
**Television, Memory and Identity:
An Analysis of South African Youth
and Fictional Programmes**

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DECLARATION

I declare this short dissertation is my own original work and that all other sources of reference have been acknowledged.

This research has not been submitted previously for a degree at this or any other university.

Deanna Powers
May 2001

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ABSTRACT

This study synthesises three conceptual areas—identity, fictional television programmes and memory to examine what young people remember about their fictional television viewing and how it impacts their identity. Memory is used as a window through which long-lasting identity influencers can be analysed; this takes the analysis beyond the level of ‘effects’ to a more contextualised view. Focus group research and a quantitative overview work to uncover which fictional programmes stand out in young people’s memory and why. Research further interrogates what events, characters or story lines young people recall and why these elements are important. The answers to these two research questions crystallises the ways in which South African youths’ memories of fictional programmes impact their identity formation. The hypothesis that young South Africans remember that which directly affirms or contradicts their lived experience, is found to be partially true. Similarly, the second hypothesis that fictional memories of South African 15- to 20-year-olds impact youth identity through a direct link between memory selection, interaction and application is found to be fractionally substantiated. The final conclusion of the study is that while memories of fictional programmes do impact the identity of young people, it must be viewed within the larger context of lived experience.

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CHAPTER ONE—INTRODUCTION

Throughout South Africa and abroad young people, ages 15 to 20, are watching more fictional programmes like *Days of Our Lives* and *Party of Five* than nightly news broadcasts (SAARF, 2001a; SAARF, 2001b; SAARF, 2001c; SAARF, 2001d; Rideout, et al., 1999). So while media scholars (see Barnurst & Wartella, 1998; Price & Czilli, 1996; Mundorf et al., 1990) spend time researching the impact of news recall on young people, the larger universe of their total television consumption remains largely uninterrogated. According to South African Audience Research Foundation (SAARF) viewership figures, between January and October 1999 on any given Sunday evening there were an average of just under one hundred and fifty thousand (149,385) young people, ages 16 to 24¹, watching *Dawson's Creek* (SAARF, 1999). This constitutes an undeniably large public that consumes widely and follows religiously programmes targeted specifically to their demographic characteristics and psychographic needs. This fact has led many parents, educators and community leaders to fear the effects of these programmes could be much more than a benign case of 'art imitating life.'

Media scholars and popular commentators have linked the critical discussion of television to discourse about identity and identity formation. In order to critically interact with today's growing media landscape, it is important for consumers to "recognize how their identities are formed and their 'mattering maps' produced through an engagement with electronic and other types of media" (MacLaran, 1995: 22). The influence of television on the identities of young people is a greatly contested issue. Do teens and young adults blindly mimic what they see on the TV screen? Or do they draw clear demarcations between fact and fiction? An August 29, 1997 *Mail & Guardian* article deals specifically with these controversial questions—South African hip hop artist Ready D stated that despite his supervision of his five-year-old son's television viewing habits, his favourite programme is *Rescue 911* (Smith, J., 1997). He went on to say, "there are three-year-olds who speak openly about how much they want to have a gun and to be a gangster," and insisted some programmes on TV intensify youth's understanding that to

¹ While this study defines 'youth' as 15- to 20-year-olds, SAARF takes a slightly different/wider approach to this demographic.

be tough is to be violent, even to kill (Smith, 1997). These children grow into teenagers and young adults who often have less television supervision and a more independent spirit. The discussion of fictional TV and youth identity goes beyond intellectual dialogues to deal directly with issues of youth's daily experience, values and sometimes even life and death.

PRIMARY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Contextualising a discussion of the impact of television on the identities of young people requires a focused theoretical approach and specific research aims. Philosophers, sociologists, psychologists and cultural studies scholars, have struggled for more than three centuries to determine what comprises and influences human identity. For the purposes of this study, I propose that *memory is a window through which long-lasting identity influencers can be analysed*. In keeping with the aims of the present research, I will focus my attention on memories of fictional programmes. Thus, the study will hinge on three conceptual areas: *identity, memory and fictional television programmes*.

Structuring a discussion of identity, memory and fictional programmes gives rise to several important research questions, which will be addressed throughout the study. First, it will be important to interrogate *which fictional programmes stand out in young people's memories and why*. This question tries to uncover the viewing patterns of South African 15- to 20-year-olds and their recollection of these programmes. It also goes deeper to uncover what particular aspects of the programme make it memorable. This leads to the second research question: *What events, characters or story lines do young people recall and why are these elements important?* Thirdly, I will connect the findings of these two important questions to *uncover the ways in which South African youth's memories of fictional programmes impact their identity formation*. These questions strategically pull identity, memory and fictional television programmes into tight critical proximity.

THESIS OVERVIEW

Throughout the study, I will develop and test two central hypotheses. The first (H_1) is that *young South Africans remember that which directly affirms or contradicts their lived experience*. This is based on initial reading on studying memory in the real world (see Cohen, 1989; Cohen et al., 1986). The second hypothesis (H_2) is that *the fictional memories of South African 15- to 20-year-olds impact youth identity through a direct link between memory selection, interaction and application*. This hypothesis will test the validity of a version of Jeanne Brown and Jane Steele's (1995) adolescents' media practice model and will deal directly with the relationship between the three conceptual areas—youth identity, memory and fictional programmes—dealt with in the study.

Theory and primary research will be paired to deal with the questions presented by the critical union of identity, fictional programmes and memory. When approaching the questions this union prompts, it is important to establish a theoretical and conceptual framework. In building this framework, I have taken an inter-disciplinary approach, drawing primarily from cultural and media studies but also incorporating the disciplines of psychology and sociology where necessary. Although this discussion is intended to be comprehensive and theoretically salient, it is by no means exhaustive. Therefore, there is not one theoretical position, but a series of conceptual building blocks mined from different paradigmatic areas. In unearthing these areas, I have drawn upon many thinkers from the mid-1900's including Henri Tajfel and John Turner (1979), Erik Erikson (1968) and Maurice Halbwachs (1952). This was an intentional academic decision, intent on returning to the original thought employed by more contemporary media scholars, sociologists and psychologists. While, as I point out, many of these theorists have been criticised, their core theory is still widely utilised in their respective disciplines. I have referred to contemporary applications of this theory where relevant, but have remained consistent throughout by synthesising positions that are well-tested and practically relevant.

The first component of the inter-disciplinary framework, is a discussion of several approaches to identity. I will examine the tenets of cultural identity, as forwarded by

cultural studies scholars and complement this with a discussion of sociology's contribution of social identity. I will conclude this section by drawing upon the work of Erikson (1968) to discuss identity in adolescence and early adulthood. The second part of the theoretical and conceptual framework will be a treatment of television as it relates specifically to youth. I will review and revise Steele and Brown's (1995) adolescents' media practice model and continue with an analysis of the importance of fictional programmes in the lives of 15- to 20-year-olds. It is important to point out here that for the purposes of this study, I have defined 'youth' as those who fall within the age domain of 15 to 20. Throughout the study, I use the terms 'youth,' 'adolescents/young adults' and 'young people' interchangeably to refer to this target population. The significance of studying this specific population will be discussed in chapter three. Thirdly, chapter one will deal with several theoretical approaches to memory. I will highlight sociology's contribution of collective memory, which will contextualise a discussion of the psychological concept of the everyday memory approach. Reviewing the academic literature regarding identity, television and youth, and memory, will establish a theoretical and conceptual framework upon which original research can be constructed.

Chapter three of this study will establish the research methodology and discuss the findings of my primary qualitative research. In discussing the methodology, I will first provide a quantitative, statistical overview of the youth audience. This data, gleaned from local and international studies, will draw a more detailed portrait of the subject of the study. After introducing the subject to the reader, I will provide a review of focus group methods in general and specifically describe the groups conducted in this research. I will conclude by summarising the primary themes uncovered after critically analysing the focus group transcripts. These trends are not intended to be a complete review of the factors impacting young people's memories of fictional programmes, but rather a thematic gateway leading to a discussion of these memories' impact on identity.

In the final chapter of the thesis, I will evaluate the hypotheses discussed above in view of the theoretical framework and the findings of the primary qualitative research. I will re-address the research questions and develop a final conclusion about the relationship between youth identity, memory and fictional programmes. This conclusion will shed light into what happens when 15- and 16-year-old girls in Westville discuss last

night's episode of *Sabrina the Teenage Witch* or when a teenager in a taxi to KwaMashu recalls an encounter he had with some gangsters that reminds him of an episode of *Yizo Yizo*.

CHAPTER TWO—THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

IDENTITY AND YOUTH

If identity is conceptualised as a blank slate on which vectors of influence converge, the web of lines becomes undeniably complex in adolescence and early adulthood. The slate is modified as peers, family, educators, media, past experience and personal knowledge jockey for directional dominance. In order to examine identity generally and its formation in youth specifically, it is important to look at the concept from several theoretical angles. First, cultural identity as defined by Stuart Hall (1996), Laurence Grossberg (1996) and others, contributes a view of identity as a dynamic negotiation. Secondly, sociology's social identity theory developed by Henri Tajfel and John Turner (1979) unites the central tenets of categorisation, identification and comparison (McGarty et al., 1994) to take a complementary but slightly more systemic approach to considering identity. Finally, Erik Erikson's (1968) discussion of identity and youth narrows the analysis on a particularly meaningful moment in the life-long process. As one slate of identity is revised interminably, it simultaneously draws its own vector of influence on countless others; identity formation and re-formation is both a personal and communal phenomenon. The personal and community identities impact each other in a dialogic exchange.

Cultural Identity

Even before Descartes postulated "I think, therefore I am," philosophers have been grappling with the questions 'who am I?' and 'who are we?'" Cultural studies has recently offered its own hypotheses—its primary assertions developing in a debate between essentialist and non-essentialist perspectives (Woodward, 1997: 11). The essentialist perspective proposes identity has inherent and essential elements defined by "either a common origin or a common structure of experience or both" (Grossberg, 1996: 89); in this sense identities are static definitions of Self. The non-essentialist perspective views identities as "relational, incomplete and in a constant state of flux" (Grossberg, 1996: 89). According to this view, identity is constantly changing and often takes

multiple forms at the same time (Morely & Robbins, 1995: 45). In today's academic theatre, the non-essentialist view has taken center-stage. When judged against the benchmark of practical experience, an ever-changing view of identity seems the most viable. Identity formation begins with a blank slate, but quickly becomes a negotiation of designs of influence. In this view, who 'I am' and 'we are' changes with every formative experience.

In the negotiation of formative experiences, identity rests on a platform of dynamic transition and difference. Hall stated that cultural identity theory

accepts that identities are never unified and, in late modern times, increasingly fragmented and fractured; never singular but multiply constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic, discourses, practices and positions. They are subject to a radical historicization and are constantly in the process of change and transformation (1996: 4).

In this way, competition is introduced into the identity equation—different identities constantly conflict, overlap and overshadow each other based on personal circumstances or external situations. This is played out in reality as we negotiate between a public Self (at work, school, etc.) and private Self (alone in our own minds). Often this process of definition and re-definition occurs through the lens of difference. Identity is an accumulation of past experience and formed based on our recognition both of who we *are* and who we *are not*. Theoretically 'modern' constructions of identity are inherently social (Grossberg, 1996: 93), constructed in a dialectical exchange between the individual and community. This difference is an inherent quality of cultural identity, which marks its departure from recent structuralist and post-structuralist notions of 'otherness,' which hinge merely on the existence of the other. Grossberg establishes that:

theories of difference take difference itself as a given, as the economy out of which identities are produced. Theories of otherness, on the other hand, assume that difference is itself a historically produced economy, imposed in modern structures of power, on the real. Difference as much as identity is an effect of power. While such theories obviously accept a weak notion of difference [. . .]they do not see such differences as fundamentally constitutive. Rather, they begin with a strong sense of otherness which recognizes that the other exists, in its own place, as what it is, independently of any specific relations (Grossberg, 1996: 94).

Thus, in the dynamic negotiation of identity, difference must be accepted as a given—an integral element that impacts the relational process of becoming. When taken in total, cultural identity is a constant process of definition and re-definition based on difference.

Social Identity

Definition by difference vis-à-vis identity is a concept that has been taken up by other academic disciplines and critical theorists. Social identity theory is a social-psychological approach to intergroup relations, group processes and the social Self (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Tajfel, 1982; Hogg, Terry & White, 1995). The theory, engineered by Henri Tajfel and John Turner in mid- to late-1970s at the University of Bristol, involves three central tenets: categorisation, identification and comparison (McGarty et al., 1994). Before discussing these foundational elements, it is important to note that, like most theoretical positions social identity theory is not without its critics. For example, Bornewasser and Bober claim that by focusing on intergroup behaviour and socially constructed identity, the theory leaves “no room for personal identity” (1987: 269). While recognising the context of the social can sometimes usurp a treatment of the individual, the authors have not persuasively argued their contention. Social identity theory and the related self-categorisation theory make distinct space for the individual in dealing with the personal *in relation to* the whole. Thus, the position of social identity theory contributes a level of depth to the analysis of youth that others cannot.

In order to synthesise the complexity of social identity theory, the three categories mentioned above must be discussed individually. First, categorisation helps define “who one is in terms of the defining characteristics of the category—a self-definition that is a part of the self-concept” (Hogg, Terry & White, 1995: 260), whether it be by nationality, political affiliation, social class or friendship group. Not unlike Grossberg’s (1996) treatment of ‘difference,’ these socially constructed categories tell us something about the members that belong to them and ourselves. Categorisation also implies norms and standards that dictate behaviour for the select group (McGarty et al., 1994).

Identification, the second aspect of social identity theory, involves thinking of the Self as both an individual and as a part of collective. It is this nuance of the theory that

many critics have overlooked (see Bornewasser & Bober, 1987). According to the theory it is possible to sometimes think of ourselves as group members (*social identity*) and at other times as unique individuals (*personal identity*) (my emphasis; McGarty et al., 1994). This varies situationally—in any given instance we can be more or less a group member. This positional variance adds a level of depth to identity that cultural theories does not provide. While cultural theory contends identity can take on multiple forms, it does not go on to develop the relationship between one identity and the perceived identity of a group.

The final aspect of social identity theory is closely related to identification in holding that in order to evaluate ourselves we compare ourselves to similar individuals, thereby viewing our own group as better than others. Comparison takes the group as a larger category of analysis and considers the way not only individuals, but collectives interact. When taken together, classification, identification and comparison complement and build on many of the concepts put forward by cultural theorists by allowing for relational and differential precepts, while building on the interplay between the group and the individual.

Self-categorisation is a more recent theoretical approach, closely related to social identity theory (Turner et al., 1987; Hogg, Terry & White, 1995). There is some dispute about the exact relationship between these theories; Turner et al. (1987) consider self-categorisation a more general theory from which social identity theory can be derived, while others (see Vanbeselcaere, 1994) describe it as part of the larger social identity framework. Despite this positional controversy, the two theories undeniably are complementary and thus it is important to consider self-categorisation when building an approach to identity.

In simple terms, self-categorisation holds that at different times we perceive ourselves as unique individuals while at other times members of groups, and that these two are equally valid expressions of Self (Turner et al., 1987). This assertion is clearly mirrored in social identity theory's discussion of identification. Self-categorisation, however goes on to propose that our social identities are as intrinsic as our personal identity and the extent to which we define ourselves at either the personal or social level is both malleable and functionally antagonistic (Turner et al., 1987). So for example, if a

young person defines himself in terms of group memberships as a 'male,' 'middle class,' 'rugby player' in a particular situation, this implies that at that time he is considering himself more as a group member and to a lesser degree as an individual. However, self-categorisation's antagonism is not taken to extremes. In allowing for levels of abstraction which acknowledge the possibility of more than two levels of identity, the theory avoids polarising the individual and the group (Turner et al., 1987).

The final element of self-categorisation that will inform a discussion of youth identity is the aspect of prototypes. According to the theory,

people cognitively represent social groups in terms of prototypes. A prototype is a subjective representation of the defining attributes (e.g. beliefs, attitudes, behaviors) of a social category, which is actively constructed from relevant social information in the immediate or more enduring interactive context (Hogg, Terry & White, 1995: 261).

These prototypes help individuals define groups, group members and themselves; they make sense of the world and are particularly useful in adolescence and early adulthood. Self-categorisation and social identity theory complement the constantly negotiated notion of identity forwarded by cultural studies scholars. Overlaying social identity theory on the concepts forwarded by cultural studies scholars results in a unique image of identity as a constantly dynamic inter-play between collectively constructed perceptions of the Self and other collectives. Taken together the two schools of thought provide a unique foundation for examining an intensely active moment in identity formation and re-formation—youth.

Youth Identity

Recent dialogues regarding youth and identity call out examples of pierced-faced pimply teenagers searching for social acceptance. In the early 21st century, conversations commonly add allusions to teenagers entering school buildings enraged and armed (e.g. Dedman, 2000; Claiborne, 1998). However, beneath the stark mental images and extreme circumstances rests more than 50 years of scholarship and practical research. Erik Erikson's 1968 seminal work *Identity, Youth and Crisis* has served as a stepping stone for many current academics, providing an admittedly dated, but nonetheless

practically useful framework for examining the development of young people. Erikson was the first scholar to thoroughly interrogate this moment of identity development and any analysis of this phase would be incomplete without drawing on his historic work. His ideas in many ways build on those of cultural identity and social identity theorists, while focusing the lens of analysis on a more specific stage of identity development.

Rather than explicitly defining identity, Erikson put forward two formulations that describe what identity 'feels' like. He stated the first element of identity is a "subjective sense of an invigorating sameness and continuity" (Erikson, 1968: 19). This aspect certainly opposes cultural theorists' non-essentialistic perspective of identity as dynamic and in a constant state of flux. The second is a "unity of personal and cultural identity rooting in an ancient people's fate" (Erikson, 1968: 20). Although Erikson's notion of one static identity—"sameness and continuity"—is essentialistic and dated, it is his union of the individual and communal cultures in youth that remains contemporary and useful in the forthcoming analysis. Indeed, it seems Erikson understood identity formation in youth to be negotiated. He wrote:

the process[. . .]is always changing and developing: at its best it is a process of increasing differentiation, and it becomes ever more inclusive as the individual grows aware of a widening circle of others significant to him[. . .]In fact, the whole interplay between the psychological and the social, the developmental and the historical, for which identity formation is of prototypical significance, could be conceptualized only as a kind of psychosocial relativity (Erikson, 1968: 23).

While Erikson held a negotiated view of identity in youth, he left sketchy signposts throughout his work indicating he believed this 'relative interplay' that 'is always changing and developing' ends some time near the onset of early adulthood as the 'crisis' is resolved. This position is never explicitly stated, but is implied through his explication of identity. This is where cultural and social identity theorists modernise Erikson's dated thinking. Hall (1996) and Grossberg (1996) argue that identity is in a constant state of flux *throughout life*. The macro theoretical conflict confronted here may seem insurmountable, but I contend it can be side-stepped by focusing on Erikson's micro

observations of identity formation in youth. While these ideas may be periodised in 1960s and 70s, they contain time-tested descriptors of an important developmental phase.

Erickson describes the initial stage of development as a 'crisis' in which a young person experiences a "need for trust in oneself and in others [. . .]At the same time, however, the adolescent fears a foolish, all too trusting commitment, and will, paradoxically, express his need for faith in loud and cynical mistrust" (Erikson, 1968: 128-129). Practical experience teaches that maturation involves constant change as young people carve their personal path amid fashion, music, social trends that blantly offer them something to believe in and belong to. Adolescents seek unique identities, a space to make a contribution to their own space of history, and ideals or objectives to which remain faithful (Erikson, 1968; Juhasz, 1982). Erickson further states that as adolescence progresses, youth strive for peer approval which introduces a second paradox: "namely, that he would rather act shamelessly in the eyes of his elders, out of free choice, than be forced into activities which would be shameful in his own eyes or in those of his peers" (Erikson, 1968: 129). Peer approval is intensely important during adolescence and early adulthood, to the extent that many youth, in their battle against conformity, will unite with other 'social rebels' engaged in the same struggle. This introduces an 'oppositional' identity, which provides young people an 'us' that is against the dominant collective. While many young people believe they are individually rejecting the dominant values of society, most are actually joining a counter-culture that provides them a sense of belonging. This brings full circle the 'we' versus 'they' concept present in both cultural and social identity theory. Erickson concludes that at the core of youth's most passionate aim is 'fidelity' or a need to "have an opportunity to develop, to employ, to evoke—and to die for" (Erikson, 1968: 233). It is this desire that ties the individual inextricably to the community.

Erikson's (1968) notions on the community are also particularly useful when interrogating youth and identity. He links the individual to the community by contending that the way in which a community identifies an individual is constantly compared to the way the individual compares herself to others (Erikson, 1968: 160). The community supports conformity to socially acceptable norms "to the extent that it permits the child, at each step, to orient himself toward a complete 'life plan' with a hierarchical order of

roles as represented by individuals of different ages” (Erikson, 1968: 161). In this way, parents, grandparents, teachers, neighbours and even peers provide a growing youth possible identification options. As these influencers send uniform messages about socially acceptable values, norms and behaviour, pressure increases for the adolescent or young adult to become a member of the ‘in group.’

Social opinion leaders also work to develop what Erikson (1968) terms a “historical perspective,” that is “a sense of universality of significant events and an often urgent need to understand fully and quickly what kind of happenings in reality and in thought determine others and why” (Juhasz, 1982: 443). This historical perspective is unique to adolescence and is important to individual and collective contextualisation of the past. “The adolescent, in the process of intersecting with the historical past identifies both with significant persons and with ideological forces” (Juhasz, 1982:444). It is this intersection between social influencers, ideology and the individual that is particularly relevant to this study. In light of the union of these complex elements, the question then becomes to what extent does television contribute, contradict or interact with the list of community influencers, historical perspective and the individual’s search for a unique identity?

Erikson (1968) has directly addressed the issue of the media’s impact on youth identity. It must be noted, however, that his knowledge of media is secondary to his approach to youth identity. Erikson’s information on media is entirely anecdotal and second-hand, as he is neither a media expert nor researcher. Also, the academic period in which his work is located is aligned and influenced by the ‘effects’ school of media thinkers (McQuail, 2000). These scholars presupposed individual receivers responded to media directly, with little or no self-censoring or personal analysis (Abercrombie & Longhurst, 1998; Watson & Hill, 2000). However, to not mention Erikson slightly alarmist positions on technological advancement would be negligent. While acknowledging the limitations of his expertise and academic period, Erikson nevertheless makes some salient points about the growing role television played in the 1960s and will continue to play in the future lives of adolescents.

Erikson established the ‘mass media’ as a key contributor to the historical consciousness of young people (Erikson, 1968; Juhasz, 1982), asserting that the mass

media positions itself as a “mediator between generations” (Erikson, 1968: 30). Through the lens of practical experience, it seems entirely feasible for young people to learn about adulthood through the mediated images on their television screens. Erikson concluded his discussion of the media and youth identity by predicting “a new generation growing up with and in technological [. . .] progress as a matter of course will be prepared by the daily confrontation with radically new practical possibilities to entertain radically new modes of thought” (Erikson, 1968: 38). Examples of these ‘practical possibilities’ and ‘radical new modes of thought’ can be gathered in one afternoon of television programmes—unfortunately, it takes a much longer time to assess their impact on cultural, social and youth identity.

Theories of cultural, social and youth identity taken together, provide a multi-faceted view of what occurs in the on-going process of definition and re-definition. Cultural studies scholars such as Hall (1996) and Grossberg (1996) establish identity as a constantly dynamic process. Social identity theory builds on this dynamic process by developing the relationship between the group and the individual. While all definition occurs in terms of the group, the individual is interminably categorising, identifying and comparing in terms of the group(s) around her. At no time could this process be more meaning-laden than during adolescence and early adulthood. Erikson’s theory on youth allows us to focus on the influence of community and ‘historical perspective’ on young people’s need for trust, cynical mistrust, need for peer approval, development of counter culture and overwhelming search for lasting ideals. This comprehensive view of youth identity is the first ‘leg’ in the theoretical platform of the study and will be examined in practical relation to fictional programmes and memory.

TELEVISION AND YOUTH

Before overlaying the theoretical models of identity on the practical patterns of television interaction, it is essential to consider television consumption and its interaction with youth. Television producers and broadcasters walk a tenuous tightrope when it comes to youth—often stepping on a communal nerve that finds them enveloped in a whirlwind of public sentiment. South Africa’s recent (March/April 2001) outcry over the SABC educational drama *Yizo Yizo* is the perfect example of fiction dramatically

impacting the everyday. This 13-part series of hour-long drama situated in a township school has elicited fierce editorials for and against in all the nation's major newspapers (see Smith, 2001). Many argue the programme's portrayal of rape, sodomy, gun violence, drug use and school upheaval are encouraging copy-cat acts and immoral behaviour (Ramoupi, 2001). Others—interestingly, mainly youth—argue that *Yizo Yizo* offers proactive solutions while accurately portraying the harsh realities of many South African teens and young adults (Zibi, 2001).

The *Yizo Yizo* debate and many like it all over the globe (see Pasquier, 1996), bring practical relevance to a discussion of television's impact on youth. In order to analyse the real-life impact of fictional programmes, it is important to review a model of the relationship between consumption, selection, interaction and application. Engaging such an analysis will allow a systematic approach to discussing young people and television, while simultaneously avoiding many of the emotional pitfalls besetting the greater public dialogue. Steele and Brown's (1995) adolescents' media practice model is uniquely applicable to this discussion. By adapting Hall's circuit of culture (1997) and other theoretical constructs, the authors have specialised a model to the individual needs and habits of youth. Also, a review of the existing research on young adults and entertainment programmes must be undertaken. Only after taking a contextualised approach to examining television and youth, is it possible to interpret the opinions and ideologies fiercely argued by parents, educators and young people.

Adolescents' Media Practice Model and Youth Media Involvement Matrix

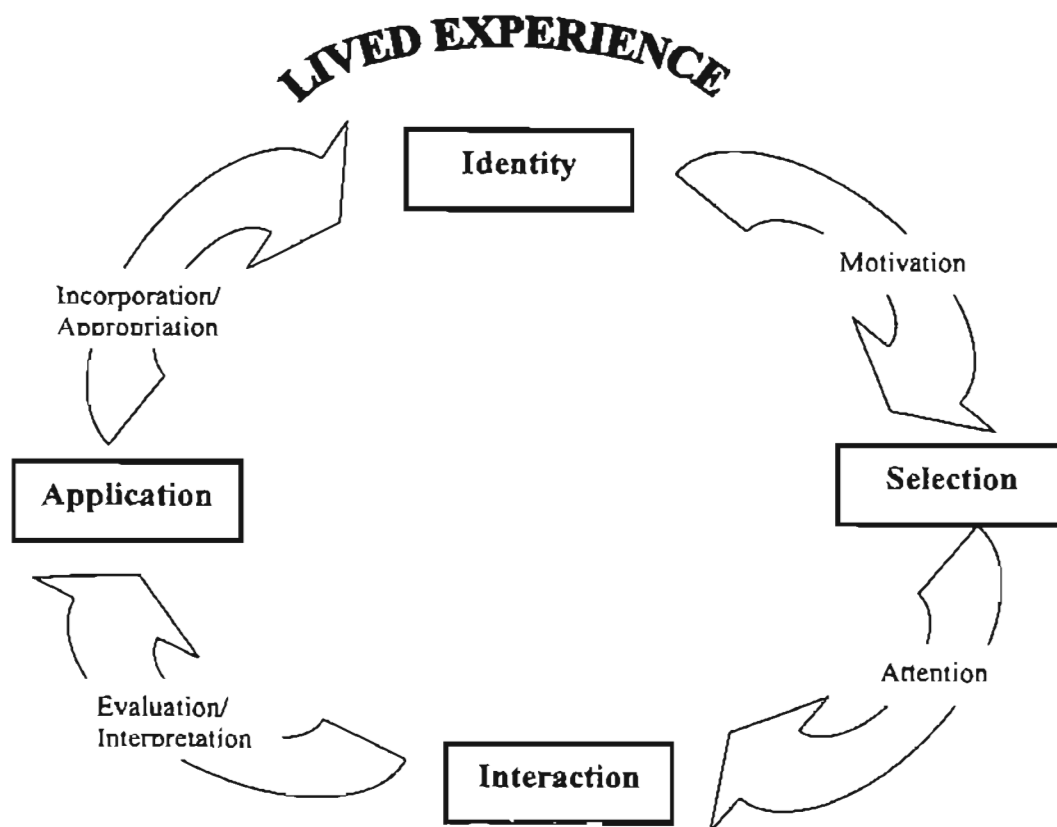
Recent research into media's impact on audience has moved away from traditional effects thinking (Lasswell, 1927; Blumer, 1933; Blumer & Hauser, 1933; Peterson & Thurstone, 1933), which views the audience as passive receivers of highly targeted messages. Rather, current media scholars tend to treat viewers, readers and listeners as active participants in a dialogic exchange between themselves and the viewer (Steele & Brown, 1995; Hall, 1997). They suggest all viewers—including youth—exercise a degree of personal choice in deciding what to watch, what to pay attention to and recall, and how to respond to what they have consumed. Throughout this process the viewers' personal experiences, knowledge and environment impact the way they receive

and filter information. This filtering process involves a number of stages and influencing factors that must be organised and explicated in order to scratch at the initial layers of television's impact.

In strategically examining youth's interaction with media, Steele and Brown (1995) developed the adolescents' media practice model (FIGURE 1), which illustrates a process of selection, interaction and application that is always being shaped by and shaping identity (Steele & Brown, 1995: 554).

Although never explicitly stated by Steele and Brown, the model depicts the relationship between the receiver and the media. However, before exploring this relationship, it is important to deconstruct the model's components. First, as stated above, the structure of the model hinges on **identity** formation, which is the "central task of adolescent development [. . .] Teens' sense of who they are shapes their encounters with media, and those encounters in turn shape their sense of themselves in the ongoing process of cultural production and reproduction" (Steele & Brown, 1995: 555-557).

FIGURE 1: Adolescents' media practice model
(adapted from Steele & Brown, 1995: 556)



The second element of the model is **selection**. According to Steele and Brown (1995), selection is “the act of choosing among media-related alternatives [. . .and] influenced by *motivations* [which] in turn affects *attention*, how attuned or focused the teenager is in relation to the media selected” (authors’ emphasis; 558). Today in South Africa, broadcast media selection occurs among a possible universe² of more than 25 television channels³ (SABC, 2001; M-Net, 2001; eTV, 2001; MultiChoice, 2001) and 120 national, local and community radio stations (SAARF, 2001a); not to mention the selection of programmes within the more than 145 potential sources.

Thirdly, Steele and Brown establish **interaction** as the “cognitive, affective and behavioral engagement with media that produces cultural meanings” (1995: 558). Frequently, these meanings evolve from teens’ evaluation and interpretation of media content. Because Steele and Brown use a ‘practice’ approach, interaction is narrowly limited to “what is actually happening at the moment teens interface with media” (1995: 558). Due to the fact that my interest is specifically in more long-term residual influences of media on youth, I will widen the scope of interaction to include cognitive, affective and behavioural engagements that occur during *and after* youth ‘interface’ with media but constrict my discussion to that which ‘produces cultural meanings.’

Finally, “**application** is the concrete way in which adolescents use media—how they make it active in their everyday lives” (my emphasis; Steele & Brown, 1995: 559). Steele and Brown define two subcategories of application.

Appropriation [. . .] is an active use of media that is frequently visible in room decorations, media-related activities, or teens’ own accounts of why specific media content is important to them [. . .] (Steele & Brown, 1995: 559).

Incorporation, in contrast, is an associative use of media that often builds on existing attitudes, feelings, and prior learning (authors’ emphasis; Steele & Brown, 1995: 559). Thus appropriation represents more superficial changes in buying patterns, habits or media priorities, while incorporation is an internal support of deeply held intrinsic values.

²The ‘universe’ referred to here includes all the possible media outlets throughout the country, the author recognises however, that based on access and frequencies, this total universe is practically available to a small minority of South Africans.

³ This figure includes access to M-Net and Multi-Choice’s digital television.

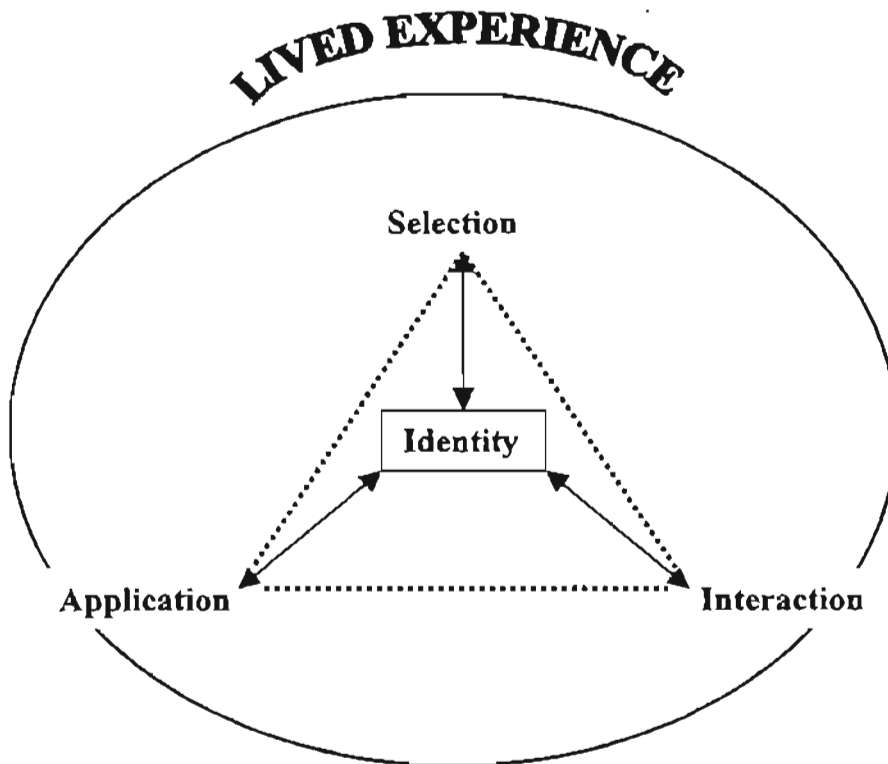
Steele and Brown contextualise their circuit by placing everything within the purview of lived experience asserting that

lived experience [. . .] holds the potential for amplifying or restraining what is possible when specific adolescents and particular media come in contact. But it is through everyday activities and routines—in other words, practice—that the difference is played out (Steele & Brown, 1995: 558).

They are also quick to point out that the model “does not diminish the importance of media content, but it recognises that individuals shape and transform media encounters in a continuous cycle of meaning making” (Steele & Brown, 1995: 553). Thus, the model allows a discussion of research in terms of content *and* audience reception, a necessary dual-approach when discussing television in relation to identity and youth. Also, this ‘continuous cycle of meaning making’ fits in well with the dynamic concept of identity developed in the first part of the theoretical framework.

While the adolescents’ media practice model is uniquely suited to framing an analysis of youth’s involvement with media, it seems Steele and Brown’s (1995) theoretical discussion of the model is not accurately depicted in its physical construction. I appreciate the authors’ efforts to create a cyclical depiction of media practice and to “foreground identity” (Steele & Brown, 1995: 572), by taking a ‘practice’ approach. However, I contend their physical positioning of contributing factors detracts emphasis from the centrality of identity formation to the overall process and moves them closer to the effects paradigm than they initially intended. As stated above, the authors specifically assert that the selection, interaction and application of media is constantly being “shaped by and shaping identity” (Steele & Brown, 1995: 554). However, when looking at the illustration of the model, it would seem identity is only one *static* stopping point on the circular path of media interaction. Therefore, I propose a small but meaningful alteration in the physical depiction of the model (FIGURE 2). For the purposes of clarity, I will call this revised illustration the youth media involvement matrix.

FIGURE 2: Youth media involvement matrix



In the youth media involvement matrix, I have moved identity to the center of the model rather than placing it on the outside. This positions identity as the anchor of both media interaction and lived experience, stressing that both lived experience and media exposure contribute to youth identity. More often than not, this contribution is more heavily weighted on the side of lived experience. Therefore, the vectors of influence are represented by a dotted line, representing the fact that their length is not a static factor. The curved arrows of the Steele and Brown model (1995) gave the impression that the relationship between identity, selection, interaction and application always occurred in uniform proportion. However, my research and practical experience demonstrates that the lines that connect these factors are always changing and often different lengths. Thus, at any given moment the triangle of influence could be isosceles, acute or anything in between. (Although for the purposes of visual clarity, it is equilateral in FIGURE 2).

The triangular shape of the interplay between selection, interaction and application is merely based on its geometric simplicity—the shortest distance between

each of these points is, in fact, a line. Also, for the purposes of clarity, I have opted to leave out the contributing factors of motivation, attention, evaluation/interpretation and incorporation/appropriation (see FIGURE 1) as Steele and Brown (1995) hold these to be merely non-exhaustive, correlated motivators. Furthermore, these secondary components did not factor into my research or application of the model. Through simple graphic adaptation, the youth media involvement matrix more accurately represents a structure that hinges on identity and takes into consideration the complete realm of lived experience. In view of the present research, this is a more holistic way to examine the relationship between youth receivers and the media.

As is demonstrated in the altered model and discussion above, my contention with the adolescent media practice model (Steele & Brown, 1995) is of a primarily graphic nature. Therefore, the definitions and descriptions of selection, interaction and application developed by the original framers carry through to the youth media involvement matrix. However, because identity is no longer foregrounded, but is now given a central role, the general orientation of the dialogue surrounding the model has changed. Identity now becomes the central point of both the viewer-television relationship and lived experience. In this way identity acts as a conversational link between the lived and the mediated experiences. Thus, our theoretical discussion of identity as dynamic, communally relational and particularly tenuous during adolescence and early adulthood, has direct bearing on the youth media involvement matrix and its application.

Fictional Television Programmes and Youth

In addition to exploring a theoretical model to help filter youth's media experience, it is imperative to review the literature regarding young people's specific experiences with fictional television programmes, since this is the primary emphasis of the study. While few studies focus attention specifically on fictional or entertainment programmes, many of the results from broader studies help to inform a discussion of this refined topic. However, before launching into a treatment of these studies, some general comments regarding youth's viewership of fictional programmes must be made. Various international studies have found television watching decreases in adolescence (Arnett,

1995; Larson & Richards: 1989). At the same time, studies have shown there is an increase in listening to popular music in adolescence and early adulthood (Larson & Kubey, 1983; Fisherkeller, 1997). One study attributes young people's high rate of music listening "to the fact that teen music, unlike TV, is produced by and for young people, thus it reflects adolescent concerns with autonomy, identity, love, and sexuality" (Larson & Kubey, 1983). Regardless of the reason, this drop off is significant for an analysis of youth's interaction with media generally and fictional television specifically.

An important piece of deconstructing young people's interaction with television is interrogating the reasons they select entertainment programmes. Based on a literature review in this area, I have generalised findings into several descriptive clusters; they are: 1) coping with stress or emotions; 2) humour; 3) connection to peer network; 4) gender identity; and 5) occupational information. These categories are not meant to be exhaustive, certainly there are a plethora of other reasons young people choose to turn on a soapie or sitcom. These categories do, however, represent a summary of the major findings in recent scholarship.

Coping with stress or emotions is the first selection reason. It has been argued decisively in qualitative (Fisherkeller, 1997) and quantitative studies (Arnett, 1995; Kurdek, 1987; Moore & Schultz, 1983; Lyle & Hoffman, 1972) that listening to music and watching TV are the coping strategies most commonly used by adolescents and young adults when they are angry, anxious, or unhappy. Reed Larson (1995) found in his study of adolescents' private use of media that

in most cases [. . .]teenagers do not feel strongly aroused or captivated by the images they see on TV. In fact, adolescents usually report[ed] feeling vacant during TV viewing[. . .]If anything, the comfortable messages of TV are an opportunity to turn off the Self (Larson, 1995: 544).

In this way, coping becomes escapism—a way to disconnect from the often-difficult process of transitioning from childhood to adulthood.

Closely related to coping with stress or emotions is the second generalised reason for selection: humour. Humour warrants a classification unto itself largely because of the emphasis it has received in research on youth's television viewing experiences. Hart Research Associates (1996) asked 10- to 17-year-olds to mention the elements of a

typical good show; the young people's spontaneous responses emphasised humour as an essential ingredient. Other studies support this finding (Valkenburg & Janssen, 1999; Nikken & van der Voort, 1997; Pasquier, 1996). The first two categories of selection motivations open a window of understanding to the total lived experience (reference the youth media involvement matrix) of young people—their lives become increasingly complex and in many ways they use television to holiday in the simple.

One of the reasons the lives of adolescents and young adults take on new complexity is the heightened sensitivity to relationships that most experience. Thus, connection to peer network is the third determining factor in youth's media selection. Scholars have found media consumption can give young people a sense of cohesion with a larger network of peers

which is united by certain youth-specific values and interests. In a highly mobile society, the media provide common ground for all adolescents [. . .]At the same time connect[ing] adolescents [. . .]around the country and even around the world (Arnett, 1995: 524).

In this way, youth can stay in touch with the attitudes, appearance and experience of people their own age, both through the mediated viewing experience and through discussing what they have watched with peers in their immediate circle. Further research supports the importance of this connection by proving individuals display a preference for television shows that feature characters of their own age group, even when all other aspects of content are controlled (Harwood, 1997). Clearly, youth choose to watch certain programmes not only because they are entertaining but also because it connects them to a larger social network. This emphasis relates directly back to our earlier discussion of youth identity. Erikson (1968) stresses the importance of peer approval in adolescence and early adulthood. This connection brings our discussions of identity and fictional programmes in closer theoretical proximity.

Youth also select media, in part, because it informs their conceptions of gender identity. Gender and sexuality are important issues to adolescents and young adults. The media portrays definite images of what it means to be a man or a woman and further displays several ideal-types when it comes to male-female interaction. In his review of adolescents' use of media for self-socialisation, Jeffry Arnett (1995) found adolescents

take ideals of what it means to be a man or a woman partly from the media, which “presents physical and behavioral gender ideals in images through music, movies, television and magazines” (Arnett, 1995: 522). Television through, its visual stereotyping, is particularly influential in communicating gender roles. These gendered stereotypes relate to the concept of ‘prototypes’ developed as an element of self-categorisation theory. Prototypes and stereotypes alike are based on and cemented by the interplay between collectively-held concepts of who ‘they’ are in relation to who ‘we are’ or ‘I am.’

Finally, youth select and approve of media that gives them occupational information. Jo Ellen Fisherkeller (1997) conducted an ethnographic survey of teenagers in their homes, neighbourhoods, schools and peer cultures, to analyse contextually their uses and interpretations of television. She found

for all three [subject] students, motivations for future success in some kind of profession arise from home and neighborhood cultures [. . .][while][. . .]within television culture, they find specific strategies that can help them flesh out their possible Selves and accomplish their quests (Fisherkeller, 1997: 484).

Quantitative research done by Wroblewski and Huston (1987) supports this finding. So although teenage dreams about being a doctor, lawyer or artist may not be born in the TV screen, support and role models found in television confirm already established ambitions. This confirmation-lending influence may be at play in other selection factors discussed above. This will be further interrogated in the forthcoming discussion of research findings. Taken together with the structured method of analysis offered in the youth media involvement matrix the deciding factors in youth’s selection of fictional programmes provide insight into the viewing landscape. Young people’s coping with stress or emotions, humour, connections to peers, gender identity and occupational information help clarify the specific values and habits of youth which provides a natural window into youth identity.

MEMORY THEORY

As children pass from adolescence to early adulthood and old age, they acquire knowledge and values that shape who they are today and who they will be tomorrow.

These pieces of knowledge and formative values influence the ongoing, communally defined process of identity formation and re-formation and contribute to the comprehensive total of lived experience. Practical and moral lessons take on significance and meaning within a social milieu that is as important as the information itself. The communal context of lived experience is dependent on geography, social class, religious affiliation and a host of other collective determinants. Compare for example, two 16-year-old males: one living in Chicago, Illinois, USA, the other just outside Eshowe, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. While for the first boy knowing the safest bus routes to take to school may be an 'essential' piece of information, for the other the correct bleach/water ratio to purify his family's water supply is necessary knowledge. The common thread between the two is the way in which this information is stored. Memory acts as a kind of cataloguing device for lived experiences, both on an individual and a communal level. What we remember about our past determines how we will think, act and feel in the future. In this way, memory is intimately tied to identity.

Understanding the interaction of memory and identity requires an examination of scholarship from both sociology and psychology. First, sociology contributes a collective approach to memory developed by Maurice Halbwachs (1952) in the early and middle part of the 20th century. Collective memory theory gives greater emphasis to the social context that has been a theme throughout the discussion of identity and television interaction thus far. Secondly, psychology contributes a rich history of examining memory on a more individual basis. Without getting too deeply into the physiological details of memory storage and retrieval, it is important to analyse psychology's contribution on more conceptual and methodological levels. Examining the methodological approach of everyday memory, and the theoretical constructs of episodic and semantic memory, and autobiographical memory, informs a broader interrogation of how memory relates to identity and youth. Lived experience does not occur in a vacuum—it is connected to our past and our present social context. Memory is the capsule of the past and the major determinant of the future.

Collective Memory

The human memory is constantly bombarded with images and information; processing everything from the contents of our lunch to complex algebraic formulae. Based on the sheer magnitude of processing and storage that takes place, it is reasonable to infer the procedure involves something slightly more complex than isolated bio-cognitive functions. Out of this inference and other academic quandaries, scholars began to consider the social aspect of memory processing (Connerton, 1989). Indeed cognitive psychologists today can acknowledge, without undermining their precepts or principles, that “the memories of people in different cultures will vary because their mental maps are different” (Connerton, 1989: 28). These mental maps are constructed through human experience that is inherently situational and communal, which links back to the theme of communal negotiation discussed in the identity and television sections of the theoretical framework. Everything we remember, no matter how personal, exists in relationship to ideas, values or feelings others possess. Any individual memory is dependent on collectively constructed words, language, people, locations and other structures. The scripts of our memories are written and revised based on external sources. Thus, our personal and collective histories do not appear on a blank page.

The personal was situated within the collective for the first time by French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs (Cosser, 1992). Halbwachs argued individuals acquire, localise and recall their memories only through membership to social groups—particularly kinship, religious and class affiliations (Connerton, 1989). Indeed, practical experience demonstrates that the bulk of our memories rush in when prompted by questions or comments made by friends, family, colleagues or others around us. Halbwachs suggested “we appeal to our memory in order to reply to questions which others put to us, or which we imagine that they could ask us, and, in order to reply to them, we envisage ourselves as forming part of the same group or groups as they do” (Connerton, 1989: 36). Therefore, in Halbwachs’s theoretical construction the individual memory is entirely dependent on the collective; “it is to the degree that our individual thought places itself in [the social framework] and participates in this memory that it is capable of the act of recollection” (Cosser, 1992: 38). This collective situation builds on the foundation established in our discussion of identity, particularly in the description of

social identity theory. It also connects to Erikson's emphasis on peers and the research findings that connection to peers was one of the primary motivators for young people selecting a fictional programme.

Halbwachs' fervent rejection of the individual as the unit of analysis marks his dramatic departure from the standard psychological approach to memory. He contended that psychology divides the bonds that attach individuals to their social context, while experience teaches that memory is constructed within the very same social context (Coser, 1992). While, Halbwachs acknowledged that in the individual "we observe dreams, the functioning of memory and the disorders of aphasia [such as amnesia and other memory inhibiting disorders]" (Coser, 1992: 167), he opposed the way psychologists "exteriorise" internal states of consciousness (Coser, 1992). He wrote:

Indeed, from the moment that a recollection reproduces a collective perception, it can itself only be collective; it would be impossible for the individual to represent himself anew, using only his forces, that which he could not represent to himself previously—unless he has recourse to the thought of his group (Coser, 1992: 169).

This is where academic advancement would force a contemporary Halbwachs to revise his point, for psychology has made inroads into connecting an individual's memories to his or her context (see Cohen, 1989 on everyday memory). Although the bulk of psychologists continue to speak of memories as fairly insular units, some have knowingly or unwittingly built upon Halbwachs's assertion that the individual and collective are not two separate elements, but rather "two points of view from which society can simultaneously consider the same objects" (Coser, 1992: 175). Collective memory theory and psychological approaches to memory initially may seem uneasy bedfellows. Indeed Halbwachs' tone and primary argument seems to reject violently such a pairing. However, I contend a theoretical union is possible if one: a) draws upon psychological theory that considers context and b) intentionally 'interiorises' aspects of other theories—thereby recognising every memory is founded in and in turn influences the collective.

There are two other aspects of collective memory that are particularly salient to our discussion of identity, fictional programmes and memory. First, Halbwachs, like other cultural and sociological thinkers, acknowledges collective memory is not a static

entity—like identity, it too is negotiated. Depending on the particular historical and socio-political moment, “society represents the past to itself in different ways: it modifies its conventions. As every one of its members accepts these conventions, they inflect their recollections in the same direction in which collective memory evolves” (Coser, 1992: 173). A prime example of this is the way in which South Africa’s collective memory of racial and social classes has changed over the last two decades. In many ways the nation is exerting concerted energies into reframing its understanding of relationships between individuals, communities, right and wrong. In her recent discussion of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Sarah Nuttall (1998) wrote:

We are never [. . .]the first people to know who we are. But if collective memory is the outcome of agency in South Africa it may often seem that we need to approach the construction of memory from the other way round: *Is it less, here, that private memories shape collective remembrance than vice versa?* Does the challenge then become how we can create a collective memory that is multiple, flickering with the many meanings that individual experience can collectively bring to it? (my emphasis; Nuttall, 1998: 88).

Nuttall puts her finger on the pulse of South Africa’s collective memory, which is multicultural, and radically changing in the post-apartheid era. However, according to Halbwachs’s conception of the relationship between the collective and the personal it is *precisely* the ‘other way round’ approach we should *always* take when revising memory. For in his view, in almost all cases the collective point of view inspires an alteration of the personal viewpoint—this is the result of ‘interiorisation.’ However, beyond the directional flow of the change, it is important to note that collective memory constantly revises itself based on the knowledge and power relations of the present moment.

Secondly, Halbwachs and others (see Edwards & Middleton, 1986) have maintained that language is an important component of the transmission, storage and retrieval of collective memory. Though the degree to which language is fundamental in the process of remembering has been debated (see Howe & Courage, 1997), most scholars would agree it is a key component of memory. Halbwachs positioned language as the “precondition for collective thought” (Coser, 1992: 173), stating that “it is language, and the whole system of social conventions attached to it, that allows us at

every moment to reconstruct our past” (Coser, 1992: 173). This point is carried through by Derek Edwards and David Middleton in their analysis of joint remembering in which they hold that symbolic communication through language makes our memories “uniquely human” (1986: 424). Through verbal transmission in a commonly understood language, the collective viewpoint influences the personal. This emphasis on language as a source of transmission is important to the present project because moments of fictional programmes are transmitted, in part, through language and are kept alive in conversations among fellow watchers. This brings our previous discussion of television programmes to bear on our current treatment of memory.

Collective memory, first established by Maurice Halbwachs, situates the personal in the context of the social. In assuming this outside-in or ‘interiorising’ approach, I have contended it is possible to overcome some of the theoretical disagreements between the schools of thought within sociology and psychology. Collective memory is a changeable entity that utilises language as key component of its transmission, storage and retrieval. In summarising this theoretical stance, it is important to re-emphasise the close relationship between social memory theory and identity. Halbwachs crystallises this link best in asserting that “we preserve memories of each epoch in our lives, and these are continually reproduced; through them, as by a continual relationship, a sense of our identity is perpetuated” (Coser, 1992: 47). Our memories are a window to our ever-changing, constantly competing identities. Memories also act as long-term indicators of what is salient and lasting among those identities.

Everyday Memory

While it is true that what we recall is shaped by our exterior, collective experience, it is also true that the way in which we process this information in turn influences our personal reality and collective identity. For memory of our personal viewpoint is an integral part of our identity—in many ways we are what we remember (Cohen, 1989). To demonstrate this point, consider a person who has suffered brain damage in a car accident. In injuring the physiological part of the brain that controls long and short-term memory, his personal and collective viewpoints of the past have been virtually erased. Although this research does not deal specifically with physiological

memory or amnesia, this example demonstrates that in a very real sense this man has lost his identity—memory and identity are intimately linked. While he can rebuild a sense of Self from the community that surrounds him, his individual loss will dramatically impact his day-to-day existence. Thus, while situating an analysis of memory in a broad collective framework, it is also important to consider the personal ‘everyday’ memory.

The present focus on everyday memory methodology was born at a 1976 conference on the practical aspects of memory (Neisser, 1991; Cohen, 1986; Cohen 1989). Psychologist Ulric Neisser presented arguments advocating a new approach to the study of memory—one that emphasised “ecological validity” by concentrating on naturally occurring phenomena and paying particular attention to individual differences (Cohen, 1989; Cohen et al., 1986). He maintained too many psychologists were busy examining rote list recall in laboratories and were too far removed from the everyday lives of the subjects they professed to be studying. While the necessity and validity of laboratory memory research has been re-asserted by countless academics (see Banaji & Crowder, 1989), Neisser’s call for action opened the floodgates for a great number of studies with a more functional approach and practical aims (Klatzky, 1991). These studies analysed everything from memory for names of high school classmates to long-term memory loss in the aged. Proponents of the everyday methodology contend that “if we know how memory normally functions in everyday life, we can sometimes predict performance in natural contexts” (Cohen, 1989: 5). Thus, the primary aim of everyday memory research is not statistical validity but generalising habits and norms.

Another primary difference between the study of everyday memory and other more clinical psychological approaches is that it makes provision for individual differences. Therefore, when looking at this methodology from a collective viewpoint, elements such as age, gender, geographic location, and socio-economic status factor into the analysis. Whereas these factors would tend to be sidelined in the laboratory, they take center stage in a real-world methodology. Particular perspectives of memory are “embedded in a rich context of ongoing events and scenes; they are influenced by a lifetime of past experiences, by history and culture, by current motives and emotions, by intelligence and personality traits, by future goals and plans” (Cohen, 1989: 5-6). This context runs parallel to the circle of lived experience in the youth media involvement

matrix. Thus, the everyday approach complements our contextual approach to examining young people's engagement with fictional television. The everyday approach ties a tight knot around our critical synthesis of identity, fictional programmes and memory.

It must be noted, however, that everyday memory is primarily a research approach or methodology, as opposed to a body of theory. Often absence of a strong theoretical framework puts everyday memory research "in jeopardy of producing only a mass of interesting, but uninterpreted observations" (Cohen, 1989: 13). In order to avoid this pitfall, it will be important to consider the everyday approach within the context of collective theory and apply these precepts to other elements of analysis contributed by psychology. Therefore, it is important to take a step back and look at some of the psychological theory that contributes to and informs the everyday approach.

Schema theory, which stresses that what we remember is influenced by what we already know, is the first body of theory that contextualises the everyday approach. In schema theory "the knowledge we have stored in memory is organized as a set of schemas [. . .]each of which incorporates all the knowledge of a given type of object or event that we have acquired from past experience" (Cohen et al., 1986: 26). In this way, an individual memory is a compilation of several 'packets' of mental representations already gleaned from objects, situations, events or actions found in the outside world (Rumelhart & Norman, 1983). Although schema theory predates the everyday approach (Bartlett, 1932), when modern psychologists have combined the theory with an everyday methodology, the results draw even closer links between the collective and the personal viewpoints. Interiorising this theory—as prescribed by Halbwachs (1952)—leads fluidly to the subsequent corollary that what we already know is influenced by our social context. As noted in our discussion of cultural and social identity, it is this same context that gives us information about who we are in relation to others and a historical perspective.

The close link between the collective and the personal within schema theory is visible in the ways in which schemas can impact memory in general. Gillian Cohen and her colleagues (1986) have summarised these influences into the following four categories:

- Selection—** Schemas guide what is encoded and stored in memory
- Abstraction—** Only the general schema is retained in memory, while the particular episode is forgotten
- Integration and interpretation—** A single integrated memory representation is formed which includes information derived from the current experience, prior knowledge relating to it, the default values supplied by the appropriate schemas and any interpretations that are made
- Normalization—** Memories are generally distorted so as to fit in with prior expectations and to be consistent with the schema (Cohen et al., 1986: 28).

If it is true that schemas are packets of information taken from real experience, then the starting place of selection is the exterior. The circle of influence returns to the exterior in the normalisation function, as memories are altered to fit with already lived experience. Despite the fact that some psychologists have questioned the validity of schemas (see Clark & Clark, 1977), the concept is particularly useful in the consideration of everyday memory, highlighting what is important to remember, helping round out our memories and enabling us to make educated guesses about information that may be missing. This is just one of the ways a traditional psychological theory can be used within the everyday approach to highlight themes and norms for future hypotheses and research.

Closely related to schema theory is psychology's discussion of episodic and semantic memory. First put forward by Endel Tulving in 1972 and further established by Marigold Linton in 1982, episodic memories are records of personal experiences—the events, people and objects an individual personally encounters (Nelson, 1993; Cohen et al., 1986; Tulving, 1984; Linton, 1982; Tulving, 1972). Semantic memory on the other hand, is “a mental thesaurus or organized knowledge a person possesses about words and

other verbal symbols, their meaning and referents [and] relations among them” (Tulving, 1984: 223). Episodic and semantic memory are intimately linked to schema theory in that episodic memories are generalised into semantic knowledge, which in turn comprises the material stored in schema form (Cohen, et al., 1986). In the same way we can place the origins of schemas in the exterior lived experience, so too is information situated in the episodic and semantic memory systems.

Much has been written about the unique relationship between episodic and semantic memory. Some theorists (see Craik, 1979; Jacoby & Craik, 1979; McCloskey & Santee, 1981; Kintsch, 1980; Naus & Halasz, 1979) have contended episodic and semantic memory are not distinct systems at all but rather points on a mental continuum. However, Tulving (1993; 1984; 1972) and others (see Herlitz, Nilsson & Backman, 1997; Cohen, 1989; Cohen, et al., 1986) have held fast to the original assertion that the systems are separate, while interdependent. The point of theoretical suture (if one can be discovered) seems to be that episodic and semantic knowledge “are not separate compartmentalised structures but are in an interactive and have an interdependent relationship” (Cohen, 1989: 114). Figure 3 provides an overview of the chief differences between the episodic and semantic memory systems. In the end, both systems are necessary for proper information processing—episodic memories are generalised and categorised in terms of broader semantic knowledge. Thus, episodic and semantic memory constantly interact in a larger network of mental cognition.

FIGURE 3. Features of episodic and semantic memory
(adapted from Cohen et al., 1986: 46).

<i>FEATURE</i>	EPISODIC MEMORY	SEMANTIC MEMORY
<i>Type of information represented</i>	Specific events, objects, places and people	General knowledge and facts about events and objects
<i>Type of organisation in memory</i>	Chronological (by time of occurrence) or spatial (by place of occurrence)	In schemas (packets of general knowledge relating to the same topic)
<i>Source of information</i>	Personal experience	Abstraction from repeated experiences/ Generalisations learned from others
<i>Focus</i>	Subjective reality (the self)	Objective reality (the world)

In discussing episodic memory, it is useful to make mention of autobiographical memory. Most scholars place autobiographical memory as a subtype of the episodic system—while not all episodic memories are autobiographical, all autobiographical are episodic (Nelson, 1993). Autobiographical memory is worth highlighting because of its unique interaction with the everyday and the Self. Autobiographical memory is defined as “a specific kind of episodic memory that refers to the recollection of experiences from an individual's life that are presumed to be of significance to the Self-system” (Davis, 1999: 498). In autobiographical memory, the Self is both the product of the experience and the experiencer itself (Cohen, 1989). Autobiographical memories may be general or experiential (Cohen, 1989). For example, I can remember that I attend regular jazz concerts at the University of Natal or I can remember a particular concert I saw at the University of Natal Jazz Centre. The memories can also be generic or specific in terms of location (Cohen, 1989); I can remember what it feels like to walk up any hill or I can remember what it feels like to walk up the hill to the Jazz Centre in Durban, South Africa.

Of the multitude of events that occur in daily life, it is significant to consider which elements remain particularly salient in autobiographical memory. Research has underlined that “events which are personally important, consequential, unique, emotional or surprising are liable to be better remembered” (Cohen, 1989: 119). Also, researchers have demonstrated that the more memories are discussed with others, the greater likelihood there is they will be remembered (Mullen & Yi, 1995). This reflects the earlier discussion of the importance of language in the processing, storage and retrieval of information, and will have a bearing on the findings and discussion in chapters three and four. Researchers have also found that pleasant autobiographical memories fade at a slower rate than unpleasant ones (Walker, Vogl & Thompson, 1997). Finally, due to autobiographical memory's unique relationship with the Self, it makes sense that “generally a greater number of memories recalled are congruent with existing self-perceptions than incongruent ones” (Neimeyer & Raeshide, 1991). These determining factors in the recollection of autobiographical experiences provide insight into the way

memories are preserved and recalled and will have great significance on an analysis of young people's memories of fictional programmes.

Reviewing the concepts of schema theory, episodic and semantic memory, and autobiographical memory in the context of everyday memory provides an important perspective on the personal, more psychological approach to memory. However, it is also important to also contextualise this discussion in a broader understanding of collective memory provided by Halbwachs (1952) and other sociologists. Collective memory focuses attention on the social and cultural contexts that shape all personal experience and in turn influence identity formation and re-formation.

In concluding the inter-disciplinary theoretical framework, several common themes run throughout the structure. First is the relational and constantly changing notion of identity—this can be found in both the cultural and social conceptions of identity. Second is that both identity and memory are rooted in the communal and are therefore relational. Third is the negotiated nature of both identity and memory. Fourth is that the critical discussion of identity, television and youth, and memory is all intentionally located within the larger universe of lived experience. These four theoretical joints taken together with their larger conceptual constructs provide a solid foundation on which to examine primary findings on young people's recollections of fictional television programmes.

CHAPTER THREE—METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH FINDINGS

METHODOLOGY

The pathway to assessing the impact of television on youth is riddled with the pitfalls of extreme media-centrist and society-centrist opinions alike (McQuail, 2000). Negotiating primary research in this terrain often involves jockeying between inflated statistics and polarised viewpoints. The most accurate view of the 'truth' seems to require a synthesis of extremes. By conducting qualitative research on youth's memories of fictional programmes it works to uncover the 'why' that nags in the minds of most parents, educators, community leaders and media professionals. Why do young people plan their evenings around their favourite sitcom? Why do female hair trends seem to follow seasons of *Friends*? And why does violence, sex and shocking material seem to attract the greatest number of young viewers? Thus, the present study's aim is not statistical significance, but practical relevance.

The focus of the research on identity, fictional programmes and memory works to uncover the voices of the young adults around whom debates are centered and regulations are structured. First, however, it is important to precisely identify the youth population; I will begin by providing a brief overview of statistics on youth and television both internationally and locally. Secondly, I will establish the strategic significance of focus group research and describe in detail the guided discussions that occurred in this study. Finally, I will filter the findings of the focus groups through the window of memory by working through the elements of the youth media involvement matrix—selection, interaction and application. This will build a platform on which synthesised conclusions can be drawn.

Quantitative Audience Overview

Before being introduced to the more qualitative voices of youth, it is necessary to identify them in terms of their relationship to television. Fifteen- to 20-year-olds are an under-researched population, particularly as a cohesive unit of 'young adults.' There is a plethora of research that examines the impact and memory of television on young

children (see Meadowcroft & Reeves, 1989 or Puggles Lorch, Bellack & Haller Augsbach, 1987), college students (see Eckhardt, Wood & Smith Jacobvitz, 1991 or Mundorf, et al., 1990) or older adults (see DeFleur, Melvin, et al., 1992); however very few studies take a combined look at older school-age and younger university students. This is probably due to the logistical complications of compiling a sample. In fact, 15- to 20-year-olds have more in common than they have in particular. This is the age when peers take precedence over parents, when independence is explored and asserted and where a good deal of attention is focused on consumer and popular culture.

The 'youth' age group also seems to have a good deal in common when it comes to television viewing habits. Based on my anecdotal research, these young people seem to be watching the same programmes. While it is true that there are a few programmes that are consumed more widely by younger teenagers (e.g. *Sabrina the Teenage Witch*), this age group in South Africa unanimously focuses its attention on programmes like *Ally McBeal*, *Generations* and *Party of Five*. It seems young men and women alike are watching similar sitcoms and soaps. However, there is really no way to statistically verify this assertion as the South African Advertising Research Foundation (SAARF) and other international media ratings institutions have opted to take an incredibly expansive view of this age demographic. Instead of occupying one demographic bracket, 15- to 20-year-olds span two SAARF age categories: children (age 16 and under), and youth (age 16 to 24). Taking such a wide view of these age categories is problematic, particularly in the youth category. A 16-year-old South African is generally still in high school, lives at home with his parents, does not have an income and is relatively sexually inexperienced. While a 24-year-old is just graduating university or in her or his first few years of working life, has started living independently, generally earns a steady salary and is more sexually experienced than her 16-year-old counterpart⁴. Thus, due to the fact that academia and consumer research organisations have largely ignored this unique population, insight into their memory of and interaction with fictional programmes is particularly necessary.

⁴ These are 'best case scenario' assumptions and are not based on statistical data. This generalised depiction is intended to portray the disparity in life experiences for 16- and 24-year-olds, rather than to catalogue a qualitatively accurate illustration of the lifestyle of South African youth.

In addition to the academic 'hole' in terms of the youth population, there is also a very limited amount of information known about South African youth's television consumption habits. We can determine, based on SAARF data, what and when viewers are watching, but beyond that we are generally left in the dark. The United States (probably due to its largely commercial broadcasting structure) has been a leader in illuminating this area; in 1999, both the National Institute on Media and the Family and the Kaiser Family Foundation conducted comprehensive studies of children and teenagers' media habits⁵. While South Africa and the US do have common democratic structures, stratified societies and growing industrial economies, South Africa has a vastly different degree of media diversity or saturation. Thus, while statistics from abroad are useful to use as a benchmark and a portent of possibilities to come, they are only of limited value when trying to characterise South African youth audiences in terms of media access, content preference, restrictions and overall impact. Therefore, whenever possible, I have augmented foreign statistics with local figures gathered in an unpublished survey conducted by the Graduate Programme for Cultural and Media Studies (GPCMS) (2000)⁶ or taken from other primary research.

Young people's access to media is the first area that will contextualise a discussion of television's overall impact on identity and society. A 1997 study done by SAARF on the media consumption habits of South African youth found that "53 percent (1.95 million) youth⁷ watched TV 'yesterday' and 67 percent (2.45 million) in the 'last seven days' (SAARF, 1997).

⁵ The samples of the Kaiser Family Foundation and National Institute on Media and the Family studies do not include 18- to 20-year-olds.

⁶ The GPCMS study surveyed primarily urban 15- to 20-year-olds in urban KwaZulu-Natal. This survey population was chosen to mirror the focus group parameters established by this and other studies being conducted in the programme. Attempts were made to include rural youth, however the total number of respondents was far smaller than a statistically representative population.

⁷ SAARF defined 'youth' as 12- to 15-year-olds—a markedly different parameter than the one used in this study.

The GPCMS found that 83 percent of youth in urban KwaZulu-Natal had televisions in their homes (Teer-Tomaselli, et al., 2000). Figures 4a and 4b illustrate this point and show the percentages of the total Black⁸, Indian, White and Other, respondents that answered 'yes' to the question regarding TV in the home.

FIGURE 4a. Percentage of Kwa-Zulu Natal urban youth that reported having at least one television in their home

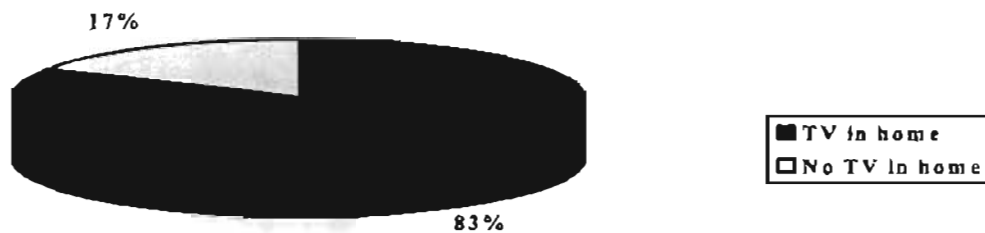
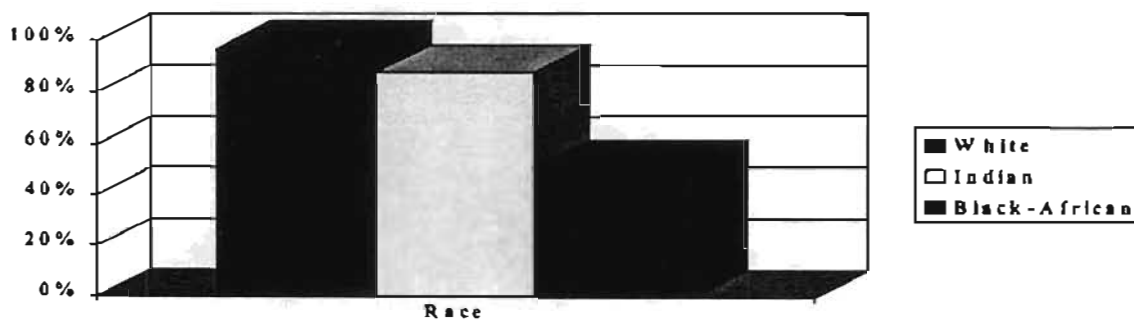


FIGURE 4b. Racial breakdown of respondents who reported they had at least one television in the house⁹

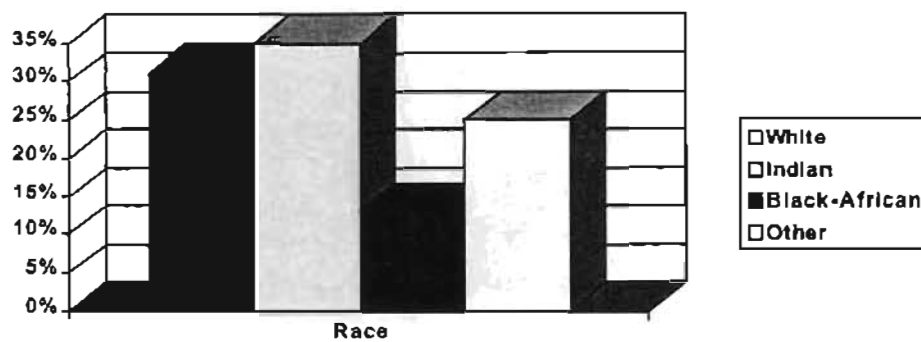


⁸ Racial classifications have been capitalised to denote their political and social importance in the South African context.

⁹ The tabulations of this question did not include the 'Other' category mentioned in subsequent figures.

Furthermore, the same study found that 28 percent of the total respondents had personal TVs either in their bedroom or another private part of the house (Teer-Tomaselli, et al., 2000). Figure 5 breaks down this statistic down according to race by demonstrating what percentage of Black, White, Indian and Other¹⁰ students said they had their own televisions. This compares to the more than half (56 percent) of American 13- to 17-year-olds that have televisions in their bedrooms (Gentile & Walsh, 1999: 14). The National Institute on Media and the Family found that the average American young person watches 25 hours of television each week (Gentile & Walsh, 1999: 17).

FIGURE 5. Racial breakdown of respondents who said they had a personal televisions

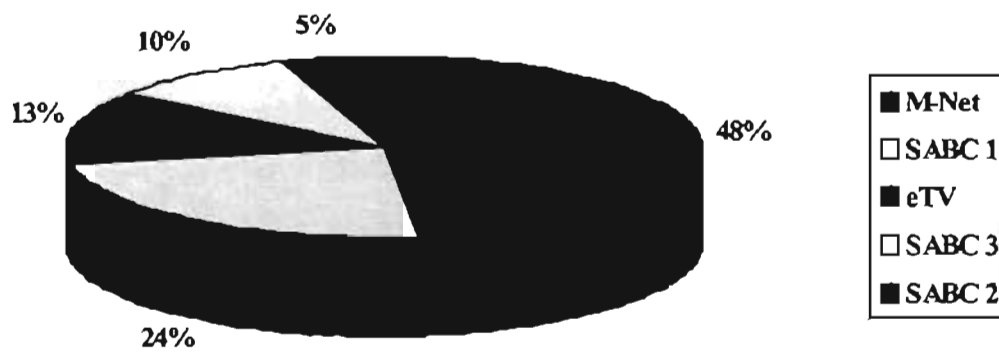


In terms of content preference, the Kaiser Family Foundation found that on a typical day a third of all American kids (34 percent) will watch a TV sitcom and six percent will watch a TV news show (Rideout, et al., 1999: 49). This preference trend toward fictional programmes is supported by SAARF figures which show significantly higher ratings for sitcoms and teenage dramas than for news in the 'youth' category (SAARF, 2001a; SAARF, 2001b; SAARF, 2001c; SAARF, 2001d). Also, in my focus group research (described in the forthcoming qualitative research overview) 62 percent of the total focus group participants listed a fictional programme as their 'favourite.' Finally, there also seems a tendency among urban youth in KwaZulu-Natal to prefer channels with little or no news programming; 48 percent of young people chose M-Net as their favourite channel and 24 percent chose SABC-1 (GPCMS, 2000).

¹⁰ 'Other' includes those classified as Coloured or who identified an alternative ethnic grouping.

Figure 6 shows the percentage of young people that chose each South African non-satellite terrestrial channel as their favourite.

FIGURE 6. Favourite channel of respondents



The third descriptive characteristic, which will help identify youth's interaction with television, is the restrictions imposed on consumption. In the US, only 58 percent of parents have rules about how much television their children can watch (Gentile & Walsh, 1999: 4). My qualitative research supports a similar figure in the South African setting. About half of the 47 focus group participants said their parents had rules about the amount or time of day they could watch TV. Most, however, said that those rules were far more restrictive and stringently enforced when they were younger. Also in the US, almost half (46 percent) of parents say they 'rarely' or 'never' use the TV rating system to help choose their children's programmes (Gentile & Walsh, 1999: 30), but 84 percent of parents say they 'at least sometimes' talk to their children about television programmes (Gentile & Walsh, 1999: 31). In my research, it seems the focus group participants discuss what they are watching with their parents significantly less than 80 percent of the time (probably largely due to the mistrust of authority that comes in the late adolescence as pointed out by Erikson). However, there was definitely a greater discussion of TV ratings as a parental regulative tool than there would be in an American conversation. In one of the focus groups conducted in this study, 18-year-old Derryn said his parents would not allow him to watch 'anything that was age-restricted' (Crawford

College; 20 April 2000). Finally, it seems an international trend that as children age they spend less and less time watching television with their parents and more time alone or with other young people. According to the Kaiser Family Foundation study children between the ages of 7 and 18 almost never watch TV with their parents (95 percent of the time they are not with their parents) (Rideout, et al., 1999: 18). I also found this to be true among South African young people. While several mentioned they may occasionally watch television with their parents at meal time or for particular programmes, they generally said they spend the bulk of their time watching television alone, followed by an occasional mention of watching with friends or siblings.

Finally, it is necessary to take into consideration recent findings on the overall impact of television on youth. When considering the following statistics on the influence of television, it is essential to avoid making direct correlations or 'effects'-style assumptions—these facts merely speak to trends and habits; they do not signal a direct cause/effect relationship. Thirty-six percent of American children 'often' or 'sometimes' copy characters they have seen on television (Gentile & Walsh, 1999: 46) and 40 percent 'always' or 'often' want to buy products they have seen on television (Gentile & Walsh, 1999: 48). My South African focus groups support these findings. Many of the participants told stories about games they would play as children and most could think of some doll, figurine or piece of clothing they had as a child that was linked to their favourite cartoon. More than one-third (37 percent) of American children 'sometimes' want to dress like their favourite sports, music or media stars (Gentile & Walsh, 1999: 47). Many young South African female focus group participants noted they took their fashion cues from the programmes they watched. This will be discussed in greater detail in the overall findings. When asked about the impact of media on their children, 61 percent of American parents agreed they had seen media have a negative effect on their children (Gentile & Walsh, 1999: 53), while only slightly fewer (58 percent) admitted they have seen media have a positive effect on their children. South African youth also seemed divided over the overall influence of television and fictional programmes in their lives. One participant summarised a theme by saying, "I think television has a negative [. . .] impact on your life. Because some people try to copy those on TV, especially the young people – they are still young and there is a lot of confusion" (University of Natal,

Durban; 11 April 2000). However, a great many said they and their peers understood television to be fantasy and therefore it did not have a significant bearing on their lives. This will be discussed further in the conclusions of the study. These qualitative facts on the access, content preferences, restrictions and overall impact of television on youth establish a factual canvas on which a more detailed rendering of the relationship between youth and fictional programmes can qualitatively be depicted.

Qualitative Research Overview

Qualitative analysis involves “understanding phenomena in ways that do not require quantification, or because the phenomena do not lend themselves to precise measurement” (Abercrombie, Hill & Turner, 1984: 200). One of the qualitative methods gaining prominence in the social sciences today is the group discussion or focus group. Before developing the specific parameters and construction of the focus groups that formed the basis of the present research and moving on to the findings of these groups, I will provide a brief overview of the technique, highlighting its history, primary features and aims.

Historically, focus groups methods evolved out of an analysis of World War II propaganda engineered by Paul Lazarsfeld and Robert Merton at the Bureau of Applied Social Research at Columbia University (Kidd & Parshall, 2000; Macun & Posel, 1998). The modern day version of these earlier guided discussions, usually involve six to 12 participants, are led by a moderator and work through a pre-tested questionnaire (Dawson, Manderson & Tallo, 1992). During the conversation, participants vocalise experiences and reactions with others whom they share some common characteristic or frame of reference (such as age, geographic location, occupation, etc.). Interviewees are encouraged to disagree, contradict and build upon what their fellow group members have said (Kidd & Parshall, 2000; McDonald, 1993).

The major advantages of conducting focus group research are that they are cost efficient, yield quick results, permit a larger sample size and allow the researcher to probe unanticipated themes (Cohen & Garrett, 1999). The drawbacks include difficulty in organisation, individual behaviour possibly influencing opinions or distorting data, and a less controlled environment for the researcher (Cohen & Garrett, 1999). However, I

contend a well-informed moderator can minimise these factors to keep them from impeding the truth-seeking process.

When it comes to analysing the results of the focus group, it is important for a researcher to examine both the individual participants and the collective group as units of analysis (Kidd & Parshall, 2000). In the end, the aim is to distinguish themes and identify areas of agreement and controversy (Carey & Smith, 1994). This method of analysis is particularly useful in the South African context as it helps to bridge and interrogate areas traditionally segregated and silenced by “high levels of inequality and social and cultural distance” (Macun & Posel, 1998: 117). Focus groups are also uniquely suited to an interrogation of memory. Everything discussed within the context of a focus group represents a collective recollection, transmitted by language and influenced by a particular ‘historical perspective.’ In this way, most of the comments made in the focus groups conducted in this study represent evidence of remembering. Thus, when examining the group transcripts, comments made within *and* outside of the conversational context of memory represent collective recollection and will be treated as such.

The six focus groups interrogating identity, fictional programmes and memory conducted in this study were between 60 and 90 minutes in length and explored viewing habits, childhood memories, recent memories of fictional programmes and participants’ assessment of the overall impact of the programmes on their identity (to review the moderator’s guide see APPENDIX A). The group discussions were conducted in March and April of 2000. Three were held in Durban-area schools with 15- to 17-year-old learners; two groups were conducted on the campus of the University of Natal, Durban and were comprised of 18- to 20-year-olds; and the final group was held on the campus of M.L. Sultan Technikon with 18- to 20-year-olds.

I intended to divide the sample by socio-economic categories (in the interests of avoiding the complexities of racial division) and thus chose one government school (Phambili High School); one Model C school with primarily middle-class learners (Brenttonwood High School); and one private, traditionally upper-class school (Crawford College, La Lucia). M.L. Sultan was chosen to conduct the working-class group of older youth because of its historical reputation as being the lower-cost secondary education

option. The University of Natal, Durban groups were supposed to be divided into middle- and upper-class students by the participating lecturer. While the school groups were consistent with the intended socio-economic divisions, the Technikon and University groups, although intended to be screened, lacked the same cohesive economic-status found in the younger age group. As it turns out, M.L. Sultan no longer attracts primarily working class students. Many of the Technikon participants were in fact from middle-class families. Also, the University, formerly a privilege reserved for the upper economic echelons, now offers a great number of bursaries and financial aid that have opened it to all socio-economic levels. Thus, the three groups of older participants were not as well-screened or divided in terms of the economic background. However, in the end, almost none of the major findings were specific to a certain socio-economic class.

A total of 47¹¹ young people participated in the study. This number goes well beyond a 'saturation sample' for qualitative research defined as "the point at which additional life histories add particulars, but do not increase the general understanding about the group" (Barnhurst & Wartella, 1998: 282). This point has been found to be somewhere between 25 and 30 (Bertaux, 1981). The cross-section of focus group participants were selected by the contact at the various educational sites. This technique is known as purposive or convenience sampling (Dawson, Manderson & Tallo, 1992) and while it is often the simplest way of gathering group participants, it can be questionable in terms of achieving a diversity of opinion. However, when making arrangements for each group, I was careful to stress the importance of involving a diversity of ages, races and personality types. I also requested the school liaisons try to limit the number of friends in the group. I am convinced the majority of the group members were familiar with each other only as classmates and were generally representative of their larger academic environments.

These groups created a space in which to explore the ways in which young South African's memories of fictional programmes impact their identities. They also provided a forum for young people to voice their opinions, views and concerns about what they see on TV. It must be noted that this methodology falls well within the scope of the

¹¹ This number excludes the focus group participants who were outside the 15- to 20-year-old age parameters.

'everyday' as first defined as Neisser (1976), thus it is further asserted that the aim of the research is not statistical validity but generalising habits and norms. It takes into consideration individual differences and experiences, while viewing them within a wider context of collective memory. In asking young people what they remember about fictional programmes we step behind the statistics and indirect assumptions made in most quantitative studies and directly address youth's motivation for memory and their correlations to identity.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

As is the case with any good interpretive discourse, making sense of the opinions, views and concerns of young people requires reading between the lines. In interpreting the research gathered in the six focus groups explicated above, it was necessary to hear both what the participants *said* and what they *did not say*. The youth media involvement matrix proved particularly useful in sorting the themes uncovered in the analysis of the group transcripts (to review the transcripts of each focus group see APPENDICES B through G). Research findings will be discussed in terms of selection, interaction and application. However, because memory has been incorporated throughout the study as a way of identifying long-lasting impact on identity, these items will be filtered through the window of memory. This is important to remember when working through the subsequent findings as it changes the orientation of Steele and Brown's (1995) initial intention of the terms. While this may seem like a minor shift in analytical perspective, it actually opens a corridor that connects traditional notions of consumption to overall impact. In this way, selection is not just what the young people report watching, but what they *remember watching* and *why*. Similarly, interaction becomes the way in which youth cognitively, affectively and behaviourally interact *with what they remember*. And finally, application is seen as the way in which youth make active *what they remember* in their everyday lives. An analysis of media memories recalled in guided discourse, provides media scholars the opportunity to see behind the black and white facts to uncover the 'why' that exists in shades of grey.

Memory Selection

Entire industries and organisations have been born out of a desire to track what people are watching on television. The Nielsen Organization in the United States, and the South African Advertising Research Foundation (SAARF) compile comprehensive and detailed viewership reports. While these numbers and demographics may be useful to advertisers and producers, they offer little depth as to how the viewer incorporates what they have seen into their everyday lives. Therefore, when examining what audiences select to remember about fictional programmes, it is important to interrogate continuously why they recall a particular programme, episode or moment. In examining the research gathered from South African youth it seems they selectively remember material centered in five areas. They remember that which is 1) *humorous*, 2) *out-of-the-ordinary*, 3) *age-relevant*, 4) *relationship-related* or 5) *personally meaningful*. These themes will be unpacked using representative comments taken from the focus groups in order to see behind the stark statistics and shallow demographics.

Humour

More than any other factor, humour seems to be the most influential factor in determining fictional programme memorability. This finding was true for focus group participants' distant and more recent memories alike. Navi¹, a 17-year-old, said she thinks she remembers cartoons and the *A-Team* because they were "really funny" (M.L. Sultan Technikon; 8 March 2000). She draws a direct link between humour and memorability. Also, Xolani, 18, said he recalls cartoons because the way "they do things is so funny, they make you laugh all the time [. . .]When you're looking at the person run his legs go all wind-e (gestures) [. . .]It's so funny; I still laugh" (Pambhili; 15 March 2000). Pranusha, 20, said she remembered programmes from her childhood specifically because 'they were funny' (University of Natal, Durban; 11 April 2000).

As noted earlier, humour has been found to be an important factor in why adolescents and young adults choose to watch entertainment programmes (Valkenburg & Janssen, 1999; Nikken & van der Voort, 1997; Hart Research Associates, 1996; Pasquier,

¹ Permission was granted by all focus group participants to use their first names and ages. Where necessary, the first initial of the surname distinguishes two participants with the same first name.

1996). This is related to the fact that adolescence and early adulthood are full of increased stress and emotional complexity. Youth use television as a means of escape from these everyday tensions (Larson, 1995). An exchange between Jithen and Shivani, two 17-year-old participants, supports this point (Crawford College; 20 April 2000). Jithen stated he likes “programmes like *Married with Children* and *Unhappily Ever After*” because “it’s not a normal family” and you can’t help thinking “thank God I am not in that situation!” (Crawford College; 20 April 2000). To which Shivani added “you just like to relax and laugh at something, you don’t want something serious” (Crawford College; 20 April 2000). Thus, it can be inferred that because youth generally consume a greater amount of comedic programmes and because they value the emotional escape laughter provides, particularly humorous episodes would naturally comprise a large part of their fictional media memories.

Out-of-the-Ordinary Episodes

Youth also report remembering out-of-the-ordinary or outrageous fictional moments. When participants brought up *Yizo Yizo*, the South African drama discussed in the previous section on television and youth, they reported remembering a specific rape scene (Pambili; 15 March 2000; Brenttonwood, 25 April 2000). This phenomenon may be related to the earlier theoretical treatment of autobiographical memory, where research has proven that events which are particularly “unique, emotional or surprising are liable to be better remembered” (Cohen, 1989: 119). Gillian, a 19-year-old participant, proved this hypothesis when she said:

probably the reason I can’t remember a single episode of any soaps is that there’s very little new that happens. Like, I will remember it if it’s new (University of Natal, Durban; 11 April 2000).

To which her classmate Michael, 20, added that “in American sitcoms there’s like a formula thing. You can see the joke before it’s happened [. . .] someone says something and you know the punch line” (University of Natal, Durban; 11 April 2000). Michael later stated he remembers when “something shocking happens” (University of Natal, Durban; 11 April 2000), and gave the example of the lesbian kiss that appeared in the 2000 season of *Ally McBeal*.

The culmination of a suspenseful story line is also classified as out-of-the-ordinary and is particularly memorable. Charma, 19, gave the example of when the characters Ross and Rachel from *Friends* finally kissed (University of Natal, Durban; 11 April 2000). She said, "I'll remember that always, when they eventually got together, it was like big suspense. And then they kissed and were together" (University of Natal, Durban; 11 April 2000). Also, 15-year-old Aruna said she remembered a fictional moment if "something tragic happened" or "something sad" (Brentonwood; 25 April 2000). She gave the example of an episode of *Beverly Hills 90210* where "Luke Perry—Dylan—married that girl and on their wedding night her father killed her [. . .]that was sad" (Brentonwood; 25 April 2000). Focus group participants selected out-of-the-ordinary episodes of fictional programmes to remember because these moments grabbed their attention by defying already encoded schema.

Age-Relevant Material

Focus group participants also reported recalling episodes that were particularly relevant to their age-group. This relates back to the importance of "connection to peer networks" discussed above in relation to youth identity and their reasons for selecting fictional programmes. When asked which sitcoms they remembered watching participants from M.L. Sultan Technikon listed "*Sabrina, Dawson's [Creek]* and *Party of Five* . . .because they are the same age." Navi, 17, said she remembers watching "*Beverly Hills*, but its sort of lost that effect because they are getting older;" to which Kieshni, 18, added that she watches "mostly sitcoms, but that 'age thing' has to be there" (M.L. Sultan Technikon; 8 March 2000). By that 'age thing,' Kieshni was referring to the fact that the characters in her favourite sitcoms need to be relatively close to her own age. When discussing *That 70s Show*, Derryn, 18, said that he remembered the show because he "could put [his] own friends in there" (Crawford College; 20 April 2000). Jithen, 17, agreed that this show was particularly relevant to people his age and gave the example of a conversation among several female characters about whether Donna should have sex with her boyfriend (Crawford College; 20 April 2000). Jithen concluded he could relate this conversation to his friends (Crawford College; 20 April 2000).

In his study entitled “Viewing age: Lifespan identity and television viewing choices” media scholar Jake Harwood found that “all age groups [view] a television universe in which lead characters of their own age group are overrepresented relative to their presence in the population” (Harwood, 1997: 209). Harwood’s results and the comments of focus group respondents can be contextualised by relating back to the earlier discussion of social identity theory. Through categorisation, identification and comparison, viewers remember fictional episodes that support their social identities and provide them with positive social comparisons. This finding may also be related to Erikson’s (1968) assertion that peers become increasingly important in adolescence and early adulthood, which directly links to the ‘in-/out-group’ precept in social identity theory.

Relationship-Teaching Moments

Youth also remember fictional episodes that teach them something about relationships—both platonic and romantic. In connecting to peers and defining the ‘in-group,’ relationships take on greater importance in adolescence and early adulthood. Erikson’s (1968) emphasis on the supremacy of friendship over all other relationships in adolescence and early adulthood relates to this point. Derryn, 18, illustrated this by contending that the reason he remembers programmes from his childhood is that they taught him “a lot about friendships, [. . .]the interaction with people” and “tolerance as well because in a lot of cartoons there’s [. . .]the odd person out and eventually they get accepted, so it’s a lot about acceptance” (Crawford College; 20 April 2000).

This focus on relationships is closely connected to the definition of gender roles in this phase of development. As noted earlier, Jeffry Arnett (1995) found young people take cues from television on what it means to be a ‘man’ or a ‘woman.’ Because identity is relational (Grossberg, 1996), I contend that while young people are learning stereotypes of man and woman, they are also learning what it means to be man in relation to woman and vice versa. The best example of this theme was expressed by Jithen, 17, when he explained why he remembered watching *Friends*:

Everybody in *Friends* is not perfect and they all have their flaws, but when they combine together they complement each other so well. If one of them was missing, it would be like a missing link. Phoebe's dippy; Chandler can't get a chick; Joey's always getting chicks but he's got no brain; Ross is always the hopeless one in love, he's always getting dumped; and Monica, she needs a man, she *needs* a man...It's really funny. And you look at it and you think, 'I wish I could be like that, living with my friends,' they have such a good relationship, where you form this bond and you can't live without each other (participant's emphasis; Crawford College; 20 April 2000).

This semantic memory of a fictional programme underlines the importance of platonic and romantic relationships to youth. Zeenath, a 20-year-old university student said that she relates youth programmes to her own life "when [. . .]they're going through boyfriend problems and the same thing is happening with us" (University of Natal, Durban; 18 April 2000). Victor, 18, concluded this point in his focus group by saying "when it comes to the issue of intimacy, that's where there's a lot of attention. That's where everyone wants to [. . .]try to compare themselves" (University of Natal, Durban; 11 April 2000). It therefore makes sense that this important aspect of identity formation would be highlighted in youth's memory.

Personally Meaningful Moments

Young people also selectively remember personally meaningful material. The focus group participants reported that when that which they saw on television related to what was happening in their real lives, they had a greater tendency to recall it later. These memories are uniquely autobiographical in that they relate specifically to a personal experience (Davis, 1999). Navi, 17, episodically recalled being anxious about her mother's pregnancy and having a new baby in the family. She said: "I remember watching this programme about this little boy and he was in the same position ...it was a cartoon actually ... and then I basically realised it wasn't so bad" (M.L. Sultan Technikon; 8 March 2000). Similarly Charma, 19, has a more generalised memory of applying a programme to her personal circumstances. She remembered that when she went to university, Felicity was also going to university for the first time (University of

Natal, Durban; 11 April 2000). She remembers thinking when she watched the programme, “oh my gosh, this is just like me,” especially when Felicity “met a guy” and then she also “met a guy” (University of Natal, Durban; 11 April 2000). This example highlights the fact that many fictional media memories overlap in their selective significance. While Charma’s memory is personally meaningful, it is also relates to relationships. As with all memories, what makes it memorable may not always be isolated to one characteristic. This overview of material and motivations for memory selection reviews themes that are a diverse and interconnected (though not exhaustive) sampling.

What Was Not Recalled

Considering that which is *not* contained in this thematic sampling is also important to this analysis. As noted earlier, it is also important to take into account what the focus group participants *did not* say. First, participants did not mention remembering overt or detailed acts of violence. They did not mention car crashes, shootings or explosions. While participants did report recalling the rape scene from *Yizo Yizo* (Pambhili; 15 March 2000; Brenttonwood, 25 April 2000), it seems that they remembered it more because it was unusual to see on television, rather than solely for its violent content. Secondly, the young people interviewed did not talk about memories of intensely sexual content. This could be due to the fact that they did not feel comfortable discussing such issues or memories in front of their peers or an unfamiliar moderator. The young people did remember feeling uncomfortable watching characters kiss on the screen if their parents were in the room. Thus, this area remains an area that is inconclusive in terms of memorability. Finally, the focus group participants did not discuss remembering South African/local programmes any better or worse than imported programmes. The young people talked about remembering *Willie Vale* and *Thundercats*, *Isidingo* and *Days of Our Lives*. Apparently, colloquial references or inter-textuality does not increase the likelihood that fictional material will impact memory.

Examining what was not said by the focus group participants in conjunction with their memories of humorous, out-of-the-ordinary, age-relevant, relationship-related and personally meaningful gives us a clearer view of what young people remember watching.

It also gives us some initial indications about why these memories are particularly important. However, what these research themes do not overtly summarise is the link between the selection of these memories and identity formation and re-formation. In the youth media involvement matrix the line connecting selection and identity is a double-sided arrow, indicating both factors impact each other. The discussion above has given us several examples of how relationships, age of the viewer and personal circumstances impact what young people selectively remember (this represents the upward flow of influence; see FIGURE 2 on page 19). However, what is less clear and will need to be interrogated further is the downward flow of influence from memory selection to identity. This relationship addresses the third primary research question: How do South African youth's memories of fictional programmes impact their identity formation? Addressing this question of influence will take on greater significance in the conclusion of this study.

Memory Interaction

While the gamut of what young people select to remember may be expansive, which memories they choose to interact with—whether once or repeatedly—is decidedly more narrow. Interaction in terms of memory can be described as the way in which youth "cognitively, affectively and behaviorally interact" (Steele & Brown, 1995: 558) with what they remember. Though interaction is not a necessary precursor to cementing a memory of fictional programmes or influencing identity, it does increase the likelihood and the clarity with which a memory will be recalled (Mullen & Yi, 1995). The focus group participants described two major forms of interaction. First, simulated play is associated with early childhood memories of fictional programmes. Secondly, conversational recollection, may be related to childhood memories, but more often operates as a function of recent memories of fictional television. These two methods of cognitively, affectively and behaviourally engaging memory bring the fictional programmes young people have watched into the realm of their everyday lives.

First, simulated play is a way many children translate what they remember from cartoons or other children's programmes into their everyday lived experiences. In this way, a static televised text becomes an interactive dialogue and part of collective memory, which in turn contributes to identity. Zinhle N., a 17-year-old participant, noted

that she used to “jump on the bed and act like Superman” (Pambhili; 15 March 2000). Superman re-enactments were mentioned throughout the focus groups. Other participants mentioned choosing other animated characters such as the Thundercats or Ninja Turtles (University of Natal, Durban; 18 April 2000) to imitate. Charles, 17, said, “we use to be like in primary school: ‘I’m gonna be this character, you must be that character.’ I always wanted to be the main character” (Crawford College; 20 April 2000).

Simulated play, as a form of memory interaction, also occurred with non-animated programmes. Vuwokazi, 20, explained that “when that *Shaka Zulu* series came on television. Everybody in [his] house was crazy about it and [. . .]the [children] from across the street would come and make those shields and spears” (University of Natal, Durban; 18 April 2000). The important thing to note when interpreting these comments in terms of their larger social impact, is that every example of simulated play occurs in the collective. Thus, as children interact with what they remember from fictional programmes, they share it with others. Simulated play utilises collectively constructed language to re-assert communally held ideas and values. This is most visible in the dominance of good over evil, which was also affirmed by focus group participants. This builds upon the collective theoretical perspective we have taken when considering identity and memory. Both are rooted and negotiated in relation to other individuals, groups or collective interpretations of history.

The second way focus group participants reported interacting with what they recall from fictional programmes was through conversational recollection. Derryn, 18, remembered discussing cartoons with his friends when he was small, and contends that those memories continue to be a part of more mature conversations. He said: “I know sometimes someone will talk about something they watched as a kid and you’re like ‘oh yes, I remember that,’ and then you can remember other things that you watched” (Crawford College; 20 April 2000). Sibusiso, a 17-year-old, said that he recalls talking about what he watched on television with his friends when he was small and still continues to discuss what he’s seen today. As reported in chapter two, Mullen and Yi (1995) have quantitatively demonstrated that the more memories are discussed with others, the greater likelihood there is they will be remembered. Based on focus group

responses, time or how quickly an episode is spoken about does not seem to be a factor in recollection. These conversations can occur during the viewing—Sfiesl, 20, said “it’s cool to watch with friends because you exchange ideas about what you are watching” (University of Natal, Durban; 18 April 2000). The recollection can also occur years after the episode has aired—when asked how people still remember *Yizo Yizo* (even though it had been more than a year since the series aired), Zinhle, 17, said it was because she and her peers were “talking about it” (Pambhili; 15 March 2000).

Conversational recollection directly relates back to Halbwachs’ (1952) assertion that language is an important component of the transmission, storage and retrieval of collective memory. As conversations recount a scene or episode of a programme, it is positioned within an ever-changing collective ideology and contributes to the “uniquely human” (Edwards & Middleton, 1986) process of verbal transmission. In this way, youth cognitively, affectively and behaviourally interact with what they remember. In the process of the interaction of simulated play and conversational recollection, collective memory is engaged. Subsequently, it would seem that through this link identity is also engaged. Halbwachs himself linked collective memory to identity by contending that our collective memories continually revise our sense of identity (Cosser, 1992). However, what is still not clear in the interaction level of the youth media involvement matrix is how memories of fictional programmes—made alive through play and conversation—impact identity directly.

Memory Application

Conversation and admiration is taken one step further in application. Application, in terms of memory can be understood as the way in which youth make what they remember active in their everyday lives. Steele and Brown (1995) divide application into appropriation and incorporation. The appropriation of fictional programme memories seems to manifest regularly in the commodities young people purchase and the fashion they report mirroring. Interaction, is a bit more difficult to pin down because it involves “building on existing attitudes, feelings and prior learning” (Steele & Brown, 1995: 559). Through looking at the way memory impacts application, the third leg of the youth media involvement matrix is examined.

The first example of the way in which young people make what they remember active in their everyday lives is in the commodities they recall consuming. Fictional media memories are appropriated through the recollection of action figures, comic books and stuffed toys. It must be noted that the recollection of consumption is markedly different than the act of consumption itself. The reason for this distinction is to maintain the study's focus on memory as a filter of everyday experiences and a possible portal to identity formation. In several instances it seems remembering the programme-related products or spin-off merchandising participants were given or purchased increased the overall memorability of the show itself. Shivani, 17, said that all the "best shows" like *Smurfs* came up with toys, she also uses the example of the *X-Men* comic books (Crawford College; 20 April 2000).

In one focus group members recalled, with increasing pride, several residual products in rapid succession: "a *Thundercat* sword," the whole set of *My Little Ponies*, the *Thundercat* figurine "on the airboard," a *He-man* action figure and a *She-ra* colouring book (University of Natal, Durban; 11 April 2000). Victor, an 18-year-old participant, provided an example capturing the theme of commodity consumption and drawing a direct link between the fictional and lived experiences. He explained that he remembered collecting *Casper* comics in primary school, but was not allowed to have them. So the teacher "would take them away and [he]'d buy another one and she would keep on taking them" (University of Natal, Durban; 18 April 2000). In this way, the economy of television becomes part of a larger consumer economy and the fictional interacts with the collective 'real.' Remembering *Pumpkin Patch* dolls and *Care Bears* links recollection of the fictional to recollection of the everyday in very physical terms. These memories connect what we remember *having* to who we remember *being*—thereby, defining our social identity in past and present terms. Here, the bi-directional flow of influence between identity and interaction seems to be more clearly established.

Social identity is further negotiated by the fashion styles and trends that are set through the television screen. As noted in the quantitative overview, more than one-third (37 percent) of American children 'sometimes' want to dress like their favourite sports, music or media stars (Gentile & Walsh, 1999: 47). It seems where young people's memories of playing *Superman* or *She-ra* wear off, their memories of idealising the

fashions of sitcom or soap opera stars picks up. Navi, 17, said, "I think that what really draws us to programmes [is] the way they dress and how they present themselves, [it] depends on what you individually like about people" (M.L. Sultan Technikon; 8 March 2000). When asked what she recalled about sitcoms or soapies, Kieshni, 18, said she remembered the show *Sister Sister* because "of the clothes that they wear and their style," comparing them to "supermodels" (M.L. Sultan Technikon; 8 March 2000). While this was generally a theme among female focus group participants only, Sihusiso, 18, recalled liking Glen the character from *Generations* for "the way he dress[ed]" (Pambhili; 15 March 2000).

Eighteen-year-old Ian was the only participant who contradicted this means of appropriation. While conceding that MTV or music videos give people his age "a window to the world" of fashion, he maintained that he makes a distinction between non-reality and reality and does not remember taking his fashion cues from fictional programmes (University of Natal, Durban; 18 April 2000). A great number of mainly female participants did, however, remember imitating the style and fashion trends found on their favourite fictional programmes. Exterior appearance is very important to young people because it helps in the categorisation, identification and comparison required in negotiating a social identity. So, while there were alternative opinions on the subject, the vast majority of young people, especially women, seem to incorporate what they remember watching in fictional programmes into their personal wardrobes. More importantly, they apply what they see on *Beverly Hills* and *Charmed* into their personal understanding of the collective definition of 'cool' and 'uncool.' This could be through an acceptance or rejection of the dominant fashion standard. This links back to our early discussion of an 'oppositional' identity and joining a counter-collective or culture. Regardless of whether a young person chooses to mimic the fashion they see on fictional TV or if they, with their other non-conformist friends, reject the gold tops and knee-high boots, they are applying what they have seen. As with commodity-consuming this forges a bi-directional link between applied memories of fictional programmes and identity.

The second tier of application is incorporation which involves memories that "build on existing attitudes, feelings and prior learning" (Steele & Brown, 1995: 559). This final aspect of the youth media involvement matrix relates directly to the previous

discussion of schema theory (see chapter two), which stresses that what we remember is influenced by what we already know. As stated earlier, the 'interiorised' corollary of this theory is that what we already know is influenced by our social context. Therefore there is a direct line between what we recall and our collective reality. Schemas—the small packets of generalised facts, opinions and experiences stored in our memory system—guide what we remember and distort our collectively constructed memories to fit in with prior expectations (Cohen et al., 1986).

Several focus groups highlighted memories of cartoons or early childhood programmes that re-asserted the generalised schema that right always triumphs over wrong (Pambhili; 15 March 2000; Crawford College; 20 April 2000). Also, the only socio-economic theme uncovered when analysing the groups was the working class youth's (ages 15 to 17) distaste for the wealthy (Pambhili; 15 March 2000). I contend that this is based on an already-ingrained distaste for the well-off, based on their previous exclusion from that 'in-group.' The subject of money came up three different times in this group and one participant (Kenneth, 17) remembered disliking Archie from *Generations* because "he thinks he's powerful 'cos he's got money" (Pambhili; 15 March 2000). Zinble, 17, summarised the existing attitude of the group by stating that "in our days, it's all about the money" (Pambhili; 15 March 2000). In the end, while there are mixed reviews regarding whether or not memories of fictional programmes impact identity, most participants admitted that they remembered episodes better if it reminded them of something they already knew, felt or believed. This conclusively supports the bi-directional arrow between application and identity and the contention that fictional programmes build on already existing attitudes, feelings and prior learning.

In summarising the overall relationship between memory selection, interaction and application it is important to review each element's connection to the ongoing process of identity formation and re-formation. First, while it was illustrated that identity impacts memories selection and recollection, focus group research did not as persuasively characterise the impact, if any, of selection on identity. Secondly, the bi-directional link between identity and interaction was substantiated, though not clearly characterised, through the presence of simulated play and conversational recollection. Thirdly, the link between application and identity was shown to flow both upwards and downwards

through the somewhat superficial dynamic interchange of commodity consuming and fashion-mirroring. The same link was also substantiated by the more substantial connection between identity and incorporation, which involves building on existing attitudes, feelings, and prior learning. These results present a rather problematic view of the flow of influence represented in the youth media involvement matrix. However, this complicated view is precisely the one most media scholars have chosen to ignore for decades.

By providing a structure through which the theoretical treatment of identity, fictional television involvement and memory can be filtered, I have uncovered a complex web of influence. This web was developed after the methodological structure of the study including a quantitative overview and focus group approach was explored. In the second part of the chapter, I drew upon the theoretical framework to examine qualitative findings to create a conceptual link connecting identity, fictional television programmes and memory. The only admittedly weak area in this network is the bond between fictional programmes and memory (which dynamically impact each other) and youth identity. While collective memory theory establishes a theoretical connection between memory and identity it is rather inconclusive as to what the overall impact of memories of fictional programmes is on the ever-changing, socially constructed identities of young people. This topic will be taken up in the conclusion of this study.

CHAPTER FOUR—DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

DISCUSSION OF CENTRAL FINDINGS

In order to draw final conclusions on the strength of the conceptual chain linking youth identity, fictional television programmes and memory, it is necessary to return to the original hypotheses of the study and weigh their validity in light of the theoretical context and qualitative findings. This critical synthesis will evaluate whether or not South African youth remember that which directly affirms or contradicts their lived experience (H_1) and whether fictional programmes impact youth identity through a direct link between memory selection, interaction and application (H_2). The evaluation of these hypotheses leads to the primary finding and conclusion of the study. Only with this contextual analysis in view can parents, educators, media scholars and community leaders chart a way forward in the larger dialogue regarding youth and the impact of the media.

Several of the study findings indicate young people recall fictional episodes that strike a personal chord. These trends speak to the salience of the first hypothesis (H_1)—that South African youth remember that which directly affirms or contradicts their lived experience. First, let us deal with the affirmation of lived experience. The finding that young people are more likely to recall age-relevant material points to the importance of the peer network in adolescence and early adulthood and focuses on the socially identifiable ‘in-group.’ These factors indicate scenes featuring characters close in age and in familiar social situations, affirm young people’s lived experience and are therefore more likely to be recalled. Similarly, fictional moments featuring relationship-related material is also more likely to be recalled. For example, one 17-year-old participant recalled watching soap operas because it taught her “how to treat [her family] and how to treat [her future husband]” (Pambhili; 15 March 2000). Finally, the finding that most directly relates to an affirmation of lived experience is the recall of personally meaningful fictional episodes. When the images in the television screen complement the events in a young person’s real-life, the result is a lasting autobiographical memory. Based on the fact that youth are more likely to remember age-relevant, relationship-related and

personally meaningful fictional episodes, this study's qualitative findings support the fact that South African youth tend to remember that which directly affirms their lived experience.

The evidence supporting the negation of lived experience is less conclusive. While many focus group participants reported remembering scenes that were out-of-the-ordinary, such as the death of a character, (M.L. Sultan Technikon; 8 March 2000) or a lesbian kiss (University of Natal, Durban; 11 April 2000), none linked surprising memories to their personal experience. Schema theory provides an explanation for why young people recall scenes that affirm their lived experiences, but seem to cast away episodes that negate their realities. As noted earlier, schema theory holds that what we remember is influenced by what we already know. An adolescent is more likely to recall a scene featuring a drug overdose if she has already been taught that drugs are harmful and dangerous. Whereas if she has been introduced to the 'drug culture' by her friends, she is a) less likely to pay attention to the message; and b) even less likely to remember it. Erikson's (1968) description of youth identity may also lend insight into this phenomenon. He established that approval and reinforcement are particularly important in adolescence and early adulthood. Based on this insight, it seems highly unlikely youth would seek out or recall images that negate their experience or identity. In the end, there is strong evidence suggesting young people recall fictional programmes that affirm their lived experience, but none to assert the converse—that young people recall that which negates their lived experience—holds true.

The second hypothesis (H_2) held that fictional programmes impact youth identity through a direct link between memory selection, interaction and application. As noted in chapter three, while relationships conclusively can be drawn between fictional programmes and memory selection, interaction and application, it is not clear what role these memories play in the overall identity negotiation of young people. Halbwachs (1952) and collective memory theory maintains "we preserve memories of each epoch in our lives, and these are continually reproduced; through them, as by a continual relationship, a sense of our identity is perpetuated"(Cosser, 1992: 47). As established in the theoretical overview, there is an intuitive connection between what we remember and

who we are. The question that remains is how much of what young people remember is comprised of fictional programmes?

Focus group participants contextualised the impact of fictional programmes over and over again by pointing out that from a very young age they were able to make the distinction between reality and make-believe. Smiso, a 16-year-old, said that he did not think what he remembered from television impacted who he is as a person because “many of the programmes on TV, [he] knows are not really true” (Pambhili; 15 March 2000). Others commented that they believe their memories of non-fictional programmes impact them more than those of fictional programmes. And while some seemed concerned about the potential for copycat violence in shows like the *Mighty Morphin Power Rangers* and *Yizo Yizo*, the majority professed they would not be so easily influenced or take such extreme measures. Alicia, 20, expressed this best when refuting the point that teenage girls may be prone to starving themselves to look like Ally McBeal or other television icons. She said:

we’re at that age where we’re pretty much established as a person, and maybe you’ll draw from things [. . .]but I don’t think I would go to the extent of starving myself for two weeks to look like her because I actually don’t think she looks very nice (University of Natal, Durban; 11 April 2000).

Although Alicia’s notion of identity is slightly more static than the one established here, her conclusion that television is not the primary source of identity information for most of her peers is well taken. Other focus group participants commented that they did not believe their memories of fictional programmes impacted their identity to a great degree because TV was not “the center of their lives” (Crawford College; 20 April 2000). Niven, 17, said, “I don’t agree with setting your life around TV, there’s just so [many] other things to do” (Crawford College; 20 April 2000). Thus, the voice of young people affirms that the degree to which memories of fictional programmes impact youth identity is in direct proportion to the role television plays in the individual’s life.

In order to highlight the primary finding of this study, we must return to the youth media involvement matrix (FIGURE 2). I contend the failing of most media scholars is that they focus their attention too narrowly on the aspects of television selection, interaction and application, at the cost of placing it realistically within the larger context

of lived experience. The findings and discussion above suggest that for most youth, television and their memories of fictional programmes act as only one of the many influencers of their identity. This is why it was necessary to represent the lines between selection, interaction and application as non-static vectors (or dotted lines)—like identity and collective memory they too change within the negotiated space of life. With the changing length of these lines comes a change in the physical and influential space fictional programmes take up in the total universe of an individual's lived experience. The only unchanging factor in this transitive process is the centrality of identity. Therefore, my primary argument is that, *while memories of fictional programmes do impact the identity of young people, it must be viewed within the larger context of lived experience.*

Gillian, 18, eloquently summarised the impact memories of fictional television have on her life by saying

if I watch a show like *Knight Rider* say, it will remind me of the fact that when I was small I wanted to drive a fast car, right. But it doesn't change the fact that I always loved cars, that was there already. It's just a reminder (University of Natal, Durban; 11 April 2000).

Thus, based on a theoretical and qualitative investigation, it seems that the largest realm of influence memories of fictional programmes have on the identity formation of youth is incorporation—"building on existing attitudes, feelings and prior learning" (Steele & Brown, 1995: 559). The partial hypothesis that South African youth remember that which affirms their lived experience seems to have a greater impact on the identity-formation process than initially suspected. The importance of the total universe of lived experience can not be over-emphasised. Of course there are those young people for whom television comprises a great deal of their lived experience or who recall fictional programmes that affirm their already negative or violent personal experiences. This represents grounds for additional intensive study. However, for most youth, memories of fictional programmes are placed within the broader context of their lived experience in which peers, parents, educators and other community members play a significant role (albeit an ever tempered role in the young person's continued search for independence.) Therefore, if we truly wish to impact the identity formation of young people we would be

well-advised to deal *both* with everyday experience and its contributing component—fictional programmes, but to do so in a way that puts fictional programmes into its proper context.

CONCLUSION

Throughout the theoretical and research components of this study, I have attempted to present a contextulised picture of the relationship between youth identity, fictional programmes and memory. I constructed this study on a theoretical and critical framework that took an inter-disciplinary approach to the three conceptual areas. I first discussed several theoretical approaches to identity. From cultural studies, I drew on Hall (1996) and Grossberg's (1996) notion of a cultural identity that is relational, incomplete and negotiable (Grossberg, 1996). I then complemented this theory with social identity and self-categorisation theory, which holds that identity is based on categorising, identifying and comparing the Self in relation to others. Finally, to put these theories into more practical relation to the subject at hand, I drew upon Erikson's (1968) concepts regarding the unique changes that occur in the identity of adolescents and early adults.

In the second level of the conceptual framework, I discussed television, specifically as it relates to youth, drawing upon Steele and Brown's (1995) adolescents' media practice model. After making a few conceptual and graphic changes to the original model, I developed the youth media involvement matrix which re-positions identity as a central element of the media experience and allows a greater dynamic exchange. In order to round out a discussion of youth and television, I examined the literature surrounding young people and fictional programmes. I concluded the theoretical chapter with several theoretical approaches to memory. I placed all conversations within the larger collective context, drawing heavily upon the work of Halbwachs (1952) and then went on to develop psychology's everyday approach to memory—demonstrating how schema theory, episodic and semantic memory and autobiographical memory are uniquely suited to discussing memories of fictional programmes.

After building a theoretical and conceptual framework around youth identity, fictional programmes and memory, I worked to establish a foothold and discuss the findings for primary qualitative research in this area. In chapter three, I provided a quantitative, statistical overview of the young adult audience and dealt briefly with the history, primary features and aims of focus groups. This background provided an entrée into a discussion of the six focus groups that were conducted in Durban-area schools and institutions of higher learning. After analysing the transcripts of these groups, I identified five primary themes (enumerated below) that predict the memorability of fictional television programmes, characters or events.

Throughout this study, I have used memory as a window through which identity could be more tangibly discussed and measured. This is an admittedly complex process, but nonetheless one that allowed central research questions to be directly addressed. In looking through the window of memory, I determined what fictional programmes stand out in young people's memories and why. This inquiry was closely related to the second research question: What events, characters or story lines do young people recall and why are these elements important? Through tailoring focus group questions around these areas, I determined that 15- to 20-year-olds are more likely to remember programmes, characters, events or story lines that are a) humourous, b) out-of-the-ordinary, c) age-relevant, d) relationship-related, or e) personally-relevant. Using these themes and drawing upon broader statements made in the six focus groups, to come to a final conclusion about the way in which South African young people's memories of fictional programmes impact their identity formation. I contend that while memories of fictional programmes do impact the identity of young people, it must be viewed within the larger context of lived experience.

Answering the research questions of this study and forming initial conclusions immediately gave rise to more questions and other areas of research that should be examined in the future. First, an astute reader will notice that very few of the examples provided in the focus groups were specific to South Africa. Further, all of the findings and the conclusions were more general than they were country-specific. Because of the high concentration of foreign (particularly American) programmes in South Africa, it would be interesting to conduct an international comparative study in this area. Also,

there is a great body of research relating to recall of news programming (see Newhagen, 1998; Price & Czilli, 1996; or Mundorf, et al., 1990). The majority of this research takes a rather clinical 'effects' approach. It would be interesting to compare the recollection of fictional and non-fictional programmes using a more qualitative approach. Thirdly, media studies has developed the notion of 'media events' which are "those historic occasions—mostly occasions of state—that are televised as they take place and transfix a nation or the world" (Dayan & Katz, 1992:1). In the past the concept of media events has only applied to non-fictional representations of scenes like the explosion of the space shuttle Challenger and the death of Princess Diana, however it would be provocative to determine whether or not there are fictional media events. Finally, as noted earlier, while there are countless studies detailing children's memory of television (see Meadowcroft & Reeves, 1989 or Puzles Lorch, Bellack & Haller Augsbach, 1987), there are significantly fewer studies that deal with the memories of adolescents and young adults. This study's review of identity and youth has revealed that this is a time of transition and change, and therefore it is incredibly important to turn academic attention toward the audience older than children and younger than mature adults.

On any given evening, hundreds of thousands of 15- to 20-year-olds in South Africa, and millions across the world, escape the rush of their everyday lives into a fictional world that is full of love-triangles, the newest trends and 30-minute resolutions to most problems. It is no wonder the headlines and many media scholars have predicted gloom and doom for the younger generation of television viewers. However, to the journalists, media scholars, parents, educators and young people who want to ward off this destructive fate, I say: television does impact the identity of youth, but before you pull the plug, deal with the realities of young people's daily experience. For teenage boys who have attentive parents that talk about the senselessness of violence are far less likely to bring a loaded shotgun to maths class. Likewise teenage girls who have parents and peers who affirm their sense of self, are less likely to binge and purge in an effort to look like their favourite soap star. Fictional television does have an impact, but it must be weighed within the context of lived experience.

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APPE DIX F

UNIVERSITY OF NATAL II

18 April 2000

No.	Name	Age	Favourite Programme/Genre
1)	Ian	18	movies
2)	Fezile	20	channel 'o'
3)	Showeanla	19	<i>Sex and the City</i>
4)	Sfiesel	20	channel 'o'
5)	Futhi	32*	<i>Felicia Mabusa Suttle</i>
6)	Vuwokazi	20	<i>Studio Mix</i>
7)	Zeenath	20	cartoons
8)	Shainez	20	<i>Jag</i>

Did you all have TV's when you were young?

(All say yes)

And where was the TV kept?

(All say lounge)

And were there certain times in the day when you watched TV? (Yes) When?

Showeanla: Usually after school.

Fezile: Or before school.

Vuwokazi: They had those cartoons.

And when you watched, did you watch brother's and sister's or with family or who?

Shainez: Family...brothers.

Vuwokazi: Friends.

So it just depended on who was around? Okay. And then when you were watching, were there any rules that your parents had?

Futhi: There are some restrictions in my home, the homework issue and the studying time and then the kind of movies you have to watch and the kind of movies you are not supposed to watch.

Sfiesel: We are not supposed to watch where there are people kissing.

* This focus group participant is outside of the study's 15-20 age parameter.

Okay, so your mom said if there was a programme where there was people kissing then it was off limit.

Yes.

Anybody else's parent's have rules like that?

Ian: My mother was a schoolteacher so she always used to make me read for an hour before I was allowed to watch TV.

(Laughter.)

That's why you're so smart today! Okay. That's a good one. Anybody else's parents have rules, about how or when or with whom or what they could watch on TV? Were there certain shows you could not watch?

Showeana: I remember, I had to be in bed by 8 and I never used to like to go to sleep. I used to wake up – hoping to watch *Dallas* or *Dynasty* – but my parents refused to let me watch.

Any other shows that people weren't allowed to watch?

Fezile: I wasn't allowed to watch *Dallas* or *Days of our Lives* or *The Bold and the Beautiful*.

Shainez: At my house there isn't such a major restrictions. But it's like, it depends on the individual. I mean, If a programme comes up and it is not for under 18 and if I'm under 18 and my parents come in then I don't watch it.

Zeenath: Also, like, in my house, to this very day we cannot eat and watch TV because, apparently, say it's a violent scene and you're eating, you tend to eat your food quicker (laughs) it depends on the scene.

So your mom is concerned about your digestive process! Ok. Anything else about the way you watched TV when you were a kid?

Now let's talk about the way those rituals have changed. So I wanna go through the same sorts of questions but talk about viewing habits today.

So, when do you watch TV, what times?

Shainez: After 4.

And you watch straight through? Yes.

Sfiesl: In the morning, say, two.

In the morning? Two AM onwards?

Sfiesl: Yes, yes I watch channel 'o' on SABC.

So you turn the TV on late at night?

Sfiesl: Yes I wake up and I watch.

Zeenath: Usually from 7 onwards all the good stuff starts, the soapies.

So in the morning you watch as well?

No, I mean in the evening.

Oh in the evening, ok.

Futhi: Now that I am here at school, I always watch the soapies at around 5, 6 or 7 and then after 8, until after *Generations*, but that's the only time I watch TV here. But then during the holidays I watch all the time, it becomes a habit and you just open the TV in the morning even if there is nobody watching and you keep on going.

So that's an interesting comment that she's saying, you know sometimes the TV is on as kind of this background filler and sometimes you're doing other things, is that true for people?

(Yes.)

Futhi: Actually you just open it like it's a radio and leave it on the whole day.

So it keeps you company?

Yes.

Fezile: I also like to sleep in front of the TV...get on the sofa. I enjoy that.

Showeana: And yet, if someone were to switch it off, it would wake you up.

(Agreement)

Ok, when else do people watch?

Ian: I think definitely over weekends – the long haul – especially because there's so much sport on. My family tends to watch a lot of sport, so, if it's like, a cricket match, which goes on the whole day, then the TV just stays on and you drift in and out.

Vuwokazi: Also in the holidays, with me, I make sure I wake up at 10 in the morning, I bath then I wait for the 11 o'clock movie on M-NET. I'll watch till about 1, from then till 4 I'll sleep or whatever, then I'll go back and watch till late.

Sfiesl: Yes during holidays I do no work. Ja, sit in front of the TV, watching movies the whole day until the evening.

OK, and now, who do you watch with, do you watch mostly by yourselves or do you watch with friends or family?

Showeana: I prefer watching by myself, I like the remote in my hand, I like to be in control of when I want to change the channels. I don't like watching with anybody else because my father wants to watch sport – because we have satellite at home – and my mother wants to watch something on the Indian channel and, so, I prefer to watch by myself.

Anybody else?

Sfiesl: I watch with friends, it's so cool to watch with friends, because you exchange ideas about what you are watching and it's very cool.

Zeenath: Especially when you like a programme. I mean, I don't know about you but I prefer watching by myself because otherwise you tend to get a blabbermouth next

to you (agreement) and they go on and on and then you don't enjoy the show...or they'll tell you what's gonna happen next.

Vuwokazi: That's what's difficult about watching with my parents because, they'll say their own thing and the movie will be about something else.

And do people still have rules and restrictions about what you can watch and when you can watch?

Futhi: Not really when you are at university.

Sfiesl: My brother, he is very sensitive about things like, um, sex, he doesn't like that. He doesn't like that.

Is this an older brother?

Yes, but he's very religious so he doesn't like that.

So there are certain restrictions because of his belief systems?

Zeenath: I guess, no matter how big we are, we still have to have respect in front of our parents, I mean, that's for us, I don't know about others but I don't tend to watch sex scenes or...

When your parents are around...

Ja, it's kind of odd, I mean, you can watch it but it feels kind of weird.

So it's more a self-restriction, kind of.

Futhi: You know, my daughter would always say "mummy I'm not watching that, okay?" (gestures). We'll be sitting in the sitting room and if a sex scene comes on she'll say, "ok, I won't watch that."

Sfiesl: If I'm watching it with my brother and a sex scene comes on screen, we laugh and we just watch his reactions (laughter)...it's beautiful. And we talk afterwards.

Ok. Now I wanna talk more about what you watch. And what you've watched in the past. So return with me to when you were small. Okay. Think about when you were little children, like, before school or just after you went to school. Tell me about the first TV show you remember watching, what was it? And why did you like it?

Sfiesl: Soccer...because everybody around was watching it.

So the first thing you remember watching is soccer. And how did you watch it?

Did you watch it with your family?

I watched it with family and the one thing I can recall there's this, um, slow motion. Everytime someone scored a goal there was this slow motion, and we'd say "yes, once again, yes!" (Laughs.)

Anybody else?

Vuwokazi: I remember watching *Spiderman*.

Zeenath: *Pumpkin Patch*.

Fezile: *Tom and Jerry*.

Ok, why did you like *Spiderman* or why did you remember that, do you think?

Vuwokazi: Because I thought it was for real, you know, seeing him flying across the buildings and everything.

Showeana: It's like *Gummi Bears*, I remember thinking that Gummi Berry juice actually existed.

Okay and you were looking for some of that juice, hey! What do you remember about *Pumpkin Patch*?

Zeenath: Woofles and Speckles.

(Agreement.)

Shainez: And *Uncle Bill*.

Zeenath: And that song they always sang.

OK. How about you?

Ian: I remember just watching cartoons, things like *Thundercats* and *The Ninja Turtles*, with my brothers and we'd always go act and you'd choose a character and play in the garden.

That's good, so you'd re-enact what you see on TV? Okay and you said you'd choose characters and you'd play the part of that. And did you re-play what you'd seen on TV or did you make up new?

Ian: Ja, anything. Just make it up as you go along it's like, just a childhood fantasy and you just play it out.

Anybody else, what you remember watching as a child or a particular episode of a cartoon or show that sticks out in your mind from when you were little?

Vuwokazi: I remember that *Shaka Zulu* series that came on television. Everybody in my house was crazy about it and we used to, the people from across the street would come and make those shields and spears.

And play that?

Ja.

Oh, okay, so it was the little children. Anybody else?

So, tell me, what characters really stand out in your mind from when you were a child? Like, is there one particular character – either a cartoon or real life character – that influenced you?

Shaveana: *McGyver* and the *A-Team*.

(Agreement.)

And what about them sticks out in your memory that was so influential?

Shaveania: The way they used to make these complicated things out of plasticine and batteries. You know, they could blow up things and the way they used to get out of tough situations, it was really something special.

Zeenath: And they'd do it really quick as well.

That's definitely true. How about *The A-Team*, what was cool to you about that?

Vuwokazi: Action.

Why do you think you remember certain things about those characters or those programmes? So many times when people say, *Thundercats* or *Pumpkin Patch*, they get this big smile on their face, why do you think that stands out?

Showaenia: I had a crush on McGyver, he was so powerful and cute.

How about everybody else?

Vuwokazi: With *Knight Rider*, I used to fanaticize about riding in his car.

Being in Klt?

Shainez: And when you were younger, I don't know about anybody else, but everybody idolized David Hasselhof for being Michael Knight. But now in *Baywatch*, he doesn't really get the same, you don't look at him the same way ...

Ok, what do you think these stories or these characters taught you as a kid, like, what lessons did you get from the TV that you watched as a child?

Vuwokazi: That there are bad people and there are good people and the good people always win.

(Agreement)

Any other lessons?

Shainez: That cartoons are fun.

Cartoons are fun. Um, and how did they relate to your own lives, or did they?

(Silence)

Does that question make sense? Did you see what you saw on TV reflected in your own life or did you? Or were there other circumstances where you talked about it with your friends at school? Did you talk about it with your friends?

(Yes.)

Shaveania: I think when we were much younger it was more like a fantasy world, it doesn't. It was like this whole world that, you're just a spectator, you don't understand the whole dynamics of television. I honestly believed that McGyver existed and that he did all these things for a living.

Okay so that line between what is real and what is not real is fuzzy? Do people think that's true, or do some people think no-no...

Zeenath: Look at *Airwolf*, right. If I can remember right – or maybe it was a dream – they had *Airwolf* come to South Africa.

(Big response)

Showeana: Yes, I was there.

Zeenath: So it really seemed real.

Okay. Did you admire any characters on TV or want to be like them?

Anybody else look up to characters on TV or have a hero?

(Silence)

Okay.

Now let's talk about more recent media memories, so, what you remember about TV more recently.

You told me about your favourite shows at the beginning, but what else, what other programmes do you watch?

Shainez: Comedies like *Spin City* and *Dharma and Greg* and *Frasier*.

Fezile: *Kids Say the Darndest Things*.

Vuwokazi: *The Jamie Fox Show* and *Third Rock from the Sun*.

Ok, anybody else, what else? What about you – you just watch channel'o' at 2 in the morning?

Sfiesl: No I like mini series and the one I'm fascinated with is *New York Undercover*.

Anything else?

And which soapiers do you watch?

Vuwokazi: At the moment my favourite are *Sunset Beach* and *Days of our Lives*.

Fezile: And *Generations*..

What do you remember about what you've watched on TV recently?

Vuwokazi: I just saw a music video of this girl, what's her name...Pink...Pinkie

(acknowledgement). I just saw her video on the way to this tut.

Anybody else? What do you remember about what you watched on TV recently?

Shainez: There was an episode of *Jag* last week about drug smuggling.

And what do you remember about it?

That the main guy saved the day.

And why do you think you remembered that...just because it was a good show or...

Ja, because it's my favourite and I kind of have a thing for the main guy, even though he's married. It was the first time he went undercover and stuff like that, so, it was a nice episode.

Anybody else?

Ian: There was an episode of *the Simpsons* the other week about beer. I thought that was fantastic.

And why?

Because Homer was such a champion, he becomes like a mobster and smuggles beer because they had a prohibition.

So you think you remember it because there was a particular hero?

Well he was the hero, he saved the day, and he's like the absolute anti-hero of the whole town and he comes to the rescue.

And why did you like the show, do you think, just because of your affinity to Homer?

And Beer!

And beer, hal Anybody else?

Showeania: Last week's episode of *South Park*, it was basically the same thing, but Cartman saved the day. They went to a forest and they got lost and Jennifer Aniston was the voice of the woman in charge and Cartman went off and he saved the day and...Kenny didn't die.

Anybody else, what do you remember?

Sfiesl: That sense of satisfaction when you see the guys dancing on the screen, you know, the guys can dance you know, and you just get this...satisfaction.

Okay.

What characters stand out in your mind from TV today, what characters do you like or hate?

Shainez: I like Michael J. Fox.

Why do you like him?

Because he's got a successful TV show even though he's suffering from Parkinson's disease. He can still get an award for doing the show so well...I admire him.

So you admire him as a person rather than as an actor? Yes.

Okay, what other characters stand out?

Zeenath: I like that guy on *Sunset Beach* with the deep dimples, I think he's absolutely gorgeous...very nice.

So he stands out?

He's very outstanding.

Anybody else?

Vuwokazi: I'd say Phat Joe.

And why?

It's the lips and everything. I like funny guys.

Anybody else?

Showeana: The characters, all the women from *Sex and The City* are so...They don't care about what they say, they say what they feel and sometimes...around sensitive issues, they just go for it.

Ian: I like Joey from *Friends*, just because he's so stupid.

Do you still admire certain characters? For example, you said you admire the women from *Sex and the City*. Does anybody else admire characters on TV? No?

Sfiesl: I used to admire (inaudible name)...the way he talked, the way he walked.
He just exuded cool?

Very cool.

Anybody else think one particular character is cool on TV?

Shainez: Sabrina, I don't think she's entirely cool, but I sometimes wish I had her magic powers.

Okay, you wanna be a teenage witch.

When you remember a particular scene from TV do you remember it as a scene in your head, can you see it playing over, or do you remember yourself watching it?

Do you see the difference? How do you remember?

Ian: I see the scene on TV, I can't see myself watching it.

How about other people, how do you remember?

Vuwokazi: I just thought of something (laughs). Do you watch *Martin Lawrence*? You know he changes characters, I just remembered when he was the dragonfly when he was in the Kung Fu ad and he was fighting with this guy and he was toothless.

And why do you think you remember that?

I don't know but it was the funniest.

And can you see it over in your head like a movie?

Yes, well I taped it and watched it several times and ...

So it just kind of got stuck there, okay. Do other people tape their favourite shows? Do you?

Fezile: I used to.

And did you watch them over and over?

Yes.

And do you think you remember them better because you've taped them?

I used to tape, like, *Studio Mix* and my favourite songs and I used to play them over and over.

How about the rest, when you see a memory of TV in your head, how do you see it? Are there feelings that you associate with watching that show at the same time?

Zeenath: Like the *Titanic*, that song, whenever I hear it, most people it doesn't make them cry but it's sad, I find it sad.

So the emotion and everything...?

The emotion just surges up.

Showeana: There are certain movies that just get you...get you thinking. I taped *Schindler's List* and *Remains of the Day*, those movies really got me thinking

And so you remember things, maybe, that make you think? Even on television? Shows or just movies?

Especially movies.

Are there certain TV shows that make you think, yes or no?

Vuwokazi: Ja like last night there was a thing on SABC 1, a tribute to Mandela, and they just showed all those scenes about what has happened in South Africa and I felt...national pride and everything.

Welling up. Anybody else?

Showeana: One that really sticks out for me was an episode of *Ally McBeal* where she was questioning whether – and around the same time I was doing the same thing – you ever find your true love and if you don't. She was thinking you might just settle for whatever there is, that's one memory that does stand out.

And do you think you remember that because you were thinking of the same thing at the same time?

Yes, whether one true love really does exist.

Do other people have that? Where they remember because it applies to them, like, it's happening in your life and all of a sudden on TV?

Shainez: Yeah there was, I think it was the second or third episode of *Ally McBeal* where that guy she was his future fiancée and...my friends and I were talking about it. The guys you go out with- you don't know if they've got other girlfriends and stuff – you trust them completely and they could be fooling around behind your back and you don't know about it – unless you've got a lawyer like Ally whose gonna tell you.

So you remember because you talked about it with your friends and it's a point of discussion in you own lives, okay. Anybody else?

Zeenath: Most of the soaps, they're like, very relevant to our lives. It's happening all the time so we are always linking things.

Okay and how do you link it?

Like when they show teenage shows and they're going through boyfriend problems and the same thing is happening with us, those kind of issues.

Anything else you want to tell me about what you remember about TV or the way you remember them? Or scenes?

Ian: I remember one episode of *Suddenly Susan* where one of the main guys died, do you know who I'm talking about? Richard Strickland...or, ja, David Cartman.

Oh yeah!

And they brought that into one episode where he was going to watch a Fatboy Slim concert and "The Gate" – which is the name of the paper – they were gonna go with him and, like, he didn't arrive and sort of left you hanging on, like, he sort of disappeared. Makes you wonder, what if one of your friends died, how would you react as a group of friends.

So it had an impact, like, what would happen or what would I do?

And you think – you'll never see that character in *Suddenly Susan* again, so it's like, more of a reality.

Because you know he really died, okay.

And why do you remember that episode, was it poignant or did you just experience it intellectually, was it emotional for you?

It was emotional.

Shainez: He committed suicide and things like that make you wonder why a person who has everything and he goes and does that.

Alright, um. Why do you watch what you watch now? Do you watch because it's informative or entertaining or...

Shainez: Because it's fun.

So it's an escape for you? You think so too?

Fezile: Definitely.

Do people agree?

Zeenath: Certain types.

Like what?

I like watching love stories.

Why do other people watch TV?

(Entertainment)

What makes it entertaining?

Fezile: Like channel 'o', it's the latest music and if it's comedy, you sit and laugh.

Okay, good.

Sfiesl: I watch action packed movies. For me, it's entertaining, and secondly, you want that feeling of nostalgia...you want to be there but you can't be there...you want to do that but you can't do that.

Okay, so you want to be put into the situation?

Could the people on your favourite shows attend varsity here? Shainez: I think if my favourite actress or actor were to come to the university, actually meeting them in person might change your perspective on them, they might not be the same in reality.

Okay, now take that and flip it around, what if they came as a character, like, what if Sammy...could they come here? Are there certain characters that you think could fit in or...?

Zeenath: I don't think they'd study here, they'd probably study through correspondence because everybody would be stalking them.

Shainez: They wouldn't get much work done.

Any others that you think could live in your own lives?

Vuwokazi: I think Martin would bring more life to this place.

Fezile: I think Bill Cosby could fit in because he's more natural and casual.

What effect do you think that the shows that you watch have on who you are?

Sfiesl: Back in the days when I used to watch (mentions the same inaudible name)...the way he walked.

So it gave you a model?

Ian: Are you talking about impact on your life... especially things like MTV and music videos with the latest fashion and trends overseas, it's like, our window to the world. We think, like, "oh, that's what they're doing in America" and this is the clothes we must wear, or how we must act.

Do you feel that way about fictional shows as well, or just MTV?

Not really, like, I can see the difference between fiction and reality – it doesn't really apply when I watch fictional things and stuff.

Then you're not looking at what they wear?

Vuwokazi: I look at the way they talk

Anything else, how it impacts who you are as a person? Does it influence your values or goals or what you want?

Vuwokazi: Well if you take, like, Sammy. Some of the things she does – I'll never do that to my sister or friend.

So it puts you in this – would, could I – situation? Okay.

Showeana: Sometimes when you watch something and it has a happy ending, you think that your life...you hope it's happy.

So it gives you that hope that in the end good will win and you'll find your man and he'll be on a white horse, okay.

- END -

APPENDIX G

UNIVERSITY OF NATAL I

11 April 2000

No.	Name	Age	Favourite Programme/Genre
1)	Charma	19	<i>Ally McBeal/Part of Five</i>
2)	Alicia	20	<i>Ally McBeal</i>
3)	Victor	18	Channel O
4)	Tendai	45*	News
5)	Emmanuel	24*	Sports
6)	Lindiwe	34*	News
7)	Joanne	20	<i>Days of our Lives/channel O</i>
8)	Michael	20	<i>News Radio</i>
9)	Gillian	19	<i>CNN/Northern Exposure</i>
10)	Jerusha	20	<i>Whose Line is it Anyway?</i>
11)	Pranusha	20	Comedies
12)	Natasha	21*	<i>Ally McBeal</i>

First of all, where was the TV kept?

(All say lounge, except Pranusha, who says 'in the bedroom')

Were there any rules?

Michael: It had to fit in with bedtime, couldn't watch after 7 or 8 o'clock

When did you watch television?

Michael: In the late afternoons.

Alicia: Also before school, the morning cartoons and after school.

Charma: If no chores were done, there was no TV, or if homework wasn't done. In preschool and primary school I watched cartoons and stupid programmes.

Any rules?

Pranusha: No

* These focus group participants are outside of the study's 15-20 age parameter.

You could watch anything?

Pranusha: Yes, but I had to do my homework first.

Gillian: My parents tried to in senior school by saying we could watch so many hours, but it never worked.

What weren't you allowed watching?

Gillian: *Loving*.

Joanne: *Dallas*.

Gillian: That was immoral.

Alicia: I wasn't allowed to watch *V*, they said I would have nightmares.

Michael: *Thirty Something*.

It was too adult for you? Anything else? Did you usually watch by yourself?

Pranusha: By myself.

Jerusha: With my family.

Alicia: In the evenings with my family, in the afternoon with a friend.

And how do you watch TV now?

Gillian: Now the programmes all suck, I prefer CNN and informative programmes.

The sitcoms are terrible, when I was little, my favourite was *Thundercats*.

When do you most watch TV now?

Charma: After varsity and in the evening.

Pranusha: Straight after varsity!

Alicia: Also straight after.

Charma: I watch it for relaxation.

Alicia: And in the evening, the parents go to bed.

Victor: I watch when I have time to watch.

Anything else about your viewing habits?

Gillian: I can't just watch TV, I have to do something with my hands.

Victor: It depends on the programme, if you realize it's important, like a documentary or music awards, then you watch.

Anything else about the way you watch TV?

Natasha: I just watch.

(Jerusha and Pranusha agree.)

Alicia: We usually watch while we're eating.

Natasha: No, we are not allowed to because then we won't pay attention to the food.

(Pranusha says the same rule applies in her home.)

Victor: It is not nice to eat in front of the TV when you are watching something disturbing.

Gillian: We always eat in front of the TV but I would prefer to eat at the table.

And now, when do you watch TV?

Gillian: Not after three in the morning.

Charma: My parents leave it to me.

What shows do you remember watching when you were little?

Alicia: *Maya the Bee*.

Gillian: *Thundercats*.

Natasha: *Scoobie Doo*.

Alicia: *The Smurfs*.

Pranusha: *The Mickey Mouse Club*.

Alicia: *Goofy*.

Gillian: *Roadrunner*.

Jerusha: *Webster* and *Different Strokes*.

What did you like about those early shows?

Pranusha: They were funny.

Jerusha: There was lots of fighting.

Alicia: The characters were cute.

Charma: They always had happy endings.

Gillian: I liked the old programmes because the characters kept to character, like the *My Little Ponies*. In *Ally McBeal*, the characters are so different to what they were in the beginning and that guy from *Growing Pains* is now in his own show called *Kirk*, but he is completely different. Oh and *Paddington!* *Paddington Bear* was great.

And why did you like *Paddington* in particular?

Gillian: Because he ate marmalade.

Okay. Anything else, anyone else?

Charma: I liked that little yellow bird, Tweetie, that Sylvester is always trying to catch because he is so cute and little but he is so clever as well.

Michael: *Bugs Bunny*.

***Bugs Bunny*...and why did you like *Bugs Bunny*?**

Michael: No idea.

Okay (laughs).

Alicia: Oh and the *Ninja Turtles*, I loved the *Ninja Turtles*, they were one of my favourites.

And why?

Alicia: I just, I wanted to be like them, I wanted to fight like that and eat pizza (Agreement.)

Okay, and so, do you remember anything else like particular storylines that stand out in your mind?

Gillian: I remember one episode of *Thundercats*, um ... this was fourteen years ago so...okay. There was one where there was an enchantress type woman and she was...actually wait, that was *My Little Ponies*.

Oh no, okay...so it's from *My Little Ponies*?

Gillian: No wait, it was *Thundercats*...because she was trapping them in this glass cage and there was this bird that could sing incredibly high and it shattered the cage with it's voice. Now I only remember because I was at a Game Reserve at the time so I was watching it in the middle of the hills somewhere.

That's a good memory, I think it's significant.

Victor: And that kid's programme *Kideo*, because this programme, it's not that good because it's for kids, you know. It's funny to see a person playing with kids and I like music, so I ended up meeting the guy in real life.

Okay, so you liked it because you met the guy and so it related to your real life and...

Victor: Yeah, it was really so cool.

Charma: I also remember that programme *Pumpkin Patch*. (Agreement from others.) and *Wielie Walie* and I liked those because there was a lot of singing and poetry and stuff like that

And you, you liked *Pumpkin Patch* as well?

Pranusha: Ja, we used to watch it everyday...everyday.

Charma: With Woofles and Freckles and Speckles.

What do you think these programmes that you watched when you were small, what did they teach you?

Pranusha: The alphabet...all educational stuff. Morals as well.

Gillian: I just remembered two programmes from when I was small, one was *Heman* and one was *McGyver*, of course.

Victor: I think a lot of these programmes they...they are showing the reality of life.

So you think they did?

Victor: They did, they gave me a focus on what is happening in life.

Do you think the real life shows taught you about life or did cartoons teach you about life?

Victor: Even the cartoons...even the way cartoons are portrayed, with their characterizing...they, like, portray, like, real life.

Charma: Ja but they die in the end and come back to life.

So you disagree?

Charma: Ja, I think that was just for the fun of it and the other one's like *McGyver*, like you did think he was really going and solving problems.

Okay, anybody else, what lessons they taught you?

Natasha: Well, they were educational in that you learnt numbers and alphabet and stuff but at, at the same time, they had this same kind of storyline where the good always won and it was very...I think to an extent stereotyped.

Natasha: I mean, you never saw a storyline where the bad guy won. Happiness was always restored. So I think, we're basically used to that kind of thing, where it was good to be nice and polite and stuff like that.

Victor: But I think cartoons, they show the family, you know...cooking...and that is the picture of life, the reality of life. Also, when I was young, we used to play games back home where you'd pretend like you're the father and you have the woman and the kids and with cartoons, it's more the same.

So, the fantasy that you played in your real life as children, related to the fantasy that you saw on TV?

Victor: Yes

Okay. What were you gonna say, Michael?

Michael: Ja with *The Gummi Bears*, they used to make Gummi Berry juice.

(Others remember.)

And what did you learn from that Gummi Berry Juice, Michael?

Michael: Not really the juice, just that they always worked together as a team to overcome Gregor and his ogres.

So maybe concepts about teamwork and working together and co-operation and all those things.

And why did you primarily watch them?

Pranusha: It was something fun

Entertaining? What were you gonna say?

Gillian: Well, when I was like, really small, I'd go to preschool in the morning; go visit my friends and then I'd come home and watch my friends on TV. It wasn't just that there was nothing else to do I was just really convinced that like, the Care Bears really cared for me.

So you formed a relationship with the characters? Okay.

Do you think these shows related to your own lives? I mean, Victor you said that the fantasy you were playing kind of related to what you saw on TV, so obviously there was some kind of relationship. Would you say that they related to your own life?

Victor: Well, yes.

Anybody else, did you relate them?

Alicia: I think, um, that you would sort of try and be the character when you played games.

Okay, that's my next question. Did any of you act out what you saw on TV?

(Charma and Alicia agree.)

Victor: Ja that's what we would imitate.

What?

Joanne: I was just thinking, the programme that I remember from my childhood was *The Cosby Show*, and the reason that we watched that was because it was so similar to our own family. Rudi was my own age and the older brother was my brother's age so...I always thought that I was Rudi.

Okay.

Victor: You know, myself, I used to be with my friends and I'd watch the television, right...and I used to watch the cartoons and try to imitate. So I think it was all about...being part and parcel of our lives.

Sure, sure.

And did any of you buy things or consume products based on the shows?

(Yes, yes.)

Gillian: I had a Thundercats sword.

Natasha: My Little Ponies, I had the whole set.

Michael: I had the Thundercats...the little guy had an airboard.

Alicia: I had Heman.

Pranusha: I had the Sheera colouring book.

Victor: What about the Casper comics...I had a problem in primary school, we weren't allowed them, the teacher would take them and I'd buy another one and she would keep on taking them.

Okay, and did you look up to the characters on TV when you were small?

Gillian: McGyver.

And why did you admire him? Anyone else?

Pranusha: I never, I never considered them to be real. I knew they weren't real, it wasn't someone I thought I should look up to.

No one? Ok. Anybody else who thought so and so was their hero?

Charma: What was that programme with BA...

(*A-Team*)

Yes! I liked Face, I thought he was very good looking

Anything else you want to tell me about what you remember from TV when you were a child?

Gillian: I remember something about the *A-Team*, apart from the fact that I had a friend who had a habit of putting a stick in his mouth and acting like Hannibal. There was an episode when they got exposed to radiation, and Face was getting all bummed because he like, touched a flower and it wilted.

An interesting memory.

Now I wanna talk about your more recent media memories, so, what you remember from what you watch more recently, okay. So let's get into the more recent past. You told me all your favourite shows, are there other shows that you watch regularly?

Alicia: *Sunset Beach*.

Michael: *Dharma and Greg*.

Natasha: *Frasier*.

Alicia: Monday night is TV night.

(Agreement.)

Charma: I like *Dawson's Creek*.

Victor: I like Felicia's show and *Two-Way*.

Okay, did you just say something?

Alicia: I don't like Felicia.

(Laughter.)

Michael: She's trying to be like Oprah Winfrey.

Alicia: I find that she's very self-absorbed and the show is basically all about her.

(others agree), so someone will have this huge crisis and she'll be so insensitive to that person's feelings and she'll just be like "Oh well, you know what happened to me" or how it relates to herself...she doesn't actually know what she's talking about.

Victor: That's what I hate about her...she doesn't give other people a platform. I think with Oprah you have the floor.

Natasha: She really understands what the problem is and, at one point Oprah will not say anything for like ten to fifteen minutes before she says anything.

Victor: There is another show of Bill Cosby, about kids...

Oh, Kids Say the Darndest Things!

Any other shows you watch?

Natasha: I like *Generations* and *Buzz*...it's fun.

Alicia: *Who Wants to be a Millionaire*, every Sunday.

(Others agree.)

Michael: *Duty Calls*.

Duty Calls?

Michael: It's a real life documentary about the South African police.

Tell me, what you remember about these shows? For example, you said *Generations*, what do you remember about *Generations*?

Natasha: Well what I found interesting about *Generations*, well I watch *Days of Our Lives*, and, I don't know if anyone else watches. I prefer *Generations* to *Days* because if you watch *Days of our Lives*, Susan and Marlena have been carrying on for ages. But in *Generations*, like, on Monday they have a secret and on Thursday it's out. I mean, they don't keep you hanging. In *Generations* it's fast moving.

And what do you remember, are there particular characters that you remember or what...storylines...about *Generations*?

Natasha: Well my favourite character is that girl with the kidney op...Ntsiki.

Pranusha: I hate her!

Natasha: Oh she's a horrid character, but she's smart.

And why do you hate her?

Pranusha: Because she's devious.

Charma: Very evil.

Victor: I have an objection to this business of soapies because they are glued to the television, you know. And they become more like the stereotypes, "let's watch the soapie", they don't have time to talk to people.

So you think people focus too much on them?

Victor: Ja, a lot, especially women.

Okay, what do other people remember about programmes?

Jerusha: I think the most annoying thing about soaps is the worst situation can be a situation. Like the Kristin situation, Ilke, build a secret room why don't you!

Gillian: Or, Ilke, the themes in soapies, either they've got amnesia or they're married twice...

(Agreement.)

And so. Do you remember those themes in soapies? Can you remember an example of where one of these theme happens? So give me examples of where somebody has amnesia.

Jerusha: *Sunset Beach* and Sammy in *Days*.

Pranusha: And the *Bold*.

Gillian: And Brooke had amnesia, and Laura had amnesia.

(All talking at once.)

Okay, so you remember soapies – and maybe even sitcoms – in themes, hey? Is that true?

Alicia: Well, soapies is themes, sitcoms...I'm not sure.

Pranusha: Sitcoms are just funny, you laugh at the joke and that's it.

So you remember what's really funny or outrageous?

(Yes)

Charma: Like, for an example, in *Friends* – I love, love, love *Friends*. I remember a specific episode like when Jennifer and Ross kissed, I'll remember that always, when they eventually got together, it was like – big suspense and then they kissed and were together.

Victor: I think, to remember something in soaps or TV, especially a programme...I'll give you an example, like Lawrence Martin – his programme – if you were to remember, it would be something funny. Like, he just pisses everyone off and, that's why, even by myself I will laugh and that's how I will remember it. I've experienced it with some of my friends, when I've watched.

Okay, so that's a good point, so that, if you talked about it with someone else, does that help you remember it?

Victor: It helps a lot, that's why it sticks in your mind.

And do you find that, you'll talk about it the day after or will you talk about it a week later?

Charma: The day after. Or if you missed an episode, then you can speak about it, like, a week later. What happened last week.

Pranusha: Or if something evokes a memory of the last episode.

Gillian: I just wanted to say that probably the reason I can't remember a single episode of any soaps is that, there's very little new that happens, like, I will remember it if it's new.

Michael: Like, in American sitcoms there's like a formula thing. You can see the joke before it's happened, like, someone says something and you know the punchline. Or you know that the person they're talking about is gonna walk into the room as they say something.

So, you don't find those things memorable?

Michael: Well, like, some of the time you do, like, it's weird like some programmes like *Spin City*, I find that extremely funny but it's classical American sitcom.

And what makes you remember *Spin City*?

Michael: I don't know, with a lot of the sitcoms where you can see the punchline, I don't laugh, but with *Spin City*, I just laugh even though...

Alicia: You know it's gonna come but you don't know what's gonna come.

Okay. Anything else that you remember about shows or how you remember them?

Michael: Um, *Whose Line is it Anyway?*, that stands out because it's all impromptu, and most of the programmes, even if it's live, they still have a script that they can go to. This programme is completely ad hoc so that's like real humour.

And do you remember that show better than other shows?

Michael: Yes.

Pranusha: I do as well.

Okay, so that's a good question, do you think you remember non-fictional programmes more than fictional? Which do you remember more?

Michael: Well, I can't remember a single question from *Who Wants to be a Millionaire*, but I can remember certain episodes from sitcoms.

Okay and why do you think that is? Does anybody else have an idea?

Gillian: Well, I'm just surprised because my favourite thing is National Geographic and CNN, and, I can remember a wolf documentary that I watched. It said that a wolf could drag something 30 times its body weight and it could cover 3 miles in a day. No reason why I should remember that, But I do because it's interesting.

So you think you remember what's interesting and real?

Gillian: And non-fiction.

Victor: Well for me, it's not about fiction or non-fiction, it's about whether it draws my attention.

And how do you think it draws your attention?

Victor: Well to draw my attention...let's say for a non-fiction programme, let's say *Who Wants to be a Millionaire*, and say somebody like, he won after a long struggle and that will stick in my mind. And sometimes, like fiction, if something can make me laugh...as long as it's not boring.

Do you think it has to apply to your own life? For you to remember it?

(yes)

Does anyone have an example of that where it's applied to your own life and so you remember it better?

Charma: For example there was this programme, *Felicity*, and she went to university and I was going to university and I thought "oh my gosh this is just like me" and she met this guy there and I met a guy and it just applied to me totally.

Okay.

Charma: And she broke up with her boyfriend and I broke up with my boyfriend (everyone responds) and I thought...she's like me, *Felicity* (uses mock tone) (laughter)

Victor: Wow.

Charma: But it wasn't like "oh my god, I'm Felicity", I was just like "wow, this is so similar".

Alicia: Ja, I suppose like with *Ally McBeal*, she's always having trouble with guys and that...it doesn't apply to me but it was applying for a long time.

Charma: But now she's found a man! (meaning Alicia)

Victor: When it comes to the issue of intimacy, that's where there's a lot of attention, that's where everyone wants to know and try to compare themselves, this applies to me, it's really...you really try to compare.

Okay, so you find yourself comparing your own lives to those on screen?

Victor: And maybe I admire that situation or particular person. Especially on issues of love relationships, they pay attention.

Do people remember where a relationship peaks or where it dissolves better?

Or no, is that a non-issue?

(some indicate non-issue)

Charma: No, I definitely remember when people get together that are like, supposed to get together for a long time.

You agree Michael?

Michael: Yes.

Victor: Take for example the soapies, soapies are more centered towards love relationships and people wish to watch the climaxes of soapies and stuff like that.

Okay. Do your friends watch mostly the same shows you watch?

(Yes)

And do you talk about them together?

(Yes)

And how would that happen?

Natasha: My lift club, we all love *Ally McBeal*, so this morning, as we were coming to campus we were carrying on about it, from beginning to end - the soundtrack, the works - whatever interested us.

Okay, so you talk about the music, what happened in the show...Give me an example. What did you talk about this morning? I'm just curious.

Natasha: This morning we talked about when Elaine was having that meeting, right in the beginning, with John Cage and she was breastfeeding.

And why do you think that was memorable, that she was all of a sudden breastfeeding?

Natasha: Memorable to me? Well, I dunno, because...what I found funny was him, he does that thing (gestures).

So it's memorable to you because of his behaviour?

Yes.

Michael: When something shocking happens, then obviously as soon as you see your friends you know that they remember it as well.

If it's shocking?

Michael: Ja, then it stays in your mind. Like when Ling and Ally kissed. I don't even watch Ally and I watched that episode, really.

Alicia: I think last night's episode was actually quite sad and that makes you feel something. Last night, at the end, I mean, I was ready to cry it was so sad.

Pranusha: Ja, it's so strange to see them so serious.

Alicia: Ja, none of them were joking, usually, like Richard says something or whatever.

Pranusha: No matter how serious.

So maybe, too, when people are out of character, that's memorable, is that true?

(yes)

Pranusha: Something out of the ordinary happens.

Okay. These are some recap questions. I really want to talk about the impact of your memories. Why do you think you watch what you watch, do you watch it because it's entertaining or because it's informative...why do you watch what you watch?

(Most say because it's entertaining.)

Gillian: Informative.

Victor: Well I watch channel O because it's entertaining but since I am studying music I can also relate it to my course and career. Also, I want to watch the styles that they use and to copy their styles and I can improvise something. Let's say I am watching a documentary, I would like to watch to see what happened in Hiroshima, and what really happened.

Charma: Ja, it just depends on what you're watching.

So it depends. You can watch for a lot of different reasons. That makes sense. Okay. What impact, do you think, what you watch has on who you are as a person, if at all?

Gillian: I think TV is responsible for the moral decline of the entire world myself.

Look, look at a year ago, a little kid watches *The Mighty Power Rangers*, I've watched an episode of that – that's not like *Thundercats*, okay – that is violent. This kid took a little kid, tied him to a tree and burnt him, okay. That is not a positive thing and it is purely because of TV, I promise you his parents weren't saying "here kiddy, you want to take your friend out and kill him". It's because TV is not... Even if you

look at *The Ninja Turtles*, they, like, jump from rooftop to rooftop and say, "hey kids, don't try this at home". And because of that you can see it's kind of a joke. The TV nowadays has lost that. The thing I most have against *Ally McBeal* – the woman does not look like a woman – how many women have become anorexic because they've got her as a role model – that is an effect.

Okay, do you, does everybody else agree or disagree with that? Do you think that *Ally McBeal* for example, impacts who you are as a person?

Alicia: I don't think so. I think, watching *Ally McBeal*, we're at that age where we've pretty much established as a person and maybe you'll draw from things. Like I said she's never got a boyfriend and I thought that was like me. But I don't think I would go to the extent of starving myself for two weeks to look like her because I actually don't think she looks very nice. So I think it depends, you know. We're older now so it's not like watching some violent cartoon like they have on KTV these days.

Victor: Well, to me, I think television has a negative and positive impact on your life. Because some people try to copy those on TV, especially the young people – they are still young and there is a lot of confusion. There was a programme called *Yizo Yizo*, and they think that's how things happen and that's how you can live. But when it comes to other programmes, it can have a positive impact.

Alicia: At the end of the day, you know it's just a programme, but if you're a kid you might not think it's just a programme, you might think it's real.

Michael: It depends on the person, you can take what you want.

Alicia: Then you have extremists, who really want to be like that character, then there will be others who just watch and think "oh well".

Victor: (beginning inaudible)... *Yizo Yizo* was trying to show the bad things in society.

Charma: I think if you watch a programme like *South Park*, if you're old enough to understand what's going on, and you think "ok, that's just a couple of kids being rude", that's fine. But if you're a child and you're watching this you might be "oh great, ja it's nice to use that word". When you're that age it really isn't nice for children to speak that way.

Gillian: But don't you think there comes a point when the parents should be there and actually say to the kid "you shouldn't be watching this".

Charma: Definitely, it's the parents responsibility to restrict children, but ...

Gillian: If the parents can't be bothered to be around to tell the children not to watch something like *South Park* – which is not for children – it's the parents fault.

Alicia: But the movie, wasn't the movie like 2 to 13 or something? I went to watch the movie and it was quite hectic.

Pranusha: Ja, my brother went to watch it and he's in standard five and he doesn't use language like that. I mean, he's still a baby so for someone like that to watch something like that...

Michael: I don't think kids that age really understand what it's about, I mean, how many kids watch the *Simpson's*, but some of the things they say is actually like social commentary.

Alicia: It's not only, I think, the responsibility of the parents. But the people who let these movies come out and be seen by the public, and who said *South Park* should be PG 13 – there's only so much parents can do.

Gillian: At 13 I wanted to see the *Prince of Tides*, which I still haven't seen, but apparently it's incredibly graphic, highly sexual, and it was a 14 age restriction, so I couldn't see it. But that movie should have at least an 18 age restriction – but that's not the same as TV, it's a whole industry.

Okay, just to close, I want you to think about specifically about memories and what you remember from television.

Do you think that those memories have incorporated into who you are or how you live your daily lives?

Alicia: Not really.

Does what you remember influences the person that you are?

Gillian: Can I put it this way, if I watch a show like *Knight Rider* say, it will remind me of the fact that when I was small I wanted to drive a fast car, right. But it doesn't change the fact that that I always loved cars, that was there already. It just, um, it's just a reminder.

So maybe, what you watch on TV reminds you of your real life?

Yes

Okay.

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APPENDIX A

Television, Memory and Identity Formation: An Analysis of South African Youth and Fictional Programming

FOCUS GROUP OUTLINE

Objectives

- To discuss media access and determine the overall experience with media, including viewing habits and rituals
- To determine what fictional programming youth have watched throughout their childhoods and what they remember about those programmes
- To determine what fictional programmes youth watch presently and what is currently memorable or influential about those programmes.
- To investigate what is 'memorable' in the minds of youth—Is it the unusual or that which relates to their own lives? Do they remember storylines, particular episodes, or characters? How are their memories constructed?
- To look at the relationship between fiction and reality—To investigate how those programmes compared to their own life experiences at that time; to determine how their memories of their own lives integrate television (regarding time placement, etc.)

Introduction

- Name
- American, studying at UND
- MA dissertation on what young people remember about the media
- Ground rules—Free flow of ideas, try as much as possible to speak at once, but feel free to interrupt and overlap, say whatever comes into your mind, but feel free to disagree and build on what someone else is saying, in the end this is meant to be a guided conversation. It is important to note that not everyone, must answer every question.
- Emphasize confidentiality—First names only
- Restrict to fictional programmes (Only if it becomes necessary to make the distinction.)

Discussion Questions

Participant Introductions—Go around the room and say four things:

- 1) Your name
- 2) What standard you are in
- 3) How old you are
- 4) Your favorite television show

Access, Viewing Habits and Rituals—Talk about how you watch television, not necessarily what you watch

- Think back to when you were small and tell me what you remember about watching television.
- Did all of you have TVs when you were little? (If no, did you know someone who did?)
- Where was the TV kept?
- Did you always watch at a certain time of day? (Before school, after homework, before bed).
- What rules did your parents have about television?
- Anything else you remember about the way you watched television when you were little?
- Now, let's talk about how those rituals have changed. How do you watch television now? (Review questions again for prompting).

Childhood Memories of Shows, Characters and Story Lines

- Let's return to the past again for a moment. Think back and tell me the first TV show you remember watching. Tell me what it was and what you remember best about it.
- What did you like or not like about that particular show?
- What characters stand out in your mind? Why did you like or dislike those characters? Why do you think you remember them so well?
- Do you remember anything else from the television you used to watch?

Impact of Childhood Memories

- What did these shows/characters/story lines teach you?
- How did they relate to your own life?
- Did you talk about your favourite shows with your friends?
- Did you play games or buy things that related to your favourite shows? Tell me about that.
- Did you admire or want to be like the characters on TV?
- Tell me a little bit about what was going on in your life at the time you were watching these programmes? Can you remember any major life changes or events that happened around you? Do remember if TV came into play with any of these life changes? (Give example if necessary.)
- Anything else you want to tell me about what you remember from television when you were a child?

Recent Media Memories

- You all told me what your favourite shows are, what else do you watch?
- What do you remember about these shows?
- What characters stand out in your mind?
- What story lines or episodes are particularly memorable?
- When you remember a particular scene in a show or a character doing something, how do you remember it? Do you picture it happening as if you are watching it again? Or can you see yourself seated watching the particular show? Is it like a

movie in your head or can you also remember what you felt like and were thinking as you watched it?

- Do most of your friends like the same shows you do?
- Do you watch them together or talk about them with each other? Tell me how those conversations go. (Model a conversation if necessary).
- Anything else that seems significant about what you watch now? Or what you remember about those shows?

Impact of Recent Media Memories

- Why do you watch what you do now? Does it entertain you, teach you something, or give you information, or a combination?
- Do you still look up to or admire characters on TV?
- Do you find that the problems the characters have on the shows you watch are similar to your own lives? Why or why not?
- Could the people on your favourite shows go to school here? Do you think you could live where they live? How much do you identify with these people?
- What effect do you think the shows you watch have on who you are? Do you and your friends dress like or do some of the same things as the characters in the shows you watch?

Overall Influence

- In closing, I'd like to know how much you think your memories of television from your childhood and more recent times influence your life today? Do you think your memories of TV have at all impacted who you are, how you see yourself or the world around you?

Conclusion

- Thank you for your comments
- Explain what I am going to do with what they've told me
- Emphasize confidentiality
- If they have any other questions or what to discuss anything with me further they can contact their principal, or appropriate contact person

APPENDI B

PAMBHILI

15 March 2001

PARTICIPANTS

No.	Name	Age	Favourite Programme/Genre
1)	Zinhle	17	<i>Take Five</i>
2)	Lorraine	17	<i>Oprah Winfrey</i>
3)	Zinhle N.	17	<i>Felicia Mabusa Suttle</i>
4)	Sindile	14*	<i>Studio Mix</i>
5)	Smiso	16	<i>DCC</i>
6)	Sibusiso	17	<i>Phat Joe Live</i>
7)	Kenneth	17	<i>Generations</i>
8)	Xolani	18	<i>Jam Alley</i>

The first thing I want to know is how you watched TV in the past, not necessarily what you watched but how you watched it, okay.

The first thing I need to know is how many of you had TV's in your home growing up, some? Who?

(Only Sibusiso indicates yes)

And now, where do you all watch TV, at home?

(All say yes)

And you all have TV's at home?

(All yes)

All right, so, for you, when you were little, where was the TV kept? In the lounge?

(Yes)

Okay, now?

(Yes)

And do you watch with family or do you always watch by yourself?

(Most say sometimes with the family, sometimes by themselves)

Sibusiso: I think most of us prefer watching in the late night, alone. (Others agree)

* This participant was outside the 15-20 age parameters of the study.

Okay, when you were small, what time did you watch? Did you watch it at a certain time of the day?

Sibusiso: Yes there was a certain time. I watched it from 3 o'clock to six.

From 3 to 6...and that was restricted by your mom?

Sibusiso: Yes.

And the rest of you, did you watch TV with friends when you were smaller, when you were very little?

Zinhle: I always watched it with my friends, because my mom was not there.

So you would go to a friend's house and watch it there? And was it the same with the rest of you? Yeah? You'd find out who had the television and go there? Is that true?

Xolani: Actually, when I was small, I used to watch from 3 o'clock until the morning.

Until the morning! When did you sleep!

Xolani: One o'clock in the morning...2 o'clock.

So the rest of you went to a friend house. And did your parents know you were going to a friend's house to watch TV?

(Yes)

And did they say anything about what you could or couldn't watch? Was that ever an issue?

Zinhle: Sometimes parents are boring...that's why they have rules.

So they did have rules about what you couldn't watch?

Zinhle: Yes.

What couldn't you watch?

Zinhle: They said I mustn't watch *Days of our Lives*.

Days of our Lives?

Zinhle: They said I was too young to watch that.

Lorraine: *The Bold and the Beautiful*.

***The Bold and the Beautiful*...anything else that you couldn't watch?**

Sibusiso: The movies with an age restriction...violence, language and nudity.

Okay, and were there any other rules, like, you couldn't watch TV if you hadn't done your homework...was that a rule?

Xolani: Yes, if you didn't do your homework there was no TV

That was the rule, huh?

Zinhle N.: Like at 7 o'clock, we do our homework until 8:30, after that we can watch TV.

And is that still the same today?

(Yes)

And now...are there any new rules now that you've grown up or do you not have rules...you can watch whenever you want?

Zinhle: With mine you can watch whatever you want.

Smiso: I can't watch whatever I'd like to on TV.

Why not, what don't you get to watch?

Smiso: Oh, after the parents go to sleep we switch off the TV...because there are programmes about sex and things.

That they don't want you to see?

Smiso: Yes.

Okay. Anything else about...any other stories or anything else that you remember about how you watched TV when you were little?

(Yes, at school)

Sibusiso: Yes, even nowadays we still talk about TV.

So, tell me, what programmes were your favourite programmes when you were little?

Zinhle: Cartoons.

Cartoons? What kinds of cartoons?

Sibusiso: *Popeye*.

Smiso: Yes, *Popeye*.

And what else?

Zinhle N.: *Simba the Lion King*.

Lorraine: And *Kideo Kids*.

And did you play games, like, when you played did you play games where you imitated characters on TV or did you, like...were there any games that involved television?

(A few say yes)

What kind?

Kenneth: Playstation

Okay but what about where you imitated television characters, did you ever do that? No?

Okay, so tell me a little bit more about how you watch TV now, do you watch TV now with your friends?

Zinhle N.: I always watch it with my family and my sisters.

Zinhle: I always watch with my family.

Okay, so it's mostly with your family or alone? You don't get together so much and watch because now you all have televisions in your lounges so...you watch later I assume?

(Yes)

Xolani: But you can't watch with your parents doing things...like if you're watching *Generations* or *Days* and they're in the kitchen...you can't watch with them.

So when you watch *Generations* you do it by yourself?

Xolani: Yes by myself.

Okay... (to the other side), would you watch a soapie with your sisters and your parents?

Zinhle N.: I'd rather watch it with my sisters.

Zinhle: I don't watch with my parents, I'd rather watch with my sister and my boyfriend.

Now I want to go back again. We're gonna talk about programmes specifically. You told me about what cartoons and stuff you watched when you were little, what did you like about those cartoons? What appealed to you? What made you want to watch *Popeye* or some of the other cartoons you talked about?

Xolani: How they do things is so funny, they make you laugh all the time...when you're looking at the person run...his legs...they go windie (gestures)...it's so funny, I still laugh. When I watch cartoons I still laugh...it's very amusing.

Slindile: And at the end, they're always happy.

Okay, what else do you like about cartoons? Or did they teach you lessons ever; did you feel like you'd learnt something in cartoons?

Zinhle: Not necessarily.

No, not really? So you mostly watched to be entertained, huh?

(Yes)

Sibusiso: But you must know, like, you look up to the persons on cartoons and *Popeye* is a strong man and you look up and say "one day I want to be like him."

Xolani: He ate a lot of spinach.

(Laughter)

That whole show was aimed to get you to eat spinach!!

So, *Popeye* was an important character, were there any other important characters that you remember watching when you were little?

Sibusiso: Mickey Mouse

Zinhle N.: Superman

Xolani: Sonic

Ok, who else?

Sibusiso: Donald Duck

Zinhle N.: Batman

Zinhle: Hercules

And, is there anything else that you liked about those characters that you remember?

Sibusiso: I think McDonald. He's a rich man, rich man and he's got a whole lot of money.

Okay, anybody else?

When you were little, how did you relate cartoons to your own life, or did you?

Xolani: Yes

How?

Xolani: Like running and hitting the wall over and over like in cartoons they would run and hit the wall.

And you would do that?

Xolani: I would do that when I was small...and other movements...kicking and doing the flying, trying to put my legs on top of everybody...I would watch it in cartoons and try to do that.

Is that true for anybody else?

(Yes)

Can anybody else give an example of something you did because you saw it?

Zinhle: I'd take a sword and teach my sister how to play swords.

Okay.

Zinhle N.: We used to jump on the bed and act like Superman.

Okay. And did you talk about your favourite TV shows with your friends when you were little?

(Yes)

Okay. Now I want to move in the present okay, so, you told me about your favourite TV shows when we started, do you remember? So now I want to talk about the other fictional shows that you watch, like *Generations*, shows that tell stories that aren't real life. Can you think of other shows that you watch that are like that?

Zinhle N.: Yes, *Sunset Beach*.

Slindile: *Ally McBeal*

Kenneth: *Miami Sands*

Xolani: *Egoli*

Sibusiso: *Isidingo*

Zinhle: I don't like *Isidingo*

Anything else?

Ok, what characters from those shows stand out in your mind? What are your favourite characters from any of those shows? Who do you really like...or really not like?

Zinhle: In *Days of our Lives*, I like Carrie.

Why?

Zinhle: She's always doing the right thing, she doesn't want to hurt anybody...even if her sister is doing the wrong thing, she always shows her the right way.

Zinhle N.: I hate Sammy.

You hate Sammy?

Zinhle N.: I hate Sammy...she is so cruel

Zinhle: I like Marlana.

(Agreement)

You like Marlana?

Zinhle: I like her.

Zinhle N.: In *Generations*, I hate Ntsiki, that cruel woman.

Yeah, yeah. How about you boys?

Xolani: I don't watch *Days*.

I know you watch them! (Laughter) You just don't want to say!

Xolani: No, but it doesn't make sense because they're getting married and then divorced and married and divorced and married and divorced.

(Laughter)

That's true. And what about you, you said you watch *Generations* (to Kenneth).

Kenneth: I watch *Generations*.

And that's your favourite show?

Kenneth: Yes

And who is your favourite, what characters do you like best?

Kenneth: I like Archie

(Others disagree)

Sibusiso: I don't like him, he thinks he's all powerful 'cos he's got money.

Xolani: In *Generations*, I go for Sunny.

I thought you didn't watch soapies!

Xolani: I do, but I don't get involved.

Ooh.

Sibusiso: I like Glen Madjosi.

Why?

Sibusiso: The way he dresses.

(Laughter)

What else do you like about the shows you watch and why do you watch them?

Do you watch because they teach you things or because they're funny...or...why do you watch?

Zinhle: Because they teach us something.

And what do they teach you?

Xolani: About life and how it goes.

Your life is like *Generations*?

Xolani: No, not like *Generations*! Like *Take Five* when they talk about education and your schoolwork and how to pass matric.

And why do you like the soopies? Do they teach you something?

(No)

Zinhle: Sometimes they teach us how to treat our families and how to treat our husbands.

Zinhle N.: And how to be honest.

Kenneth: Like it shows us what obstacles we are going to face.

(Agreement)

Okay, that's fair. And why else do you like soopies? Is there another reason?

Lorraine: Getting more information about love.

(Laughter from Kenneth and Xolani)

No, that's good.

Lorraine: We also learn more in English, we hear words that we have never heard before.

And do you watch shows that you just find entertaining? Or fun, or funny?

(Yes)

Zinhle: *Family Matters*.

What do you like about *Family Matters*?

(Zinhle Lorraine and Zinhle N. say Steve)

And so, is that the only show that you think is funny or are there other shows?

Zinhle: *Murphy Brown*.

Zinhle N.: *Sabrina*.

Xolani: Like, from Monday to Friday, from 7 on.

You watch everything from 7 o' clock on?

Xolani: Yes.

Alright, so, do most of your friends, you think, watch the same shows you do?

(Yes)

And do you talk about them in school?

(Resounding yes)

Lorraine: Yes, every morning.

Xolani: The girls talk about *Generations*...*Bold*.

And the boys, what do the boys do?

Kenneth: They talk about *Martin*.

(ALL TALKING AT ONCE)

Zinhle N.: Especially *Yizo Yizo*.

Oh yes, okay. People liked *Yizo Yizo*?

(Yes)

Why do you think people talked about *Yizo Yizo*?

Sibusiso: Because it's educational, because you learn...that's what happens right in the street.

Xolani: In our communities.

So you feel like it's the most true?

(Yes)

Okay, and were you surprised to see a show like that on TV?

(Yes)

And what do you remember about *Yizo Yizo*? What sticks out in your mind?

When I say *Yizo Yizo*, what is the first thing that comes into your mind?

Sibusiso: Rape.

Zinhle N.: Violence.

And the characters, are there characters that you remember?

Zinhle: Baba Ekshi.

Why do you remember him?

Zinhle: Because he's ugly.

Lorraine: And Chester.

Zinhle: Chester's got a nice car.

Anything else about what you remember from what you watch now? Why do you think you remember what you watch? What makes you remember something from the TV?

Smiso: It's because we like it.

Because you like it...and why do you like it?

Zinhle: Because it's interesting.

But what about...what interests you about the programmes you remember?

Smiso: I like comedies.

So you remember it because it is particularly funny?

Smiso: Yes.

And the rest of you, why do you remember what you remember?

Sibusiso: The first thing for most of us is, say like you watched a show yesterday, you come and tell your friends about it.

Okay, so if you talked about it, then you remember it?

Sibusiso: Yes.

Okay, okay.

And then what about the shows that you remember from a long time ago, like *Yizo Yizo* hasn't been on for a year, or, a long time, so why do you remember it?

Zinhle: Because we were talking about it.

Xolani: They're still talking about it, they want it back.

So they still talk about it, that's good to know.

Okay, um, do you think...so we talked about how *Yizo Yizo* is like things that happen here, right? Are there any other shows where you think the characters on these shows could come to school here and it would be similar?

Are there any other shows where you think the characters are like your lives?

Sibusiso: There was this show about a month ago...*Dingo...Njadingo*...like it talks about the sex life of, like, students.

Okay.

Sibusiso: I think those characters, when they come to school, they'd like, fit in because that's what happens among the youth.

What was the name of the show again?

Sibusiso: *Njadingo*.

Xolani: There was a movie...*The Line*...about the ANC and the IFP and they were fighting.

Okay, so it was about that...portrayed all the political stuff that has happened in South Africa? Okay.

Um, but otherwise you think that most of the characters on TV, they couldn't go to school here, it really doesn't relate? No? Why not?

Sibusiso: Because, like, the people in *Generations*, they're rich...they come to this school...they would not fit in that much.

You know a lot of times parents and people in government, they like to talk about how TV influences young people. How do you think TV influences you? Do you think it has a big impact in who you are as a person? How much, big or little?

Sibusiso: I go for big.

Big.

Sibusiso: Because like, when I'm bored, I just sit down and watch the TV.

And how does that influence who you are as a person?

Sibusiso: Well, like, the educational programmes, I learn from that.

Okay, and what about the entertaining programmes, do they influence who you are as a person?

Sibusiso: Yes they do 'cos, say you're in a bad mood and you watch that show, you'd be smiling.

And what about...Is there anything that you watch on those shows that you bring into who you are and you make it your personality, like, you maybe want the same things those people want...do you see what I'm saying?

(Yes)

Does that make sense to anyone?

Xolani: It does, I mean, the characters (LOST SECTION IN TRANSCRIPTION)...I want to be like him, I want to act like him.

And then you model him? And you, you shook your head 'no' when I asked that question, why did you think 'no'? When I said do you think it influences who you are as a person?

Smiso: No because many programmes that are on TV, you know that they are not really true.

And do people agree with that, or do you think it really influences you?

Xolani: In the end it's all about money because you know he's getting paid.

Okay.

Zinhle: In our days, it's all about money.

Slindile: Money.

Xolani: Money talks.

Okay, that's true. And what else, is it just money or is it other things, like what other things?

Zinhle N.: The way they wear the clothes.

Zinhle: The way they look so beautiful.

Anything else? Okay. Alright. And so, I think I've gone through all of my questions, we're done a little bit early so if you think of anything else you remember about TV that you want to say now...otherwise you can ask me questions.

Anything else that you think influences who you are...or doesn't influence...

Xolani: Sports, I like sports.

It's good to know there are other things besides fake shows that influence you...so...that's a good question actually...do you think shows like *Felicia* and

Oprah and sports influence you more than shows like *Generations* or, um, *Isidingo*...which do you think influence you more?

Slindile: Talk shows.

(Zinhle, Lorraine and Zinhle N. agree)

Talk shows, oh that's good to know. And why do you think that?

Zinhle: I think in talk shows they are always talking about things that happened.

Xolani: Real life.

So you think real life shows, actuality shows, influence you more?

(Yes)

Zinhle: Sometimes they talk about our culture, how to respect yourself and your culture, everything like that.

Sibusiso: And, like, with the TV influencing youth, you look at what is happening in the United States and that influences in South Africa.

So, if you watch for instance *Days*, you see what people are wearing in the States maybe and then you want to dress like in the States, is that true?

(Yes, yes)

Sibusiso: And the problems that they are facing, like on *Oprah*, the thing is, they are facing the same problems that we are facing in South Africa.

Alright.

- END -

APPENDIX C

BRENTONWOOD*

25 April 2001

The first thing I want you to do is think back to when you were small. Tell me where was the TV kept?

Did you all have TVs first?

All: Yes

Where was it kept?

All: In the lounge.

Everybody in the lounge?

All: Yes

Response: Some of us in the bedroom and lounge (Agreement.)

Who had TVs in their bedrooms?

Count, five of you, hey you are all spoiled (Laughter). Okay, and when would you watch TV?

Response : When we would come home after school.

Response : After homework.

After your homework? Did any of you watch before school?

All: Yes

And what did you watch?

Response : *The Toastie Show*.

Response: And cartoons.

Okay, so you watched cartoons when you were small. Did your parents have rules about what you could watch?

No, no.

Response: I had to sleep before 8 o'clock.

So you could watch anything you wanted, you could watch *Generations*?

Some Yes.

Others No.

What about *Bold and the Beautiful*?

All: Yes.

* The transcription for this focus group was done by a member the Graduate Programme for Cultural & Media Studies who did not follow the same format parameters of the five other transcripts.

Anything else about how you watched when you were little? Did you eat while you were watching?

All: Yes.

Response: Even now.

Even now you eat while you are watching? Okay and did you watch with friends when you were small or, who did you watch with?

Response: Selves.

Response: Cousins.

Response: Brothers.

Okay family, but some of you watched with friends as well?

Response: Yes.

Okay.

Now let's talk about how those rituals about how you watched TV have changed. Has anyone gotten TVs in their room since they were small?

Response: Yes.

Okay.

What time of day do you normally watch now?

Response: When I come home from school or around half past 3.

Response: After our homework.

So you watch after you've done your homework, but you watch straight after school?

Response: Me too after school.

Response: I watch at around 6'oclock.

Response: I watch around 9'oclock

Response: I don't have the time, from school, I've got school practice.

So you are doing things until after 6, okay. And do your parents have rules now about what you can watch or when you can watch?

All: No.

Must you finish your homework before you watch?

Some Yes; Some No.

Who do you watch with now, do you watch by yourselves?

Response: Yes, mainly, sometimes ...

And you watch it on a weekend or...

Response: Ya maybe if you hire a movie then you watch it at home.

Anything else about the way you watch TV now? Anything important that I should know about?

Okay lets go back to the past again. Now I want to talk about when you were little. Tell me about the first TV shows you remember watching?

Response: *Kidio, Mac Gyver, Knight Rider.*

Any other cartoons that you liked?

Response: *Batman, Superman.*

What did you like about those shows? Why do they stick in your memory?

Response: He was strong.

Anybody else? What did you like about those cartoons?

(Inaudible response.)

Anything else you remember about those characters? Is there any character that you hated when you were little?

Response: Spiderman.

You hated Spiderman. Why?

Response: I don't know I just didn't like him.

Do you remember anything on TV that you watched when you were little? Tell me what you remember about TV when you were little? (Addressed to a particular participant).

Response: Every time there was news it was so boring.

Rather than news what would you have liked to watch? What was more exciting than news?

Response: Comedies and cartoons.

Why did you like cartoons rather than the news?

Response: Cartoons you would be glued to the TV.

And why where you glued to the TV?

Response: It was like real life.

So it's like real life that's why you like it?

Response: Yes.

What did cartoons when you were little teach you?

Response: Morals, to be yourself.

And you said you liked them, why?

Response: Funny, heroes.

Did you talk about your favourite shows with your friends when you were little?

Response: Yes

What kind of things would you say with your friends?

Response: Like if there was a part you enjoyed in the programme.

So you would go and re-tell the part? Did you pretend like you were the character when you were little?

Response: Yes, you go and play that after watching.

So tell me how that would work?

Response: Maybe one of you had an outfit of Superman you just run around and run around.

Anybody else who would do that? Did you girls do that?

Response: No, we had no time for that.

Did you buy things? You mentioned the Superman costume, did you have other things that were based on TV shows?

All: Yes, toys.

Like what kind of toys?

Response: Clothes, acting figures ...

What kind of acting figures?

Response: Like Batman wears, ...

And tell me did you admire those characters? Did you want to be like those characters?

All: Yes.

Okay, anything else you want to tell me from the TV that you remember when you were little? Think about those shows.

Response: When we watched *Bold and the Beautiful*, we couldn't understand what was going on.

Now I want to talk about your more recent TV memories; what you remember from yesterday and a week ago. You've already told me what your favourite shows are, tell me about what other shows you watch. But remember I am mostly interested in talking about fictional programmes. You can talk about other shows, my research will specifically focus on fictional programmes. So what other things do you watch?

Response: Horror movies, *Who's Line is it Anyway*, ..., cartoons, sports, comedies.

What kinds of comedies?

Response: Mad about You; The Sopranos. The teenage girl— I like her.

Is there one programme that everybody watches?

Response: *Days*.

Even the boys?

Response: Yes.

And do you come to school the next day and speak about *Days*?

Response: Ya, especially girls they are always talking about what happened there.

What's the problems and all that. (Laughter.)

Have most of you watched *Generatlons* before?

Response: Yes.

Response: Most of the teenagers watch *Jam Alley*.

Okay and what do you remember about *Jam Alley* or *Generations*?

Response: South Africans are trying to be like the Americans because we are watching too much of American television. We must preserve our culture.

So you think there is too much of *Days* and *The Bold and the Beautiful*?

Response: Yes.

So getting back to what you remember from the programmes you watch. What sticks out in your mind?

Response: When Ntziki was caught.

And why was that memorable?

Response: Because when she was caught she was sick and she was nearly dying...

And so that was pretty dramatic, is that why you remember it?

Response: Yes.

And from *Days*, what do you remember from *Days*?

Response: When Stephano was caught and when Sammy was caught.

Why are those things memorable?

Response: The characters where evil.

Response: When Marlana was possessed.

What was so memorable about Marlana being possessed?

Response: She was evil; sometimes she was strange.

What do you remember about sitcoms like *Sister Sister*?

Response: (Inaudible.)

Anything else from comedies you remember, or from dramas?

Response: Every time we had nightmares.

Why do you remember that?

Response: Because we where scared to go to sleep at night.

Why does that stick in your memory? Did you have nightmares at the same time?

Response: No, ...

What about lately, did you watch programmes like *Yizo-Yizo*? What do you remember about that show?

Response: ... I remember the gangster, ...Papa Action came in a BMW and there was one other guy driving a taxi...

And why do you remember that?

Reponse: Because she ... sex with ... she got raped.

Think about the way you remember those scenes. Do you remember them like a movie your mind or can you see yourself watching TV?

Response: I hear voices.

Tell me what that means?

Response: You know it's like I was just watching a programme and then go to my room. I just hear their voices coming.

So that you can hear how the programme was speaking, but you don't see it?

Response: Ya.

And when you can see it in your head do you see yourself?

Response: No.

No you just see the programme in your head?

Response: Sometimes when you see a programme, like a girl is raped then you picture yourself.

Okay, let's shift gears a little bit. Do most of your friends watch the same things that you watch?

Response: Yes.

Do you watch together sometimes like on the weekend?

Response: Yes.

Does anything else seem significant about what you remember about what you watch now? Otherwise we'll move on.

Okay, let's talk about the TV programmes that you watch. Why do you watch them now? Do you watch them because it entertains you or it teaches a lesson? Why do you watch?

Response: To kill time, makes me laugh.

Does anybody watch for something else?

Response: To be evil.

You watch TV to be evil? Why?

Response: I just like it the characters they play.

And you still look up to characters on TV? Who do you admire on TV now?

Response: Bruce Lee, John Kennedy, Oprah.

Do you find that the problems the faces are the same ones as you face? Are the shows on TV like your life?

Response: Yes, some.

Okay, tell me about the programmes that are like your life.

Response: Have you watched the movie *the Mission Society*? See that is about that gangsters, rape, in some areas in Durban there are places like that.

What other TV shows are not like your life?

Response: Like the sex movies. (Laughter.)

Like *Days of Our Lives*, is that like or not like?

Response: Not like.

***Bold and the Beautiful*?**

Response: Not like.

Who watches *Bold*?

Response: I do.

What about *Sister Sister*?

Response: I like it.

Is it like your life, or not your life?

Response: Not like.

What impact do you think the shows you watch have on who you are? Do they have an impact on who you are as a person?

Response: if the character is....

So if the character is like you then it has an impact.

Response: Yes.

What about fashion? Do you want to buy the clothes they wear on TV?

Response: Ya the shoes ...

And what about relationships do you think you should be like that with your boyfriend or girlfriend or with your with your other girlfriends or your other guyfriends?

Response: No, why be somebody else if you can be yourself, don't be another person.

Do you think what you watch on TV influences how you see the world around you? Do you compare TV to things that you see in real life?

Response: Ya sometimes.

Like what?

Response: Like *Yizo –Yizo* where the fight ...

Okay, that's all I have, thank you so much for your great answers.

APPENDIX D

CRAWFORD COLLEGE La Lucia

20 April 2001

No.	Name	Age	Favourite programme/genre
1)	Charles	17	<i>Seventh Heaven</i>
2)	Derryn	18	<i>Friends</i>
3)	Aruna	17	<i>Whose Line is it Anyway</i>
4)	Jithen	17	<i>The 70's Show</i>
5)	Shivani	17	<i>Melrose Place</i>
6)	Kajal	16	<i>Dawson's Creek</i>
7)	Juanita	15	<i>Frasier</i>
8)	Niven	17	humour

Did you all have TV's when you were little?

Yes

Tell me, where was the TV kept when you were little?

TV room (others agree)

Okay, so you had a special room which was dedicated to the TV (laughs). Did the TV room double as the lounge?

Agreement.

And when did you watch TV, did you all watch at certain times of the day or...

SHIVANI: When we were small, remember, it just used to come on for a certain period...*Pumpkin Patch* and....

(Someone asks whether the question is asking about TV viewing before school or at school.)

It's up to you but I'm primarily interested in when you watched TV at home, but if you want to talk about when you watched at school that's fine too. There's no right answer here.

NIVEN: Well I don't know about everybody else but I never had a set time to watch TV.

SHIVANI: But KTV was 3-5.

NIVEN: It was 3 to 5 but, or it was 3 to 6, or 3 to 4:30, but no matter what show was on I never, like, I never centered my life around it. If I had time, well, I watched TV but...TV never ruled.

Okay.

JITHEN: I loved TV. I used to come home from school, I used to eat while I was watching TV and no matter what I was doing, I always knew that KTV was from 3 to 5. That was, like, the best time for me. Even on a Saturday, you wake up at 7, you have the energy to wake up at 7 just to watch KTV.

And the rest of you?

ARUNA: I used to play outside more than I used to watch KTV.

DERRYN: My mom was quite strict about TV times 'cos normally we were allowed two hours during the week.

Two hours per day or two hours total?

DERRYN: No, two hours per day. She tried to keep it less but...

But you found ways, I'm sure.

And you guys, before school or after school? When did you watch TV?

KAJAL: After.

JUANITA: Before, during, after.

DERRYN: There used to be a cartoon that used to be on at seven in the morning. (others remember)

JITHEN: *Popeye* or something...you could watch it while you were changing.

Okay and you mentioned that your parents were quite strict about rules, did anybody else's parents have rules about when they could watch or what they could watch?

SHIVANI: Ja, what we could watch.

Okay, what were the rules about what you could watch?

SHIVANI: Age-restricted.

Ok, so what things couldn't you watch?

DERRYN: Anything that was age-restricted.

SHIVANI: or *Loving*. (laughter)

And you?

JUANITA: I couldn't watch *The Simpson's*.

Okay. Anybody else's parents have rules...you could watch whatever you wanted to?

ARUNA: Except 2-18, but like, anything else...when I was, like, ten, I could watch 2-16. My mom felt that it was open, it's out there, why couldn't you watch it a little earlier.

JITHEN: My parents were never strict. If there was, like, sex in the movie, they were like "close your eyes." No not 'close your eyes', they were like "I think you should go

to bed now" or something like that. But violence was not as bad as nudity and sex and stuff.

Ok, what about strong language?

JITHEN: Ja, that was like sex, but violence was ...

Was okay?

Ja.

Anybody else's parents have rules; did your parents have rules?

NIVEN: My parents didn't exactly...well they had rules but they didn't enforce them on me that much. It was more my sister 'cos she was a bit of a loose canon...but...considering I didn't watch TV that much...I mean, I had weird times like, I'd wake up at 11 at night and would have nothing to do and just watch whatever's on...and even if it was, like, *The Red Shoe Diaries* or something like that (Much laughter from group), my parents just let me watch because if you're going to learn at, like, twelve years old, rather learn at home in the context of respect for your parents than on the streets.

So that was your favourite show? *Red Shoe Diaries*? (Much laughter.)

NIVEN: I just think that...I don't agree with setting your life around TV, there's so much other things to do.

(Someone comments on *The Red Shoe Diaries*, suggesting that Niven set his alarm for 11 o'clock to watch it)

NIVEN: It's not like I sat there with my mother watching it!

JITHEN: I think every boy or every girl went through a stage of...I think the challenge was more to watch it - because your parents didn't want you to watch it - than actually enjoying it. I mean, there was this one thing, *Exit to Eden* or something like that, that was the first thing that M-NET had and it was so bad that I was like "oh my god" and your friends are like "did you watch it" and you're like "Ja"!

ARUNA: It was more like, because your friends are, because you know they're gonna talk about it, so you have to be in that group, watch it as well, but not like to watch it really.

JITHEN: It was like, when my parents came into the room, I'd switch the TV off so my parents don't see it you know (laughter)... "no I'm just watching TV!"

NIVEN: That was more of the challenge because everybody thought it was cool to break the rules. (All agree.)

JITHEN: It wasn't actually the thrill of the programme.

Sure. And tell me, you said you talk about shows with your friends at school.

Did you watch programmes with your friends as well...when you were small?

ARUNA: Sometimes I watched alone or my brother was with me.

And the rest of you when you were little, did you watch by yourself or...

DERRYN: I think if friends came over, most often if you didn't have anything else to do you'd watch TV.

Okay, anyone else?

NIVEN: Well, my friends and I, we're like, humour junkies so anything with Jim Carrey – we just go crazy. If we're really, if we've got absolutely nothing else to do, we'll just sit there and pop in a tape...watch *The Mask* or something.

Okay. Is there anything else about the way you watched TV when you were little? Did anybody else have particular rituals ...

CHARLES: We liked switching the lights off (others agree) But your parents always come in and say, "don't switch the lights off"

DERRYN: "It's bad for your eyes!"

Okay. Now let's talk about the way those rituals have changed. Is there just one TV in your lounge or do you have TV's in your rooms or, where are the TV's kept now?

JITHEN: In every room besides the bathroom.

You have a TV in every room in your house?

So do most of you have TV's in your rooms? So. It's like four 'no' the rest of you 'yes'? Four 'yes'? OK.

And when do you watch now? Anytime?

JITHEN: No.

JUANITA: Only on the weekends. Or maybe if there's something special that you want to see.

CHARLES: You tend to, if you have a programme that you want to watch like *Friends* or *the 70's Show*, then you'll schedule your evening, like, have a half hour to relax and watch TV and the rest of the time you'll work.

Ok, so there's maybe one show an evening or if there's a particular show that you want to watch.

JUANITA: If you're lucky it's one show.

And do you watch with friends or with your family or, who do you watch with?

CHARLES: Siblings.

SHIVANI: Alone.

JITHEN: Well certain shows that my whole family likes, like *Friends*, everybody likes *Friends*, so around that time we'd watch TV and have supper but the rest of the time, you don't really have time and if you do you watch it alone and at odd hours.

Do your parents have rules, still, about...does anybody's parents still have rules?

(No)

DERRYN: My mom does tend to tell me to stop watching it but there's no actual rule, it's like, "don't you have work to do?" (Others agree)

So it's like, powerful reminders from your folks?

DERRYN: heavy hints.

Okay, now, let's think back to the past again. Now we're gonna talk about what you watched. Tell me the first TV shows that you remember watching.

ARUNA: *My Little Pony*

JITHEN: *Gummi Bears*

DERRYN: They used to have...there were always Afrikaans programmes on, like *Wielie Walie*.

ARUNA: *Benni Boekwurm* and all that.

DERRYN: Yes! And even though when you were little you couldn't really understand what was going on you just watched it anyway.

SHIVANI: I always remember *Pumpkin Patch*. (agreement)

JITHEN: I remember *Thundercats*.

ARUNA: And remember that little line man and he used to walk on the line.

(Agreement)

What else?

KAJAL: *Smurfs*

NIVEN: Disney.

DERRYN: And every Sunday they would have Disney family hour on M-NET and they would have one Disney movie and break it up over two weeks.

Anything else that you remember watching? Tell me, what did you like or not like about particular shows. What made a cartoon or a kids' show particularly cool or influential?

NIVEN: It's basically to do with sound, like, if you're reading a book, it's different to watching TV with the sound and moving pictures.

So, it's kind of that interactive, 3D...

NIVEN: Ja but, for me, I mean...I just like learning stuff better on TV than reading a book about it.

Okay.

SHIVANI: Ja but always the best ones – like *Smurfs* – they came up with Smurf toys and X-men comics.

JITHEN: Also characters that you specifically like, like the *Simpson's*, like it's Bart Simpson. He always used specific words and that became the latest trend, y'know – 'rad man' or 'shut up man' or 'eat my shorts.'

SHIVANI: I had the T-shirt.

DERRYN: I don't know how everybody else feels but it was also the programmes with the better animation and graphics were the ones we wanted to watch (other agree)...we didn't want to watch the ones that were, like, sketches

ARUNA: Ja, like you know those ones that were just round faces with just eyes, they were so boring

So the pictures matter, okay. And you guys talked about residual characters, like T-shirts and all of that, did you all get into that?

(Yes)

What kind of toys?

CHARLES: Turtles.

Okay, so Smurf things, Turtles...what else?

DERRYN: My Little Ponies and Care Bears.

JITHEN: I put those Thundercats figures in my bathroom. Up till standard seven I still had all those figures in my bathroom, I had this guy pointing (laughter). And like, everyone came to my bathroom, whenever they knocked one down I used to get so emotional, like, ""h my god, you knocked one of them over!""(Laughter)

What else? Does anybody else have residual characters or products or...

Okay, did you talk about the programmes or cartoons with your friends when you were little?

(Yes)

And did you play games?

(Yes)

And tell me about that. What was that like?

CHARLES: We used to be, like, in primary school, like, "I'm gonna be this character, you must be that character"...I always wanted to be the main character.

JITHEN: Everybody wanted to be. Like, in *Bionic Six*, they used to wear gold rings so we used grass, and we had these grass rings and whoever had the best grass ring was the main character.

Any other games that you played...that's a good example.

JITHEN: Good people played bad people, always the case.

That was the one thing you could see common throughout, huh? There was good people and bad people.

DERRYN: And the good people always win.

JITHEN: So no one wanted to be the bad people.

Okay, um. What didn't you like about particular shows besides the bad drawings? Were there other things that...other cartoons that stick out?

SHIVANI: Some are boring.

What made them boring?

SHIVANI: That *Bugs Bunny* is so boring. I always found it boring.

CHARLES: I loved *Bugs Bunny*, until now.

SHIVANI: I still hate it, it's so boring.

Why?

SHIVANI: It's all the same, it's always, like, "what's up, Doc?"

Okay!

NIVEN: Well, generally, I found American cartoons basically amusing. But Australian and British cartoons...well, basically, they sucked. (Others agree)

Why do you think that was?

NIVEN: Cos the humour, it's dry. It's not like, South African or American humour.

DERRYN: But, I think, it's also the accents, the voices used. You're a lot more used to American accents so you tend to watch them and if you get a cartoon with strange accents, you don't quite pick up everything 'cos you're not used to it. And also, the voices have to suit the characters. I mean, you watch some cartoons and you kind of look at it and ...they just don't match.

JITHEN: I don't think so. I think that, if you look at South African cartoons, it's too morally based, I mean, they try to get this perfect, y'know...like *Kideo*. You know it's like, "oh Mr. Chinwag, what are you doing today", you know it's all this...especially when you go home and want to watch something relaxing...the moral way is not always the most relaxing.

DERRYN: And *Kideo's* always so whiney.

JITHEN: Personally, I think that American cartoons and British cartoons they expose...their idea of humour is what teenagers and children want to see. If you look at South African cartoons, even that *Wilie Walie* whatever, they're so old and the issues related to it are, it's always morals – if you're a good boy you do this, if you're a bad boy, you do that. Whereas the *Simpson's* or the *Dinosaurs*...

SHIVANI: Or those new ones, they're getting more advanced...they, like, swear or call each other names.

JITHEN: But I think, at the same time, children – because times are changing as well. If you look at cartoons way back when we used to watch them, I mean, look at *My Little Pony* and then, look at the age-group as well, like, look at *My Little Pony* and

South Park or *Cow and Chicken*, like, flip *My Little Pony* – I'd rather watch *Cow and Chicken*.

SHIVANI: And it also shows that children are getting more advanced because they can understand.

DERRYN: I think the other thing about South African cartoons and South African TV in general, we've got this preconceived idea that that South African stuff is basically rubbish. Even take, like, a soap opera. You'll find that people would rather watch *Days of our Lives* or *The Bold and the Beautiful* than *Isidingo*.

SHIVANI: No, *Isidingo's* cool.

ARUNA: I watch *Generations* everyday, It's so interesting, you can relate so much better.

DERRYN: But *Bold's* like, when we were in Paris they even had it dubbed in French and you don't find *Isidingo* or anything overseas.

JITHEN: But the way the characters do it, okay – you've also got to look at experience, I mean, it's only recently we've been exposed to international theatre as well. And *Bold and the Beautiful* has been in countries around the world for years and CBS (the company that promotes them) has been so experienced, so we...even if you look at the way the acting is done and the story and stuff like that, it's so different to South African theatre. They always have to put in, like, a racism issue or sexism issue, always gotta put in colour.

DERRYN: Always have to be politically correct.

SHIVANI: And also they all try to speak with phoney accents.

NIVEN: Have you watched something called *Save our Souls*? I think it's hilarious but, it touches on that racism and sexism and colour but what they basically do is...it's a group of University drama students and they ...(interruption)...put big issues to humour. All common issues, like taxis.

SHIVANI: Like *Streaks*, *Streaks* is so funny.

JITHEN: But do you think that's a good thing?

SHIVANI: Ja, you can't take everything so seriously.

JITHEN: Ja, but if you keep on reminding people about it- no matter how funny it is – if you're always touching on the same subject, whether it's harsh or light, I mean, if I'm a guy and I go 'you're a white chick' (lost in transcription)...at the end of the day, I'm still being racist.

SHIVANI: But have you watched *Streaks*? They actually let racist people see how silly they are. Like, they've got this old lady who sees this black American guy and she goes "Don't we have enough of them in our country – why do we have to import

them!" I mean, that's what people really think but they put it in a funny way so people can ...

JITHEN: But I could get offended. If I'm a black American, I could get offended.

SHIVANI: No but they make them see how stupid they really are.

DERRYNY: They're supposed to but a lot of them don't.

JITHEN: Ja, I just think people should...South Africa should actually get over that and, on theatre, start doing what America does. Like, don't go over it. don't

DERRYNY: ...become American ...

JITHEN: Ja, don't even start changing our culture but just get over it and start moving on...it happened, it's in the past - start moving on ...

(?)Ja, it's like, 10 years gone now, so...

SHIVANI: But it's still here

JITHEN: I know but...our cinema is our first thing, that's our key thing. I mean, people watch that, you know everybody loves. Teenagers watch, young...and it's showing more positive things about the country and also makes them forget about the past. I mean, our younger generation, we don't want to influence them about apartheid. I don't even know that much about it so I'm not that angry, y'know. So I just think cinema is our key.

ARUNA: Ja but we still go to movies to watch Leon Schuster.

JITHEN: But that's like a comedy, you see.

DERRYNY: It also disses everybody.

JITHEN: But that's what I mean.

ARUNA: He puts black paint on and he plays different roles and it's funny.

JITHEN: If you look at all his movies, he's doing the same thing. All his movies are either about racism...the accents have to be there, they have to get a Boer person, it has to be in Bloemfontein. After a while, if you've watched three or more of those movies...I saw one and I was like "that's really funny". Second time when I saw it I was like "Ja, okay" y'know. There was one, Sweet and Short – who remembers Sweet and Short? It was very funny okay, but after, when 'There's a Zulu on my stoep' came out, it was pretty dumb. I just thought it was ridiculous, they were bringing Prince Charles into the issue, y'know.

NIVEN: But doesn't that happen for all other series and productions?

JITHEN: Locally?

NIVEN: Internationally or locally. Like, for example, *The Mask* cartoon. When it came out everybody hosed themselves silly for the first few episodes, after that it just got redundant. And Jim Carrey ...

Zeenath: Look at *Airwolf*, right. If I can remember right – or maybe it was a dream – they had *Airwolf* come to South Africa.

(Big response)

Showeana: Yes, I was there.

Zeenath: So it really seemed real.

Okay. Did you admire any characters on TV or want to be like them?

Anybody else look up to characters on TV or have a hero?

(Silence)

Okay.

Now let's talk about more recent media memories, so, what you remember about TV more recently.

You told me about your favourite shows at the beginning, but what else, what other programmes do you watch?

Shainez: Comedies like *Spin City* and *Dharma and Greg* and *Frasier*.

Fezile: *Kids Say the Darndest Things*.

Vuwokazi: The *Jamie Fox Show* and *Third Rock from the Sun*.

Ok, anybody else, what else? What about you – you just watch channel 'o' at 2 in the morning?

Sfiesl: No I like mini series and the one I'm fascinated with is *New York Undercover*.

Anything else?

And which soaps do you watch?

Vuwokazi: At the moment my favourite are *Sunset Beach* and *Days of our Lives*.

Fezile: And *Generations*..

What do you remember about what you've watched on TV recently?

Vuwokazi: I just saw a music video of this girl, what's her name...Pink...Pinkie (acknowledgement). I just saw her video on the way to this tut.

Anybody else? What do you remember about what you watched on TV recently?

Shainez: There was an episode of *Jag* last week about drug smuggling.

And what do you remember about it?

That the main guy saved the day.

And why do you think you remembered that...just because it was a good show or...

Ja, because it's my favourite and I kind of have a thing for the main guy, even though he's married. It was the first time he went undercover and stuff like that, so, it was a nice episode.

Anybody else?

Ian: There was an episode of *the Simpsons* the other week about beer. I thought that was fantastic.

And why?

Because Homer was such a champion, he becomes like a mobster and smuggles beer because they had a prohibition.

So you think you remember it because there was a particular hero?

Well he was the hero, he saved the day, and he's like the absolute anti-hero of the whole town and he comes to the rescue.

And why did you like the show, do you think, just because of your affinity to Homer?

And Beer!

And beer, ha! Anybody else?

Showeana: Last week's episode of *South Park*, it was basically the same thing, but Cartman saved the day. They went to a forest and they got lost and Jennifer Aniston was the voice of the woman in charge and Cartman went off and he saved the day and...Kenny didn't die.

Anybody else, what do you remember?

Sfiesl: That sense of satisfaction when you see the guys dancing on the screen, you know, the guys can dance you know, and you just get this...satisfaction.

Okay.

What characters stand out in your mind from TV today, what characters do you like or hate?

Shainez: I like Michael J. Fox.

Why do you like him?

Because he's got a successful TV show even though he's suffering from Parkinson's disease. He can still get an award for doing the show so well...I admire him.

So you admire him as a person rather than as an actor? Yes.

Okay, what other characters stand out?

Zeenath: I like that guy on *Sunset Beach* with the deep dimples, I think he's absolutely gorgeous...very nice.

So he stands out?

He's very outstanding.

Anybody else?

Vuwokazi: I'd say Phat Joe.

And why?

It's the lips and everything. I like funny guys.

Anybody else?

Showeana: The characters, all the women from *Sex and The City* are so...They don't care about what they say, they say what they feel and sometimes...around sensitive issues, they just go for it.

Ian: I like Joey from *Friends*, just because he's so stupid.

Do you still admire certain characters? For example, you said you admire the women from *Sex and the City*. Does anybody else admire characters on TV?

No?

Sfiesl: I used to admire (inaudible name)...the way he talked, the way he walked.

He just exuded cool?

Very cool.

Anybody else think one particular character is cool on TV?

Shainez: Sabrina, I don't think she's entirely cool, but I sometimes wish I had her magic powers.

Okay, you wanna be a teenage witch.

When you remember a particular scene from TV do you remember it as a scene in your head, can you see it playing over, or do you remember yourself watching it?

Do you see the difference? How do you remember?

Ian: I see the scene on TV, I can't see myself watching it.

How about other people, how do you remember?

Vuwokazi: I just thought of something (laughs). Do you watch *Martin Lawrence*? You know he changes characters, I just remembered when he was the dragonfly when he was in the Kung Fu ad and he was fighting with this guy and he was toothless.

And why do you think you remember that?

I don't know but it was the funniest.

And can you see it over in your head like a movie?

Yes, well I taped it and watched it several times and ...

So it just kind of got stuck there, okay. Do other people tape their favourite shows? Do you?

Fezile: I used to.

And did you watch them over and over?

Yes.

And do you think you remember them better because you've taped them?

I used to tape, like, *Studio Mix* and my favourite songs and I used to play them over and over.

How about the rest, when you see a memory of TV in your head, how do you see it? Are there feelings that you associate with watching that show at the same time?

Zeenath: Like the *Titanic*, that song, whenever I hear it, most people it doesn't make them cry but it's sad, I find it sad.

So the emotion and everything...?

The emotion just surges up.

Showeana: There are certain movies that just get you...get you thinking. I taped *Schindler's List* and *Remains of the Day*, those movies really got me thinking

And so you remember things, maybe, that make you think? Even on television? Shows or just movies?

Especially movies.

Are there certain TV shows that make you think, yes or no?

Vuwokazi: Ja like last night there was a thing on SABC 1, a tribute to Mandela, and they just showed all those scenes about what has happened in South Africa and I felt...national pride and everything.

Welling up. Anybody else?

Showeana: One that really sticks out for me was an episode of *Ally McBeal* where she was questioning whether – and around the same time I was doing the same thing – you ever find your true love and if you don't. She was thinking you might just settle for whatever there is, that's one memory that does stand out.

And do you think you remember that because you were thinking of the same thing at the same time?

Yes, whether one true love really does exist.

Do other people have that? Where they remember because it applies to them, like, it's happening in your life and all of a sudden on TV?

Shainez: Yeah there was, I think it was the second or third episode of *Ally McBeal* where that guy she was his future fiancée and...my friends and I were talking about it. The guys you go out with- you don't know if they've got other girlfriends and stuff – you trust them completely and they could be fooling around behind your back and you don't know about it – unless you've got a lawyer like Ally whose gonna tell you.

So you remember because you talked about it with your friends and it's a point of discussion in you own lives, okay. Anybody else?

Zeenath: Most of the soaps, they're like, very relevant to our lives. It's happening all the time so we are always linking things.

Okay and how do you link it?

Like when they show teenage shows and they're going through boyfriend problems and the same thing is happening with us, those kind of issues.

Anything else you want to tell me about what you remember about TV or the way you remember them? Or scenes?

Ian: I remember one episode of *Suddenly Susan* where one of the main guys died, do you know who I'm talking about? Richard Strickland...or, ja, David Cartman.

Oh yeah!

And they brought that into one episode where he was going to watch a Fatboy Slim concert and "The Gate" – which is the name of the paper – they were gonna go with him and, like, he didn't arrive and sort of left you hanging on, like, he sort of disappeared. Makes you wonder, what if one of your friends died, how would you react as a group of friends.

So it had an impact, like, what would happen or what would I do?

And you think – you'll never see that character in *Suddenly Susan* again, so it's like, more of a reality.

Because you know he really died, okay.

And why do you remember that episode, was it poignant or did you just experience it intellectually, was it emotional for you?

It was emotional.

Shainez: He committed suicide and things like that make you wonder why a person who has everything and he goes and does that.

Alright, um. Why do you watch what you watch now? Do you watch because it's informative or entertaining or...

Shainez: Because it's fun.

So it's an escape for you? You think so too?

Fezife: Definitely.

Do people agree?

Zeenath: Certain types.

Like what?

I like watching love stories.

Why do other people watch TV?

(Entertainment)

What makes it entertaining?

Fezife: Like channel 'o', it's the latest music and if it's comedy, you sit and laugh.

Okay, good.

Sfiesl: I watch action packed movies. For me, it's entertaining, and secondly, you want that feeling of nostalgia...you want to be there but you can't be there...you want to do that but you can't do that.

Okay, so you want to be put into the situation?

Could the people on your favourite shows attend varsity here? Shainez: I think if my favourite actress or actor were to come to the university, actually meeting them in person might change your perspective on them, they might not be the same in reality.

Okay, now take that and flip it around, what if they came as a character, like, what if Sammy...could they come here? Are there certain characters that you think could fit in or...?

Zeenath: I don't think they'd study here, they'd probably study through correspondence because everybody would be stalking them.

Shainez: They wouldn't get much work done.

Any others that you think could live in your own lives?

Vuwokazi: I think Martin would bring more life to this place.

Fezile: I think Bill Cosby could fit in because he's more natural and casual.

What effect do you think that the shows that you watch have on who you are?

Sfiesl: Back in the days when I used to watch (mentions the same inaudible name)...the way he walked.

So it gave you a model?

Ian: Are you talking about impact on your life...especially things like MTV and music videos with the latest fashion and trends overseas, it's like, our window to the world. We think, like, "oh, that's what they're doing in America" and this is the clothes we must wear, or how we must act.

Do you feel that way about fictional shows as well, or just MTV?

Not really, like, I can see the difference between fiction and reality – it doesn't really apply when I watch fictional things and stuff.

Then you're not looking at what they wear?

Vuwokazi: I look at the way they talk

Anything else, how it impacts who you are as a person? Does it influence your values or goals or what you want?

Vuwokazi: Well if you take, like, Sammy. Some of the things she does – I'll never do that to my sister or friend.

So it puts you in this – would, could I – situation? Okay.

Showeana: Sometimes when you watch something and it has a happy ending, you think that your life...you hope it's happy.

So it gives you that hope that in the end good will win and you'll find your man and he'll be on a white horse, okay.

- END -

APPENDIX G

UNIVERSITY OF NATAL I

11 April 2000

No.	Name	Age	Favourite Programme/Genre
1)	Charma	19	<i>Ally McBeal/Part of Five</i>
2)	Alicia	20	<i>Ally McBeal</i>
3)	Victor	18	Channel O
4)	Tendai	45*	News
5)	Emmanuel	24*	Sports
6)	Lindiwe	34*	News
7)	Joanne	20	<i>Days of our Lives/channel O</i>
8)	Michael	20	<i>News Radio</i>
9)	Gillian	19	<i>CNN/Northern Exposure</i>
10)	Jerusha	20	<i>Whose Line Is it Anyway?</i>
11)	Pranusha	20	Comedies
12)	Natasha	21*	<i>Ally McBeal</i>

First of all, where was the TV kept?

(All say lounge, except Pranusha, who says 'in the bedroom')

Were there any rules?

Michael: It had to fit in with bedtime, couldn't watch after 7 or 8 o'clock

When did you watch television?

Michael: In the late afternoons.

Alicia: Also before school, the morning cartoons and after school.

Charma: If no chores were done, there was no TV, or if homework wasn't done. In preschool and primary school I watched cartoons and stupid programmes.

Any rules?

Pranusha: No

* These focus group participants are outside of the study's 15-20 age parameter.

You could watch anything?

Pranusha: Yes, but I had to do my homework first.

Gillian: My parents tried to in senior school by saying we could watch so many hours, but it never worked.

What weren't you allowed watching?

Gillian: *Loving*.

Joanne: *Dallas*.

Gillian: That was immoral.

Alicia: I wasn't allowed to watch *V*, they said I would have nightmares.

Michael: *Thirty Something*.

It was too adult for you? Anything else? Did you usually watch by yourself?

Pranusha: By myself.

Jerusha: With my family.

Alicia: In the evenings with my family, in the afternoon with a friend.

And how do you watch TV now?

Gillian: Now the programmes all suck, I prefer CNN and informative programmes.

The sitcoms are terrible, when I was little, my favourite was *Thundercats*.

When do you most watch TV now?

Charma: After varsity and in the evening.

Pranusha: Straight after varsity!

Alicia: Also straight after.

Charma: I watch it for relaxation.

Alicia: And in the evening, the parents go to bed.

Victor: I watch when I have time to watch.

Anything else about your viewing habits?

Gillian: I can't just watch TV, I have to do something with my hands.

Victor: It depends on the programme, if you realize it's important, like a documentary or music awards, then you watch.

Anything else about the way you watch TV?

Natasha: I just watch.

(Jerusha and Pranusha agree.)

Alicia: We usually watch while we're eating.

Natasha: No, we are not allowed to because then we won't pay attention to the food.

(Pranusha says the same rule applies in her home.)

Victor: It is not nice to eat in front of the TV when you are watching something disturbing.

Gillian: We always eat in front of the TV but I would prefer to eat at the table.

And now, when do you watch TV?

Gillian: Not after three in the morning.

Charma: My parents leave it to me.

What shows do you remember watching when you were little?

Alicia: *Maya the Bee*.

Gillian: *Thundercats*.

Natasha: *Scoobie Doo*.

Alicia: *The Smurfs*.

Pranusha: *The Mickey Mouse Club*.

Alicia: *Goofy*.

Gillian: *Roadrunner*.

Jerusha: *Webster* and *Different Strokes*.

What did you like about those early shows?

Pranusha: They were funny.

Jerusha: There was lots of fighting.

Alicia: The characters were cute.

Charma: They always had happy endings.

Gillian: I liked the old programmes because the characters kept to character, like the *My Little Ponies*. In *Ally McBeal*, the characters are so different to what they were in the beginning and that guy from *Growing Pains* is now in his own show called *Kirk*, but he is completely different. Oh and *Paddington!* *Paddington Bear* was great.

And why did you like *Paddington* in particular?

Gillian: Because he ate marmalade.

Okay. Anything else, anyone else?

Charma: I liked that little yellow bird, Tweetie, that Sylvester is always trying to catch because he is so cute and little but he is so clever as well.

Michael: *Bugs Bunny*.

***Bugs Bunny*...and why did you like *Bugs Bunny*?**

Michael: No idea.

Okay (laughs).

Alicia: Oh and the *Ninja Turtles*, I loved the *Ninja Turtles*, they were one of my favourites.

And why?

Alicia: I just, I wanted to be like them, I wanted to fight like that and eat pizza (Agreement.)

Okay, and so, do you remember anything else like particular storylines that stand out in your mind?

Gillian: I remember one episode of *Thundercats*, um ... this was fourteen years ago so...okay. There was one where there was an enchantress type woman and she was...actually wait, that was *My Little Ponies*.

Oh no, okay...so it's from *My Little Ponies*?

Gillian: No wait, it was *Thundercats*...because she was trapping them in this glass cage and there was this bird that could sing incredibly high and it shattered the cage with it's voice. Now I only remember because I was at a Game Reserve at the time so I was watching it in the middle of the hills somewhere.

That's a good memory, I think it's significant.

Victor: And that kid's programme *Kideo*, because this programme, it's not that good because it's for kids, you know. It's funny to see a person playing with kids and I like music, so I ended up meeting the guy in real life.

Okay, so you liked it because you met the guy and so it related to your real life and...

Victor: Yeah, it was really so cool.

Charma: I also remember that programme *Pumpkin Patch*. (Agreement from others.) and *Wielie Walie* and I liked those because there was a lot of singing and poetry and stuff like that

And you, you liked *Pumpkin Patch* as well?

Pranusha: Ja, we used to watch it everyday...everyday.

Charma: With Woofles and Freckles and Speckles.

What do you think these programmes that you watched when you were small, what did they teach you?

Pranusha: The alphabet...all educational stuff. Morals as well.

Gillian: I just remembered two programmes from when I was small, one was *Heman* and one was *McGyver*, of course.

Victor: I think a lot of these programmes they...they are showing the reality of life.

So you think they did?

Victor: They did, they gave me a focus on what is happening in life.

Do you think the real life shows taught you about life or did cartoons teach you about life?

Victor: Even the cartoons...even the way cartoons are portrayed, with their characterizing...they, like, portray, like, real life.

Charma: Ja but they die in the end and come back to life.

So you disagree?

Charma: Ja, I think that was just for the fun of it and the other one's like *McGyver*, like you did think he was really going and solving problems.

Okay, anybody else, what lessons they taught you?

Natasha: Well, they were educational in that you learnt numbers and alphabet and stuff but at the same time, they had this same kind of storyline where the good always won and it was very...I think to an extent stereotyped.

Natasha: I mean, you never saw a storyline where the bad guy won. Happiness was always restored. So I think, we're basically used to that kind of thing, where it was good to be nice and polite and stuff like that.

Victor: But I think cartoons, they show the family, you know...cooking...and that is the picture of life, the reality of life. Also, when I was young, we used to play games back home where you'd pretend like you're the father and you have the woman and the kids and with cartoons, it's more the same.

So, the fantasy that you played in your real life as children, related to the fantasy that you saw on TV?

Victor: Yes

Okay. What were you gonna say, Michael?

Michael: Ja with *The Gummi Bears*, they used to make Gummi Berry juice.

(Others remember.)

And what did you learn from that Gummi Berry juice, Michael?

Michael: Not really the juice, just that they always worked together as a team to overcome Gregor and his ogres.

So maybe concepts about teamwork and working together and co-operation and all those things.

And why did you primarily watch them?

Pranusha: It was something fun

Entertaining? What were you gonna say?

Gillian: Well, when I was like, really small, I'd go to preschool in the morning; go visit my friends and then I'd come home and watch my friends on TV. It wasn't just that there was nothing else to do I was just really convinced that like, the Care Bears really cared for me.

So you formed a relationship with the characters? Okay.

Do you think these shows related to your own lives? I mean, Victor you said that the fantasy you were playing kind of related to what you saw on TV, so obviously there was some kind of relationship. Would you say that they related to your own life?

Victor: Well, yes.

Anybody else, did you relate them?

Alicia: I think, um, that you would sort of try and be the character when you played games.

Okay, that's my next question. Did any of you act out what you saw on TV?

(Charma and Alicia agree.)

Victor: Ja that's what we would imitate.

What?

Joanne: I was just thinking, the programme that I remember from my childhood was *The Cosby Show*, and the reason that we watched that was because it was so similar to our own family. Rudi was my own age and the older brother was my brother's age so...I always thought that I was Rudi.

Okay.

Victor: You know, myself, I used to be with my friends and I'd watch the television, right...and I used to watch the cartoons and try to imitate. So I think it was all about...being part and parcel of our lives.

Sure, sure.

And did any of you buy things or consume products based on the shows?

(Yes, yes.)

Gillian: I had a Thundercats sword.

Natasha: My Little Ponies, I had the whole set.

Michael: I had the Thundercats...the little guy had an airboard.

Alicia: I had Heman.

Pranusha: I had the Sheera colouring book.

Victor: What about the Casper comics...I had a problem in primary school, we weren't allowed them, the teacher would take them and I'd buy another one and she would keep on taking them.

Okay, and did you look up to the characters on TV when you were small?

Gillian: McGyver.

And why did you admire him? Anyone else?

Pranusha: I never, I never considered them to be real. I knew they weren't real, it wasn't someone I thought I should look up to.

No one? Ok. Anybody else who thought so and so was their hero?

Charma: What was that programme with BA...

(*A-Team*)

Yes! I liked Face, I thought he was very good looking

Anything else you want to tell me about what you remember from TV when you were a child?

Gillian: I remember something about the *A-Team*, apart from the fact that I had a friend who had a habit of putting a stick in his mouth and acting like Hannibal. There was an episode when they got exposed to radiation, and Face was getting all bummed because he like, touched a flower and it wilted.

An interesting memory.

Now I wanna talk about your more recent media memories, so, what you remember from what you watch more recently, okay. So let's get into the more recent past. You told me all your favourite shows, are there other shows that you watch regularly?

Alicia: *Sunset Beach*.

Michael: *Dharma and Greg*.

Natasha: *Frasier*.

Alicia: Monday night is TV night.

(Agreement.)

Charma: I like *Dawson's Creek*.

Victor: I like Felicia's show and *Two-Way*.

Okay, did you just say something?

Alicia: I don't like Felicia.

(Laughter.)

Michael: She's trying to be like Oprah Winfrey.

Alicia: I find that she's very self-absorbed and the show is basically all about her. (others agree), so someone will have this huge crisis and she'll be so insensitive to that person's feelings and she'll just be like "Oh well, you know what happened to me" or how it relates to herself...she doesn't actually know what she's talking about.

Victor: That's what I hate about her...she doesn't give other people a platform. I think with Oprah you have the floor.

Natasha: She really understands what the problem is and, at one point Oprah will not say anything for like ten to fifteen minutes before she says anything.

Victor: There is another show of Bill Cosby, about kids...

Oh, *Kids Say the Darndest Things!*

Any other shows you watch?

Natasha: I like *Generations* and *Buzz*...it's fun.

Alicia: *Who Wants to be a Millionaire*, every Sunday.

(Others agree.)

Michael: *Duty Calls*.

Duty Calls?

Michael: It's a real life documentary about the South African police.

Tell me, what you remember about these shows? For example, you said *Generations*, what do you remember about *Generations*?

Natasha: Well what I found interesting about *Generations*, well I watch *Days of Our Lives*, and, I don't know if anyone else watches. I prefer *Generations* to *Days* because if you watch *Days of our Lives*, Susan and Marlena have been carrying on for ages. But in *Generations*, like, on Monday they have a secret and on Thursday it's out. I mean, they don't keep you hanging. In *Generations* it's fast moving.

And what do you remember, are there particular characters that you remember or what...storylines...about *Generations*?

Natasha: Well my favourite character is that girl with the kidney op...Ntsiki.

Pranusha: I hate her!

Natasha: Oh she's a horrid character, but she's smart.

And why do you hate her?

Pranusha: Because she's devious.

Charma: Very evil.

Victor: I have an objection to this business of soapies because they are glued to the television, you know. And they become more like the stereotypes, "let's watch the soapie", they don't have time to talk to people.

So you think people focus too much on them?

Victor: Ja, a lot, especially women.

Okay, what do other people remember about programmes?

Jerusha: I think the most annoying thing about soaps is the worst situation can be a situation. Like the Kristin situation, like, build a secret room why don't you!

Gillian: Or, like, the themes in soapies, either they've got amnesia or they're married twice...

(Agreement.)

And so. Do you remember those themes in soapies? Can you remember an example of where one of these theme happens? So give me examples of where somebody has amnesia.

Jerusha: *Sunset Beach* and *Sammy in Days*.

Pranusha: And the *Bold*.

Gillian: And Brooke had amnesia, and Laura had amnesia.

(All talking at once.)

Okay, so you remember soapies – and maybe even sitcoms – in themes, hey? Is that true?

Alicia: Well, soapies is themes, sitcoms...I'm not sure.

Pranusha: Sitcoms are just funny, you laugh at the joke and that's it.

So you remember what's really funny or outrageous?

(Yes)

Charma: Like, for an example, in *Friends* – I love, love, love *Friends* . I remember a specific episode like when Jennifer and Ross kissed, I'll remember that always, when they eventually got together, it was like – big suspense and then they kissed and were together.

Victor: I think, to remember something in soapies or TV, especially a programme...I'll give you an example, like Lawrence Martin – his programme – if you were to remember, it would be something funny. Like, he just pisses everyone off and, that's why, even by myself I will laugh and that's how I will remember it. I've experienced it with some of my friends, when I've watched.

Okay, so that's a good point, so that, if you talked about it with someone else, does that help you remember it?

Victor: It helps a lot, that's why it sticks in your mind.

And do you find that, you'll talk about it the day after or will you talk about it a week later?

Charma: The day after. Or if you missed an episode, then you can speak about it, like, a week later. What happened last week.

Pranusha: Or if something evokes a memory of the last episode.

Gillian: I just wanted to say that probably the reason I can't remember a single episode of any soapies is that, there's very little new that happens, like, I will remember it if it's new.

Michael: Like, in American sitcoms there's like a formula thing. You can see the joke before it's happened, like, someone says something and you know the punchline. Or you know that the person they're talking about is gonna walk into the room as they say something.

So, you don't find those things memorable?

Michael: Well, like, some of the time you do, like, it's weird like some programmes like *Spin City*, I find that extremely funny but it's classical American sitcom.

And what makes you remember *Spin City*?

Michael: I don't know, with a lot of the sitcoms where you can see the punchline, I don't laugh, but with *Spin City*, I just laugh even though...

Alicia: You know it's gonna come but you don't know what's gonna come.

Okay. Anything else that you remember about shows or how you remember them?

Michael: Um, *Whose Line is it Anyway?*, that stands out because it's all impromptu, and most of the programmes, even if it's live, they still have a script that they can go to. This programme is completely ad hoc so that's like real humour.

And do you remember that show better than other shows?

Michael: Yes.

Pranusha: I do as well.

Okay, so that's a good question, do you think you remember non-fictional programmes more than fictional? Which do you remember more?

Michael: Well, I can't remember a single question from *Who Wants to be a Millionaire*, but I can remember certain episodes from sitcoms.

Okay and why do you think that is? Does anybody else have an idea?

Gillian: Well, I'm just surprised because my favourite thing is National Geographic and CNN, and, I can remember a wolf documentary that I watched. It said that a wolf could drag something 30 times it's body weight and it could cover 3 miles in a day. No reason why I should remember that, But I do because it's interesting.

So you think you remember what's interesting and real?

Gillian: And non-fiction.

Victor: Well for me, it's not about fiction or non-fiction, it's about whether it draws my attention.

And how do you think it draws your attention?

Victor: Well to draw my attention...let's say for a non-fiction programme, let's say *Who Wants to be a Millionaire*, and say somebody like, he won after a long struggle and that will stick in my mind. And sometimes, like fiction, if something can make me laugh...as long as it's not boring.

Do you think it has to apply to your own life? For you to remember it?

(yes)

Does anyone have an example of that where it's applied to your own life and so you remember it better?

Charma: For example there was this programme, *Felicity*, and she went to university and I was going to university and I thought "oh my gosh this is just like me" and she met this guy there and I met a guy and it just applied to me totally.

Okay.

Charma: And she broke up with her boyfriend and I broke up with my boyfriend (everyone responds) and I thought...she's like me, *Felicity* (uses mock tone) (laughter)

Victor: Wow.

Charma: But it wasn't like "oh my god, I'm Felicity", I was just like "wow, this is so similar".

Alicia: Ja, I suppose like with *Ally McBeal*, she's always having trouble with guys and that...it doesn't apply to me but it was applying for a long time.

Charma: But now she's found a man! (meaning Alicia)

Victor: When it comes to the issue of intimacy, that's where there's a lot of attention, that's where everyone wants to know and try to compare themselves, this applies to me, it's really...you really try to compare.

Okay, so you find yourself comparing your own lives to those on screen?

Victor: And maybe I admire that situation or particular person. Especially on issues of love relationships, they pay attention.

Do people remember where a relationship peaks or where it dissolves better?

Or no, is that a non-issue?

(some indicate non-issue)

Charma: No, I definitely remember when people get together that are like, supposed to get together for a long time.

You agree Michael?

Michael: Yes.

Victor: Take for example the soapiers, soapiers are more centered towards love relationships and people wish to watch the climaxes of soapiers and stuff like that.

Okay. Do your friends watch mostly the same shows you watch?

(Yes)

And do you talk about them together?

(Yes)

And how would that happen?

Natasha: My lift club, we all love *Ally McBeal*, so this morning, as we were coming to campus we were carrying on about it, from beginning to end - the soundtrack, the works - whatever interested us.

Okay, so you talk about the music, what happened in the show...Give me an example. What did you talk about this morning? I'm just curious.

Natasha: This morning we talked about when Elaine was having that meeting, right in the beginning, with John Cage and she was breastfeeding.

And why do you think that was memorable, that she was all of a sudden breastfeeding?

Natasha: Memorable to me? Well, I dunno, because...what I found funny was him, he does that thing (gestures).

So it's memorable to you because of his behaviour?

Yes.

Michael: When something shocking happens, then obviously as soon as you see your friends you know that they remember it as well.

If it's shocking?

Michael: Ja, then it stays in your mind. Like when Ling and Ally kissed. I don't even watch Ally and I watched that episode, really.

Alicia: I think last night's episode was actually quite sad and that makes you feel something. Last night, at the end, I mean, I was ready to cry it was so sad.

Pranusha: Ja, it's so strange to see them so serious.

Alicia: Ja, none of them were joking, usually, like Richard says something or whatever.

Pranusha: No matter how serious.

So maybe, too, when people are out of character, that's memorable, is that true?

(yes)

Pranusha: Something out of the ordinary happens.

Okay. These are some recap questions. I really want to talk about the impact of your memories. Why do you think you watch what you watch, do you watch it because it's entertaining or because it's informative...why do you watch what you watch?

(Most say because it's entertaining.)

Gillian: Informative.

Victor: Well I watch channel O because it's entertaining but since I am studying music I can also relate it to my course and career. Also, I want to watch the styles that they use and to copy their styles and I can improvise something. Let's say I am watching a documentary, I would like to watch to see what happened in Hiroshima, and what really happened.

Charma: Ja, it just depends on what you're watching.

So it depends. You can watch for a lot of different reasons. That makes sense. Okay. What impact, do you think, what you watch has on who you are as a person, if at all?

Gillian: I think TV is responsible for the moral decline of the entire world myself.

Look, look at a year ago, a little kid watches *The Mighty Power Rangers*, I've watched an episode of that – that's not like *Thundercats*, okay – that is violent. This kid took a little kid, tied him to a tree and burnt him, okay. That is not a positive thing and it is purely because of TV, I promise you his parents weren't saying "here kiddy, you want to take your friend out and kill him". It's because TV is not... Even if you

look at *The Ninja Turtles*, they, like, jump from rooftop to rooftop and say, "hey kids, don't try this at home". And because of that you can see it's kind of a joke. The TV nowadays has lost that. The thing I most have against *Ally McBeal* – the woman does not look like a woman – how many women have become anorexic because they've got her as a role model – that is an effect.

Okay, do you, does everybody else agree or disagree with that? Do you think that *Ally McBeal* for example, impacts who you are as a person?

Alicia: I don't think so. I think, watching *Ally McBeal*, we're at that age where we've pretty much established as a person and maybe you'll draw from things. Like I said she's never got a boyfriend and I thought that was like me. But I don't think I would go to the extent of starving myself for two weeks to look like her because I actually don't think she looks very nice. So I think it depends, you know. We're older now so it's not like watching some violent cartoon like they have on KTV these days.

Victor: Well, to me, I think television has a negative and positive impact on your life. Because some people try to copy those on TV, especially the young people – they are still young and there is a lot of confusion. There was a programme called *Yizo Yizo*, and they think that's how things happen and that's how you can live. But when it comes to other programmes, it can have a positive impact.

Alicia: At the end of the day, you know it's just a programme, but if you're a kid you might not think it's just a programme, you might think it's real.

Michael: It depends on the person, you can take what you want.

Alicia: Then you have extremists, who really want to be like that character, then there will be others who just watch and think "oh well".

Victor: (beginning inaudible)... *Yizo Yizo* was trying to show the bad things in society.

Charma: I think if you watch a programme like *South Park*, if you're old enough to understand what's going on, and you think "ok, that's just a couple of kids being rude", that's fine. But if you're a child and you're watching this you might be "oh great, ja it's nice to use that word". When you're that age it really isn't nice for children to speak that way.

Gillian: But don't you think there comes a point when the parents should be there and actually say to the kid "you shouldn't be watching this".

Charma: Definitely, it's the parents responsibility to restrict children, but ...

Gillian: If the parents can't be bothered to be around to tell the children not to watch something like *South Park* – which is not for children – it's the parents fault.

Alicia: But the movie, wasn't the movie like 2 to 13 or something? I went to watch the movie and it was quite hectic.

Pranusha: Ja, my brother went to watch it and he's in standard five and he doesn't use language like that. I mean, he's still a baby so for someone like that to watch something like that...

Michael: I don't think kids that age really understand what it's about, I mean, how many kids watch the *Simpson's*, but some of the things they say is actually like social commentary.

Alicia: It's not only, I think, the responsibility of the parents. But the people who let these movies come out and be seen by the public, and who said *South Park* should be PG 13 – there's only so much parents can do.

Gillian: At 13 I wanted to see the *Prince of Tides*, which I still haven't seen, but apparently it's incredibly graphic, highly sexual, and it was a 14 age restriction, so I couldn't see it. But that movie should have at least an 18 age restriction – but that's not the same as TV, it's a whole industry.

Okay, just to close, I want you to think about specifically about memories and what you remember from television.

Do you think that those memories have incorporated into who you are or how you live your daily lives?

Alicia: Not really.

Does what you remember influences the person that you are?

Gillian: Can I put it this way, if I watch a show like *Knight Rider* say, it will remind me of the fact that when I was small I wanted to drive a fast car, right. But it doesn't change the fact that that I always loved cars, that was there already. It just, um, it's just a reminder.

So maybe, what you watch on TV reminds you of your real life?

Yes

Okay.

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