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**Border crossings:  
How students negotiate cultural borders  
during digital video production**

**Franci Cronje**

Thesis Presented for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Supervisor: Dr. Arlene Archer

in the Centre for Film and Media Studies

Faculty of Humanities

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

December 2010

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## Thank you

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Elaine, William and Gerrard: Children of gold.

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# Abstract

This thesis explores emerging patterns of communication in student video production and the extent to which such patterns signify cultural border crossings in a South African upper income group school context. The investigation was carried out with specific reference to the politics of difference, an educational philosophy defined by Henry Giroux (2006) as border pedagogy.

Within the framework of multimodal pedagogy, four learners from diverse cultural backgrounds collaborated with one another in a timeframe of three days to create digital video productions using guidelines provided by the researcher. The production unit was observed in order to answer questions around the utilisation of video production in the classroom, as well as how learners interact and negotiate cultural issues while producing video. The data was analysed with a custom-made multimodal toolkit as proposed by Baldry and Thibault (2006). By employing Kress and Van Leeuwen's four strata of Discourse, Design, Production and Distribution various types of data illuminated themes around social memory, race, the influence of class difference, and gender representation. Assessment techniques in terms of the multimodal theories of Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001) also enabled the researcher to look at the way in which meaning is made 'in any and every sign, at every level, and in any mode' (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001: 4).

The classroom intervention was designed to encourage adolescents as 'unique hybrids' (Bhabha 1994) to cross borders of cultural identity, hypothesising that difference might emerge

more clearly in the negotiation and video production process, than what might crystallise in analyzing the final video production. Metaphorical border crossing in a cultural and racial sense might become more apparent in production than final product. The negotiation of Border Difference took preference over the ultimate erosion of these borders.

Significantly, these students as 'unique hybrids' (Bhabha 1994) create hybrid border spaces in the act of producing video and using parody as a genre of expression (Crapanzano 1991). They create their own counter memory by re-working social memory inherited from older generations as well as appropriating aspects of shared identities from other adolescents in their immediate shared environment. The research found that the use of video production combined with semi-formal pedagogical spaces around critical issues regarding identity and race can act as a meaningful catalyst for understanding identity and difference amongst young people.

With the use of multimodal interaction analysis (Norris 2004) the thesis explores how students from different backgrounds negotiate identity borders when they need to do so, how the cultural borders between these groups are negotiated during creative activity as well as what metaphors emerge, and how learners interact and negotiate cultural identity issues while producing video. Employing critical border crossing pedagogy when working with video enables a special space for negotiation between various students, which the researcher calls a hybrid border space. In this metaphorical space, adolescents borrow

from each other, from popular culture, and from the media. They also retain some of their own cultural background in this space.

Inclusive hybrid border spaces already exist. This study only emphasises how these spaces could be activated and fast-tracked within a formal school environment particularly in the South African context. The intervention discussed might act as a useful blueprint to facilitate border crossing within other pedagogical settings. Therefore, this study unpacks dynamics around cultural identity and how these can be activated within a hybrid border space, with the help of informal classroom discussions and video production to enable critical thinking.

This study has argued that these hybrid border spaces can be activated as semi-formal interactional terrain when initiating structured projects involving negotiation with video production to achieve a certain goal.

The data included video observation of semi-structured interviews, planning sessions, character mind maps and other paper based planning documents such as a script and storyboard. These, together with the four-minute student video production were used to identify key themes around creating a new counter memory (Giroux 2006) from generational social memory (Giroux 1991) where the young people side with each other rather than older people from their own background.

The study concludes that these young people live with a different outlook on social memory and history than their elders. Contrasting to the general exclusiveness and ready willingness of

older generations to respect societies, to remember attitudes, events and conventions wherein they discriminate against any difference, and thus preserving a social memory. The four students deal with these memories as they deal with the rest of the influences they ingest daily; they re-interpret all information, redesign it according to their own tastes and preferences and re-make it into a new, agreeable and inclusive counter memory. By appropriating some aspects and identities foreign to their own heritage, they inadvertently move closer to one another.

Video production seems to be particularly beneficial to activate a metaphorical hybrid border space. Not only is it inspiring to create something in a collaborative group, but the medium of video with its associations and relevance to popular culture and media facilitates expression in a language which the students experience as motivational. In the process of creating video, students also create counter memory collaboratively. Video production here thus acts as a vehicle to understand difference.

# ONE

## Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore emerging patterns of communication within a multicultural school environment and the extent to which such patterns signify cultural border crossings. The investigation was carried out with specific reference to the politics of difference defined by Henry Giroux as border pedagogy, an educational philosophy or ideology that 'both confirms and critically engages the knowledge and experience through which students author their own voices and construct their identities' (Giroux 2006:60).

The design of the intervention becomes important; it combines border crossing with multimodal pedagogy in order to facilitate a hybrid border space where young people can interact towards better understanding of their differences. South Africa is currently emerging from a divisional period in history where

cultural and racial divides ruled politically and socially. Although democracy was instated more than thirteen years ago, some societal divisions still remain.

Learners in the now-integrated South African schools still seem to be segregated across racial and cultural borders (Chisholm 2004; Harber 2001). A disturbing feature about the current diverse South African school context is that learners seemingly live, study and play in discrete cultural 'pockets' or enclaves and may never communicate in any depth with other learners from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds.

The intervention deals with four female seventeen-year-old drama students from an upper income group school seated within the heart of the economic hub of South Africa. The drama teacher identified them as four students who have obvious differences in background, cultural identity and class, although they seem to be friends away from the school environment as well. The object was that they should participate in an activity where they would critically investigate each other's backgrounds by discussing difference and identities in the timeframe of a day and a half, and then create a five-minute video production within the remaining one and a half day. The video needed to be a promotion for a television soap opera that they needed to design themselves. They each had to create and negotiate two characters identifiable with their respective identities, and to give them each a role in the story.

## Research Questions

The investigation refers specifically to the 'politics of difference' defined by Henry Giroux as 'border crossing pedagogy', an educational philosophy that 'both confirms and critically engages the knowledge and experience through which students author their own voices and construct their identities' (Giroux 2006: 60). Giroux defines borders not only as physical borders, but also cultural borders which were constructed historically to privilege certain social and cultural groups and individuals (2006). Such borders are created, and are constantly reaffirmed, updated and sometimes redrawn to serve individuals and groups with standing and agency in society. Giroux accentuates that critical border pedagogy theory can be deployed to create an awareness and mental suppleness among students while critically engaging with cultural difference. The concept of border crossing as a pedagogical method devised by Henry Giroux (2005) prompts the first research question:

- How do adolescents negotiate cultural difference when using video?

Furthermore, Giroux holds that it is vital to introduce meaningful kinds of *intercultural* communication into society (2006:190).

Multicultural literacy as a discursive intervention is an essential step not only toward a broader notion of self-representation, but also a more global notion of agency and democracy. Literacy in this sense is not only pluralized and expanded, it is also the site in

which new dialogical practices and social relations become possible.

These new dialogical practices, he asserts, are needed to create bridges between people so that genuine democratic sensibilities and practices can become rooted in society. As soon as this point of view is accepted, cultural differences can become a social, cultural and political asset instead of a liability. Video production is introduced in this study as one of these dialogical practices, and as such, prompts the second question:

- What are the affordances of digital video production for designing a pedagogical intervention to negotiate diversity?

The research project with video production as dialogical practice was designed in such a way as to motivate learners to cross cultural borders. The four participants cooperated as a group with the explicit object to ensure that individual cultural identities were recognised and explained. How each participant sees and experiences her culture in her own cultural milieu, should become equally important in the final video production. The hypothesis is that cultural differences might emerge more clearly in the negotiation and production process, than what might crystallize in analyzing the final video production. In other words, it is assumed that metaphorical border crossing in a cultural, gender-related and racial sense might become more apparent during the production process than final product. Thus, the negotiation of border differences is more important than the ultimate erosion of these borders.

It is foreseen that cultural capital trading would be activated during the act of video production. The study also hypothesises that cultural capital and crossover will be evident in the discourse, design and production process. However, these 'trading moments' might not only happen in the video production, but also significantly in the discussions and interviews about identity serving as a preamble to the production process.

## Context of the study

The four female adolescents used in this specific study were purposely sampled from an upper income group school's drama class. Mountain Hill, a privately funded school teaches students from a wide range of cultural backgrounds. These students all come from the upper income group within the economic hub of Gauteng. In this, the most affluent province of South Africa, a variety of better-off financially successful professional members of society are drawn together on the basis of income and available cash, and therefore, similar lifestyle, rather than race and cultural identity.

Ester's mother is a teacher at the school. They are from a white Afrikaans-speaking family who are seen as less affluent than most other students in this environment. Larusha is often stereotypically mistaken to be Muslim because they are Indian. However, her family is Hindu and although her father and mother come from two different castes, they are sufficiently similar in the South African context that the family is seen as homogenously Indian. Tumi is a black female whose mother comes from a Sotho background. Her father is Zulu, but he lives

and works in a neighbouring country. She lives with her mother in the upper income group suburb where the school is situated. Both Tumi and Amouré, the fourth student, come from single parent homes. As Ester, she also has an Afrikaans father. Although she lives with her father, Amouré remains staunchly proud of the Italian genes from her mother's family. The anonymity of the girls is protected by the nicknames that are used.

The four students were chosen from the same drama class for specific reasons: they are willing to perform, and they also know each other on a social level away from the classroom. For this project, the research needed demographic variables narrowed down as much as possible in order for the basic research project to show decisive results. I must reiterate here that the main purpose of the intervention was not to tease themes out of the data, but to be able to design a classroom activity that would effectively facilitate understanding of difference, and ultimately border crossing. It was important to design a project that could be replicated on a wider scale, in more diverse circumstances.

The qualitative study makes use of group- and personal interviews questioning cultural identity, race, religion, taste, and gender. The group discussions deal with video production metalanguage and practical instruction as well as the technique and meaning of the genre of a daytime television series commonly called the 'soap opera'. Also included were symbol drawings of certain conceptual ideas, production planning documents (character and plot planning, a script, storyboard, props and costume planning), music production, and the shooting, editing and final distribution of a student video.

The pedagogical process for the video production group was designed in such a way that cultural negotiation and communication around difference formed a core starting point. The first day of contact consisted exclusively of verbal discussion around cultural identity without any instruction in video production. By using verbal language as a semiotic mode in this part of the process, the stage was set for consciousness of cultural difference as a defining factor right through the workshop. The verbal mode was chosen here because of the more direct way of communication possible. While non-verbal modes might prove fruitful in a protracted, more indirect way, fast-tracking the process of awareness formation seemed more plausible in a medium with which the learners are already comfortable.

The discussion group format used in the first part of the intervention afforded the advantage of steering the conversation into certain directions. Open questions with reactive responses to initial questions facilitated lively interaction within the group.

The researcher prompted negotiation of difference using themes and question lines on the students' own identities and how they would describe themselves within areas such as language, culture, school culture, race, ethnicity, gender, age, family status, social setting and environment, and how they express their identity with their clothes, language, creative activities and friends. They were also prompted with questions around their role in their family life, background, beliefs, practices, and where they fit into this micro aspect of society. Question lines also explored their

attitudes regarding their identities as perceived by society around them.

## Theoretical position

Three key elements form the pillars of this study. The study aims to explore how border crossing pedagogy can be practiced in the South African environment, and how video production as intervention can facilitate border crossing, specifically employing multimodal pedagogies as aid to practically activate such an intervention.

### **Border crossing and counter memory creation**

This research is informed by Giroux's border crossing theory, which asserts that *differences* may be productively harnessed and utilised to unify social groupings and contribute something essentially new and creative that did not exist before. Giroux links the shifting of borders by way of border pedagogy education to the development of a more democratic society as well as reconfigurations of culture, power and knowledge in society (1991). Three theoretical assertions about borders from Giroux can be unpacked in the following way:

- Borders define the metaphorical (but real) power bases of the body, culture, history, space, land and psyche, and they bring to light 'issues of language, history, power and difference' (1991: 4).

- By creating the pedagogical conditions in which it is relatively safe for learners to become 'border crossers', one gives them the opportunity and the ability to appreciate and understand their own identities in relation to other cultural identities.
- Border pedagogy highlights the limitations and strengths of inherited historical borders in a way that enables us to understand the discourses and social relations that inform our currently dominant cultural frameworks.

Giroux (1991) asserts that we need to question our social memory so that it brings oppressive practices and power relations that might be totally invisible to us into the spotlight so that they can be critically examined and assessed. He also asserts that we need to empower learners and teachers to become aware of forms and instances of dominance and victimization so that we may understand, resist and neutralise them by restructuring the kind of relationships that legitimate them and give them their power and authority. Educators can use the agency of culture to develop a politics of identity, community and pedagogy. A single culture may be divided by internal borders into several territories, each of which contains histories, voices and experiences. It is these borders that define the identity of separate spaces within a single culture. A space of this kind is separated and defined primarily by borders — but also by the power relations that legitimate borders, and keep it intact within a wider network of relationships.

It is important to give learners opportunities to cross borders while allowing them to maintain their safety and the integrity of their individuality and identity within a secure pedagogical environment. Giroux says: 'What is at stake here is the development of a border pedagogy that can fruitfully work to break down those ideologies, cultural codes, and social practices that prevent teachers and students from recognizing how social forms at particular historical conjunctures operate to repress alternative readings of their own experience, society and the world' (1991: 56). What is pedagogically important here is 'to articulate difference as part of the construction of a new type of subject, one which would be both multiple and democratic' (Giroux 1991: 57). It is essential for teachers to create conditions in which learners can feel secure enough to cross borders to meet the unknown 'Other' who provokes fear and anxiety, in circumstances in which neither party will feel threatened, demeaned or patronised.

Once learners have crossed such borders and become familiar with the 'Other', they should ideally have achieved a more critical but appreciative understanding of their own culture. Learners who have acquired this new sensibility will also have acquired the ability to 'zoom out' and look dispassionately, critically but appreciatively and proudly at the dynamics of their own culture. It is also important for learners to acquire the kind of sensibility that constantly aspires to cross borders. It is important to bear in mind that Giroux's theory is predicated on the value of the creative possibilities inherent in *differences* between cultural identities rather than commonalities.

How border pedagogy would influence social memory in the South African context becomes interesting. Giroux quotes De Lauretis (1987) as describing social memory as representing 'a form of cultural criticism that refuses to treat democracy as merely inherited knowledge: instead, it is premised on the assumption that struggles over public life must be linked to postmodern notions of democracy that "afford both agency and sources of power or empowering investments"' (De Lauretis 1987, quoted by Giroux 1991: 25).

In *Border Pedagogy and the Politics of Anti-Racist Teaching*, Giroux (1992) defines border pedagogy as 'presupposing an acknowledgement of the shifting borders that both undermine and reterritorialize different configurations of culture, power and knowledge' (1992: 23). If learners are ever to understand the 'Other' and have the freedom to create for themselves new identities within existing configurations of power within society, they themselves need to become skilled in the crossing of borders. Border crossing is therefore an essentially 'subversive' but self-affirming, stimulating and creative activity because it invites both learners and teachers to acquire the skill of crossing borders into new and different cultural spaces to map out new political territories and identities. The most important skill for promoting this process is being able to *write, speak* and *listen* 'in a language where meaning becomes multi-accentual and dispersed, and resists permanent closure' (Giroux 1992: 245). In order to activate this multi-faceted language, multimodal methods of teaching and learning seem to be a creative way of unlocking certain historically frozen arguments.

## The role of multimodal pedagogy

Multimodal texts consist of different kinds of multimodal meanings. A number of design elements feature in the multiliteracies theory, namely linguistic meaning (language in the cultural context), visual meaning (everything seeing and viewing), audio meaning (hearing and sound), gestural meaning (any movement), and spatial meaning (encompassing space and place). These design elements are essentially an employment of multimodal discourse. It proves a new way of pedagogically deploying this discourse in teaching and negotiating something as complex as cultural negotiation in video production (Kress & Van Leeuwen 2001).

How multimodal social semiotics gets integrated and incorporated into formal as well as informal learning environments, is seen as multimodal pedagogies. 'Pedagogic processes can be understood as the selection and configuration of the semiotic resources available in the classroom' (Stein & Newfield 2006:7). Both learners and teachers are creators of meaning. Keeping in mind who the audience would be, they choose their means and methods of communication out of available personal resources. According to Stein and Newfield (2006), multimodal social semiotics and multimodal pedagogies challenge the 'logocentrism' of traditional 'human communication' to include other forms of communication apart from verbal language (written and spoken). Human communication is not static (traditional view) but it changes and moulds constantly with society and individual use (Finnegan 2002).

Multimodal pedagogies are seen as ways 'to describe pedagogies which work across semiotic modes' (Stein & Newfield 2006: 9). What is important is that semiotically, multimodal pedagogies focus on 'mode as a defining feature of communication in learning environments' (Stein & Newfield 2006:9). All communicative acts within a classroom are inherently multimodal and learners are all resourceful, creative and critical thinking. Thus, one needs to cater for the capacity of making individual meaning of multimodal messages. However, learners interpret and deal with these modes differently according to differing cultures and histories. Most importantly, 'In multimodal pedagogies, there is a conscious awareness of the relationship between modes, learning and identity' (Stein & Newfield 2006:10). Bearing in mind the possibilities of multimodality, it becomes apparent that this type of pedagogy could suitably complement teaching practices using video production.

## **Using video production in border crossing**

An initial literature study revealed some cross-cultural studies in which Giroux's border pedagogy had been used in conjunction with digital video production as a tool to illuminate cross-cultural issues among learners from different cultures in various countries. One such study involved Japanese and Kenyan learners (Maeda 2000), and another involved German, British, Czech, American and Hungarian learners (Niesyto, Buckingham & Fisherkeller 2004). Both these studies provided some useful ideas about the kind of research design and procedures that might profitably be used in this research.

Video production is an ideal tool for training learners to move out of their well-defined, predictable and stereotypical 'comfort zones'. Comfort zones are places where apathy and prejudice flourish. The unique language of video can inspire and motivate learners to cross the borders that define the visual, technical, and communicational conventions of their own culture. The affordance of video is that it can also inspire one to cross cultural borders. The unique potential of the video camera is that it gives the person who holds the camera the ability to see through the eyes of the 'Other'. By doing this it gives the one who holds the camera an understanding of how the Other lives within the borders of his or her cultural and ethnic territory. Border pedagogy encourages one to resist cultural similarities and to probe differences in an effort to understand the alien habitations of the 'Other'.

## **Data collection**

This research is based on a qualitative case study using video data analysis, focus groups, participant observation, extensive personal interviews as well as reflective journals written by the learners themselves. Additionally, individual interviews at predetermined stages with individual members of each team, as well as a team as a whole, were held at certain points in the production process. These interviews presented the study with rich data about personal points of view, emotional experiences, and information about either how well, or how badly communication is taking place between team members. All questions were predicated on a particular day's proceedings, events, highlights and criticisms.

Video recordings triangulate other datasets as the students engaged in the creative activity. The participants each kept an individual reflective diary that they updated daily for the duration of the process. Focus group interviews with the production team were conducted every afternoon, as well as individual interviews on a discretionary basis.

Contemporary media are specifically designed to serve a practical purpose: to entertain and educate large masses of people. Over time, these became more specific. Media are currently employed to express semiotically particular meanings. When the Mountain Hill production group produces a parody in video, the inherent meaning of the daytime television series features primarily on that level of popular cultural 'spectacle'. This includes all forms of filmic production. 'Production is the communicative use of media, of material resources. The idea of 'medium' includes the body and the voice, and the tools which may extend bodily communication and expression' (Kress & Van Leeuwen 2001:66).

In the context of translinguistics as termed by Bakhtin, the language of video would fall into the category of a primary- rather than a secondary genre (more formal language, for instance legal language) of communication (Bakhtin 1986). The use of this primary genre of everyday language makes video production wholly accessible for adolescent communication. However, it was important that the technicalities and novelty of video production did not overshadow the main aim of intercultural communication in this study.

## Chapter Exposition

*Chapter two* concentrates on building a theoretical framework investigating theories of border crossing and a politics of difference as described by Giroux (2006). These borders are not described as physical borders, but as cultural, social and metaphorical borders. Aspects uniting, as opposed to those dividing, are explored in the South African context. This section also describes hybridity in a global context, and how young people establish cultural identity by negotiating cultural capital (Bourdieu 1984). 'Taste' (Bourdieu 1984) plays a big part when these young people deal with social memory. Social memory, its origins and definition is investigated further in the chapter. This aspect becomes important when dealing with divisional aspects that could impact on students' lives. How social memory re-forms into counter memory makes one of the guiding themes of the analysis chapters.

A look at meaning making and video production is prompted by investigations regarding gender and border crossing within the genre of the television soap. The study also investigates social interaction and identity through the lens of social semiotics, and video production facilitates new perspectives in this regard. The interpretation of the text is emphasised in this part of chapter two. The representation as discussed by Hall (1997), Barthes (1977) and Foucault (1972) form the core of this section. Representation is seen as the basis of production, reception, interpretation, accommodation and the re-configuring of messages. Several texts emphasising the importance of video

production as a sociological shaping tool as part of representation are interpreted in the latter part of the chapter.

Finally, the theoretical framework focuses on a multimodal approach to understand difference, and motivates video as production of text as well as the usefulness of interpreting text multimodally for better and richer understanding. Stein and Newfield emphasise the importance to challenge the 'logocentrism' of human communication (2006: 9) by recognising it as a changing entity. The chapter concludes with a description of text as a social construction, and how aspects such as Discourse, mode and genre impact on expression of identity by video production.

The *third chapter* concentrates on the methodology of the study. It discusses the sample of four female seventeen year olds, what their backgrounds are, and why they were chosen. Furthermore, the chapter describes the data collection strategies namely video production, group discussions, participant observations, personal interviews and reflective journals as well as paper based planning documents prepared by the four participants. The chapter describes why the physical intervention was divided into two parts. The first part consists purely of group- and personal discussions, and the second part deals with the students producing their own video.

The next section explains the method of social semiotic-based multimodal data analysis employed in analysing the chosen dataset. The chapter furthermore motivates the use of the particular events and why they were chosen for multimodal

analysis. An explanation regarding the multimodal toolkit and its composition respectively for the two datasets follows next.

Transcription with the help of *Final Cut Express* and exposition of tables explain how data was transcribed in order to make meaning. Finally, the researcher explains ethical difficulties working with young people and video recording as well as complications when using video as primary dataset, what to consider while recording and transcribing it.

The *fourth chapter* discusses how border pedagogy facilitates the creation of counter memory in the hybrid border space by analysing a number of events out of the video dataset. It explains how themes regarding social memory and its linkage to race emerges in this context, and how these students feel that the older generations are stereotyping difference and animosity in their existing environment. The data expose how they negotiate their way around these preconceptions of older generations by skirting situations and issues in order to unite as young hybrids. By creating a hybrid border space, they act inclusively towards their peers, contradictory to the exclusive nature of their elders, building a shared counter memory with their own peers.

*Chapter five* describes events from the video production by the students, called the *Class of '94*. In the five-minute promo for a television soapie, the four producers used parody of their own volition in order to criticise existing stereotypes and perceptions about identities out of their own lifeworlds. The chapter builds on discourses regarding gender and social memory discussed in the previous chapter, and how they deal with the shared, but different memories. It becomes clear how they distance themselves from

their elders' perceptions and social memory by creating their own stereotypes that challenge in their own terms again, hypocrisy and their ideal of honesty and integrity. Finally, the last chapter reaches certain conclusions regarding the feasibility of this intervention, and how replicable the project might be in other contexts in South Africa.

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# TWO

## Cultural difference and meaning making in video production

This study investigates how diverse students negotiate difference when working together on a set task, and what can be exploited specifically in video production that might not be recognised in the current formal pedagogical environment. Additionally, the study explores how students create and author their own identities in a cross-cultural environment when they are motivated to work together in focusing on a pedagogical task.

The purpose is to explore alternative means of communication within a culturally diverse South African school environment and the extent to which patterns signify and problematise cultural border crossings. South Africa, while aspiring to be a 'non-racial, non-sexist and democratic nation' (Ndebele in Soudien 2006:

vii), is still struggling to democratise itself. Oppressive social structures have been ingrained over many years. Education as a site of struggle, offers an opportunity to engage with some of these hegemonic practices and assumptions. Van Wyk (1997) cites among others, two reasons for the insufficiency of previous 'Model C'-schools when it relates to integration and differentiation. Firstly, the 'white' culture still holds a weightier measure when compared to the other cultures, thus being considered more important, and secondly, only small efforts are made to engage in intercultural literacy issues.

The investigation refers specifically to the 'politics of difference' defined by Henry Giroux as 'border crossing pedagogy' - an educational philosophy that 'both confirms and critically engages the knowledge and experience through which students author their own voices and construct their identities' (Giroux 2006: 60). Giroux defines borders not only as physical borders, but also cultural borders which were constructed historically to privilege certain social and cultural groups and individuals (2006). Such borders are created and are constantly reaffirmed, updated and sometimes redrawn to serve individuals and groups with standing and agency in society. Giroux accentuates that critical border pedagogy theory can be deployed to create an awareness and mental suppleness among students while critically engaging with cultural difference.

The second section of this chapter investigates how some aspects of cultural identity unite a social group, while other aspects cause division. Cultural difference, and the fluid nature of their origin, account for a significant aspect of identity. This chapter

investigates South African youth culture and what influences individual situations, while also exploring cultural hybridity from a global perspective. The fluid nature of culture and identity seems to have a direct influence on local youth identity. Thornton emphasises that culture is a resource, and that we should investigate what culture *does*, instead of what it is supposed to *be* (Thornton 1988). The 'cultural turn' by which people accessing similar cultural resources are drawn to the same practices is investigated, as well as how 'cultural capital' and 'cultural identity' are currently constituted through hybridity in the global context.

The third section of the chapter concentrates on meaning making through the lens of social semiotics. Representation of identity forms a critical part of investigating difference. However, the social power of a text lies in its interpretation within a context. As such a message is interpreted and translated within the cultural context where it is received. This last section discusses representation and identity and creating meaning with the multimodal discourse analytical framework within which the project is embedded.

## **Using border pedagogy to interrogate social memory**

To understand border pedagogy within a framework of critical pedagogy, the following section investigates the way this theory views historical divisions of race and identity, specifically constructions of the Other. Historically, the Other, according to Giroux, has been represented as 'impure, evil and inferior'

(Giroux 1994: 36). Whiteness represented itself as being pure, superior, the ultimate 'norm', and aspirational with little opportunity created to question inequality, oppression and racism. In this view, the centralised 'whiteness' perspective becomes the only acceptable and plausible viewpoint to engage with race and the Other. From the 'white' perspective, Otherness is stripped of any voice. In contrast to the benign nature of whiteness, the Other is represented as stereotypically violent, uncontrolled, dangerous, and that which is to be feared (Giroux 1995).

With the emergence of new liberal politics around race and difference, increasing hybridisation of culture, emerging feminism, postmodernism and postcolonial discourses, lively interaction around representation and cultural differences has emerged (Giroux 1995: 37). This has not necessarily meant that borders and misrepresentations have ceased to exist, but that the discourse around difference has moved to another level. What has happened, according to Hall (in Giroux 1995) is that the notion of the 'innocent black', and the modernist view of the disenfranchised 'Other', have been eradicated. One needs to view these constantly shifting conceptions of race together with gender, class and ethnicity (Hall 1997).

Within the framework of border pedagogy, students learn to think critically in order to understand the identities of others. The pedagogical process aims to create a certain 'fitness' of interrogation of ideas such as difference outside of an individual's cultural, racial, linguistic, gender, political and other territories, with the ultimate goal of creating players in society who can

interact in a non-threatened way. However, instilling this type of agency has the potential for conflict within authority structures and pedagogues may need to re-think traditional authoritarian roles. Giroux elaborates that such an empowering pedagogy could initiate

fundamental questions regarding how students make particular investments of meaning and affect, how they are constituted within a triad of relationships of knowledge, power, and pleasure, and why students should be indifferent to the forms of authority, knowledge, and values that we produce and legitimate within our classrooms and university (Giroux 2006: 61).

Students need to be partly critical of older generations' forms of authority and values. They need to overthrow negative perceptions and knowledge that is transferred through social memory from generation to generation in order to correct issues regarding the Other and entrenched stereotypes while consequently, building their own counter memory in a positive way.

Giroux calls for the re-engineering of the education system so that students become critical architects of their own environments. This re-engineering is needed to allow and empower students to critically engage with new subjects that emerge in the globalised society. A new critical approach can only be possible if old structures of order and knowledge are set aside. Many educational theorists call for change in the education system, such as Grossberg (1997), Keating (2007), Becker (1997), Kaye (1997), McCarthy (1997), Kellner (2001), Ryan (2005), and the New London Group (1996). Grossberg comments on discourses around difference and interrogates how individuals are empowered to position themselves in a place of

belonging in relation to society. According to him, 'challenging culture's equation with and location in the form of identity as a difference may enable us to think about the possibilities of a politics that recognizes and is organized around the positivity and singularity of the other' (Grossberg 1997: 18). Giroux's position can contribute towards such a change in the educational system. His critical pedagogical stance around the crossing of borders deals specifically with investigating difference, where power shifts and other territories become equalised with that of the subjects' 'own' viewpoint.

One way to re-engineer the education system would be to incorporate new educational media and methods into the classroom. Maeda (2000) defines border crossers as learners who venture to reach out and understand the 'Other' despite influence from traditional popular media or culture. These learners reached out to make contact with 'Others' by claiming to ignore prejudice against what is alien, strange and foreign that exists in popular media. She proposes that if one hopes to acquire a more sensitive, sympathetic and realistic understanding of the similarities between people one needs to assimilate the messages and impressions that are conveyed by the key alternative (non-western) media that she defines as *African, educational, and young people's* productions. The local situation in South Africa is even more complicated than what Maeda describes in her article because of the complexity of mixed cultures and classes co-existing in one space. There is a history of inequality with its accompanying social memory that adds to the reasons to facilitate better understanding of difference.

South Africa is particularly ripe for border pedagogy in terms of the complexities of identity and difference in our classrooms. The African uniqueness and variety of identities are complicated not only by difference between cultural groups and between individuals, but also between generations. More than half of the South African population is under 25 years of age (Soudien 2006). There are eleven official languages representing major cultural groupings. Within any of these social groupings with similar cultural resources, various historical, language and religious affiliations can be detected. Negotiating difference in this context is complicated. Popular culture, the media and a consistent emphasis by various stakeholders and leaders in society on 'unity within the rainbow nation', confuse matters even further.

South Africa still bears traces of, and in many cases is still structured by, racial disparities and disadvantages persisting from the apartheid era. As a result of this contradiction, youth today are struggling to figure out who they are: in spaces opened by new possibilities; but also in spaces closed by old constraints (Ndebele in Soudien 2007: viii).

A large amount of pressure is also placed on the youth to unify the nation; to use the agility and positivity of the young mind in leading the older segment of South African society into more enlightened times.

Border pedagogy does not aim to eradicate all difference, as Ellsworth (in Stone & Boldt 1994) contends. Giroux emphasises that it is not a call to water down difference with the object of sameness in mind, but rather to understand how historical and social backgrounds shape effects of discrimination. Looking through this lens, it becomes easier to understand how differences

are 'organized and constructed within maps of rules and regulations and located within dominant social forms which either enable or disable such differences' (Giroux 2006: 55). These differences manifest themselves within the context of social spheres such as schools, workplaces and families, and then within the 'discourses of history, citizenship, sex, race, gender and ethnicity' (Giroux 2006: 55). Becoming comfortable with difference within the South African context might not necessarily transform society into a harmonious and homogenous unit, but it might enable us to debate difference in order to understand diversity. This may help to facilitate even debate where entities or groups could cease to slip into either a subordinate or dominant position because of previously determined and shaped social standings and perceptions.

It is clear that we should not underestimate the importance of identity and difference. Grossberg advocates 'an alternative understanding of the relation of the modern and identity which suggests that the modern transforms all relations of identity into relations of difference. Thus, the modern constitutes not identity out of difference but difference out of identity' (Grossberg in Hall & Du Gay 1996: 93). In South Africa, difference might be interrogated within the context and focus of particular identities. These identities, as will become clearer later in the chapter, consist of many aspects overlaid upon each other. Culture, race, social class, physical location and language are only a few of these aspects. However, an about-turn in a society where differences were historically used for division, to a more egalitarian approach, does not happen spontaneously. Some sort of training and education needs to steer the process. I contend

that Border Pedagogy is an effective way to explore these many facets of difference constructively.

Border pedagogy is about active listening and engagement. Students need to be guided not only to listen to the voices of others, but also to practise conveying their own experiences, stories and stances. In other words, they should be empowered with the knowledge and ability to convey their own familiarities, as well as to internalise the knowledge of others. As Giroux points out, 'Border Pedagogy both confirms and critically engages the knowledge and experience through which students author their own voices and construct social identities' (2006: 60). This knowledge of self and others is required to form a background for students to meaningfully engage in 'criticizing the dominant culture' (Giroux 2006: 60). To address some inequalities in the South African context, such a skill of engagement is needed to counteract existing social memory.

Social memory in the South African context can arguably hamper understanding across cultural borders. Social memory and accompanying emotions that are communicated from parents to children, and generally from older to younger generations, act as a divisive force across the fabric of our society. Fortunately the process is not static, neither is cultural identity itself. Groups and configurations in groups change constantly, which in turn, results in continuously mutating memories. Halbwachs (in Schwartz 1982) discusses the mutative role of social memory in society in terms of how the mental life of social groups functions in order to keep memories and arguments lucid within any particular environment. When groups disappear or mutate,

however, social memory changes accordingly. Groups change to form new groups, which in their turn create their own social memories to suit the new environment and a fresh organisation of the changed structure. Apart from being constantly changing, Schwartz (1982) also describes two aspects of social (or collective) memory. Firstly it consists of the collective fears and aspirations of a certain society, and secondly, it misses the framework or orientation according to which a society is structured. The framework serves as a cognitive, affective and moral shaping force that guides a society into a certain direction.

Young people are naturally influenced by the histories and narratives of their parents and elders. Social memory can cause friction that slows down the process of change, acting as a constant negative protagonist against new directions. Social memory is conveyed to the youth of South Africa by parents and elders in the home context. Soudien (2006) refers to a study by Hasseler in a Durban school, in which she defines the problem of discordance between home and school. She talks about 'ingrained stereotypes', prejudices inherited from parents, and how, at home, some students are actively discouraged from challenging stereotypes. They find it difficult to form new opinions because 'what their parents taught them is gospel', and 'then their parents tell them 'I've lived through apartheid, don't try to tell me [these people] are not like what I think they are'' (Hasseler in Soudien 2006: 65). Histories and collective memories like these play a key role in shaping society. In South Africa people have been living in parallel spheres of existence for hundreds of years. The reasons for, and instances of interaction were artificially scripted and designed to such an extent that even physical location had

different meaning and connotations. This racially divided social memory continues to play an important role in the South African psyche.

South African students with richly varied identities and unacknowledged complex social memories mix daily. They are mostly unaware of the unmined resource for social change within them. An educator not only has to allow, but should actively draw out the identity backgrounds of students and their histories. Backgrounds and 'collective memories' (Giroux 2006: 60) need to be unpacked to understand and critically engage with student experiences.

At issue here is the development of a pedagogy that replaces the authoritative language of recitation with an approach that allows students to speak from their own histories, collective memories, and voices while simultaneously challenging the grounds on which knowledge and power are constructed and legitimated (Giroux 2006: 60).

New avenues open up when social memory is viewed through the lens of border pedagogy, particularly in the South African situation. Social memory 'afford[s] both agency and sources of power', representing 'a form of cultural criticism that refuses to treat democracy as merely inherited knowledge: instead, it is premised on the assumption that struggles over public life must be linked to postmodern notions of democracy' (De Lauretis in Giroux 1991: 25). Informal histories conveyed in society might be significantly different between various socio-cultural groups. However, this awareness of social memory, its constraints and potentials, needs to be actively mobilised. Giroux asserts that we need to activate our social memory in order to bring oppressive practices and power relations that might be invisible into the

spotlight, and enable them to be critically examined and assessed. We need to empower students and teachers to become aware of forms and instances of dominance and victimisation, so that we may understand, resist and neutralise them by restructuring the kind of relationships that legitimate them (Giroux 1991).

Educators, as protagonists, can use cultural investigations to develop a politics of identity and community. A historically objectified grouping may be divided by internal borders into several territories, each of which contains histories, voices and experiences. It is these borders that define the identity of separate spaces within groupings. A space of this kind is separated and defined by the power relations that legitimate it and keep it intact within a wider network of relationships.

Giroux claims that critical pedagogy can develop new 'emancipatory forms of political identity' (2006: 56) by employing the process of counter memory and increasing awareness of the need to resist victimisation and dominance. 'Counter-memory represents a critical reading of not only how the past informs the present but how the present reads the past' (Giroux 2006: 56). He emphasises the use of counter memory as a 'theoretical tool' to make new connections between official histories and personal experiences and voices. In the South African context this means that students should be empowered to integrate and evaluate histories of communities and families within generally accepted public life, the aim being to validate and confirm such histories. While border pedagogy addresses the question of content that needs to be conveyed and negotiated, educators also need a practical way of implementing these

recommendations. The next section looks at the activation of video production within the pedagogical space and how notions of agency and democracy are negotiated in media education.

## **Video production as a pedagogical tool**

The media education theory drawn on here is specifically informed by the theories of Buckingham (2003) and Sefton-Green (1998). Media education can be defined as the 'process of teaching and learning about media', with media literacy being the 'outcome' (Buckingham 2003: 4). This discipline teaches the analysis of media texts conveyed in all the modes at the disposal of popular media (still or moving visual images, audio, and written language). 'It aims to develop both critical understanding and active participation' (Buckingham 2003: 4). Technological advancement enables young people not only to be interpreters of media, but also to be producers of their own cultural media texts. Media texts make use of contemporary 'forms of communication', such as a combination of visual, audio and written language.

Media literacy can be seen as 'a form of critical literacy. It involves analysis, evaluation and critical reflection. It entails the acquisition of a 'metalanguage' (Buckingham 2003: 38). Buckingham (2003) suggests that metalanguage – the 'technical vocabulary' of the 'language' of video such as the naming of various shots, how they are used as video grammar should comprise only a minimal part of teaching in media studies. However, for collaborative purposes, the metalanguage becomes more important (Burn 2007). Media education concentrates on

the use of media to teach and to learn '*about* the media' (Buckingham 2003: 4), rather than using it as an educational tool. Media education develops a critical understanding and meaningful explanation of media texts.

Buckingham's views (2003) agree with Burn (2007) and Sefton-Green's (1998) assertions that digital production is empowering media consumers. They all question the spontaneous evolution to meaningful media production if equipment and skill become commonly available. The question is whether the general trend of owning home video cameras and use of cellphone video cameras, foster a more critical (or investigative) attitude via the production of video. In other words, does better accessibility enhance cultural interaction and investigation in a societal context? Buckingham (2003) states that, unless funnelled by means of a structured programme such as contained in a school curriculum, home video production may remain on the same level as instant photography. However, video production has potential to be much more than just a tool to record. It can also be used as a complicated and dynamic activation to unlock meaning such as the communication that Giroux proposes. Giroux holds that multicultural literacy is vital to introduce meaningful kinds of communication and negotiation of difference into society:

Multicultural literacy as a discursive intervention is an essential step toward not only a broader notion of self-representation, but also a more global notion of agency and democracy. Literacy in this sense is not only pluralized and expanded, it is also the site in which new dialogical practices and social relations become possible (Giroux 2006: 190).

These new dialogical practices, Giroux asserts, are needed to create bridges between people so that genuine democratic

sensibilities and practices can become rooted in society. As soon as this point of view is accepted, cultural difference can become a social, cultural and political asset instead of a liability. However, to tap into this possibility, pedagogues need to compete with a variety of prompts affecting students' lives. Young people have an ever-widening array of choice where identity and cultural questions are concerned. The 'increasingly heterogeneous, multicultural society, in which very different conceptions of morality and very different cultural traditions exist side-by-side' (Buckingham 2003: 16) that today's youth are living in, opens up the possibility of personal choice. South African youth are readily shifting their identities, positioning themselves in the most favourable place available at any given moment (Makhalemele 2005). However, this shifting identity and emphasis on personal choice also exposes them to the international trend of polarising societies that Buckingham describes (2003).

Investigating identity and difference through video production can enrich the pedagogical process of border crossing. Popular culture and how teenagers reference genre and style to express and interrogate differences in identity seem to complement investigations around social borders and territories. South African youth are brought up in a society where social memory of division plays a strong role in identity formation and ongoing social division. In order to understand these identity dynamics, this chapter now investigates the ways in which South African youth shape, adapt and harness different cultural resources, and how to utilise this in the classroom.

# The Pedagogical possibilities of video to investigate cultural identities and hybridity

This section discusses ideas around cultural capital and identity, and hybridity in the globalised context, and the effect of 'taste' in the expression of identity. Rituals, customs and practices that identify and shape our identity and position in society make up the cultural capital that characterises an individual. Additionally, constant adjustment and negotiation within a fluid situation means that we are continuously re-moulding and re-inventing our identities. Borders are defined so that identity is formed in such a way as to include aspects that defines the person, and exclude that which one is not. Thus, the boundaries and what is not are just as important as the definition of 'what is'.

A number of empirical studies focus particularly on the investigative benefits of digital video production regarding cultural identity. Potter (2005) reports on a case study with digital video production by young learners in the United Kingdom. Vaucell, Africano, Davenport, Wiberg and Fjellstrom (2005) write about an intercultural video-sharing project that brought Swedish and Irish children into contact with one another. Although dated, the study by Squires and Inlander (1990) about learners in a high-risk environment who produce videos in a Freirian-inspired video curriculum, raises valid pedagogical issues and theories, and Maeda's case study (2000) on the effects

of video productions by African youths for Japanese pupils relate to the methodology and theoretical stances of border pedagogy.

Dealing with video sharing to share identities, four case studies from the VideoCulture project in which groups of teenagers from Germany, England, the Czech Republic, the United States, and Hungary were involved from 1998 onwards, catches the eye. The first article by Niesyto, Buckingham and Fisherkeller (2001) analyses the project itself and locates it theoretically in terms of border crossing theory. The second article by Fisherkeller, Butler and Zaslow (2001) looks at a discussion group of teenagers and their reactions and opinions to videos that had been produced. The third article by Buckingham and Harvey (2001) articulate more critical and cautionary attitudes toward the importance of the perceived audience and creativity in the video production process. Finally, an article by Holzwarth and Maurer discusses an 'open-ended pedagogic style', aesthetic initiative, and how learners experience an audience. Aspects most relevant to my study include their investigation of the open-ended use of symbolism and its interpretation. A descriptive study by Takakuwa (1996) about a competition in which Japanese learners describe their culture to foreign viewers in English and their recorded attitudes to video production is relevant to concerns regarding intercultural aspects in the current study.

While these articles discuss many important and relevant aspects of intercultural communication through the use of digital video production, studies on the South African context are scarce. All of the above-mentioned studies however, regardless of whether their theoretical underpinning takes account of the concept of

border crossing or not, are designed for adolescents and learners. They all deal with the production of videos in isolation from other cultural or social groupings. Little research deals with the interaction between different identities within a production team, and how cultural identity learning takes place when learners share the value system of the school function socially apart from one another, and how these differences might affect the negotiation of cultural borders. The found literature deals exclusively with more cohesive cultural groups that function as production units instead of units that were made up of individuals with different cultural and representational resources.

## **Negotiating Cultural Capital**

The cultural terrain is contested, uneven and never static. Thornton (2000: 43) states that culture is currently understood by theorists 'as contested yet creative, limiting but empowering, stable yet transformed and transforming, compromised yet valid, bounded but always transcending boundaries'. Malinowski (1993) and Foucault (1982) agree that social power is negotiated in the ordinary life of society, where people bargain (consciously or subconsciously) around ritual, customs and general practices. This 'culture of the popular' is what 'shapes our existence' on a daily basis (Thornton 2000: 35). Culture is always in contestation; individuals are always bargaining, and negotiating the weight assigned to cultural practices and ideas. Cultural 'sets of meanings' are always in tension (Thornton 2000).

Thornton describes culture as 'a set of resources from many different sources' (2000: 43). Consequently, cultural capital can be referred to as commodities, or where 'verbal facility, general cultural awareness, aesthetic preferences, information about the school system, and educational credentials' (Swartz 1997: 75) become material in negotiation; where values are ascribed to certain educational and sociological backgrounds to validate or invalidate individual cultural histories. Thornton claims that 'the knowledge that we have, and often take for granted, such as ideas of economy or culture, has been 'constructed' through a complex set of experiments, procedures, insights, and, above all, texts in which this knowledge is contained and communicated' (2000: 35). Within these power relations, some constructions are then ascribed more value, while others are devalued according to the worth ascribed to them.

The question arises then, how values are afforded, and on what basis, in a society such as South Africa. In his work *Distinction*, Bourdieu (1993) theorises on nurture, and how one's upbringing influences taste, social position, and aesthetics. Such aspects of identity seem to be set at an early age. Early nurturing activities serve to embed 'symbolic goods, especially those regarded as the attributes of excellence, [as] the ideal weapon in strategies of distinction' (Bourdieu 1993). Consequently, this 'dominance of cultural capital' serves to embed and strengthen the dominating class structure. Bourdieu (1993) contends that youth and their opinions tend to be similar to those of their caretakers or elders. However, several external forces in contemporary society might serve to influence youth away from the trends and expectations of their elders.

Globalisation trends not only facilitate cultural capital to become a sociological force by catapulting the world into an industrialised environment, but individuals and groups are constantly prompted to hierarchise cultural assets. Cultural capital is constantly weighed in social, as well as economic ways. This 'cultural nobility' (Bourdieu 1984), where the legitimacy of certain cultural ideas is weighed against economic worth, brings with it the ability to ignore the arbitrary nature of any social order, and to enforce social structure created by economic factors. In the South African scenario this dominant social structure not only stems from economic roots, but also from historical racial domination. While students in a private school like Mountain Hill might be of relatively comparable economic or social class standing, the question is to what extent a historically dominant, or oppressed, social structure influences them.

Bourdieu (1984) acknowledges that not only does an individual body exist, or co-exist with society, but that the individual body is part of society. He defines 'habitus' as the concept of the individual and society existing in relation to each other (Swartz 1997: 97), as well as in relation to 'systems of disposition' (Bourdieu 1984: 6). This co-existence is, according to Swartz (1997), an academic stance as well as a political problem (1997):

Habitus, which is akin to the idea of class subculture, refers to a set of relatively permanent and largely unconscious ideas about one's chances of success and how society works that are common to members of a social class or status group (Swartz 1997: 97).

According to Bourdieu (1984), the ruling class uses culture as leverage and a tool to control everyday life. Such ideas of

dominance shape personal action into that which the individual senses to be the most fortuitous action for his or her advancement in society. These actions then perpetuate existing structures (Swartz 1997). In a way, this perception then becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy in that the individual behaves in a way that a person perceives as being congruent with the performance of the social group to which he or she belongs. According to Bourdieu (1984), one needs to acknowledge that dominated groups are also instrumental in their own oppression. Moreover, Bourdieu (1984) argues that schools mirror authoritarian culture structures in the wider society, as well as negating the authority of the oppressed.

A school is therefore influenced by the immediate society in which it exists. The Mountain Hill students arguably feel themselves to be a part of the community outside the school gates. And although one senses the school has a primary influence in some areas, cultural differences often override class and environmental similarities. That the students fluctuate between the various 'worlds', perhaps perceiving conflict with aspects of their habitus, necessitates meaningful analysis, especially the difficulties what Soudien (2007) calls the 'informal arena' where authority is structured in a more democratic manner. It is uncertain how South African teenagers fit themselves into this environment where they feel they belong, and 'how the individual's depth of habitus – the taken-for-granted in one's everyday world – is tested in these situations' (Soudien 2007: 9).

A big component of adolescent identities consist of an appropriation of popular culture. Duncan-Andrade makes a point that this appropriation of youth popular culture is not a passive acceptance, but rather a 'collective interpretation (meaning making) through representations of styles, discursive practices, semiotics and texts' (2004: 314). I see this as one of the cornerstones of negotiating cultural capital within the adolescent world.

Although popular youth culture forms a large component of the hybrid adolescent, it still makes up only some part of the cultural capital involved in negotiating identity. Buckingham quotes recent research accentuating the fluid way that young people associate themselves with certain cameos and 'lifestyles' which are completely time- and stage bound. He notes nonetheless, that the more ordinary, less noticeable day-to-day negotiation of identity of less 'spectacular' individuals have been largely ignored (Buckingham 2008: 5). These less obvious dynamics are part of the majority of adolescent lives, where cultural capital is used to create identity and social positioning in the true style of Homi Bhabha's 'unique hybrid'.

## **Identity, Hybridity and Social Positioning**

Identity can only exist if demarcated by borders. This, Hall states, is the essence of identity: 'identities are constructed through, not outside, difference' (Hall 2000: 17). Hall continues: 'identities can function as points of identification and attachment only *because* of their capacity to exclude, to leave out, to render "outside", abjected' (2000: 18). Cultural borders are never fixed

or sedentary, because of the fluid nature of culture. It is this 'capacity to exclude' that border pedagogy addresses; to enable students with agency to investigate that which might have been excluded within a social context and its social memory.

Hall (1990) discusses a natural referencing system in which an individual continuously refers and relates current situations and living experiences with those of the past, constantly re-making culture to accommodate past histories. 'Far from being grounded in a mere 'recovery' of the past, which is waiting to be found, and which, when found, will secure our sense of ourselves into eternity, identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within the narratives of the past' (Hall 1990: 225). Young people in South Africa are dealing with social memory and identities built around difference between races, as well as the trend towards a postcolonial globalised identity; to borrow from a variety of identities in constant flux.

With globalisation came the postcolonial subject in the postcolonial world. Nationalities lost power in favour of globalised industry that is no longer state- or even continent-bound. With the global industry came globalised individuality. A global allegiance dominates the traditional order of national importance, resulting in people borrowing from many available sources to suit their own identity building. 'Neither colonizer nor precolonial subject, the postcolonial subject exists as a unique hybrid'. Bhabha theorises the concept of hybridity as a third space created, or born out of two movements (Bhabha 1994: 37). Border crossing is hybrid by its very nature: '[M]arking an

image of between-ness which does not construct a place or condition of its own other than the mobility, uncertainty and multiplicity of the fact of the constant border crossing itself' (Grossberg in Hall & Du Gay 1996: 91). Border crossing creates a mindset and critical thought pattern in order to be able to investigate identities other than one's own, without trying to 'own' the other identities. 'Borders' can be described as spatial metaphors, non-physical spaces of existence where people negotiate identity in the current globalised world.

In the context of popular culture, where the desires and wishes of young people for all things modern move them to negotiate the co-existence of the traditional and the new, hybridity is often used as a descriptive term. Kraidy presents hybridity as 'more the rule than the exception' (Kraidy in Strelitz 2004: 265), and as the 'cultural logic' of globalisation, 'entail(ing) that traces of other cultures exist in every culture, thus offering foreign media and marketers transcultural wedges for forging affective links between their commodities and local communities' (Kraidy Strelitz 2005: 148). Grossberg (in Hall & Du Gay 1996) describes the 'hybrid' as an individual who borrows identity from all available sources. This constant flux of identity creates the ideal space for experimentation and investigation, which are part of identity formation in adolescence. With hybridity as the norm, easy accessibility of globalised identities, also in the South African context, create fertile ground for individual choice.

Because of the fact that identity formation is seen as a social process, Buckingham prefers to talk about *identification* instead of *identity*: 'Individual selfhood is a social phenomenon, but the

social world is constituted through the actions of individuals' (2008:6). The digital world and interactions within it, make up a large part of the lives of young people moving in first-world environments. On the one hand the expressive character of media such as video can play a large part in sharing information to negotiate social identities and cultural capital, but it can also 'be seen to provide powerful opportunities for identity play, for parody and subversion of the kind promoted by queer theory. Here, the emphasis would lie not on honesty and truth, but on the potential for performance and even for deception' (2008: 9). Because adolescents tap into this sharing of cultural capital, some interesting questions arise about association and understanding between different groups with differing identities.

Potter (2005) asks questions about the way in which learners choose to present themselves, about which personal attributes they had intended to portray, and about which particular aspects of digital production's form and function allowed them to succeed in achieving their goal. His study addresses identity negotiation in video production, and his target group is slightly younger than mine. However, he answers important questions about how young people present themselves in the video medium. One of his most important conclusions is that 'there is ample evidence of the sophistication of these manipulators of moving image literacy as they merge sound, image, cultural references and performance into a representation and celebration of their identity at a particular place and time' (Potter 2005: 2).

Empirical studies show that learners feel closer to, and more comfortable with people of their own age in foreign cultures than to older people in their own culture (Niesyto et. al. 2003), and that video is an effective way of liberating communication in the young. Video making is teleological in the sense that it plays to an audience or an imagined recipient of the message. In this way, video making, complex though it is, is no different from other forms of focused communication. Communication always has a recipient or audience in mind. To make polished videos for an audience of adults is in itself a feat that requires a great deal of education, sensitivity and an understanding of the norms and ideals that dominate the adult world.

But that is not the kind of video that will unleash spontaneous creativity in the young. Spontaneity does not equate unstructuredness, or unfocused and random production but rather video production sprouted by the immediacy of creative energy. The technical difficulties, constraints and parameters of video technology are such that they impose form and narrative logic onto the process. Spontaneity and creativity are not inimical to form, function and logic. The discipline imposed by form and the requirement for logical progression in communication is the chalice, the container, in which the energies of creativity are given shape and finish.

## **The hybrid nature of the South African youth environment: local and global borrowings**

Viewed in an international context, youth culture has played an unusually prominent role in South African society. Zegeye

(2004) ascribes this dominance to the youth's strong revolt against Apartheid politics for forty years from 1970. Apartheid policies were also the cause of generational division that will impact on youth for many years to come. Soudien (2007) describes the environment in which young South Africans grow up, as 'complex' as it is both 'of and against Apartheid' (Soudien 2007: xi). South African youth combine traditional backgrounds grounded in 'custom, magic and belief' (Soudien 2007: xi) with the quest for contemporary, popular culture, fuelled by youthful desire and well-orchestrated globalised need creation. This well-strategised need creation perfected by popular culture, taps into the human tendency Althusser (in Soudien 2007) describes; the individual is constantly prompted every day into moulding actions, reactions, beliefs and emotions to negotiate his or her stance in society. For South African youth, the modern 'instant gratification' culture is counterbalanced by a genuine belief in and nostalgic yearning for old, established ways (Soudien 2007).

It is noticeable that globalisation funnels South African youth in a direction of identity homogenisation (Soudien 2006). Soudien (2007: 28) refers to a recent poll by the Unilever Institute that highlights the significant extent to which South African youth are ascribing to a globalised world market. Radio, television and the Internet are instrumental in exposing local youth to global trends regarding fashion, music, television and film. However, this homogenisation occurs more in the middle class youth arena where popular culture and global media have a greater impact. Additionally due to globalisation, two new tendencies are surfacing among South African youth: cultural borrowing and adaptation, and individualism (Soudien 2006). Soudien

comments on the 'high levels of dislocation and trauma' and how societies were affected by Apartheid histories (Soudien 2006: 25). In terms of cultural borrowing and adaptation, popular culture provides a wide range of aspects and desirables that young people appropriate and mould to fit their own cultural environments.

The second trend among South African youth, that of individualism, occurs among young black individuals who choose to follow their cultural roots and customs, but in an informed, individualistic way. Although Soudien elaborates specifically on trends among black South Africans, it seems that such individualism occurs generally across race and class. The point is 'not that young people are throwing away their traditions, but that they are remaking them' (Soudien 2006: 30). It seems to me that young people are creating new cultural practices, in some ways homogenised, while in others, sentimentally, recreating 'retro' with a modern slant. Not only are they following the trends, but also the youth are active producers of these new thoughts and actions. Mgxashe (in Soudien, 2007:28) quotes a young woman saying: 'when we start talking about the African Renaissance we are not necessarily talking about living strictly in accordance with our traditional values ... we are more bent towards African values which are a kind of hybrid of all our exposures and experiences' (Mgxashe in Soudien 2007: 28).

Historically for South Africa, identities and relations functioned around the dominance of the colonial imperialist and the unequal relationship with the colonised subject. In this context, the 'nation-state' defined interpersonal power dynamics, and identity

definition was 'dominated by the dynamics of center/periphery, colonizer/colonized, victor/vanquished, oppressor/victim' (Dolby 2001: 12). Emerging from histories on different sides of cultural spectra spanning political, social and language borders, today's youth are the first generation that has really been afforded the opportunity to open themselves up in an overt way to influences from all possible avenues in local society. Scholars are increasingly recognising the 'hybrid history of South Africa' (Strelitz 2004: 265).

However, I would contend that although some contact points could be instrumental in creating cohesion when negotiating difference within a group of students, these very same transcultural wedges could serve as a complication, masking difference that might surface between participants in this study. Hybrid identities can create a sense of 'sameness' to such an extent that difference may conveniently be put aside. The emphasis in this study is on empowerment, and how South African teenagers in particular, can use a constantly shifting and changing environment to mediate their own identities.

South Africa has never had a 'unified national identity' (Strelitz 2004: 631). Different descents as well as divisive Apartheid politics worked in unison to provide us with a varied society in every aspect. Massey's idea of 'spaces of interaction' (in Strelitz 2004: 632) logically propagates the usefulness of the areas and instances of contact. Instead of considering areas and spaces as homogenous pockets of various segments of society, we should investigate areas where local identities are continuously shaped and influenced by each other within everyday interaction. These

'spaces of interaction' serve as platforms for hybridity in current society.

Many vocalise the need to be fluent in English, and well versed in popular culture and international trends. Older generations debate cultural alienation, while the younger generation is actively building their own cultural styles and traditions involving for instance hip-hop music and other artistic endeavours. They are finding a unique voice actively 'debat[ing] issues of representation, their cultural roots, their cultural influences and the differences amongst them' (Soudien 2007: 29).

## **The influence of class and taste in cultural identity**

Hall (1997: 2) defines culture as those aspects that bind a certain group of people together with 'shared meaning', distinctive features of similar living, values and thought signifying a collective 'way of life'. It is also useful to investigate cultural identity through the lens of *taste* as defined by Bourdieu and implemented by Dolby (2001). Dolby claims that the youth she studied 'construct race primarily as a discourse of taste' (2001:15). By framing her study around 'taste', she consciously tries to steer clear of the contested use of 'culture'. By doing so, she theorises about what Clifford calls 'the processes of identity' instead of cultural identity (Clifford in Dolby 2001: 16). By using 'taste', she disassociates identity from territory and physical place, thus investigating identity through a 'global/local nexus of taste practices' (Dolby 2001: 16).

'Taste classifies, and it classifies the classifier' (Bourdieu 1984: 6). By this, Bourdieu means that an individual places him or herself in a certain category, or classification, by distinguishing what is seen as beautiful or ugly. Individuals construct and revisit their personal taste in order to fit in to a certain circumstance or environment. In some instances a certain taste might be negated in favour of something that would yield more socially desirable associations.

This study concerns students who belong to a distinctive school identity while originating from diverse family and cultural backgrounds in terms of race, religion, language, and ethnicity. These students negotiate their social identities to fit into the school identity while negating, or maybe unconsciously hiding, a part of their family identity. This study aims to tease out covert identities, and how students negotiate seemingly invisible differences.

Young people choose many aspects of their identity. Dolby (2001) notes that categories of identification such as 'race, gender, class, and sexual orientation', are not pre-ordained with unchangeable meanings, but rather constitute a set of choices that individuals are confronted with, in order to 'stabilize both oneself and the surrounding world' (Dolby 2001: 9). Choice seems to be inextricably linked to taste. Individual youth identities are not merely formed by local South African influences (Dolby 2001). These identities are not only shaped by popular culture, but students choose their identity regarding race according to global perceptions. This process is one of constant change and renewal as young people place themselves within this

global context. Youth continuously align themselves with people with whom they wish to associate. This choice of taste seems to afford young people more agency to decide how they would like to live.

Social organisation, according to Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001), has undergone a major shift. Not only in semiotic terms, but also economically and socially. The culturally dominating paradigm in the public domain has shifted from a focus on class to a focus on lifestyle (Kress & Van Leeuwen 2001: 35). Although culturally diverse, questions surface around this trend of personal agency, and whether that influences the dynamics between the members of the Mountain Hill group who are participants in this study. Within the discussion around taste as a factor in forming identity, this study theorises about the choices of lifestyle, and the influence that taste might have on communication across difference. However, taste and lifestyle are not the only decisive factors when forming an identity. Cultural identity refers to those aspects in a person's background and habitus that are part of an identity.

The terrain of cultural identity is perceived as a contested area, constantly remoulding and reinventing itself according to societal and individual demands. Consciously as well as unconsciously, cultural capital is defined as a set of resources that are traded. Societies with stronger market forces are more susceptible to cultural bartering. The trend is even more prevalent in communities in a globalised society – globalisation facilitates cultural assets to be commodified to a certain aspect.

Identity is never fixed, and individuals construct and reconstruct their own identities, demarcating borders by way of placing themselves relationally within a habitus of choice. Globalisation facilitates the hybrid nature of this identity formation, where individuals construct an identity from various available resources. Moving from within this 'third space' as defined by Bhabha (1994: 37), pedagogical practices are challenged to create an environment of moving across borders, 'visiting' other spaces so to speak, to create interaction between individuals using this 'newly created' third space as a base.

A third space would be beneficial in the South African school culture that is strongly influenced by the the immediate society in which it exists, and as such, mirrors the negation of the autonomy of the oppressed section of society. Local theorists (Soudien 2007) state that South African teenagers however, might have more liberal influence and agency in their informal arena of habitus than in the formal arena of school culture. Outside the formal school arena, South African youngsters choose complicated and diverse aspects to incorporate in their identities.

Although South African youth, according to theorists (Soudien 2007), have historically played a prominent social role, their contemporary actions and desires are divided. Globalisation and the popular culture trend towards instant gratification draw young people to conform to global trends, while a certain nostalgic yearning for cultural roots and local history form another facet of desire. In conclusion, youth are homogenising their 'African-ness' into a retro trend, trying to carve out an individual slant of their own cultural background, to fit into a

globalised world. Fluidity forms the basis of these formations, while it remains important to keep the increasing agency and taste of individuals in mind. However, although taste can form a meaningful basis for analysis as part of race identity, one should also consider the influence of church, family and neighbourhood in the formation of social identity. One way for South African adolescents to gauge their own degree of fit into a globalised community is to consider messages through the popular media to their own situations. Stories, such as television soap operas, play a considerable role in their decisions.

## **Gender representation and border crossing within the genre of the television soap opera**

Soap operas are originally defined as a television drama broadcast at least three times a week in late afternoon slots. The storyline has no beginning or end, with a number of characters that exist on a regular basis, and a number of ephemeral characters that come and go at irregular intervals (Hobson 1982). A soap opera deals with real-life dramas concentrated to attract a female gaze. It is important that the female audience can relate to the characters, thus they should form a balanced cross-section of society.

Gender and border crossing within the television soap opera genre are investigated in this section, with specific mention of the distinction between gender and sex, the socially determined nature of representational gender difference, and gendered behaviour as culturally acquired. Interestingly, gendered behaviour of students also impacts on the pedagogical style of the

teacher and how critical thinking is navigated. Gender plays a pivotal part within the television soap opera genre, and a section deals with the way that videos are produced within this environment. The latter part of this section discusses the supposed gendered address within soap operas' agenda, and how cultural capital is manipulated to express gender within the genre.

To theorise gender and border crossing within the soap opera genre, it is important to distinguish between sex and gender, as outlined by Oakley (in Howson 2004). Within western culture, 'gender' is characterised by 'differences based on social arrangements' (Oakley in Howson 2004: 40), in contrast to biological differences referred to as 'sex'. Sex is a more physically stable, not so easily changeable attribute, while gender is malleable, defined by psychological, social and representational differences. Aligning with our current unstable postmodern environment, these differences seem to be increasingly hybrid in nature. Gender differences are 'socially determined and culturally variable' (Oakley in Howson 2004: 40), and many of our distinguishable feminine and masculine features are learned behaviour (Howson 2004).

According to Phelan and Davidson (1993), gender borders are significant in the educational context when taking into account curriculum content, pedagogical styles, as well as attitudes and expectations of the teacher towards students. These theorists comment on the impact of gender borders on self-confidence, as well as empowerment for future employment. Giroux (2005) emphasises the way that 'gender relations can be used to

problematize the sexual identities, differences, and commonalities of both men and women' (Giroux 2005: 58).

At issue here is the need to deepen the postmodern as a social category while simultaneously engaging in a politics that aims at transforming the self, community, and society. Within this context, postmodern feminism offers the possibility of going beyond the language of domination, anger, and critique (Giroux 2005: 58).

This genre of the television soap is decidedly female-oriented (Gledhill in Hall 1997), with a female cultural versimilitudinal approach, because of the predisposition for verbal communication as part of the narrative. Gledhill states that 'soap operas employ a range of knowledges, perspectives and nuances that emerge out of a female cultural experience and can be fully activated only within this framework' (in Hall 1997: 376). This comment refers to female cultural competence that is seen to be a part of the genderedness of a soap opera.

Although the overt address is seen to be female, the gaze of the 'soap' appears to be masculinised (Mulvey 2001). According to Mulvey, this has to do with the fact that narrative and visual forms of the Hollywood spectacle were designed for the male gaze by playing on Oedipal fantasies and anxieties. Thus, according to this theoretical stance, any gaze on a woman is bound to be masculine by nature. Gendering the ideal spectator versus the social audience and the spectator in the text, as described by Gledhill (in Hall 1997), also affects border crossing phenomena within this study. Distinctions between the intended

spectator in the text and the spectator as audience member are not always crystallised. The dynamic within such a situation as evident in the production by the four students in this study, is investigated in terms of reification versus the blurring of gender borders.

It seems then, that the culturally learned gender attributes within the address of a television soap opera can be fruitfully unpacked in terms of reification or blurring of borders. The crossing or eradication of borders within a shared popular cultural environment such as an upper income group school, can either mean that students distinguish themselves as a group apart from their own individual identity references, or that they align themselves predominantly as individuals affiliated with their own backgrounds.

## Meaning making and border crossing through video production

This study investigates social interaction and identity through the lens of social semiotics. Video production facilitates new perspectives when examining social practices relevant to culture and community. Hodge and Kress (1988) elaborate on the use of semiotic systems in social practice. What is important for them is how a text is interpreted. The social power of a text depends on its specific interpretation within a context. As such, culturally meaningful activities are influenced by the interpretation of a text, which can ultimately change the power of the message.

This section deals with the theory of making, interpreting and re-making messages. It deals with views on representation by Hall (1997), Barthes (1977) and Foucault (1972), and discusses how messages are moulded and re-made, functioning in a circle of meaning, being constantly re-shaped. The negotiation process when participants acquaint themselves with each other in classroom discussions as well as identity construction in the process of video production becomes interesting. Specifically, how identity issues that emerge during classroom discussions are translated in the student video production, fall in the scope of this thesis.

## The cyclical nature of culture and representation in meaning making

The complex impact that globalisation has on cultural identity in current communities are profound. Niesyto et al talk about 'trans-national cultures' with their own practices, lifestyle and conventions (Niesyto, Buckingham & Fisherkeller 2004). These trans-national cultures build their own character and identity when they combine 'socially-generated and media-generated patterns and lifestyles' (Niesyto, Buckingham & Fisherkeller 2004: 2). Although they say that new media technologies are accelerating this process, Niesyto et al contends that we need new forms of inter-cultural and symbolic learning in this environment. We need a common set of 'trans-cultural audio-visual language' (Niesyto et al 2004: 3) that can transcend verbal language. Representation needs to become more inclusive. It is a well-known fact that power and identity is brokered every day within

the schooling environment. It is here that power and identity are brokered every day within the schooling environment. Here, political identities are negotiated and shaped (Duncan-Andrade 2004).

Video production offers learners possibilities for self-expression, intercultural communication and border crossing. According to Raymond Williams (in Buckingham 2008) technology is a sociological shaping tool. Individuals are bound to change their attitudes because of information conveyed by technology. However, technology is also continually shaped by society and in particular by those who take an interest in the way it is used and the effect that it has. Technology and video act as shaping mechanisms towards representation of identity and how meaning is made. It is not only the receiver whose perception is shaped by what is being conveyed, but also the producer. Video production is a reflective process.

Thus, the objective of video production to express identity is an *inside out* process. Smith-Welch explains the distinction looking at the two approaches called self understanding from the *inside out*, versus an opportunity to express, from the *outside in* (2004: 11). While individuals use their own identities as a starting point for representing themselves when working in an inside out approach, the opposite is true when the user is confronted with a video camera as starting point. This initial 'gathering of images' leads to an understanding of the outside world, while Smith-Welch then hopes that a self-reflective editing process would facilitate inner reflection. However, my study uses preliminary classroom discussions as this reflective process, culminating in

the negotiation of a script where characters emerge out of each individual's identity.

Representation conveys an object or idea by way of a symbol or other means, to enable someone else to interpret the idea according to the original intent (Hall 1997). Kress calls representation a 'political process', whereby it 'constantly remakes the resources for making meanings and, in the remade resources, shapes those who remake them' (2010: 52). Hall contends that the meaning of the object or text does not lie in itself, but that meaning is constructed according to the way it is represented (Hall 1997). Text is presented subjectively, according to the maker's identity and background of the producer. Reception is always understood within the identity framework of a receiver. 'Meaning and representation seem to belong irrevocably to the interpretative side of the human and cultural sciences, whose subject matter – society, culture, the human subject – is not amenable to a positivistic approach (for instance, one which seeks to discover scientific laws about society)' (Hall 1997:42). Culture is interpretative by nature. Interpretations never produce a final moment of absolute truth. Hall explains that 'interpretations are always followed by other interpretations' (Hall 1997:42). This process produces an 'endless chain of meaning'.

This 'endless chain of meaning' is itself forever changing, and in a Bakhtinian heteroglossic way, it shifts to accommodate and change history and social memory. By this constant fluidity, it becomes possible to introduce a process of counter-memory in order to facilitate understanding. Giroux uses this 'counter-

memory' in pedagogical practices to challenge 'our current modes of truth and justice, helping us to understand and change the present by placing it in a new relation to the past' (Foucault in Giroux 2006: 160-164). In any investigation into the negotiation of identity and difference, as in the case of this study, the process of representation needs to be kept flexible, taking cognisance of this fluidity.

Final meaning is never fixed but always 'deferred' (Hall 1997: 42). There is never an ultimate, uncontestable meaning. One interpretation follows on a previous one. Hall (1997) calls this never-ending loop the 'circle of meaning'. Considering Derrida's (2001) comment that writing always leads to more writing, the same can be said for any kind of semiotic process. There is always a negotiated meaning, dependent on the receptor's cultural and identity background. Hall's 'circuit of culture' (1997) creates questions about the way video production participants choose to represent themselves and how they intend their representation to be interpreted by the viewer. However, this is not a static process. Meaning and interpretation constantly shift situationally, exacerbated by the fluidity of cultural symbols and meanings.

The circular nature of culture is defined by Hall (1997: 1) as a dynamic way of connecting representation, identity, production, consumption, and regulation in communication and cultural interaction. The cultural circuit suggests that meaning is produced, represented and understood within a dynamic system of sharing between people. In this way, identity is maintained, as well as produced in the form of shared meaning. Communicating

difference in and by traditional systems of sharing become complicated when dealing with conflict amongst group members.

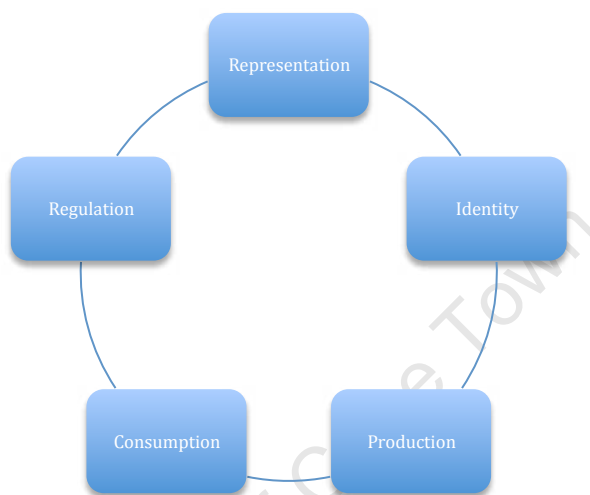


Figure 1 Hall's circuit of culture

The reception of messages, and how various symbols are understood, overrides original production, in that interpretation is dependent on the 'social articulation or the contexts in which it is inserted into society' (Grossberg 1997: 181). We cannot evaluate and interpret a single concept without considering the wider cultural context. Hall claims that a symbol or concept is 'always caught in the network of the chains of signification which over-print it, inscribing it into the currency of our discourses' (Hall in Grossberg 1997: 181). Barthes (1977), in his seminal essay 'The Death of the Author', argues that a reader should consciously reject and ignore the author's background, personal affiliations or other identifying aspects, as these factors limit

understanding. In another text, 'The Rustle of Language', Barthes refers to text as a 'fabric of quotations' (1989: 53), with rich undertones of fluid intertextual inferences. The author, he says, is merely the scribe. By distancing himself from the produced text, the author cedes all author[ity], allowing it to exist in its own right, and to be interpreted and appropriated in meaning by the reader as receptor. Thus, every text is 'reborn' when read by another individual. This circular process is never-ending.

According to Hall (1997), the circuit of culture and the 'circle of meaning' are inextricably linked, where the latter is actually the manifestation of the former. In accordance with Bakhtin's notion that an individual is never static, but always changing, one has to allow for individuals of various cultural backgrounds to be perpetually influenced and changed by each other (1981). This negotiation of meaning leads to constant re-modelling of texts to convey a preferred meaning. Producers of texts (as we all are) use certain common knowledge as 'hooks' to make texts more interpretable by the reader. Thus, it becomes important that there is a degree of fit between the producer and the interpreter in order for the original intention of a message to be understood.

Culture depends on its participants interpreting meaningfully what is happening around them, and 'making sense of the world, in broadly similar ways' (Hall 1997: 2). Hall calls this the 'cultural turn' in the social and human sciences, referring especially to 'shared meanings' within a culture. 'Primarily, culture is concerned with the production and the exchange of meanings - the 'giving and taking of meaning'' – between the

members of a society or group. To say that two people belong to the same culture is to say that they interpret the world in roughly the same ways and can express themselves, their thoughts and feelings about the world, in ways which will be understood by each other.

The circle of production, reception, interpretation, accommodation and re-configuring of messages in order for the producer to create a representation to be understood is always a dynamic and intricate process. Additionally, the way in which messages align with each other within a certain discourse, what is attended to and what is omitted, also impacts on the communication process. According to Bakhtin (1986), all forms of communication are always dialogue. One needs to take cognisance of the heteroglossic audience (illuminating the different approaches of communication an individual employs for various receivers) that a video production group might have in mind. Socio-ideological discourses operating within a culture might result in complex dynamics where various cultural codes collude.

Importantly, meaning is always fluid, depending on the never-ending 'circle of meaning' in which interpretation and original meaning constantly re-form each other. The 'cultural turn' among individuals belonging to similar social groupings does mean that they interpret the world in roughly the same way, but the process of production, reception, interpretation, accommodation and re-configuring remains dynamic.

Pedagogically, the challenge lies in the fact that interpretation disregards the intention of the producer who needs to be aware

that a certain amount of calibration between production and interpretation must occur.

## **A multimodal approach to understanding difference**

This study is situated within multimodal discourse theory (Kress & van Leeuwen 2001). The pedagogical discourse around cultural difference is initially articulated by way of classroom discussions, and the students continue these discussions when they become actively involved in video production. This study not only investigates and analyses produced text from a multimodal perspective, but also the negotiations and pedagogical actions involved in producing the text. All forms of communication constantly change according to situation and need, and it is important to understand the complexity and fluidity of text.

If one considers that multimodal social semiotics and multimodal pedagogies challenge the 'logocentrism' of traditional 'human communication' to include all forms of communication (Stein & Newfield 2006: 9), it becomes evident that the form of communication should be continually considered. Human communication is not static, rather, it changes and moulds constantly within society and in terms of individual use.

This study is interested in how multimodal pedagogies can be integrated and incorporated into video production in an informal learning environment. 'Pedagogic processes can be understood as the selection and configuration of the semiotic resources available in the classroom' (Stein & Newfield 2006:7). Both

students and teachers are creators of meaning. Keeping in mind who the audience may be, they choose their means and methods of communication from their store of available resources. At issue here is the historical shaping of these resources of communication within a social space, and how the Mountain Hill students within multimodal contexts deploy these.

Multimodal pedagogies are a way 'to describe pedagogies which work across semiotic modes' (Stein & Newfield 2006: 9). What is important is that multimodal pedagogies focus on 'mode as a defining feature of communication in learning environments' (*ibid.*). All communicative acts within a classroom can be viewed as multimodal, and all students are resourceful, creative and critical thinking with the capacity of making individual meaning of multimodal messages. However, students interpret and deal with various modes differently, according to their differing cultural identities and histories. Most importantly, 'in multimodal pedagogies, there is a conscious awareness of the relationship between modes, learning and identity' (Stein & Newfield 2006: 10). Meaning makers and pedagogues make conscious and unconscious decisions about what modes might serve which situation better. '[D]iscursive practice in a multimodal environment consists of the ability to select the discourses which are to be 'at play' on a particular occasion, in a particular text ... But more than that, communicational practice consists of choosing the realisational modes which are apt for the specific purposes, audiences and occasions of text-making' (Kress & van Leeuwen 2001: 30). Students as well as teachers need to exercise adaptability and flexibility to oscillate between the most appropriate modes in all interactions. Even more complex

choices become available when students work with video production.

What Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001: 68) refer to as the 'social formation of media' is a key aspect in teenage video production. Questions arise around the dominance of school social culture and popular culture, versus individual cultural backgrounds, and how these spaces are negotiated in a production. Multimodal theory places a great deal of emphasis on the modal realisation of ideas, and how the materiality of production conveys an idea. Issues at stake here include the production and use of props, costumes and actors' performances within the video productions themselves.

To conclude this section, it is important to note that a multimodal approach to representation, and specifically concentrating on video production such as the one followed in this study, emphasises the '*material*, the *physical*, the *sensory*, the *bodily*' (Kress 2010: 105) to a specific and physical understanding. The creation of a videotext is a practical, nearly tactile process. Because of these multimodal pedagogies, both students and teachers are empowered in this creation. The next section deals with another aspect of representation; and how text as a social construction communicates identity.

## **Text as a social construction**

Kress (2003: 86) regards text as a total formation, the 'central category in literacy'. The wider definition of text is thus not concerned with a specific letter or word, but rather the

description of a particular social interaction. Most notably, Kress argues that text, the making and interpreting of it, gives us a 'sense of who we think we are' (2003: 87). Kress (2003) discusses the dynamics of how genre in particular, impacts on the power formations between groups of multiple cultural configurations in a society. Not only genre, but also discourse and mode are players in the power construction within society. These three aspects (discourse, mode and genre) form a basis for the understanding of textual formation and the organisation thereof (*ibid.*). In the next section, I proceed to define these three configurations of text, and consider video together with some of the processes of video production in the classroom environment.

### Discourse, meaning and power

In this section, I explore how meaning is constructed by discourse, and how power dynamics are not only created by certain decision to include certain knowledge, and exclude other knowledge. Knowledge changes when viewed from different cultural viewpoints, and is always constructed through a particular lens or within a certain discourse. Ideologies and ideas are thus socially constructed through discourse. I argue that video can be viewed as expression of discourses that might have remained hidden in more traditional media in the classroom.

Fairclough (1995: 76) defines discourse as 'a particular way of constructing a particular (domain of) social practice'. Of importance to this study is Fairclough's (1995: 78) explanation of sociocultural analysis as the need 'to address such issues as the relations of power that underlie the emergence and continuity of

particular discourse types, ideological effects that might be associated with them, ways in which they construct social identities, cultural values that they project, and so forth'. To build new concepts we have to break down existing discourses. In other words, new discourses are needed to re-construct identities when original power structures are broken down.

Discourse frames and embodies knowledge. In fact, things and events only exist within a certain discourse (Foucault 1972). Thus, to socially attach meaning to something, one has to construct it as part of a particular discourse. Rather than defining language, Foucault calls both the concept, and process, discourse, concentrating on power and how this power is perpetuated and strengthened by discourse assigning meaning to a text.

Foucault defines the concept and process, whereby knowledge is produced, as 'discourse'. He rejects the Marxist ideology that all divisions can be reduced to those of economics and class power. He asks: 'In whose class interest does language representation and power operate?' (Foucault in Hall 1997: 48). Foucault bases his theory on the employment of language to serve meaningful statements in particular historical periods and contexts. Thus discourse shapes knowledge and the topic in the mind of the receiver; in fact, discourse not only shapes knowledge, but it also excludes other knowledge.

The episteme of a particular discourse can be initiated in different ways by a variety of sources to form numerous discursive expressions of schools of thinking in political or social

circles. For instance, individuals in the Mountain Hill group might come from groups that have been exposed to different discursive formations of a common episteme. Thus, the episteme of historical knowledge about social and cultural power dynamics in the South African context might have different meanings for the Afrikaans, Indian, or Sotho participants. Consequently, various students may react differently to seemingly similar histories.

Discourses are 'meaning-resources available in a society to make sense of the world, *social* and *natural*, at a larger level' (Kress 2010: 110). Discourses enable people to understand aspects of their environment in an epistemologically coherent sense, and framing such knowledge within existing institutions. Importantly, discourses are embodied in modes of expression (Kress 2010). What a mode is, with its functions, is discussed in the next section.

### Modes and their affordances

In Kress's (2003) terms, mode is an important component of text. He defines mode as 'the name for a culturally and socially fashioned resource for representation and communication. Mode has material aspects, and it bears everywhere the stamp of past cultural work, among other things the stamp of regularities of organisation' (Kress 2003: 45). With digital media, it is now possible to fine-tune the choice of modes to 'fit' the intention of the message being communicated.

Kress (2003) differentiates between time-based modes (speech, gesture, dance, action, music), and space-based modes (layout, architectural arrangement, image, sculpture), each category offering its own affordances. These affordances do not stay in segmented boxes. '...mixed logics are, above all, a feature of multimodal texts, that is, texts are made up of elements of modes which are based on different logics' (Kress 2003: 46). Strictly speaking, I would classify the medium of video as using both these temporal and spatial modes.

It is difficult to find theoretical categories developed specifically to address three-dimensional and moving images, or a combination of sound, image and text. Linguistic categories do not really describe these new modes. Kress (2004: 106) asks: 'Are there social meanings which can be realised in the mode of image but not in the mode of speech and writing?' I explore the possibility that students have different experiences during verbal discussions than they do in video production.

Messages call for the use of the particular mode that would afford the most appropriate for a particular purpose. Since representation and interpretation are so fluid in nature, the mode chosen, and how it is used and interpreted, also constantly needs to shift in order to convey the intended message. Further complications are, among others, varying interpretations across cultural differences, which may be addressed by using different modes. Some of these interpretations might be deceptively subtle, leaving the receiver to ambiguously overlook nuances. Finnegan (2002) notes:

The specificities and combinations of modes vary not only in different cultural conditions but up to a point within and during each personal enactment: the detailed balance between different channels, say, or the use of avoidance of touch or smell; the patterning of visible gesture, facial expression, posture, orientation, spacing, personal adornment; or the processes of audible interaction through manipulation of volume, tone, speed, vocabulary or mood... and so on, and so on (2002: 226).

The nature of a mode and which one is chosen for a certain effect have become important subjects in the age of new media, conversion, and multiple technologies (Kress 2003). In the current age, where texts and languages are realised in other, non-traditional ways, Kress (2003) questions the use of mode in a strictly formal way. Specifically mentioning new media he notes that such texts are to be analysed in a multimodal communication context, where the various modes and how their individual connotations and communicational properties add to meaning, are afforded equal importance.

As Finnegan (2002: 226) states, even 'seemingly monomodal' forms such as music, reading or writing are not as uncomplicated as they may seem. Video as a medium, and how it is used in a hybrid society, employs modes in complex ways. Complications occur because producers might combine and disseminate modes in their production with intentions different from how these modes are interpreted by various social identities. A great number of variations and non-verbal variants come into play, which is why multimodal analysis is important in this context.

Certain questions need to be asked about the 'affordances' of a text, which Kress (2003: 3) defines as the 'filling with meaning' of a text, explaining that words on their own, for instance, are essentially 'empty of meaning'. Meaning is added by the sequence

in which the words are read, and the interpretation afforded by the reader. Affordance of a mode is 'materiality', which Kress (2003: 45) describes as the following characteristics of the mode: 'sound in speech or in music, of graphic matter and light in image, or of the motion of parts of the body in gesture'. In the context of cultural representation, these characteristics of modes promise particular affordances.

Several issues need attention here: what modes are used and therefore what materials are invoked, and therefore, what are the senses which are involved? What differential possibilities of perception and cognition are invoked through the uses of different materials and modes? What difference in kinds of meaning is produced in the use of different modes and materials – the kinds of meaning usually referred to as emotive, affective, aesthetic, and the kinds of meaning referred to as semantic, rational, logical, ideational? (Kress & Van Leeuwen 2001: 28).

The polysemic nature of television as noted by Hall (1997), might also influence the choice of mode, and what that mode affords. This has consequences in terms of how the producer has constituted the sign, the potential interpretation, and how the receiver decodes it. Received meanings can conflict with each other in a more radical, oppositional way than was the intent of the producer (Procter 2004: 66).

This study investigates the way in which different modes and media serve certain discourses. How is information, for instance, obtained by way of classroom discussions? The way that this knowledge utilises the spoken word and gesture, relates to- and contrasts with the way in which the discourse of difference is articulated by way of video production using the specific modes of sound and moving images. The following questions arise: are there any semiotic modes in South African schools which are

disadvantaged because of hegemonic practices of traditional pedagogical and societal perceptions? What modes can be exploited, specifically in video production, that might not be recognised in the formal pedagogical environment and that could aid in the negotiation of difference?

The question of empowerment becomes clear at this stage. Although we know that priority given to various semiotic modes differs in terms of differing identity backgrounds, we also know that society is dominated by particular sociocultural formations. Such formations might exclude the representation of different cultural backgrounds. Fortunately we also realise that we are all both receivers as well as producers of meaning. As the producer has agency around the message that needs to be conveyed, so the receiver has the agency to interpret the message. A receiver, especially in the domain of television, interprets messages of his or her own volition. However, the producer makes the choice around form and substance of the message. The video producers in this study use their agency to decide on mode and message as well as an unprompted choice of genre: parody.

### Genre framing the message

In the age of multimodal communication it is important to investigate the construct of 'genre'. Genre refers to the 'use of language associated with and constituting part of some particular social practice' (Fairclough 1995: 56), such as an interviewing genre, or advertising genre, 'orient(ing) attention to the social world' (Kress 2006: 87). As in the areas of culture, identity and representation, is an important aspect of genre. In terms of the

scope of this study I define genre as the way text is arranged, how it is used in context, and what text does to facilitate social interaction. The choice of genre, and how inclusive that chosen genre is, matters. Different cultural scenarios incorporate genre in various configurations.

Kress (2003) traces the history of genre back to Aristotle, by defining major literary forms. After being used more recently to distinguish between modern literary forms, the common use of the term shifted after the 1960s to refer to a 'device for classifying the many objects of popular culture' (Kress 2003: 89). Bakhtin defines genre as an 'expression of worldview and ideology' (in Kapchan & Strong 1999: 243). It is difficult to define genre. Kress (2006: 87) refers to 'the formerly stable framings in all sorts of significant areas [that] are weakening or have already disappeared'. Kapchan and Strong (1999: 243) argue that 'genres, like utterances, are permeable and unruly. Given to multiple interpretation, arising intersubjectively, they defy uniformity'.

Rather than acknowledging the 'absence of genres', Kress (2006: 88) sees this fluidity of genre as an expression of current times: 'Constant change has to be seen as entirely normal as an effect of a social theory of language'. Fairclough (1995: 78) hints at the hybridity of genre when he talks about 'possibilities for creative reconfigurations of genres and discourses'. Strelitz (2004: 639) adds that 'both our media consumption decisions and the meanings we take from texts are influenced by the contextual setting of consumption and other sources of cultural experience'.

In the context of text as social construction, the choice of genre is a reactive function. According to Kress (2003: 91), a 'linguistically and culturally pluralist' environment, where cultural capital not only hails from one single social group, has become essential for genres to be approached in new forms. He says that 'in that new form, genres were seen as forms which had come into being as the result of social action and which, in and through all aspects of their form, represent the central characteristics of the social occasion in which they are produced' (Kress 2003: 91). The choice of genre, and how inclusive that chosen genre is, matters because of the various configurations genre incorporates in different cultural scenarios. New media require other non-mode specific ways of identification, thus the wider use of 'text', not only as letters or words but as a description of social interaction, become pivotal. This choice of genre, I would add especially in the medium of video, poses pedagogical challenges for teachers and students. Kress (2006) refers to Martin's definition of genre as one of the most accurate that he has come across: 'Genres are staged, goal-oriented social processes which integrate field mode and tenor choices in predictable ways' (Martin in Kress 2006: 93). The current study uses this specific definition as the point of departure. During this intervention, the students spontaneously used the genre of parody to express their story.

Hirschkop (1989:3) describes Bakhtin's notion of the carnivalesque as the use of 'motifs, themes and generic forms drawn from a tradition of subversive medieval popular culture, a tradition linked to a very specific festive practice and to the significance of the body in medieval and Renaissance culture'.

The carnivalesque use of laughter and drama to 'symbolically invert the usual hierarchies and imagine different roles and relationships' also forms a potential platform to enable teenagers to investigate identity in a safe and 'removed' environment (Grace & Tobin in Buckingham 1998: 48). However, the carnivalesque, or parody, is also used with irreverent humour and thereby, communicates certain hidden messages.

Parody clouds, yet enriches a message, by irreverently and indiscreetly using humour to disguise the obvious, and mostly uncomfortable truth. For Crapanzano, playing with parody becomes like walking on a tightrope. The danger constantly exists that the truth might break through, and 'arrest the play' (Crapanzano 1991: 431). Parody is an imperial power play. The act of parody stresses difference while it 'challenges that which it parodies' (1991: 431). Words are 'transcontextualised' (Hutcheon in Crapanzano 1991) and thus revised into intentionally becoming something that might be contrary to the original meaning. Parody also serves as a helpful activation for generating counter memory (Giroux 2006) in order to unravel generational differences, aiding realisations that might lead to making choices and influence future preconceptions. Parody that focusses on exaggeration and an irreverent emphasis on humour seems to be the ideal medium to present a 'critical reading of not only how the past informs the present but also how the present reads the past' (Giroux 2006: 56). This approach can accentuate areas of victimisation and dominance. New connections between official histories and personal experiences and voices can be established by playfully planting suggestions in video narratives.

One needs to consider the power formation that is affected by discourse, mode and genre, in order to understand texts as social constructions. Discourse frames and constitutes knowledge. While knowledge is produced through language as discourse, concepts can only exist through the lens of an individual's own identity and discourse. The process is complicated by the multimodality of current texts, as well as the variety of ways that individuals interpret different modes within various identity and historical backgrounds. In order to understand these texts, it is necessary to examine them in a multimodal way, employing linguistic, audio, visual, gestural and spatial meaning within design elements.

Importantly, meaning is always fluid, depending on the never-ending 'circle of meaning' in which interpretation and original meaning constantly re-form each other. The 'cultural turn' among individuals belonging to similar social groupings does mean that they interpret the world in roughly the same way, but the process of production, reception, interpretation, accommodation and re-configuring remains dynamic. Pedagogically, the challenge lies in the reflectivity whereby the reflectivity of the process becomes more important than the outcome.

## Final comments on the theoretical framework

This theoretical framework is presented in three parts. Firstly, in the section on pedagogical implementation. The case is presented

for the employment of Border Pedagogy to act as a theoretical lens in the investigation of difference. In the second instance, the hybrid nature of identity was investigated in terms of how certain intentions influence the cultural background of South Africans. The last section discusses text as a social construction, and how the three main areas concerned with this study, namely discourse, mode and genre, can be analytically deployed in teasing out difference by making use of video production.

In Border Pedagogy and specifically in the politics of difference and the Other with the concomitant connection to historical power structures, the debate around race and difference has shifted to a more critical sphere in which gender, class and ethnicity emerge in the open. Within this wider scenario, this study is situated in a space where teenagers can question difference and identity in a critical way. Border pedagogues agree that the education system needs to be re-engineered to interrogate a globalised society. In the local context, the complexity of South African youth identities spans race, gender, and generations. A pedagogy of difference should not attempt to smooth over differing points of view and to create a superficially homogenous society, but rather to mine these differences in order to enrich society. Thus, South African youth should become comfortable with debate and disagreement, not with the intention of eradicating difference, but to understand it. In this way, difference could become a unifying, instead of a dividing factor.

Border Pedagogy is about teaching constructive listening and engagement to re-model social memory. Social memory complicates difference in South Africa, where people have

different collective histories. The challenge is to employ Border Pedagogy to draw on social memory and constructively tease out difference. Negotiation of culture can serve to activate or encourage counter memory to empower, confirm or re-write history.

The dynamics of culture and how race and taste influence identity in a South African context is also investigated. Although taste, as defined and discussed by Bourdieu (1984) and Dolby (2001), might have a significant influence on identity, one cannot negate other cultural and environmental factors. According to Dolby (2001), identity is a set of choices. Identity is never static, and people use constant referencing systems to mould actions and to benchmark personal ideas. Popular culture and globalisation, combined with personal identity facilitate hybridity in identity, by using fractions of various identities to constantly make and re-mould our own identities. This constant flux creates an ideal space for experimentation and investigation as identity formation takes place in adolescence. We can employ this constantly shifting and changing environment to the advantage of Border Pedagogy and critical thinking.

South African youth are constantly changing, influenced by each other, but also by global changes and popular culture. In short, they are in a constant mode of cultural borrowing and change. Within this shifting and changing mode of current habitus, cultural capital is also in constant flux in order to accommodate changing views. The endless chain of changing and moulding meaning from representation to reception means that the

producer and receiver both have equal agency in understanding and interpretation.

I discussed how discourse can institute, re-state and substitute meaning and knowledge by either including, or excluding certain information. In this way, ideologies are shaped and re-shaped within discourses in any medium. Combining this dynamic with the constant circle of meaning and the hybrid nature of identity brought about by globalisation, popular culture and interpersonal experience it is clear that discourse is in constant flux. I defined mode as that material resource through which different individuals can variously interpret culture. The notion of mode is complicated, and when choosing the most appropriate mode, certain questions need to be asked around affordance and materiality to best suit cultural representation. Various modes and media serve different discourses better, and with distinctions between time-based and space-based modes to be made, one needs to make choices to the best advantage of the social meanings to be investigated.

# THREE

## Methodology

This chapter discusses the research methodology employed in this empirical study involving four seventeen-year-old girls from a drama class at a wealthy independent high school. Within a framework of border pedagogy, the four students were led to produce a video where they needed to explore cultural difference. Two pilot studies informed the main study; these are discussed briefly here, followed by a description of the main research intervention. This chapter describes the data collection strategies used, namely video data analysis, classroom discussions, participant observation, extensive personal interviews, and reflective journals all of which enabled the collection of data for multimodal discourse analysis. The next section describes how data was collected in the form of both paper-based documents and video footage.

A framework for the analysis of the data is then outlined, based on multimodal discourse analysis (Kress & Van Leeuwen 2001; Levine & Scollon 2004; Baldry & Thibault 2006; Norris 2004; Van Leeuwen & Jewitt 2001). The data analysis is framed specifically in the strata described by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001), namely discourse, design, production and distribution. Finally, the chapter presents some thoughts on relevant ethical research questions.

## Overview of Research Methodology

It is a qualitative case study using video data analysis, group discussions, participant observation, extensive personal conversations, as well as reflective journals written by students themselves, to create a thick and layered description of the cultural dynamics when learners practice negotiation of difference through video production. Empirically the study can be classified as a multimodal discourse analysis of field experimental discourses in a constructed pedagogical setting. In this setting, a group of participants initially share personal views on identity and individual stances in structured classroom discussions, and then participate in a video production activity.

Broadly located within the framework of border crossing pedagogy (Giroux 2006), this study employs multimodal instruments in the production and analysis of data, focussing particularly on multimodal discourse analysis (Kress & Van Leeuwen 2001). The purpose of the methodology employed is to answer questions regarding the affordances of digital video for designing a pedagogical intervention based on diversity, and how

adolescents negotiate difference through dominant discourses by means of digital video.

The study addresses the following research questions:

- How do adolescents negotiate cultural difference when using digital video?
- What are the affordances of digital video production for designing a pedagogical intervention to negotiate diversity?

With video production as the main focal activity, the intervention aimed to encourage learners to interrogate cultural borders. The four adolescent girls cooperated with one another with the explicit objective of ensuring that they negotiate difference from their own and the other's perspectives. This situation enabled a collection of in-depth, detailed data regarding the type of interactions one can expect when some young South Africans work together to accomplish an expressive and creative task. How each participant views and experiences her identity, and to what extent such individual expression forms in a group situation, could shed some light on the dynamics of meaning making within a particular mix of respondents. Extrapolations from lessons learnt in this specific situation could serve as beacons for similar initiatives in a variety of South African youth situations. By analysing theoretical and practical dynamics that arise within the group and by also carefully examining and analysing the final video production, the study sheds some light on how students negotiate gender, race and age differences, and the kind of

pedagogical considerations that have to be taken into account by a mediator.

While aiming to contribute to the discourse around video production as a pedagogical intervention, and at the same time, to investigate the complexity and situatedness of such pedagogical actions, the study was designed around a single case that can be construed as a snapshot of a pedagogical instance. This design enabled an in-depth analysis of the data in order to explore the possibilities of combining classroom discussions with active video production, while facilitating border crossing as theorised by Giroux (2006).

In the two-staged approach, the first stage of negotiation during which students get to know each other more intimately by way of discussion groups, lends itself to discursive formations. The situation changes somewhat with the video production activity itself. During the second stage, participants are not necessarily able to explain overtly why a certain production choice with a profound contextual meaning has been agreed on. Analysing these texts semiotically can be useful in revealing how meanings have been constructed.

This study is built on a multimodal pedagogical approach. The first part of the process relies on group discussions around themes constructed by the researcher and spontaneous verbal negotiation, and the latter part on video and sound, with a smaller portion of paper-based text consisting of a character mind map, storyboard and props lists. Video data was collected during both stages, as well as by analysing the video 'product'

that was constructed by the participants as an expression of their collaboration. Four female participants were chosen out of the drama class with some obvious identity differences like race, mother tongue, and home circumstances. The drama teacher selected the participants. She has background knowledge of all her students, and could thus match participants to required criteria.

The strength of this study resides in the method of concentration on larger semantic themes, whereby certain valuable constructs can be derived in order to build on existing conversations and themes regarding identity, cultural and other negotiations in a diverse society. Video production, various types of interviews and informal conversations, combined with the final video produced by the students, inform meaning and context in terms of cultural identity which might differ between the various participants. Such integrated resource principles (Baldry & Thibault 2006) enable the researcher to analyse video production, interviews and informal classroom discussions as being representative of identity and the uniqueness thereof, allowing the four participants to portray individuality in a specific situation. Discourse analysis facilitates a better understanding regarding dynamics and possibilities within such a specific framework. The reasoning for the use of multimodal discourse analysis of research data lies within this holistically orientated analysis of meaning. Only by understanding the sum of the parts instead of analysing components separately can meaning be derived.

This study is highly contextualised, and as such, the possibility of generalisation to wider South African society is limited. Only four

students from an upper income group school were used, and they were specifically chosen from the drama class because of their willingness to act in their own production. Eliminating variables of gender and class allowed the research to concentrate on race and social memory. Methodologically, however, the framework is applicable to other settings in South African school environments. There were two methodological aspects that necessitated pilot projects; the first pilot ironed out practical issues around students producing video and the dynamics between members of the group and each person's role, while another was used to gauge the feasibility of using more than one group and working with bigger cultural variables in one group dynamic. One can view the first pilot as concentrating on videomaking, while the second pilot emphasised border pedagogy and difference.

## Two Pilot Studies

While conducting some review on existing literature it became clear that careful and precise planning is required for a research project to be built around one group of participants within a constrained timeframe of three days. I decided on two pilot studies, each with a different objective. Pilot One (Figure 2) was designed to investigate timeframes regarding video production and themes that would interest teenagers. Some concepts that crystallised out of a broad literature review, such as determining exactly how much time was needed for pre-production, production and post-production of a student video, and what measures can be employed to facilitate the most conducive environment for an uninterrupted workshop-type of activity with optimal settings of continuity and pace.



*Figure 2 Pilot One: Pretoria, South Africa.*

Pilot Two tested border-crossing practice on the physical Finnish–Russian border within an environment where two groups of stakeholders differ notoriously in terms of their political and socio-economic domains. Finnish and Russian teenagers do not share a common language, and their methods of mutual cooperation were influenced by various pre-conceptions about one another. I planned to use this second pilot to hone methods of negotiation to facilitate Border crossing and the Politics of Difference in my main study. Pilot One proved most helpful with logistical matters and the choice of theme and genre for the student production, while Pilot Two posed a serious warning. To successfully prompt negotiations between two groups so different in identity would need a much longer time frame than the four days afforded to this study. Each of the pilot studies is now described in more detail.

Pilot One involved four learners, two boys and two girls from neighbouring boys' and girls' schools. The three-day exercise was intended to clarify logistical and pedagogical matters in preparation for the main study. The researcher also had to determine the exact scope of such a video production brief. This exercise helped establish an overall timeframe for activities, and the most productive way to approach theme negotiation. During the first day, the group was briefed on basic video making techniques such as storyboarding, camera work, editing, and sound concepts. The participants went through a practical exercise in planning, shooting and editing a piece of video on a subject of their choice. This allowed them to experience the most common traps when planning and shooting video for the first time. They were then briefed and commenced planning their actual video. That afternoon and the next morning were used to create a theme and concept, converting them into a script and storyboard. By lunchtime on day two, the team started shooting footage systematically, as planned in their storyboard. The day ended with capturing the video from the camera to a computer. The third day was used for editing, animation and searching for appropriate sound tracks. The activity concluded at six o'clock that afternoon with a formal showing for parents and other enthusiasts.

The team was observed with video recording, capturing sound clips on an iPod, and taking some still photographs while they were producing their video. The researcher had regular personal conversations with all the members throughout the three-day activity. On the last day, all four participants were asked to complete a questionnaire on their experiences. Interestingly, the

girls and boys were very aware of their gender differences and cited positive aspects from both perspectives. The boys mentioned that they were 'stronger' and 'more energetic', while the girls said that they 'concentrated longer' and 'took the process more seriously'. Disregarding the fact that any first attempt at video production is far from perfect, they were all positive about what they had learnt.

Pedagogically, it became clear that teenage students are easy producers of video. Although a video production meta-language had not been established at this stage, they had a clear idea of what they wanted to convey. They knew what their result should resemble, but they could not necessarily share individual views with the group by means of effective communication. It is clear that conceptual and linguistic background regarding video production needs to be added to students' vocabulary.

The biggest challenge seemed to be the acting roles. The limited access to 'actors' proved to be a very real limitation on the choice of theme and content. Only one of the girls felt comfortable in front of the camera, which made it difficult to produce a drama with so few characters. As could be expected, this issue, as with any poorly-acted drama, reduced their satisfaction regarding their final product. Acting ability amongst the participant group thus became a decisive criterion in my sampling strategy for the main study – I decided to use students from the drama class who would be keen actors as well as producers.

The implications for the main study became apparent: (i) participants had to be carefully selected to ensure a willingness to

perform and produce at the same time, and (ii) it was necessary to underplay production roles in order to keep all four students interested during the full duration of the video production process. Thus, camera work, music making, and editing were everybody's job, and not only that of an individual chosen by the group. My observation was that by taking turns with roles, it could become easier to maintain momentum and interest. Pilot One proved to be a good exercise in highlighting valuable aspects regarding pedagogical practice, choice of theme and content, gender dynamics, and timeframe variables.

Pilot Two was conducted in Joensuu, a Finnish town near the Russian border, during the second half of March 2007. The Joensuu Scifest, hosted by Joensuu University, is modelled on the South African National Science Festival that has been conducted in Grahamstown for a number of years. Such a science festival aims to introduce the sciences and activities related to science and technology to the school population in its vicinity. Joensuu, being conveniently situated near to the Russian border and thus accessible to Russian schools as well, proved to be a good meeting point for a variety of students with different backgrounds.



*Figure 3 Pilot Two: Scifest. Joensuu, Finland.*

These groups exhibited highly problematic relationships. Historically, the district of Karelia in Finland was divided into two parts, of which the eastern part was integrated into Russia as part of the post World War Two peace settlement. The western section remained under Finnish rule. The cold war era effectively isolated the Russian 'emigrants' so that besides geographical distribution, language and cultural signifiers also alienated their descendents. However, social and cultural memory remains a strong influence. Although many descendents are no longer Finnish speaking, they retain a very real desire to be part of Finnish Karelia, with their perceived and remembered cultural roots.

Pilot Two (Figure 3) investigated particular dynamics within such a group with diverse identities. Eight Finnish students co-produced a video with eight Russian teenagers, divided equally into two production teams. Each team was ultimately tasked with producing a five-minute video. In this pilot study, the researcher

hoped to observe two groups with different identities that had to negotiate in English, as neither group was fluent in the other's language. As an outsider coming from another part of the world, she was able to distance herself, concentrating on observing their personal interaction and negotiation, but also perhaps missing some of the nuances of their literacies.

It was clear that these two groups needed extended time for negotiation and communication. Three days did not lead to meaningful interaction. Firstly, besides the Russian–Finnish language problem, the Russian students were also not fluent in English, and constantly required the help of an interpreter. Secondly, the Finnish students seemed reluctant to engage with the Russian students. The main problem seemed to be a perception of differing social classes. After the first day, the groups arrived at a stalemate, and they separated into two camps.

Pilot Two made it clear that it would be beneficial to precede the video production exercise with classroom discussions and negotiations around identity. It seemed that in setting the scene, participants needed certain prompts and guidelines on the 'rules of the game'. Discussions can serve as prompts to broach subjects such as identity and belonging. Such guided brainstorming sessions could serve to encourage identity mapping, giving students an idea of what to expect from their fellow participants.

Thus for the main study, activities are presented in two stages. During the first two days, group discussions and personal interviews with the researcher would guide conversation, to

enable the participants to share their own opinions on personal identities and how they see themselves as fitting into the diverse South African society. The second half of the exercise would then be spent on incorporating these vocalised standpoints into characters in the cast of the student video production.

## Description of the pedagogical intervention

The study engages four girls from differing backgrounds to enter into formulated discussions around identity and difference against the background of critical Border crossing pedagogy, as formulated by Giroux (1997). These students attend a privately funded, upper income group school situated in a relatively affluent neighbourhood in Gauteng, South Africa. They share a passion for drama and music production. The activity was an extra-curricular activity conducted in the time between exams and the end of the term when students are mostly left to their own devices. While the researcher needed a group of students to participate in this activity, the school management was looking for new implementable activities to complement their new Apple Mac computer lab.

The research process was divided into two stages. The first half of the three-day timeframe consisted of informal classroom discussions, personal interviews with each participant, the completion of questionnaires, and symbol drawing sessions.

During the second half of the research process, the same four students were expected to produce a video in which they could negotiate and interrogate their own identities as part of various character developments. The idea was that the video production would form an activity in which each individual could showcase her background and identity on neutral terrain. However, the symbol-drawing activity did not lead to expression of unique identities. The students fell back on stereotypical expressions of concepts that reverted to watered-down generalisations.

Preparative discussions around popular media, video production, and soap operas made for television orientated the participants in terms of the medium of digital video. They were briefed regarding the development of a concept for such a television programme, and what was required from them, namely to develop a storyline and trailer for such a series. Each of them needed to contribute two characters with whom they felt they could identify. These characters should be able to fit into the individual's immediate life world. This requirement was complicated, as South African identities have become hybridised to a large extent. Ideally, a minimum of eight characters had to be developed, who would feature in the trailer as the main players in the envisaged soap opera. During this stage the students were initiated into the meta-language, or 'technical vocabulary' (Buckingham 2003:73) of video production. They investigated various positions of moving images, movements, types of shots, and contexts in which they are used. The last day was spent recording sound and music, and producing the video. The process of performing filming and editing was recorded on video for analysis.

Many borders such as geography, class, race, language, politics and gender divide South African society. Video is widely hailed for its inclusive features when dealing with cross-curricular activities (Schnackenberg 2004; Hooper 2002), in which different types of students need to collaborate and communicate with each other. It 'requires many different intelligences' (Greenwood 2003:ix). Video is seen as the 'predominant language of youth today' (Goodman 2003:2) and thus, combined with informal classroom discussion, video offers significant potential to enable students to investigate difference and identity. The act of creation while producing video could provide students with the agency to step away from themselves onto an equalised platform; to explore each other's territories while feeling safe on mutual ground.

The pedagogical methods adopted in this intervention aimed to encourage individuals to interrogate attitudes and presumptions about each other. The process was dynamic, with dialogue initiated and perpetuated in order to effect better understanding. It was to be expected and hoped for, that the video production group members would be influenced by each other. Hopefully, they would, by using their own environment as a starting point, question borders while producing knowledge. 'If we can begin by sharing our students' beliefs, values, and experiences we can then encourage them to bring the wider world into their frames of reference. Then they can cross borders' (Doyle & Singh 2006). Within a critical pedagogical framework, border crossing infers that learners are active architects in their acts of investigation and formation of identity.

Active video production contributes to initiatives that counteract the oversupply of characteristically one-way mass communication methods that exist in society today. According to Goodman (2003), global media encourage young people to be spectators and consumers, rather than social actors and producers. Such trends encourage the youth to become passive receptors of knowledge, and seek to 'repress the agency and self-determination of young people' (Goodman 2003:3). Additionally, some schooling systems find it easier to teach children a certain set amount of prescribed information without expecting them to interact critically with knowledge production. Video production can serve as a very useful 'critical lens' (Goodman 2003: 3) enabling children to distance themselves from these uneven communicative strategies.

The pedagogical intervention for the video production group was designed in such a way that cultural negotiation and communication around difference formed a core starting point. The first day consisted exclusively of verbal discussion around cultural identity, without any instruction in video production. Verbal language as a semiotic mode in the first part of the process enabled a consciousness of cultural difference throughout the creative activity. The verbal mode was chosen here because of the more direct form of communication it enabled. These students knew one another well, and it seemed that classroom discussions had potential to fast track the process of awareness formation.

The student production group of four seventeen-year-old girls constructed a multimodal videotext by creating verbal dialogue, storyboarding it, performing it, and recording it in video format.

According to the New London Group (1996), such a multimodal text contains five different kinds of literacies with multimodal meanings, namely: linguistic meaning (language in the cultural context); visual meaning (everything to do with seeing and viewing); audio meaning (hearing and sound); gestural meaning (any type of movement); and spatial meaning (encompassing space and place). These literacies provide a way of pedagogically deploying multimodal discourse in teaching and negotiating something as complex as cultural negotiation, particularly by means of video production (Kress & Van Leeuwen 2001). This study analyses the data according to these design elements, while using the framework of four strata of meaning, namely discourse, design, production and distribution (Kress & Van Leeuwen 2001) as discussed later in this chapter.

### **Multimodal pedagogy**

Multimodal social semiotics and pedagogies challenge the 'logocentrism' of traditional 'human communication' to include other forms of communication apart from verbal language (written and spoken) (Stein & Newfield 2006). Human communication is not static, but it changes and moulds constantly with society and individual use (Finnegan 2002). The communication process yields various outcomes at different times. As Flewitt (2006) argues that video recording of pedagogical situations challenges a hierarchical importance of spoken and written word above that of gesture and body language among others, I argue that the same challenge is introduced when video is introduced into the learning environment as one of the pedagogical tools.

Stein & Newfield (2006) describe multimodal pedagogy as a way to use various modalities in one pedagogical intervention. 'A multimodal pedagogy seeks to go beyond written and spoken language to value a range of modes through multimodal assessment practices' (Stein & Newfield 2006: 191). This research project frames video production as a pedagogical function. Group and personal discussions, paper-based planning documents such as scripts, storyboards, symbol drawings and props lists, as well as video production activities like filming, acting, recording of music and editing are all combined into a multimodal pedagogical intervention. The pedagogical framework of this action relies heavily on the *prompts* (Kress 2010: 33) by the researcher happening throughout the activity. Kress describes these prompts as specific acts, moments where the instructor guides the learner to take a certain direction, or attend to a certain aspect while performing within the learning environment (2010). A prompt could for instance, be a nod of the head, or a point of a finger.

During the first stages of intervention verbal prompts were needed more regularly, such as in the group discussions and instruction around video production's metalanguage. As soon as the production group commenced shooting and editing, the researcher reduced this prompting to subtler body language instructions such as head nodding, or finger pointing while shooting, or showing encouragement visually. Prompting became useful again while the students edited their footage. Here, the instruction became more intricately multimodal, since it involved more 'showing' instead of verbally instructing.



Figure 4 *Multimodal pedagogy: prompting*

Semiotic action is seen as real work and social action.

Ultimately, any social action transforms both the actor and the recipient (Kress & Van Leeuwen 2001). Thus, in any type of social action, using whatever mode (moving images, sound, or the spoken word), the transformative action of eradicating cultural differences, or communicating across barriers, influences the interactions between members of a culturally diverse group.

Introducing video through multimodal pedagogy was valuable as video production shifted attention away from traditional modes such as writing and talking action towards a more holistic, more instinctual communication.

## Research design

In qualitative research, video can be most useful. Firstly, data collected is dense and rich in verbal as well as non-verbal content. Secondly, video minimises subjectivity in the recording stage,

thus providing a more objective and credible record. It also provides 'repetitive' data since the researcher can analyse it in real time, slow motion, and reverse and with enhanced sound, among other techniques. Most importantly for this study, is the fact that video recording makes it possible to analyse data in a variety of ways, and in this instance, multimodally. This all leads to more credible research knowledge and findings (Latvala in Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2000). Latvala (in Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2000) describes such a recording as a non-selective method of observation, whereby the researcher does not influence the recording or the behaviour of participants. Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2000) claim, in fact, that continuing video observance overcomes any partialness on the part of an observer, and is comprehensive in nature.

## **Methods of data collection**

The data collected and analysed in this study consists of rich content focussed within a narrow focus. The researcher participated only as a facilitator in the classroom discussions and acted as instructor for aspects of video production. Validity of the data is supported by the use of video observation, interview questions, and questionnaires. Meaning and the conceptual grasp of situations and events are interpreted by means of in-depth multimodal analysis of certain events based on discourses that emerged as the main themes. The internal validity of the data analysed is theorised by way of explaining certain phenomena such as representation and cultural identity, while investigating the pedagogies of video production and border crossing (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2004). The study makes use of

methodological triangulation to ensure validity by using discussions, video and sound production selectively throughout the research process (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2004).

*Stage One* focuses on instruments that were used to interrogate identity and cultural construction. Data collected during this first stage consists mainly of the recorded video footage of personal interviews and group discussions, which were prompted by open-ended questions that I posed as the researcher. Paper-based documents such as the symbol drawing and reflective journals were also produced. Although the paper-based documents were not analysed, it formed a valuable component when prominent themes of analysis were identified.

The discussion-group format offered the advantage of steering the conversation in certain directions. Initial open questions encouraged reactive responses that facilitated lively interaction within the group. Although in some instances images enabled more direct communication than the verbal mode the immediacy afforded by the verbal discussions surfaced dynamics that proved very helpful when the group had to function as a production unit.

*Stage Two* includes the recorded video (henceforth called the *process video*) of the research process throughout the four days, taken by a static video recorder, with audible sound. The second video included is the final student video production (*Class of '94*), the complete five minute 'trailer' they produced as the culmination of their efforts in fulfilling the pedagogical brief. The *Class of '94* video production is entirely the students' own work. They produced and recorded their own music for the sound track.

They played the main character roles (two characters each) and dressed the parts.

This last stage also includes the students' paper-based planning documents in the form of a mind map, detailed script with dialogue, storyboards with detailed camera shots, and prop planning lists. These instruments were analysed in search of further insight into border crossing moments within major discourses. For final microanalysis, video records of sections of the group discussions as well as sections from the student video were used. The rest of the data such as the paper-based planning documents, symbol drawing as well as video records of production planning sessions and music production were useful in a process of elimination; although these datasets and their affordances could serve well towards investigations into identity and difference this study eventually focuses particularly on the affordances of video and its production. Therefore, they were eventually regarded as part of the journey to discover that the video data conceptually conversed with each other in a meaningful way. Each of the instruments in both stages is now discussed in more detail.

### Personal conversations and group discussions

The personal conversation sessions were used to track attitudes and enthusiasm for the process on a more informal level while the group discussions were structured more around a series of pre-formulated questions. Flexibility, however, happened spontaneously since answers and conversation threads sometimes emerged when participants reacted spontaneously to anecdotes

from their fellow students. Each student was given a turn to answer general questions regarding identity and their own background. The discussion group format afforded the researcher the advantage of being able to steer the conversation in certain desired directions.



*Figure 5 Group discussions*

Questions prompted participants to discuss identity and how they define themselves in terms of factors such as language, culture, school culture, 'race', ethnicity, gender, age, family status, social setting and their environment. Participants reflected on the ways in which they interact with their family and school environment. In practical terms, they were asked how they express their identity in terms of their clothes, language, spare time activities, sports, hobbies, creative activities, and interaction with friends and other people with whom they come into contact.

Considering background and habitus, the facilitator initiated discussions about language, their broader family background, family values, beliefs and practices, and their own attitudes regarding these primary influences. They explored to what extent their identity becomes known to their school associates, as well as their willingness to expose their private identity and to share aspects thereof with their wider school environment and friends. They also answered questions about their attitudes around identities of other people in their immediate environment.

In terms of metaphors and imagery, I enquired about what might be acceptable or unacceptable in their different environments and family backgrounds. We discussed imagery and concepts that might be problematic when conveyed through the medium of video, and they each drew symbols conveying love, hate, fear, loyalty, hospitality, respect for their elders, and respect for women. Although these discussions were not specifically used in the data analysis, they were crucially forming bridges between discussions and to ensure that such developed into a deeper level of conceptuality.

### Personal conversations

In the individual sessions the students answered more personal questions. This safe forum seemed to facilitate individual answers, whereas a group environment might influence answers offered, and would compromise confidentiality. Conversation topics were gleaned from a crucially important study conducted as part of the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation's work (Makhalemele 2005) around Race and

Identity in South African Schools, particularly about how young South Africans engage in the changing social environment. In that large study, the researchers touched on themes such as racial dynamics and integration in classrooms, class, religion, culture, identity, patriarchy and family, identity and the school, citizenship, and racial reconciliation. Conversations started with personal questions regarding the shape, definition and expression of students' identities. They were asked how they perceive themselves and how they think others see them (Makhalemele 2005). The facilitation of interviews conducted by Brian Molewa provided useful questions for the current study. These themes identified in Molewa's study directly correlate to the elaborations in the current study.

### Reflective journals

Each participant completed a reflective journal by answering a set of open-ended questions at the close of each day. General questions regarding the 'best' and 'worst' experience of the day served as ice breakers, while the rest of the format led them to probe matters regarding relationships between teammates, and attitudes to and understanding of teammates' views and identities. The researcher also completed a daily reflective journal. This afforded a valuable space to step back and reflect on the process while distancing from it as much as possible.

### Process video

Discussions, pedagogical interventions and production planning activities throughout the three-day process were recorded using a

tripod-mounted camera recording always-audible sound, placed in a static position in order to enable an objective view as far as possible. All four participants were always in full view of the camera. There are various difficulties to deal with when analysing video data. Recording data with video creates its own problems. Flewitt (2006) claims that, although one steers away from the hierarchical differentiation made historically in data collection, that the spoken and the written word takes precedence over any other mode, transcription and interpretation of such transcription still prove problematic. Some challenges that she names, are the sheer complexity of modes such as 'words, noises, gaze, facial expression and body movement' (2006: 29) that young people use when communicating, the fact that different interpretations from the particular perspectives of participants can be made, technical difficulties such as inaudible sound when students mumble or whisper, and the use of the correct equipment to record the most accurate version of an event (2006).

Apart from the difficulties, video recording still seems to create a special 'multisemiotic dynamic, creating relationships between different data sets, with the inherent tensions and contradictions of all relationships, and producing conflicting evidence that challenges and eventually strengthens emerging themes' (Flewitt 2006: 30). As Flewitt argues, it is important to be able to triangulate events by analysing how these emerge differently within the different modes. In the current research intervention, a video camera was used constantly. It stood either in the corner of the room while recording every minute, or right next to the researcher in the conversational milieu.



*Figure 6 Process video*

Because of the unidirectional limitation of the one-camera setup, the students were obliged to sit in a semi circle in order to allow the camera the best view. Since they were seated around a table, the camera view of the lower part of their bodies was restricted, which might have influenced body language transcription. During more dynamic situations, for instance when they were shooting their student video, I trained a hand operated camera on them, using the widest possible angle.

The process video camera as a data collection instrument became an unobtrusive element in the activity space, although the participants were aware of its existence, even positioning themselves automatically around the table so as to be visible at all times. The discussion group was sometimes left alone with the documenting camera trained on them. They explained its existence to passing friends as 'a way for the researcher to check whether it (the video production) is our own work'.



## The Student video: 'Class of '94'

To reiterate, the students were tasked with making a promotional video for a television soap. About five minutes long, the students needed to create a narrative of a soap that could run indefinitely on a local television station. Apart from the storyline, they had to create a character set that would be representative of themselves. In other words, every student had to take ownership of at least two characters that could be representative of her specific background. The idea was that they would negotiate characteristics and probabilities with each other and by explaining reasons behind the existence and behaviour of characters, they would open up a conversation with each other regarding their own respective identities. After creating a storyline and character set, the team would then proceed to produce a five-minute trailer to introduce the characters. This trailer needed to adequately describe their planned television soap. They also needed to act in the trailer themselves. Here they were given freedom to cast actors to desired characters. Most of the roles were played by the production group themselves, although they involved one other fellow student for a leading role, and a handful of extras to complete the set.



*Figure 8 Students shooting their own production*

The students managed the editing as well as final production. This also involved creating their own music. The addition of sound is an important element in this project because of a certain freedom music creation affords identity expression. Sound production contributes to rich metaphorical data because of it being a creative subproject all of its own. The participants were encouraged to produce all of the soundtracks that they add to the film themselves by compiling music and environmental sound from their own frame of reference. Thus, for instance, team members were required to record sound that is somehow expressive of their own identity, ranging from violins, pianos, drums, vuvuzelas, voices, or any other environmental sound. These four students also have music as subject, thus they played flute, sang, and involved a younger brother in producing a piece of beat box music making as as part of their sound production.

## Data analysis





Western culture has traditionally been geared towards a predominantly monomodal form of communication (Kress & Van Leeuwen 2001). Multimodal approaches to both research as well as pedagogy, allow messages to be constructed with different semiotic modes. In contrast to monomodal theory which describes how meaning is made by one mode such as sound, visuals, or writing for example, a multimodal discourse expects meaning in a culture to be *continuously* produced by different modes, with inferences to be made from different 'sensory channels and semiotic modes' (Kress & Van Leeuwen 2001: 2). Multimodal analysis takes cultural, social and historical background into account. Semiotic resources work cumulatively to construct meaning, showing that the sum of the parts is more than the separate semiotic components.

The multimodality of texts is the basis for my data analysis. Semiotic action communicates, and such actions, or texts, are invariably multimodal (Norris 2004; Baldry & Thibault 2006). All texts in themselves convey semiotic meaning (Halliday 1989). The variety of data collected for this study calls for various methods of transcription and analysis such as described by Baldry and Tibault (2006).

The first stage of my data analysis makes use of communicative modes as theorised in multimodal transcription and analysis theory (Norris 2004). According to Norris (2004), we should be concerned with two aspects when analysing human interaction: firstly, how an individual expresses perceptions, thoughts and

feelings; and secondly, the different levels of attention and awareness that may be at play. This methodology uses heuristic units called *communicative modes* as systems of representation in transcription, for instance proxemics, posture, head movement, gesture, gaze, spoken language, layout, print, and music. Although many research groups, such as the Multimodal research lab in Singapore headed by Kay O'Halloran (<http://multimodal-analysis-lab.org/>) are actively pursuing the challenge to create video transcription software to enable multimodal analysis of the moving image, no such programme exists as yet.

The video data of the group discussions was analysed by firstly capturing sections with *Final Cut Express* editing software, and thereafter transcribing images frame by frame. The frames were chosen by following each participant's individual movements and notifying events of posture change, head movement, gesture, gaze, and spoken language including intonation, loudness, and other expressive (Norris 2004). Each frame was numbered in sequence and matched up with sound and language (table 2). The process is quite laborious because the digital numbering of individual frames cannot be matched up to actual time in seconds. All the data were subsequently transcribed into a table in a *Microsoft Word* document format.

	01-03			A gestures up with RH, elbow still in table, looks at E	
	01-04	A			<b>First of all</b>
	01-19	A			<b>We don't have afrikaans</b>
	02-09			A points with pen to E. T looks at A	

*Table 1 Group discussion video data transcription*

Although time-consuming, this method was effective to transcribe the group discussions. This is mainly because there is no camera movement or expressive cinematic qualities to the video itself. Video in this context is only meant to act as recording tool of events played out in front of the lens and microphone. Transcription of the student video itself proved more challenging.

While the personal conversations and pre-production discussions between the four students can be analysed by means of multimodal interaction analysis (Norris 2004), this method is not entirely appropriate for analysing the student video production because of limitations and omissions of cinematic metalanguage. Additionally, one cannot divorce or extricate one mode in preference above another. Meaning might also shift between

different situations because of the spatial or temporal arrangements of the various modes employed. The *resource integration principle* 'refers to the ways in which the selections from the different *semiotic resource systems* in multimodal texts relate to, and affect each other, in many complex ways across many different levels of organisation' (Baldry & Thibault 2006:18). Thus, according to this resource integration principle, modes used cannot be isolated from the whole and must always be de-coded in context. Multimodal discourse analysis applied to such a diverse set of data as collected in this study, thus requires a holistic approach.

### **The Multimodal 'toolkit' – a flexible means for resource analysis**

Baldry and Thibault (2006) propose a 'multimodal analysis toolkit' for such a complex variety of texts and messages, which means that a researcher can draw from a wide variety of resources and methods particular to a certain set of data. Methods of analysis can be custom-made in order to suit individual types of data. The tools, however, are theoretically grounded in similar multimodal analysis principles, thus weaving a golden thread through the corpus of analysis variants. The analyser of a text is encouraged to make use of clusters of multimodal text. Data in this study can consequently be contextualised within identified clusters to underscore the applicable discourses, namely race, gender, taste, nationality and religion.

To transcribe data from the student video proved possible if one uses the multimodal analysis toolkit, moulding and adding analysis elements to suit particular needs. Cinematic qualities in the student's own production were limited, as this was their first video production. Their drama training also seemed to prescribe a certain mindset of the set as being a 'stage' with the limiting qualities of such an environment. The actors all played towards one plane- an imagined audience (where the camera was placed), and the camera operator managed to use a wide angle shot to record action without interrupting the flow of the drama. It seemed sensible to allow the students the freedom to choose this style, as the particular creative treatment of cinematography was not important. Ultimately, the use of camera language and cinematic direction for the student producing video would not necessarily influence expression of identity. The transcription table thus has room for the timecode, a video still, spoken language and diegetic as well as non-diegetic sound, and then following columns for Representational meaning, Interactive meaning and Compositional meaning (Table 4).

Narrative as well as conceptual structures comprise the two columns in Representational meaning, while the Interactive meaning columns record interactional modes such as proxemics, posture, gesture, head movement and gaze (Norris 2004) described in cinematic language such as contact, distance, point of view, and modality such as the information value, framing, salience, representational detail, depth, tonal shades and so on. The last set of columns point to compositional meaning such as cinematic descriptions such as camera movement, framing, colour, contrast, placement, and shot description.

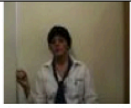


Timecode	Video still	Spoken language, diegetic and non-diegetic, sound	Representational meaning (Ideational - Halliday)		Interactive meaning (Interpersonal - Halliday) Sigrid Norris				Compositional (Textual - Halliday)	
		Spoken language & other sound	Narrative structures Vectors dynamic agents	Conceptual structures Classification (CS), symbolic (SS) & qualisfied (AS) Settings	Contact Quasi- or pictures	Distance Size of frame, Close or long	Point of view (Vp, gaze)	Modality Information value: Framing; Salience; Modality, Colour, Vp, Detail, Depth, tonal shades etc.	Information Value: Elements placement	Framing: Connecting & disconnect elements
03-05 CP: stationary		J Cut on beat, gaze to <b>Quasi- or pictures</b>	V: Junkie: beanie, white shirt open, loose tie, chain & pendant around neck, ear stud, cigarette, loose cuffs, cigarette packet in pocket, lipstick.		Demand Looking into lens, right hand halfway up, clenching cigarette. Head tilted slightly to right.	D: MCS	RP: direct VP: direct	Col saturation: naturalistic, low differentiation, modulation to beige, black and blue.	Static shot of 'confessional' nature, rather like a mug shot in front of a beige screen. No background information except for metal strip of screen on left side, and fall-off on right.	One central character, pe image. Beinh character on monotone. All visual information character props and dr contained. M No irrelevant
04-01 VS: junkie CR: monotone beige with blue tie CO: naturalistic VF: directed to viewer, median		J BB into background I <b>Quasi- or pictures</b> (*) I <b>Quasi- or pictures</b> (*) I <b>Quasi- or pictures</b> (*) I <b>Quasi- or pictures</b> (*) I <b>Quasi- or pictures</b> (*) From here on, dialogue always in foreground I <b>Quasi- or pictures</b> (*) I <b>Quasi- or pictures</b> (*)	Vectors: gaze to cigarette.		*Right hand closer to face bending down. Gaze to cigarette, introspectively.			This static background information stays the same throughout the phase.		
04-13		<b>Quasi- or pictures</b> (rp)	Gaze transactional, no vector		Head up gaze in lens.					

Table 2 Student video transcription

In Table two, transcription of the final video with a cluster oriented micro transcription approach makes use of notational elements namely timing, visual frame, visual image, kinesic action, soundtrack, and meta-functional interpretation of phases and sub-phases, plotted in a table format. Six columns describe such a micro-analysis of video footage. The first column indicates the *overall time* that the analysed phase takes, as well as a timeline in seconds for sub-phases transcribed. Important information around overlapping actions and sequences become apparent when glancing at this column. For integration and cross-referencing purposes, this timing needs to be accurate.

In column two, a *video still grab* follows the notational time description. Grabbed directly from the moving footage, this still serves as referential image to ensure that other information

corresponds with the actual visual image, resulting in a 'fine-grained correlation of selections' (Baldry & Thibault 2004:174).

*Notational glosses* in the third column explain the video still and represented actions it refers to. Some topological meanings are represented here, thus only selective aspects are appropriated. This selection helps to analyse relevant semiotic modalities and to integrate the visual image with the soundtrack. It is important to note that no kinesic aspects are noted in this column, but rather the viewer's relation to the world depicted by the moving image. This relation is described mainly by way of the camera position, camera perspective, distance, visual collocation, visual salience, colour, coding orientation, and visual focus or gaze of the participants.

The fourth column deals with kinesic action, namely body movements and a variety of spatio-temporal arrangements. It is important to note that these actions might be culturally contextual, but not culturally specific (Baldry & Thibault 2006). This kinesic aspect deals with all kinds of movement within the camera frame, either concerning the actors, props or other elements in view. The soundtrack column describes all aspects of sound, with no separation of dialogue and sound effects, to provide a multimodal text where no importance of one mode is presumed over any other. The last column analyses meta-functional interpretation in a cumulative way, bearing in mind all the information provided in the other columns.

This multimodal transcription toolkit proves useful by custom making the implementation of concepts such as aspects within the representational meaning namely narrative structures (vectors and other dynamic agents) and conceptual structures (classification and symbolic settings). Secondly, interactive meaning aspects such as contact, distance, point of view and modality form a cluster, and then lastly, compositional meaning (information value of elements placements, framing, salience and modality) form a cluster of its own. Video data for this study was analysed with the help of cluster-oriented micro transcription, referring to analysing multimodal clusters by considering the composition of a certain unit, and the relationships between various clusters within a bigger whole. This technique is the best choice for analysing identified sections of text that refer individually to the appropriate themes identified in this study, particularly in the research instruments used to interrogate border crossing within student processes, namely the process video, the student planning documents (character planning, script, and storyboard), and the student video production.

## **Multimodal Discourse analysis**

Jewitt defines multimodality as approaching 'representation, communication and interaction as something more than language' (2010: 1). Shortly, theorists agree that multimodality describes the practice of using a collection of modes to communicate a message in our contemporary society (Jewitt 2010, Kress & van Leeuwen 2001, & Flewitt 2006). When analysing these data sets, Jewitt identifies several foci. Of these questions, I am interested in what the researcher wants to focus

on, what knowledge the researcher has about the subject, and how the data will be transcribed (2010). Which modes become important when using various types of data sets would also impact on this study since the emphasis on modes for video records of conversations would vary from those when analysing the student video. Similarly, would the paper-based data reveal a different set of important modes than the video recordings? Flewitt describes the difficulty between descriptive and analytical tools for multimodal discourse analysis (2010: 40). The difficulty emerges because most transcription of data is still language based, transcribed into a written script. This funneling down of multimodality into a description of written language emphasises the importance of the way that data would be transcribed and described in the first place.

Facilitating in understanding aspects of multimodality, Kress and van Leeuwen (2001) ordered modes and their stages into four strata namely discourse, design, production and distribution. These distinctions are not meant to arrange modes and meanings in a hierarchical order, although the distinction between them becomes a useful tool to make sense of certain modes contained in a body of articulation.

### Focus on Discourse

In the context of New Literacy Studies, Gee emphasises that we need to concentrate on Discourse with a big 'D', which is 'much more than language' (1996: 2). Rather, he says, Discourse is a way of '*recognising and getting recognised* as certain sorts of *whos* doing certain sorts of *whats*' (1996: 156). Shortly, what he

describes as Discourse with a capital 'D' also includes all kinds of modes other than spoken language, such as gestures, glances, body postures and the like.

Within the video production team, individuals chose from a pool of semiotic resources the ones that they find best to convey certain Discourses. Discourses, which are 'socially situated forms of knowledge about reality' (Kress & Van Leeuwen 2001:20), are subjective and produced to be interpreted according to the interests of individuals and groups where they are embedded. In a Bakhtinian heteroglossic way, an individual will choose between various Discourses available concerning a certain aspect of reality in order to serve effectively in a specific context.

Discourse also appears in the language of the producer conveying his or her message: how he or she assesses and understands the viewer, and how he or she comes to decide on a mode that is best suited to reach the audience.

In this study, Discourse is realised in the various genres expressed in the different stages of the research. Thus, the Discourse in the initial stages is realised in discussions and verbal dialogue as texts, while paper-based planning documents and symbol drawings might reveal other Discourses among individual members of the group. The physical expression of these Discourses as materialised in these modes then, leads us to the second stratum or domain of practice (Kress & Van Leeuwen 2001) of multimodal discourse, namely design.

## Design as conceptualisation

Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001: 5) discuss the nature of the term 'design' by defining it as 'the conceptual side of expression, and the expression side of conception'. Apart from forming the 'halfway house' between content and expression, its main use is to plan and shape discourses within a certain communication event. By way of design, such a communication event is transformed into a 'social (inter-) action' (*ibid.*). Design is conceptually planning the execution of a discourse into a particular social event or simply put, deciding on how to operationalise the events.

Content design and strategising for this video production were left to the team. Various modes such as choice of props, language, visual modes, additional sound, and actors' performances influence not only the design of a video production, but also how the intercultural communicative practices articulate with each other. The boundary between resource and design mentioned by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001), seems to be challenging. As they say: 'For us it suggests that out of the semiotic modes which exist in any one culture only some are officially recognised and therefore available to design processes' (Kress & Van Leeuwen 2001:560).

The actual methods used by a producer, writer or creator (whether he or she is working through the medium of film, text, the Internet, and the intentions that are coupled to each of those modes of production), together constitute the *design* of the semiotic expression. In design as a verb, one may also call this the 'planning' that takes place before the actual execution. In this

study, therefore, the paper-based storyboard (design as noun) and how it was negotiated among the members of the group will show us the way in which they *designed* the semiotic concept. Design, by either being a noun or a verb, seems to be in a constantly changing state. When referring to the design of a certain object or idea, the meaning is never static, but always ambivalent.

### How to analyse production

As the fully active mode in the cluster of four strata within multimodal discourse, production refers to the 'organisation of the expression, the physical articulation of the semiotic event, or the actual material production of the semiotic artefact' (Kress & Van Leeuwen 2001:6). In semiotic production, articulation and interpretation (similar to Hall's concept of reception theory) (1997) each aspect serves a distinct function. While interpretation might be the most crucial function while producing an idea, storyboard and characters representing cultural variety in a group, the actual video production entails articulation as a significant function of semiotic production. The combination of these two aspects serves as one of the most important pedagogical tools available to the researcher. Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001:66) describe both the production, and the interpretation of the production, as 'physical work'.

During the act of producing producers use strategies to convey meaning of the discourse. Halliday (1979) identifies these meta-functions as logical (raising questions and providing answers in the form of a logical argument), textual (investigating the covariate ties, or aspects in the text binding events and actors

together), experiential (how actors and events are stereotypically expected to tie in together), and interpersonal meaning (how the viewer is set up to take a certain stance to suit the producer). These meta-functions serve to activate narrative discourse and meaning when viewing texts as multimodal instances. This approach brings us one step closer to understanding how interactions from each of the participant's subjective views are embodied in research texts. Correlating and triangulating themes across the various stages and produced texts, and filtering meaning through these meta-functions, are significant components of analysis. Other aspects of production are also explored in this study during analysis of the data, namely experiential meaning potential and its variety of cultural positions and expressions, as well as materiality of the body (actors' performances).

Production, however, needs a completely different set of semiotics that are more orientated towards actual practice and process, compared to the discourse and design strata. When we examine production, we look at actual video footage, how and by whom it was shot, and how the team envisages intention against realisation of the final product. Video editing is also part of the production stratum. Sometimes, however, there may be a disjunction between design and production – as happens in the case of the music that accompanies the final video (Kress & Van Leeuwen 2001). The composer creates the music (one may say that he or she designs it), and qualified musicians execute or produce it. In some kinds of music, such as jazz, the two strata overlap. They can also work against each other if there is inadequate communication between the designers and the

producers, or if the design cannot be executed in production because of ineptitude of the producers (for example, novice producers also acting as designers, with dreams too big for their own production abilities).

### Distribution and transmission

The means of arriving at a completed product needs to be in service of the result. 'Speaking about "distribution" semiotically means, in the first place, acknowledging that the technologies may be used in the service of preservation and transmission as well as in the service of transforming what is recorded or transmitted, of creating new representations and interactions, rather than extending the reach of existing ones' (Kress & Van Leeuwen 2001:93).

From the point of view of this research study, the distribution stage is fairly clear-cut. Distribution describes the form in which the material will ultimately be distributed, whether for example, on a DVD, in videotape format, or in compressed format such as a web-movie. The participants in this study had to make choices regarding publication, either within the relative privacy and controlled environment of their school, or to publish their video on a web-based social software platform.

## Ethical matters

Video recordings involving under-age students present various problem areas in terms of ethics, disregarding the intention of the researcher. Working with video production as the medium to be

researched becomes even more problematic (Flewitt 2006). Elaine Yakura (2004), in a sobering view on 'informed consent' and other ethical conundrums in videotaping personal interactions, identifies two types of 'gazes' relevant in video data. She notes that the 'surveillance gaze' can be typified as the 'academic gaze', while the other, the 'reflexive gaze' involves a more private reflection or an 'out-of-body experience' that can sometimes contrast with an existing self image. This study includes both these types of gaze. The academic gaze strives for objectivity and unemotional recording of an event, while the reflexive gaze is psychologically and emotionally driven in a very personal context.

The students in this research study all take drama as a school subject. They are expressive, and their viewing of their own images in recorded footage, as part of their identities formed did not present a problem in terms of reflexive gaze. The process video recordings showed their excitement at watching themselves acting out a part. The fact that they requested 'bloopers footage' as part of the DVD that was handed to each of them afterwards also attests to their willingness to be recorded. Their dignity and self-esteem seemed to remain intact throughout the process.

Researchers view the open-ended publication of research respondents' identities as being ethically problematic. In this study, the original intention had been to show the student's *Class of '94* video during the school's open day as part of a display, but they volunteered to publish it independently and insisted on uploading it to *Youtube*. They felt that just showing it at the school exhibition would not give them adequate exposure. I view

this as what Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001) refer to as 'creating new representations', when the original intention is superseded by complementary actions.

Because of the nature of video production, anonymity could clearly not be promised. As part of obtaining informed consent, thus protecting all actors in the process, the participants were briefed on every step envisaged in the research study, as well as the questions that the researcher wanted to investigate. All the parents signed briefing letters in which every detail of the project was explicitly explained.

As a researcher acting as a participant in the pedagogical process, I was constantly aware of my own possible influence on the outcomes. An interviewer in such a position needs to be cautious of leading questions and seeking answers to reflect preconceived ideas and thought patterns. For this reason, I was an active participant only in the interview conversation, while becoming more of an observer in the video production stage. I limited my interjections and questions to times when it became clear that some instructional assistance would be beneficial.

## Final comments about methodology

This study is not intended to be representative of the wider situation in South African schools. Rather it is an investigation into the possibilities that critical border crossing theories could afford within a similar environment, and particularly how video production can benefit a process of negotiating difference and identity in a diverse society. As such, the study is a snapshot that

affords the opportunity for the researcher to triangulate various multimodal research material and to analyse the data by way of social semiotics and multimodal discourse analysis, in order to de-code meaning making within such an exercise.

The research focuses on drama students who like acting and making music. Learning from the two pilot studies, I decided to narrow the variables by using people who have a natural inclination to articulate themselves in expressive ways. Using drama students ensured that the students could easily participate in their own video production. Since they all love the drama of a story, they did not find it difficult to identify with characters that they created. Their envisioning of such characters was easy to embody. The project is meant to form a replicable blueprint for such an intervention in other situations. By using the near 'perfect' candidates first, the intervention in the most ideal form could be tested first before it could be employed with more introverted students in less ideal situations.

The use of multimodal pedagogies in both the stages of the intervention enabled the researcher to use a larger canvas of modes in teaching difficult concepts regarding identity and video production. Although more regular prompts (Kress 2010) were used in the initial stages of the project when discussion between individuals needed to be steered into a more open-ended direction, verbal prompts from the researcher became fewer as the intervention progressed. Eventually, at the editing stage, only gestural combined with a lesser degree of verbal prompting was noticeable. This proved the view (Kress 2010) that various stages of the pedagogical intervention ask for different types of prompts.

Thus, when employing multimodal pedagogy, choices are made easier and more focussed.

The decision to divide the process in two stages complemented the triangulation of different data instruments. Such an approach is particularly necessary when one deals with salient concepts like identity and cultural perceptions. The personal interviews and discussion groups around identity and difference sensitised the participants in preparation for the video production theme and character building. These discussions and subsequent activity of video production complemented each other in exposing some semantic themes that could be analysed by way of multimodal discourse analysis built on a social semiotic approach.

Thematically the students were prompted to create a video promo for television soap after creating a story line, character set and environment wherein a television soap could run for an unlimited timeframe. The students chose to create a parody out of own volition, which became an illuminating factor in their identity projection. It seemed that the genre of parody enabled the students to move freely in a common border space where all four of them felt comfortable. Parody also formed the vehicle to express themselves irreverently towards their elders and family members, maybe dealing with social memory in a liberated way.

The researcher struggled with typical difficulties regarding transcription of moving images such as the process video as well as the student production. However, these data sets contained the most valuable insights, and subsequently, it became productive to employ some kind of multimodal toolkit such as devised by

Baldry and Thibault (2006) to transcribe data as it affords some flexibility in transcription and interpretation of the wide variety of data collected. With the view of analysing data in communicative modes such as proxemics, posture, head movement, gesture, gaze spoken language, layout, print and music (Norris 2004), the toolkit enables the researcher to change the focus of the analysis to fit the various types of data sets. The process video demands different foci on other modes than that of the dramatised student video, and as such the process is continuously directed to use the best possible combination of analyses. This approach enables the researcher to change focus between discourse, design, production and distribution as the data demand.

The next chapter analyses themes emerging in the data regarding memory and race as it emerges in the South African school environment, how social memory influences adolescents, and how these students create shared counter memory in order to deal with their older generation's beliefs and attitudes.

## FOUR

### How border pedagogy facilitates the creation of counter memory in the hybrid border space

This chapter analyses the ways in which students negotiate 'social memory' when dealing with matters of race and gender. Social memory is the collective generational memory of a society. This research found it to be inextricably linked to race, in particular the divisional structures created by older generations. Where older generations tend to use stereotyping to negatively frame the Other, younger generations tend to use the stereotype to turn around the convictions of the elders. Older members of the students' extended family often seem to belong to a different class structure from their immediate close family unit, which tends to live near the school, in an upper income group environment. To negotiate the disjuncture between these two worlds, students sometimes rather tell their elders half-truths

than face the consequences of disagreements. From a number of the classroom discussions analysed, it is clear that the students try to avoid conflict with members of the older generation by omission as opposed to straightforward lying. By sometimes keeping quiet instead of confronting older people, they ease their way around difficult social issues related to social memory.

It is evident from the data that the students in this study are able to create counter memory in the act of identifying with a new 'us', against the older generation's construction of 'them'. The use of parody when producing video material opens up a set of new mindsets that contribute to building counter memory. However, at times, the students seem to yield to the same stereotypes they identify as being entrenched within structures of the older generation, bringing to light the baggage of their own social memory. Border pedagogy was useful in establishing this counter memory, since it afforded the students moments to identify moments of synergy between them as members of the younger generation as well as those instances of difference that they need to recognise. Many of these instances could be traced to issues created by race.

## Race as defining factor when creating counter memory

Border Pedagogy addresses 'the "structural foundations of [the] culture of racism"' (Hannan in Giroux 2005: 110). Giroux stresses that anti-racist pedagogy should be more influential than addressing only personal feelings and expressions. Rather, one

has to investigate how certain historical, cultural and social actions influence society. An attempt to equalise power needs to be nurtured in the pedagogical situation, making sure that a certain amount of equilibrium prevails. Pedagogy needs to be steered into a direction of intellectual power, instead of emotional reasoning towards a reactionary imbalance. It is specifically for this reason that the open-ended classroom discussions preceding the video production became meaningful. The discussion group forum enabled the participants to create some critical distance from their family environments, in order to interrogate dynamics of race and class meaningfully.

Discourse around race featured overtly in the classroom discussions, in which the students were prompted with questions regarding cultural affiliations and perceptions regarding race in the school, as well as in their respective home environments. In this chapter I pay particular attention to some instances during the discussions where references to race arose. Students transform social memory into counter memory through negotiating cultural capital, emphasising the existence of a unique hybrid (Bhabha 1994) as described previously in Chapter Two.

Crapanzano (1991) reflects on the nature of social memory and how people subjectively and collectively remember events; people try to recreate and preserve past events even if they are traumatic. Even if they do not have particular memories to support a certain event, people create a collective memory, despite the fact that we realise the dangers such memories can hold, such as 'fundamentalism, racism and nationalism' (1991:

443). Many South Africans cling to historical perceptions, and many of these perceptions are built around racial prejudices. 'Race remains the major factor shaping the character of South African social life' (Soudien 2007: 118). This is predictable, considering Hall's notion that identities are constructed through difference (Hall 2000). Since race has always been the most obvious differential factor within this 'Rainbow Nation' (a term coined by Archbishop Desmond Tutu), the distinctions seem to be inevitable. The four participants in this study overtly express themselves about race in the more formal pedagogical environment, rather than in the less formal space of planning a video production. In the latter scenario, race is addressed in less overt, although perhaps more constructive ways. They tend to emphasise humorous and satirical moments towards each other, such as when the Indian student jokes about them sitting 'Apartheid style' when she realises that they are sitting in a half-circle with the Indian girl next to the black girl, opposite the two white girls.

In this study it becomes clear how collective memory divides generations, and galvanises youth who might generally feel misunderstood by their elders. While there seems to be a general understanding amongst older members of the Afrikaans community that racial difference needs to divide society amongst lines set by social memory, the students perceive their own values differently. They negotiate their collective memory from the point of their lived spaces. Their collective memory, which is a counter memory distinctly different from their older generations, shapes their worlds in a different way.

Divided opinion exists about the importance of social memory. Schwartz (1996) refers to some theorists of the 'politics of memory' movement as described by Hobsbawm (1983), Alonso (1988), and Bodnar (1992), who argue against the preservation of social memory, as this would essentially be a way of maintaining hegemony by the privileged. Other theorists however, deem collective memory to be a socially rooted concept with a very important role to play (Giroux 1995, Schwartz 1996 and Soudien 2006). We need collective social memory as a societal anchor, but mostly to mediate discussion and re-work history in order to eradicate inequalities. The work of social memory as such could be to facilitate transformation (Giroux 1995). Giroux maintains that the amnesic quality of allowing such memories to be eroded by subsequent generations is counter productive. The dilemma is that unmediated social memory could perpetuate and strengthen negativities and inequalities, while the ideal would be to create informed opinions and vision through critical evaluations of the past.

Giroux laments the role of the media and popular culture in eroding social identities and the memory of these inequalities that form part of social memory. He articulates the negation of social memory in essentially one-way populist media as contributing to a 'politics of forgetting' (Giroux 1995: 47), which perpetuates the circle of hegemony and inequality (Giroux 1995). In South Africa, it is important to address the theme of race as part of a social counter memory in which the younger generation actively produces new memories that counteract and work against certain dominant social memories. In the intervention described in this

study, students themselves through parody in video production activate counter memory.

The importance of activating counter memory is evident when the students relate perceptions around race and how generational differences exist within their various home environments. In a country such as South Africa, social memory and history are inextricably linked as a legacy of Apartheid.

Notions of race are perpetuated from generation to generation by way of a powerful communication of social memory. Biko writes: 'being black is not a matter of pigmentation – being black is a reflection of a mental attitude' (1978: 48). Conditions of oppression lasting many centuries have proved to forge this mindset (Durrheim & Mtose in Stevens, Franchi & Swart 2006). Durrheim and Mtose mention three ways that black identity has been theorised in South African academic literature, namely: (1) psychological inferiority, (2) political inequality and (3) repetition, multiplicity and conflict of identity. This study comments on the third feature, namely repetition, multiplicity and conflict of identity. 'Identification is an activity that involves locating oneself in a matrix of symbolic similarities and differences' (Durrheim & Mtose in Stevens, Franchi & Swart 2006: 156). A conflict of identity might fill the individual with feelings of disenfranchisement and helplessness.

As mentioned in Chapter Two, Soudien (2006) comments on a South African study by Hesseler (2006) who discovered a discord between home and school environments. This discord is related to social memory within the home environment, which dictates a

stereotypical prejudice reflected from older generations down to their children. Within their home environments, children are actively discouraged from challenging stereotypes and forming new opinions (Hesseler in Soudien 2006: 65). These young people are already dealing with hybrid family identities, and as such, might feel at times that some status quo needs to be maintained. In South Africa, not only are people with diverse cultural identities sharing public and educational spaces, but also family units are in many cases such a hybrid mixes that few can define themselves as originating from a definitive local, historical or cultural group.

South Africans typically identify themselves as having various backgrounds. Strelitz (2004: 631) reminds us that South Africa has never had a 'unified national identity'. Hall (1997) claims that forming an identity is a purely exclusive function – one can only create an identity by excluding that which a person is not. However, Bhabha (2008) argues that one should rather think inclusively. It becomes easier to list those traits belonging to a person, rather than those that a person excludes from his or her identity. Buckingham (2008) contests that in 'identity politics', claiming aspects of identity is a social issue. Since those in positions of power make the rules, their recognition of the importance of aspects such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality and disability is pivotal. South African society is currently in a state of change: previously marginalised majorities are claiming their own space and a right to representation (Buckingham 2008). They also want a reservoir of choices readily accessible, to act as 'unique hybrids' (Bhabha 1994).

## The 'unique hybrid' negotiating race

The four students in this study are unique hybrids. Ester originates from a strictly Afrikaans background. Tumi's mother has a Sotho background while her father is Zulu. The home environment of Amouré seems to be Afrikaans, but her father originates from Italy, and she identifies with her Italian roots. Amouré, as an 'operant person' (Adler & Adler 1998), chooses to align herself with Italian society, thus making use of the agency to choose her association according to her personal taste. Larusha relates that her parents are both Indian and Hindu, but that they stem from two different castes. The common denominator seems to be their religion, and not their Indian origin. These students apparently come from various complex backgrounds into the school environment that serves as their space of interaction (Massey in Strelitz 2004).

Events that emerge from the video production process make it clear that not all the students are equally comfortable with talking about race. Ester remarks that Afrikaners are scared of black people, but it is because they feel uncertain about other cultures. She claims that older generations imprint this mindset into them as younger members of society. Such sensitivities add to the responsibility of the school environment in creating spaces for meaningful interaction. I see video production as being an invaluable vehicle in fulfilling this need.

Giroux (1995) claims that more open debate around postmodernism and postcolonial discourses has emerged after the materialisation of new liberal politics, and that a certain

hybridisation of culture is evident. In particular, it appears that students are currently inclined to participate in debate around difference. This new willingness needs to be utilised in the pedagogical situation. During classroom discussions among the four students, I directed the discussion towards dialogues regarding the 'Other', and how the students view such representations. From these prompts, the conversation steered itself towards the fears of elders and the effect that these create on the younger generation. This type of open conversation rarely ensues in the structured South African educational sphere, but it is clear that the students in this study are willing, although cautious, to engage.

The first event (Figure 9) deals with perceptions within the group towards specified 'racial' groups as distinguished by the racially segregated former Apartheid classification system. This system (now abolished) classified people as either black, white, Indian or coloured. Discussing race generally, there seems to be consensus among the students. They perceive their parents and grandparents as being distrustful towards racial groups other than themselves. The social memory among older people filters down to their attitudes, generating this distrust towards others. The students are aware of the elders' prejudices, but they reason that it might be because people 'are often afraid of what they don't know'. They do not see it as a 'black against white' issue. Concern arises because the elders try to project their views and fears onto the younger generation in an authoritarian way, which prompts certain dishonesties in their relationships with their parents and grandparents. The result is not a transfer of distrust from parents to children, but rather that the younger generation

hides their affiliations from their authoritarian elders. Thus it seems that a certain decisive moment might be occurring in this young generation: that the responsibility that Fanon (1967) feels towards perceptions regarding blackness, might be overturned, as discussed below.

In his widely quoted essay 'The fact of Blackness' (1967), Fanon writes how he at first laughed at the white child who expressed fear when encountering him on the train. However, his laughter soon turned to tears when reminded of all the tales regaled in society regarding blacks as those to be distrusted and feared.

Fanon (1967) laments that the colonised are sitting in a double-bind: not only has he been de-activated as the architect of his own destiny, but some actions are also being predetermined and guided by the prejudice of others, thus removing his autonomy. Adding to some previous sentiment of nonexistence and inferiority that white colonialism imposed on blackness, the colonised are also left with feelings of guilt, and an irrational feeling of 'taking up space' (Fanon 1967). Consequently, Fanon feels responsible for his own body as well as his ancestors. Such feelings of inadequacy and guilt have powerful ways of being transferred from the older to the younger generation.

According to the students in this study, preconceptions embodied as a fear of the 'Other' linked to social memory persist. However, the fear spans a wider issue than simply colour. They relate that Afrikaans people are not only afraid of black people, but also of the English, and the Indians, and every other culture that is not theirs, and everything that they do not know; they are taught by

parents and grandparents to be afraid of anyone who is significantly different from themselves in terms of colour or culture. These students perceive the divisional attitude as being generational, since they still feel the impact of the colonised older generations. Both the black and white students seem to perceive emotions of aggression from the older generations. While some black students seem to live within an atmosphere of helplessness resulting from previous oppression exhibited by their elders, the white adolescents perceive guilt and resulting aggression in the behaviour and attitudes of their older relatives.

In the next section, Tumi relates how her extended family criticises her because of her particular dislike of some of the foods they eat. The push-pull relationship of generation versus association is also illustrated by the way that Ester voluntarily puts herself in Tumi's shoes when the students explain cultural identity to the facilitator, here an objective outsider. Ester finishes sentences started by Tumi, and uses the first person when doing so.

Ester shares Tumi's indignation against older family members. Tumi perceives her family members as forcing her to choose between her two lives. They resist her association with both the school and familiar township spaces, and they readily obfuscate the concepts of race and class. They see rich people as being upper class and white, contrasted with being black, and ironically, once more turning the stereotype of 'poor blacks' onto themselves. While Tumi's family pushes her away, Ester draws Tumi nearer by associating with her identity dilemma. It becomes a continuous movement, also mirroring Ester's situation. Both

Amouré and Ester claim, in other conversations, that they cannot comfortably invite their black friends home, or tell their grandparents that they are socialising with them outside the school grounds. Ester mentions that if she wants to go to the movies with Tumi, she needs to make up some 'white' name as a fictitious friend who will accompany her, as her grandparents will take exception when knowing the truth.

## Memory and race emerging in the South African school environment

According to the four students in this study, it seems that memory still 'batters down' some of the older generations in South Africa. In the following analysis, it seems as if the students perceive older family members to be more conservative and unwilling to accept social integration. They put this animosity down to a basic distrust of the unknown. However, it seems that there are other dynamics at work on the schoolground than those in private homes. Although the students claim that there is no animosity between black and white students in the school environment, they say, that this has mainly to do with equality of numbers of these two groups. Indians, however, form a minority group. According to the students, Indian students being a minority occasionally seem to experience some animosity from black as well as white students. The following section looks at a few events where the students discussed perceptions of race within their various social contexts. Later on, the chapter argues how the students negotiate cultural capital through difference, and that they borrow from each other in what Bhabha (1994) would call true 'unique

hybrid' convention. The data lead us to the fact that feelings of distrust amongst people mostly happen because they rely on social memory and issues brought forward from one generation to the next. The students perceptively distance themselves from these divisional emotions by acknowledging the power that counter memory can play in their own lives. Although they do not identify it as such, counter memory clearly serves as a unifier in their collective circumstance here in their school.

In all events discussed in this chapter, the students are sitting stationary in a semi-circle around a table. They are mostly talking to the researcher, who is sitting just out of sight to the left of the camera. Multimodal interaction analysis entails analysing the video recording with consideration of various modes as explained in the Theoretical Framework for this study (see chapter 2). The higher-level proxemic action involves the students sitting stationary within what Hall (1966) would term '*personal distance*' from each other. Personal distance is a proximity to another person, where two people are so near that they share the same social space. Personal distance can become confrontational when feelings of resentment and distrust exist between participants. In these discussions, the students sat close to each other, obliging individuals to deal with any discomfort caused by physical closeness.

In the following instances, such physicality seemingly forces them to overcome barriers of intimacy across borders and they seem to be completely at ease with each other. It becomes clear that they identify so closely that they see their own families as the 'other'. By stepping back, they disembody themselves from their own

familial situation and talk about general feelings in their own environment in an objective way that can only be possible if emotions are sidestepped. However, the knowledge is still shared from a personal space. It is somehow allowed to criticise one's own more harshly than what society allows you to criticise someone else's situation. Within this space they create, they also comment on the presumptions with which they are brought up, creating distrust between different people interacting within one environment. Much of this un-ease, they convey, are happening because of a basic lack of knowledge.

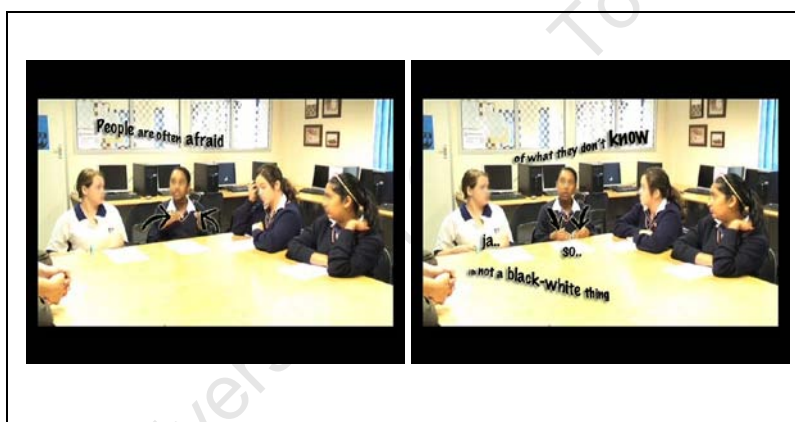


Figure 9 *People are afraid of what they don't know*

Ester (Figure 9) sits on the far right with her arms open and her body facing the camera. Her head is turned towards the other three students. She looks at Amouré. Tumi sits on her left. Tumi gestures with both her hands, fingers closed and facing towards each other while her fingers move out and in towards each other in a lower level action while she is talking. Amouré sits on Tumi's left hand side. Her higher-level proxemic action prompts her body towards Tumi, the speaker. Her left elbow often leans on the

table to stabilise her arm, out of camera sight, propping up her head, while her right arm is loosely positioned in a 90° angle in front of her on the desk. This position becomes habitual for Amouré throughout the discussions. She constantly looks down to her notes in front of her, appearing preoccupied and pensive in this static position. Amouré assumes this position often when she is not actively engaged in conversation. The turn of her body tends to effectively isolate Larusha from Ester and Tumi. Larusha leans on the desk with both her arms visible. Her left elbow props up her hand playing with a strand of her hair, alternatively turning and twisting a strand, and stretching it outwards towards the camera. She often stares straight out in front of her into empty space, and seems to be withdrawn from the conversation for a great deal of the time. The dynamic described here seems to continue throughout the discussion. Ester, Tumi and Amouré take turns in becoming animated around certain discussion points while Larusha passively listens. She occasionally joins the conversation when the talk turns to religion or perception of Indians.

T: It's a bit strange and people are often afraid of what they don't know  
 E: Ja  
 T: So..  
 E: its not a black white thing, its not such a big thing because there is LOTS of black people and lots of white people  
 A: yaa  
 E: But the, but the white Indian thing  
 T: [problem constantly  
 E: especially (.) and I would say it because I AM Afrikaans. Afrikaans people have a have a problem with different culture, its like  
 A [yaa  
 E: so (.), eh ], cause Afrikaans people are all scared of black people for some reason, eheh  
 T: eh  
 L: ehh  
 E: and (.)  
 F: why do you think this is?  
 E: I don't know, w, we just kind of TAUGHT that, that black people are (.), black people ya know, be careful of black people.

Figure 10 *People are afraid of what they don't know*

Larusha and Amouré (Figure 10) both fiddle with their hair using their left hands, thereby shielding their faces from the camera, perhaps belying a certain level of discomfort and self-consciousness with the recording. However, judging from reactions and ambience, it seems that these movements might be related to the fact that Ester and Tumi dominate this part of the conversation, and that these two turn themselves towards the place of interest, showing more engagement (Norris 2004). Interestingly, Amouré and Larusha both hold their arms in what Dittman (in Norris 2004) would call a 'closed position' most of the time. Activating social memory through the lens of Border Pedagogy is valuable, as can be seen in Tumi's opening sentence: '*People are afraid of what they don't know*'. As Giroux argues (1994: 36), the Other emerges in this context, being viewed by the older generations as 'impure, evil and inferior'.

By exposing and verbalising societal differences in social memory (De Laureatis in Giroux 1991), counter memory can actively be

mobilised. At this stage of the discussions, the students have opened up to each other sufficiently in order to step back from their own situations and view certain behaviour and perceptions differently. The act of stepping back in this way enables them to become philosophical about their own immediate identities and influential social members. The semi-formal structure of this pedagogical discussion seems to be valuable: since it is not curriculum-based, it frees students from external expectations to a certain extent and subsequent formal assessment. Additionally, such conversations might never have happened without the facilitator. I observed and later noted that meta-communications, such as talking about potentially sensitive topics like race often do not occur naturally in informal environments such as school grounds. Students need prompts and guidance in how to become critical architects of their own environments.

Tumi (Figure 10) initiates the conversation with a topic-setting sentence. Her gestures and spoken words ensure that the modal density as well as intensity is trained on her. She tries to answer a question regarding racial insecurities and distrust. When she says *people are often afraid of what they don't know*, her hands prominently form a horizontal to-and-fro action. Her vocal intonation increases at the end of the sentence. The upward intonation at the end of the sentence, together with her hand movements, reinforces the moment as what Norris defines a higher-level action (2004), and serves as a prompt for a continuation of this theme during the conversation. While talking, she is looking towards Ester on her right, with her chin held high. Her eyes form a vector towards Ester, although her body is turned towards the desk directly in front of her. Towards

the end of Tumi's sentence, Ester readies herself to speak by inhaling deeply and extending her stance to sit more upright in her seat. *Ja*, she says momentarily, before Tumi tentatively utters *so[.]*, herein signifying her intention to carry on speaking. Ester's body language signifies her interest and need to associate with the view Tumi expresses. All the while that Tumi is speaking, she glances towards Ester, indicating by this direct visual gesture that she would either like to prompt Ester into responding, or that she expects Ester to understand and associate with her opinion. Her prompts are rewarded during the immediate follow-up moments. We can see here how Tumi is emboldened by the knowledge that the school environment is a place where she belongs, and where she would like to obtain the goodwill of her fellow students. Even more than that: the situation expects it of her. Grossberg (1997) defines this as organising a situation positively, singularly, so that the environment itself influences and empowers her. Ester opens herself up, agreeing to some vulnerability when she talks about painful things that might put her at risk of criticism.

In a high modal intense moment (Norris 2004), Tumi is interrupted by Ester who says *it's not a black-white thing [.]*, indicating that the issue carries some emotional value for her (Ester) as well. It becomes clear that the effect and expectations of Border Pedagogy and its theory of active engagement and listening is emerging in this conversation. In relation to Tumi, Ester's actions and spoken language push her towards a more foregrounded position in the foreground-background continuum. Tumi consequently takes up a secondary position. Within the bigger context, it becomes clear that Ester wisely sees the 'bigger

picture' and these students, as a group, acknowledges differences of one another. They are capable of recognising the dynamic that difference creates in the bigger society.

While Ester is saying *it's not such a big thing*, she points in a deictic gesture with her left index finger on the desk, indicating emphasis. This modally intense movement emphasises the strong conviction she feels about this point. She maintains that it is because *there are LOTS of black people and lots of white people* and emphasises her point with her left palm turned upwards, a metaphoric gesture indicating honesty. When she carries on speaking, her hands drop down but the palms still face upwards. A second later, Tumi opens her mouth to speak. All four students nod towards the facilitator, agreeing with the statement that Ester has just made. Ester then turns her head back towards the other three, in an action so modally intense, that all attention shifts back towards her.

All the time that Ester talks, Amouré and Tumi have their heads turned towards her in a rotational deictic head movement. Ester, Amouré and Tumi all contribute to this conversation, while Larusha is sitting motionlessly, staring in front of her most of the time. She proceeds with *but the white-Indian thing* (Figure 11), while she points with her left index finger in a beat gesture. Emboldened by the openness of the conversation, Ester broaches another dimension of the problem.



Figure 11 *But the White-Indian thing...*

With the use of Ester's spoken language, combined with her finger beat for emphasis when she says *but the White-Indian thing*, the moment becomes modally intense because of its complexity as well as its density. Her hands move rapidly in precise movements, framing two actors in the scene: herself and Amouré. She initially motions with both her hands pointedly towards Tumi and then back to herself, and then gestures directly towards Larusha with one finger. When the other students, including Larusha, proceed by nodding to this statement, the importance of the moment is strengthened. Giroux claims that we need to activate our social memory in order to bring instances of dominance and victimisation to the fore, with the aim of eradicating such practices (1991). Through this discussion, the students are starting to talk about and understand oppressive practices. This could set the tone for resistance and neutralisation of such social practices.

The facilitator, as outside party perhaps, frees up the conversation. The students generally do not address each other

directly and turn consistently towards the facilitator. This becomes a valuable way to embolden them to speak their minds. While they convey feelings and societal prejudices subjectively, they do at times step out of their own situations to comment on society as a whole. The 'personal' is removed in the presence of the outsider. They are not talking directly to each other, and this seems to remove some 'sting' from the directness of their statements. It becomes an embodiment of the generalised 'they say' comment used often in society. The construction of the somewhat artificial pedagogical situation enables the students to engage with perceptions as a corpus of third persons, that seemingly plays devil's advocate as commentator.

Evidently, all the students have thought about this prejudice against Indians. Ester waves her left forefinger in the direction of Larusha and then lifts both her hands, displaying vertical palms. She looks at the facilitator one-and-a-half seconds later, and in a complex gesture, she moves her left hand from top to bottom in between her right hand, in a to-and-fro beat. In the next second, while she moves her left hand in beat gestures, all of them nod their accord in sagittal head movements. Through this hand movement it is evident that Larusha is taking ownership of the topic, acknowledging the fact that she has a personal interest in talking about Indians. Ester's actions here become foregrounded, while Tumi moves to the mid-ground. Ester also becomes animated, pointing with her left index finger (defined by Norris as a 'medium modal intense moment'), while the rest nod in agreement. Here, Tumi vocalises *..problem constantly..*, thus talking simultaneously with Ester's last words. This utterance serves to strengthen Ester's previous words about the Indians

*having a problem* with the attitudes of the other students, by creating a dense modal moment with two utterances and lower-level sagittal head movements by three of the four students. In this moment, one can perceive, by the choice of words, that the students identify completely with the Indian community by semantically placing themselves on the Indians' side. Additionally, they all actively agree in chorus on the principle of the matter. Their metaphorical placement in the 'Other's' shoes becomes a strong theme, as also demonstrated in the next section.

## Social memory influencing trust in communities

Although theorists claim that South Africa has never had a 'unified national identity' (Strelitz 2004: 631), there have always been 'spaces of interaction' (Massey in Strelitz 2004: 632) where spontaneous contact took place between various social groups and classes. These areas serve as platforms for the formation of hybrid identities and behaviour. Useful points of contact are established between South African youths when they are out of reach of generation-bound debates and cultural alienation resulting from the influence of older generations (Soudien 2007). These enabled spaces are helpful for young people to negotiate cultural capital with touch points provided by popular culture that they all share.

As adolescents move out of their home environments, they fall under the influence of more varieties of cultural differences, from

wider associations. These cultural capital factors are either economic or socially driven. South Africa has an ever-growing upper income group of black elite, with young professionals finding their way into more affluent segments of society. Their children, the unique hybrids occupying positions in private upper income group schools such as Mountain Hill, shape adolescent identities in increasingly fluid ways. They can associate with the generation that Buckingham refers to as an 'increasingly heterogeneous, multicultural society, in which very different conceptions of morality and very different cultural traditions exist side-by-side' (Buckingham 2003: 16). For the students, negotiating cultural capital has become a matter of personal choice and necessity in this liberated space.

Negotiating cultural capital, changing and shaping it, affect these students more profoundly than their individual home environments. Within their 'habitus' (Bourdieu 1984), they oscillate between various views and mindsets. At home and in the socio-cultural environment, parents and elders within a narrow familial set-up prescribe values and motivations. Conversely, shared habitus at school is significantly different. According to Bourdieu (1984), schools mirror authoritarian culture structures in the wider society as well as negating the authority of the oppressed. Bourdieu (1984) uses the analogy of financial capital to explain cultural capital as a negotiation tool of empowerment. However, in the recent historical context of South African society, efforts are made across various subsections of society to eradicate differences. Jansen (2009) supports this trend. I disagree with Jansen that eradicating all difference would be conducive in understanding and accepting fellow students.

Nonetheless, concerted efforts need to be made in the education context regarding inequalities based on race and identity. Educators can employ the agency of expressed differences in culture as a 'hook' to develop politics of identity, community and pedagogy and in this way, facilitating the creation of counter memory.

[Race is not] merely a political issue; it is eminently a pedagogical one as well. Racism is an ideological poison that is learned; it is a historical and social construction that seeps into social practices, needs, the unconscious, and rationality itself (Giroux 2005: 85).

Giroux also refers to Habermas who talks about Foucault, Lyotard and Lefort 'generating a critical discourse around historical modernity as an epistemological structure' (Giroux 1994: 342). Perceived inequality of race is still arguably a real issue in the South African context (Durrheim & Mtose 2006). Black people locate themselves constantly in areas of conflict when trying to understand colour. However, these issues create more conflict in older generations than in the youth, who recognises youth as having more flexible opinions regarding inherent goodness amongst societies (Durrheim & Mtose 2006: 168).

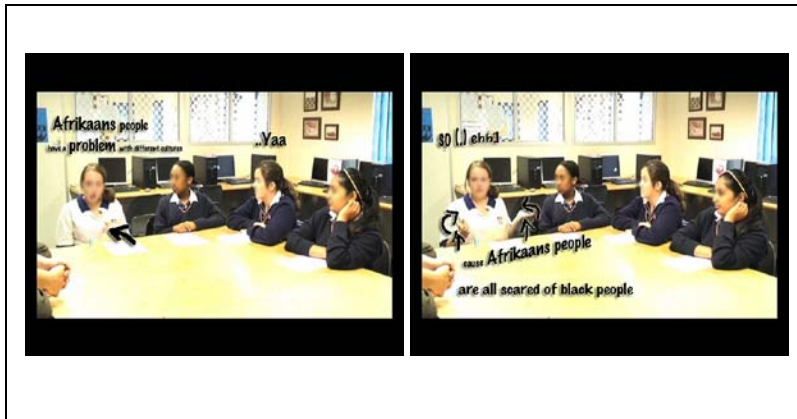


Figure 12 Afrikaans people have a problem

Ester (Figure 12) says that Afrikaners generally have a problem with other cultures. She makes her point by employing a higher-level action consisting of a shoulder shrug and holding her palms up to desk height. Her confession can be interpreted as honest and non-confrontational, since, together with the open hand gesture, she says *I AM Afrikaans myself*. She is also nodding her head, adding to this higher-level action. While using a confessional tone, it is clear that she aligns herself away from these 'Afrikaans people' that she mentions. This is a complex situation, because while she aligns herself with Afrikaans people, she also distances herself by observing the criticism of the group. Yet, she owns the right to criticise, because of her own association.

In keeping with the questioning nature of critical Border crossing Pedagogy, the facilitator prompts Ester: *Why are Afrikaners reluctant to trust other people?* It is important that language and interaction throughout the intervention stays 'grounded in the context of everyday life and asks how human experiences are

produced, contested and legitimated within classrooms' (Doyle & Singh 2006: 29). Doyle and Singh claim that particular attention needs to be afforded to the practicality of such language and the way that it finds resonance with students. It is important that students should have the opportunity to talk about difference experienced practically in their own life worlds. We need to 'allow students to find their own voices through their culturally produced language, in ways that express what they know, what they are experiencing, and what they are learning. This is the stuff of critical pedagogy' (Doyle & Singh 2006: 29).

The essence of the matter is how the students in this study express themselves frankly, although non-confrontationally, throughout these conversations. These four students are seemingly on an equal footing in this conversation. While taking turns to speak, there are an equal number of moments where their comments dovetail into each other, where body language moves in harmony accentuating and complementing each other, revealing consensus. In the rare moments where slight unease can be detected, it is mostly when some reflective tone is adopted, when they act as spokesman for a social group wherein they belong. The next moment is testament to such a moment of unease:

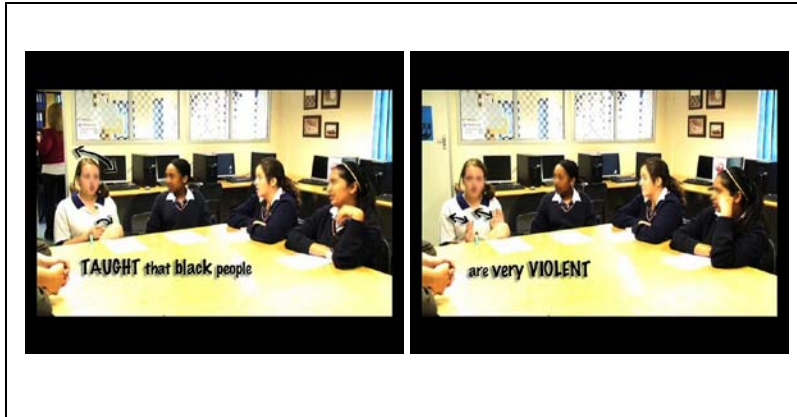


Figure 13 Afrikaans people are taught..

As explanation for this problematic attitude of Afrikaners, Ester (Figure 13) says that *Afrikaners are TAUGHT that black people* [..]. Here she stops, assigning meaning to 'black people' as if activating her perceptions towards the aforementioned *black people*. The emphasis changes from what black people are perceived to be, to the attitudinal stance of how one should behave towards them. Thus, she wants to convey a certain conception by her own community although she herself does not buy into these actions. Ester's body language stays focussed on the facilitator. By turning her body slightly away from the rest of the group, she effectively 'confesses' a vulnerable aspect of her association with Afrikaners. By pushing her hands in a beat away from her body, she expresses her own distance from this Afrikaner attitude. She puts the Afrikaner as a group, metaphorically on the opposite side of where she is sitting. The students clearly do not always agree with their older family members.

The perception of fixed ideas of older family members effectively compel these students to feel that they need to keep their friendships contained to the school grounds. The preferred alternative seemingly, would be to lie about the identity of friends, especially to their grandparents. They perceive the older generations as being intolerant and distrusting towards other cultures. Soudien (2006) claims that students find it difficult to form new opinions because of the lack of fit between mindsets of family members, mostly older generations, and their own experiences of their peers sharing the same school environment.

The students claim that their parents and grandparents influence them towards distrusting other groups. From the discussion though, they seem to be forming a counter-opinion to that of their parents, and criticising people within the familial social sphere. The discussions with the facilitator present in this chapter mainly take place within the first day when the students share views around difference and how they negotiate race in the school versus their home environments. It seems in this situation that their relational identity (their situation within the school context) overrides their cultural identity (Wiseman & Koester 1993). These students as unique hybrids (Bhabha 1994) position themselves socially here within the framework of their school environment. The choice might change later when they are on their way home. That is how the hybrid operates: social positioning is constantly changing, becoming more advantageous to suit the current, also changing situation.

In consequent discussions general perceptions of distrust emanating from the grandparent-generation emerged. Ester (Figure 14) dramatically quotes her grandparents who tell her to be – *be careful of the Indian people, be careful of the black people, be careful of the English people*. She deictically uses high-level actions with her open palms protruding in a stopping motion out in front of her, creating a high modal intensity. She elaborates that they would also tell her to be careful of black people as well as English people. Tumi and Amouré both nod their heads in agreement, and Larusha tries to say something but is ignored by the rest; Larusha generally tends to be shy, and therefore less opinionated than the other three students.

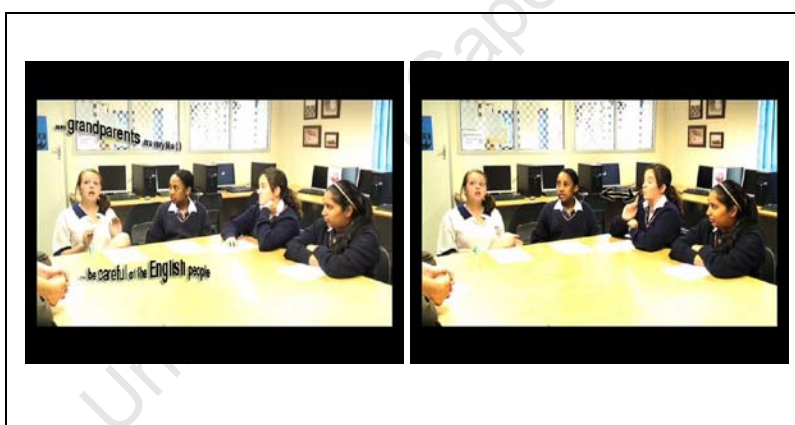


Figure 14 *My grandparents tell me .. like.. be careful*

It seems that the students perceive the older generation, especially grandparents, in a similar way. When Ester talks about her prescriptive grandmother, Amouré, in a deictic gesture similar to that of Ester's, is ready to speak and wags her finger with Ester's in unison, and Larusha smiles. They tend to mimic the older generation with these gestures in order to evoke their

presence in the conversation, thus creating some humour directed particularly at the older peoples' actions. When Ester states that her grandmother believes firmly that Afrikaners should stay with their own kind, they all nod unanimously.

Tumi says that because of this preconception of the older generation, she is not allowed to visit some of her Afrikaans friends in their houses, and Ester may not go to movies with her friends of other cultures. Ester mirrors the hand movement of Tumi that creates a high modal intense moment. Ester looks quite comfortable with Tumi talking for her here, and agrees vocally with this statement. Amouré does the same, confirming with a *yaa*. They seem to be talking across each other, for each other. They are finishing each other's sentences. In the last few seconds of this instance, it seems that Tumi and Ester are identifying with each other to such an extent that they 'change skins', so to speak. This deictic movement creates an agreement between all of the students, embodying their closeness and concord. In this instant, the school community seemingly takes precedence over their individual home environments.

It becomes clear that the history of Apartheid still governs social memory in South Africa and has consequences on all aspects of private and public life. Political power may have been equalised in the public and social domains. However, psychological inferiority persists. The adolescents in this study feel that the older generations, particularly the grandparents, are keeping a feeling of inferiority alive amongst the larger society. The students themselves appear to live in more than one social world. While they have to deal with the divisive social memory of

Apartheid at home, they are able to escape from some of the prejudices and negative associations at school. They seem to be able to express their complex diverse identities better in the company of their peers than in their home environment. While they perceive the older generation to adopt an exclusive identity, the students choose to act inclusively by embracing a culture of unique hybrids.

Although they align themselves with an inclusive identity, aspects of social memory could still keep them from crossing certain boundaries. Border crossing Pedagogy embodied here as an open-ended style of group discussion enables the facilitator to lead conversations with certain prompts towards areas that historically, in the context of social memory, would be taboo subjects. South African society generally seems to shy away from discussing race in a forum where diverse identities are present. It seems easier to avoid sensitive issues such as this, because of the perceived high risk of affronting someone of a different background. While the older generations teach younger ones to avoid other races, the younger ones realise that *one is afraid of what one does not know* (Tumi). The dexterity of youth enables them to claim a hybrid space. They explore, although tentatively sometimes, areas where their grandparents fear to tread. Border crossing Pedagogy enables the process by opening doors of enquiry and inviting participants to ask previously taboo questions.

Interventions like these cross more taboos than talking about race. As Ester recounts, social memory prescribes that these youngsters should be afraid of any identity that might be unlike

their own. This includes any other language, class or group with identifiable differences from what is familiar to them. Older people, within their direct home environment, act as the enforcers of these prejudices. Fortunately, young people tend to question and rebel, even if rebellion is not always an overt act. Some situations described in this study show clearly that the students rebel within the safety of numbers, and as a group, when they experience a feeling of solidarity.

## Ignorance to difference within communities

In a school such as Mountain Hill, where the racial mix of white and black seems to be roughly equal, black students often seen as being of a mixed-racial identity and trying to create an anti-racist society. 'They regularly have to explain who they are and what they are about' (Soudien 2007: 120). While they are part of the privileged black generation, they also feel a very real obligation to state the case of the black oppressed, so to speak. Various factors and circumstances serve as reminders that they are black, and different from their white peers. This attitude is evident in the next event, where Tumi explains that some people fail to distinguish black people as belonging to various different cultural identities. Throughout the interactions in this study, the findings described by Soudien are validated by the ways in which Larusha and Tumi negotiate their positions within the broader society and within their immediate social position. These findings in turn, reflect the feelings and actions of constant self-evaluation and re-alignment that Fanon (1967) and Bhabha (1994) describe

regarding black members of society. Thus, it becomes just as important to define identities in terms of what they are, as to demarcate borders where they cease to exist. Although identities are hybrid in nature, it is not a question of 'anything goes'. Teenagers motivate and negotiate to move in shared and hybrid cultural spaces that are always intuitively considered and calculated. The dialogue below (Figure 15) demonstrates Tumi's insistence that black people are not culturally homogenous as sometimes perceived by the larger community.

T: a lot of people really don't see the difference there. Like.. sometimes there will be like teach me how to talk black and you're like, you know..  
 E: ..no, there's no..  
 T: there's no, there's no language called black  
 E: ja  
 T: we have many languages, different languages, different cultures  
 E: but that's just culture  
 A: ja  
 T: so its like, people generalise us to be one culture  
 E: one bunch of people  
 T: we are just black and  
 E: ja  
 T: our culture is black and we speak black, so its...  
 L: just like, Indians, all are the same  
 T: ja, its like the Indians, all Indians are Muslims  
 L: exactly the same  
 E: ja, kind of thing  
 T: so its this same stereotype across all of us, even tho its not part of our culture. [ja and look, I'm very, very guilty of that because..  
 A: ja  
 E: when I was, I was.. I was in another school up till grade four  
 E: I had one black person in my class throughout ... those four years at that school.. and um .. just that one black friend so I didn't - I thought black people were black people  
 T: ja  
 E: you know all black people were black people  
 A: ja  
 E: and then when I came here  
 L: I was also..  
 E: and there were so many black people, and you realise that.. there are the.. I just thought that.. like - ja there's just there's a black peop - peop.. black people speak that black language..

*Figure 15 People don't see the difference*

Malinowski (in Baldry & Thibault 2006) and Foucault (in Hall 1997) both agree that people bargain daily, consciously and subconsciously, while participating in general rituals, practices

and customs. The bargaining around the popular, that which is to be recognised and followed, shapes daily practices and interactions between members of a society (Thornton 2000). The four students illustrate this bargaining by their recollection of the way that students generally negotiate language and how white scholars try to buy into black identity. During the group discussion on the first day, the students remark on the many stereotypes noticed at school. Black people are generally perceived as one homogenous group who 'talk black'. Black people identify themselves on the basis of difference, while outsiders group them together because of various similarities. Minority groups such as Indians, according to the students, seem to have the biggest problem of being understood as diverse groups of people. It becomes clear that various stereotypes are generated to coincide with what is easily recognisable as a group. The members of the group sometimes distinguish themselves according to skin colour, and at other times, they use their home language as differential factor. Tumi has a Sotho mother and a Xhosa father, Amouré has an Afrikaans mother and an Italian father, and although Larusha and Ester come from an Indian and an Afrikaans background respectively, they find themselves in an upper income group, English medium school.

Tumi (Figure 16) has the floor. She is talking, as insider, about how outsiders perceive black people. Ester, Amouré and Larusha look at the researcher. Tumi is the only one who is looking down towards the desk. Ester touches her face with her right hand while her head is tilted slightly to her left side, towards the other students. Her right leg rests on the chair next to her. The camera sees the top of her left knee protruding above the table surface.

Larusha slumps over the desk with her hands hidden while Amouré sits forward leaning over the desk, with her right arm lying in front of her, bent at the elbow at 90°. Her left arm lies deceptively relaxed, outstretched in front of her. However, she uses her thumb to pick on her nails throughout the duration of the discussion, belying an underlying tension. Tumi shakes her head three times while saying *A lot of people...*



Figure 16 *People really don't see the difference*

Ester shifts her gaze when she turns her head to the left in a simple movement. While her body language shows her listening attentively to Tumi, her gaze is unfocused somewhere to her left. Larusha turns her head towards Tumi but stops in a mirror movement to that of Ester. She then straightens up close to the desk and looks down towards an unfocused space in front of her while Tumi carries on with her sentence ... *really don't see the difference.*

While talking, Tumi turns her head to her right and stares chin up, into the space between Ester and the researcher. Larusha tilts her head up, and proceeds to look quietly at the desk in front of her, while Ester brings her hand to her mouth. Thumi says: *there*] [*like*... exhibiting a short guttural stop between the two words and a pause at the end. On this last utterance, she turns her head to the left and stares out to infinity. Larusha tilts her head to the left and looks more intently at the desk and her writing in front of her. Ester rubs her fingers in a to-and-fro beat over her mouth and then removes her hand a fraction from her face. It is clear that they listen to Tumi intently, but turn their heads towards the researcher, signalling cohesion.

Tumi says *sometimes there will be like.. teach me how to talk black..* Larusha simultaneously turns her head to the right and looks at Tumi, and Amouré shifts her gaze laterally from Ester to infinity straight in front of her. Her body stays still throughout these words, except for her fingers moving up and down. Tumi follows with the next words: *and you're like.. you know..* Ester starts talking over the last part of this sentence with a sudden interruption [*no there's no*... Two seconds later, Tumi follows: *there's no*... Ester turns her head forward and gazes in front of her. Tumi starts her sentence again. *There's no language called BLACK*, emphasising the last word. She turns this emphasis deictic by bringing her hands up in an offering motion. This gesture is carried further for a few more seconds, moving her hands three times up and down while looking at the facilitator. Her structured gaze, combined with deictic beat hand movements, turns this moment into a foregrounded action of high modal intensity.

Ester (Figure 17) affirms her accord again by uttering a sharp *ja* over Tumi's words. Tumi carries straight on talking, explaining *we have many languages*. At these words, she places her right hand horizontally over her left in a metaphoric gesture as if classifying conceptually into hierarchical importance. She looks at the facilitator. Judging from the modal intense moments used by Tumi as emphasis, she repeatedly looks at the facilitator when she agrees strongly with a certain point.

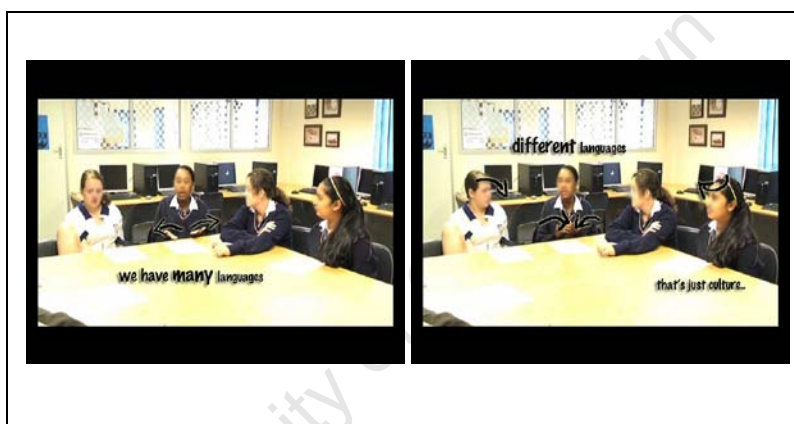


Figure 17 *We have many different languages*

Tumi then opens her hands and with both palms showing flatly upwards, moves her hands slightly up and down in a low beat movement. She carries on: *different languages, different cultures...* Ester interjects straight away by commenting that [*but that's just culture*. In this moment, Larusha once again turns her head towards the left and looks at the facilitator to strengthen her opinion. On the second half of her sentence, Tumi starts a methodical deictic movement by interchanging her hands in a stacking motion, one on top of the other, and then exchanging the position to favour the alternative hand. This

motion is repeated twice. Amouré emphasises the modal intensity here with her own interjection of [ja. Proxemically, it becomes obvious that Ester, Tumi and Amouré agree strongly about this issue. Larusha seems indifferent.

Tumi carries on explaining that *so its like... people generalise us*. Her head is turned straight towards the camera while she is looking down. She turns her fingers together, pointing the fingertips towards each other in an iconic gesture. *People generalise us*. She turns her head laterally towards the researcher, and finishes her sentence: *to be one culture*. Here, Ester interjects with [*one bunch of people*, bringing her right hand vertically up in a beat past her head. She drops her head slightly.

When Tumi comments *our culture is black and we speak black, so its...* Larusha suddenly takes an interest and says [*just like, Indians, all are the same*. She looks at the researcher. Tumi interjects here, talking over Larusha's words, affirming what she has been saying. Tumi and Ester turn their attention towards Larusha by looking at her. Larusha waves her right hand in a horizontal deictic gesture. All attention shifts to Tumi when she says that *all Indians are Muslims*, and Larusha affirms this statement with an utterance of [*exactly the same* holding her right hand in an offering gesture, palm turned up.

In the next few seconds, Ester confesses that she is very guilty of generalising, because at her previous school she had only one black friend. Students were overwhelmingly white. The next deictic moment manifests itself when she says *I thought black*

*people were black people..* which Tumi affirms with *Ja*, while nodding towards Ester. When Ester continues, right hand flat on her chest, with *you know all black people were black people*, Amouré joins in the agreement with a strong [*ja* over Ester's voice. All three of the other students now look at Ester, and she causes a foregrounded action by moving her right hand to and fro across her chest and away. Larusha's words [*I was also ..* are drowned by Ester's *and there were so many people..* Larusha sinks back in her chair and continues to look at the desk in front of her. She seems to have lost the moment. Her words often get drowned in the midst of the other louder conversation.

While Larusha slumps down towards the desk, Ester carries on with her words, unabated: *and you realise that (... ) there are the* [*I just thought that... like – ja... there's just.. there's a black peop]... peop].* She finishes her sentence abruptly, as if bereft of the correct words, and gives up speaking. In this last moment, Tumi nods her head sagittally repeatedly five times. She displays strong and passionate agreement with Ester. Although silent, Larusha is seen to agree as well, by the way that she shifts her gaze to look directly at the researcher. Amouré leans forward onto the desk and gazes at Ester.

During this interaction, it becomes clear to what extent the four participants agree with each other on certain viewpoints. They seem to identify completely with Tumi when referring to the amount of contempt and indifference with which blacks are treated. Judging by the way they relate to this sentiment, one can deduce that they regard this way of thinking as being history, and that they have distanced themselves from it. They feel themselves

to be wiser. With hindsight, they criticise themselves, and the white students do not mind the fact that they confess their ignorance to the facilitator. They present themselves as enlightened individuals who have found some distance from what they perceive to be their narrower-minded family members. They have migrated opinions and sentiments towards alignment in common with each other. One can deduce that they generally buy into the same power relations that Thornton describes as 'emanating from constructions of a complex set of experiments, procedures, insights, and, above all, texts in which this knowledge is contained and communicated' (2000: 35). Empowered by hindsight, they look at historical events affected by their older family members and re-work their own perceptions around these societal constructs.

Their coherence in this instance binds them towards the shared hybrid border space that they occupy. From within this shared space, they exhibit a certain amount of optimism. Certain historically restrictive forces based in their home environments, do not affect them here. By vocalising these touch points, the students seem to be fused into solidarity in using popular stereotypes as defining moments. They seem to be able to distance themselves from their situations elsewhere, where they might find themselves in an unequal or skewed social argument, by defining themselves according to more comfortable definitions in popular culture.

From the previous two events it seems that the students sometimes appear hopeful that they will be able to convince their own parents to adopt a more liberal stance, but they are less

positive about their grandparents. They are also more aligned with their schoolmates than to peers from their own backgrounds who are from other social and financial classes.

This group of young people can be compared with the new generation that Soudien (2007) describes as those with the desire to be architects of their own destiny. New liberal politics have re-introduced the debate around race and the modernist discourse of the 'innocent black' which centers around whiteness with any other racial difference as 'the Other' (Giroux 1995). Because of the history of Apartheid structures in South Africa, the race debate has only been democratised within the last two decades or so. Soudien comments that especially among black South Africans, the youth, in their social groups, are actively re-shaping their own racial identities, and creating their own traditions to form homogenised cultural practices.

Perceptions of race and the importance of distinction seem to change within the various generations. Consequently, members of certain generations identify with other members of the same younger generation. Ester and Amouré share firm compassion with Tumi and Larusha when it comes to talking about generational difference. It seems that all four students feel that their parents are not quite in touch with their own racially integrated world. Messages seem to be mixed. The parents would like students to mix freely, and that sometimes becomes one of the main motivations for putting a child into an integrated school like Mountain Hill, but in the wider family unit, social integration away from the school grounds is frowned upon. Students feel that

they need to lie, or keep quiet, about their associations and friendships formed at school.

The next section investigates how parody can be employed to create counter memory. Critical pedagogy prompts 'new emancipatory forms of political identity' (Giroux 2006: 56) by not only informing the present, but also challenging the way that the present reads the past (Giroux 2006: 56). The student video clearly shows how the students use their own interpretations and agency, through parody, to re-shape views and stereotypes in order to take control of social perceptions and histories.

Border Pedagogy and the pedagogical intervention designed for this study activate a Hybrid border space. In this space, students are endowed with a certain fitness to interrogate the ideas and aspects of difference outside of their own individual cultural, racial and political territory, without being influenced by the social memory that lingers in their broader family environment. The hybrid border space thus created provides them with a certain agency to defy authority structures.

## Taste as an aspect of social memory

Talking about 'us' versus 'them' implies that there are some distinguishing factors, and reasons why one would align oneself with a certain identity rather than another. It might be that various identities overlap for adolescents in the current South African scenario. In terms of cultural identity, the first of three types of identities defined by Wiseman and Koester (1997), the students perceive acceptance by a certain group that shares

symbols, norms and behaviour. In this space, someone like Tumi, who has affiliations with several very diverse groups of people, might find herself belonging to more than one group. Secondly, a person also belongs to some wider concept of relational identity (Wiseman & Koester 1997), which could be interpreted as the way that an individual situates him or herself within the various shared identities that make up the personal whole. Lastly, there is the notion of total identity, which is the sum of various relationships and how behavioural dynamics form a person in the wider context. In short, cultural identity starts at the personal level, with the association widening to where an individual is seen to be part of the broader environment.

The double bind, according to Bhabha, is that the Other is not only 'overlooked' and ignored, but also 'overdetermined', or stereotyped and predicated into a certain role and expectation (Bhabha 1994: 341). From the point of view of stereotyping 'Africanness' as a universal whole, theorists such as Bhabha, Fanon, and Biko, although differing on some aspects of theorising race, all manage to compartmentalise the issue of blackness into a separate category from whiteness, thus falling into the trap of stereotyping and achieving once again, the distinction of 'us' versus 'them'.

Some leading theorists such as Bhabha (1994), Fanon (1967), Biko (1978) and Kaunda (in Biko 1978) associate 'being black' narrowly with a universal 'African' culture, without making distinctions between differences in African cultural and ethnic identities. This broader description is usually the category in which public opinion remains rooted. Kaunda, for instance,

describes Africans as people 'inhabit[ing] a larger world than the sophisticated Westerner'. Biko further describes this as being in 'close proximity to Nature' (1978). Biko describes 'African people' as man-centred, group-orientated, egalitarian, communicating through music, song and rhythm; ironically the stereotypical description that white 'colonialists' fixated on for many generations.

However, in order to meaningfully negotiate hybrid border spaces, the recognition of a variety of black cultural identities needs to be unpacked. Marked cultural differences exist between groups who are all labelled under the umbrella description of 'Black African'. However it is not possible to define a person's cultural identity according to skin colour or continental origin. This seemingly benign 'equaliser' merely has the effect of enhancing visual and the most obvious differences, to the detriment of more meaningful, cultural differences.

Judging by the evaluation of students such as Tumi, the older generation such as her family living in the township still suffers from social memory of this type of sentiment. The older members of society exhibit a certain amount of reactive emotions, and regard alignment with whites by the younger generation as treason. The balance of power is shifting however. As Soudien (2006) relates, the South African population under the age of 25 constitutes more than half of the total population. The following incident illustrates this aspect of social memory from the viewpoint of Tumi and her family.

Bourdieu (1993) theorises in his work 'Distinction', that nurture, and how individuals are raised, has a major influence on their taste, and thus also on their resulting social associations. Tumi associates herself more closely with her friends at school than with her family living in the township because she feels that they are too critical. By contrast, Ester never gives examples of her own relationship with other members of white Afrikaans society, nor particularly her own family. She literally puts herself in Tumi's shoes when the latter explains her dislike of *malepogodu* (intestines of an animal), which her family interprets as snobbishness. Ester's gestures and interjections convince the facilitator that the situation is very real to her as a young person. She so keenly wants to be part of Tumi's life that she identifies fully with the situation Tumi describes.

T: because some people in my family live in the township and I live in the suburbs, some of them will be like o, now you think you're better..  
 E: you think you're better  
 T: than us or whatever  
 E: ya  
 A: ya  
 T: Or if, I dunno, se ma uhm they are having malepogodu its like, um, intestines. Sheep intestine.. Say they have malepogodu and I don't wanna eat malepogodu, then they'll say o, is it because you live with white people or you're living in the sub whatever  
 L: become white ...  
 T: its not the issue its just because I don't wanna eat it  
 E: I don't like it  
 T: I don't like it  
 L: ja...

Figure 18 So now you think you are better

Tumi also relates her experiences with some of her family and friends who live in the township. Here it becomes clear that she feels disconnected from her more traditional relatives because they interpret her personal taste as prejudice against them as black people. In this space, defined by Ndebele (in Soudien 2007:

viii) as 'still spaces closed by old constraints', her family members residing in the township feel alienated and thus rationalise her personal taste as siding with white people. There seems to be a general perception that the older generations might harbour the tendency of sticking together loyally, so to speak. In the past, South Africa distinguished the cultural bartering of groups on the basis of racial domination that shaped society historically, rather than in terms of economic stratification. In other words, Bourdieu's (1993) notion of cultural nobility in this context was shaped by race and not necessarily by taste or cultural preferences.

Tumi (Figure 18) describes how some people in her family, who live in the township, judge her taste because she does not like to partake in all their customs and eating habits. While she is talking, she gestures in definite deictic beats to enforce her spoken language. Her eyes are mostly averted, not making eye contact with the rest of the group, while the attention of the other girls' moves in and out from her story. Tumi as an individual body, in the sense that Bourdieu (1997) describes, identifies herself more as part of the habitus of school and hybrid society, rather than that of the township.

*Because some people in my family live in the township and I live in the suburbs, some of them will be (.) like (.).* Tumi's spoken language is delivered in a flat but definitive tonal intonation that demands high-level action. The other three students all have their bodies turned towards her, and appear to be listening intently. Ester opens her body towards the desk while her head is turned straight towards Tumi. Larusha is leaning both her hands on the

left hand side of her head, which is tilted towards the middle of the conversation. She looks down onto the desk in front of her. However, when Tumi starts talking about the township, Amouré turns her head and pays attention. Tumi creates the only movement when talking animatedly. While gazing down, her hands form deictic beat movements to and from her body, towards the desk and back. She then opens her hands, and carrying through with another beat movement, points upwards just above the desk height, in an 'offering' open gesture. Her next hand movements can be described as metaphoric beat gestures, with her hands in parallel formation moving from left to right and back again, visualising two various existences that she and her township family live in.

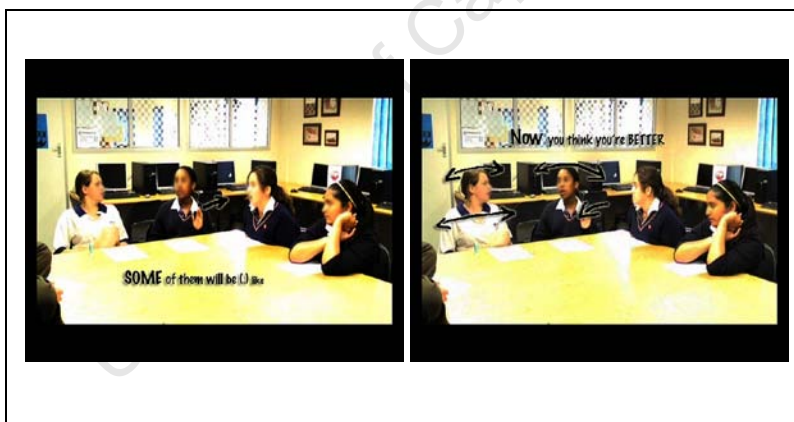


Figure 19 *Now you think you're better*

Tumi (Figure 19) turns her fingers inwards, towards herself, and carries on with a beat movement while she continues: *oh, now you think you're better (.)*. She opens her left hand towards the camera and drops her right hand out of sight. This iconic 'surrender' gesture is carried forward for the significant length of

six seconds. She proceeds to talk, but Ester initiates an utterance simultaneously. *You think you're better*, she comments, literally inserting herself into Tumi's sentence construction. Ester speeds up her gestures, opening and closing her left hand in an emphasised beat movement. This gesture becomes a high modal intensity action, so that together with the high modal intensity of her spoken language, a high modal complexity system is formed. It is as if Ester puts herself inside Tumi's narrative, quoting the words of the township family in this way.

Relating this event also gives Tumi the opportunity to recognise the dominant social forms still prevalent among her township family. She feels more and more removed from them, as she has less agency in their environment. Their cultural leverage in the township environment puts her at a disadvantage there, resulting in heightened feelings of alienation on her part. By contrast, her school as a Hybrid border space enables Tumi to identify her differences from her distant family, proving Giroux's point that social spheres such as this intervention, which happen in schools, workplaces and families, facilitate debates around difference by interrogating 'history, citizenship, sex, race and ethnicity' (Giroux 2006:55).

Without skipping a beat, Tumi continues with *than us or whatever* (.) upon which Ester interjects [*ja*] in an affirmative way. Ester strengthens her utterance with a sagittal head beat. Amouré also interjects with [*ja*]. She is looking at Ester, and directing her whole body towards her. Tumi is still carrying on with her sentence thread and tries to explain her relatives' behaviour by saying: *Or if (1) I dunno, sê ma* (.) *umm..* This is an

interesting language mix of Afrikaans and English. There is a general perception that black students do not speak Afrikaans, or are reluctant to use any Afrikaans phrases. These slang words are part of a general vocabulary in the popular domain. It is, nonetheless, a notable indication that she projects herself in a heteroglossic way by being sympathetic to the Afrikaans contingent in the conversation. It becomes evident that Tumi feels very comfortable with interjections like these.



Figure 20. *They are having malepogodu*

Tumi (Figure 20) subsequently offers an example: *they are having malepogodu* (.). She uses deictic gestures with both her hands to illuminate her example. Her right hand lies flat on the desk in front of her, pointing with a beat gesture of her left hand. She alternates her gaze from Ester to the middle distance in between the students and the camera. As she gets further into her example, she tilts her left hand, picking up her right hand. She then puts both hands flat on the desk in front of her, with the palms downwards. When she then proceeds to explain that *malepogodu* is *intestines*, she uses both her hands to point with

closed fingers towards the stomach, grabbing everyone's visual attention. These movements, together with Tumi's spoken language, form high modal intensity foregrounded action, while the other three students are merely observing her. They seem to accept her expertise in this instance. She states that the reason that she dislikes certain dishes is not because she rejects township culture, but purely that she does not like the taste of the food. While all attention is on Tumi, Ester affirms again, in strong deictic language, what Tumi has been saying. She says: *..and I don't wanna eat malepogodu, then they'll say O, is it because you live with white people (.) or you're living in the sub whatever..* Her hands are now dropped onto the desk, pointing downwards, with relaxed fingers. She lowers her hands even further, with parallel palms, slanted to the right. She then directs her open hands flat onto her chest. Larusha interjects and speaks simultaneously with the last few words with *become white (.)*, with Tumi interrupting her saying *[its not the issue]*.

Larusha's words maintain a low modal intensity here, although one becomes aware of her chorus. Tumi develops a more passionate vocal tone, and lifts her hands with palms towards her chest, fingers upwards in a V-formation. She subsequently points to her chest and says: *It's just because I don't WANNA eat it.* Larusha rests her elbows on the desk, and with her open palms facing each other, her level of attention is now shifting from high to medium.

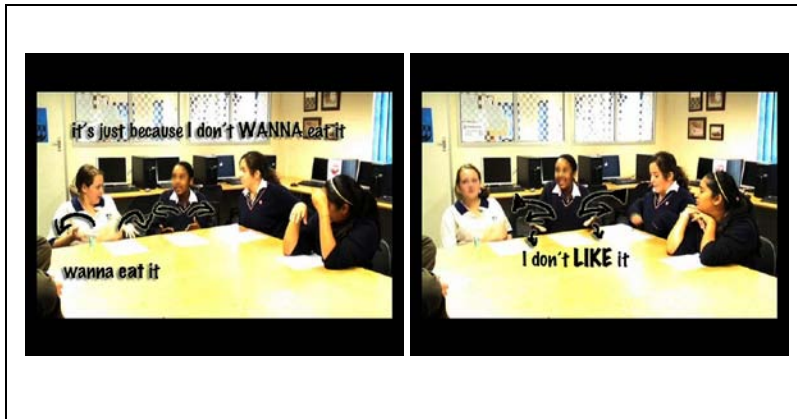


Figure 21 *It's just that I don't WANNA eat it*

Attention shifts towards Ester (Figure 18) when she says *[I don't like it]*, as if she is taking the words out of Tumi's mouth. Once again, she identifies totally with Tumi's viewpoint. This is a very high attention moment for both Tumi and Ester, echoing Tumi. Ester mirrors Tumi's deictic beat gesture of open palms in an offering pose, creating a heightened higher-level action of the spoken word. Tumi repeats after Ester: *I don't like it*, shortly whereafter Larusha echoes *ja* (.). Ester uses the first person here again, indicating her association and eagerness to propagate Tumi's side of the affair. Ester's attitude is one of the strongest instances of identification with another identity that was observed in all five events that were analysed in this study.

Overall it becomes clear that Ester takes on a mostly conciliatory stance, and that she shies away from direct language and communication (mentally and physically) which could be interpreted as confrontational by the rest of the team. She continuously agrees with Tumi, elaborating on the latter's statements in the manner of a first-hand experience. Associating

with Tumi in such a personal way might affirm to her companions that she aligns herself with the view of the perceived Other.

Ester often seems to feel obliged to speak for Tumi and Larusha. In the event *You think you are better because you live with the white people*, Ester joins in with an interjection of *you think you're better*, as if talking from a first person perspective. She turns her head towards Tumi while even Larusha shifts her attention from low to medium by lifting her head. Ester continues affirming Tumi's sentences with *ja, ja*, on every beat.

It seems that it comes easy to the students to talk about their difference, and to align themselves with each other in day-to-day living environments. However, to conceptualise their feeling of distancing from prejudice around discrimination of the Other within their video production, they found alternative ways. The genre of parody gave them a platform to showcase the discrimination of certain groups within their environment. Out of their own volition, they decided to use a character of an Afrikaans man to be an outsider not because he is Afrikaans, but mostly because he is gay, and hiding the fact from his peers. The next section deals with the planning of this particular character.

## Creating shared counter memory in the hybrid border space

The shared openness of the Hybrid border space activates exactly what Giroux (2006) cites as the motive for the re-engineering of the education system. In the following instance, the actions

illustrate the students' potential to become architects of their own environments.

As time progressed, the facilitator retreated gradually. From a very intense critical pedagogical activity, in which the students were guided in questioning and conversation, the facilitator left them alone to plan their production during the progression of the second day. This is not to say that having been introduced to critical thinking processes they instantaneously mastered the skill, but they got the gist of the activity in a relatively short space of time. As much as one should not regard critical pedagogy as an instantaneous solution, one should also not underestimate the adaptive power of young peoples' minds. If they are situationally guided towards certain actions, they are willing to investigate further themselves. These four producers quickly comprehended what was expected, and feeling emboldened during the first day of motivated honesty, they carried on with the process. Their expression of having embraced this perceived newfound honesty is evident in an event where the four are sitting around a table, planning their production.

In 'we are sitting Apartheid-style', Larusha impulsively jokes about the order in which they are sitting around the table. Without the presence of the facilitator, the students seem to have forgotten about the existence of the camera. However, some borders ironically remain, even in an informal situation like this. The team subtly presents evidence of the syndromes of division that they identify themselves in their discussion forum.

L: ummm, its like Apartheid, look at that  
 A: laughs  
 T: O my Soul  
 E: no at a time like this  
 L: [but look at this.. it IS like apartheid.. uuhh (laughs)  
 E: NO its like APARTHEID Amouré excluding ME.. making me work, and she doesn't even tell me what's going on  
 L: Apartheid WORKED  
 A: WHAT?!  
 L: yes it's a work Apartheid  
 E: if your name is Ester, you're secluded from the group  
 A: not true

Figure 22 *It's like Apartheid, look at that*

Shared cultural capital means that students see humour in the same events. They feel comfortable with discussing racial issues within this Hybrid border space that the project has created for them, as long as remarks are not directed to them personally. Tumi describes the group as *sitting apartheid style*. It becomes plain that a certain way of commenting on and discussing apartheid history has become part of cultural sharing that specifically connects members of this generation. This particular incident becomes dynamic when an innocent joke becomes laden with added meaning.

Larusha (Figure 23) breaks the silence when she murmurs *ummm, its like Apartheid*. No high-level action follows this comment. Only when she says *look at that*, does Amouré look up at her. Larusha turns her head laterally to the left and laughs. They all laugh when they notice that the order of seating ranges from Indian and black on one side, to two white girls on the other. They all look at Larusha. Tumi drops her head and gazes onto the paper in front of her, commenting *o my soul*, in a muted tone of voice. This reaction creates the impression that Tumi is embarrassed. Larusha insists with a sudden start motion *[but*

*look at this, it IS like Apartheid*, pushing her complex modal action of spoken language combined with pointing deictically with sharp beats towards Amouré and Ester to form a complex foregrounded, intense set of actions.

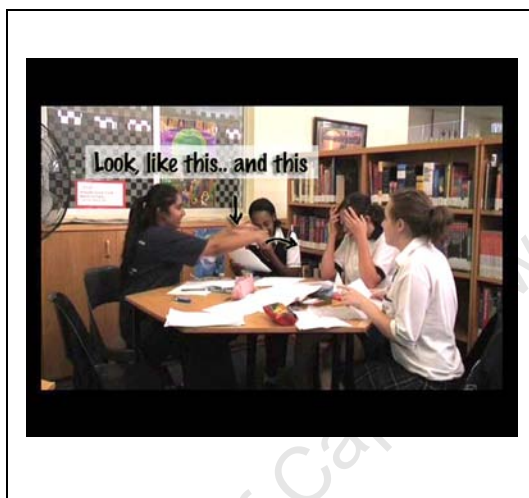


Figure 23 *Sitting apartheid style*

Larusha seems to be the only actor for a few more seconds, and then Amouré shifts her view upwards with a forceful gaze, sagittally lifting her head towards Larusha. She throws her head back and laughs. Larusha leans back in her chair and gazes at Amouré. Tumi looks down onto her paper and both Amouré and Ester look at Tumi. It seems as if the others find it important to gauge Tumi's reactions when race is mentioned. A three-second silence ensues, whereafter Ester suddenly exclaims in a modally intense utterance *NO, its like APARTHEID*, pushing her high-level behaviour to the foreground.

Ester gazes at Amouré in this instant. Her whole upper body is proxemically turned towards the latter. While looking at Amouré,

she speaks about her in the third person *Amouré excluding ME* (.). Immediately after this utterance, she turns her body towards Larusha, and both her gaze and body direction form a vector towards Larusha. Amouré looks at Ester and laughs uncomfortably. While still looking at Larusha, Ester withdraws her left hand, which until this stage had been visible above the table to the other students, and drops it to her lap. The camera still has a view of her hand, which lies palm upwards while Ester says *making ME work...* With this last utterance, Ester relaxes her left hand and it lies motionless in her lap, palm downwards on her left thigh. Within this modally dense moment, it becomes clear that Ester is feeling uncomfortable with Larusha's joke about Apartheid. She tries her best to divert attention from the social memory of this history. She attempts to give the concept of Apartheid another dimension or connotation by linking it to the physical act of work that they are doing at this moment. She is the one who is meticulously writing everything down that the rest of them are brainstorming, and from the notes analysed later on, it becomes clear that she takes her task very seriously.

Ester remarks that Amouré perpetuates Apartheid because she needs to work without being informed. Notably, Larusha picks up the thread here saying that *apartheid WORKED, yes it's a work apartheid...* Amouré exclaims in simultaneous language in the middle of this sentence with an emotionally charged *WHAT?* in a distinctly raised voice. Amouré's head is turned laterally towards Ester, but she is gazing downwards onto the desk. She gestures with her left hand, open palm outwards, and her right hand 45° towards her face, with her right elbow on the desk. Ester

noticeably shifts uncomfortably in her chair. She gets support from Amouré during this instance.

It seems that Amouré acts here in order to support Ester with her diversion cloaked as an indignant exclamation. The two of them seem to stage an impromptu scene to divert attention away from the thorny issue of Apartheid. Larusha joins in here, saying *yes, it's work Apartheid*, while looking up from her papers. Ester sits upright with her head upward, but eyes averted, gazing in an unfocussed way downwards in front of her. After Larusha's words, all four students settle down with minimum gestural, proxemic or head movements. They now sit in open posture towards each other. Amouré, Tumi and Larusha look down on their work, while Ester gazes at Larusha and says: *if your name is Ester, you're secluded from the group* (.). Nearly imperceptibly, Amouré answers: *Not true...* while still gazing down onto her paperwork. The group falls silent again.

As can be seen from the section, Border Pedagogy and the pedagogical intervention designed for this study activate a Hybrid border space. In this space, students are endowed with a certain fitness to interrogate the ideas and issues of difference outside of their own individual cultural, racial and political territory, without being influenced by the social memory that lingers in their broader family environment. The Hybrid border space thus created provides them with a certain agency to defy authority structures.

## Counter memory: in search of a perfect world

The school environment that these four students find themselves in seems to embody Bhabha's (1990) third space that is created when people of various identities share life-worlds. However, this space is generally not negatively consuming, where a dominant identity might overshadow minorities or historically disadvantaged groups. From the discussions, it becomes clear that some balance between black and white students is maintained. However, the students wisely identify gender also as a potential for Other spaces. Giroux reminds us that race and ethnicity (and here I might add gender) need to be regarded as part of the wider discourse of power and powerlessness of the Other (Giroux 2005). Whiteness (and gender) 'functions as a historical and social construction' (Giroux 2005: 89). However, South African youth of all races are systematically challenging this constructed space of the norm versus the Other.

Larusha tells of how a group of boys taunted her on a staircase with comments such as *look out, she's a time bomb!* ignorantly categorising her in the stereotype of Muslim-related terrorism, while she actually belongs to a Hindu family. Although such incidents seem to occur sporadically on the playground, the situation changes in a semi-formal mediated environment such as a classroom or other pedagogically planned situation, such as this current study. Within these mediated environments students find themselves on neutral territory, in an uncontested space, where hybridity seems to provide fertile ground for investigating

difference. This equality seems to emerge due to correspondence in class and similarities in taste.

Within this neutral territory created as a semi-formal educational space, negotiation of cultural capital (Bourdieu 1993) affords a certain amount of agency for an individual. In the context of the South African upper income group, scales appear to be tilting in another direction. The opinions of the youth might be similar to those of their caretakers (Bourdieu 1993) only to a certain degree, whereas later in life, negotiation of cultural capital takes a more socially heteroglossic turn. What Bakhtin calls 'socio-ideological languages' (Bakhtin 1986) can also be applied in a socio-cultural context within environments such as this school setting. As shown in the reactions of Ester throughout the discussions, students mould their behaviour and viewpoints in accordance with the social group space that they find themselves occupying.

Soudien (2007) concludes his important work on the emerging identities of South African youth with some remarks about the emergence of two categories of identities in the post-apartheid era, namely *identities of possibility*, and *identities of challenge*. The students in this study would be placed as part of the cross-racial identity within the category of *identities of possibility*. People within this cross-racial identity are politically aware, but the views of black and white members manifest themselves differently. White members within this cross-racial identity have become aware of the complex nature of race in their environment. They are actively criticising and questioning their own histories, and they want to move away from their parents'

racist attitudes. They want to play an energetic part in social change towards equality in the new South Africa (Soudien 2007). They also seem to have more expressive freedom and agency with each other in terms of identity, race and social questions.

The hybrid border space is not always a comfortable space for the students to occupy, although each exhibits a distinctive coping strategy. This becomes evident in the reactions of Ester to the obvious joking by Larusha about 'sitting apartheid style'. Race seems to be a fabric interweaving every interaction and conversation within South African society (Soudien 2007), even though the students would determine the issues it raises as immaterial. Various dynamics and sensitivities still exist among the students in this study that relate directly to the overriding theme of race. Ester senses how the power shifts, and modifies her previously centralised standpoint in order to identify with the former Other. These dynamics are distinctively different from sympathies shown by older generations as well as other class structures. Within the general upper income group environment occupied by these girls, race distinctions are still notable, but seem to be of less importance. The theme becomes important though, because of the power of negotiation within the space. The students still very strongly utilise difference in such a social negotiation process.

The ease of negotiation around differences of race and class becomes a valuable tool within the pedagogical sphere of a semi-formal interaction in situations such as this study. The hybrid border space allows sufficient objectivity for the pedagogical

intervention to function effectively. Within this space, students seem to find common ground and mould a collective social memory identifiable with their generation. This collective memory heteroglossically encompasses all of their respective identities, while at the same time, no distinctive part of any of them. A new identity is formed, contested and remodelled towards some equality of difference where it is not only easy, but also necessary to exist as an 'identity with difference'.

Although these young students talk fairly freely about race and gender and how differences are aggressively maintained by their older generations, they themselves are not dealing completely with history and hurtful legacies. For Larusha who is part of a historically negated section of society, it seems to be easier to joke about race. Ester, however, who historically needs to make peace with the fact that her Afrikaner forefathers were the executors of Apartheid, seems to be constantly trying to compensate for unequal histories. These students are from Mountain Hill, and are relatively comparable in terms of economic and social standing. Thus, in unpacking questions regarding the extent to which a historically dominant social structure influences them when bargaining cultural capital, it seems that the current social structure enables free barter on the side of the previously oppressed. On the other hand, the previously dominant group (in this case white Afrikaans individuals) is more withdrawn and cautious in their dealings.

It becomes clear that the cultural 'assets' (Alexander 2005: 7) used by these students for bargaining their cultural capital do not correspond with those assets owned by other family members.

The strained relationship of Tumi with her township family bears testimony to this. When she relates the reluctance of her relatives to understand that she does not eat certain foods because she simply dislikes the taste, one can see that this becomes an alienating factor. Shared cultural capital seems to weigh heavier than commonalities of race.

The golden thread weaving through this research exercise seems to be that young people are the susceptible ones in society, yet they are willing to investigate stereotypes and experiment with new viewpoints. As unique hybrids that habitually and constantly weave in and through different spaces, they have precious opportunities inherent to their dispositions, to explore difference. They are already in a space of constant flux, with the flexibility to group themselves according to their own tastes and comfort. When they are directed within a communal space, the Hybrid border space (both physically and mentally), they are open to investigation into difference.

# FIVE

## Using parody in video production to activate hybrid border spaces

While the previous chapter discusses some themes from the body of research data that emerge when one investigates Border Pedagogy, cultural identity, and shared cultural capital, this chapter elaborates on the possibilities when such spaces are activated semi-formally in pedagogical areas. Adolescents clearly align themselves strongly with their own associates who share their daily living space. I call this loosely defined 'daily living space', such as the semi-formal school environment and areas where young individuals meaningfully interact with each other, a hybrid border space, and discuss the possibilities that such spaces could open. In such hybrid border spaces, investigating and negotiating meaningful identities through difference can be

powerful enough to overthrow stereotypes. This is not a natural process, however. The action needs to be prompted pedagogically, albeit in a semi-formal way.

This chapter builds on the themes discussed in chapter four regarding discourses of gender and social memory, where we first looked at how students negotiate cultural capital in difference. Consequently, chapter five commented on how the students perceive their older generations as being distrustful when people seem different. The following analyses illustrate that critical pedagogy for border crossing takes on a momentum of its own. Where the facilitator steered certain conversations into interrogative directions of difference and the Other, no such actions were needed when the group members started planning their own video production. They levitated into a mode of investigating difference. By getting into this investigation space, they first had to meet in a hybrid border space; the 'comfortable' shared space where they all have equal agency. Spaces of power have historically been prominent in the local context.

South African youth are brought up in contested and complex spaces. Throughout South Africa's history, young people have owned unusually foremost spaces of power (Zegeye 2004). They played a pivotal role in Apartheid politics while also acting as protagonists from various sides of division in the polarised society. Currently, with the move to a more integrated society, young people have to deal with older generations who were actors in these former divisive practices, while at the same time they are trying to live in more fluid way, living out choices and taking agency for personal decisions. Hybridity, the 'cultural logic of

globalisation' (Kraidy in Strelitz 2004: 256) has become the sign of the times.

Homi Bhabha describes the need for interaction in an overlapping space in the following paragraph:

What is theoretically innovative, and politically crucial, is the need to think beyond narratives of originary and initial subjectivities and to focus on those moments or processes that are produced in the articulation of cultural differences. These 'in-between' spaces provide the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood – singular or communal – that initiate new signs of identity, and innovative sites of collaboration, and contestation, in the act of defining the idea of society itself (Bhabha 1994: 2).

It is this 'site of collaboration and contestation' that I call the hybrid border space. In this space of overlap and 'displacement of domains of difference', Bhabha does not believe all interactions to be equally amicable and non-confrontational, but rather they may be 'profoundly antagonistic, conflictual and even incommensurable' (1994: 2). In this space, according to Bhabha, continuous movement 'prevents identities at either end of it from settling into primordial polarities. This interstitial passage between fixed identifications opens up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy' (1994: 5).

According to Bhabha (1994), the social articulation of difference expressed as cultural hybridities seems to thrive on moments of transformation in a nation's history, such as those happening currently in the South African environment. In this study, the use of structured interviews, planning sessions, and video production in the classroom activated and facilitated engagement with this hybrid border space. Open-ended discussions around racial

identities preceding the video production seem to have produced quite extraordinary subject matter within the semi-formal school environment.

Ironically, differences that fuel older generations are those areas that the students in this study use as negotiation-capital for forming their own re-made, hybrid identities. Traits that are seen as strengths in older generations are seen as some weakness by the younger generation. Prejudices such as these form chasms between generations when youth migrate towards each other in hybrid border spaces such as school environments.

Some analysis regarding these feelings of alienation between generations by analysing two parts of the student video that concentrate on a character built around prejudices in the Afrikaans community follows here. The discussion unpacks particular themes regarding fear of the Other and exclusivity propagated by older members of that society; how students use stereotypes in parody to criticise preconceptions regarding gender within society by highlighting these critique creating pressure on people of different persuasions. A surprising honesty in narrative happens when these associations are expressed in the student video. Within one scene where money is cited as ulterior motive for marriage, the character is ostracised by others because of her association with an 'ancient' man, the teacher.

Thus in their production, the students take a stand by condemning hypocrisy. Ironically, this attitude contrasts with views expressed in previous discussions, in which they described how they manipulate older generations by omitting information about their

daily lives in order to circumvent conflict. It is clear that they tend to exploit their world by way of least resistance while negotiating cultural capital to create their own counter memory – one of resistance against the views of their parents and grandparents.

Video production affords the producers a certain freedom that they appear to relish. They create characters out of multiple stereotypes. They even combine the Afrikaner stereotype with that of a gay black man, thus tapping into the notion that not all gay men are effeminate, or 'out of the closet'. The students give more weight to honesty than to the gender of the Other. This theme is developed further in this chapter, illustrating the fluidity of their identification with the characters. Sometimes, a male character morphs inexplicably into a female, and vice versa. When planning a gay character such as that of the Afrikaner, they are not personally affronted or resistant towards a gay interracial relationship, but are struck only by the shock value such a character would have in the Afrikaans community, thus implying the older generations are labelled as 'them'. The group chose to approach the video production in a playful way, making use of parody genre. Theorists such as Grace and Tobin (in Buckingham 1998) note that young people often instinctively revert to parody when they articulate themselves. Parody has the potential to free up express certain irreverent subjects where serious handling of the theme, would be inappropriate for such producers.

## Parody Paradox: undermining versus perpetuating social memory

Grace and Tobin (in Buckingham 1998: 48) list the functions of parody in the pedagogical use of video production as 'to bolster cultural barriers as well as break them down; to release tension; offering opportunities for opposition tempered by humour', as well as 'providing a space for critique and change'. Parody may also provide a space to ask unsolicited questions, challenge social conventions, and investigate new possibilities. In the next section, I analyse a certain character in the student video called the Gay Afrikaner Jock. He is, particular to parody, an exaggerated, comical stereotypical figure that seemingly have all the characteristics of a macho Afrikaans man. In this instance, the students challenge social conventions that extend beyond the limiting reaches of various taboos within stereotypical Afrikaner identity.

Dolby (2001) argues that gender, together with other identifications such as race, class and sexual orientation, is a matter of taste, and thus personal choice. These choices are not pre-ordained by environment and other forces, but by personality and personal direction. The concept of a performative self plays a big part in self-actualisation for the drama students participating in this study. Such a performance is in accordance with Butler (1999), who defines gender as a 'continuous performance of identity'. Traditional Afrikaner society does not show much tolerance regarding alternative gender choices. The production group comments on this intolerance within the sharp expression

that parody allow. The genre of the television soap opera, with its exaggeration and comic parody features (Bakhtin 1997), emboldens the group to share their reflections. It affords them a certain amount of agency to venture their own opinion, to bend the rules irreverently. This masking of their identity might create some bravado necessary to challenge adult opinions in cases where individuals were not brought up to challenge authority in any way.

A certain character called the 'Gay Afrikaner Jock' is brought to life, firstly in the planning stages, and then in production of the student video. In one event, Ester proposes the creation of this gay Afrikaans person. She does this in a discussion with Amouré, implicitly asking for her sanction for such a character. Amouré seems obliged to democratically negotiate this character with Ester who also has Afrikaans alliances. When Ester proposes the 'gay Afrikaans person' to be a 'gay Afrikaans *Jock*', all four participants seem visibly shocked. General perceptions are that the Afrikaner society is homophobic, living with a threatening subtext that ostracises individuals who dare to declare a gay identity. However, although the two students with Afrikaans backgrounds conceive this character, the other two support them.

The four participants decide that the Gay Afrikaner Jock will appear to be a macho-looking Afrikaner boy whose athletic abilities propel him into leadership of both the soccer and rugby teams. His peers view him as a role model. Unbeknown to the rest of the students, he is gay. When he is exposed at the student reunion, his girlfriend leaves him and he is shamed in front of the whole class. The underlying message, though, is not a

condemnation of his gay-ness, but his dishonesty towards his close friends and his girlfriend. Although the message seems to be serious, the incident itself is humorous, a parodic comedy of errors. Tumi explains that the gender phenomenon of 'gay-ness' is also controversial in the Zulu culture. She refers to a television drama called *Yizo Yizo*, in which the storyline introduces a gay character. Ester suggests that the two characters, the Zulu and the Afrikaner guys, should 'find' each other, and that someone should discover them in the locker room, embroiled in a scandalous love affair. The prejudices of society in general are laid bare in this instance. The four respondents unite here, taunting dictated general societal consensus of binary opposites in gender relations (Garfinkel in Howson 2004).

However, their own parody works against them to some extent; they create their own paradox by implying the very same prejudices that they criticise. They find themselves on the same side of the argument, commenting on what they perceive as a general view of the broader population, again reinforcing the 'us' versus 'them' theme. What is important here is that they name the taboo of gay-ness; they critically distinguish themselves from society. Covert criticism against gay identities is generally implied, but not necessarily openly vocalised. Liberated views regarding gender galvanise the students against what they perceive as old-fashioned and conservative perceptions of binary gender preoccupations. They see both the Afrikaner community and the Zulu community as taking an exclusive and damning stance against liberal gender roles, thus creating their counter memory to include yet one more aspect seen as an 'Other' by the older generations: 'alternative' gender preferences.

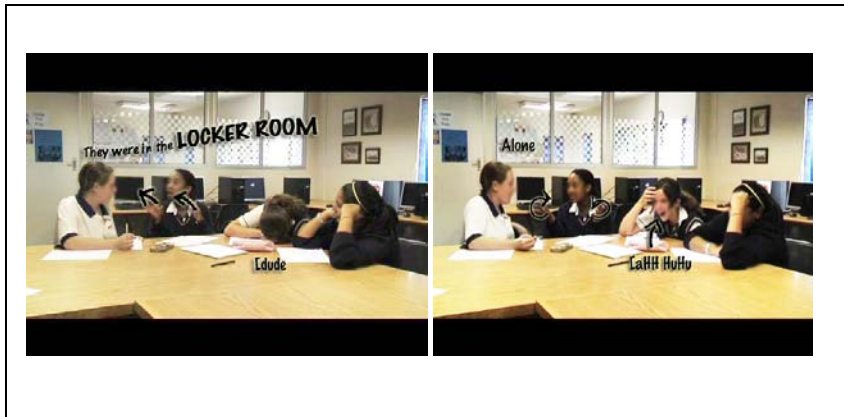


Figure 24 *They were in the LOCKER ROOM*

One needs to remember here that the students use parody to name and shame the convention, rather than condoning it. This is the serious undertone of parody; by naming the monster, one can conquer it. Like laughing aloud in a haunted house, the students are swearing off the practice by exposing it in an act as part of their video. Parodic stereotyping also gives them another set of powers; together with parody, it gives the four students agency to express themselves in a field where they rightfully might see themselves as outsiders. Not only are they very young and seemingly inexperienced within a sexual environment, but also they are also female. To plan meetings between two gay males seem not only scandalous, but also voyeuristically titillating. The student video 'Class of '97' reinforces themed gender discourses around the manifestation of emotion in terms of romantic involvement, ambiguity of gender affiliations, social acceptance of traditional family values, and some (dis)ease around crossing gender borders without hypocrisy.

The choice of contemporary media serves a semiotic purpose. When the Mountain Hill production group includes a parody in video, they use the fact that television 'soapies' feature primarily on the level of a popular cultural 'spectacle'. Filmic 'production is the communicative use of media, of material resources. Students use video production to employ multimodal meaning in order to convey a message. Thus, 'the idea of 'medium' includes the body and the voice, and the tools which may extend bodily communication and expression' (Kress & Van Leeuwen 2001:66). Moving images also enable adolescents to use the language of popular culture as a known meta-language, thus creating a common meaning that is seldom explicitly obvious in the storyline and production itself. The social formation of media is a key aspect of teenage video production (Kress & van Leeuwen 2001). It becomes clear that informal school culture dominates student thought. Merged with popular culture, it pushes ethnic and individual backgrounds further away from the immediate environment. Adolescents can hide behind props, costumes and actors' performances to form their own television spectacle. In this seemingly innocuous and neutral space, they boldly participate in border crossing.

Their actions comply with the view of Buckingham (2008) when describing how students almost always use video production – in a more critical form than what they have been historically credited with:

There is almost always an element of parody, a knowing distance – and hence a critical potential – in the ways in which students use mainstream forms and genres (Buckingham 66: 1998).

In the instance of video production, he reminds us that play is intended as a vehicle to break rules using certain actions of fantasy. Additionally, he claims that the use of parody in such exercises has the benefit of employing prevailing themes without having to commit to consequences of implicit dynamics (Buckingham 1998).

The plot not only serves as vehicle of distancing themselves from stereotyping and discrimination of the Other, but it also creates a strong impression of what it is that draws the adolescents together, and to what extent they associate with each other. It becomes clear that a strong sense of cohesion exists within the generation, and that some behaviour is more acceptable within the generational group than the same actions that might include individuals of an older generation.

## Gender and generations expressed in parody: Playing Devil's advocate

This section serves as a more detailed analysis to show the parodic subversion of the soap opera genre in a part of the student video where the character of the Gay Afrikaner Jock is compromised. The juvenile delinquent, Michelle, exposes the macho-looking leader among the boys as being secretly gay. In true parody style, the students comment comically on the ingrained perception that obviously masculine Afrikaner men cannot be gay. The fact that he marries the Hindu girl challenges other perceptions about the Afrikaans society. Here, they are also challenging the notion that Afrikaners do not integrate socially

with other cultural identities and races in the South African society. They overturn the social memory of Apartheid to create counter memory by predicting this event for the future ten years to come.

As seen by the creation of the Gay Afrikaner Jock character in the previous chapter, the carnivalesque use of the parodic television soap opera as a theme for a video production becomes an effective medium to tackle discourses such as race, taste, religion, and gender. The students use the language of the stereotype to criticise a social stance with which they might normally disagree. Cohen (in Buckingham 1998: 167) creates a direct link between racism and parody, claiming that students in general use parody, mimicry and playful juxtaposition particularly to undermine divisional ethnic identities. Although parody enables people to build identities more reflectively, he argues that one should revert to it as one of the elements of masquerade, adding it to mimicry and 'playful juxtaposition'. However, despite the complexity and possible negativity of parodic imagery, students might use the genre to create more layered identities around ethnicity and race.

In the analysis of a section of the student video regarding the gay Afrikaner character called Jaco and how Michelle introduces him, one can see how these complex identities emerge. The students share their intention to eradicate cultural borders within the group of teenagers, instead of dividing their age group into the ethnic identities of social memory. Parody enables them to blur gender borders by exaggerating the precarious situation of the Gay Afrikaner Jock. Delving between the lines, the production

condemns his reluctance to reveal his sexual orientation and the message becomes clear: there is value in integrity and the consequences of deceit might be quite uncomfortable.

The use of video production is key here in significantly enriching the pedagogical border crossing process. Video production proposes possibilities, and in general, the mindset and fitness, to investigate other situations and identities as if they are one's own. It particularly enables investigation into other cultural, racial, linguistic, political, and in this instance, gender possibilities. This requires a certain amount of play, uncertainty and assumed open-endedness of possibilities. The process is forgiving and non-judgmental. The border crossing process is counter-intuitive, opposing the trend of human nature to compartmentalise, and name the Other. When categorised, one can assign a certain code of reaction to a phenomenon, a mode of dealing with an action. Border Pedagogy overturns this process, enabling more non-judgemental investigation. The critical pedagogical process allows the students to ask 'what if' questions before judging. Parody in contemporary media such as video allows them to ask 'what if' in a playful way, turning it into a type of brainstorming. The plasticity of digital media makes it a natural medium in which to channel expression.

During the planning of the student video production, much effort was invested in investigating various stereotypes that seem to prevail in South African society. Planning such as this was not prompted by the research brief, but came rather from the inspiration of the students to develop a character composition based on a television soap opera, and to produce a parody of

such. Unsurprisingly, the development of a gay character seemed to happen naturally. However, this does not mean that the character itself proved to be uncontroversial. From the discussions, it became evident that the students felt that the production took on a life of its own, and that they were only facilitators in the process.

A: Ok. First of all, we don't have Afrikaans.. Yeea  
E: Oe, oe, oe  
A: I don't have  
E: Can, Can we make-  
    I illegible..  
E: Can we make, can we make.. Can we make a gay Afrikaans person.. because  
A: whow..  
E: All the other.. (illegible) I think..  
L: That's so awesome  
A: that is like.. HUGE conflict  
T: the gay person  
A: Gay Afrikaans person, wow..  
E: hmmm

*Figure 25 Can we make a gay Afrikaans person?*

Because each student was required to develop two characters, a total of eight characters were developed that are identifiable in terms of the cultural identities within the group. They discussed stereotypes at some length in the interview sessions with the facilitator. One of the focal points that emerged from these sessions was the strong Afrikaner stereotype that is repeatedly reinforced in the strata of society in which they live. Both Ester and Amouré are emotively charged by this stereotype, since they both have a stake in Afrikaner culture. Amouré's mother is Afrikaans, and Ester's immediate family speaks Afrikaans. She regards herself as an Afrikaner. It therefore seems natural that these two students would negotiate closely about Afrikaner stereotypes. Amouré starts the conversation by talking directly to Ester. She says that they still do not have an Afrikaans character.

She claims ownership, and directs Ester to join her in co-ownership by talking directly to her. The first deictic moment occurs when Ester breathes in sharply and interjects halfway through Amouré's sentence, exclaiming in short, staccato utterances *oo, oo, oo..* Her breath intake is at a high point at the end of each utterance. While Ester repeats 'can we make' three times, Larusha tries repeatedly to say something. She extends her arm in front of her, says something under her breath, points at Ester with her right hand down on table level, and points again repeatedly. Nobody looks at her, and the moment passes.

Ester causes a deictic moment shared by all four when she says: *Can we make a gay Afrikaans person.* Her utterance is not posed as a question, but is rather an exclamation stated as a revelatory fact. For a moment, all four freeze in apparent shock. Ester takes full ownership of the concept. Amouré draws her breath sharply. When Ester says 'because', all attention is focussed intently on her. Her next words, 'all the other' are introspectively placed with no particularly meaningful significance.

Amouré is seemingly reeling with shock. The concept strikes her profoundly. She breathes *wow* heavily over Ester's last words. Thereafter, she closes her former open-arms gesture towards Ester. While Ester continues speaking, Amouré once again extends her arms into a hold-off position in front of her. Larusha simultaneously utters flatly: 'that's so awesome'. Amouré's hands are now extended on the desk in front of her. She stares intently at the desk. Tumi looks straight at Ester. The group seems to be in shock-induced limbo for a moment or so. In the midst of this limbo, Amouré says: *that is like HUGE conflict.* The other three

are now each staring introspectively at their own paperwork. Tumi affirms everyone's reaction while repeating 'the gay person' in an understated way. Here she is still looking at her own work, as if she is internalising the suggestion.

The next deictic event occurs when Amouré muses: *Gay Afrikaans person..* while looking at Ester. The two now turn towards each other and form a closed circuit of reactions, excluding the other two girls. Although they are not sitting directly next to each other, their gazes form a strong vector which foregrounds their gestures and attention. Tumi and Larusha recede to the background and are isolated while working on their own paperwork.

The shock around this turn of events seems twofold. While the students are initially alarmed by the idea of a gay Afrikaner jock appearing in their script, it seems that the biggest revelation is the fact that the script seems to take on a life of its own. As will become evident in the next event, the general feeling is that they are only facilitators in the process, and that the characters generate themselves. Theorising about this, it might be that the girls are intentionally putting some distance between them and the characters in order to assign daring traits without feeling personally responsible for doing so. It is as if they are acting in the third person in order to place themselves in objective stances. The trend of distancing corresponds notably with that of the discussions around race as mentioned in the previous section. By creating 'us' and 'them' situations, the students feel less responsible for personal actions. They become spectators of their

own lives and circumstances and thus they do not feel obliged to be accountable to anyone.

E: The Jock is Gay  
A: O my word (01-07)  
E: Yes the Jock is the Gay Afrikaner  
A: AAA, ah God  
E: remember..  
T: Maybe we can have a Zulu guy that has a thing for the cheerleader.. ZULUS are also having a big thing about gayness. They, they really.. There was a big controversy  
E: [ˈa bes'(?) 0000  
T: Was a show called YizoYizo.. And they decided to take a step forward, and they had TWO Zulu guys.. And it cased a MAJOR controversy  
E: [AH AH YES.. SO THEN.. So then the the ZULU GUY ends up having had a relationship with a gay AFRIKANER because they.. they, They kind of FIND out by chance that both of them are GAY  
T: They were in the LOCKER ROOM  
A: [dude  
T: Alone  
A: aHH HuHu  
E: But ... even if the gay Afrikaners, and the ZULU were alone  
A: GUYS, if you- If you look at this whole thing, the most innocent person here is the GEEK.. and he is not even that INNOCENT  
E: HUUU  
A: And he didn't even.. like he did NOTHING

Figure 26 *The Jock is gay*

In a later incident while working on the script, the group returns to discussions around the gay Afrikaner Jock. Larusha starts with a factual tone, stating that *the Jock is gay*, lifting her head. When bending down again, preparing to write, she seemingly grasps the impact and says *oh my word*. This utterance initiates a deictic moment and both Ester and Tumi look at Larusha. Ester affirms the statement with *yes, the Jock is the Gay Afrikaner*. She relates this authoritatively, as a matter of fact, uncontested, looking Larusha straight in the eye.

Larusha emphasises *AAA, A God*, while still bent over her writing. Her tone and demeanour exhibit a certain amount of resignation because of some impending disaster that she senses is going to be difficult to manage. Ester's tone and gestures show

that she is taking a position of authority on the subject, and she emerges as the decision maker. She takes ownership of the character, and thus also of the stereotype and depicted situation.

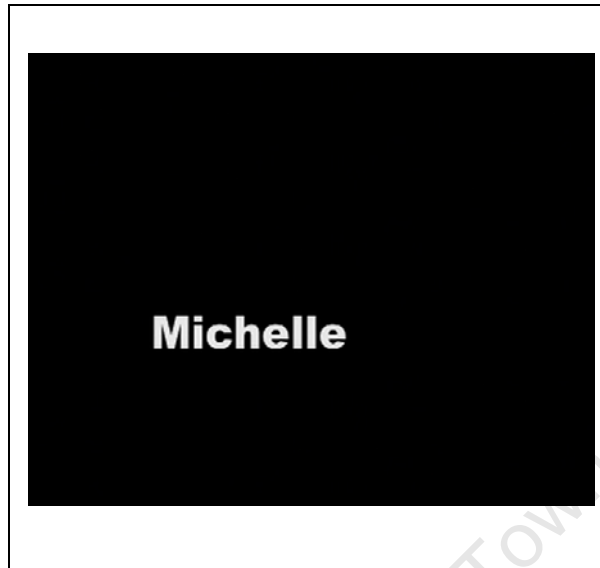
Amouré muses about having a *Zulu guy that has a thing for the cheerleader*. A silence follows. Clearly this comment makes no impact on the rest of the group, because they ignore it. After a few seconds, Tumi says that 'ZULUS also have a big – thing about gayness'. Her tone is measured, introspective and confessional. She is looking at Amouré. Ester's body language shows that she is getting an idea. With an open gestural body language, she turns to Tumi who is speaking currently, and says *OOO*, in an exaggerated tone. Although this utterance does not stop Tumi talking, she alternates her gaze between Amouré on her left, and Ester on her right. From previously talking only to Amouré, she is now including Ester. She tells Ester that this has caused a *MAJOR controversy*. This emphasis warrants a deictic moment where everyone's gaze turns towards Tumi. While Tumi is speaking, Ester gestures and readies herself for talking. Ester leans back slightly, and lifts her hands up from her elbows. This decisive gesture alerts us to her moment of decision to make her next move in the storyline. She bends down while saying 'yes', and starts writing on her next line. She has taken a decision, authoritatively verbalising her next development of the script. She is not negotiating any more, and commits herself to paper.

Her next line, delivered confidently, turns into a deictic moment when she announces: *so then the ZULU GUY ends up ... having a relationship ... with the gay AFRIKANER because they..* Both Amouré and Larusha turn their attention fully to Ester. Tumi is

still staring onto the desk in front of her. She is noticeably deep in thought. In Ester's next line, one grasps from her words that the gayness of the two characters is uncontested, and that they were both gay before meeting each other. It is inferred that Ester quite sympathetically crosses gender borders where necessary.

The next section discusses a part of the student video where one character is caught having an affair with a teacher. The act of an affair might still be acceptable, but the real negative reaction happens because the transgressor happens to affiliate herself with someone much older than herself.

Within this particular exercise, the video design bears a strong resemblance to a stage production. They use only one camera, executing many of the scenes in one long recording without any cutaways or close-ups. This is mainly because their drama course trains them in formal method acting, and also because of time constraints of the project. Tuition regarding meta-language, cinematic language and movement would have required more time. For the purpose of this project, however, the participants did not need such precision. The following section analyses the part of the student video where the character Michelle spills the beans about Jaco, who is secretly gay. This stereotype of a gay Afrikaans man, who lives a secret life because the Afrikaans community condemns homosexuality, seems to be a social stance that the production group disassociates itself from.



*Figure 27 Michelle*

For the first few seconds, a blinking cursor types out the name 'Michelle' in Arial font on a black screen in a newsflash style. A beatbox sound, repeating 'piff zzik zik piff zzik' at a medium tempo, is the only sound in these few seconds before Michelle starts talking. The simple introduction leads into the character Michelle, who tells us about the secret life of the Afrikaner Jock Jaco, who is the captain of the cricket and rugby teams. He is romantically attached to the cheerleader and later marries her.

In the 'conceptual side of expression' (Kress & van Leeuwen 2001: 5), the design of this opening frame intentionally creates a message of objectivity. The modality of the visual here is simple: white lettering on a black background. However, the animation and speed of the lettering appearing on the screen maintains viewer attention for the whole three seconds. The text is placed on the bottom third of the screen (the given) with the white

lettering in the foreground. Textual elements are floating on black, except for the white space cursor that is blinking regularly.

The explanation of all characters in the video is one-dimensional. However, the conceptual classificatory setting of the blinking cursor structure of simple white text on a black background uses no vectors. The blinking cursor and animated text in an Arial font leads to 'newsflash' reporting style meaning. From the semiotic pool, the team chooses this mode to convey them as journalistically unbiased.

Moving telegram-style text reminds us of newsrooms, conveying 'breaking news' over communication channels. Although the technological convention of telegram-style text type is old-fashioned, this principle has become a stereotypical way of conveying unbiased truthful news messages. This places the text in a discourse of documentary representation that aims to strengthen the authenticity of the remarks as being factually credible. The style reminds us of the filmic genre of a mock documentary that stages real-life events to simulate a dramatic narrative. The Arial font strengthens this perception while the beat box sound counter balances the connotation and leads the viewer into a certain disjuncture of meaning, conveying the rebellious nature of the named character.

Beat-box music, the 'vocal rhythmic simulation of a drum' (Keyes 1996: 227) is an entrenched sub-genre associated with rap music. Rap as resistance music emerged from 'social dislocations' and cultural revolt by marginalised communities such as those in the Bronx in New York during the seventies

(Martinez 1997: 272). Thus, in popular culture today it has significant associations with practices in rap and hip-hop music styles. It is stereotypically the music choice of rebels and juvenile delinquents. The representational use of this music in the background when Michelle is talking indicates to the viewer her association with a non-conformist way of life. This is in total contrast to the newsflash Arial style text. The screen fades to black for one second before the image of Michelle appears.



Figure 28 *That Jaco guy, he's gay*

The black frame cuts to a medium shot of Michelle. She is the storyteller in this scene. Compositionally, Michelle is placed centrally (holding the idea, or discourse together). The medium shot reveals a forced social distance. The point of view is a full-frontal angle shot with a static camera. The social meaning (Kress 2004) conveyed by Michelle is that of defiance and honesty. She reflects a careless attitude, cutting to the bone and not playing games. It is important to note that video creates a virtual world in this instance; that boundaries of time and space

are overcome, creating an ideal canvas for the creation of counter memory.

Materiality (Kress 2003) becomes important in this instance. The image reminds us of an old-fashioned photo booth or a police 'mug shot' in a confessional style. Interactively, the image has a low modality in terms of interpersonal structures. The framing simplistically includes only Michelle, and the salience of her cigarette is high because of the vector it creates from her body out towards the top left of the frame. Flat neon lighting makes for low differentiation. Colour modulates to beiges, blacks and blue. There is very little depth of field with no added setting or environmental information. The single metal strip on the left hand side, towards which Michelle leans when talking, balances the brown doorframe on the right hand side of the background. Michelle's directionality towards the camera, and how intimately she talks straight towards it, strengthens the covert message of bravery and honesty.

Popular culture perceives beat-box music as being predominantly male (Martinez 1997). As a masquerade, the image of the female delinquently dressed in a school uniform unexpectedly conveys an androgynous figure. She becomes a sexless and genderless storyteller who might very well have been near a men's bathroom to witness the séances of the Gay Afrikaner Jock. Interestingly enough, the character of Michelle was scripted as a male from the initial phases, and only turned out to be female when the production started. The affordances of the modes of music and visual video are crucial here, and the combination of modes complements the interpretation (Finnegan 2002).

The beat box sound carries on in stops and starts through her narration – it dominates the scene for the first few seconds, and then slips into the background for the duration of the shot. However, one gets the overall feeling that the rhythm of speech follows the beat box sound. Michelle delivers a monologue of 17 seconds, relating the background of the Gay Afrikaner sports captain called Jaco. He lives a double life. She laconically relates the fact that he is gay. He hides this from his girlfriend, the cheerleader, and also from the rest of the school.

Michelle says she only knows this because she saw him and Tenda in the locker room. She disrespects him because of his dishonest lifestyle. The interpretation of the social meaning (Kress 2004) of this image of Michelle emphasises her honesty and rebellion. Consequently, she can afford to criticise Jaco for his dishonesty. By her dress and demeanour, the viewer knows that she is not hiding her own lifestyle of drugs and smoking. In this aspect, the production group candidly communicates integrity and respect. The affordances of the image as text clearly become more meaningful than that of the spoken word. The production team takes ownership of their own environment by becoming critical social architects (Giroux 2006); they take a stance by lauding integrity and embracing the Other. This is a clear instance where young people are 'directly resisting adult authority' (Buckingham 2008: 5). They are resisting in two ways: firstly, by rejecting marginalising notions of gayness as being the Other, and secondly, by portraying an obviously juvenile delinquent such as Michelle as honourable.

Michelle's tone remains defiant throughout the delivery of her diegetic monologue. In a mumbling, monotone voice, she sulkily talks about 'that Jaco character' that, although he may be the captain of the rugby and cricket teams, is gay. With the attributive 'that', she distances herself and objectifies the actor. In referring to him as that 'character', she distances the actor (Jaco) as if he is an unknown person in the public domain. This choice of words reveals that he is not a friend of hers, and that she does not idolise him as the rest of the school supposedly does. The fact that he is the captain and prominent member of several sports teams indicates that he is a high achiever and a 'jock', implying that he is very popular. In the background, while Michelle is speaking, the beat box sound is still audible.

The sound peaks at pauses in her monologue where it emphasises certain words and phrases. There is a definite accent 'huwaa' on the word 'gay', giving the event a conspiratorial and sensational ambience. This same accent 'huwaa' occurs again on the word 'together'. The scene ends a second later with a last 'ptsh' beat box sound. The diegetic and non-diegetic sounds analytically converse in order to increase the emotional impact of the revelation. The team used intentional timing and choice of sound effectively to upset hierarchies and subvert personifications (Grace & Tobin in Buckingham 1998) in order to create this moment of parody.

The character Michelle, the carrier, looks like a 'junkie', a juvenile delinquent, with possessive attributes such as a beanie (a knitted hood), a white school shirt with the top three buttons undone, a loose tie with the knot hanging at the same level as the

breast pocket that visibly contains a packet of cigarettes, and a pen. She wears a chain and pendant around her neck, lipstick and an ear stud. Her right hand is lifted to shoulder height with a cigarette clutched loosely in a seemingly practised smoker's hand, with her gaze forming a vector to her hand.

The uplifted arm reveals an unbuttoned sleeve cuff. The fact that she seems to talk towards her own hand gives her actions a reflective impression. She is less concerned with the audience than with her own self-centred actions. Her body language gives the impression of contempt and disregard of social convention. Her identity might be read as being stylised and intentionally disregarding convention. In a Bakhtinian heteroglossic way, she is trying hard to represent herself as being neutral. There seems to be no one to mirror on the other side of the interaction, and she plays her own game. Her demeanour reminds us of a person's presence in a Catholic Church confessional. The purposefully directed blank canvas of this scene leads to an interesting reception phenomenon in the context of Hall's (1997) comments that reception is always understood within the identity framework of the receiver.

Although I would define character forming as part of the parodic deconstruction of a soap drama, there is nothing comical about this scene. Crapanzano (1991) claims that parody is not necessarily comic. Parody as masquerade, as used here, is grave and uncomfortable in its honesty. It inherently accentuates difference. Compared to the real television soap genre, the students' version seems wild and uninhibited. The students use parody to subvert and intentionally exaggerate a character that is

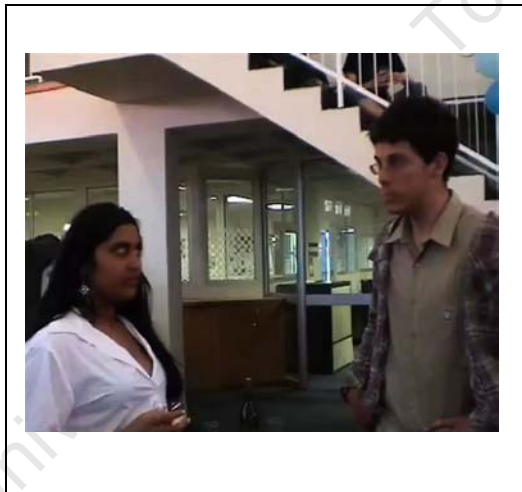
deemed unacceptable in the context of generational social memory. Michelle is that friend that you cannot take home to meet your parents. She represents the whole faction of school friends who are not welcome at home, the Other; people of another colour, or who have piercings and are associated with drugs and loose living. In fact, she is an abject alliance whom you have to hide from your family, for fear of sanctions against you.

The touchy subject of gayness is confronted head-on in a decidedly less than dramatic definition. Within the irreverent freedom that parody affords, lies an honesty regarding the production team: they side with integrity rather than conformity in society. Anyway, to which society do they need to conform? They have already previously declared the schism: that general rules pressed upon them by older generations are not necessarily those of their own choice or priority. Within a few seconds of video performance, they stake their claim of creating their own counter memory by eradicating social memory and taboo (usually dealt with through stereotyping) of older generations. They shift their alliance to reorganise societal values in their own habitus by rejecting hypocrisy.

A purposeful emptiness of the scene leaves it open for interpretation (Grossberg 1997). It becomes possible to decode and then introduce understanding in the process of creating counter memory within this 'fabric of quotations' (Barthes 1971: 169). The speaking character becomes the archetypal juvenile delinquent who, in this emptiness, transforms into the ultimate observer, social commentator and anonymous gossip authority. True to the character of the soap opera genre, she becomes the

moral gatekeeper and the one who reveals questionable behaviour. The image fades to black.

Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001) explain how important materiality of the production becomes in conveying the discourse. This video text demonstrates that the costumes, performances, dialogue and camera work all form an integral part of the message of the 'Afrikaans Gay Guy' who is shunned not because of his choice of sexual partner, but mostly because of his lack of honesty towards his partner.



*Figure 29 Ag, I'm sorry...*

Here, the black frame cuts to a medium shot of the Cheerleader (Gita) and her husband, the former Jock (Jaco), presumably as a reaction to the confession of the 'druggie' Michelle. Michelle has just revealed that Jaco is gay, and that she saw him and Tenda in the bathroom, implying that they were caught in a compromising position. The scene stretches over fifteen seconds, and was shot with a handheld camera. No cutaways or close-ups were used in

the edit. The fifteen seconds run as an uninterrupted shot, positioning the viewer as a voyeur. The two actors perform as if on stage, with the camera moving alternatively from a medium shot including both of them, to panning from one to the other as they converse. The affordance of video imagery and especially the effect of the hand-held unsteady image as a medium, effectively convey uncertainty and unsettled-ness.

Sound was recorded with the camera microphone, and therefore includes general room sound. The ambient nature of this strengthens the feeling of a stage performance. Additionally, the actors are projecting their voices as if on stage, exaggerated, characteristic of parody. No non-diegetic sounds were added in editing. The materiality of the raw quality of recorded room sound underscores the affordance of this unmanipulated sound; it contains a hint of hastily-shot news footage and reporting of the truth. The high modality of the unmanipulated sound establishes a certain authenticity, while the same effect of materiality occurs in terms of the lighting.

The scene is shot *in situ* in the school library, bathing all objects in a flat neon light. Because of the non-discriminatory lighting, no distinction is made between the background and the actors. The stairway going to the mezzanine floor runs diagonally across the background, directly behind Jaco's head. White pillars with stark post-modernist architecture complete the background. Some 'extras' are distinguishable behind the couple, but are unnoticed because of the animated way in which Gita talks. She is placed in the left hand of the frame, with Jaco on the right hand side. She wears a white unbuttoned shirt with some of her hair

tied back, and the rest hanging loosely over her shoulders. He has dishevelled hair and wears glasses, with an unbuttoned plaid shirt draped over a khaki one. He is considerably taller than she, and thus the vector established between them as they make eye contact stretches from the bottom left hand third (real, given) to the top right hand corner (ideal, new). Initially, no action takes place. Visual focus intensifies on Gita when she starts talking after five seconds.

Representation through the actional mode (Jewitt 2002) opens up possibilities when Gita says 'I MARRIED you!' in a fast-paced aural exclamation. Her movement becomes fast and jerky while she leans back with an open posture directed towards Jaco, increasing the physical distance between them. She exclaims 'I DON'T (.) BELIEVE it!', with a quick stop between the two words. The camera pans towards Gita so that Jaco is out of frame and Gita is presented centrally. Her gaze is pointed out of the frame towards Jaco. Her arms and hands push out in front of her in an exclamatory way, pointing towards the right hand side where the viewer assumes Jaco is standing. After a sharp intake of breath, she brings her left hand to the side of her face, suspended in mid-air, with palm open in a shocked gesture: 'You're GAY?' After a short silence, she drops her hand with the palm pointing downwards, in a vertical position. The camera pans back to include Jaco. During her tirade, he stands motionless before her, quietly letting the focus shift to Gita. His passivity strengthens a perception of weakness and the inability to act decisively. Tellingly, it translates into an interpretation of Jaco as being a weak character.

Camera angle and movement express particular messages regarding conflict and tension in the next few seconds of this scene. Compositionally, both characters are now only halfway into the shot, with the distance between them perceived as having increased. The frame seems disjointed due to the tight cropping of the two images, which is disorientating for the viewer. As Jaco answers meekly 'I.. I didn't think anybody would find out', the camera pans to include him in a medium shot. Gita's face is cut halfway by the frame, but the viewer sees her covering her mouth and nose with her left hand. She turns towards the camera. The uncomfortably close framing of this shot brings the actors closer to the camera, from a social – into a more intimate distance. Reminiscent of the method acting style revealing the drama training of the actors, Jaco maintains an open body stance throughout, and lifts his right hand into an open palm gesture depicting surrender. This camera work strongly reflects treatments stereotypically used by television programmes such as *Cheaters* where emphasis is placed on unpredictability and fake voyeurism. These actions manipulate the viewer into sympathy towards Gita, while Jaco is represented as being weak and dishonest.

Gita turns her body towards Jaco when he says 'Ag, I'm sorry...'. When he reaches out trying to touch her with his right hand, she retreats and says 'Don't touch me' in a clipped voice. The handheld camera tracks around the figures. The viewer expects one of the characters to push a flat hand in front of the camera to avoid being filmed. It seems to be one of those unbearably embarrassing, intimate moments, when the exposed character would cower away from all view. For a moment, they are

together in the frame before the camera moves into Gita's space. She constantly seems to be the visually salient element in the frame. Jaco now forms the right hand side of the frame, with only his hands, chest and chin in shot.

Gita repeats 'I don't believe this', her hand forms a stopping motion in and out towards Jaco. She turns to her left, presenting her back towards the camera, and stretches out over a table containing snacks. She exclaims 'UGGHH' in a disgusted tone. The camera is still zooming in on her movement. She puts her glass down to grab some marshmallows from a bowl on the table. The handheld camera drops a fraction to reveal an array of snacks on a table with a dark green tablecloth. Small plates with chips, marshmallows, wine bottles and glasses are revealed. When Gita bends over, her hand forms a vector with the table's contents. Only her right shoulder, with hair falling over her white shirt, is visible.

By now, the camera distance has shifted into a medium close shot, impressing a social distance between the viewer and the carrier. Actions are fast and the impression is created that the camera is not keeping up with the pace. As Gita prepares to throw the marshmallows at Jaco, she practically falls out of the left hand side of the frame. Jaco appears on the right in a medium shot as the marshmallows hit his face, travelling from the left to the right hand side of the image. His gaze follows the actions of Gita, although she is out of frame at this point. In his next words, he switches over to Afrikaans, exclaiming *my liefie, my liefie!* (my love, my love!) before racing after her.

Using Afrikaans in his dialogue contributes modally to the strong emphasis of the rough Afrikaner man contrasting with the revelation of homosexuality in the metaphorical closet.

Stereotypically, Afrikaner men would be depicted as rough, heterosexual and less refined in manners and looks compared to their white counterpart, the English man. Afrikaans dialogue becomes a strong emphasis here, conveying how social formation of media (Kress & van Leeuwen 2001) shapes meaning. The production team sends a message here; that there are also gay Afrikaans men, and that the stereotype of the effeminate gay is not always applicable.

The use of the Afrikaans language in this context reflects Foucault's comments (in Hall 1997) regarding knowledge production through language, and how language representation and power operate in the interests of a certain dominant class structure. As Foucault (in Hall 1997) argues, the discourse here shapes knowledge in defining Jaco as an Afrikaner man, seemingly and deceptively heterosexual, actively creating a certain stereotype, while ignoring the fact that gay Afrikaner men are generally as diverse in identity as their English counterparts.

Actionally, the camera movement here becomes rough and disjointed. The camera tries to follow the action but everything moves too fast, and after a split second of 'empty set' where the camera picks up only rows and rows of books on shelves, the back of the running Jock comes into shot once again. The unsteady camera work serves to relay mental and emotional viewing disorientation. The viewer instinctively tries to 'see more'; to mentally slow the image down and try to understand the scene.

Very tight cropping and physically cutting off significant parts of the two figures add to this disorientation. Camera distance remains a fast-paced medium close-up with visual salience and focus on Jaco as he bolts away. The scene ends in a cut to the metro man (metrosexual) master of ceremonies, poised, shocked, standing on the stairway.

The importance of finding unity in honesty and truth underscores this section of the video production. The divisional factor between the characters seems to be the withholding of information, and the viewer remembers the delinquent Michelle because of her careless frankness. The pedagogical message is clear: according to the students, dishonesty does not pay, and the truth has a way of emerging despite strategies to keep it under cover. According to Stein and Newfield (2006), video acts as a way of harnessing a variety of semiotic resources available in the classroom, which can be employed to convey a pedagogical message of honesty as moral high ground, and that celebrating difference is necessary. In this video, the students constantly make conscious decisions about discourses apt to convey the meaning of their message (Kress & van Leeuwen 2001).

How discourse affects 'relations of power' (Fairclough 1995: 76) becomes evident in the described scene with the Gay Afrikaner Jock. Merely defining him by way of dress and the use of English, catapults him into the stereotypical bracket of Afrikaner inferiority that is understood by the majority of South Africans. Immediately, the viewer makes assumptions about his social identity and cultural values, and how he is supposedly meant to behave. It must be mentioned here that the stereotype of the

Afrikaner in this sense should be seen in its situational context within South Africa, and that non-South African viewers might not necessarily understand this stereotype.

Social memory places the archetypal Afrikaner in a safari suit serving as social marker, a kind of summer uniform traditionally worn by farmers and later by Apartheid government officials. He also wears a plaid shirt over the safari suit, which categorises him as someone totally out of touch with fashion. Jaco is also wearing glasses, perceived as the ultimate nerd accessory. The students combine two stereotypes here. Referring literally to the 'Afrikaner' description leads them to the safari suit, which looks conveniently like the summer school uniform. If one looks at clothing as the representational mode, it becomes interesting how the history of the character is layered within his looks. The safari suit conveys multiple meanings, firstly to remind us of his history of a schoolboy, and secondly to highlight his current nerdy attributes. The plaid shirt strengthens this nerdy image; it seems to be the ultimate un-fashionable item in the minds of the students.

In the categories of representation, interactivity and composition, the production conveys a feeling of recording and news reporting. There is a certain amount of confessional ambience suggested by the raw footage. Although a certain lack of technical training resulted in this raw footage, it also unintentionally reveals some expression of truthfulness. This truthfulness and irreverent play with meaning so typical of parody, is enforced by the flashing text and cursor on the first screen, as well as the raw execution of the

beat box sound and the unmanipulated recording, thus enforcing documentary style filmmaking and its associated legitimacy.

Affordances of modes and their materiality in the last section, where the timeline jumps back to that of the reunion, work together to create an impression of truth and honesty. One unedited shot, with a handheld camera, ambient sound with room reverberation and no added sound effects and flat neon lighting, equalises the whole room. The Afrikaans dialogue and Jaco's dress in khaki and plaid shirt stereotype him as being deceptive and inferior; his looks are used to strengthen the discourse of the perceived inherent weakness in this character. The viewer's knowledge of the character type of the stereotypical gay Afrikaner man who lives a dishonest life is affirmed by his dress, manner and Afrikaans interjections in the use of language (Foucault in Hall 1997).

## Peer identification in the hybrid border space

Even though they originate from such different cultural backgrounds, the four students in this study seem to side with the peer group more readily than aligning themselves with their elders from their own backgrounds. This trend is expressed differently in their video production than how it came across when they discussed the matter in a group situation. In the next excerpt from the student video, Marike is exposed as having had an affair with Mister Jenkins in their school-going years. This was discovered when they played her videotape emerging from the

time capsule. Further complications emerge in terms of the complex relationship structure between the characters in general. As opposed to real life, soap opera characters seem to be romantically involved with each other in more intricate ways. Not only are several pairs currently married to each other, but they all had affairs with various class members on the side. Thus, Marike confesses that she had an affair with the schoolteacher, Mister Jenkins. Her motivation was purely material. She wanted to be rich.



*Figure 30 His family, like, left him a lot of money*

A screen introduces Marike with white text on black, and blinking cursor (as previously described for Michelle). She confesses that she had an affair with Mr Jenkins because she wanted to be rich. The well-known Abba song 'Material girl', quite aptly illustrating her attitude towards money, leads into her confession. This song was pre-recorded by the production team themselves as one of the requirements: they had to produce all music and sound themselves. Representationally, Marike is portrayed as a

stereotypical innocent-looking girl, slightly 'dim' although highly manipulative, who usually gets exactly what she wants. She has the knack of manipulating men with charm. They find her irresistible. Mister Jenkins is no exception. She has large, rolling eyes with a pleasant demeanour and friendly face. Her hair is tied back from her face. She wears a conservative blouse buttoned up to the top. No jewellery or any adornments are visible. Visual modality is low, with beiges and browns and neon light showing natural skin tone with no highlights, thus placing emphasis on her spoken language, gestures and bodily expression.

In terms of interaction, Marike talks animatedly to the camera with a lilting little-girl voice, and often gazes straight into the lens. As she confesses her secret, one gets the feeling that she is intensely pleased by her romantic liaison. She conveys naively that she *has to tell someone*. The booth gives her the confessional opportunity that she craves. She often leans forward towards the camera, laughs and rolls her eyes to the top right hand corner. She confesses twice, repeating *I'm having an affair with Mister Jenkins* before ending with a weak *OK?* when her voice lilts upwards to indicate the end of her interview. The visual cuts to the party scene in the library. Here, her husband Rajesh, the master of ceremonies, confronts her. He was blissfully unaware of her relationship with the teacher.



Figure 31 *Hehehe... You're JOKING, right?*

The scene seems to be deliberately designed to mimic a stage drama. Compositionally, the camera stays in the same place. Although hand held, a wide shot of four characters on screen remains constant. Gita stands on the left hand side of the frame, animatedly viewing the drama unfolding in front of her. She is obviously pleased with events. Rajesh is in the centre of the landing where he is presenting the video show in front of the television set. Marike stands to his left two stairs above him, in an open stance towards the camera, as if on stage. An 'extra' is seen in the top right of the screen, seemingly unaware of the drama unfolding on the landing. He is sipping on a glass of wine and talking with someone out of frame. He only once acknowledges the scene behind him. Although not visually framed, proximity and gesture place Rajesh and Marike in the same conversational space, while Gita remains an outsider. Gita is dressed in an alluring, feminine, low-cut dress; Rajesh (the student Tumi acting as the male character) sports grey flannel trousers, a white long-sleeved shirt with a pullover and tie, and thick glasses; Marike wears a feminine, white, floral summer

dress with frills, incongruous with anything that be worn by a seductress. The dress belies her dark secret by emphasising her naivety.

There is a prominent poster behind the characters with the words 'CLASS OF 97' written in blue and red on a white background. Balloons in various colours are tied onto the balustrade and staircase. The characters are all framed in the bottom two-thirds of the screen, with the staircase focussing the visual perspective on Rajesh. He is framed as the focal point and is also the only person seen in near-full view. All through the near-static scene, both Marike and Gita stay behind opposite sides of the balustrade with their bodies partially obscured by the trellis. It seems as if they are purposefully staying in one place to frame Rajesh as the focal point.

Interactively, the characters are focussed on each other. Rajesh seems to have forgotten about his role of master of ceremonies, and all his attention is now on Marike. His body conveys a fighting stance. His fists are poised next to his hips. With protruding chest, he reminds us of a fighting cock readying himself for defence. Throughout the conversation, he juts his hands out towards Marike, who initially plays nervously with her dress before adopting a defiant stance. As the conflict progresses, she straightens herself more and more until she proudly lifts her chin and declares that it is true, *I had an affair with Mr Jenkins, how did you think I became so rich?*



*Figure 32 No, I had an affair with Mr Jenkins*

As if on cue, Gita in the left side of the frame, starts sniggering and laughing, interacting in direct demand with the camera, pointing towards the two quarrelling individuals. She points her finger, closes her face with her hands and rocks up and down with exaggerated silent laughter. The extra on the stairway also turns around at this point, momentarily gazing down on Rajesh and Marike.

Gita's exaggerated body language and actions push her to the foreground here, causing conflict with foregrounding the spoken language and body gestures of Rajesh and Marike. The viewer is momentarily diverted from the two main actors, which causes a complicated mini-clash of attention. Apart from the defiant lifting of her chin, Marike is posturally inactive. However, because of her full frontal posture towards the camera as well as her vocal spoken language, she moves in and out of the focal position.



Figure 33 But... You're so INNOCENT ..O SHUT UP

Rajesh exclaims *But you're so INNOCENT*, whereupon Marike retorts *Oh SHUT UP. You had an affair with Gita, so get-a-grip*. Gita, still standing to the left, seems to be getting immense pleasure from the scene. She continuously rocks up and down, pointing towards them, interacting with the camera while laughing silently. Spoken language throughout the scene is exaggerated and parodic. The parody here is intended to be humorous, and Gita's over-the-top comic gestures prompt the viewer to laugh. She interacts straight into the camera, acting as 'ra-ra girl' to sweep up the audience. It is as if she is performing the role of the invisible audience usually associated with a situational comedy.



Figure 34 Yes but that was different. He's so OLD, man.

The focus returns as foregrounded modal intensity to Rajesh when he says *he's so OLD, man.. He was .. DEAD already, man..* He stumbles over his words, and shivers in a 'grossed-out' way. His cringing body language expresses his extreme disgust with Marike and the thought that she actually had physical relations with such an old person. While he expressively throws his body to- and from her in an animated, fast-paced gesture, she turns away, folds her arms and juts her chin into the air, as if she is pushing him out of her space. An invisible division seems to exist between them. Gita on the left has gesturally muted her actions. She stands motionless with her hands in front of her mouth, posturally leaning a little further backwards. She is completely behind the balustrade now, and of low modal intensity.

Alternating with the spoken language, actional representation in this scene enjoys the highest modality. The body movement of the three characters in the focal area on the 'stage' ensures that, due to high modality and intensity, attention stays on them throughout the scene. They are spatially situated on the lower

half, centre of the screen, and stay proximally close in relatively the same position. Rajesh breaks the pattern occasionally when he pushes his body sharply towards Marike in animated, quick movements conveying agitation and aggression. The shot distance remains on an impersonal level ensuring the viewer's impression of a stage with actors playing to an audience. This impartiality is enhanced by the camera point of view, looking up towards the landing on the stairs.

## Activating the hybrid border space in video production

Niesyto (2003) comments on the phenomenon that young people associate themselves more closely with other adolescents, albeit from across the world and with totally different identities, than with older generations. However, experts do not concur. Although the trend is identified, this seems to be a largely unexplored area. Buckingham (2008) mentions that 'affluent middle class youth' and their identity groupings have not been adequately researched. To contribute to this seemingly inadequate corpus of knowledge, I contend that the phenomenon defined by Niesyto (of adolescents identifying more easily with other youth than with their own immediate older family), also applies to a group of diverse adolescents such as this production group. Not only do they associate with each other, but they understand and bond with each other on a meta-communicative level. However, such a space of understanding needs to be initiated and introduced by some appropriate activity such as a video production.

Giroux (2005) contends that one should attempt to remove emotional values from racial investigations, and in Border crossing Pedagogy rather look objectively at how certain social, historical and cultural actions influence society. Students should learn to explore intellectually instead of reacting emotionally. Such a rational approach to the Other within the backdrop of social memory in the South African context is a challenge, as evidenced by the data analysed here. This chapter has shown how groups of people remember subjectively (Crapanzano 1991) and that people tend to cling to emotional events as memories. Despite the fact that people know that such remembrance might lead to skewed perceptions of history, it is the human way of dealing with trauma. Race as the Other seems to be the most obvious differential factor in the South African context; consequently it seems to be the most polarising dynamic. However, Giroux (2006) advocates that social memory can be used in a positive sense. Discourses need to be built around such memory in order to construct new counter memories even if they are often accompanied by tension in relationships.

In this study, it was found that the adolescents try to sidestep conflict with elders wherever necessary. Although they have their own convictions and would like to associate freely with their peers, they find it difficult to be constantly honest and open towards their family members, especially the older generations. The youth do not subscribe to a social memory consisting of the values and convictions that the older generations impose on them. They navigate this emotional minefield that they sometimes feel they find themselves in, by following the way of least resistance, and using their own experiences and convictions to re-shape their

social memory into a counter memory. However, this analysis has shown how in the creation of the video production, the participants ironically sometimes use the very same stereotypes so entrenched in society to describe older generational views, in order to re-work their own counter memory.

Soudien (2007) is convinced that race seem to continually be the major shaping factor in South African society. The participants in this study are no exception. However, they express opinions about race in social memory in various ways, depending on the forum. When the mode of spoken language overrides other modes, as in the case of the discussion sessions, they express their convictions about the Other in different ways than in the production of the video. They are convinced that the older generations, especially the grandparents, are a divisive force, using social memory to cling to beliefs and opinions that the younger generation views in a different way.

Therefore, they choose to create counter memory with a more inclusive angle to replace the memory of their elders. They recognise differences in race and identity and they live amicably with such differences, while also perceiving that an uncritical contingent of fellow learners in their environment do not necessarily share their views. Two domains of 'us' versus 'them' are created: firstly, they feel removed from the elders, who are situated apart from them as adolescents; and secondly, they have to contend with a faction in school society which has certain discriminatory views about race and difference that they as a group cannot agree with.

The group of students in this study considers the views of the older generations as well as the discriminating attitudes of other students are divisive, and they seem to be proud that they are thinking along more individualistic lines. Giroux's (2006) suggestion that we need to activate social memory in order to re-work instances of dominance and victimisation seems to be exhibited in this group. It is not necessarily true that they as a group have been activists before, but during this particular intervention they seem to have re-formulated their ideas.

The participants make it very clear that they do not contain their friendships to the school grounds, yet they negotiate the way of least resistance by ensuring that their older family members stay out of touch with their daily lives. They seem to be aware that criticism might otherwise ensue. Their statements about Afrikaners who do not trust the English, the Blacks or anyone different from themselves translate into a form of resistance by omission. Therefore they limit their buy-in to the elders' social memory, as well as their own contribution to such a social memory, by creating their own counter memory.

Video created a marked opportunity for negotiating difference while producing this student video. By using the playful possibilities of parody as a genre to act as devil's advocate, the students created a Gay Afrikaner Jock who defies at least two conventions of comfort of older generations. Not only is the character defying strict Calvinist convention of faith, but also hints at the fact that gender choices might go completely ignored in accepted Afrikaner society. From the script and discussions it became clear that the Jock married a Hindu girl, who is also one

of his classmates. He converted to Hinduism to show his commitment to the relationship. In the Afrikaner community this would have been viewed as being utterly defiant, since Afrikaners have a strong sense of allegiance to the Calvinist faith. Jaco also hides the fact that he is actually gay, thus demonstrating a second big transgression.

A large contingent of the older generation in the Afrikaner community frowns on such a choice of sexual orientation. The students, however, do not condemn him for this, but only for his dishonesty. They clearly rate honesty much higher than conforming to the opinion of the majority of society. This symbolic inversion of usual hierarchies (Grace & Tobin in Buckingham 1998) encapsulates a safe environment for these adolescents by removing their own voice from controversial statements. Because the video becomes the voice, they can stand back to objectify their own convictions. It is in this space where the use of video production becomes a valuable means of expression. Once the fact is 'put out there', so to speak, confidence in their own creation of counter memory is bolstered to such an extent that their own voices can be asserted.

School, as an integrated social space, creates a strong forum for shared cultural capital, especially in such an environment as Mountain Hill. The motivation for adolescents to 'blend in' creates the social space of a school ground that becomes a very strong market force for cultural and identity markers. Video production proves to be highly beneficial to cultural exchange (Bourdieu 1984) whereby agency for change is afforded.

# SIX

## Conclusion

Makhalemele urges in his conclusionary notes regarding cohesion and reconciliation in South African society that 'there is an urgent need to debunk the myths that have been built about African, coloured, Indian and white identities over centuries, and to consciously promote the ethos of the equality of humanity. Constructions of memory, especially of national memory, should therefore seek to promote fair representations of the peoples of the country and their history' (2005: 38). The current study attempted to work towards designing an intervention that could facilitate such conciliatory movements.

The conclusionary chapter reflects on how the research questions were answered by firstly looking at how border pedagogy facilitates the creation of counter memory within the South African school environment. The following section reflects on the

use of parody in video production, and how this choice of genre activated hybrid border spaces. The last part of the chapter reflects on the methodology that played a large part in the design of this intervention. Multimodality was not only a focus as pedagogy, but also in the analysis of the data.

The two questions were:

- How do adolescents negotiate cultural difference when using video?
- What are the affordances of digital video production for designing a pedagogical intervention to negotiate diversity?

The purpose of this study was to explore emerging patterns of communication within a school environment with diverse cultural identities and the extent to which such patterns signify cultural border crossings. The investigation was carried out with specific reference to the politics of difference defined by Giroux as border pedagogy, an educational philosophy or ideology that 'both confirms and critically engages the knowledge and experience through which students author their own voices and construct their identities' (Giroux 2006: 60). Looking at South African adolescents, Bhabha's description of the 'unique hybrid' (1994) resonates. He describes young people of this current age as people who borrow from various places in order to construct and re-make their identities continuously as the globalised world and their habitus lead them. They interact with different cultural identities; borrow from popular culture, media and their own historical identities fluently. They are in a constant state of flux.

South Africa, with its unique diverse environment, might need a different focus- instead of investigating difference with critical border pedagogy as is suited for societies such as the United States, the local environment needs a more inclusive way of interaction. Borders among South African students are blurred, and taking the unique hybrid into account, the inclusive shared space where these young people interact and borrow on equal terms seems to exist under certain conditions. This study has argued that these hybrid border spaces can be activated as semi-formal interactional terrain when initiating structured projects involving negotiation with video production to achieve a certain goal.

This outlook of inclusivity resonates with another conclusion in this study: these young people live with a different outlook on social memory and history than that of their elders. Contrasting to the general exclusiveness and ready willingness of older generations to respect societies, to remember attitudes, events and conventions wherein they discriminate against any difference, and thus preserving a social memory. The four students deal with these memories as they deal with the rest of the influences they ingest daily; they re-interpret all information, re-design it according to their own tastes and preferences and re-make it into a new, agreeable and inclusive counter memory. By appropriating some aspects and identities foreign to their own heritage, they inadvertently move closer to one another.

Employing critical border crossing pedagogy when working with video enables a special space for negotiation between various students, which I would call a hybrid border space. In this

metaphorical space, adolescents borrow from each other, from popular culture, and from the media. They also retain some of their own cultural background in this space. Inclusive hybrid border spaces already exist. This study only emphasises how these spaces could be activated and fast-tracked within a formal school environment particularly in the South African context. The intervention discussed might act as a useful blueprint to facilitate border crossing within other pedagogical settings. Therefore, this study unpacks dynamics around cultural identity and how these can be activated within a hybrid border space, with the help of informal classroom discussions and video production to enable critical thinking.

Video production seems to be particularly beneficial to activate this metaphorical space. Not only is it inspiring to create something in a collaborative group, but the medium of video with its associations and relevance to popular culture and media facilitates expression in a language which the students experience as motivational. In the process of creating video, students also create counter memory collaboratively. Video production here acts as a vehicle to understand difference.

The process of activating a hybrid border space with video production proved to be inspirational for both the researcher and the participants, and the use of multimodal pedagogy and analysis of data with multimodal principles was invaluable. With this process it became possible to track transformation of ideas from one mode to the following. The general themes about memory and race, taste and class, gender, generations, and peer identification emerging out of the data correlate generally with

Makhalemele's conclusions (2005) about race and identity in South African schools, as this research has employed the same question direction that he proposed. The value of this current research does not lie in the emerging themes, but rather in the design of the intervention to activate hybrid border spaces in investigating difference with video production.

The drama teacher because of their obvious differences in background, cultural identity and class chose four female seventeen-year-old students. Although they have different cultural roots, they attend the same school seated in an upper middle-income suburb within the heart of the economic hub of South Africa. Despite their differences, they seem to be friends away from the school environment. They were asked to participate in a three-day activity where they were taught to critically investigate difference, and to use that knowledge to produce a video together that would depict their own identities through the characters.

Because of the diverse nature of interaction between the students, multimodal pedagogy appropriately lends itself to link onto critical border pedagogy in order for learning to occur. Additionally, multimodal discourse analysis in the social semiotic context formed a productive way to analyse a number of complex data sets. The following sections discuss particular conclusions drawn from the two main research questions.

## Adolescents negotiate cultural difference when using digital video

In the South African context, cultural difference cannot be separated from race. The 'unique hybrid' as described by Bhabha (1994) being young people in a globalised world who borrow aspects of identity from various sources, are wary of the older generations and the mistrust they perceive to be part of the makeup of these family members. They also recognise that the distrust towards people of other races forms part of a wider perception. One of the students aptly described it as a fear of the unknown that binds the older people (Figure 13 in Chapter Four). This fear, together with the older family members' expectations that the younger ones should follow them in their convictions, alienates these students. The opposite effect takes place- young cultural hybrids draw towards one another to form easier alliances. They create collective counter memory, an act that Giroux stresses to be a healthy way to deal with social memory (1995). Videomaking acts as a kind of disruption, drawing young people together to form counter memory while creating something from which they all take ownership in production.

Although social memory causes tension between older family members and these students, they also recognise the effect of minority groups within their school environment. They are in unison, but they are sensitive to the fact that not all cultural groups are seen as equal among the majority of the students in the school. In this instance they also distance themselves from others; here, from the groups of boys who seem to discriminate

against minorities such as the Indian students (Figure 11, Chapter Four). They convey incidents where Larusha was teased with 'look, she is ticking, she is a time bomb', referring to a stereotypical generalisation of Muslims as terrorists. Ironically, they note, Larusha is not Muslim. She is Hindu. Herein, they once again recognise the fear of the unknown and how a minority group can be marginalised. Social semiotics enabled analysis of the empathy that the other three students feel with Larusha – the way they finish her sentences and speak in the first person on her behalf, as if they are the party being discriminated against.

The current study agrees with Soudien (2007) that students act cohesively when they are taken out from under direct influence of their own community and the culturally divisive debates. In school, where they have distance from their own communities, hybrid border spaces enable understanding and empathy. They live in a 'heterogeneous, multicultural society' (Buckingham 2003: 16) where they are in constant contact with divergence. They share a habitus of difference, whereas their older community members might be more isolated within homogeneous confines.

They constantly distance themselves from the views of their generational elders. These four young people pre-empt their parents and grandparents' attitudes regarding socialisation between them as friends away from the school grounds. Although they do not agree with the older people's views, they choose not to act confrontationally. They admit that they would rather lie about whom they are meeting in the mall, than to upset the status quo. This points to some generational gap between particularly

the grandparents and the teenagers, since they seem to be isolated from teenage life more readily than the parents. One senses that the students purposely present themselves in a vague light, void of all detail, to the older generation. Thus, although they are quite aware of the existing social memory and creating their own counter memory away from home, their elders will not necessarily be aware of their alienated counter memory. The rift, thus, is a one-way mirror. The young people here recognise attitudes of the elders while the latter appear to be unaware of the reverse.

Such a one-way conversation has distinct disadvantages. It means that the opportunity created by the young people and how they wised themselves by interacting with people of difference, may not benefit older generations. It means that social change and consequent cohesion based on difference may not filter through to older generations. This is an opportunity missed as possibilities of younger people influencing their elders could be harnessed to affect wider social change. The problem, however, seems to be more wide reaching than a disconnection between generations. Tumi explains that she is generally misunderstood within the community of the township where her family lives. Although she lives with her parents near the school in an upper income group, integrated community, she regularly visits the township where her poorer relatives live.

The problem here seems to be a class divide. Taste as a divisional factor within various classes is a natural occurrence (Bourdieu 1993). How these students distinguish themselves as different from their relatives living in the township is explained by

Bourdieu's description of how habitus changes an individual's taste (1993). Tumi feels alienated from her township family because of their difference in taste. While they perceive her as 'thinking that she is better', she feels misunderstood and unfairly judged. The irony of the situation is that while the divide between the students in this study is narrowing because of initiatives such as this intervention, the gap of misunderstanding between classes is widening.

Interventions such as a programme of conversations coupled with video production such as these, or other uses of social software, facilitate the creation of a classroom discussion and shared counter memory between such groups of students. The intervention, thus, means that students can build on difference to enable better understanding between people of the same generation in a shared environment such as this one. A crucial finding of my study is that video production serves as the impetus to change cultural interaction, thereby opening up communication channels. Metaphorically speaking, it acts as a protagonist on the production stage, enabling participants to express thoughts and feelings as it crystallise out of initial verbal discussions.

The expressive aspects of video production and the use of it in the educational situation concur with other international studies investigated initially such as observations by West and Whitehead (1993), Bazeli and Robinson (1997) and Tyner (1996). In a recorded speech, Puttnam (1999) promoted the use of video in classrooms as a 'tool for reform, to promote critical thinkers, and to avoid a crisis in vocational training'. Savage and Challis

(2002) call for curriculum reform by the incorporation of digital tools into the curriculum, and Flanagan and Jacobson (2003) make a case for school principals to get abreast of the times. The 2003-4 BECTA Report highlights teaching, the impact on learning, and the leadership and management of digitally enabled environments. Duncan-Andrade addresses youth popular culture and relevant pedagogy in the United States media education policy in contemporary American society, and (2004) while McShay makes a case for multicultural critical education by means of technology (2005). The reform of media literacies and the use of technology to include multicultural education are also promoted by Tambucci (2006) and Kellner (2006).

The list of proponents is growing annually. Niesyto, Professor of Education at the University of Ludwigsburg in Germany, concludes from a wide-ranging study that he conducted with other researchers in several countries with a large number of participating learners, that the kind of intercultural communication recommended by Giroux (1997) and alluded to above, can in fact be effectively put across in learners by means of digital video production tasks undertaken in controlled (research) conditions.

A great deal is known about children as readers and writers in classrooms. Little, in contrast, is known about children as producers of videotexts. Video production is a new form of literacy that integrates art, language skills, problem solving, technical proficiency and performance. Although there are manuals available on the technical skills involved it is only recently that educators are producing critical, theoretically

informed studies of video production with young students (Buckingham 2010, Gilje 2010 and Potter 2010).

It has only been in the last two or three years, with the advent of true digital technology facilitating the medium becoming invisible, that the conceptual possibilities of video production has come to the attention of scholars. Therefore, this study sets out to contribute to the knowledge regarding cultural and gender border negotiation with the conceptual and thematic use of video production in the South African school environment.

Involving students to create their own video productions are leading to a new literacy practice, 'metaphorically conceived as a form of "curatorship" of children's own lives' (Potter 2010: 22). Potter reports on a case study with digital video production by young learners in the United Kingdom (2010).

Investigations focusing on cultural identity and difference with video production have been conducted within the last few years as well. Vaucell, Africano, Davenport, Wiberg and Fjellstrom (2005) have written about an intercultural video-sharing project that brought Swedish and Irish children into contact with one another. Although dated, the study by Squires and Inlander (1990) about learners in a high-risk environment who produce videos in a Freirian-inspired video curriculum, raises valid pedagogical issues and theories, and Maeda's case study (2000) on the effects of video productions by African youths for Japanese pupils was related to the methodology and theoretical stances of border pedagogy. Although some very valuable insights emerged around pedagogical issues and audio-visual perception

regarding a lateral-thinking way of assessing youth communication, documentation around the actual negotiation process between the members of respective production teams throughout all the various studies were lacking.

Four case studies from the VideoCulture project deal particularly with the same project in which groups of teenagers from Germany, England, the Czech Republic, the United States, and Hungary were involved from 1998 onwards. The first article by Niesyto, Buckingham and Fisherkeller (2001) analyses the project itself and locates it theoretically in terms of border crossing theory. The second article by Fisherkeller, Butler and Zaslow (2001) looks at a discussion group of teenagers and their reactions and opinions to videos that had been produced. The third article by Buckingham and Harvey (2001) articulates more critical and cautionary attitudes toward the importance of the perceived audience and creativity in the video production process. However, it was the final article in the series, by Holzwarth and Maurer, commenting on 'open-ended pedagogic style', aesthetic initiative, and how learners experience an audience that became relevant to the current study.

Reflecting on the current study and how it relates to studies mentioned above, the researcher concludes that the methodology used, such as multimodal pedagogy in a framework of border crossing create a valuable additional conversation to the current debates. Video production can be a valuable tool in investigating identity and difference.

## How parody as choice of genre frames the message

The students chose to express their video production in the genre of parody. Genre here is referred to as the way that text is organised and presented in a particular context in order to facilitate social interaction in a particular way. Kress (2006) explains genre as the specific way that text is used to direct attention towards a particular understanding in the social world. The choice of genre is important in constructing the message. Martin defines genres as 'staged, goal-oriented social processes that integrate field mode and tenor choices in predictable ways' (in Kress 2006: 93). The students chose to parody the soap opera genre. It is not unusual for young people to choose this particular genre when creating a story. This environment allows them to invert hierarchies in such an overt way that a certain distance between the text and the creators is formed. In the safety of this distance they find agency to express themselves in unmediated ways.

The importance of parody in this study also lies in the potential and tendency of the medium of video to stress difference (Crapanzano 1991). In the power play of video words are transcontextualised to become something other than their original meaning. The message ironically is still interpreted similar to the producer's expression. There is also a second layer of text that, although invisible to direct translation, has a marked influence on eventual reception.

However, reception of the produced message by an external audience was not important for this study. Rather, the meaning ascribed by the producers within the pedagogical process of video production is important as 'critical reading of not only how the past informs the present but also how the present reads the past' (Giroux 2006: 56). Social memory in this production gets subverted into a joint counter memory shared by the four students in this study. This is one of the potential benefits that the design of this pedagogy can contribute to negotiating difference in the school environment.

In addition to parody, it is also important to discuss the possibilities of meaning making in the genre of a television soap opera such as in this instance. Gledhill claims that the genre of the television soap opera is basically female oriented, but that the gaze is male (1987). This gender crossing in production and gaze is substantiated in the student video produced by the four female drama students. Their approach to television soaps is directed towards the norm - emotional intrigues with less emphasis on physical violence.

### Using parody in video production to activate hybrid border spaces

While chapter four, the first of the two analysis chapters, analyse some of the events dealing specifically with social memory, race, and discussing difference and taste amongst the four students, chapter five focuses on analysing the student video and how these themes emerge in the students' own creation. The fact that the students decided to use parody is very important. It means that

they chose to convey their story with several attributes that parody affords them. It seems that using parody within the hybrid border space of semi-formal education gives them some agency to over dramatise certain events and characters in order to make statements about their own identities. Therefore, chapter five motivates the use of parody in young peoples' work, also drawing on other theorists such as Grace and Tobin (in Buckingham 1998) who elaborate on the phenomenon. Additionally, this current study would conclude that parody is activated within a hybrid border space such as described previously.

Chapter five is introduced with a discussion on the definition, description and merits of using a hybrid border space such as identified in this study. Bhabha motivates such a space of interaction by accentuating how important it is to 'focus on those moments or processes that are produced in the articulation of cultural differences' (1994: 2). It is clear that he theorises about spaces between formal and informal interactions. Bhabha qualifies this interaction by claiming that these moments are not unconflictual or easy, but that they can be 'profoundly antagonistic, conflictual and even incommensurable' (1994: 2). These spaces, he also elaborates, are non-hierarchical. Both aspects are embedded in their choice of parody. Within the agency of parody, the students formed 'super-stereotypes' such as the Gay Afrikaner Jock combining two socially defined characters that would have a controversial edge. The Afrikaner Jock stereotype is seen as an accepted type of person in the conventional Afrikaner environment. The students take great pleasure and amusement out of assigning gay characteristics to this conventional character. Among raucous laughter, Amouré

exclaims that this would create 'huge conflict' (Figure 24 in Chapter 4). Additionally, they also combine this character's fate with that of a Gay Zulu Guy. In the narrative they are discovered having an affair in the school locker room. Tumi experiences the Zulu community as a conservative society. They generally disapprove of alternative gender choices, and it is because of this perceived heteronormativity (Butler 1999) that Tumi suggested the gay character.

The students' choices of combination and omission became noteworthy. While they reinforce stereotypes (the Afrikaner Jock), they also undermine convention by making the character gay. Adding the gay Zulu guy expresses their desire to overthrow convention and to create conflict. Buckingham claims that young peoples' video production 'almost always [contains] an element of parody, a knowing distance' (1998: 66). Play, here expressed as parody, ensures the breaking of rules and actions of fantasy (1998). By creating these 'what if'- moments, the video production group plays devil's advocate to create new genders and conventions that they know might not always be accepted in general society. Educators as well as students working in such an environment of difference as this study, find the tool of describing that what is *not*, valuable. This defines the identity of a community.

The use of stereotypes by these young producers become complicated as they seem to be aware of the 'essentialising, reductionist and naturalizing' (Hall 1997: 257) effects that stereotyping adds to representation. Hall further comments that stereotyping actually has the effect of 'splitting' (1997: 258),

dividing and excluding. 'It symbolically fixes boundaries' (1997: 258), exactly the opposite of what border pedagogy proposes. However, these students seemingly use their own stereotyping to overthrow existing power demarcated by general society within their own environments currently. By breaking down these boundaries set up by their elders and creating their own counter-stereotypes, they seem to claim their own territories, once again, creating counter memory. By doing this they claim their own ritualised power such as described by Hall (1997).

All the students regard heteronormativity, the 'core presumption of opposite-sex desire' (Butler 2008: 151) as an important part of their communities' social memory. This heteronormative aspect embedded in most societies in South Africa affects mostly the older, more conservative generations. However, it forms a strong reflection of social reality, shaping society (Schwartz 1996), and it is thus revealing that these students, when they are physically removed from the influence older generations, recognise and criticise these 'cognitive, affective and moral orientation' (Schwartz 1996: 910) of that specific group that they sometimes associate themselves with. Within this group, it seems that 'ingrained stereotypes' inherited from parents and grandparents (Hasseler in Soudien 2006: 65) has less impact than what would have been if they lived in close proximity to these elders. Tumi specifically seems to distance herself from a large group of her family. Parody proves to be a useful means of expression in order for the students to remove themselves emotionally from their own society in order to criticise it.

As such, parody empowers students to engage with oppressive practices and power relations (Giroux 1991) as border pedagogy suggests. Parody acts as expression in order to develop new politics of identity, community and pedagogy (Giroux 1991). This is a true emancipatory function of critical pedagogy. Here in the hybrid border space they are empowered to deal with integration and evaluation of histories of communities in order to form their own counter memory. This environment seems to be complementary for social cohesion between these four students learning in the same space.

A hybrid border space is strongly activated by peer identification. Culture is always in contestation (Thornton 2000), and young people use their own knowledge, identities and 'aesthetic preferences' (Schwartz 1992: 75) within a peer platform to negotiate and borrow from other 'unique hybrids' (Bhabha 1994). Video production affords an exaggerated platform of negotiation of cultural capital. While in the realm of text production the students freely negotiated various stereotypes, for instance, what would an Indian 'flower child' or 'bunny hugger' look like, and how would she behave to be still in character Hindu with markedly conservative characteristics. The Indian girl repeatedly asked whether the dress neckline is not too revealing for her character. While the rest of the cast tried to convince her that the dress is appropriate it was clear that it would not have been tolerated in another habitus.

Schwartz describes habitus as similar to the 'idea of class subculture' (1997: 97). While Larusha's current habitus in this school environment might be similar to the class subculture that

her Hindu family belongs to there are many ways in which her current situation is more inclusive. Playing devil's advocate with her Indian character in the student video vouches for this inclusivity. The Indian flower child is married to the Gay Afrikaner Jock, Jaco, who converted to Hinduism to marry her. This aspect brings us to one of the most important aspects that the investigation into hybrid border spaces brought through this study: inclusivity.

Inclusivity and cohesion in this group also has to do with devotion to various religions. Throughout the intervention it is clear how important religion is for these students. The fact that Jaco converts to Hinduism for his new wife implies that this action casts him in a honourable light in the eyes of his fellow characters. Although this particular group of students do not harbour divisive attitudes against people different from themselves, they acknowledge that other groups within the school environment might not be integrated as a rule. During the conversations, they constantly voice their disdain for intolerance of a small isolated number of groups on the schoolground who taunt people different to them.

The importance of parody as a choice made by the students themselves becomes important because of the power shift that the young people effect within the hybrid border space where they negotiate difference. While Bhabha mentions that these moments of interaction where cultural differences are articulated are by no means confrontation-free (1994) the observance within this study is that the producers diverted the tension away from themselves by using parody. Additionally, with the use of inverted

stereotypes, they succeeded in shifting power towards themselves as young people. With this power and knowledge in their own hands they group themselves on a power base distanced from the older generations. This whole movement seems to strengthen the argument for the cohesive aspect of this specific intervention with video production even more. Once again, it illustrates the inclusive movement of these students, away from the trend of exclusiveness that their older generations seem to follow.

### **The affordances of digital video production for designing a pedagogical intervention to negotiate diversity**

The next section looks at the design of pedagogy for meaning making where video production acts as focus. While the main aim lies with critical border pedagogy, multimodality forms an essential basis for the design of the intervention as well as analysing the data.

This study endeavoured to show how video production could play a meaningful role when students investigate difference within a structured pedagogical intervention. Even within this isolated intervention it was evident how the students deepened their understanding of difference just by the act of conversation and video production itself. No visible conflict occurred within the group as the project played out.

The project offered an opportunity to students to negotiate their identities and differences. Duncan-Andrade discusses at length how power and political identities are shaped daily on the

schoolground (2004). However, video production offers opportunities of self-expression, cultural interaction and border crossing in a more structured and expressive way than informal interactions can provide. Technology is a sociological shaping tool (Williams in Buckingham 2008). Within the act of creation and negotiation to achieve an outcome group dynamics come into play. To be able to create a negotiated product when working in groups, each member should ideally have opportunity to express and motivate ideas that will be mediated by the process. To express identity with video production is an inside-out process (Smith-Welch 2004). It involves a certain amount of internalising of the outside world before expressing an idea and mediated result. Thus, it can be a self-reflective process.

## **Reflection on design and methodology**

The study employs multimodality in both the intervention as well as in analysing the data. When examining the ways in which adolescents use digital video while investigating cultural difference, multimodal pedagogy is part of the research design. The research explored the affordances of digital video production within a pedagogical process to negotiate difference. Although the study is highly contextualised and the findings cannot be generalised to the wider South African society, the value lies in the intervention itself. With the two pilot studies preceding the main intervention as seen as part of the whole, the iterative nature of the process suggests a potential for replication within a wider context.

The two-staged nature of the pedagogical intervention proved to be valuable. Although classroom discussions and conversations alone could have provided a forum for negotiation of difference, video production added a bigger focus of multimodality to the pedagogy. With parody as production genre, the students were inspired to distance themselves from their own backgrounds, thus facilitating the creation and maintaining of the hybrid border space while discussions of characters, pre-production and production were in process.

However, it is clear that the video production needed the foregoing conversations in order to start certain discussions around difference. Video production itself activates a thought process (Gilje 2010) whereby students in this study managed to negotiate their social context.

The pilot studies showed that the video production intervention needs more time when standing on its own, in order to be used as negotiation tool. Thus, the discussions act as fast track for ideas to form, and negotiations to reach a meaningful level. The paper-based documents form a kind of a bridge between the modes of verbal discussions and video production. Although the paper-based documents were not analysed multimodally, they were useful to track the trajectory from discussion through to character planning and eventual video production.

### Reflection on pedagogy

While the study was framed within the context of critical border pedagogy, the intervention was built with multimodal pedagogy

as physical framework. Thus, themes and questions facilitating discussions on metaphorical border crossing worked within multimodal pedagogy by way of using various modalities in one pedagogical situation (Stein & Newfield 2006) in synergy to enable hybrid border spaces. The acts of negotiating, creating verbal dialogue, storyboarding, performing, recording and editing it in video fulfil the five different kinds of literacies namely linguistic, visual, audio, gestural and spatial meaning (New London Group 1996) as discussed in chapter three. Stein & Newfield argues that multimodal activities challenge the logocentrism of traditional pedagogy (2006). Video production can combine such a set of multimodal activities into a multimodal pedagogy.

### Reflection on multimodal data collection methodology

From the data that was collected in various ways such as video recording, text and image on paper and a student video production the video based material became the most useful for micro-analysis. In a wider context the rest of the paper-based data served as useful methodological triangulation to the video data identified for closer analysis.

The process video recorded of the first stage revealed data that could be analysed with a multimodal transcription and analysis theory (Norris 2004) specifically designed to look at conversations. This social semiotic approach emphasises two aspects when analysing human interaction: firstly, how an individual uses various resources to express perceptions, thoughts and feelings, and secondly, the various levels of attention and

awareness that might influence interaction. Using the heuristic units such as proxemics, posture, head movement, gesture, gaze, spoken language, layout, print and music in this first stage meant that the process video could be analysed frame by frame according to these communicative modes.

Flewitt's comment that the sheer complexity of modes used in video such as words, noises, facial expression, gaze and body movement (2006) puts a great strain on analysis of situations is valid, although it is not necessarily the complicated nature of the video data that frustrates the researcher, but rather the recognition of the invisible aspects not captured by one stationary camera. In the discussion groups, for instance, the desk in front of the students obscured their hand movements when their hands were resting on their laps. In fact, the bottom half of their bodies, with all the encumbent body language, was obscured from view. Additionally, even though the camera sound was of exceptional quality, some words and reactions still got lost in other noise like laughter and small ambient noises.

However, despite the obvious restrictions of a single camera, it still proved to create a 'multisemiotic dynamic' (Flewitt 2006: 30) leading to internal validity of the data sets because of visual and non verbal triangulations between the various situations. For this study it is important that the process video enabled multimodal analysis of conversations resulting in rich and layered data. This huge corpus of data enabled the researcher to tease out a few themes running through many of the conversations such as social memory and counter memory, gender and generational

differences, and the identification of the features of a hybrid border space.

When the students planned their student video during the first part of the second stage, they were still relatively stationary, sitting in a half circle around a table in the library. The video camera revealed even more impulsive behaviour in these instances that triangulate data in the discussion stages. In one event, for instance, a theme from the discussions was carried over into a spontaneous discussion around Apartheid and race. Contrasting with the first discussions regarding race, where the students all agreed in a rather politically correct way that they do not distinguish race in any way within day to day interaction with each other, and that questions of race do not arise between them as friends, the spontaneous instance recorded by the camera without an obvious presence of the researcher, showed another dimension. When the Indian girl noted that they were sitting 'Apartheid style', the two white girls became notably uncomfortable. Discomfort materialised as much in their verbal conversation as in their body language, gaze, and posture.

During the second half of the second stage, when the students acted and shot scenes from their video, the main action was followed with a hand-held camera. This was frustrating and did not yield much useful data. The camera angle became too narrow, and it was obvious that there were happenings outside the frame that could inform the data, but that it was not recorded in any way. In hindsight, it must be an inherent problem when a researcher decides on multimodal data analysis as method: that

there is a constant awareness and reiteration of method, to include continually more data to complete a set.

### Data analysis:

This constant quest to complete a multimodal data set has the challenge that a researcher might end up with considerably more data than what can be analysed sensibly. Identifying a smaller corpus of data to analyse multimodally was a challenging in this instance. However, it prompted a funnel-like process, initially surveying all video data generally and making notes regarding themes emerging in general conversations. The data was surveyed three times in total while concentrating on various aspects every time such as transcription of verbal messages, voice intonation, body language and body movement. These general viewings led to the selection of eighteen events of about 30 seconds each, from which seven were then chosen to micro-analyse multimodally by using the designed multimodal toolkit.

The idea of a multimodal toolkit for analysis as proposed by Baldry and Thibault (2006) had liberating consequences for this intervention because of the variety of data that were available. A custom-made toolkit enabled conversational analysis (Norris 2004) to form the focus for the process video, with an elaboration to include representational, interactive and compositional meaning to analyse the student video datasets. Since the students used the acting to camera in the same way as acting on stage, the inclusion of film analyses such as Baldry and Thibault proposes combined with conversational analysis yielded more insights. The students did not use film language to its full

potential. They clearly had insufficient time to experiment with video and its metalanguage in order to employ it to its fullest. Thus, no intentional meaning could be read into camera angles, shot designs and other filmmaking tools.

### Final recommendations

In his groundbreaking report regarding social cohesion and identity among South Africans, Makhalemele expresses the hope that our youth could be the entry point for national reconciliation as 'adults can be stuck in their positions' (2005: 11). Border crossing pedagogy can activate integration and understanding in situations of such a rich and diverse nature such as those in South African schools. The design of this intervention has useful potential to translate into a project within the formal South African school curriculum, and specifically in Life Orientation for grades nine and ten. It would be most useful in middle class schools where students from various backgrounds share the same educational space. The curricular design and policy regarding the subject choice where such an activity would fit, offers new avenues for research. Various international studies debate the feasibility of integrating video production in either the English language-, or the Arts curriculum (Buckingham & Sefton-Green 2003; Burn 2005). Niesyto, Buckingham & Fisherkeller therefore concluded that 'if we wish to learn about young people's views and perspectives, we should be giving them a chance to express themselves through their own media productions' (2004: 2).

However, for the intervention to be optimally effective, the model needs to be re-developed. Firstly, the timeframe for the intervention needs to stretch over a longer period, either uninterrupted, or broken up in various shorter stretches. It would prove most beneficial if it formed a program over a process of a few months, where it is treated as a project within a school subject such as life orientation. Spreading out the discussion stages could enable informal conversations in the informal arenas to act in an investigative role. Furthermore should the video production training with appropriate metalanguage tuition be more elaborate with sharper attention to film language and effective ways to produce video, this would enable more accurate and richer communication by way of the medium.

Potential for further research involves studies regarding activities where two or more schools interact to investigate difference. The use of cellphone video combined with cheaper and more accessible ways to produce video with social software and material readily available to students within certain environments is a further avenue to explore.

In conclusion, the researcher wants to reiterate the importance of such activities as video production and investigating cultural difference in the current South African educational environment. While it has become essential that South Africans should understand each other on a deeper level, young people as globalised hybrids are bombarded daily with many multimodal stimuli. It is thus important to use their own means to affect change and cohesion. Vandeyar strongly urges South Africans to 'work towards a deeper and proactive diagnosis of the content of

the culture of its diverse peoples and find spaces for dialogue based on equity within the education system' (2003: 193). Such an intervention such as the proposed one where hybrid border spaces are activated can meaningfully contribute to the educational curriculum to affect change in a divided society.

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