thus, there is no possibility of discovering how the soap opera text constructs meaning. Recent research

influenced by the Cultural Studies approach and semiology has begun to delve into the soap opera text exploring its ways of constructing meaning (Hobson, 1982; Brunson, 1983; Modleski, 1983; Allen, 1985).

Using Stuart Hall's theory of the mass media and his conceptualization of ideology, it is the purpose of this research to examine how the soap opera text reproduces the hegemony of patriarchal ideology. This can only be accomplished through discovering how the soap opera text constructs meaning, for ideological hegemony is reproduced primarily through a struggle over meaning. The soap opera's construction of meaning will be examined in terms of how the soap opera (as a 'symbolic good' of the mass medium of television) fulfills the functions of the mass media in its reproduction of patriarchal ideological hegemony.

## Chapter Three

### Methodology

#### Structuralism Versus Content Analysis

The purpose of this analysis is to examine the ways in which the soap opera text reproduces patriarchal ideological hegemony. This necessitates the discovery of how the soap opera text constructs meaning, for this is to discover how ideology works. The analysis must make visible the ideological meanings that appear natural or taken for granted. It must reveal the ideological structures which are encoded in the soap opera text; therefore, a structuralist methodology must be used.

The use of this methodology in the analysis of soap opera texts has not traditionally been the predominant methodology used. Content analysis has been the popular choice as a methodology for the analysis of soap opera texts (Allen, 1985: 35). However, with the positing of the concern of ideology in the mass media, structuralist analysis must replace content analysis as a methodology if ideological structures are to be revealed.

Content analysis is quantitative. It approaches any text with the intention of quantifying items within that text. Thus, the analysis of soap opera using this methodology

quantifies occurrences within the soap opera text often as a basis for comparison with the socio-demographics of the real world. (Allen, 1985: 36). Content analysis studies have looked at the socio-demographic characteristics of soap opera characters comparing them to socio-demographic characteristics of the real world's population to ascertain the degree of realism of the soap opera text (e.g., Katzman, 1972; Cantor and Pingree, 1983; Rondina et al., 1983). Similarly, for the purpose of comparison with the real world, they have looked at the incidence of illness and its cause (Cassata et al., 1983); the incidence and types of violence and crime (Cantor and Pingree, 1983); the incidence and types of social issues presented (Downing, 1974; Greenberg et al., 1982); and the incidence of alcohol use (Lowery, 1980) in the soap opera text.

These types of analyses assume that the soap opera text should represent the real world, and if it doesn't, it distorts reality. The major problem with this assumption is that the fictional status of the soap opera text is ignored. "In the case of content analysis of soap operas, as in other texts...what is being observed for its regularities is not some aspect of a real-life society but a fictional construction" (Allen, 1985: 36). The soap opera text as a fictional construction should not be expected to mimic the real world. As a fictional construction, the soap opera text

selectively extracts aspects of the real world reorganizing them to construct its fictional reality. Allen (1985: 37) calls this "not a process of transplantation but of transmutation." The aspects of reality that are included in the soap opera text do not fully function as in the real world. They are changed when made to conform to the fictive world of the soap opera text.

The world of television is clearly different from our real social world....television does not represent the manifest actuality of our society, but rather reflects, **symbolically**, the structure of values and relationships beneath the surface (Fiske and Hartley, 1978: 24; emphasis added).

It is this 'symbolic' dimension of television and the texts that it produces which are lost in content analysis. For content analysis, by ignoring the fictive status of the soap opera text, confuses reality and fiction assuming the meanings of its quantified items are "derived entirely from their function in the real world and not necessarily from their functions in the texts which they are parts" (Allen, 1985: 38). Thus, the 'symbolic' or ideological dimension of the soap opera text is ignored favoring quantifiable manifest contents. The soap opera text is reduced to isolated items abstracted from their context. This is done in error, for "a text, clearly is a **structured** whole, and the place occupied by the different elements is more important than the number



of times they recur" (Burgelin, 1972: 319; emphasis in original). Content analysis quantifies the signifiers<sup>9</sup> of the text without thought to what they signify; consequently, the systems of signifiers in the text are not analyzed to make visible ideological structures. Content analysis denies the 'symbolic' dimension of the text never moving beyond the manifest content. Of course, content analysis should not be totally disregarded. It is a methodology useful for mapping out the contents of a text. It can be used to identify signifiers in the text.

On the contrary, structuralist analysis does what content analysis cannot. It does make visible the structure of ideology by going beyond the manifest content of the text to reveal the latent content. Structuralism views the text as a 'structured whole' which can be dissected into its constitutive elements to discover how the text makes meaning. The elements are not seen as isolated items to be tabulated, rather they are seen in sets of relations to one another, as systems of differences, and as structures which produce meaning through that difference. Therefore, it is the form of the message not the raw content that is important. It is how the content is organized into various systems of signifiers that reveals how the text means, and thus, reveals ideological structures (Burgelin, 1972: 313-320).

From this perspective meaning is produced through

difference. Signifiers are organized into systems which produce meaning through the differential relationships between each signifier in that system. Each signifier is defined in relation to its difference from the signifiers that precede and follow it. Therefore, the relationship between signifiers is more important than the signifiers as abstractions from the system of differences. For example, a set of traffic lights can be seen as a system of differences. The colours red, yellow, and green compose a structural relationship producing meaning through their difference from one another. Red comes to mean 'stop' set in a differential relationship to green which can only mean 'go' through its difference from red. The colour red abstracted from this system of differences loses its meaning, for without the colour green, it has nothing to define itself against (Fiske, 1982: 63-64).

Furthermore, structural analysis cannot isolate itself from the cultural context of the text, and this holds in the analysis of the mass media. "[T]he mass media clearly do not form a complete culture on their own: in other words, they do not form an entirely closed system, like a language, but simply a fraction of such a system, which is, of necessity, the culture to which they belong" (Burgelin, 1972: 317). The text is a cultural product embodying cultural meanings. It is only through interaction with the culture

surrounding the text, by way of the 'reader' of that text, that meaning is produced and ideology can work. As clarified previously, this analysis concerns itself with how the soap opera text constructs meaning as a cultural product to be 'read' by the viewer. It is concerned with the text itself not a theory of the reader.

Structuralism can reveal how a text constructs meaning; therefore, it makes visible the ideological structures. If the purpose of this analysis is to be realized, it is evident that a structuralist methodology is required.

#### Structuralist Methodology and Soap Opera

This analysis involves the case study of the soap opera Another World. This particular soap opera was chosen from among the many soap operas available because it was familiar to the researcher. This familiarity allowed the researcher knowledge of characters' pasts, knowledge of past and present storylines, and knowledge of the settings which proved valuable to the accuracy and proficiency of the analysis.

Another World is one of the long-lived soap operas of television spanning twenty-four years (Allen, 1985: 127). This researcher's knowledge of Another World is limited to approximately ten years of that span. In that time,

characters and settings have changed, yet some have remained the same. This soap opera is set in Bay City located somewhere in the north eastern United States. The main families currently inhabiting Bay City are the upper class Cory's and Love's along with the working class McKinnon's. Class distinction is based here on occupation, status, and property.

The Cory's are the most established family providing two of the soap opera's central characters, Mac and Rachel Cory. Their estate and Mac's publishing company have been two of the staple settings of the soap opera. Rachel's son Jamie Frame, by a previous marriage, is one of the last remaining members of a once established family on Another World.

The younger of the two upper class families, the Love's, provide a host of familiar characters. The most established being Donna, Peter, and Reginald. They represent old money with Peter having the only discernible occupation as a lawyer. Their mansion and the Love Tower (the location of the restaurant 'Tops') are settings for the unfolding of many plots.

The upper-class families have been the most enduring on Another World with the working class families changing over time. The Perrini's gave way to the Ewing's who are now replaced by the McKinnon's. This family provides four main characters: Vince, Mary, MJ, and Cheryl. Their home and

Vince's restaurant (Mary's Place) are now familiar settings on the soap opera. As families and individual characters leave and enter Bay City, the settings change. However, the staple settings include those associated with the established families, the police station, and Bay City General Hospital.

A week's worth of Another World was video-taped for slow motion analysis. This amounted to five one hour episodes. Within one week of the soap opera, it can be estimated that there were 150 scenes. For, it was calculated that 35 scenes occurred in just one of the episodes taped (see Appendix). Thus, the sample size is extended within each episode of Another World since scenes were often the unit of analysis.

Within these five episodes, eight storylines were in progress and three of these were major storylines. Of these three major storylines, one was chosen to be analyzed. The storyline chosen was distinct from the other two in that it had as its central figure an independent woman attempting to take charge of her life amid many oppositional men. It was the most appropriate storyline for structural analysis given the purpose of the research.

The analysis of this storyline began by systematically identifying all of the relevant scenes within the five video-taped episodes of Another World which were important to the chosen storyline's narrative's progression.

This meant choosing only those scenes where the major characters appeared in the midst of dialogue and action that were a part of the narrative's progression. Scenes were eliminated where the major characters were only in subsidiary roles to other storylines, for these storylines did not relate to the narrative being analyzed. In turn, each of these relevant scenes were summarized for their contribution to the narrative's progression giving the over-all structure of the narrative.

The structural analysis then began by dissecting each scene of the storyline into their various possible elements or signifiers: characters, blocking (i.e., character positions in relation to objects or other characters), dialogue, physical action, clothing, props, settings, camera shots, music etc. The purpose of identifying the signifiers within each scene was to discover how they combined to construct the meaning of each scene. The signifiers within each scene were reassembled into a 'structured whole' revealing how each scene constructed meaning. The structure of each scene was seen to be a complex chain of signifiers activating meaning. The chain of signifiers was predominantly set off by characters, for they were the carriers of many of the signifiers (e.g., dialogue, blocking, physical action, clothing, props). Thus, the relations between characters within each scene became important to how meaning was

constructed in that scene, for the signifiers that they carried attempted to construct meaning often in opposition to another character's. These relations between characters were seen as systems of differences constructing meaning through opposition. Emerging from this analysis was the obvious fact that the characters were the circulators of ideology, embodying many signifiers. Moreover, their circulation of ideologies became a contest to produce meaning among the ideologies that competed for preference.

With the ideological structures of each scene made visible, the structure or sequence of the scenes themselves was analyzed. This gave more depth to the structural analysis. Each scene was seen as a self-contained signifier linked in a chain of signification by their real sequence. The sequence of scenes became a system of signifiers often related in a system of difference, for the over-all meaning of a scene that preceded or followed another scene was frequently in opposition. The relationships of scenes constructed further meaning in the soap opera text.

The structural analysis was concerned not only with what happened within scenes in terms of meaning construction, but also what happened across scenes which signified opposed meanings. Thus, the structural analysis exhausted the possibilities for how the text constructed meaning. Finally, the results of this structural analysis are generalizable to

other soap opera texts in as much as they adhere to the particular characteristics of the genre (i.e., form and content) as does Another World.

### The Reflexive Researcher

The position of this researcher in relation to the structural analysis of the soap opera text is informed by both hegemonic patriarchal culture and the feminist subculture. As a member of the hegemonic culture, this researcher is implicated in the hegemonic process, and, as a member of the feminist subculture, this researcher engages in an oppositional reading of the soap opera text. The researcher's use of her placement in such a cultural context is useful to the methodological strategy of structuralism. It is not just the purpose of this research to reveal what the soap opera text means, but also how dominant meanings operate through the structures of the text. Thus, membership in the hegemonic culture allows structural analysis to take place (the how of meaning) as such an analysis cannot isolate itself from the cultural context. Moreover, the feminist subculture allows an oppositional reading further revealing the how of meaning.

As will be seen in Chapter Six, a dominant reading by the female viewer is concluded. However, no single female reader may make a complete dominant reading. Yet, even



negotiated and oppositional decodings presume a dominant reading. In order for a reader to position herself in such relations to the soap opera text, she must 'get' the dominant decoding. The dominant reading is a basis against which to construct negotiated and oppositional decodings. Thus, the dominant ideologies are always reproduced but not always with acceptance.

## Chapter Four

### Another World: The Construction of a Social Imagery

#### Introduction

The first function of the mass media in their reproduction of ideological hegemony is the construction of an imaginary social totality that appears whole, not fragmented (Hall, 1977). Social cleavages that would point out antagonisms between disparate groups are masked. The construction of this social imagery is related to the theoretical interest in patriarchal ideology, for the social imagery provides a site for the hegemonic process.

In this chapter, it will be shown how the soap opera Another World fulfills this function of the mass media. A social imagery is created through the process of personalization which, in turn, creates an intersubjective view of the social world. This particular view of the world equalizes characters at the personal level masking differences. The importance of the 'talk' of soap opera to the personalization process will be discussed. Attention will then turn to three major threats of fragmentation to the intersubjective social of Another World: class, the public/private spheres, and social problems. Each will be discussed showing how their threat of fragmentation is

alleviated. Finally, an analysis of a major scene will be undertaken to support the contentions concerning the process of personalization.

### The Process of Personalization on Another World

The process of personalization creates a social imagery for Another World that is intimate, internal, and interior. It is thus an intersubjective social world where characters and their relationships are extremely personalized. All characters are ready-made subjectivities emanating their essential characteristics through talk. As Newcomb (1974: 169) says, the soap opera "is a world of words....Dialogue is all-important." In the process of personalization, talk is used to establish intersubjectivity.

Relationships between characters are intersubjective. They are not institutional, structural, or objective. Relationships are emotional investments established through talk. They are the encounters necessary for ready-made characters to talk, expressing ready-made subjectivities. The emphasis on intersubjectivity creates a psychological world where inner emotions are revealed through talk and signified through close-up camera shots of emoting faces. All are equalized at the intersubjective emotional level.

Talk is the main currency for exchange on soap opera. The exchange of talk on soap opera is the means by which

characters weave interrelationships into a social imagery. It is primarily through talk that a community of characters is established. A disruption in one character's life is felt as a disruption to the whole soap opera community, for talk spreads the disruption to all characters. Through talk, a "personal and caring universe is repeatedly affirmed with expressions of concern and offerings of love" (Intintoli, 1984: 57).

On Another World a community of caring characters is established through talk. Vicki Love is a young woman who is having family problems surrounding the unfaithfulness of her mother, Donna, to her father Michael Hudson. When Vicki is arrested for speeding, talk spreads the mishap to other characters who express concern. Vicki is brought into the Bay City Police Department at the same time two of her friends are there. Jamie Frame expresses concern.

Jamie: I'll walk you out.

Vicki: No, I want to be alone.

(Vicki exits with Jamie following.)

Jamie: Wait a minute.

Vicki: I don't want to talk Jamie.

Jamie: Where are you going and what's bothering you?

Vicki: Nothing.

Jamie: You don't drive like that when you feel good. Now something happened at home, didn't it? Is it

Michael?

The immediate concern of Jamie, expressed in his dialogue of questions, establishes a caring relationship. And in a later scene, when Jamie and his girlfriend Lisa enter 'Tops', they communicate the disruption in Vicki's life to her family.

Lisa: In fact, we just saw Vicki.

Michael: Where?

Jamie: I'm sorry. It was at the police station.

Donna: What?

Jamie: Well nothing serious, just a minor speeding violation.

Michael: But you don't get thrown in jail for going just a little over the speed limit.

Jamie: Well, it was more than a little over.

Michael: How much?

Jamie: Eighty in a thirty.

Donna: She could have been killed!

Jamie: Well, she's okay now. Appears she's at home.

Donna: Jamie, why was she going so fast?

Nicole: Well Cass and I saw her before she left and she seemed a little wired.

(Michael and Donna exit for home.)

Jamie and Lisa's talk spreads the disruption in Vicki's life to the other characters. All express personal

concern creating a community of caring characters. Later, Jamie and Lisa worry about Vicki as the caring dialogue continues.

Lisa: I hope I didn't cause more problems for Vicki.

Jamie: Oh, I'm sure you didn't.

Lisa: I sort of know what she's going through.

Jamie: You mean the trouble with her family.

Lisa: Yeah, especially with Donna.

Finally, the disruption comes back to Vicki as her parents express their concern.

Michael: Now, what's all this about a speeding ticket?

Vicki: My life is an open book around here.

Donna: Victoria, Jamie said that you were arrested.

Vicki: Jamie should have minded his own business.

Michael: Young lady I would like to know what was going through your mind. What were you thinking?

Vicki: I wasn't thinking about anything.

Michael: Why don't you tell me what happened?

Vicki: Michael, I just got a speeding ticket. You know the cop made a big deal out of it just like you're doing.

Donna: You could have had an accident. You could have been seriously hurt or even killed.

Talk is bounded and expanded on Another World in a

number of material ways: through the overuse of first names, the use of the telephone, and the use of doors. The repetitive use of first names by interacting characters further personalizes the social imagery of Another World. This overuse of the first name is an inscription device where ready-made characters become personalized. This can be illustrated in an argument Michael Hudson has with his wife Donna.

Michael: Donna you were awfully upset when I came home last night.

Donna: No I wasn't.

Michael: What happened?

Donna: Michael nothing happened.

Michael: Then why did John move out?

Donna: I told you I'm really not sure.

Michael: Donna there's gotta be a reason.

Donna: Michael think about it. This isn't the first time he's moved out. In fact, he's practically made a career out of it.

Michael: Uh Uh. You haven't answered my questions.

A further illustration is an exchange between Donna and her brother Peter Love.

Peter: I am appalled.

Donna: What?

Peter: At **Michael**. He's got no right to treat you like that **Donna**.

Donna: You heard?

Peter: Yes. You know its obvious that **Michael** is not the sensitive, caring individual we all thought he was.

Donna: **Peter** please don't say that.

Peter: Well **Donna**, I'm sorry but you know I just wish **Michael** treated his wife as well as he treats his own brother.

(**Michael** enters hearing **Peter**.)

**Michael**: Get out **Peter**.

**Peter**: What?

**Michael**: Get out!

**Peter**: Why? So you can be even more abusive to my sister.

**Michael**: Out!

Donna: **Peter** please. Its alright, really. I would like to talk to **Michael** alone.

The importance of talk in the creation of the particular social of soap opera can be seen in the use of the telephone as a social link between characters and settings. It is another means by which talk establishes an intersubjective social. The telephone is very crucial in soap opera as a means of linking characters in an intersubjective reality. The telephone signifies talk, and it provides a means by which fragmented scenes are brought into a social whole as characters can talk on the phone to someone in



another setting. Settings are not isolated places for characters to interact, for the ever present telephone symbolically and in use provides the possibility of connection between disparate settings linking characters in a social imagery.

The telephone is a symbol of communication, of talk...talk is still what soap operas are all about. The telephone is used for a special kind of talk -communication with someone who is not there in one sense, present and close in another. (Timberg, 1982: 146).

The telephone on Another World expands the possibilities for talk and thus expands the intersubjective social. Sam Fowler can cross class lines by calling Cheryl McKinnon at 'Mary's Place' from Cory Publishing. The two disparate settings are linked and difference is made commonality as talk places them in the same intersubjective social. Peter Love can call his father Reginald at 'Tops' informing him of the events occurring at the Love Mansion. The telephone provides connections between characters and events constructing a network of talk and interrelationships. Michael Hudson can call the Love Mansion from his car to check on his wife Donna. The isolation of the car is made unproblematic, for it is connected to the intersubjective social through the telephone which makes soap talk possible. The telephone on Another World removes limitations on talk.

Characters are not isolated as they can join the intersubjective social by picking up the phone.

All settings have doors through which characters can leave one setting and enter another. They allow talk to become continuous, creating a continuous community of characters. For, doors provide the flow between the segmented scenes of talking characters. The constant movement or flow of characters in and out of doors brings the social imagery to life as characters come and go. Often on Another World, one scene ends with a character exiting through a door, and the next scene begins with a character entering through a door.

This flow of characters facilitates talk, for doors symbolize the opening and closing of talk on soap opera. Doors provide the entrances into talk, and they provide the exits from talk. "Doors signify communication, interrelatedness, a network of lives in a non-problematic world. Yet the function of soap opera's doors is finally to close, since that makes possible the retreat into the private sphere of intimate relations" (Porter, 1977: 786). Doors on Another World allow characters to step in and out of its ready-made intersubjective social. The closing of doors contain talk in personal spaces. The closing door shuts out the public allowing the private to take precedence. Characters entering doors on Another World enter to talk

while exiting characters are ending talk. Elevator doors open at 'Tops' and Nicole enters eager to talk to Cass. John enters the doors of his houseboat to find Vicki there. They immediately begin to argue, and Vicki quickly exits the houseboat's doors when she no longer wants to talk to John.

Once a character enters a door, they must talk, for entering doors signifies communication. Vicki Love wants to tell her father Michael of Donna's unfaithfulness. Michael and Donna are behind the closed door of their bedroom. Vicki stands outside their door about to enter with the fatal communication, but she is stopped by Clara. Vicki's talk is stopped, for she is not allowed to open the door. However, in a later scene Vicki again approaches the closed bedroom door. The door knob is shown in a close-up camera shot. Will Vicki open the door and talk? The next shot has Vicki knocking on the door and gaining entrance. With the opening of the door Vicki says, "I have to talk to you." Doors open and characters must talk.

The problem of the fragmented nature of soap opera's narrative structure is overcome as scenes are linked by telephones and familiar characters enter and exit through a network of doors creating a social imagery that is whole. The fragmented scenes become woven together by the use of telephones and doors. Characters are constantly being set up to talk, creating and recreating an intersubjective social

imagery that is domestic and personal. This is all accomplished through the process of personalization. Macro-sociological reality is reduced to the personal. The social created as a result of this process is intersubjective. This intersubjective social relies on the use of talk as its foundation.

The Process of Personalization and The Representation of Class on Another World

The presence of class difference on Another World makes suspect the universal reality of its social imagery and the threat of fragmentation exists. However, the process of personalization makes class position irrelevant, alleviating the threat of fragmentation.

The representation of class on Another World is typical of soap opera in general. It is predominantly a world of the upper and upper-middle classes (Wander, 1979: 87; Cantor and Pingree, 1983: 90; Neumann et al., 1983: 129). The inhabitants of this world are usually doctors, lawyers, corporate owners, executives, business people. And of course, there are always the independently wealthy who have no discernible occupations. As Wander (1979: 87) observes

There are no linemen for the county, no bus drivers, no farmers, no mechanics to speak of, none of the people who talk about the exhaustion and frustration

of work. The problems which face the soap opera characters -possessiveness, lust- are not those of working-class people, but those of people with a great deal of time and money; they are the perils of the Country Club Place.

Of course, soap opera has its share of lower-middle and working classes. Nurses, police officers, waitresses, and secretaries also inhabit this world. The occupations of soap opera facilitate the process of personalization. They are service sector jobs concerned with people processing; consequently, these jobs are concerned also with talk. These people talk for a living, or appear to do so, as real labour is rarely seen. Hospitals, police stations, offices, and restaurants become settings for talk. The difference between the upper and lower classes (i.e., economic) is masked, as they all become bearers of talk.

The structure of character interrelationships in the soap opera presents a world where class fragmentation does not exist. "The boundaries between classes are blurred...by a number of factors. Class positions are changed through marriage....social and financial success....members of various classes interact constantly and are tied together by kinship, friendship, or romance" (Intintoli, 1984: 47). The process of personalization becomes a social leveller.

The relationships in the soap opera world are of three types: romantic, kinship, and friendship. Economic relations are not of concern. While the soap opera world is

inhabited by both producers and consumers, these economic relations are suppressed. The economic basis of the soap opera world is not seen; the mode of production is absent. Although money is talked about, the exchange of goods and services through the money medium is absent (Allen, 1985: 74). The major source of social fragmentation is dismissed by the form of the soap opera where interpersonal relations are preferred over economic relations. Consequently, when economic difficulties are dealt with in the soap opera, they are "treated as extensions of personal problems" (Cantor and Pingree, 1983: 80). In the world of soap opera, the structural is reduced to the personal.

Power and wealth are personalized and related to psychological motivations of individual characters....Corporate power is presented largely as an arena in which individuals compete with each other. The elite are also seen as mixing freely with individuals lower in the class hierarchy, linking all the participants in the same symbolic community (Intintoli, 1984: 41).

On Another World, the occupations held by the majority of characters both male and female are professional. We have McKenzie Cory, Michael Hudson, and Reginald Love as independently wealthy businessmen. Cass Winthrop, Peter Love, and Zak Edwards are all powerful lawyers working in corporations. Scott Love is a law student. Jamie Frame is a medical doctor. Sam Fowler is a corporate employee running a

layout department for a prominent magazine. Mitch Blake is a professional photographer.

Although females on Another World do not occupy as many powerful professional positions as do the males, they too are predominantly in the upper classes, if not by occupation, then by marriage or birth. Rachel Cory is married to wealthy McKenzie Cory. Her interests are upper class for she is an artist and sculptor. Donna Love Hudson, Vicki Love, Nicole Love, and Amanda Cory are upper class by birth. Nicole Love is a fashion designer while the other two Love women have no discernible occupations. Amanda Cory is working for her father McKenzie Cory at his publishing empire learning the publishing trade. Felicia Gallant is an independently wealthy romance novelist who also manages an elite restaurant called 'Tops'. Barbara Van Arkdale is a business woman fashion designer. Females on Another World tend to be upper class more through association with males than through their own occupational positions.

The upper classes on Another World are represented by two main families: the Love's and the Cory's. The settings within which these two families live provide a system of symbols which indicate their power and status. For example, the Love's reside at the 'Love Mansion' whose interior design is indicative of the upper classes. The front double doors lead into a spacious interior with a large foyer, staircase

to one side, and a large doorway leading into a pastel living room complete with antique furniture. Vases of flowers, elaborate light fixtures, glass tables, art work fill the living room with the symbols of the upper class. The setting's decor is soft, refined and detailed, indicative of the mental labour of this class. There are no rough hands in this world.

Although, Another World is predominantly a world of the upper and upper-middle classes, it does have some representation of the working class in the McKinnon family, and subsidiary characters. The McKinnon's have an Irish working class family background. Vince, the father of the family and former mine labourer, now owns a small restaurant in partnership with Ada Hobson also of working class origins. The home setting for the McKinnon family is their kitchen. Entering the kitchen through the back door, the setting is typical of any working class kitchen. There is the counter top space, small fridge and stove, wooden table and chairs placed in the center of a small plain room. A door leads into the living room which is never seen. In contrast to the upper class setting, the working class setting is hard and plain. It symbolizes the manual labour of the working class where hands are rough.

These distinct settings which represent two disparate classes are potential threats of fragmentation to the social



imagery of Another World. However, these distinct class boundaries are blurred as upper class settings have working class characters and working class settings have upper class characters. The two restaurants on Another World provide major settings for interaction. 'Tops' is the elite restaurant atop the 'Love Tower'. Its counterpart is Vince McKinnon and Ada Hobson's lower-middle class restaurant called 'Mary's Place'. Both settings are distinguished through the systems of symbols that indicate class difference. 'Tops' is characterized by its plush pastel blue interior, blue marble walls, brass railings, vases of flowers, and elegant elevators as entrances and exits. Dinner music is always playing in the background as well dressed male waiters serve well dressed people at small tables with cushioned chairs. 'Tops' has a patio and ladies powder room as additional places for interaction. It is symbolically bourgeois in its softness and detail. On the other hand, 'Mary's Place' is characterized by dark heavy wooden walls, black and white tile floor, wooden chairs, and an open bar. There are daisies on tables and sport pictures on the walls. Female waitresses dressed informally wait on casually dressed people. 'Mary's Place' has the kitchen behind swinging doors as an additional place for interaction. Unlike the bourgeois 'Tops', the location of labour is seen at 'Mary's Place'.

Class distinction is clearly evident in these two

settings; however, the characters who walk in and out of these settings are not necessarily of the same class as the setting. The best example of this occurs when Vince McKinnon goes to 'Tops' to meet with his wife and lawyer to discuss their divorce. Vince signifies the working class in both his dress and manner. He wears untailored jacket and pants which do not match as a suit. His shirt is open with no tie. Vince enters 'Tops' with his hands in his pants pockets. His demeanor is casual. In contrast, his lawyer Zak Edwards is dressed in a tailored suit, briefcase in hand. The visual contrast between Vince and the setting of 'Tops', and between Vince and Zak is noticeable. However, it is because the difference is noticeable that it can be made incidental to the scene. In a sense, the difference only exists in order to be overcome. Despite Vince's working class background, he is comfortable at 'Tops'. He fits in because people he knows are there. Zak is a corporate lawyer and friend working on behalf of working class Vince. Class distinctions become incidental as it is the personal that takes precedence. It is obvious that Vince is working class, yet he is as comfortable at 'Tops' with his upper class friends as he is at 'Mary's Place' with his working class friends. Class becomes irrelevant in the face of the personal.

Similarly, the characters who enter 'Mary's Place' also blur class lines. Rachel Cory visits her mother Ada at