

THE RE-PRESENTATION OF
AN INDIAN IDENTITY BY
SOUTH AFRICAN PRINT MEDIA:
A CASE STUDY OF *THE LEADER*
- 1 APRIL-25 APRIL 1994.

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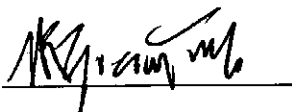
Submitted to the Faculty of Humanities, University of Natal, Durban, in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the Master of Arts (Cultural and Media Studies) (Coursework).

DECLARATION

I declare that this is my own unaided work,
except for the acknowledged supervision and referenced citations.
It has not been submitted for any previous degree at any university.

Date: December 1995

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Signature: A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N. R. Bramdaw', is written over a horizontal line.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author wishes to thank the following people who helped develop and refine this dissertation. Primary acknowledgement goes to the Editor and Staff of *The Leader*, who granted access to the materials under discussion. Thanks also go to Dr. R. E. Teer-Tomaselli for her constructive criticism during her supervision of this work. The writer also wishes to acknowledge the 1995 Masters and Honours classes at the Centre for Cultural and Media Studies (CCMS) for their input into the drafts of this dissertation. I am especially grateful to the staff of the Division of Language Usage (DLU) at the University of Durban-Westville (UDW) who made available materials on discourse analysis, and more importantly, managed to grant me generous leave whenever I needed it. For assistance with the layout of this project, a word of thanks goes to M. Moodley. Finally, a word of gratitude to K. Moodley and I. Mackraj for their support.

Needless to say, any shortcomings in this work should not be seen as a reflection on any of the above persons.

ABSTRACT

In the Kwa-Zulu Natal context, a lot of attention has been paid to the construction of Zulu ethnicity in the political and discursive spheres. Less attention has been paid however to the construction of Indian ethnicity in this region. This project will explore the exclusivist construction of an Indian ethnic identity by an Indian-owned print medium in this geographical context during the time of the 1994 South African elections, when various political parties fought for what has been called the "Indian vote". It will attempt to point out that the notion of ethnic identity offered by this medium to its readers does not actually challenge those offered to the community by the old South African state.

In grounding the analysis of the editions under discussion in a framework developed by Norman Fairclough, this study draws heavily on a theoretical continuum developed by Antonio Gramsci and Louis Althusser. It is in such a theoretical context that Fairclough has developed the methodology of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). By bringing such a methodology to bear on the texts under analysis, the study hopes to develop an understanding of Indian ethnicity in this region which suggests that it is an extremely problematic construct.

ABBREVIATIONS

AMP	Africa Muslim Party
ADM	African Democratic Movement Party
ANC	African National Congress
AWB	Afrikaner Weerstand Beweging
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
DP	Democratic Party
DIMES	Durban Integrated Municipal Employees Society
FW	F. W. de Klerk
IEC	Independent Electoral Commission
IFP	Inkatha Freedom Party
KISS	Keep It Simple Stupid Party
MF	Minority Front
MP	Member of Parliament
NIC	Natal Indian Congress
NP	National Party
NSL	National Soccer League
NUM	New Unity Movement
SABC	South African Broadcasting Corporation

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INTRODUCTION AND THEORETICAL CONTEXTUALISATION

For the uninformed, [*They Came from the East*] provides an insight into a group of people making up a specific, an exclusive racial category in keeping with the notion of South Africa comprising a mosaic of ethnic groups. Precisely because the video deals with the Indian community as a homogeneous, clearly defined group, it is giving credibility to and perpetuating this erroneous and destructive mosaic theory. ...[Indians] are seen as one separate ethnic component with a social, economic and political life of its own and seemingly able to function without any apparent contact with the balance of South Africa's people. ...The end result, of course, is to give credit to the State's version of separate but equal. The question then is, why deal with Indians as a separate group and not as a part of a dynamic South Africa? [Tomaselli *et al.*: 1986:41].

The stereotype - the 'black', the 'Indian', the 'native', the 'other' - collapses beneath the weight of ... complexity. Stretched between histories it tears, becomes piecemeal...Here, in a post-colonial genealogy of modernity, the tension, the gap, between different symbolic regimes and their shared occupation of the same signs simultaneously draws us into historical specificity and potential communalities [Homi Bhabha quoted in Iain Chambers:1991:14].

This project will attempt to address two interrelated questions which have as their common aim the interrogation of the metanarrative of a consistent South African Indian identity. In exploring these questions it seeks further to decentre the notion of an essentialist Indian ethnic subjectivity and implode the myth of the South African Indian cultural isolate that Keyan Tomaselli *et al* identify in ethnographic documentary modes of discourse on Indianness. In addition, this study attempts to address a particular lacuna in the critique of *They Came from the East* quoted above. While Tomaselli *et al* are correct in that the ethnographic representation of Indians in the documentary structures in many absences, the paper itself tends to structure out attempts by Indians to represent themselves in various media. By confronting this particular absence, it is hoped that this study would illustrate the role of signification systems *within* the Indian community that have depended far too uncritically on a problematic "historical specificity" and has largely ignored the "potential communalities" to which Bhabha refers. This would also be an attempt, of course, to offer a reading of identity which runs against the grain of *The Leader* and the representations of such a largely "imagined

community” by Indians themselves. These questions are:

- a. to what extent is such an essentialist ethnic identity constructed by the old South African state or, as it has come to be called, an “administrative identity”? [See for example, Bekker:1993.]
- b. to what extent is such an identity the construction of the subject community itself in relation to the project of the old South African state?

To attempt to answer these questions, it is necessary to accept that the idea of Indianness (like notions of Zuluness or Jewishness etc.) is a constructed one. As Edward Said [1] has pointed out in a related but further reaching project, the construction of the Orient by the West has been a problematic activity which has been informed by many hegemonic, ideological and material interests. Similarly, one could argue that as a discursive construct, the notion of South African Indianness is produced in the realm of daily life, in the realm of the family, in the realm of the school, in the realm of the state and the realm of subjects in coming to terms with these constructions.

If we borrow more extensively from Louis Althusser we could argue that these arenas meet in the realm of subjectivity. It is important to note that Althusser was not particularly interested in the notion of ethnicity. In dealing with class and subjectivity, however, his project has an affinity with this one in that both are concerned with the impact of ideology and discourse on the subject. Althusser, of course, deploys the term ideology in a specifically postmarxist context in relation to class formations and the subject. Ideology in this study will refer to the general belief systems of the subject community under discussion in relation to identity and the construction of ethnicity by an Indian print medium. In addition, as Norman Fairclough points out, Althusser is of some value as a theorist of ideology for the following reasons:

First, the claim that it [ideology] has a material existence in the practices of institutions, which opens up the way to investigating discursive practices as material forms of ideology. Second the claim that ideology ‘interpellates’ subjects... Third, the claim that ‘ideological state apparatuses’ (institutions such as education and the media) are both sites of and stakes in class struggle, which points to struggle in and over discourses a focus for an ideologically-oriented discourse analysis [Fairclough:1992:87].

This project will explore the notion that South African Indian ethnic consciousness is a form of 'false consciousness'. It is false in that, in the South African context, the community represented in and by *The Leader*, for example, is framed within discursive and ideological fields that largely ignore other cultural groups in this country. Furthermore, the rubric 'Indian' tends to obscure economic relationships within and outside the community, bringing such notions of identity in relation to ideology closer to the camera obscura idea held by Marx. While this is so, one will also notice a dialectical relationship with the 'real-seemingness' or verisimilitude of the Indian identity constructed in the columns of the paper, and the subjects towards which the paper is actually targetted. This verisimilitude, however, tends to obfuscate class and group differences within the Indian community itself. This is not to suggest, however, the development of what Stuart Hall has referred to as a "new ethnicity" [Hall in Ashcroft *et al*:1995:223-227] which acknowledges and accommodates ethnic difference. Rather it is an attempt to show how such an identity has been produced and in return has reproduced isolationist notions of ethnicity.

It is necessary to point out what is meant by the term "Indian" in this study. This project deploys the notion of Indianness on two levels. Firstly, the term refers to South Africans who are the descendants of what was largely an Indian (from the Asian subcontinent) indentured labour force (or 'coolies'). Many of the Indians that arrived in this country arrived as passenger Indians to set up businesses or in professional capacities such as translators etc. The reasons for their leaving India are well documented. In addition, the process of immigration to South Africa marks a specific moment in the expansion of capitalism and colonialism which is often ignored in historical accounts of the South African Indian community, both by Indians themselves and by the medium under discussion. What has rarely been attempted, however, even from within the community under discussion, is the reproduction of ethnic identity on an ideological level. In this sense, the idea that the subjectivities occupied by an ideology which posits their historical (and biological) origin as supreme is often in contestation with the day to day realities of their interpellation by competing discursive systems. This brings us to the second use of the term. In this sense it is largely ideological. Although it is extremely difficult

to draw a dividing line between the ideological construction of identity and the physical and historical fact of one's 'Indianness', 'whiteness' or 'Jewishness' etc., it is necessary to do so here. Indeed it is this second, largely ideological, construction of Indianness that this study will explore. Furthermore, it will attempt to assess the role a medium created by an 'Indian' (in both senses of the term) company, is implicated in fostering ideological notions of Indianness which reinforce existing preconceptions of identity in the subject community under investigation, and the notion of discrete ethnicities advanced by the old apartheid state.

A PROBLEMATICS OF REPRESENTATION

The discussion thus far has assumed an unproblematic relationship between the definition of *The Leader* as an ethnic medium and its status as a generically established print medium which 'objectively' reports on events in its structured reading community. The following exploration of ethnicity and representation might prove useful in showing the disjuncture between objectivity and the notion of ethnicity in this instance.

The Oxford English Dictionary defines ethnicity as follows:

ethnic 1. A person who is not a Christian or a Jew; a pagan, a heathen. LME -E18. 2. An epithet that denotes nationality and is derived from or corresponds to the name of a people or a city E19. 3. A member of an ethnic group or minority. Chiefly *N. Amer.* M20.

ethnocentric a. centred on one's own race or ethnic group; based on or characterised by a tendency to evaluate other races or groups by criteria specific to one's own; having assumptions or preconceptions originating in the standards, customs etc., of one's own race or group: E20. [Oxford English Dictionary:Vol 1:1993:857.] [2]

In attempting to 'represent' the Indian community, the newspaper under discussion makes a problematic claim. News media in general often make claims that suggest that they do represent a market or community through a process of mediation. Such a claim rests on the apparent objectivity of their reportage, amongst other things (a more detailed analysis of the rhetorical devices used by print media will follow).

Such a claim appears to rely on a simplistically mimetic notion of the idea of representation. Recent attempts to problematise representation and the notion of mimesis have isolated three main theoretical approaches in this area. These are:

1. mimetic approaches, which include positivistic and observer-participant approaches,
2. postmodern approaches and
3. hermeneutic approaches [Duncan and Ley:1993:2-12].

The shortcomings of the mimetic approach lie chiefly in its assumption that a positivistic epistemology can yield knowledge on the world which carries with it a universal validity. The positivistic method is also implicated in the claims of the Enlightenment that language simply reflects reality in an unproblematic way. As early as the 1930's, Ferdinand de Saussure problematised the nature of language in the process of signification, arguing that there is a discontinuous relationship between the signifier and the signified. More recently, Frederic Jameson has written of "the prison house of language" [1972] which actually disables a positivist epistemology.

A realist epistemology, furthermore, is, as Eagleton argues [1983], an ideological construction. In attempting to pass off the explanations it provides about the world as natural, realism actually succeeds in concealing the socially constructed nature of narratives in society. By assuming that facts provide the substance of history, for example, historians fall into the trap of ignoring the narratives within which those facts are embedded. Similarly journalists' claims to objectivity and impartiality also ignore the contexts within which the facts they collate are embedded. Disputes in historiography over the interpretation of a colony of facts aptly illustrate the contentious nature of historical representation.

Criticism of mimetic approaches to representation have come from quarters as diverse as feminism, poststructuralism and postmodernism.

As a methodological precaution, Duncan and Ley point out that:

A critical view of the mimetic claims of description builds a more serious divide between a traditional cultural geography committed to theory-free empiricism and a recent cultural geography committed to theory-laden interpretation [Duncan and Ley:1993:5].

In addressing the shortcomings of a mimetic approach to representation, this analysis will attempt to avoid the extremes identified by the writers above.

In turning to postmodern theories of representation we encounter another extreme. Although

sharing with hermeneutics a suspicion of mimetic representation, this approach tends to decentre the “privileged sites from which representations emanate” [Duncan and Ley:1993:7]. In so doing however, postmodernism tends (in its radical manifestations) to offer an epistemology that is so relativistic that all connection between signifier and signified becomes ruptured. In such an epistemology, it appears as though all language loses its descriptive force, which is clearly at odds with the notion that communication and description (however problematic) are still possible.

A second concern with postmodernism is the tendency to decentre the privileged gaze of the white, western, male academic. In so doing it hopes to open up academic enquiry to a “polyphony” [Duncan and Ley:1993:8] of voices. This move is desirable since the authority of the text becomes dispersed, and is not located in the hands of the traditional academic. In practice however the ordering influence in any text of a polyphonic kind means that authority still resides with an author who has to deal with the linear nature of language and narrative, irrespective of categories such as “whiteness” or “maleness” etc. Thus the radical attempt at free play and disrapture that characterises the postmodernist endeavour finds itself returning to the confines of Jameson’s prison house. A radical relativism, even if purely for its own sake, appears out of reach for the postmodernist.

This analysis is based on the hermeneutic approach which borders on the postmodern. While it does not seek to adopt the radically relativistic epistemology of postmodern endeavours, it may at times appear to do so. The hermeneutic approach is characterised by a suspicion of the claims of postmodernism. In relation to text and text production, hermeneutics identifies three aspects of representation:

The first is the text which the academic produces (whether it be a journal article...or simply an idea which has yet to be committed to print). The second is the *the extra-textual field of reference*, the ‘data’ used in the production of the text. The third is the *inter-textual field of reference*, elements culled from other texts (both theoretical and empirical) which are used in the production of the text. What this model of academic work suggests is not a mirroring of the extra-textual within the text, but rather *re-presentation*, the production of something which did not exist before outside

the text [Duncan and Ley:1993:9].

In following this sort of strategy Duncan and Ley argue that it is important to take cognisance of the reader and his / her relationship to the text as well. In attempting to disrupt dominant meanings offered to the reader by a medium claiming to represent an ethnic community the path here will deviate slightly from mainstream hermeneutic approaches in an attempt to understand the hailing of readers by the narratives contained in the issues under analysis.

The position adopted in this paper is that the news medium under discussion is involved in an ethnographic project as well as a commercial one in choosing to commodify ethnicity in the way it has. Such a process of commodification in the name of 'representation' is not without its problems. In articulating its ethnographic presence *via* its editorials, the newspaper grounds its position in the ideology of Indianness without explicitly stating whether such an ideology is problematic. Instead it has sought to present an inclusive Indianness at the expense of other racial groups in this country, except where it seeks to align itself with a broader black community. The discursive inconsistencies this represents shall be borne out later in the analysis.

IDENTITY AND ETHNICITY

The paradox is the following: identity is what is naturally given and is therefore considered as a possession, yet it is also that which possesses the individual. If, on the one hand, identity is constituted by a personal experience and an individual history, it is also and inevitably a product of the otherness of cultural, social, and linguistic determinants. As the individual reconstructs and reflects upon an imaginary identity, he/she cultivates an illusion of conscious control that only serves to occlude the aleatory and contingent nature of this imaginary essence. Thus, in a sense, identity is our metaphysical refuge, it is the gap between our history and History, between our self-conscious and purposeful use of language and the Logos that makes our speech possible. We reside in this gap by covering it up with an explanatory system that has also the virtue of placing other humans within the context of a fundamental nature, a teleological design, or a scientific paradigm [Karlis Racevskis in Bernauer and Rasmussen:1994:21].

In the context of a post apartheid society the South African Indian subject (if we can speak of such a subjectivity in an authentic manner) has been 'hailed' by many, often politically contradictory, forces. One of the most powerful of these forces has been the myth of India as 'motherland'. This appears to explain, for example, the idea that Mahatma Gandhi 'belongs' to the Indian community or that the Indian community belongs to Mahatma Gandhi. Another response has been the attempt to retain an identity in the face of the ravages of apartheid, toward which many Indians appear to have had an ambivalent relationship. This is borne out in the largely successful establishment of the House of Delegates with the assistance of a whole cluster of Indian political parties. Alongside this political development many Indians were involved in the attempts to establish democracy in this country. Further complicating the issue is the many religious (read 'ideological') systems that accompanied the arrival of Indians to this country and which are still quite strong up to this day. Although these examples come from very recent history (and many more can be found from earlier on) they are presented here to problematise the notion of a coherent Indian subjectivity and to suggest that the Indian subject is an extremely fractured one in political and cultural terms especially when viewed from within the confines of an homogeneous identity.

The subscription to an essentialist Indian identity, both by the acquiescence of some and the

impositions of apartheid discourses, has led to a simplification of the complexities of such a process of identity-formation. Also, the idea that Indians represent an homogeneous ethnic group appears to have been the by-product of particular administrative identities constructed by the old South African state. It is important here to indicate what is meant by the use of the term “state”. This project takes its understanding of the operations of the state from Antonio Gramsci (1891 -1937):

Thus he defines the state as force plus consent, or hegemony armoured by coercion, in which political society organises force and civil society provides consent. Gramsci uses the word ‘state’ in different ways: in a narrow legal-constitutional sense, as a balance between political and civil society; or as encompassing both. Some writers criticise his ‘weak view’ of the state which overemphasises the element of consent [eg Anderson P.:1976:The Antinomies of Antonio Gramsci], while others stress that Gramsci is trying to analyse the modern interventionist state where the lines dividing civil and political society are increasingly blurred [Sassoon, A. S.:1980:Gramsci’s Politics] [Bottomore:1983:194-6].

Although it has been generally accepted that the media play an important role in influencing public opinion and formulating consensus, the effects of their influence are difficult to quantify. As Tuchman says, “by stressing news as knowledge, I do not mean to suggest that news reports are the only mass medium shaping understanding of the everyday world” [Tuchman:1978:3]. As regards debates surrounding the nature of the state in relation to the establishment of consensus, it appears as though the old South African state was extremely interventionist both on the levels of force and ideology. In the use of physical force to quell violence in this country and their propagation of various myths to establish consensus, the state sought to establish an increasingly tattered hegemony. As such, a news-medium involved in elaborating an ethnic consensus must have come dangerously close to supporting the interventionist state. Marx’s original argument that the “executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie” [Bottomore:1983:465] appears to be somewhat too terse to describe the complex role hegemonic interests played in the old South African state.

While it would be unfair to argue that *The Leader* turned a blind eye to political developments

in this country, it is necessary to point out that political analysis was conducted within a very narrow ethnic frame. (A more detailed analysis of this will be conducted later on.) It is in the context of state discourses on ethnicity and race that such a frame becomes even more problematic. It is on this basis that one could argue that such a news medium was implicated in the formation of consent of an ethnic-racial kind. As a news medium, therefore, it is placed dangerously close to reproducing the sort of power relations the apartheid state sought to introduce and maintain.

We shall return to Gramsci and Althusser later on in the study, as the method of discourse analysis developed by Norman Fairclough largely depends on their ideas of the social construction of reality and the reproduction of hegemony. In turn, the social analysis of language is based on Fairclough's conception of the role of language in establishing social consciousness.

In choosing to confront the issue of the representation of the Indian community using the methodology of discourse analysis, this study implicitly aligns itself with endeavours in the field of postmodern theory. In addition, by separating the notion of identity from the subjects that are under analysis it hopes to challenge notions of identity which suggest that they are fixed and unified. This in turn represents an approach to identity and subjectivity (even if for purposes of analysis) which not only suggests that they are separable, but that they are constructions. Indeed an aim of this project is to suggest that they ought to be deconstructed, placing this aim close to the heart of poststructuralist academic endeavour. It is necessary, therefore, to qualify the instances of intersection between postmodern theories, which (sometimes) offer radically relativized understandings of the world, and the broadly postmarxist approach referred to above.

In addition to the above, we live in a context which has simultaneously been described as postmodern and postcolonial. As has been argued by Ashcroft *et al*, postcoloniality does not just refer to the political act of decolonisation, but begins from the moment of colonisation [Ashcroft *et al*:1995:117:118].

In a scathing critique of postmodernism and discourse analysis, D. Sivananthan has the following to say:

In another time, these [poststructuralist] intellectual playboys of the western world would be of little consequence: they would not affect the struggle on the ground. But in post-industrial society...they are workers of the mind and the brain...that run the Information Society. And, it is they who are the best placed to unmask governments, counter disinformation, invigilate the communications corporates and, in the process, rekindle the drive for a just and equal society that the unprecedented prosperity, unleashed by the technological revolution, promises. In place of which, they blame modernity for having failed to abolish 'poverty, ignorance, prejudice and the absence of enjoyment' (the list is Lyotard's) and so decide to abolish modernity instead. And to justify their betrayal, the postmodernists have created a whole new language of their own, which allows them to appropriate struggle without engaging in it and, while appearing radical, further their own interests - a class in itself and for itself. (Poor Marx.)

Hence we have discourse *sans* analysis: information that never becomes knowledge - theory that never becomes practice. Deconstruction *sans* construction: you disassemble dominant value systems, but have none to replace them - and that vacuum is a virtue. And the temporal *sans* the eternal. But we live in eternity, in conformity. That's why we have memory, tradition, values and vision. The notion that everything is contingent, fleeting is the philosophical lode star of individualism, an alibi for selfishness, a rationale for greed. They are the cultural grid on which global capitalism is powered, and the postmodern intellectuals have helped to keep it in place, lent it their skills and ideas - usurers in the temple of knowledge. It is time we drove them from the temple [*New Statesman and Society*: 19 July 1995:21].

It is also important to address the misconception that might arise following the privileging of discourse over the real in the above manner. The misconception, simply stated, is the idea that in the 'real world' of struggle, of memory, values and vision (as Sivananthan frames it), discourse analysis actually represents a flight from reality to the comfort of endlessly defining and redefining one's terms of debate. Postmarxist suspicions of postmodernism, as a cultural movement and a theoretical practice, centre largely around its tendency to consistently question rather than affirm. In many ways this is an extremely important question. On one level discourse analysis leaves itself open to the charge that it is an apolitical Eurocentric methodology which is of limited use in the South African context, given the urgent need to address 'historical imbalances'. On another level, the privileging of discourse over the real

implies that all *meaningful* struggle is fought in the realm of discourse and only indirectly in the real world. It is not fashionable to speak of ontology anymore but such arguments seem to imply an ontological discreteness on both the part of the inhabitants of the 'real world' and those who live in the world of the discursive!

In response to such charges it is necessary to return to the interrelatedness of language, ideology and subjectivity as conceived by Louis Althusser. Neither Althusser nor (as "radical" a post-structuralist as) Jacques Derrida have thrown out the notion of the subject [Marshall:1992:87-89].

In the words of Marshall:

Thus, to critique subjectivity is not to refuse the concept in any of its definitions; that would be an exercise in futility. The post-structuralist critique of subjectivity is wide-ranging and multi-farious, but is most consistently an impulse to look at the historical, philosophical and cultural construction of the subject [Marshall:1992:82].

In other words, to provide a critique of subjectivity is to attempt to understand its positioning in ideology and language, not to dispense with it. Althusser stresses, of course, that ideology has a material presence. By extension then, we need to ask whether the values and traditions that Sivanandhan refers to are not materially constituted and re-constituted by subjects that hold these to be true (with Sivanandhan as a subject himself).

In a more direct reference to the roles of language and discourse, Catherine Belsey has the following to offer:

Because ideology has the role of constituting concrete individuals as subjects, because it is produced in the identification with the "I" of discourse, and is thus the condition of action, we cannot simply step outside it. To do so would be to refuse to act or speak, and even to make such a refusal, to say "I refuse," is to accept the condition of subjectivity [Marshall:1992:90].

We can see from the above that the subject is involved in a complex relationship with ideology,

language and discourse. It is also an attempt to explain the “I” of discourse and the relationship between the subject conceived as an individual and the intersection of such an individual with the discursive and political constructions of such an individuality.

Thus even the most commonsensical notions that individuals hold of themselves appear to be mediated *via* some exterior point, and that these individuals continue to mediate those notions in turn in a manner which is not simply mechanical. It is hoped that later on in this essay, on the basis of the arguments advanced above, that the complexities of the mediation of a primordial notion of ethnicity will become more apparent.

Finally, in discussing the confrontation of postmodernism with the idea of the stable black subject, Stuart Hall offers us another route through the *impasse*. He acknowledges the real existence of social effects on subjectivity but argues for the importance of the discursive nonetheless. He adds that “while we cannot expand the territorial claims of the discursive infinitely” we have to recognise that the only meaningful contestation of the manner in which subjects are represented are fought in the realm of the discursive according to its rules and norms. In this manner the idea of representation can escape a simple realist, mimetic epistemology and “replace it with a radical displacement” [Hall in Ashcroft *et al*:1995:224] of such a theorisation. This would encourage a politics of representation that would reveal that race and identity are essentially social and political constructions.

THE PRINT MEDIA

The adjustment of reality to the masses and of the masses to reality is a process of unlimited scope, as much for thinking as for perception.
[Benjamin 1970:quoted by Chaney in Curran, Gurevitch *et al* :1977:440.]

In this part of this essay, we leave the broad theoretical context to examine aspects of print-media theory. We therefore engage in a very brief examination of the conventions of the print media and their implications for the medium under discussion. Secondly, it will explore the news genre and the ideological effects of newspaper structuration. Finally, the focus will tighten to cover the specific role an ethnic print medium plays in our context.

We can summarise the conclusions to be drawn from the argument thus far by saying that the convergence of capitalism and print technology on the fatal diversity of human language created the possibility of a new form of imagined community, which in its basic morphology set the stage for the modern nation. The potential stretch of these communities was inherently limited, and, at the same time, bore none but the most fortuitous relationship to existing political boundaries (which were, on the whole, the high watermarks of dynastic expansionisms) [Anderson:1993:46].

While Anderson is writing of the rise of nationalism in Europe in relation to the print media, a few pertinent parallels can be drawn between the phenomenon he is describing, and the history of *The Leader* and its impact on ethnic consciousness. While we have already explored the role of the apartheid state in packaging ethnicity and race, we need to turn to the more direct role played by this print medium in reproducing the phenomenon of ethnic consciousness.

Firstly, a parallel can be drawn in the choice of language by *The Leader*. In choosing to publish in English, at a time when competing media were being published in vernacular languages, the newspaper succeeded in a sense in speaking across “the fatal diversity of human language”. As Anderson points out above, this would have increased the “potential stretch” of the local Indian community who would have met in the pages of the organ without a language barrier. Secondly, such an addition in stretch, within the boundaries of race-capitalism in this

country would have helped deliver the acquiescent reader of *The Leader* to apartheid conceptions of ethnicity. Finally, although Anderson speaks of a national consciousness, a parallel may be drawn between ethnic consciousness and the apparent commonalities of the imagined community of Indians in this region. In other words, “these fellow readers [who] were connected through print formed, in their secular, particular, visible invisibility, the embryo of the...imagined community” [Anderson:1993:44]. [3]

In addition, Anderson offers the very interesting idea that language is *not* an instrument of “exclusion” [Anderson:1993:134]. In conjunction with the print media he sees language as involved in the process of building nationalism. In the context of this particular project one may argue that the initial success of the medium under analysis lay in the fact that it first appeared in English in a context where colonised subjects would have aspired to such a language. In this manner, English would have succeeded in creating an imagined ‘Indianness’ across the vernaculars in currency at the time. In taking on what was perceived as ‘the Englishman’s preserve’, it might have been seen as a site of resistance by the Indian who bought into the notion of ethnic consciousness. In addition, such a creation of ethnicity might have been informed by the perceptions of South African Indians of the status of English in India, a much more Anglicised country in relation to the Indian subjects here. In other words, the myth of India as motherland might have been informed by such a perceived linguistic relationship to the Indian sub-continent.

This is not an attempt to claim, however, that *The Leader* was solely responsible for the phenomenon of Indian ethnicity in this region. Such a claim would be naive, even given the rapid rise of its circulation in its earlier years. [4] The complex dialectic between media and the communities they claim to represent (its actual readers appear to be the only *quantifiable* community here) does not make such a claim possible. Its rise in circulation does seem to indicate that *The Leader* did contribute in no small way to the development of a pre-existing ethnic consciousness, in conjunction with various factors, such as a common geographical background, a common enemy in the form of a discriminatory state and linguistic commonalities, amongst others.

If we extend the critique offered by Anderson to the role of the media in relation to ethnicity, it would appear that a similar process of imagined community formation takes place on both the levels of ethnicity and nationalism. The difference with nationalism however appears to be the role that state institutions can play in the dissemination of nationalistic ideologies. Stuart Hall points to the other extreme of such a process of identity formation. The dissemination of nationalist ideologies in Britain appears to have mystified the link between English ethnicity and extreme nationalism in that country [Hall in Ashcroft *et al*:1995:225].

On many levels *The Leader* represents a commodification of ethnicity. It has sought, through its structure and content, to reflect and reproduce Indian ethnicity as unique and viable despite the construction of such ethnicity by the old apartheid state. Furthermore, the idea that such a construction of ethnicity is problematic was barely entered into in the columns of the editions under discussion. In our later examination of these issues we will easily see the extent to which this representation of the Indian community becomes problematic. This phenomenon is, however, partially explicable:

...[here] the difference between race and ethnic identities comes to the surface. The searing reality of race discrimination...has strengthened race consciousness amongst blacks who experience the multiple pains of exclusion from the dominant society and culture. At the same time, ethnicity signifies assimilation, and many people of colour continue to act as if this objective has been achieved, and the remaining task for subalterns is to acquire the credentials of inclusion, principally through education, training and legal protection against discrimination.... Ethnicity is a term that contains within it the presumption of structured class inequality, but not a problematic nationality [Aronowitz:1992:53].

Aronowitz is significant to our project in that his explanation appears to clarify the tension that exists between those subjects who simultaneously view themselves as “black” and “Indian” in our context. In an attempt to mark themselves off as unique, it appears as though certain Indian subjects need to do so under the rubric of blackness. In so doing they mark themselves as unique within a subaltern milieu.

Before we leave Anderson's comments on the origins of the print media, we need to explore other forms of community implicated in them. In addition to the imagined community outlined above, Bob Hodge identifies three different communities in which a newspaper is involved, the first two of which seem to be covered by Anderson's notion:

- a. The community constituted by the act of communication, those who produce the paper and those who read it.
- b. There is also the community which the newspaper transmits or creates; the world that it records, the images of social relations and events in its pages, and the community implied by its content.
- c. Finally there is what we can call the real world, the world of people and actions, which are recorded, accurately or inaccurately or ignored by the paper concerned [Hodge in Fowler *et al*:1979:157].

Hodge goes on to point out that print media tend to structure a social world which makes one newspaper distinctly different from another. Further, newspapers are bought by consumers because they expect that a social world is to be confirmed in the columns of the newspaper purchased. This goes some way to explaining the complex relationship between readers, newspapers and ideology.

We shall now turn to the broad structure of print media to examine the methods by which they produce meaning and construct social reality. The frames or "discursive technologies" [Fairclough:1989, quoted in Fairclough:1992:215] used by print media often differ, and necessarily so, from the frames used by electronic media. To begin with both forms of media have in common an appeal to objectivity. An effect of this is the legitimisation of the scope and authority of their gaze. News narratives sound and read differently to ordinary speech. Although not produced in a highly formal register, news narratives are certainly not ordinary speech. While these might seem like obvious points, the tone of news reports lends weight to the apparent 'truthfulness' of their reportage. Often readers are unfamiliar with the latent content of news, and narrative, in conjunction with news frames and the specific choice of words used in reportage, can actually work against the objectivity striven towards by journalists.

On a theoretical level this appeal to objectivity (and hence, *truthfulness*) is problematic. Apart from hiding its absences, a news report 'invites' the reading subject to participate in the notion of objectivity as well. The subject is often interpellated into believing that news reports consist of unquestionable facts recorded by an unbiased observer. Moreover the subject believes that it comes to a news medium as sovereign when it is actually subjugated to and positioned by the rhetorical power of news discourse.

Furthermore, in attempting to offer a topography of certain kinds of reality (be these communities, markets, race groups, ethnic groups or a nexus of these), the media in particular order boundaries, inscribe meanings, rationalise ideological positions, sanctify certain forms of meaning and exclude others. [5] This is not done in a deterministic fashion but depend largely on the vagaries of manufacturing a product (and concomitantly diverse realities) given perceived corporate and ideological constraints and freedoms. [6] Thus frequently quoted claims that the media simply offer a mirror to society become problematised. As will be illustrated by this project, the medium under discussion is involved in reflecting society as much as it is in constructing it. A consequence of this is that simple mimetic theories of representation become increasingly inadequate in attempting to assess the role news media play in society.

As a textual site, *The Leader* shows incongruencies on many levels. To begin with, the claim in its masthead that it represents "The Voice of the People" is extremely audacious. Within the narrow discursive frame of Indian ethnicity articulated by the paper such a claim is a sweeping one. Furthermore the problematic of "the people" covers differing constituencies which traditionally cover class as well as racial divisions in this country, if one wishes to consider racial divisions a valid category of analysis here. It is an idea which seeks to confirm that the newspaper is one which has its columns open to all as was stated in its original editorial. [7] As such, the day-to-day editing of the newspaper and the principles via which news items are included or excluded become subsumed to the idea of objectivity and openness while ignoring the agenda set for the market towards which the paper is targeted. The notion of "the people" in this context could be seen as a simple rhetorical appeal to populist notions of the "the

struggle”.

In addressing the problematic of ‘the people’ and the use of the term, Seth Siegelaub in Communication and Class Struggle offers us the following insight into the use of the term:

The confusion maintained around the idea of the popular, between ‘of the people’ and that which is ‘regard[ed] with favour or affection by most persons’, is not just due to an innocent misunderstanding or the complex overlay of ideas connected to the movement of past history. It is especially connected today to connect the ‘people’ to a certain idea of the cultural, social and political; to a certain idea of people’s opinion and consciousness; and ultimately to a certain idea of what people were, are, can or will be [1983:11].

Incidentally, this appeal to the ‘people’ has grown since the elections with some newspapers changing their mastheads to include an invocation of the idea. *The Sunday Times* for example has added “The Paper for the People” to its masthead since the elections.

In the discursive terms offered to us by Bakhtin [1981] this represents a “double-voiced” encoding of the reality offered by the medium under discussion [Fairclough:1992:108]. Despite the encoding offered by *The Leader* and its masthead, it could be suggested that in the context of ethnicity, such a coding seeks to incorporate, in a very narrow context, the broad notion of belonging to a “black” community. In terms of the voice offered by the medium itself to the notion of the people such a strategy appears to seek to conflate the two notions: black and Indian. This ambiguity, while on a simple level an advertising strategy, also seeks to obscure the political and material repercussions of the statement.

The notion of ‘voice’ in the case of the print media is an extremely complex one. Apart from the structural factors that affect the reproduction of legitimate social processes in the literal sense of of the word [Tomaselli, R.:1994], in the the print media, this often leads to the conflation of the position on the medium with that of the “community” under description.

In the implicit (in this instance) construction of the news frame of the medium under discussion, attention should be drawn to the fact that such a frame must affect the running of

the newspaper in several ways. It is significant in that the newsworthiness of reports has to be decided as part of the editorial function. The contradiction presented in the first editorial of *The Leader* makes the task of keeping columns open to all within the framework of the law, while simultaneously seeking to reflect the needs and aspirations of the Indian community an extremely difficult one. These conceptions would not only affect the filtering of copy as newsworthy or irrelevant at the point of newspaper production, but also in the assignment of reporters to different beats and stories, the designing of advertising campaigns and the selection and omission of letters to the editor, amongst other things. In other words, maxims such as these have material effects on the construction of the news in the newspaper, and the representation of the community imagined in its columns.

In terms of the period under discussion it is necessary to add that the elections in South Africa were successful in drawing a close to the gap between the state and civil society in this country. There were many significant discursive interventions involved in the elections. For example, the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) was involved in producing an objective account of the proceedings in the light of its prior history as a state controlled broadcaster. This shift was actively marketed prior to and after the election. In the print media, newspapers sought, as in previous referenda, to explain the importance of the individual vote to the future of South Africa as a nation. The African National Congress's (ANC's) invitation to become part of the "rainbow nation" also succeeded in establishing a form of consensus. Political dissent, articulated by the Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging (AWB) and, on the other extreme, the New Unity Movement (NUM), was largely ignored by the medium under discussion.

The point of the above analysis is the interdiscursivity of political developments in South Africa since the elections that have placed South Africa and President Mandela on the international moral high-ground since 1992.

METHODOLOGY

Discursive practice is constitutive in both conventional and creative ways: it contributes to reproducing society (social identities, social relationships, systems of knowledge and belief) as it is, yet also contributes to transforming society [Fairclough:1992:65].

In this part of the paper, a brief methodological outline to discourse analysis is provided. In Discourse and Social Change, Norman Fairclough (1992) outlines a detailed methodology for discourse analysis. In addition, Fairclough makes reference to Roger Fowler, Bob Hodge, Gunter Kress and Tony Trew, the authors of Language and Control (1979). The following analysis will be based on an adaptation of the models outlined in both these books.

Methodological Paradigm

Discourse analysis has been chosen as the methodology for this particular study for many reasons. To begin with, in dealing with the print media, discourse analysis has proved fruitful in unlocking the structures of meaning in what is often taken for granted as an objective structuring of newspapers and the reality they re-present [see for example, Hodge:1978 or, more pertinently, van Dijk:1987]. Secondly, Norman Fairclough points to what has been called a “linguistic turn” in social theory. As a consequence of this, methodological paradigms have come increasingly to be based on assumptions which foreground language as a rich source of social, cultural and ideological information. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the methodology developed by Fairclough is based on the insights offered to us by Althusser and Gramsci. It is largely in an attempt to carry forward and develop these insights to the discursive construction of ethnicity in Kwa-Zulu Natal that this study bases itself on such a methodology.

1. The first step in any project using the methodology of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is gathering data and consequently defining a project. Fairclough's recommendation here is that the project should be interdisciplinary [Fairclough:1992:225]. As it has been

described thus far, this project has attempted to unravel both issues of Cultural Studies [8], and issues in the field of Media Research. In this section, we will introduce aspects of Critical Sociolinguistics.

2. The Corpus: The corpus of work has already been identified. It consists of issues of *The Leader* dated 1 April through to 25 April 1995. As these issues comprise a total of 124 tabloid pages, the focus of the analysis will be a selection of those items that deal directly with election issues and their intersection with issues of Indian ethnicity. In an attempt to enhance the corpus of work, an extraordinary edition of the newspaper published to document the elections will also be briefly analysed. Finally, this corpus has been “enhanced” [Fairclough:1992:227] by the allusion to unpublished primary historical research into the life of the founder of *The Leader*. This corpus represents the case study, as recommended by Fairclough.

The selection of the corpus is based on the hypothesis that during the period of elections, appeals to Indians and Indian-ness in order to win votes would have intensified. This is in keeping with the argument advanced by Fowler and Kress [1979:195-6] in the course of which they stipulate that a Critical Sociolinguistics would attempt to understand language as a social process rather than a neutral event. Furthermore, given the role of *The Leader* as an organ which “reflects” Indian issues, such a sample is selected to problematise the claim that such a simple mimetic conception of news-gathering and news construction is possible. As a conclusion it is hoped that an argument could be advanced suggesting that there is a complex dialectic between the reflection of news events and, in this case, the reproduction of ethnic consciousness.

Methodologically, this is a response to Gunther Kress’s advice that:

By denaturalizing the discursive practices and texts of a society, treated as a set of discursively linked communities, and by making visible and apparent that which may previously have been invisible and seemingly natural, they intend to show the imbrication of linguistic-discursive practices with the wider socio-political structures of power and domination [Kress:1991:85].

This is based on an attempt to understand language and discourse as social events as well as a

linguistic one.

3. Analysis. Analysis will follow the conventions laid down by Fairclough and Fowler *et al.*

3.1. A brief introduction to discourse analysis with respect to its theoretical underpinnings will be offered.

3.2. An analysis of representative material will be conducted.

4. Results. Results will be discussed in the “Conclusion” of the work.

ANALYSIS

3.1 The theoretical underpinnings of discourse analysis.

Discourse refers to a regulated system of statements which can be analysed not solely in terms of its internal rules of formation, but also a set of practices within a social milieu. Discourse is a combination of a practice and a mode or structure of speaking [Marshall:1993:99].

From the above relatively uncomplicated definition of discourse, we move onto the theoretical bases of the method of discourse analysis. While reference was made earlier on in this essay to the importance of Althusser to the development of discourse studies, Norman Fairclough [1992:90-91] draws attention to the weaknesses of his formulation of the relationship between ideology and subjectivity. Althusser's theory of ideology tends to overemphasise its power over subjects while underemphasising the power of subjects to overcome ideology. In addition, Fairclough points out: Ideologies arise in societies characterised by relations of domination on the basis of class, gender, cultural group, and so forth, and in so far as human beings are capable of transcending such societies, they are capable of transcending ideology [Fairclough:1992:90].

Althusser's notion of a dominant ideology which serves as a sort of "social cement" [Fairclough:1992:87] is somewhat too rigid in this case as well. It appears to represent a one-sided notion of the nature of the relationship between subjects and their ability to transcend ideologies.

While Fairclough is partially correct about the shortcomings of the Althusserian conception of ideology, this study maintains that the discursive field of *The Leader* managed to empower its target audience to challenge the *status quo* on certain levels only. As might be borne out in the analysis proper, it may have succeeded in delivering its readers to a form of psychological comfort in attempting to appropriate Mahatma Gandhi as a role model for Indians, for example,

but in revealing actual power relations in society, it appears to have done this from behind the confines of a narrow conception of cultural pluralism. The notion of a consistent ethnic identity, it appears, is the “metaphysical refuge” to which Racevkiš referred earlier on.

As a response to the shortcomings of Althusser's understanding of ideology and subjectivity, Fairclough introduces the idea of hegemony as outlined by Gramsci as flexible enough to explain the vital aspect of “discursive change” [Fairclough:1992:96]. In this move, Althusser's notion of the subject is retained, but in the attempt to offer a more nuanced understanding of the relationship of the subject to ideology, the notion of consent is introduced.

By way of content analysis - which runs counter to the paradigm developed thus far - the following statistics might prove valuable in formulating a broad picture of the amount of space dedicated to the elections in the month under analysis. The statistics which follow cover only the advertising content and percentage of reportage in the issues under discussion. No attempt will be made to analyse these statistics as they fall outside the paradigm being developed.

Following the breakdown of the advertising section, an attempt will be made to address the editorial content in a similar manner. In producing a regular election supplement called “Election Countdown”, the newspaper often presented party political election advertorial in the guise of hard news reportage. This section will quantify the percentage content of such advertorial in the columns under discussion. On the level of ideology, such a strategy is a particularly insidious one in that party-political ideologies are transmitted to the reader as hard news. In the conflation of the genres of ‘hard news’ (as problematic as such a genre might be) and advertising, readers are interpellated into believing the ‘veracity’ of the reports.

The total corpus under discussion includes 124 tabloid pages of 40cmsx8 columns. Of these, the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) was responsible for 12 complete pages, which amounts to 3840 column\centimetres (in addition to the 39 680 col\cms represented by *The Leader* published in April 1994. This is the largest single supplement published in the corpus under analysis. The following represents the party-political advertising of the issues under

discussion:

The Africa Muslim Party (AMP)	1920 col\cms
The African National Congress (ANC)	1600 col\cms
The National Party (NP)	1575 col\cms
The Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP)	960 col\cms
DIMES (Durban Indian Municipal Employees Society)	640 col\cms
Women's Rights Peace Party	420 col\cms
Minority Front (MF)	415 col\cms
The Democratic Party	320 col\cms
The Federal Party (FP)	320 col\cms
Qibla	320 col\cms
Keep It Simple Stupid Party (KISS)	280 col\cms
African Democratic Movement (ADM) Party	120 col\cms
Women's Charter Alliance	40 col\cms

The Leader itself took 150 col\cms of advertising based on the elections. A detailed discursive analysis of the advertisement will take place later on in this essay.

This represents a total of 32.7% of advertising on the elections. The total coverage of the elections in terms of reportage, letters to the editor and advertising is broken down below:

Dates	Total col\cms per edition	Election Coverage	%
1 April	6400	1111	17,4
8 April	6400	1078	16,8
15 April	7680	1944	25,3
22 April	8960	3970	44,3
25 April	7680	4598	59,9
29 April	2560	1414	35,6

As can be deduced from the above table, the elections accounted for 35.57% of the total content of the sample under analysis.

3.2. The pattern of analysis followed here is simple. A cursory examination of the editions under analysis in terms of structure and content is followed by a discursive analysis of the articles that pertain to ethnicity and the elections. The assumption here is that the reading subject has been partially constructed by the discursive conventions of the newspaper and the omissions pointed towards in the course of the analysis. Not all the editions have been analysed.

3.2.1 *The Leader: 1 April 1994.*

In this, the first edition of the corpus under analysis, very little coverage is given to the election. In conjunction with this coverage, two full-page political adverts inserted by the ANC and the NP appear in the front section of this edition.

In the first item under analysis we turn to page 15 of this edition. On the top of this page, we find two double-column black and white pictures. In the first one, we see a smiling Mr. F. W. de Klerk, who is surrounded by placard-carrying Indian women. The placards read "FW cares for your health" and "Phoenix welcomes FW". The second picture shows "State President FW de Klerk laying the foundation stone for the Mahatma Gandhi hospital." In terms of the construction of the slogans on the posters it is significant that de Klerk is referred to as "FW", which is a familiar mode of address. This perhaps indicates the extent to which the NP had succeeded in wooing voters in the township

The body of the article carries a disclaimer by de Klerk. It reads as follows, "In his address to about 200 people, Mr de Klerk said that he was not at the function to score points for his political party and that he saw the laying of the cornerstone as a 'pleasant task'". Later on in the story he adds that "It is appropriate that the new hospital will be named after Mahatma Gandhi, certainly one of the most remarkable men that ever lived in South Africa."

In addition de Klerk is quoted as saying:

It is also appropriate that this new hospital will be built in a community with the name of Phoenix. Like the mythical bird, it will show that we can and will rise again from the flames of conflict and the ashes of the past.

This extract reveals the extent to which de Klerk actually was electioneering in the township, despite his disclaimer. In attempting to recuperate the NP's image he tends to romanticise the township and obscure the role his party played in creating it. *The Leader*, on the other hand, seems to endorse this view as the passage appears under the cross-head "A Symbol". In according such a status to de Klerk's words, the reader is invited to see Phoenix as a symbol of hope and regeneration, not as the material entity created for the convenience of race-capital in this country.

In another piece on the same page, under the heading "Relevance of Gandhi", Gandhi is described as "relevant as long as peace remains relevant". This is a quote from a Mr. I. C. Meer, who is a columnist on the paper, but who was speaking in this context as a person who had just concluded a radio talk show on Gandhi which comprised "220 talks on Radio Lotus". In this article he refers to Gandhi as "Gandhiji", a term of respect and admiration. The suffix "ji" is also often used in a conversational context rather than a written one, to accord such respect to an interlocutor. In choosing such an idiomatic expression as part of the genre of journalistic writing, the newspaper is simultaneously breaking the genre and interpellating Indian subjects into accepting that Gandhi was indeed a great man. The use of the term in this manner also suggests that Meer was a contemporary of Mahatma Gandhi, in turn lending authority to Meer's opinion. [9]

In the articles just described, there are three competing levels of signification which are all interdependent for the construction of meaning by the reader. These can broadly be described as rhetorical appeals to Indian-ness, the political processes unfolding at the time and the notion of the great man, both in the form of Gandhi and de Klerk. The fact that these stories are embedded in the codes of newspaper discourses also compounds this analysis. The broad impression is that both as a symbol and in its manipulation in and by the newspaper, one

detects a contestation over Gandhi on the three levels described above. He is granted an iconic status which is seen as relatively unproblematic as the icon moves across the discursive fields of National Party rhetoric, the idea of an Indian community (located, in this instance, in Phoenix) and finally as a “man of peace”. Thus the reader is interpellated by accepting such a construction of Gandhi across these fields.

On page 8 of this edition we encounter I. C. Meer’s column titled “50 years ago in *The Leader*”. This feature has been running since the newspaper turned 50 in 1991. In it the writer, who is described as a “veteran Congressman” in the introductory caption, examines issues that were published in the newspaper half a century ago. This is significant in that the political alliance between the ANC and the Natal Indian Congress (NIC) is both reflected and obscured in such a statement. Furthermore, the statement reflects a conflation of ethnicity and nationalism in the name of the NIC and the ANC. In a three-column piece next to the article we find an etching of Gandhi and an article entitled “Gandhi Anniversary Special”, which was run in order to “mark” the stay of Gandhi in South Africa. Both these columns ran for the entire month under discussion. This special was also authored by Meer. The general angle of these histories is informed by Meer’s experiences as a member of the Natal Indian Congress.

3.2.3 *The Leader* 15 April


In this particular edition the focus of analysis falls on advertising. As an aspect of Critical Discourse Analysis, this move from one genre to another is not a problematic one. In order to show the interrelatedness of discourses such a move is actually encouraged.

Critical Discourse Analysis is not interested, in a crucial sense, *in* language and advertising, even less so in the language *of* advertising... Critical Discourse Analysis, quite to the contrary, would emphasise the continuity between language in advertising and language in education, for instance, in an attempt to focus on the very real areas of socio-cultural and linguistic/textual continuity between these domains-and with all others [Kress:1991:92].

In the first advert under analysis, we examine the nature of the advertising campaign of the NP in the columns of an ethnic news medium. An excerpt from an NP advert (which appears on

page 15 of this edition) is reproduced below.

The Man for JUSTICE and PEACE
FW de KLERK






*Leader of the new National Party, State President,
The man who liberated South Africa,
The man of reconciliation*

On 2 February 1990 he changed South Africa and surprised the world:

- He sounded the final death knell on *apartheid*
- He set his opponents free to level the playing field
- He opened the door to negotiations
- He made this election possible
- He set South Africa on the road to a new and better future

FW de Klerk is recognised throughout the world as the man who really liberated South Africa



Meet your State President!


PRES. FW de KLERK
at the VILLAGE GREEN
(NEXT TO THE WATER WONDERLAND)

THURSDAY 21 APRIL
19H00 for 19H30

Come and enjoy our Festive atmosphere:

★ Fireworks Display ★ Live Entertainment

For transport phone your local NP office on (031) 4611083



National Party
Builders of a Better New South Africa

The most noticeable part of the advert is the repetition of the personal pronoun “he” in this advert. While these claims may appear to be *true* about the role de Klerk played, it obviously structures out the roles played by other elements in the history of resistance in the country. The claims are made on the basis of the liberal notion of individual agency in effecting change in the political sphere. The impression conveyed is that “he”, acting in his individual capacity and by his own initiative as an enlightened leader of the country, liberated South Africa. This is significant on two levels. Firstly, the forces from which he liberated South Africa are not made clear. Secondly, this represents an attempt to inhabit ANC discourses on the nature of the struggle in this country.

3.2.4 *The Leader 22 April 1994.*

This edition consists of 28 pages with a special insert produced by the Independent Electoral Commission. The insert is 12 pages in length. It will not, however, form a significant focus of

this analysis. The lead article is entitled “IFP SEEKING INDIAN VOTE”, with the sub-head: ‘Help us win Natal’ call. The headline constructs a contestation over the Indian vote here. In such a construction, the “Indian Community” is presented as a homogeneous, passive one, about to be approached by the “Zulu” Inkatha Freedom Party. The implication in the the sub-head is that “we” can all win Natal, crossing the boundaries of Indian-ness and Zulu-ness for the sake of the region.

A five column full colour picture of what is described as a “bevy of beauties...for the Miss India South Africa Pageant” stands alongside this article. The construction of this phrase, in privileging India over South Africa reveals much about the ideological predilections of the participants and the attention afforded to this competition by the newspaper. For example, the editions under analysis carried 450 colcms of combined advertising and editorial on the pageant. Apart from the objectification of women any such pageant represents, (particularly in this instance in choosing to describe them as a "bevy of beauties) such objectification under the rubric “Miss India South-Africa” represents an alliance with the myth of India as a motherland before South Africa as an accepted home. (As tempting as it might be to go into a full analysis of the caption that accompanies this picture, or its juxtaposition alongside the lead article, suffice it to say that this fit is incongruous to say the least, even within the terms of the news frame within which the newspaper operates.)

Two other items concerning the elections occur on the front page. As the second lead, an article entitled “SHARP SURGE IN CRIME ON ELECTION EVE” appeared above a self-promotional box titled “Election Special”. In this box, the newspaper introduces the idea that it would publish two editions in one week to commemorate the “historic” event of the elections. The word “historic” here obscures two very interesting thrusts. The first is the obvious impact of the elections on what has been constructed as the Indian (and South African) community, while the second is the dependence of the newspaper to exploit the occasion to advance its own market share in the process of setting down the record.

The next item of significance in this edition is the supplement provided by *The Leader* for its

perceived readership. It is called a supplement although it bears none of the formal characteristics of a newspaper supplement. Running from p12 to p16, it comprises editorial as well as advertising content. In both examples of these genres, attempts are made to draw readers of competing ideological persuasions into accepting that they are still framed within the common good of the country. If deconstructed, however, it can be seen that this common good is still framed within a broader conception of Indianness. A few examples may be necessary:

The largest advert in the supplement belongs to the AMP, a party which was quite unsuccessful in the election campaign.

It reads as follows:



- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ They told us we were a fledgling party with limited scope ★ We maintain that for us there is abundant hope ★ They told us that we should disband and decline ★ We maintain our right to exist and reach heights sublime ★ They opposed us from within and without ★ They didn't realise that we are a party with clout ★ Rumours, scandals, falsehood, mischief and slander they spread ★ Yet we are very much alive and far from dead ★ They say for elections we have no mandate and no consensus ★ 25 000 signatures in 4 days should bring them to their senses ★ Some gloat that this is nothing but an emotional vote ★ Unfortunately some see the truth some see it not | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ They say in the community we are creating a split ★ We say that the IP and AMP accord dispels this myth ★ Nat backed? IFP backed? ANC backed? Shia backed? ★ Some rumour mongers are far from the track ★ Truth they oppose ★ Falsehood they endorse ★ Ascribe not weaknesses and deficiencies to the AMP ★ After all the principles we promulgate raised the GDP ★ An inefficient and disorganised group they called us ★ 20 offices in 2 weeks, 20 000 billboards in 5 days, 100 public lectures in 13 days, 25 000 signatures in 4 days is what AMP achieved in this "disorganised" state in 6 weeks. Can you imagine what will happen if we are "organised" and run a government for 5 years |
|---|---|

VOTE AMP WE CAN MAKE IT HAPPEN

In its verse form, the advert breaks with the conventions of newspaper discourses. This would be one of the strengths of its appeal. It would have been doubly strengthened by its appeal to vote for the underdog party. Furthermore, as Benedict Anderson has pointed out in relation to hymns and national anthems, the conventions of poetry and song bring a community together in what he terms “unisonance” [Anderson:1993:145]. In this particular case the unisonance appears to be based on notions of rap music that are currently in fashion. In a double-remove away from the printed text the sound of rap in the reader’s mind (both Islamic and non-Islamic) strengthens the appeal of the advert.

In itself, this advert, while differing in style from the more serious one under analysis later on in this paper, is also framed within a problematic ideological context. The Islamic community in the province of writing, and indeed in terms of the binary Middle-East - United States, is an extremely complex one. To make an appeal to the underdog status of the party, is actually to appeal in this advert to the underdog status of Islam in relation to media depictions of the ideology. The inclusive use of the pronoun “we” obscures the distinction between the ideology of the election and the party that articulates it, within the frame of resistance to “the new world order”.


The repetition of “they”, for instance, appears to refer to an anonymous exterior enemy (an idea we shall return to in a while) in this instance, (similar to “die swart” one cultivated in the minds of minorities by the apartheid state) who may have been a threat to the AMP or the readers designed to be interpellated by the advert. It is an obfuscating term which seeks to pull readers into the Islamic ideology that the advert attempts to convey using the conventions outlined above.

Furthermore, the use of the term “natural” in this advert is problematic. It implies a simple acquiescence on the basis of an individual, perhaps even primal, existence that obscures the banner of Islamic ideology in the advert itself. Interestingly, in another advert published in the edition of the 25 April, the Africa Muslim Party appears to have taken on the misconception that Islam is a misogynistic religion. Quotes in the adverts again come from the Koran.

On p28, which is the last page of this edition, the newspaper ran a lead sports story under the banner "TOO MANY CHIEFS TOO FEW INDIANS". In this play on the idiomatic phrase, the reader is lead through an item which describes in literal terms that Indian soccer administrators were being excluded from the National Soccer League (NSL) and being replaced by "blacks". In a highly speculative and polemical piece, the reporter concludes that the NSL "has taken an anti-Indian line" suggesting within the frame of the newspaper's ideology, that anti-Indianism is a rising ideology. Also significant is the shift in reference as here as "black" comes to refer to "African". In other places "black" is used inclusively to refer to all people of colour, not just the African sector of the population.

This invocation of the idea of an anonymous exterior enemy and the idea of minority status is one that we will encounter later in this paper when we explore the campaign of a particular party which preyed quite ruthlessly on these ideas to win votes.

3.2.5 *The Leader* 25 April 1994




M.K. Gandhi

NATAL'S INDIAN VOTER

From Gandhi to Mandela

100 years' struggle



Dr Nelson Mandela

WHEN Dr Nelson Mandela casts his vote in Natal on Wednesday, he will have successfully brought to fruition, the historic campaign launched by Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi in 1894, exactly one hundred years ago, for a non-racial parliamentary franchise.

The 24-year-old Gandhi postponed his departure to India, when at his farewell

(IN this historical survey, especially written for *The Leader*, Mr I.C. Meer deals with the denial of voting rights to Indians from the time of M.K. Gandhi to Nelson Mandela - a period of 100 years. The struggle to regain the non-racial common roll vote, taken away in 1896, has finally been won.)

powerful story of one hundred years of resistance, of sacrifice and martyrdom, in which the community has played its courageous role.

Indeed, the 1906-1914 Satyagraha under Gandhiji, the 1946 passive resistance; the 1952 Defiance of Unjust Laws Campaign; the formulation of the Freedom Charter; the courageous opposition

Vincent Lawrence and Mr S.M. Mayet both of whom were vice-presidents of the Natal Indian Congress under the leadership of Dr Monty Naicker.

Indians in Natal never qualified for the Provincial Vote.

In the Cape, Dr Abdulla Abdurahman and Reverend Walter Rabusana were the only two persons ever to be elected to that

And then came the tri-cameral parliament which excluded Africans on a racial basis. The Nationalist had removed the African communal representations to parliament and they engaged in a long battle to deprive the Coloureds of their entrenched rights given in the 1910 Constitution.

The House of Delegates was elected on

came to be regarded as South Africans.

If the Indian community had accepted the Nationalist policy in 1948, there would have been no Indian in South Africa today. But they did not do so.

Indian South Africans have become totally integrated into the liberation struggle of all the peoples of the country. In 1947 the Dadoo-Naicker-Xuma Pact was yet another important milestone in forging the unity of all the oppressed.

IMPRISONMENT
In 1952 Indians went

This edition of the newspaper consisted of 12 pages and the supplement called "Election Special '94", which consisted of 12 pages. On the front page of the supplement, there are two single column portrait-style pictures of a young Mahatma Gandhi and a smiling Nelson Mandela. Only two articles appear on this page. A brief analysis of excerpts from these articles follows.

In this particular introduction, the idea that Ghandhi has unproblematically led to Mandela is advanced. In this way the iconic status of both leaders is brought into a continuum which again structures out other political leaders in the country. Furthermore, it represents some sort of alliance between the two which indicates a link between the imagined community of Indians in this country and the imagined community of the nation which was a feature of much ANC discourse at the time of the election.

The appropriation of Gandhi as an Indian icon is a complex phenomenon. Many Indians identify with Gandhi simply because he was Indian, forgetting the ambiguous history of the man in terms of the class interests he sought to defend in South Africa. This attempt to link the personality of Gandhi with that of Mandela under the rubric of "struggle" ignores the simple fact that resistance to the South African state began long before the arrival of Indians to this country. To further claim that Mandela has brought Gandhi's "struggle" to "fruition" appears to be a rhetorical strategy designed to win voters into the fold of the ANC. In terms of the history of resistance in this country, (and in terms of the political resistance of Indians in this country, as Swan has pointed out) these seem to be extremely chauvinistic claims.

Finally, there is an obfuscation here of the fact that Gandhi did not fight for all Indians in 1894. This implies the unification of Indians under that label while ignoring class and group differences. The article does, however, acknowledge the gender-biased system of voting at the time.

On page 1 of this edition we encounter the following excerpt from an editorial on the elections.

Under the heading "Date with Destiny" the following analysis is offered:

Often the tension-filled drama that has been played out on a national scale has captured international attention; and a fascinated world will be watching closely as the curtain comes down on white hegemony (*sic*) and a non-racial democracy takes its place through what we all fervently hope will be free and fair elections.

At long last, the old order of white power and privilege will give way to a new society, in which democratic principles, safe-guarded by a bill of rights, will prevail.

There is a conflation here of what has been seen to be white hegemony with Afrikaner hegemony. In understanding this use of the term "hegemony" here we need to separate race (construed in simple binary "black" versus "white" terms) from the dominant conceptions of what actually materialised in the old South African state.

The editorial reveals a racially based understanding of hegemony which is somewhat simplistic. The fact that capital was complicit in the establishment of the old South African hegemony is absent from the editorial. As a consequence, the shift in hegemony implied by the elections, and the consequences for capital, are not adequately analysed. as the argument is developed in simple binary black-white terms, without recourse to class or even ethnic deconstructions of these terms. Given the ambiguous stance of the newspaper in terms of its use of the categories "black" and "Indian", this perception appears to be even more contentious.

3.3.4 *The Leader: 27 April 1994*

In what is the only advert in the sample under analysis, the Qibla (this term is another name for the Kaa'ba, the sacred site of Islamic worship) association urged *The Leader* reader not to vote. Many controversial ideas are included in their full page advertisement on page 7 of this edition. It appears to be based on a Koranic ideology that has ignored the political developments of the time. While the broad argument of this paper has turned around the establishment of consensus in the Indian community, this exception shows that within the community itself, there were many competing voices. In a picture in the advert which shows Klerk shaking hands with

Nelson Mandela (Mandela is on the right) an excerpt from the Koran states "...let there be no hostility except against those who practice oppression' (Quran 2:193)." Amongst a series of illustrations, that verge on the genre of the cartoon, a list of reasons is provided.

In terms of the debate outlined thus far, the advert appears to overlap between the rhetoric of the the struggle (in terms of the invocation of categories such as "justice", "illegitimacy" and "the new world order") and the advancement of an Islamic ideology. It is in the conflation of such categories that the advert might have derived some of its persuasive influence.

A "NO" VOTE IS A VOTE OF "NO CONFIDENCE" =

- ★ Criminals cannot be given a blanket amnesty even before they have been tried on specific charges; and to think that an illegitimate government actually wants to grant that amnesty!
 - ★ It is not permissible for the oppressed people to apply for permission to be granted by criminals, murderers and killers in order for us to protest against them.
 - ★ We know the oppressors and exploiters by what they DO and not by what they say.
 - ★ The oppressed masses do not need generosity, they need justice!
 - ★ The light at the end of the tunnel is not what you think it is: it is actually the multi-racist fascist steamroller coming towards the oppressed masses. This is the introduction of the new world order!
- The so-called new South Africa is part of this mosaic called the new world order. It has never been new and to call it an order is a misnomer.
- All aspects of this mosaic is built on beating the hell out of the oppressed masses instead of out of the oppressor!
- ★ It is the government which is in a State of Emergency and NOT the oppressed masses.

Do not do injustice unto others, nor let injustice be done unto you. (Hadith)

DO NOT VOTE! DO NOT VOTE! DO NOT VOTE! DO NOT VOTE! DO NOT VOTE!

In this section of the paper, the analysis deviates from the pattern established thus far. Instead of moving chronologically, a thematic analysis of the advertising campaign of Amichand Rajbansi's Minority Front party is offered. This is done to illustrate how his campaign unfolded over a period of three weeks during the month of April 1994.

In one of the earliest adverts in the month [8 April 1994:9 and 15 April 1994:3], the MF ran the advert below, which served as an indication of the nature of the campaign that was to follow. Based on a racialistic understanding of South African politics, the advert attempts to win voters on the basis of race and ethnicity. The name of the party itself implies that the party sought to campaign on the basis of minority fears in a multi-party democracy. In many ways this idea has an affinity to NP discourses in maintaining minority rule in this country.

It is also significant to note that in this particular advert that the MF has chosen to single out members of the teaching fraternity who are members of the ANC affiliated teachers' union.

WHY EVERY INDIAN AND COLOURED SHOULD VOTE MINORITY FRONT (MF)

**SEND
RAJBANSI'S
TEAM TO
PARLIAMENT**

- ★ The **MINORITY FRONT** courageously exposed that minority Indian and Coloured students, workers and professionals were being sidelined in Affirmative Action programmes. Was A.A. anti-Asiatics? Yes, the workers and the students would say so.
- ★ This was denied
- ★ The M.F. is your voice and we stood our ground with boldness, steadfastness and tenacity.
- ★ We are your only hope
- ★ Now, after three months of denials and silence - even on threats of seizure of Indian homes - the liberation force has reacted. They are now condemning these acts against Indians and Coloureds.
- ★ We have proved that our Voice (Your Voice) is not in the wilderness.
- ★ What would have happened if the M.F. was not around. It proves the need for minorities to have their own voice.
- ★ The M.F. has proved itself.


TEACHERS (INDIAN SADTU MEMBERS)

- ★ You have selected your candidates. Where are they? In the wilderness.
- ★ Find the placing of the Indian teacher on any list of any liberation movement. It is placed in a position that she cannot win.
- ★ The M.F. has six teachers in positions that they can win.

- * The M.F. is the voice of all the Minorities. Hindus, Muslims, Christians, etc.
- * The presence of Minority Parties at the Multi-Party Talks have resulted in the inclusion of Clause 14 in the new constitution that recognises our family laws, validity of our marriages and recognition of our customs, religions for the first time in South Africa.
- * Minorities require their own, undiluted voice in parliament.


**THE BLACKS OF THE U.S.A. ARE
12% IN AMERICA. THEY STAND
TOGETHER AS THE BLACK
CAUCUS. WE MINORITIES, CAN
STAND TOGETHER, AND OUR
COLLECTIVE VOTE IS OUR
POWER.**

**Vote for the M.F. anywhere
in South Africa**





**A vote for the
M.F. is a vote
for your future**

VOTE



MF





**Mr A. Rajbansi
Man of Courage
Man of Charisma**

While all the adverts under discussion have displayed a very strong imperative voice, this particular campaign differs from the others in its singling out of race groups. The notion of minority, of course, extends far beyond that of racial categorisation. In choosing a racial classification in this way, the MF campaign would serve to reinforce existing ethnic consciousness in the mind of the reading subject. A gaping absence in the MF's notion of the minority is its failure to address other ethnic minorities, especially those that belong in white

HEAR THE MINORITY FRONT

**EVERY INDIAN
AND COLOURED
SHOULD VOTE
MINORITY FRONT (MF)**

**SEND
RAJBANSI'S
TEAM TO
PARLIAMENT**

**PUBLIC MEETING
A.B.H. HALL ARENA PARK
SUNDAY 24 APRIL
AT 4.30 PM**

HEAR Mr A. Rajbansi
Mr Visvin Reddy
Mr B.P. Juglal
Mr N. Rajaram

**NATALASIA HOTEL
Sun. 24th April at 9.30 am**

CHATSWORTH AND SHALLCROSS RESIDENTS

Study the ANC's and the NP's candidate list.
Your best hope of having representation in the Natal Parliament is the MF.

There is only ONE REAL HOME
for MINORITIES
DO IT WITH YOUR X FOR THE M.F.

**VOTE
M.F.** **MINORITY
FRONT**
TEL. (031)
434981/435041



**PAINFUL EVENTS AFFECTING OUR HOMES,
WORK AND UNIVERSITIES HAVE PROVED
THAT MINORITIES IN MAJOR
MOVEMENTS HAD THEIR LIPS ZIPPED.
THEREFORE THE NEED IS THERE FOR
MINORITIES TO ELECT THEIR OWN M.P.'s.
YOUR ONLY WAY NOW IS THE M.F.
THIS OPPORTUNITY WILL NOT COME
AGAIN.**

★ Minority Front can Confront

This change may
NOT COME AGAIN
**DO IT WITH YOUR VOTE
FOR THE M.F.**

**A VOTE FOR THE M.F.
IS A VOTE FOR YOUR FUTURE**

VOTE  **M.F.**



**Mr A. Rajbansi
Man of Courage
Man of Charisma**

communities. It is obvious that the party sought to gather voters around the notion of black minority groups in this country.

In relation to minorities in other parts of the world, the MF chose to pick on the African-American population of the US as an example to hold up to the reader. In what must be one of the crudest campaigns in the entire election, the adverts appear peppered with references to “blacks” while the content of the adverts appear to be biased towards potential Indian voters. It seems as though the alliance being sought with “coloured” voters was merely an afterthought in the MF’s campaign.

In a glaring inconsistency in this advert, the MF claims that it is the “voice of all the Minorities. Hindus, Muslims, Christians etc.” It appears even here that the MF is referring to Indians of a Christian persuasion rather than to all black people. Even in its attempts to broaden its appeal as the “voice of the Minority”, this campaign falters.

In the advert that appeared the following week [22 April 1994:13], the tone of the text appears to verge on the hysterical. There is a repetition of the idea that voters may not have the opportunity to vote for the MF again. A belligerent Rajbansi is pictured wagging his finger at a policeman. The policeman has his arms raised in a gesture of submission. Beneath the picture, the caption “Minority Front can Confront” appears designed to extend the idea that as a party representing minorities, it is still capable of wielding power. In including such a picture the MF makes the laughable claim that political power is the same as confrontation.

Implicit in this particular advert is the reference to affirmative action. It is difficult to ascertain just how broad the word “our” is in the statement “Painful events affecting our homes, work and universities have proved that minorities in major movements had their lips zipped” The “major movements” here is clearly a reference to the “liberation force” referred to in the earlier advert. It is also difficult to ascertain what is being referred to in the notion of “Our universities”. It appears as though the MF has submitted to the apartheid classification of tertiary institutions on the basis of colour, and is resistant to the idea of open institutions. As a political force it would be difficult to imagine just how a party such as this would have been able to articulate the aspirations of its constituency.

In urging potential voters to “elect their own M.P.’s”, the MF clearly assumes that there is some correlation between the race or ethnicity of Members of Parliament, and the constituency they represent, or that minorities are united in their political aspirations.. Again, even within the

logic of its own campaign, this idea falters as the clear bias towards "Indian" issues is borne out by the appeal to "Shallcross and Chatsworth residents".

The final advert of the campaign [25 April 1994:5] appears in a supplement called "Election

MINORITIES: YOUR VOTE IS YOUR POWER

The IFP participation breakthrough will make Natal election a cliffhanger. Will it be a neck-and-neck battle for the control of Natal?

The 12% Indians and the 4% Coloureds will hold the balance.

Can you afford to take sides? Think very carefully and wisely. Overnight we have proved that the minority vote is important.

Your vote is your power and leverage. If you do not build this power now there would be no second chance.

We can play a role in true reconciliation if we all vote for the Minority Front.

This opportunity to show unity would not come again.

There is only ONE PARTY that is in the field and can play that role. IT IS THE MINORITY FRONT - THE REAL HOME FOR MINORITIES.

YOUR POWER AND YOUR LEVERAGE IS NOW THE M.F.






Your best hope for representation is the Minority Front.

Your vote is now like gold - only if collectively you put it behind the M.F.

It is power which you must not let slip away.

The Minorities can determine now the Natal Government and the Natal Premier.

We may be a minority party but on the ballot paper we are just above the National Party.


LUSO - SOUTH AFRICAN PARTY		LUSAP		 <p style="text-align: right; margin-top: 10px;">FOR M.F. PUT YOUR CROSS HERE</p>
MINORITY FRONT		MF		
NATIONAL PARTY - NASIONALE PARTY		NP		


EVERY INDIAN AND COLOURED SHOULD VOTE MINORITY FRONT (MF)

SEND RAJBANSI'S TEAM TO PARLIAMENT


Study the ANC's and the NP's candidate list.
Your best hope of having representation in the Natal Parliament is the MF.

**This chance may NOT COME AGAIN
DO IT WITH YOUR VOTE FOR THE MF.**





THIS (X) NEXT TO THE M.F. IS YOUR COLLECTIVE POWER



VOTE M.F.

Special". In one of the more ridiculous statements in the advert, the MF shows a clear misunderstanding, which is quite revealing ideologically. By claiming that the MF "may be a minority party, but on the ballot paper we are just above the National Party" the advert obscures the notion that the ballot sheet was actually arranged in alphabetical order. This might have been intended given high rates of illiteracy that many parties sought to counteract in the course of their campaigning. The use of the term "minority party" in this instance appears to mean "a small party", as opposed to its general usage in the campaign where it means "a party for minority groups". In this formulation the MF implicitly concedes that the NP is a more powerful party, although it is not clear whether this power derives from size or influence. It is important to bear in mind here that the leader of the MF worked in a hierarchy that placed the NP at the top.

In the rest of the advert many claims are made regarding the power of minorities in the region. In numerical terms, the minorities appealed to by the MF add up to 16%. In a series of assertions which lack any proof, the MF attempts to convince "every Indian and coloured" to vote for the party. The racialistic understanding of the political situation is again implicit in the exhortation to "study the ANC's and NP's candidate list". The "your" in that instruction is clearly an appeal to look at political representation in ethnic and racialistic terms.

In the last advert to be discussed in this paper we examine the advert taken by *The Leader*. In this advert [25 April 1994:5], the newspaper attempts to link its own history with that of broader political developments in the past 54 years. (The newspaper would have been 54 years old at the time of the elections.) The implied subject here appears to be the regular reader of the *The Leader*, and potential new ones. The advert is embedded in a metaphor which draws on the elections for its appeal. If decontextualised, the advert appears to be written in neutral, almost clever, terms. In claiming to stand for "Democracy, Justice, Social Upliftment and Peace" the medium certainly appears to be the "voice of the people". As such it would appeal to the reading subject.

In quoting its age in the text of the advert, an attempt is made to establish the credibility of the paper. In terms of the metaphor established, a pun is found on the word "leader". In using such a pun, the newspaper places itself in the same metaphorical milieu as the potential leader of South Africa.

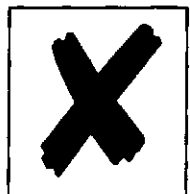
While these are the features of a decontextualised analysis, an attempt to contextualise the advert yields a very different set of conclusions. To begin with, the problematic claim that it is

the voice of the people is reiterated here. It is hoped that in the course of this analysis, the “people” in this instance refers to a contentious ethnic construction of Indianness. Secondly,

While South Africa
is in the throes
of finding a leader,
there has been one
that has consistently
championed the cause of
***Democracy, Justice,
Social Upliftment and Peace***
for the past 54 years

The

LEADER
VOICE OF THE PEOPLE



GIVE IT YOUR VOTE

the claim that the newspaper stands for the values it identifies in the advert are problematic. If Gandhi, for example, is consistently being held up by the newspaper as an exemplar of such values, then the role model is not without problems. Finally, the grand claims made in the advert appear to a hollow note within the frame of the ethnic chauvinism highlighted in the course of this analysis.

CONCLUSION

With the concepts of ethnicity and indigeneity we bring together two of the most vexed and complex issues in post-colonial theory. The way each intersects with notions of race, marginality, imperialism and identity, leads to a constantly shifting theoretical ground, a ground continually contested and subject to more heated debate than most [Ashcroft *et al*:1994:213].

Theorists have consistently argued that a society's mass media necessarily legitimate its status quo. Gerbner (1972:51) suggests that today's mass media "are the cultural arm of the industrial order from which they spring" and so are in all ways political. Enzensberger (1974) characterises the media as "the consciousness industry" whose "main business is to sell the the existing social hierarchy" (Glasgow Media Group, 1976) to consumers [Tuchman:1978:156].

While Tomaselli *et al* may have recognised the difficulty of a cultural pluralism within the context of exterior representations of the Indian community and how they ought to have been constructed, they appear to have underestimated the extent to which the community under description has sought to reproduce itself via the acceptance of an ethnographic construction of itself in relation to an Indian-owned medium. This analysis, it is hoped, has shown this construction to be extremely problematic in relation to the manner in which *The Leader* has sought to represent "the voice of the people".

In the news frame it has chosen the newspaper is also setting and policing agendas around a constructed Indian ethnicity in an attempt to articulate the notion of Indianness against terms such as "blackness", for example. Its ambivalence towards a broad black identity for Indians in this country also reveals an ideological position akin to its ambivalence over the status of Indians as South Africans in relation to India.

As an ethnic Indian medium in the field of apartheid discourses it thus serves to establish consent around notions of Indian ethnicity. *The Leader* appears to have succeeded on a such a level although in the period under analysis this hegemony was extended to the development of consent around the South African elections as well.

This study has attempted to illustrate a few broad themes in the coverage of the elections by *The Leader*. The nature of these themes and their impact on the construction of ethnic identity has also been an important concern. These themes could be isolated as being:

1. The notion that the elections actually represented (in the columns of the newspaper) some form of liberation for all Indians in this country.
2. the idea that as a minority, the South African Indian community was under threat by the arrival of democracy in this country. This is especially borne out in advertisements such as those placed by the MF.
3. The perception that Mahatma Gandhi actually represents the Indian community, and *The Leader's* consistent efforts to construct him as representative of all Indians in South Africa.
4. The idea that news media actually report on reality in a manner that can be considered objective.

In exploring these themes it is hoped that they have been shown to be extremely contentious. While these are themes that have been reflected in the columns of the newspapers under discussion, the manner in which they have been constructed raises important questions about the consistency of the Indian identity it has sought to advance. In the light of the foregoing this study should not be seen to suggest a naive pluralism which advocates the assumption of the Indian South African in a "rainbow" democracy. Rather it should be seen as an attempt to understand the influences that seek to advance notions of identity which are seen to be primal and unproblematic.

In terms of methodology, a stipulation by Fowler *et al* is that a Critical Discourse Analysis must also be a "practical" one [1979:196] If it is not, it becomes mere literary criticism. This criticism is met by the Critical Linguistics approach that it offers. One hopes that links between the fields of Critical Linguistics and language will help cut a new avenue into enquiries on ethnology and the media.

Finally, it must be pointed out that this is not an attempt to deny the recuperative role such a medium would have played in the context of the old apartheid state. Perhaps, however, this

study points out that the necessity for the fiction of an homogeneous and primal identity for Indians has outlived its usefulness [see Hall in Ashcroft *et al*:1995:226].

ENDNOTES

[1]. Edward Said comments: [another] qualification is that ideas, cultures, and histories can only be understood or studied without their force, or more precisely their configurations of power, also being studied. To believe that the Orient was created - or, as I call it, 'Orientalized' - and to believe that such things happen simply as a necessity of the imagination, is to be disingenuous. The relationship between the Occident and Orient is a relationship of power, of domination, of varying degrees of a complex hegemony [Said in Ashcroft *et al*:1995:89]. The "complex hegemony" in the context of this particular paper should be understood to mean the consent of the subject community under discussion in accepting a primal construction of Indianness.

[2]. 'Ethnic', as Raymond Williams observes, "is from the [the forerunner word] *ethnikos*, Gk - heathen (there are possible but unproved links between *ethnic* and *heathen* ...). It was widely used in the senses of heathen, pagan or Gentile until C19, when this sense was generally superseded by the sense of a racial characteristic. **Ethnics** came to be used in the United States...as a 'polite term for Jews, Italians and other lesser breeds'." Raymond Williams, Keywords, 1976:19. While Williams provides valuable insight into the history of the pejorative use of the term, this study will attempt to use the term in the somewhat more value-free manner suggested by the Oxford English Dictionary.

[3]. In contrast, however, it must be pointed out that in describing the rise of nationalism Anderson's analysis differs in one important respect from this one. While *The Leader* managed to advance ethnic consciousness via the use of a relatively alien language, the contribution of the print media to nationalism appears to have been accomplished out of a sense of linguistic pride. Thus, for example, speakers of a huge variety of French dialects would have gathered around a print medium which was written in a dialect that most closely approximated their own. This linguistic pride would have been complemented by what was perceived to be a "standard" French, and would have contributed to the growth of French nationalism.

[4]. Between 1940 and 1948 the print order rose from an estimated 2 000 to 17 500. By 1952 the print order had dropped to 12 500. [Bramdaw and Tewary:1985:(19) Axiii and (20) Biii].

[5] In an apposite reference to cartography, Duncan and Ley offer the following analysis:

...if one performs a close reading of the dictionary definitions of 'topography' and 'survey' one can see that running alongside a language of 'objective' science is another language of power....

Topography claims to be a 'science', that is, a discourse of technical, objective, rational, Enlightenment knowledge. Such knowledge is often claimed to be universal in its scope and free of cultural and political interests. But topography (like cartography) also is a 'practice', knowledge put to use, knowledge in service of power that is deeply intertwined in the cultural, social and political webs of a society. Such knowledge is intended to describe the way in which a social formation is made visible on the face of the earth. It is a practice which describes boundaries, including property relations, and thereby objectifies them, rationalises them and makes them seem like objects of nature through the legitimising trope of the discourse of science.

Topography is a system of knowledge which can encompass the world; its purview ... takes in the rural and the urban, the secular and the religious. Its theoretical reach even extends beyond the edge of settlement to empty tracts of land. Topography is also a science of domination - confirming boundaries, securing norms and treating questionable social conventions as unquestioned social facts [Duncan and Ley:1993:1].

If news media are reconceptualised as representing a map of events as they occur in society, the analysis offered above would prove appropriate to arrive at an appreciation of the highly selective process of news-gathering. In addition, it is interesting to note the overlap in the discursive trope of science in cartography and the related notion of objectivity in the media.

[6]. See, for example, Murdock, Graham. "Large Corporations and the Control of the Communications Industries" in Culture, Society and the Media. Eds. M Gurevitch, T Bennet, J Curran and J Woollacott. London: Routledge, 1982.

[7]. The original editorial reads as follows:

It is customary when a newspaper makes its first appearance to indicate its policy and what it stands for. Following tradition we make our declaration.

The Leader will primarily be a newspaper of the quarter million Indians of South Africa. By news it hopes to interpret all those facets of community life and development that should prove of interest to all its readers.

The Leader is an independent organ, owing no allegiance to any group or body, but its columns will be open to all bodies which place the welfare of the community, in its entirety, foremost. This, in fact, will be *The Leader's* criterion of judgement of all public affairs affecting Indians.

While it is impossible to get a complete unanimity of views on all public questions, *The Leader* may have its own viewpoint, but it will never deny the use of its columns to expressions of divergent views, honestly expressed and within the law, and directed towards the well being of the community. In other words it must not be said of *The Leader* at any time that it does not observe the best traditions of journalism.

To end on a personal note. The editor has served daily journalism of this country and of abroad for a long time. Present conditions place a severe restriction on space for any adequate treatment of Indian news in the daily Press today, and therefore it is with a great deal of hesitation and trepidation and in traitorous times he is venturing on an enterprise of which the Indian community has very great need. Given support there should be no doubt that *The Leader* must become a force, a champion of Indian rights and privileges, and be ever vigilant in its service and well-being. [Vol.1, No 1:30 November 1930:2.]

[8]. As Audrey Kobayashi argues:

The term 'cultural studies' is used to mean the work, especially of Stuart Hall and his colleagues through the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at Birmingham. ... this Centre has produced a large quantity of empirical work that uncovers the the working of cultural processes which affect subordinate groups in British society. More generally, 'cultural studies' refers to the theoretical contributions of Raymond Williams (especially 1961, 1977, 1980, 1981) and Antonio Gramsci (especially 1971) [Kobayashi in Duncan and Ley:1993:226].

From the above, the analysis in this paper should be seen to have been informed by the Birmingham School and the efforts of the theorists cited by Kobayashi.

[9]. It is interesting to note that there have been competing conceptions of Mahatma Gandhi which began to develop as soon as Gandhi arrived in this country. The political establishment quite naturally developed an oppositional attitude towards him. What is often ignored however is the fact that the left had problems with his campaigns as well. In *The Spark* of October 1935, for example, we encounter the following:

Gandhi arrived at the most opportune moment. Up to 1920 the Natal Indian Congress was a mere talking-shop, composed for the most part of middle-

class young men and educated petty-bourgeoisie, who were debarred from positions in the government and the British Civil Services. The country as a whole was at a low ebb. But during the Great War, from 1914 to 1918, the Indian bourgeoisie consolidated its position. England was then so busily engaged in bringing militarist Germany to her knees, her capitalists were so keenly absorbed in the profits to be made by munitions, that the manufacture of cotton goods was neglected and fell behind. The Indian bourgeoisie seized upon this opportunity to extend their operations and in doing so vastly increased their strength and importance as a class. ...

To Gandhi indeed must be given the credit of making the greatest “howler” at a time when the class struggle is superseding every other struggle, when the clashes between Labour and Capital daily grow in intensity and violence. He, Gandhi, talks and babbles of the capitalist as being the “trustee” of his riches. By the mere magic of his word, he will be able to obtain 75% of his profits - voluntarily, so that there will be no need for revolutionary force. “Conversion of heart” is the famous bluff of Gandhi.

For Gandhi’s consistent betrayal of the (South African) Indian working classes, *The Spark* offers the analysis which follows. Incidentally, this charge has been made about Gandhi’s attitude towards the working classes in India as well.

But behold! It was the brutally oppressive Government that had now been delivered from the consequences of its own ill-doing! The imperialist oppressors vied with one another in hastening to congratulate Gandhi on his sickly surrender. Smuts voiced his “heartfelt thanks”. From all the bourgeois circles up and down the Union resounded the phrase of Gandhi’s “chivalrous” consideration. That disgusting “chivalry” appeared in other incidents occurring at this time. When the Indian labourers on the North Coast of Natal went on strike planters of Mt. Edgecombe were threatened with heavy losses on the cane that had been cut but had not been brought to the mill for crushing. Gandhi sent 1200 of the men back to complete the job first and then to join their fellows on strike! And again when the Indians employed in the sanitary services of Durban went on strike Gandhi ordered them back, exempted them from the strike, lest there should be an outbreak of disease in the city! In his whole make-up there is no atom of revolutionary realism. He never fails to gather followers and at the critical moment he never fails to let them down [*The Spark*:12 October 1937:Vol 3, no 10].

On a less polemical note, Antonio Gramsci offers the following assessment of the nature of Gandhi’s political work:

Gandhism and Tolstoyism are naive theorisations of the “passive revolution” with religious overtones....

Thus India’s political struggle against the English (and to a certain extent that of Germany against France, or of Hungary against the little Entente) knows

three forms of war: War of movement, war of position, and underground warfare. Gandhi's passive resistance is a war of position, which at certain moments become a war of movement and at others underground warfare [Gramsci:1971:107 and 229].

In a more contemporary commentary, Maureen Swan concludes that:

Organised Indian political expression in Natal and the Transvaal did not owe its origins to M K Gandhi: it predated his arrival in South Africa by several years. Gandhi was inducted into merchant politics as a hired representative at a time when there was an urgent need for a full time organiser. His legal training, fluency in Gujarati and English, and ideological compatibility with the merchants (it is worth remembering that Gandhi himself had been socialised within the milieu of a Gujarati merchant caste), rendered him particularly suitable for the task.

The *a priori* assumption that *all* South African Indians were part of the political community permits, indeed demands, two further false assumptions: that Gandhi was the leader of *all* South African Indians, and that passive resistance was therefore a popular movement from its inception. This obscures the course of the passive resistance movement as a whole, and the events of 1913 in particular. However, the more careful examination of the dynamics of Indian politics which reveals the Gandhi was forced by the failure of his earlier strategy to make profound political adjustments to the movement in 1913, reveals also why they took the form they did. The nature of these adjustments was dictated by the emergence of new political parties in Natal as the upwardly mobile strata of the underclasses began to redefine their relationships with both the merchant class and the mass of the people. By 1912 it had become clear that they had the potential to mobilise the people (and there seemed to be a very real possibility that they might do so) thus possibly radicalising Indian politics, and certainly further undermining Gandhi's already tenuous claim to be the sole representative of the South African Indians. It was this threat that resulted in the three Pound tax - one of the most profound specific grievances of Natal Indian workers - being pushed to the top of the political priorities of both the Natal Congress and Gandhi. Thus in mid-1913 when the passive resistance movement had finally run aground after seven years, despite ethical compromises on Gandhi's part, and when he had been unequivocally repudiated by most of his former constituents it was the abolition of the three Pound tax which he used in order to mobilise the committed army of supporters which he had unsuccessfully sought since 1906 [Swan:1985:272].

At best one may argue that in recuperating an identity for Gandhi in the manner that it has, *The Leader* appears to have forgotten these glaring inconsistencies in his political career; at worst, it might seem as though the newspaper is involved in reporting on and reflecting the merchant

interests that Gandhi sought to defend.

It is also of some significance to note that Gandhi's NIC found itself deeply divided over the establishment of the 1984 tricameral parliament. A stormy debate ensued when members of the NIC considered standing for elections in the tricameral parliament so that they could "fight the system from within". While this may appear to be a plausible argument now, the opportunism this implies for a burgeoning Indian middle-class in the context of Mass Democratic Movement politics should be clearly seen.

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