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RECEIVING TELEVISION MESSAGES

An Ethnographic Study of Women in a Nigerian Context

Ph.D Thesis Submitted

by

OLUYINKA ANUOLU ESAN

to the

Department of Sociology
University of Glasgow

May, 1993

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

So much ground has been covered in this work, in the face of such constraints. It may not have been possible without the support of so many. I am grateful to each and every one of these, whose names are etched in my memory. I hope the Lord will lift His eyes upon you and be gracious unto you.

I am grateful to my sponsors, the Association of Commonwealth Universities, the administrators of the award at the British Council and also to my employer the University of Lagos for their co-operation in making it all possible.

I am especially grateful to my husband, Olufemi; my children, Ayomide and Olurotimi, and all the members of our family for the sacrifice, love, understanding and support.

I am very grateful to my supervisor, Professor J.E.T. Eldridge for his encouragement and support. I have learnt from him, more than he can tell. I am also very grateful to Dr Greg Philo, 'Young' Greg, David, Peter, Jenny, Jackie, Lesley, Cathy, Kathleen and all the folk at 61 Southpark, for their assistance and for providing a conducive academic environment in which the work was done.

Many thanks to all my contacts at the Nigerian Television Authority in the various locations (Victoria Island, Ikeja, Abeokuta, Ibadan); Ogun State Television; Broadcasting Corporation of Oyo State; Lagos Television; my hosts and hostess, and everyone who took time to talk to me and provide invaluable information.

I am grateful to Betty Johnstone, Lorna Brown and Peter Lambie for the painstaking care in the presentation of the study.

My special thanks to all who saw me through with their prayers and practical support. Chapel of Victory, Sagamu; the Afro-Caribbean Christian Fellowship, Glasgow; Victory Family Fellowship, Glasgow; Covenant Life, Glasgow; The Famiyesins; the Nkomazanas; the Lovetts are worthy of mention for the wonderful ways they have shown their love.

And to ... (the list seems endless) I thank you all.

But to God be all the glory, for this is His doing, it is marvellous in our sight.

ABSTRACT

The study was concerned with the way in which television messages are received. It was an exploration into the actual processes of production and reception of television messages. A detailed description of these processes is presented. There are basically two parts of the study.

The introduction explains the rationale for the study. It also describes the research design.

Part I begins with a history of the television industry with emphasis on the evolution of the present structure and how this directs the service. It reviews the processes of production and scheduling of television programmes. From this part, we can begin to understand the philosophy, objectives and constraints underlying the messages which the viewers receive.

Part II, which is the larger of the two parts, is the report of the observation of viewing practices in the 12 selected locations. Each location has been treated as a separate case, with a day-by-day report. There are many fascinating and stimulating details in these reports. The discussion which follows is only an overview of the highlights in each location.

The concluding chapter - The making of Meaning - presents the findings of the study in a nutshell. It covers the significant contribution which this study purposes to make to the body of knowledge. It highlights the striking images which viewers had taken from the screen, but more importantly, it re-examines the otherwise mundane act of viewing itself.

On the whole, the study made a case for

- i) the appropriate methodology for understanding the role of television society
- ii) raised issues which research should be concerned about, and
- iii) those which programmers need to be mindful of.

There are essentially two elements to this study. The first is to describe the development of television in Nigeria; its organisational structure, and its programming practices and policy. The second is an exploratory study on the way television messages are received. This was an ethnographic study of television viewers, using a small sample of Nigerian women. The study can claim originality on both grounds.

In the first instance, there is no indication that such a detailed description of the organisation of the television industry in Nigeria, has ever been documented. Similarly, the sort of ethnographic work on television audiences, conducted in this study is unprecedented in Nigeria. In deed, it is still rare more generally in media research. The work conducted here is more directly related to that of Morley (1986), and Lull (1990). These form the theoretical point of entry.

The two parts of the study are efforts towards trying to understand the communication process. The rationale for the study is to try and understand links between the production and scheduling of programmes, and the way people receive programmes. What has been attempted in the first part, is a description of the framework in which programmes are produced - the processes, the problems, and constraints which shape the messages that are broadcast. This was done with the belief that if communication, as a set of social processes is to be understood, the social production of messages must be considered along with the active processes of reception. Part of the understanding should come from a knowledge of the structure of those organisations from which the messages emanate. Understanding the way in which the messages, that is

how the viewers respond to, and take meaning from the messages constitutes the other part. This was the second part of the study.

Whilst the first part of the study looked at the institutional context within which the messages are organised, the second part, which carries the weight of the study is an ethnography of the contexts within which the messages are received. It is this aspect of the work, that relates to the studies by Morley, and Lull. Although both studies recommended and used qualitative approaches, as opposed to the "typical" survey type audience studies, (See Ang, 1991) they had their own limitations.

In his exploratory study, Morley had restricted himself to interviews with the viewing subjects. He was not actually present in the homes to observe the viewing activity and experience. Lull and his colleagues had likewise, relied more on the interviews, in spite of the 3 - day period of observing the subjects. The period of observation had been borne, more out of concern with facilitating the interviewing session. My study is designed to explore beyond the limits of both studies.

Research Designs

The trend of the discussion in the field of audience reception studies clearly points to the need for a design that would enable inquiry to progress beyond the identified limits. There is a need to unravel some of the assumptions that had informed reception and media studies. For this reason, there was to be less dependence on reported viewing behaviour. That consideration was central in this study.

Although the research questions which evolved from previous studies had been directing inquiry to audience reception practices, this study was

designed to encompass encoding practices as well, at least in part. There was an aspect of the examination aimed at (i) documenting the organisational structures and (ii) production practices of the various television stations which served the study focus area.

The point of this was to establish the range of programming fare available to the audience; examine the relationships underlying this range; and thereby identify the intentions of the producers in the messages that are received. This was done with the hope that understanding the practices that underlie both encoding and reception processes will better illuminate the interaction between both. These concerns informed the methodology that was adopted.

Methodology

As already indicated, there were two stages to the inquiry. One was on the production side and the other was focused on the viewer's reception of the messages marked out.

The following questions served as a guide to the inquiry on the production side.

1. a What is the policy view of the role of television in society?
b What range of interests is television expected to serve?
Note how television is expected to serve the interests of (i) government (ii) business (iii) the audience
2. What is the organisational structure of the television stations?
 - i How have the defined objectives of (1) above influenced the structure found in the industry?
 - ii What is the organisational structure as relates to message production?

Note the intended messages in the various programmes.

iii How does the organisation affect the clarity of the declared intentions?

3. What provisions have been made for special interests meant to be served, bearing in mind the socio-cultural make up of the target audience?

Although in-depth interviews were conducted on ^{the} production side, with staff at the various stations and the supervising ministry; it was complemented by observation of production procedures; and the noting of pertinent casual remarks made by past and present staff. In addition, documented evidence from books, files, which proved to be scanty, were also used to supplement the above.

For convenience, the interviews as well as the production meetings attended, were all to have been taped. There was a revision in the strategy, which led to a reliance on mental and hand written note-taking rather than taped interviews. Because broadcasters as with ministry officials were government staff, bound by the Official Secrets Act, there was a hesitation on the part of some staff to have taped interviews. A certain general manager who had refused to be interviewed on tape gave a very frank and extremely insightful interview. Thereafter, even when interviews were to be taped, remarks made during discussion outside the taped exercise were noted. These usually clarified points that had not been clear within the interview. In fact, taped interviews were thereafter reserved for those officials who had a level of confidence in the researcher, and were not intimidated by the audio recording.

For the interviews that were not taped, notes were taken as sparingly as possible. Emphasis was on mental note taking. Records of these meetings were documented immediately afterwards often in the car park or even on the road side. Repeated visits to the stations meant that there were several contacts with the officials and this provided the opportunity for follow up and further clarification.

Following the precepts of Morley (1986) and Lull (1990), there was to be a contextual focus of the viewing practices. The participant observation technique was thus employed for gathering data. This was done with a view to exploring the various processes which interact and determine the audience reception.

Rather than rely solely on the self reports of the audience sample, the subjects were to be observed in a real setting, so that as many of the contributory factors that exist, as possible, will be documented.

The design is informed by the knowledge that television viewing is basically a pastime. For several reasons, the medium is often not given deep or serious thought. In some instances this is due to a certain snobbery, in some it is that it is merely taken for granted. In fact, this was confirmed in many instances during the study. The subjects were, at least, curiously amused that their viewing practices could attract such rigorous inquiry. With such an attitude prevailing, it becomes even more important to have someone who consciously appreciates the purpose of the inquiry, directly noting what is pertinent data. After all, the study was designed to explore explanations which had hitherto been ignored. Hopefully, this would give a greater chance for understanding television viewing as a social behaviour and identifying

the pattern of responses to make television itself more meaningful.

Safeguards

In addition to being physically present at the viewing sites, and watching those programmes which the subjects themselves selected, and taking notes, the conversations around the viewing were taped and analysed. There was only one location at which the audio taping of all the viewing could not be recorded. In this case more detailed notes were taken.

The use of strategically positioned microphones proved to be a great help. Usually a microphone was stationed close to the main subject (S1), and another was positioned close enough to the set. In the event of a larger viewing group, the priority was to record the viewing subjects. In any case the microphones were sensitive enough, and the programmes were usually loud enough to be picked up.

The advantage of this is that comments which were muttered, which could otherwise have been missed, were picked up by the microphone. This afforded a closer inspection of the phenomenon, which was often private, without the researcher being too obtrusive.

In addition to the observation, focus interviews or groups discussions were conducted with the subjects in the various locations. According to the design, these should have been conducted after the observation period, but this was not so in some cases. Some of the subjects in the course of viewing spontaneously engaged the researcher in discussions which covered the scope of the planned discussions. Conducting the scheduled discussion thus proved to be needless.

Rather than be alarming, this trend should be seen as encouraging. It was a confirmation that the study was interested in issues which are relevant to the viewing audience. The discussion was guided by the same questions which served as the observation guide, especially those issues which evolved from the viewing experiences. There were thus some variations among the questions asked the different groups.

The discussion/interviews were useful for clarifying observed trends which could otherwise be regarded as the researcher's assumptions.

A seven-day observation period was decided upon for each location. This meant that the possible variations in day and time use pattern could be observed. This was why there was no pre-determined viewing times. The researcher aimed to be at the location for the entire duration of transmission that the subject was available for. This meant observation was planned to commence at the times when the subject were available in their homes, and concluded at their bedtime. This was not always possible for various reasons. Further details of the observation procedure are available in the discussion of the findings.

Another crucial reason which informed the decision for a seven day observation period arose from Lull's work. He recommended this duration on the understanding that, by the end of the week, 'normal' viewing patterns would have emerged.

The following are the research questions which served as a guide to the observation.

1. What is the television consumption pattern of the women?

- i What is the frequency of use?
 - ii What is the intensity of use?
 - iii What is the station loyalty pattern?
 - iv What is the programme preference pattern?
2. What is the manifest content of preferred programmes?
- i What are the perceived themes/central storylines?
 - ii What are the identifiable signs and symbols?
 - iii What are the values placed on them?
3. What is the media literacy level of the women? Which of the following production elements are found to be significant or meaningful.
- i The characters
 - ii The performance
 - iii The set design
 - iv The music
 - v The duration
 - vi The theme/message
 - vii The format
 - viii The lighting
 - ix The costumes
 - x Camera work/transition devices
 - xi The use of language
4. What are the existing discourse patterns amongst the women?
- i How does the women compare the world view(s) on television with reality?
 - ii When is the TV world view accepted, rejected, ridiculed or rationalised?

Ethics

The issue of ethics in a design as above, is always one of concern. The respondents in all cases were made aware of the purpose of the exercise. This awareness in some cases was not until after their contribution as in the case of the unsolicited remarks. Nonetheless, the respondents' permission to use their comments ~~was~~ obtained. In any case, the identity of respondents in such cases is protected.

Timing

Due to funding, there was a six months limit for the fieldwork. This time was split equally between both stages of the data collection.

The fieldwork ~~took place~~ from January 1991 till June 1991. January to March was devoted to collecting data on the production end. It was also during this period that the locations to be used for the audience section of the inquiry were arranged.

To ensure that the programming base which the audience had to refer to was uniform, all the observation at the reception end was conducted within the same programming quarter. This was the second quarter of 1991 - April to June. Starting at the production sites meant that the inquiry could trail the received programmes from the production stage.

The two stages of data collection were not totally discrete. Difficulties in setting up some interviews or in collecting documents and so on, meant that work on the production sites overlapped into the time allotted for reception practices. As a result, there was the opportunity of observing more current day-to-day production processes, and the reception of such. On occasions, it was possible to observe the

production sites in the morning and, thereafter, observe the reception of the result of these processes, in the evening.

Sample

There was no attempt to get a sample that was representative of Nigeria. The intensity of the scrutiny which the study aimed for meant that the sample size had to be small. Given the limits on the time and design, only 12 locations could be selected. It was decided that these be drawn from one town.

Sagamu was selected as the focus town for the study. It is a town that is strategically located, in close proximity to Lagos, Ibadan and Abeokuta - three cosmopolitan cities, each being state capitals. This meant that there were TV stations situated in each of them. As a result Sagamu was privileged to have pluralistic TV service. (Re. Map TV transmission coverage.) within the coverage area of several stations.

The focus area is situated in the south-western parts of Nigeria which has had the longest contact with TV broadcasting.

A rural based town like Sagamu was more attractive than cities like Lagos because it afforded the opportunity to investigate the response patterns of the otherwise largely ignored rural majority. It also presented an opportunity to examine communal viewing practices which presumably typifies a larger proportion of viewing in the Nigerian context. The widely held assumption, even among programmers, is that inadequate number of homes with sets results in communal viewing, with neighbours and relatives clustering around available sets (Odeka, 1988).

The sample of 12 locations was selected to illustrate different social positions. A synthesis of advertisers (and broadcasters') view of audience positioning, and the continuum proposed by Moemeka, was considered in identifying such variations.

The knowledge continuum is distinct from a scale measuring formal education in that it recognises the importance of alternative, non-structured education which includes exposure to and use of other media of communication. It recognises the scope of 'experience' which has been identified as relevant in the process of making meaning. As a result, even though it is not clearly defined, the scale was still considered attractive.

Educated and informed	-	Educated but uninformed	-	Semi-educated and ill-informed	-	Uneducated and uninformed
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Knowledge Continuum Model, developed from an original idea by Andrew A. Moemeka (1981)

The purchasing power and living patterns which are of concern to advertisers were considered, using social indices like housing, standard of living; and acquisitions. Above all, the anticipated nature of the viewing context whether it was family, or communal was considered in the selection of the sample.

It was difficult to get detailed information about the population of Sagamu, the study focus town. As a result, it was impossible to even attempt to draw a sample representative of that population. Though this had not been the aim, a sampling frame was required as a reference point to the social reality. Using records of studies carried out by medical

students in the Community Health Department of the Ogun State University Teaching Hospital, the scanty information from the local government office and first hand knowledge of the town, the selected sample can be said to reflect the prominent social positions in the town.

On the production side, seven out of the eight channels receivable were scrutinised. Interviews were conducted with various officers in six of these stations. They ranked from senior management to junior cadre staff, especially those who were directly involved in the production process. Inquiry for information on policy, general management and ancillary services was not as rigorous

In addition, the present and past employees of the TV stations network staff, officials from the supervising ministry, the Ministry of Information, at Federal and (Ogun) State level were interviewed.

Interviews were also conducted with staff of advertising agencies who represent the voice of advertisers. These included Account Executives, media executives, the producers of the TV advertisements themselves. The three agencies covered were selected to represent different orientations to advertising management.

The emphasis at this stage of inquiry was to speak with as many people as possible. Fifty-two scheduled interviews were conducted. In addition to these were the spontaneous chats, incidental discussions and the attendance of editorial and production meetings.

Scheduled Interviews for Production Practices

Station		Scheduled Interviews
NTA (Headquarters)	11)	
NTA Channel 10 (Lagos)	4)	15
NTA Channel 5 (Lagos)		1
NTA Ibadan		1
NTA Abeokuta		2
NTA Ikeja		8
LTV		3
OGTV		6
BCOS		9
Ministry of Information (Federal & State)		2
Advertising Agencies		5
		<hr/> 52 <hr/>

Fig No. 2.

This laborious exercise was warranted by the dearth of documented information on the television industry in Nigeria.

Limitations of Study

The most obvious limitation to the study is the size of the sample which limits how generalisable the findings can be. There was the lack of proper documentation on the subjects. There was hardly any secondary source of information. For instance, there was very little documented information about the focus town, especially such as was relevant to the study. In this regard, therefore, the study was again exploring into hitherto unresearched territory. This meant extra effort had to go into locating the pockets of studies that had any bearing at all and, thereafter, make sense of them.

The few figures which informed the knowledge of the sample town were estimates made from several unpublished class projects. It is not clear how reliable the data gathering and computations in these projects had been. They, therefore, have to be used with caution. For this reason, statistics have not been provided in the study. It is hoped that the

census exercise conducted after the fieldwork will offer more reliable data base for future studies. All this meant it was even more difficult to attempt to draw a representative sample.

The closed nature of the society, particularly in the traditional quarters, could have proved to be a limitation. The researcher had the advantage of being able to communicate in the local dialect, and was ready to come to the subjects level. This proved to be very helpful as it reduced the suspicions held about the researcher. Researcher, on occasions, had to compromise personal hygiene standards to partake of family meals during the observation. A continued rejection of the invitations would have been interpreted as snobbery and this would have alienated the respondents.

The research culture is not yet prevalent in Nigeria. In all cases, the confidence of the subjects had to be won. This meant that personal relationships had to be cultivated. This proved less difficult in some cases where there had been previous acquaintance of the researcher, usually through a contact. It was more difficult initially, in those cases where there was no prior knowledge of the researcher or anyone who could vouch for her. In these cases (locations 1 and 2) subjects were suspicious of researcher's motives.

However, once rapport had been established, there were no holds barred. The subjects were very unpretentious and very open.

In fact, by the end of the observation period, relationships had been established. In many cases ^{the} researcher had also taken on extra roles, confidant, counsellor, role model, health visitor, driver. The danger of

this involvement was that it could have removed attention from the object of study. However, the tape recording of the observation exercise proved to be a useful back up support, when subjects had otherwise engaged researcher. Prior contact, when the viewing exercise was being arranged, also helped to break the ice. They afforded the glimpse of the natural patterns to be expected.

The plan to have a seven-day observation period was not always feasible for natural and personal reasons which could not be helped. The issue of safety particularly at the end of a viewing day, for example, proved to be a risk. This risk was greater in certain locations than in others. This meant that observation had to be concluded earlier than planned in such cases. Sheer fatigue or failing health meant that observation was skipped on certain days as indicated in the reports.. This did not seem to impair the findings much because a pattern was established within the time that was available.

The other risk which the researcher faced was that on the notorious roads. The nature of responses from certain interviewees on production side, particularly at top management level, warranted several journeys to the three cities, even beyond the allotted time.

By design, the study had to be quite laborious. This has been a great challenge for a researcher to take on, single-handedly.

About 150 x 90 minute audio tapes were required. This only sufficed as a result of prudent use. A reliable tape recording device (Marantz, p.230) and two sturdy omni-directional microphones had to be acquired for the study. These particular devices were chosen for the reliability and

fidelity of reproduction, the ability sound from different sources into separate channels. This proved to be very useful during the analysis.

An audio-tape player with similar facilities was required for playback for transcribing and analysis.

In addition, to the cost of these was the cost of transportation and other incidental expenses - the goodwill account.

Some of the viewing subjects had demanded payment for their participation in the exercise. This demand was not entertained. The point of the study, being an academic pursuit and not a government sponsored project as the women assumed, was made very clear. However, in the course of observation there were goodwill gestures which are expected culturally (like confectionaries for the children). Often this was reciprocal to the subjects' hospitality. These were no more than would be expected in a normal social relationship. They were not bribes, but they helped develop a rapport between the subjects and the researcher.

PART I

ENCODING AND SCHEDULING PRACTICES

THE STATE OF THE TELEVISION INDUSTRY IN NIGERIA

The design of the study necessitated an examination into the structure of the television stations with a view to identifying the forces that determine the disseminated programmes. To this end, seven of the eight stations, serving the focus area were examined. In addition, the central operations of the national network were also examined especially as they affected the stations; such operations had more direct influence on those stations which belonged to the network.

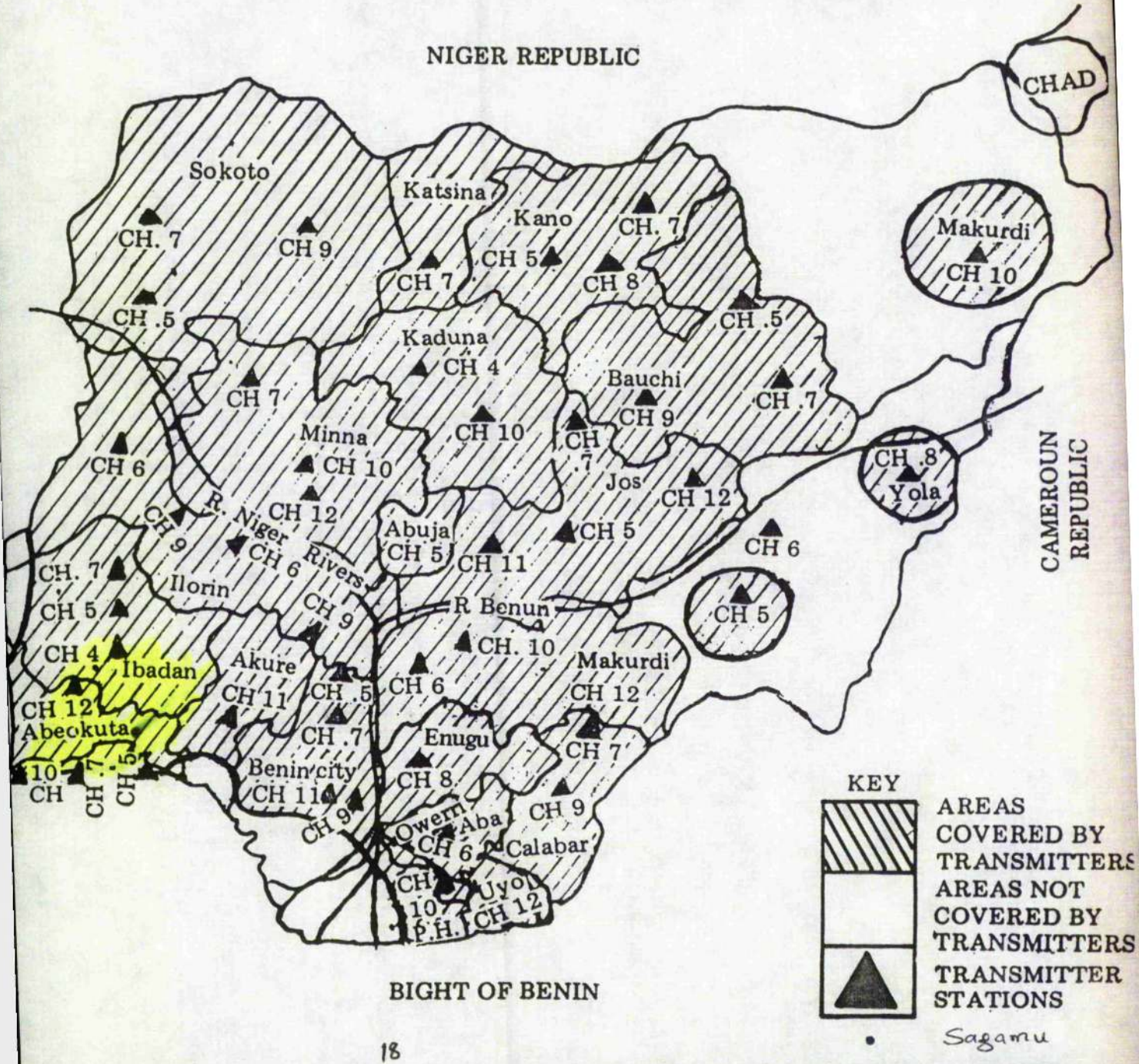
The aim of the examination was to map out the structural organisation of the industry and identify the relationships which shape the programming of the stations. In essence, the study was interested in the guiding philosophy, the objectives, policies and the realities of the implementation of such. This was to facilitate an understanding of the programming options available to the audience.

The findings reported herein, synthesizes information from interviews, observations and documented history of the station. While some of the interviews were scheduled, some were informal conversation stemming from unsolicited; impromptu; unguarded comments from station officials. These proved a useful check, on the scheduled interviews. Very often, they were pointers, to the realities, which the official position would have covered up. In some other cases, such information *confirmed* observations; indicating the 'normalcy' of an observed incident. Most importantly, the impromptu remarks, helped to make sense of the stunted truths from some tight-lipped, highly placed officials.

It is necessary to explain why the study focus area is served by eight stations, as such a situation is an exception, rather than a rule in

COVERAGE AREA: NTA has about fifty-one (51) transmitters spread all over Twentyone States of the Federation and the Federal Capital Territory of Ab. By this network of transmitters, the Authority is able to cover about 90% of population (104 million — 1989 projection) and about 75% of the land (925,000 sq km).

MAP OF NIGERIA SHOWING N.T.A.TX STATIONS AND PRIMARY AND SECONDARY COVERAGE AREAS.



Nigeria. Most places lack such a pluralistic service, the peculiarity of the situation, contributed in making the area attractive for the purpose of the study.

The settlement pattern in the south western areas of Nigeria is such that there is close clustering of settlements. The result of this is that a high population density exists on relatively small area of land. This area constituted one of the three regions in the original concept of Nigeria. Even when states were created for the first time in the Republic of Nigeria, the area remained largely unaffected. The region merely became a state, losing only areas that were on the fringe (mid-west).

It had established and was served then by its own station. It is on record that this station was the first regional attempt at broadcasting and it was the first attempt at TV broadcasting in Africa. To ensure effective coverage transmitters were strategically located, some to boost, and some to extend the span that was covered. This meant that the infrastructure and the audience was already in place when the Federal government decided to establish its national TV network, taking over the regional establishments.

With the creation of more states, there were three states carved out of the west. The TV station, along with other assets, was shared. Staff, as with transmitters and other technical facilities, were inherited by the new states. The choice was largely parochial and mercenary - staff went to areas which held the best promise for them. Often that meant their state of origin where they could lay claim to being indigenes 'sons of the soil'. Such a claim encouraged assertiveness, if not power.

What is of relevance here is that the single station had multiplied into three. There was further multiplication of stations with the return to civilian politics. The politicians were determined to have an outlet, a voice under their direct control. Therefore, by 1978 three states created out states of the former region Western Nigeria, blazed the trail in the action, and established their own stations. Each of these states thus had two stations created with the proclaimed aim of serving its interests.

The nature of broadcasting is such that its dissemination cannot be curtailed by geographical borders or to some extent intentions. This is why, with the states existing in close proximity of each other, the signals originating from and meant for one, could not be exclusive of the others.

Certain locations, like the focus area, are thus privileged, technically to receive signals from more stations.

Meanwhile, the variable nature of the technology has meant that other factors hinder the reception of the receivable signals. The terrain of the location, the quality of the receiver set, the effectiveness of the aerial, the positioning of the TV set can all hinder clear reception.

These are some of the the other factors beyond the station's control that affect the clarity of reception. But the stations sometimes contribute to the predicament. Usually it is a result of the state of their technology.

What this means is that it is possible to have homes within the same locality, even sets within the same home/building which are excluded from the receivable TV channels. This was the situation in which the study was conducted.

Social Context of Television in Nigeria

The contentions over the results of the various attempt at a national census notwithstanding, Nigeria is acknowledged as a most populous and most diverse nation. The population of Nigeria has been estimated at being over 100 million people.

It was estimated that there were about five million TV sets in Nigeria around 1983/4 with more than six people to a set. For this an annual growth rate of 9.10 per cent had also been estimated (RBNL Survey 1983/4 quoted in NTA National Rate Card effective 1.7.90). The estimate is that which the NTA still used in for its advertisers at the time of the study.

There are no less than 250 ethnic groups and languages in Nigeria. Of these, three are recognised as being major or dominant. This is based on their size and spread of their influence. Within each of these, there are such radical variations of dialect which make the languages less homogeneous. At times, it is possible to have such variations of dialect which are incomprehensible to others who normally understand the language.

Prior to colonisation, the area now known as Nigeria was made up of various nation states, some of these in expanding had annexed the territories of others. Hence at the time of colonisation and

subsequently independence, there were three dominant ethnic groups. Till date, the ghosts of the historical pride of those hitherto independent nation states, are still haunting the nation. The dominance of certain ethnic groups, and their language remains a grim reminder of the pre-colonial subjugations. Many-a-group want to break away from this. They therefore prefer to use their own languages, or even English, rather than use the language of the domineering group.

At the inception of the study, the number of states in Nigeria had just risen from 19 to 21. Presently the number of existing states has risen to 30 and there are yet many unsatisfied demands. No group wants to be treated as minority, nor do they want to be marginalised or dominated; each one wants to assert itself.

This is the backdrop against which any efforts to satisfy any general interest must be examined. In fact, the distrust and jealousy is such that English, being neutral, is still the acceptable official language. None of the numerous languages was to be adopted as that was to be perceived as an acknowledgement of the supremacy of that group. Therefore, even in the House of Assembly during the second republic, English and the three acknowledged major languages - Hausa, Ibo and Yoruba, were recognised languages of communication.

One of the implications of this situation is that for long the majority of the populace, who are largely illiterate, at least in English, are left out of public discussions (which were necessarily conducted in English).

	NTA Ibadan	NTA Abeokuta	NTA Chan. 10	NTA Chan. 7	OGTV	LTV/LWT	BCOS
News	935	1025	685	585	1105	1050	1030
Drama	450	630	525	420	630	545	295
Education	150	180	150	90	60	0	90
Children	270	380	570	300	165	210	125
Religious	115	60	110	60	480	510	360
Health	0	60	0	0	30	90	0
Metaphysics	0		30	0	210	210	0
Youth	60		60	60	30	0	0
Women	30	30	30	60	60	60	60
Talk	390	315	225	390	470	105	290
Entertainment	90	90	190	90	0	60	85
Enlightenment	0	150	30	0	60	185	30
Government	180	150	120	180	0	60	85
Musical	180	105	320	90	60	320	230
Movies	120	0	165	0	630	180	870
Magazine	0	0	0	0	90	105	180
Cookery	30	0	30	30	0	30	30
Documentary	60	60	150	60	0	0	60
Sports	325	210	270	300	240	210	345
Promos	60	60	0	105	265	0	215
Unclassified	90	0	0	0	0	30	30
classification # 2							
1	775	565	1390	630	1190	1395	1055
2	945	730	90	825	1135	990	1055
3	0	30	0	105	45	60	0
4	90	240	30	75	535	255	760
5	360	490	830	330	1395	975	1225
N	1425	1440	1425	1155	285	285	315
Cumulative	3595	3495	3765	3120	4585	3960	4410

Table 1

As Ugboajah (1980) noted:

'in trying to bridge the gap in knowledge through the communication of development issues, Nigerian mass media have resorted to an increasing use of local languages'

By their very nature; the fact that they transcend barriers of illiteracy as well as physical space; difficult terrains and hardly motorable roads leading to the hinterland, the broadcast media were found better suited to the task of developmental communication. The articulation of the legislation which established the various stations (NTA for instance) clearly saddles them with the responsibility for giving adequate expression to the different parts, and integrating the various parts of the whole.

Already, there-in lies a challenge to television service that is bound to shape and determine its output. Television was to attempt to tackle a problem which had since defined solution; it was, necessarily to impose compromises which had not been willingly acceptable in politics into its organisation and programming.

This problem becomes glaring and compounded as the history of television in Nigeria is traced.

Brief History of Television in Nigeria

Television service was first introduced into Nigeria in 1959 by the regional government in control of Western Nigeria. Irrespective of the noble and laudable reasons which were given, it is unquestioned common knowledge that there were underlying intentions which were political and self serving. Having been snubbed and denied access at the federal controlled radio station, the leader of opposition, who himself

was from the west, and whose party was then in control at the Western region, was galvanised/encouraged to establish a station on which his party would have absolute control. These regions had certain degrees of political autonomy at the time.

The station, Western Nigeria Television Service (WNTS) was established in 1959. It was the first in Black Africa, second only to that in Cairo. Nigeria was thus early in its acquisition of the novel technology in the field of communication, as television had only been in the market for about 20 years prior to this. BBC television service had been introduced in 1936, whilst 1948 is considered by many to be television's first year as a major mass medium in the U.S.A. It was indeed in the fifties, though, that television became a mass consumed rather than 'a luxury item' for few.

Western Nigeria blazed the trail; the other regions were not to be left out. Within three years, each region had its autonomous stations. Eastern Nigeria Television Service (ENTS) was established in 1960. The station which served Northern Nigeria, known as Radio-Kaduna Television, was established in 1962 as an arm of its radio broadcasting company - Broadcasting Company of Northern Nigeria - BCNN.

The monopoly of the federal radio had been effectively broken. Each of the above stations set out to serve the regional interests. This was their paramount interest although they also claimed to serve the wider national interest. Even if this was so, the differing visions which each had for the new entity - Nigeria must have affected the interpretation of public interest. The role that was played in the circumstances that led to the civil war and even the conduct during the war illustrate this

point. The involvement, intensity and direction of the war campaign differed among the regions.

The federal government was the last to establish its own television station. Hitherto the audience in the federal capital - Lagos - was served by WNTV. Lagos was situated in close proximity to the west. The need to establish a federal television station, to complement the regional services, and the federal radio broadcasting service was predicated on the perceived specialised needs of the Lagos audience; Lagos being the commercial nerve centre and the seat of federal government.

The sincerity of this claim cannot be vouched for, even when it was used again in later years. This time, the circumstances made it more glaring that control of the airwaves was perceived as power, and that was really the driving motivation; greater than any audience interest.

Early Days

The Lagos station - NBC TV had the least reach in coverage. Each of the other stations by design, was meant to serve much wider areas. It appears that WNTV had the widest coverage. The land mass occupied by the Northern region was a hindrance in achieving the sort of penetration that WNTV had with the TV service. Both stations had strong and far-reaching radio services.

Another point which contributed to that was the level of development at the time. The urban population was not as dense at the time: ancillary services for television reception were not widely in place; there was not as yet an appreciation of the medium nor was there the surplus

wealth to be expended on sets. Radio was then the fashion; the desire of many. It was thus not imminent then to expand the service beyond the strategic urban centres, until those problems were tackled.

The solution was to establish communal television viewing centres in the rural areas, which would then justify the expansion of the service to cover such areas.

Of the three regional stations, the West had the enviable privileged position; of being first; of serving those at the helm of affairs, as well as the peculiar Lagos audience. All these it did, along with serving its rural audience. The privilege was to be seen in both political and economic terms - economic in the sense that advertising revenue was attracted from Lagos; political in that it served the influential elites. For some of the Western audience, they had the privilege of a plural service from very early on in their history of TV reception. They were served by both WNTV and NBC TV, and so they had a choice.

The same cannot be said of most other parts of the country who, even though their region/states had TV stations, were too remote to be served by them. In some cases, the remoteness was not just physical, it was a matter also of distance in cultural orientation, as in the case of the ethnic minorities who felt marginalised by the mainstream politics.

Little wonder then, that the first additional stations to be established following the initial creation of states (the onset of the 12 state structure) were by the two 'minority' states - Midwest Television (MTV) and Benue-Plateau Television (BPTV). The stations were established in

1973 and 1974 respectively. BPTV was the first colour television station in Nigeria. What is most striking here is the urgency with which the establishment of television stations in Nigeria was treated by the young states. It can thus be deduced that it was a matter that was high on the political agenda.

There were other endeavours towards establishing TV stations. The new states carved out of the former Northern Region, for example, which, because of their proximity from Kaduna, the former regional centre, had not hitherto benefited from the TV service had made moves to establish their own state stations.

Kano and Kwara state, for instance, had ordered their equipment and had virtually all but set up their stations when events overtook them.

Propagation of Service

It is not surprising that television broadcasting has grown tremendously. Two primary factors can be identified as accounting for this and both have roots in the political direction of the country.

The establishment of the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) in 1976 must be identified as a catalyst for growth. The NTA was established by a federal government decree in May 1977 but the decree took effect from April 1976.

In the first instance, NTA took over the 10 existing television stations under the umbrella of the national authority. Each of those stations were no longer autonomous. The states had lost control of their outlets. Those states which had not had stations hitherto, had stations

established for them. There was to be a television station in each of the 19 state capitals. All the stations were to assume a common identity - only distinguished by their locations.

Thus, NBC TV became NTV-Lagos, RK TV became NTV-Kaduna, WNTV became NTV - Ibadan and so on.

The rationale which shaped the idea for the national television authority was the political direction that the nation chose to pursue. A federalism, like that which Nigeria chose to operate required (more) strength at the centre and an integration of the (weaker) fringes. This meant the states had to be dispossessed of the power which they had built up in the unstable years of national infancy. With the civil war behind, the government had the task of consolidation and nation building ahead.

All of these were translated into directives which became the policy for the NTA. Indeed, they eventually determined the objectives, and the day-to-day operations of the NTA.

The other way in which the establishment of the NTA affected growth of the television industry is less direct but no less pertinent. It was not immediately apparent and in fact did not manifest itself until a few years after the inception of the authority, when the military took their leave of government and handed over power to the civilians.

The NTA, with its centralised powers had no real problems with clash of interest, or of wills during the military regime in which it was established. The military had a unitary political structure which left

no room for rivalry. There was no urgent need felt in the states to voice views that were opposing those from the centre. At best then rivalry was based on the projection of their image, and their ability to stake a claim to a share of the 'national cake'.

This was no longer to be the case with the return to civilian politics in 1979. History repeated itself as the parties other than that in power at the centre (the federal level), felt their interests were not being properly served by the federally-controlled NTA. The other politicians perceived a dire need for outlets for their own views. It was more or less a repetition of the trend that had led to the introduction of this medium in 1959 and the early sixties.

After protracted legal disputes, the constitutional provision for the establishment of TV stations was interpreted in such a way that permitted the states to set up their own stations. The (now divided) Western states now had legal constitutional backing for their stations. Each of the four states which had been carved out of the former Western state established a television station - Lagos Television, Ogun State Television, Television Service of Oyo State and, later, Ondo State Radio-Vision Corporation.

The stations were established amidst a lot of rancour and bitterness. The politics which characterised the first republic and fuelled the establishment and running of the early stations was still in existence. The awareness of the television stations as an important tool of governance had become so prevalent that no government attempted to function without it. As Mytton notes (1983, p.117)

'Just as the press gave African nationalism its primary means of dissemination, so today along with radio and television it gives politicians their prime means of reaching national audiences and of attempting to secure a national following.'

It must be noted that as a matter of policy each of the states also had an NTA station, ensuring the presence of the federal government is not slack.

Lagos: The Test Ground

Lagos had a 'peculiar' situation. It was the battle-ground for the legal tussle. The NTA, in opposition to the attempts of the state government's efforts, had established rather hurriedly a station to challenge the LTV. In fact, the station was more or less an after thought, as the operation had begun with transmission of signals on the same frequency as LTV, to block out its messages.

The legal decision approved the establishment of LTV. Both stations had come to stay, but LTV was relocated to Channel 8, whilst NTA-2 retained the disputed Channel 5. The official rationale for NTA-2 was a repetition of that which had been given at the inception of NBC TV now NTA Lagos on Channel 10. Channel 5 was to serve the peculiar cosmopolitan interests in Lagos, seeing as it was a commercial centre, and also host-town for the foreign missions, as well as the widely travelled Nigerians. To date NTA-2 is the only station conceived as a station predominantly for transmission. It shares the premises of the Channel 10. Its programmes are basically foreign in orientation.

The Reach Out Station: NTA 2, Channel 5

NTA-2 Channel 5 is the third Lagos oriented (and based) NTA station. It is the most commercial of all the NTA stations. While other stations are

expected to programme on a ratio of 60 per cent local productions:40 per cent foreign, NTA-2 is allowed to do the reverse. The heavy emphasis on foreign programmes is due to the anticipation of audience wants. This particular station has always had an entertainment orientation with programming being heavily in favour of sit-coms, musical videos, melodramas and feature films. It is noted for the American programmes.

What is not mentioned in the above is how such programming was arrived at. What officially is not admitted but is the acknowledged truth is that the station's existence had been an accident which may not have occurred had there not been a battle for supremacy on the airwaves. It has since been shaped by other events. The economic dilemma which had forced a rethinking of broadcasting orientation spurred the commercial experiment at which NTA-2 has been most successful of all. The mistake had come to stay.

For the Masses - NTA 7

The other Lagos based NTA station which was referred to can (also) be described as a better planned after-thought. In the event that LTV had come to stay and was reaching out to the indigenous Lagos state audience (along with the elites and foreigners) the NTA found that it lacked a station to serve that category of people. NTA Ikeja was thus established on Channel 7 to serve the indigenous audience of Lagos state. It was the equivalent of the other production centres in the states which had earlier not been missed, because Lagos was the dual capital of the nation and the state. Later, Ikeja a suburb was made the seat of the state government to make a distinction from Lagos as federal capital, and also create room for growth in rural parts of Lagos state. The establishment of Channel 7 was thus easily justifiable. Both NTA-2

(Channel 5), and NTA Ikeja on Channel 7 were thus set to compete with LTV in terms of its programming strategies.

The Station for the Nation

By this time NTA - Channel 10, the first of the Lagos channels was playing host to the network transmission. Its slogan reflects this as it glories in being 'The station for the nation'. Besides providing office and studio space in its premises for the operations of the headquarters, it beamed the network programmes, and it for a while was considered the federal station. It was thus not supposed to be identified with any one area, but to reflect federal character. This is changing in the wake of partial commercialisation of the NTA and the need to be profitable.

In all, Lagos alone ended up with four stations. As mentioned earlier, these signals though meant for the Lagos audience primarily could not be contained within Lagos. The areas adjoining Lagos were thus to 'enjoy' the results of the political antics, which for the people was translated into 'pluralism of stations'.

The Emergent Pattern

The other primary factor that accounted for the growth of the television industry is the creation of states. As highlighted in the preceeding discussion, the former Western state had been carved out into four states. In fact the original Western region, served by WNTV, had been carved into five states each with its own state, and federal stations. Since the study began the political structure of Nigeria had assumed a 30 state structure. It had begun in 1960 with three regions and a federal capital territory. In 1972 it assumed a 12 state structure. 1976 witnessed the 19 state structure. Two additional states were carved out

of this in 1988 and presently there are 30 states.

The NTA by its policy is duty bound to establish stations in the states. If each state government (following the historical trend) establishes a station, then the number of stations will be on the increase once again.

In the meantime, there are serious clamourings for private television. No firm decision has yet been taken. The issue is still a political bait. Like a donkey being teased with a carrot, the nation is being kept hopeful, without any definite government opinion being expressed.

The advantage of all of these is the greater potential of reaching the vast and largely rural population. The changing socio-economic climate will, in fact, confirm the need for this trend in the development of the television industry.

The oil boom and the upward review of workers salaries known as the Udoji awards in 1972 accounts for a distribution of surplus wealth. Since then there have been various concerted efforts geared at bringing development to the rural areas as well as the urban. As a result of all these, the living pattern, if not standard of the Nigerian populace, has been modified since 1959 when television was introduced. The availability of cheap receiver sets, the status conferred with the ownership of television sets, the increased enlightenment amongst the people as a result of the free education programme, all meant that the audience for the increasing numbers of television stations was available.

As we have already noted, by 1983/4 a conservative estimate of 5 million

sets with six people to each one was recorded by the NTA.

With so many stations situated closer to the audience, one would expect that the audience would have felt the impact both in terms of access to airwaves and relevance of programming. In fact, going by the responsibility with which the stations were charged, that is, - to be a vent for local needs, one would expect the audience to be well served. But this is not really the case. The programming opportunities which the organisation structure has (albeit accidentally) allowed, has not been tapped.

The Organisational Structure of Television in Nigeria

Nigeria boasts of Africa's largest television network, with 24 production centres and 56 operational transmitters by January 1991. The NTA broadcasts about 85,000 hours of programmes annually. In addition to this there are 14 state owned stations.

The original concept of the NTA network was to have the various stations/production centres, feeding into a nationally receivable channel. The plan that evolved eventually was mainly due to technological limitations. This has stations at base catering for local needs within the areas of operation, and occasionally they can produce for national consumption. The network programmes are originated from the headquarters. Presently the authority is made up of six directorates which centrally manage the affairs of the network and to some extent the affairs of the production centres

NTA Central Management Structure

At the helm of affairs is the Director General, who is appointed

politically. He is a member of the governing board, when it exists. The Board is a politically constituted committee which links the station to the government. Although the authority is supposed to be supervised by the Ministry of Information, there is little in terms of real interaction that exists. The following is the account by a director at the Federal Ministry of Information, of such a relationship which exists between his Ministry and the authority.

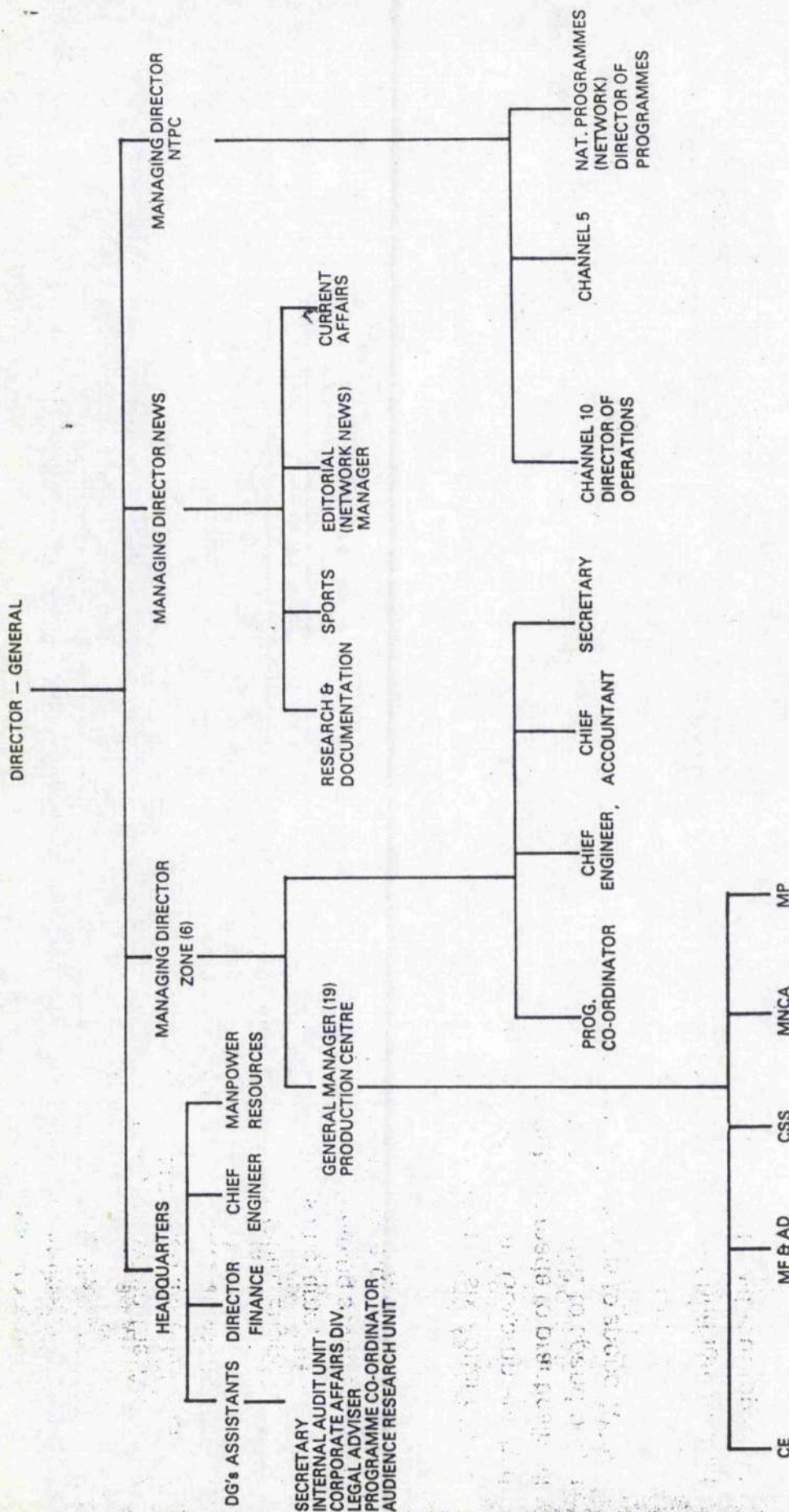
'The supervisory role of the Ministry is one of acting as an intermediary between the various parastatals and government. If the authority wants anything from government, they puts requests to the Minister who in turn presents them to the government at the Council of Ministers. The request is put in form of a memorandum to the Presidency, through the council and the response is passed back through the same channels to the Ministry. Finally allocations which are made by government - the Ministry of Budget and Planning - are passed through the Minister - the Ministry.

Other functions of the Ministry involves authorisation for overseas travel. Staff who must travel abroad to undertake assignments, sports, attend professional meetings, training courses, seminars, and workshops must obtain written approval, through the authority from the Honourable Minister.'

In the absence of a board of governors, the Ministry is expected to 'oversee' the running of the station - setting policy, granting approvals as the board would have done. Indeed, the Ministry is the final clearing house as certain matters, even with an operational board, still have to be approved by it. Contracts worth more than 2 million naira must be referred to the Ministry, even by the board. The Ministry also supervises capital projects to ensure that standards are met.

The existence of the board thus should be a relief to the Ministry. It also, especially as regards policy, ensures that there is a wide representation of public interests. Members of the board are selected to represent various interests in society. Invariably there is an attempt

STRUCTURE OF NTA (FORMER CENTRAL MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE)



NTPC = National Television Production Centre

CE = Chief Engineer

MF & AD = Manager Finance & Administration

CSS =

MNCA = Manager News and Current Affairs

MP = Manager Programmes

to reflect federal character and minority interests, including women's interests and this is specified.

Besides the protocol and bureaucratic involvement, the Ministry, even in the absence of a board, is often by-passed by the government. Government officials depending on the authority/power they wield tend to relate with the station on informal basis. All that is required in a lot of cases is a phone call. Failure to comply has been known to cost even director-level staff their positions.

The link between the stations, in this case the authority, tends to be considered the umbilical cord between the organisation and its proprietor - its benefactor. The Director General is the person who walks the tightrope even when there is a board, representing the professional interests of the organisation and executing the sometimes self-serving interests of 'government' and individuals who are close to the corridors of power.

Administrative Services

There is a deputy, who assists the Director General in supervising those departments which fall directly under the Director General's office - those that are not part of any of the six directorates. These include the office of the secretary of the board, the legal adviser, the internal audit department, corporate services and public affairs, the Marketing and Audience Research department. In effect the DG's office is responsible for enforcing/overseeing the policy and legal obligations, accountability on finances, image making and public relations and it is concerned with the assessment of projects and for performance.

There is a separate directorate, the Corporate Affairs Directorate, which is responsible for administration. The director is responsible for staff recruitment, discipline and staff welfare. It ensures that corporate policy and guidelines are properly interpreted and implemented. On a day-to-day basis, the directorate is responsible for the hiring and firing of all staff of the authority, from a certain level. This includes appointments and promotions, even at the production centres. The implications of this will be discussed later.

The Finance Directorate is responsible for 'corporate finance management'. Salaries and wages top the list of the concerns for this directorate. In fact this is a problem more glaring at the production centre level. Other areas of operation listed here cover the monetary transactions, both internal and foreign exchange, purchases and credit control, sales and debtor controls. There is also the management information and accounting system to be covered. The directorate plans towards and ensures accountability and judicious use of the available resources. Again, how this affects the output is later illustrated in a production and administrative context.

Commercial Directorate

The Commercial Directorate is the one which has acquired an elevated status in operations in the wake of the partial commercialisation of television service. This was the response to the dwindling finances from the government. No longer is it merely to sell air-time to interested advertisers, there is now an aggressive wooing of even otherwise disinterested advertisers. This has meant that the advertisers demand far more say in the value they get for money, especially when rates have been increased. The implication of this is that the Commercial

Directorate now has an input into the operations of both the News and Programmes Directorate - the two who are actually responsible for the programming. This implication is reflected in the arrangement whereby commercial officers, who are responsible in the final analysis to their own Director, are located in the various producing arms - programmes, news directorate and each of the production centres.

Besides, the directorate organises fairs, exhibitions, competitions, and other such activities which both generate funds and programming opportunities. It is responsible for buying and selling of rights to international events.

That all of its activities (at the headquarters) are done for the only TV network in the country is considered to be an advantage. The promise of a larger audience had been its selling point but this promise has been challenged. Competitors, by way of the state owned stations have had to work harder and be more innovative. The NTA network, who because it was backed by the federal financial might, and so took longer in feeling the pinch, seems to have taken a cue from the desperate attempts of the state stations, including sometimes some of its own production centres. For example, at the onset of commercial news coverage, (described later on) the NTA was known to have condemned the practice, but now it even has commercial officers resident in the news directorates, ensuring that those stories which qualify as having commercial orientation are not covered for free, but that the levied rates are paid. In fact it was partly due to the recognition of the revenue potentials that the duration of the network news was extended from 30 to 45 minutes.

As part of its efforts to recognise opportunities for revenue, the directorate has been known to commission research into the organisation areas of performance. Needless to say, such commercially motivated research, when used as guide in policy making, have had impact on the output of the authority. The directorate is made up of four divisions, network programmes, news, enterprises and sales co-ordination.

Engineering

The Engineering Directorate is headed by a director who is assisted by a deputy. The Directorate is responsible for the formulation of corporate engineering policy. To ensure effective execution of its services, the field offices have been established in four strategic locations around the country. These are headed by chief engineers. Each production centre has its own engineering department headed by a Manager. (Re TV Organisational Structure Chart) #65a)

The Directorate is responsible for planning, designing, research development, project initiation, implementation and operation, and it is responsible for training technical staff. This means it is responsible for all the transmitters, maintenance and procurement when necessary of spare parts and equipment. Its activities are geared towards ensuring the acceptable technical quality of the stations. It is also responsible for maintaining the studios, the vehicles and premises of the Directorate (and its stations).

Because the technology of television has been imported, the Directorate's purchases tend to be a large drain. This has become a more dire problem in the light of the nation's dwindling foreign reserves. It is important to appreciate just how the technological dependence becomes

a problem for the daily operations of the stations, who always complain of being saddled with obsolete technology.

Q: Is it really necessary that we must have the latest in technology?

A: Well not really necessary to have the latest in the market but we must have the ones that are still being produced, ones that we will have spare parts for.

Q: So it's a matter of spare parts?

A: Yes! It's a matter of spare parts because the average life span of most equipment is about 10 years. When it has lasted about 10 years, then the manufacturer will say "okay it is under", it has become a standard practice that they will keep on producing that spare part of the next 10 years [sic]. So they are not committed to any consumer to produce the spare part for them. If you have to go back for them, to procure the spare part, you have to pay extra for it. It's got to be custom made for you. It's got to be made specially for you and you've got to pay more for it. So that is why we must really keep up to date.

It is, thus, an expensive venture, whether the nation keeps abreast of technology or opts for the soon discontinued models. There is, therefore, a greater need to look inward. Local ingenuity is thus supposed to be desirable. In reality, however, this is not always so. There is no adequate financial encouragement for such yet, either from government or the private sector.

Although the engineering field in broadcasting has had the privilege of producing a Director General of the authority there is yet a lot of work to be done on its image. Because it is basically a technical service unit, the glitz and glamour that accompany the jobs of the other members of the crew is often lacking for the engineers and technical staff. Whilst they are slaving to ensure that the production is well received by the audience, their other colleagues are basking in the glow of public recognition.

Although this reasoning may appear childish and impertinent, it is a serious point regarding the engineers self-recognition and job satisfaction. That which is lacking is the compensation for the frustrations which abound on the job. The engineering service is often blamed for poor performance. The inadequacy of technical facilities albeit due to insufficiency of funds is often times a fact, though sometimes overplayed. The charge is, however, a reflection of the challenge that those responsible have to face. The engineering services though largely obscure are very strategic in the workings of the TV industry.

The following account is an engineer's description of his department. Although he belongs to a state owned station, the account illustrates the general situation.

'Let me tell you in a nutshell. The commercial man will be fighting because people are complaining that they are not receiving us. He knows his target. Now somebody in news, a newsman will be fighting you for a vehicle - that you didn't give him a vehicle at a particular time. Now somebody in programmes will say "You have given me a bad camera. I've gone to location for about three days, come and see the outcome of my production." It's like a mad house, everybody now is at the throat of engineering.'

There now appears to be an increasing sensitivity to the fact that engineering holds the frame within which other departments must fit, but nonetheless, the Directorate exemplifies the state of engineering in the Nigerian television industry - it is fraught with problems.

Problems of TV Engineering

There is an inadequacy of trained technical manpower. Although there are several institutions and colleges which offer electronic or allied engineering training, graduates of such still need the training on the

job to adapt them to the peculiarities of the television industry. This, in itself, is not actually a problem. The NTA staff college offers programmes that could supplement the in-house efforts, although the limited spaces compared to the needs poses a problem. There is also the question of releasing useful staff for external training. The onus, therefore, rests on the in-house training, to suffice. Traditions and nuances are thus more easily perpetuated rather than a situation where ingenuity is drawn out. Though this is a problem, it is still true of other industries and not peculiar to TV. What however is the problem is the fact that TV engineering does not have enough incentives attached to it to make it attractive to the large corp of engineers which is produced in the country. Thus, apart from the constraints of funding, availability of trained personnel is identified as one of the greatest constraints of this Directorate.

With their drive and ambition young engineers who start out their careers in the TV industry are not attracted to stay on. One such engineer reminiscing on his experience described some of the provocations militating against his performance and interest in the field of television. He summed it up thus.

'They operate like Ministry, they operate the same salary, you know, scale. You can't really keep professionals with that poor salary.'

Q: Is that why you left?

A: That wasn't the reason why I left but one of it.' (laughter)

He admits that he went in search of greener pastures; more experience more exposure, greater challenge.

'There's a colleague of mine, he's still there. I met him a year ago or so. He said "Ah, I'm still at NTA. oh! but I'm still finding a way out. I want to go out." Although he has risen very well, if he's not a chief engineer now he'll be a

deputy chief engineer but he's still looking forward to leaving because he was not getting that challenge too. He said "well I just want to see whether I complete 10 years then I will go".

The job in itself presents frustration to those who are in there. Even when there is money (and there is never enough) to procure necessary equipment and spare parts, the bureaucracy and the delays constitute a hindrance in planned maintenance.

Already it has been mentioned that procurements of certain value require clearance from the Ministry. There is also the frustration of chasing manufacturers for discontinued models which the Nigerian stations are saddled with. It is said that the stations buy other older models because it is what they can afford. Added to the bureaucracy is the waiting period for shipment and clearance of the haulage.

What is often not included in the official story is the human factor - the corruption, greed and insensitivity of certain individuals within the chain. This is a problem that reflects the larger society and is not peculiar to this directorate, but it manifests itself and hampers effective performance - inflated quotations for contracts, procurement of substandard materials which no sooner than they are bought present problems to the user departments.

There are also slothful and ill motivated officials who cash in on the situation. There have been stories of equipments, particularly vehicles which are written off and auctioned to interested officials, when in fact they are still serviceable. Indeed, some are serviced and used by the new owners to the knowledge of all. Such ill motivated officials have been known to frustrate the ingenuity of some others seeing as it

is more profitable for them, to write off than to repair. Such practices are better appreciated from the perspective of the user departments - when a whole Programmes Directorate is left with only two functional vehicles, and all others in its pool are grounded 'for service'. Producers either have to share vehicles or use public transport and thus add to the expenses and logistics of programme production. It is even worse still when News Directorate, meant to produce a 45 minute newscast, is left with only two functional cameras.

The engineers also feel the pinch. In one of the state owned stations, an engineer confessed to having to resort, unilaterally, to reducing the wattage of transmission to save the lives of some of their equipment.

Q. Why don't you stay alive always?

A. It's not economical for us. It's not wise because it's like when you have your hot plate on at a low temperature, you know the element will not glow, you see the glower (sic) the element, the faster it burns out. So the same thing with transmitter.

At times (if) we know we might run into problems. You see we have peak periods ... Peak periods in the sense that when the commercials rush in, they tend to undulate ... You know within you because we have our operational meetings, somebody from the commercials will be say "my sales is low and it could be due to this." The newsman will say "I went for an assignment yesterday. This is what people are saying." But you know that, as an engineer, you may not be able to now own up that "I lowered the wattage" because they might not understand what you are doing. But occasionally I do it. At times I come as low as 20 kilowatt if I know that I don't have a spare part at hand, and I don't want to flog a particular unit, so I just come as low as this. So somebody at Akure, for instance, may not receive OGTV at all for that period. It might be one week.

So before he can come over - because he has an option anyway, he might tune to BCOS or he might tune to OSRC, maybe he enjoys drama on OGTV.

You use your discretion because most of our equipment you order them from abroad and it takes weeks, and then hard currency too.

So unknown to them, I might be laughing at (commercial

officer) for instance because I know I'm trying to save some - he might be thinking of N70,000 income, okay. I will be thinking of saving about N300,000.

Q. So at the end of the day it's economics?

A. Yes, it is. It depends on your handling that equipment to know that.'

This kind of system tends not to retain or attract the calibre of personnel needed in the organisations. Those who remain do so grudgingly and all these tell on the output.

The News Directorate

The News Directorate is responsible for all the news and current affairs programming that are received nationally. Because of the linguistic complexity of the national audience, all its programmes are produced in English. This, in itself, defines the boundaries of those who can benefit from its operations.

This problem is compounded by the restrictions of available service equipment - when there is an (imagined or real) shortage of reliable news gathering equipment, and thus an over-reliance on the verbal report, the TV newscast cannot be what it should be - seen and heard. This is a problem which the Directorate is aware of and it is due in part to the organisational structure. The equipment is the responsibility of another director, who purchases and maintains them - the Engineering Directorate. There are officers from that directorate located in news (as in programmes). Like the resident commercial officers they serve the News Directorate but look after their interests. They are accountable to their own directors. The possible lapse in the arrangement which has been known to happen, is that the serviced (news) directorate is ignorant (albeit for a while) of the position from the

servicing area. Equipment is thus in short supply when ^{it}~~it~~ should not be, for instance because they have not been repaired, or they have been 'forgotten'. In the meantime, those in authority over them assume that they are in operation.

The News Directorate is saddled with other constraints, some of which reflect the upheavals in the network itself as an entity. One of these is the need to arrange and give coverage to the nation - which now is made up of 30 states. The political rivalry, the underlying distrust and mutual insecurity of the various leaders have been constant pressures on the operations of the Directorate. In fact, it was another reason why the newscast was extended. It was found that there were more stories coming from the states which could not be accommodated within the 30 minute slot, yet, if accepting an item from one state meant rejecting some from others, it was becoming increasingly difficult to justify such. Hence an extension of the duration of the programme, that more stories may be accommodated.

The original concept of network which would have reflected in the newscast had it endured was to have feeds from bureaux around the country, which had been zoned. The complications arising from that arrangement had led to the centrally-planned programmes which then used contributions from the individual stations. This also meant that the zonal screening point had been omitted and the wide flow of information had to be dammed at the centre.

The Editorial Board

The Directorate is headed by a Director, assisted by Deputy Director, who is assisted by an Assistant Director. Working with them are managers

NTA Network News Editorial Board

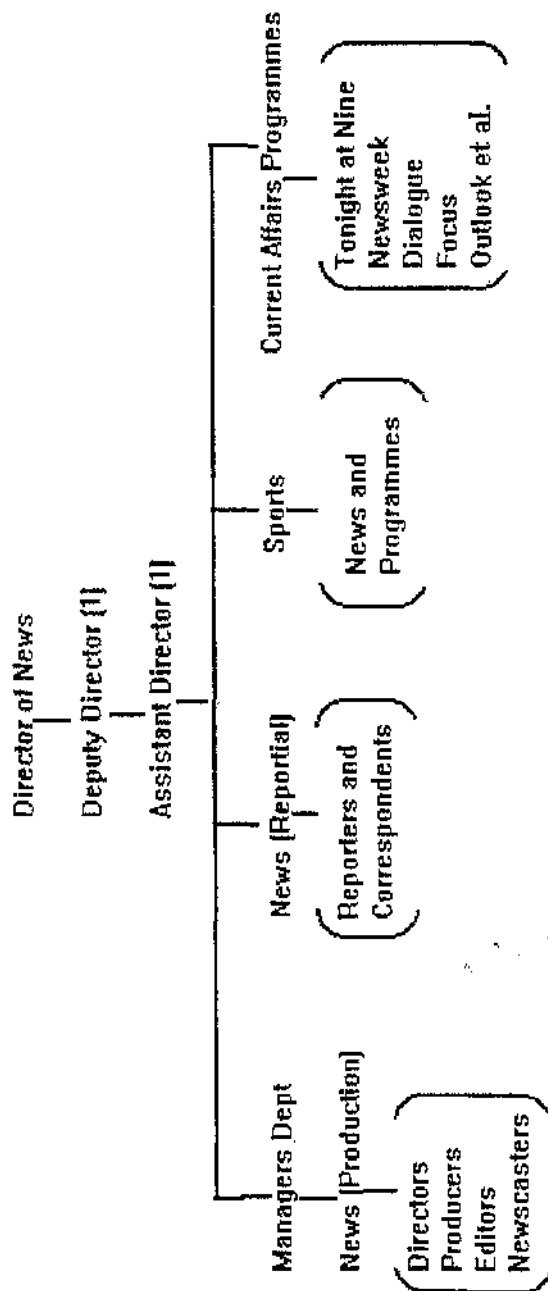


Fig No. 6

and controllers. There are principal officers and others lower down the hierarchy. The directors and managers (occasionally controllers) make up the editorial board. Every programme that is put out by the Directorate has a voice representing it on the board. This includes the producers of the current affairs programmes, (operational) producers of news, the manager reportorial, the manager of sports news, the operation news directors and the administrative policy and supervisory staff from the directorate, i.e. the Director, the Deputy and ADN. This board meets daily except at weekends (Saturday and Sunday) to evaluate the previous day's output, and plan the forthcoming ones. It sometimes discusses in detail the strategy expected for the presentation of certain news items or programmes, although it recognises the individual producer/reporter as the final judge.

Challenges of News Productions

There is no rigid approach to news gathering but the underlying interests which informed the setting up of the organisation are not overlooked. The legal instrument establishing the NTA spells out certain responsibilities which have guided the operation of the Directorate.

The Directorate would like to be seen as tackling/presenting items which interest the audience, by telling them about themselves, their environment, their problems and aspirations. The output of the Directorate is supposed to be geared towards enlarging the viewers' understanding of themselves, and the community in which they live.

It also confirms that it promotes government policy and tries to increase viewer understanding of government policy. Although the charge that it's performance can be equated to that of a public relations

service of the government is denied, the description of its duties confirms this.

According to the Deputy Director of News

'news is not uncritically reported. Critical evaluations of government policy is aired at times. However, there are occasions when there is a clash, conflicting demands of various interest groups. Government as proprietor, is a very powerful interest group, and this must be and is considered. This reality is an acknowledged and acclaimed source of disillusion for young reporters who find it hard to compromise between the purely professional attitude and the above perception of the proprietor.'

Other problems which were identified as constraints to the performance of the Directorate are imposed from social structure within which the organisation has to operate. Lack of telephone services, efficient transport system, reliable electricity supply, efficient record keeping, an inadequate library service are all realities that the newsrooms have to live with.

These obstacles to the progress of the organisation provide an environment for slackness in the operational staff. They are a ready ruse for the slothful, unwilling and ill-motivated staff to hide behind, and the excuse is made more plausible by the much celebrated constraints of funds.

Despite its enviable position as the originator of the regular daily programmes which 'capture' the entire audience, including that of the state-owned stations, inadequacy of funds is still an issue of contention. This is so much that it has resorted to the much loathed commercial news and other 'aggressive' revenue generating drives.

Commercial news refers to those items which are identified as having (commercial) value to the subject - promotional elements which the subject can benefit from. This is irrespective of the benefit that the audience might derive from the knowledge of such information. Such items are, therefore, not carried except the subject pays the reckoned rate.

What this has meant in practice is that such items, because they hold the promise of a contribution to the well-being of the station, and thus the staff, tend to get coverage. This is to the neglect of those items which do not fall within such categories, as broadcast time, unlike newspaper pages, is inelastic. In other words, news is becoming more and more, with such practices, a voice of those who can afford to pay - government agencies, big businesses and rich individuals. This is so, even if what they have to say is not as relevant as what else could be said.

Even when there is money, there are other problems which hamper daily operations of the News Directorate. This is better illustrated later as they are expatiated upon in the discussions of the operations of the other producing directorate.

The News Directorate pays lipservice to the fact that its news programme is meant for everybody - the entire Nigerian populace - people in business; in the rural areas; sports; women; and other special interest groups are meant to be served.

Indeed, all stations are mandated to hook up to the network for the national news at 9.00 p.m. The Directorate recognises that its market is wide and varied and it is of the opinion that they are all served.

The instances of the regular 'Business Report' on the Friday newscast geared towards the business community; the discontinued rural news; the specialised Tonight at Nine for the 'intelligentsia' and the general interest human approach to the news, as featured in the Sunday evening Newsline are cited.

The Directorate aims to inform, to create awareness, as well as stem the tide of undesirable traits. It is supposed to be a general service, non-discriminatory in its appeal. But what obtains in day-to-day practice, is that audience interests, as with news items are juggled and 'balanced' against operational and other interest. This is exemplified by the following excerpt from an interview with a (director level) producer of news.

Q. When you say you try to include something for everybody, does that mean you try to include a news item for the different segment in the audience or do you in your treatment of each item take into consideration the different segments?

A. No you can't do that for each item because it might not relate to everybody. We try to include something for everybody and from everybody. You know proper communication is a two-way, should be a two-way thing so whilst we are carrying information for people in the rural area we also bring things from the rural areas to remind them or let them know what is going on whether it be government level or on the very personal level of some festival in some village that the man in Maiduguri (north) may not know about which is taking place in Owerri (east).

Q. But in terms of priority if you had a choice...?

A. It will be that which is more national, something that affects most people. We take it from the national down like that.

The self-admission does suggest that news is far from being meant for everybody. In fact, this deduction is confirmed in other subtle ways. The selection and treatment of the stories and issues also

indicate/delineate the boundaries of the audience to be served. A heavy reliance on specialists to discuss, explain, predict patterns was observed at the editorial meeting. This practice was not denied but the need for it was explained:

'Because broadcasters are not supposed to hold opinions, they need to find resource persons who can articulate their thoughts. Though acknowledged as a jack of all trades, the broadcaster - by inviting resource persons - accepts that they are more knowledgeable and so better qualified to explain, interpret or predict events.'

These resource persons tend to be publicly recognised persons of stature who can be acceptable. This tends to overshadow the other criteria which the station consider in selecting them; their ability to express themselves (communicate) on television. This is the quest for credibility and clarity. However, in the bid to meet the demands of deadline, and speed up production, the same group of resource persons are used repeatedly.

The limited private sector in the Nigerian economy, the relevance of their experiences to the information of interest; the easy access of certain academics and journalists to such; make these groups a ready pool of resource persons. This makes the news highly predictable. It also gives the news an image of exclusivity.

The Directorate is less inhibited in eliminating certain categories of audiences from its considerations in other news (that is other than the newscasts) and current affairs programmes. It is simply assumed that they cannot understand or contribute meaningfully to the debate. No attempts are made to involve them. There is the unapologetic stance that concerns of politics of governance and economics, (global, regional,

national) which are discussed are matters for the intelligentsia, not the masses.

According to the Deputy Director of National News

'The audience of news in the generic sense is anyone, from policymaker to peasant farmer to local artisan. Yet there are a number of sub audiences within the large audience. The largest and most significant is, of course, the elites, the middle and the high income group ... So, while news is designed for the entire audience the elite and non-elite, current affairs programme is for the more politically inclined section of the population. Those who are interested in knowing about national issues, who tend to be concerned about policies and the effect of policies on the group to which they belong, on them as individuals, on their business interests, if they are business men, on their future within the scheme of things, within the economy if they are members of the labour union or bureaucrats.

So current affairs programmes are designed for that category of audience and they tend to be professionals, businessmen, members of the labour unions, bureaucrats and the like, students and so on.

They are the kind of people we design current affairs programmes for but news is for the generality of the audience who have access to television.'

Research findings are often referred to as justification for such positions that are held. But often the term research is used so loosely that it could also cover a street corner journalistic inquiry, or such efforts which merely confirm hunches. As a result, planning stands the risk of being premised on exaggerations or misleading assumptions which could frustrate the most carefully planned programme decisions.

The Newsroom

The News Directorate is pretty much centred around the newsroom. There is a corps of reporters at headquarters whose job it is to gather news. They used to operate on the basis of specialisation with reporters being attached to specific desk including sports. Although this was officially discontinued at a time, in practice it has remained, even till now. In

addition, there are producers for the currents affairs programmes.

The stations/production centres send input to the newsroom, by way of produced news stories. When deemed necessary a team is sent from the centre to the remote areas to cover an event. Otherwise a large proportion of the news and news-related programmes begin and end within the centre. This also tends to determine boundaries of the interested audience.

The Directorate of Programmes - An Octopus

The Programme Directorate is, no doubt, the most visible of the six Directorates of the network. It is responsible for all the non-news programming activities of the authority. This amounts to about 12.5 hours of network programming weekly. About 41.6 per cent of these programmes are featured at prime time, that is between 8.00 and 9.00 p.m.

The other programmes, though not featured at general prime time, are strategically targeted to reach their intended audience at the most opportune times. There are five 30-minute programmes for children and youth audiences in the 6.30 to 7.00 p.m. strip. There are also the formal teaching programmes; Instructional Television (ITV) stripped across the schedule for NTA stations from 4.30 to 5.00 p.m. on weekdays.

With such responsibilities, it is, almost easily, the Directorate with the widest reaching tentacles. Its structure has witnessed so many changes over the years, that some staff are caught not being sure what exactly is going on.

The Directorate is presently headed by the only female director in the authority. She is supposed to be assisted by two Deputy Directors but at the time of the study, only one had been appointed. She thus had the (added) responsibility of the second deputy.

The Directorate is divided into four departments, each headed by an Assistant Director. These report to the Director through the Deputies (where applicable and possible). Although they are placed higher on administrative hierarchy than the managers supervising staff from the service departments (Chief Engineer, Chief Technical Officer, Manager Commercial, Manager Administration and so on), and although in reality they oversee the work of such managers, the official line of communication makes those accountable to their own Directorates, and then to the Director of Programmes, sometimes through the Deputy - just as the Assistant Directors themselves. Besides being a strain on the Director's schedule, this raises the question of effective control in operations.

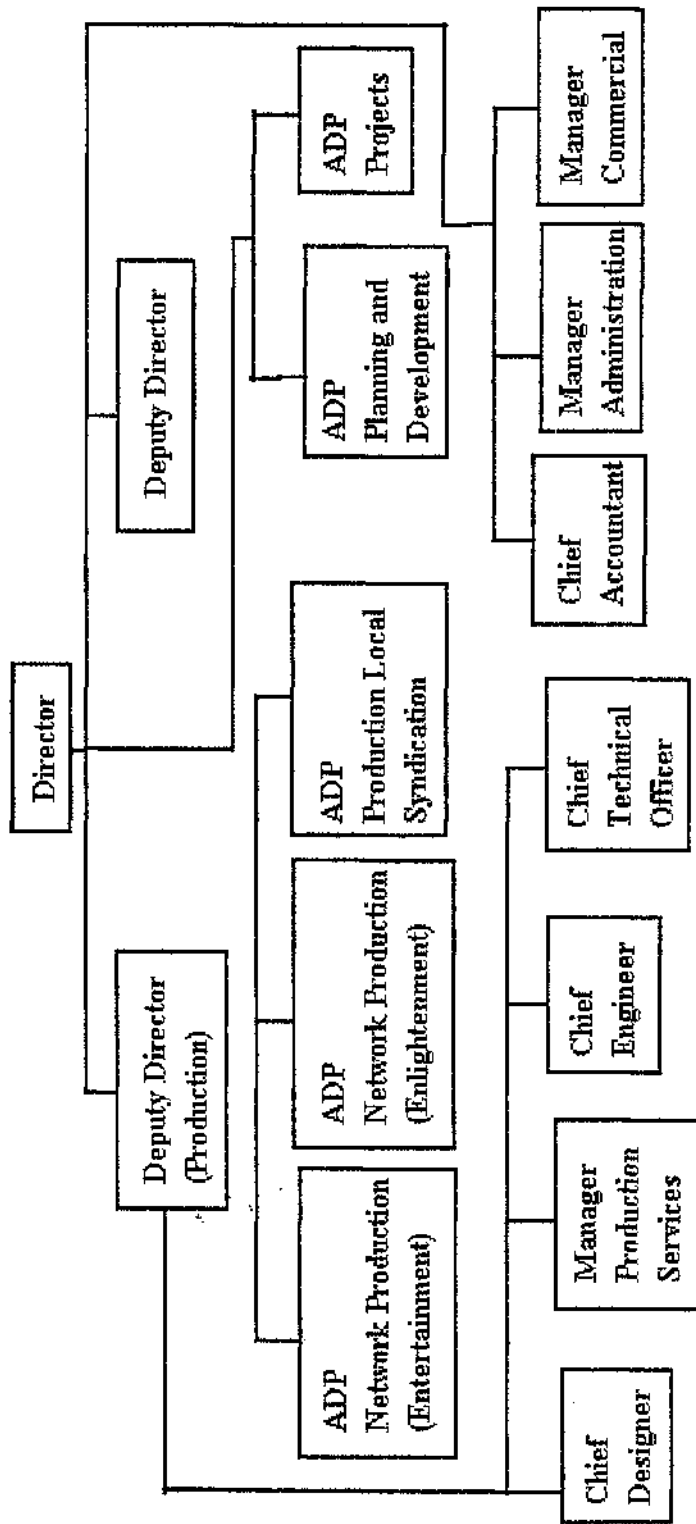
The need for the director to get personally involved in the supervision of such aspects of the operation has been described as an attempt at empire building. This representation expresses the disgruntlement among some staff who feel edged out by their inability to suck up to the powers that be. The validity of that position has not been accepted or queried. What is important, in that opinion, is the recognition of an intrusion of personalities, on the execution of the job.

There are other parties/people which recognise the necessity for such an arrangement.

Fig 7

Organogram

NTA Programmes Directorate



Q. Is that (refusal of directors generally, to delegate authority) because they are in more sensitive offices?

A. Well that is true really but the problem is because we are in a sick country. There are no clear policies. Not that there are no policies, but because these are bent all the time. So you must see everything to know if the policy is to be bent at that time...

We tried to structure the Programmes department in a modern way. You know we tried to develop the Producers Code of Conduct, the VTR man, the directors - each was to have his own code. These things cannot be found easily in this organisation. I doubt that it is on any file anywhere, except if individuals kept personal copies and with this exodus of staff and general lack of contentment where will you find such?

Already the above hints at the mood prevalent in the Directorate - the nonchalance; rivalry; antagonism; back-biting and general lack of contentment that envelope the operations of the Programmes Directorate and indeed the TV industry in general.

The Directorate of Programmes has been described by some as the engine room of the authority, and this is seen in the operations of its four departments.

Planning and Development

The Planning and Development Department is the largest, it is charged with the responsibility of regulating and monitoring policy. This it does through its various divisions - Research, Documentation, Regulation and Planning.

Research

The Research division is supposed to monitor the performance of stations under the umbrella of the authority. This sort of monitoring has ceased for some years now.

'We used to have a proper monitoring outfit at the instance of the DP herself but the efforts were frustrated... We used to have monitoring officers from headquarters go into different towns unannounced, check into hotels and monitor reception as a viewer and not as the station had transmitted.

After a period of about three days the officer will report to the station he had been monitoring, first to confirm that he was there and then come back with the report.

We used to care even about language, about technical quality and also quality of content but we came up against so many obstacles.

We used to have the stations monitor themselves and send in monthly reports. We had standard monitoring paper which I could have given you a sample of but I doubt it can be found anywhere now... They were real broadsheets, properly printed and could not have been missed. They were stacked in half of a Portacabin and they disappeared. The people who moved into the office claim they saw it, but assumed someone moved it into some store. We searched all the stores, there was no such thing there.

Someone must have sold these to a groundnut seller because I can't think of what else was done with them....'

The detailed account above has been presented to illustrate the attitude to this aspect of the department's job. This unit was to see if the NTA codes were being adhered to in the programming output.

'We monitor before and after transmission and the general purpose was to ensure that the programmes keep the NTA objectives.

They look for anything vulgar, indecent exposure, errors in transmission.

Stations are usually queried but nothing really works. There are a million and one excuses. It was like a waste of time.'

It did seem like a waste of time as there was such antagonism generated by the operations. The results of such efforts, even then could not be implemented. It was not surprising that this was so, seeing the focus of the research could easily be mistaken for a witch-hunt. In the light of the many frustrations experienced all round, the extra pressure was not welcome. Little wonder then the system did not endure, especially as

those involved felt victimised at critical times in their career.

'My involvement in the monitoring exercises affected me at promotion time. GMs had taken it personally that I had queried their station so they like (sic) had a chance to pay me back during the promotion interview - as soon as I had been asked what my previous duties were and I included monitoring ...'

This was how unpopular the operation was irrespective of how effective it could have been. The NTA is not isolated in this ailment. There is still a distrust and myopic view of criticisms in the larger social structure, within which the NTA functions. Research findings, which are critical, are not always considered constructive.

The implication of all these is to be viewed against the reason which necessitated the research effort initially - in other words the means for having informed policies.

Acquisition

The Department of Acquisition is another which has attracted some measure of criticism. It is the one responsible for acquiring programmes, both local and foreign, for the authority. All programmes procured by any member of the authority is done through this department. This aspect of the operation is discussed in greater detail later.

The Planning and Development division is also responsible for scheduling network programmes including those from the News Directorate. This is discussed in greater detail elsewhere.

Documentation

The Library is within the division. Apart from storing programmes, the library is also responsible for the copying and distributing of the centrally-acquired programmes. This is no mean feat considering the number of stations within the authority, the number of programmes, the number of episodes which have to be dubbed and distributed. In some cases, because of the ineffective network transmission, programmes - which ought to be received via satellite - have to be dubbed from headquarters and sent physically to the stations. This is especially with regard to the states in the far northern parts of the country. This means that such stations transmit episodes which are a week later than those nearer the centre with better reception of satellite transmission.

The job of the library is made no less easy by the inadequacy of functional equipment; VCRs and editing suites. The library is housed in Portacabins. It is little wonder that the library with its problems cannot offer better services or be more reliable.

There is, also, lacking a book or documentation library that can facilitate the research which producers require for even routine production, yet the division is also responsible for research and scripting for network programmes in particular, although it could and does offer help to other NTA stations.

Programme ideas which are brought to the authority are developed here. Such ideas could be meant for national or local audiences although those for local audiences are usually sent to the states for development. A notable network programme among others had developed in this manner. Behind the Clouds had been an idea offered to the authority by a (then)

high school graduate, a teenager who was awaiting admission into a higher college.

The quarterly meeting of all NTA manager programmes to assess general performance is another forum where ideas are generated, which are developed into programmes. This meeting is also used to reinforce guidelines on policies that have to be followed/adhered to.

Projects (and Social Mobilisation)

The Project Development Department comprises of the Project division and the Social Mobilisation division. These are responsible for organising workshops, seminars, and the national television festivals or competitions. One of such festival is exclusive to NTA stations whilst the other is open to all television stations, as well as independent producers in the country.

Such activities are seen as an encouragement of creativity and promotion of excellence. It is certainly an effort at getting the television industry in Nigeria as a whole developed. The fora constitute an avenue for acknowledged recognition and as such are no doubt, sources of motivation. Moreover, they are sources of programming material and ideas. Many regular programmes were first presented as specials in this type of forum. For the period of the festival, the normal programme schedule is suspended to give way to the specials.

The Assistant Director Projects is really more of a liaison officer and organiser. Her schedule entails liaison and contractual relations; liaison with government and even international relations. She organises, for example, to have NTA programmes entered for international programmes

competitions. It does appear that there is an overlap in her schedule and that of other functionaries in the authority. This overlap is not typical to her area alone, it seems to be characteristic of the other departments as well, particularly the following two, to be discussed, whose duties sometimes appear to overlap the News (and Current Affairs) Directorate.

Public Enlightenment and Entertainment departments are the two which are most directly involved in production of programmes.

Enlightenment Department

Public enlightenment covers the areas that include documentaries, panel discussions, campaigns, all special coverages, and the broadcast of all Grade A programmes. These are the 'government must tell' stories, presidential addresses to the nation, budget speeches, national day parades, and the like are handled here.

The department's schedule also includes the planning and production of instructional television programmes; (less formally structured) educational fillers; jingles; and such programmes that are used to highlight and convey government/public interest - Expanded Programme on Immunisation; Campaign Against Drug Abuse, Indiscipline; Campaign for Patriotism and such.

Although not spelt out in the job schedule, the Assistant Director in Enlightenment has lots of liaison to do with the government and government officials. If he has to get their story told, he has to work closely with them. In this regard, the job appears similar to that of the News programmes, and Current Affairs departments of the News

directorate.

Indeed, there are such striking similarities between its functions and those of the Public Enlightenment unit of the Ministry of Information, or even the Federal Department of Mass Mobilisation for Economic Recovery and Social Justice (MAMSER).

It is often hard to tell the difference in the results of their efforts as they are all geared towards the same goals.

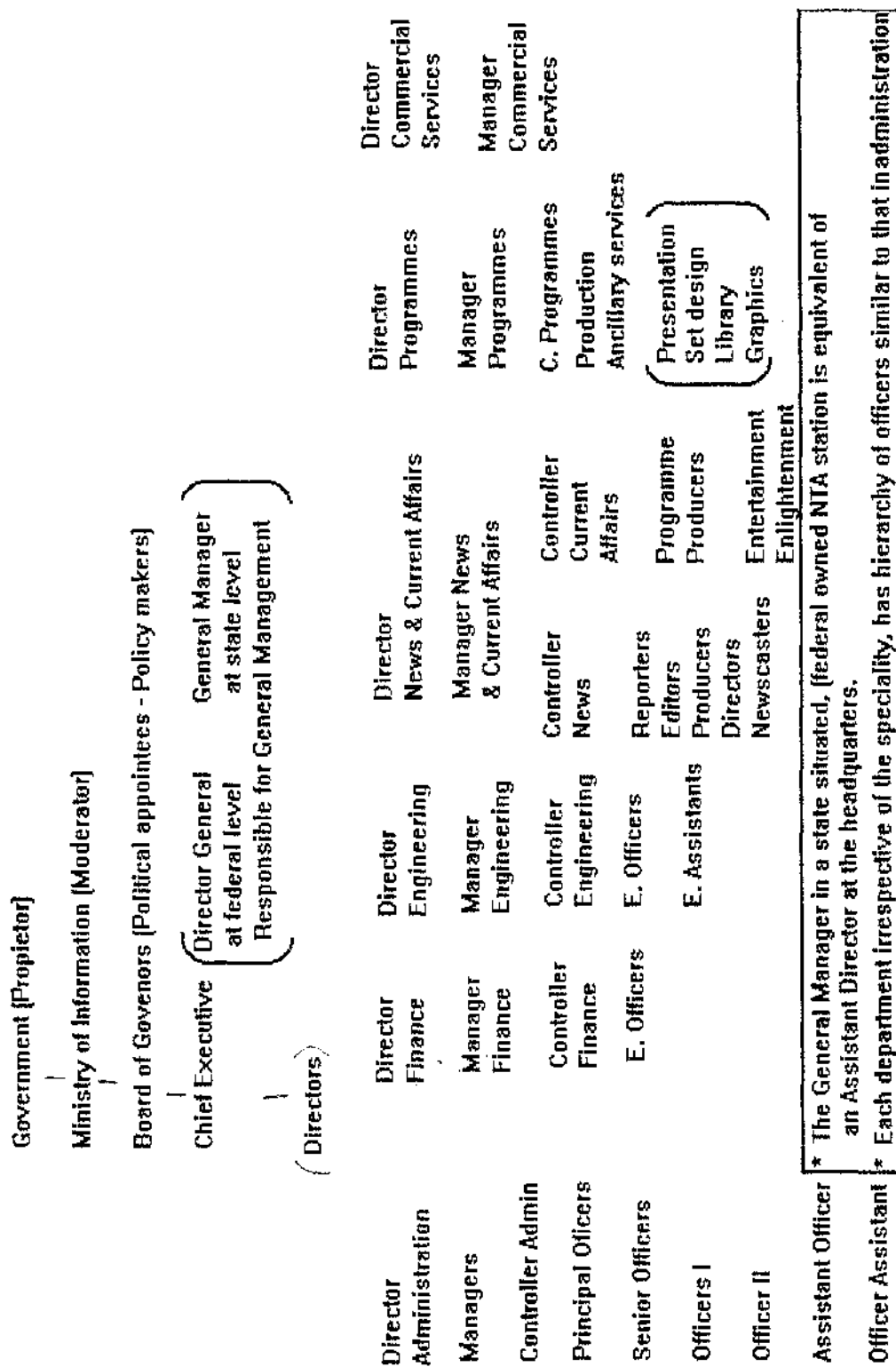
Entertainment Department

Entertainment Department is responsible for the production of dramas and features; music and light entertainment; children; youth and women programmes for network transmission. The department has been carved out into three divisions as enumerated above. These divisions are headed by Managers who report to the Assistant Director. Reporting to the managers in hierarchical order are Controllers; Principal Officers; then Officers cadre 1 and 2 and assistant officers on the bottom rung. (Ref 65a, Typical Organisational Structure Chart).

There is also the Manager Production Services who oversees the unit which supplies set designers, props, editing equipment for post-production. Though the equipment is the responsibility of engineering, the use of such is organised by the user department.

The Entertainment Department operates on the principle that there must be a proper mix of programmes even musicals, that will have a national appeal, and further bind the nation together. The big question, yet unanswered though, is if there is a need to have such a wide range of

Typical Lines of Communication in a Television Station



to
act
the

programming from network before the NTA objective can be met. In presenting the federal character in its programming, the NTA reasons that it fosters the feeling of acceptance, the sense of belonging to every Nigerian irrespective of where he is situated. By so doing it assumes that unity is fostered. This reasoning assumes the parochial nature of Nigerians and goes overboard to satisfy the otherwise 'insignificant others'. The question is, if when the cost is counted, the effort is worthwhile, especially as there are so many more interests which are yet marginalised (the ethnic minorities).

Evolution of the Structure

The structure of the Programmes Directorate has been informed by, and it reflects the NTA objectives. It is thus not surprising that it is so unwieldy. It has in fact undergone several revisions over the years and this reflects the instability in the overall approach to management of the authority - all in a bid to find the most effective means of delivering the goods.

What is now known as the Programme Directorate used to be National Programmes. The Director of Programmes then was responsible for producing, along with the zonal directors, programmes for national consumption. Whilst the zonal directors had programmes emerging from within the linguistic zones which the authority carved out for its administrative and operational purposes, the Director of Programmes at the National Television Production Centre (NTPC) produced programmes with national appeal. The DP reported to the Managing Director of the NTPC. NTPC also incorporated the other two stations which were meant for 'federal' audiences as were to be found in Lagos, the federal capital.

Those days were not without their problems; lacking co-ordination for example, such as arose from jealousies and inter-departmental rivalry.

With the metamorphosis that has taken place, has emerged, the earlier described structure. That in itself was a very recent development in the history of the Directorate as it had only been implemented for a couple of months at the time of gathering data for the study.

What had obtained immediately prior to the period was really quite similar. The main difference is that there had since been a rationalisation of the authority's operations, resulting in the compressing of the hitherto six departments into four. This simply meant that rather than having six Assistant Directors there are now four who share the responsibilities there would have been for the extra two.

One of the results of such frequent changes is the genuine confusion in the minds of staff about the organisation in which they worked. Quite a number of NTA staff were ignorant at the time of the study, of the current organisational structure. Each person encountered, knew to whom he reported and sometimes was not quite sure who was to report to him. This was not the case at director, i.e. top management, level. Even then, it was sometimes difficult for director level staff to speak on what goes on in sectors other than his own. The lapse in this can only be appreciated in the knowledge of the programme production process, whereby a production team is pulled from various units, with members accountable to different people. Enforcing discipline, therefore, requires a knowledge of the workings within the various departments.

Staff tend to rely on their personal experiences and more so on

information which they gather from the 'official grapevine'. Some times what they see, on which they base their actions, constitutes incomplete pieces of information.

As a result, a lot of policies and decisions cannot be explained by even senior staff. 'I don't know', 'Don't ask me' are responses which ring the note of despair.

'There have been a lot of changes, costumes and set design used to be under which AD now? (pause) But they have been moved around. In fact they have only been moved again a couple of weeks ago because the workload was too much (for the AD).'

A critique of the Programmes Directorate may be seen as one of the authority as a whole. One of the reasons why the Programmes Directorate is so large and top heavy is because of the problems that authority has had with the hiring and promotion of staff.

'The problem with staffing is that civil service structure'.

Staffing - An Endemic Problem

The procedure for staff appointment has from the onset been questionable. Julie Coker lays claim to being the first female TV newscaster in Africa. The following is her account of how she was recruited. She had dropped out of high school in her fourth form to have a baby and had thereafter won a beauty contest which shot her to public fame.

'It was Justice Ighodaro who took me to Chief Tony Enahoro's office. Chief Enahoro was then the Minister of Information in the West. At his office, we were told that he was away to London to sign the contract for television equipment and technical experts. Justice Ighodaro, therefore, decided to take me directly to the General Manager of WNTV, Mr Mathers. When we got to the WNTV studio at Agodi, the reception was rousing. Everybody wanted to see the Honourable Minister of Justice. I was overwhelmed with joy. I immediately knew that I was already employed. How can they turn down the Minister's request after such a welcome.

The expected moment came. We had an audience with Mr Mathers. When he asked me the job I would like to apply for, I said I would be happy to be a receptionist [sic]. Justice Ighodaro objected to my intention to be a receptionist. He argued that I had got all it took to become a good Presenter/Announcer, good command of English language, elocution, diction, photographic memory and was photogenic. The interview was conducted here and then. I was, however, offered the job of a Receptionist because there was no vacancy in the Presentation Department.

Later on that evening Justice Ighodaro's sister-in-law, Mrs Taiwo Shariff, who is also my paternal Auntie became interested in the matter.

Having been previously married to an Englishman who happened to be a personal friend to Mr Mathers, she encouraged me not to give up on presentation and further promised to take me to the Managing Director even though an interview had already been conducted. Today, when I look back, I have a lot to be grateful to her for.

Again this is a case not peculiar to the NTA, but true of a lot of other establishments. Recruitment particularly in the political era was based more on connections than on the suitability of qualifications of the staff. It is common knowledge that the issue of staffing has become an endemic problem. As one General Manager lamented

'Take the headquarters for example, it is over-staffed. Now, invariably, we have to contend with their cast offs. Imagine a station that is supposed to be the showcase of the nation may be made to be the dumping ground. We do reject the staff that we receive occasionally, but what that amounts to is that we maintain the vacancy that exists.'

In the hey-days of civilian politics, the powers that be had outdone themselves, facilitating, if not directly authorising the recruitment of staff. This in itself was a power game as well as it was a strategy to maintain power. The problem, however, did not disappear with them when they left. The stations were beset with the problem of what to do with the staff. The appointments could not be terminated without reason; even though they came in through the back door, they had become legitimate staff of the authority.

One problem common to all the station managers was the sheer amount that was needed to be spent on personal emoluments and staff welfare - hospital bills for dependants of staff, for example, Yet, these staff were not always beneficial to the station.

There are stations with a staff strength of over 200 yet the one which is most commercially viable has only a staff strength of 43. NTA-2, Channel 5, is an illustration that with the right management approach, a station need not be large and unwieldy to be commercially effective.

In an interview with Television Journal (July/September, 1985) Dr Kolade, chairman of the federal government appointed committee on the rationalisation of the NTA noted that his committee found a need for the NTA staff strength to be trimmed down, commensurate with its proper activities.

COK: That mean a reduction from 9,700 to about 5,000

TJ: Was funding the authority form [in a] part of the basis for rationalisation

COK: We found that the government was talking to NTA about levels of subsidy and annual level of subsidy in the region of N66m and already the previous year the NTA personal emoluments was in excess of N60m.

Staff were usually not trained for television at the point of entry. The definition of their functions were ambiguous and the quality of their input was questionable. Their experiences were not useful enough for them to be saddled with responsibility. The stations thus had to seek help, sometimes from outside, to train them, or they learnt to live with their incompetence. As though this problem were not enough, the 'liabilities' presented other complications. Because such staff were often 'sacred cows' who were well connected in high places, enforcing

discipline on them was not always possible. Worse still, they tend to be upwardly mobile with speed.

The political undertones/orientation in promotion (and appointment) exercises whereby a quota reflecting federal character is to be observed, opens the way for younger recruits to supercede their seniors, who invariably happen to be from some other parts - usually the south. The south by virtue of its history, having more older stations has more experienced personnel.

This system also leaves the loophole for real or imagined favouritism and nepotism, which brought in the 'sacred cows', to thrive and see them through to high places. As a result of promoting such mediocrity, the enthusiasm of other staff is dampened, their morale is low and commitment wanes. These are manifested in different levels and different manners. It has in itself, contributed to the near mass resignation of staff in some stations. In such instances, this only leaves room for such mediocrity to wax even stronger, unchallenged.

The problem with staffing is that, it hits production where it hurts most. As one producer who had just resigned said

'Most of the people in the servicing areas are incompetent. They usually are relatives of the highly placed or well connected who simply get the job because they need a job not because they are qualified or are interested. They, therefore, can't appreciate what the job entails.'

The pertinence of the above comment can only be fully appreciated if one accepts that TV broadcasting is a demanding vocation. It is one which requires commitment and flair if one is to be effective. One General Manager described it thus

'The job is not just glamour. It's hard work but a lot of people don't see that. They are merely attracted by the glamour. Even some of the staff have a hard time reconciling both.'

The problem noted here highlights the importance of the service departments, which are often not treated as an integral part of the production team.

Attitudes and Productivity

There are basically two studios at the Victoria Island premises of the NTA which houses the national Directorates; NTA Channel 10, and NTA-2 Channel 5. Besides these there are mini studios for newscasts and continuity announcements.

It is in these studios that the production crew hang around. They do not have offices, even pool space. They, therefore, rely on the props in the studios to sit on. Usually this calibre of staff do not have respectable qualifications.

Defying cultural expectations, even mere courtesy, these staff irrespective of their age or skill are often times denied respect.

When asked if he felt he was appreciated, a set designer with the authority paused and, after some thought, said

'If you deal with a mature producer, yes. There are some who are full of themselves, who try to boss around ... but I guess those who know their job, appreciate our work. ... Production is teamwork our people do not know that. Some of those who exhibit this "big mannism" [sic] attitude are ignorant. Here everyone is concerned with titles. There are so many titles. It's not like that abroad.'

This disgruntlement permeated the studio based crew who opine that they contribute in no small measure to the final product. According to the set designer, his job can be likened to that of an architect or an engineer.

'Practically the aesthetic aspect of what is seen is our business. Add to that [set design], lighting and then there is camera work.

You see the producer's idea is as a naked virgin which we clothe and make into a Miss Nigeria or a Mr Nigeria [i.e. an award winning beauty]. There are the various sections. Make-up, Graphics, Props, Set Decoration, Set Construction. You require a good tailor, a carpenter, a hairdresser, a beautician or make-up person who can remove a nose or add to it.'

At some times the problem is not just from producers but from administrative and ancillary staff, notably drivers. There was a consensus of opinion on the insensitivity of administrators and bureaucrats to their contribution to the plight of the production crew.

'Administration has a problem relating with us. They tend to act like they are the boss but when you know "I have the nut, you have the screw", you must co-operate.'

Taking a cue from the set designer who is younger, better qualified and more confident man, the lighting/audio/camera crew who had risen through the rank, narrated series of their nasty experiences, all pointing to the fact that they were not appreciated.

'There are no incentives here. Those who have climbed up have thrown away the ladder, like the typist who rose to be an Assistant Director now requesting for qualifications.'

'It is a demanding job; no time for self and family. A serious programme could keep you in the studio overnight. There is no closing time on this job. All you have is resumption time.'

'Sometimes we stay here till 1 a.m. The last recording of Sunday Rendezvous [an audience participatory musical programme - Soul train type] we were dropped on the express road after the recording in the middle of the night.'

Although the vehicle had been meant to drop the staff off at their homes after such a recording particularly at such unholy hours, they had been dropped on the highway, for some reasons. One such reason is the inadequate number of functional vehicles. Whatever the case though, the staff had been shabbily treated by drivers and had even been exposed to the possible physical dangers of the night.

Another explanation which could have been projected in that experience is the driver's self interest as well, and the staff knew this. Yet, in all of these they could not limit the blame to the individual nuances or the personality of the drivers alone.

'It's the drivers' fault but management does not do anything to help matters.'

'The drivers say it's management.'

It is the nonchalant attitude of the management to their plight as they described that provides encouragement for such and all these, they have to endure for no more than civil service structured salary and career advancement aspirations.

The same lackadaisical attitude which the staff experience is observed in the case for the set props and flats. On the whole there is an indication of insensitivity to this unit. When appreciation of the services is confessed and intended at all, it may well amount to no more than mere lip service or fleeting seriousness at time of need.

The point of this seeming digression is that the structure of the television industry as it obtains now, does not yet recognise as priorities, all of those areas which directly contribute to the programmes that are made. The situation as observed is worse at the

state level. The extent and magnitude of such problems are compounded in the states by other problems not least of which is availability of resources.

According to a producer at an NTA (state) station

'Another problem is that of poor conditions in which tapes are stored. It is bad enough that they are used for that length of time, they are very poorly stored. The temperature is not right and so on. How can it when air conditioning is not assured.'

Bearing in mind the temperature in the tropics, issues as air conditioning, which may be taken for granted, become really serious contentions.

Remuneration

One of the age long criticisms of the NTA is that it is yet to find a proper method of rewarding staff. This problem stems from the civil service structure of remuneration. This criticism is true for the TV industry in Nigeria as a whole. The following is an unsolicited gripe of the library officer, although he works in one of the state stations; he is a veteran in the industry, and his comments captures the facts and sentiments on broadcasters remuneration in general.

'These are some of the damages that the Udoji harmonisation of parastatals and civil service left us with. Here we work round the clock to ensure that the promoted programmes are transmitted. Even when we are one minute late we must apologise. Come rain, come shine, we must be here. Even when someone dies, we just must drag him aside and continue. If the transmitter packs up, engineers are called out in the middle of the night. The most annoying thing is that we don't enjoy public holidays.'

Q: Why is that?

'It is because even those whose sets have broken down ensure that they are fixed so that they can enjoy good programmes over the period, even during the weekend. But there is less

problem during the week because people are too tired to be critical but when people are relaxing at the weekends is the time we have to be on our toes. "lgbadun ti yin, wahala ti wa" [sic meaning your pleasure is our pressure].

Meanwhile civil servants can push aside their files till the next day whereas you must work to meet the schedule. It is too late for people like myself, so I may not leave, but it is important to know that some jobs are more important than others, and let it be reflected in the remuneration. Otherwise they will not get people interested in the job.'

In the present system, the producer reaches the bar; after a point in his career, he cannot make more money, nor can he be advanced unless an administrative type post is created for him. This means that a number of talented/creative people have been promoted to 'redundancy'. They are saddled with administrative responsibilities, albeit within the organisation in recognition of their good work.

Managers, even directors, have been known to confess to being square pegs in round holes, who would feel better in a place, if left to deal with real production. The frustration of not being opportuned to advance, and the fear of leaving the door ajar for those lacking in the production experience to run the show, have proven strong enough convictions to justify the compromises that such persons had made.

This practice had also become a problem which is not readily admitted. It has contributed to the unwieldiness of the programmes directorate for instance. Having been designed as a producing outfit, there was the perceived need to hire so many producers. Before long they were due for promotion. After a while, there are only so many who can get moved, going by the structure. The need to create 'jobs for the boys', 'the good boys' had thus arisen. To do that the structure had to be made to accommodate them. Little wonder the organisation is top heavy, with

congested bottlenecks close to the top.

The limitations of such bureaucratic organisation even permeates how the newsroom is structured. For instance, it was reported that the organisation and discontinuation of the formal specialisation desks was informed partly by such administrative considerations as the number of staff on what level. Units are headed by officers of certain level, and so the number of available officers on such level determine how many units could be had.

There have been many loopholes recognised in the management organisation structure; the lines of communication of the authority and these are only issues here in as much as they taint the programming output.

The State Situated Stations

The NTA directorate is almost a model of what obtains in the state situated stations. Their objectives and operations are similar except that the magnitude of production, and thus of their producing departments, all as a result of the size of their target audience vary. Whilst one seeks to serve a national audience, the others seek to reach the grassroots audience who also vary in the level of urbanisation. Their operations are still guided, though, by the same/similar codes.

This observation is most glaring in the organisation of the programmes department; as it determines the programme output but it is noticeable in the entire station. A state-based NTA station had by design, the following expressed plan.

'Our target audience are the ruralites, those at the grassroots and those who are so inclined. We do not boast of the Victoria Island [i.e. a posh neighbourhood] audience who demand sophisticated programmes. We want to educate our

people on EPI (Expanded Programme on Immunisation) and things like that which limits our financial drive.'

The modesty also necessarily limits the ambitions of the engineers, their aspirations for the station, more so in the reality of the financial situation.

The situation is not much different in the state-government owned stations which appear to be scaled down versions of the national network. They do not have the influence of a central super-structure which skims off some of their powers and responsibilities as with the (federal) NTA state based stations, but they are motivated by similar drives.

Though they are more local, they invariably still have the problems of serving a 'national' audience. In the first place, the settlement pattern is such that populations are hardly homogeneous. Even the cultural/socio-linguistic groups as noted earlier cannot claim to be really homogeneous. Nigeria is made up of several independent nation states, and even the Yoruba speaking peoples share such diverse heritage and traits that they very often differ widely. Then, also because the stations are government-owned the stations still have similar problems to contend with as does the NTA as a whole. These direct the orientation and performance.

According to the Manager Programmes of Lagos State Television,

'LTV is a state owned television, so we consider the populace, the special audience of Lagos State. Lagos is a dual capital, federal and state, so we have diplomats, foreign missions; Lagos state indigenes Aworis, the Ijebu, the Eguns, and the migrants from the other hinterland who are in search of the golden fleece with all the industrial locations within Lagos.

The majority of the indigenes are Yoruba speaking. This in essence guides what we beam out. The state TV belongs to them, they are the tax payers financing LTV.

It is not unusual that we have a Channel 10 [NTA] approach to programming but [it is also like] Channel 7 which is geared towards the grassroots.'

LTV was the very first state owned television station after the establishment of the NTA.

The state owned station, established primarily to serve the area within which the study focus area falls is the Ogun State Television - OGTV. Right from its inception, there has been an understanding that the station was to ultimately become self-sufficient. Nonetheless, it was established with grants from the civilian government in power in 1981. It had modest beginnings transmitting from two rooms at the temporary base in the Ogun State Hotel. It later moved to its present (permanent) site.

The story of OGTV is similar to that of the other state stations. However, it had to contend with situations that were peculiar to itself. To begin with it was operating in a state which was in its infancy. Although the other states (Lagos, Oyo) were technically created in 1979 as well, they had had state machineries in existence for much longer. This includes TV stations. The state capitals, (Lagos and Ibadan), had served as the capitals of the larger states from which the new states were carved.

These cities were blessed with - better established commerce, and other features of metropolitan life. *These* were more prominent in those centres. *Such* was not existing on the same scale in ~~some~~ Abeokuta,

capital of Ogun State, and location of OGTV.

The history of the station suggests that it has been, more glaringly so than others, an organisation responding to whimsical desires of individuals, rather than the exigencies of its situation.

According to an Assistant General Manager of the station, transmission began on Christmas Day, as a Christmas gift of the Government, to the people of the state. That decision was also supposed to have been influenced by the station's frequency allocation - Channel 25 UHF.

'We started with the most skeletal staff [I've known] in my life. I was the founding officer in charge of programmes. We moved to the present complex after it was commissioned on the 13th of May 1982.

Transmission was from hand to mouth, for a period of about 4.5 hours a day. In spite of the fact there was not much else, we had ambition. We used OB vans for transmission.'

This officer had confessed to/acknowledged a lack of experience in the TV industry prior to his position at OGTV. This he considered an advantage in the sense that they were not (did not feel) trapped by industry traditions and were thus able to introduce some freshness into the service they offered. The state had set out to fill the gaps that were existing.

'Something else we did was to introduce what we called "Breakfast Television" at the weekends. As I said, I like classical things. This was introduced during the Easter weekend in April 1982.

R: Why?

'I don't know. Maybe it was my romantic nature. We wanted to do something unusual. We had ambition. We did not have much else but we soon became a force to be reckoned with. We transmitted movies, excellent musicals and a few solid local production.'

In all these the station appears to have followed a replicable trend as WNTV, the patriarch station. It certainly stretched itself, almost breaking its neck to fulfill this ambition. Unscrupulous, and unprofessional practices were glaring to the audience, notable of which was the source of programming material. It did not appear to matter to the audience who indeed seemed to welcome the break/change.

'Because Ogun state is a gateway state, opening into the Republic of Benin on one side and to Lagos and the outside world as well, we had dubbed the station "The Gateway Telly". But the people of their own volition crystallized the name, "The People's Telly" and that is how we came about that name. We decided to take it on, since the people themselves had re-christened us in appreciation of our efforts.

The essence of programming at this station was "to give the people what they want, having seen NTA for so long and how much frustrating and boring that had become".

Pioneering staff of this station had not had experience of television. The job was cumbersome and rewarding. We had not any precedence in terms of pattern to follow. We evolved our own patterns ourselves.

At its inception and even afterwards, the station operated from a premises which lacked basic modern infrastructure - electricity, water, telephone services. It was not even connected to the national electricity supply grid, being on the outskirts of the town. It thus relied on private electricity generation for all its operations for several months. This was a very expensive though reliable option. So reliable was it that even after public power supply had been subscribed to, it was preferable to transmit using privately generated electricity supply.

Although it was clear from its inception, that the station was to be commercially operated, public service, commercialisation was hastened with the financial predicaments of the various governments. OGTV was thus expected to break even by 1984, before it could really try and test

the patterns it was evolving. The government subvention had been withdrawn before OGTV could mature out of its infancy.

'The government was not paying or delayed payment, but they were still responsible for the capital expenditure - major repairs and running cost was borne by them.'

But staff cannot forget those days of uncertainty, not knowing if salaries would be paid or if artiste contract fees would be released. The implication of all these is that OGTV then evolved a new structure in its organisation. By this arrangement, it is no doubt the most ruthlessly commercial of the stations. It is the least scrupulous and least apologetic.

The new strategies for generating revenue and managing the organisation were worked out by mid-1984.

Officers were moved from programmes department, the spending end to the commercial department; the earning end. A hitherto dead end, was thus exalted to being the most influential and most rewarding department. It was at that time that OGTV evolved an organisational structure fairly distinct from that of other stations.

Prior to this time there had been a politically appointed board of governors. This board was the ultimate authority in the hierarchy, they acted for and reported to the state governor.

At the helm of the day-to-day affairs of the station was the General Manager. He was the link between the board and the station. In other words he, with his staff, translated the determined policies. They implemented the policies.

Reporting then to the General Manager were the directors. They were supposed to be five directors for Engineering, Programmes, News and Current Affairs, Administration and Finance, and Commercial Services.

It is noteworthy that till 1987, the post of the Director of Commercial Services was not filled. The department was at the onset, the dispensable one, the one with the less dynamic staff. Yet, it has evolved to be the bedrock of the station's activities. Little wonder then, that 'more productive' staff had to be transferred to inject life into the operations of the department, when the crunch was bitterly felt.

Needless to say such moves became a source of jealousy, bitterness and ill-feeling in the organisation. It was considered in some quarters as a means of promoting a swifter climb-up for some 'good lads'. Some of those who pioneered the commercial department, though not acknowledging their alleged unproductivity, felt cheated out of their career aspirations, when eventually the top posts were filled.

The hierarchy up to the director level was almost replicable to that of any other station.

Manager <- Controller <- Principal Officers (Unit heads) <- Officer Level 1 <- Officer Level 2 <- Assistant Officers <- Officer Assistant
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Typical Hierarchy in the Television Industry

The distinction which evolved with time was the introduction of the posts of two Assistant General Managers, for Engineering Services, and

for Production Services. The organisation has thus been collapsed under two large umbrellas.

Engineering Services was to take care of all maintenance issues; of transmitters, studio equipments building, transport as to be expected.

Production Services was the broad category which encompassed News and Current Affairs, Programmes and Commercial Services departments. It is most interesting that it was the Director of Commercial Services who filled the new post. Though he did have experience in the other two departments, his appointment in no small way crystallized the elevated status of the Commercial Services.

OGTV also introduced some innovations into its operations. One of this is that each member of staff is considered a potential sales person. This is besides the corps of sales officers in its employ, and the sales agents working for the station. The staff are induced by the commission they get on the sales they make.

Irrespective of how this system was justified, it had been unpopular amongst certain staff. Some producers, for instance, felt their creativity was being stifled, especially reckoning that the odds were stacked against them when they tried to reach out to 'rural' audience segments, a group not readily attractive to advertisers.

This system had been discouraging to some 'hard working, creative' staff who lacked contacts and external financial backing. As a result of this system, where sponsorship was the paramount consideration, productions, which even the station's staff acknowledged as mediocre and

unprofessional, made their way to the screen. In fact, even at management level personal sentiments against some of those sponsored programmes run high, but as long as they brought in the much needed funds, they were tolerated, even welcome.

On the other hand, what were considered better quality programmes, never developed out of the files for lack of sponsorship. Invariably such productions failed to attract sponsorship because they would require higher budgets (not to mention expertise) and for such, sponsors had a choice of other (possibly) more central stations. Increasingly independent producers have become an attractive and economical option. This corp is being swelled by the disgruntled and frustrated staff who quit the various stations.

As a result, productions featuring questionable traditional/spiritual healers; religion (evangelists); personal celebrations of the 'haves', have well endowed the screen. The Assistant General Manager was most unapologetic for this trend even though he expressed personal disdain for some of the programmes.

'I have looked at the socio-cultural setting of the station and I have designed strategies that will help us to make money and survive within in. The Yoruba man is fun loving, he likes parties, titles, and publicity ... We have problems with funding ... it is not peculiar to television; it's all over. Funds are very hard to come by and costs are going up. Costs are going up and the funds not coming in. There's a rethinking in terms of what is to be done, and how to do them, and this is where ingenuity and creativity really come to play. You use what you have to get what you want ... it's tough, there's no doubt, it's tough but we keep managing. We keep adjusting to the realities of the situation.'

Such adjustments has also meant that the station is prepared to broadcast programmes from bodies or individuals who have links abroad and can help procure much needed spare parts, even if they cannot pay

cash at home. The flexibility of this trade by barter, and the entire re-thinking are examples of the ingenuity which the station prides itself with, and it is only possible because there is a commitment to such practices in high enough quarters in management. This illustrates the impact of a commercially motivated mind running the affairs of a station.

		%
LTV (Lagos)	450,000	11.52
BCOS (Ibadan)	240,000	6.14
OGTV (Abeokuta)	100,000	2.56
NTA Ikeja (Lagos)	170,000	9.35
NTA-2 Channel 5 (Lagos)	1,300,000	33.29
NTA-10 (Lagos)	110,000	2.81
Total Billings for the period above - 3,905,000		
Comparative Station Share of an Advertiser's Media Billings		

With the above as an indicator of advertising spending, it is little wonder why some stations are

(i) more desperate in their management than others, and

(ii) have a higher concentration of frustrated staff,

yet the stations need to be more attractive to get a better share of the advertising budget. To do this they require money; to make money they resort to desperate means.

Note that the stations with the least shares are the rural oriented station - (OGTV, NTA Ikeja). In the case of NTA 10, though it is an urban-based, urban target station. It is competing against more commercially motivated less conservative stations - (NTA-2 Channel 5, and LTV).

As mentioned earlier, the state owned stations were 'necessitated' by the political realities of the time and some of the station officials are mindful of this, and it guides their operation. According to the Controller of Administration of BCOS

'The states were created. They were federal states so they had a measure of independence. They, therefore, wanted to control their own broadcasting. They wanted independent broadcasting, which they were used to anyway. This is the most special reason for the establishment of state stations. There are areas which states have complete control and there are some which it shares control with the federal government. The states, therefore, had to create their own agencies to be able to execute their own programmes. Broadcasting is the way of reaching the people so they wanted control.'

Such an understanding of the proprietor's expectations are the uncoded guides to the station's performance. Certain courses of action thus needed not be expressed.

In answer to a question on whether the station has a policy/style sheet which is given to staff as part of their orientation, the Controller News in one of the state stations tried unsuccessfully to hedge. Eventually, the following is what he said,

'Every Tuesday, there is a general editorial meeting. On Thursday, there is a News Management meeting. Whatever we do at the News Management, we will bring it down to the editorial meeting. From there people see that "For God's sake who wrote this yesterday? You want us to go to prison?" From there you know that it's wrong to do that. 'Please don't. So it's not a written code, but unwritten ... You learn ... as you go along the line, you learn.'

The Programmes departments also have similar regular meetings where these ideas and unwritten codes are disseminated and perpetuated. Indeed, with state owned stations there is no camouflage as to the purpose for which the stations were meant.

Beside the political considerations, some broadcasters have rationalised

more noble, more productive reasons for the type of service they offer. The Controller Programmes of an NTA (Abeokuta) state station, explained another point of view on the matter.

'In a military regime, each state government wanted its own station and it was alright. With civilian politics (when there were conflicting interests at federal and state level) the federal presence was required in the newly created states. The political reasons were thus there but they should not be overplayed ... given the fact that policies are made at the federal level, there is need to reach and harness the local people. The linguistic orientation of the area will be satisfied and the government will be closer to the people.'

Structural Similarities

In essence, there was not to be much of a difference in the output of the state owned stations and the NTA production centres. This similarity is also present in the organisation of the Programmes department. The News and Current Affairs department did not differ much either except in the number and type of newscasts that are broadcast.

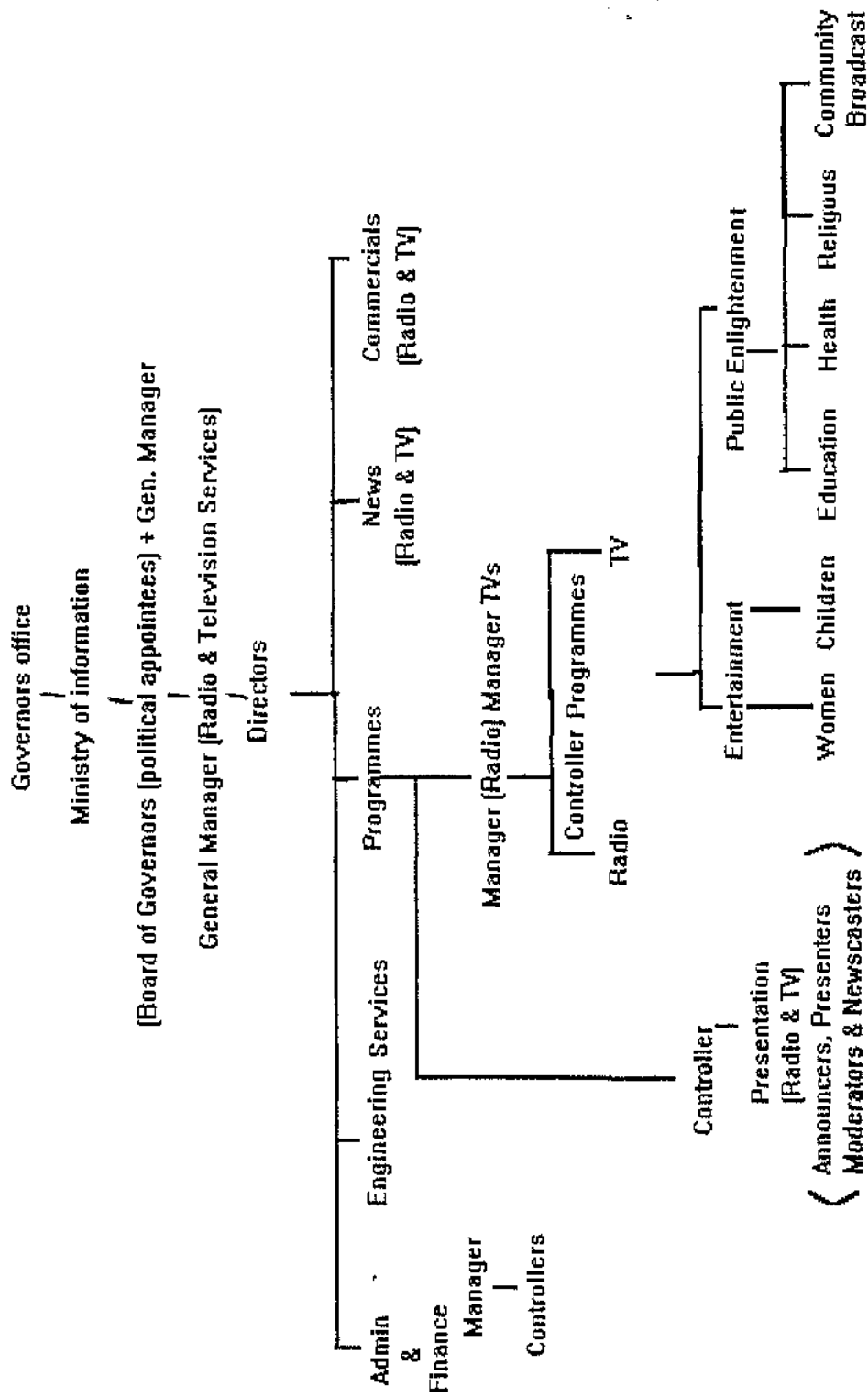
The Programmes departments are all divided into similar units with Entertainment and Public Enlightenment with a community development orientation forming the base.

BCOS

This station to a large extent than any other has joint operations with the radio arm of its service. A joint pool of presenters, announcers, for example, serves both radio and television as does the production services staff - audio mixers and so on. The News department also is responsible for the newscasts on both radio and television.

The Programmes department is organised into two broad categories as well, Public Enlightenment and Entertainment. For administrative reasons

Broadcasting Corporation of Oyo State [BCOS]



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it has not been split any further, but there are various sub-units as with the other sections. These are Women, Children, Educational (schools), Health, Agriculture, Governmental; Religious; Community Broadcast which covers anything having to do with community development and such.

According to a senior producer in the department,

'Women's programmes whether in English or Yoruba in which case it is targetted towards the uneducated and semi-educated masses, tend to highlight issues of interest to the women, for example fashion, care of home, kitchen affairs. It also highlights women in politics; professionals; successful traders.'

Such are the assumptions which permeate the thinking about audience expectations not only in this, but in other stations.

OGTV

This station is distinct in its organisation yet it remains basically the same in many aspects of its operations to the other station. The Programmes department is headed by a director to whom the two controllers report. The department is separated into the Production facilities, and Programme Services. These two are further divided into two and three units respectively. Production facilities encompass Studios, Library and Graphics; this covers the Library and Store, Editing, Purchasing (of equipment, spares, programmes, software with the advice of Engineering where applicable); and Production Services - the studio operations team. The other unit is the Presentation Unit - assigning Announcers, Presenters, Moderators and such staff.

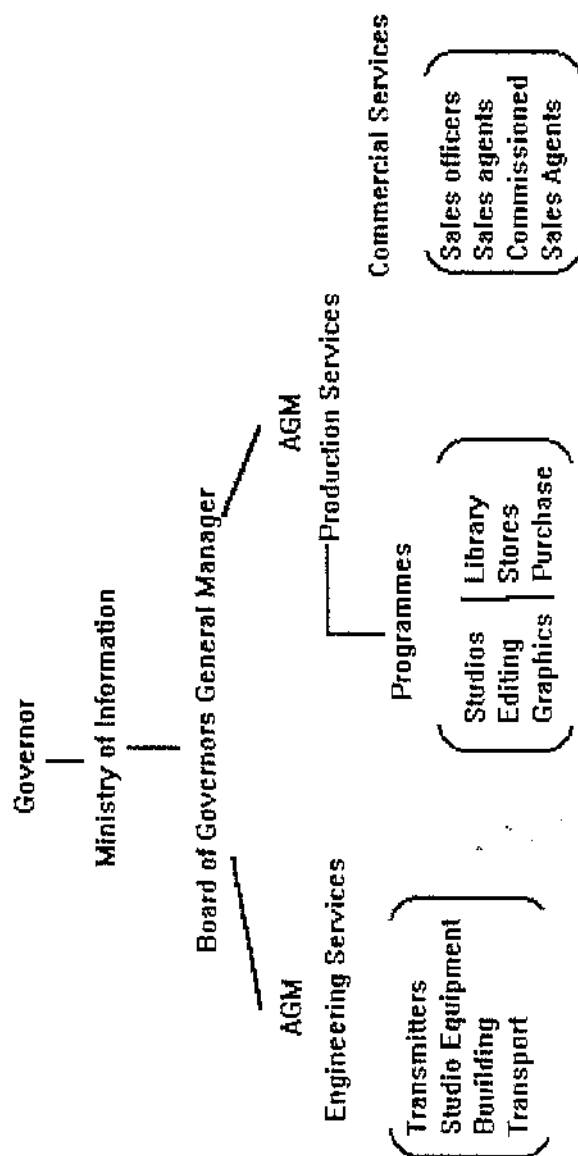


Fig 12.

From the above it is clear that the run of the mill of programmes that are produced do not differ from the other stations'. It is only that the organisation of the station, possibly reflecting its emphasis, is different.

In the last two stations discussed, note that the foreign tapes that are procured are not necessarily the duty of producers *per se*. In ECOS, for example, the procurements of programmes that are not in-house are the responsibility of the library. The library serves both radio and TV and is not a part of the Programmes department. Though with OGTV, the library is a unit under the Programmes Directorate, there is a distinct unit charged with the responsibility of acquiring programmes. Unlike ECOS, OGTV is completely autonomous of the state radio, OGBC. They are, in fact, physically miles apart.

Although Lagos Television (LTV) shares its premises with the radio station, there is not much overlap in their operations either.

LTV's Programmes department is first split into two main units, Entertainment and Enlightenment. These have been further split into two sections each.

The delineation of units or sections are merely a method of systematic assignment of responsibility. Often, the units are not mutually exclusive although in reality there is a territorial sovereignty, whereby staff identify and jealously guard certain subjects and areas of interest.

Programmes Department Structure

Lagos (State) Television (LTV)

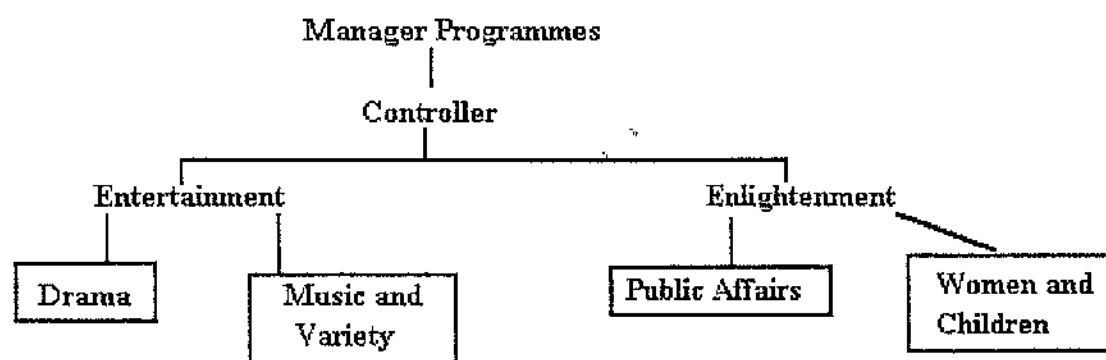


Fig. 13.

Peculiarities in Station Management?

The subtle variations in the stations can be considered as indicators of emphasis and targets of each station. Within each variation exists the taint introduced by individual broadcast managers. The personal philosophy of the managers who interpret the assignments, (that is, to entertain, educate and inform,) shape what the eventual official position is. For example, the following interpretation of his task, as Manager Programmes LTV, will no doubt reflect on the output of his station.

'Entertainment is mainly for the enjoyment of all [Merely or primarily for relaxation, or to beg the question, for entertainment]. Productions that are meant for enlightenment for example Vox Pop which goes round town sampling people's opinion, or the Women and Children's programmes, there is an attempt at informal education.

My personal philosophy is that if you want information you might as well pick an encyclopedia. But people [who watch TV] want to be entertained and [to] learn. So if you want people to watch, you will make learning fun; envelope the package in fun.'

It is in such personal philosophies as are brought to the job, that the distinctions underlying appear; not in the vague claims, or even the established goals, since all the stations lack specified, pinned down, audience targets.

Another feature in the organisation of the state (owned) stations is the fact that there is a closer proximity between the staff and the decision making bodies. This is unlike a situation where the General Manager (in the NTA state stations) has to take his cues from the Directors at the federal level (General Managers are administratively of the same rank as Assistant Directors) and centralisation of operations effectively strips the General Managers of certain authority which their counterparts in state owned stations could have.

The General Managers of the state owned stations report directly to the Board of Governors, who are politically appointed. In the event, and this is not unusual, that a board has not been constituted, they report directly to the governor. General Managers of NTA state stations report to the Central Board of Management, a body made up of all Directors, Deputy and Assistant Directors, including the General Managers from all the stations under the umbrella of the authority - (the federal government owned NTA stations).

This suggests that the state owned stations are under closer supervision from the state governments in the locality which they serve. Priorities for the NTA station differ, even in a military regime, where there is unity of purpose.

The following is the response of a Director at the State Ministry of Information, when asked about the objectives behind setting up state TV stations.

'The real objective of setting up the stations is for (i) government to create the general awareness of its activities; and (ii) enlighten the populace both in the urban and rural areas.

The government wants to be heard, and the federal organ does not give the desired impetus in the state. Imagine! I'm just coming from a swearing in ceremony of the new commissioners in the state including the commissioner for Information and NTA was not there [with a much bewildered tone] I did not see any NTA cameras there (emphasis) OGTV can't do that!

What is the essence of NTA if it can't be at a ceremony like that? OGTV can't do that! There is no assignment that should have been given greater priority than that. So to go back to your question, the purpose of a [sic] station is to propagate government activities, give it publicity, it should entertain, educate and inform taxpayers.

It can be of use to the generality of the public, for example publicising their chieftaincy ceremonies. It should cover activities, policies and reflect philosophy. It could also be used to break age long cultural barriers to progress. For example, the attitude that we do not number a man's child ...

needs to be re-addressed if the census is to be successful.

These are some of the functions of the station. The enabling edict spells this out.'

The enabling edict like all laws is more generally framed and subject to individual officer's interpretation. The brief encounter with this official proved quite revealing especially on the government's attitude to the medium. Incidentally, this same official had once served on the station's management board. This makes more interesting his interpretation of the much bandied cliché describing the purpose of a television station (i.e. to educate, entertain and inform).

In saying no other assignment should have been given greater priority, he had taken up the editorial judgement of the station without being mindful of the prevailing situation for example the available number of functional cameras, or even the other events which required coverage.

Clearly, his hold over the state station is displayed in his confidence that the station, 'their station', run with their funds (if only partly) could not ignore the coverage of a ceremony that they held, no matter what else was shunned. Here we see the illustration of priority.

Another matter worth noting is the detrimental ego play evident in his assessment of the station's performance.

'OGTV is good ... compared to some other states - Ondo (Akure). It is received in Lagos, Oyo, Benin. If they were better funded, they will perform better. A state which wants a TV station should be prepared to fund it. Otherwise there is no point in having half baked attempts. The service is good, the people there are knowledgeable.'

It is surprising even in the light of his utterances that he was able to

conclude that 'the station is good'. He had compared the station with another whose reputation is no doubt the worst in the adjoining vicinity. The station is not even within OGTV's primary coverage area and thus does not pose any serious competition to it.

To buttress his point, he cited the extent of the station's coverage, his assessment of the quality of minds at the station, and not any mention of the quality of what gets transmitted. This sort of refusal to face up to the truth is bound to plague the performance of the station in the sense that the managers are placated, and the urgency of their dire (financial) needs not addressed.

Although differences exist between the various stations in terms of their loyalties and even their administrative organisations the lines of communication remain basically the same. The interdependence of the various departments is never precluded although the bureaucratic channels in some cases have been abridged.

The differences observed in the various stations reflect the variations in the management style. These contribute to the individualised experiences of each station. For instance, a former head of presentation at a station, a section which served both radio and television services, had the following experience.

'The head of presentation does not even monitor any more ... when you have a head of presentation with about 13, 13 announcers under him and he has to monitor three stations, and he has to monitor every day; he has to monitor seven announcers; weekends - Saturday and Sunday, he has to monitor 9 announcers. What I'm saying is A.M., there's an announcer on morning duty, afternoon and night; on F.M. there's an announcer, morning, afternoon and night; on television weekday, there's one in the night, that's 7. That's 7 stations [sic], 7 announcers in a day. You know you must be a superman.'

At weekends, the 'superman' must monitor the additional two announcers who man the morning and afternoon shifts of TV's weekend (daytime) transmission. This particular experience is not as crucial in that it is not widespread, at least on that scale. There are many frustrations that are experienced, which are quite general to the industry even if of varying magnitudes. A lot of these have already been mentioned especially as they affect the output of the stations.

It is noteworthy that there is little co-operation amongst the stations particularly between the state owned and the NTA stations despite the similarities in their programming strategies and operational procedure. This is hardly surprising following the antagonisms witnessed at the inception of the stations. The professional jealousies, rivalries and mutual distrust still persist. As a result, the stations rather than complement each other's efforts, stretch their resources, covering the same/similar events, and trying to out-do each other.

Amongst the NTA stations there is provision for programme exchange as part of the attempts towards cultural exchange and national integration. There is a percentage requirement of exchange material for each station to fulfil in its programming. Besides, centralising either at zonal or network level, assures a high degree of inter-station co-operation.

The state owned stations have a less formal arrangement. Under the auspices of SOBON, State Owned Broadcasting Organisations of Nigeria, stations can and do exchange programmes. This is neither mandatory nor regular. It does not automatically cover for joint productions as the NTA can. Such initiatives have not been reported or observed.

The other, and more central body of broadcast organisations is the Broadcasting Organisation of Nigeria. This is a body to which both NTA and state owned stations belong. The body, as of present, lacks any real powers or sanctions in regulating the practices of its members. It is merely a forum where matters of mutual concern are aired. Such concerns may range from the coverage of international events such as FESTAC '77 (Festival of Arts and Culture for which BON was established) to professional practices in the wake of partial commercialisation; or even the remuneration of staff. BON cannot even be described yet as a trade lobby group. It had been dormant for several years and it is only recently that there is an attempt at revitalising it. In addition, it would appear that the government(s) have too firm a grip on the stations, with all the important appointments being politically motivated, and capital funding being from the government.

Highlights of Complexities in TV Broadcast Management

Goal Setting

Often times, because the underlying political motives are what really give impetus to the establishment of TV stations, the professional and operational plans are not given due consideration prior to commencement of services. Nor does it appear that adequate consideration is given to the fact that the course of television usage, or that of any other medium at that, is charted, by the technological progress. This insensitivity results in half-baked, ill-advised, myopic policies which have necessarily to be modified in the course of an establishment's life span. What this means then is that policies do not endure. The instability that is consequent to this have to be accommodated. They are the frustrations and headaches that station managers and operators inherit. This has been true at all levels of broadcasting - regional,

state, and federal.

In the hurry to set up WNTV for instance there was inadequate preparation for the local output. There was no sufficient arrangement for the local content of programming hence the over-reliance on the foreign input which amounted to 80 per cent of programming. It was almost automatic that since the technology was imported the software was also to be imported. It was much cheaper anyway to import, than to develop the framework and talents required to produce such software locally.

In all of this it does not appear that much thought was given to the fact that the pioneers were setting precedent, cultivating the audience's taste.

Indeed, WNTV has been the model after which many-a-station has been fashioned. Some stations (BCOS for example) even go to the extent of trying to replicate what they had considered a success in WNTV.

One could argue that a more clear-cut plan would have been such that had programming restricted to such a length that the station could cope with without being overly dependent on imported materials. Programming hours should have been determined by the number of hours that could have been produced as well as a careful selection of imported programmes chosen as they helped satisfy the station's objectives. But that would be assuming that the objectives as they were set, were not achieved.

There is no evidence to support such assumptions. There is a very real possibility that the station met the goals which it set out to achieve

at that time. Both the government and its commerce motivated technical partners seemed to have been satisfied.

The problems thus arose with the changes in what was required of the service over time. However, since a good plan should be forward looking, the quality of the plan is still here called to question.

The flaw observed in the establishment of WNTV becomes even more pronounced when the problem manifests recurrently in the trend of television broadcasting. The same excuses which were tendered in 1959 should not again be tenable in 1979, two decades later. Yet, the same pattern had been followed repeatedly. OGTV and BCOS (more so than LTV) followed trends replicable to WNTV's. These stations set out, aware of their commercial obligations as well as their mandatory public service. The stations set out to entertain and satisfy their audience whom they needed to mobilise for their socio-political mission. It was thus convenient, besides being economically sensible, to show so many foreign films with so little in house productions.

For OGTV, like the others, transmission began from a modest temporary base. But before long, the station had invested huge sums on a sophisticated 'up-to-date' studio complex. At the time of completion, the studios were nationally acclaimed. The staff, who had largely not been groomed for production, learnt on the job.

The available finances had not been prepared for the demands of in-house productions, either in terms of production costs, or the maintenance of the enviable edifices which the studio complexes were.

In one station the expensive equipment arrived before the building contract had been completed. The equipments were thus left in their crates, out in the rain; at the mercy of the elements. Not surprising that they were eventually to become a liability to the station when put to use.

In another station, there had to be a complete reliance on generating plants for electricity because the location of the station was not served by the public power supply (nor was it connected to the telephone network). This exercise proved to be a huge drain to the station's resources.

The stations had not adequately planned for the eventualities of their situation. Before long the political and economic instability had taken its toll and dealt the final blow. However, it is erroneous to blame fall in finances alone as broadcasters are wont to do. Unless the government as proprietors had been prepared to provide an unrestricted flow of funds, it was only a matter of time before the stations were shown up as white elephants. There is no indication that such a promise (of unrestricted cash flow) was ever made.

The stations had too much on their agenda to accomplish and they were not prepared for this. They had taken a headlong plunge into the market not capitalising on their strengths and avoiding their weaknesses, as conditions, are currently forcing them to. If they had done this from the onset they may have been spared of some liabilities which now beset them. For example, maintaining such large studio complexes could have been avoided had a station from the onset been planned to be a predominantly transmitting station. In which case, the onus would have

been on the independent producers to maintain the large overhead costs, which accompany production. Stations could have focused their attention on developing those programmes which government guard jealously, and for which reasons the stations were established.

Rather than get frustrated by the civil service structure and bureaucracy, the creative staff could have organised a commercial industry to feed the service.

Another area where the imprecise planning blurs focus in the television industry as it has been run is in the identification of the audience. More often than not, station operators identify their audience by the physical coverage pattern - the effectivity of the transmitter's signals. This definition in itself is subject to so many factors such that it is unreliable.

Beyond the inherent problems in that definition is the inability of the station managers to put a face to their audience. The audience is described in such vague nebulous terms when described.

The audience besides being classified by their linguistic competence are identified by such sweeping terms which are generally understood but hard to define thus be agreed upon - grassroots, elites, masses, youths educated. This is as illustrated in the definition of the audience for news: news like television is meant for everybody who has access to a set.

Examples of Audience Descriptions

Manager Programmes LTV

'Basically Lagos state is our primary target area but we are aware that our coverage area extends to Ogun, Oyo and parts of Bendel states we even get as far as Benin Republic and Ghana. We are quite mindful of this reach that is beyond our target audience, even though our scheduling is originally meant for the Lagos state audience, we plan for them.'

P.P. BCOS

'We cater for all interest, we have children as our target audience in some segment. That again would be English or Yoruba speaking. We have the children's belt; youth and adolescents and adults. We have some programmes that cut across all three ...'

NTA 12 C.P.

'Generally our audience is more rural but each programme has its own target audience, so we have programmes for both rural and urban targets. It now depends on how we weight the importance of one against the other. This is reflected in the overall composition of our programme schedule.'

AGM - Production Services (OGTV)

'OGTV has everybody in mind in its programming. Every strata of the audience's culture is represented. This forms the base of our programming for the day and the week; trying to satisfy every sector of society. Our principal coverage area is Ogun state but we are received clearly in Lagos, Oyo, Ondo and Republic of Benin. We have even had programmes in French. In fact, we once had a programme in Russian. That is our attitude, we believe that people have a right to learn as long as there is something worth learning.'

Excerpts of dialogue with News Editor referring to the audience

R: Why will all these be news if OGTV is serving the people if OGTV is the people's telly ... who exactly do you even think watches the news?

Editor

'It should be interesting to know exactly because they (sic) are people who are going round, they are important in society too. They are visiting your state, they go back with an impression [i.e. subjects of the news item in question]'

R: Would you say the average market woman in Lafenwa would be interested in the visit of the people from Command and Staff college?

Editor

'The direct answer is no! I don't kid myself. The direct

answer is no, I don't expect them to be interested.'

Excerpts of dialogue with news reporter, State House correspondent

R: When you are writing your report, for example, who are you writing your report for? Who do you have at the back of your mind that you are talking to?

Reporter

'I believe I'm talking to an ordinary literate mind outside

R: Just describe the person

Reporter

'At least a secondary school grade, Class 3 so to say will be able to grab something.

The imprecision in defining the audience is reflected in and also is a reflection of the objectives. The NTA, for example, is expected by its policy to have as many as 16 programme types, each targetted to an audience type, to fulfil certain objectives in such strata of society. The target audience is thus identified by the programme.

This shotgun orientation to programming has been attributed to the public service nature of the NTA. That means the finger again is being pointed at the underlying orientation to the business.

The statutory purpose of the NTA dictates that this must be so. The number of objectives, and the targets set, that each of those objectives may be met, are such that it is impossible to try and meet all those standards without being stifled. (Ref. to Appendix. The objectives of Television Broadcasting in Nigeria.) For example

'The objectives are meant to cover the areas of education, information and entertainment ...'

'Television broadcasting should also serve as a means of bringing news and information to as many Nigerians as it can physically reach'

The implication of this on programming is that stations attempt to be jack-of-all trades. Programme design in some cases becomes ambitious and beyond the scope of many a station.

The imposed policies in this way constrain what the programmers, who are experts on the environment which they serve, can do. The rationale, for such compromises are based on the fact, that station performance must be judged against the criteria for which those stations were set up, not just on any expectation of the stations.

Inasmuch as television in Nigeria is seen as a public service by some, it must, according to an Assistant Director, be seen to belong to everyone not the sole preserve of some.

It did not matter what his personal convictions against such an approach to running a station were, a certain NTA station manager was able to see the point in the authority's reasoning. This is that compromises made are towards objectives which if achieved, cannot be quantified in monetary terms.

'As a matter of fact, I think that if some of those things are not done, the amount of money that will be spent in killing some of the problems that will have arisen from not doing them, ... will be more than what we are loosing in terms of air-time and things like that.'

Commercial Public Services

The manager of yet another NTA station identifies the problem as being one of approach to management especially in the wake of commercialisation - that conflicting goals were being pursued.

'The NTA was set up by Decree 24 of 1977 as a national broadcasting outfit. As opposed to being an autonomous body it was funded by direct subvention from government. Commercial activities were fairly irrelevant from the onset.

But then along came the oil doom and subvention was cut from N50 million to about N11 million [an authority which had grown in the number of stations in its network, and thus staff strength].

NTA to survive had to devise a means of existing thus commercial activities were given greater prominence ... 3-4 years ago we were running primarily as a public service. Now that we have had to add on the commercial activities and even made them more important, we are blending two diametrically opposed orientations.'

This manager's view is that proper public service cannot be assured as long as commercial interests are made paramount. The advertisers concerns are certainly going to take priority over the audiences. While this may not be as glaring on certain stations yet, since NTA, as 'custodians of public interest' tends to observe strictly its codes, increasingly concessions are being made to advertisers, especially as they are being asked to pay more.

The fact that the advertisers have to be wooed means they get a greater say in the programmes. A certain station manager was worried that a seemingly remote possibility, captured in a joke, may before long be a reality. - The joke had been that for the right price, a wealthy enough person would buy air-time, not to transmit any programme at all, but to have it remain blank for the period of time. 'This dead air time has been courtesy of Mr. Rich'.

The desperate situation brought about by financial considerations must be viewed along with the station managers consideration of government interests. Such considerations needless-to-say shape the creativity. It is thus apparent that the audience is not the *raison d'etre*. Really in the final analysis, the audience interest is last to be considered except of course if such coincide with (i) governments interest, (ii)

advertiser's concerns or (iii) the media manager's schemes. The audience is very often just the recipient of the results of the bargaining of the three.

It may be inaccurate to conclude that audience interests cannot be served in a commercially motivated public service. The history of WNTV suggests that a commercial service motivated by social responsibility is possible and effective. But this station did not have the demands of a superstructure as the NTA's imposed on it.

Some station managers in state owned stations (LTV, BCOS) have defined their service in such a way that acceptable compromises are made in the execution of their objectives.

So what is the philosophy that guides your programming?

- A: 'We aim to
- (i) propagate or sell government to the people
 - (ii) to bring the people nearer to government.

We sell the plans of government to the masses, the governed and feed the government with responses of the masses.

Actually the medium is a tool of governance. Can be used for selling policy, amplifying and explaining to people in a language they understood. Thus, we are always creating programmes that will sell the policy, amplifying and explaining to people in a language they understood.' [sic]

Indeed, the ideals of the objectives are not queried. It is the chosen method of execution that is doubtful. Whilst the value cannot be quantified in monetary terms, the success of the efforts can yet not be quantified. It cannot be assumed that the laudable goals, translate into the desired goals of operation. It is yet to be demonstrated, that the NTA as its being run has fostered national unity, promoted mutual understanding and not brought the government to disrepute with the governed.

The regional television establishments which preceded the NTA had similar social service bias though their mode of operation differed. The stations even though they had a regional focus had some national consideration given to programming. More importantly is that they had a mix of programmes which was selected based on the close understanding of the audience, and an identification with their aspirations.

Programme makers are well aware of the dangers of being blatantly identified with government and being perceived as propaganda channels. They acknowledge that such an image could kill the programme and the message. Yet, they feel mandated to attempt the subtle injection of such government (social mobilisation) messages.

Their objectives do not remain constant. They are interpreted to reflect the realities of prevalent situations for example the economic depression, transition to civil rule. In responding to the socio-political realities, the stations have either ignored or not considered the audience's ability to discern their subtle attempts.

Impact of Centralisation

Centralisation of the NTA has impacted the entire television industry more than it probably set out to do. It has mapped out how funds are spread both within and outside the authority.

There is a concentration of funds at the network level. This has meant sleeker productions for the network. That, in itself, makes it a more ready revenue generator - being more attractive to advertisers and reducing the share of the pie that state owned stations, never mind how

effective they are, can aspire to get. The trend is daily being challenged.

Even within the NTA conglomerate, the production centres, as a result of centralisation find that initiative is sometimes stifled. Besides the fact that the funds available to them are [possibly] reduced; such that they are forced to be modest in their aspirations, there is the fact that they have to wait for approval from headquarters for certain categories of spending. This is in some ways considered to be a drag on action, although it is also often times beneficial to some stations. The fact, for example, that the stations are relieved of the bother of capital expenditure - all expenditure concerning transmitters and such capital intensive projects are the responsibility of the headquarters. What in this sense is a relief, however, does sometimes end up being a problem in practical terms. This problem may be more glaring in stations which are far from the headquarters (NTA Makurdi). The distance may be either in terms of physical proximity, or personal relations - the managers ability to get the system working.

The magnitude of such a situation is best imagined when one thinks of the prospects of an imminent breakdown of a transmitter.

Other possible advantages that an arrangement such as centralisation affords, are experienced in those stations which ordinarily may not be viable, but which rest on the successes of more profitable stations.

The most vehement objection to centralisation, however, is that network usurps the best of programming time. The inevitably finer productions emanating from the national directorate are transmitted at prime time -

sometimes from 7.30 p.m. but usually between 8.00 and 9.45 p.m. Whilst the period from 8.00 p.m. to 9 p.m. is mandatory only for the NTA stations, the national news between 9.00 and 9.45 p.m. is mandatory for even state government owned stations.

There is the argument that state audiences can be reached at times other than prime time. Such arguments are based on assumptions about the audience behaviour. The station managers at the states, who should know better do not agree with this but they, whilst acknowledging the constraints the system brings, have to comply with the directives from above. They have to work around the time available to them.

Another argument put up at the headquarters, in defense of the usurpation of prime time, is that the stations can hardly put even the 30 minute access time they are given, to profitable use. This again goes back to the fact that the system has for long made state stations less financially adequate to produce such programmes as can compare with the network productions. An attempt to succeed at such could require endurance, time for the programmes to prove themselves. Such time, the network is not prepared to part with. At the end of the day, the argument which appears to carry most weight is that which is both financially motivated, and draws on the authority's goals. This is that the sale of airtime at the centre provides funds with which the NTA runs even its state situated stations. This argument is further justified by the fact that national programmes are set to foster national unity.

The question to be asked is if they do, or if so many of them are required to do so. This issue is addressed by the audience in the other stage of this research which focuses on the viewers' perspective.

TELEVISION PROGRAMMING IN NIGERIA

An Overview

Unlike in the more developed nations of the world (U.S.A., Britain) programming on Nigerian television is more limited to certain parts of the day and night especially on week days. Transmission usually commences in the early evening; round about 4.00 p.m. It lasts for about six hours. At weekends, transmission is usually for longer periods. The length and the pattern of the weekend transmission varies with the ability, and the motivations of the station. The more commercially aggressive stations usually attempt to run for longer hours. It is on such stations that a viewer will find a 'breakfast' service at the weekend. Transmission here starts about 7.00 a.m. Some other stations begin transmission a few hours later; at 9.00 a.m. or 10.00 and some other stations do not start till mid-day.

In some other parts of the country, outside the focus area, transmission, even at weekends, does not commence until later in the afternoon, as with week days. This goes to show the extent of the media presence in the study focus area.

Generally the stations close down about midnight. There are some (NTA) stations with particularly lean resources, and different managerial approaches, which close down earlier at about 11.15 p.m. From the viewers perspective, what all this means is that there is programming available, from 4.00 p.m. till midnight on weekdays and then from 7.00 a.m. to midnight at weekends. There is thus the possibility of having 104 hours of programming per week.

Programme Scheduling

All the stations studied, except one (the television service of the Broadcasting Corporation of Oyo State-BCOS) operate a quarterly system of programming. This means that the schedules are valid for about three months. Even when the schedule is drawn up for a new quarter, there are some programmes like the news which do not lose their slots. There are other programmes, which are also more or less fixtures, and this depends on the defined mission of the station. For instance, a station may want to be seen as a leader in entertainment or a station of sophistication, or one which serves the people and, as such, will largely retain the types of programmes which makes it qualify for such images. Often the use of time does not change very much, as this reflects the audience that is served. What in effect changes, may be the specific programmes. The specific programmes are simply the vehicles which execute the declared purpose.

With the many problems that the stations face, production has been largely curtailed (as discussed earlier). It is hard to find new programmes on the schedules. Low staff morale coupled with a heavy work load means they are not coming up with new ideas. When they do, tight resources keep the ideas in the files. As a result, very few new productions, which are in-house, are to be found on the schedules for several consecutive quarters.

This is not the case with sponsored, independent productions though. With the frustrations in the TV stations, and the exodus of staff, the independent production outfits are mushrooming. Those productions which have sponsors are attractive to the stations, often not for their quality, but for the revenue they bring.

Archival material from the stations are also sources of programme changes in a schedule. This is more applicable to the older stations, or those who have the facility of a central pool. The stations, thus, do not really change their 'clothes', they merely recycle them in different ways. What this means though is that the observations in one quarter's schedules, remain relevant for another, especially when there is closeness in the time frames.

The above applies to the BCOS as well even though it operates a CADENCE system. This system is simply preferred for its flexibility as a Controller programmes in the station explained.

'The advantage of the CADENCE system is that it is flexible. You may discover that when you have a programme idea it does not last longer than four weeks, then you are stuck if you ran a quarterly schedule... it [CADENCE] makes room for generating new ideas [but] Advertisers want a more steady schedule in which the slot they can buy will not keep changing.'

So, the flexibility in the Cadence system does not mean that it is any easier to run as the programmers operating within that system themselves had found.

'It is more convenient for us to run a quarterly schedule. Cadence always keeps you on your toes; you are always brainstorming. It is a good thing if not for commercial interests.'

Indeed, it is the flexibility in this system that makes it more adaptable to the commercial interests. Contracts are not bound by the quarterly time frames, for instance. While this may work against, it could also be put to use by the station in that new, better, negotiations can be made any time as long as the desired audience is delivered. This illustrates the importance of commercial considerations in the entire business of programming. Despite the fact that all the

stations are engaged like this, they all lay claims to having public service orientations.

Five of the schedules discussed herein were in operation in the first quarter of 1991. The BCOS schedule was that in operation in the months which would have been the second quarter of 1991. The last schedule for NTA7 discussed here was that operation on the last quarter of 1990. These schedules can be regarded as typical at least for the study period for the reasons enumerated above.

The NTA Approach

For the NTA stations the programme is largely centrally planned. This is geared towards attaining a uniformity, and also to ensure that the objective of unifying the country is achieved.

There is a master plan which originates from the Directorate of Programmes. This serves as a guide for the stations. The plan (or dummy schedule) structures the broadcast day into time belts and recommends what programme type or what target audience is to be reached at such times. For instance, the time block between 5.00 and 6.00 p.m. is reserved as the Children's belt; 7.00 to 9.00 is Family belt. There are also recommended blocks for sports, educational and other types of programme.

The format is guided by the corporate objectives amongst other things. It assumes an understanding of the audience behaviour and it also attempts to fulfil the several broad programming objectives. There are as many as 16 programme classifications stemming from the need to reach all strata of society with national (developmental) messages. These

classifications are based on either subject interest; genre; format; target audience; or a combination of any of the above. These classifications are often times not mutually exclusive. What goes under the broad category of children's often includes drama, talks - story telling, even interviews with top government officials who seize the opportunity to narrate the 'government's story' as is the case with *Speak Out* on the network service.

Besides providing the framework, the Directorate of Programmes actually schedules all the network programmes. It is around this schedule that the state situated NTA stations plan their own output. The drafting of the network schedule is informed by what programmes are available for the quarter from Programmes, as well as the News Directorates. Series may be discontinued for different reasons other than a normal planned life span. For example, there may be legal tussles; disbandment of cast and crews, which halt production unceremoniously. Replacements have to be found hurriedly for such programmes.

Scheduling decisions are also informed by what is considered necessary. Largely, the ability of a programme to attract sponsorship is considered, but when the anticipated role of a programme measures up to public interest, it may get scheduled even when there is no sponsor. Here the authority exercises its role as the custodian of public interest in making decisions about acceptability of the programmes within the limits of set standards. This is more than can be said for some state government owned stations, who turn a blind eye to programmes which are questionable; even seeking loopholes to justify presence of such on the screen. The primary reason for excusing these is the revenue that is thereby accrued.

It used to be that audience research was conducted by the stations, especially the NTA. The central acquisition department had audience panels evaluating available options. These exercises guided the department in determining what it purchased and therefore what was scheduled. This type of research has for a few years been suspended at the various stations due to funding constraints and other reasons discussed earlier.

Even when it was conducted, the research at the state-owned stations were more commercially motivated. In one case (OGTV) the research was conducted by the Engineering department to evaluate their performance in the market area, was to serve as a guide for the commercial officers who went scouting for adverts and paid announcements. The results were not routinely passed to the Programmes department to guide them.

The same is true for another station (BCOS) which had research that was commissioned to independent agencies. The BCOS in its case went a step further by using its research findings for image making to its outside public; and as a morale booster for the staff. The results were published in the organisation's newsletter, although they were not routinely passed to the programmers for them to be used as tools.

As a result of lack of research information, the various stations devised a way of having audience opinion represented in the scheduling exercise. There was input from staff of certain status, irrespective of what departments they belonged to. These staff are considered public relations officers of sorts; they being in touch with the public in daily life, are expected to be aware of public response. The staff were

thus qualified to act as the voices of such members of the public.

The draft schedule presented by the Programmes department must be examined and approved by a central management board at the various relevant levels (that is, federal or state level). As a result, there is an understanding of the stations output in all quarters. There is a corporate identification with the schedule. It is thus not just the end product of the efforts of one department - (Programmes) alone.

At the network level the schedule must receive the approval of the central board of management, headed by the Director-General. Thereafter it becomes operational and is sent to the various stations.

The politics of scheduling at the network level is influenced by the linguistic and cultural complexities of the nation. The network programmes are necessarily in English. Even if some interjections are made in the vernacular, they are merely part of the characterisation. There are a few (drama) programmes wherein pidgin English is largely used. This widens the appeal of such programmes and increases the audience base. Notable examples are the *New Masquerade*, the discontinued *New Village Headmaster* and *New Samanja*. These examples were all originally produced for local audiences, before being taken over for a national audience (hence the prefix *New* before their titles).

There are several productions which were not originally conceived for local audiences. These productions were conceived with the English language as the medium of expression, unlike some of the above where the thought had been translated into English. These productions, therefore, inevitably take on some foreign semblances even though they are local

productions. This is also a reflection of the impact of exposure to Western culture in many other ways. It is a feature of a wider socialising process promoted by free flow of communications in a multi-cultural society. This means that even 'authentic' local productions, sourced from a different culture will still be 'foreign' to a viewer not familiar with that culture. In effect, there will thus be a percentage of the local productions, which are only so qualified because of the location of the production. They may have no bearing on the real tastes and values of the audience.

One of the aims of network programming is to give every Nigerian a sense of belonging irrespective of what part of the country he/she may be situated. ⁱⁿ For this reason a 'proper mix' of programmes, that includes as wide a range of programme types as is feasible, is scheduled for a national audience. This is irrespective of what is done at state level. The network aims to reach each Nigerian with a federal voice.

There is an extension of that philosophy in the NTA (state) stations. Unlike the network though, they aim to reach the grassroots indigenous audience of the state they serve, with the 'federal voice'. To be effective they are expected to programme predominantly in the vernacular. It is the policy that 60-70 per cent of their total production be local. One interpretation of that policy would be, to have 60-70 per cent programme in the vernacular. But this is not so. Indeed, it cannot be so with the imposed framework from network already taking as much as 40 per cent and the stations bound to pay for centrally acquired foreign programmes which they may not even desire. Having paid for such, they feel obliged to schedule them. Already more than half of the programming hours have then been centrally accounted for. (Ref. N + 1

TV Charts

in Classification 2 tables; Chart No. 1) Ref pg 122

Another policy guideline is that the stations (NTA) should devote 16 per cent of their time to serve the interest of the linguistic minority. There are no special provisions for the physically disabled, the deaf for instance as obtains in Britain. The stations, with the resources they have, simply cannot cope, even if there were. In fact, catering for the needs of the linguistic minorities in the instances cited are limited to the least ambitious productions possible. In none of the stations examined does the minority audience get 16 per cent of the programming. (Re - category 3 in Classification 2 Table 1) pg 122

This provision for linguistic minorities does not suffice in some areas anyway as it is difficult to establish the dominant language. This was the case in the former Bendel state, for example. The creation of more states, with less diverse pockets of audiences, may prove helpful to programmers in this respect. Such problems were not encountered in the study focus area.

Yoruba (Category 2) is undoubtedly widely understood, irrespective of the existing dialects. There are six native dialects in Ogun state - Remo, Ijebu, Egba, Egbado, Egun and Awori. Of these, Egun is acknowledged as the minority both in Ogun and adjoining Lagos state.

It is important to note, though, that these dialects are quite radically different both in terms of their colloquialisation and more so in terms of their tonality. To understand any one of them, one requires to have an accustomed ear. Of the above, Egun is that which is most radically different; most exclusive, hence the tendency to consider it to be a

distinct minority language. (Category 3) Ref Pg 122.

This consideration is evident in the programming of the stations serving both Ogun and Lagos states. Oyo state which borders Ogun state on the north-west has a more linguistically homogeneous audience in spite of the dialects therein. The stations which served Oyo state thus did not have to contend with the complexities of a linguistically diverse audience. (Chart No. 1 BCOS; NTA Ibadan) Ref Pg 122.

Besides the indigenous audiences, there are also the diverse cosmopolitan audiences to be considered. Migration and re-settlement of people from various cultures are evident even in rural areas, hence there is still the need to use the English language, even if it be pidgin. English is still the official national language. This is evident in all the schedules including the local schedules (Category 1 in Classification 2 Chart No. 1) Pg 122.

Another reason why English is a feature on the schedule is because of the foreign input within the schedules. (Category 5) These programmes vary in their context and their origin. For instance, there are dramas, (comedies, soaps, detectives), the movies, children's programmes, cartoons, magazines, enlightenment programmes, entertainment, music, news, and sports. The sports programmes are predominantly wrestling and football. The sources of these programmes vary as well. There are programmes from USA, UK, Germany, Italy. There is one, teaching Russian as a language; and there is a regular slot on one of the stations (BCOS) for Indian movies.

At the State Level

Whereas network programming is free of restrictions- the NTA stations at the states have other considerations to be mindful of. These stations have to contend with:

- i) the framework imposed on them from headquarters - within the time available, after the network schedule has been outlined, they must endeavour to satisfy the policy guidelines laid out for them. Even then, they still have to consider the network programming so that efforts are not duplicated. This is why, for instance, there is no locally produced educational programmes on any of the NTA stations;
- ii) the efforts of their local competitors must also be considered to ensure that they are not over-whelmed by the competitors' strong points. This is very important bearing in mind that the state government stations, though claiming to be public service, are so more commercially inclined they they could sacrifice public interests for financial gains. Competition thus tends to be what is more commercially viable; that is what sponsors want rather than that which is considered good in 'public interest'. The highlight of this difference is glaring in the programme mix of the stations. Take the concentration of the movies and foreign programmes on the state stations as opposed to the government programmes; the talks and the documentaries from the NTA stations. There is also the concentration of the sponsored religious programmes and those featuring unorthodox healers referred to as metaphysicians on the state stations. These programmes are highly restricted on the NTA stations.

(Compare distribution of minutes by programme type Table 1 also figure of daily schedules in appendix.)

TV Charts: Weekly Cumulative Total of Programme Type and Language

	NTA Ibadan	NTA Abeokuta	NTA Chan. 10	NTA Chan. 7	OGTV	LTV/LWT	BCOS
News	935	1025	685	585	1105	1050	1030
Drama	450	630	525	420	630	545	295
Education	150	180	150	90	60	0	90
Children	270	380	570	300	165	210	125
Religious	115	60	110	60	480	510	360
Health	0	60	0	0	30	90	0
Metaphysics	0		30	0	210	210	0
Youth	60		60	60	30	0	0
Women	30	30	30	60	60	60	60
Talk	390	315	225	390	470	105	290
Entertainment	90	90	190	90	0	60	85
Enlightenment	0	150	30	0	60	185	30
Government	180	150	120	180	0	60	85
Musical	180	105	320	90	60	320	230
Movies	120	0	165	0	630	180	870
Magazine	0	0	0	0	90	105	180
Cookery	30	0	30	30	0	30	30
Documentary	60	60	150	60	0	0	60
Sports	325	210	270	300	240	210	345
Promos	60	60	0	105	265	0	215
Unclassified	90	0	0	0	0	30	30
Classification # 2							
1	775	565	1390	630	1190	1395	1055
2	945	730	90	825	1135	990	1055
3	0	30	0	105	45	60	0
4	90	240	30	75	535	255	760
5	360	490	830	330	1395	975	1225
N	1425	1440	1425	1155	285	285	315
Cumulative	3595	3495	3765	3120	4585	3960	4410

Table 1

At the bottom line of the stations' considerations are the peculiar needs of their audiences. In spite of how constraining the aforementioned considerations could have been, the stations still have the responsibility to reach the various segments of their audience with the developmental messages, and thereby fulfil the reason for which they had been established.

The considerations enumerated above are also observed in the operations of state-government owned stations, although perhaps in varying degrees. The fact for instance that state owned stations are compelled to carry only the 45 minutes newscast from the network service, gives them more free time to schedule their own choice of programmes. On average, that is about 2 hours 47 minutes a day (about 17½ hours a week). In addition to this, two of the state-owned stations have opted out of the compulsory transmission of the Sunday newscast in its entirety. Their reason for this is that the latter part of the programme, which they do not transmit, is not always hard news. Since the programme is sponsored, the stations feel they ought to be paid for carrying it. Indeed, the reasoning is applied on other days as well, even with the programme they acknowledge is news. The stations black out news items which they reckon are commercial stories, for which the network would have been paid. Rather than carry such stories, they promote their station or play music as fillers.

As illustrated in the above, the seriousness of the funding problem has contributed to such laxity in operations. This often borders on insensitivity to set standards. In the absence of the added commercial considerations brought about by the financial plight experienced in the nation, the network and the state government owned stations, have

similar guidelines guarding their operations. Presently it is the NTA which has documented, well articulated codes and guidelines to which it is bound unlike the state stations. There is a tendency towards being uncompromising. The state stations confess to having to make compromises which the NTA for its size, pride and prominence, cannot dare make. As far as the goals go, the stations are all geared towards the same purposes - to inform; to educate, to entertain. On closer inspection, all the stations see their roles as being to bring the government closer to the people; to foster an understanding of government policy; to mobilise the people; to give them a forum to be entertained. As a result of the above, there is a striking resemblance in the various schedules. For example, the unrivalled dominance of news in all the schedules as well as the prominence of Government and Talks programmes. (Ref Appendix - Daily Schedule Graphs)

The resemblance is also due, in part, to the similarity of the plights that the stations experience as has been described earlier. Besides, it is a feature of the pattern of supply and distribution of programmes. As a result of this there are certain programmes which feature on several stations.

With those stations which belong to the network, their foreign programmes are centrally acquired. They also have access to a central pool of local programmes from other stations. Stations, particularly those with similar socio-linguistic areas, are encouraged to exchange their own productions. This is to reduce total cost of production, as well as it being used to expose audience to other cultures and foster unity. All these are in addition to the network transmission.

There is also the syndication of programmes often by sponsors and advertisers who, wanting to saturate the market, place the same programme on different stations. *Family Menu* sponsored by Maggi Cubes, and *Alawada*, a comedy in Yoruba, sponsored by Cafenol are examples of this. There are also the religious programmes - *Another Life* the American produced soap opera, *700 Club* and many more local productions have in this way become features on several schedules. With the stations which carry them, the alternative healers ('Aranfaajo' and such) also engage in the type of syndication described above in order to saturate the market.

It is noteworthy that with the limited private sector in Nigeria there are limitations on the sponsors which the stations can expect to have. This has meant a limited number and variety of advertisements which get aired. Stations thus have to solicit, aggressively, for personal paid advertisements. These are notices of personal or social events, meetings, obituaries, chieftaincy ceremonies, weddings, stolen vehicles, seasonal greetings, goodwill messages and there is also room for the small-time businesses to make announcements about their wares.

That independent production and other servicing areas for the television industry ^{have} yet to be developed has meant a reliance on the same limited corps of performers by the various stations. There had hitherto been negative social attitudes towards performing artistes and this had discouraged growth within the sector. This attitudinal problem was further compounded by poor remuneration, and the poor state of relevant physical structures in the society. It is only recently (late 1970s) that bolder efforts were made on a wider scale. The result of all these is that the same faces tend to keep appearing on the various stations,

even if it be in different programmes. Splinter groups come up with ideas similar to that of original groups, so there is also similarity of format and content.

The implication of the above is that though there are alternative stations available for viewing, options often times can be limited. It must be reiterated, though, that the pluralism of stations existing in the focus area is by accident rather than by design.

The language of a production is indicative of the target audience. The local language programmes are often geared towards the indigenous audience. The English language programmes are usually targetted towards the more educated audience. Similar deductions cannot be made from the classification by programme-types. For instance, 'talks' programmes cannot be seen as appealing to elites alone. The technique of presentation has been applied to different types of audience. In some cases the programme format had been dictated by the expediency of the production situation. Programme design had often been guided by affordable costs. What perhaps is more important, is the classification of programme by subject which also reflects the targetted audience segments.

On its part, the programme schedule reflects the presumptions about audience use of time. It is against this background that the following discussion should be viewed. Each schedule illustrates the station's understanding of its audience. The overall picture presented is the context in which the audience choices must be situated, for such choices to become meaningful.

Programme Flow Analysis

Following is a description of the highlights of the programming strategy on the various stations. For detailed information of each programme rundown, see the appendix for the time flow charts and comparative graphs of daily schedules.

NTA Abeokuta

This is the federal (network) station established to serve the state in which the study focus area is located. Because it belongs to the network, about 55 per cent of its programming is centrally acquired (Re Table 1 - Classification 2). Of these, 14 per cent are foreign sourced English language programmes (Category 5) and 41.2 per cent from the network (N).

There is an additional 16 per cent of locally produced programmes which are also in English (Category 1). Thus a station, with a largely rural audience with presumably little competence with English as a medium communication, has about 70 per cent of its programming in English. The programmes are not sub-titled or translated.

The category of programmes which are bi-lingual (Category 4) having made use of interpreters, or incorporated segments in the local language are only 6.86 per cent. These figures contrast sharply with 21.6 per cent of programming in the local languages (Category 2; Yoruba, 20.8 and Category 3; Egun the minority language .8 per cent).

This pattern already is a delineation of the audience prospects which the station can hope for.

NTA Abeokuta commences its weekend transmission at noon. On weekdays, Monday to Friday, transmission begins at 4.00 p.m.

There are certain fixtures within the schedule (schedule 1). The major newscast, for instance, is scheduled for 7.00 till 7.30 p.m. daily. This newscast is in English.

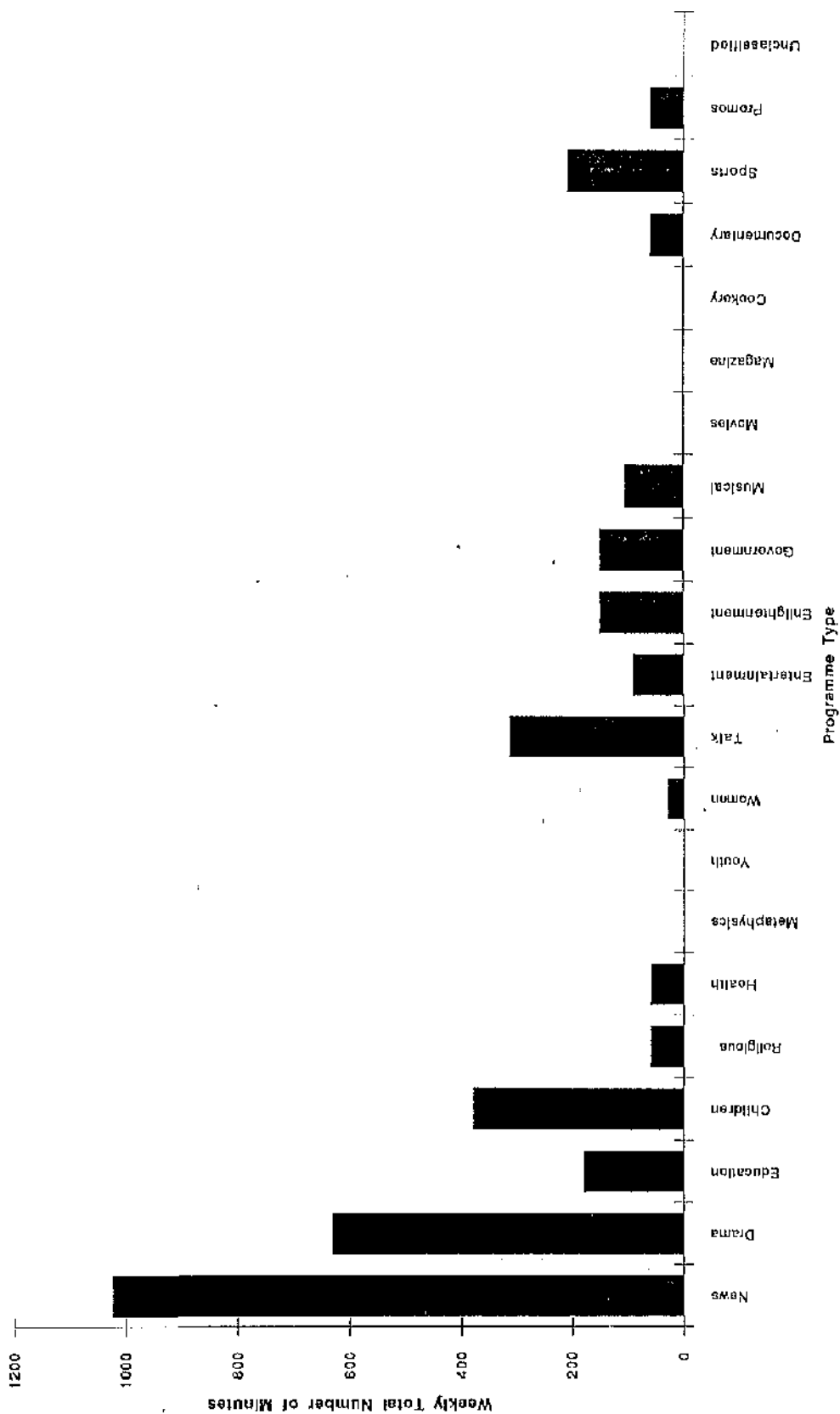
The 30 minute Yoruba newscast is scheduled for an earlier time of 6.00 p.m. on weekdays. At the weekends, the Yoruba is reduced to 15 minutes and it also loses its 6 o'clock slot. There is no scheduled position for newscasts in the minority dialect (Egun) as obtains on some other stations receivable in this audience market. The consistency of the positioning of the English newscasts is a programming strategy known as stripping; it aids habit formation.

News programmes account for about 29 per cent of total programming hours.

Drama is the next biggest chunk of programming but these programmes vary and they are scattered about on the schedule. There is at least one drama programme a day, but the positioning is not consistent. There are more drama slots concentrated at the weekends. There are two slots on Friday, three on Saturday and six on Sundays. These programmes vary in length and language; some are 60 minutes, others are 30; some are in English, others in the vernacular. Four out of the six dramas featured on Sunday, for example, are in Yoruba.

On the whole, Sunday is the day with the highest concentration of Yoruba broadcasts in the entire week (230 minutes). It is the day when the

NTA ABEOKUTA: (Weekly Cumulative) Total Number of Minutes of Each Programme Type



Station Output Graph No. 1

indigenous audience can hope for an almost uninterrupted service.

The educational programmes that are broadcast on this station are all from the network service. These programmes occupy the 4.30 to 5.00 p.m. strip on weekdays. In fact, it is for this reason that NTA stations resume transmission as early as they do on weekdays. Rather than operate a separate educational service earlier, which would warrant a break before evening transmission, as was the case instructional television was moved to a later time of 4.30 p.m. Schools would have closed at this time. The evening transmission was also moved to an earlier time. With 30 minutes each day of the 5-day school week, educational programmes make up about 14 per cent of the total programming hours.

In compliance with the guide from headquarters, the programmes for the younger audience are features between 5.00 and 7.00 p.m. These programmes make up (380 minutes) almost 11 per cent of programming time. One-third of this comes from the network service.

As with other NTA stations, certain time blocks within this station's schedule have been conceded to the network transmission (the following time blocks, 4.30-5.00 p.m.; 6.30-7.00 p.m.; 8.00-9.45 p.m. and 10.00-11.15 p.m.). Locally scheduled programmes thus have to be placed around these. As a result of this chequered use of the time, besides news, children's programmes are the only ones in a consistent time belt.

Going by the language and subject of the programmes in the 5.30-6.00 p.m. time belt, the station aims to serve various indigenous audience segments. The assumption is that they are available at such times.

Two of these programmes are on health, one is religious, one is on

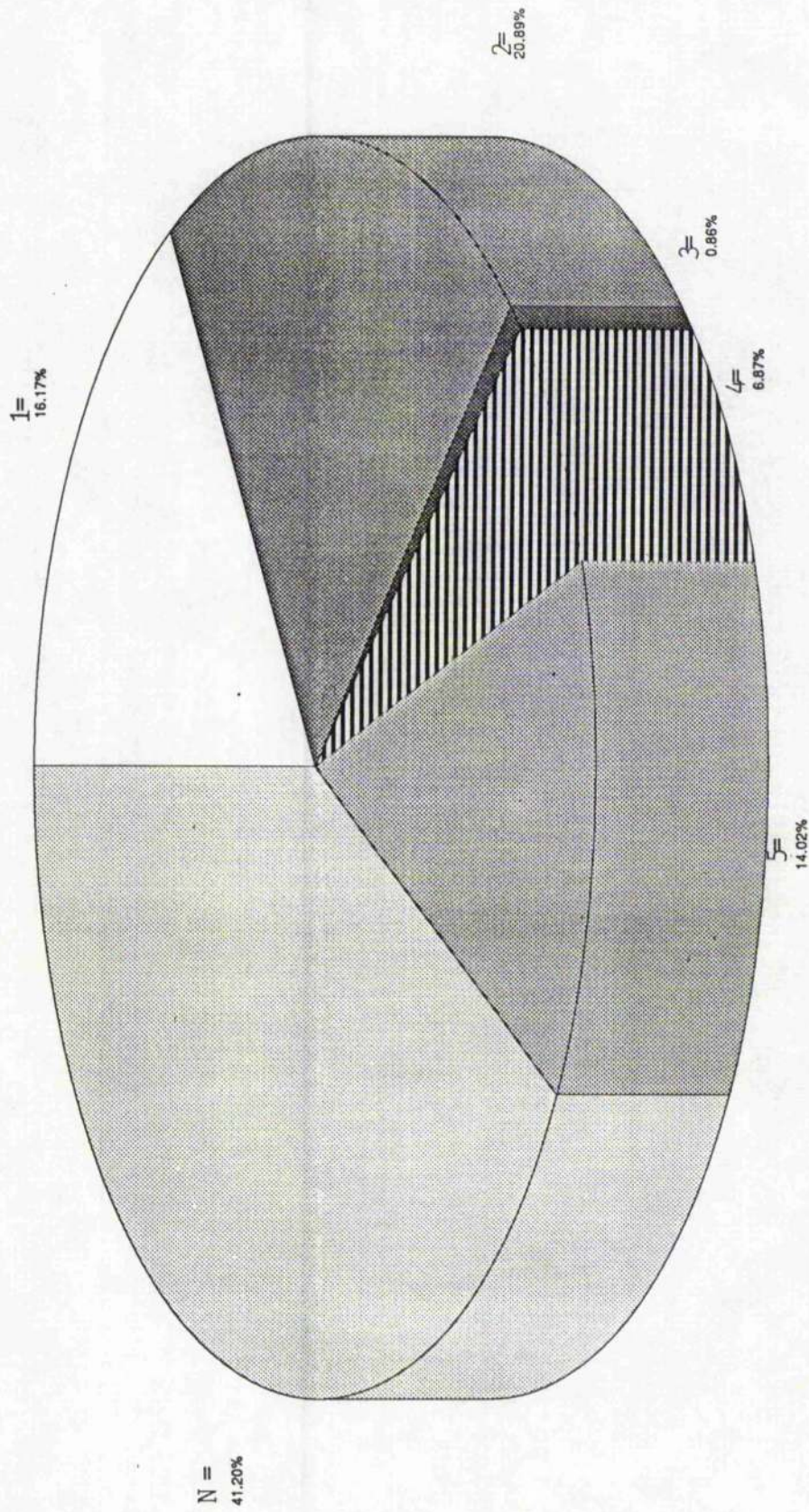
current affairs/general interest. The only programme for the linguistic minority is in this block. The programmes assume a less privileged, less informed audience.

With the exception of Sunday and Tuesday, the 7.30-8.00 p.m. time block is filled up with various talk programmes. On Sunday there is a comedy in Yoruba - *Alawada*, and on Tuesday a family/children quiz programme also in Yoruba. Indeed, with the exception of Saturday, all the programmes in that time strip are in the Yoruba language.

Besides the many (subtle) attempts at injecting government messages into programmes, there are several programmes on the network service which are aimed at highlighting and explaining the government's positions on issues. This sort of programme accounts for 4.2 per cent of programming time. They are featured three days a week; twice on Tuesday. In addition, several of the talk programmes are focused on acceptable civic responsibilities, developments on the political scene particularly as regards the government's transition to civil rule.

The checkered use of the rest of the schedule (having considered the network programmes) makes it difficult to build up any particular type of audience. One common feature of the programmes featured in this prime time block is that they are for an English speaking presumably more enlightened, audience. Only two of the programmes (one drama and one talks) are local production. The network takes a sizeable chunk of the block on weekdays, and the other time-slots are filled with foreign productions (one documentary and two dramas). At the weekends, transmission is rounded up with drama productions. There are no movies on this station. Compared with other stations, the foreign programmes on

NTA ABEOKUTA: Weekly Cumulative Total Percentage of Language Coverage



this one are scheduled sparingly. Ten of the 13 are scheduled for periods before 8.00 p.m. These are children's programmes, enlightenment, entertainment and drama programmes. This means that although adults have a restricted supply of foreign productions, the children like those in other parts of the world are treated to cartoons, also to popular American productions like *Sesame Street*, *Contact 321*. Going by the scheduled times, the children are not precluded from watching the drama and enlightenment (general information programmes).

In spite of the 6 per cent of programming devoted to sports, there is no local sports production on this station. All its sports coverage comes from the network service.

Scheduled musicals count for only 3 per cent of programming but, in addition, musicals are also readily used for fillers. Their use in this manner is not reflected on the schedule. It is the frequency of their usage in this manner, more so than the sheer time they take up, which makes them an interesting feature on the screen. Yet, this is not reflected on the schedule. In like manner, the advertisements are not scheduled either, though they are a feature on the screen.

The biggest problem with this station is with the quality of reception even within its primary market area, Ogun state. In Sagamu, the study focus area, there were several homes in which NTA Abeokuta was simply not an option because the signals were just not there.

NTA Ikeja

This is a station situated in Lagos, intended to serve the indigenous Lagos state audience. Its signals are received in Sagamu as in some

other parts of Ogun state. Because these are fringe signals, the quality of reception could on occasions be, understandably, poor.

The constitution of the station's target audience is similar to that of a station in Ogun state. There are (NTA) sister stations operating within the station's designated market area, which cater for the special needs of the cosmopolitan audience. The programming decisions of those stations affect its own; narrowing down its focus. Although they are not meant to be competitors, there are still areas of common interest especially since it is through the cosmopolitan audience that advertising revenue can be got.

There is no formal educational programme on this station's schedule (re Appendix Prog Rundown Schedule No. 2). This is only possible because of the existence of other NTA stations within the same market.

On weekdays, transmission begins at 5.30 p.m. whilst at weekends the station is opened at 2.00 p.m. This means it is one of the last stations to resume transmission on any day. By so doing it conserves its hard stretched resources.

The largest single category of programmes on this station is the news (28.36%) Table 1, also Fig. No. 2. There are newscasts in three different languages daily. The length of time committed to each one of these is not equal. The position, likewise, lacks equal degrees of attraction.

There are more newscasts in English when one reckons the major one at 9.00 o'clock, and other newscasts from the network service. In addition, there is the earlier news in brief and the major local newscast at 7.30

p.m. Positioning the latter at this time appears to be in deference to the newscast on the other (older) NTA stations which transmits their newscast between 7.00 and 7.30 p.m. They had been on for so much longer.

The 15 minute newscast in Egun is positioned at the earlier time of 6.05 following right after the *News in Brief*. The Yoruba newscast which is also 15 minutes long is at the later hour of 9.45 p.m., dovetailing into the network newscast. This pattern reflects the station's priorities and assumptions about its audience. The Egun audience are rural and presumed to be available earlier on in the evening, whereas a significant proportion of the Yoruba audience, those dwelling in the city are understood to be unavailable till the later hours. The fact that all the newscasts maintain regular slots and are stripped across the schedule throughout the week provides a basis for habit formation.

The first hour of transmission on weekdays which is between 5.00 and 6.00 p.m. is basically targeted to the younger viewers. Besides the local comedy in Yoruba, on Tuesday, and the musical on Thursday, the other programmes within that time block are specifically intended for children or the youth.

There is a break in the build up of that audience segment with the two news slots and the commercial break for the personal paid announcements. Thereafter, the network programmes for the younger audiences (children and youths) are featured.

By 7.00 p.m. there is a concentration on the adult audiences. The 7.00-7.30 p.m. slot is used to serve a variety of interest. On Monday there is a programme on farming; on Tuesday the focus is on political issues;

on Wednesday the discussion is for women on issues of interest to them. On Thursday there is a drama in Yoruba and on Friday there is sports and an Islamic religious programme. This is the slot that is matched against the main news, on the sister station.

There is an obvious attempt by this station to balance the religious fare that it schedules. There are only two religious programmes on this station and they are not independent productions. The Islamic programme is on Friday in observance of the Moslem day of worship. The other programme is the first programme on Sunday, the Christian day of worship. This one caters for the needs of the Christian viewers.

The 8.00-11.00 p.m. prime time block, when the largest audience shares can be expected, is taken up by network programmes. The slots within this block, to which the station has access, are used for either news or talk programmes. The one programme which is commercial and within that slot is like a soft news show (an idea similar to *N.B.* on Scottish Television). In this case those featured must have paid a sum to announce what events they have planned, when and where.

The talk programmes are basically discussions on civic responsibilities, current affairs and there is a report on the (state) government as well. That these programmes are on at this time suggests the priority given to them.

It is within this pattern that the station closes down on weekdays after the 15 minutes newscap from the network transmission at 11.00 p.m. Friday is an exception, as there is a drama scheduled to round up the day's transmission. This marks the commencement of the weekend.

The weekend transmission consists of more lighthearted programmes. Besides the news slots on Saturday, there are three slots for sports. One of these is wrestling. There is a 30 minute talk programme in Yoruba which has a more general focus. The other programmes for the day also have an entertainment orientation.

On Sunday, transmission begins with the Christian religious programme. This is followed by a review of the news highlights for the previous week. The programmes which come after these are such as have general interest, and without the (blatant) government/political undertones. There is Cookery; Music and Drama. The particular drama is the success story of the station. It occupied the 4.00-5.00 p.m. slot. It is a drama in Yoruba employing the traditional story-telling techniques. At the end the story-teller, in this instance presented as the 'chief' of the land of wisdom/experience, does not keep the audience guessing what the morale of the story is. At the denouement, he inquires of his audience, an extension of whom the real audience is, what their reaction to the story is. Thereafter, he confirms what his intended message was to be.

The programme, *Feyikogbon* is an anthology drama, set in contemporary society, with topical themes. It resembles the relevant life experiences of the audiences and deals with issues which elude the discussions/talk programmes. So popular is *Feyikogbon* that it has been on the schedules of other NTA station which share linguistic traits. The programme is listed as one of the station's star shows.

The programme which follows *Feyikogbon* on Sunday is another star show. It is an Ombudsman programme where the station appoints a panel to deal

with the real social problems of (real) people. The audience is allowed to share the experiences of the aggrieved as well as the investigative and negotiating processes that lead up to the panel's proffered solution. This programme is also in Yoruba. It is considered to be a service to the audience and the society. Rather than go to the courts to seek redress, the aggrieved can appeal for justice and exert pressure through a societal conscience. There is a strong emphasis on the fact that such programmes are not legal courts of justice, even though this one has lawyers on the panel, who point out the legal implications of actions. There is preference for the consensus of opinion, the respect for social morality. There are similar programmes on other stations which are also very popular.

It is interesting that the two-star programmes are scheduled back-to-back. This reflects the importance of this time block to the station. It is generally admitted that these, of all the station's programmes, are those which the station's target audience can really enjoy. This is for the simple reason that is the only realistic time that they can be reached. At a producer's meeting, most of the producers themselves for various reasons confess their inability to watch the weekday programmes which they produced. They thus knew that Sunday was the most effective time to transmit programmes which they would not want to 'throw away'.

Right after *Gboromiro*, the Ombudsman programme, the pattern on the schedule reverts to that noticeable on weekdays with the news and network programming dominating. The access slots in the network time block are used for a comedy in Yoruba, and a community report.

The programme Italian soccer found on the Sunday 8.00-9.00 block in this

particular schedule is not typical. This block is traditionally used for the star drama programme on network. This is usually a soap opera. The Italian soccer had been scheduled as a replacement following unanticipated problems in the production of the on-going series, and a new one had not yet been developed. It was a desperate measure, yet it shows the network's understanding of the national audience. Drama is undoubtedly the crowd puller, but in the absence of a good drama, soccer was considered to be the next best substitute even for a 'family' audience. Note that Sunday 8.00-9.00 p.m. is the most enviable, most coveted time block on Nigerian television.

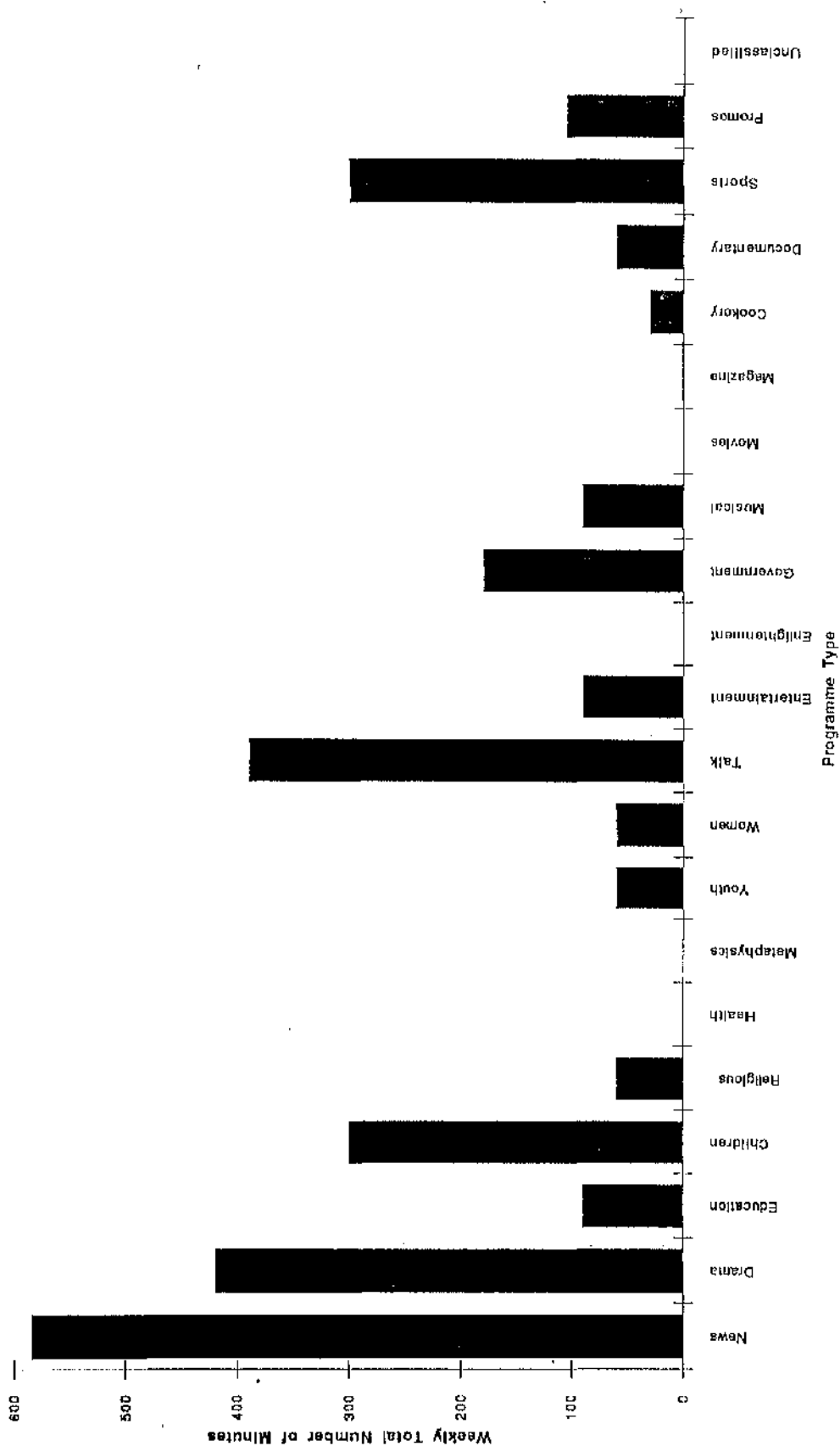
Following the network newscast at 9.45 p.m. is the major Yoruba newscast. This is followed by a one hour current affairs discussion programme in English. The day's transmission is rounded off with another drama in Yoruba. This slot is also known to be popular amongst the audience segments for whom it is meant - the under-privileged, less educated Yoruba speaking audience groups.

It would appear that serving in a market along with ^a sister station has helped this station to have a better focus in its services. Rather than attempting to beat others at their game, it has carved out a niche for itself in the market of audiences. About half (52.40%) of its programmes are locally produced. Network programmes account for 37.02 per cent. 10.57 per cent of the programmes are foreign. (Ref. Pie Chart No. 2)

The minority audience get a 3.36 per cent share of the programming. If this is a small share, the consolation is that it is steady.

Besides news, which is the highest category of programmes (28.5%), drama

NTA CHANNEL 7: (Weekly Cumulative) Total Number of Minutes of Each Programme Type

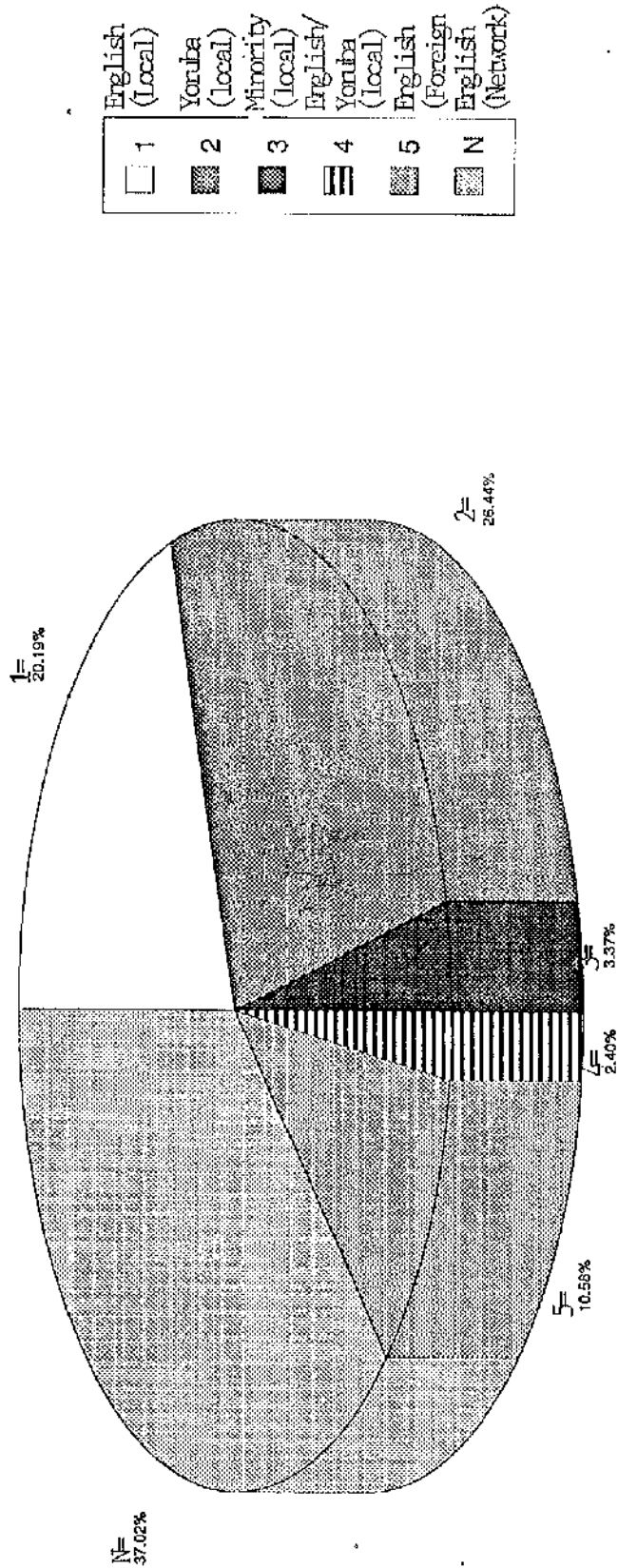


takes the next highest chunk of the time (13.46%). This is less than half of the time devoted to news. The talks programmes amount to 12.5 per cent of the programmes; whilst sports, all of which was from the network service, came to 9.61 per cent. The other categories share the remainder of the time. Of the lot, government programmes alone accounted for 5.76 per cent of the time. There were no health programmes on during this quarter although it can be presumed that topics on health issues would have been dealt with in other programmes (for example, women's programmes). Note that there were no movies on this schedule as well. (Ref. Station output Graph No. 2)

The pattern found on this station, as with NTA Abeokuta to be more precise, depict the limited capabilities of the stations, as well as the planned strategy. Whilst the stations do not feel the need to schedule movies for their target audience, for example, they would want more local drama productions on the schedule. These are known to be ready winners with the audience, but drama productions are too engaging, and too expensive for the stations to churn out in the quantity which they would want. This is despite the fact that these productions are made to be low budget, costing as little as N3,000 per episode. These are not the ideal productions but again they are compromises which have had to be made.

It is the cost and ease of producing talk programmes that has made them increasingly attractive. Programmes which used to be more ambitious have had to be scaled down and the ready format opted for, is the talk. The farming programme is an example of this. It used to be that real farms were visited to capture actualities, but the programme has had to restrict itself to the presenter and his guests who, at best, are seen

NTA CHANNEL 7: Weekly Cumulative Total Percentage of Language Coverage



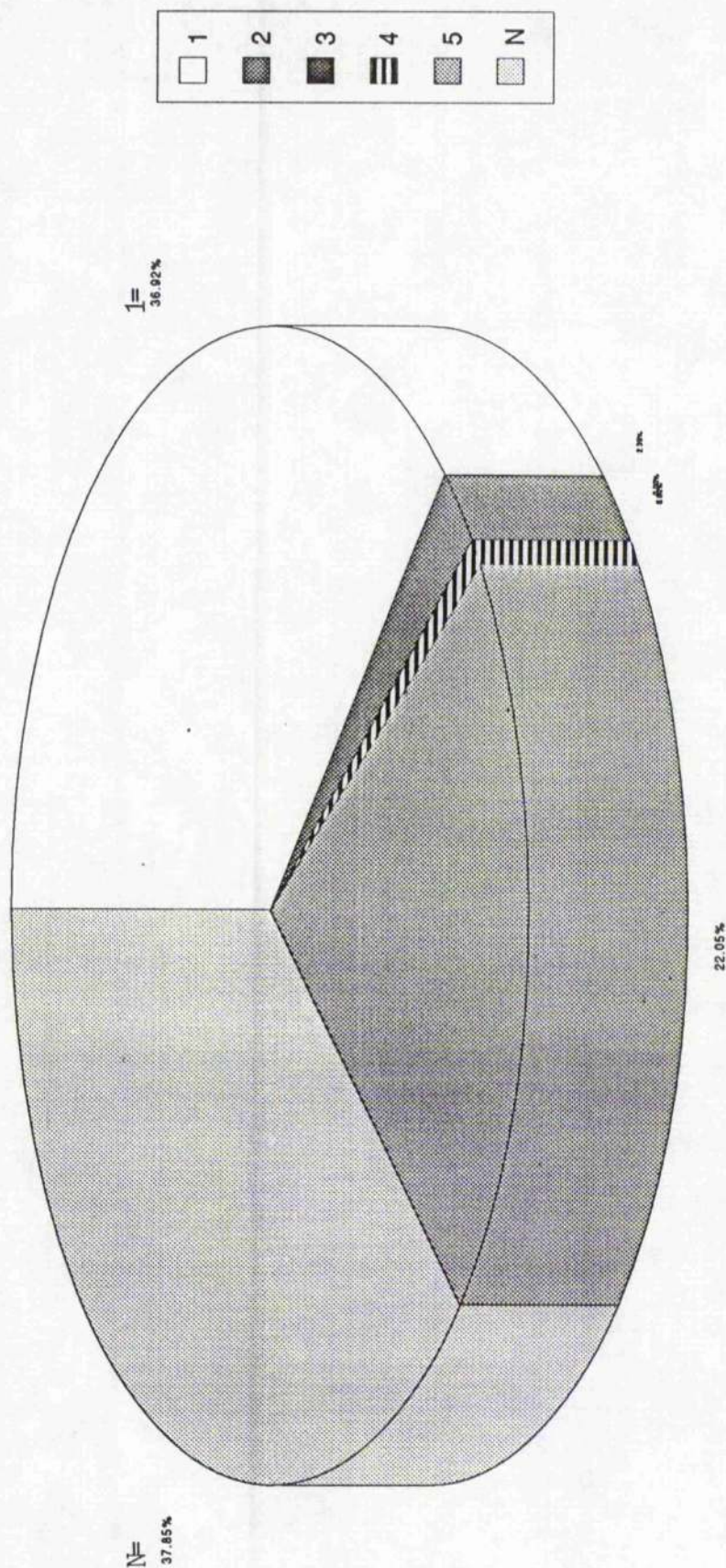
standing in an open field. This explains why there is a preponderance of 'talking heads' on the screen.

NTA (Lagos) Channel 10

This Lagos-based station is known as the station for the nation because it was designed to serve a federal audience. It is, therefore, not bogged down with linguistic considerations. About 96 per cent of the programming is presented in the English language. (Ref. Comparative Analysis Chart Table¹, classification 2) ^{Pg 122} This includes the network programmes (37.84%), the foreign programmes (22.04%) and the local productions (36.91%). It is a recent trend for the station to broadcast in the vernacular at all. It broadcasts 30 minutes programmes in each of the three major languages, Hausa, Ibo and Yoruba and these take up 2.39 per cent of the programmes. The commercial attraction in programming more Yoruba programmes is recognised. This is seen as a threat by the NTA Ikeja which does not favour the trend especially as Channel 10 has better resources for production and will, therefore, be at an advantage. Two of the vernacular programmes are dramas and one is an interview on philosophy, bordering on the metaphysical. In addition to these, there are musicals which employ both the English and Yoruba languages and, as such, attract the Yoruba-speaking audience.

This station is the base from which the network programmes are transmitted - another reason why it is 'the station for the nation'. The first noticeable implication is that it devotes less time to news, compared to other stations. (Re. Appendix - Comparative Graphs of Daily Schedules) It is the local news of this station that becomes the core of the network news, it thus does not require separate time slots for its local news.

NTA CHANNEL 10: (Weekly Cumulative) Total Percentage of Language Coverage



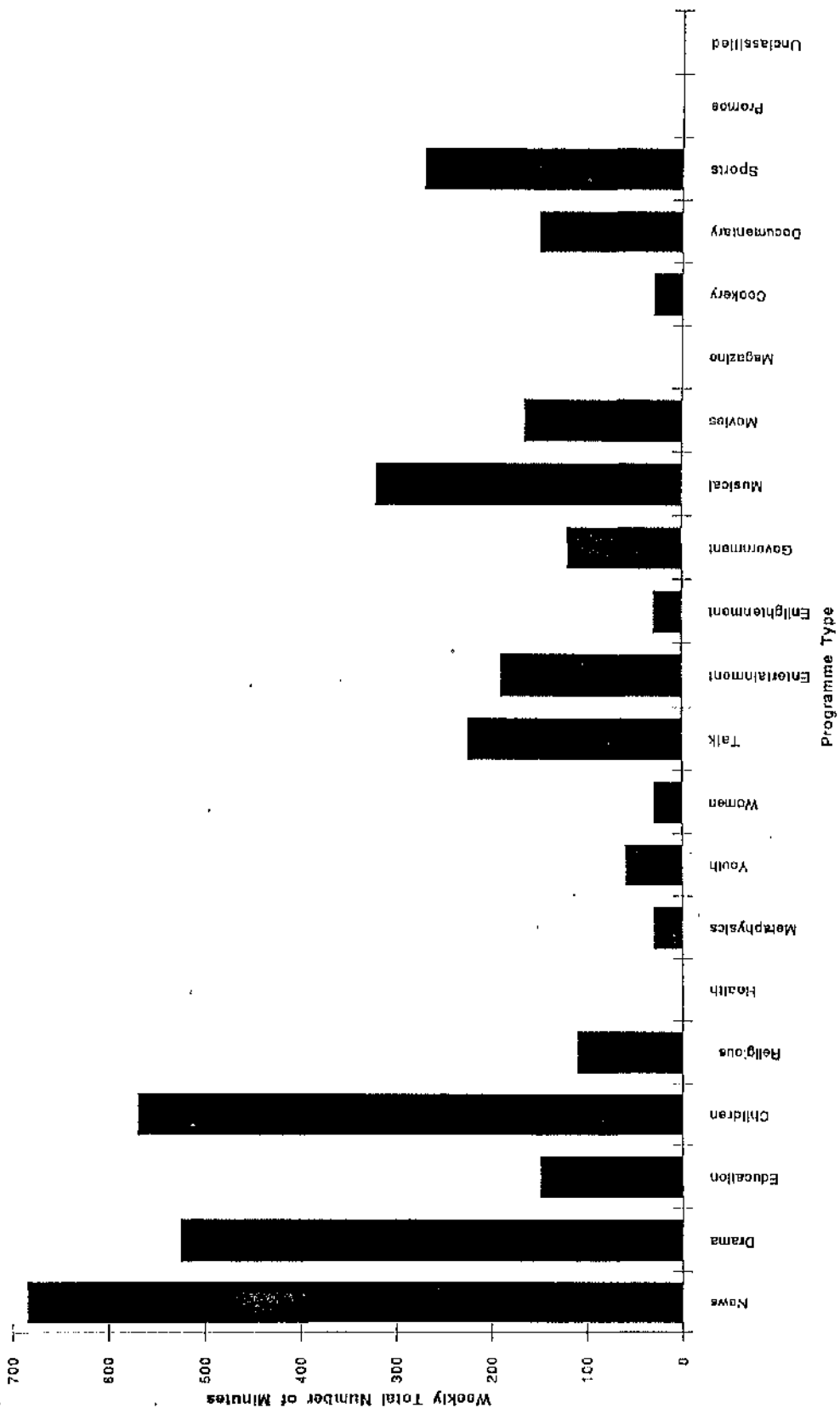
There is a very brief and incomplete translation of the English newscast to the three major languages at 7.00 o'clock. This is all within the half hour. The unequal sharing of that length of time explains the incompleteness of the news translations. They cannot but be stunted in their coverage.

The station has a great commitment to the children audience, with 15.3 per cent of programming geared to that segment. The station opens for transmission at 4.00 p.m. on weekdays. From this time to 7.00 p.m. the service is almost exclusively for the younger audience. On these days the children have as much as 120 minutes of programmes. On Tuesdays they have 150 minutes. Friday has the least amount of children's programmes as some of their time is taken over by the Islamic religious programme.

After the 30 minute early evening news, there is a consistence in the use of the 30 minute time block, preceding network transmission. This station devotes that time to light hearted programmes for all ages. There are two dramas, a programme focussed on the cultural heritage, a documentary and a musical. On Sunday, there is a local comedy in the strip, whilst the programme on Saturday presents culinary suggestions. The pattern appears to be a consistent effort at satisfying a similar category (non-discriminate, enlightened) audience. (Re. Programme rundown schedule No. 3) pg 960

Dramas account for 14 per cent of the station's programmes. Five of these are from the network at prime time, between 8.00-11.00 p.m. Besides these dramas, there is a concentration of talk programmes (5), government programmes (4) and documentaries at this time (5). The trend with such programmes continues even after the newscap at 11.00 p.m.

NTA CHANNEL 10: (Weekly Cumulative) Total Number of Minutes of Each Programme Type



The pattern at the weekend is different. There is a concentration of entertainment programmes. There are those programmes which appeal to children, but which cannot be said to be exclusively for that audience. For example, the variety shows, the enlightenment programmes, the musicals, and the (imported) circus show. There is a British comedy in *Some Mother's Do Have 'em*, there is science fiction, and the German produced *Telematch*. There is also American wrestling on Sunday afternoon. These programmes are less discriminatory in their appeal.

Only two of the programmes (on Sunday) have specific target audiences - the health and beauty show for the ladies, and the Christian religious programme.

It would appear that this non-discriminatory appeal is a reflection of the station's approach on the whole. Even then, it can still be regarded as an exclusive station; excluding the less educated and the indigenous audience, going by the dominance of English language programmes. Likewise, there is an absence of health, civics and community development programmes on this station. (Station Output Graph No. 3)

NTA Ibadan

This is the station that prides itself as being the first in Africa. It was the very first TV station in Nigeria (then known as WNTV) and it was established primarily to serve regional interests. Since the establishment of the central authority, to which it now belongs, its operations have been largely curtailed.

It used to be that the station consciously served a designated market area, which included the study focus area. Presently, there is no such

conscious planning although some of its fringe signals are received depending on the conditions. These make it an option that is considered.

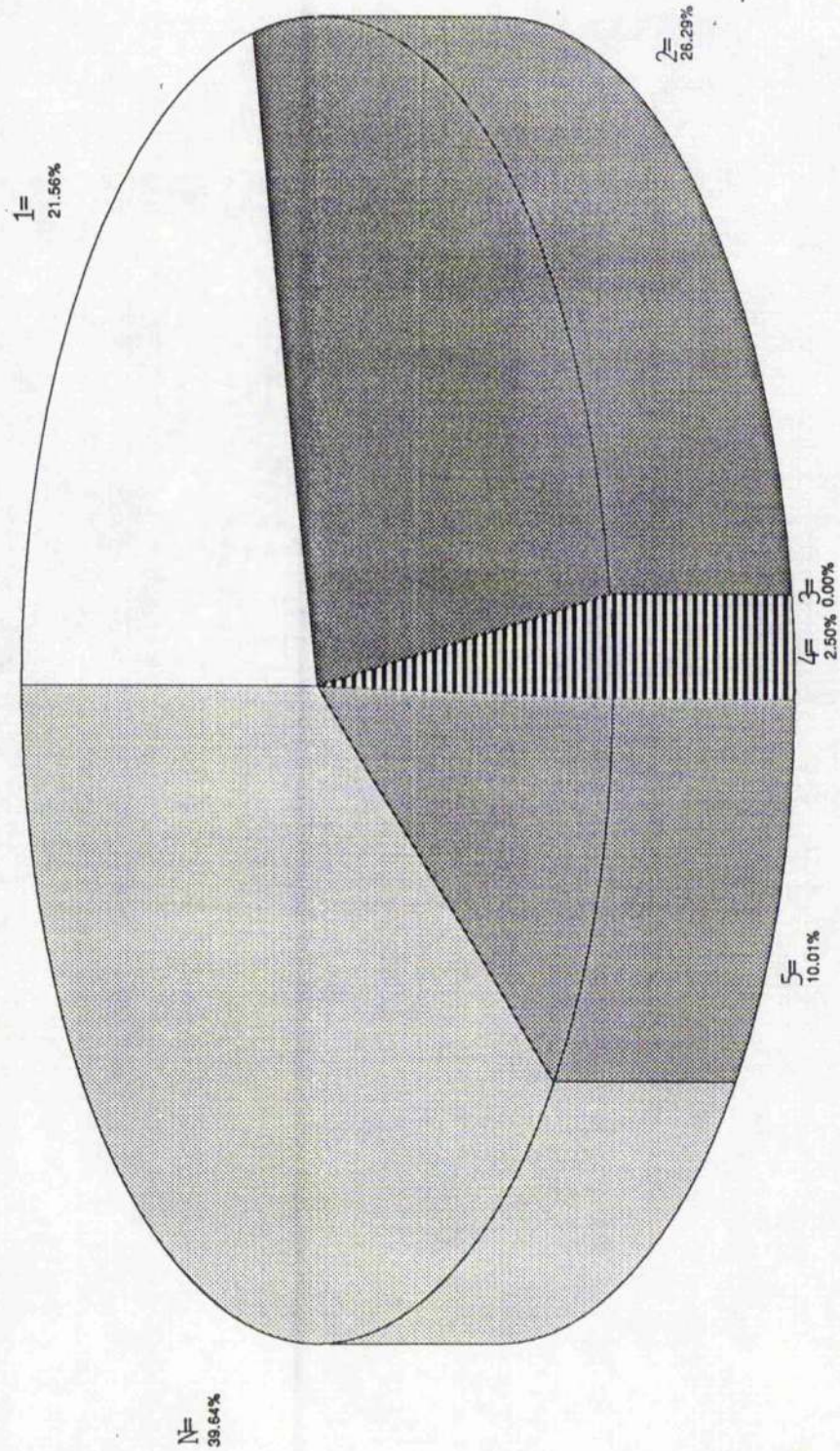
Beside its legacy, the (assumed) homogeneity of its audience also makes the station unique. The audience which it serves is expected to understand Yoruba, if not along with English. There is, thus, no provision for linguistic minorities in its programming. (Station Output Pie Chart No. 4)

Of the total programming from the station, 55.33 per cent are sourced locally (i.e. not foreign productions nor network transmissions). More than half of the locally sourced programmes are in Yoruba (26.28%). This compares well with the 21.55 per cent of that share of programmes which is in the English language. Network programmes account for 39.63 per cent of total programming and the foreign productions are 10.01 per cent. It would, thus, appear that NTA Ibadan is a truly indigenous station. Yet in all, the programmes in English are more by far. (Pie Chart No. 4)

Ibadan had for long been on record as the most populous city in Africa, it is also the site of Nigeria's premiere university. The area formerly known as Oyo State, which this station serves primarily, does not lack an elite population, in spite of its large rural population. This justifies such a high use of English language.

On weekdays, transmission begins on this channel at 4.25 p.m. There is a five minute slot for local news before the station links up with the network service for Instructional television. Three days out of five, the station returns from the network service at 5 o'clock to present

NTA IBADAN: (Weekly Cumulative) Total Percentage of Language Coverage



English (local)	1
Yoruba (local)	2
Minority (local)	3
Yoruba/English	4
English (foreign)	5
English (network)	N

children's programmes. Only one of these is in Yoruba, the other two are in English. One of them is a foreign production. Besides these, there are no other locally-scheduled programmes for children on weekdays. The other programmes for the younger audience are from the network service between 6.30 and 7.00 p.m.

There is no attempt to build up the audience for these programmes. The programmes on the schedule between 5.30 and 6.30 p.m. are not such as would necessarily interest children. The programmes are targeted towards adult audiences, focusing on such themes as politics, farming and (on Friday) religion.

The full newscast in Yoruba is scheduled at 6.00 p.m. every day. This lasts for 20 minutes and it is followed by the exhortation of the day in Yoruba and English. The talks are usually on social issues which require attention. It is usually not politically motivated as with news commentaries. The children's programmes from the network service are featured after this. There are other locally scheduled programmes with varied subjects and audience targets between this and the later network transmission at 8.00 p.m.

There is more news after the network news at 9.45 p.m.. This is a 15 minute bulletin in Yoruba - the late evening news. Three out of the seven days, the station returns immediately thereafter to the network service. On other days, the return to the network service is delayed.

Even in those instances (Sunday, Monday, Thursday) the station has talks programmes scheduled anyway. These are equally divided between English and Yoruba. The Monday slot is for an interview programme with selected

senior citizen using either English or Yoruba on alternative weeks. This is an interesting programme in that it targets an audience segment which is otherwise neglected. In doing this, other audience segments are not excluded as they can journey down the memory lane of those whose experiences are being sought.

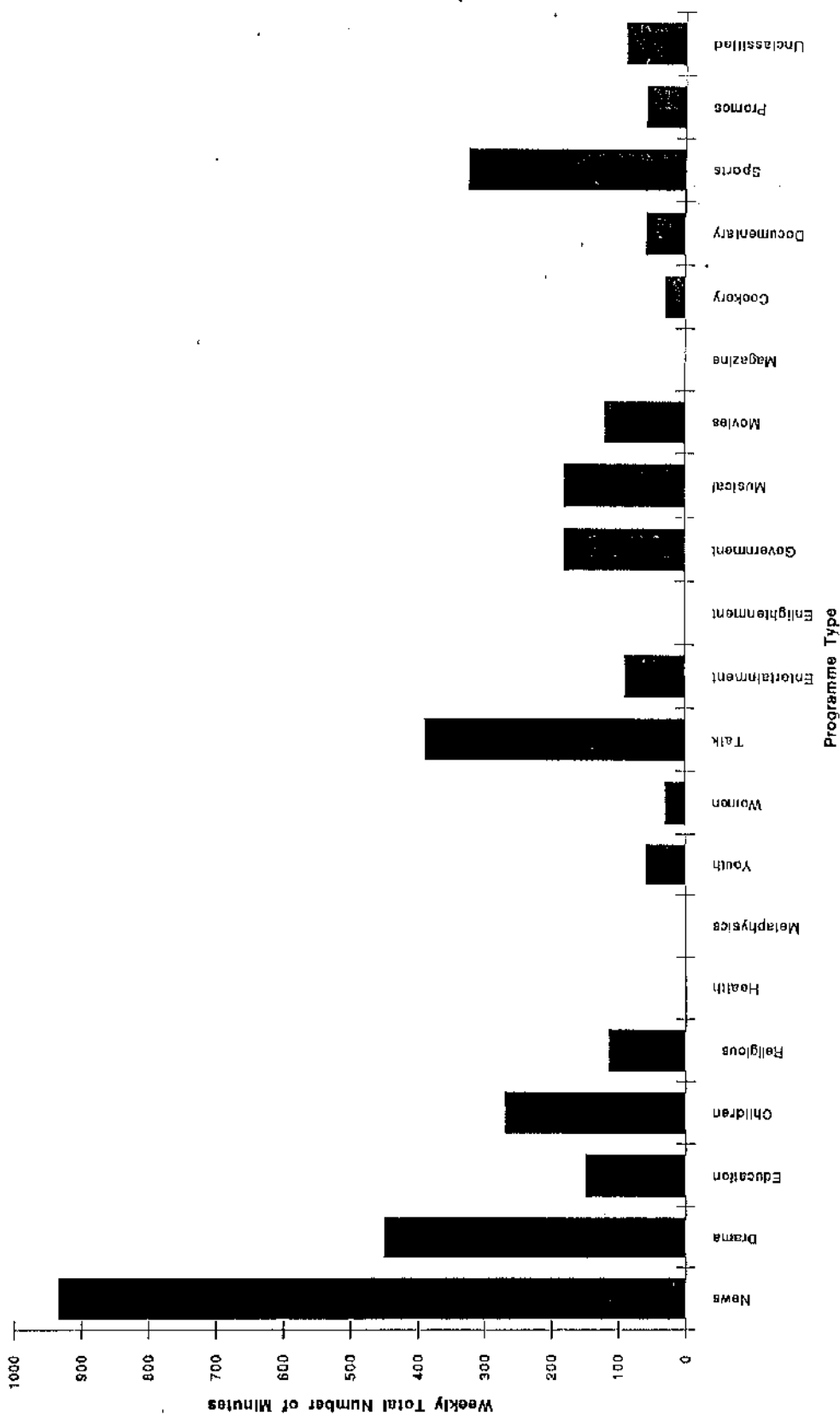
There are at least 10 programmes (10.84%) classified as talks on this station. It is the third largest chunk of programme classifications, after news and drama (12.51%). (Station Output Graph No. 4)

Transmission at the weekend begins at noon on Sundays and at 10.00 on Saturdays. These schedules are geared toward entertainment. (Programme Rundown Schedule No. 4) The only talk programme scheduled during these days is on Sunday at 1.00 p.m. It is an Ombudsman in Yoruba. It is in fact the trail blazer. Other local TV Ombudsman programmes took a cue from NTA Ibadan's *Agborandun*. That similar programmes are a feature on several other schedules is a tribute to how popular the service is with the audience.

There are two programmes which precede this one on the (Sunday) schedule. The first programme for the day is a Yoruba comedy. This is followed by a Christian religious programme and it is thereafter that the ombudsman show is featured. The three programmes are in the Yoruba language but they all have a general appeal. They have been known to attract an audience which cuts across the social strata, including the educated elites (professors and such) and the stark illiterates; the wealthy and the poor; even creed is not barrier.

The other programmes for the day also have a general appeal. One of

NTA IBADAN: (Weekly Cumulative) Total Number of Minutes of Each Programme Type



these is the German produced game programme. It is a programme suitable for family viewing but the concept of the particular competitions could be considered too foreign in certain quarters. (For example, grown men playing with mud-pies.) The cultural evaluation of such concepts may, therefore, restrict the appeal of the programme.

Later, there is a religious programme in English. There is also a current affairs (talks) programme in English later on in the evening. These may be seen to break the pattern of the general appeal; relaxation oriented programmes.

There is a high concentration of local productions at the weekend, particularly on Sunday. There is a total of 8 hours 45 minutes of locally scheduled programmes which compares well with the 2 hours 15 minutes of network programmes. On other days, there is more input from network than the local sources. On those days, total hours of transmission are less. (Re. Programme Rundown Schedule No. 4)

Saturday's programming is the longest of all the days. Of the 14 hours, 4 hours, 45 minutes is from the network service. The lion's share of that service is devoted to the coverage of sports. Another hour is devoted to a detective drama, a network production. This is featured after the news which takes up the remaining 45 minutes.

On the whole, NTA Ibadan, even with its variety of programmes appears to have concentrated on certain types of programmes, neglecting others. (Station Output Graph No. 4) This is not by accident, as the orientation here is to concentrate on recognised audience needs, and; concede (where possible) to network, that which is beyond the stations might. By so doing the station maintains a simplicity in its schedule, which makes it less cluttered and easier to follow.

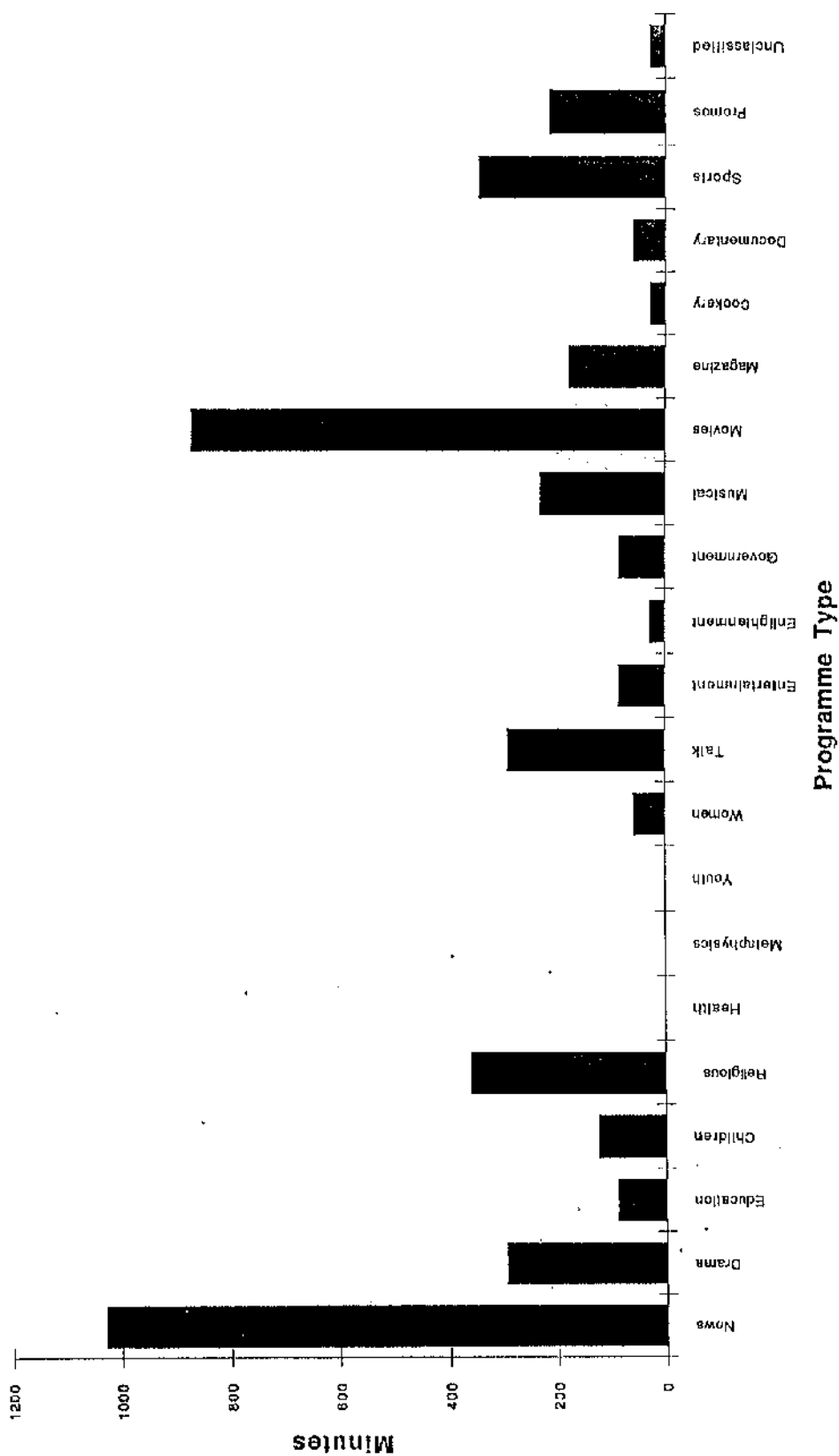
The commercial drive in this station is not as desperate yet because of the legacy of programmes and goodwill that it enjoys as the premier station. But, a struggle to maintain the pride and standards which it had built up over the years is becoming evident. Still, there is a strict adherence to the guidelines of the NTA. It is the responsible and mature approach to management which contribute to the 'modesty' and simplicity of the station's schedule in spite of all the above.

BCOS

The television service of Oyo state is a state government owned station, (receivable in the study focus area. It is another station, like NTA Ibadan, which does not contend with the problems of linguistic minorities. It therefore programmes in two languages - English and Yoruba.

Being a state government-owned station largely frees it from obligatory network transmissions. The exception to this is the 45 minute network newscast (and the other occasional 'Grade A' broadcasts). The network news accounts for 7.14 per cent of the station's total programming hours. This means the station has 92.86 per cent of its time to use as it pleases. (Station Output Graph No. 5)

BCOS: (Weekly Cumulative) Total Number of Minutes of Each Programme Type



On weekdays, the station opens with a programme parade about 4.30 p.m. and it closes down at about midnight. This means there are about 7.5 hours of transmission. There are even more hours at weekends when the station opens earlier closes later.

There are certain patterns which are immediately apparent even with a casual glance at the schedule. (Prog. Rundown Schedule No. 5) There is a consistency in the station's service to the children. Monday to Friday at 4.30 p.m. the children assuredly are served on this station. Note that 4 out of these 5 programmes are locally produced. Only one of these is in the Yoruba language. The only imported programme for children is a cartoon - *CB Bears* and it is featured on Friday.

The children's programmes are followed by a commercial break. This is followed by the news in brief in both English and Yoruba. Although these brief newscasts are adjacent to the children's service, there is no other consideration in the production of the news, to make the news appealing to the children, besides the brevity. This observation is true for the other stations as well. The news within the children's belt is not targeted to that 'ready' and 'available' audience segment.

This is not so with the non-personal advertisements which are placed within such slots. Generally advertisers are more mindful of the types of audiences to whom their message will be delivered in the different positions on the schedule. Some stations have been known to show explicitly adult movies as their matinees, whilst *Oliver Twist* was shown as the late night show. It is along these lines that the news, rather than the adverts stands out of these programmes within the 4.00-6.00 p.m. time belt. This is an important point to note as the 5.30-6.00 p.m.

slot, though not an exclusive service for children, hopes to attract them nonetheless.

On Monday there is a programme on farming; Tuesday and Wednesday have more formally structured educational programmes, teaching Maths and English; on Thursday there is a drama in Yoruba, and an Islamic religious programme on Friday.

This trend of serving a general audience continues till 7.00 p.m.

Even the programmes which have specific targets have a wide subject appeal. In this way, the audience is built up for the station's major newscast in English. This newscast is at a consistent time, just as is the Yoruba news that occurs at a later time of 8.30 p.m., coming just before the network news at 9 o'clock. The consistency of the news helps in making it a milestone within the programme flow. This pattern, as mentioned, aids consistency in the viewing pattern.

There is no clear pattern of whom the station is serving in the one hour time block between 7.30 and 8.30 p.m. Three out of the five days there are drama programmes. One of those is in English. There are two other programmes within the time block which are talk programmes. Both programmes are in Yoruba and focus on civic responsibilities and social problems.

On Wednesday, there is a market review programme, but this is in English. On Friday, there is a one-hour programme on the government's transition to civil rule programme. This programme is in English.

Going by its length, the Yoruba news which comes up at 8.30 p.m. is an unequal parallel to the English newscast. The programme is 10 minutes shorter than the English newscast. These 10 minutes are used for a commercial break. This leads into the network news. Although this position could be advantageous, in that it precedes the network news, there is no guarantee of an overlap of the network audience. What would have been the dying minutes of the half hour slot, which is likely to attract the audience of the network news, has been taken away for the commercial break.

Following the network news is another commercial break along with a repeat of the station's message of admonition for the day. Till this time there is hardly any foreign production on the schedule. It is at 10.00 p.m. that the station opens the airwaves to foreign productions.

On Mondays and Thursdays the American Christian Broadcasting Network's production *Another Life* is scheduled at 10.00 p.m. This is unlike another station (OGTV) which schedules the same programme at an earlier time (7.00 p.m.) five days a week (Sunday to Thursday).

On Tuesday, there is a political talk in English. On Wednesday, there is a series on the various uses of Soya beans. This is the closest to a health programme on the station and its focus is on nutrition.

It is obvious that commercial interests contribute to the broken pattern on Friday. It is the only day which the productions after 10.00 p.m. are in Yoruba. The two programmes which occur consecutively on the schedule are sponsored Islamic religious programmes. Friday is also the only day when the last programme for the day starts later than the rest.

Besides that exception the last programme on the station starts at 10.30 p.m. daily. There is no late news rounding up transmission.

With the exception of Monday, when the soccer world cup series is shown, there is a movie rounding up transmission every day. All these programmes are imported. They vary in origin and content as they do in duration. The Saturday slot is specifically reserved for Indian films. These films are in Indian language and come with sub-titles in English. The other films are of Western origin and are in English.

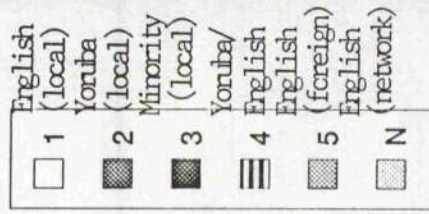
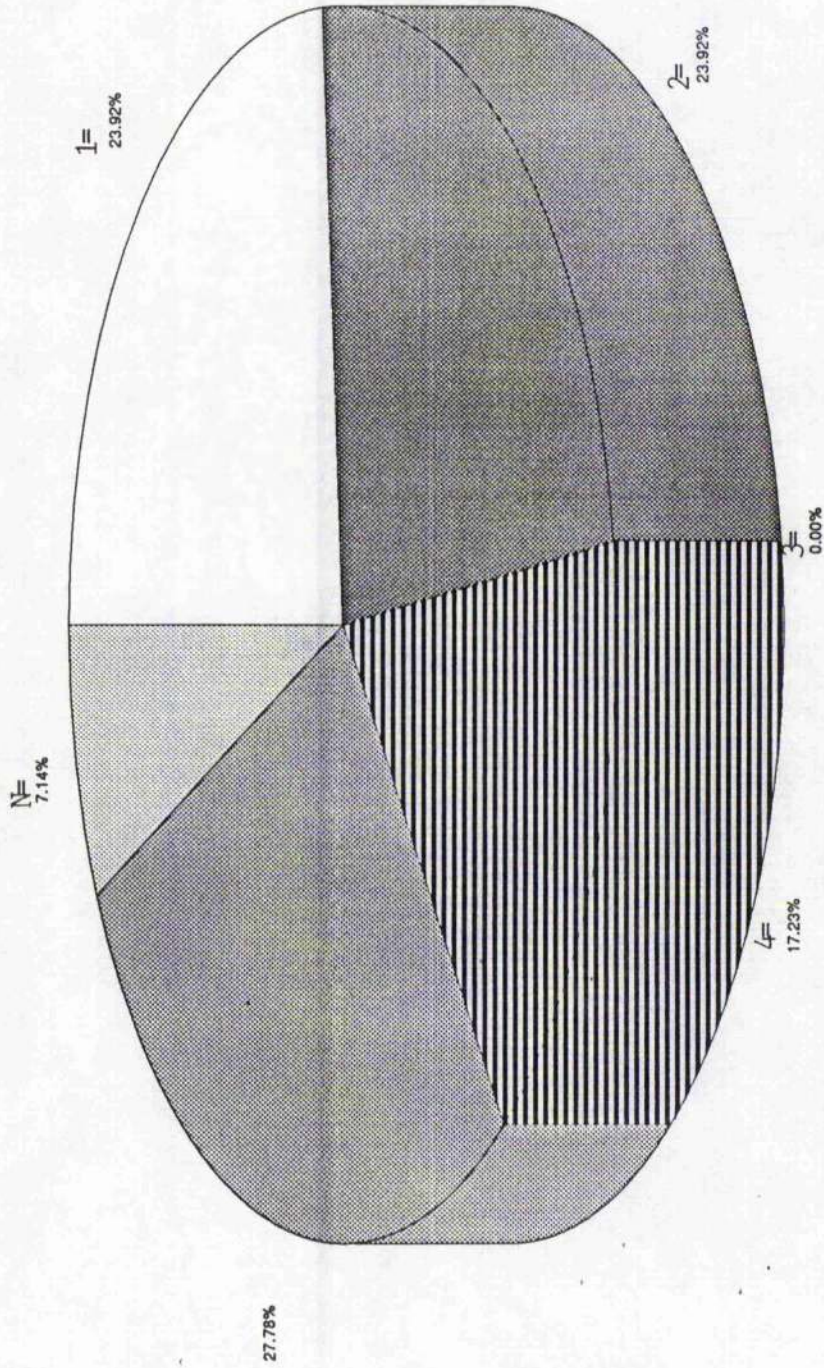
It is largely due to this pattern that the station has such a high output of foreign programmes (27.77%). This is the highest share in the analysis of programme by their sources. (Pie Chart No. 5, also ref Station Output Graph No. 5)

The programme line-up at the weekends differs only slightly from that described above. Transmission on Saturdays and Sundays commence at 7.00 a.m. and continues till midnight or later.

There is a three-hour magazine programme on Saturday mornings. This programme caters for different tastes and interests. It has various segments including press reviews, personality interviews, foreign news, musicals. Some of the segments are in English and some in Yoruba. The presenters are bi-lingual although there are specialist contributors.

Right after this programme comes the Saturday matinee. Like the 'late' night movies, this is imported. It takes up another two hours and brings us to mid-day.

BCOS: Weekly Cumulative Total Percentage of Language Coverage



At mid-day there are fifteen minutes of news in both English and Yoruba. The lack of a distinctive time for both newscasts, allows for a compromise on the length of one (Yoruba) on account of the other (English). It would appear that such a compromise need not be, as the news is followed by a scheduled period for a musical filler, along with the commercial break. Had there been conscious planning to have newscasts of equal lengths in both languages, it would have been possible, even with the commercial interests being protected. But there is no such conscious planning, the Yoruba newscast is designed for a shorter period.

The musical fillers represent an acknowledgement on the part of this station that it lacks complete control over the factors that determine its output. The station, therefore, cannot plan for all its programming time.

The slot which follows the news is devoted to sports - wrestling or boxing to be precise. The programmes are foreign. The musical which follows is also a foreign production.

There is a change in appeal in the next hour of programming as a quiz programme in Yoruba is featured. This is an audience participation programme which is not just a local production, but has a really indigenous flavour. After an hour of this, there is another change in tempo with the musical video show that is put on. Although it is a local production, it is a montage of mostly foreign input with which the audience is kept abreast of the tops of the international charts.

The traditional weekend sports is also a feature on the ECOS schedule for 1.5 hours in the afternoon. This leads up to the time for the early evening news, which is consistent with the weekday pattern. The difference at the weekend though is that the news is shorter. There is a commercial break eating into the shared 30 minute slot.

After the news, the audience is returned to another 30 minutes of sports. Both sports programmes are in English. There is none in Yoruba.

At 6.00 p.m. the Yoruba speaking audience is again served but this time the programme is a talk on the incumbent military government's plan to return to civil rule. There is more political talk in English following.

Next on the line up is the major local newscast in English. What this means is that the audience would have been exposed to 1.5 hours of talking heads, albeit in different languages and checkered slots.

There is a break in this trend as a Yoruba drama is featured at 7.30 p.m.

There is a 30 minute musical filler which is usually a medley of the latest on the local music scene. This filler is even longer than the major newscast in Yoruba which comes right after it.

The network news is followed by yet another hour of sports reviews. There is hardly any explanation for so much time, scattered during the day, devoted to sports other than that sports is a traditional menu for Saturdays. The long day-time block is set apart for the possible live soccer matches which abound in their season. In the absence of live

matches, there is usually a re-run of other matches. It is the review slots which are devoted to general sports news. This pattern is similar to the trends observed on the NTA network as well.

It is after the later sports review programme that the movies of the day, an Indian film is shown.

Possibly the most striking feature of the day's transmission is the checkered nature of the schedule. This is as regards the programme flow vis-a-vis the targeted audiences.

Sunday's transmission presents a different view entirely. With eight different Christian programmes, 25.71 per cent of the day's programming, there is no doubt that it is the Christian day of worship. Only one of these is the station's production, the others are sponsored.

Transmission for the day begins at 7.00 a.m. with Christian songs of praise. The programme is in Yoruba. This is followed by a press review. Once a month, the press review is replaced by a news/personality interview programme. This is an audience participatory programme of sorts, as there is provision for audience letters and phone-in to the guest. This programme is also in Yoruba and it is usually well advertised on both the radio and television service of the corporation.

There is a return to a steady stream of religious programmes. Two of such programmes follow consecutively. One of these is an American produced magazine programme, which is also found on other station's schedules - *The 700 Club*. The other programme is a sponsored Yoruba production.

At 9.00 a.m. there is an hour nature documentary from the National Geographic Society. Thereafter, there is more foreign input with the Sunday matinee. This trend is similar to that on Saturday mornings. It is also similar to patterns observable on other state stations (OGTV). What this means is that a viewer who has a choice of both stations has a choice of two movies to watch at the same time. (The other station (LTV) with a similar pattern, has its movies scheduled for a slightly later time.) The movies are on till mid-day when there is a newscast.

After the mid-day news and the accompanying commercial break and fillers, there is a full fledged dance/music programme in Yoruba. Thereafter, is a 30-minute comprehensive review of the news in Yoruba. This marks the beginning of a 'ding dong' pattern in the audience appeal going by the content or the ^{language} of the programmes. e

On this schedule, as with others, news is the highest ranking programme category (23.35%). It is followed by movies (19.72%). Though concentrated on two days (Friday and Sunday) religious programmes are next with a share of 8.16 per cent of the station's total programming. Whilst some programme types are popular, there are some which are totally absent. For instance, there are no programmes on health, not even the less orthodox Metaphysics programmes are on the schedule for this quarter. The trend may have since changed. Farming, cookery and even government programmes are ^{few and} far between.

On the other hand, there is a concentration of efforts in certain categories (news, talks). One of the reasons why this is so is the

relative ease of producing such formats (as talks). The trend also reflects the station's perceptions of its obligations.

Although there is about equal time sharing between the locally produced, English and Yoruba, programmes on this station, (Re. Pie Chart No. 3) there is greater time devoted to English programmes because of the foreign and network input.

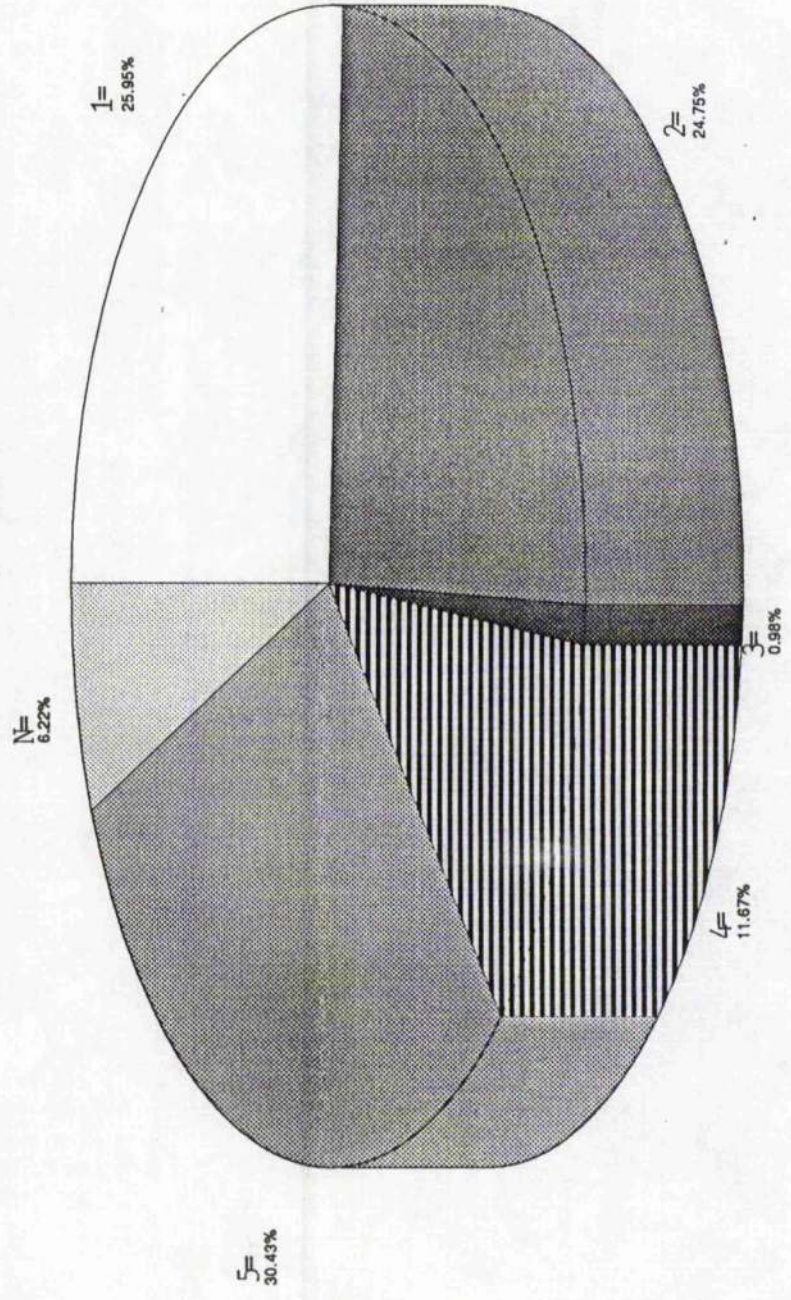
OGTV

OGTV is the station owned by the Ogun state government. Because the study focus town is located in Ogun state, one will expect OGTV's coverage to be closest to the audience in terms of access and affinity. This is because state stations were supposed to have been primarily established to serve the interest of the indigenous audiences in the state.

With only 6.21 per cent of its programming hours devoted to the mandatory transmission of the 9 o'clock (NTA network) news, OGTV is left with about 93 per cent of its time, to use as it sees fit. This alone is an advantage over the NTA (Abeokuta) station in Ogun state. Of all the stations studied, OGTV spends the longest time on air (76½ hours per week). There is no day that it closes down earlier than midnight. (Re. Programme Rundown Schedule No. 6)

Five nights a week, the station is committed to showing a film, just before the late news, which marks the end of transmission. On the two nights when there is no movie, there is either wrestling or soccer; and there is a movie length Yoruba drama. These programmes are standard features on the schedule. Except for the Yoruba drama, the programmes

OGTV: Weekly Cumulative Total Percentage of Language Coverage



1	English (local)
2	Yoruba (local)
3	Minority (local vernacular)
4	Yoruba/English (local)
5	English (foreign)
N	English (network)

Station Output Pie chart No 6

are all imported.

On weekdays, transmission begins at about 3.45 p.m. There is a 15 minute slot daily, for a talk in Yoruba, admonishing the audience on desirable ways of living. This is similar to the feature on NTA Ibadan and BCOS. It is a practice rooted in the Yoruba culture where one is daily reminded of who he(she) is, and should be. It usually accompanies the exchange of greetings at the start of the day. Because of the level of sophistication in the language, the poetrical style of delivery, this talk would undoubtedly, be better suited to an adult audience although it could be beneficial to all. The slot precedes that which serves the children from 4.00 to 4.30 p.m.

There is a consistency in the audience attracted during that time slot even though there is variety in the service. On Monday and Tuesday there are English language programmes which are in-house productions. On Wednesday and Thursday, the productions are also local, and in the Yoruba language. On Friday there is an imported production - *Fraggle Rock*. The children are thus assured of a regular service throughout the week at that particular time. This pattern is similar to that which obtains in the BCOS.

The news which follows is even a more regular feature as it can be seen at the same time even during the weekends. There is 20 minutes at this time for the news in Yoruba and English. Those 20 minutes should be shared equally between both newscasts. However, because the English newscast comes first, and it is the original language of production, the newscast in Yoruba tends to be compromised. If the English newscast

over-runs for instance, it eats into the time of the Yoruba newscast.

There is a 10 minute commercial slot for the personal paid announcement. As opposed to the non-personal agency mediated advertisements, these are personal notices which are usually not about consumer items but about social events - obituaries, chieftaincy titles, birthdays, weddings, naming ceremonies, goodwill messages. There are also the lost and found announcements. These include missing persons and vehicles.

In the event that there are not enough notices to fill the slot, the audience is treated to musical interludes. This is true of every station and of every circumstance when the programme under-runs. Invariably, this is due to a short fall in the anticipated commercials. Such interludes are not reflected in the schedule.

Twice a week, on Mondays and Wednesdays, there is a 15 minute newscast in the Egun language - for the linguistic minority. This follows the commercial break. There is an additional 15 minute newscast for them on Saturday at an earlier time of 12.30 p.m. Other than these three programmes there is no other special consideration on this station for the minority audience segment. This means only .98 per cent of its total programming hours have been devoted to this audience segment.

There is no other provision for the special interest of the various ethnic sub-groupings represented in the state. The station has conveniently lumped them all together as the same ethnic group. Hence, besides Egun dialect, the mainstream Yoruba is the only local language of presentation. (Re. Programme Output chart No. 6) This accounts for only 24.75 per cent of the total programming. There is another 11.66 per

cent of programmes which are bi-lingual. (Category 4) Such programmes either have segments in English and Yoruba, or they employ interpreters within the programme. These programmes can thus reach Yoruba and English speaking audiences.

The station has a marked presence of foreign programmes (30.42%). In fact on Tuesday, within the same time block that the two Egun newscasts are to be found, there is a programme in which the Russian language is taught. (Programme Rundown Schedule 6)

Of the other programmes within that time block, two are targeted towards the younger audience - both being educational although not in the formal structured sense. One of the other programmes is a sports programme. This is featured midweek, on Wednesday. On Friday, the Islamic day of worship, there is a programme of Islamic choruses.

In the next hour block (5.30-6.30 p.m.) the weekdays have a mixed menu of programmes. On Monday, the first half-hour within the block is devoted to a political talk in Yoruba. This is followed by a British comedy *Life begins at 40*. On another day there is a (state) government programme followed by the American Christian Broadcasting Network (CBN) news. In addition, there is Italian soccer and imported soap operas to be found within the time block (Re Programme Rundown Schedule No. 6)

The time block is indeed a pot-pourri, not delineating any particular target which it knows will be available at such a time.

From 6.30 to 6.45 p.m., there is a full news bulletin in Yoruba on weekdays. The length of this newscast, which is the major Yoruba

newscast of the day, is half of the English 'equivalent'. It is one-third of the national network news. Even as regards its position on the schedules, another factor which illustrates the importance of a programme, the full Yoruba newscast is undoubtedly of less importance. Whilst it is featured in the early fringe (6.30 p.m.) the English 'equivalent' and the network news are featured in the prime time, at 8.30 p.m. and 9.00 p.m. respectively.

The other implication of the pattern is that starting from 8.30 p.m., there is a solid block of 1.75 hours of news. On the whole, news is a big feature on the station and it takes the lion's share of programming hours (24.10%). (Figure No. 6) On Sundays there are as many as nine news slots; eight on Saturdays; and six or five on weekdays. (Run-down Schedule No. 6)

The daily newscast is followed by another 10 minute personal paid announcement slot. The pattern is the same after the network newscast.

At 6.55 p.m. there is another five minute slot for the admonition in Yoruba. This is followed at 7.00 p.m. by the American (Christian) soap opera *Another Life*. This programme is featured consistently, from Sunday through to Thursday. The programme is reputed to have a large loyal following. The regularity and continuity encouraged by its scheduling is remarkable. It is one of the consistent features on the schedule, like the news, the movies, the commercial slots. However, unlike the others, the station lacks complete control on the processes which bring the programme to the airwaves.

On Friday, there is a government agency sponsored talk programme on

civics and politics. The discussion programme is in English and last, for one hour till 8.00 p.m.

The one hour block of time following *Another Life* on the other weekdays is another potpourri. Monday 7.30-8.00 p.m. is a news magazine programme featuring human interest stories which would not find space in the regular newscasts. It was initially positioned against *Newsline*, the similar concept on Sunday's network newscast.

This programme is followed by a programme which has been classified as metaphysics. These programmes are sponsored by unorthodox healers, who go beyond the physical abilities, invoking spirits to effect cures for failing health and ailing fortunes. These healers are referred to as 'doctor - metaphysicians' in the programmes which are in the Yoruba language.

There are two such programmes on the schedules for this day. One of them is right after the news and the commercial break.

On Tuesday there is an hour of this station's Ombudsman programme in Yoruba - the public morality court, the defender of the 'helpless'. This showing of the programme is usually a fresh episode. There is a re-run of the Tuesday's programme on Saturday afternoons.

The first programme within this time block on Thursday features another of the 'metaphysicians'. The programme is in Yoruba. The audience is led into another Yoruba programme in the next half hour. This time it is a long-standing, successful Yoruba comedy. Because it is syndicated by an advertiser (the sponsors) the programme features on other schedules,

at different times.

On Friday at 8.00 p.m. there is another metaphysician's programme on the schedule following the government agency sponsored talk. There are, thus, different metaphysicians on three different days of the week, and on one occasion there is more than one on a day.

There is a fairly consistent pattern within the 10-10.30 time strip. There are three religious programmes and three of the metaphysicians programmes. Two of the religious programmes (on Saturday and Sunday) are Christian programmes. The third one is Islamic and it is on Friday.

Although their mission and messages differ, the metaphysicians are quite similar in their appearance to the Moslem preachers. They often bear the Moslem names, and titles (Alhaji).

There are other similarities in the physical appearance of both which could cause a viewer to be confused about the distinctions in their identity.

On the whole, the variations in the creeds being broadcast is interesting, as is the preservation of the sanctity of certain days of the week. All these programmes are sponsored.

There is a news/personality interview programme in English which stands out in that 10.00 - 10.30 slot. The programme is on Wednesday, coming just before wrestling.

It is only in few cases that the structure of the schedule aids a build

up of any particular type of audience. There is an attempt to serve so many varied audience segments and so complete drifts of the audiences appealed to, is not avoided. This suggests the drift pattern of audiences before the set, at the transition of programmes.

At the weekends, OGTV commences transmission at 7.00 a.m. On Saturdays it starts the day with a keep fit programme in English. This is followed by an early morning 'live' report on market bargains. This is a community access programme, as the presenter goes round the different markets within the states, publicising the produce typical to the areas as well as indicating the cost of living.

In recent times the local government councils have been made to sponsor the programmes from their area. This practice has made conditional the access to the programme.

The timing of this programme had been informed by the traditional practice of 'early' shopping. The expectation is that the shoppers having been informed can go out in search of bargains, armed with the knowledge of the standard. This is particularly important in an economy where market prices are not fixed; buyers have to haggle over the prices before arriving at a price acceptable to sellers and themselves.

At 8.00 a.m. there is a magazine programme for the outward looking enlightened audience. Although it is a local production there is an input from the international scene. This invariably comes from satellite television. There are items such as news, music, fashion, personality interviews that would interest the upwardly mobile, outward looking, enlightened audience. The programme lasts for 1.5 hours. Again, it is a

concept similar to another featured on BCOS. The timing of both programmes also coincide.

A half-hour review of the highlights of the news is presented immediately afterwards. This programme is in Yoruba. Thereafter, there is the breakfast movie. At noon there is the first news bulletin for the day in English. The 20 minute bulletin is followed by the personal paid announcements slot and then a newscast in Egun. Even the abridged newscast in English is five minutes longer than the 15 minute newscast in Egun. The rationale behind this is that the Egun speaking audience have access to either the English or Yoruba news. The question, therefore, is why the Egun translation is on air at all.

There are certain programmes featured on the schedule which are dispensable. For instance, there is a slot for a repeat of one of the sports programmes. The slot is often used for the sponsored specials - the reports of private social engagements, as opposed to the mere announcements. At other times, the slot is used to conclude the showing of movies which over-run the designated time block. There are occasions when the movies have to be concluded much later, in the evening movies slot.

In fact, all the in-house productions which are not sponsored (by individuals, businesses or governments) are dispensable, irrespective of the scheduled day or time of the week. The programmes can be replaced at any time during the quarter, as long as there is a sponsored programme considering the time slot. Such jettisoned programmes may not be rescheduled within the week.

The weekend transmission on OGTV is also fraught with programmes of different appeals. These include the American drama *the A Team*, a re-run of the station's ombudsman programme in Yoruba, the movie length Yoruba drama; American championship wrestling; local and American (CBN) news. Unlike NTA Ikeja's schedules the two programmes in the vernacular are separated by the foreign news programme. This does not encourage a build up of particular audience segment.

(For a feel of the changing waves within the audience flow see Programme Rundown Schedule No. 6)

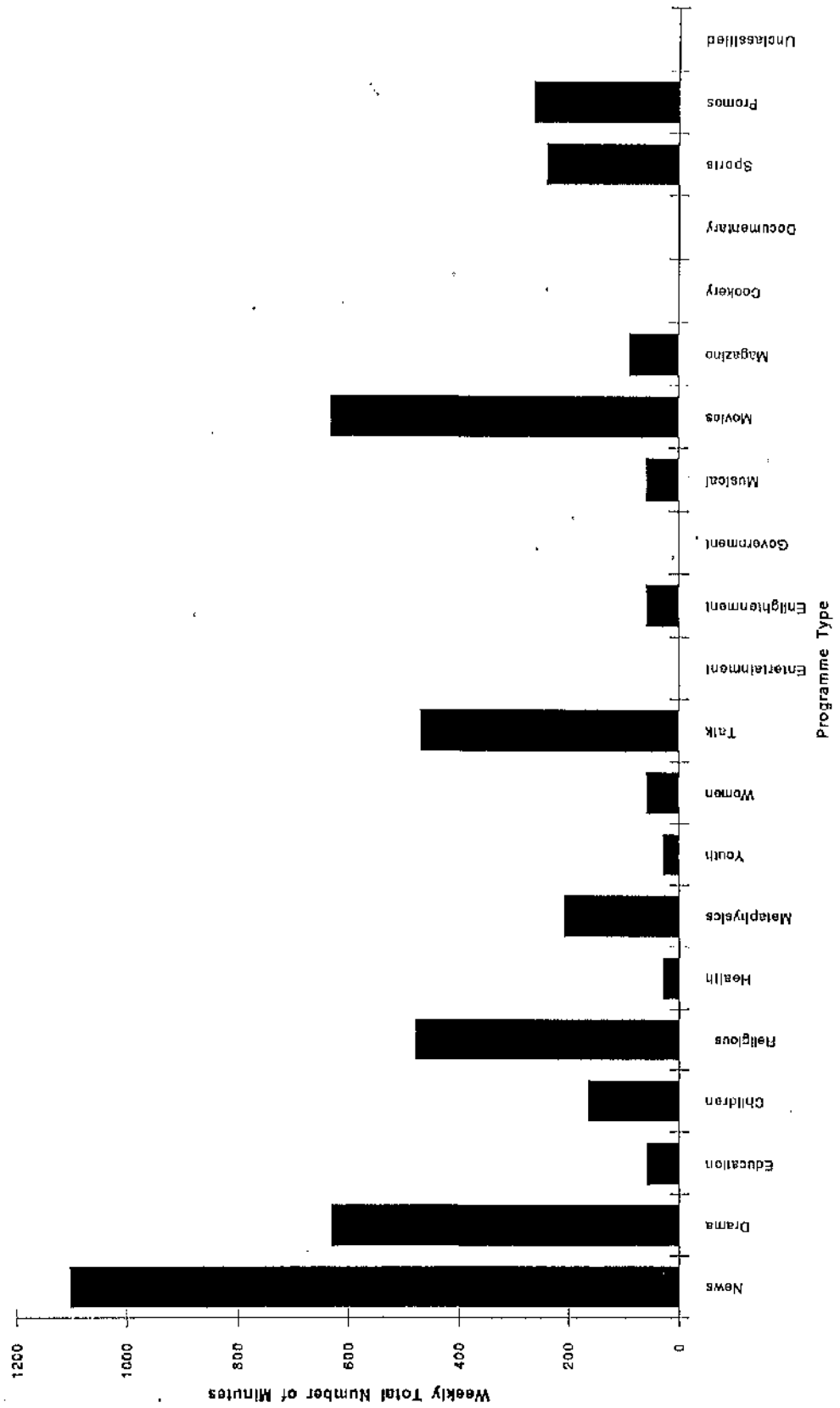
Besides the sheer number of foreign productions on this station, there is the tendency that they are better promoted. As a result of problems in local production, it is usually more difficult to include highlights of such in the promotion clips that the station transmits weekly.

In spite of the number of newscasts, on any day, there is not much variation in the content except that certain stories are excluded. There are no updates, no variation in style to suit any anticipated changes in the audiences constitution. This observation is as true for this station as it is for the others.

The schedule for Sunday on OGTV is particularly interesting. Besides the 'standard' fixtures on the schedule (the news, the movies, musicals and promos) the other programmes to be seen are religious programmes. On this day, transmission begins at 7.00 a.m. and so even the fixtures were featured for longer periods on the whole.

It takes Sunday's schedule to see how prominent religious programmes are

OGTV: (Weekly Cumulative) Total Number of Minutes of Each Programme Type



on this station. The category constitutes 10.46 per cent of total programming for the week. It ranks third in terms of the share of programming.

News ranks highest with 24.10 per cent; drama and movies have equal share of 13.74 per cent each.

Another high ranking category was the talks with 10.25 per cent.

Although the 'metaphysicians' have a relatively low percentage of the programming (4.58%) the spread of five out of seven days, and the frequency 7(x 30 minutes) makes the category quite ubiquitous. This contrasts sharply with the conventional health programme which appears just once a week for 30 minutes (.65%). Similarly, the educative programmes feature only twice a week taking 1.30 per cent of the time.

This pattern does not reflect what the programmers believe is best for the audience. There is an acknowledgement amongst them that the menu is not a balanced diet. They had simply done what was more economical. The revenue yielded from the religious and metaphysician categories (i.e. $10.46\% + 4.58\% = 15.04\%$) is what enables them to put the remaining programmes (about 84%) on the air.

This stand does not reflect the amount contributed by government to the capital expenses of this station. However, it does reflect the desperate situation in this particular station. It also reflects on a different level the monopoly 'enjoyed' by the state stations regarding such programmes. The strict regulations of the NTA does not permit such programmes on the NTA stations and thus the consequent free reign of the

state stations.

Already it has been pointed out that the schedule does not reflect all that is transmitted, with the dispensable programmes on the schedule. In addition to these, there are the musical fillers which are not accounted for. This means that there is indeed more than the 1.30 per cent of the time devoted to musicals. The addition comes usually in little pockets of time scattered all over the transmission day. It is their frequency rather than the size they take up, which makes them worthy of note.

It is only occasionally that the station is involved in the design and production of the sponsored programmes which are the more stable elements of its programming. At such times, the station's involvements are chargeable. There must be payment for services rendered. Thus, the station lacks effective control. It does have guidelines for standards. Some of these can be compromised - especially as regards technical quality, but some are more rigidly observed - particularly concerning legal implications of content.

Indeed, there is a great variety of audience needs which the station proposed to satisfy with the programme fare which it serves. It also attempts to fulfil the basic obligations for which it was established.

The reception of these programmes goes well beyond the programming considerations, which already involves commercial consideration as illustrated above. It involves the engineering performance as well. This reminder is brought up here because although this station is expected to have high audience loyalties in the study focus area, it is not well received in some parts of town. It is thus not a prominent station as

expected, and this cannot all be attributed to the programming

LTV/LWT

Of all the stations available to the study focus area, this is the one that is most prominent. To start with it is the station that is received in homes where for different reasons, no other station is. For this reason the schedule is also of particular interest.

As a state government owned station, situated in Lagos, the nation's political and commercial nerve centre, LTV has a peculiar agenda. It aims to serve the indigenous people of Lagos state as well as the cosmopolitan audience of Lagos city, and its suburbs. In addition to these, there is the need for the station to be commercially motivated, to remain in business at all.

To survive, it has to compete with three NTA stations within the dominant operation area. One of these is NTA-2 (Channel 5) its competitor from inception, and the NTA's 'successful commercial experiment'. By its design, LTV also has to compete with NTA-Ikeja channel 7 for the indigenous audience of Lagos state. By its coverage pattern, it finds itself competing with the neighbouring Ogun state's television (OGTV). This it does to maximise the profit from its potential. All these are reflected in the scheduled programmes.

At the time of the study, LTV broadcast for the shortest period of time compared to other state owned stations. This had not always been so. It had pioneered the 24 hour marathon service on its weekend service (LWT) in response to the dwindling night life in Lagos, following the menace of armed robbers. The 'marathon' length of the service had to be

suspended following the devastation, of the fire which gutted the station's temporary premises, and its archives.

The station had endeared itself to the audience with the unique service. It had also pioneered special services which are outside daily transmission schedule. The special fairs at festive periods like Christmas, for example, are now annual events. These are public relations events which are not reflected on this schedule, although highlights of such fairs may be featured on certain programmes in the quarters that they occur. These are the specials.

Presently on weekdays, transmission starts on the station at 5.00 p.m. This is even later than the NTA stations. The station closes down just about midnight. At the weekends, transmission commences at 9.00 a.m. This is two hours after the other state stations although it is earlier than the NTA stations.

At a glance, it is clear that the time blocks have been shared out to serve different audience segments. (Programme Rundown No. 7)

On the whole the children can expect to find something for themselves between 5.00 and 6.00 p.m. on weekdays. These programmes are all (5.30%) in the English language. Two of them are foreign productions. The remaining five are in-house productions.

With the exception of Thursday and Friday, the station begins its weekday transmission with the children's programme. On Thursday, there is an environmental sanitation programme in Yoruba which precedes the imported programme *The New Zoo* for children. The health programme is

targeted towards the less privileged members of the audience.

The 6.00-6.30 time block is an interesting one. It does not command attention of any particular audience type. On Monday, there is an American drama suitable for family viewing though it could well be for children. It is thus simply classified as drama. This programme dovetails neatly into the preceding audience flow, retaining its children audience and possibly attracting adults.

Within that time block on Tuesday, there is one of the 'Metaphysicians' programmes. The programme is in Yoruba and is not likely to inherit the audience from the earlier shows. (Re. Programme Rundown Schedule No. 7)

There is another of the Metaphysicians on Thursday at the same time. On this occasions, it is the Children's programme which possibly claims the flow of the audience of this show and the earlier occurring conventional health programme. The Children's programme is in English unlike both the Health and the Metaphysicians programme.

There are more of the Metaphysicians programmes in the later time block, between 7.00 and 8.00 p.m. For the first 3 out of the 5 weekdays there is consistently one 'Metaphysician' on the air. There is none at any time on Friday, although there are the (3) Islamic religious programmes. The point about the similarity of the programme types has been made.

On Saturday there are (2) Metaphysician programmes within the same time block (6.00-6.30; 7.00-7.30). This means it is only on Sundays and Fridays, the accepted days of worship for the two religions that these programmes are not aired.

The frequency and consistency of these programmes, coupled with their proximity to the news belt and prime time that reflects their prominence. It is the general uncertainty surrounding their desirability that makes their presence an issue.

These healers encourage less conventional approaches to health care usually employing a combination of Eastern and traditional approaches.

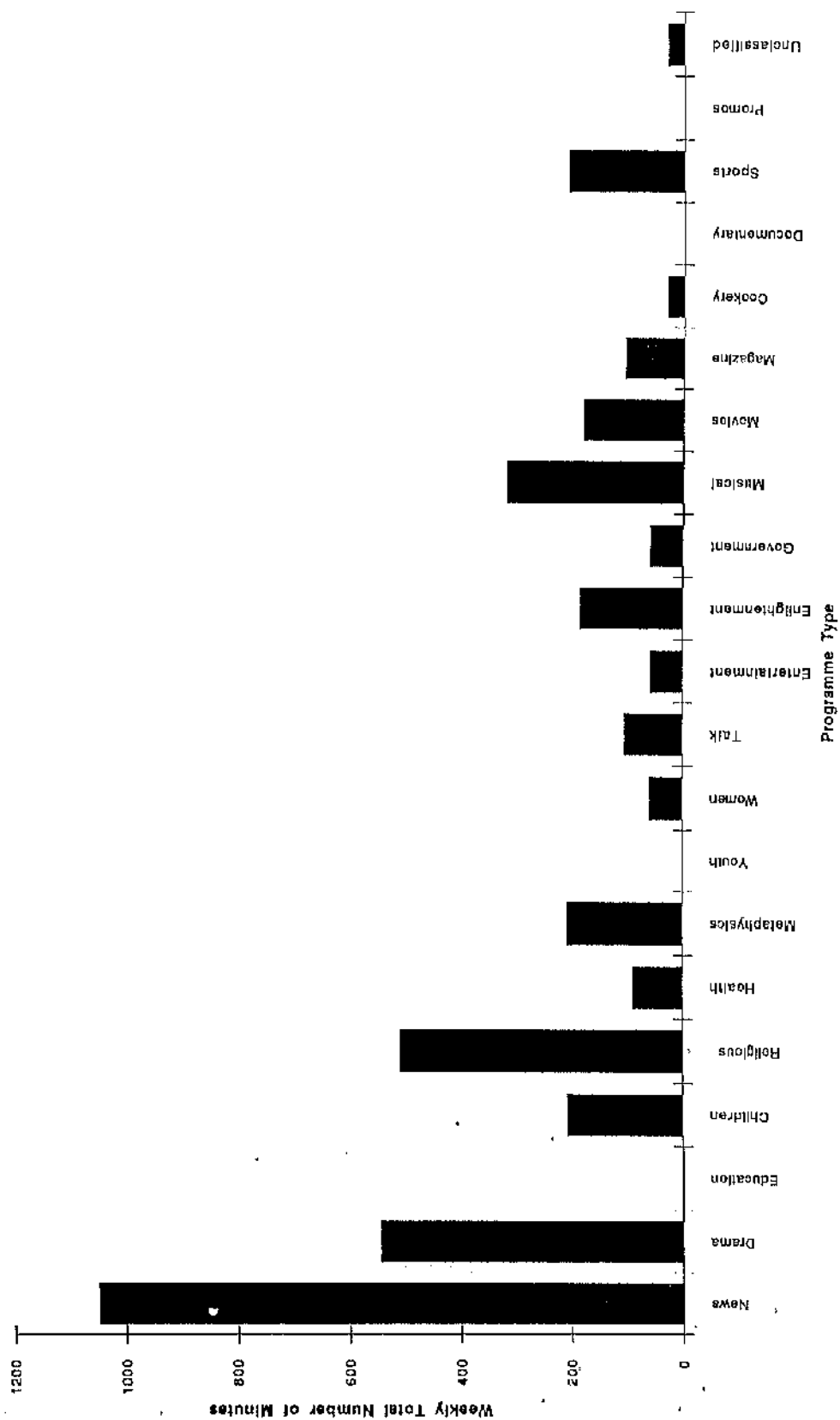
By contrast, there are only two programmes (on Tuesdays and Thursdays) which encourage the conventional approaches to health and well being. One of these is in Yoruba and the other is in English.

As with other stations, the news retains a consistent slot on LTV. There are 4 time strips daily, reserved for news. That the news has become fixed features on the schedule could in part explain why news watching could easily be a habit. This point may well be more important than the sheer amount of time that is devoted to that category. On this station 26.51 per cent of the time is devoted to the news (Re. Programme Output Graph No. 7)

Drama also ranks high on the station's use of time. It is the next highest category, after the news. Four out of the five week days there is at least one imported drama. These are usually on at prime time (8.30); right after the station's major newscast in English. There is a local comedy (in Yoruba) at the same time on Saturday.

On Fridays and Sundays, the trend is broken by the religious programmes. The religious programmes rank third in the station's overall use of time. There are more of these religious and drama programmes in other

LTV/LWT:(Weekly Cumulative)Total Number of Minutes of Each Programme Type



positions on the schedule.

Another striking feature on this schedule is the position of the major Yoruba newscast. It is placed strategically after the network newscast (at 9.45 p.m.). It is also one of the few incidents of a full 30 minute block devoted to the news in one vernacular language.

Although some programmes within the other categories featured earlier do employ the talk format, those programmes classified as 'talk' here, focussing on civics, politics, even general interests as well as government programmes are few and far between on this station.

Talk and government programmes on this station constitute 1.51 per cent each of the total programming. When combined they are just about 3 per cent. Three out of the total four programmes in those categories are situated in the later time block between 10.15 and 11.00 p.m.

There is a 30 minute focus on the state government on Monday. On alternate Tuesdays there is a current affairs talk programme. That programme has a tendency towards the state of political affairs and lasts for 45 minutes.

On Wednesday there is an extended interview programme - a press conference with personalities whose offices have a bearing on socio-political life.

Programming ends with a 'relaxing' programme each day of the week. This concept is similar to that on the other state owned stations. However, LTV has a wider variety than movies.

On Monday, Wednesday and Thursday there are dramas, all foreign productions, rounding up the day's transmission. The drama on Monday is preceded by an American-produced enlightenment programme on African-Americans, courtesy of the United States Information Service. On Tuesday there is another foreign production, a jazz music programme.

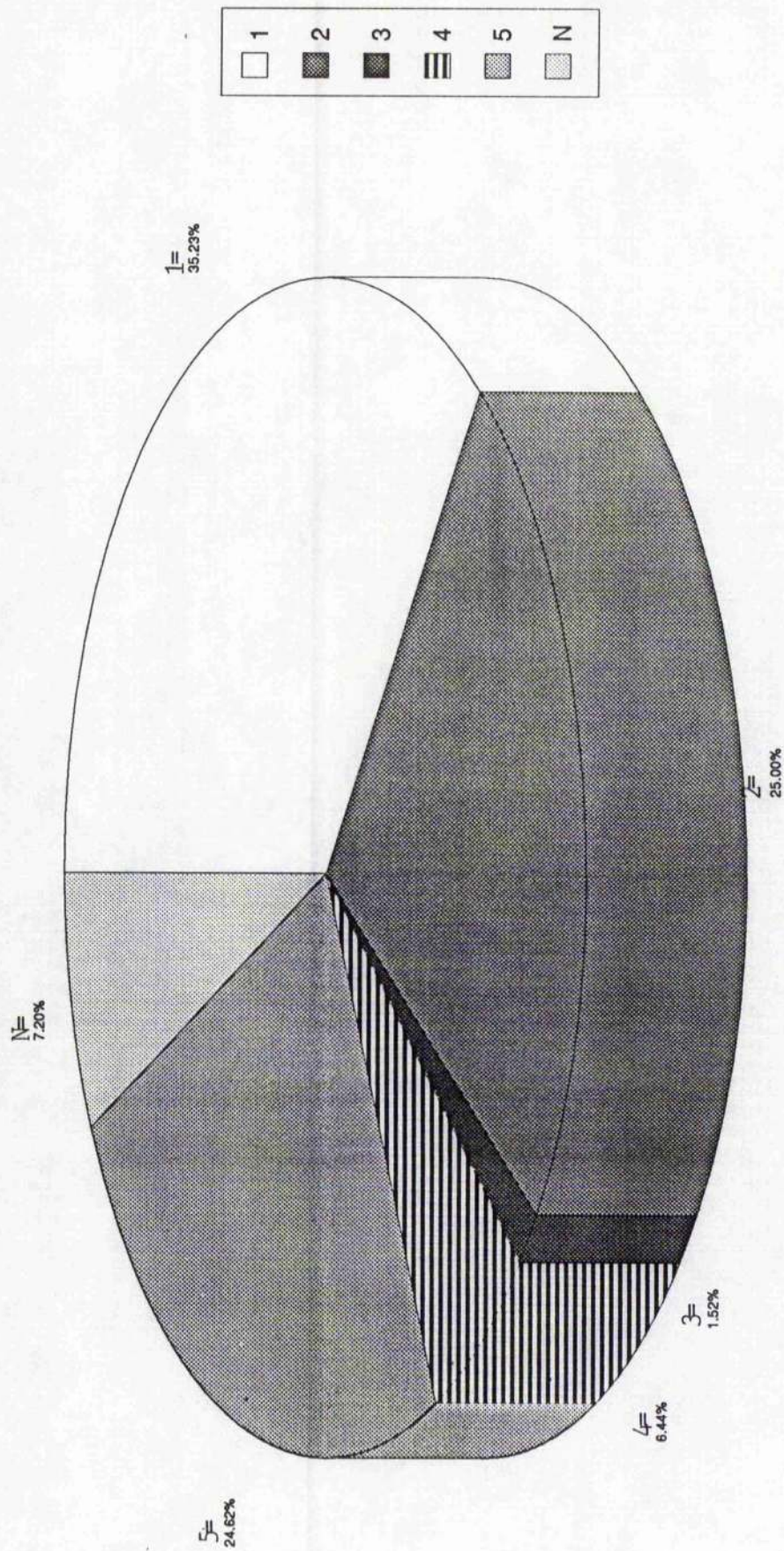
It would thus appear that LTV has devoted the time block to the better informed outward looking segment of the audience. It is thus interesting to note that 45 (of the possible 105) minutes devoted to the linguistic minority audience (Cat 3 Classification 2 Table 1) ^{p2 122} in a week falls within this block. There is a programme for Egun speaking audience on alternate Tuesdays at 10.15 p.m. (see Schedule No. 7) ^{p6 963}

It can be said that, of all the stations, LTV has exhibited a greater commitment to this audience segment. This is based on the total (possible) amount of time, and the depth of the service to them. Rather than the flighty even if consistent newscasts, the station has three possible programmes of no less than 30 minute duration to serve the needs of the Egun speaking audience. Besides that which comes on Tuesdays, the Egun speaking audience are served programmes in their mother tongue on Saturday and Sunday.

The weekend transmission known as Lagos Weekend Television (LWT) begins on Friday night and ends at the end of Sunday's transmission. Already similarities have been observed in the use of time on these days as on the weekdays.

There are some distinctions marking this service. The first distinction is that transmission begins at an earlier time of 9.00 a.m. There is a

LTV/LWT: (Weekly Cumulative) Total Percentage of Language Coverage



market situation report targeted towards women. It comes as the first programme of the morning but that is two hours later than that from OGTV. The programme is also in Yoruba and it last for 30 minutes.

The programme which follows is an imported sports programme, the *Gillette World Sports Special*. This leads into the one hour foreign drama slot. According to the schedule the audience can expect either the science fiction series *Star Trek* or the feature series *Fame*. Thereafter is a 30 minute report on the progress within the state. This report is in English. The next 1.5 hour block is used to serve the Yoruba speaking audience. There is first, one hour of drama and at 11.30 a.m. thereafter is the news in Yoruba.

A Christian programme in English comes up after the news and thereafter the Saturday matinee. The movies are imported and they take up a 1.5 hour block of time.

With the differing appeals, the audience constitution should be expected to change. Such changes are very manifest in the time block between 3.00 and 5.00 p.m.

At 3.00 p.m. there is a programme for the Egun speaking audience. This is followed by a current affairs talk programme and thereafter a two hour sports programme in English.

This pattern makes the service of LTV/LWT distinct from that of the other two state government owned stations, which were almost replicas. (see Saturday's Comparative Graphs: State Government Station)

Conclusion

There is a striking resemblance in the services from the various stations. This is possibly due to the similarity in their goals and the interpretations of their obligations. It is also due to the similarities in their audiences.

Drama is popular even when its share of the total output is constrained.

The talk programmes geared to awakening the audience to their civic responsibilities are also a standard feature on the various schedules. Also falling within this category are the daily 'sermonettes' from the stations, which come in varying forms on the different stations - poetry, subtle exhortations, even outright condemnation of the observed unscrupulous (anti-social) traits.

One of the similarities in the various schedules is the prominence of the news programmes. News is undoubtedly an important category. On the whole it takes up a better part of prime time on all the schedules. Indeed, it is a popular choice of programme for the linguistic minority audience. Sadly, though, there is a compromise of the vernacular news compared to the English news. As observed, there is an inequality of time sharing, placement, even treatment of news for the other categories of audiences. There is yet an unresolved debate on the appropriate style of the (poetical) Yoruba language that should be adopted for news. The sheer waste of words and time, of this flowery languages imply compounds the inequality.

This inequality may only be excusable if the Yoruba speaking audience are known to be satisfied with the English newscasts or if they are not

really interested in the news. The stations tend to assume both - that this indigenous audience have other cares and presumably access to English speaking children who can interpret for them. Yet, as noted earlier, the newscasts are not produced with a younger audience in mind. Rather, the news is prepared for a general (adult) audience who have at least partial secondary school education or complete primary school education.

There are some other categories of programme, like sports, which have also excluded this audience segment. As noted, there are few locally produced sports programmes. All the NTA stations only feature network sports. The local audience thus have to identify with these, and the imported sports. The option to that choice is to ignore the programmes.

On the contrary, there are some programmes which the schedule will suggest do not appeal to the English speaking audience - the elites. Notable examples of these are the metaphysicians and farming programmes which are exclusively in Yoruba.

The cogency of these deductions can only be faulted if the audiences were competently bi-lingual. But the vernacular programmes exist because of the advantages of direct access to the debates. English, after all, is still a learnt language even for those who understand it. Though it is not clear that much thought has been given to how it works, group viewing is an assumed mode of reception, in many of the stations. Hence an assumption that incompetence with a language does not amount to an insurmountable barrier.

TV is thought to be the medium of those who have means. It is assumed

that such people are educated. In the event that those 'illiterates' have access to the sets, it is assumed that their children, who presumably are students and presumably understand English, will act as interpreters for them. The schedules appear to have thus marked the boundaries of the different social stratas.

It would appear that there is little access to the medium of those who are considered as having no means. There is a dearth of programmes featuring the real life, day-to-day problems of people. Audience participatory programmes are insufficient; going by the reports of the long queues for existing ones, and even the number of such on the schedules. With the various considerations which take priority in the production of news and a lot of the other government and talk programmes, the relevance of what is focused on, necessarily reflect the priorities. Indeed, audience considerations come at the bottom rung of the ladder, after government interests and those of big business.

The programmers are, themselves, aware of this and readily acknowledge it. It is the drama category which they have found is still able to reflect the real problems that the audience daily grapples with. For this reason, the drama has also been identified as a vehicle for carrying the messages from the government to the governed. This is even without the direct prompting of government.

In all, the schedules have paid little attention to the non-personal advertisements which also feature within the programme flow. The standard practice on all stations now, is to have inter-programme commercial breaks as well as the intra-programme breaks where possible. The intra programme breaks come right after the opening credits, halfway

through the programme; and before the closing credits. This is usually with the sponsored programmes. In many cases, the programmes are sponsored by corporate advertisers and the advertisements that are featured show a range of the advertiser's products. There is a limit to how much time can be devoted to adverts. Usually this is about seven minutes within an hour. As a result, there is an understanding that 30 minutes programme for instance should be only about 25 but no longer than 27 minutes.

Sometimes, the free time which this allows for is not sold. It is the inability to sell these times that make it appear as though the programme had under-run, hence the need for musical fillers. These occurrences are not reflected in the schedule, yet they are a feature, within the programming.

Likewise, there are the links made by the continuity announcers as they highlight the programmes within the schedule. Such announcements are important because of the absence of a published programme guide. The practice is also important in that it should guide the audience flow.

Indeed, there is a lot more than scheduling that determines audience flow patterns.

The entire discussion above has been done to facilitate an understanding of the choices and viewing behaviour of the audience subjects. It is hoped that with an awareness of the available range of programmes, there will be a better appreciation of the viewers' choices.

However, the knowledge should not be expected to fully explain audience

behaviour before the screen. To do that, is to equate the processes of production with those of reception.

The following section focuses on the practices of viewing and will reveal the dynamics involved in the reception processes.

PART II

THE PRACTICES OF VIEWING

(Report of Ethnographic Study in 12 Locations)

LOCATION # 1 - MAMA'S SHOP IN A TRADITIONAL COURT

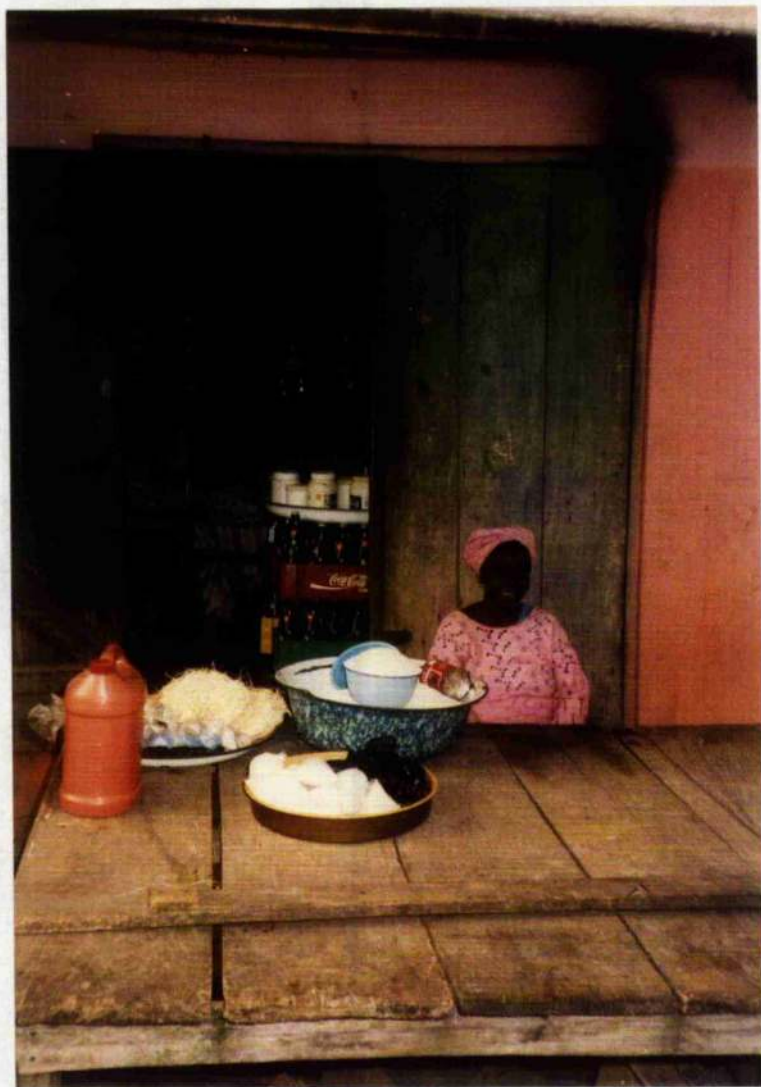
Subject in focus is aged about 65 years old. She lacks formal education, but she is fairly well informed of issues in society. She is the wife of one of the traditional rulers in the several wards of the town. It is by virtue of this position that she gets some of her information. In addition she is interested in current affairs and so she asks a lot of questions, that get answered by the children or the more "enlightened" people around the palace quarters.

Subject owns a shop in which she spends practically all her waking moments. There is a black and white television set in this shop. There is also a bed on which the the subject can relax. She invariably does not spend too much time on the bed; she is quite an active old lady.

Because her shop opens out to the lane, the set usually attracts a crowd whenever there is any programme considered to be interesting. Also because the shop opens into busy the lane, there is a lot of other attractions (distractions) for whoever is viewing therein. The problem is compounded by the customers who trickle in and out, and it is made worse still, by those who come to buy and consume the local gin.

Such is the company in which our subject had to watch television. Two stations are receivable on this set, although within the same building, there are other sets that can receive other channels. The received stations are OGTV, the state owned station, and LTV an adjacent state station. Because the signals from the state station are not very clear, the subjects set is permanently on to LTV - therefore, effectively there is no choice.

PICTURE 1.



Location 1.
Mama is outside her shop. Her back is to the set which is made obscure by the door.

The bulk of the observation at this location was not tape recorded because of a lack of a DC outlet. Though this could have been provided, an attempt to do so would have made the researcher more obtrusive than she needed to be - this subject was not who had any prior acquaintance of anyone who could vouch for the researcher, and was therefore initially suspicious of the whole exercise.

Observation week - Day 1

At about 6.00 p. m. subject was outside her shop with her letter writer. She had just had letters written to her children, some of whom were abroad, and some in Lagos. She was arranging a get together and was trying to fix a date. Afterwards she got her chickens into the pen, and rushed off to the market. She had asked how much her fee would be for participating in the exercise as "we are now aware". The researcher explained to her in the local dialect that this was an academic exercise for which there was no budget.

Whilst subject was away in the market, there was a group of women sitting outside the house with their babies and children, conversing. They made no attempts to watch TV. After a while the group dispersed, as it was time to prepare the family's evening meal. Some of the women went off to the market, to buy the necessary ingredients for their meals. Because of their way of life and the manner of their earnings, they tend to live a life of subsistence; buying only when need arises. Besides very few of the families had refrigerators to store their perishables in. The time then was about 6.30 p.m.

Their conversation had centred around

- (i) the pros and cons of breast milk and formula milk. They also

discussed the "right" quantity of such.

(ii) the superstitious practise of the Ijebus - the indigenes of the town - always needing to consult a medium for everything. The practise was largely condemned.

(iii) the previous day's party and the fight that developed from there - a man, his wayward wife, the confrontation, and the fight that resulted there from.

There was a similarity between these and the themes of the programmes which they watched later in the week.

Subject returned from the market at about 7.10 p.m. and suggested that researcher should leave as she was about to prepare her evening meal. With some persistence, observation continued.

There was a Yoruba drama on which was not watched by anybody - even the young women. Each one was facing her chores and there was no "time" really. The cooking was done in the open, and the preparation process took the women back and forth; from their rooms to the backyard, to the open space in the frontage of the house which served as the kitchen. The women, and children had to fetch water from the next compound. This water was stored in drums or such large containers in any convenient location within the compound. This is one of the reasons why in the process of preparing food preparation, a woman may find herself going back and forth. There is also the fact that what serves as the pantry or store or even the kitchen sink may be a combination of locations; the room; the backyard; the corridor are examples. The less organised woman thus may find herself requiring several trips round the house in the process of preparing a meal.

They did not walk in viewing range of the functional set and there was no incidental viewing. The subject who operated within the range of incidental viewing, did not show any sign of interest. She was either wary of the researcher or really quite pre-occupied with her thoughts.

At Yoruba newscast time the subject was attracted by the signature tune and she settled down to watch.

S: Let us hear what is going on, what they say is going on.

She watched quietly and attentively. She only commented on the news item about a leader's movement.

S: They say the king is going to do something. They say he is going somewhere. They say he said something.

These were unsolicited comments, much like a commentary on the news item. These were the only comments she had on the entire newscast.

Following the news, a foreign drama came on. Subject glanced occasionally at the set, attracted by the action as she did not understand the English language. Again she began to pass comments as she became engrossed in the programme. She was "reading" the visuals.

S: Look at this man holding the woman! Ah! The woman is having her head knocked on the ground. The man's head is knocked on the ground too. [PAUSE] He bites his finger, "Had I known?" gesture [as programme fades to black] Now they close their eyes.

Her interpretation of the action and gestures had been based of her own understanding of the codes. Thus the reading of a "Had I known ?" gesture when subject had merely been licking his bruised finger. In this, a misinterpretation that is based on the application of the wrong

set of decoding tools is observed. Non - verbal codes are culture bound.

After a while subject suggests that researcher's effort for that day will be a waste of time as there usually is no viewing at that time. People only viewed specific programmes.

R: So what are the programmes that people view?

S: The Wednesday drama, then Saturdays , Sundays, and maybe Mondays.

Neighbour: At a time we were really serious about television but now we don't watch it. When one works hard all day and gets back home tired, is that when one wants to watch television? Then on Saturdays you want to lie in.

S: Saturdays and Sundays are good days though. The stations would have announced what they have on offer during the week but I don't even remember.

This dialogue illustrates the unreliability of self account. The subject had not accounted for incidental viewing such as that which had just taken place in assuming that there will be no viewing. This is a result of the lack of sensitivity to variations in viewing modes.

Likewise there is an example of the need to probe in the above response - That a day is considered a good day does not guarantee that there will be viewing.

It stands to reason that the same can be said for a programme and a converse situation. Hence again an illustration of the unreliability of self report.

With this declaration of disinterest, the researcher was taken to the sitting room upstairs which has a bigger black and white set. The set receives more channels and is relatively clearer although the pictures

are also sometimes grainy. The arrangement of the room makes it more comfortable and more convenient for deliberate watching. But the room was empty and the set was off. There was no sign of life at all. However, there was plenty of activity downstairs. The children were all outside; the mothers were in the "kitchens"; the men were absent from home at this time.

There were the occasional bursts of singing and the blaring of the isolated cassette player. There is no distinction between this and the radio, the radio/cassette player is simply regarded as the radio.

The house is an old building and the windows are devoid of the burglar proof bars which are to be found in the more modern (and more privileged) homes. There is an open secure feeling in the atmosphere. Besides the extended royal family who lived there, some of the rooms in the courts had been let out to tenants.

The house is also closely huddled to the adjacent courtyards such that conversations from there can be easily overheard. There was no deadly silence in the sitting room even though the set was not on. Its function as a companion, supplying background chatter was not missed.

Someone, somewhere, bemoaned the cat which ate up the five Naira worth of meat that she intended cooking with.

Subject called out again to researcher that it was time to go. Observation thus ended at about 8.30 p.m.

Day 2

Subject reported that she had found some other programme which she

watched the previous evening. This confirms the above observation about self reports on viewing.

S: There was an Apala performance, a show like that of old times, a Sakara performance.

Apala is a type of music, and Sakara is a variation. They are both socially accepted types of music for the elderly. Note that this meant that she could indeed have been exposed to other programmes, but she only reported that which she found to be of interest to her.

The set had been switched on and the subject's attention was drawn to the set which had a foreign programme on. The programme was Another Life which is a soap opera by the American Christian Broadcasting Network (CBN).

S: These gunmen have come again...These programmes do not lend themselves to my viewing ...What is it called those films that people go out to watch? I don't watch such...I like to watch traditional dances.

Q: Which type?

S: Opope dance group is what I like to watch.

Opope is a really indigenous type of music which is typical to only a small segment of the large Yoruba ethnic group, to which the subject belongs. Yet this is what she would rather see on television. This illustrates the problem that programmers may have to contend with if they tried to satisfy every whim or desire.

Subject mostly was sitting, backing the set and looking out into the lane; she was looking out for her customers; making small talk with passers - by who were invariably neighbours, her husband's subjects, and possibly relations. She knew them all and in fact, she knew much more

about them than she cared to let on sometimes. At some other time, she talked about their problems as they passed, not as gossip, but as sympathy for their plight. Many times she was just sitting and staring but her thoughts were far away though she was not impervious to the outputs from television.

There was an announcement made by the continuity announcer to herald the next programme on the line up which "jolted" her out of her thoughts. Although the announcement was made in English which she does not understand, she turned to see what was on offer. This illustrates that she understands the ritual even though she was handicapped regarding the language of communication.

She looked expectantly to assess if the programme was worth watching. She decided that it was not, as she hissed, turned her head and "went back to her world" deep in her own thoughts.

There was a break in transmission . The set was left on, and in a few moments the service was restored. The subject, though familiar with such disruptions, she was nonetheless irked by it as she pointed it out for the researcher to note. An apathy towards the service is detected in her report and this was confirmed by her added declaration.

S: That is what it does, dying and waking...[as programme resumed] you can chatter and chatter as you please then you will have to leave sometime and my own type of programme will come.

There was a lot of noise coming out of the programme at some point which prompted, the subject to make a play on the paramount king's name. This play on words is only a rhyme although it could be indicative of subject's frame of reference.

S: I wee alariwo - Sonariwo

[meaning This one is a noisy - Sonariwo is the king's name
which means One who has noise - that is One who is acclaimed]

The fact that she was shut out of the programme, compounded the problem of noise and according to her she would have switched off had the researcher not been around.

Indeed the intolerance of noise was not to have been an issue had it been that she understood what was going on. The level of said noise was not to be compared with that which is typical of the location. The noise therefore is more of the communication model type of noise - a message that cannot be decoded. The annoyance likewise, was more of the frustration due to the insistence of a jolly group, on being overheard, even though their chatter is incomprehensible.

The effect of this would have been that the subject would have been led out of the programme flow if she indeed acted as she felt like.

S: IF you had not been here, after a while of tolerating their noise, I'd switch the set off, out of anger.

Q: Is it their laughter or their speech that is annoying you?

S: It's the speech; when I don't understand what they are saying.

The programme in question soon ended but in the meantime subject had gone out to prepare the pen for her chickens, to come and roost in. The response to the programme had affected the decision on the use of time. This was even more apparent when the interlude of music following the programme attracted subject's full attention despite the fact that she had customers to attend to.

Besides the fact that this was a programme type that she liked, as she declared, the customer's mission was one which she preferred to avoid/ignore. The said customer was one who was much younger than the subject but who had brought a complaint concerning the iced water that her child had bought. The woman was very rude to the subject in the process of lodging her complaint.

Subject dismissed the issue quickly as a case not worthy of her attention and proceeded to dance to the juju music that was coming from the screen. She also echoed the music as she danced.

S: This is the current fad..."Friends, fellows, put off your worries and let us dance..."

The music is more instrumental than the bardic type of music for which she had earlier expressed preference. It is more modern with synthesisers, guitars, percussion drums. The dance display [at this point] is more gentle than the other prevalent fads. and the subject commented on this. She was not just listening to the music, she was watching as well.

S: This group play music that is more pleasant to the ears than the groups springing up now.

Q: What about the new groups?

S: Those ones are not good. Their stories are no better to the ears than those who just finished playing in that cinema [referring to the fore - going programme as film, thus the word cinema].

Note that the foreign programme is equated with cinema which is a concept that subject because of her age is more familiar with. The more interesting equation, is that of the modern though local music with other foreign programmes.

This subject tends to see TV talents as performers who are only playing a part. This could be an off shoot of the traditional view of entertainers as performers.

Already the subject has employed TV as an entertainer; an informant; a nuisance; and also as a non - existent contraption.

Despite the fact that she had been enjoying the music, it is remarkable that when the experience was stunted by the advent of the commercials, there was no visible response. There was no disappointment or acrimony. The first few adverts that came were in English language and later the Yoruba ones but all the response that came from the subject, was the echoing of the name of one of the products - Cafenol; a pain relief which had been on the market for a long time.

The echoing of that name suggested that it struck a resonant chord in her mind but one cannot be sure why. What is certain though is that she was fascinated by the name.

There was another pause which was not a break in transmission. The announcer came on and introduced in English the state news. Despite the fact that she does not understand English, she was able to anticipate correctly that it was time for the news. Again this illustrates how that an understanding of the routine can make television predictable. This is why it was possible for television to be used as a time keeper.

Going by her first comment, it appears that the newscaster's dressing was the first attraction.

S1: These headgear experts are here again.

The Yoruba translation followed the English newscast and she listened attentively. For items that interested her, or those that she had a say on, there was the tendency for her to listen only to the lead sentence, before "running off" with her own commentary. What this meant was that she missed a good part of the news story itself. With the stories that she had little interest in, or knowledge about, she either received with non-committal acknowledgement, or she was not bothered at all. As a result of this mental or occasionally physical drift, from the set, she missed some of the details of an item which she would have loved to watch.

For example, because of her experience with the bank which had refused her a loan, she found the news item concerning banking, to be interesting. Also because she had a direct and unpleasant experience on the subject matter, she was very vehement and antagonistic in her commentary.

S: The wretched rogues, they will only give loans to rich men; adding to their wealth. They will never give help to the down trodden masses. Of course it serves them right now! The rich ones will not pay back the money and who will query them? Whereas if they had helped the genuinely poor, who do not have godfathers, and would have hurriedly paid back, the money would have been recouped.

In saying this she had not listened to the rest of the story but to the lead. Some other news items however evoked a nod of acknowledgement, a snigger and after a while of such passive responses, she left the set. She was attracted back to the set on sighting a picture in an obituary news item. By this time she had missed the details of the story and although she was curious it was not a great miss (possibly because she

did not recognise the person).

The previous interlude of music was resumed and subject likewise resumed her entertainment, which she no doubt had enjoyed. The music is prayerful and with the exhortation for reliance on God the avenger and defender. Subject danced and sang along. The tunes and lyrics are catchy.

The interlude of music was again interrupted to present the next programme which is an Australian adventure series - The Elephant Boy. Although her enjoyment was interrupted, there was no animosity; no show of disaffection.

The new programme was not one with which subject was familiar especially with it being in English. She was however attracted to watching by the fascination to the animals in the visuals. The point of attraction was really the point where a leopard was about to be shot. She followed the suspense of the animal being stalked. Subsequently, she tried to identify the names of the other animals that she could recognise.

Note that the subject again assumed that this group of performers are the same as the ones that she had encountered earlier in an American comedy series. Her handicap with the language compounds her ability to discriminate in her assessment.

It is also interesting that this subject having acknowledged the fact that she may be educationally, disadvantaged, seeks to be led in the viewing experience by the comments she makes which often are prompts that could lead to a discussion of the programme content.

S: ... I wonder what it's name is now. It's not a camel nor is it a donkey. What is it called now. ...

...It's the same group of performers again...

...This is a dog the type the westernised folks guard their houses with. [The animal in question in this instance was a leopard!]

The subject soon got bored with the viewing experience and she opted to sit outside the shop with her back to the set. It was obvious she wanted a different kind of companionship than the viewing experience could offer her. She mused over the whereabouts of the other women in the household. These ones had again either gone to the market, or to their shops. The frequency of the trips to the market was striking.

Though subject had ignored the set, it was left on and some children passing by were attracted to it. The first had been attracted by a sudden noise from the screen and casting a glance, reacting to reflex, he found himself fascinated to the programme. It appears that his presence, standing and watching from outside the shop was what attracted the others.

The group of children dispersed as unceremoniously as it was formed especially with the poor and noisy signals.

Somewhere nearby a child was being flogged and the noise drowned the sound of the television. This was only momentary but not long after subject got up and switched off the set. She did not try to check other options, to see if at least the signals would be clear thus confirming that there is no option. She also confirmed that she was not keen on TV at that time; what she wanted was some quiet, and TV was, therefore by

inference a nuisance.

She turned her attention to the erring child and joined in scolding him, and thereafter she marvelled at the changing virtues in the world.

In a few moments the set was switched on again in the absence of any other pastime. The programme that was on was a discussion programme on "Sanitation in the market place". From the content with the subject, it can be safely assumed as a programme that would interest and engage her, especially at that time. But the programme was in English and so she could not be a part of it. Subject made no pretence about watching or patiently enduring the course of the programme. Her outburst was again evoked by the liveliness of the discussants; their gesticulations.

As though consoling herself, her outburst was followed by a repetition of the fact that there will be "good" programmes at the weekends. Here again by inference the programme was not "good". The programme for her, did not serve any purpose, as she could not be a part of it. Therefore it could not have been good.

For some reason the set was left on till the programme ended, and the news came on. By this time, there was a customer sitting in the shop. He was an elderly man in his 50's; he was semi - educated; and he had come for some shots of the local gin. He provided a ready assistance to the subject who had no qualms in admitting that she does not understand the news and concluded that "it was not for the likes of herself".

Her lament is suggestive of an unsatisfied interest in the news. In fact her conclusion that the news was not meant for her type, goes beyond a

criticism of format or language, which are the more apparent aspects. This is illustrated in her response and attitude to the subjects of the news items themselves, when she could grasp the content of news, either through the news translations, or when she had the services of an interpreter. In this instance, this was her gin drinking customer.

S: I don't understand the news; it's not meant for us. Raji Rasaki is the one they keep on mentioning.

C: They say he is going to resume duty.

S: What duty?

C: He is going to resume some suspended neighbourhood meetings.

S: [Hisses] The rich man is not God; he is just privileged.

The last statement is a common proverb employed by the disgruntled in situations that are "helpless" and unavoidable.

The remainder of the news was not watched as the customer who had been drinking took over the discussion. What is outstanding in his ramblings is the confidence with which he makes his utterances, (even when they are not correct).

In this instance his focus was an assessment of TV service having been told of researcher's mission.

Observation ended at about 9.00 p.m. at subject's *insistence* as she was concerned for researcher's safety.

Day 3

There was no observation on this day.

Day 4

Observation started at about 6.30 p.m. Subject reported that she had seen her husband and the other king - Sonariwo talking [making a speech] and when they had finished they were applauded. This had been on the news the previous day. What was reported was not the point made in the speech but the fact that they were there at all.

One of the tenants came to inform the subject of the decision to introduce new coins into the currency. This illustrates the alternative sources of information at subject's disposal.

When the Yoruba translation of the news came on, subject paid very close attention at the onset. There was a determination to view. This interest waned as the reports came on, and she started running her commentary. She reacted to the visuals which she found striking (a man in very dark glasses); and at that time, she was not even listening to the utterances that the man was making.

Her attention was attracted again by the lead sentence of another story. This was an item warning parents about the immorality of youths as found in schools. This was not only interesting, the subject was concerned. Her concentration on the item was however to be compromised because of the sale she had to make.

Later, an obituary was announced and a picture of the deceased was used. Her concentration was only heightened at the mention of the venue of the funeral which invariably was indicative of where the deceased was from. She echoed the name of the town. The town in question was not too far away and belongs to the same ethnic grouping as that of the subject. The

echoing of the name thus suggests a resonance based on affinity as well as recognition. She echoed the name as though wondering who could have been affected.

She mentally switched off again from the news. Earlier, she had missed other stories because of the sale she had to make, and also because of her fascination with the new coins which someone had brought in to show her.

The set was left on although it was not attended. It turned out that the set was not being completely ignored as subject, on hearing the continuity announcer speak in Yoruba, perched , alert to hear which programme was introduced. She rounded up her conversation, while the signature tune for the introduced programme was being played. She made a conscious decision to watch. It was a health programme, and the discussion was on the "goitre".

Subject set about watching the programme with very keen interest but ended up losing interest. This experience is an interesting illustration of a negotiation process.

S: They say they are going to discuss goitre. God may I never experience the evil of goitre.

[She watches closely, studying the visual illustrations used in expounding the points.]

S: Is this goitre looking so wide?...They say it appears to be on the left side. Hun! Ridiculous lot...

[She switches off her gaze from the illustration quite unimpressed.]

S: Before goitre that size appears on a man's neck, he would have been dead no doubt.

The illustration had been misunderstood - the detailed diagram of the

neck cavity had been confused with the goitre. Subject called out to her mate who was close by, who had neither been watching, nor been within range of viewing to discuss the ridiculous claims that she had heard on the programme. Meanwhile the claims had only been ridiculous because the picture was misunderstood and contrary to their experience of the phenomenon. The mate was not very interested and they both concluded that the programme was full of a bunch of liars. (There had only been the interviewer, and the guest doctor on the programme).

After the mate had left, subject still cast occasional glances at the set, as she had not physically switched it off, inspite of rejecting the content of the on going programme. She was thus able to take in some more of the programme.

S: He says there is some substance coming out of the brain that has it's limits of being effective on the brain.

There was a loud noise from a nearby mosque - call to prayer - which rendered everything else inaudible. After this, subject continued her commentary on the programme.

S: No work is forgone. Sometimes when a person is asked to engage in some job and he does not want to, when he goes hungry, he will comply.

Now they say they want to investigate the causes of goitre. There is no one who can't be afflicted by goitre; whether old or young. He said that goitre is more common place amongst women than men.

Mate: Come to think of it, it is not as common amongst men as amongst women

S: It is more common among women [agreeing]

TV: Iodine deficiency is caused by improper diet...Iodine can be sourced from seafood like fish...

S: [echoing programme then reacting] "When one eats too much of certain types of food particularly cassava", pray tell me what we would eat then? [cassava is not only the staple it is the most affordable]. . .It's

those who live by the sea who get to eat plenty of fish.

Another passer-by who is within viewing range joins her in wondering what they are to eat, laughing scornfully at the reasoning of the programme. This fellow had not been watching the programme but had overheard the message as well as the subject's musings. The scorn arose from the perceived condemnation of that staple which is all they "can afford", and a recommendation of a diet that they feel is beyond their reach.

Subject is nonetheless still following the programme.

S: [echoing TV programme] There is a drug for controlling sugared urine condition [diabetes] and they say it is careless eating habits that cause the condition.

TV Interviewer: How does that affect goitre?

TV Doctor: That is different but there is an ailment that can also eventually lead to goitre.

S: Body ailment? It therefore must have affected everyone who is plagued by goitre. It could be hereditary or caused by careless eating habits...These deceitful people! They can tell such lies.

Even with that outburst she continued viewing; listening to the programme and nodding in acknowledgement of what was said, but not watching except for the occasional glance at the set. She also continued the occasional echoing of what was said.

S: The implications for women - deficiency of substance makes women fat, have irregular menses and difficulty in child bearing. Do you hear that?

Over-production causes jumpiness weight loss, unsteadiness, fear [anxiety], a ravishing appetite without correlative weight gain. Look at those pictures, see how that one lacks flesh; the best of her nutrition has been siphoned by goitre!
LAUGHTER

These people they make sure they have all the facts before

they talk. . . Indeed after a while of incubating a disease does come out.

It now appeared that she was convinced by the conclusion. There was a break in transmission at this point and the subject exclaimed; a confirmation of her knowledge of the station's pattern. That signalled the end of the viewing session as that programme though it appeared to have almost ended, was not resumed. Instead, the next programme on the line up, was aired when transmission resumed. The programme was not that which had been scheduled as the announcer's apology revealed. Family Man replaced Family Matters. The apology was lost on the subject, as she could not distinguish between these programmes anyway. She only noted that the English speaking performers had returned. This was because the programme had been introduced in English.

This is another illustration of how familiarity with the codes of TV, enables subject to guess, and this time correctly, what the programme was about.

S: It is the English speaking performers again. These ones are comedians.

Q: How do you know?

S: The soldiers (war men) will carry guns. Do you know that the war that was just concluded, it was the white men that fought in it?...

Besides the reasoning that underlie the subject's ability to classify programmes, something else that is worthy of note in the above transcript is the way one thing leads to another. The manner in which cues become baits leading to further discussion. This kind of discussions may take a subject further away from the programme which supplied the cue as was the case in this instance.

The mention of war seemed for some reason to remind subject of the news as her next utterance showed.

S: Oh, I slept early yesterday. The set had not finished bringing the news when I had gone to sleep; when I had started dozing.

The war in question was the Gulf war which had recently been prominent on the news, hence the correlation. With this, the conversation went further away from the programme on the screen as did the attention.

It can be seen from the above, that television, is also employed as a reference point; a time keeper of sorts. This is indicative of an understanding of its workings; its schedule; its pattern.

The next programme on the line up was the news and it may not be far fetched to assume that the subject was anticipating the news.

Of the various advertisements and announcements that preceded the news, it was an advertisement promoting the Lagos state trade fair which had as part of its highlight traditional dances that caught the subject's attention.

S: Look, look, they say they are going to have school children do traditional dances.

It is not clear if the attraction was the traditional dance that was to be performed, or the fact that it was to be performed by school children, or both. What is certain is that the main purpose of the announcement, that is that there was to be a trade fair, was not paramount in the subject's consideration of the message.

Another announcement which she reacted to was the public service announcement, about a missing person, who was trying to locate her relatives. Subject's response again went beyond a mere acknowledgement of the fact or even the problem, she saw the wider problem from a personal angle and not just responded to the individual's plight.

S: That is why I don't like Lagos.

She proceeded to narrate some of the experiences she had had in Lagos; how her grandchildren have to be locked up, "caged" in fact; and how such constrained living is typical for all in Lagos including herself when she goes. With this, the conversation again drifted away from the set.

Thoughts were directed further away from television when one of the women arrived home from the market announcing that she had lost twenty naira. After commiserating with her the discussions drifted to focus on the new coins; the novelty in the currency.

There was a clear rejection of this action; the group which had gathered round to sympathise with the woman and thereby discuss the problem could not understand the need for the lower denomination notes, to be replaced by coins. They wondered about the practical implications of spending coins rather than notes, and concluded that the currency has been turned into "a joke".

Whilst the details of their alternative discussions need not be the focus of this study, it becomes interesting when one realises that up till that time there had not been any programme on television explaining the queries of the people and allaying their fears, yet they had got the

information and had made up their minds. They had already taken a stance before they could be offered any official explanations. They had acted based on their common sense.

This was the mood that the subject was in when the World News at 8 p.m. was transmitted. The subject was determined to watch, despite the fact that the news was in English. She asked that the items be interpreted for her. Her concentration was not to be for long as there was a flurry of competing activities; children coming in, to make last minute purchases for their mother's cooking. She therefore did not get a chance to see the accompanying footage for the reports which got translated. She soon switched off mentally and she started singing to herself observing the absence of musical interludes in the day's transmission. Note her concluding comment about the day's service in comparison with the above report.

S: They did not perform today; it's been chatter chatter all day. You know sometimes they will perform throughout the day, till the day is gone. Is that not on Fridays and Saturdays and Sundays?

With that comment, subject was not being discriminatory as regards which group of performers; television for her, was a performance, albeit with varying inputs or varying shows.

Observation ended at about 9 p.m.

Day 5

The set had been switched on before the arrival of the researcher and subject had concluded her daily ritual of preparing the pen for the chickens to roost in.

There was a religious programme on, and it was bilingual. That means it had an interpreter translating the message as is characteristic of gospel programmes.

The segment of the programme that was on, was an interview and subject was watching with keen interest. The issue being tackled was on the reasons why Moslems and Christians do not agree. Soon after, there was a musical interlude within the programme and Christian gospel music was played. Subject was singing along. At this point the subject's mate came along to viewing range and affirmed her thoughts. Based on the singing she affirmed it was a Christian programme. But she was wrong.

There was no commentary accepting or rejecting the points made in the programme as the interview continued. This was unlike the subject. She who was not in the habit of receiving programmes without verbally acknowledging or even negotiating them.

A customer came in and she was also fascinated by the comments made in the programme. The points responsible for the difficulties in the ability to get along were being highlighted. Even though the subject echoed the programme, and she had a ready audience in her customer to discuss the issue with, she did not make any comments. Rather she was prepared to listen to the comments of others.

This is a contrast to her response to the musical interludes which were intermittent in the programme. She preferred (or so it seemed) to sing along with the music rather than pursue the line of conversation. This suggests that she was trying to avoid the possible controversy on an

acknowledged, sensitive issue.

As her mate had earlier done, she took a part of the programme, in this case the visuals and the content of the songs, and tried to determine the identity of the source. She however concluded that the "performers" were Moslems.

S: These are Moslems.

Q: How could you tell that they are Moslems? Was it the song?

S: Yes and they have covered their heads...Laila i la Allah...[singing along with the programme]...They are saying Laila is accepted; that they are sure of that;but the Christians are saying Moslems are not their brothers, therefore Laila is not acceptable.

Subject was joined by her mate in singing the Laila chant. The mate is a Moslem, whilst the subject professes Christianity. They are both traditional queens and that means they also have allegiance to their traditional religion. As has been noted, the issue of religion tends to be touchy hence the subject's response was even more interesting.

As the programme came to an end, the subject exhibited her recognition of TV codes.

S: They have moved that one away. [as the music was faded and the visuals dissolved, and replaced.]

Applied (Mis)information

By this time, subject had become more relaxed with the presence of researcher and was even willing to take her into confidence. The interesting feature of these conversations, is the way television is used to buttress points, provide illustrations, in the realm of reality despite the fact that throughout the viewing sessions, it had been treated as a performance.

In discussing particular objectionable behaviour in a person for example, she drew from the information that she had received from the news earlier on in the week.

S: This thing [i.e. the television] said yesterday that there was a meeting in Lagos the previous day. They said men and women need to be more vigilant in the training of their children; that these days 10 year - olds get pregnant; permissive sex does not allow them to show brilliance in their studies. If you gave them 3 lessons, hardly can they grasp one. That whoever has children in schools should warn them to behave, otherwise, the teachers will have to throw them out.

They had discovered that 3 out of 11 children were seeking admission into some schools were already pregnant.

The children were kept in a room and their parents were sent for. The children were handed over to their parents and then dismissed on the spot. They are never to attend school ever again. The parents offered to take care of the children or get the pregnancy aborted, but the school would have nothing to do with that. The teacher's would not be responsible for anybody's life.

Her account was a slight expatiation of a news item which she had attended closely 2 days before. No matter how slight, the subject's report had modified the original report. This reflected her understanding of the news item. It suggests that understanding is a possible site of misrepresentation of that which was said, especially where the viewer only takes a part of the report, missing out the other details there in.

In another case, where subject buttressed her position with her own account of what had been said on television, the slight distortion, or expatiation as in the previous example described, succeeded in completely changing the story.

The story was that the school-year was to be reverted to September - July from the January - December that it had been. This meant that the 1991 session was to be condensed, so that a new session could commence in September.

Subject however said that it had been announced that the twelve month calendar had been reduced to a six month calendar with no indication of an understanding that it was just a temporary measure, with plans to accommodate the extra work load.

This misconstruction again comes from not listening to the entirety of the news. Subject had been observed to just listen to the news in parts, particularly taking just the lead sentence and running away with it. At best she took the lead along with the ambivalent of the lead, if the story was one, on which she had a say.

This observation should have serious implications for news writers particularly.

Interest in programming resumed as a musical interlude came on. There was a customer, a young person in the shop at this time and subject was not shy, to learn from him.

S: What is this called? [referring to the type of music.]

Boy: He is called Ayuba; he is from Ikenne. [Ikenne is a neighbouring town, and the boy sings along.]

S: How come you have heard him ? I have not.

[She danced along to the music whilst the boy sang along, humming to, even those parts that were purely instrumental.]

S: You mean you can even sing it unaccompanied? Truly the young shall grow.

[As she yet marvelled at that one child, a crowd of other

children had gathered around]

S: So why have you gathered round now?

She switched off mentally as the funk music came on. The crowd of children likewise thinned out but a few children remained, reading the captions that accompanied the visuals, and listening to the music. They left as the music gave way to an interview programme. There was no question of assessing the programme to see if it was worth their while, they just left.

Subject on her part, looked at the picture and commented on the talent's earring; comparing it to that which they used to wear in the "olden days". This attraction to the person of the presenter served as a reminder of the personality of another favoured presenter.

S: ...These earrings are quite something! There is one woman, she is a very good newscaster. She has not been on at all during this week. These ones are not as skilled. That woman is very eloquent and very versatile; she acknowledges those who sponsor them; those who have given them gifts or soap...

Subject was not interested in and did not watch the interview programme. When the interlude, the disco type music came on again, subject commented on it being an energetic dance. What is interesting in these sort of comments is that it illustrates that a viewer may still have an opinion, an impression, on a programme that she is not interested in, and does not particularly watch, or understand.

Because of her trading interest, subject asked that the Pepsi commercial be translated to her, although, she identified Pepsi as Coke.

S: [As Pepsi advert came on] They say we should be buying Coke. Please tell me how much that Coke is supposed to be sold for. [All advertisements in Nigeria by legislation

must carry the recommended retail price hence the confidence in expecting that the price must be included in the advert.]

S: ...Ehen I wonder how they expect that it would be sold at that rate even in Lagos. They don't even sell to us at that price, but then the customers see that and expect that price. Anyway I always tell such customers to go and buy from their TV sets.

Another musical interlude succeeds the commercial break and this stopped the subject in her tracks. It was Sunny Ade's music; a popular juju musician.

S: ... Ah that man is talented! [the man] who sang this song "Ayinde has no rival amongst musicians. Ayinde has not been involved in their treacherous plots, he has great wealth, and dresses in regal robes, wears beaded shoes, and has become Kabiyesi (unquestionable authority - king)"
LAUGHTER

Subject no doubt enjoyed the music and the experience of viewing the interlude.

From the above, a tendency for the subject to interchange similar codes is noticeable. She confused the roles of the presenter and the newscaster. This error may actually be due to the fact that the person in question, does in fact at times perform both roles at different times. This may not assist the subject in her ability to discriminate.

The other example of her inability to discriminate was when she confused Pepsi for Coke. During the period of observation, the subject was seen using the name, Coke as a generic name rather than a brand name, so, although she knows there is a difference, she still refers to the competitor's product by the leading brand's name. It is this habit that she carried into the reception of the advertising message. This is another potential source of confusion or misinterpretation.

As the newscaster for the evening's news was introduced by the continuity announcer, the subject made ready to watch the news. She actually vocalised her decision to watch, but she still got on with one of her nightly rituals - the stacking of her wares as for the night. In this instance it is not clear if her decision to watch was actually because she anticipated the news, or if she anticipated a programme in Yoruba. What is clear is that the name that the announcer heralded aroused her curiosity.

The next programme was the English newscast and subject was nonetheless interested. She followed the picture, and tried to make sense of it. For a person who could follow both the visual, and aural parts of the news, it was obvious that the visual aspect of the report alone, could not convey the stories accurately. In fact in some instances, she could not distinguish between different reports and she linked unconnected reports. To her they seemed connected.

There had been a story on some violence, and this was followed by a report of some women's activity. There however was no pause between the stories to enable subject differentiate between them. She thus assumed that the women must have been part of the violence. She had inadvertently read the frame, along with the foregoing material. The following was her conclusion.

S: It must be the authorities killing them. There are women amongst them.

Q: This is a different item you know?

S: What is it about? They have so much to say that we don't hear. Well, I hope all this will be translated.

This illustrates the interest which the subject has in the news and how her incompetence with the language frustrates her interest. In the first instance, she confesses to not being able to keep up, with the pace of the news; there are so many stories for one who is trying to work out just what is being said. To compound issues as it were, the reality, is that not all the stories get into the translations, so that unless she got it from picture reading, she was not likely to get it at all. This frustration is what was expressed in the "hope".

The fact that she has to rely on picture reading or at best the sometimes questionable interpretations from the incidental interpreters whose services she can employ, make her highly susceptible to misinformation.

These observations have serious implications for the news writers, the news producers, and also the directors.

The observation of subject's frustration goes beyond questionable deductions. She actually had occasional outbursts when she voiced such.

S: They just keep making small talk when they are supposed to be casting news. Rather than do what they have to do, they repeat the same thing umpteen times. Anyway I suppose that is what they are paid to do.

In all her utterances, TV was undoubtedly, the illusion of reality; TV is all a performance even though she could learn from it, and illustrate reality with it.

Commercial Breaks

She finds relief in the commercial break. There was the Milo commercial and then the Trebor Luckies commercial. They were both in English and once again she read the visuals.

S: Eh! They are running ...now they stop ...Eh! Trebor Lucky!

Her echoing the name and even her commentary was non - committal suggesting that she did not pay attention to the message if there was any. She was glad to have a break from the news which she had complained about.

The striking observation at this point though is the ease with which the excitement transpires, and that with which the product name is "mindlessly" repeated. This excitement or satisfaction was more than the news could offer.

It is noteworthy that this subject seemed to derive more satisfaction from the interludes and the commercial breaks than she did from the main programmes themselves at least during the week days.

As a result of the way these programmes are seen; they are not really considered to be the substantive programmes. She would have been correct if she reported that she does not watch TV at all. Yet this discounts the real position between herself and her set.

Network News

The national network news came on soon after the commercial break. This was also in English. By this time, her regular customers were there again, to consume their usual shots of the local gin. One of the

customers is dumb and therefore unobtrusive; showing no interest in the television; but the other one is rather garrulous.

The newscasters had been introduced.

S: See how that one is glaring! ...Pity!

Customer: It's only that woman who presents Areweyo that I like. You can win gifts from that programme and sometimes she will ask the audience to write the station.

S: [obviously discomfited by the patron's incessant chatter]
You are talking too much.

Customer: [acknowledges complaint but goes right on] See that one what is his name?...

The countenance of the newscaster was the first feature that the subject commented about. At a previous session, it had been the attire that first caught her fancy.

Even though the subject was not comfortable with the actions of her customer, and though she made obvious her intention to watch the programme, possibly with a greater degree of "peace", her customer proved incorrigible and she did not do anything about it, possibly because he was a customer. This is an example of a situation which affects the viewing but which the viewer cannot help.

The man carried on with his commentary on the visuals; using the striking features, usually persons, as a point of departure in conveying the information that he was "privileged" to have. This information was not always accurate. Meanwhile the gist of the news items are themselves lost under the insistent chatter of the said man. His attitude was to show off that he was better informed.

Customer: See that one, what is his name? He used to be governor here. [Ogun state] That one in camouflage; that's

him; that's the man! You do not have reliable eyesight.
Don't you see this is Rasaki?

S: It is?

Customer: It is! See, see the pendant on his head [cap] That is the man.

S: Look at his cheeks...

Customer: And that a leader! [actual translation of word used should be king rather than leader. This was uttered with such disdain.]

They had not listened to the news story at all, to know that it had not been about the government, on which their venom was now unleashed. It had been about the Red Cross. The governor had only been a guest at the occasion yet with all the argument, no one was able to follow the story.

During the commercial break that came on, there was a public service advertisement - Stop the abuse of the naira. This advertisement used a popular TV character a star of one the comedy groups. The subject recognised him and though she did not comment on it, she demonstrated some familiarity with the message in the particular campaign.

S: Ah! That is Aluwe, the money collector is here.

She watched the mini - drama with keen interest. The message was presented in pidgin English and once again the subject was having to read the pictures. The pun was lost on her, but she watched the character, as well as the dramatised format.

[Aluwe wants to dry-clean some money which he brings wrapped in a big cloth but he is told that money cannot be dry-cleaned. The message follows thereafter, that there should be better care in the handling of the Naira notes.]

What subject identified in this was that Aluwe carried a big bundle of money to and from a counter. She could not tell the purpose for his doing so.

The Coke commercial was another that caught her attention. The particular advert was set in a construction site with lots of scaffoldings and cranes. It showed workmen going to enormous risks to get a drink of Coke. This advert which is musical, is again in English. Though the subject does not understand what is said, she still identified the product that was being advertised.

S: Is this not Coke? Is this where it is made?

She had read the picture correctly, but her deductions were wrong. She knew it was an advert; she knew it was about Coke; she knew the location was a work place of sorts; she saw the crate of Coke being lifted up on the crane; but she did not understand that it had been brought for the workers' refreshment. She thought making Coke, was the reason for the workers' presence there.

Musical Fillers

On this day, the station had begged to be excused for their inability to bring the Yoruba news. Instead musical video clips were broadcast. Subject did not show any signs of being disappointed or even enraged. It appeared that she did not expect much else. Her customers and herself merely settled down to enjoy the show. Even with this viewing, the subject was still misled by her self appointed interpreter/viewing guide.

Her acknowledgement of her ignorance, and her dependence on those considered to be better informed had made her vulnerable to misinformation.

The musician in view was Olu Fajemirokun, a relatively new person on the music scene. In fact this was his debut album. Note how the customer conveys his misinformation with confidence and authority.

Customer: Is this not Ebenezer Obey's new release? I have been hearing about it.

S: True?

Customer: Oh yes! Obey Commander! He is quite a great philosopher.

S: Yes he brings out a lot of wisdom in his songs.

Both S & Customer: [echoing the music] Stones cannot be eaten like rice, a pineapple cannot be eaten whole. . .

Customer: [to subject] Look, see what the world has become. See that fellow, [someone who is dancing] She is a woman you know? That's Obey himself, that is his new release.

S: [still echoing the music and later joined by Customer] My moon of wealth is beaming from the sky, beaming clearly from the heavens. . . It is my time to shine,

S: He says it is his time to shine, ... that each man has his time, whoever is a detractor will have his jaws torn. [laughs] This is serious.

[While she was laughing she missed a line so she asked the customer to fill her in.]

S: What did he say his head should do?

Customer: He prayed that his head should guide his mouth, so he does not mis-jive. God in heaven may I not mis-jive as well.

[They join in the prayers being rendered in the song and watch the performance of the dancers, when there was no more lyrics to the music. They were engrossed but it is not certain that they were impressed. They were certainly fascinated.]

S: They have not left out anything, [i. e. This performance cannot be improved.]

Customer: This is Obey's house that they are performing at. Ah! this is serious business [the dancing] They dance you know Obey type of dance.

S: In a short while they will put Shina on.

Shina is a younger musician who was the latest phenomenon in the music scene. It was he who "originated" the current craze in dancing. Notice how subject made a link, in her expectation, between the on - going music, and that which was similar.

By this time it appeared that subject's attention had waned and she was ready for something else; another show. What however is more noticeable, is the way the customer perpetuated an error in his reading. Indeed the two musicians, that is Olu Fajemirokun and Obey, both look alike and have similar styles of music, but this man did not stay within the limits of supposition; he proceeded to definite assertions including a positive identification of the location of the recording.

With her last comment, subject departed on another line of conversation. There began an assessment of the various musicians. Here again the customer's views , dominated the discussion with, subject merely affirming or listening. It is not very clear if this is a matter of their natures, or if it is a cultural feature; where the woman does not argue with (or defer to the man). It is very possible that the observed feature, is a result of a combination of both.

Their attention was soon drawn back into the programme as subject exclaimed on seeing a segment of energetic dancing by the women on the screen. The man resumed his "informed" account.

S: Ah! Aree! Aree! [as she focuses her gaze on the screen]

Her attention is on the dance, but notice the difference in the responses. While one is marvelling about the sheer strain in the exercise, the other dismisses the feat, and concentrates on the underlying motivation.

Customer: Their fee is higher than 5 bags of money. [that is one thousand naira]

The reading was thereby guided to focus on another level which the man in his retort had introduced.

S: So they are earning their pay then? ...Look at that one is calling him with her eyes.

Customer: Can one bring this type [of woman] home and think he has found a wife?

S: Any man who lands himself with one of these, and thinks her fit for a wife, will deserve whatever he gets.

This is one occasion when the subject actually takes and makes known, a strong position on the programme content, while watching with the man. By inference it is clear that there is a negative value placed on the performers, if not the performance.

This is better understood when the musical video itself is watched. [See the videos attached; Olu Fajemirokun musical clip.]

There was a crossfade to another artiste and even before seeing the visuals, the subject identified the voice and even sang along.

S: That is Barrister!

The identification is positive, and confident. This was the type of music that subject had expressed preference for. The nature of these type of music is such that there is a lot of repetition which makes it easy for the listener to pick up the lyrics. The leader leads, and the back up singers repeat, and this in itself induces the participation of the audience in the viewing experience, whilst it also serves as a mnemonic device. This experience followed the same pattern. The music is didactic in nature.

S: He says you should face your baby [partner or sweetheart] and then your baby too should face you, if you want to

dance. Now he goes. . . Onifila [the one with a cap that is a man] has come. Can you appreciate that regalia? . . . Amen we will not mourn her children. . . Do you see , do you see? [excited at a feature in the visuals on the screen]

The subject had resumed her commentary with the viewing of this music - an experience at which she was competent. Her mode varied as she viewed, singing; pausing to respond to the prayer in the music; and then resuming her commentary.

In this, as well as the use of TV examples to buttress points of discussion, it is evident, that there is an elasticity in the view of television as a performance, and television as reality.

Suddenly, as though out of the blues, subject wondered how come she was being entertained at that hour of the day. This illustrates that the pattern of television is known and this, in this context, is the guide to deliberate viewing.

This also illustrates the fact that television is used as a time keeper; it was the discrepancy in the expectation of the structured day that prompted the subject to wonder about the service.

Her interpretation of the earlier received apology was likewise interesting. Though the apology had said the station was unable to present the news for that day, the subject a short while later in rehashing the statement to herself said there was no news.

S: They say there is no news. Had it been that there was news, they would not have been showing this.

For this subject there are no long stories, and no indication of any

understanding of the production process. Therefore, inability to bring the news, was equated with a lack of news.

Her focus was soon brought back to the screen as she noticed a change in the artiste's apparel.

S: Look he's changed again. . . He said to draw closer to him; that Falila should come and dance.

The last example illustrates a misreading of a message in Yoruba, that is even in the form that subject likes and understands. This misreading was due to a limited competence in coping with the pace of the delivery. Subject had read the prominent phonemes in the lyrics, and had missed out those which seemed to be compressed in the barrage of words. Following is a highlight of the words as spoken.

TV (SONG) : Tunde Balinger fun wa ni'lu, ka jo. . .

Subject's reading : Falila wa jo.

Falila is a girl's name and this perhaps made the reading more plausible. What however compounded the error was the rumour brought to the reading experience, which validated the misreading.

Customer: Here he sings the song that was used as a truce by Salawa and Kollington.

The parties mentioned are two other prominent musicians who appeal to this audience. The said truce is a rumour although the enstrangement was widely publicised in the media. The rumour is here being fuelled to the point of validation.

The transition of that programme was another example of the subject's familiarity with the usual codes of television.

Self-Correcting Mechanisms

The succeeding segment of programming was the Yoruba translation of the "Stop the abuse of the Naira " campaign. This time subject was able to grasp the gist of the message. This suggests that there are self correcting measures, within the structure of television programming.

The fact that a programme is repeated, increases the chances of a correct reading being made. In addition, the fact that some messages are translated, facilitates the chances of viewers, like this subject, who, do not understand the original language of the broadcast to get the intended meaning. There are more varied examples of this later on.

With the translation, the subject did grasp the message and she in fact identified it as "good advice". In this instance that she could fully participate in the experience; that is, when she watched, as well as listened, it was easier for her to understand what was being said. The advertisement became more meaningful to her, and from the sponsor's perspective, became more successful. It could have been possible to measure the success the message with other criteria, which could compromise the intended purpose of the communication. For example, using the viewer's appreciation of the experience.

The continuity announcer came up and expressed the hope that the station had pleased the audience. The subject confirmed that they had been very pleased. It was like a dialogue. The announcer following the prompt which she hoped to evoke from the viewer, (that is her satisfaction with

the service), then introduced the next programme which was a government agency sponsored programme.

The programme, "E da wa l'ohun" meaning "Give us answers" is an interview programme in Yoruba. This meant that the subject should not have had any problem of access.

Her expressed satisfactory disposition should also have facilitated the favourable reception of the programme. But the subject from her utterances, revealed that she was not very impressed by the track record of the government, and so she was on her guard as soon as the programme was identified with the government agency - MAMSER.

S: The government has made so many promises and now it is time to fulfil them they are scarred. . . The money they should loan to the entire community has become the preserve of the wealthy.

Her gripes are based on her personal experience of, and criticisms of the government. The disposition which she arrived at the viewing with, was thus changed. There was no flow of disposition even though there was a flow of attention.

This viewing was characterised by complaints about the government. The subject was sceptical throughout, and this affected the attention, and the negotiation of the programme. Because the subject was not impressed, she attended to the programme as though from arm's length.

In the same way (because the subject did not trust the source), she treated the information as though it were false. The entire programme was treated as though it was an avoidable nuisance. It was certainly a trigger of sour experiences which the subject could do without. And

this, it would appear, was because of the identity of the source. It was not long before the subject mentally and in fact physically switched off. The observation for that evening ended on that note.

Day 6

Observation began at about noon. There was already a group of viewers engrossed in a Yoruba drama programme titled, "It's you whom we blame." This group was mostly children with a few (4) adults. There were other groups around other sets. Viewing in this location with such a crowd was not very convenient, yet the audience endured. Most of them were standing up and squashed together, but what mattered to them most, was to see how the story was resolved.

At the end of the programme, the audience joined in singing the theme music which summed up the morale of the story. Subject in addition, agreed with the logic and the lesson in the programme.

During the viewing, the group was engrossed in the experience. They followed the story line; trailing every action; identifying catchy statements and repeating such. The poetrical devices employed in the programme made it such that the lines were catchy and memorable.

S: You are the one to blame, for marrying their wife and not their mother! That is true really.

S: My wife it's battle time! [echoing the character.]

Group: Aroko Moogun! [hailing the character]

S: [explaining to the researcher the significance or deeper meaning of the nickname] That means he is a powerful man; a valiant man.

S: See Iyalode has gone to trick the Balogun

[Iyalode is the traditional title for the women's leader, and Balogun is the traditional title for the warlord. The literal translation for the name is Father of wars.]

The subject is more confident in her reception of this programme. Rather than expect a translation, or anticipate a confirmation of her reading by throwing baits which she expects to be picked up as cues for "negotiating" discussions; she is confidently reading, interpreting and running a commentary that may assist the others in the reading of the programme. She was certainly in her element with this programme. This is reflected in her comments on the programme. Because of subject's engrossed interest in the programme, there is a comprehensive report of what she watched, and what she did. This was the first really deliberate viewing that the subject had engaged in, during the observation period. It is consistent with the self report about her viewing pattern.

S: Look at that one, he knows he is doomed and so he wants to bring more people down with him.

S: It was Balogun who sent them to turn the town up - side down. That is why the captives have been brought; the casualties from the rioting, and you see, there is included the escaped slave. He was Balogun's slave and now he has been shot in the back. . . Ah! my goodness, they have killed him.

S: Covenants are dangerous . . . [The word translated as covenant is Awo which could also mean secrecy and cult. The covenant in this instance therefore has the ring of a cult or "brotherhood" pledge that was not fulfilled and so led to the death of the party in question.]

S: Awoyale; is that a woman's name?

S: Arokomoogun! That is Balogun's henchman.

S: The council of elders have met and reached an agreement on the situation. They want Balogun to put a stop to all the feuding so that the settlement [community] will not break up before their eyes. How can just one person put the entire community through so much travail [turmoil]? This one says he will not stand for it.

From the comments, it is clear that the subject was fully participating in the viewing experience. She was following both the visuals as well as

the audio parts of the programme. What is more is that she understands, and is very competent with the codes of the message.

The programme did seem to be couched in codes. The names were all significant in that they have meanings. Interpreting these meanings, was no hindrance for the subject, at all. What is not certain is if such perceived codes were part of the intended message of the programme.

An emissary was sent to Balogun to convey the collective decision. They were not allowed to see Balogun; his thugs were in the way.

S: Arokomoogun and his boys have been well girded with the charms that he [Balogun] gave them. . . They will use them on the emissaries

Group: Balogun has given them power.

Group: They say they want to see Balogun but those thugs won't let them.

Group: How come they do not have their own powers too?

[Balogun emerged to see the commotion.]

S: He says is it him that they have all come for? "And for what?" he says. It is a madman, a fool who is set up with lies. See he has set them up. He has sent them along, that they should, "please go there is no problem".

Group: Oh, never mind him. [to the emissaries as though they could hear.]

S: [echoing the actor; Balogun] If a child raises his hand and strikes one with a razor, he will get cut truly.

[That was an idiomatic expression with which subject could relate.]

In that example, it is not clear yet with whom subject's sympathy lay. She seemed to be in agreement with whatever was "logical", not necessarily pitching her camp anywhere. She referred to both the emissaries as well as Balogun as "fools". Her comments seemed to highlight those striking features that are value - laden.

Of the captives released from Balogun's jail during the connived attack on him by the people of the settlement, the women refused to leave saying that he offered them a better life. The subject responded to this vehemently.

S: Or are these ones crazy? Don't you see the life of women?
Women are only impressed by money.

Her response had been a value judgement, using her own standards to negotiate the meaning of the actions of the TV characters. She affirmed her submission by drawing on stereotype.

In certain instances, it would seem that the subject had been triggered off, by the familiarity of the codes. Thus she echoed certain portions of the speech , particularly the idioms.

S: If you spank the child with the right hand, you draw him close [for a cuddle] with the left.

Sometimes, the action was striking in that it was familiar to her even if not common place. In this case it she assumed the duty of an "interpreter" translating for the (possibly) less competent co-viewers. It would appear therefore that translating was a standard feature of communal viewing.

S: That is the Ifa oracle being consulted...They had appealed to him, [Balogun] he would not listen; he remained headstrong. [to the character] Now you have had it. . . These are evil connivers, they are going to attempt to avert the course of justice. They are going to fix the calabash that will be chosen, before the blessings are delivered. [The calabash is a symbol of fortune telling the fate of the one who picks it] . . . The ritual is being performed and the verdict is that the matter be resolved by luck. Each of the rivalling party for the title carries [picks] a calabash and whatever is in it, is his luck; he's and his family's, and his supporters'.

In this report as well, the subject swung from making a report, to running a commentary, and then to addressing the character. This viewing was a complete experience. There was no demarcation between the television and reality.

In the programme, the same man who was causing the unrest in the community was the first to rise at the meeting, raining curses on whoever was the trouble - maker. Subject marvelled at the height, the extent of his mischief. She also repeated the incantations that are used within the programme, much like she did with the music. These incantations are (like) poetry.

The programme was soon to come to an end, but not without the twist that characterises drama. Subject continued to run her commentary, noting the resolution that was offered in the programme. Again it is apparent that she did not have a blanket notion of values. Each expression of value was treated on its own merit. For instance, at the conclusion of the story, Balogun's stooge for the position, ended up carrying the calabash of misfortune because the other elders had fixed the selection process. Though "justice" appeared to have been done, with the right man being in place, subject recognised the fact that the so called divine intervention, had been a result of human manipulation. This could in other words be described as deceit, yet she did not object. Rather, she seemed to have endorsed it because of Balogun's earlier excesses.

S: They have been told to be content with their choice and they must reveal the content of their calabashes. . . The one who gets the title strides majestically. The one who got the fire upon his housetop has run away. . . [Of the lucky man] The man was scarred; he did not know what to expect, but they [the elders] had lured the wicked one away. They had cheated in the selection process [to favour their man]

This was no condemnation; just a "matter - of - fact" assertion.

The audience had vicariously participated in this programme and when it was over they got up to go, as their purpose of being there had been fulfilled. Besides the fact that the enjoyment of the programme was observed, there was also the response to the continuity announcer's question on the satisfaction derived from the programme; which was in other words, the station's performance.

Continuity Annr: We hope you all enjoyed that programme and that you will join us again at . . . for our presentation of Balufon dance.

These types of questions bring out the viewer's conscious response to the programme. In this case the observed, and the verbalised response tallied.

S: Ah! Balufon is Elepe's preserve, we are the experts. That was a great performance; we really did enjoy it. . . You see I enjoy anything traditional like this play that brings wisdom.

Her response to the announcer's invitation, which was linked to the question, was not based on the announcer's anticipation of the flow effect. Rather, it was based on the chord that the programme struck in the subject's mind.

After the programme, the crowd dispersed, and subject was left alone. The set was still left on, but there was no interest in it. It was the report on a missing child which attracted the subject's attention to the set.

At the point when they left, it is remarkable that one of the children actually read the credits of the programme, noting whom the camera men

were. This was not done as an exercise to get acquainted with that particular information, but as a practice of his reading skills.

Subject's focus on the missing child's report is only momentary as she almost immediately went about her chores again; organising her shop and preparing to go out. Even with all this, she was still paying attention to the set especially as the programmes were in Yoruba.

There was a News Review programme in Yoruba, which captured her interest. She actually settled down to watch. She had hitherto not been aware of the programme's existence, and had not planned to watch it.

The programme was focusing on the issue of secret societies (cults) in the higher institutions. The guest was a member of a university confraternity - The Palmwine Drinkards Club. His mission was to dissociate himself and his club from, and condemn the activities of the cults whose activities had become notorious on the campuses.

The interviewer was well versed in Yoruba, and he used proverbs and idioms to convey his messages. These, (as in the viewing of the Yoruba drama) caught the subject's attention. It appears that in this context, the words or concepts had different connotations to the subject, than what the programme intended. There seemed to be different magnitudes of meanings to the subject, than what the programme meant.

The connotation of the word cult for example raised the subject's eyebrows.

S: Cults! You mean they have cults in institutions of learning?

Her own concept of cult was such as existed in society which traditionally formed part of the system of governance, and as a result was serious. (Refer to her earlier comments on covenants). Added to this was her view of the institutions of learning and a place for young people, who [my deduction] should not be involved in commitments of such magnitudes as she thought. The subject attended this segment of the programme closely. This could have been due to several reasons.

- i. The programme was in a language she understood and the delivery was considered impressive.
- ii. The programme was focused on the youth, a subject matter which coincides with subject's interests.
- iii. The subject was interested in news and current affairs anyway.
- iv. The subject was otherwise not preoccupied. There was nothing else doing, and she was not ready to go on her outing yet. She was thus able to give the programme her undivided attention.

The following account illustrates these points.

In introducing the interview, the interviewer, had employed an idiom which struck a responsive chord.

S: [Echoing the presenter's introduction] When your masquerade performs well, you are proud; so parents should be more concerned about their children. [so that they can perform more impressive feats in future]

The segment was thereafter heralded by a performance, a dance typical of the Palmwine Drinkards, with a song which declared their stand. The song was first in Yoruba and then in Pidgin English.

Translated into English it says;

" Palmwine Drinkards call should be heeded,
Secret societies should be hated.
To Palmwine Drinkards I belong,
To Pirates confraternity, I do not [belong]."

Subject was very relaxed in watching this programme. Note that there was limited commentary being run by the subject, save for the occasional echoing of the striking statements. She did not require any assistance in reading this programme and did not solicit any interpretation. Possibly because she herself lacked sufficient experience on the matter being discussed, she did not offer any appraisals. It is also possible that it is the nature of the subject, (as it bothers on the occult), that made the subject cautious in her utterances. This was certainly the pattern observed in the viewing of the religious programme, the previous evening. It is certainly noteworthy, that subject, who was in the habit of passing remarks, and expressing her opinions on this occasion kept mum.

The next segment of the programme featured an announcement of some scheduled ritual worship of a certain deity. Subject is familiar with the practice and others in the said area. Ikosi, the town in question is in Lagos state, the state from which the programme originated. The other towns whose activities she was reminded of by the announcement, were also towns in Lagos state. Yet subject herself is resident in Ogun state. The locations are actually not far away in terms of proximity and also in terms of affinity as they all belong to the same ethnic group as the subject.

It is still very important to know that there are distinctions in the administrative grouping. The implication of this, and the exposure pattern, became a bone of contention in another location (#2), where it

affected the subject's perception of their own state government.

The fact that those towns in Lagos state were seen more often on the screen was used as an indication of the strivings and concern of that government, whilst they felt ignored by their own state (Ogun) government.

The next segment in the programme was an interview with an executive of the Lagos Building Investment Corporation. It was as part of the 10th anniversary celebrations. The corporation is also a government parastatal, but it had not been identified as such. This is what makes the subject's response to this particular viewing interesting.

The interview was like an account of the corporation's stewardship. It was to the researcher, clearly a public relations effort. The guest highlighted the various available schemes, and encouraged the poor to get involved "as government policy was to help the poor obtain their own houses" so that "they will not be tenants for life." He went into further details of the pre-requisites and qualifications and also advise for interested parties.

What is striking is the subject's disposition to the programme, inspite of what could have been considered a direct prompt on a "sore" point, on which she had been vehement in earlier instances.

Rather than show her displeasure, either in a disgruntled, "hard - to - please" disposition towards the programme; or in outright vehement verbal expression as she had been known to do; she watched attentively. What is more is that she was able to agree with the logic of the

speaker, and thereby accept the message. The musical clip which followed the segment was an opportune time for her to sum the message up, and express her sympathy for the reasoning.

S: If one wants to build a house as he said, he should have five shillings before he can hope to borrow extra five shillings. That is logical.[But] he did not respond to the question on interest rates. That is why people say they sell money. . . A house should be built gradually, and then one can get a loan to finish it off. If one gets a loan from the onset, one will just languish in debt.

Again there are different levels embedded within subject's appraisal of the message. In her negotiation of the message, she swung again from a mere report of what she observed, to a value judgement on the matter, a judgement which was based on her own previously held values. This was manifested in her expatiation of that which she had received from the set.

It would appear that the non disclosure of the connection, between the source and the government, contributed to making her more tolerant of the message.

Her submission which she made to the researcher was not discussed or further negotiated and viewing continued. The musical clip which was one of those that fascinated her, was watched. As usual, subject sang along with the music. It was the same track that she had earlier misread, and which her rumour mongering customer had reinforced. Subject was singing outloud with confidence, and a younger customer, who was more competent with the reading, being more conversant with the current music, overheard her making the error. This younger lady had in fact been attracted to the set by the music. That was what she she had come to watch. She corrected the subject. Her correction was confirmed by

another little girl who had also been attracted to the set to watch the current fad in music.

Subject did not argue and it appeared that she accepted the correction gracefully. She made no comments regarding that, rather, she exhibited a knowledge of the pattern.

Indeed with repeat exposure, some of the confusion within the programme become clearer. The pattern becomes more predictable and this sometimes gives the impression of greater competence.

The incidental group soon grew in size as the featured musical endured. It was an array of the latest hits on the music scene. As though to confirm the temporary nature of their exposure, the group made no attempts to be comfortable before the set. They watched from a distance. They also had their comments on the performance and these to subject's hearing. She thus was exposed to the negotiation of members of a different sub - culture. In other words, she picked up the evaluations of viewers of a younger generation, and this explains her familiarity with some codes from which she might have been excluded going strictly by her own social position.

There was a difference in the concerns within the constituted viewing group. While the youth focused on a recognition of the artistes and an evaluation of their performance, the subject focused on the worth of the message, (in this case the prayers, although at some other times it was the idioms, and wise sayings).

There was soon to be a meeting of minds as subject drew the younger

viewers into a hypothetical discussion based on the rumour which had been transmitted to her at a previous viewing of one of the clips. It was an attempt to evaluate their own values.

YL1: Here comes "O L'omori"

YL1: Wasiu is just a struggler; Barrister no longer sings well.

YL2: Ayuba is the choice of the youth.

S: Those are the prayerful [referring to a sect of Christians, then echoing the music] . . . A slave works till his death; a thief dies of a curse; betrayal is what kills friendship. . . See, see how he covers his "wife's" face. . . [she watches the performance some more and then asks the young ladies] Can you join this group of performers?

YL: [Contemptuously] Me?

S: I hear their fee is 5 bags of money [That is one thousand naira]

YL: I'll go then. If you go twice then you'll rest. [i.e. desist]

S: So can you dance like that?

YL: Why not? Is it not these steps?

S: If you try it, you'll end up in the hospital ward.

YL: No, not me! But you know Fuji is what we dance in Sagamu. [that is, Fuji dancing is not alien to them, rather it is their stock in trade.]

Subject switched back to focus on television which was then heralding an Egun language programme. The mere mention of the programme title was a turn off for the subject and she did not mask this at all.

Though Egun language is one local in the state, it is not a language that she understood, hence her immediate response. Her reaction was no different from her response to other "foreign" programmes. There was a tone of irritation in her voice.

S: "Mi Yon Mi De" Oh no! here they come now.

Despite the remark, she watched the dance. The drama was initially shunned, but subject soon started reading the pictures, even though she did not understand the language. A young child, who was hawking mangoes also stopped to watch the programme. He did not understand the language as well, so he like the subject, was reading the pictures. The scene to which their attention was attracted, was one that is familiar to them, both in reality [for the subject at least] and also from the Yoruba dramas on television. It is the scene of an Ifa priest receiving a client for consultation. The client is deformed; with a bad leg. Subject watched and interpreted what she had seen. She thereby exhibited a knowledge of the practise that was portrayed.

S: He is explaining what it is, that is wrong to the Ifa priest.

This indeed is true, and though the subject can successfully interpret the general drift of the action, based on the understanding of similar codes, she is frustrated by the inaccessibility of the more specific codes, that is the words.

Viewing continued in silence until customer came in. By this time, the subject had drifted to sleep, in the course of the "quiet" viewing, and the heat of the hot afternoon sun. Viewing only resumed with the arrival of the customer who drew attention once again to the set.

Customer: We can't even understand this one; it's in Egun.

S: But those Egun are wicked people!

Customer: How do you know?

S: Don't you see how the woman presented the bowl of water?

Customer: What about that? What are they doing now?

S: They have carried that man away because they know he is stronger than this. . .

What is most interesting in this portion of the viewing is the way the partial reading is fuelled by prejudice and stereotype. Her reading was restricted by her experience of the visualised subject matter. That she lacked access to the verbalised story, which could have explained the position taken within the programme, thus compounded the problem; causing a greater reliance on the stereotypes, as she attempted to make meaning of the perceived visuals.

There was a break in transmission for about a minute and this proved to be adequate time for the subject to go right back to sleep. This time, her sleep was determined; she actually lay in the bed and slept, leaving ^{the} researcher to keep an eye on the shop. The mango seller also took a cue from the break in transmission and left. The audience had dispersed by the time the programme was resumed in about a minute. The set was left on, but not watched.

The subject's nap was disturbed only by the uproar from the main house as a girl was being scolded. The other occupants of the house quickly assembled, "joined their voices" to admonish the girl, placate the aggrieved and they soon dispersed. This time, ^{the} subject did not resume viewing. Rather she got ready to attend an "unavoidable" commitment. Researcher was therefore taken to the other communal viewing room.

Group Viewing

It was the sitting room upstairs. Because of its location, it was more restrictive in granting access to the set. That notwithstanding, there

was a fairly large crowd of viewers assembled when there was a programme of interest. This was not difficult, with the number of residents in the house, and their friends. The size of the crowd was very comparable to that in the exterior location. The fact that it was a more comfortable place to view, considering there was seating space, also made it attractive.

The main difference between both locations was really in the ease with which unfamiliar passers-by could stop to watch. Such passers-by were invariably children. Usually the adults would have first been attracted for other reasons; to make a purchase for example.

Viewing was more relaxed in this location. There was adequate room for all to sit, even if it meant that the children sat on the carpet, to make room for the adults.

When observation commenced, there was a group of young men (aged about (17 to 20) in the location. They were the princes and their friends. Some of these friends were going in and out. They all seemed completely unconcerned with what was being transmitted even though the set was on. It had been left on by the group of viewers who had watched one of the earlier dramas. They were more concerned with their looks, and it appeared they were preparing for a Saturday evening outing. It was in this mood that they attended to the musical video which came on. It caught their attention.

They were critical in their reception of the performance. They were not just watching, even though it was music; they were evaluating the lyrics, as well as the dance, and the performers, despite the fact that

their initial viewing was really no more than the incidental glance. The queries raised however made the group pay more detailed attention to the set for the period that the musical clip was on.

YM1: These people don't have songs to sing anymore; they just play [the instruments] for so long to waste time.

YM2: Well but they did dance here.

YM3: Are these not the same girls who danced for Salawa?

The group dispersed right after the focus of their interest was taken off the screen.

Another crowd made up of members of different households, resident within the courts, was constituted. The constitution was deliberate. A few people, mainly children and one young mother were the first to report to await a programme which they knew would be coming on. The initial group summoned the other parties who were known to be interested in the viewing, but who had tarried behind. Some of these had gone to the market, and one who was a nursing mother who was sleeping. The nature of the summons is again interesting in that it was the little children who heralded the programme. In instances where they were either too slow or inaccurate, the older ones, including the adults could shout out to the person(s). In doing this, others for whom the summons had not been intended, also overheard and thus became aware of, or were reminded of the programme. The programme was a Yoruba drama.

In no time the sitting room was so full that there was not enough space to sit in. The children were made to sit on the carpet. They were in the majority. There were 6 adults in the group; including one man who was a security guard on night duty. These were the people who stayed

throughout the duration of the programme. Some others came in and out during viewing. In addition, there were 8 children of varying ages including 2 toddlers.

The group was diverse in the ethnic backgrounds, but they all understood Yoruba (in varying degrees of competence).

In the drama programme which came on, someone was bereaved. There was a lot of noise. There was a lot of noise from the group as well, which could have made it difficult to concentrate. The viewing was thus initially rowdy, especially with the restless children who were crying for attention. The children had to be settled for the group to enjoy the programme. Rather than miss the viewing experience in attending to her child, the mother had at first ignored the child. Even when the children had all been settled, there was still the problem of those making small talk, whose chatter amounted to occasional distractions to the viewing.

This sort of chatter was interjected with TV related conversations. The "keen" viewers, tried to maintain some order. The children in deference to the elders, and sometimes in a bid to concentrate, were intermittently quietened. All the viewers, irrespective of their ages contributed to an on going commentary. These should not be seen as mere distractions. They served several purposes within the group.

The comments drew attention of a digressing segment of the group back to the programme. It thus maintained the declared reason for the gathering. For some, the declared reason of the gathering was not the reason for their presence. They had merely attended so as not to be left out; to be social and not alone, hence the making of small talk that was totally

unrelated to the purpose of gathering.

Another purpose served by the comments is that it helped the distracted to catch up on the happenings within the programme. In doing this, there was the tendency for the reading to become converged. The group was reading through particular individuals and as these views were being reported, any discrepancies in the other individual readings were "ironed" out.

The programme was about a woman who was successful but was separated from her husband. The daughter had tried to talk her mother into a reconciliation with her father and had suggested that her mother's wealth was responsible for her pride. She threatened to move back to live with her father, if the mother was to be unyielding. This was to deny the mother of her company. There were voices from the audience which expressed their impatience with the woman. This was not only on account of the verbalised story line, but also on account of the woman's "excesses" in her relation to her daughter. There was likewise an observation of the daughter's "excesses". These views expressed a recognition of contradictions to acceptable behaviour. At this point there was rapt attention in the programme.

When the woman's mother arrived with much fanfare, she stumbled and fell. Although it was amusing, it took one person's laughter to set the entire group laughing. The amusement was short - lived as the severity of the fall soon dawned on the audience. In the programme, the old woman had died.

Like the audience, it took the woman a while to realise that the woman

had died and that her efforts to help were in vain. Her initial panic gave way to wailing, and her wailing gave way to a lament of her situation. This sequence attracted a solitary laughter from the audience but did not endure. This time, no one took the the bait. The amused person stifled the laughter, as the group's position on the matter, though not verbally expressed, became obvious. The group was quiet to the point of being sober as the woman lamented her situation and narrated all her regrets. The frame was faded to another, which showed the story - teller, highlighting the morale of the story to his audience.

Except for the fact that the TV audience was set was in an exterior location, there was a striking resemblance between the recorded audience, and the observed reality in this location. Indeed it looked and felt like an extension of the TV situation. The responses to the story - teller's questions were similar.

The format seemed to encourage and direct the participation of the viewing audience. The viewing audience recognised the performing group, the characters, and the format and they "flowed" with them.

In summarising the story, the story - teller justified the trend of the story. He ended by pulling the individual members of his immediate and extended audience, into a direct dialogue, by offering advice and prayers which they received personally. This, way each viewer is guided into a "closed" reading of the producer's intention. Even when the viewer does not agree, what was intended is clear. In fact there is a direct encouragement for the viewer to empathise with the presented situation at the point where the prayers or counsel is expressed, not to

a faceless audience, but to the individual members who are present.

The programme was rounded off with a eulogy of the story - teller, and his wives, as they danced to a traditional beat. This is the normal manner in which the programme closed. Although they had seen this closing several times, it still engaged viewers' attention.

It was only at this time that the group resumed their normal conversation. They had been on their guard through the viewing of the last portion of the programme.

Their conversation was a discussion of their evaluation of the performance; the dance; real life experiences of members of the group. This led to a discussion on the splinter group, it's performance, and subsequently, the discussion arrived at the appraisal of the stations' schedule. This served as a reminder of what else to expect in terms of interesting programmes. The discussion served as a forum where an incompetent viewer is assisted in making sense of the programme. It is interesting that there is an emphasis on their view of the programme as a performance. Yet, from their response, they also readily see it as a reflection of reality. It was a performance which helped them widen their scope on the goings on in society. As a result, they were prepared to learn from it.

The discussion which followed the viewing discouraged a complete disintergeration of the group in this location. Rather than the disperse as the group at the shop did, the conviviality existing among this group meant some of them could stay on to chat. As a result, those who were not pre - occupied, were prevailed upon to stay, and watch something

else.

As one thing led to another, the anticipated programme met them at the set. Those who had had other things to do, were summoned to the set for the anticipated programme.

The signals of the programme were very poor. While some were prepared to endure and watch it as it was, some were not prepared to do so. They preferred to seek another option. The decision was a veto from the oldest member of the viewing group.

This argument on choice was only because someone in the group knew that there was an alternative. Even though it was a less favoured programme - an "oldies" style musical, it was selected, because the reception was clearer on that station. The programme was not watched with any degree of seriousness. It was more of ambience than anything else. The group thus gradually disintergrated.

Those who were left before the set engaged in pursuits that were in no way related to viewing. Before long, the children had the set to themselves, and they played around with the various channels until they found a programme acceptable to all. The group reconvened. all this took about 2 hours. In that period, the children's viewing was not monitored even by the adult who was present. It was as though they were not there. Yet the adult was in the same room with them.

The selection of the new programme had been informed by someone who was exposed to another set. Having overheard an "interesting programme" from another set, the child had hurried to inform those in her own domain

that there was something worth watching being transmitted.

The programme was another drama presented by a known comedy group. It was noisy. There was a squabble over a woman. The woman had been "caught" by her husband after a long history of infidelity. It turned out that one of the "peacemakers" was the actual culprit (and his two friends were accomplices). Although this was unknown to the husband, it was exposed to the audience. The same group of men, succeeded in conning an old woman about their identity, and she entertained them, even took them in for the night. Later on in the middle of the night, one of them, unknown to the other two, raided the leftover food. They had all earlier on refused the pleas of the old lady to eat some more.

The drama that ensued was the attempt to unravel the mystery (as there was no voluntary confession). The suspects were made to swear before a river, with the belief that the river deity would reveal the culprit.

Although the programme was a repeat, it was watched with keen interest. One could hear a pin drop as the suspense grew.

One of the adults in the group recognised the programme as a dramatisation of a popular folk tale that she had known as a child. Because the programme was a re - run, there was screen side commentary predicting each act. This did not seem to affect appreciation for the programme.

Some striking utterances within the programme were occasionally repeated as though acknowledging recognition, or sometimes for assimilation. Examples of such were names of known places, or familiar idioms. All

these contributed to the reading of the programme.

There was verbalised expression of their understanding of the codes employed in the programme. The audience was familiar enough with the practices being portrayed, and were not confused by the limitations imposed by the production process.

R: What is the noise in the background?

A: They are fighting amongst themselves, trying to identify the culprit. It's the guilty one that is most vehement saying, had he ever been accused of stealing?"

R: Is it these grown men she is calling boys?

A: Well, she is acting the part of an old woman.

. . .

Possibly the most striking feature of this particular viewing, is the manner and speed with which an almost empty sitting room got filled up at the instance of a Yoruba programme. In addition to the effects of the deliberate summons by the discoverer of a programme, the programme, indeed the viewing was usually loud enough to attract a curious crowd to itself.

Though this programme was acknowledged as a comedy, it appeared to have been attended with great seriousness. There was not much by the way of discussion of the programme content in this viewing situation. It could have been because the subject matter even the presentation of it was sufficiently familiar, that it did not warrant much ado.

The programme ended on a note of relief, with exoneration of the two innocent men, and the ridicule of the unmasked culprit. The group appeared satisfied by the experience, except for the children whose mothers had delayed serving their meals until the viewing was concluded.

As the viewing concluded, the mothers, who had put their children "on hold", hurried off to attend to them. Another set of people, stayed on to watch what else was coming on. They found another Yoruba programme and instead of dispersing, viewing continued although the constitution of the group had changed.

This time, the group was mainly children. This constitution seemed to have been influenced by the time of day. The adults, and even the older children were engaged with other chores. What is important however is the illustration of the continuous flow of an audience before the screen. The noteworthy point is the fact that, the audience was not static, but dynamic. It is not only a variety of programming that flows across the TV screen, in some cases, the audience(s) before a particular set may be varied and tactile.

In this location, certain practices regarding the behaviour of a viewing group emerged. These are related to the process of selecting a programme for viewing. It appears that in this context, age was a criteria in determining whose opinion counts. Preferences may be expressed by all, but the group defers to the elder's choice.

Other factors that come into consideration include

- i. the available programme options
- ii. number of previous exposures to, the same material.
- iii. the format and content of the programme(s)
- iv. duration of the programme in relation to considered available free time.

It is rare in this traditional setting for the elder to defer to the preference of the youngsters except they are convinced that such choices were better. The other exceptions would be if at that time, they are not interested in watching TV at all. There is still the orientation of children being seen but not heard.

Prolonged, or protracted arguments which tend to be repetitive in nature were observed sources of loss of interest in programmes. This is important because in the first instance, the constitution of the group, showed that they were attending the programme with a high degree of conscious determination. In spite of that, they still get turned off. What they do not do, is switch the set off. The recognition of a reputed, or favoured talent often injects interest into the on - going programme. Thus when interest is waning, a recognition of such a talent helps to sustain interest in the programme. Interest in a personality, thus aids the interest in the programme.

The fact that a programme is a repeat, does not seem to reduce the entertainment value for this group.

The group dispersed at the end of the viewing as there was no anticipation of any other programme for the day. Because the researcher was still around the set was left on but there was no one who showed any interest in it. The fact that they had all gone their various ways, and were not within viewing range, meant that there was no room for any incidental viewing. Observation ended at about 7. 00 p.m. and the subject had still not returned from her outing.

Day 7

Observation began before noon. The set had only been switched on, on the arrival of the researcher. The programme that was being shown was a traditional game (Ayo). It was a Yoruba programme. Ayo is a form of board game. It is entertaining in the way it is played, in that though there are only two players at a time, the group which typically gathers around them, pitch their camps and poke fun at the opponents and what they stand for.

In this programme, the players were from different towns, and that in itself was catchy, providing another point with which the cheer leaders could identify with. Though she expressed an interest in the programme, subject did not immediately settle down to watch. Rather she went about her business of arranging her stock for the new week. The other women in the house seemed to be preparing for the week as well. There were several people engaged in washing and cleaning. Some others were simply absent from home; they had gone visiting. The programme thus went largely ignored in this context.

It is important however to note that it was within earshot and there were occasional glances at the set especially when provocative comments were made.

The next programmes which came up were first a Christian religious programme, and then a Science programme. Subject did not show the slightest interest. At some point she expressed her utter disinterest.

S: After you left yesterday, I did not want to switch it on.
In fact had you not come today, I would not have switched
it on. It's too much trouble for me. I am tired.

This is an interesting revelation in that it contradicts the pattern which the subject had earlier on in the week described as her viewing pattern. The outing the previous day had left her too exhausted to be interested in television. Note that much of television viewing for her was tedious anyway because of the concentration of "foreign" programmes. Television thus was not immediately perceived and employed as a medium of relaxation. What else is important in this development is the results of this on those who rely on the subject's set for exposure to the programmes. Such people may either have to forgo their viewing, or if they were familiar and bold enough, they could encourage the subject to watch. This is what the subject had referred to earlier, that her exposure was sometimes dependent on the prompting of others.

Likewise this restraint on the part of those other viewers, is what was referred to by some, as a pinch on their pride, which they have to be cautious in tolerating or allowing.

Possibly the most important of the implications of this revelation is the role it plays in the reception of those programmes which are new on the schedule, especially since selection is often based on familiarity of pattern, rather than the consultation of a schedule.

A Yoruba drama eventually came on , which attracted the subjects attention. The characters included an Ijebu man and an Ijesa man. Both Ijesa and Ijebu are dialects of the Yoruba language. The Ijebu dialect is that which the subject speaks. The characters also represented certain stereotypes of the subcultures they portrayed.

The plot was based on the efforts of a younger wife in a polygamous

setting to get rid of the senior wife. The attempts entailed the use of the supernatural - spiritualists and charms. Meanwhile on the surface she maintained a friendly and even sympathetic relationship with her target. Ultimately, she succeeded in killing one of the woman's children. The ghost haunted her till she made a "public" confession of her clandestine activities.

Subject does not respond verbally to programme very much except to answer to prayers that are said within the programme, and to echo the idioms that are employed within the speech. These are sure means by which this subject as a viewer, is drawn into the experience on the screen. For example she echoes as though marvelling at the poignancy of the idiom which conclusively summarised the drama - The Wicked Knows. Even when the innocent suffers in ignorance, the perpetuator is well aware of his actions. It is customary with these Yoruba dramas to have the programme's morale written into a summary which often times serves as the title of the programme. The traditional mode of story telling expects that the listener takes something, a lesson away from the experience. In fact such lessons are usually drawn out so as not to leave the listeners in confusion about the intention. It is this practise that has been carried over into the dramatised forms of story telling for television, in some cases more subtle than others.

The subject's attention was diverted from the set, when a woman with a plight similar to that being dramatised, came to report the matter to the "king". The subject being the queen, got a sneak preview of the case whilst the complainant awaited the king.

The similarity between both cases is very striking, except that the

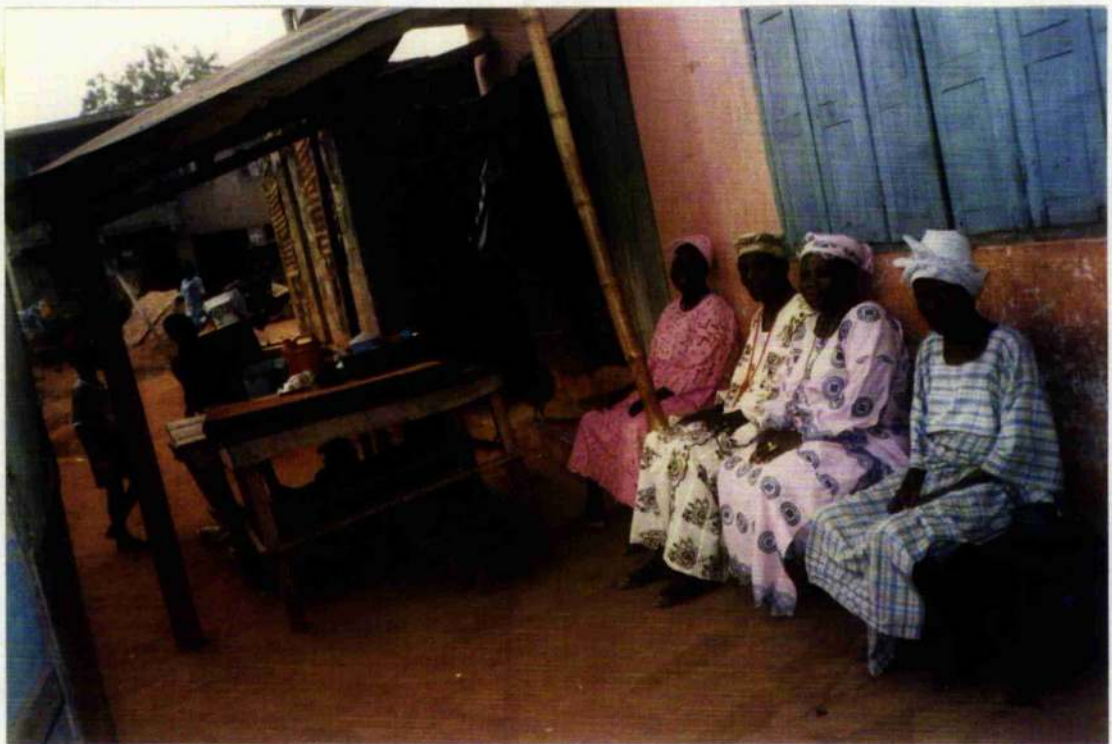
complainant in her case was silent on the motive to kill, though it was implied and culturally understood as a means of elimination of a rival. Her case, placed more emphasis on the "attacks" on her children as a means of provoking disfavour and her eventual elimination.

It is interesting that despite the apparent striking semblance and the coincidence in time, there was no reference made to the television experience. This was unlike the subject who when not at a formal forum, (such as the foregoing) very readily drew from television to illustrate or buttress her position.

The matter was heard outside on the lane, in the cool evening breeze. The subject was thus sitting along with her husband and her mates, outside the shop. Even after the complainant had left, the group continued deliberations on the matter, and one thing led to the other. They discussed other related matters; changing times, changing values; eroded morals, immoral youths, uncaring parents; excessive love of money.

It was a while before subject's interest in the set was again rekindled. It appears that it was when she had become weary of the conversation that she again expressed interest in the programming. About that time, a musical came on, and she made the conscious move to turn up the volume. This conclusion can be justified by the fact other programmes had been watched by passers by, and subject had still not shown any interest at all. Normally, had she been interested, she would have watched, even if she had to solicit assistance in getting interpretations. This had been the pattern observed.

PICTURE 2.



Location 1.

Mama and her husband and her mates sitting outside for some fresh air.
The two young boys who were passing by, stopped to watch the set.

As she turned up the volume of the music she commented on the dance.

S: This dance changes all the time. . . This dance is really hard work (strenuous)

Subject who is in the habit of repeating striking words, and singing along to music ridiculed, in this instance, the lyrics of the song that was being performed.

S: "Chocomilo" "Cinderella" is that a song?

The words Chocomilo and Cinderella are names; one of a sweet, and the other of the fairy tale character. Whilst at least she is familiar with the sweet, the subject is not familiar with the original concept of Cinderella. However, both concepts are being used here with a different meaning which is restrictive culturally. Therefore, even going by that with which she is familiar, the relevance in the context is not apparent, and the meaning is not clear.

The song exemplifies those which may be described as senseless songs. In the course of discussion, this sort of song was described, as only fit for hooligans. The reason for that is that they belong to the sub - culture to which the codes in those words are manifest. However, we see here how television brings such vocabulary into the agenda of "respectable" homes. Whether it is assimilated or found acceptable or not, it is, if nothing else discussed.

At some time during the day, the subject stretched out on the bed in the shop and had a nap. The set was left on possibly to "entertain" the researcher, who by now was being treated as a familiar guest.

Later, in the early part of the evening, another Yoruba drama was

broadcast. It was another programme which subject would have enjoyed watching, but an emergency court had to be summoned to deal with a pressing matter.

A mother had come to report the continuous harassment of her daughter which had just culminated into an assault. Because the "accused" had been dragged to the courts by the scruff of his collar, and the king was still "lounging" outside, the matter had to be dealt with summarily. It was whilst this was going on that the television drama came on but it lost it's audience in the subject to the real life "court drama". However, because the situation had attracted a crowd of curious observers, a group of interested viewers who watched the programme was soon constituted.

Whilst the adults concentrated on settling the dispute, each making contributions (either by way of assessing evidence, making observations, giving counsel and the like), the children soon lost interest in the proceedings and rather they busied themselves with TV drama. They ignored the noise from the proceedings around them, and focused their attention on the programme. They were undeterred. A few of the older ones; the teenagers were observed switching their attention from the set to the proceedings, in an attempt to follow both.

Subject in her own case was involved in the proceedings, yet she was aware of the fact that there was an "interesting" programme being aired. She however did not watch, nor did she show any interest in watching. She was more concerned about the security of her wares, in view of the nature of the crowd which had gathered; she was concerned that they did not break the display table on which a lot of them were resting. Worse

still, she was concerned that they did not pilfer her money or her wares.

Though she was obviously apprehensive of their presence there, she did not drive them; she did not deny them access to the set. She was however visibly relieved when the programme ended and they left.

The proceedings, were concluded before the programme, but the review of the incident continued. Subject engaged in the review, rather than resume interest in the programme midway through the viewing experience.

On the whole there is a striking semblance observed, between the world of the Yoruba dramas, and that of these subjects. Indeed it appears as though their deliberate exposure pattern is an extension of their own reality. This pattern is probably exaggerated as a result of those factors that work together to determine that viewers in this context, are more deliberate in their viewing.

Discussion

The subject declined to participate in any discussion in view of the extensive comments that she had made during the viewing. From these comments certain answers to the issues of interest emerged. For the group, in this location, their concept of television was very clearly defined.

For them, TV can be equated with Yoruba dramas, and musicals. This observation tallies with their responses during the discussion as well as their behaviour. It was only at weekends when "they were less busy", that they really settled down to viewing TV. The only types of

programmes that they set out to watch were the Yoruba dramas.

The issue of how less busy they were is debatable. Though they claimed to be less busy, there was no apparent difference in their schedule, but they did make time to watch those programmes which interested them. In between, they still had to go the market, and engage in such ventures as they normally did during the week. Yet, they did not seem to mind waiting for the programmes of their choice.

As regards the manifest content of the programmes, the subjects in this group seemed to focus their attention on those aspects of the programme that was familiar to them. For example, there was the repetition of those expressions that were either familiar within themselves or referred to familiar situations. Even in the visual reading of those programmes which were not accessible to her because of the language, the subject seemed to be struck by those concepts that were familiar.

Along this line, there was the tendency to recognise those characters who had previously attained some reputation. These were either celebrities, or those to whom the subjects could relate personally. Even in this way, TV seemed to have been an extension of reality. It is this that makes the exposure pattern, and the themes in those programmes of concern.

There was an emphasis on the negative aspects of the programmes which themselves were out to expose the ills in society. It is little wonder that the subject sums up that life is warfare, and requires careful treading. In other words, the programmes viewed confirmed the distrustful views about life. This was primarily from the drama

programmes.

The distrustful attitude was extended to the "factual" programmes. The response to the information directly identified as being from government sources has already been highlighted. Likewise, there was a hint of the sceptical attitude in the subject's response to the health programme. At least in her case, she viewed the programmes, and so could attempt to evaluate them. There was the chance that she could eventually be convinced by the logic in the programme. However, there is the case of the other viewers in the location who deliberately refuse to expose themselves to any other programmes. With such people, the images taken from the the dramas, was then all they could associate television with.

LOCATION 2 - CLUSTER OF TYPICAL RURAL WOMEN

This group was selected to illustrate the viewing habits of the younger traditional conservative subjects. The subjects are aged between 25 and about 40 years old. Trade in kolanuts is the predominant occupation in the study focus area. At the onset, the assumption was the group being largely illiterate, would also be financially under - privileged. This assumption was not made as a correlation with their educational status, but from the observation of their dressing, their eating habits, their homes and their living pattern generally. It, however, turned out, that whilst all prior observations were upheld, the assumption of a low income was not. The group, even though readily claiming to be poor, are well aware that even if in terms of modern knowledge and social status they are poor, they do not lack intellect and monetary wealth.

One of the reasons why their wealth is not readily apparent is because their spending pattern is linked to their values which in many ways are different from the westernised mainstream's.

The group lives in the same neighbourhood. Most of them live in the same building which is a family house. They are wives of brothers and cousins. This meant there was added fraternisation, than that observed in location 1. This enhanced the freedom in their relationship. This should have affected the viewing patterns as it reduced the restraint in the accessibility to sets. The other members of the group who were just friends and neighbours were also members of the same trading association and social group. They also had shared religious affiliations. It was a close group.

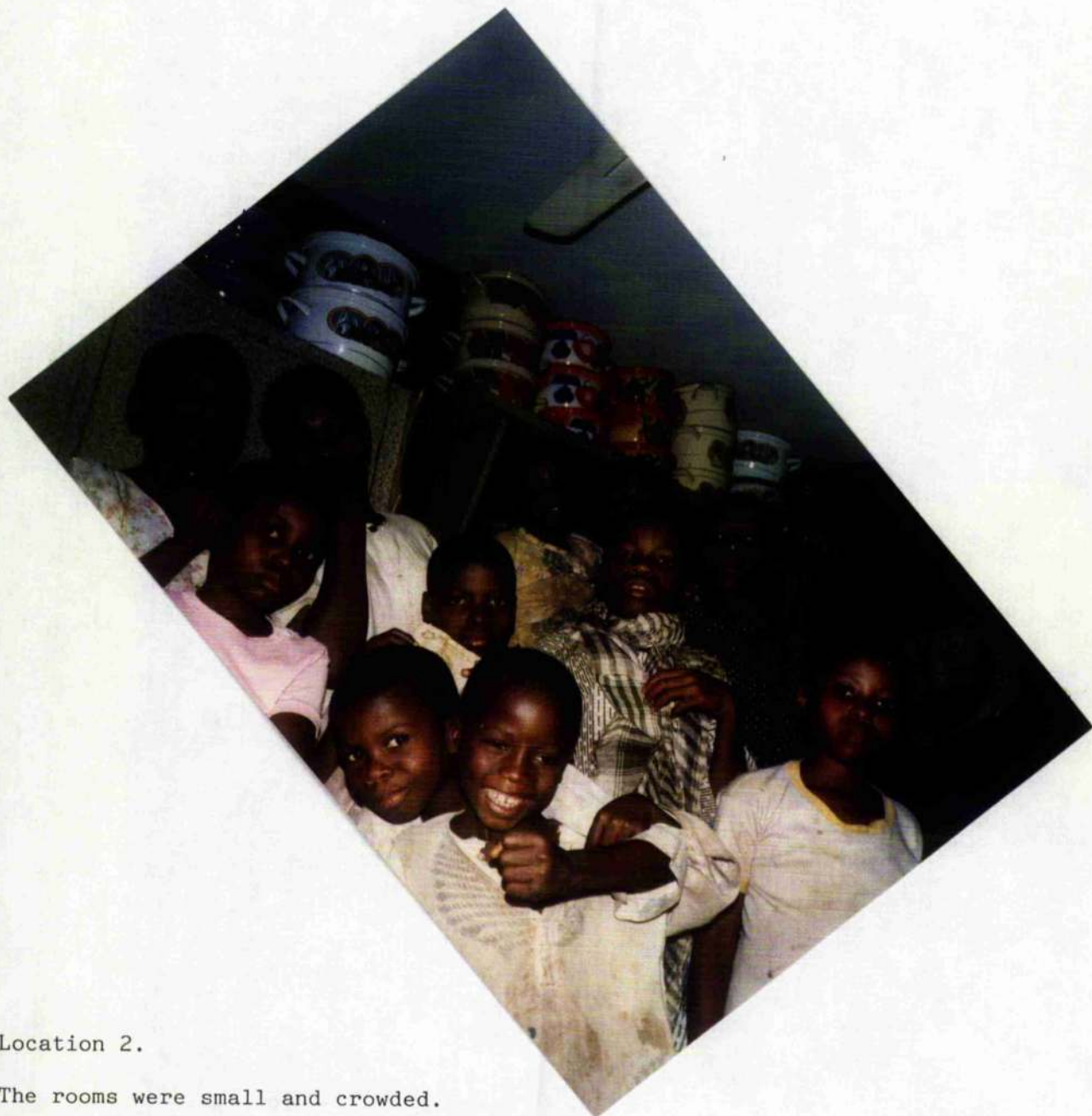
Each woman had her own room, where she lived with her children, yet because of the fraternity which was shared, there was no exclusivity of room or to a large extent property. As a result, there was a tendency for the children to converge to lounge, eat, even sleep in any room that caught their fancy. There is a remarkable absence of the restrictions, informed by suspicions that are assumed features of polygamous homes. There was a free flow of movement, even more so than was evident in the location 1, the palace courts which had various unrelated families living together.

There was no strong male presence observed, though all the women were married. For most of them the husbands were polygamous, and so had alternative places that they could be. In the case of the hostess (S1) her husband was a railway worker and was based outside town in the northern part of the country. Most of the women were left to their own devices, without much check from the presence of a dominant male figure.

The focus group was made up of 5 women, 4 of whom live in the same quarters; the fifth member lived only a shouting distance away. However, the exact size of the group of viewers was much larger because of the free flow of human traffic.

The number of children in this context must also be noted. Each woman had no less than 4 children. The cumulative number of children when they converged was usually on the average about 6. What this meant was that some of them viewed from outside the window when they were that interested. On the other hand some went to other locations within the quarters where there were available sets. There was a tendency to spend a lot of time outside amongst this group. This is probably because of the

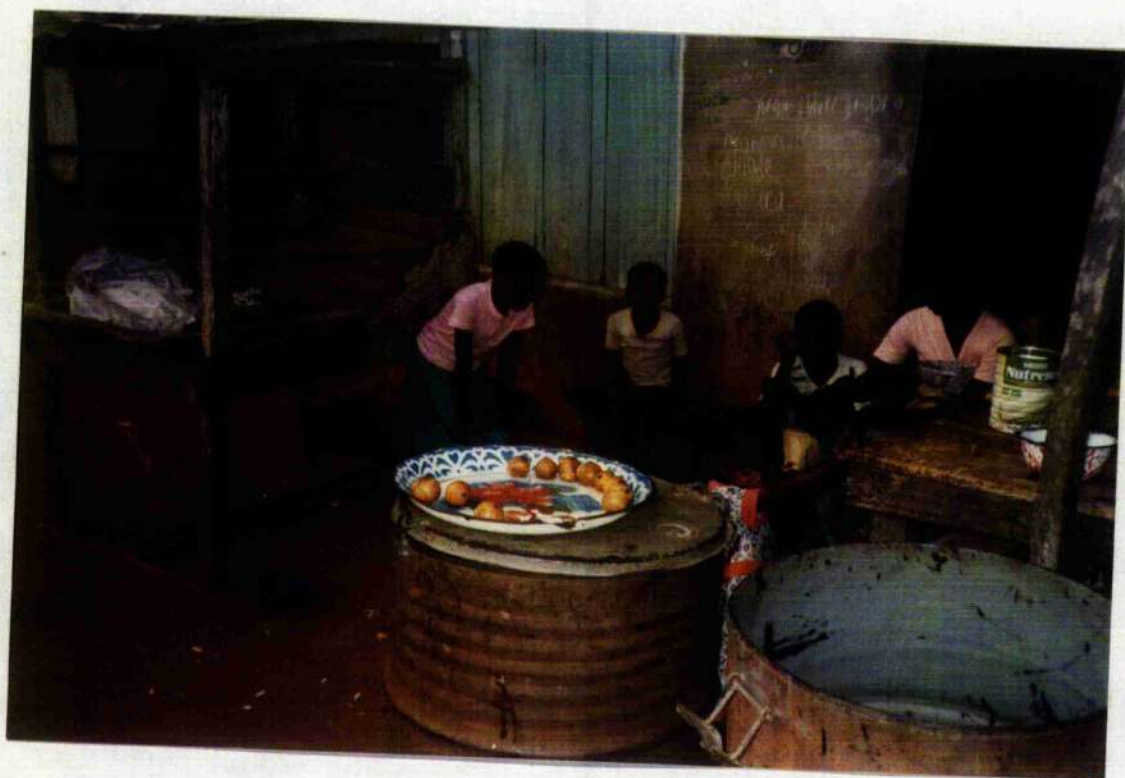
PICTURE 3.



Location 2.

The rooms were small and crowded.

PICTURE 4.



Location 2.

They spent a lot of time outside.

problem of crowding.

As is to be expected of a rural community, the group was found to be highly superstitious. They were in no way pretentious and they were completely unapologetic about their beliefs. Another point worthy of note in the character of these subjects was their simplicity and their readiness to try any change that promises to bring them a better life. They recognised their vulnerability in this regard, and so were quite critical in their assessment of the media, as they were other vehicles of change.

Contact Meeting

The fact that the meeting itself was interesting, makes it remarkable within this framework. The researcher had not had any personal acquaintance who fitted this description who could have served as a contact. It took a trip to the market to get a lead who could arrange an introduction. Incidentally, there was a social group converging at the contact's shop, in readiness for a social outing. They were almost all involved in the kola trade. Though the trading interest was not what was most paramount for the purpose of the study, it coincided with the desired social description.

The women had heard the researcher narrate her mission to the contact, but they initially feigned ignorance of what was going on. When they opened up, they confessed a lack of interest in the exercise and unwillingness to cooperate. They were very vehement in expressing their dissent, and the irrelevance of TV service to them.

"Yes, what do you want from us?"

"Are you going to pay?"

"We do not watch television. How can we watch television when we are out all day?"

"By the the time we come back, they have closed down."

If you want to see us, come to the market at 10 p.m. we are still here."

"Imagine yesterday I did not get home till midnight, I was so tired, I just dropped off to sleep."

"If you see the person who prepares the meals that I eat, she's no bigger than this." [referring to the size of a young child.]

"Well let me tell you a secret, you can't find any real rural woman who watches television, except jobless housewives like me."

Like the older woman at the palace, they too asked if they would be paid for the exercise. It was made very clear that they were not to be paid as this was an academic exercise.

After the initial reluctance had been overcome, the group turned out to be very cooperative, and indeed very hospitable. This was possibly fuelled by the (halting) attempts of the researcher to speak in the local dialect. She also dropped all airs that the women had expected from her; identifying with them in dressing; and sometimes compromising hygiene standards to partake of the family meals. This went a long way in the acceptance of the researcher, even as confidant, counsellor, and friend. Researcher was even invited to invest in what they later confessed to be a very lucrative trade in kola, to supplement what they considered her "pitiable" income.

This point is made here to illustrate what confusions may arise from employing "income" and such classical demographic variables to describe subjects, rather than a more realistic view of the social positioning of the subjects.

The observation period in many ways confirmed the discouraging picture that the women had painted. Yet the exercise is not to be considered like them, a waste of time because it has illuminated the further reaching questions of why they do not watch more television than they do. This is in addition to confirming the way in which they use the medium.

The women had suggested a category of women which remarkably was not to be readily found. There was no one who was a "jobless housewife". Each woman had a trade or the other if nothing else, like our self confessed "jobless housewife", was engaged in the kola trade. In this case, the woman was also in the business of small time (domestic) milling. This woman eventually was the volunteer to host and serve as base for the observation of the group.

Another important issue which was raised at the contact meeting was the fact that the women related their disposition, resulting from their experience in the larger society, to their interest in television.

"But let me tell you, how can anyone watch television when he is not happy? How can you be happy when you have not made ends meet?"

TV viewing was no longer just a case of the expediency of their situation, it was also a case of the attitude formed as a result of their daily experience. This was what formed their disposition.

In a bid to solicit their cooperation, the women had to be warmed out, from their vehement dissociation from the medium. They eventually confessed to an occasional, conditional use of it. However, the

dissenting voice even then was still very strong as illustrated in the following.

"We watch TV on Saturdays and on Sundays if we don't go out. We watch Yoruba plays." "Who cares what they are doing? You know there will always be somebody to tell what is going on. . . Sometimes one likes to watch the world news in Yoruba. "

"You know the entire project is annoying. Those media people are serving themselves, at least in the sense that they are earning their salaries. TV is a waste of money. There should be better things to do with money. School fees have now gone up 100%. "

"You know I met a woman on the way just now muttering to herself..."Twenty naira, thirty naira""

"She must have been calculating how much her debts are and assessing what her situation is. "

"And you know the media people don't really care about us. This recent focus, like yours, is just a ploy to exploit us. All this talk about a census too; it is exploitative."

"They just want you to be around so that they can count you. They say it's for your benefit, but it is all a farce. They will split the benefits among themselves, and then bring the dregs to us. Of course, they will fight amongst themselves and we will know the truth."

"It is all nauseating business. Don't study us. The media don't care for us It [i.e. TV] is not meant for us and we have nothing to say about it."

"Well you can come if you are ready to listen to our gripes as long as they [the authorities] will not come back to harass us."

. . .

Already there is a clear distrust of the media and the government which underlies the reception of the medium. The issue of how ownership affects the message was raised in this. Perhaps what is more important is the women's perception of the relevance of the service to them. They were certain that their interests had been marginalised by the various interests. This also affected their attitude, because they could not take serious, a medium which did not take their plights serious. As a result television service, like the government was seen to be largely

irrelevant. It was against this background that the observations should be read.

Day 1

Observation commenced about 9.30 a.m. Although it was a Monday, it was a public holiday marking one of the Moslem festivals. This meant the subject, being a Moslem herself was in a festive mood. It also meant that transmission began earlier than usual for a weekday.

There was a musical programme on the set which was on, when the researcher arrived. It is not clear if this was normal, or if it was because the researcher was expected. Earlier on in the day, before observation commenced, the researcher had met the absence of the subject. Subject had had to go on an early morning outing.

The musical was not viewed; the children had gone to the praying ground, and the mothers were busy. S1 was busy sorting kolanuts in her room. Though she did not watch, she sang along with the programme as she did her work. At the point when she heard a segment of the programme that was meant to exhort children, she called out to her daughter, the one who was at home to come and watch.

The programme was a special "Id - El - Fitri" edition of a Yoruba language magazine programme for children , "Areweyo". The title of the programme when translated to English means "One Who Delights in Children".

The advice that was being given in this particular instance, was for children who help themselves to their mother's stew pots. In other

words, children who pilfer.

The daughter objected to her mother's invitation, because of the insinuations that could be inferred from such. She felt the invitation in other words suggests that she needs the advice; in which case, she was being accused of being a thief. She complied anyway, and came to watch, but the mother had to apologise to her. The mother had apparently not intended the insinuation.

Other mothers also came to watch the musical part of the programme. They were quite impressed by the feat performed by the children. Except for the presenter, all the segments of the programme - the acting; the singing and dancing; the recitation; were performed by children.

Though they attended the programme, it was no more than a passing interest. The attraction had been the performance of the children.

When there was a break in transmission, the subject scouted round the channels for an alternative service. This was just a chanced move as she had earlier informed researcher that only one channel (LTV) is clearly received on her set. In the absence of a better service, she turned down the volume of the television, and switched on the cassette player. This was to provide background music much as the television had been used when it featured the musical segments of the programme.

As the children trickled in, they were attracted to stay and listen to the music, and they still watched the television, despite the fact that it's sound had been turned down.

Even without the sound, they were able to tell when the drama came on that, it would be in Yoruba and they encouraged; prodded; their mother to turn off the music, and increase the volume of the programme instead.

There was a full house to view the Yoruba drama which followed. There was a pattern, similar to that observed in location 1, in the way the viewing group was constituted.

The signature tune for the drama, which was a special, did not reflect its true identity. The music used, was a piece of foreign music - (imported) jazz. That notwithstanding, the true identity of the programme soon attracted the viewers to itself. The sound of conversation, coming from the set in Yoruba, was easily overheard in the adjacent rooms, and the crowd soon converged. Again this was facilitated by the type of building they were situated; the closeness in the location; and the very presence of a converging group was enough advertisement for those who did not easily catch on to what was going on. The jubilant children who heralded the arrival of a Yoruba drama on the screen left no one in doubt as to the purpose of the gathering.

The programme was titled "Oun T'o Pamo" meaning "That which is hidden" The title itself is an idiomatic expression, and when completed, says - that which is a mystery to man is clear in the sight of God.

At the onset, the programme failed to satisfy the expectant crowd. Besides the perceived lapses in the production of the programme, there were several breaks in transmission. The audience was thus not giving the programme their full attention. Other side attractions took prominence. The children received their festive gifts and treats, and

these were compared; the adults had tales to share. They were not satisfied yet they sat before the set, although they were not really watching. It was a child who voiced their dissatisfaction, and measured the experience against a previous, more interesting experience. She reminded over the theme of that "enjoyable" experience.

"This programme is not interesting. There was once a more interesting one which I watched about a man and his wife. The man married a second wife, built a house for her, and lived a clandestine life with her until one day, God caught them."
[sic]

Although the particular experience did not measure up, the theme of a better one was being recalled. There was an emphasis on the story line of the "enjoyed" experience. This seems to suggest that it was the intrigue therein that was fascinating. What is more, it seems to suggest an appreciation of the story line was necessary for an appreciation of the viewing experience.

The comment also succeeded in bringing back the focus of the group, to the "unsatisfactory" programme, the declared reason for the gathering.

At that point there was a scene with a couple in an amorous situation. This in itself, attracted the criticism of the women. They wondered how realistic the show was. There was contempt for the character portrayed, because she was supposed to be a student. They even judged her by the hair-do she wore, as a "student".

Had they followed the programme, they would have seen that the point they were making, was the same as that which the programme was trying to make - that the girl was a wayward student. They could not immediately get that point because they were too engrossed in confirming that it was

not an interesting programme. This was the cue on which they had begun their conscious assessment of the programme.

The point at which a crime was being perpetuated in the programme was when the interest of the group soared. There was very visible suspense, at the "action" and very visible relief at the end of the act. This audience vicariously participated in the viewing experience at that point. They listened, and followed the visuals. The experience, as they received it, might well have been real.

There was intermittent screen side commentary run by various individuals within the audience, as they voiced their anxiety, and their understanding of the situation. This ensured that there was a group understanding of what was going on. The interesting aspect of this voiced readings, and expressed commentary, is that it allows for a convergence of the various readings. Any divergence, which in other words was an "error" of reading, (the interpretation of read signs), had a chance of being corrected immediately.

With the diversity of the group's constitution, it was possible to have a middle ground reading. The children by virtue of their education and exposure, were able to moderate the possible limitations that their mothers had as regards literacy in media conventions.

Even amongst the children, there was a variation in their abilities, and therefore their reading. There were those who were in secondary schools, and more worldly wise than those who were still in primary schools for example.

The intermittent commentaries also included the audible suspense, exclamations, relief and attempts to predict the outcome of an action. It often times included direct inquiries which made it easier to have a guided reading.

"Yep! Ha! Ha! Ha! God will save him. [about a character who had been "lured" into robbers den]

"Ah! what's wrong with this one? Life is cool for you." [about an imbecile; a comic relief within the programme, oblivious of goings on around him]

"Now who is this one?"

"That is the one who went to bail the person out."

"She is being taken to their boss?"

"Who is this third person? Is this not the third person in their group?"

"No it was the woman, the driver, along with the father who made up the party of three."

"Oh! I see!"

. . . .

"Ah! now they have committed a crime in that person's name! Can you see that?"

"Won't somebody call ----- to come and watch this and learn to desist from doubtful company?" [because the criminals in the programme had implicated some "innocent" person]

"That one knows the implication of what is happening." [bringing focus back to the programme]

. . . .

"He is sniffing cocaine and he is such a child!" [the tone was so emotional, full of pity for the character.]

"Aree! He's even worse than the gangsters."

"When he too is one of them."

"That's all!" [a colloquialism, meaning there is no need for anymore to be said; the situation is helpless.]

. . . .

In the last batch of statements, the ease with which the women related their television experience to reality is illustrated. They readily

found in the programmes, lessons for dealing with reality. They equated the actions with real life events but it appeared that the remoteness of the presentation on television, made it easier for them to deal with the reality of the situations. There was the fact that they could see the outcome, and they were quick to employ these as examples in their own realities which were yet to emerge, or be resolved.

What else is worth noting at this point is the way the voiced commentaries help to bring the group back to focus on the programme. The digressions are not allowed to thrive.

The viewing continued with such rapt attention as the programme reached a climax - the confrontation; the arrival of the hero; the liberation of the victims; and the denouement where the perpetrators were dealt with and life goes on.

Although it was a Yoruba drama, the production employed the formula typical of imported melodramas. The duelling was very similar, infact it was aping the Ninja style of fighting. There were other features in the programme that ~~were~~ similar to the "romances" in Indian drama productions.

The group was not as concerned with such appraisal of the production. They were too engrossed in the storyline; the outcome of the conflict; identifying with the aggrieved and rooting to see "justice" done. They continued to discuss their views of the programme, and arriving at a consensus.

At the end of the programme the conclusion was appraised. They used the continuity announcer's remarks about the programme in pulling together,

PICTURE 5.



Location 2.

Some had to watch through the window.

the thoughts that arose from the viewing experience.

"Erhen! that's the end indeed. He's lamenting her death. . . He did not know that she was behind all the trouble."

"Oh! he never realised that it was him they were after, What a shame. He does not know."

"What is hid indeed is clear to God; if one is doing something, hiding in a corner to do evil. . . "

"Imagine, she dipped her hand into her purse to pay to have someone killed!"

"What manner of money is that."

(The programme had been about a wayward schoolgirl who was impatient with schooling, and her lover. She moved on to life on the fast lane. When eventually, the lover became successful in life and got involved with somebody else, the girl became jealous and attempted to use her influence in the underworld to get at the lovers. When attempts to get them implicated failed, there were outright attempts to kill them. The girl, who was then involved with a gang leader, had not come out with the real reason for her vendetta, but that was no hindrance to the gang. They pursued the couple with such an obsession, till they met with their own death. The couple meanwhile had been ignorant of the real reason for their trials, and although they were eventually vindicated, they and members of their family, had suffered quite a bit.)

The women's appraisal at this point was a much more apparent negotiation of values. There was no opposing view to that of the mainstream which was expressed. If such a view was held at all, it had been suppressed.

The viewing experience had been enjoyable. There was a note of relief in the tone with which the following was delivered and it expresses the consensus of feeling amongst the women.

"That is why children enjoy watching this thing. [TV]. One can use it to gain wisdom."

"Oh enlightening lessons abound in there."

It is not clear if the children were as concerned with gaining wisdom through the programmes, as the women were. Although they were all engrossed in the viewing experience, and they all got carried away, vicariously participating in it, it was the women who had the tendency to see the lessons, and to draw parallels from real life. They were the ones who had the initiative of calling individuals to the set to widen their scope of reality; to learn about life.

In this way, the children are aware and learn, if only from their mothers' actions, the appropriate way to use the medium. Such programmes thus become used to broaden their experience of life. As it became apparent at the point of discussion, even the children are able draw out the lessons that they should have learnt in the course of viewing. They had learnt the acceptable way of using the medium.

The programming continued with the advertisement of a show. The advert had a clip that was similar to the programme that had just been watched and it was watched. Although there was a dispersal of the group right at the end of the programme, there was still a sufficiently large crowd, left at the set. This group was almost exclusively adults who had other causes to be in the room. The children, it seemed could not wait to get back outside. The room was cramped and they were the worst for it, having had to make room for the adults to be "comfortable". Besides, the adults waited to appraise the programme, and also to socialise with the hostess. The effect of the knowledge of the research effort can not be discounted.

What ever the reason, they remained at the set, they were incidentally exposed to the advertisement of the show. Their reaction to the advertisement was a consideration of the wisdom in such an "investment"; why spend so much on a show. There was also the fact that they referred to the cost of the show in pounds, although the advertisement had given the cost of the show in Naira. They had read the message in their own frame of reference, employing the currency denomination that was 20 years outdated.

"Oh! They are talking about a show that will cost four pounds"

"Four pounds for children, and five pounds for adults. How can any one spend five pounds to watch a show? Those who have TV sets at home do not know the value of what they have after all."

This point, illustrates the suggestion that viewers, irrespective of what the programme presents as a cue, will read the programme content with their own "vocabulary" - they will translate what they see into a language they are more comfortable with. This is similar to the practice of measuring the perceived values, on the scale of held values. This is also illustrated in the above.

At that point the group mentally switched off the set. They concentrated on their conversation and completely ignored the set. This was easy because although the set was centrally situated in the room it took a conscious effort to view it as it was placed on a purpose made shelf high up, in one corner of the room. Since it was a small room, the space had to be conserved. (See picture of location 2)

At the arrival of the hostess' mother, the other women in the group; the

"guests", soon excused themselves, making room for the hostess and her mother to have their privacy. What is interesting at this point is the recognition of an alternative news network which the women rely upon. The mother had brought news from home to her daughter. This report was very similar to the Yoruba newscast in its constitution except that it was more personalised, and so, more relevant. The report had an update of social happenings, obituaries, it even included a surveillance of the environment, but it was devoid of government report.

Whilst the mothers were engaged in their conversation, the children demonstrated aspects of the drama that was watched earlier on in the day. Unlike the critical negotiation of the mothers, they in the course of play, mimicked the imbecile that was portrayed in the foregoing programme. This exhibition was prompted by an exposure to a promo of another Yoruba drama specially scheduled for the holiday.

They mimicked his words, his delivery, and his action. This manner became a fad in the household and was observed even later on in the week.

The children noted the time that the advertised programme was to be transmitted. They also noted the performing group, and going by the known standard of performance, and the favoured personalities, they immediately decided and planned to watch. The children were not restricted or moderated by their mothers at all.

The foreign film which followed was completely ignored by all in this group. The children went out into the open as did the other adults as earlier noted. The TV set was still left on as really the audience did

not make a conscious decision to leave at once. Each person merely drifted off as it became increasingly apparent that there was no reason to be in the room any further. The women continued sorting the kolanuts as they conversed. They were still engaged with this when the next programme, a special musical, presented by an Islamic, all women, choral group came on. It was in the mood of the festivities.

No group converged to watch this programme. Those who were within earshot or who were passing by were attracted. They merely came in and glanced at the performers, before going about their business. That they did not stop to view the programme should not be attributed to the perceived need for privacy. At least one hour had passed since the two women had been on their own. Besides, there was sufficient familiarity and closeness within the household, to remove such inhibitions. The nature of the programme seemed to be the more likely reason for the observed response. The response of the two women who were right before the set, clarifies the point.

The women did not leave their chores, yet they vicariously participated in the programme. They sang the choruses along with the group and were very competent with the practices. They were able to recite the Quranic verses along with the programme. With varying degrees of competence, the viewers were "able" to place the participants within the programme. For example, from their dressing, the viewers could identify that the performers had all performed the "Hajj". From this they deduced that it was a group of well off women. They confirmed this particular reading with the stereotype they held of the town that the performers came from. That information had been announced at the beginning of the programme.

They found the performance impressive. They were impressed by the uniformity of the group in their outfits, and their competence at the "carolling". From this it is clear that they attended both the visual and aural aspects of the programme even though they were not setting time apart to view it. The format of the programme one may say facilitates this kind of reception. The women enjoyed the programme.

It may also be deduced that they found the programme relevant. Infact the hostess was, in real life, expecting a similar group. The difference between the reception of the group, which arrived not long after, and that on the television was the absence of any inconvenience regarding the latter. She could get along with her chores even as she received the television programme. She did not have to sweep and get the room clean in readiness for the TV group, nor did she have to give them any money in appreciation of their performance.

On the other hand the TV group had not given her the honour of a personalised service, so she did not get any songs sang especially for her.

These are mere observations and it is not clear that the subject reasoned the situation out in this way. What is more important, and more readily apparent however, is the continuous flow of reality and the TV experience.

After the intermission provided by the visiting choral group, interest in the television was resumed as another Yoruba drama came on. It was the one that had been advertised earlier, which the children had noted. They had been mindful of its coming, and had converged around in

anticipation of its arrival on the screen.

The children *perked* up as soon as the programme was introduced. They called out to others to confirm the commencement of the programme. This had in fact been before the arrival of the live choral group. The viewing was thus interrupted by the visit, for about 10 minutes. The programme was however long enough for the viewers to catch up on the "lost" segment.

The implication of this sequence of events was that, those adults who had not been mindful of the anticipated programme, but who were dragged to the location by the choral group, stayed on to discuss the performance and thus were around to watch the drama. They had not made any conscious decision to view the programme.

"What are they doing now? Did they not say they will show a programme at 2.00?"

"That's what they are showing now."

Even when they had become aware of the transmission of the programme, they did not immediately focus attention on it. The children did. The women went on chatting, until there was an utterance within the programme which they considered funny. They were right before the set; within viewing range and so, though they ignored what was going on, they were aware of it.

The programme eventually earned their attention, and they then attended it with concentration. The utterance had been echoed by one of the children, and this was to further amplify its impact.

From this point on they watched as a group, following the same pattern

that had been earlier observed. Even within this group, there were other activities going on alongside viewing like eating; running errands; attending to children; for example. The primary focus was however the television. All these meant there was the need for the commentaries and clarifications which facilitated the group reading.

The group was engaged in the viewing with rapt attention. The use of language was an element of the production that they visibly responded to. They either were amused or impressed by the literary devices employed in the programme. There were many hyperboles, onomatopoeae, and idioms which the viewers mulled over, by repeating, or drawing attention to. There was some use of incantations, which being a form of poetry was also delivered in the sort of way that caught the viewers' fancy. There was thus the repetition and highlighting of chants, in a similar manner to the reception of the "funny utterances", and exaggerated melodramatic acting.

In this viewing experience, the subjects also repeated the pattern of evaluating the values perceived within the programme, with the values which they held. They vicariously participated in the programme, expressing their sympathy, and identifying with the characters as they went along. Their sympathies were drawn on the line of the values they held.

For example, their sympathy was with the man, who's wife, encouraged by another woman, dealt "treacherously" with. The woman committed adultery. The group disapproved of this. Furthermore, she made a fool of the husband, by making him serve her lover, in the belief that he was her relation.

The woman eventually passed off another man's child on the new man she eventually married. It turned out that the new husband had also deceived her, just as he had deceived another woman. The two women happened to be related.

The friend who had encouraged and schooled her in the villainous intrigue, eventually betrayed her. She thus ended up with the short end of the stick all round, especially as her family would have nothing to do with her, because of the pain she had caused them by her actions. The subjects did not necessarily sympathise with the women in the programme. They felt betrayed by such women as those who were portrayed. They sympathised with the man, who had been a good husband but who had been betrayed. The man had had been vindicated by the end of the programme, and he was also compensated with a more promising relationship.

The subjects were so engrossed in the storyline, and they were not put off by the poor technical quality noticeable in the programme. They were disappointed when there were temporary breaks in transmission, but the children, who understood the television practices better than their mothers, recognised the temporary nature of the breaks and so, urged their mothers to be patient.

Perhaps it is because the storyline focused on an area of their competence and interest that their commentaries tended to be more evaluative. The women in their commentaries identified the "goodies" and the "baddies" and passed judgements as they went along. Because it was more evaluative, there was tendency for discussion to endure. Yet

the digression was not allowed to get too far out of the scope of the viewing before someone directed interest back into the programme.

There were such remarks as the following which drew attention back to the programme.

"Look! look! look!"

"Listen! listen!"

"Wait a minute, let's hear what is going to be said."

Sometimes, it did not take such words to draw the attention back. It took non - verbal exclamations or an echoing of what was said in the programme.

Even when the clarity of the reception deteriorated, the women endured, and read the pictures when the sound was very poor. Although this is a potential source of misinterpretation, the group viewing practices, were able to moderate such incidents.

The fact that the group was so familiar with the codes employed in the production seemed to encourage them in seeing the events therein as an extension of reality. It was very easy for them to participate in the drama as they not only watched but also tried to predict what would happen next, or assess the "fairness" of what happened. There was no debating how realistic the programme was.

The language and the style of the drama group, though not making light of the issue, was added entertainment for the viewers, and this facilitated the reception. It was also useful in highlighting some important lessons or points within the programme.

From the programme the women were able to point out the irony of life. It was not until the programme ended, that the women unglued themselves from their seats, to stretch and ease themselves. Yet this was the programme that they were initially not bothered to watch.

Having earned their attention, the programme had managed to keep the women's interest. As they got interested in the story, their interest grew as they, irrespective of the other considerations, were interested in the logical conclusion.

There was no more viewing for that day. The group was anxious to get their views aired, and so the discussion with this group unlike with other groups was conducted on Day 1. It was just as well, because the public holiday, and the festivities allowed for a full house. Indeed, subsequently, it was difficult to get any meaningful group to converge within the study week. They had gone back to their routine, which was really so busy that they did not have time.

Day 2

Transmission resumed at about 4.00 p.m. as usual, but there was no viewing till about 8.30 p.m. when one of the contact subjects returned from the market. It was obvious that even that act of viewing was done to please the researcher. In fact , there was no viewing as such. The television was merely switched on. The children spent their time outside in the open, till their mother came back. They had not tried to switch the TV on earlier.

Being on a highly elevated shelf, the set was out of their reach. The

children thus needed an adult to help them switch the set on. On this occasion, there had been no such moves to get the set switched on. It can only be presumed that the children were not interested in watching it. This illustrates the deliberate and discriminatory pattern of their exposure.

To buttress this observation is the fact that the situation was the same in the neighbour's house, (S2) in whose house the group had converged for that evening. The hostess for the project had returned very late from her outing.

S2's was also in a communal living situation, as her husband was a polygamous man, and all the wives lived together. The living room was in this instance a big hall, with chairs arranged round (the perimeter of the hall). It was indicative of the anticipation of a large congregation of guests. The fact that the room was so large, encouraged the occurrence of smaller pockets of discussion rather than such with a united focus. This was what happened as the group sat before the set. The children sat in their own little groups, and the women sat in theirs.

In this location as in the others, the television was also centrally situated. In fact it was within viewing range of those who were out in the corridor as well as those on the balcony.

Even when the television was put on, the 2 women who were around completely ignored it, and got on with their conversation. They were lamenting the problems of life. Their cares centred around the progress, and well being of their children; and a peaceable existence.

Coming out in their discussion, is their superstitious nature; their reliance on diviners, spiritualists and twists of fate. They also reveal more of their experiences, with con men and swindlers who cash in on their ignorance and their beliefs. All this indicate the reason why they have such a critical and guarded response to agents of change.

The narrated experiences are similar to the themes of the Yoruba dramas which they love so well. It is not surprising then, that they were so competent with the codes of communication, therein. They could very easily relate with the experiences portrayed. The fictional programmes were factual to them.

On their part, the children watched the functional set which was before them. They watched the pictures, although they were not quite attentive. The programme in view was a foreign programme. The image which the programme evoked from the women was a stereotype, and the children were inclined to agree. The common view of foreign programmes was that it promoted violence.

S2: Oh! they will soon start fighting in the programme, that's what these children enjoy.

S3: I don't even watch it.

S2: Ah! you will soon see them.

Boy: Ah! yes, they can fight, they can fight like this [boy displays shadow fighting, Ninja/Karate style.]

The volume of the programme was so low, and that of the discussion so high that it was obvious that the audio was not attended, even if the visuals were being watched. The programme was in English language, and this was not attractive because of the effort that would have been

required to follow.

The researcher's presence had undoubtedly attracted more children to the set. It seems that their typical pattern would have been to play outside or to engage in some other activities.

This deduction is fuelled by the fact that the children, like the women, had been happily engaged in their play or their chat on the street, before the researcher proceeded to the sitting room to appraise what was going on there.

The programme that was being watched was the American Christian Broadcasting Network soap opera, Another Life. The station was LTV. This was the only channel that was received clearly in this location as well.

The manner in which the group's attention peaked and dipped is noteworthy. There was immediate peak attention as the musical interlude which followed the programme came on. In this group, the Fuji/ Waka type of music was considered appealing. The adverts had no attraction for them, except for that which attracted the children, who in turn attracted their mothers with their noise. It was an advertisement of a brand of vegetable oil. The advert had been in Yoruba, and it had pictures of mouth watering dishes. The children's response had been exaggerated as they salivated noisily. It was this that drew the mother's attention to the advert.

The children can, and do read the English titles in the advert. They read the information about the price, and retail outlets. These were in English because the original commercial was shot in English, and the

vernacular versions merely have translations of the "voice overs". This is the usual practice and it is a cost saving measure.

There were no pressures on these women to be in the kitchen, because they had help. This usually came from the female children. It is thought to be training in this parts, to have the daughters assist, indeed be responsible for the cooking of the family meals. The age of the girls, determine how much is expected of them. The older the daughters, the less supervision required; the freer the mothers, but the less time such youths have for their leisure.

In this instance the women had competent assistants and so were able to view, if they wanted to, with very little interruption, but they did not want to view. There was no programme that attracted their interest at the time. The kind of attention that they gave to the musicals which came up later, suggested that they would have viewed, if they had had such a programme.

There was excitement as the musical video of the celebrated "Waka Queen" came on. It was clear that she was a favoured artist. She was also a familiar character and as they viewed, they ran a commentary on what they knew of her life.

It was at this point of viewing that the children and their excesses were checked. The women were determined to pay attention. They wanted to hear and enjoy the programme. In fact, they had the volume of the set increased. Meanwhile, they sang along in hushed tones.

Another interesting point here, is the way in which television

determines the agenda of what is discussed. While this may not necessarily be a response to a direct cue from within the programme, as in the discussion of a statement, or a visual, it may be a response to a cue triggered off by the less obvious aspects of the programme. Because television is responded to in this way, and such triggers for various individuals may not be as readily observable, assessing just what is taken from television may not be possible. What ever is got should at best be treated as an indicator not an absolute.

There was obvious disappointment as the interlude gave way to a scheduled programme. There was a chorus of the exclamation from both the children and the women. There was an outburst which summed up the feeling of the group. It also explained the effect of such frustrations in the viewing experiences, on the general attitude to viewing.

S3: You nitwits! That is what they always do. Tease us with good music, and just when you start enjoying it, they zap it off; especially during the news.

This illustrates what is priority to the women - for them the news was the interruption; the prolonged and unwelcome interlude between the music which they enjoy. They did not seem to appreciate the fact that the interludes did not constitute substantive programmes in themselves. All they cared about was that programme type which was pleasing to them.

The use of musical interludes had become a standard feature within the broadcast of the network news on state owned stations, as explained in earlier sections. This remark therefore reflects the frustrations which such programming practices could have perpetuated.

This audience was oblivious of the politics of management, and was only

aware of the unsatisfactory service. It appears that they were only catered for as an after thought. They were on the fringe of programming considerations. This belief contributed to their apathetic response to the programmes which manifested even within this observation period. It is this, more than set ownership, that is responsible for the problem of reaching this segment of the population with important developmental messages via the media. This point is illustrated in the sequence which followed.

When the station, resumed the transmission of music that was similar to that which they had removed abruptly for the news, the audience, refused to attend to it. Rather they carried on their conversation; each to their own. They seemed wise in doing so, because the feature was only as a result of the delays in the transmission of the network news. As soon as the network news came on, the interlude was again discontinued.

The agenda for their conversation had once again been provided by the, stunted viewing experience. The children discussed their preferences in the types of music, whilst the mothers continued the discussion on the celebrity's life. It was only at this time (about 9.00 p.m.) that S1 returned from the market. Rather than watch the news, the women planned their itinerary for the next day.

Even among the children the group is very fluid, its constitution was constantly changing, as people were coming and going at will in the "open house". The children who had been ignored had started making a noise and they were sent to their quarters especially in view of the time of day.

Observation ended at this time as the group had broken up.

In the course of their discussion, subjects expressed interest in musical videos for the following reasons -

The fact that they got a chance to see the artistes; that one could learn the appropriate dance steps for the music. It was the younger viewers who were more concerned with the latter. The point led to a discussion of how visuals help clarify what is said in the audio, and how demonstration aids memorability.

They recalled for example, how viewing certain TV programmes had helped to make certain idioms and proverbs much clearer. All these were points that they used to buttress their preference of TV over radio. Yet radio is the medium that is generally assumed will be more effective in reaching this segment.

The day's viewing had illustrated the inaccuracy of widely held assumptions about this audience segment. There was more credence for these observations in the course of the week, as well as in the experiences observed in other locations.

Day 3

By the third day the excitement of the project had waned amongst the adults although the children were still quite tickled by the presence of the researcher, and the microphones. What is striking at this point is the confirmation of the earlier observation, that the women had created for themselves an alternative network of communication. It is important to note that the use of radio for these women, did not discriminate

between the exposure to radio waves, and the use of the radio set for alternative reasons. Often times, it was the cassette player in the radio, that was being used, to play cassettes of their own choice, and this was considered to be use of the "radio".

The adults had their chores that kept them occupied - buying, selling, appraising the value of stock. There is regular sorting of the kolanut and the washing and drying of new stock. Besides these, there were daily household chores; washing; fetching of water; and the like. In their free time, they chatted outside, as they "watched the world go by". There is usually enough to chat about with all the happenings around.

There was usually enough activity going on to form the bedrock of their conversation. There were reports on neighbours, on children, personal experiences, which were shared.

The presentation of these reports were quite theatrical. There was the added touch of drama which made their lives more similar to their choice of programmes. Like Shakespeare's fools, their tales were full of sound and fury, but in this case, they were significant.

There was no real viewing on this day. The subjects had been encouraged to pursue their normal routine. They were relaxed enough with the researcher, not to put on an act. They seemed not bothered enough to put one on, there was no incidental viewing as they sat out in the open till very late. There was no deliberate viewing either, as there was no knowledge of an interesting programme. As a result, there was no viewing at all.

It should not be surprising that the women were outside, and remained outside even at the arrival of the researcher, when one considers the design of the location.

Besides their stories and utterances, their actions, particularly the children's games, were also similar to their choice of programmes. The children in this location were quite "active". They are wont to hit each other in "jest". This boisterous nature was also reflected in their expressed preferences of actors and actresses.

"We enjoy Yoruba dramas. . . We also enjoy action film where there is fighting."

"I like to watch those so I can learn how to fight."

"I like Spiderman for example."

"I like Orisabunmi but I don't want to be like her."

"I like Fadeyi too!"

"Nobody wants to be like Fadeyi!"

"I want to be like Fadeyi."

"All hail the wicked, Fadeyi the wicked"

"I like Awojigini as well . . . he is a little boy who is a versed occultist."

"Yes, we like Awojigini, the pea - sized child. He is hot!"

Besides Spiderman, the other enumerated favourite characters, are occultists. Orisabunmi is a pretty woman who is an acknowledged and versed occultist, usually representing good ideals of justice and liberation.

Fadeyi surnamed the wicked (has become a household name for wickedness in fact) is a diabolical occultist whose role is so well played that even in real life, people tend to dread the artiste. (He is so callous

in the programmes, that he will not even spare his own child).

One thing that these characters have in common is their prowess in verbal warfare. Though the more common place physical violence is also present, more prominent is the verbal engagement, by which spirits and powers are invoked.

The poetry (of such incantations) has been identified as being fascinating. It even contributes to how the performing groups are assessed by this audience group. For the children particularly, and also for the adults, the poetical devices which play on words and sound are found to be striking and serve as pneumatic devices. Even when a character's name is not remembered, his utterances are not readily forgotten. The following are examples of such utterances which came out in the children's jivetaik:

"Pe fu e le le , sun ke le le pe ke le tun!"

The above is a meaningless exclamation used in a variety of ways, by a particular artiste, and also the children.

"Ti o, kelebe!"

Another exclamation expressing disgust, disdain, or non-chalance. The word "Kelebe" means phlegm.

"Ma so o mo!" - meaning "Say no more."

A commonly used exclamation amongst the streetwise.

"Sababi oke!" [A form of hailing, that has become an appellation between two particular characters in a drama group. All the expressions were taken from different characters in the Yoruba dramas.]

As with their mothers, the children found these utterances amusing. They used them to identify the programmes in which the personalities who utter them, were featured. In the final analysis, their identification of the programmes therefore revolved around the utterances.

Rather than refer to a programme by its title, they referred to it by a prominent or favoured character, who is usually remembered by his action or his utterance and in some cases by the name.

The relish with which they re-lived those experiences, especially those pertaining to super - natural prowess, is note worthy. The mother, (S1) who looked on as the stories were told, confessed that she had been totally ignorant of the programmes. In some cases, she wondered when the children had watched the programmes. This indicates the type of "freedom" that the children had. It also indicates the lack of censorship that the communal nature of viewing can encourage. A similar trend was observed in location 1, (Day 6). According to the children here, they some of the programmes had not been viewed on their own set, but at other locations, with other people, who were not sensitive enough to discriminate what the children could or could not watch. Often times, they were with youths or young adults, as the mothers themselves were almost always not at home, having gone about their business.

Observation ended for that day at about 9.00 p.m. without any viewing being recorded.

Day 4

There was no viewing and no prolonged observation. At the time researcher called, the subject had not returned from the day's business,

and researcher was reliably informed that she would not come back till very late. This fitted the previous day's pattern, and the subjects' account of their daily activities.

In addition, the subject was to attend some to family commitment; a funeral ceremony. The concept of a funeral ceremony in this culture, is usually is a very elaborate affair. Depending on how affluent the deceased was, the ceremony is usually very costly in terms of time, money and effort. It is usually an affair lasting at least 2 days.

As on the previous day, the children were playing outside, and not showing any interest in watching television.

On the following day, the subjects (particularly the children) reported that they had not switched on the set at all.

It was the second day that the functional set had not been used at all.

Day 5

Any novelty that accompanied the project by this time had worn off. The adults and the children went about their normal duties. This verified the pattern of viewing which the women had earlier described.

Those adults who were at home early in the evenings were those with very young children; the elderly who do not go to the farm; and the very heavily pregnant one. They were in the habit of sitting outside and chatting as has been observed. The early evening is also the time when water is fetched, and stocked in the house; an activity which is engaged in by both the children and fit adults.

It is also a time when the kola is washed. This is possibly due to the fact that water is fetched at that time. There is also the fact that those who go to the farm, start to return about this time. The buses come in at about 6.00 p.m. but they usually drop the passengers off at the market place. (See photo of market place) pg 937

Some of the people, who come straight home, (not waiting to sell their wares), arrive home any time from about 6.30 p.m. By this time if they are so inclined, especially if they have enough water stocked they might proceed to wash the kola immediately.

Indeed those who have things to buy in the market tend to go in the evening about 6. 30 p.m. to catch those coming straight from the farm. This enables them get farm fresh foods. Besides, there is the added consideration of aiming to buy directly from the farm people themselves, thereby cutting out the middle man. This is a way by which they get better bargains. This is the conception that underlies the inherited practise.

Those "farmers" who go to the market to sell, often do not return home earlier than 10.00 p.m. S1 on Day 2 had only returned early at about 9.00 p.m., because she was mindful of the research exercise.

The explanation for this feature is the poor sales in the market. According to them, they too would like to "close shop" early, but when there are poor sales, they tend to hold on in the market, hoping that a customer could come at the last minute and make all the difference to the day's effort.

Invariably they come back home, tired especially as their day usually had started even before sunrise. The fatigue was usually compounded by the disappointment and frustration of poor sales. In such a mood, it is difficult to imagine that they could be impressed by ^{the} television service as it was.

On the average, supper is eaten at about 9. 00 p.m. in this location. At this time, some of the children are still quite alert and boisterous. Verbal and physical assault is not always offensive.

S1 was home early on this day, to compensate for her absence the previous day. Although she switched on the television, but did not watch it at all. She was not always within viewing range. She had merely left the set on, as a form of hospitality. She went about her usual business.

By 8.00 p.m., the LTV World news in English was on, but it was not watched. The network news came on at 9. 00 p.m. but it was not consciously attended either. However because the set was on, and subject was in the room, having her dinner at the time, there were some visuals and thus news items which caught her attention. She had been busy cooking the evening meal during the earlier (LTV) newscast, and so she had missed any possibly interesting items.

It was the visuals accompanying a report of a fire in one of the major markets in Kano; one of the cities in the north, that had attracted her interest. In the first instance, she was attracted by the blaze that she saw in the report. She became even more interested because she knew the market, and could therefore better appreciate the magnitude of the

disaster. She was very attentive to the details of the story, and even made the children keep quiet. She eliminated the distraction that could have come from them. This response was motivated by the familiarity with the subject of the story, and also by human compassion for the disaster.

The response also illustrates the fact that these subjects are interested, and would even attend the news, if the items were of interest to them. The above enumeration of the reasons for the favourable response, should be helpful in making clearer, the concept of "interest", which can otherwise be very vague.

Although the mother was accommodating, the children by this day no longer concealed the fact that the researcher's presence at that time of the day (9.40 p.m.) was inconvenient. The children by the time had wanted to sleep. There was no programme that was "interesting", and no good reason why they wanted to stay awake since they had had their dinner. The news held no attraction for them as it did for their mother. They did not seem bothered by the items even when they could see, and understand what was going on. The impact of the event in the fire story, for example, seemed lost on even the 13 year old. This may be due to the manner and time of presentation, but the children did not show any response to the information. At that point all they cared about was getting their rest.

In fact, the really little ones by this time had been falling asleep in the chairs, or the bed and on the floor; wherever they had been seated. The older ones had to exercise restraint till the researcher left, and they could spread their mats on the floor, and turn in for the night. They did not hide the fact that they were impatient. This was a strong

indicator that the group had returned to its normal routine, following the initial novelty of the project. It thus boosts the confidence that can be placed in the observations. Observation ended at about 10.00 p.m.

Day 6

There was no observation as subjects had several social obligations to attend to, including one in a neighbouring town. An attempt to observe the children in the absence of their mother was foiled by the cut in the public power supply. This was an added reason for the children to find alternative ways of spending their time on a day which they normally would have watched television, (going by their report, and assessment of the stations' pattern of scheduling).

Day 7

Following the marathon socialising of the previous day, the subjects were all exhausted on Sunday morning. The children were however, quite alert, as the whole "family" settled down to watch the Yoruba drama.

The particular programme was a repeat; the children had watched it before, but they were engrossed in the viewing all the same. The previous exposure had not dampened their interest, it had only made their screen side commentary more accurate. They could more correctly predict the pattern of events, even anticipate the exact words of the characters.

The mother had not seen the programme before and she did not reject its content. They all viewed the programme as reality, not querying but accepting the reasoning and the story line.

The programme was about a queen; a regent whose tenure was up, but who was not prepared to yield her seat to her brother, the chosen substantive ruler. As it happened, the woman was also a witch and her mates in the "craft", had been wreaking havoc on the town. There were several tragedies being reported all over the town.

The queen's involvement with all the calamity, was not initially known to all. It was a closely guarded secret which her brother, the heir to the throne, inadvertently discovered. For seeing her in her other form, the brother was made blind. To prevent him from revealing the secret, he was also made dumb instantly, with a spell invoked by the sister.

A diviner was summoned to examine the sudden and mysterious ailment of the "would be" king. He was able to detect that the regent queen was a witch and that she was responsible for the problem. To protect themselves, the other witches attacked this man, and co-opted his daughter into their craft, so that she could assist in sabotaging the father's efforts, and ruin his reputation.

S1 watched the programme in silence, while the children ran the commentary that gave the group a unitary reading. At the point where the man's child was incorporated into witchcraft, the subject broke her silence, to sound a note of warning to her children who appeared to be more concerned about the entertainment value of the programme.

S1: That is how people are co-opted [into witchcraft] and that is why we tell you people to be careful in your movements.

From her outburst, it was clear that the woman equated the happenings that she saw on the programme with reality. Though it may be considered

to be fiction, that the details of the story are non factual programming, the Yoruba drama is related to by its fans as reality. The opinion informing this attitude, is that the producers' imagination is fed by their experience and observation.

The viewing continued with the group again intent on seeing the outcome of the story.

The diviner was to have been sent out of town because of the many jobs that had been botched up - the many lives that had been lost. The regent had engineered this scheme to rid herself of the potential "menace" that the diviner could become. This was when the diviner consulted another, who made the loose connections fit. The other diviner helped to identify the fact that the man's daughter had been incorporated into the "enemy camp". He also recommended the sacrifices which the man had to make, to remedy the situation.

In the meantime the regent was planning how to kill the man physically, because he still had custody of the brother; the rightful heir to the throne. The local gossip, stumbled on that meeting, where this was being arranged, and overheard their plans. She escaped but not before she had been seen. She was stabbed in the back by magical means. Although the woman died, she was able to reveal her knowledge of the plot; the information that had claimed her life.

The final show down was when the diviner, now empowered by the principalities to whom he had offered sacrifices of appeasement, overpowered the witches including his daughter, and the regent. He was also able to release the crown prince from the spell, freeing him to

take over the throne. The "terrors" were banished from the "kingdom" and not killed outright, because of the compassionate disposition of the new king.

Such was the plot in which the subjects were engrossed. As observed, they participated vicariously, and in this viewing situation as well, the already noted patterns, were again displayed.

There was no more viewing for that day, as the tired subject wanted to rest, and catch her breathe in anticipation of the challenges of a new week. In fact, she was so tired, that she declined going for a meeting of her social group, opting to pay a fine for her absence instead. Had she not been that tired, she would have gone for the meeting, and not viewed television still.

Before very long, the concerns of the group, among other considerations encouraged them to sit outside in the open. Lounging in the open far away from the set, the subject was not encouraged to view any programme which may have come along, of which she had not been aware. The chances of incidental viewing were thus eliminated.

The children were made to prepare for school. They were to resume the following day, after a long holiday. There were uniforms to be prepared, books to be sorted, hair to be done and so on. Because these had been left till the last minute it became a big deal. As a result, there was no settled atmosphere to watch in, even if the interest could have been developed.

On the whole, there had not been so much viewing as the women had

reported at the initial contact, and also in their discussions. With this group the discussion had been conducted on Day 1 as the subjects were in a hurry to get it over and done with. This was just as well, because, except for Day 1, which incidentally was a public holiday, marking a relevant festival, the group could not easily be converged on any other day. This too is an illustration of the living pattern of the people, which invariably affected their use of the medium.

Discussion - A catalogue of Woes

The discussion with this group can best be described as a catalogue of woes, the details of which have no place in this context. The group was full of complaints about the television service as an extension of government. Their complaints and observations highlight the importance of a better Public relations approach to information management, by the government as a whole. They highlighted the need for government to be open to criticisms, from their media, for such to be credible. There was also the need for more meticulous investigation and follow up of government stories.

They challenged the role of the media as the "fourth estate" of the realm. They acknowledged the potential of the media as an integral arm of the governing process, and it was for this reason that they were disappointed by the performance.

They could not excuse the perceived inadequacies in the media institutions, and they could not separate them, from the government who sponsored them. For instance they expected that the news in the media, should not only bring information, but present their views to government. Failure to do so, amounted to betrayal. This was the main

indicator of the perceived (government) neglect. The insufficiency of relevant programmes was merely the confirmation of the fact.

The television was described by one of the women as the link between heaven and earth ("J'aye, j'orun"). This was the technology, but the performance of the operators was found to be a disappointment.

"The TV workers are working for themselves"

The unanimous opinion was that, with the potential of the medium, there is much more that can be accomplished. It was because the programme makers were merely wage earners, that they were not presenting a balanced view of happenings. They were only doing as they were told by "government".

"The radio workers are placed there by government, or who pays them? The TV staff likewise are placed there by government. Or who pays their salaries is it not the government? They ought to be able to assist the people. I mean all people in Nigeria."

"We assist them but they don't assist us."

"You see, the reason why we complain about the radio [i.e. the media] is that they should be our helper [champion] but the way we see it, there seems to be "am content with my lot" in their attitude

The perceived impotence of the media made them unreliable. The women felt that trusting the media would only deliver them up to greater suffering, as the "watch-dog" was sure to abandon them. They had examples (of government announcements which had been featured on factual programmes) to buttress their position. This was an interesting dimension to the perception of the media as "liars".

"There's no trusting their utterances. They just talk because it ensures the payment of their salaries."

"They never lack something to say you know, they just talk."

. . .
"You see they initiate these programmes, and they do not have the control to keep the excesses in check. . . Do you see, it's more or less like punishing the people."

[The last comment was referring to the citizen enlightenment campaigns]

It was only in the report of disasters or of incidents in remote places, that the media were perceived as being honest and reliable. These were stories that they could not readily verify in the course of their experience, as opposed to the report of government plans.

On the whole, they expressed an interest in the news, and the discussion of current affairs from which they had been marginalised. This interest could however not be observed in their behaviour. Instead there was a was very strong distrust and non - chalance.

From the comments, it became apparent that their assessment, compounded the institutionalised marginalisation. The efforts of the stations to reach this segment was thus more or less wasted. This contributed to the subjects views from television.

Jaundiced Views

Television in this location had a very restrictive definition.

The fact that the reception was restricted to a particular station affected their opinion about the state government as the following comment illustrates.

"Lagos state is more conscious of its citizens than Ogun state. They also have farmlands in Ikorodu, and their media in Lagos does not stop mentioning them. But Ogun, state has neglected its people. . . "

This assessment is not reliable, because the subjects did not watch any of the stations in Ogun state, in which they reside. They could therefore not say if these featured the happenings in the state.

There was a very deliberate use of even that single station to which they had access. This further restricted the programming base from which the subjects could get images of the world. They only watched Yoruba dramas, and musicals, when they stumbled on them. The exaggeration of these images should increase the concern for Yoruba dramas.

Already there has been extensive discussion of the themes of programmes from which the women purpose to learn lessons, on how to cope with life. These "fictional" programmes were considered more relevant, and more honest in their presentation of life. What is noteworthy is the emphasis placed on diabolical plots. This fuels the distrustful attitude of the subjects, by their own admission.

The culmination of this pattern, by inference, is that TV breeds a culture of distrust. This is reflected in the subjects remarks about the portrayal of life.

In spite of their complaints, the subjects felt there was a place for the medium, and so the service should be maintained, but made more relevant to their needs.

LOCATION 3 - AT HOME WITH AN 'AREA MUMMY'

This is supposed to be a nuclear family setting. Subject has 4 children, aged between 10 and 15 years. Three of these are in secondary school. The fourth was in his last year in primary school. The older three are in boarding schools. During the study period, they were home for the Easter holidays, so there was a full house. In addition there was a relative who lived with the family. She was a young lady who usually tried to respect the Westernised values of the family, by being as unobtrusive as possible. There was also a non-residential houseboy. He lived in the boys quarters. At the time of the study, one grandmother was living with the family. She also was quite unobtrusive. She had problems with her vision, and also, because she could not speak English, she had difficulty communicating with her grandchildren, who were not as competent with the dialect of Yoruba that she spoke.

The subject (S1) was about 45 years old. She is an educated farmer. Because she is a government agricultural extension worker, she is routinely in touch with the rural women. In fact she one of the organisers of the government sponsored "Better Life for Rural Women" project. This made her an interesting subject.

The subject (S1) was an opinion leader, as well as being a significant other. The fact that she also engaged in trading alongside her job, meant that she was in touch with women from other social backgrounds. She is a member of many social clubs; and matron of many more. She is trendy, and friendly. Her disposition, her age, and her status explain why she was an adviser to many young women. She is one of such women, who are otherwise known as "area mummy".

The nature of her job, and her person, meant that she travelled very frequently. This affected her experience, her exposure pattern, as well as her reading.

Her husband subject H, was a senior management staff in the cement factory. This gave the subject an enhanced status in society. It also explains the limited presence of H in the home.

The viewing location was comfortably furnished. There was an airconditioner in the sitting room, which when it was functioning, had the effect of shutting out "noise" from the viewing site. There were two functional TV sets, a video player, a sound system. All of which illustrate the state of affluence, and the existence of a TV culture.

There is a dining area which adjoins the sitting room. Although it is quite secluded from the sitting room, the arrangement in the home, was such, that depending on a person's position at table, it may be possible to see the set. Even when this was not possible, the dining area was within hearing range especially as the windows were usually shut.

Although the house faces a road, there are relatively few distractions from there, because the road is a private road, and the garden puts a distance between the house itself and the road. In addition, the windows were usually shut, and the curtains were usually drawn, to keep out the glare of the sun; and at night, to keep out the stare of outsiders.

All these had an impact on the observed viewing behaviour.

Day 1

It was Easter Monday, a public holiday, this meant that transmission began quite early in the day. Observation commenced at 7.30 a.m. H had gone to work. The family had gone to church at this time, but the TV set was left on. The relative and the houseboy were both engaged with different chores in the home, and they were watching TV as they did so. At a point, the houseboy, suspended the sweeping, and concentrated on the boxing match that was on OGTV. The bout was between Mike Tyson and some other (unidentified) boxer.

As soon as the family arrived, both parties masked any interest in TV. They went about their duties as though the set was not there. The children all eventually settled before the set. S1's automatic request was to have the set tuned to an NTA channel. She did not specify which, but there was an understanding of which one she meant. She did not settle down to watch. She proceeded straight to the kitchen, after she had changed out of her outing clothes.

The children were reluctant to comply for several reasons. There was the fact that the mother was not there to watch the choice that she was going to impose on them. Besides, they were interested in watching a programme that would come on another station. Their attitude was borne out of a knowledge of the programming pattern of the various stations. They knew that OGTV would show a film, and that the NTA stations would not have even commenced transmission at that time.

They tarried in complying with their mother's instruction. It was only when they realised that the movie was not attractive that they grudgingly tuned to the NTA to confirm what they already knew. The

station had not resumed transmission.

The reason why the movie was not interesting was because they had watched it before. The children had read the names of the star actors (and actresses) and even noticed the setting. Before the title of the film was shown, they had been guessing its identity. Sighting the title only served as a confirmation of what they knew, that they had already seen the film. In their opinion, they had seen it too many times.

At this point there was no strong preference. The choice was more of trial and error. The channels were scanned till the least objectionable programme was found. In this case, it was the station which was just opening for the day. The national anthem was being played.

The children were engaged in the viewing of this. They followed the accompanying visual montage, trying to identify each of the national heroes there in. The youngest of the children, was quite agitated about the disrespectful response to the national anthem. He had been taught in school that people should be at attention when the national anthem was heard, and so he advocated for "proper decorum". On the whole the viewing site was very active at this time, there was no convergence of readings. The children were excited and restless.

With the sitting arrangement in a room that size, the group was not receiving the programme as one. There were splinter groups based on their seating positions. For example G was reading the visuals, then she was engaged by B3 on the proper decorum; S1 and B2 were engaged in issues evoked by the sighting of a specific aspect of the visual. (The atrocities committed by the national president in the second republic).

The children exhibited a familiarity with the codes and conventions of television. They could very accurately predict the programming sequence. In addition, they even mimicked programmes which they had watched previously, when they were spurred by a cue from that which they saw.

There was a rundown of the day's programmes after the national anthem. They were attentive to this especially as it was their only guide to the day's transmission. Their knowledge of the normal pattern could not quite suffice for specific details, because it was a special holiday transmission on this day.

There was contempt for the local programmes on the schedule whereas they were attracted to the foreign programmes. For instance, they rejected the dance /musical programme in Yoruba, Ariya, and they gave a loud cheer to the cartoon programme which was to be presented next.

They echoed, and ~~ridiculed~~ striking statements, for example, "Evidently evident"; "Ketu Alapere". The first was part of an utterance made by the announcer, and the other was a name of a place. It was the combination of the sound and the meaning of the name that had been ridiculous to them. [Alapere means, the owner or maker, of baskets]

The family gathered together to watch the special Easter cartoon programme. It was an imported programme tracing the genesis of the Easter egg. The programme began with the controversy of which came first - the chicken or the egg. This in itself was a catch for the already keen audience. They were visibly engrossed in the programme. Though they joined in the initial debate, they did not allow it to get so prolonged

that they missed the programme.

There was a freshness in the programme. The family had not seen it before. There was also the freshness in the topic that it covered. There was a curiosity to know the origin of the Easter egg, a concept which though foreign was familiar to them.

G was so impressed by the programme that she wished she could record it. A similar response to a local production on network was observed in another location (# 12). This desire, was an expression of the desire to control choice. The quest for acquisition of preferred programmes, was to be expedient at other times when programming was not such that was approved.

The family more readily responded to the action than to some of the things that was said. In spite of their competence with the English language and their exposure, they could not always follow the accent, and the culturally situated statements like the puns in the programme.

The programme was mostly watched in silence, except for the occasional snigger. The viewing in this sense made them more of individuals viewing together, rather than a group of people viewing. Each was in his own world, they were merely receiving simultaneously.

Unlike the children, S1 had a chequered experience, viewing in between the times that she had to spend in the kitchen, cooking the festive meal. The children on the other hand would not even go to the table to eat their food, when it had been served. They waited till the end of the programme.

S1 was reading the pictures without necessarily listening to the accompanying speech. This was evident in the comments that she made. She could not even distinguish between two different cartoon programmes. This was evidence that she had not been following the story. Had she been, she would have seen the difference in spite of the similarity in appearance. The chequered nature of her viewing may have contributed to this, but it seemed more a matter of interest and attentiveness, at the time when she was viewing.

Because the children concentrated on their meal at the dinning table, the programme which succeeded the cartoons was largely ignored. The programme, "Don't Ask me", was also an imported programme. It was an American production on general information.

By this time, guests attending a function planned in the neighbourhood had started arriving. Several of the women stopped to visit S1. In no time, a group of 5 women had been constituted at the viewing site, but they were not immediately concerned with viewing. Rather they discussed other matters arising, (the tragic incident of a man who died in a car crash, on the way to his daughter's wedding; the party that they had attended; latest wears, and propriety of dressing; their latest acquisition).

The above list is enumerated because it is an indication of the women's interests. The first item on that agenda was one which had been taken from the newspaper. There was an injection of personal experiences of the incident in the course of the viewing. Most of these came from reports that had reached members of the group. There was one of the

members of the group who had seen the remains of the wreckage, although she did not have any personal acquaintance with victims.

The reason why this particular aspect of their discussion is interesting is because it illustrates the fact that in spite of the differences in the various mass media, reception practices may be similar.

Whilst the women engaged in the discussion, the children were ignored. The number of the children had also increased because of the visitors' children. They were initially engaged in viewing the TV, but they soon left. They were not satisfied by the available programmes. The programme on the channel that they had been watching was a documentary, and when they shopped around, they were not enticed by anything they saw, including the Yoruba drama. They ignored the set, and went outside to play, but the set was left on. The mothers were in front of the set. Though they were not watching, it soon became obvious that the programmes still caught their attention.

As they sat and chatted away, a news review programme came on air. They still did not make a conscious effort to pay attention to it, until one person caught a glimpse of the Lagos state governor. The man used to be governor in Ogun state in which they were resident, before being transferred to Lagos state. Attention was shifted to the subject of the news, yet, the group was not interested in the gist of the news item. The governor had merely provided the next topic of discussion. The news had set the agenda for discussion.

Their discussion suggested that only the visual cues were attended.

"Look look at Rasaki looking like a decent human being."

"Look at his big fat cheeks"

"He'd have had a good helping of "goodies" in Lagos"

"Both he, and his wife."

"Don't mind that one, she is now bleaching."

"If I had money, I wouldn't bleach."

"Look, look, see how he resembles a decent human being."

"If I had money as well, I would not bleach, but I'll really wear "clothes"." [that is dress extravagantly]

"She probably started bleaching before he was made governor."

"He's so fat, he can't even bend down [to touch his toes]"

"...they insulted him well and proper."

"What do you expect, when it is "Eaglets" ruling Nigeria? For example, the Commissioner for Education is my younger "brother", and I don't even think he's married yet."

"That's good, we have hit the good life, we'll only be needing to tell him that we were present at his wedding."

"But someone should tell that man [Rasakil], that such dressing is outdated."

"He too should be feeling uncomfortable."

A few of the remarks in the conversation were culturally loaded. For example, the terms "goodies"; "Eaglets"; "brother".

Goodies in the context of it's use, referred to the unearned gains from a privileged position - undue favours. "Eaglets" is the name for the nation's under 16, soccer team; it is used to connote youthfulness, but it could be a derogatory reference as in this instance, to describe juvenile, adolescent tendencies. The term brother, as used in this case does not express a familial relationship. Rather it describes the closeness in the acquaintance, and the direction of the relationship.

Several points are evident in the above excerpt from the women's screen

side banter. The first is the disregard for the personification of authority. There was (in the third statement), an insinuation of corruption alleged against the governor and his wife. In line 11, there was a report of the widespread disregard for the governor. This led to a confirmation, and the justification for such.

The other striking feature of the conversation was the evaluation of perceived personal practices, against their own personal standards - the issue of bleaching, and mode of dressing. The fact that these personal preferences were expressed in a group setting gave it greater impetus. The reinforcement of personal preferences in a social setting increased the value of such. It also reinforced the reading of television - that the governor was not trendy, and lacked proper judgement on the use of his privileged position.

The other observation was along the same line. Although there were allegations of corruption insinuated against the governor, there was no expressed condemnation of this. Rather it seemed that it was condoned, especially in the light of the remarks at the recognition of a possible link to someone high enough in the government hierarchy.

Although different lines seem to have emerged from the discussion, there was a point of convergence in the readings. This was seen in the recognition, and the attitude to governance.

The women's deliberations was interrupted by the arrival of H, for his break. He was immediately told of certain problems which required urgent attention in the home. Having assessed the situation, he focussed his attention on the television. He sought out the remote control, and

searched round the various channels. He settled for a Yoruba programme. It was a drama that was acted by children.

The programme attracted the women's attention momentarily. They were impressed by the feat performed, by children of that age.

"These are children acting!"

With that observation from one member of the group, they all turned their attention to the set, but it was only for a while. They soon switched off especially as their hostess came out with some of the latest wares for sale. This engaged their attention, and the goods became the focus of their discussion.

The discussion thereafter snow - balled, covering other topics; exchange rate, value of money; prevalent business climate. It eventually went back to the use of privileged positions and so on. Through all of this, the set was ignored, yet it was not turned off. The children had all gone away engaging in various interests. H had also left the women in the sitting room. This was especially at the end of the drama, which was only a segment of the children's magazine programme.

There was another segment of the programme which again, momentarily engaged the women's attention. This time, the attention was attracted by the dressing. The women passed comments on this. These comments also became a reminder of the other purpose of their visit. That element of the programme thus served as a prompt for their exit.

"These people are really celebrating the Easter!"

"How did this woman tie her headgear?"

"There was one lady at the wedding who also tied Aso Oke like

this."

"Won't you be going for your picnic now?"

"At this time, we'll probably just drive round."

. . .

The women's viewing had been very chequered. Above all, it had been mostly incidental. They had not planned to watch any specific programme, but because they were sitting before a functional set, there were aspects of the programming which seemed to reach out to them. In all, these were visual aspects of the programme. It is possible that this pattern of response was due to the women's interest. They had been very conscious of fashion, and looks, and it was not surprising that it was such elements of the programmes that attracted them. This pattern of focusing on visuals, had been consistent for S1, throughout the day.

In all, the attention was superficial. The group, like S1 did not have any sustained interest in what was presented. They were more interested in their own agenda.

There was a certain elasticity between what they attended in real life, and on television. For example, they related their contemptuous response of the governor, with a real life incident; and they also found a real life parallel for the admired headgear. The women dispersed at about this time. The two older boys, (B1, and B2) had also left the house. They had gone out with their firends. S1 was occupied with her preparations for a planned journey. H returned to work. It was G and B3 who deliberately converged at the set. They had come to watch a particular programme. It was an American comedy, Family Matters.

G and B3 were later joined by the other boys in the course of the

viewing. Once they had settled to view, there was rapt attention in spite of the poor reception quality. Of the lot, G's viewing was that which was most interrupted. She was made to tidy up the sitting room. She did this, whilst keeping an eye on the set. The children were otherwise, practically glued to the set. There were instances when they got up to mimic some of the acts that they had seen. Sometimes, it was the utterances that they echoed. However, it was at the end of the programme that they did this freely, as they had consciously tried to follow the programme. The spell which seemed to bind them to the set, only broke as the programme came to an end. They did not even attend to the continuity announcement which was in Yoruba. A Yoruba drama was being promoted, but the children had no interest. This was consistent with the observation earlier on in the day. The children left to prepare for the outing. They had suspended this to view the programme which they were interested in. Their action can therefore still be seen as an expression of the values they placed on the programmes. This deduction was supported by the observation of the fact that the family did not leave the house for a while yet. No programme was watched, even when the children had been dressed. The matinee which was found was not watched either. They eventually switched the set off, when it was glaring that there was no one attending it. This was especially as they were all ready for their outing. Even then, they did not leave the house for another hour.

. . . .

Viewing resumed in the evening when the family returned from their outing. The set was switched on and left in the background as they discussed their outing. By this time, there were several advertisements being shown, the children's discussion was punctuated by their attention to these. They displayed a very good knowledge of the adverts. They

could recite most of the adverts, word - for - word, and they could predict the visual sequence accurately.

There were characters in some of the adverts whom they identified with. For example, a character in the Nasco cornflakes advert was identified as B3's friend. This implied that there were traits which the boy exhibited which were similar to those which B3 was known for. They sang along to the Malta drink commercial. The jingle in the advert was antiphonic, and encouraged participation. The children joined in the question and response sequence, and they enjoyed the advert.

In addition, the children performed parts of other television programmes which they enjoyed. These were imported programmes. This performance illustrated the children's use of alternative technology. For example, they displayed a very good knowledge of the programme Teenage Mutant Hero Turtles. This had not been shown on any of the television stations. They had seen these on video. They were thus ahead of the programme offering from the television service. They were familiar with the latest craze on children's TV in Britain, due to their use of home videos.

In the meantime, S1 was busy, shuttling between the kitchen and the sitting room. She spent more time in the kitchen, preparing the family's meal.

The TV had been left on an NTA channel at S1's request. The children did not object, but they were repulsed at the appearance of the news programme, Newsweek. There was a unanimous "Yuk!" as the programme came on.

There was no extensive search for an alternative. The children simply went off to have their meal, leaving their mother to have a TV dinner. She did not object to the programme. Her motions suggested that she was watching it. Again, she was focusing on the pictures; identifying familiar faces. This time, she also picked out familiar reasonings in the presentation. This served as a basis for expressing her views on the Educational system. (The programme was a feature on the educational system). Ignoring the report on the TV, subject proceeded to give her own account of the irresponsibility of parents in society, and how this contributes to the general trend of irresponsibility in society.

The TV was again left as ambience.

When the children finished their meal, they resumed viewing, with a more determined interest in the programming. They changed the channel, in spite of an objection from their mother. The objection was not very strong anyway. She was more engrossed in her own report, to effectively enforce her objection. This was an illustration of the level of her interest in the programme.

The children did not find any satisfactory programme option, so with the TV set left in the background, they started playing music on the cassette player. This was played so loudly that it drowned every other conversation in the room. Again, they exhibited such familiarity with the music. They knew every note, and every word.

It was the sighting of a musical video on the screen that rekindled the family's interest in the programming. The children willingly stopped playing their own music, so that they could attend to that on the set.

The cassette player was switched off, and the volume on the TV was increased.

The video which they watched was only an interlude. It was not a substantive programme. Their treatment of it seemed to correspond with this status. They merely situated it in the natural flow of their conversation. It served as a pivot into other related interest. A cassette of similar music was brought out and played, while TV was left in the background again.

There was a divergence in the observed responses. While the children focused on the entertainment value of the music, the mother focused on the profitability of an enterprise in music, and the proliferation of churches. The music in question was a Christian gospel music. S1's response was to the entirety of the particular genre of music, rather than the specific cut which she was encountering.

Similarly, rather than respond to the explicit message in the lyrics of music, she responded to the accompanying visuals, criticising the mode of dancing. This was because it did not correspond with her expectation of propriety in the Christian religious setting. The message was thus measured against her own values.

The cut which followed also evoked criticisms. The criticisms was not for the track but for an advert which it brought to mind. Subjects found a similarity between the local funk musical video, and an advert. It was one of those that the children enjoyed, (Nasco wafers). Both the musical and the advert had used a classroom setting. It was this that prompted the subject to comment on the advert. She condemned the teacher, who had

seized some wafers from a pupil, for eating them in class, and had herself found them so irresistible, that she stole bites of them. The advertising message, was that the product was irresistible, but the subject had focused on the values expressed in the presentation.

At about 8.30 p.m. subject was relaxed and settled before the set. She had also found a programme which she could relate to. The programme did not require intensive attention. The bands that were playing, as well as the dancing, were similar to those which she encountered at her various outings. The comments which were evoked were similar to those which had been dominant in her earlier conversations. It appeared that the musical video show was right up her alley.

The viewing evoked comments and grapevine reports of the socialites, musicians TV celebrities, and so on. Though she seemed to enjoy this, the children seemed bored. It was not long before each one of them curled up in different corners, of the room, reading.

As the station in view made ready to join the network service, the subject directed that the set be switched from LTV, to an NTA channel. The children still did not show any interest in the programming, they merely complied. H emerged from the bedroom at this time to join the group. It was deliberate and carefully timed. He came with the purpose of viewing. He took hold of the remote control as he sat down.

The news was yet to begin. S1 shared the experiences of the day with him. It seemed to be an intimate time of the day. This was later confirmed to be a regular pattern, as the observation progressed during the week. It was at this time that the couple shared their experiences

of the day. It was the beginning of that time when they had less external distractions. The children were already in a subdued mood; not as boistrous as they had been earlier, but they were still occupied with their books.

Although she did not appear to be making any conscious effort to view what was on, S1, responding to a soap commercial, remarked about the assortment of soaps in the Nigerian market. Her comment was not about any particular feature of the particular soap that was being advertised. The advert had merely evoked a comment that responded to the number of soap commercials which were featured on the screen. In other words, she was responding to the assortment of soap that was known to be in the market place.

Hearing the headlines of the news caused her to voice her private thoughts. For example, the headline on the launching of a special Road Safety campaign served as a reminder of the accident which she saw on the road.

"Oh, there was an accident on the road today!"

The headline about a major breakthrough in a veterinary institute reminded her of some day old chicks which she had also seen earlier on in the day.

"There were day old chicks at Sheraton. I wonder if they will be for sale sometime. I just saw them there."

The news was in this way, brought in to the on going discussion. The items were made to fit the context of the day's event's which the subjects were discussing. Thereafter, S1's focus on the news became more in line with her personal interest. Her viewing took on the already

noted form. She was focusing on the superficial visuals rather than what was being said.

The headlines had been presented as "Voice overs", (similar to the ITN News at ten format). Her main concern as the main news began, and the newscasters were shown was about their dressing.

"Now I wonder what she dresses like . . . [as newscaster was shown] What is she wearing now? Is it "iro" and "buba" or what? How did she design the top?"

Whilst the preamble to the news was going on, H made a quick phone call, and settled down immediately as the main stories were read. He seemed intent on attending to the news, but he could not. As he resumed viewing, he asked S1 about what he had missed, but she could not help. She had not been paying sufficient attention to the aspect of the newscast that interested him. He therefore had to make sense of the viewing without her help.

His attempts to concentrate on the news were frustrated by the distractions in S1's chatter, as she continued her report of the outing. This was actually spurred on by the lead news item. The item had been about the Easter celebrations. The subjects were able to predict the pattern of the story, and it was in doing this that they went back to the report of their own experience.

The deliberation over the report, was cut short by the next item on the news. This was the Road Safety campaign story. Again subjects drew upon their experience. Based on their personal observations during their journey that day, they confirmed the story. It was about efforts to prevent road accidents during the festive period.

S1: It's true, there were not so many accidents on the road .
.. Oh so it was a burst tyre, no wonder it was the only
vehicle. It was a J5, (This was the accident we saw on
the road), and there was no other one there. [sic]

Although the husband was still interested in the details of the story,
having heard the gist of it, S1 continued being chirpy, not minding the
story anymore, but assessing the newscasting.

"Oh, they are lucky they didn't make "Ogbereje" read this
item. Oghereje! He's always adorning himself with his wife's
wrapper. He would tie one, [round his waist] and the other
one, he will put here [on his shoulders]. He's my husband's
friend. Or is he not your friend? (laughter)

The above illustrates how her comments directly addressed to her
husband, could have distracted his attention. It also illustrates how
her reading of the particular newscaster, is directed by her
indifference. She could not even be bothered to attempt a correct
pronunciation of his name. She did not like the newscaster because of
his manner of dressing. H however recognising this as prejudice, was
more objective. He was tolerant of the fact that the dressing reflected
another culture, and that the newscaster should be assessed based on his
performance. He therefore saw nothing wrong with him.

S1's criticism, as was her reading, was really an expression of her
intolerance of another culture. Her condemnation was based on the
imposition of a different culture, on another, when evaluating the
newscaster's dressing.

The issue of dressing was apparently very important to this subject. Her
comments suggest that the newscaster's dressing must first interest her,
before she could even begin to assess the performance.

There was a difference in her attitude and that of her husband. This was a potential cause for differences in their readings.

S1: Oyinlola reads the news himself, and Cyril Stober. They both dress well. I usually am interested in watching the news because I don't read the newspapers. . . but I may be listening and find myself dozing. . . but you know why Ogbereje doesn't interest me? It's because he doesn't dress well. He usually wears the same outfit over and again.

H: That's ridiculous and anyway he can't steal. He must live within his means.

S1: Do you mean Sienne and the others steal?

. . .

In spite of the fact that she recognised a need for television news, the subject still felt the need to be impressed by the newscasters dressing in the first instance.

There was an insert in one of the items which was insistent. The interviewee, who was the Minister of Education had asked if the interviewer was following him. Subject responded to this question. She gave an unapologetic, and emphatic "No!". Thereafter she proceeded to share the information about the man, which she had picked up from the grapevine.

By the end of the first segment of the news, S1 was sleeping. She had ostensibly missed all the stories within that segment, even though she sat before the set, as though she were watching.

The noise in the sitting room had reduced by this time, and the volume of the television had become too loud. It had to be reduced. In spite of the fact that she was sleeping, there were some news items which caused her to stir. She challenged or substantiated certain items which she

knew something about. As she did this, she went back to sleep. At times her remarks were not directly related to the particular issue that was being discussed, but with the topic, or item.

As the evening progressed, the comments were reduced. This did not seem to be a correlation of the types of stories that were featured. It seemed more directly related to the subject's physical state. H on the other hand was still interested, and attentive, till he received a phone call.

The message was that the neighbour had delivered a baby. The excitement of this news revived the residents of the home, but it put paid to the viewing for the evening. The set was ignored in all the excitement, and the subsequent celebrations. There was a musical interlude following the news, and after that was an Islamic religious talk; an exhortation for the Ramadan fasting period.

Observation continued till about 10.00 p.m and though the television was left on, it was still not viewed. It was merely left in the background except for the occasional fleeting remarks about aspects of the programmes.

Day 2

The normal work schedule had resumed following the public holiday on the previous day. S1 returned briefly at about 4.00 p.m, but she went back immediately. The children too had gone out. They were attending extra mural lessons. Someone had left the TV on. It was playing to an empty house. It is possible that the houseboy was responsible for this.

The children returned at about 6.00 p.m. The first thing they did was to scan round the various channels to see what was on. They did not really settle down to view until about 7. 00 p.m. There was then argument on whether to continue viewing the Wonder Woman (which they had not really been watching), or if they should switch to Another Life, a soap opera on OGTV, which G favoured.

The consensus of opinion was that they should watch Wonder Woman. Though she lost the argument, G had succeeded in increasing the interest that the boys showed in the viewing. The volume of the set was increased. As if to prove a point, those who voted for the programme sat down consciously to watch it. The interest was contagious, and soon, all the children were enjoying the programme.

The children exhibited a very good knowledge of the programme. They were so familiar with the codes, that they were able to fill in the gaps that were existing in the programme. For example, they identified the hotel in the setting as the Sheraton, although the logo in the shot, lacked the S.H. They were able to supply the missing letters and complete the spelling.

They were also able to recognise those acts which were obvious exaggerations, even though they enjoyed the "tricks".

Chorus: Uhun!

B2: What sort of rope is that long?

B1: It's just a film trick.

. . . .

S1 had returned at about 7.00 p.m as well. Although she was very tired, she went straight to the kitchen to prepare the family's meal.

Intermittently, she called on G, (the girl) to run an errand or the other. As a result, G, unlike the boys could not have an uninterrupted viewing. In fact, it was a knowledge of this pattern of viewing that caused G to loose on her choice.

At the end of the programme there was a promotion of the highlights of the evening's schedule. Of all the programmes promoted, the Benny Hill show was the one which the children applauded. They did not acknowledge any other programme.

The advertisements which were shown were better received. They all sang along to the Tandi Guarana, soft drink advert. B3 tried to imitate the dance steps that were portrayed, as he made his way to the kitchen. He also attempted the traditional dance steps which were shown in the promo, for a presentation by the Lagos state council for Arts and Culture.

In spite of the fact that they enjoyed the entertainment which the adverts had, the children were critical of the products that such adverts were promoting.

For instance the Tandi Guarana was said to taste like "chewing gum". It did not matter that the advert was enjoyable. They were less charitable in their comments regarding some other products, whose adverts they also liked. Cadbury's chocolate Fudge was said to taste "Yukky!"

The above illustrates the fact that even the children can separate the message from the product. Similarly they had separated the fantasy, from the "realistic", in the programme viewed earlier. It was their knowledge

of reality that they drew from in making these distinctions.

There were some advertisements which the children did not like. They did not even attend the messages in such at all. They mentally switched off viewing at such times.

This pattern of viewing continued till the State News was about to be read. It was the substantive programme that followed. Rather than watch the programme, the channel was changed. The programme was used as an indicator of time. The new selection was in anticipation of a particular drama, The New Masquerade, on the network service of the NTA.

The family arrived early at the new channel for the programme, but no one watched the (sponsored) documentary that was on, (Spotlight). Even when H joined the group, he first shopped round the channels as if rejecting the choice that was on. Finding no better option, he settled for Spotlight. Neither the news, nor the documentary was watched. H soon got up, and left the set. The children were unimpressed as well. They were bored. One of them actually voiced their frustration with the available programming.

"This is dry!"

It was G who had exclaimed thus, and having shopped round yet another time, without finding an option, she also left the room.

The others who remained at the set, could not contain their relief, when the programme was concluded.

"Ah, thank God they've finished!"

Although they had ignored the set, they had actually been mindful of what was on. They had only been expecting of a "better" option. This illustrates the fact that they would rather have used the set at that time. Because it had been raining, and this had affected the quality of their reception, their choice of channels had been limited. They had lost the Lagos based channels, except for LTV where the news was on. They thus had to rely on NTA Abeokuta to receive the expected network drama.

All the children were competent in deciding the course of action in the event of the weather hampering their reception. The incident was not a strange phenomenon.

The programme had begun before S1 came to the sitting room to take a phone call. Prior to this time, she had still been busy in the kitchen and also outdoors with some guests. There was a striking similarity between her phone conversation and the theme in the drama that the children were watching. This observation was not made by any of the subjects.

S1 was amused by the snatches of the conversation which she caught as she passed through the sitting room. The children on the other hand, watched with a different degree of determination. They were engrossed in the programme, attempting to predict the course of the actions. It was only at the tail end of the programme that S1 joined in the viewing. Even then, she did not sit down. She merely leaned against a chair, and watched the conclusion of the programme.

As soon as the programme was concluded, she went back straight to the

kitchen. She did not even wait to see the sponsor's commercials, or the closing credits. The children behaved likewise. They each got up and left, just as the drama ended, as though broken from a spell that had bound them to the set. They went away to have their supper. It was only a couple of minutes before 9 o'clock at this time. By the time S1 returned to the sitting room, the news headlines were already being read.

Although she could have said she watched the drama, S1 had not seen enough of it to follow the story line. She had been finding amusement in the superficial. For instance the insulting remarks that came from Jegede, the dance steps in the party scene; and the simulated newscast which was a parody of the network news.

On her return, her first comment was a remark about the newscaster for the evening. She hailed, him using a bastardised pronunciation of the newscaster's name.

"Ogbereje!"

She looked out for his dressing to confirm her previous remarks about him. She did not even comment on what he was saying before leaving to join her family at the dining table. Her attention had been momentary.

Of all the members of the family, it was H, who had a clear view of the set, from his position at the table. There were some items of the news which were interesting enough to cause the children to dash away from the table to catch a glimpse of the reports.

For example, there was a news report about the meeting of the Ogun state

council of chiefs. This was interesting because they anticipated seeing some of the chiefs whom they knew personally. They were not too conscious of the report or the deliberations.

The only person who did not get up to get a clear view of the visuals from this report was H.

At the end of the meal, S1 sat before the set, as though meaning to view the news, but she was not attentive. She again ran a commentary on the newscasters' dressing. She carried on from the points made the previous day.

"Really it's not so much the mode of dressing, I know it's their tradition, but he should change his outfit. He usually wears just the same white top, and he uses his wife's wrapper. I guess she's lent him another one today, otherwise, he would have been clad in the same attire. Then he tops it with red beads. . . Who is Ruth's designer? I wonder. . . "

Even as she sat there before the set, S1's attention was very divided. She was giving instructions to the children who were clearing and washing up; she was checking their other assignments, going over their homework; and it was only intermittently that she glanced at the set.

The only news item which attracted her interest for a while was that which coincided with her professional interest. It was a story about the preparations for the planting season.

By the last segment of the news, the location had become quiet. S1 was again dozing off and this continued through the programme promotion which followed. It was at the instance of a familiar face on the set that everyone's attention was parked up again. It had taken one alert

person to call the attention of others to this. The interest was only momentary for the parents, but the children having finished their chores had assembled to watch the earlier advertised Benny Hill show.

Observation ended at this time as S1 was sleeping. She seemed really tired. In spite of this observation, it was reported the following day, that having escorted the researcher, S1 returned to do some paper work in the room. This illustrates the demands on the subject, her priorities, and her use of time.

Day 3

Viewing commenced at about 7.45 p.m. S1 had returned late from work, and the children had also been attending their lessons. S1 had arrived before the children. She was in a dilemma as to how to put on the set. She had always relied on the children or their father, to operate the TV. Although H had returned from work at the time, he had gone out again. In the meantime, S1 also had some guests to attend to. It was when the children returned that they found a suitable programme. This limited competence in operating the set, was noticeable in some other subjects who had the new sophisticated, remote controlled sets. They often, did not know the location of the controls on the set, and they could not decipher which buttons on the remote control did what.

The dependence on the children was an indicator of the superior competence, as it was, the children's amount of use of the set.

The programme that was selected was a musical, School's Choir. S1 found this interesting. She was impressed by the leader of the group, who was a boy. She marvelled at the performance of the boy, his dancing, his

gestures, the quality of his voice. This was contrary to her expectations of that gender.

There was no comment about the message in the songs. The only reference to the lyrics, was when she was trying to identify location of the school. She used the priorities expressed in one of the songs to deduce where the school could have been from.

"I think it's a school from Oyo state; he mentioned that they should join hands to improve Oyo state."

The subject had not been following the programme as presented, otherwise she would have heard the name of the school, and where it was located, when the programme was introduced. She was following the visuals, and "writing her own script" using some aspects of the programme that she had picked up.

The subject was so "engrossed" in the programme, that she did not entertain the interruptions even when it came from her guests.

There was a portion of the programme which was of poor technical quality. The subjects' response at this time, showed that they were not ignorant of technicalities of production. It seems that the use of the home video, had made the viewers more familiar with some of the problems that the technology presents. For instance, they could identify that the shaky voice may be a result of a bad/worn out tape, or a poor recording. They could certainly separate the artistic performance from the technical.

At the end of the programme, H who had by then joined the viewing, requested for the remote control. There was no doubt about who was in

control of the set at this time. There was no debate with him, and there were no suggestions made to him, about what should be watched. He selected OGTV, and the family caught the tail end of a sponsored programme. It was a chieftaincy ceremony. The subject in view, who was also the sponsor, was not known to the subjects.

The programme was interesting. It evoked an evaluation of the chieftaincy award practices. S1 was knowledgeable in this area, and she shared this knowledge with the others in the group. H had his own remarks which buttressed her report, but he only interjected occasionally. S1 did most of the talking. The children had moved to the dinning room. at this time, leaving S1 with her guest. The summary of the report was a critique of the traditional institution of ruling. S1 pointed out that some of the redundant traditional rites can be discarded. She cited the example of a known "king" who had done so. She regarded him as being progressive. H had commented that a lot of the awards, and other needless practices were maintained for monetary gain.

The programme which was supposed to inform the audience of the sponsor's newly acquired status, had thus ended up, being a forum for the evaluation of an entire institution. Rather than focus on the individual, the focus had been on the institution which he represented, the system to which he belonged. The system had been brought to disrepute. This response pattern is similar to that observed when there is a focus on government on the set.

By the time the discussion was over, H had changed the channel to another station. There was a sports programme on. He had kept this in the background as the discussion continued. It thus provided ready pivot

for the conversation at the end of the previous deliberations. Breaking the silence that was prevalent after the discussion, S1 wondered which stadium was in view.

Again, she had been attracted by the visual element of the viewing. Her interest thereafter was focussed on the name of the stadium, and this led to other deliberations. For example, name giving practices.

The TV had only supplied the agenda. It was not watched. Even H, who had selected the programme had fallen off to sleep in front of the set. S1 soon left for the kitchen and she remained there for a while.

The house was much quieter on this day, as the children were all engaged with their homework. The TV was left in the background, with no one watching. There were the isolated occasions, when B2, and B3 sang along to the advertisements. The singing on these occasion were rather subdued as the boys were really otherwise engaged.

The TV had been left on BCOS, an Ibadan channel. Active viewing resumed when H changed the channel to an NTA channel. He had stirred from sleep, and changed the channel, thus rejecting the Oyo state news which was on then. There was a (serious) drama on the NTA network at the time. It was The Young Ones. H did not watch. He merely changed the channel, and resumed his sleeping. B2 and B3 who were within earshot were not immediately drawn to the TV. They tidied up the table first, and they took their time doing so. In the meantime, the set was playing to an empty room, not counting the researcher, and H who was sleeping there before it. The programme was largely ignored.

This situation seems to have been compounded by the arrival of a customer. S1 settled in the sitting room but she was more concerned with making a sale. This involved making a pitch for the item, as well as the several anecdotes that accompanied that. The women's chatter prompted H to leave the sitting room. Before he left, he checked what was on OGTV, switched back to NTA, and excused himself.

It is not certain if the children were too tired, hungry, or otherwise busy, to show an interest in the programme. What is certain is that the programme did not stand up against what they were experiencing at the time.

The pattern continued into the network news slot. The headlines had preceeded the newscast itself as is the usual practice. S1 had recognised the voice of her favourite newscaster and was on the look out for her dressing for that night.

Her first comment when the news began was on the dressing, comparing hers with that of the newscasters who were on, the previous day. Her outburst on this occasion took on its own life, as the customer responded. She too had noticed S1's observations.

S1: Now you look at Sienne's dressing and compare it with Ogbereje, and Benamasia, who went and put a bow in such an awkward place. [sic]

S2: It is those yellow things that put me off.

S1: It was a bow. We had a close look at it, it was a bow, a very big bow, very very odd.

S2: I just knew that the yellow was out of place. It was too bright for the red outfit. The contrast was too much.

. . . .

The conversation went on, and the point of Sienne's impeccable style of dressing was made. The conversation carried on to other matters, such that the women did not pay any attention to the news. The news could have been casted to an empty room. Although the women were there, their attention was elsewhere.

The other point from the above is the merit of S1's observations. That S2, who had watched the news in another location, could readily relate with S1's observation reduces the possibility of the remark being an isolated incident based on S1's personal taste. It suggests that the newscaster's appearance contributed to the message which was received, and conversely, that it could contribute to the message that is rejected. This is worthy of more rigorous investigation but it stands to reason, that if the appearance is a put off, there is likely to be a greater block for the intended message to permeate. The observation was illustrated in other locations in other ways.

Having recognised this, the next problem may be in identifying what is acceptable to such a heterogeneous and mass audience as that of the NTA network news. Having said that, there is no indication that approved dressing is enough to sustain the interest in a programme. On this occasion that programme was the news. The women had illustrated this in their behaviour. They had ignored the set, even after having assessed and approved the dressing.

It was the news item about the release of political detainees in a neighbouring country, (Cameroun) that stopped them in their tracks. The attention even then was momentary. Having established enough details about the story to be at peace, they again ignored the set.

From their discussion, it became clear that their personal experiences had contributed to the significance of the news. They demonstrated this by relating this news item to their own experiences. This led to a discussion of the Nigerian penal system. The news was once again ignored.

It was the theme of the story which the subject's responded to, particularly because of the pattern of their experience. They had not been concerned with the specific details of the story, which presumably they knew little about. As a result, rather than comment on the political situation in Cameroun, they commented on the penal system in Nigeria.

The conversation drifted to other matters. By this time, the children left for the club. They had not watched TV that evening at all, and neither had H. S1 and her guest who sat before the set, were only watching intermittently; as the items of interest became striking to them.

The item on the Youth conference was striking. S1 wished she could be on such delegations. The announcement concerning the issuance of the newly introduced driver's licence was also striking. In this instance, there was rapt attention as the women gleaned the information; the directives on how to get their licences. The issue was one which they had to comply with, and within a certain deadline. That deadline was very close, hence the urgency to attend to the news. Besides, up till that time, instructions had been very vague and confusing. They were very attentive to this item. It was when they had got the required details that one of

them noted the unusual length of the interview with the personality involved.

There was an instance when subjects were attracted to the set, by the observed conviviality between the two newscasters. It was S1 who observed this first, and she drew her guest's attention to this.

"They are even grinning at each other. Look at them! Amazing!"

This comment directed attention to the set. The news item which was read at that time was remarked upon, indicating that it was (more) consciously attended. The guest for instance was thereafter surprised that the newscast had not been concluded.

The news item which they had attended then directed the trend of their conversation. It was an item about the appointment of a former Minister (of Information) as a chairman of a board. S1 was not critical, but she noted that all the retired people were being placed.

In this instance again, she had left the specific, and addressed the trend that it illustrated. The discussion had led to an evaluation of the political situation. This was at the mention of a retired government official who was aspiring to the post of President. The conversation was only punctuated at the instance of a (Yoruba) musical video on TV. The artiste in view was Waka Queen, Salawa Abeni. She was a very young girl when she launched into the music business, but she had recently become much talked about in the press. The conversation of the group became centred around her. This focus again gave direction to the subsequent discussion of the group. It became an evaluation of some social practices.

S1: See this young girl who has now become such a blob. I remember in 1977, when her back up singers were much bigger than her. I wonder how she's become so fat.

S2: Yes, that was when I was in form 2. I remember my teacher used to tell one of my duller classmates, she had a similar name, to go and join her, because she could not cope with Physics.

S1: She was just a girl then, and out of the blues, she is now like puff - puff, like she's been pumped.

S2: She seemed like one of those twins who are made to dance on the street for money when she first started. Ehen, what's that news that I heard and I haven't shared with you. It was from one of those programmes on the radio; one of these talk shows. The woman used to drop her children at a day care centre.

S1: (laughter) It's in Lagos.

S2: Oh, so you've heard. Help! Help! Help! Someone went to inform her at work. It was like dropping your child at Ayepe, they were twins, the children. Then one of the attendants would take them to the other end of town using them to beg for alms. [sic]

. . . .

The story which S2 had got from one of the musical chat shows on radio was how an attendant at a day care centre, had in connivance with the proprietor, arranged to present the children in their care, as twins who were to beg for alms. This practice is rooted in some traditional beliefs that twins are special children who's destiny must be charted by the gods. In many instances, they were to be taken to the market to sing and dance and be given alms till they were a certain age. This was what the attendant had been doing with two of the children in her care.

In the course of the discussion, it was revealed that it was not a strange happening in Lagos. Other examples were cited to buttress the fact about such deceitful practices in the society. S2's experience of such was thus reinforced.

Although the original source of the information was the radio, the reinforcement had come from the viewing of television. The remarks about a visual cue had triggered off a seemingly unrelated matter.

Personal experience was woven into the negotiation and the result was that the unlikely connection was made. The conversation snow balled, and ended up being an evaluation of various unscrupulous practices in Lagos. A seemingly harmless interlude of music had evoked the reinforcement of a value laden assessments of practices, and images of people in a place.

By this time, H had joined the viewing group. He also joined in the discussions. It was he who changed the channel as soon as the musical was concluded. The programme which was to follow was Hotseat, an extended interview programme. The guest for that day was a retired army officer. The programme would have been more engaging than the musical if it were to be watched. But it was rejected. The other options available were also rejected. There was the Yoruba World news on one channel, (LTV), an Islamic recitation / chant (Tafsir) on another. He settled for the Yoruba news. The women did not show any concern about the choice. The sale was closed, and S2 left. S1 thereafter went into the bedroom.

As H was watching the Yoruba news, he heard an item about the preparation to the return to civil rule. Without spending time on the details of the story, he began a counter report. He expressed his strong conviction that the military would not give up power.

He was certain that, if the particular regime left, another would come.

"I don't know whoever tastes power and leaves it"

Rather than listen to the rest of the news, he narrated the experiences

which informed his position, and resolve never to get personally involved in politics. He was of the opinion that no self respecting person should get entangled in politics.

The discussion turned into a lecture on the political situation in the subjects' state of origin; Ondo state. In this, the need for direct access to information, to stem the flow of damaging rumours was identified.

At about 10.30 p.m. H switched the channel back to an NTA channel, and he caught the tail end of a programme. He did not seem to mind. He switched to LTV very briefly to assess what was on, and he promptly switched back. He was apparently targeting a particular programme. It was Midweek Sports, on the network service. Whilst H was waiting for the programme to start, he and S1 spent the few minutes sharing their experiences during the day, till the programme started.

H and B2 watched the programme attentively. S1 on the other hand had started sleeping by 10.40. p.m. Soon after, H too was seen dozing before the set. It was only the children who were alert. It had not been long since they returned from the club. They were supposed to stay up, to study for their forthcoming examinations.

Observation ended at about 11.00 p.m, but viewing had effectively ended by about 10.50p.m. though the set was still left on.

Day 4

Subject returned late (about 7.00 p.m.) from work, and she was quite exhausted. B2 had been the first to return home on this day. He had

returned home at about 6.45, but he did not attend to the TV. He played about with the football, and thereafter went outside to play a game of soccer. He rounded up his mates from the neighbourhood.

B3 arrived from his own lesson at about 7.25, and headed straight for the set. There was an interlude of music which interested S1, but the sound was lost in transmission. This had not been immediately known. The subjects had suspected that the fault was from their set. All efforts to get the sound proved abortive. Eventually a caption directing that the set should not be adjusted came up on the screen. It was this that showed that the fault was from the station and not from the set.

About five minutes was spent waiting for the fault to be rectified. This was primarily because S1 was interested in the programme. No option was sought even though the other channels did not have the problem.

In the meantime, S1 informed researcher of her intention to visit a bereaved friend. Her conversation centred around the issue of death and dying in the society. The blank set was left in the background. By the time the fault was rectified, and the sound came up, no attention was paid to the set.

It was when B3 came in, that the channel was changed. He came in, oblivious of what had transpired, only aware that no one was paying any attention to the set, he changed the channel. He selected LTV which was showing an American comedy, Family Matters.

He settled down to watch and soon his laughter as he participated in the programme, attracted other members of the family to join in the

viewing. S1 did not join in the viewing immediately. She made sure that she concluded the story she was narrating before she switched her attention to the viewing.

Unlike her, the children were really engrossed in the programme. Their hearty laughter was indicative of their participation in the programme. S1 instead made her way to the kitchen to begin the preparation of the dinner. Thereafter, she shuttled between the kitchen, the dinning room, the sitting room, and the bedroom. Her view of the programme was thus necessarily superficial as her comments revealed.

The following is a remark about the size of one of the characters, (the father) -

"Americans are usually so obese. They own food!"

The "ownership" referred to, implied a high level of production such as leads to availability, control, and low cost of living. This reading was evoked by the size of the character. Though it may have been isolated, it was preferred because it was a confirmation of preconceived stereotypes.

S1 made the comment in passing. She did not bother with the other details of the programme. She simply went about her business.

It can be argued that the subject's use of time was indicative of her convenience. On the other hand, it can be seen as an expression of her preference. Considering the fact that she had spent about an hour, chatting, had she been interested in viewing, she could have restructured the use of her time, to accomodate the viewing of the

programme of her choice. The flaw to this argument is the fact that she did not have prior knowledge of the particular programme. However, had she been really interested in the programme, the amount of time she spent going back and forth, suggested that she could have spent more time purposely with the intention of watching TV.

Although the programme was in English, the subject confirmed that she had to put in more effort, to be able to understand the American accent, and follow the conversation. In the event that she was not prepared to do so, her viewing was going to be superficial anyway. This was consistent with the pattern that had been observed.

H returned about 7.35 p.m. and went straight into the room. The children also left the sitting room at the end of the commercial break following the programme. The pattern of reception was similar to that noted on Day 1. They attended the messages, particularly the musical ones, and in spite of the obvious entertainment value which they found in them, they criticised the product. This served as a reinforcement of the negative assessment of the product. With the repeat exposure of the advertisement, there was a repetition of the assessment. The contradiction was thus perpetuated.

It was when the news was about to be read that the children left the sitting room. They hummed along to the signature tune, and having recognised what was to follow, they shopped around, and settled for an NTA station which was not showing the news. Although the programme that was on was not acceptable either, the set was left on there, in anticipation of a drama that was to follow soon. It did not matter who made the selection at this time. The decision was unanimous, although it

was B2 who had the remote control. B1 was already in the room then.

Having selected the preferred channel, they drifted into other interests and only returned to the set, just before the anticipated programme came on. They were in time for the advertisements.

The programme in view was relatively new. It was a soap opera, "Checkmates", and the story line was yet to be established. This in itself added to the children's curiosity about the programme.

There was a non-committal attitude to the viewing, yet the viewing persisted. The available options were rejected. These were the news on one channel, and a Yoruba comedy on another. The viewing continued with no one caring to adjust the brightness level, and improve the quality of viewing.

It turned out that it was only G who was really interested in trying to follow the programme. The others soon turned their interest to their books, only casting occasional glances at the set as striking remarks were made. (These remarks were not always verbal. They were sometimes expressed in the music, or the action and other dramatic gestures)

As the programme unfolded and the conflict line was drawn, the attraction towards the programme was increased. The boys then relied on G who had persevered with the viewing to fill them in. There was a similarity between the children and some of the children who were portrayed in the programme. The family to which those children belonged was perceived to be the most interesting. This is not to suggest a connection between the two, because there were other things happening in

the favoured family.

The father, who is also a chief had an interesting character. This was in itself captivating, just as the music in the programme.

As captivating as the programme could have been for S1, she did not watch it. She had noticed it whilst she walked through the sitting room, but she had not given it much of a chance to prove itself. This showing was the premiere episode of the programme, so there was no allegiance to it as yet.

The advertisements in the programme did not attract much overt attention. This was probably due to the fact that the children were not sitting before the set. They were in and out of the sitting room. B2 sang along to the Nasco wafers advert.

The news came on after the programme, but the children were not interested at all. S1 missed the headlines of the news although H watched attentively. When she finally settled down before the set, the time was about 9.15 p.m. The first segment of the news had been missed. The preparation of the meal for that evening had been particularly time consuming. This raised the point about a possible correlation between the time available for viewing, and the complexity of the chosen menu. This observation was evident in other locations as well.

In assessing the complexity of the preparation of the menu, one should also take into consideration, the availability of help, and time saving devices.

She settled in front of the set at this time for a TV dinner, whilst H joined the children at the table. The first story which attracted her attention was the one about the governor of Lagos state, whom she and her friends had ridiculed on Day 1. Her immediate reaction this time was also to ridicule him. She was not concerned with what he had to say. The following was her instantaneous comment as she sighted him.

"Now, what erroneous English did he utter last week?"

Thereafter her attention was on identifying the location in which the governor was conducting a tour. She was again concentrating her attention on the visual aspects of the report.

"Is this not Lekki that he is in? . . . "

Her interest in confirming the location, drew attention to the story that was read. Having confirmed the exact location, she embarked on a report of her experiences which the said location evoked. For instance, she reported the phenomenal traffic jam which had made her go through the area. This had been her first exposure to the area. Thereafter her focus was on how illuminating the experience was. The news was thus ignored. She only resumed her interest in the programme when she caught a glimpse of her favourite newscaster.

Her attention was not sustained. Almost immediately, she switched her attention back to chatting about unrelated matters - the meal; her childhood experience. In the meantime, there were more reports that she missed. Her inattentiveness was again broken when she caught a glimpse of a traditional dance troop. She remarked about the skill and grace of the dance, and she was disappointed when the clip which was only an illustration did not endure.

This pattern of reception continued, as she continued to pick out those items which for some reason were of direct relevance to her personal interest; a news item about a presidential announcement; a new chairman for a board , following the resignation of the former.

Her reading of these items were informed by stereotypes, and her pre - conceived attitudes. Her reading led to suppositions and inferences from such. For example, regarding the Chairman who was supposed to have resigned, she was of the opinion that he had been forced to resign having embezzled so much, that he had become an embarrassment to the government. This was based on her "knowledge" of the system.

Another news item which attracted her attention was the obituary item which rounded up the news. The obituary was one which she had read about in the papers. The story evoked sympathy from the subject, but she wondered about the other details that were excluded - the other deceased who were not mentioned. H at this point was able to rationalise the exclusion of the details. The one in view was the main actor.

The story itself, had been presented in a way that the status of the deceased was highlighted, suggesting that the others were not included for lack of status. This was the point, to which S1 was alluding.

Their discussion on this did not persist because of a phone call that was received. Thereafter, the attention shifted to other matters. The TV which was showing a Moslem programme was ignored. It was H who responded to this, by changing the channel, thereby rekindling interest in the television. He had selected the news programme on LTV.

At the mention of Lagos state governor, Rasaki's name, S1 was attracted to the programme. The attraction was the fact that the newscaster had read the governor's full names. Thereafter, S1 remarked on the event which had warranted the story.

S1: Oh, oh! She hailed him fully. . . What is his business, leaving the whole of Lagos state to go and settle dispute in Oyo state. He's even skipped Ogun state. . .

The use of the governor's full names, had pulled the subject into the story, but it had not improved her disposition towards the object of the news story.

Another story which attracted her attention was one which evoked the memory of a personal encounter which she had, had. She had been trapped in a lift in the housing estate that was the focus of the news item, so she was attentive to the story. Besides, she marvelled at the number of families who lived within the estate. The estate had become known by this number - 1004 housing estate.

In her reception of this programme, the subject only listened to a few details, before embarking on her own verbal voyage. By so doing, she missed some other details which could have helped her make better sense of the story. This pattern contributed to the chequered nature of her viewing. She skipped some parts of one story, and when attracted by another she would attend that, but by the time, she concentrates on doing this, she would have missed some aspects; and the cycle continued. Often times, her commentary was not restricted to the news item. The story was used as a pivot to other digressions.

Following the news, on another station (OGTV), was a Yoruba (metaphysician's) programme. The programme was selected and watched.

The interviewee was a self declared wizard. Though his claims were rebuffed, and the subjects expressed their wariness of such programmes, there was attentive viewing. The subjects expressed disdain for the character as well as his claims, but there was silence in the sitting room as they watched the programme.

The comments at the end of the viewing were not as vehement as those at the beginning. There were no outright accusations of deception, the comments were an expression of confusion at the exposure to various values.

"It's remarkable! Each individual is claiming to know the way."

On his part, H noted how expensive it would have been for the programme to be put on air. There was no lengthy discussion, or comments on the programme. Unlike with the news, each individual was left to go away with his own perception of what the programme meant.

The programme which followed this one on OGTV was a Moslem religious programme. This was rejected. Instead, CBN news on LTV was selected. The other option which was available was a documentary on government activities on the NTA network service. By this time, S1 was already sleeping in her chair. She only stirred as the channels were being changed. She asked if there were no better programmes. She promptly went back to sleep.

Observation ended at this time.

A remarkable feature of the viewing for that evening was the difficulty which the new programme had in catching its share of the family's attention. This suggests that new programmes required time to cultivate the loyalty of the audience. This observation becomes even more remarkable when held up in the light of the lack of enduring programmes on television. The audience have few programmes in which they can cultivate an interest. This tends to affect their viewing behaviour.

Day 5

There was no viewing. Subject returned home at about 7.00 p.m. She popped in to her neighbour's house to congratulate them on the arrival of a new baby. She returned home to dress up, for her evening outing. The set was ignored in all of these. The children were not around to use the set either. They had gone for their lessons, and returned late. Thereafter, they were in a hurry to get ready and go out to the club. Friday evening at the club was for family video viewing, so although they had not watched the scheduled TV programmes, they had made use of a set in the club house, using an alternative technology.

The children's outing was different from the parents'. The parents had gone for a party. This pattern is remarkable because the programme at the club was meant to be for the family, it was invariably, only patronised by children. The children had thus been viewing the video socially, with other children from the neighbourhood.

There was a report on the following day, that they had viewed one of the scheduled TV programmes on returning from the club. This was a Yoruba

drama on NTA Ikeja channel 7. The programme was identified by the star character, Fadeyi Oloro. The children's report, especially B3's suggested that there was much relish in the viewing of Fadeyi's exploits. Fadeyi is a character, surnamed "Oloro" because of his evil deeds.

According to the children, a better part of the programme was watched on their own. Their parents had only caught the tail end of the programme. This again is interesting. In view of their limited competence with the Yoruba language and practices, their ability to make sense of the programme in such circumstances could have been potential source of misreading - exaggerations; extra linguistic readings (none contextually situated readings); and so on.

Day 6

Although transmission began at about 7.00 a.m. subject did not sit in front of the set, till about 6.30 p.m. She had taken B3 for an examination and his centre had been in another town. She had returned at about 1.00 p.m. but she embarked on another journey to visit a friend. When she returned, she chatted outside with another friend, before going to visit the neighbour who had just had a baby. On her return, she relaxed outside for a while before entering into the sitting room. With this kind of routine, there was very little room for any incidental viewing. The only places where this could have occurred were at the places where she was visiting. For instance, she had joined in the viewing of a musical video, similar to those used for interludes on the various stations, at the neighbour's house. This viewing had been along with other women from the neighbourhood, who had also come to visit the mother, and the new born baby. The viewing in this context was a social

act. Not much attention was paid to the lyrics, but the dancing the dressing and even the artistes were topics for the women's discussions. They negotiated the values expressed in the type of music, and used these as a yardstick for evaluating society. This pattern is similar to that reported in other locations (7, 5, 11). It was the proximity of the neighbour's house that facilitated the observation of the pattern there in, but there was no audio recording of the viewing. Rather, notes of the pattern were taken.

The children too had been absent from the home for most of the day. With the exception of B3, they had gone for their lessons. Thereafter, they had gone to swim, and play tennis. They dropped off to sleep in front of the set when they returned. They only woke up at the instance of a musical programme on TV. It was similar to that which their mother had been watching with the other women on video. This musical programme featured several artistes. The children compared the various artistes, and their performances. Their discussion was not as reflective of society as the adults. For instance, they concluded that one (musician) had an interesting video, although his song was dry; while another was found to be fascinating. There were no references to the values expressed, or the impact of such on society.

In spite of the snobbery for local programmes, the children were still fascinated by the musicals. The musicians were the current "raves" on the local music scene. The fascination for the programme did not result in enduring attention to that which was being shown. G for instance intermittently turned away to read her novel. B2 on his part, set about doing his homework whilst still viewing the programme. And so, although they watched, they also did other things. They were not a captive

audience.

It was around this time that S1 and H went out again. This was after the pattern described earlier on. They had gone to visit a bereaved friend. The children were again left to their devices. There was not much that impressed them on television.

After shopping round, B2 grudgingly settled for a musical programme on NTA channel 10. It was a clip from the Easter carnival that the station had organised. As though to confirm his lack of interest in his choice, he turned the volume down. This suggests that the volume of the set, was an indicator of the family's mood, and interest in the programme.

G soon dropped off to sleep. After a few minutes, B2 shopped round again for another station. He was still not satisfied, and he did not switch the set off. Instead, himself and B1 played a game of cards. They did not pay any attention to the Sports programme which was on the new station that B2 had selected.

The pattern continued till about 8.30 p.m. when they consciously switched to the channel presenting Alawada - a comedy in Yoruba. The volume of the set was turned up, and everyone in the room was alert. This was the same programme that the family had rejected on Day 4, preferring the network drama in English language, Checkmates. This suggests that in the face of a better option, the choice could have been different. Conversely, in the face of poorer options, expressed viewing preferences, may differ from observable viewing behaviour. This was illustrated in this particular viewing. The children had chosen the least objectionable programme, and had ended up appreciating it.

Thereafter, they confirmed that their expressed dislike for Yoruba programmes was conditional. There were some programmes that they liked.

They liked Alawada, which they identified by the name of the star character, Baba Sala. They also liked Feyikogbon, and Fadeyi Oloro's plays. Again, the emphasis on each choice was linked to the personality of a particular character.

In the case of Alawada for example, they were attracted by Baba Sala's dressing, his language and his general attitude. They had found these very funny.

B2: He has a very unusual attitude.

B1: His language, the language he speaks.

B3: Yes, it's very funny. For example, sometimes he will say [things like] "Two heads are better than four". . .

G: That means that two heads are better than a broken head.

. . .

The humour which they could appreciate in this particular character stems from the bastardisation of the English in the vernacular. In addition to the example of the language above was the example of his funny mode of dressing in which he puts a bogus tie, on a native attire. From these examples, it seems that they are not able to read deep into the dialogues, and relationships expressed therein. The particular programme was a comedy, usually not longer than 30 minutes.

In other examples, which were longer dramas, the children had story lines to relate to. They could rehash these with ease.

R: You all like Fadeyi Oloro? [sic]

Chorus: Yes!

B2: We like him.

R: What do you like about him?

B2: When they fight their local wars. . .

B3: When Fadeyi is saying to Orisabunmi, "Agbero ni Iku n'gbowo" [an incantation, - "A hand raised by Death is unshakeable"]

B2: . . . with their traditional medicine [i. e. charms] and all these things. Like the time they fought . . .

B3: That Orisabunmi won, and they brought Fadeyi back to the world [i.e. back to life]

. . .

The children were able to recount in brief, the story which had been serialised for 13 weeks on television. The halting account appeared to have been as a result of this. Their conjunctions seemed to reflect the scenic or visual phrases.

The names used in the particular example were such names that are not common. This in itself makes the names striking. However, they had entered into the daily vocabulary as demonstrated in this family. It was not unusual to have certain actions by the children, evoking a certain label. A person who acted mean, was hailed as "Oloro, Baba!" Fadeyi's appellation. This was often times done in jest.

From their account, it was clear that the children did enjoy the programmes. There was that note of excitement in their tone as they relived the viewing experiences. Although the names and themes were focused on violence, spirits, and what would otherwise be dreaded, the children considered them amusing, and entertaining.

The parents returned home just in time for the network news. The same pattern which had emerged during the week was maintained. S1 was

concerned first with the person of the newscaster, then the dressing, the presentation, and thereafter the gist of the story. Even then, she only attended to the first sentences of particular stories, before she went on to give her own "report", using the visuals, or memories that such cues evoked.

H on the other hand seemed to be concerned with the details of the story that he was interested in, and he challenged S1's readings. He was more prepared to accept what he was told, than challenge it unduly.

The third segment of the news was the least engaging. The viewers were in different stages of slumber. In fact, some were only awakened by the music accompanying the closing credits. Thereafter, the interest in the programming seemed to have been rekindled.

The set was tuned to a different channel. Having concluded their attention to the news on an NTA channel, (because it offered the best network reception quality), they switched to OGTV.

There was a musical video on at this station, at the time. The main actress in the video was one who was a personal acquaintance. Her voice drew all the members of the family to the set.

At the onset, it was not clear what the clip was. It was the first time they were exposed to it. There was that added interest, brought about by their curiosity.

Although they enjoyed the clip, the family especially the children, were still critical of it. They queried the illogicality of the visual

message. For example, they noticed the fact that the child's hair was not wet, despite the fact that he had been pulled out of a well. They expected that the well would have been full of water. No one offered the possible explanation of the well being dry. The inconsistency was seen as a lapse in production.

After that viewing experience, the children remained alert, and watched Mind Your Language. The parents sat in front of the set, and slept through the comedy.

At a point, S1 stirred, and requested that the set be switched to a particular channel (NTA) because she wanted to watch a particular programme. The choice was approved by the children. It was a network production; a detective drama.

Although he had been sleeping before his attention was called, H who had the remote control was opposed to the popular choice. He preferred to watch the Sports programme on another state station (BCOS). He selected his own choice, and promptly drifted back to sleep.

One of the children, encouraged by the mother's request, changed the channel selected on the set itself. The change in audio it appears, caused H to stir and he changed the channel. At this point, S1 authorised the switching on, of the second set in the room. The volume of this set, which was black and white, was tuned so high that it drowned the volume of the father's choice. At this point he conceded to the popular choice

About fifteen minutes after this "drama", both parents had drifted off

to sleep again. The children were however still alert, as they watched the programme. The time was then about 11.30 p.m. Observation was concluded at this time.

Day 7

The family went to church and returned about half past noon. morning, there was no viewing. As soon as she returned, S1 called on her neighbour to assist with the preparation for the naming ceremony. Viewing resumed at about 2.00 p.m when she returned home.

Whilst she was away, H was having a nap, and the children were playing cards, listening to pop music, and the TV was left unwatched. This may have been due to the other attraction presented by the presence of other children in the neighbourhood, who had drifted in, from the next door, the venue of the naming ceremony.

The set was switched on, and ignored at some point in time, till a Yoruba drama came on. Their interest was kindled at this time, and they read the credits, identifying familiar names, and assigning roles to themselves.

None of them wanted to be the houseboy, nor the "weakling" who lost the fight. Each preferred to be the chief, or the character who was the mediator in the fight. All of these came out spontaneously in the response to the programme. In essence, they were not watching the programme with any level of seriousness, yet they were able to identify from the visuals, who was doing what.

G was the only one who seemed to be making an attempt to follow the

story. She had been reading, and had not been involved with the boys. Even for her, she was not fully engaged by the programme. She continued to read her book, as she viewed.

In all, the programme was not taken seriously. S1 emerged from the kitchen, and resumed viewing well past the middle of the programme. She made no attempt to understand the programme. She also merely scoffed at the action, and the speeches. She was of the opinion that these were forced, and thus came out as exaggerations. She did appear to have been entertained still.

Like the children, she laughed at the programme.

It was clear that the programme was merely tolerated for some reason. The boys had left the house at this time, and S1 was left with G at the set. The channel was changed as soon as the programme was concluded. There was no room given to see the sponsor's advertisements or the closing credits which followed. The channel was changed as soon as the resolution of the story line was seen.

In changing the channel, there was no definite programme that G was looking for. The fact that it was a new programming quarter meant that their idea of the schedules, was not particularly reliable. They therefore relied on what seemed appealing as they zapped round.

It was S1 who made the decision. The programme which she selected was another Yoruba drama. This was presented by a long standing drama group. It was a dramatisation of social problems and the resolution of such in a traditional court. This programme was watched in silence. S

had fallen asleep at some point, during the programme. She had complained of the heat, and the airconditioning was not working. She had, therefore, only seen snatches of the programme.

The boys came in, as an interlude was about to begin. B3 went straight to the set, and searched round the channels, without any excuse. Although this behaviour was not acceptable, he had redirected the focus of those viewing. S1 had gone on to select one of the channels that he had scanned.

The attraction on the new channel was the dance displayed in the musical interlude. The whole family was interested in this. The children were interested in the dance steps, as was the mother. Although she protested the prevalence of such programming on the screen, she was quite engrossed in the viewing of it. In fact, she responded to the lyrics, as well as the visuals. For this subject, this was remarkable.

"Don't they know more, than just dance? . . . Ah, ah! This is Ayuba or Talazo? The black Americans accept the dance indeed. [responding to lyrics] And she is not finding it easy either. Oh no, I'm not fooled, that's a half caste, not a white man."

. . .

The nature of this production is such that the visuals are tied in to the lyrics. Following both therefore, does not require much extra effort. The gaps provided by the dancing accompanying the instrumental segments of the production also allows for the commentary which S1 is wont to make.

The programmes which followed the interlude of music were all religious programmes. The subjects were not particularly interested in these programmes, but they endured the programme for a while. In doing so,

they did not watch the programme. They only left it on in the background, and drifted to other concerns. Before long the sitting room was empty and the set was still on.

The channel was changed by B1 when he passed through the sitting room. The station which was selected (NTA 10) was soon showing a newscast. This was being broadcast to an empty room, as the children soon went out to play football. Just before they left, B2 had scanned the stations, as though interested in watching. He only found a Yoruba drama, but he rejected that programme as well opting for the news but not interested in watching that either.

When S1 emerged and settled before the set, she preferred the Yoruba drama. The reception quality of this was very poor, and she could not, on her own, adjust the controls of the set. She had to send for the boys to help. This is interesting because in the event that the boys were not readily available, if they were in boarding school for example, she may have been quite helpless. This was the situation observed in another location (8). In fact, because the boys were not interested in the programme and they were not watching with her, she had to endure the poor quality reception for a better part of the viewing experience. There was a lapse in reception quality, after the boys had left, having adjusted the set. She sat in front of the set, but the viewing was strained.

The viewing was interrupted by the arrival of some visitors. In the course of their conversation, subject confirmed that she would normally have gone out, but had only been restrained because of the research exercise. This explains the reason why she was not so keen on viewing.

By the time the visitors left, the children had returned, and they changed the channel to another station. The programme that was on, was another Yoruba drama. The reception on this channel was much better. It was a station based in the state, whereas the other one was based in neighbouring Oyo state.

The other choice of programme which was rejected was another Christian programme.

S1 went out to the naming ceremony with her guests. It was the children who were left to view.

Viewing resumed in the early evening when subject returned home with another guest - a prospective customer. There was a foreign children's programme on at the time. It was left on in the background, unattended by the adults as the children watched the cartoon.

Intermittently, the adults were drawn into the programme. For example, they were attracted by the tricks which were performed in the locally produced children's variety programme that followed. The cues which they saw in the subsequent parts of the programme were reminders of other phenomena in society. These were used to direct the conversation. Though they did not discuss the programme particularly, their conversation was still TV related.

S1: Oh this reminds me of the shop I visited the other day.
The shop had a wide variety of games. . . That looks like
the Trans Amusement park. They invested a lot of money
in that park. [sic]

This type of programme did not require intense concentration and it was appealing to the subject.

As she viewed, she noted trends which seemed to be catching on. For example, she noted the fact that catering at fairs was becoming a popular avenue for making money.

Later in the evening, S1 selected a quiz programme in Yoruba. This was over the news and the Christian oriented soap opera which the children had wanted to watch. The programme focused on the traditional beliefs and living habits of the Yorubas, and she found this very interesting, and enlightening. She vicariously participated in the programme. The children were not impressed. It was only when the programme was concluded that subject proceeded to prepare the family's dinner.

The children then took over control of the set and selected the programme of their choice. There were several possible options which they fancied. They therefore had a real choice and they selected the locally produced comedy in pidgin English. The attraction was the character "Aluwe". The choice was unanimous. The entire family viewed with rapt attention.

The programme which followed that was another comedy, in Yoruba. Although the children did not mind the choice, they had preferred another drama which was in English, but they had to defer to their parents' choice. They watched with rapt attention none the less. They all appeared to have enjoyed the programme.

The parents were more competent in appreciating the second programme

because of their competence with the cultural practices portrayed therein. The earlier programme had been more modern. There was very little conversation accompanying the viewing. There was no attempt to share the meanings which they took from the programme.

The next programme which was viewed was a drama; a soap opera on the network. This was again followed vicariously, by the entire family. There were the occasional external interruptions during the viewing but in this instance, interruptions were treated as such, and not allowed to persist.

Such was the interest of the subjects in the programmes that none of them left the set till the programme was concluded. This meant that they missed the beginning of the news, as it was this that was next in the flow.

Besides H, no other person showed any interest in the news anyway. There was no regrets about missing the news.

Observation ended at this time.

Discussion

In spite of the apparent apathy to television, the subject still considered it to be of relevance, especially for the young ones, but also for the adults. As observed, the subject had so many other obligations which kept her away from viewing even those programmes which she preferred. There were many programmes to which she was indifferent. Her preference was not very distinct, as there was no programme to which she could claim to have any loyalty. Her manner of reception illustrates this and she confirmed this. This pattern seems to have been influenced

by her busy schedule. The fact that there are so many distractions for her, had meant that she could not really cultivate an interest in any particular programme.

In the case when she had the "time" she expressed an interest for dramas. She was specifically interested in the soap operas, and such that presented social every day life. She was non - committal to entertainment programmes, (the musicals), but her interest in these were on condition that she was free. This confirms the observation made earlier, about her interest in programmes that were not demanding; those programmes which did not require much concentration.

In similar manner, she expressed preference for "Newsline" and not the news itself. Newsline was seen as an avenue to gaining familiarity with the unknown. It did not connote the type of seriousness that the news did.

What is clear with this subject was her particular interest in the personality of the presenters. For her, the personality and success of the programme, hinged on the personality of the performers. There was no exception for the news. She confirmed for instance that she was selective in her exposure to the news, and this often depended on the newscaster.

"Any one [that is the particular items] that interest me, when you are reading it I will, I will listen; anyone that does not make me have interest, I will be dozing" [sic]

She added that whether the news was interesting or not, she was put off by the particular newscaster, who, in her opinion does not dress well. It can be inferred that, in such a case, she was likely to miss even the

interesting items. She would not have been able to identify the "interesting" qualities of such items.

Drama

Like some of the other subjects (in location 4, 8,) the interest in English language drama was attributed to the affiliation to the drama society during their school days. Dramas were an exception to the general non - chalant attitude to programming. Her favourite programme was Ripples. With little assistance from the children, the subject was still able to recount the story line of the programme, which is longest running of the network soap operas. There were gaps in the story but because of the length of the programme, she was able to make sense of the message.

The story was recounted as though it were real life, and the performers were related to as if they were personal acquaintances. The story which was presented in the English language programme was about a family. Bukky, the victim, was her favourite character. She also admired Bukky's mother in spite of the negative image that she portrayed.

"The woman was even behaving like a witch." This was because the woman was opposed to the marriage of her daughter, (Bukky) and her lover, Nnamdi. The objection was to mainly because she wanted to remain in control of the large estate that Bukky was to inherit.

The highlights of the story were about intrigue, and twists in love relationships, as well as the excessive love of money. There were certain utterances which the subject was able to repeat verbatim.

In spite of the "seriousness" of the issues, the story was amusing, and interesting. The story was engaging. The performance of the actors was a

strong criteria which influenced the subject's favourite actors. There was an understanding of the fact that the programmes were all performances, therefore the part played by these performers did not make much difference. Both victims and villains were favoured for their performance if not the values they stood for.

"I like Bukky. . . Abass too is a character. . . [He is] very very bad! It's that bad aspect that I don't like, but, he is a real actor. . . "

Language

There was a preference for the use of English language in programmes. The "excessive" use of the poetical devices, which was identified as incantations were held against the use of Yoruba. This style of use was seen to require "expert" knowledge of the language for it to be appreciated.

In like manner, there was no great interest in foreign programmes which though are mainly presented in English, require a familiarity with the foreign accents. It was this preference pattern which was exhibited in behavioural terms, as lack of interest in those programme categories.

Talks

There was no apology for not having any interest in the talks programmes. She ascribed this lack of interest in the format, mainly because of the choice of topics. The topics were said to be uninteresting. The strong negative attitude was such that she would not even give the programmes a chance. She was certain that she would either leave the set, or be dozing.

Portrayal of life

There was no doubt that television reflects reality, in some aspects.

This was in the dramas generally.

"Majority of what they act, are true life issue - that's has happened to people. . . "

Both the husband and the wife were convinced that the dramas were presentations of "what is actually happening". They agreed that these portrayals were usually of crisis, and marital affairs.

H: Take this . . . Oyin Adejobi, majority of his plays are almost real life experiences. He is original. . . in that he takes us back to what is actually really happening in Yoruba society, whereby Yoruba society is naturally a polygamous society. And whereby you see different kind of characters, women in particular, maybe living under the same roof, you will actually see that it's not easy to manage in Yoruba society, because of so many things. This extended family nature, whereby you don't marry your wife alone , you marry the family, or whereby if you don't get on with the family, the home cannot be peaceful.

Again this wife versus wife, senior wife versus junior wife, how the junior wife must respect the senior wife, and how a traditional woman should respect the husband. Should give him all those things, these things are brought in the plays. Where you have deviance you will see that it usually works against them. That teaches some morals."

The summary of the themes portrayed on television by this subject, explains how the assessment of particular programmes, serve as platforms on which social practices, or even the society at large, are assessed. There is a potential source of confusion, where both contemporary reality, and historical reality are presented concurrently, albeit in different programmes. They are received by the viewers as reality, even as a guide to daily living. This is what obtains in this, as well as some other locations.

On the whole, there was confirmation from her husband that her specific

nature of the subject was such that she did not take anything seriously, least of all, television. Whatever interest she may have in any programme, was described as being "very shallow". This confirms the pattern observed.

The man in this location was a better viewer, than the woman. He was even able to discuss sensational news with his colleagues at work, but not his wife because of this general lack of interest.

LOCATION 4 - A YOUNG MOTHER IN A MODERN FAMILY

The subject (S1) is not a native of the town. She is from the Eastern part of the country, and is a high school teacher at a federal government establishment that is situated in the town. She had only been recently wed, and because her husband has an important status in his family, there was a high presence of her in-laws (S2, B) in the home. In addition, there was her baby (aged 5 months) who also required her attention.

At the time of the study, S1 was undertaking a part time course in one of the universities. All these affected her personal schedule and thus, her use of the medium.

The viewing situation was a family living room. The family lived in a self contained bungalow. The sitting room was comfortable. It was well furnished with easy chairs, a colour television, a video, and a sound system, indicating the level of affluence. There was also a conspicuously large collection of home videos. It must be pointed out that the consciousness of the purpose of the research caused the subjects to restrict their normal use of home videos.

These subjects exemplify those viewers who had been situated in towns outside their ethnic group, as a result of their employment. This is to illustrate the impact of the promotion of the federal character of the country, even in (remote) rural areas.

That in-laws were very present in her home, also illustrates another typical situation where there is a stream of relatives and friends in

the home. The impact of their presence should thus not be discounted.

Day 1

S1, returned late from an outing. She had gone to visit a friend who needed to be hospitalised. This was a source of concern to the subject.

On arrival the subject went straight for her baby. She went in to give the baby a bath. She emerged thereafter, still attending to the baby's needs, and only casting a cursory glance at the TV screen. The set had been switched on.

The brother - in - law, (B1), and the sister - in - law, (S2) who were both postgraduate students, had been watching TV. They continued watching while she was in and out of the kitchen.

Even after she had finished attending to the baby, she continued in the same manner. She was preparing the evening meal for her family.

On this occasion, there was an elaborate meal being prepared because of the visiting in - laws. Although B1 was left in charge of the baby, the women still had to help out, intermittently, when he became overwhelmed by the baby's demands. On one of such occasions, S1 was attracted by an item on the personal paid announcement slot. It was the announcement of a birthday celebration. This prompted a remark from her.

S1: I hope she invites everyone oh! As she has now told the whole world.

B1: But she's not the one advertising; it's someone else advertising for her [sic]

S1: Whatever, she should be prepared to host all who have heard.

The discussion did not endure, nor did it come to a logical conclusion as subject was again on the move. It however indicates the response the subject's reaction to the information; she felt it was not of relevance to the general public.

The various channels were scanned at the top of the hour, to assess what was available. This was done by B1. He found a segment of the network programme "Newsweek". This was a discussion, although the programme itself is a feature. The reception was not clear. The programme was rejected, and the News at Eight on LTV was selected. Even then, the programme was not attended as there were other chores to attend to.

The elaborate nature of the meal that was being prepared, and the absence of modern, time saving devices, meant that there was a lot of time spent in the kitchen. This was an encroachment on the leisure time that could have been spent viewing TV.

As a result of the inadequacy of time, there was strategic planning of how it was to be used. There was marginalisation of certain interests, and this was expressed in the choice of programmes that was to be watched. This practice was thus indicative of what was central.

In spite of their busy schedule, the women still made time to watch the soap opera "Another Life". Some duties were suspended, so that the viewing of Another Life could be accommodated. The viewing had begun with the previously noted pattern. The subjects initially only caught snatches of the programme. It was thereafter, that they made time; putting chores aside, so that their viewing would be uninterrupted. This was not so with the news. Even though S1 expressed her interest in

viewing the news, she had not made time to watch it.

There was a difference in her interaction with both programmes, which could have accounted for this. She did not have any sustaining interest in the news. Her desire to watch was motivated by duty, not interest. However, she had been following the story in the soap opera, and was quite engrossed in it. There had been a miscarriage of justice in the programme. A man had been framed by his wife, for adultery, so that she could get a divorce, as well as the custody of their son.

S1 was excited at the day's episode where justice had prevailed. The man was acquitted of the charges, as the wife's schemes became exposed. He thus got custody of the son.

S1 expressed sympathy for all that the man had gone through. She related with the characters, as if they were real people. She also drew an inference on reality from the programme. In this way, she drew the attention of others, who were not such faithful followers of the programme, to the point that she found in the programme.

S1: You know, that is what happens o! Some people will be tried innocently, for things they don't know anything about. Eh Ya! [expression of sympathy] . . . But this kind of thing cannot happen in Nigeria. Have you ever heard of someone being sacked for moral bankruptcy?

S2: No! Except they want to get rid of him anyway.

B1: So what happened now?

S1: He [that is the TV character] won the case, and got the custody of the son. He had appealed.

S2: What is the title of this one?

S1: Another Life.

S2: Oh, so this is Another Life? I have not been watching it.

It was that statement, that drew S2 into the programme, as thereafter, she sat down to view. It was clear from her utterance, that she was aware of the programme's reputation. In comparing the facts portrayed on the programme with her own reality, S1 came away with a disaffection, for her own society. She recognised a lack of the type of morality portrayed on the screen, in her own society. This was lamentable.

The point is even more important, as the programme, was of American origin, and thus seen to depict the reality of life in that society. The comparison was thus of a TV "myth" about America, and the reality of life in Nigeria.

It may not be right to blame the TV portrayal for her negotiation. It is clear from her expressed reasoning, that she had compared the information which she brought to the set, and that which she got at the set. Therefore, the disaffect for her society was not as a result of watching the programme. It was merely reinforced by it.

The husband, (H), returned from work during the viewing. He went in to freshen up. His coming out of the room, coincided with the time when the meal was served. There was thus much activity in the sitting room as S1, was ensuring that the meal was to everyone's satisfaction. She was in and out of the kitchen, fetching one thing or the other (water, salt, glasses, more food for example). Of all the members of the group therefore, she had a chequered viewing. The others had a relatively uninterrupted viewing.

Even with this observed pattern, she still managed to catch snatches of what was going on. She asked questions about the aspects of the viewing

that she missed. However, she often did not wait to receive answers to her questions before she had had to leave again. Such was the nature of her activity, and her comments were likewise, inconclusive.

"What happened to this woman later on?"

"The thing is that A..."

S1 eventually settled down to her meal, as well as the programme. The programme had almost been concluded at this time. But it was the break in transmission which caused a premature departure from the programme. B1 was so incensed at the disappointing performance of the station, that he changed the station. He held the remote control.

B1: You see Lagos Television, "Sorry we are changing power supply." That is what they will say.

[He changed the channels]

An NTA station was found as the channels were scanned again. S1's initial response had been to reject the programme, but she quickly changed her mind as she recognised a face amongst those on the screen. This was made possible because the prejudiced rejection, was not instantly executed, as the decision was still being negotiated. This was a feature of the communal viewing. Had she been on her own, her decision would have been translated into action faster.

In this case, S2 had pleaded for a better assessment of the programme. She thought it could have been relevant to her professionally.

It was the same visual cue which caused S1 to reject the programme, instantaneously, that caused S2 to ask that the programme be given a chance. The fact that there were a group of men, all in suits seemingly at a conference, meant something different to both of them.

(As B1 switched the channels round)

S1: Please take this away. [sighting the men in suits]

S2: Wait let's hear what they are saying. . .

(Pause, as the group evaluated what was said for a while)

B1: It's interesting. [he settled down to watch]

S2: . . . Let's see if it has anything to do with my organisation. [Pause] Yes it does. You see as soon as I saw them, I just knew; they are bankers. Wait let's listen "We want to underline something" [echoing the utterance]

. . .

As a result of one person's initial interest, the group was enticed to watching the programme. It was only in the course of viewing, that S1 also found something of interest. She recognised one of the speakers and so she also became interested in what was being said.

S1: This Giwa man, his children are in my school.

The women's interest was short - lived. They soon had to attend to the baby who was being fed. B1 continued viewing unconcerned, while S2 looked on as S1 tried to feed the uncooperative baby. S2 soon ignored them, and she too concentrated on the programme. It was thus S1 who was left to contend with her child, thus being unable to follow the programme unhindered.

To follow what was going on, S2 had to rely on B1, to supply the blanks that her divided attention had caused. This led to a discussion which attracted S1's interest into the programme. She was however more fascinated with the visuals of the programme, than the issue that was being discussed. Her contribution successfully diverted the focus of the discussion.

S2: That must be the C. A. they are talking about. You know they say they should . . . [sic]

S1: Hun! Everybody in suit!

S2: Yes now, that's it! You must either be in suit or complete aghada [that is the national outfit for men]

S1: See this fat banker, e don chop! [meaning - he has eaten. This insinuates that the man had become "fat" through corrupt means] Oh, he looks like ----, the LBN ----.

S2: It's okay now, let's know what . . . [switching attention back to the programme] What are they doing? [thinking aloud, attempting to make sense of the programme.] They invited customers like this probably to let them know what they are doing. Okay LBN is the customer; he, is their customer.

[Pause in commentary. Attention is still fixed on the programme]

S1: (echoing the programme; mimicking one of the speakers.) "As eh, like I said earlier" [Laughs at the pronunciation and the grammar of the speaker.]

S2: He's not an English officer like you, he's a banker.

S1: He read History oh, that man. He read History, and he's now the MD of LBN.

S2: History?

S1: I'm telling you! If you know people who know him, they will confirm it.

S2: I should not have read this course then. I should have gone to work in a bank straight.

S2 was just completing an MBA programme, to get her launched into the Banking world. Her earlier degree had not been related to Finance. That there was someone else who had risen to the zenith of his administrative profession, with a degree which was apparently not of any direct relevance was what prompted her response.

The programme soon ended without much attention paid to the message which it brought. It had merely served as an agenda setter for the family's discussions. They had informed themselves, drawing from sources

other than the television.

The dressing; the diction; even the physique of the speakers had become sources of distraction in the viewing. This suggests that the visuals of the actual events, are not necessarily the best visuals to accompany a message.

These subjects were particularly critical in their reading. They were not content to sit before the screen, and be spoken to. They cared about the delivery of the message. They also cared about the implication of the message, as it affects their personal lives. When considered together, these two observations, explain the introduction of the unintended message which, as was seen in the example, became a hindrance for the intended message.

In the example, the unintended message was so central to the subject's individual situation, that it became a potential source of disaffection towards the previously held notions about how the social system (should) work.

This, had been prompted by an unintended message in the visual report of the event. It will be interesting to compare the response to a concise report of the same event, which does not use the accompanying visuals. This is worthy of further investigation.

The programme gave way to the network news. By this time there was a convergence of all the residents in the household before the set. The baby was dancing happily to the signature tune and the father was following the accompanying visual montage. He hailed one of the

newscasters therein as a shot of him fleeted past the screen. Incidentally, this newscaster was from the same ethnic group as the subjects.

It is not clear though if it was this identity, or his personality, or the style of his reports that made the subject (H) hail him so.

The commentary on the news began as soon as the highlights were read. This time it was the husband who started the trend. There was an item about the launching of a book. The book was about the head of state. The following was H's response to the story.

H: That man [that is the author] wants to make money.

When the newscaster introduced himself, S1 was quick to predict who was to accompany him. But she was wrong.

TV: Good evening, I am Donald Ovhareldjo. With me tonight is -
S1: Elizabeth Nze. Oh no! It's Ruth Benamaisia!
S2: You did not match them well.

This illustrates the familiarity of the subjects with the newscasting pattern. It also indicates that they notice when there are changes in this pattern. The impact of such patterns to their reception of the content of the news is not as clear here, as it was in location 3. There is however a suggestion in their utterance, that they may respond better to certain newscasters, than they would others.

Whilst the women were busy "matching " the newscasters, they had missed an item on the news. This was the lead item for the day's bulletin. It can thus be assumed that it was an item of considerable importance, yet it had been missed. This in itself indicates the impact of an

unanticipated change in the pattern.

The fact that H was attentive, meant that the subjects did not totally miss the information. He informed them of the gist of the message. They relied on his own summary of that which he had heard.

H: Did you hear that? They [that is the government] have taken another loan after the other one has been written off. They will then say for their [children's] tomorrow, we should give our todays.

Chorus: Hiss!

H had not only given his own summary of the story, he had editorialised. The message thus did not stand a chance of being received in any other way but with contempt.

The reading had not restricted itself to the news item alone. It had made reference to the a public mobilisation jingle which encouraged patriotism. This jingle encourages the populace to make the sacrifices required to build up the economy, for the sake of the future generations. It appealed to the parental emotion by showing children, for whose sake the sacrifices were (supposedly) being made.

Although it is normal that such jingles are shown just before the news, the particular one had not been shown on this occasion. The impact of it being an adjacent message could thus be removed on the occasion. Yet, the subject was able to make a connection between both. In his opinion, the two messages were incongruous.

As a result of the outburst, other details of the story were missed. Besides, emotions against the government had also risen high, before the

news entered its fifth minute.

The general contempt for government were exhibited in, the outburst; the unwillingness to hear out the other details of the story; the chorused hiss at the end of the outburst. The gesture, within the culture, is one of utter disdain.

This example illustrates how dynamic the negotiation process is. How for instance, a seemingly unrelated item may be brought up from the recesses of memory to be re - negotiated. Meaning is thus not a once and for all product. It is a product that is made over time and possibly re - shaped in the light of new information.

This observation is also true for the earlier comment about the author's intention. Following is a report of what happened when the full story about the item came up.

S1: Oyeware, it must be a Bini man who wrote the book.

This comment came as the president's speech was being read. S1 was concerned about the ethnic origin of the author. H was more concerned with what the president had to say. There was still a tone of disaffection in his remark. The entire conversation was a source of distraction to the other viewers.

H: See, it is people like you who write such.

S1: Is the president educated enough to write these speeches?

S2: They are still talking about the book, you know.

H: Do you think they have any other news besides Babangida and Mamangida? [that is the president and his wife]

Although S2 had succeeded in drawing attention back to the programme, H had set the mood with which the information was to be received. His

contempt had manifested in non - chalance to whatever else was to be said. The subsequent reading followed the trend, and there were enough cues within the story to confirm their position.

B1: Hun! See money!

S2: It's fifty naira. [that is the largest denomination of the Nigerian currency, and had only been introduced to the economy at the time]

S1: Babangida can launch it with hundred naira, then behind he will give them thousands.

S2: He won't announce it to the public if he does not want them to know.

Despite the fact that the "actual" amount for which the book was launched was announced, the subjects still proceeded to speculate on the truth of the matter. This could have been a result of the disaffection generated by the earlier news item, and the subject's, pre-conceptions of the government. The impact of the latent distrustful attitude towards the government cannot be discounted. It would appear that it was the insinuating gesture in B1's comment, that had triggered off the speculations. Another item which attracted the group's attention was that about the sub - regional travel document (for Economic Community of West Africa, ECOWAS citizens)

B1: In short that is not a bad idea.

S1: But won't it be abused?

H: That's the Nigerian matter now.

B1: I don't know when it comes to being . . .

S2: What we are saying is that getting the certificate may not be as easy. You will have to bribe so much, it will not be worth the effort.

H: You might as well get a passport.

B1: Why is this one making her mouth like this? [referring to the newscaster]

S2: They have trained her. [sarcasm]

S1: Sienne visited my school the other day . . .

With that comment the group's focus was diverted to the stories from the grapevine. The critical nature of the group, which stems out of their scepticism, is again illustrated in the above. This is fuelled by their pre-conceptions; knowledge and beliefs of the society.

The result of this was again *no* chance to other information. Instead, they attended the "inconsequential". Even a facial gesture was enough to cause a digression.

The group's interest was only re - captured by the news item about "Better Life for Rural Women" which is a pet project of the president's wife, and a widely infamous one. The report included the visuals of "women leaders" involved in the programme. One of the women was a former newscaster, whose husband had become a state governor.

S1: See Ronke! See her husband too.

S2: ---- That ugly man with a beautiful wife.

S1: Better Life! Is this one a rural woman? She is from my mother's village and she never goes there unless there is a funeral and they say she is a rural woman.

S2: But the thing is that it is the modern woman who enlightens the rural women.

S1: I see. [sarcasm, meaning she remained unimpressed]

In all of this, the story was not attended. No obvious attempt was made at all, although subjects may well have picked up the gist of the story. S1 for instance was again refuting the logic and accuracy of the subject of the news. The news report itself was therefore not impressive or worthy of attention.

As for S2 her attention was drawn to another item, which seemed relevant to her personal (professional) interest. It was an item about a new bank that had just been opened.

S2: The thing is they are just opening banks here and there and they are not performing. There's Community bank, there's People's bank.

The comment itself was inconclusive, reflecting the waning interest in the news.

Later on, there was a story about an engineering outfit. This attracted H's attention from the professional point of view, in the same way as S2 had been interested in the programme about the bankers earlier on in the day. Again the lines of reading were divergent as he shared his enthusiasm with other members of the group.

H: I once attended a meeting there. Look! They are lathe machines. Have you seen a lathe machine before? [sic - meaning; Have you ever seen a lathe machine?]

S1: You will teach me Engineering, will you? My head can barely cope with my own field.

H: You know what they are doing? They are smelting.

S2: Engineer in suit! [disdain]

H: Yes what's wrong with that?

B1: He's not doing anything he should be in shorts and very dirty.

S1: Like a cement man.

S2: Someone once said engineers and mechanics don't allow us to differentiate [recognise] mad men on the streets.

Laughter all round

The serious interest in the news item was thus lost. Here again, the news had only prompted the group to discuss a specific subject. It had merely set the agenda. Though the subjects noticed what the news item

was about, they had hardly paid any attention to the details therein. They had preferred their own 'bulletin'.

The importance of the above observation is that it suggests that such that reading practices are determined by the subject's interest. In other words, it suggests the following hypothesis; that a programme will be more engaging, if it is perceived to be in alignment with the viewers interest. This is worthy of further investigation.

Going by the observations, one could also suggest that; a programme that is perceived as being hard to understand, will be more visually engaging. It is interesting, that the dressing was what engaged the S2, whereas H had called attention to the smelting process that was being featured, within the same context.

As the news progressed, in the face of the obvious waning of the subjects' interest, there was a news item about the "First Lady". H confirmed his earlier assessment of the news.

H: I told you, they do not have any other thing . . .

By this time, the viewers had lost interest in the news. They no longer commented on the items, nor did they comment on the messages that came during the two commercial breaks. It was only in the dying minutes of the news, when the subjects responded to a Sports news item that the viewing livened up. It was the a story about the female soccer team.

S2: If they go to China or Brazil, they will beat them, 21 :
0.

[Laughter all round.]

Observation was concluded at the end of the news programme as the inconvenience of the researcher's presence became glaring. S2, and H and B1 were sleeping, by the time the news was being concluded. In fact, S1 seemed to be merely struggling to stay awake, out of politeness. They were all in this drowsy state when the highlights of the news were reviewed.

The last three comments reported had in fact come between "winks".

During this time, S1 had not been immobile before the set. In between viewing, she had gone to lay her baby in bed. The baby too had slept. She had also seen to it that the house had been put in order, in readiness for the next day. The family was by then ready to turn in for the night.

The striking feature in this viewing session, was the readiness to share thoughts on the received messages. There were no inhibitions about having others know what each felt about any aspect of programming. This appears to be a result of the familiarity within the group. They all had similar experiences, being of comparable age range; belonging to the same ethnic group; and having similar educational experiences. Viewing for them was a social process.

Another striking feature which has earlier been mentioned, is the critical nature of the subjects. The confidence with which they could negotiate the unintended messages, came from the fact that they had privileged information. Unlike those who depended on hear - say, and mere sentiments, they felt more confident that their positions were informed by "facts". The results of both negotiations are none the less

comparable. (Re. - location # 1)

Day 2

Observation commenced at about 8.30 p.m. when subject S1 returned from visiting her sick friend. She had gone out in the early part of the evening, although she had returned from school earlier on in the day. When S1 returned, B1 and S2 were already before the set, watching Another Life on LTV.

Again, S1 went straight away to attend to the baby, but she soon came out. She was aware of the schedule of programmes from the national network service. She expressed her desire to watch a particular programme. The said programme was a comedy, "New Masquerade". It was referred to as "Zebrudaya", using the name of the lead star of the programme.

Although it clashed with the soap opera which was watched with such relish the previous day, no one was averse to watching "Zebrudaya" in spite of the poor quality of reception.

They were able to account for this poor reception quality. It was due to the recent rainfall, and the fact that they lived in a valley. The weather-induced impact on reception was tolerated, but the recent changes within the programme was a greater source of discontentment.

R: The programme is not very clear.

S2: You know it rained.

B1: And we live in this slope.

S2: They have just started. [noting that they had only missed the preamble; the sponsor's message]

B1: That is the problem with those things, when you have nice

programmes, and people don't watch . . .

R: Why?

S2: You know that now, these two artistes are no longer there; Gringory and Clarus, people don't enjoy it as before. When you have an alternative instead of "Zebrudaya" [that is the programme] . . . They don't gain people's attention anymore.[sic]

B1: Except IBB, [the president] he still loves it!

S2: He won't like it as much again. Ah! he loved it when Gringory was there.

. . . .

The conversation again drifted into the realms of grapevine information, but the point had been made. A change in the cast of the programme was a considerable dent to the perceived enjoyment value of the programme. The characters who had been dropped were founding members of the cast, but what is more is that they were considered to be amongst the favourite stars of the show.

They were houseboys to the chief (Zebrudaya), and they had added pep to the comedy with their "stupidity", and their mannerisms. Their language, as with the other members of the cast was a play on the peculiarities in the various dialects; the accents, as well as the use of words. For instance, Clarus should really be Cletus, whilst Gringory should be Gregory.

In their banter, the subjects exhibited a knowledge of the politics involved in the production of the programmes. Their awareness was partly as a result of the stories from the tabloids.

In spite of the criticisms, they still opted for the programme. S1 was still very enthusiastic about the programme. She had anticipated its

presence on the screen based on her knowledge of the day of the week. B1 on his part had not remembered, because being on holiday, he had lost track of what day of the week it was.

S1 settled down to watch but her attention was soon diverted as she had to feed the baby. The "pendulum" pattern thus began, with her attention swinging from the baby, to the programme; and then to the baby, and back to the programme.

Although it was only S1 who was directly experiencing the diversions, her outburst affected the others also. In their cases, the distractions were momentary.

S1: (to the baby) Ndo! [whispers more encomiums to baby whom she had had to leave at home for the whole day. Attention shifts back to the screen] But it's not clear. What is the meaning of "Oku igbe"? [an utterance by one of the characters in the programme - the one playing the role of a Yoruba man.]

The entire group was impressed by the man's act, and though not spoken, their affirmation of the act, suggests that they perceived the portrayed image, as being accurate. They later confirmed this.

The subjects were not as conversant with the Yoruba language as to understand the exact meanings of some of the expressions which the characters employed. They seized the opportunity of the researcher's competence with the Yoruba language to clarify those aspects of the viewing, which were rooted in the Yoruba culture, that they did not understand. These were usually just interjections as in the above example. The absence of a viewer who was competent in the language would have led to an incomplete reading of the intended message. This is despite the fact that the programme is set in a contemporary Eastern

town. Ordinarily, being Easterners themselves, the subjects should have been able to relate with that society. However, the introduction of other cultures, through certain characters, had forced them to face the cultural complexities of the federal character of the nation. This was a deliberate aspect, of the programme design.

"Oku igbe" is one of Jegede's (i.e. the character) favourite abusive names for another character. The subjects had been aware of the name prior to the exercise. They had known that it was not a complimentary statement. They had a vague idea of what was intended but they had not known what it meant exactly.

The words literally mean - "a corpse destined for the forest." This implies the utter worthlessness of whoever is so called, such that even in death, the person is only fit to be buried in the forest. The following is the reaction which the explanation attracted from the group.

S1: Ehen! Now when taxi drivers drive nonsense, I will call them "Oku Igbe".

Laughter

. . .

The discussion continued in an assessment of Jegede's wives. There was a direct link that may not be as obvious in the conversation. This is that the wives were also known to be as abusive as Jegede.

S2: It's Ramota I like. I like the way she acts, she says - "Ehn! . . ." she makes it so natural.

B1: Ramota, Apena too. All the better people have gone. When Apena was there en!

S1: This Ramota is better than Apena.

S2: Did you watch Apena?

B1: There's no way you can compare Apena with Ramota.

S2: Apena was the best.

S1: You mean it?

S2: She was the best, you won't even know she is not a Yoruba woman.

The discussion thus shifted attention away from the viewing. This was compounded by the arrival of H. By the time the focus shifted back to the programme, it had gone past halfway; past the mid programme commercial. It was Jegede who was again in view. It is not clear if this was a coincidence or if Jegede's presence was the attraction to the screen. He was again making hurtful remarks to the under-privileged person - Natt, the same one whom he had earlier referred to as "Oku igbe". This trend did not escape the attention of the audience.

"This man is just abusing people today."

"Maybe he's in a bad mood."

R: What did he used to do before? [sic]

"He promotes himself before"

. . . .

It is interesting that they had not associated the abusive nature with the character. Instead, they had seen him as someone who "promotes" himself. The fact that he did it at other people's expense had not been a point that they had noted. The embedded negative aspect of the behaviour was thus ignored. They liked the character.

The viewing continued with subjects viewing corporately, as they voiced their observations, commenting on what they saw.

"See this one, 'senior service' houseboy"

"He's looking to see if he's boss is coming or not."

TV houseboy: You see that short boy . . ."

TV(Jegede): "Short boy!"

TV: "And the boy is taller than him!"

Laughter

There was silence in the group, following the laughter attracted by the irony. The group again concentrated on the programme, but they had missed a part of the message during the uproar.

Not long afterwards, there was another distracting outburst as the subjects verbalised their views on the story line.

On the screen, Jegede was supposed to be patting Zaccheus on the head.

S2: You are beating him.

S1: "Zacceu!" Zaccheus that is what he's calling Zacceu.

S2: He gave him money.

B1: You mean Jegede gave him money?

S2: Yes, For leaking the secret.

[Transition to new scene accompanied by music. B1 hummed along. It was Zebrudaya's home, and sighting him prompted another commentary.]

S1: But I don't like this man's English.

B1: Electric fire! [referring to the man's English]

S1: It's no longer interesting.

R: Why?

S1: Yes! He's overdoing it. I prefer Jegede to him.

. . .

Just then the character committed another grammatical blunder.

". . . the worst of all are that"

The subject was quick to point this out to buttress her position. The discussion of that led to another digression in the viewing. There was another session of "grapevine" reports on the Zebrudaya's lifestyle in reality. This illustrates the fluidity between the reality and the illusion perceived on the screen.

Even as they "ignored" the set, and entertained themselves, they did not miss the other grammatical blunders, by other members of the cast. They were aware of what was going on.

TV - Ovularia: Wetin you dey chop, by this time of o' clock.

Chorus S1 and S2: "By this time of o' clock?

S1: That one is irritating me.

Chorused hiss by S1 and S2

R: But don't people speak like that in the village?

Chorus: Noo!

S1: Like Zebrudaya?

S2: Noo!

S1: No, they speak, if you say like Jegede in the village, or like Ovularia in the village, but not like Zebrudaya. 'If you are arrival' They will say "When you don come" or "When you come". Of course in the village they do not know the meaning of arrival.

Chorused Hun! [non - verbal agreement].

The subjects were aware that the purpose of the programme was to be humorous.

"The essence of this thing is to make people laugh".

What they objected to, was the exaggeration in Zebrudaya's presentation of the group which he represented. There is an acknowledgement that this category of people, will mutilate the English language, especially with

their pidgin English, but Zebrudaya was seen as mutilating even the pidgin English. Though they agreed that it was funny at a time, with prolonged exposure to it, they had started to get "irritated".

B1: That's his own creation, he's not imitating somebody.

S2: That's his own, but his imagination is now, I think he is being out of fashion now."

As the group's focus on the programme shifted back and forth, they still managed to keep up the trend of the story line. For instance despite the discussion from which the above was extracted, and the exit of S1 to attend to her baby, on her return, she was able to identify what was going on in the programme.

The pattern of verbalising the individual observations, continued. This contributed to the possibility of having a corporate reading of the programme, and it also helped to fill in the gaps for the absentee viewer.

There was keen interest as the subject followed the unfolding plot. They watched how the criminals, who were referred to as "business dealers" planned and tried to hide stolen telecommunications cables in Chief Zebrudaya's spare room. The "dealers" had connived with the Chief's houseboy, who had leaked the plot to Jegede. "Nathi", the wretched man had also been involved in the deal. He had been promised the post of "Commissioner for long throat".

The title of the post was striking, and the subjects repeated it. Nathi, did have a long throat, and also characteristically exhibits the behaviour which in the local parlance is described as "long throat". He was always coveting good things, which he was often deprived of. He was

also very gullible as in this episode, where he had been quickly taken in, by the "business dealers".

The viewers, were quick to see through the action of the swindlers' actions. There was a voice in the group which was full of contempt for Nathi, for his involvement. However as the story evolved, there was sympathy for Nathi, within the group.

S1: Nathi, Commissioner for long throat.

B1: Even Nathi!

S1: Ehen, poor Nathi. You know, Nathi has long throat, so they call him commissioner for long throat.

In their anticipation of the evolving story line, the subjects drifted, occasionally viewing the fictional programme as "reality". They predicted the pattern that the programme would take, using their experience of such patterns in real life.

B1: They [the "culprits"] will say it is the first time.

R: They will say it is the first time?

B1: Yes, you know when you steal, they catch you, you will say it is the first time.

S2: This one [the penalty for the offence] is firing squad.
...

The viewing was concluded with subjects approving the outcome of the story, and also using that as a pivot, into approving government action on the issue which the drama had been focused.

Ovularia was shown scolding Nathi, for getting involved with people of questionable character. He was also admonished for damaging the newly installed electricity supply; showing him how he had punished himself,

as well as others in his bid to make a quick buck. The programme's line of reasoning was approved by all, even though from differing angles. What is interesting was that each of the deductions was expressed for all to hear.

S2: You see, they won't get anything anymore. [referring to amenities from government. Note the justification in her tone]

S1: I like their stuff.

B1: I like what the government is doing now. They are arresting many people because of these NEPA [electricity authority] cables and those things.

S2: That's right! Two of you one should face front, one should face back. [sic, - referring to the punishment being meted out to the offenders.]

S1: Zacceu, is gone. [as Zaccheus, one of the culprits, bolts out of the room, escaping arrest] Zacceu, Zacceu, "Oku igbe!"

B1: If the public can be doing all these things,. it will work out well.

S1: Hun, You see the problem we have in this country, people will just say "It's government own"

B1: Thank you, look at LSA or Lagos state, FGN [state and federal government numbered vehicles] See how they are using them.

. . .

Each of the subjects drew individual conclusions about the programme. S2 found justification for government restraint in providing social amenities in certain instances; S1 found value in the viewing experience - "I like their stuff." referring to the logic of the presentation. B1's observation was that which drew on the programme, to approve of another phase in government's activities; that of apprehending those who sabotage its plans of spreading physical development.

Here again, the fact that each person voiced his deductions, facilitated a group discussion, which led to an explicit statement of the group's

position.

The discussion carried on, introducing other government efforts, and acts of the citizens. This time, the government was excused, whilst the citizens were condemned. On the whole, the programme still evoked a negative sentiment against the society as one thing led to another.

A news item which B1 had heard on a radio newscast was introduced into the conversation. This aroused the group's interest in the TV newscast, and they consciously sought it out. This had set a mood with which the news was to be received. They were very attentive.

As they waited attentively for the news, S2 reported another headline which had caught her attention earlier in the day. It was the news of Rhajiv Gandhi's death. The subjects were visibly shocked and shaken by the news. It was obvious that B1 and S2 were more informed about the current affairs on the world news scene, than S1. This was apparent in the negotiation of the information. Whilst they reasoned confidently on known facts, S1 followed from an emotional / human interest angle. It is not clear if this was due to the personality of the subject, or if it was as a result of her busy schedule, and consequently, her limited exposure to the media. This is worthy of closer investigation.

S2: Rhajiv Gandhi is dead.

S1: Rhajiv Gandhi?

B1: They killed him o! It was an assassination.

S2: That India sef! The man that talked yesterday. [sic]

B1: After talking yesterday, . . . You know they had elections yesterday, they were to hold another one.

S2: And he was winning! I don't know why he should come back, you know. . . it's just like a tribalistic something.

S1: They did shoot the mother like that?

S2: Ehen! [affirmative] That's how the mother died.

B1: In short, their family line, just like that now. Is he related to Mhatma Ghandi?

S2: Yes, it's the same line; he was killed too. . . and the thing is they have good ruling power. They don't misbehave when they are in power so those criminals will like to . . .

B1: It's not criminals, it's a religious problem.

S1: Had he any children before he died?

. . .

It was not yet time for the news, but these discussions had set the subjects up for the evenings news. The conversation had developed out of a cue from the earlier comedy.

Condemnable acts in society - reckless driving of government vehicles - unscrupulous students groups on the news - anticipation of the news - report of another striking headline, the obituary in the news.

In the mean time, whilst the group awaited the news, they sat before the set as the commercial break was featured. The Blue Band margarine commercial attracted the baby's attention and this drew the adults into the commercial. B1, confirmed that the baby liked both the Blue Band and the 7 UP adverts.

The focus shifted to the baby for a short time, and thereafter, someone commended the quality of the reception from the station in view, LTV. The commendation was at the expense of OCTV which they noted was not clear especially after the recent rainfall.

The Maltina advert was found attractive. S2 sang along to the jingle, and she followed the segment on the basketball game, excited as the ball

was dunked in the basket. She had once played basketball.

The discussion of the adverts was superficial. On this occasion, there was no critical evaluation of the message, or the products. Instead, being prompted by the mention of a name, they discussed other developments on a trial which had been much celebrated in the news. They were still on this when the network news was started.

The lead headline on the highlights of the news, was the obituary of Rhajiv Ghandi; one of the awaited items. Their response of sympathy to the information was non - verbal. This was not prolonged. They were expecting the details and other items.

B1 was visibly excited as the highlight of the anticipated report was mentioned in the headlines. Thereafter, the news was watched in silence. But S1 was distracted by the baby. This time, she was ignored by B1 and S2 who paid attention to the news. They saved their comments till the end of the lead report - the Ghandi story. Their comments were about the silent visual report which came at the tail end.

S2: Look at the Italian wife., look at the wife . . . look at the car . . . but that's him with the wife. . . that was yesterday's something [report]

B1: The thing pained me when I heard! [pained in this context expresses the deep hurt]

The commentary led to further discussions on the issue. It did not persist, as some members of the group (B1 and S2) were set on attending the news. Their comments were thus abridged, so that they could attend the subsequent item. This was different from the pattern observed in S1 in location 3. She was not mindful of subsequent items. She was not

particularly interested in the news.

The comments of these subjects on the news of the Ethiopian president's escape from his country in the face of a "rebellion", was to compare the action with that of another African president who was in a similar crisis. The Liberian president, in his case, had taken an opposite course of action. The consensus of opinion was that -

"He should have fled"

In other words, the wisdom in this particular instance, was seen and approved. They had judged this, using the known outcome of that earlier reported news event. The event had happened months before. This process was similar to all their "negotiations" of news items.

The news report on Ethiopia continued with visuals on the situation in the country. It focused on the poverty and the plight of the people, although, that was not what the story was about. It was not surprising that there was a response to the visual report. This illustrated how the visual report had added to the manifest meaning of the story that was heard. B1 declared -

"This is the worst country in the world!"

At this time, S1 had left the set, to serve the evening meal. S2 was left in charge of the baby. There is an apparent difference in the attitudes of both women. While S1 was unruffled about the distractions which accompanied her viewing, S2 was. In the the course of minding the child, which proved to be a distraction, she was still mindful of the news. She thus relied on B1 to fill her in, when she had missed any detail. It is possible that the difference in attitude, can be

attributed to the "normalcy" of the routine. S2, was yet a spinster, independent and (relatively) lacking responsibilities; she was not accustomed to the distractions that such could bring. S1 because of her roles, had become so accustomed to distractions to her viewing, that it was no longer an issue. This was the case with the other mothers encountered in the course of the study.

By the time the news had focused on local news items, the discussion surrounding the stories became more lively. More of the reports were supplemented with details from the "grapevine".

The item on copyright law in Nigeria for example, led back to the issue of the disputes in the production team for the comedy watched earlier. The discussion carried on to a point where there was total disregard for the other information coming from the set. It can be deduced that the stories did not hold much interest for the subjects. Even if that were not so, the interest value on the stories did not compare with those of other topical affairs in their world. This lack of attentiveness, carried on till the commercial break. It only stopped at the resumption of the second segment of the news.

The lead story in that segment of the news, was the announcement of the constitution of a commission of inquiry into recent riots in Bauchi state, (one of the northern states in the federation). Even without hearing the details of the story, S2 had her notions of how it would have been constituted. She only voiced this after the announcement had been made. Her anticipation had been accurate.

S2: They must be Hausa, only Hausas and Moslems.

B1: For the commission of inquiry?

S2: Did you see any Christians there? It's true! Their AFRC, [Armed Forces Ruling Council] no Christians. If they put a Christian, it will be a "Josephine" [that is a woman, presumably a person who can't make an impact]

B1: That is why these people came here two weeks ago from Iran, you know! That commission from Iran, military something for, what do they call this court . . . martial court or so, they came to Nigeria to advise them on how to implement the . . .

R: Sharia Law?

B1: Yes! Sharia law, yes. Committee on Sharia law.

S2: The Sharia law is a different thing, it can't be for this.

B1: Eh, who knows?

There is a visible distrust of the government underlying these readings. It is so strong, that even though the subjects were aware of the deliberate misreading, they considered their own deductions, to be more plausible, than the explanations expressed in the news. In fact, their deductions, were not presented as suppositions, but as logical "facts". They cited other instances to buttress their position.

In doing this, they had ignored the news, although they were still able to follow what was being read. They could thus break off their conversation, when they wanted, to attend to the aspect that interested them.

"Ehen, listen now"

With that cue, the group focused attention on another news item, which they had been waiting for. It was the news about the "unscrupulous students". They listened in silence as the details of the story was read. When they had got the gist of the story, they responded, analysing the situation, and taking sides. S1 had been excluded from all of these. It was only S2 and B1 who were free to watch and judge. This explains,

(if only in part), why they are more conversant with current affairs.

B1 and S2 were not in agreement in the positions they took away from the last story. Though they both condemned the excesses of the students, they could not agree on where the excesses started.

This is interesting because they, were themselves, (postgraduate) students, like those whom the story was about. They were thus a part of the group who were, (supposedly) being represented by the agitating students.

They did not identify any innuendoes in the story. It was received at its face value and the students were assessed on individual considerations of fairness, (relevance).

B1: The demands should not be listened to, it's irrelevant.
[sic]

S2: They have some points there but they spoilt it with . . .
eh

B1: Which points? Which points? I don't see any points there.

S2: The only thing is they spoilt it with that secret society

. . . .

B1: Those things they are asking for is not their business --
- ; that they should reduce working hours . . . Are they
working? Does it concern them? The people who are
working, are they complaining?

At the end of the argument, S2 sympathised with B1's reasoning, but it is not certain that she had changed her position.

At the end of the viewing, it was indeed clear that the subjects, had formed an agenda of what to receive from the news, even prior to the

newscast. They had used their exposure to other media of information in doing so. The agenda determined the attitude, the degree of concentration with which they attended the various items.

There were some other items which caught their attention during the newscast. In some instances as in one in the third segment, their attention was got by a visual cue. In that example, they had not been attracted to listen to the news itself. Instead, they expressed their objections to the subject of the picture, rather vehemently. He was the Minister for Information.

The protagonist on this occasion was S1 who had hitherto been "passive". By this time, she had settled down to view.

S1: This bush man! He's . . .

There was laughter all round as a result of vehemence with which the words were uttered, but there was agreement with the sentiments expressed.

B1: The man is always pompous . . .

S1: He said newscasters should not dress well again. [sic] . . . That they should not overdress. That they should pay more attention to the news they are reading, as if they have to study the news they are reading. . . . When they dress well, it is the pride of the country. [my emphasis]

B1: [affirming] Country! Because this is national something [TV] you know.

S2: And may be the satellite, maybe you know. . . .ehen!

S2's point was made clearer in subsequent conversation, and this was that with the technology of satellite, it may be possible to pick up the signals beyond the national borders. Like the S1 in location 3, S1 had stressed the importance of the newscaster's dressing, to her

appreciation of the news. She had even projected other "logical" reasons why this must be addressed. This indicates how these subjects "define" of news.

In their projections, they cited the newscaster in view [Sienne Razaq - Lawal] as the object of the minister's utterance. This was another supposition that was presented as a fact. They were bent on "finding" a malicious motive for the minister's action. This is an interesting illustration of the genesis of rumour.

What is probably more interesting for the purposes of the study is that the news was ignored. The subjects did not attend to the information which was brought to them. Rather, they produced their own "news" based on the cues that they had received from the screen. As a result, while it is possible for them to honestly say they had watched the news, yet they may not be able to accurately re - present what the news had said. This may be an explanation for why there was an apparent difficulty for many of the subjects encountered, to present a typical account of a newscast, even when they had claimed to have been exposed to news.

Another interesting feature of the comments was that which reflects the "Hypodermic needle" thinking towards the workings of the media. It is interesting that the viewers themselves hold this view of the medium.

B1: . . . The only thing is that he feels that when Sienne is reading, people are not concentrating on the news.

S2: [that] They are looking at the dressing.

B1: But that is not the concern of this thing. [news] The essence of this thing is that once the instruction is given out, you wait for the reaction of people. If people are not reacting positively, you know that maybe the news did not reach. [my emphasis]

S2: They don't even know that this news they are reading; they give news in the morning, in the evening it's still the same news you will hear, so you won't pay much attention to all of them. You will have selected areas; those ones you didn't pick up in the morning, you'll just listen to them.

The last comment (by S2's) confirms and explains in part, an earlier observation - that the subjects were selective in their exposure to the various items. The explanation is deemed to be partial because it does not take into consideration, some of the other observations which perhaps the subject was not even aware of. Some of these were seen operating, even in other locations. The following is another example.

As H emerged from the room, S1 proceeded to the kitchen to get the meal. S2 and B1 were engaged by H on personal matters.

Following a momentary mention of the sad event about Rhajiv Ghandi, H was brought up to date on the story as he had missed the news. By so doing, they also missed other items. Thereafter, the siblings went on to discuss matters of personal concern. Again, it was the sighting of the president in an advertisement, and then the sports news story which captured the interest of the subjects.

The family concentrated on their dinner as the news was rounded off. There was a lot of "clutter" on their attention that any information coming from the set, had to permeate. None the less, the announcement of the next date for Enviromental Sanitation, which had behavioural implications was received. The announcement was of an exercise which imposed restrictions on movement during certain hours of a particular day. This confirmed that the media was indeed used to get instructions, which the subjects must comply with. The presence of noise from

themselves did not obstruct that.

As the news came to an end, OGTV was the first station which the group opted for. The pictures were grainy so LTV was selected, at the request of H. The decision was not contended.

There was a musical interlude on at the time. The particular song being featured was a Christian song and S1 hummed along to the tune. The song was in Yoruba, and so she was not quite sure of what it said. She reported that she had seen it often enough, to have caught the tune. The visuals had influenced her liking for the song.

The researcher was asked to translate the song into English.

"E ma sora Jesu fere de o,
Gbogbo oju ni yio ri, l'awo sanmo.
'Tori lojo oun, ko ma ni si nigbati, nigbati,
Awawi kan ko si, ko se ni ti yio r'ojo fun o"

Meaning -

"Let all watch out, for Jesus will soon return,
All eyes will behold him in the clouds,
And on that day there will be no excuses,
There shall be no advocates helping you plead your case."

Though it was an interlude which they had seen several times, access to the verbal message had made them re-evaluate the message as though it were new.

They were all touched but they responded to the message in different ways. S1 soberly pondered on the words. S2 got up to dance to the music. B1 tried to situate the location where the visuals were shot.

Hitherto, the subjects had only appreciated the melody, and they had been struck by the words, "nigbati nigbati" - an appellation which had been given to Yorubas by other ethnic groups, because of the frequency of the words in narrative conversation.

S1 continued following the interlude whilst the others had "switched off" the viewing. But they were still mindful of the music in the background. S2 was the first to complain when the interlude was removed abruptly, and replaced by the Yoruba news. Although it was clear to this group, that the musical was an interlude and would soon give way to the substantive programme, they expected some courtesy, not an abrupt withdrawal even if the programme had been such that only remotely sustained their interest. It was a matter of courtesy as another subject (in location 10) articulated. The offence was as bad here, as it was for those who were, in fact, more interested in those interludes, (such as in locations 1 and 2).

Though they were not very competent with the language in which the news was being read, B1 followed the visuals, until S2 requested that the channel be changed. The reason given was not the incompetence with the language, it was the perception of it being, "the same news again". This is to suggest that they could have been interested, had it been a different news (for example the CBN news). The question here is what constitutes "sameness" in the news. Language had not been identified as a mark of distinction, but the content and the visuals.

An NTA channel was selected but it was not consciously watched. The discussion programme which came up was rejected, and the group returned to the Yoruba newscast on LTV. It was not watched, yet there were no

moves to switch off the set. It later came out in the course of conversation, that the normal pattern of viewing at such a time would have been to watch a video.

S2 later requested for the discussion programme, so that she could hear about the "Banking System". Even when it was selected, it was not watched consciously. Besides the fact they were more interested in sharing each other's experiences for the day, the programme was not "real" to them as reflected in S1's outburst in response to a cue from within the programme.

S1: Who are those whose salaries can build houses. Mention them; merchant bankers. Teachers can't build houses anymore.

The above reaction evoked a discussion on the level to which people had been reduced as a result of the inflation. This illustrates the fact that a lack of conscious attention to a programme, does not mean that the programme's message is lost. Besides, it shows how the programme had evoked an assessment of the larger framework than that manifest in its construction.

There is also the issue about the relevance of the programme. This group of viewers exemplify those whom the programme was supposed to target, yet they were as unimpressed by the programme, as the unintended audience. The question therefore remains, whose interests does the programme serve?

The group's attention in viewing generally, soon began to wane. B1 who had intended waiting for the movies of the day found that the wait was too tedious. He thus prepared to retire just about 10.00 p.m. S1 expressed her preference for drama as opposed to films anyway.

S1: Drama is better than film. . . because you always have something clear. When learning anything from drama, you will see the lesson better than film. Film, at times they just end, that way, there would be no conclusion. But for drama, wherever it ends you have a lesson. There is a theme. You will be able to identify a theme unlike films, especially oyinbo ones. [sic - meaning imported ones]

The key to the subject's attitude to films is in the very last comment. There are invariably, very few films, which are produced in Nigeria, which get scheduled on Nigerian television. Some of the programmes shown as movies on certain television stations are themselves dramas, not films. Subject did not make this distinction. By inference therefore, what she is opposed to, as is evident in her comment, is her inability to draw conclusions from foreign productions, typified by films. There is a similarity in this position and that of some other subjects (as in locations 6, 8, and 11) who also did not like films, because of the foreign accent; incongruent culture; and also the duration. However, there was S2, who professed to being an avid viewer of films; a habit she had formed since being very young.

The subjects continued the discussion, digressing to the issue of the (technical) quality of the stations that had served them. They also expressed their personal preferences. The summary of their discussion is as follows.

- i. The television stations in the Eastern part of Nigeria were perceived as being deprived of resources, and consequently, they deprive the viewers in those parts, of the network programmes. The concern expressed was for the "interesting" dramas.
- ii. The state owned stations were "very good" - because they had "sophisticated equipment" and they - "have good films, any recent film, if they see, they will show it". Films are better enjoyed when there is quality reception - clear and sharp pictures and "proper colour".
- iii. Personality traits affect viewing habits. The extroverted, party - going person was less interested in viewing, than the home loving person. Even for each individual, there were clear distinctions as

the roles expected in each phase of life, seemed to have affected the amount of viewing. This has already been discussed.

The depths of the above point go beyond the scope of this study, but it certainly is interesting to recognise that psychographic traits do influence viewing patterns. There is still need for caution in the identification of these, especially as they could be indiscreet. For instance, age should not be seen merely as a label of chronological growth, but as an indicator of dispositions and responsibilities.

The conversation was carried on till about 11.00 p.m. The set was still on but it was not watched even though the subjects intermittently shopped round the channels to assess what was on.

Observation ended at about 11.00 p.m. when there was no more viewing apparent. The subjects were either staying up to chat, or were politely waiting for researcher to make her exit. They were certainly doing both.

Day 3

Observation commenced at about 7.00 p.m. The station that was on, was OGTV. The group had tuned in to watch Another Life, and there was absolute concentration. The baby soon became restless, and the mother (S1) had to pacify her. Soon after, S1 had to get the family's meal ready. On the contrary, B1 who had been teaching, abandoned the exercise, when he remembered that it was time for Another Life. The intrigue in the plot remained engaging, (Re. - Day 1.) but it was disrupted by a phone call.

The programme was followed by a musical interlude, and then a Yoruba drama.

At the beginning of the Yoruba drama, B1 switched the channels around. He then selected LTV which had a musical programme, Schools' Choir. There was no visible attention to the programme. The programme was used as ambience. The catchy melody of one of the renditions was also used to cajole the baby, to entice her into eating her food.

H arrived early from work on this day. He arrived at about 7.45 p.m. He went straight into the room, as was usual with him, to get ready for his dinner.

This day, S1 did not follow him, as she normally did. She requested for the channels to be changed. She was interested in a particular drama programme from the network service - The Young Ones.

Her request was prompted by her knowledge of the scheduling pattern, and a reminder of what day of the week it was. It was the "admirable" use of the English language that made the programme attractive to her.

B1: What's today, Thursday?

S1: No, Wednesday, the Young Ones. That Young Ones, they speak "oyinbo", Hey! I like their grammar.

Despite the enthusiasm with which the programme was sought, the reception on the channel could not be endured because of the poor quality. The group grudgingly returned to the Schools' Choir. But it was not long before the group began to enjoy the programme. The viewing soon prompted a discussion on the state of schools in the nation. For this group, the programme was used as an interlude, even though it was a substantive programme. Rather than respond to the music, the subjects had found the programme, stimulating an assessment of the educational

system. The programme had thus evoked a meaning that was beyond what it was intended to bring.

Following the programme, was a slot for personal paid announcements. There was a particular announcement which was quite insistent. There were several congratulatory messages to the wife of the Lagos state military governor, who had been conferred the title of "Yeye Jagun Nla" of Lagos. The subjects did not understand what the title meant, because of their limited competence with the Yoruba language. This led to a misreading of the message.

S1: What is Yeye Jagun Nla?

B1: . . . Yeye, oh, they have finished these people, or doesn't yeye mean something useless?

There is a Yoruba word spelt yeye, which means worthless. The pronunciation of that is slightly different from another word, which is also spelt the same. This latter is used for respectable women; literally meaning - mother.

In the absence of one who was sufficiently familiar with the intricacies of the language, the reading, at least for that time, may have been erroneous. There was however, the fact that such a reading, contradicted the connotation of the congratulatory message. It is not likely that such a misreading could have endured. This is especially in view of the communal nature of viewing, which tends to generate (group) discussions. The set was soon ignored, whilst the baby was fed. This was during a commercial break. Though they were not visibly attending the adverts, one of the advertisements, evoked a grapevine report on the personal life of the manufacturer. The product was not discussed, the set was ignored as the report was analysed and discussed. This trend continued

even into the slot for the News at Eight, the major newscast on that channel.

The news only became engaging when there was an item on the visit of certain Youth Corpers, (recent graduates on national service) to the State House. There was an identification with, and thus an affinity for the subjects of this news item, hence the interest.

Further on in the newscast, there was mix up in the film reports. The subjects blamed the newscaster for this.

S1: Why did they not bring that other man? This one whenever she's reading, she's always apologising. . . Look at her, [unmasked disdain in her tone] . . . I prefer Lekan Ogunbanwo's reading. even though he's always making his mouth like this [contorting her face]

S1's criticism was evidently from her predisposition towards the newscaster. She had not been following the news as far as one could see, but she did not miss the error that was therein - the fact that there was an apology for the mix up in the visual report. The reaction was an illustration of the suggestion that the success of the programme was linked with the perceived personality of the presenter.

The reaction led to a discussion of the other newscasters, including those from other stations, notably, from network. Two qualities which were identified as being important were the voice, and the facial looks. The very outburst itself however shows that a smooth flow of delivery was important. Yet this had not been mentioned. This illustrates the limitations of certain research methods in the study of such a phenomenon as this. Viewers can not always be exhaustive in accounting for the qualities that determine the viewing pleasure.

The news item following the above reported, was one on the cabinet appointments in Lagos state. There was a part of the governor's speech at the ceremony, which attracted a comment from B1. The comment, was B1's query, but it was projected to one of the newly appointed commissioners. This was based on his own reading of the expressions on the man's face.

TV [Governor]: By their appointment, they have ceased to be career civil servants.

B1: [aghast] What does he mean by that? This man does not know, o! And he's one of them. He's surprised. He doesn't like it . . . He's one of them. . .

There was yet another reading which was another projection, based this time on experience.

B1: The problem is that once this man is going out in December, all of them [will have to go] because new governor will like to make new appointments; the people who helped in passing elections. So all these appointments now are going there to chop the remaining something [sic] Just like my friend who was appointed just as he came out of the seminary. . .

[In other words, all the new appointees are only going to help themselves to what is left of the depleted public funds. This reasoning was based on the fact that since the governor was to hand over power soon, there was no time for there to be any worth while contribution from the new cabinet.]

B1's "news talk" attracted attention away from the real news. By this time, both S1 and H retired with the baby. Researcher was left with B1 before the set.

Both S1 and H re-emerged in time to catch the tail end of the news, featuring international news. There was an item on the funeral of Rhajiv Gandhi. This evoked a discussion on the desirability of cremation. Each person assessed the practise from a personal stand point. There was no attempt to reach a consensus.

Besides the discussion of the above, a practice which was alien to their culture, there were other aspects of the report which was negotiated, against personal standards, (preferences). The wisdom in the widow's acceptance of the invitation to run for the elections in her husband's stead, for example. In this instance, there was a consensus against the widow's decision. S1 was most vehemently opposed to the decision.

The newscast gave way to more personal paid announcements. These were unheeded. They were mostly a repeat of the earlier transmitted messages anyway.

LTV's showing of Another Life succeeded the announcement. Though it was acclaimed, it was not attended with as much concentration as the earlier showing. LTV was behind in the episodes that it showed. While Another Life was being shown, S1 went into the kitchen to get the meal, and B1 brought H abreast of what had transpired during the day. There was an intermittent focus on the programme by B1. The programme had not been completely ignored.

Contrary to the above, S1 was desperate to watch the drama The Young Ones She arrived promptly at the set, for the programme. The reception was not clear. H adjusted the aerial all to no avail. Rather than miss the programme completely, the subjects, encouraged on by S1 endured the

poor quality. The programme, a drama series, had the attention of both the husband and the wife (S1, and H).

Together, they tried to make sense of the programme, especially as they had missed the beginning, whilst trying to improve the reception. In doing this, they read both the apparent and the implied.

H: So that girl is her sister.

S1: He says she's her sister.

H: That guy is pretending.

S1: The girl does not know now, the girl has never heard of a half brother.

R: Was the guy telling the truth?

H: No! He's telling lies, so he's actually playing the part very well. . . It's all lies, but I don't know whether he's actually lying because, the man that sent him to spy, he went to steal his things and run out again. So I don't know which part he is in now. [sic]

[The boy had stolen from the man who sent him to spy, thus suggesting that the boy was on his own mission]

Despite her clamourings and her effort to watch the programme, S1's viewing of the programme was still interrupted. She still had to go to the kitchen intermittently, and she also had to attend to the baby. Each time she returned, she depended on H to help her make sense of what was going on. At the end of the viewing, she spontaneously confessed that she had not understood what the programme had been about.

The family became engrossed in their own affairs, not heeding the set, when the programme came to an end and advertisements were shown. This was until S1 saw a familiar face; a face which reminded her of someone she knew. Even then, they did not pay attention to the message itself.

Because it was musical, the lyrics to which the subject had been repeatedly exposed were recited, without giving it much thought. Because the song was in Yoruba, the subject (S1) had again mutilated the message. The song, as she sang it, was unintelligible.

There was an argument about the sequence of a commercial, It turned out that S1 was wrong, and H who had a more limited amount of viewing, was right. This need not be surprising, because, though he only watched for more limited time than S1, H was privileged to have less interruptions in his viewing.

The national network news came on next. The group was attentive to the news because they wanted greater details of Ghandi's funeral. The visuals from the network service were still poor, as in the case of the drama which it had presented earlier. Because this was news, and was to be transmitted by even the state government stations, (OGTV, LTV) the subjects searched round for a station with better reception. There was none. They opted for the station with the best visuals, and tolerable audio. This choice seems to infer that the visuals were of more importance to the audience as regards TV news. Earlier the subject's had mentioned "Looks" as a quality they look for in the newscaster.

The response to one of the items further confirms the suggestion. The story was about the President who was commissioning an agricultural project somewhere. The subjects' focus was on the affluence displayed.

H: Ah! This is another grand style. [shot in view, is of a car]

R: What type of motor [car] is this?

H: Mercedes 3 - doors.

B1: It's the motor of the emir. [sic]

H: That's the type they killed Murtala Muhammed in. Is it still in the museum?

. . . .

The conversation digressed to other matters, taking a cue from the above. The news item itself was not attended, with any intense concentration. It was the visual cue that had on this occasion, supplied a topic for the alternative agenda.

As another news item was introduced by the female newscaster, the subjects, hailed, and saluted her beauty. Again, it seemed that the subjects were more concerned with the visual elements of the newscast than with the audio aspects of the report. The reports which followed, were "ignored" and these incidentally lacked footage of actualities.

The report which attracted a "related" response reaction from the subjects, particularly H and B1 was that about Nigeria giving financial assistance to some other African nation. They wondered about the sense in Nigeria, attempting to help solve the problem of others when it was yet to solve its own. It was the "illogicality" of government policy, and action that attracted their comment.

The above report had been preceded by another which S1 had found visually exciting. She had in fact drawn attention to the spectacle - "See the horse is dancing." Because that experience had dovetailed into the news item, the subjects had the chance of receiving the story from the very beginning. In this, we have an illustration of how careful juxtaposition of visuals, can pull the viewer into the substance of a report. The following are examples of how engaging those reports

accompanied with visuals were in this location.

Illustration # 1: Bhajiv Ghandi's lying in state:

S1: Oh the daughter and the wife! I thought they said he had 2 sons.

B1: No it's a son and a daughter.

S1: Oh no!

B1: The son is 20.

S1: Oh no!

B1: The daughter is 19.

S1: Oh no!

B1: You see now, they'll wound these people. [referring to the uncontrollable mob, and police control. This had not been included in the report]

S1: [of file report] Oh, that was when it happened, that's the man.

The report was from that point heard in silence, only punctuated by S1 exclamations of grief.

. . . .

Illustration # 2: Winnie Mandela's arrest:

[S1 is watching in between doing other things.]

S1: Look at how they are dragging her!

B1: It's true oh!

S1: Ah, Ah! [exclaiming the incredulous.]

R: Is this not Winnie Mandela? [to ascertain subjects' recognition of the character]

S1 & B1: It's her.

B1: Look at how they are pushing her [disbelief]

S1: She's the one, she's the one. Look at her, look at her. Oh no! Oh no! [shock and disbelief]

B1: Yes it's true, it's an assault. [affirming the position expressed in the news story.]

. . . .

In illustration 1 above, S1 used the visual report to clarify that which she had already known about the story. Whereas she had thought, the man was survived by two sons, she saw him being mourned by a son, and a daughter. This was easily registered to her especially in the light of the distraction within which she viewed.

In the second example, there is a similar situation, where subjects though disputing the logic, of what they saw, could not deny that it happened. As a result, what ordinarily would have been incredible, had to be accepted as credible, because they had seen it happen.

In both instances, that they had seen the actualities from the event, had heightened their attention to the stories, and increased their understanding of the event. They were in fact able to take away more than the report was able to say. (For example the treatment of the mob at Ghandi's funeral)

Both reports were, incidentally, from international wire services. There was no such attribution on the news, but the quality of the visual was distinct from the usual local stories. The subjects did not comment on this, but it is highlighted here because of the implication of the observation to the production of the news. . . .

As the report continued, S1 herself became a source of distraction for H and B1, Rather than get up and do things for herself, she gave instructions to S3. These instructions had to do with the preparation of the evening meal. The distraction was consciously ignored, until there was a speech being made by the Vice president. The subjects did not want to miss that.

Despite the assistance that she had from S3, S1 soon had to get up to serve the evening meal. H had to attend to a guest who arrived midway through the news. It was B1 who had a relatively uninterrupted viewing of the news.

There was a repeat exposure of the congratulatory messages to the governor's wife during the commercial break. There was still a negative response to the message. The subjects failed to see the need for it. They also found it "boring". They objected to the fact that the accompanying visual was a lifeless, photograph.

"They should have shown her alive."

"She should have been dancing or doing the "Yeye". [- Mother]

"Or even visuals of a similar ceremony that had been done before."

In spite of the fact that they were aware of the correct pronunciations and meaning, there was a point where S1 deliberately mispronounced the title, thus making the object of attention, (that is the governor's wife), an object of ridicule. This was an expression of her objection to the message.

"They should carry this woman away now, we have heard. Yeye of Lagos [pronounced deliberately to read The ridicule of Lagos].

By the third segment of the news when the subjects had all settled down before the screen again, the evening meal had been served and there was progressively less interest in the proceedings on the news. The only report which permeated the clutter was the repeat of the announcement on the title for the governor's wife. The subjects were thoroughly fed up.

S1: Ah, ah! what is this now? . . . It's too much now. And it's free advertisement oh! This is how they misuse our money. God sees you all.

This outburst led to another discussion of the excesses of government. H was more cautious, blaming the populace, and those responsible for making the decisions that permit such announcements on the air. He chose to excuse the governor's wife. In conclusion, even though the personification of the government was excused, the announcement had still reinforced the disaffection which the subjects had for the society.

Later on, H mentioned in passing, that he was anticipating a programme that would feature a personal acquaintance. He was to be on a personality interview on OGTV, but the programme never came. He felt he had been misinformed.

A knowledge of the station's operations suggests however, that there was a last minute rescheduling of the programme, which was not announced. As a result, H, was disappointed. His carefully planned exposure was frustrated. Even though he had been informed by the guest on the programme himself, the schedule was not reliable. This type of disappointment does not encourage station loyalty. It is likely that the disappointment was experienced by other relations and friends of the guest.

As the subjects awaited the programme, the Yoruba news came on. H lamented, and exclaimed, - "Satellite dish!" - he longed to have one.

This illustrates the fact that TV viewers, even in this location, yearn

for an alternative, from which they believe they will have wider range, and so greater control on choice and better service.

The various channels were scanned to see which had the most tolerable service. They all seemed to be doing similar things. He endured because of the programme he was awaiting. When he realised that the guest on the programme was not whom he anticipated, the programme was not attended. The names mentioned within the programme were used as the cue for other deliberations. One thing led to another, within the grapevine reports, (personalities; diseases; youth corps scheme; geography of the nation; transport in Lagos)

Observation ended at this time (about 11. 00 p.m.). There was no viewing apparent.

Day 4

Observation commenced at about 8.30 p.m. Subject had gone to the hospital to be with her friend who was being operated upon, the following day. On arrival, she busied herself in the kitchen, although she popped into the living room intermittently. The reception of the set was poor. The pictures were grainy, and subject remarked this.

S1: All the stations are sick tonight.

B1 who had been at home earlier, was at the set. He seemed to be following the programming. He urged the baby to respond to the 7 UP Fido Dido commercial. The advert was associated with the baby because of the response which they normally observed from her.

An advertisement of a condom came on at a time when S1 was within

viewing range. There was a spontaneous rejection of the message.

S1: Shurrrup! I don't like that thing they are advertising.

B1: Why, is it not a product?

S1: Maybe I am parochial about it [publicised sex education]

Elsewhere, some subject had seen the presentation technique as being responsible for such spontaneous irritability that the advert evoked. Whilst they were not against the message of better planned family, they were put off by the young man knocking at their screen, telling them what he had chosen to do. The advert was perceived as being stiff, and unrealistic.

The station in view was a state government station, LTV. It was the one which had the most tolerable quality, of all the channels. None of the NTA stations could be tolerated. This meant that the programme which was anticipated earlier on in the week, "Checkmates", a soap opera from the network service could not be watched.

Since her choice was not available, subject concentrated on her chores in the kitchen. The set in the meantime was left unwatched. Before long LTV also joined the network service for the news.

The Ghandi story was still prominent and it still evoked the sympathy of the subjects. Unlike their response to the repetition of the announcement of the chieftaincy title for the governor's wife, they did not show any irritation or disaffection. They seemed pleased that they could receive up - dates on the event in India.

There was also, an update on the Ethiopian situation, which had been

followed through the week. (It was the country to which Nigeria had pledged aid the previous day). The story was still eye catching, and still thought provoking. The stories were considered to be events, yet unfolding, and worthy of public attention, whereas, the chieftaincy ceremony for the governor's wife was not deserving of repeated mention, even as paid announcements. The following is the summary of the views which the subjects took away from the report on Ethiopia.

"The whole of Africa is drifting."

"See Ethiopia, fighting hunger; the President has fled to Zimbabwe; the acting president dismissed the Ambassador to Zimbabwe for accepting him."

Such voiced perceptions of the highlights of the news enable the group to have a group reading of what is viewed. Such views also help set the household's agenda for discussion. There was thus the opportunity of introducing personal biases into the readings

Since the exit of S2, the other female subject, who was confident and knowledgeable of current affairs, such utterances were from the men, (H, and B1). In spite of her education, S1 was clearly dependent on other members of the group to make sense of the news.

S1 was also the most selective member of the group as regards which news items she would attend. There was a tendency for her to attend the human interest (angle of) stories, or those which held professional or personal interest. For instance after being given the explanation of the terms used in the report on oil exploration, S1 switched off the news until there was a news item on the 7 - point ultimatum demands which some students gave to the federal government. In responding to that, subject compared the incident to another event which would affect her.

"Maybe they will call off this year's Children's day because of the students threat. . . "

As often as possible, S1 did not allow her other pre - occupations to coincide with the viewing of those items in which she could have a say. Conversely, the trend was that she would slip off, to attend to her other chores, when the item was such that she would have been silent on. When she had switched off thus, and there was an item which caught her attention, there was a visible return to the programme. This was manifest either in her coming to sit before the set, or in becoming more attentive (usually by sitting up).

One story which caught the subject's attention thus, was an item from the state adjacent to her state of origin.

As was often the case, the report was watched but not listened to. Rather, an alternative report from the grapevine was run alongside the provided visuals.

"Is that not Anambra state governor, they say he is lazy ..."

S1 was again checked by H and B1 who were interested in the details of the TV report. It was about water supply. H was interested in the professional angle of the report. Again, S1 relied on him to make sense of even the visuals.

S1: What is this?

H: It's a machine to supply water. . . So this thing is built in the river bank . . .

There was a convergence of interest when the report was read from a more general base, than that which the news prescribed. By associating the

town in view with an acquaintance, interest in the story increased. Despite the poor quality of the report, the subjects were so keen on it that they increased the volume, and endured the noise.

H: This is ----'s village.

S1: Ehen see erosion.

There was soon a break in transmission from the studios. The subjects could thus not pursue their interest in the report to a logical conclusion. They searched round the various channels to see if the problem was a localised one. But it was not. The fault was from the network service itself, and it contributed to their view of the service.

"This NTA is useless! How can they be casting news and the thing will just trip off?" [sic]

The above outburst is indicative of the value that the subjects themselves placed on the news. Even S1 who's interest in the news was "superficial" was concerned. When she came out from the bedroom, the first question she asked was if the newscast was over.

When the network transmission resumed, there was a commercial news item. As a result, the station on which the subjects were viewing, (OGTV) broke off from network for the duration of that news item. The subjects were initially confused as to what was going on. They wondered if there was another power failure. They shopped around other stations, and the reason why the station had broken off from the network service became clear.

Irrespective of the fact that they had missed the beginning of the story, they heard and saw enough for them to conclude thus, -

"Okay, it's a commercial story."

Shopping around the channels was relatively effortless, as they used the remote control. This time, it was H who was in possession of the gadget. In his absence, B1 was usually in control since he watched more attentively anyway. That meant that S1 made her requests through them. They could then assess the request, against their own preference. It seemed logical to do so, if they were going to be saddled with the choice. This was a replica of the pattern observed amongst the children in location 3. There was a pecking order for the control of the gadget. It was in the absence of the men that she (S1) really ever took possession of the remote control. This pecking order, was also indicative of the overall control in the home.

That the struggles within the media are reported in other media, has helped to inform viewers of production practices. This seems to contribute to the understanding of what is seen and heard. The knowledge of the politics and economics of broadcasting, either received from personal acquaintances, or from the tabloids and other publications, made these subjects familiar with the (inexplicit) tensions, that underlie the manifest messages. There have been several illustrations of the point.

The rest of the news was received in the already noted pattern. The subjects having taken the cue from the news item, pursued their own line of dialogue. At times these complemented the story, at other times they were independent of what was being said. At such times they constituted a distraction to the intended message. The subjects had their own interpretation of the agenda which the news provided.

The following is an example of a news item which the subjects merely used as a cue to run their own commentary, not necessarily relying on the information that the news had to supply.

World Health Organisation's (WHO) appointment for the Health minister.

"Eeeii! [excitement] He's the best minister, honestly!"
[B1's outburst captured the unanimous feeling.]

. . . .

Nigeria Polytechnic Games, (NIPOGA)

The report was more captivating. Because it was sports, and the trend was unpredictable, the subjects could not easily ignore the details of the information that the news contained. In this instance, their commentaries were complimentary to the report. There was vicarious participation in the visual report.

"Hey, this is fast!" [of the race]

"Good! She did a nice jump." [the high jump was applauded]

"In short, Kaduna Poly should win, Hausas know this game very well, and they are tall." [of the basketball]

. . . .

The visual report had been a montage of the highlights of the games. The subject could only attempt to predict the sequence of events in the basketball game. It was an event that was more open to speculation. The outcome of the league was not yet known, unlike in the case of the races, which had been decided on the spot.

A similar pattern was noticeable in the reception of other sports story. The story was about the national football team. Having heard the details of the story, the subjects proceeded to make predictions on the outcome of the matches. Whilst they were doing this, they missed the lead sentence in the next news item. Their interest was only re - captured when they sighted the photograph of "a church leader". The man was not

known to them, but his identity, was read, from his dressing. They had missed the lead sentence which was read before the photograph was shown. It was when the photograph of the man replaced the shot of the newscaster that one of the members of the group wondered aloud - "Is he dead?"

As though in reply, to the query, the report continued by enumerating the survivors of the deceased. This illustrates the subjects' awareness of the conventions of the news. It was as a result of this that interest in the story was aroused. They tried to figure out the specific identity of the deceased. The chequered viewing of the news continued till the end of the newscast.

Thereafter, S1 had a spontaneous outburst which explains her understanding of the patterns within the newscast. It also indicates what aspects of the newscast she valued.

S1: If you just get the headlines, you've heard everything. So you know what they do now, they'll read the most interesting item last because they know people don't wait to listen any more as soon as they've heard the headlines.

In other words, but for one interesting item at the end, she need not have viewed the news in its entirety. Watching the headlines would have sufficed. This summation explains the attitude which she brought to the viewing experience. Her "superficial" interest to a better part of the newscast is thus accounted for.

Following the news was another commercial break. There was an advert of the Right Time condoms for which she had earlier expressed her dislike. Her attitude as observed at this point was consistent with the earlier

observation. She did not mask her intolerance for the advert at all. She snapped at the talent who was giving the testimonial.

"Stop knocking on my screen."

The attention getting device, whereby the man knocked on the TV screen before giving his testimonial message had back fired. Though he had succeeded in getting the subject's attention, and he had got his message across, he had also repulsed the subject.

There was another commercial which attracted her interest, because of the "talent" employed in the advert. She was familiar with the actress and had liked the role she played in another drama. She watched the advert because of this actress, but thereafter, she expressed her disapproval for the technique employed in the commercial.

S1: That advert is not a good one. It's condemning or criticising other banks instead of promoting theirs.

B1: Yes that's what adverts are supposed to do now!

H: If they had mentioned any particular bank it is a different thing.

The advert did not use a direct comparative technique, in which case it did not mention the name of the competitors. It, however, featured the known lapses in the services of the older banks. It only stopped short of mentioning their names. It was thus not positive in its approach as S1 had observed. But there was an apparent difference in the reading within the group, and this is even more glaring with the reading in the following report.

The advert was a corporate advert for the Venus range of products. S1's critical reaction, was very controversial, almost degenerating into an

argument. Whereas the others took the messages for the informative value alone, S1 analysed the message for the innuendoes, and the implications of such to her religious beliefs. H and B1 found this to be insufferable.

S1: Fifteen naira, I won't buy it. Venus hair product!. . .
Even if they sold it for five naira, any thing Venus.

R: Why is that?

S1: . . . Venus is a goddess who used to be worshipped in Rome in those days. I used to use Venus. . . Father please forgive me.

H: . . . If you didn't go to school, I won't have laughed.
So you are worshipping Venus if you use the product? ...

The argument was protracted, and in the meantime, the TV was ignored. In fact after that, the viewing atmosphere had become tense.

By the time there was calm, it was the excerpts of the Minister of Education's nation-wide speech, to students that was on. There was no visible appreciation of this. H and B1 made it clear that they were only waiting for Christian Broadcasting Network (CBN) news. The emotions were high strung, and it was in this mood that they watched, as they awaited the programme of their choice.

There was musical interlude following the speech, whilst they waited. It was this that they responded to. The musician was a Nigerian Reggae artiste, and it is not clear if it was his performance or his appearance which struck a familiar chord.

B1: This boy is just like Peter Tosh or Bob Marley.

This was the ice breaker, and "normal" conversation was resumed in the group

S1: Yee, see now, see South Africa!

B1: I don't know what will happen in that South Africa.

H: What of here in Nigeria?

B1: If they leave a black man to rule in that country, it will be like hell. See how they have started fighting since. . .

H: What of Angola?

B1: They are still fighting you know? Cuba is supporting Angola, and Russia and America is supporting UNITA the rebel group. [sic]

H: What is their own? [i. e. business]

B1: I believe they set up these troubles so they can sell their ammunitions.

S1: [shifting attention to written credits] Righteous on fire!

H: Righteous on fire, that's an idiomatic expression. . . see if there's a better thing on. [to B1, who had the remote control]

Even in the above , the divergence in the reading is apparent. Though all the subjects are analytical, H and B1 are on a different course from S1. In the last sentence for instance, H had deliberately shifted the line of thought from S1's to avoid another confrontation.

Though it was S1 who first voiced the recognition of the atrocities in South Africa, she was only responding to a cue from the song, particularly, the visuals which accompanied the song. These showed the plight of (presumably) the people of South Africa themselves.

In avoiding the impending confrontation, H had to forfeit, the programme which he awaited. This was not intentional, but in the process of searching round the other channels for a less tedious programme, what he described as a "better programme", B1 found a movie which proved to be more interesting to him than the news he had been waiting for.

By this time, S1 had lost any interest in viewing. There was still the tension which resulted from the response of others to her strongly held personal attitude. The medium of relaxation, had thus become a source of tension. Yet it was not the medium that produced the tension, it was the reading of the message from the medium, based on previously held attitudes.

Observation, ended on this day at about 10.30 p.m.

Day 5

Subject was not available for observation on Day 5.

Day 6

This Saturday was a national Enviromental Sanitation day. hence there was a restriction on movement between the hours of 7.00 and 10.00 a.m. Enviromental Sanitation days are set apart, by decree, for people to clean the environment of their homes. In the event that this is not done, and the restriction on movement was still enforced, as it always is on those days, it can be implied that there is a group of "captive" people who are a potential audience for TV viewing.

On this day, the subject had the choice of 2 stations which commenced transmission at 7.00 a.m. - OGTV, and LTV. Because the reception from OGTV was rather poor, she was effectively left with no choice other than LTV, even though some of her neighbours, had the privilege of seeing more channels. She was limited on a day like this to the services of a single channel. This Saturday was one of the few Saturdays that H was free from work. S2 and B1 had also returned to their own bases. It was

thus a time when the couple had their privacy. They spent a better part of the day together, and their privacy had to be respected. Although 3 calls were made earlier on in the day, the fact that they were not, on all occasions easily accessible, meant that observation did not commence until the early evening, when H had gone out.

It is not clear if the fact that there were "a lot" of Yoruba language programmes in the morning had anything to do with subject's inattentiveness to the programming. What was clear however was the fact that there were lots of chores to do or supervise. This is besides the fact that H was also to be attended to, as well as the baby. Saturday is the only day that S1 was free of obligations that took her outside the home in the mornings. On weekdays she went to work, and on Sundays she went to church.

As dusk fell, the reception quality had improved. "Icheoku" a local comedy in Igbo/English was watched from one of the NTA channels when observation began.

The comedy was set in the colonial times. The "English" court, was in Igbo land, and the comedy centred around the inaccurate translations of the court clerk, who was the link between the magistrate, and the local people. The programme was thus in English and Igbo, but it did not have any sub - titles. This meant that one who was not competent in both languages only had partial access to the programme. Such a viewer had to make inferences from that which (s)he could understand from what was seen, and said. In this instance the subjects (S1, and S3) were competent in both languages, and so had no such problems. They thoroughly enjoyed the programme. S1's viewing was without restrictions.

She was in control of the viewing session, as S3 was junior, and therefore subordinate to her. Her commentary was not disputed as had been the case when others were around. It was an entertaining experience for her.

There was a verbatim report of the viewing experience as the viewing progressed. This was possibly because subject was aware of the researcher's incompetence with the Igbo language. She thus assumed the role of a translator, so that the researcher, her guest, would not be left out of the "hilarious" experience.

In the process of translating, she also had to explain some aspects of the Igbo culture in which some actions or utterances were rooted. This was to assist the "co - viewer", in this case the researcher, in appreciating the full import of the message.

The programme was watched attentively. Although there were children present during the viewing, they were ignored.

The viewing. Icheoku: [meaning the parrot]

The magistrate asked for the culprit. The interpretation of this made the subject laugh.

S1: The interpreter said "Who is called Pret here?" ; that whoever is called Pret should come out; that the lawyer wants him. [lawyer meaning the magistrate.] . . . Nobody came out, nobody is called Pret, You know, cul - prit. [interpreted as - call Pret]

. . . .

[After a bout of laughter]

S1: He [the magistrate] said why are the women so fat; then he [the interpreter] said, they eat a basket of egg everyday. Somebody can't finish a basket of egg. It's not possible.

. . . .

S1: [echoing the TV character] "No plenty tief here" - plaintiff. [No plenty thief here] Ehen is there anybody who steals here?" Plaintiff. "Jesus wept"

Ehen uhun [as she followed the character's utterances in the local language. Then she exclaimed] See oh! he's being rude to him [that is, to the magistrate].

. . . .

S1: . . . "it's belly" That the wife ate chicken and ate it alone, into her own stomach instead of calling the husband. Court clerk says the wife killed a chicken, and ate its belly, and its now its belly, the chicken's belly. . . that is the gizzard. [sic]

(The magistrate seemed to be better able to make sense of the story, than the court clerk. Subject proceeded to give explanation which situates the story line into a cultural context)

You know in Iboland, a woman is not supposed to eat [the] gizzard. Anytime you kill, [a bird] the gizzard, you shouldn't eat. You should keep it for your husband. And the heart is for the first daughter of the house; whether [it be] fowl; goat; anything; you keep the heart of that thing [sic] You must keep it for the first daughter of the house. So this man, [the litigant] maybe beat his wife up because . . . [he thought she ate up the gizzard meant for him]

Note how the full import of the message is culture bound. Access into the programme thus requires more than a working knowledge of the language.

In fact, besides the story line, there were even some aspects of the programme, which required an understanding of the cultural context to make sense of such. (the dressing for instance)

There humour in the programme was centred around the absurdities in the court room. There was a play on words, with the translator, substituting words, like translating gizzard as lizard; iced water as eyes water - tears; bush man, one who is uncouth, as one who owns land. The frustrations of both himself and the expatriate magistrate were highlighted, whilst the magistrate was impervious to his own, often insulting outbursts.

The matter was eventually resolved. The man was punished for the unjust punishment he had meted out to his wife. It turned out that the man had eaten the gizzard, when he was too drunk to know. But he had proceeded later to treat the wife with ignominy, with the assistance of other women in the village. They were all punished.

The magistrate had been appalled by the customary concept of justice. However that, had not the issue at stake. The issue had been that of the miscarriage of the "justice".

Though it was a comedy, and the humour was enjoyed, the story line afforded the subject an opportunity to question some aspects of the culture.

S1: [wondering why the women of the village were punished] What did the women do now? Maybe Umuwanyi . . . You know what happened, I'm sure the women went to fight in the Osakwe's house [that is the couple/litigants] because you know in Iboland, traditionally once you are married into a village, then they initiate you into the married women meeting, this club. If your husband deals with you, if you go and report to those other women, you know, they will come and deal with your husband.

Those days, they will come with pots, brooms, and everything to show that they are on a kind of demonstration. . . You have to pacify them.

Those days, they will beg them and apologise. If he has wronged the wife, they will take the woman away, and say before the woman comes back, the man will pay this - he will buy wrapper, he will buy something, he will buy drinks for all the women. But these days, they will just come and make trouble. You can't do anything to them really. . . These days, if your husband offends you, or if your husband drives you away, or if there is a problem you know you can't settle, you will just go and report to those Umuarulalu, then they will come to the man's house and make trouble. . . It still happens now.

At the end of the account, the subject was able to point out how such practises had served to preserve the institution of marriage. Her narration included the groups which served as checks on the excesses of wives as well as that described above which check the excesses of husbands. The group viewing of the comedy, had afforded an opportunity of transmitting elements of the culture, even if in an indirect way. The subject had picked up on the cues that were in the programme.

The level of concentration on this programme is remarkable, especially in view of the presence of the children. Unlike previous viewing sessions, when there was only one child; on this occasion she did not allow herself to be distracted by the two in spite of the absence of

other adults. At one point, she re-arranged the furniture in the house so that the children could play, with as little attention being paid to them as possible. The viewing atmosphere was really a relaxed one.

The deliberations and discussion which evolved from the viewing of the comedy, Icheoku, was not constrained to the programme. It carried on even after the programme had been concluded. As a result, the TV was ignored, as well as the elements of programming which were directly adjacent to Icheoku. These included the commercials, the continuity announcements, and the introduction of the succeeding programme.

The succeeding programme itself did not prove attractive to the subject, so she ignored it. The programme was a Sports programme. The signature tune of the programme was imposing, and the subject's attention was obviously caught by the programme. However, she promptly looked away having glanced at the set, acknowledging the cue which she heard, but not showing any interest in what it had heralded. There was no attempt made by the subject to change the channel; to find a more suitable programme. It was not long after that some guests arrived and were entertained.

After the guest had been made comfortable, (they had been served drinks and refreshments) subject requested that the channel be changed. Even at this time, S1 did not handle the remote control. She delegated the responsibility, to S3, a younger relative who was also familiar with the house.

It was as if the programme offering was a part of the entertainment menu. There was no excitement at the available options. Besides the

Sports programme on the NTA network, there was a talk programme in Yoruba on OGTV, and LTV was featuring its World News. S1 grudgingly opted for the news. It was not watched. It was by the same breath that she requested for the news, that she requested for a comb, so she could braid her baby's hair. That was an activity which required full concentration, especially as it was for a child who was prone to being fidgety. It was clear that the subject did not have any serious intentions of watching the programme. A comparison of this behaviour and that which was displayed during the viewing of the comedy highlights this point.

In spite of this, being before the functional set, subject was still able to attend to the news, especially as she had requested for it. In this situation, she was using the TV as if it was a radio. She was listening to it, and only occasionally watching it. That she responded to certain items, was proof of this. For instance she exclaimed outloud when she heard that a certain day had been declared a school free day (to mark the Children's day). It was a piece of information that she had been anticipating.

S1: School free day! Praise God!

It was difficult to ascertain just what she attended to, because of the way in which she was using the medium. On the contrary, H who arrived whilst the news was still on, sat down to watch what was left of the news.

The guests for whom S1 had served the programme had not stayed long enough to have any meaningful exposure to the programme. It was clear that they did not have any real interest in the programme, at that time.

PICTURE 6.



Location 4.

A guest relaxes, ignoring the functional set.

PICTURE 7.



Location 4.

S1 was in and out of the kitchen.

Yet they had served the purpose of drawing her attention to the programme; in deed to the station, and the succeeding programme flow.

The news was followed by a comedy programme in Yoruba - Alawada. Subject actually recognised the signature tune, and was able to identify the programme by the name of the lead actor; Baba Sala.

Again in this instance, subject attempted to devote undivided attention to the programme. Rather than go to the kitchen to prepare the meal, she merely gave instructions to S3 and the other young person who was in the house. These young girls had been present in the home throughout the week, but they had usually been so occupied, that they did not participate in the viewing. At the times they were not occupied, they observed the tradition, of being unobtrusive in the presence of elders, and so they kept away from the set. The exception had been on this day, when they watched Icheoku quietly, with S1, in the absence of the other elders.

Unlike in the viewing of the earlier comedy, with which subject felt comfortable, S1 in spite of her efforts still did not concentrate fully. There were several reasons for this.

The timing of the earlier programme was such that there was little competition from other activities. In this instance, the programme coincided with the time that the evening meal was to be served. Though S1 was not physically involved in the preparation of the meal, as when the in - laws were present in the home, she still had to break her trend of thoughts, to give instructions to S3 who was to execute them.

There was also the fact that the subject was not as competent with the Yoruba language and culture as she was with Ibo. The viewing (reading) was thus not as fluent.

S1: I don't understand what he's saying, but I like the pictures, because after watching it, you will be able to decipher what the play is about. . . I don't understand what he's saying but at the end of it all, I will know the meaning.

Though she did have a minimal knowledge of the language which facilitated her ability to make sense of the pictures, she was not able to grasp the culture laden meaning of the programme as she was able to do with the Icheoku. She was still able to get the gist of the story, which was about bribery in hospital.

S1: I know they are trying to discuss. They want to bribe him and I don't know . . . I think people tend to say it's true, but I have not experienced it, but they say, most doctors, when they are treating you in General Hospital they don't treat you very well, but when you go to them privately, they will give you all attention. But we all know that private hospitals, they give more attention.
[sic]

Though she got the gist of the programme, there was a critical scene which had eluded her, because of her limited competence with the language. This was the scene, typical of (Yoruba) local dramas, where the built in morale of the story is highlighted.

In this instance, Baba Sala, acting that day as a corrupt hospital attendant, was being told off by his friend, after he had been apprehended. The friend had earlier advised him against getting involved in the questionable deals. He was remorseful, but he still had to loose his job. His defence had been that he had seen nothing wrong in doing what every body else was doing. The morale was thus that one need not join the band wagon of wrong doing.

There was a noticeable difference, in their response to the programme, when the group had had the critical scene translated for them by the researcher. They were able to discuss the ills of the practise on a wider social scale.

S1: Nigerian syndrome!

B1: That is really what happens oh! [exclamation of emphasis]

S1: Yes oh! - People are doing it, let me do it - They will say Mr A has done it before, let me go and try. . . .
That is how they get into trouble.

The reasoning was extended to the wide spreading problem of drugs in the society. As a result of that translation, the viewing took on a different value. It was no longer just a viewing of a comedy, it was a platform for deliberating a social malaise.

The deliberation continued into the next programme, which was the Saturday evening news; Tonight at Nine. The inter - programme commercials and announcements were ignored. The focus was only shifted back to the screen, when the signature tune of the news programme was heard.

The fact that the story was set in contemporary times had helped, S1 to follow the programme. She was able to recognise the visual cues which showed the act of bribery - squeezing money into another's hands. Being familiar with aspects of culture in contemporary society, subject was able to read the programme from that axis. Even that, was sufficient for her to have her usual "critical" reading.

Although she knew it was an expression of a practice, the very act of

squeezing the Naira notes was condemned by the subject. She took her cue from the on going campaign against the abuse of the Naira notes.

The timing of this programme coincided with the time when there were more people at home. H and B1 too had returned home. Their presence at the set affected the kind of attention that the S1 brought to the programme. For instance, the fact that she did not have unchallenged authority over the use of the set. There was an instance during the viewing when H and B1 without consulting her agreed to scan available options, to see if there was "anything better". One of them had the remote control, and though it did not take long, it was without consideration for S1 who was viewing.

There was also the fact that the meal was served, albeit, by S3. It was eaten whilst the programme was on. All these affected the kind of concentration that could be brought to the programme.

B1 was first to respond to the signature tune of the news. With his response, the attention of others was attracted to the set. The attraction was not the signature tune itself. That signature tune had only prompted an anticipation of a favoured newscaster.

B1: Ehen! I will see my friend now. . . John Momoh.

The newscaster who was the attraction, was not on the programme that evening. The subjects were disappointed, and they noted that this had been the trend for a few weeks. This was indicative of the fact that they were regularly exposed to the programme. The newscaster's unexplained absence was cause for speculation on the internal organisation of the network.

"Or have they sacked him?"

"How can, he's a big man"

"Maybe they are moving him to another show."

"He won't be very good in Newslane, the poor man will not understand his English."

From the above, there is an indication of the subjects perception of the programme and also of Newslane, the Sunday network newscast - Tonight at nine was seen as a highbrow show, one that was not to be easily accessible to the "poor man", whereas the Newslane was for the "poor man".

S1: I think so, it is for people who like gossip, it's for them. Newslane is just another version of Primepeople, and Vintage people. I am sorry to say.

The subject had thus equated the "poor man's" news with the populist, human interest magazines. These journalistic efforts are widely acclaimed to be "gossip rags". In fact, they have attracted the classification within the Nigerian circle that is referred to as "Junk journalism". That S1 made this equation led to a discussion of this term.

Guest: I want to know what actually is the meaning of junk journalism.

S1: Anything, corner - corner news. Anything. [not straight forward] Any rubbish.

Guest: Is there anything like Junk journalism?

S1: That's what they mean now; it's all rubbish; gossip; new style; new dance; just anything that's it. Just jumble anything and come out with something.

. . . .

The above definition made subject's equation of Newslane, with the magazines even more interesting. Yet, this was the newscast that had the

widest appeal in all the different locations.

In the meantime, the "highbrow" news had been ignored following the disappointment. When the focus was shifted back to the screen, it was as a result of the visual elements of the report. These were used as a guide for the subjects own reports; the grape - vine news relay which was largely independent of the transmitted newscast.

The atmosphere at the screen, was one of socialising, with the entertainment of another set of guests who arrived just before the news was introduced. The group had increased in size, (5 adults, 2 women and 3 men, excluding the researcher) This meant increased scope of the grapevine reports. The deliberations soon digressed into personal matters, which had no apparent connections with even the visual cues taken from the programme.

It was not long before the the women (S1, and the female guest) separated themselves from the mainstream conversation. They looked at photographs, whilst the men discussed their professional interests. The set was thus left in the background.

Occasionally, the subjects remarked about visual subjects within the news. This was merely as part of the social chatter.

"He has a [facial] mark, just one."

"He is from Kwara [state]"

"No he is not"

"His wife used to work at NTA Abuja"

These remarks suggest that the subjects were not necessarily impervious

to the news, though they did not attend it with any level of seriousness. Yet, these were examples of the audience which the particular programme was meant to target.

The guests left whilst the news was still on. The hosts, and hostess escorted them out. This took them away from the set for a little while. Even when they returned physically, they did not return to the programme. They merely continued the socialising. This continued until after the news.

It was the musical interlude which followed the news programme, that drew their interest back into the television. Attending to such element of programming seemed to fit the mood they were in. The discussion about the musicians which was evoked by the viewing, dovetailed neatly into their previous conversations.

The World news in Yoruba, from LTV followed the musical break. The visual aspects of the reports on the news evoked other lines of discussion. For instance, the visual report of the Enviromental Sanitation exercise in Lagos, evoked a discussion on the practice of street trading in Lagos.

Unlike the pattern noticed during the week, the group remained alert after the news. They were awaiting a particular drama, from the network service - The Third Eye. Once again, one of the attractions was a character, who was a personal acquaintance of S1.

The star of the show was also attractive. His performance and track record were points which the subjects considered in favouring the

programme.

The programme was watched and enjoyed with minimum commentary as was usual with other viewings of this group, (the news for example). The programme is a detective programme, similar to Colombo in approach. The detective's daughter, was the one, whose unwitting comment helps her father unravel the mystery, just when he is about to give up.

In spite of the time of day that it was, much of the programme was watched in silence, and the subjects did not fall asleep. They followed and only remarked as aspects of the mystery, became clear to them.

B1: Can he kill some one? They didn't show us how the thing happened, how can he kill somebody like this?

S1: He didn't kill any person.

H: He didn't kill, but he will see a shovel, he will see some sand.

S1: . . . that shovel is just part of the thing the woman did, so they will suspect [that] the man killed her brother.

. . .

S1: They are going to catch her now. . . She is talking to the brother. . . The man [the detective] picked it [the other extension of the phone]

H: Now what happened, she will narrate. [sic]

B1: This is a real code! Perjury! [hailing detective, as he read the charges to the culprit]

. . .

The mystery for the episode, had been a report of an alleged murder. There was evidence pointing to the crime, there was an accuser, there was an accused, but there was no corpse. The accuser had connived with the alleged victim, who had fled abroad, so that the accused could be implicated.

The viewing of the programme illustrated again the ability of the subject, S1 to watch a 1 - hour programme uninterrupted. In this example as in the earlier one, the timing, also contributed to the observed pattern.

There were no more chores to be done at that time of the day, and even the baby after being ignored for a while soon fell asleep. On this occasion as well, the baby had to be ignored. She was still a potential source of distraction, but the subject was not yielding.

All these suggest that the timing only worked, because there was sustained interest, in the particular programme. The fact that it was Saturday night, and subject was not under pressure of preparing for early morning start the next day should also be noted. Likewise, there is the time use pattern for the day, which contributed to the subject still being alert at the time of viewing. Observation on this day, ended when the programme was concluded. This was about midnight, but subjects were still alert.

Day 7

Although observation commenced earlier on in the afternoon, the recording for a period of time was lost. There is thus no report for that period. The lost tape included the viewing of the religious programmes which dominated the screen at that time.

By early evening, about 7.00 p.m. the set was tuned to NTA channel 10. There was a comedy in pidgin English. The performing group, had made their name, through the Yoruba performances. As a result, there was

still a strong Yoruba presence in the programme, by way of interjections, setting and so on.

By this time, S1 was watching with H and B1. The drama was referred to by the name of one of the leading actors, "Aluwe, and co", and not by the title. In this episode, Aluwe, was begging for alms in Jesus name; pretending that he was blind. This immediately evoked a screen side discussion, which moved progressively away from the particular drama.

B1: He's begging for money as if he were blind.

S1: Me, I don't like this idea of their using Jesus name to act.

B1: Is it not a programme?

H: They are telling you that, that is what happens. Aah! aah! [bewildered]. . .

B1: They are trying to you know. . . [halted mid sentence by H, though the general sense he was making was understood; that the programme was meant to expose such deceitful practices.]

. . .

While they engaged in the conversation, the drama progressed. Their attention was drawn back into the programme by an antic of the "blind man". He had gotten into an argument with someone who had given him a foreign currency. When queried how he could tell if he were indeed blind, he said -

"It is my outward eye that is blind."

This is a saying which was known to the subjects, and S1 joined him, as he completed the saying.

S1 & Aluwe: The one that is inside is not blind.

In spite of the parallel dialogue, there was still this type of

vicarious participation in the programme. The familiarity of the subjects with that which was featured, as illustrated in the above, must have helped in the ease with which they followed both.

As the programme evolved, the subjects acknowledged it as being not just an illusion, but a depiction of reality. Again, the comedy evoked a commentary on the depicted practice, and a condemnation of such reality of life. They cited other examples which they knew of.

B1: There is a beggar in Lagos that has three Molue [commuter buses] [sic]

H: The one in . . . that one has houses.

B1: And he is still begging.

S1: Is the man blind? These beggars that have houses and molues in Lagos, are they blind?

B1: Which kin blind? [sic - meaning What do you mean blind?]

S1: But they pretend to be blind?

B1: Some of them are blind.

. . . .

Attentive viewing was resumed as an unexpected spectacle was seen. A rich looking man came to salvage the "blind man" from the street. As soon as the point had been made, the subjects proceeded to make predictions regarding the outcome of the new turn of events.

H, predicted, that the rich man was going to attempt to make a prosperity potion out of the blind man. S1 preferred to think that the rich man's offer of help was sincere, but that it would expose the "blind" man's scam.

They thus concentrated to see which prediction was right. H's inference turned out to be right. The group only needed to see, the destination of

the men in the programme to know this. The rich man had led the "blind" man to a medicine man. They did not bother to listen to the dialogue - they did not bother to hear the rich man's stated mission, but their deduction was right.

S1: Oh! he wants to use that man to make money. Hey o!
[distress]

H: Jibiti meets with jibiti. [Fraud meets fraud]

B1: That's it now, cunny man die, cunny man bury him. [sic]

There was not much more to be said. It was clear from the above though that the subjects were familiar enough with the presented sequence of events. S1, at that point went off to attend to some other concerns. She did not wait to see the outcome of the story.

The programme ended with the police accosting the three men; the blind man; the rich man; the medicine man, for varying acts of deceit - one for pretending to be blind, another for attempting to "make" money potion; and the other for offering such services.

This outcome led the subjects H and B1 to wonder about the Nigerian statutes, which discountenances the potency and use of spiritual power.

One of the other programmes which the group could have watched in place of the above was, "Another Life" - the soap opera which had been watched with such relish during the week. There was no reference to the fact that it was missed. The programme was on OGTV at the same time as Aluwe's, which was on an NTA station, preceding a soap opera from the network service. This Nigerian produced soap opera was anticipated by the group. Faced with the choice, these subjects had opted for the local

production, over, "Another Life".

There was great disappointment as the expected programme was not featured that evening. In it's place, there was a special feature on the launching of one of the sponsor's products.

In spite of the disappointment, the programme was watched grudgingly, as the group could not find a more acceptable option. The programme was on NTA's network service, the only available options to the subjects in this location were LTV, and OGTV. LTV at that time had it's World news, whilst OGTV had a religious programme. Both of these were rejected.

The decision was not discussed, nor debated. B1 who was nearest to the remote control had merely zapped round the available channels, and settled for the special feature. The resignation of the rest of the group to his choice indicated that the decision was unanimous.

There was a lot of noise accompanying the viewing of the programme at the onset. There was however no attempt to switch off the set, or at least engage in other activities. The subjects had prepared themselves for the particular programme. It was to have been the highlight of their viewing for the evening.

It was not long before the group found what was pleasurable in the programme. It was the visuals - the familiar faces, and the dressing that drew the group into the programme. In this instance, the perusal of the visuals alone was sufficient for the group to follow the beauty show. The subjects assessed the portrayed concepts of beauty against their own standards of beauty.

They ridiculed the looks that were not familiar to them, and tolerated those which had some semblance of familiarity. The subjects ignored the accompanying commentary, preferring theirs.

The "fun" derived in doing this was cut short when the speeches accompanying the launching began. The programme was again rejected, and the subjects remembered their disappointment.

B1: There's no fun in that thing they are doing.

S1: I don't know oh, [agreement] instead of just showing Natasha.

H: A whole Sunday night.

B1: Imagine!

There was indignation at the fact that the disappointment had been on a Sunday night. This suggests that Sunday night is considered to be of special value.

Another point emerging from the above is that S1, besides missing the entire programme, missed a particular character therein.

There after, the subjects searched round intermittently for more acceptable programming, but they kept returning to the same programme. This was because S1's request for the religious programme on LTV was over ruled. Both H and B1 preferred to have the unsatisfactory programme, than watch either of the religious programmes or the news on the alternative channels. After her request had been turned, down S1 occupied herself in the kitchen.

The trend of events as reported above illustrate how choice is informed

by factors other than preference. S1's preference had been turned down, to avoid arguments that typified her reading of such programmes. H and B1 had not watched the choice they made, nor were they prepared to have S1 watch her choice.

Because she had been busy in the kitchen when the programme started, S1 missed the first segment of the programme, which carried the news for the day. She arrived at the set in time to hear the mid news advertisements. Even this was news to her.

It was a goodwill message to the Vice-president, from the subject's state governor, on the occasion of his visit to the state. The information was news to the subject. What is more interesting is that, she used the information to confirm her views about prejudicial treatments towards her state, from the Presidency. Her reasoning was that Presidential visits to other states are conducted by the President himself, but in this case, he had delegated the Vice-president. The reasoning was further buttressed by references to the recent lavish media coverage of the Presidential visit to Niger state; the President's home state. Her conclusion was that -

"We have suffered in this country!"

A goodwill message had thus become a source of disaffection to an indigene of the state which had paid for it. This is very important, considering the fact that the state in question is one of those, which were directly involved in the civil war. The situation, especially considering her citing of the lavish media coverage of the Presidential visit to a particular state, buttresses the need for better management of government information.

Newsline itself was more captivating to all members of the group. The anchor person, Frank Olize was favoured and hailed as though he were a personal acquaintance, though he was not. The stories in the particular episode were engaging.

There was a story of the wedding of a 95 year old man who married a 75 year old woman. Their son was the officiating minister. There was another story on women's headgears.

Both stories were amusing, but there were more comments on the second one. This led to a discussion of information they had received.

S1: Me, I can't spend twenty naira to make hair. [headgear]
It's not as if I'm buying the headgear, it's too expensive - just to make it; it's too expensive.

B1: It's not a waste, maybe you will use it 10 times; that is two, two naira. [sic - two naira for each use]

S1: Keeping it is another problem [making it last, is another problem]

B1: It's just like some people making ties, when they make [knot] the tie, one will go to Abakaliki, one will go to another side like this. [sic]

S1: Wait --- [B1] so you will advise your wife to use [spend] twenty naira to tie a headgear.

B1: Yes . . .but it won't come from the soup money. [food allowance]

. . . .

Besides informing the subjects about trends in fashion, the story had also spurred a discussion on other aspects of living - acceptable spending patterns.

One of the advertisements which was featured in the commercial break

featured some characters from the (old) New Masquerade. The subjects were excited to see these characters, (Clarus and Gringory) It was with this excitement, that they attended the commercial. They echoed the message of the advert with such fondness, as intended for the talents. The particular words which they registered were incidentally the product name.

Chorus: Ayepee, Ayepee! [laughter]

S1: Calabar man, 'go drop for that yunction'. [sic]

B1: Ayepee, see that one he's going to . . . [running commentary on the sequence of the action; thus displaying familiarity with the advertisement, and verbalising the visuals]

The subjects were making fun of the Calabar accent; "Yunction", should have been junction, while Ayepee, was - "Ah Gee Pee!" pronounced with the Calabar accent. The accent had thus become a "Nameonic" - a copy writing strategy, which employs a pneumatic device for the purpose of aiding the retention of a product name.

The other adverts which were noted were that for "Three Crown Milk"; it was the music of this that was fascinating; and "Trebor Luckies" (sweets) this featured one of S1's colleagues.

Although some other commercial messages could have been noted, there were no remarks about them. They were treated as part of the ambience.

The 'Personal Information Box' which came up after the commercials was attended. There was the obituary of an elderly woman. This information was received without any show of emotions. The name had not been familiar.

There was the announcement of a missing person; a 21 year old who hailed from an area known to the subjects. The subjects, empathised with the relations of the missing person, and were sympathetic towards them, even though they were not known to them.

By this time it was 10 o'clock, and though the subjects were still alert, they were making plans to retire. They wanted to have an early night, in preparation for the demands of the next day, (Monday).

This was the last day of the observation exercise in this home. Researcher was told that subject does not normally stay up later than 10. 00 p.m. to watch television. This information fit the behaviour pattern observed on most days. It was however useful to check the behaviour induced by the presence of the researcher.

Discussion

One of the highlights of the subject S1's behaviour at the screen, is the fact that she easily built up a social discussion around the cues which she took from the screen. It was thus easy to know her assessment of a programme, even as she viewed.

From the observations, it was clear, that the subject did not spend much time watching the television. Even at those times when she sat before the set, there were too many distractions for her. As a result, what she took away from the programmes was even more interesting. This is especially so, when regarding the arguments that her own reading caused with the other members of her family.

Perceived Themes

The subject found that there were a range of themes on television, "usually based on events happening in Nigeria; issues, contemporary issues."

She agreed that television reflected present day Nigeria to an extent. However she felt that the picture of the society that was portrayed was one sided.

" . . . they base their themes mostly on the masses. They don't criticise the government itself. Even when they do, they try as much as possible to hide that thing. You have to really reason out thoroughly, before you can know that they are talking about the government in some cases. But when they want to lambaste the masses, it's just clear. They make a caricature of the masses but when it comes to government, they hide it. . . ."

She had ready examples to illustrate this. These were from her declared favourite programmes; the dramas. To be precise, it was "The New Masquerade" that she cited.

In the example, Zebrudaya was "talking about" the promises of government, working towards the year 2000 - promising Health for all, Education for all. But as far as this subject was concerned, there were problems that needed to be solved presently. She presented a catalogue of the problems. Some of these, affected the promises for the future. Being a teacher herself she drew on her experience, her present frustrations to reject those future promises.

So many were her gripes against the government that the discussion almost turned to an appraisal of government's performance. Yet the focus of the discussion had been on subject's views of television programmes. The subject was upset that television did not report these realities of

life. When asked why this was so, S1 felt it was obvious;

"TV cannot report these things because teachers can't talk ... Government policy; civil servants should not go to the press ... except you have clear permission from your ministry."

The frustrations experienced personally, arising from the inability to seek redress from government had thus affected the way subject assessed TV programmes. This explains the sceptical attitude with which the subject received the programmes during the viewing sessions.

Though she knew the entire story was not being told, the side that was not debated, which is the portrayal of the masses, was quite interesting.

For her, the "middle class" people were those whom she saw most on television. There was no definition of what she meant by middle class or most. She felt that this class of people were usually portrayed in the English language dramas, typically seen on network. On the contrary, she felt that the "lowest" class could be found in the local dramas, employing the vernacular.

"... when they want to portray the real local people, they use the middle class to show the lowest class. . . In Yoruba drama, they go to the lowest people."

Images from the screen

Her view of the portrayal of these categories of people was even more interesting. The first example that the subject had cited to illustrate what she had seen on television had been one in which a person, attempted to exhort money from others - pretending to be what he was not.

". . . People are not truthful these days."

In this example she had not made any class distinctions. There was another example which she had stumbled on, and which typically, she had not followed through, hence the jerky account of the story. The story had a rural setting.

"One man saw a girl and wanted to marry the girl. He didn't know even where the girl comes from [sic] but he impregnated her and brought the girl home. The mother was annoyed and felt bad about it. Any woman would. Later on [she] agreed [to the union] since the girl agreed that she was willing to farm with the mother. . . I don't know what happened again, the man died. You know, slumped, with all his charms and amulets."

Since the programme was in Yoruba, this reading had been one of such that subject had pieced together, from the visual information and her scanty knowledge of the Yoruba language. She for instance was not sure if the man had been a farmer but going by his dressing, she assumed he was either a farmer or a labourer. From her reading, the man's sister was a seamstress, and the mother was indisputably a farmer. The prospective wife, was preparing to be a farmer. Such were the relationships that the subject perceived of rural life from the screen.

What is interesting is the fact that she based her view of television's portrayals on such chequered readings. The deductions were not queries, but seen to be reflective of reality!

In her reading of drama programmes to be precise, the subject sees a difference in the portrayal of men and women. Women in her view were portrayed as dependent on men for so many things. In this instance, she cited *Ovularia of New Masquerade* as her example.

"All she does is cook, take money from Zebrudaya to buy even

the smallest broom. We know that these days it is not so."

Women to her were also portrayed as people who could not reason for themselves. *Supple Blues*, a drama set in contemporary times, and in the city, (unlike *Masquerade* which is set in the rural town) was used to buttress this view.

"Like the girl who did not tell the man she married that the pregnancy [was] not for him. You find that she cannot even decide on one thing to do [by] herself. She wants her friend to tell her whether she should now tell her husband or she shouldn't...They want to show them as people who think they are wise but they are foolish. . . They want to show women as foolish people and at the same time, people who are . . . is it wicked or deceitful? "

In her view women, especially those who are younger, and are just getting married, are portrayed as being deceitful.

Men on the other hand have their "egos boosted"; "as if they are Lord and master" she said.

"As if they are better people, but in another way, they show men to be heartless. . . They show them as ruthless people at times but at the same time, in other ways, they show them as people who are double faced."

The example to illustrate that was also from an urban - based contemporary drama - *Checkmate*. The character was a university lecturer who was unfaithful to his wife, to the point of ignominy.

"The girlfriend even phones his house".

The wife in this situation was described as an "epitome of love" who endured so much for her children's sake.

"It shows that the Nigerian woman can sacrifice anything, just for the child's sake."

There were different deductions from the same examples, even as she, narrated them. Her deductions give an insight into the values that she arrived at the programmes with. These have charted the course of her negotiation of the programmes.

The examples cited illustrate the subjects viewing pattern. All the programmes she referred to were drama programmes. Talking about television for this subject was almost synonymous with talking about TV dramas. In fact it was like talking about network dramas, featured between 8.00 p.m. and 9.00 p.m. It took a conscious probing before subject could say anything about news. The news in this instance was synonymous with the NTA network news.

Images from the News

For the subject network news had a pattern which she was familiar with. The news begins with an introduction of the newscasters, Thereafter, her anticipation of the news was that it would carry a report of a scheduled event, in this case it was the Children's day celebration. Then there will be a Presidential address to the nation on some matter, from where ever he may be visiting. It is as an addition that the subject anticipated a "well edited" story from another country.

The subject's description of a 45 minutes news cast, was remarkably scanty. This is not surprising, going by S1's behaviour, as observed at news time.

There was a slightly different pattern for the 8 o'clock news - the LTV World news. The subject expected that there will be more stories from the rural areas, and also that there will be more stories from other

countries. Yet this newscast is only 30 minutes long. From her description, she found the World news at 8, to be a report of topical events in the world. The examples she gave were the continuing coverage of the Ghandi story, and the Ethiopian war. These were in addition to the coverage of local news, as in the Children's day, and the rural news items. She made no attempt to predict what kind of news could come out of the rural areas. In fact, there was very little room for details in her account.

For this subject, news was just a source of information. Unlike with dramas, she did not pay particular attention to what images were portrayed in the news. This is an interesting development considering the assumed importance of news in the structuring of daily life. For this subject, drama, not news, was more relevant for that purpose.

"This one, [news] is just for information. They just give information. Drama, they don't only inform, they also educate and entertain."

Though the subject liked the medium of television, she had definite views about how it was being used. Television in her view, presents a one sided story. The medium should be used to advise government. It should be used to point out government's error without necessarily bringing it to disaffection with the people. The medium was seen as being used to boost government's ego - to paint an image for government. This image was "always positive". Assumptions about the use of the media in other societies, notably, U.S.A. fuelled the subject's convictions. These assumptions were themselves a product of the exposure to the programmes exported, and featured on Nigerian airwaves. The particular example was the CBN news, which is transmitted on two of the state-owned stations. The subject thus did not need to have travelled outside her

home to find evidence of alternative ways of using the medium; ways which she considered to be better.

A discredited Society

In spite of the perceived deliberate attempts to give the government a "positive" image, this subject had identified contradictions. As a result the government was still in her view discredited.

The governed, who in her opinion, had been accurately portrayed were also not to be trusted. On the whole, the society as she saw it, was one that was discredited. This, is the view of the society, which the subject took away from the television.

RECEIVING TELEVISION MESSAGES

An Ethnographic Study of Women in a Nigerian Context

Ph.D Thesis Submitted

by

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to the

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May, 1993

Volume 2

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LOCATION 5 - THE EXPERIENCE OF A HOUSEGIRL

The subject is aged about 19 years old. She is not an indigene of the area, but she has a faltering level of competence with the Yoruba language. She is a maid to an expatriate, and even her living arrangement illustrates this.

She lives in a very sparsely furnished room in the boys' quarters, but at least she is in control of her time and space when she is not on duty. She has set hours during which she works, and she usually closes for the day at about 7.00 p.m. This may vary depending on the demands on her.

She is allowed two long breaks during the day. It is these, as well as her free weekends that she spends learning her sewing trade. It is also at these times that she does her own shopping or other private business. Her leisure, which includes television viewing, is planned around the rest of her "free" time. The subject does not own a set of her own, nor can she afford to buy one from her salary. She relies on the hospitality of her better paid neighbour, a steward who is on company pay roll.

Because her benefactor is a married man, she had had to be more cautious in the frequency of her visits, to avert the gossip, and the innuendoes that such visits can attract from other maids in the quarters. As a result of this, she was more deliberate, and more selective in her viewing pattern. Over all, she spent far less time viewing, than she would have liked to.

The neighbour's room, in which the viewing took place was small and

modestly furnished. The furniture was comfortable, but the room itself was cramped and hot, in spite of the fan. The door had to be left ajar, and that meant that it was easy for the noise of the children playing around outside, to infiltrate the viewing. On several occasions, the noise even came from adults who were conversing from a distance, and shouting across to each other.

The set in view was a black and white set, and it was centrally positioned in the room, along with the radio cassette player, and the hi-fi speakers.

The sitting room in which the set was, opened into the (only) other room that the family had. The kitchen and other utility rooms were in the adjoining block outside.

Day 1

There was no viewing on this day at all. Subject had concluded that there are no interesting programmes on this day. This came from a knowledge of the pattern of scheduling, and not a knowledge of the actual schedule for the day. Although it was possible that there were programmes that could have aroused her interest, had she been exposed to the actual programme flow, her precise pattern of exposure did not make this feasible.

Day 2

Observation started at about 8.00 p.m. Subject had selected this time for several reasons. It was the time when she would have completed her own personal chores having served her masters, and gone to her lesson, during her day time break. She had also selected the time because of the

proximity to the scheduled time for a particular programme. The programme was a drama on the network service - The New Masquerade.

Before the programme came on, she sat before the set, and watched the special documentary on the government. The benefactor's wife, (S2) was still in the kitchen at this time. Like the subject, S1, the host himself, (H) was awaiting the drama. The children were in and out of the rooms.

Both S1 and H endured the programme for a few minutes, before she rejected this programme on the NTA channel, and selected OGTV in the interim. There was a Yoruba musical on OGTV, and S1 sang along to some of the tunes. She seemed to be enjoying the programme, but she was still mindful of the programme which she set out to watch.

Although it had appeared that she was singing along, subject denied knowledge of the song, (that is the lyrics), she had been following the melody of the tune. In doing this, she was also repeating, those aspects of the song that were repeated, and which could easily be grasped. This illustrates how easily the (Yoruba) music is learnt, even without being conscious of it.

The host's incompetence with the language, constrained him from participating in the viewing experience, in the same way. He did not sing, but according to him, he enjoyed the music and the dancing shown in the accompanying visuals. The likelihood that he had also been learning can not be ruled out. The viewing of the musicals set the agenda for the conversation which accompanied the viewing. The focus in this case was the developments in the local music industry. As they

watched, noting facial gestures, along with the dance styles; S1 voiced her opinion on the origin of the trend.

S1: All these new Yoruba music, the latest, I believe all of them are dancing Shina Peters.

Host: Ehn, they are all dancing like this.

S1: . . . what that man has created, I don't think none of the Yorubas can beat him.

Subject had identified the ingenuity but she had insisted on qualifying it. It is striking, that she has not identified herself with the source of the experience which she had been enjoying. The music was still "Yoruba" music, and the people were still referred to in the third person. Her host was not a Yoruba man, nor was he an Ibo like herself. He was from the middle belt.

So keen were the subjects on the programme which they awaited, they did not even wait till it was 8.30. p.m. before they switched back to Channel 10, on which they were to receive the programme. They were thus able to catch the tail end of the government programme which they had earlier rejected. In this, there was a summary of what the programme had featured on that day, and an invitation from the narrator, to join him the following week. S1 was certain that she would not join him, but her host said he would.

Without having consciously watched, the programme, it was possible for these viewers to have a fair idea of what it was about. In this case, they had overheard from the story teller himself as it were, and not from a secondary source, for example someone else who had viewed the programme. They could thus have taken away the intended core message, as well as whatever else they made of their incomplete exposure.

The polarity in the subjects response to the invitation was examined. S1 was simply not interested. On the contrary, her host was of the opinion that as a man, he should be interested in the running of the country. Based on this, he expressed his preference for such programmes even above other programmes that are shown. His actual behaviour in the observed instance belies the position. It is not even clear if the awaited programme was one of those referred to as being less preferable.

R: So you like government programmes?

Host: Of course yes. . . I prefer it, even to all the other programme they are showing [sic]

R: Maybe it's just you.

Host: I believe it's all men, because I don't know where I should be tomorrow.

R: What does that mean?

Host: I may join the army or the police force. [In other words, he does not know what prospects the future holds for him; what job he may be required to take to earn a living]

R: So you want to know what is going on?

Host: Yes, so I may have the experience [i.e. be knowledgeable of current affairs] even if I am somewhere else.

The above suggests that role expectancy, and not gender as seems obvious, is related to declared programme preference. The observation however illustrates, how even the declared preference may not be the assumed viewing pattern. In spite of his preference, the subject had given up his choice, without much ado, for some reason. This could have been his benevolence, or an inability to endure in reality, that which he "should be" watching.

As the sponsor's message (for the awaited programme) came up, the host

sent a message to his wife in the kitchen. The advert, had been the cue, the man had been the medium of heralding the programme.

S1 was so familiar with the message of the advert, that she recited the words along with the advert, just as she had done with the musical earlier on. The main actors in the programme, were also the characters in the commercial of the sponsor. The sponsor of this programme, is a bank.

The programme is set somewhere in Ibo land. There was thus an overbearing presence of the Igbo culture. One of the families presented in the programme was meant to portray the Yoruba culture. Though the programme was in pidgin English, there were occasional interjections in the two local languages represented. The subject and her host were both competent in the Igbo language and so could confidently interpret the occasional interjections in Igbo language. S1 could also interpret the Yoruba interjections.

They both followed the programme, and even tried to participate in it; they tried to predict the outcome of the events that they saw. For instance, Nath had purchased bread from Ovularia. Ovularia had made it very clear that there was no credit facility. Using their knowledge of the character, Nath, the subjects predicted what he would do next.

Host: Nath will run oh!

S1: Or maybe he will start eating the bread. . . See, he is eating the bread; trouble will come now. . .

The subjects also used their knowledge of the prevalent themes in society, which is what the programme is designed to feature, to predict

the trend that would be portrayed.

S1: He will bring out kobo, kobo, [that is coins], or maybe old money that is not good.

This was as Nath went through his pockets, trying to get the money to pay for the bread. In deed he brought dirty notes, and the coins. Ovularia rejected the money that he paid. At this point, the subject's were able to identify what the message was to be.

"Okay, it's the new, one naira, now"

S1 was able to see through the message of the programme; the day's episode was to promote the newly introduced naira coin. The message was not debated further, nor was any unintended message read from it at that time. The subjects were totally engrossed in it.

The next scene was in the "Yoruba" family's residence. Jegede, and Ramota his wife, were featured. Jegede was suspicious of the motives behind his wife's amiable disposition towards him. As he feared, the woman was after something. This was amusing to the subjects.

The very next event in the episode was not amusing. The subjects were quite indignant, like Jegede was, when Ovularia, who was visiting the family in view, instructed her grown up nephew, to take a live chicken home. It was S1 who was more vehement.

S1: Oh, oh! You see a young boy [man] dress[ed] like this, you say he should carry a chicken home.

S1: Yes! [in agreement] what Jegede is saying is that, it's not good for a young boy [man] to take chicken along the road, so he is not supporting Ovularia.

It is interesting that S1 was in agreement with the traditional, albeit patriarchal reasoning. The argument was that the "boy", featured as an

undergraduate, was beyond the task of carrying a live chicken especially "along the road". Ovularia's position, was based on a more liberating outlook to life. If the boy was not too old to eat of the chicken when it had been prepared, then he was not too old to help in getting it to the right destination. Even though these viewers did not agree with her reasoning, Ovularia had her way in the programme.

The subjects were attentive to the programme, even during the commercial break. The advertisement was like an extension of the programme especially as the actors retained the characters which they had in the substantive programme. There was no other advertisement at this time, except for this one, which was the sponsor's.

In spite of his understanding of the Igbo language, there was still a limitation to how much the host could cope with the portrayals that were deeply rooted in the culture. For instance, there was a joke which Zebrudaya cracked with his wife. Even though the joke was translated into English, it was only S1 who could really appreciate it, because she had a better grasp of the culture. The joke had been used as a parable; it was to have had a communicative function.

At the end of the viewing experience, the subjects aired their views on what they had seen. It was the man who lead the appraisal, and S1 took a cue from him. She agreed with his reasoning which reflected the male advantaged traditions. Their position on the earlier cited example was re - affirmed. There were other examples of the women's actions which the subjects found condemnable.

S1: I agree with what he's saying, because when Ovularia is selling something in the house, and the husband asks for some things, she must [should] have been giving him, so far they are staying together in a house . . . if he

didn't pay her directly, he can pay her another way, because he is her husband. . . Ovularia does not have the right to say her husband should give her money before she gives him whatever she wants, so far as she is selling it in the house, she's not going outside to go and buy it. [my emphasis]

. . .

The other act which was condemned was Ramota's; who had ulterior motives in showing affection to her husband. S1 identified this as being true of a lot of women, but she acknowledged that there were still some who had sincere affection.

Both the male and female subjects came to the same conclusion, that women love money, even more than they love their husbands. The point at which they disagreed was where the man generalised this to all women. S1 preferred to make exceptions here.

It was these social relationships that were portrayed that captured the attention of the subjects, more than the intended message. The intended message was not missed. The subjects had no problems identifying what the programme purposed to say to them. It was just that there was more in the programme, even in the intended message, than the producers' intentions. For instance, they used the summary of the intended message as a cue to discuss other rumours that they had heard about the matter. These had not been incorporated into the programme.

The viewing for the evening was rounded up at this time. S1 said she only watched the news occasionally. Likewise, the host said he only listened to a few points of the news before going to sleep. They both had very early start to their days because of the nature of their jobs.

The hostess had not joined in the viewing at all. Although her husband

said she was busy, it appeared that she was shy; and a sense of inadequacy had overwhelmed her because of the language barriers. She only spoke her own dialect, and so she had limited ability to communicate with the others.

Day 3

The hosts were not around on this day, but had made their home accessible to the subject.

At about 8.30 p.m. she stumbled on a drama programme on the network service. She had no preference for that evening because according to her, she does not normally watch TV on Wednesdays. The actual explanation though was the other way round. She had not been making allowance to watch TV, because she had not been aware of any programme that would make the effort worth her while. She had only planned to watch that evening because of the research exercise. Otherwise, like her hosts, she too would have gone visiting.

She had closed early on that day, but she had taken her time to eat, and get through her routine, such that viewing did not even begin till about 8.30. Closing early had thus not meant an earlier exposure to programmes. There were other things to do. This pattern again, seems to be, because subject did not own a set.

The programme which was found was a series. Because the subject had not begun viewing the programme from the beginning, she had to fill in the gaps as she went along. It was not long after she joined in the viewing that the programme ended. This was an indication to her, of how much she had missed. Her reading of the programme was thus beset with

assumptions.

R: What are they talking about?

S1: I think, you know, this girl is quarrelling with the other girl's husband, when I tuned the channel. That's what this one is telling her - that the other man is very annoyed with her because by [of her] leaving her husband to [go] to another place. . . [sic] (my emphasis)

The assumptions had transformed the real meaning of the programme. The "husband" in question was no husband but a drug baron. The two women were drug couriers, and it was the attempt by one of them to go straight, that had been the cause of the annoyance, and the fight.

In her report, S1 began on the note of supposition, but she soon became more confident, no longer "thinking", but positively identifying the action in the clips that reviewed the highlights of the programme. These were the clips that accompanied the closing credits.

"This is where they fought. This is the other girl's husband. This is where she got off the taxi. That was how the man knew. "

She was more confident as she had the visuals to buttress her reading. The expectation seemed to be that the pictures were clear enough, for the same inferences to be made. In deed the misinformation was so plausible, and would not have been disputed, had one not seen the programme.

This observation is important especially in a communal context of viewing. The erroneous report, could have been shared with a co - viewer who for some reason had missed parts of the programme. (Ref. viewing patterns in locations 1, 2, 7, 8, and 11). In such an instance, the

error in reading buttressed by the visuals supplied by the programme, is shared, and not contained. As the programme ended, the subject searched round the other stations. she wanted to know what else was worth watching. There was an advert on one station, and state news on another. She concluded that there was nothing on. The news and the advert, as well as the prospects of the network news, amounted to "nothing".

Her reaction at the end of the programme on this day was different from that of the previous day. She was still keen to watch television. The problem was that there was no satisfactory programme. This was in contrast to the previous day when she had been in a hurry to leave. Although this can be linked to the absence of her hosts, it may also be linked to other factors; like her physical state, or even the pleasure derived from the preceding viewing experience.

Observation ended at this point, as S1 switched off the set, and went to her own quarters.

Day 4

The host and hostess were home on this day. As with the previous day, subject did not know what to watch. It was not a day when she normally watched television. This was since the New Village Headmaster, a drama programme on the network service had been discontinued, (at least a quarter; that is 3 months).

The owners of the set were no better. They had no idea of what to expect. They stumbled on a drama programme which was in Yoruba. The programme, a long standing comedy, featured such characters as "Baba

Sala" and "Papalolo", who are both widely reputable. The choice was unanimously approved.

Besides watching the pictures, the subjects used their limited knowledge of Yoruba, to make sense of the conversations. The most competent of them, S1, acted as the translator. As with the viewing of the programme in pidgin English which they could easily follow, they were so engrossed in this programme, that they even tried to predict the outcome of the unfolding events.

The programme was again on contemporary social issues which they could easily relate with. They could thus have a say.

It was about the plight of street traders, in the hands of town council officials. Baba Sala, and Papalolo, had appeared as council officials, confiscating the traders wares. But they were impostors, they had not been authorised to carry out such raids. The subjects were confident that the men would be apprehended. They were confident that greed, would cause the pair to fall out. It was obvious that the subjects were familiar with this kind of programme.

What is more interesting though, is that the subjects never linked that which they saw in the drama, with what happens in reality. This was very different from the trend observed in some other locations. (Re. - Location, 4 & 8)

It was when the programme had ended that the hostess had lamented her incompetence with the Yoruba language, and how that had been a discouragement, regarding her interest in the television as a whole.

It was also when the programme had ended that the subjects searched round and found a drama on the network service, which was in English. The programme, unknown to the subjects, had started at 8 o' clock. They had missed 30 minutes of the programme when they found it.

S1 had heard about the programme from a friend, but had not been mindful of it. None of them had ever watched the programme. They were not certain of what to expect. They were engrossed in the viewing, and there was very little chatter that accompanied the viewing. There were no attempts to predict what would happen next. The programme was viewed in silence.

Like the earlier programme, this one also showed some form of deceit. This was the first remarkable feature which the subjects found in the programme.

S1: That girl just deceived her that somebody is calling him,
so that the other girl will go. . . Na wa oh! [meaning
- remarkable] (Hiss)

A two timing doctor had been saved from the wrath of his girlfriend, by a nurse, who turned out to be yet another of his lovers. The above comment was made as this became apparent; when the doctor and the nurse were shown entangled in an embrace after the "girlfriend" had left.

The above comment illustrates the type of comments that characterised the viewing of this programme. They were expressions of the sense made of the programme. This facilitated the existence of a group reading, even if there were any individual variations. The group readings on this occasion were not contested. This may suggest that S1 was seen as being

more competent. It may however be that she, being more vocal, expressed their thoughts before they managed to. S1 was the one who interpreted and labelled the proceedings in the programme. It was later revealed that her interpretations were tainted by her personal experience.

She identified with the character's situation, and used the benefit of hindsight, to assess such. She interpreted the advice to one of the characters, from another, (that she should be wary of her smooth talking suitor) as "jealousy". In this, she was projecting into the character's experience, and equating such with hers. She had once received such advice, and in her case, it had been motivated by jealousy.

Another example was the sympathy which was expressed for the "persecuted" mother. This sympathy had been misplaced, because the subjects had not been following the programme. They merely saw a mother who was not wanted by her daughter-in-law, and a weak son who could not effect control in his home. They had not been aware of the woman's attempts (in previous episodes) to dissolve the son's marriage.

There were other examples where the subjects' reading had no bearing on the story line. They had based such readings on the visuals alone; the gestures which they saw. Their evaluation of the relationship was based on their cultural values. The clash in the values they held, and those portrayed were even more glaring in this programme than in the previous day's. This programme was set in contemporary society, and the characters mainly reflected those in the upper echelons of society. The characters in the previous day's programme were such with whom the subject could identify. Yet even in their portrayal, the subjects could not agree with some of their reasoning.

The subject watched the programme right to the end. She even watched the visual montage which accompanied the closing credits. This way, she had a chance to see what had transpired before she tuned to the programme. That meant she was able to form an opinion on what she had missed. Such an opinion was subject to a lot of assumptions as illustrated earlier. She followed the same pattern.

S1: I am seeing that the reason why the girl got annoyed because maybe her husband did not tell her the truth, that he got a letter from the boy's mother. The boy did not tell his wife and she heard it from outside that's there's a letter to her husband. That is why she was quarrelling with the husband. . . "

The others had left right at the end of the performance and so had not been chanced to fill even the visual gap. Either way, they had all left the programme with an incomplete picture of the programme.

Another interesting feature of the evening's viewing was that the subject S1, and her host were not able to reach an agreement just like the characters within the programme over what was considered to be proper. Having determined the probable cause of the couple's disagreement, an argument ensued which was a replica of that within the programme.

The man argued that there was no reason why a man had to tell his wife or even girlfriend that his mother wrote to him; even if she was the subject of the letter. He considered the woman's insistence on being told, as an affront - an infringement on his privacy. The matter was treated as a threat to his manhood.

The woman on the other hand did not particularly demand to know the content of the letter. It was for her, a matter of courtesy that she be

told. In the instance that outsiders knew about the letter, even before she did, the situation was considered to reflect a lack of trust. It was considered as a threat to their relationship.

Both parties argued hypothetical situations, using the facts from the programme. As in the programme, they could not reach a compromise.

This concluded the observation as S1 left to join her friends who had called to see her, and had joined in the viewing, for a brief while at the tail end. They had not waited to see the closing credits.

Days 5 & 6

There was no viewing on either of these days. Subject was off on Day 6. As a result she had seized the opportunity to visit her friends who lived in another part of town. She reported that they had attended an all night party. Hence the reason why she stayed over. This was also an indication of the amount of TV that was watched. She had reported that there was no viewing at all, since her friends did not own a set.

Although she was sorry for disrupting the study, Friday, (Day 5), was one of those days that she did not normally view television. According to her, it was a day when all the Moslem programmes, which she was not interested in, were shown.

Day 6 was another day when she did not view. This time she did not blame the programming. It just happened that Saturday was the only day she had to herself having such a busy schedule during the week. On this Saturday, she decided to visit her sister who had recently given birth to a baby, to help her with some of her chores. She spent the night at

the said sister's place, and only returned on the afternoon of Day 7. There had been no TV in that sister's place either.

Subject's absence is not treated as a disruption or limitation of the study, since it is illustrative of her typical time use pattern.

Day 7

The host and hostess were not at home. They had made their home accessible to the subject, on this occasion as well. She thus had the freedom to watch what she pleased, when she pleased.

The first programme that was watched was a comedy in Yoruba. It was a repeat and subject had watched it before. On this occasion, the programme was not concluded. Because she had watched it before, she was aware of the lapse.

The programme had been on Lagos Weekend Television. The quality had been very poor, and the tape had been dragging. In spite of this, and the fact that she had seen the programme before, subject was still disappointed that it was taken off the air midway through the programme.

The programme was replaced by a medley of music. This seemed to placate S1 who claimed to like any type of music.

The programme, a comedy, had been about how two in-laws, got involved with each other, whilst looking after their children's home. The children were hospitalised at that time. Their secret affair was exposed when the woman became pregnant. This was the point where the programme was stopped on this occasion.

Subject reported that the other pair of parents also decided to get involved as a result of the condemnable act of their spouses. This was how the matter was resolved, the couple was left in disgrace, as their parents swapped partners.

The content of the programme attracted no comments from the subject. This was possibly because the incomplete showing of the programme had become a more pressing issue at the time.

The content of the musicals attracted the subjects comments. This was again based on the subject's evaluation of the performance against her values, her expectation of what was right. It was the presentation of Christian music that first came under scrutiny. According to her, she watches the TV presentation of musicals to learn the appropriate dance steps. She also uses the presentation to assess the performer.

S1: . . . let say I'll know how to dance it, and maybe the people singing, I will know how they act. Let's say it is church music, I will know how the person is acting as a Christian.

In other words, the message in the song is not the only message she takes from the presentation. She also watches the dance, and interprets that, to see if it correlates with what is being spoken. This is besides learning the appropriate dance steps.

"By the way the people who dance it . . . Let me put it this way, what the man is singing is Christian music, but the way they dance it, they don't suppose to dance Christian music like that. Because, as the man is acting, his acts shows that it's Christian music that he is playing, but the people who are dancing it, like this one now, it doesn't show that it is Christian music they are dancing. They dance as if they are dancing disco or any other music. For a Christian music, they are not supposed to dance as they are dancing. It is what someone is supposed to dance with cool body and cool mind."
[sic]

The subject's pre-disposition was clearly directing her response to the programme. The subject makes a distinction between the type of dancing permissible at parties, and such gatherings which are to the "self", and such that should be acceptable in a gathering which is to God. Subject belongs to a church that does not condone dancing during its service. She cited the criticism of the programme as a point to buttress the argument for the doctrine.

After the musical interlude, the programme line up was promoted. This was followed by another musical. Subject was conscious of the programme which she meant to watch. This was a children's programme from the network service. She could not pick any NTA station with a clear reception. She thus settled for a Christian programme on OGTV. She watched with rapt attention. The room was so quiet that one could hear a pin drop. This was however not indicative of her interest in the programme. It was an indication of the learnt appropriate response. Within a few minutes, she yawned, and later she asked for the time. Reckoning that she could still catch the preferred Children's programme, she switched round the channels again. She settled for the NTA channel 12. She had not been mindful of the fact that being a network programme, the programme would have been on this station. It was only when she searched round that she found it. Earlier on she had made a predetermined scan of the Lagos based NTA stations.

Even when she found the programme, the subject did not watch it. It is not clear that the poor reception alone can be blamed for this. (Compare the determination of subjects in location 11 to watch drama programme). In this case, she was more interested in chatting. She was experiencing

some personal problems, on which she required counsel. It was only in the dying minutes of the programme that she acknowledged its presence. There was no more viewing for the day.

Discussion

Exposure Pattern, and Ultimate View

Subject confirmed the observed time use pattern. She is usually available for viewing at about 7.30 or 8.00 p.m. on weekdays. She introduced another dimension of her selectivity, which had not been observed.

Fatigue was another reason why she does not watch TV every day. Sometimes, she may be too tired after the day's work. When considered along with the fact that she had to leave her own room, to go next door to watch, the cost of viewing was too high to make the exercise worthwhile. In a situation where the cost of viewing was not as taxing, this might have been different. Ownership of set, was thus again shown, to be a factor that affects intensity of viewing.

This is confirmed by the subject's view of the function of the medium. For her, television was a companion; a medium which eases loneliness.

"If you are alone, you can switch on the television then you can feel somebody is talking to you. Then if you are not happy, you put it on, you will see people playing, then you can laugh and forget what is making you pressure [sic] That is why I watch television."

Because of her need for a highly selective pattern of viewing, an anticipation of known pattern of programming, underlined her viewing plans. There were however occasions which did not fit the mould. There were programmes which she had stumbled on by accident, and some which

she had expected but which never came. She recalled the drama programme which she had seen on a Monday, a day which she had written off, as it were. To her, the drama had been a fluke.

The programme had actually been a serialised drama. She had only seen one episode, and had missed the other parts. This was similar to what happened with Thursday's viewing, (Day 4). The result of this on subject's interpretation of the programme is that subject is at a loss regarding the real intentions of the programme makers. She is not able to take the complete message of the programme. Her views are thus riddled with assumptions.

The inconvenience of the viewing arrangement meant that subject was very definite in the expression of her preferences. Besides dramas and the musicals, television for her was none existent.

R: When you say you want to watch television, what do you have in mind?

S1: I first of all check if there is something intelligent to watch. If I find [such] I will sit down and watch. . . If I can meet a play like that, I will sit down and watch it, then maybe if they are singing, I will sit down and see how they sing the song. . .

R: Besides drama and singing you won't watch anything else?

S1: There's nothing else than those.

What this meant in essence is that the subject only planned to watch the dramas. As seen during the observation, the musicals were often not scheduled; only serving as fillers. Viewing of such could therefore not be planned. Exposure to these were dependent on if one was available before a functional set.

Going by the same reasoning, it may not follow that her definition of

what television means can not be expanded. This need not be so. For instance, what happens if she happened to be before a functional set and she was exposed to other programme categories? The ready example illustrating this is her response to advertisements which she was so familiar with, that she could sing along. She did not object to watching certain interview and discussion programmes, particularly those which target the women folk. Her interest in these, was purposeful.

"Some of those things will show us how to be nice to [our] husband . . . how you will do in the house, so that is why if I see something like that, I will like to watch."

The emphasis on "sit down and watch" in the earlier statement, connotes the determination involved in the type of viewing. This is a pointer to the variations that exist in the act of viewing. The other programme type which the subject expressed interest in, which she would watch occasionally were films. The viewing of this had been curtailed by her time use pattern. Because the films are usually shown late in the night, and she tries to sleep early (about 10 p.m.) she had found it impractical to watch these more frequently.

From the discussion, there is no doubt that the subject has a strictly determined pattern of exposure to the programming. In her case, the occurrence of incidental viewing had been reduced to barest minimum. Her favourite adverts were all such as are targeted towards women; mothers and housewives. This was indicative of the kind of programmes which she watched.

Advertisements

Though she enjoyed the adverts, they did not always evoke the desired behavioural response. Though she did not doubt the claims, she saw the

advertises as an exaggeration of reality. For instance, she admitted that Maggi cubes made a difference in cooking, but she would not put it in every thing that she cooked.

" . . . so far the ingredients are complete, . . . it does not mean that if there is no Maggi in a soup, somebody will say, "It's not sweet, I can't eat"

The advert of the particular product had only insinuated the message that the subject rejected. It had not said that cooking without Maggi will be rejected, it had only said acceptance of cooking will be enhanced with the use of Maggi cubes. Some other products in the same genre as Maggi had made the said promise.

These other products are often times referred to as Maggi, which being the brand leader, had become generic label for the product. These had also come out in the subject's reading of the advertisements.

Striking themes

The subject on the whole, found television to be realistic. She agreed that it should be taken seriously. Television for her was a medium which we can learn from. This had already been illustrated by the purpose for viewing discussion and interview programmes, although these were not mentioned amongst the category of programmes which she set out to watch. They did not rank high enough on the scale of priority which her situation constrained her to use. But she did find the medium as one from which one could learn lessons to cope with life. This made the lessons which she learnt from the dramas more interesting.

Dramas and Films

The subject was able to recall with clear details what she watched in some of the dramas. She clearly enjoyed reliving the viewing experience. In some cases though she had confused the facts in the story line. This was due to her limited knowledge of the Yoruba language, and as seen during the observation, her incomplete readings of the programme.

By reading only the visuals, subject had introduced her own interpretations, which on occasions were not part of the intended message. This was only detected because the researcher had viewed the programme which she was trying to describe. At the end of the day, the main lesson of the programme was not affected. The theme of retribution; evil being overcome by good, was still manifest. It was the details of how that came about that had been transformed. (This was the first drama viewed in Location 2 on Day 1).

In a similar way, the subject also had formed an impression of a genre which she admitted she does not watch often. Of the portrayal she had seen on films she said:

"They show us how to steal may be by going to their house when they are not around; or at night when the people have slept. . . to took [sic] their property away. . . In short, the way they move, how gentle they are, they will just do as though they want to catch somebody. . . so they will just keep silent until they took what they want, then they will be going. And anybody they see on their way, they will just shoot the person so that the person will not be alive to witness."

The description which subject has based her views on, have been mainly visual. She had made no reference to the story line, nor did she give any indication that she understood the motivation or the reasoning underlying the violence that she described. This was not the case with

the local dramas. Although she recognised the presence of evil, and violence, in her view, she was able to appreciate the need for the portrayal of such; knowing that it was a means to a desirable end. The lesson of retribution; vindication; eventual prevalence of good over evil was dominant.

"What I get in that play is that, how God did his work - somebody whose hand is clear to somebody, no matter what they try, God will never agree [permit] because, hence I'm not doing anything, to you, and you are trying to suffer [punish] me, all what you are doing will not reach my body. God knows I didn't think bad to you, and I didn't think bad to anybody else - [Anticipation of God's thoughts] - 'The person whose mind is clear he does not trouble somebody like him, how can I allow somebody to suffer him?' . . . That's what happened to Bello and his sister had it not been the hand of God that man could have killed them. "

This type of reading seemed to excuse a certain type of portrayal, and not the other which could not be thus explained. It was this type of "mindless" violence that attracted the subject's criticism. Compare the lesson which she found in the earlier description, with that which she felt was inherent in the films.

". . . And to me, I don't think it is good for children who like to copy, to watch such a thing, because they just act as in the film. Like these children, [referring to the children in the neighbourhood] they will be playing, they will just shoot - pa sha, pa sha, pa sha . . . It's because of what they watch from the films. So, to me, I don't think it is good for children to watch film of stealing, because it can be, a stubborn child who will like to copy every bad thing. "

In other words, subject felt that the resolution of the problems in films, was not sufficient deterrent to the difficult child, who may be tempted to copy the negative ways that are portrayed. It is easy to see how the subject could arrive at this kind of reading. By relying mainly on the pictures, the subject, and other viewers like herself are deprived of the rationalisation that could be embedded in the dialogue.

On the whole, this subject saw television as a medium which she could learn from. She was not bothered about the credibility of the source, but she saw TV as a window through which she could see what was going on. This applied mainly to the dramas, and the religious programmes, not the news and such programmes which she definitely did not watch. She was not very critical as regards the production elements - the aesthetic quality of the programmes. What mattered most to her was the story which got told.

In spite of her indiscriminate affinity for local drama productions, she had an ethnic bias when it came to identifying her favourite characters. These were the people whom she would like to imitate. It thus seems to follow, that she was taking from television, what she had brought to it.

Subject's view of the technology as has been shown, had determined her expectation of the service there from. Television was a source of relaxation. It was to be like a window on the world which one could gaze through when not occupied. Yet in all of this, it was a place where one learned what was going on.

This explains why some of the programmes which subject was exposed to were refused - they were not relevant to her needs. Unless there is a coincidence in the programmers' attitude and that of the viewers a large proportion of the service will remain largely irrelevant.

LOCATION 6 - A SCHOOL MISTRESS AT HOME

Subject is a primary school teacher, and she has a 4-year old daughter. Her husband is an engineer who had worked with the NTA, and thus had specialised knowledge of the TV industry. The wife did not have this.

Although the family lived in a bungalow on their own, the subject was often in the company of her neighbours. Because their houses were close, to each other, they belonged to the same profession, and shared similar interests, they had children of similar ages who played together, there was the tendency for the women to converge in each other's houses.

Unlike her neighbours she did not have a shop where she traded after school. She thus had the opportunity to spend more time at home. It turned out though that her time, was not necessarily free for TV.

During the observation period, the subject had her teenage brother-in-law, (an undergraduate) in the home. Otherwise, she lived alone with her (nuclear) family, and her maid.

It became apparent during the period, that the subject was experiencing serious emotional turmoils which she had tried to cover. The observation of her emotional state adds an important dimension to the study as it does affect her viewing pattern, and her response to the programmes. This need not be considered a limitation, as it could be indicative of a sizeable group of women in the society; those who are struggling with marital and such undisclosed problems.

Another feature of this week which might suggest that it was not a

typical viewing week, was that the subject spent a better part of the week attending a Christian outreach in the town. The particular meetings were very special to the subject and she did not miss any one of them.

Though these particular meetings were infrequent, and so do not illustrate the normal, it does illustrate the subject's priorities. The expression of these priorities could have taken different forms. In this regard the week should still not be viewed as being atypical.

The subject had a range of 3 stations which she received from her location. These were LTV, OGTV, and NTA Ikeja (Channel 7). Of these, only LTV was reliable. The other two stations; the one from the state, (OGTV), and the other from Lagos, were not always clear.

The set in the home was a large colour set. It was centrally located in the comfortable sitting room. The sitting room was adjacent to the dining room, but the arrangement was such that the set could not be viewed from the dining area.

The sitting/dinning area, separated the kitchen and the bedrooms. This meant that anyone who was in either of those sections of the house was out of viewing range. This was especially when the airconditioner was in use, and the sound from the set was restricted to the sitting area.

Day 1

The subject's house was active and noisy. There were 5 boisterous children, and 3 mothers. There was also the subject's brother-in-law (B1). He was the only one who sat in the sitting room, watching TV. The programme in view was Another Life.

The women were in the kitchen, and the children were playing in the porch. Subject (S1) was cooking, whilst her friends kept her company. Even after the meal was ready, they remained in the kitchen, chatting, and possibly keeping an eye on the children. The subject's husband (H) returned from work at about 7.15 p.m. The group at this time moved into the sitting room. S1 served her daughter's food and tried to get her to eat, while still "entertaining" her friends. B1's meal was also served but he kept viewing the programme. The entrance of the group did not appear to have distracted him. He sat, "glued" to the programme until it ended.

It was only when the programme ended, when the signature tune accompanying the closing credits was heard that the group noticed it. These subjects were not regular viewers. In fact, without any prompting, S1 described her use of TV. The point she was trying to make was that she did not watch TV very much, and that she was not worth studying.

S1: Oh, Another Life! It's finished. That's the programme I watch once in a while. Then I watch Ripples, and the 8 o' clock news.

I'm only interested in the 9 o' clock news when I've heard the headlines. If the main news is not what I'm interested in, I just go to sleep. . . Then I like musical interludes. "

She soon continued to remember other programmes that she liked, and it became apparent, that she watched more TV than she could readily think of. This confirmed that she was worth studying, especially as her lack of viewing was also of interest.

At the commercial break, the children, who were now in the sitting room, danced to the Coca-cola advertisement. The mothers engaged in their own

discussion, ignoring the set, but keeping an eye on the frisky children.

The trend continued into the 8 o' clock news. This was one of the programmes that the subject had identified as what she watches on television. The only person who watched the programme, with a determination; shutting out all the noise around him; was B1. Even after her neighbour left with her children, midway through the programme, S1 did not watch. Instead, she trailed her active daughter around the room, trying to get her to eat. Thereafter, her husband emerged from the bedroom area, and she set the food on the table.

The family then had their dinner. They were out of viewing range, even if they could hear what was going on. There were no remarks to indicate that they took any notice of anything that was coming from the set.

Right after the meal, the husband (H), came to the sitting room, and immediately took the remote control. He switched away from the channel in view at the time, (LTV). This was showing a documentary on government activities. He selected OGTV instead. This was showing a musical interlude at the time. With the music in the background, H engaged the researcher in a conversation. He did not watch the programme, nor was it apparent that he had any intentions of doing so. It seemed to have been selected for its suitability as part of the room ambience. H had definite opinions about the running of the broadcast industry which are beyond the scope of the present focus. Some of his comments have been used in another part of the study. His views stem from his specialised knowledge of the broadcast engineering. S1 was still clearing up at this time. She cleared the table and as well as the kitchen.

In addition to his gripes with the management of the stations, H was not impressed with the programming. He was particularly against foreign productions. Though he was tolerant of some of the soap operas, because "they make sense", he singled out films for being irrelevant. S1 who had joined the discussion at this time, was of the opinion that there were "polluting" influences in the films.

S1: I thought of some films, [they] pollute people. Watching all those films teaches people how to gun. . . you can hear the children play[ing] at times, they say; 'I will gun you' . . . so it pollutes children and even other people in society. That's why I don't have interest in films." [sic]

H: You see, so they should try, and develop indigenous films that will make sense to people [my emphasis]

It was the same people who complained of the "pollution" which comes from TV, who buy guns, as toys, for their children, yet it was easier to blame TV for the trend. They also fail to monitor the types of programmes that the children watch. They overlook the influence of the home videos to which the children are also exposed. Instead they praised the indigenous programmes, which also feature guns and other forms of violence, and "pollution". [Compare the comments of the group in location # 2]

In fact their own example also illustrates the point. The following is a conclusion of their own example, of a desirable indigenous film. The film was not watched on the television.

"At the end of it when you sit down and reflect, 'What is this film trying to teach?' - It teaches us not to be wicked; not to be jealous. You [had] see[n] how somebody who was jealous ended up. He ended up by planning for somebody to be assassinated, and it was he himself, who was assassinated. . . So people will learn from this"

The mode of "assassination" had been a severe beating, which culminated in lynching. There were guns in the film as well. It appears that the real issue then is the ability to make sense of the programmes - the relevance of the programmes to the subject's reality. As H put it, there was a preference for those films which made sense.

S1 soon withdrew from the discussion whilst H pursued his professional appraisal of the TV industry. Although she was still sitting before the set, she was not watching.

The house was soon quiet, especially after the daughter had been forced to go to bed. The maid had retired into the room, making no attempts to watch the set. B1 too had excused himself, and retired into the room. This was reflective of the training where subordinates, even as in children of discernible age, do not hang around elders without reason, and especially without permission.

Before long, S1 had fallen asleep, though she was holding her notes of lessons, with the intention to work on them. It was not 9 o' clock yet. She had missed the earlier newscasts from the state stations. The trend continued into the network newscast. The subject merely sat politely beside the researcher, not viewing, but sleeping.

On the contrary, the husband was still alert, awaiting the network news.

As observation ended, and researcher was packing up to go, S1 was awakened. She expressed her determination to write her lesson notes still. It is thus possible that she may have viewed TV after the researcher left.

Day 2

Observation began in the early evening. Though the set was on, the subject did not watch. She was entertaining a guest. It was only when she returned from escorting her guest, that she paid attention to that which was on. The programme was a Yoruba drama on OGTV. Though the subject made attempts to concentrate on the programme, she was constantly distracted by her very boisterous daughter, and the other children who had come to play. She thus had to try to make sense of that which she saw, filling in the gaps resulting from her intermittent attention. Meanwhile the subject, S1 was able to watch without any visible distractions; having ignored the children, who were all around him.

In trying to make sense of what was going on, S1 relied on her knowledge of the culture in which the programme was set; using the visual cues; and the symbolisms in the action.

S1: They want to give [bethrothe] her to a husband, and the king now desires her. . . It seems like it's the king [who is getting to marry her] You see, they have adorned her neck with beads, royal beads, now she has become a queen. . . They are taking her to the palace, the king ordered that she they should bring her. That is what they did in olden days. see she is [dumbfounded], she can't even talk.

It turned out that this form of visual reading was not reliable. Though the interpretations of the visual cues were correct, the subject had missed the motivation which had been embedded in the speech. She had not been following that. As a result she could not tell, that the king had summoned the maiden in order to ensure that she was given to the suitor whom her parents approved, and not her secret lover. The king had not

intended to marry the girl for himself as subject assumed.

In fact, after a while, S1 confessed that she was not following the programme. She had had to go to the kitchen in between the viewing, and the bother from the restless children was not reduced. Even after she had made this confession, she still continued viewing, finding pleasure in the various elements of the programme, even though she could not piece them together. For example, she was entertained by the part where a scoundrel gave a report to the king, even though she was not clear of its significance. The subject had focused on the composure and the gestures at this time.

In spite of the fact that B1 was following the programme, and S1 was not, he did not volunteer to be her viewing guide, neither did she ask him to be. This again is rooted in the existing communication pattern in the home. There was not enough familiarity between the two to warrant such communication. The social distance that existed between the two was maintained.

S1 did not see the conclusion of the programme because she was in the kitchen. By the time she returned to serve the children their food, the programme had been succeeded by a musical interlude. The interlude was followed by a special programme, which featured the inauguration of the presidential system of government. There was a long pause before this programme came on, after it had been announced. The subject did not show any interest in the programme. It was rather used as a back drop for her own private conversation which she engaged the researcher in. This had nothing to do with the viewing, yet it was about other social issues which affected her directly. None the less, she noticed the dressing of

the characters on the screen.

"Ah, Ah! They all have on, the same cap. . . "

This illustrates that though she did not pay full attention, she was not impervious to the elements of the programme.

As she observed the uniformity of the men in the programme, her comment which followed was a ridicule of another "government" project - the Better Life for Rural Women. The image of the "Rural Women" clad in their uniform was what she drew on, making a jest of the "uniformed" men.

". . . the people of this area know how to [are fond of] dress in uniformity. . . are these "Rural men" as well."

Even with the remark, she did not care enough to find out just who the men were. Though she sat before the set, she was not attentive to the programme.

It was obvious after a while that the subject was merely sitting before the set to please the researcher. She was putting off certain matters that she needed to attend to. The subject was then encouraged to pursue her normal routine. The following was her response.

". . . If you want me to be natural like I normally am, you are not likely to see me sitting with it [television]. If I sit down here, I may get my notes, and sit down here to write." [sic]

In deed, this was what the subject had done the day before. She had sat before the set with the lesson notes, but she had neither worked on them, nor had she viewed the set. She had drifted off to sleep.

It was possibly as a result of the encouragement from the researcher that she should pursue as normal a routine as possible, that there was no more viewing at all that evening.

The only programme which attracted the subject's comment was the programme in Egun language. She marvelled at the diversity of languages in existence. Though the programme did not make sense to her, she was able to make some sense out of it. This did not have anything to do with the programme content at all. This comment was prompted by the dexterity exhibited in the speech.

"These languages are remarkable. God is patient, he can understand all these languages."

The subject's husband had travelled straight from work, so he was not returning that evening. It is possible that this also contributed to the absence of an incentive to stay awake.

By 9 o' clock, the observation had to be concluded because there was no reference to the set at all. B1 had retired by this time. He left after his dinner, which he had after watching the Yoruba drama.

Days 3 - 5

There was no observation at all, as subject had been attending a crusade meeting in town. She usually left at about 7 p.m., after cooking the family's meals, and feeding her daughter. She did not return until well past 10 p.m.

The interesting feature in this, is the fact that subject could make time for the crusade; even take the trouble to journey to the venue of the meetings; and stay awake for the programme. When discussing

television viewing, she had mentioned the need to sleep early, because her day begun very early - about 5.30 a.m. On these days, when she attended the crusade, this was not an issue.

This is a reflection of the subject's priorities. Television, service, even though it was available to her in the comfort of her home, was not high enough on her list of priorities. TV viewing was not an activity she made provision for in her schedule. It turned out that all her viewing was incidental, (as she had said).

Day 6

Observation began early in the day (about 10 o' clock) as transmission starts earlier on at weekends. Subject's home was already buzzing with activity at this time. Subject was entertaining a guest, (her brother) who had come from another town. They were both sitting in front of the functional set, but subject's daughter was making a lot of noise with her toys.

The programme which was on was (the news) in Egun language. The language was remarked upon by both viewers.

B2: It's a funny language.

S1: It's like that code language we used to use when we were children; when we didn't want other people to understand what we were saying. We either spoke from the back [that is reverse] or something.

It was the language itself that had attracted their attention. In this instance, the subject had taken a different message from the use of the language, than she had done on an earlier occasion. Her reading this time, had been directed by her brother's comment.

The programme which followed was a foreign Sports programme. This attracted the interest of B2 whose remarks again drew S1's attention to the programme. The viewing was an extension of their conversation. It supplied an agenda for their conversation. This was premised on B2's interest in the subject of the programme.

B2: I do like Sports programmes, especially foreign ones. There are some feats that are wonderfully performed. We Nigerians can never perform such. Ever! Like this one, what's it called, car racing. . .

B2's comments dominated the discussion. S1's few contributions were overshadowed by his. She was more a recipient of his views, agreeing with that with which she was familiar, and "learning" those which were news to her. This was possibly as a result of his superior education; his confidence; and her lack of confidence at the time. She did not contend his views.

They were agreed on the fact that car racing was dangerous; tennis was boring, and had too many rules and formalities. S1's attention was drawn to the expenses involved in horse racing.

B2: Do you know that the cost of feeding this horse per day, is more than some family can afford? the cost of the food; the cost of the drugs; the treatment; and if you refuse to treat it per day it may lose its sensitivity. . .

S1: Since the day that thing [a horse] killed Kaingiwa, [a prominent politician] I've hated it.

The above was evoked by the segment of the programme which featured well groomed horses in a race. What is interesting is B2 divergence from the presented line of communication. He had looked beyond the well conditioned horses, beyond their preparedness for the race, into the

economics involved in the sport, comparing this with the reality of his own experience.

S1 had more than agreed with him, and his reasoning had been confirmed by another negative experience in which the animal was prominent. Although the particular sport had been given negative value, the positive image of the participants, and the culture which they reflected, was not adversely affected.

B2: . . . These white men like to engage in risky games. They risk their lives. Anyway, that is why they are progressing. If you must make progress, you must be prepared to take risks. All those inventions - if you know how many lives are lost in the process.

It is interesting that the subject arrived at this conclusion; finding justification for what would otherwise be condemned, but still upholding the Western culture, whereas he made no such provisions for Nigerians. Rather he was outrightly disdainful. This was evident even in the viewing of a Sports programme.

The confidence which B2's views and comments exude was striking.

The programme gave way to the station promotion. One of the celebrities featured in the montage was recognised, and became a focus of B2's next "report". The report on this celebrity, led to grape - vine reports on other celebrities who had not even been featured. - Who is dating who? Who is committing what atrocities?

According to B2's report, the celebrity in view had been living above her means, and the press had capitalised on the situation that she had found herself in. He had some inside information that gave the background to the reports which had been serialised in some of the

tabloids. Sharing this information had been prompted by the sighting of the character in the montage used by the station, (OGTV), for its promotion.

As one topic led to another, and the conversation soon became paramount, overshadowing every other thing in view. The set was ignored, and there were no remarks pertaining to any aspect of the programming throughout the duration of the one hour musical entertainment programme. The set was left on, and the programme served as part of the room ambience.

The programme which followed was a Christian (evangelical) programme. This attracted the attention of the subjects. S1 noted the resemblance in the choir in view, and that of her church. B2 in his case used the programme as a cue, to air his views on the practice of Christianity.

S1: This choir looks like that in our church.

B2: If you see Kumuyi, [leader of prominent Christian church] you will know that the guy is well fed. . . His shoe is clean all the time. Then you will see those "Calabars" [living] in my area who attend his church, going all around, picking their television [sets], and throwing them away; saying Kumuyi says they should not have worldly things. . .I say, "You are crazy upstairs". . .

It was as if he had been waiting for an opportunity to air his views about the particular church, which in his view had fanatical doctrines. Although he was not against Christianity, and the programme in view had not been from the church in question, he had succeeded in diverting attention from the programme to his own views. S1 who seemed to have been interested in the programme, had also been distracted. She saw the "truth" in her brother's report, and was quick to find an example, an experience of someone very close to her, (her neighbour) to buttress the brother's case.

Though there was still enough time to watch a part of the programme, a negative atmosphere had been whipped up by B2's insinuations and comments. In concluding, he turned to the programme that was on air, drawing examples from what he knew to be the pattern of such programmes, and what he saw which confirmed his position. His condemnation of this was based on his own assessment of acceptable Christian doctrines. Again, his remarks exude such confidence, that added weight to his opinions; making them seem absolute teachings, not opinions.

B2: These modern type of gospel, you see the women don't have their heads covered - they have on "Jheri curls", "Bob Marley" and this man, [the preacher] is going to perform miracles any time now. I'm telling you, he'll perform miracles. . .

S1: I am tired, there is so much sleep that I have to catch up on, that's why I am curled up here.

There was silence as the viewing continued. S1 did not contradict her brother, although she refrained from joining him in outright condemnation of the programme. She soon left for the kitchen to prepare some food for him. He turned his attention to his niece, showing no interest in the programme, or even in other available programmes. He did not scan the other available channels, even when the reception quality on the station in view had deteriorated. The set was completely ignored.

The subject had not followed the programme to assess the correctness of his prediction. He obviously had no interest in it. What is more is that he had succeeded in quenching any possible interest that the sister could have had. She it was who had first been attracted to the programme, identifying a semblance with the choir in view and that of her church; thus suggesting that she was not against the "modern" churches as was the brother. This reasoning is upheld by other remarks

which came out of their conversation.

B2 preferred to be in his own world than to be a part of the programme, even after his niece lost interest in his company. He hummed to himself as he awaited his meal, and H, with whom he was to travel to Lagos.

At a point, B1 emerged from the room, and sat before the set. He was intent on viewing a particular programme. This programme had not started yet, but he waited quietly for it. The little girl entertained the family while each person waited (for the different reasons). The set was still on in the background. S1 was still in the kitchen and remained occupied there till H arrived.

As soon as he had changed and was ready for the journey, he also sat before the functional set, awaiting the meal, that the wife insisted he must have. This meant that all the males in the house were able to sit for longer periods of uninterrupted time, before a functional set, even when they were not consciously viewing what was on.

As for S1, she had to serve a hurriedly prepared meal because H, in his hurry, could not wait for the planned meal. As a result S1 was tied up in the kitchen for longer than she had planned. Even after the meal had been served, she had to clear up, and she was faced with other problems. She needed to get a ride with them because she was to go to the market, but she also had to resolve an unforeseen crisis - a cut in water supply. She had not anticipated the problem, and had not stocked any water in the house. Amidst all of this, she was yet to finish her cooking. The men (H and B2) had to leave without her.

This meant that she was potentially available for viewing at that time. It however also meant that she had a more tedious journey to make to the market. This affected the viewing for the later part of the day.

Although she settled down to watch the set, after the men had left, she was too pre-occupied to really enjoy what was going on. She had a troubled countenance, and though she sat before the programme which was a Yoruba drama, she made no attempts to follow it. Apparently, the drama was what B1 had been waiting for. He followed it keenly and was quite unperturbed by the "problems" which S1 was facing.

Subject S1 actually broke down in tears about this time. It was this, that indicated the enormity of the domestic problems that she had to contend with. It was also at this point that she excused herself to go to the market.

Subject's home is located in a remote area of the town. Public transport to the market was unreliable. This meant she had a more tedious journey to the market. It also meant she spent a longer time getting there and back. On her return, she was not in any frame of mind to continue with the exercise. The combination of the emotional stress, and the fatigue had worn her down. Besides, by this time of the afternoon, she anticipated that there would only be Sports programmes any way. There was no attempt to verify this, it was just the excuse that was given for the afore mentioned reasons. Viewing had thus effectively ended at about mid-day.

Day 7

There was no observation on this day. In the morning S1 attended a

service. She did not return until about 1 p.m. She had planned to attend the finale of the week long crusade. Although the afternoon was relatively free, she had indicated her intention to rest, and prepare for the week ahead. It is possible that there might have been some viewing during this period. However the prevalent mood was such that it seemed wiser not to impose on the subject at the time.

Discussion

The discussion with this subject was deliberately delayed for weeks so that the problems observed in the viewing period would not taint the responses that she would give.

The observed pattern of viewing had been consistent with the subject's appraisal of herself at the point of contact. She did not use the medium very much. She did not appear to be conscious of television. The immediate concern during the discussion was thus to find out her programme preference pattern; if that had any bearing on the viewing pattern displayed.

Programme Preference

Drama was the only programme which the subject spontaneously identified as being enjoyable.

R: What programmes do you watch on television?

S1: I used to enjoy watching drama.

. . .

It was only in the course of the discussion that the subject began to identify other programme categories that were likeable. For instance in expressing her preference for the service from OGTV, over that of other

stations, she identified musicals, as well as the dramas.

During the viewing, she had not at any time exhibited a preference for any particular station. She did not show any interest in making any choice. She was always content with whatever was on. Most times, she was not even watching such. In the same way that she was not keen on any particular programme, she was not opposed to any particular programme. The only exception to this were the movies. Her reason for this was -

"They are not natural . . . to me. . . "

"It's just like tricks to me, because it's not just possible for someone to be doing "gbu gbu gbu", killing people. I don't think it's possible. "

The subject's response to movies has already been discussed. It is the only genre which she positively identified as what she would not watch. In spite of this, she did illustrate a certain familiarity with the genre which suggests that she had some measure of exposure to them.

For her, TV was just something which she had on when she was relaxing. Even then, she may not be watching it. On the other hand, she may be attracted to any of the programmes.

It is interesting that there was a distinction between the known purpose of TV, and the purpose which it served the subject personally. This became apparent in the response to the following question.

R: What do you use TV for? What's the purpose of TV?

S1: The purpose of TV, eh, first it enlightens us on some things that is going on.

R: For you?

S1: Myself? For me, it gives me a sort of enjoyment I enjoy watching TV as one of my hobby so that, that time, at

times I will be thinking of something else, but when I see something interesting in the TV, I pay attention to it, and forget about the - [problem]

In other words, the subject also used television to relieve tension, besides using it as a companion. This form of use itself was dependent on the considered value of the programme. The condition for viewing, depended on if the programme was assessed as being interesting. This explanation goes a step beyond the conclusions of the Uses and Gratifications approach. Indeed, the subject employs the medium to relieve tension; to be informed; even for companionship, but what is seen here is that she does not deliberately seek out programmes for any purpose. Rather, she stumbles on the programming that is able to give her such gratifications, because she is sitting before a functional set. This subject can be said to be indiscriminate in her viewing; that is, she does not select specific programmes for viewing.

She is attracted by programmes which she feels she can learn from. The "education" which she finds attractive on television varies from tips on cooking new dishes, to what goes on in government - what meetings government officials are attending, lessons on hand crafts from programmes such as those on the government sponsored "Better Life" project and so on.

Perceived Images

The subject found that the drama programmes show some of the things that happen in real life. Her indiscriminate attitude to television was also manifest in her response to this category. For instance, she did not have any particular programme which she favoured. The importance of this, is that no particular programme can be readily identified as,

being responsible for any views that the subject has from viewing television. Therefore, studying her response to, or the impact of a particular programme, would not have revealed the true impact of television programming on her. The importance of conceptualising TV as a flow was more glaring in this subject. The following illustrates the point.

" . . . I don't have any specific drama, anyone [will do]. Even at times, they may be doing it, and I will join it at the middle. I may just see something I like or something that I want to gain something from it."

With such a viewer, many assumptions would invariably accompany whatever sense she makes of the programme, which will cause the viewed programme to be unequal to that which was transmitted. This has been illustrated in location 5.

It could have been helpful, for analysis of her response, if the viewer had been explicit in identifying what aspects of the programme that she responded to. This subject could not even single out what aspects of the programme were attractive. She could not identify what made a programme appear interesting. Rather, she preferred to give an example.

"It may be what they pick out at the particular point in time. . . It may be what they say. . . like for instance, . . . at times when you come in, you just see the reaction on that man, just shout[ing] on that girl. . . so you'll like to know what is going on."

The above example had been premised on a knowledge of the story line. It was the "reaction" however that was to arouse her interest. Subject also identified advertisements as being able to attract her to programming. The general theme, as with Christian programmes was also identified. At this point, one can see that the subject's viewing depended on many factors, including some that were extraneous to the TV programme itself.

[Re. situation on Day 6] This further buttressed the need for television, to be conceptualised as flow, rather than specific programmes, which capture discreet moments.

Her responses pertaining to what she watched, were contradicted by the observed pattern. This should not invalidate her responses. Rather, it should be seen as being indicative of what subject would like to watch, whilst the observed indicates what the reality of her situation allows for.

Though she claimed to watch a wide range of programmes, including the news, discussion and interview programmes, women's programmes, musicals, religious programmes, advertisements, and drama, her response indicated that she only saw a bit of these. This made her views of what was portrayed more interesting.

News

"They normally talk about, mostly it's about government. They usually talk about what goes on with government; within the government. They will say Babangida travelled to New York, travelled to Kano, to Sokoto or something like that. . . National things anyway. Things that go on around or something like that."

Besides the mention of Babangida's travels, there were no other specifics which the subject could spontaneously recall from her exposure to the news. The remainder of her views from the news was nebulous - "things that go on around"; "something like that"; "national things".

With a bit of prodding, she included the Ministers for Health; for Education, and also the Road Safety Corps in the picture of those who

she felt were "occasionally" featured in the news.

Newsline, for her, seemed to be richer in content. A lot of these could not be personalised as in the case of the news. What was clear was that it focused on the rural areas, and it showed -

"Things that they feel will interest people - like water that never dries or something like that. They will go to rural areas."

It is interesting, though subject did not find it strange, that the newscast associated with the rural areas, was that noted for such "oddities". This sort of coverage was that which was assumed as being of greater interest to the viewers. The other implication in the statement was the assumption, that news producers, know that other newscasts, may not be as interesting.

Dramas

The subject was more confident in discussing this genre. What is more interesting though is the fact that she seemed more confident in describing examples from viewing in previous years; a period when she, presumably, had fewer responsibilities, (when she was neither a mother nor a wife). A similar trend is observable in the response pattern of other subjects, [Re. location 8]

She was also more conversant with Yoruba language dramas than those produced, (even locally), in English. The foreign dramas had been included, in what she classified as "films".

The English programme which she could identify was a network production. The programme "Behind the Clouds" had been "rested" in the recent past.

Though the programme was a serial drama showing a variety of struggles, subject's view was put in a nutshell.

"It covers family life, spinsters, bachelors; how to court."

Later when she expatiated on the above, her view of the English drama, is that they show the behaviour of housegirls; how the housegirls displace their "madams" in the home. As for the Yoruba dramas, they showed the events "that happened in the past".

"For instance Efunsetan Aniwura is terrorising people in the olden days, that is in Oyo state [sic - should read Oyo empire] because she has so many people as slaves that are serving her. She enslaved some people serving her doing this, and that, terrorising people.. . So they usually put the action the screen for others to see.

And in some cases, like this man, Fadeyi Oloro [name meaning Fadeyi, the wicked, or custodian of anguish] - it's for all those wicked things that happened in the past. . . how to go claim something from somebody with force, like they want to collect the crown, we want this, we are going to war; staff of office. Something like this, they put on the screen for people to see. How people suffered in the olden days. . . Like the poverty in the olden days. . . "

It is interesting that the subject views this programmes as being reflective of the past rather than the present. She had situated the "wickedness", and the poverty perceived in those programmes in the past. Whereas, the English language dramas were more contemporary, and seen to feature struggles and insecurity in modern families. The subject did not query the semblance of life as portrayed in the "historical" dramas, with present day but implied that they had a cognitive value. There were lessons to be learnt from them, that were still applicable.

The programmes were identified by key characters within them. These were invariably the villains. Fadeyi Oloro's programme was a more recent one. In fact there was an on-going series which featured him on one of the

Lagos channels. (Re. last programme viewed on Day 6, in location 8).

Some of the Yoruba dramas were historical as in the first example she gave, some, including "Kumo" the current series that Fadeyi was featured in were designed to fit a contemporary time frame. There were several other examples of Yoruba dramas which are set in contemporary times, albeit often in remote villages. It is therefore interesting that the subjects made such a categorical distinction. The trend in that reading is worthy of closer investigation.

Other Programmes

Subject singled out Christian music from those which she sees.

"I usually like Christian music anyway . . .they sing about Jesus. When they sing the song at times, will give you an idea about what Jesus is . . ." [sic]

For her, the Fuji type of music were -

"not good for small children who are copying them."

On this occasion, approval was a matter of personal values. It was her religious convictions which influenced her preference. She also described what to her was salient in the religious programmes.

"They usually preach, they preach about Jesus anyway. They talk about what happens - how to believe, or how to give yourself to Jesus, or how you can lay your hand upon something, with Jesus and you will prosper; on how to solve your problem with having Jesus in your life, and so on like that. They usually talk on those things." [sic]

Her report on religious programmes would suggest that for her, there were no religious programmes, other than the Christian religious programmes. She was totally oblivious of the existence of any other.

This would have suggested that she was a loyal viewer of the Christian programmes. The experience with B2 on Day 6 however illustrates the difference in the viewing behaviour and attitude to viewing.

All the advertisements which subject mentioned were of soap. All of these adverts were usually transmitted between 8.00 - 9.00 p.m. They were the products of the sponsors for the favoured dramas on the network service. This was further confirmation of subject's time use pattern.

The adverts were liked because of their entertainment value. Although she identified the possible educational value in adverts, for instance how the toothpaste advert taught her the correct way to brush, she watched the adverts primarily for entertainment.

"Anyway, I can't deceive you, I don't believe them. I just watch them. . . I will not stand up, and go and buy [a product] without it being recommended by someone that it is good. Because they have shown it on TV, I want to go and buy it? No! I just like seeing some adverts at times."

On the whole, this subject demonstrates how much extraneous control there is over what a viewer takes from all that she may be exposed to. The viewer as in the above case may herself reject, or be cautious in accepting what is shown.

In other instances there are others who sow the seeds of doubt in the viewer, as in the viewing of the religious programme on day 6. Similar patterns happen with the news, and other government sourced programmes. Dramas, because they are presented as fiction, are not so closely scrutinised. It is thus easier for the individual viewer, to identify what coincides with reality.

On the whole, the programmes on television are still seen as reflecting reality; having lessons for the viewer to learn. This point came out repeatedly in subject's assessment of programming.

"It shows what is going on".

From her report, there were a variety of things going on.

S1: We can say that life contains hustle and bustle, hazards, then it contains pleasure. Some people you see them on TV how they enjoy, how they do this at times, you may even be tempted to envy them"

R: What kind of people are these who enjoy?

S1: It is the top officials, top people in government, they are the people! Because, you see them when you see where they are even sitting! See, people driving them ku ku ku ku ku. And the type of car they drive, you will see that they are enjoying."

"Ku ku ku ku " is an onomatopoea to describe the fuss that accompanies the activity. The subject discerned a message, which had not been intended in the TV programmes, that she had not even been "seriously" watching. She had not been able to say much about the content of the programmes, but she had still formed such an opinion, based on her exposure to the programme flow.

The countenance and demeanour of the characters on the screen are noted. She contrasted a fat, fussed over government official, with hungry looking, harassed men, being shoved, as they attempt to jump on an already crowded bus. These were from visuals of news reports, or even other factual programmes.

TV was a medium which people learnt from, and they also use their knowledge of life to make sense of what they see. There was the tendency

to place more emphasis on that which they saw, rather than that which they were told, because as the adage cited says;

"There is no cheating in photography. You are, as you posed"
[translated from Yoruba].

In spite of the dim prospects of life for a certain category, that she described, there were certain categories of programmes from which the subject was able to draw hope. The religious programmes have already been highlighted. But when asked if there were no solutions proffered for the problems portrayed, it was the Yoruba dramas, which the subject cited as offering hope.

"Take those wicked people, at last, their secret is shown up. It will definitely leak out one way or the other, although he would have done some harm to the one who he is after - it would have had some effect on that one, but at last, the secret is revealed. The wicked is shown up. . . "

The prominence of retribution as a theme, was perceived, and in it, was the glimmer of hope. If this is the case, it suggests an explanation why the Yoruba dramas, are so popular. This also requires closer investigation.

LOCATION 7 - AT A LOCAL CLINIC

The location is the waiting room of a non-residential clinic. The space used as a waiting room also served as the nurses station. There were thus nurses and patients in the room at some times. Due to the inconsistency of the group of patients, the nurses, and the attendants, were the primary focus of the study. The 2 doctors in the establishment were men, and were not of primary interest to the study. They had a separate consulting room, although occasionally they did sit in the waiting room/ nurses station, where the TV was situated. They will however receive such mention in the report as their actions affect the behaviour of the subjects at the screen.

The fact that the subjects are shift workers, there are different teams at the set. These subjects ranged in age; between 20 and 30 years old. All the subjects, including the attendants, had had some degree of secondary school education. The nurses on their part had had a more specialised training in their field.

Though largely homogeneous on the basis of their occupation; education; age range; and even income, the group presents an interesting variety of ethnic orientation. The majority of the staff were Yoruba speaking, but there were individuals from the East, the South east, the Midwest, and also the North. Of these, 2 could not understand or speak the Yoruba language at all. These were subjects from the North, and the East. The subject from the Midwest, understood the language, although she was not very fluent with it. The one from the South east was competent and very fluent with the language.

During the observation periods, there was at least one change of shift, in the evening. The afternoon shift works from 2.00 p.m. till 8.00 p.m. when the night duty staff take over. The night duty staff was usually a team of 2 people unlike that on afternoon duty which had 3 people. In addition to these there was the administrative staff whose hours spanned the three shifts. The morning shift was only relevant to the study at the weekend when transmission commenced earlier on in the day.

Owing to the size and nature of the establishment, there was noticeable conviviality among the staff. There was no apparent discrimination of status, except where the doctor was concerned. The age and income bracket of the subjects, coupled with their demographic description (young married mothers/home keepers) made the group, an illustration of such as is commonly sought by advertisers.

That the set is centrally located, visible from any angle in the room, is glaring in the arrangement of the location. The set is within the viewing range of the nurses from their desk; and the patients who have more easy chairs to sit on while they wait. Indeed, the television is in closer proximity to them. The set is also within the viewing range of the receptionist/administrator, from her desk. Although it cannot be viewed from the adjoining treatment room, the TV can be heard from there.

The set is a black and white set. The quality of reception is quite poor. Only 2 stations can be received from the set in this location. These are OGTV, and LTV. Even then, the pictures were rather grainy. No NTA station is received.

In spite of the impersonal atmosphere that obtains in a clinic, the staff at this location, manage to get a home atmosphere, especially, when they are less busy. When there are no patients waiting, they relax on the cushion chairs intended for the patients.

The proximity of the clinic to the main road, and the main motor park should be highlighted. This meant that there was a lot of noise from the vehicles which were passing by, and also from the touts and drivers, who were loading their vehicles. It was in this context that the viewing was performed.

Day 1

Observation commenced at about 6.30 p.m. The set was already on then. There was an ethnic diversity in the group on duty. It was a predominantly non-Yoruba group. There was SMW from the midwest; SSE from the south east; SE from the east; and SY1 was the only one of Yoruba origin. What this meant was that there was a more pertinent need for the use of English as a language of communication within the group. It also affected the choice of programmes which they could watch.

SMW was the one who showed a keen interest in the programming. She confessed that she was a follower of the American soap opera "Another Life". The serial was shown at 7.00 p.m. daily on OGTV except on Fridays and Saturdays.

Although there were duties that required her attention, SMW consciously sought the programme. Though she could not sit down to have a concentrated viewing of the programme, she was content to keep an eye on it, whilst doing her duties. This was preferred to missing the

programme.

Her enthusiasm for the programme was infectious. The others at the onset, did not show any commitment to the programme. But this subject, in asking them to keep an eye on the programme when she had to leave the room, compelled them to be attentive at the particular times. They were to assist her in viewing, by watching, and filling in the gaps that she otherwise would have had in her own viewing. Her own viewing had to be chequered because her duties, sometimes took her into the doctor's room, which was beyond the viewing range. The dangers of such transferred readings, have been highlighted in earlier discussions (Re. location 5)

The pattern persisted for the 30 minutes that the programme was on. The subject was still able to follow the trend of what was going on. Though she had missed certain details, she managed to grasp the trend in the story line.

R: Why were you laughing during the programme?

SMW: You know, they were auctioning a bible there, and a lawyer said he was going to buy the bible for one million, two thousand naira. So I was just laughing because I thought [resuming her laughter] I was just thinking, where is he going to get one million two thousand naira from.

It is clear that the subject found the offer incredulous because she was measuring the drama against her own reality. Although the currency referred to in the programme was (American) dollars she had read the amount in the Nigerian currency - Naira. She had not made a conversion of the stated amount to the Nigerian equivalent. Had she done that, the cost of the bible would have been even more incredulous. (At that time, it would have been about twenty times more.)

It was the sheer magnitude of the amount involved and how it was arrived at, that had "amused" the subject. None the less, she recognised the explanation for the high value of the commodity .

R: For a bible?

SMW: For a bible! Okay the bible is, they say it is a very important bible. That a certain prince or princess needs it at all costs. So someone was able to lay her hands on the bible, and said she will auction it. It is one of these . . . it is a doctor anyway. That's why they are auctioning the bible. So these people, these other people came from Africa, the one dressed like eh, came from Africa to buy that bible.

You know they first said two thousand. . .

So they say they want to buy the bible, they will take it back to their country. But these people, they don't want them to buy it. That's why they are hiking up the price, hiking up the price; from eighty thousand, that other man just went up to one million two hundred thousand.

So the other man wanted to say something, the princess said he should not say anything.

The subject is mindful of the sequence of events. And though for instance, she is mindful of the dressing, and the details of who did what, her main concern seems to be that of making sense of the story.

A documentary succeeded the soap opera, but it was not consciously watched. Rather, other assignments were sought and done. This was unlike the situation when Another Life was on, when the subjects tried to delay attending to their assignments, so that the programme could be watched. The documentary was on Genetics research in Utah, in the USA. One would have expected the particular topic to be of interest to the subjects, but it was not. They had not been attentive enough to even be aware of the topic. The channel was switched to the other station, LTV. The programme on LTV was a locally produced documentary on beauty and body

care. The music used in the programme was familiar to some of the subjects. Before long there were visuals which proved to be captivating. The programme thus captivated subjects attention.

The specialised knowledge of the codes, meant there were differences in the interpretation of the programme. The fact that there was an exchange of views meant that these were shared.

SMW: What is it, traditional beauty?

SSE: She is appealing to the goddess.

SSE had employed her own personal experience with the icons to arrive at her interpretation. The programme itself had not verbally expressed that spiritual aspect of the message. The general focus of the discussion was about beauty and art. There was thus no way of invalidating the proffered reading.

The viewing itself was chequered. The adverts which came on, were at best, watched mindlessly. The subjects simply went about their business.

The time to hand over to the team on night duty was nearer at this time. The tension in that team should be highlighted. This stemmed from the inability of these subjects (SN, and SY2) to communicate with ease. One was Yoruba speaking, whilst the other was Hausa speaking. Though they both could communicate in English, one was less confident in doing so, preferring to use the English language only when she had to. These meant there was minimum communication between the two, and this affected their viewing.

The Lagos Television news was in the background, but it was not attended as the handing over was done. Afterwards, the new team did not attend to the set either. They busied themselves with the task of checking the stock of medicine that was handed over to them, after they had checked the money.

The flurry of activities continued through the news, and even through the commercial break that followed. There was a lengthy personal paid announcement which was not attended. Rather, SY2 sang one of the popular music tunes to herself. This particular tune was that of Olu Fajemirokun one of those which featured prominently on the screen. It was not on, at the time.

The break gave way to Another Life on LTV. It was not watched with the same enthusiasm as observed in the earlier group's viewing. This further suggests, that indeed the enthusiasm of the subject SMW, made a difference in the earlier viewing. If they watched the programme at all, the two subjects on duty at this time did not discuss it at all.

In all it appears that subject SMW was just a more enthusiastic TV viewer. She was the one who bothered to change the station, at the time that it was changed in search of a more satisfying programme. Otherwise, there were no adjustments to the set at all. Observation ended at about 9 o' clock this day.

Day 2

Unlike the group on duty the previous day, the four subjects observed were all competent with the Yoruba and the English language. This included the subject of South-eastern origin (SSE). Although it was time

for Another Life, the American soap opera, none of those subjects present on this day, expressed any interest in watching it. They watched the Yoruba comedy which was on the other channel instead. It did not seem that this choice was a deliberate rejection of Another Life. It seemed more as a result of the programme flow. The set had been left on the other channel, (LTV) and the Yoruba comedy had come on. There was no conscious selection of one over the other. The group simply watched what was available, to which they were not averse.

The comedy gave way to a programme on Sanitation. It was a discussion programme in English, after the commercial break which was also in English. These were not attended.

At a point, the doctor came out to the waiting area. The subjects were hushed at this time. Their conversation was hushed, and they were on their guard. It was almost time for the arrival of the staff on night duty.

The topic of discussion on the Sanitation programme was Road Traffic Accidents. One would have expected the subjects to show greater interest in the programme, because of the profession but there was no such interest was expressed, nor was any attention given to the programme. It was ignored.

The programme gave way to the News at Eight - the LTV national and international news. The subjects were seen attending to the headlines of the news. They were watching as much as they could decently do, whilst still attending to their patients. After the headlines had been heard, there was no more visible endeavour to follow what was being said. They

went about their business, and they concentrated their attention on their patients.

It soon became apparent that the subjects were indeed, still following the programme. They responded to certain details of certain news items, whilst in fact, there were not even watching the set. For example, there was a spirit-less reaction to the report on the state of Tuberculosis and Leprosy in Lagos state.

At the mention of the statistics of sufferers, one of the subjects, sighed and said quietly - "Oh Lord, please save us"

The reaction lacked spirit but it was a reaction none the less.

The other news item which drew a sharp intake of breathe was the story on Winnie Mandela's imprisonment. The highlight of this story had not attracted any reaction. It is not clear if the subjects missed the highlight for some reason. The story however undoubtedly caught their attention. The available subject, (SN) watched in silence as the details were read.

At this time the afternoon shift had gone having handed over. They left during the newscast, just after the headlines had been read. They had been handing over, just before they left. This had taken the nurses away from the viewing range. This partly accounts for the absence of a sizeable audience for the news.

The striking feature of the night shift team as mentioned for the previous day, is the restrictions placed on their ability to converse.

Though both subjects were competent with the English language, their conversation was restricted to that which was really necessary. As a result, there was a noticeable silence especially because the period was less busy. Because more of the patients had been attended to, earlier on in the evening, they had quite a lot of time, when they were, less busy. This should have affected their viewing pattern, but there was the problem of communication. The subject (SN) reported that there had been a Yoruba drama on the previous night. This was after the observation period. She explained that she was interested in the programme, but she could not follow it as she did not understand the language. Her colleague, whom one would have assumed would have acted as her interpreter, was too engrossed in the programme, to endure what was found to be a tedious process of explaining what was going on. This included explaining the customs which were underlying the actions, and which had to be understood for the overt actions to make sense. (Re. location 4) As a result, instead of watching, SN resorted to chatting with the night guard. This pattern of time use, was however not indicative of her real preference.

SN: I like the drama but I don't understand Yoruba. So if someone can translate for me like when I'm at home, I'll enjoy it, but otherwise - that is why I sometimes lose interest.

Following the news at eight, the soap opera in English language Another life came on, on LTV. It was followed by the network news at 9.00 p.m. Although they were both sitting in direct viewing range, SY2 showed no interest at all. She rather dispensed drugs for the next day's clinic. On completion of that duty, she shunned the set, She preferred to stay outside at this time. She watched the human and vehicular traffic go by.

In contrast, SN was very attentive to the news. It is not clear if SN's

interest stemmed from the need for her to keep in touch with what was going on in her own part of the country, through the news. The element of personal interest cannot be ruled out either, because she was not only interested in the national news, but in the world news as well. Above all, the programmes were accessible to her as they were in English.

The nature of the subject also came out in the manner in which she received the programmes. She was not one to talk very much. Often times, she viewed in silence. There were the occasional times when she had an outburst. These did not lead to monologues or lengthy dialogues, even when there was someone around to respond to the cue.

Following the network news was the main news in Yoruba. Just about that time an emergency case was rushed in. SY2 was busy attending to the patients. SN had to act as a translator, because the patients were also northerners who had limited understanding of English and Yoruba. There was no one free to attend to the programme as a result. SN, who became less busy sooner, was not competent in the language. The programme thus went unwatched.

Throughout that evening, there was no attempt to change the channel at all. This may indicate an apathy towards the set, or an expression of priorities for that evening.

Observation ended at about 11.00 p.m. about 45 minutes after the Yoruba news. The observed nonchalance to the functional set was maintained, especially as there was a patient who demanded attention.

Day 3

The afternoon duty group was made up of 4 people. Three of them spoke the Yoruba language. They had been acquainted with each other for a longer period of time, compared to the team on duty the previous evening. They were thus a more lively group. Because one of them (SE) was not competent with the Yoruba language, the group was forced to restrain itself from speaking in Yoruba all the time. They thus had pockets of conversation. Occasionally the subject SE was left out which freed her from the collective pursuit of the others.

The group was so lively that they did not pay attention to the set. The "free" SE could have attended to the set, but she preferred to read when she was not attending to the patients. In fact, by about 7.00 p.m. when the doctor arrived, the clinic became quite busy such that the subjects could not engage in their chatter anymore. They were besieged by the patients they needed to attend to.

It is not clear what the influence of the available programme fare is on this observed pattern. Nothing can be said on this as observation did not persist till later in the evening on this day. It ended at about 7.30 p.m.

Day 4

Observation began at about 6.00 p.m. on this day. The clinic was still quiet at this time as the doctor does not arrive till about 7.00 p.m. There were 3 people on duty; the same group as on the previous day without SE, who was off duty.

One of them was sitting right by the TV watching a Yoruba programme that

was on. It was a drama. The other two were also watching although from the desk at the nurses station. It was a slow time at the clinic and their duties did not get in the way of their viewing.

The two people who sat together discussed the programme as they watched. Occasionally, they involved the third person who sat aloof, nearer to the set. It appeared that she had separated herself from them to avoid such "distracting" chatter. It was clear that she wanted to follow the programme. It was a serialised drama.

In their conversation, the two negotiated the programme as well as the social practice which was reflected. The programme was about a man who had an affair with his father's wife, and was being disciplined. He was to enter into the forbidden forest, to get certain leaves. There were certain assumptions underlying the various deeds. There is an understanding of these in this group. In the instance that such were not clearly understood, the most competent of the viewers offered explanations. In addition, there were the consultations based on the lapses in the viewing of even the overt. For example an unclear action, or statement. These as well as outbursts on what was observed formed the basis for the discussions which were held around the screen. The following is an illustration of the screen side comments.

SY1: There are all sorts of oddities really - a man having an affair with his brother, or I mean his father's wife. That is an insult! What ever can be the cause of that?

SY3: Okay what are you marvelling at? After all, when a man dies, and the wife is left as a legacy to the child, is that not encouraging such?

SY1: So that is why the son is so hurriedly interested in the woman? Should he not have waited till the father's death?

SY3: Why should such a practice be allowed [at all]? A person whom you have been respecting; who you have been calling

uncle, then wants to be your husband, what for? Imagine, that's after your husband's death, you now refer to "Brother So and so" as your new husband. . . Well, they [that is traditionalists] have cancelled that practise.

SY1: Some are still interested you know.

SY3: Those are the illiterates, not educated persons.

SY1: They will even choose whom they want to inherit them.

SY3: Not now; that was in those days. Utter rubbish!

The conversation continued, with SY1 citing an example of such an experience, which had occurred in recent times. This was both to buttress her point that such a practise was still not extinct, and also that it was not desirable.

There was a slip of tongue as the subject related the TV's portrayal with the incident which she had been personally acquainted with. Whilst the TV was about an affair with the father's wife, the personal experience was one where the affair was with a brother's wife.

The above conversation was carried on even as the programme was unfolding. This meant that the programme was attended with partial attention but it was being followed all the same. It was this divided attention that prompted the questions about the overt action in the programme. Such questions attracted interest back into the programme.

SSE: Has he got the leaves?

SY1: No he got another type.

It was not very difficult to follow what was going on as there was a lot of repetition in the sequence. The actor was on a journey into the forest and this took very long. There was no conversation, only a very repetitive song about his plight and how sorry he was. This made it

possible to follow the programme rather effortlessly.

Besides, it was possible for the subjects to use their familiarity with such practices in real life, to fill in the gaps. This is similar to the "closure" which psychologists recognise; the ability to use the familiarity with a pattern, to close any gaps there in; thus identifying that the moon is round even when it lacks a crescent. The problem here was that the subjects were not always right. The dramatic twists made the outcomes less predictable.

The subjects for instance had assumed that the actor would not come out of the forbidden forest alive. In their reality, entrance into a forbidden forest meant death. They thus interpreted the sentence, which required the actor to go and get certain leaves from the forbidden forest, as a death sentence.

SY3: They expect him to die in there.

SY1: Yes! They know he will die there; when that is a forbidden forest. . . and whoever enters it will die. The father will not be able to kill him [given a direct order for his execution] I mean how is it said. . . [that a father ordered the killing of his own son] (sic)

The subjects were pleasantly surprised that the man had not died in the forbidden forest. They were so engrossed in the viewing, that the arrival of patients did not distract them, especially as the doctor had not arrived. They suspended registering of the patients till after the viewing.

The programme itself was a philosophical riddle. It was the most senior of the viewers SY1 who explained this riddle to the group, which now included the patients who were waiting to see the doctor.

SY1: Look at his body, he's been stung and bitten by insects in the forest.

[This reading was more of an expectation prompted by the actor scratching his body, as he emerged from the bush. It was not because there was a close up to show the state of the body]

SY1: [echoing the repetitive refrain] "Agba ma wo be"
[meaning - Elders do not countenance]

SY3: Elders do not countenance?

SY1: Yes, elders do not countenance. They had asked him to go and get the "Isede" [Here's the culprit] leaves. That is the leaves that explain how that which he had done, had come to be. Those [creatures] whom he met in the forest asked him to take these other leaves instead; that the elders should not countenance what he had done.

SY3: So the elders should not countenance that means the elders should overlook what he had done? This play is not bad then.

There was an agreement with the deduction of the perceived goal of the programme - to discourage undesirable (outdated) practices. The discussion on this was however suspended to see the final outcome of what had been voted a good programme. They were more attentive to the viewing at this time though the programme had almost come to an end, and they knew.

The song was still being sung. The refrain was the name of the leaves which the man had brought. It was also the title of the programme. With the development of the plot, it had become more striking and the subjects sang along with the programme. This time with more emotion. The key statements are repeated so many times, by so many people, in so many ways that the emphasis is clear, and recall is aided.

The programme ended without giving any indication of what became of the wife. The focus was on the re-union of the man with the community from

which he had almost been ostracised. This was another instance where the subjects rounded up their reading with their experience and their expectation. In this instance, there was no way of determining if they were right or wrong; that is if their reading aligned with the intended message or not. This opened avenue by which assumptions became assertions.

SY3: What about the wife, what happened to her?

SY1: They must have driven her away or something.

SY3: They did not even ask for a statement?

SY1: Who from?

SY3: From the boy or. . .

SY1: They did. We did not watch that bit but they did. He said it was the woman who called him. [that is seduced him] In deed, it was the woman who called him.

It was the subject's expectations of justice and logic that guided their reading, even so in the instances where they had recognised lapses in the programme. For instance, they identified the inconsistencies within the culture which encouraged a practice and also condemned it; they condemned the sympathetic crowd who had hitherto been privy to the "victim's" sufferings; and even at the end, they approved the programme, based on what they considered was fair - the man had paid an appropriate price for his inexcusable behaviour.

There was a relaxed atmosphere as the programme was watched. Even the arrival of the doctor; their employer did not affect their viewing pleasure. This was probably because the group was made up of older, more confident staff, who were intimidated by the anticipation of the doctor's arrival, and more importantly, they were not under the pressure of serving patients.

The programme gave way to the Yoruba news on OGTV. The announcer had committed an error, "a slip of tongue" and this immediately, prompted a negative attitude towards the station, from which they had only just derived such pleasure.

"This OGTV is a nuisance"

Such intolerance was not manifested during the earlier viewing, and even though there were errors which could have warranted such. (For example the technical quality, which was exaggerated by the poor reception quality)

The outburst seems to be an expression of the cumulative experience of enduring lapses from the station, that is, the errors are habitual. The opinion was not debated it was merely accepted.

The flurry of activities which was absent during the viewing of the Yoruba drama, was immediately noticeable as the news began. It was because the subjects were catching up with those duties which they had suspended on account of the drama. While this itself cannot be equated with an outright rejection of the news, it certainly illustrates the scale of priorities. This scale of priorities may in fact be influenced by various other factors, but these should not discount the observed reality.

The channel was not changed, and the TV was left on. The subjects however had changed their focus. Even when they became less busy, they converged at the nurses desk and conversed rather than watch TV. This trend continued till after the news when their attention was attracted

by an obituary which was announced on the personal paid announcement slot.

The subjects were attracted by what they perceived as a tragedy in the obituary announcement. Their sympathy was based on their empathy with the widow. Besides noting the information, they projected into the implications of the event in the life of the wife.

SY1: [echoing the announcer] "Survived by a wife and five children" - God have mercy!

SY4: Oh they had announced that yesterday.

SSE: No, it's not the same one, that one had

Chorus: Three children.

SSE: . . . and a mother.

SY4: The wife was expecting.

SY1: Oh, no! That is the worst, because when she delivers, she'll start crying all over again. [That is, when the baby is delivered, the loss and the grief will be renewed.]

SSE: She'll weep her eyes out.

The attention was only momentary. The focus was soon shifted to other matters. This coincided with the entrance of the doctor and the pharmacist in the waiting area. They started a conversation, which though did not involve the nurses, silenced them for a while. The said conversation, as with the presence of the two, was imposing in the room. Other conversations within the room, that was independent of this had to be conducted in hushed tones.

The content of the conversation was so dominating, that it directed the focus of the nurses' hushed conversation. These were all related to the output of television.

It is possible that the researcher's presence had encouraged the trend, but the cue which prompted the conversation was from the functional set. The set, had not been completely ignored, as it seemed.

The cue which prompted the conversation was a promo for the traditional healer/"metaphysician" on the set. This captured the interest of the doctor.

Doctor: Is this part of what you are studying?

Researcher: Do you watch this?

Doctor: I do when I have time for him. Alhaji-Doctor-Shehu Jabir.

Pharmacist: He just sits there and boasts that one.

The two men demonstrated their familiarity with the character. The doctor had not only identified him, he had also recited the man's titles, as well as his names. In doing so, he was not only exhibiting his acquaintance with the character, he had a subtle ridicule in his tone which implied his contempt for the character. "Alhaji" is a Moslem title signifying a level of accomplishment in the Islamic faith. The use of the title "Doctor" here was in reference to the "healer", who had no (Western) professional training. These were the elements which were ridiculed, along with the name, which was pronounced with exaggerated vulgarity, as though highlighting that which was inherent in it.

The response of the pharmacist confirmed the disregard for, even the contempt, in which the character is held. This was more overt than the doctor's.

The discussion thereafter, led to a focus on developments on a recent news item.

Doctor: Do you know that my son was asking me why Mandela's wife is going to prison? I said I'd give him a newspaper to read, because it will end up being too much of a bother trying to explain to him.

(From the nurses corner, still in hushed tones)

"I'm sure they will say that the woman and her husband planned it together. She's been sentenced to 6 years imprisonment."

The above shows the familiarity of the subjects with the details of current affairs. The item in this instance however is about a personality, who had been considered nation-wide, as a hero. Even a 6 - year old was aware of his stature, hence the query about the "illogical".

Another striking feature in the above is the way the media is used. There is an indication of how TV is used, and also, how newspapers are used - one is used for awareness, and the other is the source of detailed explanation.

It is striking, that whilst there is a discussion on how to get the details and facts of the case, it was the subject who had immediate access to the newspapers mentioned, who did not make any attempt to get it. She preferred to make conjectures of her own instead. Though she had some of the facts, as were highlighted on the TV news, but from her utterance it is clear that she did not rely solely on the details she could have got from the newspaper. She projected beyond the scope of that which she had, introducing other elements, based on her own understanding of humanity. Her view went unchallenged.

The discussion continued in this manner and as other news items were introduced, the subjects explained them with their suppositions. The group kept itself entertained in this manner, and so "ignored" the set. The remainder of the programme promo went unwatched.

By the time "Another Life" came on, there was work to be done. The doctor was still in the waiting room, so there was no chance of the subjects putting off the duties that required immediate attention. It was only SSE, the administrative staff, who was less busy, and she acknowledged the programme, audibly.

SSE: Oh! Another Life. I'd have loved to watch Another Life.

The subjects continued with their duties and engaged in whispered conversations. It is assumed that these were about more personal matters. What is important though is that even as the work load eased out, Another Life was not watched, or glanced at longingly. This illustrated a contradiction, in the expressed interest, and the real interest.

The subjects discussed other matters; including hairstyles; dressing; personal problems, and gossip about other people. They also sang popular Fuji music, such as were used on the various stations for the interludes. On this occasion as well, there had been no prompting from any interludes on the day's transmission. This showed that they did have a real interest in the music.

In the course of their discussion, the size of one of the subjects was measured against a known TV character. The TV had been used to supply a standard with which the subjects could relate.

The programme gave way to musicals similar to that which the subjects had been singing. This attracted a bit more attention, before the subjects veered off into more gossip, and discussion of personal (romances) experiences. Intermittently, they sang along with the musicals in view, also commenting on the performers. The subject's comments on the musicians is remarkable.

SSE: [singing along with the music] "Oh, Satan don't tempt me, don't tempt anyone else, you should go back to where you are from." [running a commentary] Now he has revised that song. In the old one, he used to say that Satan should not tempt him, but he should tempt someone else. Oh, how I hated that song. I mean, how could he say that?

SY4: That was not him, that was someone else.

SSE: No, it was him. Listen was it not Obey?

SY1: Yes it was him but he's more mature now.

SY3: Well, then, he was singing worldly songs; now he sings for God.

SY1: He has always sung for God.

SY3: There's a difference now, at a point he used to sing abusive songs.

SY1: Aree! [expression of surprise or disbelief]

SY4: But I did not realise that he was the one who sang the song - "Satan don't tempt me , tempt someone else" In fact I [used to] think [that] Kollington sang that one in one of his. . .

SY1: Which Kollington? [sarcasm]

SSE: It was Obey!

SY1: What does Kollington know?

SY3: Do you know Obey in the 70s? That was when he sang "The child of the rich man, do not oppress the son of the poor man".

The highlight of the above, is the illustration of how beliefs are

corrected. SY4, is the youngest member of the group, and she was yet a child when the music in question had been a hit. What is however more interesting is the intolerance of the other two subjects, particularly, SY1, who was the oldest member of the group, and who's views were respected. The intolerance expressed, left SY4, no opportunity to negotiate the error; the correction was imposed on her.

Another interesting feature is how the musicians were assessed. Kollington, is one of the popular Fuji musicians, reigning on the music scene. It was alluded that this star had nothing to offer - "What does he know?"

Obey, the musician whose music was in dispute, is an older musician, who had been around for a longer period of time. He was hailed as being philosophical, and had in recent times become even more committed to Godly and prayerful songs. This was illustrated in the two songs which were highlighted. Whilst one was a prayer against temptation, the other was a plea for tolerance, and thoughtfulness.

Following this brief discussion, the subjects, continued their gossip. There was an elasticity between this, and the discussion on the musicians. The difference was that the musicians were not "personal" acquaintances, as were the patients and other persons, who the subjects discussed, and assessed.

The discussions on personal acquaintances, also led into the sharing of rumours and information from other sources of communication. This included the tabloids, the "grapevine", or "market place", and other interpersonal sources of information.

In the mean time, the two doctors had come out to the waiting area. They had endured the musicals that was showing on the screen for a while. Then there was an outburst from one of them which again led to a conversation about their views of television.

Doctor #1: TV is a waste of time. They sometimes tell us that they have nothing to say. Like, for the past 30 minutes, they have been showing us music. Imagine! You don't do such on prime time, and you know people are going to work tomorrow. [and] They should be going to bed at about 9.00.

Doctor #2: The problem that I have with them is that they show the same thing on LTV and OGTV. And there is one thing I don't like, between 6 and 8 p.m. everyday, if you can get at least 6 stations, one of them will be talking about these terrible things. [spiritual healing]

R: Does that threaten you as a doctor or what?

#2: [disgust] No! It 's the fact that they are polluting the minds of people. Personally, the sorts of patients I will get, will not be appealed to by such trash, so it does not affect me as a doctor. That is number one. And the sort of people who will sit and watch such things, I will not be able to stick [tolerate] as patients. . . That is just me.

The second doctor had not been present earlier when the said "healers" were mentioned. His remark was spontaneous.

It is the fact that their interpretation goes beyond the obvious, that makes their deductions interesting. For example, the musical is not just accepted, and regarded on its value as a programme. Doctor #1 actually appraised the musicals, against the purpose which he perceived that it was meant to serve. This he measured against his understanding of the station's intention. Thus, the musicals were not just for the entertainment of the audience. They were interludes. This assessment was more or less correct. As a result, he was able to deduce that if interludes could be as long as he had perceived; (30 minutes) the station must lack substantive programmes to show. If that was the case,

and the occurrence of such was as high as he had perceived, he concluded that television was a waste of time.

The doctors understanding of the purpose of the musicals on television was a reverse of that of the subjects in location 1 and 2 for example. For them, musicals were one of the categories of programmes which fulfilled the purpose for which the medium was meant. In that case, they were perceived as substantive programmes. However, the fact that they came as interludes, meant that those viewers were often frustrated in their attempt to enjoy them.

It is the knowledge that the musicals were not the station's idea of programmes, at least for that time, that buttressed the doctor's case. The case had also been built around his idea of what was reasonable use of time. Perhaps his attitude would have been different if his priorities were different, (as with the cited examples in other locations). His response to an expressed change in station orientation even with his present priorities will be interesting.

It is notable, that the negative views of television, appears to attract more remarks from the viewers. The identification of TV as a waste of time was not disputed; rather, it was reinforced by citing the examples that make the case. The similarity in the programming of two stations, implying the absence of choice despite the plurality of stations is mentioned. This led to the observation of the ubiquity of deplorable programme types. There was more evidence which pointed to the "fact", that TV is a waste of time. This included the programme which was in view at the time.

Doctor #2: There is so much immorality on television for

instance look at this dance.

It is interesting that the doctors were not worried about the consequence of these programmes on themselves. There was an air of immunity, about them. They were more concerned for other people who they considered less discerning. This was the case with other subjects who expressed these reservations. There was always a greater concern for others (especially children), while each felt in control of what was viewed.

#2: There are set times when TV is watched in my house.

#1: Because of the children? That's better.

#2: My son watches this kind of thing on the TV and it infuriates me, so I switch it off. There was this boy who was staying with us, who knowing that we do not approve [of such] used to wait till we left home to play the cassettes. After a while, . . . he resorted to using the next door neighbour's flat, he and his friends. . .

The above gives an insight into how values on programming are expressed and perpetuated. The child learns of the parents disapproval of certain categories of programmes, through the acts of selection, and rejection. Yet there are other influences, as in the example of the houseboy mentioned above. From such quarters, the child is encouraged to avail himself of the "unapproved". As a result, the parent's preferences stand the risk of being undermined. The significance of this within the context of the study is that there should be greater consideration of observed viewing patterns, as there might be a difference between such and the expressed, "approved" preferences.

It is important to point out that there was a difference in the social position of the parent, in the above example, and the house boy who "welcomed" the undesirable programmes into the home. This already

suggests a correlation in the social position and taste. There is also the example of the response of the other doctor, and that of the subjects in location 1 and 2, to the musicals.

By this time, the afternoon shift was getting ready to close. The night duty staff had arrived. In the course of conversation, it was revealed that the subjects had "watched" a drama (in English) the previous day. This was outside the observation period. They could not be bothered to narrate what the programme had been about. They said they had not paid that much attention to the programme.

There was a guest present, who was less inhibited about discussing what she had seen. As she did, the subjects muttered under their breathe, not mindful that the microphone would pick these up. The guest's narration had helped to bring theirs out.

Guest:I watched it, towards the end. I don't know what happened in the earlier parts, but from what I gathered, I think the mother was a bit careless. She thought money could buy everything. That is my conclusion about the whole thing. [sic]

SY4: [under her breathe] I am usually shy of talking . . . I watched it and you did too didn't you? . . . [to colleague]

Guest:She, [the mother in the TV drama] was making sure that they [the children] got everything. The boy was the senior, but not much senior to the girl, and the two used to cover up for each other. They could say that they had to wait for evening classes and that they had to pay for that. . . those ones. Then the girl confided in the boy that she's already pregnant and he laughed and said "Nonsense, how can you be pregnant" Then she told him she was pregnant for Tony.

[Subjects were still muttering to themselves alone, and to the microphone. There was one who was challenging, and some who were confirming, the report that was given.]

Guest:[continuing] While he was laughing, their mother came in and they kept quiet. She did not hear what they were saying, but one would have expected her to be more curious, and failing that, you will feel that she is

careless.

So the girl started doing and saying odd things that will scare her mother. The mother tried to pet [cajole] her, to drag whatever it was out of her. She told the mother "I know you will kill me when you hear this anyway, so I'm prepared to die, and I will die today."

When the mother heard, she asked the brother if he did not know about it. She was furious that that, was what they had been up to, and they had been covering [up] for each other. So he confessed that the boy, responsible was another student in their school; one of the seniors. The mother said maybe he too had impregnated someone else's daughter.

Immediately she said it, the girl whom he had impregnated was chased into the house by her father. The mother was still wondering "What is happening?" The girl's father told her that her son had impregnated his daughter. She just collapsed, and that was how they ended the programme.

Well I feel that whoever watched that film, [my emphasis] if he were a parent particularly, should learn that parents should be more careful especially if they have children that age. They are wont to keep bad company.

The drama was here referred to as a film. The report also includes the (unsolicited) lesson that was learnt; the morale of the story. This illustrates how viewers watch (even) drama programmes being mindful of the lesson to be drawn.

The following is the subjects' account of the programme, which was inadvertently, whispered into the microphone.

SY3: Yes . . . that girl got pregnant, and the boy impregnated someone else.

SSE: It was Tony who made her pregnant.

SY4: The girl was Kemi or Funmi or what?

SSE: Tony made Kemi or what was that girl's name, Mary, or, - Tony made her pregnant. Then Sunday, or what was the brother's name, made another girl pregnant.

SY4: Hun! [exclamation challenging the validity of the guest's report]

SY3: She is saying what happened. (upholding the report, and correcting the subject SY4)

SSE: Did we not watch it yesterday?

SY4: I did not see those parts.

SY3: She is talking about the end.

SSE: We watched it to the end, all of it from the beginning to the end.

SY4: Oh no! I did not watch it from the beginning either.

SY1: [to SY4] Don't mind her, she is the one who watched the entire thing.

. . .

SY3's reading had been affected by incomplete viewing of the programme. Besides being the most junior nurse, there was the tendency for her to get sent on errands. This meant, of the lot, she was more prone to having incomplete viewings, and different readings. However, these are not allowed to persist, as in the course of conversation, she gets corrected. The opportunity of getting corrected is linked to the subject's personality. It would have been possible for her to be stuck with her views, if she were not open with the other members of the group, or others, who had watched the programme in its entirety.

SSE was privileged to view the programme in its entirety, because of the nature of her duties. She was administrative staff; a receptionist, who was more often, stationary.

There was a Yoruba comedy on, at this time and the subjects expressed interest in watching it. The handing over had been completed, the afternoon shift had closed and gone. Despite the interest they expressed in the programme, no one waited in the clinic to watch it. Rather they hurried to their homes. This meant that even if they got home in a short

while, whilst the programme was still on, they would have missed some parts of it.

For those who remained, they had to tidy - up to cross check what had been handed over to them. It was only after this had been done, that they actually settled down to watch the programme.

The pair on duty, was still there, with the problem of communication. The programme was watched in silence.

There was no indication of what either of them took from the programme. There was minimal private conversations between the two of them. It was not even clear, if they watched the programme at all, or if they just sat and stared at the screen, as was apparent.

The remainder of the programme flow for the remainder of the evening's observation period were news including the network news, and the programme promo. These programmes were received in similar manner. There was no attempt to change the channel on this day either. It did not seem as if there was enough interest in what was on at all, let alone what was on another channel.

Day 5

Observation commenced at about 6.00 p.m. There was an interlude of music on at the time. This gave way to the Islamic religious programme. It was a Friday. The programme appeared to have been ignored. It was a back drop for private discussions. The team on duty was made up of friends (SY1, SY3, SY4, SSE) and they all spoke Yoruba.

PICTURE 8.

Location 7.

The TV from the nurses' station. It was centrally located.

According to the subjects, the set had been switched on at about 3.40 p.m. Transmission had not resumed then, but the subjects turned on the set to listen to the music which accompanies the engineering line up that precedes programme transmission. The station which was selected was OGTV. The comment of one of the subjects regarding this use of TV is remarkable.

SSE: If we had a radio, we won't switch it on, and if we did, we would put it on low. [that is turn down the volume under the radio.]

What makes the above comment remarkable, is the fact that it gives an indication to the use that the set is being put. That it was switched on consciously, did not mean there was a conscious intention to be exposed to the programmes. In this case, it was not that the subjects lacked companionship, as is assumed when TV is used in this manner. It was merely to add to the room ambience. This is even further confirmed when the subject suggests that even in the event that they had a radio, the TV will still be switched on, along with the radio. The music or chatter from the set does not then seem to be the pertinent reason for activating it. It appears that "viewing" in this situation had become a habit. Whether the programme is acceptable, or not, the set is left on. In the event then, that there is a programme which catches the subjects' fancy, they take time out to watch. Otherwise, the set is just left on, with the subjects seeming to ignore the programmes.

(It is important to point out again, at this time, the fact that there is no ready published programme schedule. To know what will be shown on the stations, is to have someone who had watched the stations.)

The TV was left on, unattended while the ladies discussed the love

affairs of the single girls in their midst. One of the subjects reported on her opinions to such, and her exploits. The trend continued right through the slots for the early evening news.

There was a slight improvement during the commercial break that followed the news. The subjects did not concentrate on viewing these either, but in the case on the non - personal advertisements, there was one, which a subject recited, "mindlessly", along with the television. At least this gave an indication that the advert was acknowledged. It was the "Pengo" pain relief commercial.

The same subject, (SSE) responded to the introduction of discussion programme which followed. She tried to identify the (ethnic) origin of one of the discussants in the programme. This was also a spontaneous reaction to the programme, and she did not attend to the message of the programme at all.

The programme was a discussion on the economic development and national stability, sponsored by the government agency, MAMSER. It was completely ignored.

Each subject went about her own business, despite the "provocative" points made on the programme, and the slow tempo of work.

There was an elderly man in the waiting room, who was "drawn" into the programme by the discussion on the "sharing of the national cake". He nodded his head to some comments coming from the programme, as though seeking confirmation; a cue to open a discussion, but he got none. No one else was interested , so he watched in silence. He had arrived when

the programme was past half way.

The programme which followed was an British comedy; "Keep it in the Family". This attracted the attention of the subjects immediately. They perched on the available seats, to assess, if not watch the programme. They came to the programme deliberately. But they soon turned their backs to the set, ignoring the programme, and carrying on with their routine.

That they even came and sat down before the set, confirmed that they were not too busy to watch. Had the programme met with their approval, they could have stayed on to watch. It is not clear why they left, but the fact that the programme was a foreign drama and a comedy had attracted them in the first place.

There was the fact about the incompatibility of their culture, with that in which the programme was produced. It was observed, that the subjects, did not appreciate the humour in the programme. Even the pre-recorded studio audience laughter, within the programme, did not prompt them to laugh. This may explain the rejection of the programme.

Even after the conscious rejection of the programme, out of nothing else to do, they still glanced at the set. But the humour seemed lost on them, except in instances where there was a visibly absurd act. For example, a man, holding up a pair of panties. In this example, they recognised the "ridiculous" but they could not understand the context of it.

"Why is he doing that?"

"Oh I didn't follow it"

At this time, the group had broken up, and the subjects were acting as individuals. Yet, there was no one watching. Rather, they were getting ready to close and go home. The end of the programme coincided with their closing time, when they handed over to the staff on the night shift.

The team on duty for the night had changed although the Hausa/Yoruba factor remained. SY2 had been replaced by SY5. SY5 had a different personality; she was a bit more open and social, yet the strain in the communication with the SN was still noticeable. She engaged in a conversation with (Yoruba speaking) patient(s) instead.

There was one of the "healing" programmes on the air. This was the programme that succeeded the English comedy. The programme was in Yoruba. It appeared that the programme was ignored until the "Alhaji", the "healer" used a proverb which aroused the subject's curiosity. Her query had no apparent link with the programme. It was to increase her understanding of the language, and culture.

SY5: [to the patient] Why do they say that "okra" draws better than "Aapon"?

Patient: [an elderly man] Yes, a bit of effort is enough to make the "okra" [soup right], compared to the "aapon" [soup]. That is why they say one [who lacks know - how] should desist from [unsuccessful] attempts to prepare the "aapon" soup, and pursue the making of "okra" soup instead.

Following this clarification, the programme was once again "ignored". There was no reference to the statement which the healer had used the idiom to highlight.

That the programme was "ignored" did not mean it was not received. In other words, the programme permeated the clutter of the audience's attention) as indicated in the above.

In the programme itself, the interviewer's question's were hardly audible, yet the sponsor who was also star of the show, was very loud and insistent. His views were not to be missed.

After a period of waiting, with nothing else to do, the elderly man, who had no apparent interest in the programme began to cast occasional glances at the set. Eventually, there was an outburst from him, condemning the "Alhaji-healer", and his kind. The elderly man himself was an Alhaji, but he was of the opinion that these other men were chalartans.

"Foolish never do wells, they have turned religion into begging.

Is he God? [He is] Asking people to come to him; is he God?

This outburst had been spurred on by an invitation from the "healer" to those afflicted by various ailments, for which he claimed to have cures. The word used in outburst translated above, connotes more than just begging. It implies that one makes a livelihood from favours received.

The man did not make any attempt to conceal his contempt; either in his attitude or in his words. His vehemence was fuelled by the fact that he recognised these healers as taking advantage of the faith, to which he also subscribes.

"The faith does not encourage them to do all these. He is a liar! He is just swindling people, and making a living out of that. The faith does not condone this. God does not approve at all!

. . .

He's asking them to come if they must build a house; does that mean every man must build a house?"

The viewing location was charged, with the opposition to the programme by this man. No one contended his positions, and if there was any one who would have subscribed to the message from the challenged programme, there was at least an awareness of the aspersions, cast by this challenger.

The programme was concluded, with a description of how to get to the "healer's" house. It was [like] an advertisement. The sponsor/star warned that prospective clients should bring money along. This utterance was cited as a confirmation of his earlier outburst. The other members of the group, [who followed the trend] found this amusing.

The programme was followed by the OGTV state news. It was not watched. There was the occasional glance at the screen, which seemed more motivated by boredom, than interest. We should not rule out the possibility of the news being heard, even though it was not watched with any appreciable level of determination.

The news itself, lacked the visuals which would have sustained a visual interest in the stories. Most of the time, the news was read by the newscaster without any visual reports to accompany the stories.

The apathy was broken when there was an obituary item on the news. The subjects gave full attention to the news as the details of the story was read. Immediately afterwards, they reverted to the previous pattern.

The commercial break which followed the news was not really attended either, even though, it was "entertaining". This was followed by the network newscast and the pattern was maintained still. It was only SN who glanced at the set occasionally. By this time, the subjects had busied themselves with their routine chores. There was nothing to sustain their interest on the screen. Therefore as SY5 said, they could not make any assessments on what was being shown.

SY5: My mind was not there at all, I must not lie. It is if I knew what they were doing that I could assess if it was interesting or not. My mind was not there; there are so many cares.

This utterance was as much an assessment of the subject, as it was of the programming. What it illustrates is the comparative strength of the various "pulls" on the viewer's attention. At this point of the observation for example, the balance was tilted in favour of the other cares which this subject had, even though there was a light flow of traffic in the clinic for the evening. The subjects attributed this to the fact that it was a Friday, the beginning of the weekend, and so patients avoided coming in. It was on this note that observation ended for the night.

Day 6

Observation began at about 4.00 p.m. in the afternoon. Being a Saturday, transmission had begun in the morning. The set had already been switched on. It was tuned to OGTV. The group on duty was made up of SY3, SY4, SMW.

While the news was being read, there was a lively discussion on some real - life drama that had happened in the clinic. The drama was about their experience with a patient. The discussion continued through the

commercial break, and the set was ignored.

The succeeding programme was wrestling. This was interesting to SMW who sat close to the set to watch. SY4's initial reaction was to find an alternative. She was not interested in the wrestling, and neither was SY3. There was no promise of a better option. The subjects reminded themselves that it was a Saturday afternoon, and they thus braced themselves for more of such. With that, they mentally switched off the set, and shared personal experiences instead.

SMW was not deterred by the attitude of the others. She watched the programme. The traffic (of patients) was light and so she was able to watch undisturbed. From their knowledge of the environment, the subjects knew that the patients would rather endure the ailments for as long as was tolerable, "even if it kills them", than come to a clinic at the weekend or on public holidays.

SMW was so conversant with the codes of the programmes that she was watching. She knew the wrestlers by name, and even by their acts. Her concentration eventually drew the attention of the other subjects to the programme. They marvelled at why she was so interested in the programme, and she explained the goings on in the programme to them. This way, they got to watch what they ordinarily were not interested in. SMW had again enticed her colleagues into a programme of her choice.

SY4: He's dancing!

SMW: You've not seen anything!

SY4: Is his bird beside him?

SY3: It's the one with a snake, that is funny to me.

SMW: That is Jack the snake boy.

Though SMW was the expert, the other subjects also exhibited a familiarity with the programme. This incidental watching observed here, illustrates how they become exposed to a programme they may honestly say they do not watch.

Towards the end of the programme, the reasons why the others had disliked the programme became evident in their discussion. It was their perceptions of the outcome of the sport.

SY4: He's won! That surface is Dunlop [Dunlop is synonymous with cushions in the local parlance]. Had it been normal ground, your head would have been splintered.
[addressing the wrestler who had been thrown]

SMW: When they grow up, they start behaving funny.

SY4: It is suffering, they just punish themselves.

SMW: Take Mohammed Ali for instance, they have battered his head to ruins [sic]

The subjects including SMW marvelled at the claims and countenance of the wrestlers, and they used this to confirm the perceived danger inherent in the sport. This further confirmed their conclusion, that there was no sense in it. It was SMW who identified the sense that the performers see in the sport.

SMW: There's money in wrestling, there's more money in wrestling than in boxing.

The others were not able to see that line of reasoning. All they saw was the agony of the victims, and the inhumanity of the valiant. The summary of their discussion is that the wrestlers are animals.

While they were all entertained by the show of prowess, as well as the

ludicrous (dressing, utterances, performances) the group was divergent in its ability to separate the reality of the repercussions of the event, and the reality of any value in the sport.

What is certain, is that they all vicariously participated in the programme. They did not listen to the commentary from within the programme. Rather they preferred their own commentary.

There was obvious relief for SY4 as the programme came to an end, whereas SMW enjoyed her reminiscences of the programme.

The programme gave way to a musical video. SY4 ran a commentary on the visuals but could not say what the lyrics were about.

SY4: They won't find a way. . . one man will come and rescue him. . . . Those man eaters! . . . He's going to shoot, that man is going to shoot. Here is his saviour. . . This one looks like a Ghanaian. . . Maybe they are from Calabar. It's Calabar people who also have masquerades on stilts. Ah, Ah! This girl is really digging the dance.

[As the clip gave way to another by the same group, subject was opportuned to read the name of the artiste. She further confirmed her "prejudice" of the group with this reading.]

"There he is again, Chiko, Tony. That is how they go about bearing funny names."

Rather than listen to the lyrics of the song, the subject focused her attention on the visuals of the video. Her attempt to identify the group, was first premised on stereotypes. It was thereafter that she sought evidence to buttress her deductions. There is also a trait of a negative stereotype, in her outburst about "Man eaters". This was fuelled by the visuals which she had seen. The group belonged to a culture which though local, was foreign to the subject. Her insufficient familiarity with the reality of that culture made it easier for her, to

negotiate based on assumptions and stereotypes.

The visuals had been of an ambush, a capture, and escape of some individuals. The captors were clad in raffia skirts, and armed with spears. These men had had their faces painted and they looked quite dreary. The scene was in a "jungle" whilst the captives belonged to modern day. The combination thus suggests a recency in the timing of the event. The theme of the music was about liberation. The subjects were attentive to the musicals even as they continued their own conversations. Occasionally, the visuals evoked some comments from them.

The sight of a gospel singer evoked the memories of another gospel singer whom they had not seen for a while.

In another instance, it was the dance which attracted the comments. It was a reminder of another context where the dance had been seen, and which they felt was inappropriate.

SMW: There was a gospel singer who was dancing this sort of dance.

SY4: Yes!

SMW: Do you know [her as well]? I was wondering if the producers never corrected her. It's not good! . . . She was dancing reggae exactly like those ones are dancing. [And] what about those who were brake dancing in this Funmi Aragbaiye's record - Mo duro le, Kristi Apata? [Title of record means I stand on Christ the Rock]

The discussion was concluded without an expression of what they felt was decent composure within the gospel musicals. They had merely pointed out what it should not be.

In the course of the viewing, they identified the songs which were

popular in the town, and the category of people whom such songs appealed to. They also identified the possible locations where the videos could have been shot. In short, they related well with the programme category. SMW, the TV enthusiast, was the most vocal during the viewing. She also displayed a superior competence with the codes of television. She had no qualms about being an avid TV watcher. This had helped her in her ability to relate with the messages therein.

SMW: This was shot in Victoria Island.

R: I wonder where they could have got such old buildings
[as was seen in another part of the clip]

SMW: Abba! [expression of surprise] either in Imo state or. .
.

R: How did [would] you know that?

SMW: It was shown on TV sometime; they carried this house
[sic - the house was featured] when the whites were
here, some blacks, carried this house on their heads,
and brought it to the city, to Aba. It was when they
were changing their colonies, they did not want to
dismantle it. So the house is still there. It is one of
these monuments.

The musicals also were used to pass commentaries on the "decadent"
situation that the subjects, perceived was prevalent in the land.

SY3: [looking at the screen, and lamenting] Oh look at
Nigerians!

SMW: Ah, Ah! The sons of these land have become decadent. If
you go to Lagos they are all over the place. You will
pity them.

SY4: Have you not seen the recent calendars, with the awful
hairstyles they wear?

SMW: Is it the hairstyles or how they pose; how they behave
like the crazy Black Americans?

SY3: You will see the girls.

SMW: Yes, they go have some girls like this! [sic]

. . .

SY3: Just go to Lagos.

SMW: Go to down town Lagos Island. (Isale Eko)

SMW: There was once I was going to Ikoyi, at CMS. . .

SY3: Yes that is where you will find them.

SMW: If you could have seen the girl's haircut.

SY3: Yes! She must have had it coloured.

SY4: Two toned at that.

SMW: . . . she coloured it purple!

SY4: She must have painted her face. She must have painted it
like mad!

The subjects had been prompted into the above discussion by the sighting of an image, similar to that which they described. It is clear that they do not approve of such fashion as they had just seen on the set. What, however is more interesting is the equation of such fashion with that of "Black Americans" who were qualified with the description, "crazy". Indeed, the entire concept had been qualified with terms such as "mad", "pitiable" , having begun with the simple description of such being "awful".

None of these subjects had ever visited the USA. Yet they readily suggest or agree that such a fashion is typical of the some Americans. The contribution of the TV portrayal of Americans to such a position such as this cannot be quantified, but it should not be discounted, seeing as it is one shared source of images.

The focus of their attention was soon shifted as a new musical clip arrived on the screen. It was the contrast in the sizes of the artistes that caught their attention. Once again, this prompted them to talk about another enjoyable experience, which had used a similar contrast.

SY4: Look at the small man!

SMW: Small man, and big woman.

SY4: It seems like he was the one in "Funwontan's" video.

With that cue, they relived their experiences of viewing the said video, which had been featured on the television. In doing this, the subjects did not conceal their amusement at the humour with which serious issues were presented.

There was the case of the unplanned family; the mother of "man-made-twins" referring to the inadequate spacing of children. Her husband had deserted her, preferring the company of younger (more attractive women). There was also the case of the promiscuous young man; and that of the drunk. The dangers in each of these cases was highlighted, in the song, and dramatised in the video in a humorous way. The subjects tried to recall each of the cases that were mentioned, as well as the outcome. They also tried to capture the other jokes for which the artiste, who had first risen to fame on radio, was known for.

As they did this, all other programming which came along was shunned. This was until the continuity announcer came on. They paid attention to this, and so they they did not miss the programme's highlight for the rest of the day's transmission.

It is not clear if they had anticipated the programme highlight, and so suspended their conversation, or if there was just a coincidence in the timing. What is important is that they did not miss the announcement.

The next programme on the line up was a Yoruba programme, therefore, the

announcement came in Yoruba. This was in itself another cue that the subjects responded to. That the announcement was in Yoruba, meant that the next programme was in Yoruba, and this heightened their interest. The subjects' interest had been captivated. There was an obvious affinity for Yoruba language programmes. The subjects were still critical though. They attended the programme title credits, assessing if it was really worth watching. They viewed and read the credits of the programme.

"Oro Okere" [with the inflection with which it was read, that meant "Word from Abroad"] What does that mean? It must be, "Oro Okere." [with this inflection it meant, "There is no word, too small"]

"Look at how he put a tape [player] at the window, this is real rural life. "

(Laughter all round.)

With this, the group settled down to view. It was not very long before a patient came in to be attended to. This disrupted the viewing by the nurses. Not only did they attend to the patient, after she had left, they discussed her case, and marvelled at her carelessness.

By the time viewing was resumed, they had missed a good deal of the plot. The programme was just a "30 - minute" programme. But the subjects still found use for the programme. The first striking feature was the mispronunciation of a common place English word - Football.

SMW: Football! (laughter)

SY4: You won't even see the spectacle on the screen. . .
Those two men had tried to chase the woman on the way,
now they have come to report her to her husband. [sic]
Yet they were the ones who accosted her on the way.

The above illustrates the prominence of absurdities on the screen. They

serve as attention getters, but thereafter, it takes other cues to sustain interest. In this case, subject SY4 had been most attentive to the story line, even as the group discussed other matters. She thus filled in the gap for the others in a nutshell. These efforts were mere teasers. It was another show of an absurd behaviour which the subjects witnessed, and remarked about that focused their attention on the screen. They wanted to see the outcome of the "injustice"

The woman had been talking to her brother on the way back from the market. She had been accosted by the two old men, who later made a report of her to her husband. The woman had been falsely accused of adultery. But the irate husband had not investigated thoroughly; he had not even given his wife a chance to defend herself before throwing out her belongings, with ignominy. It was this show of "authority" that the subjects viewed with contempt.

The truth eventually came out when the brother came to visit, and the old men identified him as the culprit. The man then threw the old men out, and then sought the forgiveness of his wife.

The subject's interest had not been sustained. As soon as the outcome was predictable, they switched their attention to other duties. The doctor arrived around this time, and it is possible that this influenced the switch to their normal routine.

Even with this explanation, there was still the question of interest in the programme itself. There was no apparent duty that should have warranted them to abandon the programme. For instance, there was no patient to attend to. In this case, one could then see that the

programme had simply not sustained their interest.

The programme which followed was the Yoruba news and this was also not attended.

The inability of adjacent programmes, which had similar appeals to maintain the audience group, suggests that the programming assumptions, about audience lead in effects need to be further examined still. This is especially so when there had been a commercial break in between. Each programme had to justify itself to the audience, especially in the early minutes of its receipt by the audience. This does not necessarily coincide with the first few minutes of the program's broadcast. This suggests that, to place a programme adjacent to one with similar appeals, is not enough to guarantee a synergy action.

The comedy was at least watched, partially even enthusiastically, by one, (SY4), but the news went unwatched. The subjects engaged in their own private conversations. They were not totally oblivious of the set; it was just that they gave it selective attention. Even that attention, was divided.

There were some programmes which were not approved of, but which attracted the attention of the group. An example of such, is one of the "metaphysician's" programmes, which had been condemned the previous day. When the promo for the programme came up during the commercial break that followed the news, subjects' attention was called to it. Even though the intention was to bring the programme to ridicule, still, it had attracted attention nonetheless. It is thus not surprising, that the subjects, who had such disaffect for the programme, could speak

competently about it.

"That day he said the talk was coming from Mecca. . . Did you watch it?"

"Yes! I did too."

"Not indicating that the curtains [the backdrop for the programme] was an artwork. He brought these people who were clad in white [as done in Mecca] and they too sat behind him."

"I said, 'Why did he not show how they . . .'" [throw stones to the black stone - one of the rituals performed during the pilgrimage]

"My first acquaintance with him was when you know these masquerades that women are forbidden to see, Abdul Jabba brought it on television. He said why should they say women should not do something and so on. Is it not from there that he gets his powers? I know someone from that area he was referring to, who swore that all he was saying were lies."

The subjects continued to listen to the man, as though to find a fault with him, and prove that he was a conman. The disgust is unanimous, and unmasked, yet they continued. There was a similar programme right afterwards.

SMW: Here is another one. . . All of them just tell lies. [with disdain] Look at him, Chrislamherb! . . . combination of Christian, Islam, and herbalist. I don't know if he has a church or what to call it [that is not certain how to refer to the place of worship where] they preach the bible, Islam, and herbalist [the word herbalist is used as a synonym for the Yoruba traditional beliefs]

These programmes engender distrust. There is a recognition of a charade - and even religion is not sacred.

Following were the programme promos and a musical interlude. There was none of the guarded reaction, that was noticeable earlier, with this aspect of the programming. SY4 immediately started to dance to, and sing along with the music. She was the youngest in the group and was not

mindful of those other more serious concerns that the older ones bothered with.

SMW: . . . Sister ---- said at one time if she was asked , she used to say Yoruba dance was the one she liked best. She did not even like the dance from her area [in the East] So she was saying, "Why now, why did Yoruba people decide to change their dance?" I said I don't know, she should go and ask them.

SY3: They have spoilt the culture!

SMW: Since after the man's "Fuji Garbage" all dances have changed. [referring to the style of the dance that came up] Ehen! this is the one I hate, [because they are shaking] both the busts and their buttocks.

SY4 was unperturbed by the critical views of her colleagues. She did not dance like the one shown on the screen, but she danced nonetheless. She even boasted, jokingly, that the arrival of her boss could not deter her.

There is a remarkable level of seriousness in the issues that come out of the viewing of such "inconsequential" programmes as this interlude. Earlier on it had been a discussion on the values expressed in dressing and behaviour. Similarly, in the last example, the issue was about the direction the culture was advancing in. This goes to show how television even in such mundane ways, encroaches into the discourse of the world views that are held.

Though there is no vehemence in the reservations expressed now, as with those expressed earlier, regarding the religious "quacks", they were disgruntled anyway.

The repeat exposure to these musicals make them more predictable, and even more memorable. These also enhance the clarity of concepts, as with

each exposure, there is more discussion, as well as "grapevine" reports. Therefore, the language and meanings are clarified. Take this excerpts for example.

"Which one is this? "

"Ayuba."

"What is he holding, a ruler?"

"Maybe he wants to teach them a lesson, someone who did not finish secondary school."

"I don't appreciate this new tune. He finished from R.S.S. [one of the oldest high schools in the town; Remo Secondary School.]

"We are H.A.P.P.Y." [singing along to the music] Those children always sing it."

"Most of those tunes are accepted by those little children, and the younger generation. This is the time for the youths."

"So don't begrudge us, (laughter) for sure ni! [sic, meaning - it is sure.]

The artiste was acting the role of a teacher, as one of the subjects had suggested. The scene was set in a classroom, with some young people. He had spelt out the word H.A.P.P.Y. on the board. The music had been built around the tune of one of the popular childhood favourites - "We are H.A.P.P.Y."

The colloquialisms used by the subjects were themselves part of another artiste's music, hence the laughter. The statement as with such others had become a code.

The musical gave way to the announcer promoting the programme line up and this was followed by a Yoruba programme, "Aye Gbege" [which means - Life is Fragile, (must be handled with care)].

SMW rejected the programme by switching to the other station. There were more musicals on, similar to that which had been showing on the other channel. What this meant was that a continuity was maintained, though channels had been switched.

The subjects continued viewing, noting how appropriate the dance steps were, to the message which they assumed the music stood for. Along with that also came the grapevine reports on the private lives of the artistes.

"You see, I like this dance." [it was to a sober tempo of the gospel music]

"But this man can dance." [responding to the energetic dance of Barrister, a popular Fuji musician]

Both the sober slow rhythmic, and the energetic dance were appreciated. It was a question of how appropriate they were perceived to be in their context, that determined if they were condemned or not.

The programme was enjoyed. There was an obvious participation in the programme which gave way to the news. The news was seemingly ignored, till the item which concerned the subjects directly. The news item was about a salary review for nurses in view of the recent review of doctors' salaries. The item prompted a verbal response from one of the subjects, and this led to a discussion.

"It's true, doctors can't work alone after all. If they don't review it, we will strike."

It was this verbal reaction to the item that indicated that the news was attended at all. Otherwise, it had appeared that they had completely ignored the news. This illustrates that the TV is sometimes not viewed,

even when it is attended. It is sometimes used as its predecessor, the radio.

The time was about 8.00 p.m. and the subjects prepared and handed over to the night duty staff. The set was again "ignored" even by the new team, as the obituaries, and other personal paid announcements were featured.

The personal paid announcements were followed by Alawada, a Yoruba comedy of long standing repute. There was no visible response to the programme, even though it was watched. The doctor had by then come out to the waiting / reception area. Unlike in his absence, the subjects at this time conversed in hushed tones. This suggests that his presence could have affected the observed patterns. But the tape recordings revealed that the subjects' mutterings had no bearings on the programme. They were discussing their own personal affairs. Even these were not, obviously, evoked by anything from the screen. It is thus not clear that the presence of their boss can be made to account for their lack of interest. The pattern continued till observation ended at about 9.00 p.m.

Day 7

Observation began at about noon. The group on morning shift, SMW, and SE, watched a Yoruba drama with rapt attention. The programme on OGTV which was also a Yoruba drama was not clear. There was thus not much of a choice as to what should be watched. They stuck with the Yoruba drama on LTV.

The drama on OGTV was a serial drama, and the subjects had really

preferred to watch it, to follow what was going on. The quality of reception however forced them to decide otherwise. The programme had been well advertised the day before, and the subject's interest had been aroused. That it could not be watched after all, was lamentable. It also aroused suppositions about the performance of the station.

"It's that channel, 2.5. UHF that we want to watch, but now that it's not clear, what to do? Should we watch a programme that is not clear? It is a serial drama. . . Now when they show it, it is not clear."

"It is from there." [that is, from the station.]

"These people are funny, sometimes, they just slot in the programme and leave the place. They must have left the place. . . They have ruined this programme for many people today. So many people who stayed at home to watch this programme today."

The very first questions are indicative of the selection process. The choice had not merely been premised on the poor reception quality. The fact that there was another programme of comparable value to the subjects, made it easier to decide against that of poor quality. Had the programme option been different, the response may have differed. This reasoning is confirmed by the fact that the subjects eventually went back to view to the programme on OGTV.

Another interesting reading of these subjects, is not of the programme itself, but of the programmers. The assumption was that the programmers were negligent. There is no suggestion that the subjects appreciated that the programmers themselves might have been "helpless" in the situation. The point about the influence of the use of home videos, on this type of understanding of institutional practices, has already been made in the discussion of events in a different location (3).

Although the subjects joined the viewing midway, it was not difficult

for them to pick up what was going on. Being a serial drama, they were conversant with the story line.

R: What are they doing?

SMW: The programme started with different types of acting, but now they are fighting for a crown. Three people are fighting for a crown. They have killed one [hence the wailing and lamenting] and now there's remaining two. [sic] So they went to the palace, for the coronation, they divided into two. In fact into three, because there is the faction of the other one that was killed. They said they refused the choice of the one who was going to be king. There's also another factor who said it's their own person supposed to be crowned. So after much argument, the kingmaker tried to seize the crown, and said he had Gbadeko. [sic - Gbadeko is the title of the serial, and it means literally, suspending the crown]

What they are doing now is the burial of that one that they killed"

It is interesting that the reference is vague. No particular person(s) had been identified as being responsible for the actions. The explanation for this is reflected in the comments reported hereafter.

SMW: It was one herbalist. The herbalist took money from the other faction who want their "son" to be king, to kill that one who has just died. That one [the one who had died] came to him, to help him, [that is, to seek the help of the herbalist] so he [the herbalist] gave him this "ebo" [sacrificial offering] to take to the iroko tree in the middle of the night. Not knowing that the herbalist was going to be waiting in the bush for him at about 2.00 a.m. when he wanted to put the "ebo" down, the herbalist shot him. [sic]

The description as clumsy as it is, illustrates the intrigue that is embedded in the plot. It also is a verbatim report of the dramatised story.

The funeral scene was followed by that where a woman is seen, wooing a younger woman, for her husband, for the purpose of child bearing. The woman herself, like the biblical Sara, was barren. The subjects did not

comment on the values that this expressed. They were more concerned about the talent's accent, and the quality of the reception. Although they continued watching, they also continued to lament the situation. It was clear that they merely tolerated it. They were well aware that it should be better. They were not indiscriminate as regards quality. For instance, they noticed the difference in the quality of the programme, and that of the advert from the program's sponsor. This also attracted their comments.

Viewing was suspended at this point as one of the subjects came in to announce the news of her bereavement. This fouled the mood of the others, who gathered around to offer condolences, and practical suggestions on what needed to be done. There was no time for viewing, even if there had been the interest.

There was a similarity in this real life situation, and the funeral scene that had just been watched on the screen. There was a lot of noise, as the subject came in and threw herself on the floor, wailing and lamenting her misfortune. Likewise, the bereaved in the programme had thrown themselves on the floor, rolling and being restrained by the sympathisers. The sympathisers in this instance, were the fellow nurses and the researcher.

Even after the wailing had ceased, and there was again calm, the group did not resume viewing. Rather, they appraised the situation, and life in general. It was not until an urchin came around, peeping through the mosquito netting at the door, to catch a glimpse of the programme on the TV that their interest in the TV was resumed. The boy's persistence, in peeping through the door, ignoring the pleas of the staff that he should

leave, was what aroused their curiosity. They wanted to know what had captured the boy's attention so much that he defied them.

SMW: Go away, please don't put us in trouble.

SE: I'm sure he's come to watch television and that is not clear.

SMW: That's Lagos Television - it's an old programme, and must have been shown about thrice now.

SE: Is that one dead now?

SMW: Yes, the other one poisoned his food.

SE: So he died then, or turned into something?

SMW: He died.

The reception suggests that there is a normalcy of such events; of dying or taking on another form, like a man manifesting as an animal, or another creature. Again it was SMW, the avid TV viewer, who because of her previous exposures to the programme, assisted in clarifying the otherwise stunted message.

The afternoon shift took over and attended to their duty, not the set. This was so even when they were less busy. The bereaved subject was to have been a member of this team. There was thus a prevalent sober mood in the location.

Besides, the programme that was on at that time, was Hawaii 5.0. It was a foreign programme and it did not appeal to the subjects. The quality of reception was still not clear. The volume of the programme had been reduced. This was an indication of their lack of interest in the programme.

At the top of the hour, SY1, got SY4 to switch the channels to OGTV so

that they could watch a Yoruba drama. The programme was identified by the stage name of the main actor therein.

"Baba Amoye", [meaning the Father of wisdom] was the attraction in the programme. It was SY1 who alerted SY4, who was also willing to watch any way. They were both mindful of the programme, as well as the timing but their viewing was disrupted by the return of the bereaved subject. She had come back to confer with her colleagues, and friends, on the next line of action.

She reported the confusing situation arising from the loss, and requested their counsel in dealing with the situation. This led to a discussion on the dangers on the roads. One thing led to another, and by the time the subjects resumed their focus on the screen, they had lost the trend of what was going on. They thus tried to piece together, the snatches which had caught their attention, using their knowledge of the program's pattern, and their personal experiences.

SY4: She is going to take up an appointment in another town.

[The character announced that she would be coming home at the weekends]

SY1: Weekends! The husband is going to disappoint her, I don't know for certain, but I think so.

[The husband had told the wife to take the children along to the town where she was taking up the new appointment. The woman had refused, abandoning the children for the man. The man struggled with the responsibility, till a friend of the woman came along to help him out. The subject's predicted the outcome of the relationship]

SY1: That's it! The wife's friend is going to overthrow the wife!

[Baba Amoye in this episode, acted as the houseboy to the couple. He witnessed the "coup" which the subject had predicted. The new wife, who wormed her way into the home, really lorded herself over him, old and wise as he was. The outcome confirmed SY1's prediction, but there was an unexpected turn in the programme. The headmistress of the

children's school, rather than join the first wife, to blame the husband for the apparent lack of care for the children, put the blame squarely on the woman's shoulders. The woman, was admonished for not putting her home before her career, then she returned home. It was when she returned home that she found that her friend had settled in with her husband.]

The group watched in silence as the struggle began, and Baba Amoye being an elderly man was called to settle the crisis.

The reception quality of the programme was so poor, that the subjects did not watch the programme to the end. The routine was familiar enough, and with the poor audio and video quality, there did not see the point in carrying on. There were no remarks about the outcome of this programme.

This pattern of reception did not facilitate the group negotiation of meaning that had been observed when there are comments about the programme. The pattern holds the potential for divergent readings of the programme, with each individual taking away from the programme, what she saw was best. Because no opinion or conclusion was voiced, there was no negotiation of such.

In addition, the usual explicit conclusion, that is built into the programme had not been received. There was no group discussion which could have facilitated a group reading.

The poor quality of reception, was only noticeable with the programme itself. The sponsor's message as well as the credits of the programme were very clear. These were not of interest, especially as that which was of interest was not clear. The clarity of the adverts merely proved to be a source of irritation.

This programme was followed by a short interlude of music before a Christian religious programme "Word Alive" came on. There was no apparent excitement heralding the programme. It is not clear if this was a result of the dead air that was experienced at the beginning of the programme, or if it was a result of the tape dragging halfway through the programme.

The programme, in a nut shell was on the exceedingly great power that is at work on behalf of anyone who believes and comes to Jesus. This message was presented as the remedy for the overwhelming fear which had led many to various sorts of arrangements against the powers in witchcraft, juju, poverty and so on. It was based on biblical teachings.

There was little by way of visuals; and participating in the programme did not require viewing. Listening alone would suffice. The subjects received the programme in silence. There were no gripes about the technical quality, nor did they run any commentary about the content or credibility of the programme.

There was an air of reverence in the location as the programme was received. At the end of the programme, there was an apology from the station about the technical hitch which had been responsible for the poor quality of the transmission. The subjects still did not comment. They had become quite apathetic to the service coming from the set at this time.

The programme gave way to the news. The timing of this coincided with the arrival of subject SSE. It also marked a resumption of the chatting which included the announcement of the sad event. It was like a parallel

news network to that on the the screen. Because this was more personal and of greater relevance, they simply ignored the TV news service. That simply had no chance. The reopening of the issue of the bereavement constituted another block for the receipt of programmes, as the sober mood again pervaded the viewing atmosphere. It was almost as though it was disrespectful to view TV when there was a colleague mourning her dead. While this observation holds true, the assessment of available programme fare may also have contributed to their response. This is going by the fact that the subjects, even in spite of the recency sad event, managed to enjoy the drama programme that was on earlier on in the day.

The set was ignored as the subjects continued their paper work.

Observation ended early on this day; at about 7.00 p.m.

Summary

The observation in this location illustrates the process of reception in a communal setting. What is immediately apparent is the influence of individuals who are keen on programmes, on those who are less interested. The curiosity which is aroused, generates interest in the programme. Such individuals like SMW, are thus able to direct the attention of the group.

In like manner, the negotiation of group meanings was also illustrated. The voicing of observations or opinions that the viewing evokes, opens the avenue for immediate discussion of such. At the end of such exercises, the corporate assessment of the perceived images, are quite clear.

Preference Pattern

As with some of the other groups, television for this group, was more or less the dramas, and the musicals. The dramas were the programmes which they consciously attended. These were invariably those in the vernacular. The fact that their choice of stations in the location was restricted could have accounted for this. However, there was the general apathy towards the programmes in English language. In fact, the pattern of communication within the group, for instance, the existence of the communicative tension between the subjects non - Yoruba speaking subject and the others illustrates the reluctance of the subjects to converse or reason in English except they had to.

Although there was a glaring lack of interest in "factual" programmes, the subjects were able to use even those musical interludes, to draw a picture of the reality in which they live. For them as well, even though the television portrayal was a performance, there was an elasticity between the illusion and reality. Television was window on the world because the producers only dramatised what they had seen or heard about. They had been inspired by reality.

Going by their comments during the viewing, this group also seems to concentrate on the acts of villainy that are featured in the programmes. There was an emphasis on the diabolical relationships in the dramas. The government was practically non-existent for this group. They seldom ever watched the news. There were other duties that they engaged in, rather than be attentive to the news. But they made time to watch the dramas. They were so familiar with these that, they could even predict the pattern. That they discuss these common interest contribute to the

perpetuation of the images that have been perceived as has been explained.

LOCATION 8 - A WELL-TO-DO FAMILY

Subject is a high school principal and the wife of one of the renowned doctors in town. She is also the proprietor of a nursery/primary school. She is an executive of the Lioness International; a philanthropic organisation. She represents the well educated, well articulated, privileged group in the society.

Subject's last child is aged 9. He was the only child at home. The others were in boarding school although there were a couple of other dependents living with the family. These were largely unobtrusive during the observation period. The husband was hardly around during the period. He was usually busy attending clinics.

The family resides in a large, comfortable house, in an exclusive area in town. The nearest neighbour was separated by a large wooded compound. But there was a branch of the hospital network situated within the house grounds.

There was more than one TV set in this location. One of these was in the waiting area attached to the hospital. This was a black and white set. Another was in the family's private sitting room. This was a big colour television. These two sets were used for communal viewing, although the set within the home was more exclusive. There was a third set in the bedroom. This was most exclusive of all.

The TV in the very spacious sitting room was centrally positioned. It could be viewed from any part of the room. It was the focal point of the room's arrangement. It was in a side board along with ornamental pieces

PICTURE 9.

Location 8.

S1 at the telephone. The TV is centrally located in the spacious and comfortable sitting room.

of furniture. The telephone was also within that cabinet. The implication of this arrangement becomes clearer in the body of the report.

The sitting room itself was adjoining the dining room, which led into the kitchen, and a corridor which led to the bedrooms. In this house, there was a clear demarcation of the sitting room, and the dining area. It was not therefore possible to see or hear the set, from the dining area. Though the pictures of the sets were grainy, (indicating poor reception) there were reports of times in the past when the family had been able to receive several television stations, including one from neighbouring countries (Ghana). They had been unable to pick any Ibadan station. This was confirmed when the researcher connected the aerial, and tuned the set.

The family was able to pick one Ibadan station (NTA), but it would have meant loosing one of the Abeokuta stations. It could the get the Abeokuta stations, (NTA, OGTV) and three of the Lagos stations, (NTA Channel 7, Channel 10, and LTV). In spite of this range, the reception was poor. That of the stations originating from within the state were particularly poor. The Lagos channels were the fairest. Because the problem with the aerial was a loose connection, there were times when this range of choices were not available. The problems were such as could be easily rectified, but the subject was not able to.

The observation was conducted in this location, as well as in another earlier mentioned position, the waiting room. The need for this was in itself interesting.

The problem with the aerial, of the set in the sitting room was a minor one. However, neither the husband nor the wife could figure out what this problem was. They acknowledged the ease with which their older children would have dealt with the problem had they been at home. For them, it was a problem, that they "could not" solve. They awaited a repairer, who would help rectify the problem. The set was thus abandoned. Their viewing of TV for the period, had since then been deliberate. They had to make a conscious decision, to go to the other locations, where they had access to a set.

The choice of where to go depended on the nature of their viewing; private viewing could be done in the room, but viewing with company meant that they had to go to the waiting room in the adjoining building. The inconvenience alone was considered a discouragement especially in the light of the subject's busy schedule.

Day 1

There was no observation on Day 1. It coincided with the first day of a new term. Subject reported that she had had a hectic day at both schools. After closing from the school at which she was head, she had gone to over-see certain matters in her own establishment. After this, she had paid a visit to the beauty shop. She returned home late, about 8.00 p.m., exhausted and asked that the viewing exercise for that day be skipped.

Day 2

Viewing commenced after 7.00 p.m. The location of the viewing was in the waiting room, which was not as comfortable as the family's living room. The subject (S1) was not keen on spending too much time in the location

because she considered such as an infringement on the freedom of her husband's staff. In deed, none of the staff came in to view while she was there. Though the hospital, unlike the clinic in the study (location 11), was one which gave admissions, the patients, did not routinely join in viewing either. Rather, they came to pay their compliments, when they knew the doctor's wife was around. They thus constituted a source of distraction.

There was a special documentary on LTV. It was part of a campaign; Stop the Abuse of the Naira campaign. This was a plea for better attitudes to the currency, pointing out the various ways in which the currency notes were being mistreated, and the outcome of such. Subject watched, and listened attentively. The programme was a special. She said it was not like anything she had seen before. It was engaging, and convincing, and the subject agreed with the reasoning of the programme.

S1: [anticipating the commentary, that would accompany the visual] . . . That they should not implicate our currency with their celebrations.

TV [Narrator]: They should not implicate our Naira, indeed.

S1: [Horrorified at the act shown in the visuals] Did you see what he did? He's turned our Naira into mere paper.

The scene showed various ways in which the notorious practice of "Spraying" is conducted at open air parties. Spraying is the act of pasting or showering a person with money to express an appreciation for the person. In the example, the Naira notes had been linked, made into a paper chain, and put on the person's neck. There were other similar practices exhibited. Some of these were more common place. The subject was familiar with some of these. Her outburst was sufficient evidence for that - "Typical!"

The subject was appalled by a lot of the other examples of the abuse of the Naira that was shown. She was appalled that fresh currency notes were being used for such - being squashed up; used to take down addresses; soiled with sweat, and oil having being squashed up, and tucked away in the orange vendor's bra, or the butcher's blood soaked pockets. She was familiar with some of these practices, and so found the programme credible.

"It can't be, . . . on the Naira, . . . that he will write the address! . . . I have never seen that. Sometimes they will write N5, N10 sometimes you will see "Iya Muri" [the person's name] who the money is meant for. [running commentary on the sequence of events as she watched] He is going to pay, with that note that he has written someone else's address."

The programme showed the cycle of a Naira note. As the note journeyed along, the subject's interjections showed that she agreed with the position of the programme, which was - to handle the naira notes with greater care and respect. The programme was like an extension of reality, because subject readily found examples that she knew of, that fitted the points being made.

"If the butchers in Sabo market give you change, you can't venture to bring it out in daylight. . . They will even lift it up to see if it has the security line or something [with their blood stained hands that is]."

The programme went further, to show recommended ways of handling the Naira. Though she agreed with the suggestions, she wondered about how practical it would be for the types of the people whom the programme had shown as offenders.

"We should keep the money flat and straight. True, but how is that going to be possible for someone who is tying a wrapper?..."

You know they steal purses, they steal wallets. . . "

In other words, the use of purses or wallets, which was being recommended, made traders particularly vulnerable to thieves, it was that, that warranted them to tie the money around them. Therefore, the solution for that aspect of the problem was not acceptable. The excesses displayed in the parties earlier, was not condoned at all.

As soon as the programme ended, subject went away to over see the preparation of the husband's meal. She returned just in time to watch The News at 8. She was late, and had thus missed the highlights of the news. She attended the lead story only long enough to make sense of it, before she shifted her attention to her son, whom she feared was coming down with malaria.

The story was attended because of the memories that the subject matter evoked. It was a story about the National Youth Service Corps.

"Corps members! I'm always interested in whatever affects them. I was a corps member myself. I was in the first set in fact."

No other story was attended with such consciousness, until after the mid programme commercial break. There was an item on riots in a certain northern state - Bauchi state. Subject was alarmed by the gravity of the crises, particularly because she had a brother who was resident in Bauchi. This explanation only came to light later.

The remainder of the news was watched, but with distractions. For instance, she complained of the menacing sand flies. There was also the outburst following the announcement, within the news, of the population on the Nigerian pilgrims to Mecca. Subject worked out the cost of the exercise to the nation, going by the details of the announcement, that

each of the pilgrims would be allowed N40,000. In doing this, she missed the subsequent stories. She was already in an indignant mood anyway.

She left the set to arrange for treatment for her son. She thus missed the end of the news, and the closing review of the highlights. She had earlier missed the opening highlights of the news. Although she had "watched" the news, she had missed a large portion of it.

Subject returned in time to watch the American produced soap opera - Another Life. The viewing of this was relegated into the background as the subject turned the exercise into a social visit. There was more chatting than viewing. She was apparently not a regular follower of the programme.

R: You don't follow this programme?

S1: No. About this time I am usually busy; wash my clothes; bring my clothes out for ironing. . . [get ready for the next day]. I usually listen to the news, and also at 8 o' clock. So, between the end of the 8 o' clock news and the time for network news, I try to get done all the things that need to be done.

The observation that the soap opera was ignored was therefore correct. From the subject's response above, there is a suggestion that the network news at 9, was regarded as "the news". The 8 o' clock and other newscasts had to be qualified. This distinction needs to be made, if a correct view of what is received should be known, as the definition of the news may vary from subject to subject, and even from station to station.

A business contact was entertained while the soap opera was being shown.

There was no sign of regrets at being distracted from the programme. Interest in the programming only resumed at the commercial break which preceded the network news.

The "Oroyo" vegetable oil advert was striking. It evoked discussions which were not about the product, but about the subjects buying habits. The usual buying habit was what the advert challenged. The product's selling point was that it offered a more hygienic way of having the product dispensed.

This was not an important point to the subject. She was satisfied with the product she got from her supply, and was determined to remain loyal to her source. The advert had made her evaluate the service which she received from the supplier, and at the end of the exercise, she was convinced of her satisfaction with the service. The strategy of the advert had thus lost this prospective patron.

There was another advert which caught subject's attention. This was the teaser to the 7UP Fido Fedo advertisements. The character, Fido Fedo, who was yet unknown, was shown "pulling" away a page on the screen, to reveal a question - "What's the difference?"

Apart from the ambiguity about the advert, there was also an "insistence" on the viewer's attention. For instance, it was shown twice within that commercial break. That is twice within two minutes. It succeeded in getting the subject's attention, and it also got her talking. She was curious to know what it was all about.

Subject left the room at this time, and so she missed the stream of

adverts which followed. This included adverts of detergents, chocolates, and finance holdings. She returned in time for the news with her dinner. She had timed her meal to coincide with the showing of the network news.

While the highlights of the news were being read, the subject was dishing her meal. There was a food related discussion - the menu; the amount of calories there in and such. The discussion extended well into the first segment of the news. The first two stories were ignored. These were the stories about President Babangida's visit to Akwa Ibom state, and that about the establishment of the boards for certain parastatals.

Though she had ignored the items, the subject had not been impervious to the information that came out of them. This was apparent when she suddenly concentrated on an aspect of the second story. It was the announcement of the board for "People's Bank". She had virtually kept quiet, mid sentence, to attend to the story.

She had been attracted by the the mention of the Finance minister's name. The name was striking enough but the subject had been attracted for other reasons. Her outburst as she poised herself to attend to the story about him shows this.

"Alhaji Abubakar Alhaji! Those are the people who move Nigeria. They are the ones who hold the country. Whether rightly or wrongly, their reasoning affects all of us."

Subject noted the details of the story, even noting the various individuals on the board. She voiced her observation of a pattern, as the Chairman of the board turned out to be a retired army officer.

"Hum, these soldiers will never go!"

With that, her attention shifted to personal matters that were not related to what was on the screen. This carried on, and only tapered out as the story of a N33 million aid to Africa from Britain was read. Again, the coincidence in the timing, (of the story and the resumed attention), suggests that subject was not totally impervious to the news in spite of the chatter. She was only being selective in that which she consciously attended to.

The story which she attended evoked her comments. This commentary was carried through to the tail end of the story, and it went on, getting into the commercial break.

The subject's comments revealed her views of one of the affected countries - Ethiopia.

"They always have famine there, in Ethiopia. . . I wonder why . . . In the midst of all of it, Haile Selasie embezzled money. . . and even the person right there, - Mengistu Hainimeri - is not doing anything impressive."

Subject had expressed this position, even though there was nothing apparent in the report to suggest the view. The information about the aid given to this country, was sufficient for the subject to make this comment. It was clear that she had drawn on pre-concieved notions on the subject matter, in assessing it.

During the commercial break, subject resumed conversation about personal concerns, which had nothing to do with the viewing exercise. The resumption of the news arrested the drift of the conversation. Subject resumed her interest in the news, as the second segment began.

The story about the External Affairs Minister, was that which prompted another outburst. Again it was about the "monopoly" of power, in the hands of the military men.

" . . . At the end of a career in the army, he has now become a Minister. What chances are there for other people? . . . Are they saying they are the only ones who have the solution? That's why people don't bother with them; just leaving them to their devices."

The outburst in this instance was again, not directly related to the story. It was brought about, by the mere sighting of the person in question. It was after her outburst that she settled down to get the gist of the news story. The sequence indicates the mood with which the story was received. The subject of the story was such that it compounded her negative attitudes towards the government.

"Hun! They say 75% of the money [spent in keeping the peace in Liberia, following the outbreak of war] was borne by Nigeria."

Subject was not interested in commenting about the striking dressing, of the celebrities who appeared, in the stories. She even refused to take the bait that was dropped. It appeared that she was more concerned with the issues rather than the dressing, or appearances.

As she attended the stories, subject examined the logic in them. She contested those which were illogical, and expressed her thoughts on them. The above examples already illustrate that. It should be noted that all these stories were about government officials.

There was another example, which subject had initially watched quietly. Her comments, when they came, showed that her silence was not a sign of acceptance. She was merely paying attention, so that she would not miss

the details of the news. She had a genuine interest in being abreast of current happenings.

Her viewing of the news was however disrupted by a phone call that she had to attend to. This took such a long time, that she missed a better part of the third segment of the news. She arrived in time to catch the review of the headlines of the news.

It was only at the end of the newscast that the subject gave recognition to the newscaster by hailing her.

"Razaq - Lawal!"

It had not been clear if subject's fascination, had been for the name, or the newscaster herself. She confirmed though that she liked the person of the newscaster - "I like her, I like people who, some how do their job well." Her affinity for the personality seemed secondary to her interest in the news. The person was liked because she facilitated the reception of the programme.

The news was followed by a public enlightenment advert. Thereafter, there was the World news in Yoruba. Subject at this time attended to her son. When she came back midway through one of the earlier stories, she was struck by a particular name. She recognised the subject of the story as her teacher. She was attentive to the story but this was only momentary. Instead she opened a conversation about the newscaster. This attitude was different from that which she exhibited with the earlier newscast.

With the Yoruba newscast, the subject's attention filtered in and out.

This was despite the fact that she understood the language. This pattern was consistent throughout the 30 minute period of the Yoruba news. Incidentally, there were fewer external distractions at this time, compared to that of the 45 minute network newscast that subject had attended to earlier.

The Yoruba news featured some items from the previous day's network news. It was therefore not as topical.

The public service announcement which followed the Yoruba news received better attention. There was an announcement of a missing 15 year old. Subject found this incredible, using the televised photograph of the "missing" person to judge the information. The child looked too old to have been "lost". To her, it seemed more likely that the child had absconded from home.

The programme which followed was the Benny Hill show. Subject took her son to bed as this was about to begin. Thereafter, she went about other duties; which included visiting personal acquaintances who were patients on admission. One of these proved to be a difficult patient. This patient took up the subject's attention for the rest of the evening, till observation ended at about 10.45 p.m.

Several interesting points emerged from this day's observation. There was the fact that subject never attempted to change the channel that she was watching. She simply followed the stream of programming from the one channel. This was because there was really no option because of the poor quality of the reception. Subject made no attempts to "tamper" with the set, especially as it was a communal set, and she did not want to appear

to be imposing.

The network news for that evening had blacked out the Bauchi riots, which had been on the LTV news. She had seen that. Her mother, who was resident in another state had also got wind of the Bauchi riots. It was revealed later, that the phone call had been from the anxious mother, who had got the information, but had not got needed clarification from the network news. Hence the need for the personal contact. This illustrates how viewers are forced to rely on alternative sources of information.

There was also the fact that the last programme which was advertised was eventually not shown. After heralding the programme, the station had apologised for their inability to present Benny Hill. In its place, they had featured "Ere Ibile" a programme about traditional dances. Besides the fact that any planned viewing may have been frustrated, there was the added fact that the audience for the two programmes are not interchangeable.

The station had not facilitated the use of the medium for both audience segments. The audience of "Ere Ibile" could only have stumbled on it, while the audience expecting Benny Hill would have been disappointed. Another group who would have been affected by this would have those who would not have welcomed Benny Hill, but would have preferred Ere Ibile, but who in the mean time, had left the set. It is not clear if the subject belonged to this category. What is certain, is that when she left the set, the programme she was rejecting was The Benny Hill Show.

Day 3

Observation only began at about 7 o' clock. Although she closes from school at about 4.00 p.m., subject had other duties to attend to, hence her viewing could not begin earlier. The husband was at this time leaving home to attend to his rounds at the hospitals.

It was on this day that the set in the sitting room was fixed. Subject was a bit more relaxed on this day. She lamented the inability to see her "favourite" station, NTA Channel 10. She also gave an insight into her preferences and her viewing habits.

In this instance what the subject perceived as a station's programming style, at the time that she was available for viewing, was what determined her loyalty.

It was the dramas on NTA channel 10, that endeared the station to the subject, whereas the "metaphysicians" on LTV had been off putting.

"I love drama, and they have a number of good dramas. . . NTA is more profitable for me, than . . . LTV 8 [which] now has some frivolities. If you sit down at 8.30 they will start some "Alib Galib"

There was contempt in her tone as she pronounced the names - Alib Galib. These words were actually used as onomatopoeas. There was no programme by any such name, but in that it sounded like the names typical of the healers, the subject's point was very clear. Her knowledge of the timing of the programmes was correct, and this also facilitated an understanding of the point made.

The subject explained that her use of time had been revised, as a result of the scheduling pattern adopted by the station most readily available

to her. She was certain, [and correctly so too, Re. LTV programme run-down schedule] that between the time blocks of 8.00 - 8.30, and 8.30 - 9.00, there was bound to be one of such programmes. She had responded accordingly.

"Those are the reasons why I don't sit down to, . . . why that period around 8.00, 8.30 has been deleted from my programme; so that I use that time to do other things; I come back and settle [for the news]."

Subject's contemptuous attitude to these programmes was based on her assessment of them.

"If on Monday or Tuesday at 8.00 they don't do "Alib Galib", come 8.30 they will show one "Mother of Children" who is lying to the world. [my emphasis]

As a result of her assessment of the programming, subject had adjusted her own schedule accordingly.

Another point which emerged from the conversation with the subject is one which has already been highlighted. This is her "wilful ignorance" about the "technology" of the set. She was not interested at all in acquiring an ability to operate the set. This meant she could not fine tune the set, nor adjust it's vertical hold. She was only able to switch the set on and off, and, press the buttons on the remote control to change the channels. She did not even know where the control box was located on the set.

This seems an extreme case in view of the subject's level of education. However, the point is an issue because there were instances, in the course of watching, when subject needed to use such knowledge, that she did not have. In such instances, the possession of such abilities, would

determine the continuation of the viewing.

The incident which happened on this day, showed that the subject was helpless, especially when viewing without her older children. This was not an isolated case. Some of the other subjects (for example, in locations 3, and 11) who also had sets with sophisticated designs, had similar problems. The implication of this, is the need for less "complicated" designs for television controls.

The problem, which had made the subject "throw up" her hands, had been caused by a loose connection in the aerial cable. This wear had reportedly been caused by those constant changes that the use of the home video required.

In addition, there was the need to have the set, fine tuned.

When the adjustments had been made to the set, the programme that was on, was Another Life, on LTV. There was no enthusiasm accompanying the viewing, and there was, effectively, no other choice. The poor reception quality of the other stations, left the subject without any choice.

(To get a clearer reception warranted holding the cable in place)

Rather than view the programme, subject engaged the researcher in a conversation, on social topics - experiences with her high school students, and other such matters of interest to her.

This trend was carried on into the commercial break that preceded the network news. The pidgin English version of the "Stop The Abuse of the

Naira" jingle, was striking. This was because subject was able to relate it to the viewing of the documentary, with which the campaign was launched. (Re. Day 2)

Just as she was settling down to watch the news, she received a phone call. She thus "missed" the news highlights, and the lead story for the day.

The position of the phone in the room was such that it was not only subject who was distracted by the phone call. Had there been any other viewer, as in the case of the researcher, such individuals would have been distracted as well. On the other hand, if subject had not been so engrossed in the phone conversation, it was possible for her to also follow the news, because she was right in front of the TV set.

The first picture which was striking enough to evoke a comment from her, as she returned to her seat was that of the President. Her exclamation was a play on the his name.

"Babangida, Iyanbedroom!"

[Meaning - Father in the house; Mother in the bedroom.]

There was no more to the exclamation. If it was pregnant with meaning, it was not apparent.

Her interest in the news was heightened when she saw a list of names on the screen. She was interested in finding out who they were.

It was a list of the names of the members of a tribunal of inquiry into recent disturbances in Katsina state. Having satisfied her curiosity, she relaxed.

She was already in this relaxed mood, when the visual of the list of names was succeeded by that of the newscaster. She made a very clear gesture of disapproval. This was because she did not approve of the newscaster's dressing. The newscaster, (Hauwa Baba Ahmed) was shrouded. This way of dressing was typical for her. To the subject, it had an undertone which was not acceptable.

"If one is going to come on TV, we are in Nigeria, we are not in a Moslem country, after all they are the ones who complain about religious disturbances; she should put on "iro" and "buba" [national traditional wear for females] or george[tte], or something, not covering herself up this way."

The subject had suggested a range of attires that would be acceptable to people from the various parts of Nigeria. In other words, traditional dressing, even when typical of other parts of the nation, were acceptable. But a mode of dressing with religious undertone was not, because it was seen as an affront; a provocation. The subject drew on the inferences which she could make from the news, to buttress her position. In doing this, she was suggesting that the dressing of the newscaster, was contradictory to the position held in some news reports.

This illustrates how sensitive religious issues are, and how even the slightest hint of it, in this case through dressing, could affect viewing. (There are similar examples in other groups, notably Group 11).

It was the first time that this subject would comment about dressing of any sort. As noted earlier, unlike S1 in location 3, she did not seem to care very much about dressing. Yet, on this occasion it had constituted an issue worth her comments.

The outburst thus illustrates how even non - verbal aspects of viewing, do contribute to the meaning that is taken from the expressed positions. In other words, the production treatment was again being shown to have a bearing on the substantive message. The response of S1 in location 3 is another strong example of this.

Her commentary on the matter had kept her attention from the screen, and the story which Hauwa was presenting. She was still explaining her position when she had to answer a phone call. The phone call kept her occupied till half way through the second segment of the news.

She settled down again halfway through a story. It was the news item about the 250 recipients of a British Airways free trip award to Nigeria. Though she had missed the earlier part of the story, she was not unaware of the details. She had heard the story earlier on; on the radio.

She was able to give more details than the story carried. She was very enthusiastic about the particular story, and mentioned that -

"These are the reasons why I don't miss the news"

This suggests that there are certain news items which are dispensable. In deed, this suggestion fits, the observed attention pattern. Some stories were watched non-chalantly, some were unacknowledged, whilst some are aggravating. In this instance the story evoked her comments, and though she was critical, she was not angry. She had her own definition of what was newsworthy.

She enjoyed watching the accompanying visuals, which showed notable

tourist attractions in Nigeria. Another story which caught her attention, and excited her, was one which featured someone whom she knew personally, and could vouch for.

" . . . She's really working hard and exposing Nigerian raw materials. . ."

She was interested in what the person had to say; what the story about her was. At the end of it, subject was still sceptical. Though she trusted the person, she did not trust the system within which she was working.

" . . . She gives them institutions and facilities, she wants to get funding and possibly the next thing you'll do is start burning the buildings. Nigerians, are none other than arsonists, petrol is not far from their reach." [sic]

[meaning - petrol is within easy reach of Nigerians; Nigerians are arsonists. The arson is to cover up the fraud which though not mentioned, is implied in the statement]

The reading above illustrates the intensity, and the damaging effect of the pre-conceptions which the subject arrives at the news with. The negative assessment of the government and the people is so intense, that subject will even make projections that would cause her to reject that which, she would have found acceptable.

There were several other examples of such negotiations, usually they had to do with government policy or action. There were also examples within the private sector. There is the earlier example of the "Metaphysicians" whom she had accused of telling lies to the world.

There was a story which put a private company on focus. Subject was also acquainted with the people involved. This time she was both able to vouch for them and endorse the story. It was one of the commercial

stories, a public relations effort of the company, and so the story would have been paid for.

There were several people on the news with whom the subject was personally acquainted, directly or otherwise. This made her more confident in her assessment of the stories. This made her suppositions even more "damaging".

There were instances where the subject acknowledged her ignorance on issues. These were no less damaging. For instance she wondered, (rather than having suppositions), if there was special training for retired army officers who took up sensitive appointments, where "precision" is required - where you "can't talk nonsense" - such as those in the diplomatic corps. She wondered if on the other hand they were merely briefed by "knowledgeable" people, the experts.

The assumptions which underlined this position was already damaging. It was to say, in other words, that the officers had not previously been trained, or knowledgeable. It expressed, and explained her contempt for such people.

This attitude came out in the way she responded to the news. Having wondered outloud, she shifted her thoughts to matters of personal concern. These thoughts were voiced. She did not thereafter show any interest in the news. Then there was another phone call. She thus "missed" a sizeable chunk of the second segment of the news.

Whilst on the phone, there was an item which she had overheard, which was interesting to her. This time, when she finished her telephone

conversation, she was curious to know what had been said on the issue. She requested for a report. She was thus relying on someone else's reading of the story. In the event that she was viewing alone, as was most likely in the absence of the researcher, there would have been no way for her to get the details of the story at all. Even if she did, her reading would have been directed by the competence of the mediator as has been described in other locations.

The story was one that was sensational. It had been widely publicised especially because of the twists that were introduced. A well-to-do woman had been arrested on drug charges. She had implicated the boss of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency. (NDLEA). The man had hitherto been in the police force. He had had a good reputation. His implication in this case included the allegation that he had had an affair with the woman. The news item for that day, was about a statement from the man's wife, which exonerated her husband, and condemned the woman. Subject's response to this story, again reflected her distrustful attitude.

"Oh, she must say something! When she's seen him to that point she won't be able to leave him, or let him down. Even as the thing really pinches her, she must tell some lie. . .[to save his face] Hun! Nigerians, you just can't trust anybody!"

Although she was selective, the subject was on the whole, a serious news viewer. She watched and listened attentively when she was not distracted. She did not run indiscriminate commentaries, nor was she overly concerned about gossip and appearances as were some other subjects.

Though her viewing was chequered, she was able to see the review of the highlights on this day. This meant she could decide from highlights of

the news, what were the "important" items that she had missed because of the distractions. It was clear that she was keen on the news. Her behaviour confirmed her account. This was not the case for some.

There was shift in subject's focus right after the network news. Her attention went to personal matters, that were not related to the news. This was even before the commercial break began. It was as soon as the closing credits were being shown. The conversation which resulted from that was carried on, through the commercial break, and the Yoruba news.

In her deliberation, she was lamenting the state of the education in the nation. This is her own professional area.

It was the musical interlude following the Yoruba news, that drew subject's attention back to the programmes on the screen. The trend displayed was incorporated into the subject's lament. It was cited as an illustration of problems in society.

"This is what we know how to do. If the children were here, they will know what it is - if it is "Ijo Yoyo"; or something else. Our values have been spoilt! God bless my father. Imagine a child watching something like this, the set will be switched off, and the the child has had it. For a week, the child will not be allowed near the set. . . " [my emphasis]

The subject, as illustrated in the above remark, is of the opinion, that such programming as the musicals had contributed to the deterioration of the values. She had also introduced another element into the issue of TV reception. She had put the onus of selectivity on the viewer. Rather than blame the stations for showing such programmes, she reminiscenced on how (at the inception of TV service), when she was still a child; her father would act as a censor for what the children were allowed to

watch.

"He will first watch the programme, to assess what the programme is about, and whatever is senseless, induces early bedtime."

The subject recognised the widespread discontinuation of such vetting of programmes. This she blamed on the fact that parents, these days, spend less time at home. Even in her situation, the children were more familiar with the operation of the set, suggesting that they put in more use than she did. There was however a noticeable consciousness, of the need to vet the children's choice. This was absent in other homes. The children were in fact, the parents' guide to viewing in some other locations. (locations 2, 9, 11) The changes noted in this observation, illustrate changes in the social structures; particularly in the home; and how these affect viewing patterns.

The programme which followed was an extended interview "Press Conference", and it featured a chiropractor on that evening. This was a news interview, distinct from the sponsored "metaphysicians" programmes. It was in English, with 3 journalists, from both the print and electronic media interviewing.

The subject watched with keen interest, curious to find out about the practice. Though she was still sceptical, she was more tolerant of this than she was of the "metaphysicians". This parallel is drawn because the subject in her references, equated the chiropract with these other "healers". She saw him as a Westernised version of them. In fact she was of the opinion that the programme had been paid for, that it was a public relations act of the man.

With time, the programme proved to be a trying experience for the subject. But she endured, because she was staying up, waiting for her husband's return. The programme was also more tolerable in that the interviewers' were asking probing questions, similar to that which she was asking. The interviewers were not lenient with the chiropract. The line of questioning aimed at finding out the possibility of the chiropract being a charlatan.

Subject was able to conclude that the guest on the show; the chiropract was a liar, who was "employing these deceitful black magic". To her, the interviewers were "intelligent" thus able to find the faults in him. Thereafter, the subject was relaxed in watching the programme, making the guest an object of ridicule, and seeing the interviewers as doing the same.

At the end of the programme, "when they had shown him up", the moderator invited viewers to heed the guest's invitation, to patronise him. Subject was not amused. Though she was able to reject the offer, she did not assume that every viewer would be discriminatory enough to read through the "sarcasm".

"Don't say that please! They may think you mean it; our 30 million viewers."

The programme was followed by another interlude of music. Subject was still disdainful of the programme, though it was a different clip. She expressed her fears about the prevalence of the sort of programmes.

S1: This is scary to me

R: This dance? Will you not differentiate between them?

S1: There's no difference. You know, when something is decadent. - Ijo Yoyo; Figure 8; Shina Peters; ehn Barrister; they are all manifestations of the evil in

this country.

In the days of I. K. Dairo - when I.K. Dairo is singing, you'll all be listening attentively, because you will learn some lessons from there.

Sunny Alade, as flippant as he was, in the midst of them, [musicians] then, he was not senseless. I mean Ebenezer Obey was dignified; Comfort Omoje, a mother, no doubt!

That was a time when there were values and you can't talk nonsense. These days, they want to sing, what do they they say? "Shake, shake, shake, shake you bottom" Aree! [exasperation] My parents won't let you watch such. In our home, you won't watch that. If it comes to the screen, you won't watch it!"

[For the subject's point to be appreciated, see accompanying videos, showing a variety of the latest musical clips at the time of the study]

Subject was vehement in her objection to the values expressed particularly, through the dance forms. The clip which had brought about the latest outburst was Olu Fajemirokun's. The lyrics of which expressed moral values, and was at certain points prayerful [Re. report in Location 1] The dance steps and other aspects of its presentation, was similar to that of the artistes whom subject had enumerated as the "offenders".

What made the trend "alarming", was the difficulty of escaping exposure to the aspect of programming. Yet, these musicals, because they are mainly presented as interludes, are not striking features on the stations' schedules.

The solution which the family had resorted to because of the trend, was to reject television programming. Rather than watch TV, the subject reports that her family had developed other interests. They had their own selection of music, films on video, and even had family concerts.

"My children have a lot of things. They have Toun Soetan, [Christian musician] we have many fine things; so of their volition, they decide what is not good. Even when they don't, use these, we sit down and discuss, . . . then we'll round it up with our own concert. We will sing, and sing. If you stumble on our proceedings, you may meet us dancing. You know we don't even have neighbours to pop in on us."

In essence, the family is not averse to singing and dancing, but it is selective of the type of values expressed in such, whether covertly or otherwise. This illustrates how interludes, which would otherwise be an insignificant aspect of the programming, could cause a group of viewers to reject more substantive aspects of the programming effort.

The observation ended at 10.30 p.m. although the subject was still alert, and the set was still on. Subject was still waiting up for her husband. Viewing for this day had again been devoid of channel zapping. Even though this time, there was a functional remote control, it was hardly ever used.

Day 4

Subject was only able to settle down to any sort of viewing at about 8.00 p.m. Before then, her son had been watching alone, in silence. He had first watched Family Matters, an American comedy. Thereafter, at 8.00, he switched from LTV to an NTA station to watch the drama, Checkmate on the network service. This was the programme that was on when the subject arrived.

Since the programme was a serial, and subject had not been following it, she had to rely on deductive reasoning to make sense of what was going on. To do this, she used the snatches of conversation which she heard, as well as her interpretation of the actions, and attitudes she could

infer from the gestures.

The subject had not been watching for long, when the sponsor's advert came on. The particular product that was being advertised was Royco; a bouillon cube. She hissed as this advert came on.

Her concentration was heightened as the programme was resumed. She watched with keen interest and was very attentive.

At the second commercial break, which was halfway through the programme, subject assumed that the programme had ended. She did not show any signs of disenchantment as she did at the earlier break. She only expressed her disappointment to see the programme end. She said -

"These are the types of programmes I like to watch."

By this time her attention in what was happening on the screen, had waned. Her interest was again re-kindled when the programme itself was resumed.

Her viewing was still characterised by the need for deductive reasoning. This was compounded by the fact that her viewing had to be punctuated, as she had to attend to the various people who came in to see her for various reasons (the driver, the cook) and she also had to serve the dinner. She confessed that it was difficult for her to follow what was going on.

"Many things are happening, it is difficult to follow except one has been following it for a while."

At the end of the programme, most of the subject's questions were still

unanswered. Her confusions regarding the plot were left unresolved. The public service announcement which preceded the network news, as well as the commercial break, were "ignored". The TV was left on, to provide part of the room ambience, as subject had her meal before the set. Her son at this time went to the dining area. He was thus absent from the proceedings from the set.

The subject again preferred to talk about the menu, than discuss the information that came out of the TV at that time.

On this day, she had missed the 8 o' clock news. The viewing of the drama had usurped the attention at the scheduled time. There was no indication that this was in any way regrettable.

The network news was attended as soon as it came on. The conversing was stopped as soon as the preview in to the news, was being read. It was from this time that the subject had become grieved by the presentation. She had missed some part of a sentence, because of the pronunciation of the newscaster.

"What was that he said? . . . Oh they don't speak English well. When we speak English, we must speak it in a way that other people will understand. . . We have introduced our West African accents into English. . ."

This "flaw" in the presentation, had created a mental block for the subject. It had set the mood with which she received the news for that evening; and it had kept her from following the information adjacent to that which she had brought about her lamenting. In fact it was as though she had been put off the newscast. She paid little attention and was more relaxed than previous days.

There was a phone call which diverted her attention completely. She had to turn down the volume of the TV whilst she was on the phone. When she returned to viewing the news, she did not turn the volume back up. Yet she continued to view, not straining to hear, though the volume was low. She merely followed the visuals of the reports.

The first comment which she made about the news for that evening was hailing the President's wife who was featured in a story. Subject was positive towards the woman as well as the story.

"I don't mind her, I like her. . . I like a person who contributes to society; whether good or bad, at least she does something."

There was a part of the story which she lamented. This was an aspect which she had deduced from the story - the fact that the ceremony had been held at Abuja, Nigeria's new federal capital.

". . . everything has been taken away to Abuja . . . You see if they take things to a place where everyone will think, I won't mind"

Though she had been in approval of the purposed message, she had by the process of deduction, found an element of government activity which was not agreeable. There was a tone of resignation in her voice. She was not vehement in her expression of this.

There were few other stories which caught the subject's fancy. One of these was the story about Zonta (Women) International. The subject noted that it was the the decade for the women. She consented to the prominence of women in the evening's newscast. The story had followed that, about the President's wife closely. Thereafter, she was not so

attentive, but she was quick to remark, when there was a story about a loan to be taken for one of the newly formed states.

"Oh, what a borrowing nation this is, borrowing 400 million U.S. dollars, to be used in Akwa Ibom state."

There was a news item about Civil Service Reforms. Subject was not satisfied with the information that the news could bring.

"When things like this happen, they should present it to us, in documentaries, so we can listen again; not in a news item like this."

Subject's reasoning was based on the need to examine the issue in greater detail, and digest the changes there in. The chosen format of presentation, the treatment of the story, was considered inadequate.

The story nonetheless prompted the subject to report about a personal acquaintance who had been adversely affected by the reform. With this report, and the expression of her objection, subject was distracted from the other details of the information coming from the screen.

This alternative line of conversation was halted as soon as subject recognised another acquaintance on the news. She focused her attention on the news, because it had presented a different level of relevance. The renewed interest in the particular news item, positively affected, the subsequent stories as interest was sustained till there was a break in transmission. This led to the channel being changed. Because it was network news, all the stations were featuring the same programme. The viewing was thus continued on the other channels.

The already noted scepticism, was again observable in the subject's reaction to the stories. Her response amounted to an assessment of the

country.

The news report was about efforts to preserve the National Film Archives. Subject hissed; a show of contempt, she was unimpressed, even though in this instance, she did not challenge the sincerity of the report.

"... hoping they will keep them safe. Safe from cockroaches and such. Oh this country! Yet we were created by God, or is it that we have re - created and marred ourselves?"

The subject was exasperated. She did not think much of the country. This is interesting, especially when one sees that her reading sometimes contrasts the message which she is shown. This then raises the question of the validity of the fears in some quarters over the influence of certain foreign programmes, because of the negative portrayals inherent in such. All that subject had viewed, were local productions, which even had positive portrayals, yet they prompted a negative image of the country.

There was another story on the President's wife. Going by the visuals, and even the report, it the same story that was featured earlier on in the bulletin, but the focus in the second report was on the President's 2 year old daughter. The response to this story was not positive.

The President's wife, who had been approved for her good works, was criticised for behaving as one who "had never had a child". This was condemning the much ado, about the child's birthday, thus refuting any significance of the particular child.

It is unlikely that this was the response which the story sought. There

were some other stories which had relatively predictable responses.

There was the obituary of a certain 86 year old man. He was a leading world scientist, who had worked on the Atomic bomb. It did not matter what he had done, the subject was sympathetic. There was support for the Nigerian team, as one would have expected. This support was based on another view of Nigeria which the subject expressed.

"How dare them try to beat the Nigerian team? Don't they know we are superior? "

This illustrated the contradiction in the subject's opinions about Nigeria. She had earlier on, been unimpressed with the country, not trusting that a good thing could be done there in. Here she saw the country as being superior. There were different sets of circumstances in which each of the views were held.

With the issue of governance and relating with each other, Nigerians were not trustworthy. In the face of an external aggressor, as in the case of sports, Nigeria was superior. What makes these readings more interesting is the consistency in the pattern. For instance she was excited about the sum of money that had been voted for Children's Trust Fund, (which the President's wife was championing). The next sentence was reason for her to belittle the entire story. It was the government who had donated the lion share - two out of three million Naira. There was no real achievement after all. There are other examples reported earlier, of how the subject finds cues, from within the stories, to read meanings that were not apparently intended.

As the news ended, the subject switched her focus to domestic matters.

It was as though she had only been enduring the news.

She was not impervious to the programming flow, especially when she was before the set. For example, one of the times she was in the sitting room, there was a commercial, a special promotional advertisement for one of the detergents. She recognised one of the gifts on offer as something that her children possessed. The gift was a torchlight / radio - cassette player.

There was another which the subject did not comment about even though it was one of the products, targeting people like herself. It was the new vegetable cooking oil. She had not found the advert credible. On an earlier occasion, she had been prompted by the same advert, to assess her own buying habit. The exercise ended up with an expression of loyalty for her own alternative. (Re. Day 2)

Another (unintended) result of viewing the advert was that the advertised recommended retail price, evoked memories of when the product was cheaper. The comparison of these prices, amounted to a deliberation on the rate of inflation.

" . . . there was a time oil was cheap, a gallon was three naira fifty kobo"

There was a public service announcement which arrested the subject's attention. This was because it was directly relevant to her. It was concerning the postponement of the Common Entrance Examination into secondary schools. Subject was not as concerned with the fact that the information was reaching her for the first time via the announcement, she was more concerned with the directive that the deadline for the sale of application forms should be extended. It was an illustration of the

insincere motives of government actions.

"Do you see, it's because they did not sell all the forms"

In subject's view, the examination had been postponed because there were still forms to be sold. This view was the opposite of the information within the announcement, that is, the postponement of the exam date, meant there could be an extension of the period for the sale of forms.

The commercial break was followed by one of the "Metaphysician's" programmes. Subject felt vindicated in her assessment of the programming; that the programmes had taken over the screen. She decided to endure the programme for while before switching off, so that she could point out features which illustrate her evaluation of the programme genre.

The programme was an OGTV production, although it was not being featured on OGTV.

The first few credits on the programme were eulogies of the sponsor / guest. There were also directions to how the viewer(s) could get in touch with the healer's. The reception quality was very poor, and this induced a switch in channels earlier than the subject had planned. The poor reception had compounded the problem she had with the programme, and it was not worth enduring anymore. She rather settled for the Yoruba news on LTV.

The news was largely a translation of the previous day's network news. Subject was able to catch some of the items she had missed on that newscast, because of the distractions during the viewing. An example of

this was the suspension of expatriates involvement in the travel agency business in Nigeria. The subject queried the rationale behind the decision as she heard the lead sentence. She had noted the highlight of the story the previous day, but she had responded differently. She had been more preoccupied than she was during this viewing.

As though anticipating her question, the report offered an explanation for the decision. It was to stem the tide of fake tickets and forged papers. The subject was alarmed at the reasoning which led to the decision. She found the innuendo in the story incredible. Again she chose to suggest the opposite.

"Is it the foreigners who sell forgeries, or yourselves?"

She detached herself from the guilty parties even though the reference to "yourselves" was one to Nigerians as a whole.

There was something fascinating about the Lagos State Governor's name. She echoed it as the name was mentioned in another news story. There were similar responses in other locations as well.

There was a translation of the news of the First Lady's efforts which subject had found impressive the previous day. This time subject was unimpressed. This was due to the awareness of the detail, that had made the effort become contemptuous in the subject's view. It was also a result of the subject's opinion of the populace.

"No poor man will spend his N5, because they will say the fund will not be of benefit to their children. "

Notwithstanding, she still wanted to know more about other efforts of

the First Lady. She wanted to read the book written by the First Lady.

On the whole, the programme was watched attentively, even though the viewing was not planned. At the end of the newscast, the newscaster had a charming smile, and a prayer for the viewer(s), to which the subject responded a loud "Amen!" She made no comments about this, (as did S1 in location 1) but her response suggested that she was impressed.

There was a few seconds of dead air. This was followed by an announcement which was not very clear. It was from the continuity announcer. This was again followed by a period of dead air.

The subject did not make any attempts to change the channel. She did not anticipate any particular programme, but she was waiting up for her husband, so she waited, with the set keeping her company.

The programme which eventually came up was a musical filler. The artiste that was featured was not one of those to which the subject was vehemently opposed. She recognised him as one of her son's favourite. The boy had slept, but the subject, danced to the rhythm singing along as well. The lyrics were basically popular idioms, and so it was easy to sing along.

The initial response to the beat had been one in which the subject was imitating her son. She was not sitting before the set at this time, rather, she was attending to some other matters, and moving from room to room.

The filler gave way to the CBN news, and this was engaging. Subject

viewed with a sense of purpose. The viewing was largely devoid of the commentary refuting the expressed reasoning, and offering alternatives, such as characterised the viewing of the network and local newscasts. Yet, subject reacted to the news items in the reports as well. These responses were mainly audible exclamations to the audio and visual elements of the news.

The lead story was a report on the Gulf war. Subject was moved by the magnitude of the problem, and she was also touched by the human suffering which were featured in the visuals from the affected areas.

"Ah! Oh! Oh! [in response to the details from the audio report] Look at that child! [responding to a visual not directly referred to in the report] Oh! Christ! Oh Jesus! Yee! [responding to heard details] . . . Do you see, what they are begging for? They are begging for water! [responding to visuals] "

Though it was an event in a far away land, subject was able to reduce the proximity in the report. The event was one which aroused concern, and this could even be personalised.

"They are going to Iran. I have a friend in Iran. So what is Saddam's gain in all this? Making refugees of his people..."

Observation ended after the viewing of the CBN news at about 10.40 p.m.

Day 5

Viewing commenced at about 8.30 p.m. when subject returned from an outing. Indeed, the subject had a hectic schedule, which involved her spending a lot of time outside the home. She had had to cancel another engagement for that evening for the sake of the research exercise.

It is important to note that this observation does not confirm the

subject's description of her use of time. Because most of her outings are not for leisure, subject is wont to think she does not "go out much", as she said at the contact meeting. Though she was observed to be homely person indeed, she was one who spent a lot of time outside the home.

The programme which was selected for viewing was a soap opera on the network service - Ripples. Because of the problems with the set, the subject reported that she had not seen the programme for a while. She was therefore unable to follow the story line. Besides, she had resumed viewing, when the programme was already on the way. She had to be briefed by her son on what had transpired. In spite of this, she was able to form an opinion of the characters by herself. This opinion was informed by what she could see of their countenance, as well as her son's assessment.

"This one talks like one who smokes hemp."
[synonym for drug addict]

Following the above comment, subject focused attention on the screen, but soon resumed her commentary. At this point she noted how predictable the Yoruba dramas were to her - they always revolve around a "Babalawo".
[the medium for an oracle.]

"They always do suspicious things; they don't build trust. At least with historical ones, we know that they are what actually happened at those times"

The subject had ignored the programme, and the commercial break featuring the sponsor's adverts while she was saying the above. The interesting features of this comment are that she had a generalisable view of the Yoruba dramas.

In spite of these, she made a distinction between the historical and the contemporary dramas. Subject was able to excuse certain practices in the historical dramas, which she believed to be factual, but she was intolerant of the same in the contemporary dramas. She had not queried how factual this portrayal was, she was only concerned on what she felt was being fostered. There was a similar response in the views expressed by S1 in location 6.

As the programme resumed after the commercial break, subject suspended her conversation and resumed her interest in the programme. The scene featured two children in a home, who were having an argument, before their father came in to help resolve the problem. The children's response to their father was such that the subject's son objected to.

B: Is that his daddy who is talking to him, and he is walking away?

S1: Do you see, do you see? [in agreement]

B: The daddy does not discipline him, that's why.

The child in the programme had blamed the mother for not being at home to look after them (i.e. the children). The child had then stormed out of the father's presence. The subjects could neither find any justification in the child's reasoning, nor his action. Even B1 was using his held standards to assess that which he saw on the screen.

Although subject was interested enough in the programme to be concerned about getting a clearer reception, she was not captivated by the programme. She attended other chores, for example, supervising the cooking, even as she viewed. Although H (subject's husband) was at home at this time, he did not come anywhere near the set. He was getting

ready to go out, whilst waiting for his meal. This perhaps explains why there was the need for the subject to leave the programme and attend to the cooking. Her viewing was thus of a chequered nature.

As a result, S1 was confused by the events in the programme. Because she had not been following, and could not even identify the various characters. There were several families in this programme as well, and subject was confused trying to piece the snatches which she saw together.

She suggested links between completely different families; those whom she had seen and the new ones which were in the on going scenes. She asked and tried to answer the question "Who are these ones?"

At the end of the programme, there was no show of emotion. There were no comments about the programme, or about the experience of viewing it. Subject simply went straight to the kitchen. It was as though she was relieved of the distraction to concentrate on her cooking.

Whilst in the kitchen, she missed much of the commercial break, but she was conscious of the news. She was targeting the news as she went about her duties. She came back to sit down, just after the lead item of the news. She had again missed the highlights, and the headlines of the network news.

The first story which she remarked about was that about the Presidential gifts to Akwa Ibom state, at the end of his visit there. Besides the perceived "good fortunes" of the people of that state, subject was also excited on account of a member of her household, who comes from the

state. She asked for the person to be summoned to the set.

The reaction received from the person, dampened her enthusiasm. There was apparent disinterest, an apathy towards the government in spite of the announced benevolent gesture.

S1: These ones have collected money, 30 in one place, 40 in another. . . Go and call Mercy so she can see what the President is doing in her state. . . .

S1: Where have you been? The President has given a lot of money to Akwa Ibom. He has given you money to build House of Assembly in Akwa Ibom. [no excitement in Mercy's response] It's Akwa Ibom. Are you not from Akwa Ibom?

Mercy: I know I am from Akwa Ibom, but I don't know anything about that.

S1: I am telling you now, see, he's still there. They are building a university, they are giving money for educational development, 15 million.

Mercy: [apathetic] Let him do.

S1: They even made provision for water. . .

Mercy: [with apathy still in her tone] Babangida, do well oh! [meaning - Babangida has done well] . . .

The promises in the news, and the excitement in S1's report of them, were not enough to evoke any emotions from the young lady. She could not care less really, and she did not mask that. The reason for her apathy may not be totally accounted for, based on this observation alone, but there was certainly a disinterest, that caused her to discountenance government promises.

Subjects both left for the kitchen. This meant S1 left the newscast completely. She had earlier, left it mentally, as she carried on the conversation reported above.

When she returned, she hailed the Vice president, whose picture was on

the screen. She had not even known why he was there; what the story about him was about. When she did, her response was simple - "Ah! . . . ridiculous."

The news item had been a policy on the army officers' acquisition of wealth; but subject had referred to it as a "formula".

The story which followed also featured the Vice president. This time it was an item about the arrival of a new foreign diplomat. This did not evoke any comment from the subject.

Subsequent stories did not evoke any comments from the subject either. But she made non verbal gestures, for instance she grunted at the mention of large sums of money in one of the stories. This suggests that she was not as vocal as she could have been. Occasionally there were outbursts from her. For instance she made the following outburst, and she left the set temporarily. The item which provoked the outburst had been about the inauguration of some board.

"Inaugurating one board, or the other; one board or the other. There must be people, begging to be placed some where. . . You will hear them say he is the secretary, [if ever a Yoruba man is to be named] The Yoruba man is the one who will do all the work there. "

Subject was fed up with that type of information. There had been the announcement of a new board on every network newscast during the exercise in this location. Her deduction based on the frequency of the information, (which was indicative of the frequency of the act), is also interesting - "there must be people begging to be placed". In other words, the appointment to a board was a "privilege" which some were "begging" for; and the more who begged, the more announcements of board positions

that could be expected.

The subject took her reading a step further, and introduced the element of ethnicity into the board appointment. In her view, people of a certain ethnic group, (Yorubas) were not fairly represented. When they were appointed, they were made to - "do all the work" there is.

In all, going by subject's view, fairness was lacking in the rampant, issue of board appointment. This was another illustration of a reading which contradicted the intended message. Rather than bring the government closer to the people, the story informing the people about government activities, had only brought the government into disrepute.

By the time subject returned to the set, following her outburst, she had missed about 5 stories, and a commercial break. Even when she returned, she was not fully engrossed in the details of the stories anymore. Rather, she mused over the the various personalities, that the story revolved around. Her attention to the stories, when she attended to them, were momentary. One of the stories which captured her interest in that way, was that about the Food Fair. Because the report was not one which was familiar, subject had been curious to know what the story was about. Having satisfied her curiosity, subject resumed the pattern of attending the news - with a fleeting interest.

What occupied the fore of her attention, as indicated by her deliberations, were other personal matters - caring for those personal acquaintances who were in the ward, and so on.

The third segment of the news featuring the Business news, was totally

ignored. Interest in programming was only rekindled when the subject's son exclaimed excitedly, about the advert for the Stop the Abuse of the Naira campaign.

In spite of the fact that she had seen the advert before, it was only on this occasion that the subject began to wonder about what had inspired the campaign. (The advert had shown a popular comedian, "Aluwe" attempting to have a bundle of Naira notes dry -cleaned.) She rejected a suggestion that there must be a reason for expending money on the campaign. Instead she said -

"Nigerians are not so thoughtful".

The subject's contemptuous view of her country, even in this, illustrates how, that view cuts across programme genres. Her views were not a reflection of any particular programme that she watched, they were a result of the knowledge and attitude which she brought to the screen. The tendency however seemed more likely in certain programmes or subjects than in others. As in the following example.

The trend of being disinterested in the programming continued through the commercial break, into the Sports programme that followed. There was a switch to another channel and the interview programme that was on was attractive because the interviewee, was familiar. The interview was in the Yoruba language, and the focus was on the activities of the government agency - MAMSER. The interviewee was identified more on the basis of his past reputation, than that of the office which he currently represented. There was actually an initial separation of the man, and the post he was holding. Whereas the man was identified for his own achievements, the office was identified for the obscurity that

surrounded the purpose of its existence.

"I know this person, . . . but I don't know what that MAMSER does."

As the man proceeded to enumerate the "achievements" of the agency, his own personal credibility was queried. Rather than lend credibility to the office, the subject's discredited view of the office was extended to the man. The subject was very vehement in her outbursts which intermittently punctuated the programme.

"MAMSER has not done anything please, old man! . . . Hun! You are fooling yourselves. . . They don't have responsibilities, they don't have any functions, they are doing the job of the Ministry of Information. . . You can't be "increasing our awareness" by telling us lies. We aren't dead or blind! We see what is going on. You tell us not to do, yet we see the same thing being done"

. . .

The subject was so peeved at the programme, and only stopped short of calling the "old man" a liar. She saw him as an example of other old men in government, who had compromised on the truth for personal gain.

"What do you want him to say, that it's not good and he continues to receive his pay? He has an official car and official house.

. . .

That is why people do not watch television! They [the people] will say - 'Are they dunces?' If my mother watches television, it is because she wants to watch Obadare, [an evangelist] or she wants to listen to the news, because her children are not in Ibadan [with her]. She may also keep it on, till 10.00 p.m. whilst waiting to make a phone call."

The link between apathy to the television viewing and the credibility of programmes is interesting. In other words it suggests, that television because of those programmes, is "trying to make fools of the people". The charge is that people of questionable integrity have access to the screen, hence television has lost the attraction that people may have

had for it. This view of government was evident in all the locations, transcending differences in social positions, although some subjects were more vocal (location 2) or more articulate (location 10) than the others. The accusation here becomes clearer in the utterances that followed.

"Did you not hear what my young lady said when she was told that Babangida gave them money? . . . She knows it's a lie, . . . It's because people are complaining that MAMSER is not doing anything that they have now come on television. . . They behave as though those whom they are talking to are blockheads or dunces. They embellish their words as though . . . They will embellish trivialities and present them to the rural people as though - but it's not like that! They are not dense!"

Even based on her personal experience, the subject could find good reason to be contemptuous of the government, and public officials.

"You know the place we went to give a deep well, ['we' being the Lionesses, the occasion was one of the subject's activities the previous day] we were told that the DFRRI [another government agency like MAMSER] officials, will dig a well that is not so deep, [and] when the Commissioner is expected to commission the project, they will go, and fill the well with water. They will bring a water tanker to fill the well so that when the dignitary pumps for water, it will flow, but in three days the well is dry! They are a deceitful lot and someone will want to tell me rubbish" [my emphasis]

It was in this manner that the programme was received, till it ended. Although she became a bit more attentive when the focus of the interview shifted from government's plans for returning to civil rule, to other social issues like drug abuse, she did not find the programme agreeable for the reasons enumerated above. She merely waited for which of the statements was challengeable.

From the subject's comments, it was clear that the above response was not restricted to TV reception alone. There was a general rebuffing of

government activities for the same reasons. Television programming was thus not distinct from the larger social system in which it functioned. It was a part of a whole, which for this subject included the general attitude at work, and other such social problems. In this way, there was a certain elasticity, between TV and reality.

The programme was followed by a film. Subject was not interested in watching (any film). She was not prepared to spend three hours or even two, on a programme. She checked for what option was available to her. The only station that was clear was showing Sports. She thus settled for the film, to be left on in the background, as she did not watch. She was not waiting up for the husband on this occasion, because he had a social engagement after his rounds at work. Out of politeness, to the researcher, she still sat before the set, showing no interest in what was going on. She soon started to doze. Observation ended at this time - about 10.45 p.m.

Day 6

Observation did not commence until about midday because of the compulsory restriction of movement which goes along with the monthly Enviromental Sanitation exercise.

Subject (S1) had a friend (S2) visiting. The two women had comparable descriptions. S2 was also affluent, and respectable in society. She was also a high ranking, high school teacher in a federal establishment, with her own private enterprise on the side. Their children were of similar ages. They both lived in exclusive and remote areas. They both had links with people in high places, and so, in addition to their education, they were quite well aware of privileged information.

S1 reported that the reception had not been clear, earlier on in the day, when the son had wanted to watch the set. She herself had been too busy to watch, or even sit down, till her friend arrived. It was only because she was entertaining S2 that she was found sitting down.

S2 was aware of the purpose of the exercise, and without any prompting, she expressed her affinity for "Another Life". It took further probing for her to identify other programmes that she liked. The following is the statement of subject's reasons for liking the programme.

"It's a soap opera, showing us the ups and downs of real life; the way they handle the scripts[;] especially since the main character is a Christian

There were three factors which are identified in the above statement - the subject matter, the relevance of the story line, and the treatment. These were all factors which contributed to the subject's affinity for the programme. Of these, she seemed to have rated the treatment highly. It was this that she went into any great detail about. It was also this that she identified as the flaw in the local production. It was the first reason why the particular programme was not boring, and she could still enjoy watching re - runs of the serial, which had been introduced since 1985, 5 years afterwards.

". . .for one thing, compare the production techniques with that of our local productions, those based on our social relations, based on Nigerian situations, . . . if they show one family eating now, for the next five minutes, you will be gazing at that meal, whereas with them, they will show you, just to register to you that they are eating. . .it's mainly their thoughts that they want to follow, to listen to. And where a character has made a particular statement which will have an effect on the next episode, the music, everything will let you know that there's something ---- about this statement."

Besides this programme which was her favourite, the subject reported that she only watched the news - "to know what is going on". Unlike the earlier cited programme, the viewing of news was one that had to be qualified. According to her report, her choice of which newscast to watch was determined by convenience. The rationale for watching the news was more interesting, and held a part of the clue to this attitude.

S2: I try to watch the NTA, the one at 9, but if it's not convenient, I watch any other, to know what is going on around you. Otherwise, people will be discussing what is going on, and you will be looking [on] like a fool. More so, I am going for a promotion interview anytime from now on. If one is invited and does not know what to say -. Besides, if one is not current, you don't get what one wants in terms of promotion.

S1: It's part of education, you must know what is going on.

S2 & S1: . . .around you. Why should people be talking around you, and you are not able to contribute?

S1: It's even good, we teachers, we must be informed.

S2: Sometimes, you want to discuss some of the current issues with your students.

The above shows the influence of their professional considerations on the subjects' viewing habits. There was a sense of compulsion that motivated their interest in the news, as illustrated in the highlighted emphasis. This explains why S1 made such efforts to watch the news, even when it was clear that she was only struggling to endure the experience.

As reported, the experience of viewing the news was not usually a pleasurable one. It was quite a taxing exercise, yet the subject endured, so that she could be informed for the above mentioned reasons. There was emphasis on "not looking like a fool".

Both subjects did not hide the fact that viewing Nigerian produced news was taxing, but they both had an affinity for the CBN news. S2 again

identified the contrasts in the production techniques, the treatment. This buttresses the point made earlier about the impact of the production, (the packaging) on the message to be presented.

They both found Nigerian programmes so predictable, and thus so boring.

S2: . . . you can predict what will happen right from the beginning.

They could not make any distinctions for any of the different genres of programmes produced in Nigeria. There was no locally produced news that they found credible. "You can't trust the NTA" they said. S2 also cited personal experiences that had made her arrive at the same conclusion, just as S1. S1 felt vindicated, as her reasoning was supported by her friend's. This further buttressed the position which she had expressed during the viewing on the previous day. The observed negative attitude towards the government and the society was confirmed. This further suggests its strength and depth.

The discussion from which deduction was made had not been prompted by the researcher. After the initial questions on the preferences, the conversation had become spontaneous, taking on a natural course. The subjects discussed, whilst researcher merely looked on.

Their appraisal was interesting, and revealed the following; that

1. there was appreciation for production quality;
2. there was a demand for respect for intelligence; It is this that amounts to the quest for honest and balanced coverage as in the dramas which showed both the ups and downs of life.
3. As noted earlier, their interest in the news was strongly a matter

of compulsion. There was the added strong impression of the news not being credible. This illustrates how exposure to the programme (as expounded by ratings) cannot always be a good measure of the success of the programme.

Whilst they discussed, they ignored the functional set, which was before them. The disregard for what was on the set was compounded when S1's husband, H joined the group. The children, B, and S2's son did not pay any attention to the set, even though they had taken over one corner of the sitting room.

The programme that was on was in the Egun language, which they did not understand. It featured some Egun dance and masquerades. There was no apparent interest in the programme. In fact there was no reference to the set at all. There was no suggestion of the fact that they actually missed having access to programmes of their choice. They were more interested in socialising.

The Egun language programme was followed by a feature film. The observed pattern was maintained. Even after the parents dispersed, the boys, played a board game. They did not watch the TV at all, even when the film was on.

The trend continued till lunch time. Thereafter, the family received a guest who diverted all attention from the set. This was brother, who had been in the reported crisis area in the north. [Re. Day 2's report]. Before long there was an assembly of 2 other brothers, (H2 and H3) and a sister-in-law, (S3).

This gathering illustrated the alternative sources of information. (see another example in location 9) The eyewitness account which the brother gave proved to be a more credible and more interesting alternative to the network news. He brought reports of the crises, which the NTA network news had blacked out. In fact his report revealed that, even those accounts from state government owned TV stations, had played down the magnitude of the crisis. There was confidence in this 'reporter'. There was rapt attention as he presented his report, and there was also the opportunity of direct interaction. Questions were immediately answered and so the report was as comprehensive as the audience wanted.

After the re-union, the subject went out for a meeting. It was early evening. There had been no viewing by any member of this family. By this time, the film had given way to the transmission of the Sports programmes. There was live football match being played. Whilst the driver had lamented his inability to watch this because of the subject's outing, she had not been aware of the programme.

When S1 left, the couple H3 and S3 were left. They lamented the state of television programming in Nigeria. They occupied similar social position as S1 although they were younger and had less responsibilities. They had no children for example, although they also had several business concerns. They were well educated, and successful (affluent). They were of the opinion that the standard of television service had deteriorated since the introduction of commercialisation. In their view TV service was not detached from their views of the management of television broadcasting. They also extended the contempt which they had for the government of the day, to the TV service. For these educated ones as well, television was an extension of the government. [Re. group 2]

These was because it was a government parastatal. H3 ventured to suggest that complete privatisation, as opposed to commercialisation where in the government was still involved in the management of the organisation, was the required solution to television service. In doing this, he was pitching a camp in a suspended public debate about the desirable approach to TV management.

Their contribution shows the vulnerability of TV - unlike some other professions which are exclusive. Issues in TV are perceived as such that require no specialised expertise. These subjects were able to make direct links between the commercialisation efforts of the state government owned stations in particular; a high incidence of programmes showing "charms", (the metaphysical); and a drop in the amount of S3's viewing. S3 was reported as previously being an avid viewer of TV. She reported that her present viewing was more deliberate and much restricted. The enumerated preferences only covered those programmes which she enjoyed watching. These can only be those which she watches deliberately. The list may not cover the programmes which she could have watched by chance.

The programmes enumerated were all foreign productions. They were all dramas - the soap opera, Another Life; and two other American comedies; Cosby show, and Family Matters. The local productions were not mentioned at all, but she did recognise a pattern in the programmes, which had made her reject them. This implies that she must have had some measure of exposure to them, such as would have facilitated the forming of the impression.

S3: All their Yoruba programmes are not interesting. They charm each other; they show in the play, how a person is to be killed. It's all too boring, and if they don't do that, [it's] a priest; white witches, black witches soo,

. . .(laughter). In Tolu's house [that is H2], they don't watch TV in their home anymore. . . TV does not educate anymore. There are no serious programmes anymore. All they show these days does not go beyond someone who can sponsor a programme, a wealthy moslem. . ."

That the subject is aware of the patterns in the programmes suggests that she does get some amount of exposure to the programmes. The exposure is sufficient for her to form an impression even if it is not an accurate account of the programmes. For instance, the reference to the "priest; white witches and black witches", was to the "healer" otherwise known as Lord of witches, and wizards. She had thus lumped the dramas along with the "healing" programmes. This subject's concern for these sort of TV programmes was mainly because of the perceived negative influence.

S3: I don't even think they consider that there are children watching TV at all, because if they do consider such, they should re-assess those programmes showing the use of charms, before production. They should think that a young child does not know much yet, how can he discern, what is bad, from such."

Here again, the children are identified as the vulnerable audience segment. The concern is for this "others" and not self. She narrated the incident which led the other brother to discourage the viewing of TV in his home.

The son had asked the father for an explanation of an act which he had seen on TV. The boy had inquired about the significance of placing sacrifices at crossroads. The act had been featured on one of such Yoruba dramas that the boy had watched. The father was alarmed that TV had drawn the children's attention to an act, which though it happens around them, they had been shielded from. He thus decided to shield the children from exposure to such from the television. H2 like his sister,

had not removed the set, but he had introduced other influences into the home, which could take up the children's time, and keep their interest away from the set.

Changing Times

S3 also also had memories of how her viewing was monitored and censored as a child. She remembered that by 8 o' clock, the children were sent to bed. This pattern tallies with that described by S1. It is indicative of the values and living habits of their generation, and their social group. This differed from what obtains in some other social positions, especially with the younger generation.

Lifestyles had changed since the period that these subjects were children. 8 o'clock, which was their bedtime, was almost standard dinner time in the various locations that were studied. Children, even toddlers were seldom sent to bed. They were left to their own devices. There were no full time mothers, in the study, and on several occasions, they fell asleep before their children.

The use of time by the children had also changed. Going by the reports, and even observations, [Re: locations 2, 3, & 11], the children's free time, did not coincide with that which these subjects had in their time. Attempts by programmers to operate based on these assumptions will therefore prove to be inadequate. Another issue which the subject raised is the inability of television programmes to convey enthusiasm.

S3: Most people seen on telly, all the actors and actresses behave as though they lack interest. Maybe it's because of the how the stations are run, or because it's not lucrative, but they act as though they lack interest. . . on screen. . . I don't really know if they don't have interest anymore, some have left anyway, some [have joined] magazines and such. They have left.

The comments of this subject indicates one fact, - that the viewers are affected by the countenance of the on-air talents. In this instance as in others, the viewers, are aware of the internal politics of the broadcasting organisations. Such knowledge and concerns may contribute to the confidence of the viewers in offering suggestions for solving the problems of the industry.

In the course of conversation, S3 identified another programme which she had liked. It was a news programme; the network newscast on Sunday - Newsline. She noted that there had since been changes in the programme, especially as the original presenters had been replaced. This event was widely publicised by the tabloids, and the subject cited one of these as her source of information on the developments within the programme. Her account highlighted the qualities which she appreciated in the particular style as opposed to that of the daily newscasts.

"I like the way they start, we are all used to having news read, you are listening but after a while, your mind is no longer there. There you are no longer serious. but then there is another programme, it's like news, but like in a lighter mood. It's like entertainment. The two of them will be cracking jokes, laughing between themselves. So you will find that though the news is there, you are just laughing, you feel more relaxed. . . Then it's the unusual things, things that you don't think about, that they show. Places for example that you don't know exists is what they show. Things like that you don't expect, so actually, I did look forward to it. That is, 'what is going to be said on Newsline today?'. . . People liked that and would sit down to watch something other than "Babangida travelled"; "Iyangida travelled"

Her husband even went further to describe the perceived trite pattern in the news. [See conclusion for the details]. For him as well, the news had become so predictable that he had lost interest in it.

There was no more viewing for the day. On arrival from her meeting, S1 had another social engagement to attend.

Day 7

S1 had to cancel another social engagement for the purpose of the exercise. She was to have travelled for a social function, but she sent her apologies instead since it was the last day of the exercise. This should be noted, because ordinarily, she would not have been available for any viewing. The exception, impresses upon the subject's real viewing / time use pattern. Even with the exception, observation only began after noon. Subject had attended the church service, and this had taken up the morning. After the service, subject reports that she stopped at the market briefly. Then, she had been occupied with over seeing the preparation for lunch. She had been more involved than usual, because it was a Sunday, and she wanted to relieve those who were normally responsible for the cooking.

Thereafter, she retired to her room to rest. Her husband had gone off for the engagement at this time. Were it not for the exercise, she would have gone with him. (at about 2 p.m.)

When he was leaving, she came out to see him off. She did not return to the room. Rather, she stayed in the sitting room, and watched the TV. The programme in view was a Christian evangelical programme. The programme was watched in silence. Although she watched the programme dutifully, subject was not impressed by it.

R: Do you watch this programme normally?

S1: No, I don't believe him.

R: Why?

S1: I guess it's not for people like me. If it were this lady from C.A.C., I listen, in fact I share fellowship. . . I don't know, I don't know, I might be wrong, but I just know that he appears deceptive to me.

. . .

The subject was not sure what it was about the particular preacher. It was not the dressing, it had to do with the style of preaching; that he was noisy, and had the tendency to repeat himself. Even as she groped for reasons why, her reservations could not really be pinned to any particular thing. Yet she had her reservations although she endured the programme.

Apparently, she had only been sitting before the set, because she did not want to sleep, to avoid having problems sleeping at night! Note the subject's priorities. She was to have gone out, but in the event that she did not go, the preferable option was to sleep. It was only the fear of not being able to sleep early at night that kept her before the set.

Though she was not vehement as she was with some other programmes, subject was unimpressed by the programme, and voiced her objection to certain statements which she found incredulous. In her comments, she acknowledged that her impression, once formed, could evoke a prejudicial response to subsequent exposure of such messages, even when changes were apparent.

(Responding to suggestion that she may change attitude to the preacher if he changed his style.)

S1: . . . provided I had not seen this one, because I will feel that someone like me had let him know that he had been detected - shown up to the world as a fake. I'll just think, his changing of style, is another gimmick."

There was an interlude of music following the religious programme, and

this caught the subject's attention. The format of the particular video was different from others. The entertainer had made his name on the radio. The clip was a dramatised version of his radio performance. It was therefore not strictly music and dancing.

The subject was not familiar with the format as yet. She was thus curious to know what it was. She soon recognised the artiste, from his utterances. She enjoyed the clip, but it did not last for very long. It gave way to the continuity announcer who introduced the next programme. This was a local comedy.

The subject ridiculed the characters' appearance, and their language. Both were bastardizations of the English way.

"Osibitu', 'osibitu'. . . They will take me for treatment in the 'shiata'. . . These ones are layabouts!"

(Osibitu - Hospital; shiata - Theatre)

Although it was a comedy, subject still compared what she saw with what was "possible". The relatives of a sick man had taken their charms and their native doctor with them to the hospital where the patient was on admission. They had even taken a live cockerel, palm oil and other such components of their sacrifice, to conjure the patient back to health. The subject had not been amused by this. She felt it was not possible in reality, and was quite indignant as she watched. She participated in the programme, and predicted realistic ways of resolving the situation. She felt the patients would be thrown out of the hospital if they could not abide by the regulations. Her prediction was right.

Rather than see the programme as showing the efficacy of traditional healing methods, the subject saw it as showing the incompatibility of both. She also saw the ridiculous.

The programme was more aggravating than it was relaxing, but she continued watching any way; following the story line. She was appalled by the "gross misinformation" from the "doctor". It did not matter that it was just a drama, even a comedy at that.

Viewing was suspended at the arrival of a visitor. She thus did not watch the programme to the end. But the programme was a repeat, B had seen it before, and was able to fill the mother in, on the outcome of the story.

Subject's refusal to attend the programme at the arrival of the visitor was more, a matter of choice. Whilst the same visitor was being attended to, she suspended everything else, even her conversation with the guest, so that she could attend to the musical interlude that followed the programme. It was a continuation of the earlier featured one, that had been discontinued abruptly.

In the viewing of this as well, she solicited the help of her son to enable her understand what was being said. This was an acknowledgement of the son's superior competence at reception, in this case. It also illustrates the pattern of use, if competence is a result of use (exposure).

B was indeed more competent in hearing what the man was saying, and he acted as an "interpreter" for his mother. (The programme was in Yoruba

language, which the subject speaks). The problem was that her ears were not accustomed to the musical presentation on television.

The other striking feature in the above, is that B, a 9-year-old was exposed to, and able to narrate the "adult" issues that the entertainer was singing about.

B: He says the man is not giving his wife money for food The other issues which were focused included promiscuity and drunkenness. There was a focus on the negative outcomes of such practices. The clip, thus had a didactic value.

S1 did not object to B's exposure to this. In fact the clip was thoroughly enjoyed. It set the mood for that which succeeded it. The subject was not critical of it, and she had been on a previous occasion. She seemed to have enjoyed it on this occasion.

The subject involved her son in the viewing experience. The musical interludes were a forum for conversation between the mother and the son. It also proved to be an avenue of transmitting the mother's values to the son.

As they viewed together, she made remarks about her assessment of the lyrics, the dancing, and such, to the boy's hearing. There was also the fact that the subject did not view with any degree of concentration. Intermittently, she made comments which showed that she had been thinking of other matters. This pattern contrasts sharply with that which she exhibited when viewing a religious programme that she approved of.

In that instance, she asked the son to bring her bible, and she also covered her head as a mark of reverence. She thus set, by example, the

pattern of what is approved. She had, with, and without words, censored the son's viewing.

There was a stream of Christian programmes at about this time. Subject did not respond in the same way described above to all of them. The attraction to the programme was thus not just the theme. She was critical of the way the information was presented. For example, she objected to the - "noise"; "shouting"; display of miracles; and the "impersonation of God"

"I'm not saying there is no miracle, but you are not the one who is doing it. How can you tell me 'Can you believe I can do it?' It's not left to us at all. Once a person starts saying such I've left. You are not the one to be believed."

With that outburst she did in fact leave the set. She had been turned off, even before the message for the day had been shared.

In spite of her response she recognised a positive contribution that the programmes could have in society. Again she tied her viewing into the prevalent situation in the society. On this occasion, she identified a situation that was not but should be.

"If Nigerians could believe the word of God, as abundantly available as it is, it would have been good. If they believe God, there'll be no armed robbery; there'll be no embezzlement, frauds and such."

With that she launched into an assessment of known fraudulent practices, and highlighting the need for those in responsible places, like herself, to be extra cautious so that they are not implicated in ignorance.

The subject did watch the programme which she had earlier left. Her attention to the programme had been intermittent. It was from the

message in the programme that she had taken the cue for her above noted comment. The programme did set the subject thinking.

Although the son had not bothered with the programme, and had been restless whilst it was being shown, he became very alert as the commercial break began. The mother had done the direct opposite, but the son's disposition had affected the mother's attention. He was a source of distraction during the programme, but he drew her into the adverts, which she had not cared about. He called her attention to the desirable things that he saw and desired.

The response to the early evening news which followed was almost reflexive. She was automatically attentive to the newscast, but had been repulsed by the very first highlight.

TV: Women have again been reminded that men are the head of the family. . . .

S1: [sarcasm] Congratulations!

In spite of that, her curiosity had been aroused any way. She kept on viewing, and the more details she had, the more objections she had. At the end of the news, subject expressed fear for the trend noticeable in the country. This had been manifest in the news item.

The excerpt which prompted the response was a sermon from a wedding, the subject of the news report. It was the wedding of the governor's sister-in-law. The story had taken up 4 minutes 30 seconds, whilst the other two stories on the newscast were 1 minute 30 seconds and 1 minute respectively. The subject's fear stemmed from what she considered an undue regard for wealth and social position. She cited other examples of

such in society.

Rather than respond to the explicit statements within the news item, she was responding to the values expressed by the editorial judgement. In all, she still seemed to have enjoyed watching the array of celebrities who were present at the ceremony.

There was not much viewing for the rest of the day. Subject showed the same pattern as has already been reported, watching only those segments of the programme that momentarily caught her attention. Throughout the evening, the only two programmes which subject showed interest in were the early evening news on LTV; and a drama on NTA which had been found for her. Subject had not bothered to switch the channels round. It was as though she was still used to not having a choice. Besides, she was really busy. Her attention was divided. She had to keep going and coming from the sitting room. Her viewing was thus chequered. It was during one of her absences from the room that the drama programme was found for her.

The programme had been sought because subject had expressed her affinity for drama programmes, but had not really consciously sought any.

The viewing of the drama programme begun midway through the episode. The subject demonstrated remarkable ease in her ability to follow the plot, and interpret the production elements. It was clear that she had professional knowledge of drama production as she had mentioned earlier. But again the viewing had to give way to another focus.

The arrival of H, and the exchange of their experiences during the day

took priority over the viewing of the drama. The programme, as well as the sponsor's messages, thus went unwatched.

The other programme which could have interested the subject was the Newline. The station in view when this came on was a state government owned station, LTV. This was one of the stations that had refrained from carrying Newline. There was thus no chance for the subject to see the programme of her choice. The option which the station put on, was a disappointment. Though it was a Christian programme, it was not acceptable, but subject did not attempt to find an NTA channel that would show Newline.

After attending the coverage of the "proper" news bulletin, the subject did not pay any conscious attention to the set any more. Thus ended the observation of viewing in this location.

Discussion

There was no separate discussion with this subject in the light of the spontaneous conversations that were recorded during the viewing. Some of the comment will merely be clarified here.

Exposure Pattern

The observed chequered viewing pattern as described was confirmed. Subject explained why this had to be so. It was an expression of her priorities, an indication of her responsibilities.

"I'm not very current with what comes on this days, so I just watch what comes my way. I have gotten busier. Sometimes I come home after finishing my work in the kitchen, I'd have brought some work home [from the office]. Then besides, I have to sit at home with my children to go over their work with them. So, television was, sort of, cut off at that time, even for them. It was deliberate on my part. I won't let them watch television. . . It's not really that I don't want them

to watch television [but] when we go for lessons, we don't leave our lessons till 6.30. Maybe it's on the way back at 6.00, that we'll remember that we need to buy oranges; we want to buy leaves; or plantain. . . So we arrive about 7.00 [p.m.] Then we have a rushed meal . . . they have to prepare their uniforms for the next day, you see we don't have a maid. . . I also have to get a few things sorted, soak their clothes, maybe. Meanwhile, they will be eating. I may give them half an hour to themselves before we come round to sit at our [work] table. While they tackle the assignment I give them, I come and listen to the news. . . so I have not been current"

The above was prompted by the subject's inability to readily identify a favourite programme or character from the screen. It however explains how subject's viewing pattern evolved.

The above is indicative of the the subject's priorities, as well as the inadequacies of the domestic arrangement. That there is no maid, and that certain items had to be bought as there was need for them, had contributed to the demands on the subject's possible leisure time. These were mainly perishable commodities which were difficult to stock in large quantities. (Compare with the situation of subjects in location 1; there are similarities in spite of the differences in the social positions) On the whole, it still amounted to the impact of the domestic arrangement.

From discussions, it became apparent that subject had viewed TV at home, more than was usual for her, during the observation period. This need not be atypical of her viewing pattern because she sometimes viewed television, in some of the places that she visited, when she was outside the home. It is likely that such viewing would have been as that observed, though there may have been variations depending on the frame work in which she viewed.

Preference Pattern

The subject expressed an affinity for drama, irrespective of the story line or the quality of production. This indiscriminate attitude was silent on the productions in the Yoruba language.

"Whatever comes, I'll watch it, as long as it's drama. . . ."

A proviso to this preference was however in the availability of time, the exposure pattern mentioned above. Viewing for instance was dependent on what her schedule with her children was. The observation however showed that there was more than the consideration of the children that could draw the subject's attention away from even the drama programmes that she "loved".

The news was another category of programmes that the subject said she liked to watch. This was consistent with the observation. In fact it was the only category of programme that the subject made conscious attempts to watch. Even though the viewings were often incomplete, at least there was a conscious effort to engage in them. The subject often had "no time" for the other programmes. She was either not at home, or she was otherwise engaged. Yet she made time to watch the news.

Expectations

This pattern contradicts her expressed views of the purpose which the medium should serve. For her, the TV should primarily be a medium of entertainment, and then a medium of information. The failure of the programmes to meet the expectation which she perceives as their intended goal, could also account for her frustrations with the service. This had been expressed in her apathy towards the medium.

"It's supposed to relax you principally, because this country

does not have an all round the clock television [service] programme.

The thing does not start until about 4.00 or 5.00, so you have the impression that they want it to relax you after a hard day's job. And for somebody like me, who works all round the day, I do my official job, I do my bit on the side, I want to come back and [pause] I want to listen. In between I'll boil my meat. In between I'll cook my soup. In between I may rush to get my clothes washed. . . Yes, it should also inform, but [it should] principally be for entertainment."

The structure of the subject's day had influenced her expectation of what functions she expects the medium to perform. In other words, her other engagements have contributed to how she expects to use the medium. If the programmes are principally for entertainment, then it can be implied, that they can easily fit into her viewing schedule as observed.

This deduction is significant in light of social norms regarding relaxation. As she pointed out, there is not much room, for relaxation in the society. This is rooted in the culture which snubs leisure.

Leisure is largely perceived as a waste of time. The identified means of relaxation are usually tied into other more significant activities - ceremonies of various sorts. Even traditional leisure activities, are considered to be waste of time, as there are always more profitable activities demanding attention. This view has been more clearly extended to television in this location than any other, although it is implied or stated in others as well, (particularly the Kola traders in, location 2).

It is not surprising then that the subject does not make a conscious effort to select what she would view. It is the content of the programme that determines if the exposure would be sustained. For example, the

religious programme which she rejected, was not on account of what type of programme it was, but because of the doubts about the credibility. The same is true of her intolerance of the alternative healing programmes.

S1: You see, there is nothing that is not good. . . When they have their NIFEST (Nigerian Festival of Television Programmes), you'll discover that everybody is good.

R: How do you determine what you watch?

S1: It's whatever I stumble on.

This further illustrates and explain, why she lack the motivation to search round stations to assess available alternatives. Further compounding the situation is the absence of printed TV guide that could have facilitated pre-viewing planning. There was also the problem with her set.

Perceived Images

Her references to TV were often reminiscences of the previous years TV service. These were the years when she had less responsibilities than those held at present (as she had earlier on described). This suggests that there is a correlation between pattern of TV use, and the responsibilities of the viewer. The responsibilities in this case appear to have been acquired with age. By deduction therefore, such responsibilities, which had a bearing on the exposure pattern, may be expected to affect the perceived images of what is portrayed on the screen. The relationship that is suggested here requires further investigation, as it is a process in itself, not to be seen as a linear equation.

In spite of her pattern of exposure, the subject had definite views

about what is portrayed on TV. These have been highlighted in the reports of the daily viewings. The subject was very contemptuous of the society, and was easily prompted by the programmes to express this. The observed elasticity between reality, and TV portrayals was clarified. She was asked if she felt TV portrayed reality.

"I can't say totally 'Yes' or 'No'. . . This 'Stop the Abuse of the Naira' [campaign] is absolutely true, but when someone like ----- [Ogun state MAMSER boss name withheld] comes to the screen to tell us - [lies], or when you say because of an advert, one soap is the best and no other --- [is like it], that is not true."

Even in this statement, the subject's contemptuous view of the society is consistent. The only programme conceded to be "absolutely" accurate is that which had exposed the condemnable behaviour in society. The government official and advertisements were cited as examples of the "lies" on television. She had identified many more in the course of the viewing. For her, TV was thus not credible.

"When you tell us something that's not true, and you want us to believe that, there will be no credibility. . . " [sic]

R: So how do you distinguish what is credible and what is not?

"From what we hear, and what we see ourselves; since we live in the society, and we are part of that society, we know what is true and what is false"

The above is an illustration of the fact that the disseminated message is not equivalent to that which is received. Though the subject identifies the intended message, she refuses to accept it, because her experience has given her information, which runs counter to that which she was being asked to believe. She thus makes a different message from that which she was offered.

The danger of this is highlighted in the following comment about the

information of such (factual) programmes.

" . . . it brings us close to government, at least we hear what they are doing."

In other words, the subject uses the television to know the declared agenda, even if such were to be disputed. There was still use for the discredited information. It served a purpose albeit, one that was different from that for which it was intended.

In conclusion, the subject still felt TV was relevant in society. She recognised the diminishing relevance of the medium in her own situation, because of the described personal schedule, but emphasised the benefits of the medium to the less privileged. This understanding differs from the assumptions held by the programmers. It also differs from the understanding of the "less privileged". [Re. comments in Locations 1, and 2]

"It's part of what should be in a home, more so in a society that is illiterate as ours. They will read the news in Yoruba, some person who can't read newspapers, who doesn't know Babangida, unless he's shown, he hears that Babangida has gone to Akwa Ibom. He asks 'Where is Akwa Ibom?' He's told it's Calabar [the popular town in the new state]. He's aware. . . Even for those who can read, papers have become so expensive, they [papers] have been priced out of people's pockets. Like my driver, he said it's now that papers cost N2 that he stopped buying . . . but he listens to the news in his home. He has since acquired a TV for his home." [sic]

. . .
"When I have the time, it relaxes me . . . it keeps me company especially when the children have gone to sleep, and I don't want to sleep yet, I just glue myself to the set, whereas, if I were reading my book, I would sleep."

. . .

The "snobbery" that was mentioned earlier, can also be seen here. For the subject, the television was useful; but only when there was nothing else to do. This is in contrast to the potential service that it could be to those other people, who had no other alternatives - access to

newspapers or privileged information.

This comment, and her general attitude to the use of television is striking, and this is because she was selected to illustrate the social position, which constitutes the primary target of the television programmers. She did not have the time for television. She had alternatives. Going by her utterances, she could do well without it. If this is the case, it challenges the programmers to re-think their orientation, and their operations.

LOCATION 9 - A LOCAL MISSION HOUSE

Subject (S1) is well educated, with a college degree, and she is also widely travelled . She is a hospital administrator, and is aged about 40+. The husband (H), is the principal of a Theological Institute. The couple have two young children, aged 6, and 8 years. The younger (B), is a boy, while the 8-year-old, (G) is a girl. They were both in primary school.

The family lived on the premises of the residential college. As a result, there was usually a number of staff, and students visiting their home at different times, for different reasons. The home is typical of that of a missionary, or a parsonage.

The home was comfortably furnished. The sitting/dinning was adjacent to the kitchen. The kitchen was however completely detached from the main building, connected by a short corridor, as is typical of older designs. . This meant a person in the kitchen, was out of earshot of whatever was going on in the sitting room.

On the other side of the sitting /dinning area, was the living quarters. This again was completely cut off from the sitting area. The only room which opened directly into the sitting room, and was close enough to the sitting room was the study /office. Even this was out of earshot, especially when the air - conditioner was in use there. The walls in this structure were remarkably thick. These structural details have been noted because they had been seen to affect the viewing in some other some locations. The location is a multi-set home. There are two colour sets in the home, as well as a video player. One of the sets was in the sitting room, and the other set, and the video player were in the

parents' bedroom. This illustrates the level of media presence, and of the alternative technology.

There were 4 stations received in this home. In tuning the aerial, a decision had to be made to have the 3 NTA channels in Lagos, or to have OGTV and loose Channel 5. The family opted for NTA 2 channel 5. Thus, they received, NTA channels 5, 7, and 10. In addition, they also received LTV, another Lagos state based station. This meant that they did not have any of the stations originating from the Ogun state, in which they lived.

Day 1

The sitting room was deserted when the researcher arrived. The children were out of the home at the time. Subject was busy indoors. The husband had gone out of the college premises to fetch water. The family converged at about 7.00 p.m. The children had their supper. They sat at the dinning table, which was within viewing range. They sat in a way that both of them could see what was on the television that they had switched on.

The parents did not get a chance to sit down, as H had official matters to attend to. S1, had been in the kitchen, until she had to attend to some neighbours who came visiting. This neighbour had accompanied her husband, whom H was attending to in the study. The women remained in the sitting room, and S1 entertained the "guest". The TV had been switched on by the children at this time. The women were thus sitting before a functional set.

When the TV was switched on, it was tuned to NTA, channel 10. The early

evening news was on at the time. B was not interested in this, neither was G, there was no argument as B selected LTV, to watch a comedy in pidgin English - Comedy Junction. The programme was identified by the main actor in it (Uncle Joe), and not the title.

B's viewing especially after they had finished the meal, was unhindered. This was not so with G who ran errands. For instance it was G, who had to assemble the chickens in their pen.

Whilst they were having their meal, the children viewed over their mother's shoulders, and they turned up the volume, to "drown" the conversation between the mother and the guest. This was because being at table, they were further away from the set, than the adults, who were in the sitting room, right before the set, but taking no interest in it. The children had the remote control.

In spite of their location, the adults did not show the same kind of interest that the children showed. They had other priorities. They did not even glance at the set, as the programme, and various adverts were shown. They were engrossed in the arrangements for organising some association (of ministers' wives), and so on. They spoke in hushed tones while the TV blared in front of them.

This trend continued until the programme Tolly baby show came on. It was this programme which attracted the attention of the women. The attraction, there was the presenter - she had become familiar because of the role she had played in a discontinued drama. Apparently, she had not been seen for some time, and sighting her, evoked some nostalgia in the subjects. She was referred to by her stage name. The women marvelled at

how young she still looked. The character had also been subject's contemporary in school. This was an added explanation for the fascination.

Although the programme had attracted their interest, the subjects did not watch the programme consciously. Their interest had not been sustained. The women only noted specific points, and continued their conversation. There was no direct comment about the performance either.

This changed when H came out into the living room. He commented on the presentation. He was impressed by how natural the presenter was. He compared her with another presenter, whose accent he ridiculed, because he recognised it as being false.

H: You see, the person presenting this programme is better than my good friend, who [mimics the falsetto, and childlike accent] I mean, this is Ibidun Allison, she's so natural. [describing the other presenter] The person who used to present the 7UP children's show on Sundays. . . She used to read the news. She started reading the news, and she used to make me sick, because she looked like eh -

S1: In fact she looked like a doll.

H: She's a grand pretence I mean when it comes to it,

S1: Yees!

. . .

Unlike the women, H, had identified the presenter by her real name. He had also been more concerned with her performance than her looks. Another interesting point in his observation, was the response to the presenter, and how this affected his disposition while receiving the programme.

After the above analysis, the interest in the programme grew. It began as an attempt to confirm the assessment. Thereafter, the various

elements in the programme became more engaging, like the parade, and the drama sketch. At this point, the programme came into the centre of the group's discussions. Though they digressed, they still came back to the programme.

S1: "Aboseldehyde", what a name?

Guest: It must be an Anglicised name, you know our people and the funny mentality.

S1: But it's an awkward name to pronounce.

H: It reminds me of this word; when I first got to America.
P.O.P.E.Y.E.

S1: That's the first prize . . .

Guest: Oh, they usually give them a good deal, N100, towels all the products. . . .

S1: Isn't this baby cute! She resembles the mother. The mother had taken good care of her, even better care than she has taken of herself. . . .

H: I prefer this type of programme to network news. I am sick of the 9 o' clock news. . . .

S1: What can N100 buy?

Guest: But the products themselves are worth N100. . . .

Guest: The little girl's mother is simple.

S1: Yes she is. The little boy too is natural. . . .

The above is an example of the comments which the programme evoked. Each of the above led to digressions, further expounding the the varying lines of attention that each viewer had taken from the programme.

As soon as the programme ended, the guest went home, not even waiting for the closing credits. (Her husband had left earlier, at the time H joined in the viewing.)

At the end of the programme, the family also mentally switched off the set, although it was still on. The parents were engaged with domestic responsibilities. It was G who debated what should be watched. There was "nothing" to watch, because, the NTA network was showing Newsweek, a news programme, and the other receivable station LTV, was showing it's World news. Newsweek was selected, but it was not watched. It was only left as ambience, whilst S1 and G traced the family history. This was interrupted by the arrival of another guest.

The guest was another neighbour who had come to narrate her plight. She attracted the attention of the family at this time. Even after she had left, the subjects were left to appraise the problem. In addition, they discussed the other events of the day. These were such important matters that they turned down the volume of the TV. The TV then was a distraction. This was the trend that led up to the network news.

Besides the fact that the issues they were discussing were important, H had earlier expressed his negative attitude to the network news. It was not surprising that in comparison, the news was of less priority. It was only attended grudgingly. The following was H's comments as he turned his focus on the news.

H: The reason why I don't like network news, you know why?
You will see it now.

You will see the faces of the president, maybe that will take 3 to 5 minutes. May be the Vice president, as God will have it, he has gone to Kano now. And then they will talk about Mariam Babangida [the president's wife]. Then every other thing is seminar - this one was making a speech; "and during a launching"; a dinner this thing for a visiting this kind; [sic] So in all, the news, the really newsy items are out.

S1 was in complete agreement with the above comment. For them, the news as it was presented, was not "really newsy". For these subjects, the real news would be such stories that would make them more knowledgeable about their environment, especially knowing how vast Nigeria is.

The comment explained the attitude which underlined the observed pattern within the news. It illustrates the attitudinal barriers that the news was up against.

Subjects paused to hear the headlines of the news. Right enough, the lead item was about the president. The reaction was one of - "I told you so"

H: That's the first person you'll always see.!

The subject was very correct in his description of the pattern. The item which followed that of the President was one featuring the Vice President and so on.

Despite their objections, the couple still watched the news. H increased the volume as soon as the main news was being read. The story was about the decoration of some members of a social club in Lagos, at which the president was present. The details of the story buttressed his observations about the news.

H: I don't see the relevance of the Island Club to the society.

The subject felt that even though the particular club was for the cream of the society, the event was still a private function, and therefore he failed to see the relevance of the report that had been featured as the

lead story for the day.

At this time, S1 got the children ready for bed, and thereafter, she served the dinner. She thus abandoned the viewing. H who was sitting before the TV at this time, was no longer attentive to the reports. Instead, he engaged the researcher in a conversation, and he again reduced the volume coming from the set.

In the course of the conversation, H identified the alternative avenues of information which he used. The BBC external service was identified as the source of reliable information about events in Nigeria. Other sources which the subjects relied on were personal contacts - eye witnesses. Subject happened to have one of such reports. He had personal accounts of the religious riots which had occurred in Bauchi. This story had been blacked out of the national network news, in spite of the magnitude of the crisis. [Re. Report on Location 8] He was expecting to get a video coverage of the incidents. He was so convinced of the "irrelevance" of what was paraded as the news, especially in the light of those events that are ignored. The result of this is what he described.

"The Bauchi games were disrupted as a result of that [crisis]. Nobody says anything. They only showed us yesterday the closing ceremony of the thing [games]. The thing was so badly disrupted. If they could bring pictures from Bauchi, of the games, they could as well bring us pictures of what happened. So, they make us feel apathetic to watching television because 30 minutes of BBC news focus on Africa, will give me more than I can ever get on the television on the local network. What I get is a look at this man reading 130% or 200% profit - It's meaningless to me. "

The item referred to in the last sentence was the reports of companies' annual general meetings. This comment illustrates the real meaning of the responses that "nothing really" is what is seen on television news.

The use of vague words like "nothing", "everybody", "somebody", and in this case "meaningless", which were prominent in the initial assessments of the news, by the various subjects can be seen as expressions of the viewers scale of priority - the value of what they perceived.

The news was completely ignored, as H further chose to describe his viewing attitudes.

TV preachers did not appeal to him, because he saw them as being "manipulative". The personal paid announcements in his opinion were full of obituaries, ". . . They never announce weddings". In all, comedies were the only programmes which the subject found appealing. There was a fascinating reason for this.

"There's not enough time devoted to laughing in my life, and I wonder, need life be so serious?"

For a similar reason subject expressed his interest in the dramas. His wife, S1 had been a major influence in his cultivation of this interest. It was a keen interest which she had, but which they now share.

Although he was not viewing it consciously, H, was mindful of what was coming from the television. After the news, there was a "Metaphysician's" programme. He explained why such a programme would not interest him.

H: I don't watch programmes like this. You see programmes such as this, I don't know if it's this particular one, but there is one that is paid, paid programme; where they say, I guess they claim they have powers, they have charms, and so on. I find it difficult to want to accept the validity of such programmes in that they paid for them so, they can have their own airtime. Otherwise, the value is not that good because their claims are exclusive to them, they want people to come to them, and I think it's a big lie. . . Why must you take [buy] a programme? It's

like a doctor says you can only come to me. But it's the society's problem too. A person feels "I alone can do it all".

In this situation it is the credibility of the programmes that is being challenged. His basic reason for this is not the impossibility of the claim, but the claimants assertion of exclusivity. This sort of "exaggeration" coupled with the fact that the coverage was not earned but bought, were reasons for his distrusting the programme. It was thus ignored as the couple sat down to their meal.

The silence which characterised meal times meant that the rejected programme became an insistent intruder in the home. The TV had been left on, so though the programme was rejected, its presence was still felt.

After the meal (the time was about 10.00 p.m.) the family returned to the sitting room. Before long, a conversation had evolved from a remark that was made in the programme. This was a comment about resigning to fate, God's will. The subjects had thus become participants in a programme which they had earlier on rejected.

At the end of the debate, their attitude to the programme was not one of definite rejection as earlier on. They had become more tolerant.

S1: I like to listen to them, but I can't share their theology.

H: . . . You will find it has some ring of truth in it, but it's so hollow. And the problem with Christians is that they tend to subscribe to some of these things. It comes from living with different people.

The inattentive viewing continued especially as the couple's guest, (S3) had not retired to her quarters. They were thus opportunely to see the

promotion of the programme schedule. They were attentive to this, unlike the government programme which preceded it. S1 noted the time for one of her favourite drama programmes - The Third Eye. This was the only programme which she showed any interest in, although there were other dramas.

The explanation which she gave for this was that it was the only programme which was scheduled at a convenient time. The programme was scheduled for 10.00 p.m. on Saturday. She explained that earlier time slots (8.00 -10.00 p.m.) were not suitable for several reasons, which had even been observed earlier on. There was the domestic schedule, as well as the flow of guests. These proved to be distractions, As a result she had resorted to ignoring the programmes which came on at the time, rather than be disappointed by her inability to concentrate on them.

S1 made a note to herself, to watch the programme on the Saturday.

Observation ended at about 11.00 p.m. and subjects were still alert. It is not certain if viewing continued in the living room, or in the bedroom, when the subjects retired.

Day 2

The house was empty till about 7.00 p.m.

S1 and H, along with other neighbours were busy all evening looking after one of the neighbours who was about to deliver. The neighbours husband was away from home on an official assignment, so it had become H's responsibility to take the woman to the hospital. S1 on her part, was responsible for organising the other women, to help with the care of

the woman at the hospital, and also that of the children who were to be left at home.

Having done all these, S1 returned home at about 7.00 p.m., and went straight to the kitchen to prepare the family's supper. The children were free to watch the television. Their choice was not supervised. But they did not really watch the programme that was on. They were too excited as a result of the expected baby.

The family was able to settle to their supper at about 8.30 p.m. The comedy, New Masquerade was on at this time, but it was not watched at all. The family was seated at the table, and their conversation had an entirely different focus.

The sitting arrangement at the table was interesting. It was only S1 who sat with her back to the set. The children sat at opposite ends of the table, so that they could be in view of the television. Their father, (H) sat facing the set, and the entrance to the house. Because S1 preferred to sit facing her husband, she sat, backing the set.

This was the same arrangement which was maintained throughout the observation period. It was acknowledged to be the regular sitting arrangement in the home. Although nobody was interested in the television on this particular night, the sitting arrangement had implications on S1's viewing on other days.

The table was cleared at about 8.55 p.m. just about the time the programme ended. This confirmed subject's description of her daily schedule, and her TV consumption pattern. However although the subject

had help with the washing up on this evening, she did not spend the free time watching television. There were other chores that she engaged in. At a point she went indoors with H. They had some matters to discuss. They both missed the commercial break that preceded the news.

When they emerged, they settled down in front of the set. They were just in time for the network news. In fact it seemed that they had come to watch the news. But this was not so. They continued their conversation, and were soon caught up with the arrangements for the new mother and other pastoral concerns. When they ceased their focus on these, H engaged the researcher in a conversation on the teaching and use of the Yoruba language for the news. As with S's father in location 10, he was critical of the news translations. The criticisms revolved around the inequivalence of the news translations - use of hyperboles, there was also the problems of verbosity and excessive use of flowery statements which they found boring. Besides these affected the accuracy of the translations.

The observations imply that there should be news gathering and production in Yoruba, rather than relying on translations. What is more, is that it raises the need for a journalistic training for the translators. It called for the general development of the journalism practice in the vernacular.

With all of these, the subjects had ignored the first two segments of the news. The news item about an innovation in the automobile engineering field, discovered by an obscure citizen was what kindled H's interest in the news. Thereafter, there was the 7UP advert. It was the follow up to the "What's the difference?" advert which had been running

for a couple of weeks. The new campaign was still featuring Fido Fedo, and it was answering the question posed in an earlier campaign. 7UP was the difference. H noted that he was now aware of what the difference is.

In the meantime, S1 was busy with the children's home work. The slowness of the daughter in answering some questions was a source of aggravation.

The other news item which attracted H's attention was a foreign news story. It was about the natural disasters in Bangladesh and a province in the Soviet Union. In one case it was a cyclone, and it was an earthquake in another. H had heard of the stories on the radio, and was aware of the details. As a result he was interested in the story, particularly the pictures.

He felt they were stories, to which his family should be attentive, so he called their attention to the stories. He ran a brief commentary to the pictures, giving the background to the problem. He had merely taken the visuals, and had substituted the news report with his own commentary. The situation had earlier been described as "very sad".

The subject's analysis of the problem dominated the remainder of the news. H compared the situation in Bangladesh with a hypothetical replica of the situation in Nigeria. He contrasted the perceived values of the people in the real situation, which resulted in the survival of 3 million people, with those values which he recognised in the Nigerian society.

Although the news items had obvious link with Nigeria, and Nigeria is not known to stand the risk of having such problems, the subject's

reading was still such, that made a connection. The event, was personalised, and Nigeria was discredited. In his conclusion, he gave credit to the "white-men" who would painstakingly study nature, to the point that they could predict, and prepare for the eventualities of such disasters. He admired the survivors, for the discipline of self-denial, for leaving all they have to escape the calamity. He compared this to what he expected to find in Nigerians whom he assessed as being self-indulging even in the face of death. In all, he acknowledged the superiority of the other cultures over his own.

His reasoning was buttressed by the nature watch programme which came right after the news. S1 was absent most of this time, because after she had finished checking their homework, she had taken the children to bed. On her return, she did not contribute much. She listened to her husband's analysis of the superiority of the Western culture. She did not dispute this. Instead they drew examples of their experience of living in the United States, and the U. K. to illustrate their points.

Although the report had been about a calamity in another part of the world, the subjects' negotiation of it, still left those societies in a positive image. Their own society, Nigeria, which had no apparent business with the report was still seen in the negative light.

The nature watch programme gave way to a discussion on the network service. It had apparently been used as a filler. The subjects were not interested in the programme. H picked up the remote control and turned down the volume. He had not done this with the nature programme, although he had not been watching it attentively. The time was about 10.30 p.m. Subjects were looking tired. It seemed they were up waiting

for the researcher's sake. Observation ended at this time.

Day 3

It was the first day in May, and so it was a public holiday in commemoration of workers day. S1 had seized the opportunity to travel to Lagos for some major shopping since she was not going to work. She returned late in the afternoon. There was thus no observation until the early evening although transmission had begun earlier on in the day.

At the time observation began, subject was busy helping her daughter with her homework. The TV was left on in the background. There was a live band on air. It was the police band noted for it's mellow type of music; usually old tunes. The station in view was LTV.

Subject was upset by a minor accident that had happened in the home. She had broken a bottle of very expensive medicine which she had only just bought for the First Aid box. To compound her aggravation, her daughter was being slow with her work. She was not enticed by the programme which her husband found fascinating.

H: This can pass for music for one's listening pleasure.

His interest was not sustained. He had to attend to other matters, and so he had to abandon the television.

As soon as the home work was done, the daughter was asked to lay the the table. The son had no responsibilities. Even as she lay the table, G who had been crying was immediately consoled by the programmes she expected on television.

She knew what programme was on which channel, and she switched to Channel 10 in anticipation of the drama, The Young Ones. When the mother returned from the kitchen, she insisted that the homework must be finished if G was "to watch any television". The programme had not begun yet. There was a health discussion programme on at the time. This did not interest any of them.

The children hurried to finish their homework, and the additional exercise that the mother had given them. The mother was not free to watch either, as she had to supervise them, and also keep an eye on her cooking.

Already, G was being prepared, just like the young girls observed in other locations, for a time use pattern similar to her mother's. The training can be seen to shape her access to viewing.

While she was waiting for the children to finish their work, S1 had switched the TV back to LTV. This had been an act of rejecting the discussion programme, which was focused on the problem of hard drugs. It was not that she planned to watch the alternative programme which in this case was the news at 8. This programme was just left on, while the subject went back to the kitchen to continue her cooking.

The meal was served at about 8.30 p.m. just as the anticipated programme began. Again the subject was the only member of the family who was backing the set. The children were mindful of the programme but they soon found other points of interest in their parents conversation.

S1 was very quiet. She later explained that she was tired. The meal time

conversation had no bearing with the TV programme. It focused on sharing the day's experiences. H dominated the conversation. He was also the first to comment about an advert which he had seen on the television. It was the advertisement of a massage parlour.

H: This has become an exclusive preserve of the rich. Not that the middle class won't be interested, but I figure it's expensive.

The advert had shown the various gadgets which were available in the health farm. It also demonstrated some of the expertise which the health farm offered. There was no expressed indication to the cost, or the sort of clientele that was being solicited. It is thus interesting, that this was what H could read from the message.

Due to her experience, S1 was able to come to a different conclusion, even though they were agreed on the exclusivity of the club.

S1: It's not that expensive. Initially when you join these health farms, you make contributions. It's like joining a club, so if you use it more often, you will get your money's worth. . ."

At the end of the day, the usefulness of the club was not disputed. S1 shared her experience of the health farms that she had used. This conversation only tapered out, as a documentary tracing the various communities living along the banks of the Niger river was shown. The programme was captivating.

It turned out that this was because it evoked reminiscences of H's childhood. H had also grown up, along the banks of the Niger river. The programme thus provided another topic of discussion, as H shared his experiences as a little boy. He was participating in the programme as he did this, identifying those features that he recognised therein.

The programme had not been restricted to the course of the River Niger in Nigeria. It had traced it's course from Senegal through other neighbouring countries, and then into Nigeria. Even then, subject was able to find features similar to those which he had experienced.

His first hand experience with the wildlife that was being featured made the viewing more interesting, and the programme more captivating. On this occasion, his analysis was not derogatory to Nigeria. In fact it was not derogatory at all. He simply revelled in the memories of his childhood.

The trend continued till the programme was concluded. Observation ended after 11.00 p.m.

Day 4

By early evening the house was buzzing with activity. The subject was in the kitchen. Several women kept coming in to the house. They had been attending a naming ceremony in another house, and seized the opportunity to "pay homage" to the principal whose staff had been blessed with a child.

Besides the influx of these visitors, subject had house guests; another minister's wife, and her baby. The children focused their attention on the baby as if it were a new toy. They ignored the TV including one of the (children's) programmes (Storyland) which had received much clamouring earlier on in the week.

S1 had just settled down in the sitting room for a short while, when she

received another guest. This guest was not dropping in, as were the others. It was a planned, (deliberate) visit to express her gratitude for some kindness shown to her. S1 had to entertain her. The television was ignored in all of these, although it was on.

The trend continued throughout the 7 o'clock (early evening) news on Channel 10. The only story which attracted any attention was an obituary item. As soon as the identity of the deceased had been established and it was not a familiar person to any of them, the trend continued again. Without much ado, the group returned to their deliberations.

The lead item in the Yoruba translation of the news captured the interest of the group. The same story when read in English, had not evoked the same response. It was about the activities of the Federal Road Safety corps. The item diverted the focus of their conversation. Without commenting on the gist of the story itself, the women discussed the issue of safety on the roads. Their discussion painted the Road Safety officials in a good image. This was based on their personal encounters with them.

"They are very effective. They are feared. I travel a lot on Sagamu [to] Benin, all over, and the difference is there even though you may not see them. I like them, I can contribute to them if they ask for assistance."

"They are really doing a good job, [road] accidents have reduced."

These comments had been evoked from a news item which had not made any mention of the performance of the Corps. Of their own volition, the viewers had brought up these positive views of the service. The discussion had been on the unexpected incorruptible nature of the officers. One of the women had even made reference to the fall in road

traffic accidents, without having any statistics, other than her own personal observations.

These reactions contrast with responses, (or lack of such) to information about those other government agencies which are in fact presented in a way to suggest that they are working. The key to communicating is not necessarily what is said in the news but what the viewers can bring out, based on their personal encounter with such establishments. This confirms that viewers are not mindless as earlier theories had suggested. They are discriminatory in the negotiation of meaning. This is an important point that Public Relations teams have to be aware of if they are to succeed.

At the arrival of another guest, H left the two women at the set, and went into the office. S1 was still away in the kitchen. Though these guests could watch TV uninterrupted here, it would follow that had they been the ones entertaining they would not have had that opportunity. This suggests that the subjects for this study may also be in a better position to view what is on, when they are also visiting. This suggestion is actually confirmed by another subject (in location 8), who was always busy at home, but in the course of conversation revealed that she is more able to watch when visiting places where sets are available.

The visitors in this context give an indication of what kind of viewing to be expected in such situations. Though they had the "freedom" to watch, because there were two of them, they rather engaged in a conversation. This was a more acceptable social behaviour. The TV, as seen so far, only became relevant, when it contributed a focus for their conversation. It merely provided an agenda for the social chatter.

There was a Health programme on air at this time, and this was ignored. It was only the drama clip which had been used to introduce the programme that had been momentarily attended. As soon as the purpose of the programme was established, the programme was abandoned. It is not clear how much the poor quality of the acting contributed to the rejection of the programme. What is certain, is that the women found their own conversation more interesting.

The subjects had a very busy time entertaining on this evening, but they were not unaware of what was being shown on TV. It was their response to the Coke advert that revealed this. They were so attentive to the advert, that H was able to point out the large Pizza to his children, and others who did not know what it was.

He lamented the fact that others within the group did not recognise the Pizza. The advert led him to reminiscence about his stay in the U.S.A. Ultimately this led to a comparison of family life in Nigeria, and in the United States. Nigeria came out in the negative light.

These assessments were not based only on the images or perceptions that the subjects had of the two societies. They were based on the knowledge of reality. Here is an illustration of how a negative image of the society is perpetuated through the television, even though it was not intended.

"These are examples of what I wonder how people can come about - such big burgers."

"In fact, any size"

"They will present foot long burgers, big size burgers; any size!"

"In those days when things were alright in Nigeria, they still imported them"

"How much will they sell them per head?"

"I went out once recently with someone, he paid - was it N10, or N12 each?"

"Imagine going out with your family and your children's friends!"

"They will just arrest you there!"

LAUGHTER

"He too would have checked his pocket before going there."

"He would have stuffed his pocket well."

"You see if one is to attempt a thing like; I asked for one meat pie, it was N6. Imagine if you took 6 children, one meat pie each, you already have N36, "

"Then he will buy drinks for each of them, N2 each, that's N12, N36, N48 - N50. Then the children will buy other things."

"They certainly will! in fact your reckoning of one meat pie each, depends on the size of the children. It depends on if you have taken two boys, or three."

"Won't you yourself have helped yourself to two meatpies?"
[sic]

"Oh I wonder!"

"You may even find someone asking for more"

. . .

The above conversation had been brought on, by the visuals in the Coke commercial. The viewers had not been responding to the product itself, or the message about it. They had been responding to the setting in which these were placed. They had ignored the intended message, and had made a completely different meaning out of the advert. The advert had led to a comparative evaluation of the daily life in Nigeria and the US.

In their negotiation of the above, other adverts which came along were

ignored. The guests dispersed just before 8 o' clock. S1 and H escorted them out, while the children stayed and watched the adverts preceding the drama on the network service. They mimicked the children in the (Omo) advertisement which was the commercial of the programme sponsors.

Of the two children, it was the girl who was again summoned by the mother to set the table. This meant she had a limited viewing, while the brother was left to have an uninterrupted viewing.

As a result of their interest in the programme, Checkmates, a soap opera on the network service, the children bargained with their father to extend the decreed bedtime, by 15 minutes so that they could watch the programme to the end. They sat glued to the set, determined to concentrate in spite of the other stream of guests who came into the house.

G was particularly peeved at the distractions coming from the conversations that were being held about her. She endured viewing none the less. At meal time, she refused to leave the front of the set, claiming that she was not hungry, just so that she would not be "disturbed". The only time she would talk, was during the commercial break.

The level of the child's concentration caught the father's attention. This made him remark on the suitability of the programming strategy, as he perceived it. He accused the stations of indiscretion. He felt they were sometimes insensitive to the presence of impressionable minds at certain times of the day, when they should still be expected to be around, between 7.00 and 9.00 or even 10.00 p.m.

". . . .They are not too mindful of that. And it's even more pronounced with Yoruba programmes because not the actors this time, but the language. . . Not particularly mindful of the needs of the young ones, the minds, the impressionable minds. . . So I don't like those programmes. I may like them for other reasons.

Or like you watch those Yoruba programmes packed full of insults and abuses, it mirrors society alright, but it's not good for impressionable minds." [my emphasis]

The above complaint was at the instance of an amorous scene; a married man was cuddling one of his students in the office. The 8-year-old who was engrossed in the programme understood this.

The other issue which he raised, is the question of variations in the forms of indecency. He identified the indecency in language, and he had been prompted by the implied rather than the obvious indecency in the presented act.

The family convened at the table including the daughter who had earlier refused to eat. Even as she settled down to her meal, her gaze was still focused on the programme. She was eventually allowed to go back with to the front of the TV with her food.

The dinner time chat was not related to the TV at all. This was more so because of the presence of the house guest who was being entertained. It was the first private time that the family had to spend with her.

The couple shared personal experiences with their guest, until other guests joined them. The bigger the group became, the more they focused on themselves. The other child soon joined his sister in watching the programme. The adults' attention was not caught at all, whereas the children were left to watch, unsupervised. They were left to make their

own meaning of the programmes.

Of the whole group, (of about 5 adults, and 2 children) it was only G, who responded to the message of the sponsor's advertisement. Her critical response was not even noticed by the adults. The advert's claim had been that Omo washes brighter, and it shows. G had accused the soap of being too harsh on coloureds, even bleaching them. She used the visuals in the advert to buttress her position.

"This Omo makes clothes white; look, look at the difference in the clothes!"

In this instance as well, the advert had taken up a different meaning. The brightening effect which was presented was seen as a bleaching effect.

At 9 o' clock, the children were sent to bed, as bargained. The house guest being a younger woman, cleared up after the meal. S1 and H were left with some "free" time before the set. They did not spend this time watching the news. Rather, they played with the baby and discussed personal matters.

They soon had to get up for different reasons. S1 returned shortly, but H was engaged for a longer period of time. Even after returning they were not attentive to the news. The only time they responded to what was going on, on the screen was when there was a break in transmission. H searched the channels to establish the reason for the break. They had suspected that it was a break in the power supply to the station. But they also wanted to establish that it was not an aerial problem. This led them to selecting another station - LTV.

By this time, the station was showing some commercials. The network news was just being concluded. It was at this time that H remembered that he had received the tape of the independent report on the riots. [Ref. Day 1] He was prompted by S1 to show this to his audience.

The tape was very revealing, very detailed and very gory. The information there-in, would never have been shown on television, for different reasons. The first would have been the issue of decency. Showing so many corpses would not have been approved for transmission, by any editor for professional reasons. The other obvious reason was that which the subjects focused on; the "censorship" on the event, allegedly imposed by government in "public interest".

H: It's a tragedy, you see. The government says there is a news black out; that nobody must say these things; but it is good to [have such things on record].

The viewing of the tape was more engaging than any other viewing experience that had been witnessed. The account showed details of the extent of the damage to life and property. It was accompanied by an eyewitness account of what had "actually happened".

After the viewing, the viewers were better educated about the situation than they had been. They discussed this. Although the government was not blamed for the crisis, its attempts to hush the incident was interpreted as it's being partisan.

The entire incident was cited as a reason for the apathy towards the news. The subjects, in spite of the educational, and social status were not ashamed to declare their lack of interest in, and patronage of the

news. Observation ended at about 11.00 p.m.

Day 5

It was another busy day as the subjects were hosting a conference on the college premises. The participants were arriving that evening, and had to be settled in their various accommodations. Added to these, the students were breaking up for the holiday, so they were making returns, handing over College property that had been in their care. Some, especially the graduating students were simply coming in to say their farewells.

Although she was not directly involved in some of the matters, S1 was assisting H in thinking out the solutions to the problems as they emerged. She was more directly involved in receiving the guests. H on his part had to make several trips out of the premises to smooth arrangements that had been made, or to get supplies.

S1 was very tired, and in fact had to take medication for a headache. The children's excitement had to be contained in the light of this. They were thus rather subdued on this day. The TV likewise was subdued although it was left on in the background. It had been on LTV. It was on account of one of the guests who came, and observed the time, that the channel was changed. He had requested for an NTA channel so that he could watch Ripples, a soap opera on the network service. But he did not even stay to watch it there. Instead he decided to go to his home to watch. This guest was a bachelor whose home was likely to be less busy than the study location.

As the evening progressed, the excitement grew, and the set got "pushed"

further into the background. The programme was not watched.

The rejection was compounded by the fact that the particular episode that was being shown was a repeat. It was G who first noticed this. S2 observed that this was responsible for her lack of interest in the serials. S1 was more understanding. She explained that the repetition was sometimes at the request of viewers who had missed the earlier showing, especially if it was due to a general black-out; a cut in the power supply to some areas.

This was as far as the interest in the programme went. In fact at a point, B was playing with the remote control, zapping round the channels. No one took any notice of him. S1 and S2 continued chatting, exchanging information about the various guests. It was only G who intermittently tried to attend the programme, but she was soon to be carried away with the adults' conversation. Her occasional plea for silence that would enable her concentrate was another cue for the subjects to discuss their preferences on the screen. They also planned their viewing for the following day.

The subjects re-affirmed their interest in dramas, particularly those which are serialised. The interest was however conditional. They were not so keen as to plan to watch at all costs. The conditions must be right before the interest can be fruitful. The subject again identified her time schedule, her frame of mind and general disposition, as some of the conditions that must be appropriate; for there to be viewing of any serious kind. There was also the issue of the uniqueness of the subject; such programmes that are auspicious, and so cannot be missed.

Failure of a programme to meet the above conditions already implies the type of reception that the programme will get. The present situation was cited as an example to buttress the point. Subject recognised the fact that she was merely sitting in front of the set, was seeing the programme, but she was not watching it. She identified the importance of the conditions to her attitude to viewing.

S1: Another problem I have is, when I don't have time to watch it, I am not bothered, especially if I'm busy, or if I have guests or - I don't think about it. What can I do? I don't have any other way. If I plan to leave it [i.e. her chores] till another time, who will do it? And if you leave what you can do now, till another time, you will never get it done.

But once I'm relaxed, I have nothing doing, I will watch.

Subject's attitude to viewing, was also informed by her confidence in her ability to "very easily" follow what the drama is about even when she had not watched for some time, provided she recognises the characters. This reading however is also open to confusion. She identifies the fact that to fill in the gaps, she relies on guesswork.

"I can easily get the characters from any drama. . . as long as I recognise some of the characters, I can guess what is going on, or guess what has happened in the period that I missed."

The subject would in such instances be employing common sense reasoning to project the plot. In this way, she will be equating the drama, with the reality which is common sense to her. The dangers of this type of reading has been illustrated in the reading of other subjects. This explains one way by which the differences in readings and intended meanings come about. It also illustrates the fact that television and reality are often times not discrete, but elastic.

The illustration of the measure of opportunity and interest in viewing

mentioned above, can be seen in the high concentration in the watching of the tape of the independent report. There was an urgency to watch the tape, because the tape had to be returned to the owner. There was no obvious likelihood of getting such an opportunity anymore.

The important point made in these points is that "exposure" is not just a function of "interest". There are several other intervening variables.

Also from her conversation, the subject illustrated how, retention is not merely a function of interest or choice. There was an enjoyable viewing experience which she was going to share, but which she could not remember. She could not even remember any details of the programme, the setting, the characters involved, the story line. She only remembered the context of her viewing, and the fact that the play was enjoyable.

There was another factor which had not been mentioned in the above, but was constantly illustrated in the viewing context. This was the possibility of contagious interest. For example, S1 was still caught up with her conversation with her sister when the Coke advert came up. She did not show any interest in this at all, but she was pestered so much by the daughter (G) who wanted her to clarify some unfamiliar spectacle. It was this which brought S1's attention into the advert, even if it was just for a moment.

By the time the network news came on, H's routine was still hectic. S1 was less busy, but she was not viewing the news. In fact there was a point where H turned down the volume of the set. The news was treated as noise, a distraction from the desired peace in the home. Rather than watch the news, H discussed the issue of the dishonest business man, who

had caused there to be a hiccup in his arrangements. He was however still mindful of the news. He responded to an announcement of the inauguration of a board. He was very irritated by this news item.

H: Must we know about all these appointments to serve on the boards? These people had their jobs before. There is nothing newsy about this!

It appeared that his mood had made him less patient with the news, but his response was similar to that of other subjects, even those whom the news producers, expect will be the audience of such information. (Re. location 8, and 10)

The children had drifted off to sleep at this time (9.20 p.m.). They were sent in to their rooms. Even when the subject was left alone, she still did not watch the news. The business segment of the news was totally ignored, no item evoked any remarks. Instead, she sorted out the photographs which she had shown to some of her guests.

At the tail end of the news, there was a big uproar as some of the students came in to report a matter. The resolution of the matter became the most prominent issue in the viewing context. Two programmes which followed were completely overshadowed by the problem which was in the fore ground. The programmes were a special production on the Expanded Programme on Immunisation, (EPI), and a drama in the Hausa language. Both programmes were from NTA, Channel 10.

The reason why the matter was so protracted was because witnesses had to be called, and cases had to be stated. This was accompanied by a show of emotions the noise of which, was enough to drown the audio of the television set. When the students had been dismissed, the subjects also

spent some time analysing the particular situation, and the general framework that had allowed such to breed.

It was at this time that the interest in television was again rekindled. While the discussion was going on, S1 had her eyes on the set, and was able to identify, and could call attention to that which she had seen on the screen.

It was a clip of the programme that she had earlier, tried in vain to remember. It had taken, seeing this aspect of the programme again to remember what it was.

Without being told, H realised that it was a programme that his wife was interested in. He therefore comported himself appropriately. He increased the volume of the programme using the remote control in his hands. He suspended the analysis which he had been making, and concentrated on the programme.

After S1 had shared the story line of the previous episode; setting the scene for the day's episode as it were; there was rapt attention in the location. Both S1 and H were engrossed in the programme. There were no criticisms, and very little commentaries accompanying the viewing.

The striking feature of their commentary was that the programmes were seen to bear semblances of the reality, including known persons.

"He looks like ----'s daughter's husband."

". . . Just like this eh, youth corper who served here, sounds just like her."

"This must be real London [in] Nigeria"

"Do we still have brick houses in this country? ---- estate will be a good place to film this kind of shots, walk on the golf course and around. . . "

The subjects were so engrossed with the story line. They showed appreciation for the scenery, the actors; the music; and the evolving story. The subjects exhibited a familiarity with the production elements such that they were able to interpret, even predict, the sequence based on the transition of the shots, and especially music. In spite of these, they were able to identify the characters for the other prominent roles that they had played.

They also read beyond the manifest message in the programme; interpreting, and finding the implication of the actions.

The programme was about a couple who fell in love in an extraordinary situation. The wife, a nurse, had married the man while he had been paralysed, without any hope of improvement. His fiancée at the time of the incident, had deserted him. When he improved, the woman had resumed her interest in him. She tried to get him back, and so she embarked on a smear campaign. She even cooked up lies about the wife, and bribed one of the wife's close friends, to make a confession which supported the cooked up allegations. The campaign had been a test for the couple. They had even broken up for some time, but eventually love prevailed. However, there was still the seed of doubt that had been sown. This was not explicitly stated, but the subjects saw through this, and such other inexplicit statements. They responded to these. In fact they reacted to the characters as if they were real life characters.

They were so involved in the programme that S1 was crying. She shed

tears of joy as the victim (the wife) was exonerated. Earlier, both herself and H had been optimistic in their predictions of the outcome of the programme. They were visibly relieved at the end of the programme.

The subjects had refused on this occasion to let anything disturb their viewing. There was the possibility of this happening, as a student came to seek counsel. He was not entertained at all; he was turned back. The time was about 11.00 p.m. then.

Observation ended at the end of this programme.

Day 6

There was no viewing. Subjects had travelled out of town to attend a wedding ceremony. Though they had made it a day return journey, each way of the trip had been about 3 hours. This meant that they had set out very early, and returned just about 8.00 p.m. It was a full day's outing. They were really very exhausted, and so they were excused from the exercise for that day. The researcher's presence would have been an imposed burden on them.

This meant that there was no observation for the viewing of the drama programme which the subjects had expressed strong desire to watch. The programme according to the reports received the next day had not been watched. The family reported that they had an early night.

Day 7

S1 had been so exhausted, that she did not even attend the church service that morning. When the others returned from church, she set about preparing lunch. In the meantime she also checked her daughter's

homework. At the conclusion of the assignment, she was annoyed, and the daughter was quite upset as well. They were hardly in the mood for television.

It was lunch time, and they went about setting the food on the table. H and B were before the set. There was a clear demarcation of time use, based on gender. S1 and G were joined by their female house guests (S3, and S4). These were the first to be relieved of responsibilities, unlike S2 who was closer to the family.

The preparation of lunch was elaborate because it was, Sunday, and there were more people to be catered for. This became significant in that it affected the length of time which S1 had to spend in the kitchen.

In the meantime, there were two drama presentations that were shown. Both were of 30 minute duration. There was one in English, and the other in Yoruba. They were both local productions, from NTA Channel 10. Neither of them was watched.

To start with, H had attracted the interest of his audience with his stories about his childhood, and his days as a younger minister. S3, and S4 were spouses of younger ministers. They were not competent with the Yoruba language, having come from other parts of the country. The first of the two dramas that was featured was in Yoruba.

The cut in public power supply to the home put paid to any plans to watch the other presentation that was in English. The group had not immediately abandoned their conversation when the programme came on air. They had just found a suitable point to pause, such that they could

attend to the programme when the power supply was cut. In fact, S3 had only just settled in her new position in front of the set.

With the disappointment, the group merely pursued other interests. They engaged in more reliable pastimes; conversing among themselves, and listening to music with a battery operated cassette player, (Walkman).

By the time the supply was restored, the particular programme was over. The subjects had had their lunch, and had settled into various other activities which made them ignore the set. There was no evidence of a welcome for the medium. It might as well have remained "dead". It was the children who were left out of the adults conversation who showed interest in the restoration of TV service, with the restoration of power supply.

While the adults revelled in each other's company, the children watched TV unrestrained. Even then, they were not a captive audience. They drifted in and out of the viewing, and the conversation, and control of the cassette player.

The "party" only broke up after the News Update at 4 o' clock. There were no pretences that they had missed the news. Noting the programme had only been a reminder of how far spent the day was.

It was at this time, that H took the remote control to find a more suitable programme. G suggested a programme and the channel on which it could be found. The programme was the popular Yoruba drama, Feyikogbon, on Channel 7.

H was not deliberate in his searching. He was still zapping around when he found another comedy on LTV Channel 8. The comedy was also in Yoruba. He settled for this, and no one objected. The younger couples, had gone out into the garden at this time. It was only the nuclear family that was present.

Even then, the subjects did not watch the programme. Rather they reminiscenced, and empathised with the younger couples' experiences. Before long, another group of guests came in. They had come to visit the subjects' guests. The drone of the TV was lost in the background of the excitement.

The new group soon dispersed, going about their mission. S2 left with G; the other guest joined the others in the garden. But before they left, their presence had impacted the viewing. The volume of the TV set had been reduced on account of the noise. After they left, the volume was left down. S1 was relaxing before the set. She was in control of the remote control. She was not particularly involved in viewing anything. She was more interested in what was going on around her.

Her attention was attracted to a particular programme. This was one of the Ombudsman programmes. She was acquainted with one of the panellists. She expressed her interest in the programme, but she did not watch it. Instead she discussed the memoirs of her relationship with the familiar character.

The rest of the programme was not watched. Subsequent programmes were also ignored. The children went to visit the neighbours. Subject entertained her guests, and chatted with them in the meantime. She also

kept herself busy by picking the beans that she was going to cook for supper.

The children arrived back home just before 7.00 p.m. and immediately directed their attention to the set. They were anticipating particular programmes. G ensured that the set was tuned to the right channel. She selected Channel 10. Both children ignored their mother's instructions until they saw the early evening news come on. This was an indicator of how much time they had before the expected programme. It was also an expression of interest. The news was dispensable.

S2 employed the programme in the same way. She left for her quarters with a plan to return in time for the anticipated programme because she did not own a set.

As a result, the early evening news was again ignored. The trend continued till about 7.30 p.m. when the group converged again. By then, the men who had been in a meeting since about 5.00 p.m. had also emerged from the study. Subject was not under any pressure to remain in the kitchen tonight. This was largely because of the type of attention that her cooking required. She joined the others, in concentrating on the watching of the drama programme (Ojo Ladipo half hour), that was on Channel 10.

The programme was a comedy. It was in pidgin English and featured the popular character - Aluwe. The programme was entertaining. It evoked a lot of laughter. Again, there was a direct link between what was seen, and what was known to be reality. Aluwe, had pronounced curses on his son, in the event that the son did not treat him well. He wanted the

child to buy him a car. The child promised to buy, not just a car, but a big truck. Aluwe was rejoicing at the news. He soon found that the truck that he was bought was a toy (plastic) truck.

While he was still raving over the matter, he was approached by a successful acquaintance for assistance. The acquaintance wanted to be introduced to a bank manager who was Aluwe's friend.

It turned out that the man was dubious. He defrauded both the Bank Manager, and the white man whom he had presented as his associate. Aluwe had inadvertently been a party to the crime, but his innocence could not be proved until there was a confession from the villain. Aluwe was then released but cautioned for being gullible. This was his offence for which he could not be charged. Even though the subjects were able to laugh about the various incidents in the plot, they still identified the seriousness of the message. They recognised the trend in their experience of reality. They thus did not question the credibility of the programme.

"Ah, he's playing on the intelligence of the white man. He went there [to the manager] to open an account, and he's telling the [white] man that his draft is ready. And he came to the manager, [then] he came out, making it more credible for the [white] man to believe him [that the draft is ready] . . . People are fast these days." [sic]

[The white man was duped into a business transaction, and given a fake cheque]

On seeing Aluwe's plight, one of the viewer's concluded that

"One just has to be very careful in real life before you help somebody. . . "

The same viewer, said, because of his sheltered life, he used the dramas as a window on reality. The dramas helped him to broaden his limited

exposure. The plausibility of the incidents were not challenged. They were still seen as reality and a guide to dealing with reality.

At 8.00 p.m., the group converged again. It was only S1 who left at this time to go to the kitchen. G and S2 had returned, and so had S4. They joined H, and N; the guest who had been viewing the comedy with S1. They all focused their attention on the screen as they awaited the soap opera from the network service - Supple Blues.

It was not long before the S1 called G away from the viewing. Her attention was needed in the kitchen. Knowing the rules, S2 had also joined S1 of her own volition. S4, who was the guest, was the only female left to view with the men.

They, followed the programme explaining and predicting patterns, and even noting such details, as gestures, as they did. There is a similarity in some of the readings, and those of subjects in other locations. Compare the first of the following comments, and that of subject H in location 5 (viewing of the comedy on Day 2).

N: Ehen, she wants something from him. Once you see a woman playing up to a man like this, it means she wants something from him.

S4: Ah, but not always.

. . . .

[One of the characters was having a meal, which was not given prominence.]

S4: If it's macaroni, they will show us, but now that it's yam, see they are using plates to cover it.

N: Are you then saying they have no money to produce macaroni for them to act with?

. . . .

What S4 was saying was that the producers were not promoting the local

menu, as they would have, a foreign one. In other words, though the local dish was featured it was not given the pride of place. This was another example of how a viewer perceives an unintended meaning in a programme. Her prejudice about the society, including the producers, had led this subject to see a contrary message to that which was manifest.

Even as they got engrossed in the programme, the subjects reminded themselves of the need for restraint. N considered it painful, that the story which he was getting so engrossed in, was not to be resolved on that day. As the programme came to an end, he confirmed his fears. He described the frustrations that accompany the attempts to make sense of incomplete serialised dramas. This was based on his experience with other Nigerian attempts at soap operas.

None of those earlier attempts had been brought to a pre-determined conclusion. The programmes had thus been ended in limbo. These experiences had contributed to this viewer's attitude to the new production.

As the programme was concluded for the day, the subjects dispersed, without even waiting to see the credits. They had only been interested in the story line. This made the frustrations at an incoherence caused by the stunted programmes more appreciable.

N left for his home, G and B were sent off to bed. They complied grudgingly. H and S4, were called to the table. On this day, S1 had deferred to the programme, and had suspended serving the meal until the viewing was concluded.

The implication of this pattern was that the adverts which preceded the news, were ignored. So also was the first segment of the programme Newsline. This was the section which featured the news. The other sections had human interest features, such as would not be covered in the daily newscasts.

There was no sense of loss at the missing of the short segment of "news". In fact, S1 remarked that it was "boring", thus suggesting that the act was deliberate. What the remark also revealed was that she was aware of the reports coming out of the functional set, even though she was not deliberately watching it. The following was her summary of what she did not miss.

"This kind of news is boring. . . You see, like they have been saying, you know, it's all seminar and lectures, and then you will see Babangida's face."

This view tallied with those already expressed by H, and by subjects in other locations. S1 was aware of the fact that this view is one shared by other people. For her, it was a dominant view.

There was a contrast in this response, and the reaction to the Newsline proper, that is, the human interest features. The programme was foremost in the mind of the viewers as they ate. All the activity in the house at that time were geared towards making time for the programme.

At meal time, there was no prolonged chatter to keep the subjects at the table. After the meal, there was an urgency to clear up so that Newsline could be attended. It was the first time that the subjects were actually making room for the viewing of a news programme.

On this occasion it was S4 who was clearing up, because she was the youngest. S1 was free to sit before the set, to view the programme. H was likewise, before the set. S1 encouraged S4 to suspend the cleaning up and join in the viewing.

There was no doubt that they thoroughly enjoyed the programme. Their reaction to the portrayal of the Nigerian society was, remarkably positive. Even then, there were suggestions of this being incredulous.

The first item on Newsline featured aspects of Itshekiri culture. These included a traditional boat regatta in commemoration of the fourth anniversary of the reign of the Olu of Warri. The particular visuals which attracted the comments were of a boat regatta, and thereafter, the street carnival.

S1: Yes! That's beautiful. It's like American

S4: It doesn't look like a Nigerian [scene]

S1: Yes!

S4: Itshekiris! They have culture.

Viewing continued in silence at that point.

As they watched, they remembered personal acquaintances who were of Warri origin, whom they felt, should be especially proud of the feature. This indicated the considered relevance of the programme, and their level of participation in it.

The next item was that of a Food fair, that was aimed at promoting Nigerian menus. H lamented that had he been aware, he would have gone. Again this indicated how relevant he considered the item to be. This was his opportunity to attend the event that he had missed. There was keen

interest in the segment as well. The subjects vicariously participated in the segment, describing, or discussing the varieties of food that was shown.

The discussion eventually developed into an analysis of the eating habits in the various parts of Nigeria. There was the consensus that there was a potential for a very wide variety in the menu which was yet restricted.

On this occasion, the analysis did not endure. The story which followed was considered interesting and worthy of attention. The subjects thus concluded the on going analysis very quickly.

It was while the report was still being introduced that their attention was perked. By the time the full report came, they had become really attentive. The subjects, including S2 and S4 who had hitherto been in different stages of sleep were attentive to the report.

The story was that of a Managing Director of a tabloid acknowledging an error in the details of a story that his magazine had published. The public admission of guilt, and the announcement of disciplinary measures against the erring journalist did not evoke any sympathy from the subjects. Rather it was a confirmation of their negative opinion about the usefulness of such magazines.

H: In fact you should stop publishing . . .

This was the last item of Newslines. S1 observed that they only had three things to say. She had been attentive to them all. The same could not be said for S2 and S4. As much as they would have loved to be attentive,

(as evidenced by their struggle to participate still) they seemed to be contending with a force greater than their interest - fatigue.

The particular viewing experience illustrates that the incessant chatter that accompanies the viewing of a programme could be indicative of the level of acceptance of the programme. Because the subjects are mindful of the transient nature of the television message, they can, as illustrated in the viewing of Newsline, comport themselves in a way that is adaptable to the medium. They could suspend their duties, when possible; they could suspend their chattering; and even struggle with sleep to attend what was considered relevant. These various activities were in other words an expression of values (priorities).

An interesting feature observed during the viewing was the way the recognition of a favoured familiar feature, made the viewing more interesting. Likewise, the recognition of the unfamiliar, evoked a discussion, which generated renewed interest.

The familiar features, had stirred up nostalgic feelings in H, and S4. These subjects had also been encouraged to share these experiences with the other members of the group. The discussion was similar to that which other less familiar features had evoked. These discussions were an avenue of the presented position to receive immediate approval. They were like testimonials and as such facilitated the message.

Over all, the critical nature of the audience did not in this case result in the rejection of the message. As the above would suggest, this may be due to the familiarity of some of the viewers with that which was shown. Even in the instance where there was no previous knowledge of the

object in focus, the subjects did not reject the story as they did the news. They merely negotiated what position they would take following the viewing experience. (For example the response to the public apology).

The key factor here is in the attitude which the subjects took to the viewing. There was no preconceived distrust of the source as was the case with the news. The information thus had a chance of being negotiated.

The subjects were obviously tired and in need of rest. Observation thus ended at this time (about 9. 50 p.m.).

Discussion

Time use schedule.

Following the observation of such a hectic schedule in the home, there was an interest in establishing how typical the observation week had been. The researcher was assured of the typical nature of the observed routine. Indeed, continued contact with the family, even after the study period confirmed that this was so. In the very next week that followed the study for example, there was a national conference hosted in the college premises; a few weeks later there was a crusade held on the grounds. All these had an impact on the viewing habits of the subjects as has been illustrated.

Contrasting Responses

The most striking revelation from the discussion was one which had also been observed in the other subjects. This is the variation in the response to factual programmes such as the news, and fictional

programmes such as the dramas. Already the difference in attitude to viewing has been highlighted. What is more interesting is the fact that this also underlines the readings. Speaking in the context of another issue, S1 made the following remark.

S1: . . . And like these vernacular plays, any cross section of people will like to watch it you know. Sometimes it's educative and these are the kinds of things, just depict the - what we are whether you believe it or not.

R: How about a programme like Newsweek, does it depict what we are? [sic]

S1: No! Not really. . . It gives you information on what happened during the week, you know kind of summary of events, so, which is something good. At least you have a fair knowledge of what is happening.

R: Does the news depict what we are.

S1: The news? No. I don't think so. I guess the reports that are given in the news, is what interests them, or what they feel they want to pass on.

H's contribution at this point was that the news did depict the reality of dominant group - "the elite class", or "a section of the ruling class". As much opposed to the news as he was, he identified the cultural traits that are inherent in the news gathering process as being responsible for the final product. The news men were identified as a part of the culture within which they worked and as a result their product could not but be reflective of the values which informed it.

H argued that the society placed so much importance on personalities, and as a result was bound to have the kind of news which it got. For him, the news is a product of the society from which it is produced. For H, it was not accurate to conclude that the news did not reflect reality. The more accurate position was that it reflected an incomplete view of reality. This imbalance, is what the subjects had not been

impressed with. Taking the subjects in location 2 for example, the fact their direct experience of reality was being marginalised made the news unreliable, inaccurate, incredible, irrelevant, and not worthy of attention.

It is their view that was echoed in varying degrees by the other subjects that were studied.

In summary, the subjects in this location saw the news as - what important people do; a gazette of what government would have the governed know of its activities. News was the sighting of the President and his wife, the Vice president, and participants at seminars, and a parade of board members.

There were other interesting summaries from the younger subjects, S4, and S2.

"To me, it's very boring."

"It's just there, you look maybe when you are fed up you will close your eyes until quarter to ten when they'll finish the news and go."

The last description illustrates the impact which the news could have on subsequent programmes. Having closed the eyes to the news, the already tired viewer may find it hard to open them up again for a desirable programme. This trend is particularly important in view of the timing of the news, and the schedules of the viewers. As observed, a good deal of the programmes scheduled later than the network news tend to be thrown away. (In the same way, a good deal of the items in the later segments of the news tend to be lost as well). It may be worthwhile having a quantitative study to confirm this trend. The result of such will be of

immense value to finding an appropriate length and position for the news, such that it would not be detrimental to the fate of other desirable programmes, (programme scheduling). This is important particularly in light of the observed response to news as opposed to other programme types.

Elements of Production

The subjects were concerned with the presentation of the news. Amongst the qualities which they noted are the articulation; the voice quality; the fluency; the competence with pronunciations; the composure (authority), and the countenance. The dressing appeared to be less important to them. It none the less, contributed to their reading of the total output.

A certain newscaster, was acknowledged as being otherwise good, but because of her dressing, she was associated with the state bureaucracy. Her dressing evoked a religious connotation. It was interpreted as an insistence on having a bureaucratic view presented, in a supposedly secular state. In other words, it evoked a connotation of a partisan medium. This is the same newscaster who had evoked a similar reading in another context.

Over all, the subjects exhibited a high level of literacy in the conventions of television news. They also had definite ideas of what the news should be.

"I believe that there are a lot of things that happen that are newsworthy, but the people don't reach. I don't know what the constraints may be, but I believe that they can do a lot more than they are doing presently.

We have to seek for news, dig for news, reach out for news, put your ears down to where something is happening that is worth reporting.

. . .

I want to know the effect of somebody having triplets you know in a hospital, being discharged. The feeling of that particular person or something. . . The times are hard these days, I do not see anybody reporting about the difficulties of children in primary school, or high school, going to school, mobility problem, problem of getting food. . . so they are not really moulding the opinion, they are not helping because we are not receiving the right kind of news. . . "

This view represents the discontent of the viewers with the news; that there is no attempt to create an awareness of the widespread problems, if only with the aim of offering solutions to them. Whilst the news and other factual programmes are concerned with the image they present, the fictional programmes delve into such matters, if only in passing, as in setting the scene for example. It is this that has made them of more relevance to the viewers.

Mode of reception

In the course of the discussion, it was observed that there was the tendency for the subjects to refer to their act of receiving the news as "listening" rather than watching. On investigation, it was found that this was not an error. It was no slip of tongue. The subjects confirmed that they were listening to the news more often than they were viewing it. According to H, there was not much to watch in terms of visuals. There is not enough variety in the visuals that are presented.

"The pictures search the same people, and they keep fooling us."

S1 identified the incompatibility of the visuals with the story as the report evolves. This was again a matter of the inadequacy of the footage, which results in an incoherent visual report, and a final report which lacks internal consistency.

The subjects made a distinction between their mode of reception of the news when they were abroad. There was excitement as they recounted their watching of the news.

S1: There's always something to see

She was of the opinion that there was a lot more to be got from the visual aspect of the report than even that which was read!

H: The drama is there to look at.

They were impressed by the "effortlessness" that the news in those contexts, (Britain, and more so U.S.A.) required.

". . . without knowing it, you are taking in quite a lot."

They remembered vividly, the launching of the space shuttle Columbia; the case of the Atlanta killer; the eruption of a particular volcano; the attempted assassination of the Pope, and also of Ronald Reagan.

In their report, they showed that they were impressed by the meticulous reporting of details. Along with the sense that these made of the story, the subjects read off these, the painstaking efforts that could have gone into the production of the news. This fitted into their view of what news should be, - "dug for".

They were also impressed by the up-date; how the events were kept alive till they were resolved. They cited the example of the coverage of Reagan's assassination, his hospitalisation, and the outcome of these, which satisfied the curiosity of the viewer that had been aroused. The viewing of the news was therefore not frustrating.

Implications on Production

These observations have serious implications on the production of the news. The recommended practices are such that would be expected in a professional capacity any way. That they are not evident to viewer who lacks specialised knowledge in the area, speaks of the practical nature of the required standards.

There should be a journalistic training of news videographers. They should be news minded as well as being good camera men (and women). This may imply an elevation of their status from being mere service/ support staff, to them being an integral part of the news production team. The former was the observed case.

Although the reporter is in control of the story that will be told, the video reporters being sensitive to the direction that the story would go, can still be creative. They should have the initiative to cover such shots which would become useful in conveying the message or the event. They should therefore be competent news persons themselves, and part of the editorial deliberations.

For these efforts to be more effective, there is need to have enough stock of tapes. At present, this is a problem and it goes back to the constraints in funding. None the less, there is still a lot that can be done in the present situation as the subjects opined. Their exposure to the news coverage in other societies had provided them with a basis for comparison. This sort of exposure is available even right on the TV screen with programmes like CBN news, and with the increasing impact of satellite and cable television.

Advertisements

The subjects were quite impressed by the efforts put into the advertisements. H was the one who spoke for the wife. He was of the view that the commercial interest of the stations has made it such that there is a lot of time devoted to advertising. The frequency of repeating the adverts is what he says makes them boring. Otherwise, the advertisers he noted, were conscious of the need to develop new marketing strategies. The use of television had thus been identified as part of that needed strategy.

In this regard, the adverts were seen by this family as interruptions (breaks) between the programme flow. In their view, advertising was not really needed in the evaluation of products.

H: I will want to say that the economy of the country dictates the level of activity when it comes to putting commercials on the television. Right now, the problem in this country is that we have too few goods, chasing too many people. I mean so many people chasing too few available goods in which case, the need for advertising is not very much. So apart from the, what you need to advertise really are the new products entering the market. And you find that when you do it for some time, and people get used to it, you find out that the need for it subsides, because these things are not sufficient, to go round the people. . . " [sic]

This view indicates the attitude which has been a bane to the development of advertising. Coming from a viewer, it explains the irrelevance of the promise of advertising service. It is this attitude that underlies the non-chalance towards paid advertisements, as has been observed in this and other locations.

If this is the case, then advertising on Nigerian television, is more of a goodwill service, a public relations gesture, than a marketing tool.

However, even within this family, there was evidence that the adverts still served marketing functions.

It was difficult for S1 to identify particular adverts which caught her interest on the television, however, there was the understanding that on sighting the products in the market, her memory will be triggered. She explained that her choice in most cases was not dependent on her exposure to television.

" . . . most of the time, the things I use, are not really because I've seen them on television. You know, I just buy the product I feel that, [gesture implying "that it is good"] Maybe because I've been used to them, and I am not really keen on new products except for example detergents. You know washing up soap. Whichever one I think is cheaper for me, I just buy once I get to the market. Most of the time, I don't even go to the market, I always send people. I either ask them maybe to get me something that I had seen before. "

From her account, it turned out that the adverts did serve as a guide for her choice. Yet in her reception of the messages, she had not attended them with a view for employing them for such a purpose.

The example of the incidental "serious" use of advertisements, has already been highlighted. (This was when it was used to acquaint the children with unfamiliar concepts). However, the evaluation of the response to adverts, must be measured against the advertisers intentions. The manner in which the subjects cited advertisements showed that the adverts, were perceived more as entertainment, and occasionally as sources of information.

R: Maybe you do like some adverts?

S2: Only Lux because of the lady and the man. Joy bath soap, just to see what happens [at the end] how the man with the briefcase is just standing there.

H: That's a beautiful one. I love it just for it's

production quality. I think it's good. for it's entertainment quality. I think it's good. I like commercials generally, especially the ones that are very humorous, and those are the ones. I just like the humour, rather than the advertisements."

The sentiment was echoed by the other members of the group. All the examples which were cited to illustrate these types of adverts were all for soap (detergents and bathing soap). In addition, there was an advert which employed the popular comedian - Zebrudaya. This was the advert for a bank. The other was for a Malt drink.

In this instance as well, the subjects' experience in the U.S.A. had a better imprint on their mind. They were able to recall even in details, some of the adverts which they had not seen for at least 9 years. They were citing examples of commercials which they had seen between 1978 and 1980.

Drama

There was no doubt that the subjects liked drama. It was the only category of programmes that they had expressed certain affinity for. The main problem that S1 had had with viewing was the scheduling of the programmes. That programmes were replicable, was also an issue, as was the incompleteness of stories. Yet the subjects still found the drama programmes fascinating; as S1 said

"at least for entertainment, just to pass the time".

The two programmes which were readily identified as the unanimous favourites of the entire group were, a discontinued soap operas. One was the programme, Behind the Clouds, a national production on the network service. The other, Mirror in the Sun was like wise.

Another favourite which was still being featured was the Yoruba drama, Feyikogbon. S1 observed that she liked that for the wisdom in it. This view was concurred by S2, who in fact preferred it, to the other programmes. The fact that the story line was not serialised, meant that she did not have to contend with the likelihood of an incomplete story.

Although she claimed she had not watched a lot of the episodes, S1 could offer her a summary of what the programmes were about.

"Now, there is always a theme about retribution.. For instance, if you do something, "Esan a ke" [meaning vengeance is certain] like retribution. Retribution is an important one they always show."

It was acknowledged that Feyikogbon had a lot of lessons. There was a variety of ways in which this theme was expressed, but it was expressed none the less. The subject identified that the programme usually had unexpected twists, but the lesson would still be clear. She spontaneously likened it to reality.

"It doesn't mean it is going to end up in one way or the other. It may end up in a way that you did not even expect. You see, the idea is that it it's just kind of telling you, the type of thing that will happen in society, and the result of that kind of thing."

It was difficult for S1 to reconstruct specific examples of these genre of programmes. She attributed this to the infrequency of her exposure to them. H was the one who articulated their views on the Yoruba programmes in general. This was merely part of the several problems which he had with the programmes.

"The Yoruba programmes and I say also that if one is not careful, the Yoruba programmes tend to encourage, or plant in subtle ways, distrust among people, because it highlights the negative things, more of the negative things of the Yoruba culture, of the Yoruba society, and amplify them into plays. Therefore if I give you food, the tendency is that if you are

not careful, it may have been poisoned, and so you have to go, and you know, go to the diviner to discover what happens.

Or if I want to take your husband from you, I must cast a spell on you in your dream or something like that, and it's - very repulsive because of the number of children watching it today - the viewing audience!"

This subject also detached himself from the category of those who can be affected by the programme. As with the other subjects, the crippling potential of the programme was a matter of concern, in the interest of others, particularly children.

Other observations about the programme type includes the indiscretion in the use of language; the poor video quality; the prevalence of noise and verbal and physical abuse. In all H observed that there was a lack of polish, such as have been introduced to the local English language productions. Although she agreed with the observations, S1 still felt there was an entertainment value in the programmes.

H did not dispute the fact that the programmes may be reflective of reality, but he was still resentful of the portrayal of such on television. In his opinion, television should be discriminating the aspects of reality which it shows. He implies that television widens the scope of the problems, by making a part of the reality of those who are otherwise sheltered from such. His main concern though seems to be the choice of format, and the frequency of exposure. He did not object to having documentaries which record those aspects of reality. He compared the experience of watching the genre as frequently as it is presented, with watching the Holocaust, or Roots everyday. He was thus not advocating for a denial of the reality, but a socially responsible approach to setting the agenda.

These comments calls for a more effective method of achieving the goals which the stations set out to achieve. It suggests that the results had been the opposite of the intended. The stations' rationale for showing those programmes is that such ills in society may be corrected. However it seems from the subjects' response that they had only succeeded in perpetuating, and widening the scope of experiencing such ills.

There were several examples of evil which had only been experienced because it was portrayed on television. H found that even the seeming happy ending that was certain in the presentation of retribution, was fractured. He felt hate rather than love was being magnified.

The point of the above still goes back to the need for proper treatment of ideas prior to production. The preoccupation of producers with exposing the ills of the society, (Re. programme objectives, in appendix) is not met with adequate professional treatment in the production process. Ad-libbed plots, slapped up performances, by crude talents, which often cannot receive adequate post production treatment had meant that the final production differs very little from the chaotic reality that it tries to portray.

The situation described above is different from a carefully thought out script, followed by carefully planned production. In the latter, there is greater room, to plan the emphasis and build in the desired myths in order of priority. As a result, even though the viewer recognises the existence of the polarities, his reading may be tempered by the built in emphasis. This is by no means all that is required to affect the images perceived on the screen.

The subjects were not as critical of the English language programmes. These were also seen as being reflective of reality. However, S1's impression of the life portrayed in these programmes is that it presents various relationships within family life. She positively identified the theme of "love", either amongst siblings, or between lovers. To her there was a portrayal of "the normal things that happen" in a family. The existence of professionals in such settings was also remarked.

" . . . Especially if you have a lawyer or an accountant or something in the family, the way of viewing things will be different, and that affects the way of life."

Throughout the observation week, the only dramas which S1 was opportuned to watch undisturbed, were not the soap operas that she tried here to describe, but they were English language productions which indeed featured professionals, and intelligent people.

When compared, the reading of the English productions, bore semblance to those alleged to be manifest in the Yoruba language dramas. (Re. Day 5)
The problem can thus be said to transcend the issue of production.

Other programmes

Except for the news, dramas, and adverts, it would appear that there were no other programmes on television. When this was investigated, the subjects did not express any objections to the other programme types. For instance, S1 claimed that she tries to watch the children's programmes with the children. She felt that these programmes were educative, but she could not offer much details about them. She was impressed by the didactic nature of the story telling programmes.

" . . . right from the beginning to the end, you try to get something out of it. And at the end of it, questions will be asked by the children, that is the TV children about what

they have learnt. And if they can't get what they want the children to understand, this is passed to them, and the children love it."

In other words, subject is not only impressed by the content, she was impressed by the structure which built in participation, and closure of readings. Moreover, the fact the programmes are enjoyed adds to its value.

An interesting point which came out of the discussion about the documentaries was the preferred mode of reception. S1 preferred to watch documentaries in the bedroom where she will be more relaxed. The issue of concentration, and the absence of distractions can also be assumed.

Subjects had no qualms about their apathy towards current affairs issues. As a result they were not interested in programmes which were focused on such issues. This apathy, was extended to interviews and discussion programmes, because of the association of these formats with the topic. However, they expressed a conditional interest in the genre of programme (talks). Their interest in such programmes was to be dependent on the topic in focus. Again because of the known association of these formats with the current affairs issues, the exposure pattern was usually not deliberate.

R: So you don't like discussions and interview programmes?

S1: Not really, except if it's a topic that I think I'm interested in, and that is if I [had] known before, otherwise, or okay, I just stumble into the programme..

R: But merely seeing the fact that it's an interview, I've noticed that you turn it off.

S1: That's it! [laughing]

R: That's not even giving it a chance to impress you.

S1: Once I know that maybe it's something that doesn't even

interest me, I'm not keen. I prefer doing something else, maybe that is the time, I remember "Okay let me start getting this done". I just forget about that.

. . . .

The nonchalance towards other programme types was not concealed. This complemented the observed viewing pattern. There was not much of a chance to watch TV in this context. They were always so preoccupied. It was thus not surprising that they had little to say about television. This was yet another family illustrating the presumed target audience. This made their summary of life as portrayed on TV of greater interest.

Images of Life

H: If I can just tell you in one word, what comes to my head now, I will say we live in a world of pretence.

R: Why pretence?

H: Because it's a grand delusion

This was a position which the women in the group did not confirm or reject. They were content to have H speak for them. He was no doubt the opinion leader. It was his opinion that television was a grand delusion because of the inherent contradictions in the portrayed images.

From their discussion, it was apparent that a good command of the language of presentation; the appropriate use of language; propriety; logic of reasoning were qualities which they appreciated in programmes.

The question of propriety was seen against the context in the programme, the viewing context, and the context of the reality that was being presented. For instance, while they were critical of the abusive language in the Yoruba dramas, they were able to excuse the dances in

the musical video that were condemned in other locations. The reasoning was that the dance forms were a part of the culture. It was the process of fitting these into the medium - camera work, and the choreography - that made the forms seem exaggerated. By so doing, they suggest a link between, understanding of the conventions of production, and the production of meaning.

Perceived Role of television

In spite of their criticisms, the subjects still felt that there was a place for television in the society. In the first place, they identified the fact that there was not much else by way of structured entertainment. However, the primary function which they expected from television was that it should be a medium of information, and then entertainment.

H: One would want to watch television for information, for maybe entertainment, but if I have [pause] in this country, you are glued. I cannot go, you see, it's dangerous to go out. Where are you going to go to? We don't have parks. In Sagamu area, the only pastime in this place is parties, and so if you are opposed to parties, there is no place for you to go. No stadium, no swimming pool, no open spaces, eh, no security, you can't drive out. There's very little. All you do is, sit down eat, no place to have exercise. Maybe all you hear people talk about is the kind of dresses and clothes to put on, absolutely trash. . .

The above outburst was one borne out of hurt. The subject realised from his exposure, that there was more that could be done. His analysis shows the fact that television has the potential for much higher reach to its audience than the present apathy makes possible. The audience is not opposed to the aims of the producers to be channels of information, particularly such that would enable them function more efficiently in the society. The question however, was in how this was spelt out - in the content and treatment of such.

LOCATION 10 - A RURAL YUPPIE

The subject in focus is a graduate of Psychology, who has a professional interest in television (advertisements) She thus has specialised knowledge of the TV industry. She is is an avid reader, and besides being educated, she is well informed. Although she is interested in how the medium has been used, she is very uninterested in the programming on the medium. She is very critical.

The subject is aged about 27. She was engaged just before the study. This meant that she was preoccupied with the preparations for the wedding. In addition she was acting as guardian for a family who had two little children, (aged 3, and 2). She was assisted by S2.

S2 was younger, about 20 years old, and more directly responsible for looking after the children. She was also not as educated. She only had partial secondary school education. She thus had to defer to S1. In spite of her full time domestic schedule, she had a keen interest in television.

S1 was teaching in a private primary school as part of the National Youth Service Corps scheme. This meant that she should have had plenty of free time, having an 8.00 a.m. - 4.00 p.m. work day. This was not the case. She was engaged in extra mural classes for two sets of children; one of primary school pupils, and another of secondary school students. The lessons had to be run separately. This meant that subject as well as the older children were sometimes, engaged till late in the evening - about 9 o' clock.

In addition to these, the subject was also involved in catering supplies.

H was S1's brother, and the family lived in a comfortable bungalow. The home was a multiple set home. There was a colour TV set in the sitting room with a video set; and a black and white set in one of the rooms. There was limited access to this set, unlike that in the sitting room. The sitting room was adjacent to the dinning room which was also occasionally, the venue of the coaching lessons.

Day 1

Subject returned late from school. Transmission had begun at this time. The children were playing outside, and the brother had not returned from work. S2 was engaged, preparing the meal. S1 went out immediately, (to attend a prayer meeting). She returned at about 7.30 p.m.

After eating she had to attend to her pupils, who had been waiting for her. She then excused herself and went to rest in her room. It is not clear if she went to sleep or if she was reading.

S2 on her part was not interested in any of the programmes that were on air. Like the subject in location 5, she had arrived at the conclusion that there was no programme on Mondays.

The only programme which S1 expressed an interest in, was a foreign comedy, a British production - "Yes, Prime Minister!" This programme was scheduled to come after the network news - at about 10.00 p.m. Although she did come out as she had decided to watch the programme, she fell asleep, within the first 5 minutes of waiting. As a matter of fact, she

had only come out to say "Goodnight", when she remembered that the programme was on.

On her part S2 had been occupied throughout the evening. By the the time the network news was on, she had only just settled the children in their beds. She had then returned to the kitchen, and the sitting room, to tidy up for the night. While she waited for H to have his meal, she sat down before the set. She was thus exposed to some of the news which she did not set out to watch. Although the subjects had rejected the programmes for the evening, the set had been left on. It was not long before she went into the room.

H had not consciously watched the news either. Although he sat within range of viewing the set, he did not appear to pay attention to it. He was still sitting before the set when the comedy came on. He was given himself time after the meal, so that he did not have to go straight to bed. As a result, he watched a bit of the programme before retiring. There were no remarks about what he saw, and it was not clear if he was really watching. He seemed uninterested. He was tired and pre-occupied. Thus ended the observation for the evening.

Day 2

It was a less hectic day for S1. She returned at the usual time from school, (about 4.30 p.m.). She had had a chance to rest, before the students for the coaching lessons arrived. By 7.00 p.m., subject was anticipating the Christian soap opera, Another Life. In the meantime the set was left on but the volume was subdued. She was however conscious of what was going on. The TV which was on OGTV was blank. Subject deduced that there had been a cut in the power supply at the station. What was

interesting was that she was steeling herself for the disappointment that this would mean.

Even before the station had a chance to explain the problem, she had assumed that the programme would not be shown that evening. As a result, she switched the channels round. As she was doing this, her attention was caught by the 7UP, Fido Fedo commercial. This evoked a positive response from her.

S1: This is one of the most creative adverts I've ever seen. This one! It isn't until now, that I know that it's 7UP that is being advertised. You know, they successfully made use of the suspense theme.

For about 3 to 4 weeks they've been showing us that the difference is clear. "The difference is clear" and because it was animated, cartoonish kind of, you'll be wondering that "What is this that the difference is clear? . . . " [sic]

Subject went into an analysis of the strategy employed in the launching of the Fido Fedo campaign. As she had observed, for weeks, the animation of Fido Fedo had been shown, along with the question, "What is the difference? " The curiosity of the viewers, as noted in other locations (for example in #8, #9) had been aroused.

S1 noted that there were not so many adverts that had been as creative. She was particularly impressed because it had shown her that some thought had gone into the production of the message. It was very important to her that the message showed some intelligence. She found the message -

"very creative, and entertaining".

There was no reference to the attitudinal or behavioural changes that the message may have evoked. What was important to her was that her

intelligence was not being undermined, a charge which she levelled against a lot of the other adverts.

While this appraisal was going on, the set was ignored; which meant the other aspects of programming which came on.

S2 in the meantime was feeding the children. She had brought them to the living room so that she would not miss any part of the anticipated programme.

Because the station had been changed, there was no way of knowing what happened on the channel - OGTV. The set had been left on LTV, which also showed the serial Another Life at a later time. S2 concentrated on watching this whilst S1 continued her appraisal of the various advertisements.

There was the advert of Harp Larger beer, which was the first on the subject's list of "stupid" adverts.

"Hey look, they are playing Polo, they took a break, and they went to take a drink, beautiful! The drink was Harp beer! I mean! And what surprises me is that everybody else didn't see that. You know, for crying out loud! Are people stupid? Some of us do watch these things you know. It really hurts me. And somebody tries to stand . . . up to their defence. . . They went and took the drink and went back to the field to play Polo. Do you drink beer when you are on a horse moving at XYZ kilometer speed per hour? Do you want to kill yourself? I mean that is really dumb. That's what I mean by creativity and intelligence in adverts. "

The subject because of her training was able to articulate what perhaps others had seen but had not been able to describe appropriately . Whereas they had merely classed the adverts as being "meaningless" as did the subject in location 12, S1 here, was able to articulate the

illogical reasoning in the message. There were several other examples which she cited.

She was so familiar with the adverts, that she could even ape the gestures and the delivery of the lines. Two of the other adverts cited were those for Venus Gold body products, and Chevalier brandy. Her familiarity with these went beyond her exposure to them on the television. Her experience with them included the exercises she had had in her classes.

As noted S2 was mindful of the programmes. She, it was, who got up to change the channel to an NTA station. She wanted to watch the comedy on the network service, The New Masquerade. Having said her piece, S1 returned to reading her book, and she completely ignored the comedy. She did not even bother with the programme which she had set out to watch. She had missed it on the two stations. She did not appear to be particularly interested in any viewing. Although her mood had been positive when she saw the 7UP commercial, this had changed following the appraisal of the other unsatisfactory adverts.

Contrary to S1, S2 had finished her chores hurriedly, prepared the children for bed, and settled down to watch the programme. Even when prompted to watch the programme, S1 confirmed that she was not interested.

R: Why don't you like it? .ls1

S1: How can an adult be crying?

Her objection was based on inappropriate casting in the programme. Although she recognised the fact the characters in question were

supposed to be boys, she still saw them as grown men, which they were.

In addition, she did not find the story line realistic;

"I just think of them as useless old men. How can he [Zebrudaya] make his servants cry so? You know that kind of thing. So I'd lost interest [in the programme] from the onset. . . "

The image which the subject had, was that which the programme had since departed from. She was still holding on to this after several years, and it had underscored her attitude to the programme.

"But you'll agree with me that they used to cry? Ehen! An adult man who erred and starts crying, and he's going to be at it for the next fifteen minutes."

Besides casting, the above remark also points to poor techniques of production, which some other subjects had alluded to. That the actor spends, what seems like the next 15 minutes, (in a 30 minute programme) crying, suggests that too much time was spent on the particular scene. This is similar to the comment of S2 in location 8 (Day 6).

S1's attitude to the programme, also stems from her limited appreciation of the programme. She reported that she did not understand the point there was to it. She did not always understand what was going on. This is an example of a local production which was alien to a local viewer. She could not blame this on the use of pidgin English with which she had limited competence, because there were other local productions which she could follow, even though they also employed pidgin English. The distinction existing between the example she cited, and the programme in question, was the setting. S1 belonged to one culture, and not the other.

As a result of her inability to relate with the portrayed culture, which was the context in which the message was brought, subject had difficulty finding the gist of the message. This thus added to her indifference to the programme.

Her lack of interest in the programme, was another cue for subject, and she began another critique of television programmes. At the core of her resentment was the lack of creativity. She identified this as a lack of originality in the locally produced TV programmes. The subject even feared that she might be "too foreign inclined" in her taste.

Going by her education and her experience, the possibility of having a foreign taste is not ruled out, but the observations were not baseless.

She cited the example of a local comedy, "Second Chance". The programme which was on the network service, had since been discontinued. It was a comedy which replicated the idea in the British production, Mind Your Language. Mind Your Language had itself been on the NTA schedule before Second Chance came on. As a result, the subject did not need to have lived in Britain to have a standard against which to measure the new programme.

"In the first place, why did they, ooooooh! . . . When Second Chance came, and it was the same classroom setting teaching and everything. An adult teaching class, you know, a language. It was very very obvious that look, nobody thought of that thing, until we had watched Mind Your Language, from reverse to fastforward on the Nigerian screen, then somebody is now taking the hints from them, and wants to Nigerianise, (you get) a foreign programme. It's dumb now! I can't have watched Mind Your Language for 5 years, and really enjoyed it, you know, and come and sit down to watching Second Chance. The production is not as good; the jokes are not original; the punchlines, you've heard them before - there's nothing in it. So I mean, that is the long and short of all these [comedies]. [sic - my emphasis]

Again as she was wont to do, subject had ignored the viewing of the programme, to air her criticisms of the service. In these she gives an indication as to her apathy towards the set.

The subject had made a distinction between the local comedies. She did not extend the observations noted above, to the comedies employing the vernacular. Notable of these was the original Alawada series (Baba Sala). As with the other subjects, she appreciated Baba Sala's contribution. Having said that, she feared that the programme as it was being shown presently had become influenced by the times, and was now introducing a focus on the diabolical.

This particular comment suggested that subject's rejection to the present programming amounted to a rejection of the prevalent values in a changing society.

She concluded that it is a shame, that the medium was being used in such a way. This subject had made a distinction between the technology and the use to which it had been put. This verbal expression is a more direct way of the making the distinction. In some other cases, (as in location 3, 4, 9, and 11), the distinction had been expressed in the alternative use of the medium. It was used to view videos, scheduling programmes of their choice. There was a collection of home videos in this location as well.

S1 momentarily turned to S2, and inquired about the programme. S2 could not tell what the programme was about, yet she was supposed to have been attending the programme. It was not clear if the story had not evolved sufficiently for her to report what was going on, or if she had been

distracted by S1 's critique, which was quite vehement; expressing the depth of her feelings.

S1 then returned to expressing her gripes. Her focus began with the flaws in presentation.

"It is the responsibility of the stations to put somebody who knows what he's doing there. A presenter comes and just cannot speak proper English! . . . I can't sit down and listen to the programme he's presenting. When in fact the one who is telling me about the programme doesn't know what is going to happen, you get? Some unpardonable slips. . . "

Subject was confident that within 20 minutes of viewing, she would encounter examples of such slips.

They are there, whether you agree with me - they are there. So somebody comes and says, that "You have been watching OGTV, and the programme was eh" - In the first place he is so drab, you can see that he himself has not been watching. It's just [because] 'It's my shift tonight, and I'm your duty announcer' or something.

He talks more, all sorts of grammatical errors. At the end of the day, [he says] 'Will you now sit down and watch - ' Ah, forget it! "

Subject's concern with presentation was in a sense linked to the earlier expressed concern - respect for her intelligence. This meant that the presentation itself, added to the meaning of what was said - that the presenter was not enthusiastic made the viewer feel that the programme was not worth watching. Likewise, the stumbling of the presenter was interpreted as a lack of competence on the issue that such a presenter had brought. All these resulted in the subject refusing to be exposed to the content of the medium.

In spite of her deliberate refusal to attend TV programming, subject exhibited a knowledge of some of these. For instance, she reported on

the some good adverts that she had seen recently. That of 7UP has already been cited. There was another in which she confused the name of the brands. She referred to the Bournvita commercial, but identified it as that of a competing brand Vitalo. The key concept which she remembered clearly, was that the product was the food drink which offers Vitality.

The subject thus showed again that she focused on the promise of the product, and not just what it says. [Re. comments about Harp beer earlier on in the day.]

The confusion of the two brands also buttressed the allegation of a lack of freshness on the part of the advertisers; the similarity in the messages encourages such confusion.

"It's the same setting, well may be I won't bet my last Naira on it, but it's the same house which they use to advertise Cornflakes in the morning, the same family they use in advertising toothpaste; the same family they use in advertising Lipton tea. It's the same man, his wife and his children - Ribena drink, Lipton tea, UTB [Universal Trust Bank] toothpaste in the morning, all of them and I mean so, you just could put one for the other and come up with the same rubbish! - 'Take it easy dear, have a good day' - Whether it's tea [that] he drank or the cornflakes he ate; or if it's the bank to which he's going - it's the same thing! . . ."

Although S1's reading seemed exaggerated, (as S2 pointed out, that the adverts do not all use the same words), there was a striking similarity in the meaning which the adverts conveyed to her. In her reading, she had gone beyond the exact words that were used, to the promise that was embedded in the words. Besides the similarity in the themes of the adverts, subject again identified the lack of originality in the conceptualisation and presentation of the messages.

"We've had Kellogs cornflakes on our ears for so long. Kellogs was the only cornflakes that Nigeria knew. . . Nasco came with cornflakes - Ah beautiful we can now make cornflakes in Nigeria, and it's of good quality - advertise. Why did it have to be a cock? Couldn't they have found something else to advertise the cornflakes apart from the "Koo ko roo koo" that Kellogs used to advertise theirs for the past - Mr, Kellogs died may be 3 centuries ago, why did they have to steal Mr. Kellogs idea? " [sic]

While the subject was busy criticising more advertisements, the three year old at the mention of a particular advert, re-hashed the lines in the advert. She was more accurate than the subject.

Subject blamed the similarity in the messages for her incompetence. It however seemed from the observed pattern that her chequered viewing could also have accounted for her inaccurate reading. Since the beginning of the exercise, subject had not settled down to watch any programme on TV. Rather than be drawn into the programme by the cues which attracted her attention, she was prompted by those cues to launch into a criticism of the service. She seemed to have focused on the negative aspects of the programming. Even when she saw what was commendable, it reminded her of those myriad of other condemnable aspects of the programming. Her attitude towards the entire service, was a block for the messages that were in the programmes.

There was another point which emerged from her criticism. This was the divergence in her reading, and that of S2. Whilst S2 accepted the cock's crow as a signifier for the time of day, and thus not out place in the various adverts, S1, because she had taken the message on a different level of meaning, found the use of the signifier as being trite, and unimaginative. It would appear that S1's education accounts for this difference in reading.

As the observation progressed S1 was clearly the one who had difficulty identifying characters. It appears that to her, they are just icons, so she cared mainly about the image that they portrayed. For S2 the characters are indicators, who are merely playing specific roles. So, while S2 is easily satisfied, with the apparent message, S1 is not, as she launches into an analysis of the programme.

Some of the subject's objections about adverts, stem from the fact that the products are targeting the same market strata, and using similar talents and settings which even when not replicable, are interchangeable.

Another of S1's observation is that of the limited pool from which talents are drawn. As a result, the same talents are seen over and over again. As she pointed out, it is the same person who sells Cadbury's chocolate spread, who sells one of the new trade banks. The character plays the lead role in both, and she had been a star in one of the popular (discontinued) drama series. To the subject, this diminished the effectiveness she might have had in her delivery of the messages, because she was no longer fresh. Another advert which she identified as being good; which showed some ingenuity. It was that which playing on the brand name, "packed" 33 people into a 2 - door panel van. This was such an obvious exaggeration that it did not insult her intelligence. Instead, it was so striking, that it became an effective aid to memorability of product name. It is interesting that subject had taken the trouble to count the people who were packed into the car, and was certain that there were 33 of them. (The advert is similar to the current Britvic orange juice commercial which tries to squeeze several

fat men into a telephone booth)

"I sat and counted it one day. . . and I found that 33, yes they had 33 people coming out of a car . . . Ha! Ha! Ha! Everybody has a good laugh at least it has entertained you, whether you want to drink double 3 Export or not."

It was not long before S1's attitude affected S2. The attitude was contagious, and S2 chipped in her own examples of the "ridiculous". These were adverts of household items - various soap, and bouillon cubes. S1 was again the one who articulated the shared sentiments.

S1: (mimicking the advert) 'Mummy I'm sure it is the Maggi your - (laughter) These things are ridiculous. A child comes back from boarding house, maybe 11 or 12, 'Oh mummy' in a very false voice, in the first place, a very very false accent, 'Oh mummy, I've missed home. 'I'm sure it is the Maggi cube in my soup that you missed.' - Can you imagine? Not the soup, it is the Maggi that is inside the soup that you missed. You know, you just wonder. . .

S1: As we talk about it, I'm reminded of the soap adverts. One woman brings out her whole laundry - Elephant blue detergent, complete with lipstick. See her bangles up to here; [points to the elbow level] well manicured nails, then she wants to come and start scrubbing - OOOh! Is that how you dress to wash clothes? "

At the end of the day, there had been no viewing. Each attempt to focus on something good from the service, ended up being reminders of even worse offences that had been observed. S2 who seemed interested in the programme, had been successfully distracted by S1 and her griping.

Although S1 recognised herself as being extreme, the subject realised that she was not the worst offender. She cited the example of others who do not even bother to give the TV service a chance at all.

The only programme which subject expressed an interest in watching on a regular basis, was the soap opera - Another Life, but the incentive to watch that was dampened by the fact that she had watched the entire

series, and knew the outcome of the story.

S1 is of the opinion that TV was not worth watching especially between the hours of 6.30 and 8.30 p.m. "Everybody is reading news in one language or the other". [Refer to the programme schedules in the appendix to verify this remark]

" People like OGTV finish their State news, [and] straight on to the network news. In fact, they hold back the network news for a couple of minutes to finish their State news. So, that means you watch TV, you are watching news for at least one hour, and a half, solid! "

What made the trend even more offensive was the content of the news that was presented.

"There isn't anything to talk about. Is there that much to talk about. Even if there is, they are not saying it well enough. Hun! un! [grunts illustrating the type of insignificant details in the news, followed by more concrete examples] - Somebody did Iwuye [chieftaincy] ceremony; what was that they showed on OGTV today? That the man was praying and he could not even remove his cap? . . . They spent 15 minutes on that feature alone, and they went from the house opening [warming] ceremony, to another funeral. . . It was not a prayer meeting, so the praying was no issue. . . "

Subject's inattentive demeanour had been responsible for her misreading in the particular details presented here, but her general observations were largely correct. In spite of her ignoring the programming, S1 was aware of what was going on. She had just not cared enough to attend the programmes.

The programme which she was describing was not the news. It was a special feature on a king's coronation anniversary that had been on at 8.00 p.m., preceding the OGTV news which came on at 8.30 p.m. This special feature did bear a semblance with the news, and the programme,

dove-tailed into the news. The item was also featured in the newscast. The subject's conceptions were not baseless, even though they were not totally accurate and they informed her attitude to the programmes.

These sort of preconceptions, had kept her from the programmes. For example, she was convinced that the children in the earlier scheduled network programme for children - Speak Out, were well rehearsed, with tailored questions, which give the government a chance to come out "smelling of roses". This view is different from the reality which the producer of the programme boasts of. The producer was proud of the children's intelligence, and the types of challenging questions which they came up with. Subject was certain, that if not the producer, the parents or other significant adults in the children's lives, (Sunday school teachers; neighbours) would have coached the children. For this reason she was not impressed by the programme.

Her conception of children was that they were too "innocent" to ask the types of questions credited to them. At the time it was shown, S1 was busy with her students so she did not watch the programme. She had only overheard it. Yet, she was convinced of her views. Moreover, she saw the programme as an imitation of old programmes on various other stations. This raises the issue of freshness in programming again.

In the course of her deliberation, subject referred to the types of health programmes which she had seen. These were also devoid of imagination in her opinion. The illustrations were considered to be "very gory", "really horrible looking" and lacking in the ability to communicate to the lay person. That being the case, they had not served the purpose for which they had been put on air. [Re. subject in location

1, and the viewing of the Health programme] On this occasion, she found a positive side to the error. The "really explicit pictures", "put the fear of God" in the viewer; that "if you do not brush your teeth, this is what gum cancer is all about".

The doctors who are invited to discuss the problems were seen by this subject as being too sophisticated, to communicate successfully with the audience.

Though she recognised that the programmes which she had condemned were all the result of hard work, she could not, regrettably, help holding those views. For her, the TV was left on simply for company. This is interesting because she would not have lacked company in the home. It raises the issue that there was more to company than just hearing voices in the home. It suggested that the subject, wanted to be in touch with the larger world as presented on TV in spite of the perceived lapses. This explanation can also be offered for the other subjects (notably those in location 2) who unequivocally condemned TV, but would not agree to having TV service scrapped.

While the news was being read, there was no interest shown in it. Subject focused on discussing the school trip which was a boat cruise. H arrived from work at about this time, (9.00, p.m.) he objected to the choice of food that had been prepared for him. Both S1 and S2 thus had to prepare something else. Although the preparation was not laborious, the activity had taken them away from the set completely. This put paid to the viewing of most of the news.

Even when she returned, S1 did not attend to the news. S2 returned a bit

later because she had the added responsibility of clearing up. S1 rather than watch the news, read her book. She was not impervious to what was going on. She had another outburst as the station in view showed its promotional clip in place of the (last) commercial break within the network news. It was the station's use of the English language, that had aggravated her.

"Maybe it's just that we don't understand the English language anymore. - [mimicking the station] "The station of sophistication, and dedication . . . " - must you force a rhyme? I think your aim should be to communicate. . . There are tidier ways of saying things without forcing rhyme. . .'

With that she launched into another spate of criticisms; all of which go back to the lack of originality. This led to the question of the lack of propriety, introduced by S2.

S2: As for OGTV they don't know what they ought to do in the day time and at night . . ."

S1: They will show Dynasty at 5.30, in the afternoon, and Annie at 11.00 o' clock. . .

The focus of their attention at this time was the propriety of the scheduling patterns of the stations. OGTV was seen as the most notorious station of all.

As the network news gave way to the the station's commercial break, the subjects were attentive to the promos and adverts. It was those aspects which they considered negative, that they noticed first. At this point, S2 got up to change the station. There was no remote control in this location, which meant that a more deliberate effort was required to make any changes in what was being watched.

S2 zapped round, her change was not to a pre-determined destination. She

eventually selected NTA (Abeokuta) channel 12. The station was showing a musical. The artiste in view was "Yellow man"; a (popular) reggae artiste. He is an albino, who has short (worm-like) dreadlocks. S1 found the character "frightening", S2 found him off putting, though not frightful. The TV was switched back to OGTV in anticipation of the movie that may follow.

It was S2 who suggested the move, because she had watched the promo which advertised the schedule. She knew that there was a movie coming up. S1 on her part was more ignorant of what to expect. Her limited exposure was compounded by the fact that she was more "loyal" to a particular station. This station, OGTV, was that which she criticised most. The "loyalty" referred to was not an expression of preference. It seemed to be a habit, that subject, because of her general apathy, could not be bothered to change.

It took the very first line in the awaited programme, for the subjects to decide that they were not interested in it, preferring to go to bed.

TV programme: Well, it looks like your life Mr. Nelson. . .

S1: Look, since they have started on that note, they will soon draw their guns. I am going to bed.

S2 also followed suit. The programme was identified by H who by then had joined the group, as the police series, "Dempsey and Memphis". S1 equated it to "Starsky and Hutch". S2 was not familiar with the programmes enough to find any such categorical labels. The subjects waited to see who was correct. It was H. They had however been correct in their anticipation of a crime. S1 had found the welling of the music as further evidence that there was to be a crime. She was right. At the crescendo of the music, a man was killed. It was at this time that she

went in to the room.

It appeared as though S2 would not have minded watching but with S1's exit, she was obliged to leave as well. Thus ended the observation for the day.

Day 3

Being a Youth Corper, S1 was released from her teaching assignment, for community service. She had seized the opportunity to travel out of town and returned very tired. In spite of that, she joined S2 in the viewing of the imported soap opera Dynasty. The programme was so captivating, that S1 put her students on hold while she watched it.

She was really engrossed in the programme, and her outburst indicated the level of participation that there was. The outbursts also became opportunities to discuss the meaning that was taken from the programme. For S1, an evaluation of the programme was an assessment of the culture that it depicted. She drew on her experience of other "similar" programmes to support her position. Similarity in this case was not only based on the format, but on the depicted culture.

There was a court scene in which the issue of child custody had arisen within the divorce proceedings. (Compare with the theme in the viewing of Another Life in location 4). The following was S1's outburst.

"Immaturity! The way in which they marry and divorce, it shows they can't handle real life problems. It's not as if it's a real life situation, anyway . . . but don't you know what a commitment to marriage is? Stick with it and make it work. . . "

Subject referred to her perceptions of love, courtship and marriage (in

the Western world), and though she recognised the programme as being fictional, she expected to find her own real life standards. The fictional programmes were seen as depicting the reality of the culture that they portrayed. In this situation as well, the elasticity between reality and the TV portrayal was expressed.

Without any particular regard for statistics, she was not surprised that marriages do not last. She drew on her preconceptions of the society in insinuating that the Western culture was indulgent. This is more explicit in the following.

"This matter is similar to that in Another Life - the grandfather; [supporting his daughter against her husband so that he could have custody of his grandson] But these whitemen tolerate nonsense. What is the grandfather's business in the matter. Can you imagine Baba, coming to put his foot down about ----, is he not ----'s son? "

This reading showed subject's disrespect for the culture which was seen as being permissive. The programme was seen as showing "their" way. She did not recognise the universality of the problem being featured. It was used as a basis for comparison. In this case, she was able to identify those aspects of the culture which were "inferior" to that which she had. This was the one instance, where, in comparison with the more advanced Western society, the Nigerian society was perceived as being superior.

The 3-year-old (G) was able to identify items of furniture which were familiar to her. It is not certain that she was following the story line, but she was able to point out the visual aspects which she had seen in her own environment.

G: Aunty, we have this at the club, we have it.

It seems natural, coming also from a three-year-old, that foreign programmes are assessed against the known reality of the viewer. This evaluation as has been seen in S1's reading, could evoke a contemptuous attitude. In this case, as in that in location 11, the contempt was towards the Western culture. Both situations had to do with values regarding morality. (There is a remote similarity in the rejection of films that was expressed in other locations)

In other examples that have been seen, the contempt was towards the viewer's society, for not being able to offer the better standards of living, which the programmes confirm exists elsewhere. The pattern is that while the viewers appreciate the infrastructure that the Western culture provides, they are disdainful of some of the (family) values that it holds.

In the course of the viewing, S2 engaged herself in making, G's hair. This meant that her attention was divided. Even then, there was a synergy between both subjects as they viewed. S2 was a more regular viewer of the series, and S1 had watched the series at a much earlier date. They thus helped each other, clarifying the potential points of confusions that were within the programme.

S1: Oh, so these two are not married anymore?

S2: Yes, that's what I've been trying to tell you.

S2: Will she marry him at last?

S1: I don't know. I did not watch that bit. This man really loves this woman. She is the only woman she's ever loved in his whole life.

. . . .

There were a range of responses which the programme evoked. For instance there was outburst from one of the characters, (Alexis to Blake), the whole uproar was at first funny, the subjects laughed. Thereafter, it was lamentable.

S1: The judge's ear will be full. Oh! . . . This judge is very biased. Why is he asking this man to remain in control of himself? Can't he see that this woman provoked him with all the nonsense she's saying. What kind of foolish -, Jumoke [a friend] likes this girl, because she's "prim, prim, prim" you know. She's the kind of woman you would love to hate. She hates her, but then she loves her. - Why is he saying they should put Blake under control? Can't he see that Alexis is the sharp edged - "[sic]

The subject's attention was swinging as her outburst showed. While she was reacting to the immediate situation, she was also responding to the character. One could then say that her reading was both horizontal and vertical; particular incident, as well as the more general implication of such.

This type of reading determined the level of attention which the subject gave to particular segments of the programme. For instance, it enabled her to make predictions about the unfolding plot. There was complete silence when such were to be verified.

[As the two rivals confronted each other]

S1: They will fight in a minute. They will never stop fighting. This woman is a witch!

SILENCE

[There was complete attention to the dialogue. It was an encounter between the "victim" and the "villainess". The commentary only came as the anticipated point was made]

S1: [of victim] She's the best of them; the saint. . .

S2: She came to meet that woman by the hospital, and she told him not to go near her children anymore and so on. That's how they landed themselves in the water, then their husband arrived. Instead of

S1: Hold on, hold on, let's hear what this one is going to say.

This was a most engaging programme for both subjects. Their focus had been on the resolution of life-like crisis, that was in it. The example cited indicate this. They evaluated the events, and the characters, and apportioned blame and sympathy as they saw fit. Their evaluation was based on the information available to them from the programme; and their predispositions to the specific problems. These came from their own held values; their real life experience and that from other programmes.

At the end of the programme, S1 launched into her critique of Nigerian productions again. The programme was used as a measure for the Nigerian "equivalents". Subject was of the opinion that one of the soaps on the network, which had "copied" some aspect of this programme in the sequence of its opening visuals. Again, the point of departure, was the issue of the lack of originality.

"That's the one I said the Nigerian programme copied. The way they just zoom in on a skyline. And then they go to Lagos. Maybe they go to one high building in Lagos and take it and then begin to flash the names across this, with this very, what's it called, compelling music in there, so that whatever it is you are doing, you can - "Ah they've started" whatever it's called. It's so annoying. It's so unoriginal, that's what irks me. . . ."

Rather than be appreciative of the effort, the subject was "irked" by the obvious similarity in the programmes. Her objection may not be restricted to the "copying" of foreign programmes. [Re. Day 2]. It also has to do with a problem compounded by the demands of television, the development of "formula" programmes, which arises from, and reflects the pressures of the industry's consumption. The issue of similarity of

concepts, was only made worse by the inability to imaginatively mask such.

As the subject's choice of programme left the screen, she requested that the volume of the set be turned down. The output of the set only became "noisy" when there was no interest in such. When again her attention was called to a musical clip which she favoured (Christy Essien's "So So Ka Gbo"), she asked that the volume be increased again. S2 had found the clip as she searched around the various stations.

She had done this, as she got up to turn the set down. On finding the particular clip which she recognised as S1's favourite, she drew her attention to it. S1 appreciated the particular clip, because of its communicative ability - the theme, the style of delivery, and she recognised a freshness in the approach.

"Yes, this is my friend . . .leave it on, leave it on. So why is this woman my friend of all the songy people? Because her song, what she's singing about is very different. Do you understand? And she's being very frank; that "You new government, don't come and mess up." She's gone to the market women; she's gone to the offices; she's gone to the bus drivers, because we are the ones that are going to be ruled. We the grassroots. Don't you see them? [reading the subtitles of the song] "We hear they are arriving again!" You know, I think it is original, she's not just singing "Shogologobangoshe" [A meaningless onomatopoea, made popular by a primary school text]

Subject was really impressed by this effort. She used both the visual and audio aspects of the musical to make sense of it. She was also impressed by the hardwork that she knew must have gone into the making of the programme. For instance, the fact that the singer was not Yoruba, and yet was rendering the song without any flaws, in the Yoruba language was in itself, as impressive as her boldness.

She was also impressed that the song ended on a hopeful tone.

" . . . It's on a positive note. It's not as if - this Nigeria is completely ruined, it's rotten! - Ehen, "God will assist us" You see, they should come, we are prepared for them, and with God's help we shall emerge victorious."

She believed that the songwriter deserved an award. An interesting aspect of the above illustration was the way the subject expanded on what she read. She read both that which she saw, as well as that which she could have seen. In addition, she read the totality of the song, and not just the individual lines as they came.

There was a consensus that the performer sings well.

S2: She sings with all she has.

This was not the case with some others. All it took to reject some was the looks, especially as the songs did not have such striking meanings. In some cases, it was that the visuals were so detailed, and so explicit that they are better avoided.

"This woman looks like a demon" . . .

"I think I've seen it before, they show some malnourished children. It's the kind of song I'd like to listen to with my eyes closed."

The end of the interlude was significant to the subjects. It was an indicator of what time it was. For S1, it was an indicator of "the end of programming", since "there will be nothing else but news till 9.30 p.m." As she had explained, the news as presented did not show that there was enough happening to warrant so much time being devoted to the news. She was certain that the various newscasts were almost exact replicas of each other.

She had had to correct her initial assessment that there was not enough news. She recognised the fact that there was news, but identified the process of packaging news, as the problem. Her position challenged the definition of news. Her objections were summed up in the following vehement response to the suggestion that the news as presented, reflects the obvious statement that it makes - that there was no other news available in the society.

" . . . We know nothing about ourselves, yet we say there's no news. There is news! But they have not, - "they" meaning those who say it, and those who find it; news researchers. . . they don't have a good concept of news. I was going to say they don't have a training school, but I remember that they do. I wonder though what they are taught in their training school. . . "

This subject, as even the less educated ones in location 2, is aware that the TV news is a product. Though she could not confidently blame their training, she knew that there was something missing in the production process. Again, her education had only helped her articulation. Her observations were very similar to those of the less educated group. The responses were similar - inattentive viewers, non-chalance in attitude to TV programming.

Unlike the less educated group of viewers, she did not completely ignore the set. She could not afford to. Being more directly affected by government directives, she still found use for the news. [Re. subjects in location 8]. This point is illustrated in the following.

In spite of her commentary on the news, she still had an eye on the news, and was able to caution herself, and attend to the item which caught her interest. This sort of viewing was facilitated by the use of

visuals. She had become attentive when she sighted Youth Corpers in their uniform. She stopped to attend to that item because it was of relevance to her, being a Youth Corper herself. As soon as she established what the story was about, she just carried on as before, "relaying her own newscast", as the TV newscast was being read.

Another item which caught the subject's attention was the "multi-thousand" naira donation mentioned within an item. The news item was about the celebrations of a particular festival in a certain town. The magnitude of the ostentation, was what attracted the subject in this case. Thereafter, she noted the negative implication of the story to herself. Going by her experience of the station's pattern, she noted the fact that various aspects of the festival would dominate the programming for the next few weeks. In other words, she was fuelling her apathy towards the set for the period of time. It was on that note that she left the set to attend to her students.

As with the other educated subjects, she found that there was a greater need to rely on the TV (and less of radio) because of the prohibitive costs of newspapers. This was not to imply that the newspapers had a better news judgement, they were also condemned for their editorial judgement, and quality of their production.

At 7.00 p.m., when Another Life came on the air, (the station in view was OGTV), S1 came round to watch the programme. She had given the students an exercise to keep them busy. One of the older students was known to be an ardent fan of the programme. S1 noted that she was not concentrating, especially as she was within earshot of the programme. She therefore decided that the students should join her in viewing the

programme, so that they could thereafter, face their assignment with undivided attention. It turned out that S1, again, did not watch the programme which she had set out to watch. Instead, she went in to have a short rest, while the student was left to watch the programme.

S2 on the other hand, put off her chores so that she could watch. There was not much consultation between both viewers, although the occasional outburst were still present. Each watched as though the other was absent.

The programme which followed was a serial drama in Yoruba. S2 waited to assess the programme. She had seen the promotional clip and had been put off by it. None the less, she still waited to see if the programme itself would be worth watching. It proved not to be, so she went off to complete her chores without any regrets. At this time S1 had resumed her teaching. The set was thus left unwatched.

In the event that the set was on, the subjects who were within earshot could not help overhearing the dialogue. This way, S1 who had no interest in the programme found herself asking questions about it, and making comparisons; drawing parallels between her views of this and another drama. This was a foreign drama, the American produced soap, Another Life.

Though she did not directly watch the programme, she relied on S2's report of the aspects which she had seen. She thus "saw" the programme, through S2's eyes, but she negotiated the meaning from her own experience.

In spite of her fleeting exposure to the programme, she was able to conclude that it was "more wicked and dreadful" than another of the same sort. That observation set her off on another spate of criticism of the television service.

In all these, subjects identified BCOS as being the best of the stations, because of its tradition of introducing innovations to programming - phone in programmes; the leisurely general interest magazine show on Saturday morning; and even the various Yoruba drama serials. They exhibited a familiarity with the trends in television programming in spite of their unceasing criticisms. An interesting aspect of their analysis, is their perception of the Yoruba serial dramas that they listed.

S2: They [BCOS] are the first to bring Feyikogbon, Yapon-yarin, something or the other, Aja Dudu; Iya Pupa; these

S1: What is the meaning of Yapon-yarin? Is that the title of a programme as well? I hear that being said - Yapon-yarin; Kumo!

(Laughter)

The above assessment was not an accurate review of the facts, although it was the subjects perception. For instance, Feyikogbon was an NTA 7, production. It could thus not have been shown first on BCOS. The statement was a reference to the genre, and it was the similarity in the programmes, that was responsible for this error.

The names mentioned above are programme titles. With the exception of one, their meanings have direct connotations with evil; sorcery; dread.

Yapon-yarin - tupsy turvey; spell induced calamity
Kumo - Club (as in weapon)
Iya Pupa - The red woman (red as in blood) a.k.a. witch

Aja Dudu - Black dog
Feyikogbon - Learn from this

Although Feyikogbon does not have such a direct connotation with the dreary, it had become associated with such because of the similarity in the programmes, and its focus on the diabolical.

S1 was thoroughly fed up with the entire genre, and requested that the channels be switched. S2 had left the programme on, whilst she lamented the latest addition to the schedule; recounting the atrocities in such programmes as she did so. This was to buttress her rejection of such. In doing so, she was "exposing" S1 to the rejected programmes.

They never got round to switching the programme off, till it was concluded. The volume was merely reduced. S1 noted how lengthy the closing credits were, and commented. She wondered about the number of people who had sponsored the programme.

During the commercial break, the Bournvita commercial came on. The volume of the set was still subdued at this time, but the visuals had still attracted the viewers. It was S2 who first noticed it, and drew S1's attention to it. G requested permission to turn the volume up. She was also fascinated by the advert. This was how the TV regained it's aural presence.

It was while S2 was assisting G with the volume, that she remembered another drama on the network service. (The Young Ones). She thus changed the channel at the end of the commercial.

S1 was not sufficiently familiar with the said programme. She again

relied on S2's description to identify the programme. In spite of the differences in their educational status, this subject's behaviour was similar to that of S1 in location 1. As a result, they were both open to misinformation.

This is not to suggest that the subjects are gullible. With sufficient exposure, they are able to correct the "errors" in the reading. The problem arises when they do not make themselves available for such exposure.

In this case, S1 sat with the programme, although not concentrating on it, she was mindful of what was going on. After a few minutes, which to her seemed like ten minutes, and there was no change in the scenes; and she had not been captivated by the dialogue, she decided to go out to the club, rather than watch TV. She thus left S2 and the children at the set.

While they discussed the programme, they made references to other dramas on the network service. S1, was confused as to the distinctions in the identities of the programmes. It was an opportunity to clarify her reading of those programmes. It was also a chance for S2 to recommend the "likeable" programmes. It was an illustration of how group readings are generated. Likewise, it illustrated word of mouth recommendations, which influence choice - how the viewer's appetite is wet.

In rejecting the programmes, the subjects showed that the audience expect to be cultivated. Each individual wants to be pampered, not taken for granted.

"These OGTV are so discourteous. They don't even think of

their audience. . . They'll just be showing films thoughtlessly, as if it's a he goat or a sheep that's watching it. I'm not watching anymore! I'm going to the club."

The subject had tried OGTV, to see if there was a more acceptable programme which could replace the rejected drama. She had only found the news, and she was angered that it was all the station could offer after having spent, an hour on "the sorcery", and knowing that the next programme was to be the network news. It was this disappointment that evoked memories of others, and the above outburst.

Being stuck at home with the children, S2 was to choose from the available options. She relied on the judgement of the children - that which they preferred. This illustrates the level of loyalty that she had for the available options. (the drama on network, and the news on OGTV. LTV was not considered at all). The child opted for the drama.

It was not surprising that S2 left the set on, unwatched. Rather, she went about her chores, and thereafter she took the children to bed. Thus ended the viewing for the day.

The fact that the rejected programme dove-tails into the network news seems to have totally quenched any interest that the subjects might have had in viewing. They were not interested in the news, and did not find the programme interesting enough to endure viewing it. As a result, by the time the news came on, the group had dispersed.

H had not returned from work at the time.

Day 4

Observation began at about 7.00 p.m. Subject was busy with her students.

The children were called in. Unlike other days, S2 did not show any interest in the set. She was very busy with her chores, which she normally left till later. On this day she cooked and fed the children, even prepared them for bed and had cleared up in the kitchen by 8.00 p.m. It was only at this time that it became apparent, that she had structured her chores around the programme which she intended watching.

By 8 o' clock the family convened to watch a much talked about drama on the network service. There was a pre-determined plan to watch the programme.

At the beginning of the programme, S1 was still working with her older group of students. She had dismissed the younger set earlier. Having given them an exercise, she joined in the viewing. This seemed to be the highlight of S2's viewing for the week, and she had infected the others with her enthusiasm in the programme.

The reception from the network service was particularly poor on this day, yet the subjects endured. S1 was still not as impressed by the programme. It was the one, whose opening visuals, she had perceived as a copy of Dynasty. She watched it anyway, but she soon gave up, preferring to attend to her students. They were interested in the programme, and when they had the opportunity, they sneaked over to the sitting room area, to see what was going on.

The viewing session was distracted by some children who came to deliver messages from their mother. S2 was the only one who had a fairly uninterrupted viewing. She did not entertain any distractions. She simply ignored them, as much as she could. These included instructions

on what she needed to do.

She was so engrossed in the programme, and irritated by distractions, that she did not give an accurate account of some money she had spent. This ended up in argument, which temporarily kept her away from the programme. As soon as she had the chance, she returned to the programme.

By the middle of the programme, the children were in different states of sleep. They had not been taken to bed, but had been allowed to drift off to sleep in front of the set. These children, like in the some of the other locations, did not have a strict bedtime, though they were not allowed to remain past 9 o' clock. The network news was the indicator, if they had over stayed.

Another fact illustrated in this location, is children's use of time. Those who came for lessons for example; and those who came to deliver messages. [Re. locations 1, 2, 3, 11, 12]. With these other responsibilities that they had, they were deprived of the freedom of uninterrupted viewing.

When S1 returned to the programme, which was one hour long, she noticed a scene which had a familiar tinge. There was a segment of the scene, that appeared to be a replica of one which she had seen on an episode of Bill Cosby Show. This served as further confirmation that the programme lacked originality.

Although she was pacified by the fact that this attempt had a little variation, she still recognised it as a "photocopy" of the "original" idea. This was in spite of the fact that she recognised the possibility

of the action being a feature in every day life.

S1: That was [from] Cosby show. This scene exactly , because I know I'd watched it before and I was so impressed by it. Bill Cosby's wife the lawyer, she'd gone to work, and she'd told her husband to make sure that the girl is given her medication. So he was trying to give the child the medicine. He'd put the medicine on a spoon for the little girl. So the little girl said "No! You are not an aeroplane." He asked "What does that mean?" The girl said "Mummy makes me an aeroplane." So he tried to sound like "Vroom". The girl said "That's a racing car" . . . Bill Cosby was at his wit's end. He had to go to the end of the room . . . See, that's what the guy is doing. It's dubbed straight out of Cosby! . . .

I mean it's not a bad dub; he's feeding her with food not with medicine"

The other programme had so impressed itself on her, that she remembered the exact lines. It was no wonder she was confident of her ability to recognise a "photocopy". It takes seeing both programmes to appreciate the subject's point - there was indeed merit to the point.

Besides the similarity, there was the lack of spontaneity in the "copy"; it was stiff. The method of coaxing was seen as being alien within the culture, and this made it apparent that it was an imitation.

The longer she sat at the set, the more S1 found to complain about. Her objections were based on her assessment of courtesy and decency. On one occasion it was the posture of a character. It did not matter that it was a man, she objected to him sitting with his legs wide apart before the screen. In another instance, it was the way a particular character related to some others. The character in question was the girlfriend of a widower. S1's reaction on this occasion was more vehement.

"Shurrup, that's not how to be a stepmother!"

By this time, it seemed that subject had developed an interest in the programme, but because she had not been following, she again had to rely on S2 to make sense of what was going on. When S2, for some reason was not there, she relied on commonsense interpretations of the sequence.

At the arrival of H, S1's attention again became diverted from the programme. She had to give him his messages, and thereafter, they shared their experiences for the day. After this, she proceeded to attend to the students, sorting out their homework. The programme had ended at this time and so the pattern had continued into the network news which came next.

In spite of the fact that the preceding programme had eventually become engaging, the subjects showed no apparent interest in the news, although they left the set on. There was an interesting comment which S1 made as she was eating at the table, out of viewing range, but within earshot of the news.

A news item about the President Babangida had just been read, and her response showed that she had not been impervious to the news. More than that, it indicated the image which she had of the president.

"If I were to sit down at table with this Babangida, I will not feel awed before him. I'm not sure how much regard I have for him. I think I'll more easily tremble in my headteacher's presence than in his presence. . ."

The subject was thus projecting the disregard which she had for his presence on the screen, into a (hypothetical) reality. What is more interesting is that the attitude seemed like a direct rebellion, arising from the media coverage. It was a rejection of the imposing presence of Babangida in the news. This suggestion is worthy of closer inspection. A

clarification of the existence of any such correlation would be of immense benefit to the public relations efforts of the Presidency.

The subject was so disdainful of the entire government. The president had only personified his government. Because it was the vehicle for presenting them, the news had been the object on which this attitude was reflected. The attitude was shared by other members of the family. In fact, such attitudes had been observed in varying degrees of intensity in other locations.

H, who watched the news deliberately on this day, had the same attitude towards the government. In his case however, he did watch the news, although his comments ran counter to what was being said. They were definitely negative.

With a particular item, he accused a minister of lying. He did not mince the words. The accusation had been based on what he saw as the sheer illogicality of the utterance - going by common knowledge, but further buttressed by alternative informed sources.

H: I do feel sorry for these people [journalists at a press conference] . . . Because they are being lied to and they know. They know that this is a lie that they are listening to. They are paying more money for food, and somebody is telling them that this harvest is 13% higher . . . Production is not higher!

The production that was higher when they were saying everybody should farm, farm - after all, we also planted cassava then. So that is what made it seem so, But this one is a big lie don't try to find the sense in it, it is just a lie. Don't try to reason it.

And why I say it is a blatant lie, is, ----, Minister of Communication or whatever he is, he went to America, let's hear what lie he's told again. [sic, but actually referring to Information minister who was then in view]

Pause as they momentarily attend the item.

H: He went to America, and told the Americans that Nigeria is self sufficient in rice, wheat and flour. . . So the wheat users, the Master Bakers Association of Nigeria, just wrote a statement in the Sunday Concord, that - Well, we have an installed capacity of 40 million, utilisation percentage of maybe 10,000. So if you say we are self sufficient, we are not calling you a liar, but we are just stating the facts. . .

. . .

S1 suggested that the minister in question may have been drunk! With this kind of reinforcement, the news item only evoked anger and resentment. It had only succeeded in bringing the government to disrepute, and further distancing it from the audience. This is the direct opposite of what the news had set out to do.

This illustration typified the group's response to the news. It appeared that it was better for the government, when they ignored the news, than when they attended it, and left with a reinforced negative image.

It was not only government officials who were the objects of ridicule. The subjects were generally intolerant of what they considered to be deceptive. For instance, there was the story which involved a renowned Nigerian football star. This story was not attended. The reason for this was because on sighting him, S1 proceeded to give a report about him, and some claims that he had made. These claims were challenged, and evidence to the contrary were brought up within the discussion. H was so angered by the reported claims, and he kept pondering on them. There was no chance of him or any other person, concentrating on the other items of the news which followed. The pattern had been the same with the government stories.

By the time the review of the highlights were read, the subjects had again become attentive. On this occasion, it was H, who broke the concentration, but he had only voiced an observation which S1 had been trying to keep to herself. By voicing it, the observation was no longer considered an isolated feeling, there was confidence, in perceiving it as the acknowledged view.

H: Why is this one talking like this?

S1: She's singing! I just didn't want to say so, so that it appears like we are being critical or something. "World Culture" - I thought she said Cartier or something.

. . .

The subjects were intolerant of what they perceived as a forced phonetics. Even the presentation, had been identified as being phoney. This was the issue which was paramount in the viewing of the news. The subjects could not tolerate dishonesty. This still fits into the mold of S1's demand for a respect for her intelligence.

The newscast gave way to the OGTV station promo. S1's previously expressed views were reinforced by some spontaneous views which H expressed. This had not been solicited. H, was merely responding to the earlier criticised station promo. He picked on the announcer.

"This boy is a local champion."

The comment set S1 on another assessment of the mass media. This kind of assessment, was no doubt a regular occurrence in this location.

Their comments showed that they were not against a station being local. For instance, BCOS, which was voted the best station, was preferred because it was unpretentious about it's being local. It was admired for

it's ability to reach those who were considered to be the station's audience - the local people. The offenders, were those stations which they expected to be local, but who were seen to be "trying" to be something else, other than what they could comfortably be.

"They are striving to attain the middle class status. . ."

The issue raised here is that of the station's programming strategy. These viewers were not impressed by the shot-gun approach, which aims to please various, often not complementary groups. They would rather have a more precise targeting, as with a rifle. The cost of this though is that they may not be covered in the programming of particular stations, but at least they would have been aware of this. That was at least sincere.

The success of this sort of programming, could only be achieved if there were a concerted effort within the industry at large. There must be agreement amongst the stations as to who should serve what interests, if the public service goals were to be maintained. Rather, than trying to beat each other at the same game, resources should be spread, to cover the various interests that need be served.

The discussion of the stations performance had not kept the programming out of the subjects view. Their discussion was halted by the the promo for a Yoruba film. The film was that of Baba Sala who Si had noted was being gradually influenced by competition, to introduce the portrayal of the diabolical into his programmes. Although this film was not meant for television, it confirmed her view, and this was lamentable. She was of the strong opinion that this trend was as a result of competition. In other words, she was suggesting that the focus on sorcery, and such themes that she associated with the other Yoruba dramas, was proving to

be popular amongst the audience.

H's response was in no way analytical. It was a simple declaration -
"These people are sick."

The scene which was shown was in deed, gory and dreary. It was not to be immediately seen as being comical, unlike a programme like Bewitched, an American comedy which also featured sorcery.

The longer they stayed, the more they had to complain about. H complained about the (Fuji) music that was featured as an interlude before the movie presentation. He was of the opinion that it may have a "tribal appeal". This lacks merit as S2, who was from the same tribe as he, enjoyed the music. It was he and S1 who snobbed the music.

There were more complaints about the announcer when he introduced the movie. Because of the flaws in his pronunciation, it was difficult to tell exactly what the title of the movie was. The subjects thus had to stay to find out for themselves, by viewing the opening credits.

They had not even needed to see the title. Knowing that Steve McQueen was the star of the movie was enough for them to know that it was a Western. That knowledge in itself, was enough for S1 to reject the programme. -

"They will soon start shooting themselves dead."

She searched round the various channels, and there was nothing attractive, The Ibadan channels were not clear, another channel was showing some talk programme; so she concluded that no station was

interested in pleasing her for that night.

S1 was of the view that what was discussed on the talk programmes was "total rubbish, and nonsense". This view made her distance herself from the programme without even assessing it. Though she claimed that she would watch them, if they had meaningful discussions, she did not even bother to find out what was being discussed in the particular instance. Her mind was already set.

With this evaluation of the programming, she went off to bed. S2 was also asked to go to bed. The time was about 10 o' clock. Observation ended at this time.

There were no more observations recorded in this location. There was an unanticipated public holiday, and the subject decided to travel out of town for the long weekend. The incompleteness of the observation period should however not be considered as a flaw. The pattern which had emerged within the first 4 days can be considered as being typical. This assessment comes from the researcher's continuing contact with the subjects in the location.

There was also no group discussion with these subjects as the spontaneous comments made during the "viewing" had covered the scope of the discussion. These comments were repeated, and consistent and having the discussion would have been tenuous. Besides, the subject, at the time of contact had again spontaneously, given her views of television service. These had covered the scope of the discussion. The consistency of her views also hold up against the pre-observation comments. The observation had been useful in illuminating the process of viewing, and

negotiation of meaning.

Images from the screen

The following is an account of the views of the subjects' father, collected during one of such unscheduled meetings. The father, a retired professor, was only visiting on the occasion. He is normally resident in another town within the Western part of Nigeria. His reception pattern would thus be similar to that in the focus area.

"A good deal of the programmes are not worth watching at all! Extremely stereotyped news about government, and they never criticise government. Some of the programmes that are worth watching at all, - take "Ijoko Ojogbon" [another ombudsman programme] - settling disputes. I see that as performing public service. In fact it's equivalent to Crown Court. No not even that because it's not really legal; it's something that's extra legal, but because we are bound more by public opinion. If they say your kinsman has done such and such, and all the people will have heard, they will be discussing the matter on television before the person's very eyes, so he will feel bound more by the word of honour, and the public opinion. So that is reasonable, but when they say "Alejo Wa" - [meaning Our Guest, signifying the interview programmes.]

There was a trail of in the subjects voice, indicating by contrast that such are not "reasonable" service.

". . . The one who has nothing to offer them, they still say
"Our guest has said this"

. . .

In subject's view, these sorts of programmes were used to "fill up" the schedule. He expressed his utter dislike for the real "fillers" - the musical programmes. The onomatopoea which he used to describe the programmes, suggests that in his opinion, the performances were "slapped up".

"Come let's dance, gburu gburu gburu"

He failed to see the educative value in the programmes, nor did he see

the informative value. There was a remarkable purpose which he felt the programmes had; at which it was succeeding.

"I suppose it's a deliberate means of spreading corruption"

The local plays were of no better value in his opinion.

"They have the same theme, the same pattern; the same morals or immorality, or whatever it is."

More Views of the News

The news was the only programme which this subject could endure. Yet, even this was to be taken with a pinch of salt.

"Well occasionally, one does find items of news particularly foreign news, because I do not believe that any news that is presented about the government is really presented correctly, because it's a government medium. In a case where government has done something good, they will over praise it, if it has done something bad, they will black it out. They will completely.. . They tell lies deliberately"

This view which the subject held was informed by his own personal experience with the media, as well as that of others. He could not find the media reliable because he had read his own obituary in the news, and such other stories which he was certain were "absolutely untrue". Subject even remembered the instance when a public holiday had been declared when there was to have been none. He recalled the hardship which that caused. In this way, the media, were an extension of the unstable government. There were thus not even reliable as the notice board, which will help the viewer to be prepared, and organised.

These views echoed that of S1 and the other subjects, yet they had been spontaneous. The subjects simply cheered on, as their views were confirmed. There is also a similarity between these views and those of

the other educated subjects in the sample. As noted, even those who were less educated expressed some of these points in may be less articulate ways. The issue thus may not be based on the education; or snobbery. The problems raised are in deed, real problems and especially so because they have informed the attitudes towards the TV programming in general.

LOCATION 11 - A FEMALE DOMINANT DOMAIN

The setting is a modern family, with traditional roots. The father is away in the United States of America and so that left the mother (S1) as the head of the home. The woman has college education, and is a civil servant. She works shift at the international airport in Lagos as an agricultural quarantine officer. These facts have two important bearings on the focus of our study. The first is that she commutes daily, when feasible; when she is not on afternoon shift, in which case she will close from work at a time when it is too late for her to travel. This commuting does affect the physical state in which she arrives at home, indeed, before the set.

The other important point is the fact that she goes daily to Lagos, and she interacts daily with international travellers. All this coupled with the fact that her spouse is abroad no doubt will affect the type of values / outlook / standards of expectation with which she arrives at the viewing sessions.

This subject is aged about 40 years.

The woman's mother also lives with the family. She is about 60 years old and typifies a different subculture, as she belongs to a different generation. Though she is not formally educated, it would appear that the education of her children and her grandchildren, has rubbed off on her. She is polished.

The old woman is not engaged in any form of business, or trade. Her main pre-occupation seems to be to keep an eye on the home. What this will

suggest, for the purposes of the study, is that she has a lot of free time.

The children illustrate for the study, yet another subculture - that of the youths. There are 5 children in the family, this is not reckoning the visiting toddlers, whose presence is no less influential to the study, as the reports would show.

Of the five children, two are in their late teens, and they are awaiting admission into colleges of higher learning. That implied that they should have had plenty of free time, but this was not necessarily so.

One of the two older children was male and the other was female (G1). The young man (B1) along with his little brother (B2), who was the youngest of the five, and one of the visiting toddlers, were the only males in the home. It can thus be reckoned, as was observed, that there was no dominant male presence in this location.

The other two children, who were in their early teens, (G2, and G3), were already in secondary schools. The family thus had an interesting constitution of females, with representation of differing sub - cultures.

The family lives in a roomy flat, and their sitting/dinning room is furnished with 2 TV sets, a video machine, a hi - fi sound system amongst other things. This indicates the level of media presence, more than the "obvious" level of affluence. The arrangement and design of the sitting room is such that the televisions are central and cannot be ignored. The flat is on the ground floor opening into a fairly large

PICTURE 10.

Location 11.

The TV is centrally positioned.

PICTURE 11.

Exterior Location 11.

There were attractions (distractions) outside. Neighbours sitting outside, watching passers by.

PICTURE 12.

Exterior Location 11.

Neighbours playing out in the compound, just outside the sitting room.

open space which are part of the house grounds, and bounded on all sides by footpaths. These in themselves constitute alternatives to television, as they held attractions for one sitting outside, watching the people go by.

Due to the absence of the father, the mother is the dominant figure in the home. In her absence, the grandmother, was to hold the fort, but this arrangement, was merely ceremonial. In reality, the responsibility of running the house, in practical terms, fell on the children, with the eldest two, - G1 and to a lesser extent, B1 being in charge.

One very interesting point which was clear from the onset, was the gender variation of duties. This affected the use of the medium.

Day 1

Although she was on morning shift, which meant that she had closed at 2.00 p.m. subject did not get home until about 7.45 p.m. She had stopped at the hairdressers, and had spent about 2 hours there.

Observation had begun at about 5.00 p.m.

The grandmother was sitting outside, skinning melon seeds. This activity in itself is acknowledged within the culture as a pastime, to replace inevitable idleness. Although the melon seeds do get peeled in the process, the person who engages in the activity, primarily is relieving boredom, or idleness. The peeling of melon seeds is seldom an activity which one engages in when there are other things to do. This confirmed that the woman was potentially free to watch television, but she did not.

The children were in the sitting room apparently for different reasons. The really young ones were watching "Areweyo" a magazine programme for children in Yoruba. Afterwards, they watched Kiddies Incorporated; another children's programme, on LTV.

B2, the younger boy watched with rapt attention. The older children, G1 and G2 who were primarily entertaining guests, also found themselves watching with keen interest.

Being the youngest girl, G3 was the one whose viewing was being interrupted, because she had to run errands. She eventually decided to avoid the sitting room to avoid being sent on such errands. By so doing, she had also missed the chance of watching the programmes on the set. She preferred to stay outside, and watch the people passing by instead. This was a more satisfactory option.

At some point during the viewing, the reception quality became really poor, but the audience endured viewing till the researcher wondered aloud. It was only then, that B1 tried to fine tune the set. It appears as if they had all been too lethargic to implement any change. It was only deference to the researcher, that had galvanised them into action.

This is interesting, especially as one considers the fact that the TV set was a sophisticated one, with a remote control. This meant that all that was needed, to get the adjustments, was a touch of the buttons, once the remote control had been located. It was the mental decision to prompt the physical act of pressing the buttons that had been lacking.

It is also possible that each person, was leaving the responsibility to the other. This was a feature of communal viewing, where no one wants to take responsibility.

What these all amounts to, is the fact that the programme, though watched with apparent interest, was not as captivating, or as central as it appeared. Had it been more central, there would have been greater concern expressed about the quality of the transmitted messages.

This reasoning is supported by the very trend of events. B1, in fine tuning the signals, stumbled on another programme, on another station, and settled to watch that. It was a sports programme. The only protest, and this was quite vehement was from B2. This indicates that it was only he, who had really been consciously watching the programme.

The Sports programme was not a popular choice either, and before long the group appealed to B1, who had the remote control to change the programme to a children's detective programme, "Cats and Dogs". The programme was one, which they all knew. It was thoroughly enjoyed by all, even though the sound was not very clear. It was an imported programme.

Right after the programme, B1 did not even wait for the public service announcement that was to follow. He immediately switched to a different channel. It was not that he had any particular channel in mind, but he shopped around to find another suitable programme. He was thus illustrating how viewing can be a flow, rather than separate discrete moments.

He found a musical video on OGTV. This was a unanimous choice. It received the approval of all. Even the grandmother who seemed totally uninterested in television found the programme appealing. She came in and along with the other older children. The older children enticed, even goaded, the toddler to dance. He watched the video and aped the dance steps as he had been instructed. Going by the comments from the group, B2 was only restraining himself because he was being shy. He was being urged to watch out for certain steps that he was yet to master.

The entire group, including the grandmother who had varying degree of competence, could sing along to the music of Kollington, a Fuji musician, (Ijo Yoyo) and others of his kind, whose performances were presented. In fact the viewing experience, prompted the singing of other similar types of music. These were the fads on the local music scene.

It turned out that the programme was an interlude, and it soon gave way to the news. The family at this point drifted out onto the verandah. Later some found their way to the bedrooms, and the kitchen. It was the female children who went into the kitchen. The news was ignored.

Again it took B1, who had no chores, and had separated himself from the "crowd" to shop around for a more suitable option. His shopping seemed deliberate and not random. He seemed to know what programme he was looking for. He chose what was on NTA 2 channel 5. It was a quiz programme sponsored and produced independently by the Federal Ministry of Education - "JETS", (Junior Engineers Technicians and Scientists).

At about 6.40 p.m. the grandmother came in, but only to go out again.

She was going to the market. Each time she passed by, she cast a cursory glance at the set. By this time there was a local comedy on the set, which the girls watched. B1 left them to watch this and he stepped outside. He apparently had other interest outside, as did G1 - some of their friends were visiting. G2 and the children settled down to watch.

The grandmother returned from the market at about 7. 15 p.m. and was peeved that the girls were still watching TV and engaging in other leisures, and had not prepared the dinner. She set about making a meal for the little boy, not caring if the older ones starved or not. This meant that they still had to go about preparing their own meal. This illustrates the demands that are on even the younger females. The girls were already being prepared for the socially acceptable role, and this was not to encourage the viewing of television. Indeed their viewing of television was almost always hindered by one thing or the other. If that was not the case, a guilt feeling was to accompany the pleasure.

A documentary, "State in focus" followed the local comedy. This was ignored although the set was left on. The children again, as with the news, drifted out of the room. Those who had chores went about such without feeling that they were missing anything. These observation are based on the displayed attitude, as well as the comments of the subjects. They are therefore not suppositions.

The grandmother was still sitting as though perching at the table where she had been trying to feed the toddler. This was indicative of the transient nature of her presence in the room, even though her location put her in very good viewing angle. She did not attend that particular programme, she only sat there and directed what was going on in the

kitchen.

The mother returned home to receive the news of the burglary at the family's new home which was still under construction. She immediately asked for the volume of the TV to be turned down. She felt the need to deliberate and take decisions on the next line of action. The TV at such a time was not welcome.

The incident was serious enough in itself but it also brought out other cares and thoughts which subject had been silently wrestling with. These were only dragged into the open by the burglary. The pertinence of this to the study, is that it opened up a dam of concerns with which subject would have arrived at the viewing situation. These were concerns that could affect her response, but which, when they are bottled up, may not be readily apparent. It is even more interesting that her first response was to have the volume of the TV turned down.

The fact that the TV was turned down and not out meant that it was possible to re-establish interest in the programmes. The family, had all converged since the arrival of the mother to share the bad news. Even as they sat down to consider their losses, the incidental music from the programme which was then on air, attracted the children's attention and they perched up to explore the programme. This interest was not sustained as there were more pressing matters. Perhaps it was because the programme itself was not as interesting as the music. Whatever it was they soon went back to focus on their plight.

The renewed interest in the proceedings on television, manifested in the mother searching around the channels, having gotten the remote control

from her older son. This marked the official end of the deliberations over the matter. She selected a musical video show which again turned out to be an interlude. Afterwards came the News. The subject sat in front of the set, yet it was apparent that she was lost in thoughts. The subject appeared dejected. B2 having shopped around again, and finding "no better option" settled for the OGTV news. The time was about 8. 30 p.m. He had rejected a News programme, Newsweek on the NTA network service. That it was on network, had effectively limited the available options.

This mood with which subject arrived at the viewing situation was no doubt to affect her response the news as illustrated in the following.

S: Is it 9 o clock already?

R: No this is the OGTV news.

S: (Sighs resignedly) We'll drift to wherever Babangida is taking us.

The news had been used as an indicator of time. The comment also made it clear that the government, personified by Babangida, was not absolved of any blame in the family's plight. It was with this disposition that the subject received the network news when it came on. The state news was merely glanced at and not quite attended. It is not certain, if this was a result of subject's disposition at that time, or if it was an expression of priorities, because even with that disposition, she still attended the network news.

Another point worth considering is the possibility of the irrelevance of the items on that news. From the observation one can suggest that the response was due to a combination of both.

The family did converge to watch the 9 o'clock news. This indicates the value which they placed on this, as compared to the state news which they did not acknowledge.

The very first news item made mention of the president's name. This inflamed the subject, who now took it as a confirmation, of her earlier outburst.

S: We are all just trailing Babangida.

There was a news item about the Soromptimist International. Subject was contemptuous of this, and the activities of the organisation. Going by the visuals, she reckoned that even the newscaster had given them, (the video report) a contemptuous look. Her disaffection to the group, was an extension or an expression of her feelings towards the government.

S: This is just another avenue for them; they are the wives of those who are high up and their husbands have advised them to join so that they can all get a chance to share of the national cake. It's all a ruse, the wives join these groups, the husbands get the contract. Otherwise, they won't get a share of the cake.

R: How do you know?

S: How did I know? It was when my husband got a contract and he left me to follow up on his payment. We never got paid. I had to keep going back and forth and the office was all the way in Ikoyi. . . I would, they had even come out if what they wanted was a bribe, but they did not let on. They just kept tossing me back and forth.

Such was the disaffection with which the news was received. The children after a while did not pretend to endure it any more. They soon drifted off to the kitchen to eat and thereafter they went into the compound. The mother also left to have a shower. The grandmother went in to the bedroom. Meanwhile, the younger children had dropped off to sleep, leaving only the older boy, and the researcher at the set. This was only

15 minutes into the 45 minute newscast.

The group converged before the set again, about 10 minutes later, but the discussions were totally unrelated to television. By this time, there were obvious preparation for going to sleep. It was not 10 o'clock yet. This observation was confirmed.

S: Oh they sleep early! In fact, it's your presence that has kept them up till this late.

G1: No! When you (i.e. mother) are at home, we don't sleep early, but when you are not, we do sleep early.

S: Am I not at home today? I usually [have to] tell you to go to bed?

G1: Yes that is when you are going to bed, but when you are not at home, we don't even listen to the network news, and you do.

S: Well invariably we never retire at the same time, because I sleep here [on the settee] and when they are fed up with watching the news, they just go in and leave me here. And sometimes I just go straight to my room to sleep, so I don't know when they switch off the set . . . I only just tell them to switch off the house lights.

This description of their reception of the television, particularly of the news is incomplete unless seen against the backdrop of those few moments which they are even supposed to be viewing. There was usually a lot of distraction at the point of viewing, and these were often times because there was no real interest in what was being reported. Take the following for example.

The mother's attention had been attracted by the picture of a familiar person on the screen. He had been a celebrity, but he had since died. She did not even attempt to listen to the report. Rather, she proceeded to negotiate the visual that she had seen.

S: Ha look at Ogunde! Is it already a year since he died.

G1: Oh! What a pity!

G2: I went when he was being buried.

S: Ha! Tomi! [i.e. G2] what a horrible lie. Who took you?

The conversation thus drifted to other matters. There had not been any real interest to begin with, and with the drift of the conversation, there remained no chance of finding out just what the story was about.

The subject requested her supper and the conversation continued drifting from one thing to another. The news was still in the background. The meal which she was having, was not a light one. She required more than a bit of concentration. This meant less attention that could go to the set.

It appeared that all this amounted to a conscious rejection or at best avoidance of the content of the news. This suggestion was strengthened by the following observation.

At the end of the newscast, whilst the highlights were being reviewed, the subject picked on a particular item. This was an item on the plan to return to civil rule.

S: Who do you think is going to be handed over to? Babangida is not going to hand over to anybody, . . . let's wait and see. He is going to remain in power. He has strong security you know.

The commentary continued and it revealed a distrust of the expressed government intentions, that is portrayed on the media. To confirm the observed lack of interest in the news as it were, there came a public service announcement, which stopped the subject in her tracks as she ran

her alternative newscast. There was a contrasting response to that item, in which she was interested, unlike the response to the news.

The announcement was a missing person's report. The subject was touched.

S: For the past three days? . . . He must have been abducted.
He probably went out to play. . . His mother must be
confused now.

The subject's sympathy was immediately evoked, and she examined the implications of the incident on all that it could concern. She projected into the situation, so much so that she tried to imagine what the mother like herself would be going through. This personalization of the information was absent in her response to the news. Even when news items were attended, there was a quick dismissal; as though they were not worth the bother. This raises the question of relevance.

There was another report of a missing person -, a 65 year old woman. The children were amused, but the mother was concerned.

S: Oh, she probably set out to go and visit her children.

R: Do you think she has been abducted too? [sic]

S: It's possible, there are people who are seeking money by
all means. . . or maybe the vehicle she boarded had an
accident.

The first possibility, inferred that the woman, like the child might have been a victim of ritual killing. The second suggested an undetected or unreported fatality in a road traffic accident. Either way, subject fears the victim is dead and that explains why she did not find it funny. However, for the children, it was the mere thought of having a full grown adult, go missing like a child that had been amusing.

There was a commercial break following, which was well attended by the group. The first advert was that of a bank. [Trade International Bank.]

Although the advert had not mentioned the names of any competitors, the members of this group of their own volition, drew on their real life experience of the older banks, to compare the portrayed experience in the advert. They thus supplied the missing cues that the advert had omitted.

The striking aspect of the advert, which followed was the announced price. While the other qualities of the product itself were not discussed, the subjects picked on the price. It had evoked a discussion on the trends of inflation. They discussed their concerns, and frustrations of the prevalent economic conditions. The discussion amounted to a distraction on the adjacent message.

The display of price had thus become a block for the intended message in that advertisement, as well as the one which came after it.

For another product that was advertised, the block had been the prejudice which the subject had about the product. Although her view did not receive the support of the children, she proceeded to buttress her position, with her experience. For the children, this further confirmed that it was a prejudice. They could not agree.

The issue was a case of modern taste versus traditional taste. What is more important to the study, however, is that it illustrates the possibility of having opposing views, which are perpetuated on an "alternative network". These also feed on the "legitimate network". S1

in spite of her exposure to the advertiser's intended message, held on to her own views. Her exposure to, and negotiation of the intended, had only assisted her to further strengthen her own negative views.

This happens with "serious" programmes like news, and also with those elements of programming which have so far not attracted as much attention in audience reception studies - like adverts.

At the end of the commercial break, the channel was changed to another station. The anticipated programme fare, on the other station was also not satisfactory. The programme found on the alternative station was likewise. [There was a "current affairs" programme on the NTA network, and LTV was showing the Yoruba "translation" of the news. The last option on TV, OGTV had a sponsored Moslem religious programme on.]

The group was very disappointed. There was an underlying tension which reared it's head at the expression of the disappointment. The implication of this only became clearer in the course of the observation week.

G1: Oh, there are so many sponsored religious programmes.
It's all because of this Moslem fast.

S: Even when there was no fast, there are so many Christian programmes.

The group eventually settled for one of the stations. At the time, that station had a commercial break. There was no real interest in the set by this time, but the mood was further soured by the mother's comment regarding one of the children. The remark was considered embarrassing, and it had put the other children on their guard. The remark had been prompted by the child's desire aroused by an advert which she had seen.

The signs of fatigue which had been observed earlier may also have contributed to this. The mood was tense. Observation ended at about 10.30 p.m. It is not certain that viewing continued afterwards.

Day 2

Being mindful of the research exercise, subject arrived home at about 4.00 p.m. Viewing started at about 4.30 p.m. She selected one of her son's favourite programmes, and watched it, even though the boy (B2) was not at home then. The programme was Voltron, a cartoon programme for children. G1, B1, and B2 had gone to the dentist. G2, and G3 were at home, but they were the ones who usually had to run errands; fetching drinking water from the fridge; stocking the house with water; laying the table; clearing the mess made by the visiting toddlers, or even restraining the toddlers from disturbing the rest of the household. Because they waited on everyone else, the girls could not have uninterrupted viewing. It was no surprise that they were not as familiar with the operating the receiver set, as the other children were. This, became a problem not only for them, but also for the mother.

In the absence of the two sons, S1 and the girls had some difficulty using the remote control. The gadget was the same one for controlling both the television and the video and thus appeared "complicated". They were not familiar with it, and this limited the flexibility which they could have had from the available service, till the "experts" arrived.

The grandmother was sitting out on the verandah on this day as well. She showed no interest in the television, she was again shelling her melon seeds, (Egusi).

There was a rainstorm and electricity supply was cut off. It was restored at about 45 minutes later. In the meantime, the grandmother continued shelling her melon seeds. She was unperturbed by the disruption in electricity supply. She did not express any disappointment.

When viewing resumed, a locally produced programme was watched - The LTV Magic half hour show. This was captivating for the toddlers. S1 also cast occasional glances at the screen, running a commentary on the programme, when not discussing something else. Eventually the commentary led to another topic of discussion.

S1: He is tying her up in a sack. He has turned her into "Agridoya". (laughter)

There was a comedy we watched once, where the woman had invited her lover into the home. Then the husband returned and she tied the man up in a sack saying to her husband that her mother had sent them a sackful of yams from the north. The man marvelled at the size of the yams and surmised that it must be a special "Agric" breed. She confirmed that it was a special Agridoya.

(Doya is the Hausa word for yam)

The man asked her why she had not taken the yams out of the sack, so that they do not get spoilt. She then said she wanted to be sure he saw it, to [enable him] compare whatever stuff his own mother sends, with.

[shifting attention back to the programme] That is the wife standing on top and counting down. The husband has chained himself up and is tucked away in the Agridoya sack.

[Pause] Now is it not India that these magicians are supposed to receive their training from?

The programme was not particularly watched out of interest, but out of apathy. As soon as there was enough distraction from the toddlers who had lost interest, and had gone off to play outside, the concern

shifted. The focus of the commentary also shifted to the state of children's education, and the welfare in schools.

It is interesting that the programme had evoked the memory of another one that had no apparent connection, as regards the intended message. Yet, S1 was able to find the connection in the visuals, and in so doing, she relived the experience of a comedy she had viewed earlier. What makes this even more interesting, is the theme of the programme that she was experiencing anew. By sharing the message of the said programme with the others (the children) who were viewing with her on this occasion, but who had not seen the said programme, S1 was widening the scope, and helping to perpetuate the gist of the programme, as she saw it.

Attention in the present programme had waned. It was not watched any longer, it was ignored. The same fate befell the programme which followed, The New Family Scene. This was an LTV production, a magazine programme for children, in English. The programme was simply left on as part of the room's ambience. By this time, discussion centred around the preparation of the evening meal.

When a question was asked to try to draw the subject's attention to the programme, the answer lacked enthusiasm. It was clear that the subject was aware of the programme, and but she had consciously rejected it.

Q: Where is this?

S1: I don't know but you know he also acts in another programme.

[That was all she had to say.]

The bunch who had gone to the dentist arrived. Having settled down, G1 took the remote control and sought out another programme. She selected

"Speak Out" an NTA network programme for children. The reception of the programme was not clear, (possibly because of the rainstorm). The programme could not thus be watched with the intense pleasure observed, as it was found.

The advert for Tandi (a soft drink) came on, while B1 was inadvertently standing in front of the set. The 2-year-old was very cross that his view was being blocked, and he practically shoved the "obstruction" out of his way. This was an example of how preferences are expressed, even by toddlers.

Meanwhile, S1 was playing the role of an entertainer, more than that of a viewer. She was running a commentary which was more insistent in vying for the attention of others, than the programme from the screen, at which she cast the occasional glances. S1's remarks which were not necessarily related to the programme in view, was easier for the subjects to relate with, and it appeared to be more entertaining.

There was a musical interlude, a young juju musician - Wale Olateju. It was not watched. Even the young ones ignored the set, until B1 switched the channel again to a station which was transmitting the network programme Speak Out. He was successful in improving the reception by fine tuning the set; something that no one else could do.

As he searched round, the stations which he found, either lacked colour or clear sound, and the picture was grainy. The one which was picked, was the one with grainy black and white pictures, but clear sound. It was a Lagos station - NTA Ikeja Channel 7. This suggests the importance of sound over visuals in this particular instance. This is not

surprising as it was a "Talks" programme, a discussion, of some sort, with a panel of children interviewing celebrities.

B1 seemed in rapt attention as the questions were being asked, but his concealed lack of interest became apparent as he got up, not waiting or attempting to get an answer.

Electricity supply was cut again for about another 45 minutes. This resulted in a story telling session; with S1 narrating some real life drama that she had been involved in, to a captive audience. By this time, the family had begun preparing for bed. They were still engrossed and waiting to hear the end of the story when the supply was restored. The American Christian Broadcasting Network, produced CBN News was on but it was not watched. The family chose to hear the end of the drama.

The channel was later switched to NTA - 2 Channel 5 where Only Fools and Horses, a British comedy was showing. The story had not been concluded yet so the comedy also went, largely unwatched. The channel was switched to LTV where an interview programme was showing. This was also not watched.

By the time the family settled into watching any programme, the electricity supply had been reduced to half current. There was a debate as to whether the set should be switched off and saved from abuse, or if the programme was worth risking the set for. The former was decided upon, since the programme was not being viewed anyway, except for the occasional comment on the use of language. For instance, G1 made a note of improper use of English language.

It appears that the nonchalant attitude to the programmes, which was observed, is not a direct response to the programmes themselves. Rather, it seems more of a response to the erratic power supply; it is like a defence mechanism against the frustrations of an interrupted viewing experience.

With a slight improvement of electricity supply, the set was switched on again. This time, the CBN news was selected and watched by B1. The story on cocaine captured everyone's attention and S1 quickly compared the experience being reported on the set, with her personal experience when she visited the USA.

By this time, the family was waiting to watch a popular local comedy from the network service, The New Masquerade. That programme was referred to by the name of it's main character, as well as it's title.

S1: At 8.30 we are going to watch Zebrudaya.

G1: But Channel-5 is not clear you know.

B2: That is the news coming.

S1: That means it's 8.30, please switch it to New Masquerade.

The set was thus switched from LTV World news, to one of the NTA stations. The programme line up was used as an indicator of time, and a knowledge of the pattern had informed / directed the selection process. The news is consciously rejected, for a particular drama programme.

Whilst an NTA channel was being sought out, using the remote control, the group stumbled on a musical clip of Sina Peters - Afro juju star, who at the time, was a phenomenon on the music scene. This was on OGTV and though it was not what they set out to watch, it was welcome, none-

the-less.

They were all singing along and the little ones; the toddlers and B2; were encouraged, almost goaded to dance. The group responded both to the music, that is the lyrics, and the melody, and also to the visuals.

"Child of man, beware." [echoing the song]

"Kunle come on and dance"

"That's his wife, Sami. Maybe [the reason for his singing the song was because] someone was trying to split them up." [responding to audio, and visuals.]

"Look! that is Kemi dancing." [comparing sister's style of dance with that of the girl on the screen]

"No that is not me." [responding to comment and the visuals.]

"They would need Zorro and Robb for these shoulders afterwards."

(Zorro and Robb are popular brand names for liniment. This was in response to the perceived strain in the dance moves.)

"Come on now Kunle, entertain us."

"Look at him he is in the plane."

"I wonder where he got these girls from."

"This [dance style] is the one that those girls danced, those girls at the party."

There was an obvious elasticity between the real life experience, and the viewing experience. There was a constant comparison being made, of the things that were heard, those that were seen, and even those that were merely implied.

They ridiculed the sizes of the dancers, particularly their fat behinds, which the dance emphasised. They also ridiculed the artiste's limited versatility, in his music. The slow tempo of the particular track was approved.

Just as the family had allowed themselves to be pulled into the viewing experience, the electricity supply was cut again. There was an obvious, and audible expression of their disappointment. The mother began chanting the president's name, as though holding him personally responsible for her disappointment. The reaction which almost naturally followed that, is what is more interesting to station managers. It is an illustration of the apathy towards the TV service, stemming from an awareness of its unreliability, irrespective of the cause. The family was quick to find an alternative source of entertainment or pastime.

S1: Babangida! Babangida! All right Kunle [that is B2, the 8-year-old] you take over and entertain us.

As with the story telling session, the family displayed it's lack of dependence on the TV service. The boy entertained the family remarkably well, rendering not only Sina Peters, but also other hits.

The family snuggled together, in the face of the chilly weather following the rain. They all gradually assumed slouched/ lying positions. Before long the children were all asleep.

By 9.15 p.m. when the supply of electricity was restored, the family had even prepared a sleeping place for the researcher. They would have retired had the researcher not been around.

As though to please the researcher, they switched the set on, and some went back to sleep as the older ones watched drowsily at first. The grandmother had retired at the very first interruption.

S1: I did not expect that the supply would have been restored tonight.

By 9.30 p.m. all the children except G1 (who would see researcher out) had retired. This was even after the resumption of the service.

At the time the service resumed, there was a musical interlude in lieu of the NTA commercial break, on OGTV. OGTV was the station from which the family was receiving the network news. The breaks in reception had disoriented the subject. Not looking at a clock for the time, and not reading the pictures which she was receiving, she made an incorrect deduction.

S1: They must have finished reading the news, why don't you switch to another channel, let's see what is being offered.

G1: No the news is still being read.

The two proceeded to plan the following day's itinerary; they reviewed the happenings for the day and they all but paid attention to the news itself; that is, till G1 caught wind of an item about a former Nigerian head of state's recipe for national development. She stopped her conversation with her mother, and raised the volume of the set.

The mother did not stay awake after the conversation was terminated. She went back to sleep. Soon the sitting room was very quiet, not because of the concentration to the programme coming from the television, but from the fact that the viewers had all fallen asleep, whilst the set was left on.

S1 only just stirred at about 9.47 p.m. after the newscast had been concluded as researcher got ready to leave as observation for the day was ended.

There was an obvious disappointment that accompanied the viewing experience on this day, which the subject had determined to watch television. It is not clear if the determination had been because of her personal interest in the programmes, or because of the research exercise.

Day 3

Viewing began about 8.00 p.m. because of a cut in the public supply of electricity.

S1 herself, had returned home late. She had had to travel across the borders to a market in a neighbouring country, so that she could get a better bargain on her food shopping. She had gone straight from work and so was quite exhausted on her return.

As she settled down, she was briefed on the happenings on the home front; the children's health particularly those who had had to receive medical attention; the developments on the burglary case (reported on Day 1); preparation of those children who were going back to boarding school. She was also informed of the depleting stock of food. By the time there was a break in the stream of reports, she had been so overwhelmed, she picked up a magazine as though to read it, but she really just browsed through, not dwelling on the matters arising. She did not read the magazine, she only glanced on the fashion pages, and then tossed the magazine aside and requested for her meal. This time she got up to help herself.

B1 was the only one watching television. He shopped round using the

remote control, but obviously he was not after any particular programme. He eventually settled for New Trends - a locally produced magazine programme for youths. Because they are not opportuned to watch television in the boarding schools, these youths, were yet to cultivate their viewing preferences and pattern. It had not been long since they returned home from such institutions.

There was also the fact that a new quarter, had just commenced and there were some changes in the schedule. In addition, there was the fact that the special transmissions for the Moslem fasting period of Ramadan had only just been concluded. These compounded the problem of identifying the stations' pattern, and it manifested as a lack of deliberate viewing habit / pattern.

The girls G2 and G3 were either running errands or studying. G1 was caring for the toddlers in the group, alongside her attention to the TV programmes. She had a privileged status, unlike G1, and G3, because she was older, and could delegate some duties to her junior sisters. She thus had more free time, than they to watch television. Even then, her viewing was often times interrupted by the demands from others especially the toddlers, and S1. For example, the arrival of the mother disrupted her viewing, more so than it did B1's. She was more accountable, being a female.

In the height of the commotion caused by the mother's arrival, (that is as the various reports were being narrated), B1 was the one who zapped round, with the remote control, and eventually settled for the fashion segment of the magazine programme.

The grandmother was not at all interested in the goings-on. Rather than get involved in any peripheral or incidental viewing which was observed of those others who were before the set, she took charge of the running of the house. She assigned duties to G2 and G3 and supervised them in the cooking, cleaning, and the feeding of the younger children.

S1 (Mother) had a TV dinner and she cast occasional glances at the set. At a point, the volume of the TV was actually reduced to give prominence, to the family's discussion. This was at the point where the sponsor's message came on. This did not mean the adverts had not been noticed, but they were not commented upon. There was a nonchalance in the observed reception.

Another story telling session began just as a serious drama on the network service - The Young Ones - began. They missed the beginning of the programme. The programme is one of those sponsored and labelled by a federal agency aimed at national mobilisation, and re-orientation of the social values.

An argument in the drama, between a couple over who is boss; with the wife asserting herself, and the man demanding more respect, attracted a passing comment from the mother, and a mere glance from the children.

S1: Ha! Do you see one boss?

Thereafter, the family lapsed into their routine. There was an argument about who should fetch the water, clean the bathroom and so on. All this while the set was left on. It turned out that there was no one watching, no one following the trend of events who could explain to the others even when they were ready to watch, and so no one could really catch on.

The squabbling and griping continued for several reasons till the end of the programme and then the mother sang along to the tune of the sponsor's jingle -

"We are the ones, to make Nigeria a better place,
we all have a duty for sure . . . We are the ones"

S1: Oh! so now they have finished, it is 9 o'clock. Now they will read the news. [subject comments watching the visuals on the screen] Lagos! The rush rush life of Lagos! Ah! I have been to a place in Lagos where they have offered similar Suya [barbeque] as this. [referring to that which she had seen on the screen]

Her attention was attracted by that which was not demanding. Though she did not make time to watch the drama programme itself, she contented herself by watching a jingle which is no longer than 60 seconds, and is not as engaging as a full fledged programme. She sang along, to the lyrics (audio), and she also related to the visuals, using with her personal experience of the reality of the situations portrayed.

Her attentiveness was only short lived. Having used the TV as a time indicator - assessing what was to come next on the schedule, she shifted her attention to other things.

S1: Have you brought in the clothes? [the washing] It's 9 o'clock now, as you can see they will soon read the news. Get me your bills, Bring the admission letter, you must get the fees paid tomorrow. You too, bring your bills. .
. [echoing another jingle] I will work hard today [. . .
I will put in my best to make Nigeria great.]

Each of the children presented a list of requirements, and none was willing to compromise. S1 was counting out and sharing money for them, and as such, she could not concentrate on the highlights of the day's news. She also missed the lead story in that newscast. Her attention was

momentarily attracted by the visuals of a flood (disaster) incident that was reported. Even though she saw the visuals of the survivors, she was not sure of what had transpired. As a result, there was an error in her reading.

S1: What happened to them, were they involved in an accident?
[implying road traffic accident]

Her interest was only momentary, as there were other more pressing and immediate concerns which engaged her thoughts. They were money matters - the bills, shopping lists and budgets that she had to balance. It was not till about 10 minutes into the bulletin that she noticed the newscaster.

S1: Hauwa! It's been a while .

This was closely followed by a sigh and a plea for God to have mercy; an indication that her thoughts had again travelled away from the programme. This deduction was confirmed by the other concerns she expressed.

S1: Look at this, it is the empty powder tin. That's it. I'm not buying another one. . . What is that? Have you burst a keg in the freezer? Have you gargled with warm water and used your medicine?

There was a question for each child. The mother's concerns at that time were about getting her home in order. She was like the old woman who lived in the shoe; she had so many demands on her, that she did not know what to do.

B1 detached himself from all the clamouring around him and watched the news. The younger children had retired to the rooms with the grandmother by 9.15 p.m. The mother was still working out her finances. She was

assisted by G1 and G2, in searching for a missing letter. The newscast was not watched at all. There were no further comments made, not even in passing. Attempts to get them interested, in a bid to check the extent of the lack of interest, were ignored. The researcher's baits were not taken up. There was no pretence at being interested in the news any more.

However, without being prompted, the Pengo commercial, (an advertisement of a pain killer employing local concepts - showing an old man shivering from aches), was attended. The advert was already familiar to the group, and it was considered to be funny.

The (Guinness) Malta food drink advertisement was also found fascinating by the younger viewers - G1 and G2. They even sang along with the chorus.

Whilst the Pengo commercial was being shown, S1 got up from the set, and in apparent response to that which she had seen, expressed an awareness of her needing a pain killer as well.

S1: I believe I also need to take Panadol.

However, in expressing her need, she did not identify Pengo, but Panadol, which is a market leader, and competition for Pengo, the product that was advertised.

As the researcher packed up to go, S1 commented that -

"There were no programmes at all today"

The fact that she "had not watched any programme" was equated with the

deduction that there were no programmes worth watching. Subject had discounted the influence of the other experiences she had had in the viewing context which were responsible for the observed pattern. She however made a connection between the interruption of the power supply and her attitude towards viewing.

S1: I was quite fed up since the power supply was interrupted.

This last comment, when taken along with the previous day's experience, partly explains why the set was ignored. It is only considered a partial explanation, because the other concerns cannot be unconnected with the observed pattern. However, the subject was quick to blame unavailability of programmes.

Although when that line of reasoning is taken alone, (that is, oblivious of the other observations), it is not accurate, it still raises questions about the relevance of the programmes that are transmitted, to the immediate plight of the audience.

Observation for Day 3 ended on that note.

Day 4

There was no observation for this day as a flood from a previous rainstorm made subject's house inaccessible.

The children reported having watched Checkmate, a locally produced "soap opera" on the network service. They also reported that they had watched Family Matters, an American produced comedy.

S1 reported that she did not understand Checkmates because she had not

been following. Being a shift-worker, she had to miss the episodes, for those weeks when she was on either afternoon or night shift. Besides the programme had only been recently introduced. The story line was only just starting to unfold thus the trend was not very clear yet. Even with all that, S1 reckons that the programme will be interesting. Although she herself had an idea of what was going on, she deferred to G1 in the attempt to explain what was going on in the programme.

Day 5

Viewing began at about 4.30 p.m. Subject had just returned from work and she relaxed with the music programme that was on. At some points, she danced with the little 2-year-old.

S1 supped in front of the set, even though she was not particularly watching what was going on. The children likewise did not watch the programme on the set. They merely cast the occasional glance at the set as they passed through the room, in the range of the functioning set.

Before long the older children had a friend visiting them. The focus of the entire group was shifted to the concerns of these youths who were preparing for some examinations. The mother got caught-up with arrangements of how they would get to the examination centres. This deliberation led to other related matters, which were in no way related to TV.

In the meantime, there was a cartoon programme - Police Academy on the screen. This was watched with rapt attention by both B2 and the toddler. This was until the toddler, on seeing a packet of snacks that interested him (in real life), switched his attention, and that of everyone else,

as he clamoured for it.

He succeeded in breaking the attention of the adults from their deliberations. But he also freed them, as it were, for the TV to attract their attention. Not being engrossed in any conversation, one of them soon noticed a visual on television, and called the attention of the others to the price tag on the advertised product - Soy Ice cream (ice cream from soya bean milk which is very cheap).

In rejecting the credibility of the advertised price of the product, they drew from their knowledge of the "norm". With this experience, they modified the message. Therefore, although the advertised price was 50 kobo, which ordinarily makes the product "affordable", there is an understanding that the actual selling price would be an additional 30 - 50 kobo.

G1: They won't sell it for 50 kobo , it might get sold for 80 kobo or one naira.

Although at this time the grandmother was not out on the verandah but in the sitting room, she still maintained the pattern of ignoring the set. There was apparently none of the selected programmes that she fancied.

As for S1, she continued to ruminate over her concerns, even though she sat in front of the set. For instance she, at some point, burst out spontaneously

"Does anyone know who can fix this fridge, Sendeke is no longer reliable."

This indicates the kind of concerns that engaged her thoughts even as she sat in front of the set. She had even commented on the fact that a

programme had totally captivated the little ones. True as that was, the toddler was restless still, and not as attentive as B2, he soon went out to play.

As the closing signature tune welled up and closing credits for the programme began to roll, G1 took the remote control and switched the channels. She did not appear to have any particular programme in view. She simply zapped round and settled for "Voltron" a popular cartoon programme with the children. This was in spite of the fact that the programme lacked colour and sound. B2 still found the programme attractive. The older ones preferred a better option. (They had also been watching the Police Academy cartoons.)

B2 was no match for them (B1 and G1) this time, possibly because of the indisputably poor reception quality of his choice. His choice was overruled. The choice to be made was between a foreign programme, and two music programmes. B1 accused G1 of indecision as she kept switching back and forth. In the end it was the guest's choice that was allowed.

That choice was a musical which entertained everyone including the mother. It was a compilation of the latest on the local music scene. There was obvious vicarious participation in this viewing experience.

S: Indeed the hands speak! [responding to lyrics, affirming what was said based on the accompanying visuals that she had seen.]

Girls: Ah! Ah! [marvelling at the (strenuous) dance.]

Guest(male): That's their profession.

G1: That's his wife. [of one of the dancers.]

R: Is that his wife or they are just dancing together?

Guest: Throughout that record, she is the one who danced with

him but one can't assume that she's his wife.

S1: [reading record's title off the screen] O l'omori.

Girls: [reading the translation in a chorus] E get cover.

(The translation is in pidgin English. The manner of reading both the title and the translation can only be fully appreciated when there is an awareness of how faddish slangs, for the sake of including as wide a spectrum of the population as possible, get translated into the most common denominator -pidgin English. Often, one is repeated as a reverberation of the other.)

As one musical video was faded out, another was faded up. The group was quick to recognise the artiste. He is a favourite and they could not conceal their excitement or welcome for him.

Guest: Look, that is him.

Chorus: Funwontan!

B1: His music is enjoyable.

Guest: There's sense in the music he plays on the radio.

S1: Do you want me to buy it? [i.e. the video, as this is just the promotional clip]

Chorus: YES!

S1: Seventy naira, that is how much the videos costs.

PAUSE as (apparently) the new release was being enjoyed.

The nature of this music is such that one must get acquainted with it first before one can sing along. Unlike some which employ common idioms and follow known literary patterns, this particular artiste excels in presenting his message in an original way, which includes coining original words - Neologism.

G2: But I do not like these little children, they should have worn clothes. [responding to the visual illustration of the message, without connecting it to the song, and thus not able to appreciate the reason why it need be so.]

S1: And you know it all started as humour (a joke) yet see how much reputé he has acquired.

B1: He was the one who got the best entertainer of the year award.

R: Really! Who gave him that?

Chorus: PMAN (Performing Musicians Association of Nigeria)

It was clear that there was no convergence of focus in the response to the clip. There was no other reference to G2's objections which were founded on her standard of decency. Rather the conversation drifted in the line of the artiste career. The conversation continued with each person narrating his personal experience of, (or encounter with) the artiste. He was soon out of focus, and they concentrated on the other circumstances surrounding such experiences. None the less, they were disappointed when the clip, which they had ceased watching was succeeded by another one.

It was only at this time that someone inquired about the station in view. It had not mattered which station it was that they watched, as long as the programming was satisfactory. There was no set station loyalty pattern observed.

"Ah! Shame!"

"What station is this?"

"LTV; they are only biding time till 6.00 p.m. when they will read the news."

"No they will read the news at 6.30 p.m."

"Well then, maybe it's one of those Moslem programmes."

The family switched off mentally as they found Moslem programmes being shown on the various stations. S1 later commented on the accuracy of the earlier predicted pattern. This was as they shopped round the stations without finding an option.

Afterwards, the television was ignored, and left as part of the room ambience. Again, S1 recounted her woes in another story telling session. By this time, the grandmother had proceeded to the verandah. The little children had since dispersed, right after the musical interlude.

Although the set was ignored, there was still a conscious monitoring of of its content. This soon became apparent as, on sighting acceptable programming, there was a renewed interest in the screen.

On seeing what appeared to be a drama programme, S1 asked for the remote control, so that she could increase the volume and generally take control of the set. By requesting for the remote control, she expressed her interest in the programme.

She thought she had watched the programme at some time previous, but even that did not make the programme any less captivating. Rather, it assisted her ability to read the programme and also her ability to run a screen side commentary as she is wont to do.

The programme was a serial drama and S1 filled the other members of the group in on the story to date. Thereafter there was relatively quiet viewing as the group paid close attention to the programme. The suspense in the drama was contagious.

The quiet viewing was punctuated by the occasional comments from the subject. These were really bits of information which she felt was necessary for the group, particularly those who had not watched the previous episodes to understand what was going on.

S1: That is the sacrifice being taken [to the forest / shrine] but that has no effect on the ghost.

Subject soon realised that, that which she had watched, was a different episode. This further heightened her interest in the programme. In fact, the interest was so much that in this situation, the children's demands, only met her momentary attention. They did not succeed in breaking her concentration. This, is despite the fact that the reception of the programme was not clear.

It was clear that the value placed on the previous experience; the pleasure derived from the viewing of the previous episode, had been transferred to this one. The subject was on the look out for the ghost who had "wreaked havoc" in the previous episode.

"It was on channel 2 that I watched the programme. I was alone that day as well. I had a fit of laughter when the ghost chased the man and he ran like a thief."

[The man in question according to subject's report was a pastor, who, motivated by the promise of monetary reward by the village head, attempted to rid the village of the ghost. The ghost was that of a man, who had been killed "before his time".

The pastor had gone to the cemetery armed with a crucifix and a bible, but he flung these away, when he was chased by the ghost. He even ran past his own compound, in his confusion.]

S1 was satisfied by the suspense, and the anticipation of "action" that the arrival of the ghost on the scene would bring. She participated so vicariously, and she even responded as though she were a member of the crowd within the programme.

The conversation being held outside the room was clearly audible and in deed it was a source of distraction to the viewer.

Just as the "noise" from outside was a source of distraction to the programme, the commotion that was featured in the programme itself drew attention to the programme. G1 and some of the other children who were within earshot were attracted to investigate the cause of the commotion within the programme. They stayed to watch till the end. The duration for which they waited was not very long as the commotion marked the climax of that particular episode.

[The commotion had been the uproar which accompanied the exposure of the girl who posed to be a virgin when she was not. She had thus wrongly taken part in, and even led the ritual virgin dance. The penalty for her action was that she would be struck down by the god. It was this action coupled with the expression of shock and horror by the villagers that had caused the uproar.]

The children dispersed as soon as the programme came to an end. The channel was switched immediately to a much clearer station. It was clear that the poor reception was endured only for a specific purpose.

The children soon converged again, as the mother, who was sitting before the set, was sharing some treats. By this time, the set was on the Lagos state channel - LTV. The programmes that were to be on the weekend transmission - Lagos Weekend Television (LWT) were being promoted. This promo was watched with a noncommittal attitude. There was no covert excitement at the programme offering; there were no expressed plans or desires of the featured programmes.

The transmission continued with a musical. This attracted the attention of the group. There was a particular piece which, though it was locally produced, and in a local language, appeared foreign. The group was able to discern that the piece was a copy of the "Indian culture", both in

the dressing, and in the melody.

Though they enjoyed the programme, they did not fail to observe the fact that it was not a regular feature. They were aware that it came to them, only as a result of a lull in the station's drive for sponsored programmes. It was thus seen as one of the dispensable programmes. In the previous week, the slot, had been taken up by one of the sponsored religious programmes transmitted specially for the period of the Moslem Ramadan fast.

This awareness appeared to have affected a viewer's attitude to the programme. G1 was particularly vocal in expressing the observation. As though confirming the criticism, S1, complained about the low audio level.

Even as they enjoyed the musical, unceremoniously, it gave way to a Moslem programme. There was no continuity link. The succeeding programme was not introduced, nor was the musical signed off. G1 saw this as a confirmation of her beliefs about the station.

G1: That is what I said. I knew they would do these. They won't sing [show musicals]. When they do conclude this fast, they will start showing programmes. Since they [i. e. Moslems] started this fast, OGTV has just put all their old programmes aside.

S1: We have just been neglected.

The (offending) station in view, was not OGTV, and the subjects were aware of these. When asked, they affirmed that the station in view was not OGTV, but still they made a connection between their view of OGTV, and the performance of LTV, the station in view. This suggests that the viewing experience is sometimes not delineated by channels or station

identification.

There was a mental switch off, but the programme was left on as part of the room ambience. S1's attention was focused on the smooth running of the home. After a while, the channel was switched, to a station showing the news. This was not deliberate.

The initial reaction observed, was that the programme was a put-off as well but it was selected still, as if indicating that it was to be preferred to the other options; the Moslem programmes. The mother (S1) was the only one before that set. Others were doing other things only coming to sit before the set sometimes.

S1 watched, in a rather uninterested manner, only when there was an item that had caught her attention. This was the story about the possibility of the Nigeria/Ghana football match not being transmitted. At other times, she did not bother at all.

The viewing for this day was generally chequered, and carried on grudgingly. The family was well able to amuse (entertain) themselves without the medium especially with:

- the size of the family; and
- the variety of ages and nuances.

The Polygram musical show was selected and viewed by G1, but her viewing was restricted by her chores. B1 however watched unhindered.

The Pepsi advert was appreciated and in fact as though she were an expert on the matter, the mother commented that -

"Pepsi and Coke adverts usually have a large budget!"

Meanwhile the programme, which Pepsi had sponsored, was not consciously attended.

The grandmother was attending to the little children, and the mother was lying down on the sofa before the set, switching her attention between her conversation with the grandmother in which she was catching up on the day's event, and overseeing the older children. She appeared to be running the home by remote control -sitting before the set and getting things done. Amidst all of these, her attention occasionally went to the functional set which was right before her.

When G1 was chanced, as the nature of her chore permitted, she made her way to the set to watch the programme. Both herself and B1 were thoroughly into the programme, irrespective of the goings on around them. They sang along to the lyrics of the videos, and even tried to identify the locations where such videos were made. This was in the case of the locally produced ones, as the programme was a montage of both foreign and locally produced popular music.

The ability of those who are interested, to concentrate, in spite of all the possible distractions around them, is worthy of note.

In spite of all the chores and distractions, the children were still mindful of the time. At the scheduled time, they asked the older ones, to tune the set to a particular channel - LTV.

The programme that they were after was another musical but it was not

featured that day. Instead, there was a paid announcement promoting a special cultural show.

There was a change in the audio level as the new channel was found. This attracted the mother's attention who directed that the volume be turned down. Thereafter, the attention was shifted to the visual spectacle - the displayed float, the masquerades, and the cultural dances.

S1 echoed the words of the music which the maidens danced to.

"You went to Abuja and danced for the government, you went to Epe town and danced on the lagoon. . ."

What they viewed, were just the snatches of the actual performance, used in the promotional package, the experience of viewing it was thus necessarily truncated. At the end, the promo was obviously enjoyed. But no one could tell when the show was to be staged, although someone had an idea of where. They had not read the caption which trailed the promo at the end. The earlier visuals and the voice-over, had not given any indication of these. It seemed that this audience, had by-passed the voice-over, and focused their attention on the underlying music and visuals instead.

As the interesting promo was concluded, the grandmother raised a question which diverted the family's attention to another matter. It was the question of which soap was longer lasting. This was a reflection of her considerations - housekeeping expenses. No soap advert was referred to in the deliberation. In fact, the scope of options were much wider than the range advertised.

The discussions were immediately suspended as a musical interlude came

on. The focus of the group was again shifted to the set. The artistes were identified; their attires appraised; and their dance steps were compared to that of known persons - "This one dances like - " The various individuals also moved to the beat. Participation in this viewing experience is vicarious whereas the adverts which preceded the interlude were ignored.

It is obvious that the musical fitted into the daily experience of the family

"Ehn! Mummy here is that song."

"And this one resembles mummy"

"No. Don't you know this one"

"This is Wasiu..."

"They have played it so often, the tape is worn." (That, as the picture wobbled)

"The tape is bad."

"Is it worn already?" (comparing the date of release, the expectation of wear, and the perceived quality.)

"If not for Barrister who started the trend..." (Focus back on dance)

"Can you do it?"

The direction of the discussion changed as another musical succeeded the previous one, yet the pattern continued.

"This is Fajemirokun."

"What is this that he is clad in?"

"What is it? Let [B1] tell us, jeans or stone-washed?"

The younger children were summoned to put on a dance display, like that which was on the screen. The adults and the older children looked on,

marvelling at the show from the children and the set. The children were soon ignored and the group's attention was drawn to the familiarity of the song. It only took one person, (G1) voicing the observation, to set the others off.

G1: This is a rendition one of the old [time] stories. [to sisters] Do you know it?

They did, and they all sang the original folk tune which had been revamped in the musical video.

The focus of the group was shifted again, as another person (G3) voiced her own observation. These audible observations helped to converge the group's reading of the programme.

"This one looks like Auntie Sola"

"They say that is your mother" [that to the visiting toddler]

"Look! You will soon see what this one will do now"

[Laughter all round as they beheld the spectacle to which their attention had been drawn.]

"She is dancing like my sister. This one is dancing like my auntie, Titi, that one is dancing like mummy. . . "

"Your head! Can I dance like this mad people? This is not dancing, don't you know that mine is a slow and easy dance?"

"He looks like Sunny does he?" [Researcher's bait]

"No he looks like Obey"

"Yes, but he looks more like Dele Abiodun"

"This one looks like one of mummy's colleagues"

"Mummy look at him Mr. --"

"Could not be! That one, can he dance?"

The commentary carried on like that, and though the show was enjoyed by all, in the course of their shared observations, individual reservations

were aired. This provided the forum for a group negotiation and subsequently, a group reading. This is not to suggest that individual opinions were cancelled. They could still exist alongside the group's. The observation only offers an insight to how group readings are generated.

In the negotiation, each person's contribution was informed by the scope of personal experience. Take the following observation for instance.

Child: "No he looks like Obey"

Mother: "Yes, but he looks more like Dele Abiodun"

It is not clear which of the children expressed the above opinion but she certainly spoke for them all, as they readily agreed with the statement. Even the mother was also in agreement, but she had a broader basis of comparing the physical appearance of the musician in view.

While the children likened the man's appearance to Obey, who is a more acclaimed musician; the mother was able to find a closer resemblance in another musician, (Dele Abiodun) who though once very popular, was not as familiar to the younger generation.

There were other baits which the group did not take up. For instance they did not follow up on the remark about the subject's hairstyle, neither did they attempt to identify the location of the recording. These baits were dropped as subjects had not voluntarily commented on those aspects of the viewing. The aspects which they considered striking, can be deduced from their pattern of response. By not

responding to such baits, there is a suggestion that rather than being an oversight in the course of viewing, they did not intend or were not competent to comment.

The group did not attempt any analysis or negotiation of the programme beyond reading the obvious. They did not try to appreciate the several idiomatic expressions employed in the songs, as did S1 in location 1. Rather they focused on the superficial - the dance steps, the dressing, and striking visuals; like the woman seen trying to eat a whole pineapple (not peeled).

The idiom which that visual was illustrating was not discussed. The pedagogic function of the visual seemed to have been lost here, whilst the humour appeal was paramount.

The musical was incorporated into the family's entertainment agenda. It was not treated as an intrusion. It did not require such concentration that would make each become an individual viewer. It still allowed them to share their thoughts as a group.

Even the toddlers were paraded as entertainers.

At 8.00 p.m. as the news came on, another channel was selected. It was a clear rejection of the news. The new channel that was selected was an NTA station. The programme which was on the network transmission was a documentary and this was not appealing either. The said programme was associated with government activities, or that of its parastatals. It was rejected as well. In the absence of a "better" option, the news which they had earlier rejected was selected. Then the set was left on

again as part of the room ambience. The family got on with their life as though the set were not on.

Despite the fact that S1 was sitting in front of the set, (when she returned to it), her thoughts were apparently not aligned with the information that emanated from the set. For instance, at a point when the item was on the training of bankers, the subject's outburst was about the boarding arrangements for high schools.

Although there were several other human interest items, those which caught the subject's attention, were the items on the following.

- i, the public auction of "essential commodities" [that is groceries like milk, oil, sugar, tinned fish]; and
- ii, the announcement of the Moslem night vigil, marking the end of the month of fasting.

Whilst her interest in the former was fleeting, the fact that the latter was a practice which evoked long forgotten, childhood memories, caused her to dwell on it. In fact it sparked off another family discussion as the grandmother was drawn in, and the subject shared her memories with her children.

It was G1 who drew attention back to the set. Being mindful of the time and the schedule, she selected a network produced soap opera. There was no objection to the choice as the options available were the news on one station, and an Islamic religious programme on the two state stations which they received clearly.

Though there was a genuine interest in the programme, the enthusiasm was dampened by the fact that all the viewers had missed some of the

previous episodes. They were thus wary of their ability to follow. They had missed these episodes for different reasons; some because they were in boarding schools where they had no access to sets, and some because of unstable schedules, both at home and (for the mother) at work.

The programme was not clear till about midway through the day's episode. It was watched in relative silence and there was no indication that the programme was enjoyed. Rather it appeared that the programme was watched out of habit, or for the want of a "better" thing to do.

By the time the programme came to an end, the two boys had left the sitting room unceremoniously, as had the grandmother, and the two younger girls, G2 and G3 had drifted off to sleep.

The family's interest was perked up by an advert which aroused their curiosity. It was the commercial preceding the launching of 7UP's Fido Fido campaign. (This was not clear at that time.)

The other commercials which the subjects noticed were the competing brands of tyres which were placed adjacent to each other. Not only was this striking, S1 actually confused the names of the brands as she referred to their adverts.

It is well possible that the sudden change in the volume of the TV as the second advert came on, accounts for the observation. It must be noted that the sudden increase was so noticeable that S1 first requested that the volume be turned down, before commenting on the close proximity of both commercials.

The volume of the set was still kept low when the network news came on. There was no attempt to increase it as the now roused family, supped before the set. Ten minutes into the newscast, there was a cut in the electricity supply. This lasted for about 45 minutes although it appeared to be longer. By the time it was restored the family had drifted back to sleep, but the children were still mindful of a Yoruba drama which they had planned to watch.

B1 and G1 switched on the set in time for the programme. G3 and the mother stirred and managed to watch the promos for other similar dramas as the one expected. These were to be shown in cinemas. The information was lost on this audience.

The programme seemed lost on them as the reception quality was very poor. There was hardly any noise from outside at this time, so initially they all endured, attending the programme with full concentration.

After a while all that could be heard was the static, and the picture was very grainy. Yet the viewers persisted in their endurance, trying to make sense of the snatches of the programme that they could piece together.

There was a long scene in the forest, in which there was no speech at all, except for the occasional sound effects. Still the programme was watched, although only by G1 and B1 and one of the young guests, aged about 10 years old. The others had drifted back to sleep by this time.

The programme was about the supernatural. The day's episode had centred on how an evil purposed demon occupied a disobedient woman's womb,

having rid her of her foetus. (Subsequent episodes, showed how the demon plagued the town, and later how another incarnated spirit - child came to the rescue.) Because this was one of the earliest episodes, the plot was not immediately clear. The poor reception had not helped either. In fact it was with the knowledge from the previous week's viewing, that the viewers could make sense of the particular experience. Yet they did not relent in their endurance till the programme was concluded.

It was only then that they sought out the movies which had since begun on some other channels that were clearer. They had been aware of these options even as they watched. This showed that their viewing of the Yoruba drama was a matter of choice.

It was suggested that the rain storm which was responsible for the cut in the power supply, was also responsible for the particularly poor reception quality. It is also reasonable to suggest that the cool temperature, which the rain brought along, further encouraged the lull to sleep.

Observation ended at this time.

Day 6

Though she did not go to work on this Saturday, the mother, S1 travelled to her home town for the day.

Viewing did not commence till about 4.00 p.m. because of a cut in the public power supply. As a result, the family had missed half of the day's transmission, on this day that there was daytime transmission.

When the power supply was restored, the family awaited the Cosby show, an American produced comedy. The other programmes which came on the screen before then were used as a backdrop for the various conversations. The mother and the grandmother exchanged reports of their experiences during the day. The mother gave a report of events in the hometown, from where she had just returned, and the grandmother reported on the home front, at which she had been holding forte.

The children watched the programme Lagos Weekend Television run-down for the rest of the weekend transmission, as it came on. They noted the available fare in a non-committal manner. The mother was attracted by the programme featuring the (Yoruba) traditional game of "Ayo". Because she had not been paying attention, she wondered aloud, if it was time for the programme. This was despite the fact that she knew that the programme was normally featured at a different time.

S1: Have they changed the time of the programme to this time?

G2 & G1: No, it is a programme promotion.

What this suggests is that with an inattentive viewer, the programme promo, could be a source of confusion, rather than of clarification. However as with other types of confusion arising from her being inattentive, persistence before the set, especially within the context of a group of other viewers, the misreading is soon corrected.

There was a remarkable amount of noise within the room as the children played, and the elders conversed. It was only the Yoruba programmes which they found attractive enough to defer to, and attend. They relied on one person or the other to have picked up enough details about such programmes. There were instances when a different person who noted the

title, whilst a different one noted the time of transmission. They were all able to recognise the programme to which the clips belonged. The programmes were old, and known programmes. This point of recognition, was the point where interest was expressed.

When she felt it was time, G1 switched the channel to NTA - 2, the station which she knew the Cosby show would be on. But the programme was not on yet. The programme promo which was on, was attractive as well and it was watched.

The children watched as though attentively. That way, they pretended not to hear what the mother said, thus they refused to run errands. The grandmother's response came out as a negative attitude to the medium, rather than the children.

G/Mother: Once they start watching that thing, they never hear anything!

The volume of the set was increased as the Cosby show came on, and the children at this time, completely ignored the mothers. They watched in (relative) silence. This was the first time during the observation that the children unanimously cautioned someone for distracting their attention. The toddler was the first to be warned. But the mother was still a source of distraction. Rather than follow what was going on, she relied on the children to tell her.

Often times, the jokes were not laughed at. Sometimes, the family laughed only to the cue of the recorded studio audience. At other times, the laughter was at the really, visually, ridiculous things. (For instance, Mrs. Huxtible's longing look at a baby; Dr. Huxtible in the basketball court with his son - such attracted spontaneous reaction from

this audience.)

Although she was the only one who had visited America, the mother was the least "Americanised". She was the last to understand the story line and she was not shy to admit this.

The programme was enjoyed and as it concluded, the family expressed their frustration at the available programme fare for the evening. This came out as a lament by G1 -

"There are no more programmes tonight"

The absence of programmes considered to be interesting was equated with a lack of programming. The effort of getting the available fare notwithstanding, to this subject, they were non-existent as they did not suit her taste.

Because she had voiced her opinion, she had a chance of being "corrected". Her sister reminded her of a scheduled programme, which they expected to be interesting. It was a comedy in Yoruba, (Alawada) on another channel. As they discussed, they were able to iron out their "wrong" assumptions as to the position of the programme on the schedule. The confusion had been due partly to the fact that the programme was featured on different stations.

G1 changed the channel in pursuit of "Baba Sala" the lead character in the said comedy. The time which she chose to switch the channels did not meet the approval of the toddler, who let out a scream and made a big racket to express his disapproval. He had been engrossed in the Kodak advert which had followed the Cosby show. He was not aware, nor could he

appreciate the reason why the channel was being changed. For him, all that mattered was his pleasure that was being curtailed.

The said programme was not found for some reason. Possibly there had been a mix up in the time. During the search, "Icheoku" another comedy in English and Igbo was found on channel 10. It was another old favourite, which the family had not been aware was on. It was thus watched on its own merit, as well as for the fact that there was no better option. The sought programme had not been found.

On this night, the whole family was watching together. They appeared to be either exhausted or bored. It could have been a combination of both.

The comedy in the selected drama is based on the anomalies in the court clerk's translation of the British magistrate, the district officer, and the Igbo natives in colonial Nigeria. (Re. Day 6, Location 4)

After a few (5) minutes of Icheoku, the family got tired of it and rejected it. G1 shopped around with the remote control for an alternative. The mother chose a Moslem talk programme to be endured in the meantime. The children preferred to watch the advertisements on NTA - 2. The mother's choice was rejected with the excuse that it would soon be time for news on that channel. The mother relented. This was how the family found itself watching a stream of adverts. They were quite critical of these.

There was an advert for a soap - "Zip bar". The family reacted to it.

G2: All sorts of soap!

G1: It can't be different from Rin. [Rin is an older soap

bar similar to that being advertised.] I don't like that Rin, it bleaches clothes.

S1: There is too much soda in it. "Cross" is the soap.

G1 & G2: And "Canoe" as well.

The discussion continued, and they enumerated the types of soap they had used, and the perceived demerits of each one. The conclusions were based on their experience. In the meantime, all the other adverts which came on were ignored, till the "Winco" shoulder pads adverts came on. This had models walking along a catwalk. The group halted their conversation, and paid attention to the screen.

The "Pengo" pain relief was also found interesting. The actions were not quite understood, but seeing the product at the end of the advert, they were able to "make out" what the message was.

The advert was a montage of different people in different situations and with different ailments, which the product could relieve. It was only the shot of the bent over old man, who was shivering that the group could readily identify with. The other illustrations were not quite clear, yet this was not a new advert.

The Lux advert was also an old one. It did not evoke any visible response, but when asked, they claimed to like it.

R: What about it do you like?

G1: I like the way the woman is dressed.

G3: I like the woman because she is fashionable.

R: What about the product?

Non-committal response.

The "Tandi Guarana " advert was visibly enjoyed. The girls sang along and danced to the musical commercial. The product was a soft drink that was relatively new in the market. The advert had youths, singing, dancing, and enjoying the product at an exterior location, (possibly) a beach.

The Nasco cornflakes adverts reminded one of the girls of school. Cornflakes is apparently one of the provisions taken to the boarding school, (presumably) to subsidise the meals.

Malta Guinness, was another new product in the market, and the advert was also relatively new. It was vicariously enjoyed. The advert was also a musical, a montage of different age groups in different situations enjoying and endorsing the product.

By 8.00 p.m. B2 had slept, B1 sauntered into the room. He did not particularly demand the remote control, or the Sports programme which was on at that time. It was as though he was not aware, or that he was not interested.

S1, was not in the sitting room at this time so the children had the freedom to choose. They chose the musical; locally produced funk, contemporary music. Again the toddler was made an entertainer; he was made to dance to the amusement of the group. He was like an extension of the TV programme.

When S1 returned to join the group of viewers, she was quite content with the choice of programme. She enjoyed the music and the display. She exhibited a knowledge of the goings-on in the music scene.

S1: This is the group, the one who married one of his back up singers.

G1: No, it is this one, Amos something.

S1: His name is - I'll remember in a minute, he has another name, Madonna or something.

G1: You are referring to Mandators, this is not that group.

PAUSE

G3: Oh I thought it was a better song that was coming. . . she [referring to the new artiste on the screen] is the one who sang the song where someone was convulsing on the bed.

The video which the girl was referring to was supposed to be portraying a woman passionately longing for her lover. The theme of the song was "loneliness". With that comment, the group's loss of interest was voiced. The show thus became a backdrop for the family's discussions, teasings, and bickerings.

The musical show gave way to the time slot for the awaited comedy, Alawada. The programme was referred to by the name of the main character. There was a personal paid announcement slot which was heeded. Whilst this was going on, there was break in transmission due to a cut in the station's electricity supply. This information was given by the continuity announcer as she apologised. It was just a momentary break and the group did not appear to mind. In fact there was relief that the apology was not on account of the station's inability to bring the programme.

G3: Oh! I thought she was going to say they could not bring the programme.

The relief was short lived because, in the very next breath, the announcer apologised for the inability to bring the awaited programme.

The station had been so predictable. The replacement for the programme was a discussion programme in Yoruba, on the census exercise. It was automatically received with contempt.

G3: Thank you! but shut up. We are not interested.

For some time, the channel was not switched, though attention had shifted from it. It was S1 who later directed that it be switched. This was in response to some utterances in the programme that she had not been paying apparent attention to. At the time she made the request, she was obviously irritated by those utterances that she had overheard.

S1: Please, switch the channels, who asked them?

Even at the request, the channel was not switched. The group merely switched off their attention again. S1 confessed that she was not interested in either the programme, or the census exercise, at all. Her interest could not now be "forced" by the programme, but she could not help overhearing what was being discussed.

In the course of expressing their frustrations, there arose a discussion on their appraisal of the stations' performance. Although LTV is a station which they liked and still sought, someone expressed a dislike for the station.

R: Why do you not like LTV anymore?

G1: Because they do not have programmes anymore.

R: But that is the station you watch most.

G1: It is not.

R: Which station do you like?

G1: Channel 5

These responses do not correspond with the observed pattern of viewing. Had the study not employed the method of direct observation, these type of misleading responses is what one would have had to work with. This is however not to dispute the truth in the responses, it only indicates that the compromises of group viewing, on the individual's preferences, can invalidate such responses.

It is remarkable that disliked programmes were equated with no programmes. These subjects had an interesting view of the television service.

R: Do you like OGTV?

G1: Well yes, but since the period of this Ramadan. . .
[mother cuts in]

S1: It's because they have found sponsors who give them money. My view of LTV - 8, is that they have more foreign programmes than local programmes.

R: Do you not like foreign programmes?

S1: [Pause] We ought to promote ours. Even while transmitting, they tend to be untidy. We are fed up with them. The station should be cancelled.

G2: [aping station's announcer] We beg your pardon!

G3: They say "The new staged drama" (laughter)

S1: Then they keep repeating and repeating.

G1: They do not have programmes anymore.

S1: Since their station got burnt, they have lost their stock of films

G3: Oh even before then, they used to have - [she sings a song from one of the Yoruba dramas, enjoying the reminiscence] - The mother is the mother.

[The use of the word mother in this context has the added connotation which makes it a reference to the "women of the night" - witches]

G1: In fact, if only they would just repeat and avoid that hissing sound. [referring to the quality of reception]

G3: They are always begging your pardon. Those "Ayedogbon" tapes, they attract so much begging your pardon, you could die.

[Ayedogbon is a Yoruba play, this station's equivalent of the NTA's popular "Feyikogbon". The performing group is a splinter group of that which performs "Feyikogbon"].

G1: Those tapes are old, scratched and spoilt, I feel sorry for them. [she burst into a song]

R: What's this you are singing?

G2: Oh, it's from [one of] the good programmes they used to have. They used to have them, such enjoyable programmes.

That the above discussion took place at all, illustrates how busy the viewing context could be - the fact that there is a bunch of restless viewers who could constitute a nuisance to whoever is trying to concentrate on the TV.

It would appear that the main objection to LTV's performance is the poor technical quality of the available stock of programmes. Although subjects objected to repeats, it appears that a good quality repeat, will be tolerable especially if it were an attractive programme. In this instance, it appears that the Yoruba programmes would be more tolerable than foreign ones, except if such were comedies. This decision would be influenced by what else was available for watching at the time.

A projection on audience viewing pattern can only be complete, when all elements of the viewing situation is complete. These includes viewers' preferences; available options; reception quality; even context of viewing. The last two elements appears not to have received adequate attention in previous studies, yet they do have a bearing on the attitudes which influence viewing. The effect of the proximity of an experience; for instance, in this case, the disappointment from the

station, cannot be overlooked when considering the reaction of the viewers to the station.

The family continued enumerating their gripes about television viewing generally. The perceived poor performance of one station, evoked memories of that of others. Though they could distinguish between the stations, it appears that the entire television service was seen as one. The discussion had an interesting conclusion.

G1: You see, another reason why I don't like OGTV is because they have too many sponsored programmes. If they attend a private party, they will broadcast that instead of showing good programmes - showing parties of individuals whom we don't even know.

S1: You know that is where they get their money from.

G1: Money! They have been driven crazy by money. They should in fact, they should scrap the station.

R: So if TV is scrapped you don't mind?

G1: Yes! We will be watching video. (Pause) They should save only channel 5.

The family did have a stock of videos to watch. In addition they had a network of friends with whom they could share and circulate home videos. These were invariably of foreign films, and locally produced musicals. The pattern of viewing these is not reflected herein as it would have amounted to a digression in this study. The impact of this allied technology should however not be discounted.

Earlier on in the week, there had been a clamouring for the mother to buy a particular musical video which had been seen on the screen. There had been other times when they had restrained themselves from switching to the use of the home video for entertainment, rather than remaining bored with the TV service. This indicates the desire of the audience

The network newscast was on air at this time, and there was an item on the news, announcing the sighting of the moon, which signifies the end of the Moslem Ramadan month (of fasting) had been sighted. The timely coincidence, evoked an outburst.

G1: [with disdain in her tone] They follow the moon, the moon!

The above illustrates how religious loyalties affect the way some aspects of programming are perceived. G1 was obviously intolerant of the Moslem programmes, whilst others were not as vehement in their objection to them. In fact it appeared that there was an indifference on the part of some other members of the family. The mother for instance had been converted from Islamic faith to Christianity, and even then she had no strong allegiance either way.

But there was more to G1's objection than than religious allegiance. There was the fact that Friday's programming was more limited in length than Sunday's. Therefore to her, it appeared that there was little time for her choice of programme, when the unwanted programmes had been scheduled.

The situation was further compounded by the exclusivity which the programmes presented. Though the programmes are not in Arabic as the subjects perceived, they do have verses being read or recited in Arabic. Some of these are translated. The main discussions are usually carried on in Yoruba. Yet, there is a confirmation of the apparent misreading, from one who is even indifferent to the programmes. The misreading here had been fuelled by the preconceived prejudices towards the context of

the programme - Religion.

The discussion was beyond the scope of programme preference. There were latent motives behind the position of each one of the discussants. If this illustrates the religious tensions which exist for programmers to be mindful of, it also illustrates how other strong beliefs, may affect reception.

While the discussion was going on, the younger children had drifted off sleep. They could thus not constitute any distraction for those who were interested in the news. But the discussion itself was a distraction as the above and other personal matters that were talked about.

Being a Saturday, the news proper was only for 15 minutes. This was followed by the news interviews. The first segment, the "news" proper, was ignored. The second segment, which focused on the issue of Secret Cults on Campuses, proved interesting. This segment was viewed in silence, with rapt attention, even by the mother, till her meal was served. Then, the bickerings started, over who was responsible for what.

Both G1 and B1 were prospective undergraduates and this may have heightened the interest in what was going on in the campuses.

The third segment of the programme was a discussion which focused on the efforts at technological advancement by the Nigerian Society of Engineers. This did not capture the mother's interest, and so she continued her conversations, thus distracting the attention of anyone else who could have been interested.

Observation ended at this time.

Day 7

Viewing was reported to have begun at about 10. 00 a.m. as subjects did not attend church service as planned. The younger children had been sent to church. S1, B1 and G1 had watched a locally produced drama; Telemovie. The programme was in the English language.

Observation commenced at noon. The group watched a comedy in Yoruba, "Efe". There was rapt attention to the programme. The ease with which the pun lines were appreciated was obvious, in contrast to the reception of the previous night's viewing of the Cosby show. The audience could readily identify and appreciate the symbols and images employed.

Man in TV Prog: Ah! the soldier at Idumota is my friend you know, we were childhood friends. We used to play together even tell stories to each other -

G1: And that the soldier of Idumota! (amused)

S1: Can you hear that? (Laughter as she marvelled)

[The soldier of Idumota is a statue - the unknown soldier]

The viewing was interrupted by the grandmother who tried to commandeer G1 into the kitchen, in the absence of the younger girls. G1 shelved the duty to G2 and the grandmother was pacified. S1 suspended viewing to have a bath as the programme ended. The children read the captions which came up on the screen to the grandmother. This was the station's felicitations to the Moslem viewers who were celebrating the "Id-el-Fitri" festival.

G2: Mama, they send you greetings. ["They" refers to the station]

The observation evoked another discussion on the confusing nature of the Moslem festivals due to the moon sighting practise. The grandmother who still had her Moslem affiliations, was genuinely confused as to the exact day of the festival. Although the station was sending her felicitations, there was no sign in the town that it was the day of the festival. Reports from interpersonal sources had put the day of the festival for those in her part of the country, as the next day. The moon was yet to be sighted.

These were the thoughts that she expressed as she sat down purposely to watch the set. Although it was a Sunday, there were special Islamic programmes on account of the festivities. In the meantime, there was an interlude of music which the grandmother obviously enjoyed. The music was played in the background with the station's caption in view.

For the first time, she expressed interest in the choice of programmes as G1 using the remote control, shopped around the stations for an acceptable option. The grandmother requested for a programme wherein the Ijebu dialect was spoken. Like S1 in location 1, she did not simply restrict her preference to the broader Yoruba language, but to her own dialect.

What she heard, which had prompted her request was a fleeting segment of programming. It was possibly just an announcement, but this is not clear as it was only seen momentarily whilst the stations were being scanned. The programme was no longer there as G1 sought it out for the grandmother.

G1 eventually settled for the tail end of a (Christian) religious

programme. The grandmother left immediately the English language programme came on. G1 soon got up as well, leaving the set on, unwatched, until a musical video came on. This too, was not watched consciously, as the subjects went back and forth doing other things.

Of all the subjects, G1 was at this time excused from any chores. Although it was known that she was feeling poorly her mother attributed the excuse to laziness and the programme she was set to watch. Either way, G1 was free to watch the set "undisturbed". The programme was a serial drama in Yoruba. She did not watch alone. She was the one who called the attention of the others when the programme started.

S1 was busy attending to the toddler, but she came to watch anyway. She came in during the commercial break following the highlights of the previous week's episode. She was confused, wondering if that commercial break, signified the end of the programme. G1 was able to confirm that it did not.

A couple of minutes into viewing, G1 searched round the other channels, as though confirming that she had made the best choice. She immediately came back to the programme.

In the course of viewing, S1 intermittently sought clarification of the programme from the children, (G1) - her fellow viewers. She also found comparisons between the child on the screen, and the toddler to whom she was attending.

The group was expecting another programme. For this reason, the mother (S1) kept switching to another channel and the children did not object.

At one point, she came across a musical, Salawa Abeni, one of the popular Yoruba artistes, and she paused to view the clip to the end before switching back to the drama. There was no objection to this either. Rather the entire group enjoyed the viewing of the musical. They were even singing along.

The musical had come from LTV\LWT in place of a Yoruba drama.

The clip of Salawa, was followed by that of the radio entertainer, (who had recently produced a musical video). This was also watched. The search for a station only continued after that, as with the family's "normal" routine. Then another Yoruba drama was found, this time on NTA Ibadan. The reception was not very clear. The programme served as the lunch time show.

There was a similarity in the plots of the two programmes which had been watched.

The earlier programme had featured a woman who was wrongly accused of adultery, because her husband had "caught" her whilst someone was trying to seduce her. The husband had not been aware that his wife was not a willing participant, and he was enraged. In the particular episode, the aggrieved husband was shown punishing his wife, despite assurances, even sworn declarations, of her innocence. The evidence was too implicating. The viewers knew the truth, though the husband did not.

Following her punishment, the next time the woman encountered the seducer, she kept him at arm's length. She even crossed to the other side of the road, to avoid any chance of them being seen together. She

hailed curses to the man as she did so.

The culprit was featured trying to seduce another married woman. This time it was the wife of a blind man. Even though she was unaware of the man's previous deed, she immediately raised hell, calling out to the neighbours to join her in beating up the man.

There were other scenes showing the parents of the aggrieved man, attempting to reconcile the couple. They appeased their son, and pleaded that he should give his wife the benefit of the doubt. They were also shown trying to placate the wife; encouraging her to endure.

The second programme also featured an incidence of infidelity in matrimony. This time a woman had brought her lover to her matrimonial home. They were really caught in the act. She tried to hide the lover before her husband came in, but the husband had seen the lover's hiding place. She then tried to pass the lover up as a diviner. The husband was not fooled and he disciplined both parties. He beat them up thoroughly.

The punishment meted out to the wives in both cases is such as would (traditionally) be given to children or slaves (- crawl on their knees on stony ground).

Both programmes involved the use of charms, the supernatural, and the latter involved witchcraft.

In both cases, the subjects did not object to the punishment, but the circumstances that led to them. The audience had sympathy for the woman who had been wrongly accused, but there was none for the guilty woman

(in the second example). They were amused about the situation in which the punishment was warranted.

Though the programme was engaging, the fact that it was lunch time meant there was divided attention. There was distraction from the act of serving the meal. The arrival of those who went to church also added to the distraction. There was also the added distraction arising from the poor quality of the reception. This in fact led to a contemplation of having the channel changed. The available alternatives, were Christian programmes - Idahosa's ministry was rejected outright. Idahosa is a Nigerian minister, who was not respected in this house hold, and his message was thus shunned. It was not given any chance at all.

The other option featured an American minister, Fredrick Price. This was selected, but the programme was soon concluded. Only the tail end was watched, and the family resumed the watching of a Yoruba drama. Again they only met the tail end of the programme.

The segment that was watched featured a man who was scheming the downfall of his brother. The scheme was motivated by jealousy; the brother happened to be wealthier.

Even before the programme ended, the family had resumed its "normal" routine. They did not pay any apparent attention, but they became engaged intermittently, as the diabolical plan unfolded.

There were times when prayers were being offered within the programme, and these viewers responded. It was with such vicarious participation that one could assess their continued engagement in the programme, in

spite of what else they were doing.

Another indicator was when they voiced their observations and thoughts about what was going on. As noted, this ensured that the group had a uniform view of the broadcast message. But there was a need for such verbalisations anyway because of the several distractions that plagued the viewing exercise. For instance, there was less of such screen side banter later in the evening compared to daytime viewings. This is not to identify time as the factor, but the congregation of a group of active viewers. Indeed, if there were such a congregation at a later hour there could have been the same incidence of the said banter.

The fact that the viewing of the drama was punctuated by the viewing of the musicals is interesting. This happened in the viewing of both programmes. It suggests a restlessness of the particular group. Although it cannot be assumed, the impact of the quality of reception should not be discounted.

After the drama, S1 again, stumbled on another clip of Salawa's music. This time it was her latest release. Without being inhibited that another programme was being viewed, the family convened to watch. S1 organised the young children B2 and the toddler, to perform a dance display taking a cue from that on the screen. The family apparently enjoyed this experience.

There was a problem with the functioning of the remote control panel. There was an obvious dependence on B1 to get it fixed, and he held the family to ransom. It was B2 who called his bluff.

There was a unanimous decision to watch Telematch as soon as they stumbled on it, as the various channels were being scanned. Telematch is a West German production, usually featuring contests between two communities. The emphasis is on team work, and the feats are couched in fun.

The family certainly enjoyed the programme and they even identified with the teams. They used their own initials to determine which team to cheer.

Even with the enthusiasm which heralded the viewing of the programme, the attention pattern soon became chequered. There were chores to be done. The grandmother who was not a part of the viewing would not let the girls escape. Guests also arrived and they had to be entertained. But as soon as they had been settled, the group, including the guests, focused the attention on the programme. Viewing together, was like part of the hospitality.

As they re-convened, it was S1, whose viewing had not been as disrupted as the rest, who filled them in, on what had gone. G2 had watched the programme before. She was therefore able to act as a viewing guide, fore - telling the pattern that would be seen. If it removed the suspense, this did not remove from the excitement in an apparent way.

About halfway through the programme, the group disintegrated. The mother dropped off to sleep, and the children drifted out into the open. The set was switched off, to give it a rest.

G1 was the one who switched the set on in anticipation of "Feyikogbon" -

a drama programme in Yoruba. The programme was viewed with the same pattern as observed before. "Distractions" were allowed during the viewing, but this time, there was a determination to watch the programme. For instance, G3 was not allowed to scan the channels to check for another Yoruba drama that she was interested in. That programme was a comedy, and the others were certain that it would be a re-run because the main character had been dead.

The chosen programme became more engaging as the diabolical plot unfolded. It was about a man who wrongfully accused his boss of greed and corruption. As a result he sought to implicate the boss, be rid of him, and then get a chance at the job, and a share of the "benefits". When he tried physically, to no avail, he put out a contract with the diviner/spiritualist, and he succeeded in getting his boss crippled.

This was a programme that even the grandmother watched. She was visibly involved in the events as they unfolded. She prayed against the success of the "evil man" - the subordinate. As the man got the charm from the spiritualist, the grandmother prayed her wish outloud.

"You will fail, you will misuse the charm"

S1: That is if the other man has good fortune.

S1 was not certain that the good wishes would be the case. For her, the failure of the "evil" plot was dependent on the good fortunes of the boss.

As the "innocent" boss got crippled, they lamented his poor fortunes, and the audacity of the "evil" man who now took control of the office, exploiting his powers as his boss never did.

Subjects were able to relate to the plot, acknowledging that there are parallels to be found in reality.

The sequence of events was predictable. The "truth" eventually prevailed, the innocent man was freed from the curse, and the "villain" got exposed, having worked his way to prison. It turned out that the victim had been related to the spiritualist who was employed to execute the diabolical plan.

This was the third programme viewed on that one day alone, which had such themes involving the occult, and diabolical plans.

The channel was switched to another station right after the programme. This audience group did not wait to have the story teller tie up the story and highlight the morale that he wanted to be drawn from the story.

A Christian programme was found as the channels were scanned. Although B1 advocated that another programme be found, there was no other acceptable option. The programme was thus watched with uneasy reverence. The particular minister was acceptable, and respected by the family. The family gathered round to pray at the end of the programme.

It was about 5.00 p.m. at this time. The family had a problem finding "something" to watch. They were not impressed with all that was on. The set was left on anyway.

Eventually the children's "Sallah" party, a special programme to mark

the Moslem festival, was "enjoyed". The peculiarities observed in the presenters - in their dressing, accent, diction, and even their ability to relate with the children, were ridiculed.

G1 attributed these peculiarities to the fact that the presenters were Moslems. S1 attributed them to the fact that they were northerners. What is clear is that the group picked out those elements of the programme which were symbols of a different culture. These were used to ridicule the programme.

The result of this was that they kept themselves amused, and soon, they were able to appreciate the programme for what it was meant to be. They enjoyed the music to which the children danced; and also the musical chairs competition amongst the children. These were the games that they played in their own homes. They were familiar with the rules, and so they could moderate from home. This way, they vicariously participated in the programme. In addition to these, they also noticed the dressing and the beauty of the children. The programme was used to pass the time.

Later on in the evening, the family watched an American produced situation comedy - Different World. This was consequent to a determined selection of another American production in the same genre - Family Matters. The programme been a replacement for Family Matters. In a sense therefore, they had stumbled on it. Although they had sought something else deliberately, they had not been disappointed by the replacement.

Again it was G1 and B1 who instigated the choice. They were the ones who had been at home for a longer period of time, whilst awaiting the results of their O' levels. The other children were thus not as

conversant with the pattern of the schedule. The exception in this case is B2 who was resident at home all year round.

The characters had played comic roles in other programmes, and they were still appealing. This was true both in the substantive programme, and in the advertisement of the sponsor.

The advert was locally produced. Recognising a familiar face therein proved to be more of a distraction. Spurred by their fascination with the actor, they proceeded to recount the aspects of his career, which they liked. Thereafter they discussed his personal life. By this time, the advert was over, and it was not clear that they actually paid any attention to the message that the celebrity brought.

The advert was for a courier service and it was relatively new. It is not clear if the nature of the product contributed to the apparent lack of attention.

The substantive programme was a spin off of one of their old favourites, Cosby Show. In this case, there was enough time to get over their reminiscences and get along with the programme, which was also new to them. Their familiarity with the reputation of the cast contributed to the level of their anticipation.

It was not long before their attention was converged on the programme. The programme was really absorbing. The group viewing at this time was larger than the normal, as there were still some of the guests around. These were youths - friends of G1 and B1. One was a male and the other, female. Their presence made the viewing even more interesting as the

programme focused on the plights of young adults, like themselves, in a family situation, and in life. With their presence, the age group had a bigger representation.

The contrasts which they perceived to be in the American culture also contributed to how engaging this viewing session was.

One feature which was striking, was the contrasts in their show of respect, and that of their American peers.

Male guest: See how she is greeting someone's mother, these white people have no respect.

B1: Don't mind her, I wonder who invited her to intrude.

Mrs Huxtible was visiting her daughter at the university campus. The two of them were engaged in a conversation, when the daughter's room - mate, butts into their conversation. The room - mate plays the role of a spoilt brat, from a privileged background. Her unsolicited introduction of herself, and her condescending attitude to the Huxtibles, even in the context of that culture, would have been regarded as rude. These viewers did not apply this discretion in their reading. Instead, they made a generalisation. The isolated incidence is accepted as the normal. It is likely that their reading was coloured by preconceived prejudices.

There was another instance where the same "rich" girl was shown, singing "Happy Birthday" to herself. Her friends had pretended that they had forgotten her birthday. Meanwhile, they had organised a surprise party for her. This treatment was deliberately meant to bring their vain friend down a peg or two. It was the surprise element which was striking to the viewers.

G1: They do enjoy surprises; for every little thing, they go

"Surprise! Surprise!"

There was not much else, by way of comments, on this programme. It is thus not clear if it was understood. What is apparent is that the programme served as mirror into a different culture. It is for this reason that the indiscriminate reading of actions (that disapproved behaviour was not discerned for example) becomes important.

The 8 o' clock drama on the NTA network "Supple Blues" was watched. It was not treated as a highlight on the schedule. There was no visible excitement heralding the programme. The programme a soap opera, was still quite new. It had only been introduced in the new quarter which was just a few weeks old.

The programme had what was considered an attractive setting. The subjects tried to identify the location. To do this they looked for landmarks, car registration numbers and such visual signs.

They also tried to follow the storyline, but they exhibited the same chequered viewing pattern. This had begun in the first fifteen minutes of the one hour programme. It started with the arrival of a guest.

The family's attention was diverted to exchanging reports on pressing matters, with the arrival of the guest. The matters were not suspended till the end of the programme, even though they knew, that this guest was going to spend the night.

Despite the distractions, the programme was still followed. The story - line was easy enough.

It was the intrigue in the plot; the deceit; the lies, that captured the attention of the group. It was at these points that there were remarks which helped to converge the group's focus.

There was the case of the girl who "fooled" her guardian, who was also her lover, that she was pregnant by him. This way, she got money off the man, who indeed was very rich.

There was another relationship which was being haunted by the ghost of a lie in the wife's past. She had passed up someone else's child as her husband's. She was, in the episode, being hounded by the child's real father, who wanted to claim his child.

In yet another family, there was the man who had hired an assassin, to kill his brother and the wife. The daughter had escaped, and was now in the man's custody. The girl, who had been unaware of her uncle's involvement in her parents' death, had stumbled on implicating evidence, when the assassin visited to collect his payment.

When the family had settled down to watch, there was not much chatter as was "usual" with them. Even then, the programme was judged interesting. There appeared to be signs of fatigue after the weekend. The adverts which accompanied the programme were not attended. These were not new, like the programme. They were the same adverts that had been seen in that hour for months, even years. It was the same company which had sponsored the previous series in the time slot, that had sponsored the new one.

The channels were switched, right after the programme, even before the credits were shown. In the absence of a more pleasing option, the NTA station was again selected. It was left in the background as other issues were discussed.

Thus ended the observation with this household.

Group Discussion

With the intensity of their complaints during the viewing sessions, the first question which they were asked was if they liked television. The answer was unanimous - they all liked television.

Expressed Preference Patterns

There were different reasons why the medium was liked but the fact remained that it was liked. The common ground was that television "brings the programmes that we want".

For B1 these were the comedies - "the American comedies. . . African comedies, and also music and films."

As for G1, she did not like films. She liked "comedies, Nigerian comedies, and anything pertaining to children."

G2 was non-committal to all the above. She liked "Yoruba dramas and Sina Peters" [a specific musician who was the latest craze in the local music scene.]

The mother (S1) was initially not forthcoming with a response to the question. She seemed content with the children's preferences. Indeed,

this is consistent with her viewing pattern during the observation. She did not appear to have any strong preferences. She knew what she did not like, but there was no programme that she particularly liked or asked to watch. Often times she had stumbled on her choice, either by scanning the channels, or having the choice made for her. For her television was for companionship.

S1: "We like television because if you are the only one in the house, you don't feel lonely. It talks, and it's as though you have company. When I'm going in the morning, Mama [grandmother] asks me to put on the radio . . . television is usually not on then anyway. . . but she likes me to put on the radio."

If the primary use of television is companionship, one starts to understand why there was hardly any concentrated viewing on her part. This lack of concentration as we have seen, affected the viewing of others around. It is probably for the same reason that there is a lack of concentration, that there is no commitment to any particular programme. The confessed apathy notwithstanding, the subject still had her views on the programmes that she watched.

It is interesting that S1 implied an equation between TV and radio.

Interesting - the criterion for preference

The group was again agreed on the criteria for their expressed preferences. Each considered his/her choice "interesting". Interesting in this context meant a programme from which "more sense" could be learnt.

B1: "Like those comedies, if someone does not know how to make jokes, you will be associated with these and when you are with your friends, you can be able to go into jokes with them about the programme you watched." [sic]

B1 and G1 were agreed on this and they cited examples of the American and Nigerian comedies which serve as a common ground for discussion amongst their friends.

"Bill Cosby, and Family Matters, and those African that is Nigerian comedies like Uncle Joe."

From the above, it was not just the viewing experience that was interesting but the shared social experience; the ability to be at par with others who have watched the same programme. In this regard, the anticipated choice of one's peer group would thus affect what one counts as "interesting".

Already we have seen that these subjects are attracted by the dressing of the characters which they see on the screen. They confirmed this.

They had definite views about the other aspects of production. The length of a programme for instance was said to be a possible determinant of what could be interesting or not. But this is usually not considered in isolation. An engaging plot, which is presented in a language that is easy to follow can be enjoyed, and endured for hours. The problem with the imported films, according to S1 is the inability to follow the accent of the actors. She gave the example of a Ghanaian production, featured on the Telemovies slot which was a full length drama. She recalled how engaging the viewing was throughout. It is not clear how the subject had received this programme, but she was clearly able to recall the story line. That the storyline is familiar to her own reality might have helped as well.

The subject cited the story as an example to buttress her view that television portrays reality.

Manifest Lessons

The lessons which they said they had learnt from the television were varied.

G1: Sometimes they discuss about sanitation, that we should always keep our homes clean . . . these are the local dramas -Uncle Joe.

R: What about Family Matters?

G1: That one is pertaining to families.

B1: That teaches us how to relate in the family.

. . .

R: Are there many lessons that you learn from TV?

G1: When we are watching it, we learn how to behave when we are among our friends, (Different World),and also how to behave in the hostel.

R: So do you watch for that reason?

G1: Yes!

. . .

In the event that the lessons which could be learnt from a programme was so important to this audience group, that which they took from the musicals became even more interesting. This was the programme genre which held a ready attraction for the various age groups.

There was variation in the answers given. It would have been interesting to know if there was any correlation between the interests of the different peer groups to which each of the respondents belonged. Here is the range of answers that were given to the question.

R: The musicals, what do they normally sing about? [sic]

S1: "Praises"

B1: And that of politics about the census; population census.

S1: Abusive, they abuse each other.

B1: Politics.

S1: Politics, praises, abusive something.

B1: But that of Sina, I can't qualify that one because it is "ja si bi, ja s'oun" [meaning - here now, there now; non-coherent]

R: So Sina can't be qualified?

B1: Yes, because I don't think the type of music he plays has any meaning. He sings jargon.

R: So what is attractive about his music?

B1: In short, it's just the beat.

G1 & S1: It's just the beat.

There was an agreement that the beat of this fellow's music is attractive, but it is acknowledged that his lyrics do not make sense. In fact, the attraction is acknowledged to being limited to youths. But the mother drew the line here, further limiting the propriety of the "lessons".

R: Why do the youths like him?

G1: It's just the beat, and the people who are dancing.

S: No well brought up child will dance like that.

R: But they enjoy watching it?

S1: Well you know madness is better beheld. . . [laughter all around] because the mad man is without his senses.

In this there is another indication of the use of television and that which is taken from it. The medium is a forum for participating in the "forbidden insanity" that exists in society.

It is interesting that S1 and the older children did not directly participate in the "madness". During all the viewings of the musicals, it was the younger children, those who could be excused for "foolishness", who were summoned to ape the display on the screen.

Sources of Attraction

Of the various things which could attract a viewer to a programme on the set, the picture was the first to receive mention. By the picture these viewers could assess who the programme was meant for and what it was about. A mere glance at the picture was thus enough to determine if the programme was worth watching or not. This explained the "zapping" practice.

S1: The picture and the programme, for example as soon as you see those Moslem programmes, you will not like it.

G1: But if it's for the youths, I will stay and watch the programme.

B1: For me, if I see those religious something . . . "Allah Akbar", I will just switch off.

S1: That is because you are a Christian. . .

R: So you use the pictures?

B1: And the programme. If I see that they are giving us films, I will leave it.

These viewers affirm that they judge a programme by that which they see and hear of it. It is thus possible that they will misjudge a programme which has been designed to have interest built up gradually. Indeed it is possible that a programme will be misjudged if not watched from the beginning. This will be particularly true in such a case where "inserts" are used. If not followed from the beginning, and the rationale for the presence of the segment is not known, an otherwise interesting programme could be rejected.

B1 was the one who liked American comedies. He also liked "American" films. His preference was very specific - American. It was not just any foreign production that he liked, but American. It is not clear though

whether this is a real or imagined discrimination - that is, if the subject had not equated all foreign productions with being American. There was a consistency in the examples that were given; they were all American.

It was only B1 who was interested in films. S1 and G1 were of the opinion that these films had undesirable lessons to teach. B1 however identified the need for such lessons.

R: Why do you like American films?

S1: It teaches them hooligan's mentality. . . How to box.

B1: No.

G1: And how to shoot.

S1: How to shoot.

B1: That can even help you when you have maybe misunderstanding with a thief ([sic] that is in the event that you are attacked).

It appears that there were different outlooks to life underlying these readings and the differences in the anticipated reality have influenced what was considered relevant or useful. Whereas S1 considered boxing and shooting as acts of "hooliganism", B1 perceived such as ability to defend one's self.

There is more to the apparent dislike of the films than the perceived content. These have to do with the format of presentation; the congruence of the reader's culture, with that, in which the programme is expressed.

R: You don't seem to like films. Why?

G1: On my part, I think it's too boring. [sic]

R: Why do you think it's boring?

S1: Maybe it's because of the time, some of them are 2 hours. Ehn but some 2 - hour programmes can be interesting, like Evil Encounter.

G1: That one is Nigerian made.

S1: Okay. [meaning an agreement with last statement] You see foreign films, as for me, I can't hear them well [that is inability to follow conversation, on account of the accent] It makes me not to like it. But if I follow the behaviour, the movement, I may follow what is happening. When they speak and you don't understand, it will put you off. The film itself may be interesting but since you don't follow their speech. [sic]

It was the cost of following the programme that was, invariably, too high for the subject to pay. She would have required undivided concentration for the viewing such, since she could not follow by overhearing what was going on, whilst attending to other matters. The latter, a mode of reception similar to that for radio was the typical mode for this subject as shown. This therefore, makes her comparison of television with radio even more interesting.

Salient Images Perceived

The reported pattern of reception was apparent in the family's account of the salient messages that they had received from television. Cosby show was that used as an example in describing the portrayals of familial relationships, that they had seen on television.

S1: In some homes, you find . . . take, yes it was Cosby, they had a guest at the door, there were three of them in the sitting room . . .

G1: [mimicking the children in the programme] "I'm too young", "I'm watching TV"

B1: There were three of them in the sitting room.

S1: . . . rather than go and get the door, there was one who said she was too young, and the other said she was watching TV. The third said "I'm on the phone". It was

their mother who had to come and get the door. . . In our context, that is not acceptable. You would have slapped the child to her senses.

It is interesting that it is the negative aspect of the programme that was salient.

The subjects were asked about those programmes which they consider to be positive that they had seen on television. The following are their responses.

G1: Comedies,

S1: What about educational programmes? Like those quiz programmes.

G1: . . . also Tales by Moonlight which teaches us to be good to other people, and to love other people.

There was no effort to expatiate on those experiences. The report was not given with the same relish that accompanied the earlier, spontaneous account of what was considered salient on the screen. Even the account of what was considered positive, included the negative - it was a call to rejecting the "negative".

The subjects were thus asked to give an account of what they considered good or bad.

G1: Killing; stealing; abusing elders are bad.

S1: Bad gangs are also portrayed, such things are watched and you are left to make your choice.

There was a definite impression that the mother was using this forum to highlight to her adolescent children that which she felt was the good to be taken from television. Even in an exercise like this, it is evident that enumerating the lessons from a story is typical, as within the

telling of folk tales.

At the insistence of the researcher, the family had to ruminate to identify the "good things" that they had seen on the set. Eventually they came up with these.

B1: Like those quiz programmes; they teach us to know more about the subject.

G1: And also it teaches us how to speak to elders.

Even this suggests that the group basically uses the medium to learn that which is desirable and acceptable behaviour. There was further evidence pointing to this as the subjects recalled their favourite characters and why they were liked.

"Steve" in Family Matters was the first to receive mention. This character is a little boy who "always caused trouble" No doubt there was humour in his act as even at the mention of his name, the group laughed. No one wanted to be like him though. He was one of those who are better watched than imitated.

"Uncle Joe" a local comedian was mentioned next. Himself and "Zebrudaya" another local comedian on the national network were liked because of the way they talk. These characters both speak murderous, adulterated forms of language (usually English).

G1: The way he normally speaks, sometimes in vernacular, sometimes even in broken also. He normally speaks pidgin English. And also this man Zebrudaya on this programme .

. . .

S1: New Masquerade, Tuesday at 8.30

Again though these characters were liked, the errors in their language was recognised as humorous. They were admired, but not enough to be seriously emulated. All the characters in the New Masquerade were admired. It was only in the course of the research exercise though that S1 realised that two of the key characters in the programme had been replaced. The children were aware of this change.

While B1 went along with the above choices, he had his own distinct choice which was not shared by others.

B1: I want to talk about my favourite character that I've watched; Arnold Schwartzniger. He's an actor in an American film.

R: Which one?

B1: There are several films; the man is active, always successful in everything he does. . . He is bold active and successful. I want to be like that.

R: Is he convincing?

B1: Yes!

This is the one character who drew enough admiration, that the subject could readily declare him as a model. All others mentioned, were good enough to watch, but not liked enough to be emulated. It is interesting that Arnold Schwatzniger is here identified with being American. It would appear that he is thus identified as a symbol of what is American.

The other favourite character mentioned was Frank Spencer, of "Some Mothers Do Have 'Em" - the British comedy.

Following this dominance of foreign actors, the subjects had to be prompted before they mentioned favourite local artistes.

R: What about local artistes?

S1: They try as well.

G1: This man "Ma so mo" - I don't know his name.

S1: Ifa something

G1: I don't know his name, he recites these incarnations and whenever he starts, Oh! he gets such a high. I like the way he talks. . .

The character is here being identified with his act. "Ma so mo" is an utterance which the character uses so often that it has become his alias. [Re. Location 2] The suggestion that the character's name could be related to Ifa is a stereotype of the Yoruba dramas, referring to the prominence of the oracle/diviner.

The response reported above, can also be said to reflect the viewing pattern observed for these programmes. The subjects were wont to follow the storyline, paying attention only to the spectacular, and not minding the details such as the names of the characters. Those whose names were identified were those who appear regularly. Baba Sala for example, is a comedian who had been on the scene for almost as long as television itself.

G1: . . . Then there's Baba Sala,.

S1: The dressing; he will clad himself with his tie, on his native wear. His sun - glasses too. And then he will put a torchlight on his head.

B1: Yes Baba Sala is funny; his whole body is funny.

The implication of this statement, is that the spectacle is amusing enough on its own, without the message. If indeed this is the attitude which they bring to the set, then there will be hardly any need for them to do more than scan the screen as they were observed to have done.

There was not much that attracted the attention of the grandmother on the screen, but she also had her preferences.

G/M: I like the Moslem religious programmes. Sometimes they are presented as plays, and sometimes, they are used as lessons. That is on Fridays they explain how things are. . . They show weddings, Wolimats. . . They show them on television.

[Wolimat is like the Islamic equivalent of the Christian confirmation of faith. Maybe more like the Jewish "Bar Mitz Bar" signifying the coming of age.]

S1: You also like Obadare!

G/M: I also like Obadare and all those prayer[ful] people who offer prayers.

[Obadare is a Christian evangelist, and the term used "prayer people" is usually used in reference to a particular sect of Christians.]

G/M: As for those English speakers, we just watch them we don't understand what they are saying.

There is a suggestion even in the above, as in the viewing sessions, that the grandmother has her own choices, as well as those which are made for her.

It appears that if she did not have to contend with the conflicting interest of the others, that is if she had greater control over the choice, then this woman may have had a bit more use for the medium, as S1 in location 1. The reality of her situation is however that there is already a struggle amongst the children for that which should be selected. She would have had to ward them off, to enforce her choice.

There is a general assumption that such a woman as this, who does not understand the English language, but is surrounded by her children who do, will not lack for interpretation. This one does not have enough interest in the programmes to prompt her to solicit such. There

implication of this is that programmers should make more attempts to reach this type of viewer, directly.

The grandmother expresses a strong preference for radio as a medium because she saw it as a source of experience that people can gain from. It was for her, a companion because it offers daytime programming unlike television.

It is remarkable, that the G/M admitted that she would not attempt to operate either of the two. Instead, she would ask S1 or any available person to leave the radio left on for. This caution comes from the fact that she is living as a dependent in her married daughter's home. Such caution is typical amongst self respecting, elderly dependents.

A Question of Relevance: Fact or Fiction?

S1 was of the opinion that TV portrayals reflected reality. There was a certain elasticity in the TV portrayals, and reality.

"They do portray reality. It's not always true what they show but they are possible truths. Take this one that I've just narrated, don't you think it's possible? . . . I'm sure it must have happened at some point, even if it was slightly exaggerated. "

The above seemed to have restricted applications. There seemed to be an obvious preference for certain programme formats. The subjects did not seem to like the talks programmes; the interviews, and the discussion. Dramas were their main attraction. If so, then the above could only be applicable to such programmes.

Although she had been referring to dramas specifically in the above utterance, it was not right to deduce that she did not like certain

formats. S1 explained that she was not averse to the format.

"No it's not that I don't like the format. It's not all interviews that I dislike because after all they do invite Mr and Mrs here to the set and interview them to know how well they know they know each other. You know the "getting to know you" when they will hide the husband away and ask the wife what did her husband wear to work yesterday? When he wakes up what does he do first? When he wants to wear his trousers, which leg does he put in first? We too amuse ourselves at home. My husband asks me to answer the questions to see if I'll get them. They even ask about how a person acts at childbirth and they later invite the woman to see how harmonious the home is."

The programme described above had not been featured on the screen for several quarters, yet she was able to recount it with such relish. The point of this is that, if the format is used for relevant themes it will still be found interesting. Therefore, it is not the interview format that is detested, but the topics and in some cases the treatment.

The potential for vicarious participation in the programme is lost when there is a focus on matters considered as "irrelevant". Relevance is a pre-requisite for participation and interest.

The above response also illustrates the usefulness of the otherwise "mundane" programmes. The subject recognises that the seemingly unimportant matters as "getting to know you", serve the purpose of evaluating (and fostering) harmony in the home.

This was in fact of greater interest to the subject than "important" matters like politics or the news.

R: What if the interview or discussion was about politics?

S1: I would not even wait, [to find out] I won't bother with at all.

R: I know you don't watch the news either, why don't you watch the news?

S1: (lackadaisical) I listen once in a while, I listen. It's because of the unstable government. They will always announce that they will do things that they won't do and we have resigned ourselves to them. What I believe in, is that one should just pray that one does not lose one's job, and that one should have the money - then there's nothing you can't buy. That is my personal belief. All those things that they say are deceitful...

In other words, the disillusion with the government and the politicians, are the cause of her lack of response to the the factual, politics oriented programmes, including the news. This is noteworthy especially when the size of programming time that is devoted to these categories of programmes is examined.

The personal belief which she has adopted as a result, can be seen as encouraging her preference for those programmes, which have more direct "relevance" on those areas of life, in which she still has control - the home and grappling with daily life for instance. This pattern was also evident in the subject's report of her use of the other media - radio; newspapers; and magazines.

Advertisements

In the course of the discussion no spontaneous mention was made of adverts and those programming elements that come in between programmes. This could not be taken to mean that they were not important. The observation suggested that they were better received than some substantive programmes. On inquiry, the subjects confirmed that they liked adverts.

S1: Some are good and some are bad.

G1: I like adverts.

R: Which do you like?

G1: The lost and found, when they say a person is lost and is being sought. (laughing)

M: Those are advertisements?

G1: They are adverts as well.

On a more serious note, the subjects identified a range of adverts which the subjects favoured. These included adverts for toothpastes, drinks, condiments and even soaps.

The first category of adverts that were mentioned were all musical.

There was another group that pertained to cooking. The striking elements which the subjects highlighted in these ones, were related to exaggerations in production.

There was reference to the large eyeballs of one of the artistes, which was exaggerated in her act. There was mention of the falsetto voice of another. In this one, even the dialogue, was mimicked and ridiculed.

The exact words of the adverts were recalled in these instances.

While in the account, the subjects ridiculed the adverts, they were amused by the humour inherent in the other group of commercials which they mentioned. This category of commercials was not homogeneous in terms of the products which they promoted. The products ranged from detergents, to bath soap to banks. The common feature in these, was that each one employed celebrities from TV to give testimonials for the products. One of such characters, Zebrudaya, had already been identified by the subjects as a favourite.

From their response, the subjects seemed to regard adverts as entertainment, rather than sources of information or education. They had alternative information which they more readily believed and even compared to the advertiser's message with. This had been evident during the viewing sessions but it was also confirmed.

G1: In fact that --- [product name], those seasonings, the rumours that we heard is that they are meant to wash pots with. . . They are supposed to be scourers, before they were converted to --- [name of brand leader in the bouillon cubes category] but it's used all over now.

S1 went on to narrate her personal experience which convinced that the rumour was not far fetched. In the discussion, the label for the brand leader was bestowed on another competitor. The negative disposition to the product had not affected the disposition to the advert.

The above by no means exhausts what these subjects had been exposed to on television. For every other category or example that they were specifically asked about, there was no direct antagonism. The subjects were able to identify some use for them, either as they were, or with some modifications. This was similar to the observed tolerance they had for programmes in which they had no apparent interest. At the end of the day, this pattern confirmed their claim, that they like television. The medium is tolerated, even independent of the content. At least it functions thus, as a companion. However they preferred to have better service, by way of better, more relevant programmes offering.

LOCATION 12 - AN ENTERPRISING FAMILY WOMAN

Subject is supposed to be a housewife, but she is not. She runs a sewing business from her home. In addition, she engages in some trading, and at the time of the study she was applying for a short term job as an enumerator. She was also putting in tenders for some contracts. In this way, she could not be described as the housewife that she was supposed to be.

The subject was in her late 20's and had three young children, whose ages ranged between 5 and 1 year old. There was also a 15 year old sister who lived with the family. The husband was an intermediate level factory, (shift) worker. He did not have a strong presence in the home. He was either on duty, or he was sleeping off the fatigue.

The subject had secondary school level education.

The family lived in a ground floor flat which is right on the road, and adjacent to a Police Barracks. These factors, combined with the nature of her business, meant there was a never ending stream of visitors coming through the house. Often times, the location was the convening point for the neighbours. It was also subject to other kinds of distractions - activities of passers-by for example.

The television set is centrally positioned in the sitting room. It could be viewed from any angle in the sitting / dinning area. The sitting room adjoins the dinning room, which also serves as the subject's work area, where she has her machines. The bedrooms and other utility rooms are in another section of the flat, therefore they were out of viewing range,

PICTURE 13.

Location 12.

S1 and her family.

and also out of ear shot. The closeness of the next buildings, and the other flats meant that it was easy to be within hearing range of the neighbour's sets.

In spite of their position on a social scale, the family was quite comfortable. The sitting room was comfortable, though modestly furnished. The children were receiving private education. This had an impact on their exposure, and their taste. The home was a multiple set home. There was a black and white set in the sitting room. This was the front that the family put up. There was, however, a more sophisticated colour set, along with a video in the parents' bedroom.

Besides the obvious implications of this to the study, (the intensity of the media presence) this confirmed the wisdom of forsaking the use of socio-economic status and such demographic categorisations.

There was a ready explanation for the subject's time use pattern. She was a very busy, and very chatty person. She was also very selective of the programmes she watched. At the point of contact, she had ruled herself out of having any value for the study, because "she did not watch enough TV". After the study, she admitted that she had watched more TV than was "normal" for her during the observation period. She had defined watching as sitting before the set. The records will show that she did not actually "watch" much television, in spite of the fact that she was there. She was a person with many concerns.

Day 1

There was no viewing. Subject had been absent from home. She was attending a child's naming ceremony. Though the actual ceremony itself

does not last for long, the socialising that follows makes such occasions take much time. There was also the aspect of the social obligation of close friends and relatives, particularly the women, who had to help out with the cooking and entertainment of guests. This explains why attending such ceremonies could take the whole day, and a better part of the evening.

Day 2

Observation commenced in the evening at about 5.00 p.m. The TV set was on. The children were playing, and watching the programme, concurrently.

Although she suspended her work for the purpose of the exercise, she did not watch the television at all. The TV set had been left on, the entire evening, a drama programme which subject had indicated an interest in was shown. It was the New Masquerade. Though she had not been working, the subject did not get a chance to watch it. She had participated in more engaging real life drama.

To begin with, she had gone to the barracks to assist in settling a fight amongst her neighbours, who were also her customers. The incident was a complicated domestic matter and the settlement was protracted. Eventually the subject had to invite one of the aggrieved parties to her home. Other interested parties also came later. After the settlement there was an analysis of the problem. With all the television programme had been ignored. The first programme that was on, was a government documentary on the network service. It was the government's account of its performance in office.

The only time reference was made to the set was when the signature tune

PICTURE 14.

Location 12. Work Corner.

This is a corner of the dining / sitting area. She ran a sewing business from home.

PICTURE 15.

Location 12.

It was an open house. A customer arrives, and the TV is left in the background.

accompanying the closing credits was heard. The neighbour who had engaged the subject's attention was the one who was attracted by this. The cue was used as sign post; a milestone in her structure of time.

"Ah that's 8.30 coming up, I must go and prepare this man's meal"

The end of the programme, was a signifier of what was next on her schedule of duties. For her, this did not include the awaited drama programme. For the subject's children, there was a loud cheer for the awaited programme. Subject expressed an interest but her attention was only momentary. Immediately afterwards, she engaged the researcher in a conversation about her son's health. She had been treating him for a cough, and she was suspecting asthma. Her fears were so strong that she decided to go to the doctor's immediately. Thus ended the observation for the day. The subject did not return from the clinic till past 10.00 p.m.

There had been no TV set in the waiting room of this clinic. Instead there was music coming from a radio. Subject was anxious.

Although the children had been attentive to the set, whilst their mother was at home, they left the sitting room immediately she left for the hospital. They had trailed their aunt to the kitchen to get their meal. Thereafter, they must have gone to the room, because they remained in the inner chambers. The network news was thus relayed to an empty room. The set had still been left on.

Though the researcher had accompanied the subject to the clinic, the above information was still available because the recording of the viewing context had continued. The highlight of the information thus

received, was that the set had been left on. The normalcy of this even in the absence of the researcher, was significant and encouraging. It reduced the fear, that the observed trend where the set was always left on, had been induced by the study.

Day 3

Observation commenced early in the evening, at about 6.00 p.m. There was a Health programme on the screen when she came to the set. Her initial move was to search round the stations. She seemed to have been looking for a more acceptable programme. She settled with the programme, but she continued chatting; appraising the economic situation, and trends in fashion. She was promoting her business.

Her comment on the programme seemed to have come, like a bolt, out of the blues. This illustrated the fact that she was, if only remotely, aware of the programme. After all, she was sitting right in front of it, with the declared intention of viewing it.

By the same breath with which she announced her affinity for the programme, she continued another discussion. This indicated the focus of her attention.

The arrival of the water tanker punctuated subject's pursuit of any other lines of thought for the period that it was there. Because hers was the front flat, the water tanker was parked right in front of it; virtually in the sitting room. The tanker had come to supply water that was to last for several days. Subject thus felt obliged to personally supervise the supply; to ensure that she had enough water stocked for the period of time. This was a usual occurrence - the residents of this

area relied on water tankers for their water supply. The public water supply in the town was not adequate.

The exercise had interrupted the subject's "viewing" of the programme. However, she returned to the programme, with renewed interest. This was especially as she had overheard the dialogue in the programme from outside. She had been attracted by the topic of the discussion - Asthma. It was the same ailment which she feared her son had. The programme was therefore of particular interest to her. Even then, she was not a captive audience. She only sat for long enough, to form an impression.

"They are talking about asthma you know, they say there is no cure, that it can only be prevented"

Not long after she made the comment, she left the sitting room, for the kitchen. The lot fell on her to do this, because her sister, was otherwise occupied.

The subject was engaged in the kitchen for the remainder of the time of the programme. When the meal was ready, she also saw to the feeding of her children, particularly the youngest one. Although she was in the sitting room, she did not pay attention to the TV.

While she was still engaged thus, a customer came in with the material which she wanted tailored. This was what engaged her attention as soon as she was free from attending to the children. Their conversation became protracted. One thing led to another. They discussed the material; then the style; the care of clothes; dry cleaning services and so on. They were not attracted by what was being shown on the television. Not even the drama programme that was on the network

service, The Young Ones. One of the children had tuned the set to an NTA station, and so the programme was right before them. Still it was ignored, from the beginning to the end.

The children were fascinated by the programme. Whilst their mother and her friends had their backs turned to the screen, they watched the programme, they tried as much as they could, to make sense of it. The 15 year old was the authority.

The company of women grew with time, and the conversation continued, gathering momentum, as new life was injected into the group, with the arrival of more people. One neighbour popped in on her way home. Another came in to discuss her experience regarding the hunt for a Census enumerator's job. This was what was paramount on the women's agenda at the time. It was an opportunity for them to make some extra money, but they were being frustrated. Their interest in the census was purely economic; their own gain. Otherwise, they did not seem bothered with the civic interests.

The network news had come on at this time. They paid no attention to it. Instead, the women had their own discussion. It was like an inter-personal news relay. The information, from this, was of more immediate relevance to the women, and it was more engaging than the news from the television.

The women having reported their experiences, exchanged the information that they had got, about the matter at hand. This included the recruitment procedure, (speculations on) the number of vacant spaces, and it led to an appraisal of the corruption among local government

officials; traditional chiefs, and kings in the town.

The women's "bulletin" also included a "news analysis" which traced the history of the town, and tried to identify the origins of the exploitative practices. There was a report comparing the standard of living in rural areas in Lagos and Ogun state. There was a discussion on the development of politics. The women declared their readiness, and determination, not to serve, but to get a share of the "national cake" this time around.

This was the direction which the women's conversation took. In the meantime, the news that was produced, to keep them informed, had been, and gone. Likewise, the personal paid announcements had also come and gone. The children had fallen asleep in front of the television set, while the women, excitedly pursued the chosen line of discussion. The TV was not as much as glanced at, nor was it referred to as a source of information. All the sources which they cited had been personal acquaintances.

Observation ended at about 10.00 p.m. and subject had not watched the set, which had been on, throughout the period.

Day 4

Observation commenced at about 8.00 p.m. The subject was with one of her neighbours. Though the neighbour had a set in her home, she had problems receiving NTA stations. As a result she had to rely on the subject's set to receive any of the NTA programmes that she wanted to see. Besides, she confessed that she found it too lonely staying in the flat by herself, even though her children were also there. Her husband was also

a shift worker, running similar hours as subject's.

On this day, as almost usual, both women and their (6) children were gathered before the set to watch the drama; Checkmates. The programme was a new network production - a soap opera. They watched with rapt attention.

The subject (S1) had not watched from the beginning. She had been attracted to the programme at the point where one of the stars, a lady had an argument with her uncle. The argument was over the running of the company which she had just come in to save it from imminent collapse. The crisis in the company had been her purpose of returning.

There were several stands to the programme. Because it was still new, the subjects were not able to identify what direction the story was going. This made it difficult to predict what was going on. It also contributed to the attention it received. S1 was intolerant of distractions from the children. She wanted to follow the story line. She had been following the series.

In spite of her competence with the language, and the cultural dimensions in the programme, subject still found there were some lapses in her reading. There were some parts which she did not understand. This was attributed to the episodes which she had missed. She had not been immediately aware of the programme, when it was introduced as a result she had missed a few episodes at the onset.

The subject was so conversant with the genre, she knew that viewing subsequent episodes would, she would fill in the gaps that existed in

the story line. She was attentive. Besides the 1 year old, there was no one else who distracted attention from the programme. The screen side programme commentary was absent in this viewing situation.

From the remark she made at the end of the programme, one could see that the subject found the programme to be, as reality. The direct context was regarding a character who was sick, in hospital. The doctor had assured her that she was all right. Subject, like the character, was not sure if to trust the doctor.

S1: Is that not what doctors always say? When I was at the doctor's place today, there was an old woman who was dying, and the doctor was still saying that she was all right."

This comment led to other social issues which were no longer related to the programme. This was what engaged the group as the network news came on. It was again ignored. The discussion was similar to that of the previous day. It was a report and exchange of the information that the subject had. In that sense, it was like a newscast; one which was more relevant. One could see why the broadcast newscast was not interesting.

On this occasion, there was reference to a newspaper report. The striking story which was reported was the tragic incident of a newly wed teacher who was electrocuted, along with two of his twelve students. The subject was convinced of the influence of an evil force.

This insinuation was also in her reading of the drama. Her account of the programme was not limited to the particular episode. She related the day's episode to the on-going story. In the same way, she related the story to real life, as has been noted above. She was able to make better sense of the programme as a result of this. (Compare her reading to that

of subject in location 5)

S1: . . .On the other side, there is girl - husband and wife who love each other and so married each other. The mother in law did not approve of the marriage. I don't know how they got married, but when we started watching, the mother brought a village girl, with spiky hair, to be her son's wife. The son said he did not need the girl; what does he want to do with her and such?

The mother then said the wife was dirty. 'See how untidy the house is' and so on. She was just victimising her, and when she saw that all was to no avail, she told her plainly that she is no wife; she can't be married to her son, and she should go. The woman is possessed by evil spirits.

R: Which woman?

S1: The mother-in-law.

R: How do you know?

S1: She had appeared. She appeared as a cat. She turned into a cat. The girl went out, and as she returned, she opened the door, and she met the cat inside the house, glaring at her. She saw that the cat wanted to attack her and she screamed...

The subject had relied on the visual aspect of the story, as well as following the story line, as it was written into the dialogue. She had also drawn from the cultural insinuations that were embedded in these. She could thus deduct that the mother in law possessed evil powers - turning into a cat to harm the son's wife. These culture mediated signs were a part of the production. She had no problems interpreting these.

This was the one programme that subject watched. There was no other viewing for the day.

Day 5

There was no observation on this day. A heavy down pour had made subject's home inaccessible to researcher. Subject reported that she had

watched another drama production from the network service. That was another soap opera which she had been following (Ripples).

Day 6

Observation began early in the evening. The set was already on when researcher arrived as was usual. The station in view was LWT. The programme in view was a foreign produced, enlightenment/ general interest programme. The set was merely left on, there was no one watching it. The children were playing about, the older one of them was in and out of the sitting room. Subject was at her machine sewing.

The pattern prevailed right through the succeeding programmes, which included the state news. These did not attract anyone's attention.

The subject engaged the researcher in a social conversation. Before long, she had brought the researcher into confidence over personal matters. The relevance of this to the study is that it gave an insight to the struggles which the subject was engaged in. It was an indication of her mental state, and the reasons why she ignored the set became clearer. Subject was under so much stress, she had a lot of anxieties.

It is remarkable that even the widely acclaimed Yoruba comedy in Yoruba, Alawada, did not hold any interest for subject at the time it came on. Though she knew it was there she did not watch it. She kept on sewing, and talking.

At about 8.30 p.m., the younger children were before the set. They had settled down in the house at this time. The older of the children, had retired at this time. She was sleeping, but subject insisted that she

should be woken up to study. When she emerged, she sat before the set, and glanced at it (more than she did her books).

The set was noisy, and so were the children. There was no one "watching", yet no one bothered to turn it off, or at least turn it down. It was part of the ambience.

This pattern continued through the network newscast. There was an isolated remark about a particular item which again confirmed that, though she was not consciously watching, the programmes were reaching her.

The comment was about a drama clip which was being featured in the news. The subject immediately deduced, even before the story was read, that someone was dead.

"Once you see them doing something like that, then you know someone is dead"

She was right. One of the performers in the drama had died. The story was an obituary item. She was only interested enough to identify who it was. The story did not draw her into the news.

The fact that she recognised the pattern meant that subject, even though she "does not watch" the news, was familiar with the codes. Even, the incidental viewing arising from having a persistent TV presence did have its impact.

Another point that is striking is the nature of the news agenda which the subject sets for herself. The pattern had been consistent over the

week. On Day 4, she had focused the tragic incident which she had got from the newspaper. On the Day 3 her focus had been on the gloomy prospects of life, the atrocities the corruption, and exploitation in the society. On Day 2, she had been involved with the real life domestic crisis.

Observation ended at about 10.00 p.m.

Day 7

Observation began in the afternoon. Subject and the children watched a Yoruba drama. The programme was a serialised drama, and the family had been following the story. It was another programme which was captivating. The subject was enthralled by the developments in the story. There was much excitement as the subject and her children watched the programme.

As with the viewing of the other serial drama, the particular episode was not isolated from the totality of the story. The programme itself began with the highlights of previous episodes. The subject in recounting what she saw did the same. In her case she went further, beyond the most recent episodes, to the beginning of the story.

"It's been a while since they started showing that play. The chiefs in town, at the time I started watching, said that there was confusion in the town. They did not realise that "Iya Agan" [one of the female chiefs] was responsible for the chaos. She had hired thugs to execute the "business". They were professional thieves. She also had terrible charms. You see Iya Agan used to be queen in a neighbouring settlement, but because of her questionable ways, she was driven out from the palace. When that happened, she could not face staying in that settlement so she came to the present place.

She had two children. She left one behind; the one whom she knew the king favoured, and she brought the other one, a girl, along.

She had been stealing for long in the new settlement, and the

chaos was growing.

You see when a king dies, and a new one is to be enthroned, there is a certain calabash which is in the former king's wife possession. This must be collected. So it happened that the king died and a new king was to be enthroned, so they went to the old queen to collect the calabash. It was not quite from her, that the calabash was collected. She was outside. The person went and stood beside a wall, chanted incantations repeatedly, and the calabash came out of the wall. . . ."

From the above, one can see that the subject was more concerned with the story line. On inquiry, she could not say how the calabash came out of the wall. She did not seem concerned either because she did not query the possibility of such. Her understanding of the programme was premised on a familiarity with the reality that was being portrayed. For example, she punctuated her account with explanations of the cultural basis of such acts. For her therefore, the programme was a portrayal of reality. She was not concerned about how this was done technically.

"I don't know for sure how it was done, but I think it was a film trick. You know after shooting they will remove the parts that are not needed, and they leave the parts that will be useful."

The "tricks" and production techniques were appreciated and taken for granted as long as they facilitated communication.

The subject's account of the story also showed her fascination with the story line. In this case, the emphasis was on the exploits of the villainess. These were not just physical, there was a strong presence of the occult involved as well.

". . . It was after this calabash was stolen that the chaos really began because the new king could not be enthroned. It was one of the woman's thugs who had gone to steal the calabash. She empowered them whenever they go to steal. She gives them charms and sits on the mortar while they are away.

[The concept of sitting on the mortar goes beyond the physical act. It has a deeper spiritual connotation, and is symbolic of the woman, keeping the fire of the "powers" ablaze. These visual metaphors are so familiar to the subject, that she takes them for granted. This would not have been possible had she not been familiar with the culture. In this instance, the subject and the programme producer, have a shared framework of meanings.

"The problems in the community had been raging and one day, she said at the meeting of the chiefs that the events in the community could not be without the knowledge of some chief. therefore, they should go up to a certain hill to swear on oath."

R: Did she say so?

S1: Yes! She was the one who brought the proposition, yet she was at the root of it all. So she set a date to go. But on that day, she did not go, although her partner, another one of the chiefs went. He fell from the hill top, but he chanted incantations which would ensure that he got home, and he did get home.

It was since that episode, coupled with Iya Agan's absence, that the others had become suspicious, and more determined to find the culprit. . .

R: But she brought the proposition?

S1: Yes you know the it's the evil man who brings the good suggestion, so that he would be thought to be good, yet his heart is not clean. [my emphasis]

The account continued with details of the exploits. It culminated in the conflict between the "evil" force and the representative of "good".

There was Chief Otolo, who was very powerful, he and his son, volunteered to watch over the house of beads. They had a house where the beads were stored. The beads had almost all been stolen.

So whilst they were keeping watch at night, Iya Agan and her gang came. He was shocked to see that she was involved. Anyway a fight ensued. He killed the other chief, who was in Iya Agan's gang, and although he put on a brave fight, he ran away with Iya Agan chasing him.

When he got home, he did not let on that he had run away from

the fight. He was boasting of his prowess at the encounter. "

Subject's account of the warfare were more graphic in Yoruba, and not easily translated into English. It had more details, and embraced the traditional Yoruba concept of warfare, with each fighter having the ability to change their forms; (changing into snakes, dogs, water and the like).

Subject was fascinated with the characters' use of language such that she could even remember the exact lines that were used. Both the subject and the children could remember these lines and they had fun reciting some of these. There was excitement even as they recounted the viewing experience.

From their account, one could see that the subjects did follow the programme. The observed rapt attention with which they were engaged the programme had been productive. They had been participating in the programme. They identified which side of the conflict they wanted to be on. They were also entertained by the comic nature of the characters. For instance they were amused by Chief Otolo, who on account of his exaggerated report of his ability, was given the task of defender. He refused the "honour" though he could not then, own up to his defeat. They knew why and were amused by his the discomfiture of Otolo.

They were also amused at the use of language (Re. Location 2), as well as the countenance of some of the characters. Although they did not approve of what she stood for, they were impressed by Iya Agan's performance.

It was clear that the subjects could participate in the programme, because of their ability to relate with the underlying reasoning in the storyline. There was no disputing what was shown. The programme was credible.

Also, they were not offended by the expressed values. These coincided with the reality of their life. Subject in the course of her conversations referred to similar personal experiences. (This is even clearer in the viewing of the later programme). The viewing was thus an extension of reality.

The striking feature in the programme is its perpetuation of the diabolical. Even the representative of "good" was not truthful. This makes the subject's comment, which was highlighted earlier more remarkable.

The programme whether intentionally or not, fostered distrust, and suspicion. This is besides the fact that it promotes the occultic practices which the subject and her children could recount with such details and such relish. This was the sort of programme that the subject was interested in.

The viewing of this programme on OGTV had evoked the memory of another which she had watched on LTV at an earlier date. She shared the memory, narrating the story of this to her friend.

The programme was about a reindeer which turns to a beautiful woman. It was a dramatisation of folklore. The neighbour, who was being told the story, recognised this, and wondered if such were possible in reality.

Subject was certain that there were such occurrences. She had several examples of her own encounters with such to buttress her position. She also narrated other experiences that had made her "vigilant" concerning acts of sorcery, and other occultic practices. These were responsible for her caution regarding the meals she ate. It was another manifestation of a distrustful attitude in which she was schooled. She was schooling others in it as well.

The discussion generated by the viewing of the above programme was protracted. In the meantime, the set was ignored. There was no remorse for this. It was only as an aside, when there was a lull in the conversation, that she inquired of her sister, about other programmes that could be interesting. The sister was to be the "TV guide".

There were only two programmes worthy of mention within a 3 - hour period. These were a local comedy, identified by the favoured character, "Papy 'Luwe" (a.k.a. Aluwe); and " Tales by Moonlight" which is a children's programme on the network service.

Neither of the two programmes mentioned evoked any excitement from the subject. She did not comment on the comedy, but the dramatised story telling programme for the children was immediately dismissed because "the masquerade there in scares one of the children". Both programmes were on NTA channel 10.

The other programme which could have been considered was on NTA channel 7 which was not clear in this location. The subject confessed that she was not interested in it any way. The programme, a Yoruba drama, is similar to those which she had watched. The only difference was that

this programme was set in more contemporary time.

Subject identified some of the reasons why she was not keen on the programmes. She identified the chanting of incantations, as a reason why she was not keen on the programme. This was not in line with the observed pleasure which subject derived from chanting similar incantations, as she narrated the warfare, in the earlier viewing experience.

She claimed that she did not like the children watching such programmes. Again this was not the observed case. She was engrossed in the programme and did not discourage the children from watching. Her response fits the pattern of that given by other subjects. It thus seems to be the socially acceptable behaviour. The real behaviour was however different in many cases, as in this.

The TV set was left on, although there was to be no satisfactory programme for about an hour. Nobody was watching. There was a musical variety programme in view but it did not attract the attention of the subjects. They rather entertained themselves by chatting on various subjects.

Occasionally, S1 identified certain familiar faces in the programme; like Nelson Mandela; and Sina Peters (a star in the local music scene). Recognition of such faces did not draw her into the programme. She merely passed some remarks about them, and even these were not sustained. The type of remarks were such that could have developed into major discussions had she been in the company of her friends. They were baits for opening conversations. The children could not take these up.

In the event that the researcher did not take these up either, there was no conversation developing from the remarks.

The subject's attention soon shifted to other matters - the neighbour; the children; the issue of resemblance, and eventually she left for the kitchen to prepare the dinner.

Going by her report, her normal routine on Sunday evenings was to cut materials in readiness for sewing during the week. In the absence of that, she could sit down before the set, and rest. She had not found the programme in view interesting. It had been "sloppy".

As she voiced this verdict, she decided to change the channel. She found a Christian evangelistic programme which she thought was a better option, but she did not watch it. Again, she had done the "acceptable" thing by switching to the programme, but she could not be bothered to even assess what it was about. Instead, the programme had prompted a discussion on the genre. This was more or less an evaluation of the reality - the development of religion in society.

S1: Now listen, do you see that there are all manners of churches springing up? When we came back from church this morning, there was this church on TV singing. What was the name of the church now? . . . You see, the flags in the church, were almost as many as twelve.

Going by the details of her report, the subject had focused on the visual aspects of the programme. The fact that she was watching on a black and white set, was identified as a hindrance, because she could then, not fully describe the flags in question. She could not tell what colours they were.

She could tell the identity of the characters within the programme. Having described them; the preacher, and the choir, subject went on to condemn the "performance". She employed known non-conformist musicians, (Michael Jackson, and Fela Anikulapo Kuti) to describe the images that the programme evoked in her. At the end of it all, she (and her husband) had concluded, that -

"There is no better paying business, than setting up a church".

In other words, she queried the sincerity of programme. The message was ignored, and the aspersions were cast on the motive. It was no wonder then, that she did not watch the programme, in spite of the fact that she had done the acceptable thing, and tuned to it. Still prompted by the programme, subject's attention shifted from the assessment of the church growth, to the increased wave of demonic attacks, and the atrocities being committed in society. To confirm the report, subject reported her personal encounters with demonic forces. She concluded that

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"It seems as though it is the same way that some are fighting to see the end of evil, that evil is springing up, and growing roots."

(Compare with the response of S1 in locations 6, and 8, Day 7.)

Through all of this, the programme was not watched. It was the children who sat with the set.

At the commercial break following the programme, they recited every word, and every note; they even noted every visual sequence of the advertisements. The only advertisement which the subject noted was that of Pengo the pain relief. The advert evoked a discussion about the

trends in fashion. The advert had featured some scenes at a wedding ceremony, and so showed several people who were gaily dressed.

The viewing site was uneventful for a while. This was especially when subject received some of her husbands friends. In the course of conversation a debate began. This became protracted and lasted through the showing of one of subject's favourite programmes. It was the drama programme; a soap opera - Supple Blues - from the network service. What is remarkable is that subject, in spite of the debate and the noise around her; in spite of the fact that these were her guests; ignored all, and focused attention on the programme. She was determined to follow the story line.

Though she could ignore her guests, subject could not ignore the children who intermittently required her attention. As usual, she tried to evade them, directing them to her sister instead. This worked at times, and it meant that even at that age, the sister was taking on the viewing pattern of the adult (female). She was taking on some of the responsibilities.

There were certain occasions when the subject had to attend to certain matters personally. These took her to the inner rooms. These were timed to coincide with the commercial break. It was clear that subject was interested in the programme.

By 9 o'clock subject had had the children sent to bed. They had had their dinner during the showing of the drama programme and they had been sent to bed. The only exception was the toddler who only proved to be more peaceful when allowed to stay. The beginning of the Newline, was

the cue which the guests took to leave. Subject was thus able to watch the programme in silence, without any distractions. She did not run a commentary on what she saw. She did not respond as she normally did when she was in the company of others. About five minutes into the news, she got up and went inside. She seemed to be bored.

This observation was confirmed by the fact that when she returned, the station (LWT) on which she had been receiving the news, had broken off from the network transmission, and was showing a sponsored Christian religious programme (instead of the Newsline). She made no attempts to search for other channels from which she could receive the programme. She did not watch the Christian programme either. The set was just left on.

Interest in the set resumed when the sister finished her chores, (fetching water and such) and sat before the set. She vicariously participated in the programme. She sang along with the choir, and she tried to follow the programme.

S1 had difficulty in following what was being said. At a point she asked what language was being spoken. The sister replied that one man was speaking in English, and the other was translating into Yoruba. She had not been able to decipher either of both languages, though she was competent in both. The presentation required some concentration to be clear. but S1, at this time, was too tired and sleepy to give the programme this kind of attention. In fact it was clear at this time, that she was merely staying up because of the exercise, and had only been attracted into the programme by her sister's participation in it.

Observation ended at this time.

Discussion

Although she claimed not to have much interest in television, the subject had a lot to say about it. It was confirmed during the observation that she was a very highly selective viewer.

Expressed Preference Patterns

All her favourite programmes were drama programmes. Her range of choices included even those programmes which had been discontinued. The programmes included both English and Yoruba language productions. She could identify the programmes by the day of transmission, and the originating channel.

Unlike with her neighbour who uses television to while away the time, the subject is more definite in her use of television. She watches only those programmes which she "likes enough, that [she] would hate to miss them." These are also programmes from which she can gain some experience, some wisdom.

"The specific programmes that I watch, I like them to the point that I would hate to miss them at all, so I know the time that they are shown. And as soon as it is almost time, even when I am working, I'll put my work aside, to watch because I won't want to miss out, because they are very interesting. Like Supple Blues, it also teaches a few lessons because of the various scenes that is shown there, I learn some wisdom from it."

The issue which this response raised was the need to identify what is considered interesting - what makes a programme appealing?

A Question of Interest

There was a common thread which run through all the programmes which

were identified as being interesting. The first is that they all share the same format. They were all drama productions; produced in Nigeria.

Subject preferred the local productions, and did not show any affinity for imported productions. She was very categorical regarding this distinction. It thus seemed that there was more to the attraction than mere format. There was the issue of relevance, and participation - the ability to follow.

R: What is your interpretation of a good programme?

S1: The way I understand it, I'll say some dramas. There are some dramas which when they are shown, one can gain from; and there are some, which will not even have any meaning.

R: Gain in what sense?

S1: Family type programmes, possibly about couples who probably fight, or maybe a married woman watching a married woman who has a bad character [trait] possibly by watching such, the viewer may see that those traits which she shares with the TV character which are bad, but which, she had not known was bad, should be dropped, or corrected. Dramas such as that, from which one can gain, that is what I mean.

In other words, a "good" programme for this viewer must be meaningful; it must have a moral, or share an experience which will be of benefit to either herself or some other person. In this regard, the programme must be such that she could confidently follow the story line. This reasoning is typical of the traditional story technique. No story is told without a purpose. A moral must be drawn from the story even if it was to have been for entertainment. The same goes for entertainment through songs and music.

What is interesting however is the focus on the bad, to know that which is good. A good programme was that which exposed what is bad.

There were other considerations which the subject enumerated. These could well be considered as the secondary considerations in her evaluation of programmes. These included the acting skills; speech delivery; plot development; use of props; and the ability to simulate reality.

The subject had not identified these points, but had alluded to them in her description of what else could make a programme interesting. There was also the issue of dressing. She had a professional interest in fashion and she used the programmes as an avenue for knowing the latest in fashion designs. The programmes were thus alternatives to fashion shows.

Of all, the ability to simulate reality, that which could lend credibility and also facilitate understanding is what underscored her entire description.

" . . . Take in Supple Blues the girl who married, whose child is Tope, [the one] who there's a dispute over, . . . Do you know such a thing can very easily be happening? . . . That kind of thing we know is a common possibility, but it's meant to enlighten people about what actually goes on. . . "

Subject could perceive that television intends to enlighten people on what could be happening, "so that they are not blinded and thinking it is not possible. They want us to know what is happening in the real world".

It is interesting that this function is taken over by the drama programmes. It is this, that has made the dramas interesting for this subject as we have seen. The same could not be said for the genre which

is usually associated with that responsibility - the news.

News

As observed the subject did not have much interest in the news. She had other sources of information which she relied on. The television news was only used to get the official account of what had happened.

" . . . the news I only watch occasionally, when I might have heard that something is happening, you know, from rumours and you can't go by rumours, because if 2 things happened, our people will say 3 things happened. Like the issue of Tomi and Bisola, those children who were stolen with the car. We had heard all sorts about them, some said, it was their parents that hired killers were after. It was not until they were found and the full story was reported on the news - that it was just a case of car robbery, and the children just happened to have been there [in the car]. . . That's what I mean by not trusting our people and rumours. So occasionally when things like that happen, I want to get clarification from the news. Newspapers now cost too much. At N2 per paper per day, in 30 days, that is N60. I know what else I can do with that money rather than buy newspapers which will end up as junk inside my house. . . " [my emphasis]

On the whole, it appears that the subject does not have a need for the regular kind of news that is presented in the media. Her preference for the electronic news is thus based on its inexpensive cost especially as it can suffice for the occasional purpose.

The question of credibility of the news was not an issue for this subject. However, there is the same distrust for "our people" underlying the subject's reception. It is interesting that it took the resolution of the story for subject to have confidence in the report. It is not far fetched to assume that subject would have been sceptical of even the version of the story as carried by the news; confused about whom to trust; prior to the resolution.

Another point which subject's response points to, is the types of

stories that interest her. She was very specific about the type of stories which would interest her enough to want to refer to the news for clarification. These were not stories for which credibility could be compromised. The official version were most likely to be true (dates of public holidays, orders on restrictions, and such directives which affected the citizenry). These were the sort of stories which, as she had implied were not always on the news. It is thus not surprising that subject's interest in the news was "occasional".

At other times, her interest in the news were not issue related. She was concerned about the presentation and the appearance of the newscaster. The clarity of the reading was identified as a pull into the news.

"You will like to listen because the news what is being read, will be clearly heard."

Subject reminiscence over the days when this was the case. She lamented the performance of the newscasters who she saw recently. It turned out that her gripe was actually focused on a particular newscaster (Hauwa Baba Ahmed) who had been featured quite regularly around the time of observations.

The subject's resentment towards the particular newscaster, was based on her insistence on being shrouded on air, and her limited competence with pronunciation. These made her easily identified with a particular group, and it evoked a great deal of resentment in the subject.

"That shrouding of the head is very upsetting. As soon as I see it, my stomach churns, and I wonder at, what she will have to say. May be it's the hatred I have for her, that won't let me like what is being read.!"

This subject is not alone in her disaffection towards the particular

newscaster. Her dressing and her inability to pronounce words from other parts of the country but hers, makes her easily a source of ethnic prejudice. In this case, this is so strong that it becomes a block for the news that is being read.

The implication of this is that the concept of news needs to be broadened. The news includes the channel through whom the story is received. When this is the case, it will not be enough to try and be objective in the details of the story, the channel through which the story comes, and this includes the newscaster, will attempt to be neutral as well. Their resentment implies that the subjects have this expectation.

The above point must be seen in context, for its seriousness to be appreciated. In a society where ethnic rivalry is rife, and where the news has to break through such prejudicial barriers, a newscaster should not be readily labelled as belonging to a particular section. To this end, newscasters should be encouraged to have a national dressing, that is standard and neutral.

They should also be trained in the correct pronunciation of words irrespective of their origin. This is not to wipe off the newscasters identity, but to show respect for the viewers. The charge against the newscaster could have been avoided had there been evidence of an effort being made. The subject resented being taken for granted.

Another point which came out of subject's comments was the confusion that had arisen with the number of newscasters. There was no particular person, who could be identified with the news. Unlike with the drama

programmes which could be identified with certain key characters, the news did not have any particular person, whose personality it could ride on. This had arisen from the number of newscasters who had served as anchor persons for the news; and also subject's confusion of the correspondents with the anchor persons. This confusion can be traced to the fact that some of the correspondents had also at some time been anchor persons.

The observation, that the subject was not keen on the news, had not only been confirmed, it had been explained. This explanation is of greater use than that which the subject had initially offered. She had blamed her busy schedule for her lack of interest in the news, and the timing of the news. While it may be true that by 9 o' clock she will be too tired to maintain an interest in any programme, that fact does not sufficiently explain her attitude to the news. This reasoning is confirmed by the fact that occasionally she does show an interest in the news.

The following is the subject's view of what the news portrays.

"They say what is going on. It's times like that, [when the children were missing; the story referred to earlier] that I want to hear the news. Otherwise, if there's nothing happening other than Lagos is in chaos; Life is shifting to Abuja; all the women 'Better Life programmes that they peddle, I don't have the time , because it's like they want to make you sad. We say things are expensive, they say things are cheap. so it's such things that won't make it interesting. . . Sometimes they will say one million naira launching project which when we view it should not be more than 10, 000. Yet you say it costs 1 million to complete it. . . " [my emphasis]

The rest of her views, as with the other subjects, became a critique of the government. In other words, what she sees on the news evokes in her,

an appraisal of government activities. Her response to the news had thus become a critique of the government.

Advertisements

Advertisements were another category of programmes which the subject attended to. As with drama, and even the news, subject preferred those adverts which have meaning. This implied that some adverts were meaningless. It was the Coca - cola advert, an imported musical advert, that the subject cited as an example of a meaningless advert.

(The Coke advert running at the time of the study had relied on the visuals, and music. The lyrics present in it, were limited and only summed up the slogan - Can't beat the feeling. The advert had shown a work site, and the extent to which those who know the value of Coke would go to get it; even if it took diverting the crane, or walking the length of the scaffolding.)

It is no wonder that the above commercial is not liked since subject claims to like adverts for the information they bring. This could be information about the existence of the product, or about it's uses.

"Once I hear an advertisement which is different from that which I had been hearing, I sit down to listen, just in case it is something that will be useful to me. But that which I've always heard, I don't bother with."

Another type of information which had made adverts interesting to this subject was the knowledge of the price. Although she knew that the market price would be different from that advertised, (Re. Location 11) she used the advertised price as a guide to what the market price should be.

This is very important in a situation where market prices are not fixed. Sale price in the open market is arrived at after haggling, therefore the buyer needs to have a guide as to the reasonable offer to make.

The subject was attracted by those commercials which made use of children. The attraction in some instances were on account of the children's response to the advert. For instance, each of the favoured advert, was identified as being the favourite of one of her children.

For the subject, adverts were used as a guide to the trends in the market. They were also used for their the entertainment value. In these respects, the subject seemed to derive the same service from drama, news, and even adverts. Although she was very selective in her use of television she did use it as a guide to daily living, but she did not even seem to be aware of this.

So great was her apathy to the television service, that left to herself, she did not think she would miss TV very much if it were to be cancelled.

"As for me, left to me, if it's cancelled, I won't feel it much because I'm so pre-occupied by my work. But, it's also on the other hand, a source of consolation it wipes away sad thoughts."

CONCLUSION

The Construction of Meaning

With its broad agenda which often links it directly to real life, television is properly subject to critical scrutiny. It is the fact that it is a mass medium attempting to deal with so many facets of life, and is received by individuals within varying social contexts that makes it a necessary focus for scholarly scrutiny, as well as government interest. I have tried to show that the subjects have been, in complex ways, employing rules developed on the basis of the group(s) to which they belong, to evaluate the message which they received. (For example location 5)

The subjects have shown that it is possible to reject the position presented, or prescribed on television, for reasons that are not necessarily related to the issue. This sort of response is not limited but cuts across issue oriented programmes; government issues as presented in the news; to religious messages even as presented in music. This pattern was also manifested in advertisements and in dramas.

Ownership

It is interesting that on the whole, 'the government' (be it state or federal) tends to get blamed for the perceived inconsistencies between the TV portrayal, and reality. The medium is seen as a government propaganda channel. This reasoning is not far fetched because of the ownership pattern; the control pattern; and even the objectives and design of the programmes. This situation suggests that even the structures of ownership, contribute to the meaning that is given to a message. The viewer's perceptions of the encoder's motivation can direct

the way the message is decoded. In this instance, the producers are seen to be earning their keep by presenting government's messages; whereas, the producers claim that they are acting in the interest of the society, and doing so, largely independent of government.

The potential danger of the above point is one which is already apparent. Viewers did not trust the medium, and the apathy which they had towards the government and society, had been extended to the television service. The extent to which this trend was manifested was varied. It appears to be linked to the how much the subjects, felt they were attached to the structures of government. The self employed subjects who felt they did not need to care about what government was doing, were on one end of the scale, whilst those who had to keep in touch with government by virtue of their jobs, were on the other end. In other words, dependency on the structures of governance had become a determinant of media use and interpretation.

Although it was inevitable that the viewers were seen to negotiate that which was seen, based on that which was known, the fact that there was a basic distrust of the motivations, the intentions of the programmers compounded the problem. Rather than be an effective medium for conducting social debates, the medium which is not trusted by those whom it had set out to serve, had become a source of evidence against the state. Rather than be a medium to promote stability, it appears to have been inadvertently, mobilising ill feeling against the government which it set out to serve.

Credibility factor - Fact or Fiction

There seemed to be a disparity in the subjects' attitudes towards

certain genres of programmes. The key to the response was however not inherent in the genres as forms, but in the preconceptions about the underlying motives. This point stems from the problem already noted above.

The internal inconsistencies in the programming may also have contributed to this. There were clear inconsistencies in the values that were being promoted in various aspects of the programming. Different programmes often had varying messages, which did not necessarily complement each other. At times, there were inconsistencies even within programmes. For example whilst one news item spoke of the poor economy and austerity measures, another item displayed extravagance. It thus becomes difficult to identify what such a station stands for. Unlike with familiar print media, television seemed to lack clear philosophy, and therefore identity. This seems to have fostered the lack of trust especially in the "factual" programmes.

Generally, the subjects found the "fictional" programmes credible. These programmes, particularly the local dramas captured the known reality of life. They had been designed to do this, whilst laying emphasis on the portrayal of ills of society, with the aim that these will be corrected. Although they supplied an agenda that could help the viewers challenge the credibility of the (propagandist) factual programmes, they also appeared to have been contributing to the social problems, which they tried to solve.

As one of the subjects (in location 9) noted, these realist programmes, because of their emphasis, could further escalate the culture of distrust, suspicion and scepticism that was already existing in society.

There is evidence to support this in the response of the subjects to some programmes as has been detailed. This is discussed further, later on.

This development raises a problem which programmers have to address. This is the issue of how to envisage "realist" programmes, in an imaginative way, that will offer suggestions on how society can be improved. In presenting the problems in society, the programmes should not be seen to celebrate or promote the social ills, especially as there is evidence that the medium is one to which the viewers come to learn from. The problem calls for carefully planned productions; with proper scripting (where possible); careful juxtaposition of details; and sensitivity to the values expressed. The response to such programmes will be interesting. To start with, a comparison of the response to the better planned English language productions, and that of "slapped up" Yoruba dramas may better indicate how pertinent the issue of production treatment is, to the construction of meaning.

Aberrant Decoding

The nature of viewing had an impact on the meaning which was taken from the set. The incomplete nature of viewing meant that there was aberrant decoding of the messages. Often times, viewers had made meaning based only on their interpretations of the visual code. They had employed extra linguistic codes, which were often restricted by the culture, because they could not understand the conversation which should have helped them to make sense of the action. This was very glaring with the imported programmes, especially when viewed by those with limited competence in English language. It was still true in cases where the viewers had limited competence in the local dialects, in which some of

the programmes were presented. Examples of these abound in locations 1, 6, 11. Similarly, it was true when the viewers were not familiar with the tele-visual language; the codes of production. For example, when the pacing of the programme was too fast, there was the tendency for the less competent viewers, usually the women who were not sufficiently attentive, to misread the messages. The misreading was often because they had skipped certain parts of the message.

There were also occasions when the problem had not been based on incompetence, but on the nature of viewing. What happens then, when for instance the viewer is watching, as well as attending to active children; insistent music from the cassette player, or even the other attractions from the environment; is similar to what happens above. The viewer often has gaps in the reading of the presented message. These gaps are then filled using common sense or experiential knowledge. This account also illustrates how aberration can be introduced into the decoding process.

Communal Viewing

Viewing in a group can be a potential tool for effective communication. In the first instance, it could serve as a built-in check for the possible lapses in the negotiation process, such as those described above. There were several examples of how the discussion which typically accompanies communal viewing, helped to converge the readings. In the event that one member of the group was misreading the programme, there were opportunities for corrections.

The high synergy provided when there is interpersonal communication, often reinforces what is perceived. This is especially so when there

were accounts of personal experiences, to buttress the points being made. This is in line with the findings of Philo (1990). The reverse is the case when personal experience contradicts the message that is being put across. It is in such situations that subjects, ridicule or even reject the intended message: This means that ineffective communication, may not always be due to aberrant decoding. The receiver may properly translate the message as the encoder intended. The problem may be in the assuming of value laden, extra - explicit meaning like motives, loyalties. This is why the issues of objectivity, balance, fairness, ownership, control, are of such importance in broadcasting.

Another issue which arises from the observation of viewing practices, is that of the relevance of programming efforts. Not much credit was given to this. A change in programming and management approach is necessary for the medium to be more effective tool for development that it is expected to be. Although a change in government attitude will help, a change must come from the within. Priorities have to be redefined, even without changing the objectives from how they are presently expressed. There must be a re-thinking of how the objectives can best be implemented.

The Environment of Viewing

Television viewing cannot be separated from the larger social context in which the activity is performed. The social context directs/supplies the attitudes and beliefs which the viewer arrives at the set with. It even determines the possible existence of viewing. For example, at Location 11, on Day 2, in spite of the determination to view, erratic power supply meant that there could be no viewing.

In more subtle ways, the larger social context also affected the mood that the viewers were in, and this determined if they would view at all. This is assuming that the service is otherwise acceptable.

The social context as illustrated in all locations can affect the meaning that is accorded to the programmes. Even when the intended meaning is recognised, the meaning which each viewer chooses to take from the programme may differ, based on his/her acquired, or shared experience.

The effect of the "rat race"; the inability to relax or be entertained was lamented in location 6 and 9, as in other locations. Contrary to popular assumptions, the "rat race" was present, even in the rural setting. There were no laid back rural dwellers who gorged themselves with television programmes. This was not because they lacked physical access to the TV sets as widely thought. They had functional TV sets, but they had no time. The children were often left to watch as they pleased. Often, even they did not have time either. On many occasions, when they did have time, the programming was not satisfactory. Viewing was merely tolerated; endured, not enjoyed.

Acceptable service

When all the above are considered, it seems that for the medium of television to function effectively as a channel of development, there must be a service that is acceptable to the audience. This challenges the practice of the "Public Service" broadcasting as it obtains in Nigeria. In an increasingly aggressive climate, public service broadcasting is being challenged. (Ang, 1991) If it is to have a chance, it must offer such services that are perceived to be of relevance to the

audience. Nigerian television must recognise that public service, does not have to be government service. Observations suggests that the present service is considered to be an exaggerated presentation of the "government's" case. For instance, news is, in the first instance, what the presidency and other agencies of government do. The impact of this "exaggerated" presentation on the image of government, is worthy of closer investigation.

In the meantime, the audience, that is the governed, should feel that it is being served. According to the subjects, acceptable service is that which is directly relevant to their needs. It was those programmes which the viewers felt could assist them make better sense of their real life situations that they attended. There was a large proportion of programmes which could well have been non-existent, simply because they were not watched. There should be innovations in the efforts to get viewers involved in debates about public issues.

In addition, it is necessary for the stations to re-appraise the distribution of their efforts, so that there will be a more relevant service available to the presently marginalised sections of the society. The evidence provided in this study, suggests that the favoured audience segments, the elites, have access to alternative technology, and other sources of information. As a result, they are not deprived, even when they choose to shun the medium. The same cannot be said for the ignored categories, who become apathetic, and more susceptible to rumours.

Freshness

Another problem which the subjects identified in different ways, was that of duplicated ideas on the set. TV was full of similar concepts.

The subject in location 10 was most vehement in expressing this. This lack of freshness in the presentation resulted in a mental block which the programmes had to surmount. This became an added problem to the physical and structural problems with which the programmes had to contend.

It may be useful if the stations, or a body like the Broadcasting Organisation of Nigeria, BON would establish self regulatory body, where programmes would be approved. Blatant "dubbing" of programme ideas could thus be checked.

Such a centre could serve as a Think Tank for the industry, by experimenting and developing programme ideas in an environment that is free of the tensions of operations.

It could then be a quality control centre for the TV industry. This drastic recommendation is put forward, not as a government control or censorship mechanism, but as a self regulatory device, to curb those excesses which malign the entire industry. It should have as its guide, the value of the service that the viewer receives. This is irrespective of the purposes which the proprietors of the stations declare.

Prospects of life, as perceived from TV

Some interesting patterns emerged when the striking aspects of the programming to the various subjects was compared. Because these have been reported in details in the previous section, it will only be highlighted here, because the trend that emerges is one that calls for concern.

Whereas the positive aspects of life which were reported were taken for granted, those which were negative, were echoed and discussed. When pieced together, their perception of the world in which they live was one to be dreaded. The following are some of the excerpts of the comments which either came spontaneously in the course of viewing, or which came in response to the question,

"In your view how does television portray life?"

"It's those theatre dramas, [Yoruba plays] that are best, some teach you not to be covetous, some teach you about this rivalry, struggling for titles, that it is not good to plan evil for your fellow man" (- subject in location 1.)

"These programmes are about real life happenings. For example, there are some programmes about demonic children. These also widen [the scope of] one's experience. They show what is going on in the world. How these beings go and beat up someone's child. Some they "eat" the child but because it is not their entitlement, it is impossible for them. Some bones get stuck in their throats. These are real life happenings that we are being shown, learning about; seeing that this worldly ways are not good. The outcome of such evil doers is not good. [Retribution]

So it is! Life is not good. Life is so short, how long is one going to spend here, that one will hug life so close to his heart?" [be obsessed with life.] (Location 1)

For subject H3 in location #8, the world according to the news was so predictable that it he had lost interest in it.

"They'll at first mention some people, - so and so. They'll throw Alex Akinyele [Information Minister] in the middle somewhere, if he travels any where. They'll end it with an obituary of some person who has died, who is known at the NTA.

In the middle, they'll talk about [the war in the] Gulf, then assuming was still happening, but when they found that the Gulf was going to cause problems, because Nigeria didn't take sides, they tried to black it out.

So you know the sequence the news takes - Babangida is returning from somewhere, he has returned from somewhere. . . Mamangida [alias for the First Lady] has gone to do Better Life. "

An interesting feature in the above is the attempt at blacking out issues that could rock the boat. This contributed to the perceived bland nature of the news. It appeared that only the privileged were active, both in living and in dying. Life on television seemed to be an array of who's who.

The subject S1 in location 8, was watching the news. There was a wedding in view. The identity of the couple was not yet known. Of her own volition, she ran a commentary to the visual report.

"Ah Rasaki was there! and his wife! Look at Ronke Daley! . . . Ah who's child is it? [the bride] Abeke Taire, head of service in Lagos state. . . Aikhomu [the Vice President] too was there. . ."

The newscast featured the wedding of the governor's sister - in -law, (4' 30") and two other stories (1'30"; 1' respectively) The subject lamented the trend that the editorial judgement reflected. This is an illustration of how viewers respond to the values expressed in production decisions.

"It's because she is the governor's sister in law, that's why she was featured. Now, she will think she's something and she's nothing. Oh God, have mercy on this country! Whenever I think of it, it's scary. I was telling my husband today that they have a club in our daughter's school - Rich men's kids club . . . "

Though the editorial judgement was lamentable, what was probably more lamentable was the fact that the trend was repeated in the other bulletins for the day, including the Yoruba and Egun translations which followed the English version. As can be seen, the trend was even more regrettable because it illustrates the undue regard for wealth in the society at large. At the end of the viewing, she had not been as bothered with the content of the message, even though that in itself had also been provocative.

There were very few programmes which S1 in location 12 she watched consciously. But as illustrated on Day 6 particularly, an announcement of death on television was remarkable. The subject chose to draw a gloomy picture, out of what she was shown of life. Nothing else had caught her attention, but the obituary had.

In her view of other programmes of her choice, the presence of injustice, betrayal, evil, and the diabolical were dominant. Even from the Health programme which she had stumbled on, her deduction was not one of hope. The disease that was being discussed, Asthma, lacked a cure. The best that could be offered was control for it.

Subject S1 in location 10 was very highly critical as has been detailed. Her views of life as depicted on television were equally as lamentable. Her viewing time was dominated by her lament. The summary of her view could very aptly be described as "life is devoid of imagination". She also saw particularly from the Yoruba dramas, that "life is dreadful, full of chaos, and sorcery, and ill mannered people. Even though there were amusing moments, this life was not funny.

Perhaps what is most interesting of her views was the total disregard which she had for the government, as personified by the president.

There were the occasional "good" points which she observed, but even this as illustrated by the Christy Essien's music focused on the negative aspects of life. The redeeming feature of the particular example, was that it presented the message in a fresh way, and on a hopeful note. It was able to whip up encouragement for the challenges

ahead.

On their part, the producers of television programmes, see themselves as crusaders for a better society to live in. They thus make it a duty to highlight the evils of society, in an attempt to bring about change. (See appendix for illustration of programme proposals and programme objectives.) They are poised to highlight these problems, in order that they may, for example, be addressed; (interviews documentaries, news); that people may be informed and so be on their guard (drama, particularly local dramas). However, even without their emphasis, the viewers are able to identify the negative or objectionable aspects in what is portrayed; (music, news).

If what the producers present is bad news, and what the viewers see, is really bad news, it is little wonder that the view which emerges is one, in which "evil" has an exalted position. The trend had contributed to the practice of reception. If nothing else, it is supposed to have contributed to the observed apathy amongst some the viewers. Besides, there is evidence that these images, are employed in negotiating every day life, hence the validity of the suggestion that it fuels a culture of suspicion, and distrust. The relationship is worthy of closer examination.

The Dynamics of Viewing

Ability to examine the dynamic nature of television viewing was a strong consideration in the design of this study. The advantage of the chosen methodology is that it has opened up the practice of viewing, and exposed the importance of some of those aspects of the act, that had hitherto been taken for granted. Already some of these have been shown

to have direct impact on the process of making meaning. In this section, some of these will be discussed, beginning with a re - conceptualisation of viewing.

Types of Viewing

Hitherto, it had not been necessary to define viewing, after all, it is such a common place practice, that it did not require any definition. However, as has been pointed out in the introductory chapter, this concept is one of those that had made the study of television so problematic.

McLuhan's (1964) qualification of television as a cool medium, should be seen as the earliest indicator that this concept requires closer consideration. He had made the point that television does not always attract the viewer's full attention. This already suggests that viewing is variable. Observations in this study confirm that the variations in the act should be given due consideration in research, because it helps us understand the issues of access, and participation, which affect the reception of the message.

Going by the observations, there are basically 3 modes of viewing - Determined/Deliberate; Chequered; Incidental.

Determined viewing is the mode in which the viewer having decided to watch the programme, pays full attention to it. This is the mode of viewing that is usually assumed in the discussion of television practices.

In this mode, the viewer is usually settled before the set; either

sitting or lying down; standing up, perched or leaning on available space. The posture which is assumed does not really matter very much as this may depend on other facts. What is more important is the determination, the unhindered expression of the desire to attend to the programme.

With the Chequered mode of viewing, there is also usually a desire to watch the programme, but this is not matched by attention. There is usually another activity that requires and thus reserves some of the viewer's attention. The hindrance may be from the viewer, the viewer's context, the viewing context, or even from the programme itself. For example, no matter how strong the desire to watch the programme is, there is a stronger pull, when one has to attend to a call of nature; a telephone call; a sick relative; rumpus at the doorstep; or even a provocative statement within the programme. Such a provocation need not be verbal expressions in the programme. It could be visual, or technical or even aesthetic. The nature and number of the competing activities, may determine in how many bursts the viewing is done.

Once again, the posture that the viewer assumes is not always a relevant indicator of the mode. What matters is that the viewer is drifting in and out of the viewing experience. It is important to note, that whilst some of these activities are physical, some are mental. and less readily observable. For example the viewer could be engaged in deep sober thoughts, or in mental calculations.

Often there may be several activities, occurring simultaneously, hindering the act of viewing. This only goes to confirm the dynamic nature of the act of viewing.

Incidental Viewing is the mode which described that, which for long, has captured the "mindless viewer" because of the way in which the set is used. The set is often left on, as a source of room ambience; as a companion; as a time keeper; as a tension "diffuser". It is thus possible for the viewer who is within viewing or hearing range, to be exposed to the aspects of programming which must necessarily fleet across the screen. Such viewers usually had not made any conscious decision to watch. It is usually not pre-planned.

The nature of the viewing makes it particularly interesting. Because the viewing had not been planned, the viewers are usually unguarded. Even when they are sceptical, that they are pulled into the programme is an indication that their curiosity had been aroused. This attitude affects their negotiation of the meaning.

This sort of viewing is the kind that readily generates conversations. Questions may be asked where possible to clarify or direct the attention of others to the source of the attraction. Such questions as "Who is this?" "Why are they dressed so?" "What are they fighting about?" The attraction could be anything from a (visual) gesture to a (verbal) utterance. It could be due to familiarity, or even strangeness of the feature.

The conscious interest in the programme may be momentary. However, continued exposure to the programme may facilitate the viewer's ability to follow it through. It is also possible, that the viewer may be pulled into the programme. Once the viewer has been pulled into the programme, the mode of viewing may change to any one of the above. The

classification of the different modes of viewing may not always be totally discrete. There may be points of overlap.

As has been pointed out earlier, the modes of viewing can actually be influenced by other dynamics in the course of viewing. These have also been largely unresearched due to constraints of methodology. Yet, it is important that these be understood as well, if viewing practices are to be understood.

The danger of not understanding these may be demonstrated in the failure of government funded communal centres. The fact for instance, that the viewing centre (at Akaka, near Sagamu) was not patronised, stems partly from the fact that television was confused with cinema. The viewing centre was purpose built, like a cinema house. There is no other attraction in the building other than the television sets. But television is not cinema, the reception practices for both are different even if there are any similarities. This illustrates why the dynamics of viewing has to be understood. We need to know what directs viewing. For instance we need to know what could facilitate or what will hinder viewing; if people will go out of their way to view television. Some of the residents of Akaka for example, were not prepared to leave the comfort of their homes to go and watch television in the centre. They considered such a person who would make such a deliberate effort, to be one who lacks ambition. This attitude cannot be taken as an indication of their behaviour at the set, under different circumstances. The above discussion should have illustrated that. There are also several concrete examples in the preceding section. It is thus essential that the varying circumstances that were observed be analysed to see the variables at work. The following is a discussion of those other variables which were

conspicuously directing viewing practices.

The Cultural Framework

The study set out to examine possible contrasts in the dynamics of viewing in varying viewing contexts; between family and communal viewing contexts. Of the 12 subjects studied 8 can be considered to be family settings. However the reality of the viewing situation as observed is that even in those familial settings, there was a ready elasticity in the classification of the viewing contexts. Certain traits, which have a bearing on this have been identified.

The fact that guests are welcome any time, without notice, and have no constraints on the length of their visits, is very important. In fact the word "guest" should be read with caution as the "guests" very often are members of the extended family, or neighbours who are considered to be "family by proxy". The culture encourages the open house hospitality and this is illustrated in the saying which when translated to English means

"A body should not flee/avoid another body."

Guests are often told to feel at home as they cannot be considered strangers. Probably the most appropriate idiom that illustrates the point is that which means -

"One who lives alone in his parlour (one who uses his parlour alone) is an animal."

In other words, such a person who is intolerant of company can only be equated with an animal. This type of thinking is exemplified by the owner of one of the communal sets, location 1 who said -

"I cannot watch all the programmes by myself."

Whilst this observation holds true for all the families, it appears to be more prominent, in a higher degree in the more traditional, less educated settings (1, 2, 5)

Social Roles

A variation to this trend are those subjects who by virtue of their roles, have to maintain an open house - the seamstress who works from home; the minister / principal's wife; the opinion leader (area mummy) who had grown children who also brought home their guests. These ones in addition to having the traditional values of hospitality, by the definition of their roles, also have to host a never - ending stream of guests. Communal viewing was thus encouraged. The clinic is another example of such a location.

Living arrangement

Another factor that contributes to how discriminatory the access to a set is, is the living arrangement. This pattern again seems to coincide with the socio-cultural positioning of the subjects.

The subjects who are more traditional, and who live in the more traditional (the older) sections of town, in houses where there are several families occupying the different rooms, had a higher incidence of communal viewing. (location 1, 2)

The pattern may be a result of the overcrowding that is inevitable in such accommodation.

Besides the fact that the architectural design of the homes facilitate

the flow of human traffic, it also has a direct bearing on the occurrence on various forms of viewing as has been discussed. The above illustration does not necessarily describe the total pattern of reception. Whilst the incidence of communal viewing may have been high, the total amount of television viewing in locations 1, and 2, was much less compared to the locations with moderate or low rating.

The cramped nature of the rooms in such places, meant that the inhabitants spent more time outdoors. The occurrence of incidental viewing was thus reduced in those locations. Their viewing was more deliberate.

Table Comparative rating of incidence of communal viewing

<u>Family</u>	<u>Type of residence</u>	<u>Rating</u>
#8	Detached house (large owner - occupier house)	Low
#3	Detached house in a company's residential estate	Moderate
#12	Block of flats in close proximity to a police barracks.	Moderate
#5	Close clustered boy's quarters	Moderate
#1	"Palace" courts with room letting arrangement	High
#2	Family house with several brothers and their families co-habiting	High

Having identified a possible correlation between architectural design and flow of guests, a caveat has to be highlighted. This is the fact that individual personalities may mitigate, in some circumstances. For example, a more outgoing person may have less inhibitions about leaving

her own set, to watch with a friend, or neighbour, whereas a more reserved person may exercise more restraint, even in the absence of a personal set. Even in the light of this, it is still important to highlight the prevalence of the communal context in the course of the observation.

Macro-economic situation

The macro - economic situation had a strong impact on the viewers. This subsequently affected the disposition which featured prominently in the observed response, attitudes to television viewing. There were several responses which expressed this, but they are aptly summed by one proverbial response -

"A happy mind evokes a pleasurable disposition."

Many respondents were unimpressed / unconcerned about television because they had more pressing needs. This was expressed in the way they prioritised their activities. Television viewing was not considered to be very profitable. This explains the trend of responses which ended up, expressing other inadequacies, like the following.

"We do not have time for television these days."

"The market is poor."

"We are not happy."

This trend may suggest that the viewers as a result, would be more critical in the reception of the amount of viewing which they engage in.

Besides shaping the attitude, the economy also moulded the viewer's use of time. The biting effect of inflation on the family's income had had a greater demand on the women's time. For example, none of the subjects

studied, was a housewife. Each person irrespective of age, education, or social position engaged in some form of business or the other. They were often engaged in a combination of pursuits. The striving cut across the various social positions represented in the study.

Table Occupational and social roles.

#1	#2	#3
Queen/wife	Mother/wife	Wife /mother
Mother/grandmother	Kola trader	Government farm officer
Trader	Mill operator	Trader
#4	#5	#6
Wife/mother/in -law	Maid	Wife/mother
Teacher	Trainee seamstress	Teacher
Student		Active church member
#7	#8	#9
Nurses on duty	Wife/mother	Wife/mother
Acquaintances/friends	High sch. principal	Hostess
Administrators	Proprietor of Schools	Hospital Adminis.
Social observers*	Assistant hospital manager	Counsellor
Traders	Church leader	Social leader
	Social leader	
#10	#11	#12
Youth Corper	Family breadwinner	Wife/mother
Teacher	Mother/daughter/father	Seamstress
Trader	Wife (by proxy)	Trader
Engaged spinster	Agric quarantine officer	Applicant(Enumerator)
		Aspiring contractor

* The social observers are those individuals who were "guests" in the location, whose comments were referred to in the study.

The effect of this matrix of roles, tells on the amount of time, and the nature of temperaments within which television programmes are received. A combination of these, is actually what underlies the way the messages is perceived.

There is another suggestion arising from this picture. It is that, the television service, as it was being run at the time, did not offer a

palliative remedy for the plight of the people. This also affected the type of response they gave to it. The most interesting point in this particular trend of discussion, is the viewers' interpretation of time. This expands the concept to encompass relevance. The above table illustrates how a viewer may be so pre-occupied, with the different, demanding roles. One thus finds, that there is an expression of values embedded in the definition of "time".

Time is reckoned as opportunity, and a cost is put on viewing. It is evaluated according to the viewer's frame of reference.

The viewer's experience in this regard, comprises of that which she knows or anticipates she has to grapple with, within the larger social structure; and that which television itself has to offer. Therefore, the reputation of programmes go before; the programme is weighed up against other activities that could be performed. Hence situations where a "viewer" would rather attend a crusade meeting; or visit a sick or bereaved friend; or simply sit and chat and watch the sun go down.

On the other hand, a viewer could deafen her ears to her baby's cries, or take a break from selling her wares to watch what is considered to be interesting enough. Time thus becomes an expression of interest.

This analysis was necessitated by the perceived apathy to television service generally, and the number of responses which attributed this to "time". The intricacies which are often embedded in the conceptualisation of "time" suggest that care should be taken when dealing with this issue, more so as it is so prominent in the process of reception.

PICTURE 16.

Oja Oba Market Sagamu at 6.00 p.m.

The women arrive at the market. The lorries arrive from the farms.

PICTURE 17.

6.00 p.m. and Oja Oba market Sagamu is filling up.

Notice the number of women who are buying and selling.

This is another reason why only a methodology that can unearth the hidden faces of such pertinent concepts, can hope to understand the problem of audience reception.

Time

Due to its importance, the "time factor" deserves further comment. In Marketing, a distinction is made between the income of a consumer and that portion of it which is actually at his disposal to spend (disposable income). A careful consideration of this is important in making decisions about the manufacturer's value of the product, and that which the consumer will place on it. This is just one of the many variables that may contribute in making a potential consumer a potential customer.

This sort of distinction should likewise be made in Programming. Distinctions should be made on the time available to potential viewers, when considering what will move such persons to become actual viewers.

This is also a way of reckoning the value of the programmes, and their position on the schedules. Understanding the time which viewers have, becomes even more vital.

"Time" within the context of reception may be considered in two ways.

- (i) the free time at viewer's disposal i.e. free from duties arising from her responsibilities in her social or occupational roles.
- (ii) the actual time that is expended on viewing television.

Whilst (i) is the leisure time which the person has, which can be equated with the actual income in our marketing parallel, (ii) is similar to the expendable income. On occasions it is possible that the actual time of viewing (as with actual expenditure), could be higher than available leisure time. This is encouraged by the nature of the programme(s). For example, the viewer is more likely to "create" or "borrow" time to watch a special, which she knows is not likely to be repeated.

The importance of this distinction is that it is mindful of the structure of the viewer's time. It considers what else the viewer could be doing with her time; what she has given up to participate in the viewing experience. It recognises the dynamic nature of television reception. It thus accounts for the duration and quality of time spent attending to a programme.

These observations would have direct implications for programmers' scheduling practices.

Repetition and replication

As illustrated above, another factor which contributes to the viewing pattern is the prospect of repetition or replication of programmes. There may be less urgency, (motivation) to watch a programme which would likely be repeated. The need to make time in such an instance is reduced.

Similarly, the fact that a programme is a replica of some others, does not facilitate viewing, unless a distinct, and strong attraction has been introduced.

This appeared to be the case with the formula type programmes. In the study, the news, and the Yoruba dramas in particular, evoked such responses. The prevalent attitude was one of -

"You've seen one, you've seen them all."

This has serious implications for programme producers. There is the need for freshness in the programmes. The viewers have to be wooed, not to be taken for granted.

Constitution of the Audience Group

Having established the prevalence, and importance of the communal nature of viewing, one can expect that the constitution of the audience group has a bearing on the process of reception. The following is an attempt to describe how this happens.

The range of discourses available within the groups could determine how the group behaves, as earlier studies (Morley, 1980) had shown. The bargaining and conversation which necessarily occurs in such groups contributes to the dynamic nature of viewing. The relationship could be complex. For example, the representation of a subculture within a group does not presume that it is given a voice. It is the nature of the relationship(s) within the groups that determines how the group behaves.

Conviviality and familiarity in a "formal" group can make it less formal than an "informal" group which lacks those qualities. Therefore, the various constituents in a group should not be taken for granted.

A strained relationship between a couple, even if it be temporary, can

sour the viewing experience, and the expected or assumed flow of interpersonal communication, which gives life to a viewing group, is not observed. (#4)

In some homes, children are still to be seen and not heard. The elder has the veto power, even if not the remote control. [Re. location 11]

On the other hand a boss may be so chummy with his employees, that the traditionally expected barriers are broken down and the social gap is closed. This in turn affects the behaviour of such a group before the set. [Re. location 7]

Considering the constitution and behaviour of the group is important in that it has a direct bearing on what is taken to and what is taken away from the television. This is reflected for example in the choice of what is watched. The above explains why it is difficult to offer any hard and fast rules about group behaviour. It is dynamic and any future studies of audience reception must give it due consideration.

There are usually varying interests present in a group. The dominant voice tends to be the arbiter when not satisfying vested interest. Observation showed that the dominant voice usually was that of the eldest, because of the cultural deference to age. This was even acceptable, where the eldest was not the owner of the set, and so was self respecting; and modestly deferring to the choice of the real owners of the set. [Re. Day 6, location 1]

At some other times the elder lacked interest in the viewing. At such times the "minority" interests are served. Sometimes it was that the

elder lacked the knowledge or competence to make a decision. Power to choose thus evolves from the bandwagon, or from the one who is most knowledgeable about the programme. In such a case the determinant of power is no longer age but knowledge.

On the whole, the nature of the audience tends to determine what the medium is to them. This nature, is affected by the place or the position of the members in the larger social system. The viewers' position in the larger social structure determines the nature of the responsibilities that they have. It also directs their interests, which, as has been discussed, come together at the viewing location.

The viewing location

The point has already been made regarding how the architectural design of the viewing location, encourages the formation of groups. There are other aspects of the viewing location which will be considered here, as they contribute to the dynamics of viewing, especially when the variable nature of viewing is considered.

Whereas the contribution of programme qualities towards the so-called "mindless" act of viewing are more readily recognised, the impact of the viewing location is seldom identified. The observations show that there is need to consider this.

The arrangement of a room, the "comfort" of a room, the position of the set all contribute to the ease with which a programme is received. In other words, they are reckoned as the cost of the viewing experience.

It is interesting that the TV set was a central piece of furniture in

all the locations/homes observed. The TV set was a reference point in the floor plan. The arrangement of other items gravitated around it. The set was always placed in such a way that all or most people in the room could be within the viewing range.

In some instances, the dining room adjoined the living area, and the TV could still be seen. In some instances (#1,2,& 5) there was no separate dining area at all. Often times the dining table, even in those homes where it was present, was not used. The meals were simply brought to the viewer in front of the set. This partially explains the pull on the viewer to view "mindlessly".

In a situation, for example, where the viewer is being waited upon either by the maid or the children, there is the chance of becoming so comfortable before the set that viewing is encouraged.

This brings to mind the comfort of the seats. This determines the length of time which a viewer can sit for, before getting fatigued. Whether a meal has been had or not, the comfort of sitting in a "TV room" contributes to the type and amount of use to which the set is put. These points are well illustrated in location 11 where the mother comes in from work and slumps in the chair. With several children to wait on her, and with the freedom of her own privacy (no dominant male presence that could moderate her behaviour), she often made herself more comfortable in front of the set. She could therefore lounge in the sofa having propped her head up with a pillow brought from the bedroom, she was set to view or sleep as the situation demanded. For this subject, all of her meals were brought to her before the set. This is eye catching, and while it may suggest a reaction to the researcher's presence, we must

remember the varying cultural dictates about the use of space. Therefore it need not be strange that a person can appropriate space as need demands.

The converse of the above, is that the discomfort in a TV room may curtail the tendency to drift along with the programme flow. This was very evident in locations #1 & #2 where because the rooms were readily crowded and uncomfortable, the residents spent more time outside in the open, even at night. They really only came indoors to sleep or attend to other perfectly private matters. Such living patterns tend to be habit forming such that even in the event of acquiring a more comfortable house, the pattern may still be evident as in the case of the grandmother in location #11.

Another illustration of this point is found also in location #11. Because of the heat and the mosquitoes attracted by a black out, consequent to a cut in public power supply, subjects drifted away from the living room, (and thus the set). Some of them moved to more "comfortable" parts of the flat thereby, they drifted off to sleep. They thus missed the programme which they had been expecting.

Location #9, is another example of how the sitting arrangement at the dinning table, was influenced by the ability to see the set. However, for the mother (S1), there were other considerations to which she deferred. She thus ended up, being the one who sat, with her back to the set. For her, facing her husband was more important, than seeing the set especially as her routine, may prevent her from watching the programme in its entirety anyway. She also did not want to "struggle" with the children for a vantage seat. She did not want to deny the children the

pleasure of watching. This example goes to show that the points mentioned here work together. Sometimes against one another. It is such that make the act of viewing a dynamic one.

In one of the locations, the television was often left on with no particular person watching it, and for no specific reason. This appears to be a result of family/group viewing (#3 & #11). Each person assumes that some other person may be interested in something else that may be coming, and so the set is left on. Nobody takes responsibility for switching off the set. Indeed, with the movement through or by the sitting room, some programmes do catch the attention of some person(s), who then may decide to watch. This is another way in which the viewing location influences television viewing. In the event that there is no passage through the room in which the set is to be found, such incidental viewing may be reduced. But in all the locations studied, the TV was not placed in a separate or special room. There was no distinct space for viewing. There were no separate family; living; or sitting rooms.

The Television Culture

Another point which the above brings to mind, is one that will be described here as the "TV culture". While prevalent in certain homes it is relatively absent in others. Hence in some homes, switching on the television is almost an unconscious habit (#3, #11, #9) whereas in some other homes, it is a deliberate gesture (#2, #1). This trend is, in itself reflects some other factors - the availability of leisure time; ready access to a set; the familiarity with TV codes, which is encouraged by the intensity of use of the TV, and exposure to other related technology, and media like video, magazines, books.

In some families, there was assistance with daily routines either coming from dependents or servants, or from the technological labour/time saving aids. Such offered relief on the burden which members of the household particularly the women and children had to bear. It also contributed to the TV culture in the homes. Because they do not have as much chores, there was usually more time to watch television.

In these such homes, (for example location 3), their exposure, their tastes, their aspirations, made television more relevant to them. As a result, even when the available service was not relevant, the tendency was to endure whatever was on, even if it was to be left in the background. This may be because they had already formed the habit of watching television. So they scanned available channels, bidding time till some more acceptable programme material comes on. As a final alternative, where possible, such viewers also employed the alternative services to television, very often the video or audio cassette players. They had expressed the desire to subscribe to satellite transmission. The range of options becomes wider, in the event that this became available.

It is interesting that of the 12 locations studied, only 4 did not have ready access to a video machine. (One of this is the clinic which is not residential.) In the other three locations, the younger ones, (between teenage and twenties) exhibited knowledge of, (even familiarity with) the alternative technology. Lack of ready access to the technology, may be accountable for its seeming lack of impact within that group. Going by the response of the older groups to TV programmes, their expressed priorities, one can only hazard a guess as to their lack of interest.

What is important is that ready access to the technology is lacking. As a result, the technology still lacks the impact impact that is noticeable in some other context. In other words, the TV culture exists in varying degrees for this reason.

This reasoning goes beyond the usual assumption which merely attributes the media presence to level of income. With industrious wives, many junior/intermediate level workers are able to live sufficiently comparable life-styles to that of those in higher income brackets as exemplified by subject #12. Some of them can afford colour TV sets, video machines; thus they have multiple set homes.

Contrasting this example however is the case of those with means, (location 8) but who had a carefully planned exposure to the medium. This only goes to show, that the issue of TV culture cannot be readily latched on to income or such demographic variable, but to the way of life.

Summary

The study has traced and outlined the meaning making process in the reception and negotiation of TV messages. It is not one process. Rather, the production of meaning is an interaction of various processes.

For us to understand the practices of television reception, the various factors which have an input into that nature must be unearthed and examined. This study constitutes one such attempt. The viewer's position in the larger social structure must be considered to see how this affects the disposition that is brought to the viewing experience.

In this study, the impact of the viewer's orientation and values on time have been addressed. The manner in which the viewing location; the viewing situation (the size and make up of the group), contribute to the nature of the viewing experience has been pointed out. All this has only been possible because of the chosen methodology.

Although it has been quite a laborious exercise, it has been one worthy of pursuit. It has increased the understanding of what viewing is all about.

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The Study Focus Area

The town is strategically located in the western part of Nigeria. It has always been on one of the major roads leading to Lagos, the main sea and airport; the commercial nerve centre, and till very recently the seat of the Federal government. Sagamu had been on the route to the north and the east and as a result, it has had a cosmopolitan nature for many years. This was encouraged by the thriving trade in Kolanut.

Sagamu had been a centre for the neighbouring rural settlements. During the colonial era, it was a divisional headquarters. It had thus been a meeting point for trade and also politics. Sagamu had thus earned a place for itself on the map (Ref. Fig.). Traditionally, the town is made up of 14 traditional quarters, each with its own ruler. The Akarigbo of Offin had long been acknowledged as the first among equals. In addition, he had also been accepted as the paramount ruler in the 16 towns in Remo land. The real indigenes of the town, who have not migrated to larger towns, tend to live in the traditional quarters. Even those who have moved to the cities, as well as those who have other more rural bases maintain a link with their homes in the town. There is a strong presence of non-indigenes in the town especially in the newer areas, which had hitherto been farmlands. These are areas like Ajaka, High Court Road, G.R.A, Station, WAPCO Cement Estate. Indeed, there is the traditional quarters for non-indigenes, Sabo (Offin) which has a vibrant northern (Hausa/Fulani) community as well as a strong presence of easterners and other westerners who are non-indigenes.

It may be difficult to match the physical development of the town itself with the status described above. Although there is a fairly good network of local roads, they are in different stages of disrepair. This limits

communication especially during the rainy season.

Although taps and water pipes are seen around the town, they are often artifacts of known development. Public water supply is hardly adequate in most parts.

The Ogun State Teaching Hospital situated in the town is still struggling to upgrade the infrastructure it inherited from the General Hospital. This in many ways was still a relic of the colonial era.

There are many churches and schools in the town, many of which are reminders of the presence of missionaries and influential politicians. Consequently, there is a high incidence of some experience of formal education in the population. Between 70 per cent and 80 per cent are supposed to have some level of education. About half of these had primary or secondary modern education. These are often incomplete for different reasons. The experience thus makes little impact on the traditional beliefs held by the people.

Both Christianity and Islam are prominent faiths professed by the people. In spite of these, there is yet a deep seated superstitious nature that is rooted in the traditional beliefs. This nature contributes to prevalent attitudes that exist among the women. It is thus important as it is evident in their day-to-day activities.

Contrary to the wide expectations of life in rural Nigeria, there is still an indication of a high population of young adults in this town. This is possibly due to the proximity to the bigger centres. The road transport network has made it possible to commute on daily basis between

the bigger towns and cities. In fact, the farming population also commute on a daily basis between their farms and the town.

Trading is another paramount occupation in the town. It is typical for those engaged in other professions and vocations (civil servants, teachers, farmers, seamstresses) to engage in some form of trading. As a result one can hardly find the 'typical' housewife, who is solely in the business of keeping the home.

Another consequence of the above is that there is a continuous link between the rural and urban areas. This link may not always be from direct experience.

One typical feature of the town which influences the social life, is the lack of organised recreation. The prominent form of recreation in the town is the 'beer parlours'. This is an exclusively male domain. Only women of 'loose virtues' are expected at such places. There is a more tolerant, though negative image for the (male) patrons of beer parlours as well. There is only one non-functional cinema house in town. It is a monumental evidence of the cultural attitudes to such pastimes. Relaxation is not high in the priorities.

What the town lacks in these forms of recreation, it makes up for in the unending ceremonies and celebrations. These are really social obligations. The practice which gives these priority is rooted in the culture that celebrates birth, death, and every milestone in life. Street parties are typical in the town irrespective of the day of the week, or the economic situations. The social obligations must be met.

It is against such a background that this study examined the use of television.

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5:00 - 5:30	Drama	1	Children	1	Enlight.	5	Children	2	(series)	5	Children	5	1
5:30 - 6:00	Children	5	Children	3	Health	1	Health	2	Talk (series)	2	Religious	2	1
6:00 - 6:30	Religious	1	News	2	News	2	News	2	News	2	News	5	1
6:30 - 7:00	Children	1	Ed. Quiz	1	Children	1	Children	1	Children	1	Children	1	1
7:00 - 7:30	News	1	News	1	News	1	News	1	News	1	News	1	1
7:30 - 8:00	Drama (series)	2	Talk (series)	2	Children	2	Talk (series)	2	Women	2	Talk	2	1
8:00 - 8:30	News	1	News	1	Children	1	Children	1	Children	1	Children	1	1
8:30 - 9:00	Drama	1	News	1	Children	1	Children	1	Children	1	Children	1	1
9:00 - 9:30	News	1	News	1	Children	1	Children	1	Children	1	Children	1	1
9:30 - 9:45	News	1	News	1	Children	1	Children	1	Children	1	Children	1	1
9:45 - 10:00	News	1	News	1	Children	1	Children	1	Children	1	Children	1	1
10:00 - 10:30	News	1	News	1	Children	1	Children	1	Children	1	Children	1	1
10:30 - 11:00	News	1	News	1	Children	1	Children	1	Children	1	Children	1	1
11:00 - 11:15	News	1	News	1	Children	1	Children	1	Children	1	Children	1	1
11:00 - 11:30	News	1	News	1	Children	1	Children	1	Children	1	Children	1	1
11:30 - 12:00	News	1	News	1	Children	1	Children	1	Children	1	Children	1	1

NSTA Ikoja Channel 7

	sunday	monday	tuesday	wednesday	thursday	friday	saturday
7.00 - 7.30							
7.30 - 8.00							
8.00 - 8.30							
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11.30 - noon							
12.00 - 12.30							
12.30 - 1.00							
1.00 - 1.30							
1.30 - 2.00							
2.00 - 2.30	Religious 2						
2.30 - 3.00	News 2						
3.00 - 3.30	Cookery 1						
3.30 - 4.00	Music 5						
4.00 - 4.30	Drama 3						

(Africa) Entertainment 2
(Asia) Entertainment 2
Talk (Gen. Int.) 2
Children 1

NIA Channel 7

5:00 - 5:30	(K) (person)	2	Childrens	2	Children (comedy)	5	Children	2	Youth (Debate)	2	Children	5	Musical (ent)	1
5:30 - 6:00	Children	5	Children	5	Children	2	Children	5	Musical	1	Children	1	Musical	1
6:00 - 6:05	News	1	News	1	News	1	News	1	News	1	News	1	News	1
6:05 - 6:30	STATION	N	PRG	N	PRG	N	PRG	N	PRG	N	PRG	N	PRG	N
6:30 - 7:00	Children	1	Youths	N	Children	1	Children	1	Children	1	Children	1	Religious	2
7:00 - 7:30	Drama (comedy)	2	Talk (comedy)	2	Talk (politics)	1	Women	2	Children (comedy)	2	Sports	1	Women	2
7:30 - 8:00	Talk (comedy)	1	News	1	News	1	News	1	News	1	News	1	News	1
8:00 - 8:30	Sports	N	News (P)	N	Govt	N	Talk (political)	1	Govt	N	Documentary	N	Sports	N
8:30 - 9:00	Sports	N	News	N	Drama	N	Drama	N	Govt	N	Drama	N	Sports	N
9:00 - 9:30	News	N	News	N	News	N	News	N	News	N	News	N	News	N
9:30 - 9:45	News	2	News	2	News	2	News	2	News	2	News	2	News	2
9:45 - 10:00	Talk	1	Talk (comedy)	2	Talk (A)	N	Govt	1	News (commercial)	1	News (talk radio)	2	Drama	N
10:00 - 10:30	Talk (A)	1	Talk (comedy)	2	Talk (A)	N	Govt	1	News (commercial)	1	News (talk radio)	2	Drama	N
10:30 - 11:00	Drama	2	Govt	2	News	N	Sports	2	Govt	N	Documentary	5	Sports	5
11:00 - 11:15	Drama	2	Govt	2	News	N	Sports	2	Govt	N	Documentary	5	Sports	5
11:15 - 11:30	Drama	2	Govt	2	News	N	Sports	2	Govt	N	Documentary	5	Sports	5
11:30 - 12:00	Drama	2	Govt	2	News	N	Sports	2	Govt	N	Documentary	5	Sports	5

9:30 - 9:45
9:45 - 10:00

7:00 - 7:30
7:30 - 8:00

5:30 - 5:45
5:45 - 6:00

N/A Channel 10

	sunday	monday	tuesday	wednesday	thursday	friday	saturday
00-7:30							
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00-5:30	Entertainment	1	Children	5	Children	5	Children	1	Children	5	Children	5	S	N
00-6:00	Musical	1	Children (you)	1	Children (Aunt)	1	Musical	5	Children	1	Religious	1	P	
00-6:30			Musical	1	Children	1	Children	1	Youth	1			R	
00-7:00	Children's	N	Youth (aw)	N	Children	N	Children	N	Children	N	Children	1	S	
00-7:30	News	1	News	1	News	1	News	1	News	1	News	1	N	
00-8:00	Drama (rem)	1	Drama	1	Drama	1	Talk (Ming)	1	Documentary	1	Musical	4	Cookery	1
00-8:30	Drama	N	News (P)	N	Govt	N	Musical	1	Musical	N	Documentary (soap)	N	S P O R T S	N
00-9:00			News	N	Drama	N	Drama	N	Govt	N	Drama	N		
00-9:30	News	N	News	N	News	N	News	N	News	N	News	N	News	N
00-9:45														
00-10:00	P.P.A	1	P.P.A	1	P.P.A	1	News	1	News	1	P.P.A (enlight)	1	P.P.A	1
00-10:30	Documentary	5	Talk (Melathy)	2	Talk (1.4p)	N	News	1	Drama	*2	Documentary #2	N	Talk (enlight)	N
00-11:00	M	5	Govt.	N	Talk	N	Sports	N	Govt	N	Drama	2	Talk (enlight)	1
00-11:15	N		News	N	News	N	News	N	Govt	N	Drama	2	Talk (enlight)	1
00-11:30	E		Documentary	5	Talk (Ming)	N	Enlight.	5	Talk	1	Drama	2	Talk (enlight)	1
00-11:45	S													
00-12:00														

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W/A 10

N.T.A. Ibadan

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10 30 - 11 00							
1 00 - 11 30							
1 30 - noon							
12 00 - 12 30	(comedy) 2 Drama 2						DRAMA (SERIES) 2 Musical 1 Childrens 5 Entertainment (Quiz) 2 Sports 5 Drama 2
12 30 - 1 00	Religious 2						
1 00 - 1 30	Talk (Ombudsman) 2						
1 30 - 2 00	1						
2 00 - 2 30	Musical 1						
2 30 - 3 00	5						
3 00 - 3 30	Entertainment (Games) 5						
3 30 - 4 00	Religious 1						
4 00 - 4 25	News 1						
4 25 - 4 30	2						

4 00 - 4 25
4 25 - 4 30

00-05:30	Musical (Entertainment) 1	Childrens (politics) 2	Children (Talk) 5	Childrens (lead) 2	Govt (comedy) 1	Entertainment 5	S	N
00-06:00	Youth News 2	Talk News 2	Talk (farming) 2	Talk (farming) 2	Drama News 2	Religious News 2	P	
00-06:30	STD/PROG PROM 2	STD/EXHORTATION 4	PROMO / EXHORTATION 4	PROMO / EXHORTATION 4	STD/PROG PROM 2	STD/PROG PROM 2	R	
00-07:00	Children Musical 1	Youth (lead) 2	Children Talk (CA) 1	Children Talk (politics) 1	Children Sports 1	Drama Talk (CA) 2	S	
00-08:00	News 1	News 1	News 1	News 1	News 1	News 1	N	
00-08:30	Drama N	News (P) N	Govt (comedy) N	Cookery N	Govt N	Documentary N	Sports	N
00-09:00	News 1	News 2	News 2	News 2	News 2	News 2	News	N
00-09:30	News 2	News 2	News 2	News 2	News 2	News 2	News	N
00-10:00	Talk (C.A.) 1	Talk (farming) 1	Talk (CA) N	Musical 2	Talk (CA) 2	Documentary 1	News (Detective) N	
00-10:30	Govt News N	Govt News N	Govt News N	Sports News N	Govt News N	Religious 1	Drama	
00-11:00								
00-11:30								
00-12:00								

Senior Citizens.

04 TV

	sunday	monday	tuesday	wednesday	thursday	friday	saturday
10-7:30	Religious 4						HEALTH 1
10-8:00							WOMEN 2
10-8:30	NEWS 1						11:00
10-9:00	MUSICAL 2						11:00
10-9:30	NEWS (P) 1						11:00
10-10:00							11:00
10-10:30	M 5						NEWS 2
10-11:00	6						M 5
10-11:30	V 1						0
	E 1						Y 1
							I 1
							E 1
							S 1
1:30-noon	S 1						
12:00-12:30	NEWS 1						NEWS P.R.A 4
12:30-1:00	MUSICAL 2						NEWS 3
1:00-1:30	DRAMA 1						Sports 1
2:00-2:30	Religious 1						DRAMA (comedy) 5
2:30-3:00	Religious 1						DRAMA (comedy) 2
3:00-3:30	Religious (comedy) 1						NEWS 5
3:45-4:00	DRAMA 5						DRAMA 2
4:00-4:30	Religious 1	Children 1	Children 1	Children 2	Children 2	Children 5	NEWS 2
4:30-4:50	News 1	News 1	News 1	News 1	News 1	News 1	NEWS 2

12:00 - 12:30
12:30 - 12:45
12:45 - 1:00

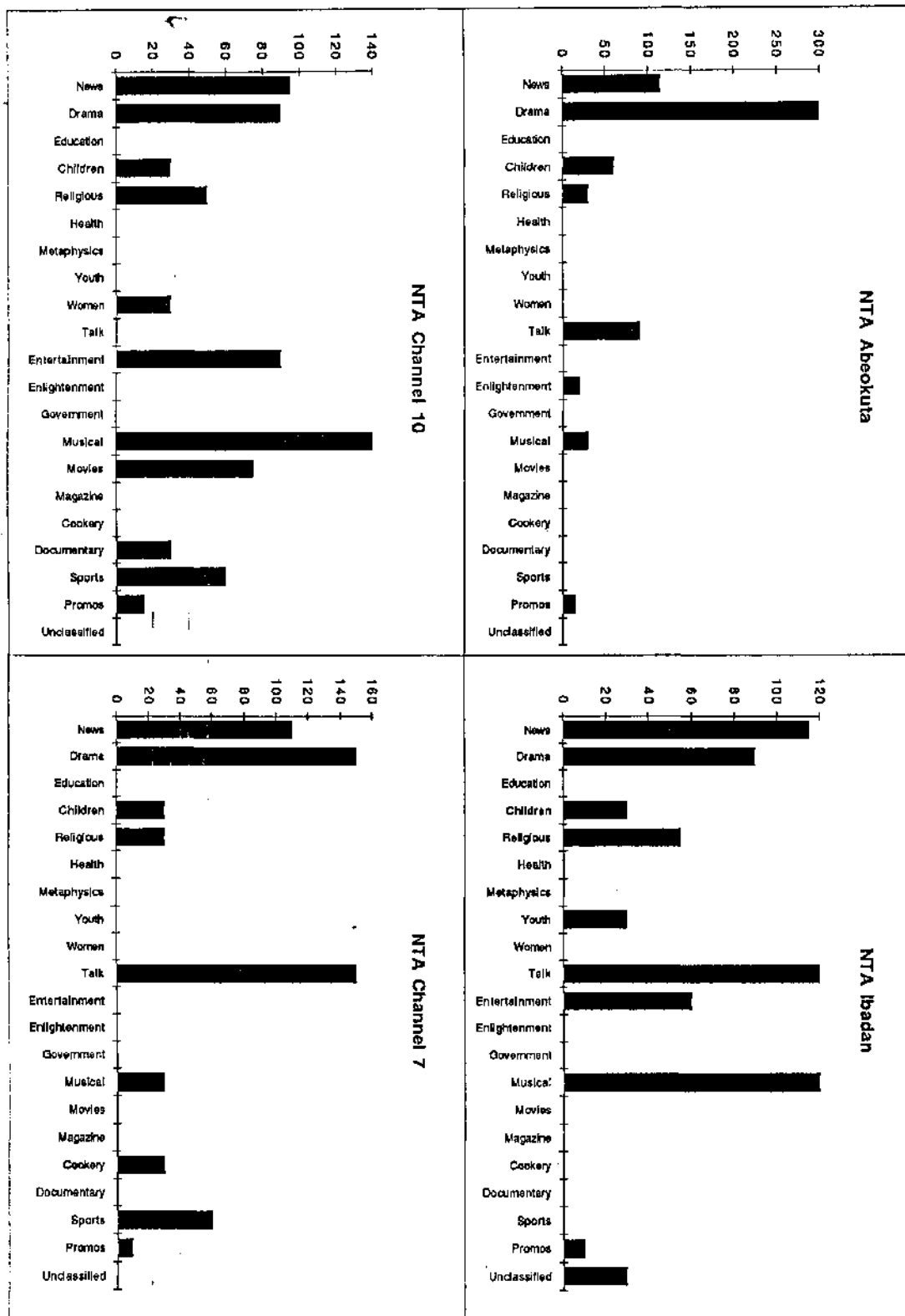
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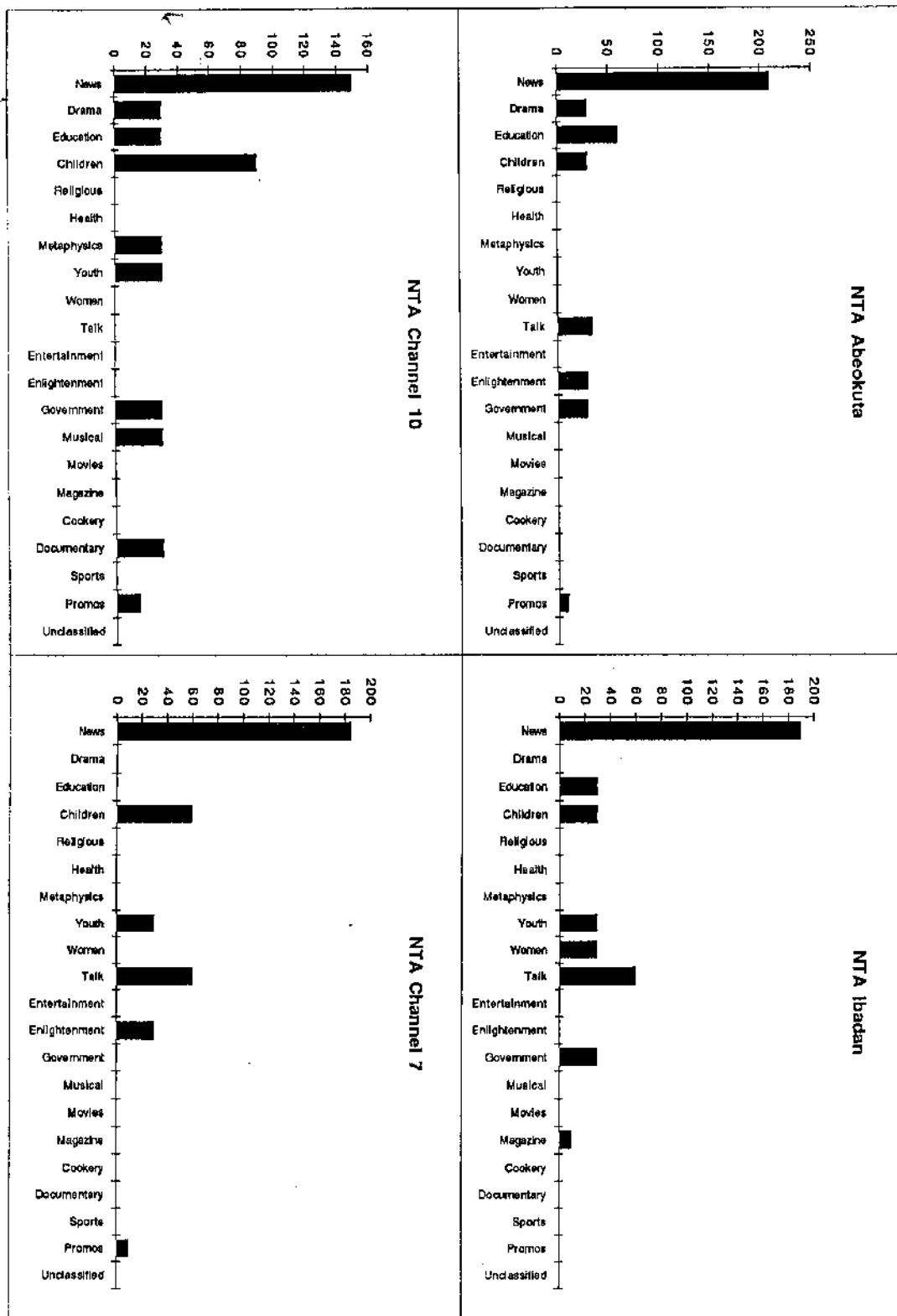
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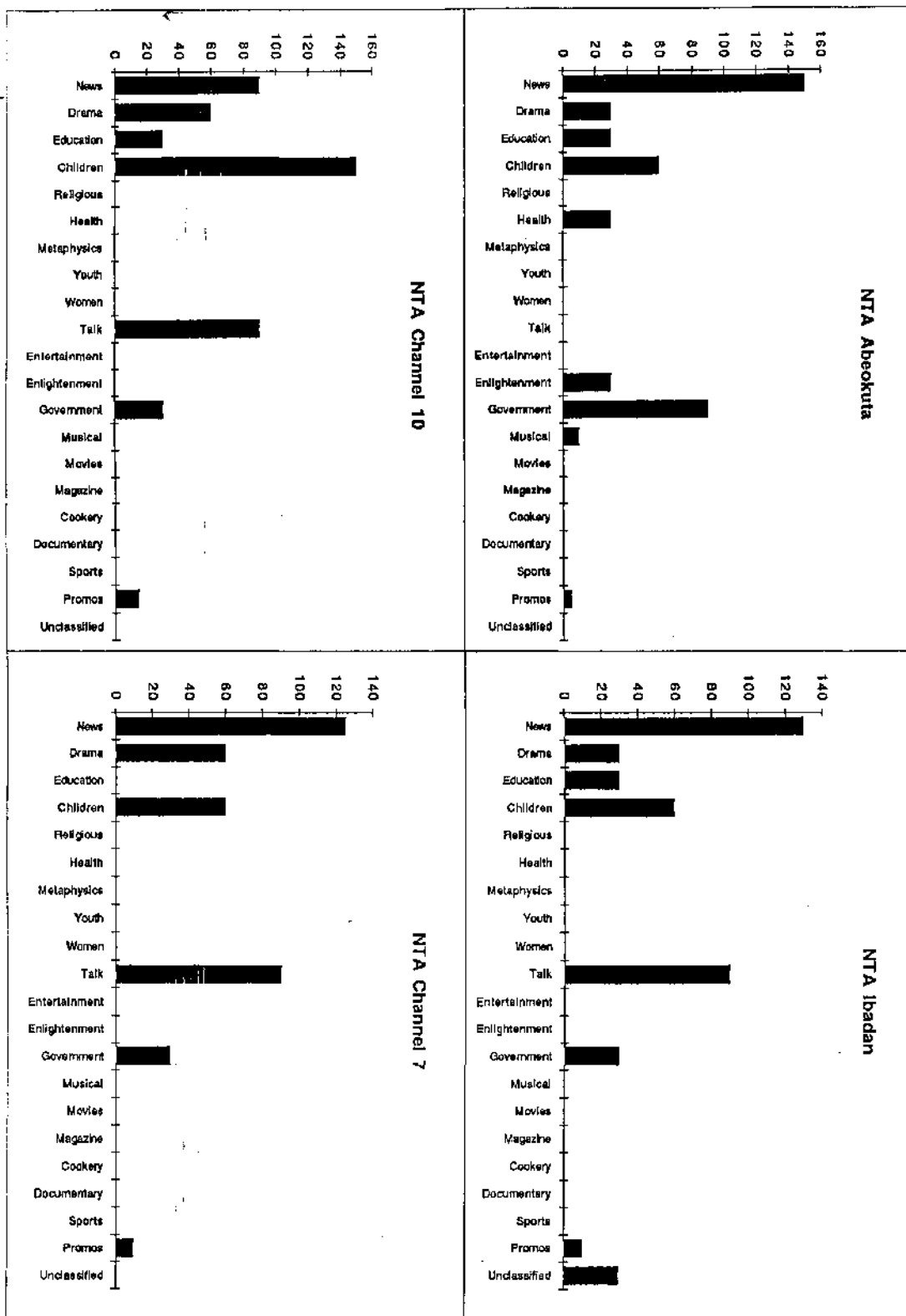
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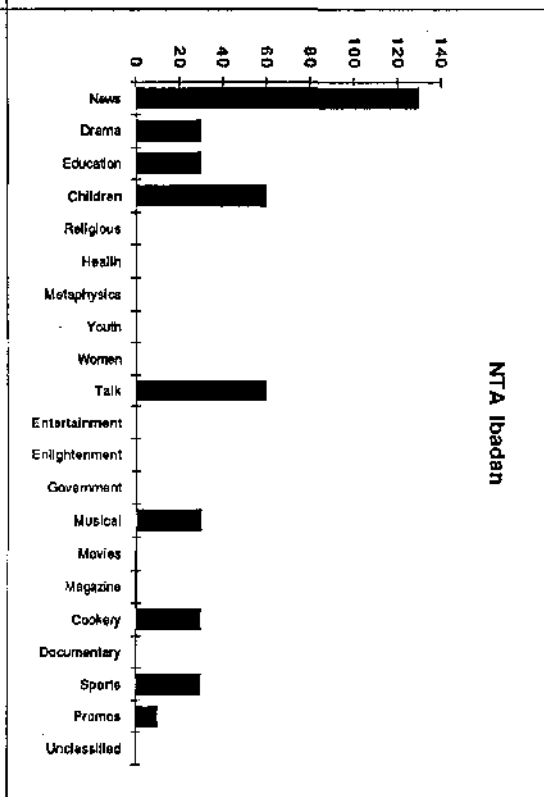
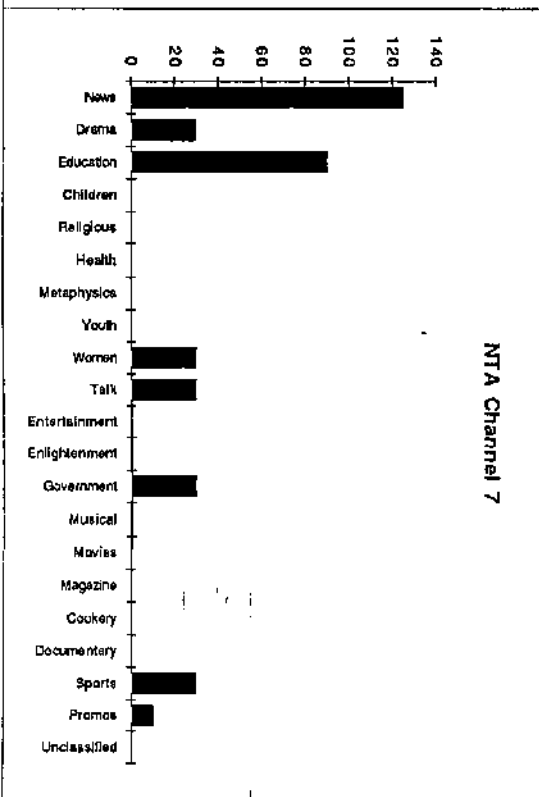
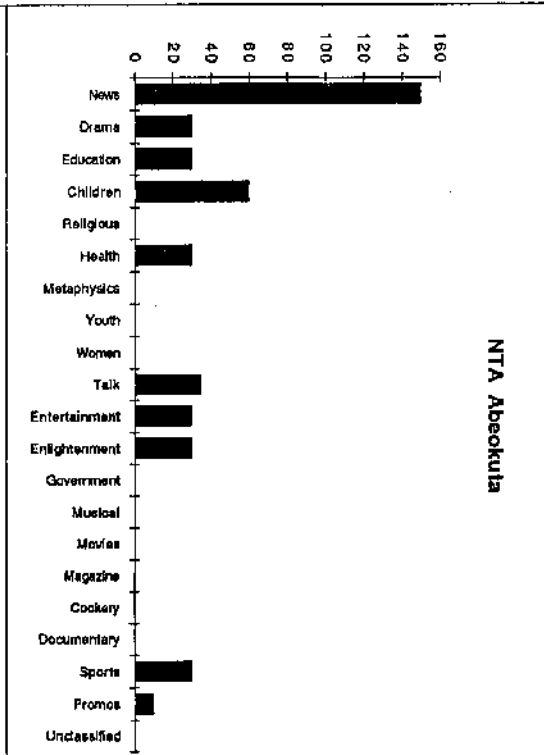
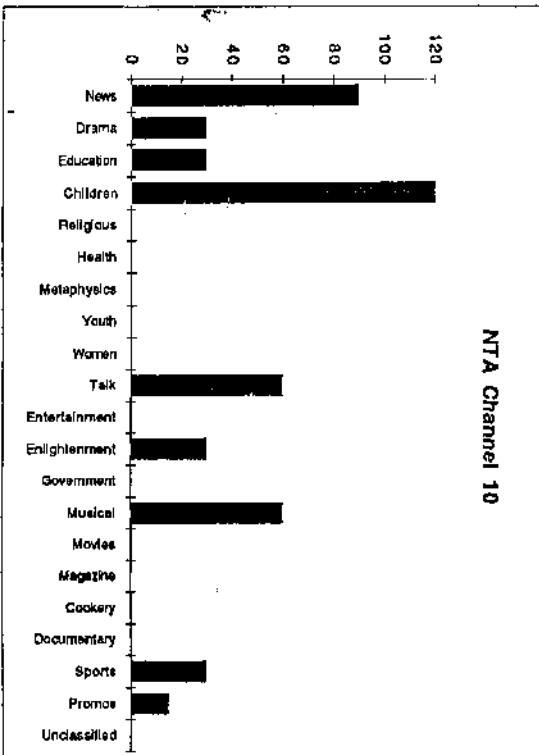
	sunday	monday	tuesday	wednesday	thursday	friday	saturday
00-7.30							
30-6.00							
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00-9.30							
30-10.00	Religious 1						Women 2
10.00-10.30	Religious 2						Sports 5
10.30-11.00	Children 1						Sci-Fi/Fantasy 5
11.00-11.30	Children 3						Drama 5
11.30-noon	News (enlightenment) 5						Documentary 1
12.00-12.30	Documentary 2						Documentary 1
12.30-1.00	Entertainment 2						Drama 2
1.00-1.30	Games 1						News 2
1.30-2.00	Religious 1						Religious 1
2.00-2.30	Talk 1						Novels 15
2.30-3.00	Yoga 2						
3.00-3.30	Religious 4						
3.30-4.00	Musical 4						Magazine 3
4.00-4.30	Religious 4						Talk 2
4.30-5.00	Drama 2						Sports 1
5.00-5.30	Drama 1						

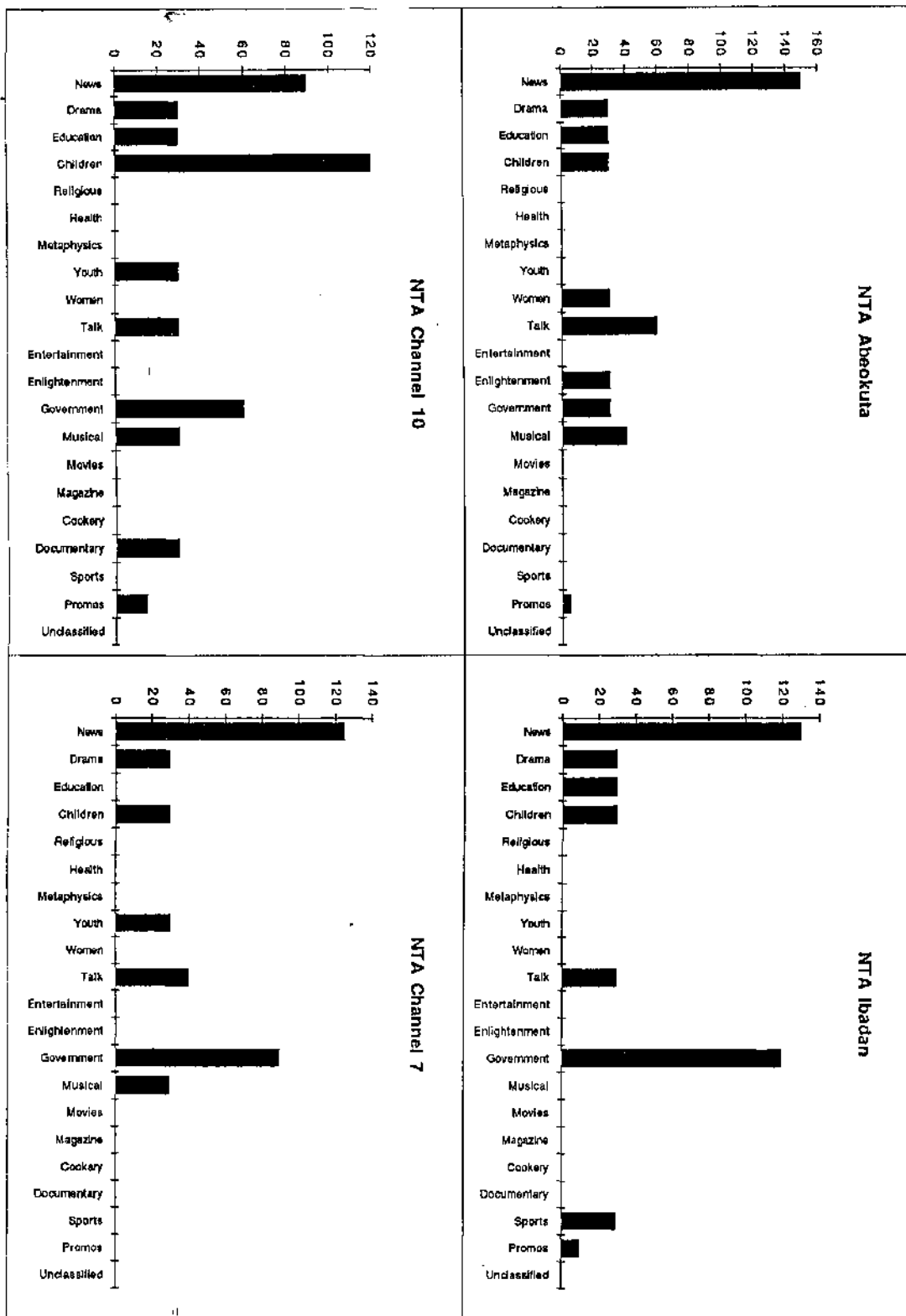
12.00 - 12.30
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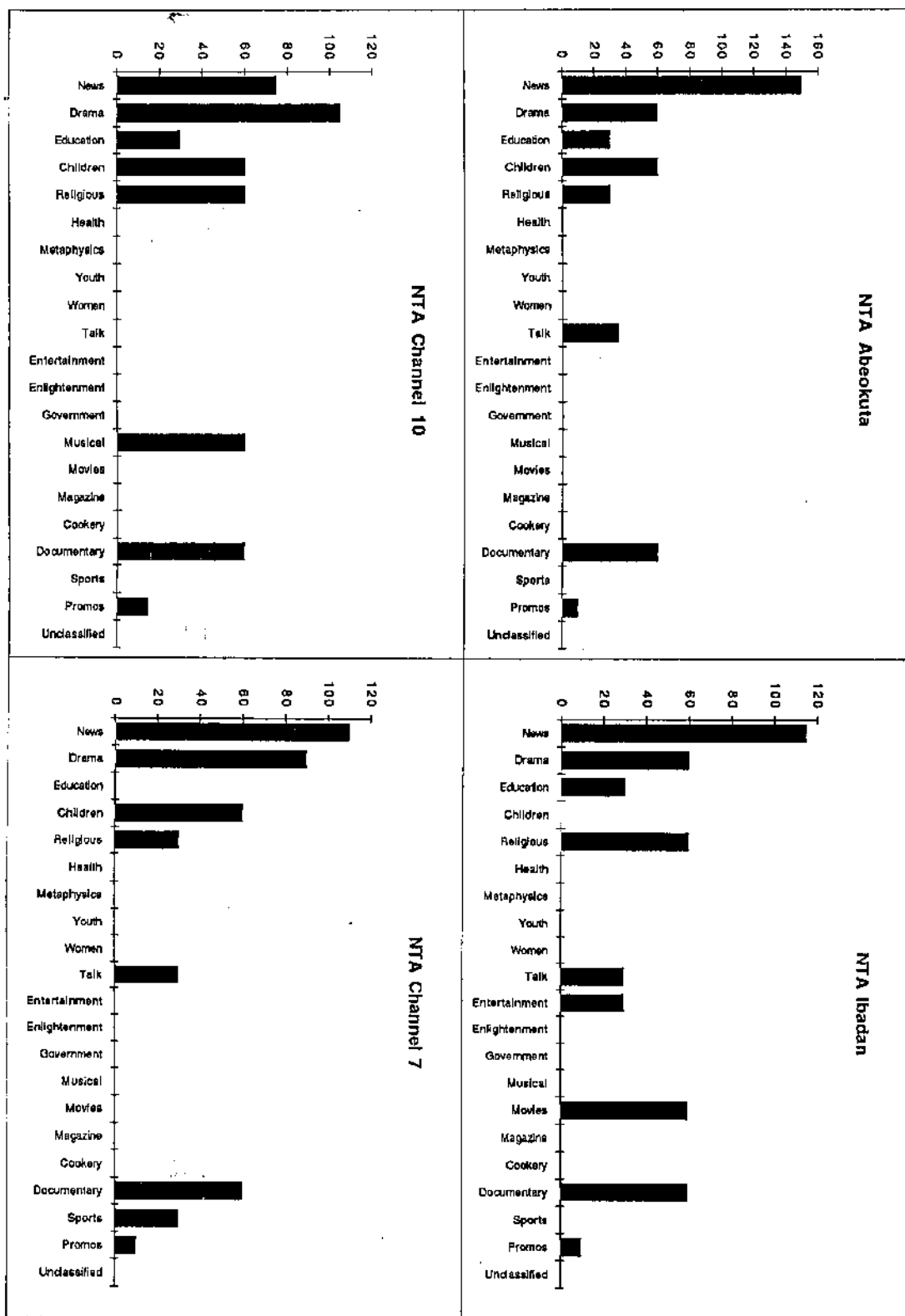


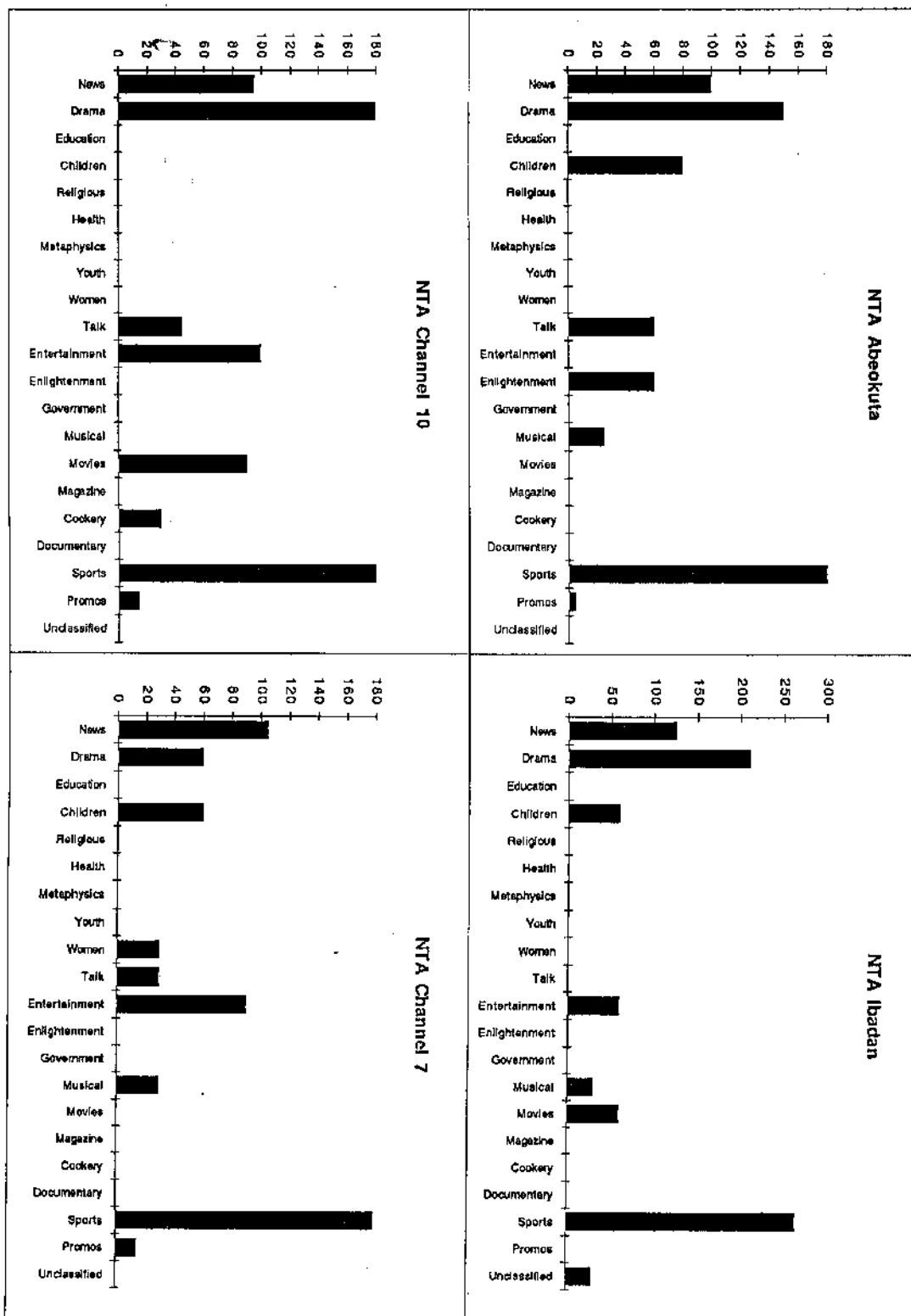


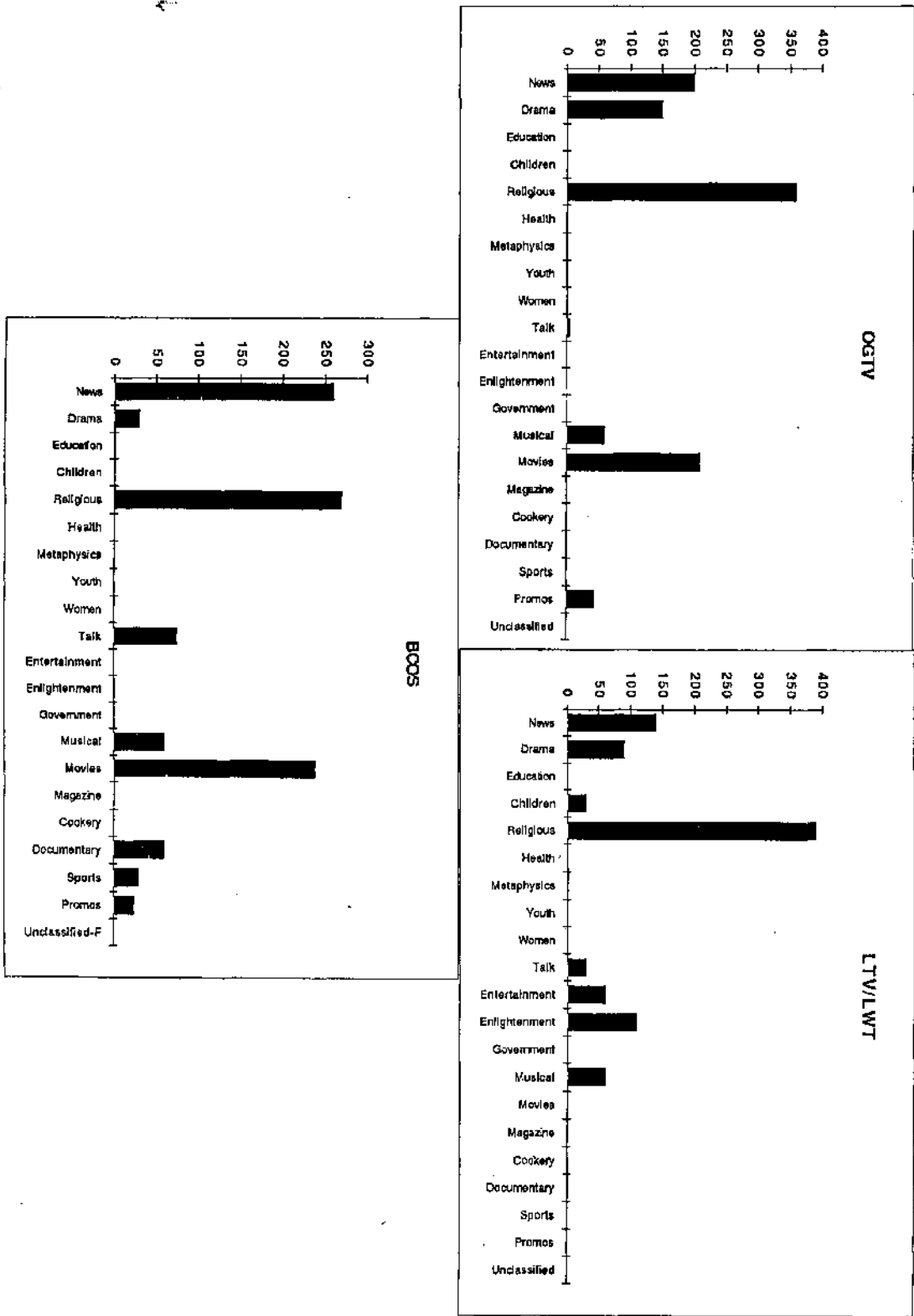


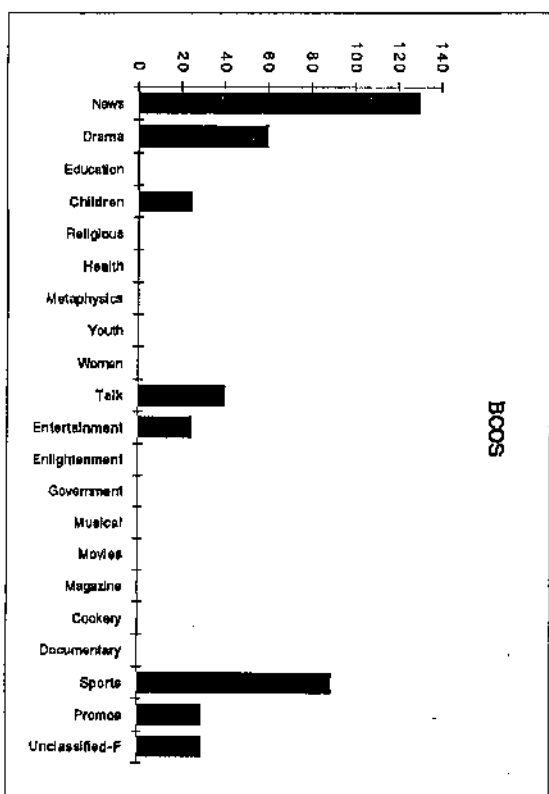
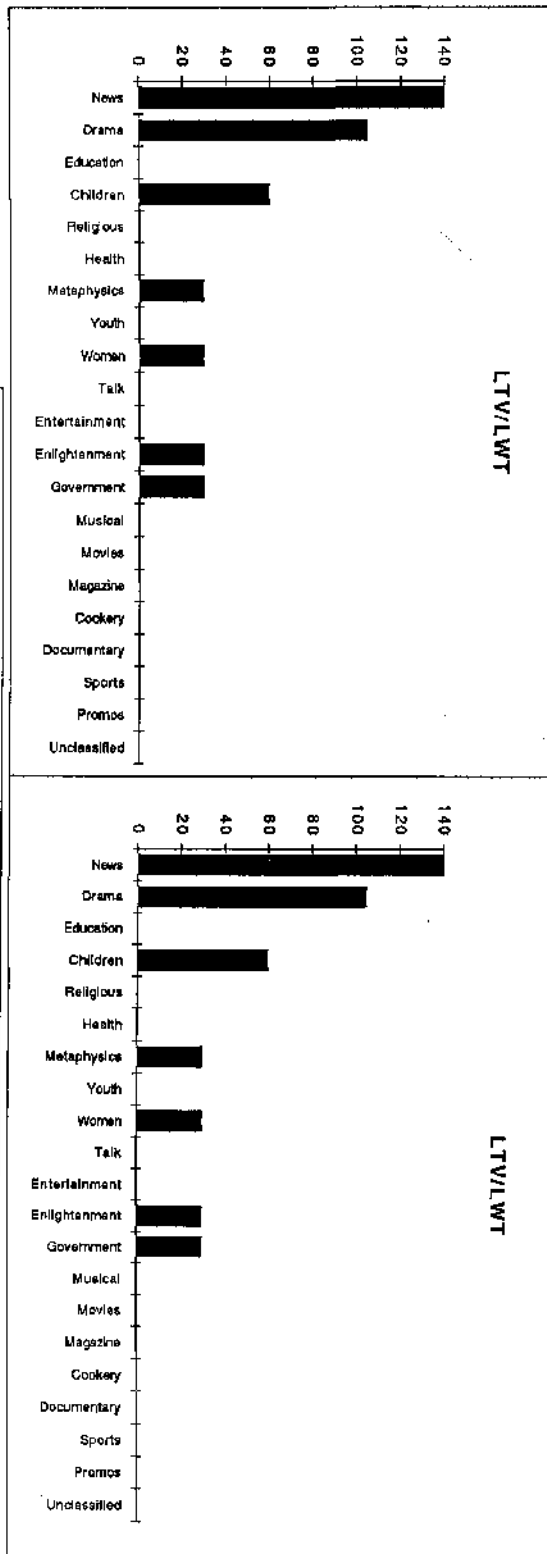


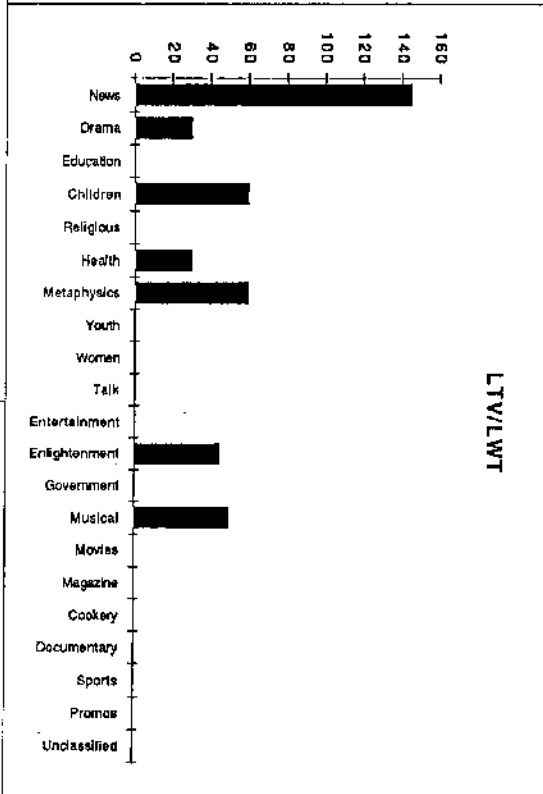
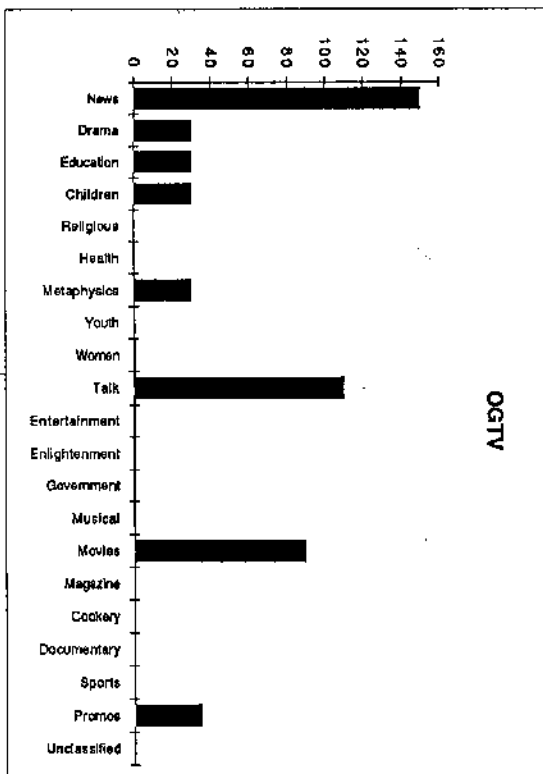
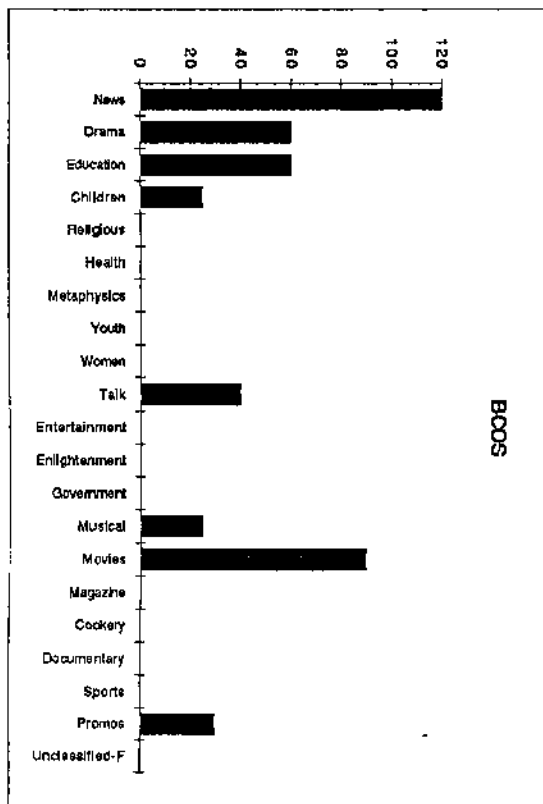


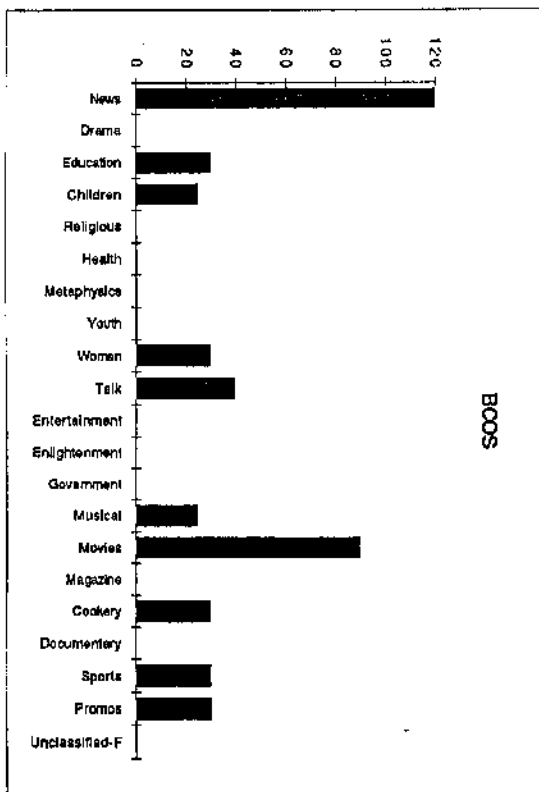
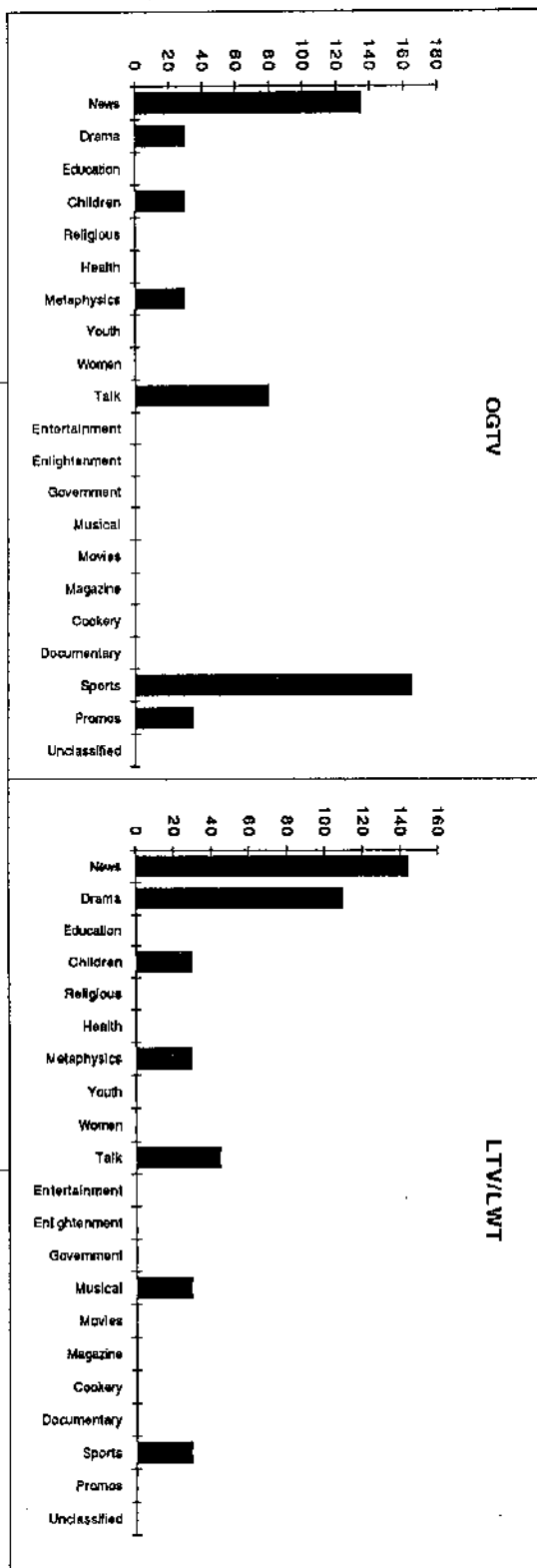


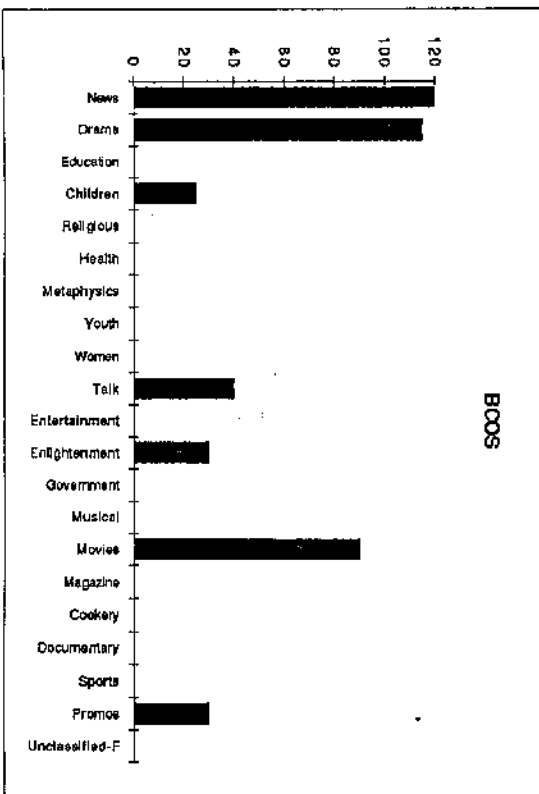
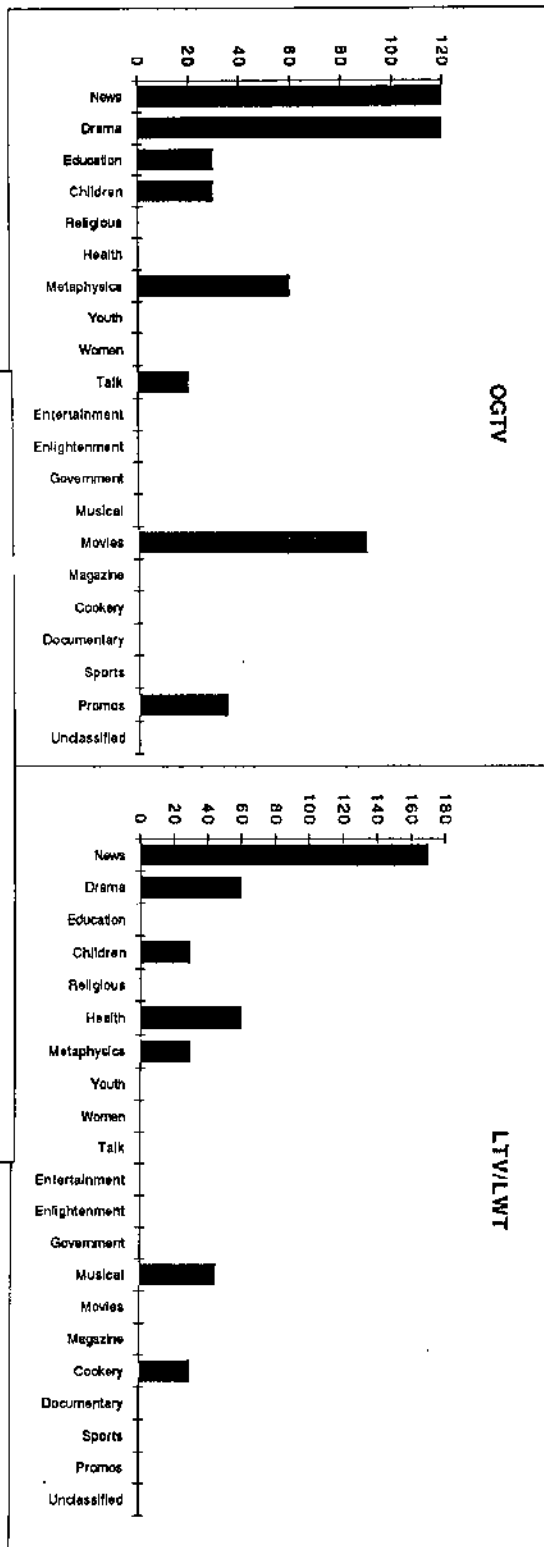


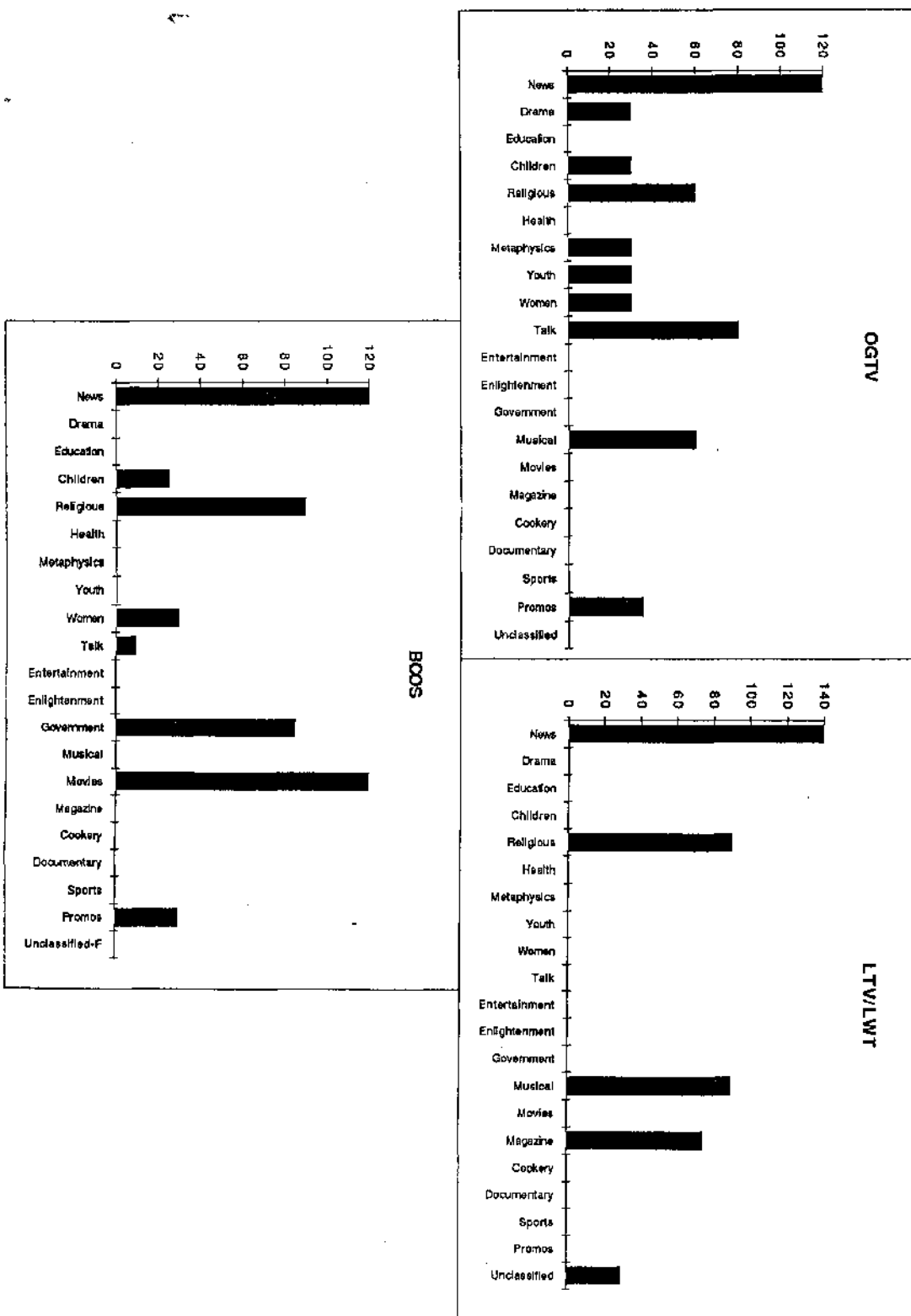


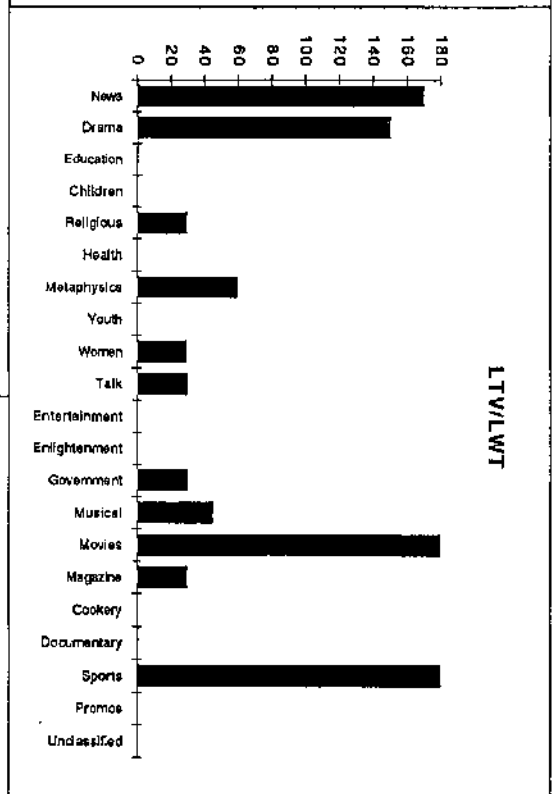
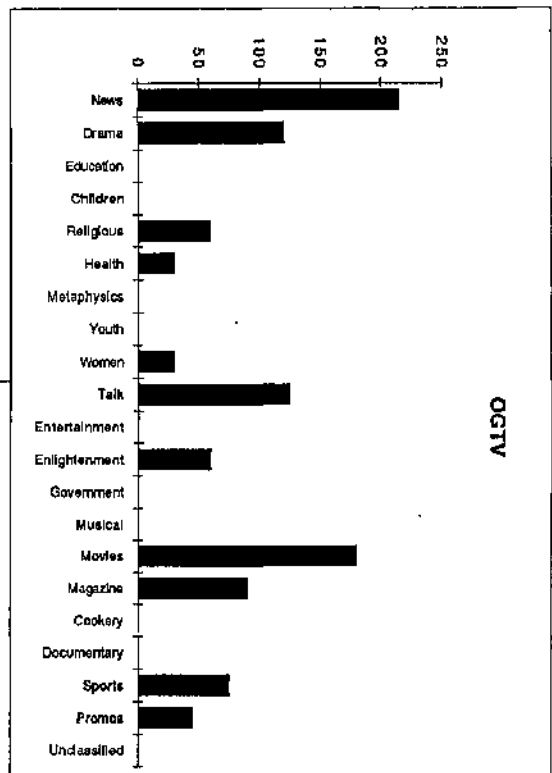
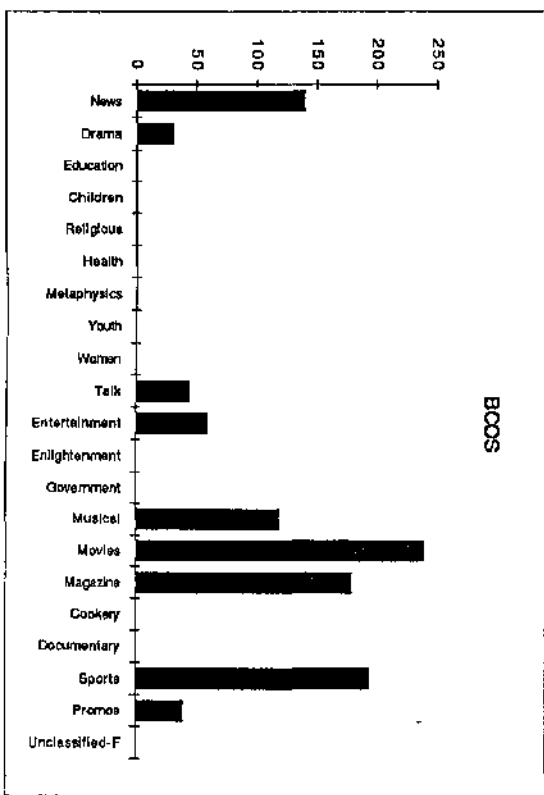












SPEAK OUT

In pursuance of its children programmes objectives among which are development of children's intellect and their creative ability, NTA introduced a new children's programme in 1990, called "SPEAK OUT". "Speak Out" is a magazine programme which has as its primary target, children between the ages of 7 and 15. Its scope of discussion, however cuts across a very wide categories of audience, including adults. Topics of national importance are brought and discussed, problems are highlighted and probable solutions are recommended.

In order to sustain the interest of audience, the programme is divided into two parts, the first one

tagged 'Just A Minute' is a contest among four children who struggle to outwit the other by ringing the bell when a discussant errs.

The second part highlights an interview conducted by the children with an important public figure. Reactions by the audience have been highly impressive and show that "Speak Out" has really penetrated every home.

The setting is usually the studio for the first part while the second segment of the programme uses an outside location. The 30 minutes programme is shown every Tuesday at 5.30 p.m. Fifty-two (52) episodes have been aired.



BEHIND THE CLOUDS

—An Intriguing Serial

THE CONCEPT

For every programme, there is always an underlying message. The difference is the mode through which the message is sent and this could be either direct or indirect. 'Behind The Clouds' was conceived using the latter approach. The issues being raised in the soap opera are contemporary ones with attempts being made to address the sentiments of our people.

'Behind The Clouds' chronicles the star-crossed lives of four families. It delves into their past and present lives to be able to find answers to relevant questions of the times.

Thus, it tries to find out whether or not a parent who abandons his family responsibilities can live out his life in peace without the ghosts of the abandoned family haunting him for the rest of his life.

In the same vein, the soap opera addresses the fate of single parents. And in this case, it tries to see how a single parent who has a child outside the bonds of marriage expect to live happily ever after in this day and age.

It also pictures the fate of off-springs of divorced parents living unorthodox lives. Would they be able to bring up these off-springs to tow the straight and narrow path?

And finally would a grown up daughter who is trying to follow the profession of her choice, more so when she is being faced with joblessness after her university education but with stiff parental opposition, be able to cope?

These and other relevant questions that are prevailing in the society as we see it today are set to be resolved in this intriguing serial.

THE CAST

Just like there is a silver lining behind every cloud, so are the brains behind 'Behind The Clouds'.

No doubt, many of the faces are quite familiar on the screens. And even the not too familiar faces are not necessarily making their debut on television. Casts like Efe Okonzua, Felicia, the journalist and Buba, her boyfriend are popular faces on NTA Jos having appeared on several local productions like tele-movies.

LOCATION

NTA has production centres across the country, but the 'Rocky City' of Jos has been of tremendous blessing to the Authority. In fact it is otherwise called the Hollywood of Nigeria. The choice of Jos and its environs as the shooting site of Behind The Clouds cannot be underscored because of its beautiful environment and natural attributes that will make good scenery.

NUMBER OF EPISODES

Eighty (80) episodes were shown and the programme is currently being rested.

"TONIGHT AT NINE"

This is a live programme which hit the air waves for the first time on August 12, 1989. So far it has 72 editions to its credit.

Though not a pioneer news magazine programme, "Tonight At Nine" has taken its place amongst its sister news magazine programmes and has come to stay.

At 9 p.m. every Saturday on the prime time network service, discussions on "Tonight At Nine" cover a wide range of topical issues both on the national and international scenes. The programme which replaces the usual 45 minute network news discusses issues live, in three segments of ten to twelve minutes duration each. In between each of the segments is a one minute break, a rare provision which offers highly reputable and interested commercial concerns, opportunities for the promotion of their products. To achieve their aims and objectives which are: to focus attention on national and international issues, highlighting positive and negative reactions with constructive reasoning. Discussants on "Tonight at Nine" are properly scrutinised before being invited.

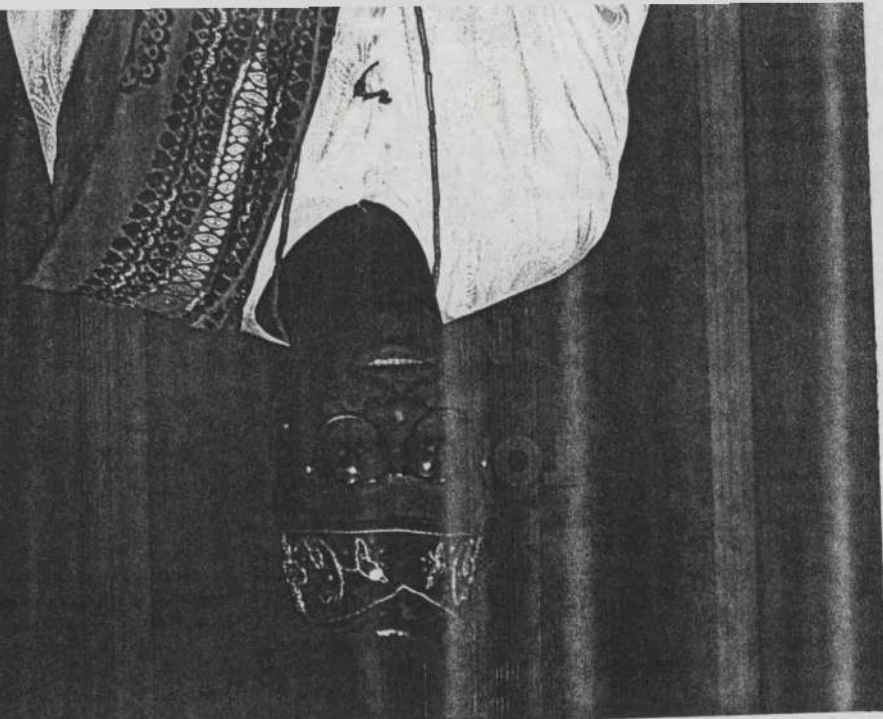
They are experts in their respective fields of study and include Chief Executives of establishments, Ministers, Ambassadors, Board Chairmen and Scholars.

CREW

Behind the collective production of this weekly live programme is a team of six men and a woman all fondly referred to by their colleagues as The Magnificent Seven.

They have the onerous task of contacting the relevant personalities, initiating and researching topical issues on national and international scenes and co-ordinating the format of the programme as well as its transmission.

With the relentless and collective efforts shown by the team, "Tonight At Nine" no doubt leaves "nothing to be desired".



**THE DARLING PROGRAMMES ON
YOUR STATION OF DISTINCTION
NTA IKEJA CHANNEL 7**

FEYIKOGBON

The famous Feyikogbon retains its slot at 4.00 to 5.00 p.m. every Sunday with a lot of focus on the ills and social problems afflicting the society.

GBORO MI RO

Your popular Ombudsman programme "Gboro mi ro" has not relented in its campaign for justice without tears. It comes up at 5.00 p.m. on Sundays.

OMOLERE

Omolere is a family programme aimed at educating mothers on the care of infants. The programme enlightens pregnant women on how to take care of themselves and the generality of the public on how to plan the family. It takes the air at 7.00 p.m. on every Wednesday.

TAN' MOO

Your irresistible quiz programme noted for its proping up the inquisitive instincts of viewers and increase mental alertness of viewers still retains its slot at 2.30 p.m. every Saturday.

NEWS

Our consistently balanced news bulletin run in English, Yoruba and Egun languages.

Our English news now takes only 15 minutes while Irohin equally takes 15 minutes. The news is aired at 7.30 p.m. everyday.

Our Current Affairs programmes like "Our Guest" comes up at 8.00 p.m. on every Wednesday while "Issues of The Day" is aired at 10.00 p.m. on every Sunday.

ERIN KEKE

A half hour new Yoruba Drama (comedy) designed to satirise societal ills with a view to remedying them, and also to uphold desirable societal norms and values. The programme will come up at 7.00 p.m. on Sundays.

E KOWE SI WA

This is another half-hour discussion programme designed for our teeming viewers. It is aimed at creating a forum for presentation of viewers' reaction to our programmes and also to enlighten them about basic operations in broadcasting. It now comes up on Fridays at 7.00 p.m.

NIGERIAN TELEVISION AUTHORITY, IKEJA
CHANNEL 7

PROGRAMME PROPOSAL

PROGRAMME TITLE: E YIN OLUWA

PROGRAMME TYPE: RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS

TARGET AUDIENCE: CHRISTIAN VIEWERS

PROGRAMME FORMAT: SINGING

AIMS & OBJECTIVES:

1. To promote spiritual upliftment in christian viewers.
2. To entertain.

PROGRAMME PROPOSAL

PROGRAMME TITLE: AL - DEEN (The noble religion)

PROGRAMME TYPE: Religious Affairs

Duration: ½HR

TARGET AUDIENCE: Yoruba speaking muslim viewers

DESCRIPTION: The programme will feature asalat laced with a brief discussion or advice for viewers. It will be rounded up with Islamic chants/songs

FORMAT: MIXED GRILL

AIMS & OBJECTIVES:

1. To promote the religion of Islam
2. To highlight the need for proper understanding of Islam
3. To educate our viewers more on the pillars of Islam.

NIGERIAN TELEVISION AUTHORITY, IKEJA CHANNEL 7
PROGRAMMES DIVISION

PROGRAMME SYNOPSIS: 3RD QUARTER 1990 (JULY-SEPT.) 1990.

PROGRAMME TITLE:

ITAGE EWE

PROGRAMME TYPE:

YOUTH

TARGET AUDIENCE:

YOUTHS

DURATION:

½ HOUR

DESCRIPTION:

The invited schools will present their play.

FORMAT:

DRAMA

AIMS & OBJECTIVES:

1. To promote our cultural heritage
2. To expose the youth to our societal norms and values.
3. To entertain.

WEEKLY EPISODE

1. Otitoleke
2. Owo eyin
3. Ilara
4. Akeju
5. Omo oran
6. Atitebi
7. Omokemo
- 8.

NIGERIAN TELEVISION AUTHORITY, IBADAN

COMMUNITY BROADCAST SECTION

1ST QUARTER SYNOPSIS, 1991

PROGRAMME TITLE:

E La Laro

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES:

- (1) To illustrate with relevant drama Sketches, the proper use of Yoruba proverbs and idioms.
- (2) To provide a forum for learners and researchers of Yoruba language.

TARGET AUDIENCE:

All Yoruba speaking viewers

DURATION:

$\frac{1}{2}$ Hour

FORMAT:

Docu-Drama approach

WEEKLY LINE UP:

1. Kokoro Okanjua
2. Arigbo mo gbo
3. B'Olorun ko pani
4. Biku ile ko pani
5. Ifura loogun agba
6. Aboju Godogbo
7. Oloro abeti didi
8. Ojulari
9. Ghun eni kii nu ni
10. Inu eke osi
11. Agbayawo gba Lekeleke
12. Eniti ko moni
13. Ibinu ko mo odo oba

NIGERIAN TELEVISION AUTHORITY, IBADAN
MUSIC & LIGHT ENLIGHTMENT SECTION
1ST QUARTER SYNOPSIS, 1991

PROGRAMME TITLE: FAAJI L'AWA

AIMS & OBJECTIVES: (a) To entertain our viewers with carious kinds of music
(b) To encourage young music artistes and popularize their kinds of music.

TARGET AUDIENCE: All viewers

DURATION: $\frac{1}{2}$ Hour

FORMAT: Musical

SYNOPSIS: Mixed grill - Fuji, Juju, Afro-Juju etc.

WEEKLY LINE UP

1	Juju
2	Fuji
3	Sakara
4	Afro Juju
5	Adamo
6	Apala
7	Juju
8	Sakara
9	Fuji
10	Highlife
11	Juju
12	Dundun & Sekere
13	Waka

NIGERIAN TELEVISION AUTHORITY, IBADAN

MUSIC & LITERATURE SECTION

1ST QUARTER PROGRAMME SYNOPSIS 1991

PROGRAMME TITLE: E KU AGBA/DAYS AFTER

AIMS & OBJECTIVES:

- (a) To focus on the life-styles of retired old workers
- (b) To identify the problem of old age and offer possible solutions/advice
- and (c) To prepare young generation of workers for old age and retirement.

TARGET AUDIENCE: All Viewers

MEDIUM OF COMMUNICATION: Yoruba/English

DURATION:- ½ Hour

FORMAT: Interviews

LINE UP: People who retired from various walks of life would be featured.

NIGERIAN TELEVISION AUTHORITY, IBADAN

DRAMA AND THEATRE SECTION

1ST QUARTER PROGRAMME SYNOPSIS, 1991

TITLE:

JUMAT SERVICE

AIMS & OBJECTIVES:

- (a) To preach the tenets of Islam
- (b) To remind viewers of their moral, spiritual and ethical obligations to their fellowmen in strict compliance with Islamic teachings; and
- (c) To encourage religious tolerance

TARGET AUDIENCE:

All viewers

DURATION:

$\frac{1}{2}$ Hour

NIGERIAN TELEVISION AUTHORITY, IBADAN

PUBLIC ENLIGHTENMENT SECTION

1ST QUARTER PROGRAMME SYNOPSIS, 1991

TITLE: XTIAN HALF HOUR

AIMS & OBJECTIVES:

- (1) To preach the Gospel
- (2) To remind viewers of their obligations to God and fellow-men in strict compliance with Biblical teachings; and
- (3) To encourage religious tolerance.

TARGET AUDIENCE: All viewers

DURATION: $\frac{1}{2}$ Hour

NIGERIAN TELEVISION AUTHORITY, IBADAN

PUBLIC ENLIGHTENMENT SECTION

1ST QUARTER SYNOPSIS, 1991

PROGRAMME TITLE: TAN MOO

AIMS & OBJECTIVES: 1. ~~To foster the spirit of competition in~~
children;
and 2. To improve children's word power as well
as to test their I.Q.

TARGET AUDIENCE: Children of ages 6 - 18 yrs.

DURATION: $\frac{1}{2}$ Hour

FORMAT: Quiz

WEEKLY LINE-UP

1. Olubi Memorial Schl., Elekuro vs. IMG Agodi Gate, Ibadan
2. Methodist Pry. Schl., Ekotedo vs. Agbaje Memorial Schl., Ayeye, Ibadan
3. Islamic Pry. Schl., Orita Aperin vs. C.A.C. Schl., Apata, Ibadan
4. St. Mary's Catholic Schl., Aladorin Oluyoro vs. Public Day Schl., Elekuro
5. 7th Day Adventist Schl., Oke-Bola vs. Comm. Pry. Schl. Akobo Orita
Bashorun, Ibadan.
6. IMG Schl. Ojagbo vs. IDC Olubadan, Old-Ife Rd., Ibadan.
7. C & S Schl., Idikan vs. C.A.C. Sango, Ibadan.
8. St. Stephen Pry Schl., Nalende vs. Islamic Schl., Odoye, Ibadan.
9. Fazl-O-Mar Ahmadiya Schl., Aremo vs. Islamic Mission Schl., Ibuko
10. King Schl., Foko vs. Methodist Pry. Schl., Agbeni, Ibadan.
11. Army Children Schl., Iwo Rd. vs. UMC Demonstration Schl., Oke-Ado, Ibadan.
12. Salvation Army Schl., Ekotedo vs. C.A.C. Schl., Olugbode, Ibadan.
13. Ifelodun Comm. Pry. Schl. Odinjo vs. IMG Pry. Schl. Beyerunka, Ibadan.

NIGERIAN TELEVISION AUTHORITY IBADAN

1ST QUARTER 1991

PROGRAMME SYNOPSIS

PROGRAMME TITLE: YOUTH FORUM

DURATION: ½ HOUR.

AIMS & OBJECTIVES: 1. To create awareness among the Youth on National and International issues;

2. To explore talented youths in various disciplines and bring them to the lime light.

TARGET VIEWERS: The Youth and the Young at Heart

FORMAT: Magazine.

<u>WEEKS</u>	<u>TOPICS</u>
1.	a) Discussion (Moral Laxity) b) Music and Dancing c) Book Review d) Youth News.
2.	NYSC Activities.
3.	a) Fashion - Dressing b) Guest Artiste c) Discussion - Sex Education d) Youth News.
4.	a) Youth Clubs - Social Clubs b) Carrier Talk - Medical Sciences c) Music d) Youth News.
5.	a) Music - Miming b) Guest Artiste - Psychologist on Adolescent prob. c) Fashion Tips - Hair Do's d) Youth News.
6.	a) Discussion - Drug Abuse b) Guest Artiste - Solo music c) Do it Yourself - Gardening d) Youth News.
7.	a) Carrier Talk - Mech. Elect. Eng. b) Choreography - Bata Egunbunmi c) Youth News.

<u>WEEKS</u>	<u>TOPICS</u>
8.	a) How to study (Talk) b) Discussion - What is in a Name? c) Record Review d) Youth News.
9.	a) Techniques of TV Production - With expert on TV Production. b) Music c) Youth News d) Drama Sketch.
10.	a) Music and Dancing b) Comedy - Drama Sketch c) Do it Yourself - Textile Designing d) Youth News.
11.	a) Fashion Tips - Grooming b) Discussion - Beauty and Character building and it's effects. c) Pantomime - Fela Anikulapo Kuti d) Youth News.
12.	a) Keep fit Exercises b) Music and Dancing c) Carrier Talk d) Youth News.
13.	a) Discussion - The Role of Youths in Nation Building b) Music c) Youth News.

NIGERIAN TELEVISION AUTHORITY IBADAN

1ST QUARTER 1991

PROGRAMME SYNOPSIS

PROGRAMME TITLE: JOLLY TRAIN/CHILDREN'S BIRTHDAY PARTY

TARGET AUDIENCE: CHILDREN 4 - 12

DURATION: ½ HOUR.

FORMAT:

- AIMS & OBJECTIVES:
1. To boost the knowledge, among children about functions and importance of establishments and institutions; and
 2. To encourage the spirit of adventure in children.

NOTE: Each episode has a question and answer session.

WEEKS

EPISODES

- | | |
|-----|------------------------------|
| 1. | Birthday Party |
| 2. | Visit to NTA Ibadan |
| 3. | Visit to TCTC Ibadan |
| 4. | Visit to FRSC Moniya |
| 5. | Birthday Party |
| 6. | Visit to the Post Office |
| 7. | Visit to the Railway Station |
| 8. | Visit to the Airport |
| 9. | Birthday Party |
| 10. | Visit to 7-Up Bottling Co. |
| 11. | Visit to a Bank |
| 12. | Visit to a Soap Industry |
| 13. | Birthday Party. |

1ST QUARTER 1991

PROGRAMME SYNOPSIS

COMMUNITY BROADCAST SECTION

PROGRAMME TITLE: AGEORANDUN

DURATION: 1 HOUR.

TARGET AUDIENCE: ALL VIEWERS

FORMAT: Discussion, Investigation of cases and
Film Reports.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES:

- (a) To combat injustice, denial of rights, abuse of power, cheating; and
- (b) To champion the course of the oppressed and the down trodden in our society.

COMMUNITY BROADCAST SECTION1ST QUARTER SYNOPSIS 1991

PROGRAMME TITLE: ERE AGBE

AIMS & OBJECTIVES:

1. To encourage people to go back to the land for mass production of food;
2. To encourage modern methods of farming and seed varieties; and
3. To put agriculture back to its feet as the back bone of Nigerians economy.

DURATION: ½ HOUR.

TARGET AUDIENCE: Yoruba Speaking Viewers

FORMAT: Feature.

WEEKS

1. Harvesting of oranges
2. River bed vegetable plantation
3. Highlighting Institutions where farmers can get seedlings
4. Bush burning
5. Cattle rearing
6. Fish Farming
7. Livestock feeds
8. Clearing and preparation of farm
9. Planting of early maize
10. Piggery
11. Visit to a Cooperative Farm
12. Harvesting of Colanut
13. Planting of Pop-Corn Maize..

PHILOSOPHY

TITLE	TYPE	DURATION	
TELLY DRAMA	DRAMA	60"	Telly Drama, otherwise called "play of the week" is a special one hour production of television drama in English. The scope and dimensions very from script to script but emphasis is laid on message, movement and entertainment. By its very nature, performed scripts are written by different contributors with a unifying goal - to build up an admirably strong production that could be slotted in as the night cap to a transmission day. - 10.30 - 11.30 p.m. on Fridays.
CHILDREN'S PLAY-TIME	CHILDREN'S VARIETY	30"	As the name suggests, this programme is directed to children but it is not merely a time for them to "play around". It combines fun and entertainment with subtle learning through drama sketches, songs, and stories, and gives opportunity of inter-personal relationships first among the children themselves and on a wider scale, the different families represented. It is also a period for parents to sit back and share in these joyous qualities which delight children of all ages. Tx. - 4 - 4.30 p.m. on Mondays.
E PAGEO VI MI KA	CHILDREN'S VARIETY	30"	This is basically the same in principle with "Children's Playtime". Presented in the Yoruba Language, it is a tremendously useful avenue to retell folk tales and introduce children to their cultural environment. Tx. 4 - 4.30 p.m. on Thursdays.
BINU KONU	QUIZ	30"	Binu Konu is a quiz programme in Yoruba involving one family tree against the other. It is designed to provide an all-round entertainment without losing sight of its educational and enlightenment functions. Each victorious family is given a prize at the end of each programme. Tx. 3 - 30 - 4.30 p.m. on Saturdays.
Awada	DRAMA	30"	Established and budding comedians are featured in the programme which is principally meant to portray human foibles and societal problems subtly with a corrective viewpoint as the basic found. Transmission - 9.15 - 9.45 p.m. on Sundays.
FOOTBALL	SPORTS	90"	We have a good stock of European soccer championships, would cup series and other interesting international matches. Our stock is constantly updated by our suppliers. Transmission - 10 - 11.30 p.m. on Sundays
WRESTLING	SPORTS	60"	Many episodes of wrestling materials from the latest and hottest champions of the sport are readily available for sponsorship. The 11 - 12 Midnight slot of Wednesdays in major highpou of our transmission.
Ilora Lero	Health	30"	This is a Yoruba family health programme in Yoruba, geared towards teaching the people the rudiments of health care from pregnancy to child birth and beyond for mothers, and on the need to prevent diseases to the general public, medical officials are dietly involved and demonstrations are by people, and with aid of charts. Transmission 6 - 6.30 p.m. on Thursdays

PHILOSOPHY

TITLE	TYPE	DURATION	
TINTA YORUBA	DRAMA	60'	Notable theatre groups are usually commissioned to give ná imaginative serials or series capable of arresting viewership. For now we have Gbadeke by Olofin Theatre in can for sponsorship, and we have works by Oyin Adejola, Duro Ladipo Memorial Theatre, Akin Ogunjola, and a host of others in our stock. Transmission 1 - 2 p.m. on Sundays.
Telematch	Games Entertainment	60'	Produced by Transtel, Cologne, Federal Republic of Germany, it is an interesting games package for the family. Each episode contains five different imaginative animal-derived games on competitive basis between two communities in Germany. It is taking off in January 1991 and is being proposed for 1 - 2 p.m. on Saturdays.
J.25	CHILDREN VAUDEVILLE	30'	It is an in-house junior television workshop programme where children are taught and made to work independently on various art forms; guitar playing, pattern making, dramatic performances, music, greeting card making etc. It is transmitted 4 - 4.30 p.m. on Fridays.
HOME REVIEW	MAGAZINE	30'	A women magazine programme which focuses on the involvement of the parents in home-keeping, health care, upkeep of the children and all it takes to maintain a family devoid of bad influences for the benefit of the home in particular and the nation in general.
GATEWAY CONCERT	ENTERTAINMENT/ AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION	60'	As the name suggests, this is planned as a concert that can compare favourably with such other programmes anywhere. Special sets, effects and lighting are being used to add colour and glamour to the bandstand performances of top-rated artistes on the Nigerian entertainment scene. A fertile ground for would-be advertisers, the Gateway Concert is an entertainment magazine programme with comperes, side shows and full audience participation. It is, in a nutshell, "television variety on the wheels".

No.	Title: Tape 1	Source	Language	Duration
1.	Supple Blues (soap opera)	NTA network	English	
2.	Checkmates (soap opera)	NTA network	English	
3.	New Masquerade (comedy)	NTA network	Pidgin English	
4.	Comedy Junction (Uncle Joe)	LTV	Pidgin English	
5.	Adverts (Coke, 7Up, Pengo, Right Time Condoms, Lux, Pepsi, Indomie Noodles)		English	
6.	CBN news	LTV / OGTV	English	
7.	NTA network news	NTA network news	English	
8.	Newsline	NTA network news	English	

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No.	Title: Tape 2	Source	Language	Duration
1	Adverts (Abacus Merchant Bank, Vaseline petroleum jelly, Milo, Vaseline baby range, Vaseline petroleum jelly, Rin, Chocomilo, Pears, Tenderly, Elephant blue detergent, Bagco bags, Golden Morn, Maggi, Jumbo Cubes, Knorr Cubes, Royco, Maggi(Hausa, Yoruba, Ibo) Cerelac, Nutrend, Nescao, Seaman's Schnapps (Yoruba)	All stations	English , Hausa , Igbo, Pidgin, Yoruba. Yoruba	
2.	Musicals. Mo l'oro (I have a message) - Christy Essien Candle - Waka Queen Salawa Abeni Ijo Yoyo - "Professor" Kollington Ayinla New Fuji Waves - Alhaji Sikiru Ayinde Barrister O l'omori (E get cover) - Fabulous Olu Fajemirokun	LTV / OGTV		
3.	OGTV station promo.		English	
4.	Sponsored programmes Chieftaincy title; Xtian Religious programme (World Outreach Ministry); Traditional healer/metaphysician (Aranfaajo);	OGTV	Yoruba	
5.	Feyikogbon (drama)	NTA 7 Ikeja	Yoruba	
6.	E ku oja (market report)	OGTV	Yoruba	
7.	Gboromiro (ombudsman) Mode of recording LP	NTA 7 Ikeja	Yoruba	

