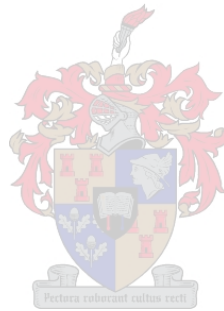


THE MEN IN OUR LIVING ROOM

MASCULINITIES AND THE STRUGGLE FOR A NEW SOUTH AFRICAN
HEGEMONY IN *EGOLI: PLACE OF GOLD* 1994

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DECLARATION

By submitting this thesis electronically, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own, original work, that I am the sole author thereof (save to the extent explicitly otherwise stated), that reproduction and publication thereof by Stellenbosch University will not infringe any third party rights and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

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OPSOMMING

In hierdie studie analiseer ek die 1994 episodes van die populêre sepie *Egoli: Plek van Goud* wat afspeel tydens die sogenaamde 'geboorte' van die Nuwe Suid-Afrika. Hierdie oomblik in media-geskiedenis is gekarakteriseer deur 'n verhoogde gevoel van antisipatie rondom *Egoli* as die eerste plaaslike sepie, vervaardig deur Franz Marx tydens die toppunt van sy loopbaansukses vir die relatief nuwe, en enigste onafhanklike uitsaaiers in die land, M-Net. Vanweë hierdie medium se afhanklikheid op skynbare realisme, bied *Egoli* 'n waardevolle historiese televisuele vertolking van die verrykende sosiale en politiese veranderinge van hierdie tydperk. Ek argumenteer dat die sepie 'n passiewe kritiekloosheid in kykers uitlok en daarom as 'n 'leeslike' teks benader moet word, wat 'n reeds-onderhandelde hegemonie direk in die intimiteit van die huishouding oordra. As gevolg van die bewustheid van die kritieke rol wat deur blanke Afrikaanse mans vervul is in die beveiliging van kulturele hegemonie tot en met hierdie historiese moment, wyk my studie af van die veelvuldige navorsing oor die sepie as 'n vroue-medium en benader ek *Egoli* met 'n fokus op die konstruering van manlikheid. 'n Analise van drie kontrasterende manlike karakters ondersoek *Egoli* se formulering van 'n sosiale matriks wat nie alleenlik die program se benadering tot geslag blootlê nie, maar so ook tot sosiale mag, klas en ras. Ek sluit af met die bevinding dat dié sepie ontbreek in die vermoë om radikale verandering aan te spoor of te weerspieël. *Egoli* slaag slegs daarin om op 'n oppervlakkige wyse die hegemonie van 'n gevestigde Afrikaner patriargale orde te bevestig en te reproduseer.

ABSTRACT

In this study I analyse the 1994 episodes of the popular soap opera *Egoli: Place of Gold* that coincide with the so-called 'birth' of the New South Africa. This moment in media history is characterised by a heightened sense of anticipation surrounding *Egoli* as the first local soap opera created by Franz Marx at the pinnacle of his career for the relatively new – and only – independent broadcaster in the country, M-Net. Because of the reliance of this genre on perceived realism, *Egoli* offers a historically significant televisual mediation of the widespread social and political changes that mark this particular period. I argue that the soap opera elicits a non-critical passive spectatorship and should therefore be regarded as a 'readerly' medium that transmits a form of pre-negotiated textual hegemony directly into the intimacy of the domestic viewing space. While acknowledging an awareness of the pivotal role played by white Afrikaans men in the safeguarding of cultural hegemony up until this historical juncture, my study diverges from the wealth of research on soap opera as a women's medium and approaches *Egoli* with an interest in the programme's construction of masculinities. An analysis of three contrasting male characters investigates *Egoli*'s formulation of a social matrix that reflects not only the programme's attitude towards gender, but also to social power, class and race. I conclude that this specific soap opera lacks the ability to produce or reflect radical change. *Egoli* merely serves to reiterate the affirmation of the hegemony of an established order of Afrikaner patriarchy on a superficial level.

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Probably the most significant intervention I want to offer is that media play a leading role in the transition of South Africa. While the media did not cause the former regime to break down or trigger the transition to democracy, they did play crucial roles in determining how, when and to what degree democratisation took shape in both the transition and the consolidation period.

(Jacobs 2003: 30)

1.1. Background and aims of the study

The inception of *Egoli: Place of Gold*,¹ as the first long running locally produced South African soap opera, coincided with a period of accelerated political and cultural transformation highlighted by the first national democratic election held on 27 April 1994. This study proceeds from the premise that the story of *Egoli* is a story about social change rooted in the many unresolved questions about an uncertain future facing all South Africans at this historical juncture. During the years of transition ubiquitous promises of ‘new-ness’ raised the question of what a ‘New’ South Africa would look like.² As opposed to the use of the term ‘post-apartheid’, which serves as a continual reminder of the country’s violent history, the term ‘New South Africa’ promised change, possibility and more importantly a complete departure from the burdens of the past. Nelson Mandela, in a statement released after voting in the 1994 election, described his personal hopes for this New South Africa (Mandela 1994);

I cherish the idea of a new South Africa where all South Africans are equal and work together to bring about security, peace and democracy in our country. I sincerely hope that the mass media will use its powerful position to ensure that democracy is installed in this country.

¹*Egoli: place of Gold* - from hereon referred to as *Egoli* - first aired on South African television on 6 April 1992 and ran for 18 years until production was stopped on 31 March 2010. For a concise introduction to the programme’s plot and central characters, see Franz Marx’s *précis* of the first 300 episodes, attached as Addendum 1.

²Chandra Frank argues that “the use of the word ‘new’ [...] becomes problematic as we need to critically question the claim that South Africa is now a completely new country and for whom” (Frank 2014).

This study investigates the possibility that *Egoli*, as a soap opera, could be read as an important vehicle that actively contributed to the cultural and political negotiations within the New South Africa and in this way belongs to the category of 'mass media' alluded to by Mandela. In Robert Bocock's view political transformation, regardless of its context, is essentially a struggle for hegemony.³ In the case of South Africa this hegemony was safeguarded up until the early 1990s solely by white men.⁴ It is from an awareness of the central position held by men in the transformation of the country that the study focuses explicitly on *Egoli*'s representational articulation of masculinities and therefore roots itself at the intersection of media and gender studies.

³ Bocock implies that hegemony, as conceived by Gramsci, occurs "when the intellectual, moral and philosophical leadership provided by the class or alliance of class fractions which is ruling successfully achieves its objective of providing the fundamental outlook of the whole society" (1986: 63). A key feature of Gramscian hegemony is that it is sustained without coercion – a highly relevant point to its application in media studies.

⁴ For Robert Morrell the hegemony of white men as a "racially exclusive fraternity" was entrenched by the fact that "white men alone had the vote until 1931, [historically] white men were predominantly employers, law-makers, decision-makers, heads-of-households, possessors of bank accounts, possessors of jobs or income-generating positions and provided with [...] compulsory schooling" (2007: 619).

⁵ The term biologicistic is used throughout the study in order to describe the tendency to locate biological features as the so-called root of social behaviour.

As a field of research, gender studies traditionally centre on the analysis of the representation of women, yet during the 1970s the scope of investigation widened to include an inquiry into various forms of racial and sexual Others. This study, accordingly, aims to reflect on the so-called 'unmarked' position of masculinity as a form of universal subject-hood – often taken for granted as the dominant and normative position, and therefore not as gendered (Hearn & Collinson 1994:99). Masculinities are defined by Stephen Whitehead and Frank Barret as a vast set of practices, behaviours and languages that exist within a specific cultural location that are commonly associated with men, defined by an opposition to what is considered to be feminine (2001: 15-16). One cannot, however, undertake a study of gender on the dualistic assumption of such rigid binary distinctions between men and women, nor on the assumption of a necessary relation between masculinities and "male bodies" (Whitehead and Barret 2001:18). Tim Carrigan, R.W. Connell and John Lee (1985:151) concur that it is impossible to approach the subject of masculinity from a perspective that is purely biologicistic and suggest that one should rather approach the subject from an awareness of the social implications of masculinities in relation to the manner in which they dialectically constitute a social network of gender power relations.⁵

Ben Carrington suggests that media representations, such as the soap opera, as opposed to being mere reflections of established

social hierarchy, serve as the “primary site for the construction and constitution of identities, collective and individual” (2000: 91). The study therefore approaches *Egoli* through a sociological-analytical lens that considers its cultural representations as catalysts with the potential to produce normative stereotypes (Hall 2013: 34). Stuart Hall characterises representation as a site for the production of meaning within a discursive process of encoding and decoding actively resulting in the constitution of intelligible social knowledge (ibid.).⁶ This awareness of the mediated nature of social reality, in which meanings become synonymous with their representations, thus alerts one to the “textual nature of reality” (Davis 2004: 44). As situated within the realm of the popular, the representational language of soap opera accordingly offers an ideal ground for an investigation of the mediated constitution of social reality. In opposition to so-called high culture, which tends to make use of signification strategies aligned with critical resistance to ideological mythologies, John Storey (2001:10) contends that forms of popular culture function in Gramscian terms as formative of a “compromise equilibrium”.⁷ Popular texts, such as the soap opera, consequently contribute towards the legitimisation of widely accepted cultural norms, including intelligible gender identities.

The scope of this study is limited to the investigation of the representation of masculinities in the characterisation and narrative of the 1994 episodes (episode 456 - 718) of *Egoli*.⁸ During its 18 years on air, *Egoli* became the first South African television programme of any genre to reach 2 000 episodes and at its zenith aired in more than 30 countries. The show’s production ended after more than 4 650 episodes on 31 March 2010 (*Egoli, Place of Gold* n.d). The long running history – spanning almost twenty years, pre- and post-1994, and its wide popularity make *Egoli* an important site within the South African media landscape. Yet despite playing a major role in the development of South African television, *Egoli*’s history is almost completely undocumented. An investigation of gender and soap opera is by no means a neglected topic within the field of media studies. The soap opera genre has proven

⁶ In *Encoding, decoding* (1999) Hall proposes an alternative structure to the traditional conception of media communication as a linear process encapsulated by the model: sender/ message/ receiver. Hall argues that this process should be approached “in terms of a structure produced and sustained through the articulation of linked but distinctive moments – production, circulation, distribution, consumption, reproduction. This would be to think of the process as a ‘complex structure in dominance’, sustained through the articulation of connected practices, each of which, however, retains its distinctiveness and has its own specific modality, its own forms and conditions of existence” (Hall 1999: 508). The production of meaning is therefore conceptualised in this study not as a linear process but as the result of an intricate cycle of negotiations.

⁷ In relation to Gramsci’s description of hegemony the term ‘compromise equilibrium’ refers to a negotiated and subsequently legitimised horizon of meaning described by Hall as “the residue of absolutely basic and commonly-agreed, consensual wisdom” (in Davis 2004: 81). Hall’s conception follows from Raymond Williams’s contention that “culture is ordinary, in every society and in every mind”, thereby proposing that “[t]he making of a society is the finding of common meanings and directions and its growth is an active debate and amendment under the pressures of experience, contact and discovery” (Williams 2014(1958): 2).

⁸ The specific bracketing of the 1994 episodes is motivated by the contextual backdrop of major historical events taking place in South Africa during this period. The first democratic election and the inauguration of the first democratic president, Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela on 10 May 1994, specifically, mark key points of reference in the large-scale reshaping of the South African cultural landscape (Wasserman & Jacobs 2003: 15). A more comprehensive account of these events, as well as their relevance to this study, follows in section 1.2.1. of this chapter.

to be a form of mass media with unprecedented popularity (Marx 2007: 1; Geraghty 1996: 88), which makes it an appropriate phenomenon for cultural research. In the South African context Magriet Pitout (1998) provided a comprehensive reception study on *Egoli*, and Viola Milton (1996) and Hannelie Marx (2007) have investigated multiple local soap operas, including *Egoli*, with a key interest in the role of soap opera in gender construction. Yet these specific examples, as well as the extent of other soap opera research available, are focused specifically on the representation of women. An interrogation of the construction and depiction of masculinity still remains largely unformulated. I argue that a comprehensive understanding of even the representation of women would remain inconclusive without a critical engagement with the manner in which the soap opera genre deals with masculinities.

My study is framed by an awareness of the way in which the specificity of the textual content of *Egoli* is constructed in relation to the mechanics of the soap opera genre and informed by the comprehensive renegotiation of cultural identities that resulted from the political transformation of South Africa. In this light the main aim and objectives of the study can be summarised in the following three points:

- To document the inception of *Egoli* in order to contribute to a broader South African media history;
- to investigate how *Egoli* positions various forms of masculinity with respect to gender power relations as a process of negotiating hegemonic masculinity. In order to do so, the study specifically focuses on the intersection of masculinities with social markers such as language, age, social class and race within a selection of episodes;
- to position *Egoli* in relation to the broader struggle for cultural hegemony, by investigating the way in which the programme transmits its mediated depiction of the social reality of the New South Africa directly into the intimacy of the viewers' living rooms.

Since a multidisciplinary approach is necessary to achieve these research aims, three primary contextual underpinnings serve to inform the study from both historical as well as theoretical perspectives. These include an overview of the historical locality of *Egoli* in relation to the broader political and cultural transformation of South Africa; a theoretical foundation for an understanding of the relationship between narrative and identity construction, and the influence of visuality in the mediation of narrative through various genre-specific apparatuses employed by the soap opera; and lastly, a brief introduction to South African gender legislation in relation to broader gender theory and specifically the concept of hegemonic masculinity.

1.2. Contextual landscape

1.2.1. The New South Africa: a 'Place of Gold'

April 27, 1994 is widely regarded as the official date of birth of what is referred to as the New South Africa (Wasserman & Jacobs 2003: 15). Yet, the widely popular recourse to the term 'new' is problematic in that it semantically suggests the notion of immediacy, a moment of clear disconnection, in which the umbilical cord to the past has been immediately severed. Herman Wasserman and Sean Jacobs (2003:15) suggest that the transformation brought about by the institutionalisation of political democracy in South Africa did give rise to the reconfiguration of cultural borders and identities, but they maintain that historically entrenched barricades of cultural separation and exclusion have not been completely dismantled.

“When history delivers something that looks like a miracle, the mind experiences a kind of electricity, the thrill of beginning, of seeing a new world” reports Lance Morrow for *Time Magazine* in May 1994 regarding the inauguration of Nelson Mandela as the first democratic president of the country (1994: 22). “But if the miracle [...] was abundantly welcome, and long overdue, it also looked dangerous. A thousand

possibilities attended the birth of the new South Africa” (Morrow 1994: 22). These possibilities brought with them immense expectations and responsibilities, as expressed by Nelson Mandela in his inaugural speech (Mandela 1994b):

Our daily deeds as ordinary South Africans must produce an actual South African reality that will reinforce humanity’s belief in justice, strengthen its confidence in the nobility of the human soul and sustain all our hopes for a glorious life for all [...] The time to build is upon us.

The inauguration of President Mandela demarcates the position of ‘ground-zero’ in New South African history. This moment of complete suspension was overshadowed by the spectres of colonialism and apartheid, yet filled with the promise of countless promises. One struggles to approach this moment without reverting to the sensationalist melodrama offered by the popular media of the time; a sense experienced by Morrow as “[j]ubilation and anxiety [flashing] around the imagination like manifestations of weather” (1994: 22). Yet the temptation of trivially romanticising the inception of the New South Africa is not the only hurdle one is faced with when investigating a moment so critically caught up in revisionism.⁹ The New South Africa seems to emerge from a moment so fixated on both past and future, a moment of utter euphoria in which the immanence of the present is largely unfathomable. Sarah Nuttall suggests that this historical deferral should be addressed through the lens of ‘entanglement’ by framing the ambivalence of temporality in relation to a utopian horizon, but with a profound awareness of the intersected nature of sites that are typically thought of as separate, such as “identities, spaces [and] histories” (Nuttall 2009: 11). This approach aids in the construction of a methodology for an analysis based on relations that exists between individuals and the social world, aiming to locate the margins of normativity and their transgressions that constitute the lives of those entangled within them (Nuttall 2009: 12).

My investigation of the *Egoli* episodes, specifically those broadcast and produced in close historical proximity to this specific moment in new South African history, accordingly aims to reflect on the programme’s

⁹ The revisionism referred to here relates to an active awareness of the enormous weight of the past as well as of the even larger capacity for future possibilities.

mediation of the entanglement of masculinities with shared histories, social power, cultural and racial identities, and class distinction. It is clear that from its beginning the creator of *Egoli*, Franz Marx was well aware of the programme's potential to contribute towards the nuanced cultural transformation experienced and lived by its audience.⁴⁰ In an article for *Die Vrye Weekblad* in 1992, Marx states (1992: n.p);

Ek hoop wel dat die reeks kan bydra tot verandering in die land. Ek probeer maar net ons samelewing weerspieël soos wat dit vandag is. Eintlik het ek net 'n storie om te vertel en my tydsgeselskap om te weerspieël.

I do hope that this series will be able to contribute to transformation in the country. I am merely trying to mirror our society as it is today. Actually I just have a story to tell and my zeitgeist to reflect.

As part of his effort to maintain a contextual relevance within the conceptualisation of the programme, Marx regularly consulted news sources to ensure that “the story is always coloured by the society we live in” (Marx in Sibling 1994:38). *Egoli*, in this manner, diverges from the soap opera genre in its intention to actively reflect a national consciousness as opposed to the insular micro-universes portrayed in the majority of American soap operas. It is interesting to note that *Egoli* as a mediated reflection of reality drew a larger viewership than its direct competitor in the same time-slot – the TV1 news bulletin – even during the uncertain political climate of 1994 (Silber 1994:38). It would be naive, however, to assume that *Egoli* effectively captures the complexity of the actual social reality that it alludes to. Despite his insistence on the programme's supposed authenticity of reflection, Marx admits to *Egoli*'s aspirational and escapist vision of the New South Africa (Marx 2013):

Dit was baie, verskriklike geweldadige oorgangsjare gewees, 'n hoogs onsekere [tyd]... ek het die storie daarby aangepas, ek het dit verromantiseer. Die verhaal [geskep] van hoe 'n nuwe Suid-Afrika behoort te lyk.

Those were extremely violent years of transition, a time of tremendous uncertainty... and I adapted and romanticised the story accordingly. Created a narrative of what a new South Africa should look like.

⁴⁰ My study relies extensively on Franz Marx as a central entry point to *Egoli*. As the creator of the programme, Marx was responsible for the programme's conception, plot development, casting and production for the full extent of its run-time. According to Marx: “I write the plot - the basic story if you like - which includes creating the characters, and I break it up into daily episodes. The dialogue for each episode, however, is written by a team of writers whom I brief (this usually takes in the region of three hours) so they know exactly what I have in mind [...] When they've written their parts, it comes back to me so I can make sure it's all 'in character.' I change a lot, yes, but I must say some of those writers have become so good at imitating me, I would have thought I'd written their stuff myself” (Marx quoted in De Waal 1993: 22).



Fig 1. *Egoli* cast 1992 - 1993. (Louw 1999: 11).

Judging from the initial cast of *Egoli* (see Figure 1) it seems evident that Marx's utopian vision of a New South Africa centered largely on a community of white, Afrikaans-speaking South Africans. Despite the programme's inclusion of the coloured Willemse family, and the introduction of the black Mashabela family in 1994, its representation of social reality is essentially a misrepresentation, portrayed through a lens that assigns universality and racial neutrality to Whiteness. My analysis of masculinities, even those that are black and coloured, therefore investigates the manner in which *Egoli* deals with the notion of Whiteness in the wake of the dismantling of the white supremacy of apartheid. Yet since Whiteness is not the subject of this study, my scope does not allow for a comprehensive investigation of this conceptual field, and its function as leitmotif of the programme will be highlighted only where necessary. *Egoli's* misrepresentation of the social reality of the New South Africa is, however, hardly unexpected, since the programme remains a fictional construction with an overtly commercial intent. I argue, however, that one cannot underestimate the role of fictional narratives in the constitution of social reality nor their constitutive effects on the subjectivity of their audience.

1.2.2. Narrative fiction and the scopic regime of the soap opera

[N]arrative proves to be a supremely appropriate means for the exploration of the self, or more precisely, the construction of selves in cultural context of time and space.

(Brockmeier & Carbaugh 2001: 15)

My study approaches *Egoli* from the supposition that narrative forms, such as the soap opera, constitute a discursive framework for the mythical relationship between social behaviours and the contexts within which they occur (Brockmeier & Harré 2001: 40).¹⁴ This follows from Jens Brockmeier and Rom Harré's insistence that narratives cannot be understood as presenting an external version of particular 'realities' floating in a pre-encoded state and should therefore be regarded not as mere modes of representation, but rather as modes of construction that actively contribute to the constitution of social 'reality', or what Roland Barthes might have labelled as myth (2001: 49, Barthes 1972: 108). Narratives are thus inherently instructional in the manner in which they subtly reproduce norms of social conduct and provide reassuring justification for a normative social matrix. In doing so the narrative encapsulates what is plausible within its given cultural context (Barthes 2001: 50). *Egoli*, in this light, functions as a repertoire of models for the integration of individual behaviour in the social 'reality' of the New South Africa, therefore serving as an instructional model for its viewers. Brockmeier and Harré suggests that it is through stories that one reads oneself as a character within the 'reality' of the world (2001: 54).

Umberto Eco (1994: 85) posits that when a reader enters a fictional world evoked by a story and imagines him/herself wondering through its internal 'reality', the reader inherently behaves in this world as if he/she is part of it and subject to its conditions. Yet the fictional world adds to the real and often transcends the world of experience. Fiction therefore seems to have the ability to extend indefinitely beyond the boundaries of the story structure. Fictional narratives, such as *Egoli*, can open their

¹⁴ This relationship is deemed mythical, with reference to Barthes proposition that "[m]ythical speech is made of a material which has already been worked on so as to make it suitable for communication: it is because all the materials of myth (whether pictorial or written) presuppose a signifying consciousness, that one can reason about them while discounting their substance" (Barthes 1972: 108).

audiences up to the hypothetical, to a range of possibilities that extend beyond the fictional into the actual and thereby crystallise perspectives that constitute real life and one's interpretation thereof and interaction therein (ibid.). It therefore becomes apparent why Brockmeier and Harré (2001: 41) define narratives as "representational fallacies". One should, however, distinguish between literary fictions and visual fictions that are encountered through a scopic regime, as is the case with the soap opera. If narrative forms inherently guide the structuring of one's knowledge about the world and oneself, then the visual narrative surely presents the viewer with a visually standardised matrix of ideals.

Before the launch of *Egoli* South African audiences had already proved themselves receptive to the serial narrative format. With the arrival of television being delayed until 1976,¹² South African audiences had the privilege of engaging with an unprecedented devotion to the development of radio entertainment, which included the serial radio drama (Marx 2013). By the time that the serial format was introduced to television, radio had already known for decades the potential of the serial narrative to keep the hearts and minds of mass audiences engaged, day after day (Louw 1999: 8). Television soap operas might share the radio drama's narratological interest in themes surrounding family and romance typically interwoven in multiple plot streams, yet the soap opera does so with a reliance on a specific set of visual aesthetic devices.

Despite the fact that Christene Gledhill (2003: 357) reminds one that the boundaries between different television genres are not fixed – there are certainly some key aspects that are definitive qualities of soap opera that are specifically relevant to *Egoli* as well as meaningful for this study. Soap opera narratives typically parallel real time, leaving the viewer with the impression that the action goes on 'inside the box' whether he/she is watching or not (Brown 1987:4). The close resemblance to everyday life is one of the central characteristics of the soap opera genre and aids to construct a sense of verisimilitude (Gledhill 2003: 360). Within the construction of its fictional world the soap opera typically employs signs

¹² The introduction of television was strongly opposed by the Nationalist government, especially Dr Albert Hertzog, who, in 1960, stated before the Senate that "[t]elevision as a destroyer of the human spirit is a bigger menace than the atom and hydrogen bombs" (Cros n.d). Bernard Cros, however speculates that much of the National Party's fear of television was brought about by an awareness that South Africa did not have the means, capital or technical capacity to produce its own programming and would therefore be reliant on international productions – that would in turn threaten the National Party's attempt to maintain a supposed homogenous nationalist consciousness (Cros n.d.).

from the cultural world of the viewer in order to enhance the 'realness' of the programme (Marx 2007: 50). Verisimilitude is therefore established through the reduplication of signs that serve dominant cultural beliefs that are generally accepted as credible, even though these signs are not necessarily based on the so-called natural order of things (Marx 2007: 50). This concept of verisimilitude is central to the functioning of the scopic regime within which the soap opera operates.

The term 'scopic regime' was first coined by French film theorist Christian Metz (1982) in order to distinguish between cinema and theatre, specifically relating to the absence of the real referent on screen.¹³ Filmic representation becomes unhinged from what is represented through the medium's construction of imaginary objects, thus detaching representation from a present stimulus, both spatially and temporally (Jay 2003: 480). In the construction of its own scopic regime, the soap opera informs viewing through the mediation of a social reality that places characters and objects in a perceptual field that can possibly be perceived as neutral, non-political and therefore innocent. Yet this perceptual field is constructed through a visual order informed by dominant protocols of seeing.

Notwithstanding the fact that the soap opera, in this light, serves to reproduce a cultural status quo, Lidia Curti points out that the soap opera format employs strategic devices that serve to erase the presence of a preferred point of view (1998: 72). Curti identifies these devices as the "horizontal, repetitive pace of the plot, the circularity of the structure, marked by the open format and the lack of closure, as well as the absence of [...] authorial markers (such as voiceover for instance)" (ibid.). The soap opera can consequently not be regarded as innocent, mindless entertainment, but rather functions within an ideological space with the potential to influence the perceptions of viewers on countless socio-political levels. This study investigates *Egoli*'s reproduction and constitution of cultural ideology in the programme's construction of masculine gender tropes as an entry point to analysing *Egoli*'s facilitation of a broader cultural hegemony.

¹³ Metz's notion of the scopic regime follows from Benjamin's description of the distinction between the presence of a stage actor and the presentation of an actor on film. For Benjamin; "The camera that presents the performance of the film actor to the public need not respect the performance as an integral whole [...] It comprises certain factors of movement which are in reality those of the camera, not to mention special camera angles, close-ups, etc. Hence, the performance of the actor is subjected to a series of optical tests" (Benjamin 1968: 228).

1.2.3. South African gender politics and hegemonic masculinity

Phenomenological theorists such as Edmund Husserl, Maurice Merleau-Ponty and George Herbert Mead have set the tone for investigating social actions to understand their potential to inform or construct social realities through a seemingly 'mundane' infiltration of language, gestures and a regiment of symbolic social signs. Judith Butler (1988, 1990, 1991) strategically adapts this approach to the investigation of gender. With reference to Simone de Beauvoir's claim that "one is not born, but rather, becomes a woman", Butler places the emphasis on the phenomenological doctrine of "constituting acts" that construct a gendered identity over time through the repetition of stylised acts as a form of social mimicry (Butler 1988: 519). If gender is formed through performative acts which are "internally discontinuous", as Butler states, the appearance of an identifying substance must then be read as a "compelling illusion", a constructed identity that the social audience and the actors themselves come to believe (Butler 1988: 520).

Connell (1987:167) points out that one of the major misconceptions in gender psychology assumes that men differ from women based on a set of innate traits shared as defining characteristics of these groups individually. This assumes that there is one set of fixed traits shared by men and one set of traits shared by women, defining individuals as members of either one group or the other. Yet Butler's phenomenology of a gendered identity demands the conception of what she refers to as a "constituted social temporality" (Butler 1988:519). As opposed to gendered practices being unitary and stable, Butler articulates them as fluid, demanding an understanding of the contextual relations that they reflect and produce. Carrigen, Connell and Lee (2004:152) agree that the social organisation of gender is a historical system constituted from the social fabric of a paradigmatic context. A theoretical attempt to organise gender on a grand scale can therefore only result in a

simplified skeletal plotting of masculinity and femininity according to gender conceptions that are impoverished and essentially stylised because of the lack of an intricate contextual understanding (Connell 1987:183). Yet, such a skeletal plotting can provide one with an indication of the inherent power structures that actually prevail between gendered identities. These identities, however, include not only the dichotomous relationship between what is perceived as masculine and what is perceived as feminine, but also more subtle power struggles that exist between a so-called idealised or normative masculinity and other diverging forms of manhood (Connell 1987:183). Within this basic skeletal plotting of gender power, femininity is regularly defined as the global subordination of woman to men, which provides an essential basis for gender differentiation. According to Connell, femininity is accordingly oriented in a manner dictated to a large extent as a reproduction of the desires and interests of men (Connell 1987:183). So-called diverging forms of womanhood are consequently measured in relation to a level of resistance or non-compliance with these universalised interests of men (ibid.). The single strongest motive of the development of feminist thinking can accordingly be regarded as the need to expose this asymmetrical distribution of power that leads to a conception of masculinity as transcending gender (Whitehead & Barret 2001: 3). As a political movement – one which Whitehead and Barret (ibid.) describe as the “single most powerful political discourse of the twentieth century”, feminism aims toward achieving what Connell describes as “gender justice” (1987).

Under the guidance of a vision of democratic human rights, contemporary South African legislation prioritises the goal of achieving a gender justice that incorporates equal and inalienable rights for all men and all woman. The Bill of Rights of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996) aims to rectify historic inequalities, steeped in institutional sexism and racism, by promoting the rights of all citizens irrespective of race, gender, age and class (Bill of Rights, Sections 9.1 to 9.4). According to *The Office on the Status of Women* (2000: 3), South African women

have been categorically and institutionally positioned as inferior to men in both the private and public sphere through a legacy of patriarchy. This entrenched legacy is not limited to one specific ethnic group, but structurally imbedded in all the diverse cultural groups that comprise the South African nation (Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality 2003: 3).

The institutionalisation of patriarchy results in an unequal standing in both formal and informal interpersonal relationships, more often than not, stripping women of decision-making power. *The Office on the Status of Women* (2000: 3) does, however, assert that significant progress has been made in the advancement of gender equality through the development of a comprehensive National Machinery composed of strategic structures such as the *Commission on Gender Equality* and *The Office on the Status on Women* itself. Yet the Gender Policy Framework (2000: 3) acknowledges that South African women are still continuously confronted with disadvantages "in government, in business, in their communities and in their homes". Through a slow economic and social evolution South African gender legislation aims to provide women with lifestyle and career opportunities unimagined by previous generations, yet Whitehead and Barret (2001: 4) propound that global changes in the evaluation of women's rights bear no trace of an active parallel change in masculinity and occurs in most cases in spite of men, as opposed to the result of male participation. This leaves women burdened by an intensification in the multiplicity of expectations of their gender role informed by this social evolution in addition to the stereotypical expectations still held by many men regarding childcare and home-making (Whitehead and Barret 2001: 4).

It is clear to see that the national South African Gender Policy Framework (2000: 6) proceeds from the premise that gender equality is a matter concerned primarily with the empowerment of women as a result of the historical advantages granted to men through past legislation and policies. This policy framework therefore completely fails to address

the gendering of masculinity and serves to perpetuate the notion of masculinity as the universally dominant subject. Masculinity in this way therefore legislatively escapes the repercussions of the policy's attempt at redress. Whitehead and Barret (2001: 3) emphasise the vital importance for men to recognise that they do have a gender, rather than to perceive gender as being about women and therefore peripheral to their lived experience.

In *Gender and Power* Connell (1987) elaborates on Gramsci's perception of hegemony as an ongoing historical process in the continuous struggle for social leadership in order to conceptualise what she refers to as 'hegemonic' masculinity – a position that is always constructed in relation to the subordination of both women and other diverging forms of masculinity. The academic conversation on masculinity primarily revolves around this concept of hegemonic masculinity (Connell 1987, 2005; Hanke 1992; Hearn and Connilson 1994; Hearn 2004; Hearn and Morrell 2012; Whitehead and Barret 2001), yet Jeff Hearn and Robert Morrell (2012: 3) argue that the popularity of the concept of hegemonic masculinity in gender studies does not necessarily signify a consensus on the conceptual value of the term.

On the one hand, the concept seeks to explain the hierarchical power structures inherent within society that place a specific group of men in a position of dominance to the detriment of women and those subordinately excluded from power. Furthermore, hegemonic masculinity refers to a set of collective embodied stylised social practices that exist at the very centre of the relational gender system according to which both masculinity and femininity are culturally defined. Hegemonic masculinity, in this light, operates as a normative model to which it is assumed almost all men aspire and from which all men gain their share of a patriarchal dividend (Hearn and Morrell 2012: 3). As a set of values or ideals aimed to legitimise patriarchy, hegemonic masculinity constructs a configuration of gender practices and functions to include and exclude subjects in a

social organisation of individuals and groups, but as Hearn and Morrell state, always in gender unequal ways (2012: 3).

Despite the popularity of the term as a replacement for the abstract essentialism of 'patriarchy', Stella Viljoen contests the uncritical acceptance of the concept of hegemony. For Viljoen 'hegemony' retains the evasive generality of 'patriarchy' and, in terms of visualised masculinity, it seldom allow one to take into account the creative, idiosyncratic ways that signifiers operate (Viljoen 2014: 269). This study, however, aims to invigorate hegemonic masculinity as a framework through its application to representation in soap opera, since this has not had much currency within this field. The 'dated' nature and supposed superficiality of the specific text in question (*Egoli*), furthermore, seems to offer fertile ground for a reading within this framework, despite its shortcomings. My analysis therefore aims to draw on the framework of hegemonic masculinity as proposed by Connell, yet avoids as far as possible a reliance on its terminology – specifically because of its evasive and abstract nature.

1.3. Methodological approach

As a historical account, my study aims to contextualise the inception of *Egoli* within its historical location that significantly overlaps with the emergence of the so-called New South Africa. In order to establish an understanding of *Egoli*'s construction of an order of masculinities, my study relies primarily on visual and content analyses specifically directed towards the representation and characterisation of three specific male characters: Dr Walt Vorster, Doug Durand and Andrew Willemse. These characters have been purposefully selected because of their explicit divergence from one another and their individual intersections with the critical categories of patriarchy, class and race. In attempt to arrive at a relational plotting of these three distinct conceptual categories, I make use of a comparative analysis structured by means of a uniform theoretical framework derived from Michel Foucault's 'critical ontology of

ourselves' (1984a). This specific framework proves beneficial due to its multi-layered interrogation of the process of subjectivisation, in relation to knowledge, power and what Foucault refers to as the 'ethic of self'.

My analyses are thus loosely structured around these three ontological questions: How is the character constituted as a subject of knowledge? How is the character constituted in relation to a gender power order? How is the character constituted by his personal motivation to perform a particular mode of being? These recurring questions are used as a lens applied to selected plot developments, scenes and dialogue segments selected from the 270 episodes of *Egoli* broadcast in 1994. These analyses therefore provide only an artificial sample of the gender order constructed in the programme, yet they allow for the testing of the application of this analytical framework to the genre of soap opera. My study furthermore aims to make use of these analyses in order to reflect on the way in which *Egoli* transmitted its mediated reality directly into the intimacy and privacy of the domestic realm of its viewers, so as to contribute to the negotiation of a broader cultural hegemony.

1.4. Overview of chapters and key sources

Chapter Two provides the theoretical foundation with which to investigate the role of the soap opera genre in the circulation and reproduction of cultural mythologies, and examines *Egoli* specifically for its potential to act as a constitutive catalyst for the renegotiation of social identities within the formation of the New South Africa. This chapter commences with a brief historical contextualisation of the relationship between *Egoli* and its broadcaster M-Net, and it subsequently relies on various official documents sourced from the Franz Marx Productions archive, Reinet Louw's book *Franz Marx's Egoli 2000* (1999), as well as a personal interview with Franz Marx himself (2013). In order to position *Egoli* within a broader sphere of television research, this chapter draws on Ien Ang's conception of the commercial mechanics of television production, by underlining this medium's difference from cinema (1996).

Ang approaches television culture through a lens that transcends the popular fixation on textual meaning to investigate the relationship between television and its viewers, which for Ang centres on the commercial function of programming. In contrast to John Fiske (1978, 1987), who describes television audiences as active ‘producers’ of their own meaning, Ang draws attention to the way in which televisual media ‘infiltrate’ the intimacy of the domestic viewing space through strategies that aim to elicit complicit spectatorship. David Gauntlett and Anette Hill’s comprehensive work *TV living* (1999) addresses various aspects of the intersection of television with everyday life and provides key insights into the synchronicity of television broadcasts with domestic affairs. In order to examine the implications of the conventional language of soap opera on the interpretation of its meaning I refer to Fiske (1987), Christene Gledhill and Vickey Ball (2013) and Franz Marx (2013), to ultimately question *Egoli*’s role within the negotiation and dissemination of a cultural hegemony.

Chapter Two also reflects on the formation of masculinities within a broader gender order. This chapter relies on Arthur Brittan (2001) Carrigen, Connell and Lee (2004) and Connell (1987, 2001, 2005) for a general theoretical introduction to the study of masculinities. In accordance with Connell’s negation of gender as a biologicistic determinate, I investigate the performance of masculinities as the reiteration of normative tropes (Connell 2001: 34). In addressing this, my investigation of the formation of discursive gender norms follows Foucault’s ‘critical ontology of ourselves’ (1984a) and therefore approaches masculinities as the subjects of knowledge, power and what Foucault refers to as the ‘ethic of self’ (Foucault 1980, 1981, 1984b, and the interview with Foucault conducted by Fernet-Betancourt et al. 1987).¹⁴ As a foundation for my understanding of the relationship between gender formation and this power-knowledge-ethic nexus, I rely primarily on Butler’s conception of gender performativity (1988, 1990). This chapter furthermore adopts Connell’s relational topology of masculinities as

¹⁴ As a result of the limited number of primary sources available by Foucault on his ‘critical ontology’, I additionally consult Hanna (2013), Hook (2010), Rozmarin (2005) and Yates and Hiles (2010). Dreyfus and Rabinow (1982) furthermore provide a valuable contextualisation of Foucault’s methodological shifts throughout his oeuvre.

methodological framework within which to relate the selected instances of masculinity in *Egoli* to a social gender matrix (Connell 2001).

In Chapter Three I firstly investigate the accumulated knowledge from which *Egoli* and its audience approached the contested subject of Afrikaner patriarchy through the representation of Dr Walt Vorster. In order to do so, this chapter relies on the genealogy of Afrikaner masculinity proposed by Kobus du Pisani in *Puritanism Transformed: Afrikaner Masculinities in the Apartheid and Post-Apartheid Period* (2001).¹⁵ The questionability of the legitimacy of Afrikaner patriarchy at the time of the emergence of the new South Africa is addressed through questions regarding the narration of memory, guilt and redemption, in line with Morrell (1998), Njabulo Ndebele (1998) and Sandra Swart (2001). This discussion is supported by a more general critique of patriarchy as presented by Butler (1990), Christene Delphy (1988) and Barbara Ehrenreich (1995). This chapter furthermore questions the programme's reproduction of patriarchal power through an investigation of the sexual division of labour, which according to Connell (in *Power, Production, Cathexis* 1987: 99) serves as a primary instrument for the legitimisation of patriarchy. In order to account for the reproduction of patriarchal power, this chapter relies on Foucault's description of panoptical control, which assumes that this form of power maintains complicity, even within the absence of a dominating force (Foucault 1995: 200). Patriarchal power is furthermore interrogated as a form of 'autocolonisation', which in its cyclical structure infiltrates the subjectivity of the patriarch himself (Dreyfus and Rabinow 1982: 186). This chapter concludes with an investigation of the way in which *Egoli* deals with the death of the patriarch, Dr Vorster, in relation to the programme's impulse towards representing the redemption of Afrikaner patriarchy.

In Chapter Four my analysis focuses on Doug Durand (played by Steve Hofmeyr) as *Egoli*'s primary depiction of underclass masculinity. This chapter investigates the stereotypical connection between the working class and instrumental embodiment, as described by Connell (1987: 43) and Tim Edwards (2006: 145). In relation to the notion of 'celebrity

¹⁵ The primacy given to the work of du Pisani over historians such as Giliomee (2003, 2012) and Cuthbertson, Grundlingh and Suttie (2003) derives from his specific position within media theory.

¹⁶ Stam *et al.* formulates the notion of 'celebrity intertextuality' from their reading of Bakhtin's notion of dialogism (1981) and Kristeva's interpretation thereof (1984).

intertextuality', as conceived by Robert Stam, Robert Burgoyne and Sandy Flitterman-Lewis (1992),⁴⁶ I interrogate the effect of Hofmeyr's self-admitted superficial media persona on the audience's encounter with Durand. Laura Mulvey's *Visual pleasure and narrative cinema* (1975) and Steve Neale's critique of it (presented in *Masculinity as spectacle*, 1983) is used in order to reflect on the erotic objectification of Durand's body. Durand is read as the epitomic soap-stud, notorious for his sexual conquests of women of wealth, which I approach through Connell's formulation of 'cathexis' (1987) and Bourdieu's notion of cultural capital (1984; 1986). This specific analytical lens allows for a reflection on the social power relationship between Durand and Vorster, and contributes towards an understanding of *Egoli's* attitude towards established Afrikaner culture.

Chapter Five aims to reconcile the notion of historically cemented categories of racial difference with the possibility of what Nuttall refers to as "new forms of imagining" through an interrogation of the representation of Andrew Willemse's racial hybridity (2009). This chapter proceeds from a discussion of Colouredness within the realm of South African historicity, as guided by Mohamed Adhikari (2004, 2006, 2008, 2009),⁴⁷ Because of the implicit centrality granted to Whiteness in *Egoli*, this chapter makes use of Homi Bhabha's 'mimicry thesis' in order to question the way in which the programme legitimises Whiteness through racial mimesis (1994). The programme's ability to facilitate a process of social transformation is furthermore interrogated through Nuttall and Michael's (2001)⁴⁸ adaptation of the notion of creolisation and the work done on the role of media in the political transformation of South Africa by Wasserman and Jacobs (2003). As central feature of this study, my analyses aim to investigate the soap opera medium as possible site for the negotiation of a New South African visual economy and social order through the representation of masculinities. It is therefore vital to examine the conventions of medium and the specific relationship it establishes with its audience.

⁴⁷ Despite the wealth of work produced on race by postcolonial critics such as Doy (2000), Enwezor (1997) and Mbembe (2002, 2004), this study's focus specifically on the racial hybridity of Willemse relies on Adhikari (2004, 2006, 2008, 2009) and Erasmus (2001).

⁴⁸ The work done by Nuttall and Michael on creolisation is highly indebted to that of Eduoard Glissant (1992), and therefore approached with an awareness of his definition and application of the term.

CHAPTER 2

SOAP OPERA AND MASCULINITIES

This chapter is premised on Hall's insistence that cultural studies must be about something, aligning its theoretical development in direct connection with lived experiences – in other words, there must be something “at stake” (Hall 1992: 262).⁴⁹ Accordingly, this chapter aims to reflect on the relationship between the formation of masculine subjectivities and their mediation through the medium of television. To achieve this aim, the televisual representation of men is discussed not with reference to mere aesthetic devices, but for their multiplicative reflection of the real cultural struggle for hegemonic masculinity. My interest in *Egoli* follows Hall's proposal that the domain of social knowledge is constructed through the media's reliance on various intersecting networks of codes, which generate the audience's understanding of the world. In this sense the media functions like a map that demarcates certain thoughts as intelligible and others as not, through a process of merging contemporary strains of thought with historical residues (Hall 1999: 513). This leads me to question how *Egoli* as a cultural map depicted the fundamental tectonic shift caused by South Africa's transition from apartheid to a democratic society. Accordingly, this chapter first and foremost interrogates the specificity of the relationship between the soap opera and its audience in order to investigate the discursive generativity of the textual construction of masculinities in *Egoli*.

⁴⁹ Hall propounds that cultural studies, despite its avoidance of formulating its own metanarrative, is not a discipline infinitely open to any scholarly activity that proclaims to “march under [this] particular banner” (1992: 262). He locates a dedicated interest in the ‘political’ aspects of culture as a shared commonality that warrants a “dialogic approach to theory” (1992: 262). For Hall the abstract and ‘sanitised’ nature of theory must be placed in conversation with the ‘dirtiness’ and often contradictory experience of lived culture in order for cultural studies to function purposefully (Hall 1992: 262-263).

2.1. *Egoli* and the soap opera genre

My investigation of the soap opera genre reveals four intersecting factors that inform the relationship between *Egoli* and its viewers. These are: the commercial function of *Egoli* as a promotional tool for its broadcaster M-Net; the intimate familiarity with which *Egoli* routinely entered the domestic viewing space; the perceived realism of the programme that promotes non-critical spectatorship through the suspension of disbelief; and the textual negotiation of a broader cultural hegemony, within the ‘reality’ of the on-screen world.

2.1.1 The love child of M-Net and Franz Marx

Despite the enormous and immediate success of *Egoli*, its history long precedes the first broadcast in 1992 (Marx 2013). In the early 1980s Marx had already proposed the idea of a locally produced Afrikaans soap opera, dealing with the social complexity of daily South African life, to the Suid-Afrikaanse Uitsaaikorporasie²⁰ (SAUK). The SAUK, however, reacted with scepticism, fearing that their audience might not be supportive of a programme that transgresses the boundaries between language and racial groups in a ‘progressive’ way. M-Net,²⁴ however, “felt it wanted to be more open and daring” (Leon Rautenbach, M-Net head of local productions quoted in Louw 1999: 8). In 1989 this young broadcaster put the development of its own news bulletin on hold and opted to redistribute funding towards a locally produced drama, and Marx’s proposal for a soap opera seemed to be the perfect fit (Louw 1999: 8).

²⁰The state-owned SAUK, known in English as the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC), was established as the only national broadcaster in response to the National Broadcasting Policy of 1936, and remained under the control of the Nationalist government throughout the period of apartheid. The SAUK was therefore widely considered as an important role player in the dissemination of apartheid discourse, up until 1991 (Teer-Tomaselli 2001: 117, 133).

²⁴Electronic Media Network, popularly known as M-Net, launched in 1985 as the first South African privately owned subscription based broadcaster, under the banner of Nasionale Pers (Naspers) (Marx 2013).



Fig 2. M-Net logo 1994 - 2000. (Louw 1999: ii).

Since its inception in 1985, M-Net strategically formulated its brand identity around its status as the only alternative and independent broadcaster in the country. In anticipation of the economic consequences of a new democratic dispensation that would inevitably lead to the development of new audience markets, M-Net established itself as an ambassador for diversity. With its multi-coloured logo, echoing the notion of a united rainbow nation, M-Net configured its identity in line with the endless range of magical possibilities posed by the New - integrated - South Africa:

Nothing is grey at M-Net. Colour is evident everywhere, even behind the scenes. M-Net colour is more than literal, more than the opposite of black and white. It extends to attitude, to dress to a rainbow of programming variety (M-Net 2007: 2).

According to Koos Bekker, CEO of Naspers: “[*Egoli*] was meant to become the focal point” of M-Net, serving as a platform for the broadcaster’s construction of a utopian mythology that imagines a prosperous and peaceful future for all races (quoted in Louw 1999: 9). *Egoli* therefore became a pivotal component of the broadcaster’s commercial success. In *Living Room Wars* Ang (1996: 22) frames the commercial function of television productions as analogous to Metz’s understanding of cinema (Metz 1982). For Ang the similarity lies in the medium’s interpellation of its viewers through the propagation of habitual consumption as a self-perpetuating strategy in order to ensure a prolonged viewership, which in turn guarantees the sustainability of the medium. *Egoli*’s supposed aim to reflect the social reality of its viewers was thus largely overshadowed by its function to create and maintain high viewer numbers.

M-Net’s rationale for specifically developing a soap opera was primarily warranted by the genre’s ability to attract mass viewership (Marx 2013). Furthermore, the conventional structure of the soap opera, which is divided into three distinct ‘acts’ interrupted by commercial breaks, translated not only into the prospect of advertising revenue,²² but also allowed the young broadcaster to advertise its own subscription programming schedule (ibid.). Marx suggests that the foundation of

²² During 1994 advertising slots were sold out well in advance at a cost of R 25 000 per 30-second slot (Marx 1994: n.p.).

²³ Although M-Net functions as a subscription-funded paid network, the South African Broadcasting Authority granted M-Net an hour per day to broadcast unencrypted free-to-air programming. This time-slot became known as *Open Time* and served the purpose of promoting the channel in order to gain more paid subscriptions. As part of the contractual arrangement with the Broadcasting Authority, M-Net was to discontinue *Open Time* once the network had reached 150 000 subscribers. *Open Time* eventually ended only in 2006, due to a ruling of the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa, who ruled in favour of its closing (M-Net: n.d.).

²⁴ This somewhat illogical argument seemingly assumes that an increase in over-all subscribed viewers could be achieved through the segmented targeting of specific programming. This argument implies an assumption that women are more susceptible to televisual strategies of persuasion than men. Despite the fact that the target audience is specifically identified as female, statistical data from 1996 point out that men did in fact form a large part of the programme's audience (Oosthuysen 1997: 3). The programme's creators therefore produced *Egoli* with the primary aim of attracting a female viewership, but with the awareness that men will also be watching.

²⁵ On an unspecified date M-Net later reframed the target demographic to "women of all nationalities from the ages of 25 [to] 45, with middle or upper income" (*Egoli*: n.d.).

Egoli's commercial intention was based on the broadcaster's assumption that domestic consumption is an activity primarily led by women. The development of *Egoli* as a device for gender-specific targeting therefore anticipated that capturing the viewing attention of women during a specific time frame of free viewership²³ would directly lead to an increase in paid subscriptions (Marx 2013).²⁴ For this promotional strategy to function effectively, the success of *Egoli* was consequently determined by its ability to provide viewing pleasure to the largest possible female audience, within the specific class-based targeted demographic – explicitly stipulated by M-Net as a "white, Afrikaans-speaking married lady, 35 - 45, middle income, between jobs while bringing up her (teenage) kids" (Van Heerden 1994).²⁵ According to executive producer, Johann van Heerden, "[a]t the time Franz Marx specified that he has to write for one specified viewer (type) and that all other viewers will be a bonus" (ibid.). In fulfilment of its commercial function, the textual content of *Egoli* therefore had to speak directly to the cultural values of its supposedly homogenous (female) audience. Despite the noted similarity in the commercial function of cinema and television, a critical analysis of this analogous relationship must acknowledge the distinct differentiation between the ritualised activity of attending the cinema as a public space providing focused viewing, in contrast to the localisation of the television within the privacy of the non-focused domestic environment.

2.1.2 *Egoli*: in the living room

But [M-Net is] never satisfied with just being a supplier of television programming. M-Net builds relationships with its viewers and is welcomed in every home as the kind of friend you would unhesitatingly introduce to anyone else in your social circle

(M-Net 2007: 2).

Ang (1996: 23) draws attention to the fact that the placement of the television in the domestic space cannot afford to disrupt everyday home life and needs to be able to seamlessly slot into a day-to-day routine. This poses the inherent challenge of

maintaining the attention of viewers through the solicitation of attention that needs to be grasped in fragmented segments (Ellis 1992: 162).²⁶ In order to achieve this goal M-Net made use of specific scheduling tactics that are sensitive to the stereotypical routine of the 'ideal viewer' so as to enter the domestic environment at specific periods, when it could do so most naturally as a form of linear addition to the domestic activities already taking place. For this purpose *Egoli* was aired at 18:00 on weekdays, a time typically associated with 'family time' or domestic relaxation. The synchronicity of domestic affairs on screen with those at home strategically translated the text into an extension of the domestic realm (Gauntlett and Hill 1999: 35).²⁷

In the light of television watching typically occurring – specifically during this time-slot – as a collective activity contained within the family audience, *Egoli* entered directly and seemingly naturally into not only the privacy of the domestic realm, but also the intimacy of the interpersonal domestic 'conversation' (Fiske 1978: 109; Mendelsohn 1966: 74).²⁸ The specific placement of the television within the domestic family environment thus had a crucial influence on the relationship between *Egoli* and its audience and the decoding of its meaning. The programme spoke directly to the lived experience of the viewer, within the private space, in contrast to the physical barrier between the fictional realm of cinema and the reality of the 'world outside' (Fiske 1978: 109).

For Ang (1996: 23) television texts manage to maintain a complicity of viewing through the arrangement through which it composes itself as an institutional eye looking out into the world on behalf of the viewer. Even though Ang's analysis focuses specifically on news productions, I maintain that her argument is helpful in understanding the specific manner in which the scopic regime of the soap opera manages to win the trust and attention of the viewer. When compared to the focused viewing of cinema,

²⁶ For televisual texts to function effectively, the domestic viewing space necessitates what Ellis refers to as a "generalised [mode of] domestic address in order to reach a diversified audience that engages with the text through unfocused 'glances' that interweave with other personal and domestic activities". For Ellis this mode of address results in the confirmation of the normality and safety of the domestic realm and thereby isolates the viewer from the "world outside" (Ellis 1992: 167).

²⁷ Based on the outcome of their qualitative study on the relationship between television and everyday life, Gauntlett and Hill argue that "it comes as no surprise to find that television is heavily integrated into peoples lives and routines. And because broadcast TV has set timetables, and so is the inflexible party in the TV-viewer relationship [...] people's everyday activities are shifted, elongated or cut short to accommodate the programmes that they want to watch" (1999: 23). These authors furthermore draw attention to a tendency of many households to coordinate their evening meals around their favourite programming. These programmes therefore become deeply assimilated into routinised family interactions (1999: 25).

²⁸ For Fiske the familial viewer engages with the televisual text "under the powerful influence of his or her domestic environment" and typically negotiates responses to the text by means of "testing" it against his/her "total cultural experience" and familial relations to his or her co-spectators (1978: 91). It is therefore arguable that the messages produced by television programming 'naturally' spill over into personal conversations.

which according to John Ellis (1992: 170) offers viewers the legitimisation of voyeurism, the soap opera in contrast provides the audience with a trusted means of encountering the world outside within the safety of their own living room.

The familiarity of the routine domestic environment allows viewers to respond to *Egoli* in ways that are intimately meaningful to themselves (Fiske 1978: 111; Gledhill and Ball 2013: 335). In order to effectively reach the viewer in this context, *Egoli* strategically responded through the construction of a representational language that pervasively intertwined with the everyday life of its audience, thereby creating a field of perceived neutrality (Gledhill and Ball 2013: 337). Hall proposes that this ability to capture ‘reality’ in visual terms and transmit it directly into the living room is the most dominant and powerful feature of television (Hall 1971: 92).

2.1.3. The ‘realness’ of *Egoli*

Louw (1999: 13) acknowledges that *Egoli*, right from its start, set out to construct a reality that “almost perfectly matches our own”. Through a strategic synchronicity with actual locations, real-time events and the incorporation of local celebrities as guest stars, *Egoli* constructed an on-screen world that overlapped significantly with that of its viewers.²⁹ Characters on the programme furthermore celebrate the same national holidays, cheer for the same sports teams and vote in the same national elections and thereby obscure the boundary that exists between the fictional world and lived experience. Through achieving this sense of perceived realism, the soap opera not only suspends the viewers’ sense of disbelief, but also ensures a viewing pleasure that arises from the predictability of events as the fulfilment of the audience’s expectations (Gledhill and Ball 2013: 339).³⁰ The enjoyment of *Egoli*, thus resides in the predictability of its stereotypical plotlines that establish a sense

²⁹ *Egoli*’s overlapping depiction of social reality is, however, undoubtedly coloured with an aspirational flair.

³⁰ The soap opera genre consists of a specific system of conventions that produces a set of expectations that the audience brings to the viewing process. For Neale these expectations are of equal importance to the textual content in the relationship between the audience and the genre. These expectations help render the programme intelligible by presupposing what is probable or likely within the particular genre (Neale 1990: 46). *Egoli*’s adherence to a specific set of genre codes, such as perceived realism, therefore contributes to the incitement of a non-critical spectatorship. It is also important to mention the South African audience’s familiarity with American soap operas such as *Dallas* (broadcast from 1978 to 1991) and *Santa Barbara* (broadcast from 1987 to 1998), which, prior to the conception of *Egoli*, had already imprinted an expectation in viewers of the particular type of narrative structures and signifying practices through which the soap opera genre communicates.

of naturalness, supported by the programme's reliance on a perceived realism (Fiske 1978: 160).

As characteristic of most soap operas (Brown 1987:4; Gledhill 2003:352), the world of *Egoli* occurs mostly indoors. The Vorster home, the Naudé home, the Malboro mansions, the headquarters of Walco International and the House of Coffees provide the backdrop for the unfolding narrative. Camera positions are clearly predetermined and remain largely consistent throughout the series. These camera angles and viewpoints deliberately frame actions with a perceived objectivity. Viewers gain a sense of familiarity with these interior spaces within only a few episodes, to the extent that the set becomes nearly as familiar as the interior of the viewer's own home, office and favourite coffee shop. The major reliance on fixed camera placement furthermore allows the viewer to become accustomed to their viewpoint into this realm, as scenes are always approached from the same angle – with utter consistency in the *mise-en-scène*. This sense of environmental predictability transforms the set into a seemingly neutral backdrop for the narrative development – adding a flavour of normality to even the most bizarre twists and turns in the plot.

Characters furthermore adopt specific routines. The Vorsters always eat breakfast on the patio, have a nightcap in the living room and make serious telephone calls in the study – behind closed doors. The Naudés tend to have either toast or cereal for breakfast, mostly still clothed in their nightgowns, sitting at the table in their humble Brixton kitchen. Nenna regularly fetches her mail from the post box, while Tim goes to the gym before heading to the office. All of these seemingly insignificant routine activities recur according to a well-defined formula, thereby affirming the viewer that character's lives are routine, just like their own. Through this focus on the ordinary and everyday life, these characters become an extension of the audience's community, enmeshed in the cultural environment of the viewer (Gledhill and Ball 2013: 368).³¹ The world of *Egoli* is therefore constructed from the world of its audience

³¹ *Egoli*'s commercial infiltration of the 'real world' was strategically extended through the programme's pioneering development of merchandise items. *Egoli* was the first South African television series to produce its own recipe book – written on-screen by a selection of characters as central to the plot development, its own perfume – a fragrance designed in England and packaged with a gold-plated container, dubbed *Essence of Gold*, as well as a fashion line produced for the on-screen boutique: *Louwna Fashions*, made available to viewers in retail outlets (Louw 2000: 19). *Egoli*, furthermore, became the first local television programme to engage with viewers in large-scale roadshow spectacles, which at its pinnacle attracted 70 000 fans to sports stadiums around the country, where fans got the opportunity to see their favourite characters live on stage (Louw 2000: 55).

on the foundation of what Hall would refer to as common sense – “the absolutely basic commonly-agreed, consensual wisdom” (Hall 1977: 325). For Hall such common sense meaning aids viewers to order the social world in simple but meaningful terms, as such meaning does not require logic, reasoning or argumentation, since it is “spontaneously available, thoroughly recognisable, widely shared.” (Hall 1977: 325). Hall, however, posits that despite the fact that such common sense meanings might appear natural and self-evident, an analysis of textual content should approach them with a critical awareness that such meanings are always contingent to a specific history (ibid.).

2.1.4. The internal hegemony of the soap opera

Popular genres not only engage with change, but become key sites for the emerging articulation of and contest over change.

(Gledhill and Ball 2013: 358).

³² Directly translated as ‘rubbish-entertainment’.

Despite the fact that the largely repetitive, predictable and superficial nature of the soap opera narrative easily leads to the assumption that the genre is, in Marx’s own terms, mere ‘stroomvermaak’,³² Gledhill and Ball propound the view that this genre is of immense relevance and cultural significance due to its routine entry into the lived experience of its audience (2013: 336). These authors posit that soap opera representations “constitute major sites for conflict and negotiation, a central goal of which is the definition of what is to be taken as ‘real’ and the struggle to name and win support for certain kinds of cultural values and identity over others” (2013: 345). It thus follows that this discursive arrangement of social knowledge actively produces particular meanings encoded into the structure of the soap opera as ‘preferred’ readings which tend to support specific economic, political and social power relations (Ang 1996: 138). Despite the fact that the genre’s reliance on a multiplicity of plot lines and a stylistic avoidance of closure opens the text to multiple readings, one must bear in mind that the soap opera – specifically – promotes the passivity of the viewer through its seamless

entry into the domestic environment and its attempt at perceived realism (Fiske 1995: 340; Ang 1996: 140). The hegemonic struggle for cultural meaning therefore interweaves with the textual fabric of the soap opera through so-called “‘soft’ strategies of persuasion, seduction, incorporation and interpellation” (Ang 1996: 140). This leads Ang (ibid.) to the assumption that “the hegemonic does not dominate from without, but from within [the text]”, through a process which Hall describes as successfully placing all opposing definitions of reality within the range of dominant ideals (Hall 1977: 333). In relation to Fiske’s distinction between producerly and writerly texts, the soap opera is clearly situated as a readerly medium, with the thinly veiled predetermined meaning requiring very little effort to consume (Fiske 1987: 95).

The inception of *Egoli* coincided with a moment described by Wasserman and Jacobs as characterised by the shifting of social configurations, the transgression of cultural borders and the renegotiation of identities (2003: 15). As a programme essentially aimed towards white South Africans, about white South Africans, my analysis aims to question the way in which *Egoli*’s textual hegemony could be said to didactically interpellate its viewers into specific modes of cultural subjectivity. Yet this study centres primarily on the representation of masculinity and should thus be approached through the lens of gender discourse.

2.2. Performing masculinities

Despite the fact that masculinity as a social construct results from the inscription of historical and cultural developments, and should therefore be conceptualised as continually open to re-interpretation, it is commonly assumed that men are quantifiable subjects possessing a variable degree of a so-called masculine essence (Carrigen, Connell & Lee 2004: 152; Brittan 2001: 51). Individuals understood to possess only a limited amount of masculinity are consequently characterised as inadequate or in terms of a sense of lack, despite the biological materiality of their

manhood (Connell 1987: 52, 66).³³ One might therefore ask: How does a male body come to be accepted as a masculine subject? And what role can be attributed to the mediated televisual performance of masculinity within the construction and affirmation of normative gender roles?

This question necessitates an approach that manages to account for the relationship between the differentiated plurality of men as real individual social subjects, and masculinity as a temporal discursive norm or linguistic structure. Connell consequently proposes the need to engage with any individual instance of masculinity as a mere node in a broader gender network, with each instance of gender regarded as a social practice that constantly refers to biological markers, as opposed to reducing gender to a social practice determined biologically (Connell 2001: 30 - 34). One can therefore infer that masculinity takes the body only as a point of departure for the formation of a gendered identity that emerges from the inscription of the discursive realm onto the body, that in turn purports itself in direct relation to the prescriptive rules of gender discourse.

2.2.1 Men as subjects of knowledge

The question regarding the transformation of a material body into a social subject forms the basis of the work of both Foucault and Butler (cf. Foucault in Fournet-Betancourt et al. 1987; Butler 1990). The scope of this study does not allow for a meticulous mapping of their extensive investigations, but rather focuses specifically on their individual methodological aversion to a deterministic essentialism in addressing the generative role and the normative function of gender discourse.

Foucault's project is fuelled by an ongoing inquiry into the formation of temporal 'realities' as they result from the inscription of history and culture through the development of systems of knowledge that ascribe positions of subjectivity to individuals (Foucault in Fournet-Betancourt

³³ Accordingly, Connell critiques the essentialist determinism that traditionally serves to bolster sociological sex-role research on the biologicistic material dichotomy between men and women, which does not succeed in formulating a framework that acknowledges the distinction between normative gender tropes and the experiences of lived gender subjectivities (Connell 1987: 52, 67). A fixation on the materiality of the sexed body results in a dilemma of signification that conflates the social meaning of gender with the so-called 'natural' attributes of the body. From a purely biologicistic perspective, the sexed body emerges as both signifier and signified, caught up in an endless displacement of its meaning onto its differentiated binary Other (Elam 2000: 171).

et al. 1987: 112).³⁴ To achieve this aim, Foucault develops an archaeological methodology that serves to analyse the human sciences as structured around the self-regulatory autonomy of discourse.³⁵ This methodology avoids essentialist preoccupation with the validity of the so-called truth claims of, and about, the knowing subject, by placing emphasis on the process through which subjectivity emerges as the product of various intersecting discourses (Dreyfus and Rabinow 1982: 29; Yates and Hiles 2010: 54).³⁶ Through a process of internal ordering and categorization, discourses formulate paradigmatic social norms that present the language from which intelligible subjectivity can be encoded, thereby enabling the formation of the self (Foucault 1972: 49). It thus follows that the gendered subject is always already the citation of the discursive knowledge that systematically 'speaks' or 'names' the subject into being, by placing the subject into demarcated fields such as masculine or feminine (Yates and Hiles 2010: 55).

Butler, in her negation of biologicistic determinism, frames the relationship between the a priori realm of discursive prescriptions and the practice of gendered subjectivity as 'performative' (Butler 1988).³⁷ For Butler "[g]ender is the repeated stylisation of the body, a set of repeated acts

³⁴ In *The order of things* (1970) Foucault presents an analytical excavation of the human sciences in order to illustrate the way in which subjectivity emerges as a knowledge-object contingent to historically constructed prescriptions. For Foucault "[t]he mode of being of life, and even that which determines the fact of life cannot exist without prescribing its form to me, are given to me [...] the mode of being of production, the weight of its determinations upon my existence, are given to me by my desire; and the mode of being of language, the whole backwash of history to which words lend their glow at the instant they are pronounced, and perhaps even in a time more imperceptible still, are given to me only along a slender chain of my speaking thought" (Foucault 1970: 343).

³⁵ Foucault's conception of archaeological analysis diverges from traditional forms of historical research that aim to reveal in longitudinal fashion certain developments that occur over a specific period of time. In contrast, archaeology adapts a cross-sectional approach in the investigation of various different occurrences that emerge during the same historical period in order to elucidate how the connections between differentiated phenomena reveal a certain temporal episteme, or what Foucault refers to as an archive. For Foucault the object of archaeological analysis "is not language but the archive, which is to say, the accumulated existence of discourses. Archaeology as I understand it, is not akin to either geology (as the analysis of substrata) or genealogy (as the description of beginnings and successions); it is the analysis of discourse in its archival form" (Foucault 1994b: 290).

³⁶ Foucault's methodology therefore proposes an alternative to the popular recourse in the latter half of the twentieth century to Structuralism and Hermeneutics as reactions to the Kantian subject/object division (Dreyfus and Rabinow 1982: xvii, xix). Kant interprets human beings simultaneously as knowing subjects and as the object of their knowledge, thereby positing the human subject as a "unique being, totally involved in

nature (his body), society (historical, economic, and political relations) and language (his mother tongue), and who at the same time finds a firm foundation for all of these involvements in his [own] meaning-giving [...] activity." (Dreyfus and Rabinow 1982: xix). In reaction to the complexity of the subject/object split, Structuralism treats humans with a scientific determinism, eliminating both the subject and meaning in favour of deciphering objective laws, therefore focusing all engagement on humans as objects of knowledge, whilst Hermeneutics in contrast, isolates the knowing subject by proposing to unearth the 'deep' and hidden meaning of the subject and his/her traditions (Dreyfus and Rabinow 1982). Foucault's methodology, despite being indebted to the distancing effect of Structuralism and the interpretive nature of Hermeneutics, critically negates the a-historicity of the former and the validity of so-called deep meanings "of which social actors are only dimly aware" of the latter (Dreyfus and Rabinow 1982: xxiii - xxiv).

³⁷ Butler's notion of gender performativity is rooted in J.L Austin's theory of speech acts, presented in *How To Do Things With Words* (1955). Austin distinguishes between constative utterances (those that describe something, such as 'it is a sunny day') and performative utterances (those statements that within their utterance perform what is being said, such as saying 'I name this ship the Queen Elizabeth') (Austin 1955: 4 - 7). Performative utterances therefore "do not 'describe' or 'report' or constate anything at all, [they] are not 'true or false'; and the uttering of [such a] sentence is, or is a part of, the doing of an action, which again would not normally be described as saying something" (ibid: 5). Butler's claim, that gender is performative accordingly suggests that the sexed body is never merely described when assigned a gender, but constituted through the language that assigns it. For Butler there is thus no gender identity preceding language (Butler 1988: 522).

³⁸ The notion that *Egoli* is limited in its portrayal of masculinities to a pre-existing 'catalogue' of masculine norms can be read in relation to Sarah Salih's understanding of gender performativity as expressed in her analogy of the wardrobe. Salih states that gender roles are formulated in a manner similar to that of composing an outfit from the limited selection of items available in one's wardrobe. Salih thereby draws attention to the fact that gender roles are predetermined by the context in which they occur in the same way that one's choice of outfits is prescribed by current fashions, weather conditions and economic context (Salih 2007: 56). This analogy proves helpful in its allusion to the notion that the appearance of specifically nuanced gender tropes within *Egoli* might provide insight into other contextual factors from which they emerge, such as broader social, cultural, economic and political conditions.

within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeals over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being”(Butler 1990: 34). For Butler the body is thus not a “mute facticity”, with the autonomy to exist outside of the a priori cultural description of gender discourse (Butler 1990: 129). Following from Nietzsche's statement that “there is no ‘being’ [...] ‘the doer’ is merely a fiction imposed on the doing – the doing itself is everything” (Nietzsche 1887: 29), Butler posits that “[t] here is no gender identity behind the expression of gender; that identity is performatively [realized] by the ‘expressions’ that are said to be its result” (Butler 1990: 25). Butler therefore suggests that gender as a generative act formulates its own fabricated psychological interiority that is regulated through the social reproduction of gender knowledge (Butler 1988: 528). In this light, gender is conceived not as the personal embodiment of a ‘predestined’ biologicistic essence, but as a paradigmatic model of falsity that serves to prescribe gender formation within a public social sphere (ibid.). Accordingly, the perceived realism with which the soap opera actor is read as a gendered character is thus a fiction that sediments and naturalises that which is in itself already a fiction. The representations of masculinities in *Egoli* therefore contributes to the social construction of gender-knowledge through its citations of a ‘catalogue’ of historically contingent gender norms that act as prescriptive models that informs the audience on the composition of ‘acceptable’ masculinity.³⁸ In doing so, the programme therefore circulates a particular language of gender-knowledge that, on the one hand, serves as a point of reference for the audience in their own stylisation of their gender performance and, on the other hand, forms an expectation for the gender performance of others.

Connell suggests that insight into what can at a specific period be thought of as normative gender stereotypes is not so much a mere description of gender as revelation of what the holders of dominant power wish it to be. Connell is therefore interested in the question of whose interests are embodied in the reproduction of normative tropes? (Connell 1987: 52). In an echoing of Hall, one might therefore continue to ask: *What is at stake* in the televisual reproduction and transformation of masculine

gender tropes? And how does the enunciation of gender discourse reflect, reproduce or possibly alter relations of social power?

2.2.2. Men as subjects of power

Foucault contends that the discursive structuring of knowledge leads not only to the constitution of social reality, but in this process inherently serves to reproduce social systems of exclusion, prescription and dominance which are essentially linked to notions of power (Foucault 1981). It is from this awareness that Foucault's project develops from its archaeological to genealogical methodology.³⁹ Where archaeological analysis is concerned with the formation of the subject through the internal ordering of knowledge, genealogy aims to critically interrogate the manner in which a system of knowledge interpellates subjects into specific networks of social power and the evolution thereof as power relations change within a given context (Yates and Hiles 2010: 56; Hook 2001: 1).⁴⁰ My genealogical interest in the construction of masculinities in *Egoli*, therefore aims to investigate the way in which the programme reproduces (and therefore normalises) a historically constructed gender order through the idealisation of certain 'acts' of masculinity that inadvertently de-legitimise opposing or divergent gender performances.⁴¹

Brittan contends that a genealogy of masculinity reveals that masculinity is historically constituted within an implicit relational position to the justification and naturalisation of patriarchal power (2001: 52). As a result, an individual experience of masculinity is primarily founded in the expectation placed upon men in relation to the performance of patriarchal power that is essentially asymmetrical to the projected powerlessness that this same discursive construction places on women (Kiesling 2001: 113).⁴² The question therefore arises of the degree to which *Egoli*'s reproduction of the social formation of masculinity reflects an affirmation of or complacency about the idealised position of patriarchal power.⁴³ Connell, however, contends that acts of masculinity are always performed

³⁹ In opposition to the cross-sectional nature of archaeology, Foucault conceives of genealogy as the analysis of descent, "grey meticulous, and patiently documentary. [Genealogy] operates on a field of entangled and confused parchments, on documents that have been scratched over and recopied many times" (Foucault 1994a: 369). In contrast to conventional historical research that aims to uncover the so-called origin of certain meanings or conventions, genealogy aims to reveal the discontinuous processes through which a particular concept is historically constructed in relation to specific temporal, social and political agendas. For Foucault "[g]enealogy does not [...] map the destiny of a people. On the contrary, to follow the complex course of descent is to maintain passing events in their proper dispersion; it is to identify the accidents, the minute deviations – or conversely, the complete reversals – the errors, the false appraisals, and the faulty calculations that gave birth to those things which continue to exist and have value for us" (Foucault 1994a: 374). ⁴⁰ Butler accordingly contends that "the body is always an embodying of possibilities both conditioned and circumscribed by historical convention" (Butler 1988: 521). As a historical situation, the body is therefore compelled to reproduce a historical situation in its performance of gender. In this light, the gendered body should be read, in Foucault's terms, as a "confused parchment [...] recopied many times" (Foucault 1994a: 369), each act of gender performativity therefore inextricably contingent to its genealogy within its given cultural context.

⁴¹ This follows from Foucault's contention that discursive power operates through the construction of margins of normativity that prescribe 'possible fields of action' that not only enable but also constrain acting, speaking and thinking through a play of prescription that designates exclusion and choice (Foucault 1980: 221; Hook 2001: 2). A gender order is accordingly established through the historically prescriptive structuring of patterns of power relations between men and women, resulting in ►

normative definitions of masculinity and femininity, which further serve to exclude various forms or performances of gender that diverge from the normative prescription (Connell 1987: 99).

⁴² The assumption that the asymmetrical distribution of gender power grants men the free choice to construct individual masculine identities is therefore revealed as a fallacy that is contradicted by the coercive effect of the power/knowledge nexus (Hearn and Morrell 2012: 4). The manner in which gender discourse is constructed and reproduced obscures the interests and denies the experience not only of women but also of many men through the power of inclusion and exclusion in relation to the patriarchal ideal (ibid.).

⁴³ One might feel compelled to question the possibility that *Egoli* might serve as a site of potential subversion and destabilisation of a patriarchal gender order, in a similar fashion to Shugart's analysis of the sitcom *Ellen*. Shugart contends, however, that *Ellen*'s ability to challenge gender norms results from the programme's conspicuous framing of the presentation of gender roles explicitly as performance (Shugart 2010: 107). In contrast to *Egoli*'s incessant appeal to realism, *Ellen* purposefully collapses the audience's suspension of disbelief in order to draw attention to the artificiality of the televisual construction of femininity that reveals this construction as a parody. For Shugart *Ellen* therefore manages to challenge normative conceptions of gender by revealing gender norms as arbitrary (2010: 108). Given *Egoli*'s appeal to realism (presented in section 2.1.2.), it thus proves highly unlikely that *Egoli* presents the potential for such subversion.

in relation to a possibly limitless series of intersecting factors informed by social descriptors extending beyond the asymmetry of gender power, such as race, social class and age (Connell 2001: 35). A reading of the nuanced representations of gender presented in *Egoli* must therefore acknowledge how they are fractured by multiple intersecting discourses that are simultaneously reproduced within the specificity of their paradigmatic location. In *Egoli* one consequently encounters a range of masculinities as a spectrum of diverging and differentiated embodiments that emerge from the notion of masculinity as universalising discourse bound to patriarchal power. In an attempt to delineate a methodology for engaging with the structuring of gender power, Connell (2001: 38) identifies the recognition of the plurality of masculinities as only the first step of mapping a gender order. The primary task, however, is concerned more with identifying the relational interaction between factors of gender differentiation rather than an acknowledgement of difference.

In this light, Connell proposes a three-fold model for reading the structure of gender that occurs in relations of power, production and cathexis, which are all inextricably interwoven into other forms of social structural organisation, such as age, class and race (Connell 2001: 26). Within a grand-scale distribution of gender power, masculinity is thus universally established in relation to the subordination of women to men, despite various localised forms of resistance. Yet the subtle working of power extends beyond the simple male-female dichotomy into various forms of male subordination to masculine power in the case of non-compliance with constructed patriarchal ideals. The generative effect of power is closely related to the notion of production that refers to the division of labour and the allocation of tasks that are related to financial systems and other forms of reward, and thereby inextricably interwoven into the notion of social class. Cathexis, as the third intersecting axis, captures the practices that give form to, and realise, sexual desire and the direct political influence of these practices on forms of social dominance (Connell 2001: 36). These three factors loosely provide the framework within which my own analysis serves to unpack several instances of masculinity as represented in *Egoli*.

Connell's analytical inquiry into masculinities aims to identify the demarcated fields of knowledge as they are constituted through social actions that implicate the structuring of gender power and make use of the normative ideal, or hegemonic masculinity, as a starting point of reference.⁴⁴ Despite the awareness of hegemonic masculinity as a dynamic shifting position resulting from cultural struggle, it serves as a temporal anchoring point for establishing a centralised proposition of normativity within any given context. Hegemonic masculinity therefore emerges from gender discourse as a position that supports the 'currently accepted' cultural ideals through the gendered embodiment of constitutive social practices that secure patriarchal power by means of excluding oppositional forms of masculinity (Hearn and Morrel 2012: 3). Contemporary Western society, South Africa (within the specific historical bracket of this study) included, typically attaches hegemonic masculine value to "white, heterosexual, able-bodied, and upper class or, at least, upper-middle class professionals commanding enviable salaries and benefits" (Rogers 1998: 289).

As an idealised construction, hegemonic masculinity provides a sense of solidarity for men in the struggle for patriarchal power through the reliance on gender discourse (French 1993: 181; Rogers 1998: 290). Yet within its language of naturalisation, patriarchal power disguises "domination [as] protection, exploitation or unfair advantage [as] provisioning, and power over others [as] leadership" (Rogers 1998: 290). Patriarchal power, furthermore, constitutes hegemonic masculinity through tactics of exclusion, giving form to the hegemonic position by means of stigmatisation of forms of oppositional gendered identities, so as to speak them into positions of subordination (Connell 2001: 39). As a result, subordinate masculinity arises as the counter-reference point of the hegemonic position through emphasis of the perceived lack of specific instances of masculinity to embody the hegemonic ideal. Homosexuality is often cited as the most explicit site of subordination to the heteronormativity of hegemonic masculinity, yet a lower ranking within the social class structure also constitutes an implicit contrast to the idealisation of patriarchal power.

⁴⁴ Despite being widely cited, Connell's concept of hegemonic masculinity has also been subjected to a series of criticisms. Collier (1998: 20) and MacInnes (1998: 58) argue that the concept of hegemonic masculinity tends to essentialise the gender performance of men by framing the fluid and often contradictory nature of men within a rigid unity that relies on a heteronormative fixation on the male-female dichotomy. Wetherell and Edley (1999: 336) furthermore contend that the concept of hegemonic masculinity leads to an inconsistency of application that on occasion refers to a fixed masculine trope and on other occasions refers to embodied gender actors. In response Connell asserts that hegemonic masculinity should not be regarded as a universal trope, but should be treated as a temporal construction that is occupied by a dominant set of masculine traits that exist in various different forms in various different locations simultaneously (Connell 2001: 38). Connell emphasises that hegemonic masculinity should therefore be regarded as a position that is always contestable as a site of continual struggle (ibid.). In relation to these criticisms and Connell's response, my application of the concept frames hegemonic masculinity as a methodological 'invention' that serves to aid in the analysis of the structure of a gender power order. Despite being a reflection of the material arrangement of gender power, my use of the term does not aim to deny the fluidity of the embodiment of masculinity, but rather serves to elucidate the specific masculine traits portrayed by *Egoli* as idealised.

Connell (2001: 40) recognises the problem of normative definitions of masculinity, or hegemonic masculinity, lies in the fact that many men do not achieve the normative or idealised standard. This gives rise to a gendered position that Connell refers to as complicit masculinity. Patriarchal power as the reward and effect of gender discourse directly results in the expectation that men have the ability to embody this power within the construction of their own gendered identities (Kiesling 2001: 112). Yet, many men gain their share of the patriarchal dividend not through an active embodiment of the hegemonic ideal, but through silent complacency. Connell (2001: 41), however, notes that the claim to patriarchal power remains largely unavailable to specific men, even through attempts of complacency, because of the specificity of the cultural construction of the idealised hegemonic position. Marginalised masculinity thus appears due to the intersection of various types of social differentiation that leads to forms of Othering. This conceptual category describes men who are marginalised based on a cross-section of gendered characteristics unavailable to them as a consequence of cultural descriptors such as social class, race and age. It becomes impossible for some men to benefit from the claim to patriarchy because of the specificity of its cultural construction (Connell 2001: 41). My analysis of several instances of representation of masculinity presented in *Egoli* accordingly aims to reflect on the way in which a gender order emerges as a result of various intersecting social factors informing individual characters. This positions them within relations of subordination, complicity or marginality in relation to patriarchy as the paradigmatically established hegemonic norm.

At first glance Connell's topology seems to suggest that certain positions within the gender order are silently imposed on individual subjects, who assume these roles by means of a process of internalisation. The pursuit of individual gendered subjectivity thus seemingly occurs as a form of reproduction of the discursive arrangement of power within the established gender order. Yet, Connell suggests that the conception of gender as mere reproduction of social structure does not account for the

reality of change – one cannot assume that history takes place “behind the back of the actors” (Connell 1987: 94). This concern raises the issue of personal agency and individual practice within the formulation of gender subjectivities. For Connell (Connell 1987: 95):

The crucial point is that practice, while presupposing structure, [...] is always responding to a situation. Practice is the transformation of that situation in a particular direction. To describe structure is to specify what is in the situation that constrains the play of practice. Since the consequence of practice transforms the situation which is the object of new practice, 'structure' specifies the way practice (over time) constrains practice.

Connell accordingly admits that human practice involves a level of agency or invention (within particular margins) that can transform that which constrains it – yet practice always already remains bound to structure within which it acts or responds and can, as a result, not float free from context (Connell 1987: 96). Connell's proposition can be read in line with Foucault's observation that any subject constitutes itself by means of selecting practices of self-formation, but “these practices are nevertheless not something invented by the subject itself – they are patterns that the subject finds in culture, they are suggested, imposed by his culture” (Foucault in Fernet-Betancourt et al. 1987: 122). For Foucault the process of subjectivisation is thus an intersectional process centred on three domains of relational constitution, which he refers to as a “critical ontology of ourselves” (Foucault 1984a). Here Foucault engages with three specific critical questions (Foucault 1984a: 318):

How are we constituted as subjects of our own knowledge? How are we constituted as subjects who exercise or submit to power relations? How are we constituted as moral subjects of our own actions? [...] This does not mean that each of these three areas is completely foreign to the others. It is well known that control over things is mediated by relations with others; and relations with others in turn always entail relations with oneself, and vice versa.

Following Foucault, one can therefore infer that the masculine subject is an intricate configuration that results from the subject's reproduction or divergence from the normative prescriptions of discursive gender knowledge. This always already positions the subject in a specific relation to gender power (whether that might be a position of complacency, subordination or marginalisation), yet the subject purposefully pieces itself together by interpreting specific value in its relation to others and itself.

2.2.3. Men as subjects of the 'ethic of self'

[T]he self is not an ontological given; rather it is constructed by the self in relation to the self and the social norms regarding what constitutes a self at a particular moment in time.

(Hanna 2013: 660)

In a course presented at the Collège de France (1981-1982), Foucault's interrogation of subjectivisation shifts from the relationship between the subject and the coercive prescriptions of discourse to practices of self-formation, or what Foucault describes as the "exercise of self upon self by which one tries to work out, to transform one's self and to attain a certain mode of being" (Fornet-Betancourt et al. 1987: 113). Foucault roots this conception of the subject in the ancient Greek notion of *askesis*, a fluid concept that describes the manner in which individuals have the ability to act on themselves, not in the form of complying with a prescriptive rule, but rather through the conscious transformation of the self motivated by an individual ontological *telos* (Hanna 2013: 660).⁴⁵ Foucault (1984b: 10) describes *askesis* as

intentional and voluntary actions by which [individuals] not only set themselves rules of conduct, but also seek to transform themselves, to change themselves in their singular being, and to make their life into an oeuvre that carries certain [...] values and meets certain [...] criteria.

Foucault argues that there is no single homogenous set of practices that constitute this 'ethic of the self'; rather, there are a wide range of practices with which an individual engages in order

⁴⁵Foucault posits that these technologies of the self "permit individuals to effect by their own means, or with the help of others, a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality" (Foucault 1997a: 225). These 'technologies' can thus be read akin to Butler's notion of the stylisation of gender performance as an "imitation that regularly produces the ideal it attempts to approximate" (Butler 1991: 28). Butler, however, contends that "[t]his style is never fully self-styled, for living styles have a history, and that history conditions and limits possibilities" (Butler 1988: 521).

to achieve a particular mode of being (Hanna 2013: 660). Foucault therefore alludes to the possibility of social resistance within the power/knowledge nexus (Rozmarin 2005: 6). As opposed to his earlier work, in which subjects are seemingly assigned a definitive role through the workings of discourse, Foucault's conception of technologies of the self suggests that subjects have the possibility of selecting and transforming their own social role (Hanna 2013: 659).

For Foucault this work of the self is, however, in no way parallel to liberation to the extent that there exists an essential human nature that must be uncovered or rescued from a number of historical, economic and social processes that function as external repressive mechanisms (Fornet-Betancourt et al. 1987: 113). Foucault's analysis of the subject introduces here a degree of freedom of the practice of self, in the way in which the subject actively chooses modes of conduct based on the assignment of meaning to various practices, despite the fact that this does not entail an "uncomplicated zone of liberation" (Hook 2010: 248). Freedom of choice within an ethical self-relationship remains available to the subject in so far as the limited margins of actions within a particular network of discourse allows (Yates and Hiles 2010: 61).

It therefore follows that the process of gendered subject formation does not merely result in a blind reduplication of discursive gender knowledge which positions the subject in a power relation with an established gender order, but that the self critically attaches meaning to the performance of a gendered self within a power network, thereby selecting practices by means of attaching ethical value to these practices within the temporality of their appearance. My analyses therefore aim to identify specific character nuances that serve to illustrate how *Egoli* informs the representation of masculinity by imagining a practice of self-stylisation that formulate a given character's 'ethic of self'.

One could furthermore argue that this practice of the self leads to the accumulation of what Pierre Bourdieu refers to as habitus, a term which he defines as (Bourdieu 1977: 95):

A system of lasting, transposable dispositions which, integrating past experiences, functions at every moment as a matrix of perceptions, appreciations and actions, and makes possible the achievement of infinitely diversified tasks, thanks to analogical transfers of schemes permitting the solution of similarly shaped problems.

For Bourdieu, habitus manifests as a set of “internalised dispositions” acquired through socialisation and experience (Swatz 2002: 63). The gendered subject therefore acquires habitus as an “active residue” of his/her accumulated experiences that produce his/her ethic of self and gendered bodily comportment (ibid.). In relation to gender formation, the embodiment of habitus is concerned with the process through which the individual subject gives form to itself through the active identification or affiliation with a particular type of gendered subjectivity, which implicitly reflects on a concern with and responsibility for the inter-subjective relationships with others (Hanna 2013: 663 - 664). This conception of the individual renders the gendered subject in an open and dynamic relationship with power – “shaped but not structured, shaped but not determined by social, historical and discursive conditions” (Rozmarin 2005: 5).

The notion of habitus is significant in this study because of the discontinuity of gender discourse within the particular historical time frame of this investigation. Framed by the dramatic shift in the South African conception of ideal and normative masculinity, during the transition from apartheid rule to a free and democratic society, individual social actors were placed in a position where the decision arose whether to maintain one’s conception of self in relation to an established but severely challenged gender order, or to align one’s self with the emergence of an uncertain new form of hegemonic masculinity. Within this specific paradigmatic location, the represented embodiment

of habitus, as articulated by *Egoli*'s men, is therefore steered by the assignment of morality to the nuanced conduct of individual characters. Following Foucault's 'critical ontology', the following chapters present three distinct character analyses that focus on to the articulation of masculinity in relation to knowledge, power and the 'ethic of self'. I firstly question how *Egoli* formulates certain male characters in relation to the a priori social knowledge of the audience, and how this formulation serves generative towards gender tropes. Secondly, I interrogate the way in which *Egoli* positions these masculinities in relation to a genderpower order. And thirdly, I question how *Egoli* imagines these characters' self-stylisation as reflective of an 'ethic of self'. My repetition of these analytical questions posed about three contrasting characters aims to uncover how *Egoli*'s construction of masculinity informs the negotiation of a broader cultural hegemony in the New South Africa.

CHAPTER 3

AFRIKANER PATRIARCHY IN THE CASE OF DR WALT VORSTER

⁴⁶ Connell makes use of the phrase “sexual division of labour” to describe “a historical process in which categories of [gendered] work and [gendered] workers are formed” that prescribe normative gender roles within the mode of production (Connell 1987: 101). For Connell this “allocation of particular types of work to particular categories of people [...] is a social structure to the extent that this allocation becomes a constraint on further practice” (1987: 99).

SONET: That’s the way, now you’re learning. Mention daddy’s name at every opportunity, the magic wand that heals all ills.

[*Egoli*, Episode 594: Prologue]

It is clear from the above-mentioned comment by the daughter of Dr Walt Vorster that his character, even just in his name, is vested with immense influence and power within the social order of *Egoli*. At the age of 64 the well-known and respected opera singer, Gé Korsten, left the stage to take up the role of patriarchal tycoon Dr Walt Vorster – a role which magazine *New Ideas* (1992:12) described as the “big bad and nasty J.R. Ewing” of South African soap opera. Vorster in many ways signifies the epitome of Afrikaner patriarchy – the protective yet domineering husband, the devoted yet authoritarian father, and the very image of corporate success as the Managing Director of Walco International, a position that he inherited from his own father, and subsequently passed down to his eldest son André in 1993. Commencing with a critical theoretical overview of Afrikaner patriarchy, this chapter investigates themes of memory, residual guilt, the sexual division of labour,⁴⁶ corporate power and fatherhood in relation to various purposefully selected scenes indicative of Vorster’s status as an Afrikaner patriarch. Vorster completely

inhabits the 'textbook' definition of patriarchy, described by Ehrenreich as "the rule of the father, including the rule of older men over younger men and fathers over daughters, as well as husbands over wives" (1995: 284). To his many friends in high places, three ex-wives, five children and countless employees, Vorster is known as a strict but honest man with firm family values despite his background of bad marriages. As a patriarchal figure – a cultural construction which du Pisani contextualises as deeply entrenched in the societal organisation of Afrikaner identity – Vorster represents not only the head of the Vorster family, but also a bastion of respect and control that overarches the entire social sphere represented in the programme (Du Pisani 2001: 163).

One might thus easily be inclined to approach Vorster with an oversimplified attitude that reduces the complexity of this specific instance of gender performance to a non-critical reading, resting on an assumption of a simple asymmetrical distribution of power between men and women. Whitehead, however, critiques patriarchy as a conceptual category for its tendency to typically approach the domination of men over women as a fixed universal state, thereby disregarding the fluidity, complexity and dynamism of power relations within a gender order (2002: 87). Butler concurs that this universalising conception of patriarchy threatens to limit one's understanding of the distinct and nuanced articulations of gender power in relation to the specificity of the paradigmatic contexts in which it occurs (Butler 1990: 45). Based on an awareness of these criticisms, this chapter aligns its understanding of patriarchy with the definition offered by Delphy as the subordination of women and men to patriarchal power, "here and now", thereby acknowledging the pitfalls of considering patriarchy as an a-historical concept and stressing that one must contextualise the existence of patriarchy "at each and every moment by the context of the prevailing time" (Delphy 1988: 260).

In an article in the *Sunday Times* on 27 November 1994 esteemed author Athol Fugard describes South Africa as "one of the last bastions of chauvinism", urging that "[e]very white and black man in this country should be locked up in a room with five women for a few weeks" (in

⁴⁷ Bozzoli adds that “[a] cultural catalogue of [South African] chauvinism would not be hard to compile”, and makes use of the term “patchwork patriarchies” in order to describe the variety of forms and locations of different patriarchal regimes that emerge from the history of South African gender formation, including what she refers to as “Afrikaner patriarchy”, the “English-speaking variety” and so-called “tribal patriarchy” [sic.] (Bozzoli 1983: 140). The scope of this study, however, does not allow for an in-depth investigation of the constitution and reproduction of all three of these unique regimes, but rather focuses on the representation of Afrikaner patriarchy because of its relevance to *Egoli* and its encoding of Vorster.

⁴⁸ For du Pisani (2001: 157) the hegemony of Afrikaner patriarchy is intrinsically bound to Afrikaner nationalism, entangled with the political and social power of Afrikaans-speaking men, leading to a conception of Afrikaans power and wealth as dominant determinants of social practices and gender formation (Ndebele 1998: 24).

⁴⁹ This transformation of localised Afrikaner patriarchy, however, cannot be considered as isolated from the reach of accelerated globalisation, characteristic of the specific period in question. Ehrenreich proposes that various global shifts towards the end of the twentieth century led to an apparent widespread decentring of patriarchy, rooted in the alleged decline of the legitimacy of its ideological necessity (Ehrenreich 1995: 288). In *The Decline of Patriarchy* (1995), Ehrenreich identifies a supposed diminishing of the sense that women need the protection of men – thereby relieving men of their power to provide stability and protection. Furthermore, consumer culture embraced men in newfound ways, emphasising that men allegedly no longer need the subordination of women to express their own social status (ibid.). These temporal shifts in the understanding of meaning and attributes of patriarchal power reveal that systems of inclusion/exclusion involved in the establishing of a hegemonic notion ▶

Morrell 2001: 3). Fugard’s inclusive criticism that specifically speaks to all white and black men hints at the complexity of unpacking the question of patriarchy in South Africa of the 1990s.⁴⁷ Morrell (1998), however, specifically emphasises the authority and domination of Afrikaner patriarchy as a form of masculinity that maintained a hegemonic status within the South African gender order throughout the vast majority of the twentieth century.⁴⁸

The destabilisation of white supremacy towards the end of apartheid therefore raises a critical question: how does Afrikaner patriarchy as a form of hegemonic masculinity adapt and respond to the decentering and redistribution of social power? In this light this chapter echoes a question raised by Swart: does the Afrikaner patriarch, caught up in the struggle to retain hegemony, adapt and re-invent itself, or re-entrench itself in order to legitimate the previous form of hegemony? (Swart 2001: 87).⁴⁹ By giving fictional form to the discourse of patriarchy, however, its ideological underpinnings undergo a modification from the level of representation to that of figuration (Storey 2012: 79).⁵⁰ An investigation of the way in which *Egoli* mediates a paradigmatic portrayal of Afrikaner patriarchy therefore raises a second question, namely whether the programme serves to challenge or affirm a populist understanding of this gender trope within the intimacy of the viewers’ living room?

3.1. The well-known Afrikaner patriarch

Even before his appearance as Walt Vorster, Gé Korsten was a household name to many South Africans, because of his “shockingly good looks and buckets of charisma [...] he became the ultimate heart-throb for hundreds of thousands of mainly Afrikaans woman, who travelled vast distances to hear and, more importantly, look at him” (Ge Korsten n.d). Korsten’s musical oeuvre was diverse in nature and ranged from popular hits (through which he reached a mass audience), to opera (which subsequently grew in popularity as a result of his celebrity status in the Afrikaans pop genre). “People who would normally have run a mile at

the mere mention of the word began flocking to opera houses to hear their idol” (Ge Korsten n.d).⁵¹ Korsten’s first appearance as Vorster was therefore by no means the introduction of an unknown persona. Already known and established as a relatable star from so-called highbrow culture, with his celebrity status extending back several decades, Korsten was known and revered by the audience for his cultural importance (Viljoen 1984: n.p.).

Similarly, the fictitious character Vorster also made his debut on screen to an audience already in some way familiar with the character trope. As a fictional construction, Vorster relies to a large extent on the widespread knowledge with which the audience approaches the subject of archetypal Afrikaner patriarchy at this specific historical juncture.⁵² The representation of a conceptual field such as patriarchy, however, is caught up in a cyclical knowledge exchange, which not only draws on the historical knowledge of the field that is available, but also through the act of representation serves to imagine possible new and transformative knowledge through which the field can be extended. One can therefore assume that Vorster’s on-screen presence has a wider cultural resonance beyond what the audience sees on screen. He frequently appears passive, silent or even absent, yet his patriarchal position is often performed not by the character himself, but in the generative effects of his patriarchal rule over almost all other characters in the programme, extended by the audience’s knowledge of the meaning and value of this position. Cultural myths regarding patriarchy and power consequently serve to scaffold the construction of Vorster even in moments of apparent passivity.

The centrality of the patriarchal figure is by no means a unique conception in *Egoli*. The soap opera genre in its American variation also typically makes use of patriarchy as a central point of reference for the development of inter-character relationships, yet the patriarchal portrayal of Vorster proves to be of unique significance, specifically relating to the political transformation of South Africa towards the end of apartheid

of universality are not fixed, but continuously the stake of a cultural struggle, open to renegotiation and re-definition (Žižek 2000: 102).

⁵⁰ For Machery “figuration is something rather more than representation, since it is a question of devising, or at least collecting, the visible signs in which [meaning] can be read: the reading of [...] signs will give a certain representation of the [meaning], but it is necessary first to discover the sign” (2006: 320). The articulation of Afrikaner patriarchy, through the representation of Vorster therefore serves to contribute to the production of a visual codification of patriarchy.

⁵¹ As one of the founding members of the Pretoria Opera Group, Korsten is thus regarded as a pivotal role player in the development of opera as an art form in South Africa (Viljoen 1984: n.p.). Interestingly, *Liefeling*, one of Korsten’s most popular love songs, featuring “lush string arrangements [that] sweep and swoop as [Korsten] builds each refrain towards the powerful chorus”, became a popular pre-game sing-along-song on *Loftus Versfeld*, the home ground of the Bulls rugby team at the turn of the century, thereby claiming this sentimental love song as a cultural token of machismo and masculine camaraderie (Samson 2011).

⁵² This follows from Brink’s insistence that it is impossible to “disentangle the personal from the public, the story from history” (Brink 1998: 30). Yet for Brink the inventiveness of fiction surpasses that which is considered to be reality within a specific context, constituting the real, not merely as the material for representation, but as the effect of fictitious imagination (ibid.).

on the eve of the country's entry into a democratic dispensation. As the literal face of apartheid and therefore also injustice and deceit, the white Afrikaner patriarch acts as a locus of guilt, disillusionment and national betrayal. For Cloete (1992: 42) the Afrikaner, even just in name, "symbolises for the majority of South Africans, a sinister signifier of oppression" during this specific period.⁵³

The dismantling of apartheid revealed in many ways the falsity of the assumed homogeneity of Afrikaners as a cultural group, leading to a "crisis of identity" experienced by many Afrikaners (Swart 2001: 75). "The ordinary Afrikaner family lost the illusion of the heroism of the group [and had] to find its moral identity within a national community in which it is freed from the burden of being special" (Ndebele 1998: 24). As central to the societal arrangement of Afrikanerdom, the negotiation of patriarchy within a post-apartheid milieu accordingly serves as a vital component of dealing with this crisis of Afrikaner identity. The characterisation of Vorster must thus be read specifically in the light of the temporal developments occurring within the cultural myth of patriarchy – as this system of knowledge is re-membered, re-assessed and re-written during this period of transformation.

The topic of knowledge should also be read in this specific context as a contested subject because of the reassessment of far-reaching political discourses that had served as the foundation of South African cultural and societal arrangements up until the late 1980s. Under apartheid "the state [...] compelled those who were able to see what was happening not to admit the testimony of their own eyes" (Ndebele 1998: 20). With the critical re-evaluation of apartheid, many Afrikaner citizens claimed innocence based on their entanglement with the particular discourse of apartheid that served to legitimise asymmetrical knowledge-claims regarding human rights and cultural segregation. This opened up various arguments with regard to the powerlessness and consequently implied innocence of subjects submerged within the 'non-innocence' of discursive knowledge. Sanders argues that the dismantling of apartheid

⁵³ The ambivalent sentiments directed towards the notion of Afrikaner patriarchy are furthermore spurred by the specific naming of Vorster, who shares his name with President John Vorster, one of the primary patriarchal villains in the narrative of apartheid and the individual held responsible for the imprisonment of Nelson Mandela.

necessitated raising this question of complicity in relation not only to collaboration, but also to accommodation as a problem that needs to be explored without merely excusing or accusing different parties involved (in Nuttall 2009: 6). The country's entry into democracy accordingly lifted the censorship of the articulation of experience and brought about a "movement from repression to expression" – experience now forming "the essential conditions for the emergence of a new national consciousness"(Ndebele 1998: 20). The discovery of a skeleton beneath the foundations of the old swimming pool at the Vorster house can thus be read in a critical relation to this notion of repression and expression, of knowledge, memory and guilt.

In the episode broadcast on 18 March 1994, in the critical approach of the first general democratic election to be held in South Africa, the proverbial skeleton literally emerged from the Vorster closet. This discovery occurred during renovations done to the poolside entertainment area, when the side of the swimming pool accidentally collapsed, despite Vorster's insistent instructions that the old pool should not be tampered with. The shocked construction team removed the skeleton wrapped in sheets and brought it into the Vorster house for further inspection. The entire family, shocked and amused by the bizarre finding, immediately huddled around the unknown corpse, until Vorster urgently ordered everyone to leave the room until the police could come to remove the body. From the start of these events André and Sonet, Vorster's son and daughter, immediately start treating their father with suspicion as a result of Vorster's behaviour, which hints at prior knowledge of this matter. As seen in Figure 3, Vorster is portrayed after this discovery in the foreground as central to the plot development, faced with the accusing stares of his children. Vorster's pensive isolation furthermore frames him in the final shot of this scene as peering left out of the picture frame, alluding to his looking back in time and the notion of recollection and memory. This incident momentarily serves to suspend the hegemony of his patriarchal rule, as his family as well as the audience is led to question his moral character.



Fig 3. After the discovery of the skeleton. (*Egoli*, Episode 510, Scene 3.2).

⁵⁴ The historical moment of the murder has significant value, as 1961 also marks the year in which South Africa gained full independence as the Republic of South Africa; it also marks the year in which the National Party won national elections and re-elected Hendrik Verwoerd as the prime minister, as well as the year in which the African National Congress launched their first form of armed struggle against the oppression of the National Party through the formation of its armed wing, *Umkhonto we Sizwe*. In historical terms this year marks not only the threshold of an intensification and entrenchment of apartheid and its militarisation, but can also be viewed as the beginning of the end of the Afrikaner apartheid regime. Interestingly Nadine Gordimer's 1974 novel *The Conservationist* also makes use of the image of a dead body from the past emerging in the present, with much the same implication as this specific plot development in *Egoli*.

As the plot develops and the mystery surrounding the unknown skeleton starts to unravel, viewers learn that the body is that of Gert du Toit, the ex-fiancé of Vorster's older sister Monica, who was accidentally killed in a fight with the arch-patriarch Dewald Vorster (Vorster's father) and buried there in 1961.⁵⁴ The unfolding of the mystery occurs in a narratological game of knowledge and revelation played off against assumption and omission. Throughout this plotline Vorster is positioned, in relation to his family and the audience, as a gatekeeper of truth, an ominous truth that Vorster wants to protect his children from:

SONET: Daddy, I want to know the truth!

VORSTER: ...That's why I went there, to discover the truth!

SONET: About? ... The truth, about?

VORSTER: The less you know about this, the better ... believe me.

SONET: Why, what is going on?

VORSTER: I don't know.

SONET: But you have a pretty good idea, don't you?

VORSTER: Yes.

SONET: Then tell me!

VORSTER: If what I suspect is true ... it's too ghastly ... it will be the end of this family.

[*Egoli*, Episode 533, Scene 3.2]

This specific plotline underlines the complicity implied by having access to knowledge of crime. This serves as a clear reflection of the reassessment of a broader understanding of patriarchal power during this particular period of political transformation. As the authoritative spokesperson of an older Afrikaner generation, Vorster is made responsible for the hidden truths of the past, and to facing the consequences of his own implicit entanglement with guilt and shame, yet he remains powerless to undo the wrongs of the past. In episode 544 the truth is finally revealed when Vorster emerges from the shadows of the patio, interrupting the family whilst they speculate, leading to a scene of soap opera melodrama in its most captivating form (see Figure 4):

VORSTER: Jy het nie geweet wat gebeur het na jy hier weg is daardie
(To Monica) aand nie...niemand het nie. Dit is tyd vir die waarheid.
[You did not know what happened here after you left that
night... no one did. It is time for the truth.]

SONET: Daddy don't! Please! I don't want to know!

VORSTER: I thought I could keep it from you, but it has gone too far.

SONET: No! I'm sorry! [...] Let's just forget that this whole thing
ever...

VORSTER: You will never forget. But I hope one day you will be able
to forgive.

SONET: No! Please stop! I don't want to hear this! Please!

ANDRÉ: Wat gaan hier aan?
[What is going on here?]

SONET: Please tell him to stop!
(To André)

VORSTER: Ek was daardie aand hier Monica, ek het alles gehoor. Ek kon
nie help nie, ek was net hier buite.
[I was here that evening, Monica, I heard everything. I
could not help it, I was just here outside.]

MONIKA: Jy't geweet?
(To Vorster) [You knew?]

VORSTER: Na jy hier weg is... is Gert na Pa toe, in die studeerkamer.
Ek het hulle hoor baklei.
[After you had left, Gert went to Dad, in the study. I heard
them fighting.]

ANDRÉ: Oor Monica?
[Over Monica?]

MONIKA:
(To Vorster) Jy het al die jare geweet? Hoekom het jy niks gesê nie?
[You knew all these years? Why didn't you say anything?]

VORSTER:
(To Monica) Ek wou jou die vernedering spaar.
[I wanted to save you the embarrassment.]

ANDRÉ: En toe?
[And then?]

VORSTER:
(To Monica) Toe begin dinge handgemeen raak. Ek wou keer, maar...Pa het my uitgeskop, en gesê dit het niks met my te doen nie. Ek is hier weg opsoek na jou, maar...toe ek die aand later hier terug kom... toe...
[Then things got physical. I wanted to help, but...Dad threw me out, and said it had nothing to do with me. I left here to go and look for you, but...when I returned later that evening...then...]

SONET: You killed him...You didn't mean to...but you killed him?

LOUWNA: Sonet!

SONET: To protect Monica?

VORSTER: No...No Sonet... I did not kill him...When I came back Grandpa was in the study, with Joseph the butler. The study was in a mess, there was blood on the carpet, and Grandpa had a large cut above his eye, I thought it was his blood.

MONIKA: En Gert?
[And Gert?]

VORSTER: Weg...
[Gone...]

ANDRÉ: Dan was dit Oupa?
[So it was Grandpa?]

VORSTER: Ja...
[Yes...]

MONIKA: Al hierdie jare van wag...waarom het jy nooit iets gesê nie?
[All these years of waiting...why didn't you say anything?]

VORSTER: Ek het nie besef nie, Monica.
I did not realise, Monica.

SONET: Until the skeleton was found?

[Egoli, Episode 544, Scene 3.2]



Fig 4. Vorster's confession. (*Egoli*, Episode 544, Scene 3.1 - 3.2).

Despite the fact that Walt is exonerated from any form of guilt regarding the suspicious murder, this narrative turn of events leaves his character marked by the residual effect of the 'sins of his father'. In the absence of his deceased father, the onus seems to rest on Vorster to reconcile his family with the hidden truths of the past.⁵⁵ Despite this burden of responsibility, Vorster is portrayed with a sense of moral clarity and dignity, in contrast to the demonization of his murderous father, thereby restoring the hegemony of his position as idealised patriarch, after the temporal suspension of his ennobled authority.⁵⁶ In this light, one might be led to question whether this specific moment might be indicative of a broader desire for the redemption of patriarchy. Might this resolution reveal a longing for a restoration of the familiarity of the patriarchal status quo as buttress in the formation of a stable Afrikaner identity? In relation to the Foucauldian power-knowledge nexus it proves essentially ineffective to isolate the constitution of Voster as a subject of knowledge without a thorough investigation of the constitutive effect of power on the patriarchal subject. It is therefore vital to investigate the characterisation and representation of Vorster as the hegemonic masculine ideal in relation to *Egoli's* formulation of a broader gender power network.

⁵⁵ This moment of over dramatised confession can be read in line with what Miki Flockemann describes as a "rediscovery of subjective experience" and a "renewed validation of the personal and private sphere" in South African televisual media of this particular period. Flockemann identifies this sharing of personal experiences (culminating in the public testimonies before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission) as the ideological formulation of a perceived shared narrative of a unified South Africa. Flockemann, however, criticises such narratives for their tendency to oversimplify the reality of social relationships, specifically by means of this focal shift towards subjective 'reporting' (Flockemann 2000: 144). Vorster's exposé therefore pacifies a sense of national history by drawing attention towards the singularity of his individual experience.

⁵⁶ Vorster is seemingly absolved even of his complicity in withholding the truth, as this plot-line – in true nature of the soap opera genre – dissolves into new developments and is never spoken of again.

3.2. Reproducing patriarchal power

For Foucault the power and privilege of speech results from the generative effect of a network of intersecting sets of discursive knowledge (1982: 53). For Vorster as the archetypal patriarch, this power is established through the overlapping of various identifying characteristics such as being a white, Afrikaans father figure, holding the position as the corporate head of a large multinational corporation, the wealth and social status accrued through this position as well as his postgraduate education that obliges other characters to address him as Doctor Vorster. Yet Hubert Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow contend that in line with Foucault's conception of power, "[it] is not a commodity, a position, a prize, or a plot, it is the operation of [...] political technologies through the social body [...] not a thing or the control of a set of institutions, or hidden in the rationality to history" (1982: 185). Power is therefore not won through various achievements such as wealth and education, but rather projected onto the social body through political rituals that bind social actors in non-egalitarian relationships (ibid.).

With regard to the constitution of Vorster in relation to power, the question thus remains as to what these political technologies or rituals are that position Vorster within the knowledge-power nexus? And which of these are given primacy in the representational language of *Egoli*? One must remain aware, however, that these technologies do not belong to Vorster like the hammer belongs to Thor. These technologies or practices are historically entrenched and produce Vorster as the subject of power – practices which he legitimates through maintaining the hegemonic consent of those unequally positioned at the receiving end of power. Dreyfus and Rabinow posit that in order to understand power in its day-to-day materiality, one must critically examine the "micro practices [as the] political technologies in which our practices are formed" (1982: 185). My interest is therefore not focused on larger movements of legal forms of power, but rather in the subtlety of power relations as they emerge from such micro practices represented within the narratological development.



Fig 5. Vorster and Louwna in an argument about her career ambitions. (*Egoli*, Episode 648, Scene 1.1).

Vorster's marital relationship with his current and third wife, Louwna Roelofse, serves as a primary vehicle for the culmination of the negotiation of a gender-power order. The depiction of this specific relationship portrays Louwna as utterly underwhelmed by the rags-to-riches existence that resulted from her marriage to Vorster. As the novelty of this leisurely lifestyle wears off, Louwna starts longing for fame and stardom. As an ex-actress, she wants to get back onto the stage, yet Vorster remains adamant that the role of a mother is located in the home with her children and he goes so far as to legitimise this claim through a clause in their marriage contract that prohibits Louwna from realising her ambitions of an acting career. These specific diverging viewpoints on motherhood, career ambition and social convention led to various argumentative deadlocks, as portrayed in Figure 5.

Through visual strategies such as specific costume, body language and position in the frame, arguments between Louwna and Vorster typically portray the two characters in visual contrast to one another. As seen in Figure 5, Vorster is dressed in a formal dress-suit, while his bodily posture is presented as closed, solid and static, always positioned higher in the frame. Louwna, on the other hand, is presented in a floral nightgown, presenting dramatic arm movements and constantly looking upward towards Vorster. The two rarely face one another straight on, and are often portrayed as looking in opposite directions so as to emphasise their inability to arrive at a mutual agreement. These visual strategies clearly emphasise the rationality, self-control and power of the patriarch

in contrast to the erratic, emotional and 'disobedient' female subject. This gender power relation is thus clearly framed as asymmetrical. Vorster's corporate success and wealth place him at a vantage point from which Louwna's own career ambitions appear nothing more than frivolous and characterise her adamant behaviour as naive and infantile. This dismissal of female ambition occurs through the allusion to a mythical margin that separates his rationality from her perceived 'madness' as the exertion of power through exclusion and prohibition. Vorster's rational self-control therefore dialectically overrules Louwna's emotional state, presenting her request as the result of an aberrant social condition, whereas his decisive decision-making is framed by a so-called ethical 'truth' substantiated by a legally binding contract.

VORSTER: Wat wil jy hê?
[What do you want?]

LOUWNA: Ek wil terug verhoog toe, Walt.
[I want to return to the stage, Walt.]

VORSTER: Het jy vergeet wat in ons huwelikskontrak staan?
[Have you forgotten the terms of our marriage contract?]

LOUWNA: Nee, ek het nie, ek mag geen verhoogwerk doen nie.
[No I have not, I may not do any stage work]

VORSTER: Maar jy wil nog steeds voortgaan daarmee?
[But you still want to continue with it?]

LOUWNA: Ek is bereid om die kans te waag.
[I am prepared to take that risk.]

[*Egoli*, Episode 461, Scene 3.1]

The semantics of this dialogue clearly establishes Louwna as dependent on the goodwill of the patriarch. Her specific reference to the element of "risk" furthermore elucidates the notion of dependence and the potential retribution that may result from subverting patriarchal power. This notion of female subservience is continually affirmed through the act of requesting permission:

LOUWNA: Ek wil terug verhoog toe Walt, en jy moet dit vir my toelaat, ek weet hoe jy daarvoor voel, maar ek kan nie anders nie.
 [I want to return to the stage Walt, and you have to allow me. I know how you feel about this, but I just can't not do this.]

VORSTER: Ek wil nie weer hieroor praat nie.
 [I do not want to speak about this again.]

LOUWNA: Dit kan werk, jy sal sien. Baie aktrises is getroud.
 [It can work, you will see. A lot of actresses are married.]

VORSTER: Nie met my nie!
 [Not to me!]

LOUWNA: Niks hoef te verander nie.
 [Nothing has to change.]

VORSTER: Jy het 'n kontrak geteken... Dit is jou keuse. Jy is of Mevrou Walt Vorster, of 'n aktrise, maar die twee gaan nie hand aan hand nie.
 [You signed a contract... It is your choice, you are either Mrs Walt Vorster, or you are an actress, but the two do not go hand in hand.]

[Egoli, Episode 464, Scene 1.6]

This specific argument serves as a moment of crucial stalemate in which Louwna's will to power and personal liberation meets the immovable boundary of patriarchal tolerance in accordance with the subtle workings of discursive prohibition. Vorster's ultimatum furthermore serves to secure patriarchy as the hegemonically accepted ideal, not only as a model for masculine rule but also as the reward for obedient conduct, a prize that remains unavailable to the independent and self-empowered woman. Patriarchal power is consequently secured through the strategic alignment of women within the economic base of a "domestic mode of production" (Delphy 1988: 261). This sexual division of labour serves to cement a social norm that constrains women's social practice and confines them to a position of subservience (Connell 1987: 99). Vorster's recurrent references to Louwna's responsibility as a mother acts as a clear reflection of the strategic workings of patriarchal discourse that relies on childcare as a mechanism to secure dominance. For Connell

“childcare is not just an issue for women, but an issue about men. The overt collective choice not to do childcare, reflects the dominant definition of men’s interests and helps them to keep predominant power” (Connell 1987: 106). This pattern of social organisation, which operates as both a cultural and economic force, serves to manifest the solidarity of the patriarchal fraternity and to exclude women from the accumulation of wealth (ibid.).

The relevance of this argument seems quite pertinent, as M-Net explicitly state that their audience demographic is specifically centred on women who are not working for the purpose of raising their children and therefore serves to promote the hegemony of patriarchal power through its reliance on the audience’s adoration of, respect for and empathy with Vorster. The programme furthermore naturalises the gender-based division of labour by framing its asymmetry as a historical *status quo*.

SONET: My Grandfather must have had a very violent temper.

MOIRA: Jy sê vir my... ‘he ruled this house with an iron fist’.
[You’re telling me... he ruled this house with an iron fist.]

SONET: Did he have anything against women?

MOIRA: Not as far as I know...he adored Monica.

SONET:: Monica is the eldest, by right she should have taken over after his death. But his will stipulates; no woman may ever run Walco.

[*Egoli*, Episode 546, Scene 3.2]

The mediation of the position of patriarchy within the organisation of gender power, however, seems to extend beyond the embodied characterisation of Vorster. A critical reading of *Egoli* makes one aware of the dissemination of patriarchal power in the application of *mise-en-scène*. Vorster’s home study strategically emerges as the domain of patriarchy, through the specific rhetoric of the relationship that is set up



Fig 6. Vorster's study. (Egoli, Episode 548, Scene 1.6).

between the patriarch and this setting. When seated at his desk, Vorster is framed by expansive bookshelves containing leather-bound books and annual reports (refer to Figure 6). This visual strategy serves to legitimise his conduct as the product of knowledge, endowing Vorster with the power of speech. The study acts as a locus of activity; architecturally situated so as to divide the Vorster house into the private space of the bedrooms, situated to the right, and the social or public realm of the living room and patio, situated to the left. The specific use of glass-panelled doors leading to the study creates the impression of a central vantage point from which both social and private matters can be observed and controlled; these doors furthermore look out directly to the front door, placing patriarchal power as the gate keeper that safeguards the entrance to the household. The study as material focus of patriarchal power therefore leads to a panoptical effect, placing the inhabitants of the Vorster household in a domestic theatre where they are constantly visible. This causes patriarchal power to remain operative, whether Vorster is watching or not (Foucault 1995: 200). Yet Jeremy Bentham's conception of the panopticon contends that this effect also regulates the watcher, as he is open to punishment when not observing. The patriarch is therefore taxed with the responsibility of monitoring the family as an authoritarian observer.

This notion of surveillance as a form of control is furthermore extended by the placement of a photograph of Vorster in the offices of Walco



Fig 7. Vorster's portrait in Tim's office (Egoli, Episode 551, Scene 2.3).



Fig 8. Vorster's portrait in André's office #1 (Egoli, Episode 560, Scene 1.4).



Fig 9. Vorster's portrait in André's office #2 (Egoli, Episode 606, Scene 2.1).

International. The effect of Vorster's claim to patriarchal power thus overarches not only his personal and family life, but encompasses the corporate sphere.

In Figure 7 viewers encounter the portrait of Vorster in a scene depicting an argument between Paul de Klerk and Tim Herald, regarding André Vorster's conspiracy to get himself appointed in a position previously promised to Paul. Vorster's portrait appears again in Figure 8, this time in André Vorster's new office. This scene depicts Donna stumbling across one of the company secretaries mysteriously working on André's computer – viewers are at this point already aware of André's attempt to frame the secretary for corporate espionage. In Figure 9 the portrait appears yet again, as André reports on his plans to be out of the country. Despite the fact that he does not elaborate on where he is going, the audience is aware that he is travelling in order to secure a transaction in which he aims to sell military vehicles to a terrorist faction in the Middle East. It remains an open question whether the programme's creators used the visual inclusion of Vorster's portrait as a conscious strategic device. Yet the thematic similarity of these scenes – centring on the questionable conduct of Vorster's son, André, feels significant. Besides being a visual reminder of the extensive power of the patriarch, the portrait also serves to emphasise the contrast between father and son. By offsetting the morally corrupt practices of André against the image of Vorster, the audience is subtly reminded of Vorster's honesty and integrity, which in



Fig 10. Vorster takes back his position as MD of Walco. (*Egoli*, Episode 634, Scene 2.5).

contrast to André seems even more righteous than it might have before. This alludes yet again to an idealisation of the patriarch's moral character that serves as a force of stable guidance, now not only in the confines of the family unit, but also in the corporate realm.

Vorster's retirement in 1993 saw the family business enter into a turbulent situation characterised by André's mismanagement and criminal schemes. After the unsuccessful release of a locally produced sedan, Walco is faced with near bankruptcy that leads to an emergency board meeting, chaired by Vorster (see Figure 10). Within the depiction of this meeting Vorster is clearly portrayed as the centre of attention in the boardroom, as the key focal point in the shot. Visually distinct and isolated in the establishing shot and strategically positioned in relation to the window, Vorster is presented as the subject of clear vision and foresight. This scene specifically makes visual reference to the 'natural' lineage of power through the positioning of Vorster directly below a portrait of his own father, from whom he inherited the family business. But this notion of the natural order of patriarchal succession is brought into question by the portrayal of André. He arrives late for the meeting with a pile of disorganised files and paperwork – some of which drop from his hands – portraying him as incompetent, clumsy and as a character who does not yet display the potential for patriarchal power.

VORSTER: Jy rapporteer van nou af direk aan my.
 (To Tim)
 [From now on you will report directly to me.]

ANDRÉ: Maar hoekom? Ek is mos daar.
 [But why? I am there.]

VORSTER: Dieselfde geld vir jou ook...jy sal van nou af ook direk aan
 my rapporteer. Ek neem die bestuur oor Walco oor.
 (To André)
 [It also applies to you, from now on you will also report
 directly to me. I am taking over the management of Walco.]

[Egoli, Episode 634, Scene 2.5]

Vorster's authoritative tone and harsh facial expression affirms him as the sole commander of corporate power in relation to his son and the other young male attendee. Vorster is therefore not only physically positioned between his own father and son, but is also established as a conceptual divide of sorts. Vorster as the idealised patriarch emerges as the middle ground where morality meets power in contrast to his father – already established as murderous – and his son, who is depicted as morally corrupt. It is within this subject of morality or ethics that the negotiation of patriarchal discourse seems to be at its most fractured and discontinuous. On the one hand, the ethical self-construction of the patriarch serves to legitimise the embodiment of knowledge and exercise of power, but on the other hand, it serves as the intersecting factor that illuminates the self-alienation of patriarchy.

3.3. The ethic of the father

Foucault contends that “[t]o constitute oneself as a subject who governs implies that one has to constitute oneself as a subject having care for the self” (in Fornet-Betancourt et al. 1987: 124). Yet the ethic and care for the self is contingent on the effects of power. For Foucault the cyclical nature of power results in a form of “autocolonisation” since that power is exercised not only on the dominated but in return also impacts on forms of dominance (Dreyfus and Rabinow 1982: 186). The discursive effects of power therefore infiltrate the ‘project of self’ by limiting the actor’s choice

of social conduct through auto-projection of normative expectations on the subject as the product of power. If subjective agency lies in the practice of habitus, the project of self serves to legitimate acts of knowledge and power based on the discursive ordering of cultural value assigned to a spectrum of social actions. The individual subject therefore stylises his/her performance within discursively legitimised fields of social conduct based on the personal disposition acquired through previous experience. *Egoli* portrays the patriarch's role as the custodian of family values as a key in the development of Vorster's habitus.

VORSTER: Ek doen dit nie vir jou nie ... Albert is die belangrike
(To Louwna) een. Al wat ek aan dink is my seun. Een van sy ouers behoort
ten minste daar te wees vir hom ... Kinders is 'n mens se
grootste verantwoordelikheid in die lewe.
[I am not doing this for you ... Albert is the important
one. I am only thinking about my son. At least one of his
parents should be there for him ... Children are one's
biggest responsibility in life.]

[*Egoli*, Episode 469, Scene 3.1]

Vorster's comment to Louwna emphasises that his perceived responsibility of a father extends beyond his responsibility towards himself and his wife. The weight of this ethical clarity seems, however, to result from a process of aging and acquiring wisdom. Vorster, now as a retired corporate professional, is faced with an internal struggle between the value of the power accrued through career success and value ascribed to the masculine figure within the family relationship.

VORSTER: As ek dink wat ek prys gegee het ... Waarvoor?
[If I think about what I have given up...For what?]

LOUWNA: Maar jy het baie bereik ook!
[But you have also accomplished a lot!]

VORSTER: Wat!? Ek het my hele lewe gewerk, dis al. En wat kan ek
daarvoor wys? ... Twee mislukte huwelike.
[What!? I worked my entire life, that's all. And what do I
have to show for it? Two failed marriages.]

LOUWNA: Jy het vir my!
[You have me!]

VORSTER: My kinders ... ek het hulle vervreem van my...my suster ...
was dit alles die moeite werd?
[My children ... I alienated them ... my sister ... was it
all worth it?]

[Egoli, Episode 475, Scene 1.1]

Vorster seems to be facing a moral dilemma caused by the tension between family values and career success. This realisation speaks of the overwhelming expectation of upholding the expectations of patriarchal power, which in its practice seemingly comes at the price of personal loss. This expression of guilt and regret, however, serves to further redeem the field of patriarchy by masking its power and success as a service to the family rather than the achievement of personal reward. The unusual sight of Vorster's vulnerability heightens the viewers' sympathetic adoration and therefore re-legitimatises patriarchal power as a form of cultural capital.⁵⁷

3.4. Vorster's death: The suspension of patriarchy?

On the evening of 29 September 1994 Vorster greeted Louwna at her sister's home, as the two have rekindled their love just a week after their official divorce. They have decided to go on a romantic breakaway to the family vacation home in Hermanus. But while finalising their plans – that Louwna would fly down in the morning with their son – a stranger sabotages Vorster's Rolls Royce that is parked outside in the street. A few minutes later Vorster is shown on his journey, where he loses control over the vehicle as the brakes fail and he crashes over the side of a cliff (see Figure 11). The sequence of the car accident takes on the form of a fast-paced montage of various camera angles framing Vorster's facial expression, the rising speedometer and the winding road. Interestingly these shots are interrupted by various angles of the hood ornament of the

⁵⁷ Bourdieu claims that "the dominant class distinguish themselves precisely through that which makes them members of the class as a whole, namely the type of capital which is the source of their privilege and the different manners of asserting their distinction which are linked to it." (1984: 258). For Bourdieu this capital when embodied as a "long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body" (a specific style of thought and behaviour) that relates to a particular legitimisation of its objectified form (a specific taste in cultural goods) can be described as cultural capital (1986: 47).



Fig 11. Voster's accident. (*Egoli*, Episode 649 Scene 3.2).

Rolls Royce. This explicit reference to this icon of social status and wealth is presented as flying uncontrollably through the air as a foreboding signifier of the resulting turmoil following Vorster's accident that threatens to destabilise both the social status and financial success of the Vorster family. The death of the patriarch results directly in the deterioration of family bonds.

SONET: You can say about us what you will, but the Vorsters have always stuck together, despite the fights.

NIEK: So?

SONET: So...this is different. Daddy is gone. The one person who held us together through all our crises is gone![...] Today is the beginning of the end of the Vorsters... and there's no turning back!

[*Egoli*, Episode 654, Scene 2.5]

the inability of the reign of patriarchy to come to a natural end. The dissolving of patriarchy therefore becomes essentially violent. The patriarch, however, remains in a position of power even in death through his detailed will that determines the fate of the family. His decision to cast his son André as the sole heir extends the position of the patriarch to the eldest son, yet the family dynamic and characterisation of André does not seem promising for the continuation of paternal power in the Voster family, as André is led by his own choices down a path of unlawful activity, engagement with terrorism, eventually also leading to his death, once again as the result of murder. The position of patriarchy is therefore left vacant, until the introduction of a new character, Chris Edwards in 1995. Edwards, however, in contrast to Vorster is an English-speaking, much younger character who attains patriarchal status through a slow process of inscription that plays out in the subsequent years of the programme's production.

3.5. Concluding remarks

The representation of Voster suggests that the social stature of patriarchy imbued with age and enabled by wealth leads to a form of hegemonic masculinity that asserts power over women and younger men. That power remains contestable, specifically in the case of the Afrikaner within this historical milieu, but through the affirmation of solidarity within the microcosm of the family and its traditional values, *Egoli* suggests (at this particular moment) that it should stand the test of time. It does, however, become evident that the legacy of patriarchy emerges in *Egoli* not as the continuation of male domination, but as the inheritance of monetary wealth, the shimmer of gold, which seems to have been the stronghold of patriarchy all along.

CHAPTER 4
**UNDERCLASS MASCULINITY IN THE CASE OF
DOUG DURAND**

The postmodern tendency to suspend the notion of class classification has led to an excessive politicisation of race and gender that neglects their contingency to social class (Žižek 2000: 98). For Slavoj Žižek postmodernism's "retreat from the problem of capitalism" consequently disengaged the discursive relationship between the social body and class distinction (ibid.). With the redemption of patriarchy, primarily by virtue of class status, emerging as an underlying leitmotif for the construction of Vorster, one might be led to question how the legitimisation of patriarchal power serves to inform the construction of forms of masculinity that are indicative of a lower-ranking class status?⁵⁸ With reference to the classical Marxist assumption that the economic mode of production serves as the "backbone of a whole historical epoch", patriarchy for Connell primarily secures subordination by inserting subjects into determinant slots within the strategic reproduction of "relations of production" (Connell 1987: 43). Class categorisation and the discursive distribution of labour is thereby deeply embedded in the construction of the social gender order (1987: 45). For Bourdieu such discursive distinctions historically rendered the working class (gendered) body as essentially instrumental – as a means to an end (in Edwards 2006: 145). For Connell this leads to 'functional' sexuality in which sexual reproduction can, to some degree, be read within the production chain as the physical reproduction of the workforce (Connell 1987: 43). Despite

⁵⁸ This follows from Connell's argument that the affirmation of the legitimacy of patriarchy implicitly implies the systemic subordination of gendered Others, gendered subjects who are marginalised as a result of various factors such as their race, sexuality and social class status (1987: 43).

⁵⁹ I am referring here to major plot developments such as the discovery of the skeleton, Vorster's insistence on Louwna's role as mother and housewife and Vorster's dramatic death. These narrative arches stretch out over multiple episodes and typically lead to a 'knock-on effect' that involves a large selection of other characters. In contrast, Durand's contribution to the plot development recurrently plays out in a cycle characterised by short bursts of drama interrupted by the character's retreat from the plot.

the oversimplification and somewhat out-dated nature of this argument, it serves to highlight how the working class body has been culturally figured primarily in relation to sexuality and physical labour. This forms a stark contrast to the disembodied rationality awarded to dominant classes and, more specifically, to patriarchy (Edwards 2006: 145). In this light, this chapter interrogates the way in which *Egoli* imagines working-class (or underclass) masculinity through an investigation that aims to reflect on the entanglement of the representations of gender and sexuality with social class. In order to do so, my analysis focuses on the character of Doug Durand (played by Steve Hofmeyr), who in relation to the patriarchal Vorster stands not only on the opposite end of the social class spectrum, but also quite literally takes on the role of 'the other man' in his not-so-secret love affair with Louwna Vorster. Indicative of my argument that his class status positions Durand as marginal to the programme's gender order, his portrayal does not present such articulate narrative devices as is the case with Vorster.⁵⁹ My analysis is thus focused on the reading of purposefully selected, yet somewhat inconsequential, moments that reflect the superficiality with which *Egoli* treats Durand's manhood.

4.1. What is there to know about the 'soap stud'

'Like a deck of cards', daar moet 'n koning van harte wees, daar moet 'n koning van diamante wees, koning van 'spades', koning van 'clubs'. So [hulle] moet aan verskeie smake voldoen. Want vrou se seksbehoefte is anders as 'n man sin [...] 'n vrou word 'gehook' deur die visuele, maar dan moet daar meer wees.

Like a deck of cards, there must be a king of hearts, there must be a king of diamonds, a king of spades, a king of clubs. [They] need to satisfy different tastes. Because the sexual needs of women are different from those of men [...] a woman is hooked by visibility, but then there needs to me more.

Franz Marx (2013)

In this whimsical remark regarding the composition of the male cast of *Egoli*, Marx suggests an intrinsic awareness of differentiated polarities of distinct characteristics within the archive of masculine stereotypes on

which the programme depends. The effectiveness of these stereotypes are measured, for Marx, primarily by their supposed visual attractiveness for the female audience (2013). Despite Marx's assertion that the characterisation of men needs to extend beyond the surface of a handsome facade, the genre's mechanical avoidance of sophisticated character development is evident in a reading of *Egoli's* men. Gledhill and Ball (2013: 343) refer to soap opera's reliance on stereotypical depictions as a "shorthand reference to specific cultural perceptions", in order to illustrate the manner in which character tropes, despite their 'flatness', relate to the context within which they are produced.

If Vorster is located in Marx's analogy as the King of Diamonds – the eternal creditor because of the success and wealth of his patriarchal lineage – then Durand most certainly plays the King of Spades – crested by the up-side-down heart in the form of a labourer's implement. At first glance the most distinct differentiation offered between these two characters is that of class. Durand is introduced on the programme as a base-level employee of Walco International, a test driver for their new vehicles, but later enters the world of professional race car driving – a career consistently sponsored by the latest in his succession of wealthy mistresses. Submerged in a field of masculinity governed by an aspiration for patriarchal power, Durand acts as a counter-reference point to the patriarchal rule of Vorster. Where other men seem to mimic the patriarch in their dress, posture, social conduct and professional ambition, Durand stands in stark contrast, evident both in visual appearance and through his behaviour (see in Figures 12 and 13). Durand's attire is typified by denim, lumberjack shirts and utilitarian boots that serve not only as a visual reminder of his working class status, but also differentiates him as a visual focal point.

Durand therefore enters *Egoli* and perhaps even some of the upper-middle class audience's living rooms as a type of exotic Other, challenging the homogeneity of the well-groomed, suit-and-tie-wearing corporates. Morgan asserts that men's corporate wear draws attention away from



Fig 12. Durand interrupts a meeting between André Vorster and Katherine Sinclair. (*Egoli*, Episode 594, Scene 3.3).



Fig 13. Durand proposes a business deal to Tim Herold. (*Egoli*, Episode 618, Scene 3.1).

the masculine body, through the act of covering it up from the neck down, with the neck-tie pointing towards the head, emphasising the premise of locating the power of masculinity in disembodied rationality (in Edwards 2006: 153). This differentiation in sartorial coding reaffirms the relationship between working-class masculinity and embodiment, which for Edwards, stems from the historically entrenched assumption that working class labour is physical by default (2006: 157). The visual portrayal of Durand's romantic conquests, the wealthy women of the Vorster empire, serves to further extend his visual differentiation. By offsetting his rugged physique with impeccably dressed, styled and jewelled women, *Egoli* draws attention to the transgression of class taking place, specifically in his 'intrusion' into the Vorster residence – which serves as the visual backdrop for most of Durand's passionate encounters (see Figures 14, 15 and 16).



Fig 14. Durand embracing Louwna Vorster. (*Egoli*, Episode 594, Scene 1.5).



Fig 15. Katherine Sinclair says goodbye to Durand. (*Egoli*, Episode 608, Scene 3.2).



Fig 16. Durand embracing Kimberly Logan. (*Egoli*, Episode 714, Scene 1.4).



Fig 17. Doug Durand. (*Egoli*, Episode 608, Scene 1.6).



Fig 18. Agter Elke Man, DVD Cover. (*Agter Elke Man*, The Movie n.d.).



Fig 19. Only me, Album Cover. (Steve Hofmeyr 1990).

Despite Durand's somewhat abrupt visual impingement on the lives of the wealthy, any individual familiar with Marx's oeuvre would not be able to avoid relating the image of Durand (Figure 17) to that of Bruce Beyers (Figure 18), the motorcycle-driving rebel, also portrayed by Hofmeyr (Figure 19) in the Marx drama series *Agter elke man* (1985 - 1988). The casting of Hofmeyr as the specific vehicle for the portrayal of so-called underclass masculinity proves significant in that the characterisation of Durand seems to continue almost seamlessly from the media persona of Hofmeyr, which is itself indebted to the image of Beyers. For Dyer (in Hall 2013: 247) it seems feasible that viewers make sense of isolated moments of identification in relation to wider accumulated archive of representation that stems from a familiarity with the images of Hofmeyr and Beyers that precede their encounter with Durand.

In an article announcing Hofmeyr's debut on *Egoli*, *Die Burger* (Roos 1994) describes him as a "hartedief" (heart-thief) and "hartebreker"

(heartbreaker). This debut is furthermore framed by what Louw describes as a “bad storm raging around him” caused by the media reports of his three illegitimate children (1999: 30). The entrance of Durand is thus by no means a neutral unveiling, as his image carries with it a series of pre-encoded associations. In an interview with Pearly Joubert in the *Vryeweekblad* (Joubert 1992: [n.p]) Hofmeyr commented on the roots of his success as a celebrity figure:

Dis seker maar alles die image - 27 jaar oud en ek sing en ek dra
geskeurde klere en so aan [...] Die meisietjies wat my posters teen
hul deure opplak - dis baie nice. [...] My image, het ek gesien, is soms
belangriker as my talent [...]

*Its probably all in the image - 27 years old and I sing and wear torn clothing
and so on [...] The girls who put up my posters on their doors - that's very
nice [...] My image, I have seen, is sometimes more important than my
talent [...]*

In contrast to Gé Korsten, who was known and respected not only for his good looks but more so for his contribution to the development of serious South African culture, including opera, Hofmeyr's celebrity status was primarily accrued through tabloid sensationalism, reporting on his dubious sex life. Hofmeyr furthermore aligns his musical career with a non-critical attitude rooted in the 'popular' (Joubert 1992: [n.p]):

Ek is 'n gewone ou. Ek hou van party soos elke ander ou [...] Ek kan nie
die intellektuele goed skryf wat byvoorbeeld Coenie de Villiers skryf en sing
nie. Ek is nie deel van die alternatiewes nie. Ek skryf en sing goed waarvan
ék hou en wat ék kan doen. Ek laaik nie mense afpis nie.

*I am a regular guy. I like to party just like any other guy [...] I can't write the
intellectual stuff that someone like Coenie de Villiers writes and sings. I'm
not part of the alternatives. I write and sing stuff that I like and that I can
do. I don't like pissing people off.*

Hofmeyr therefore serves as the ideal platform for the depiction of a man of a lower-ranking class status because of the audience's inclination to approach his image as an attractive veneer, without the expectation of encountering the disembodied rationality through which Vorster performs his patriarchal role. Stam, Burgoyne and Flitterman-Lewis make use of the term 'celebrity intertextuality' in order to describe this phenomenon,

“where the presence of a film or television star or celebrity [...] evokes a [particular] cultural milieu” (1992: 211).⁶⁰ In this light one might argue that Durand is read not as the representation of an actual instance of masculinity caught within a particular class position, but rather as a mere node within the complex network of ‘empty’ significations surrounding the celebrity status of Hofmeyr.⁶¹ Durand therefore appears as a vacuous shell; a soap-stud body without much depth of character, formulated from a chain of signifiers that defers the viewer’s knowledge of the character through an endless play of appearance.⁶² By constraining the viewer’s knowledge of the character to the level of visual appearance, *Egoli* therefore sets Durand up as a vehicle for erotic objectification.

4.2. The powerless, pacified body

[T]he body is the ultimate surface upon which power and resistance operate.

Whitehead (2002: 186)

As previously discussed, the male body is typically portrayed in *Egoli* as covered-up, made almost invisible through a reliance on dark coloured formal suits that reduce it to a trope of corporate effectivity, therefore legitimising what Butler refers to as the “body transcendent universal subject-hood” of men (1990: 13). Yet for Marx, the men in *Egoli* are most certainly objects on display (Marx 2013);

As meeste kykers vrouens is dan is hulle seks simbole seker nie ander vrouens nie, dan moet dit mans wees. Moet nie ‘n vrou vir hulle met ‘n laag gesnyde décolletage wys nie, wys vir hulle ‘n man met ‘n kaal bolyf - verkieslik iemand wat bietjie geripple is. Dit sal hulle meer intereseer [...] dit was ‘n bewuste [besluit], jou sekssimbool is gemaak vir vrouens, en dit moet geteken word, en dit moet geparadeer word soos wat dit vir die vrou interessant sal wees.

If most of the viewers are women, then surely their sex symbols are not other women, but must be men. Don't show them a woman with a low-cut décolletage, show them a topless man - preferably someone who is slightly rippled. That will interest them more [...] it was a conscious [decision], your sex symbol is made for women, and should be drawn and paraded in a way that women would find interesting.

⁶⁰ The term ‘intertextuality’ is formulated by Julia Kristeva as a rephrasing of Mikhail Bakhtin’s notion of dialogism, which he describes as “the necessary relation of any utterance to other utterances” (Stam et al. 1992: 208). Kristeva’s intertextuality conceives of a text as a “mosaic of citations, a palimpsest of traces”, which therefore relates a text primarily to other utterances of representational language as opposed to an “amorphous ‘context’ anointed with the dubious status and authority of ‘the real’” (1992: 208-209).

⁶¹ In relation to Baudrillard’s statement that “today the scene and mirror no longer exist; instead, there is a screen and network”, one might argue that televisual representations are inevitably depthless, as a result of the infinite and complex network of signs through which the medium constructs and disseminates its meaning (2007: 53). Yet in the case of Durand this depthlessness seems emphasised (more so than in the case of Vorster) by his simulation of the overtly emptied image of Hofmeyr himself.

⁶² The interchangeability of Hofmeyr’s image that acts simultaneously as a signifier for his celebrity persona and the characters, Beyers and Durand, produces a fluidity of meaning that cannot be resolved into distinct descriptions that segregate these personas into individual entities.



Fig 20. Durand returns from his morning swim. (*Egoli*, Episode 711, Scene 1.1).

⁶³ This specific reference to the visual economy of American action films proves relevant due to the popularity and availability of such blockbuster Hollywood cinema to M-Net, and subsequently, *Egoli* viewers at this particular moment in time.

Despite Marx's explicit admission of his attempt to imagine a signifying economy that parades the masculine form specifically for the female spectator, most of the men on the programme escape erotic objectification through the lack of visual reference to the virility of their bodies. In contrast to the other men, the relationship between Durand and the blank image of the celebrity draws attention to his physicality and creates a 'fertile site' for the objectification of his body. The most obvious example of this tactic is seen in the shot (Figure 20) where Durand returns after his morning swim, bare-chested with water dripping from his wet hair.

In *The White Man's Muscles*, Richard Dyer (2002: 263) contends that the exposed white male body could bring into question the legitimacy of white male power. For Dyer, clothing can function to assert power, specifically when associated with wealth and social status, yet when the body is exposed, the legitimacy of masculine power is dependent on the display of muscle (Whitehead 2002:182). In comparison to the depiction of exposed male muscle in popular action films of the same year, such as *True Lies* (featuring Arnold Schwarzenegger, Figure 21), *The Specialist* (featuring Sylvester Stallone, Figure 22), and *Street Fighter* (featuring Jean Claude Van Damme, Figure 23), Durand's body seems undisciplined and therefore lacking in pure masculine strength.⁶³ This visual reminder of Durand's physicality therefore draws attention to his embodiment but simultaneously also hints at his lack of gender power.



Fig 21. Arnold Schwarzenegger in *True Lies*. (*The top ten most bad-ass dads in Hollywood history* n.d.).



Fig 22. 'Sylvester Stallone in *The Specialist*.' (Sylvester Stallone. n.d.).



Fig 23. Jean-Claude van Damme in *Street Fighter*. (*Jean-Claude van Damme talks about his gay fans*. n.d.).



Fig 24. Durand pleads with Louwna Vorster not to leave him. (*Ego!*, Episode 608, Scene 1.6).



Fig 25. Doug attempting to comfort Kimberly Logan. (*Ego!*, Episode 711, Scene 1.1).

Durand's embodied physicality is, however, affirmed even when fully clothed. In contrast to one's expectations of the depiction of men in the soap opera genre, Durand is physically expressive, using big hand gestures and occupying a large proportion of the picture frame – a mode of depiction more in line with the norm for the female characters. His physical interactions with other characters occur in large movements that cut diagonally across the screen, often initiating physical contact with women through grabbing, embracing, touching, and covering the faces of his mistresses while kissing them (see Figures 24 and 25).

⁶⁴ Despite the fact that authors such as Neale (1983), MacKinnon (1997) and Edwards (2006) criticise Mulvey's analysis for its lack of attention to female spectatorship, her proposed structure of looking proves helpful here, specifically when read in relation to Neale's response, because of the overtly melodramatic nature of Egoli's depiction of eroticised masculinity.

⁶⁵ Mulvey draws on Freud's conception of scopophilia as a description of the active expression of sexual drives that manifest in the form of a curious gaze that maintains control over the image of women as objects of desire (Mulvey 1975: 8). Freud illustrates the scopophilic gaze by referring to the voyeuristic activities of Peeping Toms, whose sexual satisfaction arises from a sense of control that results from the active watching of an objectified Other (ibid.). The visual penetration of the private and therefore forbidden world of the unaware Other consequently produces a sense of mastery of the world that serves to satisfy a sexual need.

In her seminal work "Visual pleasure and narrative cinema", Mulvey contends that in juxtaposition to men, women are inescapably bound to their corporeality, which renders their bodies open to objectification (Mulvey 1975: 6).⁶⁴ She argues that classic narrative cinema typically makes use of signifying strategies that frame women as pacified bodies to be looked at – the bearer but not the maker of meaning. For Mulvey this scopic framework solicits the active scopophilic gaze of men directed towards the representation of the passive objectified female body as a stimulation of sexual arousal.⁶⁵ This gaze is furthermore accompanied by the male viewer's identification with the representation of the male protagonist, typically echoing the viewer's look on screen (1975: 10). According to Neale, men's bodies, when appearing as a representational spectacle, typically occur within a practice of looking that does not facilitate purely erotic objectification; "we see male bodies stylised and fragmented by close-ups, but our look is not direct, it is heavily mediated by the looks of the characters involved. And those looks are marked not by desire, but rather by fear, or hatred, or aggression" (1983: 18). Representations of Durand's body, however, differ from Neale's account, and it is presented as objectified, even in sequences of violent action.

In Episode 655 a gang of vengeful terrorists attacks Durand in the reception area of Walco International (see Figure 26). The final shot, depicting his helpless, pacified body, conceals the attacker's face, which diverts the viewers' inclination to mediate their reading of Durand's body through a secondary gaze. His sensually exposed neck and the blood trickling down his face are therefore posed and exposed for the immediate attention of the viewer. His closed eyes, furthermore, allow the spectator to look without the gaze being returned, rendering Durand's body as an object. In his analysis of specific film genres such as the Western, "in which masculinity is necessarily the object of consideration", Neale argues that the portrayal of violence circumvents the possibility of eroticising the male by placing emphasis on the hardness, toughness and force of male bodies, reverting back to the notion of male power (Neale 1983: 18). Despite being portrayed within the context of physical



Fig 26. Durand being attacked in the offices of Walco International. (*Egoli*, Episode 655, Scene 1.2).



Fig 27. Durand arriving at Vorster's funeral after being attacked. (*Egoli*, Episode 655, Scene 2.4).



Fig 28. Kimberly Logan nurturing Durand back to health after being attacked. (*Egoli*, Episode 656, Scene 1.3).

violence, however, Durand fails to embody the “hardness and toughness” of masculine strength and to some extent becomes ‘feminised’ through his passive fragility. For Neale this reliance on a set of codes conventionally reserved for the representation of women serves as the primary platform for the translation of men into objects of an erotic gaze (Neale 1983: 18). The ‘feminine coding’ of Durand’s passive body is reaffirmed in a later scene depicting Durand’s injured body arriving at the Vorster home.

Durand stumbles into the front door in lurching and jolting movements, falling into the arms of his ex-mistress Louwna Vorster before losing consciousness and collapsing onto the living room floor (see Figure 27). It proves significant that this event occurs as a disruption of Vorster's funeral, taking place at the very moment of Durand's arrival. In contrast to Vorster, who even at his funeral eludes corporeality through the omnipresence of his power and wealth still intact within the stately Vorster mansion, Durand is depicted as the objectified bleeding body, bearing physical traces of his lack of masculine power. The floral patterning of the Persian carpet that frames Durand's passive body in the last shot of the scene contributes further to the overt feminised coding of his pacified state. Durand's injured body consequently reminds one of Marion Young's description of the modalities of the feminine body as "a mere thing – a fragile thing, which must be picked up and coaxed into movement, a thing that is looked at and acted upon." (Young 1990: 150; original emphasis).

Durand's injured body remains passive in the following episodes, as Kimberly Logan – André Vorster's fiancé – attentively nurses him back to health as a prelude to their love affair that follows (see Figure 28). Mulvey proposes that the visual presence of the pacified and objectified female body obstructs narratological development and leads to moments of 'erotic contemplation', characterised by a multiplicity of looks directed from both the male audience and the on-screen protagonist towards the female object (1975: 11). Marx, however, states that *Egoli* purposefully aims to subvert this pattern of looking (2013):

Die karakters van die reeks is almal die vrouens [...] in 90% van alle rolprente wat jy kyk, of Amerikaanse televisie is die karakters die mans en die poppies is die vrouens - 'the eye-candy'. Hier was dit anders, die 'eye-candy' was die mans.

The characters of the series are all the women [...] in 90% of all films that you watch, or American television the characters are the men and the bimbos the women - the eye-candy. Here it was different - the eye-candy was the men

Despite the soap opera's multiplicity of overlapping narrative streams that discourage the viewer's identification with one central protagonist,

Kimberly provides the audience with a secondary gaze with which to read the passivity of Durand's body (Gledhill and Ball 2013: 370). As a moment of erotic contemplation, Durand is placed in a subordinate position to Kimberly's active look, emphasising his vulnerability. Whitehead argues that "[t]he gaze is not simply about reifying bodies; the gaze politicises bodies, rendering them into numerous political fields of truth and knowledge of which race, sexuality and age are but three" (Whitehead 2002: 203). By composing Durand in a manner conducive to encouraging an eroticised gaze, *Egoli* therefore suggests a gender order in which the ability of the underclass man to assert masculine power remains ambiguous and the subject of ridicule:

SONET: Your constant attempts to satisfy your lust are beyond bad taste. Kindly do it behind closed doors, like you used to when André was still around.

DURAND: Jy is nou net soos een van daai ou tannies wat fout soek met dit wat hulle eintlik self wil hê. Jy moet net sê, ek help maklik uit.

[You are like one of those old ladies finding fault in that which they actually want for themselves. You should just tell me, I'll happily help you out.]

SONET: If and when I need help, I'll ask a man... a real man!

[*Egoli*, Episode 714, Scene 1.4]

Durand's body thus becomes a metaphor symbolising (low) cultural value as a key site for the affirmation of a class-based hierarchy. Despite the reducibility of Durand to the sexual objectification of the body, one must acknowledge that this character is not always portrayed as this passive object of the gaze, but also, specifically in his pursuit of mistresses, acts as a catalyst for the progression of the narrative.

4.3. The ethic of the 'other man'

Through *Egoli*'s reproduction of the heterosexual matrix, masculinity is repeatedly affirmed and institutionalised as an expressive attribute of heteronormative desires (Butler 1990: 23). The programme therefore

continually measures the manhood of its characters based on their success in winning and maintaining the sexual interest of female characters. It follows that cathexis emerges as a central field of contestation in the negotiation of masculine identity, specifically in the case of Durand. Connell's conception of cathexis is rooted in Freud's use of the term in order to refer to the instinctual psychic charge or energy of attraction to an idealised image (Connell 1987: 112). When viewed in the light of Foucault's proposition of the 'ethic of self', cathexis can accordingly be contextualised as the use of sexual accomplishment as a self-reflexive practice aimed at achieving an idealised version of masculine selfhood. For Durand this narcissistic cathexis emerges as an explicit desire for women of wealth:

SONET: Ask Louwna, or Katherine St. Claire, [Doug] loves the ladies, but only if they have money.

[*Egoli*, Episode 714, Scene 1.5]

Within the scope of the episodes surveyed in this study the audience encounters Durand in three different illicit love affairs – with Catherine Sinclair, Louwna Vorster and Kimberly Logan (engaged to become a Vorster). Besides the fact that these three women are all extremely wealthy, the latter two are also presented as 'patriarchal property' because of their relationships with Dr Walt Vorster and his son André. Durand's desire for the attention of women is therefore seemingly synonymous with his desire for wealth and power, and the possibility of liberation from the limitations imposed on him by his class. His desperation is evident in the pleading tone of his last conversation with Katherine Sinclair, before she returns to her home in London:

KATHERINE: Stop sulking Doug. You should know by now, it has no effect on me.

DURAND: Then give me an answer.

KATHERINE: What about?

DURAND: Dammit Katherine, my sponsorship.

KATHERINE: Oh yes, the cash, always the cash.

DURAND: If you can help me, I can win. I promise you, I'll show you this time, I can win.

KATHERINE: If sponsorship is the only thing that you're interested in, then why don't you try Louwna?

DURAND: Louwna's history!

KATHERINE: What a pity, I shudder to think where you are going to go next for money.

DURAND: Stop it! You are not going to go like this, I mean...

KATHERINE: Good bye darling, don't think it hasn't been fun.

[*Egoli*, Episode 608, Scene 3.2]

Katherine's antagonising parting words reveal how Durand fails to sustain the interest and desire of his mistresses. The visual composition of this scene portrays Katherine as stern, decisive and in control (see Figure 29). One reads her position behind the Vorsters' desk as one of authority and power – a terrain that Katherine, as a corporate, wealthy woman seems to inhabit with natural ease. Durand, on the other hand, appears misplaced, with his lack of power emphasised through the way in which he leans on the couch and the desk for support. The faded blue denim of his attire stands in stark contrast to the supposedly valuable collection of leather-bound books, exquisite china and the artwork in its gilded frame. In contrast to Sinclair's confident posture, Durand appears overly melodramatic in his fast-paced movements.

This particular scene serves to emphasise Durand's inability to successfully enter the position of wealth and social stature that he so desperately desires. His reliance on sexual seduction seems to give him a merely marginal presence, constricted through the incessant reminders of his lack of cultural (and financial) capital. For Bourdieu, the embodiment



Fig 29. Katherine says farewell to Durand. (*Egoli*, Episode 608, Scene 3.2).

of capital integrates external wealth into subjectivity through a timely process of accumulation, which can thus not be transmitted to another instantaneously (Bourdieu 1986: 48). The social stature that Doug desires (or cathects) and aims to achieve through acts of sexual conquest therefore remains elusive, because of the inability of these physical moments of passion to transform his social disposition into embodied capital. Durand therefore remains caught in a marginal position to the idealised image of Vorster's body transcending power that arguably serves as the motive for Durand's cathexis of these women of wealth.

Durand's powerlessness becomes most evident when placed in direct contrast to the patriarchal control of Vorster. In line with Connell's contention that within patriarchal discourse the threat of adultery "has nothing to do with greater desire on the part of [the adulterer], it has everything to do with greater power", Durand's repeated attempts at seducing or 'stealing' Vorster's wife exposes his desire not for sexual satisfaction but for the power of the patriarch (Connell 1987: 113). His transgression of Afrikaner patriarchy's demand for monogamy, presents Durand as punishable under patriarchal rule (Connell 1987: 108).

Durand is therefore cast as a sexual ‘criminal’ who poses a threat to the accepted margins of sexual conduct and therefore serves to legitimise the desirability of Vorster’s patriarchal reign. For Foucault, the elaboration of such symbolic margins of accepted sexuality demarcates the bourgeoisie within a “noble code of blood”, which serves to subordinate the underclass as the bearers of various sexual and cultural dangers (Dreyfus and Rabinow 1982: 168).

VORSTER: Daar’s niks om te bespreek nie, jy en Louwna kan maak wat julle wil, maar julle los my kind hier, verstaan jy?
[There’s nothing to discuss, you and Louwna can do whatever you want to, but you will leave my child here, do you understand?]

DURAND: Daar’s niks tussen ons nie.
[There’s nothing between us.]

VORSTER: Kom nou Durand..
[Come on Durand...]

DURAND: Ek het nooit in haar belang gestel nie, dis sy..
[I was never interested in her, it was her...]

VORSTER: Dis een ding om ‘n ander man se vrou te vat, maar om die skuld dan op haar te pak..
[It’s one thing to take another man’s wife, but then to put the blame on her...]

DURAND: Dis die waarheid.
[It’s the truth.]

VORSTER: Jy het nie eers die eerbaarheid om die gevolge te dra nie. Kruip weg agter ‘n vroumens. Loop, voor ek die wagte roep
[You don’t even have the dignity to face the consequences. Hiding behind a woman. Leave, before I call the guards.]

DURAND: As jy dit so wil hê.
[If that is how you want it.]

[Egoli, Episode 625, Scene 1.3]

This isolated encounter (which is the only time within the range of episodes selected for the analysis that the audience sees these two characters portrayed together in one scene), places the emphasis on the asymmetrical distribution of power between Durand and Vorster (see



Fig 30. Vorster confronts Durand about his affair with Louwna. (*Egoli*, Episode 625, Scene 1.3).

⁶⁶ Bourdieu conceives of power struggles as situated in “social fields, which are networks in which specific cultural products and their associated symbolic and material capitals are created and invested in” (Atencio and Beal 2011: 2). Struggle therefore takes on the form of negotiation of “the parameters of what is valued [...] in the competition for social status” (ibid).

Figure 30).⁶⁶ Durand is clearly out of his depth, his instrumental body, powerless in relation to Vorster’s body-transcending authority affirmed through his ability to drive Durand away by mere threatening mention of ‘the guards’. Durand therefore epitomises the notion of the ‘other man’, the powerless intruder who momentarily entertains the desires of married women; yet his melodramatic self-assertion and clear lack of cultural and material capital have deprived him of the leverage to enter into the domain of patriarchy.

4.4. Concluding remarks

Egoli’s portrayal of underclass masculinity therefore serves to cement the legitimised reign of Afrikaner patriarchy. Through a reliance on the vacuous celebrity image of Hofmeyr, Durand appeals to the audience primarily as visual pleasure, without the expectation of much complexity or depth. The programme furthermore encodes the depthlessness of Durand’s appearance through the stereotypical presentation of the working class as embodied. Durand is therefore not only presented as powerless against the eroticised gaze of the spectator, but consequently also as marginalised by the all-encompassing authority of the patriarch. In this way the programme serves to emphasise the discursive relationship between the hegemony of patriarchy and financial success, and therefore affirms class status as the root of the idealisation of Vorster as patriarch. The dichotomous relationship between these two characters therefore

suggests a hierarchical arrangement of men within the category of Whiteness; the following chapter, however, examines how *Egoli* positions racialised men in relation to this masculine order.

CHAPTER 5 'RACIALISED' MASCULINITY IN THE CASE OF ANDREW WILLEMSE

⁶⁷ For Luyt, televisual representations of masculinities inevitably serve to inform the social understanding of racial categories through a process of encoding that he refers to as co-construction (Luyt 2012: 38). In *Representation of masculinity and race in South African television advertising: a content analysis* (2012), Luyt presents a rigorous content analysis of visual male actors in a sample of advertisements. The concluding contention of this study emphasises the manner in which televisual representations of the intersection of masculinity and race maintain a hierarchical relationship that does not appear to reflect the political transformation of South Africa and often serves to strengthen the historically entrenched notion of "white men's 'internal hegemony' over black men." (2012: 49). The term 'racialised' masculinity is therefore used here with a sense of irony that follows from the manner in which televisual representations – even after two decades of democracy – tends to affirm the so-called universal 'neutrality' of Whiteness, as a category that transcends racial definition.

After the African National Congress won the first national democratic election in 1994, this New South Africa became a fertile site for the renegotiation of social identities, necessitating the pluralising expansion of modes of representation beyond the limited tropes available in the media up until this historical juncture (Viljoen 2012: 649). With racial stereotyping forming an integral part of the reproduction of apartheid discourse, the re-evaluation of racial representations must thus be addressed with an awareness of the precipitate of white supremacy that continues to stain the visual economy of this post-apartheid period. Nuttall draws attention to the urgency of the need to rescue markers such as Whiteness, Blackness and Colouredness from the artificiality with which these categories served to legitimise the mythical borders of so-called racial purity (Nuttall 2009: 11). In this light, this chapter's analysis of the representation of 'racialised' masculinity in *Egoli* follows from Russell Luyt's account of the shortcomings in South African gender studies literature in addressing the intersection of gender and race relations in televisual representations (2012: 35).⁶⁷

This chapter's engagement with racial difference is furthermore informed by Jacobs's proposal that mass media played a significant role in facilitating cultural change in South Africa during the transitional

period (2003: 30). Louw argues that despite the fact that *Egoli* did not set out to challenge the audience's political attitude, one should not "underestimate the role played by *Egoli* in opening the eyes of society in the run-up to the election" (1999: 8). Marx contends that notwithstanding *Egoli*'s foundation rooted in his personal 'Americanised' understanding of the soap opera genre, the programme was made with a critical awareness of its position in the unfolding of the New South African narrative (Marx 2013). For Marx this sentiment is evident even in the naming of the programme (ibid.). 'Egoli' is the Zulu name for Johannesburg and translates as "place of gold", which to Marx relates to the aspirational intent of the *Egoli*. As opposed to a "gritty, naturalistic" take on South African life, *Egoli* supposedly set out to propose an idealised future for South Africans of all races (Marx 2013). M-Net's strategic reliance on market research conducted with test groups from their targeted demographic, however, suggests that the utopic horizon constructed in *Egoli* was dictated by the ideals and limited by the demands of an exclusive selection of the South African population. One instance of this form of research, conducted in 1993, asked respondents their opinion on the addition of a black family to the programme; the outcome was summarised as follows (Franz Marx Films 1993: n.p.):

Viewers are of the opinion that *Egoli* already reflects the 'new South Africa' to a certain extent with characters like Donna Makaula⁶⁸ [...] working for Walco, and as in the mixed relationships of some of the white and coloured characters. While some younger English-speaking respondents said a black/white relationship "would add some spice", the consensus in Afrikaans and older English groups was that *Egoli* viewers are not yet ready for such a dramatic departure from the mores with which they grew up. Some of the younger Afrikaans males said the introduction of a black family is unnecessary [...] Almost all the people in the groups [...] admitted that whites generally know very little about the lives of black people, how their family members relate to one another, and how they experience the changes taking place in South Africa [...] Respondents were divided as to what type of black family should be introduced. Some want it to be the type of family that would move in next door in a white suburb. This implies that they felt comfortable about identifying with them, yet earlier the idea of learning about black families that they do not know about and identify with, was said to have great merit. Others who thought a little further said it would be more fitting to introduce a family that lives in Soweto, is working class and striving for a better, new South Africa for all races.⁶⁹

As a result of the outcome of this survey, *Egoli* introduced viewers to the Mashabela family early in 1994. Jeremiah (John Kani), owner of a liquor

⁶⁸ Donna Makaula, the single, successful black career woman portrayed by Thoko Ntsinga, was revealed as one of the audience's most favoured characters in another marketing survey.

⁶⁹ M-Net's detailed categorisation of the diverging opinions according to the age, gender and language group of its respondents implies the broadcaster's awareness of the way in which the novelty of the Rainbow Nation ideology led to a struggle that Adam Haupt describes as "[disparate] identit[ies] compe[ting] for attention in public arenas" (2007: 17). For Haupt, cultural productions from this particular period, specifically those that were aimed towards achieving a sense of inclusivity, revealed that "debates about racism or [...] hegemony [...] cannot be reduced to a tidy binary opposition between black and white subject positions" (ibid.). *Egoli*'s internal debate around cultural inclusivity therefore speaks not only about the representation of various racial groups, but also about the way in which such representations serve to affirm the legitimacy of certain compounds of race, language and culture within the unfolding narrative of the New South Africa. Despite the language issue being touched on in various arguments, the scope of this study does not allow for an in-depth analysis of the politics of *Egoli*'s strategic allocation of spoken languages to certain characters, relationships and situations

wholesaler in Soweto, his wife Ma-Tsheko (Nomhle Nkonyeni) and two children, who are described by the programme's creators as "modern young people [who] often clash with their parents, who believe the two should follow a traditional lifestyle" (Louw 1999: 71). These are daughter Lerato (played by Nthathi Moshesh), a university drop-out, now manager at a coffee shop in Rosebank Mall, and her over-protective brother Tseko (played by Macks Papo), who has just returned from exile in Lesotho, where he completed a degree in Sociology (Louw 1999: 71). Except for Lerato, however, the Mashabelas are awarded very little airtime, with only a small number of scenes portraying their Soweto home.

After being introduced on *Egoli*, Papo received some media attention for his reported energetic ambition. In an article published in *City Press* on 9 October 1994, he instructed his fellow black performing artists who experience themselves as professionally disadvantaged because of the colour of their skin to "stop whining about the past, get off your butts – and prove your worth" (Memela 1994: n.p.). For Papo, "[i]t is true that the legacy of apartheid has devastated many a promising career, but that does not justify sitting back and complaining – because nobody can give you success and glory on a plate" (ibid.). Despite receiving numerous accolades locally and abroad, Papo ironically received a full-time role on *Egoli* only in 2000.⁷⁰ Within the time period covered in this study Papo can be regarded as little more than an 'extra', perceived as the token black guy strategically placed in the background of a limited number of scenes. As opposed to Donna Makuala and Lerato, neither Tseko nor any other black male characters contributed to any major plot developments during this time. *Egoli*'s reluctance to introduce a black male character as central to the narratological development was only re-evaluated several years later, as the country grew more accustomed to the new political dispensation. Similarly even the inclusion of mixed-race romantic relationships from the very first episode (a feature of which Marx speaks with immense pride, as prior to *Egoli* this had not been seen on South African television) avoids bridging the white-black divide.⁷⁴ The sensitivity with which the programme addressed this specific topic is implied in a

⁷⁰ As actor and playwright, Papa was rewarded with Pick of the Fringe Awards during the early 1990s for *No Good Fridays*, *Survival* and *Bear* in Zermatt, Switzerland. Papo also performed for the entire British royal family in *Kwamanzi* at Balmoral Castle in Scotland in 1992. Locally, Papo was nominated as best actor for the Regional Vita Awards in Bloemfontein for his role in *Kippie* in 1998 ("Macks Papo" n.d.).

⁷⁴ These relationships include Johan (white)/Margaret Rose (coloured) in episode 1 - 260; Niek (white)/Margaret Rose (coloured) in episode 96 - 121; Paul (white)/ Margaret Rose (coloured) who got married in episode 362 and Andrew (coloured)/ Lerato (black) in episodes 551 - 574 (Lurie 1994: 1).

letter from L.J. Lurie, an executive producer, to Leon Rautenbach, the Head of M-Net's Local Programme Production, reporting on the way in which the producers monitored the effect of the depiction of mixed-race relationships on viewership statistics (Lurie 1994: 1):

To the best of our knowledge, and after M-Net's usual extensive market research, we are unaware that any of these [mixed-race relationships] have ever appeared "geforceerd" [forced], and there is no evidence that we have been able to find in the AR's⁷² or the TVQ's⁷³ that would indicate any negative reaction from our traditional *Egoli* viewers.

The depiction of racial relationships of a romantic as well as a more general nature should consequently be read as purposefully orchestrated. *Egoli* clearly composed its articulation of racial relations for their specific targeted demographic and therefore avoided addressing potentially confrontational issues such as introducing the audience to strong, successful black men, or to any romantic involvement between white and black characters. As opposed to the programme's reluctance to deal with Blackness, however, *Egoli* introduced the coloured Afrikaans-speaking Willemse family as one of the four primary familial factions in the programme from the very first episode.⁷⁴ One might therefore presume that Colouredness is favoured as a less threatening middle ground between white and black, making the analysis of coloured masculinity pivotal to this study's understanding of *Egoli*'s treatment of race as a social marker in the construction of manhood and a broader New South African cultural hegemony.

5.1. The unknown: racial hybridity

As a key commentator on the field of Colouredness, Adhikari points out that South African historiography's lack of written accounts that deal with the coloured community clearly reflects the marginal nature of this social group (Adhikari 2004: 77).⁷⁵ It is only from the 1990s that coloured racial identity entered the academic conversation in a highly focused way. Adhikari points out that, up until this point, a widespread populist consensus defined coloured people as a "distinct racial group

⁷² Audience Response Data.

⁷³ Television Quotient, also known as Q-score.

⁷⁴ For a concise summary of the Willemse family, see Franz Marx's précis of the first 300 episodes attached as Addendum 1.

⁷⁵ Cressy, a coloured school principal, noted as early as 1913 the tendency to exclude the coloured community from South African history, bemoaning the falsity of the myth that coloured people do not contribute to the social formation of South African society (Adhikari 2004: 77).

that resulted from miscegenation between European settlers and a heterogeneous black labouring class of African and Asian origin” (Adhikari 2008: 78). For Adhikari, coloured people were not only marginalised as a consequence of this specific conception of racial-sexual identity, but also effectively denied historical agency, presented as “inert, faceless beings who are acted upon by whites and [emerged as] incidental [and quite undesirable] to the main narrative of settler conquest and their creation of a Christian, civilised society in southern Africa” (Adhikari 2008: 85, parenthesis added). Coloured people have thus historically been cast as mere bystanders, placed at the margin of the “noble struggle of hardy, pioneering colonists”, who tamed the African landscapes and its barbarous natives (ibid.). Coloured journalist Charles Ash contends that this marginality continues to deny the coloured community a sense of shared culture: “As a late entrant to the human race, is the Coloured community too late to enter any submissions to the ‘culture club’ or have cultural submissions been closed?” (2009).

For Adhikari (2006: 156), the problem of this essentialist fixation on miscegenation is rooted in its inability to recognise the role of societal change and individual agency in the production of coloured subjectivity, thereby denying coloured people an active role in forming their own identity (Adhikari 2008: 93). Furthermore, in relation to a populist version of Social Darwinism, miscegenation is often assumed as resulting in weaker progeny (Adhikari 2006: 156). Having the status of being of mixed race therefore marks an individual not only with a perceived low-ranking physiology, but also as intermediate within a broader racial hierarchy (Adhikari 2006: 143). Coloured people therefore appear not only marginal to Whiteness, but also marginal to the entire spectrum of racial identities, as it perceivably lacks the homogenous ‘purity’ that serves to cement the boundaries between racial groups. Adhikari (2008: 48) argues that this racial ambiguity and its resulting negative stereotyping are pivotal factors in the formation and experience of coloured identity and consciousness. For Hall “identity is always in part a narrative”; in the case of Colouredness this narrative is figured through the marginalisation

and ambiguity that discursively pacified and silenced coloured people throughout much of the country's history (Hall 1997: 49). This results in a 'slippery' conception of Colouredness that avoids clear definition and remains obscured by the shortage of knowledge about this field.⁷⁶

From birth Willemse's entanglement with his racial identity is one of contestation and complexity. The very reality of his existence is the result of an illicit affair between his coloured mother, Ester (Nenna) Willemse, and her white employer Senator Sinclair, for whom she worked as a housekeeper. This affair is perceived as doubly taboo in that not only was Willemse conceived from an extramarital relationship, but his racial identity also stems from the 'deployment' of miscegenation in accordance with the Immorality Act of 1950 that prohibited sexual relations between persons of different racial groups.⁷⁷ In relation to Hall's insistence that the mixed race individual "must learn to reconcile his two identities and make them one", Willemse is placed in a liminal terrain that exists between Whiteness and Otherness wrought by the fact that the process of 'making them one' is an act rooted in so-called immorality in South Africa (Hall 1968: 8). It is indicative of the tendency to omit coloured history, the love affair between Nenna and Senator Sinclair is never explicitly discussed. When Nenna makes a cursory remark about the similarity of Willemse's physique to that of his father, he responds only with an aggressive stare and immediately changes the topic of conversation (see the final frame in Figure 31).

After living in London for a long time Willemse arrives back to Johannesburg in order to manage the affairs of his boss, Katherine Sinclair, at Walco international.⁷⁸ Nenna welcomes him into her home with great excitement, providing him with care and many a home-cooked meal for the duration of his stay. It is within these two settings that the audience most often encounters Willemse – the domesticity of his mother's flat and the corporate offices of Walco. In comparison with Vorster and Durand's tendency toward domination of the visual field, Willemse typically occupies the shot in a way that presents him as much

⁷⁶ In the case of the coloured character, Andrew Willemse, this sense of unknown-ness is amplified by the fact that the actor, Kevin Smith, who portrays this role, makes his televisual debut on *Egoli*. In contrast to recognisability of Vorster/Korsten and Durand/Hofmeyr, whose characters extend directly from their personal celebrity status, the audience encounters Willemse/Smith as a literal stranger.

⁷⁷ The term 'deployment' is used here in relation to Foucault's contention that "[s]exuality must not be thought of as a kind of natural given which power tries to hold in check, or as an obscure domain which knowledge tries to gradually uncover" (Foucault 1978: 105). The sexual-racial construction of the notion of miscegenation should therefore be regarded as an operative deployment that strategically organises racial relations into a policeable structure that enables a legal rhetoric that frames 'natural' sexuality as a categorical feature limited to the procreation of Whiteness (Ehlers 2011: 320). For Foucault there is no doubt that "relations of sex gave rise, in every society, to a deployment of alliance: a system of marriage, of fixation and development of kinship ties, of transmission of names and possessions", that serve to naturalise several mechanisms of social and juridical constraint (Foucault 1978: 106 – original emphasis). The criminalising of mixed-race relations therefore serves as an example of this 'deployment of alliance'.

⁷⁸ Katherine Sinclair is the sister of Willemse's father; the late Senator Sinclair, yet their relationship is one of a purely professional nature and their familial relation is never mentioned or made explicitly visible through their personal interactions. Sinclair, however, functions as a recurring reminder of Willemse's racial hybridity and paternal relation to Whiteness.



Fig 31. Willemse and Nenna having breakfast. (*Egoli*, Episode 535, Scene 1.1).

more equal to the characters with whom he shares his scenes. This is specifically evident when placed in relation to women (see Figures 31 – 33). Willemse’s visual appearance furthermore seems much more suited to his visual surroundings – in both the domestic as well as corporate setting. He does not emerge as a central focal point by means of visual isolation (as is argued about Vorster in Chapter 3) neither does he read as a visual intruder (as is argued about Durand in Chapter 4) (see Figures 31 – 35). The ambiguous nature of Willemse’s racial construction is therefore pacified by his ability to act as a type of chameleon character with the ability to enter multiple differentiated settings without causing a visual disruption.

In contrast to the other corporate men, who appear consistently dressed in their formal work attire, Willemse is sporadically shown in casual wear, often sporting over-sized shirts that drape off his shoulders (see Figures 32 and 33). These shirts tend to accentuate his childlike demeanour, often accompanied with facial expressions evocative of innocence, naivety and petulance, placing emphasis on his seemingly immature nature. These visual markers accompanied by his constant need for motherly



Fig 32. Willemse and Nenna discussing the political situation. (*Egoli*, Episode 525, Scene 1.1).



Fig 33. 'Willemse unexpectedly arriving at Lynette Strydom's flat. (*Egoli*, Episode 552, Scene 3.2).

care serves to infantilise Willemse, in line with what Edwards refers to as the 'emasculatation thesis' (2006: 65). Edwards contends that Western colonialism and institutionalised racism have effectively emasculated the image of non-white men, through the discursive popularisation of the notion that white men are superior to those of colour, who are in some way eternally burdened to 'catch up' (ibid.). This is most certainly evident in the manner in which apartheid discourse conceptualised non-Whiteness as a sign of an unresolved cultural naiveté in dire needs of the tutelage of civil (white) Afrikaans society (Thornton 2001: 39).⁷⁹

Despite his continual infantilisation, Willemse often acts as the voice of a newly liberated non-white generation, enthusiastically professing the possibilities that the New South Africa might produce. His opinion that "we [the non-white community of South Africa] will not have to stand back for anyone, ever again" lies at the heart of Willemse's political

⁷⁹ This assumption is emphasised in a brutish form by Andries Treurnicht's statement that "[c]oloureds are our 12-year-old children and must remain under our guardianship" (in Adhikari 2006: 153).

consciousness (*Egoli*, Episode 536 Scene 1.1), and informs an idealism that he persistently professes to his family:

WILLEMSE: Dis hier waar dinge gebeur, alles borrel en kook. Ons lewe in opwindende tye Ma.

[It's here where things are happening, everything is bubbling and boiling. We are living in exciting times, Mom.]

NENNA: Miskien vir jou Andy, maar ek kan doen sonder hierdie opwinding. Ek sukkel al klaar so met my bloeddruk.

[Maybe for you Andy, but I can do without this excitement. I'm already struggling with my blood pressure as it is.]

WILLEMSE: Dinge kan nie verander sonder 'n bietjie pyn nie - dis hoe die lewe is.

[Things cannot change without a bit of pain - that's how life is.]

[*Egoli*, Episode 525, Scene 2.1]

⁸⁰ One might argue that the programme specifically sets out to emasculate Willemse so that he can raise questions regarding the uncertain political future, without being perceived as a threatening force.

It proves significant that *Egoli* specifically makes use of Willemse as the most (and perhaps only) politically outspoken character in the programme. His racial liminality – conceptually Westernised by his residence in London – avoids clear identification with traditional racial classifications and can be read, in Nuttall and Michael's terms, as an example of a "new form of [social] imagining" (Nuttall and Michael 2001: 2). Willemse therefore challenges the fixed nature of the oppressive identities reproduced through apartheid discourse. In relation to Wasserman and Jacobs' argument that identity formation in the New South Africa remains entangled with traditional apartheid tropes, and that the affirmation of previously marginalised identities runs the risk of leading to a form of strategic essentialism, the programme's specific reliance on the hybrid nature of this character seems to by-pass the pitfalls of racial essentialism and therefore casts Willemse as the ideal voice for a new political perspective (Wasserman and Jacobs 2003: 15). It seems feasible that Willemse's racial intermediacy provides a fertile site for a non-threatening, pseudo-objectivity with which the programme can address the sensitivity of political change.⁸⁰

WILLEMSE: Paul leef in die middel-eeue, soos alle Suid Afrikaanse mans [...] Dit verstom my elke dag meer en meer, ons staan op die rand van die verkiesing, en dit lyk nie vir my of enige iemand gereed is vir die veranderinge wat gaan kom nie.

[Paul is living in the middle ages, like all South African men [...] It baffles me more and more every day, we're at the brink of the elections and it doesn't seem to me as if anyone is ready for the changes that will happen.]

[*Egoli*, Episode 525, Prologue]

The notion of infantilising therefore leads to a plurality of readings which, on the one hand, devalues the character's political optimism as naively idealistic, but on the other hand, I argue, speak to the infant nature of New South African identities that are not rigidified by racial classification, but opened up by a shared experience of a political awakening. This argument, however, depends heavily on a reading of *Egoli's* articulation of Willemse as a coloured man in relation to a broader network of social power.

5. 2. The power of Whiteness

Notwithstanding the challenge of post-apartheid discourse to free the negotiation of social identities from the fixity of previous cultural boundaries, one must acknowledge that these negotiations are cemented to some degree by the inequality of the established material distribution of power which continues to permeate social reality (Wasserman and Jacobs 2003: 15; Mbembe 2008: 6). Apartheid discourse constituted racial definitions by superimposing on to the racialised body social categories pertaining to lifestyle, class and professionalism, normalising and conflating these stereotypical assumptions with the 'common sense' of the biological 'certainty' of racial difference (Posel 2001: 88). This idiosyncratic composition of racial tropes was furthermore deployed through the Population Registration Act, which legally obliged all South Africans to register as official members of a designated racial group, with

the understanding that this classification defined all aspects of one's life (2001: 89).⁸¹ This panoptic condition served to institute race as the "mould within which all knowledge and power were constituted", thereby unavoidably encoding all social actions as conditional on a platitudinous understanding of race (2001: 104). The domination of white supremacy was thus secured and legitimised by a process of social hierarchisation instated by apartheid discourse and should thus be read in line with Foucault's conception of 'biopower'.

Foucault makes use of the term 'biopower' to describe how power projected on to the body can serve as a form of domination over a large unit of a population, such as a racial group. Foucault thereby locates institutionalised racism as the effect of a state which relies on a medico-biological attitude as the foundation of its understanding of race, and the way in which such an attitude serves to fix racial differences (Foucault 1997b: 80). The residual implications of the effects of apartheid biopower are therefore always already present in post-apartheid negotiations of racial identities. In relation to the effects of biopower, Willemse is therefore cast in a position reminiscent of racial stereotyping. Ash contends that "[o]ne of the most unique features of being coloured is that at birth, you are gifted with a boxed set of societal issues still in their original, restrictive packaging" (Ash 2009). This includes the implications of the stereotypical reduction of coloured identity to alcoholism, unemployment and crudeness, a perception visible in Kuli Roberts's widely criticised column in the *Sunday World* on 27 February 2011, in which she wrote that "[t]hey [coloured people] have no front teeth and eat fish like they are trying to deplete the ocean [...] they love to fight in public and most are very violent" (*Kuli Roberts Column Scrapped 2011*).⁸²

The visible appearance of his Colouredness thus opens Willemse to a reading informed by such widespread essentialist stereotyping. The programme, however, challenges this stereotype by portraying Willemse as a professional, educated and articulate man. There are, however, continual reminders that Willemse's position in the professional realm

⁸¹ The Population Registration Act which required all South African inhabitants to be classified and registered in accordance with racial characteristics such as skin colour, facial features, hair texture and even socioeconomic status was instated on 7 July 1950 and repealed only on 28 June 1991.

⁸² *The Sunday World* retracted the article and terminated Roberts' employment the day after publication as a result of her explicit racist tone.



Fig 34. Willemse seated at Walco's reception. (*Egoli*, Episode 569, Scene 2.1).

is the result of his 'Western cleansing' and his paternal relation to Whiteness. Willemse's presence in the corporate realm thus appears as a form of social mimicry, reshaping his racial Otherness in relation to his similarity to Whiteness. For Bhabha (1984: 126):

The discourse of mimicry is constructed around an ambivalence; in order to be effective, mimicry must continually produce its slippage, its excess, its difference [...] The authority of [...] mimicry is therefore stricken by an indeterminacy: mimicry emerges as the representation of a difference that is itself a process of disavowal.

This process of disavowal is prevalent in the way in which Willemse is awarded a partial entry into the corporate world, as a representative for Sinclair, but the audience is often reminded that his role is characterised as one who is there to support and serve. *Egoli* never shows Willemse in his own office, but rather frames him on various occasions in the Walco reception area (see Figure 27). Elsa du Plessis even makes the joke: "now you only need to answer the phone, then you'll be the perfect secretary".⁸³ The asymmetrical distribution of corporate power is furthermore emphasised by Willemse's frustration about the Vorsters as the custodians of an established material predisposition. He states: "the less I have to do with the Vorsters, the better" (*Egoli*, Episode 521 Scene 1.2):

WILLEMSE: I'm really battling. I know my attitude at Walco has been negative and destructive, but...

LYNETTE: It's the Vorsters?

⁸³ Translated from the original Afrikaans text (*Egoli*, Episode 569, Scene 2.1).

WILLEMSE: (Nods in agreement)
I hate working there, for them, even if it is for
Katherine, I hate it!

MITCH: Join the club, but don't let them get to you, that's what
they're counting on. They're giving you enough rope...

WILLEMSE: I know. Hard as it is, I'm playing the game...for now.

[Egoli, Episode 553, Scene 3.2]

Even in his mimetic reproduction of Whiteness, Willemse is denied the authority to make independent decisions without consulting with Sinclair. This constraint on social practices is indicative of an established power structure that in Connell's terms exists as both the object and condition of his labour (Connell 1987: 107-108). In other words, Willemse's desire to gain the respect of an established corporate order is dependent on his subordination to this order's racial exclusiveness. The other men at Walco – all of them white and Afrikaans speaking – are ambitiously climbing the corporate ladder, in the competitive race for the position as Managing Director, yet Willemse, in contrast, merely observes, a position which gains him little respect from his co-workers.

WILLEMSE: ...[D]an beteer jy jou werknemers onder die verstand bring dat ek Katherine se amptelike verteenwoordiger by Walco is. En ek sal hier rond wees tot sy my laat terug kom.
[...[T]hen you need to inform your employees that I am Katherine's official representative at Walco. And I will be here until she lets me come back.]

TIM: Wel, ek hoop nie dis gou nie.
[Well, I hope that is not soon.]

WILLEMSE: Ek is hier om Katherine se belange te bevorder. So...ek hou julle dop.
[I am here to promote Katherine's interests...So I have my eye on you.]

TIM: Solank jy jou aggressie op 'n ander plek uitleef solank jy van ons kantoor geriewe gebruik maak.
[As long as you project your anger somewhere else while you are using our offices.]

WILLEMSE: Pasop, moet nie met my swaarde kruis as jy nie bloed kan hanteer nie.
[Watch out, do not cross swords with me if you can't handle blood.]

[Egoli, Episode 614, Scene 1.3]

This specific argument portrays Willemse in stark juxtaposition to Tim Herold,⁸⁴ whose calm and collected response serves to emphasise the anger in Willemse's tone, posture and facial expression (see Figure 35). This emphasis on Willemse's aggressive behaviour serves to highlight his confident striving for independence and esteem, thereby challenging the legitimacy of the sole authority of white men. Willemse, however, presumably realises that his subordinate relation to an established corporate order reproduces the material inequality that condemns him to subservience. His political idealism consequently leads him to believe that the cultural transformation of the country might provide an alternative to 'making money for the Vorsters'. Willemse regards the

⁸⁴ This argument occurs during the period in which Tim Harold serves as the Acting Managing Director of Walco International, appointed by the Vorsters as a result of André's leave of absence for medical reasons.



Fig 35. Willemse 's aggressive confrontation with Tim Herold'. (Egoli, Episode 614, Scene 1.3).

narrative unfolding of the new democratic South Africa as an opportunity to quit working for Katherine Sinclair so as to move back to the country on a permanent basis and return to the field of journalism.

WILLEMSE: Hier maak julle geskiedenis, en ek sit daar anderkant. Dit voel vir my of ek uitgesluit is.

[Here you are making history, and I am sitting over there. It feels as if I am shut out.]

NENNA: Of jy nou daar anderkant of hier is, die geskiedenis sal in elk geval uitgeskryf of uitgebaklei word.

[Whether you are over there or here, the history will be written out or fought out regardless.]

WILLEMSE: Ek's 'n joernalis Ma, hulle kan my gebruik [...] ek wil nie vir die res van my lewe vir die Vorsters geld maak nie [...] dinge is aan die gebeur, dinge is oopgegooi hier, Ma, en ek het nog my ou kontakte, dis beter as om vir ryk mense nog ryker te maak.

[I am a journalist Mom, they can use me [...] I don't want to make money for the Vorsters for the rest of my life [...] things are happening, things are opened up here Mom and I still have all my old contacts, it's better than making rich people even richer.]

[Egoli, Episode 524, Scene 3.1]

Despite settling for a job in copywriting as opposed to journalism, Willemse manages to sever his professional sense of agency from its contingency to his own traces of Whiteness and he exchanges his status of visitor for that of permanent citizen.

WILLEMSE: Nee, Ma, dis my land hierdie, ek gaan hier bly maak nie saak wat gebeur nie!

[No Mom, this is my country, and I will stay here no matter what!]

[Egoli, Episode 663, Scene 2.3]

In direct contrast to Vorster, Willemse's relation to power is thus not that of the corporate tycoon deeply embedded in the historically cemented material arrangement of wealth and power. He enters the social structure

through the act of mimicry and therefore has to navigate between his role as representative of an established order and his own personal aspirations and political awakening. Yet Willemse's appeal to power is not met with the same recurring futility as in the case of Durand. Whereas Durand remains fixed within a position of subordination because of his inability to escape his social class, the fluidity of Willemse's movement between marginality and complacency serves, on the one hand, to affirm the hegemony of Afrikaner patriarchy, whilst simultaneously suggesting the potential for Willemse to transgress the limitations of its distribution of power. After Willemse leaves Walco, however, *Egoli* makes very little mention of his career ambitions and his possible liberation from the dominance of the corporate order. From this point the programme turns its attention to Willemse's personal life. It is through the unfolding narrative of his romantic involvement with Lerato Mashabela that *Egoli* most pertinently starts speaking about the challenges and effects of the reconciliation of cultural difference.

5.3. The self-ethic in racial assimilation

Willemse's racial hybridity frames him not only as the ideal entry point for *Egoli*'s reflection on political transformation and the possibility for transgressing the established power relationships, but also raises the question of whether his racial ambivalence might serve as a fertile site for the assimilation of cultural difference. My interest in Willemse's ethical self-relationship therefore centres on the question of how Willemse positions his social role in relation to his encounters and engagement with racial Others?

Cultural difference emerges as the thematic centre of the romantic relationship between Willemse and Mashabela. On the one hand, their attraction is spurred by the similarity of their affinity for 'modern'⁸⁵ South African life, but on the other hand, their contrasting racial identities serve to elucidate the historical fixedness of cultural segregation.

⁸⁵ Modern, in this sense, refers to a state of perceived detachment from the boundaries of cultural difference entrenched through the segregation policies of apartheid.

The portrayal of this turbulent relationship draws attention to the problematic of the ideology of the Rainbow Nation, which Nuttall and Michael (2000: 1) describe as a reductionist oversimplification of the complexity of real social identities. Robert Thornton (2001: 41) concurs that the neutrality suggested by the politics of the term New South Africa must be unmasked through a genealogy that reveals its social reality as “a generative, productive relationship in which concepts, practices and meaning give rise to each other, but, paradoxically, they also are always *there* as the condition for any concept, practice or meaning whatsoever” (ibid.). In other words, the assimilation of difference is always already rooted in the recognition of difference. In this light, the relationship between Willemse and Mashabela serves to imagine the reconciliation of cultural differences within a New South African paradigm, but it simultaneously remains entangled within the deeply entrenched historical borders segregating individuals into rigid cultural factions.

Egoli specifically makes use of the two lovers’ parents in order to express a concern regarding the complexity of a relationship that crosses the racial divide between coloured and black people. For both Nenna and Jeremiah their concern is rooted in the inevitability that such a relationship would change their children, thereby the possibility of cultural assimilation as a negative result:

NENNA: Dis nie hoe ek vir Andy ken nie, hy is klaar aan die verander. Hmm... jy moes hom gister gehoor het. Hierdie ding met Lerato gaan tussen my en Andy kom, hoor wat ek vir jou sê!
 [This isn't how I know my Andy, he is already changing. Hmm... you should have heard him yesterday. This thing with Lerato is going to come between us, mark my words!]

MARGARET Dit sal oorwaai Ma.
 - ROSE:⁸⁶ [This will blow over Mom.]

NENNA: Moet ek dan nou vir sy onthalwe maak asof ek bly is daarvoor? Ek het nog nooit vir my kinders gelieg nie, en ek is ook nie van plan om nou te begin nie.
 [Should I then pretend to be happy for his sake? I have never lied to my children and I'm not about to start now.]

⁸⁶ Margaret Rose is Willemse’s sister, who is married to Paul de Klerk – a white, upper-middle-class employee of Walco International.

MARGARET So oor 'n maand of wat dan is hy terug in London, dan is
- ROSE: dit iets van die verlede
[In a month or so he will be back in London, then this will be something of the past.]

NENNA: Toe jy met Paul begin uitgaan het was dit ook eers vir my
moeilik, maar dis mos anders.
[In the beginning, when you and Paul started dating it was also difficult for me, but that is different.]

MARGARET Hoe anders?
- ROSE: [Different how?]

NENNA: Jong, dis 'n perd van 'n ander kleur en Paul het 'n goeie
werk en hy kan sorg vir jou.
[It's a completely different situation and Paul has a good job, he can take care of you.]

MARGARET Ag kom aan Ma, dis nie omdat Paul 'n grootkop by Walco is
- ROSE: dat Ma hom aanvaar nie.
[Oh, come on Mom, it's not because he is such a big-shot at Walco that you accepted him.]

NENNA: Luister moet nie woorde in my mond lê nie. Jy kan my van
baie dinge beskuldig, maar die dat ek 'n...'n snob is nie.
[Listen, don't put words in my mouth. You can accuse me of many things, but not of being a...a snob.]

MARGARET Toemaar, kom ons los dit.
- ROSE: [Let's just leave it then.]

NENNA: Nee... as daar 'n boom staan vol koketiele, en doer staan
'n boom vol pappagaaië, waan'toe sal jy vlieg, hu? Jy wat 'n budgie is? Julle moet nie vir my verkeerd verstaan nie. Lerato is 'n lieue dierbare kind en ek hou van haar, maar saam met Andy?
[No... if there is a tree full of cockatiels standing here and a tree full of parrots standing there, to which one are you going to fly to if you are a budgie? Don't get me wrong, Lerato is a dear child and I like her, but with Andy?]

[Egoli, Episode 570, Scene 2.3]

JEREMIAH: We are too different. Our cultures are different. You ask me to accept you...but can you accept us?

WILLEMSE: I already have.

JEREMIAH: Then why are you trying to change Lerato? You want her to think like you, do things the way you do.

WILLEMSE: I see...So, that's what this is about?

JEREMIAH: Lerato is a modern girl, there's nothing wrong with that... but the Springbuck can never become the Kudu...

WILLEMSE: I see...So, that's what this is about?

[Egoli, Episode 613, Scene 1.4]

If identity is not an ontological given, but rather always in a process of becoming (Hanna 2013: 660), the cultural exchange between Willemse and Mashabela suggests the possibility of the emergence of a new form of cultural hybridity, not just in the prospect of producing mixed-race offspring, but also in the unhinging from their racial status through the cross-pollination of their social knowledge (Nuttall 2001: 6). This process of cross-cultural integration, however, is translated by their parents as the erasure of one's so-called cultural 'pedigree' that leads to a loss of identity. Willemse and Mashabela's relationship is furthermore portrayed as repeatedly disrupted by their awareness of their differences, leading to the constant re-evaluation of their commitment. When they finally decide to get married, their cultural differences reach a crucial deadlock. Mashabela's insistence on upholding her family's expectation of a labola agreement creates a cultural barricade obstructing the formation of a hybridised union.⁸⁷

⁸⁷ Labola is an age-old custom "whereby a man pays the family of his fiancé for her hand in marriage" (De Swart 2014). According to Tom, "The custom is aimed at bringing the two families together, developing mutual respect, and showing that a woman's future husband is capable of financially supporting his wife" (cited in De Swart 2014).

WILLEMSE: This labola thing, it's ridiculous. I'm prepared to ask your father's permission to marry you, but I refuse to have to pay for the privilege.

LERATO: It's a sign of respect to my parents. They'll finally realise that you're serious about me.

WILLEMSE: It sounds like a business transaction to me. I won't buy you.

LERATO: If you love me, you'll go through with it. It's not such a big deal.

WILLEMSE: If it's not such a big deal, why do you expect me to do it? If I had known about the...

LERATO: You would have never asked me to marry you?

WILLEMSE: That's not what I mean! I love you, isn't that enough?

LERATO: I don't know. We aren't even married yet and already we are fighting. Maybe we should call it off, before it's too late.

[Egoli, Episode 622, Scene 2.2]

In his ethical self-relationship, Willemse is portrayed as reluctant to accept cultural change, and views Mashabela's traditions as marginal to his experience and therefore unnecessary to assimilate. As opposed to the acceptance of cultural differences, Willemse seems convinced that his role as soon-to-be-husband requires him to educate and transform Mashabela so as to rid her of her perceived Otherness.

WILLEMSE: Why don't we make it easy on ourselves and live off take-aways. I think it's a brilliant idea. It will give you time for an evening course.

LERATO: Course? What course?

WILLEMSE: Well, anything you like. Political science, economics, I'll help you choose.

LERATO: What do I want to do a course for, I'm fine.

WILLEMSE: It could be very interesting.

LERATO: I tried it once, it interfered with my ball-room dancing. Anyway, I don't have anything to prove to anybody

WILLEMSE: Well, don't you have any ambition? To...to better yourself?

LERATO: Are you saying I'm not good enough for you?

WILLEMSE: Of course not!

LERATO: If I were white, would you still feel that I need to better myself?

WILLEMSE: Hey...Colour has got nothing to do with this.

LERATO: Okay...on one condition... I'll start classes the moment you can speak my language, after all...I speak yours.

[*Egoli*, Episode 623, Scene 1.2]

Egoli finally concludes this narrative arc with the outcome that Willemse's failure to 'cleanse' Mashabela of her cultural differences dooms their relationship to certain failure.

⁸⁸ The term creolisation is used here in line with Glissant's contention that 'creole' identities do not result from the mixing of so-called 'pure' categories, such as African and European, black and white. Glissant defines creolisation as the "contemporary manifestation of contact between peoples" that serves to unmask their "mythical pedigree" (1992: 17, 141). Erasmus identifies the value of Glissant's proposal in its disruption of the mythology of cultural purity through his emphasis on the multiplicity of histories that inform the formation of cultures within a genealogy that reveals all identities always already as hybrid constructions (2001: 18). Nuttall and Michael therefore contend that "the theoretical possibilities of the term 'creolisation' need to be drawn on not to bring erasure – an erasing of difference – but to underwrite a complex process of making connections" (2000: 10).

WILLEMSE: There has to be a way.

LERATO: I wish there was. This will never work.

WILLEMSE: We just haven't tried hard enough.

LERATO: We can't change who we are, we come from different worlds. You thought you could change me, and I thought so too, but the problem is, I don't want to change.

WILLEMSE: Where does that leave us?

LERATO: A little wiser maybe?

WILLEMSE: But I love you and you love me!

LERATO: For how long?

[*Egoli*, Episode 628, Scene 3.2]

Egoli's representation of Willemse and Mashabela's oscillation between discovering similarities and encountering unsurpassable differences can be read as an example of what Wasserman and Jacobs (2003: 15) describe as the re-evaluation of social configurations and renegotiation of cultural borders following the birth of the New South Africa. Nuttall and Michael use the term creolisation to describe the possibility of new configurations as a process "whereby individuals of different cultures, languages and religions are thrown together and invent their own language [...] a new culture, and a new social organisation" (2001: 6).⁸⁸



Fig 36. Willemse and Jeremiah Mashabela in conversation. (*Egoli*, Episode 613, Scene 1.4).



Fig 37. Willemse and Mashabela discuss their engagement and the prospect of a labola arrangement. (*Egoli*, Episode 621, Scene 2.4).

I would argue that, despite *Egoli*'s reluctance to present a positive portrayal of new forms of cultural integration, its representation of these encounters of difference does contribute to the development of a visual economy that presents the audience with shared language with which to address notions of difference and sameness. The consistency with which *Egoli* frames these moments of cultural differentiation by the *mise-en-scène* of the coffee shop serves to detach the traditional values in question from the expected confines of stereotypical racial tropes, thereby engaging the viewer through their familiarity with the visual appearance of the scene.

Zegeye and Liebenberg (2001) make use of the term “historical prisons” in order to describe the discursively fabricated cultural borders that result from the seeming incompatibility of the politics of exclusivity that served to support racial supremacy within the material reality of a multicultural and multiracial population. For these authors, the material arrangement of power that resulted from the struggle over ownership and the socially institutionalised fear of the Other have led to the “shelving” of a potential for unity and shared meaning (2001: 216). The intimacy within which *Egoli* unpacks cultural differences in the recognizable setting of the coffee shop (and in certain instances to the overbearing soundtrack of Tchaikovsky’s *Swan Lake* in the background), when investigated through the creolisation approach, reads as a textual form of cultural assimilation. The programme therefore shift the spectator’s focus from the ‘bars’ of these historical prisons to the gaps in between them. Yet, the programme presents cultural exchange and the development of shared meaning with a numbing overtone of white upper-middle-class traditions. Ndebele speaks of South African histories as “intricacies that create reluctant bonds” (in Nuttall and Michael 2001: 9). I argue that *Egoli* clearly reflects this reluctance and fails to present the viewer with the opportunity to engage with the real complexities at stake in the process of bridging the cultural divides that have become rigidified in South African history.

5.4. Concluding remarks

From the above analysis it can be inferred that the Willemse’s racially intermediate position frames him with a level of complexity not often encountered in the soap opera genre. In contrast to the repetitive affirmation of Vorster’s and Durrand’s stereotypical but resolved ‘empty’ appearances, Willemse presents a limited, yet convincing, sense of depth. It seems evident, however, that *Egoli* does not manage to disentangle Willemse’s racial hybridity from what Nuttall and Michael describe as the “overwhelming presence of race as master signifier” (Nuttall and Michael 2001: 11). By constructing Willemse through acts of social mimicry, the

programme ironically makes use of his racial ambivalence to reinforce “particular repertoires [that] have dominated the way in which race has been thought about” (ibid.). I therefore agree with Wasserman and Jacobs that “exclusionary notions of identity based on race and ethnicity are still operative among certain sectors of post-apartheid South African society” (2003: 15).

In its multiracial inclusivity, despite it being extremely limited, *Egoli* addresses the problem that Nuttall and Michael describes as the typical oversight of texts from this period to open up notions of “being together”, representing shared space, experience and common rituals (Nuttall and Michael 2001: 12). One might therefore return to the matter of Tseko Mashabela so as to assert that despite his marginal depiction in the programme, the visual insertion of a young educated black man to the backdrop of the recognisable set, serves the purpose of subtly introducing the audience to the presence of black men into spaces typically perceived as the realm of Whiteness, thereby developing a visual economy in which everyday exchanges between different races become less threatening and more familiar.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

This study set out to document a part of *Egoli*'s media history that overlapped significantly with the birth of the New South Africa. By specifically focusing on the episodes of 1994, I aimed to investigate the programme's construction of a signifying economy that imagined a New South African social order in anticipation of the imminent transformation of the country. With this aim in mind, my analysis centred on the representation of masculinities that served as distinct anchoring points within the programme's social matrix, so as to explore not only the mediation of gender, but also of social power relations, class and race. This case study examined the potential of the soap opera genre to actively contribute toward the negotiation of cultural hegemony by transmitting its mediation of social reality directly into the viewers' living room. My study comprised three character analyses, presented in Chapters Three, Four and Five, that reflected on *Egoli*'s portrayal of divergent types of masculinity through the aid of the interpretive theoretical framework presented in Chapter Two.

Chapter Two contextualised *Egoli* within the commercial function of the televisual medium and the conventions of the soap opera genre. As a marketing tool and the face of the relatively new broadcaster M-Net, *Egoli* was tasked with providing pleasurable viewing to the specific targeted demographic. In the formulation of its textual reality, however, this task was largely overshadowed by the pivotal role *Egoli* played in the development of the broadcaster's ideological mythology rooted in the notion of cultural diversity and prosperity. In contrast to Fiske's proposition that television offers its viewers 'producerly' texts from which to actively construct their own meaning, I argue that the soap opera elicits a non-critical passivity. In relation to *Egoli*'s repetitive consistency, the achievement of verisimilitude through perceived realism and its placement within the intimacy of the domestic realm, my analysis positioned the programme as a 'readerly' text. My study therefore argued that the programme negotiated a broader cultural hegemony on behalf of its audience through the formation of its textual social order.

The analysis of masculinity that followed furthermore argued for the 'readerly' nature of gender construction. By intersecting Butler's notion of performativity with Foucault's conception of 'subjectivisation', I examined the performance of masculinities as retroactive iterations of normative prescriptions. Accordingly, I argued that if masculinities are the product of a power-knowledge-ethic nexus, the televisual articulation of gender identities is limited to a 'readerly' activity constrained by the margins of gender discourse. In order to reflect on soap opera's navigation of masculinity as a discursive field, I set out to test the relevance of Connell's 'relational topology of masculinities' to television in South Africa. As central to this topology Connell conceives of hegemonic masculinity as a methodological construct that functions as a central anchoring point in the analysis of a gender order. Yet the notion of hegemonic masculinity, as a position of singular idealisation, proved too abstract and evasive and thus resisted effective application. The specific narrative arcs and character features that allowed the most insightful analyses of the prescriptive nature of gender discourse arose most effectively from

idiosyncrasies (particular types of behaviours, appearances, historical dispositions etc.) that resulted in the suspension of masculine power. These seemed to be the moments where analysis could invigorate the neutrality and universality typically assigned to the representation of masculinity in soap opera and more specifically *Egoli*.

As central to an understanding of *Egoli*'s production of a social gender order, Chapter Three interrogated the characterisation of Dr Walt Vorster as the vehicle for the programme's construction of Afrikaner patriarchy. Following Morrell and du Pisani's contextualisation of patriarchy in relation to the white supremacy of apartheid discourse, this chapter approached Vorster as a subject of contestation marked by a sense of residual guilt and moral uncertainty. This uncertainty most evidently came to the fore with the discovery of the skeleton that suggested the imminent castigation of an established patriarchal order. My analysis therefore navigated the ambiguity of Afrikaner patriarchy, which in the case of Vorster oscillated between villainy and heroism. As in the case of the skeleton, it is, however, revealed that at this early point in *Egoli*'s production, the programme recurrently affirmed the ascendancy of a current order of Afrikaner patriarchy. *Egoli* therefore suggested that as a symbol of impenetrable wealth, class and cultural sophistication, the patriarch will inevitably be redeemed – regardless of the circumstances.

I furthermore argued that the familiarity of Gé Korsten, who portrayed this role, acts as an entry point for the audience's positive reading of this character because of his established cultural appeal of his public persona. The casting of Korsten at this mature stage in his career served not only to provide the audience with the comforting image of a well-known cultural icon amidst the uncertainty of the changing political climate, but furthermore served to redeem the cultural value of Korsten as an emblem of Afrikaans esteem. Through a reliance on celebrity intertextuality, *Egoli* therefore legitimated established Afrikaner culture as a form of capital in the complex multiracial narrative of the New South Africa.

Chapter Four introduced *Egoli*'s representation of underclass masculinity as portrayed by the character Doug Durand (Steve Hofmeyr). Durand was configured in the archetypal entanglement of working-class identity politics with embodied subjectivity. In contrast to the elevated cultural appeal of Korsten, Hofmeyr's celebrity status was, as he admitted himself, figured almost solely on his rugged good looks. I claimed that the audience therefore encountered Durand from a predisposition that expected to locate the pleasure of his character not within the disembodied rationality ascribed to the patriarch, but rather in a visceral materiality, objectified for erotic visual consumption. By offsetting Korsten, as an emblematic symbol of established cultural sophistication, against the young pop star who seemed to represent a newfangled, somewhat Americanised strand of Afrikaner culture, *Egoli* subtly promoted a mythological Afrikaner purity. Furthermore, this dichotomous relationship seems to instruct the audience that Afrikaans men can secure a position of power and ascendancy within the New South Africa only through the accumulation of wealth.

Chapter Five presented an analysis of Andrew Willemse as an example of *Egoli*'s constitution of racialised masculinity. Because of the programme's reluctance to portray black men, Colouredness was read as a 'safe' middle ground for *Egoli*'s attempt at constructing a sense of post-apartheid social inclusivity. Born from an illicit affair between his coloured mother and her white employer, Willemse typified a form of racial hybridity that seemed to evade clear definition. I argued, however, that his racial ambiguity – as a symbol of the ideology of the Rainbow Nation – was emptied of threat and uncertainty through the character's display of mimetic Whiteness. Willemse's racial status was therefore easily overlooked, because of the way that *Egoli* seemingly camouflaged his Otherness by recurrently coding his appearance and behaviour with a sense of mundane familiarity. In contrast to Vorster and Durand, who entered the viewer's world through the vehicle of the personae of well-known actors, Kevin Smith, who portrayed Willemse, was unknown. Viewers therefore encountered him as a literal stranger, devoid of any

a priori cultural significance. I argue that his 'empty' image became the clean slate from which *Egoli* could construct a metaphor for the audience's assumed hopes and expectations of a racially integrated New South Africa. Yet through Willemse's mimetic nature, *Egoli* pacified the context of political uncertainty for its viewers and therefore suggested a kind of optimism (however unrealistic) about the New South Africa. In response to this argument, Franz Marx affirms the aspirational intent of the soap opera genre, and concurs that *Egoli* by no means reflected the actual social reality of a South Africa experiencing far-reaching cultural and political changes:

Dit was 'n beeld, dit was wat die mense wou sien, dit is hoe die Nuwe Suid Afrika gaan wees. Dit was vër daarvan (realiteit), maar 'never mind' [...] Laat ek dit duidelik maak, ek het nie 'n droom gehad nie. Dit het niks met 'n droom te doen nie, dis 'n 'job'.

It was an image, it was what people wanted to see, it was how the New South Africa would be. It was far from it (reality), but never mind [...] Let me make it clear, I did not have a dream. It had nothing to do with a dream, it was a job.

(Marx 2013).

Marx accordingly describes his role as the creator of *Egoli* not as an imaginative (or prophetic) task, but as a calculated, consumer-driven curator. As a medium typically defined as a women's genre, *Egoli* reflected Marx's assumption about the hermeneutic practices of women television viewers. This is furthermore reflected in Marx's admission that he cast actors based on their visual appearance before developing their on-screen characters within their acting capabilities. Marx thus seemingly expects that women's viewing pleasure lies primarily in the visual. I contend that this is an expectation widely shared in the medium of soap opera, which accounts for the level of attention given to the visual, that is not paralleled by an equal investment in narrative structure and development. Approaching *Egoli* with the hope of encountering a radical renegotiation of cultural hegemony thus leaves one frustrated by the banality of the genre. The lack of research on South African soap opera can therefore perhaps be explained by the flattening effect of the genre that, in the case of *Egoli*, tends to recycle old typologies, characters and narratives, pre-

existing and ill-defined surfaces largely devoid of originality or specificity. This is most apparent in characters who never seem to change or grow but remain caught in a look, a cynical appearance. Regardless of the rich socio-political situation in which the story apparently unfolds, in so far as *Egoli* resists real depth of meaning, it is a text disconnected from context. The men in *Egoli* in 1994 were portrayed as exhausted images of an old South Africa and as such failed to deliver on the promise of a dynamic, progressive, alternative or even a marginally different future hope.

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ADDENDUM 1

PRÉCIS: EGOLI: PLACE OF GOLD (SEASON 1)

Franz Marx
1994

EGOLI, meaning “Place of Gold”, is the popular Zulu name for Johannesburg, the sprawling metropolis built on the Gold Reef in the Transvaal, South Africa. Franz Marx Film’s overwhelming successful daily tele-serial, “EGOLI – Place of Gold”, is structured around the intrigues of 3 families and 2 business ventures. WALCO INTERNATIONAL is a successful automobile/tractor manufacturing empire, and EGOLI is a small jewelry design firm. Every character in the series is connected to one of these companies. The three families involved are:

THE VORSTERS

Head of the family and chairman of the Board of Walco International is WALT VORSTER, who is seldom at home and often abroad negotiating international business deals. He is a firm believer in family unity, integrity and loyalty.

Walt is married to LOUWNA (his third wife), a beautiful former actress, who had reached a crucial point in her career where she was being offered minor roles and in stead chose to marry a wealthy man. She is conservative in outlook owing to her poverty stricken background, and lives in the shadow of Walt’s ex-wives, who constantly appear on the horizon, complicating her marriage. She has to try and settle family quarrels involving Walt’s children, since they are all living under the same roof. She is extremely ambitious and is appointed Head of Public Relations of Walco International, but then falls pregnant and opts out for the role of mother which becomes her sole interest in life.

Walt has four children from his previous marriages. The eldest ANDRÉ, has taken over from him as M.D. of Walco and has recently married LYNETTE. André copes admirably as M.D., in spite of trade union activism, strikes and international company conspiracies.

LYNETTE STRYDOM, a popular and highly sought after television anchor person, married André on the rebound after discovering that his younger brother, JOHAN, to whom she was engaged, was involved in a paternity case with a beautiful university friend, MARGARET ROSE WILLEMSE (MARGIE). Lynette is very popular in the Vorster home, but her marriage to André soon becomes shaky when he wants to start a family. She refuses to have any children in what she sees as a dysfunctional family home. She accepts several television commissions in Europe and Africa, putting further strain on her marriage.

JOHAN, Walt's second son, is the apple of his father's eye: an acclaimed engineer and car designer, who developed a revolutionary, affordable family car for Walco. He is, however, an eccentric and passionate figure and when he becomes involved in major scandals, rocking the Vorster family, he becomes estranged from Walt. He is forced to leave the firm after his secretary, Joanne Logan, accuses him of sexual harassment and is accidentally killed.

SONET, Walt's only daughter, grew up with her mother and arrives back home for good after dropping out of university. She is a real rebel, scornful of the millions made by the Vorsters and Walco. She causes a major stir in the family with her nastiness, way-out behavior and selfishness. In no time she becomes bored with her new surroundings and falls in love with NIEK NAUDÉ, Louwna's humble nephew, overwhelming him with her bohemian charms. Their sudden marriage causes animosity in the Vorster family as well as Niek's own.

DEWALD is Walt's youngest son. After graduating from high school, he opts out of the "rat race" and joins a religious cult, the New Essenes. Walt

wants him to study further and join Walco, but he refuses. After the leader of the New Essenes starts visiting Dewald at home, he is forced to admit his involvement with the sect, to his father's horror.

THE NAUDÉS

NORA NAUDÉ is Louwna Vorster's eldest sister. This kind-hearted mother of three is a dressmaker who struggles to make ends meet. Also living with Nora is BERTIE (ALBERTUS) ROELOFSE, Nora and Louwna's brother. He is mentally impaired – a harmless and cheerful character who works as a postman.

NIEK, the Naudé family's problem son, returns from Lüderitz (Namibia) after a three-year stint on the diamond boats, with a parcel which brings him into unwelcome contact with the police as well as with members of the underworld, in particular one ALISTAIR MILNER-SMYTHE (SPIDER), a notorious swindler and crime boss. Nora's life is affected by the young detective (BRIAN) who investigates the diamond theft.

Niek becomes involved with Margaret Rose Willemse, the ex-girlfriend of Johan Vorster (and mother of Johan's illegitimate child). Niek is immediately drawn to Margaret Rose and they begin a strong and sensitive relationship. She agrees to start a jewelry business with Niek and they call their little shop "EGOLI", but Margaret Rose's relationship with Niek is doomed when Sonet Vorster appears on the scene.

TARIEN NAUDÉ, Nora's beautiful daughter, works as a secretary at Walco International. She is secretly in love with her boss, André Vorster, but accepts that he is a married man and always adopts a very professional

attitude at work. Because of her obsession with André Vorster, she has disastrous love affairs.

BIENKIE (BEATRICE) is Nora's youngest child. She wins the Miss Teenager title in a local beauty contest, and starts a lucrative modeling career. She is on the verge of going to Milan when she meets Dewald Vorster and becomes involved in his cult group, the New Essenes. She undergoes a complete personality change, gives up a promising career and chooses to live with the cult at their so-called temple.

Nora and Louwna have a third sister, CECILE, the widow of renowned gynecologist Dr TOM SINCLAIR. When her husband dies under mysterious circumstances, she is left penniless. She moves in with the Vorster, where she openly tries to steal her sister Louwna's husband. She also enters into some shady deals with the gangster, Alistair Milner-Smythe.

THE WILLEMSES

ESTER WILLEMSE, lovingly called NENNA by all who know her, inherited an old apartment building, Malborough Mansions, from SENATOR SINCLAIR, Cecile's late father-in-law. Senator Sinclair fathered Nenna's two children during her time as his housekeeper.

Their son, ANDREW WILLEMSE (ANDY), is an investigative journalist with a large chip on his shoulder. Nenna feels that Andrew should be grateful to the late Senator, since he paid for Andy's expensive school and university education. But only when Dr. Tom Sinclair's death becomes a society scandal, does Andy find out that he and Margie are in fact the illegitimate children of Senator Sinclair and that the murdered gynecologist was their half-brother.

When NENNA discovers that the adoptive parents of her illegitimate grandchildren are having marital problems, she does everything in her power to get the baby back. WALT VORSTER suspects his second son, JOHAN of fathering the child and is covertly trying to secure a decent upbringing for the boy. MARGARET ROSE WILLEMSE, Nenna's daughter and mother of the baby, applies to the courts to get the child returned to her and after nerve racking negotiations, her application is granted on the grounds that she is the natural mother.

The intrigues between these leading characters have made "EGOLI - Place of Gold" a 'must-watch' smash hit. Each episode contains at least three main story lines, supported by sub-plots. Main story lines and themes are usually played out over 50 to 60 episode arc. Social issues relevant to a modern audience include sexual harassment, murder, child abuse and rape.

"EGOLI" differs from the American soap opera formula in that it uses a lot of humour (as do some British dramas) - its passionate and often tragic intrigues are set amongst comic characters, incidents and sub-plots.

Franz Marx's "EGOLI" has been the most successful Southern African tele-serial since its inception and is screened at 6pm in Open Time on the commercial channel, M-Net.