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SMASHING THE AUDIENCE

The Political Economy of New Zealand Television

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by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is a work in the political economy of New Zealand television. It seeks to understand the relationship between three distinct processes. Firstly, how are the institutions of broadcasting effected by their location within the centralised, extensively intervening New Zealand State? Secondly, how does the above relationship of the institution to the State effect the work of professional television journalists in the production of political television? Thirdly, how do the two levels of relationship previously considered effect effect the programmes that are produced? Each question is answered through three types of analysis: historical, qualitative observation and semiotic respectively. It is argued that the entire process is unified within the terms of the liberal democratic State, and that the practices of journalists ideologically represent this State form as "above" the class character of the New Zealand social formation.

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INTRODUCTION

"For every complex problem there is a solution that is
simple, neat, and wrong"

- H. Mencken

INTRODUCTION

This thesis is a work in the political economy of New Zealand television. It seeks to understand the ways in which people make television, and the reasons why they make it in one way and not another. Television is a matter of pictures and sounds that can be understood by viewers. In this respect, this thesis is a political economy of meaning. The making of programmes can be understood as a very complex process. At one level it involves the relationships between various institutions. In New Zealand this has to do with the Broadcasting Corporation, Parliament, political parties, and so on. One must consider how these institutions relate to each other and to society generally. There is also a second level to look at. Television is produced for the viewer by a certain social group, professional journalists. To understand how and why television is made is for this reason a matter of studying this group in its place of work. Finally, television "finishes up" as programmes that are broadcast across the country. Studying the meaning of these programmes is therefore another important part of an analysis of television production. Research could concentrate on any one of these levels and ignore the other two, but by doing this it would not be adequate to the complexity of the entire process. This thesis analyses each level in turn and shows how they are interconnected.

All thesis work is immediately faced by the disarray of modern social theory. Giddens discusses the disarray of orthodox

sociology in his useful essay, "The Prospects for Social Theory Today", (1979, pp234-259). He attributes the present muddle to the failure to sufficiently distinguish between the social and natural sciences. Thus, for example, orthodox sociology has been heavily dependent on positivist methodologies. It has continued with the by-now ancient theory of language as the "description of reality." This has created an inability to cope with the problem of meaning. Language as the complex of human practices that create meaning is ignored in favour of simple, quantitative categorisations.

In chapter one, thesis work on television in New Zealand is assessed in the light of such criticisms as those made by Giddens. A strong tendency to empiricism is identified, and related to the establishment of an orthodox, pluralist sociology in this country. The overriding tendency is to treat television as a "tube", as something which functions only to transport "messages" formed elsewhere. One of the main problems with this sort of analysis is that it fails to gain a critical distance from the liberal democratic ideologies which television itself proposes. In chapter two a way out of this impasse is associated with the recent emergence of "Cultural Studies" in Australia and New Zealand. This emergence is briefly charted.

Giddens (ibid, pp2-4) claims that the social sciences have failed to produce an adequate theory of social action. This is due to their inability to overcome the opposition between voluntarism and determinism. Human activity is explained either as the pure intentionality of the free subject or as the completely determined

social reflex. The pressing need for contemporary social theory is to adequately link together agency and structure. Giddens argues that this need can be met by attempting to adequately theorise the various social forms of language. The social practices and practical consciousness of meaning mediate between and break down the dualism that has stalled social theory. This proposition is taken up in chapter three. Television is a body of practices that produce sense. Two dominant modes of analysing the production of meaning are identified. Firstly, there is the culturalist approach, which emphasises agency and experience. Secondly, there is the structuralist approach, which emphasises determination and ideology. In this chapter the outline of an adequate analysis of television is presented. This outline structures the remainder of the thesis.

An adequate analysis of television must attempt to resolve the opposition between culturalist and structuralist modes of analysis. Chapter three argues that this resolution must take place within a Cultural Studies reworking of the Marxist theory of the State, and of the theory of relative autonomy in particular. This reworking is adequate to both the specificity of and determinate connections between the various human practices that compose the social formation as a whole. This promises an analysis that can grasp both what is peculiar to television's creation of meaning and how this is related to other aspects of New Zealand society.

From this point on, the thesis breaks down into three parts, each dealing with a relatively autonomous level in the making of

television. These parts are respectively (a) political economy, (b) the cultural practices of current affairs journalists, and (c) two programmes produced for the 1981 general election, "Facing the Nation" and "The Leaders Debate". While none of these levels can be reduced to any of the others, nor can they be analysed completely separately. Each part divides into two chapters. The first chapter is primarily concerned with the theoretical task of establishing the relative autonomy of the level with which it deals, the second with the work of concrete analysis.

Part two deals with the political and economic relationships between classes, the State and the institutions of broadcasting in New Zealand history. Essentially this is a matter of the Marxist relative autonomy theory of the state, as represented by the recent work of Poulantzas and Wright. First, one must consider the relationship between the State and the Economy (Fig.1) -

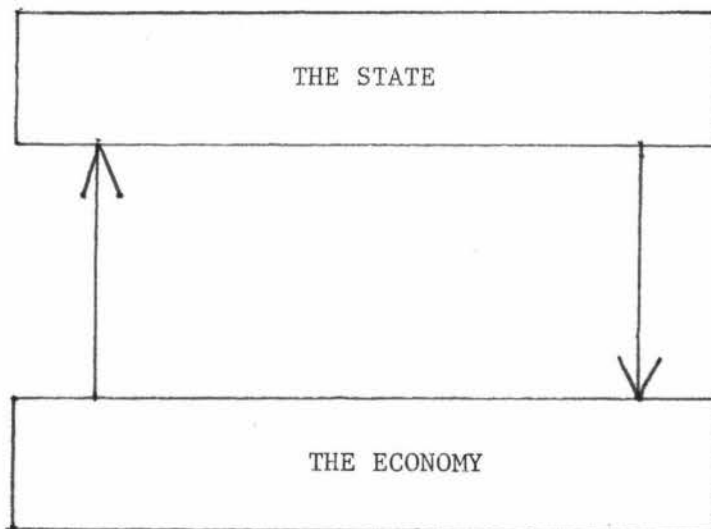


Fig. 1 - THE RELATIVELY AUTONOMOUS STATE

The State is relatively autonomous from the classes constituted by the capitalist mode of production. It thus provides the site for the (albeit contested) reproduction of the means and relations of production. In particular, the New Zealand State developed an interventionist, centralised form which stabilised an economy based upon small rural and urban property. New Zealand broadcasting is contained within this State form (Fig. 2) -

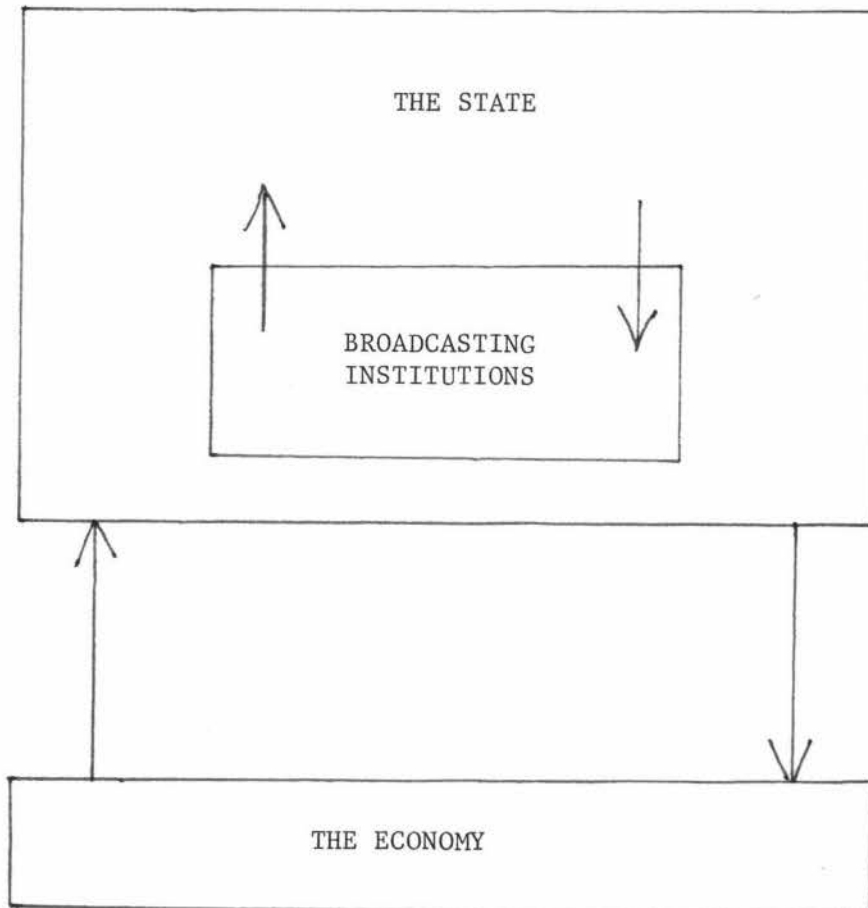


Fig. 2 - THE RELATIVELY AUTONOMOUS INSTITUTIONS OF BROADCASTING

Broadcasting institutions are incorporated within the structural determination of the State in general. They are "State apparatuses". Nevertheless, historically they have become increasingly autonomous from specific classes and political

parties, particularly from the government of the day. This raises the necessity of closely studying the practices of professional journalists, to ascertain how their active creation of meanings is determined by the structured relations considered thus far.

This problem is taken up in part three. Broadcasting institutions are themselves complex phenomena. Three important dimensions are considered - (1) the bureaucratic mode of organisation, (2) the various class relations within the institution, and (3) the journalists' everyday practices used for making programmes. As our concern is with the production of meaning, the latter is the main focus of analysis (Fig. 3) -

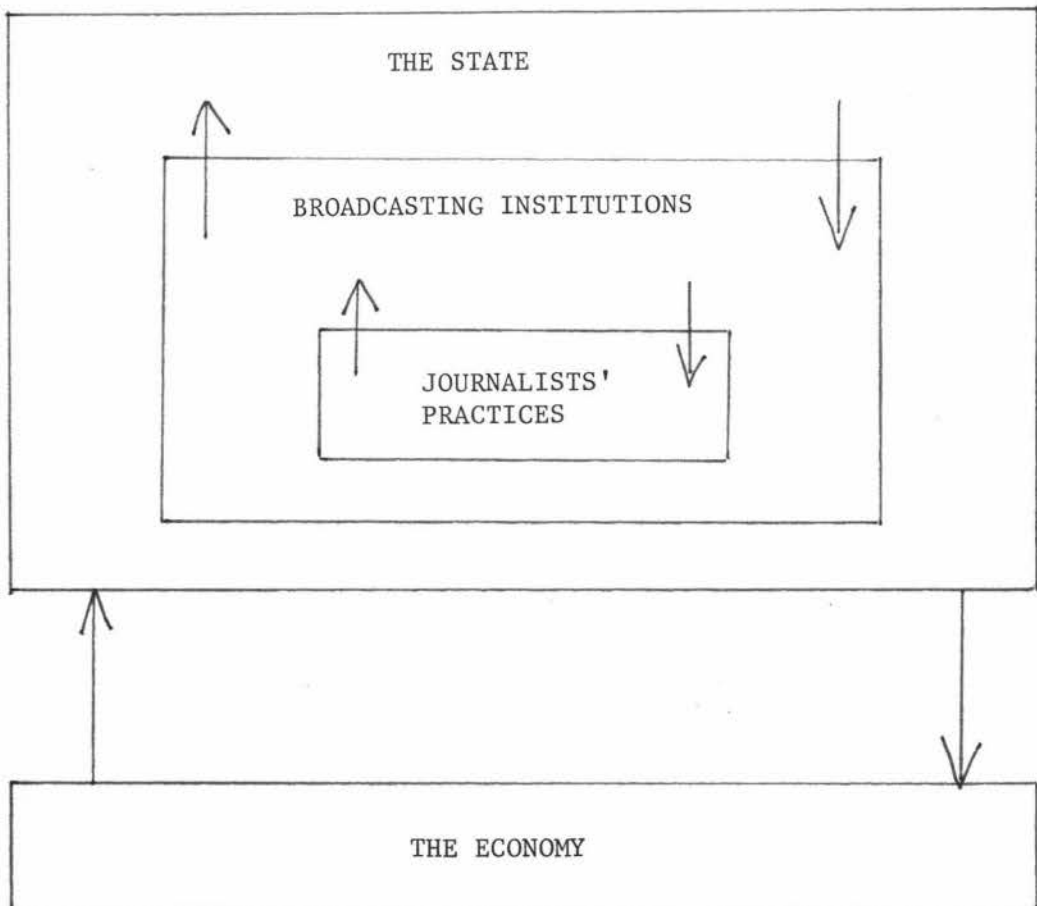


Fig. 3 - THE RELATIVELY AUTONOMOUS PRACTICES OF JOURNALISTS

The everyday practices and common-sense knowledge of journalists is analysed through a detailed, qualitative case study of the production of two programmes ("Facing the Nation" and "The Leaders Debate") within the B.C.N.Z., as part of its "coverage" of the 1981 general election. Broadcasters have considerable editorial autonomy; they are rarely told what to do by someone else. It is argued that there are principally two interconnected practices operated by broadcasters to make meaningful political programmes. These are balance and impartiality. Through these practices broadcasters represent themselves as politically neutral, as treating all comers equally. In fact, television is partisanly committed to, and attempts to ideologically reproduce, a particular form of political organisation and actively represses alternative modes. The practices of journalists limit the meaning of politics to the structured clash between the mass parties of Parliament. The individual viewers, and voters, are placed as outside politics, rather than as the holders of specific and conflicting interests. Political activity for the viewer is reduced to passive, individual preference (e.g. voting), rather than active participation and collective organisation. Thus although the practices of broadcasters are autonomous, they are only relatively so. Ultimately they work within the present, liberal democratic form of the State. By concealing class interests, these practices reproduce the dominant political "resolution" and organisation of class conflict. This accomplishes an ideological stabilisation of New Zealand society as capitalist.

Televised politics is first seen by the viewer as "text", as completed programmes watched usually in the viewer's own home. While it is true that the practices of journalists create these texts, other forces are also at work. Thus, for example, there are the participating political parties. Those forms of political organisation excluded from the programme may also have an impact. Furthermore, different viewers may interpret the same programme differently. That is to say, the text contains a number of possible "readings". For these reasons the text has a relative autonomy of its own (Fig. 4) -

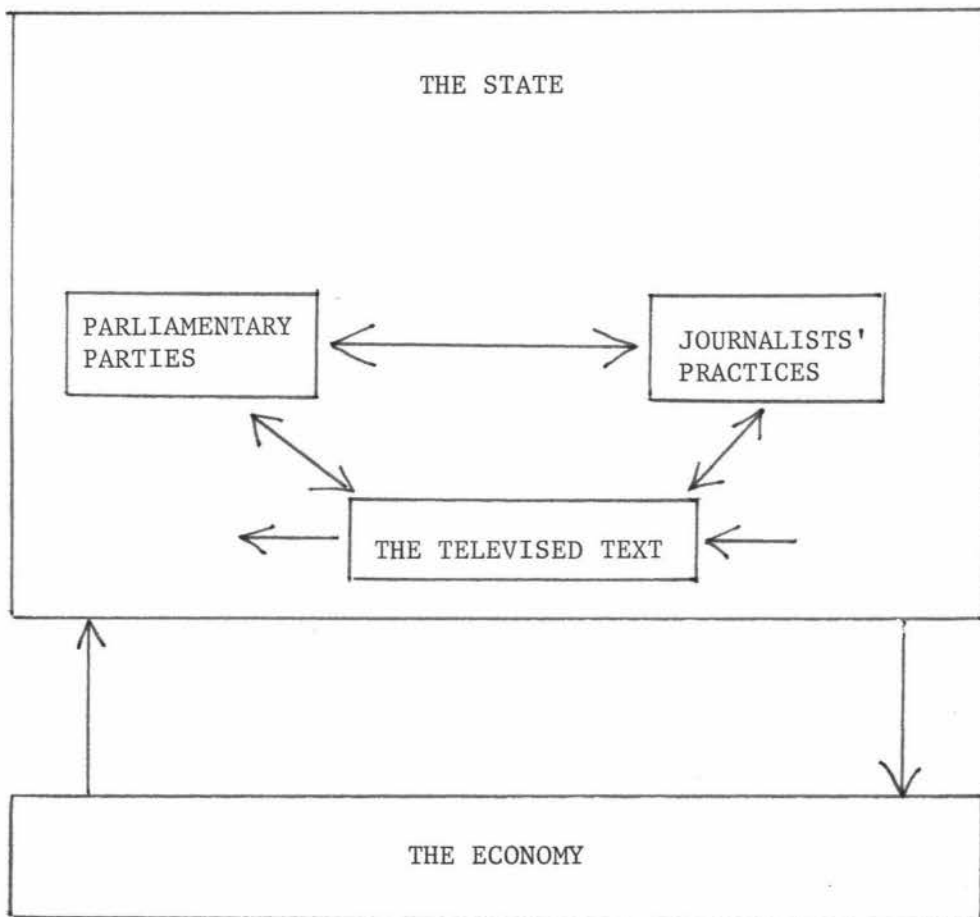


Fig. 4 - THE RELATIVELY AUTONOMOUS TEXT

In part four the two programmes, "Facing the Nation" and "The

Leaders Debate", are studied as texts. The method used is a semiotic one: it looks at the ways in which these programmes work as a kind of language, as a rule-bound system that creates a certain type of meaning and rules out other possible types. This analysis brings together all the forms of determination considered so far: the text is a "site" where they are worked out and presented for the viewer.

Journalists' practices exclude those forms of organisation outside the liberal democratic model. In the text, this exclusion appears as the absence of any organised groups other than political parties. It is argued that in this way the text creates a certain position from which it is supposed to be viewed: it creates a certain form of subjectivity. This subjectivity is not organised, active collectivities but a mass of passive individuals who only watch while others act. The audience is "smashed" into its smallest pieces, isolated individuals, by this repressing of any forms of organisation. All political parties accept this work of broadcasters. Thus in the text, party representatives and journalists are complementary in terms of the social structure as a whole, even though individually a politician may argue quite violently with an interviewer. Individual politicians argue with each other over the "smashed" audience. Each tries to "pick up more pieces" than his opponent. In this way the conflict that takes place in the text reproduces the liberal democratic, parliamentary form of the State. Individuals vote for the party they like the most. The party that is coincidentally preferred by the majority gains parliamentary power. This ideologically

conceals the basic conflict of interests in a class society.

To conclude, this thesis is a sustained and concrete demonstration of the relative autonomy of television. It shows television's distinctive role within the political economy of New Zealand society. Three separate levels are studied - institutions, cultural practices and texts. Each level is different from the others, but ultimately they are all unified within the State. Television can be named an "ideological state apparatus" because it tends to universalise this parliamentary form of the State. It argues that no other form of political organisation is possible. Thus it claims that the State's stabilisation of New Zealand society as capitalist is in the interests of every member of society, rather than in the interests of just some.

Having introduced the thesis in general terms, work can now begin. Chapter one criticises the theses that have been done on political television in New Zealand. Overcoming the inadequacies of these pieces of research is the project of this thesis.

PART ONE - CULTURAL STUDIES

CHAPTER ONE - TELEVISION THESES: A CRITIQUE1.1 - MEDIA POLITICAL SCIENCE: A CRITIQUE OF VINTINER (1976)

There are very few New Zealand theses devoted to the analysis of television. This somewhat surprising circumstance, surprising due to the medium's high cultural and political profile, is readily intelligible if due emphasis is accorded both to the continued elitism of the so-called "humanist" (unpopular) arts faculties [1] and to the present disarray of our native social sciences. I shall return briefly to consider some implications of the latter's undisciplined state, with particular reference to sociology, in section 1.3 below. For the moment it is sufficient to observe that one effect of this disarray has been a domination of New Zealand media research by political scientists. This is hardly unexpected given the close correspondence between the ideological practices of modern mass media (the Fourth Estate ethic) and political science. Both are firmly embedded within western parliamentary democracy. They are unified by a pluralist theory of the State and by a common commitment to those various institutions (the family, "pressure groups", etc) held to mediate between and so balance State power and individual citizens. Ultimately, of course, the mass media and political science interpret themselves as instances of such institutions. In New Zealand there is no clearer illustration of this complementarity than the television coverage of each election, which is typically a coordination of selected political scientists and media personnel. Political science thus tends to lack sufficient critical distance from broadcasting institutions and

acts technically within their common set of assumptions, as shall be demonstrated in this section's critique. This point will be further substantiated in chapter 4.2. This particular configuration of the political science of media, one of combined pervasiveness and immanence, makes it a necessary point of entry for my own work. Thus I shall begin with a critique of Vintiner's (1976) masterate thesis, A Structural Analysis of Television in New Zealand [2]. I am not concerned here with an explicit and general critique of media political science but of a particular instance in its practice. A more general critique is taken up in Part two. Vintiner's thesis is particularly apposite as it addresses exactly the problem I am concerned with, namely the articulation of television structures and messages. That a critique of Vintiner embodies an evaluation of political science per se issues inevitably from the correspondences between the former's thesis and the work of Cleveland (e.g. 1970a, 1970b, 1972, 1975) and Jackson (e.g. 1962, 1973; Jackson was Vintiner's thesis supervisor).

Vintiner claims that his intention is to show

"the role of organisational type and the system of controls that go with it in influencing content presentation of the media concerned. The television medium in New Zealand was considered relevant to demonstrate this 'effect' of organisation on content (known as 'structural analysis') as in 1975 the legislated changes in the 1973 Broadcasting Act were instituted, giving this country a two-channel system of television and a restructured organisation for broadcasting generally" (1976, "Abstract").

Using newscasts as the units of analysis, the work proceeds on three "levels". Firstly, Vintiner develops from the literature a typology of media organisational modes. Specific New Zealand

broadcasting organisations are then inserted into this typology - the pre-1961 N.Z.B.S. as a "State-operated Type", the pre-1975 N.Z.B.C. as a "Public Corporation Type" with two channels that vary within this category. These variations, the former T.V.1 and S.P.T.V., are developed as subtypes (ibid, chapter one). Secondly, a sample of newscasts from each channel is in turn categorised into various types (war, foreign affairs, human interest, etc) using content analysis. Finally, the results of organisational and content analysis are articulated through a "structural analysis". Vintiner somewhat idiosyncratically defines "structural analysis [as that which] deals with content as it is produced in a context of organisation" (ibid, p72). More specifically, structural analysis links organisation and content "types" through "a detailed analysis of organisational behavioural patterns" (ibid, p73; my emphasis). Thus Vintiner's aim is to "observe and statistically record characteristic behavioural traits of the television media in New Zealand" (ibid, p18). These traits are derived from the consideration of content data, they are patterns of content articulation held to mediate between the broadcast news "contents" and the organisational type in which they are located. By a process of statistical accumulation Vintiner discerns three distinct patterns (trends, covariance and interaction) which "add up to an overall code of behaviour of the channels under study" (ibid, p84). These discoveries lead him to conclude that "circumstantially, organisation and content appeared to be behaviourally related" (ibid, p139).

Despite the impressive amount of information Vintiner mobilises

for his argument he is forced to admit that ultimately "the weakness of inferring from content trends to organisational type is that much of the link is conjecture, save perhaps where corroborating evidence is used to enhance the validity of this step" (ibid, p139). He is wrong, however, to think that replication would reduce the conjectural status of his findings. The "step" he speaks of remains a leap and the thesis splits into two discrete parts, the considerations of content and of organisation. The so-called "structural analysis" cannot sustain a mediating role, to do so it would have to be somewhat more than "a modified version of content analysis" (ibid, p72). Vintiner cannot both use content analysis to "enrich" his hypothesis (ibid, p12) and as the source of the categories offered as an explanation; in Popperian terms the explanation is not separate from the "facts", it is no more than the "facts" put differently. The "structural analysis" collapses back into content analysis. Clearly the "behaviour" upon which Vintiner's argument depends is no more than an abstraction, it is not the behaviour of anything but merely a different order of content which is assumed to be an organisational reflex. In the final analysis Vintiner's "facts" must "speak for themselves"; it is the thread of abstract empiricism that unifies his work.

By tracing the impact of this abstract empiricism on the two halves of Vintiner's thesis it is possible to discern how a more resolved analysis might be achieved. This is the positive value of the critique. At the most general level Vintiner's work draws upon systems/information theory -

"the role of television in presenting information content to the larger public [has] three basic elements ... the source (or sender), the message (or source-product) and the receiver (or message-recipient)" (ibid, p11).

Vintiner does not develop the implications of such theorisation. Most importantly he arbitrarily closes the system at the broadcasting organisations, ignoring any direct relation of extra-system structures (political parties, the market-place, etc) on the broadcast contents - "the message is the product of a media organisation" (ibid, p12) [3]. The relation of the media organisation to the State is not considered as a link to broader social processes (i.e. extrinsically) but merely immanently as an aspect of the definition of the categories. Vintiner simply uses systems theory to reduce the objects of analysis to information units, to "facts" that can be statistically arranged according to various typologies. This is the first abstraction, a denial of the importance of any reality outside broadcasting institutions by assuming the relationship between "news" and events to be unproblematic (as "information"). In conceptualising the message as "source-product" Vintiner has already substantiated his hypothesis: what remains is merely to establish statistical correspondences. As with all empiricists, his problem is that these correspondences can exert no necessity.

The effect of this preliminary abstraction is two-fold. Firstly, the consideration of organisation is marked by a denial of history. Vintiner notes that "in establishing this point [i.e. the organisational typology] a short history of mass media organisations was inadvertently presented" (ibid, p31; my

emphasis). In place of history, the dialectical interaction of manifold processes, whose inclusion would destroy the arbitrary closure of his system, Vintiner offers the unfolding of ideal organisational types (a typical representation of "progress"). Secondly, abstraction in the consideration of content entails a denial of meaning. Despite preliminary gestures towards the specificity of meaning (e.g. *ibid*, p72), the two methodological assumptions Vintiner sets out - (1) that the frequency of message occurrences is a valid indicator of concern, value, etc and (2) that each unit of content should be given equal weight, permitting aggregation and direct comparison (*ibid*, p83) - place his inquiry immediately within traditional quantitative content analysis. Not surprisingly, he quotes the demographer Poole in support of these assumptions. These twin reductions, of history to typology and of meaning to content, result in a work that strives to establish correspondences between reified, static categories with no reference to real, sensuous human activity [4].

A critique that is at once more general and more positive can now be advanced. An escape from the minutia of Vintiner's argument is possible only by first returning to this more comprehensive level, which is a conjuncture of three "attitudes". These attitudes are ideological; Vintiner does not explicitly argue their propositions but simply assumes them to be unproblematic. Firstly, empiricists have no commitment to material reality, it is simply a realm of "facts" to be manipulated. As Vintiner emphasises (e.g. *ibid*, "Abstract"), there is nothing specific about television practices that he is concerned to apprehend. They

are merely an example arbitrarily chosen to "enrich" his hypothesis. This means, the second assumption continues, that knowledge is spontaneously produced through the indifferent activities and carefree inquiry of the merely curious scientist. Lastly, and the circle is now complete, "facts" and "scientists" work together without interference within the bounds of liberal democratic society. This is clear in Vintiner's constant and confident reference to the "fourth estate", the "Public", "citizen" and so on (e.g. *ibid*, pp140-141). As a preliminary move it is sufficient not to argue against these three attitudes but (a) to refuse to accept their assumptions as unproblematic and (b) to have as prime motivation the comprehension of specific television practices. This latter position suggests the qualitative research attitude rather than the traditional "hypothesis-testing" model.

The denial of Vintiner's empiricism is anticipated through the return of both theorisation and the beginning of analysis with 'real, sensuous activity'. The notion that these two practices are somehow mutually exclusive is rejected. Determinate human activity and not the coordination of empty categories is the real mediator between "organisation" and "content". This activity cannot be reconstructed from lumps of content but must be captured ethnographically. As I shall argue in more detail below, analysis is not to end with assumed reflexes of "organisational behaviour" but must begin with the actual cultural practices of broadcasters. This is not simply a study of "gate-keepers" (to which Vintiner reduces sociology in order to reject it; *ibid*, p70); there are other alternatives that must be explored. Rephrasing the problem

as one centering on the study of culture completely reformulates Vintiner's objects of analysis - we study not organisational typology but history and structures, not content but meaning. Therefore our first task is not working with tacit assumptions to construct abstract typologies but the rigorous development of theory.

1.2 - THE NECESSITY OF THEORY

We begin by asserting, in opposition to any neo-positivist or empiricist positions, the necessity of sustained and explicit theoretical rigour in the analysis of facts. As Poulantzas (1976, pp65, 67) has argued, this avoids "the demagogy of common sense", under which one merely reproduces the obvious, and the absent-mindedness of empiricism, under whose abstraction description is mistaken for analysis so that "in neglecting theory one ends up failing to notice the concrete". Furthermore, systematic theorisation reintroduces the dialectic between one's own individual or collective intellectual endeavour and history -

"real history can only ever have an impact upon theoretical positions ... It can never do so on positivist empirical positions because, for the latter, facts 'signify' nothing very much: they prove nothing, for the simple reason that they can be reinterpreted ad infinitum in any way one chooses. It is this noisy illusion of the evident that gives rise to immutable dogmas" (Poulantzas, 1976, p68).

This situating of the theory-practice relation is immediately threatened by theoreticism, in which the specificity of the theoretical process is advanced with such force that it is

universalised. With the loss of the empirical moment, practice is absorbed entirely into theory, so that the latter becomes self-validating, subject only to epistemological or formalistic criticisms (exemplified by some interpretations of Althusser's work). The recovery and preservation of a practical approach rests on two related provisos. Firstly, the theory must be connected to an ongoing programme of empirical research. Secondly, one must attempt to be sufficiently comprehensive to include and account for the relationships between the theory's origins and applications (see Habermas, 1974, particularly pp1-39). Thus my individual problem of avoiding various forms of masterate malpractice must be based upon more general considerations of the native production of sociological knowledge. As Hall (1980, p43) insists,

"intellectual work does not consist only of what has been studied, of the theories and methods employed or even the provisional results obtained. It has to do with the practice itself - with how it is performed".

To this end these general considerations will be focused upon the specific issue of an indigenous "Cultural Studies" (this term will be developed in chapter three). More particularly, the path to the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, within whose practices I am concerned to ground my own work, must be set out and justified.

1.3 - ORIGINS OF THE PRESENT STASIS

Identifying the initial problem as the theorisation of culture immediately throws into sharp relief the present fragmentation of New Zealand "human sciences". There is no coherent academic

approach to the cultural problematic and the "Cultural Studies" to be outlined in chapter two is (you may say) yet another foreign import, contributing only to further this disharmony. However, the licence for this import is the fragmentation itself; Cultural Studies offers not merely a new position to choose but a means of achieving some integration of the cultural problematic. Therefore the justification for my focus upon the work of the Birmingham Centre begins with a brief consideration of the disarray of contemporary New Zealand social sciences. In keeping with the specificity of this thesis comments will be directed at sociology, and television sociology theses in particular [5].

The establishment of academic sociology in New Zealand during the late 1960s was at a time when the discipline's mainstream, U.S. functionalism, became socially inept and unable to maintain its intellectual hegemony in the American and British universities. These universities continue to be the principle source of New Zealand's intellectual personnel and ideas. Initially in England and America this breakdown proved enormously creative: the new "multi-paradigmatic" sociologies were open to previously bracketted influences and problems. In the United States the formerly subordinate "social interactionist" sociology (Mead and the early Chicago School) emerged to a new and varied prominence through the work of Blumer, Becker, Garfinkel, etc. This shaking-off of quantitative terrorism, associated with the rediscovery of European traditions of hermeneutic and phenomenological inquiry, lead to new ethnographic explorations into "darkest America". In England the decline of structural functionalism produced a similarly complex

response, two facets being a significant rephrasing of the Marxist challenge and the associated development of Cultural Studies. We shall explore this response in detail in chapter three. In New Zealand the collapse of functionalism in the mid and late '70s produced a disarray that has proved less than creative. The developing local sociology, faced with a burgeoning number of intellectual "options", settled upon an overly fractured departmental multiplicity. This entails presenting students with as many sociologies as possible, implying that they are all of equal value and between which one simply has to "choose" on the basis of some pre-existing (i.e. non-sociological) "commitment". A more sophisticated approach involves introverting competing theories to expose their epistemological bases, reducing ways of knowing the world to the a priori voluntarisms of god-like Theorists. This "founding Father" syndrome is a meta-physical solution to diversity, it solves the problem of competing sciences by reducing them all to particular "value" positions. The consequent stress on the centrality and autonomy of value-commitment, characteristic of many New Zealand sociology debates, continues a definitive trait of functionalism and its preservation of the status quo [6].

Such benign theoretical pluralism established the detente a somewhat resigned empiricism needed to take hold (i.e. to the extent that it remained sociology). Lacking any coherency, New Zealand sociology seems to be in a perpetual state of beginning, invariably producing "text books" and readers. This marks the discourses of both the Left (e.g. Bedggood, 1980) and the "liberal

middle" (e.g. Pitt, 1977). Pitt's book is an extreme representation of this trend. The aim is not to determine the actual nature of New Zealand social stratification but rather to cover as many theoretical positions as could possibly explain it. Pitt's conception of the editorial (and professorial?) role is clearly the same neutral, pluralistic function he assigns the New Zealand State (see Pitt and Macpherson, 1974). This culminates in a radical relativisation of science and knowledge, implying the co-existence of multiple social formations - "probably the real answer is not that one theory is more right than wrong, but that in different space and time contexts there are different explanations and different forms of class, or other forms of social stratification" (Pitt, 1977, p5). Thus the contradictions between the volume's individual essays are "solved", but only by severely limiting the knowledge that arises from the book as a whole - "one thing all the authors here are agreed on is that there is some kind of social differentiation that resembles some form of class" (ibid). The overall lack of direction in the discipline is also clearly evidenced in the recent S.S.R.F.C. Discussion Paper (Sept, 1981), on the attempt to establish priorities for social science research. Aside from specific criticisms of sociology (e.g. pp2-3), the report describes "the stance adopted by many in the research community [as] ... uninformed criticism rather than active involvement in research projects" (ibid, p4). This failure to overcome the empiricism/theoreticism divide through an effective sociological practice is not simply a response to the economic determinations of knowledge reproduction and distribution in New Zealand (e.g. the comparative market sizes of the N.Z.S.A. and

"Intro. Sociology" courses). Other countries have devised means of circumventing such limitations (the Birmingham Centre's Working Papers are a case in point). The failure is part of the general inability to situate intellectuals and their specific activity, as mentioned above (see footnote three; c.f. Hall, 1980, pp287-288). Consequently, social science intellectuals have tended either to confer upon themselves an absolute "vanguard" role, which they are unable to sustain or the citizenry appreciate (the "ivory tower" syndrome, resulting in nothing), or these intellectuals disavow their own specificity and attempt to assume some other role ("State servant", politician, teacher, researcher, agitator, etc) [7].

This disorganisation poses critical problems for university sociology in coming years, especially given the social effects of the worsening economic situation and the consequent increasing State interest in employing social scientists (see Baldock, 1980; Dent and Illy, 1980). At issue here are the various relationships between government policy, university academics and social scientists employed by the State [8]. Given the current state of New Zealand university sociology, the likely responses to these issues are either a detached disdain or individualised incorporation into State structures of hegemony. Resistance to these debilitations can only be achieved by attempting to focus and direct groups of sociologists and to establish a collective political awareness [9]. This is likely to take the conventional form of repeated calls for "professionalisation".

The development of the sociology culture outlined briefly above

poses problems and limitations for university sociology research. These problems are most evident in theses, since either this is how most of the research is done (university academics resting on the "teacher" role and not doing much research) or rather this is how it is done as sociology (i.e. conforming to certain intellectual standards, rather than the university academic acting in "researcher" or "State servant" roles, concerned only with questions of empirical validity, etc) [10]. The relationships between the discipline's thesis television research and the contemporary sociology culture can be situated in terms of three general patterns distinguishable in New Zealand sociology - in terms of orthodox, interpretive and Marxist approaches. As we shall see there have been only two higher degree theses done on television. This can be explained in terms of a dialectical relation between the small number of sociology post-graduate students and the discipline's undisciplined state, such that little is known of even the more prominent sectors of New Zealand culture. Media theses are not the product of specialised graduate research programmes but rather the presumably spontaneous "elections" of individual students.

Day's (1971) thesis, A Content Analysis of New Zealand Television Fiction With Regard to Likely Audience Effects [11], was written within the orthodoxy of confident structural functionalism that established New Zealand sociology in the late 1960s and early '70s. It employs American "effects" research, with a typical functionalist concentration on values. Television fiction from various countries is content analysed according to its value-goals

and the means used to achieve them. These content categories are articulated with a Mertonian conception of anomie (ibid, p75). The methodological aim is quantification (see the tables, pp61ff; e.g. Table 20 crosstabulates anomie by nation), and the resulting statistics are assumed to be social by interpreting television as "a socialising relationship in which individuals are, over many years, being taught to acknowledge the worth of particular goals and the acceptability of particular goal-attainment methods" (ibid, p84; my emphasis). This "relationship", Day's central proposition, is not tested, nor even part of the empirical analysis. There are no programme producers, the programmes are already made and the producers' "work" is assumed to have been "perfect" so that the resulting programmes completely materialise their values. There are no programme receivers either, the audience effects are merely "likely", analysis proceeds only by conjecturing "perfect" reception also. There is no gap between such perfect and finished practices that a sociologist might comment on. All one can do is demonstrate descriptively the correspondences between static content categories. Ultimately Day's abstractions are unsuccessful because he has removed from his frame of analysis those very events the sociologist is concerned with - the practices of real, sensuous human beings in determinate social settings. Only reified statistics can achieve such "perfection", not real work. This failure carries through to the completely conditional status of Day's conclusions.

By the late 1970s functionalism's dominance of New Zealand sociology was over; an event marked by the arrival of interpretive

social theories and challenges to quantitative methodologies. Indigenous qualitative sociology seems always to have existed ambivalently within an orthodox sociology that continued to favour accepted statistical techniques, rather than establishing itself as an independent and equally powerful perspective [12]. It is this complex conjuncture of the breakdown of the orthodoxy and yet uncertainty over the legitimacy of the interpretive challenge that situates Wilkes' (1976) masterate thesis, Politics and Television [13]. This state of flux and uncertainty explains the thesis's preoccupation with methodological problems. Wilkes explores the transformation of modern political campaigns by the activities of "media professionals". More particularly, he argues "that contemporary campaigns now have their origins in the process of opinion polling by market researchers" (ibid, p3). There are two related remarks to be made of Wilkes' work. Firstly, he proposes that "the task of a new theory of television ... is to try and combine the insight of the media professional with the conceptual clarity of the academic" (ibid, p24). Here the interpretive challenge is carried to the heart of theory formation itself; the media professionals who are the objects of study also have an input into the theorisation of the medium (see ibid, pp120ff). Secondly, while he conceptualises the problem methodologically in terms of the interpretive "social construction of knowledge" of Berger and Luckmann (ibid, pp31ff), nevertheless the actual methods used to assess the impact of these "interpretations" involve a sophisticated but orthodox (panel) survey (see ibid, Appendix One). On both counts rather than reconciling interpretive and orthodox sociologies Wilkes highlights their contemporary conflict by

bringing them together and yet maintaining their divergences. The thesis functions by accepting interpretive sociology's radical critique in terms of theory, but in such a way so as to allow continued use of orthodox methods. It admits the relevance of "media professionals" in terms of their discourses upon the media (primarily in books); that is, at a second remove similar from and hence compatible with academic theory. These two types of theorisation can then be resolved at the theoretical level. It is not a matter of inducing theory from observed practices of "members", say in the Glaser and Strauss tradition. Thus Wilkes can sidestep the problems of interpretive sociology as a radical methodology (e.g. in terms of ethnography) and continue to employ orthodox positivist methods.

Evaluating the relationships between modern variants of Marxism and New Zealand sociology is a difficult task impossible to achieve here. This relationship is made complex by Marxism's engagement with socialist politics, such that it pre-dated the foundation of, and continues to struggle outside, university sociology in this country. Marxist challenges were among those that brought down the functionalist hegemony during the 1970s. Radical Left critiques of orthodox sociological practices were evident powerfully as early as the 1973 S.A.A.N.Z. conference (see the Presidential Address; reprinted as Dunphy, 1974 [14]). Nevertheless, Marxist sociology has (so far) proved relatively disorganised and ineffectual; there are, for example, no New Zealand Marxist theses on television. To fill in this gap, and to some degree understand it, we can briefly consider a prominent instance of Marxist work that has dealt

generally with television, that of Bedggood.

Bedggood invariably occupies the position of "Official Marxist Sociologist" in the local sociology readers, and his various writings from the mid '70s to the present evidence a systematic approach to New Zealand culture, and to television as a facet of that culture [15]. Bedggood explains the relative absence of overt class conflict in New Zealand in terms of the lack of (working) class consciousness. This absence is due to the ideological domination of "bourgeois culture", which consists of values such as individualism, nationalism and achievement. These values militate against the objective class interests of the proletariat. The ideological assurance of proletarian quiescence is a function performed by the capitalist State -

"the modern State is able to prevent the emergence of revolutionary ideas and movements ... The dominant bourgeois culture has infused strong senses of chauvinism, racism and moralism in sections of the working class, with the result that any form of deviance or political opposition is easily 'steered' into relatively manageable social problems" (1977b, p205).

The State's relationship to bourgeois culture is clearly assumed to be unproblematic. The reproduction and legitimation of capitalist values is "performed by the cultural apparatus, which includes all the institutional sources that transmit and reinforce values such as families, schools, the media and popular literature" (1977b, p209; see also 1975, p299). These cultural apparatuses, including television, act on behalf of capitalism by installing bourgeois culture in proletarian heads - "in support of capital the cultural apparatus inculcates achievement values into its cohorts" (1977b, p209). This inculcation has been more or less completely

successful, it "has reached the point where the dominant culture is able to determine the learning of values and interests of the working class independently of their objective experience" (1977a, p127). Thus rather than a number of conflicting class cultures New Zealand has a marked "cultural homogeneity" (1975, p299).

It is now readily understandable why there are no Marxist theses on television, if Bedggood's style of Marxism is dominant. Television is merely one of the functionally identical cultural apparatuses (hence he always refers to them in the singular) that perfectly "transmit" bourgeois values to their audiences. Nothing happens that is specific to television, the reality it transfers from sender to receiver takes place completely outside its bounds. There is nothing to study. The realities left for the Marxist student following Bedggood to address are the values and psychologies presumed to lie at each end of these perfect transmitters (and which are therefore necessarily deduced to be identical). The theoretical and methodological danger here is a quick relapse into an abstract empiricism - the construction of "types" of values and psychologies ("bourgeois culture", the "authoritarian personality") from attitude surveys and Heylen Polls (e.g. see Bedggood, 1975, pp302ff; 1980, pp135-138). This combination of perfect practices and abstract empiricism corresponds exactly with the functionalism of Day and the political science of Vintiner, as outlined above.

Rejection of the mechanical Marxism Bedggood offers for the analysis of culture is an essential step in the development of

Cultural Studies. This rejection is implicit in chapter three's setting up of the Cultural Studies problematic, so that all that is necessary here are some general and anticipatory observations. The repudiation of Bedggood's approach begins with his theorisations of the State and culture, and this theoretical reworking in turn creates methodological imperatives. The modern State is not simply the instrument of the bourgeoisie but, following the structuralists, is the site of class struggle. Culture is not "the total set of values in a social system" (Bedggood, 1975, p209) but is rather specific material practices of signification. These reformulations restore the Gramscian notion of "hegemony", frequently used gesturally by Bedggood. "Hegemony does not refer to the smooth, uninterrupted expression of ideological domination by the cultural apparatuses of the bourgeoisie. It refers to the continual struggle for and securing of ideological domination by the ruling class alliance," it establishes equilibrium and not equivalence. Methods must be appropriate to represent these struggles and practices where they occur in specific, material, historical conjunctures. This suggests an articulated structural and ethnographic analysis. It also suggests that a Marxist thesis on television in New Zealand is now both possible and necessary.

The three patterns of sociology outlined above emerged in distinctive historical periods, but rather than sequential succession they have tended simply to accumulate. We are not dealing with linear evolution but with the creation of the complex theoretical pluralism that identifies modern sociology. In New Zealand the effect of this unresolved pluralism is evident in a

position common to the orthodox, interpretive and Marxist sociologies outlined above - the reliance on positivistic, empiricist methodologies. Empiricist methods have generally meant that theoretical explanations tend to be abstract and unconvincing. An interesting exception here is Wilkes' work, where theoretical abstraction is avoided by profitably maintaining the contradiction between orthodox and interpretive sociologies rather than arbitrarily coming down on one "side". For the Left this abstract empiricism has been particularly damaging. As Anderson (1969, p277) has argued, "it quite literally deprives the Left of any source of concepts and categories with which to analyse its own society, and thereby attain the fundamental preconditions of changing it" [16]. This situation also poses problems for contemporary student research. A rich and varied mix is indeed an ethically satisfying state around which to structure undergraduate sociology courses [17], but rather more hygiene must nurture cohesive programmes of empirical research and graduate education (these two practices go together, their articulation overcomes the false teaching-research dichotomy). As I illustrated above in terms of television research, in the face of such uncertainty thesis practices have tended to fall into abstract empiricism. This is presaged by the manner in which the particular theoretical-substantive conjuncture necessary for any thesis to function is established - the literature review.

1.4 - ESCHEWAL OF THE LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review is the traditional thesis solution to the

disarray of university sociology. It categorises the academic research done on the thesis topic and locates the thesis in respect of this tradition. Such a practice invariably derives from two "working" propositions - (a) that sociology as a science is completely separate from the society it studies, it has a scientific and not a social history, and (b) sociology is driven by scientific curiosity, the one interest which unifies all disengaged academics into a single community whatever their theoretical and substantive divergences. Following from these two propositions is the explanation of the plurality of social theories either (a) completely immanently (either science tests hypotheses and moves on to truer knowledge, or it is due to the operation of different scientific "paradigms" chosen on the basis of some a priori commitment by the scientist) or (b) completely extrinsically (new realities develop outside science "in society", for which science creates new comprehensions). The articulation of sociology-as-science and society is a dialectic of spirit only, consisting of the inquiring intelligence and voluntarism of the free scientist. The individual sociology thesis-performer can now solve the problem of theoretical pluralism - it is simply an election where one has to lodge a "vote". Abstract empiricism is the norm of such a polity. The literature review thus solves the disarray whilst simultaneously preserving it as intact. For this reason it is an ideological practice.

Overcoming this scientism begins with considerations of the actual conditions of knowledge production. This chapter has dealt with this through critiques of the sociology and political science

of television media theses in New Zealand. Now the more positive step can be taken of locating my thesis within an emerging Cultural Studies problematic. This location is constituted of dialectical interactions between contemporary society and the work of the New Zealand Cultural Studies Working Group and the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies. Such an enterprise does not involve simply outlining the sequences of media sociology, but a historical presentation of contemporary Cultural Studies and the media study which is one of its facets. It is in terms of this actual practice that previous studies and the literature on television have real impact, and this is the context in which they shall be encountered. I am not dispensing with the literature, only the literature review which claims for books an abstract history of their own.

Sociological endeavour that produces work of value invariably stems from anti-pluralistic tendencies, from some form of coherent theoretical intolerance. Cultural Studies, as developed by the Birmingham Centre, is an essential point of departure. As Hall (1980, p37) argues -

"different theorists and positions ... have been more or less influential in different areas of the Centre's work. While maintaining a consistent level of debate and discussion about and between them, a certain theoretical 'pluralism' has been both necessary and inevitable."

However, Hall continues,

"there has never been a rigidly imposed unitary theoretical position in the Centre: though there has always been a general project - the elaboration of a non-reductionist theory of cultures and social formations - and a defined 'universe of discourse' within whose framework different positions and

emphases are exposed to mutual critique" (ibid, pp39-40).

FOOTNOTES

- [1] Modern liberal "lit. crit." practitioners in New Zealand have tended to evade the reactionary political implications of their Arnoldian conception of culture as "the best that has been thought and said". A notable exception is Olssen's (1962) argument that New Zealanders' "dull utilitarian uniformity in mind and outlook" (p411) is due to the indigenous culture being "far too inadequately differentiated" (p405). This, in turn, is due to the "fact" that "there are no social classes to fulfill the function of transmitting culture" (p403). Therefore, he argues that a cure for cultural lack could come from studying how one might create the conditions in which social classes grow (p401).
- [2] A. R. Vintiner, 1976, A Structural Analysis of Television In New Zealand: An Initial Approach Using Television News, unpublished M.A. thesis (Political Science), University of Canterbury.
- [3] In other words this is not "good" systems theory either. Vintiner does not rigorously pursue systems theorisation, but simply uses it to allow statistical abstraction. Buckley (1969), for example, argues against this sort of arbitrary closure. He links it to Parsonian functionalism, arguing that "in this way, the 'social system' comes to be narrowed down to embrace only certain determinate relations - those of presumably 'peaceful coexistence', or Parsons' alternative definition of order" (ibid, p29). This location in structural

functionalism and its criticism is equally relevant to the thesis work of Day (1971), covered in chapter 1.3.

- [4] It is worthwhile emphasising here that Vintiner is not working completely within a Weberian idealism. Weber indeed did displace history with his ideal types but he was concerned with meaning, if only in reducing it to subjectivity. The complex philosophical problem broached upon here, one which includes the role of the "scientist", is none other than the Kantian dilemma, and as such is most certainly not the subject of this thesis. The problem is resolved by Ruben (1979).
- [5] My aim here is merely to outline the present situation and not to develop a socio-historic explanation of it. It must be emphasised, however, that I do not agree with Fougere's and Orbell's (1974) argument that the fragmentation of New Zealand social science is simply "a consequence of present organisational arrangements" (ibid, p229) and can therefore be overcome merely by creating new research institutions. A true understanding of this circumstance entails much broader considerations of why New Zealand, despite being well stocked with intellectuals, lacks an intelligentsia. Such analysis could begin with a critical appropriation of Anderson's various essays on English culture, particularly "Components of a National Culture" (1969). Here Anderson links the character of the English class struggle to the pervasive empiricism and factionalisation of that country's intellectuals - "empirical, piece-meal intellectual disciplines corresponded to circumscribed social action" (ibid. p226). Perhaps New Zealand society is similarly organised around an "absent

centre" (ibid, p276), a lack of a total theory of itself. Thus in sociology the importing of American structural functionalism in the 1960s was a preliminary and ultimately unsatisfactory response to this absence.

- [6] For example, c.f. Parsons (1968, p475) - "My first policy recommendation, therefore, is that every effort be made to promulgate carefully considered statements of value-committments which may provide a basis for consensus among both have and have-not nations. This would require that such statements be disassociated from the specific ideological position of either of the polarised camps".
- [7] The Birmingham Centre has been constantly aware of this "academic" problem. See, for example, the Gramscian argument in Hall, 1980, pp42-47.
- [8] For a history of recent developments in the relationship between the State and the social sciences see the N.R.A.C. Annual Reports for 1971 to 1981. The S.S.R.F.C. has been functioning independently only since 1979. In 1980 Committee D (the N.R.A.C. committee for social science) organised a seminar on the contribution of social science research to the formation, development and evaluation of social policy. That same year the independent Association of Social Science Researchers (A.S.S.R.), consisting mostly of government-employed social scientists, was formed. In 1981 the Coordinating and Advisory for Social Science Research was set up.
- [9] These resistances are incorporated at least formally in the S.S.R.F.C.'s activities (see footnote six) and the

non-academic A.S.S.R. (e.g. see the statement in its Directory of Members, 1981, p1). The resolution of these issues will never take place at universities themselves, since the problem is not a purely "academic" one. The politics of social science practice inside the State have an informative precedent in the 1936 establishment of a Bureau of Social Science Research within the D.S.I.R. (see Robb, 1980). The Bureau was closed in 1940 for vague reasons clearly involving the radical Left politics of its staff and the publication of results. Robb's paper warrants brief consideration in that it advances a position for modern sociology's relationship to the State through a descriptive history of the Bureau. Robb shows clearly the political bases of this closure, yet his analysis stresses that actually understanding the situation is "impossible". This allows him to imply (in a very loose fashion) that the closure was due to the politics of Doig and Martin (e.g. "obviously the question is still strictly unanswerable, but the fact that it seems to make sense suggests the nature of the situation", my emphasis), and thus to further imply that a successful State-sociology relationship relies on the latter speaking only in the language of the former, without having to explore or argue the political consequences of this position. This danger of the dissolution of sociology into State practices was discussed at the 1980 N.Z.S.A. conference (where Professor Robb reproduced his position as above), suggesting perhaps that the discipline is approaching a critical period in its development. Robb delivered the 1980 paper more or less unchanged at the 1981

S.A.A.N.Z. conference also.

- [10] C.f. Shield's (1974, p230) comment that "what little research is being done is extremely limited in scope and is too often unrelated to the special needs of New Zealand society ... Research within government is generally conducted for administrative purposes or to provide supportive evidence for current policies or future proposals. Research in the universities is generally carried out as part of higher degree requirements or in the interests of training students. The majority of projects undertaken at the request of community groups have proved to be of dubious scientific merit and what little research has been undertaken by senior staff has been primarily aimed at the overseas' academic journals. This prime position occupied by graduate thesis research in Australasian sociology means that the publication and authorship of student work has frequently been the subject of controversy; e.g. see Witton (1973), Chapman (1974) and Gardner and Stanley (1974).
- [11] P. Day, 1971, A Content Analysis of New Zealand Television Fiction With Regard to Likely Audience Effects, unpublished M.A. thesis (Sociology), University of Canterbury.
- [12] For example, see Shuker's (1981) comments on the recent S.S.R.F.C. seminar on qualitative data as useful "to enrich and supplement other forms of analysis".
- [13] C. Wilkes, 1976, Politics and Television: In Which Hanna-Barbera Win An Election By Giving Us What We Want, The Way We Want It, unpublished M.A. thesis (Sociology), University of Canterbury. The thesis was the basis for the

subsequent essay "The Great New Zealand Melodrama" (1977).

- [14] Dunphy interprets these radical critiques as challenges to values - "the radicals have firmly raised the issue of values - the question of whose interests, apart from our own, will we as sociologists support" (1974, p7). This pre-figures the modern resolution of competing sociologies into an orthodoxy by situating positions as "value commitments" (as outlined above). A central, mainstream rapport ("apart from our own") is held to be common to all these diverse positions, beyond politics and attack.
- [15] For a more detailed presentation and critique of Bedggood's work in relation to Cultural Studies in general, from which the argument here is derived, see my "Bedggood and New Zealand Cultural Studies" (1982).
- [16] For a clear illustration of the impact of this abstraction on New Zealand academic Marxism see the recent contribution to the debate on culture by Beatson and Cox (1982). From the beginning they eschew the task of theoretical work (see Footnote one, p374), but aim to remain within Marxism by setting up a Marxist framework as a series of abstract assertions (particularly pp355-356). The result is that immediately they attempt to analyse anything specific they fall completely out of a Marxist discourse. Thus, for example, in outlining "the cultural mode of production" they claim "our chief interest is directed towards the question of how the arts in New Zealand are financed" (p 359). Thus "with a budget of over ninety million dollars in 1980, television is a key part of the cultural infrastructure" (p386). The

subsequent outlining of "market forces" is precisely the sort of superficial economism that Marx argued mystified the capitalist system. Clearly the central financier of the New Zealand "arts" is the State, and Beatson and Cox amass considerable information to establish this market relation. But without theorising the State this information has no meaning for a Marxist discourse. Furthermore, as Miliband (1974, p4) argues, "a theory of the State is also a theory of society and of the distribution of power in that society". The evasion of theoretical work results in an empiricist's accumulation of data (sales' taxes, funding sources, etc) that has not been made meaningful by theory. It also results in abstraction, since firstly we are not sure what "the State", "culture", "art", etc are even though we continue to talk about them, and secondly we do not approach specific concrete art works in terms of their actual material existence and production at all but only as commodities already produced and circulating in a market.

[17] It may, however, be part of a politically disastrous situation for the student body. The increasing impact of the current economic collapse upon New Zealand universities, combined with ministerial attacks, is unlikely to radically politicise students (as it did more than ten years ago). We have now in universities a new pluralistic orthodoxy that includes depoliticised Marxism, a new "repressive tolerance" (see Marcuse et al, 1965) that makes the likely student reaction a wholesale defection to Business Studies. For a perceptive comment on the political and theoretical abstraction of

academic Marxism in Australasian universities from the student point of view see White, 1981.

CHAPTER TWO - CULTURAL STUDIES 'DOWN UNDER'2.1 - SOME PRELIMINARY RESTATEMENTS AND EVASIONS

In the preceding chapter I briefly outlined the development of the New Zealand university sociology "culture". The question of the determinations of this culture was phrased but shirked. These general observations were then connected to specific moments in the (arguably) dominant cultural practice of the discipline - the thesis. The contemporary situation was identified as a conjuncture of two interacting confusions or uncertainties. The first confusion is political. In particular, what is the role of sociology in relation to the State? The critical nature of this question surfaces in a historical period of New Zealand society marked by major economic and political realignments, in a period when the relationship of social scientists to proposed transformations of the Welfare State is forced into prominence [1]. The second confusion is theoretical. The plurality of theoretical positions is so contradictory and segregated that the distinctions seem to be based on irrational and irreconcilable "faiths" rather than scientifically resolvable propositions. These two confusions structure the two practices, practical and academic respectively, of sociology as an intellectual discipline. For this reason I have represented it as the disarray of university sociology. For the benefit of my own "project" I have elaborated this disarray as a problem for higher degree student research, and television theses specifically.

A particular student response to the disarray has been identified. In the face of a problem that is at once practical and academic, research may emphasise methods that announce themselves as both apolitical and atheoretical - those of an orthodox positivism. This exploits the relative underdetermination of theories by facts (e.g. see Giddens, 1979, p243). It maximises the distance between facts/methods and theories/values so as to reformulate theses as demonstrations of statistical competence with largely ad hoc theorisations. The danger consequent to this schism is an abstract empiricism that in scientific terms fails to be adequate to the concrete and in practical terms reduces politics to voluntary "value commitments" [2]. Although this problem and response have been situated in New Zealand universities, they in fact reflect a situation common to modern sociology throughout the liberal-democratic capitalist world. Thus in the Introduction I made use of Giddens work to phrase them as general problems. Through the process of uneven development other countries have encountered these questions earlier. From these engagements we can learn a great deal. In New Zealand this creates the challenge and vulnerability of adapting foreign scholarship to "the peculiarity of the New Zealand". Since the 1960s English Marxists have successfully begun working towards their own local goal. Both the general study of culture in New Zealand and the execution of specific sociology theses on television must take account of this experience if they are to transcend the present intellectual stasis. The most convenient focus for such an account is provided by the critical appropriation of the work of the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies.

It must be emphasised that it is not the theoretical and practical divergences per se that I am arguing against, it is the disordered state of this plurality. There is no sense of intellectual contestation and movement. An individual thesis, for example, does not so much contribute to a debate as augment the proliferation. For this reason in the preceding chapter I identified the contemporary situation as a stasis, consisting of various intellectual apartheid's whose apparent differences conceal common weaknesses. This stasis is due to the improper phrasing of questions, such that the different positions do not really engage with each other but only with themselves. The Birmingham Centre's development of Cultural Studies, I shall argue, properly phrases the questions for the study of culture so as to avoid both the absentmindedness of empiricism and the dogmatism of theoretical voluntarism. It is this "posture" even more than actual "results" that makes the Centre so important.

The underdetermination of theories by facts suggests that social science is more than establishing unmediated ("true") correspondences between the "real" and the "theoretical". Rather than a simple dichotomy, it suggests a complex active continuity unified in part by political practices. This emphasises the unity of those academic and practical questions outlined above. Theses, however, are quintessential academic practices, their discourse is destroyed by political practice. This is exemplified by the custom of attaching arbitrarily (some have them, some don't) political proposals at the end of theses. These policy suggestions (for liberal-democrats) or tactics (for radicals) invariably take up

where the thesis leaves off. This suggests that the thesis practice is itself part of the academic/practical problem. Nevertheless, or rather for this reason, I shall be subsequently preoccupied with presenting and resolving theoretical problems. This is a limiting but necessary contradiction for the practice of a thesis. It is a contradiction that would be completely improper to purport to resolve inside a thesis.

However, the theoretical consideration is not to be some ideal academic abstraction. A thesis on television could "do" Cultural Studies in such an abstract fashion by using any number of well-tried strategies. It could simply add Hall's work to the other positions for media study in New Zealand, or it could go back to Gramsci as an Origin in need of working out. These two "movements" (adding, going back) are an extension of the literature review practice critiqued above. They preserve the stasis of contemporary sociology precisely because they are not linked to any concrete intellectual activity. We must begin with the real historical emergence of Cultural Studies as a distinctive problematic in Australia and New Zealand. Such a beginning will fully appreciate the value of the work of Hall and Gramsci.

We can begin by noting that there is an identifiable modern interest and initiation of work in Cultural Studies in Australasian universities. Furthermore, this interest is very contemporary with the general development of Cultural Studies in Britain. If Cultural Studies began in force in the early 1970s in England, it arrived in the Antipodes soon after - by the late '70s in Australia

and early '80s in New Zealand. In the age of international capital intellectual practices also begin to circulate much more rapidly. These developments, then, are part of common international emergent tendencies in capitalism and the role of intellectuals.

2.2 - CULTURAL STUDIES IN AUSTRALIA

A simply summary presentation of Australian Cultural Studies is all that is necessary here. An exemplary instance of this trend is Dwyer's and Wilson's (1980) unpublished paper, "Cultural Formation in a Time of Crisis - the Australian Context". The paper is important as a conjunctural work, one which intersects a number of movements in Australian sociology. In pointing to possible resolutions of current problems they succeed in raising nearly as many unresolved questions as well. They readily agree that their discussion "has inevitably been general and tentative" (ibid, p15).

Dwyer and Wilson begin with what seems to be a crucial "thinking through" for the initiation of Cultural Studies - the affirmation of the existence of class cultures and the consequent need for research methods to be adequate to the cultural variety of any social structure. This entails the rejection of a mechanical Marxism which postulates a single, efficient ideology. In respect of New Zealand I have already rehearsed this rejection through the critique of Bedggood (above), and shall return to this point in chapter 2.3. Against the common argument by Australian Marxists for a "cultural classlessness" (e.g. Altman, 1980; Connell, 1977; Theophanous, 1980) Dwyer and Wilson "insist that working class

people do establish a legitimacy of their own by means of the class struggle in which they engage" (ibid, p11). This theoretically centres struggle and Gramsci's notion of "hegemony" as key problems (e.g. ibid, pp2ff). It also creates the demand for methods that are sensitive to the cultural dimensions of class conflict, to "actual experience" rather than simply "attitudes in the abstract" (ibid, p11). In place of "a neat set of categories" they follow Connell's argument (1977, p5) for a "generative approach" which stresses situated practices. From this Dwyer and Wilson argue that ethnography is an essential methodological ingredient, and they often refer to the Birmingham Centre's already classic text in this field, Willis' (1978) Learning to Labour (e.g. pp11, footnote 34). In total these reconceptualisations point to work on working class resistances as well as incorporations (ibid, pp13ff).

Dwyer's and Wilson's paper is full of problems. It is unclear how their situating of cultural crisis in terms of structural changes in Australian capitalism (unemployment, the international division of labour, etc; see ibid, pp3-4) avoids the collapse into the sort of economic reductionism they strive to reject. It is unclear how the Gramscian notion of "hegemony" can be theoretically identified with Habermas' "legitimation" (ibid, pp15ff). This results in a tension between the conceptions of culture respectively as practices or as values. These unresolved theoretical problems create the danger of a reductionist, conspiratorial notion of "hegemony" (e.g. ibid, p5). The crucial point here, though, is that the problem has been posed, that there is now concrete theoretical and research work to be done.

This work is going on. Two outstanding examples are Johnson's (1979) The Cultural Critics and the ongoing programme of work from the Sociology Research Group in Cultural and Educational Studies at Melbourne University. This latter has produced two collected Working Papers (1979, edited by Johnson and Ozolins; 1980, edited by McCallum and Ozolins), which have dealt with a wide variety of cultural topics, including Barthes, working class cultures, schooling, Bourdieu and the media. This variety illustrates another identifiable pattern in Cultural Studies, to which I shall return. Following an initial posing of working class culture as problematic, culture in a more general sense becomes the focus of theoretical and research work. Activities include studying the media, literature, race, the sexual division of labour, etc. The central problem becomes the complex mediations and determinations of these cultural practices and sites of struggle; for example through the study of the role of the modern State, or through working theoretically at such concepts as "over-determination", "relative autonomy" and "hegemony".

Finally, it must be noted that making "culture" problematic has also significantly challenged the assumed political roles of intellectuals. It is interesting that Johnson's (1979) The Cultural Critics is both an important initiation of Cultural Studies in Australia (a concrete piece of scholarship) and also a consideration of the emergence of English Cultural Studies generally in terms of intellectuals and their specific practices (see particularly *ibid*, pp1-17). For the Left an ideologically dominated working class "cannot be relied upon for radical action"

(Altman, 1980, p130), thus Australian Left intellectuals have largely remained politically inactive (a la Frankfurt School) through despair, seeing themselves as the last holders of genuine radical values who must wait for structural developments to reawaken the working class. However, as Dwyer and Wilson make clear (e.g. *ibid*, pp9, 11, 19), the reformulation of "culture" suggests a specifically intellectual practice in radical politics. This explains the close tie between Cultural Studies and work on class aspects of education, schools and communications [3]. In this respect Cultural Studies is part of a crisis within Marxism. In Australia the appearance of a new radical journal in 1980, Thesis Eleven, consciously indexed this development (e.g. see the "Editorial" of No. 1, pp2-6).

2.3 - CULTURAL STUDIES IN NEW ZEALAND

In recent years there has been debate in New Zealand over the existence of (working) class cultures. This has not taken place in Left sociology (an option presumably closed by Bedggoodian Marxism) but within the local historiography. Due to its extreme theoretical fragmentation, sociology has not succeeded in isolating common problems for systematic scholarly dispute. New Zealand historiography, on the other hand, with its solid tradition of a "social history" that tends to be relatively under-theorised and stress the value of detailed empirical description, has raised the existence of class cultures as such a problem. This in turn has created the need for theoretical work, and in this respect sociologists (notably Toynbee, Pearson and Martin) have engaged

with historians on their own terrain. The specifically New Zealand nature of this conjuncture has important implications for the establishment of an indigenous Cultural Studies. For example, the trivial departmentalising ("disciplining") of university intellectual practices has meant a concentration on aspects of class in the 19th and 20th centuries ("history"), rather than extending to more modern times.

Throughout the 1950s and '60s historians generally agreed that the concept of "class", culturally or otherwise, had little or no relevance for New Zealand (e.g. see Sinclair, 1959; Oliver, 1969). More recently, however, notions of class conflict and consciousness have emerged as problematic, notably through the work of Olssen (1974, 1977) and Gibbons (1977, 1981). Both Olssen and Gibbons reject the methods of Sinclair and Oliver as too abstract. Olssen's ethnographic concern for "the inner texture of working class life" (1974, p45) leads him to uncover distinctive working class cultures. His suggestion that perhaps "no working class existed between 1890 and 1940, only congeries of distinct working classes rooted in particular national groups, industries and communities" (1974, p59) raises a crucial area of research for Cultural Studies in New Zealand. The historians have tended to approach native class formations from a loose Weberian position (e.g. see Olssen, 1974, p44; 1977, p22). The low level of theorisation has produced a rich empirical base that both avoids the simple summations of Bedggood and provides much valuable material for those concerned to extend or appropriate historians' findings. However, it also leads to a preoccupation with detailed

description, with what Poulantzas (1976, p68) has called "the noisy illusion of the evident", at the expense of more comprehensive attempts at structural explanation.

It is in respect of this demand for theorisation that sociologists have engaged with historians. The sociological contribution can be divided into two positions. Firstly, there is a recent Marxist structuralist approach that is essentially different from the pre-existing historical work. Secondly, there is a neo-Weberian approach concerned to extend and lend increased theoretical coherency to the pattern of established historical scholarship. The structuralist challenge to historians' tendency to subjectivise class to what "people think about class" is very much a modern development (see Martin, 1982). The theorisation of class cultures in New Zealand has been dominated by neo-Weberians, notably Toynbee and Pearson. Both Toynbee (e.g. 1979, p79) and Pearson (e.g. 1980, pp167-183) criticise the abstraction of many studies of class formation and demand detailed, localised ethnographies. Pearson, for example, throws up the need for a Cultural Studies to mediate between the structuration and experience of class, but fills this gap with orthodox "community studies". This fails to articulate satisfactorily the relationship between localised experiences and practices and the general structures of class relations, State activities, the formation of a national hegemony, etc [4]. From the above we can see that work on class cultures has begun and is ongoing.

During 1981 the New Zealand Cultural Studies Working Group

(N.Z.C.S.W.G.), based at Massey University, was formed. A preliminary statement of position is provided by Maharey and Wood (1981). As Hall et al (1980, pp7-8) have argued, it is the particular social and intellectual configuration of each country that will determine the precise shape of the indigenous Cultural Studies that emerges. However, as I mentioned above, one can discern a number of common positions that are "thought through" in the process of this development. Hall (1980) calls these "breaks", and we shall return to his paper and its charting of the Birmingham Centre's work in chapter 3.1. The emergence of Cultural Studies in New Zealand is too recent for its character to be clearly delineated, for example in terms of the disciplines that will be involved and the various cultural sites to receive research priority. What is clear is that the time is now and that the work is beginning - for example, there is an ongoing interdisciplinary debate on class cultures, the tradition of functionalist sociology is destroyed, there is an emerging sociological interest in "on-the-ground" ethnographies thus far dominated by neo-Weberian "community studies", mechanistic Marxism's notion of "ideology" is rejected and the concept of "culture" made problematic by a break into a complex Marxism whose vocabulary includes "relative autonomy" and "hegemony" (see Gibbons, 1981; Wood, 1982), and the Working Group and its Journal have been striving to initiate, coordinate and provide forums for studies of various cultural sites. The exact relation of this emerging Cultural Studies to academic sociology is unresolved. It was clear at the 1980 N.Z.S.A. conference working session on "culture" that the representatives of entrenched sociological positions found plenty

to argue over but had very little in common to argue with.

The Working Group has already encountered opposition. Positivist sociologists are unlikely to be much of a problem - their confident tyranny collapsed some years ago along with functionalism. Unable to see Cultural Studies as a challenge, they are more likely to be either confused ("cultural"?) or disinterested. It is not surprising, therefore, that the first opposition to the Working Group has come from the already insecure qualitative sociology. Mast (1982) has attacked the Group from an orthodox symbolic interactionist position. Employing the typical theory/methods closure of the New Zealand sociological pluralism, she argues that ethnography belongs to symbolic interactionists and no-one else. She fails completely to see Cultural Studies as a problematic, misinterpreting it as merely another theoretical discipline invading her exclusive methodological territory. Mast's action is essentially defensive. This posture causes her to misrepresent both the Birmingham Centre's work and its relation to the N.Z.C.S.W.G. (see the Editor's "Response"). Such opposition seeks to preserve sociology's fragmented status quo ("the freely initiated study of culture", Mast calls it) and thus fails to engage profitably with Cultural Studies. The establishment of New Zealand Cultural Studies is, then, very much a work in progress.

The political role of an indigenous Cultural Studies is similarly unresolved, but recent events such as the 1981 Springbok Tour clearly call for it. The Springbok Tour presented a critical challenge to the political activity of Left intellectuals in New

Zealand. Here was a struggle manifestly cultural and not simply reducible to class relations (see Fougere, 1981). Opposition to the Tour rallied around moralistic arguments ("HART"). Large numbers of Leftists, liberals, Maori radicals, poets, feminists, priests, students, etc regularly confronted the State's oppressive apparatuses; yet the great mass of the working class was fiercely pro-Tour. Conservative politicians used this conjuncture to discredit radical politics by energetically defending the abstract freedoms and formal "rights" of individual "citizens". This split off the radicalised working class minority and its intellectuals from the great bulk of that class. There were three discernible Left responses to this situation.

The Labour Party simply couldn't cope. Unable to produce a coherent position in anything but a formal sense, it was as split as the country as a whole. A more concerted effort came from a second Left posture, exemplified by Shaw and the Workers' Action League in Wellington, which may be summarised as a temporary political activation of a Bedgoodian Marxism. This position includes, at least formally, most of those Leftists who were incorporated individually into the anti-Tour movement. This group accepted the status of one position amongst the diverse moralist "mob". Thus for them the struggle became "merely" cultural and so they were able to act pragmatically (and effectively) in an organisational sense. The politics of this activity were a rejection of the bulk of the working class as reactionary, as the "enemy". This activity was, then, very much in bad faith. The politics of this practice were not rigorously advocated and

accepted (this would have destroyed the claim to a radical Left position), but temporarily held at bay. This refusal of politics allowed adventurist tactics by phrasing the struggle as "merely cultural", their activity as "merely moral" and the rejection of the working class "merely temporary". When the Boks have gone home, this posture suggests, we can all get back to the "real" struggle (presumably that around economic class relations). For this second Left response nothing is learnt or challenged by the struggle around the Springbok Tour.

An informative comparison can be made between the movement against the Springbok Tour and the formation of the New Left in England in the 1950s and '60s. The New Left intellectuals saw themselves as the inheritors of the moral critique of capitalism initiated by the English working class (see Williams, 1965). Anderson (1965, p4) has located the New Left as a moral response to the two crises of 1956 (Hungary and the Suez). The stress on an ethical rejection of industrial capitalism culminated politically in the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, which has interesting parallels to the style of the anti-Tour movement. The problems attendant to a simple focus on morality, Anderson argues, are both practical and theoretical. It fails to motivate the working classes and it also fails to develop rigorous theorisations of English capitalism. Thus Anderson criticises the New Left for failing to move beyond attacking society on its own terms, and therefore being unable to cause substantial change. These criticisms apply equally to the moralistic bent of the anti-Tour movement in New Zealand and those radicals who simply accepted this

as a basis for their practice.

This comparison is valuable not merely for the similarities it turns up but also the divergences. The British New Left advanced largely ethical critiques and were committed to a humanistic socialism. This concern with morality developed into an increasing interest in cultural (theoretical and practical) problems. Thus the work of two main figures involved with the New Left, Thompson and Williams, was crucial in the founding of Cultural Studies, which eventually rejected a moral critique of society in favour of more rigorous theorisation and structural considerations. These developments lead to the Birmingham Centre (see Johnson, 1979, pp204-205). In New Zealand, the second Left response's acceptance of moralism was only tactical, an adventurist pragmatism with no enduring positive results. Cultural Studies in New Zealand seems more closely tied to the third Left position to the Springbok Tour.

This third response came from the Labour Left (for a founding position statement see "Socialism and the Labour Left", 1981a). The pamphlet distributed prior to a Wellington demonstration, "Brilliant Tactics ... But Where Do They Lead?" (1981b), criticises the moralist nature of the anti-Tour movement ("the struggle of all good people against the evil of apartheid") and the adventurist stance of the Leftists who accepted this as a platform for activity. While such tactics have a limited short-term effectiveness, in the long run their implications are less tenable. The liberal-moralist posture alienates the working class by failing to demonstrate the mediations of the cultural struggle with class

interests (apartheid as the specific form of South African capitalism). The Labour Left approached the issues of both apartheid and the Tour as part of the hegemony that secures working class consent, as

"a specific form of limiting the ability of the people to organise against exploitation and oppression ... In the absence of any systematic presentation of the real interests of the working class, large sections of it are being mobilised against their own class interests. A wedge is being driven between the more political and progressive, if liberal-moralist, representatives of the class and massive layers which are allowed to remain backward on this issue" (ibid).

This Gramscian rephrasing argues against Left adventurism, demanding long-term strategies of "systematic education, agitation and organisation, ... explanation of the links between apartheid and the system that exploits the working class and so on" (ibid). It centres the politics (theory and practice) of cultural struggle as a central preoccupation of the Left. It argues that the escalating impact of what has been called New Zealand's "third depression" (Davis, 1981) will not at all necessarily produce a spontaneous, radical consciousness in the working class (as the adventurists assume) but could lead to an ultra-right reaction (e.g. centred around racism).

It is within this emerging Cultural Studies that I seek to locate my own work. This aim is made difficult by three inter-connected factors. Firstly, this is a thesis, an exemplary instance of what Hall (1980, pp43-44) has called "the lonely, isolated, individualised, competitive-possessive form in which much research in the humanities and social sciences is conceived and conducted". How such a work relates to a developing collective,

interdisciplinary enterprise is problematic. Secondly, the fragmentation of the local sociology threatens constantly to simply absorb this individualised thesis as yet another instance of its plurality. Ultimately this absorption must succeed (it will) because it is a precondition of this thesis-work being accepted. Lastly, there is no established Cultural Studies in New Zealand, only an emerging and as yet unfocused problematic. This thesis is not only work in Cultural Studies but also a conscious initiation of Cultural Studies. The critique of existing television theses and the sociological status quo established the need for Cultural Studies, which was then elaborated as an emerging problematic around this thesis. The final step is to use the work of the Birmingham Centre as a solid point of departure.

It seems very likely that Cultural Studies in this country will begin with a period of sustained critical appropriation of the Centre's work (see Maharey, 1982). The fragmentation of the local sociology suggests the need for some coherent starting point. The "freely initiated study of culture" Mast advocates has so far resulted in little in concrete terms, and is unlikely to ever lead to systematic attempts to comprehend New Zealand culture. At the 1981 S.A.A.N.Z. conference in Christchurch Mast presented an ethnomethodological paper based on an English case study of television actors. Johnson (1979, p207) has noted that

"interest in cultural studies is burgeoning in a number of different contexts. This phenomenon is vital for preventing stultifying debates around rigidly defined theoretical positions".

Her consideration of the contribution of the Birmingham Centre to Cultural Studies in general (ibid, pp205-207) shows also why the

Centre is important for cultural analysis in New Zealand, and why this thesis draws so heavily on its work. She argues that the Centre "provides a valuable focus" (ibid, p205) because its members have been prolific in terms of publication and so are responsible for a great deal of the present interest in the field. It is not that the Centre presents a single resolved position, but that it has developed with Cultural Studies, encountering and adapting the various theoretical influences. The most important reason, however, is in a way the most accidental. The Centre's attempt to work out of the culturalist moralism of the New Left and a literary-humanist conception of culture, and yet avoid a Marxist reductionism, lead to a persistent emphasis on the development of theory and the need for theoretical rigour in its work. Thus though the Centre's specific "project" is different from our's in New Zealand, the resulting body of theorisations provide the needed antidote for the fragmentation of the local sociology, and begins to satisfy the need for theory uncovered in chapter one. That this theoretical emphasis did not prevent numerous concrete studies of specific historical conjunctures suggests the Centre's relevance to thesis work. As a graduate education institution, much of the Centre's work was in fact done as part of the requirements for higher degrees.

FOOTNOTES

- [1] See Martin (1981), particularly "The Modern Welfare State and Welfare Expenditure in New Zealand", e.g. pp68-70.
- [2] This is not a necessary consequence. Erik Olin Wright (1979, pp11-14, etc), for example, has reconstituted Marxism

vis-a-vis traditional quantitative methods. In chapter one I argued that Wilkes (1976) also succeeds in rejecting this abstraction.

- [3] For an expression of these linkages in an important founding statement see Williams (1968). This is not to say that the connections have proved unproblematic.
- [4] The relatively recent development of community studies in New Zealand is dominated thus far by neo-Weberians and anthropological accounts of Maori settlements. For a useful summary see Pearson (1982). For a cultural studies critique of the "community" concept see Brook and Finn (1977).

CHAPTER THREE - THE CULTURAL STUDIES PROBLEMATIC3.1 - INTRODUCTION

In chapter one the historical and contemporary deficiency of New Zealand sociology was located in terms of its inflection through the failure to produce either adequate concrete studies or theorisations of the native television. A pronounced tendency to empiricism was identified. In chapter two the recent development of an Australasian Cultural Studies was briefly charted. It is within this emergent tendency that this thesis is located. It was argued that an important beginning point for this work must be the critical appropriation of overseas work, in particular that of the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies. The Centre offers a body of theory and research capable of overcoming empiricism and allowing an adequate study of New Zealand television. This appropriation begins here.

Having said that, it must be immediately emphasised that it is not proposed to review the Centre's work. I do not intend to trace its origin from the Birmingham University's English Department, its struggles with literary humanists and positivist sociologists, nor the major events in its considerable publication record since the first issue of Working Papers in Cultural Studies in 1972. A consequence of this is the tendency to represent the Birmingham Centre as a single-minded agent, rather than being adequate to its real history as a site of change, struggle and profound disjunctures. Readers interested in this dimension are advised to

begin with Hall's (1980) summary, "Cultural Studies and the Centre". There is as yet no authoritative historical documentation of the Centre's project. From New Zealand the task of locating many important pieces of work remains a difficult task of hunting them down through a maze of references. For example, most of Hall's extensive analyses of television (which provide the basis of parts three and four) exist only in the Centre's Stencilled Papers series.

This is to be an abstract presentation, devoid of the struggles which established Cultural Studies as a distinctive intellectual intervention. In particular, it concentrates on general statements made by the Birmingham Centre's former director, Stuart Hall, and the person now in that position, Richard Johnson. Cultural Studies is to be generally considered as "a proper posing of the problem".

Cultural Studies addresses a particular problem "area", that of "culture". An adequate definition for beginning to think about culture is provided by Mulhern (1980, p32), who claims the term refers to "the complex unity of those practices that produce sense". All empiricist abdications before this problem (by treating the production of meaning as unproblematic, limiting one to merely describing its quantitative distribution) are rejected. Johnson (1980, pp11-12) expands the study of meaning to

"the production of forms of consciousness - ideas, feelings, desires, moral preferences, knowledges, forms of consciousness of self ... the key task of Cultural Studies (in this definition) is to specify the social and historical forms of consciousness and, more analytically, the processes or circuits through which they are produced."

Clearly Cultural Studies is not in itself an academic discipline in the accepted sense. Many disciplines (anthropology, history, literary criticism, sociology, etc) have studied the production of meaning, though typically by rather arbitrarily abstracting one moment from "the unity of sense".

At a general level there are two dominant "problematics" in the study of culture. A "problematic" is "a definite theoretical structure, a field of concepts, which organises a particular science or individual text by making it possible to ask some kinds of questions and by supressing others" (Johnson, 1979, p20) [1]. Cultural Studies is the ongoing attempt to resolve the opposition between the two problematics of culturalism and structuralism. It exists in a permanent state of tension by avoiding the reductionism that would result from coming down on one side of this polarity.

3.2 - CULTURALISM VERSUS STRUCTURALISM

Culturalism and structuralism are the two opposed poles in the study of meaning (see Hall, 1981; Johnson, 1979). They correspond, respectively, to the philosophical distinction between agency and determination raised in the introduction. By attempting to resolve the opposition between these poles, Cultural Studies provides a point of departure for an adequate "theory of social action" in the terms elaborated by Giddens.

Johnson (1979, p214) links culturalism to "an overriding concern with describing actual forms of popular practices and

beliefs". The emphasis is upon being descriptively adequate to the richness of lived experience, thus preferring methods which are themselves experiential. The culturalist tradition immediately behind the Birmingham Centre in particular is the work of Hoggart, Williams and Thompson. The work of these writers is united by an attempt to recover the integrity of working class resistances to "bourgeois culture". This typically involved a struggle against both Marxist economic reductionism and the elitism of "lit. crit." intellectuals. More generally, culturalism obviously includes the verstehen gloss of Weberian sociologies. Within this problematic, culture is "the sum of the available descriptions through which societies make sense of their common experiences" (Hall, 1981, p25). Culturalists typically have a humanist emphasis upon the active making of culture. As Bennett et al (1981, p10) state, here the creation of sense devolves upon

"the set of practices through which men and women actively respond to the conditions of their social existence, creatively fashioning experienced social relationships into diverse and structured patterns of thinking and feeling. The emphasis in this account is on the notion of human agency."

The structuralist account, by contrast, stresses the determination of human activity. Marxist structuralism, deriving from the work of Althusser, has a similar concern to argue against the tradition of economic reductionism, but in its place is put the effectivity of ideology. The complex of social sense is not something created by actors. The social formation is a structure of three interrelated practices - politics, economics and ideology. These structures consist of largely unconscious rules. Ideology consists of those unconscious categories through which social

conditions are presented and lived. Thus structuralism does not emphasise "lived experience", it insists that experience can not be the "ground" of anything since it is produced by the structuring rules (see Hall, 1981, p27). The social subject does not make culture but is "spoken by" ideology. Ideology is the medium through which the world is experienced (see Johnson, 1979, pp218ff). Thus, the study of cultural questions is presently taking place between the poles of culturalism and structuralism. Both positions have the advantage of complexity. Culturalism's grasp of experience prevents the abstraction of a crucial dimension of social relations. Structuralism's theoretical impact has been to displace any simple, reductionist arguments about the relationship between consciousness and a material "base". Both positions also have major weaknesses. Culturalism excessively privileges experience. Lacking consistent theorisation, it therefore tends to avoid generalisation and remain at the level of concrete description rather than explanation. The notion of culture as a "whole way of life" is too broad; it expands to include everything. Thus the problem of determination, of the relation between culture and other non-cultural practices, is displaced. Structuralism tends to become excessively theoreticist, to abstract social relations beyond human activity. This leads to a functionalist conception of how meaning is produced in the social formation. The dimension of human conflict and struggle is displaced. The problem for contemporary Cultural Studies, and for this thesis, is to begin to develop an integrated approach that combines the value of both positions, so overcoming their mutual weaknesses.

3.3 - "THINKING FORWARDS"

Television is a phenomenon caught up within the social production of sense. The debate between culturalism and structuralism is thus of critical importance in terms of how this thesis will be performed. The attempt must be made to salvage the value of both culturalist and structuralist work. This will be done throughout the thesis in a series of concrete engagements.

Culturalism and structuralism are necessary moments in the analysis of the sense-producing practices that constitute television, but neither is sufficient on its own. For this reason Hall (1981, p36) argues that the present need is to "think forwards", to attempt to concretely study and theorise the domain mapped out by the complexly interrelated notions of culture and ideology. In general terms, what a study of television that attempts this resolution might look like can now be mapped out.

The concrete problem addressed by this thesis is the production of 150 minutes of television for the 1981 general election campaign. How is this to be taken into "thought" adequately? Television is part of the cultural field proper since its practices have as their prime function signification - the creation of a sense that can be broadcast to viewers. This leads to the necessity of analysing the social institutions which organise these practices and the agents that operate them (see Mulhern, 1980, p31). In the case of the two specific programmes under study,

"Facing the Nation" and "The Leaders Debate", this points to the activities of the Broadcasting Corporation of New Zealand, and the Current Affairs Division in particular, and to the cadre of professional television journalists involved in production decisions. The culturalist mode of analysis, with its emphasis on located and observational studies of the shared and lived experiences in various social milieu, is of immediate value here. What is the common sense of broadcasters, formed within their practical interaction, that directs their production of sense for others? This problem demands, firstly, qualitative ethnography, with both observation of the interaction in situ and in-depth interviewing of the participants. Secondly, it demands analysis of the meaningful object so produced - the text of the two programmes. The first task is taken up in part three and the second in part four of this thesis. Although such analysis could be successful on its own, it is not complete.

A complete analysis must take into account the relationship between the cultural and the non-cultural, it must attempt to recover "the dialectic between the unconsciousness of cultural categories and the moment of conscious organisation" (Hall, 1981, p33). This raises questions of explanation and determination. What causes broadcasters to tend to act in this way rather than another? What is the relationship between the sense they produce and other aspects of the social totality? It is here that structuralist work on political economy is important, in particular the theory of relative autonomy. This theory allows one to "think" both the specificity of cultural practices and their articulation

with other practices to form the determinate social totality. Crucially, it enforces the analysis of history. What are the political and economic determinations of the ways in which the cultural practices of New Zealand broadcasters have been institutionalised and organised? What is the relationship between the Broadcasting Corporation and the historical emergence of the interventionist, welfare State of this country? Such questions are taken up in part two.

The connections between the cultural practices of broadcasters and their political-economic determination raises the problem of ideology. As Johnson (1979, pp232ff) argues, while the cultural significance of broadcasters' activities must be comprehended as physical labour, this is not the case with ideology, which is a result of discursive practices. Analysis must establish the relationships between the determinate organisation of television's production of meaning and systematic ideological effects. The precise manner in which ideology works on and through cultural practices will be established in parts three and four. The study of ideological effects connects the production of meaning to the social formation as capitalist. How are the cultural practices of television journalists connected to the political economy and in turn ("in the last instance") to the requirements of the capitalist mode of production, particularly in terms of the struggle to reproduce labour power?

An adequate analysis of the production of television programmes has now become a matter of articulating three distinct problem

"levels" -

(a) the historical development and political-economic determination of broadcasting institutions. This is the subject of part two.

This must be connected to

(b) the specificity of broadcasters' practices "in action". This is the subject of part three. This, in turn, must be connected to

(c) the "texts" (two meaningful television programmes) that are ultimately produced. How are these derived from (b) and contained by (a)?

The task for each part of this thesis is to (theoretically and concretely) keep apart and articulate these three "levels". This is accomplished by constantly working within and developing the theory of relative autonomy, a task immediately begun in chapter four. This thesis argues that only within this general theory can one adequately "think" both the lived relation to real relations (culturalists' "experience") and the imaginary representation of that lived relation (the structural level of ideology).

Only by thus phrasing the problem can one work at the dialectic between material conditions and consciousness in such a way as to overcome the old dualism between reductionism and idealism. It is not a matter of merely replicating the work of the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies. The Centre's work is marked by a profound culturalism, stemming from their origins in the English Left. As will be argued subsequently, this means that the Centre has failed to engage concretely with French structuralism (despite Hall's assertions, see 1980, pp26-38), so

that it has retained inadequate notions of ideology, bureaucracy and the State (c.f. Sparks, 1977, p30). Nevertheless, the Centre's substantive work, particularly that of Hall on television, is immensely valuable, particularly in terms of demonstrating how Cultural Studies work must be done. Having abstractly posed the questions, the actual work must now begin.

FOOTNOTE

- [1] The notion of "problematic" derives from the work of Althusser (e.g. 1970, pp25-28).

PART TWO - THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF BROADCASTING

"Researchers in St Louis are using pigeons and rats to test economic theory. They found both like their leisure and will work hard to get food only for a certain time. One rat who liked root beer switched to a dry Tom Collins mix after the researchers made the root beer more `expensive` by reducing the flow from the lever the rat pushed while increasing the flow from the Tom Collins lever"

- Reported in the "Evening Standard", 1982.

CHAPTER FOUR - POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC THEORY4.1 - INTRODUCTION

The aim of part two as a whole is to outline a general political economy of broadcasting in New Zealand. This chapter is given over to the essential preliminary development of a theoretical complex or "model" capable of illuminating the relationships between the State, economy, class and broadcasting institutions. This theory will be empirically detailed in terms of New Zealand history in chapter five.

At the most general level there are two dominant and rival approaches to theorising the connections between broadcasting organisations and the political and economic practices of specific societies. The first developed from the perception of newspapers in liberal democracies as a "Fourth Estate" whose business is to ensure the accountability of governing groups. The media are held to accomplish this by both relaying information on government to the electorate and by critically scrutinising the former on behalf of "the people". This liberal democratic approach advocates a pluralist conception of the State and society. An opposed position derives from the Marxist challenge to capitalist class society (liberal democratic, fascist or otherwise). Marxist analyses stress broadcasting's dependence on the State and/or the bourgeoisie and its role in legitimating dominant interests. These two contrasting approaches are the subject of this chapter.

The division of media studies into liberal democratic and radical Marxist tendencies is scarcely a novel one. It has been, for example, made in a rudimentary fashion by Connell (1979) and in more detail by Tracey (1977). Tracey, however, collapses Marxism into uniform elite studies, and the resulting misrepresentation of structuralists such as Poulantzas has required careful reworking. The advantage of such a tendential presentation is clear - it emphasises the immediately political bases of media research. These bases are all too often mystified by the conception of such studies as merely one facet of an academic sociology formally divisible into a number of "traditions" (uses-and-gratifications, effects, mass society, etc).

4.2 - LIBERAL DEMOCRATS AND THE FOURTH ESTATE

The liberal democratic tradition is arguably dominant in mass media research. Broadcasting organisations are understood as mediums transmitting and interrogating messages from political agents to the electorate. The media thus have both a passive "conducting" function and an active critical one. Liberal democrats' arguments about television characteristically debate three propositions - should it be a disinterested mouthpiece of Parliament (which is, after all, the elected representative of "the people"), an impartial commentator and critic or a committed editorialiser (see Blumler, 1970, pp70ff). Membership of the Fourth Estate proper is held to lie in some combination of the latter two propositions.

As Tracey (1977, pp20-28) has demonstrated, the liberal democratic conception of broadcasting derives from a theory of the press. Having said that, it is important to note that it derives from one theory of the press, having no truck with analyses which situate the newspaper in terms of nineteenth century class struggles (e.g. Williams, 1965). Rather, what is emphasised is the gradual development of liberal democratic pluralism, one aspect of which is an autonomous and responsible "free press" (see Siebert et al, 1963). With the development of liberal democracy and rational individualism, credible channels of communication were necessary for the citizenry to make rational political and economic decisions. Autonomy from political control guaranteed the objective truth of the information transmitted. In fact, libertarian notions of this "fourth estate" have gone through two stages - the first was characterised by a free market conception of autonomy and the "watch-dog" role (see Siebert et al, 1963, pp50ff), the second (and more modern) by an emphasis on the positive "social responsibility" of the mass media to their audiences (see Peterson, 1956; Smith, 1973). The contemporary "fourth estate" line is characterised by this dual advocacy of freedom and responsibility.

In terms of broadcasting the practical correlate of these conceptions was the attempt to create formal broadcasting systems beyond government influence, and to develop the required codes of journalistic practice. The post-Reithian B.B.C. is frequently held up as an exemplar of this - the B.B.C. "represents the people", providing both information and the accountability of

governors (e.g. see Smith, 1973, pp25ff). A free press is thus an essential part of democratic government, like the Opposition in Parliament (e.g. see Seymour-Ure, 1968, pp300ff).

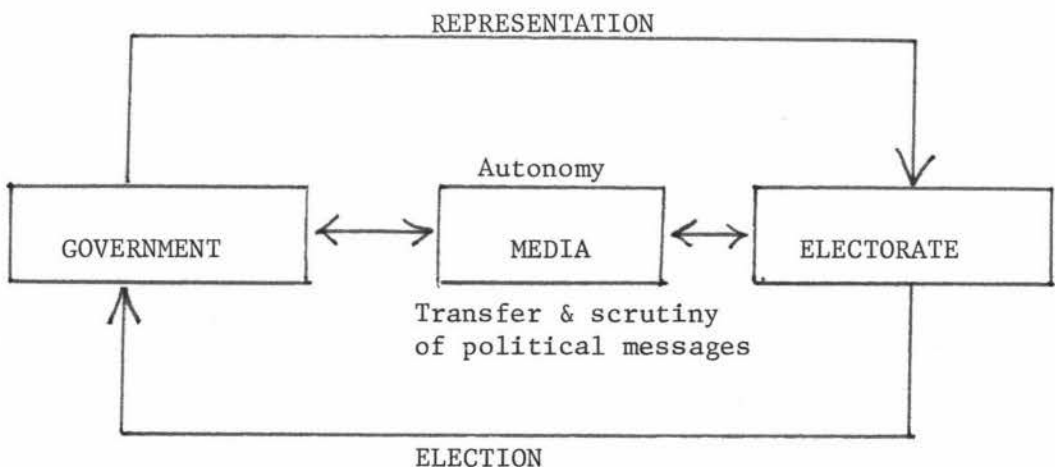
Academic research within the liberal democratic tradition can be crudely divided into two parts. For many years media research was pre-occupied with the audience, simply because "fourth estate" notions rendered broadcasting's linkages to the State and the actual practices of journalists unproblematic. Thus well into the 1960s inquiry was dominated by "effects" or "uses-and-gratifications" studies (for a summary of these arguments see Wilkes, 1976, pp5ff). More recently, however, presumably under the influence of the "social responsibility" thesis, there have been a number of close observational studies of television journalists at work (e.g. Cantor, 1971; Elliott, 1972; Epstein, 1973). A particularly fertile area of research has been general elections. There have been numerous studies elaborating elections as media events coordinated by autonomous and responsible broadcasting organisations (e.g. see Seymour-Ure, 1968, 1974; Blumler, 1969, 1970, 1974a, 1974b; Blumler and McQuail, 1968, 1970). For reasons to be argued below the positive value of this research will be considered in part three and not in detail here.

Liberal democratic theories, including "fourth estate" approaches to the media, rest on two fundamental propositions about the nature of their society. Firstly, the social formation consists of a diffused plurality of competing power-groupings and the State is the mediator of their interests. In terms of media

research, Smith (e.g. 1978) is perhaps the most prominent and prolific advocate of this liberal pluralism. The political process is viewed as a system formally divisible into a number of discrete parts, one autonomous part being the media. Liberal democrats share their second proposition with the functionalist tradition in American sociology, namely that the social order derives from individuals' commitment to a common set of norms, from the agreement between the plurality of social groups on the legitimacy of society's values. A typical "fourth estate" argument attributes to the media political and economic functions but insists they are politically and economically independent. The source of their power is ultimately normative. Thus, for example, Gurevitch and Blumler (1975, p168) argue that the power of the media is due to

"the respect that is accorded in competitive democracies to such tenets of liberal philosophy as freedom of expression and the need for specialised organs to safeguard citizens against possible abuses of political authority. This tends to legitimate the independent role of media organisations in the political field and to shelter them from overt attempts to blatantly bring them under political control."

In summary, the liberal democratic position can be diagrammatically presented thus -



Before moving on to criticisms of this position I wish to take up and substantiate the points on New Zealand media political science made in chapter 1.1. Whereas both Leftists and sociologists have tended to emphasise the concentration of power, the liberal democratic interpretation of power as diffuse and the State as pluralist tends to be advocated by political scientists (see Crewe, 1974, pp34-35). In Britain proponents of the "fourth estate" are commonly political scientists (e.g. Seymour-Ure), journalists themselves (see the numerous memoirs of British broadcasters) or both (e.g. Blumler and Whale). The situation is very much the same in New Zealand, although the pattern tends to be less clear simply because less work has been done. What has been written by journalists consistently advances "fourth estate" arguments (e.g. McKay, 1953; Bick, 1968; Edwards, 1971; Hall, 1980), and this is reinforced by political scientists who explicitly combine it with ideas of State pluralism. Cleveland (1975, p85), for example, sees the mass media acting

"as representatives of the public, making inquiries on its behalf ... [they] have a political responsibility to act as watchdogs of the public interest in a way that complements the work of pressure groups, the electoral system, the political Opposition, Parliament, the Ombudsman and the law courts" (c.f. Jackson, 1973, p193).

Although the argument thus far has been phrased in general terms and dependent on English research for examples, one must see it, and the criticisms that follow, of immediate relevance to New Zealand scholarship and journalistic practice.

Liberal democratic considerations of broadcasting are seriously deficient in a number of respects. I shall begin by criticising

the theory of the press advanced by this position. This criticism has three dimensions. Firstly, the assertion that the role accorded to the press was one aspect of an unproblematic and popular emergence of liberal democracy must be contested. Williams (1965, pp195ff), for example, has convincingly located newspapers within the nineteenth century struggle between an emerging urban middle class and the declining landed gentry. Secondly, the interpretation of journalistic notions such as objectivity, impartiality and scrutiny as the simple correlates of pervasive libertarian principles is too superficial. Carey (1969, pp32-33) has argued that these notions indicate a "fetishism of objectivity" which corresponded to newspapers' need to serve an ideologically heterogeneous audience. The presentation of all sides of each issue, he maintains, indicates press passivity and not active scrutiny. Lastly, and most importantly, the very relevance of a theory of the press to broadcasting must be questioned. In particular, the idea that there is some unproblematic continuity between newspapers and the broadcast media, so that a theory of the press can be simply extended to radio and television to construct a general theory of the media, is strenuously rejected. Liberal democrats' claim for a uniform "fourth estate" rests precisely on this assertion of continuity. That this claim is often supported by citing the fact that many broadcasters have print backgrounds reflects the frequent subjectivism of the liberal democratic position (this point is expanded below). Broadcasting institutions and newspapers in New Zealand (and Britain also, for that matter) have very different political and economic histories, in terms of both their their relationships to the State and the market-place.

As will be demonstrated in chapter five, New Zealand television is best understood in terms of a history of radio. The position adopted here is that the specific political economy of broadcasting must be established prior to any consideration of how this relates to either the print media in particular or to more general theorisations of the media. Furthermore, this latter consideration is outside the purview of this thesis.

A major drawback of the liberal democratic approach is its conception of politics. Firstly, it is an extremely limited notion which unduly concentrates on governments and Parliament in particular. Analysis is rarely extended to the State in general, and even more rarely are the linkages to economic practices explored. As such liberal democratic theories tend to ignore both the conflict, incorporations, etc with the State, through which the media are politicised, and the relationships to developing economic structures and the associated class struggles. The academic correlate of this limitation has been a tendency to concentrate on general elections as events in themselves and to generalise from this (for example, by demonstrating the broadcasting institutions' autonomy from the party in power). The pre-supposition here seems to be that political broadcasts occur only once every three years, rather than in every advertisement, soap opera, etc. The second related problem with liberal democrats' conception of politics is subjectivism, the tendency to reduce political and journalistic practices to the collision of various personalities. The description of the B.B.C. as "Reithian", "post-Reithian", and so on, is clearly historically inadequate in the terms specified

above. In New Zealand the impact of this subjectivism on media commentators is marked. Wood (1968, p271) expresses a common sentiment when he argues that "whether such a zone [of government influence] exists, and whether the Corporation develops ability to resist pressure, depends on the calibre of the Minister and of the men composing the Corporation". It is also evident in a fascination with the celebrated personality of Muldoon (e.g. see Eagles and James, 1973).

The criticisms made above can to a certain extent be unified under the single charge of formalism. The tendency here is to equate formal, legalistic definitions of politics, broadcasting, autonomy, and so on, with reality itself. The resulting concentration on formally defined relationships produces perceptions of pluralism and normative consensus but fails to account for their complex structures and the concentration of power in society. Thus the liberal democratic tradition of media research exemplifies what Marx (1975, p179) called "the socio-legal point of view". Here legal definitions usurp and are mistakenly held to determine (and therefore satisfactorily represent) real economic and political practices. Marx developed this notion primarily in his critique of bourgeois political economy, where the formal correspondence of buyer and seller roles in the commodity market is mistakenly attributed real equivalence, so that the process is interpreted as the exchange of equivalents. This, he argued, mystified the social relations of a formation based on structured inequality [1].

Such formalism has drastically curtailed the scope of media analysis. For example, the theoretical acceptance of formally autonomous broadcasting institutions means that the effect of political and economic practices on journalism can be conceptualised only as a "mistake", as "noise" ("interference") which has no legitimate place in the system per se. Liberal democrat theories lack the conceptual vocabulary to analyse this relationship in its own terms and without formalist reductions to unproblematic transparency (for example, to the intentionality of individual politicians in their desire to be successful). Thus the modern "fourth estate" studies of television journalists at work, mentioned above, have been unable to escape the merely immanent "organisational" level of analysis and elaborate systematic and concrete relationships between the codes of practice uncovered and the more pervasive social processes. As Halloran and Gurevitch (1971, p6) put it, "the problem is not so much that there is a lack of studies but ... that the studies have been confined, on the whole, to the lower level of mass media operation". Thus these studies have tended to be rich in detail but limited in scope, or abstractly empiricist in the same manner for which Vintiner (1976) was criticised in chapter 1.1. This has lead McQuail (1969, p67) to argue that

"clearly there is a need both for a systematic exploration of the effects of variations in structural context on the work of communicators and also for studies of the external, political, economic and social pressures in the mass communication organisation ... the tradition of enquiry has remained an empirical one and theory available is of a fragmentary and ad hoc kind."

Liberal democrats have tended to meet the demand for more systematic theorisations by a somewhat cursory adoption of an

ahistorical, systems model (see Tracey, 1977, p12), which preserves their "tradition of enquiry" intact by failing to challenge its inadequacies.

We have seen that "fourth estate" media research can tell us much about the cultural practices and ideological assumptions of broadcasting. "Fourth estate" notions are held not only by political scientists but also by television broadcasters themselves because they are part of their journalistic practice. This point will be developed in theoretical and empirical detail in part three. Such notions, however, provide no systematic basis for more structural analyses of the kind that could accomplish the project McQuail identifies above. The pursuit of a political economy of broadcasting necessitates the abandonment of the liberal democratic tradition.

4.3 - MARXIST THEORIES

Opposed to the liberal democratic tradition outlined above is the radical Marxist response. This response stresses the determination of broadcasting organisations by the dominant economic, political and ideological structures of society. The emphasis on integration, power, stratification, and so on, decisively breaks with the "fourth estate" advocacy of formal autonomy. The fundamental proposition of Marxist media studies is that there can be no theory of mass communications sui generis, that it is necessary to situate analysis within a political economy that includes both broadcasting institutions and the social

formation as a whole (see Murdock, 1974). This proposition coincides with the theoretical demands made in section 4.1 above.

Furthermore, Marxists insist that class is the fundamental structuring principle of modern western societies. These social formations are better represented as "capitalist" than "liberal democratic" (or the related notion of "post-industrial"). Thus a consideration of the relationship between class and media structures is held to be the best place from which to start analysing the connections between mass communications and society in general. This leads analysis to two interrelated structures held to determine broadcasting. Firstly, the State, as Hall (1972, p1) argues, "broadcasting institutions [may] have a great deal of formal autonomy from the State and government but their ultimate authority to broadcast derives from the State and, in the last instance, it is to the State that they are responsible". The second structure is the economy, the social relations of production.

The Marxist tradition of media research is a widely differentiated one. A particularly important type of study has emerged in recent years. This illustrates the structuring of the programme-making process by particular cultural practices and routines which derive from the occupational setting of media organisations and society's general ideological structures (e.g. see Hall, 1972, 1973a, 1973b; Murdock and Golding, 1974). Because of their focus these studies shall be considered in part three and not here. For the purpose of this chapter Marxist approaches will

be divided into two competing camps [2]:

1. A conjuncture of elite, class-voluntarist and instrumentalist approaches. The most noted advocate of this position in media research is Miliband.

2. A structuralist approach primarily associated with the work of Althusser and Poulantzas. This argument has been elaborated in detail in terms of the State per se and the specifically ideological, but its implications for a political economy of broadcasting have remained relatively unexplored.

These two positions are discussed in detail subsequently.

By way of concluding this general introduction to Marxist theories, two observations may be noted. Firstly, the Marxist tradition provides evidence of the split into determinism (structuralism) versus agency (instrumentalism) elaborated in the Introduction to this thesis. My aim in this chapter is to develop a "model" capable of expressing political and economic determinations, but whose specification of limitations does not obliterate the authenticity of human activity. Secondly, if the principal failing of liberal democratic theory is its empiricism, then the corresponding flaw in Marxism is theoreticism. The unity of these two different failures can be attributed to their relative positions vis-a-vis the single social formation they cohabit, advanced western capitalism. For the modern liberal democrat his/her practice is "obvious", immediate, apparently natural; for the Marxist it is anything but. Thus for the latter there is a marked tendency to interpret empirical problems as theoretical problems and to argue them (away) as such. We may find that much

of the theoretical opposition between, say, Miliband and Althusser can be ascribed to a certain empirical flippancy. These two points constitute enduring themes of this thesis.

4.4 - The Capitalist Instrument

The general rubric "instrumental Marxism" refers to a complex of elite, instrumentalist and class voluntarist positions. There are substantial disjunctures between these three arguments, but my concern here to develop a political economy of broadcasting is best served by establishing their continuity. Their apparent diversity is unified by a common emphasis on class struggle. A particular historico-social configuration is explained by reference to the results of class engagements, through which a dominant class gains power and so is able to secure its interests to the detriment of other subordinate classes. In capitalist societies these classes are respectively the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, as defined by Marx. Classes are the "agents" or "subjects" of history, their struggles constitute the historical dynamic.

One of the most famous modern expressions of this class-voluntarism is Thompson's (1968) The Making of the English Working Class. Thompson insists that class formation is

"an active process, which owes as much to agency as to conditioning. The working class ... was present at its own making" (op cit, p9).

Our primary interest in this position is its association with a certain theorisation of the State (and broadcasting), rather than as a general historical materialist theory in itself. We are not,

for example, directly concerned with the recent polemic between Thompson and Althusser, or whether Thompson himself provides any way of conceptualising the State other than in terms of the tradition of empirical social history. Our interest in the class-voluntarist argument is that it has been articulated with an instrumentalist view of the State (see Martin, 1981). Furthermore, we are concerned with the polemic between this instrumentalism and structuralist approaches, which will be elaborated below as the Miliband-Poulantzas debate [3].

As the State is patently not composed of members of the bourgeoisie, how does it act under capitalism? Class-voluntarists maintain that the State is controlled by the capitalist class, and thus serves the interests of capitalists, because that class succeeds in its struggle against the proletariat. Thus the State does not have an intrinsic class character but is an instrument wielded by the dominant class. Indeed, fragments of the State can be wrested from the bourgeoisie's grasp by the working class and directed to its own (anti-capitalist) interests. This is a common instrumentalist interpretation of the Welfare State (see Martin, 1981).

Such theorisation is often coupled with elite analysis [4]. The State is an instrument of the capitalist class, staffed by elites who represent the bourgeoisie. This is exemplified by Rex's identification of the

"institutional and ideological means whereby the elites relate themselves and the classes they represent to those over whom they exercise

hegemony. Three phenomena of importance here would appear to be the political labour movement, the non-elite institutions of higher education and the media. The central process here is the incorporation into or co-option of the leading figures in these spheres into the elite world" (1974, p216).

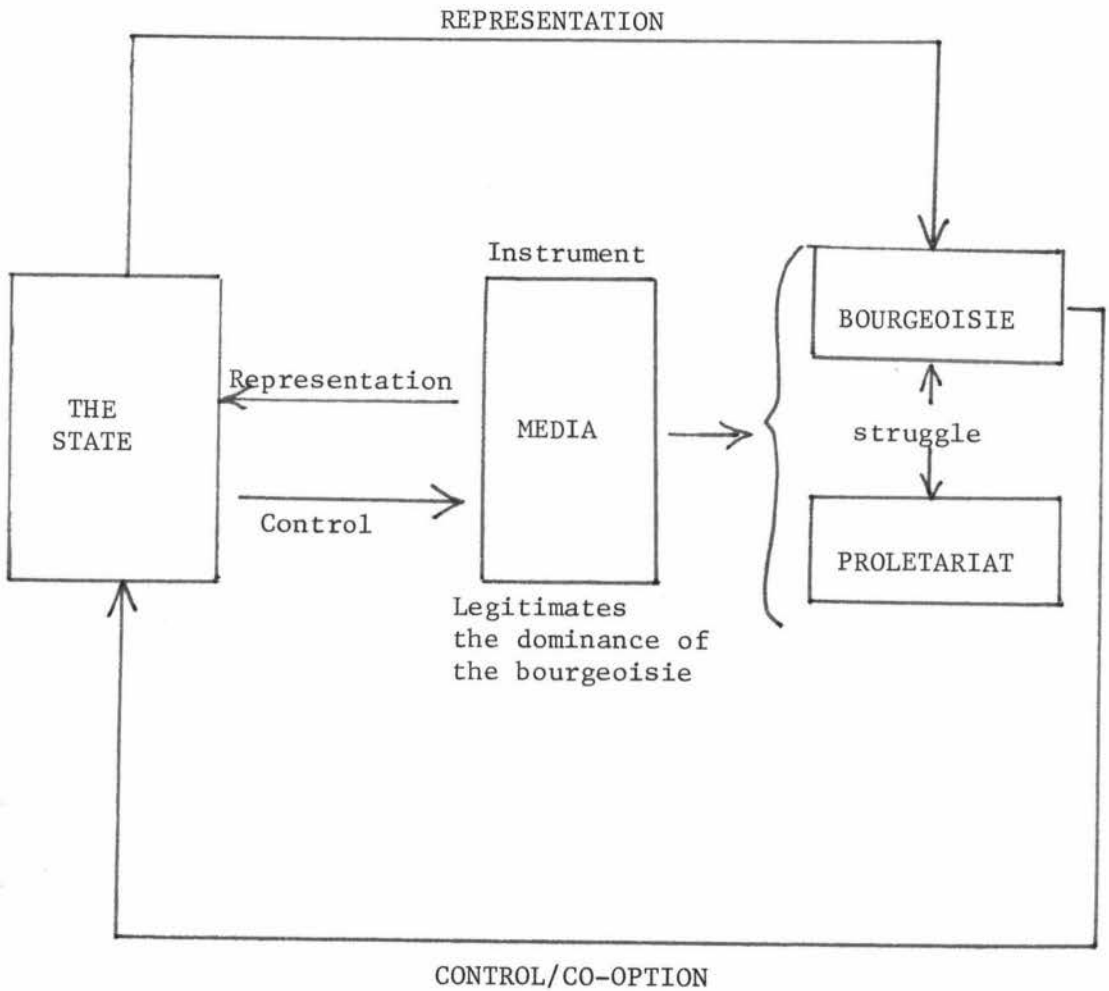
We will consider the unsatisfactory nature of these notions of "representation" and "hegemony" subsequently.

The interpretation of the media under capitalism advanced from this perspective can now be considered. The bourgeoisie controls mass communications, via its elite deputies, and through these channels legitimates and so stabilises its exploitative dominance. As Parkin (1972, p83) puts it,

"the social and political definitions of those in dominant positions tend to become objectified and enshrined in the major institutional orders, so providing the moral framework of the entire system."

Miliband (1973) is the most noted advocate of this elite instrumentalist approach to the media. Further instances are provided by Hood (1972) and Murdock and Golding (1977). Miliband analyses broadcasting institutions as acting through a number of mechanisms to reproduce and endorse the upper class' dominance. The media are an instrument employed either directly by the bourgeoisie (where private ownership prevails) or by the State (in Public Corporation or State Department systems), the latter being an institutional correlate of the former's power. The principles of instrumentalism and effective elite representation are apparently infinitely regressible - Miliband argues that the media are a State instrument (i.e. not part of the State), and that the latter is the instrument proper of the ruling class. Here elites

represent elites as well as classes. The four mechanisms Miliband argues ensure the State's and bourgeoisie's control of broadcasting are: (a) direct ownership and control, (b) the power of advertisers (causing business to be treated "sympathetically"), (c) pressures from the State, and (d) the ideological pre-dispositions of media personnel. In summary the instrumental Marxist position can be diagrammatically presented thus -



Many of the weaknesses in the instrumentalist approach are exposed by the critical dialogue between Poulantzas and Miliband [5], and will thus be taken up more positively in the subsequent section on structuralist Marxism. The critique to be made here emphasises the correspondences between instrumentalism and the liberal democratic position dispensed with in section 4.3 above.

The central problem with approaches such as that of Miliband is their acceptance of the bourgeois/Parliamentary notion of representation as unproblematic. This process is inflected differently but remains essentially unchanged, the subjects it implicates are transfigured by merely extending it to include forces outside the Parliament-electorate model. Liberal democratic theory in this sense also interprets the media as an instrument, but one that is used independently and creatively by the editors and producers on behalf of "the people" (e.g. Smith, 1978). Miliband argues that in fact the media instrument is employed by broadcasting elites on behalf of the bourgeoisie. There is, of course, a major substantive difference between these two positions. The first assigns the media its own autonomous (normative) power, the latter allocates it class power gained in struggles outside its boundaries. Thus liberal democratic and instrumental Marxist theorists engage in endless detailed arguments over precisely who grasps "the facts" most accurately. Nevertheless, in terms of theorising the process per se, their respective theories of "benevolence" and "conspiracy" are formally identical.

For this reason Miliband's position is open to the same charges

of abstract empiricism and subjectivism as the liberal democrats. His work is marked by theoretical dependency on undialectical notions of instrumentality and a simple, ultimately subjectivist notion of agency. The State and media are mere mechanisms whose actions are attributed to the intentions of economically defined classes; for the representing elites it is a matter of completely determined voluntarism. The notion that politics can in this way be totally comprehended by its reduction to economic struggles and outcomes is part of the undeveloped theoretical problematic characteristic of instrumentalism. The consequences of this curtailment are two-fold, and only in apparent contradiction. Firstly, Miliband frequently advocates in positivist fashion the importance of letting "concrete facts" speak for themselves. Furthermore, despite this extreme dependence on "real data" the little empirical analysis there is in Miliband's work is fragmentary and unsystematic (see Crewe, 1974, pp35ff). As Poulantzas (1976, p67) comments -

"one consequence of the absence of any theoretical problematic in Miliband's writings is that, in spite of all appearances, it is hard to find any concrete analyses in his text. What we find, mainly, are narrative descriptions, along the lines of 'that is the way it is', recalling powerfully to mind the kind of 'abstract empiricism' Wright Mills spoke of."

In the final analysis these limitations make instrumental Marxism an unsuitable framework for the political economy of broadcasting. The emphasis on class struggle as the dynamic of history is valuable. However the conception that this struggle takes place and is resolved outside the State and broadcasting, with the latter taken as "booty" by the winner, severely restricts

analysis of the media, in a similar (if inverted) fashion to the liberal democratic approach. Liberal democrats argue that the media are completely specific (autonomous, undetermined) and thus their focus has been on audience research and totally immanent studies of journalistic practice. Instrumentalism denies the specificity of both political and broadcasting practices, their logic is held to lie elsewhere (in "economics"). Thus research has tended to study the media extrinsically simply in terms of ownership patterns and audience consumption (see Murdock and Golding, 1977). The notion of ideological hegemony as something which is unproblematically implemented by and/or for the bourgeoisie is far too mechanistic, as will be argued in more detail in part three. Furthermore, if the media frequently do not seem to fit class instrumentalism (e.g. when they do not ostensibly serve class interests), they are seen as disinterested and therefore uninteresting, not warranting any research at all.

The considerations of liberal democratic and instrumentalist arguments above have indicated the need for theorisation capable of articulating both the specificity and the determinations of the political and economic practices of the State and broadcasting. If the liberal democrats are incapable of producing a political economy at all, instrumentalists succeed only in reducing the former to the latter. Structuralist Marxism, as developed by Poulantzas and Wright, is better equipped to satisfy these theoretical demands. The chief advantage of this position is its reincorporation of the State into class analysis, rather than seeing it as a prize taken by the victors of class struggle and staffed by class-less but

class-serving elites. The State and broadcasting thus become the site and not the stake of struggle.

4.5 - The Structures of Capitalism

My reading of structuralist Marxism will be, as are the above readings, directed by my concern to develop a political economy of broadcasting. The limits of this consideration must be clearly established here, as we will return to the Althusserian conception of ideology in part three. Structuralist Marxism emerged in France as a major force in the late 1960s and early '70s, and has arguably replaced instrumentalism as the area of concerted theoretical effort and development. In keeping with the tenor of this chapter the complex of class relations that determined this emergence are beyond the scope of analysis [6]. This development, as we will see, radically revitalised a formerly stagnant area of Marxist research, namely the analysis of politics and ideology. My focus here is on the political and economic, and on methodological rather than more epistemological concerns [7]. These emphases lead to a concentration on the work of Poulantzas and Wright, rather than Althusser. Neither of the former have considered broadcasting in detail, but their theorisation of the capitalist State is valuable.

This is a very different "cultural studies" reading of structuralism than that of the Birmingham Centre. A major fault in the B.C.C.C.S.'s work has been its tendency to concentrate on Althusser's explicit statements on ideology or on rather arcane epistemological etc arguments over what it is Althusser has done to

Marxist philosophy (e.g. see Rusher, 1974). The Centre has largely tended to see structuralism simply as a challenge to humanist analyses of ideology and thus to concentrate on Althusser's theorisation of subjects. They have failed to develop the more rigorous empirical and historical studies of social formations implied by Althusser's statements and executed by, among others, Poulantzas and Wright (c.f. Hall's 1977 reading of Poulantzas). This constitutes a theoreticist and culturalist reduction of structuralist Marxism, one in keeping with the weaknesses of the Centre elaborated in chapter three. I am frankly unwilling to engage in this sort of philosophical speculation here [8]. For my purposes this is not where the value of the work lies. I will follow Wright's (1979, pp43-44) intention to assess Poulantzas' contribution by focussing

"on the actual criteria he uses to understand classes in contemporary capitalism, rather than on the epistemological assumptions which underlie his analysis. I will thus not deal with the problem of his general concept of 'class struggle' and his categorical rejection of 'consciousness' as a useful category in Marxist analysis. While it is important to deal with these issues (indeed, most reviews of Poulantzas' work are preoccupied with these questions rather than the substance of his argument), I feel it is more useful at this point to engage Poulantzas' work at a lower level of abstraction."

My exclusive concentration in this chapter on the structuralists' implications for a political economy of broadcasting is an attempt to redirect the Birmingham Centre's "misreading". This hiatus is part of the Centre's lack of a consistent application to the problems of the State and political periodisation, at least until as late as 1978 (see Hall, 1980, p41). While we can agree with Hall (1977, p335) that both Althusser and Poulantzas "exaggerate

the role of the State and undervalue the role of other elements in the reproduction of capitalist relations", nevertheless their work is a crucial point of departure for the consideration of broadcasting [9].

Poulantzas (1972, pp240-241) criticises Miliband for simply counterposing in an empiricist fashion, bourgeois concepts with his own "facts" and thus remaining within the bourgeois frame of reference. His rejection of instrumentalism involved a retheorisation of the relationship between the capitalist State and the economy. Following Althusser (1969, 1970), Poulantzas argued that every social formation was to be analysed as a complex structuring of economic, political and ideological practices. The connections between these practices were not a matter of mechanistic reductions (e.g. to the "economy"). The material practices that constitute a social formation are "structured in dominance", so that the elements of the "superstructure" (State/law and ideology) are determined only in the last instance by the economic "base" (see Althusser, 1970, pp216ff). Structuralists have attempted to formulate this notion of "in the last instance" with a number of concepts, such as "overdetermination" and "uneven development" (see Althusser, 1970, pp315, 312 respectively). For our purposes here the most important concept is that of "relative autonomy".

This concept is arguably best developed by Poulantzas in the course of his empirical studies of various historical State structures. Poulantzas (e.g. 1972, 1973, 1975) argued that the

State preserved the social formation as a whole by maintaining the unity of the three structuring practices. This function demanded that that State have autonomy from the economy and classes. The realisation of the specific interests of capitalists could, for example, put the entire system into crisis, as it did in nineteenth century England. Such autonomy, however, was only "relative" as economically based class relations were ultimately determinate of the character of the social formation. The notion of "relative autonomy" was theorised in terms of a structurally defined relationship between the capitalist State and economy, and a separation of the structure of class relations from the mode of production itself. As Poulantzas (1976, p71) puts it -

"when I examined the relative autonomy of the capitalist State, I established its foundation in two directions, which in fact were merely two aspects of a single approach. The first lay in the precise type of 'separation' between the economic and the political, between the relations of production- consumption-circulation and the State which, according to Marx, define the capitalist mode of production. The second direction lay in the specificity of classes and of the class struggle in the capitalist mode of production and social formations ... this separation of the economic and the political is itself nothing more than the form taken by the constitution of the classes."

Poulantzas developed this approach firstly in Political Power and Social Classes (1973). The State as an "unstable equilibrium of compromises" is outlined theoretically in the second chapter and empirically established in chapter four. As he argued (e.g. 1976, p72), the precise degree of autonomy cannot be ascertained in general terms but must be fixed in each historical conjuncture by concrete analysis. His subsequent work was concerned to do exactly this, examining the specificity of State forms under monopoly

capitalism (1975) and fascism (1977, 1979).

Poulantzas thus rejects the notion that the State is an instrument that can be appropriated by classes [10]. Instead his structuralist approach comprehends both the autonomy of political structures and their functioning for the economic structure of capitalist relations. The State functions to reproduce capitalism, not by representing the immediate, frequently contrary interests of the bourgeoisie but either by directly intervening in the accumulation process itself or less directly by maintaining the stability of the system as a whole. Thus

"the State should be seen (as should capital, according to Marx), as a relation, or more precisely as the condensate of a certain relation of power between struggling classes" (1976, p74).

This establishes the specificity of the political as a site of class struggle. Furthermore, the State bureaucracy is "not a group standing above, outside or to one side of classes: an elite, but one whose members have a class situation or membership" (ibid, p75). Poulantzas has argued that a typical form of the capitalist State is the "popular-class-State". Classes are systematically absent from its institutions, whose legitimacy rests upon their claim to represent the "general will" of "the people". Individuals are constituted as formally free and equal citizens. This type of capitalist State is characterised by Parliamentary representation, universal suffrage, political liberties and, we may surmise, "autonomous" institutions of broadcasting.

These conceptions provide the framework for the political economy of broadcasting to be developed. By way of conclusion we

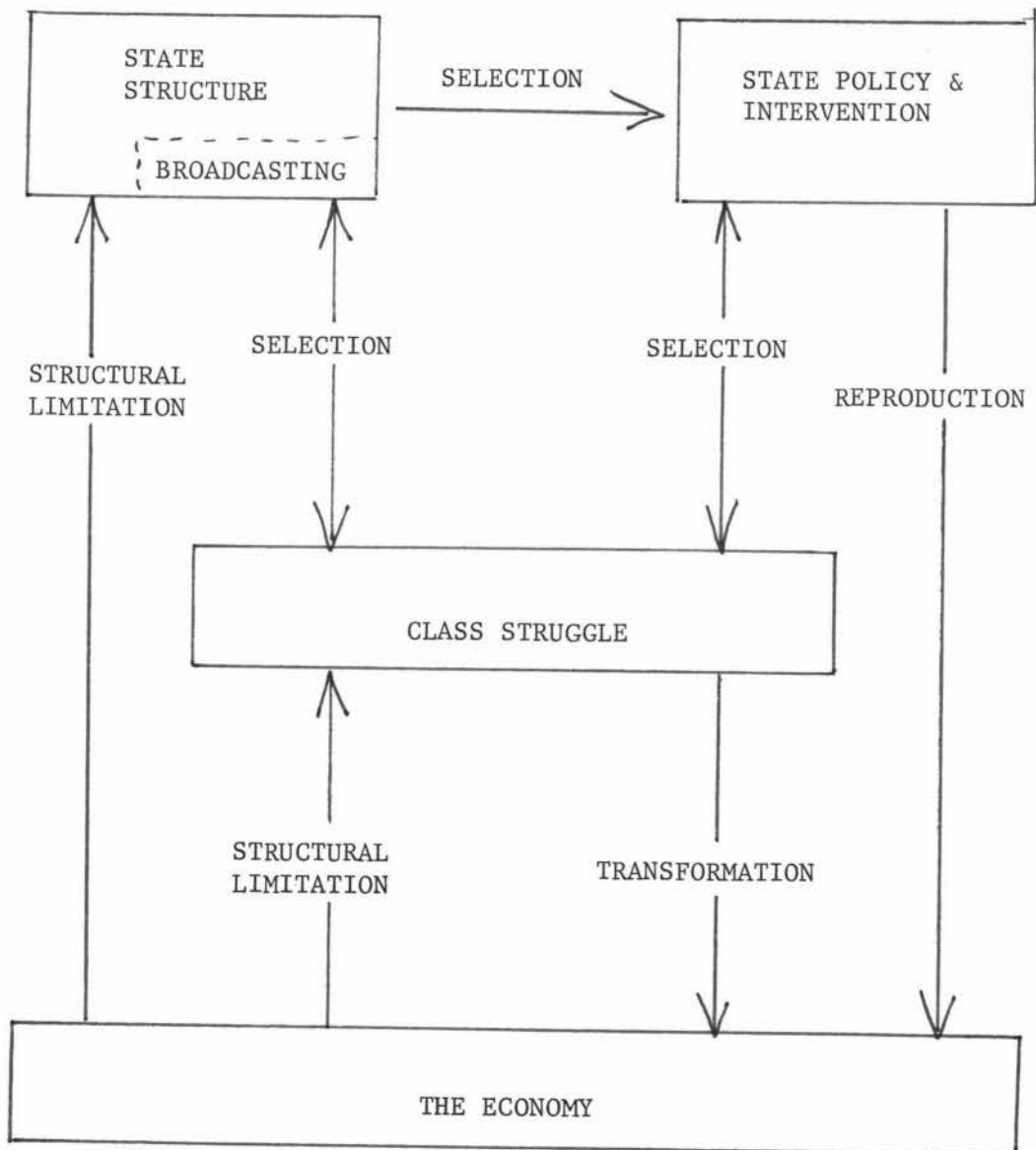
may note that a common criticism of structuralist Marxism is that it is excessively structuralist and too little Marxist. This usually takes three forms. Firstly that it is argued that it is "static" and has failed to successfully incorporate class struggle into analysis, or alternatively that it is excessively "formalist" of theoreticist (e.g. see Laclau, 1975). These criticisms apply more to Althusser than Poulantzas. Furthermore, my position here is that their merit must be evaluated in terms of the analyses of particular conjunctures, which may succeed or fail according to the theoretical criteria proposed by them, rather than in general, abstract terms. Such evaluation, therefore, is part of the overall project of this thesis and will be returned to by way of the conclusion. Lastly, it has been claimed (e.g. Wright, 1979, p44) that Poulantzas' use of structural and ideological factors effectively negates the primacy of economic relations in determining class position. This point is taken, but as part of a general consideration of structuralism falls outside the present scope of analysis. The first and third criticisms elaborated above are adequately resolved in Wright's methodological reformulation of Poulantzas' theory (see Wright, 1979, chapters one and two). It is to this consideration that we must finally turn.

4.6 - The Political and Economic Determinations of Broadcasting

We are now in a position to outline a "model" [11] for the structural and historical study of the relationships between the capitalist economy, the State and its policies (including broadcasting) and class struggle. This theorisation is a

simplified version of that developed by Wright (1979), and will be presented through his modifications of Poulantzas' categories. A major advantage here is that this work has been used by Martin (1981) to explain the emergence and development of the New Zealand State in terms of its relations to labour and welfare interventions. This analysis, and the historical periodisation it elaborates, constitute the framework of chapter five.

The structure of relationships implicated in the political economy of broadcasting can be diagrammatically presented thus (see Wright, 1979, p27; Martin, 1981, p38) -



The inclusion of the media within the State structures will be established in chapter five via a political and economic history of the determinations of New Zealand broadcasting, and in parts three and four by demonstrating these institutions' function in the (ideological) reproduction of the social formation as a whole. The structural processes of determination in the above theorisation must now be detailed.

1. Structural Limitation.

The category of "structural limitation" refers to the relationship that class struggle and the State have with the economic structure. Here Wright is concerned to methodologically specify Althusser's notion of determination "in the last instance" by the economy. This refers to "the limits within which some other structure or process can vary, and establishes probabilities for the specific structures or processes that are possible within these limits" (Wright, 1979, p16). Martin (1981) argues that there are two major changes in this relationship in New Zealand history. The nineteenth century State was characterised by provincial factionalism, corresponding to the economic dominance of large pastoral landownership. The economic crises of the late nineteenth century determined the emergence of a popular, centralised and democratic State, associated with small agrarian property. As Martin (1981, p40) puts it, "in this sense the changing economic structure was expressed in altered structural parameters for the State". The economic crisis for small rural and urban capital after the Depression conditioned the second change, marked by the emergence of the welfare/interventionist State which persists to

this day.

2. Selection.

This category refers to the relationships between the State, State policy and class struggle. Wright (1979, p17) says that "selection constitutes those social mechanisms that concretely determine ranges of outcomes, or in the extreme case specific outcomes, within a structurally limited range of possibilities". An important point here is that selection is "a form of second-order limitation" (ibid), determined by prior structural limitation (i.e. it is a further aspect of relative autonomy). For example, the economic structure does not simply and unilaterally determine the character of State activity, but sets limits within which the State structure has some autonomy, although it is an autonomy further conditioned by its complex relationship with class struggle.

3. Reproduction.

This mode of determination refers to the function of political structures and policies in ensuring the continuation of capitalist economic relations (i.e. preventing them from becoming non-capitalist relations). As Wright (1979, pp18-19) argues -

"to say that one structure functions to reproduce another implies that the reproducing structure prevents the reproduced structure from changing in certain fundamental ways ... Reproduction thus is also a kind of limiting process: it maintains the reproduced structure within certain limits of variation."

Under certain circumstances of crisis the State may not effectively reproduce the economic structures. Situations of crisis lead to restructuring of the social formation.

4. Transformation.

Appreciation of the process of transformation is central to

Marxism's dialectical approach. Wright (1979, p21) insists that

"class struggle is intrinsically a process of transformation of structures, and the very process which sets limits on class struggle is at the same time transformed by the struggles so limited."

This establishes class conflict as the "motor" of history. By transforming economic relations these struggles transform both the State and the social formation's requirements for reproduction. Under the capitalist mode there is thus "a systematic tendency for the contradictions between classes (class struggle) to generate contradictions between social structures (non-reproductive relations of determination)" (ibid, p22).

Althusser, in his celebrated 1971 essay, considers broadcasting as one of the "Ideological State Apparatuses". The specific function of these apparatuses is the ideological reproduction of the capitalist formation (for example, by their "interpellation of subjects"). To reiterate a point made above, the next chapter will not be concerned with this. The consideration of the New Zealand State and its policy will focus on both the political and economic determinations of media institutions and the general functioning of State activity for the reproduction of capitalist economic relations. The specific nature of State intervention via the media, ideological reproduction, will be taken up in part three. The point to affirm here is that this function is not executed by some institutional, epiphenomenal "husk" containing ideas or intentions, but is a materially determined practice [12].

An important consequence of this constraint is that we will not (yet) have to encounter the structuralist claim to have decisively

removed the subject and agency from historical analysis. By way of conclusion, it may be noted that the complete denial of agency is not a necessary consequence of a position advocating structural limitations and determinations. The State, for example, is not emptied of but confirmed in its specificity by this argument. That the option of agency remains open is clearly illustrated by considering the compatibility between the notion of determination advanced in this chapter and the assertion by Williams, a noted "culturalist", that

"we have to think of determination not as a single force, or a single abstraction of forces, but as a process in which real determining factors ... set limits and exert pressures, but neither wholly control nor wholly predict the outcome of complex activity within or at these limits, and under or against these pressures" (1974, p130).

FOOTNOTES

- [1] It is a basic assumption of this thesis that Marx's critique of capitalism developed categories at once political and economic, and not confined to some narrow definition of the latter. This point is amply and practically demonstrated by Yaffe (1975).
- [2] This is an explicitly selective presentation of Marxist theorisation aimed solely to include the contemporary dominant positions relevant to broadcasting and its political economy. It is not intended to be exhaustive. For example, in terms of political economy the capital-derivationist position is not considered at all, and in terms of the mass media nor is the Frankfurt School. The dichotomy between instrumentalist and structuralist Marxism that I utilise here is a common one;

- see, for example, Nowell-Smith (1979) and Martin (1981).
- [3] We must bear in mind Poulantzas' (1976, p83) comment, however, that such debates are too easily personalised and this tends to simplify the complexity of the arguments involved.
- [4] Variations within the tradition of elite studies are not important here, but it should be noted that this is not a single homogenous position. Elites have been identified without using Marxist analysis as simply various social groups (e.g. Domhoff, 1967). Within Marxism elites have been defined organisationally (e.g. Mills, 1967) and economically (e.g. Miliband, 1973).
- [5] See Poulantzas, 1969, 1972, 1976; Miliband, 1970, 1973. For a summary of this debate see Laclau, 1975.
- [6] For considerations of the historical conjuncture that locates this structuralism see Althusser (1969), Birchall (1974) and Callinicos (1976). This was essentially a crisis of post-war Stalinism, the the collapse of the Second International's orthodoxy of economism and positivism.
- [7] I will not be concerned with the vexed question of the relationship between structuralist Marxism and structuralism in general. For a brief introduction to structuralism see Bauman (1973), and for an overview of the relationship between this tradition and Marxist theory and research see Burris (1979). My position here is to naively accept as unproblematic Poulantzas' argument (1976, p73) that the definitive break with idealist structuralism in his work hinges on his comprehension of the relations of power as class relations. I also take Nowell-Smith's point (1979, p8) that

Poulantzas' empirical studies constitute an advance on Althusser's speculations due to their more successful incorporation of class struggle into the analysis.

- [8] For proficient socio-philosophical appraisals of Althusser's work see Callinicos (1976) and Geras (1977).
- [9] Note that the undeveloped outline of a general political and economic theory of the media Hall (1977, p338) offers seems to bear some resemblance to that developed in this and the subsequent chapters. It is interesting that Hall refers to Gramsci, Engels and Lenin (all major ancestors of structuralist Marxism) without mentioning any modern work at all.
- [10] For a brief summary of his rejection of both instrumentalism and liberal democrat theories (the State as "Thing/instrument" or "Subject") see 1976, p74. Poulantzas' dissent, and his argument that these two positions are formally identical, is similar to the critique made in section 4.4.
- [11] I am cognisant here of Althusser's (1970) rejection of the theory of models as a type of empiricism. The relationships to be outlined in this chapter do not represent an ideal, simplified "model" which is subsequently applied to empirical reality and the degree of its "fit" evaluated. As Brewster (in Althusser, 1970, p315) comments - "for Althusser, the theory in Capital is only 'ideal' in the sense that it only involves the object of knowledge, like all theory, not the real object, and the knowledge it produces is perfectly adequate to its object, not an approximation to it." As Poulantzas (1976, p71) argues, this "is nothing more than the

form taken by the constitution of the classes, and hence it too is a consequence of their struggles under capitalism."

[12] A second, also temporary, lacuna in this analysis is the absence of any attention to Poulantzas' resituation of State employees in class analysis (rather than conceptualising them as "elites"). This involves the theory of the "new middle class" (see Poulantzas, 1975, pp287ff; Wright, 1979, pp44ff). Wright (1979, p96) correctly argues that "in the analysis of [class] positions within the ideological apparatuses, the central issue is the social relations of control over the apparatuses of ideological production per se, not simply the participation in the production of ideology." Thus the identification of class positions must be ascertained through the consideration of journalistic practices, and will therefore be taken up in part three and not here. It suffices for the present to note that broadcasting personnel do not constitute a single class but are substantially differentiated by class interests, as any "industrial dispute" within the media clearly demonstrates.

CHAPTER FIVE - THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF N.Z. BROADCASTING5.1 - INTRODUCTION

We can now turn to considering in detail the history of broadcasting in New Zealand. Our concern is with the political and economic determinations of this particular State apparatus, as theorised in the preceding chapter. To reiterate points made above, this history is very different from that associated with the liberal democratic position in chapters one and four. We are not concerned with the ahistorical progression of institutional types - a history of broadcasting can proceed only by referring to what is not broadcasting. However, this reference to things "not broadcasting" does not involve the denial of either specificity or some degree of autonomy. This is the reduction enforced by cruder forms of instrumentalist Marxism. Both these positions simultaneously abstract and empiricise their subject.

Rather, what we are concerned with is a complex of structural relationships between and within the State, the economy and classes. For this reason this chapter relies heavily on Martin's recent work (1981) on the history of New Zealand State interventions, with special regard to welfare and labour. His concerns to elaborate these interventions in terms of (a) the implications of changes in the economic structure for both the State and classes, and (b) the State structure and its relationship to specific policies and class struggles, make his work an invaluable source for this chapter. To a large extent I am merely

"inserting" a consideration of broadcasting into an abbreviation of his analysis. I rely on his consideration of source material to construct a framework of historical periodisation.

A great number of sources were referred to for the specific history of New Zealand broadcasting, and often no explicit acknowledgement is made in the text itself for the sake of a fluid presentation. Particularly important sources were Bick (1968), Hall (1980), MacKay (1956), Ritchie (1977) and Vintiner (1976). Numerous Listener and newspaper articles were consulted, principally for information on modern developments. Journalists who have written regularly in this area include Jackman, Thorley and Mayne.

Analysis proceeds by working through the distinctive periods of transformation and maintenance identified by Martin. As will be shown, the structure of New Zealand capitalism from as early as the 1890s was to decisively effect the television broadcasting that began some 70 years later.

5.2 - THE 1890s TRANSITION

The 1890s marked the development of both a national economy and polity, based principally on the interests of the small rural landowning class. Under the Liberal government a distinctive State structure and pattern of intervention was established. This had major implications for the administration of radio broadcasting to be introduced early in the next century.

The eighteenth century New Zealand economy was extremely regionalised, dominated by large pastoral estates [1]. Apart from these estates both rural and industrial units of production were very small and scattered. This economic regionalism determined a State structure that was extremely provincial. Provincialism, in turn, meant little success with attempts at national policy-making and prevented political party formation within the State. The economic structure tended to disorganise both owners and workers (industrially and with respect to the State), whereas the large landowners' control of suffrage enabled them to protect their own interests (free trade, low taxation, etc).

The character of this social formation profoundly changed in the late 1800s under the impact of two economic developments. Firstly, there was a change in the distribution of the class structure. Immigration and an expanding export market (aided by the development of refrigeration technology) encouraged closer settlement of the land, leading to an increase in the size of the small landowning class. Secondary manufacturing also expanded, although numerically rather than in actual size of factories. Secondly, from 1879 to 1896 there was a major economic depression due to a drop in export prices and the need to service previous administrations' overseas loans. As a result wages fell and there was considerable unemployment and indebtedness.

The economic interests of the emerging classes (the working class, small rural and urban capital) were organisationally diffused and impossible to marshal cohesively, given the continued

predominance of small, scattered units of production. This combined with the economic depression to create the pressing need for a political structure that could organise and express these interests through increased State intervention in the economy (e.g. through protective tariffs). By the 1890s the existing State structure was thus in crisis, as conservative landowners prevented the extension of the tax base (to include property and income) necessary to provide the extra revenue for increased State activity. The crisis was increasingly politicised through the organisation of small landowners. Following the collapse of unionism with the breaking of the 1890 Maritime Strike, labour also turned to politics rather than industrial action to protect its interests. These struggles abolished landowners' multiple voting rights in 1889 and gained universal suffrage in 1893. The resulting political instability was part of the transformation of politics from provincial factionalism to a class-based party system.

Party formation began in the late 1880s. A Conservative group, structured by large landowning interests, emerged in Parliament advocating major cuts in government spending, no change in taxation and free trade. In response to this the Liberal Party formed, based on the interests of the working class, manufacturers and small farmers (the latter in particular). Its policies, advocating a highly interventionist State, were implemented following the Party's electoral success in 1890. State interventions were numerous and of many types, based on the introduction of land and income taxes. Tariffs and land settlement policies protected the

interests of small capital. The State continued its role in the provision of education, and greatly increased its welfare expenditure with the legislation of an Old Age Pension in 1898. Numerous policies were drafted to organise both small capital and labour, culminating in the 1894 Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration (I. C. & A.) Act. These interventions stabilised the indigenous capitalism both politically and economically into a "small farmer agrarian democracy" (Martin, 1981, p12).

The ensuing period of economic prosperity and peaceful expansion made small landowners increasingly conservative, and under their influence the Liberal Party became progressively more agrarian and less reformist. That the interests of the working class were no longer being fulfilled by the party became clear in rising political conflicts and was officially recognised with the formation of the Liberal-Labour Federation in 1898. This would lead in the 1900s to the creation of the Labour Party.

This period was formative for radio broadcasting even though the medium had not yet developed in any significant social sense. At this time technological innovations in radio were occurring in many capitalist countries. In 1896 Marconi filed his first British patent (see Sturmev, 1958). Little happened in New Zealand in the 1890s. There were small scale experiments with radio, though these were confined to universities. Even so, that the technology was initiated within the country and not simply imported, indicates that it was a response to transformations in the New Zealand social formation.

Williams (1974, pp17ff) argues that the mass media developed in Britain as a response to the great changes of the nineteenth century - democratic centralisation, mobility, the rapid expansion of industry and cities. Within the class struggle, and particularly by the urban middle class, newspapers and later radio were developed to satisfy the need for transmitting news and background. In New Zealand the situation was very different. Here a predominantly rural, dispersed economy with small capital, low industrialisation and urbanisation, was unified through a centralised, interventionist political structure. These factors made it unlikely that radio would develop either in the market place [2] or from the class struggle directly. It is not surprising, therefore, that radio was developed in the social "margins", as it were, in the universities and by enthusiastic amateurs, and that its spread early in the next century would be slow and limited. Furthermore, the likelihood the radio broadcasting would become part of State intervention, administered as a service to the country, was firmly established with the political structure that developed under the Liberals. Even before the 1890s the State had been heavily involved in developing national communications, since the urban centres and capital were both too small and regionalised to accomplish this without direction. The enormous overseas' debt created under the Vogel administration had been partly due to massive public expenditure on roads and railways. The historical pattern from the beginning involved the activities of the centralising State. This did not change in the years following.

5.3 - THE TRANSFORMATION OF AGRARIAN DEMOCRACY: 1900-1935

The most important conclusion from the consideration of this period is the marked continuity it evidences between the earlier Liberal reforms and the Labour "reconstruction" to come. This period, then, is a crucial link in our understanding of the emergence of the modern welfare State in New Zealand. The consideration of it is divided into the following three segments: (1) 1900-World War One, (2) 1919-1930 and (3) 1930-1935. Each period had a particular impact on the development of broadcasting, which steadily expanded within the State structure and to a lesser extent outside it.

(1) 1900-WORLD WAR ONE

With the continued implementation of Liberal policies small farmers and manufacturers prospered. Under the I. C. & A. Court, however, the working class' standard of living fell. The struggle for its interests moved outside the arbitration system and politics, signalled by the formation of the Federation of Labour and increased industrial conflict, culminating in the strikes of 1912-13. Within the State the process of party formation continued with the growing conservatism of the Liberal Party. Incompatibility between the interests of small capital and labour had by 1910 resulted in an independent Labour Party and a more radical Socialist Party. At the same time the Reform Party formed. With its anti-union, free-holding policies it won the support of small farmers away from the Liberals and was successful in the 1912

election.

The Reform government continued the pattern of State intervention, but mainly in the interests of small capital. In 1913 the Federation of Labour and those unions acting outside the I. C. & A. Court were smashed and the right to strike limited. The enforcement of the Act kept wages down. Other than this, however, State intervention in the form of welfare, education and health was consolidated, not substantially changed either positively or negatively. The Reform government never held a clear majority and always had to manoeuvre for Opposition support. This further militated against radical change. World War One encouraged the extension of centralised State intervention. Income taxes were increased to raise revenue and regulation of the economy was ensured by the Board of Trade established in 1915.

Broadcasting in this period was still largely the exclusive preserve of a few amateurs whose broadcasts were more experimental than regular and motivated by interests other than profit. Although little information is available, MacKay (1953, p20) reports that by 1922 there were six such stations operating. The State took no steps to actually set up radio stations, but it established itself as the absolute authority and potential actor in this respect with the Liberal government's 1903 Wireless Telegraphy Act (when actual broadcasting must have been very insignificant). The authority to license broadcasting was vested in the Postmaster General, and those wishing to apply had to pass a test in morse, sign a declaration before a J.P. and supply a certificate of

character. In 1913 Parliament, lead by the new Reform Party, passed further legislation to restrict the erection and operation of the amateur stations that were appearing here and there. Some amateur aerials were dismantled. In keeping with the tenor of State activity at this time, positive intervention was not initiated but strong regulatory powers were established. This characterised the relationship between broadcasting and the State from the very beginning of transmission, or more accurately from even before the beginning.

The specificity of the New Zealand situation should be appreciated. Given the economic structure, broadcasting would not be developed and maintained independently by a powerful class of "free enterprisers", as it was for example in the United States. Although enthusiasts and small capital might develop and implement the technology, as yet largely as a "hobby", it was the State, in its established interventionist posture, that would regulate the system as a whole. This centralised role and power had been established in the previous century and were here confirmed.

(2) 1919-1930

The War had kept agricultural export prices high and the economy prosperous. The subsequent drop and fluctuation in these prices created considerable economic insecurity so the farmers were more attracted to controlled marketing rather than free trade. The Reform government, which lasted until 1928, increased State intervention in terms of these agrarian interests. It introduced

subsidies for farmers and instituted the Meat Board in 1922 and the Dairy Board in 1923. The working class continued to experience erosion of its standard of living.

It was in this period that broadcasting underwent major development, although this merely tended to make its structural relationship to the State more prominent rather than substantially transform it. In 1921 Professor Jack and his associates at Otago University transmitted a series of (music and voice) shows that were heard as far north as Nelson. This was soon replicated in Auckland. State policy was both strongly regulative and, at the same time, rather ad hoc. Broadcasts had to be individually authorised by the Post and Telegraph Department and to submit the items for approval. In 1922 the Postmaster General claimed that the government had no intention of operating a broadcasting service itself, but that it would encourage and supervise private enterprise. Accordingly that same year the first regular broadcasting company was established in Wellington. Next year there was a new Act, which strengthened government control and forbade the broadcasting of controversial material "not in the public interest", prohibited advertising but raised revenue through the provision of transmitting and receiving licences. By the end of the year there were eleven private stations operating and some 2,800 licences had been issued. For the next two years each station ran independently and there was no central broadcasting organisation. In 1924 the Act was amended to give the government power to organise a national service and in the following year the Radio Broadcasting Company of New Zealand was established.

Operating under government regulations and funded by licence fees, the Company took over nearly all existing private radio stations and considerably extended the service provided. During the six years that it lasted the number of receiving licences increased from 3,200 to 71,500. A small number of stations continued to operate outside the Company. These "B" stations, deprived of any source of revenue, survived on the assistance from individuals and clubs.

State activity in respect broadcasting in this period was merely one facet of a uniform and persistent State practice. In keeping with its other interventions, the State regulated and organised small capital rather than supplanted it. The Radio Broadcasting Company contracted with the government for the provision of a public radio broadcasting service. This reproduces the structural relationships instituted, for example, by the I. C. & A. Act in 1894.

(3) 1930-1935

From the late 1920s unemployment became a major problem. With the sharp drop in export prices from 1928 to 1931 by 40 per cent, the economy was seriously depressed. Economic prosperity was clearly associated with primary exports and agrarian well-being, and correspondingly State policies took the form of greatly increased expenditure on grants and subsidies to farmers. Government activity in terms of other class or more general interests was limited. There was retrenchment in expenditure on

welfare and public works, and in 1931 wages were cut and the following year compulsory arbitration (which had also set minimum wage levels) was abolished. The working class had become considerably economically and politically disenfranchised. Throughout the Depression unions were very weak, and membership fell because they were unable to protect the interests of labour.

These developments caused realignments in the Party structure. In 1931 the United Party (comprised chiefly of ex-Liberals) formed a coalition with Reform. This displaced the drive for liberal reform onto the Labour Party, which reasserted increased central government intervention and regulation of the economy. The industrially weak labour movement identified its interests with this party, as did small manufacturing capital and a significant, dairying fraction of the small farmer class. With this popular base the Labour Party was elected in 1935.

In the early 1930s there were increasingly strong arguments made within Parliament that broadcasting should not be in private hands, either those of the Radio Broadcasting Company's government created monopoly or the "B" stations. These arguments often came from the Labour Party but were not limited there. Accordingly in 1931, when the Company's licence expired, broadcasting was nationalised to form the National Broadcasting Service (N.B.S.). The establishment of State enterprise substantially followed the B.B.C. formula, vesting control in an appointed but independent Broadcasting Board. Firm control remained, however, with the government. The Post and Telegraph Department continued to collect

licence fees and allocate wave lengths. The private "B" stations, now 18 in number, were allowed to continue outside the national service.

The causes for this change are complex, but do not decisively break with the established pattern of State activity. Small urban capital (newspapers, chambers of commerce, various businesses, etc) had strenuously opposed this government "interference". The smallness and disorganisation of these capitalist interests, the State's preoccupation with agrarian intervention and its already established centralised power meant that this opposition was easily overcome. The administration of broadcasting had always been identified by the State with the nation as a whole, rather than with regional or local interests. The Postmaster General, in introducing the 1931 Bill, asserted that

"receiving from broadcasting stations is going to be very popular in the near future ... [and] for that reason it is necessary that the service should be in the hands of the people, and not in the hands of a public company. Broadcasting is a public utility, and on that score it should be a monopoly of the people" (quoted in Hall, 1980, p48).

The administration of broadcasting was thus part of the democratic character of the State's interventions. Given this, and the composition of the indigenous capital, it was inevitable that the State itself would eventually become directly involved. For many years this involvement had been delayed by simply keeping commercial interests out of radio through the control of licences and prohibition of advertising. However, even so limited broadcasting had steadily expanded in regional centres and if the facility was ever to be both centrally and nationally organised the

time was clearly imminent. Furthermore, the expansion of broadcasting required major technological development and expenditure. The smallness of capital meant that this would have to be executed by the State. In its period of operation the N.B.S. considerably upgraded and extended transmission and studio equipment.

Most importantly, there was a direct need for increased State control of radio broadcasting. The interventionist State structure was in tension with a social formation where the division of class interests between workers, rural and urban capital were becoming increasingly obvious. Regional radio, located predominantly in towns and cities, frequently advocated the interests of small urban capital and workers. This was not simply a challenge to the existing government, though this was clearly one aspect of its urgency. Rather it was part of the growing instability of the State structure as a whole and the ineffectiveness of its interventions. The creation of the N.B.S. and its close regulation worked to preserve the legitimacy of the State in its general form by very effectively preventing the broadcast of any controversial topics, including all matters to do with contemporary politics and problems. Not surprisingly, the "B" stations which operated outside these limits became increasingly politicised and in 1935 legislation was passed to tighten their control. This became one of the major, ultimately class-based, issues in the general election that year. These points can be clearly demonstrated by considering the differences between the N.B.S. and the B.B.C. structures.

Williams (1974, p29) argues that the decisive factor in the 1926 chartering of the B.B.C. was

"the character of the British State which, because of the compactness of its ruling class, proceeded in many matters by appointment and delegation rather than by centralised administration. This permitted the emergence of a State-regulated and State-sponsored public corporation which was not yet subject to detailed State control."

Furthermore, this compact ruling class, combined with the early development of industry and effective communications, had created a national culture. For example, the English press at this stage was predominantly national. In New Zealand, however, the N.B.S. was indeed "subject to detailed State control". There had never been a single, compact ruling class in New Zealand - in the eighteenth century there was a provincially factionalised landed gentry, and the emergence of capital was always regionally dispersed and small. The culture was provincial, there has never been a national newspaper. In this complex the State developed a highly interventionist role in constituting and organising capital. Broadcasting by delegation was not appropriate, and could only be contemplated much later with the development of professionalism in broadcast journalism. The control of the N.B.S. was only a small step from the sacking of the Board and assertion of direct Ministerial responsibility that Labour Party policies advocated in the 1935 election campaign.

5.4 - STATE REGULATION UNDER LABOUR: 1935-1949

As the Depression was caused externally the economy merely shrank in size and was not structurally transformed through capital

centralisation and concentration (as occurred in the crises overseas). Thus even after the Depression industry remained small-scale. The election of Labour in 1935 was due to its support by the labour movement and small property. The economic crisis had proven the inadequacy of existing arrangements and the new government sought to diversify the economy and generally improve living standards. It aimed to extend welfare and ensure full employment, which required both transformation of the political structure and consolidation of small agrarian and manufacturing capital.

These aims, the combined result of economic crisis and the specific nature of contemporary New Zealand capitalism, set new political limits that resulted in the formation of the modern Welfare, interventionist State. This transformation clearly to some extent continued the pattern established in the 1890s and followed by conservative governments since then. But, whereas the Depression government had reduced its expenditure, Labour's desire for massive expansion meant the necessary revenue came from major increases in income taxation. Taxes on profits remained fairly fixed due to the vulnerability of industry. The increased revenue, and World War Two, allowed the dramatic increase in size and centralisation of the State that was necessary to carry out its new interventions.

Policies protected small property through increased regulation of the economy. This took two forms. Firstly, there was internal regulation. Prices were controlled and wages linked to their index

through the reinstatement of the Arbitration Court and compulsory unionism in 1936. The management of credit and execution of monetary policies were facilitated with the control of the B.N.Z. and nationalisation of the Reserve Bank. Secondly, the economy was protected from overseas' competition through tariffs, subsidies, exchange controls, guaranteed prices, import licences and so on. There was also greatly increased expenditure on public works in health, housing and transport, so that the State became a major employer. Welfare policies were designed to protect and improve standards of living through redistributing income in the form of monetary benefits and services. The 1938 Social Security Act introduced universal pensions, subsidised health and family allowances.

Due to the smallness of capital and colonial dependence of the economy State intervention economically took the form of regulation and its direct involvement (such as through planning, capital investment and public ownership) was limited. This confirmed and extended the existing small-scale nature of manufacturing. This form of economic intervention and welfare policies constituted the specific character of the New Zealand "Welfare State". As Martin (1981, p49) concludes -

"the election of the Labour Party to power in 1935 marked the beginnings of a new State structure with a reconstituted base in the economy. These changes involved a qualitative advance in both the State's intervention in the economy and its provision of welfare."

The new structure made for a period of further prosperity and peaceful expansion. Unions increased in size under the more

conservative Federation of Labour, reformed in 1937. Eventually, however, arbitration once more eroded working class wages, and security made capital increasingly anti-reformist. Some unions moved outside the Federation of Labour and returned to industrial conflict, and there was conflict within the Labour Party over policy decisions. In 1949 the Labour government used the I. C. & A. Act to break the Carpenters' Union, so preparing the way for the smashing of those independently powerful unions outside arbitration in 1951. The overall pattern of State intervention initiated by Labour, however, was to persist well into the 1970s.

The fate of the "B" stations was a major issue in the 1935 election. Their contentiousness had lead to the Bill passed earlier that year removing all government subsidies and thus, given that advertising was forbidden, making their continued operation extremely unlikely. The celebrated "Uncle Scrim" of Auckland's 1ZB was voiciferous in his condemnation of the government, advocacy of advertising and support for Labour's policies. We shall return to the mysterious events leading to the jamming of his broadcasts in part three. The Labour Party in fact supported public ownership, but it expressed sympathy for the private stations and advertising. This was part of its approach to small capital in general, but had much more to do with the hostile coverage its reform policies were receiving from the conservative press. Savage explicitly saw radio as one of the means to communicate their goals directly to the electorate and bypass partisan reporting. It was for this reason that broadcasting of Parliament was initiated in 1936. Savage spoke of

"the atmosphere of suspicion that is being created by the daily newspapers. By means of broadcasting the people are getting the truth from Parliament, the pure, unadulterated truth" (quoted in Hall, 1980, p83).

Such conceptions, obviously, did not augur well for private radio stations, nor did they place much emphasis on "fourth estate" critical independence.

Accordingly in 1936 Labour passed a new Bill which transformed the N.B.S. by (a) abolishing the Broadcasting Board, (b) vesting all the Board's property in the Crown, (c) placing ministerial control on the service as a State Department and (d) appointing a Director of Broadcasting. Revenue continued to be raised from licence fees. The Postmaster General claimed that

"no organisation is superior to Parliament in being able to reflect the views of listeners. The service should be directly controlled by the Government for and in the interests of the people" (quoted in Hall, 1980, p85).

As long as this structure persisted broadcasting would be continually charged with being too easily and completely dominated by whatever party was in power.

New Zealand broadcasting moved now completely from the B.B.C. model to become a State Department. We have argued previously why the N.B.S. did not correspond closely to the Corporation. Both the new pattern of State intervention and broadcasting administration were based on previous tendencies. The emerging State structure, however, required further control of the ideological means of reproduction, particularly since many of these means were vested in interests opposed to reform. The possibility

of an independent "fourth estate" based on the development of professional broadcasters was an emerging but as yet unrealisable option. Contemporary radio was either constrained to not broadcasting controversial material at all or to partisanly presenting class-based positions or their mediations in particular parties. Given this conjuncture the more or less complete domination of broadcasting by the (reforming) party which dominated Parliament satisfied the restructuring needs of the social formation as a whole. Clearly, however, this would not necessarily always be the case.

That the issue of commercialism and advertising was fundamentally one of ownership and control (rather than the presumed debasement of popular taste, etc) was demonstrated in 1936 when the State itself formed the National Commercial Broadcasting Service (N.C.B.S.) alongside the N.B.S.. The resulting good advertising profits from State enterprise allowed considerable extension of the service. The "B" stations, rigidly censored and without any means of raising money, collapsed or were bought up and incorporated within the N.B.S.. This marked the lapse of private enterprise broadcasting that was to continue for many years.

This, then, was a break with the overall pattern of State intervention in the economy, as it was based on direct State ownership making profits to the exclusion of small capital. Such economic ownership made for both effective control of an important ideological means of reproduction and its rapid extension since it centralised capital to be deployed on a national scale (New Zealand

at this time had the fourth highest density of radio licences, some 200,000, in the world). This indicates an important point about the State's relationship to broadcasting. Although it was always conceptualised as a national service, broadcasting was never to be funded significantly by taxpayers' money but was based on some form of "user pay" principle (either licences or advertisements). For the State it was more a matter of economic ownership and control than provision. Thus the structure of radio remained essentially and directly monopoly capitalist, based on the sale of commodities, rather than either a welfare service or the product of popular (socialist) participation. Finance through advertising, of course, does not make the service "free" in any sense at all as under capitalism these costs are passed on to the consumer eventually. The economy of (private) newspapers also typically operates on the use of advertising to sell below the cost of production. That such a system appeared democratic depended on (a) the continued acceptance of the State's claim to represent "the people" through the Parliamentary dominance of one party as legitimate, and (b) the cheapness and general availability (i.e. non-exclusivity) of radio sets and broadcasts (e.g. through manufacturing subsidisation and eventually the complete reliance on advertising). This conjuncture allowed the necessary identification of the "national interest" with universal consumption. It also created, as shall be argued in detail in part three, the space within which broadcasting professionalism could develop.

In 1943 the N.B.S. and the N.C.B.S. were amalgamated to form what was subsequently named the New Zealand Broadcasting

Corporation (N.Z.B.C.). The obviousness and frequency of ministerial control often made the two Directors' roles seem nominal and the service was continually attacked for partiality. Considerable growth and expansion in services continued with technical improvements and rationalisation of frequency allocations. In 1949 the X-class, commercial stations started. Using small transmitters they served provincial areas with a local emphasis in content. These were part of the extension of radio broadcasting and did not represent any significant decentralisation from the basic structural relationship with the State.

5.5 - THE CORPORATIONS AND THE ESTABLISHED PATTERN: 1949ff

The structure of the State and the nature of its interventions that had been established under the first Labour government persisted basically unchanged for the next 30 odd years. This fact has been well documented by Martin (1981) in terms of public expenditure on welfare between 1949 and 1978. It was within this largely predetermined context that television developed in New Zealand.

From the end of the first Labour administration until the late 1960s there was considerable economic growth. This stability did not challenge the State structure and consequently its type of intervention remained unchanged, although its extent regularly rose or was static under the succession of socialist and conservative governments. Under the Labour governments (1936, 1957 and 1972) there were significant increases in welfare expenditure; these

created a new level which National inherited (in 1949 and 1960) but did not improve on (see Martin, 1981, p69).

From 1970 economic growth slowed markedly due to the increasing gap between export and import receipts. With the stabilised form of the New Zealand State this depression was countered by increased fiscal policies (e.g. rather than the reduction and monetarism that is the case in Britain). Thus the National government that fell in 1972 had instigated major rises in spending, and this was followed by further increases under Labour until 1975. The 1975 National government came to power in a period of sharpening economic depression and rising unemployment. Although this administration instituted a partial (and very selective) retreat in welfare spending, the changes were not momentous. In 1976 National Superannuation was legislated and by 1979 State spending was over 43 per cent of the G.D.P.

Since the re-election of a conservative government in 1981 there have been indications that the structure of the New Zealand formation may be significantly changing. The break in the pattern of State activity in 1972 may well have indicated a developing crisis and transformation. Martin (1981, pp51-2) notes that since 1972 there has been considerable party movement and class-realignment in the attempt to secure electoral support. Recent events have highlighted these transformations. Overt class conflict and industrial disputes have increased, with the F.O.L. challenging the conciliation processes. The 1981 election resulted in an unusually unstable Parliament. The Labour Party is currently

disputing the nature of its relationship to unions. The relationship of the State to capital, in particular to foreign (or multi-national) and monopoly capital, was a major election issue and promises to change with the National victory. This year the Government has stituted across the board 3 per cent (i.e. not in real terms) reductions in expenditure. Many other developments could be cited to indicate the present instability. The extent of these transformations cannot yet be guaged.

The development of broadcasting from 1949 onwards is closely tied to this pattern of stability and change. When in opposition before 1949 National had frequently protested against the ruling party's total domination of broadcasting, and had favoured Corporation control to ensure independence. The reforming Labour government, however, retained its tight control, opposing the administration of radio by either an outside body or private enterprise. Nevertheless, despite previous protestations, in 1949 there was a new National Minister of Broadcasting and, as with the State structure overall, no change. In 1950 television was demonstrated on closed circuit in Auckland and Wellington radio stations, and the government-appointed Television Advisory Committee sent two engineers abroad to study the technology involved in developing the medium.

Thus from the beginning television was conceptualised as an extension of the State's ownership and development of radio. However, in the next ten or so years small capital, principally radio manufacturers, became interested in television. By 1959

there were already 14 experimental transmitting licences in Auckland alone. These licences were strictly limited by the Postmaster General, allowing neither advertising nor entertainment to be telecast. One noteworthy company was Bell Radio-Television Ltd, run by a former butcher turned radio maker. Bell's persistence in transmitting other than the required test patterns lead to the (Labour) Minister of Broadcasting threatening to revoke his licence. This caused considerable controversy, but the station closed in 1960 and Bell became one of the well-to-do (State-protected) local manufacturers of television sets. The State's monopoly in this new field of broadcasting, to the exclusion of the interests of small capital, was further enforced by the incoming National government (which, for example, prevented the attempts by Dryden to operate a television station with Japanese finance).

In 1960 the first transmission by government stations of regular programmes began in Auckland. Having established itself as dominant in the field (and in a similar pattern to its radio policy previously), the State introduced advertising in 1961. This State capitalism provided the basis for the steady extension of services. The evident commercial prospects of television attracted the interests of the larger electronics bourgeoisie. The Pye-Woller Group and Kerridge (the theatre oligopolist) both sought to operate private stations. These were substantial challenges, of a different order than those from former "butchers". Kerridge's "2-4-6" building in Auckland had been planned for a television mast on top, and he tendered to operate 7 stations in the 4 main centres

and 3 provincial areas. Even such a strong proposition, considerably beyond the State's own capital resources in this area at the time, was rebuffed by the State, secure in the stability of its interventionist power.

In this period, however, there was an important change in the State/broadcasting relationship. The State structure and its interventions were established so that tight control of the ideological means of reproduction was no longer as necessary as it had been under Labour previously. In fact, the manifestly direct control of broadcasting by the ruling party was a decided liability as it called into question the legitimacy of State interventions as the democratic representation of the wishes of society as a whole. There was a strong legitimacy demand to generalise the relationship of broadcasting to the State and to lessen its overt dependence on the party in power. As this point was frequently made by capitalists wishing to enter the field, a satisfactory resolution of the dilemma was necessary if broadcasting was to continue within the overall scheme of State intervention.

Consequently in 1962 the National government passed a new Act which transformed broadcasting from a State Department into a Corporation. The N.B.S. was taken over by a government-appointed Board, so constituting the New Zealand Broadcasting Corporation (N.Z.B.C.). As will be shown in part three, the attempt to develop a Corporation-style administration was made possible by the emergence of professional broadcasters. Though the model for the Corporation was said to be the B.B.C., in fact there were many

important differences. The much stronger interventionist power of the New Zealand State enforced the continuation of very definite control of broadcasting by the Minister. The new Act stipulated that the Corporation had to comply with any written directions from the Minister, salary scales were fixed by the State Services Commission and the N.Z.B.C. had to make an annual statement of accounts to Parliament. Crucially, the limit of capital expenditure allowed without Ministerial approval was set at \$50,000. Given that the Corporation was required to continue developing the service nationwide (including, for example, new studios at Avalon for approximately \$5 million) this financial control was very immediate. All these factors indicate that the new Corporation was in fact only moderately more independent than a State Department. That this change had failed to solve the problem of party domination of broadcasting was clear in the continued political conflict, especially during the subsequent elections.

Through the State's centralisation and organisation of broadcasting capital there was considerable expansion, so that by 1965 95 per cent of the population received television. The capital required for this expansion was massive - and from the start it was clear that the State would administer television, like radio, as a capitalist enterprise funded by users. Thus in the interim while the State accumulated licencing and advertising capital networking was established through translators run by locally-funded incorporated societies. In 1966 there were some 230 of these private transmitters operating. Their number gradually decreased as the State network grew.

In 1965 the N.Z.B.C.'s Board was extended from three to seven, appointments widely held to be biased in favour of the National party (e.g. see Holcroft, 1969, p191). This caused some uproar, but in general the N.Z.B.C. Board was accepted as part of the patronage domain of New Zealand politics (see Jackson 1973, p193). This failure to solve the relationship between the ruling party and broadcasting was to continue relatively unproblematically until 1972.

In 1966 capital illegally re-entered broadcasting with the appearance of pirate radio stations. As it was election year the National government chose to back the free enterprisers. This temporarily ameliorated the legitimacy problems due to State monopoly. The government promised to transfer the power of granting broadcast warrants to a new board, as it was clear the N.Z.B.C. would never allow the entry of private enterprise. This reluctance had, of course, been built into the N.Z.B.C. when it was structured capitalistically by the State. Dependent on licence fees and advertising profits, it had a strong interest in retaining its monopoly. This situation, as we will see, is an enduring contradiction. In 1968 new legislation established the Broadcasting Authority. The Authority blocked attempts by newspaper companies to enter radio by limiting their possible shareholding to 35 per cent. The government Act stipulated that no person or company could run more than one radio station. Thus private broadcasting capital was designed to remain small and unable to challenge the State monopoly. State economic interventions in general had tended to structure capital in this

way, though not this explicitly. Towards the end of the National rule a second television channel was decided upon, and the government hinted that it favoured private ownership.

Prior to the 1972 election the unsatisfactory nature of the ruling party's domination of broadcasting (via its patronage of the N.Z.B.C. Board) was highlighted with the dismissal of MacLeod, the Listener editor. There were widespread accusations of bias and Labour promised substantial change. This incident represents an interesting conjuncture. Firstly, it indicates the enduring problem of the State/broadcasting relationship and points to Labour's subsequent attempt at restructuring. Secondly, it indexes the problematic emergence of media professionalism within State broadcasting (MacLeod was dismissed for his critical editorialising). Lastly, it occurs at a time when, as we have noted above, the New Zealand State structure began to change (or at least began to experience a new instability).

The success of the State's radio commercialism was evidenced in 1972 when the radio licence fee was abolished. In 1973 there were some 732,250 television licences and colour telecasts were introduced. By far the most important change under the third Labour government, however, was its restructuring of the N.Z.B.C. into three separate and independent public corporations - Radio New Zealand, T.V.1 and T.V.2. Both television stations remained State-owned and the Broadcasting Authority was replaced by the Broadcasting Council. The Council was responsible for the provision of common services that could not be economically divided

(principally buying overseas' programmes and newsgathering for television) and for the setting of broadcasting standards by establishing a set of rules. Once again this development is an attempt to resolve the problematic State/broadcasting relationship, and the "rules" (which we will return to in part three) indicate the role to be played by media professionalism. Labour's expressed aim with these moves was to give the three Corporations greater independence from political and administrative pressures and to encourage a greater degree of involvement in community affairs (i.e. in terms of regionalising the commodity, not in terms of actual participation or such). The new Act took away from government the power to give written directions and the limit on unapproved capital works was raised to \$500,000.

The Labour government's restructuring of the N.Z.B.C., as with the State's overall economic interventions, constituted no fundamental change. Thus the problem of Ministerial control was lessened but not obliterated (see Cleveland, 1970, p58). As Wood (1975) argues, there was still a government-appointed body and one had only to hope that the intentions of the incoming administration were not such as to "stack" the Council in its favour.

The separation of the two television channels in fact only served to highlight the contradictions of the State's administration of broadcasting as a monopoly capitalist enterprise. Labour aimed to introduce (artificial) competition for the advertising dollar between the two networks, though this had to be controlled to ensure complementarity as a whole. The resulting

so-called "guided competition" lead to considerable conflict within broadcasting. The two channels developed competing market interests (the "ratings game"), but their attempts to act in accordance with these interests were thwarted by the mediating Broadcasting Council. There were continual arguments, for example, over the allocation of popular overseas' programmes by the Controller common to both channels. This conflict continues relatively unchanged under the present system.

In 1976 the new National government legislated to establish the single Broadcasting Corporation of New Zealand (B.C.N.Z.). By the time Labour had lost power, broadcasting owed \$38 million to Treasury, due to borrowings from the public account to fund the extension of the service to commercially unviable areas and the uneconomic triple structure of the three corporations. With the new Act the National government remitted this debt, and established an independent Broadcasting Tribunal for issuing broadcasting warrants (to facilitate the development of private radio, halted completely by Labour). There were strong challenges from private capital to the State's monopoly of television, to which the government made receptive noises. This lead the B.C.N.Z. Chairman to successfully amend the 1976 Act to unite T.V.1 and T.V.2 into the single Television New Zealand (T.V.N.Z.). The aim of this amalgamation was to rationalise production economically and, most importantly, to create a structure so unified that no part of it (such as the second network) could be carved off and allocated to private enterprise,

These developments index the steady emergence of broadcasting as a capitalist enterprise within (and maintained by) the State, acting specifically to preserve its monopoly against even the expressed interests of the party in power. The need to preserve this monopoly from external challenges has intensified given that the government has refused to grant any increase in the licence fee, so that broadcasting has become more dependent on its own ability to raise capital through advertising. In 1978 the B.C.N.Z. reported a \$1.4 million deficit. However, in 1979 it reported a \$3.8 million surplus. This was due to severe cut-backs in production costs by reducing labour inputs (e.g. through an almost total ban on overtime) and by increasing the proportion of total revenue from advertising from 50 per cent in 1975 to 70 by 1980.

By the late '70s the challenge of large capital (particularly newspapers and private radio) to the television monopoly was very intense. During the past 20 or so years mass media capital had become powerfully centralised and concentrated. Radio Hauraki, for example, the former shoe-string pirate, now owns 25 per cent of its Auckland competitor Radio I and 30 per cent of Wellington's Radio Windy. The production of newspapers is dominated by three monopoly companies - N.Z. News Ltd, Wilson and Horton and Independent News Ltd. In 1979 Wilson and Horton declared a \$4.6 million profit. N.Z. News has over \$5 million paid up capital, making it one of the 30 largest listed companies in New Zealand. Various attempts have been made by the mass media bourgeoisie to enter television. In 1979 Radio Hauraki offered a package deal to cover the Olympic Games by leasing Network One. Independent News, N.Z. News and

Hauraki formed 'Alternative Television Network Ltd in 1980 with the aim of taking over the second channel. Wilson and Horton have formed Northern Television and built a \$5 million studio complex in Auckland. The broadcasting monopoly in radio is also being challenged through private radio stations' attempt to introduce F.M. transmission. At the time of writing the B.C.N.Z. has been successful in containing, but not resolving, these challenges.

With the contemporary economic and political instability State broadcasting also seems to be increasingly in crisis. The Broadcasting Corporation is currently experiencing "a cash flow problem of crisis proportions" (reported in Media Times, April 1981, p3) and has drastically cut back local productions, increased programme sponsorship, etc to counter this. To preserve its monopoly the Corporation turned down all private tenders to lease T.V.2 time in 1981, leaving future developments to the responsibility of State legislation. The National government, continuing to refuse any rise in the licence fee, and is increasingly advocating support for a private television presence. At the time of writing an amendment to the Broadcasting Act has been introduced to Parliament and is before a Select Committee. The amendment moves towards satisfying the interests of private capital by removing the Listener's copyright to publish the week's programmes in advance (an issue complicated by controversy over the place of media editorialising within State broadcasting). Most importantly, it significantly increases the power of the Minister of Broadcasting to give directions to the B.C.N.Z. (with phrases such as "to have regard to the general policy of the government").

The nature and the extent of the changes to come in television in these conditions of instability is as yet unclear, though lines of possible development have been established and will be considered in the following concluding section. It may be that the State structure and its interventions are entering a period of major transformation, necessitating once more direct control of the ideological means of reproduction by the reforming or reacting party in power.

5.6 - CONCLUSION

The explanatory adequacy of the theory of political economy for the history of broadcasting has now been established. That the development of New Zealand broadcasting accorded so directly and powerfully with the work of Martin (1981) is a clear index of this. The typical failure by many media commentators to consider the structure of political-economic determinations and the complete history of broadcasting (by focusing solely on television) has led to a consistent misinterpretation and exaggeration of the importance of the changes in the administration of television under the third Labour government (e.g. see Cleveland, 1975; Wood, 1975). The more (historically and conjuncturally) totalising approach used above has overcome these inadequacies. Some brief conclusions illustrate this and indicate further work to be done.

We have established the development of television within the control of broadcasting by a strongly interventionist, democratic State that maintained and was determined by a capitalist formation

based primarily on small rural and urban property. Broadcasting was developed as State monopoly capitalism, serving therefore "the general consumer" who is the correlate to the State's political representation of "the general citizen". Thus, for example, capital is deployed "democratically", in keeping with the State's other interventions (such as welfare), so that even users in such commercially unviable areas as Fiordland receive television. The State's legitimacy in preserving its monopoly of television, to the exclusion of the interests of specific members of the bourgeoisie, has rested on this claim to represent the national consumer, which the entrepreneurial capitalist, motivated solely by profits, could not. Thus it is argued that if the bourgeoisie controlled the service it would reach only those regional enclaves where a profit could be made (see Sutch, 1959). However, now that the capital required for establishing a national network has been accumulated, and the economics of television's operation become increasingly identical to that of newspapers, the mass media bourgeoisie's challenge to the legitimacy of this monopoly has intensified and their claims have been listened to.

The logic of these modern developments lies clearly in the historical (political and economic) determination of the medium. The relative autonomy of the State from classes, indexed by the former's successful (though continually contested and changing) exclusion of the latter from broadcasting, rests on the specific nature of New Zealand capitalism and the State's claim to democratically represent the "general interest". The emergence of conflict based on class interests, such as that created by the

media bourgeoisie, severely threatens the legitimacy of this claim. Thus, as has been demonstrated, typically New Zealand State intervention has taken the form of regulation at a distance from the economy. In the early 1900s the State similarly regulated private broadcasting capital. With the subsequent establishment of broadcasting as State monopoly capitalism, a type of intervention at odds with the general pattern, a source of continuing contradiction was initiated. This contradiction implicates not just the State's relationship to private capital but also took the form of conflict between the emergent media professionalism and effective party control of broadcasting. This also threatens the ideological representation of the State's interventions as non-partisan. The creation of interests specific to broadcasting, the relative autonomy of the medium per se (both in terms of maintaining its market monopoly and realising its professional practices), has posed continuing legitimacy problems for a highly democratic State claiming to represent the "general will of society". The above complex of conflict exemplifies the argument made by Wright (1979, p22) that under capitalism there is "a systematic tendency for the contradictions between classes (class struggle) to generate contradictions between social structures (non-reproductive relations of determination)." These contradictions have now developed to a critical level. This is part of the general instability of a State form structured by and maintaining small capital in a period of economic crisis and the emerging power of a monopolistic bourgeoisie. The continuation of the social formation as a whole depends on the resolution of this antagonism between social structures so as to avoid the

politicisation of class struggle which could challenge the structuring relations themselves.

Three lines of possible development in broadcasting have appeared in response to this situation. They are -

(1) The continued functioning of the B.C.N.Z. but with the introduction of private capital involvement. This possibility has a clear precedent in the history of radio in the 1960s and '70s. The National government, increasingly at odds with critical journalism, has frequently argued the need for private broadcasting to ensure "the free market of ideas". This would allow its policies to be offered equally with those of the other parties, to be considered directly by "the people" in terms of their own merit rather than mediated through the practices of journalists, and to therefore "naturally" prevail. The assumption, however, that capitalism would somehow transform the practices of broadcasters has been demonstrated above as unsound. The present practices of media professionals emerged within a system that was already structured capitalistically, and are therefore unlikely to change much in the "real" market. Certainly this proved to be the case, for example, with the establishment of I.T.V. in England. Thus the realisation of this possibility would go some way to satisfying the bourgeois challenge but fundamental contradictions would remain. A new dimension entailed here is the class struggle between State broadcasters and the emerging private owners. At the time of writing the P.S.A. is in conflict with Northern Television Ltd over precisely this issue.

(2) The development of a more formally autonomous Corporation

modelled directly on the B.B.C. and dependent on the established media professionalism. This would provide a secure formal resolution of the contradiction between the practices of journalists and the dominance of broadcasting by the party in power. The 1981 Labour Party's election manifesto promised to do exactly this by (a) establishing a B.B.C.-style "charter" and (b) taking the power to fix licence fees away from government and giving it to the Broadcasting Tribunal. The election failure of Labour makes this possibility seem unlikely in the near future.

(3)The return to more direct Ministerial control and State Department status. If the State structure is approaching significant transformation this is a strong possibility (c.f. the 1935 Labour government). The recently introduced amendment to the Broadcasting Act, discussed in section 5.5 suggests this to some degree.

Whichever of these possibilities is realised will depend on the general outcome of changes in the structure of determinations and the result cannot be accurately predicted. All possibilities point to a restabilisation of capitalism rather than the transformation of the social formation completely. Whatever happens it is clear that the practices of professional journalists are now a prominent factor and the likely site of increasing conflict. It is to a consideration of the development and present status of these practices that we must now turn.

FOOTNOTES

[1] In 1880 some 7.5 million acres of freehold land were

controlled by only 250 men (see Shirley, 1982, p243).

- [2] Especially since the commercial prospects of radio were as yet unclear. Marconi had thought radio's broadcasting capability a decided disadvantage, since it denied privacy. The profits to be made became clear in the 1900s and it was then that capitalists' "interests" were attracted.

PART THREE - THE RELATIVE AUTONOMY OF BROADCASTING

"A historico-social moment is never homogenous; it is, on the contrary, rich in contradictions. It acquires a distinctive character, it is a moment of unfolding due to the fact that a certain activity of life predominates there over others; it represents a historical `point`: but this presupposes a hierarchy, a contrast, a struggle"

- Gramsci

CHAPTER SIX - THE SPECIFICITY OF BROADCASTING6.1 - INTRODUCTION

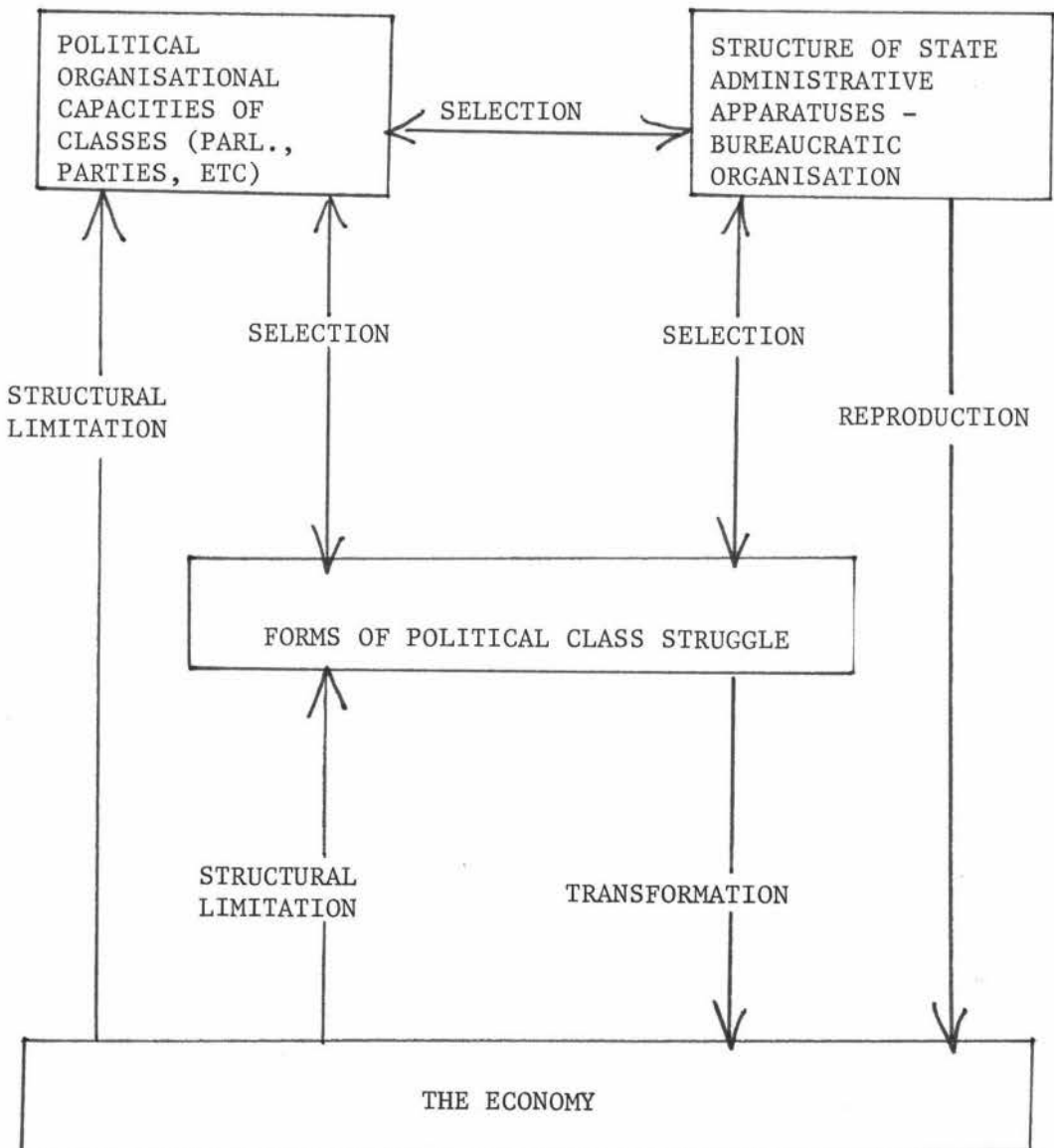
In part two the general history of broadcasting was elaborated. The consideration of television's determination by the articulation of State, class and economic structures indicated the emergence of a specific sphere of activity within the State - that of professional media journalists. The purpose of part three is to theoretically and empirically comprehend this specificity. This will be done in the following manner.

In this chapter the distinctive "zone" of practice will be fixed with regard to the general structure of relationships analysed in chapter five. Broadcasting in New Zealand will be outlined as both bureaucratic and also as having an intrinsic class basis and differentiation. This provides the foundation for the subsequent theorisation of media practice as both ideological and relatively autonomous, which will be demonstrated with a brief historical consideration of election coverage. This work situates the detailed study of a particular conjuncture in chapter seven - the production of two television programmes during the 1981 general election campaign. Analysis of this conjuncture is the subject of the remainder of this thesis.

6.2 - BUREAUCRATIC ORGANISATION

The relationship between the bureaucratic mode of organisation

and capitalism has been explored by Wright in his important essay "Bureaucracy and the State" (1979, pp181-225). As the history of New Zealand broadcasting implicates both the subjects in this title, the essay is particularly relevant to the present discussion. Wright has attempted to establish the systematic connections between the socio-economic and political determinants of bureaucratic structure. A simplified version of the model of relationships he proposes (see 1979, p223) can be presented diagrammatically thus -



The four processes of structural determination (limitation, selection, reproduction and transformation) formed the theoretical and empirical framework of part two and the reader is assumed to be familiar with their operation (the relationships are detailed in abstract terms in chapter 4.6). This model can be used to focus chapter five's analysis upon the specifically bureaucratic administration of television. This takes the form of both the determination by and the function within New Zealand capitalism.

Firstly, the forms of political class struggle and the capability of classes for political organisation are limited by the socio-economic structure. In New Zealand the small, regionally dispersed nature of capital made for the generally low organisational capacities of classes both economically and politically. Politics developed a class-based party dimension in the crisis of the late 1800s. The political mediation of these class relations and conditions of capital accumulation determined a highly interventionist State, culminating in the modern "welfare" form initiated by the 1935 Labour government. The State was democratic, with ruling parties relying on popular support generally from the working class and small rural and urban property. The need for systematic and extensive interventions, relatively autonomous from and so capable of organising both capitalists and workers to stabilise capitalism as a whole, conditioned the emergence of a large, highly centralised bureaucratic administrative apparatus. The separation of Parliamentary legislative activity from administration per se is one of the aspects of this achieved relative autonomy. Under the

conditions of economic stability until the late 1970s the nature of this established intervention and its fixed bureaucratic mode was never significantly challenged. Only its extent was questioned (whether to increase expenditure or hold it static) under the influence of the varying results of the (contained) political class struggle as reflected in the constitution of the alternately conservative and social democratic Parliaments.

Secondly, political class struggle transforms the socio-economic structure and mediates both the organisational capacities of classes and the State structure. Historically, the continuing small and dependent nature of New Zealand capital has confirmed the State's exclusion of the specific interests of either working or capitalist classes from broadcasting. The modern emergence of a monopolistic mass media bourgeoisie has altered the balance of previous class relations. The success of the class fraction's political struggle is evident in its increasing prominence and involvement in television. This is interesting not in terms of the effect on the organisation of television per se (private television would remain bureaucratic) but because it indicates the class basis of recent conflict. This point will be taken up in section 6.3.

The above determining processes have fixed the bureaucratic nature of New Zealand broadcasting within the State's overall interventions and with a problematic to Parliament. The basic bureaucratic structure of broadcasting has been continuous, as was demonstrated in chapter five. In its antecedent and present

legislated forms the B.C.N.Z. has worked via the appointment of officials to specified spheres of competence (rather than either election, owner operation or mass participation). Officials act administratively and not legislatively within this defined zone. It thus would be quite possible to exhaustively outline the working of this institution as the realisation of "bureaucratic rationality", following Weber. Such a presentation, however, would also be uninteresting. It would provide accurate abstract description but could not (a) explain the determination of broadcasting as bureaucratic (other than as the manifestation of a particular "rationality"), (b) explain the function of this mode within the social formation (other than in terms of "efficiency", etc), or (c) account for and elaborate the specificity of broadcasting and its practices (bureaucratic rationality is realised homogeneously in diverse sites). Historical changes in New Zealand television have been primarily concerned not with the bureaucracy itself (this has remained outside democratic politics) but with the overall relationships between classes, Parliamentary and broadcasting institutions. The basis of this continuity is not some universally applicable "rationality" but the material character of a specific social formation. These determinate relations involve not only those outlined above but also those of "function" or "reproduction".

The reproduction of the social formation as a whole as capitalist is the primary function of the State apparatuses (see chapter 4.6). This function has a number of dimensions. Firstly, the State's general interventions reproduce the class relations of

the economic structure. In New Zealand this has taken the form of a highly interventionist welfare State organising and maintaining small capital. In this sense bureaucracy acts as an "instrument", a means of realising this intervention (via the State Department administrations). It is part of the necessary centralisation of the State due to the constraints of class struggle under capitalism. There are, however, further functions that have to do specifically with the bureaucratic organisation of the political and ideological apparatuses. As both Lenin and Poulantzas have argued (see Wright, 1979, pp95ff, 198ff), bureaucratic structures maintain capitalism by preventing the working class from acquiring State power and exercising ideological hegemony. Bureaucratic organisation makes mass participation impossible and so impedes the realisation of specific class interests. This includes the interests of the working class (which challenge the capitalist nature of the social formation) and often also those of fractions of the bourgeoisie (which may challenge the particular form of contemporary capitalism stabilised by the State). In New Zealand television, for example, the exclusion of private capital has been an operation of central importance and conflict. Poulantzas (e.g. 1973, pp355ff; 1978, p140) thus argues that bureaucratic structures are a crucial aspect of the relative autonomy of the State and its ability to organise capitalism and disorganise the working class. He describes this process as

"the intricate decision-making structure of relatively autonomous bureaucracies, each of which has its specific field of competence, its own clientele and perception of problems. The resulting political elaboration ... takes the form of multi-level bargaining among administrative pressure groups and representatives of diverse

interests" (1978, p194).

Bureaucratic modes are part of the "space" which defines the State's relative autonomy. Such "space" constitutes the specificity of the broadcasting practices executed by the B.C.N.Z.. This conception raises a number of important points about the nature of ideology. For example, ideology cannot be the simple domination of one class by another but is the complex and contradictory creation of consent. It also fixes the specificity of media practices and the need to study them in situ. These points will be taken up in detail in section 6.4. The autonomy of media practices, it must be emphasised, is always relative. This has already been demonstrated via the determinations of bureaucracies within and along with the State structure. Another important aspect of this "relativity" is the rejection of the notion that class struggles are in some way "solved" by a non-class, bureaucratic elite. State bureaucracies must be elaborated in class terms, their differentiations and conflicts ascertained. Such work is not central to this thesis, but as an important basis for the media's relative autonomy it will be covered briefly.

6.3 - CONTRADICTORY CLASS LOCATIONS

An important aspect of the structuralists' work, as argued in chapter four (see footnote twelve), has been the analysis of "the new middle class". Poulantzas (1975) has placed this class in terms of the development of the modern State and the historical

transformation from competitive to monopoly capitalism. In the latter, unlike the former, economic ownership (the ability to assign the means of production and to dispense resources and profits), legal ownership and possession (the control of a certain labour process) are all dissociated from each other. It is in respect of these developments that Poulantzas argues that with State bureaucrats

"we are not confronted here with 'social groups' external to, alongside or above classes. These fractions are class fractions ... Even social categories have a class membership, their agents generally belonging to several different social classes" (1975, pp23-24).

The many criticisms of Poulantzas' work (e.g. see Wright, 1979, p44) are not our concern here. Such problems can be circumvented by reference to the inflection of his analysis through Wright's notion of "contradictory class locations" (ibid, pp61-97).

Wright has attempted to resolve the problem for Marxist theory of those ambiguous class positions in respect of the working class, the bourgeoisie and the traditional petty bourgeoisie. He argues that these positions are "objectively contradictory locations within class relations" (ibid, p61) and cannot either be effectively transformed into the bourgeoisie/proletariat relation, nor conceived as autonomous or outside this constitutive class antagonism of capitalism. These "contradictory class locations can be understood only with reference to the basic polarised class relations of the capitalist mode of production, and yet they cannot be reduced to those polarised class positions" (ibid, p74) [1]. Wright identifies three such locations within the social division of labour. As will be argued below, our interest in the B.C.N.Z.

bureaucracy makes the positions of managers and semi-autonomous employees particularly relevant.

Wright's classification argues that different positions in the bureaucratic structures of the "ideological state apparatuses" have different relationships to the fundamental bourgeois and proletarian class interests. The resulting complex of class alignments, differentiations and specificities can be established only in terms of "the social relations of control over the apparatuses of ideological production per se, [and] not simply the participation in the production of ideology" (ibid, p96). From this one concludes that broadcasters within the B.C.N.Z. (a) occupy in the main contradictory class positions, and (b) do not constitute a single class but are significantly differentiated.

These differentiations can be set out schematically thus (see Wright, 1979, pp94-96) -

(1) bourgeois positions: involving effective control over the creation and execution of State policies (e.g. top bureaucrats in the State);

(2) contradictory locations: involving the execution of State policy and dissemination of ideology. Two such locations are of interest. Firstly, top managers constitute a contradictory location between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, closest to the boundary with the former. This position is characterised by limited participation in economic ownership, but differs only slightly from the bourgeoisie in terms of possession. Wright argues that "at the very top of the managerial hierarchy, corporate

executives essentially merge with the capitalist class itself" (ibid, p78; c.f. Poulantzas, 1975, p180). The highest bureaucratic posts in the B.C.N.Z. are clearly either directly bourgeois or these top managerial positions. The head of the B.C.N.Z. has considerable autonomy - the Chairman, for example, initiated the unification of the two television channels and exercises a great deal of internal control. The second position of interest is constituted of semi-autonomous employees, a contradictory location between the petty bourgeoisie and the proletariat [2]. This location has some control over what is produced (minimal economic ownership) as well as how it is produced (minimal possession). This degree of control over the immediate labour process is identified by Wright (ibid, p81) with "residual islands of petty bourgeois relations of production within the capitalist mode of production itself". Such "craft" occupations frequently emerged in the period of simple commodity exchange and have been incorporated within modern capitalism, but not completely proletarianised. Within the B.C.N.Z. this category includes the numerous occupations involved directly with production decisions. The situation of such occupations within a petty bourgeois history demonstrates the essential continuity between the various organisations of New Zealand broadcasting as capitalist (e.g. early private radio c.f. the present State monopoly). Their incomplete proletarianisation is in fact a central structural component of broadcasting's relative autonomy, as will be argued subsequently;

(3) proletarian positions: involving complete exclusion from control of either the creation or execution of State policies and

ideology. Secretarial staff, studio set workers, etc are instances of this location within the B.C.N.Z..

Two things must be emphasised. Firstly, the above allocation of specific occupations within the B.C.N.Z. to certain class locations cannot be based on some abstract concern for typological symmetry or common sense, but must derive from the detailed empirical consideration of concrete practices. This can be demonstrated by reference to studio camera operators. This occupation could be denoted proletarian since camera operators either shoot "what is there" (the naturalistic illusion) or "what they are told" (the instrumentalist illusion). Observation in the control room, however, reveals a more complex situation. Camera operators in the studio select from an array of possible shots and angles, including those outside those that may have been previously scripted. These "offers" appear to the director in the control room on the multiple screens. The director then selects the single shot to be recorded, and may in fact deviate from the script. Specific shots are often explicitly "negotiated" through the "cans". Such observation situates both directors and camera operators as different hierarchical positions within the semi-autonomous employee category. The second important point is that these contradictory locations are not static typologies but dynamic relations with a basis in class struggle. This can be evidenced briefly by reference to a contemporary conjuncture.

The many years of steady growth in broadcasting until the 1970s, as with the expanding economy in general, repressed the

overt expression of class-based conflict. This has significantly changed since the late 1970s, indexed by the increasingly frequent withdrawal of labour and disruption of scheduled programme transmission. The structuring of the B.C.N.Z. as a capitalist organisation and the present need to "rationalise" costs in a period of economic crisis have led to certain decisions that have increased conflict, since they are based on satisfying certain class interests and denying others (increasing advertising, cutting back production, reducing labour, banning overtime, increasing mechanisation, etc). Cross has recently claimed (reported in Insight 1 (6), p40; 1981) that the present Board has "injected into public broadcasting a much harder headed business appreciation, with a stricter budget, cost-control system, and we've chased the advertising dollar harder than we ever have before". Fear of loss of jobs from the amalgamation of T.V.1 and T.V.2 led to a full-scale blackout in 1976. Such struggles have both an internal and an external dialectic.

Internal struggles generally take the classic petty bourgeois form of disputes between various "craft" groups. A longstanding dispute has been sound operators and the top B.C.N.Z. bureaucrats over salaries and promotion prospects. Recently a dozen such craft groups refused what they considered an inadequate upgrading of their position vis-a-vis producers and directors (who had received a large pay increase). This led to a week-long campaign of rolling strikes. The introduction of technology is also mediated by class interests. This is evident, for example, with the new E. N. G. cameras. These cameras increase efficiency and reduce

labour input by relacing the cine film crews (camera and sound operators) with a single hand-held video camera and back-pack. This allows the feeding of pictures direct to the studio control room, replacing the former time consuming stages of film developing, processing and frame by frame editing. Industrial conflict surrounding this technology has taken two forms. Firstly, it took the form of disputes between the B.C.N.Z. top bureaucrats and the labour so eradicated from the production process. Secondly, there has been conflict between craft groups over who will operate the new gear (should it be the film staff replaced by these cameras or the studio camera operators, since the new equipment is a more portable form of the same process they have traditionally worked with?). From the above we can see that class struggle in the B.C.N.Z. takes place both across class boundaries (between top bureaucrats and semi-autonomous employees) and within single classes (between various craft class fractions, owing to the petty bourgeois nature of the semi-autonomous employee category). The pervasiveness of inter-class contradictions has been indicated recently with the challenge of private enterprise to the State monopoly of television.

The working class continues to be (to varying degrees) contained within the State's stabilisation of capitalism. The challenge to the State's dispensation of television comes not from this class but a new monopolistic mass media bourgeoisie. This is not surprising since it is in a sense continuous with the State's administration of television as a capitalist enterprise. The emerging class struggle takes place between the new bourgeois

presence and specific classes within T.V.N.Z. and it indicates the precise class alignments of the various contradictory class locations.

Private capital has always had a limited involvement in the production of public television, primarily through the manufacture of advertisements. Due to the B.C.N.Z.'s recent economic crisis this involvement has been minimally extended sponsorship and the production of specific programmes by private companies (e.g. Kevan Moore and Associates Ltd), dependent on the use of T.V.N.Z.'s studio facilities. These companies (few in number) are usually constituted of ex-T.V.N.Z. staff, and their use of existing facilities contains them within the B.C.N.Z. institution. In a sense this development merely underscores the persistent petty bourgeois nature of television production. The new interest by private enterprise is of a different order altogether. Firstly, it is composed of a previously excluded class fraction - the established monopolistic class of radio and newspaper capital. Secondly, Northern Television (the strongest and at present only successful contender) has provided its own studio complex. In this respect it supplants the existing T.V.N.Z. facility, but remains dependent on the B.C.N.Z.'s accumulated constant capital fixed in the national network. The conflict of class interests this conjuncture entails has recently become clear.

The new media bourgeoisie depend on the ability of the B.C.N.Z.'s top bureaucrats to allocate the network resources for their use and to direct the labour required for transmission.

There is in fact a compatibility of interests between these two class positions. The B.C.N.Z. needs to "rationalise" production, in particular by reducing costs through lessening labour inputs. Therefore the Director General of T.V.N.Z. has come out in favour of Northern Television's "package deal" leasing of (otherwise unprofitable) time from the Corporation. Thus there has been conflict between Northern Television/top B.C.N.Z. bureaucrats and the interests of the (new petty bourgeois) labour threatened by this development (represented by the P.S.A.). The P.S.A. imposed a ban on telecasting Northern Television's package to protect the jobs of its members, and insisted on assurances that jobs would not be lost.

The above illustrations demonstrate the complex mediation of class struggles within, external to and between State bureaucracies and classes outside the State. As with the bureaucratic mode of organisation considered in section 6.2, this is an aspect of both the specificity and the determination of broadcasting. That is, it is an aspect of its relative autonomy. It is for this reason alone that the class aspects of the B.C.N.Z.'s functioning have been elaborated here. Certain compelling problems that arise from this analysis (is there such a thing as a "State bourgeoisie", can the State apparatuses produce surplus value? etc) are not to be dealt with here. The explanation of broadcasting practices (and of ideological reproduction) cannot be collapsed into the practices of specific classes. This observation is consistent with the structuralist argument that the State cannot be reduced to the activity of particular classes (e.g. those outside its boundaries,

the economically successful bourgeoisie) or to class-less elites within it. Thus although the remainder of this thesis deals with a specific ideological production by a certain class fraction (semi-autonomous employees), explanation is not in terms of the specific activities of this class location or the intentions of its agents. This ideological practice may be carried out primarily by a specific class fraction, but it is determined by the class relations condensed within the relatively autonomous State. This is the logic of Althusser's (1971) contention that even when not immediately part of the State the media remain "ideological State apparatuses". This is evidenced by the ease with which ideological reproduction can be accomplished either within public service or private enterprise broadcasting, without any substantial change to the nature of its practices. Thus Beatson, a T.V.N.Z. journalist, interprets the advent of private enterprise television only in the following terms -

"in the event of private enterprise television, public service broadcasting is going to have to look at its conditions of employment, because people will have new options. They can either carve out a public service career, or meet the demands and risks of the private enterprise market place. Public service broadcasting ... will have to commit itself to appropriate financial reward for people who are prepared to take high-profile risk. Because people with ability won't have to move two hours away across the Tasman - they'll be able to move across the road" [3].

The unproblematic nature of this "move across the road" means that we must now consider the specific nature of ideology.

6.4 - THE EFFECT OF IDEOLOGY

Locating the zone of media practice does not comprehend its

exact nature or "effect". We must consider not only the determination of this practice by the general structural relations of New Zealand society, but also the precise ways it acts back upon, or intervenes in, this social formation ("overdetermination"). This project is a continuation of that initiated in part two, where the State was analysed in terms of the political and economic reproduction of the economic structure of relations. In chapter five broadcasting was elaborated in a complexly mediated but ultimately unilateral fashion as a determinate part of this State. What remains to be accomplished is to complete the "circuit" by considering broadcasting in terms of its particular interventions. The B.C.N.Z. is constituted of a corpus of practices organised within and in terms of the New Zealand State, effecting the ideological reproduction of that State form. Two related observations must be made. Firstly, broadcasting practices are complex activities with many social dimensions. We will concentrate on what is to be argued as the most important, their ideological effects. Secondly, the above assertions are empirical, not established by theoretical fiat. Nevertheless, there is clearly theoretical work to be done, and this is the task of this section. Liberal democrat theories of broadcasting are of no immediate use, they are invariably cast at a low level of theorisation (c.f. Blumler's (1978, p3) disparagement of "grand theory"). Here the connection between the media and society is always posed in terms of a more or less successfully sustained formal autonomy, with an essentially undetermined enclave between the static conceptions of "government" and "electorate". Nevertheless, though lacking a theory of ideology, liberal

democrats' work is useful at a different level. This will be explored subsequently. It is primarily within and in terms of modern Marxism that the theory of ideology has been and is being developed. Yet there is undoubtedly no area more marked by instability and flux than contemporary Marxist theory of ideology.

It is not necessary to rehearse the entire history of Marxist polemic on the status of "superstructures". This is as of little immediate value as the attempt to locate a single, unified approach in Marx's own works. My concern to remain within the relative autonomy problematic allows a focus upon that recent work which may be more or less adequately labelled "post-Althusserian". This work is constituted of three varied rejections of Althusser's (and Poulantzas') theorisation of ideology. The first two responses - reductionist and autonomist - are based on the complete denial of relative autonomy. The brief presentation of these denials will be followed by a more detailed consideration of Althusser's 1971 essay and its inadequacies. This leads to the reformulation of relative autonomy theory at present underway in England. It is this latter "work in progress" that is sufficient to the task at hand [4].

The reductionist account of ideology is essentially a return to the familiar "base/superstructure" metaphor that dominated Marxist work before Althusser. It is a return of that old enemy of relative autonomy theorists, economism. As Poulantzas (quoted Wright, 1979, p51) writes - "I think that one of our most serious political-theoretical adversaries is economism, which always pretends, as soon as we try (with all the theoretical difficulties

we encounter here) to stress the importance of the political-ideological, that we abandon the primacy of economics". This economism entails a rigid and unilateral correspondence theory which denies both politics and ideology any specificity and reduces them to economically defined class relations, in particular to the demands of capital accumulation. The logic of a capitalist economy is held to demand certain political and ideological "superstructures", which thus have no significant autonomy. For the most part the recent work of these "fundamentalists" or "capital logicians" has concentrated on the State (see Martin, 1981, pp23ff), whose particular form is derived from the laws of motion governing capital (e.g. see Altvater, 1973; Aumeeruddy et al, 1978; Yaffe, 1973) [5]. It is scarcely surprising that not much work has been done on ideology, having reduced it to such epiphenomenal status and emptied it of any particular effectivity. Yaffe (1975) is typical of this position. Ideology is conceptualised as a set of "false ideas" (i.e. that mask the true nature of real capitalist social relations), explained in terms of correspondences. These correspondences are either argued sociologically as the viewpoints determined by particular class positions or in terms of the "fetishism" that necessarily arises from commodity production (ibid, pp2-5). Capitalist crises remain essentially determined by the declining rate of profit (ibid, p14). The denial of the complex social totality of any significant autonomy from economic relations reproduces the faults of that other form of reductionism criticised in chapter 4.5, instrumentalism. It is not necessary to reiterate those criticisms here, save to repeat that it is fundamentally a failure to

integrate class struggle into analysis and thus to be adequate to the historical dynamic [6].

Autonomist theory accepts the Althusserian division of the social formation into economic, political and ideological instances. It rejects, however, the notion the the social complex is a unity, as proposed by Althusser with the concepts "structured in dominance" and determination "in the last instance" by the economy. Relative autonomy is rejected as a theoretical impossibility, and the choice is said to lie between either the economistic reduction of "superstructures" or their complete autonomy (e.g. see Hirst, 1976). Following Althusser the reductionist account has been decisively discredited, so that the correct argument must be that the three social practices are completely separate "discourses" (see Hirst, 1979, p18). There is a necessary non-correspondence between these practices; the social formation is disjointed, not unified. Radical changes in any one of the political, ideological or economic levels have no necessary effect on the others (see Cutler et al, 1977). Thus ideology cannot be studied as the false reference to external "objects", the only "things" that any discourse refers to are constitutes within it (see Hirst, 1979, p38). Ideology does not "(mis)represent" anything, but is a practice to be analysed in its own terms. It is the practice of signification, whose internal "economy" creates the signifieds (see Hirst, 1976, p411). Three points must be noted of this autonomist position. Firstly, Hirst's arguments have redirected analysis away from questions of epistemology to the consideration of ideological consequences (ibid). This is an

important advance and will be returned to below. Secondly, the autonomist theory is obviously preoccupied with the immanent analysis of ideological signification and texts. Thus we must return to consider this position in part four. Finally, since it rigorously denies any determinate connections between ideology and political economy (rejecting even the latter as an impossibility), autonomist theory can be of no immediate use here.

It is vital to critically reconsider Althusser's work on ideology, in order to assess the necessity of the above rejections of relative autonomy. In terms of his general theory, the decisive theoretical advance made by Althusser is his insistence on the materiality of ideology, rather than seeing it as an ideal rendering of economic reality (e.g. 1971, p153). This is part of the structuralist approach to social formations as three "structured in dominance" instances. Each political, ideological and economic "level" is respectively constituted by a definite mode of production in which labour transforms certain raw materials into a determinate product (e.g. see Althusser, 1969, pp166ff). Thus ideology is conceptualised as a specific set of material practices. These practices and the nature of their product are outlined in the essay "Ideology and the Ideological State Apparatuses" (1971, pp121-173). The argument presented there may be summarised in the following fashion.

(1) Every social formation must reproduce its mode of production. Under capitalism this primarily ensures the continuation of a sturdy and compliant work force for the production of surplus

value. The task of reproduction is accomplished by the political and ideological "superstructures" (ibid, pp124, 131; c.f. chapter 4.6 above).

(2) The material practices of ideological reproduction are part of the State. In particular, they are embodied in the Ideological State Apparatuses (I.S.A.s; ibid, p158). Unlike the Repressive State Apparatuses, which function by violence and repression, the I.S.A.s (e.g. the media, educational and religious institutions, etc) "function massively and predominantly by ideology" (ibid, p141).

(3) The I.S.A.s are various but unified. Their unity "is secured, usually in contradictory forms, by the ruling ideology, the ideology of the ruling class" (ibid, p142).

(4) Ideology is not the simple expression of a particular class' "world view". As a material practice it is (like economics and politics) a site of class conflict. It "is capable of providing an objective field to contradictions which express, in forms which may be limited or extreme, the effects of the clashes between the capitalist class struggle and the proletarian class struggle ..." (ibid, pp141-142).

(5) Ideology reproduces capitalism by mystifying people's experience of the world. It "represents the imaginary relationships of individuals to their real conditions of experience" (ibid, p153). This is the precise nature of its

function.

(6) The I.S.A.s accomplish this function through the constitution of individuals as subjects - "all ideology hails or interpellates concrete individuals as concrete subjects, by the functioning of the category of the subject" (ibid, p162). This accomplishes the task of reproduction since "there are no subjects except by and for their subjection" (ibid, p163). As Callinicos (1976, p66), somewhat voluntaristically, puts it, "by placing the individual in a structure which enables him [sic] [7] to recognise himself in the world, to see it as a world in a sense created for him, an assurance is offered that if he conforms with what is required of him by society, all will be well for him."

(7) Those "bad subjects" who do not "work by themselves", a small minority, are dealt with by the Repressive State Apparatus (1971, p169).

Althusser's postscript to the 1971 essay criticises his own "abstraction" (ibid, p171), due principally to the failure to adequately theorise the role of class struggle. As Hirst (1976, pp39ff) points out, this postscript does not alter but only serves to highlight the inherent and unresolved functionalism of Althusser's approach, in which the I.S.A.s more or less unproblematically perpetuate the dominant relations of production. The unity of these apparatuses is established external to their operation, they are agencies for expressing the ideological unity and State power of the ruling class (c.f. proposition three

above). This ideological unity is in turn based upon the ultimately economically determined unity of that same dominant class. Althusser's claim to formulate ideology as a site of struggle (proposition four) is contradicted by the main thrust of his argument. Thus, Hirst (ibid, p396) concludes, "the theses of the 'relative autonomy of the superstructure' and 'reciprocal action of the base' complicate but do not alter economism." Althusser has failed to decisively rid his theory of reductionist, instrumentalist carry-overs. Hirst proceeds from this critique to "purify" the structuralist account with the completely autonomist argument presented above. This abrupt abandonment, however, is not at all necessary. It is quite possible to accept the weight of Hirst's criticisms and to reformulate the theory of relative autonomy to account for them.

This reformulation is to a degree based on the recent work of Abercrombie et al (1980), who argue that much of modern Marxism (including Gramsci, Habermas, Marcuse, Althusser and Poulantzas [8]) has been overly preoccupied with the rejection of economism. This rejection argues that contemporary capitalism reproduces itself through the efficient functioning of a unified dominant ideology (ibid, chapter one). The "dominant ideology thesis" claims that the ruling class "is able to supervise the construction of a set of coherent beliefs ... [which] penetrates and infects the consciousness of the working class, because the working class comes to see and experience reality through the conceptual categories of the dominant class" (ibid, pp1-2). Abercrombie et al argue in some detail that such a view is both empirically and

historically false and that it is theoretically unsound (on the basis of its formal identity with structural functionalist theories of a "common culture"). They replace the idea of a dominant ideology with a new version of economism, insisting that the basis of class domination is located in the economic dimension of the social relations of production and has nothing to do with the ideological incorporation of classes (ibid, p1). There is no unified ideology but a number of quite separate ideological "regions", whose functional relation to the economy is a contingent one which changes over time and in different modes of production (ibid, pp175ff). Thus

"the ideology-economy relation can only be conceptualised at the level of concrete societies and there is no such thing as a relation between ideology and economy at the level of the abstract mode of production ... There cannot be a general theory of ideology" (ibid, pp173, 185; emphasis added).

They argue that ideology is comparatively unimportant and over studied. Modern capitalism, indeed, is "very nearly" the type of economy that does not need ideology at all (ibid, p173).

It is the destructive value of Abercrombie et al's work that is our primary interest here. Their positive assertions tend to establish social unity in terms of a crude, economic coercion (c.f. ibid, p159). As Bottomore argues in the books "Introduction" (ibid, pX), the complete denial of ideological systematicity and effectivity is unnecessarily excessive. In a contradictory fashion they assert the need for articulated analyses of politics and economics but treat ideology as a separate, epiphenomenal enclave consisting of certain contingent "beliefs"

which may be legitimately approached in an empiricist fashion (similar to positivistic studies of "attitudes"). The great advantage of Abercrombie et al's work is the decisive and explicit rejection of the insistence on a complete and sealing ideological domination. This denial has always been part of the cultural studies project (see chapter three above) and has been attempted more or less unsystematically in the recent work of such writers as Bennett, Chambers, Connell, Hall and Mulhern. The attempt has been given a systematic basis within relative autonomy theory by Urry (1981) [9].

Attention has been drawn to the importance of Urry's work in New Zealand by Nash (1981). Urry argues against Althusser's division of the social formation into three homologous "levels", and in particular against the notion that ideology is a structure analagous to the political and economic. While the State and the economy are unified, ideology is not because it is not embodied within a specific corpus of social practices [10]. Rather, ideology

"is, in a sense, everywhere and is not to be confined to a particular level or instance, it is not just confined to the family, schools, trade unions, etc ... Ideology is not to be seen as an instance or structure. There are many diverse social practices within contemporary capitalist societies and some of these exert important ideological effects" (Urry, 1981, pp3-4).

Urry dispenses with the notion of ideology per se and redirects analysis to a specific kind of "effect" consequent to various practices. A practice may be designated "ideological" if it produces such effects, but this designation does not exhaust or necessarily constitute the practice's specificity (ibid, p60) [11].

An ideological effect accomplishes two things. Firstly, it conceals the nature, causes and consequences of either the practice in which it is embodied or of other practices. Such concealment is evident "when the concepts embedded in that practice:

(1) do not permit explanation in terms of wider scale social and historical changes: there is an inappropriate isolation of practices;

(2) do not enable satisfactory specification of the practice in question; thus there may be a conflation of practices which should properly be differentiated;

(3) produces an eternalisation of practice, and a failure to see it as historically bounded and hence that it may be transcended;

(4) obscure the social relations which underlie existent relations between material objects, hence, where such objects are seen to have powers which stem not from the social but from their natural characteristics;

(5) obscure the interrelations between this practice and one or more other practices;

(6) hide the conflicts of interest between the differently located subjects within that practice" (ibid, p61).

To complete Urry's list one must add the following Althusserian proposition -

(7) individual subjectivities are constituted ("interpellated") by diverse social practices. This constitution is ideological when "embedded within certain interpellations are discursive structures which systematically prevent understanding of either their own or other practices" (Urry, 1981, op cit) [12].

Secondly, Urry argues that a particular practice is ideological

"when it is shown that this concealment is in the interests of one or more of the dominant social forces within that practice; for example, of capitalists, or of men, or of whites, or of Protestants, or of State bureaucrats" (ibid).

In place of a unitary notion of a dominant ideology, Urry argues for the substantive investigation of the ideological effects of those diverse practices that make up "civil society" [13]. He firmly rejects any tendency to functionalism - ideological effects are not to be taken as the explanation of either the origin or the persistence of the particular practice with which they are articulated (ibid, p7). A particular ideological effect may in fact have a negative functional consequence for society as a whole (ibid, p45). The precise impact of these effects cannot be established universally by theoretical fiat but must be ascertained in concrete studies.

Urry is excessive in his blanket rejection of functional effects. Functionalism seems to have replaced economism as the "enemy", yet the new extreme position is just as empirically and theoretically unsound as its opposite Althusserian pole. Urry's argument is based on the assertion that "much of what is conventionally viewed as ideology is properly to be conceptualised as civil society", whose practices are so diverse that the resulting ideological effects "exhibit no particular coherence or unity" (ibid, p44). Irrespective of the adequacy of this argument, there are certain practices outside "civil society" which do evidence

marked ideological functionality and coherence. One such obvious site is the State. As Urry (ibid, p64) himself argues,

"it is the State that attempts to establish and sustain hegemony, an articulated structure that conceals and deflects the contradictions inherent within civil society and inherent between the State and civil society. This does not mean, however, that hegemony entails cultural homogeneity, merely an articulation which effects concealment and deflection."

Thus within the State, and to varying degrees, certain social practices do present a systematic ideological effect whose function is the ideological reproduction of that State form. This is not a universal situation but is historically transformed by class struggle. Urry also argues for a second type of function, in which the ideological effect unifies not some external class, etc, but the particular practice that articulates it (ibid, p61). This amounts to no more than saying that all the ideological effects produced by political and economic practices (i.e. those outside civil society) are functional, to varying degrees. Thus the notion of reproduction does not break with Urry's formulation but extends it and so makes it more adequate to the entire social formation (rather than just civil society).

As has already been demonstrated, New Zealand broadcasting is organised in terms of the State, within its ambit of relative autonomy. The observation that the B.C.N.Z. is a "State apparatus" is an empirical one. It remains to consider the precise nature of these broadcasting practices and to assess their ideological effect in terms of the functions specified above. There has been work done on the media which provides a useful guide for such an assessment.

6.5 - THE PRACTICE OF BROADCASTING AND THE EXERCISE OF HEGEMONY

There have been many arguments made for the need to articulate structural determinations of the State with detailed empirical analyses of actual media work. Murdock and Golding (1974, p207), for example, insist that "it is not sufficient simply to assert that the mass media are part of the ideological apparatus of the State, it is also necessary to demonstrate how ideology is produced in concrete practice." Traditionally, the Left has tended to lack analyses within media institutions themselves. These have been "bracketted out" as unnecessary by the reductions of economism and instrumentalism, or held at bay by the equally abstract speculations of Althusser. The assumption of a single, functional ideology pervading the entire social formation reduces broadcasters to no more than relatively unproblematic ideological agents of their political and economic masters. Thus Hirst criticised Althusser for remaining ultimately within the instrumentalist problematic. For these reasons it is not surprising that it has proved impossible to arrive at an adequate socialist strategy in terms of the media.

Orthodox sociology has also been preoccupied with abstract studies. This has taken two forms. Firstly, there is the tradition of extrinsic studies of the media audience using more or less subtle versions of the behaviourist "stimulus-response model" to assess "effects", "uses" and "gratifications" [14]. Secondly, there were equally abstract immanent studies of media practice,

usually using the "gate-keeper model" [15], which as Chibnall (1975, p49) points out

"is essentially mechanistic in its conception of the process of news production as a system of cybernetic filters reducing the flow of information reaching the audience."

Early British studies of television and elections were confined to either one of these two traditions or to their coincidental presentation. The "use" of the political media was simply its provision of information (e.g. see Trenaman and McQuail, 1961; Blumler and McQuail, 1969). The purity of this information was guaranteed by the independence of broadcasters, ensuring that "the gates" were kept wide open through the operation of such notions as "balance" and "impartiality" (e.g. see Blumler's (1969) case study of the "24 Hours" 1966 election coverage). By accepting the liberal democrat framework of formal autonomy as sufficient, such studies could not articulate determinate connections, merely present a series of autonomous and parallel "coincidences".

The argument to be made here is that this autonomy is indeed real, but that it is also limited and contained within the relative autonomy of the State. Thus the qualitative work by liberal democrats on the day-to-day concrete practices of broadcasters is valuable and will be used. It is not "wrong" in any simple sense, but is based on an unacceptable abstraction of specific practices from their precise determinate location [16]. The relativity of broadcasting's autonomy must be established dialectically. In a sense there is a (albeit unbalanced) complementarity between the liberal democrat and Marxist approaches. As Tracey (1979, pp33-34) argues, it is as if

"they are actually talking about twin levels of the same overall process ...The media do indeed function as a fourth estate within the context of the rather narrow confines provided by the Parliamentary system, but not within the broader framework of the political, economic and moral order that underpins that Parliamentary system."

The problem, then, is to articulate these two modes of analysis, within the theory of relative autonomy [17]. Some valuable work has been done in this respect.

The Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies has worked consistently towards an analysis of television practices and images that allows for both their specificity and determination. From its initiation the Centre's Media Group was concerned to break with the dominant traditions of American quantitative audience surveys and liberal democrat notions of formal autonomy. Its argument against the representation of the media as "transparent" conveyors of messages created "somewhere else" constituted not only the above break, but also situated the Media Group's work within the relative autonomy problematic and against the instrumentalist conceptualisation of the media as "the voice of the ruling class". The resulting body of work on political communications emphasises both the ideological role and linguistic structuration of broadcasting practices and their products [18]. This was "supported and reinforced" (Hall, 1980, p119) by Barthes' semiotic methods of textual analysis. Media analysis was focused upon the production of meaning, the practice of signification. The main thrust of the Centre's argument can be represented through Hall's work, who is not only the major individual contributor to this field but also, as Director, has been responsible for many

summative statements on the various pieces of graduate-based research.

Hall has consistently rejected those arguments that connect media institutions to the State using either "conspiracy" or "freedom/pressure" models. The specific nature of media work is to be embedded in some satisfactory, non-functionalist reformulation of Althusser's theory of relative autonomy (see 1972, p8; 1974a, p21; 1976, p53; 1977a, p345). He begins (1973a) by distinguishing "discursive production", of which television is one instance, from other types of social production. The "products" of discursive practices are "meanings and messages in the form of sign-vehicles of a specific kind organised like any form of communication or language, through the operation of codes within the syntagmatic chain of a discourse" (ibid, p1) [19]. Broadcasting institutions transform historical events into their "message form", since (obviously) events cannot be transmitted *per se* but have to be taken up and signified within the aural and visual forms of the television discourse. Meaning does not occur "naturally" but is produced by symbolic activity (the practice of signification) and as such requires the mediation of aural and visual codes. The entrance of a historical moment into television discourse subjects it to the complex of signifying rules. The intelligibility of discourses is secured by the operation of such codes. Thus the analysis of television proper proceeds by elaborating the specificity and determination of its particular rules of signification.

The "labour process" through which messages are constructed or "encoded" (such as in the production of political television) has a determinate form [20]. It requires both material instruments ("means") and systematic social relations of production. This directs television analysis to both the technical aspects and the institutional structures of production. A particularly important level of determination is the body of conventional practices within media apparatuses, realised by professional broadcasters (Hall, 1975). These consist of a "working knowledge" of television, assumptions about the audience, day-to-day practices, professional ideologies and protocols, technical skills; for the most part informally codified as a set of routines regularly operationalised in the production of any one particular programme (see Hall, 1977a, p343). Hall (1975, p104) refers to these practices as "the immanent structure of television as a communicative praxis", and as such are a central component of the medium's relative autonomy. They are located within particular institutions, which in turn are located within definite political and economic structures that fix outer limits and determinations. These determinations "bear back upon the screen and the image itself" through the intervention and mediation of broadcasting's internal practices (ibid).

Analysis is thus required to ascertain precisely the determinate ways in which broadcasters' discursive codes and practices produce coherent meanings through their systematic "structuring" of the communication of events (Hall, 1973b). The methodological implication of this position is for the qualitative study of these professional routines either (ethnographically) in

situ or (semiotically) as they are inflected in the image itself. It points to the close analysis of particular "conjunctures" ("case studies"); the attempt to "think" the complex "structured in dominance" connections between broadcasters' signifying practices and political/economic structures in general as they are articulated and realised on a particular "site" of ideological work and struggle (see Chambers, 1980, p117; Connell, 1978, p133; 1979, p69). An obvious exemplar in this respect is Hall et al's (1976) essay, "The 'Unity' of Current Affairs Television", which is a conjunctural analysis of one "Panorama" election programme.

Hall argues that media discourses are important primarily within the realm of ideology, that they are "the site of an enormous ideological labour" (1977a, p341). Their "function" is the ideological reproduction of the social formation through the complex creating and shaping of consent. The media do not simply express a dominant ideology, they reproduce a hegemonic ideology in all its contradictions. They thus constitute a site on which class struggles are mediated through the diverse institutions of consensus (see Hall, 1972). The media's relative autonomy (from classes, from Parliament, etc) is an essential precondition for the successful realisation of this function (i.e. in liberal democracies, at least). In this way broadcasting institutions operate within and reproduce "the mode of reality of the State" (ibid, p1). These are empirical observations, and thus will be substantiated and elaborated in chapter seven. Nevertheless, some general comments on the form of this "enormous ideological labour" must be made.

Broadcasting practices accomplish encoding by selecting certain codes from among an array of possibilities which could have been used to assign meaning to events, by placing them within a determinate referential context (Hall, 1977a, p347). At a certain point broadcasting institutions relinquish their encoded productions via the transmission of meaningful discourse. Encoding does not, however, create an omnipotent text with one unitary meaning; there is always a plurality of possible "readings". The process of decoding is also an active one, with its own specific practices and determinations (i.e. relative autonomy). Readers exist outside texts and in history, which is itself a complex of many discourses. Thus, as Connell (1978, p132) puts it, reading is "interrogative" and unpredictable, "a certain text can be pulled into more or less any ideological space" [21]. Nevertheless, although there is a plurality of discourses in any one production, these discourses are themselves "structured in dominance". A certain meaning will be emphasised by the establishment of a preferred reading. Texts will contain restrictions and offer resistances to certain other readings. These preferred readings may reproduce the existing relations of the social formation through the production of ideological effects. Thus specific encoding and decoding may be designated ideological, following Urry (see section 6.4). As Hall et al (1976, p53) say, "this 'preferring' is the site of considerable ideological labour". One must consider in detail the practices of professional broadcasters to ascertain the degree and manner in which their preferred codes accomplish ideological work.

The media are pivotal "ideological apparatuses" due to their function in the creation of hegemony, through which class struggles are displaced by the organisation of consent (see Chambers, 1980; Hall, 1977a). In modern liberal democracies the State is the central site on which hegemony is created and exercised (see Urry, 1981, p164), television is a "State apparatus". Just as with relative autonomy, then, hegemony is an empirical configuration, and not the property of all periods in the history of a social formation (see Grealy, 1977, p7). It occurs within the shifting dynamic of class struggle. A brief and general historical consideration establishes the close links between the development of the New Zealand State and, within that, of broadcasting as a semi-autonomous institution. In this way the concrete, historical connection between relative autonomy and ideological hegemony is thrown up for further, more detailed analysis.

6.6 - THE RELATIVE AUTONOMY OF ELECTION BROADCASTING

Connell (1979, p69) suggests that one way of studying the economic and political determinations of broadcasting is to look at the institutionalisation of a definite set of signifying practices. In this sense the history of broadcasting is "the establishment, containment and routinisation of a certain field of representation" (ibid). Such a history indicates that television is both autonomous from and dependent on the State. This relative autonomy consists of the concrete, historical emergence of specificity in television's mode of operation. This can be demonstrated by considering explicitly political broadcasting, which involves

political parties and "current affairs" coverage of controversial issues [22]. The focus will therefore be upon general elections, ministerial broadcasts and the like.

Throughout the 1920s there was much Parliamentary debate on the political role of radio. The broadcast of information was unproblematic - in the 1922 elections local radio stations transmitted the results from their particular area (see MacKay, 1953, p20). Rather, it was, as Prime Minister Coates stated in 1928, "a question of whether it is wise to have any matter which is controversial put on the air" (quoted in Jackson, 1973, p183). The democratic broadcasting "opinion" conflicted with the rigid control exercised by the governing party's Postmaster General. The problem was the non-existence of a specific "position" within the State which could broadcast politics in accordance to the liberal democratic practices of representation that structured the State itself. This was "solved" for the moment by the complete prohibition of controversial broadcasts by the 1923 Act. The Act defined broadcasting as "the transmission of approved programmes", and the definition of "the public interest" remained the Minister's prerogative. In the 1928 elections an Opposition Labour M.P. requested in Parliament that each party be allowed to broadcast political speeches. The Prime Minister suggested that he and the Opposition leader speak on the radio for 15 minutes each without mentioning politics! This understandably did not prove sufficiently interesting to anyone and political broadcasting remained undeveloped (see MacKay, 1953, p115).

In 1931 a "position" which began to meet the above criteria was formally created with the legislation of the National Broadcasting Service and an Independent Broadcasting Board. Government appointment to the Board and the continuation of Ministerial control, however, meant that autonomy from the ruling party was formal rather than real, and consequently the ban on controversial material remained.

The crisis situation of the 1930s, the increasingly evident "social problems" and the need for change, severely tested this ban. Its strict enforcement temporarily bolstered a State structure experiencing enormous transformational pressures. It was from the small, regionalised "B" stations, outside the State, that contemporary political issues were addressed. These stations frequently aligned themselves with those progressive forces, coalescing around the Labour Party and thus became a site of much conflict. They often had their scripts rejected or were ordered off the air by the Broadcasting Board's inspectors. The Board had been made responsible for deciding on controversial transmissions in the 1935 Amendment, but the practice was still a negative one of exclusion rather than positive initiation. In the 1935 election the Board prohibited all candidates broadcasting from any radio station after June 30th. The possibility of party election broadcasts was discussed between various political representatives and the Board, but no agreement was reached. The Board pointed to its legislated obligation for balance and refused to accept the M.P.'s arguments that election broadcasts should be allotted according to party seats in Parliament, and so denied to the new

party which was contesting 50 seats but was as yet unrepresented. Although no broadcasts were made, the crucial point here is the partial transfer and effective use of the power of denying transmission from the Minister to the Board. This created the possibility of later positive interventions. Furthermore, it indicates the importance of the criterion of "balance" in establishing broadcasting's independence from how the contemporary Parliament is so that it can represent what it might become.

The "B" stations' election broadcasts frequently overstepped their licences, and even campaigned for Labour. This culminated in the jamming of Scrim's "Christian Road to Socialism" at Auckland's 1ZB, in which the Post Office's involvement was obvious but unsubstantiated (see Hall, 1980, pp78ff). The conflict surrounding these stations indicated that their positive and partisan interventions would not be a viable form for the broadcasting practice developing within the State, and they gradually disappeared following Labour's establishment of a State Department administration in 1936. When private radio resurfaced in 1966 its practices were primarily those formulated within the State, not those used by the "B" stations.

Formally speaking, the Board expanded and controlled the transmission of contentious material by ensuring that both sides of an issue were stated within the same programme (see Hall, 1980, p81). In real terms, however, the removal of the ban did not result in much change. As MacKay (1953, p120) comments, "with the exception of Parliamentary broadcasting, organised controversial

broadcasting simply did not eventuate". Direct radio coverage of Parliament was initiated by Savage in 1936. Although these broadcasts were certainly political, they did not involve a specifically broadcasting practice. Savage's expressed aim of relaying "the pure unadulterated truth" to the people (quoted Hall, 1980, p83) did not accord any distinctive role to radio mediation and intervention. This coverage does, however, establish the precedent for the "balanced" presentation of controversial political material via the format of controlled debate between contending positions. This was to develop as a central component of a specifically broadcasting practice. The resulting formats, therefore, derive from a direct representation of Parliamentary debate and in this way from the organised practices of Parliament itself. Through these mediations broadcasting's modes of representation are determined "in the last instance" within the same complex of political and economic relations that structure the interventionist, liberal democratic form of the New Zealand State.

In 1938 party election broadcasts were introduced, with times allotted according to Parliamentary strength. This was more a matter of happenstance than the positive exercise of autonomy by the N. B. S., since the 1935 problem of allocation had disappeared with the obliteration of the new party in that election. Broadcasting's real autonomy remained slight. There was frequent direct use of radio by Ministers to "inform the people" and overt censorship of specific programmes. This was associated with continuing conflict with the Parliamentary Opposition and public dissatisfaction (see MacKay, 1953, pp106ff).

Until the 1950s there was little change and the presentation of controversial material remained undeveloped, dependent on Parliamentarians speaking rather than being asked questions. In the 1949 elections both main parties organised political broadcasts, but the Government was successful in insisting that only its spokesman would receive time on the night before the election. Nordmeyer claimed that "it is desirable in the national interest that the Prime Minister should reply to the extravagant statements made by the Leader of the Opposition" (quoted in MacKay, 1953, p107; see also Jackson, 1973, pp183ff). This abuse of ministerial power was widely criticised and indicated that broadcasting as yet was not able to independently define "the national interest", that this power remained vested in the ruling party.

In part this was due to the lack of a professional broadcasting cadre. Until 1949 the radio news bulletin was a direct B.B.C. link. In that year the N.Z.B.S. began its own regular news service, using the journalistically untrained staff of the stations. The News Service in fact grew out of the Tourist and Publicity Department and used its handouts (see Bick, 1968, p96). Nevertheless, expertise gradually developed and a set of practices began to be routinised. The N.Z.B.S.'s 1947-48 report to Parliament noted

"the progress made with the broadcasting of discussions, debates, forums, and brains trusts. The aim of these developments ... whatever the method of presentation is rather to stimulate public thought and discussion than to reach conclusions. Speakers were carefully chosen to give as nearly as possible a balanced presentation

of the various aspects of the question under consideration. In this way the question was fully opened up, and by the end of the session listeners were equipped to carry on their discussions at home" (quoted Hall, 1980, p164).

This statement indexes two important innovations - (a) the embodiment of broadcasting practices within routinised programme formats, so as to accomplish (b) the emerging specific role of broadcasting, that of "opening up" and elaborating policies through rational discussion for "the people at home". This initiates a distinctive broadcasting intervention essentially separate from that of other State structures (departmental administration, Parliamentary legislation, etc) and provides the basis for the movement away from the largely unreflexive relay of "information" to the active investigation that characterises the practice of current affairs.

The effective autonomy of broadcasting, including the recently introduced television, was extended throughout the 1960s. It was legislatively recognised with the change from State Department to Corporation status in 1962, though problems of direct ministerial control remained (see chapter 5.5). The N.Z.B.C.'s first election in 1963 showed this clearly. Faced with the problem of allocating broadcast times, the new Corporation attempted to absolve itself of all responsibility by setting the total time available and delegating to the P.M. the problem of apportioning it. He, in turn, gave no time at all to the new Liberal Party contesting 23 seats. From the resulting public uproar new time was found for this party (c.f. the 1935 situation above; see Wood, 1968, p272).

Television current affairs investigations into party politics and politicians were first allowed in 1966, and immediately developed as a site of conflict between professional broadcasters, the public service administrators of the Corporation and politicians. In 1966 the "Compass" programme on decimal currency was banned by the Director General, leading to the controversial resignation of its producer. As Prime Minister, Holyoake always successfully insisted on receiving the questions 24 hours in advance so as to either prepare his answers or refuse to appear. The present day refusal of such requests is not simply a matter of more autonomous broadcasting but also of politicians more competent with television than their predecessors. In the 1966 elections televised political broadcasts began, as did regular coverage of the parties' annual conferences. Conference coverage usually concluded with an interview of the party leader. With the National Party the P.M. himself decided whether the interviews were adequate or needed a retake. It was not until 1968 that he effectively lost control of any material recorded.

It was not until 1969 that the N.Z.B.C. extended its regular current affairs programmes to continue during election time [23]. As Wallace (1982, p15) comments,

"immediately television producers seized on one of the standard formats for political broadcasting - the confrontation between politicians of opposing parties. In 1969 several of these occasions were staged in the studio between the lesser figures of the campaign, with the most notorious occurring between Mr Muldoon and Dr Martyn Finlay."

The first televised debate between the leaders took place in the first week of the 1969 election, when Kirk and Holyoake met under

the chairmanship of Ian Johnstone before a student audience at Victoria University. Another important innovation for current affairs television that year was the internal N.Z.B.C. decision to abandon the policy of balance within each programme in favour of "over a reasonable period of time". During the elections, however, programmes were still required to be internally balanced (see Wallace, 1973, p215).

Throughout the 1970s an established and growing cadre of professional television broadcasters was increasingly prominent. In 1968 the Television Producers and Directors Association had formed to represent and further professional standards in television. It was this cadre that was primarily responsible for the handling of controversial issues, and was thus a crucial component of the N.Z.B.C.'s relative autonomy. Not surprisingly there was much conflict between these professionals and individual politicians. Due to the continuing domination of the Corporation by Parliament, and the governing party in particular, this conflict frequently took the form of quarrels between television production staff and the older (more cautious) tradition of public service administrators in the upper levels of the bureaucracy [24]. Such quarrels continue to the present and have been amply commented upon (see Vintiner, 1976, pp35ff, for a historical survey). One noteworthy instance is the 1972 "MacLeod Affair" (see chapter 5.5). Another occurred when McCready, the Minister of Defence, was allowed special time to state the Government's position on the Vietnam War. As this statement contained no new information it was strongly opposed by N.Z.B.C. journalists, who lodged objections with the

Broadcasting Authority [25].

Broadcasting competence was sharpened and consolidated in the 1970s elections. In 1972 Kennedy, the Tablet editor, came out firmly on the side of Kirk and Labour, for which the N.Z.B.C. removed him from his weekly radio programme "Looking at the Election" (see Wallace, 1973, p208). There would be no return of "B" station advocacy, no modern Scrim. In 1975 the weekly current affairs programme "Seven Days" brought Muldoon and Rowling together with an interviewer, and this "performance" was repeated on "Tonight at Nine" to answer questions solicited from viewers. These two programmes indicate precisely how broadcasting had successfully occupied a specific mediating "zone" between Parliament and the electorate - via controlled debate with an interviewer/chairperson simultaneously keeping order and "representing the people" either by delivering their solicited questions (the public's mouthpiece) or by enquiring "on their behalf" (the public's advocate). The simultaneity of these two functions is crucial - it commits broadcasting to a representation of politics through the structured practices of "rational debate" and "informed speculation". Thus, for example, in 1975 the N.Z.B.C. exercised its autonomy by limiting party political broadcasts to a maximum of three minutes duration - "T.V.1 has its fingers crossed that the new rule will encourage the parties to make policy statements and not boastful commercials" (reported in Listener, October 22nd 1975). The precise nature and effect of these structured practices will be considered in detail in chapter seven.

In the late 1970s the specificity of broadcasting's intervention was formally legitimated and codified from two different directions. The National government proposed a series of broadcasting reforms, which were subsequently legislated in the new Act of 1976. One of the suggestions made in 1975 was for a coherent system of rule-making covering journalists. This was rejected by both the P.S.A. (representing the journalists) and Corporation executives as a compromise of independence. A solution to the resulting deadlock was worked out by professional production staff themselves. As Beatson, then executive producer of T.V.2's current affairs, recalls [26], it was

"recognised that it would be better for broadcasting to be self-regulating than to be regulated. So as a natural follow-on from that it was necessary for us to develop our own code ... As a producer most directly effected by it I decided I had to be involved. What happened was the Chairman of the Corporation set up a general conference at which Bill Earle, who was my counterpart in T.V.1, and I really expressed our major concerns on a number of areas such as the fact that we had no coherent recruitment and training policies for people in current affairs ... and also that we had to have a set of 'Practices and Principles' codified which reflected the reality of what we were working with, particularly in the development of investigative reporting, which really had begun only only in the last five years prior to that time. So we had sub-groups set up and we were given the task of drafting up. So we did that, they were then discussed down the line and then presented back to this meeting with the Chairman, the Directors General, the Controllers of Programmes, and all, and then gone through again, and then they were promulgated by the Board of the Corporation".

The resulting document, Current Affairs Television Principles and Practice, "defined the practices that we follow" (Beatson, *ibid*), and clearly derives from, articulates and consolidates the emerging professionalism of media journalists. It codifies many important

practices (balance, objectivity, impartiality, current affairs vs news, etc) and will be returned to in concrete detail in chapter seven. For the moment it suffices to note that the Principles and Practice illustrates the clear definition of a specifically broadcasting intervention in politics by according to current affairs "an important contribution to the extension and invigoration of our democratic way of life" (paragraph 2.4).

A second codification of broadcasting's independence came from the Corporation executive in 1978. The B.C. N. Z. had been legislated by the 1976 Broadcasting Act and required to formulate for itself a set of rules for television. The resulting committee (consisting of the Chairman and the Director General of each service) eventually produced the document Television Standards and Rules (1978). The precepts governing current affairs and news programmes (pp3-9) are merely a more general statement of those detailed in Principles and Practice. This is an important "coincidence" and will be returned to by way of conclusion.

The 1981 election evidenced no significant changes. Live coverage of the political conferences was initiated. The B.C.N.Z. exercised its autonomy by giving all three parties, including Social Credit, equal time for political broadcasts, despite the considerable anger this change aroused from both National and Labour. There was continuing conflict between the cadre of professional journalists and the Corporation's top executives, an ongoing situation which is a clear index of the tenuous and carefully preserved nature of broadcasting's relative autonomy in

New Zealand. A special audit committee ensured exact "stopwatch" balance in all election transmissions, and this frequently conflicted with journalists' notions of "newsworthiness". Furthermore, when secret Treasury reports critical of National's "Think Big" policies (whose existence were strongly denied by Muldoon) were leaked to a television news reporter, their reporting was delayed by T.V.N.Z. with a top level order. When Rowling discovered this and made it public, the Corporation had to abruptly change its tack. As one commentator put it, "this one exercise in over-caution showed the vulnerability of a Broadcasting Corporation which had taken all the day-to-day journalistic decision-making out of the hands of journalists and made it the business of top executives" (reported in Media Times, December 1981) [27]. As will be argued in chapter seven, such a view is far too simplistic. The present relative autonomy of the B.C.N.Z. lies precisely across these tension between Parliamentarians, Corporation bureaucrats and broadcasting journalists.

6.7 - CONCLUSION

In this chapter the relative autonomy of New Zealand broadcasting has been both theorised and historically situated and elaborated. It has been identified as a complex and shifting matrix of relations between bureaucratic modes of organisation, "new middle class positions" and discursive practices within the State. It has hinged on the historical emergence and codification of a distinctive set of signifying practices, whose principles of rational debate and informed investigation have cohered to

constitute a specific broadcasting intervention. In this way New Zealand broadcasting has become a distinctive State apparatus. The history of television in this country is not a "response" to the development of the highly interventionist, liberal democratic State structure, it is part of it.

The relative autonomy of election television has been frequently evidenced in conflict between Corporation executives, producers and politicians. The coverage of controversial material is a problematic practice and one marked by constant struggles. Such struggles do indeed have a class dimension, but they cannot be reduced in any simple fashion to class struggles (top bureaucrats vs paid employees, etc) as they are highly mediated by the processes of relative autonomy and the functional requirements of the State structure. Relative autonomy is realised across these struggles, not in them.

The specificity of broadcasting has developed through the corpus of signifying practices embodied primarily within the cadre of professional media journalists. The exercise of these practices is not something simply created either legislatively by there State or administratively by the B.C.N.Z. bureaucracy. One of the enduring characteristics of Broadcasting Acts, once they have allowed controversy at all, has always been precisely their vagueness. The 1976 Act, for example, specifies the demands of "good taste and decency", "the accurate and impartial gathering of news", "balance", "the maintenance of law and order", etc, but without either detail or suggestions as to how they might be

realised. Rather than making definite, positive stipulations it is more accurate to say that the Act names mistakes (i.e. it is more important for what it doesn't say) and describes and ratifies existing practices. Thus, for example, in section 24 (paragraph 1(d)), the Act specifies "the accurate and impartial gathering and presentation of news, according to recognised standards of objective journalism" (emphasis added). This applies equally to the B.C.N.Z.'s Television Standards and Rules, as is in fact explicitly stated in the preamble -

"in approaching the task of preparing these rules and standards, the committee has been well aware that it cannot legislate good broadcasting into being, either by prohibitions or prescriptions. The quality of broadcasting in New Zealand is very much in the hands of the broadcasters themselves ... The rules and standards themselves have not been plucked out of the air, so to speak, but could be said to be the current expression of the tradition of acceptable broadcasting conduct that has been gradually developed over several decades" (ibid, p2; emphasis added).

Historically New Zealand broadcasting has been marked by the steady expansion of effective editorial autonomy by these professionals. This process has been accurately described by the various liberal democrat commentators. Jackson (1973, p189) comments quite correctly that "during the 1960s we witnessed the rather extraordinary situation in which as political broadcasting expanded, control over it decreased". The point, however, is that there is nothing at all "extraordinary" about this [28]. Where liberal democrats err is to see this as a process of detachment, rather than as a new mode of articulation. It is not a matter of a spontaneous "sprouting" and inexplicably virile growth between Parliament and electors, but rather the determinate result of transformations within the New Zealand State; in particular due to

the need for a form of broadcasting whose administration accorded to those same democratic principles that structured the State itself (rather than one easily subject to party domination). In this sense there was a disjuncture (or "lag") between two sites of relative autonomy - the State in general and its internal system of broadcasting in particular. The resulting tension was resolved (not without considerable conflict) through the development of media professionalism. This development was problematic (yet successful) since it corresponded to selection and limitation pressures on the State structure itself, rather than directly on individual parties.

Television journalists have indeed in certain, limited respects usurped politicians' claim to "speak" for the electorate. This has created a new form of "representation". As Fabian, a television news editor, recently commented -

"no professional journalist will tolerate an instruction to slant or manage news. Bias and partiality are not his tools of trade" (quoted in Listener, April 1972, p7).

The problem is one of ascertaining the exact nature of these specific "tools of trade" and their place within the social formation.

Some important indicators were thrown up in section 6.6, such as the relationship of the "rational debate" format to Parliamentary forms of representation. These need to be explored in detail through the concentrated analysis of a single contemporary conjuncture. This is the subject of chapter seven. The object of chapter seven is to comprehend the precise effects of

the State's setting up of broadcasting as a "national institution". In particular, the ideological effects of broadcasting's signifying practices; how their structuring of politics accomplishes ideological work. This establishes the concrete links between the exercise of hegemony and the process of relative autonomy.

FOOTNOTES

- [1] The location of this conception within the relative autonomy problematic is clear. The argument for the economic bases of these new middle classes is developed by Carchedi (1975). Their historical development is briefly charted by Wright (1979, pp64-71).
- [2] Between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat are a number of contradictory class locations, not simply the top managers dealt with above. Below this position are also middle managers and "technocrats" (see Wright, 1979, pp76-79). Within the B.C.N.Z. these consist of the bulk of administrative staff not normally directly involved in production. I do not deal with these locations here (a) for the sake of simplicity, since my aim is to demonstrate the relevance of class analysis, not rigorously develop it, and (b) since the focus of this thesis is on production and thus primarily on the semi-autonomous, employed category.
- [3] Reported in the Listener (1982) Vol. 101 (2213), p20.
- [4] This section is indebted for not only the nature of its conclusions but also the general approach to the work of Urry (1981).
- [5] This "capital derivationist" position is mentioned in footnote

two of chapter four, but is not considered in detail. Such theory constitutes a limiting case for this thesis, since to accept its premises (the lack of broadcasting specificity) would leave nothing further to do. One should note, however, that this school is not at all necessarily a return to crude instrumental notions of politics. Aumeeruddy et al (1978), for example, attempt to establish the autonomy of the modern State in the wage relation. The point here is that the reduction to economic causes remains immediate and sufficient. Althusserians, in contrast, insist on the continued effectivity and specificity of ideological and political practices ("the lonely hour of the last instance never comes", etc; see Althusser, 1969, p113; 1977, pp216ff).

- [6] Martin (1981, pp18ff) develops this criticism of the State derivationist approach.
- [7] Althusser's sense would be better rendered "enforces him/her".
- [8] The inclusion of Poulantzas (and probably Gramsci also) within the dominant ideology thesis is far too simplistic. Poulantzas has not written a great deal about ideology, yet his studies of fascism show that this ideology is not that of the ruling monopoly capitalist class, though he does argue that there is a dominant ideology (the one practised through the State). The identification of the empirical work of Poulantzas and Wright with the more abstract, speculative statements by Althusser ignores the value of the formers' work, as has been previously argued. It means that the structuralists' work is not decisively engaged with so that old problems are often merely rephrased.

- [9] Urry (1981, p155) notes that he has been considerably influenced by Hall's recent work. In a sense, a general theory of ideology could have been deduced from Hall's various essays. Urry essentially follows Hall's argument that ideological work effects concealment (c.f. Hall, 1977a, p323). Indeed, in many respects, as we will see, Hall's argument is superior to Urry's, especially in terms of establishing the functionality of media operation for the reproduction of the social formation (ibid, p346). However, at the general level Hall's work is as yet fairly unsystematic; for example, he often employs an elite, instrumentalist notion of the State (1973b, p35) and various versions of the "dominant ideology thesis" (1977a, p322). It is therefore more profitable to adapt and extend Urry's general framework so as to incorporate the value of Hall's specific analysis of television (considered in section 6.5).
- [10] Arguments over the precise nature of the specificity of all three instances have in fact occurred within Marxist structuralism. Poulantzas' work on class categories, for example, argues that supervisory occupations are part of the new petty bourgeoisie because they constitute a "direct reproduction, within the process of production itself, of the political relations between the capitalist class and the working class" (1975, p228). Wright argues against this, saying that it incorrectly theorises the specificity of political practices. Thus "it is one thing to say that supervision has a political dimension and another to say that supervision is itself political relations within production.

The former seems correct and is analagous to saying that possession and even economic ownership have political dimensions" (Wright, 1979, p53; emphasis added). In this manner the abstract assertions by Althusser are worked at and enriched through methodological and empirical analysis. That Wright's work remains within the structuralist account indicates Urry's failure to concretely engage with this problematic.

[11] The concentration on "effects" is an extension of Hirst's (1976, p411) approach to ideological consequences rather than origins. Hirst's argument, however, is based on the rejection of epistemology, and thus also of notions of ideological "representation" and "false consciousness" (i.e. the autonomist argument, e.g. 1979, p38). Urry's version of relative autonomy theory denies these three rejections by insisting that the State and economy are not characterised by the same heterogeneity as ideology (1981, pp57ff).

[12] It is important to add this dimension since Urry strongly rejects the problematic of the subject. This corresponds to Hirst's (1976, p396) argument, following Althusser, for the theorisation of subjectivity in this way as an ideological "effect". Furthermore, it throws up an essential area for theoretical development ignored by Urry. In opposition to Althusser, it insists that not all interpellations are ideological. Thus some forms of subjectivity are not functional but revolutionary. This assigns definite limits but also transformative power to human agency.

[13] In this section I approach Urry's work only as an ideological

theory which can be inserted into and leaves intact the relative autonomy work of Poulantzas and Wright on political economy. I frankly refuse to consider the much more general implications of his Gramscian rephrasing of the social formation in terms of the State, economy and "civil society". Urry's argument for the "civil society" concept, consistently rejected by structuralists, hinges on the observation that capitalist societies "do not constitute a unity as given by the underlying mechanism of surplus value production and appropriation. Rather such societies consist of patterned yet heterogeneous social practices" (ibid, p9). In deflecting the analysis of civil society away from class struggle to "the multitude of different efforts by which both individuals and groups struggle to maintain and expand their material conditions of life" (ibid, p5), it is unclear how Urry's work is either theoretically coherent or particularly Marxist. He seems often to be arguing that the State and the economy are capitalist but that civil society is just "complex". This conceptualisation of civil society is not problematic here because it is outside our scope of analysis. New Zealand broadcasting is in fact a set of practices organised by and within the State, not unsystematically dispersed throughout society. Thus whether or not Urry's conception of civil society is adequate is not immediately relevant. Furthermore, Urry's notion of the State as "the balance of class forces", etc, adds nothing new to the relative autonomy work by Poulantzas and Wright. This will be argued in further detail below.

- [14] See chapter 4.2. Examples of such works include Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955); Klapper (1960); Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch (1973).
- [15] This tradition originates from White's (1950) essay. More modern work within this line includes Breed (1955) and Warner (1971).
- [16] C.f. Connell's (1980, p89) argument that the liberal democrat position "describes or expresses, but only describes or expresses, more or less accurately the lived or phenomenal form of the relation in which broadcasting stands to the political and economic". The problem is that the position also entails what Bennett (1980, p23) calls an "abstract categorising definition", in which a specific enclave of cultural production is divorced from its determinate relations with other practices. Following Urry (see above), such a "divorce" is ideological.
- [17] That such such an articulation must take place within relative autonomy theory, and neither in instrumentalist nor elitist frameworks, can be quickly demonstrated by reference to Tracey's work. Tracey tends to collapse Marxism into a uniform "elite studies" (see chapter 4.1), thus his own attempt to connect political and economic determinations with media practices concludes that "what is evidenced is a kind of historical or evolutionary coincidence between the paths taken by political broadcasting and the needs and interests of dominant institutions within society" (1977, p36, emphasis added). Elite studies can turn up only the notion of "coincidence" since they rely on the bourgeois notion of

political "representation" (see chapter 4.4). Problems of determination must be solved elsewhere. Some media commentators, in a fashion corresponding to Hirst's general reformulation of Althusser's work (considered in section 6.4), have argued that the posing of such a problem is improper since the media are autonomous, essentially undetermined by external practices. Thus, for example. Pateman (1974) rejects the notion that modern election campaigns are somehow independent of television. He argues that "we do not have television coverage of an election: we have a television election" (ibid, p2). Such an "autonomist" argument does not imply a necessary return to liberal democrats' formalist notions of equality, merely that the practices of power and inequality are structured specifically. The weakness of this argument lies, rather, in its collapse of politics into a form of communication. As demonstrated in part two, political parties are constituted outside television, within the political and economic determinations of the social formation in general, and the State in particular. Thus one must maintain the distinction between elections as a moment in political practices and their representation (as "stories" and "pictures") through the practices of broadcasting. To adapt a metaphor used by Hall, real politicians can both bark and bite but their televised images only the former! The problem remains one of establishing connections, not assuming identity.

[18] For a brief summary of media work at the Centre see Hall (1980, pp117ff).

- [19] Some rudimentary competence with semiotic terminology is assumed in this section. A locus classicus of such definitions is Barthes (1977).
- [20] Hall's argument regarding the "discursive mode of production" rests on an analogy to Capital derived from a methodological reading of Marx's Introduction to the Grundrisse (see Hall, 1974b).
- [21] Semiotic approaches to texts obviously lend themselves to those types of argument labelled "autonomist" in section 6.4. Texts are approached as autonomous, closed systems to be studied solely in their own terms as the realisation of (immanent) signifying practices. The major instance of this position is the work of those various writers associated with the journal Screen. Texts accomplish ideological work through their construction of subjects, a practice theorised by the articulation of semiotics with Lacanian psychoanalytic theory. The Birmingham Centre has consistently criticised this position, particularly for its reified conception of subjectivity (see Connell, 1978, 1979; Hall, 1977b; Hall et al, 1980, pp157-171, 186ff). Readers exist outside texts and are historically situated. The construction of subjects is part of ideological functioning, but it is not in itself sufficient, it does not exhaust the process of reading. The break away from ultimately psychologistic reductions to determinations is premised on the argument that texts may be variously read by different (extra-textual) subjects, and that coding is therefore a site of struggle. The argument presented by Screen reproduces the formalism and functionalism

of Althusser's "I.S.A." essay. This suggests the necessity of a semiotics that breaks with purely immanent analysis, as sketched out by Eco (1972). The problem remains the articulation of signifying practices with political, economic and ideological structures; a question of relative autonomy.

[22] This analysis cannot begin by defining "news", "current affairs", etc; the historical development and nature of such practices is the object of this section.

[23] Wallace (1973, pp215ff) summarises the 1969 and 1972 current affairs coverage of the election programme by programme.

[24] One interesting inflection of this conflict is the argument frequently made by television journalists of the need for competition and commercialism in broadcasting to rid it of both its monopolistic, stifling bureaucratic tendencies and government influence (see Vintiner, 1976, pp57-58). This indicates, once more, how little the change to private enterprise would effect the established practices of broadcast journalism.

[25] See Wallace (1982, pp5-6) for the history of ministerial broadcasts, which are problematic for media professionals since they override specific broadcasting practices and essentially "surrender" the medium to politicians. Conflict here, then, corresponds exactly to that voiced by politicians when their "right" to "speak for the people" is usurped by television journalists. Until 1979 N.Z.B.C. policy remained ad hoc. In that year an official "memo" was drafted by Cross and circulated to the main parties. It gave to the P.M. or his deputy the right to decide whether a subject is

sufficiently important "to go the nation", and left public reaction and political responsibility to prevent abuse of the privilege. In this respect Parliament remains the primary definer of the "national interest", irrespective of journalistic evaluations of "newsworthiness".

[26] Source: interview conducted for chapter seven's data. The research methods, etc, are elaborated in Appendix One.

[27] A similar situation arose in March 1981, when Avalon current affairs staff demanded the resignation of Cross and his top current affairs staff. These latter had privately/secretly met with Muldoon to discuss his grievances with a particular "Close Up" programme. The journalists claimed that this compromised their independence by bypassing the official complaints procedure (at which they could have put their own case).

[28] In fact it is a trend that seems endemic to liberal democracies. Seymoure Ure (1974, p212ff) identifies several parallel trends in English election television coverage since the 1960s - the rise of television as the principal political medium, expansion of programmes, the breakdown of control by the parties, the increasing power of the media to define issues, etc. His argument is reinforced by Blumler (1970, p94; 1974a, pp161-162).

CHAPTER SEVEN - MAKING THE NATION7.1 - INTRODUCTION: NEWS AND CURRENT AFFAIRS

The aim here is to concretely realise the theoretical and general historical observations of chapter six through the detailed analysis of one contemporary conjuncture - the production of the two programmes "Facing the Nation" and "The Leaders Debate" by the B.C.N.Z. at the Avalon studios on Wellington during the 1981 general election campaign. The primary methods used were documentary analysis (written codes, programme scripts), observation and in-depth interviews with participants (these are detailed in Methodology Appendices one and two). The particular aim is to determine the principal signifying practices used to make politics "meaningful" and with which these programmes were encoded by media professionals. Television is not simply determined by its hardware; a much more important level of determination is the organisation of those human practices which make sense of and elaborate the medium on the basis of its technical capabilities (Hall, 1975, pp83-84).

It is not just a matter of avoiding technological reductionism. The specificity of television's significations indicates the inadequacy of those instrumentalist arguments which explain the medium's operation through reductions to "external influences". Equally inadequate, however, are liberal democrat notions of autonomy and phenomenological notions of "communication" [1]. It is true that broadcasting institutions typically exercise

considerable editorial autonomy in programme production. It is also true that ultimately they operate within what Hall (1972, p1) has called "the mode of reality of the State", as a central apparatus in the State's coordination of ideological hegemony. In this chapter, analysis elaborates in detail the precise nature of the relative autonomy of television's signifying codes, so justifying Hall's (ibid) claim that "what are usually understood as 'external influences on broadcasting' constitute in fact the everyday working context for broadcasting".

Given this focus it is clearly important to outline what will not be covered in this chapter. Primarily it is political television rather than televised politics that is of interest here (i.e. television's intervention in party politics rather than vice versa). Political parties place a great deal of importance on television. When, for example, Marshall opened National's 1972 campaign from Whangarei, electronic interference prevented reception by most of the country - a set-back from which the party President for some reason considered National never recovered (see Chapman, 1980, p58). Accordingly, the parties have developed strategies for the medium's use, such as the employment of advertising consultants for campaign management (see Wilkes, 1975). That the parties' intervention in television is quite different from the intervention of television in politics is recognised and preserved, for example, in the B.C.N.Z.'s insistence that "no political programme broadcast in time allocated free of charge [i.e. to parties during elections] shall be presented in such a way as to appear to be a programme or part of a programme regularly

scheduled by the services" (Television Standards and Rules, section 6.11). The development of specific competence with the medium by political organisations is not the subject of this chapter, although clearly it is also an important level of determination of the images televised.

Before moving to the signifying practices per se, "Facing the Nation" and "The Leaders Debate" must both be situated and elaborated as distinct totalities. This is best accomplished, firstly, through a brief consideration of T.V.N.Z.'s 1981 election coverage and the position of the two programmes within it. Then these programmes' "histories", their production sequences, will be dealt with, along with a brief outline of their internal structure. Following this, analysis can proceed by breaking them down into discursive components. We begin here by locating both productions within the domain of current affairs television.

In chapter 6.6 the historical development of current affairs journalism as a distinct corpus of practices was charted; by holding it static one can consider its specificity through its distinction from news. The distinction between news and current affairs is an important institutional one in T.V.N.Z. [2]. It has a legal representation in the 1976 Broadcasting Act (section 24, paragraph 1, parts (d) and (e)). The Television Standards and Rules (section 5.1 (a)) states that "viewers should always be able to distinguish clearly and easily between news on the one hand, and commentary and analysis on the other". According to the Principles and Practice (section 2.1),

"the Corporation makes a clear distinction between News Bulletins and Current Affairs programmes. There is a difference of intention in the production of these two elements in our television programmes."

However, as argued in chapter 6.7, these codifications are to be approached as formal representations of actual practices rather than as sufficient "causes". The analysis of determination must proceed by studying these material practices, not their a posteriori formalisations. The ways in which current affairs television is achieved are named, and only named, by these formal rules (e.g. see Television Standards and Rules, section 1.1 (a) and (g); Principles and Practice, sections 2.2 and 2.3). It is therefore crucial to locate the distinction between news and current affairs phenomenologically, in the statements and practices of journalists (since, indeed the formal rules are too abstract to be sufficient in themselves).

Essentially it is a matter of the classic journalistic differentiation of "fact" from "comment". Whereas news is principally concerned to establish "the facts" of given situations, current affairs deals with those varying "attitudes" or "opinions" which interpret problematic events and issues [3]. All the journalists interviewed frequently made this point. A typical response, for example, distinguished news from current affairs in the following way;

"It's just in much more depth. Hopefully the news headlines the story, we background it, and there you have the essential difference. One should never put news and current affairs so that they are interchangeable. News is always news. News is the Facts, these are the known facts given and accepted by everyone. Current affairs is - this is one

person's view of the incident you've just heard about in the news, this is the other person's view, and this is what the third party says, and this is the overall situation. You now make up your mind, given that flurry of opinion that we've just shown you, you can assess on far better backgrounded material what you think about the issue that was headlined in the news."

Clearly the two modes of television are closely related - stories often pass through news to become current affairs topics [4]. The two modes are themselves only relatively autonomous. More importantly, whereas the news (like positivism) creates unitary meanings [5], current affairs explores diverse meanings. Thus one must study the ways in which current affairs signifies these differences, such as by framing them through the confrontation between antagonistic positions.

Current affairs does more than merely represent diversity in order to "inform" the audience so that they can "make up their minds". It not only contextualises events but also actively investigates them. As one producer put it -

"it is to place events in context, so that people have an understanding of the history that has lead up to the event, and an indication as to the future the event may provoke. It is to analyse the relative importance of events, it is to take people beneath the surface of decision-making, to find out what pressures are at work in our society. It is the process of analysis of events. That is basically it, in terms of its social function."

Thus one must study the practices of current affairs television that accomplish this investigation and analysis. Hall et al (1976, p59) argue that "as a whole, the field can be characterised as providing informed speculation about events, with the objective of promoting a 'rational' understanding of the issues involved". Both "Facing the Nation" and "The Leaders Debate" are to be studied in

detail to ascertain the concrete practices and effects of this "informed speculation". First, however, the two programmes must themselves be "current affair-ed", by being situated (descriptively) within the context of the 1981 election coverage.

7.2 - 1981 ELECTION COVERAGE AND PROGRAMME PRODUCTION

Of all current affairs work, election coverage is probably the most sensitive topic and a frequent site of conflict with politicians. It deals with that precise moment when the electorate "makes up its mind" and political power is redistributed between the parties, a very delicate moment in Parliamentary democracies. Thus election broadcasting is carefully scrutinised both internally and externally. All levels of the B.C.N.Z. are very self-conscious about this sensitivity. For the 1981 election an audit committee consisting of top bureaucrats regulated coverage by keeping a strict minutes and seconds log. T.V.N.Z. journalists even felt the moment to be a current affairs topic in itself - a post-election "Close Up" (telecast 2/12/81) covered the experiences of four journalists on the campaign trail with the three main party leaders. From very early on election television is carefully structured.

Even prior to the middle of 1980, the Head of Current Affairs (H.C.A.) and his Southern Editor had informally and very generally discussed the next year's election television. Campaign coverage was presented as a unified whole at the mid-1980 meeting between top bureaucrats, which dealt with programme lists, budget and

facilities requests for 1981. At this meeting those programmes "extra" to normal television (subsequently the "Campaign Reports", "Facing the Nation" and "The Leaders Debate"), were submitted individually (since they required additional resources) but without much detail; simply as a package of election "specials". The H.C.A. insisted that,

"it is not a matter of editorial decisions as to who and what should be in them. At this stage I've created the slot for these programmes, I've asked for the manpower to do them and I've asked for the money to do them. I've discussed them with the Controller [of News, Current Affairs and Sport] so that he agrees that we should do them."

Clearly, however, many editorial decisions are made prior to and at this meeting. Both the programmes we are concerned with were submitted with working titles - "The Debate" and "Meet the People".

Q: "So there was also some idea of what was the substance?"

A: Oh yes, more than a vague idea, especially in terms of the programme that had questions from the audience, we'd done it before in '78 ... But neither had much meat about the bones when they went into the budget and facilities meeting."

Not only are format decisions made well in advance, along with whatever editorial decisions which follow from this, but also the decision as to the need for such programmes at all. The H.C.A. simply asserted that "it wasn't the case that there was a facilities problem with these programmes because they obviously must go on, that was never a consideration with these". The results of this meeting were taken to the Director-General for approval of the whole division's output during the year. From this stage until very close to actual production time there was little distinction between the planning of either "Facing the Nation" or "The Leaders Debate".

In April 1981 the B.C.N.Z. Board, on the basis of its perception of the public "mood", broke with past policy and allocated free time equally to all three largest parties, including Social Credit (which had previously received only half that of National and Labour). When this decision was extended from free time to include equal live coverage of Social Credit's conference, important implications were created for the way in which news and current affairs treated "balance". A Social Credit presence in all controversial discussions became mandatory. This shall be analysed in detail subsequently.

In May and July aspects of campaign coverage were discussed in formal meetings between news and current affairs editors, the H.C.A. and the Controller of News, Current Affairs and Sport. Here a certain degree of coordination was arranged to avoid repetition. "Facing the Nation" and "The Leaders Debate" were once again outlined as general formats and made the responsibility (as informally pre-arranged) of the Southern Editor. He recalled,

"there was the suggestion that I should be responsible for not only the ongoing current affairs but also the campaign reports, the two specials and election night, and that sort of formed a package. This all came in a pretty discursive fashion."

An obvious characteristic of decisions made throughout the production process is their apparent casualness, their dependence on a commonly held set of knowledges and practices (yet to be determined) which do need constant official delineation. The H.C.A. commented that

"these formal meetings themselves didn't impose any rules, they didn't mean any change in our policy or

approach. I suppose we'd already pretty well determined how we were going to do things in a very broad sense, and the rest of it would be determined by the kind of issues that popped up during the campaign, individual stories and the like."

There is clearly a well-established "common sense" which structures the combination of "individual stories" into distinctive programme identities. This means that detailed preparation is ad hoc, comparatively unreflective and very much a matter of "last minute planning". It was within this context that "Facing the Nation" and "The Leaders Debate" began to assume a more concrete identity. As the H.C.A. put it -

"these meetings don't tend to be in the form of formal meetings. In the case of these two programmes they'd involve [the Southern Editor] and myself on a large number of informal occasions, they'd involve conversations between me and the Controller on an equally large number of occasions. [Pause]. Its hard to think of the specific dates because its an evolutionary process, we might just meet in the canteen or pass in the corridor."

A few weeks before the campaign officially started (one month before polling day) the Board's Chairman called a meeting of all executives involved in news and current affairs election coverage. The Chairman emphasised the Corporation's guidelines and individual programmes were discussed in general terms. Clearly, however, most of the concrete decisions occur outside this formal, administrative matrix.

The T.V.N.Z. coverage of the election can be summarised as follows:

(1) Party political broadcasts, consisting of (a) the opening campaign speech of each leader, (b) a closing statement broadcast

on the eve of the poll, and (c) free time allocated for party "commercials";

(2) News bulletins, consisting of (a) nightly "Hustings Reports" appended to the 6.30 and 10 o'clock broadcasts and delivered by news journalists on the campaign trail with the three main party leaders, and (b) special programmes on the electorates within each regional news area;

(3) Current affairs coverage, consisting of (a) three half-hour "Campaign Reports", dealing with issues raised during each week of the campaign, (b) "Facing the Nation", (c) "The Leaders Debate", and (d) regular coverage by "Eyewitness", "Newsmakers" and "Video Dispatch" ("Close Up" being in "downtime" due to the two previous specials);

(4) "The Nation Decides" - reporting and analysis of results on election night, with a nationwide link.

Programme commitment to the election, particularly in respect of current affairs, was high [6]. From this point on we will concentrate solely on "Facing the Nation" and "The Leaders Debate".

From approximately August the Southern Editor began working on the two programmes in some detail and assembling the production team mostly through informal discussions. As both specials were originally scheduled to replace "Close Up", it was decided to use this staff for some of the work. The role of "anchorman" for both programmes had been informally allocated to Ian Fraser as early as the beginning of the year. As "the leading studio performer" he was generally thought to be the obvious choice. For reasons that we will explore below, Fraser subsequently withdrew and was

replaced by David Beatson in September. Although both programmes were clearly linked, each was produced separately and neither was privileged over the other. The Southern Editor commented that

"there was no idea of having one programme first and the other second, they were not just two together. It was just a matter of production for them, this was going ahead all along, there was no stopping that."

"Facing the Nation" was co-produced by two members of the "Close Up" staff, principally by Leslie Stevens, since she had been involved with the 1978 programme it was modelled on. She remembers,

"a very casual meeting, well, muttered conversation really, it wasn't a formal meeting at all, it was simply I was asked if I would like to be involved, [pause] kind of like passing on your way to the coffee machine"

The Southern Editor assumed the role of Executive Producer, responsible specifically for delivering the politicians. How this was accomplished will be dealt with subsequently. The Director of "Newsmakers" was appointed director of this programme also. About one and a half months before shooting there was a formal meeting of all technical staff in which studio design was initiated, and carried on informally up until production time. Editorial work was primarily the responsibility of Stevens, supplemented by informal "chats" with the Executive and Co-Producers. She designed the "promos" broadcast to solicit questions from the audience. She categorised the 1500 replies received, and winnowed them down to 100 potential questions. Thirteen of these were chosen and shot "on location", to be inserted into the programme during its recording. Others were selected to be delivered by the questioners

themselves from the studio audience that had been arranged. A final important meeting took place all day on the 16th November, the day before shooting, between the programme's three producers, director, frontperson and the H.C.A. Here the final 100 questions were honed down to the 40 or so that could be covered on the time available, and it was decided which question would go to which politician. The H.C.A. remembers it as "very much a group process, lots of those meetings are ... its hard to describe those kind of production meetings."

This last meeting concluded with the entire programme being scripted shot-by-shot. Overall, the production process is consistently marked by informally discussed decisions based of largely assumed competences, and left very much to the last minute. Stevens argued that "you want to get the questions as close to the programme time as you can so that they are of current interest, so in fact you hold back the whole making of the programme as late as you dare before doing a headlong dash into it, so that you capture the feeling of the country within that last month, because things can change so rapidly, issues can boil up". We need to study those practices that secure this "headlong dash". "Facing the Nation" was recorded on 17th November. The programme was rehearsed without either politicians or audience in the studio from 8.30 to 9.30. The audience was put in and "warmed up" before the three leaders arrived, and recording took from 10.45 to 11.50. It was transmitted unedited (or rather, as it had been previously edited) the next night in "Close Up's" spot on T.V.1 from 8 to 9 o'clock.

The planning for "The Leaders Debate" is in general quite similar. The Southern Editor, who produced the programme, drafted a letter to the leaders of the three main parties, which was sent by the H.C.A. on 7th September. As there was no contact before this comparatively late date, broadcasters were obviously confident that the politicians would participate. The letter described both "Facing the Nation" and "The Leaders Debate", indicated that Ian Fraser would front them, enclosed a set of rules for the debate and proposed times for recording and transmission. The Labour and Social Credit leaders agreed relatively promptly. Rowling complained at the "Debate's" length (90 minutes), but as this was a programming decision, and thus the preserve of broadcasting, it resulted in nothing. There was no reply from the National party leader until much later. This was to prove quite important as will be discussed subsequently. Weeks of negotiation with the politicians' campaign itineraries and constantly changing times finally produced a collectively acceptable date in early October.

"The Leaders Debate's" format, its rules and the panelists to participate were selected primarily by the Producer, in the course of many discussions with the H.C.A. Six current affairs "topics" were selected by these two for the first segment of the programme, and these were communicated to the politicians in the letter mentioned above. Each of the panelists was assigned two of these (by phone), and asked to work out specific questions in the week or so before the last production meeting [7]. This day-long meeting was held on 20th November, the day before recording, and involved the assembled panelists, frontperson, the H.C.A., producer and

director. Here a number of important decisions were made. The precise wording of the questions for the first segment of the programme was decided through group discussion. This surprised the two press panelists, who had thought the questions they had been allotted were solely their prerogative. Clearly, we are dealing with a mode of production that is specific to television. Six more "topics", that had "emerged during the campaign", were created for current affairs treatment in the "Debate's " second segment. The Producer explained the reason this had been left open thus -

"I suppose we were a little concerned that if we locked ourselves into half a dozen topics early on, something may emerge as an important topic and because we'd already communicated what those topics were to the leaders we'd be stuck with something that'd disappeared entirely as a campaign issue, or without any coverage of something that had popped up."

Clearly there are tacit "rules of the game" between politicians and broadcasters not to be contravened. Furthermore, as with "Facing the Nation", there is a calculated lateness. This final meeting concluded with the writing of a detailed script and the programme was filmed in Avalon's Studio Eight the next day, this time without an audience. The process of recording was essentially the same as that of "Facing the Nation". The programme was telecast on 25th November, 3 days before the election itself, in the "Newsmakers" slot from 8.00 to 9.30pm on T.V.1.

The two programmes have now been descriptively outlined, "opened up" for the more analytic consideration to follow. The production of both "Facing the Nation" and "The Leaders Debate" is marked by two apparently contradictory stages - (a) very early announcement, and (b) very late realisation. Analysis must uncover

and detail those practices which secure this production. Firstly, however, their frameworks are to be briefly outlined. This completes the descriptive presentation of the two programmes' identities.

7.3 - PROGRAMME FRAMEWORKS

The picture of the two programmes under study is completed with the following chronological charting of their overall frameworks. This gives some idea of what they dealt with, and how, in each segment.

"FACING THE NATION"

(1) Opening

Using crabbing, panning and zooming cameras in studio to show combinations of clapping audience, the three leaders and Beatson (Chair), with caption "Facing the Nation".

(2) First Segment - Setting the Agenda

Beatson to camera introduces the three party leaders. He sets up the programme in terms of the approaching election, the soliciting of letters from the audience and the leaders' presence in the studio to answer these questions. He specifies the time limits on the politicians' responses (30 seconds) and the three modes of question presentation to be used in the next segment.

(3) Second Segment - Answering to the People

The solicited questions (and replies) are delivered in the three following ways - (a) asked directly by selected questioners invited to sit in the studio audience, (b) letters read out by the Chair, and (c) previously video taped questions delivered to camera by selected questioners on location and inserted into the running recording. The above modes were mixed throughout this segment, the main body of the programme. Approximately 45 questions were delivered, covering a varied range of topics including the four day week, tax reform, compulsory unionism, inflation, bridle paths, the New Zealand flag, abortion, etc.

(4) Third Segment - Closing the Door

Chairman to camera concluding the programme. The opening sequence is approximately repeated, in reverse order, with credits.

"THE LEADERS DEBATE"

- (1) Opening
As before, crabbing and zooming cameras to show combinations of the three seated panelists, the three standing leaders and the Chair, with caption "The Leaders Debate".
- (2) First Segment - Setting the Agenda
Beatson to camera introduces the three politicians and panelists, establishing party and media "credentials". He sets up the programme as the "scrutiny of basic policies" and introduces briefly the three part structure of the entire programme. He concludes by detailing the logic and method of question and response (duration, timekeeping, etc) of the following segment.
- (3) Second Segment - Major Issues
Questions on employment, taxation, leadership, sporting contact, the balance of power and energy development. These topics had all been selected before the campaign started, and the politicians had been told of their inclusion. Each panelist was responsible for two of the above topics. Working on a round robin basis, panelists asked one major question and one followup on their assigned topics to the three leaders. Each leader had 1.5 minutes to answer the main question and 45 seconds for the followup. This segment was approximately 60 minutes long.
- (4) Third Segment - Changing Tack
Beatson to camera introduces the next section of the programme. This merely involves a change in the type of topic (to issues identified as having emerged during the campaign) and the leaders' response allocations (reduced to 45 seconds for the principal question and 30 seconds for the followup).
- (5) Fourth Segment - Hot Issues
This was essentially the same as segment two save for the timing changes. The six "campaign issues" were credibility, growth, the four day week, the relationship between the parties and unions, inflation and the "ideological" commitment of the three parties. This segment was of approximately 20 minutes duration.
- (6) Fifth Segment - Changing Tack Again
Beatson to camera explains the final phase, time limits, speaking order, etc.
- (7) Sixth Segment - "Giving Them a Say"
Each of the three leaders has three uninterrupted minutes to sum up and make whatever points they wished to. Speaking order was decided by drawing lots before recording started. This segment lasted approximately 10 minutes.
- (8) Seventh Segment - Wrapping it Up
Beatson to camera concludes the programme, running through the names and affiliations of the participants. As with "Facing the Nation", the opening is approximately repeated in reverse with credits.

Clearly "Facing the Nation" and "The Leaders Debate" have both distinctive identities and also many similarities. The argument to

follow will establish that together they constitute a complex "unity in difference".

7.4 - SIGNIFYING PRACTICES

The production of "Facing the Nation" and "The Leaders Debate", and for that matter current affairs television in general and election coverage in particular, has been shown above to depend heavily on a set of journalistic "common sense" routines and knowledges. This is evidenced, for example, in production's extreme speed and "last-minute" nature. As both programmes were mounted in the television studio they are well suited for a close analysis of the specificity of these routines and practices. In the studio the presentational forms and techniques, the camera angles, script, set design, etc, are very heavily determined by the particular modes and requirements of television itself. Here television operates primarily under what Hall (1975, pp92-93) has called its medium function, where the imposition of television forms is paramount. Programmes in which television's channel function is dominant (i.e. where the imposition of television forms is weaker, such as the live coverage of a political conference) are less suited to our immediate research problem, since the practices of television's presentation must compete more equally with, and thus frequently give way to and are blurred by, other forms of practice. Both "Facing the Nation" and "The Leaders Debate", as studio situations, are then well suited for the study of political television, less so for the study of televised politics.

The "common sense" routines and practices of current affairs journalism make politics meaningful by transforming it into systematic audiovisual signs, into a discourse. They are therefore practices of signification. These practices produce a text by accomplishing the separation of fact from comment and analysis, and through the presentation of organised controversy via "rational debate" and "informed speculation". To be analysed are the precise details and ideological effects of this encoding. It will be argued that broadcasting reconciles itself to power through the operation of a set of intervening concepts and practices [8]. The following analysis will concentrate on the two principal practices of encoding - balance and impartiality. These practices mediate the relationship of broadcasting to power, they legitimate political television by simultaneously ensuring that broadcasters exercise considerable editorial autonomy but do not break with the overall pattern of hegemony. This study deals in particular with their signification of elections, and thus of political parties and the Parliamentary apparatus of the State. While the signification of other manifestations of power and conflict (e.g. economic class struggle) will clearly be related to this, nevertheless its precise nature would have to be ascertained through further conjunctural analyses, rather than simply extended from what follows.

The analysis that follows is preoccupied with encoding practices. It is concerned with the text only in terms of those dimensions adequately explained by reference to the selections and decisions made by broadcasters themselves, and to the effects of these decisions. The interest in politician's contributions is

thus limited to the degree that they follow "the rules of the game". An unfortunate (temporary) consequence of this is an unduly positive presentation of the text itself since it excludes one crucial dimension - struggle - and thus whatever escapes the competence of political journalism. This lacuna will be redressed in part four, which is concerned with the text proper rather than merely its production. A brief indication of the substance of part four here will suffice to indicate the limits of the positivity of what follows. "Facing the Nation" and "The Leaders Debate" are sites of struggle in at least two ways. Firstly, they involve the intervention of politicians, who may struggle between themselves and/or with television's mode of presentation. Secondly, it will be argued that the practices of broadcasting accomplish ideological work by interpellating a particular form of subjectivity. The reception of this form of subjectivity by extra-textual, historically located readers is a matter of decoding and, as a further site of struggle, will also be considered in part four. With these provisos in mind, we can now turn to consider those practices that constituted "Facing the Nation" and "The Leaders Debate".

Balance and impartiality are complexly interrelated (relatively autonomous). Balance refers only to the attempt to distribute aspects of each programme (time, visibility, etc) equally among the participants. It is thus related to, but distinct from, impartiality, through which television signifies itself as uncommitted to any particular position either among those participating or excluded. Balance is thus a demonstration of

impartiality, though specific. Furthermore broadcasters act impartially within the balanced programme. This distinction will be brought out in the analysis.

7.5 - BALANCE

In the signification of controversial material, over which there are conflicting interests and interpretations, New Zealand television operates the discourse of "balance". This discourse is characteristic of current affairs as a whole and not confined just to election broadcasting. The H.C.A. argued that

"in an election campaign because of the formal requirement for formal balance between the three main parties there is a slight difference from ordinary current affairs. Otherwise you have exactly the same kind of requirements for balance and fair play - if you have both sides to an argument you have to represent both sides, or three sides. That's as true of politics as it is of any other issue of importance to the community."

The requirement for balance is formally codified [9] but is in fact typically achieved unproblematically in the everyday routines of political television, rather than relying on the intervention of formal sanctions. One of the panelists recalled of the final production meeting for "The Leaders Debate" -

"balance was important mechanistically in that it had been made automatic by the structure of the programme. I don't recall any discussion of the need to be balanced in the questions at all. I think basically we all understood it, that the programme had to be balanced."

The practices which compose this common understanding are the legitimate structure of access and the formal and tonal aspects of programme composition (framework, time-keeping, set design, shot selection, question phrasing, etc). The presentation of these

practices as "mechanistic" or "automatic", rather than as the problematic achievement of a socially located group, (ideologically) conceals their nature and determinations.

Through the practice of balance broadcasting does not hide controversy but overtly signifies conflicts of interest. It thus presents itself as open rather than monolithic, plural rather than univocal. Nevertheless, as will be shown, the fastidious control of the signification of conflict keeps it well within the limits of an overarching framework of assumptions about the distributions of political power. In 1969 the execution of balance was extended to "over a reasonable period of time". However, when a programme's subject matter is highly controversial or political, such as election coverage, and the possibility of television being charged with giving unfair advantage is correspondingly high, this amendment is ignored. Thus both "Facing the Nation" and "The Leaders Debate" were rigorously constructed to have internal balance. The first aspect of this practice to be considered is this internal arrangement of balance and primarily through the programmes' frameworks and timekeeping methods.

Once the participants were decided it became a matter of accommodating their number into the balanced dispensation of time. This was accomplished very simply in "Facing the Nation", by allowing 30 seconds for responses to each politician. In "The Leaders Debate" the principle was the same, though its execution was complicated by the format of the programme and the variations in the time allocated for responses. All questions were scripted

in this fashion so as to produce a text formally balanced in terms of the allocation of empty television time. We will consider what occurred "in" this time subsequently. Timekeeping was enforced in a number of ways. The programme rules sent out prior to recording emphatically stated that "interjections and debate amongst the leaders is not permitted". This prevented politicians transgressing into each other's formal allocations and thus misbalancing the end result. Other forms of control operated inside the programmes themselves. Firstly, durations were regulated by a time-light system (supplemented by a bell in the second programme when this proved ineffective). Secondly, the Chairman, as studio manager with the power of interjection (established explicitly by the programme rules and also by convention), ensured the effectiveness of this method of timekeeping. Thirdly, there were a number of rolling decisions made in the control room during recording, in which the producer modified the script so as to overcome any imbalances produced in the studio interaction. These modifications were passed to the Director on the control room, and from there (via an earphone link between the Director and the Chairman) into the studio itself for implementation [10]. Lastly, and most importantly, there are the spoken and unspoken common understandings that exist between politicians and broadcasters. Politicians concede to balance as a condition of their participation in television's discourse. The combined explicit and tacit dimensions of this understanding were summed up by the Chairman -

A: "Interjections were very specifically ruled out, they were ruled out in the brief and they were ruled out immediately in the address made to them

in the studio by [the Producer] before the programme started. And I wanted to know what my position was as well. I asked him specifically as a chairman what my power was to deal with somebody who had started to consistently break the rules of the programme, because I believe it's a chairman's prerogative to in the end either order somebody who consistently refuses to adhere to the principles under which they contracted to appear out of the programme, or to stop the programme. I was told 'no, no, no, you must find another way of dealing with that, those two courses of action are not appropriate.'

Q: What would you have done then?

A: I would have had to simply make a very pointed comment about it and virtually leave it at that.

Q: Did you think there was much likelihood of that happening?

A: No, but it was something I wanted to be clear about. No, I didn't, I thought that everybody would be reasonably behaved, because its important to them."

Ultimately it is this common norm of "reasonable behaviour" that is most effective in securing balance. Thus, for example, it is significant that politician's transgressions consist in talking slightly too long, not in directly challenging the very principle that their speech can be limited by broadcasters.

The practices of framing and timekeeping create and preserve a number of discrete, formal "spaces" (time zones) which contain the politicians and outside of which they do not legitimately move. This ensures formal balance in the text that is produced. Framing secures balance so that it doesn't have to be kept continually "in mind". This leads one to the question of entry into the frame. What is the nature of access to the medium?

This directs analysis to the systematic granting of privileged access to certain participants to the terrain of political television. Central to the exercise of balance are the decisions

made by broadcasters as to who can legitimately participate in programmes. These participants are produced by the determinate location of the B.C.N.Z. within the New Zealand State. They are the result of what Hall (1973b, p25) has called a "legitimate structure of access". There are at least four categories of possible participants privileged by this structure.

The first is a "group" which paradoxically never concretely appears (since it has no concrete existence), "the general public". Though "the public" has right of access, as the ultimate basis of the democratic polity itself, it is rarely an active participant in political television. In fact, it will be argued in part four that "the public" is not in any sense real but an ideological effect of television discourses. Television's discourse attempts to systematically disorganise its audience, to reduce it to an aggregate of undifferentiated individuals. In chapter nine the nature of the public's access to "Facing the Nation", as a component of the ideological interpellation of subjectivities, will be considered in detail. For the moment it is important to note that "the general public" is typically signified by television in the same way as the medium's audience, as a spectator. This lack of real access is mediated to the screen in two distinct ways. Firstly, what "the public thinks" is reported on by journalists. In this respect broadcasting claims to merely "convey" the worries of "the people" to the politicians. Hence the now-frequent use of Heylen opinion polls in current affairs television. This was the basis, for example, of the Chairman's confident assertion at the start of "The Leaders Debate" -

"So, to open the questioning, here's Karen Sims and we're focusing on the issue identified as the Number One concern of New Zealanders - unemployment."

The exact nature of this "conveyence", and the ideological representation of it as a practice without a constitutive effect on the message, will be examined subsequently. Secondly, the systematic absenting of "the public" is invoked by "representatives" who claim to speak on its behalf. This grants legitimacy to three positions within the schema of balance - the interviewer/chairperson, "experts" and spokespersons from political parties.

The neutral role of chairperson, as we have already seen, is an essential component of the management of balance in the studio. In "The Leaders Debate" this role was closely linked to that of the panelists. In the debate-style programmes of previous elections, questions were asked and the studio was managed from the one position. Why these two tasks were split for the 1981 debate was explained by the producer thus -

"I've never liked the idea of having a single chairman for that sort of programme. I think its as impossible task, I think that its most unreasonable for television to impose on a single person the responsibility of having to sit there in the studio and ask questions while having to keep this thing on an even keel. So working from that I then thought everyone else around the world uses panels, there must be something in them. And the more I thought about it the more I realised that if you're going to have a substantial debate, having panelists means you can bring in people who may have a bit of expertise, and therefore they have added authority and so they add something to the programme."

There is much of interest in this statement. Firstly, there is a division of labour so that the chairperson's role assumes charge of

balance in the studio, leaving a specialised activity to the panelists. This chairing role is legitimated and empowered by invoking the absence of, and claiming to represent, the audience/"public". Thus, for example, in his introductory statement to "The Leaders Debate", the Chairman claimed: "I'll be interrupting, if necessary, to ensure each leader has a fair share of our time." (emphasis added). Furthermore, both the chairperson and panelist positions invoke the absence of the public neutrally, by not taking a position in controversial situations. This "impartiality", and the way it is practiced by "expert panelists", will be considered in section 7.6. Considerations of balance were important in constituting the panel. The panel was deliberately composed of a precise media "mix" - with one journalist from current affairs television (from "Eyewitness"), an editor of a daily newspaper (Palmerston North's "Evening Standard") and a weekly columnist (from "National Business Review"). This ensured a balanced representation of "the fourth estate".

Politicians also invoke this same absence of "the public" as a condition of their activity. However, they do so not neutrally but partisanly, calling "the people" to their side in order to gain liberal democratic legitimacy. Thus there is (a) potential conflict due to broadcasters' and politicians' different significations of the audiences' absence and (b) persistent struggle between political parties over who most accurately "represents the people". As these dimensions have to do with textual struggle they will be dealt with in part four. It is not a matter, however, of all political parties having an immediate

"right" to participate in political television. This would, for example, create enormous problems for election broadcasting, when political power is precisely "loose" as it is in the process of being redistributed between the parties. Broadcasting exercises considerable ("responsible", hence relative) autonomy in its choice of which politicians may participate within its programmes. This is a crucial component of the practice of balance, in terms of who is taken within its schema, who is excluded, etc. How it is achieved warrants careful consideration.

The signification of elections in political television has two fundamental poles - "the people" (electorate) and political parties. The triennial interaction of these two forces accounts for the liberal democratic nature of contemporary politics, the legitimacy of Parliamentary representation of "the majority". Television's discourse thus limits its signification of political organisation to the contending parties ("the people" exist only as a mass that votes, i.e. individually as citizens), and denies legitimate modes of access to other forms.

The exclusion of these many other forms of organisation (trade unions, employers', federations, etc) reduces politics and elections to the reified interaction between "the voter" and "the party" [11]. Having linked access to parties, the question remains of deciding which parties. By convention the government has absolute access, it is out of the question that a government spokesperson would not appear. The right of the government to present its argument is mediated through the practice of balance to

create the "right to reply". For this reason television's signification of politics frequently takes the form of a debate between opposing parties. Which parties, then, have legitimate access to this debate?

The structure of access which selects the parties to participate in programmes has a determinate relation to the practices which constitute Parliamentary power itself. This is an extension of the determination of the debate format by the direct radio broadcasts of Parliament initiated in 1936 (see chapter 6.6). There are three general criteria that parties must fulfill if they are to be granted regular access (i.e. other than in terms of sporadic "newsworthiness"). Firstly, they must contest all the seats in the electorate. Thus Values was excluded from both "Facing the Nation" and "The Leaders Debate". The Executive Producer claimed that

"I knew earlier in the year that Values didn't exist as a national force, so I never considered that they should be involved. If they were an active political force, with candidates in every seat, then we would have been faced with the difficulty of discussing whether Values should take part or not, but that was never an issue."

The sleight of hand which collapses political activity into national political activity signifies elections as a national event. It assimilates and negates all regional differences, and so emphasises politics as both "nation-wide" and centralised. This reproduces the New Zealand State in its extensively intervening, highly centralised form. This is directly due to the organisation of the B.C.N.Z. as a national institution, as a state apparatus. Secondly, parties must have realised popular support by being

represented in the House. This mode of access to television is a direct appropriation of the electoral constitution of Parliament. Thirdly, parties must demonstrate the potential of realising popular support. This was ascertained by consulting Heylen opinion polls for the year as a whole. The questions of opinion polls ("If an election was held tomorrow, which party would you vote for?" etc) simply extend this same electoral process.

In the past these practices have granted access only to Labour and National. The development of debate programmes has therefore reproduced the State's two party structure. However, in 1981 the three legitimate structures of access included Social Credit, thus early in April the Corporation's Board broke with the past and allocated the same amount of free time to Social Credit as to National and Labour. It was taken for granted (rather than formally decreed) that this decision was important for "Facing the Nation" and "The Leaders Debate". The H.C.A. explained that

"The Board's allocation of free time to the three parties had some consequences for the way that we treated balance. There was a relationship seen between the fact that because Social Credit was given equal free time then consideration should certainly be given, at least in the formal programmes, to applying the same standards between the three parties so that their policies could be examined equally. To do otherwise would be to give less time to one party than to the other two, in terms of the kind of analysis and examination that goes on in current affairs programmes. So the broad decision in that area was that in terms of the two programmes you're looking at, we'd look for equal representation of the three parties, and in terms of day-to-day current affairs it was a matter of editorial judgement, though it was taken into account. I think it would have been difficult to sustain an argument that gave any different ratio of time, or had different participants, minor party participants and the like."

In this way Social Credit for the first time gained access to a programme such as "The Leaders Debate". These decisions were very much informal and based on a commonly accepted sense. For the "Debate's" producer

"it was never a decision, there was never any active discussion on that. Labour, National and Social Credit; I never imagined inviting anyone else."

In fact the 1978 version of "Facing the Nation" had included National, Labour, Social Credit and Values. The reasons for this were two-fold. Firstly, "Facing the Nation's" producer described the programme as having always been conceived with a "less serious" identity than the "Debate", "so that the third party has as much an equal part". Secondly, in the 1978 election Values held approximately 5 percent on the opinion polls. Thus, the producer reasoned,

"they were a minority that had a voice. This year they were running at 1 per cent. It was decided, and it wasn't something that was formally decided. [pause]. Happens a lot in television I guess, you're just chatting to someone about something and say 'hey, what about this?' and there's no way really. I guess if you work in this area there comes a consensus that you just know ... With 1 per cent and when you don't look like holding a seat in Parliament at all, or when obviously the electorate is just not behind you at all, it no longer becomes valid to have you there."

The H.C.A. claimed that once the party participants had been decided "we were just faced with the difficult problem of trying to work out a fair tennis game between three people." Before moving to the effects of this signification of politics as a "fair tennis game", there is one final practice of balance to be considered.

The framing and accessing components of balance are completed

by editorial decisions over the content that "goes into" the frame and is "put to" the participants. For "Facing the Nation" and "The Leaders Debate" this has two dimensions - (a) an aural component, consisting of the questions put to the leaders, and (b) a visual component, consisting of the shots selected for recording. These two parts of the discursive whole can be considered separately. They are not, it must be emphasised, at this stage textual practices. They occur well before the actual process of recording. They are realised in texts unchanged only to the degree that broadcasters succeed in sustaining them, both in terms of their own practice and in terms of potential struggles with and between the participating politicians. This is by no means a necessary eventuality, it could break down in any number of ways. A director may "go for the good shot" and break with the carefully balanced script. A politician may temporarily seize control of the chair and manage the studio (ask questions, etc) to his or her own partisan ends. As we will see, this was not the case with either of the two programmes under study.

The questions for both programmes were carefully mediated by the practice of balance. The letter response for "Facing the Nation" was markedly misbalanced, with many more questions for Muldoon and Rowling than for Beetham. For the producer in charge of this aspect of the programme it was a problem -

"I have to drop it, I can't take all the questions to Muldoon. Or what we do is take one question to him and then throw to Rowling and Beetham on the same one, and that evens up our score, with the questioner having put the question to the person he wanted to."

The other co-producer thought that if this "re-balancing" had not

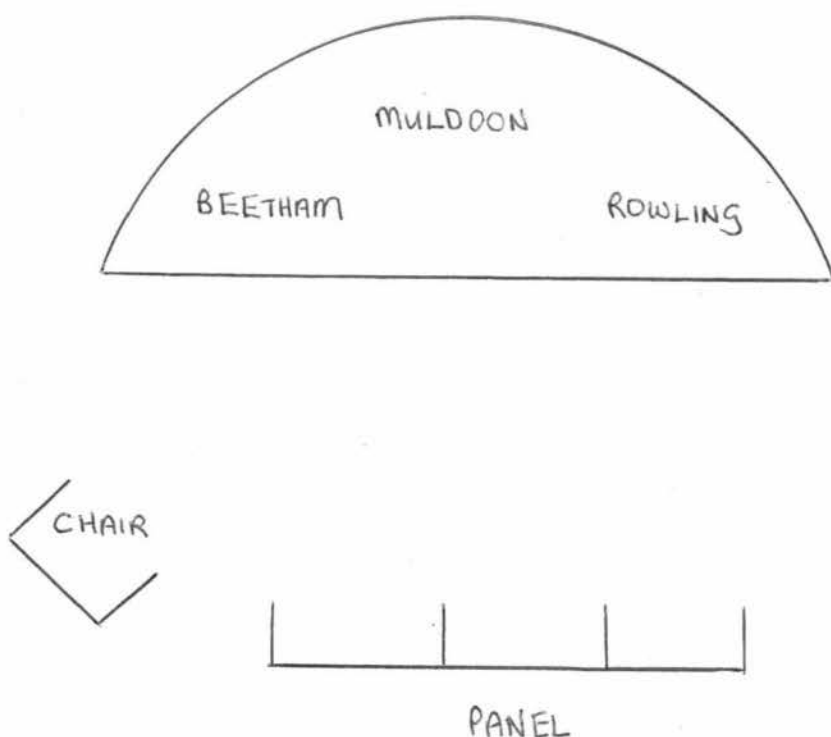
been feasible they would have had to consider writing some questions themselves. Furthermore, tone was evenly distributed, so that each leader received a mixture of "easy" and "curly" questions. In this case the practice of balance constituted those questions received from "outside" broadcasting. The representation of "Facing the Nation" as an unmediated "voice of the people" is clearly misleading. For "The Leaders Debate" the process is superficially different, since the questions were more "internally" produced. The quality of questions was formally secured, it remained only to ensure equality of tone. The H.C.A. commented that

"there was an effort to ensure there was a balanced approach in the way the questions were put, just as a matter of fair play and common sense. In some ways this was easier for the debate. Though they weren't the same questions to each of them, not exactly the same, because as a matter of sense they couldn't be, since the roles of the three parties have been different over the past three years."

In fact some of the questions were identical for each politician. However, for example, the question on leadership became a matter of divisiveness for Muldoon, weakness for Rowling and "the loner" for Beetham. These different lines were carefully weighted - the intended leadership question to Rowling was felt to be (comparatively) too sharp and pejorative and so was "toned down" to match the others.

Scrupulous set design and pre-scripting made balance achievable in terms of the composition of the selected camera shots. This included such basic criteria as equal lighting for all, but extended to seating layout for the studio. This complemented the practice of framing - the formally equal spaces of television time

were also arranged to produce formally equal and discrete picture spaces. Only within this space could a politician be partisan - for example, in his question answer or, here, in his creation of a particular type of picture through gesticulation, facial expression, and voice tone (pointing, incredulity, etc). Thus it would be inconceivable to have a politician actually move in the studio, as this constitutes an "invasion" of arranged space. Having fixed the politicians at a podium (both "wiring them up", and "down", so to speak!), picture "movement" can be simulated with two-shots, three-shots, etc. This, however, is the preserve of the director, not the politician, and so can be balanced out. In this way pronounced symmetries are produced in the images televised. The studio audience for "Facing the Nation" was selected and seated in a balanced fashion - with 30 "bums on seats" requested from the local National, Labour and Social Credit party offices [12]. "The Leaders Debate", as a more complex interaction, illustrates the above concerns clearly. The set design was essentially circular -



This produced balance in three ways. Firstly, there was a symmetry between "questioners" and "answerers". Shots were scripted to reproduce this "looking at each other" (e.g. through the careful matching of eyelines), so that the positions could not be confused of combined. Thus, for example, a three-shot of a questioning panelist with two other panelists was within the practice of balance; a three-shot of a questioning panelist and a politician together looking at the leader being interrogated was not. Secondly, the chairperson position is opposed to the politicians and differentiated from the panelists. This gives it a unique place within balance's schema - that of impartial studio manager. Thus, for example, combined shots of the panel and Chairman showed them seated at different angles vis-a-vis the leaders, though both facing the latter. Thirdly, the Director stated that

"I wanted Muldoon central from the point of view that he is the Government, being challenged by the leaders of the two opposition parties. If I put him on either of the two extremities it would look two against one, ganging up on him. Although they were both opposition parties they weren't together in what they were doing. In the middle Muldoon split it. This was strict in my shooting pattern, I had to work with a structure there."

Individual "talking head" shots of the leaders were the most frequent, and these were also carefully balanced. This led to a succession of mid-close-up shots (M.C.U.s) rather than either much variety or movement (e.g. zooming in to a close-up). The Director explained that

"you go from an M.C.U. to a close-up if it was a particularly important thing the person was saying or if they're under pressure. This didn't apply so much to 'The Leaders Debate' and 'Facing the Nation' because I stuck to M.C.U.s throughout, from balance. Because how can I give a close-up to one politician and never give the other two a close-up

during the whole show?"

Such close balance is not typical of current affairs, as the Director (who is also responsible for "Newsmakers") made clear. This fastidiousness is produced by the particular sensitivity of election broadcasting. The Director explained that

"for 'Newsmakers' its as live from the moment it starts. But these two programmes needed a structure because they were a lot longer and because you've got all the problems of balance. I mean everybody would be really scrutinising it for balance ... I've got an editorial role in the choice of shots I take. You may have noticed that in those two programmes because they were so politically sensitive I defused a lot of that role, especially in the 'Debate', to [the Producer], I threw it back on him. The reason for that is I'm very tied up in what I'm doing. Your directorial instincts are often to go for the best shot, the best picture. OK, now that may not be editorially sound. So you may have noticed in the control room I would say 'can I take a cutaway on this?' and he may have commented a few times 'I don't like that shot', its out of balance in that I was showing Muldoon against black, whereas the others had been shown previously against the striped background, which was a more pleasant shot."

Set design and scripting produced a symmetrical series of images - three-shots of the panel matched by three-shots of the leaders, M.C.U. of questioner by M.C.U. of respondent, etc. They thus completed the other components of the practice of balance considered above.

In this section the complexity of balancing has been demonstrated in considerable detail. Balance is not at all a simple procedure, but is itself a corpus of specific broadcasting practices (framing, accessing, editorialising). It remains to show how this united corpus structures current affairs topics in the process of communicating them. This has been pointed to already,

for example on terms of the signification of politics as a national event. What follows is a more systematic analysis, by assessing the effects of modes of accessing in particular.

The legitimate structures of access ensure the presence of a plurality of positions in the signification of controversial material through current affairs debate. They also fix a precise range and emphasis for this plurality, and thus establish definite limits and qualities for the elaboration of the topic. Political balance is essentially a matter of the legitimate mass parties in the parliamentary system. Modes of access are simultaneously modes of exclusion. Those organisations outside the partliamentary system are denied participation, or at least have to gain it through struggle. Part of the stability of liberal democratic capitalism is, of course, that such organisations would never even consider participating. In this way television's discourse depends upon the containment of class conflict acheived elsewhere. Thus, for example, it depends upon the containment of working class militancy by the F.O.L., and in turn on the F.O.L.'s endorsement of the Labour Party as a satisfactory "representation" of working class interests. Television's balance derives from and operates within this structure of political order. Its discourse reproduces (overdetermines) that same order ideologically.

The process of inclusion and exclusion in "Facing the Nation", for example, precisely reproduced the liberal democratic practice of election as an interaction between parties and individual voters, without the mediation of other forms of organisation. That

this entailed an active attempt by television to overcome or destroy these non-parliamentary forms of organisation will be considered in part four. By excluding certain positions, television's discourse ensures that they remain invisible, outside "the democratic process".

One deduction from the assertion that television is determined by the dominant political order is that its signification practices depend upon definite parliamentary structures. This has already been shown generally in terms of the debate format. It is further substantiated in terms of the relationship between "The Leaders Debate", in particular, and the two-party system. Many of the journalists were unhappy with the equal time granted Social Credit, since the party was outside this system. One commented that

"I have grave reservations about the question of totally equal participation on the part of Beetham, in the light of the number of questions we had to really strain to develop, because first of all in terms of a Social Credit M.P.'s obligations he's obligated virtually to nothing except the party's financial policies. Now going beyond that, what is the point of asking any other questions, since the answer you get may vary depending on who you're talking to. So they don't fit within the format, if you like, of the typical and traditional political debate of the country. It's very difficult to accommodate them in the structure. I tend to think that where we've got two parties who are in direct competition with each other, the mainstream of New Zealand politics, then we should create a forum in which that contest can be conducted. It can't be conducted in a three-way situation, I don't think. I think there should be a debate programme because we've got two parties whose policies are directly aimed in competition with each other. We've got a third party offering alternatives in almost every respect to the style of political conduct which National and Labour traditionally deliver."

The link between a mode of signification and political practice is

very clearly asserted. Thus, for example, the question on unemployment to Beetham began by asking why in Social Credit's manifesto "there is only one small remark on the problem of unemployment" when this was an issue "obviously in the minds [!] of most of the country". Beetham began by claiming that "if you look through the financial section, you will find many of the answers to the question". At this point the questioner interjected (the only time in the entire programme that a panelist broke into a politician's time allotment) with, "but no specifics, no details, Mr Beetham". Nevertheless, Beetham continued to use his 90 seconds to signify politics in terms of his party's fiscal policy. The questioner began the follow-up with - "Mr Beetham, if we can actually talk about the problem of unemployment ...", but the Social Credit leader responded as before. Broadcasting's partisan commitment to a particular form of politics is quite clear. Some of the journalists interviewed felt that with three parties it would be better to actually drop the debate format altogether and use one-to-one intensive interviews. It must be noted that if a party such as Social Credit caused such "significant" problems for television, one can scarcely imagine what would result from the inclusion of other "more extreme" forms of political organisation.

A balanced debate between Labour and National (and now Social Credit) is framed by relationships produced elsewhere. Television uncritically reproduces these relationships by accepting them as the foundation of its discourse. There is a uniform terrain of legitimate political activity on which all parties stand together. Television does not push a particular party line but it does

reproduce this terrain (the liberal consensus) and excludes and represses any form of political practice which takes place outside or challenges its principles. By operating balance within this structure, when television represents conflict it also contains it. The meticulous balancing of parties legitimates the dominant structure of interests by unreflectively reproducing those class conflicts institutionalised and contained by the State's stabilisation of the system as a whole. (see Hall, 1972, p14). Thus, for example, on the question of relationships with unions all parties fundamentally agreed that government needs both a good "working relationship" with unions but also has to be separate from them, able to resist their demands and override them in "the interests of the nation". This then became the "common sense" upon which particular parties argued their differences. The struggle between parties over these differences will be considered in part four. By reproducing this "common sense", television's presentation reproduces the exact form of the New Zealand State's intervention - its simultaneous taking up and regulation of class interests. It places working class forms of organisation outside the legitimate arena of political activity by excluding their position from the structured controversy. This represents politics (and the State) as something which "acts on" (makes policies about) and is unrelated to class interests. Thus unions, "irrational and unrealistic" to the extent that they operate against the common sense accepted by all the parties.

This "common sense" is accepted by broadcasters and constitutes the basis from which they derive questions. This can be

illustrated by considering the (pre-arranged) questions on unemployment in "The Leaders Debate":

"Mr Rowling, the first question is to you. Your priority is a quick return to full employment, you guarantee a job for every school-leaver, yet you're hesitant about the big energy-related projects and you're committed to more spending on government services. Where is the production base for all these new jobs, or are they simply cosmetic, returning little revenue for the country? ... You've said that if that doesn't work and you're not able to provide enough growth in the private sector, your back-stop position is quote 'a nation-wide public sector employment scheme!' Now that sounds like boosting the public service [shaking head], or is it just jobs for jobs sake?...

Mr Beetham, now its your turn. In your 108 page manifesto [Holds up and shows copy to camera] there is only one small remark on the problem of unemployment. Don't you think that a problem which obviously is in the minds of most of the country and should have more policy attention than this?

...
Mr Beetham, if we can actually talk about unemployment - you do mention quote 'a job intensive regionally based New Zealand development strategy'. Again there are no details. Are the regions expected to come up with the details [shrugs shoulders], how is this going to work? ... Mr Muldoon, National's programme to deal with unemployment is to try to develop our established industries and of course the new big energy-related projects. But after six years of your management the established industries have left 60,000 people unemployed and by your own reckoning won't generate the overseas funds needed to underpin the new jobs until 1986, 1990. What's your pledge to reduce unemployment right now, and what's your schedule to do that for in the next three years? ...

Just quickly, Mr Muldoon, you say 410,000 jobs in the next 10 years, how many in the next three?"

The exclusion of a certain range of voices reduces the signification of unemployment to state policies on unemployment. The production of unemployed people by the economic relations between classes entirely escapes the brief of the programme. This provides two poles of signification for broadcasters. Firstly, there is "the nation", for whom the absence of jobs is a problem.

Hence, for example, the idea that unemployment stands in different relations to different classes is repressed. Unemployment becomes simply a numerical problem, a problem for all rather than for definite social categories of people. "No jobs" becomes exactly the same sort of problem for the employed as it is for the unemployed; indeed as it is for all races, sexes and classes. Broadcasters invoke this uniform "public sentiment" to legitimate the topic itself. Secondly, the limitation of access to political limits questions to party policy. Hence the frequent use of quotation and the flashing of the manifesto. Unemployment becomes a matter of State policy - essentially a question of "how many jobs will you create?" This question form and the signification of unemployment as a general problem for "the people" combine to reproduce the New Zealand State's position regarding full employment. Intervention to ensure a sufficient number of jobs is a way of simultaneously "overcoming" and ignoring (hence preserving) structural contradiction in the mode of production. It represents parties as merely active creators of policy, solving a problem "outside" them rather than being themselves constituted within the terms of such struggles.

In this way television's discourse signifies the State as the neutral caretaker of the national interest. Unemployment is to be solved within the existing structure of relationships by the centralised, intervening State. This explains the "problem" with Social Credit - policy should be specific and detailed, not open and left to other forms of organisation ("the regions", for example). Of course, the very reason for referring to "the

regions" is precisely that they are not organisations but simply non-national, geographical aggregates of people. This is taken as a sign of political inadequacy. Furthermore, the broadcasters' questions reproduce the particular type of intervention characteristic of the New Zealand State. Unemployment is to be solved by regulation at a distance from the economy rather than direct State involvement - this is the logic behind the questions to Rowling. Policies must be quickly effective, solving the problem remedially within the present structure of relations. Thus the questions to Muldoon pushed National's "Think Big" policies (which proposed a new form of State intervention outside the preservation of small capital) back into the form of "what can you do here and now?"

In this way broadcasting's practice of balance reproduces the form of the New Zealand State established since the late 1930s. Balance is a practice of signification organised within this State structure, accomplishing the above reproduction by effecting systematic ideological concealment. Politics is signified as a formal realm unconnected to class struggle. The partisan connection between broadcasting's own practices and the existing form of politics is obscured by the differentiation accomplished within this formal schema of balance. Television's routines cohere into a rigid "professionalism". This is a defensive barrier which insulates the broadcaster from the struggles involved in controversial programmes. The representation of this professionalism as class-less and neutral is a complete illusion, probably characteristic of contradictory class locations. Together

they conceal the structured conflicts of interest in the New Zealand social formation and so eternalise the existing order by presenting it as inherently stable. New Zealand is signified as a united "nation". Policies are addressed to this whole, not to any portions of it. The formal distribution of balance locates solutions to "social problems" within the existing dispensation by excluding forces and forms of organisation which could transcend it. This represents the system favourably, precisely as "open to conflict" and thus as flexible and worthy. Anything outside this specific rationality must appear as "dogma", "irrational", etc. In this way the practice of balance ideologically reproduces the State as a whole, rather than any partisan section of it.

7.6 - IMPARTIALITY

The practice of balance in current affairs television is complemented by that of impartiality. Impartiality refers to the manner in which broadcasters act within situations of conflict - their avoidance of expressing personal opinions and commitment to a rigorous neutrality between opposing parties. Thus one could argue, as does the Principles and Practice, that "balance is an essential element in this demonstration of impartiality" (section 5.1). The practices of balance analysed above express this neutrality (though only by assigning it very definite limits). However, the impartiality to be considered here is confined to a specific function within this expression. Within a balanced programme a number of types of activity take place. In "Facing the Nation" and "The Leaders Debate" there is a fundamental

differentiation between the activity of politicians and that of broadcasters. We are interested in the specific (impartial) labour of the latter, not the proselytizing of the former.

The complex "unity in difference" of balance and impartiality can be quickly demonstrated in terms of the visual images of the programmes under study. In section 7.5 it has been shown how these were arranged to create a balanced series of "picture spaces". This is simultaneously an expression of impartiality. Television indicates its neutrality vis-a-vis the differing positions by evenly distributing the empty frames. To give Social Credit, for example, less than the other two parties would imply an evaluation by the Corporation. This explains why if Social Credit was to appear at all in these two programmes it had to appear equally - otherwise signs of partiality would have been impossible to repress. Furthermore, there is an active attempt to balance out the composition of these frames directorally. To do otherwise would put television in the position of seeming to favour one of the participants more or less than the others (by making them "look nicer"). For example, in the studio immediately before the recording of "The Leaders Debate" Muldoon stated that he would sit during most of the programme and not stand at his podium. In the control room this was discussed anxiously and various camera angles experimented with. The Director commented: "he looks bloody silly, but we'll just have to shoot him like that". The Producer, however, insisted: "no, we'll have to use the wide-angle shots". In this way Muldoon's desire was accommodated and television preserved its appearance of disinterestedness. Impartiality,

clearly, is by no means a passive activity. The preference of M.C.U.s as a shot, and cutting (rather than panning, zooming or crabbing) as a transition between shots, to also an index of both balance and impartiality. Not only do these practices make shots easier to balance out, but they also reduce obvious editorial intervention by broadcasters themselves. The Director explained -

"once you start moving a camera around you are really editorialising a hell of a lot. Like for instance with crabbing, where the whole camera moves around, rather than just panning where its the lens. If you crab around a panel it gives it a soft flavour, it gives it a flow, its own momentum. Now in current affairs very often things aren't flowing, so you tend to cut bang, bang, bang, it sharpens it up, gives it a much harsher focus. In any talking head programme I think you'd just have to cut rather than move around ... With M.C.U.s I think you are presenting a neutral image, you are using television as a tool and retaining its neutrality, rather than emphasising conflict, which I do on 'Newsmakers', by taking an over-the-shoulder shot if they are arguing, or by closing up on a crucial question where you know that it is very important or whether its a close personal thing."

Clearly, there is a distinctive current affairs aesthetic. Its operation in "Facing the Nation" and "The Leaders Debate" implies the impartial "showing what is happening in the studio" rather than "deciding what is important and what is not in the studio". It must be noted in passing that the above representation of the "neutral image" as somehow merely the result of allowing the technological means of production "their own way" ("retaining its neutrality") is ideological. The collapsing of impartiality into the supposed objectivity of machinery conceals the constant editorial selections made by broadcasters. Tools (e.g. cameras) are not "neutral" in this sense, in order to be used at all they have to be taken up within the determinate practices of a social

group. Cameras do not "on their own" produce M.C.U.s. Both "Facing the Nation" and "The Leaders Debate" rely to the same degree on broadcasters' decisions as do any other current affairs programme (not "moving a camera around" is an editorial decision).

Only within the distributed and composed frames do the participants begin to exercise some discretion. It is here that the difference between politicians' partisan intervention and broadcasters' impartial one is accentuated. Within their limited frame politicians can modulate voice, body and verbal speech to break with impartiality. In this way they can signify pleasure, scorn, conviction, compassion, incredulity, etc. Broadcasters, however, must not break with the impartial design but extend it. Thus, for example, their modulation of voice, body and speech tends to signify concern only to the extent that the question hasn't been properly answered, an earnest even-ness, dispassionate rationality, etc. They rarely either smile or frown. It is this practice, and thus the chairperson and "expert panel" positions in particular, that we are interested in. How does it combine with the Director's "much harsher focus" to produce a specific current affairs' intervention in politics?

The selection of the panel and their questions for "The Leaders Debate" were carefully neutralised. The need for panelists to be impartial ruled out as potential participants all those with a political "stake" (e.g. other politicians, trade unionists, feminists, employers' representatives). As the requirement was for "disinterested inquiry" rather than "disinterested comment the

panel was composed of journalists (e.g. rather than political scientists) [13]. In part they were selected as "experts". The Executive Producer explained -

"my idea was of getting in panelists who had some sort of expertise or authority on particular subjects. For example, it was very important to me that [the "National Business Review" journalist] asked the questions on leadership, because that's something he's spent a lot of time thinking and writing about."

Experts participate in current affairs only by speaking in a non-partisan fashion. They must be informed and uncommitted, capable of providing skilled and shrewd assessments. Having a panel actually present (e.g. rather than using a panel to draft the questions and having delivered by the chair) adds weight to the signification of impartiality.

Part of the impartiality of the questions asked in "The Leaders Debate" derived from the claim made in various forms by all the broadcasters that they themselves did not actively determine the areas covered. Important issues demanding attention were "out there" and simply "recognised" by the journalists. The methods of this recognition were the year's Heylen polls, newspaper clippings, public statements by the three parties about what was important in the election and the ineffable "news sense". One of the journalists described the programme's final production meeting thus

-

"we all threw topics into the ring, and then we came to a kind of consensus. Finally it gets down to news sense, journalistic judgement, whatever you like. Because we spend all our time reporting on issues we're in touch with what's happening."

Clearly the practice of impartiality (like balance) to a degree

reproduces issues as they have been prestructured elsewhere. Once the issues have been identified (along with their prestructurings) it becomes a matter of the impartial, equally stringent interrogation of each of the party representatives. One journalist explained that

"we really tried to hone those questions up so that they were extremely pointed, so that we could come up with the most pointed question for each of them on each area ... one of the things I always try to do in questioning is to find a quote which would substantiate a line of questioning, which would authenticate it. A politician finds it very difficult to disown his or her own words."

Impartiality as the refusal to accept responsibility for the definition of issues means questioning begins from their prestructured form, such as politicians' "own words". This was the logic behind the final section of "The Leaders Debate", where the leaders each had three minutes to sum up. For the Producer

"it just seemed to me axiomatic, after a programme of any duration, you sort of say to the leader if you hated the whole show you've got three minutes to right it."

Handing over the programme for completion to the politicians themselves is an overt and confident signification of impartiality. All three leaders accepted and reinforced the (limited) neutrality of television by using their three minutes to discuss policy, not to attack the medium for bias.

In both programmes the neutral role of chairperson reinforced television's refusal to express an overt view. This even extended to the final production meeting for "The Leaders Debate", where the Chairman emphasised

"while I would play a role in distilling the

questions down, I tended to sit back off at the part where we identified the areas to be questioned. My job was to sharpen the pencils, not to make them."

The programme rules sent out to the politicians stated that "the opening rule for the chairman will be to ensure the rules are maintained in a spirit of fair play". Precisely by being neutral he was able to ensure the programme remained balanced. His role consisted essentially of two functions. Firstly, he ensured the mechanisms of time-keeping were uniformly adhered to. He was the only one vested with the power to interrupt. In audio-visual terms this meant he was the only one who could appear simply as a voice cutting into the speaking politician on camera. All other participants were contained within their balanced unity of picture and sound. Secondly, he appeared as a picture/sound unity at the point of transition. At all of these points he was responsible for signifying a neutral terrain of journalistic investigation. Thus, for example, he introduced "The Leaders Debate" (to camera) -

"Good evening. I'm David Beatson. With less than a week to go before polling day now, the three main party leaders are meeting on television for the second time ... [introduces politicians, who] have of course spent the bulk of the campaign outlining their basic policies. Tonight they face the scrutiny of our panel of questioners, all specialists in political journalism. With me are ... [introduces panel, goes on to describe timekeeping procedures, etc.]."

The chair is established as impartial by being the position from which the participants are introduced (he is the only one permitted to introduce himself) and from which the balanced nature of the programme is described for the audience (e.g. one of the politicians could not do it without provoking suspicion). The programme is signified as being determined by issues outside

television (polling day, the leaders' campaigning) which are to be impartially and expertly "scrutinised". The Chair repeats this contextualising for each question transition in the programme. For example -

"This year, we've seen trade unions campaigning against lay-offs by bargaining for a shorter working week. Exploring the differences on that issue - Karen Sims."

In order for issues deriving from class struggles to appear within this programme they must be identified with the activity of the participants. Hence unions, like parties, are also said to "campaign", though obviously with less legitimacy since their representatives are excluded from the programme. This collapses class struggle into the same form of activity as the contest between parties within the liberal democratic parliament, insisting therefore that their resolution will be similarly contained within the existing dispensation. Thus the issue is appropriated only in its prestructured form, as the rational "bargaining" through the State-secured process of conciliation and arbitration. The exclusion of a union voice from the programme reduces the struggle over the working week to its "representation" in differences between parties, "explored" by the neutral journalist.

The Chair is neutral by being an object, defined solely in terms of what it immediately does (studio management) and with the subjective characteristics of the individual who fills the position constantly repressed. In this sense it is different from the panel, whose authority ("expertise") exists outside the studio. Thus the Chairman introduced himself by name only, but the panelists by name and journalistic credentials. This complete

neutrality is the condition that allows the Chair to be the only position scripted directly to the camera [14]. Both the panelists and Chairman are united, however, by their claim to legitimately interrogate politicians because "the public" cannot put their questions themselves. The absence of any truly popular participation in programme production simultaneously legitimates broadcasters' intervention and limits it to a neutral position. This was somewhat different for "Facing the Nation" and "The Leaders Debate". "Facing the Nation" was represented at its most neutral, as simply a medium conveying the concerns of "the people" to the politicians. The Executive Producer claimed that

"the difference is that 'Facing the Nation' was not 100 people, they'd written in and asked questions. It was their programme, in that sense, we were only providing a forum. In 'The Leaders Debate' it was very much television's programme and we had to ensure that the questions were covered in a way that we felt they should be."

The production of "Facing the Nation" emphasised this neutrality by constantly attempting to signify the presence of its audience. The Chairman represented himself simply as a mouthpiece "saying your words", introducing the programme by waving a pile of letters. Each question was carefully linked to the questioner's name and place of dwelling. The video inserts were in the "vox pop" form - bringing the man/woman-in-the-street" into the studio. This was the logic behind having a studio audience, and having questioners brought in to sit in that audience. All these practices signified neutrality as an unproblematic, passive "transportation" of words. The concealment of the mediating and constitutive interventions by broadcasters accomplishes ideological work - the signification of impartiality is an active and consciously manipulated practice.

Thus, for example, the letter responses were carefully balanced to the leaders. The production of "The Leaders Debate" constantly signified the absence of its audience. Impartial journalistic investigation was presented as something done for the public. The Producer explained -

"people have a right for us to question on their behalf and for us to discover on their behalf what's going on in this place."

The broadcaster situates him/herself as a neutral mediator between "the people" and political power. In both programmes, then, the broadcasters' signification of politics attempts to push their own form of rational impartiality back onto their audience. What ideological effects are produced by this practice?

The practice of impartiality signifies politics ideologically in a number of ways. Firstly, as has been shown it reproduces issues as they have been pre-structured. It neither "sees" nor critically challenges the different interests served by this prestructuring. As this has been considered in the previous section on balance it will not be repeated here. Through impartiality television claims to avoid expressing overt views. Neutrality is presented as the achievement of an unmediated transfer between "politics" and "people", without a significant editorial input by broadcasters themselves. This is signified by the very titles of the programmes. "Facing the Nation" represents the leaders standing directly before "the people's" interrogation, with no third party. "The Leaders Debate" refers only to an interaction between the politicians before an implied audience. The practice of impartiality constantly represses the active

presence of broadcasters. It conceals the fact that they must constantly editorialise, in terms of the selection of content, etc. It therefore conceals the "in the last instance" partisan intervention of current affairs television in politics.

Impartiality forces broadcasting to actively create a false symmetry of issues and positions. All controversial material must be situated within a number of carefully equalised positions. Neutrality means giving each side the same weight, and while this ensures broadcasters' impartiality it hardly advances the truth (indeed it has nothing to do with truth). The equivalences that result are purely formal, with little relationship to the real and quite unequal substances of the cases for each side. This symmetry typically creates a "zero sum" effect which permanently frustrates the journalists themselves in their desire to "help the people make up their minds". This frustration is a necessary contradiction that sustains their own practice. Thus, for example, some of the journalists interviewed felt that Social Credit should not have been in "The Leaders Debate" since it lacked the substance of the other two parties. They felt they had to push too hard to raise Social Credit to where it could be questioned "neutrally" (i.e. the same as National and Labour). The format of the programme provided similar problems -

"there wasn't the opportunity to vary the amount of time you devoted to each area. Every topic assumed equal significance even if they aren't really of equal significance by any objective journalistic measure. It is very hard at this stage to rate the Springbok Tour as an issue of equal import as that of tax reform or fight against inflation. We were running up against the format itself all the time."

This contradiction is illustrated very clearly by a comparison with

an election "Eyewitness" programme comparing the education policies of each party. The programme canvassed not only party representatives but also other groups. Here is the crucial difference from "Facing the Nation" and "The Leaders Debate", since it sought not only policy statements but also the different interests of various groups and to objectively assess the effects of party policies. These latter were systematically excluded from the two programmes under study. The "Eyewitness" programme was subsequently charged with bias against the National party, and the reporter resigned. In an inhouse document circulated within current affairs television, one journalist commented -

"the less said about 'Eyewitness' on education the better. Its been dealt with already. But the programme does raise one question: what happens when one party offers a policy which is clearly better than the others? Do we bland this policy down and pump up the others to avoid accusations of bias? Or do we report the facts and take the flack? Reporters need to know where the Corporation stands."

At first thought it may seem amazing that this problem does not appear constantly, as a necessary consequence of having different and competing parties. How is it that impartiality typically functions without systematically causing precisely this tension? The demand for a clear policy, rather than the suggested ad hoc agreement, would seem clear. One might expect to see written somewhere - "through balance and impartiality sometimes one party will emerge as obviously superior to the others; it is the broadcasters' responsibility to communicate this to the audience".

There are two reasons why this is not so. Firstly, the legitimate structure of access typically keeps out any interests

that do not square within the current affairs signification of impartiality. By limiting access usually to the mass parties a particular common ground has been created, that of the extensively intervening, centralised form of the New Zealand State. All parties have accepted and worked within this basic structure (see chapter five), which therefore also became the basis of television's signification of balance and impartiality in elections. Thus "Facing the Nation" and "The Leaders Debate" were limited to party expressions of political policy and "opinion". Secondly, within this common ground television limits itself to the impartial and rational inspection of policy, and forsakes the attempt to arrive at positive or negative evaluations. The task of preferring remains the preserve of the audience/voter. This division creates the principle ideological effect of the practice of impartiality.

The distinction between comparison and evaluation was one mentioned as very important by many of the journalists responsible for the two programmes under study. It was also the source of some argument between the broadcasters, particularly in respect of "The Leaders Debate". One interview interaction caught this tension very well and is worth quoting at length -

Q: "What are the advantages of the 'Debate's' format?"

A: I think the advantages from the audience's point of view, and I guess that's the important point of view, is that it does give the information. If somebody sat through the programme they would see each of the party leaders talking about their policies, their promises, their attitudes, in turn one after the other. So they could compare the answers and make some kind of a decision on it, if they wanted to use that as a basis for making a decision. The formality of the format allows that

to happen. Covering the issues in this formal way, that would constitute a success for the kind of programme as it was devised and presented. Other people have different perceptions of what a programme of that kind might do or should do.

Q: Would you agree that the two programmes were essentially a competition between the three politicians?

A: Well, that's what an election campaign is.

Q: Would you say that one of the tasks of the programmes was to provide a situation in which the politicians competed?

All television programmes do that, but ... yeah, in that they were given equal opportunities to answer approximately equal questions. Then the audience is in a better position to decide between the three policies or the three leaders, depending on whether they're more interested in leaders or in policies.

Q: Is a corollary of that function that you feel you have to provide a situation in which one of the leaders is able to win?

A: No [pause] I see it more as a comparison situation than a competition situation. We don't have it in mind that one will emerge bloody but triumphant. That's up to the way they answer the questions, isn't it. The format does give the opportunity for that kind of result, I suppose, if they choose to use it in that way. But comparison I think is more the characteristic of the programme than competition.

Q: Are there any disadvantages to the 'Debate's' type of format?

A: Yes. The formality and lack of argument and interchange, although its important to make sure that the issues are canvassed and the people get a fair go, means that it may be too stiff. That may be a disadvantage of it, but I think its outweighed by the advantages of having ensured that the issues are covered fairly and that people get a full range of information of important issues. There might be a nice compromise somewhere, we spent a bloody long time trying to see what it was, and what we showed was what we arrived at, was a recognition that we saw one side of it as more important than the other.

Q: So the programme would have failed if this formality had broken down?

A: Well, it depends on how you measure success. There is the opportunity for the leaders to present their arguments brightly and concisely or whatever. Its a programme that offers them an opportunity as well as the viewers an opportunity. But in terms of the way the programme was outlined yeah, it would have failed in its aims if it had been for instance a

long squabble about the amount of time allocated to people or a constant series of interruptions. That didn't happen. That wouldn't have been terribly productive in terms of what we were aiming to do."

The above dialogue contains much of interest, some of which has already been considered. Television represents itself as neutrally recreating "what an election campaign is", so as to provide information for the viewers. The viewer is expected to use this information to cast his or her vote rationally, that is, based on the careful comparison of what is offered and deciding what is "best". Ideological labour begins precisely at this point, by insisting that a neutral representation of a campaign is in some way an adequate, unproblematic reflection of "what a campaign is". This signifies voting as "rationally making up your mind". Thus the introduction in "Facing the Nation" explained that the leaders "are here tonight to answer your questions, to help you make up your mind who should govern the country after November the 28th."

The broadcaster in the above dialogue quite correctly emphasised repeatedly that there are a number of "different perceptions" involved here, that politicians can act in any way and that members of the audience can approach the programmes in diverse manners also. Nevertheless, while the situation is open (i.e. subject to other determinations) there has been a self-confessed attempt to make those practices by which television signifies politics dominant, to make sure that the practice of "rational comparison" wins through. There is a definite process of preferring, television's discourse explicitly recognises "one side of it as more important than the other". This establishes "rational comparison", "debate" and "informed speculation" as the

preferred reading [15]. This is a form of intervention specific to television, since politicians clearly want to "win" and frequently use a number of non-rational means (bluster, sarcasm, volume, etc) to achieve this. Nevertheless, politicians typically (as in the two programmes under study) contain their televised conflict within television's preferred discourse. The notorious instances where this was not so (such as the 1969 Edward's interview of Muldoon and Finlay) are famous precisely because they are rare. Politicians agree to this limitation because it is quite possible for a viewer to accept both television's preferred reading and to conclude that one of the leaders is "better" than the others. The basis of this evaluation would be television's own "rational comparison". Indeed, it must be argued that this agreement is functional, in that it ideologically reproduces the separation of class and party. It signifies parties precisely as popular mass parties so that, for example, a working class subject could vote for the conservative party. Television's discourse attempts to force its own impartiality back onto the audience (i.e. it says "this is how we suggest you should vote", not "this is who you should vote for"). This is ideological labour.

It is ideological labour because it effects concealment by enforcing a pragmatic view of politics. Via impartiality television's discourse attempts to raise both itself and the voting audience above the conflicts it scrutinises. Reporting on, commenting and voting are all signified as rational activities external to the real play of interests in society. "Informed speculation" is supposed to produce the "informed spectator", who

reflects on and judges these conflicts but does not participate in them. In this way television's discourse secures the separation of politics from "the people". "The people" are signified as individual and dispassionate spectators before the spectacle of a partisan and impassioned struggle. This reproduces the form of non-participation necessary for the liberal democratic practice of political "representation". It reduces politics to individual choice rather than commitment and activism. The representation of political practice as dispassionate individual preference conceals its determination by the structured clash of interests. Television simultaneously preserves its own practice by presenting it as the product of an asocial, analytic rationality. This conceals its dialectical determination by (and partisan commitment to) the particular political practice from which its programmes' "truth" is created.

As has been shown above, the final reference for broadcasters' impartiality is "the nation as a whole". Television's discourse encourages the viewer to accept this as the rational basis for his or her voting, not those sectarian interests which identify the notion of a unified "nation" as little more than an ideological fiction. This explains why journalists and politicians typically co-exist in what Althusser has called a "teeth-gritting harmony". Although current affairs television and political parties signify their audience differently, the "two audiences" are not opposed by complementary. In stable liberal democracies parties present themselves not as class parties ("I represent the bourgeoisie") but as the popular caretakers of that same "national good" the

broadcasters invoke. Thus television signifies the voters the parties demand. The parties accept this and attempt merely to direct the limited mobilisation it entails (voting). The harmony between these two practices was neatly summed up by one journalist commenting on "The Leaders Debate" -

"the function of the programme is first of all to put politicians into a fairly typical political situation. It was an opportunity for the politicians to reach the public consistent with their norm of behaviour."

In this way the determinate limits of impartiality, as with balance, ensure the ideological reproduction of the existing dominant mode of political practice.

7.7 - CONCLUSION

In this chapter the ideological structuring of messages accomplished by the two dominant and interconnected signification practices of current affairs television (balance and impartiality) were considered in detail. For reasons of space, other less important practices, such as objectivity, were not analysed. Objectivity refers to the process through which television suppresses its own technological means of reproduction (e.g. by subsequently editing out a shot in "The Leaders Debate" in which a camera operator was visible, by striving to conceal the earphone that linked the chairman to the control room). This conceals the constant editorial decisions necessary for the televising of any event, disguising the thoroughly manipulated nature of the medium. It represents the televising of politics as a "natural" process rather than the socially determined product of a particular form of

intervention.

Particular combinations of broadcasting's practices of signification become reified into coherent formats. As these formats "work" within the dominant mode of political practice they are endlessly repeated. One producer explained -

"once you've got a format there, its an inherited thing, and if you have no drive or passion to change the format then you know what you've got to do. You know today's Wednesday and so you've got to be filming. You fill the slots."

Formats obviously both stabilise television's routines and produce a marked lack of critical self-awareness. This enables decisions to be left to "the last minute". In New Zealand there has been a debate between political party leaders in every election campaign since 1969. A "Facing the Nation" format was first used in 1975. The determinate connection between these formats and the liberal democratic form of politics has both intentional and historical dimensions. The debate format is widely used by the televisions of many modern liberal democratic contries. As part of the preparation for "The Leaders Debate" the producer consulted filmed copies of American, Canadian, French and Dutch debates [16]. Historically, debates have been part of the signification of politics in New Zealand since the original broadcasting of Parliament in 1936 (see chapter 6.5). Thus, for example, in 1947 the Commercial Division began a radio programme called "Citizens' Forum", a panel discussion with studio audience participation. An impartial chairperson kept control while expert panelists "opened up" an issue, followed by questions and opinions from the floor. Station managements found that organised groups were moving in to

argue their sectarian views and control was tightened until the end of the programme in 1950 (see Hall, 1980, pp164-166). Within such a programme is the germ of both "The Leaders Debate" and "Facing the Nation". That this took place as early as the 1940s, and involved radio (not television), indicates clearly that it is the established relations within the State that are determinant. As argued throughout chapters 5 and 6.6, the stability of the New Zealand State structure has meant considerably less change in broadcasting than is commonly supposed. Possible formats have been limited to those which successfully reproduce that form of the State. Thus the struggles within "Citizens' Forum" limited popular participation to rational, individual speculation and excluded forms of popular organisation, exactly as do the modern practices of balance and impartiality analysed above.

Hall (1975, p105) argues that in fact possible formats are limited to essentially two variants. His categories correspond closely to the two programmes under study. These are

- (1) the "demotic variant" - which insists that television is an unmediated link between "the people" and the leaders, that the medium simply transports "what the people say". This is exactly the logic of "Facing the Nation";
- (2) the "paternalist variant" - which insists that television must translate the complex realities of politics into terms understandable by the "man/woman-in-the-street", that broadcasters act for "the people", using skills the latter lack. This is exactly the logic of "The Leaders Debate".

Both variations signify the audience as a mass of undifferentiated

and isolated individuals, without the capacity to organise. This is the functional dimension of the practices of broadcasting, its ideological reproduction of a particular form of political practice.

The signification accomplished through such means as balance and impartiality has been shown to reproduce a definite form of political practice in the New Zealand social formation. Through such significations broadcasters realise both their relative autonomy and remain within the mode of reality of the State, as part of its exercise of hegemony. Determination is not a matter (typically) of "external influences", bias, conspiracy, etc, but of the relatively autonomous, everyday practices of current affairs television. The B.C.N.Z. operates in a liberal social formation, within a formal system of democracy. It is accepted that there are many groups with diverse interests contending for power. Television explicitly signifies this plurality by systematically representing more than one point of view. However, it also contains this plurality within the liberal consensus. In particular, it reproduces the parliamentary resolution of conflict, where struggle is regulated within bounds that do not challenge the structuring principles of the social formation (State intervention, private ownership, etc).

Broadcasting thus attempts to contain political political struggle within the regulated conflict between parties, it is part of the political practice of a formal democracy. This reproduces the liberal class society, in which the "national interest" is

represented as the structured clash within Parliament. Parliamentary parties are all united by their loyalty to the structures of constraint which order their opposition (the two-party parliamentary form, the rule of law, etc). Television thus reproduces the unity of the parliamentary system as a whole. This represents the parliamentary form of political practice as neutral and independent from the struggles in society. It is signified as both an infallible and adequate resolution of these conflicts, as a universal form of activity for the entire social formation beyond the need for or possibility of historical change. Forces attempting to operate outside its constitutional limits must appear as irrational "threats to society". The State's stabilisation of the social formation as capitalist is in this way represented as the general interest.

Television is committed to the party system, not to particular parties. In an election campaign, parties campaign for election, television campaigns for elections. Thus television is not neutral in relation to the political structure as a whole, but partisanly advocates the capitalist State as a parliamentary democracy.

By reproducing this political field as a whole, television is a state apparatus. By representing this field in such a way that certain classes systematically misrecognise their real relations and interests (i.e. those classes whose interests are frustrated by the capitalist mode of production), it functions as an ideological state apparatus [17]. This has also been shown in this chapter. In general these ideological effects accomplish three

functions (see Hall, 1977a, p337):

(1) they attempt to conceal the class relations (domination, exploitation) that are the foundation of the social formation; for example, by concealing the relationship between economic and political forms of domination;

(2) they attempt to fragment the collective interests of classes, destroying their organisational capabilities by representing the policy as isolated, rational subjects (c.f. the individual consumers necessary for the market); and

(3) they attempt to reconstruct these fragmented individualities into an imaginary unity ("the public", "the Nation") whose consensus conceals the fundamental contradictions of interest that structure the struggles in society.

Working class practices of consciousness and organisation can succeed only by resisting these effects (and thus the practices that produce them). Television's discourse is thus one of the sites on which the State organises the popular consent (hegemony) necessary for the representation of the stability of capitalism as a general and universal (non-class) interest.

As Hall et al (1976) correctly argue, ideology is not a media "trick", it is not something covert or forced upon broadcasters "against their will" by external agencies. Ideological effects are systematically produced by the explicit, everyday routines of current affairs television. Television accurately reproduces the actual dominant mode of political power. Thus "in the last instance" there is no contradiction between the practices of broadcasters and those of party politicians. Politicians typically

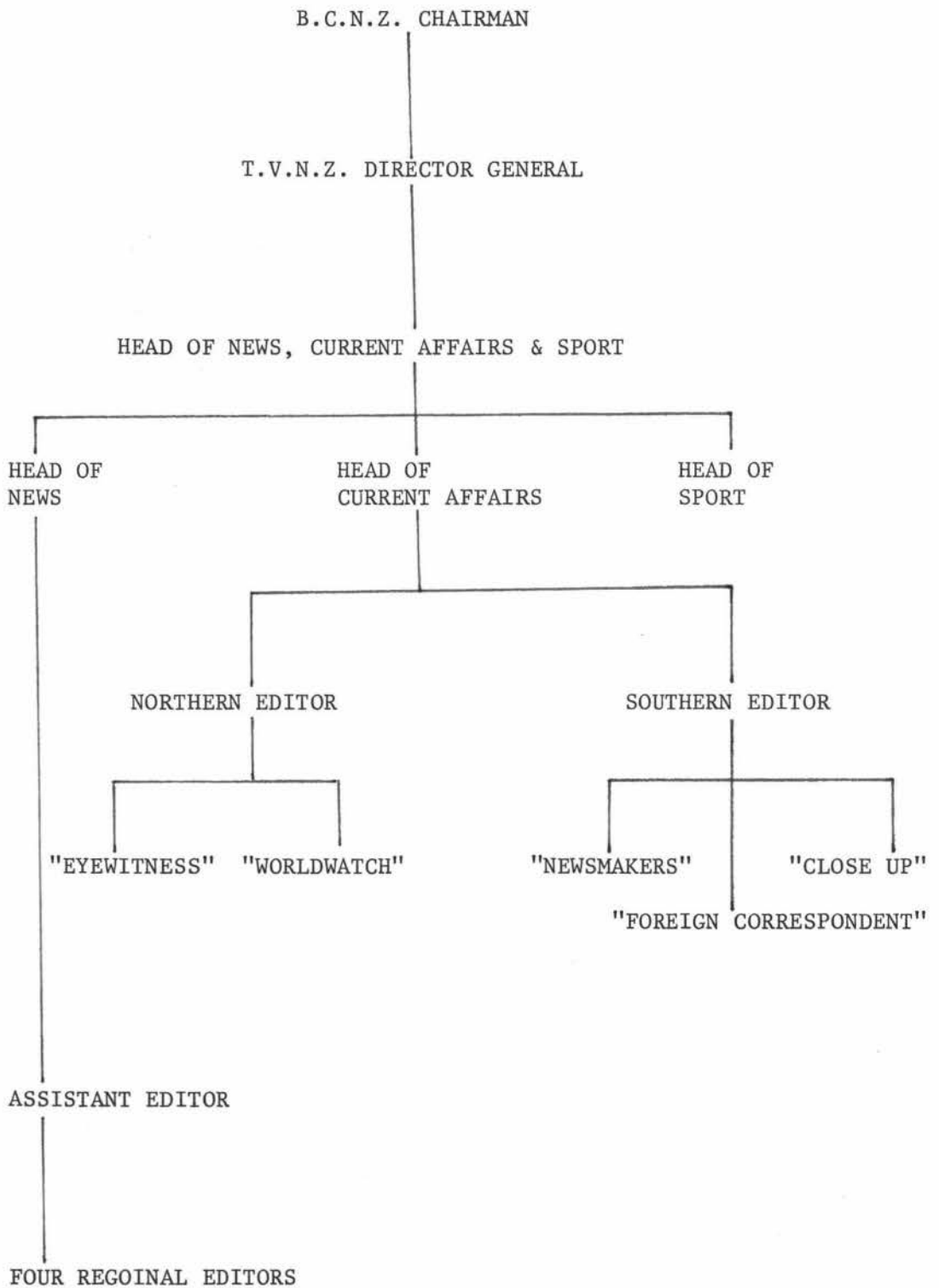
agree to struggle with each other within the domain created by television's significations. How this inflects their struggle will be taken up in detail in chapter nine. This relative autonomy of the text complements the discursive practices analysed here.

FOOTNOTES

- [1] Recently there has been an upsurge in phenomenological work on television in the United States (e.g. see Altheide, 1976; Altheide and Snow, 1979). Altheide and Snow (1979, p9) claim that "in place of a conspiracy or conditioning model, we propose that both communicator and audience members employ a particular logic - a media logic - that is used to present and interpret various phenomena ... Media logic consists of a form of communication; the process through which media present and transmit information". This position is inadequate for a number of reasons. It is based on the very simplistic assumption of a complete social consensus and absence of differentiation, so that media professionals, the audience, etc, somehow "interact" as "equals". This is an absurd gloss over real inequalities and disjunctures. The chief failure of such an argument is its idealist formalism - "media logic" provides an accurate description of what occurs but cannot escape from a merely imminent level of analysis (resting ultimately on notions of more or less perfectly achieved subjective intentionality) to the consideration of structural determinations (c.f. the criticisms of Weberian approaches to "bureaucratic rationality" in chapter 6.2 and Connell's arguments (see chapter six, footnote 16) on liberal

democrat formalism).

- [2] The administrative structure of this department, and the distribution of current affairs programmes within it, can be presented diagrammatically thus -



Note - the "Campaign '81" election coverage was organised primarily by the Southern Editor of Current Affairs.

- [3] The recent development within T.V.N.Z. news presentations of special correspondents who provide contextual explanations of news events has to a degree eroded this distinction in terms of a clear-cut programme differentiation. Nevertheless, the two functions remain very distinct. Prime Minister Muldoon, for example, has frequently complained at this combination of fact and comment within the one programme.
- [4] This link has been made very clear recently with the development of two new programme formats - (a) the addition of "Nationwide" to TV1's 6.30 news and (b) TV2's joining of "Eyewitness" to the 9.30 news bulletin to create "Eyewitness News".
- [5] Sherry frequently concludes his reading of the 6.30 news by ordering his papers into a single, tidy pile while stating "and that is the way things were today, July the 16th", etc.
- [6] A total of 18 current affairs programmes dealt with the election. This coverage breaks down as follows - (a) "Eyewitness": 3.5 hours; (b) "Close Up": 3 hours; (c) "Campaign Reports": 1.5 hours; (d) "Newsmakers": 1 hour; (e) "Facing the Nation": 1 hour; (f) "The Leaders Debate": 1.5 hours.
- [7] An exception here was a trip by the Producer to Palmerston North to discuss the question areas assigned to the "Evening Standard's" Editor since, unlike the other panelists, he had no television experience.
- [8] The specificity of broadcasting, as has been consistently

argued, resides in the organisation of its material, discursive practices. These practices, however, also have a conceptual or propositional existence in the (inter-subjective) consciousness of the subjects they interpellate and through which they are executed (see Urry, 1981, p60). The interpellation of journalists as "free subjects" (i.e. with "conscious volition", etc) is crucial for the relative autonomy of broadcasting, and also for the justification of the qualitative, interview methods used in this study.

[9] See, for example, the B.C.N.Z.'s Television Standards and Rules (sections 5.1(g) and 6.5) and the Principles and Practice (section 5.2).

[10] This form of balancing was more important for "Facing the Nation"; as the first recorded it showed up the inadequacies of relying just on a time-light. This problem was solved in "The Leaders Debate" by using a bell as well as the light. Throughout the recording of "Facing the Nation" there was almost constant discussion in the control room between the Executive Producer, Producer and Director over whether or not Muldoon was seriously misbalancing the programme by talking too long. Many rolling decisions were made to counteract this. The Chairman was eventually told to tighten up the 30 seconds to the point of interrupting. He was at one stage told "to throw the next question to all three, at Rowling first, he's throwing to Muldoon all the time".

[11] This is not to say that these other forms of organisation are not often present in the current affairs signification of

politics. The point is that trade unions and the like, gain access only by struggle, not by "right" as do political parties. The B.C.N.Z.'s Television Standards and Rules very clearly makes this distinction. In section 5.1(g) it is stated that "no set formula can be advanced for the allocation of time to interested parties of controversial public issues", but in section 6.5 it is emphasised that during elections one must "afford reasonable opportunities for such broadcasts to all political parties represented in the House of Representatives at its last sitting".

[12] One of the programme's producers thought this was a useful guarantee of "good behaviour" by the audience - the thought of 60 others close by with different political persuasions would prevent heckling, etc. In this respect balance is a more overt means of control than is normally the case.

[13] Individual reasons for joining the panel may, of course, be quite unrelated to this disinterestedness. The Editor of the daily newspaper claimed that it was "basically because I thought it was an opportunity for the paper to project itself a little bit on the national scene. We do place emphasis on promotional work and the company has a fairly aggressive marketing approach, and this really was an opportunity for the furtherance of that aim".

[14] The repression of the Chair's subjective dimension can have quite damaging consequences for the individual assigned that position. Originally Ian Fraser had been nominated as chairman for both "Facing the Nation" and "The Leaders Debate". Fraser has a long history of antagonism with

Muldoon, who has refused to appear on "Newamakers" with him for the past three years. Muldoon at first did not reply to the invitation to the two programmes, and this was thought to be due to Fraser's inclusion. This was compounded when Muldoon refused to answer a question from Fraser at an overseas' news conference. Following this Fraser withdrew and Beatson took his place. This preserved the neutrality of the chair itself, since even to argue with Muldoon would have put it in doubt (if the chair is impartial what does it matter who sits in it?). Fraser's voluntary withdrawal shows the dependence of broadcasting on media professionalism - he decided it was preferable for the programmes to go on without him than their being dropped either due to Muldoon's absence or a journalists' strike in the (highly possible) eventuality of the Board demanding his replacement. One clear effect of this is the preservation of the signification of politics as a contest between parties. It rules out as a potential election issue the struggle between one party and the Corporation over charges of bias, interference, etc. In such a struggle television would have great difficulty in signifying itself as impartial, since it would have both protagonist and reporting roles.

[15] Thus, for example, questions sent in to "Facing the Nation" whose only intention was to signify commitment were excluded as a matter of course. The producer explained - "you get people saying why doesn't Mr Muldoon go and jump in the Pacific and I really want to know this now. You also get the party faithful that writes in and says things like could Mr

Rowling please tell me whether he truly wants a caring, sharing community full of warm and wonderful people, and is this his policy. Once again its just dismissed". It is interesting that thos journalists who thought "The Leaders Debate" too tame and favoured more conflict, even to the point of allowing a clear "winner" to appear, remained within the notion of "rational comparison". Thus, for example, one stated - "I would like to see more engagement between them, where they are able to take up points that the other has made and develop or destroy them. I'm interested in giving people situations where they can make their minds up, and I think that what they want to see is how in fact these politicians do rate against each other. I think, sure there are going to be winners and losers in a genuine debate, that's what elections are all about for god's sake. I think that the opportunity for a politician to counterargue is an important way of getting people to understand exactly what's at stake, also of assessing their ability to analyse situations quickly, which is a characteristic we would want of our politicians". The notion of a "rational comparison" is still dominant, being merely extended to include qualities thought to be repressed by the programme's format.

[16] Britain is one of the few liberal democratic countries that does not have a formal television debate between the leaders as a part of its election campaign, although in 1979 the attempt was made by broadcasters to initiate it. One can only hypothesise why this is so. Perhaps it is due to the clearer links between class and party (further clarified by the

increasing economic crisis), making the parties' identification with a unified "national interest" (a necessary condition of television's signification of liberal democratic politics) more problematic than (say) in New Zealand, where the State continues to organise popular support from small rural and urban capital and the working class. This is an area in need of study.

- [17] The reproduction of the State as capitalist may, of course, produce ideological effects related to, but separate from (i.e. relatively autonomous), the class practices that are the subject of this thesis (e.g. in terms of the racist and sexist dimensions of the social relations of production).

PART FOUR - THE RELATIVELY AUTONOMOUS TEXT

"But if it is declared that the social characters assumed by objects, or the material forms assumed by the social qualities of labour under the regime of a definite mode of production, are mere symbols, it is in the same breath also declared that these are arbitrary fictions sanctioned by the so-called universal consent of mankind"

- Marx

CHAPTER EIGHT - A SEMIOTICS OF THE TEXTS8.1 - INTRODUCTION: THE RELATIVELY AUTONOMOUS TEXT

In part three the specific practices of television's current affairs were located in terms of their determination by and ideological reproduction of the New Zealand State in its modern welfare interventionist form. The analysis in chapter seven was primarily concerned with how broadcasters encode politics (through balance and impartiality) in such a way as to prefer the dominant mode of politics and suppress other forms of organisation. It focussed upon current affairs broadcasters, and only secondarily dealt with other forms of organised practice (political parties, trade unions, etc). However, it was argued, current affairs television does not express the unitary ideology of a dominant class. It reproduces a political field. A necessary consequence of this form of reproduction is that televised texts are the interaction between diverse practices on the text. Programmes such as "Facing the Nation" and "The Leaders Debate" cannot be simply reduced to those significations of broadcasters we have already studied. Instead they constitute a separate field in which, for example, political representatives compete with each other and possibly with broadcasters themselves. Furthermore, forms of practice and interests repressed by this structured field are repressed there, in the text. Thus the political field broadcast as current affairs television is always a tension - a tension between forces within the social formation, between what the society "is" and those possibilities denied by the existing

structure of social relations. The current affairs text is thus a site where various practices engage and struggle.

Neither "Facing the Nation" nor "The Leaders Debate" are the unproblematic reflection of a "reality" secured elsewhere (of broadcasters' planning, of the bourgeoisie's economic domination, etc). Such texts have a relative autonomy of their own, and are therefore a critical level of analysis for any argument concerned to avoid abstraction. This is clear, for example, in the fact that the outcome of a televised debate between political leaders under an impartial chair is always open; it cannot be predicted. The chair can lose control, can be seized, suppressed points of view can win "air time". Furthermore, on this site crucial definitions and identifications are constantly negotiated. As Hall (1972a, p24) argues, current affairs programmes are indeed "structured in dominance" (i.e. tend to systematically reproduce the ideological hegemony) but they are not unilaterally determined. Television programmes are not inert, "finished" objects - television is itself a "world in action" (Heath and Skirrow, 1977). Each televised struggle

"puts the 'structure in dominance' to the test: and the differing definitions of the situation must struggle for dominance, win assent for their outlook against others, try to amplify definitions so as to favour the dominant perspective, etc. The level of signification is, therefore, a privileged level with relative autonomy, never fully determined by larger structures nor free of them" (Hall, 1972a, p24)

For these reasons it is essential to analyse closely particular instances of television production - to "stop" programmes and consider their functioning in detail. This demands a theory and

methodology distinct from both a political economy of broadcasting and participant observation of practice. It will not, however, involve a break with the theorisation of chapter six but an extension of its premises. The unity of the whole work remains secured by the relative autonomy problematic.

8.2 - CONTENT ANALYSIS VERSUS SEMIOTICS

The central problem here is how to adequately conceptualise the relations between the textual and the extra-textual. In terms of the relative autonomy problematic this is a matter of simultaneously historically locating the production of meaning without emptying it of its specific effectivity. The loss of specificity is produced by conceptualising meaning as something "ideal" contained by various "material" objects (books, paintings, television programmes, etc). From this common conceptualisation the specificity of meaning is argued away in two very different directions. The objects of meaning can be reduced to a completely adequate external determination ("the economy", etc), thus having no effectivity of their own; or they can be severed from their social location, thus universalising their effectivity by bracketing out the question of determination altogether (a procedure common in formalist accounts, such as literacy criticism). Both variations have an affinity in their argument for a unified textual object created through the unity of an external agency (i.e. an "Author"). It is in terms of these two poles that content analysis and idealist semiotics, as two dominant and unacceptable modes of textual analysis, will be considered in this

section.

The rejection of content analysis and semiotics is based on the refusal to accept the reification of texts into finished objects. Meaning must be located in sensuous, human activity (as did Marx with the commodity form). This continues Althusser's insistence on the materiality of the "superstructures". Williams caught the nature of this move very well in his early, crucial essay for the constitution of Cultural Studies, "Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory" (1973), -

"if we suppose that what is produced in cultural practice is a series of objects, we shall, as in most current forms of sociological-critical procedure, set about discovering their components ... we will ask what process of transformation or mediation these components have gone through before they arrived in this accessible state. But I am saying that we should look not for the components of a product but for the conditions of a practice" (ibid, p16).

Textual analysis properly deals with cultural artefacts conceptualised as an objectivated moment in social relations. It is for this reason that content analysis and idealist semiotics must be rejected.

Content analysis is traditionally the dominant method for the analysis of mass communications texts [1]. It proceeds by distributing message content into a limited number of a priori categories, and then quantitatively "measuring" this distribution. From the resulting numbers, it is argued that systematic inferences can be made about social, political, etc, characteristics outside the text (e.g. see Berelson, 1971, p18). Texts are conceived as "vehicles" expressing something formed elsewhere (economic

exploitation, political domination, psychic deprivation, etc). For the most part content analysis has remained within an atheoretical, positivist tradition linked unproblematically to liberal democratic ideologies [2]. More recently, however, the Glasgow Media Group (1976, 1980) has attempted to join this method to a Marxist theorisation of the social formation. The Group's work is based on a quantitative analysis of news bulletins, showing how they are organised to reflect (i.e. no struggle, instrumentality) conservative interests (i.e. the dominant ideology). Their theory of ideology thus has a strong tendency to instrumentalism - arguing, for example, that balance is an "illusion" perpetuated by the systematically "biased" media. Their work thus tends to err by reducing to "misbalance" what is properly understood as a particular form of balance, associated with a determinate political practice. The media is an accurate representation of this dominant form of politics, not an "illusion" at all. The Glasgow Group has inadequately theorised the complexity of the social formation and thus falls back (as does content analysis in general) upon a simple, reductionist theory of communication. The value of their work is chiefly its descriptive identification of the different modes of balance, needing further theoretical and empirical consideration [3], and its ability to terrorise broadcasters (since it uses the same method they traditionally rely on themselves).

The rejection of the reductionism consequent to content analysis is matched by the rejection of those formalist accounts which abstract textual codes beyond social determination completely. This refers to the encounter between Cultural Studies

and the idealist development of semiotics. Semiotics (the science of signs) also restricts itself to the immanent study of cultural objects. However, unlike content analysis, it is concerned with the ways in which the message's elements (signs) are internally organised by codes (the process of signification) to produce meaningful discourse. It is associated primarily with the work of Barthes (1972a, 1972b, 1977a, 1977b, 1979) throughout the late 1950s and '60s. His derivation from Saussurean linguistics of semiotic concepts for the analysis of meaning (discourse, sign, code, etc) has already been sufficiently theoretically outlined in chapter 6.5. These concepts, inflected through the work of Hall, structured the analysis of chapter seven. For these reasons it is not proposed to repeat the theory of signification here. What is immediately important is to stress the nature of the break with semiotics in the idealist form it took in the work of Barthes and many of his followers.

Semiotics has tended to isolate texts from history and the social formation, studying meaning as something produced completely within the bounds of a text. Thus while content analysis is guilty of reductionism, it is matched by the autonomism of idealist semiotics [4]. Such formalism has in fact tended to leave the question of determination open - either the text is produced by a completely competent Author or it is totally determined by an external "base". This explains how semiotics was able to be appropriated by literary critical intellectuals without disturbing their subjectivist theory (that structuralism was so concerned to destroy). As Chambers (1974, p50) comments,

"by putting between brackets, or simply failing to acknowledge, the material conditions of the practices they examine, and treating them and society solely as a sign system, structuralism and semiotics have remained caught in the very [idealist, subjectivist] ideology they claim to have exposed."

Semiotics abstracts the text from its relationship to human activity, actively repressing that which takes place outside texts. Meaning is presented as adequately explained in the self-referring terms of a closed totality. While one must strive to retain the value of semiotics' grasp of meaning (e.g. c.f. positivism's cowardice), such idealism must be broken with. This begins with the realisation that the practices of signification that constitute a text are material practices, with determinate relations with the other practices that compose the social formation. As Chambers (ibid, pp61-62) argues,

"codes, like ideas, do not drop from the skies, they arise within the material practices of production ... Specific practices exist within society, there is not a relation between a practice and society."

8.3 - A SOCIAL AND HISTORICAL SEMIOTICS

The break with idealist semiotics has already been achieved in part three. Here it is a matter of completing the break by extending it to the analysis of the text proper. Chambers (1974 p63) correctly insists that to overcome formalism

"texts, established in the moment of a formal analysis by semiotics, must be located in specific modes of production and in production in general." This is precisely what chapter seven accomplished. There the specificity of a broadcasting mode of production was considered, and related to the social formation in general (in particular, the

political and ideological reproduction of the formation's mode of production). Thus we have begun the semiotics Chambers advocates - in terms of demonstrating the way in which the organised material practices of broadcasters work within the text (creating certain images, etc). However, as argued above, the practices of television journalists do not exhaust the complexity of the text.

Television programmes such as "Facing the Nation" and "The Leaders Debate" are transmitted as texts, "read" as sensuous modulations of light and sound waves. They can be stored (as film or video) and contemplated at leisure in just the same way as any book or painting. Television programme's mode, however, is typically fleeting, and this emphasises the characteristic common to all texts. They are all moments in a particular kind of practice - the production of meaning [5]. To this extent part four is a theoretical extension of the argument about signification made in chapter 6.5. Texts exist as determinate social relations. In "Facing the Nation" and "The Leaders Debate" these relations include not only those between broadcasters but also those between politicians, between politicians and broadcasters and between politicians, broadcasters and whatever organised groups may struggle for recognition from out of the signified homogenous mass of audience/voters. As Connell (1980, p95) argues,

"the primary objective of textual analysis is not to 'infer' anything, but rather to establish the precise character of the relations between the various forces that are articulated in and through the production of meanings."

Both "in" and "through", this constitutes the text as a relatively autonomous site of struggle, a moment in which diverse forms of

practice are conjuncturally combined. Current affairs television programmes are not mechanisms for obliterating all traces of social conflict. They are sites on which the organisation of consent necessary for the reproduction of existing social relations is actively worked out over and over again.

In chapter nine, "Facing the Nation" and "The Leaders Debate" will be considered as the interaction of those practices outlined above. Analysis will attempt to assess the ideological effects produced within this complex totality. How are audio-visual signs encoded to produce what particular form of meaning? As the object of analysis is signification, these ideological effects are identical to those explained by Urry and presented in chapter 6.4 [6].

FOOTNOTES

- [1] For general statements advocating and presenting this method see Berelson (1971), Carney (1972), Gerbner (1964) and Gerbner et al (1969). This method has probably been dominant in part because of its frequent articulation with (and funding by) the quantitative audience surveys performed by or for media institutions to calculate ratings, advertising fees, etc.
- [2] This point is argued in detail in chapter one.
- [3] This point seems to be suggested in Hoggart's "Foreword" to Bad News (pp ix-xiii).
- [4] The connection between autonomist and semiotic approaches was argued in chapter six (e.g. see footnote 21). The loss of determination, by according to language the self-sufficient,

magical power of material creation, is evident, for example, in Hirst's (1976, p411) claim that the action of signification "is not inscribed in limits set by what it signifies, the signified does not exist prior to its signification".

[5] All texts are "moments". The strange notion that meaning exists in some fixed sense in objects (e.g. in the varied distribution of chemicals across the surface of a piece of woven flax) completely separate from their location in social relations is probably due to the commodification of art. This allows art to be confined to a thing that can be exchanged on the market, its "value" being the sum of its own attributes (or the ineffable "trace" of genius) rather than the social relations of its production, exchange and consumption. Commodification asserts illogically that there could be a painting "full of meaning" that had never been seen by anyone. Meaning is created within human relations, it is not something "offered" by a thing.

[6] That there is no need to reformulate new "effects" for this type of analysis, since it is simply an extension of part three, is indicated by the close similarities between Urry's categories and the seven textual "rhetorical figures" identified by Barthes as typical of the "bourgeois myth" (1972, pp150-155).

CHAPTER NINE - TEXTUAL STRUGGLES

9.1 - INTRODUCTION

Television's texts must not be approached as the seizure of an external reality by the amber of the photographic image. They constitute a semiotic system, producing meaning through the succession of determinate choices and struggles. It is particularly important to analyse programmes designated "factual" (news, current affairs, documentaries, etc) in terms other than those they set for themselves. Within this frame of reference one considers programmes only in terms of the extent to which they are "true", by arguing over their approximation to some external reality ("you said x and in fact y", etc). This remains within such programmes' own ideological space, leaving their operation with regard to the production of meaning intact and taken for granted (see Kuhn, 1978, p71). The question properly phrased is - how do these programmes function as a semiotic system to signify their "truth"? If one accepts broadcasters' frequent statements that "Facing the Nation" and "The Leaders Debate" simply transported issues "from there" to "here" to "there", the text becomes semiotically passive and inert. As will be shown subsequently, television systematically suppresses the signs of its own intervention. Kuhn (ibid, p76) argues this implies

"that the truth or authenticity of a representation turns precisely on an exclusion from that representation - or denial within it - of the means of its own material and semiotic production, which means that truth or authenticity has to be taken at face value - ideology contemplating itself - without recourse to textual marks of authenticity."

The break with this enforced superficiality ("face value") is achieved by analysing the textual signification of a specifically televisual reality.

In part three this televised reality was identified as the signification of "informed speculation". Broadcasters' discursive practices systematically prefer this reading. That is, they attempt to encode televised politics so that the audience will reconstruct the programmes as they have been ideologically inflected. In chapter seven some of the textual dimensions of this attempt were considered, simply as the realisation of the discursive practices of balance and impartiality. In this chapter, which focuses specifically on the text and its struggle, such mechanistic analysis is overcome by being extended to two further dimensions.

Firstly, the process of encoding must be analysed as the interpellation of particular forms of subjectivity. This continues Althusser's rejection (detailed elsewhere) of the empiricist notion of a pure subject of experience. There is no such thing as a given subject with an experience of the real. Rather, subjectivity is constituted, it is formed through a determinate structure of recognition. As an effect of signification, it is "subject" to these same ideological inflections outlined by Urry (see chapter 6.5). The site of struggle in two ways - (a) in terms of those forms of organised practice whose attempts to participate in televised politics are thwarted by the subjectivity preferred by broadcasting's discourses, and (b) in terms of the relationship

between this offered subjectivity and real "readers" (decoding).

Secondly, practices other than those of broadcasters gain authentic and effective access to the televisual discourse. The legitimate structure of access limits this to political party representatives. The text is thus an interaction between the specific practices of broadcasting and liberal democrat party politics. As these two forms of activity are not identical they have the potential of conflict and struggle. This has to be resolved within the text. The exact nature of their relationship in the programmes "Facing the Nation" and "The Leaders Debate" must be considered. The above two problem areas define the substance of this chapter. By placing the text in terms of its own relative autonomy the circuit argued for by this thesis is completed. The "thinking" of broadcasting as a component of a complex "structured in dominance" totality will have been achieved through the analysis of the functionalities of the various dimensions (textual, discourse, institutional) of that practice.

9.2 - SMASHING THE AUDIENCE

The manufacture of television programmes predicates a social relationship between those immediately present and those absent, those "behind" the screen and those "outside" watching, for whom the commodity was produced. We have already studied how certain categories of potential participants are excluded from directly taking part in "Facing the Nation" and "The Leaders Debate" by the legitimate modes of access. Here the focus is upon the profound

disjuncture between television production and consumption. Both these programmes were broadcast some time after they had been made, but this disjuncture is only apparently radical. A commodity realises determinate social relations in the process of concealing them within its own objectivity. The commodity is not something positioned between social relations (the subject with supply, the subject with demand) - its very objectivity is constituted of social relations. What, then, is the nature of the relationship between those involved in the production of "Facing the Nation" and "The Leaders Debate" and those sitting in their "living rooms" legitimately consuming the programmes along with the advertisements before a licenced and paid-up receiver? This involves the ways in which the absent viewer is positioned within the text. Such positioning produces a form of subjectivity from which the preferred ideological meaning is "read off". Televisual communication articulated various different "modes of address". Nichols (1976/7, p37) defines these modes in general as "patterns of sound/image relationship that specify somewhat different 'places' or attitudes for the viewer". He argues that there are two essentially opposed modes -

- (1) direct address: where the viewer is explicitly acknowledged as the subject to which the programme is addressed; and
- (2) indirect address: where the viewer watches principally as an unacknowledged spectator.

Furthermore, direct address can take either of two sub-modes. It can be a relationship in which (1a) the viewer is directly addressed by protagonists, who are individuals representing their social roles outside the programme (journalists with recognised

authority, representatives of political organisations, etc); or (1b) the viewer is directly addressed by narrators, who are individuals representing the point of view of the programme itself (e.g. an impartial Chair in a partisan debate). As has been indicated parenthetically above, "Facing the Nation" and "The Leaders Debate" fit into this matrix in a particular way. The impartial Chair is linked to the direct mode of address, while protagonists are typically scripted within the indirect mode (denied the opportunity to talk "to camera"). Understanding the logic of this distinction is the object of this section. Analysis can begin by considering the opening and closing visual images of the two programmes and how they accomplish this difference [1].

Kuhn (1978) argues that an essential part of the mode of address is the relationship established between the three distinctive points of observation implicated in any television programme. This relationship takes determinate forms, which she calls "the structures of the look" (ibid, p82). The three points of observation are as follows. Firstly, there is the camera operator in the studio. He or she sees the studio interaction as a complex totality - a single moment may contain the overhead lights, the leaders talking, the producer operating the time light, the woman in the front row of the audience smiling, the floor manager pointing, the Chairman looking worried, the cable on the floor that could be tripped over, television monitors, etc. Secondly, there is the camera lens, which presents a selection from the complex studio interaction. This process has two connected mediations. There are those selections made by the camera operator in the

studio. As Benjamin argues,

"the camera need not respect the performance as an integrated whole. Guided by the cameraman, the camera continually changes position with respect to the performance ... hence the performance is subject to a series of optical tests ... The [naturalist] painter maintains in his work a natural distance from reality, the cameraman penetrates deeply into its web" (1970, pp230, 235).

The selections made by camera operators appear as a number of "lens observations" on the multiple screens in the control room (four cameras were used for both "Facing the Nation" and "The Leaders Debate"). The editor thus does not see the studio completely at all, only its presented mediations, although from experience and being involved in set design he or she is not completely divorced from it. Furthermore, the camera operators are not free agents, their positions are pre-scripted and continually controlled by an earphone link from the control room to themselves and the floor manager. From the "lens observations" offered, the editor (in this study a position split between Director and Producer roles on the control room) selects the one to be recorded. These selections are composed as a series of positional views to form the completed programme. Thirdly, the final point of observation is the absent spectator. By analysing the opening and closing sequences of the two programmes in terms of the relationship between these three different points of observation, the way in which television inscribes an audience in its mode of address is exposed. The visual images that opened "The Leaders Debate" were as follows (see over page) -

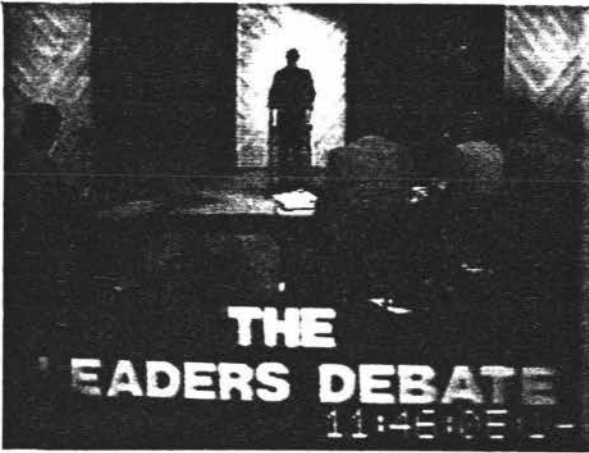


FIG. 1



FIG. 2

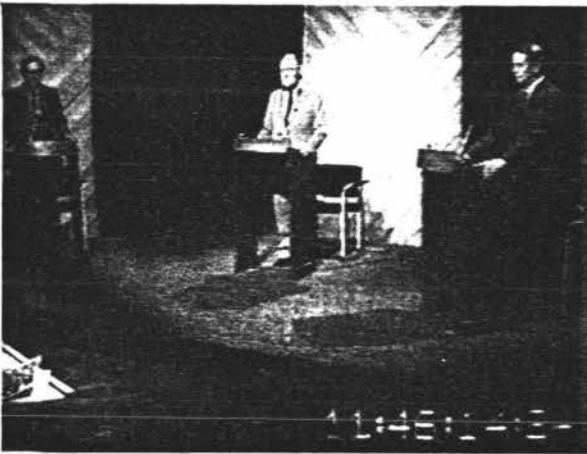


FIG. 3



FIG. 4

The programme closed with a repetition of the above images in reverse order.

The visual images are combined by a strong didactic function ("this is how it works"), which is concealed by a process of identification ("we are together in this"). For example, the opening of "The Leaders Debate" proposes a series of relationships whose logic is as follows -

Fig. 1 - you out there behind the camera will observe these seven people. As the participants' different positions indicate, this is not a matter of all seven together showing you something. Rather, Fig. 2 - it is a matter of those three (hence the shot over the panelists' shoulders) asking those three (in the background) questions. We four (you the observer and the three panelists) are together, the panelists speak "on your behalf" [2]. The eyelines for the rest of the programme will continue this opposition between panelist and leader.

Fig. 3 - the three that we are all looking at are now identified as the leaders of the main political parties. Their presumably widely recognisable physiognomies are displayed front on. The panelists' individual identity is only of secondary importance compared to their role in scrutinising the leaders "for us". Thus who they are, what they look like, etc, can be demonstrated later when they are individually introduced and authenticated. That your interests as the viewer are represented is ensured by ,

Fig. 4 - the Chair, who explicitly acknowledges your presence by looking at you (as if he alone knows you are there).

In this way the logic of "The Leaders Debate", its preferred reading as the expert interrogation of politicians under an impartial Chair and the corresponding interpellation of an external, rational, speculative subjectivity ("He-who-is-looked-at-by-the-Chair"), is signified without a word spoken.

The interpellation of this subjectivity is accomplished by identifying the camera lens point of observation with the absent

spectator. The opening sequence's movement, emphasised by the lights-up/lights-down modulation, signifies "nothing is happening yet, so come with me and I'll show you how this all works before it starts". This marries the viewer to the camera eye and shows the camera eye to be neutral (since it maps out the terrain which contains the opposition to take place). Such identification would collapse if the technical nature of its creation was evident (e.g. by the appearance on camera of cameras, cables, assistants, etc). For this reason television constantly represses the presence of its means of reproduction. The identification of camera and spectator is completed and acknowledged by Fig. 4, where the Chairman looks into the camera and "sees the viewer there". From this point on the spectator can be directly addressed by the Chair, "Good evening ...". Other participants can then be introduced to this spectator.

By collapsing the camera's selective reproduction of vision into the sight of the absent spectator, television presents itself simply as a "window". Connell (1979, p94) calls this the "transparency effect", whereby television denies the effectivity of its specific practices. The concealment of the significant structuring of messages achieved by broadcasters' own interventions insists that the televised image must be read as the transparent rendering of a reality ("what I see") [3]. This is signified, for example, in the opening sequence's movement from lights-down ("nothing's happened yet") to lights-up ("now something's happening, let's watch it as it takes place"). The representation of "The Leaders Debate" as an unmediated, "live" (i.e. as it happens) show conceals the interventions that structure it. By

locating the spectator in the privileged place of the camera, those practices used by broadcasters to signify politics (rational debate, informed speculation) are embedded in the viewing subject. The "truth" produced by television's discourse is thus self-validating. Broadcasters and viewers are constituted as the neutral observers of a partisan struggle.

"Facing the Nation" was slightly different from "The Leaders Debate", since it dealt not with "expert scrutiny" but with "the people's concerns". Although different, it did not break in any significant way from the relationships outlined above. The programme opened with (see below and over page) -

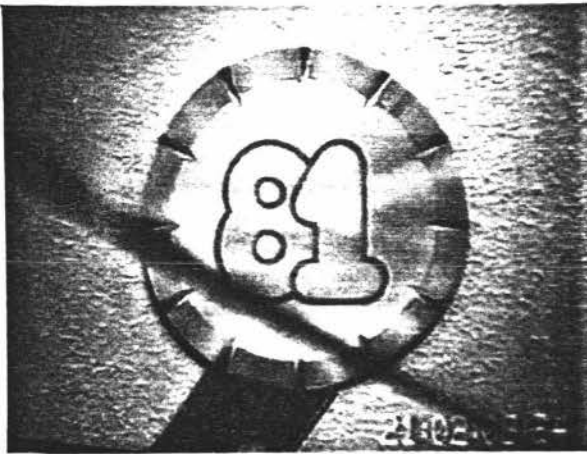


FIG. 5

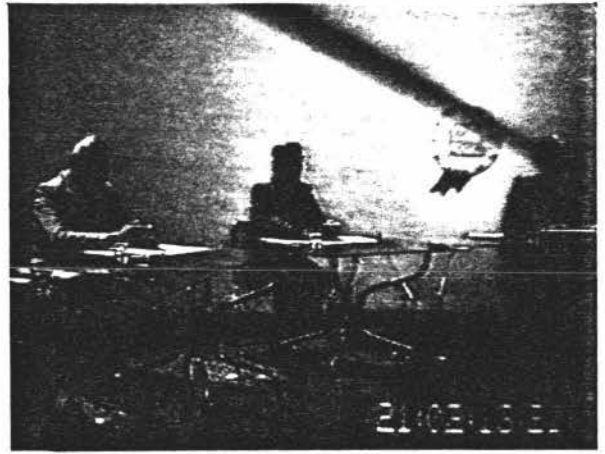


FIG. 6



FIG. 7



FIG. 8



FIG. 9



FIG. 10

and closed with -



FIG. 11

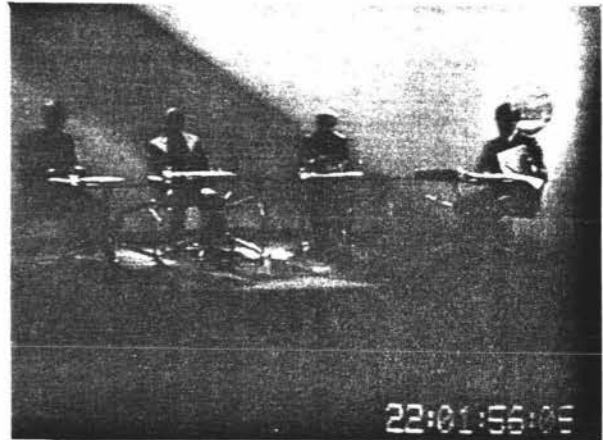


FIG. 12



FIG. 13

The sequence opens (Fig. 5) with a symbolic representation of television's notion of politics. It is a party rosette, but a general and not a particular one. This signifies all parties and celebrates their contest within the liberal democratic Parliament ("Election '81"). Any other form of political practice is either excluded from or must be absorbed into the signification process this initiates. The process begins with a slow zoom out to Fig. 6, fleshing out the symbol by fixing it in the personages of the three main party leaders. The Chair is located as separate from and presiding over the opposition between these individuals. The signification of politics as "rational disagreement" is already begun with the manifest representation of the three leaders as opposed but unified ("sitting down together"). From here it becomes a matter of the relationship between the present and implied audience, the Chair and the politicians. The analysis of this relationship provides general knowledge about the operation of both "The Leaders Debate" and "Facing the Nation" throughout.

The Chair, as narrator, commands the direct mode of address to the spectator (Figs 4, 9, etc), which thus becomes linked to the Chair's neutrality. While protagonists have extra-textual autonomy, the narrator does not, as narrator. In this way the position is identified with an impartial televisual space which contains the activity of the protagonists. Protagonists act only within the indirect mode. Thus, for example, panelist and leader are represented as "looking at each other" (i.e. at an angle to the spectator) throughout "The Leaders Debate" (see Figs. 14 and 15 over the page) -



FIG. 14



FIG. 15

Their interaction is contained to themselves, to be scrutinised from the outside by an uninvolved spectator. The Chair in "Facing the Nation" in fact holds two functions - as narrator he talks directly to camera, as protagonist (when reading one of the "letter" questions) he turns from the camera to face the leaders. The Chair functions specifically as a Chair by executing a "coherence function" (Nichols 1976/7 pp40ff). His statements to camera explain for the absent spectator the logic of what is to take place. In "The Leaders Debate" he bridges and clarifies the change in each sequence (e.g. from "major" to "hot" issues). The activity of the protagonists is ordered and contained by this intervention. He also introduces each new question area in general terms and then passes on to the specific panelist for development. This signifies the topics as legitimate (from the neutral Chair) and also keeps the Chair separate from (above) the activity of the protagonists (e.g. immune from potential conflict between panelist and leader). This "passing on" creates a boundary (illustrated in

Fig. 16) which preserves the Chair as an unimpeachable authority.



FIG. 16

Thus the systematic tendency is for the Chair to talk directly to camera ("to us") while the protagonists invariably talk at an angle to the camera's line of vision ("to others"). The direct look establishes the Chair and spectator as partners with the same interest in the impartial adjudicating role. The signification of protagonists in this way, particularly in "The Leaders Debate", creates a boundary between them and the spectator. The viewer is interpellated as a witness, present but not immediately involved in the studio interaction. What happens in the studio is cast as a reality separate from and independent of the "on-looker".

This reproduces liberal democratic politics by dividing society into those who are "active" and "the rest", who are signified as involved in politics only to the extent that they are effected by the political decisions of their "representatives". In "The

"Leaders Debate" this reproduces the prescribed form of political passivity (deciding yes or no) through the speculative interrogation of (Parliamentary) representatives by (Fourth Estate) representatives for the absent voter [4]. In this way broadcasting signifies all spectators as unified, as those who are "done to" by those blessed with the power of activity. This unity is expressed in the standard ideological phrases of liberal democracy - "society-as-a-whole", "the Nation", "the public", "the majority", etc.

In "Facing the Nation" it was not absence but participation and activity which was signified. This participation, however, did not in any way break with the form of political activity advocated by "The Leaders Debate". The notion that these two programmes were complementary was frequently mentioned by the journalists interviewed. A typical statement argued for

"a mesh of one relatively heavy, important issues-oriented programme and then the preoccupations of the electors and members of the audience. In "Facing the Nation" we said OK, this programme effectively belongs to the audience. Instead of having questioning designed to illuminate current events as determined by journalists, to their standards and as a result of their judgement, it was to a large extent predicated on the kind of questions on issues occupying the minds of people up and down the country that didn't surface in the headlines. One has a heavy journalistic input, it didn't allow itself as a programme to look at small matters, things that pejoratively you could call trivia. Although I genuinely don't want to describe anybody's preoccupation with bridle paths or whatever as trivia, because that's the kind of thing that interests individual electors. "Facing the Nation" was very much an open book that would throw up a whole lot of individual questions that individual people might be interested in".

Besides its rather crude paternalism, the above statement indicates

that broadcasters have a clear, pre-conceived notion of the audience needed to participate in "Facing the Nation" - the "small things" that concern "individuals". This leaves the "big things" that concern "the Nation" to the representatives of those individuals. This audience participation is actively created by broadcasting, by repressing alternative forms and setting limiting modes of access [5]. All issues handled had to be inflected through "individual experience" and not through forms of organised political activity outside the parliamentary model. This "individual experience" could be then composed into "the Nation". Thus, for example, questions were chosen to create content, geographical and age spread. The producer explained,

"it's the chance for Joe Blow to put his question to the politician, alone and unaided by the current affairs interviewer. It pulls out of the woodwork those little anxieties important to individuals scattered around our community. No critical analysis at all, that was the Debate programme. I just went through the letters in a very democratic way. Some questions come through the whole time, like there were ten on gin traps. Now, whilst you may think that its an organised letter-writing campaign, you look at the letters and you know they're from all over the country. You've got to put a question in about it. You may not think whether or not we have gin traps is highly relevant to the outcome of the election, but if ten people have written in on it then the question has got to go on."

Once again, there is a clear position created for the participant. Inclusion in the programme is determined not by organised Joe Blows (an organised letter writing campaign would be rejected) but by the spontaneous coincidence of a number of "worried individuals" (ten was a sufficient basis for "Facing the Nation" democracy!). This reproduces the liberal democratic process whereby the individual's secret vote at election time produces the representative

coincidentally favoured most.

The mode of access admitted only individual voters in one final way. Letters were solicited by repeated advertisements on television. The Producer described this "promo" as

"a straight format. We did an election logo to get people used to the election idea. I then threw in three people asking questions, like case studies. I went to the butcher down the road, to the chemist in Naenae and this lady in an electrical shop. I asked them to put a question that they'd like to ask, just to show people the kind of thing we were after. It gives them an idea of what perhaps they'll be asked to do, the style of that short, snappy question that we're wanting. And it gets them knowing that its going to be them asking the questions."

This limits access to television viewers, who are already interpellated as spectators. It indicates the participation desired by excluding forms of collective organisation. In this respect it is interesting that the three "case studies" selected were all classic petty bourgeois positions. These "free individuals' " mode of production well suits the immediate demands of the programme (e.g. taking a camera onto a construction site would obviously raise the problem of a "collective voice").

Through the above means, broadcasting succeeded in winning its struggle against forms of organisation outside its brief. This victory was continued by manipulating the programme's studio audience to signify politics as rational speculation. The Director explained that

"the studio audience worked in 'Facing the Nation' because it dealt with the average bloke's view, and there was an audience of people assessing the politicians on the spot, in their own terms, as to

whether or not they were performing adequately."

The audience is signified as "the Nation" (Fig. 7), consisting of a mass of spectators responding with appreciation to the spectacle before them by clapping (Figs. 8, 11, 13) [6]. The spectator is identified with the audience by the composition of shots (e.g. the angles of Figs. 8 and 13, in particular) and by the homologous connections created by situating questioners in the audience and the invocation of the trace of the absent questioner "out there" (Fig. 10). Throughout the programme there are cuts to the audience, so signifying it as a mass of attentive listeners. Figs. 17 and 18 are two typical cutaways.



FIG. 17



FIG. 18

The audience either claps or listens, its attitude never changes.

The final way in which "Facing the Nation" inscribed its spectators was through the video inserts, consisting of pre-recorded questions. These questions were signified as "shot on location" - the farmer on the farm (Fig. 19), the builder on the

house site (Fig. 20), etc.



FIG. 19



FIG. 20

The aim of such "vox pop" presentations is typically to present personal knowledge, "what the viewer thinks", rather than impersonal, expert knowledge (see Dyer, 1978, pp46-47). The questioner here looks directly at the camera, thus reinforcing (a) the interpellation of individual spectators out there "looking into" the studio, and (b) the identification of the Chair, the questioner and the absent spectator (who all look at each other). The video and inserts continue the programme's emphasis on questions simultaneously individual and generalisable into "the Nation". Thus, for example, the builder (Fig. 20) wants to know what the parties are going to do about providing finance for private home-ownership. This is signified as a general interest, the citizen's right to own a house is the responsibility of the State. The notion that the person speaking, as a builder, wishes the State to revitalise the domestic construction industry for his own vested, class interests is thus concealed by being absorbed

into this general interest. Rather it is signified that "all home-owners stand equally before the State."

Both "Facing the Nation" and "The Leaders Debate" hail the spectator as an uninvolved spectator observing the struggle and argument over issues. The spectator is inscribed within television's discourse as the rational seeker of knowledge. In this way television signifies what is in fact a partisan and structurally divided electorate as an objective, unified audience. It assigns itself the task of satisfying the viewing subject's desire to be informed. Not only, however, does television interpellate an ideologically reproductive form of subjectivity. The manner on which these subjects are "informed" also approaches dominant definitions pre-structured elsewhere. As Connell (1979,pp91,93) argues, current affairs journalism

"represents and then attempts to generalise definitions which already dominate the political sphere ... [it] does not initiate definitions of political and economic issues. These definitions originate in the struggles between contending political and economic forces."

The determinate nature of the "information" provided by the two programmes under study is the subject of the next section.

9.3 - PICKING UP THE PIECES

In the previous section, television's discourse was posed as interpellating a particular form of subjectivity. It was argued that the audience was "smashed" by being signified as individual spectators rather than as organised, active collectivities. The problem addressed here is how politicians interact with each other

and with broadcasters. It will be argued that there is no textual struggle between politicians and broadcasters because television's discourse reproduces the established terrain of which parties interact. The "smashed" audience is struggled over by the parties, who each try to "pick up more pieces" of it than their opponents.

Liberal democrat politicians argue for the "Unity of the Nation" in the same way as that signified by television's discourse. Thus they accept the broadcasters' signification and its reduction of politics to informed speculation [7]. Their activity is therefore limited to the attempt to mobilise this "unity" behind them. This was summed up rather eloquently by Rowling's reply to the question on leadership -

"we need a kind of leadership that will re-unite our people again, that will have them remembering that first and foremost they're New Zealanders. They may be trade unionists, they may be manufacturers, they may be farmers, they may be women working at home looking after a family; but the fact is they're first and foremost New Zealanders. We've become divided in recent times, we need leadership to get back to that unity."

The liberal democratic practice is very evident here. It invokes a national unity overcoming all class, sex, etc inequalities. It invokes parties as agents of the unity, not as products of the inequality. This complements broadcasting's own representation of politics. The structured basis of this national unity in New Zealand, the extensively intervening, centralised State, is accepted by all the parties and is thus signified as neutral, above the party differences it contains. This establishes a "common sense" between the parties. The question on housing in "Facing the Nation" illustrated this clearly. Beetham summed up the responses

of all three parties by asserting, "home ownership is the basis of a property-owning democracy, no doubt about that". All parties accepted the State as it is presently constituted, intervening typically to preserve small, private property. It thus ruled out as "irrational" a host of potential housing policies (e.g. that the State should concentrate its attempt to solve the housing crisis upon the construction of cheap, public housing). This common sense determines the way in which the parties proceed to differentiate themselves. Policy becomes a matter of rationally deciding which means best achieves the accepted end. The parties offer their policies to the viewer in these terms. Thus they interpellate the identical form of subjectivity ("informed spectator") as do the discursive practices of television.

One thing that each party representative must resist is the attempt by the others to link him to sectarian interests. This would invalidate his claim to represent "the national unity". The question in "The Leaders Debate" on the relationship between parties and unions produced the following response from Rowling -

"Labour has always had a good relationship with unions, because we have better understanding and concern for the working people in this country, and really its the protection of families that frequently leads to conflict ... But there will be times when [Labour] will obviously have to say look, that's as far as we can go, our responsibility is not just to the union group but to the country as a whole."

Rowling begins by moving immediately from the potentially damaging link between certain class practices and his party to the preservation of domestic stability. This places the party outside the specifically class practice, and as he concludes, identifies it

as a responsible agent for "the Nation". In his question, Muldoon was asked whether it wasn't true that National tended to accept the views of the Employers Federation than the F.O.L. He replied,

"if you asked the employers that, they would say no. The difference is that we are not the party of the trade union movement. The Labour Party is the party of the trade union movement, part of the same organisation. So obviously we are not going to be as easy on trade union militancy as a Labour Government would."

Muldoon begins by repeating the form of Rowling's argument (though he does not move to domesticity, since the families of employers are presumably doing very well). He then struggles with Rowling within the terms that both accept. It is illegitimate for unions to have an impact on Parliamentary politics. A politics attached manifestly to classes is invalidated consistently by all.

The active complicity of broadcasting's discourse with this preferred political practice is demonstrated by an exchange in "Facing the Nation". A letter was read out by the Chairman asking how the principle of compulsory unionism could be squared with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights decree that no individual could be forced to join any organisation. The pre-selection of this question sets up the classic confrontation between the formal rights of the "free individual", a form of subjectivity interpellated by both the three parties and current affairs television, and the discipline of working class practice. Muldoon began his answer by referring to National's attempt, three years before, to smash union strength with a secret union ballot aimed at establishing voluntary unionism. He then entered into an interesting dialogue with the Chair.

"I think my views on compulsory unionism are well known and they haven't changed. I don't like it. We gave trade union members the opportunity of deciding whether they wanted to have compulsory unionism in their unions, and they voted to retain it. They voted that way but that doesn't make me like it. I think it's a thoroughly bad thing. If its a bad thing don't you feel bound to try and change it?

We did, didn't we.

Again, I mean legally.

Yes, but I mean we gave people the option, and when people exercise their right to stay compulsory [pause] that makes it a bit difficult.

But union activities don't just affect union members, do they?

Exactly. No, you don't have to give me the arguments against compulsory unionism. I know them all. And I believe them.

Well, isn't there a broader question to be asked - [Interrupting, jocular] Force it on them!

[Continuing] Why isn't there a referendum of the whole country, and then decide the issue.

Well, [reflective] that's not a bad idea, that's worth thinking about. But we did it union by union and as you know they voted to remain as compulsory unionists.

All of the above interjections by the Chair were unscripted, and yet he was not subsequently criticised for contravening the Chair's neutrality, for being partisan, etc. This is because he remained within the common definition of legitimate political practice ("following up", not initiating an attack).

As Muldoon points out, there is a double contradiction here, between the individual's freedom of choice (as exercised by the unionists) and the subjection of that individual's freedom (by compulsory unionism). It "makes it a bit difficult", because if the freedom to be unorganised was forced upon unionists one would be acting in the same "dictatorial" way as the unions, but without the consent of those whom the liberal democrat practice interpellates as free subjects. The Chair systematically sets

about resolving this dilemma. He begins by invoking the legal prerogative of Parliament as the power to solve "the problem", then shows how this power can be used legitimately within the tenets of liberal democracy. Union activities are signified as an issue affecting not just immediate sectarian interests but also "the general interest". This places the issue within the zone of activity of the liberal democratic State. As a general issue it is something "the whole country" should decide by voting, in the same way that the majority "decides" on the composition of Parliament. It seems to be assumed that an appeal to "the public" will lead to voluntary unionism. This assumption derives from the logic of the dialogue, which represents "the public" as concerned with "the national interest" and unionists as simply pursuing particular interests. Unionists, as unionists, are not part of "the public". In this way television's discourse prefers the liberal democratic form of organisation, aligning itself (as Muldoon agrees) with the parties in general against other collective practices.

In his reply to the same question, Rowling argues against Muldoon. Nevertheless, his disagreement continues the same ideological reproduction of liberal democracy. At a higher level, the differences between the two parties and broadcasting are united. Rowling argued that

"its quite clear that the great bulk of the trade union movement don't want anything different from the compulsory clause. There is a conscience, escape clause that anyone can use anyway. But apart from that, the employers seem to be quite happy with compulsory unionism, the only one who has decided to seek a change is the National party, when they've played around with the situation for a while. I think they'd have been much better to

have exercised their time trying to create jobs, getting hold of costs, building some houses for our people, than fiddling with an area most people in that area don't want them to."

Rowling begins by accepting the importance of individual choice, pointing out that any subject can "escape" compulsion, freedom intact. He continues by signifying compulsory unionism as a non-political issue, as an "area" outside what may be legitimately termed political and thus not the concern of parties. This is because the enclave is based on a consensus. Since it is internally balanced on this issue there is no need for the neutral State to intervene and attempt to establish unity by appealing to a more general interest. He moves from this point to show what a party claiming to be the impartial caretaker of the national interest can legitimately do - the regulation of the economy at a distance typical of the New Zealand Welfare State. This activity is therefore signified as beyond the struggles that divide the policy (e.g. between employers and unionists). In these ways although Rowling differs from Muldoon, they both remain within a united representation of the liberal democratic State. Although they interpret the issue of compulsory unionism differently, both advance an image of political practice as an exchange between Parliament and individual voters.

Within the text there is a constant tension between the practices of broadcasting and that of party politics. This tension is the necessary result of their interaction, since they simultaneously assume different functions and yet claim to be identically representative. The panelist must ask pressing questions "for the public" - the leader must demonstrate his

party's policies as best "for the public". The politicians continually struggle to turn questions to their partisan advantage, and may refuse to answer outright. They may even struggle against television's mode of signification. In "The Leaders Debate", for example, Rowling (using a technique for which Muldoon is noted) persistently moved from listening to the panelist's question (Fig. 21) to turning and talking directly to camera (Fig. 22) -



FIG. 21



FIG. 22

His movement ruptures the televised reality which limits direct address to the neutral Chair. This overcomes broadcasting's mediation - he talks directly and partisanly to camera ("I know you are there too"), upsetting the previously signified neutrality of the camera eye by reproducing the party political broadcast form. The use of the direct mode of address attempts to partisanly mobilise the established authority of narrators over characters (narrators "tell you what's happening", characters "argue with each other over what's happening"). In the long run, however, Rowling's success was limited within the scripted picture/sound unity - he

could not move across sequences, direct the composition of visual images, etc. It was a matter of editorialising within his assigned "space" rather than attempting to overthrow television's discourse. This indicated, as do all the above examples, that although the practices of television and party politics are specific, they are "in the last instance" unified.

9.4 - CONCLUSION

In this chapter the "activity" that takes place upon the textual site was considered, principally in terms of two struggles. Firstly, television's discourse represses forms of collective organisation outside the liberal democratic model. This "lack" of organisation appears as an absence in the text - an absence signified by the presence (interpellation) of individual, spectator subjectivities. Parties in general are offered by television's discourse as the remedy for this absence. Liberal democratic practices are systematically preferred as the organising principle of the social formation. The participating parties in particular advance themselves as the most competent to organise these individuals. This is the second type of struggle on the textual site. It was concluded that the tensions between broadcasters and politicians, while evident, indicated not structured contradiction but the complementarity of two specific modes of practice. Television's ("smashed") audience is the parties ("picked up") electorate.

The participating politicians could "win" in the studio by a

number of means. They could constantly interrupt their opponents, talk all the time, walk into their opponents allotted visual space, etc. Rather than this, however, they agree to be contained within the schema of a rational debate under television's neutral Chair. They take turns, are polite to each other, listen to each other, don't shout, etc. Politics is signified as careful consideration and rational choice for the politicians as well as the voter (e.g. see Figs. 23 and 24) -

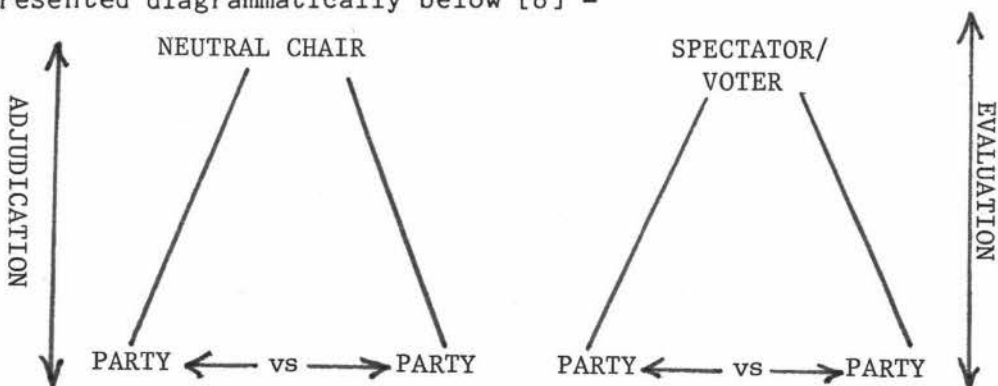


FIG. 23



FIG. 24

The party leaders are contained within broadcasting's neutrality. They achieve their partisan aims only indirectly, through broadcasting's rules of balance, impartiality, etc. This structure of relationships identifies the Chair with the spectator/voter within the discourse of "rational speculation". This is represented diagrammatically below [8] -



The combined structure of practices thus interpellate the viewer not as active participant but as spectator twice. By being divorced from the struggles this spectator is sufficiently "objective" to function as an evaluator. Thus the liberal democratic vote is authenticated as a rational basis for political organisation.

This explains why politicians submit to the signification rules of television. It is a necessary displacement of partisan politics onto an uncommitted terrain (see Hall et al, 1976, p87). It functions to provide the most suitable conditions for the long term reproduction of the dominant structure of political relations. This is not a matter of one party's temporary dominance over another, but of the reproduction of the political structure as a whole. It sets the conditions which allow the parties to oppose.

In this way the current affairs work of informed speculation is ideological labour. It effects the universalisation of the Parliamentary form of the State. From the subjective position inscribed in its mode of address, no other form of political organisation seems possible. The relative autonomy of the text allows the significant participation of liberal democrat representatives and at the same time ensures, through the discursive practices of the journalists, that the dominant political order is reproduced in its entirety. The dialectical relationship between the specific practices of broadcasters and politicians on this relatively autonomous site signifies the State itself as neutral. It signifies the rationality of the voters'

consent to the State's representation of the long term interests of capital as the general interest. For this reason, programmes such as "Facing the Nation" and "The Leaders Debate" are crucial "ideological apparatuses" through which ideological hegemony is exercised.

FOOTNOTES

[1] Nichols (ibid, p40) insists that semiotic analysis of "factual" programmes must deal primarily not with the image but with the sound track, since "each sequence sets in place a block of argumentation which the image track illustrates, with more or less redundancy". He is quite incorrect to argue that such assertions can be made a priori. Television's signification is a dialectic between sound and visual discourses. As Hall et al (1976, p66) emphasise, "each level makes its own kind of sense; but each, in the television discourse, is incomplete without the other". Television is not simply "radio with pictures", thus the relationships between each "level" (of dominance, of equivalence) must be established conjuncturally. Thus, for example, the opening and closing sequences of "Facing the Nation" and "The Leaders Debate" are of major importance for setting up the preferred reading; yet their sound track (a "theme") is completely subordinated to the complex mounting of a series of visual images.

[2] Thus, for example, if one of the political parties had made the programme, presumably it would here have shown a behind the back shot of its own leader ("your representative")

looking at the panel. This would signify something quite different, since it makes one politician the speaker for those absent (a partisan denial of the other two leaders) and it would give broadcasting's expert panelists no legitimacy (since members of the "Fourth Estate" have no right to ask questions as individuals, only as caretakers of the "public interest").

- [3] C.f. Benjamin (1970, p235) - "in the studio the mechanical equipment has penetrated so deeply into reality that its pure aspect freed from the foreign substance of equipment is the result of a special procedure, namely, the shooting by the specially adjusted camera and the mounting of the shots together with similar ones. The equipment-free aspect of reality here has become the height of artifice; the sight of immediate reality has become an orchid in the land of technology".
- [4] That the acceptance of the Chair's commitment to impartiality, etc, commits the viewer to the political passivity of the secret ballot is indicated quite clearly in the complete absence of any political activity by broadcasters themselves. The Principles and Practice explicitly advises against such involvement (see sections 4.11 to 4.13). The careers of successful journalists have been destroyed by the open expression of political views (e.g. in the Citizens for Rowling campaign). That the people offered by television as narrators become points of identification for the viewers is argued by Kumar (1977).
- [5] That the audience is created by television is indicated by the

fact that the format did not originate from any cohesive attempt by social groups to express their real needs. Rather, as one journalist recalled, "in 1975 a group of people who were working on 'Seven Days' had to face getting an election programme together. Several people sat around for three weeks in a room and bandied about an idea that would involve the general public's questions, not necessarily the issues of the moment but the little things that nag at them. They spent three weeks in a darkened room and finally came up with a format that involved questions on film, questions in the studio and letter questions. This year's was the third time that we'd done it, and the format hasn't changed".

- [6] Studio audiences rarely clap spontaneously. In "Facing the Nation" the opening applause was rehearsed under the direction of the Floor Manager, and the audience was instructed, "we're tight for time, so when you clap keep it short".
- [7] It is quite possible that on sites other than current affairs television these politicians would not accept this reduction. This would apply particularly to those sites on which the audience interpellated is quite different from that of television. Thus, for example, a Labour party politician could appeal to particular interests in a speech to freezing workers during their lunch hour. Whether or not this is so has to be established conjuncturally. In general terms, such a transformation seems highly unlikely, given the committment of all the parties to liberal democratic practices.
- [8] This is a modification of Fiske and Hartley (1978, p146).

CONCLUSION

"Will theoretical needs immediately become practical ones? It is not enough that thought should tend towards reality, reality should also tend towards thought"

- Marx

CONCLUSION

The substantive work of this thesis is now completed. It has studied the political economy of signification - how the creation of meaning is determined by and reproduces a definite structure of social relations. The task here is to draw some general conclusions.

Perhaps the first observation worth noting is the length and difficulty of this thesis. It must be argued that both traits are necessary. They are adequate to the nature of the object under study, the production of televised politics, and not to anything else. The tendency throughout has been to resist the abstracting of one moment from out of the complex unity of the production of sense. The problem is not one of studying institutions or signifying practices or texts, but of studying them all in relationship to each other. Abstract pieces of work take many deceptive forms. This includes, for example, even the detailed participant observation studies of broadcasters in their place of work which fail to generalise away from this cultural location. The empirical representation of the richness of experience is abstract if this is all it does. It is just as inadequate as the theoretical speculations of the more functionalist versions of structuralism.

These observations lead to the first "policy" conclusion. The tendency to abstraction in research is to be expected in those intellectual modes of production based on privatised, individual

activity. Theses stand as an exemplary instance of this practice. In chapter two abstract empiricism was noted in thesis work on New Zealand television. Rather than expecting each piece of work to overcome this tendency on its own, clearly a division of labour is called for. There needs to be a collective dimension to the study of culture. Individual work should be part of a relatively coordinated, ongoing project. In terms of sociology theses, such organisation is the responsibility of those departments that accept graduate students. Of necessity this will mean limiting the range of the presently unending plurality that is offered students at each individual site of graduate work. The small size of New Zealand allows for an organised division of labour and specialisation between departments. In more general terms, the study of New Zealand culture has persisted as a number of separate, and therefore abstract, enclaves ("lit. crits.", phenomenologists, Marxists, etc). To overcome this and initiate collective work means first creating profitable conflict. Specific sites (regular conferences, a journal, etc) need to be systematically organised for this conflict to take place in. This suggests the need for an organised and organising collectivity, which will itself become increasingly first the object and then the site of conflict. These concerns point to future directions for the New Zealand Cultural Studies Working Group.

Further conclusions flow directly from the thesis itself. Firstly, there is a body of substantive knowledge about the operation of television that is produced by the research. It is not proposed to repeat this knowledge in detail here, as this is

performed in other places. It is stated in general terms in the Introduction. The conclusion of each part accumulates the knowledge produced by the work done in the previous chapters. The thesis is in this way "stitched together" to provide an expanding knowledge. The conclusion of chapter nine is, therefore, simultaneously located in terms of the text and also of a very generalisable value. Nevertheless, some of the conclusions should be reviewed here, for the purposes of turning them into practical knowledge.

Analysis proceeded on three distinct levels. Firstly, broadcasting institutions were historically located within the political economy of New Zealand society. This was framed by the structural Marxist theory of the State. The administration of broadcasting is determined by the development of the centralised, interventionist State, and thus ultimately by the latter's function in reproducing the capitalist mode of production based upon small urban and rural property. Although it is a "State apparatus", broadcasting developed an increasing degree of autonomy. This means that it began to develop a form of intervention with the emergence of a cadre of professional television journalists.

The second level of analysis dealt with the activities of the journalists. These are cultural practices since they produce meaning, or forms of consciousness. In their everyday actions broadcasters exercise considerable autonomy. This is accomplished through a definite set of routines, primarily impartiality and balance. These routines make politics meaningful by signifying

certain political institutions, Parliament and broadcasting itself in particular, as neutral and objective caretakers of "the national interest". In this way the practices of broadcasters ideologically reproduce the existing State by systematically concealing structured differences of interest. They stabilise the State's general reproduction of the social formation as capitalist. For this reason broadcasting is an "ideological state apparatus". The most important conclusion from the analysis of part three is that the operation of television is typically not a matter of external censorship by other apparatuses of the State (e.g. the governing party in Parliament), nor is it a matter of bias by media personnel. The research showed how the cultural practices of journalists are constrained by the structures within which they operate. Only by being relatively autonomous can broadcasting ideologically reproduce the "mode of reality" of the State as a whole.

The third and final level of analysis was a semiotic study of two programmes produced for the 1981 general election coverage. These programmes were sites on which the above determinate relationships were actively struggled over and worked out. Primarily, this involves three relationships. Firstly, broadcasters actively repress any forms of organisation outside the liberal democratic model. They signify their viewers as "voters". That is, they are signified as passive spectators interested only in rationally choosing the party with "the best policies", rather than as committed, organised agents with specific and conflicting interests. Secondly, there is the relationship between politicians

and broadcasters. These two practices, while different, are complementary. The broadcaster's "viewer" corresponds to the party representative's "voter". Finally, the interaction between politicians was analysed. This remains within the "neutral" terrain defined by television's practices of signification. In this way all social conflict is represented as satisfactorily contained and resolved by the present Parliamentary structure of the State. The stability of this form of politics is made to appear in the interests of everyone. This means that satisfying the long-term requirements of capital accumulation are signified as "in the national interest".

The operation of New Zealand television depends on its relative autonomy from particular classes and from other forms of political organisation to accomplish this ideological work. A degree of autonomy enables broadcasting to reproduce parliamentary democracy as a whole. Ideological effects, therefore, are not the media's adoption of one position within the conflicting parties. Rather, television reproduces an ideological field on which all parties are unified, since these liberal democratic principles are the basis of their very constitution. It is this ideological field which allows the parties to contend with each other. Television shares in and partisanly supports this "mode of reality". Thus television journalists are liberal democratic "intellectuals", in the sense meant by Gramsci. They are active ideologists, transforming cultural material in a determinate manner.

From the above substantive conclusions one can proceed in a

number of different directions. Firstly, they have implications for further theoretical work and research. These two dimensions are obviously closely related. There is a need to extend the analytical method used here to other sites, such as the production of television drama and advertisements. It should be extended to include other forms of domination than the class relations studied here (e.g. race, sex). There is also the need to intensify the study of some of the areas dealt with only in passing by this thesis. One interesting area, for example, is the tension between class conflicts within broadcasting institutions (which threaten to split the production of televised meaning into discrete roles) and media "professionalism" (which attempts to unify this production process). Such tension is likely to increase over the next few years, given the steady retrenchment in State expenditure. Analysis of how these conflicts might affect the established routines of political television is of both academic interest and practical importance. Finally, there is an entire area of research that needs to be done to complement this thesis. The aspect of television about which the least is concretely known is how television programmes are actually read, or "decoded". Audiences can refuse to accept the preferred reading advanced by television's signification practices. This is because readers are not created by television's discourses, they are only "hailed". Readers are the sites on which multiple discursive practices intersect, not just those considered in this thesis. This raises the question, for example, of how subordinate classes resist their attempted ideological domination.

Such analyses will require sustained theoretical work, so that the problems can be posed in such a way as to avoid traditional abstractions and reductions. Theory must never be accepted as "given", but must be continually taken (dialectically) into intellectual practice. In particular, one must take careful account of the work being done on cultural questions in England at this very moment. Admittedly, much of this work as yet has very much a "back to Gramsci" tone, but this in fact is simply one dimension of "thinking forwards" (see Mercer, 1980). The present crisis in England, and the associated prominence of forms of cultural radicalism and reaction, continues to teach English intellectuals and guide their work in a way that is of great value.

The substantive conclusions of this thesis also have important implications for political practice. In particular, they offer suggestions for a socialist strategy of the media. As has been shown, questions about television must always be phrased in terms of the political, of the State. In New Zealand, this is a matter of a parliamentary democracy, in which the working class has the right of independent organisation (see Mulhern, 1980, p35). It is in terms of these parameters for "cultural struggle" that this thesis will conclude.

The theory of relative autonomy, in general terms, provides the most adequate basis for a socialist practice. Unless the specificity of television's discursive practices and their relationship to other forms of practice are properly comprehended, it is quite likely that attempts at change will merely perpetuate

the present undemocratic form of broadcasting (see Connell, 1980, p89). Thus, for example, economic ownership of television stations by organised workers does not at all necessarily mean a break with the ideological hegemony. If the specificity of television's intervention is not directly challenged, as a site of struggle in its own right, then the same ideological effects could continue to be produced. This means that it is vital, for example, to struggle for the deprofessionalisation of television journalists and against such signification practices as impartiality and balance. What do strategies that take account of relative autonomy look like?

The monolithic control of broadcasting by the B.C.N.Z. must be broken down and replaced by an authentically democratic diversity. This has three related dimensions. Firstly, the bureaucratic mode of organisation must be smashed, as this systematically prevents genuine popular access. Thus, for example, whilst one admits the need for local organisations gaining access to television, and thus a degree of "narrowcasting" to break down the ideological representation of a unified nation, the principle of a single, unifying authority over these regional stations must be rejected. This merely reinforces the separation between "the nationally important" and "the locally colourful". This much, at least, has been learnt from the commercial regionalisation of New Zealand radio.

Secondly, popular and diverse accessing must be authentic. It must not be a matter of various organisations "appearing in" programmes but their active production of television. Thus the

professional, elitist control of journalists must be smashed. Strategies to do this can take many forms. In particular one must exploit the distance between politicians and broadcasters. This distance is likely to become more problematic in times of structural transformation of the State. In chapter five it was argued that changes in the present State forms of intervention were associated with the Bill before Parliament tightening the control of government over broadcasters. Such moves can be exploited because the party in power continues to be a liberal, democratic one, dependent upon organising consent by representing itself as acting in "the national interest". Thus the party must be able to demonstrate how it allows itself to be opposed. As broadcasting loses its ability to offer signification "opposition" (i.e. rational interrogation) the possibility of breaking from its field of structured oppositions to alternative forms appears. For example, an hour-long interview of Labour and National representatives on the Budget, conducted by a neutral broadcaster, is very different from two 30 minute programmes on the Budget, one made by each of the parties. Furthermore, this is very different from four 15 minute programmes made by representatives of National, Labour, the employers and the unions. Each programme signifies politics differently, each may interpellate different forms of subjectivity, and yet all could lay claim to being democratically "balanced".

Finally, the texts that are produced must be open. Authentic access will produce programmes whose results cannot be predicted. One can guarantee that a version of "Facing the Nation" will appear

in every forthcoming election, with exactly the same results, unless the structure of relationships is broken with. Television's responsibility to produce a balanced text will disappear as professional broadcasters are disenfranchised in favour of other forms of practice (unions, universities, parties, conservationists, etc).

These three levels of activity correspond to the institutional, practical and textual relative autonomies of New Zealand television. The conditions for this activity exist within the contradictory relations of the social formation. Recently the National Council for Adult Education surveyed various groups for their opinions on the merits of an Educational Production Unit working independently within the national network (see the 1982 "Report"). As one might have expected, the W.E.A. president claimed that the unit would be largely redundant given the existing available resources. A union organiser, however, disagreed in the following way -

"the reason I support an Educational Production Unit is that I do not think that Television people have any more idea about Educational TV than anyone else, they only have production expertise, and that can be learned, borrowed or rented by anyone".

This thesis has shown that this statement is too simple. That it requires an intellectual intervention does not, however, deny its essential truth nor its indication of a future, quite different form of organisation.

REFERENCESABBREVIATIONS:

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 A.N.Z.J.S. = Australia and New Zealand Journal Of Sociology;
 W.P.C.S. = Working Papers in Cultural Studies;
 N.Z.C.S.W.G. Journal = New Zealand Cultural Studies Working
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METHODOLOGY APPENDIX ONE - DOCUMENTS

The following documents were used in the study of the practices of professional journalists. Most of them can be readily obtained by asking anyone involved in the production of current affairs television.

(1) PROGRAMME RULES

These were drafted by the Executive Producer for both "Facing the Nation" and "The Leaders Debate". Copies were sent to the participating politicians (see chapter 7.2).

(2) SCRIPTS

A full shooting script was obtained for both of the programmes under study. These detailed questioners, questions and camera shots.

(3) PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE

A copy of this document was obtained. It codifies the professionalism of television journalists. Its origins and meaning are discussed in chapter 6.6.

(4) TELEVISION STANDARDS AND RULES

This document is a formal statement by the Broadcasting Executive. It details the relevant laws (libel, etc) and supplements the "Principles and Practice".

(5) 1976 BROADCASTING ACT

This was amended in 1977, and at the time of writing there is a further amendment before a Select Committee.

METHODOLOGY APPENDIX TWO - OBSERVATIONAND INTERVIEWING

The production processes of the two programmes were the subject of a detailed case study. The primary methods used were participant observation and in-depth, qualitative interviewing. These took the following forms -

(1) FIELDNOTES

Although the major form of data collection was the interviewing, there were many opportunities for informative observation. Notes were taken from the control room during the production of "Facing the Nation" and "The Leaders Debate". Ethnographic detail was important in focussing the interview questions. This was particularly the case with the Director's role, about which I had been unable to find much written research. As a preliminary move I gained viewing access to a live production of "Newsmakers". The field notes were recorded irregularly from the time of entry into the field (4/11/81) until withdrawal (2/12/81).

(2) FIELD DIARY

This was a log of experiences in the field. Apart from a record of events and changes in approach, it also provided a good site for venting the many frustrations encountered by the field researcher! It was valuable for subsequently reconstructing exact dates and production events in the last few weeks before the two programmes were made. Recording began from the first entry into the field (4/11/81) and was continued daily until the final interview on the

22nd of December.

(3) INTERVIEWS

All the broadcasters actively involved (i.e. in terms of making editorial decisions) in the production of "Facing the Nation" and "The Leaders Debate" were interviewed formally in the course of this study. There were a total of ten respondents interviewed. The interviews were recorded on tape and subsequently transcribed. As is common with qualitative research in general, this was a time consuming exercise and resulted in considerable data. The length of the interviews ranged from one to three hours. This resulted in 182 1.5-spaced A4 pages. Informal chats with journalists supplemented these more formal sessions, and were recorded in the field notes. The questions asked for derived from a number of sources. In the main they came from the qualitative research on television production in England. Tracey (1977) was particularly helpful in that his book included many of the questions he used. Possible questions were also suggested by direct observation. The mode of questionnaire used was an open-ended, pre-scheduled format. The aim was to allow the interviewee to develop his or her own line of thought. Though this tended to result in frequent repetition, its value is precisely its adequacy to members' own expressions and experience. The actual schedules, furthermore, differed widely. The instrument had to be modified to suit the respondent. For example, it made little sense to talk to the daily editor in "The Leaders Debate" about how it was decided who would be invited to appear in the programme. It would have been equally unprofitable to ask everyone about the directorial construction of visual images. Due to the small number of respondents, each interview

could take account of the specialised position of the respondent in the process of the programmes' production. The method of questioning was to open up a general area, initiating a conversation and probing for certain issues. Typical areas covered were (a) the relationship between the two programmes and the programmes of previous years, (b) the relationship of the programmes to the overall election coverage, (c) when the respondent became first involved and how, (d) the meetings and decisions they attended, (e) the audience they had in mind, (f) the nature of feedback they received after the programmes were broadcast, etc. Such questions provided the basis for a fairly free-ranging discussion.

(4) VIDEO RECORDINGS

The two programmes were video-recorded for detailed analysis, such as in part four. These recordings showed the responses of the politicians, and the ways in which the script could be altered by the interaction in the studio. The purchase of the necessary video tapes was funded by a grant from the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Fund.