RADIO SOUND AS MATERIAL CULTURE IN THE HOME

Jo Ann Tacchi

PhD Social Anthropology

University College London

1997

Abstract

This thesis is an anthropological exploration of the contemporary role and use of radio sound in the home in Bristol, a city in the south west of England. Based on qualitative research, and taking an ethnographic approach, this study contributes to a growing field within social anthropology: the study of mass media.

After establishing the ways in which the radio industry in the UK researches and constructs radio audiences, this thesis examines how academic research on audiences has operated in Britain. It is demonstrated how this thesis relates to, and is different from both of these perspectives.

Radio sound is approached as a part of the material culture of the home. It is seen to contribute to domestic soundscapes. The medium of sound is investigated, and it is shown that radio sound has particular qualities that make it well suited to domestic, everyday life. It is revealed as aiding in the creative constitution of affective dimensions of the self in society.

Domestic relationships, and the role of radio sound and affect are explored. Notions of intimacy and the role of fantasy in domestic relationships are investigated. Radio sound's role in mood creation for individuals in the home is then examined, and the notion of affective rhythms established.

Radio sound's connecting powers are then given some attention; how radio sound helps to make links across time and space. Memories and nostalgia are shown to operate in creative and integrated ways in domestic contexts through the medium of sound. Finally, it is concluded that cultural knowledge and experience take place in large part in the sensory and affective dimensions of everyday life.

CONTENTS

Chapter 1

Introduction

In 1993, Spitulnik wrote 'there is as yet no "anthropology of mass media" [...despite] a dramatic rise in interest' (1993:293). Since then, there has been an increasing awareness of the need to include mass media in anthropological research. This study of radio sound in the home will contribute to the development of an anthropology of mass media, or 'media anthropology'. Generally, the studies that do exist in this emerging genre, recognise the important position of technology and mass media in processes of modernity. With television, and television programmes, forming the major focus of work in this field to date, issues around the consumption of television, and its effects on identity formation, have been raised, in the context of theories of processes of globalization. Differences between private and public spheres have been explored, and the domestic sphere, as the usual site for the activity of watching television, has received some attention (for example, Abu-Lughod 1995; Das 1995; Miller 1992). Spitulnik has used radio as a case study, to explore the 'politics of linguistic pluralism' in Zambia (1992). Spitulnik's ultimate aim, through the use of the Zambia Radio case study, was to shed light on how to characterise 'language ideology'. As such, it can be seen to demonstrate one way in which a focus on aspects of mass media, might illuminate theoretical concerns and serve as a means for exploring public debate. An anthropological approach to mass media might concentrate on many aspects. Elsewhere, Spitulnik (1993) lists a few, including looking at media institutions, at the media as cultural product, and the media as social activity. However, the greatest challenge, whichever angle one takes, 'lies in integrating the study of mass media into our analyses of the "total social fact" of modern life';

> How, for example, do mass media represent and shape cultural values within a given society? What is their place in the formation of social relations and social identities? How might they structure people's senses of space and time? What are their roles in the construction of communities ranging from subcultures to nation-states, and in global processes of socioeconomic and cultural change?
>
> Spitulnik 1993:293-294

Spitulnik wonders how anthropologists have managed, for so long, to neglect the study of mass media, bearing in mind its centrality in contemporary life (1993:294). So far, within social anthropology, there have been no substantial, published studies on the role of the media in British domestic life, although there have been studies, in other disciplines, of the consumption of media in Britain, which claim to take, or call for, an anthropological, and especially, an ethnographic approach (Gray 1992; Gillespie 1995; Morley 1992; Moores 1993; Silverstone 1990; Silverstone and Hirsch 1992). This thesis presents an anthropological study of the domestic consumption of a mass medium in and around Bristol, a city situated in the south west of England[1]. By applying classic anthropological ideas to this relatively new area of anthropological enquiry, new understandings of contemporary British domestic life, and the place of a mass medium within it, have emerged. In particular, an ethnographic approach, and an holistic and comparative framework, mark this study as one that takes its place amongst others, in a move to develop a media anthropology.

Radio is the oldest of the electronic, time based, mass media. Despite this, and perhaps because of it, radio does not receive much contemporary academic attention. By its very nature, radio is both 'invisible' and 'intimate', two qualities that make it easy for scholars emerging from what we might call 'visual cultures'(see chapter 4), to pass over - even more so when their field of study is also a 'visual culture'. Not only for scholars, but for the 'ordinary people' of my own ethnographic research, radio is personal and experiential, rarely talked about, and deeply naturalised - especially in the domestic setting within which this research is situated.

This is in contrast to television, a newer (relatively), more visible, more talked about medium (in everyday life, and by academics and social commentators). Television is naturalised into domestic life and routines in Britain, yet it attracts media and public attention, and has moral debates surrounding it - such as those regarding the supposedly negative effects of watching too much television, or the amounts of sex and violence portrayed. These kinds of debates are generally absent for radio in Britain, although, as

---

[1] The city of Bristol and surrounding areas ('Greater Bristol') had a population of just over 506,000 at the 1991 census.

Spitulnik shows, elsewhere in the world, radio can generate debate relevant to national politics (1992). In Britain, television viewing is much more of a group activity than radio listening. Radio consumption in the home is often solitary, and is more likely than television to be seen as an accompaniment to another, main activity. I have gained a general impression, through carrying out this research, that radio in this country is treated, by academics, politicians and media professionals (including some that work within the radio industry itself) as a poor relation to television. It is cheaper to produce radio programmes, and is less glamorous. The BBC has recently gone 'bi-media'. This means that previously separate radio production departments are merging with larger television departments, and that newsrooms, reporters and presenters are now required to be active in both radio and television. This is a cost saving move, yet it also displays an attitude to radio that assumes its compatibility with television in terms of programme production - radio is seen as television without the pictures. Whilst this may, on the surface, appear to make sense, radio as a medium, as it is consumed in the home, is shown in this thesis to be very different from television, and to be much more than television without pictures.

Radio Listeners and Audience Research

Whilst contemporary radio audiences are little studied by academia, the radio industry invests heavily in radio audience research. Chapter 2 of this thesis investigates how the radio industry researches and conceives of its audiences. From an analysis of how the industry thinks about, and constructs audiences, we can see how market models influence and shape the relationships between them. At first glance, this costly, and in some ways, extensive, audience research can appear to paint a detailed picture of radio listening in this country. Yet rarely does it do more than simply measure. From measurement, it seeks to explain, but it is ill-equipped to do so. This thesis highlights the inadequate understandings that the industry has of the role of radio in domestic life, although, I suspect, there is little contained herein, that will not be, in some degree, a part of the tacit knowledge of many radio sound producers.

Very few academic, contemporary, radio audience studies exist, compared to masses of research and theorising around television audiencehood. Much of the research on radio

is backward-looking, like the aural history study carried out by Moores (1988) before he went on to study the contemporary use of satellite television (1993). By omission, radio appears to be conceived of as an 'old' technology, with a diminishing and unimportant role in contemporary life, especially as compared with newer technologies. Studies, such as those by Briggs (1961, 1965, 1970), Scannell and Cardiff (1991) and Scannell (1992), chart the early history of British radio. Some attention has been paid to the changes that took place with the advent of television, in an historical context (Briggs 1979, 1995). Whilst these accounts place radio in a social and historical context, much is still to be understood about how radio is used today. Radio's early days, in the 1920's, 1930's and 1940's, are often depicted popularly as the 'golden days' of the medium - before television was introduced to the British public, and radio became lost in the background of domestic leisure. This thesis seeks to relocate radio sound in domestic lives, through investigating and interrogating the role that radio sound plays in contemporary daily lives.

Barnett and Morrison conducted a study of contemporary radio listening in the 1980s, and at first glance, they seem to have shared my goals. They set out to 'examine the role of radio in people's lives' (1989:vii), by letting 'the listener speak'. They aimed to investigate how people use radio and the 'role which it plays in everyday life' (ibid.:ix). They found the medium to be 'inextricably woven into people's lives' (ibid.:3), and attributed the feelings of intimacy that their respondents said radio engendered 'as much to the intimate nature of what is heard [programmes] as to the flexible and private nature of the medium itself' (ibid.:4). Comments from listeners, who were either involved in group discussions (32 groups of 8-10 people), or who completed one of 997 questionnaires, suggested to them that 'to construe radio listening as just another manifestation of exposure to the "mass media" becomes inappropriate'; they found it to be a very different medium from television and newspapers (ibid.:3). Their respondents talked about radio as a friend, as personal, as part of the family, and as genuine (ibid.), all descriptions of radio that are often used by radio professionals, but rarely explored or explained in more depth.

Despite their recognition of radio as intrinsically different from television, Barnett and Morrison compare the two when they present the results of survey questions asking which medium respondents would miss the most, if one were to be taken away. Sixty three per cent would miss television the most, whilst 28% would miss radio more than television (1989:5). Barnett and Morrison say that the 'starkness of these figures is misleading'; just because the majority of people would rather part with their radios than with their televisions, the figures 'should not detract from an appreciation of the integral part which the radio plays in their everyday lives' (ibid.:7). One of the explanations they put forward for the figures, is the role of radio as a secondary activity, that is, television viewing is more likely than radio listening to constitute a main activity, and therefore, television is a more primary and vital leisure activity in the home (ibid.).

The research reported in this thesis would suggest that, to compare and contrast radio with television in this way is ultimately misleading. On the one hand, Barnett and Morrison recognise radio as very different from television in the ways it is used, and in how it is integrated into daily life. On the other hand, they measure the value of radio in people's lives by asking if they would rather lose their radio or television sets. The present study seeks to carry forward Barnett and Morrison's, and my own informants' recognition of the way in which radio is involved intimately in listeners' lives, to gain a deeper understanding, whilst avoiding the temptation of comparing radio with television, or of trying to understand radio in relation to understandings of television.

Another study that would, on first inspection, appear to share my aims is Crisell (1986). *Understanding Radio* aims to 'determine the distinctive characteristics of the radio medium' (Crisell 1986:xi). This is the only similarity between Crisell's work and my own. He seeks to achieve his aim by 'examining the historical development of British radio institutions, and by developing a theory of signs, codes and conventions by which the medium conveys its messages' (ibid.). In doing so he describes radio as a 'blind' medium, because we cannot see its messages (ibid.:3), and seeks to understand radio's characteristics better by comparing it with television, literature and face to face interactions (ibid.:5). Since radio's codes are auditory, 'consisting of speech, music, sounds and silence' and since 'the ear is not the most "intelligent" of our sense organs',

> ...the risk of ambiguity or complete communication failure are high, and so in all kinds of radio much effort is expended on overcoming the limitations of the medium, on establishing the different kinds of contexts which we would generally be able to see for ourselves.
>
> Crisell 1986:5

On the other hand, the blindness of radio, Crisell asserts, also holds the advantage of appealing to the imagination. Crisell contends that 'radio is of limited efficiency in conveying highly complex ideas and information' because neither its message or its context is 'visible', and because it 'exists in time and is therefore always evanescent' (1986:219). And yet, whilst the imaginary world that radio evokes is 'less' than the visible 'actual' world, in that it is 'generally less vivid', at the same time, it is 'more', because, 'this relative lack of vividness renders the listener capable of grasping a more complex reality than could be assimilated visually' (ibid.:220). Crisell goes on the describe 'the listener', who is 'grateful for the opportunity to picture what is being described, but for not having to *see* it when he wishes to concentrate on the non-visual aspects of a message' (ibid.:220). Drawing on the work of the BBC's first Head of Audience Research (Silvey 1974), and on 'uses and gratifications' theory (see chapter 3), Crisell characterises the 'ordinary listener' as;

> not a mere receptacle. She *becomes* a listener through an act of choice: she selects certain programmes rather than others... She can reject or disagree with what she hears, and her natural human inertia will make it easier for her to resist the pressures to change her views than succumb to them. Challenge is stimulating but also discomforting: she is more likely to want to relax and be entertained than think...
>
> Crisell 1986:207

Crisell seeks to explain the 'effect' of radio content on listeners, describing how radio fits into their lives, and what is distinctive about it as a medium. His observations and conclusions sit in stark contrast to my own. To define radio as 'blind' is to misunderstand the way in which radio actually works as sound. 'Blind' implies that radio sound is lacking something - presumably the visual. My research indicates that radio sound is used in highly creative and complex ways in everyday lives. It is used in these ways precisely because it is sound. This is what is distinctive about it, rather than

its lack of a (concrete) visual dimension. In addition, to attempt to define 'the listener' or 'the ordinary listener' is also highly inappropriate, if one is seeking to understand how radio is used, rather than to generalise characteristics of radio listening, which are artificially abstracted. Like Crisell, I am attempting in this thesis to 'understand radio' as a medium, to define what its particular qualities and characteristics are. An important aspect of this is to contextualise the use of radio, in this case, in domestic contexts. Partly because of his lack of contextualisation, Crisell wonders how one can theorise about the unconscious effects of media generally, and radio specifically. He suggests that the only way to do this, is to think about one's own personal experience (1986:211). Whilst I cannot claim that my own personal experiences have not influenced the conclusions reached in this thesis, it is out of the experience of empirical, extended fieldwork that the issues and themes raised in this thesis have emerged.

Although there is a distinct lack of studies about contemporary radio audiences in Britain since the advent of television, there is a precedent to this study of radio in Bristol. In 1939, Jennings and Gill, in *Broadcasting in Everyday Life*, published their account of the social impact of radio, based on research carried out in a working class area of Bristol. Since that time, Bristol, 'everyday life', and broadcasting, have all changed significantly, yet, like me, Jennings and Gill look at how radio enhances domestic life, albeit from a completely different perspective.

They describe the impact radio had at that time on home life. They found that, less than 20 years since the first broadcast in Great Britain, the 'wireless' had become a 'normal' part of domestic life. They found it to be more than simply recreational; 'People of both sexes and of all ages are learning to use their sets with discrimination, as a means of acquiring new interests and aiding individual development' (Jennings and Gill 1939:39). They found broadcasting to be 'an equalising and unifying factor in national life' (ibid.:40). Combined with increasing leisure time, improved income, and better education, Jennings and Gill thought broadcasting was helping to overcome parochialism and class barriers. Considering broadcasting's ability to 'penetrate into spheres inaccessible to professional educationalists', they thought that, if it could be

harnessed as an extension to the education service, it had the potential to 'create a public in which the desire to learn and create would be inherent' (ibid.).

Most of the more recent academic work on the audiences of broadcasting in this country originates from British cultural and media studies, and has concentrated on television viewing. Of particular interest to this thesis is a movement, within the last 20 years or so, towards ethnographic and anthropological approaches to audience research in these disciplines (Gillespie 1995; Moores 1993; Morley 1992; Silverstone and Hirsch 1992; Silverstone 1990). This indicates the perceived appropriateness of further developing an anthropology of the media. Similarly, in America, there are those who are critical of the quantitative methods widely used in communication studies (Ang 1991, 1996; Lull 1988, 1990). In both continents, proponents of a qualitative approach, recognise the need to place the study of the consumption of domestic media technologies in the context of the home and family, or household (Lull 1990; Morley 1986, 1992; Seiter, Borchers, Kreutzner and Warth 1989; Silverstone and Hirsch 1992). In chapter 3 of this thesis, academic audience research, coming out of British cultural and media studies, is investigated. As the major focus of much of that work is on television, its value to the present work must be carefully assessed. Nevertheless, much of it has proved useful. Chapter 3 also explains the methods used in the current study, and firmly situates the research within the discipline of social anthropology.

Material Culture

This thesis is strongly influenced by material culture studies. Its genesis was a joint interest - in domestic interiors, and in radio listening. When thinking about the two together, it became clear that radio sound added to domestic environments, and thus should be amenable to a study coming from the perspective of material culture. This perspective has been good for the study of radio for many reasons. Perhaps most importantly, it has insisted that I do not dwell on the language of radio output, or the content of radio sound (programmes). This has helped to maintain a clear focus on the quality of radio sound itself in the domestic sphere, without becoming reduced to a textual analysis, or degenerating into linguistic deconstruction. A material culture perspective understands things as part of our social worlds. This study presents

evidence, if evidence is needed, that a material culture perspective can provide 'insights into cultural processes which a more literal "anthropology" has tended to neglect' (Miller (in press) 1997:1). The more common preoccupation with language imposes intrinsic limitations on cultural study;

> Languages consist of relatively few specific domains. These might include the written word, speech and grammar. Each divides up the larger sense of linguistics into domains with their own specificity. These remain relatively restrained and encompassable differences. By comparison, material culture virtually explodes the moment one gives any consideration to the vast corpus of different object worlds which we constantly experience
>
> Miller (in press) 1997:6

Miller has demonstrated how the study of material culture can enrich anthropological understandings, moving the emphasis away from language, which has assumed an overblown importance in relation to material culture perspectives (1987). In his study of council house kitchens in east London, he shows how the state is (actively, interactively or passively) appropriated through the ways in which tenants use, decorate and change their standard kitchen fittings (Miller 1988). Thus, objects and domestic interiors have a resonance and a meaning far beyond their boundary walls. The consumption of objects and artefacts can be seen to resonate with meanings beyond the immediate context (Miller 1987, 1995a, 1995b, 1995c). Hirsch (1990) demonstrates ways in which the consumption of betelnut by the Fuyuge of Papua New Guinea, with its 'associations with authority, politics and a controlled and "civilised" image of the person' relates objects to a wider social sphere or 'imagined community' (following Anderson 1983) in ways that indicate the object's role in personal and social identity construction, and, the development of a national culture (Hirsch 1990:21-22). Spitulnik (1993), in a review of studies of mass media of relevance to anthropology, recognises the strong resonance in much of the work coming out of media and cultural studies, to Anderson's notion of 'imagined community'. Thus, media and objects would appear in some ways to hold similar characteristics, so that, we can think of objects as media, and of media as objects. In both cases meanings have implications beyond the immediate consumption or context.

Within material culture studies, objects, and their consumption, use and display are seen as communicating and constructing (or reconstructing) values and meanings on many levels, such as the personal, and the social, the local and the global. Objects can be seen as media, in that, meanings are continuously negotiated, mediating within and between different worlds. Nevertheless, the nature of mass media can be seen to hold different, or additional, properties from more tangible objects. We can consider what is special about a medium like radio, and its properties, that leads us to use it differently, in our personal and social identity construction, from other objects. According to Silverstone, Hirsch and Morley, households and individuals are striving for 'ontological security', that is 'achieving competence and status as a participant in a complex public economy' (1992:19). Information and communication technologies, they say, make this project particularly problematic, because media 'disengage the location of action and meaning from experience' (ibid.:20). They show how information and communication technologies, as media, are active, or perceived as active, in a different way from other consumed objects.

In this study, there is a recognition of the importance of mass media to considerations of modernity and globalisation, and an insistence that the proper site from which to explore such macro issues, is the micro setting of the home (following Morley 1992:272). It is within the domestic setting, that understandings of the wider world and wider, or imagined, communities are formed. Out of their work on the Household Information and Communication Technologies (HICT) project, Silverstone, Hirsch and Morley (1992) created a model that attempts to explain the role that information and communication technologies (ICTs) play in the relationship between private households and public worlds. They concentrate on television, video recorders, computers and telephones, and claim that 'no general model of household practices and relations can ignore how people use objects' (ibid.:15). ICTs are particularly problematical, because of their 'double articulation'. That is, they are both objects and media. They have a 'functional significance, as media' and as such 'they provide, actively, interactively or passively, links between households, and individual members of households, with the world beyond their front door' (ibid.).

Whilst technologies as different as television, video, computers and telephones are all 'active' in different ways, and have different qualities, Silverstone, Hirsch and Morley (1992) managed to create a model that, broadly speaking, explains ICT's role as mediator between the public and private spheres. They conceived of a model that demonstrates, or constructs, the relationship between the public and the private, and the role of ICTs within it. It is a transactional system, where value creation takes place alongside meaning (re)construction. Within the formal economy and society of the public sphere, are embedded individual household economies, with their own internal or private social relations. Commodities are 'incorporated and redefined in different terms, [when they enter the household] in accordance with the household's own values and interests' (Silverstone, Hirsch and Morley 1992:16). Different from the formal economy, although negotiated in relation to it, and embedded in it, these values and interests form the 'moral economy of the household' where its 'specific symbolic reality stands behind the objective economy of visible transactions' (ibid.:17). This moral economy is specific to individual households and is where meaning creation takes place. The moral economy of the household is 'both an economy of meaning' and 'a meaningful economy' (ibid.:18). It is an economy because there are negotiations and exchanges of meanings both internally and between the household and the public sphere, and it is moral as 'defined and informed by a set of cognitions, evaluations and aesthetics' (ibid). Households, and media audiences are, in this way, 'embedded audiences' (Silverstone 1990, 1994).

Once we begin to think about radio sound as material culture in the home, it can be shown to contribute to textured domestic soundscapes. By thinking about radio sound in this way, we can also begin to understand how, thinking of a listener as simply consuming the content of radio output, and concentrating on the 'effect' of such content on the listener, is to limit the bounds of our understanding. Rather, radio sound, which is recognised by many as integrated into daily life, in an intimate way, can be understood as forming an important part of domestic environments, holding meaning and significance that reaches beyond the imediate context and physical confines of the home. Material culture studies reveal 'an endless creative and hybrid world' (ibid.). To study such a world, calls for flexibility and creativity. Each material domain is specific,

and objects themselves have no intrinsic meanings until they are appropriated and objectified into social worlds (Miller 1987). Miller says that form itself is used 'to become the fabric of cultural worlds' (in press 1997:6); chapter 4 places radio sound precisely, and literally, in this way - it is shown to create a texture within which one can live. As a part of the 'fabric of cultural worlds', radio sound is also located in an economy of meaning creation and negotiation. Rather than focusing on the 'moral economy of the household', this thesis pays attention to the affective and sensory dimensions of radio sound, and of domestic life and relationships. Adapting Silverstone et al's model, we can conceive of an affective economy which could be seen to mediate between public and private worlds.

Sound and Emotion

Domestic environments and radio sound are shown in this thesis to have affective dimensions. These can be seen to mediate between individuals in the home, and the wider world. On a sensory level, radio sound is shown to be particularly open to sensory creativity - a quality that in itself, makes the experience, activity, and meaning of listening to the radio, difficult to describe in words. Coming from the perspective of material culture studies, I look beyond the text of radio programmes, and consider radio sound as a sensory entity. Sound itself is thus seen to contribute to domestic environments in a 'material culture' way. (This is not without precedence, for example, Seremetakis (1994a) sees the senses, perception, and memory as part of the material culture of modernity.)

This thesis sees households and domestic relationships as embedded in a larger, social and meaningful world. Through examining the use of radio sound in the home we can see how meanings and relationships are negotiated and made, both within the household and beyond. Chapters 5, 6 and 7, are all, in different ways, looking at the affective dimensions of domestic everyday life, and indicating their social implications. Chapter 5 begins to establish the role that radio sound plays in the affective dimensions of everyday domestic life and relationships. Going back to the early work of Gregory Bateson (1958), a way of thinking about the emotional aspects of domestic life is found. Notions of intimacy, and of ideal relationships, are explored, along with the role of the

imagination, or fantasy. Contemporary, domestic relationships and lives, in Britain, are found to have more to do with complementarity than with sameness, and with a quest for an emotional 'dynamic equilibrium' (Bateson 1958). It indicates the role of fantasy, aided by radio sound, in creating affective realities which can overcome, or compensate for, or serve to complement, practical and pragmatic differences.

Chapter 6 continues to explore affective aspects of domestic life, but here the emphasis is on the individual, rather than on domestic relationships. Radio sound is shown to possess certain 'mood' generating qualities. This chapter is about how individuals feel, and how they can change the way that they feel, within the context both of domestic life, and of wider society. As a medium that moves through time, radio sound can be seen to help to establish affective rhythms in the home. This is to begin to understand the way in which listening to the radio can help with domestic routines, but at the same time recognising that radio sound provides a sort of affective momentum. The affective qualities of radio sound are explored, in order to understand its mood generating capacity; why it seems, so easily, to be able to put us in certain moods, make us feel better, and so on, even though we may not actually be paying the radio very much attention. Mood, emotion and fantasy are seen, in this thesis, as integral parts of mundane everyday life.

Everyday Life

A theme that runs through this thesis, and through other studies of media audiences (for example, Silverstone 1990,1994), is the notion of the everyday. In 1984 Bausinger wrote 'Today everybody talks about the everyday, even the empiricists' (1984:343). Investigating some of these discussions, Bausinger uncovered a version of the everyday 'as a sphere which, through masquerading behind "common sense", often blocks rational action and which doesn't easily question what lies behind itself' (ibid.). The everyday was construed as inert - 'soft on the surface, but in effect hardly movable'. Thus the everyday provides a block against change. Bausinger is critical of a negative perception of such a view of the everyday, negative because it is seen to inhibit change. Such qualities of the everyday, he feels, are in fact indispensable to modern life, for 'the everyday, in this specific sense, guarantees the security of the flow of events' (ibid.).

The immovable quality of everyday life, the inertia, Bausinger sees as significant. By having something that we do not question, which provides us with stability, we gain security.

Whilst I recognise this description of the everyday, from my fieldwork, a contrasting aspect of the everyday which I encountered, was its complex, rich and flexible nature. The complexity - so many reference points, contradictions, memories, connections, relationships, experienced in different sensory modes, across space and time - means that what, in specific instances and elements, is flexible and open to change, because of its complexity as a whole, would not be easily transformed. The everyday that I encountered through fieldwork was vast and multi-faceted, the challenge in the domestic sphere appeared to be to contain and to stabilise it. Elements of everyday life provide anchorage for manoeuvrings through life and relationships, in relation to, and in contrast with, our place in the world and who we are. Consequently, everyday life is generally unremarkable, or unremarked, but is shored-up by its own mass of internal and external connections and relationships, that make us who we are in space and time. Chapter 7 attempts to reveal this aspect of domestic everyday life, and the role of radio sound in it. Radio listening is shown to play a connecting role for individuals and for groups of people. A sense of community can be gained from radio listening, as well as frustration that certain communities are ignored by legal stations. These observations can be seen as relevant to debates around mass media, globalisation and cultural identity. At the same time, on another level, radio sound, with its particular qualities, is seen to make connections that draw on memories and nostalgia. Such connections, it is demonstrated, do not require rationalisation, or linguistic expression. They are experienced as one aspect of everyday life that is ongoing and is more than just one memory or one connection.

Such an everyday is dynamic and changeable. Everyday action is not so much passive - the following of unquestioned rules - as tactical. This is to follow deCerteau (1984), 'analysis shows that a relation (always social) determines its terms, and not the reverse, and that each individual is a locus in which an incoherent (and often contradictory) plurality of such relational determinations interact' (1984:xi). According to deCerteau

'users' or 'consumers' use tactics and ruses, but these are concealed by Western rationality, which assumes that in the everyday we are guided by established rules. The logic of everyday life in fact disrupts the logics of scientific reasoning; consumers are 'unrecognised producers, poets of their own acts, silent discoverers of their own paths in the jungle of functionalist rationality';

> In the technocratically constructed, written, and functionalized space in which the consumers move about, their trajectories form unforseeable sentences, partly unreadable paths across a space. Although they are composed with the vocabularies of established languages (those of television, newspapers, supermarkets, or museum sequences) and although they remain subordinated to the prescribed syntactical forms (temporal modes of schedules, paradigmatic orders of spaces, etc.), the trajectories trace out the ruses of other interests and desires that are neither determined nor captured by the systems in which they develop.
>
> deCerteau 1984:xviii.

This study of radio sound demonstrates the ways in which sound is used to explore 'unreadable paths' in domestic life. deCerteau is critical of the prominence of the visual in modern society, describing a 'cancerous growth' of vision - everything is measured visually, it has to be able to be shown. Our communications are 'transmuted', 'into a visual journey. It is a sort of *epic* of the eye and of the impulse to read...' (ibid.:xxi). And the reading of a text is seen to display the ultimate passivity of the consumer - the voyeur who passively interiorises television and newspaper content, advertising and marketing texts. However, 'in reality, the activity of reading has on the contrary all the characteristics of a silent production' (ibid.). In the reading of a text, deCerteau says, other things come into play - consumers cannot use all that is offered to them, but through reading they 'invent', 'a different world'. This thesis demonstrates how sound is used by some to invent 'a different world', unconstrained by the limitations of official, visual texts.

Bausinger notes that there is a 'specific semantic of the everyday' in which meanings are located in events, routines and relationships, and not just in words spoken. He talks about 'media rituals'; so that we could understand a newspaper as providing proof, through its existence on the breakfast table, that the world is still in order. In such a

case, it is not the content, as such, but the newspaper's presence, that confirms this. Another example given by Bausinger is of the angry husband who watches television, but not for the content of the programmes; the statement is not, I want to watch this programme, but, 'I would like to hear and see nothing' (Bausinger 1984:344). In such a scenario, the last thing the husband wants to do is chat to his wife, and intently 'watching television' is seen to be able to communicate this to her. Bausinger sees technology in the domestic sphere as invisible and naturalised; yet 'the media are an integral part of the way the everyday is conducted' (ibid.:346). On the one hand, we can see that this is widely understood in Western society, and yet, the role that different media play in different domestic contexts, is as yet, I would suggest, little understood in practice. If, as Bausinger claims, reality 'is constantly constructed anew' (ibid.:350), and media plays a part in this, by implication, the 'immovable' everyday, is, on the contrary, highly moveable. This thesis will reveal this kind of the everyday in domestic settings.

Chapter 2

Industrial Research on Radio Audiences:

Radio in Bristol

There are two main parts to the UK radio industry. The oldest is public service radio, the BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation). The BBC began its life as a commercial company in 1922, and became a public corporation in January 1927 (see Briggs 1961, 1965, 1970 for the BBC's early history). Commercial radio in this country has a shorter history. The first independent local radio (ILR) station to broadcast in this country, was in London, in 1973. The number of commercial stations grew very slowly, restricted by tight regulation, until, in the late 1980's and early 1990's, deregulation allowed commercial radio to expand more rapidly. There are now nearly 200 commercial stations in the UK, including three national commercial services. The national stations are Classic FM, which provides classical music, Talk Radio UK, which provides 'popular' talk radio, and Virgin 1215, a rock and pop music station[1]. Long Wave Radio Atlantic 252, is another service which is available to most of the UK, but which does not come under UK jurisdiction. This is because it is broadcast from Ireland, on a long wave frequency. Atlantic 252 plays contemporary chart music. Commercial stations are financed through advertising, sponsorship, and other commercial activities.

The BBC's main revenue source is the universal licence fee, which every household containing a television is required by law to pay. The BBC currently spends around £380 million each year on radio services. They provide five national radio services: Radio 1, which plays contemporary pop music and aims to attract a young audience of mainly 15-25 year olds, Radio 2, which serves an older audience with easy listening popular music and 'conversation', Radio 3, the BBC's classical music station, Radio 4 a news and current affairs station, which also provides documentaries, plays, poetry, and other programmes which are 'thought-provoking' and 'opinion-forming', and Radio 5 Live, which is a 24 hour news and sports station[2]. In addition, the BBC has a network of local and regional radio services.

---

[1] Radio Authority Pocket Guide June 1996
[2] BBC booklet, 'Facts and Figures 1995/96'

When I first began to look at the radio industry, in 1993, the commercial sector was growing rapidly, and there were several truly independent stations in existence. Over the next three years, helped by changes in the ownership rules, and by further deregulation, promoted as facilitating greater choice and diversity, fewer and fewer independent stations survived, and four or five radio groups emerged as the market leaders. As Curran points out, 'deregulation' when applied to the media industries, is a misleading term; 'What deregulation means, in practice, is not the removal of all state controls but their relaxation in ways that will assist the leading communications conglomerates to expand at the expense of broadcasting diversity' (Curran 1986:126). GWR group plc (hereafter GWR), a radio group based in the south west of England, is one of these 'market leaders', owning over 30 local stations, and having recently acquired the national commercial station, Classic FM.

One of their local stations, GWRfm, provides a service for Bristol and neighbouring Bath. It plays contemporary chart music, along with music from the 1970's and 1980's. GWR will not 'break' new bands, or play new songs, only those which have reached the charts, and which they can subject to their music research (see below). GWR, and many other commercial music radio services, see public service radio as having the remit to take risks with new music, their public funding allowing them to do so. GWR and others in the commercial world are less prepared to take such risks, and are consequently more likely to play only well established artists, which have proven popularity (thus the emphasis on chart hits). Also broadcasting to Bristol is Galaxy 101. This is a regional commercial service covering Bristol, Gloucester, South Wales and Somerset. Galaxy 101 promises to play 'classic and contemporary dance music', which suggests less of an emphasis on mainstream chart music, and more on what might be referred to as 'alternative' or 'underground' artists. By this, Galaxy hopes to attract a young audience of between 15 and 25 years, and distinguish itself from GWRfm, which serves an audience of mainly 25 - 35 year olds. However, their daytime services in particular are very similar, concentrating on contemporary chart hits.

When I began my research, Galaxy 101 was one of the stations owned by a radio group called Chiltern. GWR took over Chiltern during my fieldwork period. Under the

ownership rules of the time, GWR were not allowed to own two local FM services that broadcast to the same area, so they were forced to sell Galaxy. Chrysalis Radio plc bought Galaxy 101 to add to their other two regional services operating in London and the Midlands. Ironically, Galaxy started life in 1989 as a new local radio station serving Bristol, called FTP (For The People). This was an independent station, although it had some financial assistance, and consequently Board membership, from GWR. Just 18 months later, Chiltern added FTP to their stable, and re-launched it as Galaxy, later gaining a regional licence for the service. When Chiltern bought FTP, GWR converted their stake in FTP into a stake in the Chiltern group, which, as already mentioned, was later taken over by GWR.

GWR also provide a service aimed at an audience of over 35 year olds in Bristol. This is Brunel Classic Gold, which plays chart music mainly from the 1960's and 1970s, on an AM frequency. Also serving Bristol is BBC Radio Bristol. This is the local BBC station which broadcasts a mixture of speech and music, with the emphasis on speech. Radio Bristol mostly attracts listeners over the age of 35. Radio Bristol, like the other BBC local services around the country, aims to 'inform and involve the community at key times of the day' and provide a clear alternative to other local services[3].

These national and local radio stations make up the main services that the people I talked to during this research listened to. There were a few others. Some respondents listened to Sunrise Radio, an Asian service, received from the south east of England via satellite. Others listened to 'pirate' radio. These are unlicensed and therefore illegal radio stations. At the time of my research there were usually two pirate services broadcasting at any one time. These pirate stations appeared to attract, and were designed to attract, African Caribbean listeners, and young people across all cultural backgrounds. They provided the kind of music that was rarely available on legal services (except occasionally in the evenings on Radio 1 or Galaxy 101). Some also gave news and information of particular interest to the black communities in Bristol.

---

[3] BBC booklet, 'The BBC, at the Heart of *your* home' (1989).

One other type of service that broadcast from time to time during the fieldwork were RSLs (restricted service licences). These are temporary licences which can be bought from The Radio Authority, and which allow groups to broadcast for up to 28 days at any one time (subject to certain criteria). The types of groups who apply for these licences include student radio services, and groups hoping to apply for a more permanent licence. These more permanent ILR licences (like those currently operated by GWRfm, Brunel Classic Gold and Galaxy 101), are won in competition and awarded by The Radio Authority for a period of 8 years. When the 8 years are over, stations are obliged to re-apply for their licences, and may face competition from other groups (although the incumbent is in a strong position). The next new licence to become available in Bristol will be advertised by the Radio Authority some time in the spring of 1998. It is likely to attract several local applicants. The Radio Authority will be expected to select the application which offers the most financially secure package, and which provides a service that is not already available, thus broadening the choice in ILR available to Bristol.

As commercial radio in the UK expands, and deregulation continues, competition for listeners becomes more and more fierce. This chapter is about the battle for those listeners. Public service radio is not a neutral bystander as the battle rages. Rather, the BBC is a key player in the fight for listeners. In recent years the BBC has been under increasing pressure to justify the universal licence fee, and its programming output. Like the commercial sector, BBC radio has constructed and used 'the audience' for business reasons. The hitherto apparently timeless institution of public service radio is now under threat, and the BBC is using 'the audience' to justify its existence.

Nicholas Garnham describes the changes in the structures of public communication, that are currently underway in the West, as characterised by:

> by a reinforcement of the market and the progressive destruction of public
> service as the preferred mode for the allocation of cultural resources; by the
> focus upon the TV set as the locus for an increasingly privatized, domestic mode
> of consumption; by the creation of a two-tier market divided between the
> information rich... and the information poor... [and] by a shift from largely
> national to largely international markets in the informational and cultural spheres
> Garnham 1991:104-105

Deregulation and privatisation are seen by Garnham as just two of the aspects of the current shift in communication structures which are having profound effects on society. The 'unholy alliance' between western governments and multi-national corporations have produced the 'information society', which has driven the balance of power away from public service institutions, and into the path of the market. This has meant a shift in 'the dominant definition of public information from that of public good to that of a privately appropriate commodity' (ibid.:105). Garnham sees serious implications in this shift of emphasis, as he sees public communication channels as integral to the democratic process (ibid.).

In 1986, Curran reviewed the different perspectives on media reform that he observed at that time. He grouped together some of these perspectives under the label 'neo-liberal market approaches'. The 'New Left' and the 'New Right' had come together with the paternalist centre, and under Thatcherism, apparently formed an 'unstoppable' coalition (Curran 1986:90). Generally, they argued for a free market approach to broadcasting. Some were influenced by a desire to change the hierarchical structures in broadcasting which have a few individuals at the top, protecting their own interests and positions. These few were seen to make decisions about programming based on assumptions about what the public wanted or needed. The free market model was favoured by these 'neo-liberals' as a means to allow the paying viewer, rather than the 'small elite', more control over programming,. More channels and stations, greater competition, and fewer state controls should result, according to this way of thinking, in greater variety and greater consumer control (Curran 1986:90-98).

On the other hand, those that favoured a 'public service approach' felt that the lack of a commercial imperative, allowed public service institutions to deliver high quality programming, and variety. They could afford to appeal to minority interests and groups, whilst maintaining these high standards. Advocates of maintaining public service alongside the free market, felt that in a mixed system the consumer has the best of both worlds. In this system, the BBC must compete for audiences, and will therefore maintain its high quality programming, whilst commercial services, through

competition with public services, will need to match those high standards. Thus, a high quality broadcasting system is ensured (Curran 1986:98-109).

In 1986, Curran warned that, unless proper political attention was given to media reform, the free market model would continue to dictate the direction in which the media industries were moving. In the mid 1990s, the long term future of the BBC is still uncertain. This chapter demonstrates one of the ways in which BBC radio is, on the one hand, investing in expensive audience research to ensure that audiences are being reached, and, on the other hand, using audience research strategically to reinforce its position as a public service broadcaster, in an increasingly competitive, and deregulated environment. At the same time, one of the largest commercial radio groups in the UK, which has benefited from deregulation, invests heavily in audience research, which has a direct relationship to programming decisions and design, and is used to justify its market dominance. Whilst both the commercial, and the public sectors, explicitly and implicitly, talk about changes in radio broadcasting as democratic (giving the listener what he/she wants), the imperative of the market can be seen as both omnipresent and omnipotent.

Who Listens to Radio?
It is the contention of this chapter that industrial research on radio audiences forms the very foundation of the radio industry as it operates today. The material gathered and presented in this chapter comes from many sources. As a secondary, but important part of my research on the role of radio in domestic living, I wanted to understand how the radio industry 'saw' and listened to its end users - the listeners. Early on in this enterprise it became clear that listeners are not the only people who need to be addressed in order for radio companies and stations to achieve success. Indeed, consumers of radio sound may better be understood as pawns in a business enterprise. It is other bodies, the Board of Governors and the government for the BBC, the Radio Authority and advertisers for commercial radio, who are the people who need to be satisfied that audiences exist in quantity and that their needs are being addressed. This is demonstrated to them through the audiences who are presented to them, once they are constructed and defined through elaborate and expensive audience research. This is not

to say that industrial research does not have something to say about radio as it is used by the population at large, but it rarely gets close to gaining an understanding of how and why, in complex domestic environments, this is so. Moreover, actual audiences and service providers rarely come face to face. Listeners are presented to programmers and managers through the mediation of the research process. Through examination of one of those rare situations where listeners and programmers do meet - listener panels - my research reveals what can happen when 'real' listeners do not accord with the ideas of 'researched' listeners, and how, consequently, 'researched' listeners may become more 'real', from the institutional perspective, than 'real' listeners.

In order to understand the scope of industrial research, its limitations and applications, I met, corresponded with, and interviewed some of the industry's key figures over three years. On a national scale, I attended radio conferences, festivals and meetings held by the Radio Academy, the Radio Advertising Bureau and a consumer organisation, Voice of the Listener and Viewer. I interviewed the Director of RAJAR (Radio Joint Audience Research), the organisation which has responsibility for producing the radio industry's audience ratings, and visited the offices of RSL (Research Services Limited), the research company which carries out the research on their behalf. I also interviewed a research executive at the BBC's Broadcasting Research Network Radio Group, and the researcher responsible for their Radio Opinion Monitor (ROM) research at RSL . With this study's location in the Bristol area, I went to local meetings of the Radio Academy attended by key figures in BBC network and local stations, and local commercial radio stations. Over two years I attended GWR's two local listening panels which each met quarterly, and interviewed their programme director and research manager. I interviewed BBC Radio Bristol's Managing Editor and attended one of their Local Radio Advisory Council meetings. I have studied reports in the trade press. The analysis which follows in this chapter is based on this research.

The radio industry's research is designed to measure, define, construct and ultimately to build, audiences. There are particular structural reasons why this is so. The commercial sector of the industry must sell audiences to advertisers and sponsors, who are their main revenue sources. Public service radio research has tended to define its research

goals as: understanding listener choices and needs, with measurement being used to assess the extent of its success in meeting them. The philosophy of public service broadcasting means that the needs of all potential radio listeners who pay their licence fees should, in some way, be addressed in output. However, with potential governmental threats to the universal licence fee, and the increasing emphasis within the BBC on accountability and efficiency, the measurement and definition of audiences has also become a prime goal for the BBC. Any previous distinction between attempts by commercial, and by public service radio institutions to 'know' their audiences is blurring fast. Commercial stations need to sell their audiences to advertisers. To do this they need to construct them. Public service radio, subjected to governmental scrutiny, and faced with a rapid growth in competition, must justify its use of licence fee money, and persuade the government that the universal licence fee is the best way of funding the BBC. These imperatives motivate audience research and affect the ways that both commercial and BBC radio 'view' audiences. These views of audiences together make up an 'institutional point of view' (Ang 1991) that will be examined here.

There are many layers of industrial research. Probably the most important, and the one that gets the most publicity, is ratings research. This applies across the commercial and public service sectors of the industry. Beyond this there are various, less accessible (for an outsider) pieces of research taking place. I will look at some of this research after first establishing the place of ratings research in the UK radio industry.

Ratings

Until 1992, commercial and public service radio carried out their research on audience size separately, independent radio using JICRAR (Joint Industry Committee for Radio Audience Research), the BBC using its Daily Survey. This caused problems when comparisons were sought, as methods, sample sizes and so on, were different. Consequently, in 1992 RAJAR was created - Radio Joint Audience Research - which carries out nationwide research for both sectors of the industry. RAJAR was set up, and is jointly owned by, the AIRC (Association of Independent Radio Companies) (now renamed the CRCA, Commercial Radio Companies Association) and the BBC, and has advertising agency representation on the Board. RAJAR was structured as a 'deadlock'

company so that Board decisions must be agreed by both of the joint owners, the CRCA and the BBC. RAJAR operates as a non-profit making company with an annual budget of around £2.5 million. Its funding comes from the BBC and from commercial radio stations. For commercial radio, the motivation for setting up RAJAR was simple. Radio, as an advertising medium, prior to 1992, was seen as second rate; its share of the total media advertising cake was just 2%. One of the reasons for this was the lack of a credible audience measurement system. Advertising agencies were loath to buy advertising time on a medium whose advertising effectiveness was unproved, and whose audience measurement system (JICRAR) was highly criticised. For commercial radio, forming a research alliance with the BBC, would allow them to gain credibility in the eyes of advertising agencies, which would bring about the necessary increase in advertising revenue essential to allow the continued growth in numbers of commercial radio services. RAJAR has proven to be a key factor in the success of the commercialor commerc radio industry since 1992 - their share of total media advertising having increased by 100% to just over 4%, with some in the industry predicting that it will 'probably' reach 6% by the year 2000 (Doug McArthur, Managing Director RAB *Media Week* August 23 1996:12). For the BBC, RAJAR also made economic sense, offering a means of measuring audiences that would be less expensive than their own survey. In addition, it fits in with their move towards greater accountability, allowing them to measure their performance - in terms of how many people BBC radio reaches - in a more publicly accountable way, in accord with their objectives.

RAJAR research is contracted out to an independent market research company, RSL (Research Services Limited). The total population aged over 4 are surveyed, with representative samples of adults (15+) and children (4-14) drawn from the entire UK for national services, and within transmission areas for local and regional services. There are four fieldwork periods, named quarters, which cover the whole of the calendar year. There are 'high' and 'low' quarters: during low quarters, national services, national regional (i.e.. BBC regional services such as Radio Wales), London stations, and any other regional stations which serve a population of over 4 million, are reported on. During high quarters all of these services plus ILR (Independent Local Radio) stations

are reported on[4]. In 1996 the sample sizes were as follows: quarter one, 14435 adults (age 15+); in quarter two, 62491 adults; in quarter three, 13916; and in quarter four, 50207 (RAJAR/RSL Quarters 1-4 1996).

The way in which RSL samples the population is complicated by the nature of the task. With over 200 radio services operating in the UK, many of which have transmission areas that overlap with many other services, sampling becomes a delicate operation. The method used to gather information is a self-completion diary. The diary given to an individual in any part of the country, lists the services available in that location. Overlapping transmission areas are divided into segments (there are 410 of these) and each segment is given its own unique station listings. So, while all national services are automatically included in all diaries, local and regional services could potentially be different depending on which end of the street you live on. There were 1,050 different diary lists being used in 1995. In order to guard against unintentionally privileging any one service over another by the order in which stations are listed, each list has four different rotations (order of service appearance on diary).

Within each segment, a number of sample points are chosen, depending on the population size and whether it is a high or low quarter. Within each sample point, 11 households are selected for distributing diaries. Using a short contact questionnaire the households are first checked for their quota eligibility, 'Quotas are set on age, sex and working status of the Chief Income Earner, ethnic origin of the contact person and household size' (RAJAR March 1994). In addition, the contact questionnaire asks how many days in an average week the respondent listens to radio, and, if they do listen, for how many hours in an average day. Respondents who report that they do not listen are still encouraged to keep a diary.

Once a household has been identified as eligible, and willing to take part, a household questionnaire is administered. This collects demographic information on all members of a household, as well as general information about their radio listening as reported by the

---

[4]Quarter 4 is a high quarter that reports on all ILRs with over 300,000 population, quarter 2 is a 'universal high' which includes all of those services with a population of under 300,000.

29

contact person, whom RAJAR stipulates as the 'housewife/homemaker', or if unavailable, another 'responsible adult, preferably chief income earner' (RAJAR - contact questionnaire 1995). Diaries are then left for every member of the household over 4 years old. They are left with the respondents the weekend before the diary week, which begins on a Monday. All available diarists are briefed by the researcher on how to keep the diary. Those who are personally briefed, show a higher rate of return of 'usable' diaries. During 1994 the rate of return of usable diaries over all of those placed among adults 15+ ranged from 85% to 87% across the four quarters. Unusable diaries will be those that are not collected, not completed, or that are not completed correctly.

The self-completion diaries include some general questions about radio, television, cinema and print media - which stations have been listened to in the last year, which television channels are watched most frequently, how often the cinema is visited and which newspapers have been read. These are structured questions, with multiple choice answers that require a cross in a box. The diary lists all of the radio services available in the area in which the respondent lives. A separate page is supplied for each day, divided into time slots of 15 minute intervals (30 minutes overnight). If the respondent has listened to a radio station for at least five minutes at any time during the week, they should place a cross in the appropriate box. Information about where the listening took place, at home, in the car, or somewhere else, is also collected. All diary keepers are given a pen, and to encourage completion of the diary, on its collection, their names are entered into a monthly prize draw for £100 and 14 smaller cash prizes. For younger respondents there is also the chance to win personal stereos and store vouchers.

From the data collected, RAJAR produces quarterly summaries of listening, which are available to any interested parties. All figures are given in thousands or expressed as a percentage. Figures are given for the entire UK for national services, and within transmission areas for local and regional services. They record 'weekly reach', 'average hours', 'total hours' and 'share of listening', for each station included in that quarter's reporting. The weekly reach gives the adult population who listened to a particular station for at least five minutes in an average week (averaged across the quarter). This figure shows the numbers of listeners in terms of the total potential audience for each

service. The *average hours* reports one figure for listening across the total population of the UK or area, and another across those who listen to any radio service in the UK or area for at least five minutes in an average week. These figures, then, give average listening hours across the potential audience, (whether or not they listen to any radio), and for the 'actual' audience (those who listen to any radio at some time in an average week). *Total hours* are the overall number of hours of adult listening to a station in an average week, as calculated from the samples tested. The *share of listening* is the percentage of total listening time that is accounted for by a station in the UK or area - the station's total hours as a percentage of all of radio listening in the area that it serves.

The weekly reach and share of listening are the figures that are most often talked about in the industry, and are generally referred to as the 'ratings'. The importance of ratings figures within the industry should not be underestimated. A senior radio programmer from a London-based radio group equated waiting for the publication of ratings to waiting for examination results[5]. Ratings are the industry's measure of success.

Following deregulation,1992 is widely seen as a turning point for commercial radio. Alongside the effects of deregulation which included a rapid expansion in numbers of stations, the establishment of RAJAR provided a credible audience measurement system. At around the same time the RAB (Radio Advertising Bureau) was created. The RAB is an organisation that works to promote confidence in the UK commercial radio industry amongst advertisers. As such, it also endeavours to promote confidence in RAJAR. The RAB was established by the commercial radio industry, 'to act as the central marketing department for the medium'[6]. Funded by a levy on all national radio advertising, the RAB's mission is to increase the radio industry's advertising market share, 'by actively managing *the development of an improved climate of familiarity and favourability* for radio as an advertising medium amongst advertisers...' (emphasis in original)[7]. An article in *Admap* (November 1995) written by RAB representatives,

---

[5] Richard Park, Capital Radio, at the RAB conference 1995.

[6] The RAB web page, 'An Overview of the RAB and it's Services' February 1997.

[7] ibid.

reported on advertisers' growth in confidence in radio research over the previous three years as a reliable measure of audiences:

> The requirement for research in commercial radio over the last three years has been to illuminate. Research initiatives have been put in place ... designed to instil confidence in the role of radio as an advertising solution. The requirement covers two levels. The first is a need for a believable and accessible currency for trading purposes. The second is the need for further understanding that radio is more than 'television without pictures'.
>
> Ingram & Sampson November 1995

Research is being used to reinforce and improve the standing of radio, to construct a 'believable' currency (the audience) and to find ways in which radio is special, as a medium, and as opposed to other media. In another article, Ingram and Sampson (*Admap* December 1995) reported that their research showed that advertisers no longer asked if radio as an advertising medium worked, as this was now widely accepted. Now they were more likely to ask *how* it works, and the RAB sought ways of answering this question. If RAJAR becomes less credible, the fear among the commercial radio industry is that the medium itself will suffer. The RAB will protect the medium and work to 'actively manage' advertiser's perceptions of radio as an advertising medium.

Together RAJAR and the RAB have worked to raise the profile and credibility of radio as an advertising medium through the creation and promotion of a credible currency - the researched audience. According to Gardiner, in an article in an advertising journal, research in the media world 'exists to enable buyers and sellers to effectively trade advertising time and space' (Gardiner 1997:47). Like many other commentators, Gardiner sees the emergence of RAJAR and the creation of the RAB, along with the licensing of the UK's first national commercial stations, as landmark events in the growth of credibility that commercial radio has achieved since 1992. She warns, however, that the 'credibility of the research is almost inextricably linked to the credibility of the medium', so that while the two have progressed 'in tandem', a loss in confidence in the research and the currency it creates, will almost surely lead to a loss in confidence for the medium itself (ibid.). Such a loss in confidence could place the commercial radio industry in crisis.

Gardiner reminds the readers of *Admap* that media research is an enabling science, not a pure science: 'no research is perfect and we should not expect it to perform miracles' (1997:47). She goes on to say that research carried out by RAJAR is part of 'a commercial environment' and does not stand alone, pointing out that this is sometimes forgotten. 'Understandably, commercial radio wanted a "gold standard" currency, but wanting something trustworthy and which brooks no argument is only a short step from regarding it as pure, perfect and the answer to everything' (ibid.:48). Consequently, she says that when problems are brought to light, the industry should not overreact, a sign that their expectations were too high in the first place. Occasionally, those within the industry will allude to the inherent problems and imperfections with RAJAR's research, most commonly, sample size and the diary method. These are generally accepted as shortcomings that the industry has to live with, until better methods are found.

With regard to sample size, there are problems with some small stations, especially those operating in areas that have many services (notably London). It can sometimes be difficult to get their audiences to register in the statistics at all, especially if they offer specialist services which would not be designed for a broad, or mass appeal. Although these services may well be achieving what they set out to do, the consequences of low ratings, potentially threaten their existence, and are enough to make some specialist services become more broad in their output. If target audiences only were sampled for such services, the results might look very different. An exchange of letters in *The Radio Magazine*, a trade publication, demonstrates the point. One correspondent, referring to RAJAR figures, complained that Spectrum, a service which provides 'music, news and information for ethnic communities' (Radio Authority June 1995) in London and has relatively low ratings figures, should be taken off the air, and the frequency put to better use (*The Radio Magazine*, 2 September 1995:12). In reply, another correspondent, and frequent listener to Spectrum, pointed out that the station offers a service to 'immigrant communities' in the capital, using a variety of their languages, and as such provides 'quality, public service broadcasting', not available from any other source. How, she asked, 'can a system like RAJAR measure whether or not such a service is delivering? How many Arabic-speaking... households does its sample include?' Referring to the

increasing opportunities for specialised stations to gain licences to broadcast, she calls for 'a rethink on *how, why* and *for whom* we are measuring radio listening' (*The Radio Magazine* 9 September 1995:12. emphasis in original). In quarter 4, 1994, over half (51%) of segments had only 1 or 2 sampling points, with 72% on 1-6 points (RSL March 1995). The demographic targets are less distinct where fewer sampling points are selected in a segment, so that where only one or two points are selected, the target is to get a balance between male and female respondents, with age and other 'grades' not applying (ibid.). Here we can see how stations like Spectrum can lose out in the ratings game.

More dramatically, BBC Radio Gloucestershire claimed 'huge discrepancies' in RAJAR figures in 1995 with the Managing Editor of the station warning that 'unless there is more consistency in RAJAR's methodology, I do not see how we can be confident about its results' (*Media Week* November 17 1995). Radio Gloucestershire had been reported to have suffered a 6% fall in audience during quarter 2, 1995, compared to the previous year, and a fall in reach among 55-64 year olds from 36% to 13%. The Managing Editor of the station found, upon investigation, that there were 'huge discrepancies in the number of diaries issued to particular groups', and sampling variations due to sample size were implicated: 'For example, in Q2 [quarter 2] this year just 88 diaries were returned by people in the 55-64 age group, compared with 111 in 1994. In the group aged over 65, we had 92 compared with 168 the previous year' (ibid.). This is important for Radio Gloucestershire, as the majority of their audience is made up of those aged over 45. Alongside criticism of sample size, comes criticism of the diary method itself.

Roger Gane, Director of RAJAR, said in 1995 that he would 'be delighted to replace diaries with a completely accurate "meter"', but that there are technical and financial reasons why this is not yet possible (Gane *The Radio Magazine* 7 October 1995:22). Meters are used widely by television industries to measure audiences and are generally regarded as the most reliable method of measurement because they are seen as less prone to the misrecording of viewing behaviour by participants. They require respondents to simply press a button when viewing commences and when it finishes, the

meter itself records the channel. With possible new developments in meter technology, 'passive' people meters will not even require button pushing, as they will recognise respondents when they enter the room where the TV is on (see Ang 1991)[8]. Diaries, on the other hand, are seen as prone to misrecording, and show higher reported radio listening than the other most commonly used research technique - for radio audience measurement across Europe - 24 hour recall interviews (Menneer 1995). A recall interview is conducted either over the telephone or face to face, and asks about listening that has taken place in the last 24 hours.

Researchers who use the diary method, believe that it is more economical than recall 'and that it delivers more precise data. Station identification is easier' and 'diary keeping can be close to contemporaneous, with no reliance on memory' (Menneer 1995:22). Those who use recall methods, express concern that if diaries are completed at the end of a week, 'How can one be sure whose listening has actually been entered?' (ibid.). Also, listening may be induced by the diary method (ibid.). Research conducted by RAJAR on different response rates shows that there is 'a slight under-representation of households where the contact relatively infrequently or never listens to the radio', although those from the 'do not listen' category who do agree to keep diaries, have a higher completion rate than heavy, medium or light listeners (ibid.:23).

Twyman states that 'the nature of the medium and its great strength of being receivable in a wide variety of contexts makes it difficult to research' (1994:102). One of the commonly attributed assets of radio is that it accompanies other activities, yet in research terms, this can hinder reporting of listening, as respondents may not record listening that is not a 'main' activity in itself (ibid.:97). With the increase in numbers of stations in the UK, Twyman foresaw increased problems for the diary method of audience measurement. One possible solution he forecast for crowded reception areas, was the use of stick-in station headings, a method that RAJAR adopted, for one quarter, late in 1995. Stick-in diaries were introduced in response to the increasing numbers of stations coming on air, and needing to be surveyed by RAJAR. With growing numbers

---

[8] Ang (1991) outlines the potential problems with meter technologies demonstrating that even this method is not infallible.

of stations needing to be listed on each page of the diaries, stick-in station names appeared to offer a solution. The diarists could stick in only those services that they listened to. However, disastrous consequences followed, and the 'stick-in diary debacle' (Gardiner 1997) came to an end early in 1996. The problem was, despite the method having been piloted, the use of stick-in labels resulted in a dramatic and almost universal fall in reported listening. As RAJAR was forced to withhold figures, and find ways of weighting results to make them more compatible with the previous system, criticism grew and RAJAR's research standards were questioned. In March of 1996, reportedly when the BBC threatened to pull out of RAJAR, the stick-in diaries were dropped and the old methodology resumed (*Media Week* March 29 1996:13). RAJAR sees the reversion to the previous pre-listed diaries as temporary, and are still looking for a better format to use in the future[9].

In addition to methodological problems, there is also the risk of mistakes happening within such a large research operation. This happened in 1995, and resulted in GWR threatening to sue RAJAR, for the resulting loss in revenue that one of their stations could have suffered (*Media Week* November 3rd & 10th 1995). The action related to the omission of a station name in the diaries in a particular area in a research quarter. GWR were reportedly claiming damages of over £150,000 (*The Radio Magazine* 2 December 1995:14). Yet as a report in *Media Week* pointed out at the time, 'the cost to the industry could be a great deal higher' (November 10th 1995). RAJAR contested the action, and eventually an out-of-court settlement was agreed. Meanwhile, there were calls within the industry to 'remain united', with some suggestions that it would have been better for GWR and RAJAR to have sorted things out 'behind closed doors' (ibid.).

Gardiner questions the judgement of stations that criticise RAJAR. She alleges that a close analysis of RAJAR figures shows that there are other stations which have consistently been given 'wildly erratic results', yet they 'say nothing to damage the currency' (Gardiner 1997:49). With their figures fluctuating, sometimes dramatically, from survey to survey, they represent for Gardiner, 'the growth in maturity of the

---

[9] Roger Gane, Director of RAJAR, personal correspondence 5th February 1997.

industry' as they have 'lived with such results in order not to undermine the credibility of a currency it has fought so hard to create' (ibid.).

Ratings have specific reasons and purposes. They do not aim to 'understand' audiences in any depth, they serve only to measure, and to measure in a way that is useful to the industry. On the basis of RAJAR figures, stations can track their audiences across time, test new presenters or formats, or exclude old ones, and plan marketing and advertising campaigns. The industry needs to demonstrate confidence in RAJAR figures, or else support for radio as an advertising medium may be lost. It may be that GWR, with its own highly sophisticated in-house research, feels less attached to RAJAR than its competitors. If they are able to sell airtime based on their own research, and on their high visibility in the local areas in which they broadcast, they may not feel the same need to preserve it. GWR may also be looking to a future in which new digital technology, increased numbers of services, and other technological advances and business moves, would make RAJAR seem outdated.

A loss of confidence in RAJAR figures, could result in a decline in the total share of advertising revenue that the radio industry has worked hard to increase in recent years. The radio industry and its associated media industries (media planning, sales, marketing, advertising) not only like, but *need* a clear and reliable idea of audiences to work with. Ratings must continue to offer a measurement that is widely accepted by the industry, advertisers, government and general public. As Kent points out,

> Although many advertisers, media owners and media planners are aware of the limitations of audience measures, in practice such limitations are rarely considered. The pressure to do daily business using some yardstick means that all deal with the same numbers. It is, furthermore, often argued that, provided errors are relatively constant, the figures will accurately reflect change over time. The fact that all measures are estimates gets conveniently overlooked and they are instead perceived and treated as 'truth'.
>
> Kent 1994:12

Widely accepted measurements of audiences are crucial, because audiences are the industry's currency. this was reinforced by RAJAR's Chairman, in a comment aimed at

quelling unrest in the light of the GWR threatened summons: 'RAJAR audience results, in common with those for other media research surveys, are subject to statistical fluctuations. The RAJAR service is accepted by the radio and advertising industry as providing the audience currency for the medium' (John Whitney quoted in *The Radio Magazine* 25 November 1995). Not having an accepted measurement of audiences is like not having an accepted currency, not knowing what it is worth, and what it can buy. Once questions are raised about the validity of ratings figures, the whole commercial radio industry may feel that it is under threat.

The station/audience relationship

The UK radio market and the current questioning of research standards, reflects a situation experienced by US TV. In her analysis of US television audience research, Ang proposes that there is 'no such thing as "watching television" as a separate activity' and 'if it is impossible to make an unambiguous distinction between viewers and non-viewers and if ... the boundaries of "television audience" are so blurred, how could it possibly be measured?' (1992:139-140). In his study of family television, Morley shows that '"watching television" cannot be assumed to be a one-dimensional activity which has equivalent meaning or significance at all times for all who perform it' (1986:15). Ang and Morley's observations are relevant to radio in that they are suggesting that the actual activity of audiencehood, as it is 'embedded' in the social and cultural activities of everyday life, does not constitute a neatly-definable entity. Radio advertisers and broadcasters tend to talk about audiences as if they were unproblematic. The radio industry, advertisers and government need them to be unproblematic. However, talking about the audience as if it can be clearly defined, is like talking about 'population', 'nation' or 'the masses' (Ang 1991:2), and as Raymond Williams points out, there are no masses, 'only ways of seeing people as masses' (Williams quoted in Ang 1991:2). Thus, what Ang calls 'the social world of actual audiences', is articulated in 'a discursive construct' of the 'television audience' produced by industrial research, and the reading of that research (Ang 1991).

Attaching meaning to the concept, 'television audience', can never be definitive, because there are 'infinite, contradictory, dispersed and dynamic practices and

experiences of... audiencehood enacted by people in their everyday lives'(Ang 1991:13).
There will always be a 'surplus of meaning' that will not fit the construct of the
audience (ibid.). The industry is continually researching, looking for better
methodologies, and ways of analysing results, in order to come up with the definitive
audience, which can never be achieved, because of the nature of the lived experiences of
audiencehood. Ang's analysis of industrial research shows how there is 'a profound
disparity between everyday practice and official or professional discourse' (1991:2).
The US television institution is not interested in 'getting to know what real people think
and feel and do in their everyday dealings with television. Institutional knowledge about
the television audience inevitably abstracts from the messy and confusing social world
of actual audiences, because this world is irritating for the institutions...'(ibid.:7).
Audiences are not homogenous entities, and they resist being constructed as such. The
institutions, however, continually aim at such a construction - in Ang's terms, a
'streamlined audience'. The research that produces ratings is the primary means used to
construct the 'streamlined audience'.

All of the unmanageable aspects of audiencehood are excluded from the concept of the
streamlined audience. Variations are 'contained in "types" and "patterns"; developments
over time are straightened out in terms of "trends"'(Ang 1991:65). Through this
streamlining procedure, a filtering out of impurities takes place, and people's viewing
activities are represented 'in a smooth, totalized but adaptable map':

> The map is very handy indeed for the industry: it supplies both broadcasters and
> advertisers with neatly arranged and easily manageable information, a form of
> knowledge which almost cannot fail to provide a sense of provisional certainty,
> as maps generally do.
>
> Ang 1991:65

In-house audience research: An ILR example

Much of my research has been focused on one commercial radio group, and in
particular, on two of its local stations. GWR recently became the largest UK radio
group, by number of stations owned, currently owning 32 stations[10], and in market

---

[10] February 1997.

capitalisation terms, is worth £225.8 million[11]. GWR group spends around £200,000 a year on research, which represents 0.4% of its turnover[12]. Research is used strategically, to promote a service rhetoric, justify its programming decisions, and sell airtime to advertisers. This is one of the cornerstones of GWR's success. Research has been used to create programming formats that deliver high ratings. Within the industry GWR is often criticised for producing 'bland' radio, resulting, some would say, from its implementation of research findings. In simplistic terms, there are two camps in the industry: those that believe programming decisions should be led by 'gut feel', and those that think programming should respond to 'researched audience needs'. GWR falls firmly into the second camp, and their strongest defence against allegations of bland programming, is that, it is what people tell them they want, and its success is reflected in the ratings.

GWRfm knows its audience well; it actively targets a predominantly female audience, aged between 25 and 35 years, and this is the audience it packages and sells to advertisers. Whilst one can be critical of the attempt to streamline audiences, the format created by GWR, which they claim to be directly related to 'researched audience need', is popular among the audience it targets. RAJAR figures reinforce this - GWRfm's weekly reach figures for the period 23 September - 22 December 1996 were 33% of the adult population in the area they serve. (This compared to BBC Radio Bristol's 21%, and, nationally, BBC Radio 1's 23%)[13]. GWR have identified the largest single audience that their research can define in the area, (which may in fact consist of the 'types' of people most visible to market research), and have produced a tailored service for that researched demand, (and, crucially, sold the audience to advertisers). But, there are many other audiences available. The streamlined audience that GWR is so successful at constructing, is surrounded by smaller (potential) audiences (perhaps less visible to market research). GWRfm describe their 'audience' as promiscuous - i.e. they are not loyal to GWRfm, but listen to other services as well. This demonstrates that their audience is not as stable as their construction would suggest. If the smaller audiences,

---

[11] personal correspondence, Simon Cooper, GWR's Director of Human Resources and Public Affairs, 7th February 1997.
[12] ibid.
[13] RAJAR/RSL Quarter 4 1996

which we could call minority audiences, made up in part by groups poorly served by radio at present, were joined together as an alternatively constructed 'audience', they would be larger than the single largest audience that GWRfm has identified. This audience, however, would resist streamlining, and require 'broadcasting', rather than 'narrowcasting'. GWR's research machine, operating in accordance with a market model, identifies only narrow audience demand, and produces what can be defined as 'narrowcasting' in radio output. Like the audience, this output is also streamlined, mechanised (through the use of computerised playlists), and carefully controlled.

At the 1995 Radio Festival, which is an annual conference for the UK radio industry, one of GWR's Area Programme Directors defended 'format radio' with the tongue-in-cheek tale of his personal evolution from 'Nerd DJ' to 'Format Man'. The mission of 'Nerd DJ from Hell' was to destroy all music forms by saying and doing 'nerdy' things on the radio, while Format Man fights for the listeners. The story went: the evolution of Format Man began when GWR changed its objectives from the sort of radio service that suited the station staff, to the sort of service that suited 'researched audience needs'. In the old days, he said, programmers were little more than 'witch doctors', not understanding how or why programming ideas succeeded. With the development of in-house audience research, came the realisation that, among other things, listeners want less chat from their presenters, but like them to have personalities. Research findings like these led to the development of a 'soft ac'(adult contemporary) format, long before other stations began to use it. The ego of the presenters can be a big block to this kind of format radio, so they need to be carefully controlled. Presenters on GWR, he told us, had become more like actors who rehearse, than after dinner speakers who ramble on and on. Through implication, the 'witch doctor' of old was no more than a 'good guesser', while Format Man, who programmes according to researched audience needs, understands how and why programming works. In fact, what the research appears to tell them, is not how and why things work or do not work, but quite simply *when* they work. Based on this information, successful programming can be maintained and built upon.

Between the two camps of 'gut feel' and 'researched audience need' there used to lie a more moderate position, that recognised the importance of research, but apparently, also

recognised its limitations. According to Richard Park, Group Programme Director of Capital Radio plc, 'research should never dictate content. Good programming comes from a gut feeling', but research has an important place in programming, so that 'what used to be done on gut feel must now be supported by qualitative and quantitative research if you are to avoid certain errors such as playing music people don't want to hear or running too much news' (Park, quoted in Carter 1995:7). This moderate position seems to have shifted since then, with more radio groups subscribing to the kind of research software that GWR uses.[14]

My access to information on research at GWR was very easy, despite the fact that, generally, stations are not happy to discuss their research with people outside their company. This was due to their belief in their use of research, which is almost evangelical in character. Consequently, I describe a particular type of commercial station which, at the time of my fieldwork, could have been described as atypical, but which now appears more and more typical. GWR owns 32 stations, and has 'stakes in Minster Group (York and Scarborough), The Local Radio Company (small stations around the country), Stray FM (Harrogate) and Radio Edelweiss (Austria)'[15]. GWR is worth £225.8m. This compares with the other large radio holding companies, Capital Radio worth £396.7m, EMAP £1,649m and Scottish Radio £106m. GWR claims to be the largest 'pure radio' group, as Capital has branched out into restaurants, and EMAP is also a large magazine and newspaper owner[16]. GWR demonstrates a highly sophisticated use of research, and provides a model that many other stations are now being drawn to, in the search for high ratings and financial success. 'Scientific' research is held up by GWR to reinforce their position. Their map of the audience is *very* streamlined.

In Bristol, GWR has two stations, one on the AM waveband, the other on FM. These two stations are very similar in output to their other stations across the country. The FM

---

[14] This includes Capital Radio, Crysalis, Classic FM (who used it before GWR), and Virgin, who buy their results from Classic FM (personal communication GWR Research Manager, February 1997).
[15] Personal correspondence, Simon Cooper, GWR's Director of Human Resources and Public Affairs, 7th February 1997.
[16] ibid.

station is targeted at 25-35 year olds, the AM at a 35-55 age group. The music that each station plays, is strictly controlled by a playlist for each service. The playlist is held on computer. The computer operates software called Selector, which holds 1,000 songs for each service. This type of computerised playlist is now widely used by music radio stations, and very few radio presenters choose their own playlist. The use of a computer ensures that songs are not played too regularly, and that a song with, say, a relaxing feel, is not played back-to-back with a heavy rock song. Following the news and weather (which, GWR feels, holds the potential to cause audiences to feel depressed), Selector would programme an up-tempo song. In this way one could say that the mood of the output is computerised.

The playlists are constructed through 'music research'. There are two panels of 700 people, one for each type of service (classic gold and contemporary chart). This research is done from Bristol for all of their services, and is carried out over the telephone. GWR have found that music tastes do not vary in any significant way across the country, so these two panels, consisting of people who live in the South West, serve to provide music research for the whole group of stations. One of GWR's slogans is 'Local Radio Nationwide'. The idea is that if one travelled across the country, from one GWR station's area to another, there would be little difference in the sound of the station. The panel members take part in research once every 4-6 weeks, and will stay on the panel for about a year. Questionnaires are sent out by post and responses collected over the telephone. The station creates a list of songs (changed monthly), including current regular players, some newer songs, and songs that have not been used for a while. The respondents are asked to give each song a score, from 1 to 7, indicating their likes and dislikes. The results are used to construct a mean score for each song, with the best scores getting entered onto the stations' computerised playlists. Those songs that show a high 'burn out' factor - ones that people have heard too much of - are removed from the playlist. Fifty songs are assessed in this way each week for each service (AM and FM). One of the criticisms of this kind of music research, and the restrictive use of playlists, is that new bands and songs rarely get aired. For songs to be successfully tested in this way they need to be already recognisable to the respondents. People are recruited for the music research through cold calling (telephone), or from the station's tracking research.

The tracking research consists of 100 telephone interviews a week in each area. For the four biggest stations, this takes place all year round, whilst the smaller stations are covered by this research twice a year, for six weeks. Questions asked in the tracking research include which radio station is most listened to by respondents, what other stations are heard, when the respondents would usually be listening and for how long. Over a six week period, the demographic profile of respondents in each area would be corrected, although age and gender are the only factors taken into account. Respondents' telephone numbers are picked randomly from telephone directories. Through the tracking research, and the playlist compiled using the music research, GWR have developed their own particular 'format' for their stations. It is this format that is often criticised within the industry for being bland and unimaginative.

This example serves to demonstrate how, along with the streamlined audience, comes streamlined programming. It is a logical step, because although research can give an idea of what has been successful in terms of attracting audiences, it does not say exactly why it has been, and cannot predict future successes (see Ang 1991:65-66). So a repetitive, familiar, some would say unimaginative, format is designed, that irons out any inconsistencies or variables, just as the streamlined audience does. This is seen and promoted by GWR as responding to researched audience needs, and they maintain that, because of their tightly controlled format and playlists, anyone can tune into their stations at any time and know what to expect. This they see as an advantage in a growing radio market. In fact, when they are relaunching a station - which happens every so often as they revamp a station that they have bought from another company, or give an existing station a 'face lift'- they restrict their playlist. That is, they play fewer records than usual, more often, in order to give any new listeners who might tune in, perhaps in response to an advertising campaign, a better idea of the station sound - a more condensed version. The ways in which radio formats such as GWR's work on 'actual' audiences are highly complex and contradictory. Yet it is not necessary, and could prove counterproductive, for GWR's own research to uncover this. What their research tells them is what works, and while it continues to work, they will continue to be successful; and their streamlined audience is a valuable commodity to advertisers.

The tracking and music research are seen by the company as their 'scientific research'. Along with RAJAR, this provides the foundation for their view of 'the audience' and their programming decisions. For a period of two and a half years, GWR also set up two listener panels in Bristol, one for each service (AM and FM). This they referred to as their 'qualitative' research. I attended most of the meetings, which took place once every three months for each panel. They provided interesting examples of the ways in which 'real' listeners do not necessarily fit the station's construction of 'researched' listeners. In most cases, when differences were made apparent, the 'researched' listener's opinion, as expressed through scientific research, was put forward by the station as more substantive information. After all, the panels only had 12 members each, whilst several hundred people are contacted each year to take part in their scientific research.

The panels were organised and chaired by an external broadcasting consultant. A member of programming staff was present at most meetings. The meetings followed a fairly flexible pattern where, at some time during the two hours, every member fed back their thoughts and feelings about the station's output over the three month period since the last meeting. Although in the consultant's reports on the meetings written afterwards (and available only to station staff), he usually managed to indicate areas of the services on which the panel members' views constituted a consensus, what were very apparent from the meetings were the differing points of views and opinions that individual members expressed. Even if they all 'liked' something, the degree of 'liking' varied, as did the reasoning behind it. The consultant's job was to draw together opinions and summarise them in a coherent way. At some meetings, members of staff, such as presenters or the news editor, were invited to the meetings, to reply to panel member' questions, comments and criticisms. Meetings usually finished with the Programme Controller updating the panel on the latest station news.

The reasons for the station conducting such research are interesting. The reasons given to the panel members were: to add an extra dimension to their research, and to get to know the audience in a different way - to add to the station's understanding of what

listeners feel about, and want from, the stations. A more cynical view would connect the appearance of the panels to the way in which radio franchises are won and retained. ILR franchises are renewed every 8 years, and GWR's two Bristol franchises were due for renewal a few months after the panels were set up. Anyone can bid for a franchise and there is no guarantee that the current holder will retain it. Part of a successful bid must be a commitment to working with and for, the 'community' the station serves. GWR has established links which have been developed over the years with local organisations and events, and it operates a charitable trust for local causes. Research such as the listener panels, constitutes proactive finding out about the listeners, in a qualitative, personal sort of way, and appeared in the franchise bid document (which was successful). The decision to set up the panels could be seen as a pragmatic move in the light of the franchise renewal rather than a real attempt to know the audience better, but, either way, it related to the desire to improve upon the station's commercial success. As with their use of research generally, it served a purpose that was functionally appropriate to their business aims.

Whatever the reasons were, the panels did appear to become an established part of the station's research for a while. Over the first 12 months, one senior member of staff, the Station Manager, seemed to take responsibility for the panels and attended regularly. As staffing structures changed, the panels were taken over by the Programme Controllers from each service (AM and FM). During the first 12 months, a good relationship appeared to develop between the panel members and the station. Initially, the Station Manager was liable to counter criticisms put forward by panel members by quoting research statistics. Over the year, he became much less inclined to do so, and there was a much less defensive air about his responses. Other staff members who came to the meetings for the first time, often seemed uncomfortable to be in a situation where they were meeting listeners 'face to face'. It was an unusual situation for staff to be confronted by a group of listeners, asking them some quite probing questions, and offering them varying degrees of criticism, to which they were required to respond, in front of senior staff. Although staff are asked at the meetings to give their view of 'the listener' I have never heard them do this. In many cases, they avoided answering the

question, by commenting on how good it was to have an opportunity to meet a group of listeners and hear their points of view.

One of the reasons that this situation might be intimidating for the staff, is the way in which, over time, the panel members appeared to have developed, or increased, their sense of 'ownership' of the station, giving them a greater confidence in expressing their views. They were often told that their views were valued by the station and that the station considers all of their comments and suggestions. When specific complaints were made - for example, a record might have been played twice within a few hours - they were assured that it would be investigated. These sorts of statements suggested to the panel members that they were being listened to, and their ideas were being taken on board. Panel members often commented, to me or to the meeting, that their suggestions had been responded to by the station, often reporting this with an air of surprise. Changes that were made to the output were often seen by panel members to be related to their own expressed opinions. Members were sometimes encouraged to feel involved in the station, with comments like 'I'm letting you into a secret now'. On one occasion, one of the Programme Controllers implied to the panel that he had gone against management in order to test one of their suggestions, giving priority to their suggestions and opinions rather than the 'research' or management.

Livingstone and Lunt (1994) point out an opposition between commercial and public service broadcasting. Commercial broadcasting is often promoted as a sort of democracy, while public service broadcasting is seem as a form of elitism (Livingstone and Lunt 1994). Commercial broadcasters have been inclined to justify their programming decisions, as having taken account of audience tastes. In this way, they claim to respond to audience needs, in a democratic fashion; 'The problem is that commercial interest uses an emancipatory rhetoric offering the illusion of involvement relative to public broadcasting' (1994:22). The contributors to Keat, Whiteley and Abercrombie (1994) discuss *The Authority of the Consumer* in the new relationships that have emerged between producers and consumers. They show that there are many ways of interpreting these new relationships, some of which acknowledge consumer authority, whilst others see it as existing in producers' rhetoric. The type of

emancipatory rhetoric that Livingstone and Lunt refer to, was evident in the interactions between station staff and the listener panels. The use of emancipatory rhetoric in these settings had some interesting outcomes over time.

The AM panel, who were especially encouraged and 'massaged' by the Programme Controller responsible for that service, became very confident in expressing their ideas and opinions. At one meeting, the news editor talked to the panel about the news service. A very lively, at times, quite aggressive debate took place. The news editor appeared totally unprepared for the response; it was as though he had expected the panel members to respect his knowledge of radio news and how to deliver it. They in turn saw themselves as the experts on what 'the audience' required from the news editor, as they were in fact members of the 'actual' audience. The news editor talked about what audiences wanted from news, regarding the audience as a separate definable entity. Panel members responded aggressively to this as they did not recognise themselves. The AM panel had generally felt that they were being listened to, which perhaps gave them the confidence to react to the news editor in this way. The FM panel, on the other hand, appeared to become less and less involved with the station, and more at odds with it, as time went on. Unlike the Programme Controller for the AM panel, the Programme Controller of the FM service did not appear to be keen to encourage the panel members to give their views. Emancipatory rhetoric was not convincingly used with them, and when it was, there was an air of disbelief and suspicion. Some of the panel members felt that they were not taken seriously.

One of the things that happened when panel members and station staff were in disagreement, or simply not communicating well, was that the staff reverted to the use of research statistics, to reinforce their position. The news editor at the AM panel meeting became very defensive, and used research to back up his statements. The panel members were unimpressed. In fact, they often questioned the scientific research, especially the music research. When there was a definite consensus among the members that challenged station policy, they were sometimes told that their opinion would be checked against research, and if there was any evidence that they had a valid point, more

research would be carried out. It was understood that their opinions would not be acted upon unless the 'scientific' research backed them up.

The listener panels set up by GWR make an interesting case study if one is attempting to understand the ways in which broadcasters define audiences, as they provide a rare instance where 'real' audiences and broadcasters come together. Ang calls TV audience ratings a 'focal site of the inherently contentious relationship between industry and audience, a site in which a battle between television and its audiences is constantly being fought out, but never absolutely won or lost' (1991:50). According to Ang, ratings are primarily used to control 'the audience'. This is not control in real terms, but symbolically. Ratings produce a discourse 'which enables the industry to know its relationship to the audience in terms of frequencies, percentages and averages' (ibid.). A discursively constructed audience inhabits the symbolic world created by ratings, and it is this audience that the broadcaster 'knows' and uses to establish programming schedules which such an audience 'wants'. Because it is discursively constructed, the industry is continually battling to maintain 'the audience'. The listener panels are interesting in terms of their negotiated relationships with the members and the station, and in how they changed over time. The panel members resisted incorporation into the 'streamlined audience', not through some deliberate act, but because of the fact that they are complex individuals, who are prone to unpredictable thoughts and opinions, and are essentially 'un-streamlined'.

Despite GWR's obvious interest in finding out about audiences through the panels, the station's use of 'scientific research' claims a higher position in a hierarchy of information and knowledge. In Ang's description of the US television industry, she points out that there is nothing wrong with empirical scientific research as long as we recognise that 'the move towards more scientific ways of knowing the audience within television institutions is not simply a sign of progress from ignorance to knowledge, from speculation to fact, from belief to truth. Rather, what is at stake here is a politics of knowledge'(Ang 1991:10). GWR's research, bases its claim to validity, in the interaction that takes place with 'actual audiences' in the gathering of information. Its use of such information, however, is selective, as it constructs the discursive concept of

the streamlined audience so that any incorporation of the social worlds of actual audiences into this concept 'cannot go beyond the horizon of the institutional point of view' (ibid.). If we think about the institutionalised point of view, in terms of the commercial radio sector as a whole, we can see that it is not, in fact, fixed. One could suggest that it is becoming more 'GWR-ised' which, in relation to other and older points of view in commercial radio, does take far more account of audiences. The idea of basing programming on 'gut feel' alone no longer appears to be a real option in the UK radio industry. As in the US television industry, research in general, with 'its aura of scientific rationality, has acquired an entrenched position in the institution as a whole'(ibid:22). In the face of criticism, scientific rationality can be used to defend controversial moves:

> Research is often motivated and legitimized for its role in rationalizing managerial decision-making procedures. Indeed, where uncertainty or disagreement about the chance of success is particularly marked, resort to a neutral, non-subjective, facts-and-figures discourse, which pretends to provide the most explicit and systematic knowledge about the audience, is preferred in order to manage intra-industry relationships and mobilize support for unpopular or controversial decisions... Such use of the rhetoric of quantitative justification is a well-known phenomenon in modern complex organisations..., and suggests that the aura of 'scientific rationality' that facts-and-figures knowledge possesses is primarily useful for its rhetorical aptness in institutional practices...
>
> Ang 1991:22

The 'rhetoric of quantitative justification' is well used by GWR. It also uses its research to create a more general station rhetoric, one that works towards promoting familiarity with, and recognition of, GWR, among listeners. The station sound, the music, the way music is presented, and importantly, the research: all of these things come together to create a streamlined, tight package. The rhetoric tells the listeners that it is a success. On air we are told that GWR listens to us, the audience, and is giving us what their research tells them we want, they are in touch with the audience (a further example of 'emancipatory rhetoric'). At one listener panel meeting, a panel member commented that sometimes this appears to be a little overstated, so that it sounded a bit like the station was saying 'this is what you are going to listen to, whether you want to or not'. In response the group programme controller, who was a guest at the panel meeting, said

that it is the *intention* of GWR to 'sound invincible', he recognised that they had a very 'brassy' image on air, and said that this was deliberate. Through these kinds of rhetorical devices, through repetition, and through a carefully controlled playlist (underpinned by "scientific" research) the sound of the station is 'hardened'. We may tune to GWR at any time and instantly recognise it. The hardness of their sound means that we are also more likely to remember it, and it may find a place in our everyday living and routines.

Within a study of radio sound as material culture, such a concept as 'hardness' is very interesting. There is evidence to suggest that through rhetoric and repetition, stations attempt to create radio sound that hardens and remains in the listeners' minds after hearing it. For GWR and other commercial music stations, the holding power of the station is central; for GWR the rhetoric of the station is based on the desire to keep the listeners and attract new ones. They make sure that the music you hear, stays with you after you've heard it - especially during commercial breaks - and so, the listeners are continually reminded that the station is giving them what they want, that it is based on extensive research, and that they value the musical choices of their listeners and therefore do not talk over the records. The music is reinforced by the rhetoric, it is made 'harder'. Nothing is left to the individual whims of presenters; they read from cards, like 'trained actors'. In the slick, repetitive, recognisable presentation there are no gaps or pauses; they pump out continuous sound that is in line with the station's mission or ethos, which is constructed for business reasons. The competition for listeners has never been fiercer. Because of this competition, the audiences that ILR stations target, will become ever more streamlined, as stations attempt to corner the market in their particular targeted audiences.

Lull (1992) refers to the ways in which popular music, through thematic repetition, has an ability to 'shape the consciousness of its audience' (1992:3), so that recognisable elements or components of songs act as 'hooks', so called because of their 'ability to capture and hold the interests of listeners' (ibid.:4). Recognising, and profiting from, this ability of music, radio stations employ national and international consultants to advise on the construction of playlists. This, Lull calls an 'homogenisation of music on

radio and a market-by-market replication of sound that is more sensitive to the national industry than to local musical and cultural circumstances' (ibid.:5). GWR's research operation is overseen by an Australian consultant whom I met during one of his visits to Bristol. His role could be likened to that of a 'guru'. He speaks the language of commercial radio and marketing. He seeks to deliver audiences to the station in a usable form. He promotes the need to find out about listeners, and shares his knowledge about how to get to that information in an effective way. He is interested in facts and figures - evidence - and sees the research operation as straightforward (although not simple). That is, he sees it in operational terms: it is functional and it works. The programme controller takes this information and uses it to maintain the hardness of the station sound.

Thus, producers of radio sound, recognise the ways in which sound has the capacity to 'harden' and hold the listeners if it is presented in a certain way. One of these ways is to give the impression of friendship and intimacy. Many of the listener panel members came to the panel with this relationship in mind, only to find that there was someone between them and 'their' station - the 'streamlined' audience member who may only exist in the discursive realm, but who is a very real commodity in the world of commercial radio.

In-house audience research: the BBC

The BBC has its own Broadcasting Research Services, which has researched audiences since 1939, and includes research on audience appreciation, as carried out through methods such as the Daily Survey, focus groups, panels and advisory councils. In 1994, the BBC launched the Radio Opinion Monitor (ROM), which is a service that is contracted out to the same company that operates RAJAR- Research Services Limited (RSL). One difference between RAJAR results and the results of in-house research is that, with the latter, it is not necessary to publish results. The BBC has, over the years, collected masses of information that has never seen the light of day outside of the Corporation.

As a public service institution, the aims of BBC radio are different to those of commercial radio. In their audience research they also demonstrate clear differences. The BBC claims to place more emphasis on 'reach' figures (how many of the population listened to BBC radio for at least 5 minutes in the course of an average week) than on 'share' (the percentage of the total listening time in an area accounted for by a particular station). This is in the face of a dramatic increase in competition which has resulted in a reduction of the BBC's listening figures. In fact, it could be said that the BBC defends itself with reach figures while it still measures itself with share figures. If we look at the changes in its figures over the last few years we can see why this might be so. In quarter 2, 1993, the total BBC share of listening was 57%, compared to the total commercial share, which was 38.9%[17]. A year later, the BBC had fallen to 50.3%, whilst commercial radio had risen to 47.4%. In quarter 2, 1995, the BBC had suffered a further fall to 47.9%, whilst commercial radio had broken the 'fifty percent barrier' with 50.1%. One year later, the BBC had regained some ground, with a 48.6% share, as commercial radio dipped under fifty percent at 49.3%. In the most recent figures, for quarter 4, 1996, the BBC shows a 49.6% share, with commercial radio registering 48.3%. The BBC appears to be holding its own in terms of share of listening, but in 1995 it was widely predicted that they would not. The Managing Director of Radio at the BBC had predicted a decline in share, which would level off in the new millennium to around 30% (*The Radio Magazine* 11 November 1995:15). At the same time, the BBC began to talk in terms of concentrating on reach - that, as a public service broadcaster, it should try to provide programming for everyone at some time, rather than settle with some of the people, most of the time (cf. *People and Programmes* BBC 1995). This should also be seen in the context of political discussions going on at the time about the future of the universal licence fee.

The BBC shows a keener interest than the commercial sector in reactions to programmes or stations, known as 'appreciation indices'. The recently established Radio

---

[17] The figures do not add up to 100% because of 'other listening' which would include listening to stations which are not legal, and, listening to stations which are outside of the survey area in which the listener lives. For example, if someone in Bristol listens to Red Dragon Radio (which one of my informants did) their listening would be registered as 'other listening', as Bristol is not in the survey area for that station.

Opinion Monitor (ROM), and its predecessor, the Daily Survey, is a testament to this. ROM gathers audience reactions to BBC Network Radio (Radios 1,2,3,4 and 5 Live). Using two panels, recruited from the RAJAR survey, ROM achieves a monthly sample size of c.1,000, for each service. Results are reported monthly, by programme; each radio programme is given a Reaction Index (RI) which will range from 0-100, with a high RI indicating a high level of appreciation (RSL April 1995). Members of the panels receive two booklets, a Programme Listings Booklet, and a Special Questions Booklet. The Listings Booklet covers 7 days of national programmes, both commercial and BBC. 'Alongside each programme title is a scale of numbers from 10-0. This scale enables panel members to give an overall evaluation for each programme broadcast on these radio stations. A single summary score - the Reaction Index - is calculated for each programme' (ibid.). There is also space in the booklet for reactions to local and regional radio if respondents listened. The Special Questions Booklet is designed to allow BBC executives to ask the panel members more detailed questions.

Data from the ROM is reported in four different ways. A quarterly trend report indicates RIs for each month in the quarter, and for the previous four quarters. RIs are also broken down for demographic groups. The top and bottom 10 RI scoring programmes are listed for each network. Data is also reported in the form of an individual RI report, issued quarterly and showing weekly RIs for each programme. Based on smaller samples this data is intended for use in conjunction with the trend report. Fortnightly reports are issued every other Tuesday, giving the latest data, for reference only. The special questions report is issued every two weeks.

In a comparison between the US commercial television industry and the European public service tradition, Ang notes that public service broadcasters 'often display a confident disrespect toward [commercial stations]... "Giving the audience what it wants", a principle celebrated within commercial rhetoric as a triumph of cultural democracy, is deeply distrusted in public broadcasting circles, connoted as it is with submission to the easy, unprincipled path of populism' (Ang 1991:102). BBC radio, as demonstrated by the scale of its research, that aims to do more than simply measure audiences, has different goals from commercial radio. Rather than increasing its

audience size, in order to sell it to advertisers, the BBC, as a public service broadcaster, aims to demonstrate 'appreciation' amongst the general public. As Ang points out, however, this is not as clear a distinction as it might at first appear,

> The appreciation index is a kind of fetish for public service audience measurement: it is seen as the key difference between public service and commercial research. But the privileging of 'appreciation' as the pre-eminent variable to capture viewers' subjective responses to television also presents problems, signifying an unprompted, contradictory capitulation to the logic of the market after all... what is exactly measured here is not particularly clear: many varieties of 'appreciation' are lumped together into a one-dimensional scale of something like 'general satisfaction'.
>
> Ang 1991:144-145

According to Ang, appreciation measurements do 'nothing other than register the volume of applause'(ibid.:145), which is a narcissistic act on the part of the institution. As such it mobilises and quantifies subjective feelings of audiences 'in the service of institutional self-confidence' (ibid.). Thus the audience remains abstracted, a more sophisticated version of ratings serves merely to measure audiences reactions to its own performance whilst avoiding the 'specific and probably complex and contradictory responses of actual audiences. The audience remains an abstracted, objectified other' (ibid.). Rather than using research to get to know how actual audiences use and respond to radio in their everyday lives, 'Audience measurement information tends to be used as a form of public relations, as a sustainer of legitimacy, as a means of probing market conditions, in short, it provides the broadcasters with a discourse of symbolic reassurance' (ibid.:146). This is very necessary for the BBC in the current broadcasting and political environment.

In-house research by the BBC has been utilised for promotional purposes in a way that echoes commercial radio's use of rhetoric. An interesting example of this is the BBC's publication, *People and Programmes* (BBC 1995). Seen in the light of increased competition from commercial stations, and growing pressure to demonstrate value and relevance, both to its licence fee payers and to the government, this publication could be seen as an attempt to satisfy all interested parties that the BBC is responding to

researched audience needs and trends - a defence to criticism that GWR commonly uses.

According to Liz Forgan, former Managing Director of BBC Radio, 'successful radio understands how its audience thinks and reacts'[18]. To achieve this would be quite an accomplishment, considering the myriad ways in which radio is used and consumed, the heterogeneity of audiences and the aim of the BBC to serve the total population of Britain. *People and Programmes*, a glossy publication that covers BBC television and radio programming, admits that the BBC is not yet reaching all of its potential audiences, but claims to provide evidence that it is at least listening to audiences. *People and Programmes* claims to be the result of the 'largest research project in the BBC's history' (1995:19). It places the results of listening to audiences in the wider context of social trends, and predicts 'likely changes in audience need' (ibid.). Significantly, no details of methodology are given. It reports that it has uncovered a picture of audiences that is 'very unlike the unspoken but acutely patronising view of them that has influenced at least some of the debate about the development of broadcasting in the UK' (ibid.), which, by implication, is the way in which the BBC used to view its audiences. The audience is found to be capable of thinking and talking fluently about broadcasting, of analysing and deconstructing programmes 'on the spot'. The BBC names this new discovery 'the sophisticated audience'.

No piece of research can ever be 'neutral'; there will always be a purpose behind both the commissioning and the presentation of the research. The purpose behind this BBC report will be connected with a desire to be seen as more publicly accountable and responsive to 'researched audience needs'. With the growing choices available to listeners, there is greater competition amongst radio services, and the BBC must be seen to be responding to this situation. In contrast with the commercial streamlined audience, the BBC has created the sophisticated audience, an audience that would resist streamlining. This allows the BBC to demonstrate that ratings are less significant than appreciation. The BBC will lose out in the ratings game, as new stations come on air,

---

[18] Voice of the Listener and Viewer Autumn Conference, November 1994.

but, they will be able to demonstrate that they are responding to the researched needs of the 'sophisticated listener'.

The BBC has a forum for face-to-face interaction with listeners, facilitated by its national network of Advisory Councils. Local Radio Advisory Councils (LRAC) are each made up of 12 people, who are supposed to represent the area served by the local service, in terms of age, gender, area they live in, and ethnic background. In Bristol, the LRAC, at the time of my visit, was made up of middle-aged white men and women - which the Managing Editor of BBC Bristol recognised as unrepresentative. As with the GWR panels, members are recruited through radio broadcasts, to ensure that those who apply are already listeners. This restricts the representativeness of the panel. Having been interviewed and accepted onto the Council, members serve for three years. The local councils meet six times a year. In addition, the BBC has Regional Advisory Panels and Religious Advisory Panels.

As I only attended one LRAC meeting, I am unable to describe its operation in the same detail as the GWR panels, but I was able to observe some interesting differences as well as similarities. The LRAC meeting that I attended was, in relation to the GWR listener panels, fairly formal. The chair of the LRAC is a member of the council, appointed by the Managing Editor. The meetings follow set agendas, circulated beforehand along with the previous meeting's minutes. A regular feature of the meetings is the Managing Editor's report, which will include news about staffing changes, programming, research figures (when appropriate) and any other matters that may interest the Council. News about the Corporation may also be presented. There may be a guest speaker, who comes to the panel to talk about and answer questions on, a specific programme, or on aspects of BBC local radio.

I observed what appeared to be more engagement with the Council members, than was apparent with the GWR panels, with more questions probing what listeners want from, and think of, the service. It was also made clear to the Council, that the Managing Editor, whilst head of the local service, was very much a part of the larger Corporation, and that it was the desires of those above him, that had the most influence on his

actions. As with the GWR panels, it was made clear that the station would not act on the Council's advice unless it concurred with their 'research'. One could surmise that the BBC, through its particular version of the listener panel, is more responsive to its listeners. This would, however, be to misconstrue the effect that the meeting has on the end product - the broadcast. With the GWR panels, I felt that the panel members were talking to people who had the power to make changes, whereas with the LRAC, there was an acceptance that the agenda was set from higher up in the organisation. In addition, the LRAC was described to me by the Managing Editor as more of a public relations, than a research, exercise, which, could be seen to be true of the GWR panels as well. However, in both cases, these meetings will be presented (to the government, or to the Radio Authority) as 'research', as an exercise in accountability, and as community involvement.

Alongside the recognition of the sophisticated or streamlined audience, has taken place the development of the sophisticated and streamlined researcher. Within the radio industry, there is no simple correlation between research data and the application or publication of research results. Some commercial stations like GWR have, for some time, been telling their audiences how the station listens to them, in order to provide the service that the listener wants. Research provides a base for promoting the particular brand of service on offer. The BBC is telling their listeners that it understands their complex and different needs, and that it will do its best to meet them. In both cases, research underpins the station's rhetoric and its promotion.

Research, as I have shown, plays an important part in the creation and maintenance of a strong station rhetoric. The research is used to construct a listenership which is 'sold' back to individual listeners. In the case of commercial radio, this use of research can be seen as functionally appropriate in a competitive market. Success could be related to a successful definition of 'the audience'. The BBC's *People and Programmes,* which followed a programme strategy review, is significant as it demonstrates the use of research in a promotional exercise comparable with the commercial sector's enterprise of rhetoric creation. The BBC states that one of its 'central justifications for existing' is to be a '*universal* public service broadcaster, funded by all to make programmes for all',

which means that it has to reach out 'to previously neglected audiences' (BBC 1995:31 emphasis in original). This apparently presents them with a dilemma, as 'it would be destructive - and pointless - to adopt a programme strategy which in striking out in search of new audiences, neglected or undervalued the loyal audiences the BBC already has' (ibid.). However, it also gives them a defence - for a shrinking share of audience.

The BBC is presenting itself as attempting to deal with issues like quality versus popularity, and neglected versus loyal audiences. When combined with the growth of competition and threat to the licence fee, these things could be seen to account for the birth of the concept of the 'sophisticated audience'; an audience constructed through the creative use of research - who deserves to be, and is, listened to. Just as commercial radio's research constructs the audience, to sell it to the advertisers, then BBC research could be seen to be constructing the 'sophisticated audience', to sell to its licence fee payers. 'Sophisticated' listeners would understand that the BBC will not necessarily attract high ratings compared to commercial radio. Just as with commercial stations, this creative use of research can be seen as functionally appropriate to the situation the BBC finds itself in.

In conclusion, this chapter demonstrates some of the ways in which the radio industry constructs an institutional view of audiences. We can see the important role that research plays in this. GWR uses the classic argument of researched audience need; they have found a way in which they can use research to come up with a working machine of demand. It is a real demand, and they produce radio sound for that demand. They then sell the audience that responds to their product, to advertisers. But, because of streamlining, and the desire to attract the biggest possible audience, they respond to the needs of what could be described as the 'normative' range of the market. Their product is successful and it fills a need, but it serves only one sector of the population, leaving the needs of others unmet. With the current growth in the commercial sector, and with new technologies being developed, GWR may well argue that streamlining audiences and output (narrowcasting) is the only way to approach the future. In theory, the BBC as a public service institution, would still be there to reach those audiences not deemed large enough to be viable in the commercial sector.

On the basis of the evidence presented here - of how institutions following a market model use research to define demand, and then produce for that demand - it would be reasonable to say that audiences are well served by radio, and that radio stations understand their listeners. This conclusion, however, will collapse in the light of the ethnographic material which will be presented in the remainder of this thesis. My research demonstrates the diversity of the 'streamlined' market, and reveals markets that are ignored. Individuals may move between these two states. The ethnographic research that follows, re-situates people's tastes in, and behaviour around, radio sound. Radio sound is seen in relation to other aspects of everyday living. It is only when radio sound is situated in such a context, that we can begin to understand its role in contemporary life.

Chapter 3

Domestic Anthropology and Audience Ethnography

Audience Research

In her study into the use of television in Egypt, Abu-Lughod (1995) suggests that television gives women, the young, and rural populations, access to 'the stories of other worlds', and 'brings a variety of vivid experiences of the non-local into the most local of situations, the home' (1995:191). In the past, it would have been only urban men, listening to story tellers in Cairo coffee houses, who had regular exposure to 'imaginary non-local worlds' (ibid.). With television now having found a place in the everyday lives of most Egyptians, some people wish to use television to improve 'cultural literacy'. Abu-Lughod describes how 'a concerned group of culture-industry professionals has constructed of these women, youths and rural people a subaltern object in need of enlightenment' (ibid.). Taking on the role of 'guides to modernity', they promote or produce television programmes and characters, designed to expose the population to 'the virtuous modern citizen' (ibid.). These people, with their 'idealistic vision of television drama' (ibid.:196), promote Egyptian serials like *Hilmayya Nights*, which they think will work towards producing 'a modern cultured citizen with a national consciousness' (ibid.). *Hilmayya Nights* is a drama serial set in historical context, following the lives of a group of characters and their children from the late 1940s up until the early 1990s. Whilst the aims of its writer and supporters are to educate and enlighten, its critics seek to protect the poor, uneducated and rural populations from the political perspectives presented in the serial. The critics, comprising of intellectuals, politicians, censors and urban educated elite, are of opposing political persuasion to the supporters. Those who defend the series, do so on the grounds of art, comparing the brilliance of the serial with imported American soaps, and with home grown 'pumpkin-seed serials - serials that were fun to watch, like munching on seeds, but gave no real nourishment' (ibid.:192).

What supporters and critics of this and other serials have in common, is an assumption about 'the power of television serials and the vulnerability of subaltern viewers' (Abu-Lughod 1995:196). Between them they have constructed a 'public' which needs

enlightening, or protecting (ibid.:200). Such a construction, along with a belief in the powerful effects of mass media, fuels debate amongst the educated, intellectual and cultural elites. 'But', Abu-Lughod asks, 'can we determine how the television serials produced for them affect these "unenlightened subjects"?' (ibid.). Whilst debates continue about the positive and negative effects of serials on the 'culturally illiterate', the ethnographic fieldwork that Abu-Lughod carried out, has suggested how 'at least two groups who are the objects of these professionals' efforts and discourse - poor working-class women in Cairo and villagers in Upper Egypt - seem to slip through their well-meaning nets' (ibid.). She found that these viewers were selective in their readings of television serial messages; they would sometimes disagree with political viewpoints presented, and enjoyed 'defiant characters who lived as they could not' (ibid.:202). The urban women and the villagers of Abu-Lughod's ethnographic fieldwork were not passive and pliable receptors of enlightening messages, nor were they in need of protection, as they were capable of critical interpretations of political messages, and 'they accepted the moral stances presented only when they resonated with their worlds'(ibid.).

Television represents modernity in Egypt, but in different ways for different people. Some urban intellectual elites, believe it provides an opportunity to guide the uneducated and culturally illiterate to modernity, but, as Abu-Lughod's ethnographic research shows, 'these subalterns are already folded into Egyptian modernity in a different way'; they participate in 'the more common form of modernity in the post-colonial world: the modernity of poverty, consumer desires, underemployment, ill health and religious nationalism' (Abu-Lughod 1995:207). There is a gulf between the imaginary worlds of television serials and the real life experiences of working-class urban women and rural populations. There is also a gulf between the expectations that urban elites have, of the impact of television serials on the 'uneducated public', and the public's experience of watching and interpreting television serials. Abu-Lughod argues that television is only one part of the 'complex jumble' of the daily lives of those she researched: 'What they experienced through television added to, but did not displace whatever else already existed' (ibid.:203). In order to understand how television has transformed social life, in what ways the nature of experience itself has been altered,

and maybe how television has facilitated new identifications and affiliations, Abu-Lughod recommends 'careful ethnographic work' (ibid.:205-206).

Within anthropology, studies of the media are relatively new, and there is a special interest in the study of soap operas and serials. Miller (1995a) explains this interest in terms of the general interests of anthropology - 'this medium may be viewed as a manifest transformation in one of the definitial topics for the discipline, that is kinship and the family, leading to a reflexive reconstruction of families around increasingly global images' (1995a:13). Along with Abu-Lughod (1995) and Das (1995), his own work on the consumption of an American soap opera in Trinidad (Miller 1992, 1995b) indicates the ways in which a study of media consumption can inform debates around the issues of modernity, consumption and globalization. He found that through consumption, the American soap opera, *The Young and the Restless*, was recreated as Trinidadian, and served to refine 'the concept of Trinidad as the culture of bacchanal' (1992:179). While some might assume the Americanisation of Trinidad through such mass consumption, what in fact was found to be happening was quite different. This serves to reinforce Abu-Lughod's findings - that we should not assume passive and pliable audiences (or 'publics' for that matter), but should study the effects of mass media in detail, and in social and cultural, and domestic contexts. Ethnography is strongly implicated as the appropriate method to use.

Whilst anthropologists have tended to study the impact or role of media in non-Western societies, in other disciplines there has been a growing interest in using ethnographic and anthropological approaches to the study of the mass media in the West (Gray 1992; Gillespie 1995; Morley 1992; Moores 1993; Silverstone 1990; Silverstone and Hirsch 1992; Silverstone, Hirsch and Morley 1991). In this chapter I will concentrate largely on the development of 'ethnographic' approaches to audience studies in Britain, whilst recognising that there have been important parallel developments elsewhere, most significantly in the work of James Lull (1988, 1990, 1991). The studies contributing to the development of 'ethnographic' audience research in Britain, have emerged from the disciplines of cultural and media studies, and have focused their attentions on: television, television programmes, and new technologies generally. Radio, the oldest

time-based electronic mass medium, is virtually absent from this work, which, nevertheless, includes much that is applicable to the present study

As with the urban elites in Egypt, some academic audience researchers in the West, have tended to assume a 'public', or an 'audience' that is either, waiting for enlightenment from the powerful mass media, or in need of protection, or comprised of passive receptors of media messages. Ang's (1991) interest in an ethnographic approach to audience research, can be seen to relate directly to her fierce criticisms of such forms of academic audience research. She accuses the 'worst' of this work as having taken uncritical account of ratings discourse, as a foundation on which to build analyses of the effects of media consumption on audiencehood. Likewise, Lull (1990) found communication studies in America to be too far removed from the object (communication activity) of their studies. Through 'scientific research', using quantitative methods of data collection, these scholars categorise and analyse 'human communication activity' which, in fact 'often eludes scientific methodology' (Lull 1990:3). This is because 'many aspects of artistic texts and the complex processes of social interaction resist parsimonious and "objective" assessments' (ibid.). Academic audience research has been guilty of constructing the audience in similar ways to industrial research. The audience has been treated 'as an aggregate of individuals whose characteristics can then presumably be operationalized, examined, categorized and accumulated into an ever more complete picture' (Ang 1991:11). An example quoted by Ang of academic research that is just as guilty as industrial research of taxonomising and stereotyping audiences, deals with an analysis of 'heavy viewing' of television;

> For those viewers who are interested in all types of programme [i.e. 'not-selective' viewers], watching television is probably a habit, a ritualised way of occupying free time; little time would then be left over for other activities and for the use of other media. An ideal type in this category would be an older manual worker with a low level of education and low income. The image that emerges is of an unresourceful, uncritical, passive person who apparently prefers the world of television to his own world.
> Epse & Seiwert, quoted in Ang 1991:159

Such characterisations, according to Ang, 'can only be made from a distant, exterior perspective on this trumped-up audience category' (ibid.). Such perspectives ignore the socio-cultural contexts of audiencehood and the 'complex and contradictory' ways in which it takes place. She echoes the trend within cultural and media studies in Britain, to develop ethnographic approaches to the study of media consumption, and warns that,

> We must resist the temptation to speak about the television audience as if it were an ontologically stable universe that can be known as such... the social world of audiences consist of an infinite and ever expanding myriad of dispersed practices and experiences that can never be, and should not be, contained in any one total system of knowledge
>
> Ang 1991:155.

Back in the UK, Silverstone calls for a move towards an anthropology of the television audience, with a methodological approach that views the individual in the context of the everyday and takes account of 'the daily experiences of home, technologies and neighbourhood, and of the public and private mythologies and rituals which define the basic patterns of our cultural experience' (1990:174). He recognises that within academic research on media consumption there has been an effort to produce typologies which have ignored the context of television viewing and the complexities of everyday life. Rather,

> an enquiry into the audience should be an enquiry, not into a set of preconstituted individuals or rigidly defined social groups, but into a set of daily practices and discourses within which the complex act of watching television is placed alongside others, and through which that complex act is itself constituted
>
> Silverstone 1994:133

It is within this wider context - of academics that recognise the importance of an ethnographic approach to audience research and the consumption and use of media technologies - that this thesis fits. This chapter will examine in more detail what is meant by an ethnographic approach to the study of media consumption, concentrating on the development of the use in Britain of what is sometimes termed 'ethnographic' audience research or 'reception ethnography'. My description of audience research in this field is highly selective, focusing on the reasons behind the call for ethnographic

research and critiquing just some of the work that presents itself as such[1]. My own ethnographic research will be considered in the light of these developments, as well as in contrast to more traditional ethnography as understood within the discipline of social anthropology, where this study is firmly rooted. This will include looking briefly at examples of 'urban anthropology' and considering the particular problems of carrying out what I have chosen to term 'domestic anthropology'. My methods will be outlined in some detail, giving the following chapters, and the analyses contained therein, a methodological context.

For this short review of the work in academic audience research, which laid the foundations for, and developed an approach which promotes the benefits of the use of an ethnographic approach in Britain, I draw mainly on the work of David Morley (1980, 1986, 1992, 1995). His early work in the 1970s took on board the encoding/decoding model of communication, developed by Stuart Hall (1980). Morley (1980) looked at the formal devices and textual organisation, and at the interpretation, by audiences of different social classes, of *Nationwide,* a news magazine television programme. Later, his interest focused on the contexts of families, gender relations in the home, and everyday life, as the correct sites in which to situate and investigate the practice of television viewing (1986). These works are widely seen as highly influential, in the emergence of a view of television audience research which took into account the ways in which the social context of the consumption of television needed to be addressed. More recently, Morley, with others, has been concerned to situate the practice of television viewing within a wider study of information and communication technologies in the home (Silverstone and Morley 1990; Silverstone, Hirsch and Morley 1992; Morley 1992).

This widening of the focus of audience research to include other technologies, has been brought about, at least in part, by technological developments such as VCRs and home computers. There is concern with how deregulation of broadcast media, and new technological developments, will impact on social life. Yet the oldest of our

---

[1] For a more thorough description of this trend in audience research see Seiter, Borchers, Kreutzner and Warth (1989), Morley (1992, 1995) Moores (1993), Ang (1996).

domestically situated information and communication technologies is even now, little understood in a social context. Despite the warning by Silverstone and Morley that 'we must ... beware of overpriviledging more "visible" media to the neglect of others' (Silverstone and Morley 1990:46), radio has been curiously 'invisible' in audience studies. Nevertheless, despite the focus on television, the developments in audience research, especially over the past twenty or so years, do provide a fitting context for a consideration of the present study and its methodology, as will be demonstrated below.

From Text to Context

Prior to the development in the 1970s of Hall's encoding/decoding model of communication, there were two main, conflicting ways of looking at the impact of television on audiences. The first could be summarised as an 'effects' model, which sees viewers as passive receivers of media messages, as represented by the 'hypodermic' model where media messages are seen as being 'injected' into audience members. The second is the 'uses and gratifications' approach, which sees the proper focus of analysis as, what individuals do with the media, rather than what the media do to them. In this, the viewer is seen as active, and individual psychology is seen to account for differences in the interpretation and use of the media. Both approaches are charged with being insufficiently sociological, and of not taking into account the cultural context of audiencehood. It was in the light of these approaches and criticisms that the encoding/decoding model of communication was developed.

Hall combined the insights of communication theory, semiology, sociology and psychology, to create a model that could place the mass media in its social context (Morley 1995:302). From the 'effects' model he took 'the notion that mass communication is a structured activity, in which the institutions that produce the messages do have the power to set agendas, and to define issues' (Morley 1995:300). However, rather than the media having a direct effect, and making people behave in certain ways, as the effects theorists suggest, the media, according to this model, was seen to hold the capacity to set agendas, and to provide cultural categories and frameworks 'within which members of the culture will tend to operate' (ibid.). From the 'uses and gratifications' approach, the active viewer who makes meanings from media

texts was taken into account, but 'it was also designed to take on board... concern with the ways in which responses and interpretations are structured and patterned at a level beyond that of individual psychologies' (ibid.). Thus, this model takes into account the semiological perspectives that recognise that signs and symbols are encoded in media messages, which the audiences of those messages decode within a shared framework. It was understood that the same event could be decoded in more than one way, and that messages hold more than one potential reading, although certain meanings could be seen to be 'preferred'. Within this model, messages encoded in one way, could always hold the potential for different readings. A sign does not have a fixed meaning, it exists in an ideological 'flux'; signs are not disparate, they 'can be read any way, according to the psychology of the decoder' (ibid.:301). While 'total closure' of the encoded meaning is not seen as possible, potential meanings 'do not exist "equally" in the message: it has been structured in dominance' so that 'the "preferred reading" is itself part of the message, and can be identified within its linguistic and communicative structure' (ibid.).

Textual analysis alone, could not explain the meanings produced in the reading of a text, and a text could not be considered in isolation from its conditions of production and consumption (ibid.:302). According to this model, the questions to ask, are: which 'set of discourses' does the text encounter, and, how does that encounter contribute to the restructuring of the meaning of the text and of the discourses it meets,

> The meaning of the text will be constructed differently according to the discourses (knowledge, prejudices, resistances) brought to bear on the text by the reader: the crucial factor in this encounter of audience/subject and text will be the range of discourses at the disposal of the audience. Thus social position may set parameters to the range of potential readings, through the structure of access to different codes; certain social positions allow access to wider repertoires of available codes, certain others to narrower ranges.
>
> Morley 1995:302

As the meaning of a text was produced in the decoding encounter between text and reader, the argument was developed that it is 'the conditions of a practice' rather than the meaning of a text that should be the focus of attention, 'to examine the foundations

of communication, but, crucially, to examine those foundations as social and cultural phenomena' (ibid.). Conceiving of viewers as having an active role, in socio-cultural context, in decoding encoded messages, this approach opened up 'the possibility of thinking about television viewing as an area of cultural *struggle*' (Ang 1996:20).

But this model does have limitations. According to Ang, it has a narrow view of the role of the audience, whose effectivity 'is limited to negotiations open to viewers within the given range of significations made possible by a text or genre of texts' (Ang 1996:20). In addition, this model's conception of the audience is limited, so that 'the sole problem is the way in which texts are received/decoded in specific socio-cultural contexts, failing to take into account that decodings are embedded in a more general practice of television viewing as such' (ibid.:20-21). The whole idea of the decoding of media messages suggests 'analytical reasoning' on the part of viewers, as they make sense of texts. Ang questions this, because, 'watching television is usually experienced as a "natural" practice, firmly set within the routines of everyday life... it goes without saying that a practice which is *felt* to be "natural" structurally is not natural at all' (ibid.:21), and furthermore, as Ang goes on to say, the very 'naturalness' of the act of viewing can be assumed to have some bearing on the ways in which texts are received and used, 'what is at stake here is the way in which television audiences relate to watching television as a cultural practice' (ibid.).

At around the same time as the encoding/decoding model emerged in the 1970s, new semiological and sociological approaches were developed, in opposition to each other. On the one hand, a psychoanalytic theory of the audiences of cinema was being developed - 'screen theory'. On the pages of the journal, *Screen,* a perspective was established that, like effects theory, and influenced by feminism, 'positioned' the spectator as the receiver of 'a singular and guaranteed effect' (Morley 1995:305). These effects could be uncovered through careful textual analysis. Dominant bourgeois ideology was seen to be transmitted in the texts of films, and other media, and as having 'real effects in society' (ibid.:304). This approach ignored the possibilities of empirical audience research and the need to credit audience members with some degree of interpretative control. On the other hand, within television audience research, from the

mid 1970s, the *active* viewer was seen as a more appropriate way of conceiving of audiences. As the previous emphasis of media/audience studies on news programmes and politics on television was being widened, to include the study of popular culture in the form of, among other genres, soap operas, Morley describes the emergence of what he calls 'optimism' in audience research (ibid.:308). By the end of the 1980s 'it could be argued that the "optimism" had become central to the model of media consumption which had come to dominate the field' (ibid.:309). This active audience theory, saw media content as always polysemic and open to interpretation, with the idea of preferred readings being somehow forgotten.

Debates about the passivity or activity of audiences cannot, according to Morley, be resolved through abstract theorising. It is only through empirical research that an understanding of the practice of television viewing can be understood. Morleyis *Family Television* is described by Hall as 'a seminal piece of research into the question of the social uses of television' (Hall's foreword to Morley 1986:7). This qualitative study, focused on the family as the context for television viewing, in order to understand how, in the home, the activity of television viewing takes place. An understanding of the activity of television viewing, was prioritised 'over the understanding of particular responses to particular types of programme material (the level at which the *Nationwide* audience study is pitched)' (Morley 1986:41). A significant development in audience research was taking place, as Morley saw the domestic context as the 'necessary framework within which we must place our understanding of the particularity of individual responses to different types of programming' (ibid.). At the heart of Morley's approach to audience research, was his methodology, which used in-depth unstructured interviews with family members in their homes.

Later, Morley and others saw the benefit of situating television viewing, as a socio-cultural practice, not only in the context of the household (which may or may not also be a family), but in the context of other domestic information and communication technologies. This was empirically studied through the Household Uses of Information and Communication Technology project (HICT) (Silverstone, Hirsch and Morley 1991,1992). This venture marked a

concern with the complex set of relationships that mark and define the place and significance of the domestic in the modern world - a place and significance enhanced, mediated, contained, even constrained, by our ever increasing range of information and communication technologies and the systems and services that they offer the household.

Silverstone and Hirsch 1992a:1

This view of the consumption of information and communication technologies (ICTs) does not present the domestic sphere as separate from the outside world, but as embedded in it, just as the use of ICTs is embedded in the moral, social, economic and cultural practices of the household (see Silverstone, Hirsch and Morley 1992 on 'the moral economy of the household'). Everyday life and domestic practices, on the micro level, are seen as the appropriate place from which to begin to understand macro issues. Morley sees communication technologies as important constitutors of national and domestic identities. It is in the domestic arena that we need to begin, if we want to understand 'the constitutive dynamics of abstractions such as "the community" or "the nation"' (Morley 1992:283). Studies such as the HICT project, will add to and inform, debates on the privatisation of domestic life, and the social and cultural impact of changing technologies, because they are informed by 'substantive empirical work', which helps to 'redress the balance between assertion and informed argument' (Silverstone and Hirsch 1992a:1).

Ethnography and Audience Research

The use of the term 'ethnography' to describe methodologies employed in, or appropriate to, audience research, is now fairly common. Roger Silverstone is a strong advocate of this methodology. He cites some recent reviews of the changing and competing approaches to audience research, as having documented the debates well, but having sometimes lost sight of the audience itself, 'perversely preferring methodology to substance' (Silverstone 1994:132). There has been a spate of writing on methodological approaches to audience research, with a keen interest in ethnography, but with apparently little ethnography taking place or being reported. Silverstone's comments are interesting, because, in his own words, 'the first substantive product of this research [HICT] is a book on, and in, theory' (ibid.:ix). Silverstone directed the

71

HICT project. In *Television and Everyday Life* he has 'not sought to integrate - in the best sociological tradition - theory and empirical data within a single text' (ibid.:ix). Very little has been written, based on the HICT data itself, (but see Silverstone and Morley 1990 and Hirsch 1992). Silverstone accounts for his choice to write a book on theory, by saying that there is no simple reason except that he is 'an inveterate theoriser' (1994.:ix). He suggests that one of the great strengths of a qualitative methodology 'is precisely its ability to generate theory: and in particular to generate theory which is grounded in, and which seeks to explain, social process, to understand the density of lived relations' (ibid.). To those in agreement with this last statement, it is somewhat disappointing to be presented with theory that does not reveal its own grounding, despite the size and scope of the empirical research project.

Four studies, that claim to use ethnography to study the consumption of media and/or technologies, are briefly outlined below, concentrating on their methodologies and what they mean by 'ethnography': Radway's (1987) study of romance reading in an American town; Gray's investigation of the gendered use of VCRs (1992); the HICT project (Silverstone, Hirsch and Morley 1991); and Gillespie's (1995) study of young Punjabi Londoner's talk around television. Gray and Silverstone et al, concentrate on the consumption of technology, rather than specific programmes or genres of programmes, Radway concentrates on the reading of a genre of fiction, and Gillespie looks at the way young Punjabi Londoners use the media to help them construct new ethnicities, through a study of their 'TV talk'. First, it is necessary to investigate what is meant by 'ethnography', as used by audience researchers, and how it compares with the ethnographic approaches associated with anthropology. Nightingale (1989) indicates the need to think again about what audience researchers mean by 'ethnography', fearing its misuse, yet recognising its potential value to this academic field.

Moores provides an overview of recent developments in qualitative audience research. He charts the 'ethnographic turn' that has taken place, in response, he says, to the failure of academic and industry researchers 'to deal adequately with the dynamics and diversity of media reception' (1993:1). The failure has been in not situating media audiences within their cultural context, and in not appreciating the media's varied uses.

Moores feels that the new reception studies can 'properly be called ethnographies' despite the fact that, compared to anthropological and sociological research, they rely 'mainly on audio-taped conversations with viewers, listeners and readers which may not last much more than an hour each' (ibid.:4). He recognises that spending a year or more living with a group of people, the anthropologists' way of carrying out an ethnography, is very different to a few hours spent in a living room, talking about television or radio, but, what makes reception studies, reception *ethnographies*, are the intentions of the research, which he sees as similar to those of extended anthropological research[2]. These intentions are to do with 'questions of meaning and social context - and with charting the "situational embeddedness" of cultural practices' (ibid.). He calls for a 'critical' ethnography 'which is committed to critically analysing culture as well as describing it' (ibid.), to relate respondents' accounts to their everyday activities 'in relation to broader frameworks of interpretation and to structures of power and inequality' (ibid.:5). This approach gives significance to respondents' accounts, but, 'is not afraid to interrogate and situate their spoken accounts' (ibid.). This suggests that Moores feels that anthropologists rely too heavily on description, and not enough on 'critically' situating accounts within the broader contexts of power relations, and are guilty of not critically reviewing the position of the researcher, and the status of written ethnographies. He appears to be suggesting that reception ethnographers can achieve equally valuable insights as anthropologists, by being extra 'critical'.

As Moores points out, the extended periods of participant observation that form the mainstay of ethnography for anthropologists, are not a viable option when one's fieldsite is the sitting room. Strategies have to be employed that can overcome this; a different methodology, that still preserves some of the qualities of ethnography, must be developed. Moores, in comparing anthropology's use of ethnography, and reception studies' use of it, reveals a different motivation within the research project.

There are broad differences between the anthropological approach that the current study takes, and reception ethnography, as represented by Moores. Within anthropology, there

---

[2] This is Moores own interpretations of a body of work that he defines as 'reception ethnographies' which may not be shared by those who conducted the studies he draws on.

are many different and rich theoretical movements which have some implications on methodologies, making it difficult to sum up in brief what social anthropology is, and how it is done. However, if we attempt to summarise it, ignoring all of its complexities, it could be said: to be seeking to understand the social structures and cultures of those it studies. The current research seeks to understand the use of radio sound in the home, from the perspective of those whom I recruit into the study. This follows a long tradition within anthropology, which would aim to achieve this through immersion in the field, and engaging in everyday living alongside informants, over an extended period of time (Beattie 1964; Evans-Pritchard 1951; Leach 1982; Lienhardt 1964; Mair 1972). This is an aspect of ethnography that the current study, and audience research in Britain more generally, has had to adapt because of the subject and it's location. Traditionally, a year or more would allow an anthropologist to experience the changing seasons, and the practices which accompany them. This aspect of qualitative research, is, in my opinion, crucial, in order to obtain the kind of depth that ethnographies look for, to observe changes - in activities, opinions and relationships, and to observe the fluidity of everyday life. Rich descriptive material, gathered in this way (through the ethnography), can be analysed and compared cross-culturally, in order to highlight and bring into relief, social and cultural practices, that, embedded in their social and cultural context, are taken for granted and naturalised. Through such research, it is possible to theorise about the condition of human life. While ritual practices have always been at the heart of anthropological studies, mundane, everyday life and practices have always formed the context within which they are understood (Beattie 1964; Cohen 1982; Leach 1982, 1976).

As Jenkins states, 'The practice of intensive fieldwork has been central to the definition of modern social anthropology as a discipline' (1994:433). Intensive fieldwork allows the anthropologist to get past a reliance on oral accounts which can introduce distortions in the 'desire to explain' (ibid.:438). Such an account can generalise and standardise motivations, and, 'In doing so, it abstracts from the behaviour of those in question and creates a story that runs parallel to, or a mapping that is laid over, the perceptions, motivations, emotions and so forth that are at work in the particular instance' (ibid.). Such accounts could be seen as creating alternative narrations of social life for the

anthropologist. Accounts or stories of this sort can develop independently of the actions or events that the anthropologist is trying to understand, they can leave out the obvious, concentrate on the exceptional, and reinforce stereotypes (ibid.).

Social, or everyday, life is not transparent, or straightforwardly open to the interpretation of either actors or anthropologist. Rather, it is 'complex and heterogeneous, made up of differing and exclusive realms, of public and private, even secret, knowledge and deeds' (Jenkins 1994:441). Using participant observation the anthropologist can learn how to behave through a series of 'apprenticeships' (Jenkins 1994:442, following Bloch 1992). The anthropologist can thus learn the skills necessary to assess his or her own interpretations and actions in the fieldwork setting;

> Conducting fieldwork is a two-sided process: the anthropologist must undo and gradually bring to consciousness his or her own assumptions at the same time as grasping the indigenous categories. This is bearing in mind that the categories and assumptions are not simply intellectual, but also bodily: habits, skills and so forth.
>
> Jenkins 1994:442

Like social life itself, interactions between anthropologist and informant are 'acts of mutual interpretation' (ibid.:443). According to Jenkins the anthropologist must 'get caught up in' everyday life, 'where there is no objective truth, but simply potentially exclusive versions of the truth that together constitute the event' (ibid.). We must beware of a subject that fits objective expectations. Everyday life is not perfectly transparent, readily available as pre-formed knowledge. Through the apprenticeship of intensive fieldwork, the anthropologist 'is committed in the body... to an encounter with another form of social life' (ibid.:451).

An example of what Moores terms a reception ethnography, is Radway's study of romance reading in an American town (Radway 1987). Radway contacted her key informant, Dot, a bookseller in Smithton, because she had become well known for being a keen romance reader, who also gave advice and recommendations to other romance readers about specific texts, publishers and new releases. Dot had been a housewife, caring for three children and her husband, when she took up romance reading. She became so keen on it that she later sought work in a book shop. At the time

of Radway's fieldwork, Dot had become an expert on romantic fiction, and had started to produce a newsletter, reviewing new books. She had many regular customers, some of whom she involved in Radway's research. Radway first visited the town in the summer of 1980, when she carried out two group discussions which lasted four hours, with a total of 16 of Dot's regular customers. These meetings took place in Dot's home, as did the individual interviews that she conducted with five of 'Dot's most articulate and enthusiastic romance readers' (1987:48). In addition, she spent time with Dot, and interviewed her five times. A pilot questionnaire was filled out by the 16 women who attended the discussions, and an extra 25 women who were customers in Dot's shop. These questionnaires included 'directed-response questions' some of which, when Radway left Smithton and reviewed her data, were, with hindsight, inappropriate. Radway redesigned the questionnaires and sent them to Dot, who returned 42 of them, completed.

On her second visit, Radway stayed for a week at Dot's house. She spent three days in the bookstore observing and talking to Dot and her customers. She also re-interviewed the five women that she had interviewed during her first visit. From her description of the fieldwork, Radway's informants can be seen as eager participants. They were keen romance readers, whom she describes as a loosely constituted group. Although not a random sample, the women provided Radway with a group who saw romance reading as important in their lives, and it was the role of romance reading in everyday life that she wanted to investigate.

Despite the fact that Radway labels her research 'ethnographic', she does not achieve an understanding of how romance reading fits into the complex everyday lives of the women she talked to[3]. A criticism of her study, could be that Radway, whilst engaging with her informants in an attempt to understand their practice of romance reading, imposes her own reading of the 'ethnographic' situation, in the form of a pre-conceived ideological viewpoint. She appears to impose on the Smithton women her own *a priori* convictions of how women *should* ideally behave. This is a methodological problem; in order to gain an understanding of the practice of romance reading in the lives of her

---

[3] Radway herself recognises the limits of her study in this respect in her conclusion.

informants, she would need to be more concerned with how and why they *do* behave. Moores, sees the strength of Radway's approach as her 'willingness to be swayed by the women's own accounts of their consumption practices', and that she 'naturally', 'moved beyond those accounts to try to offer a theoretical explanation and political assessment of them' (Moores 1993:48). In contrast to Moores, Ang (1996) responds negatively to the combination of Radway's ethnographic openness on the one hand, and her political assessment on the other; 'whereas in the beginning the ethnographer's position entails a vulnerable stance that puts her assumptions at risk, what is achieved in the end is an all but complete restoration of the authority of feminist discourse' (Ang 1996:103). Radway's feminist convictions lead her to conclude that the women of her study are somehow misguided in their practice of romance reading, that it is done in response to their oppressed condition, and that they would do better to rise up against their oppressors. This is not to suggest that a feminist perspective is not valid, but, as Ang fears, it may be that Radway's 'radical intent is drawing dangerously near a form of political moralism, propelled by a desire to make "them" more like "us"' (ibid.:104).

Ang suggests that Radway fails to take the women's statements seriously enough; that she is quick to downplay the enjoyment they report from romance reading, as she labels it 'vicarious' and 'compensatory' (Ang 1996:104). Ang's own work exploring the pleasure that Dutch viewers gain from an American soap opera, *Dallas* (1985, 1996), serves to indicate ways in which pleasureableness needs to be framed and explained, within the context of its experience, not in 'the *ideological function* of pleasure' (Ang 1996:105). Radway's study does serve, however, as an example of what I would suggest Moores means by a 'critical' ethnography. He wants to see a critical, ethnographic approach to cultural analysis, in order to build a theory of 'constrained cultural creativity'. This would take into account the 'interpretative agency of actual viewers and readers whose constructions of meaning are nevertheless subject to physical and symbolic "resource constraints", including the limits imposed by prior processes of textual production' (Moores 1993:140).

From my perspective, working within social anthropology in a field that is similar to the reception studies that Moores is concerned with, I would agree that an ethnographer

should be aware of the constraints and limits imposed on the people they study. But it is through ethnographic research that these constraints and limits can be understood, as they operate, and as informants understand or engage with them. It is precisely in the ethnographic encounter, that such constraints and limits, as well as their significance, will be revealed. Lull, from his experiences of 'collecting and analysing naturalistic data' (1988:16) follows the grounded theory argument of Glaser and Strauss (1967). He feels strongly that theories will emerge from each research project, spontaneously, and that 'we should not simply conduct research that is programmatically influenced by any fixed theoretical perspective if we are to really "let the data speak to us"'(ibid.). Ethnography might be described, simplistically, as descriptive; anthropology uses ethnography as a method of research, but anthropology is not ethnography. Radway's methods of inquiry appear to be sound, as her initial engagement with the women made her reform certain preconceptions. However, in her analysis and interpretation, she does not appear to have placed her ethnographic data at the centre; her interpretations appear to be imposed on her material, rather than emerging from it. The way in which Radway uses her ethnographic material - imposing her own theoretical structures of interpretation - has not been uncommon, within certain genres of social anthropology. Yet, if we are to understand the motivation behind reception ethnographers using 'ethnographic' approaches, in order to help situate media consumption in the context of the everyday, and to understand viewers/listeners interpretations, then such ideological, theoretical, or even moral, impositions, may militate against such understanding.

Here we can usefully draw on the work of Geertz, who represents an interpretive strain of anthropology. He distinguishes between 'thin' and 'thick' description in order to explain that, for an anthropologist, 'doing ethnography' is more than following 'techniques and received procedures'. 'What defines it is the kind of intellectual effort it is: an elaborate venture in, to borrow a notion from Gilbert Ryle, "thick description"' (1975:6). Geertz considers Ryle's example of the difference between 'two boys rapidly contracting the eyelid of their right eyes' (ibid.). For one boy this is 'an involuntary twitch' while for the other it is 'a conspiratorial signal to a friend' (ibid.). From observation alone the movements appear identical, but 'the difference, however unphotographical, between a twitch and a wink is vast' (ibid.). Should a third boy

parody another boy's wink he is neither twitching nor winking, and if he is uncertain of his 'mimicking abilities', he may practice them in front of a mirror in advance. In the latter case he is rehearsing, not parodying. All of these boys' behaviours are open to misinterpretation. Indeed, the original winker might have been 'fake winking' in order to 'mislead outsiders into imagining there was a conspiracy afoot when there in fact was not' in which case our description would need to 'shift accordingly' (ibid.:7). The point Geertz is making is,

> that between what Ryle calls the "thin description" of what the rehearser (parodist, winker, twitcher...) is doing ("rapidly contracting his right eyelids") and the "thick description" of what he is doing ("practising a burlesque of a friend faking a wink to deceive an innocent into thinking a conspiracy is in motion") lies the object of ethnography: a stratified hierarchy of meaningful structures in terms of which twitches, winks, fake-winks, parodies, rehearsals of parodies are produced, perceived, and interpreted, and without which they would not (not even the zero-form twitches, which, *as a cultural category*, are as much nonwinks as winks are nontwitches) in fact exist, no matter what anyone did or didn't do with his eyelids.
>
> Geertz 1975:7

However artificial Ryle's example may seem, Geertz maintains that it presents us with an image of 'the sort of piled-up structures of inference and implication through which an ethnographer is continually trying to pick his way' (ibid.). Thin description is to describe what happened, thick description is to explain it in the light of an understanding of those structures of inference and implication. Here we might say that the long term, in-depth fieldwork associated with anthropology will ideally consist of thick description, while the ethnography engaged in by Radway might be seen as thin description which achieves its depth through the application of a feminist theory. In the current study, I have attempted to 'situationally embed' my descriptions and observations, in the wider sociocultural practices and structures of my respondents, and their 'structures of inference and implication'. The reception ethnographer, as represented by Radway, attempted to 'situationally embed' her description in the ideology of feminism, an ideology alien, it would seem, to her respondents (see chapter 5 for a further discussion of Radway's study).

Another example of what Moores would call a reception ethnography, is Gray's (1992) research on the gendered use of technology in the home. Gray's focus is on the 'domestic video cassette recorder "VCR" and in particular how women use, and what they think about, this piece of entertainment technology' (1992:1). Her interest with the gendering of technology, in the home environment, led to other factors coming into play - specifically, work and leisure. She acknowledges that, for women in particular, 'home is also a place of work' (ibid.:3). A woman operates within the context of 'home' and 'work' to define 'her responsibilities and obligations to others; and the amount of spare time that she is able to organise for herself' (ibid.:4). Home-based leisure for women is, in general, different to home-based leisure for men. With this in mind, Gray looked at the domestic division of labour within the household and 'the decision-making processes informing family leisure activities' (ibid.) as the context in which her focus, on a 'non-obligatory activity' could properly be situated.

Gray describes her fieldwork as ethnography which is heavily reliant on respondents' accounts of their experience and 'their way of articulating that experience' (ibid.:33). She went to their homes and was able to understand something of their domestic lives with children and partners, but observation as such was 'extremely limited'. She talked to 30 women in Yorkshire ranging in age from 19 to 52 with varied class positions. Most of them had a male partner and children. She carried out open-ended 'conversational interviews' which lasted at least one and a half hours. She found that the women talked not just about VCRs but about all sorts of life experiences and often recounted stories that at first she thought would be superfluous information. She realised, however, that this sort of information provided an insight into their everyday lives and feelings that talk restricted to VCRs would fail to do. It helped to position the VCR as a socially situated object.

Gray asked the women to colour-code activities and technologies in and around the house on a scale of pink to blue (pink meaning feminine, blue masculine). She found that objects were not necessarily one colour and she had to

> break down the VCR into its different modes... The 'record', 'rewind' and
> 'play' modes are usually lilac, but the timer switch is nearly always blue, with
> the women having to depend on their male partners or their children to set the
> timer for them. The blueness of the timer is exceeded only by the deep indigo
> of the remote control
>
> Gray 1987:42

A lack of knowledge and technical ability on the part of women in relation to VCRs is careful situated by Gray in social contexts and gendered positions. VCRs are not inherently masculine or feminine, gendered meanings associated with them are acquired meanings. Many of the women in her study 'felt inadequate because of their lack of knowledge and some explained this in terms of not being technically minded' (Gray 1992:166), others said it was laziness that prevented them from acquiring the knowledge. Some, on the other hand, deliberately avoided its acquisition on the grounds that it would become their responsibility to operate the VCR and they already had enough to do, this, Gray asserts, is to do with 'the domestic division of labour in the home and appropriate "territories" mapped out across gender. Two of the older women had been quite calculating in their maintenance of ignorance, a tactic based on years of practical experience' (ibid.:167).

Gray sees gender as 'the key determinant' (1992:187) in this balance of use and knowledge of VCRs and other pieces of technology in the home, a conclusion made in the light of her research experience. Moores wonders if she asserts this 'a little too boldly', especially in relation to the suggestion that this 'cuts across divisions of education and class in her sample' (1993:94). Bearing in mind the limitations of her research methodology (single interviews with 30 informants) his doubts could be well founded, but the methods used are not the basis of his criticism. Moores would appear to be suggesting that he would have placed the research findings in a more critical context, to include differential power situations as defined by different education levels and class positions. But, if it is from empirical research, that critical contexts are observed, we could follow Gillespie, who, in her study of the processes through which ethnic identities are formed, found that ethnography is the ideal method, because it 'greets cultural theory with empirical questions. The ethnography sets media consumption and reception, and issues of ethnicity and identity, in the context of its

subjects' cultures and everyday lives' (1995:1). Gillespie is critical of studies like Gray's, which call themselves ethnography, noting that the term has to her mind been mis-used, and has 'come to be associated with one method in social research, the in-depth, open-ended, semi-structured interview' (1995:55). Nevertheless, Gray's conclusions do appear to have emerged from her data.

The HICT project and Gillespie's research, which I will discuss below, could be seen to represent a different understanding, and application, of qualitative methods in audience research, which is far more compatible with the approach of the present study. Silverstone, Hirsch and Morley (1991) recount their methodology and its implications, as employed in their ethnographic approach to the study of household information and communication technologies (HICT project). The HICT project was a 'sociological, anthropological and social psychological study of social and technological relations within twenty households in London and the south-east of England' (1991:205). The study began with fieldwork carried out with four families recruited through a market research agency. At this point, they wanted their female researcher to collect information on the families' activities over a typical week, and to gain access to the families in their domestic settings as much as she could. They began by asking the families to complete weekly time-use diaries, which would record their activities, and their technology use. During a separate week, the researcher visited each family on five occasions, seeking to observe and take part in their daily life, while disturbing it as little as possible. At the end of these exercises the families were interviewed.

In this way, details about patterns of use were collected, alongside 'justifications and explanations for (and indeed fantasies around) those patterns of use' (1991:210). However, they discovered 'irresolvable limitations of a participant observational ethnographic approach'(ibid.:210), and were unhappy with the timing of the different methods. From the material collected through participant observation, they felt that they may only be able to achieve a superficial description of the 'culture' of the families. In addition, within a two week period with each family (one week completing the diaries, another being visited) they felt that not enough analysis, or comparison, of technology use or family interactions, was possible (ibid.:211). So, whilst the methods used

provided opportunities for spending time with families, and getting involved with their everyday lives, they wanted to change their research strategy for the rest of the fieldwork, and reduce their reliance on participant observation. With a new male researcher, they developed a different approach spread out over one year. They recruited a further 16 families through schools, and significantly, these families took part in the research over a minimum of six months each.

Silverstone et al (1991) describe a 'methodological raft' made up of several discrete elements of research, carried out over a minimum of nine visits to each household. Visits lasted from 2-6 hours, so that a large body of data was collected using different strategies or 'research inputs', all of which had a 'specific function' and a 'reflexive or triangulatory significance' (1991:212). Semi-structured, preliminary interviews were undertaken first to collect demographic information, and to allow the families to get used to the idea of talking about themselves. Participant observation inevitably happened in those moments when an interview or other activity had ended and casual chatting took place, or sometimes the researcher was invited to join a family meal. Any moments of 'non-research' activity were valued as providing one of the levels of 'multiple triangulation which we incorporated into the study in order to sustain the web of understanding which it is our aim to produce' (ibid.:213-214). Time-use diaries were completed by individuals within the families. They recorded activities and technology use, including information about who else was present, in half hour segments of time. These proved central to the project as they gave information about the 'space-time geography' of the homes; how members of families came together and moved apart over time, and the place of technologies in these movements. In the interviews carried out when diaries were collected, information about the boundaries between the public and private spheres of life was revealed. Household maps were drawn by each member of each household, which revealed individual conceptualisations of the internal boundaries of the households, and network diagrams, carried out with family groups, explored boundaries beyond the home, with friends and kin.

These 'research inputs' form the main elements of the methodological raft, with further exercises - technology lists, personal-construct interviews, media use interviews, and a

household income and expenditure analysis - adding to this core, and providing justifications for further visits. Final interviews, concluded the fieldwork, when the families had the opportunity to say why they had taken part, and what they had learned by, and felt about, the experience. These interviews also looked at future expectations that the families may have for the purchasing and use of ICTs. Silverstone, Hirsch and Morley describe how the methods used for finding out about ICTs in the home 'emerged and evolved as a result of dialogue with the subjects and subject of the research' (1991:222). Drawing on the notion of grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss 1967), their research was 'multiply triangulated' and they achieved 'a kind of reflexiveness in which methods "talk to each other" and subjects comment on the research process and on their own involvement in it as it progresses'; they saw their research 'subjects' as research 'partners' (Silverstone et al 1991:222).

The HICT study does not profess to have come up with a universal model for how an ethnography of media consumption in the home should be carried out. Silverstone et al, state that, 'all ethnographies require, in large measure, the reinvention of the methodological wheel' (1991:206). Although the HICT project appears to have set up the conditions for the production of an ethnographic account - or ethnography - this has not as yet been produced, leaving the project itself open to criticism. Moores (1993) suggested that the research for the HICT project might have gone 'a little too deep', that 'the vast amount of data collected has evidently proved difficult to sort and manage - because some years after the fieldwork was finished, the only sustained accounts which are available up to now are "portraits" of three out of the twenty households [that took part in the study]' (Moores 1993:101). One might be critical of the output of the study, and therefore question the methodological approach, but if we turn to the work of Gillespie and assume some cross fertilisation between her work and the HICT project (Silverstone was her supervisor), we can see how the ethnographic approach was embraced and applied by her. In order for an ethnographic piece of research to succeed, the research must move from data collection, through analysis to interpretation. Whilst the HICT has so far failed to demonstrate this convincingly, Gillespie's study has succeeded.

Gillespie's research on young Punjabi Londoners and how television is involved in their on-going project of identity creation (1995), has a far narrower focus than the HICT project. She focuses on 'TV talk'; how her informants talk about their television and video viewing, what meanings different genres of programmes from different cultures, have in their lives, and how this clashes with or complements the more traditional lifestyles of their parents and grandparents. Gillespie's fieldwork is similar to ethnography as traditionally practised by anthropologists. For Gillespie;

> Ethnography highlights the small-scale processes, rather than the large-scale products, of people's perceptions, thoughts and action. The ethnographer reads the world, as she reads mediated messages, through the eyes of her informants themselves; she focuses on the microprocesses of daily uses, interpretations and identifications, rather than macrohistorical logics of "longue durée"
>
> Gillespie 1995:1

Gillespie - like the HICT project's second phase of fieldwork - recognises the value of long-term involvement in the field. It echoes another of the premises of the HICT project, that an ethnographic approach can 'also make manifold connections between micro- and macroprocesses; between the public and private, the domestic, local, national and international spheres in contemporary societies; and between "micro" issues of power in everyday life and "macro", structural social features' (Gillespie 1995:1). While her fieldwork took place over two years, between 1988 and 1991, her involvement with Southall and the young people there, spanned many years. She had first worked in the area as a probationary teacher in 1981. Her access to young people was helped considerably by her teaching. At different times, she taught: English as a second language, sociology and media studies. Gillespie collaborated on a questionnaire-based survey which ran alongside her fieldwork. The survey was completed by 333 young people between the ages of 12 and 18. It was designed to elicit information about how young people perceive themselves in Southall, where there are people from a variety of different cultural backgrounds. It also sought to uncover patterns of media consumption. She used the survey to indicate broad patterns of media consumption, but saw the qualitative element of her research, as essential in order to understand those patterns within social and cultural contexts. The qualitative, ethnographic research she refers to as her 'fieldwork'.

Gillespie describes her main phases of fieldwork as 'groundwork', 'immersion' and 'focusing'. Like Silverstone et al (1991), Gillespie sees her fieldwork as made up of 'a multiplicity of data-gathering strategies', in her case in a 'variety of contexts, drawing on the experiences of a wide range of people over a long period of time' (Gillespie 1995:60). She is, however, less keen on viewing her research in terms of discrete strategies or 'inputs'. She could divide up various research strategies for discussion, but feels that, 'ethnography does not lend itself to neatly systematic research designs, but rather to *post hoc* reconstructions of what is in practice a messy process of piecemeal inductive analysis based upon continually incoming data' (ibid.:61). Her three phases of fieldwork must then be understood as overlapping and not mutually exclusive.

The groundwork phase was where Gillespie gained a deeper understanding of the many cultures of Southall, as constructed by young people. To do this, she developed 'relationships of trust and reciprocity' with young people and their families. She became involved in school excursions and projects, which helped her to deepen her understanding of the issues important to the young people of her study. In the second phase, which she calls immersion, she began to take part in the lives of young people as an observer and as a participant. She visited homes, and became more 'immersed' in the lives of young Punjabi Londoners and their families. She developed 'key informants' who became good friends. Survey results and interpretations were discussed with them. In the final phase of fieldwork, after one year, she re-focused her research agenda. She was guided by her first year of fieldwork, and by the results of the survey. She now focused on 16-18 year olds, and began to concentrate on 'everyday, casual conversations about TV' (1995:64). The main 'sites' where she could observe or take part in such conversations, were: morning registration with her students, and in media classes which she taught. The discussions held as part of the media course, were not as instinctive as those taking part during registration (which were sparked off by comments such as 'did you see...'). But they were 'informal' according to Gillespie. Through the media course, students learned about different TV genres and narratives and points of view, and so became reflexive about their own TV viewing. Like the HICT project, Gillespie sought as many ways as possible to 'cross-validate' her

interpretations. As well as the classroom, other locations for TV talk contributed to her research, including the homes of some informants, so that her material is 'based on various forms of talk observed, elicited or generated in diverse contexts'(ibid.:66). She was thus able to 'document spontaneous, genuinely unselfconscious talk in naturalistic settings, rather than talk generated by interview alone' (ibid.:66).

Some of Gillespie's findings will be discussed in chapter 7. Her methodology, and her focus on 'TV talk', provided her with a way of looking at how television plays a part in her informants' ongoing process of identity creation. When thinking about how best to study the role of radio in people's lives, naturally occurring radio talk does not appear as a viable option. People do not talk about radio very often. When I asked potential informants if I could interview them about their radio listening, they often found this a strange request. In a few cases they told me that I could interview them but that they didn't really listen, 'well, except in the morning.. Oh, and when I'm cooking...' and so on. It was obvious that, in order to get at the ways in which radio is integrated into the lives of listeners, I would have to be very persistent, and find many ways of getting people to talk about something that they rarely, or never, put into words. I had also decided that I wanted to look beyond language, at the *quality* of radio sound in people's lives and experiences; how it made them feel, and what it made them think about.

The HICT project was concerned with the place of technologies in people's lives. Many methods were developed and adapted to try to elicit this information. My research also called for a flexible, creative approach. Initially, I would ask informants about television viewing, and get them to compare it with radio. I quickly learned that the two activities were very different, and fitted into domestic life in different ways. Rather than seeing radio as a part of the technological set up in the household, and in relation to television, I began to see it as a particular means of creating domestic environments and moods. I wanted to explore this in some depth, asking what it is about radio sound in the domestic setting that makes it appropriate for this use. At the same time I wanted to explore other uses, and the ways in which radio provided 'company' and evoked memories. The HICT methods appeared too structured for this enterprise, although I did try using diaries and mapping (as discussed below). I wanted to remain as close as

possible to the idea of ethnography, despite the inherent problems the subject of my research presented.

Gillespie advances the 'methodological argument' that

> ethnography can deliver empirically grounded knowledge of media audiences in a way that other, less socially encompassing methods cannot. At the same time, this type of research into TV audiences can generate the kind of ethnographic knowledge of local cultures which is usually considered to be the sole preserve of anthropologists - pointing to fruitful possibilities of interdisciplinary cross-fertilisation.
>
> Gillespie 1995:54

Ethnography, as traditionally practised by anthropologists in exotic locations, can be problematic when applied to densely populated urban areas. It may be that urban anthropology can learn from the ethnographic approaches, that will need to be developed, by those who are researching media consumption in the home. There is a need to develop a form of intensive fieldwork, appropriate to these locations, that is able to move beyond a reliance on actors' linguistic accounts, because, as Jenkins points out,

> mapping in language has the particular property of appearing to bring to consciousness, if only fitfully and partially, what is otherwise going on unremarked. Much anthropological interest is directed towards the range of knowledge which consists primarily in ways of doing things, in means of organizing the continuity of everyday life and of coping with its breakdown, which are not mapped directly in language or, if they are, are so rarely and intermittently.
>
> Jenkins 1994:446

Urban Anthropology, Domestic Anthropology

From within anthropology, the question of what form of ethnography is appropriate to urban anthropology, is dealt with by Wallman (1982, 1984) in a convincing way. She challenges the notion that an anthropology of polyglot societies, should focus on some sub-group or fringe culture that is neatly bounded and defined. This would be to underestimate what anthropology has to offer the study of our own cultures. Gullestad (1992) recognises the value of the anthropological contribution to the study of Western societies and sees the emphasis on 'minority issues' as misleading. It is by studying the

unremarkable, that one uncovers notions of normality and deviance, which set a context in which we all live, and with regard to which we define ourselves. Gullestad studied 'unmarked and "ordinary"' Norwegians. She disputes claims that the social practices she has researched are trivial; her aim is to uncover the various social relations which, together, make up the social life of Norway, 'to explore connections between fields of society which are normally analysed separately' (ibid.:47).

It is everyday life that makes up my field of research, the everyday life of 'ordinary' people living in Bristol, who use radio sound in various ways. Bristol could be seen as a boundary, but it is an arbitrary boundary, and I could not study such a large area, comprehensively. The people whom I am studying, have the fact that they live in or near Bristol, in common, but this may well be where the similarity ends. So, if I am not studying a 'naturally' bounded group or sub-group, is it necessary to construct a boundary? Like Gullestad, I did not want to study a 'sub-group' or 'sub-culture', just a number of 'ordinary' people from a variety of backgrounds. How to contact people, became one of my biggest problems. Wallman et al (1982) used a local network, in order to gain access to their informants, and to instruct the research with regard to local connections and a sense of belonging to a local community.

The study was set in a geographically distinct housing area in London, and focused on the implications of living in a residents association housing action area - the distinctive community involvement that this either highlighted or created. A team of local residents were employed to carry out questionnaires; they selected their own respondents and it was predetermined in the research brief, that those interviewed first, would have the strongest relationship with the centre. The centre in this case was the 'community' of people actively (in relative terms) involved in the local housing action area, as defined by their network ties. A combination of qualitative and quantitative methods were used, the former referred to as ethnography, with Wallman calling the whole project an exercise in urban anthropology.

The first stage of the study looked at the housing action area as a whole, and interviews were undertaken with over 400 households. A follow-up study looked in greater depth

at eight households (Wallman 1984). The first stage took the form of a survey questionnaire that was designed 'to exclude matters of personal interpretation or meaning - whether of the researchers, the interviewers, or the respondents', whilst the second stage 'deliberately broach those questions', 'The first stage ... seeks to find out what the resources of the setting are; the second to account for variations in the way they are used' (1984:45). In Wallman's second stage, she selected households from the first stage and chose to 'compare styles of resource management'; she chose eight households that 'had to be similar in respect for need for and formal access to resources' (1984:46); households that had 'characteristics in common'.

Wallman's study was fairly large, with a team of researchers and interviewers taking part. On a smaller scale, Gullestad, as a single researcher, used informal social networks to explore 'the family life and friendships of young working-class mothers in urban Norway' (1984). She looked at the domestic worlds of 15 informants in some detail, and at their relationships within, and outside of, their homes. She traced their networks through marriage, work and leisure and looked at their home decoration and attitudes towards this. Gullestad saw her role as a combination of researcher and 'friend' (ibid.:43). Her field was not bounded by a geographic community, but by social networks; beginning with one informant, she was introduced to others, who in turn provided more introductions, through *klatches* (coffee meetings), sewing circles, and other social encounters. Gullestad presented herself to informants by giving an outline of her research interests. She then carried out unstructured interviews in order to provide a reason for her being there. This helped her informants to understand why she was there, spending time amongst people with very different social backgrounds and networks from her own. She calls her methodology, participant observation, and limited her use of a notebook, preferring to take part in social encounters, as a member of the group.

On the one hand, she gathered data concerning employment, lifestyle, home, family and leisure, on the other, she found out about thoughts, feelings, perceptions and values. These two types of data could be seen as objective and subjective: the 'hard' facts of life, and the moral discourses that surround them. The study looks at 'a "slice" of

Norwegian society' and Gullestad sees it as 'reference points or "peepholes" from which to get information about a culture and a way of life' (Gullestad 1984:46). Domestic ethnography is often problematic because participant observation in this setting is not always appropriate. When the subject of the study is the consumption of radio, a largely individual activity within the home, this is especially difficult. It is not difficult, however, to gain access to informants' accounts of their radio listening.

One problem with such accounts of people's behaviour, is that they are second hand, and bring into play other factors, such as the reason for giving the account, or perhaps trying to present themselves in what they consider to be a favourable light. The informants' accounts are then further interpreted by the researcher. However, the interview method is crucial to urban anthropology, at the very least as a way into the field. In addition, it provides data on the way that people talk about, and think about, their media consumption. Morley defends the interview method for this reason, 'not simply for the access it gives the research to the respondents' conscious opinions and statements but also for the access that it gives to the linguistic terms and categories... through which respondents construct their words and their own understanding of their activities' (Morley 1992:181) (for 'words' we could also read 'worlds'). Morley suggests that the content of an interview is not just another 'text' for reading, but an access point to deeper conceptualisations. Ethnography can lead one to an understanding of respondents' own definitions, revealing their understanding of their own communication practices, showing 'their decisions, their choices and the consequences of both for their daily lives and their subsequent actions' (Morley 1992:183). Other methods must be used alongside interviews, and over time, to help us to more accurately situate informants and their media use within the context of everyday life. We have seen how the HICT project used diverse methods This allowed the researcher access to the households on many occasions - they legitimised his visits. For a researcher studying any aspect of domestic life, time spent within a household provides a valuable source of information.

Gullestad was able to attend coffee mornings and other social gatherings, in the homes of her informants. She developed relationships with them, and gained a deeper

understanding of their lives. Wallman attempted to get to information about social networks by using what she calls 'devices'. For example,

> two day-round time budgets showing who was doing what, with whom, and where on one work day and one weekend or holiday day; detailed and dated job histories...; and two network maps, filled in by or with the informants, and designed to record the geographic and affective distance of kin and non-kin in the resource universe of the household
>
> Wallman 1984:49

Gillespie felt that forming relationships with her informants and their families, was instrumental in the kinds of understandings that she developed. She, like Gullestad, developed a fluid approach to urban ethnography, firmly endorsing the use of participant observation. The HICT project and Wallman's study, on the other hand, used a more structured approach which involved a series of activities such as mapping. I embarked on my own research with a fairly open mind, though I did not think that I would be able to do any participant observation. Consequently, I began to work out what other ways of gaining insights and understandings of radio use there might be. Although participant observation in the home listening to the radio, was not possible, participant observation in the social lives of a group of informants was. This proved to be a very good way of developing relationships and understanding the everyday lives of informants, which allowed me to contextualise the more specific information collected in interviews. The listener panels that I observed also gave me information, as I was able to observe the attendees in a group, and listen to them giving their opinions about radio, on a regular basis. In both cases, informants recruited through these groups knew something about me and were used to seeing and chatting to me. As with all ethnographic research that seeks to gain an understanding of some aspect of domestic life, especially if it is usually experienced individually, as with radio listening, a creative approach to the fieldwork is called for.

An Ethnographic Approach to the study of Radio Use in Bristol

The data that are produced in this kind of qualitative, ethnographic research are produced in the interaction between the researcher and the researched. It is therefore necessary to consider this interaction in a reflexive way (cf. Oakley and Callaway 1992,

Hastrup 1993, Burgess 1982, Hammersley and Atkinson 1983), especially, perhaps, when one's fieldsite is also one's home (Jackson 1986). With this in mind, it is important for me to position myself in this study. I am a single parent with two daughters. We have lived in Bristol for the past 10 years. I came to Bristol as a mature student, to study for a BA in humanities. During that degree I took modules in visual anthropology, which introduced me to social anthropology, and to audio visual production (video, tape-slide, radio). As part of the course I made a video about a newly wed couple's 'starter home'. Over several weeks I visited the wife and talked about the 'things' in her new home (see Thorn 1990). My interest in material culture grew, as did my interest in radio as a medium. As well as spending a lot of time listening to the radio, I did some radio production. Clearly, these interests informed and influenced the project, as did my status as a single parent (see below).

The fieldwork can be divided into two parts. The main part consisted of interviews, participant observation with radio listeners, and focus group meetings at youth clubs. The second part was concerned with the producers of radio sound, specifically, with how they researched and conceived of their listeners (as discussed in chapter 2). All of these elements of research took place simultaneously, and can be further broken down as follows:

- Interviews with listeners (including diaries of listening, and sound maps of the home)
- Participant observation at a single parent social group
- Focus groups at youth clubs
- Observation at two local listener panel meetings, each held quarterly
- Interviews with members of the radio industry, BBC and Commercial, attendance at radio industry meetings and conferences, both locally and nationally

Interviews
The interviews were unstructured and open-ended. The aim was to find out about radio listening in the context of informants' lives and relationships. To begin with, I did not know what aspects of radio would prove interesting to talk about, and so the

interviewing element of the research developed through two main stages. During the first stage I had a wide focus, looking at many aspects of people's lives and listening. Prior to this first stage, in March 1993 I had begun to visit an informant who had been introduced to me as a keen radio listener, who rarely watched television. I took this opportunity to begin to explore issues that might prove relevant to my study. I visited him once a week, for half an hour to an hour, for one month. I asked him about his radio choices, and what significance he felt radio had for him. I had only general ideas for questions at this stage, and we mainly talked about programme content, or programme genres, on Radio 4, his usual station. Following these visits, I decided that I wanted to focus on the role that radio sound as a medium played in everyday domestic life, rather than on specific programmes, or stations. I designed the interview schedule, and devised a diary, in which I could ask informants to record information about their radio listening and television viewing over the course of a week. I used these in the first phase of interviewing, which took place between October 1993 and April 1994.

The interview schedule covered radio listening and TV viewing, with similar questions being asked about both media, so that I could compare them. As a result, comments were often made about the differences between them. By the end of this initial interview phase, I had begun to give far less attention to television, as I felt that to talk about radio in relation to television, may not be the best way of getting at how radio fits into the complexities of everyday life. Whilst informants would still talk about the differences between radio and television fairly regularly, it was usually only after television had been mentioned in some other context (i.e. not as a reference point from which to describe radio's characteristics or qualities, or how it is used). I reserved any questions I wanted to ask about television until the end of the interview unless the informant brought TV into the conversation at an earlier time. For example, if radio listening has to stop at a certain time of the day because a child gets home from school and switches the television on, this may have led into a discussion of why radio is preferred, or not, over television. The interview schedule was used to remind me of areas and questions that I wanted to cover with all respondents; the primary aim of the interview was to generate conversation around the broad topic of radio as it related to informants' lives.

At this point, I reviewed the focus of the research, adjusted the interview schedule, and thought about ways in which I might gain access to informants in a way that allowed me to develop more of a relationship over time with them. Access was my first problem, and remained a problem throughout the research. Once initial interviews had been conducted, especially with informants whom I had not met in any other context, revisiting proved a problem. Research tools like the diary and sound maps proved useful here, as they legitimised a second or third visit. The diary used in the first phase of interviewing was a rather complicated fusion of boxes to tick and spaces for recording reactions and comments. Although some of these diaries were completed, informants told me that they found them difficult and so I modified them. In the second, main phase of interviewing, which took place between September 1994 and August 1995, I made the diary much more open ended and simple to use. By this time, it was primarily used as a way of keeping in touch with informants, and focusing discussions onto radio by talking about what they had recorded in their diaries. The sound maps were simple sketches, which I made in collaboration with the informant, by asking them to take me through their home and tell me what sounds they could hear in each room. Again, this often led to interesting discussions that were sparked off by the mapping activity, which proved more useful than the maps themselves.

In the first phase of interviewing, if we include my initial informant, I interviewed 20 people. Twelve of these informants were female, eight male. They ranged in age from 12 to 91. I recruited six of them from a club for the elderly, and six from the listener panels (one of these was the husband of a panel member). Three were relatives of other informants, and the rest were contacted by word of mouth. The interviews were carried out in the homes of the informant (except in two cases where they were at their place of work). Six of these informants agreed to keep diaries of their radio listening and television viewing. They were asked to record who was present at the time, who turned the radio or TV on, and given space to record any comments. Those who kept diaries were revisited and we went through their diaries, and discussed issues that arose out of this. One couple agreed to keep the diaries at the same time, and I carried out the second interview with them jointly. In the second phase I interviewed another 35 people, and at the same time began some participant observation.

Participant observation

By the start of the second phase, I had begun to focus on how radio sound helped in the creation of domestic environments, and was very interested to explore issues around loneliness and isolation. I also wanted to enrich my interview data by mixing with a group of people over time, who I could then also interview. I was interested in recruiting single parents as informants (I interviewed three single parents in the first phase) because of the potential for discussions of loneliness and isolation. I wanted to see if radio sound was used to combat these feelings, and if so, why. I began attending a local single parent social and support group in September, and attended (with a few exceptions) every week for a year. The group met on Tuesday evenings from 7pm until 10pm. Children were encouraged to accompany their parents and workers were employed to supervise them. The meetings were held in a family social club. There was a bar, and once every month a disco for the children. A wide range of people attended the group during the year, but in the main they could be described as working, or lower middle class, with many of the families struggling financially. Roughly two thirds of the people present at the meetings were women, but the men who did attend regularly made their presence felt as they held positions on the committee, like Chairman and Treasurer.

The group provided an opportunity for single parents to go out and have a drink and a chat with people who were in similar situations to themselves. Some of the members got a great deal of support from the group. Members worked hard to keep the group going by working on the committee, collecting subscriptions, keeping records of membership, or arranging events and outings. During the year I attended 'rambles' in the countryside, a barbecue, and a 'booze cruise'. I also kept the minutes at their AGM. Throughout the year I got to know some of the members well, despite, at first, finding it very hard to become integrated into the group. For the first two weeks I presented myself as a researcher but found that people were very wary of me. The group secretary had made it clear to me that, I could use the group as a way of meeting and getting to know people for my research, but could not study the group as a whole. I kept attending, and people got used to me and had the chance to ask me what I was doing

and why, and it became a more relaxed experience for me. When people realised I was not studying the group, but was interested in their radio listening, and how it made them feel, they also seemed more relaxed. The fact that I was a single parent meant that there were life experiences which we had in common, and this helped me enormously. Gradually, rather than a researcher who also happened to be a single parent, I became a single parent who was also a researcher. This is not to suggest that I ever became fully integrated into this group; I was always aware of my ambiguous status.

I interviewed 12 members of this group, three of them on three occasions. Four of them kept diaries, and four of them allowed me to draw a sound map of their homes, which required second visits. The maps were useful as a way of finding out where in the home the sounds of different radio sets could be heard, and how sounds from outside the home interfered with or complemented, the interior soundscapes. Primarily, though, the maps and diaries were used as a reason to revisit informants in their homes. In addition to the informants recruited through the single parent group, I recruited another six informants from the two listener panels, and another 17 informants through word of mouth, and through networks of previous interviewees' friends, relatives or work colleagues. In total (including both interview phases) I interviewed 55 people, with only a few of them having any particular association with any of the others. The informants from the single parent group could most easily be grouped together, but there are many differences between them. The 55 people, then, could be seen as a collection of largely unconnected 'ordinary' people.

Of these 55 informants, 39 were female, 16 male. The age range did not increase, but became more concentrated in the 30-50 age range. Twenty-seven of my informants were in their thirties or forties. Four of my informants were African Caribbean and 6 were Asian. Financially, they spanned poverty at one end of the scale and affluence at the other. Amongst my informants, there was a bank manager, a nurse, a secretary, an accountant, a teacher and a company executive, as well as the unemployed and retired. Their homes varied as well. The company executive lived in a detached four bedroom house in pleasant countryside just outside of Bristol, whilst some of the single parents lived in council flats in large housing estates in the city.

Focus groups

Young informants were the group I found most difficult to interview. This was not because they were unwilling to be interviewed, but because it was often difficult to get them to talk in any detail about themselves on a one to one basis. During the summer of 1995, I had the opportunity to team up with another researcher interested in radio, Berdencia Williams, to carry out some focus group meetings at youth clubs. We chose three youth clubs across Bristol, where we met with 9 groups of between 2 and 9 young people. They ranged from 12 to 25 years old. The groups that were all female, of any age, or all male and over 16, were the groups where most information was gathered. Mixed groups were not so productive, and groups of all males who were under 16 could be quite difficult to manage. In all, 35 young people took part in the focus groups, with a large proportion of them being African Caribbean (two thirds), the rest white. Two of the youth clubs were based in inner city areas, another was on the outskirts of Bristol on a large council housing estate.

The kinds of information collected from these groups, was to do with how they listened to radio, at what time, and where, and how this fitted into the radio listening of other members of their households. A lot of Pirate radio listening was reported by these young people, across all three youth clubs, but especially with the two inner city clubs. Reasons for this were addressed. Their music tastes and social activities were explored, but not in the same detail that was possible in individual interviews and through participant observation. The focus groups did provide a forum where young people were happy and sometimes very keen to talk about radio. It was interesting to hear debates and disagreements amongst different members of the groups, as these meant they would explore and explain their thoughts in some detail. Clearly though, peer pressure in these groups may have led to the misreporting of radio tastes and uses; especially one might suspect under-reporting of stations such as GWRfm, which was not seen as a 'cool' station by these groups, and over-reporting of pirate listening, which was. However, the focus groups served to provide useful information when such limitations are taken into account, and when they are considered in conjunction with the other methods used.

Listener panels

GWR started to run two listener panels at around the time I started this research. One panel was for the Classic Gold service, the other for GWRfm. They advertised for participants over the airways in order to ensure that the people who joined were genuine listeners. They received applications, and interviewed prospective members. The Chair of the panels, an independent consultant, and the station manager, did the interviewing. The listener panels provided me with an opportunity to observe face-to-face interaction between radio producers and radio listeners. As such, it was very valuable; it gave me a lot of information about how the producers of radio sound conceive of their audiences, and how audience members think about the producers. In the interactions between the two groups, over a two year period, I was able to observe changes in relationships, on individual and group levels. For example, some of the station staff became expert at running and managing these interactions, whilst others lost interest, through not seeing the panel members as representative of their audience, or the process itself as useful. Individual panel members either became more involved in the station, or less inclined to attend and voice their opinions.

The panels were very useful as a means of accessing informants for interview. I was able to ask panel members to take part in my research, and because of their attendance at meetings, I was able to keep in touch with them. The discussions that happened at the panel meetings provided me with very useful material. When one member raised a particular topic, or expressed an opinion, the Chair of the meetings would regularly ask other members to comment. In this way, rather like the focus groups, discussions and arguments followed that revealed something about the panel members use of, and views on, radio sound. Each panel had 12 members, although this fluctuated over time, with the GWRfm panel being poorly attended in the second year. New members were recruited over time, as others left, but in the main, the same people attended over the two years. The age of the panel members, generally reflected the age of the target audiences of each station, although in each group there were members who were younger than one might expect - as young as 16 in the GWRfm group (their target age

group being 25-35), and as young as 29 in the Classic Gold panel (target age group 35-55).

The methods which I have used in this research, and the stages that I have gone through, cannot be clearly distinguished and analysed. As Gillespie (1995) says, fieldwork is a 'messy' process. Like Gillespie, I have not treated the information gathered by each method, as discrete kinds of data to be analysed separately. Rather, they have provided me with overlapping resources, that came together in the act of analysis. The social group that I attended for over a year, gave me access to people that I also interviewed; because of the social group, I was able to get to know them in a way that would not have been possible through one or two interviews. The analyses and interpretations contained in the remaining chapters, grew out of the experience of doing the fieldwork, as much as from the data itself. These aspects of the project as a whole (data collection, analysis, interpretation) were interrelated in ways that make it impossible to explain in a linear way, how they each fed into the others. What is clear to me in hindsight, is that the methods of data collection that I used were not necessarily ideal, but they provided me with sufficient information to allow for the insights that make up this thesis, and which in turn are firmly grounded in the fieldwork itself. While I hesitate to call the research that I have done 'an ethnography', I insist on it being considered as ethnographic in approach. It is more than ethnographic, it is anthropological. One of the key aspects of this is demonstrated through the use of cross-cultural comparison which follows in the remainder of this thesis. In addition it takes an holistic approach. Cross-cultural comparison and holism are traditional features of anthropology, just as important as the qualitative method of participant observation. I have chosen to call this study an exercise in 'domestic anthropology', because while the method of ethnographic research is crucial to this thesis, it is its location within social anthropology, that allows for the insights I have achieved.

Chapter 4

The Social Texture of Radio Sound

Up until now this thesis has looked at how the radio industry, and how academics, research audiences. Having established the need for an anthropological study that places media consumption in domestic contexts, and having explained my methodology, I will now consider some of my findings. In this chapter I will introduce a number of general themes which will be further explored in the following chapters: the social and emotional (or affective) dimensions of domestic life and how radio sound fits into this (chapter 5); the mood generating qualities of radio sound in domestic life (chapter 6); and how radio sound holds the capacity to make connections across space and time (chapter 7). This chapter will firmly place the following discussions in the context of material culture studies, as it establish radio sound as a part of the material culture of the home. It explores how radio sound contributes to textured domestic environments, or soundscapes, and how we might conceive of these. In addition, I explore what is special about sound in cultures like Britain, which prioritise that which is visual.

In 1967, Needham was struggling with the 'problem' of where, in the categorical processes of anthropology, to place what he saw as the clear link between percussion and transition, i.e. the use of drumming or other percussive sounds in the ritual contexts of *rites de passage*. Trying out a few approaches, which included an attempt to define both percussion and transition in broad terms, he found it difficult to assimilate two apparently distinctive, yet conjunctive 'primary, elementary, and fundamental features: 1) the affective impact of percussion, 2) the logical structure of category-change' (1967:612). The problem was that empirically, he saw the connection, yet theoretically, they resided in 'disparate modes of apprehension'; the emotional and the rational (ibid.). Needham was asking why the noise of percussion was so widely used to communicate with spiritual powers, with the 'other world'. Needham found it difficult, in the face of a lack of analytical terms and ideas around sound within anthropology, not only to frame his problem, but to analyse it in more depth.

When thinking about a framework for analysis of a study of radio sound in the home, there is a distinction to be made between the mundane context of domestic media consumption, and the ritualised use of percussive sounds in *rites de passage*. Here, the focus is on the everyday use of sound, and how sound acts to create an environment for domestic living. Radio sound can be seen to fill 'empty' space and 'empty' time with a familiar routine, so familiar that it is unremarkable. In this way, radio sound is a presence in domestic time and space, which can be viewed as setting a pattern for domestic living, but a pattern that is naturalised to the extent that, as in Needham's focus on percussive sound and rituals, there are few academic pegs from which to hang it. Additionally, it can be seen to provide a frame, not only for social interactions in Goffman's sense (1975), but for avoiding, or making up for, a lack of social interactions.

Like Needham, I too am faced with elementary features which can be viewed as residing in 'disparate modes of apprehension' - the emotional or affective qualities of, and reactions to, radio sound, and the rational and logical business of everyday life. Their empirically observed connection is expressed theoretically here, in terms of radio sound providing a texture in which everyday life can take place. Radio is not an essential component for everyday living, but it is one that many use on a regular basis. My starting point is the idea that radio sound creates a textured 'soundscape'[1] in the home, within which people move around and live their daily lives. Rather than connecting with other worlds in a supernatural sense, these sounds, on both a social and a personal and emotional level, can be seen to connect with other places and other times. Linked with memories and with feelings, either experienced or imagined, they can evoke different states of mind and moods. From the perspective of material culture studies the soundscapes themselves can be seen to have no intrinsic value or meaning; these are established and re-established continually in each domestic arena, through each individual instance of use.

---

[1] The term soundscape is fairly commonly used in discussions of music and more general sounds. It's definition (although not its invention) as the sonic environment consisting of both natural and manmade sounds, is generally attributed to R. Murray Schafer (1977,1994).

Miller suggested that 'the very physicality of the object which makes it appear so immediate, sensual and assimilable belies its actual nature'(1987:3). Material culture 'is one of the most resistant forms of cultural expression in terms of our attempts to comprehend it' (ibid.). One of the problems with material culture is that its meaning is not experienced linguistically, and therefore any attempt to explain its significance which relies on language as a communicative medium, is bound to fall short of full explanation. Radio as a medium is immediate, intimate and direct. Translating this quality of radio into language, people often speak of it as a 'friend', as 'company'. Such clichéd expressions of the relationship between listeners and radio are used by both producers of radio sound and consumers, because of the experiential nature of listening, which is difficult to define in words. Something which is experiential and a part of everyday life does not normally require explanation. Radio is not a friend in the way that a person whom we are close to is a friend, and it is not the same as the physical company of another person; these terms are used as metaphors to express a particular (and usually unexpressed) relationship with a medium that we are not normally asked to talk or even think about. Yet metaphors such as these can be conceived of as more than simple linguistic devices. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) suggest that our conceptual system itself is metaphorical in nature. As our conceptual system structures our perception, metaphors can be seen to affect the ways in which we think and act; they help us define our reality.

Thinking of radio sound as textured, allows the possibility of considering how it operates, and how people operate within it. As a researcher it allows me to momentarily 'fix' something that is dynamic and flowing. Yet this is true also of objects and artefacts more generally. As already mentioned, their meanings are not static, as one might assume from their concrete physicality. Radio sound is not tangible in the same way as other domestic furniture, yet to think about radio sound as material culture is not intended to artificially translate it into something it is not. Rather, I would suggest that radio sound is experienced as a part of the material culture of the home, and that it contributes greatly to the creation of domestic environments.

Radio sound can be used as a filler of space and of time. It can act as a referencer of memories and feelings, of other places and other times. It can serve to ground someone in the present. It can help to establish and maintain identities, and it is often used as a marker of time. It moves through time, it is a time-based medium. Listening to the radio in the home is predominantly an individual occupation, and radio is seen by both consumers and producers as 'intimate' in this context, yet my research suggests that in those domestic environments which radio sound helps to create and maintain, it serves a social role.

In this chapter, I will establish a way of thinking about radio sound as textured, and uncover the role that radio sound plays, in the establishment and maintenance of relationships between self and others. These relationships may be imagined or real, a distinction that underpins the main supposition of this chapter. Radio can be used in this *pseudo* social way to create a self that could, or would like to be, social. This makes listening to the radio a social activity, in that it can act to reinforce sociality and sense of social self, and at the same time, has the potential to fill perceived gaps in one's social life. Radio sound can be used to create a non-public social space, making it a safe environment in which to work on one's sociality. The use of radio sound adds to the sound texture of the domestic environment. Radio sound, like the 'solid' material culture of the home itself and the objects within it, or the more 'fluid' aspects of the material culture of everyday life, such as clothing, can be seen to express something of the personality and social life of individuals and households. Its particular status as a mass medium also means that it can be seen to add a dimension of sociability to the lives of individual listeners in their homes. Degrees of sociability will be examined here, beginning with the sometimes feared, sometimes desired, silent environment, moving on to the use of radio as a background texture, in some instances creating a rhythm by which to live, to a consideration of foregrounded radio sound, and its potential creation of an image of a desired society, which is closer to, but essentially different from, real face-to-face social exchange. I will demonstrate that it is nevertheless part of 'real' sociality. The particular sensory characteristics of radio sound must also be considered if we are to understand its role in everyday life, so that sound as a medium, and its place in a predominantly visual culture will be explored.

Silence

When talking about *silence,* many informants displayed an appreciation of the difficulties of definition. For some, silence appeared to mean absence of speech or music, although for some it meant complete absence of sounds. Absolute silence was recognised as being either 'very rare' or 'not possible'. The more generally accepted definition of silence, as used in everyday speech, was seen as a lack of intrusive or obvious noise, perhaps better described as 'quiet'. When I use the word silence here, I am thinking of a state which is not necessarily to do with sound at all. That is, silence is seen here as one end of a scale of sociality. *Social* silence indicates a lack of social interaction, but not necessarily a lack of all noise. The philosopher Dauenhauer (1980) notes that, while silence occurs most obviously in conjunction with sound, it is 'a rich and complex phenomenon' which, with minimal investigation, can also clearly be seen to occur without the context of sound. Dauenhauer sees silence as necessary in many, if not all, forms of human communication and performance. Sign language, for example, would not be an effective language without the presence of silence, in this case not dependent on the presence of contrastive sound, but a contrastive communication or language that does not involve sound at all. Silence here, means a break or pause in communication, which highlights or enhances what is being communicated.

Dauenhauer also cites the performing arts, and activities such as silent reading or viewing works of art, to make his point that silence itself is an active performance (1980:3-4). Not only is it an active performance, but it involves *conscious* activity. Therefore, according to Dauenhauer, 'the occurrence or non-occurrence of passively or spontaneously encountered noise, of itself, can neither prevent nor produce silence' (ibid.:4). My research supports the notion that silence can be actively created, and actively avoided. Radio sound and silence are found to be very firmly a part of everyday life for my informants, and as such, they work on both conscious and unconscious levels. *Electric Radioland,* a report on research among radio listeners, prepared for the Radio Advertising Bureau, demonstrates how listeners find it very hard to describe the ways in which they listen to the radio, and what 'makes "their ears prick up"', and concludes that this is because it is 'a behaviour which is only semi-conscious (and often

unconscious)' (Navigator 1993:11). My own research shows how radio sound, and radio listening are so integrated into the routine domestic lives of some people that it is not thought about consciously unless, for some reason, it is absent. Switching the radio on is often seen as automatic, like brushing ones teeth.

My use of the term silence in this chapter sees each occurrence, or instance of use, employed or experienced on whatever level of consciousness, in the larger context of the sociality of the individual. This in turn is constitutive of social relations, and of the self. Silence can be an activity, and a *condition,* using the notion of social silence, as employed here. A lack of, or low level of noise, for some of my informants, was seen as sometimes offering a positive state, where reflection and relaxation could take place. In some of these cases I would argue that silence is used to allow contemplation of sociality. It can be a necessary part of defining sociality for those who have a very demanding job and/or lifestyle. That part of their lives which involves high degrees of sociability, is seen more clearly when observed from a situation of non-sociability, and without definition and contrast, sociability may be hard to appreciate. Alternatively, a high volume of radio sound was sometimes used by informants to block out distractions, thus creating a form of social, or anti-social silence. Sue, for example, listens to a music radio station, and told me how she sometimes 'blasts' the radio, that is, she plays it at a very high volume level, 'it clears things... to clear your mind of what's bothering you and put something else in there... I find it very therapeutic'.

For other informants, who see their lives as lacking in sociability, silence can offer a reminder of their undesired social situation, and so it is to be avoided (see Gullestad 1992, chapter on 'Peace and Quiet'). Some informants will leave their radios on whether or not they are listening, or even present in the home at the time, and some leave it on through the night while sleeping. It is used by some to distract them from their feelings of loneliness and from other unhappy thoughts or worries, yet is not necessarily consciously listened to. In this way, it can be seen as primarily used in order to prevent silence, with silence being the focus of attention and impetus for action, rather than the radio sound itself.

Thus, social silence can be both a positive and a negative thing. Some informants longed for, or at least welcomed it, others feared it. For some, silence could be experienced in both ways, depending on context and timing, or had been at different times in their personal histories. Some of the most negative thoughts on silence were expressed in relation to the evenings and night-times, when the rest of the world is apparently sleeping. For some, the availability of silent times which hold this capacity to highlight other aspects of their lives was to be feared, because of their unease, or discontent with, the quality of their social lives, or their feelings of isolation or loneliness:

> *Researcher:* Do you ever like silence?
> *Deborah:* Not really, I used to but not now, it is because I'm by myself I know that, whereas before I used to read a lot more, now I watch telly and the radio a lot more because it is company...
> *Researcher:* How long have you been on your own?
> *Deborah:* 2 years
> *Researcher:* Before that you wouldn't have listened to radio in bed?
> *Deborah:* No, I'd have read a book, it is the silence, that's why I stick the radio on... it is company, the reason I do like talk shows rather than listening to Radio1 is that it is someone talking rather than music, that's why I like it when I go up to bed, because I suppose it is a way then of knowing that someone else is around...

Deborah is a 27 year-old divorcee with two young children. She has what she described to me as a virtually non-existent social life. When she is not caring for her children or doing housework, she will be at work (part time) in a supermarket, or attending college, where she goes twice a week to try and improve her job prospects. If an individual like Deborah is not happy with her social life, silence would surely emphasise this. In such situations, radio can, and for many of my informants, does, cover up silences. It creates an alternative activity or a distraction, an alternative textured soundscape with which to surround oneself. In doing so, it can be seen in some instances to create an alternative form of silence, one that is more acceptable because it silences the troubling silence, and takes the edge off the contrast between different aspects of sociality. In such a case it may be that the sound of the radio is not simply or straightforwardly listened to for its content; rather, it can be listened to (in part at least) as a reminder that there is a world of sociability out there, that one does not have full access to, and it can create a link

with the world that does not actually require risk-taking, as face-to-face social interaction often does.

For example, radio sound can be seen to hold the capacity to help lift one out of a depressed state, it can be seen to provide emotional support. Deborah works hard to create an emotionally 'complete' home environment, for herself and her two young sons. Providing a safe and emotionally stable home for her children is most important to her. When she and her husband divorced, Deborah found that she lost most of her friends as well. She now has a very limited social life. Her ex-husband is unreliable and has been violent towards her in the past. Her own close relatives do not provide practical or emotional support, and she does not like to be on her own.

Deborah likes science fiction films and television programmes. She has whole series' on video which she will watch whenever she has time; she also belongs to science fiction appreciation groups. This is one way in which she is able to share her interests with others, whilst not actually being in their company. She is restricted by the fact that she has two young children, no baby-sitter, and little or no spare money. Radio sound is another way in which she fulfils this need, when she tunes in to discussion and phone-in programmes. When I first interviewed her, she listened to such programmes on the radio when she went to bed, to keep her company. The second time I visited, however, she had stopped listening because a neighbour had begun to shout at her through the wall, 'he shouts at me to shut up all the time, but then he'll put his radio on really late at night like 12, 1 o'clock, but I think that's because he's trying to get back at me so I just ignore everything and don't have the radio on up there any more now'. Instead of listening at night, she now stays up later, or reads. She listens mainly to one radio station, GWRfm, which provides her with music in the daytime and talk at night. She prefers talk, rather than music during the day, but when I first met her, did not know where on the radio dial to find it. So she listened to the television as if it were a radio. That is, she had the television in the front room on when she was in the kitchen, or around the house, so that she could hear voices in the background.

Deborah feels a heavy weight of responsibility for bringing up her two sons on very little money. Her main ways of gaining some relief are through TV (especially science fiction) and radio listening - talk on radio whenever she can listen (and on the television), and sometimes music when she is doing housework. The music on the radio distracts her from her tasks, and takes her mind off her problems; when her children are also at home, they often all dance and sing along. In these ways, the sounds that Deborah chooses to allow into her home can help her to get through difficult times, and be lifted out of her lonely and problematic existence - they can make her feel better and less alone - they can cover up the social silence in her life.

A Background Texture

Although the content of the radio transmission may not always be heard, it does not necessarily follow that the content is therefore irrelevant. One of the ways in which almost all of my informants talked about radio use was as a 'background' to activities in the home. When Anne is at home on her own she says she would feel that there was something missing if there was no sound from the radio or the television...

> I tend to have it as background around the house, I've got music in virtually all rooms, so, it's always on... I'm not necessarily listening to it as such, but it's on.

Anne is a 32 year old charity co-ordinator who lives alone and finds that having the radio on at home helps her to relax,

> I see it as something to relax to, even the debates, I just, its nice to hear it going on and have a smile, but I wouldn't turn it up loudly, I don't, probably I don't necessarily wanna hear it but I just know it's there...

The radio itself is seen by Anne as the creator of an environment that means relaxation. She will listen to stations as different as Radio 1, local pirate stations or local BBC. As a very busy person she sees the radio as an aid to taking 'time out' from her hectic life, yet the stations she will most often listen to in order to relax, relate very directly to her working and social environment. Anne is a black woman working in a job that involves her with many local black families' lives, in a very direct and intimate way. The pirate

stations that she tunes to when wanting to relax are seen by her and many others as the sounds of the black community. So when Anne listens to these stations she does so to keep 'in touch' but at the same time she takes 'time out',

> I'm a person who likes my own company and I'm very grateful when there's very little going on, because this job keeps us really busy you know... so I do look forward to time at home just to chill out, and that's the radio and TV... like I said, on Friday it's like, Yea! this is the weekend, put the radio on, puts you in the mood, I mean, if they're playing decent music, yea - it's just a bonus I tell you.

Joe is 29, married with a 10 year old daughter. He will sometimes listen to the radio with his family, but it is rarely the focus of attention, more often it provides a background so that,

> we'd chat through some of the less important bits... it would be *shhh* for the news slots, there might be a bit of informal stuff in between, a bit of music, so we'd talk over that, but just listen out for the more formal bits...

This would be when they are listening to *Asian Hour*, a magazine format programme, on the local BBC station, at weekends. Otherwise Joe will be listening to one of two local pirate stations which play mainly music. Like Anne, Joe is African Caribbean and he likes to keep in touch with the wider black community. One of the ways he does so is through his listening to black stations (these are 'pirate' stations which Joe prefers to call 'community' stations). With these stations the volume is often turned up quite loud, but Joe still explains it as providing a background to what he is doing...

> if I'm using it as a background, doing something else, it will be right up, I wouldn't use radio as a background to a conversation or anything like that, or writing a report or letter... but cleaning windows and things like that, and then cooking... turn the volume up... it's to create an atmosphere really, you know, the sort of dance hall atmosphere. It sounds crazy to create it while you're cooking but it's a bit of nostalgia really, you know, because we don't get out as often as we used to... so it's like, sometimes you create as near to a dance hall atmosphere as you can, it just reminds you of when you used to go out dead regular.

Both Anne and Joe have very full and demanding work and social lives. Radio for them is often used as a way of 'switching off' from social aspects of their lives, while retaining a link. They, like many others, use radio as a background texture of unfocused sound, that provides them with an environment that is nevertheless social and thus reassuring, but demands nothing of them. As the site of their sociality, the social world is very important to them and it is reassuring to know that it is continuing, but they need some social silence, or break from the social world, in order to better define and appreciate their sociality.

Two studies that come out of the tradition of ethnomusicology have a particular relevance to the notion of sound as texture, and point to ways in which we can think about the materiality of sound and the textured soundscape of the home. Waterman in *Juju: A Social History and Ethnography of an African Popular Music* (1990) looks at the relationship between music, identity and power in a modernising African society, specifically at juju musical style as performed among the Yoruba in contemporary Nigeria. He concentrates mainly on performance of this popular musical style in the context of the national environment, seeing the diverse range of stylistic systems as an opportunity for the individual to place him/herself on a map of shifting identity patterns in an urban setting that is culturally heterogeneous and densely populated. Feld in *Sound and Sentiment: Birds, Weeping, Sentiment and Song in Kaluli Expression* (1990) looks at sound as a symbolic system among the Kaluli of Bosavi, Papua New Guinea; specifically at what he sees as the most important myth among the Kaluli, *the boy who became a muni bird*, and its role as mediator between ritualised performance of weeping, poetics and song, and culturally specific personal emotions. Feld is saying that the way in which the Kaluli use sounds in ceremonies, relates to their larger cosmic world (their origin myth) and to culturally specific personal emotions, which in turn are related to their conceptions of death and sadness.

Feld concludes from his ethnography that the human ability to organise and think about things - in other words, the classificatory process, is 'complexly symbolic' (1990:218). It is a creative process that depends on the pragmatic needs of any situation, but is broadly defined in social ways, and is deeply felt on an individual basis. Looking at

Western cultures in their heterogeneity is clearly a different exercise to the study of a particular myth in Bosavi, yet any generalisations that one would want to draw from Feld's work can be tested for their applicability to the current research. The point I wish to make here is that the use of radio sound in the home in Bristol does seem to have some analogous links with Feld's research, in that it is clear that personal uses and preferences of radio sound are structured both on an individualistic, and a social, level. Feld's analysis of the social, ceremonial use of sound is related directly to everyday sounds, which in fact are seen to ground the ritualised uses of sound. That is to say, everyday understandings of sounds affect the production and use of sound in a social context. The wider world is not shut out when we listen to the radio in the home; in fact, in mediated form, it has a very direct channel into this most private sphere. The important thing to try to understand is how it is woven into that private existence. Looking at sociality and the use of radio sound in the home, we can begin to understand the weave of domestic life and links between self and society.

Waterman focuses on the historical and contemporary performance of *juju*, a popular music style, and one of many in Nigeria. According to Waterman, musical style may articulate and define communal values in a rapidly transforming, heterogeneous society (1990:8). Juju is one of many musical styles that are popular, and the very naming of such a style is seen as a declaration of 'cultural consolidation'. The choice of radio stations in Bristol could be seen in a similar way - the local classic gold station, for example, which offers popular music predominantly from the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, is a choice that is related to taste and position in society. One of my informants in particular seemed to use a classic gold station because of the era it recreated for him;

> of course, when I grew up all that was sort of starting to die out, the traditional family you know, the neighbourhood feel, and all get-togethers and parties at each others house, I mean that was starting to go in the '70s and '80s, well as I say its practically non-existent today I think... it used to be a close knit society and, they said to me [his parents] a couple of years ago, 'you would have really loved it in the '60s because it was in each others houses, always having parties' so it *really* was a lovely time. So I mean that's probably why, I mean I love get-togethers and things like that you see so perhaps in my mind I'm wishing I was in the '60s.

The interesting thing about Paul is that he is only aged 29, and so the past that he looks to as a 'lovely time' is an imagined past. He is thereby creating a certain nostalgic soundscape that evokes an idealised past that he was too young to experience. Such stations perhaps offer the opportunity for nostalgia and a syncretism of past and present[2], analogous to Waterman's exploration of the syncretism of tradition and change in modern Nigerian musical style. This is a particular characteristic in Nigeria, where rapid change and heterogeneity are firmly rooted in tradition amongst the Yoruba. For Paul, the textured soundscape created by his choice of radio sound provides an environment in which he feels comfortable. It links him with what, for him, is an imagined society, part of which he feels he has experienced through the tales of his parents, and through past experiences such as his stints as a Red Coat during summer months - that is, as an entertainer at a holiday camp. This work was, for Paul, analogous to the 1960s, because of the particular form of sociability it recreated; the neighbourhood feel, and the family get-togethers. He wants to live in such a social environment, and radio sound in his flat, where he lives alone, helps him to imagine this. His ideal social life is made real through his re-creation of it as a backdrop to his domestic life, and elements of his imagined and experienced past are brought into play in his present.

Waterman shows how it is the people in a heterogeneous setting, rather than the musical style, or the culture, that accept or reject new ideas and practices (1990:9). Equally, it is the listener who, as the radio sound enters the 'moral economy of the household' (Silverstone, Hirsch and Morley 1992), accepts or rejects ideas and practices from the radio. Gretta, when I first met her a year ago, also listened to classic gold radio, and had done for some time, although, as I pointed out to her, at the age of 37, she is quite young to call the music of the 1950s and 1960s, which she particularly liked, of her 'era',

> No, when I was growing up it was all the Jacksons and the Osmonds, all that sort of stuff, but as I got older this was the sort of music that I could relate more to... I like all the old stuff...

---

[2] These issues are further explored in chapter 7.

... its just the people who introduce it as well, they're good, but I can't say I'd ever go to another station again, I don't think I'd ever go back to Radio 1, it's just not my music at all.

However, three months later Gretta had changed her station. She had started to listen to a different ILR (Independent Local Radio) station that played contemporary chart music alongside chart music from the 1970s and 1980s. Later, her listening habits were to change again. These changes were directly related to relationship changes in her life. Gretta has been divorced for almost two years, and she has two sons, aged 12 and 19, the eldest living away from home when I first met her. She lives in a top (4th) floor council flat and receives Income Support. She sometimes works part-time as a catering assistant. Over the past year, Gretta has developed a string of four different relationships with men, and each time her listening has changed with her changing emotional situation. I will look in more detail at Gretta's changing radio listening in the next chapter, for now she serves to illustrate how the interpretation or reception of radio is not predictable or necessarily static, but individual and flexible, so that the same radio output would not automatically create the same, or even similar, soundscapes for different people, or in different contexts, or at different times. Within the home, as Gretta demonstrates, other factors come into play, such as changing relationships and work patterns. For Gretta, radio's importance and presence in her life has fluctuated along with her emotions. It has, at different times, provided a link to an outside world, which she has felt somewhat excluded from when she has been alone. At other times, it has provided a link with someone she has been romantically involved with, so that on more than one occasion, she has changed her station to one that her current boyfriend listened to. Nevertheless, her preference for what radio stations would define as classic gold music has always remained important to her, and this is the sound that has dominated her listening choices, and to which she has always returned.

Gretta demonstrates how radio sound can be used to provide a changing backdrop to social and emotional relationships and states. Radio sound can also be shown to reinforce a routine; it can provide a rhythm to prepare oneself for social life. Bob, a 46 year-old financial adviser, switches Radio 4 on as he gets ready for work - as he puts on his suit and tie. It is a preparation for the day, which keeps him in touch with what is

going on in the world, and puts him in the right frame of mind. He will surround himself with the sound of the radio, so that both of the sets in his house can be on at the same time, he will:

> turn it on first thing in the morning in the bedroom and listen to it, if I'm moving around the house then I've often got both sets on [the other set is in the kitchen] quite loud so I can hear it all over the house.

When he returns home after work, it is put on again, always on Radio 4. This is his routine that he says has not changed for many years, and he predicts that it will remain the same in the future. It is a part of his life. It keeps him in touch with a world that interests him and helps him to define who he is in such a world. As we will see in the next chapter, it can also be seen to hold the capacity to make other people in his life feel excluded, as it does not provide the kind of background texture that they feel they can be a part of or make their own.

Foregrounded Sound: A Moving Soundscape

A soundscape is not a static, two dimensional thing. Waterman writes of a 'densely textured soundscape' created by 'Juju music, with voices, guitars, and talking drum amplified at high decibel levels... which conditions the behaviour of participants in Yoruba neo-traditional life cycle celebrations' (1990:214). He sees the possibilities of investigating music not simply in its context - the usual ethnomusicologists' approach - but *as* a context 'for human perception and action'(ibid.). Thus, the concept of a textured soundscape produces a means of looking at the effect of sound on the actors involved, and on their effect on that sound.

The choice of the type of radio output - music, speech and combinations of both- seems to depend in part on what activities the listener is engaged in, what state of mind or mood the listener is in or wants to achieve and what level of backgrounding or foregrounding is required: in other words what *sort* of textured soundscape. Feld found that sound was used as an expressive means for articulating shared feelings and emotions, and he uncovered a pattern linking activities, myths, feelings, gender and expressive performance. This pattern pointed to 'linkages between sounds, both human

and natural, and sentiments, social ethos and emotion' (1990:14). While Feld's emphasis in *Sound and Sentiment* is on the symbolism of sound in a *ritual* context, in a postscript he concentrates on his informants' reactions to his findings and relates how his informants felt that he should have paid more attention to more mundane daily sounds:

> the ones that tell the weather, season of year, time of day. They asked why I told so much about birds but so little about frogs, insects, different animals. They asked why I had told about the *muni* bird myth, and not told many others. They asked why I had not told about how all sounds in the forest are *mama*, 'reflections' of what is unseen.
>
> Feld 1990:264

Taken in isolation, his analysis of certain uses of sounds were seen by his informants as providing only a part of a much wider picture. This led Feld to look again at sound in the ritualised context, relating it more to 'the kind of practical and feelingful everyday interaction with environmental sound' (ibid.: 265) in everyday life. His informants had made it clear to him that 'every sound was a "voice in the forest"' (ibid.) and that he should pay attention to them all. He found that everyday sounds serve to ground the ceremonial performances. To look at radio sound as texture in the domestic sphere, requires an understanding of the ways in which such a soundscape can operate to link the social and the private through 'sentiments, social ethos and emotion' just as Feld needed to understand the more ingrained meanings of sound in everyday life in Bosavi in order to understand the ritualised use of sound. Within the texture of a domestic soundscape, the listener can work on her/his sociality, keeping the outside world firmly in the background, or bringing it closer and surrounding oneself with it. The domestic universe, with its particular soundscape, can thereby provide some sort of validation, company, stimulation or simply a background texture in which to embed, or against which to relate, oneself. This could be seen as an exercise in socially 'grounding' the listener.

Radio sound, and sound in general, has the capacity to become foregrounded or backgrounded. To look at a soundscape as some sort of two-dimensional entity, would be to miss the ways in which different sounds appear to integrate to create it. Waterman

makes the point that sound is, in itself, textured. Both Feld and Waterman see the soundscape as consisting of interacting and overlapping sounds. Feld names this constantly changing soundscape a 'spatio-acoustic mosaic', a term that offers a perception of the depth and motion of soundscapes.

To look at it more closely, this mosaic has potential for developing an understanding of the use of radio sound, because it allows for the ways in which sounds can be brought forward or pushed back, depending both on their particular form, and on the uses the listener has in mind, or credits them with: 'all sounds are dense, multilayered, overlapping, alternating, and interlocking' (Feld 1990:265), discrete sounds do not appear in nature. The Kaluli have a concept for this which they call *dulugu ganalau* or 'lift-up-over-sounding'. This is the most general term used to describe the natural sonic form of the forest, and explains Feld's conception of the Kaluli soundscape as a mosaic;

> The constantly changing figure and ground of this spatio-acoustic mosaic is a 'lift-up-over-sounding' texture without gaps, pauses or breaks. The essence of 'lift-up-over-sounding' is part relations that are simultaneously in-synchrony while out-of-phase. The overall feeling is of synchronous togetherness, of consistently cohesive part coordination in sonic motion and participatory experience. Yet the parts are also out-of-phase, that is, at distinctly different and shifting points of the same cycle or phrase structure at any moment, with each of the parts continually changing in degree of displacement from a hypothetical unison.
>
> Feld 1990:265-266

Feld makes the point that this is the case, both in the ritualised, ceremonial context, and in the context of the everyday, natural soundscape. The idea that sounds and textures 'lift-up-over' one another, is an interesting way of looking at radio listening. Stockfelt (1994) talks about our ability to 'disharken' sounds which we see as 'normal in the situation', but irrelevant to what we are listening to or doing, so that in a concert hall we disregard, or disharken, the sound of our neighbour's rumbling stomach. Poysko (1994) writes about the use of radio in cowsheds in Finland, where the sounds of cowsheds in recent years have been transformed by mechanisation. The sounds of machines in the cowsheds are unpleasant to the workers, so they cover up these noises with radio sound. In their use of radio in the cowsheds, it 'is as though the workers resume possession of

the acoustic space by covering it with their own music' (ibid.:85). The noises they are covering are mechanical 'music in a cowshed is a form of soundscaping, and its function is to humanise and personalise' (ibid.:88). *Electric Radioland* reports that 'Radio is... being used primarily as a backdrop: therefore it follows that whatever the primary activity is, it may intrude further onto the radio station and then drop out again' (Navigator 1993:10). Written for the Radio Advertising Bureau, this report is aimed at advertisers, and seeks to explore ways in which their messages can better be heard. It sees radio as a good medium for advertisers (as opposed to TV) because it sees listeners as 'zoning, not zapping'. This means that listeners will mentally switch off, or zone out from, what they are not interested in, rather than physically switch stations, as a TV viewer would more likely do. Later on, they would zone back in again. This ties in closely with the ways in which my informants talked about their listening. While radio sound provides a background to activities, it also has the capacity to suddenly, or more subtly, become the central activity in itself.

For the Kaluli, weeping and song are about confirming shared emotional states. They are 'expressive codes' that reference 'items and events to a lived world of actual people, places, actions, and behaviors. At the same time they reference the same items and events to abstract qualities and values, precisely described by the Kaluli notion of *hega* or "underneath"' (Feld 1990:222). This concept of 'underneath' is most readily translated into English as 'meaning'. These referencing systems, as Feld describes them, where the real world and the abstract world are brought into play, are able to create a 'momentary social and personal "inside" sensation in which the weeper or singer can be seen, heard, or felt to *be* a bird' (ibid.). To stretch an analogy, we might consider what referencing systems come into play when we listen to the radio, what role does such an activity play in our conception, and perception, of what is public and private? What effect does it have on our personal identities, and on our creation of our social selves? Does radio allow a momentary 'inside' sensation that the listener is a part of something else, perhaps outside of the home, or encompassing it, and does radio sound possess an abstract quality that might somehow get 'underneath'?

One of my informants talked to me about his choice of radio listening, which has been fairly consistent throughout his adult life, in terms of the 'type' of radio he listens to. He is aged 57, and works for a local utility company. His preference is Radio 4, which he will listen to up until around six o'clock in the evening as often as he can. Other times, he might listen to Radio 3, but this is 'only a standby, its not something I would listen to regularly, it would only be a standby if there was something I wasn't terribly interested in on Radio 4'. While he likes radio that stimulates, interests and educates, he prefers Radio 4 to Radio 3 because although he enjoys the music on Radio 3 'the speech tends to get a little bit above my head'. According to Roy you have to 'have a certain *feeling* for it', and although he cannot account for his history of choice in radio listening, he knows what he has a feeling for, and what he does not have a feeling for. The idea that sounds can produce 'inside' sensations that can reference abstract qualities and values described by the Kaluli as 'underneath', is interesting. The ways in which people talk about their use of radio sound suggests similar possibilities, an emotional aspect of radio sound which relates directly to its status as a sound medium.

The Creative use of Sound

Gell (1995) draws on Feld's ethnography and his own fieldwork in Umeda, Papua New Guinea. His main focus is on the link between the landscape and phonological iconism. He suggests that when a culture uses the same sense both to imagine their world, and to communicate it, phonological iconism is likely to exist. In a visual culture this is less likely to occur as the visually evoked world must be expressed in another 'sense modality', that of acoustically coded language;

> in primary acoustic cultures there is no such cross-over; the dominantly acoustic 'world' is directly evoked in the same sensory modality, in the acoustic code of language. In other words, Umeda, and languages like Umeda, are phonologically iconic, because they evoke a reality which is itself 'heard' and imagined in the auditory code, whereas languages like English are non-iconic because they evoke a reality which is 'seen' and imagined in the visual code.
>
> Gell 1995: 245

Whilst in Umeda, Gell was frustrated at not being able to find a vantage point from which he could get a good view of the village. Sight was restricted by the forest habitat,

and consequently the Umeda 'heard' rather than saw their environment. Gell links the forest habitat with the language of the Umeda, and their primarily auditory culture. His most significant observations for this thesis, however, are about a further link he makes between physical and social environment and 'a value orientation stressing "sympathy"' (ibid.:248).

Gell renames what Feld defines as sentiment, preferring to call it 'sympathy'. He goes on to suggest that the marginal forest habitat that both the Kaluli and the Umeda of his own ethnography inhabit in fact *requires* 'sympathy', it is a social necessity 'since the vicissitudes of forest existence impose an inescapable instability on the collective institutions on which life depends' (Gell 1995:252). Gell is saying that emotional expression or communication creates some form of social cohesion when other tactics of social cohesion are less reliable. Lutz (1988) studied the cultural construction of emotions on an atoll in the Southwest Pacific. She found that the social and environmental conditions of life were both affected by and shaped the display, use and experience of emotions for the Ifaluk. She is critical of Western assumptions that emotions are natural and biological, and demonstrates their relationship to the social world of relationships and negotiations in the context of her field site. Not only must we consider the social and cultural variations in the experience of emotion, we must, as Gell demonstrates, be aware of different sensory worlds. The fact that the examples Gell draws on are of auditory cultures is of some interest here. Stoller (1989) writing about his research with the Songhay describes how his ethnographic observations and insights have been greatly improved with the realisation that it is sensory immersion in a culture rather than objective distance that achieves more profound insights and understandings. Once his senses were opened to 'the world of ethnographic things', which was achieved only after long spells of research among the Songhay, he

> let the sights, sounds, smells, and tastes of Niger flow into me. This fundamental
> rule in epistemological humility taught me that taste, smell, and hearing are
> often more important for the Songhay than sight, the privileged sense of the
> West. In Songhay one can taste kinship, smell witches, and hear the ancestors.
> Stoller 1989:5

A study of the consumption of radio sound in Bristol requires focusing on sound, whilst understanding the cultural prominence given to the visual. We can then begin to ask if predominantly 'visual cultures' also demonstrate expressive modes such as Gell and Feld uncovered. Can the link between sound and sentiment, and between environment and 'sympathy', be explored in a study of radio sound in Bristol? Here we can begin to consider the use of radio sound in relation to affective dimensions of domestic living, a theme which will be developed further throughout this thesis. We can explore the particular qualities of sound as a sense in the British context, a culture which prioritises the visual so much so that seeing is believing.

Stoller (1984) considers the 'inner dimension' of sound for the Songhay. He recognises that sound is a force in itself, not merely in relation to an act or an object. In fact, he found through his ethnographic work, that sounds carry forces that can penetrate objects. Sounds, for the Songhay, and others in the world, have the power to transform people 'morally, politically, and magically' (ibid.:559). Stoller's Songhay teacher, a healer, once told him, 'You look, but you do not see. You touch, but you do not feel. You listen, but you do not hear' without sight or touch he told Stoller 'one can learn a great deal. But you *must* learn how to hear, or you will learn little about our ways' (ibid.). Stoller had to learn how to hear, because he came from a Western culture which prioritised vision, and which had little to say about sound, 'the gaze of Western thought has seemingly ignored the dimension of sound' (ibid.:560). As a social scientist, his approach to the Songhay, and his initial attempts to understand them were unsuccessful, until he learned how to hear and appreciate sound. Such listening could, he feels, 'open anthropological ears to a penetrating comprehension of cultural sentiment' (ibid.:559). Here again, the link between sound and sentiment is made, a link which is clear also in my own research. Stoller considers sound, as a force, as something that references the intangible and non visible dimensions of the world. Appreciating the quality of sound 'could force us to overturn our static, spatialized world and make us consider in a new light the dynamic nature of sound, an open door to the comprehension of cultural sentiment' (ibid.:561). In everyday life, through their use of sound in the home, links are made, to intangible and non-visible or speakable aspects of the world - to feelings, moods, connections through time and space, and fantasy and imagination. This ability

of sound to reference these dimensions of existence may lie in the way in which sound is experienced.

Classen (1993) looks at the Western historical construction of the five senses and their values and uses. Western definitions and values of the senses are seen to be culturally constructed, and to have changed over time. There has been disagreement in the West about how many senses there are, with Plato , for example, including 'the sensations of pleasure, discomfort, desire and fear' with sight, hearing and smell, leaving out taste altogether, and substituting sensations of hot and cold for touch (ibid.:2). Aristotle is cited as the authority responsible for our current understanding that there are five senses, although this has been variously contested through time (ibid.:1-5). Classen also looks at cross-cultural variations and points out that our notion of five senses is by no means universal. In addition, both in the West, and further afield, the ranking of the senses in order of importance has been contested. Classen charts Western ideas about the senses and illustrates their cultural particularity and arbitrariness. The senses, how they are valued and used, are socially determined;

> When almost every other aspect of human bodily existence - from the way we eat to the way we dress - is now recognised as subject to social conditioning, it is surprising that we should still imagine that the senses are left to nature.
> Classen 1993:5

Classen talks about how, in the history of the West, hearing was often privileged, as more important than sight as a means of acquiring knowledge, by scholars and social commentators. More recently, scholars such as Marshall McLuhan have 'attributed historical changes in social organisations and modes of thought to transformations in the ratio of the senses resulting from the introduction of new media of communication' (ibid.). McLuhan, for one, saw the introduction of the alphabet and literacy as the beginning of a transformation from a 'hearing-dominated to a sight-dominated-culture' (ibid.). Classen agrees with such commentators that a sensory transformation has profoundly affected social and intellectual states of being. On one level, the emphasis of the visual, brought about by literacy and by scientific ways of thinking about the world, has led to the dominance of 'objective, linear, analytic and fragmented' modes of

thought; on another level it has brought about 'de-personalization, individualism and the division of labour' (ibid.:6).

Sight, as 'the sense of science', provides us with 'most of our models of the universe, from maps to charts to diagrams' (Classen 1993:6). The quality of sight that gives it its 'objective' character, that separates the viewer from the viewed, makes the scientific rationale possible. However, as Classen points out, 'This 'objectivity', nonetheless, by its very visual basis, is grounded in a very peculiar 'view' of the world, and, bird's eye view though it may be, this view is still limited and conditioned by the characteristics of vision' (ibid.). In other words, this is just one way of knowing and 'making sense' of the world. While other senses, and how they work to order perceptions have been ignored. As vision and visual symbolism have become our focus, 'we remain ignorant of the symbolic function of the other senses. Furthermore we remain closed to the alternatives to the Western sensory order offered by other societies' (ibid.:7).

As well as temporal variation in the West, Classen investigates cross-cultural variation. She looks at Andean culture which, until the time of the Spanish Conquest, was an exclusively oral culture (1993:106-120). In this oral culture, time was not, as Western, scientific thought may assume, a 'barrier to speech', it was simply experienced differently from literate societies, 'The orality of Andean culture infused the present with the past and the future' (ibid.:108). Time was more flexible, so that,

> the past could be adapted according to the meaning of the present, in a way not
> possible where written records exist. All past events which had no transcendent
> meaning were quickly forgotten and all those which were archetypal belonged to
> a mythical time, and thus could interact with each other and the present through
> symbol and ritual, and through the voice of the person who spoke of them. The
> future also interacted with the present through speech.
> Classen 1993:108

Classen's investigations illustrate how one could equate vision with surface perception, scientific understanding and linearity, whilst sound might be more easily equated with depth perception, interior understanding and dynamism. This is to suggest that we may be able to begin to understand the importance of radio sound in the home by taking into

account the cultural and social uses and values attributed to the different senses of vision and sound in Britain. As already discussed, we may 'view' British culture as a predominantly visual one, and we can compare it with alternative oral cultures, such as those described by Gell and Feld. Within this visual culture, however, there may be alternative sensory routes to the construction of, and understanding of, the world and relationships. Here, again, we can draw on the work of Classen. She points out that Western scholars tend to define any non-visual culture as an oral culture. While it may be a valid description in terms of oral being the main mode of communication, it does not necessarily follow that such an 'oral culture' uses the sense of sound to create models to make sense of the world and relationships. She gives three examples of what we would term 'oral cultures', the Tzotzil of Mexico, the Ongee of Little Andaman Islands and the Desana of Columbia (ibid.: 121-134). While all three may use oral communication, they each draw on different senses to 'make sense' of the world, 'the Tzotzil order the cosmos by heat, the Ongee by smell, and the Desana by colour' (ibid.:122).

Classen demonstrates that 'sensory models not only frame a culture's experience, they express its ideas, its hopes and its fears. Justice and life [can be] conceptualised in terms of temperature or smell' (1993:136). The senses themselves will be related, in a relation that is social, 'sensory models are conceptual models, and sensory values are cultural values. The way a society senses is the way it understands' (ibid.). Classen looks at the way that ethnographer A R Radcliffe-Brown, coming from the West with its visual predominance, found the ideas of Andaman Islanders about spirits to be 'floating and lacking in precision' (Radcliffe-Brown, quoted in Classen 1993:136). As Classen goes on to point out, 'in the intermingling, olfactory culture of the Islanders (who include the Ongee) "floating and lacking in precision" is precisely how spirits are categorized' (ibid.:136). Thus, the "'imprecision" that a visual culture finds disturbing ... can be normative for an olfactory culture, and where a visual culture may emphasise location, an olfactory culture will emphasise movement' (ibid.).

Just as 'oral cultures' may define their world and relationships predominantly through other senses, it stands to reason that a visual culture may use senses other than sight to

'make sense of the world'. In any case, as Classen suggests, 'insofar as thought depends on language,... the sensory foundations of many of the words we think with demonstrate that we not only think *about* our senses, we think *through* them' (1993:8-9). A similar observation has been made by Gillis (1994), writing about memory and commemoration. He sees identities and memories as 'highly selective', they are not 'things we think *about*, but things we think *with*. As such they have no existence beyond our politics, our social relations, and our histories' (Gillis 1994:5).

In the West, scientific logic may provide the dominant model of our world; yet, on a domestic, everyday level, using senses such as sound, individuals and groups may be seen to construct for themselves in an informal, and linguistically unexpressed way, an experience of their world which is non-scientific, illogical, and moving rather than static. Such a perception could, as Classen suggests that the Andean oral culture did, bring the future and the past into the present. So, whilst visual cultures can be constructed officially and formally as scientific and objective, hearing may allow more creativity. Different realities and possibilities may, through sound, be more easily and informally constructed, imagined and experienced. Whilst there is less emphasis on sound, and less cultural control over its constructions, there may be greater freedom on an individual, domestic level.

What the examples used earlier in this chapter have in common, is the use of radio sound to create domestic soundscapes. These can be seen to contribute to an individual's sociality. For example, a textured soundscape can be used to create silence (social silence) when there is too much sound (social activity), or it can be used to create sound when there is too much silence. Equally, it can act as a reminder of, and a link to, social life outside the home, when one is too busy, or unable, to take part in it. Radio sound draws on many referencing systems, as Feld and Stoller propose, referencing a lived world with abstract qualities and values, feelings and sentiments. This chapter recognises the ways in which radio sound in the home adds to the textured environment (or material culture) within which everyday lives are lived, and social selves are created, recreated and modified. Thus, upon entering the home, radio sound becomes both material and social - it is social in its materiality. To paraphrase the

125

words of another informant, radio stimulates the imagination, and imagination gives substance to sound. And sound can be seen to give substance, in its materiality, to relations between self and others.

Chapter 5
Affective Relationships

In this chapter I will develop an approach to emotion which will be used to examine domestic relationships. I look at how radio fits into the emotional lives and relationships of the people I met during fieldwork. It is important at the outset to define what is meant here by 'emotion'. Emotion and emotionality are two distinct things. In everyday relationships, such as those discussed here, emotion is present. Relationships, and for that matter, everyday living itself, has an affective aspect. In everyday speech when talking about emotion it is likely that it is 'emotionality' that is referenced, strong definable emotions such as anger, happiness, love. Here, while these distinct emotions are present, it is emotion in a less obvious form that I am concerned with - everyday, affective dimensions to peoples lives' and relationships.

The aim of this chapter is to consider the affective aspects of radio sound, and everyday lives, in terms of domestic relationships. Conceptualisations of the self and sociality, through radio sound and relationships, will be explored, adding an important affective dimension to the analysis of radio sound in the home. Finding a way of doing this is not straightforward. Emotions have not found a central place in social anthropology, despite the early work of Bateson which pointed to the importance of considering the emotional aspects of culture alongside the structural, economic, social and historical ([1936] 1958). Unlike more recent work, some of which studies emotion through an analysis of 'emotion talk' or discourse (see Lutz and Abu-Lughod 1990), Bateson saw emotion as a sociocultural entity in itself. This is a view of emotion that fits well with my observations of the operations of domestic everyday living and their emotional content. Furthermore, emotion is seen very much as an aspect of everyday life - an affective dimension - which must be investigated if an holistic view of culture is sought. Bateson then is a good place to start. Before this, an introduction to some of my informants and their social and emotional relationships, will serve to ground this discussion in various domestic contexts, that I discovered through fieldwork.

Four case studies

In this chapter I will draw mainly on the fieldwork information I gathered on four 'couples'. I will look at the ways in which emotion, and radio sound, work in these relationships. In each case I look at individuals in relation to, and in contrast to, an emotionally significant other.

1. Sue and Roy

Sue is 52 years old and lives in a three bedroom house in a semi-rural area a few miles from the city of Bristol. She lives there with her husband, and her son when he is not at university. Sue is from Manchester originally, and her husband is from Newcastle. She is very friendly and has a lively and outgoing personality. She trained as a teacher but has never worked in that profession. She found she was not suited to teaching and has worked in several different jobs; she is currently a part-time manager of some retirement flats. I first met Sue at a Classic Gold listener panel meeting. She was a member of the panel from its inception, and has been listening to Classic Gold for a few years now. Sue likes this radio station because of the music it plays, hits from the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, 'you can listen when you're doing other things because its quite bouncy and cheerful, it sort of helps the work along'. She will sing along to this music station when in the car, and sing and dance along at home. She listens mainly to the set in the kitchen whilst doing other things, either in the kitchen, or elsewhere in the house with the volume turned up. In the mornings, she will listen to Radio 4 along with her husband, Roy, until breakfast time. This will be one of the few times that they listen to the same thing.

They listen first to the set in the bedroom, then to the one in the kitchen. Apart from at this time of day, the set in the kitchen will change stations, depending on who is in that room, or who got there first. When at home, Sue spends most of her time in the lounge or kitchen. She spends the evenings in the lounge once she has finished preparing dinner. At this time she is likely to watch television. She enjoys watching soap operas like *Neighbours* and *Eastenders*, and drama, news and some documentaries. She is unlikely to watch television during the day, but she may look through the television guide to see what is on that evening, 'we always have the *Radio Times* [television and

radio listings magazine], I wouldn't think it was a house if we didn't have the *Radio Times* in it'. Roy, her husband of nearly thirty years, has very different tastes in radio and television. As Sue told me, 'we tend to compartmentalise our lives, for a lot of time I'm in here [lounge], my husband is in his den... very rare that we watch together'. Roy's den is a small room which might otherwise be used as a study. In it, he has a television, radio, desk, books, magazines, and a comfortable chair. Sue told me how she is embarrassed by his den, she thinks it is 'awful' because it is untidy and smoky. She will keep the door to it closed when she has friends round, while Roy's friends are generally 'very envious'. I asked Sue if she thought they ever watched the same programme without realising it, Roy in his den and Sue in the lounge,

> *Sue*: That has happened, yes
> *Researcher*: So you don't necessary discuss what you're going to watch
> *Sue*: No because we don't need to... I mean we have supper at nine so he comes in here at nine and even if he starts watching the same as me he'll want a smoke at about quarter to ten so he goes back in there... when there's three of us in the house and the majority wants to watch something then that's in here and the minority goes in there
> *Researcher*: Seems like a sensible arrangement
> *Sue*: Well it is, but everybody thinks we're really weird.

Roy is 57 and works for a local utility company. He listens almost exclusively to Radio 4, occasionally to Radio 3 and Classic FM. He listens a lot during the day when he is driving around in his van, and sometimes when he is working outside, he will leave the van door open and turn up the volume. He likes news, plays, documentaries, anything that he considers to be 'stimulating', 'I'm not interested in being amused all that much, I can do that myself, but stimulation is a different subject altogether'. Roy would not listen to Sue's listening choices which he calls 'light and fluffy', she uses it, he feels, as 'wallpaper', and he does not see the point of that. If he is not interested in, and listening to, what is on the radio, he says he will switch it off. On television he will look for stimulation, education and information. He watches mainly BBC2 and Channel 4; he will not watch soap operas. He uses the newspaper to find out what is on television and radio, and fails to see the point of buying a listings magazine such as the *Radio Times,* which in his opinion has nothing to do with television and radio programmes but is 'all advertising, just another form of advertising I think'. Roy is interested in restoring old

motorcycles, of which he has three at the moment. His idea of relaxation and indulgence is to spend time in the garage, listening to the radio and polishing his motorcycles.

Sue and Roy consume their different media in a shared but 'compartmentalised' space. Roy describes himself as a bit of a loner, but he is friendly and likes a challenging conversation. He likes subtle humour and irony, and employs this himself in conversation. When I have spoken to Sue and Roy together, I have been struck by their different tastes and interests, yet I have been equally struck by their total acceptance of this in each other. There is not a suggestion of resignation by each of them that this is just how it is, rather there is a developed form of complementarity in existence. The lounge where they come together at meal times is predominantly considered Sue's space and her media choices will dominate. The other area where they both listen to the radio is the kitchen, and here they seem to have worked out a way of avoiding conflict. As Roy said,

> we should have a pre-set tuner button so she can ding that one and I can ding that one, because that would in fact be the case
> **Researcher**: What if you're both in the kitchen?
> **Roy**: I'll duck that one... its never possible, it wouldn't be a very good idea, we worked that one out very early in life, we don't even get up together. For the same reason... I like to go in my own little limbo and that's the way I like to stay.

Ironically, Sue used to listen mainly to Radio 4, until Roy discovered Classic Gold one day while playing with the tuner, 'it was Roy that actually found it, he said, hey, here's one that plays your sort of music, and then I found it, but it was him, so now when he says, "oh not that again" I say "well it was you that found it in the first place, its your fault"'. Sue and Roy, in this account of them, may appear to have little in common upon which to base a lasting relationship. They do, however, have a very strong relationship and are both happy with it. They have worked out, over the years, how to incorporate their different tastes, as expressed through their media consumption, into their shared lives. Indeed, their conflicting tastes appear to be part of the reason that their relationship is a successful and long one.

2. Roger and Julie

Roger and Julie live in a fairly new detached four bedroom house in a commuter village between Bristol and Bath. Roger, who is 36, works as a regional marketing manager for a construction company. He spends a lot of his time travelling around the south west, visiting clients and moving between his two offices. He leaves home before eight in the morning and is often away until seven in the evening. Most of his radio listening takes place in his car, alone. He will usually be listening to GWRfm, which is a music station playing chart hits from the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, although sometimes he travels outside of its transmission area. At home he will listen to Radio 4 first thing in the morning, when the radio alarm wakes him and his wife at six o'clock. At this time he listens to 'what they call a news briefing, the first five minutes where effectively you can get all the news of real importance in that one window'.

Roger and Julie have two sons aged 6 and 9. The older son listens to sport on the radio, especially football. He has a radio in his bedroom and will often listen to a football match on Radio 5 Live. Roger will also listen to sport on the radio at weekends, in the house or garage, or again, travelling in the car. He likes GWRfm in the week because 'I think it probably closely matches my musical taste that I want in the car... and I feel also, although I probably can't put my finger on it, but the blend and the presentation is about right... I think the thing is with music, its light, you don't have to think about it too much'. Roger is a strict father, well organised and punctual. This contrasts with Julie, who is disorganised by comparison. Roger likes things to be well ordered.

Julie works part time on a job share as a community nurse. She, like Roger, spends a lot of time travelling in her car, visiting the homes of her patients. She listens to Radio 4 almost exclusively; the only times she would listen to something else is when she is in Roger's car, or when her own car radio will not pick up Radio 4 for some reason. When at home, she will sometimes listen to Radio 4 if she is doing housework, before the children get home from school, or if she has just got home and she was listening to an interesting item in the car. Then, if she remembers (and she may not) - after getting out of the car, going inside and switching off the burglar alarm - she will turn the radio on. She likes most things on Radio 4, especially news and magazine programmes like *You*

and Yours, and she likes *The Archers,* a radio soap. She listens to the radio on her own, apart from first thing, or sometimes if she is with a friend who also likes Radio 4, they may have it on, if they are both interested in the programme or news item. She will not watch television during the day because she doesn't feel that she is using her time effectively. Listening to the radio does not have the same-time wasting implications although,

> I would never sit down and listen to the radio, I'd either be, it would be background, I'd either be driving from A to B and therefore I'd have it on to kill the silence, or it would be background because I was maybe doing the ironing, or maybe sorting out some paperwork that I didn't really want to sort out... background... the play, yes I mean, sometimes I'll have the afternoon play on if I was maybe doing a bit of ironing or something, you know, you can listen with one ear to that and read whatever you're doing with the other bit.

Both Julie and Roger have very full and busy lives, so that in the week they rarely find time to just relax together. Their listening habits are quite different but rarely overlap in the same space. Julie will use radio in the background, but will turn it off if she thinks she is not listening whereas Roger would be more likely to leave it on,

> if I'm listening to that piece of news first thing in the morning, assuming I'm awake, I'll pay attention to it because I want the information. I will listen to the news as it comes on on the radio station, if there's a bit of traffic information and I'm in the car, but other than that, the music and the voice of the presenter, whatever, advertisements, unless there's anything particular that I'm interested in, we're buying a carpet and there's something advertising carpets, it would tend to wash over me; I couldn't tell you what I've been listening to today, other than when they were saying about the Severn Bridge you know, because that was topical, I was doing that today, but don't ask me what the records were, or what was discussed.

Roger likes to have sounds around him so that

> even if I go to bed early, reading the paper, I put the radio on ... whereas my wife's the opposite, she will come and read a book or something and she'll turn the radio off, she'll say 'are you listening to this?' and the answer is well no I'm not, but its there.

Roger only watches the television occasionally in the evenings during the week; he might watch some sport or news and sometimes a film. Julie likes to watch soaps like *Coronation Street* or *Eastenders*, but rarely watches any of the others, because she feels they can hook you in, and before you know it, you can be spending hours watching them. The children will watch some TV after school and she will often catch quite a lot of that hovering in doorways, or catching glimpses from the kitchen. When she is in her car with the children, the radio is often on, but she is wary of them listening to something intended for adult ears. Unlike Roger, Julie says she likes silence, and is adverse to 'inane' radio listening. She does, however, appreciate the chance to flop in front of the television in the evening if she is tired and in a 'catatonic state', and in this case it does not really matter what programme is on.

Julie describes herself as 'unorganised' in contrast to Roger who has an 'obsession with lists', 'he's terribly organised, I mean I think we have tickets for a football match in two years time whereas, we're going out on Saturday night and I haven't even organised a baby-sitter yet'. They have different preferences for both radio and television, but because they are so busy they rarely have any conflict over this; they also have the space to avoid conflict, so that one of them will often spend time in the evening in the study, if the other is watching a programme they are not interested in; for Julie 'if it's sport I don't want to watch it... I'll be in the study playing solitaire on the computer when I should be churning out documents of some description'. The weekends are when they will spend time together, with the children and with friends. Like Sue and Roy, they have different preferences and habits, when it comes to radio, and media consumption generally.

3. Bob and Faye

Bob is 46 and works as a financial advisor for a firm of accountants. He lives in a modern three bedroom house on the outskirts of Bristol. Faye is 40 and studying for a degree in literature. Faye is Bob's ex-wife and lives in a fourth floor council flat about two miles from Bob. They have a ten year old daughter, Suzie, who lives with Faye during the week, and with Bob at weekends and holidays. Bob also has Suzie regularly on a Monday evening when he attends the single parent social group, which is where I

met him. Bob has one radio in his kitchen diner and one in his bedroom. Often, when he is at home, they will both be on, in case he needs to move around the house. The sound from these two radios can be heard in all parts of the house, if the volume is adequate. He listens exclusively to Radio 4. It is usually on when he is at home, and will be on in the car. When Suzie is with him, he will still have the radio on; she will usually be in the lounge watching television or a video. When Bob has the radio on, he says he is usually paying quite a lot of attention to it,

> I would pick up an awful lot of information from the right sort of programme, if there was a science programme on that interests me I'll pick up an awful lot of that, if there's a play or a story on that interests me I'll get the whole of it without doubt, no question about that... even if I'm doing something else at the time, I will get the whole thing that's on the radio.

Bob hardly ever watches the television, and Radio 4 is hardly ever absent from his life when he is alone, or in the company of his daughter, at home or in his car.

Faye, on the other hand, describes herself as an 'intermittent' radio listener, according to her mood,

> Basically, when I'm feeling down I don't listen to radio 4.
> **Researcher:** so, you find it depresses you, or, if you're already depressed, you find it depressing?
> **Faye:** I feel alienated from it if I'm depressed, its um, I don't know if its a social class thing or what it is, Radio 4 definitely has that feeling about it doesn't it, ... and yet, when I'm feeling good *Woman's Hour*[1] feels like family. That's the thing. there's certain things I like to listen to, especially *Woman's Hour*, I feel part of it
> **Researcher:** so if you're confident in yourself then you can be part of it?
> **Faye:** yes
> **Researcher:** and if you're full of self doubt?
> **Faye:** Then I want to put a music tape on, I won't put the radio on I'll put a music tape on.

Faye has what she describes as a 'love-hate' relationship with Radio 4, partly because it was Bob who introduced her to it. Faye's listening is also affected by the seasons; in the

---

[1] *Woman's Hour* is a one hour long magazine programme broadcast every week day on Radio 4. It deals with issues from a female perspective.

summer she listens rarely, but in the winter she feels 'closed in, claustrophobic, I sit down and listen to the radio cause you're not out and about'. She will sometimes listen to a music station, usually Virgin 1215. This is often to accompany an activity like decorating. She takes pride in her home decoration and has spent a long time making her home nice. In the evenings she will usually watch television rather than listen to the radio, although she will often play her own music tapes.

Before meeting Bob, Faye used to listen to music radio, Radio1. Bob introduced her to Radio 4 about 20 years ago and then 'took over', so that while they were together his listening tastes dominated. Like Bob, her father was also a 'radio fanatic'; she remembers asking him, when she was very little, 'not to change from the Third Programme to the Home Service because I wanted to hear music, but I was fed the Home Service [now called Radio 4]'[2].

4. Gretta and Mark

Gretta is 36, divorced, and lives in a fourth floor council flat. When I first met her, she lived with her youngest son, Nik, who is 12. She also has a 19 year old son, Steven, who lived with his girlfriend. Gretta was longing for him to come home, as she missed him, and did not get on with his girlfriend or his girlfriend's parents (who they were living with). Soon after my first meeting with Gretta, Steven left his girlfriend and returned home, and Gretta was very happy about this. I met Gretta at the single parent social group, where she used to go regularly with a friend of hers, Theresa. Theresa is 28 and a single mother of four young children. They met at the single parent group, and became firm friends when they shared a caravan on the group's holiday. Although they lived at opposite ends of town, they would spend a whole day, every week, with each other. Gretta would catch the bus and travel to see Theresa, as Theresa had four young children and it would have been much more difficult for her to travel to see Gretta. Theresa lives in a council house and has been separated from her husband for two years.

---

[2] The Third programme changed its name to Radio 3, and the Home Service to Radio 4 in 1967.

Shortly after Steven returned home, he began to accompany Gretta and Nik to the single parent group's meetings and social events. He became romantically involved with Theresa and for a few weeks they were very close. Gretta was pleased about this at first, because she was very fond of Theresa, her best friend. Once Steven broke off the relationship, however, Gretta found it difficult to maintain her friendship with Theresa. Theresa was very upset about the broken relationship, and kept sending letters, sealed with lipstick kisses, to Steven, through Gretta. Steven was her main topic of conversation when she was with Gretta, and she would ask Gretta if she could find out why Steven had broken off the relationship. Gretta felt herself placed in a very difficult situation and although she did not want to lose her friendship with Theresa, her main loyalty was to her son. Gradually Gretta stopped coming to the single parent group and stopped meeting Theresa. Unlike Theresa, Gretta said that she was happy to be 'on her own'. Even when she had begun a romantic relationship, she maintained that her independence was important to her. Theresa, on the other hand, was longing for another marriage. Theresa leaves the radio on all night for comfort, while Gretta finds this keeps her awake,

> *Gretta*: I started doing what Theresa does, when I go to bed, put the radio on, I find that I'm all right like the first 20 minutes, half an hour, and then rather than turn it off I think "Oh I'll go to sleep and leave it going", but it takes me twice as long to go to sleep
> *Theresa:* I don't know...
> *Gretta:* I could be tossing and turning half the night because the radio's on, soon as I turn it off...
> *Theresa:* if anything I'm singing away
> *Researcher:* so do you leave it on?
> *Theresa:* yea, I leave it on all night ... but I does it more now because I was separated than what I did before, you know, for the simple fact that you're on your own...
> *Researcher:* is it because you want the company?
> *Theresa:* mm, yea, because I can't bear to be in the bedroom on my own I think its a sense of security as well because if you've got a noise there you don't feel totally on your own
> *Gretta:* and then you don't hear anything else like, you're not thinking, "oh what's that!", when you're on your own, you got the radio playing

Gretta is a woman who knows her own mind. She lives on benefit but also works as much as she can to earn extra money. Since separating from her husband, she has seen

some very bad times, spending a few months living in bed and breakfast accommodation, and struggling just to survive. Gretta has brought herself and her younger son through these times, and now lives relatively comfortably. In the time that I have known Gretta she has been involved with four different men, and each relationship has affected her listening choices and routines. When I first talked to her she did not have a relationship, and had not had one since her divorce a year before. She listened to the radio a lot at that time,

> I really don't think I could be without a radio in the house, I've got to have music around me, because at one stage, not so much now, but when my oldest boy was tiny, I'd have the radio on all day, right up until tea time and it would always be like the old music; like Classic Gold is the one I listen to during the day, and uh, years ago it used to be like Radio1 but its Classic Gold now and I find that that is my type of music; and Nik tends to like that sort of music as well, all the old '50s and '60s... we're in to all that and , and a lot of our tapes and stuff, we listen to a tape, its all the same as that, that type of music

Shortly after this first meeting, Gretta met a man who she had known years before. He was living in Cardiff, and she began to tune into Red Dragon, a commercial music station based in Wales, that plays a mixture of chart hits from the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. This man was then sent to prison, and for a while she maintained her relationship with him and kept listening to Red Dragon. She especially liked an evening request show, Charlie Power's Love Hour. She began to buy a lot of what she describes as 'sloppy music' tapes, the kind of music that she previously listened to when she was feeling down and wanted to 'wallow in it'. Now this music took on a different meaning in her life; now it reminded her of her friend in prison and their romance. Gretta was unable to maintain this relationship for long, as he refused to allow her to visit and stopped writing to her. She did not understand why this was, but eventually accepted that the romance had come to an end. At this time she began working part time as a catering assistant and started to see a fellow worker. He introduced her to music tapes from the 1950s and 1960s. She reverted to Classic Gold as her radio station and listened to the tapes that he had lent to her.

Meanwhile, as this relationship broke down, she became involved with a man who she had met through her previous boyfriend in prison. He was also in prison, and in fact the whole of their relationship took place with him in prison. He had few visitors or people to write to, and Gretta felt sorry for him. He was much younger than Gretta, in his early 20s. This is Mark. One of the ways that Gretta and Mark 'related' to one another was through radio. For him, it was a very important link to the outside world. She visited him fortnightly and wrote to him daily; he telephoned her three times a week. He often wrote about what he had been listening to on the radio, and she began to listen to 'his' stations. They were GWR fm and Talk Radio UK. He, in return, started to listen to Classic Gold. One of the ways in which they communicated their feelings, was through discussion of music that they had heard, or liked.

Mark dominated Gretta's thoughts for the period of their relationship; when she talked to me about the radio at that time, it was almost always with reference to his listening habits, likes and dislikes. Their musical tastes were one of the things that brought them together, as far as Gretta was concerned. She was not as keen as he was on Talk Radio, but she would listen, 'I just like to get a feel of what sort of things that get to him when he's in there, like, with this talk thing, obviously like you said its all talk and very little music, I'd listen to it for a couple of minutes just to get a feel of the things he actually listens to'. Before she found out about this station, he had talked a lot in letters about 'Caesar The Geezer', one of the presenters, and she really wanted to be able to discuss this with him. Radio, for Gretta and Mark, had become an important element in their relationship, a link.

Bateson on ethos, eidos, and schismogenesis

Over half a century ago, Bateson worked on defining his notion of ethos, in order to look at emotional aspects of human life. He felt that an holistic view of cultures would necessarily have to include details of emotional life, which he saw as culture specific 'the culture standardises the organisation of the emotion of individuals' (Bateson 1958:115).

Bateson defined ethos as the emotional emphases of cultures, made up of affective relationships and standardised behaviours, which gave an affective motivation for details of that behaviour. Each act, in turn, has an affective function. That is, 'the effect of some detail of cultural behaviour in satisfying or dissatisfying the emotional needs of the behaving individuals' (ibid.:307). Emotional aspects of cultures, along with their sociologies, structures, rituals, histories and economies, are, according to Bateson, 'fundamentally inseparable aspects of culture' (ibid.:3). The ethos which makes up 'the emotional background' to cultures, 'is causally active within a culture, and no functional study can ever be reasonably complete unless it links up the structure, and pragmatic working of the culture, with its emotional tone or ethos' (ibid.:2), and, 'ethos is expressed in the tone of [cultural actors'] behaviour' (ibid.:120).

Although inseparable in practice, abstractions such as cultural ethos may be distinguished for analytical purposes. This is not straightforward, for cultures resist being presented in linear form, they are 'really an elaborate reticulum of interlocking cause and effect' (Bateson 1958:3). Bateson's 'way in' to an understanding (although he would not have claimed to have gained a complete understanding) of the culture of the Iatmul of New Guinea, was to study naven, a set of ceremonial customs, which consist of ritualised actions and behaviour between a sister's child and a mother's brother. The details are not important to the present study, it is rather Bateson's approach that has influenced the analysis contained in this chapter. He developed this approach because he wanted to overcome the problems of describing complex behaviour and cultures and, importantly, because he wanted to get at the *feel* of cultures, their emotional tone. His focus on ritual, and mine on routinised radio listening in the home is not problematic if we see that Bateson used naven as a focus in order to gain an understanding of the wider sociocultural life of the Iatmul. Likewise, I focus on radio sound, yet my aim is to gain an understanding of wider domestic everyday lives.

He concentrated on three 'points of view', the 'ethological', the 'eidological', and the sociological. The ethological looks at the emotional emphases of culture; the 'standardised' emotional orientations. This is the *ethos*. The eidological looks at the 'logic' of culture. Through looking at the structural premises of culture, a general

picture can be painted of the cognitive processes involved; this general picture, Bateson calls *eidos* (Bateson 1958:32). The logic of a culture, is the linking together of elements of cultural structures, so that 'logic' in this sense is culturally specific, and not necessarily similar to Western notions of logic as a 'discipline of thought' (ibid.:25). Eidos can be examined, through cognitive aspects of details of behaviour, just as ethos can be examined, through affective aspects of the same behaviour. The sociological point of view, looks, as one might expect, at the society, at the relationships between the cultural behaviour of individuals, 'and the needs of the group as a whole: the maintenance of solidarity, etc.' (ibid.:30). The society, in fact, can be seen as the setting in which ethos and eidos exist, and the product of their existence.

Nuckolls (1995) recognised the insights that Bateson achieved in his early work, and wondered why later academics, interested in emotion, and the relationship between emotion and cognition in cultures, have failed to draw more productively on Bateson's work in New Guinea. Bateson was ahead of his time, in both his research interests, and his methods. In addition, as Nuckolls points out, much of what he has to say is *implicit* in his early work, rather than explicit, and perhaps its true potential and relevance is yet to be realised. The way in which his approach allows for an understanding of the link between emotion and cognition, by extension, also allows for a way of looking at the affective qualities of, and reactions to, radio sound on the one hand, and the rational and logical practices of everyday living on the other. Through a recovery of this work, and drawing especially on the concepts of ethos and eidos, Nuckolls feels a new approach to 'the problem of cognition and emotion in culture' could be developed (1995:367). Nuckolls explains Bateson's thinking behind his conception of culture as a combination of ethos 'standardized emotional configurations' and eidos 'standardization of cognitive configurations' (ibid.:368);

> The meanings of *ethos* and *eidos* depend on the term *standardization*, which in Bateson's work generally refers to the recurrent patterns that organize and represent feelings and thoughts. Standardized emotions are deep and strongly motivating emotional orientations. They constitute a cultural ethos. Standardized thoughts are habitually associated ideas, located in memory and available to recall, which organize and direct thinking. They constitute a cultural eidos.
>
> Nuckolls 1995:368.

Bateson recognised the fluidity of cultures. Working in the 1930s as a structural functionalist, he could easily have produced a functionalist and essentialist account of the emotional life of the Iatmul. But *Naven* is much more than this[3]. Although Bateson determined that his account was purely synchronous, his notion of 'schismogenesis' allows for movement through time. Schismogenesis is a force that is always at work, on all levels. It must be controlled to avoid cultural disintegration, but can allow changes to take place, if the spirit of the times, the *zeitgeist*, allows. The current state of any culture is a dynamic equilibrium 'in which changes are continually taking place' (Bateson 1958:175). Within any culture, as well as a dominant ethos (or in more complex cultures, perhaps a few dominant ethoses) there will be contrasting ethoses, such as women's ethos as contrasted to men's. These contrasts, if unrestrained, will be liable to lead to changes in cultural norms. 'Processes of differentiation', or schismogenesis, will continually 'tend towards increase of the ethological contrast' (ibid.), whilst other processes will continually counteract this tendency. Naven, and its associated transvestism, was shown to act as such a counteracting process for the Iatmul, that would serve to slow down changes in cultural norms, brought about by the contrast between the conflicting male and female ethoses.

The Iatmul, male ethos that Bateson described, was very largely to do with pride and posturing, and finding ways of gaining public attention for oneself. The female ethos was domestic, centred around co-operation and quiet. As such, these ethoses were complementary and opposite. They obtained their meaningfulness from each other, so that the ethos of the Iatmul was binary and emotive, 'both parts mutually configuring and neither intelligible by itself' (Nuckolls 1995:371). Schismogenesis has the effect of making the differences more pronounced; the male and female ethoses would become more and more differentiated and contrasting, if left uncontrolled.

In order for schismogenesis to take place, certain social factors must be present; the individuals concerned must be held together 'by some form of common interest, mutual dependence, or by their social status' (Bateson 1958:182). Equally, the emotional

---

[3] See Nuckolls (1995) for a facinating account of the influences he sees in Bateson's early work.

emphasis of the relationship will be crucial to the whole process, so that we have to 'consider not so much the content of the behaviour as the emotional emphasis with which it is endowed in its cultural setting'(ibid.:183). Relationships can be formed, then, within the emotional emphasis, or ethos, of any culture. When they are formed, they are likely to be complementary in character. That is, we look for others in a relationship, who will perhaps compensate for our weaknesses, or complement ourselves, in certain ways. Certain aspects of such complementary relationships, however, may become more and more emphasised, so that distortion of, or over-specialisation in, individuals' respective roles, can threaten the relationship. However,

> we must think... of schismogenesis, not as a process which goes inevitably
> forward, but rather as a process of change which is in some cases either
> controlled or continually counteracted by inverse processes
> $\qquad$ Bateson 1958:190.

Bateson distinguishes two forms of schismogenesis: complementary and symmetrical. Through complementary schismogenesis, the male and female ethoses could be seen to become more and more pronouncedly different, so that cultural change was threatened. However, through inverse processes, such as the naven ceremonies, where women take on the exaggerated dress and attitude and behaviour (or ethos) of men, and the men take on exaggerated dress and attitudes and behaviour (or ethos) of women, a form of symmetry is achieved. Here, the women are seen to be like 'men', and men seen to be like (an especially exaggerated version of) 'women'. The naven ceremonies were seen by Bateson to bring symmetry, which counteracted the process of differentiation that was continually taking place. Bateson observed that conflict in the opposing ethoses, was a key element. The desire to oppose through exaggeration, conflicted with the desire for cultural and social cohesion.

Conflict was also important in the eidos of the Iatmul. As Nuckolls explains, 'eidos is a repertoire of cultural models, or knowledge structures, which are variable and multiple, subject to extension or repression, and distributed differently among the members of a group' (Nuckolls 1995:386). 'It was the conflict, or more precisely, the contradiction between opposing premises, that generated and governed cultural knowledge. Bateson

described this kind of thinking as "twisted"' (ibid.:387). Whilst the conflict present in ethos is that between 'desires that mutually construct and oppose each other and those that seek a steady state within a closed homeostatic system', with eidos, 'the conflict is between assumptions whose premises logically contradict each other' and it is through this that 'systems of thought result' (ibid.:388). As with the resolution of affective or emotional conflict, cognitive conflict is only partially and temporarily resolved, and this is 'one of the reasons knowledge systems change' (ibid.).

Nuckolls sees this as an example of paradox, and he thinks Bateson would have agreed that,

> paradox is powerful because it impels knowledge, giving it shape and providing it with direction... Paradoxes inherent in Iatmul conceptions generate the dialectics out of which Iatmul social structures, emotional orientations, and cognitive organization take shape. They are fundamental, just as in Western philosophy the unresolvable and paradoxical dualism of mind and matter is fundamental to the development of philosophical systems all the way from Plato to Descartes
>
> Nuckolls 1995:388

Bateson grappled with the question of why the Iatmul took things as far as they did, and what the motivation behind it was. As Nuckolls points out, Bateson found that 'The Iatmul, quite simply, enjoy the intellectualization of paradox' (Nuckolls 1995:389). Not only those directly involved in naven ritual behaviour, but all Iatmul, contribute to, and enjoy this aspect of their culture, 'In short, the goal toward which they strive is not orderly completeness or resolution in unity, as in Western science, but the preservation and development of paradox itself' (ibid.).

We have already contrasted Western visual cultures with oral cultures, and considered some of the implications of the differences. The possibility remains that, in using sound within the domestic sphere, creativity may take place, that is unlike the objective, scientific, visual logic more formally attributed to Western thinking. Likewise, the unity and 'orderly completeness' apparently valued by the West on a formal level, may, on the domestic level, exist alongside a more conflicting state of affairs. One of the key

ideas that has received much attention in terms of modern relationships and the ideal of equality, is intimacy. Intimacy suggests completion, and unity, in an adult relationship. Intimacy, however, must be worked at, and as we also value individuality, it is clear that in a quest for both, conflict may arise. It is not unreasonable to suggest that, in our striving for individuality, we may, in domestic relationships, encounter schismogenesis. This would need to be counteracted.

Radio sound may serve such a counteracting process, slowing down changes in affective relationships, or, alternatively, highlighting schismogenic disintegration of affective relationships. Schismogenesis is a force always at work, and in order to achieve a dynamic equilibrium, controlling mechanisms are brought into play. In the tension caused by the schismogenesis between male and female ethoses among the Iatmul, naven behaviour is used to diffuse the situation. Relationships in the home, in Bristol, could also be explored, using the notion of schismogenesis. We have seen how, to some extent, radio sound can be used by individuals to relieve loneliness, to reach out in fantasy, to explore inner self and feelings. Can radio sound, then, like naven for the Iatmul, serve to help to maintain and negotiate dynamic equilibria, in the light of changes brought about by schismogenesis within domestic relationships? Sue and Roy can be presented as an example of a domestic relationship that thrives on different ethoses. Both Sue and Roy enjoy the paradox of their relationship - it provides them with an intellectual and emotional challenge. Their occasional, though regular (daily) joint radio listening and television viewing could be seen as allowing them to recognise their symmetry, important for them if their relationship is to survive. Their differences cannot become too exaggerated as this could lead to the disintegration of their marriage.

Radio sound in domestic relationships provides a means of gaining insights into, and understandings of, affective aspects of the lives and relationships of my informants. Does radio sound have the potential to work to maintain such relationships, and to change them? Radio sound has an *intimate* quality to it, it is direct. This is partly explained by the fact that it is non visual, or at least, any visual aspects to radio sound are produced in the mind of the listener. Intimacy is a quality of close personal relationships that is stressed in contemporary Western societies; it is seen as an ideal to

work towards, or to fall short of. To explore affective aspects of relationships in the home, it is first necessary to understand something of broader cultural 'ethoses'.

Intimacy

With a specific concern to trace the transformation of notions and locations of 'intimacy' from early modernity to the present day, Giddens (1992) examines the notion of love and its relevance to self reflexivity, home and domestic relationships. He charts changing attitudes to sex and sexuality in Europe over the last 200 years, recognising the emergence of notions of 'romantic love' which, whilst previously the preserve of aristocracy, began to be diffused through the social order in the nineteenth century (1992:26). It was at this time that the 'home' as a distinct environment came into being and 'at least in principle, became a place where individuals could expect emotional support, as contrasted with the instrumental character of the work setting' (ibid.). Whilst passionate love, or *amour passion*, is defined by Giddens as a more or less universal phenomenon, romantic love is seen as much more culturally specific. Passionate love is based on sexuality, and poses a threat to the social order; an individual is emotionally involved with an other in a pervasive way, so that ordinary obligations may be ignored, 'it uproots the individual from the mundane and generates a preparedness to consider radical options as well as sacrifices' (ibid.:38). In pre-modern Europe, passionate love was rarely involved in marriage arrangements, which were forged on economic, rather than passionate, grounds. Passion was more likely to emerge in, and be responsible for, extra-marital relations. In fact, Giddens observes that most 'civilisations seem to have created stories and myths which drive home the message that those who seek to create permanent attachments through passionate love are doomed' (ibid.:39).

Entering into this world of 'the "chaste" sexuality of marriage and the erotic or passionate character of extra-marital affairs' (Giddens 1992:39), came ideas of love connected to Christian morality. A more permanent devotion, romantic love, based on, rather than opposed to, social order, emerged from the late eighteenth century onwards. Incorporating notions of sexual passion, yet retaining ideas of long term involvement, 'romantic love introduced the idea of a narrative into an individual's life'(ibid.). Romantic love provided the incentive for individualisation and privatisation of

emotional relationships, centring around the home and marriage. Love is now a part of modern life that is seen as necessary for emotional stability, and security , 'It is a process of attraction to someone who can make one's life, as it is said, "complete"' (ibid.:40).

For Giddens, romantic love, which emerged at the same time as the novel genre, displayed characteristics of a 'newly discovered narrative form' (1992:40). Although some ideas about cosmic fate remained, romance provided a way of looking at an 'open future'; it became 'a potential avenue for controlling the future' (ibid.:41). In this way, modern notions of 'romance' contributed to, and expressed, changes in social life. Giddens demonstrates how emotional life and romantic love became reordered in modern times, to play a central role, that was about psychological completeness and stability, and control over the future. This accompanied the move towards greater privatisation and individualisation of the person - emotional 'completeness' being actively pursued through personal controlling narratives.

Romantic love allows individuals to detach themselves from social circumstances, but not erratically, like passionate love. Distance allows for a kind of self-scripting; romantic love 'provides for a long-term life trajectory, oriented to an anticipated yet malleable future; and it creates a "shared history"' (Giddens 1992:44) with a partner, a history centred on the home, and based on notions of intimacy. Radio sound, amongst other things, may serve to aid this narration on an individual and day to day basis. If one looks at how radio is experienced, it is personal and yet social, and it is used to create or change 'mood' and 'feeling'. Gretta uses 'sloppy music' to script her future with the man who she cannot be with in the present, and to script her present - as a woman in love, but kept apart from the object of her desire.

Giddens talks about 'the other' in a romantic love narrative as 'answering a lack' in the individual, 'and this lack is directly to do with self-identity: in some sense, the flawed individual is made whole' (1992:45). Women have become specialists in matters of intimacy, consequently, their self-identity is crucially based on, and liable to be affected by, changes in 'the nature of marriage, the family and work'(ibid.:55). In a changing

146

emotional landscape, Giddens sees them often as 'pioneers moving through unmapped territory' (ibid.:55). Here lies a paradox for women. The very love relationship that forms the basis of their lives, and is supposed to give them control over the future, because of their emotional qualities, has special impact on them. This provides women with a perfect case for internal conflict. Romantic love, says Giddens, is 'thoroughly skewed in terms of power' (ibid.:62). Bateson saw personal relationships as a difficult problem for individual negotiation. When a relationship is first established, 'it is probable that the patterns of behaviour which the two individuals ... adopt seem to both parties to be a satisfactory answer to a difficult problem of relationship' (1958:187). Over time, schismogenesis may cause a distortion of this relationship, so that discomfort will be introduced into the relationship. In an effort to return to previous harmony, individuals may 'over-specialise' in their respective roles, thus moving further away from their original states; in time, this distortion, according to Bateson, is likely to be accompanied by three effects:

> (a) a hostility in which each party resents the other as the cause of its own distortion, (b) at least in complementary schismogenesis, an increasing inability to understand the emotional reactions of the other party, and (c) mutual jealousy.
> Bateson 1958:187-188

This description of the breakdown of relationships, fits well with contemporary experience. The reason for the changes in such a relationship, may reside in cultural notions such as that of romantic love; residing as it does more in projected life narratives, with an emphasis on sameness and sharing, than in experience, which is often based on complementarity, it will always run the risk of falling short of our expectations. Likewise, the idealised individual with whom we share our projection (or think we do), will have a lot to live up to, and his or her imagined future may well be quite at odds with our own. While it is clearly not necessary in a successful relationship to share radio listening, when forced to do so, or when prevented from choosing one's own sound environment, problems can arise. This may be a symptom rather than a cause of relationship problems, but Faye recognises its role in her failed marriage,

> *Faye*: When I was living with Bob I was forced to listen to the radio and told to shut up
> *Researcher*: It sounds like he has Radio 4 on whenever he's at home

Faye: Yea, he's the kind of person that listens to PM [afternoon news programme] and it comes on again, the same thing, and he still listens
Researcher: The same news story?
Faye: Its chopped up isn't it for people to switch off and on, but he listens because there might be something in between, and *'shhhh,* didn't hear that, *shhhh, shhhh'*
Researcher: Now of course he listens to it on his own most of the time I guess
Faye: Yea, he probably inflicts it on Suzie [10 year old daughter] as well, I wouldn't be surprised... he pushes her off into the front room...
Researcher: She watches TV and he listens to the radio in the kitchen?
Faye: I think that's awful... but I mean, I do do it a bit, but I think I have to share whatever she's listening to because its a point of communication isn't it, otherwise they're not communicating...
Researcher: So did that cause friction between you when he wanted to listen and you wanted to talk or something?
Faye: Well, I remember, in the end I thought the best thing was just not to talk, so we stopped, it caused internal problems for me but, I got used to it, it was just, the radio was in the kitchen... it was when he wanted to sit down and listen to it in the front room as well that it got a bit irritating, and that Robert Robinson thing, I used to think, if this is my life listening to Robert Robinson on a Saturday night - is this the climax of my week? And I used to get very depressed... [laughter]... no, its awful really, and I didn't like being told that I would like something, that was the thing, that was the thing...

For Faye, Bob's need for radio was a snub to her and to their relationship, 'It's like, "go away, you're not important, the radio's more important to me" I mean, that's how I heard it... you can use it as a tool in an argument and a power thing... accentuate the tension between you...'. Another couple who had differing radio tastes, agreed to talk to me about their radio listening. I met Jane through a friend, and when I first visited her home and told her about my research, she volunteered her partner, Sam, as an interviewee, as he was a 'Radio 4 addict'. She, on the other hand, preferred no radio at all. The next time I had cause to visit their home, about a month later, I found that Jane had got to the point where she could no longer bear to have the radio on all the time 'spoiling and invading' her space. Sam, a practitioner of alternative medicine, worked mainly at home, and the offending radio was in the kitchen which also served as a dining area. They had come to an agreement that the radio would be on, one week, off, the next. Sam wanted it on, all of the time, Jane wanted it off, all of the time, so they had reached a compromise. I was aware at this time that their relationship was suffering, for reasons other than their different sound preferences, however, they both agreed to

talk to me for my research, the following month. When I called to arrange a time, however, they had split up, and were both feeling too upset to talk to me.

Whilst I am not suggesting that radio was solely responsible for these relationships breaking down, it is interesting to observe how the infliction of a soundscape on an unwilling partner, or, conversely, criticism of a preferred soundscape, and its restriction, can contribute to such breakdowns.

> *Faye*: I can remember Bob used to be very angry with me about liking pop music. He would say, 'well that's crap' and I would say 'well yes, but I enjoy it, maybe I'm just not cultured enough for you'... and yet he seems to go to [single parent club] and dance to crap, *ha, ha*... You know, its OK in that context...
> *Researcher*: So you were not able to put your music on?
> *Faye*: I used to put my music on when he wasn't there... I used to think, oh yea, great, I can put my music on, I don't get so excited about putting it on any more... I can have it when I like and I quite often choose not to, and I'll put Radio 4 on, I mean, he introduced me to Radio 4... but he also encouraged this love-hate relationship with it I'm sure... because it is that really.... he used to like *Woman's Hour*...

There does seem to be a need amongst the couples that I draw on in this chapter, to share at least some aspects of their radio listening and television viewing (and also newspaper reading to some extent). Sue and Roy both listen to Radio 4's *Today* news programme while getting up and eating breakfast, and will come together again in the evening around 6pm, and again at 9pm, when radio and television consumption will be shared, despite Roy's vehement criticism of Sue's media choices. Roger and Julie will both listen to the Today Programme which wakes them up in the morning, and will share the odd evening's viewing on television. Once every two months or so, they will hire a video to watch together. Gretta will attempt to tune in to whatever she thinks or hopes Mark is listening to, and try to get requests played on the air for him. She also sends music tapes to him;

> The reason I listen to GWR and Classic Gold a lot is because I know Mark listens to it and there's certain songs that both of us like... I sent him a tape and its got an old song on, they're called Heat Wave, they're not a very well known group, they've got a song called *Hurry Home*, and when I first played that it was on a tape that Theresa lent me and I listened to the words and the words just

made me spill, I just cried and I thought the words are just adequate for the reasons why he's in there and the amount of time he's been in there and how I feel for him, and all that came out. And everything seemed to be into that one song and I wrote in and told him about this song and I thought well, there's no good me telling him about it if he doesn't know the words or he's never heard it, so I put the tape, and sent it to the prison. ... I told him what song to look out for and he listened to it and he wrote back and he said it made him feel exactly the same. I just said that, I didn't tell him exactly how it made me feel, I just said that it makes me think of him, and he wrote back and everything how I felt about the song was what he said back, so we both sort of felt that way. And now, whenever he refers to it which is quite often in letters, he'll say, I played our song today. And he always puts a line under 'our'.

Even Faye, despite her remembered unpleasant experience of having Bob's radio choices inflicted upon her, will attempt to interest her current boyfriend in her own radio preferences,

I've introduced Rob to thingy, the political thing, *Week Ending* [political satire]... and I said, 'come on we've got to listen to this, it comes on at such and such time', fiddled around with the aerial, sat down and listened to it, and then after, there was something on gay men after that, new men or something... *Researcher*: *Locker Room*? [magazine programme for men] *Faye*: Yea, and I thought, right you ought to listen to this, and I could tell he didn't like it, but uh, he was listening under protest. And I thought 'I think I'll leave this to *Week Ending*', so we listen to that together.

These remarks prompted Faye to remember her terrible evenings spent with Bob and Robert Robinson; she is determined not to inflict things on Rob, if he really does not enjoy them, but is pleased that they can share *Week Ending* and will, if she thinks it appropriate, try to share other listening with him. Faye sees her relationship with Rob as full of potential for sharing interests; a more well-balanced relationship, where one partner will not impose their needs on the other, against his or her will. Intimacy plays an important role in this.

Related to Faye's working notion of a well-balanced relationship, Giddens, in optimistic vein, sees the emergence of a new kind of relationship in present day lives. A democratisation of personal life and relationships is on the cards, and women, to his way of thinking, will benefit greatly from this. *Confluent love* 'presumes equality in

emotional give and take, the more so the more any particular love tie approximates closely to the prototype of the pure relationship' (Giddens 1992:62). Here we arrive at the heart (sic) of the matter. The notion of a pure relationship, of democratisation in personal life, is an ideal. Faye may be working with such an ideal relationship in mind, so what happens if and when her experience falls short of this? Coward (1992) talked to almost 150 women at some length about their ideals of motherhood, and discovered how they, more often than not, see themselves as falling short of them. Juggling careers and motherhood, there is a clear notion that, to be a good mother, involves self sacrifice. Coward asserts that, despite many social commentators' claims that female subordination has been replaced with a high level of freedom of choice for women, the true picture is far less positive. Women's ideals of motherhood are hard to live up to, and because of this, they can be the cause of feelings of inadequacy. Nevertheless, Coward found that, overwhelmingly, women still work in the light of those ideals.

Women have been burdened with the responsibility for maintaining intimate sides to their lives, at great expense to themselves. Whilst having to take part in the creation of narratives of romantic love and marriage, in order to have any power over their destinies in modern times, and to be able to take part in the future, they have also been condemned, or at least restricted, to the domestic sphere, by the same institutions. Through different socialisation, and, Giddens claims, different psychological constitutions, men and women have enjoyed different benefits and drawbacks, based on these unequal power relations. Giddens paints a picture of men as psychologically damaged and unable to foster close, intimate relationships. Women take on the burden of the maintenance of intimate relationships. Men, in their effort to fill 'emptiness' because of their lack of real intimacy are likely to be sexually promiscuous, in a vain search for fulfilment. So, Giddens is saying that women are more in touch with their intimate selves, while men are unable to live up to their expectations. As men strive to fill emptiness, and as they see women less distanced from, and more able to achieve, intimacy, they use power to control women. However, according to Giddens, just as romantic love emerged and evolved in early modern times, a new form of relationship, the pure relationship, which is based on confluent love, is now beginning to emerge.

Giddens claims that, despite possible charges of utopianism, 'reality' bears witness to such an emotional future (and present for some). He could be charged with an overly romantic imagination. But he maintains that it is 'deep psychological, as well as economic, differences between the sexes [that] stand in the way' of democratic personal lives - of pure relationships (Giddens 1992:188) and that these are now shifting. Confluent love, in terms of sexual fulfilment, means that the 'cultivation of sexual skills, the capacity of giving and experiencing sexual satisfaction, on the part of both sexes, become organised reflexively via a multitude of sources of sexual information, advice and training' (ibid.:62-63). At the core of such relationships, is the willingness to become vulnerable to each other, to share deep intimacy. Men would have to unmask their emotional dependency and allow themselves to become vulnerable. This transformation of intimacy is clearly seen by Giddens as a progressive movement towards emotional and sexual democracy. However, as he himself points out, the pure relationship is a 'prototype'; it is an ideal. Here I think we may have an important clue to understanding domestic emotional 'realities'. When Faye tries to get Rob to listen to and share a radio programme about 'new men', she has in mind an ideal notion, and something she feels will contribute to her idealised relationship. Despite his dislike of the programme she is not put off, her ideal is not significantly damaged, and she is happy that they can share another programme on a regular basis.

We all work with ideals that inform our actions and perceptions. Our imagination works to help to form a part of our reality. If we look at Giddens' argument in a slightly different way, we can see that the sorts of prototypical notions he discusses, like romantic love and the pure relationship, exist in more than one realm; it is the sum and/or interaction of these different parts, that make up what we might call affective realities, or affective economies, in domestic lives. It may be that such ideals provide us with the will to always strive for something, even though we may never achieve it. Indeed, it may be that the resolution of any conflict or paradox which stands between us and those ideals, may not be our true goal. Maybe, like the Iatmul, we thrive on the intellectualisation of paradox, and by achieving only temporary resolutions, we continue to live affective or emotional lives. Imagination and fantasy have their roles to play in this exercise.

Imagination, fantasy and romance

Radway (1987) studied romance reading amongst a group of women in Smithton, an affluent Midwestern town in America (see chapter 3 for a discussion of her methods). Radway admits in her introduction to an 'excessive preoccupation with gender and to the use of a rather rigid notion of patriarchy' (1987:9), however, the study holds some indications of how romance and fantasy are seen by academia, and by 'ordinary' people, as gender concepts.

Radway sees romance reading as a 'complex social event' and analytically distinguishes between the act of reading and the text that is read. The women of her study insisted that 'their reading was a way of temporarily refusing the demands associated with their social role as wives and mothers. As they observed, it functioned as a "declaration of independence", as a way of securing privacy while at the same time providing companionship and conversation' (Radway 1987:9). The 'Smithton women' used the word 'escape' in association with their reading of romances. Radway attempts to analyse the word in order to understand its significance. She sees it used in relation to romance reading in two different ways: literally, to deny the present, and figuratively, through identifying with the heroine whose life is so different to their own (ibid.:90). Radway sees the women as wanting to maintain a distance between their 'ordinary' lives and their 'fantasies' and to some extent equates fantasy with escape. So, there is a dual implication in the word 'escape': 'its reference to conditions left behind, and its intentional projection of a utopian future' (ibid.:11).

The projected utopian state which is created through the act of reading romance is inhabited by men who are 'neither cruel nor indifferent, neither preoccupied with the external world nor wary of an intense emotional attachment to a woman' (Radway 1987:215). In addition, the heroines, around whom successful romances are always centred, through their adventures, suggest that 'the safety and protection of traditional marriage will not compromise a woman's autonomy or self-confidence' (ibid.). A reformation of their actual situations, takes place through the reading, so that the very conditions that leave them 'longing for affective care, ongoing tenderness, and a strong

sense of self worth' are reproduced in a different, more satisfactory, and fantastic form. This suggests to Radway that 'the women who seek out ideal novels in order to construct such a vision again and again are reading not out of contentment but out of dissatisfaction, longing and protest' (ibid.).

Radway detects an irony here; the very form of relationships which oppress the women and make them desire 'escape', is recreated in a form which, through fantasy, makes them feel better. She draws on psychoanalysis to explain the contradictions present in her findings, such as the fact that the women claimed to have happy marriages and yet apparently turned to romance reading to fulfil their needs and desires, that were not being met by their husbands. She detected an ongoing search for nurturance for themselves, which was unavailable in their everyday lives. Radway interprets romance reading as a way of ritually 'retelling the psychic process by which traditional heterosexuality was constructed for women, but it also seems to exist as a protest against the fundamental inability of heterosexuality to satisfy the very desires with which it engendered women' (Radway 1987:13-14). These desires are met by reading romance, and this is why the women of her study will read and reread formulaic and highly predictable stories without tiring of them. Indeed, when the women feel especially vulnerable to depression or sadness, they are likely to turn to a romance that they have already read, as they can then be sure of the eventual happy outcome that will help to lift their spirits.

The women of Radway's study 'fervently' insisted that 'romance reading creates a feeling of hope, provides emotional sustenance and produces a fully visceral sense of well-being' (Radway 1987:12). Radway tried to understand how, despite what she saw as their own dissatisfaction with traditionally structured heterosexual relationships, and their sometimes exhausting role of nurturance, women could experience such pleasure through the heroine's recreation of a similarly structured arrangement between a man and a woman. She does not construct any grand conclusions, and sees her research as inadequate as a means of understanding the effect of romance reading on the women's lives, more widely, or through time. As Radway states 'we simply do not know what practical effects the repetitive reading of romances has on the way woman behave, after

they have closed their books and returned to their normal, ordinary round of daily activities' (ibid.:217). Yet there is a strong suggestion that romance reading reinforces women's oppressed state in traditional, heterosexual, American marriage.

One of the biggest problems that I find with Radway's work is her separation of fantasy from everyday life as though they exist totally in different spheres. Romances embody fantasy, according to her analysis, yet she does not see this as embedded in 'ordinary' life, but separate from it. It is seen as a place, or space that women claim for themselves against the tide of cultural pressures, where they 'go' when engaged in the act of reading romance. It is seen as a defiance, a protest. It is seen as a 'compensatory solution' (Radway 1987:85) to the women's predicament born of the inequality of women in modern relationships. Their 'intense reliance' on the act of reading romance is seen as needed to 'fulfil deeply felt psychological need' (ibid.:59). There is an imbalance in the women's marital and familial relationships, which romances temporarily and vicariously, address. Good romances are defined by her informants as ones where there is a mutual love and dependence, a balanced relationship, where the heroine is both nurturing and, importantly, nurtured. It is this nurturance, that Radway sees as absent from the women's lives.

The women claimed that their marriages were happy, which Radway says she does not doubt, and yet the picture she paints, is of wholly inadequate relationships, which make the women search for compensation in the pages of romantic fiction. To situate their romance reading more fully in their domestic lives, may serve to get past this apparent contrast between fantasy and ordinary life; through investigating more thoroughly, the lives of the women that read romances - their histories and relationships - one might see how fantasy and 'escape' occur in other aspects of their lives, and how fantasy and ordinary life are integrated[4]. Romantic love is seen, to some extent, as an ideal, that exists on the pages of novels, which the women experience vicariously, and which contrasts with their own situations. If, however, such a strong contrast was evident to the women themselves, one wonders how they were able to describe their marriages as happy. If, on the other hand, fantasy and ideal romances exist across all aspects of their

---

[4] Radway herself recognises that this kind of investigation is needed (see her conclusion).

lives, and are not clearly separable from what is 'ordinary' but a part of it, then a different interpretation of their motivations and satisfactions may be possible. If integrated into their lives, then romance and fantasy are part of their lives.

Trisha, who is 37, and works part time as a care assistant, has five radios in her three bedroom house. She lives with her husband, an engineer (previously a professional sportsman), and three teenage sons. When I first met her, she was a very dedicated listener of GWRfm;

> ... I usually have the music on wherever I am in the house... sometimes I have it on in the kitchen and in here [lounge] because I like to hear music loud you see, that's me personally, not that I would disturb the neighbours, not to that extent, but I actually do like it quite loud, so if I sometimes have it on in the kitchen and in here it sounds wonderful... If there's a particular record on that I really like I will come back in and turn it on really loud, because I like to hear, I love the bass of the music coming through you know, so if there's a particular record I like, I'll do it then...

Music for Trisha, is an important part of her life. Her husband and three sons are all very interested in sport, and do not share her interest in music, or radio. She feels isolated in her family, and listens to radio when she is on her own at home. This is usually for around seven hours a day. She has a very large collection of CDs, and buys books about pop music, which she uses to research competitions set by the station, and to reinforce her extensive knowledge of popular music. She sees herself as 'passionate' about music, and about radio. Her passion is not shared by her immediate family or by her friends:

> I don't really mix with anybody who's particularly interested in music, oh, apart from my brother, I mean if my brother was here now we'd be talking shop... people are aware where I work that I'm really into music and radio so they'll say to me sometimes, for instance, 'there's this record on at the moment and I don't know what it is' and they sing it to me, and I say 'Oh, that's...' but I don't actually mix with anybody that actually has the same interests.

Trisha will listen to her own music collection on CD sometimes, usually when she is having an 'off day', as it can lift her out of a mild depression, in a way that radio cannot:

I just look through my selection and I would know what was the appropriate one to put on, and I play a song and I know I'll feel a lot better after that... You rely on it don't you [music], I couldn't be without it I know that.

Researcher: So what is it about radio that makes you want to listen to that rather than play your own music all the time?

Trisha: I like some of the slots, particularly that Gary Vincent has in his show, for instance the 10 at 10 which is at the start of his show... this is 10 songs with a connecting theme in some way and Gary Vincent devised a slot in his show whereby we get the opportunity to send in our suggestions so that's played approximately 10 o'clock till about 20 to 11 it takes about that time, and I really look forward to that every day ... sometimes I'll set my alarm, shows how silly I am, I'll set my alarm after I've been on nights for my radio alarm to come on at 10 for me to listen to it and I'll lie in bed dozing and listening to it and go back to sleep after, because I really do like it...

For Trisha, radio was important because she felt she was sharing her passion with other people. She joined the listener panel, organised by the station, and enjoyed the meetings, and her involvement in the station. She felt 'very privileged to be chosen to go on it'. She was unsure, however, about how the others at the meeting saw her. She worried that she may have been viewed by them as 'over the top', with her enthusiasm and interest. This meant that she often wanted to make suggestions to the station, but did not through lack of confidence.

I think I can present as being a little bit over the top and I think sometimes I need to stand back a bit... a bit too enthusiastic. And I think you can frighten some people off and sometimes I wonder and question whether that's probably how I presented myself, but I mean it's genuine... I don't know if there's anybody who's as over the top as I am...

In her home, she was faced with a similar situation, where she felt that if only she could win a top prize (£1000), she could justify her involvement with radio to her husband. When alone, she was able to indulge her interest in a way that was not possible when the rest of her family were there. The children preferred to watch television when they got home from school, and her husband would ask her to turn the radio down when he was at home:

My husband doesn't actually like listening to the radio very loud, if I've got it on ever, so if he ever comes in sometimes and I've got it on the first thing he

will say is 'could you please turn that down' it's not acceptable to him hearing wise, but to me it doesn't seem particularly loud... so there's a conflict sometimes between us...

... it causes conflict between our relationship sometimes because I mean, he's into cricket and football and my sons are as well and so I'm on my own regarding my music, I suppose that's why I've taken it on board as being a friend as well because I sometimes feel isolated, I feel I'm up against it really with them being so much into sport and everything, it actually has caused conflict sometimes. As I said before, the noise level sometimes when my husband comes in is unacceptable to him and so sometimes he'll say to me 'could you please turn that down Trisha' and inevitably I end up switching it off...

Music plays a central part in Trisha's life, and music radio enabled her to think that she was not alone in this, despite her family isolation. When she saw other people wearing station sweatshirts, she felt relieved and excited that she was not the only one who was proud to walk around with her favourite station's logo displayed on her chest.

Trisha is unusual among radio listeners, in that she was very actively involved in radio, either through phoning-in for competitions, attending listener panel meetings, or through other events organised by the station. She is unusual, in the way in which she engaged with the station, in a face-to-face way, forming a 'real' relationship with it.

Trisha was aware that the station representatives who attended the listener panel meetings did not understand her involvement with, and passion for, radio. She felt a need to explain this to them, but did not know how to do this. She had invested a lot emotionally in the station, which had helped her to define her sense of self, and practice her interest in music, but to the station, she was just another listener, and worse than that, she was seen by them, she felt, as 'over the top'. She felt that, in meetings her input was criticised by the station staff, that they did not appreciate her abilities and knowledge of music: 'I really feel deep down that I've got something I could offer [the station]', but her qualities were not recognised.

After about two years of membership, the listener panel was disbanded by the station, and for Trisha, this marked the breakdown of a real relationship. Trisha had sensed the end of the relationship at the last meeting, although the members of the panel were not

told at that time that it was to be the last meeting. She told me how she had 'picked up vibes', and knew something was wrong, and had 'come home really upset'. She felt personally let down by the station.

In a way, Trisha could be seen, metaphorically, to have been having an affair with the radio. It provided her with an escape from the oppression of her family, and her feelings of isolation, just as romance reading did for the Smithton women. Yet it did not contain the risk of a 'real' affair. As an affair, it was accompanied by guilt, so that she was continually trying to justify her 'passion'. It also involved collusion with others who shared her 'passion'. In the safety of her domestic environment, all was well, but as the relationship moved outside of the home, and entered the realm of face-to-face social relationships, it became fraught with problems, causing her to question her own self image. Whilst initially, her relationship with the station had acted to reinforce her commitment to it at home, gradually it challenged it. Eventually, she became like a jilted lover, and was left feeling upset, insecure and misunderstood. When I last talked to Trisha, she was trying out other stations in an attempt to find one that was right for her. Although the sound of her previous station had not changed, her relationship to it had.

In the music radio industry, there has been a long-standing notion of a stereotypical female listener, who invites the male presenter into her home, as 'romantic visitors descending on a bored housewife' (Baehr and Ryan 1984:8). Yet, there has been no research to investigate this perceived relationship on a deeper level. The fact that the target audience of Trisha's preferred station is female, and in their thirties, because this is the most prominent section of their audience as shown by ratings, does not make the stereotypical image of the housewife, fantasising about the male presenter, true. The relationship, if Trisha's case is used as an example, is much more than this. Trisha fits the station's profile of the target listener, just as the Smithton women would probably fit the profile of the romance publishers' target reader, but they do not really know who these women are.

Trisha was not 'having an affair' with an individual male presenter, or with the station as a whole. She was 'having an affair' with her self, in relation to a world that can, and does, partly through imagination, exist in the soundscape that she was able to create when alone at home. Her father, whom she remembers with affection, and sadness, died when she was a young girl. He was a trumpet player, and it is to him that she attributes her interest in, and love for music. She is not a musician, she cannot play an instrument, and this she regrets. If her father had lived, he would, she thinks, have taught her this. The soundscape she creates on a daily basis, has, as a major contributor, a radio station that tells her, and all of its listeners, through their station rhetoric, that it cares about music, and about its listeners. It tells them how it listens to them, and only gives them what they want to hear. It respects the music it plays, not allowing presenters to talk over records. This particular station is very predictable in its sound - it is therefore very reliable. Its tight format means that Trisha can be sure that it will sound the way she expects it to sound, at all times. It therefore contributes, in a very reliable way, to the domestic environment that she creates in everyday life.

This can be seen as similar to the way in which three quarters of the Smithton women would regularly re-read books. One of Radway's informants told her that she read 'to be entertained and feel lifted out of my daily routine' (Radway 1987:63), yet predictability was important to the women and re-reading a book is an added guarantee that their spirits will be lifted. This activity and such observations may help to shed some light on the current debate in the radio industry about what many call 'bland' formats sweeping the country via commercial radio. Some in the industry cannot understand how such formats which are highly repetitive and 'unoriginal', which are accused of taking all of the personality away from presenters, can be so commercially successful. Among the Smithton women, and my own informants, we can begin to understand the importance of predictability, repetition, and routine, in the consumption of certain media in the home. Knowing what is coming is apparently very important for both romance readers in Smithton and radio listeners in Bristol. It is not, however, a clearly gendered thing, according to my findings.

They challenge the simple and assumed female, emotion link. Romance and fantasy can occur in a male form, although this is often presented as a 'hard' form. It is usually rationalised rather than empathised, but it nevertheless exists. I have found that men are more likely to rationalise their listening, while women more frequently talk about their radio listening in relation to their emotional life, how they *feel* or have felt, in romantic terms. With Roger and Julie, whilst it is Julie who does not engage in 'inane' listening, and Roger who will use radio as background sound, Julie talked about radio much more in terms of how it made her feel, or helped her, emotionally, than Roger did. Both those that we might (superficially) name 'rationalist', and those we might name 'romantic', use radio sound as an aid to the affective dimension of their everyday living, and both incorporate fantasy.

Bob and Roy, as men, for example, are in effect fantasising - through their use of radio sound - about not fantasising. Bob denies his use of radio sound as an emotionally comforting thing through describing its functionality. He will only listen if it is interesting and sometimes educational, and he 'swallows news all the time'. Faye could not understand this 'obsession', in her view, with news. She could not understand why he would want to listen to a whole news programme when the items just get repeated. Having heard them once she felt he could have turned off and could not see the 'functionality' in continuing to listen. On the other hand Faye readily talked about her emotions in relation to radio, and, how her radio listening affected and was affected by her emotional states. Bob would not engage in conversation with me about this, even when I had known him for ten months and had regularly talked to him about radio and many other things at the social group. Ten months after his first interview I re-interviewed him and tried to get him to talk about how he *felt* about radio, how it fitted into his emotional life:

> *Researcher:* Do you think its something to do with needing company, radio - to not have silence?
> *Bob:* No its more than that because I am often specifically listening to it and it will modify my behaviour. I will wait for something to finish before I go out. Or if I go upstairs, I'll blast it on really loud so I don't lose it while I'm going upstairs, even though I might have a radio on in the bedroom... I might think 'I

don't wanna miss any of that' so I'll turn it on loud, so no, its more than that, I'm actually listening to what's there

Researcher: But is it that you need some sort of distraction from...

Bob: No, if its just a distraction I don't think I would turn it up loud to walk upstairs to avoid the possibility of missing something significant...

Researcher: You talked about listening to *The Archers* even though you're not a fan, but if its on you'll listen

Bob: Sometimes yea, sometimes I get interested in the storyline, I mean I've been listening to it a lot lately. I go through phases with *The Archers*

Researcher: What's that sort of listening about, where you'll leave it on even if you're not too interested?

Bob: There's just the possibility that something might come on that interests me.

Bob insists that he listens because there is something interesting to listen to, or, there may be something interesting coming up. For him this is something 'more' than using radio for company. Bob is well educated, having taken a science degree. He is a professional, middle class, divorced man who is reasonably well off, owning his own home, car, and earning in the region of £25,000 a year. In contrast, Faye struggles to live on benefits and a small grant while she studies as a mature student. Faye talked freely to me about the problems of studying, and of bringing up a child, and, of running her home. Bob always appeared to be in control of his life, and applied scientific, rational principles to problems he might encounter from time to time. Yet it is Bob who can be seen as more emotionally dependent on radio sound. Faye may talk more easily about how radio makes her feel, and about how it can alter, or be used to match, her mood. Bob talks about his listening as serving a straightforward and rational function in his everyday life, whilst Faye describes her listening, to Radio 4, as a 'love-hate relationship'. These two informants illustrate a pattern, often observed, albeit in more subtle forms, of a male functionalist routine as contrasted to a female romantic routine. If we move beyond the accounts of informants like Bob and Faye, and observe them in their social and domestic lives more broadly, we can see that, Bob is in some ways much more emotionally dependent and less 'objective' in his listening than Faye. She is able to see more clearly how radio sound fits in with her life, life changes, seasonal variation, and emotional states.

Despite his rationalist explanations, Radio 4 appears to provide Bob with contact with an other world, a world that is in itself, rational and functional, predictable, informative, and intellectually stimulating. Radio 4 helps Bob to create this world in his home. Bob is able, through his radio use, to create and to interact with a world that constitutes a part of his routine reality. Faye saw his use of radio as obsessive, as a slight to their relationship and to her, but his routine continues without her, emphasising the importance of the soundscape that radio helps him to create - as a social individual. Bearing in mind the importance of the world that Radio 4 creates for Bob, and Faye's some time alienation to it, it is not surprising that she saw his listening in negative ways. Through the use of radio sound, he may well have surrounded himself with a rationalised, yet affectively supportive, soundscape, which helped him to avoid looking at aspects of his everyday life which were difficult to think about in terms other than emotional - that is, his intimate relationship with an other person. Faye observed Bob's intimacy with radio and saw it clearly as a rebuff to her, and their non-intimate relationship. Her interpretation of his listening may be framed as 'emotional', and his as 'rational'. It can be seen as a good example, following Giddens, of a male inability to deal with intimate aspects of relationships, and of the ways in which women are burdened with the responsibility of ensuring intimate aspects of relationships. Yet, in some cases, such complementarity in relationships works well, as Sue and Roy demonstrate. It also emphasises that, although radio sound is naturalised in the home, it holds the potential to comment on self and social relations, in a profound way.

For Bob, routinised radio listening, and the soundscapes it creates in his home, help him to maintain an affective equilibrium: in his relationships and in his view of self in relation to others, his sociality. His radio listening provides a means to avoid dealing with affective aspects of his everyday life. He can anchor his affective self through the world created by the consumption of radio sound. He is no less dependent - and perhaps more so - than Faye, on fantasy, as a part of the way that his domestic reality is created.

Roy rejects Sue's use of radio as 'wallpaper', which he associates with her gender. He rationalises and legitimates his own consumption as 'educational, interesting and informative' and therefore, functional, practical and wholly rational. He cannot

understand Sue's use, which is irrational, to his way of thinking. On my third visit to their home to collect diaries of listening that they had been keeping for a week, we had the following conversation:

Roy: There was a friend of mine, we occasionally have little heart-to-hearts, like I'm the old man and he sort of bounces ideas off me; and he had the same observation of his wife as I have of mine: television, and radio is there as a distraction, its soporific if you like, whereas he was interested in television and radio for the things that he was interested in or would educate him or what, but as far as churning out wallpaper, no, no

Sue: Yes because men aren't interested in the everyday little dramas of life which is what soaps are, they're not interested in that sort of thing whereas women are...

Researcher: Men do watch things like *Coronation Street* and *Eastenders* don't they, and a lot of men seem to listen to *The Archers*[5], did I ask you if you listen to that Roy?

Roy: Definitely definitely not! I have no agricultural background whatsoever

Researcher: You don't need to have do you, its a soap isn't it?

Sue: I used to listen but...

Roy: No I find it, again you see this is where we contradict each other, I find things like *The Archers*, I mean if you really want to go back *Mother Dales Diary* was another one, so totally unrealistic, I mean they live in a world which I have no idea about at all and which, as far as I was concerned was fantasy, their so called problems, I mean good god! They haven't got any, you know

Researcher: Susan's been sent to prison [a character and storyline in *The Archers]*

Sue: I mean its gone down a bit since, its gone sort of more normal hasn't it?

Researcher: I've only been listening to it in the last couple of years

Roy: Yea I think actually that it did have, I mean in the days when they had the Squire and Grace Archer and all that lot, they were finding themselves a bit dated

Sue: You can remember when Grace Archer got burnt in the stables

Roy: Course I can

Sue: Was that the night ITV started

Roy: It was the night ITV started

Sue: yes it was, they put a really sort of big thing on *The Archers*, that was Phil's first wife, she died in the stables, oh it was big drama wasn't it

Roy: Yes, she went in to rescue Midnight

Sue: The horse...

Roy: I used to listen to it because I was waiting for the damn news to come on and this was in the middle of it, that was probably one of the reasons why, no, I only listened to *The Archers* like racing, every now and again, it would be

---

[5] *The Archers* is a radio soap that is broadcast each week day. In addition, all of the week's episodes are broadcast together in an omnibus edition on Sunday mornings.

accidental. I mean now, if *The Archers* is on, I hit that off button dead on first time, I can't stand it, I wouldn't have it on
Researcher: Its quite nice listening to it like on a Sunday morning when you're having a bath, its like something to do
Sue: Yes
Roy: What a depressing little life you must lead!

Although Roy's last comment was spoken in jest, emphasising his sardonic sense of humour, he maintained that he would not waste time listening to, or watching, something that was not informative or educational. Yet he remembers the name of the horse that Grace Archer tried to rescue, in an episode of *The Archers* that was broadcast 40 years ago. Through his diary we can see that he does listen to, and watch, radio and TV programmes, for reasons other than pure education and information. For example, whilst in the garage cleaning his motorcycle one lunch time, he recorded that he listened to a serial and the news on Radio 4, commenting that he did so as it 'distracts from cleaning tedium'. The evening before he had watched a film, *Karate Kid II* in his den, on his own, whilst reading the paper. He recorded that he did not find it very interesting or enjoyable and paid it little attention, commenting that it was 'not so interesting to stop reading paper'. Programmes about cars and motorcycles will demand his full attention and he finds them very interesting, so much so that he will watch or listen to the same programmes again when they are repeated later in the week. It is interesting to compare his diary entry with Sue's, concerning a television comedy programme that they watched together. Sue records high levels of attention and enjoyment, and writes that although her son originally introduced them to this programme, they now watch it because they like it. Roy on the other hand records low enjoyment levels, but notes that it 'doesn't interfere' with his supper.

This could be seen as an example of using the television as 'wallpaper' but Roy does not regard it as such, and notes in his diary that it was Sue who chose to watch this programme, although she recorded it as a joint choice. They both note that they watch it every week. His actual listening and viewing is not quite as clearly informative and educational, as he might like to think. His diary reveals a less discerning listener and viewer than he suggests, in his own interpretation of his listening and viewing practices. He, to some extent, fantasises this character, in relation to Sue, and his criticism of her

choices. In addition, the choices on Radio 4 and Channel 4 and BBC2 that he listens to and views, and his talk about them, reinforce the somewhat idealised rational man that he is. Yet there is, a big difference between his listening and Sue's, which demonstrates the accuracy of his statement that 'we're totally different, we're totally different in attitudes, we're totally different in everything; its amazing how we're still together'. Not only are they still together, but they are happy: theirs is a successful relationship. Furthermore, the exaggerated differences between them can be seen to take place as much in fantasy, as in practice.

Sue and Roy illustrate that complementarity in relationships can work well. Relationships are enacted and negotiated in domestic space, and exist in the routine of everyday lives, in part, in fantasy and imagination, in ideals like confluent love and pure relationships. The idea that, in order to achieve true intimacy as a sign of a good relationship, there must be a sameness in tastes, activities and ways of thinking, does not appear to be upheld by my examples. Giddens charts notions of intimacy as they have been transformed over the years. Whilst we can see that there are, indeed, ideas about what makes a good relationship, and how people should operate in relationships, the actual experiences of relationships are far more 'flexible'. While we may use notions like confluent love, and pure relationships, they can be ideas, not necessarily based on realities, but perhaps contributing in some way to those realities which are far less static and ideal. Our search for the ideal relationship, and our construction of an ideal partner, may take place as much in our imagination - in the safety of the domestic sphere - as in any other sphere. In a diachronic sense, there may well be a culturally shared ideal of confluent love which we are moving towards, with notions of mutual respect, equality and shared intimacy, yet we have seen how complementary differences can make a successful relationship.

The object of our desires can exist, as Gretta demonstrates, in fantasy, which can be given temporal and emotional structure through radio sound and the textures it creates in the home. But emotions other than 'romance' as it is generally understood, can be facilitated through the use of radio sound; radio sound can be used to adjust and create 'mood'. Mood is an important element in domestic environments, which we have yet to

examine in any depth. We can begin by placing mood in the context of wider cultural understanding of emotion, and looking at how and why, mood is manipulated and changed, through the use of radio sound. At this point it will be possible to move beyond the notion of individual narratives, and look at the economy of emotions, in and beyond the home.

Chapter 6

Affective Rhythms

This chapter continues to explore affective aspects of domestic living. It is different from the last chapter in that it is more about individual 'mood', or 'feeling', in routinised everyday life. Rather than being about close relationships, it is about individuals and how they feel, in the context of wider society. It is about establishing the notion of 'affective rhythms' in everyday life. It explores the affective qualities of radio sound and its capacity for mood generation in the home. This chapter is less about domestic relationships and more about personal affective states and personal organisation.

Keil, in 'Motion and Feeling through Music' (1994), seeks to uncover something of the affective qualities of music. At the risk of over simplifying Keil's rather more complex arguments, it is possible to draw some ideas for how to approach the affective qualities of radio sound, and how they are experienced in a personal way, from his writing. While he concentrates on music production, some of his points appear salient to a discussion on the consumption of radio sound.

Keil begins with the question 'What is a musical experience?' (1994:53). Drawing on the work of others, most notably Leonard Meyer, Keil appreciates that music has been recognised as containing both intellectual and emotional meaning. His main criticism of Meyer's *Emotion and Meaning in Music* (1956) - the details of which are not important to this study - is that it relies on a syntactic rather than processual view of music. As such, it is eurocentric, for whilst it can be applied to traditional Western composition, it is not applicable to music in performance, like improvised jazz, or to non-Western music systems. The intellectual meaning of music can be elicited from such syntactic theories, but the emotional aspects of music are not addressed adequately by such an approach. If we rely purely on a syntactic approach to an understanding of music, Keil believes that 'something is missing'. Keil asks us to consider music as a creative act rather than an object that is fixed. While the 'embodied meaning' of a piece of music may be elicited through a close analysis of its syntactic structures, the 'engendered

feeling' is only elicited through exploring that music as processual. The notion of engendered feeling fits quite nicely with the idea of 'mood', and when one thinks of Keil's ideas in terms of the consumption of radio sound, it fits very well. Not only is radio sound 'processual', that is, it is not fixed, it also fits into the processes of everyday domestic life - its routine.

We can also consider how Keil's ideas about engendered feeling and embodied meaning might relate to Bateson's concepts of ethos and eidos. Bateson (1958) looked for ways of studying ethos, because he recognised that, in order to take an holistic approach to the study of cultures, the affective dimension must be included alongside the cognitive (the eidos). These aspects of cultures, the emotional and the logical, work together. Likewise, 'every piece of teleological music involves both syntax and an elusive quality designated here as "process". Any good composer, that is, tries to give some spontaneity to his forms, and conversely, any good improviser tries to give some form to his spontaneity' (Keil 1994:55). Engendered feeling is about processual, motor responses, while embodied meaning is about syntactic, mental understanding. Keil's aim is, through 'emphasising less syntactic, under specified aspects of music' to 'reveal that part of expression not inherent in form or syntax' (1994:55). Keil demonstrates the need for a more 'processual methodology' which will explore and lead to an understanding of how performance based music, and engendered feeling, works. In a similar way, this study of the consumption of radio sound is concerned not so much with its form or syntax, but rather its affective quality. This is what makes radio sound appropriate as a domestic accompaniment, because of the ways in which it aids mood creation and maintenance.

The affective responses that radio sound produces in listeners are not created through the simple and preordained equation of certain stimulus = certain response. The same radio sound, as is continually reiterated in this study, will produce different reactions, and evoke different environments, for different people, at different times. Engendered feeling, can be understood as contributing to the creation, of a 'socioemotional' state, or mood. I will return to the idea of mood generation and maintenance shortly. First, I consider the idea of mood in the light of the routine nature of everyday domestic life.

The routine, and mundane, nature of domestic life, and of domestic tasks, was often commented on by my informants. Radio was seen as something which helped them through this. Radio seemed to give them some kind of energy or momentum. We can think of this in terms of an 'affective rhythm'. In musical terms such a phrase as affective rhythm would no doubt hold different meaning than intended here. In everyday domestic living, I see such an affective rhythm as individual yet social, and as processual. The word 'rhythm' seems appropriate on two counts. Firstly, it says something about repetition and about routine. Everyday life is often unremarkable, and follows routinised patterns of behaviour and thought (specific to each context). Secondly, and drawing on that routineness, rhythm gives the impression of movement, of momentum. Whilst this could be understood simply as a temporal rhythm - for example, if the news is on I should be getting into the shower or I will be late for work - the sense in which I use it here is as an *affective* rhythm. Bateson (1958) talks about cultural events and activities having an affective dimension. This is the dimension of radio listening and everyday domestic living that I am attempting to grapple with here. Radio listening is often both routine and energising. It can entertain, inform, educate, stimulate, annoy, get you moving, dancing, singing; it can just 'be there', or it can be the focus of attention. Radio sound contributes to the unremarkable, and the unremarked, aspects of domestic everyday life, that form the bedrock of our selves as social and cultural actors. Radio sound is used to create certain moods, or feelings, in these domestic contexts.

Sarah is a 47 year-old computer programmer, who lives with her two teenage daughters, her 24 year-old son, and her daughter in law, who is expecting a baby. Sarah is very promiscuous in her radio listening, but she adheres to a basic pattern, or 'rhythm' which she recognises, even if she strays from it for months at a time. That pattern consists of listening to the news and other speech programmes on Radio 4 during the day, and on winter evenings. She listens to music on various stations, in the evenings throughout the year, but mainly in the summer. Sarah describes herself as a 'fidgety' kind of person and this is reflected in her radio listening:

When I'm home all day I would channel hop on the radio, that's what I do really, and I don't even know what I'm on right now, that's my big problem... I don't know one end of the flaming dial from another any more, I don't know what's going on... It might be a pirate... it might be Miranda [DJ on Galaxy 101] but she talks a bit more usually, it might be a pirate, what are we on, well, we're on fm...

It does not matter to Sarah what station she is listening to, as long as it sounds all right to her at that moment. When it ceases to sound all right she turns the dial:

In a minute, if you weren't here, well probably before now, I would probably have changed the dial, like I'd have thought, "Oh, fucking hip hop, I'm sick of this", and found something else, and if I like the sound of it, I don't even look what it is, ... so I'm a bit of a grazer when it comes to the radio...

Sarah listens mainly in the kitchen diner, and in her bedroom. In her bedroom, she listens to the radio first thing in the morning. She would be more likely to listen to speech radio here, on winter evenings, when things close down around her. When I interviewed her, it was in the middle of summer, and she felt more like staying up later and listening to music, with the windows open. Her radio alarm wakes her in the mornings. Sometimes it is important to Sarah that she wakes up to the right sound, depending on how she is feeling, so that;

sometimes I will put it back to Radio 4, sometimes I'll make sure its on Radio 1, sometimes I'll be specific because I'll think, I don't want to wake up to a flaming Galaxy advert or something, you know I just don't wanna be woken up with something in my face about a product, you know about some car hire or fucking double glazing you know, so I sometimes might make a conscious effort to put it on, you know, find Radio 4 and leave it on that, because Radio 4's actually quite nice round about midnight...

Sarah's listening will depend on what she is doing, or has to do, as well as on how she is feeling, so sometimes it is used to help her to get into the right mood for specific tasks, or to distract her from that task. She likes the way in which radio allows her to get on with what she has to do, but allows her also to give some of her attention to something else, 'its very concurrent isn't it, its a very concurrent medium, that's what's

so, multi-tasking, that's what I love about it, because I've got a multi-tasking brain you see, I've got a radio brain'.

Sarah recognised how the radio sound that she listened to at the time of our meeting fitted in very well with her life, activities and mood. She was listening mainly to pirate radio stations and Galaxy in the evenings - enjoying 'young' musical styles such as house, jungle, and other dance music. At that time Sarah had recently met a new lover, after having been alone for some months. She had been spending a lot of time out dancing, and was listening to a lot more music when at home - predominantly on the radio. It matched and extended her mood, which was lively, bright, expansive, romantic and sexy. It reminded her of another time in her life, when music radio had been especially relevant to her, for different reasons;

> I used to live in Wales; I used to live in isolated cottages and you know, a cabin on the side of a hill, where the radio was my most precious, and we had tapes and stuff and they were very precious too; I remember all the music from that period really profoundly well because U2 had just brought out their first album and it was just, because its a very spiritual album, very emotional, and it was so, such raw emotions and it totally matched my mood, see the radio does that as well you know... It used to be like my most precious possession, the radio, it has been... now I do use it differently, to create atmosphere much more, or, to tell me what I wanna know...

In the last year in particular, Sarah said, music radio at home, music when she goes out, and dancing, had become very exciting things in her life. She sees music as 'emotionally potent', and especially so when her own emotions are heightened. She liked to 'graze' through different music stations because she could suddenly be reminded of emotionally important times in her life:

> I can remember songs that were significant when I fell in love with Dave's dad better than I remember him, which is interesting. Yea, and as soon as you hear that music, or it feels like your music, or it feels like you feel, boom! off you go... you will find music that's emotionally potent in the way that matches how you feel and if you're having a very emotional time, sad or happy, you flick it [radio dial] and there it is, that, phew! it makes you, that's it! you're in love with the sound you know, and its very heady stuff...

Sarah recognised, and enjoyed, the capacity that radio sound holds for triggering strong emotional reactions and memories. In everyday life she used it to extend and expand how she was feeling generally. She re-tuned her radio every so often in order to keep her mood going.

Mood and emotion in context

In the growing attention that is being paid, especially in America, to studies of emotion, there is a concern with viewing emotion in relation to social and cultural meanings (see Lutz and White 1986 and White and Lutz 1992). Lutz and White (1986) suggest that, using a number of approaches, 'which focus explicitly on cultural formulations of emotion in social context' a way of conceiving of emotions can be found that 'will give renewed emphasis to the public, social, and cognitive dimensions of emotional experience' (1986:429). Emotions have been viewed by anthropologists as too difficult to study, so there are few ethnographies that take emotion as a focus. There is still dispute over how to approach emotion - whether, for example, emotions are universal or relative, biological or cognitive, rational or irrational (Lutz and White 1986, Stigler, Shweder and Herdt 1990, Schwartz, White and Lutz 1992). Relatively recently, there has emerged a consensus that emotions must be understood in context. Whether or not one can precisely define emotion as either biological or cognitive, rational or irrational, emotion should always be approached as both cultural and social. It appears to be widely accepted amongst those who sometimes write under the title of 'ethnopsychology', or 'psychological anthropology', that to study something that is extremely complex and varied, and difficult to get at, any approach must in itself be complex and varied (White and Lutz 1992). The most important thing that ethnography can bring to the study of emotion is, its embeddedness in the sociocultural practices and structures of a setting - its contextualisation. With this approach, cross-cultural comparison is then possible.

One strong line of investigation has emerged in the study of emotion, one which its proponents say, overcomes the problems inherent in such studies - for example, the inaccessibility for sociocultural analysis of internal states. This approach takes emotion discourse, as the key to understanding emotion worlds (Lutz and Abu-Lughod 1990).

Abu-Lughod and Lutz argue that 'the most productive analytical approach to the cross-cultural study of emotion is to examine discourses on emotion and emotion discourses as social practices within diverse ethnographic contexts' (1990:1). Emotion, according to Abu-Lughod and Lutz, is about social life rather than internal states. They challenge the acceptance by anthropologists (prior to 1980) of a psychological orthodoxy on emotions - that they are 'psychobiological processes that respond to cross-cultural environmental differences but retain a robust essence untouched by the social or cultural' (1990:2). They replace this essentialist, universalist view of emotions, with an approach which relativises, historicises and contextualises. This is primarily achieved by a concern with social discourses on emotion.

Elsewhere, emotion is opposed to sentiment, so that emotion is used to indicate private feelings, not necessarily 'culturally motivated or socially articulated' and sentiment is defined as 'socially articulated symbols and behavioural expectations' (Lutz and White 1986:408). In a slight, but significant, change of emphasis, Abu-Lughod and Lutz (1990) see 'feelings' as the introspective essence of emotion, and say that feelings should not become our focus. Such a focus would deflect 'attention from social life and its possible implication in the very language of emotion. It also prevents us from looking at the role of emotional discourses in social interactions' (1990:3). Abu-Lughod and Lutz are proposing that the study of emotion should view culturally situated individuals, through their social emotion discourses. Emotion discourse, should be seen as a form of social action 'that creates effects in the world, effects that are read in a culturally informed way by the audience for emotion talk' (ibid.:12).

Because of the nature of my study, my own methodology can be seen to rely heavily on people's talk about radio, and, about emotion. I can learn from the approach Abu-Lughod and Lutz (1990) propose, by recognising the importance of considering the sociocultural context of such talk, and how such talk helps to define and create that context. I can see the practice of listening to the radio as a form of emotion discourse - the way in which individuals use radio sound to help to situate themselves in terms of wider society. Emotion as seen here is about social life, rather than about internal states. Yet those internal states are important to an understanding of how radio sound in Bristol

'works' in a social way. It is important to my study to consider those internal states, or feelings, because of the ways in which informants talk about (implicitly or overtly, directly or indirectly) their relationship to radio sound. When informants talk about 'mood', they reference their internal states, but these are, through radio sound (among other things) transformed or maintained, depending on how informants are currently conceiving of themselves in the context of their domestic settings, as a social being.

In this way, my own approach to emotion, or, more correctly, the affective dimensions of my informants' everyday lives and behaviour, attempts to move beyond discourse on emotion to those internal states, yet remain sociological. Lyon (1995) is highly critical of both cultural constructionist and symbolic approaches to the study of emotion in anthropology. She advocates a 'socio-emotional approach' (1995:258) which would move beyond accounts that simply '"culturize" emotion, extracting or alienating it from both societal and bodily domains' (ibid.:256). Lyon links emotion, or 'the *felt* sense', to the body. She views emotion as embodied, and as social, in the ways in which it is related to other bodies. It is a 'social-relational perspective' that, according to Lyon, will advance the study of emotion (ibid.:258). Such a perspective would recognise the social consequences of emotion, and, how emotion is generated from social relations (ibid.). Radio sound appears, from my fieldwork, to hold the capacity to generate emotion, but not in isolation. Radio is a medium entering the home from the outside, and it helps to create domestic environments in which domestic relationships take place; both of these are indicators of its social nature. Yet radio sound is also experienced on a very personal level. Just as Bateson (1958) wanted to get a *feel* for the culture of the Iatmul, I want to get a *feel* for how radio sound contributes to personal emotional states. The ways in which informants talked to me about their radio listening, the stories they told, and events they described, enabled me to begin to understand something of the place of radio sound in the affective dimensions of their domestic lives. They often talked about routine and mood as things that radio sound helped them with.

Neil is a mature 17 year-old. He lives with his parents and brother in a terraced house with a good view over Bristol. Neil likes the view, which he says makes him feel in touch with other people; 'we've always had houses with views. If I'm feeling kind of

unhappy or something, what I do is open my window and go to sleep with my window open. Even if it's really really cold, I like to hear noises, if you see what I mean'. Neil is a regular radio listener. He listens mainly to Galaxy 101, a commercial regional station which is targeted at listeners aged between 15 and 29. It plays what it describes as 'classic and contemporary dance music' with the classics coming from the 1980s and 1990s. It also plays 'specialist music' in the evenings. He used to listen mainly to GWRfm, but now rarely tunes in except on a Sunday when he likes to listen to the Chart Show whilst relaxing in his room. During the week Neil mainly listens to the radio in the mornings. When he wakes up one of the first things he will do is switch the radio on, for Neil it's a part of his daily routine: 'like brushing your teeth in the morning... basically I get up, I've got a light behind me, I turn that on, I don't have to get out of bed to turn the radio on, I stretch, I put it on, and I go back to sleep again. Its automatic, the first thing I do is put the radio on'.

Before the half hour walk to college, when Neil will listen to the radio on his personal stereo, he might, in passing, listen to the radio choice of his parents as they get ready for work. They like to listen to Classic fm at the moment, although Neil remembers a time when they listened to GWRfm 'obsessively... they used to be really big fans of it', he also remembers a time when they preferred Radio1. All of Neil's family listen to the radio in the morning, which means that sometimes there will be three different stations on in different parts of the house. There are 7 radio sets in the house and one in the car. The kitchen radio is the set which everyone will listen to in the mornings, at some point. It is re-tuned as people come and go. Normally, in the week, each member of the family will use the kitchen at a different time as they get up and leave for work or college at different times. Neil's mother is a teacher and during holiday times her listening patterns change, 'she'll come in and she'll listen to the radio until later. Because I'm not in college, I'll get up at a different time, and I'll come down and I'll change the radio channel over and she'll go "what are you doing" and change it back - so that's the time that conflict can arise... that's only because of our time scale, because I leave after they do. If I left the same time as them I'd probably have a problem with it, but I'd just get used to it... I'd probably just try and make sure I had everything in my bedroom the night before'.

Neil sees radio as a part of his everyday existence which has been there for as long as he can remember. He enjoys the hustle and bustle of living in a city and sees radio, and its presence in his life, as a comfort, and a reminder of his place in city life;

> I generally like the idea that there's other people out there, I mean I really like living here because I can *see* when I open my window and I can *hear* there are other people out there, and that really relaxes me, I need to know there are other people out there. I go to sleep and I think, you know, life still carries on, I don't wanna sound really awful with that phrase, but its something that really relaxes me, that gives me confidence for whatever reason, I don't know. I particularly like living in a city and that's part of it. Something that relaxes me, something that makes me feel better is other people being around and if that's on the radio, then great.

He used to listen mostly to GWRfm because it was the choice of his parents, 'I mean its convenience, my parents used to listen to GWR and Radio West [GWRfm's precursor]'. He remembers that his mother enrolled him into 'Nino's Gang', a children's club set up by GWR, at about the age of 5 and he has been listening to radio ever since. Radio has always been present for Neil, 'I'd say its important in that it would be unusual without it, I mean I like listening to radio but I'm sure if radio went I'd find something else to do, I mean its not the be all and end all, I do like having it but I'm sure I can cope without it... having said that, I've never tried'.

Neil has progressively listened to less and less of GWRfm's output, and more to Galaxy's. This, he thinks, is mainly because of the different styles of the two stations;

> The thing I like about Galaxy is the slightly more traditional radio, they've got loud and overpowering jingles and presenters that crack jokes and talk over music, which I really, really like - I find that very good radio and that's the problem that I have with GWR. ... I mean I used to like GWR a lot... maybe its just my music tastes are changing...
> ...All the presenter does is come on, tell you the last four songs you were listening to, says Hi, and tells you the next four songs you're gonna listen to and that's it. And I like the presenter to talk to me more.
> *Researcher:* Some people only want to listen to music
> *Neil:* I'd buy a cassette or something, especially the repetition on GWR because obviously they test everything and either that means they can only have a small playlist or they find a small playlist works best, but I always find, you know ...

that things are repeated an awful lot, I mean, I work somewhere [Saturday job at a supermarket] where they play GWR and I get there and I think, they cant be playing this song again, they only played it a little while ago

Whilst radio is seen by Neil as 'routine' in that it is predictable, and very regular, like brushing your teeth, he does likes it to have a certain 'personality'. He thinks his change in listening has something to do with his own changing music tastes, yet recognises that he is drawn to a more 'traditional' style of music radio presentation which GWR has moved away from. Some of the moves away from what he is used to - what he sees as 'traditional' music radio - he finds quite disturbing. For example, Galaxy broadcast their news bulletins at five minutes to the hour, while it is usual to broadcast news on the hour (and/or half hour). According to Neil this is 'wrong', 'I don't like that at all you know, there's something funny about that. I just feel like, I don't know, it feels like the radio's wrong, and they don't like me for some reason, I find it insulting... I don't know why you know, I just do. I almost feel sort of patronised by it'. These comments display an often expressed attachment or link to radio that is perhaps most evident when listeners feel that the link is broken or in some way challenged. It is an attachment on an affective level, so that it is often hard to explain or difficult to express without using phrases like 'they [the radio station] don't like me'. Faye, in the last chapter, was seen to have a 'love-hate' relationship with Radio 4, 'when I'm feeling down I don't listen to Radio 4... I feel alienated from it if I'm depressed, its uh, I don't know if its a social class thing or what it is, Radio 4 definitely has that feeling about it doesn't it ... and yet, when I'm feeling good *Woman's Hour* feels like family'.

Neil enjoys comedy programmes on television and makes a special effort to watch his favourites. He also likes radio comedy which he has heard on Radio 4, but he does not know when to listen for that and so tends not to listen, 'I mean, I don't know the station, so therefore I don't listen to it, I don't listen on the off chance'. Radio 4 as a speech radio station is very different from Galaxy and GWRfm, where presenters will not change for around four hours at a time. On these station Neil knows who will be on when, and roughly what they will be playing in terms of music, and the kind of chat they will engage in. He knows his way around them. Radio 4 consists of much shorter 'programmes' and Neil is unfamiliar with this. For regular Radio 4 listeners, however,

this is not a problem, and they can be quick to notice a change in style on a station that has a certain 'feel' about it. *Anderson Country* was a magazine programme that Radio 4 aired on weekday afternoons from February 1994 until February 1995. It attracted unprecedented amounts of criticism from Radio 4 listeners and was eventually taken off of the station. One of my informants, Gillian, listens mostly to Radio 4. She explained to me what it was that was 'wrong' about this particular programme,

> I found it quite hard to listen to... I found it irritating, it didn't have a kind of style that I could understand and latch on to. I didn't like his style of presentation, he sounded a bit sort of shambolic and confused and unprepared and amateurish... which is unfortunate because I've heard him do other programmes where he's been great, but on that particular programme I just don't think he really knew what he was doing - and the contributors and the other pieces they had varied so much, you didn't really know what was going on, where you were.

For Gillian this programme just was not right for Radio 4, she did not know what was going on, where she was, she could not 'latch on to' it. When listeners are familiar with a radio station they seem to be able to 'feel' their way around it, they 'understand' it. They come to expect that the radio sound in their home will create certain types of soundscape and fit a predicted mood. And as long as there is nothing too out of place with a station's output they will put up with and even enjoy aspects of programming that otherwise they might be tempted to switch off, as Neil demonstrates:

> Its got a lot to do with mood, I mean, sometimes to a certain extent I tolerate radio, you know sometimes I don't wanna listen to it but *I just do and I just sort of like put up with it, why, I don't know... force of habit. That's the only reason I can put to it*, and other times I'll listen to a CD... *its mood, because obviously with radio its the same everyday effectively, the radio I listen to anyway, so it depends how I feel...*
>
> ...and absolutely awful jingles, I will sing and dance, well *I will sing jingles, you can't dance to a jingle, I'll sing a jingle, I'll mouth the words to a jingle, give an impression of the voice...*

Radio is a part of everyday routines and as such it is sometimes simply tolerated, sometimes switched off. Aspects of radio that will sometimes be annoying and irritating

will at other times be enjoyed. The major factor in determining this will be 'mood'. This is not to suggest that the desired mood will necessarily be clearly distinguishable as 'happy' or 'sad' - we are not talking about emotionality here, but affective dimensions to our lives which, in many cases will not be particularly remarkable. Mood here is seen as an affective state. Following Bateson, we must always be experiencing an affective dimension to ourselves, but will not always be consciously aware of it. Radio has both mood generating properties, and mood enhancement properties. It can fix or change one's mood, or it can be chosen as appropriate accompaniment to a mood.

Mood and affective rhythms in the home

There is a need, at this point, to define in more detail what is meant by 'mood'. To begin to do this, I will draw on the work that White has done, on a 'culturally defined and socially situated activity'(1990:46) which he has observed in his study of Santa Isobel, one of the Solomon Islands of the South Pacific. Specifically, on 'disentangling', which White describes as 'culturally constituted discourse of emotion' (ibid.) which works on a social level to transform interpersonal relationships through narrative reinterpretation of former events.

The A'ara speaking people of Santa Isobel 'sporadically ... engage in a practice known as *graurutha*, or "disentangling" (from *rutha*, "undo" or "untie")' (White 1990:53). In this ritualised activity family members or fellow villagers meet to 'talk about interpersonal conflicts and "bad feelings"' (ibid.). Through this process bad feelings are made public and their destructive potential is diffused. White says that, along with many other cultures, the A'ara believe 'that negative emotions that remain hidden may cause illness and misfortune', potentially damaging to themselves and to others, so that it is in the community's interest to 'repair social discord and maintain emotional harmony' (ibid.). Talking about such conflicts and resentments would not be easy in everyday life, and even in the disentangling process actors are protected or distanced from direct confrontation with emotion through several devices. The physical setting of a disentangling meeting itself works to this end. The meetings that White attended were held in a large house at night so that the audience sat in shadows and the protagonists could not see them, or each other, clearly. Yet the presence of the audience is crucial. In

addition, the protagonists would not address one another directly but would produce a series of narratives about past events in an effort to reform 'socioemotional reality'.

White breaks down the social and emotional process of disentangling and presents it in a simplified form as an 'emotion schema'. In this schema a social event will provoke an emotion which will generate an action response. This basic schema, White claims, will be true in all cultural settings, but, the events, emotions, actions and understandings will vary. Emotions are culturally defined, and culturally embedded (White 1990:47).

In the case of disentangling we need to understand the importance to the A'ara speakers of interpersonal relations and behaviour. And, the ways in which emotion talk is a moral idiom. So, for example, 'anger' is often talked about in the disentangling process where 'talk of "anger" is not only an idiom of moral claims. It also indexes social relations' (White 1990:49). Anger, when expressed in the context of the community can be regarded as a threat to ideas of solidarity, yet to suppress anger is thought to be damaging to self and others. So, as 'an arena for the sanctioned expression of emotion, disentangling would appear to be a culturally constituted solution to the dilemma of suppressed "anger"' (ibid.:50). However, it is not quite so straightforward. Distancing from those emotions is achieved even in disentangling. As already mentioned, one of the devices is the setting and the use of narrative reconstruction of past events. Inference and ambiguity are heavily drawn upon in this process, so that what disentangling provides is an opportunity for 'creation of social reality in which "angry" events are rhetorically transformed and damaged relations symbolically repaired' (ibid.). While White emphasises the role of 'emotion talk' in his analysis of disentangling, I would like to consider the process in terms of the qualities of emotion, of feeling - of mood. Here the way in which White describes the use of inference and ambiguity can give us a way of moving beyond linguistic analyses, because they demonstrate that negotiations around emotional states are much more than language-based. Emotions are not linguistic in nature - they are felt or experienced. They may be expressed linguistically, and through that expression transformed, but they do not reside in language.

Disentangling is a way of changing emotional relationships, or restoring them. In a similar way, we could view radio sound as transforming emotional states or emotional relationships by helping to create domestic environments and moods. The notion of 'socioemotional states' can serve to explain and describe what my informants refer to when they talk about 'mood'. Disentangling events are not a method of confrontation, they are opportunities for 're-establishing community solidarity rather than uncovering transgressions or imposing sanctions' (White 1990:50). Radio sound in the home is not used to upset the 'dynamic equilibrium' (Bateson 1958:190), it is used as a way of maintaining, restoring, or reinforcing it. People know what kind of radio sound to expect from their favourite radio stations, and radio stations are aware of, and respond to, this need for predictability in their programming. In this way, people are able to predict the mood that the sounds of radio stations will generate in them. Listeners can change stations in order to change their mood, and they can turn the volume up, or down. All this happens in a very ambiguous, inferred way; it is very direct, yet incredibly subtle.

Switching the radio on, first thing in the morning, is not experienced as a cognitive act. It is like switching on a socioemotional state. It is more about feeling than about thought, ethos rather than eidos. When radio sound is used to create or transform a mood the emotion schema, which White models, where a social event will provoke an emotion, which in turn will generate an action response, needs some adapting. As already stated, mood must not be confused with emotionality. In this way, a distinct emotion need not be provoked. Indeed it need not be a social event, or indeed any kind of distinguishable event, that triggers the mood. In turn, the action response - which we will see for our purposes rather simplistically as turning the radio on - may be rather more automatic and part of one's routine, than a distinguishable action response. However, the emotion schema which White proposes as a template for understanding disentangling, does have an application here. Firstly we must understand the cultural embededness of such a schema. In Britain, interpersonal relations and behaviour will differ from those in Santa Isobel, but we can see how the event, which triggers an emotion, which generates a response, can hold true. In terms of British domestic everyday life, we can rephrase this schema in a less dramatic, more routinised and

mundane way. A domestic situation or relationship (sometimes an event) provokes a feeling or emotion, or mood, which in turn generates an action response which may be aimed at reinforcing or changing that feeling or mood.

For the A'ara we see how anger needs to be modified or dispelled, because of its socially destructive effects when it is not controlled. In the home in Britain, one of the biggest threats to one's chance of survival and success, in a society which promotes individualism, privacy and independence, must be feelings of isolation and loneliness. Expressions of depression can serve as a reminder to others, of the thin line between independence or individualism, and feelings of isolation and loneliness. Thus it is clear that we will search for ways of altering such feelings.

Gillian is a 33 year old documentary film maker. She lives in her own three bedroom house with one lodger. Her boyfriend lives and works away from Bristol, so they get together mainly at weekends. Over recent months, Gillian's life has become increasingly busy, mainly due to pressures of work. This has affected her radio listening habits. Whereas before, she would listen to a lot more radio, lately she spends little time at home, and therefore her listening has decreased. If she were to find herself at home during a weekday, or at weekends, she says she would definitely turn the radio on. She listens mainly to Radio 4, and sometimes to music stations such as GWRfm or Virgin 1215. She describes herself as 'a Radio 4 Listener' and follows a well established routine of listening:

> *Today* programme in the morning for half an hour to an hour and then, if I'm driving in the car, normally it wouldn't be until lunch time, but I would listen at lunch time to Radio 4
> *Researcher:* So that's the news?
> *Gillian:* Well, I listen to the news first thing in the morning. Lunch time I would mainly listen to the news, but I might not, I might wait and listen to *The Archers* because I'm an *Archers* fan. In the evenings I listen to the half past six comedy slot thing and then I might listen to *Kaleidoscope* later in the evening, but not regularly. And at weekends I would tend to listen to *Loose Ends* on Saturday mornings. On Friday evening I like to try and listen to the summary, end of the week programme whatever its called, *Pick of the Week*, and Sunday morning *Archers* compilation [omnibus version of *The Archers* soap opera]
> *Researcher:* Even if you heard it during the week?

> *Gillian:* Sometimes, but, well, up until last year it used to be 'yes', always, but now I've got really busy recently and I haven't been doing it so much. But sometimes I will listen to it on the Sunday show - I wouldn't have heard every, if I'd heard every day in the week I wouldn't bother with the Sunday show, but if I heard two out of five then I would.

Switching the radio on is seen as a force of habit for Gillian. She also recognises its value as a source of comfort:

> I mean if I come in from work I will just switch the radio on automatically, not really listen to it because I've had it in the car, it would be there in the background but then I'm busy doing things. Its to do with being on my own here, I'm not always I mean there's a lodger here as well but its a habit that I've had because I know that my family, my mother and father did that and its kind of a comforting thing, its always been there, its always in the background

This 'comforting thing' could be compared to the nurturance that Radway understands the women of her study to be getting from their romance reading. As with the romance readers, it is a nurturance that is unconditional, so that radio offers Gillian comfort without demanding anything of her; 'its company but its company that doesn't take all your attention so you can pick it up and sort of drop it or tune in and out of it mentally when you want'. Gillian contrasts this with the television which is 'very much demanding, much more demanding visually because you have to engage with it'. Radio can be in 'the background', drawn upon when needed, pushed back when not required. Sarah makes a similar distinction between radio and television, 'radio's quite personal... in a way television has got more functionality, and its visual, it matters what you look at much more than what you hear in terms of, "God, I've got a bloody headache from this", if the picture is bad, whereas radio, even if it goes off a little bit and comes back, its kind of almost romantic'. While many of my informants will not listen to radio if the signal is not good, the point Sarah makes about radio's flexibility is widely recognised. It's the kind of thing you can carry around with you, either physically by moving the receiver, or you can take the sound with you by turning up the volume. It is flexible in other ways too - in the ways in which it can alter or match your mood in a personal way.

For Gillian, radio is used while driving home from work to get her out of a 'work mood' and into a relaxed mood. 'I mean I find it invaluable in a car journey say, driving from work to home particularly, just to take my mind off of work into something else before I get home. If I just walked out of the office into the house I'd be really uptight so its a kind of distraction, relaxation thing'. She sometimes 'feels like a change' from Radio 4...

> Occasionally, late at night, I listen to GWR, some phone-in programme which is GWR. Or if I'm working at home in the evening and I want classical music I listen to Radio 3. Or if I'm doing something in the house on a Saturday morning like ironing or something and I don't want talk radio, I want music then I would sort of try Radio1 and then get very frustrated and irritated by it within about 15 minutes and then look for something else like GWR and then probably get fed up with the ads after about ten minutes and then try and find something else like Virgin or, yea, Virgin probably.

Gillian's use of different radio stations, and her different use of the same stations, can often be explained by the activity that she is using it to accompany, but also by how she is feeling and how she would like to feel. So, sometimes she will listen attentively to Radio 4, while at other times her thoughts will wander off. Sometimes she will want music on the radio, rather than speech. In either case she may adjust the volume to create a different effect, or in response to, or in order to create, different affective rhythms;

> When I wake up in the morning the first thing I do is turn the radio on. and I might start off with it quieter cause I don't like getting up straight away, and then sort of turn it up once I've got out of bed and moving around.
> *Researcher:* What about music radio, do you change the volume?
> *Gillian:* It does depend what I'm doing really, yea, I mean if I'm working its gotta be quite low in the background, I mean studying, writing, reading, whatever, but if I was ironing, cleaning, I'd have it on really loud because it would be, I'd want it to be a kind of attention, to fill my attention you know rather than in the background.

> *Researcher:* How much attention would you say you pay to the radio?
> *Gillian:* It depends very much on the programme and where I am I mean, driving the car, quite a lot, last thing at night and first thing in the morning, quite a lot. But then if its a weekend, like on a Saturday morning I used to religiously listen to *Loose Ends* you know from ten to eleven, right through, but recently I've kind of found, I've tried to, but there's just too many other things to do, so I

just drift away and clean the floor or put the washing on or whatever, I tend to drift out of it.

Gillian demonstrates ways in which radio sound is chosen, and adjusted, to relate to, and to help to create, certain moods in her everyday routinised living. It helps to maintain and create affective rhythms. Often radio sound is used in an impulsive rather than consciously thoughtful way, so that if one is feeling in need of something to help with a mundane, but necessary, household task, like washing up, the radio is used, but not necessarily in a consciously deliberate way. Yet radio sound and its ability to aid in mood creation, or accompaniment, is widely recognised by my informants, and talked about often, without any prompting. Neil mainly listens to music on the radio although sometimes he will play music on his CD player:

> Sometimes I just don't like what's on the radio so I'll put a CD on... to be honest, although I buy them I don't listen to them half as much as I listen to the radio. And if I do buy something its because I heard it on the radio... its got a lot to do with mood...
> *Researcher:* Is it something to do with feeling depressed, like we talked about before, not wanting radio then?
> *Neil:* well it depends, I mean it depends whether I'm happy being depressed or whether I want to stop being depressed, I mean, if for instance I'm feeling really unhappy and there's something on the radio which is like slow and not very pacey then I probably wouldn't listen to it because it would make me more unhappy, I mean I always like to be happy, I don't usually get angry, I don't usually get upset... I probably would listen to the radio if I was feeling upset because a CD is so non personal, you know, I like somebody talking to me. I mean, I put a CD on and all it is is the music. Its lonely.
> *Researcher:* And if you wanted to wallow?
> *Neil:* I don't wanna sound weird but I don't know if I ever really do sort of wallow in self pity. I'm sure I do sometimes but no, I mean, if I was feeling upset I think I'd listen to the radio.

Gretta, who was discussed in the last chapter, talked to me about how she sometimes turns the radio off and puts on her own 'sloppy music' tapes. This is directly related to how she is feeling, what mood she is in. For example, at one stage she had practically stopped listening to radio in the daytime at all, preferring her own 'sloppy music';

> nine times out of ten during the day if I'm gonna listen to music I put a tape in but on a night-time, say 4 o'clock onwards then I'll have the radio on but during

the daytime if I fancy music its gotta be a tape and you'll guarantee its always a sloppy tape, its nothing really gooey or anything like that, it gotta be real sloppy music, that's my favourite type of music anyway so, sometimes I feel really sorry for myself and listening to that makes me feel twice as bad but I'll still sit and listen to it...

Researcher: you used to listen to the radio in the daytime... why have you changed?

Gretta: I don't know. I suppose its, just lately everything is really, really sort of lonely and I think to myself 'I'll listen to me tapes', but that's worse in itself because as I say I stick soft, slow tapes on and I find with doing that it just makes me feel worse than when I started but it still don't put me off putting the tapes on... I like all the gooey tapes, your love tapes and all that, that's the sort of stuff, if I buy a tape I play the same tape over and over again, every time...

As was discussed in the last chapter, Gretta's radio listening changed according to her romantic involvements. But it also changed on a smaller time scale. It was used, or, as demonstrated above, not used, depending on how she was feeling, and how she wanted to feel, on a day-to-day, or even minute-to-minute basis. While she listened to her own music in the day to indulge her feelings of self pity, in the evenings at this time she listened to a phone-in request show, the 'Love Hour'. This played music similar to her own 'sloppy music', but she experienced it differently. She could listen to other people's romantic stories and hear about how they were feeling. She could share their music choices and therefore experienced it in a less self indulgent way. Radio sound was used by Gretta in this way to lift herself out of a very introverted emotional state where she felt lonely. Like Neil, she was able to use radio to widen her horizons, in her case, to remind herself that she was not the only person with an aching heart.

Trisha, who was discussed in chapter 5, would play her own music as a way of lifting her out of depression;

when I'm feeling a bit down or having an off day whatever, then yes I would resort perhaps to playing my own things

Researcher: Maybe radio would lift you out of it?

Trisha: I think probably my own choice of music would lift me out of it, I don't think the radio would... I actually *pick* a CD, I just look through my selection and I'd know that was the appropriate one to put on, and I play a song and I know I'll feel a lot better after that ...

When she felt better, she would listen to the radio again. Unlike Trisha, Gillian does not have a large music collection. She prefers to listen to music on the radio because she cannot be sure (within certain limits) of what will be played next. She likes that:

> its quite exciting not knowing what's going to be on and its somebody else making the choice and you think that you might come across something new and different that you haven't come across before, it is very spontaneous and fresh and the thought of, you know, maybe I'm just not that motivated to choose a tape of my own because I'm not, I don't go shopping for new records or CDs or anything, it doesn't interest me...

Sarah will only listen occasionally to her own music rather than radio. She, like Gillian, likes the spontaneity and flexibility of music radio:

> I like the changeable quality of radio you see, you can change the type of music and you can play, you know you hear things and you think oh I love that song, and you haven't got it, so you play it... it kind of suits my style, I'm a very fidgety, hyper kind of person. Its beautiful this song [playing on the radio at the time], now this is worth leaving the radio on for... I've actually got this on tape, somebody borrowed it, and I've only just got it back, I haven't played it [since it was returned].

Affective rhythm relates both to mood, and to routine. It is the combination of both that allows the possibility of thinking about affect, and how it relates to, and integrates with, routine everyday life. Bearing in mind the discussions in the last chapter about fantasy and its role in domestic relationships, we can consider here how fantasy, or imagination, is integrated into individual domestic routines.

Fantasy as routine

Writing about the place of broadcasting in modern life, Scannell (1988) shows how early radio programming was adapted in order to fit in with established domestic routines. He describes the BBC's interest in determining audiences' different uses of time throughout the day. This is so that they can provide audiences with appropriate programming at appropriate times. Scannell (1988) talks about 'temporal rhythms', and how broadcasting fits into, and through programming schedules, contributes to them. Scannell refers to temporal rhythms on a national and local level, and looks at how

national event, brought into the private sphere of the home, provides the opportunity for a shared sense of time. Temporal rhythms means the routine of everyday life, which, like broadcasting itself, moves through time. Routine, as explored in the present study, is seen to move through time, just as radio sound does. And yet, describing the role of radio sound as providing a temporal rhythm does not fully explain its role in domestic life.

In the last chapter, it was established that, although notions of idealised relationships and roles can be acted upon as if they were 'real', they are imaginary. They exist in a form that defies conscious articulation (like Giddens' notion of 'practical consciousness' (1991)). On a day-to-day basis, we operate knowledge that does not require tangible or concrete evidence; we call it feeling, creativity or imagination, and regard it as part of our active personalities, part of what makes us who we are in a globalised world. The imagination of ideal notions, and the narration of the part we play in them, drawing on our own experiences and feelings, felt or imagined, allows us to proceed with our own particular 'reality' as conceived in our specific, shared, complex, sociocultural experience. Reality, in the domestic sphere, as conceived of here, could be seen to be made up of three elements. We might call them *actuality, affect* and *fantasy*.

In sound broadcasting terms, actuality means the actual sound at the location of a story or report. It is often used as a scene setting device, as background, or as a link between segments of a report. It *places* a report. Here *actuality* represents the domestic context which will be specific to any particular household or individual. It will include particular structural, historical and economic factors, and will share in broader sociocultural structures, histories and economies. *Affect* represents the feelings, mood and emotional dimensions of domestic lives (both internal, and those that can be 'generated' externally). *Fantasy* means in this context, individual creativity or imagination - the narrative making qualities of everyday life. Fantasy is not seen here as exceptional, but as part of everyday life, of routine. Radio sound helps to routinise fantasy.

189

Fantasy is seen here as a part of mundane life; it is not only about our dreams for the future, but is involved in the here and now, the unremarked and unremarkable. Radio sound holds the potential to allow a constant play between our feelings, our social and domestic situations, and our fantasies, which, when combined, make up our realities. We are able to embellish reality through fantasy, we can make it liveable and complete. Such an imagined reality is not static; it takes the form of an ongoing narrative, so that, barring extreme behaviour or accident, it is unlikely to change drastically overnight. Yet it is fragile. Faye and Bob's relationship, despite discontent and feelings of imbalance over the years, only ended when it could no longer be kept in any form of equilibrium.

When a mismatch between fantasy and actuality cannot be avoided, relationships are liable to break down. Gretta provides an extreme but 'real' example of this. Gretta and Mark's relationship was emotionally intense, yet existed primarily in their separate imaginations and fantasies. Whilst some people fantasise about what they know, and idealise their partner, Gretta was fantasising about what might be, her ideal partner. Never having met outside of the prison walls, Gretta was nevertheless sure about their feelings for each other. He had even written to her sons, to ask them how they felt about their mother's relationship with him, and if they would allow him to stay with them when he was released. When I talked to Gretta after his release, I was surprised to hear that Mark had stayed with her 'for barely an hour' and she had not seen or heard from him since. Two weeks later Gretta had already begun a new relationship. She is a 'true romantic', with clear ideas about what she wants from a relationship; although she enjoys feeling hopelessly in love, she does maintain a strong sense of self in a relationship, despite what the story of her 'affair' with Mark might suggest. This can be seen in a discussion I had with Gretta and Theresa on the advantages and disadvantages of living without a partner,

> *Gretta*: I mean that's what I like about being on my own, you come and go as you please, you haven't gotta think well I've gotta do this before I go out ready for when he comes in and stuff like that
> *Theresa*: Yea, but I don't like living on my own
> *Gretta*: I wouldn't go back to that not for anybody
> *Theresa*: I wouldn't wish it on anybody though, to be on your own

Gretta: If I lived with somebody who had ... if they expected things like that [prepared meals] I'm afraid they'd be well out of their depth because they'd either prepare it themselves or go hungry.

Radio sound provided Gretta with a way of turning her romantic fantasies into a routine part of her life. She was able, through listening to the radio at certain times, to imagine what Mark was doing, what he was listening to. Given her love of romance, it is perhaps understandable that no one has fitted her image of a romantic partner, in the long-term. For a few months, however, she found such a perfect partner who brought out all of the feelings that she associates with being in love. It could be argued that she may be drawn to prisoners precisely because they cannot physically dispel her image of them, by entering her home and failing to contribute to the domestic relationship that she otherwise is free to imagine. Radio sound helped her to create images of her ideal partner. Mark, as the focus of her attention, was elaborated and defined, aided by her radio listening. Gretta was 'in love' with love, in a very passionate and romantic way. She used radio sound to extend her socioemotional state, or socioemotional reality, in her domestic routines.

In a world where emotional security and balance are highly desired, and yet severely challenged, and where social aspects to our selves are developed mainly in an armchair environment, fantasy plays a large part in individualised, privatised lives, in this enactment of a narrative of self. Radio sound provides one of the links between social life and reflexive self, and it offers a story line that we can adapt and follow if we wish. Gretta has changed her life narrative, several times, since I first met her, yet her spirit does not seem to falter. Her narrative works with clear ideals. It is narration in a sense that reaches beyond linear, sentential logic, incorporating emotions and memories; making connections in modes of knowing that are not simply linguistic, but are states of mind and feelings.

In a culturally contextualised, emotional world, where there is an emphasis on maintaining intimacy in fluid relationships - a task which in itself can provide us with severe strain - we must find ways of gaining stability. We must find assistance in external structures. Institutions, and social pressures, provide some such structures, and

another form of assistance is provided by 'routine'. Routinised living can offer a kind of security. Routine, and predictability, are recognised elements in radio programming, with stations placing an emphasis on their own station 'sounds' or station 'identities' which should be immediately recognisable. They recognise the importance of this, but may not grasp the complex reasoning behind it. Giddens sees our reliance on routine as the result of the 'sequestration of experience' (1992:175). A break with tradition, along with the sequestration of experience, has 'as its consequence the dissolution of the moral and ethical lineaments which related social activity to the transcendental, to nature and to reproduction' (ibid.). In exchange, we gain security through the kind of routine which modern life offers, however, 'the individual is morally and psychologically vulnerable whenever established routines are broken through' (ibid.).

Our 'reflexive narrative of self' as Giddens conceives of it, takes place within the context of such routines. To Giddens, they are devoid of ethical content (1992:176) which our intimate lives, if truly democratic, can compensate for (see last chapter). There is an 'emptiness' in modern life, says Giddens, and this is why we search for the 'pure relationship'. To adapt Giddens' arguments slightly: in our search for intimacy which validates us, in a culture which prizes, yet rarely accredits, the emotional aspects of our private or domestic selves, our search for completeness is ever-elusive. This search is ongoing, and it accounts for the affective enterprise that makes up a large part of our everyday lives, yet it is rarely examined outside the context of cultural and social understandings (i.e. it is assumed universal/natural). In order to continue with a life narrative, we must have ideals, or prototypes to work with. Here, our emotional and imaginative talents come into play, to create a reality that has fantasy or imagination as a solid, significant and routine part of it. Routine helps to maintain affective balance in domestic life and relationships, and in views of the self. Routine provides a means to relate affective aspects of our lives with the structure of everyday life. Radio sound has a role (for some an important role) in this enterprise. As with disentangling, where repeated and adapted narratives serve to transform socioemotional states, radio sound is used to change or maintain mood, and through this mood generation, to create affective rhythms for everyday domestic living. Routine is important as it is such an integral part

of domestic life. In the context of routine, radio sound can work, like disentangling, in inferred and ambiguous ways, to maintain affective rhythms.

The main emphasis of this chapter has been on the affective dimensions of everyday life and the ways in which radio sounds help to create affective rhythms, on a rather mundane level. Yet we have also glimpsed ways in which radio sound can provoke more dramatic responses. They are about emotionality, about breaking from routine - if only for a few minutes. Playing music radio at loud volume levels can distract people from their worries and problems, as Sue demonstrated in chapter 4 when she talked about 'blasting' the radio to clear her mind of things that bothered her. Radio sound also helps her to feel young again, 'I dance around the kitchen feeling sixteen again... I do that a lot. Anyone looking through the window would think "look at that stupid woman again". Trouble is, you can't dance as much as you used to, you think, "I'm too old for this", I find I really achieve something if I can keep going throughout the whole record'. Paul will sing along to some songs that really make him feel good, 'some songs, you know, "I haven't heard that for a long time", reach for the hairbrush, up it goes you know [imitating microphone], straight away, yea, absolutely!'. Another informant told me how she sometimes gets carried away by the music she hears on the radio and can't stop herself from singing and dancing along. Sometimes she can be found dancing with a pillow, or, 'I'm out in the garden pinning washing on the line, singing away to it you know and I have been caught over the garden fence... I think it stops you from thinking, I don't know, I'm not saying I do it all the time, I'm not nutty, but...'. Shelly, another informant, will often have the radio on low in the background as it helps her to avoid feeling lonely but sometimes she will turn the volume right up,

> especially when the children are at school so you don't have to worry about them because you know they're somewhere else, and you're in the house by yourself, so you can have it nice and loud..
> *Researcher:* Why turn it up?
> *Shelly:* I think, if you've got something to do, to sing along to, you get on with work better because you're, you seem to like, when I'm ironing I seem to do it to the beat of the song you know so I think it just helps you, you know, work along because you're *happier,* you've got something to listen to.

Gretta recognised the power of music, on tape, or radio, to help get you into a romantic or seductive mood, so that while she would normally play her 'sloppy' music when alone, 'especially if I'm feeling sorry for myself', she would also play it when with a boyfriend, 'because like I say, that is my favourite sort of music anyway, and I think that's what I call private music. If you've got male company that's the sort of music I'd have on. To relax... because it seems the right sort of setting'. Radio sound can also provoke emotions that are unwanted, as Gordon, a single parent of four young children demonstrates,

> Some songs have different meanings to them, every couple seems to have their certain songs. When a song came on when we first split up I'd turn it off when something came on that reminded me too much, I just turned it off. It doesn't bother me now but first off all, it was probably painful probably. I just thought "sod that, turn it off." I suppose everyone goes through that
> *Researcher:* Songs can be very evocative can't they?
> *Gordon:* Not until you go through something like that. You start reading stuff into songs you never read into it before. You've been there haven't you?
> *Researcher:* Yea, you start listening to the words
> *Gordon:* A lot of people say that. Read more into it than what there really is basically.

Radio sound, in routinised daily living, can act as a mood creator, in a very subtle, unremarkable way, and, in more dramatic and deliberate ways. It can help us to maintain affective rhythms that in turn help us to get through the routines of everyday life, and, on occasions can help us to break from those routines.

Bad feelings such as anger are thought by the A'ara to hold socially destructive powers; through the process of disentangling, they are brought into the public arena and thereby diffused. This is done in a safe way, the safety being ensured by the ambiguity and the indirectness of the whole process. In the domestic arena in Britain, isolation, loneliness and depression are potential threats to one's social self; the self is managed, in part, by the use of sound, and can, in some cases, be evoked by that same sound. Radio sound is chosen to match one's socioemotional state, or mood, or alter it; it is used to change, or to aid, the affective rhythm of everyday living from within its routine.

We can consider wider reasons for the need for socioemotional or mood transformation, and for self-reflexive narratives in domestic settings. Sometimes different activities or seasons call for different sounds: Faye, in the spring, likes loud popular music when decorating with all of the windows and doors open; in the winter, she likes serious intellectual talk, when doing mundane housework or cooking. These are Faye's preferences, but there is wide variation in the choice of sound and the moods it creates, across radio audiences. Radio sound also has the capacity to evoke memories and connections across time and space. This is to be the focus of the next chapter.

Chapter 7

The Space and Time of Radio Listening

British culture is a visual culture, where things need to be seen to be believed, unlike in Umeda. 'For us, invisible objects are deeply problematic, but not for the Umeda, who defined objective existence in terms of audibility, not visibility' (Gell 1995:238). When a man Gell knew in Umeda entered his house and told him that he had just encountered an ogre in the dark, on a forest path, Gell, looking for evidence of this event, asked if he had actually *seen* the ogre. This question, Gell now sees as inappropriate, and 'a misapprehension bred of a visually based notion of the real. For Umeda, hearing is believing, and the Umeda really do hear ogres, or what they take to be ogres' (ibid.: 239). Likewise, as Gell comments, the Kaluli of Feld's ethnography, experience and understand their world through their acoustic landscape. It 'constitutes their "world" in the fullest sense' (ibid.:249). British culture, on the other hand, is based on visual perception and verification, here *seeing* is believing. Sound - more specifically radio sound - is experienced, in part at least, on an affective level. In such experiences, where there is no visually concrete, objective object, verification and verbalisation may not be required. By this I mean that it is experienced in a way that is fluid, and it makes connections between different parts of experience and life, but not in the culturally primary sense modality of vision, which is taken to be more objective and concrete. My data suggests that radio sound has strong connecting powers. These may partly achieve their strength through the very fact that sound is not the dominant and formal mode of knowing, thus it holds the freedom to allow for imagination and experimentation. When we consider the everyday lives of my informants we can see that they are experienced as multi-dimensional, and as shifting. They are stable, yet fluid. Radio sound seems to give an added dimension, and in some ways can be seen as an agent of connecting the diverse and fragmented parts of ones life.

The power to connect: space

Kerri is 47 years old. She works part time as a Community Safety Officer, working with the Asian community in Bristol. She also works part time for the BBC as a link person with the Asian community. Kerri was born in Delhi and has lived in Bristol for the last

26 years. She is married and has a son of 23 and a daughter of 25. Her early memories of radio, from 'back home' are of the BBC's World Service, and various Asian stations. Even now, when she goes abroad, she tunes into the World Service, 'I cling to the BBC World Service, because this has become home now and I want to know what's happening'. She describes herself as having a 'news addiction'. She likes to listen to local, national and international news on a regular basis. The first she gets from the local BBC radio station. Local news is important for her because she needs to know what issues are affecting the community she serves at work, as well as what the weather is going to do, and which traffic jams to avoid, 'if something has happened in Broadmead for example, I feel when I've come to work and everyone's talking about it, I'm well aware of it. There's a drugs raid in St Pauls, and everybody's talking about it. And for information... I think I'm listening for information at that time in the morning, what type of weather it is, where the roads are bad...'. The national news she will hear on Radio 4, and on BBC TV at 6 o'clock and again at 9 o'clock. It is easy, according to Kerri, to pick up the national news, because that is what terrestrial television, and network radio concentrates on. International news, however, is more difficult to find, unless, ironically, she is abroad and can tune in to BBC World Service. When at home in Bristol she can only get access to international news through TV Asia and Sunrise Radio, both available to her via satellite;

> I feel sometimes there's a terrible lack of international news on radio when I listen to it. So this is why I find Sunrise Radio very good, it gives international news and I find that brilliant. I find local news important, but I do think international news should be there, because you know, the other news, national news, any time you turn on after every hour you can listen to it, so I do look for where I could get international news. This is why I find the World Service good. Because I think all people who are not English, non-English people, find international news quite interesting, they like to know what's happening. So news, I really am addicted to news, but I think, more than national news, I look for international and then local news. National I know I can get at nine o'clock. But I'm always looking for international, news about India... I read newspapers, but I still like the radio, and TV Asia does an international news slot. You won't find that on the national news, there's hardly a line or two about international... so I must say the radio's my first thing for news, and then TV... When we go abroad we always listen to World Service because they're giving national news all about England, people in India know far more about England than we [in England] do about any other country abroad, because there's not enough international news.

Kerri's desire to hear about what is happening in India was repeated by other Asian respondents who wanted to hear news from their 'home', whether born there, or born in this country, and by African-Caribbean people expressing a desire to know what's happening in the West Indies, and in Africa. Gloria is 33, African Caribbean, born in Bristol. She is a specialist nurse, working with the black and Asian communities in Bristol. She, like Kerri, likes to listen to Radio 4. Gloria also listens to black pirate stations in Bristol, as a way of listening to the sort of music she likes, which is not available on mainstream stations, 'I listen to Radio 4 during the day, and if I get fed up with that then I usually find one of the pirate stations, and the weather's so lovely now its nice to listen to some old reggae, and sort of like black music if you like, and stuff that I can identify with'. Gloria lives with her sister and parents. Her sister tends to listen to 'more sort of classical, folk-type music', but, when she is in the right mood, she, like Gloria and her parents, likes to listen to reggae. Her father works as a taxi driver, and when in his car he sometimes tunes to an ILR station (GWRfm), or Radio 4. Like Gloria, her parents listen to reggae on pirate stations. So, this family tends to share their radio tastes, and, if one of them is listening to something in one part of the house, which they think the others would find interesting, they will shout to the others, telling them about it, so that they can tune in as well. The appeal of pirate stations to all of this family is that they will play the kind of music that they like all of the time, 'you get some reggae from mainstream stations but its not, its stuff that we like, but when you want it all the time, like you get a bit of reggae in the mainstream stations, like, say if you listen to GWR or Galaxy on a Sunday, then you know you're gonna get a reggae slot, whereas with the pirate stations, they play it all the time'.

Gloria's family is illustrative of an interesting pattern of listening that came out of the research. The focus group discussions that I carried out jointly with Berdencia Williams at three youth centres in Bristol showed that, while black pirate stations appealed to young listeners across ethnic boundaries, within black households they appeared also to hold an appeal across generations. This is an aspect of 'black radio' that is of some interest, because other stations tend to appeal to a far narrower age band. Part of the reason for targeting an age group, for commercial stations, will be to do with

constructing audience profiles for advertisers (see chapter 2). Broadcasters do not

appear to be interested in targeting wider age bands. One reason for pirate stations'

success in this area is clearly that they provide a service which caters specifically for a

black audience (or Asian in the case of Radio Pukar - see below). For some black

listeners, pirate stations are the only services that 'talk to' them. One black teenager that

we met during a focus group meeting, looked to radio to give him the type of music that

he would otherwise listen to on tape, or at parties. Like the majority of young people we

talked to, he could not understand why the legal stations that he could find on his radio,

with the exception of a few specialist music shows, all played chart music;

> If I ran a station, yea, I'd have it, you gotta have everything equal. I don't
> understand why the stations nowadays, they play chart music all day, every day,
> and the same songs maybe two, three times a day. Instead of playing those songs
> two, three times a day, why can't they change it and put something else there,
> instead of hearing the same thing over and over again. There's so much music to
> be played, right, they're sticking to the same thing all the time.

Many of the young people we talked to saw music as a very important part of their

lives. Many had never listened to speech radio, and some did not know that such a thing

existed. Many of those who listened to radio tuned to pirate stations, as they felt that

only pirate stations offered them the chance to listen to the kinds of non-mainstream

music that they liked, on the radio. The young people we talked to told us about the

kind of music that is popular amongst young people, across ethnic boundaries, and that,

in another teenager's words, 'represents the young people today'. Legitimate radio

rarely offers them this kind of music, which includes a whole range of black music from

reggae and ragga to lovers rock, drum and bass, and jungle. Other young people that I

have talked to mention the lack of non-chart guitar music, alternative rock, techno,

house and dance music generally[1]. RAJAR figures[2] show quite a high reach for 15-24

year olds, with females at 90% and males at 85% as compared to the adult reach (15

years and above) of 86%. These figures are curious, as they do not appear to be born out

---

[1] The term 'dance music' that I refer to here means the kind of music that is played at nightclubs. It is not
easily defined, and in fact is quite fluid. Galaxy name their output 'contemporary dance music' and target
young listeners, but most of the young people that we encountered in the youth clubs did not recognise
Galaxy's output as what they define as 'dance' which is far less mainstream, with a strong suggestion of
'underground' music. For a study of 'club culture' see Sarah Thornton (1995).

[2] Personal communication (October 1996) with Roger Gane, Director of RAJAR.

by talking to young people. However, if you look further at the figures, you can see that the average hours of listening per week for 15-24 year olds is lower than for the all adult average[3]. Furthermore, when a household has agreed to keep RAJAR listening diaries, each member of the household is obliged to record any listening, whether or not it is their choice. In addition, pirate stations are not recorded as discrete listening figures, but are grouped together in an 'other' category. In the age group 4-14 year olds, there is significantly less listening taking place, with the figures showing a year on year increase from the age of 15 to 20 years, moving towards the adult average. Thus, it is hard to draw any conclusions from the data that RAJAR keep, with regard to young listeners. The young people that we talked to, felt that, as with most other aspects of their lives, those in positions of power were not interested in their opinions, despite the fact that they had lots of ideas.

The kind of radio stations that they listened to, and envisaged as the sort of stations that they would listen to, would keep them in touch with the music scene that they were interested in - and this was by no means limited to chart music. The young black respondents who told us that all members of their families listened to the same pirate station, described households where different generations listened at different times, depending on the type of music being played. Gillespie found from a survey of Punjabi youth in Southall, that young people would listen to Sunrise Radio occasionally, but felt it was more for their parents. Out of choice they would prefer Western radio stations like Kiss (a youth oriented music station). Despite reporting that they would rarely tune in to Sunrise Radio out of their own choice, it did come out as their major source of national news, after TV (1995:99). These kinds of statistics, as with RAJAR, can prove to be both surprising and confusing, as Gillespie also reports. She does, however, use qualitative methods of research to provide the bulk of her data upon which her thesis is built, as discussed in chapter 3.

Gloria's family all listen to mainstream stations at some time. Gloria, like the other members of her family, is interested in the kind of speech service that Radio 4 offers,

---

[3] 15-24 year olds - male 18.8, female 17.2 average hours per listener, as compared to 20.3 for all adult average hours per listener (ibid.).

> I quite enjoy the plays that they have on and I love the sort of like the discussion programmes they have as well, I find those quite interesting, particularly about politics, listening to people's views, and current affairs, that you don't normally get on other radio stations, you get your news bulletin on other stations but on Radio 4 they go into more detail, and I quite enjoy that. Because as a family we talk quite a lot together and discuss various issues, so its always nice to hear discussions...

As for international news, Gloria, like Kerri, finds all of the services available to her inadequate. She likes to hear local news in case there is anything important that has happened, especially in the areas she lives and works in, but her main interest is in national and international news. National news she gets from Radio 4, and again, like Kerri, finds this a good and comprehensive service. International news, however, especially news about Jamaica, where her parents come from, and where some of her family still live, is hard to come by,

> Not only in Jamaica, but the whole of the West Indian Islands, and in Asia as well. Because you know, you hear about all these disasters, and then nothing. You think, 'oh, what happened?'. When hurricane Gilbert first struck in Jamaica, the first I heard of it was - I think I was listening to Radio 4, or the World Service, the world news - and it was just so brief. I thought, that was so disgusting, when you think about the amount of people from the West Indies that are living here. I told mum, 'have you heard about the hurricane in Jamaica?' she hadn't heard anything. We turned the TV on, there was nothing, until much later. So I think in that respect radio could do a heck of a lot more for the people living in the country. My parents are both from Jamaica, and it was like, because our family [in Jamaica] don't have telephones, so we were ringing friends who live in this country saying 'have you heard anything?' and then it was, well let's get on to friends in the States to see, because they're bound to have heard more about it, we hoped they would have done, and they had. But that's how we caught up on the news, and I thought that's really bad - that we had to go about it in that way.

Global media?

In academic debates about the role of media in everyday lives, globalisation and the changing nature and experience of space and place is often discussed (see for example Meyrowitz 1985, Morley 1992, Morley and Robins 1995). Gillespie (1995) writes about the role of television in the formation of identity for young Punjabi Londoners. She

brings together what she calls 'the cultures of migrant and diasporic communities' and 'the cultures of media consumption' (ibid.:1). She sees the correct context in which to look at Punjabi youth and the ways in which their identities are formed and transformed as being the Indian diaspora, rather than local ethnic communities. To set the boundaries as local, would be to ignore the influence and interplay of more global influences and contexts, 'Social interaction and relations are no longer dependent on simultaneous spatial co-presence' (ibid.:3). While she does not suggest that Punjabi youth in Southall, London, are a homogenous group, she sees them as sharing a sense of culture, within which there are differences. Global media has helped to create links across time and space, with TV Asia, and Asian videos, having importance in the community studied by Gillespie, and American films and Australian soap operas also having an important role to play in the identity formation of the young people she met. Gilroy (1993) writes about the 'double consciousness' that Britain's black citizens require in order to be both British and black. Within modernity a black Atlantic culture has evolved, which involves mutation and hybridisation, a mixing of traditions, cultures and memories which cannot remain separated. Ethnicity is seen by Gilroy as a process of identity construction that is ongoing. Gillespie agrees with Gilroy that new identities are created through the intermixing of histories, politics and culture. For the young people of her study, through 'their material and cultural consumption and production, they are also constructing new forms of identity, shaped by, but at the same time, reshaping the images and meanings circulated in the media and in the market' (Gillespie 1995:2). She sees culture as always fluid, so that the notion of cultural change is a tautology. The cultural differences between the generation of Punjabi youth in Southall and their parents, appears to be a recurrent theme. Cultural change can be seen as becoming more obvious, the more ways there are of highlighting the differences. For Punjabi youth in Southall, it is the coexistence of Western youth culture with the Asian culture of older generations, perhaps most clearly expressed through the media. Southall youths have a 'dual concern' which is 'to achieve equality and recognition in British society without affronting their parental values' (ibid.:5). The complex negotiations between these two concerns form the focus of Gillespie's book. She describes the consumption of TV as 're-creative', aiding the formation of new ethnicities. Following Miller (1992) in his investigation of the Trinidadian consumption of an American soap

opera, she saw the Punjabi youth that she studied as appropriating Western and Asian TV, relating their content to the here and now of their everyday lives and concerns. Gillespie found the 'mythical' American teenage lifestyle, as represented by Coca Cola advertisements (Gillespie 1995:191-197), was being consumed alongside Hindi films 'where pristine, moral, rural India is conventionally constructed in opposition to its exotic, decadent "other", signified by symbols of city life and the west...' (ibid.:82). These contrasting images and ideas, Gillespie sees as being incorporated into the Punjabi youths' processes of ethnic identity creation, mediated by their TV talk.

For Gloria, in my research, we can see a 'dual consciousness' in operation, with her identity as both British and black being frustrated by her lack of access to news of her Jamaican family home; yet she maintains her British and black identity through her varied radio listening, from Radio 4, the 'flagship' of British broadcasting, to illegal, underground black culture of pirate broadcasters. Kerri would also like to hear news of her 'home', India. She does get such news from Sunrise Radio and TV Asia, but her preference would be to hear it from the BBC, because, if they decided to take on this role, she thinks their service would be the best.

Kerri listens to Sunrise Radio for international news, specifically for news about India, but her main reason for tuning to this station is for the music. When she is doing mundane tasks, like cooking, which she does not enjoy, she really appreciates the chance to listen to Asian music. The rest of her family are not so keen on Sunrise Radio,

> We tend to listen [in the kitchen] when we're managing work that we don't like, like cooking... I just love it to hear the Asian music, the Indian music. I know when the children are in the kitchen, my husband, when he's in the kitchen, its always Radio 4 on, the children, its always Radio 1 on, with me its Sunrise Radio. It depends on who's in the kitchen, but I find I can work with my own cultural music in the background. If I'm doing a boring job, then I definitely don't like to listen to the English music. I am from India, so maybe that's the reason Asian music still appeals to me, because I grew up there.

Kerri's children, on the other hand, who grew up in England, are not very interested in Asian music - or Asian culture more generally. Kerri sees this changing, however, as

203

Asian films and videos, TV Asia, and Bhangra music have begun to interest the young. As Sunrise Radio now plays modern, Western and African-influenced Asian music, Kerri sees younger Asians as connecting with their Asian culture, in a more cosmopolitan, fused form;

> A few years ago, it was all, Michael Jackson or whatever, because we didn't have this type of Asian music, but because of the change in the style of Asian music, you find more Asian, the youngsters now, listen to that sort of music, which means that Sunrise Radio, you know, when they do cater for that sort of music, the youngsters switch off from Radio 1. So we'll find now that there's a tendency of Asian youngsters to move away from Radio 1 to Sunrise. And the type of films that are coming now are appealing to our Asian youngsters a lot, and funnily enough, Asians who have come to this country are sticking to their culture now far more than they were doing in the '60s.

When Kerri was young, even when she still lived in India, it was Western music that most interested her. Coming to England was an exciting move for her, and now listening to Western music from the 1960s brings back good memories. For young Asians brought up in this country Kerri feels there is a renewed interest in Asian music;

> In the '60s it was all Beatles and... everybody was in to that. When I came here in the '60s, the first week I bought all English records. Now if I go out its Indian CDs. We were listening to the Beatles and all that back home... I knew more about English music back home, than now, when I'm living here. Because now, because I can listen to English music, I'm not going to buy a record,... but I find my daughter, she was born '68 - in the seventies she didn't want to know Indian music, nothing, eighties, didn't, but suddenly, now, because of this Bhangra power and all that, they like listening, I mean I've heard my son listening and saying 'oh, that's nice' and I say 'do you know what that is?'

This interest is born out by the younger Asian respondents that I talked to. Shindi and Harbinder, 18 and 16 years old respectively, are both now listening to Asian music, an interest that was largely awakened by a pirate radio station, Radio Pukar, that broadcast for a while in Bristol. It broadcast as a pirate station, and on a RSL licence for a short time. Shindi rarely listens to the radio now, the only time would be when she's in the car and her father has the radio on - GWRfm or Classic Gold she thinks. When Pukar was on, she listened to that almost every day, 2 or 3 times a day. She liked Pukar because it was 'for the Asian people', 'my sister used to listen to it as well, we would

put dedications over the radio, join in the discussions. A lot of my friends listened to it, it was like the first thing that was aimed at Asian people in Bristol, there's nothing else like it, that's why it was so popular'. Shindi liked the way that she could talk about issues that came up on the radio with her friends, especially issues directly to do with being Asian, which she feels the media generally do not understand. She felt involved and liked to hear broadcasts in different Asian languages, whether or not she could understand them.

Harbinder also enjoyed Radio Pukar. She does still listen to radio, but mostly because it is turned on by another member of her household. She enjoys some of the music played on Galaxy, but prefers Asian music, which they do not play. This she listens to on tape. When Radio Pukar was on air, like Shindi, Harbinder discussed it with her Asian friends, 'I've got two Asian friends and so they used to listen to it and we used to talk about that... generally the music but sometimes, you know, how they speak and what kind of accents they speak with and stuff, just talk about anything'. Now, Harbinder would not phone in to a radio station, but she did so when Radio Pukar was on air. Whilst in the past, she would listen to Radio Pukar most evenings, now she will listen to her own Asian music, or watch videos, or TV soaps when she gets home from school. Now 'radio is just the kind of thing I do to fill in the spaces'.

Nadia is 30 years old. Although she has lived away from home, in London, she is presently living and working, at her family home in Bristol. Her family are Ugandan Asians who moved to this country when she was young. Nadia's father returned to Uganda shortly after they came to Bristol, because he was unable to earn as much money here. In Uganda he is a company director, whilst here he was offered work as a gardener. He finances his family from Uganda, and Nadia's mother spends eight months of the year with him in Uganda, and four months in Bristol. Nadia and her family live in a large, new, 4 bedroom detached house in a suburb of Bristol. Nadia works at home, in a workshop attached to the house, as a designer and illustrator. She also teaches in FE colleges. Nadia listens to a lot of radio, 'it kind of sets the scene, the atmosphere really... I mean, if I didn't have the radio I think I'd be lost. I'd probably go crazy. I mean, there are times when I think everybody needs to switch off and have an hour to

yourself... I might be fed up with the radio after two, three hours, I'll switch it off for an hour and just have dead silence, listen to the birds and whatever, but there comes a time when you have to switch it back on'.

Nadia is quite promiscuous in her listening, switching between Radio 4, Galaxy, GWRfm, Classic fm and Radio Bristol. Sometimes she will switch the radio off to put her own music on, when she feels in the right mood for that. She particularly likes to play Spanish music. When I met Nadia she was listening to a radio station that she had previously disliked. It was a choice influenced by both her own mother, and the mother of her boyfriend;

> Well do you know, lately, because my mother's back we've got this Indian radio station, Sunrise Radio. Its an Asian radio station... mum was saying it's on satellite in Uganda now which is amazing... it's really, I hated it a year ago. I would say "oh why are you listening to this rubbish" you know because they were so self opinionated on that radio station, it was 'only for the Asians' and I really don't like that segregation, but now they've got sort of DJs - its Dave so and so and Paul so and so, and they've got a sort of inclination, an Asian and Indian background and knowledge of it, and they can also inspire people from the Western community so its quite nice listening to them.
> *Researcher:* What sort of music do they play?
> *Nadia:* They play... if Paul is on the station he'll play a little bit of rave with Asian music, a little bit of Indian with Rave, but its quite interesting... and then you've got the lady who comes on in the afternoon and also, because there are so many different cultures in the Asian community, they don't cater for one, they speak in different languages. So the morning will be for the Bangladeshi crowd, the next two hours will be for the Punjabi, Sikh crowd you know, listeners, and at the moment its the Muslim religion where they fast for a month and they tend to play the prayers at five o'clock dead on, so they're catering for everyone so as to not hurt anyone's feelings I think because there's a lot of racism between the Indian community so you have to be very careful... so they do a bit of everything really... its very good, and they speak in English as well. and I've decided to listen to that station a lot more recently because it helps me with my other Indian languages that I don't get a chance to speak, so I think radio is very good for that too... Sometimes they have chat shows and things so sometimes its quite nice to listen to that.

Her mother's presence in the house has affected her choice of station, so that Sunrise Radio is more often found to be playing in the lounge, whilst in her workshop, she might have any other station on, depending on her mood, and the task she is engaged in.

She puts Sunrise Radio on because she knows that her mother enjoys it, but there is another reason which is to do with her boyfriend and her connections to him,

> the other reason I've started listening to Sunrise - when I go to visit my boyfriend in London at weekends, his mother's been exceptionally ill, she's very very ill, she's been in hospital, but when she's home, she listens to Sunrise Radio and its quite an eye opener, sort of... well its the first Asian boyfriend I've ever been out with, so its quite unusual for me, but I really enjoy it because I'm thinking, 'Oh, I've met somebody here where I don't have to explain myself, and my being, and where I come from" ... They're Indian from Hong Kong, he was born in Hong Kong, but his mother listens to this and that's how I got to know about Sunrise Radio, she's constantly got it on so, and it filtered through to here.

Nadia's interest in Asian languages, music and culture, can be encouraged and experienced through radio sound, which makes connections that may not be straightforward, but delve into social, cultural, historical and contemporary relationships and connections. She links her radio choices with her personality and with her mood. She understands her use of sound as subliminal, so that, whilst she can look back and say that after an hour or so she got fed up with a certain music or speech station, or with a certain presenter, 'I don't think consciously you know, you've had enough of this person's voice, you just get used to the sound and you think, oh, this is boring now'. Nadia recognises her use of radio sound as sometimes providing a background, 'just buzzing away', as sometimes invigorating her, 'then I need something quite loud, to inspire me', and, a lot of the time, as giving her the feeling that she is not on her own. In her work, she fully utilises the senses of vision and touch; through these senses she expresses her designs and artistic creations. At the same time, through her sense of sound, she herself, as an artistic creator, is fed.

Gillespie's study is firmly rooted in the idea of the globalisation of culture, where spatial and temporal rules are dissolved, so that 'new and unpredictable forms of connection, identification and cultural affinity [are created], but also dislocation and disjuncture between people, places and cultures' (Gillespie 1995:7). The connections may be symbolic, with the imagined community of viewers watching the same TV programme or film, or, 'more concrete links between kin and friends' through home

videos (ibid.). Gillespie sees these links contributing to the process of cultural identity formation, 'The media and cultural consumption... play a key role in constructing and defining, contesting and reconstituting national, "ethnic" and other cultural identities' (ibid.:11). However, the creative consumption of media, and its role in identity formation, takes place within established social structures such as gender and class. Thus, the ways in which TV contributes to the formation of new identities can only be understood within the context of everyday life, investigated qualitatively, over time. The 'challenge' of both the strengthening of local identities, and the creative formation of new identities confronted by us all in the global present, can be felt more, claims Gillespie, by diasporic groups such as young Punjabi Londoners, because of the ever increasing and conflicting pressures to be both British, or Western, youth, and Asian.

Gillespie draws on Hall's (1992) notion of 'cultures of hybridity' to explain why globalisation does not produce singular, assimilated identities. It would be wrong to assume that 'ethnic minorities' want only 'ethnic media', as the reluctant young listeners to Sunrise Radio demonstrated in her study. Rather, she sees her informants as cosmopolitan, 'and as cosmopolitans read media, they translate between territorial, local, diasporic, national and global cultures and identities' (Gillespie 1995:21). Southall youth must situate themselves in these, and other, frames of reference, such as gender and class. Gillespie found that, for them, TV talk was a 'crucial forum for experimentation with identities' (ibid.:25). News, soaps and ads served as 'cues and resources for the reflexive exploration of cultural differences and for the articulation of both real and imaginary options' (ibid.:27). Thus, syncretic forms of culture and identity are formed, with TV talk as a form of self-narration and identity negotiation.

For Morley (1992), one of the 'key functions of broadcasting is the creation of a bridge between the public and the private, the sacred and the profane, the extraordinary and the mundane' (Morley 1992:283). Television, he suggests, has a role of connecting the domestic sphere with the national and international, 'and in sustaining both the image and the reality of the "national family" and of various trans-national "communities"' (ibid.). A new relationship between community and geography (a 'post-modern geography') has emerged, with communications technologies playing a mobilising role

in 'the (re-) creation and maintenance of traditions and of cultural and ethnic identities which transcend any easy equation of geography, place and culture, creating symbolic networks throughout the various communities of the diaspora' (ibid.:288). Not only communities of the diaspora - we are all subject to this new geography, so that we must now rethink the equation of community with geographically bounded physical place (ibid.). This new postmodern geography needs to be imaginatively explored, on a macro-level in the abstract, but also, and importantly, on a micro-level;

> it is precisely through such detailed "domestic" or "local" studies, focused, in the first instance, on the "politics of the sitting-room", that we will most effectively grasp the significance of the processes of globalization and localization (or homogenization and fragmentation) which have been widely identified as central to contemporary (or even "postmodern") culture.
>
> Morley 1992:272

The most obvious examples from my research of the kind of connecting that Morley talks about, are with those black and Asian informants who listened to Sunrise Radio, or black pirate stations, for news of the 'community' that they felt they belonged to. Informants like Joe, who was discussed in Chapter 4, prefers to call Bristol's pirate stations, 'community' stations. When he moved to Bristol from Manchester, a few months before talking to me, he had felt very isolated. The people who had employed him, had found housing for him and his family in Clifton, an expensive area of Bristol, where the University of Bristol is located. He considered this an alien environment. Soon after getting to know Bristol, he moved to another area, with a higher proportion of black and Asian families. Here, he felt more comfortable. He also searched his radio dial for stations similar to those he had listened to in Manchester (pirate stations);

> we looked for them when we came here - positively... the fact is, we lived in Clifton you see, and we felt really lonely there... it was, company did come into it then to be quite honest, we needed something familiar so we looked for the community stations and found them. There's no black people in Clifton whatsoever, I mean, well, that's a lie, there are quite a few black people in Clifton but there's not a visible community... and its a very middle class area as well you know, there's not many working class people in Clifton so we really felt out of it...

Joe sees pirate, or 'community' stations, as very grounded in the local community, so that he can, by listening, feel he is part of that community. 'These people are actually playing music that people wanna hear, and giving out information that people wanna tune into... because they're stations that developed within the community... because they're actually serving the community I always refer to them as community stations'.

Across my informants, there were examples of listening to the news - local, national, and international - in order to 'keep in touch'. Alternatively, there was an avoidance of the news, due to a reported lack of interest in any, or in specific, forms of broadcast news, or the feeling that it would be depressing and make connections that they would rather avoid (Morley also found an avoidance of news 1992:252; 1986:169-170). Morley and Robins (1995) look at the increasing 'burden' being placed on electronic media to help forge a sense of community, while at the same time, geographical and traditional boundaries are dissolving. They look beyond the frontiers of trade and economics, to the imaginary frontiers, with which we create the idea of Europe and its relationships to the world. Looking at the questions around media and ideas of community, they point out that, as well as a connecting role, creating feelings of shared culture and identity, the media are also implicated in a 'politics of silence'. In this sense, connections are made in order to evade fearful things, and avoid anxiety, but through this evasion, things are made ever more fearful. They consider an aspect of community 'that in which it is held together not by what it avows as its collective values, but by what it collectively disavows... the institution of community then serves as a mechanism of closure, driven by the compulsion to avoid the painful experience of change and development' (Morley and Robins 1995:193). Morley and Robins point out that the media 'which we assume to be working in the cause of public knowledge and understanding, may come to function in accordance with the mechanisms of inhibition' (ibid.:197). A conspiracy of silence, may be the outcome of a community, drawn together for the purposes of social defence and the evasion of anxiety. Morley and Robins thus serve us a timely reminder that, the idea of a connecting medium, cosmopolitan in outlook, may in fact also serve as a medium of closure. It is worth bearing this in mind in the following analysis of radio sound and its connecting power.

Radio, along with other, more academically visible media, can be seen from my research to play a connecting role for individuals and groups of people in Bristol. On one level it is clear that a sense of community, or shared culture and tastes can be gained from listening practices. But there is also frustration at times - that the services available fail to achieve all that they could. On a meta-level, this provides interesting material for debates on globalization and fragmentation; if we focus, on the micro-level, on the use of radio sound amongst my informants, there is another layer of connecting, which is taking place, with equal potential for an understanding of what it is to live in a world where the media play such a crucial role in the creation of 'new ethnicities' (Gillespie 1995) and a 'postmodern geography' (Morley and Robins 1995, Morley 1992). At this level of connecting, we can detect the operation of memories, nostalgia, and idealisation. It is this level of analysis, that this chapter now aims to explore, the conclusions of which may or may not prove to be significant across all media consumption. It is only within the scope of this study to look in detail at the particular characteristics and qualities of radio sound, as experienced in the everyday life of my informants. The transferability of the findings here, to the use of other communication technologies, remains to be established.

The power to connect: time

I first met Jenny when she came as a new member to, what turned out to be the last, Classic Gold listener panel. When asked about her interest in Classic Gold, she told the panel that she had begun to listen after the death of her mother. She said that the station brought back memories of the past, and helped her with her grieving process. I later interviewed Jenny at her home, a three bedroom semi-detached house in a suburban area of Bristol. She lives there with her husband, who is a skilled factory worker, and her two sons aged 7 and 10. Jenny was born in Bristol and has lived here all her life. Before she had children, she worked in the same factory as her husband. Now she works part time as a dinner lady. Jenny's mother died two years ago;

> since my mum died I found that I needed something here, ... she lived about
> five, ten minutes away, I used to see her quite a lot. She was a widow... I used to
> go round and see her, and I did miss her , especially coming back from school,
> in the mornings. When you get up, everything's going on, getting ready to go

out, but the bit was when I came back - my husband works shifts, so if he was like working mornings, when I came back from school about quarter past nine I found this was the most loneliest part of the day, very quiet... When I came back I used to feel terrible and rather than just go out and find something to do I thought "no, I have to stick this out, but I need something", so, I just put the radio on one day and it just happened to be Classic Gold and I just, it was very funny because a lot of my childhood was that type of record. I can remember things, certain records make me remember things... there was a certain record I remember seeing my dad standing at the sink shaving, and it reminds me of this *every* time it comes on...

Jenny's use of Classic Gold could be seen as nostalgic. Interestingly, she appears to be reaching back across time and across memories, bringing something into the present, to take her into the future. The memories evoked by the radio are, she says, all good, and although she recognises that there may be an aspect of selectivity in her remembering, it is not usually particularly visual images, or actual specific events that are evoked, rather it is a feeling, a mood, a kind of experience, which does not interfere with the present, but enhances it. For Kerri, when she is carrying out those household tasks that she finds boring, listening to music that she first heard in her youth, creates nostalgic memories of her life in India, and her move to England, a time of great excitement for her;

> ... what I do, I still love the old music, because it brings me closer to home I think, when I was 18 or 19, because I got married when I was 19, the type of music I listened to then, now if it suddenly comes on air I know certain times they're going to play the old things, like Brunel does, I still love Brunel [Classic Gold], that's another one I like, because they play the music that I used to listen to back home... It just brings back my good old days. I remember, oh!, when I first came to this country 26 years ago, Mary Hopkins was singing *Those Were the Days*, you know! [laughter].

But nostalgia and memories do not have to relate to specific and easily explained, or rationalisable, connections. Connections, as they are lived and managed, do not have to be rationalisable, linguistically or otherwise. They are experienced as just one element, or aspect, of everyday life and ongoing identity creation. Here we can look back at the notion of the creation of dynamic 'new ethnicities'(Gillespie 1995), using the example of Lynne, a white woman, who draws heavily on Jamaican culture and music to live her life, as a white woman in a white culture. I met Lynne at the single parent social group. She is 30 years old, with a son aged 4 years, whose father is Jamaican. Lynne grew up

in a rural area, close to Bristol, and lived in Bath before moving to Bristol, nine years ago. She used to work in insurance, but since Dan's birth, has lived on Income Support. Recently, she has begun an art course, and plans to go on to take a degree in fine art. Art has always been a hobby of hers, and she feels lucky to be spending a lot of her time drawing and painting. She lives in a small flat, with only one bed/sitting room, a kitchen and a bathroom. She lives in a street with a Caribbean name. Although her accommodation is not very suitable for her son and her, she has a problem of negative equity, and is hoping that the Council might re-house her.

When Lynne was a child, she remembers her mother listening to Radio 2,

> that was the soft music wasn't it, that was particularly aimed at housewives, and they had recipes and they had "what's the recipe today Jim?", and who else, oh yea, Terry Wogan, then it switched to David Hamilton...
> *Researcher*: so did she listen to it a lot?
> *Lynne*: Yea, all the time, then later on, my Dad, he listened to Radio Bristol, and they... but my mum would have the radio on all day that she was in the house ... you know I can remember the radio quite vividly

As a teenager, Lynne remembers it being 'compulsory' to listen to the chart show on the radio on Sundays, and to write down and remember the chart positions. When the charts were announced in the week, someone would always smuggle a radio into school, so that at break times they could find out what was happening. Up until the age of 14, Lynne liked more or less the same music as her friends, but then at 14, her tastes changed,

> they played Bob Marley's *I Don't Want to Wait in Vain* and I really liked that. Everyone said "Oh, that's a thoughtless song" but I *really liked that, and ever since then, I've really liked reggae, and Stevie Wonder, Sir Duke, so from listening then I started to move into soul and reggae, before I knew anything you know, because I lived in the countryside, there were no black people, no black, they didn't know anything about it*
> *Researcher*: Was this just you, or your friends as well?
> *Lynne:* Just me, just my personal taste. I mean they liked Pink Floyd, Emerson Lake and Palmer, Queen, and Abba...

Nowadays, the TV dominates the media consumption in Lynne's flat, with her son being the 'telly addict', while Lynne prefers to get on with her art, or listen to music. When she is painting, she gets so absorbed in her work, that she is unaware of the TV or radio, but when she does watch the TV, she likes to watch a programme that interests her, she does not like to just have it on in the background. This is difficult to avoid with her son's viewing habits. Her son does not like the radio, and as there is only one radio in the flat, in the same room as the TV (bed/sitting room) the radio is not used as often as Lynne would like. She tends to listen mainly when Dan is asleep, or staying with friends. Whenever she gets the chance, the radio will be turned on, and it is tuned to a local pirate station, 'I stumbled across pirate radio stations and they just happened to play the music that I like... they don't just stick to one type of it, they also will play, I've heard them playing Shirley Bassey, gospel, very traditional ... reggae, right up to ragga, to the more commercial soul, they play a lot of soul'. She will listen to the radio at least a couple of times a week, to relax after a busy day, or to help her to get through boring housework,

> I often do my ironing to the radio, especially if its reggae because I dance to it while I'm doing the ironing, and housework, you know, boring chores like that... well I enjoy doing boring tasks like ironing if I can listen to the radio... you can enjoy dancing to the music while you're doing something boring like chopping up the onions... it gives you sort of energy you know, do the job faster, you can actually enjoy cooking along to the music... it just makes mundane jobs more bearable.

When Lynne gets the chance, if her son is away with friends, she will switch the radio on and turn up the volume, 'I think, "Oh yea, turn the radio up" and I'm actually dancing around the living room... I'm dancing away in front of the mirror and all sorts',

> I think its a sort of moment that you've got to yourself, you know, like Dan's gone and turn the volume up and you're dancing about. And a couple of times I've done it with friends you know, they've come in and put the music on really loud, dancing around. My friend came over from the countryside and walked in here and said "wow, what's this music Lynne?" and it was funk music, which I'm not so much, I like it but it doesn't appeal to me as much as reggae, but she really liked it, and it was up and she was dancing around my living room. I was making the tea or something, she was dancing around.

Mostly though, the radio will be listened to when Lynne is alone, as many of her friends have a different taste in music. She will listen to blues music on tape if she is very tired but can't sleep, 'they're very relaxing, and they're very moody and depressed so if I'm in that sort of mood I listen to them, their problems are always worse. Whereas reggae's a more happier mood music'. She has reggae music on tape, but her collection is limited, and the radio will play more variety. She explains that she likes the pirate stations, not simply because of the music they play, but also because it is a way for her to maintain a connection with a world that she is not fully a part of,

> well it's a way of keeping in touch with what's going on, especially, I mean, I've got a child and I can't go out to the clubs very much. And another thing is some of the reggae clubs in Bristol are so rough that you don't wanna go out to them, the environment isn't very nice you know, they're filthy places, some of the people are on drugs. Whereas, on the other hand, some of my friends are really nice, but they wouldn't listen to reggae, or they wouldn't mix in that culture, that scene, they don't know about it. So I find it keeps me in touch with what's on, I'm aware, but I'm not having to go out to it...

Radio sound for Lynne, makes a connection with the world of Jamaican reggae culture that she is physically unable to be a part of. Her paintings and drawings around the flat, of a Jamaican mother and child (which she drew when pregnant), of Bob Marley, and other Caribbean images, help to maintain the link that is affectively central to her sense of self. Radio, as a sound medium, has a quality which allows for fluid creation and (re)creation of connections. Lynne's use of radio sound makes connections with the culture and music of Jamaica, as expressed and experienced by her, here in Bristol. The connections are tangible, incorporating memories, imagination, and what we could define as 'nostalgia'.

Nostalgia as material culture

Radio sound as material culture has been considered already - as a textured soundscape. We can now look at another aspect of radio sound and domestic life that can be viewed from a material culture perspective: nostalgia. We have seen how radio sound can help to establish and maintain mood, or socioemotional states. This could be considered as tangible, material manifestation of affective, sensory experience, aided by the use of

radio sound. Here, we can usefully draw on Seremetakis (1994a), who looks at the senses, perception and memory, as a part of the material culture of modernity. 'Emotions are tangible because the senses of the body are the templates of feeling' (1994c:144).

Seremetakis (1994b) tells the story of the disappearance of a fruit in Greece. The fruit was like a peach and was referred to as 'the breast of Aphrodite' because of its texture, appearance, taste and smell. This fruit was gradually replaced by imported and hybrid peaches, conforming to EEC standards. Seremetakis, on visits to Greece, would inquire if anyone had come across Aphrodite's peach. The reaction of friends and relatives at first, was that it was still around, they just hadn't come across it recently. Gradually the realisation dawned that it had gone - it now only existed in memory. The memory of the peach, Seremetakis says, is nostalgic. She asks the question, 'What is the relation of nostalgia to the senses and history?' (1994b:4). There is a difference between the American and the Greek uses of nostalgia, which points to 'different cultural experiences of the senses and memory' (ibid.). She sees the American definition of nostalgia as implying 'trivializing romantic sentimentality', whilst the Greek definition of *nostalghía* 'is the desire or longing with burning pain to journey. It evokes the sensory dimension of memory in exile and estrangement; it mixes bodily and emotional pain and ties painful experiences of spiritual and somatic exile to the notion of maturation and ripening' (ibid.).

Seremetakis chooses Greece as a site to examine senses and memory, because she sees it as on the margins of modernity. And it is from the margins, that one can get a better view of the centre. Modernity threatens the viability and standing of sensory memory;

> The particular effacement of sensory memory in modernity, is mainly a consequence of an extreme division of labor, perceptual specialization and rationalization. The senses, in modernity, are detached from each other, re-functioned and externalized as utilitarian instruments, and as media and objects of commodification. The carving out and partitioning of separate domains of perceptual acquisition also authorizes the sheer literality of sensory experience. The literal is a symbolic logic produced by the scientific rationalization of the senses and/or by a culture of specialized consumption.
>
> Seremetakis 1994b:9-10

We could say that modernity, with its emphasis on visual, objective reality, threatens the creativity of sound, so that elements of culture that reside in this mode have been devalued. As such it may well have been 'partitioned' to the realm of the domestic, but, here it may also have freedom to work in creative ways, unrecognised and unspoken. In this arena, the power of nostalgia may have real affective depth.

For a term such as nostalgia, reducing the term to 'trivializing romantic sentimentality' serves to confine the past and remove it 'from any transactional and material relation to the present', isolating, and making the past consumable, as a 'unit of time' (Seremetakis 1994b:4). In the American sense, nostalgia 'freezes the past in such a manner as to preclude it from any capacity for social transformation in the present, preventing the present from establishing a dynamic perceptual relationship to its history. Whereas the Greek etymology evokes the transformative impact of the past as unreconciled historical experience' (ibid.). In Greek, the etymology of the senses is closely associated with the etymology of emotion and feeling. There are no 'clear cut boundaries between the senses and emotions, the mind and body, pleasure and pain, the voluntary and the involuntary, and affective and aesthetic experience' (ibid.:5). The memory of Aphrodite's peach, produces a memory of the peach which evokes a taste, felt in the body, with both pleasure in remembering, and pain in its loss, so that every other peach which tries to take its place is tasteless in comparison. More than just this fruit, Seremetakis argues that a whole epoch can become 'tasteless' when a sensorial culture, made up of a 'dynamic interaction between perception, memory and a landscape of artefacts', is dissolved into disconnected pieces. In Greece, the 'characterisation *anosto* (tasteless) ... deals with the cultural incapacity to codify past, present, and anticipatory experiences at the level of sensory existence' (ibid.:8). Tastelessness is brought about by modernity and its 'scientific rationalization of the senses'. The consumption and use of radio sound demonstrates that sound as a sense is still used to great effect, in everyday life. It does appear to be entwined with the emotions, perhaps giving the 'tasteless' public a domestic flavour.

In Britain, things like records and films, from the past, or evocative of the past, are said to be nostalgic. Often there is a romantic sentimentality attached, and there is a sense of the past as a separate unit of time. Nevertheless, when we consider how this nostalgia is experienced - it is bodily, through the senses, emotions and memories. To say that one 'sensed' something in Britain, is to say that, through intuition, or some other, non-rationalisable means, one 'knows' something. This, then, constitutes a way of knowing that is not privileged, but nevertheless is experienced bodily. Nostalgia, and memories, can thus be experienced, or 'tasted', in a way that is non-linear and does not lend itself easily to linguistic translation. And in practice, the use of radio sound as nostalgia can be much more than romantic sentimentality. Paul, who we met in Chapter 4, demonstrates this. Paul is 29 years old, works as a teacher, and lives alone in Bristol in a rented flat. He listens to Classic Gold which 'reminds' him of the 1960s, which his parents tell him he would have loved. The sociality of the 1960s is experienced by Paul, imaginatively, through the tales of his parents, and materially through his listening to Classic Gold radio. Just as the memory of the taste of the peach is remembered both by those who tasted it, and by those who heard the memories of those who tasted it, memories of a past can be materially evoked and lived by Paul, whose memories are based on those of his parents, in their stories of a 'lovely time'.

Paul's nostalgic memories are more than romantic sentimentality. They are a way of life for him. The close knit family, the cheery get togethers, that he sees as resonant of the 1960s, are a part of his life, which are in some ways emphasised by the way in which he lives. For example, Paul 'lives' at his parents home, in Wales. He works in Bristol, and has rented a flat, where he stays from Monday until Friday. But at weekends and holidays, he is to be found 'back home'. His tiresome train journeys to and from Bristol, emphasise his inclusion in, and his temporary separation from, his family, who, for him, epitomise the ideal family of the past. His belonging to his family, and their ideal characteristics, are thus clarified and felt by him. If his life were different and he lived at 'home' all of the time, this aspect of his family life, which he prizes so highly, might not be so apparent.

In his Bristol flat, he uses Classic Gold as an almost constant accompaniment, because it 'generates a nice atmosphere';

> Its nice to hear that music again, you know, I sort of grew up with that music when I was younger
> *Researcher*: Some of them are from before you were born
> *Paul*: Exactly yes, um, because my mother and father says, they said to me a few years back, its a shame you weren't around in the sixties because it would have suited you down to the ground, you really are, you like that era, I said yes, I probably would have, you know, the spirit of togetherness, because I love the family holidays, the Butlins and my mother and father, we used to love Butlins, we used to go there every year with my elder brother and sister who are a bit older than I am, and you know I used to join in all the games...

Paul makes sense of the present, through such nostalgic practices, experienced positively. Battaglia (1995) challenges the definition, by some scholars, of nostalgia as a negative notion. Rather, it should be considered in different contexts, *contingently*. She questions the 'assumption that nostalgia has a *categorically* negative social value for indigenous actors' (ibid.:77). On the contrary, Battaglia finds that nostalgia 'may in fact be a vehicle for knowledge, rather than only a yearning for something lost' (ibid.). In the light of her study of urban Trobrianders in Port Moresby, and the first yam festival to be held there in 1985 (modelled on, but because of the context, necessarily different from, the Trobriand Island *kayasa*, or competitions), Battaglia suggests the possibility that nostalgia may be practised in diverse ways, 'where the issues *for users* become, on the one hand, the attachment of appropriate feelings toward their own histories, products, and capabilities, and on the other hand, their detachment from - and active resistance to - disempowering conditions of postcolonial life' (ibid.). That is to say that, for urban Trobrianders, participation in the yam festival is a nostalgic act that connects them with 'Home', giving them a sense of their Trobriand identity (that is of the Trobriand Islands), and at the same time allows a form of resistance to their 'postcolonial' detachment from that Home and its culture.

In Bristol, radio sound, and the nostalgic practices that it enables, could be viewed as creating both a link to past or distant memories and places, and a resistance to conditions of modernity that fragment such connections, often experienced in terms of

isolation or loneliness. (Conversely, it could be understood as highly selective forgetting or denial.) Emphasising a view of nostalgia as embodied, Battaglia detaches 'the notion of nostalgia from the merely sentimental attitude with which we may too easily associate it' (Battaglia 1995:77). Nostalgia, in her observation of it, is 'embodied; it is the practice of yam growing for urban Trobrianders who talk about the gardens of "Home"... as distinct from their "house" they have returned to each day for twenty years after working "for cash" in Port Moresby' (ibid.). It is situated, for urban Trobrianders, in identity formation as "nationals" in Papua New Guinea, whilst drawing on 'identities and entitlements, imaginary or actual, in their island homeland' (ibid.). Battaglia thinks of this as a 'practical or active nostalgia' that is 'transformative action with a connective purpose' (ibid.:78). Thus it is that practical nostalgia may involve connections with a past object, which nevertheless contribute to future relationships;

> Indeed, nostalgia for a sense of future - for an experience, however imaginary, of possessing the means of controlling the future - may function as a powerful force for social reconnection. In permitting creative lapses from dominant realities, it is such a nostalgia that enables or recalls to practice more meaningful patterns of relationship and self-action. The capacity of nostalgia to engender its own ironies is hence a central consideration here, and bears directly on how local and national cultural identities are argued and contested.
> Battaglia 1995:78

In the setting of Port Moresby, the yam festival became somewhat 'commoditized', in a way that was not consistent with its origins in the Trobriand Islands. Participants attempted to deny this commoditization. This was evident to Battaglia in the context of the yam displays. The gardeners pointed out to her how things ought to be done, how they would be done at Home, and insisted that she took on board their true potential as gardeners, which was not evident in their urban yields. The yams which were propagated from seed sent from home were more highly prized in this instance than yams grown from market seed - although in other contexts they would be appreciated for their qualities. Displays were generally arranged so that market yams, and scarred yams, were stacked in a way that meant they were not visible to onlookers so that, 'such yams - and the character flaws they evinced - were *denied* in the visual rhetoric of display' (ibid.:85). At home, gardeners told her, such yams would have been left out of

the display, but here there was short supply, and all yams needed to be used. For Battaglia this indicates another necessity, it 'calls attention to displays as concrete arguments of a particular model of identity' (ibid.). As such, this practice is indicative of the ways in which some aspects of life can, through nostalgic practices, be denied or forgotten.

The nostalgia that Battaglia observed, in the urban Trobriand case, does not 'entail false contact that subverts "authentic" engagement' with the culture being studied, as some academics would suggest, 'it is not for Trobriand subjects merely a yearning for some real or authentic thing. Rather, it generates a sense of productive engagement which is at once more personal and larger than any product it might find as its object' (Battaglia 1995:93). The textured soundscapes that are created with the help of radio sound, in the homes of listeners, is, similarly, personal, and it extends beyond the sound that their radio sets emit, yet it can be contained in the domestic sphere.

Nostalgic practice, as cultural practice, 'abides in a convergence of mimesis and poesis - in acts of replicating the social conditions of and for feeling', and through such actions the 'experience of social life is supplemented and qualitatively altered' (Battaglia 1995:93). The key notion here is that nostalgic practices supplement social life, and qualitatively alter it. For example, Jenny was able, through the use of radio sound, to enhance her life and self, add to her domestic experience, and *feel* better about her everyday life and her self within it. She could make connections with memories evoked by the sound, and with imaginary others, who make and consume the same sound, although her case is particular and specific to her own life and experiences. It helped her, she feels, in her grieving process - it may be that it *altered* it, by substituting another activity, or she may have been denying it. In any case, it gave her a sense of not being alone and isolated with that grief caused by the loss of her mother. As Battaglia suggests, this nostalgic practice, as social action, enabled her to break from the situation she found herself in and to connect with other sources of meaning and feeling; it 'opens subjects to creative reconfiguration: nostalgic practice invites self-problematization' (ibid.). For Jenny and others, they can work on self and sociality in a safe environment, created in and via a soundscape that is not, and need not be, as fixed or recognised

officially, or even expressible linguistically, as other aspects of their social and personal lives. It operates alongside the more visible aspects of life, having its own depths, being bodily felt through affect, yet always working in conjunction with, rather than at odds with, everyday domestic and public social selves. It may be that the affective aspects of nostalgic practices, connected and managed by, amongst other things, radio sound, constitutes the very core of the thing we call 'everyday life'.

Battaglia further suggests that 'it follows that any notion of an integral, coherent self - any vehicle universally applied to such - must be seriously reconsidered, together with any notion that an aesthetic of self-wholeness or completeness extends in practice across cultures and times' (Battaglia 1995:93). My research suggests that everyday domestic life in Bristol is often geared towards the creation and recreation of the idea of a coherent self, and that this is an ongoing enterprise, and sometimes a struggle. It is variously undertaken and is experienced in different sensory modalities. It is not just a question of establishing a role, or a role in a relationship, but is an ongoing attempt to maintain a sense of self in that role and relationship. The fact that one is a wife and mother, or a single parent on Income Support, is not, in itself enough. This is not the end of the enterprise. Such roles establish a 'state', but not a 'state of mind'. As a state, they may provide a fixed point from which, and with which, one may develop links, relationships, feelings and meanings, but in practice it is an ongoing journey, which changes, sometimes subtly, sometimes more dramatically.

Nostalgia suggests looking back. It can be demonstrated that through nostalgic practices, the past, imagined or real, as Battaglia and Seremetakis remind us, can be brought into the present, as a feeling that alters the present, and can further be projected into the future. For urban Trobrianders, nostalgic practice 'reinvented the present'. It was not simply representing a tradition, it was creating a 'gap', 'in which alternative, cohabiting identities could become apparent' (Battaglia 1995:93). Much of my data would support Battaglia's claim that for practitioners of nostalgia, '"lapsing" into it', they may 'come to realize a productive capacity' (ibid.). In the Bristol case, this productive capacity could be described in terms of producing a sense of self, relationships and everyday worlds that they can live with; a creative potential, drawing

on memories, fantasy and feelings, in a creative and fluid reality that does not need to be fixed in terms of verbal, or even conscious, explanation; that does not challenge in any direct way, official or dominant views of society and life within it, and yet can maintain stability over time. Thus, nostalgia can be, as Battaglia asserts, a 'vehicle for knowledge and experience with a culturally specific historicity and a wholly *contingent* aesthetic efficacy' (ibid.). It is experienced personally, it is embodied, it is contingent, and potentially both positive and negative. Battaglia emphasises its creative (she would say productive) capacity by saying also that it allows both memories (actual or imagined) and forgetting.

Nostalgia has a link with the past, with memories, experienced first hand, or in tales told by others. The verification of memories is not what nostalgia, as discussed in this chapter, is about. It is an embodied feeling which can, I suggest, be evoked through the use of radio sound, or created by it, as it does not have to pre-exist the experience. As such, radio sound can be seen to have a connecting power with (actual or imagined) pasts. Radio sound and nostalgia, also hold this connecting power in terms of the present, and the future.

By looking in detail at a medium which is as unassuming and 'naturalised' as radio in the home, we are able to catch a glimpse of everyday living, that can be obscured by more visual and prominent media. Not all that has been discussed about radio sound is transferable to other media; it is the quality of radio sound in domestic life, that has been the focus of this investigation. However, it could be concluded that everyday life has many hidden depths, crevices, corners, threads and strands, that go beyond the surface structures, and observable behaviours, which are amenable to quantifying scientific examination. The potential meanings of words such as 'intimate', 'friend' and 'company' when used in relation to radio, have more significance than a linguistic analysis can uncover. This chapter has demonstrated how radio sound facilitates connections across space and time in sensory and affective realms. In the concluding chapter, I will draw together the themes of this thesis, in relation to the idea that modes of cultural knowledge cannot be adequately understood in linguistic terms alone; that to

understand the consumption of radio sound in the home, one must incorporate the experiential and affective aspects of everyday living.

Chapter 8

Conclusion

In this concluding chapter, I will draw together the themes of this thesis. Chapters 2 and 3 established that research on radio listeners, both within the radio industry, and in academia, have not as yet established, as fully as one would wish, how radio is embedded in domestic everyday lives. This study builds on the growing body of work which we might refer to as 'media anthropology', and the trend in British cultural and media studies, to take an ethnographic and anthropological approach to the study of media use in the home. Material culture, as a perspective, was shown to be appropriate to this study, as it has taken us beyond a contextual or textual analysis of radio sound as it is used, to an investigation of the *practice* of radio listening in domestic life. Such an approach has demonstrated that radio sound works on affective and sensory levels. It is shown to contribute to a textured soundscape within the home, within which people operate. This thesis reveals that the everyday, and domestic relationships, are complex, and constituted by connections across space and time, largely experienced in modes other than linguistic. Affect is shown to be an important dimension of everyday life and relationships, upon which this study of radio sound has shed some light. Indeed, one of the reasons why radio sound is so fully absorbed into everyday life, lies in its own qualities, as sound. It works on sensory and affective levels, and is especially suited to do so because of its materiality as sound.

At the end of the last chapter, I explored nostalgic practices, aided by radio sound, demonstrating the creative capacity and connecting power that exists in the everyday. There are other ways in which radio sound helps to provide complementary ways of knowing and experiencing; the way it links to the past and the future, to the experienced and imagined outside, and to other worlds. This thesis has considered the web of memories, connections, sociality, future, fantasy, and feelings; how all of these link together in a routinised way in everyday life, and how radio sound, with its particular properties and qualities, is able to work as a 'conductor' for them. It has been shown to harmonise the complementary, distinct, different and conflicting aspects of one's life - a manager of difference.

Senses as material culture

Seremetakis considers the senses as 'meaning-generating apparatuses that operate beyond consciousness and intention' (1994a:6). In the Greek case that she examines, Seremetakis finds that sensory interpretations become a 'recovery of truth as collective, material experience' (ibid.). She sees senses as representing internal states, and as existing in 'a social-material field outside of the body' (ibid.:5). There is an 'autonomous circuit' between the two that 'constitutes an independent sphere of perceptual exchange and reciprocity' (ibid.:6), so that the senses are like language in that they are 'a collective medium of communication that is both voluntary and involuntary, stylized and personal' (ibid.). They are not, however, reducible to language, and can be used to relativise and contradict, as well as add to, linguistic communication, through sensory affect. Perception is sensorily experienced, as part of an act of exchange, and according to Seremetakis, truth is perceptually constructed through the communication between 'the body and things, the person and the world' (ibid.). Truth is thus 'revealed through expression, performance, material culture and conditions of embodiment' (ibid.).

Seremetakis conceives of a 'sensory landscape' which contains 'meaning-endowed objects'. These objects contain 'emotional and historical sedimentation' which can 'provoke and ignite gestures, discourses and acts' (1994a:7). There is a strong suggestion of both involuntary and unconscious participation in this sensory landscape which holds within it layers of meaning on a sensory level - existing in the material culture around us, and in which we are embedded - waiting to be 'ignited'. This web of potential meanings and truths is made up of past sensory exchanges and perceptions, and object relations, and is thus diachronic. It is a topography of communicative links which are experienced through our senses.

In this context 'the surround of material culture is neither stable nor fixed, but inherently transitive, demanding connection and completion by the perceiver' (Seremetakis 1994a:7). Radio sound, if we think of it as part of the material culture of the home, and of the 'sensory landscape' is good for making such connections and completions. It can

be seen to make complete, through its connecting power, the domestic, affective environment of the home. Much of its ability to do so is because of its transitory nature, and the way in which it is experienced sensorily and affectively. Radio is seen by my informants as a naturalised part of everyday life, that needs no explanation or justification. When we think of the many instances of radio sound being used as a background to everyday living, we can see how it can work to make experiential things concrete to some extent. But, not enough to bring about great self-critical, or reflexive attention, in a foregrounded way. It may be seen to generate self-reflexivity in a very creative, yet highly selective and subtle way, due to the way in which it is experienced - the sensory modality of sound, and its flexible character. The pilot to our manoeuvrings in this web of potential connections and completions appears to be affect.

Radio Sound and Everyday Life

In chapter 4, we saw how the use of radio sound, in some cases, created social silence, that is, a space where sociality can be contemplated. Seremetakis writes of a similar concept in terms of the senses, which she calls 'stillness'. In the wider context of 'official cultures and memories' (1994a:13), everyday life is conceived of as a 'zone of devaluation, forgetfulness, and inattention' (ibid.). Seremetakis sees it as having been 'colonized' and 'mythicized' as a 'repository of passivity' by political powers and official definitions, precisely because it is in fact the site where 'the most elusive depths, obscure corners, transient corridors that evade political grids and controls' are harboured (ibid.). It is within this devalued 'zone' that stillness can be generated, as a 'resting point', 'against the flow of the present' (ibid.:12);

There are substances, spaces and times that can trigger stillness. I think of the old Greek who halted from his daily activities in the heat of the mid-day to slowly sip his coffee, each sip followed by a sigh of release. This was a 'resting point', a moment of contemplation, the moment he began to re-taste the day. Introduced by aroma and taste, this was a moment of stillness... Coffee is *sintrofiá* (friendly companion), as the saying goes. *Sintrofiá* generates a moment of meta-commentary in which the entire scenography of present and past social landscapes are arrayed before his consciousness: the contemporary political situation, familial events, village circumstances, the weather, crops, international news, all mixed together. There is a perceptual compression of space and time that is encapsulated in the small coffee cup, from which he takes a sip every

other minute, and while feeling the sediments on his tongue, he makes his passage through this diversity.

<div align="right">Seremetakis 1994a:13</div>

This quote could be seen to hold relevance for the role of radio sound in everyday life. We could replace the act of drinking coffee, and coffee itself, with the act of listening to the radio, and radio sound. The 'friendly companion' is an apt way of describing radio sound, and this friendly companion can be used to generate moments of 'meta-commentary' where the past and the present, space and time, are compressed. These moments of stillness are like 'tidal pools', where experiential worlds can be 'mapped out in miniature' (Seremetakis 1994a:12). Such experiences emphasise the non-contemporaneous aspects of everyday life, drawing on unrecognised and unmarked events and aspects of life, through 'interruptive articles, spaces, acts and narratives' (ibid.). Radio sound can be foregrounding, when Jenny, as well as others, like Trisha and Sue, take time out to sit down with a cup of coffee and listen to a competition, or favourite feature. Neil may spend Sunday afternoon lying on his bed, listening to the chart show. Their otherwise backgrounded radio stations, can be seen as providing moments of stillness or silence. The flow of the day is temporarily halted, sensorily experienced connections are made, and perhaps, feelings of completion achieved. According to Seremetakis, such moments 'are expressions of non-synchronicity which become material encounters with cultural absence and possibility' (ibid.), where the imperceptible may become perceptible in a marked way. Such moments can provide opportunities to create alternative understandings and rationales, and give depth to the experience of everyday life which is otherwise, and officially, given little attention.

How we make sense of the world, is aided by such moments of contemplation, or depth of experience, or connections and completions, which nonetheless are not necessarily easily expressed linguistically. Each making sense, takes place individually, but in the light of more general, cultural codes and ways of understanding. Cultural knowledge can be seen to exist on an official level, in terms perhaps of moral standards, and political rhetoric, but also, in everyday life, it can be seen to be understood and experienced on a sensory level that is less superficial and official, but felt in an embodied way, and importantly, it has an affective dimension - it is *felt*. Furthermore, it

is not linear, or straightforwardly contemporary. Experiences of the self, in the present, draw on nostalgia, memory and fantasy as temporal and spatial links. This goes beyond memory as actual memory, and place as actual place, to draw on, and deny, actual and imagined memories and places. Out of all possible connections with self-constituting, and self-reflexive moments, feelings and events, a construction of self is drawn, on different levels of consciousness and deliberateness, to become part of our largely linguistically unexpressed self, in our everyday domestic lives.

Modes of cultural knowledge and experience

Bloch suggests that anthropological accounts of cultural knowledge 'work from a false theory of cognition' (Bloch 1992:127). In brief, anthropological accounts rely too heavily on the notion that thought is language-like and follows a sentential logic. Drawing on 'connectionism', a theory from cognitive science, Bloch sees knowledge working, in practice, as a kind of 'chunked' network of connections, drawing on past experiences and memories, instantly. We learn about the world and form concepts through reference to vague prototypes, 'which anchor loosely-formed "families" of specific instances';

> Classificatory concepts are ... based on an appraisal of their referents in the world, on how we think of the construction and make-up of these referents, or on our understanding of the way they are constituted. It therefore seems that the mental form of classificatory concepts, essential building blocks of culture, involves loose and implicit practical-cum-theoretical pattern networks of knowledge, based on the experience of physical instances...
>
> Bloch 1991:185

Bloch gives the example of a Malagasy shifting cultivator, who, walking through the forest, is able to recognise what a 'good swidden' is like when a friend points to a patch of land and says 'that would make a good swidden'. Whilst we may think we think in sentential, logical forms, if we follow that logic, we would have to say that the man addressed, performed 'an unbelievable mental feat';

> He recalled from long-term memory the complex yet highly flexible mental model or schema "the good swidden", then he conceptualised the piece of forest indicated, taking in information about the vegetation, the slope, the surrounding

countryside, the hydrology, the soil, etc., then he matched the two intricate conceptualisations in what could not be just a simple comparison but a highly complex set of transformations.

Bloch 1991:190

Yet, it is only when we consider such a task, which takes seconds to perform, as based in a language-like form and process, that it seems so incredible. Such tasks are performed daily in everyday life. This indicates that, to think about knowledge and culture as language-based and sentential, must be an error. Whilst Bloch does not suggest that language is unimportant, he sees it as a part of culture, most of which is non-linguistic (1991:192). Connectionism, as a theory in cognitive science, is yet to be proven, but for Bloch, it offers anthropology 'the kind of challenge to sentential logical models' that it requires (ibid.:191). The idea is that most knowledge is complexly organised in networks, or mental models, 'chunked' rather than linear, and connected to each other in many and various ways (Bloch 1992:130). Such models are only partly linguistic, they draw on sensory apprehension, 'the cognitive aspects of learned practices, evaluations, memories of sensations, and memories of typical examples' (ibid.). What is more, they are 'anchored in practice and material experience' (ibid.:132). Such observations, which Bloch applies to an ethnography of Zafiminary culture, is attractive to this thesis, in that the claims which Bloch makes, are similar to those which have emerged in this study of radio sound and domestic everyday life. Bloch emphasises the ways in which we construct and operate, mental models of knowledge and of culture, often loosely formed, and largely non-linguistic, in order to live our cultural and social lives. He also makes the point that much of this knowledge *needs* to be non-linguistic; how could we live our lives if every practice, and every thought, needed to be worked through in a language-like form?

According to Bloch, Western philosophy also assumes 'that thought is logic-sentential and language-like' (Bloch 1992:128). In 1942, Langer was critical of this trait in philosophy. Langer characterised the life of a mind as 'a smooth and skilful shuttling to and fro between sign-functions and symbolic functions, a steady interweaving of sensory interpretations, linguistic responses, inferences, memories, imaginative prevision, factual knowledge, and tacit apprecitations' (1942:289). A man, she asserts,

can adapt to any circumstance that 'his imagination can cope with; but he cannot deal with chaos' (ibid.:287). In order to make sense of the world, to think about it, consciously and unconsciously, we need to bring it into some kind of order. But the order of language is not the only kind of order we commonly use.

Language, says Langer, requires the sequencing of ideas, even though the objects of the ideas 'rest one within the other' (1942:81). Such 'verbal symbolism is known as *discursiveness*; by reason of it, only thoughts which can be arranged in this particular order can be spoken at all; any idea which does not lend itself to this "projection" is ineffable, incommunicable by means of words' (ibid.:81-82). But, Langer persists, symbolism *is* possible in another form, in a form which is unrestricted by the sequencing of language;

> intelligence is a slippery customer; if one door is closed to it, it finds, or even breaks, another entrance to the world. If one symbolism is inadequate, it seizes another; there is no eternal decree over its means and methods... there is an unexplored possibility of genuine semantic beyond the limits of discursive language
>
> Langer 1942:86

At the time of writing, Langer recognised two 'fundamental tenets of epistemology' that blocked a widening of the field of semantics to embrace forms other than language. These were, that language was the only means of articulating thought, and, that the non-speakable was not thought, but feeling. Feeling and emotion were considered 'artistic fancies' (Langer 1942:86-87). A philosophical theory, that thought begins and ends with language, Langer points out, would make conception impossible; 'the error which [such a theory] harbours is not in its reasoning. It is in the very premise from which the doctrine proceeds, namely that all articulate symbolism is discursive' (ibid.:88). Langer believed that in our physical, temporal existence, we experience things in ways which do not fit this 'grammatical' or discursive model, yet such experiences are not therefore 'blind, inconceivable, mystical affairs; they are simply matters which require to be conceived through some symbolistic schema other than discursive language' (ibid.). All sensory experiences help us to formulate our world. These experiences are part of a complex of sensations, fluid and vast. In order to negotiate it, we must make sense out

of the chaos. We must formulate 'things' through selection, if we are to function as intelligent beings. Indeed, it is our intelligence which drives us to make sense of the chaos of sensory confusion. Thus, 'the eye and the ear must have their logic - their "categories of understanding"... An object is not a datum, but a form construed by the sensitive and intelligent organ, a form which is at once an experienced individual thing and a symbol for the concept of it, for *this sort of thing...*';

> this unconscious appreciation of forms is the primitive root of all abstraction, which in turn is the keynote of rationality; so it appears that the conditions for rationality lie deep in our pure animal experience - in our power of perceiving, in the elementary function of our eyes and ears and fingers. Mental life begins with our mere physiological constitution
>
> Langer 1942:89

Our mind works with meanings, first and foremost, and our sense organs provide our mind with forms to make meanings from. Our sense activity is thus intelligent, or 'mental', we do not store up meaningless sense data, we formulate perceptions, and begin to understand our world, or aspects of it. With this line of thinking, Langer brings processes that are often thought to be 'pre-rational' into the realm of rationality. She sees symbolic activity taking place in sensory perception, so that 'the eye and the ear make their own abstractions, and consequently dictate their own peculiar forms of conception' (1942:91). This does not represent a different world to the world known to physics. That world is 'the real world construed by mathematical abstractions' whilst the world of our senses is 'the real world construed by the abstractions which the sense-organs immediately furnish' (ibid.:92). These 'ear and eye' abstractions, from direct perception, Langer sees as 'media of understanding'. Through them we comprehend things and events,

> Our sense organs make their habitual, unconscious abstractions, in the interest of this "*reifying*" function that underlies ordinary recognition of objects, knowledge of signals, words, tunes, places, and the possibility of classifying such things...
>
> Langer 1942:92-93

A 'language-bound theory of mind' would rule out of the processes of human understanding, our purely sensory appreciations of the world. Yet these are 'non-discursive' forms of knowing, and are 'particularly well suited to the expression of ideas that defy linguistic "projection"' (Langer 1942:93). Through the senses we conceptualise that which it is not possible to conceptualise discursively. To illustrate, Langer uses a picture or photograph. Its meaning and symbolism is understood through 'a simultaneous, integral presentation', that is not successive, like language. No one part of the picture contains the whole meaning, as a word might. By itself an area of shade is simply an area of shade. She calls this kind of semantic, 'presentational', to distinguish it from the discursive, or language (ibid.:97). Whilst here, Langer is using a visual form to illustrate the difference between the language-like form of symbolism, or knowledge, and the presentational, she also discusses music at great length.

Here, in this thesis, radio sound has been presented as contributing to the fabric of everyday life in a non-discursive way, that could be likened to Langer's notion of the presentational form. It is clear that radio sound should be considered as a part of the domestic environment, and that any one part of that sound is made meaningful, or reified, only in context. That context is the shifting realm of everyday life, and the internal and external connections and relationships within its total structure. Whilst radio sound moves through time, and thus could be analysed 'discursively', it has been shown to hold hidden depths which reach across space, time and the imagination. The affective dimensions of everyday life are brought into play. Following Langer, this thesis could be seen to bring ' "emotion", or ... that crepuscular depth of the mind where "intuitions" are supposed to be born' back 'within the compass of reason' (ibid.).

Making sense of the world through 'presentational' forms is a mental act, just as making words is, and is therefore rational. The kinds of understanding achieved in this way are, according to Langer, 'directly reflected in the pattern of *physical reaction*, impulse and instinct' (1942:98), and such non-discursive ways of knowing and understanding are thus formulative of life. After all,

> Everybody knows that language is a very poor medium for expressing our emotional nature. It merely names certain vaguely and crudely conceived states, but fails miserably in any attempt to convey the ever-moving patterns, the ambivalences and intricacies of inner experience, the interplay of feelings with thoughts and impressions, memories and echoes of memories, transient fantasy, or its mere runic traces, all turned into nameless, emotional stuff.
>
> Langer 1942: 100-101

In 1991 Bloch hoped that he was 'swimming with the tide', a tide which would bring anthropologists to consider, not only the linguistic manifestations of culture and knowledge, but the mental and non-linguistic modes, which he claimed made up the bulk of culture. This thesis widens his model of the mental mode, and brings the senses and emotion into a reflection of everyday life and cultural knowledge. Through a study of radio sound in the domestic sphere, approached through the perspective of material culture, this thesis claims that they are equally at the heart of experience.

Bloch's work (1991,1992), and my own, in emphasising the non-linguistic aspects of cultural knowledge and meaning-making experience, echoes work from over half a century ago. In 1942 Langer also called for a move away from a linguistic emphasis of knowledge, intelligence and understanding, hoping to pitch 'philosophy in a new key'. Her understanding of intelligence and experience brought the senses and non-sentential logic into the realm of rationality. This, she felt, pre-dated and is a necessary precursor to, a discursive form of knowledge. As far back as the 1930's, Bateson formulated his concepts of ethos, 'deep and strongly motivating emotional orientations', and eidos, 'habitually associated ideas, located in memory and available to recall, which organize and direct thinking' (Nuckolls 1995:368). One of his aims was to bring the emotional aspects of culture into the frame of the anthropological focus, because he saw it as directly related to logical and sociological aspects. As Bateson makes clear, to define 'ethos' is to artificially abstract and categorise a dimension of culture and society which is in operation only meaningful in its integration in the whole of culture, which is 'a complex reticulum' (Bateson 1958). He saw cultures as fluid and dynamic.

The immediate context for this study of radio sound, has been domestic everyday life. This can also be conceived of as 'a complex reticulum'. It can also be understood to

have 'ethological' and 'eidological' dimensions. Radio sound has been presented as having qualities that make it especially suitable to make connection with, and work in, the affective dimension of everyday life. This, I suggest, is why radio is often characterised as a 'friend' and as providing 'company'; as helping people through their daily lives. Bateson saw the Iatmul of his ethnography as trying to achieve a 'dynamic equilibrium'. This thesis describes radio sound in the home, as a part of domestic material culture, as being used in everyday life, to achieve just such a dynamic, and affective equilibrium.

Bibliography

Abu-Lughod, L. 1995. The Objects of Soap Opera: Egyptian Television and the Cultural Politics of Modernity. In *Worlds Apart* (ed.) D. Miller. London. Routledge.

Abu-Lughod, L. & C. Lutz. 1990. Introduction: emotion, discourse, and the politics of everyday life. In *Language and the Politics of Emotion* (eds.) C. Lutz & L. Abu-Lughod. Cambridge. Cambridge University Press.

Allen, C. (ed.) 1995. *To be Continued... :Soap Operas Around the World*. London. Routledge.

Anderson, B. 1983. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London. Verso.

Ang, I. 1985. *Watching Dallas: Soap Opera and the Melodramatic Imagination*. London. Methuen.

---. 1991. *Desperately Seeking the Audience*. London. Routledge.

---. 1992. Living-room Wars: New Technologies, Audience Measurement and the tactics of Television Consumption. In *Consuming Technologies* (eds.) R. Silverstone & E.Hirsch. London. Routledge.

---. 1996. *Living Room Wars: Rethinking Media Audiences for a Postmodern World*. London. Routledge.

Baehr, H. & M. Ryan. 1984. *Shut up and Listen! Women and Local Radio: A View from the Inside*. London. Comedia.

Barnett, S. & D.Morrison. 1989. *The Listener Speaks: The Radio Audience and the Future of Radio*. London. HMSO.

Bateson, G. [1936]1958. 2nd edition. *Naven: a survey of the problems suggested by a composite picture of the culture of a New Guinea tribe drawn from three points of view*. Stanford, California. Stanford University Press.

Battaglia, D. 1995. On Practical Nostalgia: Self-Prospecting among Urban Trobrianders. In *Rhetorics of Self-Making* (ed.) D. Battaglia. London. University of California Press.

Bausinger, H. 1984. Media, Technology and Daily Life. *Media, Culture and Society* 6, 343-51.

BBC. 1995. *People and Programmes:BBC Radio and Television for an Age of Choice*. London. British Broadcasting Corporation.

Beattie, J. 1964. *Other Cultures: Aims, Methods and Achievements in Social Anthropology*. London. Cohen & West.

Bloch, M. 1991. Language, Anthropology and Cognitive Science. *Man (N.S.)* 26: 2, 183-98.

---. 1992. What goes without saying: The conceptualization of Zafiminary society. In *Conceptualizing Society* (ed.) A. Kuper. London. Routledge.

Briggs, A. 1961. *The Birth of Broadcasting, the History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom, volume I.* London. Oxford University Press.

---. 1965. *The Golden Age of Wireless, the History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom, volume II.* London. Oxford University Press.

---. 1970. *The War of Words, The History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom, volume III.* London. Oxford University Press.

---. 1979. *Sound and Vision, The History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom, volume IV.* Oxford. Oxford University Press.

---. 1995. *Competition, The History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom, volume V.* Oxford. Oxford University Press.

Carter, M. 1995. RAB Conference Special Issue. *Marketing Week.*

Certeau, M. de. 1984. *The Practice of Everyday Life.* London. University of California Press.

Classen, C. 1993. *Worlds of Sense: Exploring the Senses in History and Across Cultures.* London. Routledge.

Cohen, A.P. (ed.) 1982. *Belonging: Identity and Social Organisation in British Rural Cultures.* Manchester. Manchester University Press.

Coward, R. 1992. *Our Treacherous Hearts: why women let men get their way.* London. Faber.

Crisell, A. 1986. *Understanding Radio.* London. Methuen.

Curran, J. 1986. The Different Approaches to Media Reform. In *Bending Reality: The State of the Media* (eds.) J.Curran, J.Ecclestone, G.Oakley & A.Richardson. London. Pluto Press.

Das, V. 1995. On Soap Opera: What Kind of Anthropological Object Is It? In *Worlds Apart* (ed.) D. Miller. London. Routledge.

Dauenhauer, B.P. 1980. *Silence: the phenomenon and its ontological significance.* Bloomington. Indiana University Press.

Evans-Pritchard, E. 1951. *Social Anthropology.* London. Cohen & West.

Feld, S. 1990. *Sound and Sentiment: Birds, Weeping, Poetics and Song in Kaluli Expression.* Philadelphia. UPP.

Ferguson, M. (ed.) 1990. *Public Communication: The New Imperatives, Future Directions for Media Research.* London. Sage.

Gardiner, D. Jan 1997. What Now For Rajar? *Admap* 367, 47-49.

Garnham, N. 1990. *Capitalism and Communication: Global Culture and the Economics of Information.* London. Sage.

237

Geertz, C. 1975. *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*. London. Hutchinson.

Gell, A. 1995. The Language of the Forest: Landscape and Phonological Iconism in Umeda. In *The Anthropology of Landscape* (eds.) E. Hirsch & M.O'Hanlon. Oxford. Clarendon Press.

Giddens, A. 1991. *Modernity and Self Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*. Cambridge. Polity Press.

---. 1992. *The Transformation of Intimacy: Sexuality, Love and Eroticism in Modern Societies*. Cambridge. Polity Press.

Gillespie, M. 1995. *Television, Ethnicity and Cultural Change*. London. Comedia.

Gillis, J.R. (ed.) 1994. *Commemorations: the Politics of National Identity*. Princeton,N.J. Princeton University Press.

Gilroy, P. 1993. *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*. London. Verso.

Glaser, B.G. & A.L.Strauss. 1967. *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*. Chicago. Aldine.

Goffman, E. 1975. *Frame Analysis: an Essay on the Organization of Experience*. Harmondsworth. Penguine.

Gray, A. 1987. Behind Closed Doors:Women and Video. In *Boxed in:Women on and in TV* (eds.) H. Baehr & G.Dyer. London. Routledge.

---. 1992. *Video Playtime: The Gendering of a Leisure Technology*. London. Routledge.

Gullestad, M. 1984. *Kitchen-Table Society: A Case Study of the Family Life and Friendships of Young Working-Class Mothers in Urban Norway*. Oslo. Norwegian University Press.

---. 1992. *The Art of Social Relations: Essays on Culture, Social Action and Everyday Life in Modern Norway*. Oslo. Scandinavian University Press.

Hall, S. 1980. Encoding/Decoding. In *Culture, Media, Language: Working Papers in Cultural Studies 1972-79* (eds.) S. Hall, D.Hobson, A.Lowe & P.Willis. London. Hutchinson.

---. 1992. The Question of Cultural Identity. In *Modernity and its Futures* (eds.) S. Hall, D.Held & T.McGrew. Cambridge. Polity Press.

Hammersley, M. & P.Atkinson. 1983. *Ethnography: Principles in Practice*. London. Routledge.

Hirsch, E. 1990. From Bones to Betelnuts: Processes of Ritual Transformation and the Development of 'National Culture' in Papua New Guinea. *Man (N.S.)* 25: 1, 18-34.

---. 1992. The long term and the short term of domestic consumption: an ethnographic case study. In *Consuming Technologies: Media and Information in Domestic Spaces* (eds.) R. Silverstone & E.Hirsch. London. Routledge.

Ingram, A. & J.Sampson November 1995. Advertisers' Real Needs from Radio Research. *Admap* , 45-47.

Jackson, A. (ed.) 1987. *Anthropology at Home*. London. Tavistock.

Jenkins, T. 1994. Fieldwork and the Perception of Everyday Life. *Man. (N.S.)* 29:2, 433-455.

Jennings, H. & W.Gill. 1939. *Broadcasting in Everyday Life: A Survey of the Social Effects of the Coming of Broadcasting*. London. BBC.

Keat, R., N. Whiteley & N. Abercrombie. (eds). 1994. *The Authority of the Consumer*. London. Routledge.

Keil, C. 1994. Motion and Feeling through Music. In *Music Grooves: Essays and Dialogues*. C. Keil & S.Feld. Chicago. University of Chicago Press.

Keil, C. & S.Feld. 1994. *Music Grooves: Essays and Dialogues*. Chicago. University of Chicago Press.

Kent, R. 1994. Measuring Media Audiences: an overview. In *Measuring Media Audiences* (ed.) R. Kent. London. Routledge.

Lakoff, G. & M.Johnson. 1980. *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago. The University of Chicago Press.

Langer, S.K. 1942. *Philosophy in a New Key: A Study in the Symbolism of Reason, Rite, and Art*. Cambridge, Massachusetts. Harvard University Press.

Leach, ER. 1982. *Social Anthropology*. Glasgow. Fontana.

---. 1976. *Culture and Communication: The Logic by which Symbols are Connected.* Cambridge. Cambridge University Press.

Lienhardt, G. 1964. *Social Anthropology*. London. Oxford University Press.

Livingstone, S. & P.Lunt. 1994. *Talk on Television: Audience Participation and Public Debate*. London. Routledge.

Lull, J. (ed.) 1988. *World Families Watch Television*. California. Sage.

---. 1990. *Inside Family Viewing: Ethnographic Research on Television's Audiences*. London. Routledge.

---. 1991. *China Turned On: Television, Reform, and Resistance*. London. Routledge.

---. 1992. Popular Music and Communication: An Introduction. In *Popular Music and Communication* (ed.) J. Lull. California. Sage.

Lutz, C. & GM.White 1986. The Anthropology of Emotions. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 15, 405-36.

Lutz, C.A. 1988. *Unnatural Emotions: Everyday Sentiments on a Micronesian Atoll and Their Challenge to Western Theory*. Chicago. University of Chicago Press.

Lutz, C.A. & L. Abu-Lughod. (eds.) 1990. *Language and the Politics of Emotion*. Cambridge. Cambridge University Press.

Lyon, M.L. 1995. Missing Emotion: The Limitations of Cultural Constructionism in the Study of Emotion. *Cultural Anthropology* 10(2), 244-63.

Mair, L. 1972. *An Introduction to Social Anthropology*. 2nd Edition. Oxford. Clarendon.

Menneer, P. 1995. European Radio Audiences: Figures to be Taken at Face Value? *Admap* February, 20-24.

Meyer, L. 1956. *Emotion and Meaning in Music*. Chicago. University of Chicago Press.

Meyrowitz, J. 1985. *No Sense of Place: the impact of electronic media on social behavior*. Oxford. Oxford University Press.

Miller, D. 1987. *Material Culture and Mass Consumption*. Oxford. Blackwell.

--- 1988. Appropriating the State on the Council Estate. *Man (N.S.)* 23: 3, 353-72.

---. 1992. The Young and the Restless in Trinidad: a case of the local and the global in mass consumption. In *Consuming Technologies: Media and Information in Domestic Spaces* (eds.) R. Silverstone & E. Hirsch. London. Routledge.

---. (ed.) 1995a. *Worlds Apart: Modernity through the Prism of the Local*. London. Routledge.

---. 1995b. The consumption of soap opera: *The Young and the Restless* and mass consumption in Trinidad. In *To be Continued... :Soap Operas Around the World* (ed.) C. Allen. London. Routledge.

---. (ed.) 1995c. *Acknowledging Consumption: A Review of New Studies*. London. Routledge.

---. in press 1997. Why Some Things Matter. In *Material Cultures* (ed.) D.Miller. London. UCL Press.

Moores, S. 1988. 'The Box on the Dresser': Memories of Early Radio and Everyday Life. *Media, Culture and Society* 10, 23-40.

---. 1993. *Interpreting Audiences: The Ethnography of Media Consumption*. London. Sage.

Morley, D. 1980. *The 'Nationwide' Audience*. London. British Film Institute.

---. 1986. *Family Television: Cultural Power and Domestic Leisure*. London. Comedia.

---. 1992. *Television, Audiences and Cultural Studies*. London. Routledge.

---. 1995. Theories of Consumption in Media Studies. In *Acknowledging Consumption: A Review of New Studies* (ed.) D. Miller. London. Routledge.

Morley, D. & K. Robins. 1995. *Spaces of Identity: Global media, electronic landscapes and cultural boundaries.* London. Routledge.

Navigator. 1993. *Electric Radioland.* Report on Research Among Radio Listeners Prepared for the Radio Advertising Bureau.

Needham, R. 1967. Percussion and Transition. *Man (N.S.)* 2: 4, 606-14.

Nightingale, V. 1989. What's Ethnographic about Ethnographic Audience Research? *Australian Journal of Communications* 16, 50-63.

Nuckolls, C.W. 1995. The Misplaced Legacy of Gregory Bateson: Toward a Cultural Dialectic of Knowledge and Desire. *Cultural Anthropology* 10(3), 367-94.

Poysko, M. 1994. The Blessed Noise and Little Moo: Aspects of Soundscape in Cowsheds. In *Soundscapes: Essays on Vroom and Moo* (ed.) H. Jarviluoma. Tampere. Tampere University.

Radio Authority (June 1995) Pocket Guide.

Radway, J. 1988. Reception Study: Ethnography and the problems of Dispersed Audiences and Nomadic Subjects. *Cultural Studies* 2 (3), 359-76.

Radway, J.A. 1987. *Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy, and Popular Literature.* London. Verso.

RAJAR (March 1994) Service Overview and Code of Practice 2nd Edition.

RAJAR/RSL (1995) Quarterly Summary of Radio Listening. Quarter 1/95.

RSL - Research Services Limited (March 1995): *RAJAR - What is it?*

--- (April 1995): *Radio Opinion Monitor Reference Manual and Users' Guide.* Issue no.1.

Scannell, P. 1988. Radio Times: The Temporal Arrangements of Broadcasting in the Modern World. In *Television and its Audience: International Research Perspectives* (eds.) P. Drummond & R.Paterson. London. British Film Institute Publishing.

---. 1992. Public Service Broadcasting and Modern Life. In *Culture and Power: a Media, Culture and Society Reader* (eds.) P.Scannell, P.Schlesinger & C.Sparks. London. Sage.

Scannell, P. & D.Cardiff. 1991. *A Social History of British Broadcasting: Volume One 1922-1939 Serving the Nation.* Oxford. Blackwell.

Schafer, R.M. 1994. *The Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment and the Tuning of the World.* Rochester. Destiny Books.

---. 1977. *The Tuning of the World.* NY. Knopf.

Schwartz, T., G.M. White & C.A. Lutz. (eds.) 1992. *New Directions in Psychological Anthropology*. Cambridge. Cambridge University Press.

Seiter, E., H.Borchers., G.Kreutzner & E.Warth. (eds.) 1989. *Remote Control: Television, Audiences and Cultural Power*. London. Routledge.

Seremetakis, C.N. (ed.) 1994a. *The Senses Still: Perception and Memory as Material Culture in Modernity*. London. University of Chicago Press.

---. 1994b. The Memory of the Senses, Part I: Marks of the Transitory. In *The Senses Still* (ed.) C.N. Seremetakis. London. University of Chicago Press.

---. 1994c. Implications. In *The Senses Still* (ed.) C.N. Seremetakis. London. University of Chicago Press.

Silverstone, R. 1989. Let us then return to the murmuring of everyday practices: A note on Michael de Certeau, television and everyday life. *Theory, Culture and Society* 6(1), 77-94.

---. 1990. Television and Everyday Life: Towards an Anthropology of the Television Audience. In *Public Communication: The New Imperatives, Future Directions for Media Research* (ed.) M. Ferguson. London. Sage.

---. 1994. *Television and everyday life*. London. Routledge.

Silverstone, R. & D.Morley. 1990. Families and their Technologies: Two Ethnographic Portraits. In *Household Choices* (eds.) T. Putnam & C.Newton. London. Futures Publications.

Silverstone, R. & E.Hirsch. (eds.) 1992. *Consuming Technologies: Media and Information in Domestic Spaces*. London. Routledge.

---. 1992a. Introduction. In *Consuming Technologies* (eds.) R. Silverstone & E.Hirsch. London. Routledge.

Silverstone, R., E.Hirsch & D.Morley 1991. Listening to a Long Conversation: An Ethnographic Approach to the Study of Information and Communication Technologies in the Home. *Cultural Studies* 5(2), 204-27.

---. 1992. Information and Communication Technologies and the Moral Economy of the Household. In *Consuming Technologies: Media and Information in Domestic Spaces* (eds.) R. Silverstone & E.Hirsch. London. Routledge.

Silvey, R. 1974. *Who's Listening?* London. Allen & Unwin.

Spitulnik, D. 1992. Radio Time Sharing and the Negotiation of Linguistic Pluralism in Zambia. *Pragmatics* 2: 3, 335-54.

--- 1993. Anthropology and Mass Media. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 22, 293-315.

Stigler, J.W., R.A. Shweder & G. Herdt. (eds.) 1990. *Cultural Psychology:Essays on Comparative Human Development*. Cambridge. Cambridge University Press.

Stockfelt, O. 1994. Cars, Buildings and Soundscapes. In *Soundscapes: Essays on Vroom and Moo* (ed.) H. Jarviluoma. Tampere. Tampere University Press.

Stoller, P. 1984. Sound in Songhay Cultural Experience. *American Ethnologist* 12 No3, 91-112.

---. 1989. *The Taste of Ethnographic Things: The Senses in Anthropology*. Philadelphia. University of Pennsylvania Press.

Thorn, R.L. 1990. First Home: An Account of the Household Choices made by a Newly-Married Couple. In *Household Choices* (eds.) T. Putnam & C.Newton. London. Futures Publications.

Thornton, S. 1995. *Club Cultures: Music, Media and Subcultural Capital*. Cambridge. Polity Press.

Twyman, T. 1994. Measuring Audiences to Radio. In *Measuring Media Audiences* (ed.) R. Kent. London. Routledge.

Wallman, S. 1984. *Eight London Households*. London. Tavistock.

Wallman, S., IH.Buchanan., Y.Dhooge., Jl.Gershuny., BA.Kosmin & M.Wann. 1982. *Living in South London: Perspectives on Battersea 1871-1981*. Aldershot. Gower/London School of Economics.

Waterman, C.A. 1990. *Juju: A Social History and Ethnography of an African Popular Music*. Chicago. The University of Chicago Press.

White, G.M. 1990. Moral Discourse and the Rhetoric of Emotions. In *Language and the politics of emotion* (eds.) C. Lutz & L. Abu-Lughod. Cambridge. Cambridge University Press.

White, G.M. & CA.Lutz. 1992. Introduction. In *New Directions in Psychological Anthropology* (eds.) T. Schwartz, GM.White & CA.Lutz. Cambridge. Cambridge University Press.