Dangerous Radio/activity

Self and Social Space in Contemporary Australian Talk Radio

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(Applied Communications)

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PLEASE NOTE

The greatest amount of care has been taken while scanning this thesis,

and the best possible result has been obtained.
Summary

The conversational flows of the new informational society implicate radio users in talk-mediated social relations which rework those established during 80 years of broadcasting history. Digital radio’s multiplex “narrowcasting” transmission and its localised, individually tailored programming, produce industry-audience relations closer to media theories of “active reception” than to mass media relations formed during radio’s primacy.

Since the 1960s however, radio’s “talkback” format has promoted an “active” communicative relation. Contemporary commercial talkback practices can test and critique claims made within “informational” media theory and emergent digital-audio broadcasting, for an intensified media “interactivity”, built upon the “self-tailoring” impulse current within enterprise culture and postmodern identity politics.

Using Foucault’s work on discourse, this study examines talk-radio relations in advance of digitisation, testing the continuity of patterns of listener formation, to assess the accuracy of claims that “interactivity” and individuated informational flows are demand-driven.

Using Lefebvre’s work on the cultural formation of social space, the study suggests that conventional radio broadcasting has pre-empted Internet technologies in “mapping” commercial imperatives onto urban terrains. Australian commercial talk broadcasters are shown discursively creating a living “Thirdspace” or “real virtuality” of transactional locations - to their own direct commercial advantage. Listener-caller participation, whether consensual or resistant to talk-host opinions, arrays varying social orders across this imagined-yet-real terrain. Radio talk thus becomes a “euphemised” form of social pre-dispositioning power, operating, in Bourdieu’s terms, as a form of “symbolic capital”, differentially locating power across communities.

Four sets of talk-radio texts are examined in detail, using a socially contextualised form of linguistic analysis. Sacks’s Conversation Analysis provides detailed examination of talk transactions, while Fairclough’s Critical Discourse Analysis enables consideration of broader socio-cultural issues within language in social use.

Fifteen hours of transcription from the dominant Australian commercial talkback station 2UE’s The Stan Zemanek Show reveals an openly-gendered and more covertly classed discourse, constructed around contestational talk with male
callers; consensual relations with older women “regulars”, and constant transformation of all talk-texts into promotional and even direct-merchandising activities.

Acknowledging the ongoing difficulties of conducting reception studies for radio, the study tests its hypothesis of the dominance of “enterprise discourse” in Australian commercial broadcasting by examining the address to private rather than to public “selves”, in late-night sex-counselling talkback. Pillowtalk with “Dr Feelgood” demonstrates how female public authority, while differently performed, promotes the same “governmentality” as the enterprise discourses of The Stan Zemanek Show. Dr Feelgood simultaneously elicits “confessional” participation, and extends surveillant regulatory authority into the “private” domestic spaces feminised and considered “inactive” in direct enterprise discourses.

To test the power of enterprise discourses and their governmentality to prevail beyond the commercial broadcasting sector - and so to suggest the extent of their cultural embeddedness and influence - this study examines programming from the “Community” radio sector of volunteer-produced, local radio transmission. Red Light Radio, specialist talk programming for sex workers, shows how enterprise discourses fare within “illicit” industries such as prostitution. Restricted in their occupancy of public space, the sex worker programme-team constructs feminised and “privatised” spatial discourses, asserting “enterprise” control over a “domesticated” and female industry.

Finally, the study examines The Prison Show, a Community Radio music request and message programme for Aboriginal prisoners. Denied all cultural mobility, participants deploy compensatory discursive strategies within their talk-relations, most notably an excessive hyper-masculinity, and a saturating feminised sentimentality. These intersect in complex ways within the letter-exchanges of prisoners and their families, and the “gender bantering” talk of the multi-hander presenter team, suggesting that instabilities arise within notions of “public” and “private” when gendered control is inverted, and when both domestic privacy and public enterprise participation are denied.

The study concludes by suggesting that talk-radio’s role within cultural formation is complex in its articulations, but deeply implicated within the major cultural formation activities of contemporary consumer culture, on which are being modelled digital audio broadcasting’s newly intensified flows of “interactivity”.
Statement of claim of original authorship and assertion of intellectual property rights

This thesis contains the outcomes of research undertaken between March 1995 and July 2001, during a (part-time) candidacy for the PhD in Applied Communications at the University of Western Sydney.

With the exception of brief extracts quoted from published works in the normal scholarly manner in support of the research hypothesis and its argumentation, and the audio-sources of transcribed excerpts from those public broadcasts whose texts form the data corpus for analysis, all work presented here is the original product of the author/candidate.

Audio recordings of all radio broadcasts used in the thesis were recorded off-air by the author/candidate, with the exception of the extracts from Red Light Radio, purchased from Warburton Media Monitors, South Australia, and The Prison Show, taped off-air by Huw Francis, on behalf of the candidate.

All content-logging and transcription from audio tape to type-script was undertaken by the author/candidate.

The full audio tape set, comprising over 60 hours of broadcasts, along with programme running-lists, typed transcripts and support documentation, are held by the author/candidate in secure storage, according to the guidelines for Human Subject Research conducted within the University of South Australia; the author/candidate's employer institution.


None of the work contained herein has been presented for any other degree or diploma in any other University or institute of higher education.

(signed) Jacqueline Ann COOK

(date) 29/1/2001
Dedication

While the candidate for this degree has a long-term interest in the study of talk radio, having been both a broadcaster and an academic for over 25 years, the writing of this PhD thesis was directly motivated by the changes arising within the Australian Universities sector after the introduction of the Unified National System in 1989.

The candidate therefore wishes to acknowledge the very special historical context in which this work was undertaken, and in particular the support and help of the National Tertiary Education Union, whose negotiation of the “Cathie Grant” scholarships system, which funded academic teaching replacement, enabled the candidate’s six-month work-release for data collection and transcription in 1996.

Of no lesser importance was the strongly supportive role of the candidate’s employer, and especially of the School of Communications, Information and New Media at the University of South Australia. The willingness of colleagues and students to accept work focused away from direct teaching and supervision, from a senior colleague, during the decade of establishment work required in a new University, has made this research possible. The managerial flexibility and personal guidance of the Head of School, Dr Michael Galvin, have been especially valued.

The generosity of the University of Western Sydney, not only in accepting a candidate from interstate, whose full-time work commitments both in Australia and off-shore demanded extreme flexibility in administrative and supervisory arrangements, must also be acknowledged. I am grateful for the provision of HECS Exemption Status by the University, but also and especially for the exceptional academic support and personal kindness of Research Supervisor, Associate Professor Virginia Nightingale.

In particular however, what has made this “mid-life thesis” possible has been the constant practical support, and the ongoing inspiration, provided by those fellow women academics, their careers affected by the same influences as my own, who have taken the same difficult pathways to career maintenance and progression.
This thesis is therefore dedicated to:

Dr Margaret Allen
Dr Anny Bé
Dr Myra Betschild
Dr Barbara Comber
Dr Vicki Crowley
Dr Anita Donaldson
Dr Jean Duruz
Dr Suzanne Franzway
Dr Jane Hiscock
Dr Helen Nixon
Dr Trudy Rudge
Dr Victoria Whittington

- all of whom completed PhDs between 1991 and 2001.

The institution for which most of us once worked has been closed for over five years. Fewer than 15% of its academic staff are still in the workforce. That those women academics who remain have been successful in re-locating, re-credentialling, and in promotion and career advancement, is a tribute to their commitment, their flexibility, and their capacity to maintain focus on academic outcomes in the midst of what has proven to be a period of ongoing institutional change.
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Radio’s future as read from its present

Sometime during the year 2001, its actual date interestingly unspecified and unidentifiable, Australian radio has entered its digital future.

Piecemeal, without any coordinated plan across sectors, radio “broadcasting” will shift from the one-to-many, producer-to-listener/consumer relation established across an institutional history of eighty years, to the “networked” selectivity of DAB/DRB: Digital Audio Broadcast or Digital Radio Broadcast.

To capture the implications of that change, click onto any of the current web-casting sites already offered by Internet broadcasters. The value-adding and deepening of information flows is immediately obvious. Even where existing stations are effectively just digitising and web-streaming their broadcast signal, data-flow through visual and text channels accompanies and enriches audio source. Web-listeners can enhance their aural access by clicking across to their favourite presenter’s web page; glimpse them on-air via in-studio webcam; download audio files of selected music tracks; isolate news bulletin topics in order to access in-depth reports as text files.

To take the next step, consider the decision processes currently underway in all broadcasting sectors (Barboutis, 1997), as they gear up for full digital radio services. Within the Eureka 147 DAB system chosen for Australia, service designers are provided with more channels of potential information flow than they currently know how to handle. Typically, a Digital Audio Broadcaster is confronting an MPEG-1 Layer 11 Bitstream, configured into six sectors:

Header  Bit allocation  Coding of 3 scalefactors  Subband audio samples  PAD  Scalefactor CRC
The first three streams control flow "segmentation". They title discrete programming elements; mark their length and bit size; code their format. Already, even these mostly invisible and administrative facilities signal change. Their capacity to "manage" the data flow is, for the first time, not reserved to the station's programmers. The listener-consumer's computer - or soon their new digital screen-accessoried tuner - is just as intelligent as the programmer's, and has exactly the same capacity to locate, decode and retrieve every programming segment. No matter how a DAB'caster flows programming, every listener-consumer can re-arrange that flow.

Even before the inversion of producer-receiver relations that this implies can be taken into account, programmers are challenged by the capacity of the other three bit streams offered by DAB. Accompanying the audio flow for the first time is PAD - Programme Associated Data. Textual, graphic, hyper-link activated, operating through the already-familiar GUI screen, this stream engages the full potential of Internet data-flow. Beyond it, and flowing as yet on a separate channel, is NPAD: non-programming associated data, with space for related but non-station-produced information, including for example advertising; e-commerce; chat; traffic information and local venue-promotion.

Nor is this richness of data flow the sole element of intensification confronting broadcasting. Digital radio carries interference free, CD quality sound, with high spectrum efficiency, through a power-saving transmitter. Immediately, individual stations and their network affiliates, without capital outlay for extended transmitter access, can move to multiplex transmission: the simultaneous DAB'casting of as many content services as the programmers can provide. The fixed, temporally-programmed, linear formats of the past, divide and multi-stream:
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<td><strong>Transmission per Frequency Channel</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>12 noon</td>
<td>News, weather &amp; traffic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:05</td>
<td>90s R &amp; B fast tempo, bright mood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:09</td>
<td>Station ID/Jingle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:12</td>
<td>80s medium rock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:16</td>
<td>Station ID/Talk break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:17</td>
<td>Information capsule</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:20</td>
<td>Station ID</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:20</td>
<td>Commercial Break</td>
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<td>12:23</td>
<td>Station Jingle</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:23</td>
<td>80s ballad</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:26</td>
<td>90s medium R &amp; B</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:30</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:30</td>
<td>New Update</td>
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<td>12:33</td>
<td>Station Jingle etc ...</td>
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**PAD & NPAD running concurrently**
Listeners are free to select programming according to personal preference

(Oei, R., 2000).

From this point, reviewing the new model, it is possible to see how even these multiplex intensifications of selectivity will immediately expand into infinity - once confronted by the newly activated choice mechanisms offered to the listener-consumer. Crossing not simply between streams, but vertically up and down individual streams, downloading and filing favourite music tracks or useful data; pre-setting coordinates for personalised time preferences for news flow; enabling NPAD functions which will receive narrowcast local traffic or
service-promotion signals, the new "listener" co-programmes and co-produces their favoured flow.

Commentators on radio, who confront the new reality alongside the production professionals of the industry, are equally uncertain of what will emerge. As yet we can see the DAB informational future only in terms of established radio practices. Tentatively suggesting that all of this means "The death of broadcasting?" in 1998, Jock Given cited economist John Maynard Keynes, on ongoing cultural tendencies to read the future from within existing formations:

We tend ... to substitute for the knowledge which is unattainable certain conventions, the chief of which is to assume, contrary to all likelihood, that the future will resemble the past. (Keynes, J. M. 1937, 'Some economic consequences of a declining population', in Eugenics Review, no. 29, pp. 13-17; cited in Given 1998, pp. 72-73)

The comment implies however that we are able to be fully and finally aware of what that past contained: that a single, unitary understanding, even of the past, is both possible and available. Current cultural understandings resist even that degree of certainty or consensus, rendering ever more problematic readings of the future - or even of the present. As studies of radio attempt to reach forward into digital services, their attempts to locate even basic organising principles around which to configure comparative examination of past and future radio services indicate the problems inherent in characterising what has always been a diverse and complex field 1.

Ahern (2000, pp. 266-267) predicts for Australian radio a shift towards programming which projects qualities of immediacy; global reach; personality-driven programming; imaginative production; variety; interactivity and portability, via multichannelling. He foresees an intensified individualisation, played out in both presenter-audience relations, and in terms of "interactive" cyber-technological imperatives. While his organising principles, still loosely arranged, appear to fit what we think we now know of the digital future, they are each, in their own ways, already enmeshed in a complex trace of developments inside existing broadcast practice. As DAB'casting asserts its formats, each of those traces will in turn be reviewed. Radio's past will be

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1 It is for instance always a salutary experience to re-read Brecht (1964; 1979) for his views on what Modernist radio could have become; see also Hood, 1980.
rewritten. Along the way, both what we have understood and what we have not yet perceived about radio will become self-evident.

In the UK Scannell (1996), reviewing radio’s past, sees continuities between past and present formats as a defining feature of radio. For him what counts is radio’s infinitely time-shifting “progammability”: the way its formats never die, but live on, to be reactivated within both personal and institutional use. He describes radio as “generational”. Its flows are calculated to the particular “everyday meaningfulness” of the original production-reception moment which it captures, and yet still and always extant and re-accessible:

In a pared-down “bare” state any programme is a set of notations (an embryo involvement structure) that can be activated at and for any time now (1996, p. 177).

Hendy (2000) concurs, seeing radio as “infinitely diverse in form and always [im?]permeable to new participants” (p. 239). He expresses concern however over the currently preferred “involvement structure”, as he describes already-evident narrowing of focus and “tribalisation” in contemporary radio practice world-wide. For Hendy this is produced not by the features of radio itself, but by the international dominance of its strictly-regulated commercial formats:

Commercial radio is, by its very nature, in the business of minimising risk: it cannot afford to lead, rather than to simply follow, public taste, and a certain degree of cultural stasis is the inevitable by-product of its caution. And it is precisely this - the highly-formatted, fully automated, thoroughly market-researched commercial radio station - that is now the defining identity for the radio medium (2000, p. 239).

How then to match digital broadcasting’s accentuation of radio’s existing “diversity” and “permeability” to the new, with the “cultural stasis” of the current radio moment, as Hendy - and most other contemporary commentators - perceive it? Recent studies from the originary centre of that commercialised “defining identity”, the USA, seem at first sight even more retrograde, deflecting attention from the “now” of contemporary developments to the “then” of broadcasting history. Both Hilmes (1997) and Douglas (1999) examine past, rather than present-future, formations. Usefully however they both open the way for diversity and contestation in the formation process of radio practice - and centrally within that very programming strategy which Hendy considers is blocking further development:
There is no one “true” story of the history and function of this evanescent medium called radio in the United States. Rather, a wide variety of negotiably true and differentially valuable histories exist, whose validity will have to be judged based on the depth of their evidence, the clarity of their argument, and the way they fit into the needs and uses of the present (Hilmes, 1996, p. 288).

As DAB designs and tests its new “involvement structures”, and reorients its programming formats towards the “interactivity” and “diversity” of its users, “the needs and uses of the present” will draw once again a necessary history of radio.

What this study attempts to do is to examine contemporary, pre-digital Australian radio, to ask how far it may already be showing signs of these emergent “interactivity” and diversity demands from nascent listener-co-producers. It click-freezes extracts from now - drawn from the very centre of commercial radio’s “cultural stasis”: its top-rating talkback formats. Against this, in search of diversity and accessibility, it examines programming from Australian community radio - a sector created to permit volunteer broadcast participation and community media representation. And it poses the question: if there is a social and cultural pressure operating to “open” informational flows to the interactive participation and self-selective individualisation which digital broadcasting will deliver, where and how is such pressure operating in contemporary, pre-digital, radio practice?
Chapter One

The radio/activity of contemporary commercial broadcasting

Station promotional jingle:
Ra:-di-o AC-tive (. ) the-source-of-the POW-er, (. ) is ra:-di-o AC-tive (. ) 2-U-E...

Station promotional voiceover:
Sta::n Zemanek on (. ) 2UE: (. ) Kno:ckout (. ) night time radio: (. ) with more uppercuts than a KO:Stya TSZYU fight...

Station identification link, programme presenter's comment:
... AAAs we (. ) PU:mp (. ) and (. ) GRI:ND through the huMUN:Gous big SATellites (. ) up-and-down- the-East-Coast of AusTRAlia...

(Radio 2UE Sydney, April 1996)

1.0 Discourses and practices voicing contemporary Australian commercial radio: hypermasculine entrepreneurship

The brief promotional “stings” cited above reveal one consistent feature of “cultural stasis” within Australian commercial talk radio. At its moment of intersection with the dynamism of those broader, techno-cultural innovations and changes in social communication patterns accompanying the “information revolution” (Castells 1996), commercial broadcasting is dominated by socially conservative, even regressive discourses and production practices. Imbricated across a sequence of hyper-masculine metaphors of gendered power, of aggressive competition, of technological mastery and of the occupancy of social space from centre to periphery, such discourse and practice reveals itself, in Fairclough’s terms (1992; 1995b), as a core formation of enterprise culture. It marks the triumph of
entrepreneurialism as a renewed form of powerful masculinity, within an enduring patriarchal order.

Such programming produces the dominant voicing within contemporary Australian radio practice. It tops the ratings within the commercial networks, and influences all other broadcasting formats\(^1\), most notably through its denial of the most powerful on-air shift slots to presenters operating outside the parameters of opinionated masculinity. At the same time however such talk-programming, constructed in the service of entrepreneurship, endangers its own control of the social space which it subsequently forms. It requires that radio become a two-way medium of social reciprocity. Whether through ABC “talk forum” calls and website discussions, Community-access Radio “volunteer” programming, or the full commercial broadcasting panoply of “active radio listenership” which includes sponsored competitions, promotional appearances and listener calls, contemporary talk radio has constructed an interactivity within itself. This feature is curiously at odds with the thoroughly masculine voicing at the core of its dominant “talkback” format. While claims on an aggressive masculinist contestation (“more uppercuts than a Kostya Tszyu fight ...”) may be one way to promote interactivity within communications, the use of the “power-punch” talk-technique re-centralises a hyper-masculine agentic presence (“the source of the power”) and thus models the audience relation of older, mass-media paradigms.

One response to this has been to view Australian commercial radio talkback practice as aberrant or retro-active. Cunningham and Turner (1993) like Hilmes (op. cit.) have considered commercial broadcasting a largely moribund field, from which no further development can be expected. Adams and Burton (1997) take up a more directly Habermasian position, viewing commercial talkback as an overtly “refeudalising” formation, operating downwards upon passive listener-dupes. Jock Given (1998) - albeit for more complex technological reasons - suggests radio’s imminent demise. In each

\(^1\) Ratings for the programming in the two sets of transcripts of commercial radio broadcasting used in this thesis are included the Appendices. Note that Community Radio programming is not included in the ratings system, except in exceptional circumstances. No ratings can be provided for programming used in Chapters 11, 12 and 13. While success with audiences is thus largely unmeasured for Community broadcasting, and such measurement is partly irrelevant to the non-commercial-bearing national broadcaster the ABC, the entrenched popularity of the talkback format shown in the ratings influences both sectors. See Smith, 1990, for a description of contemporary styles of audience-response sampling in Australian broadcasting.
case however, either no close examination of actual broadcast practice is undertaken, or else programming analysis is used to argue the power of the social and political roles being undertaken by various talk hosts, as “Emperors of the air”. While various unpublished US studies arising from the Rush Limbaugh and G. Gordon Liddy talkback attacks on the Clinton administration\(^2\) have shown no direct capacity for talk show hosts to influence political outcomes by affecting voting patterns, the impression remains within media study generally that radio is a powerful medium of social and political influence, and that commercial talkback is its most dangerous format. If the extremes of social conservatism almost universally reported for commercial talkback are its norm, then it is surely important to examine where they are directed, and to find some means beyond those already attempted, to investigate the willingness of listeners to participate.

This study will suggest that talkback radio occupies a problematic and contradictory position within its favoured discourses and practices of aggressively masculine entrepreneurial “activeness”. While earlier analysts have suggested for instance (see especially Higgins & Moss 1982) that hyper-masculine or entrepreneurial discourses directly seek to suppress and dominate “alternative” voicings, research for this study suggests that contemporary talk-radio’s enthusiastic re-affirmation of patriarchal power is neither simple nor unitary in its directedness. For all the seeming consistency of the talkback “voice”, this is inherently interactive and dialogic communication.

To this degree at least talkback radio matches its techno-cultural moment. In Foucault’s terms (1978, p. 54) even such powerful discourses no longer work by seeking to establish “… the synthesis or the unifying function of a subject”. Rather, the entrepreneurial-masculinist discourses dominant in contemporary Australian talk-radio themselves shape the roles available for the “active” radio participation of listeners. Working within a distinctively commercial “framing”, they delimit the scope for those social spaces and relations that host and listener-callers co-produce in their talk. Contemporary hyper-masculine radio talk works not then as a unitary discourse, but as a fluid relation of producer-consumer talk exchanges, modelling what Lash and Urry (1987) have described as the life-style/choice culture of late (“disorganised”) capital. Inside that hyper-active and accelerating social order

\(^{2}\) See especially Beatty 1996; McRae, 1997; Robol 1997; Barker 1998a; 1988b; De Sainte Croix, 1998.
an “active” consumption becomes a dominant social goal for both producers and consumers - the one seeking extension of profitability, the other, social validation (Ang 1996; Featherstone 1991; Castells 1996; 1997). Through its distinctive discursive processing, entrepreneurial masculinity takes on a cultural positioning not as the immobile, inflexible, and “culturally static” formation against which, for instance, social innovations such as gender or ethnic inclusivity have been formulated and constested, but as in itself promoting forms of active - and even resistant - self-formation (Appadurai, 1990; 1996).

To posit a communicative process which “produces” an active media audience from within the talk-relations of aggressively opinionated and hypermasculine centralised authority appears at first sight to reconstitute traditional views of “passive” and manipulable media audiences. Many of these views are still openly espoused by those very institutions and practitioners who work daily to construct the discourses of entrepreneurial consumerism. Commercial broadcasting’s production practices, still based on ratings, promotional campaigns, and sponsorship deals, like the subject positions articulated within the programming, appear predicated upon “mass media” audiences with predictable behavioural responses and quantifiable demographic features.3 And yet Ien Ang has proposed that “...the ‘active audience’ is both subject and object of postmodern consumer culture (1996 p. 12)”. Further - she insists that this by no means implies the construction of a monolithic or even cohesive media entity.4 If postmodern consumer identity is active in its own self-formation, and shares in the “new media” tendency towards individualisation and inclusive, interactive and negotiative practice, then the seemingly “stable state”, regressive and authoritative discourses and practices of commercial talk radio should be losing ground on both counts. Within commerce, and as a communications medium, commercial radio should be in decline. Instead, it commands the largest audiences for any radio sector or format; has returned higher and more consistent profits over a longer period than any of its media competitors, and pays higher media salaries - at least to its star performers - than all other electronic media.


1.2 "Abstract instrumentalism, and particularistic identities": the paradox of contemporary communications

At the very least, radio's ongoing success implies a fundamental contradiction operating within contemporary commercial broadcasting, allowing it to maintain a controlled and stable, modernist industrial operation, perversely positioned in the service of a fragmenting, personalised, interactive and postmodern audience. The pluralism that this implies arises however in forces far broader than innovations within established broadcasting practice. Contemporary media practices generally, and talk radio production in particular, are responsive to the same social and cultural forces working to constitute the "new media" of CMC (computer mediated communications) systems (Poster, 1990, 1995). Both are (re)forming around shifting and inter-active, self-regulating sets of relational behaviours and enabling technologies. To this degree both commercial talk radio and those "new media" promoting for instance, e-commerce, emphasise an active and agentic consumer identity, and promote entrepreneurial values. What is less obvious is how the masculinised authoritativeness of the talkback hosts who still dominate Australian commercial radio relates to these new formations, and successfully reproduces them.

To recognise talkback-radio practices as in fact arising within this new media paradigm, rather than acting as the last bastion of outdated mass audience practices, means shifting the balance in new media theory's characterisation of the key social forces at play. Castells (1996, p.3) has described contemporary new media practices as embedded in "a bipolar opposition between the Net and the Self", or more generally "...a fundamental split between abstract, universal instrumentalism, and historically rooted, particularistic identities." At first sight this appears yet another polarisation, accommodating a view of a retro-masculinised or patriarchal "shock-jock" set of discourses or practices. Radio thus becomes, as Given (op. cit.) suggests, a sunset industry, styled in the discursive relational frames of a Modernist, unitary cultural order, and more suited to the days of the bakelite wireless than to the self-defining multi-choices of Netcasting (Levinson,1997). Castells' "particularistic identities" and their variable social contexts thus appear to characterise developments related to the Internet - a still-emergent form of mediated social relations, in comparison to talk radio's eight decades of continuous practice. But conversely, each side of Castells' polarity is already problematised inside the ambit of commercial talkback radio practice. Both
Internet technologies and talkback radio have been heavily oriented towards the powerful formational impulses of "instrumentalist" logic and centralising systems (see Turkle 1996; Cramer, 1993). Meanwhile, as Hendy (2000, p. 138) points out, radio's central and ongoing social relation has conventionally weighted it towards "intimacy". Its primary enunciative modalities address and constitute a singular "self" - one which remains rooted in traditions of bourgeois individualism even as it becomes implicated in postmodern, consumer-choice, "identity work". Neither side of Castells' polarisation of "old" and "new" media is pure.

Castells himself is not unaware of this. He outlines in overwhelming and often pessimistic detail, and in global dimensions, a "structural schizophrenia" within the networked "information society" and its fast-eroding institutions. Dynamic innovation is too often delivering regressive social outcomes. At the same time, and outside Castells' point of vision, "old" technologies such as radio have been delivering many of the outcomes promised in the new CMC technologies. Close attention to radio as the most established of the media networking technologies suggests a more progressive and adaptive set of behaviours under construction than commentators have so far captured. The point can be illustrated by a comparison between Castells' own characterisation of the "informational" cultural moment, and the qualities he isolates as core to its operations. He outlines

a historical period characterised by widespread destructuring of organisations, delegitimation of institutions, fading away of major social movements, and ephemeral cultural expressions. People increasingly organise their meaning not around what they do but on the basis of what they are, or believe they are. Meanwhile, on the other hand, global networks of instrumental exchanges selectively switch on and off individuals, groups, regions, and even countries, according to their relevance in fulfilling the goals processed in the network, in a relentless flow of strategic decisions (1996, p. 3).

Contemporary radio, at least at a local level,\textsuperscript{5} is complicit in such a programme. But while radio audiences may appear to listen, and even phone in, on the basis of recognition of the medium's representations of identity - of "what they are" - \textsuperscript{6} it is increasingly the ways they orient themselves to the activities of "being an audience" which conserve their role within the new communications processing. "What they do" as they in their turn switch on

\textsuperscript{5} Although ABC indecision, or politico-economic play, over Radio Australia broadcasts into Asia also illustrate the tendency.

\textsuperscript{6} Like audiences for TV chat shows: see Steenland, 1990.
and switch off; phone in or hang up; take up this or that position in relation to on-air topics, is increasingly central to the nature of the informational “network” being accessed. The difficulty lies within the overt retention, within those aspects of this “new” media relation already operating inside radio talkback, of the discourses and practices of “structuring”, “legitimising”, and “permanent” institutions and identities: the older, patriarchal, authority paradigms.

Having uncovered the existence of “new media” audience behaviours operating alongside “old media” talk relations and programming practices, three possible scenarios arise. In the first instance, new media may prove to share with their predecessor technologies a producer-audience relation of unequal power, and will move from the much-heralded “interactivity” of their early years, to a more structured and closed user-formation. Certainly, those most recent studies of the rise of earlier communications technologies such as radio which examine the cultural contexts of their formation from historical evidence, have located around early radio discursive formations of “free expression” and “interactivity” - even of freedom of identity-formation amounting to gender-disguise - markedly similar to those surrounding the emergence of the Internet. As radio institutionalised its practices, accessibility became constrained. Where it continued to exist - as in the ongoing role of amateur short-wave operators - it was increasingly less publicised, and not at all recognised across broader society as “real” radio.

Secondly, the hypermasculine entrepreneurial formation may prove less monolithic than it appears, and accessible to an active audience orientation (Keat, Whiteley and Abercrombie, 1994). Its earlier theorisation itself arises within an oppositional politic of gendered or “minoritarian” resistance, which has so far failed to describe it on its own terms, or to regard it as otherwise than unitary and unvaried. Strategically, it may be over-used as a negative exemplar justifying the development of new media - whose own credentials for autonomous and self directed use may also be, as argued above, less heterogeneous than initially thought.

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7 Hilmes (1997) reprints from a 1921 QST magazine a cartoon of “Miss Ham”, an enthusiastic, flapperesque, amateur radio experimental broadcaster, shocked to discover the ethnic range of suitors who respond to her transmissions: “Miss Ham gives permission, via radio, for a nearby amateur to call on her. She has never seen him and now it looks as if others has [sic] been listening in also.” The similarity to media “moral panic” narratives of the dangers of Internet Relay Chat “relationships” is striking. See also Ken Burns’s TV documentary version of Lewis’ Empire of the air, for its selection of 1920s songs about radio love-affairs.
Finally, a third hypothesis would suggest that neither account is totally accurate. All media carry with them the marks of their formation within a contested and hegemonic order - so that the existence of a problematic relation between authoritative and hypermasculine talkback host, and active or self-directive audience, is endemic rather than transitional.

Even Castells’ model of the new media information order shows similar imbalances - although in this case inversely configured. Where talkback radio displays wide-ranging interactivity arising from within intensely structured talk relations, new media too configures a struggle between a centralising or “global” communicative capacity and an interactive, user-oriented, “local” networking structure. When Castells turns to outline the major recurrent features of the emergent “informational society”, each element he itemises is already evident within the behaviours and relational emphases of the new, “active” audiences of contemporary talk radio.

The first characteristic of the new paradigm is that information is its raw material: these are technologies to act on information, not just information to act on technologies, as was the case in previous technological revolutions.

The second feature refers to the persuasiveness of effects of new technologies. Because information is an integral part of all human activity, all processes of our individual and collective existence are directly shaped (although certainly not determined) by the new technological medium.

The third characteristic refers to the networking logic of any system or set of relationships using these new information technologies. The morphology of the network seems to be well adapted to increasing complexity of interaction and to unpredictable patterns of development arising from the creative power of such interaction ... this networking logic is needed to structure the unstructured while preserving flexibility, since the unstructured is the driving force of innovation in human activity.

Fourthly, related to networking but a clearly distinct feature, the information technology paradigm is based on flexibility ...

Then, a fifth characteristic of this technological revolution is the growing convergence of specific technologies into a highly integrated system, within which old, separate technological trajectories become literally indistinguishable (1996, pp. 61-62; original emphases).

While Castells is describing CMC or Computer Mediated Communications systems, and locally the Internet, his informational paradigm characterises the relational flows of contemporary radio practice with precision. The “flexible structure” of the network, with its capacity to harness the unpredictability and inventiveness of “human activity”, is modelled in radio talk-back’s “convergent” networking of broadcasting and telephony - and increasingly, its recognition of and creative adaptation to the extended space-
binding capacities of personal-mobile telephony. The powerful ubiquity of such an already-in-place system is used however not to restructure the local to global information flows, as Castells fears, but rather to create and foster a two-way flow.

Castells’ model, for all its claims of bipolarity, over-stresses those “global” features which prioritise powerful “outcommunication” practices: unequal flows of communicative power, operating both structurally, within systems, and in the case-by-case relations of actual communicative practices, to allow central-to-margins message flows to overpower margins-to-centre. An outcommunications system is heavily invested in power relations. Its techniques, as in the case of hyper-masculine discourses regarded as simple dominance, are deployed to “gain position” rather than to impart information (Mulgan 1989, p. 21, cited in Castells 1996, p. 63). Talkback hosts, regarded in both early and some contemporary studies as monstrous centralised presences, are such outcommunicators. And yet talkback radio practices - while strategically using such outcomunication strategies - must on the other hand also remain open to those “unpredictable patterns of development” which keep systems dynamic. By nature of its address to those “particularist identities ... historically rooted” in the local, talkback radio re-balances the informational paradigm. It pulls its audiences into its ambit, and activates their communicative capacity.

This study will argue that it is the perversely powerful attraction of the “out”communicative capacity of the hypermasculine host which drives “interactive” responses - just as it is the powerful allure of Internet related CMC new media and their promise of global access which has enticed the “local” onto the new networks.

1.3 “The morphology of the [talk-back radio] network”:
discourse and social relations

Radio’s operationalisation of the contemporary informational paradigm is inherently relational. In offering its “audiences” the space for participation, it

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8 The potential of mobile telephony to alter social relations is currently clearer to service providers than it appears to be to communications analysts - see for instance the ongoing studies made available on the Nokia website: www.nokia.com. The new spaces and roles opened up within talkback radio - and in other talk radio formats - by the popularity of the mobile provide an urgent new topic for radio study. See Kress, 1986, for an early appreciation of the emergence of “new models of social interaction” within electronic public talk.
constructs carefully delimited discursive positions within which talk may occur. At the same time however, each position arises within a consciousness of the centrality (even if momentary) of its own relational politic. In the case of talkback, which overtly fuses the “listener-caller local” into the powerful ubiquity of the broadcast medium as the pre-condition of its programming rationale, the “positioning” work of the ensuing talk and its associated technologised practices is crucial.

Once again the “bi-polarity” Castells claims for a contemporary informational paradigm drawn across “instrumentalism” and “identity formation” is present in radio talkback, as a current formation within an earlier medium. A return to the five key features of the information technology paradigm outlined above, which Castells considers elements of the “material foundation” of the new-mediated society, reveals a sixth significant feature. All of the categories he outlines are also themselves inherently inter-relational, as if the network logic were in itself informational, flexible, convergent, and pervasive. As network users take up each data flow practice, they are themselves taken up and disposed into its relation to the broader informational system. As for instance the much-discussed e-commerce practice of information-logging and on-selling of Net-user preference patterns indicates, the capacity ceded to both talkback and Internet users, to act within it as a two-way information source, also seems to promise the opportunity to act upon it, influencing its operations. What this apparent duality of instrumentalism conceals is firstly, the degree to which such systems are, in Baudrillard’s terms, “design-ated”: power over their functioning already retained within the system design; and secondly, the way users themselves are, in turn, acted upon.

Two clear effects emerge from this inter-relational core within informational networks, inclusive of contemporary patterns of talkback radio use. Because their data-flow reciprocity is built on those participatory models which constitute social interaction, (in the case of radio, talk-based) "; the roles offered within the new informational networks can be recognised as distinctively discursive constructions, each enmeshed within its particular enabling technologies. Each of Foucault's criteria for a distinctive

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9 Andreason, 1985, has conducted laboratory tests to demonstrate that this process is intensified in talkback, which listener testing shows is more memorable and influential than more formal talk-radio formats. See also Jamieson, 1988, on trends towards de-formalised talk-styles in political speech-making.
“enunciative modality” is always present, along with its constitutive social practices. As any new informational system arises, it is possible to identify within it clear recognition of the “status” of the “sanctioned” participants [speakers]; clearly attributed “institutional sites”, and observably delimited “positions of the subject” to regulate the “optimal perceptual distance” from which authorised statements can be made (Foucault 1978, pp. 51-53). Who speaks, where they speak from, and the relativity of their relation to the “authority” positions within the discourse formation, all become very clear, very quickly. Once again, the issue becomes one of the “particularist identity ... historically rooted” who is addressed, or not addressed, by the dominant discourse. Those not spoken to, cannot speak back.

In a second development, beyond this movement of discursive inclusivity or exclusivity, lies the concreting of the discourses into practices: in particular their “operationalisation” into technologies. It is precisely here that the new informational paradigm’s relational stress constructs the much-vaunted “inter-actionism” of the new media, complete with its inherent relational problem. These are systems in which the communication relations, invested with a fundamentally inequitable relations of power, are those of outcommunication.

Foucault works in his originary study on the operations of specialist discourse to delineate the rise of discursive strategies of medical authority over the human body. However his characterisation of the emergent agent of that particular authority equally describes the techniques of the contemporary “information system”, whether configured as Internet website use or talkback broadcast participation. The “authority” which arises at the centre of the discourse is one which

... uses instrumental intermediaries that modify the scale of the information, shift the subject in relation to the average or immediate perceptual level, ensure his movement from a superficial to a deep level, make him circulate in the interior space ... (1978, p. 52)

In such a process, the concept of “discourse” itself expands, in ways necessary to its capture and deployment of technologised practices. Inside Foucault’s example of medicine, the licensed, authoritative, diagnostic gaze is able to extend its “penetration” to literal, instrument-enabled capacities. Its summative judgements can be enacted well beyond the confines of physical immediacy, through the power for instance of pharmaceutical prescriptions;
case notes; textbooks; and even, if outside the scope of Foucault’s own work, remote or computer-assisted diagnosis and surgery.

How much easier it then becomes to accept the outcommunication in the technological enhancements of radio’s capacity for the recording and broadcast of speech. It has the power to make talk prevail beyond the single moments of synchronous and co-located conversation on which it still claims to found its practice. “Who speaks, where they speak from, and in what relation(s) to the subject”, Foucault’s formula for questioning the power relations of any given discourse, have become embedded within the technologies and practices of talkback-radio, just as they have arisen as key concerns for Internet users. As contemporary “audiences” of listener-users enter the discursive and technological re-formulations occurring within Castells’ accelerating and “inter-active” informational “flows”, they carry along with them a systems-based relation of power.

1.4 “Tuning-in”: the focus for analysis

Understanding contemporary talkback radio thus requires an assessment of the power relations it displays and deploys as it enters the social-relational discourses of the new informational paradigm and annexes its technologies. It needs a means of assessing current and emergent “positions of the subject”, regulating the “optimal perceptual distance” for authoritative and so powerful statements. It is not only access to the informational network which counts, but the capacity to make one’s comments prevail: to have them “...modify the scale of the information, shift the subject in relation to the average or immediate perceptual level, ensure his movement from a superficial to a deep level...”. Hendy (2000) in attempting to capture the “global” tendencies of contemporary UK radio as its production goes digital and thus directly accesses the multiple flows of Castells’ “informational paradigm”, comments on the new complexities of radio’s production and reception. He cites Al Brow (1996) on the “expropriation/re-appropriation” processes at play across informational networks. Radio’s capacity to de- and re-contextualise information lifted from an active public participation is a major marker of its everyday practice. For Hendy the communicative power of the new mediation technologies has become central to social cohesion in the informational society:
... while people are certainly disconnected from local relationships, they are not so much alienated as actively engaged in 'intense social construction' of new relationships, across large distances around the globe which can be of equal value to those relationships forged in pre-modern communities of geographical proximity. Systems of communication are central to this process of 'social reconstruction': what sustains relationships is the power to communicate at a distance (2000, p. 138).

Hendy outlines here an example of the third, “technologising” moment within Foucault’s structuration of a discourse, when the power relations constructed within a given discursive formation are enhanced, and spatio-temporally extended. At this point, with the speaking subject and their prime locations of authority in place, a particular set of “instrumental intermediaries” intervene. They shift Foucault’s material “seeing/speaking” subject, along with all of his “documentary” or conceptual baggage and institutional power, back into the networks of social interactivity. These are now, however, also thereby recognisable as discursively established social networks. Their inhabitants become users of, as they become used by, the discourse which organises them. The particularities of their relational behaviours are moderated by its positionings. The particular sociality addressed and so operationalised, is selective. It works within a “... space of exteriority in which a network of distinct sites is deployed” (Foucault 1978, p. 54). But since, as in the case of talkback radio, that “network of distinct sites” must align to itself those already existing, materially founded locations within which “particular identities ... are historically rooted” (Castells 1996, loc. cit.), relational work within the operant discourse becomes its central feature. Talkback hosts, as they encounter a caller, must assess and subsequently control not only the terms on which and topics about which that caller offers conversation, but how the ensuing talk-relation aligns with the programme’s particular informational flow. Just as Internet Relay Chat room participants report the difficulties of “entering” a conversational thread, subsequently controlling its still-haphazard flow, and even of gaining any response at all for their proffered topic gambits, talkback callers are subject to topic hijack, aggressive argumentation, over-talking, ridicule, and even termination of their call. Talkback callers with discordant topics are like websites with low “hit” scores. Those “sites” across which radio talk or IRC chat move are both socially positioned by the transit of talk across them - along with those “speaking subjects” who enact them.

As a consequence talk radio, like all technologies, returns to its own formation all of the subsequent discourses - however powerful within their
own domain - which flow across it. It too, as a “global” or totalising medium, has a tendency to “outcommunication” and must be, as Castells suggests for all informational systems, examined closely in relation to its capacity to constrain the talk-relations which it enables. Castells reminds us that the quality of “flexibility” which permits dynamism within the new informational paradigm “could be a liberating force, but also a repressive tendency if the rewriters of rules are always the powers that be” (1996, p. 62).

Castells consequently calls for - and models in his own work on CMC technologies - close empirical analysis of actual informational flows. Such work would seek to assess both the actuality of and the potential for the “unpredictable”, the “innovative”, the “liberating”, within the new networking information technologies (within which this study asserts the presence of contemporary talkback radio). Castells is himself however far from certain that the “new” equals “the innovative.”

It is at this point that Castells’ programme of analysis moves beyond examination of communications systems. Contemporary economic theory recognises accelerated informational interactivity as necessary to further economic development. Caught up within it is the “production” of selected elements of socio-cultural diversity, now a key contributor to the “styling” re-commodifications of consumer-driven production under late capitalism (Lury 1996; Bauman 2000). Castells too is explicit in reading the informational-technology “revolution” in terms of this “fundamental process of restructuring of the capitalist system from the 1980s onwards” (1996, p. 13), involving changes to what were “historically determined relationships of production, experience, and power” (1996, pp. 14-15; original emphasis.) As information itself takes up the more central role within production allocated under Castells’ model, those social experiences related in to the informational flows - whether via Internet or talkback - become, or at least appear to become, productive and empowered. Identity is bound into consumerism, the “self” formed within its variable modes of display. Consumerism becomes a pre-condition of production, regulating its “stylings” and becoming the privileged and so self-justifying side of the reversed “consumption-production” cycle. The sense of “self” thus becomes a powerful element within productivity, and social success, in turn justifying the endless flows of communicative activity allocated to it within the new and old media. The particular problem within the model, as Castells himself acknowledges, lies within the degree to which even the new communicative technologies
undertaking such roles still operate as social institutions: "... built to enforce power relations existing in each historical period, including the controls, limits, and social contracts achieved in the power struggles" (p. 15; see also Beniger, 1986).

Within the new informational paradigm those power struggles relate to the ways in which identity - conventionally a by-product of role-allocation within the relations of production - has become a major drive of consumer-led productivity. As those production-relations become more direct, mediated through the multiple informational flows, the suppressive identity formations of the traditional social institutions loosen. Disciplinary institutions and regimes can no longer constrain agents of Foucault's "microphysics of power ... enclosing subjects in a tight framework of formal duties and informal aggression" (p. 15). Social identities acquired in the constitution of selves in the service of formal social roles dissolve into the less-defined or formal, and more contested, relational-discursive modellings of the informational flows themselves.

To this extent talkback radio, with its accommodation of a social relation and an address constituted within everyday conversational sociability, directly addresses the management of discourse relations in the age of the "active" listener. Even the currently dominant radio format: aggressive and hyper-masculine social and political talkback, is continuous with, rather than an aberrant feature of, the audience-industry relation of radio under late capitalism. That it is an extreme example is undeniable. But that it shares in the "self-formative" strategies of other contemporary communications media can be demonstrated from analysis of its talk-texting methods, and its social-relational discursive preferences. Why it has so far proven the dominant communicative model will then be evident.

### 1.5 Talkback: an active industry-audience relation

The discursive techniques and cultural directions in radio's daily "processing" of talk work to create a markedly active and participatory audience. At the same time, the talk relations established in a radio programme between the programme host and the callers "institutionalise" them, to the extent of positioning each within the promotional sponsorship and advertising activities enfolding the show. "Global" and "local" directedness contend. Nor are the enticements to participation directly
focused on such “institutionalising” strategies. Indeed, the relational surfaces of the programming discourses are often spectacularly opaque - even counter-directive. The motivations behind enthusiastic listener-caller support for participation in the opinionated “abuse” dialogues of hyper-masculine talkback programmes, or the equally curious drive towards confessing intimate physical, psychological and social dilemmas to a national audience on late-night sex counselling shows, are complex in the extreme - although curiously, they have seldom been questioned by radio analysts. The meaning of such participation has not been examined, or included in the development of an understanding of radio as a social practice. The role of such discursive formations within contemporary broadcasting creates a rich and often paradoxical field of discursive practices at the heart of a new communicative paradigm.

Radio has, in its period of relative critical obscurity, established a markedly “active” reception, in which audiences have become co-producers of radio texts. The concept of co-production by talk hosts and audiences can be helpfully addressed through the concept of radio as modelling a comparatively direct audience-industry relation. Nightingale (1984; critically revisited 1994) suggested a structuration of mass communication, resting upon three distinctive sets of relations: audience-industry, audience-medium, and audience-text. While “the audience can be seen to be implicated at all levels in the system of mass communication” (1994, p. 41) its role and powers shift according to the particular relation. Nightingale allocates for instance the audience-industry relation to the focus of Foucault’s social “technologies” of power and of production (Foucault 1988), thus acknowledging its direct engagement with those elements of social relationalism which Castells considers central to the “information revolution” and its reconstitution of social identities. Nightingale however admits little space for the possibility of a critical capture of audience-industry relations:

Treating the audience-industry relation as a technology of power ... could lead to a research focus which investigated the ways people are coerced to apply consumer and commodity ideas and ideals to the analysis of their own interests. To my knowledge no-one has attempted such research (1994, p. 41).

Instead, study of audiences has focused on mediating texts - whether generated in industry production (media texts) or in audience reception (fan texts; ethnographic audience research). For Nightingale, the audience-text relation, given its double-mediation (text inside critical text) “involves the
interaction of technologies of sign systems and of the self." (p. 41). It is an inherently compositional relation, directed away from the power relations enabling production. In other words, the complexities of its textualisation may operate more to obfuscate rather than to clarify the directive nature of the industry-audience relation - although it may well have much to say about those relations as they are constituted within programme genres and formats, or as audience comments on the processes of "identification".

Talkback radio however breaks the classic media interpolation of an externally-produced text between industry and audience, replacing it with an instantaneously-produced co-text of host-listener conversation. Further, unlike those later "talk" texts of emergent new media formations (such as Internet Relay Chat and its many variations) talkback radio, arising as it has almost exclusively within the commercial broadcasting sector, is constructed around an immediate relation between listener-caller as proto-consumer and radio host as para-producer. It engages immediately the discourses of consumption-production, existing as it does within the format of a predominantly commercial broadcasting tradition. Even those instances of phone-accessed television "Chat Shows" re-mediate the talk relation. In radio talkback, the talk "text" is generated in live and immediate confrontation between listener-caller and host. Increasingly however, as the 1999 "Cash for Comment" inquiry so graphically revealed, "programming" strategies of the host and crew work to re-position even the live talk-text. Revolving around overt strategies of marketing and promotion, host-caller interactions are deployed into both direct and indirect contribution to commercial gain.

Given the dominance of commercial broadcasting formats in contemporary "radio activity", this study will work firstly to reveal how it is that such overtly directed texts have evolved and diversified, to carry out the work of identity formation inside a consumerist ethic of active co-productivity (Lury 1996; Maffesoli 1996). It will thus focus upon the industry-audience relation.

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10 Bolter and Grusin (1999) describe within the culture of CMC and multimedia a general tendency towards "re-mediation", or the reframing of one media form by another. This is clearly the case in TV chat show use of live phone calls, where the host-presenters use the discursive device of "formulation" or restatement of the phone-caller's input to clarify it for live and at-home audiences (a process often re-duplicated by on-screen supertexted script.)

11 See Turner, 2000, for a brief account of the Australian Broadcasting Authority's investigation of breaches of broadcasting regulations by Radio 2UE Sydney talkback hosts John Laws and Alan Jones, involving direct payment from large business corporations for favourable comment on financial policies and practices.
(Nightingale 1984; 1992; 1994; 1996), represented within radio talk-text as the host-caller interaction, investigating how the emergence of an active audience operates within the ongoing bureaucratic-regulatory powers of media as an increasingly central part of the late industrial complex, at its moment of entry to the informational age.

In relation to this paradoxical emergence of an actively participating audience inside an ongoing regulatory system, Ang suggests (1996) that even media analysis which proceeds from consideration of the active audience as a sign of the postmodern condition cannot circumvent the inequities of power within which those media are constituted, and which in turn constitute their own practice. As Castells puts it, the comparative "erosion" of social institutions which postmodernity has witnessed does not necessarily equate to a "liberation". A similar point has been made by Trinh T. Minh-ha, who observed the degree to which gendered inequity in power relations guarantees the presence of a covert "third-world" within each "first-world" (1989, p. 98). For her, women's participation within all relations of social power is still constrained in diverse ways. This theme of selective constraints on freedom to participate, especially relating to gender, recurs frequently in studies of radio practice, whether within the audience-text relation (Ross, 1977; Higgins & Moss 1982; Moss & Higgins, 1984) or direct commentary on the broadcasting industry and its employment and production practices (Lont, 1990; Cramer, 1993; Gill 1993; McKay, 2000).

1.6 Gender dynamics of talkback relations

This study will investigate the gendered dynamics of industry-audience relations, by examining in detail the management of gender relations through talk-radio's practices, and the existence of stereotypically gendered relational discourses (Fairclough 1989, 1992, 1995b; Hutchby 1996). A particular frame for analysis will be the gendered behavioural patterns of male and female presenters and listener-callers as they interact. The study will trace within their talk-texts both the strategies of the industry-production axis, and the tactical manoeuvres of those listener-callers (and, given Gill's 1993 research, broadcast crew) who remain - often as a result of gender - "subaltern", or suppressed within the category of being "Other" to those powerful figures who occupy centrality within radio's discourses and practices.
In subsequent chapters numerous instances will be explored of the talk-performance of subaltern social groups - and notably women - actively negotiating and reconfiguring radio texts to their own needs. This in no way suggests that these are always liberatory moves. Indeed, as Soja suggests (1996; see also Wernick 1991) contemporary media as part of “disorganised” capital have shown themselves able to profit from and even promote their own hegemonic interests, by re-appropriating and even pre-figuring an active audience “resistance” within their products.

1.7 Active or co-agentic: audience relations within new social spaces

Contemporary media production practices, like their audiences, are embedded within the complex of shifting local and global movements of capital (Castells 1996). To survive, media industries must evoke from their audiences a markedly mobile flow of what Bourdieu (1984; 1991) describes as a cultural capital “investment” in their (co) product. As digitisation increases the available informational flows, listener/users must be brought to want to participate: to see the advantages of selecting this or that media product. Bourdieu’s use of the term “investment” usefully conflates the audience-industry relations separated in Nightingale’s work. He sees “symbolic” exchanges such as those rehearsed within radio’s talk-texts (Foucault’s “sign systems” acting upon “self”) as also directly impacting upon the “power relations” demanded within capitalist systems of production. The talk relations operating at the discursive level directly emulate - and so work to actually produce - those required in the desired relation of product consumption.

Bourdieu’s insight opens the way for a re-conceptualisation of the media industry-audience relation. Castells too sees the social relations established within communications systems as producing, rather than reflecting, those arising elsewhere. In Castells’ terms, directly descriptive of CMC informational technologies, those “virtual” or symbolic spaces of information-exchange activities and their concomitant new socialities, have come to be regarded as a “real virtuality”. The concept both extends and ends the Baudrillardian formulation of a postmodern culture directed towards construction and occupancy of simulacra (Baudrillard 1983), in that it inverts its egleaic tendencies: its nostalgia for “the natural”, evident in the earlier
term "virtual reality". Castells moves on, to see a social order openly accepting both a productivity and a sociality founded in CMC informational technologies.12

When radio is regarded as among the media constructing the new communicative strategies of the technologies of "real virtuality", a new understanding of radio talk becomes possible. Radio operates not to represent, but to form actively those social relations necessary to its role within the varied spaces of a consumer society. Following Bourdieu's (1991) model of talk as a form of symbolic exchange operating alongside commodity transfer and social status negotiation, it is possible to see radio talk as existing simultaneously within an immaterial realm of simulation, and a materially-engaged, consumerist stimulation. In commercial radio, symbolic exchanges enacted as talk - the transactions which establish and maintain the industry-audience relation - are especially close to their economic and material equivalents. Talkback radio's discourses connect at either end - within both the radio industry's production spaces and its listener-caller "lived" spaces - to those of the global and local, the public and the private. Radio talk in this model is not then limited to representation of such social spaces. It contributes to their constitution and their active, and productive, use.

The seeming "virtuality" of radio's audio-channelled informational flow engages with "the real", in increasingly overt ways, and in both spaces. If the mundane local is empowered by its momentary contact with the multiplying effects of mediation, the mediated "centre" is grounded and represented as "authentic", by its capacity to access everyday reality and magnify its meaningfulness across whole populations. Nor must this reciprocity be represented solely through unanimity. For Lefebvre (1971; 1991a; 1991b; 1996) the capacity to be proactive is balanced by the reactive. Positive and negative, consensual and resistant, co-exist in a series of dualities which may well serve the interests of both dominant and dominated. At the same time, as the

12 Castells (1996, p. 333) provides statistics of contemporary media use to show the twentieth-century trend towards dominance of mediated informational and social interactivity. Using various sources, he reports the average US adult as using 6.43 hours per day in media attention; 14 minutes per day in household interactions. Since this is the base upon which CMC technologies were launched, it is of little surprise that the first substantial report on CMC uses in the US, released in February 2000 by Stanford University's Institute for the Quantitative Study of Society (SIQSS) reports that 55% of the US population currently has Internet access; that the longer the Internet has been available to them the more they use it; that as Net use increases both direct social interaction and other media use decrease (Norman H. Nie & Lutz Erbring, February 2000). See Cassirer, 1977, for a pre-Internet account of radio's popularity among US media users.
discursive representations formulated in each participating space access the
other, they operate to redefine it.

Lefebvre examines both the concrete experience of lived (spatial) reality
(*espace perçu*: perceived space) and its abstracted representations (*espace conçu*:
conceived space). The duality raises interesting ways of reconsidering the
social role of all media operations - but especially those of radio. From the
days of the development of early radio this is the medium traditionally
considered “disembodied”, or hyper-symbolic. It was long imagined as
floating in a space so “unperceivable” as to be almost inconceivable, and
describable only by reference to such (pseudo) scientific concepts as “ether.”
Lesley Johnson (1988) has described how early radio represented its
“magical” powers to carry sound signals invisibly into the family home,
through annexation of the discourses of spiritualism, a contemporary fad, as
they intersected the equally new science of electricity. Lewis (1991) has also
noted the recurrence in early US radio circles of descriptions of the new
technology as “a Godlike presence”, circulating in “an invisible empire of the
air.” Here the ideological (circulating in *espace conçu*) folded directly back
upon the concrete (*espace perçu*), precisely as Lefebvre (1991) suggests. The
representation of a new and complex technology picked up in particular the
“magical” discursive tropes surrounding the still semi-miraculous electrical
energy, and melded it with the “dis-location” claims of the “wireless”
medium.¹³ Even as radio sets came to dominate the furnishings, and so the
sociality, of the home, the medium sustained its aura of mobility and trans-
locatedness.

1.8 “*Intangible ... yet solid*”: the grounding of radio as practice

Radio has also however, since its inception, been heavily implicated in the
creation of a modernist - and now postmodern - culture of space. Despite - or
maybe because of - its seeming capacity to “dis/appear”: to refuse concrete
form, and to cross all material boundaries, it has worked not to erode or dis-
establish space, but to confirm its “preferred” modelling in the service of the

¹³ Two of the most influential books on radio published in the US in the 1990s, Tom Lewis’
Broadcasting, 1922-1952 share cover-imagery almost certainly drawn from the same source
(although the source is acknowledged only in the Lewis study, where it is given as the cover
of Radio Broadcast magazine, December 1926). In each illustration a flying Mercury figure
intersects a radio microphone and an electrical pylon, while electrical charges radiate
outwards.
industrial hegemon (Rapoport, 1982). Berland’s analysis of the “space-fixing” capacities of radio’s signal (1990; 1992) represents peak analysis of the role played by “national” broadcasters in defining an official and authorised culture across disparate social and geographic spaces (see also Cardiff 1980; Pegg 1983; Briggs 1965-79.) At the same time Berland (1993; 1997) captures the increasing complexities of diversified sub- or micro-cultural uses of radio arising in spaces of alterity: radio texts, talk and especially music play, crossing cultural boundaries into new cultural spaces, and enabling there unanticipated applications. Increasingly, it is possible to show radio hosts joining the cultural agents Lefebvre (1991a) describes as “‘découpeurs’ et ‘agenceurs’” - the interpreters and mappers of a social order serving production and consumption, calling into being the economically “activated” sites and selves of urban production (and more recently, consumption-as-production.) Bauman (1987; 2000) and Lury (1996) similarly comment on the role of new cultural interpreters or intermediaries, central to the active-consumption work of late capital. Where information itself, as Castells (1996) has decreed, becomes the new raw material for productivity, radio hosts mediate along with it the “specifications” for active co-productivity, “siting” the necessary roles in the clearly enunciated relational positionings of power discourses.

The “ethereal” elements of the earliest representations of radio are however, recognised from the outset as inadequate to a full description of the new medium. This is especially so in relation to the second, historical phase of its integration into widespread social use - the process Castells describes as the crucial “specification” stage, at which new technologies rising in research findings are developed into productive applications and positioned for optimal economic return (1996, p. 243). Lewis, whose account of the rise of radio technologies in the US rests on the traditions of humanist “great men of history” narratives, ascribes to radio pioneer Lee De Forest the recognition that it was practical applications for the new wireless technology which would ensure success: “I discovered an Invisible Empire of the Air, intangible, yet solid as granite.” Those studies of the “grounding” of radio into “production”, both on its own terms (programming) and in those of the broader socio-economic order, acknowledge the discursive work undertaken to “place” radio within the domestic (private) and national-commercial (public) spaces which it interconnected (Counihan, 1982; Bilby, 1986).
Radio undertook such a role at a crucial historical moment for the modern industrial order. This new communications medium, as Johnson (1988) and J.B. Thompson (1995) each indicate in separate studies, “radiated” its comforting social connectivity into the increasing isolation of an emergent suburban existence. It acted to compensate for the accelerating distance between urban and rural levels of social and commercial services (Bickford, 1985). Radio’s self-representation - its formative discourses - can thus be seen historically to have regulated and re-form ed its substance (Biocca, 1988), even at the level of the physical and material (a point at which Lefebvre’s analysis makes useful contact with the early work of Foucault). Radio’s involvement in the regulation for instance of modernist (Fordist) industrial time-keeping has been noted frequently (see Crisell 1986; Scannell 1988; Potts 1989; Berland 1990).

This interpretive or “mapping” work is not however enacted as the monolithic empowerment of a radio host over listeners - industry over audience; production over reception; the ideological over the lived: espace conçu over espace perçu. Lefebvre’s analysis escapes the traditional epistemological binaries. Like Castells, Lefebvre sees us culturally arrived at a moment in which we can conceive “the virtual” of mediated communications as part of “the real” of everyday, lived reality. He too introduces a combined “espace vécu”: an everyday space of contemporary lived reality, which unites the material and the ideational to indicate the ongoing role of culture in forming “concrete” space itself.

This third option creates incentive for investigation of the paradoxically un-spaced role of radio. “Thirdspace” (Soja 1996) connects with the postmodern experience proposed by Baudrillard (1983) of living “beyond the simulacrum”, where the model surpasses the original to the point of suppressing it outright - yet it lacks the negativity or cultural pessimism of the Baudrillard model. For Lefebvre, mediated reality is co-extensive with the material, rather than pre-emptive of it. From the impasse of an “either/or” dialectic of dominant/dominated, Lefebvre brings us to what Soja terms a “both/and also ...” space, in which radical diversity is feasible, even within the most heavily mediated social zones.

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14 Manuel Castells was in fact a student of Lefebvre. For an account of the influences of Lefebvre on Castells’ work - and a useful scrutiny of the disagreements between them - see Soja 2000, pp. 100-105.
15 See for instance Massumi, 1987, for a more useful Deleuzo-Guattarian use of the proposition.
If the inclusivity and interactivity of Soja’s Lefebvrian model is applied to radio, radio can be seen to play a key role in the formation of active consumer-producer selves within the new “information” economy. Participation in seemingly trivial and time-wasting public conversation becomes the productively-engaged activity its prime position within a wholly commercial enterprise should always have told us it was. At the level of consumption-production, where production has become open-ended, and “use” involves transformative value-adding rather than finite consumption (see especially Lury 1996), diversity becomes a form of use-intensification. Radio talkback’s endless disputation and personalised anecdotal detail enact an industry-audience relation which creates a multi-directional flow of “production”. The local space of caller-listener experience displays itself as significant within the mediated global production cycles of a postmodern economy. Its intense specificity - so often characterised in media critique as the “narrativisation and personalisation” of an erosive and dangerous tabloidism - actually engages and concretises the new “specification” process, itemising the “use” values of the inexhaustible products of the information culture.

In an earlier work, Castells adapted directly Lefebvre’s spatial analysis to the structuration of late-Modern/proto-postmodern socio-economic order (see also Bourdieu, 1989). Production is spatially expressed through industrial complex or office block; consumption with the labour-power allocation into housing and public amenities. “The spatialisation of the transferences between production and consumption” - traffic and spaces of commerce - regulate relations of exchange, while administration articulates “the politico-institutional system with space”, through urban design, town planning and civic architecture. But Castells also admits the spatialising powers of the symbolic or discursive, acknowledging the role of ideological systems which organise space and our trajectories through and across it,16 “marking it with a network of signs, whose signifiers are made up of spatial forms and whose signifieds are ideological contents”.17

Within such a theorisation it becomes possible to see radio - so easily and so continually considered as an immaterial or symbolic force - as actually

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16 At which point it is interesting to note that Castells also studied with Louis Althusser.
directly implicated in the "spatialisation" of productivity and consumption, at every level of Castells' model. Across even widely variant radio formats and discursive styles, discourses and practices within radio have been working to re-configure both the "the public" spaces of production, administration, and exchange, and "the private" spaces of consumption and ideological reception and integration. In each case they have transformed the symbolic - espace conçu - into shared experiential - espace vécu. Castells' Lefebvrian spatialising paradigms have operated at the core of radio's "connective" discourses, to establish and maintain a culture of production and consumption-reception. To this extent radio's discourses have concretised and "naturalised" the lived spatialisations of public and private, empowered and disempowered, central and peripheral, at the core of the production-consumption cycles of capital and its late-modernist co-production modes. At the same time they have carried into those spatialising processes the "private" and "personalised" identity work which establishes and patrols, among other things, hegemonic gender relations. The various histories of the institutionalisation of broadcasting can be read as the detailed "specification" of a technology in the service of an inherently inequitable social order. In the absence of any otherwise directly-observable spatialising capacity, radio's institutional "specification" role has been enacted through the sign-systems of its relational discourses.

Even while deliberately avoiding the sorts of debate which "public sphere" accounts of broadcasting suggest should be core concerns within the role of mass media (see for example Munson 1993; Herbst 1995; 1994; Adams and Burton 1997) radio practice has set up an industry-audience relation which has made it central to the elaboration of preferred positionings within those social spaces and roles accounted "public" and "private" (Burchell, 1993; McChesney, 1993). In particular it has positioned itself overtly in the service of a continuously emergent, saturating consumerism, and so required collaboration with certain patterns of gendered and spaced social arrangements. Talkback radio practice especially, along with all other elements of consumerist culture, has naturalised both its goals and its processes, in the elaboration of a network of myths of "choice" as "open participation", equal and interactive discussion, and latterly "free speech". Such radio practice has, it will be argued, simultaneously subsumed and suppressed concepts of public participation central to the ideals of bourgeois liberal-humanist autonomous identity which it still most strenuously espouses, and upon which it founds its appeal to the "individual" listener-
consumer (Carpignano et al., 1990). But at the same time it has broadened audience engagement with the production culture, to admit more recent developments of “consumption-as-production” - so opening new spaces for participation. The tensions which arise from radio’s efforts to control this emergent new relation are at the core of the analysis of radio talk in this study. Some of the key parameters across which such conflict plays will be picked up and examined in the following chapter.
Chapter Two

The public life of broadcasting

2.0 "RadioActive" or "active" radio? - re-positioning the relations of production and reception

In this section analysis focuses on the relationship between contemporary radio practices ("industry/production") and the constitution of social identities ("audience/reception"). It develops a critique of both the "centring" power discourses of commercial talk radio, and the claims to representation of "alternative" community voices and values from Community or Public Radio sector programming (Dugdale, 1979; Bear, 1983). Both tendencies are traced not only from within each broadcasting sector's institutional structures and industry practices, but across the discourse relations and programme-presentation behaviours of broadcasters which both sectors use to establish their audiences.

Each in its own way operates to command the conditions of its own reception, by annexation of cultural conventions (even if in many cases what Beck (1992) has called historically surpassed or "zombie categories") relating to social occupancy of public and private space, calling forth the appropriately "disciplined" identities for such occupancy. But neither exactly configures the experiences of fluid and contradictory social identity and positioning arising within the "networked" informational society of late capitalist production. Both "the public" and "the private", traditionally the spaces over which production, consumption and identity have been organised, are now intensely problematic. This chapter will argue that those traditions of public and private sphere social identity over which Modernist media were constructed have now eroded. Especially within those media formats required by their position within commercial marketing to keep up with the new "specification" work of post modern identity-driven consumption, an inversion of relations between "production" and "reception", "industry" and "audience" is occurring. It is within this new set
of conditions that this study raises the questions: where have the powerfully hypermasculine strategies and techniques of contemporary radio talkback come from, whose interests do they serve, and why do the “gender war” discursive relations they foster recur in non-commercial, “community” based programming?

In asking these questions, it is necessary to acknowledge that a Habermasian or “public sphere” account of broadcasting is still at the centre of contemporary broadcast practice, and coded into dominant discursive formations in both production and reception. While the rigidity of this model’s intensely regulatory and Panoptical structuring has little to offer an account of postmodern or informational media use (Kelly, 1994), media industry practices and popular expressions of the “power” of media most often rest on Habermasian foundations. The maintenance of the Habermasian perspective within much radio analysis similarly reflects the persistence of Frankfurt School accounts of radio as the all-powerful mass medium of the 1930s (Adorno, 1945; 1991). This has been especially so in relation to ongoing US concerns over direct political feedback between talkback opinion and the legislative process - issues arising around the strongly editorialising styles of right-wing talkback hosts such as Rush Limbaugh and G. Gordon Liddy1 (see for instance Groppe 1994; 1994a; Hopstetter et al. 1994; Hofstetter [sic] et al., 1999; and Hoyt 1992). These perspectives have also extended into Australian media self-analysis (Adams & Burton 1997), largely in response to the media’s part in the political career of Pauline Hanson. Such a positioning assumes self-evident “truths” of an abusive power operating downwards, from autonomous “emperors of the air” or “demons at drivetime”2 to disempowered and manipulable listener-dupes. The analysis which ensues blocks examination of either textual or institutional relations of power across the construction of broadcaster and listener identity within programming. The rise of such commentary however at the very moment of radical shift in theoretical-analytical work on self-within-culture, which recognises very

1 For an account of their work, see UK Channel 4 Television’s The Naked News: Talk Radio, 1997. The moral - and intellectual - panic over the rise of Limbaugh in particular can be read from the number of US Doctoral dissertations on the topic from the mid-1990s on: see DA1 Abstracts, at: http://web.ovid.unilinc.edu.au/ovidweb-x/ovidweb.cgi; especially Jones, 1988a; 1988b; McRae, 1997; Munson, 1990.

2 “Emperors of the air” is the subtitle of the 1997 Adams and Burton anthology of Australian talkback transcripts, while “Demons at drivetime” is the title of a 1996 SBS broadcast and video covering the same topics. Together they capture the largely Frankfurt School perspective of a “monstrous” media power, especially embraced by ABC Late night live broadcaster and social commentator, Phillip Adams.
different pathways towards identity constitution and opinion formation, calls for a careful teasing-out not only of Habermas’ own ideas on the public and private individual, but of the ongoing enmeshment of radio within his now problematic formulation.

2.1  The problem of the “individual” in “the public sphere”

In his early and influential study *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1962; not translated into English until 1989) Habermas explains the complex intermeshing of “private” and “public” life by tracing out what he sees as a formative influence of classical antiquity on Western social systems. The simultaneous rise within ancient urban society (*polis*) of the public life of the market place (*agora*), public ritual (*praxis*) and civic discussion (*lexis*), and their separation from, and yet dependence on, the private life of the individual household (*oikos*) constituted a still-recognisable structured base of social practices, spaces and identities. These continued to develop across two millennia, without losing the inherent tension of the public-private duality:

> Just as the wants of life and the procurement of its necessities were shamefully hidden inside the *oikos*, so the *polis* provided an open field for honourable distinction: citizens indeed interacted as equals with equals (*homoioi*), but each did his [sic] best to excel (*aristoi*) (p. 4).

In the influential late-Frankfurt School model of a rationally-ordered culture espoused by Habermas, such Hellenic originary structures re-influenced Enlightenment European social systems from the Renaissance on, exerting what he describes as “a peculiarly normative power”. Only in the past century did an opposing tendency become apparent. So wedded was the Habermasian hypothesis to the perfection of the Hellenic formulae behind European institutions, that it inevitably coded any further development as “a process of decomposition” of the private interest/public good ethos. Despite the paradoxes of the model’s continuing politico-conceptual centrality

> Tendencies pointing to the collapse of the public sphere are unmistakable, for while its scope is expanding impressively, its function has become progressively insignificant. Still, publicity continues to be an organisational principle of our political order (p. 4).

With his identity linked in the pre-modern European Enlightenment with the “thoroughly bourgeois idea of the freely self-actualising personality” (p. 13), Habermas’ “public man” entered high industrial and mercantile society, and
modelled it to his own needs. He has not since willingly surrendered the
formula designed to guarantee and reproduce his power. The emergent
“public” formed under the policing authority of bourgeois society’s
bureaucratic and administrative impulses later came in its turn to wrest some
elements of power from the private capitalist venturers. However the
equation which promulgated the ideal of an extension of private control in
the public interest: public debate for the private good, proved more difficult
to transform. The “peculiar ambivalence” (p. 24) Habermas notes in a system
of commercial enterprise in which public regulation and private initiative
coexist, exactly delineates the divisions arising between the need to
reproduce a docile producing/consuming society, and to keep in “private”
hands control over and profit from both activities. “The bourgeois public
sphere” which subsequently emerged (p. 27), allied with the Enlightenment
rationalism which was held to validate its claims to social and economic
dominance, placed not only its own concerns at the centre of public attention,
but caused itself to be refocussed as the “ideal” of social existence:

... the experiences about which a public passionately concerned with itself sought
agreement and enlightenment through the rational-critical public debate of
private persons with one another flowed from the well-spring of a specific
subjectivity. The latter had its home, literally, in the sphere of the patriarchal
conjugal family (p. 43, emphasis added).

This is explicitly an order built over gendered inequity of public/private
activity, or in strict Habermasian terms, “public/private-intimate”.

The sense in Habermas of the simultaneous constitution and mythologisation
of both bourgeois and patriarchal hegemony is crucial to the dilemmas of
radio scholarship’s continuing efforts to deal with the “public sphere” claims
of contemporary broadcasting practice. Talkback radio in particular, still
almost exclusively a commercial broadcasting genre, is frequently seen by
radio scholarship - and certainly by itself - as attempting to (re)constitute
exactly that “public sphere” of “rational-critical debate” for “private persons”
which Habermas idealises within high-Enlightenment bourgeois society (and
laments the “erosion” of in more contemporary eras).

For Potts (1989) radio worked directly to extend the public sphere, re-
constituting community through “secondary orality” - the restitution of a free
communal expressiveness through direct and conversational discussion,
otherwise barred to those without advanced public-genre literacy (pp. 25-26).
J. B. Thompson (1995) stresses the importance of radio as the first medium
permitting direct participation ("mediated interaction") in public debate to those denied direct access through lack of proximity. Gill (1993) however discovered in her research into the lack of women broadcasters a persistent view among programme controllers that women - one of the groups structurally excluded from a Habermasian public (even if re-admitted by both Potts and Thompson) - lacked both experience of active participation in relevant genres of public speaking, and acceptance in that role from audiences (see also McKay, 2000).

Barnett (1992), in an updated account of Australian talk radio (in Ahern 2000) attributes to the predominance of older listeners the ongoing "public sphere" authority positions taken up by the predominantly male presenters in Australian talkback. His citations from younger talk radio professionals (John Fabriz, 2GZ; Lukas Jon Avgerinos, SUNFM; Graeme Gilbert, 2CC; Rohan Smith, 2LF) admittedly indicate a tendency among younger listener-callers towards argumentation and challenge. The endorsement of this trend as reflective of a move towards a more independent and self-confident opinion-formation among those able to access alternative information flows is emphasised by the ABC's Andrew Olle Scholarship recipient, Kate Jordan (Ahern 2000, p.188) who suggests that "to keep those listeners, talk presenters will have to be open to being corrected or to being educated by their listeners". To date however, as work by Hutchby (1996) demonstrates, contention within talkback exchanges is enacted by both callers and hosts as "argumentivity", and has already been compellingly re-appropriated as a key component of the patriarchal talk host's discursive regime.

In every instance, claims made for talkback radio as a contemporary - and even future - "public sphere" of free debate prove as illusory as Habermasian accounts of their Enlightenment equivalent. Both a unitary public sphere and its concomitant private "self" as an active agent of public discourse (Bernstein, 1995) prove limited, exclusive - and yet persistent as models for radio "talk/back" programming.

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2.2 Universality of the function of reception

Promotional materials produced by commercial talkback publicists promulgate exactly the “public sphere” position, claiming provision of free access to public debate, and representing themselves - paradoxically - as champions of free-consensual, “individual” public opinion, otherwise repressed beneath a weight of totalising regulatory public control. Most recently this has been formulated as “the voice of the silent majority,” squeezed by the mechanics of “political correctness.”

Somewhere in the slippage between “public” and “private”, two crucial elements are suppressed within such claims on debate open to all. In the first instance, the practice of “free debate” is cut loose from its socio-economic foundation. This process is marked in commercial radio talkback for instance by the lack of acknowledgment from presenters (although not from all listeners) of the close interweaving of their debate positioning with their advertising-sponsorship-promotional roles.⁴

Secondly, the subtle and unsubtle gender-exclusion techniques of radio discourses and practices (lexis and praxis) which should take us straight back to a Habermasian sense of gendered sequestration inside the social model, are actively denied, while equally actively pursued, in relations between talk radio co-presenters, listener-callers, and off-air staff. The private/public worlds of oikos and agora: the domestic and the market economy, connect the locales of reception and production for talkback radio. In each space, both Habermasian theorisation and scrutiny of contemporary talkback texts suggests that the model of the rational, self-reliant, self-serving private man as source of all public debate, will be the “specific subjectivity” preserved (Pateman, 1989).

With industrialisation came a socio-political shift in Europe, from bourgeois hegemony to a broadening social participation. The concomitant extension of “public” regulatory powers of bureaucratic government saw even the realm of the “private” lose its self-definitional powers. Within the private-intimate sphere of oikos the patriarchal-conjugal family lost ground:

To a greater extent individual family members are now socialised by extrafamilial authorities, by society directly. Recall here only those explicitly pedagogical

⁴ Chapter 8 of this thesis will specifically address this connection, to suggest that, as dominant talkback hosts would themselves agree, nothing in the world of commercial broadcasting is ever exactly “free”.

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functions that the bourgeois family had to hand over formally to the school and informally to anonymous forces outside the home. The economic demands placed upon the patriarchal-conjugal family from without corresponded to the institutional strength to shape a domain devoted to the development of the inner life. In our day this domain, abandoned under the onslaught of extramilial authorities upon the individual, has started to dissolve into a sphere of pseudo-privacy (Habermas, 1989, pp. 156-157).

The role of modern media is recognisable here, intensifying its (massed) institutional focus upon the “private individual,” without acknowledging the degree to which this undercuts the very possibilities of “individuality” or “privacy.” Modern media’s prime role became the construction of “receptive capacity” in the service of the reproduction of consumerism, as Stephen Heath (1990) suggests (see also Joyrich, 1996). The move has seriously destabilised the Habermasian concept of the autonomous and self-actualising “subject-citizen” which contemporary media still insists it sets out to address. Describing for instance the saturating daily recurrence of engagement with media texts and techniques in television viewing, Heath comments on

... its fundamental universalising function, universalising not in the sense of the creation of some one coherent subject, some representative reason for its orders, but in ... the universalisation of the function of reception. Television [radio] exists, first and foremost as availability, as saying everything to everyone, all of us receivers (p. 270).

To this extent at least Heath’s insight reveals how far Habermasian distinctions between public and private have been eroded. Even Heath, however, fails to account for the degree to which the very accessibility of our communications systems has reversed processes of “universalisation”, producing instead infinitely distinguishing sets of identification enacted in increasingly active reception relations (Lull, 1990; Livingstone & Lunt, 1994).

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5 It is interesting to see how far Habermas’ analysis here parallels Foucault’s. See especially “The political technology of individuals” (in Martin, Guzman & Hutton, eds., 1988), where Foucault concludes that the major “political rationality” of the modern era is “policing”, in its European sense of the systematisation of bureaucratic social regulation. He concludes: “The main characteristic of our modern rationality in this perspective is neither the constitution of the state, the coldest of all cold monsters, nor the rise of bourgeois individualism. I won’t even say that it is a constant effort to integrate individuals into the political totality. I think that the main characteristic of our political rationality is the fact that this integration of the individuals in a community or in a totality results from a constant correlation between an increasing individualisation and the reinforcement of this totality. From this point of view we can understand why the modern political rationality is permitted [permeated?] by the antinomy between law and order” (pp. 161-162).
2.3 "The fetishisation of community involvement"

This "universalising" is not therefore a simple "massing" into monolithic audience. The "everything to everyone" is not - or is no longer - a totalising unitary message, everywhere and always received in predictable and standardised ways, and in passivity and quiescence. As the shift within media studies to a view of an "active reception" has demonstrated in numerous instances (see Ang 1990, 1996; Collins 1989a, 1989b, 1992); the capacity to interpret and variously interact with media texts (in Hall's formulation, to consent, resist or negotiate) has multiplied the possible cultural "uses" of media. Varying the take-up of a given text has extended the variety already offered by the diversity of texts themselves. It even extends for instance the poly-culturalism which commentators such as Grodin and Lindlof (1996) see as the new media's optimising of opportunities for accommodating to difference:

Mediated communication enables us to encounter many diverse people representing different social enclaves and ethnic or religious backgrounds. In this way, it challenges the validity of singular perspectives and calls into question the hegemony of rational choice and the belief in one truth or univocal judgement ... Self becomes multivocal as we carry a number of voices within us (p. 4).

For analysts of "media saturated" postmodernity such as Gergen (1991) this marks a passing into postmodern subjectivity, read as a kind of saturating democratisation effect, and seen as suited to contemporary media practice and the current social moment. For Habermas however media operating as direct interface between regulatory public authority and "the inner life" amounts to a loss of autonomy so significant that he accounts it a "refeudalisation." For him "discussion as a form of sociability" - the sort of discussion which formed the base of bourgeois identity-constitution - "gave way to the fetishism of community involvement" (p. 158; see also Bronstein, 1984; Bayer, 1994).

This irruption of a regulating social into a moral-contemplative private, Habermas interestingly characterises with those very activities similarly fetishised within current "active reception" theories of media-audience research. Citing W. H. Whyte, Habermas shows how "doing things with other people - even watching television together - helps make one more of a real person" (p. 158; emphasis added). It is precisely at this moment of the triumph of the everyday lifeworld over the mass media that Habermas'
unease over “loss” of the hegemonic bourgeois social order prevails over his historical account of cultural change. From here on his analysis is pervaded by a deeply Modernist elegiac tone. He laments the “apolitical” nature of the new “leisure” society in which identity formation intersects directly with consumption. His view of the development of “massed” audiences is a high Frankfurt School vision of industrial culture - albeit one which still says much about the contemporary practices of commercial talk radio. Radio as a media sector is, if nothing else, acutely aware of its industrial/commercial role (Garnham, 1983; 1992). While listeners may regard their use of radio as pure entertainment, every sector of contemporary Australian radio stresses the need for commercial consciousness:

Prepare to hear more about radio as a “business”, in smaller markets even more so - the radio stations that find the true harmony between sales and programming rather than just existing by a series of compromises or deals will be the successful ones (Australi’s Cathy O’Connor 1998)

We hear and read about the investment plans of a highly competitive industry. We know we have the ability to match them (Former ABC Managing Director Brian Johns 1998)

Even though community radio licences are issued only to non-profit groups, and community stations must be non-commercial in character and purpose, they can and do use sophisticated marketing techniques and make aggressive efforts to extend their revenue base (Station Manager Jeff Langdon, Community Radio 5UV Website 2000)

(All comments cited in Aherne, 2000).

This convergence of discourse across commercial, national and community radio sectors indicates the degree to which each version of a public sphere which has emerged has subsequently evolved - or devolved - towards the politics of production-consumption of the society within which it operates.

When leisure was nothing but a complement to time spent on the job, it could be no more than a different arena for the pursuit of private business affairs that were not transformed into a public communication between private people. To be sure, the individuated satisfaction of needs might be achieved in a public fashion, namely, in the company of many others; but a public sphere itself did not emerge from such a situation. When the laws of the market governing the sphere of commodity exchange and of social labour also pervaded the sphere reserved for private people as a public, rational-critical debate had a tendency to be replaced by consumption, and the web of public communication unravelled into acts of individuated reception, however uniform in mode (Habermas pp. 160-161, emphasis added.)

Habermas details the now-classic formula of the rise of the “culture industries” as “a conduit for social forces channelled into the conjugal
family’s inner space.” He flings epithet after epithet at this “sphere of culture consumption”; the “de-privatized province of interiority ... hollowed out by the mass media”; a “superfamilial zone of familiarity” (p. 162).\[^6\]

For Habermas self-actualisation under such direct public scrutiny is counterproductive. The equation between public reception of, but individual assimilation to, acculturating media has inverted the high-Enlightenment formula of private assimilation and public critique, into a process which for Habermas remains frighteningly inert, passive, and manipulable. In such a culture, “public debate” is itself commodified: re-proffered as a consumable, “staged” by the media, alongside what Althusser (1971) would describe as the “ideological state apparatus” institutions of schools, churches, community groups.

But for all the sense of excessive public scrutiny Habermas outlines in the new “floodlit privacy” (p. 159) of a publicised and lionised identity work within mediated individual leisure, he fails to extend the argument at this point back into its economic substructure - the originary drive of the entire thesis - and to allow for further evolution (see McGuigan, 1996). It is this which allows such “pop” versions of this theory formulation as those espoused in talk-show editorialising to take shape. Habermas acknowledges subsequent advances into advertising and promotionalism, in which the media themselves attain the status of the sole public sphere by pre-formulating political discussion within their publicistic role. But his insistence on the passivity of reception and the reductive commodification of debate blocks any possible vision of a “consumer-as-producer” resistance or transformative re-interpretation. Since the only possible position of agency for Habermas is that of the private-within-the-public: the bourgeois liberal-humanist “homme” as “citoyen”, an actively-critical audience for modern media cannot be conceived. Further, the specific gendering of this ideal and of “active” citizenship continues to accept the traditional rigid demarcation between oikos and agora which contemporary economics, domestic and market, have eroded (Mort, 1991; Jones, 1994).

\[^6\] This study will test these claims in Chapters 9 and 10, which will examine the exposure of personal sexual practice to both expert medical diagnosis and public scrutiny and comment, in Pillowtalk, with “Dr Feelgood.” There “bedrooms across the nation” are evoked and become a useful site for examination of current relations between public regulatory authority and - variously understood - personal “inner space.” The popular success of the programme and others like it suggests it has positioned itself in ways suited to contemporary expression of a highly public “privacy” zone.
2.4 Talkback radio’s active reception defies “refeudalisation”

The limitations of the Habermasian position on the gendering of public and private spaces are made especially salient in his direct commentary on radio audiences. Discussing the evolution in press practices of a selectivity and rearrangement by which “news” - crucial for the operation of the rational public - becomes “entertainment” for the broadest possible audience, Habermas extends his point into what, in terms of his broad historical sweep, are the “new media” of radio and television. Here he sees a dissolution of the distance needed for critical assessment, which allows these media to place their audience “under tutelage”, depriving the public of “the opportunity to say something and to disagree” (p. 171). The immediacy and directness of electronic media texts are compared unfavourably with the reflective interpretive spaces offered by print and in reading. The position misses both the extension of active/critical reading techniques into new views of electronic literacy (Lindlof, 1988; Liebes & Katz, 1990), and subsequent developments in electronic media formats (Silverstone & Hirsch, 1992).

Only five years after the original (German) publication of The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere, the evolution of radio talkback, its subsequent consolidation as a major radio format, and later emergence as a feared tool of public and direct political critique, give lie to this position. And yet this very media format whose agents most profit from an active audience involvement, is that most likely to espouse a Habermasian position on the “decomposition” of the public sphere; to focus intensely on “personal responsibility”, re-endorsement of the patriarchal conjugal family, and preference for private ownership (Adams & Burton 1977; Higgins & Moss 1982). This mis-match of praxis with lexis: what radio does with what its presenters and listener-callers say, is only partially encompassed within Habermas’ concept of a “realm of secondary intimacy” (p. 172.) Here modern media are seen to re-transmit the ideologies of humanist self-directedness,

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7 The accepted date for the beginnings of talkback radio in Australia is 1967, when the PostMaster-General, who still controlled landline communications, finally licensed live broadcast of telephone conversations. See Lesley Johnson (1988) for discussion of attempts at phone-in broadcast in Sydney in the 1920s. Des Foster, Manager of 2GB Sydney in the 1960s and Federal Director of the Federation of Australian Radio Broadcasters from 1970 to 1988, has outlined the steps taken in the mid 1960s to persuade the Menzies Government that the new US “talkback” mode was worthwhile (Errol Simper, “Don’t touch that dial”, The Australian, Friday November 20th 1998, p. 11). Note however that both Federal Parliamentarian Barry Jones, and Adelaide talkshow host Bob Francis, claim to have broadcast the first Australian talkback programme (Haran, 1994).
and "transfer the illusion of an untouched private sphere and intact private autonomy to conditions which have long since removed the basis for both" (p. 171.) Certainly, Habermas encapsulates with precision many of the disempowering strategies and discursive practices of contemporary radio:

... the 'culture' propagated by the mass media is a culture of integration. It not only integrates information with critical debate and the journalistic format with the literary forms of the psychological novel into a combination of entertainment and 'advice' governed by the principle of 'human interest'; at the same time it is flexible enough to assimilate elements of advertising, indeed, to serve itself as a kind of super-slogan that, if it did not already exist, could have been invented for the purpose of public relations serving the cause of the status quo (p. 175).

And yet the Habermasian disavowal of any potential for real resistance or dissent from audiences both denies the evidence of talkback callers' comments, and evades his own structural analysis of the transformational potential displayed within Western capitalism. If the capacity to adapt has been the primary ploy for socio-cultural survival, to anticipate a "final phase" - and one so neatly contemporary with the author's own era - seems perverse. More contentiously, this is a moment which just pre-dates the far-reaching social and cultural effects of wide-spread political upheaval and sustained economic pressures beginning in the late 1960s. Habermas ends his study with the comment that a decision is still pending over whether the bourgeois public sphere is a determinant of "domination and power", or whether "as a historical category itself, it is open to substantive change" (p. 250). At the same time, his identification of it as an historical moment operating as a cultural ideal from which all further development has been a sad deviation, has pre-empted the answer. In terms of radio practice, his perspective has left commentators with an excess of descriptive modes for assessing the powerful and manipulative positionings of the radio "personality" system and its practitioners: the power behind the microphone - but few strategies for accessing those sites from which critical response might be constructed, or indeed observed as already under construction.

By suspending the Habermasian analysis, focusing instead on close examination of the texts and practices evident in real broadcasting - especially that claiming for itself some version of the act of elaboration of a public sphere - it may be possible to access those social spaces defined as most powerless within the realms of the public/private divide, and to examine them for some signs of the resistance Habermas claims as impossible.


2.5 A newly enterprising “private” sphere: alternative spaces for public assertion of identity

Not only is the “refeudalising” explanation of media power inherent in Habermas seriously under attack from the “active audience” and “networked” informational flow analyses of more contemporary theorists, but “publics” located outside the ambit of bourgeois hegemony are increasingly being strongly posited. J. B. Thompson (1993; 1995) suggests four significant omissions from the Habermasian model: its exclusion of women; its undue focus on “rational debate” and suppression of the existence of other styles of public engagement; its over-confident assertion of a “unitary” public sphere, and its failure to perceive that separately evolved participatory formations historically co-existed with the bourgeois public sphere. Thompson proposes parallel spaces of public debate, including religious forums such as those provided by Wesleyan Methodism, or worker politicisation through the Trades Union movement. More recently, the work of Hartley and McKee (2001) has suggested within contemporary society multiple “publics”, evidenced in the emergence, on its own terms, of an indigenous debate and policy formulation role among Australian Aboriginal communities. Nikolas Rose (1999) similarly critiques theorisation of public spheres or models of “civil society” as “a kind of aboriginal reality or natural given”, seeing them instead as always and at all times “the correlate of a political technology of government” (p. 168). He thus cuts away the universalising tendencies of a Habermasian perspective, locating current claims made for “community” from no matter which political perspective, as arising within a renewed discourse of “advanced liberal” entrepreneurialism.

Tracing the rise in post World War Two Europe of a desire for redevelopment of civil society open to market forces yet opposed to the sorts of state interventionism witnessed in the excesses of totalitarian rule of whatever complexion, Rose shows the deployment of these Ordoliberalen theorisations ⁸ and latterly Chicago school economics⁹ within the “economic reform” programmes of deregulation and “responsibilisation” introduced within Thatcherite Britain and through “Reaganomics” in the USA. In a system which seeks to create a totalising effect within the individualising structures required by saturation marketing (Thrift, 1997), the whole of life is to be

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⁸ The term is drawn from the work of Alexander Rustow and his circle, published in the Journal Ordo. For an account of their work, see Colin Gordon, 1987; 1991.
⁹ Especially the work of Gary Becker, 1976.
configured as a range of enterprise projects. A person’s relation to all of his or her activities, and ultimately to his or her self, is to be given the “self direction/self-responsibility” ethic of an enterprise culture - a “life enterprise” centring on what Rose has elsewhere called the “self-steering self” (1996). Nor was such a programme sought only within resurgent right-wing politics. According to Rose,

... over the closing two decades of the twentieth century, beyond the politics of the right, a new way of thinking about the objects, targets and mechanism and limits of government has taken shape which shares many of the premises of neoliberalism. It entails a new conception of the inherent rationality of the different domains to which government must address itself - the market, the family, the community, the individual - and new ways of allocating the tasks of government between the political apparatus, ‘intermediate associations’, professionals, economic actors, communities and private citizens (1999, pp. 139-140).

Within this new and rethought governmentality, “all aspects of social behaviour are now reconceptualised along economic lines - as calculative actions undertaken through the universal human faculty of choice” (Rose 1996, p. 141; see also Miege, 1989). The fall-back onto essentialist human universals defines the degree to which this is, like all such governmentalities, held out as a “natural” phenomenon, spontaneously arising from within a “community” of civil interactivity, increasingly made responsible for support of its own members - and also increasingly switched in and out of “productivity”, in the intensification of capital flows enabled by the new CMC “informational” globalisation. Rose deals at length with the current stresses operating around the concept of “community”, especially in relation to contemporary attempts to use it as an “extra-political” space of “naturalness”, in which the very social values to which political programmes reference their policies appear to arise. “Community” thus becomes the discursive terrain of political activity beyond “enterprise”, to which pro-active right-wing, resistant left-wing, and neo-liberal “third-way” centrist politics all aspire. Bauman (2000) takes the analysis further, detailing instances of the sudden eruption within the rapidity of “networked” information flows for what he calls “explosive” communitarianism: the seemingly instantaneous rise of social, cultural or political groups which are physically decentralised and unlocalised, and so imperceptible and uncontrollable within the panoptic institutional regimes of modernity. Each in its way points towards a new problematisation, in media terms, of audiences - a non-massifying, but post-individualising set of fluid production-reception relations.
While the Bauman, Thompson, Rose and Hartley and McKee studies have to date limited their accounts to "representative" formations: those undertaking communicative activity on behalf of a clearly recognisable social or cultural "cause", the organisational functioning they uncover operating outside recognised institutional channels, but inside media, are also observably in play within daily exchanges across new media - in which should now be included not only the "new" and active use of talkback radio by listener-callers or "volunteer" programmers on public radio, but the varying degrees of both enterprise re-insertion and minoritarian "communitarian" work undertaken around such strategies.

2.6 Radio scholarship and the media studies "industry-audience" convention

The re-emergence in recent years of a vibrant, socially-engaged critique of radio reflects the role radio plays in establishing and regulating production-consumption relations for "self-steering selves", but has yet to undertake a re-positioning able to accommodate either "third-way" or neo-communitarian "eruptive" activities. For the most part even "new" radio studies continue to organise their investigative focus around the media studies conventions of the industry-audience relation, focused as "production" versus "reception." Most often at stake has been not the cooperation between the two which the new media studies "active audience" position suggests, but an ongoing struggle for dominance.

Scannell, whose most recent UK based work on radio (1995; 1996) has departed from his original focus on the historical development of professional radio practice (1988; 1989; 1991; 1992) has responded to changing conditions within both industry and audiences, to the extent of attempting a completely new coding of radio as socio-cultural practice. In an attempt to capture in action rather than in historical review, the multiple-directedness of radio's "universe of discourses" (1992, p. 325), Scannell has set out to establish

... as fully as possible - how what we today recognise and take for granted as the utterly normal everyday output of broadcasting was, in the first place, actually discovered and set in place by broadcasters for listeners, in what ways, under what circumstances and for what reasons (1996, pp. 1-2).

His formulation of the "conditions of intelligibility" (1996, p. 3) of a given radio text as the primary focus for study demonstrates a view that "connects
the meaningfulness of programmes with both the organising intentions of programme makers and the institutions in which they work, and the interpretations of any viewer or listener.” He equally clearly however privileges the former over the latter:

I try to show, for instance, how it is that a performance that was widely regarded at the time of its broadcast as being ‘sincere’ could indeed be found to be so by virtue of the way in which it was organised to appear as such (1996, p. 3).

What emerges is a view of the relation between “producer” and “receiver” (or industry and audience) which overtly focuses on production - in particular, the radio presenter’s practices, arranging the conditions under which listener reception will occur.

For Scannell, this insistence on an arranged reception is a corrective position, addressing what he sees as an overly “politicised” media studies (1996, p. 4) and a Ricoeurian “hermeneutics of suspicion” (p. 254) clustered around British Cultural Studies and ruling its agendas. To Scannell, the balance of Hall’s “encoding-decoding” equation (1980) has been severely disrupted. At one level he suggests that the Marxian attribution of ideological function to media as agents of social reproduction through production of false consciousness had lead media studies to a denial of the everyday reality and meaningfulness for audiences of the media products and processes which so largely constitute the modern world. At the same time, he believes that at least some of the specialist studies of the “de-coding” undertaken within the field of reception studies had tended to “uncouple the moment of decoding from that which was to be decoded (‘the text’) and the manner of its encoding” (1998, p. 258) and so over-attributed agency to the act of reception.

Each of Scannell’s views is problematic in relation to the present study. In the first instance, to seek the suspension of a consideration of power and the techniques of its differential wielding within social exchanges amplified within media texts, is to deny the observable existence of its operations - and especially its role in the concretisation of power inequities around social spaces. Indeed, the best examples of Scannell’s own analyses of given radio texts arise in just such moments of observation. For instance, he provides a very clear sense of the emergence of a class and regional difference in the voicing of early BBC Northern Regional programming (1996, pp. 31-35), and he details the outstandingly successful class resistances in singer Vera Lynn’s vocalisation of un-ornamented sentimentality in wartime “light
entertainment” broadcasts (1996, pp. 65-74). Calculated though each may be, to be received as, respectively, sociability and sincerity, these examples were argued for by producers, with specific “audience appeal” in mind. The outcomes of their selection and application rested not upon producing a particular audience through use of a particular discursive strategy, but recognising an existing discursive formation which could bridge programming to an existing audience.

2.7 Locating the space for radio analysis

As Scannell seeks to suspend a socially-engaged analysis of radio in the creation of a “free space” in which the “phenomena” of production and reception might emerge and be described, his methodology directly denies Castells’ “specification” work: his Lefebvrian sense of how central a communications technology and its constituent practices become to ongoing social structuration. The two uses of the term “space” are indeed incommensurable. For Castells and Lefebvre, “space” is both “conceptual” and material, the one “folding back” to shape and maintain the other. What Scannell’s phenomenological methodology posits and seeks is a conceptually unbound space, “open” to the equally unbound eye of an ideal observer.

Scannell does however demand closer attention to “talk in everyday contexts” as the basis of what he sees as radio’s foundation in particular forms of “sociability.” To this extent Scannell’s work is itself Foucauldian, seeking to establish what Foucault describes as a “... space in which various objects emerge and are continuously transformed” (The Archaeology of Knowledge 1978, p. 32; emphasis added). We are shown for instance how radio talk evolves in Scannell’s historical analysis of the development of broadcasting practices towards less “public” (i.e. formal) and more diversified forms of address. The conclusion is interestingly close to Fairclough’s isolation of “conversationalisation” or informal “chat” as an emerging dominant “discourse type” within contemporary media practice (1994; 1995b). But having isolated this particular form of seemingly ongoing evolution, Scannell attempts a shift from historical to ontological analysis. This time seeking evidence of the “phenomena” of the listening experience of radio within its production texts and practices, he attempts to “name” or characterise the speech relations he encounters as socially and culturally motivated interpretive strategies, which generalise the social relations of their
reception. His categories: “sociability”, “sincerity”, “eventfulness”, work to organise their own reception. As such they become powerful strategies of interpretive closure: in effect, discourses. And by that very transformation they erode Scannell’s own methodological presuppositions. Firstly, they re-engage the operation of the social and its inequities within the field of reception, which Scannell seeks to preclude - or at least to suspend. Secondly, by their acknowledgment of a relational capacity, they admit into a project which seeks to establish stable descriptive categories (“sociability”; “sincerity”; “eventfulness”) a destabilising positional bias - including the possibility of contestation. Foucault’s claim on a methodological and conceptual “space” is one which admits diversity and discontinuity - where “various objects emerge and are continuously transformed”. Scannell’s is one which seeks the security of empirically established and stable categories and taxonomies, located by an observing and analytical consciousness itself (seemingly) unsituated within the processing.

This is not by any means to abandon all that Scannell’s work pursues. Scannell’s views that a broader analysis of contemporary radio is necessary, especially given the extraordinary range of its production, is crucial to an understanding of its contemporary engagement in social developments. His insistence on inclusion of the processing of radio texts at the point of production, which positions them in identifiable ways within broadcasting’s repertoire, acknowledges that they become, indeed, one of the central spaces in which production-consumption relations are modelled. However Scannell’s refusal to consider “production,” operating within the station-and-studio institutional space, as also located within those spaces, public or private, usually considered under the category “reception”, over-attributes agency to one side of what is today becoming co-productivity. Analysis of contemporary radio, operating within the logic of the Castells informational paradigm, requires a methodology which can recognise the existence of power relations not just within its own construction of “industry-audience” relations, but within multiple processual social spaces, each of them constructed as loci of Lefebvrian “espace vécu”, and so inside the power-play of the broader culture in which they exist.

It is no longer enough to posit the sort of “hermeneutics of trust” in which Scannell seeks to work. To assert that “Trust in the ordinary meaningfulness of talk in everyday contexts sustains trust in the meaningfulness of the everyday world as such” (Scannell 1998, p. 260) posits an ontological security
which is by no means a universal experience, nor even proven as the daily experience of most. Nor does it, like early Foucauldian work, admit explanation for ongoing and continuing transformations - even those evident within those very phenomena Scannell seeks in broadcasting practices, reception experiences and the processing of radio’s talk texts.

2.8 Radio’s “spaces of emergence”:
industry-audience relations as discursively regulated

Ultimately then, in attempting to discover the “conditions of intelligibility” for a given radio programme, Scannell isolates precisely those spaces of emergence which Foucault outlines for discursive formations. His work, like Foucault’s, locates “… objects that are shaped by measures of discrimination and repression, objects that are differentiated in daily practice”; detailing “the interplay of the rules that define the transformations” (Foucault 1978, p. 33). David Cardiff has illustrated just such outcomes within historical talk-radio research, tracing what he calls “the early evolution of a number of techniques” still used in both radio and television: “the straight talk, the discussion, the interview, the debate …” (1980, p. 29.) Cardiff’s analysis can be seen as an archaeology of emerging radio discourse practice, which isolates the developmental stages of those processing talk-styles in radio which discourse analysts will later come to call “text types” (Fairclough, 1995a, pp. 14-15) and use to attribute relations and distributions of power across talk generally. But Cardiff focuses directly on analysis of cultural power relations in radio: categories Scannell seeks to suspend. Cardiff has no hesitation in considering such matters as “the prestige of the programme” and “the status of the contributors”, positing “a hierarchy of presentational rules which, while they reflect the wider social hierarchy, are at the same time symptomatic of tensions within broadcasting itself” (Cardiff 1986, p. 228). He claims no privileged “space” for informational processing or textual “encoding”, outside the relational patterns already embedded in both social structures and linguistic exchange.

In work such as Cardiff’s, the whole of Hall’s “encoding-decoding” model is represented, standing as it does inside the broader social frame in which each of its constituent elements: industry, medium, text and audience, are themselves constituted and implicated. Nor does Scannell necessarily wish to overturn such a model. Indeed, he makes a plea for its retention, during a
critique of some forms of reception study (including qualitative ethnographic studies) which he claims to have “unbalanced” the Hall equation, “uncoupling” the decoding from both the “text” and the “encoding” of production.

At worst, audience/reception studies of (mainly) television ended up in a celebration of active viewers (a reaction against earlier notions of the ‘passive viewer’) and their freedom to interpret what they saw more or less as they liked (1998, p. 258).

Despite the negativity of the language here, what Scannell endorses is an inclusive and socially embedded model, reconnecting text and context. Scannell proposes not the overturning of Hall’s production-reception polarity, but the restoration of what he considers a proper balance between the two. The problem for Scannell lies not in the tendency of some reception studies to celebrate those elements of the “negotiative or resistant” outlined in Hall’s model, but in the failure to carry them back into the context of production.

Contemporary Australian radio talk at least, links markedly “active” reception practices - those displaying many features of Hall’s negotiative and resistant appropriations - directly back into production strategies. For all their dynamic contestation and remodelling within reception, by their active participation in programming they amount to a form of “co-production.” Too severe a suppression of the idea of an active reception, such as that Scannell produces in his critique of the “worst” of audience studies, risks the capacity to observe an active reception’s achievement of a direct role in production. And most crucially, it limits the concept of “active” to that of “resistant”, neglecting the degree to which consensual or negotiative strategies (to use Hall’s terms), seeking to enter or appropriate the field of production, may in themselves be creative and even transformative acts (articulations).

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10 The degree of negativity in Scannell’s denunciation of audience reception studies has the perhaps unfortunate consequence of placing his work within the ambit of European postmodern techno-pessimism. For Baudrillard for example, the constant drive towards participation which McLuhan (1964) detected in modern media is always already pre-emptive: “The reading of the message is then only a perpetual examination of the code” (1983, p. 120). From phone-polling to the selection of camera angles in cinema, the vision/version which is given in Baudrillard’s analysis is “design-ated”. Mediated questions are already answered, even before they are raised. What is served is only the system itself. Talk-back radio in Baudrillard’s model would exist only to capture talk, to the advantage of radio. While talkback broadcasters almost certainly believe this, their listener-co-producers do not.
2.9 Participating in talkback radio: active reception becomes interactive co-production

Castells (1996) explains the rise of active media participation in the late modern era as one of its defining features. It is driven by the intensification of concern over social and cultural identity outlined in Rose's work, concomitant with the erosion of regulatory social institutions and stable, geographically and nationally bounded, cultural controls. In fact for Castells, "[t]he first historical steps of informational societies seem to characterise them by the pre-eminence of identity as their organising principle" (1996, p. 22). He cites in particular the work of Alain Touraine (1994)\textsuperscript{11}, arguing that "the defence of the subject, in its personality and in its culture, against the logic of apparatuses and markets" defines post-industrial society - although this in many ways is too negatively defined and overly directed towards a politics of resistance, to accommodate the multiple positions taken up within Castells' view of informational uses within identity formation, or the pro-market tendencies of "choice" identity in Rose's "self-steering self". Where cultural services operate to sustain and increase consumption (increasingly configured around fluid informational flows) and have replaced material goods as the focus of productivity, identity becomes central to both production itself, and to resistance to the centrality of production as prime meaning-making process.

In the second volume of his three-part study of the informational society emerging from late industrial capitalism Castells focuses directly on identity formation. Working within a social constructionist perspective,\textsuperscript{12} he isolates three dominant positions within which contemporary identity work occurs. "Legitimation" identity operates in what Hall would call a "consensual" mode, aligning itself with dominant social forces and operating within existing institutional arrangements. "Resistance" identity works within conditions of Gramscian hegemonic order, its programmes overtly seeking to express social difference, yet operating within existing structures. But for Castells of most interest is what he terms "project" identity, working within

\textsuperscript{11} Touraine is the third of Castells' teachers and mentors. Here Castells cites an untranslated work by Touraine: Qu'est-ce que la démocratie? Paris, Fayard.

\textsuperscript{12} Sampson (1989) defines social constructionism as the belief that "selves, persons, psychological traits, and so forth, including the very idea of individual psychological traits, are social and historical constructions, not naturally occurring objects." See Sampson, E. (1989) "The deconstruction of self", in K. Gergen and J. Shotton (eds.) Texts of identity: Inquiries in social construction, Newbury Park, California, Sage, pp. 1-19.
the conditions of late or post-modernity, to accommodate the accelerating pace of new identity “options” at the heart of consumerist co-production.

Of most significance is the means by which each of these identity positions is pursued. Identity operates not purely within what Foucault described as “technologies of the self” - those social and cultural activities working directly on formation of the body, directed towards such or such a styled state of being. Nor is it located solely in the symbolic or ideological levels of cultural work. Bauman (2000, p. 56) reminds us that

... the way human beings understand the world tends to be at all times praxiomorphic: it is always shaped by the know-how of the day, by what people can do and how they usually go about doing it.

Identity work in Castells’ model occurs at every stage of Foucault’s “technologies” of everyday life - so that entry to “project identity” requires constant assessment of those positionings offered within and across the “flows” of information which constitute the new social order. Bauman (2000), working to capture the “fluidity” of later modern culture and its equally mobile identity formations, reminds us that Foucault’s centred and structured Panoptic order is rapidly reversing, as institutions established in a comparatively stable period of modern industrialisation unravel. For Bauman, the “heavy” industries of the Fordist period and their concomitant Taylorist control systems modelled a stability and gravity within culture, which produced identities institutionally reliant and so relatively fixed. The “light” commodities - increasingly the informational services of post-industrial society - foster an unfixed, fluid identity formation, which Bauman describes as “an individualised, privatised version of modernity, with the burden of pattern-weaving and the responsibility for failure falling primarily on the individual’s shoulders” (2000, pp. 7-8). Social institutions and traditional cultural categories lose their exclusive powers to define. Beck (1999) refers to them as “zombie categories”, both “dead-and-alive” - still circulating in the processing of identity, but active only when, and as, enacted within a particular identity gambit. Touraine describes

... the end of definition of the human being as a social being, defined by his or her place in society which determines his or her behaviours and actions (in Castells, 1998, p. 177).
Instead, Touraine leads us to locate only strategic interplays of behaviours, not directed by social norms, but to "the defence, by all social actors, of their cultural and psychological specificity" (loc. cit.).

The open-endedness of the new formula leads us back to both Castells’ concept of the increasing necessity for "specification", or engagement of new informational flows into productive capacity - now also engaging directly with identity work as consumption-production - and Lefebvre’s sense of culture entering the construction of a “third space”, in which optionality prevails. Soja describes the moment as one which calls for

... a critical 'other-than' choice that speaks and critiques through its otherness. That is to say, it does not derive simply from an additive combination of its binary antecedents but rather from a disordering, deconstruction and tentative reconstitution of their presumed totalisation producing an open alternative that is both similar and strikingly different (1996, p. 61).

The logic of such a system matches Castells’ paradigm of an “open” communications network which can structure connectedness and at the same time, remain dynamic and permit innovation. Within the new informational logic the activities of a given audience by necessity engage the powerfully motivated informational flows of given media institutions in transformative and recombinant ways. As J. Macgregor Wise (1997) has suggested, what the media analyst requires at such a moment is not a means of describing the positions which a given medium offers, but the flows it operates, and across which new, as yet undetermined positions and counter-flows can arise. Wise recognizes as Grossberg before him the pressures exerted within postmodern fluidity on the need to "construct a place from which to stand and act within the global flows of space" (Grossberg 1992, p. 181). Inside informational society space is itself under review, disconnecting and reconnecting with the changing linkages of late capital in its electronic global daily sweep towards strategic economic advantage. The resultant insecurity is shared by the analyst. For Wise

... the solution is not to posit a politics of identity that consists in the acquisition of some quickly reified 'independent identity', or posit any necessary (physical, archaeological, anthropological or historical) connections to any particular space (or environment), or that may lapse back into Enlightenment notions of the individual, but rather a politics of space (1997, p. 181).

\footnote{See also Wark, 1994.}
Castells reminds us once more that space "... is the expression of society" - "... the material support of time-bearing social practices" (1996, pp. 410-411) - although he is quick to add that the materiality constituted in sedimented social practices is simultaneously heavily invested in symbolic meaning. What is new about such meaning-bearing spaces in the informational social order is their progressive loss of the principle of "contiguity". Instead, informational society is constructed around "... flows: flows of capital, flows of information, flows of technology, flows of organisational interaction, flows of images, sounds, and symbols". Such flows are to be understood as

... purposeful, repetitive, programmable sequences of exchange and interaction between physically disjointed positions held by social actors in the economic, political and symbolic structures of society (1996, p. 412).

Within such non-contiguous interactivities Castells identifies three necessary constituents: "a circuit of electronic impulses" acting as the material support or "network"; a series of "nodes" or "hubs" operating as exchange points or localities for specific functions, hierarchised according to their relative worth to the system; and finally, the articulation and hierarchical distinction given to dominant, technocratic-financial-managerial élites within a given "flow", by their very capacity to maintain their mobility within it. In flow culture, "élites are cosmopolitan, people are local" (p. 415).

Bauman, working to describe and exemplify the "fluidity" of late modernity after the erosion of regulatory institutions, similarly characterises what he calls the "post Panoptical" power relations of a highly mobile late-modern society (2000, p. 11):

What mattered in Panopticon was that the people in charge were assumed always to 'be there', nearby, in the controlling tower. What matters in post-Panoptical power relations is that the people operating the levers of power on which the fate of the less volatile partners in the relationship depends can at any moment escape beyond reach - into sheer inaccessibility .... The prime technique of power is now escape, slippage, elision and avoidance, the effective rejection of any territorial confinement with its cumbersome corollaries of order-building, order-maintenance and the responsibility for the consequences of it all as well as the necessity to bear the costs.

With the struggle now one of accessing the strategies of power as "leverage" and escape: achieving the lightness of postmodernity within its constantly renewing and saturating informational flows; the power-flow of panopticism reverses. As Mathiesen points out (1997), in the postmodern media world of
tabloid celebrity the many now observe the few.\textsuperscript{14} Active media participation becomes a primary means of achieving “project” identity, so that the Foucauldian Panopticon is replaced by Mathiesen’s “synopticon”, in a media-modelled, technologically enabled drive towards locating and expressing a self within the “space of flows.”

\section*{2.10 Radio as synopticon: talking our/selves into space}

In relation to identity work, the processual patterns constituted within computer mediated communications (CMCs) and those evident in the disregarded practices of contemporary radio demonstrate marked similarity. Wise, like Castells, has suggested that CMCs construct new social power “flows”, and calls for consideration of “... the technologies with which the flows are wrapped up, and the codings and resonances of their energy stream” (p. 181). At first sight, Scannell’s phenomenological method attempts for radio a similar pinning-down of the medium as a “processing” flow. His deflection onto radio texts and text relations is particularly useful for its move towards a focus on real practices within a diverse sector - despite the difficulty in reconciling his approach with everyday experience of and participation in the sorts of mobile and transformational radio practices which this study delineates. Scannell’s desire to seek a series of “stable states” for radio as a medium ultimately accentuates the degree to which it is already - perhaps even progenitively - caught up in the “flow” technologies managing and re-forming postmodern capital and its informational systems (Castells 1996; 1997; 1998). Radio, itself a deceptively non-contiguous medium, pre-empts the fluidity and two-way movement of their electronic “energy stream” (see also Avery \textit{et al.}, 1978).

From this perspective, Scannell’s attempt to capture radio’s processual powers under a series of recurrent “phenomena” (“sociability”; “eventfulness”, etc) threatens to establish radio, so long the disregarded medium, as among the “legitimising” processual forces of Castells’ schema, or what Wise, following Deleuze and Guattari, describes as “axiomatic” powers. An axiom is an operationalising strategy used to constitute a sign-system in support of a given social order, disseminating its structural and structuring principles through what Deleuze and Guattari (1987, p. 454) term

\textsuperscript{14} See Turner, Bonner and Marshall, 2000, for an account of the “celebrity” project in contemporary Australian media.
“models of realisation”. What Scannell’s work often locates - as does this study in part - are just such models of realisation, operating within radio discourse and practice as commonsense modes of participation. But within the “liquidity” of postmodernity and its “Thirdspace” logic there must also be consideration of what Deleuze and Guattari call “minoritarian” formations: points of dissidence which trouble the axiomatic, and which, while frequently, even pre-emptively, re-assimilated, work to reveal the axiomatic as in operation within the local. In other words, this study will re-introduce into the equation that field of power which Scannell suppresses, suggesting once again that his elaboration of a “hermeneutics of trust” is an over-correction.19

While each set of theorisations has thus moved to a stage which accommodates resistance (in audience terms, “active reception”) into its cultural model, when it comes to radio the breadth of social relational behaviours caught up within its daily practice makes it impossible to “universalise” its operational schema. What emerges is a need to focus study across a range of programming, to examine both influential mainstream practice, and the more specialist talk-texts of localised programming. This study will thus postulate that talkback radio in particular, but also radio talk with high levels of in-studio presenter “banter”, shows evidence of particular, but often very differently directed, “reception modelling”.

Hennion and Meadel (1986) in their study of French music programming and what it reveals about the complexities of “positioning” an analysis of radio, indicate how important it is to consider the interplay between the two co-equal spheres of radio production and consumption. Alone, neither systems-institutional nor textual-discursive investigation is enough to explain popular success with listeners. Identifying how, and in which social locations, a particular radio format or presentational style will be received and subsequently socially articulated is what is crucial for understanding contemporary radio.

What remains to be understood is how media construct at the same time their programmes and their audience. The medium is the message’, McLuhan’s phrase, has not yet revealed all its meaning. If radio creates ‘an echo chamber’ (McLuhan, 1964), if it is, above all, that which it contains, it is necessary to rethink

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15 For an intriguing account of a shift in organised politics as it recognises its loss of “legitimising” influence in public debates, see Verwey, 1990, on “covert” political manipulation of talkback in the US.
the theoretical and practical separation between production and reception
(Hennion & Meadel 1986, p. 284).

Jensen (1984) has commented that “Cultural material is not ‘processed’ like
soap by organisational, technical and economic factors, it is constructed in
and through interpretations”, and Hennion and Meadel do not ignore
Jensen’s warning. They affirm the necessity of studying social meaning-
making in process - and see radio as a key site for data-gathering:

Where better to seize this world in movement if not there where it is constructed?
Forces in action can only be measured at the point where they mesh, where they
create an entity and are experienced. Rather than seek the audience in the ‘black
hole’ of cultural practices, we have studied it in the place where it takes a
concrete form and a dimension, studying at the same time the media: in the daily
work of a radio station (p. 285).

Hennion and Meadel thus shift radio analysis from a search for stable,
prescriptive categories characterising the production-reception relation, to
examining examples of ongoing and “daily” practice. For them, still under
construction at the centre of contemporary radio’s “public” life, are those
very aspects of the “individualisation” which Scannell’s earlier historical
research (1989; 1991) has shown radio production practices and policies
carefully elaborating for listeners from the 1930s on (see also Johnson, 1981,
thus, on the one hand, resists the possibility of arrival at permanent, stable
categories, descriptive of a universal production-reception relation, and on
the other liberates individual acts of reception from an over-determining
“reception modelling.” With this second insight in particular, their work
opens the way to examining radio’s talk relations as liable to the sorts of
fluidity and contestation operating within an informational social order.

Traditional mass communication accounts of radio as a medium position it as
Panoptical: an institution of control, whether through direct instruction or
participatory regulation. Broadcasting within this model is “public” in the
sense of achieving a cohesive simultaneity of cultural focus (Bierig and
Dimmick, 1979), but it also encourages and models processes by which “the
private individual” is to relate to that wider social arena.

This study seeks rather to study radio as synoptical: constructing discursively
and through the practices which represent its preferred industry-audience
relations, idealised and spatialised agentic identities, open-ended and
operating through personalised, conversationalised talk genres of contestation as much as consensus.

2.11 “Where you can have your say”: four radio spaces of (impossible) resistance

The study focuses on four specific Australian sites. Two are from high-rating commercial talk radio: 2UE Sydney’s late-night talkback Stan Zemanek Show,16 and 2DAY-FM’s sexual-counselling talkback program Pillowtalk with “Dr Feelgood”.17 The first selection of programming displaces conventions over cynical disenchantment with organised politics, in successfully eliciting fifteen hours weekly of voluntary involvement in impassioned political debate, ranging over a broad set of social issues. The second defies national stereotypes of inarticulacy and rejection of a culture of therapy, in favour of detailed and frank discussion of sexual and relationship matters, before an extended audience of strangers.

To examine the spread of dominant trends in radio format practices across broadcasting sectors, the second pair of programmes under analysis is selected from the “local” radio programming of community stations: 5UV’s Red Light Radio, and 3d’s The Prison Show. Both of these are from South Australia, a location notable for the programming range and institutional stability of a markedly active community radio sector.18

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16 Radio 2UE Sydney is the most successful talkback station in Australia, with daily audiences of just under 500,000 in metropolitan Sydney (almost 20% of audience share), as well as relay and “replay” relations with regional and interstate affiliates. Morning shift talkback host John Laws is considered the dominant talk host in Australia. While breakfast host Alan Jones commands larger audiences, Laws is considered more influential. Prime Minister Paul Keating once remarked of him: “Forget the Press Gallery in Canberra. If you educate John Laws, you educate Australia” (Adams & Burton 1997, p. 2).
17 2DAYFM is a part of the Austereo network across Australia.
18 Adelaide currently sustains seven Community stations, serving a population of 1 million, in competition with 5 commercial broadcasters, and the full service of the national broadcaster the ABC (providing 1 metropolitan and 4 network stations). The Community Stations cooperate through their peak national body, the Public Broadcasting Association of Australia (PBAA), exchanging some programming as well as uniting to lobby for local, State and Federal Government funds and policy reforms. They also cooperate both formally and informally in the exchange of staff and equipment, and most notably in the sharing of volunteer training programs. 3d radio (formerly Triple M, until it sold its name to national Triple M Network in 1995) is an alternative music station, dedicated to playing Australian music content and especially local music at above APRA requirement rates: that is, up to 40% of all programmed music, rather than the required 15%. Radio 5UV is the oldest Community Station in Australia, broadcasting since 1974. It is owned by the University of Adelaide.
What is particularly sought from these programme selections is at once an opening of the range of talk styles, and a "troubling" (Butler, 1990) of the positions which each of the high-rating commercial shows has taken up, in relation to concepts of public and private realms of social being. The Stan Zemanek Show is taken, in this instance at least, at its face value, as a self-declared open-access talkback show, in which listener-callers are invited to discuss or comment on anything at all, at any level of expertise, and to agree or disagree with the host’s (more than clearly stated) opinions. As a contrast, this study subsequently selects community radio station 3d’s The Prison Show, which uses music requests and contact messages for a systematically limited specialist audience: prisoners in the state’s correctional institutions. There, under pressure from official restrictions and yet driven to maintain at least some form of private contact, open discussion of life-experiences and social or political issues is deflected into music play and intermediary genres of sentimental or even overtly coded address.

Similarly, within the analysis of Radio 5UV’s Red Light Radio the investigation will trace the difficulties which arise for open discussion of sexual practices. “Free expression” of the sort claimed for Pillowtalk falters when the expertise claimed by Red Light Radio’s community radio programme hosts - in this case, a collective of sex workers - is regarded as illegitimate discourse within the public realm. Elements of private experience struggle in each of these instances for the public expression community radio appears to offer (Tramer & Jeffres, 1983; Turow, 1974). It is this which links these programmes and their callers back into the processing mechanisms more obviously at play within commercial radio.

In effect then, this study will be tracing an increased blurring of distinctions between “broadcast” and “narrowcast” uses of contemporary talkback radio (and other electronic communications media), escalated by the rise of relatively inexpensive (non-professional) access to such media. By focusing both on caller contributions to major commercial programmes, and the community radio programming of groups otherwise denied access to media representation, it will track ways in which very diverse audiences, social groups and individuals are now “talking back,” to and through modern media. With feminist methodologists Stanley and Wise (1993, p. 222) the study seeks at one level to elaborate aspects of the “ontologies and epistemologies of the oppressed”- those processes of the social construction of living spaces and ways of knowing not open to constitution within the
dominant social organisational systems of the day. What is unusual in this study however is the selection of the data source. The daily-recurrent “talk texts” of radio - the supposed “universalising” medium most sympathetic to “free access” - are used to reveal processes constituting Stanley and Wise’s “living spaces and ways of knowing” not dictated by, nor otherwise represented within, an all-powerful mass medium. Instead, this study seeks out talk texts constructed and tested and critiqued and modified across, within and against the ideological pulls and counter-pressures of both commercial and alternative media influences. There exist, within even those dominant, top-rating radio texts co-produced by professional broadcasters and their call-in listeners, “subversions, as subversion is named and categorised within dominant ideological practices” (Stanley & Wise, p. 22). This study anticipates the discovery of complex intersections of rejections and accommodations, alliances, appropriations and contestations, acting across as well as within each of the programme selections. Its central hypothesis accedes to Stanley and Wise’s position that:

... the ontologies of the oppressed are not merely negatively inscribed as Other, a counterpoint to dominant group ontologies and experiences. Central to the political projects of oppressed groups is the construction of an everyday life, a mundane reality, no matter how hidden from or denied to oppressors, and with it an ontological system for explaining and thus also defining and constructing the very being of members of such groups. But of course there are internal ontological fragmentations and differences, and also points of “différance” (p. 22).

This study does not simply pose one set of “dominant” texts and practices - that drawn from successful commercial broadcasters - against another: the “alternative” or “local” views of specialist or minority “voices.” It makes no claims for instance for an “authentic” community sector (“C” licensed radio) operating consistently against mainstream (“B” licensed) practice. It aims instead to critique their relative modes of operation, seeking out how each prioritises within what Fairclough (1989; 1992; 1995a; 1995b) terms its “discourse relations,” varying social positions of greater or lesser power and privilege, and yet allows access to “minorititarian” counter formations, able to

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19 See Stavitsky, 1994, for redefinition of the idea of “the local” in public (community) broadcasting in the US.

20 While these terms are no longer in widespread use in the radio industry, they are especially useful in the Australian context, which inherited both the British “Reithian” traditions of BBC “national” broadcasting in its initial or “A” licences, and the advertiser-driven business ethos of Sarnoff’s US “RCA” operation in its commercial broadcasting “B” licences, also early entrants to the field. “C” licences were granted only from 1975.
prevail both on their own terms, and in relation to the media capacity to
display the informational flow of open-endedness as co-extensive with a
politics of consumption-production.
Chapter Three

"Talking radio": analysing the cultural work of broadcast conversation

3.0 The relational elements of broadcast talk

Within the tradition of media studies, mass communication accounts of talk radio have positioned it as Panoptical: an institution of control, whether through direct instruction, or more subtly, by regulation of social behaviour through talk participation. Broadcasting within this model is "public" in the sense of achieving a cohesive simultaneity of cultural focus. In its later stages however, especially in commercial broadcasting, it is also seen to encourage and model processes by which "the private individual" is to relate to that wider social arena of cultural-consensus-through-debate. Active consumption, the contemporary mode of "choice" driven identity formation, is fostered through symbolic participation in promotional activities.

This study seeks to study talk radio practices in this latter stage, as they are caught up in the intensified capital flows of the emergent informational society, and move from a Panoptic towards a synoptical model. Here talk radio participation constructs both discursively and through the practices which represent preferred industry-audience relations, not only idealised and symbolic, but physically spatialised and agentic social identities, more open-ended in their social orientation, and liable to unpredictable "self-steering" towards unexpected "communitarian" formations. Operating through increasingly personalised, conversationalised talk genres of contestation, as well as in more consensual modes of appropriation, talk-radio audiences and their "inside-the-media" multi-handed production-team equivalents are discursively producing new "spaces" for occupancy within the flows of informational currency dominating an "enterprise" social order.
In the first instance, what is particularly sought from the programme selections for this study is at once an opening of the range of talk styles for commercial talkback, and a "troubling" of many - if not all - of the positions which each of the high-rating commercial shows has taken up, in relation to concepts of public and private realms of social being. Rather than reproducing late mass-communication panics over an apparently monolithic and all powerful talkback relation between hosts and audiences, this study suggests a diversity of practice, a range of talk-relations, and the strong presence of strategies of resistance and appropriation among varying audiences. Subsequently, to test the new model of diversity in talk radio practices, this study will then move to examine "multi-hander" talk programming from within two "volunteer programmer" groups within Community or Public Radio, suggesting that even with an "equalised" talk relation within in-studio broadcasting, and among members of a self-selected common interest group, relations established elsewhere obtrude powerfully - modelling for audiences much the same investments of social power found in other broadcast sectors.

Such a programme of inquiry calls for a view of language and communications as motivated by exchanges demonstrating social relations based in and reflecting flows of power. Bourdieu in particular understands speech acts as socially motivated, in these ways. Like Austin (1975) and Searle (1969), on whose work Bourdieu founded his own departure from Chomsky and his concept of "sens pratique" or "practical competence" in language, he sees entries into the community of speakers as marked by consciousness of the social relation of the speaker to all other participants. Introducing the English edition of Bourdieu's work *Language and Symbolic Power* ([1982] 1992) UK sociologist John B. Thompson notes how in Bourdieu's formulation

... actual speakers are able to embed sentences or expressions in practical strategies which have numerous functions and which are tacitly adjusted to the relations of power between speakers and hearers. Their practical competence involves not only the capacity to produce grammatical utterances, but also the capacity to make oneself heard, believed, obeyed, and so on. Those who speak must ensure that they are entitled to speak in the circumstances, and those who listen must reckon that those who speak are worthy of attention (Thompson, in Bourdieu 1992, pp. 7-8; emphasis added).

Thompson, like Bourdieu, stresses the fundamentally *motivated* nature of linguistic exchange. It is deployed within performance criteria dictated by a
particular social positioning, which it then works to maintain. In both private and public social spaces, language thus operates in ways conscious of which spaces it occupies. This feature is what makes it possible to examine examples of language use from within specific contexts, and to detect the work they are doing in relation to demarking those social spaces, as well as the social selves aspired to by those who seek to operate within them. Those broader selective and deselective categories which exist within a given social order to organise its uses of social space, will themselves be evident within subsequent language use. As indicated in the previous chapter, gender is among such selectively spatialised categories, locating the idealised “female” within interior and privatised social locations. ¹ It is likely therefore to be active as a category within the relational work of radio’s various “conversational” formats.

Most importantly, Bourdieu’s view of “motivated” language use, doubly-articulated to the formation and maintenance of the identities of its users and the social spaces they occupy, enables examination of why, within contemporary broadcasting, “private” talk becomes the preferred vehicle of public communication. A concept of language as socially motivated helps address this issue, by questioning the social role of that personalised address, along with the accompanying informal, conversationalised delivery, which the literature of radio talk notes as its current dominant mode.

3.1 Mediated talk genres dominating forms of address to the individual: “The interview”

In assessing how radio talk’s current mode of intense personalisation operates as a symbolic transaction pre-disposing its users to an underlying social relation of differential empowerment, it is useful to examine some of talk radio’s major “speech organising” categories. Innovative and insightful work undertaken by Bell and Van Leeuwen into the talk-practices of the ABC (1994) has for instance

¹ See especially Gilligan, (1982) and Calhoun (1992) for an account of “interiority” discourses still working to feminise “private sphere” spaces. Turkle (1988) extends this analysis to the discussion of CMC technologies, revealing a discursive tendency to displace women as active users of the new media; see also Balsamo (1996). Plant (1996; 1997), Gray (1992) and Rakow (1988) demonstrate in very different communication technologies very much the same discursive tendencies working to position women as “inside” the technologies themselves: in the service of its mechanisms, rather than active in its operation.
isolated the media interview as a specific speech genre acting to operationalise a particular relational power flow within its talk. The broadcaster as interviewer takes up the powerful role of inquisitor, licensed within the social space of the broadcast programme to command and elicit a "confessional" response from the interviewee.²

Interviews are not merely conversations. They are 'professionalised', institutionalised interactions, performed for a third party - the audience, the viewer, the reader. Interviewers who elicit confessions are not just a listening ear for the interviewee. They are also, even more importantly, functionaries charged with selecting interviewees, who, in one way or another, will make suitable vehicles for the meanings the program seeks to present to its audience (1994, p. 223).³

The "personal", sometimes even intrusive, questioning of "the individual" as interviewee is revealed as a fundamentally public act, deliberately deployed only because of the presence of an overhearing audience (Tolson, 1985; 1991). At the same time the Bell and van Leeuwen study shows the media interview not as continuous with the everyday conversation it so often seems to display, but instead a multi-faceted and carefully enacted genre, with consistent powers across its variant forms to elaborate structured relations between participants. Built over the power differentials evoked in the many social questioning activities used in Western societies⁴ the authority relation played out in media interviews varies across interview genres, and among individual participants. But each in its way works to model processes of self-"revelation" in the service of self-constitution: that is, to operate within Foucault’s (1979; 1988b) "confessional" order of discourse. The capacity this formation produces to apparently represent

² It is interesting to note in regard to the power imbalance of the interview genre, which acts to evoke "confession" from the interviewee, that Stan Zemanek, himself placed in the interviewee position in a New Idea women’s magazine feature (Christine Sams, “Stan’s the man!” New Idea January 2001, p. 23) “finds it hard to express his emotions” about his experience in the "tragedy stricken" Sydney to Hobart yacht race, after being injured on board the Fomtel in Bass Strait. Zemanek is said to be “close to tears as he relates how his friend since schooldays, [and fellow 2UE broadcaster] John Stanley, was a crew member aboard the yacht Winston Churchill which lost three crew members at sea.” Zemanek also comments in a side-bar segment comprising quotes about the performance of each of the “beauties” on his TV panel show Beauty and the Beast: “All the girls [sic] talk about personal things and I find it pretty amazing how they end up baring their souls on the show .... I admire them for having the guts to come on the show and talk about personal issues.”

³ See for instance Rigg and Copeland (1985) for a collection of interview texts from the ABC talk show Coming Out – a consciously feminist intervention aimed at representing "women’s voices, women’s lives".

⁴ See in particular Bell and van Leeuwen 1994, Chapter 1, “Questions in society”.

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"people as they are", while actually working to produce them as a preferred model, and inside a given explanatory frame, is intensified by the endless repetition of the process, as it hardens into a genre. Indeed, for Bell and van Leeuwen the most significant continuity becomes that of the development and maintenance of the interview genre itself: its development as a discourse.

What media interviews do ... is give the public a perspective on the social actors interviewed and/or the field of their expertise or experience - a perspective from which to judge what they do and what they have to say. This perspective is sometimes that of power, particularly when ordinary people are interviewed, and sometimes that of those at the receiving end of power, as in the case of 'honest-broker' interviews with politicians or business leaders. But it is always the perspective of the interviewer that is reiterated night after night ... it is for the purpose of establishing this perspective, rather than for their substantive content, that interviews are essentially used (op. cit., pp. 22-23).

Here then the broadcast media are seen to deploy selected conversational genres ("symbolic transactions") to direct social purpose. Genres adapted from broader social repertoires are re-tailored to the "mediation" role of the institution. Yet because they are still readily recognisable by audiences, they enable crucial ideological-interpellative "identification" roles to operate. Two seemingly contradictory processes work together here. Firstly, there is a slight "estrangement" effect resulting from the questioning styles of media interviews and their defusing of the direct social outcomes of the interviewee's replies. Media interviews occur in uniquely privileged spaces, marking their role as "performance" and simulation. One effect is what Bourdieu has called a "euphemising" process, since the power differentials displayed - often, as in celebrity interviews, temporarily reversed - operate only within the less harmful level of symbolic exchange. This is a special, "defused" social encounter, carried out as talk. It illustrates clearly the capacity of mediated talk - and especially seemingly direct talk such as that of radio - to model a desired, as well as an actual, social relation.

At the same time, the converse interpretation also applies. An everyday familiarity with these techniques of symbolic exchange is necessary to the success of interviewing. These genres must engage, at the same time as departing from, known techniques used in everyday talk. This is of course an example of how

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5 Chapter 8 of this study will provide numerous examples of this sort of "estranged" or "simulated" transactive conversation, drawn from the core texts of commercial radio talkback.
radio talk is both continuous, and discontinuous, with its non-mediated counterparts (Fairclough 1992, p.36). Here the double-directedness is crucial. The seemingly transparent interview genre is at core engaged in transformational work, elaborating from the specifics of the interviewee’s “personal” experiences and beliefs, a preferred social identity. What appears to model a benign or even revelatory technique - to provide the opportunity for the interview genre to “expose” something of the interviewee - consolidates views of an economy of consciously selected, “self”-constitutive options. Its open-ended questioning makes “choice” appear [or become audible], as if it were the basis of an ongoing and originary individualism. The interview thus becomes part of radio (media) discourse, operating as a Foucauldian “technology of self” (1988). So, albeit in different ways, do all radio (media) conversational genres. Later chapters in this study will set out to discover how, exposing in particular the variety of speech relations possible in radio talkback “conversation”, and in multi-hander in-studio “banter”.

The power relation of the media interview can be shown to be carrying out crucial social work. Subject at once to the production of “personal” information under a “public” scrutiny, the media interviewee can neither refuse nor redirect the questioning. But even this processing constructs more than a single and direct enactment of a relation of power. The interviewer as “inquisitor” does not hold all the power in the interview transaction. What emerges as the genre achieves cumulative control from its daily re-enactment is the “identification” - the creation, represented as the revelation - of a particular, and recurrent, form of “self”, arising not from interviewer, but interviewee. Endowed with both a “depth” constructed from the rehearsal of a finely detailed history of its own formation, and the breadth of qualities represented as identifiable to all, the personally-addressed and “self”-expressive “individual” who emerges from the questioning carries all the qualities of the Habermasian *homme et citoyen*. The apparently “completed” self is a social exemplar enacted through talk, crossing from private space (the personal) to public (the political). The struggle for awareness enacted in the interview genre’s narrativisation of “a life” validates the power of that newly public self which is brought into being, arising from the now proven articulacy and “discipline” of the private “self.” This particular “personalisation” thus works directly to maintain a bourgeois hegemony, in that it limits public participation to those whose sensibilities can be revealed as
"correctly" formed within the normally withheld "depths" of private/intimate experience.\(^6\)

For all the insightfulness of their analysis, in regard to the study of radio talk more generally, the major strength of what Bell and Van Leeuwen reveal is however in their sense that the interview is a particular, rather than a universalising, conversational type. This is a *genre* with social outcomes (Kress and Threadgold, 1988). It is oriented towards selected orders of discourse, bringing forward within itself those favoured behavioural and attitudinal "dispositions" which Bourdieu (1984) shows as the socially preferred formations constructed around individuals within particular social groups, and directed towards this or that cultural identification or social relation.

"The personal" enacted within the interview form as used by the ABC is not by any means the same discursive formulation acting within the personalisation of address or conversationalisation of talk-text types evident in other sectors and formats of talk radio. "Personalisation" and "conversationalisation" may be dominant, even universal strategies in contemporary talk radio, but they are not, always and everywhere, the same thing. The sole common factor lies in the way that the social-directedness of a given personalised/conversationalised speech relation can be revealed within its talk-text processing. Examinations of "DJ talk" for young radio audiences for instance have shown clearly how selective and specialised radio's talk-text practices can be. There, an altogether different "personal" space has been elaborated, for the formation of a consciously differentiated "self."

\(^6\) Two notable side effects ensue: a degree of "feminisation", marked by the degree to which this form of programming is often allocated to female broadcast staff, and a concomitant effect of exclusion from the “productivity pragmatics” of entrepreneurial discourses and flows of productivity. It would be interesting to extend such a study into examination of the social positioning of the ABC and its audiences, and the current Government attacks on its funding base.

The evolution within and confinement to ABC programming in regard to this form of "self actualising" talk can be seen - albeit from different analytical perspectives - in histories of the ABC and BBC: Walker, 1973; Briggs, 1985; Inglis, 1983. The degree to which it evoked calls for "differently voiced" formats can be seen in studies of alternative practices and sectors: Baron, 1975; Bear, 1983; Boomer, 1983; Jakubowicz, 1989; De Lacy, 1982; Dugdale, 1979; Elder & David, 1984; Frith, 1983; Henry & von Joel, 1984; Hind & Mosco, 1985.
3.2 The “privatised” individual seeking a “sociability of difference”:
DJ talk and the teenaged radio listener

Hendy (2000), discussing research from both the UK and the USA which shows aberrant patterns of radio use among teenagers, outlines some of the key ways in which it is radio’s ready availability as a technology which can access variant social spaces, which produces the different styles and uses for its universally personalised address. He cites for instance the work of Troldahl and Skolnick (1968), Weintraub (1971), and Carroll et al. (1993) on the relatively heavy use of evening radio by teenaged listeners - use directly competitive with family television viewing. Hendy uses Carroll’s research to suggest that teenagers use radio as an escape route from family life and into what is described as the “privatism” being sought at a particular moment in their psychological and social development (p. 127; see also Brown et al., 1990; 1994; Larson, 1995).

UK analysts Barnett and Morrison’s findings endorse the suggestion, concluding that

Television has become the ‘social’ medium, allowing the family to share a leisure activity in its own living room; radio, on the other hand, has become ‘asocial’ - a solo medium which is isolationist rather than communal (1989 p. 1).

Having achieved this insight however, Hendy moderates his position, once again following Barnett and Morrison, in not over-stressing the “isolationism” of radio as a medium. The “privatising” impulse he outlines is to be thought of as motivated by a stage in the adolescent’s assertion of a distinctive - and most often resistantly formulated - subculture of taste, and represents the seeking of a social space for its formation and expression, alternative to that of the familial “private sphere”. This is not however entirely or permanently a space of social isolation. On the contrary, Hendy returns us to Scannell’s work on radio as a technology of “sociability”, and suggests that the ultra-personalised address of DJ talk which might initially invite a privatised listening, also enables the formation among adolescent listeners at least of a renewed and “otherwise” directed social network. This is especially the case with those “engaged” or active radio listeners of the 1990s onwards, “activated” in Castell’s terms into
transactional co-productivity across the instantly reciprocal flows of “convergent” radio-telephone-Internet connectedness.  

How then does this intensely personalised DJ radio-talk work? Alone in their bedrooms, teenage radio listeners connect, through the ultra-personalised DJ address, with a “virtual” or non-proximous “style” community of the like-minded. The talk which enables firstly the identification of an emergent social need or desire, and then structures its formation, is heavily laden with distinctive relational strategies and stylistic formulae. Montgomery (1986) lists the following features common within DJ talk:

- using present and future tense rather than the past, so projecting forwards rather than backwards;
- an obsessive concern with the conditions of its own production and consumption, signalling its bias towards identity experimentation;
- foregrounding the relation of the DJ and of the audience to the talk, rather than of the talk to the world, strengthening the role of talk as socially constitutive rather than reproductive; that is, admitting transformation;
- occupying the interpersonal I-you axis, not the objective, “factual” third person.

Each of these is directed towards the construction of a new, and shared, cultural vision: one focused on the future; constantly testing new ways of making meaning, while deferring its application into “the real” of the everyday, and providing support through the invocation of a “you” both singular and plural. Working in more detail, Montgomery captures within his transcription of DJ utterances the dominance of constructions which foreground the interpersonal, and which stress the “identifier” work of social deixis: that is, the allocation of any particular “you” which is addressed to a named social space, whether by proper name, region, occupation, event, age - even star sign. These heavily recurrent examples of deictic personalisation subsequently develop into

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8 Much of the current “call hoaxing” on night-time talkback was impossible before the wide spread availability of the mobile phone to children and teenagers. While no formal study has been conducted, anecdotal evidence from both broadcasters and students suggests that call hoaxing is a highly organised and much enjoyed activity among young males in particular.
strategies of "spatial deixis" - the evocation of a symbolic space of shared psycho-social or cultural formation. This is carried by a variety of strategies, including "simulated co-presence" ("I wish you could see this place..."); "response-demanding utterance" ("What's the gossip today?") and "expressives", or speech acts which convey the psychological state of the speaker but also their attitude towards that of the listener(s) (" - oo that could be painful couldn't it...") What emerges for Montgomery is a talk relation which combines individualised address with a sense of a shared relation:

... although the discourse may constitute the audience in fragmentary terms, it also manages simultaneously to dramatise the relation of the audience to itself: as listeners we are made constantly aware of other (invisible) elements in the audience of which we form a part (1986, p. 438).

The process provides listeners with a selection of possible identificatory positions, so validating a potential rather than actualised self-formation. It exemplifies Hall’s most recent (1996) explanation of identity negotiated across and between available discursive positions - the mobile self-formation required of the informational era’s "fluid" identity:

I use ‘identity’ to refer to the meeting point, the point of suture, between on the one hand the discourses and practices which attempt to ‘interpellate’, speak to us or hail us as the social subjects of particular discourses, and on the other hand, the processes which produce subjectivities, which construct us as subjects which can be spoken. Identities are thus points of temporary attachment to the subject positions which discursive practices construct for us ... the result of a successful articulation or ‘chaining’ of the subject into the discourse ... (Hall 1996, pp. 6-7).

In cases where talkback radio conversation accesses DJ talk⁹, that “articulation” is also able to intercept and intersect with other conversations. The "fluidity" of identity intensifies as media converge, increasing the flexibility and interactivity of the audience-industry relation. Radio talkback listener-callers can comment on, critique and transform earlier participant texts and relations, moving Montgomery’s “projected” or simulated social constructionism into a more direct and instantaneous activity. There is still however a Bakhtinian “double-voicing”, or multiplied application, in every aspect of radio talk. Montgomery finds

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⁹ Montgomery’s research was conducted specifically on the DJ “monologue”, selected for its strongly demarked compensatory strategies, where “talk” is forced to acknowledge non-reciprocity.

¹⁰ Bakhtin sees literary forms such as parody as “double-voiced”: that is, activating simultaneously the original text and the parodic version, which must be co-present in the reader’s
“dialogue” within DJ monologue, in recognition of its power to occupy multiple and diverse social space simultaneously. Talkback “activates”, in Castells’ terms, the potential inherent within that simulated or invitational dialogism, into a direct two-way flow - yet still preserves, and arguably even enhances, the dissimilarities of the social spaces connected. If the industry-audience relation of contemporary talk-back talk appears to relocate the identity formational initiative into “publicised-private” space of the active listener-caller, it still works within its talk-text processing to maintain a “personalised-public” address through its selected programming speech genres.

The discovery troubles unitary accounts of radio. To study its curiously personalised public address is to capture not one but many talk phenomena. This revelation of radio’s pluralist orientation means that from the outset there is a central methodological tension within research which, like this study, attempts to investigate the social-formational powers of radio’s language-in-use.

Research into radio talk as implicated in the elaboration of social identity within selective physical locations requires a heightened capacity to capture for systematic analysis positioned language. Such talk reveals a selected relational impulse and consciousness playing across it, because it is language aware of the social spaces in which it arises, and into which it projects. But the search for an appropriate analytic method: one which focuses on language in use, and takes into account the diversity of those uses, re-enacts the contradictions of all attempts at socio-linguistic study. Methods of analysis with the subtlety to detect relational flows which impact on the social contexts into which speakers project their utterances, require both an analytical rigour and a capacity for the capture of detailed expressive and especially interactive nuance within speech. At the

mind for the parody to work (Bakhtin, Problems of Dostoevsky’s poetics, transl. R. W. Rotsel, Ann Arbor, Ardis 1973, pp. 150-227). Radio’s problem of absent co-presence has led it to evolve a similar strategy, in which the talk-text constructed at the point of production is hyper-sensitive to the locations of its reception. Recognition of this feature places radio within the ambit of Bakhtin’s concept of “outsideness” (also “extralocality” or “exotopy”) which must be addressed by a process of vzhiwanie or “living into” - imaginative and active entry into the conditions of another without loss of one’s own place. Radio - and beyond it the new CMC media - could prove to be paradigmatic “technologisations” of the concept. Bakhtin outlined his ideas most thoroughly in a fragmentary essay published in Russia as late as 1986 (“Toward a philosophy of the act”); see Gary Saul Morson and Caryl Emerson, eds., Rethinking Bakhtin: extensions and challenges, Evanston Illinois, Northwestern University Press, 1989, for further details.

11 In the case of radio talk and its inherent multiple-locatedness, such spaces are of course, as Meyerowitz (1985) has indicated, even more highly problematic.
same time they demand a robust capacity for extending the applicability of the analysis from the linguistic to the social.

To undertake such work is at one level to enter the general field of descriptive linguistics: a corpus of work which has elaborated in ever finer detail the ways language works. Descriptive linguistics is however itself directed towards its own ends. It seeks primarily to examine and categorise language as system, even while collecting its language-data within specific examples of language in use. To capture radio’s fluid and transformative talk practices is, at least in the first instance, to suspend the orientation towards system. As with the work of Bell and Van Leeuwen or Montgomery, making sense of radio talk practice means examining socially “located” examples of its actual production - and where possible, reception.

3.3 Capturing language in use: Conversation analysis

The tensions of attempting the sorts of linguistic description of talk this study requires bedevil even those methods which have developed rigorous techniques for examining language in use (Goodwin & Heritage, 1990). Harvey Sacks (1984), outlining the bases for his elaboration of ethnomethodological conversation analysis (CA), an analytic firmly directed towards language in use, comments:

> It is our claim that, although the range of activities this domain describes may be as yet unknown, the mode of description, the way it is cast, is intrinsically stable (1984, p. 21).

Sacks aims to demonstrate how that very mobile and slippery set of practices which constitutes talk is controlled by a fixed set of variables: a set which can be described. Far from slipping formlessly from case to case, moment to moment, talk, like language itself, is organised. Conversational analysis practitioners such as Atkinson and Heritage (1984) take the observation further, characterising the study of conversation in its classic formulations by Sacks (together with Schegloff and Jefferson) as having been “developed on the premise ... that conversational interaction has a ‘bedrock’ status in relation to other institutionalised forms of interpersonal conduct” (Atkinson & Heritage, p. 12; see also Heritage, 1999). In

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For a recent emergence of feminist critique of CA, see Speer, 1999.
other words CA views talk relations as not only predictive, but actively productive of the terms under which institutionalised social interactions occur. Its patterns of use can be captured, categorised and used to “read back” rules of relational behaviours.

CA is thus a useful tool for this study: a technique to help isolate and examine within actual examples of positioned talk, as Montgomery and later Hutchby (1992; 1995; 1996; 1996a) have done, some of the relational behaviours of talk radio as just such an institutional regulator of particular social relations. Hutchby however (1996) moves even further towards acknowledgment of the fluidity and interactivity of contemporary radio talk relations. He comments on the ways in which contemporary CA must pull away from earlier “container” models of the institutional contexts in which speech occurs (Coulter 1982). Coulter views the social institutional setting as itself imposing interactional constraints on social behaviours - including talk - within it. Much CA analysis is indeed constructed around the detailing of how particular institutional formations are accompanied by specially regulated talk formations. Analysis of radio talk, produced in one social location but projected into many others, requires the converse view. It is how talk participants within a given institutional context orient themselves via their talk to the features of that institution, which maintains and reproduces the institution - and, on occasion, transforms or modifies it (see especially Hutchby 1966, pp. 10-11). For radio, as Montgomery discovered, the flow of an “inter-relational” talk within a given format admits that transformation. It (re)constitutes broadcasting as a (talk-texted) institution which negotiates between its own constraints and those of the spaces it enters:

If we are to have a comprehensive account of the role of media discourse in the reproduction of social life, then it must be one that includes the interpersonal dimension of talk as well as its ideational elements - the social-relational as well as the ideological (1986, p. 424).

CA is a useful tool for such an inquiry. It promotes diversity of focus, in terms of its efficacy in analysis of any institutionalised set of talk practices, and in its fundamental belief that “specialised interactions exhibit varyingly detailed and systematic differences from what is found in ordinary conversation” (Hutchby op. cit., p. 13.) To achieve these two sets of distinctions, in the application of its analytical method CA is scrupulously observational. It is, as Atkinson and
Heritage remark, “firmly based in naturally occurring empirical materials”\textsuperscript{13} (1984, p. 4), and is careful to provide, as this study does, full and detailed transcripts of its data corpus.

CA is however limited by its rigorous and structural formulae to often fragmentary analysis. It is excellent for short, single-mode exchanges of talk; less so for capturing the complex multi-directed flows of “produced” radio talk, in which many exchanges may be edited together; many institutionally specific features intersected. It is unable to work across levels of language (for instance with lexis, grammar and turn taking at once) to show the interaction of these levels producing meanings. Above all, at least in its classic Sacksian formulation, it has difficulty in moving beyond its analysis of those features of talk it discovers, to examine their connection to the social world in which they occur.\textsuperscript{14} Thus when Hutchby (1996) sets out to formulate the particular conversational techniques of talkback radio using conversation analysis, his typologies, useful thematisations of interactive styles, offer no analysis of the power differentials acting to produce and sustain the interactions. Nor can they examine the “identity work” undertaken by the much broader audience of these particular radio “conversations” at the point of reception. The “relational” analysis offered by CA is thus rigorous in its capture of speech positioning, but limited in its capacity to interpret its findings.

To accept the social-formational powers of those systematised exchange rituals within language use which conversational analysis works to detect, means extending analysis beyond the limits of CA. The features of language use within conversation - and especially within radio talk - which CA is able to display, need to be re-contextualised within the material conditions of their use: the social spaces in which they arise (Kitzinger, 2000; Wooffitt, 1990). To do so is to return to Bourdieu - and to address the second issue outlined in the introduction to this

\textsuperscript{13} This is not to suggest that the talk examined is somehow not institutionally constrained. Atkinson and Heritage merely refer to speech which is produced inside actual institutional locations for its own purposes, and subsequently collected by researchers, rather than, as in the case of some forms of linguistic study, prompted by researchers from their research subjects, under laboratory scrutiny.

\textsuperscript{14} Eggins and Slade (1997) make the same criticisms of CA as a limited method for the analysis of what they call “casual conversation”: examples of talk-relations established within everyday social talk, collected from face-to-face interactions. Their work is interesting, given the use of radio talk by many socio-linguistic researchers as a source of such “natural” conversation - a usage which this study explicitly rejects.
chapter: the clear parallels observable between the talk relations established within commercial radio talkback programming, and the economic marketing transactions which its broadcasting sector supports.

3.4 Radio talk commodified: commercial radio’s management of relational flows

Bourdieu views talk as a “double-articulation”, sustaining a power relation within both the flow of speech itself, and within broader material social relations. Bourdieu’s analysis develops the flexibility it requires from the application of a sustained metaphor of market exchange. For Bourdieu, the transactiveness he observed in conversation involves the deployment of what he has called symbolic capital, extending down to the finest linguistic details of interactive vocal performance:

Utterances receive their value (and their sense) only in relation to a market, characterised by a particular law of price formation. The value of the utterance depends on the relation of power that is concretely established between the speakers’ linguistic competences, understood both as their capacity for production and as their capacity for appropriation and appreciation; it depends, in other words, on the capacity of the various agents involved in the exchange to impose the criteria of appreciation most favourable to their own products. This capacity is not determined in linguistic terms alone (Bourdieu 1992, p. 67; emphasis added).

The metaphor of the market operating to structure linguistic exchanges is used to characterise, but not to systematise, how language is used. This does not imply a simple or causal mutuality between flows of goods and linguistic exchange. For Bourdieu, symbolic capital is in itself part of the social and economic order. It is not a separate system determining commodity production and transaction, but a parallel set of values, acting within it. Its function is the maintenance of those relations of power which enable social cooperation to occur, and so make the material market possible:

The harder it is to exercise direct domination, and the more it is disapproved of, the more likely it is that the gentler, disguised forms of domination will be seen as the only possible way of exercising domination and exploitation.... ‘Economic’ capital can here work only in the euphemised form of symbolic capital. This conversion of capital which is the condition of its efficacy is in no way automatic. As well as a perfect knowledge of the logic of the economy of denial, it requires constant labour in the form of the care and attention devoted to making and maintaining relations (Bourdieu 1995 p. 128).
This then is not a mere “modelling” of social relations or transactions at a symbolic level, but direct engagement in their operations. The act of speech is in itself analytic: calculating and strategic. It is system productive, and system maintaining - but not system directed. The very motivation of its “constant labour” within the symbolic field is the assurance of its direct correlation with the flows of power and of capital itself:

When one knows that symbolic capital is credit, but in the broadest sense, a kind of advance, a credence, that only the group’s belief can grant those who give it the best symbolic and material guarantees, it can be seen that the exhibition of symbolic capital (which is always very expensive in material terms) is one of the mechanisms which (no doubt universally) make capital go to capital (Bourdieu 1995, p. 120).

The accumulation and deployment of symbolic capital - in this case in the activity of rehearsing plays of power within linguistic transaction - thus becomes directly engaged with the full range of social and economic activity. “Talk” - and especially the transactive talk of interactive exchange which we call conversation - is directly a part of the processing of symbolic capital accumulation and its wider social endorsement, for both those who participate and for those who are the object of their discussions.

The insight is invaluable for the analysis of radio conversation, in which the relative indirectness of social motivation brought about by its status as mediated talk can otherwise trail off into views of it as some trivial, disengaged, “simulated” functioning. Bourdieu’s work reminds us that radio talk, for all its apparent “dis-location” (Code 1995), is directly involved in the elaboration of those exchanges and exhibitions of symbolic capital which promote, structure and enable the (inequitable) flows of capital itself. There are consequently pressures on radio talk - an inherently “public” form - to establish for itself a powerful and high-status set of talk formulae, which will “exhibit” high symbolic capital. One example of such pressures in operation is captured in the work of Goffman.

3.5 Radio’s textuality under production: constructing the seamless flow of talk

An illustration of a powerful form of symbolic capital within radio talk is constructed through the idea of the “seamless flow” of radio presentation, in its
classic outline in Goffman’s study, “Radio talk” (1981). Goffman examines in
great detail what could be termed “microphone pressures” - those errors induced
in the speech of radio announcers when working to create that so-familiar oral
fluency and continuity into their speech behaviour as a form of public
performance. Working from a data corpus inherited from an earlier researcher: a
collection of on-air “glitches” presumably saved as negative training exemplars,
but later made commercially available as comic entertainment, Goffman builds
an account of the contextual pressures - technical, professional, performative,
generic, involved in the constitution of a radio “self” for the presenter. He shows
an enhanced vocality and an oral fluency being set up, which must prevail over
fallibility, physical stress, humour, and even spontaneity - or at least see them
redirected back into the dominant project of clarity, continuity, and what
linguistic analysts have called textual “seamlessness” (Halliday 1978).

The key contingency in radio announcing (I take it) is to produce the effect of a
spontaneous, fluent flow of words - if not a forceful, pleasing personality - under
conditions that lay speakers would not be able to manage (Goffman 1981, p. 198).

Goffman is explicitly inquiring into radio announcing as a “social competency”,
in line with his own broader project of research (1956; 1963; 1971). For Goffman,
failure to arrive at a given social competency evokes awareness of the operations
of a regulating social power:

Failure at competent execution of an act can initiate the workings of social control, the
prospect of which is itself, of course, a means of social control (1981, p. 199).

What Goffman’s study does not do is to examine the consequences for listeners
of the announcer’s successful acquisition of competency. There is a consistent
direction towards elaborating an unassailable “authority” within the continuity
of the radio presenter persona, with its vocal pace pre-empting breaches which
might invite dissension (see van Leeuwen 1984; 1985) and its high-social status
pronunciations and grammatical usages implying its implacable “rightness”.
Goffman’s analysis however is not directed towards interpreting the
consequences of this construction.

By listening to radio talk as “a listener”, immersed at once in the natural
speaker’s command of colloquial flow, and the expectation of radio’s
“performed” speech of heightened “correctness”, he catches glitches in the flow of presentational talk as “errors”; flaws in the performance:

The mission of the professional announcer is to follow consistently a very narrow course. Whether engaged in fresh talk, memorisation, or aloud reading, he must be able to do so with very little stumbling or mumbling. Unexpected hitches, from whatever source, must be managed inaudibly. Unintended framings must be avoided. When there is a set text, the announcer must be able to stick to it quite fully and at the same time fit its delivery precisely into the time slot allotted to it. He is obliged to stay in role and not, through word or inflection, intentionally or inadvertently betray his tacit support for what he is saying in whoever’s name he is saying it. Finally, he is obliged to provide meaningful sound no matter what happens, dead air and nonlexical eruptions being unacceptable (Goffman 1981, pp. 269-270).

By minutely categorising this collection of possible flaws, Goffman is able to reveal the pressures working to produce that performance:

When things are going well, that is, when performance obligations are being satisfied, the announcer is presumably projecting an image of himself as a competent professional, this being an image he can seemingly live with. A prearranged harmony will then exist among station, sponsor, audience, and the announcer’s own self image. And the work that the announcer is doing to carry off this ‘normal’ competency will be hidden from us (1981, p. 270; emphasis added).

Despite this insight, the position Goffman cannot reach is to “denaturalise” radio talk’s double social role: not simply its striving to represent itself as “seamless”, therefore “natural” speech - which Goffman is able to demonstrate it is not - but the purposes and outcomes of such an aim. His conclusions are thus a triumph in their revelatory descriptiveness, but fail in relation to detection of the implied purpose for the announcer’s careful rehearsal of “correct” forms: the construction and maintenance of a persona and a register of powerful authority.

Goffman, in detailing precisely the textuality of radio talk, and showing it very clearly as a form of discourse practice under constitution, misses the level of analysis of “social practice”: the chance for a more complete insight into the “production” of radio talk as a motivated genre with a social purpose. Goffman is thus unable to read back the social-historical locatedness of that discourse, and its implications for (even himself as) the constituted listener. In fact while he tells

15 Unlike Arnheim (1936), whose early study on the practice of radio production understood the medium from a production point of view, Goffman hears in his announcers’ talk only what Fairclough would describe as the “crises” of a pressured speaking. He does not go so far as to see that these are simultaneously Faircloughian “cruces”, or moments which can reveal that same pressured discourse unable quite to conceal the processes of its own construction.
us of the sources of his data corpus ("Radio talk", p. 197, Footnote 1), he nowhere details their broadcast dates, programme formats, station call signs, or the names of the broadcasters. These become universalised, dis/located exemplars, aimed at general (structural/systemic) rather than specific social analysis.

If radio talk is a form of symbolic capital, Goffman establishes the “seamless flow” of announcer’s talk as an instance of a “social competence” which rewards its practitioner by satisfying the demands of his social positioning. What his analysis does not do is recognise the degree to which this “competence” is itself part of a larger formation: the Habermasian “completed self” as articulacy and professionalism - markers at the level of talk of the right of entry to and participation in the public sphere. To capture such talk forms as socially “motivated”, and to “double-articulate” or “harmonise” them with “station, sponsor, audience, and the announcer’s own self image”, requires an analysis which proceeds from careful observation of the details of talk as selective performance, but which simultaneously questions the role of each selection within the broader social space to which such talk is directed.

3.6 Radio talk and the “conversationalisation” of public culture: the socially “critical” discourse analysis of Norman Fairclough

By acknowledging, as Bourdie does, the ways in which the practices of talk within specific social contexts reveal much of the wider social ordering to which they contribute, analysis of radio talk moves from an examination of “language” to one of “discourse”. This is precisely the step recommended by Fairclough (1989; 1990; 1991; 1992) who sees what he calls “the structural whole” of a society’s “discoursal practices” - their “order of discourse” (1991, p. 38) as arrayed across a range of loosely connected, but nonetheless related and patterned, language selections. These he seeks to capture through descriptors drawn eclectically from a mix of traditional (rhetorical) and “scientific” descriptive linguistic (post Saussurian) repertoires (including Conversation Analysis). He applies this range of descriptors through a series of analytical “passes” across a given language text or full data corpus of such texts. 

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16 See his list of possible categories for examination in Discourse and social change, 1992, pp. 225-240. Similar lists – although linked to different accounts of the social linking of language - are available
The "order of discourse" which such analysis aims to reveal is not however unitary, or even firmly fixed - and the explanation for this is central to an examination of radio talk as interactively established somewhere between private and public modes (Avery et al., 1978; 1979). Fairclough moderates even the structural rigour of his own set of "general guidelines" for location of selected language operating in the service of an "order of discourse", warning us that "... what follows is not to be regarded as a blueprint ..." even as he shows what can be achieved (1992, p. 225). The rigour of analytical play across exemplar texts is not to be confused with the location of fixed, regulatory or prescriptive categories. Fairclough stresses the strategic and shifting nature of language within its role as discourse. He continually recommends for instance that the analyst attend not simply to how language is patterned within a given text, but to the conditions under which the text arose, and within which it will be received:

The focus needs to be ... on processes across time and social space of text production, and the wider strategies that text production enters into. But one also needs a complementary focus upon the reading of texts .... texts are open to multiple readings ... (1990, p. 55).

Most crucially for contemporary radio as a medium promoting an active industry-audience relation, an acute awareness of the institutional circumstances for which a given text has been arranged is encouraged within Fairclough’s method. This allows the analyst to read discoursal strategies as preparing for anticipated reception. Analysis undertaken within the CDA methodological frame is able for instance to capture in action and in detailed description the industry-audience relation, displayed in (talk radio) text, since texts are tailored for projection into their spaces of reception.

The texts of face-to-face discourse have a relatively simple distribution, though even here there may be a context of overhearing as well as a context of address, and various contexts of reporting. Public discourse such as political speeches tends to have a complex distribution - perhaps an immediate audience of political supporters, but beyond that multiple audiences of political allies and opponents, multiple mass-media audiences, international audiences and so forth. Anticipation of the potential polyvalence of the texts that such complex distributions imply is a major factor in their design (Fairclough 1990, p. 55).

in Potter & Wetherell 1987; and Fowler et al. 1979. For debate between CA and CDA, see Billig, 1999. For endorsement of Fairclough's dual focus on the linguistic and the social, see Pennycook, 1994; for critique, see Parker & Burman, 1993; Wodak, 1999.
Such attention to the calculation behind texts - and especially public texts prepared for mass media - arises not within the linguist’s capacity to analyse language against its possible systemic selections, (langue) but from a sociological commitment to detecting the directedness of language in use (parole). It is this consciousness of possibilities even beyond a “double articulation” which makes it the appropriate technique for radio talk inquiry. In radio, spaces of both production and reception must be taken into account. At the same time, either or both are themselves already pressured by processes of social contestation arising from conditions of inequitable access to power and resources, which require talk texts to be strategically positioned in the service of this or that “euphemising” power ploy. The “complex distributions” for which talk is prepared under such conditions mean its structuration work will be equally complex.

To meet such a challenge, Fairclough’s analysis is not merely “discourse analysis”, (rather than language analysis), but critical discourse analysis (CDA). It is open to consideration of the social context, within “circumstances of contestation and struggle” (1990, p. 55). For Fairclough what discourses seek is dominance. Within the terms of a hegemonic (disputed) social order, discourse operates as what he terms both a “matrix” and a “model”:

It is a matrix, in the sense that processes of discoursal change ... can be satisfactorily explicated if they are referred to wider hegemonic struggles to establish, maintain, undermine and restructure hegemonies on the part of alliances of social forces .... It is a model, in that there are homologies between hegemonies as unstable equilibria constantly open to contestation and restructured, and linguistic and discoursal conventions (Fairclough 1990, p. 55).

This double-linking of language within discourse to the operation of hegemonic contestation pulls critical discourse analysis away from a linguistic analysis founded on appeal to a settled system, and towards the detection of change, interchange, and exchange - the strategic selectivities of language in use. Returning to the case of “conversationalised” media texts, it is now possible to attribute their colloquialism and interactivity to motivated social engagement, rather than merely describe the features which comprise their “conversational” nature. It becomes possible to demonstrate that for radio there has been less an invasive democratisation of previously formal presentational modes of mediated speech by “the everyday”, than an adaptive re-stylisation of existing and still powerful relational discourses. The adaptation of the colloquial and the
conversational within radio talk, in Bourdieu’s terms, is thus an updating of “the euphemisms”: those terms and interactive strategies which stand in for more concrete and material social distinctions. Language as symbolic capital maintains the recurrent inequities of power within a society ordered in the service of economic capital. When it does so, it operates as discourse.

Fairclough’s methodology admits categories established within a descriptive linguistics, licensing them for “applied” use in the analysis of social discourse. Lifted away from system-based into socially-applied inquiry, the terms and categories isolated by applied linguistic analysts can be used successfully to examine shifts in such forms of speech as those encouraged in broadcast radio talk. To cover the range of daily-enacted talk radio behaviours across very divergent sectors and formats, may require every available language-descriptive category isolated within socio-linguistics. Perhaps it is significant that when Fairclough outlines the eight central criteria of his own critical discourse-analysis practice (1992, pp. 35-36) he leaves till the end the selection of “tools” of analysis - and even then, discusses them only in general outline:

Texts are analysed in terms of a diverse range of features of form and meaning (eg. properties of dialogue and text structure as well as vocabulary and grammar) appertaining to both the ideational and interpersonal functions of language (Fairclough 1992, p. 35).

Fairclough’s criteria 1-7 deal rather with the social contexts in which texts arise, and how these contribute to and work to control subsequent meaning formations - and even here he stresses flexibility and the need to admit contestation and the potential for transformation. CDA scrutinises for instance:

1. the specificity of texts, but without “homogenising” a domain of practice;

2. processes of text production and of text reception, alongside their text products (including consciousness of the analyst’s own interpretive tendencies “and social reasons for them”) (p. 35);

3. the heterogeneity and ambiguities of texts, including the mixing of discourse types;
4. how discourse types may be differently configured within discourse processes, historically and dynamically, and may "reflect and constitute wider processes of social change" (pp. 35-36);

5. how discourses are "socially constructive", constituting "social subjects, social relations, and systems of knowledge and belief" (p. 36);

6. how discourse analysis can detect power relations within discourse (for instance those discovered in talk relations by Conversation Analysis) but can also show how power relations shape the discourse practices of a given society or institution;

7. how discourse analysis can detect both transformative and reproductive practices (see Fairclough 1992, pp. 35-36).

Processing the diverse formations within radio talk through such a series of both formal and contextual examinations preserves its capacity for establishing many different talk-text relations. The radio talk we hear as listeners transforms familiar, socially occurring "conversational" talk into the established generic codes of a medium whose formats have developed over a complex 75 year history (Douglas 1999; Hilmes 1997; Lewis 1991; Johnson, 1983; 1988; Hunter, 2000), specifically to combine the rhetorical arts of public address with the familiar persuasiveness of a more personal, intimate listening relation. At the same time its social and cultural roles across its sectors have remained close to the demands of its various sponsoring orders: the national, the governmental and bureaucratic "A" licensed; the commercial "B" licensed, and latterly that particular code of resistance arising against these others as "the local" began to encounter a supra-national globalism within the new informationalism: the "C" licensed "community." Each in its way has re-textualised radio talk to suit its particular discursive configuration of social reality. It is important to remember however, to use Fairclough's terms, that this is an active process of discourse formation, constituting structures, beliefs and behaviours, rather than just reflecting their existence:

Fairclough states outright that "the linguistically-oriented tradition of discourse analysis ... is weak and under-developed" (1992, p. 35). It is especially so when it comes to capturing the multiple-directedness and transformational "re-texting" strategies of radio talk-texts.
Discourses do not just reflect or represent social entities and relations, they construct or ‘constitute’ them; different discourses constitute key entities (be they ‘mental illness’, ‘citizenship’ or ‘literacy’) in different ways, and position people in different ways as social subjects (eg as doctors or patients), and it is these social effects of discourse that are focused upon in discourse analysis (1992, pp. 3-4).

Further, and equally crucial for the diversity and fragility of radio’s spoken-word product, the sense of an economy of production in play here is underlined by Fairclough’s insistence on the inherent instability of discourses, and the tendency for the complex articulation of the linguistic and social to disaggregate at points of particular pressure.

Another important focus is upon historical change: how different discourses combine under particular social conditions to produce a new, complex discourse (loc. cit.).

Just as Bourdieu senses language as part of a broader economy of (social/commodity) exchanges and transformations, Fairclough elaborates a “triangulated” focus for critical discourse analysis: one which deals simultaneously with texts, discursive practices and social practices. He thus captures the social locatedness and cultural purposes of language in use. Just such an approach is necessary for examination of how radio talk operates within its dual “temporalities” or locations of production and reception, as well as across its multiple sectors. It is those moments in existing radio talk analysis which glimpse these connections between the texts and the contexts - the linguistic order and the social order - which are most revealing of the nature of radio talk as a specific and distinctive form of social meaning making, with implications for the social identities of participants.

This study of contemporary Australian talk-radio practices will employ a similarly multi-embedded analysis, in which the talk-texts of radio are submitted to scrutiny at every level of their appearance [audibility]. Beginning from a data corpus of transcribed broadcast talk, the analysis will work outwards, from “texts” to “domains of practice”. It will examine how the inter-relations of radio talk as a “temporal discourse” - one arising at a given cultural moment - function to produce, reproduce and reposition certain speech genres, and through them, establish and maintain certain social relations (Armstrong & Rubin, 1989; Avery & Ellis, 1979). Beyond this, the inquiry will focus onto the tripartite Australian radio industry’s positioning as a set of differently-directed mediating social institutions, performing an ideological structuring within their various roles as
promoters of symbolic capital exchange, thus ultimately producing, reproducing and repositioning both social discourses and social identities.

In particular, the study will examine how, within radio talk, the structuring frames known as programme formats operate in the space between speech genres and institutional discourses, organising and directing social relations within both production and reception. At the same time, analysis will test Hall’s sense of an articulation among all of these elements, allowing for both coherence and diversity, through the operation of the options of consent, negotiation and resistance, deployed within both production and reception of radio talk texts.

Finally, the study will re-position the entire structure of its findings within Foucault’s (1988) modelling of a social and cultural technology as well as within Castells’ (1996) elaboration of contemporary communications operating as a space of flows. It will re-examine its own findings, to assess how far radio’s discursive functioning is operating not as reflective of variant strands of “natural” (private) conversation, but as an organising location for the array, modelling and engagement into a social matrix of dominant formations within the discourses and so identity politics of a late capitalist system, dependant upon information flow for maintenance of its productivity.
Chapter Four

“*Where you can have your say!” - the space for debate on The Stan Zemanek Show

* Radio 2UE promotional song lyric by John Rowan, for *The Stan Zemanek Show.*

4.0 “The most complained-about host”: Stan Zemanek’s hyper-commercialisation of radio talkback

Analysis and discussion in this chapter are based on the monitoring and tape transcription during April to June 1996 of *The Stan Zemanek Show,* in the Monday-to-Friday, night-time talkback slot, on Sydney’s highest rating talk station 2UE (AM 954; also broadcast on relay to Brisbane’s 4BC). The programme ran from 9.00pm to midnight, and occasionally from 7pm, from 1986 until Zemanek’s departure to 2GB, Foxtel, and Channel 10 in 1999.1 During his extended period in late night talkback Zemanek earned a reputation as “Australia’s most complained-about host”;2 scoring more contacts to the Australian Broadcasting Authority than any other single radio personality. In the meantime the programme regularly won its night-time ratings slot, at an average Sydney audience of 37,000, a 14.6% share; 54% female, 54% over the age of 55, and 73% over 40.

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1 While the 2GB Zemanek shift was very much continuous with his 2UE programme, and the Foxtel-Channel 10 panel show *Beauty and the Beast* enables him to expand his repertoire of gender patronisation, one significant change did result from the split with 2UE. His late-night weekday shift was taken over by one of the very few women hosts on commercial talk radio: Sydney PR agency owner Prue MacSween. Despite regaining the Number 1 rating for the show, she left after 12 months (*The Daily Telegraph*, Thursday Nov. 30, 2000, p. 22). Zemanek left 2GB at much the same time, after poor ratings on his morning shift.

This was a journey through space and through time during which, in keeping with its ultra-masculine authoritative image, the programme was said to “blast and pump and grind through the great big satellites” of its network (promotional sting; 2UE, 14/05/96). Like a good deal of programming on the residual AM band (Miller, Lucy & Turner 1993, p. 160), Stan Zemanek’s show was very much a talk-radio product, limiting music-play to the occasional track, presumably when the lines were either “not hot”, or not producing the desired mix of calls. In some half hour segments there was no music at all, while on other evenings the music was uncredited (technically a breach of APRA’s requirements), and appeared as if drawn from a collection of old vinyls. It was mainly orchestral themes from blockbuster Western movies - to which the host occasionally sang along.

Throughout The Stan Zemanek Show tape transcriptions the proffered talkback information flow - the exchange of ideas, opinions and experiences between host and callers - is consistently compromised. Those forms of “rational debate” which Habermasian critique demands of such media projections of “public sphere” participation are pre-empted by low production values, editorialisation, promotionalism, and direct focus on commercial imperatives. The space discursively constituted for Zemanek’s listener-callers is exclusively one for display of consumerist potential: a space for advertising not so much products - although this is directly undertaken - but co-productivity. A Zemanek

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3 A “sting” is a short (5-30 second) loop of tape recorded onto a continuous-wind “cart” or tape-cartridge. It allows an on-air host or their technical producer to play and replay pre-recorded promotional pieces (“promos”) with a single hand movement - most often as continuity controls or “bridges” between different broadcast feeds (for instance in the shift from talk to a music track, or advertising to call-in). Since cogs auto-rewind and auto-cue themselves, they are ideal for saturation promotion of the desired “tone” of the programme. They are also rapidly becoming obsolete, with the introduction of digital recording.

4 The fate of AM broadcasting after the introduction of tonally-superior FM is another example of the persistence of radio as a broadcast technology. Not only has AM survived, its move into talkback has seen it eclipse music radio in the ratings - and in some cases, music radio has returned to the AM band.

5 The Australian Performance Rights Association is the reporting agency which distributes royalties to composers and performers whose works are broadcast. To fulfil its disbursement role, APRA requires that all music tracks played across a week on a given station be logged, four times annually. A royalty is then estimated on a per centage of station income. To fulfil this requirement, most stations train presenters to both log and announce all tracks played, at all times. In addition, the ABT (Australian Broadcasting Tribunal) requires that 20% of all music played between 6 am and midnight be Australian in origin. Radio 2UE’s use of unattributed music play suggests a cavalier attitude towards both policies.
“audience” is a markedly active one, whether cooperative or resistant. But the programming strategies nightly rehearsed, are aimed exclusively at maximising that audience, for display to programme sponsors and station advertisers. What is at stake is Zemanek’s own commercial power and authority: his “entrepreneurial agency”, and its capacity to transform all other tendencies which access the programme into versions of promotional and commercial talk. The proffered “free space” for opinion expression and development - radio “where you can have your say” - is an already-occupied terrain of enterprise culture.

Once again it is the discursive surface of the programming: its talk-text processing - which maintains the “accessibility” to listener-caller participation. In relation to content, the host’s overt editorialising operates as a demonstration of opinion formation on-the-run, licensing similar contributions from eager talkers-back. The foregrounding of the programme’s low production values, conveyed in constant grousing over technical failures and bumbling around with what must be very familiar equipment, again invites focus onto a “DIY” media processing. The host embodies not Goffman’s voicing of “social competence” as seamless programming, but its direct opposite. As with DJ talk, the formula activates a highly personal, colloquial and “open” discursive surface, constitutive of precisely that rough-edged and partially-formed audience participation required, if Zemanek is to demonstrate his powers of discursive transformation to his commercial sponsors, current or potential. His programming must martial its forces at every level, and command strategies of control for every caller and any topic. Close analysis of the techniques of his talk-text processing from programme to programme reveals just such a totalising formula, arising in the midst of an otherwise seemingly chaotic and spontaneous flow of talk.

4.1 Discursive “priming” of audiences: how to “open” participation without passing power

On The Stan Zemanek Show the curious phenomenon of constant complaints about production processes and faulty technology serves to foreground the production process: to make it more than usually transparent to audiences, licensing their own non-professional and low-tech contributions. As the Community Radio movement discovered, nothing signifies “authentic community” better than the
abandonment of professional "seamlessness" in broadcasting. At the same time however, the authoritative talk host must lift himself well clear of any possible attributions of error - in technical matters just as much as in relation to opinions expressed during debate.

Radio 2UE specialises in low-budget production, evident in its frequently make-shift programming strategies, but intensified and foregrounded by every feature of the programming style. This is AM broadcast sound: mono rather than stereo; constricted in tonal range and unable to produce for instance the multi-dimensionality of stereo FM's almost spatialised virtual sensorium (Dery 1996; in comparison see discussion of 2DAY Stereo FM programme sound, Chapter 10). Pleasure in listening to The Stan Zemanek Show does not lie in the sensuousness of the sound; nor does it invite the kinds of emotion-drenched imaginative occupancy which music-play stations or late-night "self-help" programming proffer.

This reduction of radio's rich range of production values to the minimum level of spoken-voice texts carries across every aspect of the programming. Advertising on radio is conventionally the most richly "produced" broadcast text - as it is on all electronic media (Fowles 1996; Williamson 1978; Price 1978). At 2UE commercials are produced largely in-house. The more familiar 1990s agency-produced "scenario" advertisements with character voice-overs, commissioned music and multi-tracked sound effects, are dominated here by earlier, almost 1940s models. The Stan Zemanek Show used basic, station-produced, cartridge-taped commercials, and frequently even copy-scripts read live by the presenter during ad breaks. While this arises from the up-front sponsorship role the programme rests upon (see Chapter 7) it also serves to further enhance the host's centrality, allowing him for instance to ad-lib and to interrupt even commercial breaks for spontaneous comment. It is of course just this interventionist capacity to "personalise" commercial endorsements which motivated the 1999 ABA "cash for comment" inquiry into 2UE. It should in no way be inferred that this is a

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*Stan Zemanek was not called before the Australian Broadcasting Authority, which limited its 2UE inquiry to his colleagues John Laws and Alan Jones (see Adams & Burton, 1997, for the comparative ratings for each broadcaster, which partly explain his non-selection). See Turner (2000) for a brief summary of the outcomes of the Laws inquiry, and David Bowman (The Adelaide Review, September 2000, pp. 3-5) for an account of South Australian broadcaster Jeremy Cordeaux' claim to have pioneered the editorialised "info-mercial" used by both Laws and Zemanek.*
practice specific to Zemanek’s programme. This study will however examine in a later section of analysis the particular ways in which Zemanek performs the “cash-for-comment” intervention, suggesting that it is a key part of the construction of a very distinctively deployed, if not at all original, broadcasting style.

In the meantime it is interesting to note that this apparent power to breach radio flow with a differently-directed stream of talk also produces within the host a curious hostility towards the conventional technical constraints of broadcasting. Zemanek’s on-air performance displays a sometimes explosive, frustrated impatience with those styles of professional “seamlessness” outlined by Goffman for instance (1981), in which small errors, delays, and equipment failures are concealed from listeners. There are frequent technical problems and stumbles on this show, with the host openly commenting on the ageing and unreliable equipment - even where it appears to be actually his own performance which is at fault.

_The Stan Zemanek Show, April 4 1996_

**Programme Extract One:**

*(The host’s voice begins without full microphone sound. This is corrected half way through the extract)*

Zemanek: 1 (Aaaand ... a very good evening: YES!) I suppose it
2 would help if we turned the microphone on properly!
3 Good evening and welcome ...

**Programme Extract Two:**

*(The host comes out of a pre-record segment without engaging the 2-second delay required for phone-in security)*

Zemanek: 1 It was 14 after the hour: this i-i-is, Stan Zemanek;
2 and what am I gonna do now? I suppose ... go into ...
3 delay.

**Programme Extract Three:**

*(The host comes out of a cart taped promo-sting, and has trouble with his headphone sound levels)*

Zemanek: 1 Why are my headphones sooo ... (:) so, ah, top? (::)
2 Why are they ... I don’t know why. (uhhh) This
3 studio just seems to change, from day to day to day
4 (hh) (::) One of these days, somebody’s going to wake
5 up and say, (uhh) (::) “Let’s get it fixed ..."
(The host resumes his public voice)

Zemanek: 6 13 13 32, a-and, what have we got here: Terry hello!

Programme Extract Four:

(Coming out of live-cross sports report, the host has failed to consult with the call-screener over an incoming VIP call: he goes off-air to do so. When he returns, his microphone is still engaged to the call-screener’s - so picks up and transmits the next call in both “real time” and “delay time”.)

Zemanek: 1 (music sting) YEee! 13 13 32 is-our-tele-phone-nu-
2 mber ... And, um, - just excuse me folks I’ve just gotta
3 tell Natasha something.
(5 seconds of dead air)

Zemanek: 4 OK. Thank you very much for that; sorry, folks, I just
5 have to (er-er) take - those little breaks - every now
6 and then: Hello! Hello! - Wayne! (:)
(the 2 second delay-sound is feeding back through the host’s microphone, off broadcast output)

delay sound 7 “thank you very much for that: sorry fo -“

In each case the host manages to allocate blame for technical failures to someone other than himself. In Extract One, despite the capacity to bring his microphone to full levels with a single fader-switch sweep on his console controls, he manages to suggest that “we” rather than “I” need to act - presumably his control-studio production staff.

Extract Three maintains this accusatory self-defensiveness. Firstly Zemanek shifts into the passive mode to generalise blame even more widely: “This studio just seems to change ...”, as if metamorphosing its own settings without human intervention. The semi-menace behind the line “One of these days somebody’s going to wake up and say ... ‘Let’s get it fixed ...’” suggests that every “somebody” in the vicinity had better take notice. The power within this strategy of curiously transitive intransitivity reflects the indirectness of the “event processing” (Fairclough 1992, p.180). By first emptying the discourse of its agency, Zemanek avoids identification of error with his own actions. In discourse terms, “directed action” and the relations of agency and causality are suspended. They can then be re-connected into an entirely different responsibility attribution. The host’s strategy thus succeeds at two levels simultaneously. He is able to demonstrate a capacity to process and transform texts as he speaks, and
so inflate his own capacity for discursive agency. At the same time he is able to attribute blame, error and weakness of any sort well away from himself.

Sitting oddly with the programme’s insistence on its power, initiative and dynamic drive towards (commercial) opportunity, this semi-comic bumbling around what are well-established technologies is even more dramatically underpinned by the host’s open rejection of technological innovation. In one instance, he ridicules a young computer buff who phones to announce his support for the host on the Internet. At first the host’s responses are supportive and non-judgemental, as a hesitant and stumbling caller introduces his topic. \(^7\) Largely phatic, comfortably colloquialised (see line 10) and deploying the long, drawn-out vowel glides which signal the passing of conversational space to a caller while the host considers their ideas (line 5), the host’s comments signal a non-combative and receptive “listening” strategy, as he allows the conversation to develop.

The Stan Zemanek Show, Thursday April 4 1996

1  Michael:  Hi how are ya Stan?
2  Zemanek:  Yes Michael.
3  Michael:  (uuh, uhh) Yeah um (uuh) you know how that person rang up said he was gonna do a hate page on the Internet?
4  Zemanek:  (:::) Yeeees?
5  Michael:  A long time ago?
6  Zemanek:  Yes ...
7  Michael:  Well um he actually, did it, [ 
8  Zemanek:  ] Did he really?
9  Michael:  Yep
10 Zemanek:  He did a whole hate page on me!
11 Michael:  Yeah! (uuh) but, um, I did a favour for you Stan:
12 Zemanek:  Yes ...
13 Michael:  I changed it. I wrote: “The Best Things About Stan”.
14 Zemanek:  Oh this’ll be good!

Warning signs are however apparent, even in this seemingly benign exchange. Within only five “turns” (at line 9); the host moves to change the established ritual of exchange. In CA terms, the caller has so far taken the “floor” in this conversation - as callers must inevitably do, phoning in to initiate a conversation, and a topic. For the purposes of this analysis Michael, as primary speaker - the

\(^7\)See Gailk, 1992, for a discussion of the range of ways in which talkback hosts and callers handle the “entry” to conversation.
one setting the topic as opposed to the one responding - can be coded "P", "Powerful" and Zemanek as his respondent, "NP": Not Powerful" (see Fairclough 1992, pp. 152-153, for his coding of the turn-taking exchanges of CA: Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson 1974). But Zemanek as host must at some stage move to regain "P" control over the structural direction of the conversation. That he does so at line 9, the moment when the caller outlines detail of a Zemanek "hate page," is highly significant. The host is now two steps down in the relation of power: firstly, in the respondent position as regards the conversational politic, and now it appears, beyond the immediate environment of the conversation, publicly under criticism in another, more glamorous medium. He moves at once to reassert his position. Even more significantly, he does so with an interruption: a strategy which disrupts the "P" speaker's claims to topic selection. Further, the form of the host's interjection at this point: "Did he really?" while accepted by the caller as a further reciprocating question, actually works to begin the shift in the conversational dynamic. The host is able by line 11 to return the whole conversational focus to himself, and by line 15, to step back from the engagement, and to comment on it evaluatively to his listeners: "Oh this'll be good!" Within five lines, or only two turns, he has completely re-routed the power-flow of this talk exchange.

Ultimately, this is an inadmissible talk-topic for The Stan Zemanek Show. The talk relations offered by the caller necessitate the host's disruption and subsequent reclamation of authority, since young Michael, for all his overt support of the host on the Internet, is demonstrating an expertise of his own. For all the indirectness of the strategy employed, every element of the conversational flow serves the host's constant concern with the construction and maintenance of his own authority.

4.2 Exercising authority: editorialising and control of content

The directedness of the authority which the host constructs for himself begins to emerge in those segments of the show in which he "cues" his audience, not just for comment, but for the sorts of comment which will most suit his discursive construction. From the outset, these are distinctively different from those elicited within the "information provision/rational debate" talk texts of "public sphere"
broadcasting - such as ABC Radio National programming. The 15 hours of audio taped and transcribed programming for this study captures the standard 2UE opening format. The talkback segments are divided into 6 x 30 minute sessions by half-hourly news bulletins from the News Room. Each broadcast episode of the programme begins with a packaged “topic list” of hot discussion issues, allowing the host to editorialise - a major if controversial element of talkback practice - in advance of caller opinion:

The Stan Zemanek Show Radio 2UE Monday April 1 1996

1 Anmd: a very good evening and welcome, TO the Stan Zemanek program
2 on a Monday night, this, first of April 1996; yes - the first of April, (huh)
3 a day when the Federal Govement announces its inquiry into allegations
4 of rorts and inefficiencies within the Aboriginal Legal Service This
5 follows allegations of financial mismanagement, crony-ism; money being
6 given away for all different ah, ridiculous reasons One was a one hundred
7 and nine thousand dollar travel allowance; other loans have been given
8 out: and not been repaid and-so-it-goes-on: How many times have we
9 heard this in the past ... yes indeedly, we have heard it many many times
10 in the past The unfortunate thing about all this is: (uhh) that the
11 investigation and audit that's gonna be carried out by the Office of
12 Valuation and Audit, (uhh) which is an ATSIC organisation: I mean
13 that's like putting your mother-in-law in charge of an inquiry into your
14 wife! I mean this is just a nonsense! What we should have is a complete
15 and total independent inquiry, (uhh) into all the rorts and the thieving
16 and the dishonesty that goes on in this organisation. The Aboriginal
17 Community complain about people dying: their health is not being
18 looked after raw sewerage flows into the streets (;) while their brothers
19 in arms are living in the lap of luxury getting fatter and fatter off the (;)
20 public purse I'd like to hear what you have to say give us a call 13 13
21 32 ....

The efficacy of this opening programme segment in eliciting a range of calls is limited by the pre-emptive nature of the host’s positioned commentaries. It is a feature of talkback editorialising that only certain types of calls are actually invited - a selectivity represented in the discursive positioning techniques displayed inside the talk.

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*To date, the only study available of the “talkback” mode in ABC broadcasting is an unpublished Masters minor-thesis from La Trobe University: Elizabeth Gray, 1998, “Women talk back: radio and public space.” It demonstrates very clearly however the differences of the ABC’s “forum” use of callers. ABC hosts make minimal comment on caller contributions, accepting any position as presented on its own terms. Beyond an occasional summary statement: “well that’s very interesting: I wonder how many of our listeners would agree ...” the response is diligently non-judgmental.
The nature of this talk as a self-consciously performative genre rather than as a spontaneous act of “natural” speech is for instance signalled in the host’s strongly marked breath pauses (lines 2, 10, 12 and 15), marking on each occasion the speaker’s launch into judgemental and accusatory positioning opinion. At the same time, these are cues to the way in which Zemanek proposes to plumb an assumed intertext of communal presuppositions. In Fairclough’s analytic (1992, p. 234) such cues - even if, as here, at the extra-linguistic level of breath pauses - can be regarded as both “manipulative” and “polemical”. They indicate that the text is about to shift from informational to interpretive. The speech at these moments palpably changes into a higher gear, as the speaker takes in the breath required to transform “the Office of Valuation and Audit” into “an ATSIC organisation” (line 12), and “a complete and total independent inquiry” into a process confronting already-established “rorts” and “thieving” and “dishonesty” (lines 15-16).

In similar fashion the repeated tag-marker, “I mean” (lines 12 and 14) codes the speaker’s transformational intent that ATSIC’s” internal review of its own fiscal procedures be regarded as not only a joke, but a particularly clichéd one: “... like putting your Mother-in-Law in charge of an inquiry into your wife!” The construction and expectation of consensus operate here through a conflation of gendered and classed discursive elements. Most obvious is the assumption of a “social matrix” (Fairclough 1992, p. 237) interpellating a listener with an interest in and experience of married domesticity, and predisposed to resisting matriarchal interventions. It is a significantly limited social fraction. When you listen to Stan Zemanek you very quickly know who “you” are.

Pronoun use across this text is in fact highly significant (see Brown & Gilman, 1960). The flow of pronouns between a communal “we” and the equally generalising “you” not only invites assent to the host’s propositions, but actually assumes that it already exists. We have “heard this in the past... yes indeed... many many times...” (lines 9 and 10) - and so “we” are included in the attribution of generalised, everyday, life experience insinuated in the terms “your wife”; “your Mother-in-Law”; together with the attitudes behind the joke. This shift into “you” goes beyond even the syntactical “thematisation” of “you”.

Α Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission: the paramount body in Australia for negotiating policy affecting Indigenous communities.
which Fairclough explains as providing centrality and agency to a particular referent social group (1992, pp. 178-179). Here - and in many other examples of texts from both Zemanek and his callers - “you” is being used as a term which can generalise experience into a form of intersubjectivity which can consequently appear as objective truth. At the same time it retains the speaker’s claims to be a personal and therefore authentic source for this “truth.” “You” and “your” are used in this way when a speaker wishes to put forward illustrations drawn from - or as if drawn from - their own life, but assumed to be shared with their listeners. It is a useful strategy in Australian colloquial speech, which has largely lost the generalising power of the objective pronoun “one” (or at least regards it as part of a classed and colonial past). 10 “You” has the added advantage of conveying an altogether warmer and more intimate sense of consensus. In using it, Zemanek positions himself and his ideas and attitudes close to those of his listeners - or at least to those he most wishes to hear from. When he finally states that “...I’d like to hear what you’ve got to say,” that you is already heavily invested not just with the agency to phone in and speak, but with pre-disposed consent to the host’s opinions.

This capacity to discursively pre-formulate listener-caller comment fits well with the host’s evident relish for extremes of both consensual stroking and combative debate. Equally interesting though, from the position of what can be called “radio practice,” is the way in which the topic choices selected for this discursive processing seem to arise. In the first place, they are markedly close to the programme’s surrounding news bulletin stories, in terms of both the selection and the ordering of issues.

April 1 1996: (9.00 pm, News Bulletin; Zemanek Show topics, 9.06 pm)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zemanek editorial topics:</th>
<th>News stories:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ATSIC</td>
<td>ATSIC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Migrant benefits entitlement</td>
<td>Migrant benefits entitlement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East-West Sydney Airport runway</td>
<td>East-West Sydney Airport runway</td>
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<tr>
<td>Employment figures</td>
<td>Australis Media financial problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Petrol pricing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10 It is interesting to note that right-wing politician Pauline Hanson, whose opinions were especially influential on Zemanek’s listeners during 1996, was a frequent user of exactly this form of “you” and “your” as a generaliser. For transcripts which reveal the tendency in both her own speeches and in interviews with her supporters, see journalist Margo Kingston’s (1999) Off the Rails: the Pauline Hanson Trip, Allen & Unwin, Sydney.
The Stan Zemanek Show consistently develops an extremely close relationship between talkback topics and currently-breaking news items, as if indicative of the programme’s intent to offer a close scrutiny and critique of current social issues. Talkback radio’s phone access invites you as we have seen to “have your say”, so that on one level this parity between breaking news stories and the presenter’s topic selections suggests an invitation to engage with the most important of current social debates, in an immediate, decisive and possibly even influential way. Alternatively, the presenter’s failure to reference the news bulletin which immediately precedes his topic listing, suggests a “quick fix” programming strategy. 11

4.3 Exercising authority over programme flow: transparency in content appropriation

Promotional stings played throughout the programme assure listeners that “You can have your say and - sometimes - Stan will too ...” - in ironic self-awareness of the degree to which caller contributions, like all other content accessing this show, will be appropriated and discursively transformed by the host and his technical crew. The sense of a haphazard selection and topic prioritisation within The Stan Zemanek Show is reinforced when the host re-orders his initial ordering issues as the programme progresses. Sometimes this accords with selected promotional edits from previous programmes, to elicit follow-up discussion, and to reinforce the impression of an ongoing, “intertexted” social debate. Equally often however changes in topic or topic emphasis are produced by “spontaneously” generating new issues out of caller comments - or indeed out of commercial copy. Zemanek has even on several occasions interrupted the conventionally sacrosanct News Bulletins.

News bulletin: 11.00pm, The Stan Zemanek Show, Wednesday April 3

(The news reader is presenting a report on Business Review Weekly’s feature on the fifty highest paid Australian media personalities. Zemanek interrupts)

11 Both possibilities are cleverly caught in Lefebvre’s (1991b, p. 41) observation that radio as a technology is strongly “presentified”: a term which conveys both radio’s capacity to appear to “keep up with” events as they occur, and the directedness of its complex apparatuses of presentation.
Zemanek: Where was I?

Newsreader: (....) s-sorry? (....) Didn't they ask you Stan?

Zemanek: Umm, they rang me up actually.

News: (....) You wouldn't comment?

Zemanek: Well I just said it's no business of theirs. I mean I just find it very rude that people ring you up and ask you how much money you made. Don't you think that's rude?

News: (....) Well I thought you would have got a run there Stan.

Zemanek: Well I didn't want to, because I just said look: you know, I just think this is the height of rudeness for somebody to sort of start talking about money and what every one earns.

News: (....) Well, if Mel Gibson made 16 million and Paul Hogan at number 10 made 1.9 million, would you have made the top ten Stan?

Zemanek: Mmm-hmmm... Aaaah, Greg, I don't like to boast, OK?

News: (....) OK Stan... (....) You play the, ah, high-paid celebrity, (noise of papers) and I'll just play the news reader.

Zemanek: (muffled) Ohh, hh, you're the highest paid news reader in the whole of Australia! [

News: [hh-hh!(News voice resumes) Checking the sport South Australia has won its 13th Sheffield Shield cricket title after playing out a thrilling draw with WA in the final; in the Rugby League Newcastle lock Mark Glennville has been found not guilty of a high tackle charge [by the ARL judiciary.

Zemanek: [- I'm told, I'm told, that Julie Flynn has to bring in your wages in an Armourguard, Armourguard van.

News: No that's Jimmy Angel's Stan.

Zemanek: Aahahahahahahahaha!

News: And then to rugby: Queensland is now a clear leader of the Super 12 competition, after scoring a 36-26 win over South Africa's Western Province in Brisbane this evening.

Zemanek: Mmm-hhmm?

News: The weather: mild and warm in Sydney again tomorrow on the coast 23 in the West 25 Brisbane sunny also, some early fog, light winds, afternoon sea breezes a top of 29, and Stan: there will be more news on 2UE and 4BC at 11 o'clock.

Zemanek: Well that's very exciting Greg and thank you for that.

The extract is significant for a number of reasons - not least its unwitting display of the presentational or performative voice of the news reader as markedly different from the conversational tone (lines 2 and 21; see also van Leeuwen, 1984, for an account of the "news reader" voice.) This text displays both a rupture in the sort of radio seamlessness long accounted a hallmark of commercial broadcasting (Lewis & Booth 1989; see also Montgomery 1986), and the sort of displacement and irruption of the real into the mediated, said to characterise the postmodern aesthetic. What is Zemanek attempting with such techniques, and more specifically, why intervene at just this moment?
Clearly there is power to be gained from what is an unexpected and persistent interruption of the high statused, usually inviolable news segment (Heritage & Greatbatch, 1992). This is the programme fragment which most strictly demarks the flow of the radio day (Potts 1989); which maintains the conservative signing of impartial, de-personalised “journalistic integrity” and objectivity (Allan 1999) and which claims for itself the stylistic clarity rendered authoritative and statused in Western modernist cultures by its association with the high-masculinity of “public sphere” activity (Easthope 1986). To interrupt it - especially to complain about one’s own exclusion from its texts - is to assert an authority which is stronger than even this most statused of media genres. It is a subversion, directly in the service of self promotion.

It is just such elements of the host’s persistence in his interruption and his refocus of the story around himself: his refusal to be unrepresented among the most powerful - especially when his station rivals are represented (lines 2-18) - which demonstrate the egocentrism and apparently infinite territorial expansiveness of his persona. Zemanek represents what can be called, extending Easthope (1986) “the phallic voice”: one able to puff itself up into an over-blown masculine subjectivity, which seeks to transform all social transactions into reflections of its own pre-eminence (see also Jeffords, 1994, and Springer, 1996). It is an example of what Foucault, writing directly in English, called “... a tricky combination in the same political structures of individualization techniques, and of totalization procedures” (1983, p. 213). While consistently locating the Zemanek self as central to the broadcast moment, this all-powerful and omnipresent vocality simultaneously generalises itself, as an exemplar for all. It is at once a self, and a system; a person(a), and a preferred “political rationality”.

Construction and maintenance of this self/system depends upon a capacity to operate within information flows which access the programme, rather than a station-initiated generation of interest around a calculated topic selection. The flows of talk thus intersect - and seem to represent - the supply-and-demand commercial “ethos” in which the show is saturated. Fairclough (1992, p. 167) reminds us of how Bourdieu views language as “a dimension of bodily hexis in which one’s whole relationship to the social world is expressed” (see Bourdieu 1977, Chapter 3.) Radio’s disembodiment renders it a curious realm in which to uncover the workings of hexis. It is however a useful way of examining the
degree to which Zemanek refocuses every aspect of those talk texts made available to him from whatever source, onto the illustration of an active, hypermasculine and opportunistic, commercial orientation to the world. Whether caller chat, in-studio banter, news, advertising, sponsorship calls, editorialising, or promo-sting, all talk texts that flow through The Stan Zemanek Show he considers as available to himself at any time for transformational re-positioning. What emerges is the personification of a keen entrepreneurial alertness.

This reappropriative opportunism is the discursive formation at the heart of the central “ethos”12 of this particular version of commercial talkback. It explains many features of its talk-text selections, including its often inconsistent deflections onto contestational stances, its preference for argumentivity, its endless search for the tendentious, the unreasoned, and often for the downright incoherent. Each in turn, no matter how unlikely, can be re-positioned to the host’s advantage. Even the news: the objectively reported, professionally distanced encapsulation of events, statements and decisions already past, can be reclaimed from the professional news reader and its issues re-ignited in listeners’ imaginations.

4.4 The seriousness of the game: post-modern textual disruptiveness and the talk host as media entrepreneur

This curious circularity of practice: the drive to re-work already mediated materials, is frequently represented in academic media studies as a feature of radical postmodernity. The constant cycling back onto existing texts; the re-working of archival material; the ludic or parodic interrogation of sources; and an insistently self-referential bias, are all celebrated for their consciously deconstructive contribution to contemporary media critique. By revealing the

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12 Fairclough (1992, pp. 166-167) uses the term “ethos” to describe the sorts of social identity signalled both in discourse and in non-verbal comportment (Bourdieu’s hexis). Fairclough cites one example from Maingueneau (1987): the speeches of the French Revolution, modelled not only on the words and styles of Ancient Rome, but selected for their parallels in political moments and “scenes”. He then outlines the evolving “ethos” of alternative medicine’s diagnostic talk, modelled on “life-world ‘troubles talk’” (p. 166). The concept is particularly useful for this study, since it re-stresses the need to capture and analyse the contexts of production and reception of radio talk, and to avoid treatment of radio as either text rendered “written” through transcription, or “speech” lifted seamlessly from “natural” conversation.
various “mediation” processes at work, they are considered to defuse the efficacy of selective media representation, and so its powers of social and cultural reproduction.

The appearance of the same techniques at work in “redneck radio”, directly constituting an authoritative public persona for the purposes of marketing, severely disrupts accepted arguments about the cultural location, and direction, of the postmodern media impulse. At the very least it suspends any expectations of the “playfulness” of the postmodern. This is no culturally trivial tendency. If a critical and revelatory bias can also operate as constitutive and obfuscatory, then it is the re-direction implied within a particular act of re-appropriation which counts, and not the act itself. The postmodern strategy is simply one of re-positioning, making whatever is available fit the circumstances, however initially unsuitable to the purpose. Collins (1992) suggests that:

What is postmodern ... is the simultaneity of these competing forms of rearticulation - the “already said” is being constantly recirculated, but from very different perspectives ranging from nostalgic reverence to vehement attack or a mixture of these strategies ... what distinguishes postmodern rearticulations of the past is their ambivalent relationship to the antecedent text, a recognition of the power of certain texts to capture the imagination, but at the same time a recognition of their ideological or stylistic limitations (Collins 1992, p. 333).

A twist of the prism, allowing those “ideological or stylistic limitations” to be read as it were from left to right, instead of from right to left, allows Zemanek into the equation. Postmodern media, recognising the co-existence and continuing circulation of diverse, even contending texts, enabled by the capacities of electronic media technologies to preserve, re-edit and replay, have found ways to reposition and re-use such texts. These activities are now deeply embedded within both media practice and audience expectations. Tolson for instance (1996) endorses the strategy of rearticulation as currently at the very core of professional broadcasting. In his view, it is inherent in what he calls broadcasting’s “institutional regime”, which has constructed a mode of address to control the complexities of a mixed time (live present or recorded past) and a mixed space (in studio or on location.)

It is a regime which establishes a hierarchy of positions for the participants in broadcasting. Some participants introduce others, some interrogate others, some make comments and pass judgements on others’ actions and statements. Those who appear in the studio, live, and have the right to direct address (always the
broadcasters themselves) are at the top of this hierarchy of positions. Those who appear on location, recorded, and who are not permitted to look at the camera (such as the ordinary people in interviews, or simply going about their business) are at the bottom. Significantly those at the bottom have no control over the regime; their appearances or statements are always subject to editing, analysis, commentary and so on, by others situated further up the hierarchy (Tolson 1996, p. 63).

This is explicitly a description of television practices, and also one with some elements which are contentious when applied to the current study - most notably the suggestion that there is no capacity for audiences "at the bottom" to engage in similar acts of rearticulation. Zemanek's practice is actively to invite - or provoke - such "bottom up" contributions. As a description however of radio's techniques of "mixing" - which it will be argued extend both deeper into and beyond the studio - Tolson's account is accurate. Radio too is a medium which mixes time and space. It controls "input" texts in very much these ways - and for all its claims to be providing audience "access", it constructs a very similar hierarchical regime of re-positionable texts and talkers. It is not even a special mark of alternative, experimental or youth radio (such as Triple J or some of the more radical Community stations) to re-contextualise, parody, or otherwise appropriate talk-text-types. Instead, in differently directed but technically parallel ways, it is a regular feature of all contemporary talk-programming practice, including the most centrally commercial. Stan Zemanek, as we have seen above and will continue to see throughout this study, is a master of appropriation - despite his being in no way likely to be considered an adherent of postmodernism.

It is time then to cut away the veneer of postmodern playfulness which has dominated views of mediated textual transformativity, and restore to the full range of contemporary media texts and textual practices the sorts of advanced critical examination they urgently require. The commercial media world in particular has not been slow to appropriate the arts of the appropriators. Wernick (1991) considers the particular form of intertextuality evident in mainstream, commercial media, which he terms "promotional reflexivity," to be a major element of current commercial media practice. He sees its constant interpolation (sic) of the commercial into the informational and vice versa as likely to evolve into a series of new popular genres, crossing between advertising and entertainment, which he consider the two major "culture industries" of our era. He argues that in the postmodern media
... the mutual entanglement of promotional signs in one domain with those in another has become a pervasive feature of our whole symbolic world (1991, p. 12).

Constant shift between commercial/promotional signs; those from an older, creative or “artistic” cultural repertoire, from no matter which origin, and those arising from the culture of everyday life, accurately describes contemporary media practice. Work in this and later chapters of this study will show that this formula encapsulates the programming “flow” of commercial radio. But the consequences of this new form of intertexting: the “entanglement” of promotional talk within all other forms, have not been examined in this medium. Radio “flow” remains largely as John Potts (1989) and others left it: a Modernist contrivance to regulate the working day, by pacing the listener’s focus as they moved across the private-public divides of a suburban-urban landscape/soundscape. Programming has been thought of as a device which “times” the listener’s day, and modulates it from “home” to “work” and back again. The new and postmodern sorts of media “flow” analysis, conducted for instance by Budd, Craig and Steinman (1999), updating Williams’ (1974) insights into the formatting of television by tracing the careful meshing and merging of themed ads into prime-time programming, have not been undertaken for radio. It is time to bring the concept of radio flow out of time and into consideration of the “spaces” formulated within given programme formats, and their relative speech genres.

To propose such a study is to suggest that the importance of talkback radio, the dominant, contemporary, commercial media format, may be located elsewhere than in the conventional view - to which the broadcasters themselves accede. The main public interactivity of the medium no longer lies in the exchange of social and political opinion between callers and host. Certainly the transitivity of talkback radio, its capacity to engage callers in dialogue as a model of social exchange, is a major feature. But the analysis in this study finds within such programming so many breaks out from this classic “public sphere” role (Habermas 1989; J. B. Thompson 1995) and into overt promotionalism, that something other than social commentary must be central. The Stan Zemanek Show is marked by numerous instances of the host’s direction away from precisely the sorts of interview styles, research-based information provision or inclusive positionings of debate which the construction of a public-access forum requires. The host’s attention and energies are clearly directed elsewhere: into those
discursive transformations which represent his own particular contribution to "promotional reflexivity", and the meshing of all aspects of his listeners' social lives with a direct commercial engagement.

4.5 "Playing the high-paid celebrity":
the construction of entrepreneurial agency

Detail after detail of programming practice endorses the host’s focus away from any real commitment to social or political debate. He shows for instance a notable inability to resist or even contest any caller who can voice strong denial of any piece of "evidence" the host cites during a discussion. In an otherwise hotly contested discussion with Dr René Pols, AMA spokesman on the decriminalisation of illicit drugs, the guest's position is allowed to prevail when the host lacks data to overturn it:

_The Stan Zemanek Show, Wednesday April 3, 1996: "Dr Pols" interview_

225 Zemanek: But isn't it also a fact that in South Australia more people have
226 been turned onto drugs since they've ah since they've made
227 marijuana more readily available?
228 Dr Pols: No that's not true at all!
229 Zemanek: Not true at all?
230 Dr Pols: Not true at all!
231 Zemanek: OK - what about in Morocco ...

Zemanek lacks the capacity to match research with research. Instead he redirects caller claims on superior expertise into appeals to the "commonsense" logic of "ordinary listeners":

120 Zemanek: Would you like to see ah marijuana decriminalised for the whole of
121 Australia - I mean do you think that would solve [ 
122 Dr Pols: [ That's the
123 policy of the Australian Medical; Association, they - they have
124 supported that in Queensland and in in Canberra where they had
125 inquiries and so forth: and they would see it to be the same in other
126 states.
127 Zemanek: But people would argue though that if you start um making um
128 decriminalising marijuana, then er er I suppose the next step is that
129 they're going to look at heroin, they're going to look at cocaine, I
130 mean, haven't we got enough drugs on the scene now ...

Zemanek acts not as a conduit of institutionally validated information to the public, but as a representative of public opinion opposing institutional expertise.
Similarly, when still occasionally enjoined by a caller to take up the earlier, 1970s role of talkback host as public advocate and personal adviser (Curnick 1982; Hobson 1980; Higgins 1978), and to inquire into some reported misdemeanour or injustice, Zemanek will provide reassurances that there will be immediate follow-up and reporting back in subsequent programmes - but there is no evidence that this is ever undertaken. He uses the opportunity to consolidate his authority as fount of all wisdom - but the streams never in fact flow. With the research function for staffers severely limited and the host’s scramble for briefing documentation sometimes actually audible as he rustles through a folder of newspaper clippings, faxes and press releases, what emerges is a picture of a distinctly minimalist public discussion and advocacy ethos for the programme. Its “expertise” lies elsewhere.

In the face of this abdication of social responsibility for accurately-informed debate, the central issue becomes one of establishing exactly how the programme host constructs and sustains claims to authoritative commentary. The most immediately notable feature of commercial radio, its “power sound” (Miller 1993; Potts 1989), helps to remediate this shortcoming. The conventional battery of “sound sting” effects is used around the host’s nightly introduction of his topic list, segmenting the list of issues, and representing dynamic focus for the show (in much the way that a circus drum roll does.) At the same time it endorses the programme’s insistence on its community of caller agency. You can call on this, or this, or this - which equals “anything you want!” Meanwhile, the technologised pace and sharp [sound] images, closely resembling those that TV channel promotions or cinema advertising use, connote leading-edge communications styles and delivery technologies, as well as the dynamic cut-and-thrust debate of up-to-the-minute issues. This evokes a kind of quick-shooting techno-heroism, to bolster the show’s aggressive stance of dynamic contemporary masculinity. Given the host’s personal vocal style of rapid but slightly bumbling avuncular enthusiasm, modulating into his special brand of unassailable paternalist opinionatedness, the sharp-edged sound seems not entirely appropriate. However, as the programme progresses, and the host’s skills and expertise are displayed, the pace and thrust of this “sound sting” segmenting make more sense. It too acts as a form of “promotional reflexivity”, surrounding the talk-texts of commerce with the glamour of high-action performance media.
Given these sorts of positioning strategies within the programme, it becomes necessary to examine who seeks to occupy its spaces. Who actually phones in? One extraordinary answer to this is - advertisers. The programme is heavy with a particular kind of sponsorship, which extends beyond the more conventional use of agency or in-house advertising product and service promotion spots. While extended ad slots are used (2 x 4 minute per half hour), much more attention is given to a regular set of call-in, pseudo-interview spots with retailers or service providers, whose detailed discussion of their latest wares is represented as information up-dates by the inclusion of brief lists of, for example, “this week’s top videos” from the video outlet, or best-sellers from the bookshop. Similarly, stage shows, cabarets or concert performances which have received 2UE backing or promotion, also receive after-show phone-in reviews from Zemanek stringers - frequently with reference to “the 2UE staff table,” and much passing of the mobile phone around to the host’s “mates” from work who have attended. If the advertisers are represented as the host’s “very good friends”, equally his friends are required to spontaneously transform themselves into advertisers.

The tendency spreads out across the programme. Interspersed with these sponsor spots, and difficult to distinguish from them in both style and content, are what at first appear to be less entrepreneurial, and more informational stringer pieces, closely resembling those in magazine formats. There are calls for instance from Sharina who does horoscopes, or Pam on Hollywood gossip. Extended conversation with these callers demonstrates however how they too are implicated in the direct promotional “marketisation” (Fairclough 1995a; Kenway 1995, 1999) of their information.

*The Stan Zemanek Show, April 1st, 1996: “Sharina” segment*

1. Zemanek: Sharina, hello!
2. Sharina: Hi Stan how are ya going?
3. Zemanek: Very good darling! What’s been happening?
4. Sharina: Look there’s so much happening I can’t even begin to tell you!
5. Zemanek: Really?
6. Sharina: (hhi) I had lunch with a friend of yours the other day; Doug McLachlan, from Riverwood Legion?
7. Zemanek: Oh, from Riverwood: yes! yep, we’re actually going to be there on the 24th of August!
8. Sharina: He’s absolutely rapt about it, and he’s booked five of my shows!
9. Zemanek: Really!
10. Sharina: Yes,
11. Zemanek: [ Well isn’t that terrific!
12. Sharina: I’m ... really excited about it!
Zemanek: Well that's good!
Sharina: And he's looking forward to your cabaret show going out there too!
Zemanek: When are you um what sort of shows are you going to do out there?
Sharina: I'm going to do a Sharina Show there on the 29th of May, and [...]
Zemanek: yes, [...]
Sharina: yes and then I'm doing some workshops there for four weeks running
Zemanek: Very good.
Sharina: MMM!
Zemanek: Well that's fantastic [...]
Sharina: [...] pleased about that [...]
Zemanek: Yeah. (,) Well look that is good. Well listen keep up the good work.
Sharina: Thanks Stan.
Zemanek: Now do you have our stars there tonight?

(Sharina does a full call of horoscopes)

Here Sharina very obviously knows the score, in terms of maintaining an equalised and reciprocal flow of conversational - and promotional - exchanges. She makes the segue from polite interchange to promotional plug as early as line 6, using exactly the formula Zemanek himself favours - the “friendship” claim: “a friend of yours ... Doug McLachlan, from Riverside Legion ...”. Not only does this enable her to position Zemanek to promote his own promotional cabarets: “... yep - we're actually going to be there on the 24th ...” but she has also interpolated promotional reference to the management which has just booked her: Riverside Legion. At the same time - crucially - she has advertised her own performances.

The whole exchange is coloured tonally by the sorts of up-beat enthusiasm and *bonhomie* which permeate the more overtly performed, agency-produced advertising texts. And grafted to this reciprocal promotion of one another’s products is the sort of consensual elaboration of central and shared values which characterises *The Stan Zemanek Show*, and which by its duplication within the talk-exchanges with many callers, helps define and maintain the audience as in itself an entrepreneurially “active” entity. Within the Sharina text the “right” values are explicit. “Good work” “pleases”, or even renders you “rapt”; is “fantastic” and “exciting”. This catalogue of approving responses extends the successful entrepreneurial present into further “good ... work” futures of assured bookings - and widening locations for publicisation of self and “friends”. Meanings are consistently “worded” (*lexicalised*) within this range of semi-colloquial intensifiers and terms of approval; a lexis which crosses from the expression of everyday pleasures of social interaction into the promotional repertoire, and back again.
Beyond the overt social and political positioning of calls and "editorialising", the most marked category on the show is exactly this extension of the marketplace and its promotional arm into every (conversational) exchange. The degree to which all programme segments converge towards sponsorship and direct or indirect entrepreneurialism is ultimately the core of this programme. It is a core dangerously close to meltdown. Discussion of sponsor's products leaks across from ads to sponsor calls; from sponsor calls to caller talk; from caller talk to the host's commentaries. A textually-saturating instance of Wernick's "promotional reflexivity", it irradiates the entire programme.

4.6 "The special Stan Zemanek deal" - "spontaneously" personalised advertising copy

So strong is this drive towards the virtual ubiquity afforded by the technical power to override and enter all other audio texts, it even enjoins the host as its wielder to interrupt his own most central function: the live reading of (paid) advertising copy. Once again he personalises and embellishes the already overtly commercial with his own special brand of multiplexed social endorsement:

**The Stan Zemanek Show, April 5th, 1996: ad break**

Zemanek: 1 YEes, it's hard to relax in front of the TV when the
          2 reception is bad, the colour is fading, and you're
          3 constantly getting out of your chair to change the
          4 channel. (uhh) if you think you can't afford a new
          5 television, see Electronic Sales and Service and save
          6 30%, ah, 30 to 50% off the recommended retail price:

(vocal tone changes)

7 (uhh) I was ah, I had love, er lovely lunch
8 today with the lovely Jenny, who owns
9 Electronic Sales and Service and she was
10 telling me all about their new plans and
11 new sales and (uhh) new offers they're
12 going to put through,

(vocal tone reverts to "performance" voice)

13 Electronic Sales and Service: stock top brand
14 Japanese TVs that offer all the extras like stereo
15 surround sound remote control, large screens and more
16 and the best of all the price: have a listen to this: 30
17 to 50% less than you'd pay elsewhere, now this is
18 fantastic. Electronic sales and Service, they're open 7
days a week 192 Sunnyholt Road in Blacktown,

(vocal tone returns to “personal” mode)

- go and see the lovely Jenny there and she-
will-do-a-deal-for -you. Go in and say
“Listen: I want the special Stan Zemanek
deal!”, and she’ll give you a deal: like
you’ve never seen before. She is fantastic.

(returns to “promotional” voice)

E-lectronic Sales and Service are open 7 days in 192
Sunnyholt Road in Blacktown, and 12 Castlereagh
Street in Penri-i-i-th...

Here the transformation is away from the professionally detached detailing of
the sales advantage of the product, where the copy reader is merely a performing
voice, and towards the personalisation which characterises this form of “tabloid
topic” talkback radio. Note from the outset, even within the ad copy, the
discursive use of the consensual “you” which generalises and so validates the
experiences, feelings and “needs” attributed to would-be consumers by
promotional texts (lines 2-5). The host however is keen to move not simply into
personal endorsement, but to the representation of a culture of personal
friendship with his advertisers: a multi-connected, social, commercial and
professional, relationship. What results is a sense of a multiplex social structure
arrayed across the intersecting discursive frames of every speech transaction
(Milroy 1987). Every social and relational category can be made to flow towards
another. Callers become “old friends”; retailers become callers. Work mates who
are already old friends become callers. Callers attend social events; the host
performs at the social events; the social events become advertising for the host.
Advertisers who are or are considering becoming sponsors of the show, become
callers. The host transforms sponsors’ products into gifts (“prizes”) for callers
(who then become even stronger “friends”). The host annexes the advertising
role into personalised “friendship” claims: “I had love, er lovely lunch today
with the lovely Jenny, who owns Electronic Sales and Service ...” The slip between
“love” and “lovely” is - at the least! - indicative of the relational slides constantly
under construction between the personal and the commercial.

Tolson (1996) sees this sort of discursive strategy, operating within the mode of
address, as the deployment of two simultaneous levels of interpellation. Drawing
on Montgomery (1986) he details firstly the direct address to particular listeners,
and subsequently a more general address to all listeners, who come to comprise Beniger’s (1987) “pseudo-community” of presenter, programme participants, and the at-home listening audience. Tolson specifically makes the point that:

This is, of course, an imaginary community; it is constructed out of the fragments which we see or (ever) hear. And it is a community which can be constructed in different ways (1996, p. 61).

In The Stan Zemanek Show it is clearly under construction as something rather more active - or, in Castells’ terms, “activated”. This is not an imaginary pseudo-community, but an example of a Castellian space of “real virtuality”: a site where all calls, all topics, and all talk, will work in the cause of commercial promotion. Even callers (or at least those who get through the screeners) will be likely to “spontaneously” advertise the host’s show in terms of at least “friendship” connections, and preferably commercial engagement as well. As this net of relationships develops, it flattens out conventions of separation between specific broadcast genres (advertisement; interview; chat; news story), discursively re-constructing the radio culture, into one which appears, at first sight, closer to the casual friendship transactions of everyday social life.

*The Stan Zemanek Show - April 2 1996: ad break*

-Zemanek: 1 Let me tell you the first people you should invite to
2 your party are *All Celebration Hire*, they’re, full of
3 style and flare; they’re ... young and friendly, and
4 they’re ready to party 7 days a week. *All Celebration
5 Hire* can deliver glassware, crockery, cutlery, linen,
6 marquee, and all the extras RIGHT to your door, and
7 because their gear is neat it is ALL in PERFect
8 condition, Give them a call right now, as a matter of
9 fact $17 10 99 that’s five one seven one oh nine nine,
10 aaand ... they’ll certainly come to your place for a no-
11 obligation free party display so’s you can see what
12 they offer before you hire. *Invite All Celebration Hire
13 to your next party ‘n’ - an’ they’ll sure:: impress your
14 guests (HH)

(breaks out of ad voice)

- we were going to talk to those people *All
16 *Celebration Hire* what happened to that,
17 if they - those people out there at *All
18 Celebration Hire*, can you give me a call
19 because, I would love to know, more about
20 ah, the service that you, ah, do : because I
21 think it is just fantastic! I think it really is,
22 overdue, that we have a service like that it

113
23 Is great so you people give them a call:

(back into ad voice)

24 517 10 99, 517 10 99 is the number to caaallll ... 

(music sting)

Here the talk flows between “we” - the in-studio staffers responsible for lining up sponsorship deals (and also for seeing that sponsor calls receive priority during the programme) - and a dual “you”, which as Montgomery and Tolson have argued, is both direct and indirect in its address. While “those people out there at All Celebration Hire” are being specifically invited to call and discuss their “fantastic” service live on air, “you people” in the consuming listening audience are also being told to “give them a call ...” (line 23). The host models the attitudes and behaviours he advocates, understanding the suggestion from within the advertising copy that a corporate entity, All Celebration Hire, can be treated as if not only human, but potentially among one’s particular personal friends: “people” who are “young and friendly, and ready to party 7 days a week ...” (lines 3-5).

To underpin this conflation of social life with commerce, the ad - read live - is then itself “spontaneously” transformed into an extension of the host’s programme (“We were going to talk to those people ...”). At the same time, the move comes close to revealing the processes through which Zemanek and his staffers maximise the financial returns of their work, by transforming fee-based commercial-break copy advertising into “cash for comment” sponsorship deals. Here Zemanek “spontaneously” offers live and personal endorsement of an advertiser’s service. In front of listeners - who thus become revealed as both a “general” audience of radio listeners, and a specialist audience of current or potential commercial “sponsors” - he displays not only the ease and seemingly “just-thought-of-this” sincerity which underpins the game of personal endorsement, but also the quite contrary fact that a deal was already under consideration: “we were going to talk to those people All Celebration Hire: what happened to that ...” (lines 15-16). His solution indicates both how familiar and therefore how common the establishment of such arrangements must be, and the necessity of conveying them as still part of the “personalisation and friendship” social discursivity - for he moves to invite the company in question to phone in to the programme on the spot. They thus become members of his audience of “real”
listeners, at the same time as their potential commercial privilege guarantees their getting to air (or at least getting to the staffer who will negotiate the deal, ensuring that their message will get to air on as many successive occasions as the cash flow facilitates). The ultimate success of the strategy rests in exactly this oscillation between the two levels of the so-called "pseudo-community" of audience. While the general audience address of personalised "friendliness" is used to make the sponsors' commercial products distinctive and desirable, it is the host’s capacity to apply or withhold that friendliness - to endorse or devastate callers and their opinions - which makes the programme dramatic, contentious, high-rating, and thus a hot commercial prospect.

For Zemanek, there is an active continuity between those public issues raised by listener calls or the wider media debate he selects from, and the outright commercial activities of his own sponsors and advertisers. It is here, rather than in the more dramatic exchanges between caller and host on contentious social or political matters, that the core activity of this programming lies. He is himself far more interested in accounts of product satisfaction or profitable enterprise, than in issues more conventionally regarded as of "community interest" - and assumes his listeners are too (or at least, the ones who count).

4.7 "Lovely lunch at the Pasadena" - gift-giving and the relation of promotional talk

Elsewhere in the programme, the process inverts - just as Castells suggests for the paradigmatically "flexible" and "convergent" informational media production system. Marketising extends into the core of the phone-in format which is represented as the programme's raison d'être: a realm where, as we are constantly told, we have only to "... phone 13 13 32, so you can air your point of view." How free in fact is this proffered capacity to spontaneously call in? Proportionately, a large percentage of air time is already occupied by arranged calls to promoters and sponsors. Beyond this, another significant group of calls is from named "regulars," who are invited to "call me any time", and so are given guarantee of access through the regulatory switchboard of the programme's production-crew call-screener, "the lovely Natasha". And, as if to mark their status, they are presented with spontaneously appearing "prizes" of sponsors'
products, such as show tickets, dinners, or flowers. Dorothy is a typical Zemanek Show regular. Her performance, for all its adulatory excess, characterises the talk-relations and the gift-exchanges established on this programme.

The Stan Zemanek Show, April 2 1996 9.35 pm: caller “Dorothy”

1 Dorothy: Hi there Stanley!
2 Zemanek: Hello Dorothy!
3 Dorothy: King of Wishful thinking! Chieftain of Combat Radio!
4 Zemanek: That’s me darling!
5 Dorothy: Did you get your little ... Easter Thing?
6 Zemanek: I did and thank you
7 Dorothy: Oh that’s all right darling!
8 Zemanek: You’re very kind.
9 Dorothy: Because I’m going to, up to Townsville on er, on Saturday
10 Zemanek: Really! what are you going to do up there.
11 Dorothy: I’m going to see my new great grand daughter
12 Zemanek: I was once on radio in ah Townsville!
13 Dorothy: Were you really: I’m going to a place called Vincent.
14 Zemanek: Yes, well I know, I don’t - I wasn’t around that much to sorta see all
15 the suburbs, I worked at 4TO there, for about 6 weeks before they
16 ran me out of town.
17 Dorothy: Oh really?
18 Zemanek: Yes, so I never got to se- [ why did they do that to you?
19 Dorothy: [ why did they do that to you?
20 Zemanek: Well I mean they, the management up there had no sense of humour
21 at all, which was (hahaha) [
22 Dorothy: [ lovely gentle person like you?
23 Zemanek: I know I know. [ How dare they do that to Stanley Zemanek ...
24 Dorothy: [ How dare they do that to Stanley Zemanek ...
25 Zemanek: Yes ... the Mayor had no ah sense of humour; the ah, the ah, the
26 local union had no sense of humour, uum, who else was there ... Joh
27 Bjelke Petersen in those days had no sense of humour ... They just:
28 they didn’t like me for some reason ... I don’t know why ...
29 Dorothy: Ho ho ho! Never mind Stanley we love you here anyway don’t we.
30 Zemanek: Well I’m pleased about that.
31 Dorothy: And I tell you what: [ yes
32 Zemanek: [ yes
33 Dorothy: You know the um, the luncheon you gave me to go to the Pasadena?
34 Zemanek: Aaah, yes:
35 Dorothy: It took: now let me tell you: we got the bus out down here, down to
36 the Meadow bank [
37 Zemanek: [ Yes anyway let’s not have the bus trip darling:
38 Dorothy: did you enjoy yourself?
39 Zemanek: It was good but it took four buses and two ferries and a train to get
40 there and back again ...

The interchange is revelatory on a number of levels, as the host and his regular caller circle around each other for primacy. The talk-relations established reveal both speakers working to maintain a degree of power. In terms of topic control, Zemanek insists on his own priorities, even while relishing the flattery of his
number-one fan. He switches the account from the caller's family to his own career (line 12) - despite Dorothy's apparent expectation that the mention of a "new great grand daughter" will be worthy of discussion. While the domesticity of her narratives grounds the talk in the exact level of everyday reality which establishes an ideal audience for Zemanek's sponsors, a little goes a long way - and the transformative impulse cuts in. He manipulates from her more of the flattery she has already offered in the opening exchange (lines 3, 22 and 29). She in turn angles for an extension of the free dinner passes he has given her earlier, (lines 33 to 40), attempting to build an understanding of the problems of public transport in a man who has already indicated that he doesn't have much truck with things like "suburbs ..." (line 15). The gift-giving exchange thus becomes for each more a manipulative than a spontaneous gesture - a relation paralleled in the interchange of talk.

For the host, such dialogues extend and consolidate the ethos of "friendliness" so crucial to his commercial operations. Dorothy and a range of similarly-inclined regular callers personify the "real", or general, listening audience. Beyond this, they permit the host to construct the social aspects of his persona of friendliness: to appear as generous, playful, down-to-earth, fun-to-be-with, avuncular and paternal protector of little-old-ladies. Notice however that even here, in the midst of this intensely domestic and familial act, it is the host's professional career which gets the most air time (25% of the lines) and his "time-is-money" commercial ethos which moves the discussion along: "- let's not have the bus trip darling; did you enjoy yourself?" Once again the personalised is annexed into the commercial - for the talk is being re-directed to a stance from which the gift, meal vouchers for a sponsoring restaurant, can be used to generate some "spontaneous," "real world", free promotion.

Nor are sponsors' products as "gifts" the sole resources available to the host in setting up and directing this conflation of his two audiences. The mediation process itself can be made to operate in these ways. Selected "regulars" - those whose political commentary most closely equates to that of the host - are invited to do editorialising "reports", for which the in-studio production crew provides theme music. There is frequent discussion on-air of selling CD compilations of the most popular of these - as suggested by a caller, and enthusiastically taken up by the host and subsequent callers. All the "guest reports" mimic the host's
opinionated assertions, as well as his social and political views, while relations between “reporters” and the host flaunt the aggressive, mock-abusive, hyper-masculine “calling out” rituals used in many other caller exchanges. Note too the discussion over whether the host has been abusing the perquisites of a promotional culture: the question of “freebies”.

*The Stan Zemanek Show, April 1st 1996: caller “Wayne”*

1. Zemanek: Aaand, welcome back to the last, 55 minutes, just before the news and just before the Philip Ruddock interview we were talking with, ah, Mr Pain in the Backside himself, Wayne: hello! You still there?
2. Wayne: Oh good evening Mr Zemanek, good evening again [yes.
4. Wayne: Oh yes I did, as a matter of fact
5. Zemanek: But don’t you all, people in the media get all these freebies?
6. Wayne: (.) You sure you paid for them?
7. Zemanek: Ahh, no?
8. Wayne: [think a lot of you people are leeches on society in some ways [yes...
9. Zemanek: [yes, well that’s probably right,
10. Wayne: [I think a lot of you people are leeches on society in some ways [yes [
11. Zemanek: [think a lot of you people are leeches on society in some ways [yes [anyway I want to get back quickly to Sodom and Gomorrah ...
12. Zemanek: [think a lot of you people are leeches on society in some ways [yes [anyway I want to get back quickly to Sodom and Gomorrah ... [it appears this ...
14. Wayne: Oh well then we’ll go straight into the report then bumble butt.
15. Zemanek: Beg your pardon?
16. Wayne: We’ll go straight into the report
17. Zemanek: (...) What did you call me?
18. Wayne: Oh I said “Mr Zemanek”, straight into the report: please - the music!
19. Zemanek: (...) KING Zemanek!
20. Wayne: “King” Zemanek

There is some degree of tension in this exchange, clearly signalled in the persistent over-talking and interruption between lines 16 and 26, where the two jockey for position. This is generated directly from the regular caller’s teasing

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13 Labov’s classic (1972) studies of US Afro-American urban street-gang word fights (“the ‘changes’”) show many parallels to aggressive exchanges between Zemanek and male callers to the show.
play over the complex power relations between the two. Perhaps it partly arises from the way the caller has been kept on hold, after having been interrupted for the more prestigious figure of Federal Government Immigration Minister, Phillip Ruddock. Wayne’s mock formality: “Good evening, Mr Zemanek,” rather than the more frequent caller “Hello Stan” or “G’day mate!” is spun further in the closing exchange, where the host comes close to surfacing his control over the caller - who is a licensed regular commentator with his own theme music - by an exaggerated reassertion of his own status: “KING Zemanek …”

4.8 “Make way for Jockstrap-Joe!” - the up-front negotiation of a direct commercial role for the audience

The entire exchange at this point teeters on the edge of losing its apparent “mock” positioning. While as licensed “reporter” Wayne has gained some access to the host’s capacity to offer sustained and uninterrupted opinion (his “reports” are performed on live phone-in, with only the legal 7-second delay for protection against illicit or undesirable comment), he is still subject to the generic and technological restrictions of all callers. He is speaking on the tonally-suppressive limited band width of a telephone, with diminished sound quality and compressed expressive vocal range. The volume balance of the theme music played beneath his report is out of his hands. The content and length of the report are subject to relatively strict generic guidelines, which the host has presumably laid down at an earlier date, as he does to a regular-reporter wannabe during a later exchange:

_The Stan Zemanek Show, April 5 1996: caller “Jockstrap Joe”_

1  Zemanek: We have Jockstrap Joe on the line now: Jockstrap: hello!
2  Jockstrap Joe: Good Morning - STRAL-ia, King Zemanek and listeners: you guessed it: it’s the Jockmeister back on your wireless: 9 pm to midnight Mon-dy to Fri-dy.
3  Zemanek: (:::) Very good Jockstrap
4  Jockstrap Joe: That’s right. Remember me? Two weeks ago, Jockstrap Joe.
5  Zemanek: That’s right.
6  Jockstrap Joe: What about that report?
7  Zemanek: That’s right - are you gonna do a report for us?
8  Jockstrap Joe: Calm, calm Mr Zemanek I’ve been out all week all last week as well - with the Jock-itis.
9  Zemanek: Really what’s the Jock-itis? Is that a sort of a - itch between your legs?
10 Jockstrap Joe: That’s right. You got it!
11 Zemanek: Yea -
Jockstrap Joe: You must be common with the symptoms ...
Zemanek: Ah ha ha ha ha ha! Well when are you gonna do a report for us?

(omitted)

Zemanek: OK you gonna give me a report tonight?
Jockstrap Joe: Yep that's right!
Zemanek: Well listen I tell you what, because we get a full board here, all the way through from 9 o'clock through till 12, how about I, I put you back to Natasha [Rightio - ]
Zemanek: [ and she can give you the, the ah, the reporter's direct line.
Jockstrap Joe: OK
Zemanek: And this, this number is only known to "Wayne" and also "Banjo".
Jockstrap Joe: Oh, ah oh yes I've got a message for Banjo and Wayne.
Zemanek: Yes?
Jockstrap Joe: You know you're talking about compiling the Best [Zemanek: ]
Jockstrap Joe: You know they're gonna put on their reports? [Zemanek: That's right]
Jockstrap Joe: Banjo and Wayne: make way for Jockstrap Joe! I'm gonna be there, all the whole way!
Zemanek: Alright now listen it's gotta be fluent and it's gotta be good and it's gotta be hard-hitting and it's gotta be sometimes funny someto - sometimes sad, sometimes hard hitting, sometimes controversial?
Jockstrap Joe: Mr Zemanek, you'll get all of that in one!

The call is interesting for its illustration of a co-operative and reciprocating talk relation, built over both competing masculine drives to dominance, and shared impetus towards commercial application. A tendency to "overtalking" for instance stems not from disagreement, but from an eager assent (Schegloff, 2000). Jockstrap Joe is keen to fall in with the Zemanek ethos, and Zemanek is equally keen to help him participate. Like both Wayne and Dorothy, Jockstrap Joe is prepared to perform his ritual obeisance to the host - in the understanding that this will admit him to a share of the status. But where Dorothy expects her special "regular guest" position to admit her private-sphere personal and domestic concerns to the realm of public interest, and Wayne assumes he can adapt the host's aggressive-abusive modalities along with his status as editorialist, Jockstrap Joe as neophyte still appears to need to establish that he is up to the task. His shift in and out of a performative voice (lines 2-4) is designed to signal his readiness to take on the media role. Note the inclusion of media references - the Robin Williams voicing from the DJ character in the film Good Morning Vietnam! and the appropriation of the New York hipster "Jockmeister". While not part of the host's own repertoire, these indicate a sense of the
transformational texting undertaken in this as in all media genres of talk. When
Zemanek moves in lines 65-67 to establish the criteria for Jockstrap Joe’s “guest
report”, his outline of desired features and qualities includes this same capacity
to transform text through a range of genres:

... it's gotta be fluent and it's gotta be good and it's gotta be hard-hitting and it's gotta
be sometimes funny someto - sometimes sad, sometimes hard hitting, sometimes
controversial?

The organisation of this list - or more accurately its lack of any obvious
organising principle - shows how anything is grist to the mill, as long as it is able
to intersect with and transform itself into the Zemanek repertoire. Note firstly
how far this is content-free. What the host demands is not ideas, but qualities of
talk: fluency, emotional range, forceful delivery. Zemanek's criteria achieve the
“flatness” of postmodern text, where differently directed textual strategies and
genres can be simultaneously present (Hebdige 1987). In Zemanek's talk-texts all
generic distinctions are obliterated in the drive to commercial transformations,
and subordinate to his persistent push towards the occupancy of all space. Here
both speakers have the requisite qualities: they are both loud; able to range
across topics heedless of logical consistency. They are openly competitive and
blatantly hyper-masculine. They appropriate other media texts. Jockstrap Joe
captures the programme's ethos through performativity alone, as he must in this
“auditioning” process.

At the same time this extract is notable for its co-operative conversational
exchanges. It establishes a reciprocal, consensual mode. The host does not
however surrender power. His retention of control over the apparently
“licensed” reporters is clear here, as he lays down the rules and admits openly to
the existence of special access lines to selected callers (lines 50-56). What happens
however when aggressive and opportunistic masculinities clash, and cooperation
becomes competition?

What the Wayne extract demonstrated was the speed with which such licence
can be revoked; can revert to what appears from its vehemence, and its
frequency, to be the host's major mode: the insistence on his own probity, status
and “rightness” on all things. Analysis in the following section of this study will
deal with examples of this in more aggressive moods. In both cases however
these talk-texts establish an authority which is asserted whenever necessary (and
occasionally when not) through a vigorous vocal and conversational style, backed up when required by brutal use of the powers of the broadcast technology. Across the range of call topics, solicited or otherwise, which the programme receives - or at least, which it puts to air - the host’s construction of his own authority takes precedence. Within this main game of receiving caller comment, his responses to callers are diverse and sometimes even unexpected - but invariably settle around three principal types. In recognition of the dominant tone of exchange in each, these can be characterised as the aggressive, the patronising-consensual, and the reciprocal-consensual. Each contributes differently to the ongoing project of simultaneously “opening” the show’s talk texts to maximum participation, and yet closing the host’s authority around himself - and those few privileged “regulars” who perform consensus; callers whose status thereby blurs into that of “sponsor.” The following chapters will examine examples of each response-type in detail.
Chapter Five

"Baggin'" Stan: aggressive contestations of the radio talkback host’s power

5.0 Aggressive talk relations: masculinity at the core of talkback

On The Stan Zemanek Show aggressive exchanges occur only with resistant callers who seek to argue with the host’s position. Most often such callers are male.

The few women callers who are treated in this way (see for instance Sandra, Chapter 7) tend to evoke calls of sympathy from other women callers, who, in line with Lakoff’s (1975; 1977) work on women’s cultural sensitivity to language use, tell the host he “shouldn’t behave that way” or that he is “rude”. Women callers whose calls do receive an aggressive response thus elicit support calls from other women, who read back the conversational politic at the level of interpersonal behaviours which they consider inappropriate within conventions of gender relations.

“Resistant” calls from male callers on the other hand are marked by hypermasculine and competitive behaviours. These include persistent interruption by the host; deliberate abuse of turn-taking conventions (Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson 1974), with associated over-riding of callers’ complaints about this; suggestions from the host that the caller is “incoherent” or “slow”; abusive accusations; name-calling; mocking mimicry, and even threats of physical violence.

1 There is some evidence from the history of US radio that an abrasively masculine style has been common in talk radio from its earliest days. James C. Roberts (1990), who is a President at Radio America, a major cultural and public affairs features syndicate based in Washington, has suggested that talkback radio as we know it grew from celebrity interviews in major New York nightclubs and restaurants, slowly spreading through the rest of the USA, until reforms to ‘phone monopolies and satellite transmission led to boomtimes for the top exponents of the “brash, blunt style characteristic of New York.” It is certainly true that Australia - despite its abortive attempts at talkback in the 1920s (Johnson 1988) - moved very quickly to emulate the US talk-style from 1967 on - just as it had with the 1950s DJ presentational formats.
To this already powerful - if abusive - repertoire of conversational weapons, the host’s position behind the studio desk adds a weighty array of technological armaments. Vocally, his own power is enhanced by the pitch settings and vocal-compression enhancement techniques available through the control desk. Although Zemanek, unlike John Laws (see Appleton, 1996), appears to use this device minimally, maintaining a quite light and high vocal tone, his voice is still embellished in comparison to the constricted quack of telephone callers. He makes exceptionally heavy use of the “ducker” device (allowing the host microphone to override the caller) which further diminishes the power of caller comment. This exacerbates the unassertive, suppressed and distorted caller tone, and fragments what may be coherent comments into non-sequential sound-bites. Zemanek is also a master of the “quick cut off” exit, giving himself the last word. He maintains a collection of pre-taped sound stings - music or sound-effect segments recorded onto continually looped “cartridge” tapes, which can be activated instantly, and can “comment” (derisively) on caller opinions while the host repositions himself to summarise the issues. Because the host continues beyond the closure of the call, he can transform and re-mythologise an encounter - as well as look to later support calls from loyal fans, who will endorse his views. And he is able to access a set of comic songs to re-position callers’ comments. Most of these date from the 1960s or earlier, and many are now outmoded in their social attitudes, especially in relation to gender or race (for instance Charlie Drake’s 1960s comedy piece, “My boomerang won’t come back,” played after an exchange on Government investigations of ATSIC finances).

The most frequent technique however in use with the resistant caller who refuses or opposes the host’s position on an issue, is the forceful attempt to dictate the terms on which the exchange will occur (Schegloff, 1988-89): another dimension of the structuring and occupancy of radio’s social-relational space. Atkinson and Drew (1979, p. 134) uncovered the capacity within talk exchange to “preformulate” a respondent’s comments, during their examination of how lawyers arrange their questioning of witnesses during cross-examination. Atkinson and Drew summarise the technique as “calling the upshot”: the skill of managing descriptions of events so that they “...propose a judgement about the witness’ actions”. In other words, the questioner draws forth the respondent’s comments in an order and in a form which either reinforces or erodes their credibility. Heritage (1985) has shown similar processes at work in news interviews. Hutchby (1996, Chapter 3) demonstrates that talk show hosts command the same techniques.
Hutchby is interested in talkback radio for its capacity to reveal the strategies used to construct and control argument. It is the ideal field for display of the full repertoire of combative positioning - especially so, he points out, because of its claims to be an “open arena”, where callers rather than hosts set the topic agenda. Hutchby’s analysis however, like my own, has noticed the frequency with which talkback hosts reverse the implied conversational positionings in such a talk relation. The tendency is for the caller to initiate the topic, but for the host’s contestational strategies to prevail:

... although introducing an agenda is the caller’s prerogative on talk radio, this leads to a situation in which the argumentative initiative can rest with the host, and the caller can relatively easily be put on the defensive (Hutchby 1996b, pp. 41-42).

Zemanek is a master of this inversion technique.

5.1 Disputing the advantage in aggressive talk: argument as contested masculinity

In the following example Mustafa, a participant in an extended debate on The Stan Zemanek Show across several evenings over the possible decriminalisation of marijuana use in Victoria, launches straight into an attack on the host for his refusal to listen to the arguments of an earlier “expert” caller. Within only 39 lines, and 10 conversational exchanges, the host disposes of him.

The Stan Zemanek Show, April 3 1996: caller “Mustafa”

1 Zemanek: Aaaand, what’ve we got here ... Mustafa, helllooo ...
2 Mustafa: Oh hello: the doctor was trying to tell you that marijuana is
3 nowhere near as harmful as alcohol (uhh) and I’ve been smoking for
4 a long time because I got back pain, and it helps me a lot and doesn’t
5 - no side affects, no harm to the majority of the population.
6 Zemanek: Well you’re another dill. You’re another dill.
7 Mustafa: Well I take it - it’s helped me with my back pain.
8 Zemanek: Yeah that’s good, and how and ah, how many aaah, bongs do you
9 smoke or how many reefers do you have.
10 Mustafa: I have, I have two bombs - two bongs a day.
11 Zemanek: Two bongs a day. Well, I can see you are a mental defect. You’re an
12 absolute mental defect, because if you follow - if you follow what
13 the good [ ] doctor was talking about, [ you’ll end up, ah, a
14 Mustafa: [ (indec) ]
15 Zemanek: nut case in a bloody - in a padded cell ... [ (indec)
16 Mustafa: drink? [ (indec) a lot worse than marijuana
17 Zemanek: [ What? Yes I do, in moderation ... no it’s - listen fella; it if
18 you ah if you check with the medical authorities drinking is OK in
19 moderation: like everything else [
21 Mustafa: [ mari - marijuana’s less harmful
22 than alcohol [ and and no harm in it whatsoever (indec) ]
23 Zemanek: [ Rubbish! Rubbish! [ Rubbish!
24 Absolutely! How can you say it’s less harmful when it contains 426
different chemicals?
25 Mustafa: Yeah but most - [
26 Zemanek: [ “Marijuana cigarettes contain more cancer causing
agents than the strongest tobacco [ cigarettes” are you [aware of
that?
30 Mustafa: [but what abou - [ not if you
31 eat it - not if you eat it!
32 Zemanek: (uhh) (sotto voce) Oh, God you’re a fool ... (full voice) “Unlike
33 alcohol”: have a listen to this: “it is fat soluble and can therefore
34 lodge in your body for up to 30 days usually in the brain, usually in
35 the brain [and the reproductive [organs”.
36 Mustafa: [ (indec) [ what what you ...
37 Zemanek: No it is quite apparent that it has - lodges in your brains and
38 hopefully, it will lodge in your reproductive organs an’ you won’t be
able to reproduce again.

(music sting)

Here, while the expected talkback roles could have been preserved: caller as querant or informant, host as facilitator of the informational flow, these roles are in fact immediately altered. This reversal is provoked by the caller’s antagonistic opening at line 2 in response to the host’s earlier treatment of “the good doctor”. This phrase is yet another of Zemanek’s techniques to over-power through - in this case increasingly ironic - patronisation. “The good doctor” in question was a Dr René Pols, whose pro-reform legalisation comments on marijuana use had enraged the host during a previous interview. Mustafa’s entry to the debate offers immediate support for Dr Pols, signalling an aggressive and disputative entry to his call, which occasions the full force of the host’s most combative rallying shots.

The exchange has much to reveal of the transactional politics of talkback, and especially of the Zemanek technique in performing aggressive, combative debate. Note the degree to which the caller situates his comments within an ongoing conversation. This is a particular form of topic-establishing gambit, where the caller’s immediate declaration of a position on an existing topic invites an especially combative relational positioning from the host.

Using Sacks (1992), Hutchby (1996, pp. 41-42), shows that talkback callers are placed by the nature of phone-call etiquette in a position of actual disadvantage:

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3 Dr Pols, Senior Psychiatrist at Flinders Medical Centre in South Australia, is the AMA
(Australian Medical Association) spokesman on law reform and treatment innovation in
relation to illicit drug use.
... a generic feature of argument sequences is the difference between ‘going first’ and ‘going second’ with one’s views on an argueable issue... First and second positions can involve quite different kinds of resources, and in an important sense, disputants who get to go second are in a more powerful position than those who go first (Hutchby op. cit., p. 42).

By reacting to an already formulated argument rather than establishing one, the host can thus act strategically. Callers must become what Hutchby calls “opinion-producers”. By nature of their role, they must formulate a position on a given issue - either by adopting, as Mustafa has done above, a stand within a continuing conversational thread across a programme, or, as Jockstrap Joe did in an earlier extract, enticing the host into an entirely new subject (albeit, in his case, one built on a strongly consensual talk-relation). Either way, callers offer themselves and their topic up for the host’s evaluation. When, like Mustafa, they access a topic on which the host’s position has already been made violently clear, they must, as he does, attempt to break open the host’s arguments from the outset.

That Mustafa has selected a pre-existing topic is signalled by his use of the referential “the” with his topic: “the doctor was trying to tell you...” This signals Mustafa’s topic as one already in the public realm: one worthy of serious consideration. He has upped the ante by entering the realm of social commentary. Hutchby cites research by Clark and Haviland (1977), which demonstrates how the prefix “the” “...invokes some degree of shared knowledge” and thus constructs themes as “in the public domain” (1996, p. 43).

But Mustafa also attempts to re-appropriate expert opinion on a public issue - opinion which the host has already rejected. In doing so, he accesses a transformational ploy usually reserved to the host in the “going second” position, a space from which it is possible to respond not by simple denial, but by changing the grounds of debate. Hutchby’s analysis of his own data corpus of talkback transcripts locates in this position frequent use of a particular strategy of transformation, which he characterises as a form of “contrast structure”. In the contrast structure format, the caller’s proposition (“X”) is summarised, and then a second, only tangentially related topic strand (“Y”) is returned, to challenge the original proposition: “You say X, but what about Y?”. The effect is to derail a strongly asserted position, by eroding not the substantive point, but a side-issue. In the exchange between Mustafa and Zemanek however, even such a powerful strategy as this is joined to a longer and more considered transformational processing:
Zemanek's response - disguised as a benign and supportive endorsement: "yeah that's good ..." is both an erosive, side-tracking diversion and an enticement into more detailed self-revelation. The caller is invited to portray himself as a regular marijuana user, which he does twice over. He not only admits to regular use, but in doing so allows the host to transform the text from what had been aggressive, combative, public-domain debate, into a personal confession. Since marijuana use is still technically illegal behaviour, Mustafa has weakened his own claims to public authority, on socio-moral grounds. As with many women callers (see Chapters 6 and 7), the direct personal experience on which he bases his arguments is immediately used to replace him within a limited, private sphere. As Hutchby puts it, "callers do not phone in about personal or private problems and complaints, not, at least, unless these can be explicitly related to an identifiable public concern" (1996 p. 43). It is here that Mustafa founders. There is a serious backfire in his attempt to reinforce his position on a public issue with personal knowledge drawn from private experience: "I been smoking for a long time because I got back pain ..." It is this which opens him to the sort of personalised abuse which operates within domestic argument and family disputes: "Well you're another dill." And since Mustafa's initially confident occupancy of the pro-expert position is further weakened by his verbal stumble over the term "bong," the host is able to launch his favoured anti-drug argument: that it destroys mental agility and reduces users to the intellectual incompetence of social drones. From this point on, no matter the skill of the caller's interventions or the power of his arguments, the host will continue to reinforce the broad, socially judgemental role originally afforded him by the limited technical efficacy of the "going second" conversational position.

None of the strategies Mustafa employs can overcome the host's capacity to re-position him. Even his strongly combative and assertive opening modality: "marijuana is nowhere near as harmful as alcohol .... no side affects, no harm to the majority of the population ..." cannot save him from the power of this attack. His self-identification as succeeding antagonistic champion to the pro-legalisation expert interviewee, fails to annexe authority. His simultaneous attempt to mount a critique of the host's rejection of Dr Pols's position similarly founders. With the phrase "... the doctor was trying to tell you ..."
he implies an inattentiveness; a mishearing; a prejudiced position. Each of these are claims on authority: the right to endorse high-status expertise; the right to move from there to a critique of the host’s opinions as fallible. They stake a claim for a hearing on equal terms, which the host, in terms of his ongoing project of self-constitution as source of all judgement, must disallow.

The host resorts at line 32 to personal insult, and especially to his exit insult, regaining his authority by attacking the caller’s masculinity and potency. The imperative of the programme is not, as suggested by his promotions and opening invitations to “have your say”, to evoke and sustain open public discussion, but to position it within a consistent set of pre-existing “higher values”. Already it is becoming clear that these values centre around an aggressive masculinity, which can switch tack without ever losing sight of its own powers. It is this transformational capacity, played out through argumentative talk relations with male challengers to the host’s authority, which most clearly illustrates the major project of this commercial talkback format. Central to it is the representation of aggressively-performed spoken opinion as not only the pivotal, prevalent, and therefore most powerful option within public debate, but as inherently masculine, and resistant to those “feminised”, non-dynamic, private behaviours which presume to operate beyond orthodoxy.

5.2 Aggressive contestation and the right to public speech: hypermasculinity built over suppression of feminised “private” spaces

The host’s ongoing capacity to exploit his “going second” position in the conversational etiquette of talkback is one advantage in this project. It leads, as Hutchby has shown, to an automatic “argumentivity” in radio talkback exchanges, characteristic of the combative appeal of talkback generally. There are also however, as the Mustafa call shows, many tendencies in the Zemanek repertoire which are not included in Hutchby’s analysis. Other features inbuilt within the Zemanek talkback genre also “formulate the upshot”, in Drew and Atkinson’s phrase, but in other ways - and for purposes other than the construction of the sorts of “pure” or technical argumentivity which could be claimed as central to the needs of a lively on-air debate.

Not least among these is the way such conversations straddle multiple talk genres, which pull towards different regulatory systems. This set of
transformational choices is a feature of talkback very familiar to this host, but rarely consciously available to callers, no matter their expertise, status, or capacity for aggressive assertion within other speech genres. While the host's drive towards control of transactions is particularly evident, it is not however simple, or absolute. It cannot be confined, as Hutchby's work on argumentivity suggests, within a single definition. For all the energetic consolidation of the host's own perspectives at every level of the programme, the resultant texts are not immediately monolithic.

Returning to the Mustafa call, there is for instance in this extract not simply a violent exchange between caller and host, which the host wins. Also evident is a less obvious yet still significant division between off-air and on-air textual interplay. This is common enough in radio practice, and yet revelation of it during this particular exchange ruptures the otherwise powerful public persona, and gives the audience a - perhaps inadvertent - glimpse of the sort of sub-texts of commentary simultaneously running in-studio, which enable on-air presenters to de-fuse personal reaction to topics or comments. At line 32 for instance, Zemanek's sotto voce comment about caller Mustafa ("Oh God, you're a fool ...") is intoned not as a directly addressed insult, but as just such an off-air tension release.

Furthermore, the host's next turn, taken with the full and resonant microphone voice in play, is intoned as a quote, and suggests that the host has been using the caller's previous turn to select more of the documentary back-up from his production staff he had already begun using (lines 24-28.) His evaluative comment: "Oh God you're a fool!" then becomes part of in-studio comment, made only half consciously, and while undertaking another task, rather than one intended for the listening audience. The insight reminds us of the degree to which all of the conversations within this data corpus - and all of those broadcast on any talkback programming - are already inserted into other conversational flows, from which they draw at least some of their positioning. While Hutchby's analysis of the "second go" advantage of talk hosts usefully captures the power relations of on-air turn-taking exchanges, carefully arranged to display mastery to listeners, it misses the extension of these apparently highly-focused conversations into both in-studio production-talk, and at-home reception-talk. The first of these at least also has impact on the strategies selected.

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Mustafa, as Hutchby’s own footnote on the role of call-screeners indicates, 3 has already been selected for broadcast because of the contentiousness of his contribution. Hutchby however, in his anxiety to preserve for talkback conversation the spontaneity and unexpectedness of everyday talk (1996, p. 59), fails to note that calls such as Mustafa’s are interpolated into the flow of argument at a pre-calculated point, judged to optimise the impact of their contribution (in Zemanek’s case, negative impact). Today’s broadcast studios have inter-studio computer screen contact and multi-call-waiting phone links, which permit calls to be pre-coded “pro” and “anti”. They enable the host to make last minute decisions as to which calls he will use, in which sequence. Further to Hutchby’s limited and rather benign understanding of the “précis” role of call-screeners (1996b, p. 65) it is also likely that a caller such as Mustafa has been cued: instructed to move straight into his main point, and to state it as forcefully as possible.

Nor is it the primary, on-air, talk-texts alone which are enmeshed within the show’s transformational impetus. Just as both host and caller revert to earlier, pre-existing texts in support of their own positions - Mustafa to Dr Pols and Zemanek to unsourced “authorities” and statistics - so too do the texts in which this one is immersed impact on its formation. The calculation of “upshot” is not the host’s alone. The various institutions which become engaged within this given moment of talkback debate - in this case, medical and political authority as well as Mustafa’s claims on personal experience - are also each used to attempt the construction of a preferred talk-relational politic within the broadcast conversation. In each case however it is the host’s preferred relation which succeeds. But while Hutchby’s analysis rightly isolates the “going second” strategy as one productive of argument, it misses two further dimensions. First is the degree to which aggressive argumentation as favoured mode on The Stan Zemanek Show supports the construction of a powerful masculinity within the “talkback” relation. Second is the way this particular form of argument as a specific and selective generic formation within talkback is underpinned by broader talk techniques operating within pre-broadcast production.

3 Hutchby 1996, p. 59 footnote 1: “The improvised nature of a callers’ opening arguments appears to be something that talk radio stations are concerned to ensure. This was emphasised to me in a conversation with the producer of one such show. Describing the role of the call-takers to whom callers get through before reaching the host, the producer explained that one thing these operatives are required to do is to check that the caller is capable of making an argument .... This seems designed to highlight the liveness and spontaneity of talk radio interaction.”
5.3 "I'm just a mouth-piece for Shirley": the construction of the talkback host's power within in-studio production talk

Does an admission that there are sources of power and information flow other than in and from himself, breach those barricades of powerful speech behaviours and technical talk-expertise behind which the host has been shown to construct his unassailable position? It is arguable, given the range of such moments across shows. These extend even to moments which capture in-studio staffers' comments on the host's microphone, as they respond to his off-air demands. At every stage however the advantage is regained. The host regards any comments which reveal him as surrounded by a crew of assistants as less as an erosion of his sole control, than as yet another opportunistic incursion into a new area of social space, in which further aspects of his powerful centrality may be deployed. They display his capacity to enter at whim a usually "unheard" form of radio space: channels of in-studio/cross-studio communication. This in effect adds to the pervasiveness, and so the power, of the Zemanek position. After all, inside this newly opened social space, the host is still dominant, making open demands on a group of very much subordinate female production staff. The women who work for Zemanek thus come to occupy, in technology analyst Sadie Plant's (1996) term, "... the inside of the machine:"

In a sense, women have always been the machine parts for a very much male culture. Women have been the means of reproducing the species, reproducing communications - secretaries etc - which is obviously similar to the role of machines and tools (Geekgirl on-line: November 1996).

Ultimately this "interior world," radio's own version of a "private" sphere, constructed to support and indeed literally to "produce" on-air authority, is also reproductive of male power. Here every aspect of the host's demands for the authoritative information and technical enhancement which sustain his power must be met. Lapses are just as instantly exposed and criticised. What is significant for revelation of how the model works, is the way in which, on The Stan Zemanek Show at least, such regulatory activity is enacted live to-air. That this is part of the constitution of a specifically masculine construction of authority, is evident from the way in which whenever there is error or inadequacy in the technologically-armoured carapace of the host's voice as powerful persona - the host's self-representation of inviolable authority - it is openly attributed to the women staff.
The Stan Zemanek Show, April 4 1996

Extract One: presenter promotional ad-lib

(music: “Johnny-be-good” - host begins before the end of the track)

1 Zemanek: Yes (music) Oh! (music) oh! (Music) Yes - that is “Johnny-Be-
2 Good” and that is Doug Parkinson and let me tell you they’re gonna
3 be all over the joint: ah, so you, better get along, to see the Doug
4 Parkinson Buddy Holly Show, ah, because it is fantastic (uhh)
5 Apparently they’re, aahh, they’re ... still travelling around:
6 they’re gonna be at the Parra - Riverside Theatre at Parramatta on
7 the 20th of April, and ah, Yallah Wool Shed, ah that’s down near
8 Wollongong, on the 26th and 27th of April, ah, and ah Belmont
9 Sailing Club up there in ah Port Macquarie on on as they head off
10 on their northern New South Wales tour, (::) What is it I say? (::)
11 Did I say La - (::) I said PORT Macquarie did I? OK it’s Lake
12 Macquarie, thank you Shirley - well you are from that way aren’t
13 you. You’re just a Newcastle girl at heart aren’t you. (::) Hunter
14 Valley. (::) Muswellbrook. I see. OK. (Uhh) well now that we’ve
15 found out where Shirley ah comes from, ah anyway, ah up there at
16 uh Lake Macquarie on ah Belmont there Belmont Sailing Club on
17 the 4th of May ah Yallah Wool Shed on the 26th and 27th of April
18 and Riverside Theatre Parramatta on the 20th of April and so , just
19 a few dates to keep in mind if you want to go along and see the most
20 popular show in the whole of the world: the ah Doug Parkinson
21 Buddy Holly Show.

Extract Two: Presenter ad-lib

1 Zemanek: So many things to talk about: so many things to do: and ah maybe
2 you think this is a Freak Show as well, just like Mary
3 Whatsername on um from the Ethnic Community (::) she reckons
4 this is a Freak Show, you’ll see that er interview on Monday night
5 as a matter of fact on The 7.30 Report, and ah, look I was just
6 shocked actually by the behaviour of the ladies, I mean it was
7 outrageous, some of the things they said. I mean I just couldn’t
8 believe it. Little me sitting there, as docile as a lamb. Butter
9 wouldn’t melt in my mouth. And these ladies was just attacking me
10 I just, dreadful, dreadful - shocked! Shocked! As you will see on
11 Monday night, I was shocked! It was (hehe) 14 minutes after the
12 hour: this i-i-is, Stan Zemanek ...

Extract Three: Caller “Rocky”

(caller “Rocky” in a reasonably friendly, bantering tone, accuses the host of behaving badly to an earlier female caller)

1 Rocky: ... but I agree with that last lady mate (ha) you are a pig, there’s
2 no question about that.
3 Zemanek: I am a pig! Shirley: this man just called me a pig! can you believe
4 that?
5 Rocky: Huh! Huh! Oh that’s nothing [ 
6 Zemanek: [ I mean the woman on The 7.30
7 Report said this was a Freak Show - now this bloke’s called me a
8 pig!
9 Rocky: Stanley that’s no, that’s no problem [ 
10 Zemanek: [ Now, listen, my producer’s
11 here, and, um,[ she’s the reason why this show’s the way it is [ 
12 Rocky: [(indec) [- my
heart's bleeding for you
Well I mean she's the one that tells me what to do, I ju - I don't I
just sit here and I'm just a mouth piece for Shirley [ [ well that's true.
she - yeah [
[Shirley must (haha) have a big mouth then anyway
Stan ... No that's cool it's a great show
So do you feel better, you feel better about calling me a pig?
Oh I'm just telling you as it is, mate. Ah but anyway, um, I had mu -
I'm [ [Shirley do you think I'm a pig?
No ... (voice off)
I'm - there's - there was (hahaha) a little bit of hesitation in that
(hahaha) Shirley! Hahahaha! There was a bit of hesitation in
that! Ohohohohoho! Oooh, Shirley! (;) Can I have another cuppa
tea please?

Extract Four: presenter vocalising technical processes
(host moves into a new call sequence: uncertain of the next technical change; is presumably
taking off-air instruction from producer Shirley through his headphones)
Yeees, OK, what have I got here, what do I have to do now? I'm just
taking directions from the lovely Shirley, an' I think I'll press this
button:
(ad)

In each of these examples women staffers, attempting to remediate the host's
technical incompetence or factual error, are submitted to a kind of direct or
indirect teasing mockery which is not far removed from manipulative
violence. Producer Shirley in Extract One, making an important correction to
the locale of an advertised show - a sponsor's product, and so an element
central to the show's primary function as a commercial broadcast - is first of
all bunted hard with reference to her personal past and obscure country
origins; then manoeuvred into appearing to be wasting programme time with
trivia - and finally slapped firmly into place as subservient "tea maker" to the
star. When in the subsequent call, Rocky rebukes the host over just such a
contemptuous and even violent treatment of a female caller, he retaliates by
claiming in a surprising mock-anti-heroic ploy to be "Shirley's mouthpiece" -
at her beck and call - so effectively shifting all blame for programme
misdemeanours onto her.

The motivation behind this move is immediately clear a few lines later, as
Zemanek attempts to de-rail the caller's criticisms by reference to a line he has
been espousing throughout this particular night's broadcast. A little
background is in order here. After having agreed to appear on the ABC TV
Channel 2 current affairs show The 7.30 Report, to discuss "political
correctness" - one of his recurrent butts - Zemanek is aware that, although the
show has not yet been broadcast, he has already informed fans that he will be appearing. In fact he has boasted night after night about what he will say. Now having recorded the debate, he is confronting the prospect of his radio audience viewing a performance in which he was devastatingly out-argued and silenced by two opponents in a panel discussion - both of them women. Worse, one is a prominent Aboriginal activist, lawyer and Magistrate Pat O'Shane, and the other an academic and expert in multicultural affairs, Professor Mary Kalantzis - whom the host attempts to demean by constant and deliberate reference to her as “Mary What's'er-name from the Ethnic Community.” Over two nights of talkback programming the host unpacks his own swingeing defeat at the hands of these two women. He works in and out of conversations, as he does, unprompted, in the extract above, to re-mythologise his performance, until it becomes re-coded within one of his own favourite strategies: “poor powerless little Stanley, bullied by those nasty, unfeminine feminists”.

By extension, programme producer Shirley, whose role enjoins her to call error when it appears, must also be caste as a bully. Her misdemeanour is made to appear in public, to sustain the perverse myth of powerlessness which the host needs to excuse his own public failure. It is a coherent, if complex, strategy of inverted projection. All error is feminised, in order to pre-empt the possibility of its connection with the host's ultra-masculinised public persona.

Centred here by the hurt the host's persona has sustained, once outside an arena of his own control, is the degree to which his vocal presentation, his preferred radio talk relations, his genre construction of a paternalist personalisation, are all elements of a constitution of powerful masculinity. Built against any hint of female authority or autonomy, this goes beyond the representations of patriarchal authority detailed in earlier radio studies (Potts 1989; Miller 1983; Higgins & Moss 1982; Hobson 1980). Paternalistic male authority does more than directly assert itself over and seek to control female opinion and behaviour. While The Stan Zemanek Show overtly continues that aspect of patriarchal authority, it also reveals the role radio can play in the constitution of masculinity itself. It arrays itself across the most powerful social space; it equates itself with dominant social values, and it fixes those values within the construction of a coherent, stable and powerful “King Stanley”, as the ultimate personalisation of a dynamic and contemporary entrepreneurial masculinity.
5.4 “Water off a duck’s back, mate!” - how aggressive, combative talk promotes an invulnerable masculinity

From this perspective the “King” Zemanek persona is at one level dangerously close to being stranded behind the barricades of an increasingly outmoded masculinity. Zemanek’s persistence with a unitary masculinity which admits no correction must of necessity repel all attacks. During another caller discussion, this time with a young footballer new to the city, the host’s characterisation of his own capacity to sustain antagonistic talk-exchanges (colloquially termed “baggin’s”) reveals his attachment to the images of potent superiority and invulnerability he likes to project.

_The Stan Zemanek Show, April 1 1996: caller “Cameron”_

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<th>Cameron:</th>
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<th>Zemanek:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>... yeah whatya think a those people I listen to you a few times, every time I listen to yer, yer get people baggin’ ya all the time, I was jist wonderin’ why’s, what, why’s ‘is, yer got people jist sorta drunk alla time or ... (indec) [</td>
<td></td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>[ Well, like, look, it’s a good laugh, I mean, I have a good laugh at all these people, I mean and other people listening to the program have a bit of a laugh as well because they think that ah, yeah those people that are listening to us think well their life isn’t so bad after all after they hear some of these half wits ... [</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Zemanek:</td>
</tr>
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</table>
| 11| [ yeah ...

In fact despite the insouciant stance of invulnerability, Stan cares a great deal, and does much to elicit and to escalate - even to promote - his regular “baggin’s.” Four separate elements of his practice here reveal how he uses resistant or abusive callers to underpin his own view of his own position as “reasonable man” in politics and social ethics; “dynamic achiever” in the world of small business; protector of the aged, infirm - or female - and adviser to right-minded youth, and inviolable, rock-hard, “man’s man” with a lightening-sharp wit: a contemporary version of the hegemonic male.

Firstly, as shown in this particular piece, the moral, ethical or political position from which abuse and argument is generated on _The Stan Zemanek Show_, is constantly shifting. What counts is not the point under contention,

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4 The provenance of the term, widely used in Australian “blokespeak” but especially in homocentric sporting circles, is obscure. One suggestion is that it is an extension of the “hazing” or entry-ritual activity of “de-bagging”, or initiation-testing through social embarrassment, by removing someone’s trousers (“bags”). The explanation that the term has extended to mean sustained spoken insult does have the requisite foundation in relation to its direct attack on masculinity.
but Stan’s insistence on winning that point - or any point. For the most part
callers, such as Mustafa, are regularly attacked for “slow speech” and “lack of
clarity”. Yet in the discussion transcribed above caller Cameron is able to
sustain his shambling, inconclusive comments across a lengthy exchange,
thanks to his embrace of “mate” Stan, his “yeah I’ve gotta girlfriend”
heterosexuality, his country-boy-in-the-big-city naïveté, and especially his
playing of professional Rugby League⁴. He is even assured that he will,
apparently inevitably, become famous and “play for Australia!” He is ideal
young Australian man: his inarticulacy a guarantee of his untainted
country-boy virtue.⁵ By comparison a subsequent caller, Luke, commits the error of
supporting the legalisation of marijuana use. In Zemanek’s view this is a
decadent pursuit, erosive of physical activity and economic productivity, and
therefore an unmasculine behaviour. Luke, like Mustafa, is accused of having
“brain damage”, as evidenced in his slow thinking and slurred speech -
neither of which are supportable propositions in comparison with Cameron
(or for that matter with some performances of the host himself.)

The Stan Zemanek Show, April 1, 1996: caller “Luke”

1  Zemanek: It is 28 minutes after the hour, this is Stan Zemanek and I’d love to
2   have your comments tonight, doesn’t matter what it is, we are - ah -
3   heh) we’re game for anything as I keep on saying. Luke: hello
5  Zemanek: = Yes Luke
6   Luke: Yeah I’d like to speak about um marijuana, I think it should be
7   legalised
8  Zemanek: = I see. And why do you say that.
9   Luke: Because it’s, I-I don’t really think um it re- it harms you in any
10  way, if you just smoke it like, once a month
11  Zemanek: = I see, and how much have you smoked.
12  Luke: Ah ‘bout, once a month for (...) year or so
13  Zemanek: = About once a month. And it hasn’t affected your brain?
14  Luke: No it hasn’t actually []
15  Zemanek: [Absolutely, you’re as ah, you got a quick wit?
17  Zemanek: Sharp as a tack?
19  Zemanek: Absolutely, and you don’t have slurred speech or anything do you.
20   Luke: No I don’t.
21  Zemanek: No and you can think very quickly though, can’t you.
23  Zemanek: Oh that’s good, that’s what I like to hear - and you sound like you
can, you can think really fast too.
25  Zemanek: So yeah .. I, look, obviously you’ve dispelled that, er, dispelled
26   that thought, that marijuana does or does affect you. I mean you’re

⁴ Rugby League, the dominant football code in New South Wales, is traditionally considered
the toughest and most macho of the four different versions of football played in Australia.
⁵ See Ward (1958) for the classic study of Australian virtu; and Connell (1995) for a more
recent account.
Between lines 8 and 26 Zemanek plays out in almost agonising detail the "contrast structure", inviting the caller to keep responding, each response "proving" the negative of what it asserts. The blatant abuse of both technical and professional power is evident here. Zemanek off-sets the anticipated use of the sharp cut-off and final word against the teasingly slow construction of what is a rhetorical rather than a logic trap. He thus creates a self positioning as long-suffering moral arbiter, who endures the idiocies of callers only to permit the wider audience time to hear for themselves what is self-evident. The strategy serves to disguise Zemanek's actually scanty repertoire of defences against contestation on such social issues as changing attitudes to drug use.\(^7\) The apparent illogic of his own position - or perhaps "a-logic", since he habitually chooses to attack callers as individuals rather than to engage with them as representing wider social issues - does however display a consistency and coherence when read at a broader level.

This new, higher-level consistency is the second plank in the Zemanek platform. Here the question to be asked is one posed by a later - and interestingly, female - resistant caller. Still involved in the fall-out over the drugs debate, she asks outright while discussing the host's violent and abusive treatment of pro-drug callers: "Stan, what's in it for you? What are you getting out of it?"\(^8\) Her implication of a personal and psycho-therapeutic dimension is not one I wish to take up, but it does demonstrate the degree to which the host's deployment of the devices of personalisation to maintain his own primacy invites such questioning; makes it possible for it to be turned back on him. It is not however a topic he can afford to admit. The explanatory space it seeks to fill is already taken up by the many-layered discursive constitution of himself as dynamic representative of aggressive and expansive

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\(^7\) In a later programme the volume of caller support for the extension of legal drug use, and the number of callers who admit to regularly using drugs, actually entice Zemanek into asking - albeit rhetorically - whether he might be "out of step" on this issue.

\(^8\) The Stan Zemanek Show, April 2, 1996; caller "Ann".
patriarchal authority. An important part of “what's in it” for the host is his licensed and technologically supported capacity to be always right - a desire with which many male callers, and especially those aspiring to the status of authorised (authoritative) regulars and reporters, concur:

*The Stan Zemanek Show, April 1 1996: caller “Wayne”*

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<th>Wayne:</th>
<th>Zemanek:</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Well, you know - how long have we been talking about ATSIC Stan?</td>
<td>Mm-hmm?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>A long time now we've been critical of it.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>We have Wayne, we've finally got it to a head and we've, ah,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>opened it up.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Well you know we were &quot;racist&quot;, weren't we!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Well you might have been!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>D-oh no, we were CALLED racist!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Well oh yes, I, probably have been called a racist ...</td>
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Here, both the first and second level of the host’s defences of his own rectitude are deployed. In line 5 he asserts unity with Wayne, endorsing the view that together they have talked the community around on ATSIC issues: “... we've finally got it to a head and we’ve, ah, opened it up” - a sustained metaphor of surgical lancing which positions ATSIC, and not their own racism, as the poison. Neither however is yet prepared to be charged with racialised analysis. In line 8 Zemanek is quick to dissociate himself from Wayne’s suggestion that the era of political correctness is over, and that it is now safe to “be critical” of ATSIC. In line 9, Wayne moderates the charge, to one of inaccurate attribution: “... we were CALLED racist!” Zemanek’s line 10 response “Well oh yes, I probably have been called a racist ...” both accepts the re- attribution of possible blame, and re-focuses the talk, from Wayne to himself. While the talk reflects power (lines 1-6) Zemanek is happy enough to accept the credit, even contributing the para-linguistic “continuer” (“Mm-hmm?”) at line 3, which invites Wayne to proceed. When in line 7 Wayne strays close to an attribution of blame, the host snaps apart the shared perspective.

The extract shows how two seemingly incommensurable, even contradictory strategies can be pursued simultaneously. Error - even the possibility of a vestigial error from a previous regime, is instantly deflected. What remains is the capacity to appear to extend moral authority through time: the ability to be right before, during and after the introduction of far-reaching political
change. With the use of regular callers this authority is polyphonically reasserted. The host hardly needs to stress the power of his own public commentary. It now seems, as regular caller Wayne points out, to be influencing every aspect of (new in 1996) Coalition Government policy. Zemanek regulars such as Wayne are rushing to phone in to point this out. The role of the regular reporter in particular becomes one of stereo evangelist, proselytising the Zemanek word to the world, in tune with his master’s voice.

No surprise then, having formulated a technique which can apparently operate “by remote”, even outside his own vocal presence, that the host refuses to concede even the smallest degree of error in himself - even when trivial mistakes have obvious consequences. From small slips of the tongue of the type described by Goffman (1981), to technical errors, to blithe disregard for his own lack of factual knowledge, to mistakes with immediate and observable consequences for his “family of listeners”, the host repudiates even the possibility of his ever being wrong about anything.

5.5 Concealing the unforced error: preserving masculinity through “repair” talk and the re-attribution of blame

In radio produced live, with the added complication of the involvement of non-professional callers, many of them first-time on air, the chances of error are high. On The Stan Zemanek Show however, the claim to absolute authority means that those problems which do occur, must be either sheeted home to someone else, (preferably a woman) or turned into the kind of mocking behaviour which will demonstrate the host’s ultimately macho, larrikin, Australian toughness - as for instance with the play across his being “run out of town” from an earlier posting in Townsville (see the Dorothy extract, Chapter 4, above). The collected corpus of audio transcripts from which I am abstracting displays each of these responses, ranging from quick re-routings around pronunciation errors, to the sorts of association of technical glitches with “faulty equipment” or female staff incompetence, which we have seen above. The problem is however at times far more significant - as when for instance Zemanek’s snap into instant expertise enjoins him to make decisions

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9 In this case, the defeat of the Keating Labor Government and the succession of the Howard coalition, a Government tainted even before its victory at the polls by negotiations over electoral vote-preference-trades with Pauline Hanson’s overtly racist One Nation party.
on matters about which he knows little. One caller for example asks that Zemanek adjudicate in an argument he is having with friends:

**The Stan Zemanek Show, April 2, 1996: caller “Graham”**

1. Graham: Stan, bein’ a walking encyclopaedia, [
2. Zemanek: mm-mm [can you, win a bet for
3. Graham: me - I hope you can - [
4. Zemanek: [yeah ... [ Which is the biggest selling biscuit in
5. Graham: Australia. Is it Saos, or Tim Tams?
6. Zemanek: (:::) Uuum, mate, I'd say Saos!
7. Graham: (::) Well that's what I reckon, but me son wants to argue with me, and I reckon that um ... [
8. Zemanek: [Well I mean - if you - if you talk about the biggest selling biscuit, in Australia, I mean Saos have been around a lot longer than Tim Tams.
9. Graham: Yep! Yep! I'll go along with that!
10. Zemanek: So Saos would have - would have, er, erp erp - a hundred times more sales, than what er Tim Tams would have.

Whether this diversion of the argument’s logic from current to historical statistics (lines 12-16) is a deliberate ploy to win in the absence of hard information, or an indication of the host’s incapacity to think logically at all, it is eagerly accepted by the caller. It is also a further example of Hutchby’s “contrast structure”, here directed not at the caller, but at the argument. This redirection is of course necessitated by the caller’s ready acceptance of the host as authority on absolutely everything: “... a walking encyclopaedia ...” Here the host is caught with no hard information to access. Consequently he deploys the “upshot” strategy more usually used to redirect an antagonistic caller. He reframes the argument into one he can win with common-sense - and so one which the caller, who is, by his own admission, out to win the argument rather than to establish the facts, is prepared to endorse. This caller is already after all inside a frame well suited to the host’s quirks with logic. He is enough of a *consensual* regular listener (see Chapters 6 and 8) to believe that the host has an “encyclopaedic” knowledge - and to accept as knowledge what is little more than talk tactics. For this caller at least, the host’s constitution of authority has worked - even at its shakiest and most patently strategic.

In a more serious instance, the host palpably bungles an exchange with a caller offering an answer on a quiz question.

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[10] A company executive does later call in with sales figures, which, fortunately for the host, make it a close call between the two lines.
The Stan Zemanek Show, April 5 1996: quiz-contest callers “Craig”, “John”, “Nicholas” and “Rodney”

1 Zemanek: And our Sports Quiz is Stan’s - Super Stan’s Sports Quiz: let’s see if we can get a few answers outa this now: and I do believe we have Craig, OK Craig, your answer is? (:) Craig doesn’t have an answer ... (music sting) OK David Gower the former captain of the English cricket team began his career in 1975: what was his highest test score during his career, and who was it against and when ...

(section omitted)

17 Zemanek: 13 13 32 is our telephone number aaand ... what’ve we got here, I do believe it’s John: hello.
18 John: Hello how are you.
20 Zemanek: Not too bad, what - now OK you got an answer to the Sports Quiz what was the team he was playing against?
22 John: Ah, the West Indies.
23 Zemanek: The West Indies: you’re wrong. (music sting) OK Nicholas - OK what team were they playing against first?
25 Nicholas: It was England against Australia [
26 Zemanek: No it wasn’t and aaaaah ... yes,
30 Zemanek: OK it was England, yes, OK, alright, OK you’ve ah, died of - a death there (the caller has put down the phone) so thanks for your call ... (music sting) OK didn’t want to go on with it, but I don’t know why: maybe he’s had, er, stage fright or something. I don’t know: Rodney: hello!
32 Rodney: Ah good evening Stan
33 Zemanek: Yes Rodney!
34 Rodney: 15 against Australia in 1985, the fifth test at Edgbaston. 11
35 Zemanek: Uuuummm - haaah! Yes you’re right!

For the host, the possibility of error cannot be brooked. It is glossed over; its evolution charged to forces outside the host’s control; to incompetent callers (“stage fright or something”) or lax staff. To admit a mistake, however small, would be utterly destructive. Error is the worst of all possible attacks on the host’s image, for it is internal and erosive of the invulnerable certitude of the authoritative persona. Where external contention or abuse can be shucked off - “water off a duck’s back, mate!” - the “unforced error” in his own performance cannot be acknowledged. Even to admit that the flow of his talk is under construction minute by minute is to reveal the dangerous latency of (unmasculine) chaos beneath hard-won order. Immediately following this potentially serious lapse over the quiz question, the host moves in two ways to reassert his own public power. He reminds us of the presence within the radio construction of the conveniently culpable “Shirley,” and demonstrates

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11 Since Edgbaston is an English County cricket pitch, Rodney, like previous caller Nick, is assuming that the international game or “test match” is between England and Australia - so that Nick was in fact probably correct. It may also be significant that the English captain’s “highest score” of 15 is shamefully low.
at the same time his own capacity to bubble the radio brew to intensities loftily beyond the reach of petty squabbles over sports quiz questions.

*The Stan Zemanek Show, April 4 1996: presenter monologue*

1 Zemanek: OK, let me see: what's happening here: my Executive Producer
2 Shirley Collins is walking into the studio and she's about to tell me something: and um but no, it may be that she's not coming in: I don't know! I thought she was going to rush in here... Shirley: are you coming in to see me? (: And what are you going to tell me Shirl? (voice off, indec.) The phone call from the Prime Minister? (:) It hasn't come through yet... (voice off) It will be coming through shortly? I see. OK, well alright, we'll wait for that telephone call: very er important ah message coming through folks: that I'm sure you're going to er be most surprised when you hear this next telephone call. If indeed it does come through...

It didn't. But the point had after all been made. The host's power is re-asserted at just the right moment - and without the possible embarrassment of a Prime Minister who might not have been quite as quiescent over Zemanek errors as contest participants robbed of their prizes.

To some extent this tendency to deny mistakes - for instance the blurring of the host's own speech-lapse corrections - is part of conventional radio practice, where fluency and continuity over-ride grammatical or pronunciation accuracy, and where training manuals assure broadcasters that to stop to apologise is to disrupt the all-important "flow." With Zemanek however the practice goes well beyond the moment-to-moment demands of on-air, live presentation. His frequent accusations of caller inarticulacy (see above) have raised the ante on his own fluency, and incorporated it as a central part of his vocal persona. It is at this point that this ceases to be merely a means of constructing a successfully "argumentative" talk genre, in Hutchby's terms, and begins instead to engage the discursive formations of high-masculinity and an active entrepreneurial commerce - the ultimate programme "ethos" of 2UE.

5.6 Entrepreneurial ethos and high-masculine selves: what the voicing of talkback radio brings to commercial culture

What is under constitution within this element of Zemanek's practice is a fully-fledged cultural myth, in the Barthesian sense of a sustained,

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12 "If you make a mistake with actual words while reading a script, you'll need to make a quick judgement as to whether an apology is called for or not. In general, it won't be necessary ..." (Pike, 1992, 5UV training manual: an introduction to broadcasting, Module 4, p. 4).
interconnecting set of coherent, consistently coded meanings (Mythologies 1973; see also Fiske & Hartley's annexation of Barthes 1978, and Barthes 1985, on the construction of "meaningful" vocalisations). In this section of the code, "superiority" of a particular type is demonstrated. The radio voice is used to personate inviolable authority: an entity which cannot brook error. Because the host's voice is always the one to prevail - even though it consistently appeals to technical means to preserve that prevalence - it comes to represent a particularly powerful kind of masculinity. It seeks to create itself as:

... reliable, informative, entertaining, authoritative - a complement, within the patriarchal structure of the family, of the father's authority (Potts 1989, p. 105).

Potts is arguing here for consideration of the technically enhanced, broadcast male voice as having been constructed to represent a mediated version of powerful masculinity within the domestic social array. As with Leslie Johnson's (1988) account of the evolution of radio as a technology of the (consumerist) family, it is a compelling picture. And yet both accounts fail - apart from brief acknowledgement of the almost exclusive use of male announcers on commercial radio - to pursue this "authoritative masculinity" of the broadcast voice into the core of commercialism which it now so obviously occupies. It is crucial to consider the role of the hyper-masculine talkback voice in analysis of the continuing evolution of commercial radio style. In particular, it is time to acknowledge its new diversity and complexity.

The text types of commercial Australian broadcasting are very rarely examined at this level of detail: almost never as inherently commercial texts. Miller (1993) goes as far as to imply that commercial talk-radio has in effect ceased evolution outright: that it has arrived at some sort of optimum sere of saturation market-niche occupancy, from which no further development can be anticipated:

In Australia today AM radio, having lost the most popular music formats to FM, has found its niche in talk ... It is worth remembering that talk-back is a relatively cheap form of radio for the program-maker (Miller, op.cit., pp. 160-161).

This dangerously naturalises commercial radio, in two ways. Firstly, it creates an economic-evolutionary metaphor, which undermines consideration of the cultural production of radio's social role. Secondly, it suggests inside that metaphor, that change and development have either ceased, or are in some unspecified way no longer worthy of consideration. What results is a
dangerous construction of a “stable state” view of commercial radio as an institution, which provides no incentive for further examination.

Such a denial of further evolutionary processes within commercial broadcasting seems ill-founded at a moment of intensive change within consumer culture, especially in its relation to the shift to CMC technologies and a consumption-production economy. To this extent, the deeper our understanding of the directedness of such discursive constructions as the Stan Zemanek “aggressive contestation” masculinity evident in this top-rating radio format, the better our capacity to capture the development of newer formations within the digitised broadcast/direct consumer profiling systems of the near future. For while it is evident that the Zemanek persona in many ways perpetuates older models of authoritative paternalism, it is more complex than such an attribution suggests. Contradictory moments of an updated masculinity arise even within this particular form of commercial broadcasting talk. They encompass many aspects of traditional authority, but also claim new territories. To capture such initiatives within broadcast texts and the practices they reveal, is to follow the continuing evolution of commercial radio programming, into the cultural work of identity constitution - increasingly central to the new “consumer profiling” phase of electronic entrepreneurial commerce.

In his one book dedicated solely to media discourses, Fairclough (1995a) signals an equally significant move in media studies, away from the problem of social representation, and towards more detailed and Foucauldian work on the contributions of specific media texts to the construction of social identities and cultural values:

The wider social impact of the media is not just to do with how they selectively represent the world, though that is a vitally important issue; it is also to do with what sorts of social identities, what versions of ‘self’, they project and what cultural values (be it consumerism, individualism or a cult of personality), these entail (p. 17).  

So what sorts of “selves” are constructed inside the exchanges both in-studio and on-air offered by The Stan Zemanek Show? In an era when a masculinity of domestic authority is under widespread dissolution (even Zemanek implies rather than elaborates on male family authority) the re-assertion of a powerful masculinity has become a daily task. Via the dynamism of free-

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13 Similar questions are raised by Brand & Scannell, 1991, assessing the persona of UK radio and TV host Tony Blackburn.
wheeling entrepreneurial capitalism in a newly-visible [audible] real-virtual space, mediated by the mobile alliance of the car, the digital phone and the portable radio receiver, Zemanek casts himself as the heroic local merchant adventurer, assisting in the “natural selection” of a supply and demand economic social order, in which only the fleet survive and prosper. In part the role is built around the traditional virtues of physical prowess, linking it to a particularly Australian convention of association between male public status and a heroic sporting past. As he moves into this fourth and final layer of the construction of his claims on dominance, the host is always quick to remind listeners of his own yachting background, past and present, couching it in all the requisite terms of masochistic pleasure to indicate his toughness:

_The Stan Zemanek Show, April 1 1996: presenter “opinion” monologue_

1 Zemanek: Yeah a lot of people have been talking about the ah surf carnival 
2 in Queensland where the young man lost his life and, was a  
3 tragedy. And, um, (.) but, you know, people have been saying oh  
4 look you know they should have called it off and, nn, these people  
5 are, they are, life savers, they are trained to go out, in ah, big  
6 waves and heavy seas and all that sort of stuff. Um. Aand I think  
7 we start, calling off sporting carnivals I suppose because the  
8 weather is a bit inclement I mean, you know, if that was the case  
9 we probably would have called off 25% of the 18 footer races that I  
10 ar sailed in at the time and got w, w, well and truly wild and  
11 woolly. Uum, but you don't call off sporting events I suppose, ar,  
12 because conditions are a little inclement I these people are  
13 professional life savers as we were professional sailors out there to  
14 do a job an', um, you know, if you ever come down Sydney Harbour  
15 in a 18 footer with a spinnaker up, screaming down the harbour with  
16 a bloody southerly buster up your backside you'll know what fear  
17 and intrepidation is all about I can tell you one wrong move with the  
18 tiller and, ar, you could have a few people with um broken arms  
19 and legs ...

Here the bluster is not all in the weather conditions. While it is not easy to read back the stumbling inarticulacy of this talk as directed towards a powerful masculinity, this is partly a result of cultural inexperience in confronting seriously the talk-texts of working class masculinities. By moving across to representations of the visual equivalent, it becomes possible to see what is being produced in such talk. Discussing contemporary masculine formations in popular film and television texts, Easthope (1986) comments of hegemonic western versions of masculine identity: “... the most important meanings that can attach to the idea of the masculine body are unity and permanence” (p. 53). The claims for powerful masculinity in the

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14 Something of the same effect can be gained from reading Kuiper’s transcriptions of men’s sports taunts during volleyball games and in football locker rooms (in J. Coates, ed. 1998, pp. 285-293).
Zemanek talk-text centre on precisely these powers to prevail against the worst of all intrusive forces, to an extent where their bearer will deliberately seek out such dangers. Citing Lacan's concept of the ego-ideal (1977), and locating it as repeatedly represented visually throughout Western popular and commercial culture, in film, advertising, television, press discourses, sport, politics, social ritual and domestic pastimes, Easthope details the complex re-workings of a male quest to locate power securely within the self, and to repel all weakness:

The masculine ego must try to master everything other than itself: physical reality both as nature on the outside and the body on the inside; other people in society; its own unconscious and femininity (Easthope 1986 p. 46).

At every level in this psycho-social regime the Zemanek project is clear. His automatic ridicule of anti-development activism; his loathing of sloth, decadence and any form of indulgence; his constant re-assertion of his own heroic sporting past; his persistent drive to code every exchange as combat and to win them all; his positioning of females as outside public activity (unless in ancillary roles) - and above all, his refusal to admit either error or relativism into his own performance - all are indicative of a socially institutionalised ego-ideal, inflated to monstrous proportions. What "Zeman-speak" discursively constructs in its aggressive or combative mode is an amalgam of all of the varying angles of this vision: the entrepreneurialism; the machismo; the authority; the violent abusiveness. The invitations to verbal combat - the careful construction of "argumentivity" - operate as terrain across which all of these can be displayed. Even the apparently inverse qualities, such as the inarticulacy of the monologues and the stumbling, repeated straining for words, signal a spontaneity and an on-the-spot creativity, as well as a lack of concern with the trivial and possibly effeminate pursuit of accuracy, "correctness" or formality. Zemanek's brand of talk-on-the-run is a crash-or-crash-through construction, which values bald assertion, expressive reaction, the odd colourful colloquialism, and a cheerful optimism that anything goes and all will be well. What can easily seem in transcription a chaotic sequence of faltering stops and false starts, works perfectly well on radio, where pauses, repetitions and paralinguistic "continuers" provide spaces for listener focus and reflection. Read the

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15 See also Jeffords, 1994; Springer, 1996; Theweleit, 1989).
16 Coates (1986) provides evidence for masculinity in speech behaviour as consciously constructing itself around working-class usage, including colloquialisms, grammatical errors and swearing, while women speakers select middle-class "correctness" and polite variants.
stresses and the sense-flow of the extract above, as opposed to its semantic load, and it turns into a rather more powerful, purposefully-directed piece. With the gestural markers restored, the rhythm stresses building to a climax, and the key words standing out starkly, texts such as these become very compelling. Let them build to the colloquial power of lines 15-18 of the extract above, and the blunt force shows through:

... if you ever come down Sydney Harbour in a 18 footer with a spinnaker up, screaming down the harbour with a bloody southerly buster up your backside you'll know what fear and intrepidation is all about I can tell you ...

Set against the golden-voiced professionalism of traditional broadcasters, the Zemanek style reads back as a vocalisation of the archetypal battler, doing his brave and boisterous best. It is the alliance of this tough ordinariness with an insistence on an opportunistic drive towards success, all strictly at a local, identifiable level, which makes the package saleable.

5.7 The problems in claiming sole discursive occupancy of public space: when two masculinities collide

A prime consequence however of this equation of power and masculinity with the inadmissibility of error, and its focus into a single, central personation, is the degree to which an absolutist masculinity must paradoxically concede position when confronted by its own mirror image. When contested by a more powerful embodiment of patriarchal authority, with which it seeks to identify, but which itself desires the retention of sole (unitary) status, the bluster and strut must stop. Such an instance occurs for instance on The Stan Zemanek Show when the host interviews the Federal Minister for Immigration, Phillip Ruddock. Representative of a political ethos which the host supports and which is congruent with his own entrepreneurial view, Minister Ruddock does not fully endorse the host’s views on, in this example, multi-culturalism.

It is significant that there is an avoidance here of any real confrontation with a more powerful figure. Ruddock’s practised politician’s evasions go unappealed and even unacknowledged by Zemanek (lines 9-10 and 30-34). He is normally swift to interrupt a caller who attempts to evade one of his tactical questions. This deviation from usual practice is significant. Note too

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from the outset of this interview, how Zemanek accepts full and uninterrupted input from his caller. While I will look later at the ratios of interruption used between resistant, consensual and patronised callers, here it is worth noting simply the relative lack of interruption. The ducking device is not activated - so that at lines 20-21 for example, Minister Ruddock is able to prevail with his comments over the host’s interjections. But above all watch at lines 70-94 for Ruddock’s capacity to refuse engagement on Zemanek’s terms: his insistence that groups other than those from the ethnic community lobby him over immigration - and that he will, in any case, listen to all sources. Here his sustained detour and delay of Zemanek’s questioning until he reaches this assertion, get it past the immediate attack. Zemanek is forced into his ultimate re-carapacing strategy after defeat: closing the conversation, and then re-mythifying in his summary, until the exchange can be said to reassert his own position.

The Stan Zemanek Show, April 1, 1996: Immigration Minister Ruddock interview

Zemanek: A lot of people say that we’re bringing too many people in the country considering that our unemployment is so high I mean there’s a report today from the ah from the Treasury I think that said we had aaaaah, officially a nine hundred thousand odd people out of work I mean people say well if we bring more people ah into this country and they can’t find jobs all we’re doing is increasing the unemployment line. I mean will you be bringing down the number of people allowed to come into this country?

Ruddock: Stan, when we went to the election we said that er we thought the programme was about right. The unemployment numbers, while still unacceptably high, have been coming off, um, and er, and the migration programme has risen over the last couple of years marginally, and so, we’re not about increasing it, but er, we’ve flagged that we expect it to be about the same, the same order as it is now. Unemployment is an important issue in the public mind, there’s no evidence to suggest that er, immigration makes unemployment in fact worse but er, [ ]

Ruddock: [yes, but Phillip ]

Zemanek: [ ]

Ruddock: [indec]

Zemanek: perception is that it does and you can’t run ahead of public perception [ ]

Zemanek: [ well, you’re right about public perception though but if you got ah if you got a hundred round holes you can’t fit a hundred and ten round poles in those round holes, can you? an um, people are saying well if you bring all these people in, eighty-six thousand people in the year [ ]

Ruddock: [ mmm ]

Zemanek: [ you just don’t have eighty-six thousand jobs! ]

Ruddock: Well Stan, um, the assumption is of course as you put it, that there are only so many round holes, the fact is that um, if you bring in migration or migrants, there is a certain amount of additional economic activity generated around those people who bring some money into the country, [

Zemanek: [ but [ 149]
Ruddock: [those who]
Zemanek: [But Phillip a lot of that
money, a lot of those people who are coming into the country don't
have money, I mean, what is it, forty []
Ruddock: [ no, they don't [ forty per cent
Zemanek: is from the, Family Reunion scheme [ we think that in fact what we
may well do with these measures that we are taking is, more
closely ah target the programme in favour of skilled entry I think it
will lead to a situation where we will have fewer people um the
relatively low level of skill that we're seeing with the present
programme (indec) []
Zemanek: [ So in other words, be more selective
Ruddock: Well it will be more selective in the sense that ah there are some
other measures that we are intending to take as well, um, and we
announced these in the context of the election.

There are features of the talk exchange here totally unlike the usual caller
relations. To begin with, as outlined above, Ruddock is able to prevail over
Zemanek’s interruptions: to continue on and to complete his turn (lines 17-
21.) When Zemanek does pick up the turn and twist it through a double “yes-
but” transformation into a “people say” proposition (lines 24-25), Ruddock is
able to produce precisely the “continuer” strategy which Zemanek himself
commonly uses (Talbot, 1992). His interspersed “mm-mm” (line 27) signals
his recognition that Zemanek is about to commit, albeit with an attributional
indirection, to a particular position: “...you just don’t have eighty-six
thousand jobs!”

It should of course be no surprise that here the talk relations appear to be
reversed. Since this is an interview, and not a talkback call, the host is himself
compelled to take up the “going first” position: to set up the terms of the
discussion, and to submit opinion for the Minister’s response. He does so
with careful distantiation techniques inside the processing (Fairclough 1992;
Halliday 1978) such as the transformations of his own known position into
the anonymity of “people say” - a strategy he repeats throughout the
conversation. Where he does modulate into the “contrast structure”
intervention the Minister is immediately able to counter-attack with the same
deflective strategy. For instance in line 62 Zemanek focuses away from the
Minister’s “reasonable” modality, where “it’s fair to say that ethnic
communities ... express a view ...” and attempts instead to revive his own
accusatory and evaluative tone: “ - but have you had heavy pressure put on
you ...” Here he questions not the substantive issue (ethnic community
lobbying) but the side-issue of the intensity of that pressure: a tactic Ruddock
is able to deflect in kind: “What would you describe as heavy pressures?”
With this reversal of the interviewer-interviewee relation, Ruddock is able to take up the evaluative "continuer" interruption at line 67. Zemanek is left struggling to formulate examples of what his accusation meant - and subsequently Ruddock can transform the "vote boycott" suggestion (line 66) back into the sorts of "reasonable" consultative discussion he had been representing earlier (lines 59-61). Not only does he maintain his own discursive framing of the lobbying process, but he also controls the talk relations - from precisely the "going second" advantaged position which the host himself normally occupies, and with the same strategies. When Zemanek attempts a rather more supportive interruption at lines 81-83, Ruddock is able to turn even this back into a continuation of his own existing intentions.

53 Zemanek: Yeah, a lot of people say also that ah, er, a lot of the ethnic groups
54 ar, in this country now, ar, for the last 13 years have blackmailed
55 the government because ah the government have obviously been
56 fearful of minority groups. I mean have you had pressure put on you
57 by the ethnic groups to ah, to keep the, ah quota as high as what it
58 has been in the last few years as far as immigration is concerned?
59 Ruddock: Oh, I think it's reasonable to say that ethnic communities through
60 their constituent organisations um, express a view and I take that
61 into account. um, I [
62 Zemanek: but have you had heavy pressure put on you by
63 the ethnic communities?
64 Ruddock: What would you describe as heavy pressures?
65 Zemanek: Well, I mean saying to you, um, you know, if, if you don't er, I, I
66 guess sort of keep the the status quo, [
67 Ruddock: [ mmm [ 68 Zemanek: [ we're going to sort of
69 um, er er push our vote somewhere else.
70 Ruddock: Oh well I mean, we get business groups who say to us um there are
71 particular demands - I had a group of engineers today saying in
72 Western Australia um we can't get sufficient employees to er service
73 our industry They think that's a reasonable request, I take it on
74 board. I've had environmental groups coming to me saying they
75 think we should have a much smaller immigration programme, [
76 Zemanek: [ mmm 77 Ruddock: they say there are environmental consequences that have to be
78 taken [
79 Zemanek: [ yeah [ 80 Ruddock: [ into account [ (indec)
81 Zemanek: [ but if we have a shortage of engineers,
82 by all means bring in more engineers, but, you know, don't bring any
83 more doctors, because we got heaps of doctors
84 Ruddock: and I had groups of doctors saying please don't bring doctors ... [
85 Zemanek: [ he
86 hehe [ 87 Ruddock: So, I get all of those inputs [ 88 Zemanek: [ yeah [ 89 Ruddock: [ and I get an input from ethnic
90 communities, um, I think they're entitled to put their view, I take
91 it into account, er, I come to a decision, I'm not afraid to tell them
92 the decision that the government has taken is this, um, and you can
93 take it into account when you vote just the same as anybody else can
94 take it into account when they vote [
Zemanek: [absolutely Phillip, I've gotta go, thank you for your ah time tonight]
Ruddock: Pleasure Stan
Zemanek: I think you've made a very brave decision and I think it's a decision that quite honestly was overdue and I think it's wholly supported by the majority of Australians what you've done,
Ruddock: Thank you very much.
Zemanek: Pleasure: there he is Mr Phillip Ruddock He is the Immigration Minister and doing a mighty fine job.

From line 81 on Zemanek surrenders. Interruptions and “but” interventions subside beneath supportive continuers: “yeah ... hehehe ...” Finally the host can only reposition this reversal of his earlier attempt at aggressive questioning, and so regain control, by terminating the interview. His “absolutely Phillip, I've gotta go ...” has three functions. The “absolutely” implies a total agreement between himself and the Minister which did not in fact occur. The use of “Phillip” suggests an intimacy and equality which the talk relations have not constructed. And the sudden re-focus onto himself - “I've gotta go - “ restores his own primacy, as the busier and more important figure. What results from this exit and its three layers of evaluative commentary (lines 95; 98-100; 102-103) is a re-sealing of the wounds. This is an overtly self-protective closure which cements over the cracks in consensus, to re-align the host's powerful social role alongside the Minister's. It shows the degree to which Zemanek's politic is one built over direct representation of masculinity as public power. The actual incoherence of his position: the declaration for instance that a move which is “wholly supported by the majority of Australians” is somehow still “brave”, disappears beneath the editorialising judgement that the Minister is doing “a mighty fine job” - the ultimate accolade from the entrepreneur.

5.8 “Pickin' on the [right] bloke” - how aggressive contestation in relational talk ultimately asserts consensual masculinity

There are in the talk-techniques of The Stan Zemanek Show other significant points at which masculinities dispute. Minister Ruddock, above, is forced to employ evasionary tactics to re-route Zemanek's politically contentious anti-multi-culturalism towards a more defused vision of “participatory democratic consultation” - even though this still permits the original, and illiberal, executive decisions to be enacted. Direct caller exchanges on Aboriginal issues however allow a much more personalised violence to
emerge. Henry, an Aboriginal wharfie (docker) from Queensland\(^{18}\), interprets the host’s aggressive conversational style as an invitation to physical combat: a male game of “calling out”, which perhaps takes literally the show’s promotional sting, replayed moments before this exchange:

Stan Zemanek on 2UE: Knockout night time radio: with more uppercuts than a Kostya Tszyu fight \(^{19}\).

The rhythm of exchanges which ensues transforms the caller’s appeal to physical combat, into an extended illustration of the host’s capacity to play across and openly enjoy the sorts of semi-abusive banter which constitute masculine power-claims within everyday Australian speech. The exchange builds into a stylised dance of aggression, in which bluff and counter bluff are repeatedly called.

\textit{The Stan Zemanek Show April 1 1996: caller “Henry”}

\begin{verbatim}
14 Henry: So what ‘a’ ya got against us wharfies?
15 Zemanek: Against you wharfies?
16 Henry: Yeah (..) (and a) blackfella [
17 Zemanek: [ I don’t have anything against
18 blackfellas as well [
19 Henry: You DO ya has a go all the time
20 Zemanek: Well no I don’t I don’t have a go all a’ the time, I call a spade a
21 spade -
22 Henry: What, you calling me a spade now?
42 Henry: You wanna call us out.
43 Zemanek: Call - call you out for what?
44 Henry: I’ll fight every time.
45 Zemanek: Who’re you?
46 Henry: (...) I could beat you.
47 Zemanek: You probably could.
48 Henry: (...) Well ‘ow come you always back down?
49 Zemanek: Back down for what?
50 Henry: From a fight. When somebody calls you out.
\end{verbatim}

The quick-wittedness of this response catches the host by surprise, and produces a less combative, more conciliatory exchange, in which it is the caller, rather than the host, who is able to continue to create the positionings:

\begin{verbatim}
14 Henry: So what ‘a’ ya got against us wharfies?
15 Zemanek: Against you wharfies?
16 Henry: Yeah (..) (and a) blackfella [
17 Zemanek: [ I don’t have anything against
18 blackfellas as well [
19 Henry: [You DO ya has a go all the time
20 Zemanek: Well no I don’t I don’t have a go all a’ the time, I call a spade a
21 spade -
22 Henry: What, you calling me a spade now?
42 Henry: You wanna call us out.
43 Zemanek: Call - call you out for what?
44 Henry: I’ll fight every time.
45 Zemanek: Who’re you?
46 Henry: (...) I could beat you.
47 Zemanek: You probably could.
48 Henry: (...) Well ‘ow come you always back down?
49 Zemanek: Back down for what?
50 Henry: From a fight. When somebody calls you out.
\end{verbatim}

\(^{18}\) Jenny Tabakoff reports in an article on Stan Zemanek in the \textit{Sydney Morning Herald Guide} (August 18-24, 1997, p. 4) that “... there is a Fort Street Boys’ High student who phones regularly in the guise of an Aboriginal fisherman, just for the thrill of being told to ‘piss off’”. If “Henry” is one of his creations, then he also managed to fool an entire class of Aboriginal students of Cultural Studies to whom I played the tapes of this extract, and who considered the caller to be authentically Aboriginal. See Mickler, 1992, 1997, for discussion of racism in Australian talkback.

\(^{19}\) Kostya Tszyu is a current claimant for a world boxing title. An ex-Soviet citizen, now Australian based, he is immensely popular on the working-class suburban pub circuits which sponsor and support boxing in Australia.
Increasingly the host’s turns are enacted as questions in the role of “continuers”: cues to expand the caller’s explanations, which, in line with his portrayal of the exchange as one of a formal call to combat, characterise the talk as a form of ritualised fight:

53 Zemanek: OK, well, where do you live - where are you tonight?
54 Henry: In Brisbane!
55 Zemanek: In Brisbane! Alright, well you wanna meet me on the, aah, the, the, the steps of the Town Hall in Brisbane tonight?
57 Henry: You’re not up ‘ere ...
58 Zemanek: That’s ve-ry clev-er of you: boy, what a bright spark YOU are!
59 Henry: When you come up in a coupla weeks eh?
60 Zemanek: Oh, look, yeah - when I come up in a coupla weeks how about I meet you on the steps of the Town Hall?
62 Henry: OK
63 Zemanek: Will you be there?
64 Henry: I’ll be there.

Once inside the caller’s definition of the exchange as the sort of semi-good-natured stoush used to establish and confirm Aussie blokedom, none of the host’s normal strategies of accusation make headway. One after another he deploys his repertoire of accusatory insults, attacking in turn the caller’s physique:

88 Henry: You - you pickin’ on the wrong bloke ‘ere!
89 Zemanek: *(imitates his voice)* aw really? Awhahahahaha! *(own voice)*
90 Henry: Gee whiz! Well listen meet you on the steps of the Town Hall!
91 Henry: (...) Yeah, well, I just gonna look for the big fella eh!
92 Zemanek: The big fella!
93 Henry: Yeah ...
94 Zemanek: Who’s the big fella?
95 Henry: You.
96 Zemanek: Oh really?
97 Henry: *(.....)* Yeah ...
98 Zemanek: Well who am I gonna look for?
99 Henry: *(..)* Well you look for the mean one.

then his “hick-town,” “Joh-country”20 Queensland origins:

100 Zemanek: Someone with a, with a peanut on their head.
101 Henry: *(.)* Hey!
102 Zemanek: *(imitates his voice)* Hey!
103 Henry: Don’t call me Joh!
104 Zemanek: Ha HA HA HA hahahahahaha!
105 Henry: You’re-pick-in’ on the wrong bloke there mate! *
106 Zemanek: *(imitates his rhythm)* [...] pick-in’-on-

20 The reference which is played between the two is to ex Queensland Government leader Sir Johannes Bjelke-Petersen (“Joh”), mercilessly satirised throughout his political career for his origins in peanut farming and his distinctive incapacity to construct complete sentences.
the-wrong-bloke, yes, OK ...

then his presumed welfare dependency:

108 Henry: Have you ever done a day's work? [
109 Zemanek: [I've done plenty a day's work
110 like today I worked for sixteen hours today
111 Henry: I'm not I'm not talkin' about sittin' in the air-conditioned office I
112 mean gettin' out there.
113 Zemanek: Yes I'm out there every day of the week
114 Henry: No you're not out [
115 Zemanek: [Working my guts out every day of the week
116 Henry: Aaaaw ...
117 Zemanek: Tryin' to pay for bludgers like you.
118 Henry: Hey! Why you call [ (ing me) a bludger!
119 Zemanek: [- you ever work - [
120 Henry: [(indecipherable) [worked all my life
121 Zemanek: Have you ever worked in your life?
122 Henry: Every day.

then his presumed work-shy status as a wharfie:

157 Henry: An' I've worked ... I've never had a day on the dole in my life.
158 Zemanek: You don't have to if you're a wharfie: you just sit on your big fat
159 backside and do nothing!

and finally his failure to comply with the executive-suited image of the new
entrepreneurial male:

165 Zemanek: [- tell me
166 something, do you walk around in a big blue T-shirt and those tight
167 boxer shorts and those big black boots? [
168 Henry: [(indecipherable) ]
169 Zemanek: [- and
170 those woollen socks? What? [
171 Henry: [...] good clothes ...
172 Zemanek: You wear good clothes do you?
173 Henry: Yeah.
174 Zemanek: Oh that's good.

With every strategy in turn effectively countered, the host can ultimately only
end the encounter, with the recognition that it was just that: an exchange of
empty threats, which he was in the final analysis unable to counter-fill with
his own meaning.

193 Henry: - I'll wear the gloves ...
194 Zemanek: [ yeah, OK, you, you'd need to wear the g...
195 Henry: ... 'wise I'd hurt ya [
196 Zemanek: [...] no you'd need to wear gloves you've been
197 handling yourself much too much.

(music)
In fact Henry was handling himself too well. The extract illustrates the degree to which both caller and host conceive their exchange as combat: explicitly, as "callin' out", ultimately to be resolved by a meeting at boxing's Queensland venue, Festival Hall, "with the gloves".

The sustained passages of accusation and counter accusation are built over unusually mutual levels of overlap and interruption (see Coates 1986; Hutchby 1996). The exchange demonstrates at one level the findings of Zimmerman and West (1975) on turn taking "irregularities" in male speech behaviour, seen as competitive in comparison with the more carefully regular "co-operative" behaviours of women. Leet-Pellegrini (1980) similarly discusses the relationship between gender and "expertise" in commanding dominance in conversation. Her data demonstrate that the "expert" male will assert unequally the right to talk and to control topic, while the expert woman favours a co-operative and supportive conversational exchange. And yet here, much to the host's initial and possibly ultimate surprise, the two assert equally their right to speak and to control topic. The exchange thus transforms its combative base into a curiously co-operative performance - without ever becoming remotely feminine, in terms of classic gendered-conversation analysis.

While it might seem then that there are problems with both sets of research findings for analysis and understanding of the exchange above, this is not however in the sense of its invalidating or being exempt from the researcher's conclusions. While it may call into question the researchers' failure to consider the classed and perhaps even raced, as well as gendered, bases of the exchanges they recorded, rather than overturning their conclusions over gendered variation in conversational patterning, it instead demonstrates what occurs when such gendering attains its purest technical expression. The point of this sort of aggressive conversation, as Hutchby points out, is not to contend "over" something, but simply to contend. Zemanek's conversational style is modelled on the "private" patterns of working class family speech, in which a prime motivation is the forcing of entry to the conversation, and the subsequent preservation thereafter of any space successfully opened. On the rare occasion that all parties successfully claim participation on more or less equal terms, nothing much subsequently ensues - as the Henry conversation clearly demonstrates.
What does emerge from the “Henry” exchange is an illustration of conversation between two players who entirely understand that the content of their conversation is irrelevant: what matters is the form. Together they elaborate a choreography of conversational advantage, where the capacity both to flummox and to continue can each become a small victorious dominance. Zemanek’s enjoyment of some of the ripostes; his outright laughter; his partially ridiculing, partially celebratory and participative, mimicry of the caller’s tone and rhythm, construct a stylistics of reciprocal pace, in which he appears to prolong the exchange for the sheer enjoyment of the (pseudo) conflict. Despite the apparent crassness of the menaces, this is Australian working-class masculine posturing at its most ritualistic.

It is also, if unexpectedly, a vehicle for the politics of consensus: a second principal way in which Zemanek asserts power within his radio style. In the midst of this most overtly violent and confrontational of texts, there is for instance complete mutual understanding over the terms of engagement, which cross politics, class and race - and even the absurdities of the virtual arena in which this “physical show-down” is putatively occurring. While contesting masculinities: manual against mental labour; rural against urban experience; physical against verbal prowess; openly clash, the “shaping up” is ultimately consensual, as Easthope shows in his work on banter in the UK TV series Minder, (1986) and Labov (1972) in his work on “sounding” or ritualised insult-games in urban US black cultures. The game re-asserts the powerful masculinity which both share, albeit in different spheres or to divergent degrees. Thus it is in this exchange that the shift from the politics of class (how much do you earn? do you wear a T-shirt and boxer shorts? have you ever done a REAL day’s work …) to those of ethnicity (you callin’ me a spade? what a’ya got against a blackfella?) shows both as ultimately ineffectual in terms of the contestational talk-relation - for both combatants occupy positions of strength within their relative realms. The final insult - that which occasions the first non-mock, felt response, as Henry uses the Australian working-class patriarch’s call to order: a short and sharply delivered “Hey!” - is to resort to accusations over masculinity itself, within the frame of hetero-normative social calls for category maintenance which both share.

65 Zemanek: How will I know what you look like?
66 Henry: Well you can [  
67 Zemanek: You’ll be the one with the dress on will you?  
68 Henry: I beg your pardon?  
69 Zemanek: Will you be the one with the dress on?
Here, in a move entirely congruent with Zemanek's other positionings of and around the idea of the feminine, to win is to de-gender the opponent. The equation between masculinity and power cannot be more explicit. What remains is to assess its discursive formulations in encounters with that very "feminine" against which it has achieved its own constitution. The next chapter deals with the talkback host’s response to those calls, largely from female listeners, which position themselves as consenting to their own overt exclusion from public presence coded as masculine. From the aggressively combative talk of contestation, we move to those consensual calls which are met by patronisation.
Chapter Six

"You can call me anytime, darlin’" -
the patronisation of women talkback callers

6.0 Loving radio: talk relations with regular female callers

The established Zemanek on-air persona is one of aggressive and entrepreneurial masculinity, built at least partially over constraints on a female presence in the "public sphere" (Landes, 1988; Fraser, 1989, 1992, 1993). The show's popularity with women callers thus poses questions about the roles they play in the maintenance of Zemanek's celebrity. The heterogeneous and inter-linking genres of Stan Zemanek's particular brand of commercial talkback radio so severely limit the range and types of women's participation, that it is necessary to examine why women continue to listen and to call.

In this chapter I examine ways of understanding the contributions of women listener/callers who have constructed an active form of fan culture around this show and its host. In terms of the current literature on fan behaviours, should the activity of callers taking up talk consensual relations with a powerful talkback host still be read as appropriative, resistant and subversive? Are such "active" reception strategies as those hypothesised within contemporary fan-culture study supportable within Zemanek's discursive elaboration of his own particular brand of hyper-masculinised "enterprise culture", which seeks to reserve public space, dynamic action and authoritative commentary to itself? And finally, given the amount of air-time ceded to these ultra-consensual calls from domestically-based women listeners, what do they add to the "enterprise" formula?

In the first instance, Zemanek's treatment of women callers - and their willing compliance with his positioning - reflects and maintains those complex

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gendered separations involved in traditions of segregated public and private spheres (Elshlait 1981; Lopata 1993), around which commercial radio at least is still structured (Rouse, 1978; Karpf 1987), and over which this host works in fairly predictable ways. His maintenance of markedly different conversational styles with male and female callers is clear for instance from the talk relations he constructs during the many rather uneventful “consensual” calls he receives from women listeners; a call-genre distinct from the aggressive, contestational debate embarked upon with male callers. As he remarks semi-humorously to caller Tanya (line 7, Extract One, below) he doesn’t believe that these forms of “decent conversation” with women callers are as much “fun”. They lack the capacity to display the sorts of powerful control which the constant maintenance of an aggressive, masculine talk-persona needs. So why are they so often accepted through the programme’s call-screening process?

Consensual calls - those in which host and caller agree on both the interchange form and the topic-content of the call - are at one level simply another way for the host to demonstrate another technique in his drive to control (Tannen, 1990, 1993; Thorne & Henley, 1975). They enable him both to exert professional control over the full range of the genres of talkback, and to work socio-politically, as every shade of caller opinion is shown to coincide with and support his own views. (See Fairclough’s distinction between “discourse practices” and “sociocultural practices”; 1995a, p. 16). The women callers however, committed less to the host’s public-sphere programme of promotionalism than to the maintenance of their own private/intimate identity, enact in the talk relations those patterns of caring and sharing constituted within normative heterosexual domesticity (Leitner, 1983; Fishman, 1983). On their side, the consensual talk accessed through The Stan Zemanek Show is no mere media game,² but the real world referent of an “ideal” relationship: one in which the celebrity of the respondent, the power of his opinionated judgement, and the familiarity of its colloquially-expressed

² See for instance Thompson, (1995), who suggests that fan-obssiveness with media idols is a form of what he calls “mediated quasi-desequestration”: a playing out of a longing for social connectedness where none is available, and a direct consequence of modern(ist) media’s primary role of re-connecting those isolated (“sequestered”) by the rise of twentieth century “dormitory” suburbism and traditions of a gendered division of labour. While this study endorses his analysis of the socio-economic production of the circumstances underlying such “fan” behaviours, it argues for a much higher degree of real-world consequence - for both the identity-work of the fan, and the direct and indirect economic benefit of the idol.
forcefulness, add up to an endorsement of the ongoing centrality of their
domestic role, in a world which may seem otherwise to have moved on.

Added to this subtle and unsubtle gendering of talk relations on The Stan
Zemanek Show is a recurrent, and often inappropriately deployed,
sexualisation of the discourse. The sexualisation of women (de Lauretis 1987)
as it is represented in radio - the family medium, as Lesley Johnson
demonstrated in her 1988 study - has long been said to be particularly
limited, in comparison with such visual media as film, television, press, or
magazine and hoarding advertising (Lawrence, 1991). For the most part,
sexual expressiveness within radio has been considered to have been coded
within music play (see for instance McClary 1994) - and even there it remains
an under-examined social phenomenon, despite evidence of extensive
amounts of cultural activity around listening behaviours.

The existence of sexualised behaviours around radio broadcasting has
occasionally emerged in periodic accounts of listener fantasy-projections over
the vocal personae of women presenters (Potts 1989; Baehr & Ryan 1984; Zion
1995). Less analysed still have been the ways in which sexualisation has been
an element in the “listener personifications” used by many broadcasters,
often in overtly mocking ways, to focus their “relationship” with an invisible
and mostly unresponding audience (see for instance Phillip Adams’ “Gladys”
on the ABC’s Late Night Live.) Each in its way speaks to the continued
recognition and cultural maintenance within radio practice of ongoing
discursive as well as institutional restrictions on women’s powerful public
On-air trainees are often encouraged, even today, to “imagine” their audience
as one individual listener, and to consider that she is most probably female.
Perhaps a result of the continuing cultural association of interior space with
women, the attitude seems to have outlived sweeping social transformations
in the public status of women, to be still in receipt of advocacy within the
most gender-inclusive areas of Australian broadcasting: the ABC, and
University-based community stations. It may however also be possible to

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3 See for instance Paul Willis, 1990a, on adolescent audio-transcription of off-air music as a
major, but unrecognised, element of contemporary youth culture.
4 Even Community Station SUV, subject to University non-sexist language policies, says in its
Training Programme (1991): “The programme-maker is right there in the home, with the
distance between announcer and listener effectively less than a couple of metres. Never,
ever refer to your audience as ‘listeners’ or ‘all you people out there’ - to the person in the
kitchen doing the dishes, you are the only person in the room.”
locate explanations for the practice within the gender politics of speech exchange, where the role of listening, as opposed to speaking, is more likely to be viewed as a female role (see for instance Fiumara, 1990, and Barthes, 1986, on the cultural power relations of a politics of speaking and listening).

Whatever the motivations for the positioning, it has interacted with broader social and cultural shifts to admit a directly sexually-charged "flirtation" onto talkback radio. Social constraints on overt (hetero)sexualisation of public behaviour have weakened in most Western public spheres - a process largely contemporary with the rise of talkback. The personalisation of media genres (Philo 1990) and the "conversationalisation" of public and professional discourses (Fairclough 1995b) have for instance produced a broad set of gendered "banter" behaviours on call-in and double-hander programming. As a result of these developments, pressure has increased on broadcasters attempting to produce the "bright", "lively" and "friendly" tones sought in commercial radio, to slip into open flirtation, teasing banter, and increasingly, explicit innuendo. So is born the media "flirt piece," which both Zemanek and his female callers appear to regard as an inherent part of his repertoire. Added then to the talk-relations of "consensus" - and perhaps acting to compensate its comparative inefficacy in offering space for the display of a relations of power - is the sexualised as well as gendered relation of host to female caller.

The three following exchanges demonstrate at least part of this range of control techniques the host has at his disposal even within consensual calls, and how keenly, and carefully, he deploys these in every detail. At the same time, these exchanges also begin to open up the uses women callers themselves make of their on-air opportunities: to detail the ways women - or at least those enticed to call in and selected through the screening process - view the possibilities of access to powerful broadcast media.

6.1 Consensual talk-relations crossed by gender: the possibilities for different directedness in a "two-way" conversational flow

In Extract One caller Tanya appears as particularly consensual. She divides her call into expressions of disappointment at the abusive nature of other exchanges - with no comment on the host's contributions to this - and

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5 See Cook, 1999, for an account of this on youth stations Triple J and Triple M.
inquiries about the broader promotional work which the host undertakes: his cabaret performances. Her call thus operates directly as advertising for the programme. It helps demonstrate both the host’s self-assurance at what he considers his capacity to control all contestation (line 8), and the urgency of listener demand for his “live” stage presence in promotional cabaret. Each in its way enhances the host’s power, at the same time allowing him to construct around himself an air of affability, tolerance and good-humour, markedly at odds with the aggressive persona used with male callers. His generic range, and his sphere of social influence, are both thereby extended.

The Stan Zemanek Show, April 1 1996: caller “Tanya”

1 Zemanek: 13 13 32 is-the-number Tanya hello.
2 Tanya: Hi!
3 Zemanek: Yes Tanya.
4 Tanya: Hi I just wanna, ring up and say that your I think your show is
good? And I think people who ring you up and abuse you should
stay off the air and let other people have, ah, decent conversation
with you.
5 Zemanek: But darling I wouldn’t have any fun haha
6 Tanya: Oh well I still think you sound lovely an’ I think that your show’s
good an’ [  
7 Zemanek: [ ah ha ha ha ha ...
8 Tanya: [ I think people should just, you know
9 people who are decent should ring up and talk to you.
10 Zemanek: Well there’s plenty of people darling who do ah ring up and ah
11 there’re plenty of decent people as well
12 Tanya: Yeah lot of people who abuse you and I don’t like that
13 Zemanek: = Oh, that’s OK darling, it’s a bit of fun ...
14 Tanya: Ah, I just wanted to ask you, my husband wanted to know when your
15 next concert’s on.
16 Zemanek: Uuuum, I don’t think we’re starting, we’re not starting the concerts
17 ti-i-ill, ah, ah, is it May? I think we’re starting up at ah, um,
18 Blacktown Workers’ Club again.
19 Tanya: Good. When abouts in May?
20 Zemanek: May the 25th.
21 Tanya: May the 25th.
22 Zemanek: Ah, we’re at the Holiday Inn at Coogee, where do you live?
23 Tanya: Ah, Hazelgrove.
24 Zemanek: Where’s that?
25 Tanya: It’s near Blacktown.
26 Zemanek: Oh right. Well there you go: Blacktown May 25th: Blacktown
27 Workers’ Club.
28 Tanya: ‘n’ I can get the tickets from Blacktown Workers?
29 Zemanek: Yes, you just go to Blacktown Workers, an’ you can get the tickets
30 there we’ve got a great show, ah, I can’t even tell you who’s on but
31 I’m sure there’s there’s terrific artists on
32 Tanya: Well as long as you’re going I’ll be there.
33 Zemanek: Oh I love you forever darling
34 Tanya: OK take care
35 Zemanek: Thank you
36 Tanya: Bye bye
37 Zemanek: Bye bye

(music sting)
The seeming uneventfulness of this conversation conceals its weighty promotional load. There is value to both the caller's "private sphere" economy and the host's public promotional activities. Not only has Tanya been enabled to purchase tickets to the host's next concert performance for herself and the husband she dutifully uses to validate her appearance within a public sphere activity (line 18) but countless other listeners have early, pre-promotional dates and venues provided. The call works directly on the programme's central ethic of consumer demand. In the first instance, it makes demand "appear", as if spontaneously.

This spontaneity may of course be questionable. Given Zemanek's capacity for shameless arrangement of sponsorship "calls", it is difficult to judge authenticity here. However, genuine inquiry or otherwise, the call works as if sincere; the host's slightly stumbling pauses and drawn-out vowels in lines 20-22 signalling a palpable shuffle through memory, or a staff scramble for dates and details. The inquiry is thus produced as genuine, and so works as authentic: all that matters in promotional talk. Either way, from Zemanek's perspective it is an example of Wernick's (1991) artificial semiosis in play: a moment directed towards the constitution or "making visible" of demand. It is a small space opened up from directly within the private, domestic sphere of kindly, concerned, supportive Tanya: "... people who ring up and abuse you should stay off the air ..." into the ticket-selling activities of an aggressive promotionalism. The ultimate success of Tanya's call is its establishment of product demand. Here is a listener so eager for the product, that she calls in for early details on supply. Buy now, or miss out. Note the repetition of the date (three times) and the venue (six times).

The role-play of supportive "caring" similarly crosses from caller to host, when Sarah in Extract Two, an older, retired, family shop keeper, phones to contribute to discussion on migration, expressing the satisfactions of her own successful family establishment in this country - and so directly endorses the Zemanek ethic of hard work and self-sufficiency. Not only will the host "love you forever darling" for this support, as he does when Tanya so obligingly promotes his cabaret show (1: 36), but for Sarah the phone lines will now be open "any time" (2: 66.) With her input, the host is able to create not only support for his own social and political values, but the sense of a ground swell of unassailable opinion behind him - the sort held by a national living treasure with "a good attitude", whose ideas no-one dare dispute. Zemanek
has found in Sarah the ideal “spontaneous” mouthpiece for his views: “... you’re a terrific asset for this country: somebody that’s paid their dues and worked very hard, and you’re the sort of people we should look after”. In a direct example of Bourdieu’s theorisation of the role of language as symbolic capital within a market economy, Sarah is transformed into a profitable commodity.

The Stan Zemanek Show, April 1 1996: caller “Sarah”

1. Zemanek: ... and ah, Sarah, hello!
2. Sarah: Oh, thank you! I’m really, ah, a first time caller, but I hope you’re, gentle with me.
3. Zemanek: Darling, I’m always gentle with ladies.
4. Sarah: Well thank you, ah, I came here in 1948, I was 34, [ whe - [
5. Zemanek: [ two
6. Sarah: little toddlers
7. Zemanek: Where did you come from?
8. Sarah: Yorkshire?
9. Zemanek: Oh very good!
10. Sarah: Yes. And ah now I’ve got ah five ah married grandchildren eight
11. great grandchildren and this ah country has been absolutely ah the
12. best thing that ever happened to me.
13. Zemanek: Well I think that’s fantastic you think like that, you obviously enjoyed yourself here.
14. Sarah: Oh I did! Not without work, I, I, I eventually came into a, little
15. business, it was a gold mine but I, it sure took some diggin’.
16. Zemanek: Yeah ... well it’s, you know, all businesses ah take a while to get
17. going all businesses are hard work [
18. Sarah: [yeah that’s right, yes, and it came into me, and then into my, ah, children then into my grand
19. children and, ah ah [
20. Zemanek: [ what sort of business was it?
21. Sarah: [ OOOOOh! It was a very hard mixed business! in Surfers Paradise, we [
22. Zemanek: [ alright: good! [Yeah well that’s good, see: any business will be
23. successful if you’re prepared to work long and hard at it [
24. Sarah: [ that’s right! I worked from, ah ah from seven o’clock in the morning, we
25. opened er the doors at seven o’clock and closed it at eight o’clock at
26. night [
27. Zemanek: [ yeah [
28. Sarah: [ seven days a week [
29. Zemanek: [ yep [
30. Sarah: [ ah, without a holiday for
31. three years. But anyway, it’s not that I ... people shouldn’t expect
32. the things they expect.
33. Zemanek: See but that’s that’s the problem though darling: these days
34. people do expect too much, but back in your day you worked hard for
35. it.
36. Sarah: Oh I did, and I intended to because I knew what a wonderful country
37. this was! And er, really, Stan, you know, er er people should NOT expect to just lay back and expect other people to keep them if you
38. know what I mean.
39. Zemanek: Yep that’s dead right
40. Sarah: Yes and er I’ve had a very, very happy life, a very happy life,
41. only because that I was fortunate in keeping my health and in and
42. deciding to work for whatever I got.
But I think you've also got a good attitude darling; I think that's what keeps you going as well.

Yeah. Now I'm 82 and I'm visually 'andicapped but you know 4BC keeps me ah going!

Well [...] [well I'm pleased about that! [... it keeps me going! Ah, ah you keep me going; ah ah

Where do you live?

I live still at (indec) Beach

What on the Gold Coast?

Yes

Oooh isn't that fantastic!

Yes! I've got my own little unit? I'm very very er er independent?

Terrific!

But my family looks after me well, and visit me well, and er even my great grand children speak to me at 7 and 8 years of age on the phone!

Well isn't that terrific!

Yes!

Well that is just lovely, well darling look you give me a call any time you like, and I'd love to hear from you because you're a terrific asset for this country; somebody that's paid their dues and worked very hard, and you're the sort of people we should look after.

Yes thank you Stan

It's a pleasure my sweet you give me a call any time OK?

Thank you so much

Pleasure! darling you take care

For taking my call and ah you know my husband was electrician and ah he served on the well he did the control rooms on the Anzac and went out on all its trials and ah but apart from that I worked from the day my husband and I worked from the day the week that we arrived 'ere.

Well that is [... never we never expected people to 'and out things!

Yeah that doesn't I mean that's the way it should be it's the way hopefully it will be in the future I wish you well and I thank you very much for your call

Thank you so much Stan.

Pleasure darling

Thank you

Bye-bye.

(music)

Here the conversation shifts its interrelational elements into what Goldberg (1990) describes as "affiliative" interruptions. Between lines 23 and 53 host and caller build not only a consensual account of one woman's successful "enterprise" life, but a model of "hard work" and "happiness" for all to emulate. It is because of this that Sarah succeeds at the level of narrative progression, and is granted the right to proceed to her completion point (Schegloff, 1974). Those interruptions which do occur (lines 32-36 for example) signal not "power" but "rapport" (Goldberg 1990, p. 885). These are benign markers of agreement and support. "Yeah", and its even more evaluatively assenting "yep", operate as "continuers" as well as
endorsements of the points at issue. So consensual is this exchange, that Sarah is even able to theme her turns as uptake of the host’s uncompleted lines (lines 19-38).

The turns flow back and forth, the rhythm of the caller’s account of hours and days punctuated only by the host’s assent: a chorus of approval for “business” and “success”. Just as the caller’s theme: the account of her working conditions, peaks in line 37, having crossed from hours, to days, to years, so the host is constructing a similar cumulative progression, focused on the more generalised issue of hard work as attitudinal or behavioural quality, or as socio-moral value. The caller introduces this topic at line 17, when she switches from an account of her family: “ah five married grandchildren eight great grandchildren …”, to her family business: “I eventually came into a, little business, it was a gold mine but I, it sure took some diggin’.” The host seizes the opportunity, shifting the contribution onto his favourite equation of “business, hard work, happiness”: “… all businesses ah take a while to get going all businesses are hard work …” From here on his responses act both to refocus the caller whenever she strays back to details of the “private sphere” - her family - and to construct a continuing iteration of his formula for success:

... any business will be successful if you’re prepared to work long and hard at it

... these days people do expect too much, but back in your day you worked hard for it

... you’ve also got a good attitude darling: I think that’s what keeps you going as well

... you’re a terrific asset for this country: somebody that’s paid their dues and worked very hard

... that’s the way it should be it’s the way hopefully it will be in the future

Here the host himself “works hard”, repositioning the caller’s experiences inside his own field of “enterprise” discourse. Fairclough (1995a) has indicated in his own analysis of enterprise discourse under construction in a series of UK political speeches, that the developmental processing of a concept such as this proceeds piecemeal, with short-term strategies taking into account “... the varying communicative objectives, situations and audiences of the speeches ” (p. 115). By considering the evolution over time of a number of strategic positionings of the “enterprise” concept within successive speeches, Fairclough is able to construct a cumulative set or
hierarchy of interlinked meanings for the term. These are then drawn on as interchangeable, and can be used in broader and broader contexts, until they can engage concrete examples of work practices at one end, and socio-moral dimensions of human behaviour at the other.

In this talkback exchange, Zemanek constructs a similar hierarchy, enabling him to build alongside his caller’s account of her life an ideological position which conflates, as Fairclough describes it, “enterprise” as “activity”, as a social “quality” and finally as “a business”. That is, Zemanek is able to slide from an actual example of “a business” - the real enterprise of Sarah’s “mixed business” or family convenience store, to the “activity” required to run the business: “hard work”, for “seven days a week”. From there he can generalise the social “qualities” required of “enterprise” participants: energy, commitment, endurance, and self-reliance: “... we never expected people to ‘and out things!’ The conversation thus is able to extend from grounded experience at one end, to ideological engagement at the other. That the caller recognises her own construction within the host’s is consequently no accident. Her comment (lines 53-54) that “... 4BC ... keeps me going” seals the connection between the two which has already been signalled in their “affiliative” conversational exchanges. Its promotion of the host’s programme and station brings the host’s “business” back into the equation, and so implies that his own enterprising “activity” and “qualities” are as sound as her own. But the opportunity to participate in this shared construction arises through a reciprocity and mutual support constituted not inside the discourse of enterprise, but through the private-sphere talk relations of “courtliness”: a dialogue of caring-and-sharing signalled in the opening lines, where the caller cues the host to “treat her as a lady”:

... I’m really, ah, a first time caller, but I hope you’re, gentle with me.

... Darling, I’m always gentle with ladies.

... Well thank you, ah, I came here in 1948, I was 34 ...

Only after this overt recognition of a “correct” social orientation to masculinity does Sarah embark upon her enterprise narrative. Her right to record participation in and endorsement of a public sphere enterprise activity - potentially a de-gendering experience, in terms of the host’s equation of

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"Sarah" is a Queensland listener, taking Zemanek’s program from 2UE in Sydney on relay - through those “great big satellites ...”
public identity with high masculinity - is preserved by her willing acquiescence in the cultural fiction of a fragile femininity, requiring protective male "gentleness." That Sarah's was a "mixed business" - in Queensland terms, a combined dairy and grocery shop, more often found in a suburban residential area than in a city retail strip - underpins this capacity to be both "lady" and businesswoman. In her life, as well as in her discourse, she has achieved presence in both spaces.

6.2 Intersections in "real-virtual" space: how radio talk can transform personal memories into promotional activities

If Sarah has seen connection between her own life story and the narratives of self-help commercial prosperity Zemanek offers, Margaret calls to record a direct link from an advertising reference to part of her own experience. She seeks to engage her personal family history with a site which the host is associating with a sponsor's business. Each caller is connecting her family-based, private experiences, through the host's specially personalised marketing ethic, to the broader world of commercial enterprise.

_The Stan Zemanek Show, April 1 1996: caller "Margaret"

1 Zemanek: Margaret: hellooo ...
2 Margaret: Oh hello Stan?
3 Zemanek: Yes Margaret?
4 Margaret: Oh, yes, I been most interested in hearing you talk about the ... the
5 Zemanek: er, Lugano Restaurant?
6 Zemanek: The Lugano Seafood Restaurant right down there at Forrest Road on
7 the Georges River [ 
8 Margaret: [ yes ... [ 
9 Zemanek: [ it is sensational! [ 
10 Margaret: [uh ha ha, oh, my
11 husband and I used to travel across the Georges River going to work
12 on the old punt!
13 Zemanek: That's right: go across to ah mmm [ 
14 Margaret: [ the end of, Forrest Road [ 
15 Zemanek: [yeah,
16 from Forrest Road across to - what was the other side of it called
17 again?
18 Margaret: Oh well it's Illawong now ...
19 Zemanek: Illawong! That's right yes ...
20 Margaret: (uhh) yes. UUm, (:) oh well it was only a four (:) car punt, [ 
21 Zemanek: [yes
22 Margaret: An' then they got a six car one, you know, but there used to be a line
23 up back to the back of the hill?
24 Zemanek: Did they used to charge you to go on the punt?
25 Margaret: Noo ... oh no, it was a Council punt ...
26 Zemanek: Oh right.
27 Margaret: We were free he he he ... something for nothing ... hahaha [ 
28 Zemanek: [yes
well yes one of the few times in life when we get something for
nothing but darling Lugano Seafood Restaurant down there at the
end of Forrest Road - it is sensational I can tell you - have you been
down there?

Margaret: Noo, Stan, no...
Zemanek: Well would you like to go down there?
Margaret: (:) Oooh yes, that'd be great! (huh)
Zemanek: Well look I tell you what I'll do: how about I send you and a friend
down there for lunch or dinner?
Margaret: Oh that'd be great, I'll get my, daughter and her husband to take
me!

Zemanek: Alright, well listen darling: you hang on there, and I'll send you
down to the Lugano Seafood Restaurant at the end of Forrest Road
for a dinner or lunch for two.
Margaret: (uhh) Alright thank you Stan
Zemanek: It's - fact I'll make it for three, you say your ah, you'll get your
husband - daughter's - and her husband
Margaret: Yes
Zemanek: Alright I'll make it for three then.
Margaret: Oh thank you very much
Zemanek: Absolutely a pleasure: hang on there don't hang up and I'll put you
back to the lovely Natashaaa.

(music sting)

Not only has Margaret, like Sarah, found a way to connect her own, "private
realm" life to a wider, commercially dynamic world which the host
represents; she has been permitted, even assisted, to do so - given feed lines
to draw out even her most inconsequential comments:

Zemanek: That's right: go across to ah mmm[
Margaret: [the end of, Forrest Road][
Zemanek: [ yeah,
from Forrest Road across to - what was the other side of it called
again?
Margaret: Oh well it's Illawong now ...
Zemanek: Illawong! That's right yes ...

Why does the host make these efforts? Why does he choose to represent his
own obvious lack of close knowledge of the area in question, as if it were a
familiarity close to that of the caller? And why is an implied "sharing" of
experience in this way worthwhile: the host twisting the conversational
exchange to offer an opportunity for the caller's contributions to emerge; the
caller considering her memories of importance in the first place ... It is not
insignificant that these "affiliative" calls centre around an identification
between caller and host which relates to the social use made of a particular,
specified and named, location. In particular, we should note that this is, or
has become, a commercial site - "a business", in Fairclough's tri-partite
analysis of the term "enterprise" - and one which the host is keen to promote.
It is in pursuit of this concrete locatedness of “a business” that Zemanek both follows and steers the logic of the caller’s reminiscence.

Lefebvre (1991a) suggests that the study of space has much to offer explanations of “... the mode of existence of social relationships” (p. 129). Working directly on the “production of space” as demarked by the historical evolution of varying means and relations of material production, Lefebvre sees social uses of space as reciprocally bound to a politics of production:

There is one question which has remained open in the past because it has never been asked: what exactly is the mode of existence of social relationships? Are they substantial? natural? or formally abstract? The study of space offers an answer according to which the social relations of production have a social existence to the extent that they have a spatial existence; they project themselves into a space, becoming inscribed there, and in the process producing that space itself. Failing this, these relations would remain in the realm of ‘pure’ abstraction - that is to say, in the realm of representations and hence of ideology: the realm of verbalism, verbiage and empty words (1991a, p. 129).

Radio hosts - even those promoting the actual commercial locations of businesses - work in the medium of “verbalism, verbiage and ... words.” Theirs is the realm of Bourdieu’s “symbolic” capital: the working out of social and economic relations within the “euphemised” regulatory processing of talk. But this is not a trivial play across an “empty” terrain. These words are connected, as we have seen in the case of caller Margaret, into real experiences, in real locations, across the real time of lived existence. Recall the host’s questioning of Sarah, in relation to where her business was - a detail of little relevance to his “enterprise” project, except insofar as it “grounds” the account for listeners. Radio’s notorious disembodiment: its incapacity to render materiality, is here compensated through the substitution of time for space. Unable to “show” the location of the Lugano Restaurant, the host accepts with enthusiasm the opportunity Margaret offers with her memories of past activities on its site: concrete and embodied activities other listeners may share, and which will serve to “pin” the location for them - just as Margaret’s free lunch will renew an active presence at the site for her. At the same time, the space-time transformation is moved from a now disembodied positioning inside memories of the (private) past, to a physical act in the (public) future (Crary, 1989). With a single move Zemanek has transformed personal memory into prime promotional entrepreneurship.

For these women callers, their own known spaces are already strongly inscribed: redolent of the socially-produced roles which have rendered them
significant within the structures of a patriarchal domesticity and a capitalist economic order (Alt 1976; Edwards 1979; Gorz 1982). They seek now - often when most socially isolated: widowed; aged; retired; house bound - to “speak” these spaces: to re-assert the familiarity of the order which produced them (Rowley, 1991). Above all, in identifying within the powerfully expressed, socially conservative views of the host, a continuing version of that order, they work to associate their own perspectives and the points of contact from within their own “life world” (Habermas 1984), with the host’s apparently still secure authority. As for the act of broadcast, so dangerously within “the realm of abstraction” - the “verbalism, verbiage and empty words” which Lefebvre so denigrates - the Zemanek drive to intercept and intensify his callers’ recurrent interest in defined, named “locational” space is thus explained. Without these “map references” the social relations so carefully detailed from conversation to conversation, programme to programme, have no real being. The otherwise oddly irrelevant discussion of time/space grids at which host and caller may coincide, or at least share remembered experience, would then remain in effect, virtual. The constant reference to shared places becomes then a serious and central part of the conversational exchanges on The Stan Zemanek Show. This double articulation is a contribution to the maintenance of capitalist systems of production and consumption, even while appearing to be restricted to a privatised world of unproductive leisure-time chat and reminiscence (Frith, 1983; Gadlin, 1977).

These women callers may seem socially sequestered: debarred within Zemanek’s conservative and heavily gender-segregated social order from autonomous social and full economic participation (despite Sarah’s years of “hard work” and Margaret’s reference to the fact that she and her husband were both using the river punt to get to work). But in fact they are allocated a central role: as consumers. They are-engaged into activity in the socially produced spaces of the production/consumption economy. Sarah promotes the host’s enterprises through her endorsement of 4BC. Margaret provides the “verbal” or symbolic space upon which the host can perform a “spontaneous” promotion for the Lugano Seafood Restaurant - its actual location on the somewhat out-of-town Georges River carefully pin-pointed by the otherwise irrelevant exchange of place-names. And ultimately of course Margaret is herself transformed through this conversational exchange into a concrete consumer: an actual customer for the business.
6.3 Consensual talk as "resistant": are female callers re-appropriating the talkback host's public powers to their own private uses?

The presence of such callers as Tanya, Sarah and Margaret on the call list reveals talk relations and discursive formations which are ultimately generically different from those "contestations" in which the host aggressively prescribes and/or enforces the "correct" social (economic) attitudes and behaviours for men: the direct, "productive" contributors to the economic order. Both the institutional (radio talk specific) and the wider socio-cultural discourses used on The Stan Zemanek Show position women callers differently from men. Two particular features characterise the resultant "consensual" female call: what women callers themselves characterise as the quality of politeness, and the talk relation of co-operation and affiliation rather than of contestation. I want at this moment however to move beyond analysis of the host's characteristic determination of the "rules of engagement" in aired calls. There is evidence within these "consensual" conversations to suggest that women callers are, in their way, as successful as the strongly contestational male callers, in forcing their own meanings into the show.

To capture this less obvious - and more successful - form of listener appropriation of these talk texts, it is necessary to consider what the texts themselves can reveal of their own reception. The interactivity of talkback texts: the "positioning" work undertaken by hosts, and the ways in which callers contest or accept those positions offered, or negotiate to construct their own, means that we can see within talkback conversations the sorts of Bakhtinian "dialogic" reception CDA considers as the reception condition of every type of text. To return to an insight from Fairclough (1995a, p. 128) cited in Chapter 3, the "reading positions" which the (talk) texts are (immediately) exposed to (immediately) return "multiple readings." No text arrives quite as it was sent. Nor does it arrive at location one, quite as it does at location two. It is this critical position on "active" and "transformative" text-reception which allows work of the type I am undertaking: the examination of openly shifting discoursal configurations. I argue that Stan Zemanek's particularly open and transparent range of transformational work
upon every talk-text which accesses his programme, invites the equivalent, albeit often differently directed, response from his listener-callers.7

For Fairclough, discoursal change parallels the operations of hegemony, in that it deals in "... unstable equilibria constantly open to contestation and restructuring ..." (1995a, p. 128). Talkback conversation models this restructuring in every mode. As we have seen, even the most "consensual" and affiliative calls work to reposition previous texts: calls, news stories, ads, promos - within both the symbolic and the physical frames of the callers' life worlds. In creating new (talk) texts, callers reveal their "readings" of older ones.

Radio talkback callers begin as radio talkback listeners. Their calls to a talkback show are motivated not by some spontaneously generated desire to talk on air, but by their particular historical trajectory of "reading" the show's texts (Franco, 1997). In this sense, as Tanya, Sarah and Margaret each indicate, their own contribution is directly intertextual: it is occasioned by the desire to respond to an earlier programme text. Tanya responds to ongoing concert promotions; Sarah has a dispute with those callers who "want something for nothing"; Margaret's memory of the river-punt is tripped off by the Lugano restaurant ads. None of these are neutral acts of passive reception. By definition, the caller has chosen to "talk back": to take issue with some element of an existing talk-text, and to seek to transform it. Even if the host's discursive predispositions have led him to support their comments, those comments have still arisen around as well as within his formations. These callers have in effect, even at their most consensual, displayed the capacity to hi-jack his performance into an elaboration of their own continuing social significance. For all their seeming acceptance of the host's genial patronisation and easy familiarity, there is much in the talk of these callers - and especially in what it achieves - which cannot be easily dismissed as simple "consensus". Something motivates their call, just as it does those of their more combative (most often male) counterparts. Equally, something satisfies the host's programming strategy, in his admission of the call into his repertoire. The next section of this discussion will seek to examine this issue of a reciprocal relation of "reading" and "reading back" of talk texts, by focusing on the complex intertextual and relational politics of appropriation: dealing first in politeness, and then co-operative affiliation.

7 See Brown, 1990, 1994, for work on the creative reception-work of women television viewers, transforming media texts through conversation.
6.4 "Decent conversation ..." - on-air etiquette with women callers constructs a co-operative talk relation and an affiliative institutional role

One of the ways women callers position their talk as acceptable to the host is by seeking to establish a cooperative relational etiquette. The first element which distinguishes women’s consensual on-air style from the aggressive range used with male callers, is their politeness (Brown & Levinson, 1987). This is in tune with Lakoff’s work (1975) on patterns of women’s language use, and shows in a marked insistence on, and even open discussion of, caller etiquette. Not only do the majority of female callers evade the sort of escalating abuse which male callers receive, they are more likely to insist on standards of “good conduct” for callers - as in Tanya’s desire for “decent” conversation (Extract One), or even the much more combative call from Sandra, discussed in Chapter 7, where the caller spends a good deal of time commenting on the abusive strategies of the host. Women callers very rarely swear (Sandra is an exception), and make none of the “smart aleck” calls which come exclusively from adolescent-male wannabes. Women are also more likely to participate in the oddly extended “call exit” procedures: an intensified exchange of “thank you” and “good bye” which work by Gaik (1992, pp. 274-275) suggests is the norm for talkback hosts, but which for Zemanek is one of the markers of the consensual rather than the aggressive call.

What emerges from the talk-texts of women callers is a set of co-operative rather than combative exchanges. Partly this is another example of the host’s lack of need to manoeuvre for control during consensual calls which, after all, already directly address his need for dominance. Once inside the supportive scaffolding of acquiescent exchange, there is little for him to do - except move to the sorts of “promotionalising” transformations we have considered above. Within such a frame women callers become, at one level, marked winners. They are even more likely than male callers to actually receive commodity “prizes” as a result of their calls. In many cases, as with Margaret, this seems to be the host’s resolution of his dilemma in breaking a call which he cannot cut off with an insult - an interesting, and paradoxically inverted, illustration of his culture of “winners” and “losers.” Women callers’ willing collusion with the host’s key values, which ultimately weakens their position for autonomous action and full social participation within an active market economy, is “rewarded” with prizes - in the form of sponsors’ goods. The
"reward" is however reflexive, in that it entices both specific "winners" and other women listeners to extend their consumption capacity into new areas. And this is precisely the host's main goal, as he demonstrated with caller Margaret in Extract Three:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Zemanek: darling Lugano Seafood Restaurant down there at the end of Forrest Road - it is sensational I can tell you - have you been down there?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Margaret: Noo, Stan, no ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Zemanek: Well would you like to go down there?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Margaret: (:) Ooh yes, that'd be great! (huh)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Zemanek: Well look I tell you what I'll do: how about I send you and a friend down there for lunch or dinner?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Margaret: Oh that'd be great, I'll get my, daughter and her husband to take me!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Zemanek: Alright, well listen darling: you hang on there, and I'll send you down to the Lugano Seafood Restaurant at the end of Forrest Road for a dinner or lunch for two.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Women callers' place in the culture thus becomes clear. They both participate in, and model, ideals of unresistive consumer persuasion. That their attitudes also "win" them extended time for their calls on the show - a level of tolerance and co-operation from the host that few male callers are conceded - demonstrates the value that these exchanges have in terms of the show's central ethos. What Gaik (1992, pp. 280-283) notes as one of the most difficult challenges for talkback callers, the extension to a second major point or theme during their time on air, is frequently achieved by female callers, despite the often tangential turns made in performing it. Tanya's move from "politeness" to "cabaret performances", or Sarah's addition at lines 41 and 74 of more details of her family past, are achieved only because the host senses the possibility of yet more appropriative transformational potential in their talk.

In part then these successful call extensions can be regarded not as topic shifts, but as slow entries into topic, as the host detects and positions himself for the appropriation. What results is an extremely extended exchange of pleasantries, read back (even by callers themselves) as another indication of women's attentiveness to social interactions at the level of "polite" linguistic form (see Coates 1986; Jones 1980). Within the host's construction of the gendered discourse of aggressive and dynamic enterprise outlined in Chapter 4, this amounts to a disavowal of women's capacity to fully enter the enterprise culture - except as consumers. Both those features "permitted" and those "policed" by the host within women caller's talk, work to endorse this positioning.
In the calls above, there is both an insistence upon a carefully regulated “affiliative” conversation, and a shift into an equally carefully constructed relation of economic exchange. Tanya and Sarah both directly promote the host’s commercial product - his radio programme. While Margaret appears only to “win” a free lunch at the Lugano Restaurant, the symbolic space she has provided for the host to promote a sponsor’s product - with five repetitions of its address - are very likely to see her invited to call again, to re-endorse the product as she “thanks” the host. Each of these examples of the careful establishment of conversational “rapport” (Goldberg 1990) mirrors the attention paid to consumer-marketer relations which women’s “private sphere” roles as principal household shoppers and appliance selectors produced through the twentieth century (Lury 1996). An equation between social etiquette and marketing style has characterised the vendor-vendee social relations set up within the Western retail industry. It is worth examining in more detail, for its correspondences with the Zemanek technique.

Gail Reekie (1993), investigating the development of a coherent retail culture within the history of Australian department store merchandising, details how every aspect of the shopping experience offered to the newly leisureed middle-class Australian wife from the 1920s on, was built over the social exchanges of courtship. What was constructed was an idealised world of romanticised promise, in which (young male) sales clerks were enjoined to regard “madam” as the central object of their assiduous attention. In fantastically detailed scenarios for (consumer) seduction, showrooms were dressed as exotic movie sets; tea-rooms as cosmopolitan Winter Gardens; staff as higher servants in respectful black. The whole construction became a fantasy of social status and economic autonomy for the woman shopper, which blurred the true financial base of the transactions (the husband paid the bills). At the same time it concealed the temporary nature of the female purchaser’s step into social centrality. This charade rapidly became so commonplace as to be largely invisible; certainly closed to analytical awareness. Inside its conventions young male sales clerks were trained into carefully regulated dialogues of solicitation and encouragement and flattery which amounted to rituals of courtship:

Sales transactions between female customers and male assistants were of a more potentially flirtatious nature. Male assistants were instructed by their employers to treat women customers as if they were courting them: to be deferential but not servile, pleasant and knowledgeable but not patronising, to flatter them within
moderation, and above all to treat them with gentleness and a ‘manly civility’
(Reekie 1993, pp. 9-10).

This construction of a specialised commercial *habitus* and *hexis* (see also Benson, 1986) explains many of the tendencies within the talk relations established between host and female caller on *The Stan Zemanek Show*. While Zemanek decidedly over-steps the respectful solicitude of such sales scenarios, with his easy over-familiarity and the quick move to sexual innuendo within many exchanges (see extracts below), he constructs much the same relationship. His talk sets up the same sense of availability for service, which Reekie shows as constructed for retailing - to *women customers*. Extended re-assurances; flattery; recognition of women’s domestic and family concerns as (temporarily) socially important and worthy of conversational exchange - all of these are reproduced as major elements of a style of reassuringly familiar radio chat with female callers. The social-institutional role seemingly offered, carefully constructed in a solicitous talk-relation which apparently gives primacy to the woman respondent, disguises the formation of the publicly active consumer inside the seduction of the still-privately-constrained woman.

6.5 Gendered and sexualised discourses brought into collusion:
the case of regular caller “Missy”

Exchanges with the regular caller known as “Missy” make these positionings more explicit. Perhaps this is because the eccentricity of her personality allows her to come closer to challenging, or at least equalling, the host’s controlling techniques within the conversation. The “Missy” dialogues are overt - even blatant - flirtations. The host however moves alternately into and away from full engagement in the highly-sexually-charged courtship exchanges, to take up a more mocking, comic positioning. His distanciation and formulation re-routes the dialogue and takes it closer to a parodic mode, even inviting conjecture as to its being an invited and scripted performance. “Missy” however is much harder to read in terms of her self-presentation. She could be serious and sincere. Alternatively, this may be a game for her as well. In either case, what matters is how she is reading - and extending for other listeners - the relations available within talkback radio, between host and woman caller. So much a favoured part of *The Stan Zemanek Show* repertoire that it is edited into weekly promotional stings, the talk relations with Missy offer a ritualised exchange of half sentimental, half sexual banter.
They capture the style of male-female exchanges in work places, social gatherings and in many working class families (Milroy 1987), particularly among older Australians. In their elevation into air-play however, they achieve a curious novelty.

_The Stan Zemanek Show, April 3 1996: caller “Missy”_

_(music sting)_

1. Zemanek: 13 13 32 ... Missy hello!
2. Missy: Hello Staaan?
3. Zemanek: How are you Missy?
4. Missy: Well, I haven’t quite recovered from our ah, little time together
5. behind the Town Haall ...
7. Missy: (uhh) and ah I wa ... [
8. Zemanek: ]was it as good for you as it was for me?
9. Missy: Oh yeah ...
10. Zemanek: Yeah I understand that
11. Missy: And aah, I was wondering if you could send me one of your socks
12. that I could put under my pillow at night ...
13. Zemanek: One of my socks!!
14. Missy: Yeah ...
15. Zemanek: Well OK I could - I could do that for you Missy
16. Missy: I mean I could sniff it and it’d bring back memories ... [
17. Zemanek: ] (hehehehe)
18. Missy: - of our night together ...
19. Zemanek: (uhh) yeeess ... well I don’t remember you sniffing my socks Missy.
20. Missy: Noo, but it, you know, it’d have your odour on it ...
21. Zemanek: Yes, and you like that don’t you ...
22. Missy: Yeesss
23. Zemanek: Yes. Well I mean I’m happy to send out those socks to you Missy,
24. that’s not a problem at all.
25. Missy: Yeess, oh our relationship’s just going ahead like wildfire
26. Zemanek: Well it’s blooming, that’s all I can say
27. Missy: Absolutely blooming ...
28. Zemanek: And I must say you looked absolutely STUNNING the other night
29. Missy ...
30. Zemanek: Oh did I?
31. Zemanek: Yeah, that frock that er, pink and purple frock was just sensational.
32. Missy: Ooooh, thanks Stan!
33. Zemanek: Very nice, very nice - and I liked the ah - what was it : the
34. er the blue sash around the middle.
35. Missy: Yeess?
37. Missy: Oh yes well I have [
38. Zemanek: ] bit hard to undo but it was, it was very
39. interesting.
40. Missy: Well I have got a good taste in colours Staaan ...
41. Zemanek: Missy you have indeed: you have indeed. It’s one thing people can
42. say about you: you are very colourful.
43. Missy: Yes thanks Stan.
44. Zemanek: Look it’s a pleasure Missy and hopefully next time we can meet
45. again behind the ah Town Hall.
46. Missy: Yeess.
47. Zemanek: And have another mad passionate erotic love making session.
49. Zemanek: Alright Missy: see [
Interestingly, despite the obvious patronisation and covert insult\(^a\) (“keep on taking the medicine ...”) this exchange achieves the pace and rhythm of an equalised transaction. It has a staged, almost stichomythic structural quality, or an air of operatic recitative. There is very little over-talking or interruption, and the caller is able to create a prolonged focus on her own contributions, through the appropriation of the host’s stylistic trick of the long vowel glide (see lines 2, 5, 22, 40). Presumably because he is never quite sure what is coming next, the host waits out “Missy’s” completions. This, and his willing contributions to the exchange, give it at one level the marks of an affiliative conversation.

There is also however an unusual degree of tension, partly in the dialogic requirement that the “riposte” exchange be sustained, and partly in the contradictions of the host’s desire to ridicule the caller, and yet his inability to altogether abandon the attempt to seduce her. He seems to want to display mastery over the politics of seduction, even within a mock-exchange. His two successful interruptions: the clichéd “was it as good for you as it was for me?” at line 8, and the innuendo-laden comment on the sash, line 38, both produce a masculo-centric image of the encounter. They re-centre the sexual initiative onto himself, at the same time as they reverse “Missy’s” topic-introduction advantage inside the talk relations. Her initial control of the conversation ends with her as the butt of the joke - a position which Zemanek’s post-termination formulation (line 55) reinforces, raising the suspicion that many of his seemingly cooperative responses have been performed for an overhearing audience, and not for the conversational respondent.

If this is in fact a joke, or even a scripted performance, exactly whose joke is it, and who is it for? Its ambivalence makes it risky, as well as risqué. The slow and markedly even pacing and pauses build a fascinated edginess into the

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\(^a\) This may be one indicator of the host’s positioning of this piece as comic-parodic: a cue to listeners to read it as make-believe. Even within such a frame however, Zemanek cannot resist the opportunity to deploy the text in multiple ways - in particular, to use it to reinforce his “desirability” as both public figure, here ceded the accolade of “crazed fans”, and as private man.
dialogue; one which promotes the interplay of nothing into something - but what? We know a game is being played. What we don’t know is exactly who the players “are”. “Missy” makes no attempt to “ground” her “self” as other callers do, in a daily, family or work referenced, located life. Even her preferred trysting spot is the blind-dater’s perennial: “behind the Town Hall.”

There is in such texts a clear need to investigate how radio provides diverging ways of taking up its symbolic material. Talkback radio practices in particular, which as we have seen can openly model variant appropriations of texts by constructing contestational public debate, contribute to the constitution of a multiple audience, and an active reception. Within such a context the “Missy” flirt-piece can be seen as better left unexplained. Zemanek’s techniques, both within and beyond the actual conversation, actually expand its “ambivalence potential”. By extending and high-lighting its existential formlessness; by re-rendering it in promotional play; by reproducing the tones of its interaction in calls with other regulars, the host is ultimately expanding its availability for selection and transformational adaptation into listeners’ life-worlds. Where genres merge and blur, appropriative potential is increased - and individual fantasies can be more easily realised.

They are however being built around texts which are themselves already occupying multiple, even contradictory, spaces. While radio thus enhances the potency of its potential for listener self-formation, it is also a treacherous medium. Its otherwise-directed powerful agendas can remain insidiously in play even within those texts most apparently open to creative listener appropriation. As Fairclough has indicated (1995a, pp. 91-92), it is these “micro” contexts of life-world reception and incorporation of discourses that most need examination. As my own analysis has indicated (see especially Chapter 4), the very contestation which listener-callers bring to the programme’s combative styling, is heavily invested ideologically by the host’s equation of contestation with high-masculinity, in association with dynamic entrepreneurialism, moral rectitude and patriarchal order. Stylistically “Missy” reveals the open-endedness and undecidability which exist beneath the power-and-control rhetoric and talk-relations of much of the programme. She opens up its texts and genres for appropriative occupancy. With her odd air of distraction and detachment; her drawn out vowels; her out-moded dating rituals and venues, she manages to be self contained; self defining. She is all possibility: simultaneously a semi-serious tease; a clever
impersonation; a fan who has crossed over into total belief in the reality of her dream; a good-time girl past her use-by date, yet mysteriously still extant; still compelling. You cannot easily imagine her as occupying successfully the sort of real-world and economically-activated location centred by the discursive transformations of all of Zemanek’s other talk-texts. And yet while she is ultimately an entirely private being, here made perversely public, even Missy is caught within the commercialising impulses of the Zemanek machine. What is to her pleasure, is to his profit. The host commodifies “Missy” to the further service of his own glory - as a promo. If her needs have been met by the exchange, so has his power been enhanced.

6.6 “That lovely package of Goanna Oil ...” - gift-giving and the gender/power inversions enabled by relations of reciprocity

At the heart of the mock-courtship relationship at its most successful: during those calls with women who become “regulars” and have free access to the switchboard, there is a set of symbolic exchanges which differ markedly from the choreographed combat dialogues with male callers, yet use the gendered and sexualised “female” talk relations analysed above in rather more strategic ways. As with the calls from regulars Dorothy and Iris (see extracts below), in each of which an actual gift exchange is duly recorded, regular female calls cement, rather than contest, social identities, yet display a certain capacity for self-directedness and even an expropriation of the host’s instrumentalist orientation, which belies the “powerlessness” of consensually feminised talk relations.

Bell and van Leeuwen (1994, p. 6) have noted that the coding of the media interview’s question-answer formula as in itself a gift exchange (following Mauss 1967) places talk-show callers into a relationship of “immediate reciprocity” of obligation with the host. This is a relation which many women callers in particular appear to feel requires actual exchange of material gifts. At the same time as these conversations reinforce the positioning of women callers into compliant non-participation in the public debates of a wider society, they bind them into the exchange-value acculturations of commercial activity. Participation in the show re-activates and re-asserts their roles as consumers, albeit at a domestic or leisure consumption level.

The roles allocated to women callers are not however simple positionings; not absolute limitations of their potential for social action. Each of the women’s
calls extracted in my opening analysis above, for instance, specifically seeks
discussion of external, non-domestic locales: a public transport system
(Margaret), a small business (Sarah), a social event (Tanya). And yet each
woman caller introduces the topic in ways the host himself is inclined to use
in approaching female experiences: through the directive influence of a male -
Margaret’s husband who drove the car; Tanya’s husband whom she
represents as the one who wants to know about the cabaret evening. Once
again, the woman enter the public realm of talkback obliquely, by rendering
themselves as ancillary. Concerns of personal memory, family and social
occasion planning, ultimately remain domestic; able to enter into a
relationship with the public world of restaurants, corner shops and cabarets
only when all three women callers have safely acceded to the host’s (and their
husbands’) control of those agendas.

Once inside the show’s discursive formations however, some women callers
prove able to re-position the host to their own advantage. One group in
particular has been able to construct a role within The Stan Zemanek Show
which elaborates an actual life-world processed through a fan-club culture: a
formation which takes its participants well beyond the terms of Thompson’s
“mediated quasi-interaction”.9 In 1995 an ABC video team, preparing a
documentary for the Sunday night Channel 2 religious program Compass,
discovered a group of Sydney women, many of them elderly or disabled,
acting to invert the interiorisation of their lives, by appropriating The Stan
Zemanek Show - and even the host himself - in the construction of their own
social lives.10 Centring around the work of regular callers Dorothy and Iris,
this group has used access to air time and to much-publicised promotional
events, to set up a social club, whose members maintain contact with one
another via regular calls to the show. Iris and Dorothy each exploit their air-
wave access brilliantly, breaking out of the host’s self-promotional strategies
to make sure that their friends know exactly when the next meeting is on, at
which venue, and who has already accepted. It is a mark of their
transformation of the mediated into the real that they regularly reciprocate
the host’s “gifts” of sponsors’ promotional packs with their own
contributions of home-baked goods or carefully purchased products.

Press, Cambridge, for an account of the media’s construction of "interactive" forms of
address mimicking those of everyday social exchanges.
10 This group, centring on regular callers Dorothy and Iris, has subsequently been featured
both in the SBS television documentary Demons at Drivetime, and on ABC Radio National’s
social documentary series The Living Eye.
The Stan Zemanek Show, April 4 1996: caller “Iris”

1 Zemanek: And the lights are flashing all over the place: hello!
2 Iris: Hello Stan
3 Zemanek: OOH! IRIS!!!
4 Iris: How are you?
5 Zemanek: Very GOOD SWEETHEART!
6 Iris: Good ...
7 Zemanek: Have you been missing me?
8 Iris: Ooh - too much!
9 Zemanek: I know ... you’re only human, let’s face it ...  
10 Iris: Hehehe - um ... did you receive my parcel?
11 Zemanek: I did indeed and thank you very much.
12 Iris: Ah, watch it Stan because it’s very good
13 Zemanek: I know - I know - you’re very kind to me
14 Iris: That’s alright
15 Zemanek: You’re very kind
16 Iris: Well, you are the only one I spoke to he he he
17 Zemanek: Well that’s true
18 Iris: Um Stan: we got sixteen to go to the, um, Blacktown Workers
19 Zemanek: Yes - how many tickets you got?
20 Iris: Sixteen
21 Zemanek: Fifteen?
22 Iris: Sixteen
23 Zemanek: Sixteen tickets!!
24 Iris: Maybe more. Later [- all my friends, yeah [-
25 Zemanek: [Wow ... ] you’re fantastic!
26 Iris: And what you going to do this weekend Stan?

(He gives details)

37 Iris: On Sunday I’m going to my daughter, and on Friday, I’ve got about,
38 twenty people here, some my children [Fantastic! [-
39 Zemanek: [And some of the
40 Iris: listeners - of YOUR listeners!
41 Zemanek: Isn’t that great!
42 Iris: Yeah he he So I invited them because on Good Friday I cook fish,
43 you know? yeah an’ olives an’ that you know?
44 Zemanek: Well that’s fantastic ...

The integration Iris has achieved here between her own family life, organised around rituals of traditional religious observation, gift giving and cooking, and the more glamorous life of a public figure, shows in her capacity not only to render the events of her own life for public consumption, but to entice the host to do the same. He details his actually quite mundane family plans for a long weekend of relaxation, in much the same ways as she has done. The tone of excitement the host produces here as he realises who his caller is (“OOOH! IRIS!”) is unequalled elsewhere in his program, and is scarcely borne out by the topics or style of the conversation. These transactions - which, we must remember, the host is choosing from many others on his “full board” to put to air - add little to the show’s reputation for up-tempo and punchy talkback, or engagement with current issues. What they do achieve is an inversion in
the “interactivity” of the life world with the mediated, in which the anticipated motivation: association with the glamour of the “star’s” existence, is overturned. Iris and Dorothy, far from seeking exciting glimpses of other ways of being, instead modulate the host’s life and interests into versions of their own: in their terms a far more powerful transformation.

6.7 “I dunno where ya throwing ya-self”: caller recognition of re-appropriative or “inappropriately” gendered talk relations, and subsequent attempts to discipline them

Contemporary work on fan culture has to date disregarded examples of textual appropriation from inside socially conservative texts or social fractions, in favour of more radically-directed strategies such as “slash” culture - fans re-working media texts in support of suppressed or under-represented identities: queer culture; race minorities; voluntary “tribal” affiliates within style culture (Goths; punks; home-boys). It is difficult however to see how the transformations and appropriations which Dorothy and Iris achieve differ from those forms of fan culture “subversion” which annex major television or film texts into cult status, rewriting and reworking them along the fracture points of new desires. The lack of sustained analytical work on radio within either Communications Studies or the new Cultural Studies partially arises, as John Frow (1995) has suggested, in the political and strategic self-alignment of those disciplines with the innovative, the modish, and the “resistant” (Hall 1976). It seems that within research which most clearly focuses forms of resistance, the ethnographic reception studies of fan culture, researchers select mainly the most graphically marginalised of groups. Henry Jenkins’ “Gaylaxian” Star Trek “slash” fans, writing the “Kirk/Spock” revisionist texts which have given the genre its name (1992); even Jamaican street kids working British cult comedian Rowan Atkinson’s “Mr Bean” into ragga-chant-dance (The Face, March 1996) - each in its way aligns itself with a form of political resistance configured around the re-creative re-positioning of “cult” texts. Elderly working class women, appropriating and reworking the texts of high rating, mainstream, non-cult commercial talkback, are therefore a doubly invisible group. As women positioned by their age outside even the sexualisation or consumerist commodifications of mainstream patriarchal culture, they are already culturally unheeded. Secondly, since the Birmingham and latterly the Grossberg US Cultural Studies focus around resistance and appropriation has
emerged from the “style” politics of sub-culturism (Hebdige 1979; McRobbie 1994; Willis 1990a) it has focused away from white, suburban, elderly, heterosexual groups. These are read - or perhaps more correctly NOT read - as normatively directed, even when actually gendered, aged or classed outside mainstream representations, and well outside dominant hegemonic relations of power.

So it is that it is left to the media themselves to deliver analysis of the subversive, inversely powerful uses made of mainstream radio programming, by elderly women listeners and callers. And in evading the attention of the analysts of resistant use, the examples provided by Dorothy and Iris may be preventing us from seeing crucial aspects of the operation of a still powerful medium. Subversion from a social group considered the most tractable, conservative, and socially inactive can show us most clearly of all a missing part of the dilemma of subversive readings: the degree to which the wheel still spins. The media which evoked the subversions are well able to re-integrate whatever degree of revisionism the technique visits upon them. As Mark Dery has pointed out (Digital Aesthetics Conference, University of New South Wales 1996) pinning hopes of political resistance on even the most creative of fan-groups as they subvert mainstream ideologies, is hardly a recipe for social revolution.

Cultural theory might do well then to consider those cases of consensual or “complicitous” appropriation (Feuer 1995), arising within the most central of mainstream media texts.¹¹ In the final analysis, Stan Zemanek’s capacity to permit - and even encourage - his most visible and active fan group onto his programme whenever they wish to appear, can only be to his own advantage. They are in effect another sort of sponsor. This may not be in a direct financial sense, although their publicisation and ticket-vending for his cabarets does involve direct economic advantage. More importantly, given the complex interweaving of the personal and the commercial which this show commands, the existence of these women acts as another promotional tool. They are able to move on social fractions which commerce has had to work doubly hard to reactivate - since the culture of productivity itself rendered them inactive except as consumers. Put another way, the group which public

¹¹ Feuer’s study of the “glamour” US television soaps of the Reagan era questions their perverse popularity in liberal intellectual - and even feminist - circles, where they were simultaneously enjoyed and critiqued. Her analysis has much to offer cases in which talkback “regulars” arrive at similar accommodations of otherwise less than benevolent hosts. See *Seeing through the Eighties: Television and Reaganism*, Duke University Press, Durham, 1995.
discourses (especially those of this form of talkback radio) discount and lock into a particular kind of sentimentalised privacy, is thereby the most difficult to coax back into active-purchase consumption of media product. That the Stan Zemanek technique has been able to evoke from elderly suburban women a self-starter programme of social uses of his show, which is publicly aired daily to many thousands of other, similarly placed individuals, is a marketing triumph, not a subversion.

More than anything, it is the self-motivation here which counts. It characterises precisely that talkback-radio veneer of “spontaneous desire” which the host attempts to introduce, cajole, even perhaps manipulate, into every exchange across the interlocking sub-genres of his show, and its surrounding marketing strategies. Dorothy, Iris, and even “Missy” are not in the final analysis resistant callers. They are ancillary broadcasters - as central to The Stan Zemanek Show as any other element. That is their triumph. They have moved themselves from the social periphery to the commercial centre, in ways which many more celebrated cases of appropriation of media power could well envy.

One indicator of the lack of recognition of this is the way in which the status they achieve here, and the public/privatisation of Stan which is constructed - by the women for themselves; by the host for promotional gain - is not necessarily well-accepted by other callers. Male callers especially appear to regard at least some elements of older women’s interventions as break-out from the conventions of public/private gendered behaviour, and a feature in need of urgent gender/age “category maintenance”. One caller is particularly offended by a transaction between Dorothy and the host, during which Zemanek initiates, sustains, and appears to enjoy, a lengthy exchange about back massage. The subsequent male caller, Andrew, registers this as “phone sex.”

The Stan Zemanek Show, April 4 1996: caller “Dorothy”

40 Dorothy: But what else was I going to tell you about: I don’t (uhh) oh you  
41 know you gave me that - ahaahh! that lovely package of ah  
42 Zemanek: Goanna Oil?  
43 Dorothy: Yes ...  
44 Zemanek: Ha! I got it today he he  
45 Dorothy: Fantastic!  
46 Dorothy: I’ll rub my back with it before I go to bed

See David Buckingham’s (1993) ethnographic study of young boys watching television for the ways in which media-inspired conversation is used to construct and “maintain” gender identity.
Zemanek: Would you like me to come round and rub your back for you?
Dorothy: I'd LOOOOVE that Stanley!
Zemanek: Well I just don't - [
Dorothy: I haven't had my back rubbed for God knows how long!
Zemanek: But Dorothy, I just don't know whether I'll be able to control myself, with your bare back looking at me
Dorothy: Oh well, we'll just wait and see shall we?
Zemanek: I mean I could rub your shoulders, with the oil ...
Dorothy: That would be lovely, too.
Zemanek: And er, rub the r, the centre of your back, and then ...
Dorothy: Oh, wow ...
Zemanek: right, down to your, ah, um, um, waist ...
Dorothy: [ oh God you're giving me goose pimples all over! [
Zemanek: [ ooo, and then I'd, rub, you, well, I don't think I should go on, should I ... [
Dorothy: [Stop it now Stanley!
Zemanek: Oh, I'm getting just - carried away ...

The Stan Zemanek Show, April 4 1996: caller “Andrew”

Andrew: How's it goin' Stan.
Zemanek: Good Andrew.
Andrew: Um, Stan - can I just say one thing?
Zemanek: Please.
Andrew: I'm, I thought what you were just saying to that lady a minute ago was just, oh, appalling, that was disGUSTing ...
Zemanek: [ What are you talking about? [
Andrew: [The last thing I wanted to hear on radio.
Zemanek: What was that?
Andrew: Honestly, about that rubbing oil? Oohh ...
Zemanek: You hated it did you?
Andrew: Oohh! Stan: that [
Zemanek: [It revolted you did you? [
Andrew: [ Very much so mate!
Zemanek: I see.
Andrew: It's just - oohh ... I mean: [
Zemanek: [ you were just - you were just flabbergasted by the whole thing?
Andrew: It's not a - it's not a double 0 double 5 number, I dunno where you're throwing yourself. [
Zemanek: [Yeah. Well, it was shocking was it ...
Andrew: Well it was a bit.
Zemanek: Would you like me to apologise to you?
Andrew: Yeah, that'd be great I think.
Zemanek: Yeah, well look I do apologise ...

(Plays music track: “May your chooks turn into emus and kick your dunny down ...”)

If the caller who objects to the sexualisation of the Dorothy exchange is being critical, it must be noted that his solution is not to prevent such exchanges, but to relocate them to the arena which communications technology had allocated as the perfect forum for commercialised/privatised sexual congress:
0055 numbers. This is not a debate about the relativity of the private-public divide, but about which section of the public a particular text, and activity, should access. It is about sequestration.

There has long been a politics concealed within flirtation: one which has in recent times achieved a certain notoriety as a field over which feminist workplace reform has battled, in its attempts to constrain some of the behavioural elements of gender inequality preventing full female participation in the paid labour force. Arguments used there about the inappropriate nature of such personalised behaviours within what is effectively a public realm, also seem to be at play here. Listeners appear to code differently the degree to which flirtation is, or is not, suitable as a radio style. Furthermore, this difference is crossed in interesting and unexpected ways by gender, and by age.

For elderly Dorothy, whose strategy has been not to enter the public arena as much as to inveigle the host into the more private and domestic styles of her own life world, there appears to be no problem with such an exchange. Andrew, a younger man, presumably has full expectation of access to an untrammelled public role. Broadcast radio for him is clearly in this public, and not the private sphere. Involuntary access to sexually charged conversation is thus for him literally a form of obscenity: a performance outside the designated social space in which it might be acceptable. His criticism is not that it exists, but that it exists in the wrong place: his place, and with the wrong person: an elderly woman, who should be quietly back within her private/domestic sequestration.

6.8 “A steady institutional process”: how gendered talk-text relations underpin social-institutional patterns of exclusion

It is the ambivalence of radio’s social positioning, concomitant with its capacity for interactivity, (until very recently, unique among mainstream media)\(^4\) which makes it the medium *par excellence* for “capture” of diverse, often contradictory responses to social relations of space - and the more or less powerful social roles which construct those responses. For Foucault

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\(^{13}\) Subsequently replaced by Telstra’s 190 “dial-info” numbers.

\(^{14}\) The phone-in television chat show format used in Britain and the USA has not been adapted in Australia, which has interestingly failed to achieve high-profile home-grown chat show programming.
the very existence of power relations "... depends on a multiplicity of points of resistance ... present everywhere in the power network." Thus it is that the complex relationship of values between Dorothy, Andrew and the host become each of them grist to the mill for the continued elaboration of the host’s position. Dorothy’s eager compliance with his flirtation is one form of power: the host’s aggressive and dismissive reaction to Andrew’s criticism is another. Note also though that whenever response the overhearing listeners take up, they are able to “show” the host as having engaged within the terms of their own social formation: consensually and flirtatiously and protectively with Dorothy; aggressively, using contestation and dismissive humour, with Andrew. Each is answered on their own terms, and with their own techniques. With each text, there is sufficient ambivalence to permit resistant, as well as consensual reading; places where even the most unvoiced can find a discourse which is partly at their direction. The terms on which de Lauretis (1987) calls for powerful women directing their own cultural representations are very obviously not available here, and yet there are, even within this most extreme of masculine control, models and opportunities for appropriation. While we still

... need a theory of culture with women as subjects - not commodities but social beings producing and reproducing cultural products, transmitting and transforming cultural values (De Lauretis 1987, p. 93)

those techniques used by Dorothy and her friends are not without their own power. They have, at least partially, counter-commodified their favourite talkback host, and learned to ride on his programming strategies.

The insight alerts us to what might become possible, should the De Lauretis formula for powerfully self/transmitting “women as subjects” gain access to the direction of radio talk, or at least the capacity to re-define its talk relations. In the following chapter, I propose to examine those few texts in which women callers to The Stan Zemanek Show take up successfully negotiative talk relations, without prior entry to patronisation, or else openly contest the host’s propositions. Far more common in commercial talk radio practice however are the consensual positionings presented above - whether affiliative or appropriative. That both are intricately articulated into the host’s own entrepreneurial discourses is the price paid for existence at all - for this is

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15 Foucault’s account of the multiple pathways of power and resistance to it (The History of Sexuality, pp. 94-97) reads almost as a complete account of the operation of the talk-relations of radio talkback.
commercial radio programming: a cultural product of a clearly defined and efficiently operating social-institutional set of practices, in which the careful control of the talk relations between host and callers follows exactly the trajectory of power relations and social accesses permitted or not permitted to various (and especially variously gendered) social groups.

Dorothy Smith (1987), detailing the ways in which women have been excluded from the *recognised* elaboration of culture, suggests that there are three main forms of exclusionary practice:

Some have arisen inadvertently as a concomitant of women’s location in the world; some have been a process of active repression or strong social disapproval of the exercise by women of a role of intellectual or political leadership; others have been the product of an organisational process.

My own focus in this study on institutional practices supports Smith’s choice of

this last form of exclusion ... for in our society we see less of the rough stuff (although do not assume that it is not there) and more of a steady institutional process, equally effective and much less visible in its exclusionary force (1987, p. 25).

I suggest that the elaboration of gendered social roles within the retailing industries, as presented by Gail Reekie’s (1993) study (see also Kingston, 1994), aligns with its “virtualised” representation in commercial radio talk-texts. The shift within commercial broadcasting from the descriptive detailing of product quality in advertising, to the interactive modelling of ideal consumerist behaviour in commercial talkback transactions, is part of just such a “steady institutional process”, in which women, even when seemingly central, are manipulated into their market-ordained social roles. It amounts to a “technologisation of discourse”, in Fairclough’s (1995a) terms, within contemporary commercial broadcasting, and it follows his isolation of three successive stages:

(i) research into the discursive practices of social institutions and organisations, (ii) redesign of those practices in accordance with particular strategies and objectives ... and (iii) training of institutional personnel in these redesigned practices (1995a, p. 91).

In this case the “institutional personnel” include not simply the broadcasters. Certainly it would be useful to examine the continued dominance of heavily-paternalistic professional personae among talkback hosts on commercial talk radio, especially in relation to the rise of talkback programming during the
loss of advertising revenue to television in the 1960s. A case could be made for the re-design at that point of marketing and promotional discourse, and its insertion into the apparently “natural” conversational relations of talkback, attending particularly, as I am doing in my own analysis, to the “promotionalisation” tendencies of talkback’s interpersonal chat. Stage three of this particular “technologisation” of commercial discourses would then relate to the “training” not of broadcast staff, but of the new “talking-back” audiences, in relation to their identification of appropriate moments and issues and topics for calling in to a given programme: moments with the potential for promotional transformation.

Such a “technologisation” does not, moreover, imply “promotionalising” training focused on the production of a single-response genre of talk relations. It is in fact as Fairclough has indicated (1995a, p. 118), the “ambivalence potential” within talk which enables discoursal reform to occur. Drawing on Frow (1985) he shows how a particular meaning potential can become “ideologically and politically invested ... and worked for reasons of political strategy” (1995a, p. 118). Further, drawing on Gramsci’s concept of the hegemonic operations of ideology, Fairclough endorses a view of discoursal development which allows contestation, generic hybridity and multiple appropriations, rather than a monolithic imposition of unitary objectives. It is this view of discourse which I seek to extend into an explanation of the development of “enterprise” talk and the “promotionalising” tendency within the host-caller exchanges of commercial talkback. I find it deployed not primarily within the lexis, operating as a rhetorical strategy, but operating instead within the talk relations: the central focus of talkback radio, and the most direct in relation to audience impact. Here is the capacity to work not through the relatively indirect media representation, or even the persuasive rhetoric of admonitory speech - but the immediate formation and reformation of ideas, attitudes and behaviours at the moment of “live” social engagement and exchange.

Nor must this re-processing of talk-types in the service of a new discourse necessarily be a conscious or deliberate project. For Fairclough, manipulation of meanings at the macro, or social/political policy level, is only one layer of discoursal change. Smaller transformations occurring largely unconsciously within daily talk transactions also impact on the processing:

Calculation at such a level of detail is perhaps implausible, and it is more likely that calculation at a more general level about how to achieve specific
communicative objectives with respect to particular audiences leads to unselfconscious adaptations of meaning resources to these higher purposes (1995a, p. 114).

The degree to which a talkback host such as Zemanek can be considered to be “unselfconscious” in regard to his project of promotionalisation and endorsement of enterprise culture is perhaps debatable, given the recurrence and intensity of focus his talk-text processing achieves. “Calculated” or not however, his project appears able to expand to meet whatever challenges it encounters. He admits and subsequently re-appropriates “contestational” as well as “consensual” texts into his programme. Even his social segregation of the sexes into “public-enterprise” and “private-consumerist” spheres can be breached by callers who take up variously “resistant” positions. The dilemma for the host’s formation of a protective and patriarchal masculinity over a malleable and private femininity comes with those of his female callers who actively resist, or consensually subvert his positionings. The next chapter locates just such women callers.
Chapter Seven

"The way you like to see it, that's not the way it is ..." - women callers who contest the host's vision

7.0 Contestation: from the inter-personal (talk relations) to the social-institutional (social relations)

On the rare occasions that a female caller openly contests the host on talkback radio, the level of discursive engagement shifts from relational to social-institutional. In talk-texts drawn from The Stan Zemanek Show, the stark contrast this creates between the host's treatment of male and female callers who take issue with him reveals how centrally his discursive construction of an idealised sociability built upon an economy of enterprise, rests upon gendering.

What is most notable in these female-dissident calls is the extremity of the host's performance. Fairclough's insistence (1992, pp.3-4) on the inherent instability of discourses, and their tendency to disaggregate at points of particular pressure, is illustrated in the intensity of the host's lapses into vilification and direct disciplinary activity - at both textual and social-institutional levels - when confronted by dissenting females. At the same time the motivation for continuing with such calls is revealed. They display to listeners even more potently than those short, sharp, combative calls with aggressive males, the raw outlines of the social-institutional positionings upon which The Stan Zemanek Show constructs its enterprise ethos. More than any other set of extracts in the data corpus, these resistant female-caller exchanges demonstrate Fairclough's "triangulation" of the action of discourse: its capacity to act simultaneously within given texts, broader discursive practices and social practices. Here, radio's dual "temporalities": its co-location within spaces and discourses of its production and of its reception; crash headlong.
The process, as Fairclough predicted, permits possible alternatives into the range of vision [audibility] for the first time in such an otherwise monolithic discursive construct. For male callers, contestational talk cements a social position within a discursive frame of active and dynamic enterprise, enacted as masculine combat, and therefore entirely congruent with and permissive of their aggression. For female callers, contestation must first force access to the space of debate, otherwise coded as a public zone of male-only agency. The talk relation which is established between the host and the rare contestational female caller to The Stan Zemanek Show must inevitably show immediate signs of break-down. At such moments the host encounters problems which amount to challenges not merely to his discursive performance (the level of text practices) but to his calls on a discourse formation (the level of social practices.) He must move to re-incorporate the caller into a social relation acceptable within his (gendered) enterprise exclusion zone - or risk losing the entire construction.

The talk which ensues reveals the degree to which, in talkback radio, talk relations stand in for social relations: operate, in Bourdieu’s terms, as “euphemised” or symbolic markers of status hierarchies whose social consequences are engaged elsewhere. What appears for the radio listener-caller as a “safe” engagement of words: whether consensually or contestationally exchanged, extends outwards into broader social-institutional positionings and formations.

7.1 Talkback radio’s direct disciplinary function: parallel traditions of social-institutional authority

Media commentators have long been aware of a connection between the talk-relational texts of radio talkback, and earlier, more deeply entrenched forms of social “talk-texting” institutions. Some have claimed for instance that talkback radio is founded in the talk-genres of both psychoanalytic therapy and sociological labour: that its hosts stand in for both Freud and Mayhew, subsequently developing alongside their individually and institutionally directed focus a full panoply of “pastoral” roles. Australian commentator John Potts (1989) summarises the most commonly cited views:

The nature of the host’s authority is itself a very curious phenomenon. As a relatively recent type of public authority, it partakes to some extent of other forms of influence or power. Listeners ring in with personal problems that may once have been the province of a local priest. Worried parents may call a host for
advice on their children’s behaviour, as if the host were a social worker or counsellor. For listeners with emotional or psychological problems, the conversation possible with the host, and the host’s advice, may be akin to the “talking cure” offered by an analyst. In extreme cases of distress, a listener may call a host as a substitute for calling a help agency such as Lifeline. As well, listeners often ask a host for advice on legal matters, as if the host had the knowledge and authority of a solicitor. A host discussing political matters or social problems with callers creates a public forum of opinions that may once have been accommodated in community meetings. As well, callers ring in asking for information which may once have been obtained from libraries or political representatives. The host represents a fount of common sense, as grandparents once did, in the days of extended families (Potts 1989, p. 119).

To some extent this already seems a curiously outdated list, even from the perspective of only a decade of further development in talkback formatting and practice. A similar social shift within talkback talk-relations is suggested however by a re-reading of Higgins’ (1978) study of Queensland talkback radio, and by her later collaborative work with Peter Moss on South Australian programming (1982), both of which characterise talkback as primarily a form of public-access community counselling. The caller assertiveness and resistant uptake of the host’s positions in my own study however, show that listener acceptance of the “wisdom” of the host is no longer universally the case. Certainly, the aggressive contestational talk most popular on The Stan Zemanek Show defies these categorisations.¹ However, while the mode of talk-relations which constitutes and validates Zemanek’s authority has shifted from benign helpfulness to aggressive promotionalism, that authority in itself is both clearly intact, and central to the success of this, as other, talkback formats. What then does this newly aggressive mediated expertise seek to achieve in terms of its social-institutional role - and what is sought by those who, in turn, seek it out?

To some extent the answer lies within media practice itself, and its ubiquity in contemporary society. Bauman (1993) comments on how far the cult of the “expert knower” has penetrated everyday life - much of it through precisely these mediated quasi-interactions, such as radio talkback and television chat-show (Rapping 1994). To this extent Bauman’s analysis supports Potts’s view of a major expansion in the twentieth century of the “pastoral” role as the benign face of social-institutional discipline, extending even to the para-professionals of media talk shows, magazines, published “pathographies”, self-help groups, and latterly, Internet Relay Chat.

¹ Later chapters will examine other genres of talkback, operating in different formats and on different stations and timeslots, which do show practices within many of these categories of “pastoral” practice.
For Bauman however the mediated talkback talk relation offers a perverse interaction. In his view it serves only to commodify “life-knowledge” in ways which ultimately disempower those who seek it out. Sarup (1996) similarly points out how “one now relies not on one’s own experience but on expert knowers” (p. 124), while Rose (1996) shows the thorough infiltration of advisory and “counselling” régimes into all aspects of “advanced liberal” society. As Scannell (1996) has shown, on talk media the everyday experiences of listener-callers are brought into the purview of the judgmental host or expert guest, and there validated, adjusted or dismissed. The process of and in itself produces the tendency for the talkback host to “rule” as either absolute monarch - as in “King Stanley” Zemanek’s case - or more often as some form of para-judicial power. South Australian talk host Jeremy Cordeaux for instance promotes his programme as “the Court of Public Opinion”.

In the case of The Stan Zemanek Show the discourses of pastoralism intersect with and are rearticulated within those of enterprise - precisely as Rose in particular has suggested. Zemanek is an “expert knower” in this new sense: not a fount of all wisdom, an elder of vast experience, or a scholar with great learning, but a vector for the formulation of judgement as to who may or may not follow an entrepreneurial trajectory into the central discourses of economic power. Zemanek is a purveyor of the ready-made subject position. The variant life worlds and caller experiences which access the discursive space of his programme must, in one way or another, accede to its formations - which are clearly, no matter what the motivation or activating factor of the individual caller, directed towards the maintenance of a “correct” social pre-disposition towards economic enterprise.

The complexities of the position are made clearer in Foucault’s (1988) discussion of the ongoing “pastoral” impulses of contemporary societies. While such impulses may, in Foucault’s vision, have lost their institutionalised directness as they loosened their ties to religious authority, abandoning formal doctrine and ritual observance, they still hold to their original “function”. Foucault sees pastoral practices as now “spread and multiplied outside the ecclesiastical institution (into) a new distribution, a new organisation of this kind of individualising power” (1988, p. 214). Itemising the features of this new “modern matrix of individualisation”, still located for him at the time of writing in the state, he describes a shift in objective, to “salvation ... in this world”, through “health, well being ...
security, protection from accidents.” Pastoral power is thus transferred to lay institutions, and extends its range into such public surveillant authorities as the police, and to such privatised, regulatory institutions as the family. The ways in which “totalising” projects of social control are able to be focused directly onto individual behaviours expand, to meet the challenge of that equally expanding “individual” diversity. Finally however, even the “individual” - the otherwise indivisible entity upon which pastoral control can be brought to bear - splits, to admit examination of its unconscious motivations, through the rise of psychoanalysis (Gergen & Graumann, 1996). Global, quantifying control of whole populations via bureaucracies, has been counterbalanced by the development of analytical procedures, focusing on the individual (1988, p. 215.)

Radio, in the many roles attributed to it in the Potts formulation (above), plays across this new adjustment of the public-institutional-bureaucratic and the private-personal-experiential. As Habermas discovered, it becomes a part of those practices creating a “spot-lit” scrutiny in the space previously reserved for the private and intimate. In moving from its initial role as a source of public information flow, to the intensely personalised address developed in the service of both nation-state and commerce, radio has become implicated first in Foucault’s reconstitution of the (modern) pastoral, and then in Bauman’s more specific construction of the “cult of the expert knower”.

7.2 “Know/thy/self” becomes “Have your say”: how taking up a position within a given discourse constitutes a “self”

Radio talkback has proven to have one often disregarded advantage over rival forms of vectoring agent for the totalising-individualising “pastoralism” of modern society. As the first of the virtual technologies rebuilding the participatory mechanisms of the community of control into the perverse sequestration of modern, urban, private life (Thompson 1995), talkback radio’s interactivity has allowed it to operate as a clear extension of existing self-scrutiny “technologies”. It combines the psychoanalytic and sociological gaze of the expert knower, yet dynamically charges it, through its activation

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3 Here in its British function as agents of law and order, rather than the European bureaucratic function of regulatory power: see chapter 8 in Technologies of the Self: “The political technology of individuals”.

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of an “authentic”, apparently self-formulating voicing, by the subject, of their own “problem”. Radio talk prescribes behavioural examination and modelling in the interrogative and expert social-institutional voice: “The Radio Doctor”; “Our Legal Expert”; “Father John”, and carries it into the privacy of “home.” Radio talkback prescribes the listener-caller enactment of that disciplinary activity - subsequently representing it as originary and self-actualising, in much the same way as the media interview makes a “deep self” appear. The talkback participant, physically impenetrable to both the psychoanalytic or sociological “gaze” of the diagnostic “expert knower”, must formulate and recite their own narrative, in a direct representation of the confessional rituals of earlier pastoral constructs. Having already entered the discursive institutional relations of the particular talkback show in order to do so, they are already pre-disposed towards “diagnosis”: their narrative “self/problematised”; their discursive orientation established. As we shall see in future chapters, where the discursive institutional formation of the programme rests on traditional pastoral foundations - in “Dr Feelgood’s” mediated medico-counselling late-night Pillowtalk chat show for instance - the talk relations are benign, conciliatory and affiliative. On shows such as The Stan Zemanek Show, where the aim is less to entice listener-callers to participate in allowing disciplinary access to their private selves, than in “activating” and positioning those private selves as ideal consumers, talk relations are either combative or consensual - but in either mode, equally pre-disposed towards accessing the show’s discursive institutional formation of an enterprise culture.

In either case, it is the enactment of the required relation, from caller to caller, programme to programme, which counts. Nor has radio’s own subsequent technical development ignored the ongoing demands of the totalisation-individualisation processing. Radio’s more recent technological advances have progressed it into the ubiquity of a cheap and mobile audio reception, taking it even further into the diversity of individual experience (see Hosokawa 1984). It is now able to access and bear witness to the sorts of social-regulatory exercises hitherto possible only through physical presence at public and ritual occasion, or by eavesdropping on expert professional interventions. Consider for instance the ways motorists now call in on mobile phones to report traffic accidents and congestion, or the ways talk hosts deal with live on-air caller suicides (see Chapter 10). Radio gives social relevance and institutional power to endless streams of individual voicings. Contestational or consensual, they each in their way model those roles
available within the favoured discursive construction, and discipline those who seek to remain outside them.

This chapter examines the intensification of disciplinary activity which occurs when callers defy their discursive positionings. In particular, it shows the shift from talk-relational to social relational positioning - from disciplining at the level of technique, to that undertaken on direct socio-moral grounds. Such intensification becomes more observable as the ante rises: as the programme’s talk-relational management, then its discursive formation, and finally its direct discursive embrace of selected social practices, are challenged. Callers Alice and Adele, who stage-manage the host by means of a transparent but nonetheless successful acquiescence to his social positioning, reveal key aspects of his practices, yet leave the discourse formation intact. Sophie Smith, who openly embraces social values diametrically opposed to the host’s, is able to sustain them through her own status as an existing media commentator, her talk already generically established within an alternative discursive formation, which he is unable to contest. However caller Sandra, who is punished for her views more violently than any other single caller to The Stan Zemanek Show, reveals the degree to which Zemanek’s entire discursive edifice can be shaken to its core by an alternative ethos.

By comparative examination of the three types of interaction with these callers, it is possible to trace the programme’s core discursive formulations, as it is forced under various pressures to attend to its textual practices, discursive practices and social practices.

7.3 Contestation through consensus: turning the talk-relation to your advantage

The discourses of dynamic entrepreneurial productivity, as they are constructed within The Stan Zemanek Show, require women callers to take up positions as co-operative proto-consumers. Only then is their “private” experience admissible on-air - and then only at the host’s whim, as we have seen with Dorothy and Iris. Caller Alice, at 98 years of age, situates herself as well beyond the public world. In fact her accessing of it, even via the virtual medium of call-in radio, comes dangerously close (lines 1-7) to evoking an abusive response. The host appears set in the opening moments of this conversation to enter one of his tirades against the inept caller, misunderstanding the slow replies of an extremely aged women for the
confusions of an incompetent caller, at whose expense he can have the sort of “fun” he discussed with Tanya, above. Caller Alice admits that her life has shrunk to her bedroom, where contact is maintained largely by the “presence” of Stan Zemanek. In a call which evoked a flood of caller sentiment, she presents an aspect of the host-caller relationship which has been outlined by many commentators, (Higgins & Moss 1982; Davies, Dickey & Stratford 1987; Johnson 1988; Potts 1989) but which is in many ways still at the apex of the talkback host’s “privatising” impulse towards woman callers: the woman to be protected by the powerful male.

The Stan Zemanek Show, April 2 1996: caller “Alice”

1 Zemanek: Alice: hello.
2 Alice: Alice?
3 Zemanek: No, this is Stan: Elvis is dead.
4 Alice: Er er Alice is next is she?
5 Zemanek: Ellis, Alice? Alice.
6 Alice: Alice.
7 Zemanek: Yes. Is your name Alice?
8 Alice: My name is Alice.
9 Zemanek: Very good ...
10 Alice: I've been listening to you since 9 o'clock Stan
11 Zemanek: Fan - tastic ...
12 Alice: And, it's about time I went to sleep I'm 98 years of age and I'd love
13 you if you had time, to play me the Stan Zemanek and the Angels.
14 Zemanek: Stan Zemanek and the Angels!
15 Alice: The Angels.
16 Zemanek: You really like them do you?
17 Alice: Oh I love it, I listen - every chance I get I listen and I haven't heard
18 it for a long time.
19 Zemanek: Well darling just for you I'll play it for you.
20 Alice: Oh thank you!
21 Zemanek: Now listen do you get out all that much?
22 Alice: No I never get out I'm pretty well a cripple Stan.
23 Zemanek: Well I tell you what sweetheart how about I send you a great big
24 bunch of flowers from my mate Jeffrey at the Flower Factory.
25 Alice: Oh (ha) that'd be lovely but I I'll do love that especially the
26 chorus, the Angels.
27 Zemanek: Well sweetheart I'm gonna play that for you can you hang on?
28 Alice: Thank you so much
29 Zemanek: And I'll put you back to our lovely lady on the switch tonight [ Oh
30 Alice: thank you [ [the lovely Fiona: and you hang on there my sweet don't
31 hang up and Fiona if you can take that lovely Alice back there
32 we'll send her out a big bunch of flowers, and some balloons from the
33 wonderful people down there at Botany Balloons in Double Bay:
34 darling, you wanted John Rowan and the Angels: here they are ...

The host's role in this exchange - once he has realised who the caller is - proves as proscribed as the woman's social existence. As Higgins and Moss (1982) demonstrate in their analysis of a home-bound female caller (“Lady who wants to buy a dog”, pp.12-14) the very restriction which the home-
bound caller represents as comprising her life, is a perverse form of
countering power. The social relation played out in the talk is close to a form
of passive aggression, in that only one response-positioning is left available
for the host. Otherwise all-powerful, he is here utterly constrained. His only
possible response is to provide whatever the caller wants; to saturate her with
sentiment, play the music she requests, sends her flowers ... It may all be
reducible to patronisation, but the details are entirely on her terms.

Reading successfully the host’s projection of his own power within the
discourses of patriarchy, many women manoeuvre successfully. A Zemanek
regular caller, “Adele of Coogee”, also provides evidence of the ways he
constructs his role within that realm. Adele however, rather than textually
out-manoeuvring the host, negotiates over the host’s attempts to engage her
within his performative texts - and so inadvertently reveals them under
construction. While Adele, like all other regular female callers - even “Missy”
- is not a co-texting “reporter” in the sense that Wayne or “Banjo” have
attained, she is here invited by the host to enter a more openly public role. He
wants her to appear with him during one of his stage cabarets.

The Stan Zemanek Show, April 3 1966: caller “Adele of Coogee”

1  Zemanek:  Now listen: are you coming up to the ah, Holiday Inn at Coogee on
2        the 27th and 28th of July?
3  Adele:    Yess...
4  Zemanek:  Well that is - I'm pleased about that! Tell you what it is gonna be a
5        big night ...
6  Adele:    Yeah I'm sure it (hehe) will be Stan!
7  Zemanek:  W - w- would you get embarrassed if I introduced you on the stage?
8  Adele:    He he he .... oh, no - oh, no?
9  Zemanek:  No?
10  Adele:     No ho ho!
11  Zemanek:  ‘Cos I'd like to, because - see I: my listeners like to see [ ]
12        Adele:          [ why would
13        you want to do that?
14  Zemanek:  Well because my listeners like to see what the other listeners look
15        like.
16  Adele:    Hahaha
17  Zemanek:  And as you’re one of the personalities of this radio programme ...
18  Adele:    Oh they probably don’t even know that though!
19  Zemanek:  Course they do, course they doo ... they always ask about Adele at
20        Coogee.
21  Adele:    Yeess ... OK. Whatever you’d like, Stan
22  Zemanek:  Well that'd be fantastic darling: um, I wanted to seek your
23        permission first because I know that you’re a tad shy sometimes ...

This “spontaneous” and public elevation of caller to co-star helps sustain the
“access” positioning of the show - bearing in mind the severity of talk-
closures set up by the host’s construction of his persona around the elements
of an aggressive masculinity. Here the talk genres are opened out until they
cross over from social conversation to promotional activity-planning. Adele is
transformed into a promotional commodity: a “personality” who can be lifted
further into the public realm at the host’s whim. Even female personalities
can be made public, as long as they are sufficiently compliant, and conscious
of the reality of their “real” social and cultural positioning, inside the realm of
the private; as long as they still know how to be “… a tad shy …”

7.4 Consensual contestation: disturbance in the talk-relational flow
when a female caller activates a differently-founded discourse

It is worth examining what happens when Zemanek encounters one of the
few women “regulars” on his show who is able - albeit unwittingly - to
destabilise his control publicly. Her contribution allows me to examine
whether a parallel but different social vision can survive on The Stan Zemanek
Show.

Sophie Smith from London is among the regular “stringers” for the show:
those who have a recurring guest spot, without being sponsors or else
legitimate callers elevated into “regulars”. Note the rare use of this
contributor’s full name, perhaps operating as a professional journalistic by-
line, since she delivers a daily rundown on the strange and quirky stories
from the day’s British tabloid press. As in the case of Dr René Pols, it seems
possible that Sophie Smith is, initially at least, unaware of the social and
political positioning of the show to which she is contracted. Her own politics,
casually overt, frequently fail to jell with the host’s. In the confident tones
which British media have taught us to associate with a young and street-wise
generation of quick-witted urban professionals, most of them with left-wing
leanings, Sophie Smith selects for The Stan Zemanek Show media stories which
deflate Tory politicians, business moguls, and perpetrators of sexist or racist
attacks. Many of these are causes dear to the host’s very public heart: part of
his construction of “enterprise” discourse. That her talk-texts are admitted
into the programme is partly due to this very “enterprise” construction - for
she presents with all of the Zemanek criteria for the dynamic entrepreneurial
self. But for all her cheery brightness of tone and evident enjoyment of tabloid
trivia, Sophie Smith has a voice which seems to be wearing Doc Martens -
and, as with Minister Ruddock, Zemanek backs away rapidly from any
possibility of confrontation.
The Stan Zemanek Show, April 1 1996: UK commentator “Sophie Smith”

Zemanek: It is ah, 10 minutes to the hour this is, Stan Zemanek up and down the East coast of Australia on the telephone from beautiful downtown London is Sophie Smith: and Sophie believe you've got a story there about a Sacked: Chip: Girl Wins a Victory - what's the story-y-y ...

Sophie Smith: Hi ya Stan, here we go: (uhh mm) the headline reads that Chip Girl Wins Victory, basically in Cardiff Wales, (uhh) a chip shop worker was sacked, for taking a day off, because she was suffering from PMT. (uhh) Anyway, her boss, when this was taken to court, her boss was ordered to cough up a bit of dough, an' she was awarded 442 pounds, which I guess is the equivalent of, (uhh) 880 Australian dollars I guess.. umm, but the girl, she called in sick with [ ] period pain, her boss was having none o' that, gave 'er...

Zemanek: [ ye - ]

Sophie Smith: the sack, claiming "It's a good job men don't have periods." Which I think's a pretty typical guy response, Stan!

Zemanek: W, w, well it depends, Sophie, what sort of guy you're going out with ... I mean, us Australian blokes, we, we're not a crass as that ... Sophie Smith: ( : ) Oooh! Staaan! I'm really pleased to hear that!

Zemanek: Yes, I mean, we're all lovers out here, and very sophis - [ ]

Sophie Smith: [ Oooh..]

Zemanek: Nice one! [ ] - very sophisticated lovers as a matter of fact [ ]

Sophie Smith: [ er he he]

haha! I'll have to come visit you guys then some time.

Zemanek: I think you should Sophie now listen what's story about A Bird Brained Parrot Saves the Owner?

Sophie Smith: Well ... ( : ) I think this could only happen in England. Basically (uhh) "A bird-brained parrot who thinks he's a dog, saved his elderly owner from a burglar, (uhh) Billy the parrot," who even eats dog food apparently, “barked, when the intruder broke into his owner’s home.” She was then able to (uhh) weigh in with her walking stick, and sent the burglar packing! What a nice story, eh?

Zemanek: Very good story indeed: speaking about ah, screwed up er animals, I had a - I had a cat called Veggemite, and a dog called Buffy, and when we used to feed the cat, the dog, the cat used to eat the dog food and the dog used to eat the cat food.

Sophie Smith: Stan you got a couple of weird pets there I'm afraid

Zemanek: I think they deserve to go off to a psychiatrist somewhere but however maybe some people would say well the owner shoulda gone with 'em I suppose.

Sophie Smith: Well, maybe - I tell you what, there's a bit of a craze at the moment, you just reminded me - I wasn't even sure whether it was an April Fool's day joke, in one of the papers today, I saw dog owners are now taking their pets with them to the gym so that the dog can work out with them.

Zemanek: Oh yeah - I mean, we've been doing that in Australia now for the last twenty years!

Sophie Smith: Oooh my god Stan - please tell me that you're winding me up!

Zemanek: Ahahahaha!

Sophie Smith: Tell me this is an April Fool's joke!

Zemanek: Noo! We been doing that in Australia for years!

Sophie Smith: Oooh my god you weirdos!

Sophie Smith is discussing the tabloid press - the privatised, personalised idiosyncrasies of a distant culture; behaviours which are coded as aberrant.
and represented at the level of gossip. She does not however shrink from the representation of direct political opinion on the cases she details. At line 17 for instance she remarks on the gender politics of the Welsh compensation case: "... a pretty typical guy response, Stan!" But for all the amusing detail of the narrative, there remains a discomfort for the host. His capacity to construct contestational abuse or to detail his own opinion at the level of invective and so counter Sophie Smith’s spin on these stories is denied. He had for instance in the same show delivered an editorial attack on the "stupidity" of compensation awards for industrial stress claims. Compensation over unfair dismissal for pre-menstrual tension (PMT) is unlikely to appeal to him as a just cause. But Sophie Smith is, after all, even more licensed as a commentator than Wayne or "Jockstrap Joe". She is a fellow media professional, with, presumably, a contractual arrangement with the station. Her editorial commentary thus goes unchallenged - except perhaps by the host’s constant attempts to outdo her sense of UK culture as pre-eminent in idiosyncratic behaviours "... I think this could only happen in England." Worse, this level of contestation involves a strategy where Zemanek places himself in the position of relating personal and domestic anecdotes about his household pets - usually the repertoire of his female callers ...

So why is the host unable to re-take the conversational high-ground in this relation? Probably because of the layers of pre-positioning already evident in the saturating intertextual reference of the conversation. While the press stories discussed represent the quirky, personal excesses of aberrant individuals - usually grist to the Zemanek mill - these behaviours have calculatedly been adopted into the cultural mainstream of a consistent representation of English eccentricity - a point which Sophie Smith makes overt. More importantly for Zemanek, they are already implicated in the marketisation processing of publication in the commercially successful tabloid press. They are thus doubly legitimised or discursively positioned texts, and not so easily overturned or transformed or appropriated as the still-under-construction talk-texts of ordinary callers to The Stan Zemanek Show, or pre-disposed to its discourse practices. Further, the agent of their introduction, like Minister Ruddock, is a media professional, as quick in the game of strategic textual re-positioning as Zemanek. Her distanciation for instance of her own disbelief at Zemanek’s "tall story" responses in defence of Australian eccentricity signals her capacity to be agent of text, not agent of experience (lines 49-51). She uses a direct command modality as she insists
that Zemanek recast his story: "Tell me that you're winding me up!" "Tell me this is an April Fool's joke!" At the same time she repositions his text directly into the ambit of a performed genre: a "wind up"; an "April Fool's joke." At every turn her media-savvy sense of the constructedness of the talk between herself and Zemanek allows her to escape his transformations, and activate her own. Her independent access to the media world validates the ongoing presence on The Stan Zemanek Show of a set of real world social practices and their equivalent discourse formations otherwise completely inadmissible within the programme ethos.

7.5 "You wanna stop being rude!" - female contestation at the level of talk relations, discourse formation and social practice

At this stage it is important to note that many elements which women callers dispute in the host's performance become admirable in the context of an all-pervasive marketing ethic. His aggression, even with the occasional female caller, is a case in point. On its own terms, aggressive contestation of what is commercially inactive, is acceptable and justified. The host's performance thus becomes expansive, entrepreneurial, affirmative, and constructive. It builds and sustains a discursive model for a world of opportunistic commercial enterprise, endlessly on the look-out. As he says at the outset of each call: "Aaand, what do we have here?"

Zemanek's politics then become coherent: not at all the "mumbling set of incoherences" he is accused of (Adams, The 7.30 Report, ABC Television, 1998). He is for instance anti-marijuana use, not from any sustained position of wowserism. He freely admits his own use of alcohol and a semi-playboy life of yachting, horse-racing, and rounds of social events. His position on drugs is taken up with vehemence, as erosive of properly-focused enterprise. Thus it is that one of his rare attacks on a female "resistant" caller is over the issue of marijuana use - which she supports. Unusual for the length of the exchange, this particular call from "Sandra" demonstrates clearly the ways in which the host codes the caller as representing all that he builds against. He calls her a parasitic welfare bludger, not inculcating the right attitudes in her

5 "The wowser" in Australian English is a semi-hypocritical puritan, explicitly opposed to the consumption of alcohol, but by extension to any pleasurable pastime and especially those subject to moral debate. Zemanek himself thus escapes the charge, since although he is extreme in his public opposition against illicit drug use or reform legislation, he is publicly known as a sportsman, gambler, party-goer and drinker.
kids; “brain damaged”, slow, non dynamic, and in sum, “a disgrace.” A consistency is emerging in his otherwise unpredictable positionings.

The caller however contests this increasingly strident set of accusations, by opposing not the social position it sets up for her, but the techniques used in creating it. More than any other single caller, Sandra lays open both the impossibility of practising in every listener life-world the social vision which the host presents (“social practices”), and the techniques of manipulation used to silence contesting visions arising from within those life-worlds (“text practices”). It is no surprise that this is one of the most disrupted calls in the data corpus. This extremely lengthy exchange is technically broken twice by the host’s calls for the caller to maintain “proper” radio conduct - an interesting inversion! Subjected to one of the most sustained and vituperative streams of abuse anywhere on the show, Sandra however stands her ground, and asserts her right to see things differently. It is an extraordinary performance, and one worth considering in its entirety (see Appendix 7 for the full transcript). I will examine most closely those moments in the text at which contestation shifts grounds, in particular focusing on the movement from broader social debate, to what amounts to a metatextual critique of the terms of the debate, as Sandra asserts her right to be heard. At the same time, I will focus on the stages within the exchange which function as possible - and in some cases actual - end points. Given the ferocity of Sandra’s defensive ploys and the unacceptability of her whole position on drug use to the host, why does he continue with the conversation? The answer lies in the complicated politics of control operating across this text.

In the opening exchange the caller seeks to comment on drug use, openly discussing her own experiences. The host takes advantage as usual of the “going second” position, probing her comments with questions which seem like continuers (lines 9-10 and 13, 15) but which prove to be the beginnings of a major “contrast structure” destabilisation. This matures at line 24, when he asks her whether she is also “a prostitute” - an attempt to refocus on what he sees as her culpability: a failure to accept her “correct” private-sphere positioning as mother and wife.

_The Stan Zemanek Show, April 3 1996: caller “Sandra”_

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<th>Zemanek:</th>
<th>Sandra:</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Yes, let's see what we've got here: Sandra, hello.</td>
<td>Hak how are ya?</td>
<td>Very well thank you</td>
<td>That's good um: I'm just going back on, about the marijuana thing.</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sandra:</td>
<td>Zemanek:</td>
<td>Yes er Sandra</td>
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Sandra: Yeah um just a little bit there um I reckon that ah um, that is I'd be in that 2% drop (indec) which is pretty good, as far as I'm concerned, I'm a solo mum, I've got a few kids [Yes - and you're on drugs too?]
Zemanek: Yeah I don't mind smokin' it occasionally? yeah there's nothin' wrong with it in my eyes.
Sandra: OK and, and wh-what, do you hand it round to your kids?
Zemanek: No I don't
Sandra: Do they see you smoking it?
Zemanek: Yes they do
Sandra: [ Yes.
Zemanek: And you don't mind seeing them seeing you smoke marijuana!
Sandra: The thing is that, the more you try to hide it, the more you, you are um barricaded from something and um I mean OK [it's illegal [ in [ [ I see ] so [ ] so that's illegal, do you also bring men into your house and charge them to ah, to be a prostitute?
Sandra: (suppressed) you wanna stop being rude cos I think that's not fair!

The next phase of the exchange is particularly interesting, given the way in which each participant works for control, but in different ways. While the caller tries, from line 25 above, to re-negotiate the terms of the exchange: expressly to move it onto a “fair” basis in which her original topic will be heard, the host moves to justify his equation of drug use and prostitution - and thus his strategy of direct insult. He produces a series of leading questions to control the debate (lines 26-30). The caller’s attempts to deny this as a base for the discussion are overridden, largely by interruption and suppression through the ducker device. When she refuses to be silenced or to accede to the host’s formulations, he resorts to re-setting the technical conditions of the call. He makes the caller go off-air to turn down her radio - and insults her while she is away.

Zemanek: No no I mean [ you're talking about [ an illegal drug [ you're talking (indec) alright [ no I want to talk about about an illegal drug, and it's illegal to be a prostitute as well.
Sandra: No - [ [Would you allow your children to see you doing something illegal as [ a prostitute? [radio off?] feedback [drug, and it's illegal to be a prostitute ...]
Sandra: No - I would - I've really got no concern on that matter, I'm (indec) [You've got no concern, [ no, you couldn't care less you - in - [ [ (indec) about that [ the state Zemanek: Darling, can you - can you do me a favour: turn the radio down in the background? (...) because - I mean - you're slow enough as it is, and you don't wanna be any slower.
Sandra: Well hang on then!
Zemanek: Yeah, turn the radio down. Now, she's gone to turn the radio down, we've only been doing talkback for 35 years, they still haven't learned to turn the radio down, but then again if you smoke marijuana your brain's gonna be slow. Are you there darling? (...
No, she’s gone away somewhere. Will she come back - here she comes! hello!

Sandra: The radio was on in the kitchen for starters, [yes, that's good -]

Zemanek: 

The host has thus taken up an early opportunity to deploy what Hutchby (1996, p. 105) describes as “the power of the last word” - the capacity to remain on-air and to summarise the debate on your own terms. This is usually reserved to the closure of a call, as we have seen with Minister Ruddock. In this call however Zemanek has three separate opportunities to have the last word, since this call is actually cut three times. This equation of the technologically-empowering aspects of radio practice with the talk relations within the conversation endorses Hutchby’s views of an “asymmetry” rehearsed across all aspects of talkback talk. Here, given the discursive construction within all of Zemanek’s texts of an ethos of dynamic action and quick-thinking productivity, it is no surprise that he uses the space provided by the caller’s temporary absence to make accusations about her "slow-wittedness" (lines 41-45).

Upon her return (line 49) the caller attempts to re-enter the debate on her own terms. She seizes the “P” position, presumably unaware of the host’s insults while she was off-air. Indeed, the broadcast delay means that his comments (lines 41-44) will not yet have reached her radio receiver set. Instead of responding, she begins immediately to unpack her view on personal experience as a pre-requisite to social comment. This is the position which Scannell (1996) has shown as reserved precisely for the talkback caller, who is required to “serve up” their everyday observations as “data” for the expert diagnosis of the disciplining host (or guest authority). The confidence of Sandra’s launch into her own perspective operates as a counter-accusation: a suggestion that the host is unable to comment, since he has no base in personal experience. Both the argument and the implied accusation evoke a steep acceleration in the ferocity of the host’s response. Immediately he insults the caller. Her reaction however is not quite what he had been expecting.

Sandra: (indec) yeah, I mean the way I look at it is don't su - don't knock somethin' till you try it, I mean [ (indec) ]that it is that,

Zemanek: Well darling I don't have to, I [don't have to - (listen you imbecile!]

Sandra: alright, (indec)

Zemanek: And darling I just had to cut you off there but just hang on a second I'll come back to you because you can't use those sort of swear words like that.

music-sting promo: “Night time entertainment - Stan Zemanek ...”
At line 52 the caller has sworn at the host. Between lines 51 and 55 the talk exchange remains relatively seamless to the listener, because the host has activated the cut-off button in delay, and maintained his meta-commentary talk over it: "And darling I just had to cut you off there ..." What is of most interest here is his decision to restore her to air: to continue this conversation. To work out why, means examining the outcomes of what the caller has achieved so far. What she has effectively done is to breach the host’s control in three ways. In the first instance she has sworn on air, as woman to man - a complete rupture of the otherwise quite rigid gendering on this programme, which attributes the right to violent language to males only. Secondly, she has taken control by literally taking the programme off air. She has forced the host to implement the cut off facility, to meet the regulatory provisions of the ABA against obscenity. Short of the - very rare - caller hang up this is the only way in which a caller can stop the flow of talk. It is also infinitely more manipulative than the hang-up, since it causes not only an immediate in-studio flurry and cover routine, but also occasions log-book entries to accompany the ABA security tapes. Thus the never-ending quest from teenaged media-pranksters, who devise various strategies to get past call-screeners for the sole purpose of causing a delay-cut.

Beyond the stop-and-restart that she achieves, Sandra has finally derailed the slow evolution of the “contrast structure” strategy in which the host was still engaged. His careful re-positioning of her experiences into ones which he could manipulate as moral lapses - his move from drug use to prostitution - operates at three levels. In pure conversational terms it is a deflection from

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4 And in gendered speech-relations more generally, which regard swearing as a male-to-male or male-to-female speech act (see Coates 1986) and reserve female-to-female swearing for a private act of communal affiliation via resistance (Coates 1996.)

5 The Australian Broadcasting Tribunal prohibits any material which is “blasphemous, obscene or indecent.” Because of the very wide social range addressed in broadcasting, and the multi-cultural basis of the listenerships, there are no absolute bans on the use of particular words. It is interesting then to conjecture what the caller actually said, given some of the expressions the host himself uses. It should be noted however that Australian radio stations have been disciplined by the ABT for obscenity, 4ZZZ-FM in Brisbane having its licence renewal restricted to two instead of three years for broadcasting obscene material.

6 Hutchby for instance found only one example in 120 calls (1996, p. 96) and there are none in my own data corpus.

7 All radio stations are required by conditions of licence to maintain automatic logger-tapes during broadcast. These very slow 12-hour spool tapes are stored for quality-control and as evidence in cases of listener charges of breaches of the ABT Guidelines. A Station logbook also records any phoned-in listener complaints, and entries made by production staff in relation to any possible breaches of ABT guidelines by callers or other contributors to programming - such as possibly obscene language.
purpose. As a strategy of argument, it works to high-jack the topic. As a demonstration of socio-moral standards, it amounts to a leap onto the highest possible moral ground. By allowing the caller back on air he gains a fourth advantage. He forces from her an apology, and so gains the space to launch his next “contrast structure” case: a long if ill-defined parallel of the “illogicality” of her argument, built around jumping from planes without parachutes or driving the family car into walls at 300 miles an hour (lines 65-71). Once again however the caller demonstrates her refusal to be derailed, with an interruption to his flow.

56 Zemanek: OK you still there?
57 Sandra: Yeah ...
58 Zemanek: OK unfortunately, ah, you said a - [
59 Sandra: [ Sorry, I shouldn't have spoken
60 out of turn [
61 Zemanek: [ No, no, you shouldn't've ... and, ah, unfortunately I
62 suppose when you're on drugs you lose your inhibitions [ I suppose
63 Sandra: [ (indec) no
64 no [ not at all - (indec) [
65 Zemanek: [ Let's get back [ Let's get back to something you just said,
66 you said well, you haven't tried it so you can't comment on it. I also
67 haven't dropped out of a plane without a parachute, I haven't
68 driven a car at 300 miles an hour round a corner, ah, up the (indec)
69 hills or something, and I haven't jumped off a mountain, but I do
70 have common-sense that says to me, I shouldn't do those sort of
71 things because it will harm me. So therefore [ I know not to smoke
72 Sandra: [ (indec) well if it does
73 harm you how can a natural herb harm anyone ...

It is at this stage that the major strategic positionings of both host and caller begin to emerge. The caller develops a dual attack, partly metatextual: “... there you go and you put words into someone else’s mouth ...” (lines 102-103) and partly an insistence on her right to define her own morality, to suit her own social context: “... the way it is to me, is that, I would rather my kids see it than hide something from them. That they’re gonna find out about anyway. Alright? And at least they know they can come to me with it” (lines 219-221).

The host resorts to a tri-partite construction. His first point is built around his usual insistence that the caller is another brain-damaged drug user, unable to sustain an argument at his own high level of debate:

164 Zemanek: Well now - darling - but unfortunately you can't - because your brain
165 is so addled [and you can't think straight, you're very slow up
166 Sandra: [huh huh! on the
167 Zemanek: uptake, that you-you-you have no reasoning at all!
From here he moves via his own contrast structure positioning to suggest that she is therefore inevitably a bad mother and wife:

"... I'm just wondering what your husband thinks of your drug taking" (lines 84-85)

"... I mean if they had licences for mothers, they should revoke your licence" (lines 133-134)

Ultimately he treats her as if she were patently open to direct and abusive insult:

"You-are-a-dill" (line 74)

"I'm leaving you on darling because I wanna see - have everybody see what an imbecile you are!" (lines 119-120)

"Darling, you're a feeble minded schmuck, do you know that?" (lines 137-138)

As the debate continues, the host moves again and again on these features of his position, constructing the caller as too unintelligent to debate. She equally consistently counter-challenges him. At times this is part of her ongoing appeal that he look at current social conditions (line 171). But she is also capable of calling on him defiantly to make good his threats - for instance his insistence at lines 180-182 that he will denounce her to the authorities.

171 Sandra: For the life time of today you've gotta give it, give everyone a break, and [
172
173 Zemanek: [Give everyone a break: you're sitting there smoking the wacky tobacky in front of your children, you should be - you should be hauled up in front of the bloody gov'ment, in front of the authorities, [
174
175
176
177 Sandra: [Yeah well good on ya: bust me!
178
179 Zemanek: Bust you?
180 Sandra: Yeah. Do it! (indec) can take it!
181 Zemanek: Let me - let me tell you if I knew what your address was I'd - I'd send round the bloody authorities straight away! You're an irresponsible mother!
182 Sandra: No I don't think I am
183

The caller's continued capacity to deny the host's charges leads him to resort to outright abuse.

184 Zemanek: You're an ab [- you're a drug addict! [you're a dirty, [
185 Sandra: [ (indec) [ (indec) I don't think I am I [ (indec) at least my kids know what's [ 
186 Zemanek: [ you're a dirty, [ you're a dirty, [
187
188 Zemanek: dirty, (grime drug addict [ 
189 Sandra: (indec) the reality of life - Oh, now your being sick!
190
191 Zemanek: No - [ I'm not being sick darling I'm just - [ stating-a-fact.
None of these are attacks on the use of marijuana. They are instead accusations of inattention to the gendered social roles demanded by the host. His attacks are made not over the use of the drug, but over the caller’s suitability as a mother (lines 133-134 and 173-182); and wife (lines 84-101; 173-182). Sandra is disqualified as potential contributor to the world he has constructed of “sharp thinkers” - such as himself and pro-enterprise consensual callers. His escalation into abuse is built over attribution to the caller of sexual looseness; lax motherhood, slovenly housekeeping, inattention to dutiful obedience to a husband. This is the repertoire of the traditional slut - a word Sandra in fact assumes is being used of her at lines 137-140 when the host (inappropriately) calls her “schmuck” (a word which is probably far more abusive than whatever it was the caller used at the cut-off at line 52.)

7.6 Contestation at the level of social practice: why Sandra threatens more than the talk-host’s control of technique

The extraordinary nature of the host’s transformation of Sandra’s “crimes” against his moral universe cracks open to the very foundations his discursive formation of an ideal social economy, and especially its gendered base. It is, moreover, a formation which, as Sandra must sense, is inimical to the largely “battler” orientation of Zemanek’s and 2UE’s working class, outer-suburban audience. Walkerdine and Lucey (1989) give “poor mothering” as one of the constitutive class markers of working class women. They show it as having been elaborated through the dual fear/desire drive of a bourgeois constitutive subjectivisation, using the working class as “other”. The technique is explicitly present in the host’s appalled rendering of caller Sandra as female-abject (Kristeva 1982). She is made into a version of un-maternal heedlessness: parental irresponsibility in urgent need of direct disciplinary intervention by “the authorities” (lines 133-34; 173-182.)

Lynette Finch, in The Classing Gaze (1993)\(^{\text{4}}\) demonstrates how far the working class was elaborated as a social category not by economic, but by moral accounts. Against such narratives as Mayhew’s proto-sociological surveys of the London poor, or Dickens’ fiction, bourgeois-patriarchal identity - and the necessity of its control - could be asserted. Investigating in particular the

\(^{\text{4}}\) See also Cranny-Francis, 1995
observational texts of the nineteenth-century social surveyors, she details their focus on a select and recurrent list of features which become naturalised as markers of the working class state:

The range of concerns through which middle class observers made sense of the behaviour of the observed, included references to: living conditions (in particular how many people lived in a single room); drinking behaviour (both male and female); language (including both the types of things that were talked about, and the manner in which they were referred to - literally the types of words used); and children’s behaviour (specifically how closely they were watched and controlled, and the types of things they were allowed to talk about) (Finch 1993, p. 10).

Each of these categories is present in the host’s response to the Sandra call. The first, a concern with “living conditions”, is carried partially in the host’s otherwise curious insistence that the caller is “dirty” and “grimy” (lines 187-88), and partially in his shock at her children seeing her on “the wacky tobacky” (line 211). Beneath the otherwise undue reaction is an indication of how far the host shares the careful Victorianism which Finch saw as suppressing the real concern behind observations of “how many people lived in a single room”. Finch details how the bourgeois concept of the romanticised innocence of childhood was breached by prurient imagining over what a child inevitably saw within that “single room.”

“What children see” is also what drives the host’s leap between open household use of marijuana, and an accusation of prostitution. While the ploy in conversational terms is part of the host’s normal repertoire: a classic “contrast construction”, used to derail the caller’s main point in favour of a destabilising, less irrelevant detail, the selection of that detail is here clearly motivated. Dissension over the nature of children’s experience of the social is at the heart of this contemporary debate, which reiterates patriarchal and bourgeois moves to discipline female and working class “dis-order”. This is still a classed and gendered issue, despite the fact that the terms are not used by either party. Both explain their view of the other’s unacceptable position in terms of personal inadequacy. Thus is suppressed not only a class debate, but a gendered one - for if the ground over which they fight is classed, the techniques used in both cases are built around gendered understandings and practices (Pratt, 1997).

The caller’s performance, and persistence, especially beneath the barrage of technically-assisted over-talking, add up to a powerful resistance. She breaks out of the usual gendered consensual stroking and patronisation, and into the
direct combative patterns of male callers - even accelerating into abusive patterns. She is able to maintain a fluent stream of speech even when over-spoken by the host. Indeed it is this which most often provokes his ire. He makes repeated attempts to change the power position by introduction of a redirection of the argument onto his own terms (see for instance lines 24; 61; 258.) That the caller is conscious of the host’s strategies throughout the exchange is particularly evident:

“... you wanna stop being rude ‘cos I think that’s not fair!” (line 25)

“... see there you go and you put words in someone else’s mouth!” (lines 102-103)

“... DON’T call me a fool!”

“You are a fool!”

“No - no you see this is where you like to cut people off!” (lines 115-118)

“... at least you can put a label on it” (line 151)

“... you aren’t even in this with an open mind are ya?” (lines 305-306)

Sandra is reflexive in her drive to sustain her own position, which she maintains coherently despite the host’s use of his entire repertoire of rhetorical and technical strategies against her. This is one of the most physically interrupted calls in the data corpus. Remember that it includes overtalking, extreme use of the ducker, re-routing of the argument, one direct cut and the actual physical direction of the caller to leave the phone and attend to her radio. Throughout, the caller maintains her position on how and how far community moralities are dependent on varying community experiences:

“For the lifetime of today, you’ve gotta give it, give everyone a break” (lines 171-172)

“I would rather my kids see it than hide something from them. That they’re gonna find out about anyway. Alright? And at least they know they can come to me with it.” (lines 218-221)

“At least my kids know what’s the reality of life” (lines 186-189)

Each of these assertions incidentally formulates positions congruent with the host’s beliefs about family integrity and independence, and “give-it-a-go”
self-help ethics. Sandra however reveals that there are different perspectives within the community, all deserving consideration: “give everyone a break”. She insists that she has the right and the responsibility to help her children to a workable compromise inside a legal system which is not aligned with their own experiences or practices. More significantly, she maintains her awareness of her own capacity to see things her own way; to hold her line: “… will stick by my guns, all the way, my way” (lines 231-32). To this end she constructs a critique of the host’s insistence on his own interpretation - even of areas he has not experienced:

“… the way you want to see it that’s not the way it is” (line 213)

“Yeah, you like to put people down, you know what: I - I - you know what really gets to me is the fact you ... don’t even KNOW” (lines 247-48)

“... now, back to the story ... like I said, it’s not like you’re playin’ it ...” (line 255)

Zemanek’s problem with Sandra is thus in many ways self-produced. It relates to the claims made within the “common-sense” and “real-life” pragmatism of his enterprise discursive construct for an ethic based upon immediate and “lived” experience - that curious offer by the media of a space “where you can have your say”, and yet have it unmediated and authentic. 9 Sandra’s is such a voice - and self-consciously so, in both the colloquial force of her social dialect, and her awareness of voicing her own immediate experience. “The story” for Sandra is her own narrative - not, to her surprise and that of many fellow-callers, the official line - often cited from official documents - as Zemanek is “playin’ it.” For Sandra there is a very clear “way it is”, which she expects to be admissible within the frames of the “self-made man”. To her surprise the very class identification which she expects to over-ride the gender-exclusions of Zemanek’s discursive formation is turned against her.

7.7 Epistemic violence: the direct suppression of a woman’s experience

In the case of Sandra, the “confession” she has produced is entirely without absolution. Her acceptance of the invitation to “have your say” evokes only an application of the apparatus of suppression, in which not just her opinions,
but her very life experiences, are ruled out of order. Zemanek, standing in not just for patriarchy, but for patriarchy founded on bourgeois sensibility, feels enabled to tell her that that her experiences are inadmissible. So violent is his response to her defiance of his patriarchal expectations, that it calls for further scrutiny. Here the aggression of his argumentation, while using exactly the same techniques - even the same terms - as those with male disputants (see Chapters 4 and 5) builds an added head of steam from Sandra’s refusal to fit neatly into the “consensual” and reciprocal roles usually used with women callers. It is her capacity to sustain his frustrated anger, and to maintain her counter line, which evokes the aggression. But it is the depth of her challenge: her insistence not just on the right to participate in contestational talk, but her representation of social practices outside the host’s discursive formation, which charge up his fury.

How far can a working class woman assert her own interpretation - even of her own experiences - against the normalising visions of publicly licensed social commentators such as Zemanek? Steedman (1986) investigates ways in which powerful originary studies based around women’s narratives of their own lives have expressed refusals by powerful males to accept those stories as relating “reality”. She outlines for instance Freud’s insistence on seeing beneath, rather than in, “Dora’s” story, the determinants of her neurosis. She examines Mayhew’s incapacity to understand the “evidence” given to his inquiry into the lives of the labouring poor, by a young watercress seller. The “expert” listener’s “disciplining” epistemological framing of women’s stories constrains them to see and not see [hear and not hear], in a myriad of ways. This then in turn affects the very nature of what is, and what is not, a possible story - and so a possible life. Steedman moves between Freud’s “talking cure” method of eliciting “truth” from distortions, and Marcus’ critique of such techniques. By suggesting that only the intervention of the therapist’s “re-telling” can allow the whole, “healed” person to emerge, with a completed self narrative, the “teller” or interpreter becomes the empowered social agent (see also Sarup 1996). Steedman is able to show us that with Mayhew and the watercress seller, the story was coherent and intact on its own terms, as the child told it. But the account was not an acceptable

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10 See also Glastonbury, 1979.
narrative to the “expert” listener. He consequently coded the teller as incoherent: as in some way, damaged.

Feminist discussions of the exclusion of women and their perspectives from social authority have the capacity to tease out these suppressions of women’s self-defining impulses from the regulatory and Habermasian exclusions still operating inside both enterprise and pastoral discourse. Kathleen Jones (1988) sees the inadmissibility of women’s life experience - such as in Sandra’s case - as stemming from “the separation of public life and political authority from private life and the passions” (p. 120). She comments on how little impact attempts by women to access and act within hitherto sequestered realms will have, without recognition that “authority” is itself conceptually secured by discourses which oppose it to “emotive connectedness or compassion.” (From the evidence of The Stan Zemanek Show, we might also add “acceptance of the worth of everyday life experience outside authoritative scrutiny”). Following Foucault, Jones proposes to examine the construction of authority as an historical and ongoing process. Defining Foucault’s method as “subversive”, she emphasises its capacity to look

... below the dominant meanings of texts to consider meanings and knowledge hidden or disqualified. To deconstruct authority is to discover the ways that a particular conceptual framework restricts our knowledge of it (1988, p. 121).

In particular, the elaboration of “authority” historically within patriarchy, has removed from its ambit all attitudes and behaviours culturally demarked as female:

... an overemphasis on the ‘rationality’ of authority; i.e., the radical separation of the realm of cognition from the realm of belief and feeling, arbitrarily restricts authority to formal rules. In addition, the logic of defining authority as a system of ‘conflict resolution’, sees decision making less as consensus building and more as a process of adjudicating competing private claims of self-interest. Moreover, since adjudication requires some ‘surrender of private judgement’, traditional notions of authority incorporate an acceptance of an internal conflict between authority and personal autonomy. Finally, the norms that constitute authority as an association of inequality and control are understood to be unmodified by emotive connectedness or compassion (1988, p. 121).

Each of these hierarchicised polarities has much to say about Zemanek’s performance as he struggles to discipline back into normative femininity and maternal rectitude, the “monstrous mother” he is himself constituting in the Sandra confrontation. The incommensurability of the terms on which each debates, and of the terms in which that debate is constituted, are clear. Sandra insists on lived experience, expressed in bluntly colloquial everyday
language: “don’t knock it till you’ve tried it ...” The host appeals to the processes and documents of social and legal regulation: “if they gave out licences to mothers yours would be revoked”. He constantly threatens that he will “get the authorities round there” to bring her into line. She strongly asserts her autonomy and capacity to make up her own mind: “I’m doin’ it my way”. She insists on educating her own children into the compromise positions of modern life, rather than submitting to formal and totalising regulation which denies the existence of other actions and values. Indeed the only aspect of the exchange which defies Jones’s elaboration of an inherently regulatory and combative patriarchal authority, rests in the host’s loss of rational control during the confrontation - a feature of his performance highlighted during The 7.30 Report debate on political correctness discussed above, during which it was suggested that he “get more cognitive and less emotive.”

Is it correct however, in Jones’s terms, to describe as “emotive” what is still at core a rational tool? The host’s performance of a “defining authority”, albeit closer to rant than to logical debate, is still an appeal to order, at the level of both talk-relations and socio-moral behaviours and beliefs. His continued abuse of the power of naming: “You are a disgrace! You are irresponsible!” along with his persistent drive to summative judgement and the desire to encapsulate in a phrase - or preferably three - are distortions of rationalism, rather than the cultural opposite posited by Jones: emotionalism. Rather than entering what is traditionally a female behaviour, Zemanek over-extends the authority of definition. In Fairclough’s terms (1992, p.237) he “over-lexicalises” or “over-words”, the sheer expenditure of nominatives unveiling the degree to which he senses a category beyond his discursive control.

7.8 “The more you try to hide it, the more you are barricaded ...” - the politics of discursive “break out”

Toril Moi (1985) comments usefully not just on the politics of definition, but on its strategic deployment during debates over gendered inequity within the domestic sphere. She discusses Cheris Kramarae’s (1981) anecdote of a woman seeking a name for her husband’s use of flattery to persuade her to perform more menial household tasks than him. Moi comments on how far a desire for the encapsulating term is a drive to closure and definition - in themselves aggressive acts to pre-empt resistance. The woman’s desire for a
“label,” Moi suggests, was based on a wish to fix meaning, and use that closure as a means of aggression: an authoritative statement to which there could be no reply. She argues that women’s search for alternative cultural understandings and means of social interaction are better served by the teasing out of multiple meanings, rather than the attempt to take over linguistically: to re-define in their own interests.

Caller Sandra situates herself within just such a relativism of lived possibilities. Her children’s future is already one which must accommodate contradiction and multiplicity of cultural values. She is, to that extent, already within a self-defining and multiple subjectivity which Zemanek’s unitary drive to control cannot handle.

Compare Sandra with medical expert Dr René Pols, whose expectation of a rational debate in which turns will be punctiliously exchanged contributes to the almost total routing of his arguments. “Non-expert” caller Sandra, like Henry (Chapter 5) enters an engagement whose terms each understands from within the cultural frame of working class family and social banter. There the terms of engagement are themselves under contestation throughout the bout, becoming a major feature of the “scoring”. Their display of reflexive and generic awareness, as each comments frequently on how their ideas are being suppressed by the discursive “rules of combat” in the exchange, shows how far they are aware that Zemanek only seems to operate on “everyday” rules. His talk-relations, as shown in their excessive play over turn-taking regulation, mimic those of everyday “natural” conversation. But the play of power within natural conversation is activated on its own terms: to operate on the relations of talk themselves - as both Henry and Sandra indicate, with their constant readings of the Zemanek style, and how it defeats the possibilities of a “fair” encounter. Zemanek’s argument is clearly otherwise directed. It is already embedded within the dictates of an enterprise discourse, which it cannot abandon. To maintain his role as embodiment of all the entrepreneurial virtues, “King” Stanley must continue to win.

Thus it is that repeated commentaries on radio talkback are likely always to read the hosts as victorious. They overlook the powerful resistance of such callers as Henry and Sandra, or the satisfactions of manipulative strategies from Dorothy or Iris. It is undeniable that, in each case, the host prevails. He maintains intact his status and - collaboratively with the callers - a powerful, combative, masculinity. And yet callers are able to expose his views of
talkback discussion as debate in which the game is called first, the content only subsequently. Henry by his reading of the exchange as a calling-out ritual, plays over the politics of masculinity. Sandra by her recognition that she must dispute the rules of engagement to force a place for her own comments, widens the gaps that Henry has opened. They achieve both a degree of self-definition, and a space - albeit a small one - for a contrary position within the powerful discourses of entrepreneurial capital at the local level.

Is this though, to return to the question with which I began this chapter, a space of effective resistance? Most commentators in a post-Foucauldian era see such questions as both unanswerable, and irrelevant. What matters is that they are observable: that they exist - for their activation as moments of resistance has impacts on both the continuation and the erosion of the positions they attack.

Both power and resistance then, operate concurrently in the “strategic field” which constitutes the social, and both traverse or spread across - rather than inhere in or belong to - institutions, social stratifications, and individual unities (de Lauretis 1987, p. 135)

The “spread” of influence returns all the way to its source. Ultimately each of these exchanges is, as always on The Stan Zemanek Show, selected by the host as promotional material. Both he and the station see the Sandras and the Henrys as displaying a key to the host’s positioning: his view of himself as besieged by resistant non-believers in the self-help entrepreneurial ethic. Thus his de-selection of the consensual call. While that reinforces his position, it cannot display it. Display counts, since this is mediation before two audiences. At one level, the host’s talk operates to constitute a particular form of an active “self” within the frame of entrepreneurial self help: a new kind of actively regulated public self, for emulation by listeners as co-producers and active consumers. At the same time, the host’s display of an excessive personal dynamism makes his product: commercial sponsorship - that much more marketable.

Read then as part of a constitutive discourse, the Henry and Sandra exchanges have to be examined at two levels. Their play across gender takes us to one cultural divide, and shows us where different codes are operating; sometimes intersecting, sometimes not. Class takes us to another. Most notably this leads us to a set of conventions over how to debate which are still so unfamiliar within public realms of media representation, as to be shocking.
As a man Henry is within the fold of gendered power, but on the outside of a classed discourse - and specifically, despite the host’s denials, a raced one.\textsuperscript{14} He gets only as far as playing out - albeit with a degree of flair which takes even the host by surprise - the rules of engagement: the limits of a class-based confrontation. Sandra is familiar with the strategies which gender her and class her as outside public engagement. By her skill in calling them, she struggles for the very space on which she seeks to fight. But the really big call for Zemanek is none of the above. His project is the melding of the social, cultural, political, and ethical, into participation in commerce. Every exchange is to his profit. Both direct financial returns, and “corporate” profit in a Lacanian sense, flow to him, as he re-integrates and puts on display a powerful (classed and gendered) self. Consensual calls reassert seamless control, while resistance becomes re-integrated within the construction of the host’s public image: he puts it on parade. Zemanek makes his callers, in effect, buy back their own resistance ... a marketing triumph in the logic of counter-resistant appropriation. The chapter which follows will focus precisely upon this discursive project.

\textsuperscript{14} Compare the focus taken up in the “Henry” exchange with Mickler’s (1992, 1998) analysis of directly racialised debate on The Howard Sattler Show in Perth.
Chapter Eight

"Here’s that number again ..."
choreographing commercial radio’s hard-sell

8.0 Directing caller input toward enterprise discourse

In previous chapters I have shown techniques used on The Stan Zemanek Show to construct and maintain the host’s power, exploiting listener-caller consensus and contestation alike for the audience’s entertainment. In this chapter I explore and provide examples of ways in which listeners’ calls, again both consensual and contestational, are co-opted into and recuperated for “enterprise discourse”.

Fairclough (1990) characterises enterprise discourse as “a rather diffuse set of tendencies” (p. 38) resulting from “wider tendencies of cultural change”, especially traceable in the “vocabularies of enterprise, skills and consumption”. Working in particular with UK Department of Trade and Industry publicity brochures, Fairclough isolates mostly lexical features of the emergent discourse, yet finds these “mainly in the subject positions which are implicitly established for producer and audience” (loc. cit.). His work, like my own, finds this new set of discourse practices already engaged in the direct constitution of idealised subject positions and prescribed social behaviours.

Even while urging a cautious initial analysis, Fairclough identifies a quite complex lexical elision operating within enterprise discourse: one which permits a conflation and a semiotic “slippage” within the term, “enterprise.” Drawing on its OED definitions: 1) “engagement in bold, arduous or momentous undertakings”; 2) “disposition or readiness to engage in undertakings of difficulty, risk or danger; daring spirit”; 3) “private business”, Fairclough establishes an equivalent three-part “meaning potential” for the term: enterprise as activity, as “quality”, and as “a business”, and establishes the constant slides and transformations that occur across the three. He characterises the discourse activity he discovers not as a discourse
formation, but as "the investment of an order of discourse by a newly salient cultural dominant ...", calling it a "subtle and even insidious process" (1990, p. 56), which only wide ranging analysis and use of many of the current techniques claimed within the term "discourse analysis" (see van Dijk 1985, 1994, 1999) can capture.

The talk-texting work of the host during his presence live on The Stan Zemanek Show is ultimately to discursively position its listeners within the various "subject positions" of an enterprise culture and economy. Thus the tendency to re-appropriate even the most resistant and contestational of self-orientations within the work of commercial promotion. To do so, the host must himself both embrace and display the "activities" and "qualities" the term has appropriated from social practice. The detailed relational work undertaken within the talk-exchanges; the formation of a powerfully authoritative on-air persona and the modelling of "activity" to the level of aggression; the quality of competitiveness to the limits of contestation; each receive their justification in terms of their establishment of an "enterprising" set of behaviours. Extending Scannell's establishment of equivalent "characteristic" values in earlier radio, such as its "sociability" or its capacity to represent "sincerity", it is now possible to see the central importance for commercial talkback radio of its generic foundation in inter-relational talk: the "quality" which allows it to represent "activity", as a core to "enterprise" values. At the same time however, it is worth noting that the marked aggression and contestation of commercial talkback, as opposed for instance to the much more benign acceptance of diverse opinion within ABC "phone forum" segments, is what signals the annexation of a generic potential for contestation within talkback, and escalates it into a "display" of positive and negative "enterprise" values. Even commercial talkback is not inherently contestational. It is merely being - very successfully and thoroughly - performed within that particular talk relation.

1 The relatively late development of this "relational" core of commercial discourse thus rests not on the wellspring of commercial broadcasting itself (see Smulyan, 1994; McChesney, 1993; Marchand, 1985; Sterling & Kittross, 1990) - but on the more recent rise of interactive technologies, combined with "self-steering" consumer selves. This insight is an answer - and possibly the answer - to questions raised in the US as to whether talkback is an "inherently" right-wing political format. See Weiner, 1990; and TV Channel 4 UK documentary Naked News: "Talk Radio", for Clinton's direct appeal to Texan talk host and Democrat politician Jim Hightower to attempt a pro-democrat talkback format.
8.1 The price of “having your say”: commercial talkback as in itself “a business”

In establishing the range of enterprise discourse’s operation within commercial radio talkback it is also important to note that the shows which bear their host’s name not only represents the values they enact,² but operate, each in its own right, as “a business.” As we have seen in varying moments of talk-text transparency, talkshow hosts at this level of success, in prime shifts on major networks and dominant metropolitan stations, run their shows as personal businesses. Station production staff are supplemented by personal appointees, operating not the programming work of the radio shift, but the promotional work of live-performance cabarets and appearances; the licensing, production and marketing of celebrity merchandise; the negotiation and contracting of sponsors; the selection, contracting and topic-cuing of “stringers” - including, in Zemanek’s case, those callers who become “regulars”; and the financial, legal and archival management of the entire operation.

It thus becomes worthwhile to examine how The Stan Zemanek Show manages the more direct texts of commerce which surround the host-caller exchanges. If overt marketing of a “produced” consumer back to commercial radio’s commodity marketeers turns out to be the programme’s real goal, how is that particular mode of consent modelled within sponsor calls, advertising copy, and promotional messages? In particular, how are the many “resistances” or self-directed “projects”³ outlined above and shown to be subsumed into the values of enterprise discourse, reconciled within the most-often affirmative and affiliative direct texts of commerce?

A thorough analysis of this issue must take into account contemporary positions around the politics of identity - especially as they relate to the sorts of quotidian activities of self-definition centred within Cultural Studies (see especially Hall 1996, 1997; Sarup 1996; Grossberg et. al. 1992). The last four chapters have shown how the “relational” elements of Zemanek’s enterprise discourse appropriate the experience-narratives and contestational drives of

² Note that for instance not all the shifts at 2UE represent exactly the same political or social views. John Laws is known as a long-term supporter of Labor politicians; colleague Alan Jones, like Stan Zemanek, pro-Liberal Coalition. Across a single broadcasting day, party-political allegiances at least are able to demonstrate extreme variability. What remains constant is the particular show’s drive towards its own enterprise goals.

³ In Castells’ form of “project identity”.

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listener-callers to the formation of, or identification with, a dynamic, entrepreneurial self. Listener-callers are co-opted into the “whole” formed by the everyday nature of talkback talk, implying a continuity of life-experiences and values, which suppresses the transformational work towards which the programme is focused. While the strategies used to reposition caller contributions inside enterprise discourses are mostly overt - and often in fact blatant, or even brutal - the power relations are themselves always suppressed. In Bourdieu’s terms the inequities of social power are discursively “euphemised” - however unlikely the suggestion may seem when applied to Zemanek’s brand of rhetoric. This programming thus works towards reassertion of its own central values: the expansion of enterprise activities through the elaboration of the broadest possible networks of entrepreneurial “flow”. The most unlikely individuals: Dorothy, Iris, Henry, Missy, “Jockstrap Joe”, can be caught up and re-positioned within enterprise culture. Their everyday lives, no matter how antipathetic, can be brought into alignment in the host’s re-direction of their talk. Even Alice, 98 years old and bedridden, operates as an opportunity to spontaneously advertise programme sponsors “Botany Balloons”, “The Flower Factory”, and the Zemanek promotional cabaret combo.4 The invitation to “have your say” comes - literally - at a price.

As the definitive radio format centred on talk-texts drawn from non-professional contributions, commercial talkback makes a powerful promise, but does not deliver. Its talk-relation is in fact a central and definitive part of its discursively-directed transformational processing. This dominant talkback genre models within its ceaseless chatter the transactive, participative, endlessly renewing “qualities” and “activities” of late capitalism. Its “flow”, in Castells’ terms, is one bringing not so much commodities to consumers, but consumers to marketers. The “best” of the listener-callers to The Stan Zemanek Show model and at times actually deliver the ideal consumer-as-producer: one who can actualise or “specify” a new entrepreneurial activity

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4 The degree to which Stan Zemanek “merchandises” his enterprise persona needs to be recognised. While his contracted salaries to 2UE, Foxtel and Channel 10 are not on the public record, and his “cash for comment” deals even more closely guarded, he freely admits to the sales figures for his promotional items: “... 3,000 cases of Stan Zemanek Ocean Cove Chardonnay have been sold since being launched three months ago. Add to that 50,000 green- and-gold Stan Zemanek coffee mugs and an unspecified number of nightshirts, baseball caps, boxer shorts and pillow slips. He promises ‘a summer range’ of Stan Zemanek men’s and women’s shirts and pants and ‘stuff like that’. He adds, ‘in a way, I suppose I’ve become a product myself.’” (J. Tabakoff, The Guide, Sydney Morning Herald, August 18-24, 1997, pp. 4-5).
within the process of mediation itself - who is as alert as the host himself to the enterprise opportunity.

Castells (1996) names “specification” as the crux-activity required in what he outlines as the “new division of labour” within an informational and electronic economy. Operating at the middle-level of productivity in the new informational economy, charged with “activating” the skilled-and-unskilled workers who operate production, the “specification” agent concretises policies, plans and designs: controls the agency of discourse. Zemanek himself is such a worker. He constitutes and regulates the enterprise codes which are central to the show. For the most part his callers enact the discourse, offering spatially located, physically embodied, materialisations of the show’s ideals. But his “regulars” - literally his best-regulated listener-callers - both enact and specify enterprise, providing direct business opportunities to the ever-alert entrepreneur. At such moments they actually enter the discourse, being picked up and re-mediated within the “sounding chamber” of its promotional productivity. Like the show’s sponsors and affiliated business partners, they gain privileged access; superior production values; extended call time; re-play in promotional carts or CD compilations - overall, an extended and larger-than-life “presence”.

8.2 “Situated knowers”, “dis/located” host:
the complexities of the show’s spatialising discourses

The distinction between the roles offered to callers and “regulars” explains the curious “inaccessibility” of the host, whose discourse practices otherwise assert a continuity and contact open to all. Ordinary callers bring to the show something which the host cannot in himself offer. The everyday experiences of listener-callers: the basis of their talk-gambits, must however be correctly oriented to the show’s enterprise ethos to prevail - or at least to avoid overt “correction”. So the show demands “the ordinary” - only to immediately embark upon sequences of transformational processing of it. Only those talk-texts which become exemplary - by extremes of either consensual or contestational response - can “activate” the enterprise discourse at the core of the formula, representing, positively or negatively, its values or “qualities”.

Nor of course is The Stan Zemanek Show the only social arena in which a seemingly “open” access for the representation of ideas proves to have in-built restrictions and co-options. Lorraine Code (1995) finds similar
contradictions and inversions as she searches for new ways of asserting variant positions on ways of living, to equalise the potential for traditionally suppressed life practices to emerge and achieve self-representation. Her work seeks out what she calls “an epistemology of everyday life” (1995, p. xi) in which “situated knowers” (Haraway 1991) can be shown in the process of evolving conscious, self-defining knowledge around their own everyday lived experience. It is very much the scenario talkback programming such as Zemanek’s appears to offer. But, as my own analysis does, Code’s work raises the issue of how far such “situated knowing” may evade the recognition and powerful formational pull of dominant paradigms. Re-working her own discipline of philosophy, and referring to a priori theorisation within it as “dis-located theory”, Code seeks to replace it with knowledges which are

... directed toward understanding (the epistemological direction) and eradicating (the ethico-political dimension) both those injustices that determine ‘outsider’ status in western societies and those circumstances that differentiate people from the affluent, educated, white, heterosexual, standard-setting, ‘insider’ (male) norm (1995, p. xiii).

Such work arises from a feminist commitment to the revelation of new ways of knowing which work explicitly towards social change. The task is however an increasingly complex one. Code’s project, like Fairclough’s work on discourse, reveals the way in which late twentieth-century social and cultural theory has come to recognise an intermeshing of positionings within given social orders. Just as Fairclough locates within enterprise discourse an intersection of different positions across which any one given instance will work, and Zemanek’s enterprise programming shows it in action, so Code too realises that a simple “inclusion” of a hitherto “outsider” perspective is an unrealistic vision of social modelling. She sees re-visioning projects as now moving beyond the “single issues” of earlier ethico-epistemological drives towards “inclusivity” (although even these have proven multiple in their way) of gender, race, class, and so on.

So this ongoing knowledge-and-subjectivity inquiry is as much about intersubjectivity as it is about selves, persons or subjects conceived singly or separately. And it is about intersubjective negotiations among people who are intersubjectively constituted, produced as epistemic and moral-political subjects in processes that are social, interconnected throughout their lives, and determinant of the quality of those lives in ways too numerous to detail. This intersubjective focus ... is central to my commitment to ‘changing the subject’ who has been the main character - albeit a shadow presence - in the stories that epistemologists of

5 See also Lefebvre’s distinction between the terms “savoir” and “connaître”; 1991a, p. 10, and its gloss on Foucault’s definition in The Archaeology of Knowledge, 1978, pp. 184-185.
the Anglo-American mainstream have favoured: the abstract, interchangeable individual whose monologues have been spoken from nowhere, in particular, to an audience of faceless and usually disembodied onlookers (1995, p. xiv, emphasis added).

Code’s emphasis on self as inter-subjectively negotiated offers an interesting context for analysis of Zemanek’s talk-relational strategies. Although he would be amazed to hear himself described as an “epistemologist ... of the [Anglo-Amercico-Australian] mainstream”, his daily work over behavioural and attitudinal formations makes him a major contributor to “intersubjective” cultural negotiation. Further, for all his apparent capacity to “slip away” from social locatedness: his broadcaster’s “disembodiment”, careful analysis of Zemanek’s discursive practice reveals not “abstract ... interchangeable ... monologues ... spoken from nowhere ...” but an engaged discourse, minutely located. The programme’s audience too, far from being faceless and disembodied, is excessively grounded, physical, and as we have seen, self-defining to the point of eccentricity. The “monologic” of Zemano-speak is not in its talk-relation, but in its discursive directedness towards a single social value. Its “dis-location” lies not at the core of the discourse, barring access to all but the incumbent - for enterprise culture is a discursive construction which requires participation from all. The host’s dis-location is instead a strategy of suspension, used to maintain the operations of enterprise discourse at the “symbolic” or “euphemising” level of mediation, where actual inequities within its flows of power, privilege and especially profit, can be safely concealed.

The next section therefore begins direct analysis of the talk-texts of direct marketing - on The Stan Zemanek Show produced live, in emulation of actual listener-caller behaviours. In particular, it traces out the techniques used to suppress the actual locatedness of commodities under offer, and their entanglement instead within discourses not just of enterprise values, but of the “familial/mate-ship” networks of good-friend Stan.

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6 Interestingly a major charge brought against the new electronic/informational society by Bauman (2000) in his characterisation of its “flow away” from social responsibility.
8.3 "It's a terrific opportunity but we've only got ten ..." - how talkback radio regulates the relations of exchange

For Zemanek, talkback is an opportunity to orchestrate a politics of intersubjectivity. His radio talk proposes a pre-emptive and strategic program (De Certeau 1988) of positioning discourses. He bridges the callers' privately located selves, across the disembodied "no-spaces" of commercial radio's virtual agora, back into the repeated and specific locations of a real market. What is under construction is an ideal consuming self. It is diverse; multi-positioned; appropriative; even resistant. And yet it is worked again and again back into the warp of consuming and promotional networks, through its array across the talk-relations of this production: the genred and textured talk of the radio programme.

The programme's interactions, as shown in previous chapters, are used to model cumulatively a re-stylisation of multi-vocality into consensus. If the process is not altogether "monologic" in Code's terms, by technologically-enabled sleight of hand the host is ultimately able to render all voices as his own. The host's consistent drive to "have the last word" in every transaction; to re-edit powerful opposition or manipulation of his position into promotional bites; to represent his most aggressively combative moments as the victorious expression of prevailing opinion - are all textual closures, around the host's own central position.7

Regardless of the strength of caller resistance; either their passion or their precision; the host's manifold capacity to refute, suppress, re-edit, and re-position, shifts all impetus gained from opposition into closure around himself. Such closure can be of course either within, or without, the central authority of his favour: it can include, or exclude. What is slowly under construction is a complex spatial metaphor, not just of "insider/outsider" status, but of a dynamic range of convoluting ways of being closer to or further from the magic circle of approval. It includes constructions of what Spivak (1988) describes as "power-in-space," which have not yet been recognised as operating within the conventionally UNspaced world of radio.

7 See S. Allan 1999, News Culture, Open University Press, Buckingham and David Croteau & William Hoynes, in S. Craig (ed.) 1992, Men, Masculinity and the Media, pp. 154-168, for accounts of how the drive to "closure" in broadcast news supports a discursive construction of masculine authority. The point has not yet been made in relation to the talk-relations and interview genres of other forms of radio "talk-texts".
How far commercial radio has come to format the consuming self remains one of the silences at the heart of this otherwise most ceaselessly communicative of media. What commercial radio itself never stops discussing, is still - critically - unheard. The analysis of the Zemanek programme suggests that commercial talkback radio is a medium which strives to represent itself as a virtual and ubiquitous “presence” within the domestic/private locations of its audience. At a most basic level, the relations of power constructed within it can be read back from the prepositional structuring inside the discourses. Here we encounter one of the oddities in commercial broadcasting: its disregard of professional strictures within broadcasting against carelessness in deictic attribution. Conventionally, radio trainees are enjoined to be particularly cautious in use of those “you and us,” “out there” and “in here” comments, which suggest that a technologically powerful centre of (radio) production is beaming out signals to a manipulable, passive, localised, “out there” reception. Zemanek however, as shown in the talk-texts of Chapters 4-7, has no compunction in revealing the powerful “inner” world practices of his production processes. In fact he revels in them, rendering them visible [or at least audible] to listeners, both deliberately and accidentally, in his scrambling and shamelessly egocentric presentation.

Beyond this is an equally heedless overlay of prepositional phrases: “out there in radio land”; “in here in the studio ...”; “get out and about”; “out there at Parramatta ...” which cumulatively builds a geography of relativity into the programming. A sense of space is constructed across the use of “here” and “there”. Although it must inevitably switch locations from caller to host, it is oddly asserted in radio usage, where it demarks the (temporary and disputed) occupancy of the speaking position. Callers who could quite adequately state location with a simple “I’m at ...” or “I’m calling from ...” are inclined instead to overstate their positionality: “I’m HERE at ...” or “I’m calling from OUT HERE at ...” The host on the other hand, especially at moments demanding a scrupulously clear (and usually repeated) commercial location, most frequently positions himself as “inside”, with the caller said to

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8 The SUV Training Programme for instance takes up the issue in relation to on-air greetings: “Thank you for joining me” could be construed as a bit of an ego trip for the announcer whereas “It’s good to be with you” or “It’s good to have your company” puts you on a more even footing with the listener. Remember that you are endeavoursing to reach out and communicate with the listener, not expecting the listener to fall at your feet.”
be “THERE at”, or listeners invited/instructed to go “OUT THERE at ...” or “DOWN THERE to ...”

Two things result. Firstly, a tension is maintained within the processes of a broadcast link: the dual telephone/radio transmitter-receiver conduit. Inside this complex technological linking the personal epistemic power of the known, local “here” of the private caller’s reality is rendered relative to a far more powerful and centralised “HERE” of technologically “doubled” studio “inside” space. Both here (in studio) and THERE (in the listener’s space) the host’s perspective (his “HERE”) will always prevail. The technology itself contributes to a deictic imbalance, in which the “call-IN” or “talk BACK” processes betray from the outset the unequal situatedness of power relations.

Simultaneously, the “out there” and “down there” of real, carefully situated, commercial market locations - the key elements of this as of all commercial broadcasting - also build a powerful and directive location, TO which all activity is oriented. What results is a constant oscillation within commercial radio discourses, between that real market: the existing spaces of retailing businesses which are under advertisement - and a virtual or mythical “selling” space constructed by the host’s - and the technology’s - retention of centralising power and authority. This space, which I am calling agora, to mark its virtual status, has the power to invert the priority of the real over the representation, in Baudrillard’s sense. This is a manoeuvre which ceaselessly troubles all except the host - who triumphantly profits from both enterprise as discourse and enterprise as “a business”.

So it is that callers seek to locate themselves not within the commodity-exchange spaces of the real market, but inside the even more powerful positions of marketing. Participation in Zemanek’s talkback is constituted as a powerful communicative act (Habermas, 1984; 1987) which can transform the mundane and local “there” (the listener’s location) into the host’s powerful and glamorous “HERE,” and so access the dynamic and agentic core. But it is only for the duration of the call. In the world of entrepreneurial commercialism, “here” is where the action is. And “HERE,” the technologically validated centre of radio power-in-space, is in the final

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9 Remember Fairclough’s (1995a) three part model for enterprise discourse: “enterprise” as activity, as quality, and as a business (p. 113).
10 The discursively-formulated sense of “enterprise” as a “quality” bridges the “activity” or human behaviour, and the physical, located space in which both can be deployed/displayed. It thus becomes the privileged mode: the simulation controlling the real.
analysis, inaccessible. As caller Henry discovered, exactly “where” the host is to be found actually defies categorisation. As Zemanek himself has come to realise, he is a “product”, not a person (Tabakoff 1997, p. 5). Henry’s attempts to deal at an embodied, physical level, with what he knows to be a racist and classing hyper-presence which denies his own achievements and power, are easily eluded by a radio host who may, or may not, be in Brisbane, or in Sydney: whose presence is at once North, or South, of Armidale. An appointment to fight Henry on the steps of “The Town Hall” - which for Henry is in Brisbane - is about as likely to be fulfilled as an appointment on the same night for a “Missy” “RENNdez-vous,” also at the Town Hall - (which for her is in Sydney). As Virilio (1986) has pointed out, the technologies of dis-location which mark the twentieth century ultimately turn ubiquity into disappearance.

Every usage adapts to this sense of spatial linking. “Getting THROUGH” and “dropping OUT”; “getting ON” and “going OFF ...” each contribute to the spatial illusion of presence and absence. The virtual centre of “in” and “here” undercuts the powerful sense of engagement of the host’s authoritative presence with a simultaneous sense of loss. At the very moment of apparent access to the powerful centre, the personal, local, everyday “here” of callers must be represented as “out here,” or even “out there” - and can be, without even time for protest, “cut off ...” Example after example reveals the positioning under construction. The host, conferring on “regular reporters” the power to annex his editorialising air-space, details a kind of “virtual tenancy” contract of conditions. He cuts short his favoured, consensual, “fan club” callers if they try to detail their arduous covering of real geographical space on public transport. The host’s power to “authorise” space is unassailable. “In” and “out”, “here” and “there” are where he says they are.

What emerges is a particular form of “production” space, involving a particular production OF space, in Lefebvre’s (1991a) terms. Commercial

\[1\] The exchange with Aboriginal caller Henry (see Chapter 4) begins with Henry “correcting” Zemanek over a previous caller’s question about whether the host’s promotional cabaret would ever come “up” to the town of Armidale. For that caller, presumably a 2UE listener, Zemanek is in Sydney, South of Armidale. For Henry, listening on relay via 4BC in Queensland, Zemanek is North of Armidale. Henry’s attempt to clarify the situation is incidentally not a trivial issue if Zemanek’s practice in 1996 has continued into his post-2UE appointments. In mid-2000 he was shown by the ABC television program MediaWatch to be advertising his new 2GB Sydney talkshow, on delayed broadcast into Canberra, as live and available to Canberra callers - who somehow mysteriously never seemed to have their calls answered. The show was in fact 24 hours old by the time the promos asked them to “call in...to air your point of view.”
talkback radio’s perpetual promise of satisfying contact with the powerful can never be achieved. It has instead its own prior project. This replaces “contact” with the host, with the dis-placement project of removal to the (powerfully and repetitively) named spaces of the transformational, commercial “there” (Berman, 1982). By active arrival “OUT THERE AT ...” those locations of commerce constantly under advertisement and promotion, commodities and services which have themselves been “contacted” by the host’s transforming powers, become activated. In the final analysis it is not the host’s role to attract listener-callers into the centre, but to shift them from a commercially inactive to a commercially active locale: from home to market. That he can make them visible [audible] as proto-consumers for a paying clientele of advertisers is one level of success. But as shown in the preceding chapters, Zemanek goes much further. He displays a capacity not only to win the ratings which prove command of a mass audience. He also demonstrates his own ability to reposition individual callers: to move them literally across space, as he moves Dorothy, Iris, Adele, Tanya, Margaret, and even to transform their “at home” talk-texts into direct promotional advocacy.

8.4 “Moving money and people”: radio as a spatialising technology

The spaces offered within the talk-texts of The Stan Zemanek Show are then interchangeable. They are spaces for self-constitution within an economy of “consumption-as-production” (Lury 1996; Bourdieu 1984, 1995; Shields, 1992), as well as opportunities for contact with the presence of the controlling and author-ising host. The intense activity of his self-promotional entrepreneurial project also of course offers real, physical locations for his presence - in concert performances and promotional appearances, sold just like any other commodity.

At every level we are alerted to who has the power here: who occupies and controls each of these spaces. Radio, the “dislocated” medium, is used primarily as a spatialising technology. Part of the apparatus for mapping the “head spaces” of ideology, it seems at first to be a representational medium, working at second remove. But it also directly names the vectors to be followed across the embodied space of the real markets of contemporary commerce. It overlays its mythic agora across the street grids and transport systems of real-world commerce, activating it (or us) into direct consumer productivity.
The process is postmodern to the extent that a number of (Baudrillardian) simulacra are recessively constructed within what is already a virtual medium. Marketing itself is constructed as a pseudo social exchange, as Reekie’s (1993) work on the evolution of the discourses of department store retailing demonstrates. The discourses of selling create a set of promises within a simulated setting, and around borrowed rhetorical relations, for a commodity exchange whose whole transitivity is premised on dis-satisfaction - as Berger long ago (1972) pointed out. Radio advertising is then a simulacrum of a simulacrum - and at this level Zemanek’s commercial promotional work becomes so far displaced from the actual, embodied transactions of market exchange, as to seem almost an art form.

Zemanek however takes the process much further than an aesthetic or formal play of displacement. This is no empty postmodern formalism. His shameless transpositions between the personal and the commercial; between callers and sponsors; between talk and selling; between advertisement and editorial; between friendship and sponsorship, are not just generic transformations, but a reworking of social relations. They reflect the contemporary drive to what is being presented as a new and fruitful, rather than merely fragmentary, “dislocation.” They are part of what Joseph Schumpeter (1942) called “creative destruction”: a tendency in capitalist order towards recurrent innovation, which re-works existing social relations in terms of its own immediate needs. In its current phase, this has meant an inversion of earlier models of productivity, and a change in the “social landscapes” of power (see Wilson, 1996). Zukin (1991) comments that

... the cultural understandings and social structures that constitute economic institutions are in disarray. These days, workers are important because they consume, not because they produce anything the culture values. Public arenas of work and community foster private pursuits ... Those places that remain part of a production economy, where men and women produce a physical product for a living, are losers. To the extent they do survive in a service economy, they lack income and prestige, and owe their soul to bankers and politicians. By contrast those places that thrive are connected to real estate development, financial exchanges, entertainment - the business of moving money and people - where consumer pleasures hide the reins of concentrated economic control (1991, pp. 4-5).

Not only does this reassert Bourdieu’s (1992) emphasis on talk-relations as “symbolic capital” and a “euphemistic” site of pre-disposition towards acceptance of economic inequalities, it comes close to revealing the role of radio, as one such “... business of moving money and people”. Radio is one of the adaptive new managers of what Castells (1996) has called capital and
informational “flow”: the capacity of wealth to move in and out of specific locations according to its own best advantage. In doing so it endorses an identity politics: one which favours the same sorts of flexibility, mobility and eye-for-the-moment which it claims for itself. In a word, a culture of enterprise. Postmodern to the extent that it can detach and re-articulate earlier social and cultural formations, radio can produce some surprising effects. Commentators seeking to endorse new, recombinant identities and practices see some positive elements. Frank Mort for instance (1989) comments on how

Today’s consumer society straddles public and private space, creating blurred areas in between. Privatised car culture, with its collective red nose days and stickers for lead-free petrol; cosmetics as the quintessential expression of consumer choice now carry anxieties over eco-politics. These are the localised points where consumption meshes with social demands and aspirations. So the above cannot be about individualism versus collectivism, but about articulating the two in a new relation that can form the basis for a future common sense (1989, pp. 40-41).

What such latter-day-syndicalist enthusiasm misses though is the degree to which such “articulations” are not - or not only - spontaneously, or resistantly generated, but pre-packaged from within and commercially primed by the myth-machines of “consumption-as-production.” Disappear into the machine which pressure-cooks this “new relation” and you too come out transformed. Your idiosyncrasies are selectively re-edited, as are “Missy’s”; your consent or resistance alike are all grist to the mills of commerce. It is at one level simply another position in an economically-driven, politically conservative (“Advanced Liberal”) containment technique, as Rose (1996; 1999) has proposed. All of the practices he itemises are evident within this neo-commercial practice. At its most calculating it amounts to an updated interpellative offer for occupancy of an already manufactured space into which “identity” can fit.

All the “spaces” that open across the field of talk-radio sponsored commerce already have closure mechanisms on them - and the processing extends beyond the planned and scripted texts of advertising to the “spontaneous” talk-texts of commercial radio. In The Stan Zemanek Show contestation exists only to create an illusory open space, within which individual desires are reformed around products. Leiss (1976) and Bauman (1993) share a view of Western cultures as formed around this intense “marketisation” of the consuming subject - a transitive process in which the process of “selling to” is also a “selling of”. For Leiss, the “self” which results is fragmented: split
between the moment of need or desire, and the (not) satisfaction of possession of the commodity - which in itself broadens the need. For Bauman the process has intensified, until it shifts its priorities from the direction of individual desires towards individual products, to the generalised constitution of a desiring subject. While promotional culture under postmodernity has introduced a “liquid” state of “flow” which appears to offer intensified choice and self-directedness, such tumultuous flows are, as Bauman (2000) has most recently pointed out, capable of flooding as much as buoying up the individuals whose identity depends on them.

8.5 Space as product: what can be learned from real estate marketing on The Stan Zemanek Show

The social relations of consumption within this new and intensified “flood” of promotional culture are still however, like those of production, arrayed in space - and need to be read back. Lefebvre (1991a) reminds us of how this “subject desiring the acts of consumption” is still constituted within a dominated set of social relations. No “space”, even the most apparently “resistant” or “personal” or postmodern or, in Kroker’s term, “recombinant” (1993), is outside the social:

The problematic of space, which subsumes the problems of the urban sphere (the city and its extensions) and of everyday life (programmed consumption), has displaced the problematic of industrialisation. It has not however, destroyed that earlier set of problems: the social relationships that obtained previously still obtain; the new problem is, precisely, the problem of their reproduction (Lefebvre 1991a, p. 89).

Lefebvre’s model, based around 1970s theorisations, still views consumption as an overdetermined process (“programmed consumption”). His admonition about the politics of “consuming-space” needs to be annexed into contemporary debates (see for instance Willis 1990b; Kroker & Weinstein 1994; Thompson 1995, as well as Mort 1989 and Lury 1996). What is up for question, is the relativity of autonomy or constraint operating across the constitution of self-as-consumer. As the demography displayed in his ratings indicates, overtly commercial media such as Zemanek represents are not operating in some socially disconnected, personal-styled world. These are not Maffesoli’s (1996) “neo-tribal” consumers, with bricolaged, “cut’n’mix”, subcultured identities (Hebdige 1979; 1987). Zemanek’s listener-callers come from a world where “the social relations that obtained previously” (Lefebvre;
op. cit.), under industrial cultures of production, still obtain, even if their dislocation and erosion is evident to the point of motivating much of the social comment on the talkback shows. New “transversal” vectors (Maffesoli 1996) and capital “flows” (Castells 1996) are being incised across the actual cities and rural locales produced within an earlier culture of production. But Zemanek’s listeners do not for the most part belong to them. His charge then is to place, alongside encouraging endorsements of those very spatial-relational arrangements which no longer engage with powerful socio-economic arrangements under enterprise policies, promotional texts to gather them in: to have them learn to consider, for instance, through “entry-level” property investment, the rules of engagement within contemporary mobile capital.

These “new” social spaces for “activation” are however also subject to obfuscatory impulses. A “euphemisation” within symbolic capital disguises capital’s pre-appropriation of those spaces of new productivity - the “consumer” spaces of promotionalism, which Lefebvre terms “representational space”. Here at last is the ultimately inaccessible, immaterial space of the dis-located radio talk host, which troubles his would-be collegial callers: his “HERE”, which “exists” only in broadcast, but which over-rides and reconfigures, selects and deselects, actual physical space.

The forces of production and technology now permit of intervention at every level of space: local, regional, national, worldwide. Space as a whole, geographical or historical space, is thus modified, but without any concomitant abolition of its underpinnings - those initial ‘points’, those first foci or nexuses, those ‘places’ (localities, regions, countries) lying at different levels of a social space in which nature’s space has been replaced by a space-quae-product (Lefebvre 1991a, p. 90).

Such “flow” spaces are still played over, but only to the profit of the those not entrapped in “places”; able to operate within the flexibilities and adaptabilities of the representational (Mattelart, ’91). Thus it is that Zemanek’s assertion of the spaces productive of consumer culture is both mobile and mobilising. He must move listeners from their “firstspace” of everyday locatedness; appear to offer them access to his own “HERE” - the “space of representations” within which the agora is drawn, to draw them into the “representational space” of consumer desire. Constituted within his own powerful personalisation of enterprise dynamism and commodity availability, is an inaccessible “virtual” space, designed to vector listeners back into local consumption in the space of everyday life. How then, at the
restricted level of audio only, is this achieved? How can talkback hosts delineate as "HERE" what must always be an illusion of (consumption-as-production) "space", where there is actually only air?

Part of the answer lies within the most polished and professional of the discursive packagings on the show. For Zemanek, the most powerful consensus exists, and must be demonstrated, during the act of selling. It is here that his particular radio technique achieves its freest expression. In the absence of responsive resistance, he can set his own pace and maintain his own rhythms of persuasion. Working in a type of "super-consensual" interaction with other professional sales staff; either openly, as in regular promotional spots, or by (semi) covert "arrangement" of "spontaneous" calls, the host can build a flowing and dynamic pitch of enthusiasm which is utterly compelling. Both his conversational exchanges and his monologues reach a level of intensity which means that these moments, above all others on the show, are its zenith. This is where the major energy of the show is developed.

As I have shown in earlier sections of this study, the typical foci of commercial radio programming: music selection or commentary; research into current issues; incisive follow-up on caller problems; advertising production; even production of promotional materials, themes and stings, are all minimal on The Stan Zemanek Show. Here, the energy is going into elements which have shifted from the periphery of radio production: from the professional copy writing or audio production of the advertising agencies, or the "invisible" [inaudible] daytime work of production crew in editing suites and multi-track studios; to the core of programming. Again, Zemanek here is well ahead of even the most cynically progressive of media commentators:

Capitalism exists to produce ads. The commodity was a silly fetish, conceived in the Sartrean 'spirit of seriousness'. The commodity is like a little relic that you buy to take home with you so that you'll always have a piece of church with you. The ad is what we want ... (Weinstein & Weinstein 1989; p. 54).

Such a re-visioning of commercial radio's project explains the oddity of numerous caller-discussions, in which the host stresses the hours of work he puts in. This seems incommensurable with the many other occasions on which he comments casually on how many lunches he has had; how many shows he has seen; where he has been and who he has been "having a few drinks with ..." What this apparent paradox reveals is how far his "work" is precisely a labour of solicitation and promotion: the pre-arrangement of the
sponsoring systems which operate behind the “talkback” formula. They are the real *raison d’être* for shows such as this.

One layer of “regular” calls into *The Stan Zemanek Show* comprises the “spots” taken up by sponsoring businesses: bookstores; video outlets; real estate companies. These masquerade as a genre midway between the “chat” of the ordinary caller, and the advertisement/“infomercial” of current media practice (see Fowles 1996; Fairclough 1995b). Much of the host’s energy is going into negotiation, scripting and maybe even rehearsal for such sponsorship segments, which subsequently emerge as the centrepiece of the show. Here, the exchange in the consensual mode becomes paced and ritualised to an almost incantatory degree. Total harmonisation of the host’s with the callers’ speech patterns, rhythms, images, intonations - even whole phrases - is achieved, in some of the most compelling radio on this or any other show. This may be the art of the spruiker updated: the urgent spiel of the marketplace, but it models exactly the exchange that each wants. The eventual transfer of the discourse from caller to host mimics both the exchange of cash for commodities which they are inviting, and the centrality of commerce itself, as the core of their mutual “programme”.

Such moments motivate the reciprocities called forward elsewhere in this study: the tendency for aggression to be met with aggression; for promotional disbursement of sponsors’ goods to be met with listener gift-giving to the host; for his nightly gathering of listeners to be mimicked within fan-group social meetings. There is a totalising power in these exchanges. The full-sound, rapid-paced, repetitive structuring, and especially the final transfer of the “message” from “caller” to host, who repeats it as accurately and with as much urgent conviction as the caller, makes participation almost irresistible. It is pure or absolute consensual exchange, in which the discourse itself passes unchanged from one to the other - modelling the anticipated emergence of consent, and so of consumer action.

*The Stan Zemanek Show*, April 1 1996: “Rob Young” Real Estate sales segment

1  Zemanek:  Rob Young: hello!
2  Rob:  Hi Stan how are you ...
3  Zemanek:  Not too bad mate - yourself?
4  Rob:  Oh well, still battling on with the ‘flu but, getting over it, doesn’t mean that we can’t keep working ...
5  Zemanek:  Nooo ... do you take vitamin C?
6  Rob:  I’m taking vitamin C, A B C D and I, and all these things that my mother is sending me as well but it’s working; I believe it’s working!
7  Zemanek:  Yeaaahh ... look I know that ah, vitamin C is good before, ah, you get the cold because it just wards off the cold and that’s my theory
anyway ...

Rob: Yeah ah ha ha ha

Zemanek: But obviously afterwards after you've got it it ah doesn't help all that much

Rob: Noo ...

Zemanek: But ah, I know people that - and I swear by it as well the only time I ever get a cold is when I stop taking vitamin C

Rob: Is the- ha ha ha -t right ...

Zemanek: Yeah ...

Rob: Well I must have missed a few days myself

Zemanek: Well: there you go (changes tone) now listen: have you got some property for us?

Rob: = Oooh, look tonight Stan something absolutely incredible:

(changes tone) and listeners should listen very closely to this:

(changes tone) This is probably this year's most affordable investment in a prime Sydney property for someone: but it's a limited offer, it's a terrific opportunity but, we've only got 10 of these units to offer tonight. Stan: buyers will need to come up ...

they'll need to put their hands on about 19 thousand dollars to get to these

Zemanek: = mm-hmm ...

Rob: = Somehow or other even if they rob the bank they've got to get hold of 19 thousand but then just listen to what they can buy (uhh)

We've got ten-stra-tailed bachelor units in a GREAT Sydney location, (uhh) SOME of these are fully furnished, that is all the bedding, all the - lounge and everything that um um already: some of them have got secure parking spaces in the building, on the title so you can get a building and a parking space, and some of them are bigger than others but Stan: they're all four years old, the rent returns are absolutely terrific, round about a hundred and sixty dollars a week, and Stan: we're going to sell the lot at an AVERAGE price of just 89 thou-sand dollars that's not a HUNDRED and 89, but 89 thousand dollars ... what do you think about that ...

Zemanek: Mate that's fantastic!

Rob: Yea he he! Now, because we've only got a few of them, we're not going to advertise them anywhere except on this programme tonight because, they ARE going to sell. (uhh) But, I'd like to tell you Stan: they are FULLY furnished, they're all fully self contained, they've got as I say, some of them are got parking spaces going with them, in tip-top condition, and, these bachelor units are fully managed for you as well, the rents are being collected and looked after ...

Zemanek: (uhh)

Rob: And Stan there's an indoor pool sauna a gymnastics they've got everything and they've all got balconies, and at an average price of 89 thousand that's fantastic but you ONLY need 19 thousand which includes all your legal fees as well as your deposit to get one of these and it will pay itself off

Zemanek: = What about finance Rob?

Rob: = Well there's it's it's on the spot it's instantaneous. If you've got 10 thousand dollars you've got the you know you've got the unit because the rent is gonna pay it off for you. And let's think about that Stan if you if all you ever put in was 19 thousand dollars, (uhhh) that's all you ever had to pay for the rent paid for it you've bought a unit for 19 thousand dollars, haven't -

Zemanek: = Mate that's gotta be the best deal of all time: eight-ty-nine- thous-and dollars for these units ...

Rob: Eight-y -ni - it's the average price! Now tomorrow Stan, at nine o'clock in the morning, we're going to open these, and we're going to sell one of them for 79 thousand dollars. They're fair dinkum: we're
going to sell one tomorrow for 79 thousand dollars ... someone better
ring up pretty quickly on that one I reckon
= Rob, you'll go broke!
Well, I'll put it to you this way Stan: we've got, er, the brief is,
we've got to sell all ten: the average price is seventy- is 89, we're
going to sell ONE tomorrow morning for 79 thousand dollars, that's
an absolute give-away price but that's a very good deal as you can
appreciate
Aaah right, now, where can people get hold of you tonight and
tomorrow?
= Call: Sydney - and start calling tonight! On 132001, ah, the
phone will be answered: we'll take your number, we'll get back to
you and tell you all, about these, 132001, if you calling from out of
town, put an 02 in front of it, 132 double oh 1 Stan
= Now are you sure you haven't picked up the wrong price on this?
You sure you right with 89 thousand?
= Stan: it's 89 thousand and don't forget some of those being sold are
absolutely fully furnished, and will have a car parking space, some
are bigger than others, they're all about the same, ah - but, you
know, only four years old, and the rents that you get for these are
absolutely terrific. They just pay themselves off. You DO need 19
thousand dollars, that will cover ALL your legal fees and your
deposit, everything
= Yes
= You can sit back and watch after that!
Absolutely! It's a limited offer: a terrific opportunity to make some
money: buyers will need to be able to put their hands on 19 thousand
dollars: somehow or other, er if someone can come up with 19
thousand, just listen to what - have a listen to what you can buy: 10
fabulous strata title bachelor units in a great Sydney location, some
are fully furnished they have parking spaces as well, some are
bigger than others, they're just FOUR-YEARS-OLD, that's right
four years old; the rent returns are fantastic, their average price for
these terrific strata titled units is just 89 thousand dollars, you will
not buy anywhere's cheaper I can tell you ... Some are furnished,
some are fully self contained, some even have secure parking spaces,
all are in tip top condition, they're only 4 years old, the rent returns
are fantastic, they're bachelor units, fully managed, there's an
indoor pool, a sauna, gymnasium, units have balconies, the average
price is around 89 thousand dollars, 19 thousand dollars deposit,
it'd - give them a call right now, this is the telephone number: and
this is the opportunity of your life I reckon: 132001 is the telephone
number: 1 3 2 double Oh 1 Give them a call right now This has got to
be one of the best deals of all time: 89 thousand dollars, and that
has to be a terrific deal, 19 thousand dollars deposit, that's all you
need: 19 thousand dollars and let the rent pay one of these off for
you Rob: we'll talk to you later.
Thank you so much Stan. Bye (bye)
= There he is Rob Young and the number to call again is 132 001 give
them a call right now 132001.

(music sting)

This is an incantatory sales text, which models urgent participation in its
exchange of rapid-fire detailing of a product. It interweaves repetitions in
almost hypnotic frenzy - which both obviously enjoy; which the caller at least
performs in spite of his initial discussion of persistent 'flu ... Worth examining
here are the rhythm and pace of the exchange, which build to crescendo exactly at the moment of the transfer of details of the deal from caller to host (line 86), who repeats it and re-arranges it with as much facility as the caller. The host then carries the message with all the zeal of the converted, producing a semi-religious ecstasy of selling. It calls in participation; modelling the commercial mystery for an audience of catechumens.

The “persuasion” intonations of commercial radio are represented here in great detail. They are a dominant feature of the text. Theo van Leeuwen (1985), comments on how both prepositional and conjunctural stress within the intonation patterns of live commercials can evolve into an intensity where intonation becomes not a performative or interpretive overlay, but itself a contributory factor to the text’s message:

The conjunctions in commercials almost always receive an accent - because the logic of the commercial must be not only stated explicitly but also foregrounded and emphasized. The relation between argument and conclusion must appear inescapable. Indeed, so much is this logic of the commercial foregrounded that the key logical conjunctions are often made into separate intonation groups. When this happens, the conjunctions no longer just link items of information, they become themselves items of information, telling us, in effect, that there is no arguing with this commercial, its logic is watertight (1985, p. 27).

So watertight is the logic of the Rob Young piece, that its conjunctions are minimal. In the “handover” conversion of the host, lines 86-105, they are almost completely suppressed - as if the signs of logic itself had vanished, its task once accomplished.

Similarly, commenting on the pace of commercial texts - which he surprisingly finds far slower and more deliberative than those of newscasts - van Leeuwen detects a crucial distinction between “speed” and “movement” inside advertising sequences. He calculates a “rate of utterance” scale which, within his data corpus at least, runs from an average of 3.89 syllables per second in “non-announcing speech”, to 3.93 for fine music announcing, 4.1 for commercials, and 4.69 for news reading. Such a scale at first seems to invert expectations of a rapid and compelling hard-sell pace. While van Leeuwen’s findings might still suggest a centralising and privileging of the commercial text - seriousness in a pace of deliberation - the degree of “compression” we have already seen in the Rob Young piece suggests otherwise.
Van Leeuwen also identifies a counter-prevalence of elements of exactly this rapidity of pace. These are carried not in duration, but in linguistic structuring: precisely the elements of suppression I have indicated. This works not out of breathless speaking, but by creating an entropic tendency inside those elements of speech which build logic. In an ultimate rhetorical flourish of persuasion, the scaffolding of logic markers is taken away, leaving us with a monolithic and overwhelming coherence which cannot be unravelled. Seeing within commercial speech a marked reduction in the duration of speech pauses, even within a controlled overall tempo, van Leeuwen realises that the logical imperative is to stress the information at the expense of the structuring cues:

Speech, in these commercials, it seems, is not rapid, does not bombard the listener with more than s/he can digest, as is so frequently the case with news, but it nevertheless moves on relentlessly, providing no real breaks in which to digest the information or question the logic; in which to come to our senses, as it were (1985, p. 30).

Any sense of personal evaluation of the deal is completely eclipsed by its performance.

8.6 Pace as a marker of enterprise: verbal fluency, capital flow

There is much discussion on The Stan Zemanek Show of the magic of the host’s promotions. Such words as “amazing!” “incredible!” “fantastic!” ring through every sector of the program. They are all terms of suspension of the rational, and consequently signs of entry to a kingdom of illusion, and should be taken seriously as vectors of the programme’s values. The shift into superlatives is another facet of the inflation everywhere observable in the presentational mode. Vocally; in pace; intonation; volume, it mirrors the inflated claims made for “the product”.

As the handover is effected, from salesman to broadcaster (lines 96-117), the exchange is that of the commodity itself. The “sell” is modelled, structurally, for the listener-consumer, who has only “to pick up the phone” to complete the transition into occupancy of that same dynamic, opportunity-grasping, entrepreneurially powerful self. The formal elements of the talk feed back into the enterprise discourse. Pace is used to create urgency (“we only have ten ...”) as well as a sense of dynamism around the commodity as a lifestyle choice. This is explicitly an inner-city “bachelor unit” for today’s corporate
executive hero: one of the mobile “flow capital” fellow entrepreneurs Zemanek most strongly endorses. What is under offer here is pace itself: the capacity to move through, discard, keep consuming. If the reality of the real estate under offer were to be too closely scrutinised, the actual restrictions on its space might become evident.

In fact as advertised, these properties place quite severe limitations on physical mobility, given the size of the apartments and the fact that some are specially mentioned as having parking spaces, most presumably do not. The solution in promotional and “lifestyle” terms is to align a “lack of space” which is a social restriction, with “freedom of movement”. Here that freedom is signified in the high social and spatial mobility of the young, male, businessman lifestyle: one for whom the “bachelor unit” suggests less a space for living than a clause in his investment portfolio. This is not real estate sold for “position”, in the land-sales sense of secure outlook, both commercially and visually. This is the opportunistic, fast-buck investment which anticipates its (rent) “returns” even at the moment of acquisition. It openly encourages investment on borrowed capital (lines 59-60). It stresses not the permanence of occupancy but transactionality - investment for the sake of re-investment. It is consumption as production, and it brings with it both van Leeuwen’s tailored rhetoric of transmissible UNspacing (where the linguistic markers of logical positioning are eliminated) and the construction of a social space created only for the transient occupancy of mobile profit. These apartments never become places to live, but only places to rent out. If they are “fully managed” (line 108), this means not that there is a security guard or concierge, but that the rents are collected for you.

Such transformations achieved within the discursive positionings and the play of words across the quicksilver of broadcast space, make the whole shimmer with dynamic promise. This is an inversion of accepted understandings of space as enclosure into stable and secure possession. It invites application of Virilio’s (1986) project of assessing contemporary social and economic uses of space - spaces of production - less for their occupancy of it than for their traverse across it:

Despite convincing examinations of city maps, the city has not been recognised as first and foremost a human dwelling-place penetrated by channels of rapid

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12 Another reason for Zemanek’s frequent references to his competitive yachting past: not only a pastime evocative of speed, but one which, in Sydney at least, is conventionally equated with successful businessmen.
communication (river, road, coastline, railway.) It seems we’ve forgotten that the street is only a road passing through an agglomeration, whereas every day laws on the ‘speed limit’ within the city walls remind us of the continuity of displacement, of movement, that only the speed laws modulate. The city is but a stopover, a point on the synoptic path of a trajectory, the ancient military glacis, ridge road, frontier or riverbank, where the spectator’s glance and the vehicle’s speed of displacement were instrumentally linked. As I have said in the past, there is only habitable circulation (1986, pp. 5-6).

What is for sale in the Zemanek-Young exchange is less the limiting (and in this case demonstrably limitED) space of real estate, than the vectors and traverses across space offered by talkback’s non-spatiality. Commercial talk radio’s own constant dynamic movement and ultimate unlocatability are being sold here as process transferred to product. The choice of night time talkback as sales “venue” keeps the transaction outside the regulatory control of daily business practice. There can be no visual confirmation of the offer made in this segment. No address is given, for potential purchasers to view the property. It is offered “outside” banking hours. No financial arrangements can be immediately available - except those offered inside the discursive formations themselves, where, by phone and therefore in the shifting world of the spoken word, finance will be “pre-arranged” by the vendor’s agency. Viewing of the commodity - attendance at the location of the “real estate” - is possible only after accessing the virtual pathways of telephone contact. Virilio’s comment on the recognition of mobility as the prime social marker of modern times is strangely applicable here:

It means giving rhythm to the mobile mass’s trajectory through vulgar stimulation, a polemical symphony, transmitted far and wide, from one to the other, polyphonic and multicoloured like the road signals and traffic directions meant to accelerate the telescoping ... (1986, pp. 4-5).

And like the radio signals, to whose “polemical symphony” we have all come to sing along. What Zemanek constructs within his selling pitches is this sense of radio’s capacity to “telescope” the mass trajectory through the market. He renders market as agora; product as process. What he and salesman Rob Young offer us is not the ideal property, since for most of his audience it isn’t. The show’s demographic very largely excludes the sorts of young, socially active, upwardly mobile, unaffiliated males who might actually inhabit such a property. Instead they delineate the values of an enterprise culture, with our/selves shown how to become the ideal consumers.

The technique is simultaneously reinforced and revealed as technique, in another piece of phone-in performance, this time coded as entertainment -
although the suggestion is there that business links may well be under negotiation. A male caller has been set up to deliver, on-air, that classic of Australian working-class pub and union-bar culture: the mock race-call. This particular call is to be performed by an auctioneer, over his car phone. He is parked, we are carefully told, outside a named pub, where his wife is currently enjoying her Thai Chicken Salad: spécialité de la maison. The set-up oddly parallels the circumstances of the entirely serious real estate selling segment, above. It is very much the same programming creation: the “reality” built only around the voice. Just as we see no horses - for there are none - we were inhibited in accessing and assessing the property we were earlier encouraged to buy. We had no more guarantees then, as prospective purchasers, of the probity of the proffered real estate deals, than we do of our chances in betting on this mock-horse race.

This time however, what is openly admired is the technique. “A very talented young man - he’ll go far ...” the host summarises for us. This should not be seen purely as an aesthetic judgement: one professional in admiration of another. It sits too clearly within the host’s discursive construction of entrepreneurialism, allied with quick-witted and fast-talking sales talent. What he admires is not just vocal technique, but the entire apparatus of values which made it possible. Skills of negotiation, organisation, application, and simulation have produced a feasible facsimile of a trackside call from a mobile phone in a pub carpark - where, we are told admiringly, such has been the degree of energy expended, that “the car windows have steamed up ...” Achieve that, and you can presumably achieve anything.

8.7 “You wanta sort of advertise ...”: setting up the “spontaneous” sales pitch

If this is the very pinnacle of the technique, the Zemanek speciality is to attempt just this degree of intensity and conviction from, as it were, a standing start. What he seeks recurrently through the programme is the “sincere sell” aura of apparently spontaneous endorsement of product. He seeks to pull into the ambit of the public process of selling, the private and personalised anecdotes on which his caller debates rest. In the extract which follows he is eliciting caller experience at the level of product use. His modelling of the break-out from scripted ads into calls for personal contact,
gets it for him, as we have seen with the “All Celebration Hire” or “Electronic Sales and Service” commercials discussed in Chapter Four.

The trick frequently seems transparent. We begin to see the contrivance behind the apparently unsolicited call. In this next conversation a call which sets out as the meeting of old mates, rapidly becomes the “spontaneous” sales discussion which is the acme of the Zemanek formula. The implication is that commerce is natural: a part of the everyday life world of callers and listeners, as it so unapologetically is for the host. At the same time however, the process is carefully de-naturalised. It is spun blatantly by and around the host. He enters rapidly into discussion on the miraculous product - so very propitiously the product of one of his own sponsors. A sense emerges of there being an illusion in there somewhere, but it is difficult to tell whether what is being spun is a sense of his own centrality in eliciting such calls, or an expectation that we will believe in the sincerity and apparent total spontaneity of the call and its topic. The tension of the contradiction becomes in fact part of the attraction.

If this is a set-up, it is carried forward in the terms of the same centrality afforded to sponsor calls and regular reporters. In fact the focus on the caller is intensified, since there are none of the overt control mechanisms at play here, such as those spelt out to would-be reporter “Jockstrap Joe.” The line is open. The talk genre is both heterogeneous (ad/chat) and yet full of consensual mateship exchanges. This time it is the host’s own experience and apparent deep personal interest in the minutiae of the product’s use-procedures which extend the call and create an illusion of spontaneity. This is another example of the host’s self-advertisement as the ever-alert entrepreneur with the best market pitch in the virtual agora. The follow-up calls which result, both to the programme and, it subsequently transpires, to the product marketers, are all subsequently cited by the host, as if in confirmation of his own prowess.
A) Caller launches straight into a supposedly unsolicited narrative of his experiences with a wondrous pool-cleaning product, advertised recently on the show.

Zemanek: Yeeesss, certainly don’t miss a thing ... hello:
David: G’day Stan: David Jones calling.
Zemanek: G’day mate how are you?
David: Mate very well indeed: mate, I’m very grateful to you, ‘cos um, about this time last week you um, advertised Crest (indec) View’s ah Pool Products, to clean your pool out
Zemanek: Yes ...
David: I had a problem with, um, a very severe dose of black, spot algae in the pool, which was so bad it was sort of marching along the bottom of the pool and it was about to march into the back of the house!
Zemanek: And uh [ Ahahahahahah!
David: I bought the uh - I rang up um, Crestview after hearing your ah commercial ... [ Aaand - a very nice gen’leman arranged um there and then to send the tablets out? Um, didn’t expect payment straight away, even trusted me to send him a cheque which I’ve done, and ah, it’s been, quite miraculous: within 24 hours there was some, things started to happen, within 48 hours the algae started to retreat back to the swimming pool? And ah, it’s just been ah a marvellous result.

B) Host reciprocates on exactly the same terms - providing his own “personal” user experiences of the product. Caller and host also enter the reciprocity of informal, “old mate” jokes and insults.

Zemanek: Well I mean, I I must admit I was sceptical when I first, ah, bought the first tube and ah they actually became sponsors after I sort of rang them up and I said listen: I - this stuff, you wanta sort of advertise because it’s just terrific: I actually I’ve used, three tablets in the pool, I started, aah, last S-S - September it was ... I put one tablet in in September, one on in October, um, I missed November, and um I put a tablet in on the 14th of December because it was just the day we went away overseas, now today what is it now in April, I haven’t put another tablet in since, since December, and my pool, is crystal clear.
David: Well mate I was getting quite desperate because this problem had been there for months I’d been spending every weekend diving ah down there with a a ah cavalcade of ah scrubbing brushes, triple ended ah brooms, wire brushes, you name it . Actually my wife Ann had suggested I strap a coupla bricks to my waist and dive down to

Zemanek: Ahahahahahahaha!
David: [ Stay down the bottom ...
Zemanek: Mate did she get the video of you diving in the pool with a few brushes in your hand?
David: No but I thought the idea of climbing in a hessian bag first was a bit excessive ...
Zemanek: [ Ahahahahah!
David: It wouldn’t have worked anyway ...
Zemanek: [ Ye-hehehehe
David: ... I can still talk under water ...
Zemanek: Yes we’ve noticed ... hahahaha ...
Among the many elements to watch here is the unashamed admission that this product belongs to a company which is already an advertiser on *The Stan Zemanek Show*:

Zemanek: - ah they actually became sponsors after I sort of rang them up and I said listen: I - this stuff, you wanta sort of advertise because it's just terrific. (lines 24-26)

Nor is the caller himself entirely innocent. In a later reference, as the issue becomes a feature of subsequent shows - itself a further spin on the recessive advertising impulse - Zemanek casually mentions that the caller, "David Jones," is former press secretary to ex-New South Wales Premier Nick Greiner. Not merely is he thus a fellow-professional communicator and promotions man, but one who has worked for a public figure who has been repeatedly attacked for his simultaneous occupancy of more business-board positions than is considered entirely proper. Like Zemanek himself, the Greiner style is one which seems able to stretch the bounds of the entrepreneurial impulse to wherever the main chance might be. No surprise then to witness the apparently endless, regressive (non) closure to this sequence. In talk-text terms host and caller spin out their discussion with endless minutiae ("where exactly did you place the tablets?") until every possible entrepreneurial trick appears taken. For Zemanek however, that is never the case - as subsequent events demonstrate.

### 8.8 "Absolutely inundated with orders ..." - constituting the "core" consuming subject

Across later programmes, the Crestview Pool Products story proves as persistent as those magic little tablets. The following evening, representatives of the company under discussion in turn phone the host on-air to tell him - again "spontaneously" - "just HOW good your advertising is ...".

*The Stan Zemanek Show, April 3 1996: Jenny Ramsay from Crestview Pool Products*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Jenny:</th>
<th>Zemanek:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Hello Stan!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Yes it is!</td>
<td>Jenny:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Hi it's Jenny Ramsay, from Crestview Pool Products.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Zemanek: Hello Jenny how are you!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Jenny: Oh I'm very well thank you - I'm exhausted! haha</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Zemanek: Really?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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13 A name with heavy commercial and promotional baggage, since it is the title of Australia's most successful and prestigious department store.
Jenny: I'd like to thank you VERY much for what you did last night, um, and I'd very much like to have, ah, explain to your listeners just HOW good your advertising is! (ha) Ar, the response that we've had today has been absolutely phenomenal, ha! we are absolutely inundated with orders, (uhh) and, you've done, such a wonderful job for us! So ...

Zemanek: Well I - look, I appreciate it; I firmly believe in the product

It is worth attempting to assess the addressee here. Who exactly is this call for? If a personal call of gratitude to the host from a grateful sponsor, why is it broadcast, rather than taken by the host off-air, or by the day-time promotional staff of the programme? It comes close to revelation of the trick which is constantly in play on The Stan Zemanek Show. It annexes “talkback” time, already severely encroached upon by advertising spots, to the usually invisible [inaudible] work of sponsor negotiation. If caller David Jones's “spontaneous” endorsement of product in the previous exchange seemed strained, the follow-up from the product marketers is even more so (lines 7-11).

Not for a single moment is an opportunity to advertise or promote passed by. Whatever the level of actual spontaneity here, the appearance of spontaneity is treated as if real. As John Eldridge points out (1993, p. 331) when the consequences are real, therefore so is the text. The resultant exchange allows the host to spin this particular mode of Zemanek magic - a mode suited to Crestview, whose product is itself represented continually as a kind of (scientised) magic.

Zemanek: Listen I mean, I don’t - without giving away any secrets, now I suppose you'd better not tell me the secret of it, but I mean: who developed this?

Jenny: (uhh) ah he's a wonderful chemist, um, very smart man (lines 50-53)

Zemanek: that is absolutely amazing; what those tablets do. Uhhh - ah, his pool just ah you know just went crystal clear virtually straight away (lines 79-81)

Zemanek: write it down - because I tell you what, you try these, you'll never have to worry about your pool shop again: you'll never have to worry about buying ah all those chemicals (lines 121-123)

The very repetition of such discourses connects them to the Zemanek promotional magic which the retailer asserts is itself “absolutely phenomenal”. But the Zemanek game in the final analysis has little to do with the programme that we as listeners receive. It is rather to do with the host’s
personal business of sales and sponsorship. The caller space (in Lefebvre’s terms, “place”); the hyper-mobile “space” of the host; the usually invisible [inaudible] “space” of in-studio and back-office “production”, are now joined by a fourth space. It is now possible to see production, transmission and reception as intersecting yet another, only partially concealed, commercial space. The way in which the audience is itself for sale as commodity for advertisers is a convention of communications/media studies. On The Stan Zemanek Show however the spin once again is embellished. The host’s techniques re-appropriate the processing of audiences to marketers, to market the advertisers, and sell them back to themselves.

The show as virtual agora, as “space of representation”, here clearly becomes the primary space for Zemanek’s operation of his business. The process by which this Crestview Pool Product scam operates may be outright set-up; fortuitous call, or casual opportunism in a lean night’s programming. But in whichever case, Zemanek succeeds in mobilising the retailers themselves as callers in praise of his own salesmanship. He is effectively persuading his advertisers to advertise his advertising. And all at no cost to (his) management. What results is surely a marketing tour de force - one which eliminates the necessity for agency-advertising, or even retailing, replacing it with a direct-marketing strategy, in which manufacturers and The Stan Zemanek Show can create a closed-circuit of consensual, mutual promotion which can operate an entire campaign.

8.9 “Is it 50:50?” - negotiating enterprise as “a business” during on-air calls

If the pool tablets can achieve such magical transformations, so can the mercurial radio of Stan Zemanek: the “uppercut” which will spell death to the competitors, and bring “floods” of calls to “another happy Stan Zemanek advertiser” as they float away on them into a world of marketing glory. All else in the programming is incidental to creation of this genre of talkback as sustained marketing. Text after text reveals the impulse under construction. Regular reporter/caller Wayne has the idea of a satirical “popstick” ice cream - an iced-lolly in the shape of the host’s talking head. His proposed slogan is “Buy a Zemano-Pop, and you’ve got the sucker licked!” He introduces it as a joke-critique of the host’s endless push towards marketing and self-promotion, only to have the concept break away from their point-scoring
masculinity exchange, when it is immediately embraced as a serious commercial proposition by the host. Similarly, a caller who suggests a CD compilation of the regular caller editorials has his concept picked up, and over, across several programmes, until it becomes openly an on-air negotiation over kick-backs:

*The Stan Zemanek Show, April 1 1996: caller “Paul”*

1. Paul: Another thing I wanted to know Stan [.
2. Zemanek: [ Yes [.
3. Paul: [ the Banjo report: is there any chance of getting a compilation of the Banjo reports - I think they’re great [.
4. Zemanek: [ Yeah, yes that’s a good idea!.
5. Paul: Yeah, a, ah, “The Best of the Banjo Reports”.
6. Zemanek: Hey that’s a real good idea!
7. Paul: - ‘ehah!
8. Zemanek: That’s what we’ll do, ah, Natasha make sure that we keep all the Banjo Reports and the Wayne Reports as well and we’ll have a compilation of the Banjo Reports and the Wayne Reports.
9. Paul: That’ll be great will l be able to get a copy of that Stan?
10. Zemanek: Absolutely!
11. Paul: That’d be great, that’d make my year!
12. Zemanek: Alright, listen, we’ll do that!


1. Zemanek: You’re a bit late tonight, Wayne ...
2. Wayne: Aww ... just tryin’ ta - squeeze it in!
3. Zemanek: OK ... what’s it - [.
4. Wayne: [ Ah, very quickly ... ah, what’s this about, ah, the “Best of Wayne and Banjo?” Is it a goer?
5. Zemanek: Well, yes, - if you want it to be ...
6. Wayne: Well what’s in it for us? Is it 50-50?
7. Zemanek: Well, no, no, no-ohoo, haha... no no no - what we’re going to do is, we’re going to donate the money, to charity!
8. Wayne: Ooohh, come on Stan! I mean, I, aw, er, why should I - allow you to, ar, you know, a blood-sucking leech like you, to ar, you know,
9. Zemanek: (mmmm) take hold of my talent? Banjo may be willing to prostitute himself for a plate of, ar, garlic prawns, (uhh) - but I’m certainly not!
10. Wayne: Alright: would you like a fee for it?
11. Zemanek: I’d certainly like 50-50!
12. Wayne: Alright: we’ll give you 50-50 then.
13. Zemanek: Alright: we’ll give you 50-50 then.
14. Wayne: OK Stan listen, I got an idea - I do have an idea for your merchandising ...
15. Zemanek: Now can I - can I put you back to Natasha after this is finished?
16. Wayne: Sure!
17. Zemanek: And, you give us your name and address and telephone number so’s we can in, get you, get in contact with you,
18. Wayne: OK
19. Zemanek: And then we can get you to sign a contract and release form ...

No move is made to suppress these conversations. They are seen as a legitimate part of the programme: a signal in fact to where the programme values lie. Those callers who emerge as regulars do so because each, in their
way, becomes imbricated into the intensity of this textualisation of commerce. As promo material; as overt consumers of CDs, merchandise, cabaret tickets, or sponsors' goods, they too put willing shoulders to the entrepreneurial wheel. There is much said in cultural theory of the commodification of the listener/viewer in mass media. Here, the transformation is openly in process in every element of the show. So it is that, in the middle of a strongly consensual exchange with a young and successful businessman caller, who is espousing all the right attitudes, the host can shift focus to construct yet another possible "spontaneous ad" sequence. This one, interestingly, calls directly on the skills of his female production staff, to promote the skills of a female computer trainer:

*The Stan Zemanek Show, April 2 1996: caller "Paul" on computer salesmanship*

1 Paul: G'day there Stan how are you?
2 Zemanek: Good Paul
3 Paul: I just can't believe the success of your show: I'm in business for myself, and, 'bout three clients in the last week have said "You probably don't listen to Stan Zemanek." I said "Stan! I always listen to Stan every night" (.) What I wanted to talk about very quickly is that you had this bludger on, about a week ago, who...
4 Paul: was on the dole, and he reckoned it was a great life? I just wanted to... share with your listeners that I'm a young person, I'm twenty-three []
5 Zemanek: [hmm-mmm?
6 Paul: I started my business when I was fifteen? in school, when I was fifteen, just after my mum had died.
7 Zemanek: Very goo... well, I mean - [
8 Paul: today, I've got a business now which turns over over seven hundred thousand a year [

Having established his entrepreneurial credentials, Paul is permitted to stay on air to describe his burgeoning computer business. The host however is preoccupied once again with his own enterprise:

9 Zemanek: Actually I've got a lady in, ah, who came in actually Malcolm T
10 Elliot actually recommended her to, come into my - company to teach us all to how - ah - to use the computers and what have you, aahh, a lady by the name ... well actually she's the Easy-Byte Company, whatever that is, um, see if I had their telephone number I'd give it to everybody but I don't have their telephone number (hhh) maybe - maybe somebody from the Easy Byte Computer, training, school could give me a call, and, ah let me know what the telephone number is because she is absolutely fantastic!

14 Paul: She's a nice lady.
15 Zemanek: Well; she's - she's a a terrific lady but she's the sort of lady that will roll up her sleeves and get in there and do the job, I mean, my whole staff are just fascinated by her because she's just-so-good at her job, and, an' nothing is a bother to her ... I mean you know we all sat there , because none of us are sort of, really great er, great on the
computers, and, she just, waltzed into the place, sort of, told us how
do things, put things and, you know, and she's just fantastic.

Paul: It's attitude Stan.
Zemanek: Well that's exactly right: she's got the right attitude.
Paul: Exactly.
Zemanek: And ar I think she'll make a FORTUNE outa the business! Because
she's just so good at it.
Paul: But Stan you, you gotta realise, the thing about my business, you've
got to realise this: you never go into it for the money.
Zemanek: Well, um...
Paul: Money will come [ 
Zemanek: ] - well the money will come, [ 
Paul: ] - I tell you what, as I
said to my wife - 'cos we've had - we had a couple, ah ah a year
where we hadn't been doing that well, [ 
Zemanek: ] about three years
Paul: ago so I changed my focus, worked harder, and are making, a lot of -
well, we're making a lot more money now and I mean - I just say I'm
comfortable, and I'm happy with that.
Zemanek: Well that is fantastic.

Zemanek: Yeah well a lot of people say that but it's exactly right: you've got
to get out there and do other jobs, maybe it's not might ah, might be,
yeah I er I know it's Linda, but I want to know the name and the
telephone number for the Easy Byte Corporation!
Staffer: (voice off) I'll (indec) round (indec) [ 
Zemanek: ] Yeah ... OK ... I need to know
the number, so ... It's alright we're just - see, they're just handing
messages, left right and centre, because everyone's in a hurry now to
find the Easy Byte telephone number. UUmm...look, I agree with
exactly what you say, um, what we've got to do is get out there and
accept jobs if we don't have a job, get out there and except - accept
any sort of job and let me tell ya one thing will lead to another

(Music sting)

One thing does indeed "lead to another". Zemanek annexes the caller's
endorsement of entrepreneurial initiative into an attempt to promote yet
another commercial service already associated with his own activities, cutting
right across the caller's consensual account of ideal enterprise values to do so
(line 95). As has been demonstrated again and again, his capacity to move
from within the programme to "spontaneously" sell a product or service is
what most strongly demarks his practice. Here his urgent desire to bring off
just such a promotion, unscripted, is even allowed to breach the seamless
delivery of his programme. He stays on-air as he hassles his production staff
to locate phone numbers (lines 47-54; 95-101).

This unashamed display of promotional activity in process ties the discourses
of apparently caller-directed programming firmly to the space of production.
Such performance is possible only within the fleeting moment of double
open-line contact. Zemanek’s live-broadcast opportunism can access simultaneously the in-studio search resources of “supply”, phoned-in caller construction of “demand,” and broadcast technologies of promotional talk - all with the split-second decisiveness of the urgent entrepreneurial impulse. Paul’s assertion of exactly the host’s dynamic and persistent business ethic has set the scene here. With very few exceptions host and caller are in harmonious agreement throughout this call. The host does display some uncertainty over whether profit will automatically ensue from hard work and persistence (line 73). For Zemanek, as we have seen, there is always a little hard-headed and shameless grubbing around ... Fortunately the caller himself is anxious to outline precisely this sort of attitude: “... anything, to survive, and I tell you what: it’s that mentality: as soon as you go on the dole, it’s like a cancer ...” (lines 91-92). Note for instance the degree of extended editorialising permitted to this first-time caller, mimicking the host’s interpretive commentaries. These are supportive exchanges, with heavy use of supportive continuers (“mmm’; “yes ...”; “yeah”; etc) which prepare the way for the cooperative trade in good entrepreneurial ideas. What such a combination builds is an impenetrable consensual shell in which every exchange accommodates itself to commerce, until the entire textual fabric becomes one of marketing. So reciprocal is the call, that the impulse within it shifts to one of outright competitiveness. The host rides on the caller’s initiative, to promote what must surely be a rival computing company - one which once more we see as already implicated in the Zemanek enterprise. The caller’s initiating strategy: the comment on how he “promotes” the show to others, leads the host to counter with his own promotion.

Paul: I just can’t believe the success of your show: I’m in business for myself, and, ‘bout three clients in the last week have said “You probably don’t listen to Stan Zemanek.” I said “Stan! I always listen to Stan every right” (lines 3-5)

Zemanek shifts the caller’s narrative of his own ceaselessly outward-directed but local business energies (“I buy a trailer ... attach it to the back of the car, and I go round cutting lawns ...”, lines 84-85) back to the hub of the Zemanek empire: “we all sat there, because none of us are sort of, really great er, great on the computers, and, she just, waltzed into the place, sort of, told us how to do things, put things and, you know, and she’s just fantastic” (lines 53-56). Finally, an exchange which itself never stops changing direction or seeking the main chance, ends on a surprisingly open note. The host, flustered by his staff’s incapacity to achieve the instant access to the spontaneous ad-copy he
is trying to create, concludes with a formulation of one of his own techniques: “let me tell ya, one thing will lead to another” (line 96). For Zemanek, it always does.

8.10 "It's all made to go around, isn't it?" - consumers as producers and producers who consume

Inside this infinitude of opportunism, all the oddities and inversions of the Stan Zemanek formula for commercial talkback radio clarify and make consistent sense. It is a ceaseless quest for the competitive edge. Ultimately, this programme exists to market itself. Its inexhaustible drive to extend sponsorships and advertising and its extraordinary ratings success, within the top 2% during the period of this research, are both explicitly pitched less to listeners than to prospective advertisers. ⁴

Fairclough (1995b), working with the openly “produced” texts of television and print media, has suggested that the discursive moments which most betray positionality are those which fail quite to veil their positioning mechanisms. They show as ruptures in the harmonious consistency of text relations and representations. For Zemanek however such ruptures incite less a scurry for remediation, than for exploitation of their potential. Callers’ comments, the host’s own errors or those of his staff, colleagues’ teasing threats of revelation, become serendipitous opportunities. Every element which lays open the marketing impulse in Zemanek’s style can be turned to his profit. Rather than further summarise the features of the style, I will cite one final, extended, textual example - one in which every feature reveals itself in turn.

Here, as in so many calls, the multiplex social networking which the host encourages, exploits, models and promotes, and over which his sponsorship commercialism is constructed, emerges from moment to moment, into a multi-layered and seeming coincidence of interest. The importance of this feature is reinforced when it proves itself able to prevail, even over arranged sponsorship calls. In a sustained exchange which invades a sponsor-promotional call, the host insists on the phone being handed over from a woman “stringer”, Kathryn Tulich, to a male 2UE broadcasting colleague,

⁴ For an easily accessible set of ratings in a period close to the data corpus for this study, see Adams & Burton 1997.
John Stanley - who “just happens” to be present during the call. As the boy-
talk progresses through bantering rounds of competitive, masculine, in-joke
references and on to more daringly anti-heroic topics such as drinking bouts
and signs of ageing, the host permits into the conversation some potentially
damaging comments. John Stanley comes close to revealing how some of the
commercial arrangements at 2UE are negotiated.

“Stringer” Kathryn phones in to give her (commissioned) report on The
Richard Clayderman Show - but despite the rapid-fire fluency of her sales-pitch
style, her voice keeps dropping out. There is serious sound-crunching from
the mobile-net connections of her phone.

_The Stan Zemanek Show, April 1 1996: programme reporter Kathryn Tulich and
2UE host John Stanley_

1 Zemanek: Kathryn Tulich helo
2 Kathryn: Hi, Stan!
3 Zemanek: How are you?
4 Kathryn: I’m great... I’m at the Hilton tonight, for the first night of the
5 Richard Clayderman ( ) and I tell you what, it was a pretty good
6 evening, it was exciting ( ) down really well, it was one of your ( ) ( )
7 Green was doing the ( ) aaand, she gave a, magNificent!
8 performance, sh ( ) -sted everyone, her singing was AB ( ) superb,
9 and, Richard Clayderman came on, and I tell you what I was
10 sceptical about Richard Clayderman because I mean, he’s one of the
11 world’s greatest pianists but I didn’t know how I ( ) like two hours
12 of piano playing would go (hhhh) but it was wonderful, I mean he
13 was just so entertaining

She moves out of the descriptive account of the show to introduce the
presence of other 2UE staff. Immediately, the host insists on his male “mate”
being given access to the phone.

21 Tulich: But I tell you what the only problem with ah tonight was
22 there was a 2UE table and you just couldn’t keep them down, they
23 were dancing on the - they were dancing on the table! And - I’ve
24 actually got John Stanley here - he wanted to have chat to you
25 about it [ [ Ooh put him on! ] [ Put him on!
26 Zemanek: I Here we go ... [ ]
27 Kathryn: [ ]
28 John: Stanley - how are you son?
29 Zemanek: I’m very well mate - yourself?
30 John: Very well, yeah! It was a very good show actually!
31 Zamanek: Ya like it?
32 John: I DID like it actually, because ah ... [ But that was very surprising
33 Zemanek: that you did like it, in in in light of what we had to say the other
34 night at the ah Regent ... [ ]

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Stanley has entirely taken over the conversation, which moves off the Clayderman concert and into masculine-banter “insult” games, caste as promotional competition ideas for the programme:

72 John: What was the - what was the: we should do this: between
73 now and midnight:
74 Zemanek: Yes ... 
75 John: People can ri ... if you had - people can ring in and guess your
76 weight,
77 Zemanek: Yes ...
78 John: Correctly,
79 Zemanek: Yes ...
80 John: Why don’t we give them, ah, some ... - why don’t we give them a nice dinner for two?
81 Zemanek: Well ... there you go - well actually, what we could do, if
82 they can pick -
83 John: ... out of one of your many “contra” restaurants
84 Zemanek: Yes ... they could pick my weight, or, they could count the number of hairs in your head!
85 Zemanek: Yes ...
86 Zemanek: A - hahaha!

The conversation moves to blatant discussion of personal social occasions - in which brand-name products and locations casually figure.

100 John: Now what time is it? I got ti ... - we might, we might meet for half a dozen Jack Daniels!
102 Zemanek: I don’t think so: not on a Monday night!
103 John: You don (haha) ‘t think so?
104 Zemanek: No -hoho, not on a Monday night!
105 John: I thought you an’ me an’ Warren could get together, and have maybe a dozen Jack Daniels between us!
107 Zemanek: Yes! yeah, no, that was, ah, we went down the - for all those people who don’t know. we went down the to the Regent after the Neil Diamond Show - it was very pleasant down there, wasn’t it?
111 John: It was very pleasant Stan we had a great time.
112 Zemanek: What did you think of the Neil Diamond concert?
113 John: The Neil Diamond concert? Was brilliant! Brilliant!
114 Zemanek: Yeah ... was good wasn’t it.

The caller (co-broadcaster) now “reads” the exchange as the spontaneous sponsorship piece it is - and plays around the idea of “surfacing” the entire process - a proposition which the host assumes is serious - and is prepared to co-operate with.

115 John: While we’re here, why don’t we mention a few ... places that we want to try and do some deals with?
116 Zemanek: Well sure - go right ahead!
118 John: (indec) a few plugs, and see what we can do!
119 Zemanek: Yeah well OK, do you, you want to mention a few names?
120 John: No hohoho, I’m only joking, of course ... 
121 Zemanek: Ohoh, hohohoahHAHHAHAH
122 John: Nothing like that ever happens in radio, as you’d be
aware ...
124 Zemanek: No well that's exactly right John yes ...

The caller/colleague continues the tease, again mocking Zemanek’s entrepreneurialism, but centring his attack around the very issue which has led the host to discount his official sponsoring caller in favour of this banter: the issue of the technical performance of digital mobile phones.

125 John: Now what do you think of the signa ... how how how do we sound, do we sound, you know, quite clear?
127 Zemanek: Now, well you've got you're obviously on a digital phone ...
128 John: No we tried to get through on one of those out-of-date analogues and couldn't get through, now. we're on a very clear phone
131 Zemanek: No, well you're not really, you you you kept on dropping out before but that's your phone for you ...
133 John: Yeah he he good on ya son! Why did are you are you have you set up for Zemanek Enterprises, selling analogue phones or something?
135 Zemanek: Well we have actually, because ah most of the people are selling their analogue phones so I've cornered the market an', an', I've got a new range coming out you know with the Big Red Zed on it!
140 John: An' ya trashin' the opposition!
141 Zemanek: Absolutely!
142 John: Fantastic!
143 Zemanek: Of course I am!

Having come so close to revealing the host’s true broadcasting agenda the caller/colleague now moves to a covert critique of Zemanek’s performance - implying first that the “good mates” chat they have indulged in is NOT the business of the show - and then very nearly revealing the broadcasters’ views of the callers as “lunatics” ...

144 John: OK well, - are you getting paid for doing this?
145 Zemanek: Well of course: you know I don't do things for nothing!
146 John: Yeah, well, why don’t we get off the phone and allow you to talk to some real listeners?
148 Zemanek: Well that sounds exciting to me Johnny boy! Listen why don't you go off to ...
150 John: You - you know the full moon's on the way?
151 Zemanek: Well I could we (hehe) I'll imagine! I could well imagine! Alright well listen you take care have a wonderful time
153 John: - kay well the next couple of nights, full moon on
154 the way, looking forward to hearing it.

Only in the closing few lines is the stringer re-admitted - and then without any opportunity to actually speak. Instead, her role is pre-empted by yet more opportunistic promotion of the “Red Zed” preference for the analogue phone:
Zemanek: Obviously Kathryn, John wanted to go, but anyway ah -

Kathryn: (line closed) there she is Kathryn Tulich ...

(music)

This web of talk and of commerce across the cityscape and its myriad of commercial locations fits exactly the host’s view of promotional activity as central to all social relations. Within it, he and all right-thinking men are ceaselessly active, reproducing the conditions of consuming. Thus the reciprocity and exchange flow of the conversations; the heterogeneity and “rupturing” potential of the genres; the competitiveness which is still at core consensual. Only a direct refusal of the terms of engagement and its ethos could breach the flow. Even what should be dangerous de-stabilisation of the system poses no real threat. Caller/colleague John Stanley plays “in-jokes” which threaten to reveal the cynical manipulation of the whole edifice by its architects. Their menace though is already contained within a re-genre-ing impulse, in which everything can be turned to (promotional) advantage. Inner worlds and outer worlds are both pre-positioned within commercialism.

In this most revelatory of texts, each of these worlds features in turn. There is a revelation, or near revelation, of an “inner world” talkback-broadcasters’ view of callers as a cranky dis-order of monstrous disproportion and lunatic metamorphosis:

John: You - you know the full moon’s on the way?

Zemanek: Well I could we (hehe) ll imagine! I could well imagine! Alright well listen you take care have a wonderful time

John: kay well the next couple of nights, full moon on the way, looking forward to hearing it ... (lines 150-154)

But even this near-insult to callers can co-exist with Zemanek’s promotionalism. It is the safely inoculative\textsuperscript{19} obverse of his “advertorial” hype. He who can himself metamorphose: change to meet any challenge; turn any circumstances to his own profit, and maintain all controversy as consistency, is un-alarmed by congress even with wild-side excesses.

\textsuperscript{19} In Roland Barthes’ (1972) sense: a deployment of a signifying category which threatens a central meaning construction or “myth”, in an otherwise secure location, in order to pre-empt its more threatening use elsewhere.
So too with the revelation - or near revelation - of the inner world of sponsoring deals:

John: While we’re here, why don’t we mention a few ... places that we want to try and do some deals with?

Zemanek: Well sure - go right ahead!

John: (indec) a few plugs, and see what we can do!

Zemanek: Yeah well OK, do you, you want to mention a few names?

John: No hohoho, I’m only joking, of course ...

Zemanek: Ohoh, hohohoahHAHAHAHA

John: Nothing like that ever happens in radio, as you’d be aware ...

Zemanek: No well that’s exactly right John yes ... (lines 101-109)

This process has been shamelessly “outed” so frequently, that it has now become an admirable quality. It is just another part of the repertoire: not so much a revelation as a consistent ethic - so much so that the host entirely fails to detect the joke. The equally shameless “shutting out” of stringer Kathryn Tulich (lines 146-155) is also consistent. Roughly attributed to the failure of a new technology which the host has not yet quite built into his own sponsorship deals (lines 110-125) it is part of a world built with and over technologies of mobility which position themselves as inherently male (Weisman, 1994). In the meantime, “the boys” chat on about masculine locations where even the booze has their sort of name:

John: ... we might, we might meet for half a dozen Jack Daniels!

Zemanek: I don’t think so: not on a Monday night!

John: You don (haha) ’t think so?

Zemanek: No -hoho, not on a Monday night!

John: I thought you an’ me an’ Warren could get together, and have maybe a dozen Jack Daniels between us!

Zemanek: Yes! yeah, no, that was, ah, we went down the - for all those people who don’t know. we went down the to the Regent after the Neil Diamond Show - it was very pleasant down there, wasn’t it?

John: It was very pleasant Stan we had a great time (lines 87-97)

Lance Strate [sic] (1992, p. 79) in a discussion of the representations of masculinity in USA beer ads, lists among the features to be taken into
account, the places in which masculinity is constituted. This particular text shows us clearly how bars are OK for the new entrepreneurial Australian male, although Richard Clayderman concerts are probably not. Thus the tension of this discussion, where a sponsor’s concert is heavily critiqued. The “caller’s” conversion to an appreciation of Clayderman allows the duo to assert “proper” (and homophobic) Ozbloke cynicism over prissy piano players of the Liberace ilk, yet still be converted to an equally proper awe for and enjoyment of the sponsor’s product. At the same time they can cut away female chatter and replace it with their own, and shift into the locational inner-world of mateship references and competitive banter of body talk. Ultimately, they talk into being a circuit of promotional places, from which all but their own productivity of sponsoring impulse is dis-placed.

8.11 “Nothing like that ever happens on radio ...” : the commercial impulse in spaces of listener-reception

What then of the listeners? In the final analysis, how do they come to work with these positionings, once inside the entrepreneurial model of this programming? As I have remarked above, there is as yet no sustained study of radio listenership as reception. Indeed, with the rise of multiple and mobile reception technologies (the personal Sony Walkman; off-air public rediffusion of “musak”; call-wait broadcast on answer phones and cue phones) the possibilities for ethnographic or observational study of radio reception may have passed. Talkback radio, as my present work attempts to illustrate, provides some degree of source material for “reading back” listener responses to the implied positionings offered within programming. But there may yet prove to be, within the reception politics of listenership, another layer of “inner space”, equivalent to those opened inside the in-studio radio production practices and the “back-room” promotional impulses of The Stan Zemanek Show.

Christena Nippert-Eng, (1996) provides a fascinating account of how commuters demark their public-private spaces as they move between suburban home and urban work. She has been able to show in the material world how the same set of physical circumstances, the same Modernist divisions in the cityscape (Felski, 1995), have been differently taken up by people she calls “integrators” and “segmentors”. Some construct practices

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16 As opposed to places of urban consumption: see Jackson, 1985.
and array signs of continuity and harmony between the world of work and the world of home; others barricade the two experiences and keep them clearly sequestered. What results, Nippert-Eng hypothesises, is a continuum of possibility, across which each commuter maps their own zoned space and day. But beyond this small and detailed “culture of the everyday”, separating and re-connecting the “private” from the “public”, is a far more important consideration:

... the ability to recognise boundary work and explore how it affects the ways we think depends on one of the main themes of this work: mental, categorical boundaries are reflected in the boundaries we place around space and time.

This is an essential dimension of boundary work and therefore provides a wonderful point of entry into identifying boundary work and the cultural boundaries it reflects and encourages. How do the different attributes of a boundary’s structure manifest in different uses and meanings of space and time? If a category grows larger or smaller, what kinds of temporal or spatial evidence might we see of its change? If categories begin to overlap or the degree of overlap changes, how is that represented in the ways space and time are used, before and after the change? If a categorical boundary becomes more or less permeable, how might this be manifested in the ways categorical contents move or are moved through time and space? And how might changes in the ways we divide time and space, alone, encourage us to change the way we think about categories and their contents? (pp. 289-290).

Radio has long been accounted a prime medium of commuter time-management (see Potts 1989; Barnouw, 1968) - a process I have suggested above as inherently Modernist. The discourses of The Stan Zemanek Show however reveal how commercial talk-radio at least has been further annexed, in the support of the culture of an intensified consumer-led productivity, operating as a medium of spatial demarcation. How conceptual “spaces” are marked out and come to be occupied is currently being aggressively modelled in the virtual home/work spaces of commercial talk radio.

The quality of the market as a space which mixed private consumption with public production has always marked it as a space of liminality. Agnew (1986) has described the traditional, physical market as

... an island in space and time, a threshold at which the antagonisms, reciprocities, and solidarities of a particular locality could be periodically confined and tempered into the social and cultural matrix of simple or small commodity production (1986, p. 39).

“Regulatory” impulses and the “concretisation” of practice are held in suspension in this “liminal” space. Paul Virilio challenged Lefebvre over the historical European issue of “the right to enter the city” (1986, p. 8) - the
original control mechanism used by burghers to constitute profit from the operations of the market as space or venue across which goods flowed. Zemanek’s control over “virtual” commerce shows bourgeois commercial and economic power still arrayed over a grid of socially-produced space - but space as agora, in which enterprise discourse at the behavioural level of talk-relations controls “the right to enter,” but also seeks to optimise the “flows”.

Is Zemanek’s work then to be taken at face-value, as a form of unofficial, “free-to-all” advice and education on how to succeed in the new, rapidly “virtualising” capital-flows of enterprise culture? Once again, Virilio’s work contains a clue. He attacks the idea that the endless extension of institutional control over European worker-citizens blocked their access to the city-as-market. He sees them rather as forced in to the market: sped up, to promote a free-flow of access and egress. It is a project in which radio, with its construction of a virtual agora both modelling and promoting a real market, has become central. Commercial radio is Virilio’s market, “created not by the object of consumption but by its vector of delivery” (loc. cit., p. 109). If, as Lury (1996), Castells (1996), Rose (1999) and others argue, consumption-as-production drives both economic order and identity constitution, then the spaces opened to the consumer self: the diverse, multiple, multi-positioned consumer self which can be approached entrepreneurially from any angle - will similarly be taken up from multi-positions; to diverse degrees and in diverse ways, in the active reception-work of listeners.

That however, at this stage of radio’s history, is still not easily accessible study. Instead, to test the emergent hypothesis of radio’s construction of models for identity constitution, I intend to examine a range of talk-radio programming which presents a broader, and more problematic, “rupturing” of the spatial metaphors I have engaged. I now want to check, in Nippert-Eng’s terms, where and how far social “boundaries” between private and public space and the cultural categories which underlie them are “permeable.” Moving away from the amorphous broadcast audience of classic mass spectrum conceptualisation - the only one still available to us analytically, until detailed, ethnographic, reception studies can be undertaken for radio - I propose to narrow my focus, onto a series of talk-programming formats currently constructing a specialist reception politics, by invoking audiences under extremes of social restriction or “boundary” definition.

To date, only one fully ethnographic study of radio reception has been published: Tacchi, 2000 – a study limited to a very small sample.
I will now take three different metaphoric “cuts” across the idea of radio talk and social space which I have propounded so far, looking at locations of “real world” physical and cultural restriction and its impacts on a rhetoric of space within identity construction. I will begin with an examination of radio’s 1990s entry - again commercially successful - into the privately-coded space of personal sexual behaviours, looking at the nationally syndicated Austereo Network call-in programme Pillow Talk, with female host, “Dr Feelgood.”

Secondly, I will analyse a radio series tactically positioned to question the public/private positioning of a specific - and enduringly successful - form of commercial enterprise, which has itself been severely limited in its access to promotional culture: the prostitution industry. Taking as my text a programme called Red light radio, presented by “SIN”; the Sex Industry Network of South Australia, I will investigate how both the discourses, and the regulatory restrictions impinging even on radio representations of this particular industry, work across varying conceptualisations of this interestingly gendered form of social space.

Finally and perhaps most dramatically, using The Prison Show, a local, community-radio request programme for music play and message exchange between prisoners and their families, I will examine how far such moves to social-connectedness by a group who are spatially dis-enfranchised - utterly constrained by imprisonment - are influenced by their representation on talk radio by a Nunga (South Australian Aboriginal) production team, and their sense of the politics of marginalisation. Re-introducing an intensified gendering into the talk-politic of spatialisation; maintaining the focus on its articulation into a gendered and classed (inclusive/exclusive) entrepreneurial discourse; outlining the continuities and discontinuities in talk-texting practice in a raced context, I aim to both place the pressure of extreme-case exemplars onto my own hypothesis as to the directedness of contemporary talk-radio practice, and to return to my own original research question, raised for the purpose of examining “new media” claims on a consumer-demand-driven “informational economy” active audience. Are current radio audiences demonstrating tendencies towards the sorts of hyper-intensified inter-activity through media, which digital multi-media will demand? Are radio’s capacities for re-formulation of consumer-producer behaviours and values “activating”, in Castells’ terms, existing community desires? Or are the discursive formulations and talk-texted relational roles already, in Nippert-Eng’s sense, changing the ways we both think about and act upon those
meaningful social boundaries within which we found and enact our social life?
Chapter Nine

Wireless sex: broadcasting to the intimate self, on *Pillowtalk* with “Dr Feelgood”

9.0 “Radio counselling” and the intimate self

Late night “counselling” talkback on commercial radio reverses the marketing push of the dominant and hyper-masculine commercial talkback format and its direct delivery of commercial corporations and their commodities to the private individual in their own, domestic space. It still however multiplies the powers of a disciplining cultural gaze, enacting its “personalised” advisory and regulatory functions before a mass audience (Banks, 1990). Counselling on radio requires of both individual “caller-confessors” and the general overhearing audience specific kinds of intensive “self-texting” work, to suit the particular discursive modes and discourse order embraced by the programme. Ultimately however, no matter the programme focus, what it delivers to its commercial sponsors is the properly-constituted consuming self. Here that self is specifically a desiring self, its most private “needs” exposed, for market scrutiny and enmeshment (White, 1992).

Increasingly, commercial talk radio now disciplines even the sexual lives of its listener-callers to these ends. Austereo’s 2DAYFM’s *Pillowtalk* offered sex-therapy through the specialised talk-relations established with a “radio doctor” - a media rendering of a profession whose guardianship over the private/intimate sphere of personal physical and emotional life has long had its status discursively mystified as private and confidential, oath bound and inherently trustworthy. Contradictory forces emerge however when radio-doctor programme formats begin to access orders of discourse beyond the long-established media genres of the “generalising” expert voice on its own topic (Scannell 1991, 1996; Briggs 1965-1979). “Radio-doctor” programmes specialising
in sexual therapy have moved to accommodate the aural voyeurism of “one-on-
one” personalised-diagnostic talk, performed live to air, for an over-hearing
general audience (Crow 1986; Abt et al., 1994; Priest & Dominick 1994).

Lefebvre (1991a) captures with precision the problematic nature of the new
cultural “spaces” such impulses construct. He comments on the inversions
occurring in the Habermasian public-private cultural binary, as enterprise
culture pushes ever further in its quest to fully activate the consumer self:

The sphere of private life ought to be enclosed, and have a finite, or finished, aspect.
Public space, by contrast, ought to be an opening outwards. What we see happening
is just the opposite (Lefebvre 1991a, p. 147).

In Pillowtalk - a title evocative of the most reserved and intimate of social-
relational spaces - radio asserts its capacity to access and publicise the “sphere of
private life”. In effect it reverses the core flow of commercial broadcasting talk,
re-focusing it from periphery to centre; private towards public. In doing so, it
could be expected to similarly invert its power relations: to “technologise”, in
Foucault’s terms (1988) altogether different sets of social “selves”; “refusing” the
selves proffered by dominant social institutions, and acting instead to promote
“self-creation” (1983; 1984). Certainly the spirit in which many listener-callers
accept the show’s invitation to comment publicly on their “private” feelings and
activities encourages such a view - as does the doctor-host’s apparent openness
to any and all topics and shades of opinion.¹

From the outset however Pillowtalk host “Dr Feelgood’s” discursive practices
disrupt attempts to constitute within the programme a “free space” for
social/ethical exploration and self-formation. As Falzon (1998, p. 68ff) reminds
us, the idealisation of a human expressiveness “liberated” from repressive social
institutions founders on two parts of its own programme. Firstly, by invoking

¹ Pillowtalk’s programme sub-title for those nights on which discussion categories are not pre-
determined, tends to give the lie to this openness: the “Emergency Clinic of Love” suggests more
of a direct social-institutional re-insertion role. The programme is most often however themed,
with topic selections often underpinned by the use of “expert” guests and even promotional
teams, introducing audiences - and the host and her panellist - to new “intimate” or self-health
products. During the collection of data for this study one such programme featured the
proprietors of a sex-aids store, while the host alluded to another: a show on which host and
callers “road-tested” various intimate board games.
“self expression” as an ideal behaviour it postulates “certain norms of thought and action as absolute and universal”, when

... they are in fact finite and historical, having emerged historically out of the play of historical dialogue, in the course of a long series of struggles to regulate and bring order to human practices.

By producing a synchronic “sampling” of very largely consensual and repeating “intimate experiences”, programmes such as Pillowtalk are instead able to continue to represent the “problems” they encounter as ongoing, universal aspects of “the human condition”.

Secondly, Falzon cautions that to produce a reformed process of human self-creation requires critical inquiry into and re-modelling of our views of possible selves, in order to “formulate the vision of a truly human form of life thus far denied”. Such intellectual labour however has been largely the role of privileged social groups - and moreover groups drawn from the same social fractions as those implicated in those very regulatory activities which they now oppose. The role of a “radio-doctor” is thus doubly disabling of a true self-creation. Medicalised authority, as Foucault has shown (1977b; 1973) co-operates with - even emerges from within - bureaucratised social regulation, and models self-surveillant behaviour. And in its approach to the work of the talk-radio host, such complicitous authority is actively enhanced.

As Fairclough’s work on media discourse (1995b) reminds us, within media practice representations of reality, enactments of social relations, and the establishment of identities (p. 5) arise together. Particular media configurations, such as commercial broadcasting, are already clearly centred in the service of a given social order, and founded in appropriate discourse practices. Since any deployment of a counter-discourse of “liberatory” intent tends rather to be fragmentary and dispersed through time and space, it is unlikely to be centred within the talk-practices of a dual institutional figure, such as a radio/docotor - no matter the claims made in the programming. Talk strategies directed to the liberatory act of self-creation arise more in dialogic resistance than in institutionally “licensed” forms - much as we have seen with “resistant”
contributions to The Stan Zemanek Show.² Even such re-appropriated contestational work as evident there however is almost non-existent on Pillowtalk, where the authority of doctor and that of radio host work together in particularly powerful, if perhaps less immediately obvious, ways.

9.1 Discourse fragmentation: how the authoritative talk-texts of radio-doctoring appear “open” to admit “self-steering” selves

The role of the dually-authoritative radio-doctor then becomes one of eliciting the sorts of self-revelation required of listener-callers to make the programme work. A true offer of discursive space for “self-creation” would develop in participants the capacity for critical reflectiveness, and a detailed “genealogical” understanding of how their circumstances arose. Such a Foucauldian explanation calls for special attention to the play of multiple, often contradictory forces across the construction of a given set of explanatory principles and their associated social demands:

the connections, encounters, supports, blockages, plays of force, strategies and so on which at a given moment establish what subsequently counts as being self-evident, universal and necessary (Foucault 1981a, p. 6).

Certain aspects of the enactment of the role of radio-doctor on Pillowtalk must appear to offer potential for, if not a fully-fledged Foucauldian self-creation, then at least some degree of “open” participation in the diagnostic processes of self-caring and self-curing which the show models. Listener-callers must want to participate, and believe that they gain some efficacy in doing so. In particular, since the programme accesses the private/intimate sphere’s most personalised zone: that of sexual pleasure, it must engage with notions of self-expressiveness and autonomy of action. It must both make and seem to deliver on promises of “liberatory” reformation.

Enticement into the show’s diagnostic processing is heavily dependant in the first instance upon the conversational informality of the talk-relations. This signs it with an ethos of equality and voluntarism (Gergen & Graumann, 1996), and makes it more continuous with other talkback-host relations - and therefore more

² See Buxton, 1991, for resistance to the US Dr Ruth talkshow, and Fischoff, 1995, for the talk-host’s perspective.
familiar. Conducting the talk exchanges in the conversational modes of everyday “democratises” the talk-relation, and eases inequities in the attribution of expertise.

Rose (1999, 1996) however has suggested that a curious combination of this form of “democratisation” with an opposite tendency to “commodification” is operating within the authority-discourses of enterprise culture. The combination is immediately perceptible in commercial radio talk-back, and lies at the centre of the Pillowtalk format. The technique “conversationalises” or de-formalises authority-discourses in just the ways Rose describes. It is designed to create a necessary hybridity within contemporary consumer-selves: a seemingly self-directing “autonomy”, but one focused only upon the central consumerist development of the capacity and the will to “choose”. The outcome is still an ideal consumer-self - but one more personally and intimately bound into the processes of consumption, with less capacity to resist their processing. Ideally there is a lessened capacity even to identify that such processing is occurring - since to do so would be to negate the apparent “democratisation” proffered. Rose has called such a “self-producing” consumer a “self-steering” self; one which claims the techniques and values of Foucauldian “self-creation”, yet never questions the direction in which they so willingly steer.

Fairclough (1992) has outlined how this democratisation-commodification “convergence” requires a specific moment of cultural entrée: a “fragmentation” inside “local”, or specialised, orders of discourse, destabilising them just enough to admit the new formation. An apparent “opening” of their conventionalised practices has the effect of making them “permeable by the general tendencies” (1992 p. 220) at play more broadly across the culture. In the case of Pillowtalk, the dominant general tendencies present are once again those of enterprise discourse. Just such a “fragmentation” formation is evident within the otherwise-powerful, “local” or specialist medical authority discourse-practices of host Dr Feelgood. Her counter-gendered occupancy of a dual position of patriarchal authority fractures the talk-relations of both the radio host, and the diagnosing doctor. Both positions require a public authority, and its discursive enactment - roles which women still sustain with difficulty.

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1 See also Tolson, 1990.
Performance of the role of the "radio doctor" in Australia has been most memorably modelled by Dr James Wright, a long-time medical broadcaster on the commercial networks. His GP expertise represents the traditional mode of the plain-speaking and patriarchal family doctor, explaining common medical conditions in simplified, often colloquial, lay terms. In contrast "Dr Feelgood" modifies the role of doctor as advice-giver in the general practitioner mould. She takes up a persona closer to the DJ conventions of a late night national music network host (see Montgomery 1986), mixing caller and in-studio banter with her medical advice. At this level her diagnosis and comment on caller "problems" exemplifies Fairclough’s - and Rose’s 4 - isolation of the "conversationalisation" tendency within mediated public discourses, de-formalising the authority structures of the medical consultation. The question is, however, how exactly is this produced, and to what ends.

Candace West (1998a) has argued that within medical consultations some degree of "status contradiction" (see Hughes 1945) exists "when the doctor is a 'lady'". Hughes introduced the idea that gender expectations of women's relative social powerlessness (their Habermasian "private sphere" sequestration) override those instances when they have medical expertise, to create a problem within the talk-relations of medical diagnoses by women, with both male and female patients. At the same time West's analysis elsewhere (1998b, 1990) provides empirical evidence of women doctors deploying less authoritative, more conciliatory and co-operative talk-relational strategies with patients: direct evidence for the introduction of the "democratising" tendency identified by Fairclough. The diagnostic sessions West analyses certainly display more "mitigated" and fewer "aggravated" talk forms (Labov & Fanshel 1977). This constructs a more interpersonal, less formal talk relation, directed to a consensus response - as opposed to the traditionally "directive" patterns established by male medical practitioners.

However, such tendencies are not corroborated in the following analyses of Dr Feelgood's on-air diagnostic talk. There the talk-relations actually reverse West's findings. The authoritative "doctorly" presence is strongly maintained, even in

[4] It is worth noting that Fairclough had access to Rose's earliest and unpublished work on the democratising/conversationalising work done to establish the "self-steering" self within media discourses: see Fairclough's referencing of several conference and seminar papers by Rose, in Fairclough 1992, p. 248.
the co-presence of those "conversationalising" informalities drawn from both radio talk, and the "mitigated" medical-diagnostic talk of West's "lady" doctors. *Pillowtalk* texts do reveal elements of conversationalised informality extending outwards from the private/intimate, but the talk relations subsequently redraw that colloquial informality into scientised medical expertise and diagnostic authority - and in especially interesting ways.  

This chapter will test the "liberatory" promise of *Pillowtalk* against five tendencies particularly identifiable in the programme, but arising within contemporary media practice more generally:

1. Fairclough's isolation within the discourses of contemporary media (1995b), of "democratising" pressures operating *within* rather than against enterprise discourse, to "conversationalise" and "personalise" its content and practices - but as a re-appropriative formation, in the service of enhanced consumerism;

2. broad social trends towards "sex-ploitation" in commodity marketing, through increasing sexualisation of commodity desire; its capacity to erode even long-held professional distancing techniques, such as those of formal medical discursive practices; and the complex relation between cultural admission of a widened range of sexual identities and expressiveness, and the "choice" mechanisms of commodity-consumption;

3. the broadcast positioning of the programme, not just as a form of talkback radio, but on a late-night shift with an at-home audience, which calls forth

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5 Kress (1986, p. 406) makes interesting claims for the efficacy of radio in just such a role: "We might suggest then that in a spectrum ranging from public to private, the 'media of speech' are ranged closer to the private, and the 'media of writing' closer to the public end of that spectrum. Radio would then be the most private medium, and newspapers would be the most public. There may be some force to this. In many discussions around the political force of the media, radio presents itself as the most likely medium for revolutionary/subversive strategies; that is, it seems most suitable as the medium to subvert the power structures of the public domain. It is regarded as a potentially viable medium for cultural and political reform." It is disappointing that this comment remains so conjectural - despite cases being available from both sides of the political spectrum. Lewis and Booth analyse 1970s European left wing revolutionary broadcasting, while the horrific scale of the Ruanda and Burundi conflict of the 1990s is now attributed by most political analysts to the powers of intensive propaganda campaigns on local radio: see Kellow & Steeves, 1998.
talk-behaviours modelled on DJ-speak, including its orientation towards the direct emotionalism of music-play (Willis 1990a; McClary 1994), and the discursive appeal to “self-formative” role-fantasy projections (Montgomery 1986);

4. a female radio host’s “authority”, doubled by her medical expertise, as a troubled and troubling presence in a medium which otherwise constructs its primary talk relations around hyper-masculine discourse practices;

5. radio’s “invisibility” and “blindness”, acting to enhance informational society’s intensified drive to enmeshment of private/intimate self-formation into its surveillant/consumerist networks (Lyon, 1994); modelling de-localised, “up-loaded” selves open to regulatory intervention, for whom “isolation” or “resistant” self-directedness must be brought to seem dysfunctional.

Bound into a complex relation of familiarity and difference; established genres and innovation, these points of orientation within the programming provide for both listeners and presenters a means of enacting hitherto un-experienced, yet still always possible, talk relations. By teasing out the relations between these tendencies in some detail, within the talk-text practices of host and callers, as has been done for the listener-callers to The Stan Zemanek Show, it becomes possible to track the major social-definitional forces discursively at play.

9.2 “Don’t send me no Doctor, Fillin’ me up with all a’ those pills ...” - “democratising” host-audience power-relations on Pillowtalk

Pillowtalk was particularly suited to 1990s late-night talkback programming for Austereo, a high-rating music-play network, broadcasting not only to the major cities, but to rural communities on regional relay. It served the demographic most resistant to talk radio as currently conceived; particularly those for whom the “humanist” interview/biographical talk-genres of ABC Radio National (see Bell & van Leeuwen 1994), and the ultra-conservative and contestational

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4 The “Dr Feelgood” name is drawn from the rock-blues classic, Dr Feelgood, or Love is a serious business, by Aretha Franklin and Ted White; the definitive recording is Atlantic Studios, New York City, 1967; available on WEA International 1994 CD 8122713962: Aretha: Queen of Soul. Interestingly, neither the song nor the title rights are accredited in Pillowtalk.
“complaint” politics of commercial talkback, are unpalatable. *Pillowtalk* attracted younger listeners, and particularly those whose listening tastes had been formed by the free-wheeling licence given to Triple M or J, where hosts’ banter accompanies music play (Cook 1999). Such listeners are seeking out more pace in both vocal and programming delivery, more variety and more shock value than conventional talk radio provides.\(^7\)

*Pillowtalk’s* styling is consistent with the “love/sex/relationship” content of most radio music play. Its late-night format places it in precisely the time zone and so social space its themes require - the “privacy” of not only the bedroom, but of the (prurient) sexual imagination, as constituted within the sex-consumerist subjects of contemporary Australian society (Lumby 1997).

In Lumby’s formulation, contemporary media tendencies towards “boundary erosion” in what had been a *gendered* social segregation of public and private living (the traditional Habermasian division) have fuelled a series of identity crises, *outside* the public sphere, as well as within it. Those social identities marginalised in the traditional formations - most centrally, in Lumby’s work, sexualised non-normative categories, but also a freer sexual expressiveness more generally (Giddins, 1992) - are no longer able to aggregate social meaning resistantly, through assertion of those categories of identity against the “norms”. They too have now been taken up by what Lumby calls the “force fields” of media representation, which are “rendering the social body and its competing identities increasingly unstable”, and acting to “reorganise social relations in their wake” (1997 p. 13). That “re-organisation” however, is by no means in the service of, or even in the best interests of, social diversity or Foucauldian “self creation”. Those “resistant” programmes of social reform attempting to assert alternative identity formations have themselves been appropriated into enterprise media:

> While these movements have in turn benefited from the proliferation of mediated sexuality, then attempted to critique and control it, they have ended up being ever so subtly subsumed and incorporated into image culture (p. 14).

Once there, these newly-licensed “public” images of formerly suppressed and “private” selves become part of “an expanded and abstracted terrain of

\(^7\) See Zion, 1995.
becoming”; in which “the logic of the production of appearances in the media space” is what prevails (1997, p. 15).

Like the future-projected discursive orientations captured in DJ-talk for adolescent audiences (see Chapter 3), the media space offered for sex-counselling on Pillowtalk operates as an “abstracted terrain of becoming”, in these ways. Adolescent listeners in the Montgomery-Hendy hypothesis (see above, Chapter 3) have come to use music radio to compensate their exclusion from the media texts and viewing habits of family television. They project forward into possible social “selves” through the openness and future-oriented textual-conditionality of the discourses of music radio and its associated DJ talk. In much the same ways Pillowtalk offers what Lumby calls an “anything goes” ground for experimentation: a thirddspace of simulated self, which never quite equates to the conditions of the “located” firstspace from which participants actually speak. Examination of the often less-than-fervent caller response-cues during a Dr Feelgood diagnosis and advisory session suggests that direct take-up of her instructions is not always the point for listener-callers.

As the major tradition within studies of youth-oriented media has established however, even such a “free” thirddspace for imaginative play has in itself become productivity-bearing; the ground initially for profit generation from a newly-cashed-up post-war youth market of “teenagers”. Subsequently, as the enactment-zone for the rapid-obsolescence drive in the economics of “revolt-into-style” fashion-cycles, it has increasingly become intermeshed with the play of appearances dominating meaning in a wholly-mediated world. There is little re-appropriative effort required of enterprise discourse in such a space, in which the very capacity of the variable to appear at all is calculated into the equation. The innovative, the new, the “quirky”, the “shocking”, have become a central part of the appeal, as they are on Pillowtalk. They are however only stage one of the programme’s processing. Like the listeners to The Stan Zemanek Show, who relish contestational calls for the opportunity they provide the host to aggressively thwart and constrain caller opinions, Pillowtalk audiences are catered to by an ever-broadening range of sexualised behaviours and dilemmas, all admitted to the “legitimacy” of air-play - and yet each ultimately transformed by the encounter. Exactly how the particular Pillowtalk version of “being ever so subtly subsumed and incorporated” occurs, requires a careful examination of
how the talk-texting acts of topic formulation and topic closure are carried out, as well as an assessment of the relative contributions to those acts, by caller and by host.

9.3 Topic establishment: just how open is the conversational field?

The range and recurrence of listener-initiated topics on the programme is usefully established in a "composite" programme of representative calls, compiled by the programmers, and put to air during the data-collection period. Such compilations are a useful indication of the programmers' opinions as to typical caller topics - yet also reveal such categories as inherently problematic. While at first glance it may seem simple enough to categorise calls into topic strands: "advice on sexual technique"; "fears over sexual identity", and so on, closer examination of individual calls reveals complexities in the topic positioning, and transformational work in the processing of topic by both caller and host.

In the first instance, these conversations are often multi-layered and shifting, as well as being frequently re-coded by the host's summarising advice at the end of each call. Bell and van Leeuwen's (1994) comments on the marked heterogeneity of radio talk-genres is pertinent here, as listener-callers mitigate both inhibition over their call topic, and nervousness over their public appearance, by constructing a very slow focus onto the issue motivating their call. Crow (1986), working on the US television call-in sex-counsellor Dr Ruth Westheimer, isolates four conversational sequences which he suggests characterise on-air counselling calls: "... opening, problem formulation, advice, and closing" (1986, p. 460). My own analysis of Dr Feelgood however suggests a much more complex and transformational sequencing.

An ultimate goal of Dr Feelgood's programme relates to the way in which she works very deliberately to activate a community of listeners who call in and call back to comment interactively on each other's "problems". Radio and

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* This practice is used from time to time in commercial broadcasting especially, where it serves not only to fill gaps in the availability of programme hosts, but provides marketable commodity. "Best of" audio tapes and CDs can be used as both promotional samples, and in direct marketing to listeners (see for instance Stan Zemanek's merchandising, in Chapters 4 and 8, above).
“doctoring” contribute equally to this formation. There is a discourse of “connectedness” built from both the interactivity of the talk-back processing, and from the “confessional” impulses of the show, which connect it directly to the sorts of social and economically-engaged “mapping” of listener-callers and their experiences produced within The Stan Zemanek Show.

Because of this drive towards connectedness and universalisation within the programme’s macro processing, individual Pillowtalk conversations, for all the doctorly authority enacted by the host, have a highly problematic relation to closure at the micro level of talk-relations. The tendency towards “connecting” is active not only from call to call, but within calls, where both host and caller work - albeit with different motives - to create topic-shifts. While it is possible to see within the data corpus evidence of a limited number of repeating categories of what Halliday (1978, pp. 128-150) calls “higher orders of meaning”; ends to which the host especially is directing her effort; it is just as necessary to accept the inevitability of movement across and among such categories:

A text is the product of its environment, and its functions in that environment ... in the normal course of events it is not something that has a beginning and an ending. The exchange of meanings is a continuous process that is involved in all human interaction; it is not unstructured but it is seamless, and all that one can observe is a kind of periodicity in which peaks ... alternate with troughs - highly cohesive moments with moments of relatively little continuity (Halliday, 1978, pp. 136-137).

On Pillowtalk the seamlessness of that “periodicity” is particularly marked. Topics, introduced in each case by the caller (see Gaik 1992; Heritage 1985; Hutchby 1996) run in a fluid and interlacing flow, with many calls occupying several positions simultaneously. Yet while the host is able to adapt her vocality, her advisory strategy and her terminology to meet topic; in other words to maintain a controlled precision in her topic flow; callers often appear imprecise. They slide between categories, so that each topic “flows” to those on either side of it; yet only rarely to those beyond; and almost never appeals to the “universalising” or “categorising” power of “higher orders of meaning”. The immediate imbalance this produces in control of topic privileges the host - yet at the level of topic selection at least, this is done without direct host intervention. It is as if what might be called paradigmatic control of the talk-topic-field: the capacity to flow over the entire range - is reserved to the host. Listener-callers, constrained by the necessity of “grounding” their contribution within their own
lived experience, can only operate syntagmatically, flowing only to immediately contiguous topics. The nine recurrent topic categories raised by callers in Programme 4 of Pillowtalk illustrate a continuum of sex-related medical concerns, but one in which each intermediate step remains firmly in place within a given caller’s selection, as if to discipline and constrain “free” public discussion, and to prevent their annexation of the “expert” and definitional powers of the host, able to flow across all categories:

1. medical advice on the body and physiology
2. information and counselling on the physiology of sexual practice
3. advice on conception, contraception, abortion, pregnancy, childbirth and childcare, OR advice on sexual technique and sexplay
4. advice on sex fantasy and sex aids
5. advice on issues of socio-sexual morality
6. counselling on sexuality and sexual identification
7. sexual and domestic relationship counselling
8. self-esteem and mental health issues
9. sexist and homophobic harassment and sexual abuse

In the “Best of ...” compilation programme, 16 out of 25 callers were female. More than half of the callers focused on categories 3b and 4: seeking to discuss sexual technique, sex play, fantasies and sex aids. These categories focus on calls in which there is most often no “problem” formulated. Many such callers explicitly represent their purpose in calling as being to “share” their “good luck and happiness” with others: to publicly proclaim their “sexual success”, or even excess. Interestingly, few callers invoke “issues of sexual morality”, so there is little redress of the programme’s tendency towards sexual celebration and even, as callers frequently comment, titillation.

What is noticeable is the degree to which a “contiguity” principle in topic flow works to regulate topic selection. While callers regularly move from their
opening issue - very often a comment on an earlier call - to their own central concern, they rarely move to non-contiguous topics. Crow (1986) similarly finds permission for only one transformational topic-slide in Dr Ruth’s programming; a tendency also supported in Gaik’s comments on general talkback openings and closings. In Pillowtalk (Programme 4) only one caller, (“Jenny”) presented a situation which connected more than two topics, and moved to a non-contiguous category.

Given the aberrant nature of her attempts at topic-shift, it is significant that Jenny’s call is terminated - and without the usual summarising “solution” from the host. The termination indicates however the complexity not so much of Jenny’s “problem”, since many of the callers present equally complex and insoluble dilemmas, but of the improbable articulation she herself has sought to make between the elements of her situation. At the level of genre the programme’s discursive patternings have found her contribution impossible to sustain. Jenny’s desire, to relate her persistent “problem” sex-fantasies to her experience of childhood sexual abuse, places her outside the ambit of the programme’s conflation of sexual fantasy as gameplay, good times and healthy self-expressiveness. At the same time her drive to “interpret” her own motivations pre-empts the host’s definitional space, and thus exceeds a caller’s role as “case history” rather than “diagnostician.” Jenny’s fantasies are, by her own narrative framing, linked to her history of abuse, her victim status, and her pain. Her claim that her psychiatrist had “abandoned” her actually further revokes her public licence to participate. She becomes a self-proclaimed therapeutic failure, outside the transformative powers of the “counselling” ethos.

The comparative subtlety of Jenny’s exclusion however, operating not through direct host-intervention, as Stan Zemanek would have done, but through its own self-imposed generic unsuitability, does not pre-empt the use of more direct strategies by the host. Beyond this establishment of a power-field of control in topic selection, the programme’s talk-texts display a range of actively deployed techniques for maintenance of the host’s power, and its equivalent “doctorly” authority. Both as radio host and as medical counsellor, Dr Feelgood commands talk-strategies able to access and transform listener-caller experience-narratives.
9.4 Raping the “virgin-caller”: imaginative occupancy of caller-space

The strongly authoritative position taken up by the radio doctor is a crucial part in the private/public balancing act required of sex-therapy counselling performed for broadcast. One simple element in the construction of this authority involves the speed with which Dr Feelgood diagnoses the “cases” which present: most often within the first 30 seconds of a conversation, and sometimes instantly. Perversely, this builds not suspicion or resistance, but an enhanced power of absolute and unquestionable authority. At the same time, the degree of authority it claims carries the powers of the “prescribing” impulse well beyond the medical, and into the socio-moral.

Caller “Betty” is extremely up-beat as she opens her call with the show’s favourite joke, asserting her own “sexual health”: “I’m a virgin caller - having a great relationship.” Dr Feelgood intervenes and pre-interprets discussion of the caller’s situation - actually in advance of any “symptomatic” detail having been provided. “He’s giving you the support ...” she proclaims of Betty’s sexual partner - a partner on whom Betty has not yet commented. The host’s assumption that she can anticipate Betty’s experience: enter her life-space, in advance of her own narrative, thus asserts a doubly-normative social formation. Sexual satisfaction must come from an attentive and protective partner, within a heterosexual relationship. By assuming the right to description in advance of caller narrative, the host has effectively prescribed normative behaviour. Equally characteristic however is Dr Feelgood’s move to regain a role for her doctorly analysis where none has yet been sought - for Betty has not claimed a relationship “problem”.

Dr Feelgood moves on to pre-script more of this caller’s responses, this time using an extended formulation as Sacks (1992, p. 338) describes it: a summarising ploy which can re-direct the advantage in a conversational exchange - and which this programme uses in a wide range of ways. In this case too it re-directs the caller’s experience, as the host undertakes the usual series of conjectural questioning manoeuvres which allow her to appropriate the caller’s experience-narrative, and use it to her own ends:

“Do you find ... do you find yourself saying ...” the host suggests to the caller.
At one level she regains the initiative as a broadcaster, by initiating the respondent’s next conversational turns for her. More importantly, she intensifies her moral authority as a doctor, able to prescribe physical behaviours in the interests of “health”, by indicating that she is apparently also able to predict the intimate relational behaviours of her callers within their most private moments. In sketching in for them the (likely) details of their own interactions, like Zemanek she occupies all possible social space. In a moment of imaginative appropriation, the entire experience has become hers, rather than Betty’s.

This drive towards complete appropriation is made even more clear from the complex intertextual intermeshing other individual calls may be subject to once they conclude. Any call at any time can be revived within the Doctor’s own prescriptive and normalising regime, by application of the radio-host’s repertoire of inter-texting techniques and technologies. Not only are earlier “cases” referred to as exemplars for later ones, but as we shall see below, callers too come to display and are praised for complex identificatory memory in relating their own cases to those of others, often from much earlier shows. The personal becomes commodified: an aural medical encyclopaedia for ready-reference - as the use of “compilation” shows and promotion of CDs underscores. Potentially however this is problematic in a therapeutic context. Given calls may work as exemplars: directly accessible to caller-patients as self-diagnosticians. How does a radio-doctor prevent listeners from self-prescribing?

One answer, overwhelming in both the consistency and assertiveness of its deployment, lies in the strong modalities of the radio-doctor’s treatment interventions. It is here that Dr Feelgood most obviously departs from the “mitigated” and “open” talk relations displayed by West’s “lady” doctors. When Dr Feelgood openly advises, it is as direct instruction; almost as command. Such command modalities are so strongly asserted, that they come to pre-empt even the radio-doctor’s own authority, and can work obliquely. “Don’t actively try to change ...” she suggests to one caller, who is presumably to wait for change to emerge, “naturally” - which, it is implied, the doctor knows it will. Doctorly authority thus establishes itself as on a par with some sort of “universal law”. It implies that there is a “correct” and “natural” system which the Doctor already knows will establish itself in your life: thus a licensed and “disciplined”
inactivity. Expert opinion works here at the level of prediction; almost, indeed of prescience.

With those few callers, such as “Charles”, who appear dissatisfied with their prognosis, (and who subsequently disappear off air rather more quickly than usual), the host’s authority-claims intensify, and become even more direct. Charles has what he defines loosely as “a problem with my girlfriend”. Dr Feelgood gives her advice in this case as a deflection. She addresses herself to Charles, but in a modality which requires action from the girlfriend, although in statements configured for immediate re-application by Charles. She thus actually reduces the girlfriend’s agency, even as she requires her to act. The indirect imperatives used to advise Charles: “She’s got to realise ... she needs to ...” are so easily re-rendered into the second person, that listeners can almost hear Charles using them (“you’ve got to realise ... She said you need to ...”). And yet even with this transferability so obvious, authority requires a further explicit reassertion of its own predictive power. Charles is assured that if he follows this instruction, “...that’ll go back to NORMAL ...”

Caller “Heidi”, who represents herself as being pressured into sex, also has the satisfaction of immediate and summative judgment in her favour. “Wrong! wrong! He’s silly, isn’t he!” she is assured of her partner’s behaviours and opinions - indeed, of him/"self", since it is him, and not his current ideas, characterised as “silly.” This time the Doctor’s prescriptive authority is directly licensed to be repeated to the offender: “tell him I said ...” Perhaps as a result of her own sense of the untrammelled power she has applied here; perhaps as a positional acknowledgment of the youth and consequent powerlessness of the caller within a dialogic relation of either medical or socio-moral advice, Dr Feelgood vocalises intimacy to conclude this particular exchange. She drops her voice to a tone of coy friendliness as she closes - in the kind of re-establishing ploy mothers use to daughters, to return from parental authority and direct command, to a relation of best-friends and harmony. That the tactic, however personal in its address, impacts on the overhearing audience is indicated by a parallel moment in Crow’s analysis of Dr Ruth Westheimer’s direct address to camera on Good sex - a ploy which Crow (1986, p. 470) interprets as returning the “social” to the “parasocial”. It is a “fragmentary” moment, which reveals the
relation as performative; conscious of the over-hearing audience, as well as directly manipulative of the caller-at-hand.

Periodically Dr Feelgood overtly re-engages the professional institutions of medical and para-medical authority, in the same terms as she establishes the power of her own diagnosis. An epileptic caller she commands: “talk to your GP”. A caller seeking advice on surrogacy is instructed: “you need counselling.” In the case of “Elizabeth”, seeking advice on whether her six year relationship should become a marriage, the host is full of negative prescriptive advice: “you don’t want to go into it unless ...”; “he won’t ... and he shouldn’t ...” The call is notable for the extended period the host requires before moving to formulate the caller’s “problem”:

*Pillowtalk, March 31 1996: caller “Elizabeth”*

1  E:  OK I’m in a relationship that I’ve been in for the past six years ...
2  F:  MM-hmm ...
3  E:  And ... my partner’s bringing up, um, marriage?
4  F:  MM-hmm-
5  E:  And ... I’m just really confused because I don’t know if that’s what I want ...
6  F:  Mm-hmm
7  E:  And ... last year this happened also, and I left him -
8  F:  Mm-hmm
9  E:  And ... I was sort of going out, and, it caused a bit of scene, and ... we got back together and everything was fine and now he’s starting to bring it up again and I, I’m just getting cold feet?
10  F:  Uhhh: I THINK that ... you’re allowed to ... not ... want to do it ... but ...
11  F:  you’ve got to work out: are you just, scared of, the commitment; are you just scared of what might happen: I mean, if, if you really love the guy, ummm, then that’s fine, uh, why ... I know this sounds a bit silly - but is there any particular reason why he wants to get married now, after six years?

It is interesting to observe here the difficulty the radio-doctor has, in arriving at a point from which to deploy her diagnostic questioning, and so launch the drilling of the surveillant regime which will resolve the problem. Five exchanges occur with the host reduced to providing phatic continuers (lines 1-12). To some extent this draws out the narrator’s “and ... and” compilation of events until she reaches her summative point: “I’m just getting cold feet” - a crisis point from which the diagnosis can begin. But even when the moment arrives, the host’s first attempt at formulation (lines 12 ff) is especially tentative and contradictory. Her drawn-out intake of breath; the high-peak tone of the sentence initiator: “I
THINK ...”; the discontinuities, all suggest a strong unwillingness to direct a caller away from an existing relationship.

As the conversation continues, the diagnosis remains just as uncertain and indecisive, even constructing self-critique of its lexical choices:

32 F: He won't, and he shouldn't, and -the thing is you.. it it takes time to come 
33 to conclusions, but if you're not in, in, in an absolute decision making mode, 
34 don't do it - don't make a decision, b-but you, can't lead him on forever is the 
35 other thing. Oh I used that word again: I don't mean that you lead him on 
36 but you can't think: 'oh, I don't want to hurt him': that's not the reason for 
37 staying. 
38 E: (deep sigh)

When the radio-doctor moves directly to her final-phase strategy of recommending professional intervention, an interesting form of projection and re-narrativisation kicks in:

39 F: Wh-what about getting - I suggested this before to somebody - what about 
40 getting a third person ie not a girlfriend because girlfriends will always 
41 (hehe) agree with you, but getting someone you can talk to, maybe a 
42 counsellor , someone like that who's independent, doesn't know you, and 
43 can help ... 

48 F: They won't TELL you what to do - which girlfriends tend to do: ‘AW- leave 
49 'im! leave'im leave im!!’ - and what you can do is go to a counsellor who 
50 can help you work through your doubts.

The insistence on the free choice and self directedness counselling will permit seems somewhat constrained. “A counsellor ... won’t TELL you what to do ...” she advises - despite the fact that she has herself just done exactly that. There is a difficulty revealed here by the curiously sustained lapse of the radio-host’s own communicative powers, which leaves her struggling to find a diagnostic point on which to fix the formulating strategy which will re-align the caller’s experience. A “speaking out” confessional formula is enacted by callers, who must initiate the talk session by narrating the details of their situation. It is this process which guarantees the host’s power: the classic “going second” position, which opens caller talk-texts to the host’s evaluation. Here however this relation is greatly extended, until the details are sufficient for diagnosis to occur. In other words, the caller initiation of topic passes power to the doctor, as well as to the host. Further, as we shall see, it initiates not only the talk of the call, but ultimately the entire work of “self-cure”. The radio-doctor’s recommendation for corrective
action to resolve the problem always requires further “self revelation”: opening to direct medical authority; to socially regulatory “connectedness”, and even to a kind of “self-voicing” of the body, which will “speak” its own symptoms.

In the case of Elizabeth, the “self-cure” is problematic on two counts. Firstly, Elizabeth produces a thorough and competent case-narrative, requiring only minimal prompting from the radio-doctor, at the para-linguistic level (“Mmm-mmm” continuers.) Consequentially, Elizabeth reveals an already-in-place regime of “self-monitoring”, and a capacity to read symptoms, which prevents the radio-doctor’s interventions. Finally, unless the host agrees with those “girlfriends” she herself dramatises, who are prepared to break, rather than negotiate, a relationship, she must break with her own diagnostic formula: that self-monitoring will acknowledge a “need” for professional intervention and thus re-insertion into social “connectedness”. The hesitancy and inability to discover an access point in Elizabeth’s narrative relates to the difficulty of re-directing the caller to “re-connection” - maintenance of the relationship - when she has pre-empted the “self-knowledge” cues for her narrative of un-ease. This call destabilises the radio-doctor technique, from within.

One simple solution is significantly not available on this programme. Because Dr Feelgood’s talk-relational technique runs on an axis from “detached” and diagnostic, to affiliative and consensual, as a disciplinary regime must, she cannot, like Zemanek, cut off a call. “When the (radio)-doctor is a lady” she must develop other strategies. On Pillowtalk, prominent among them is the centrality and range of uses of the discourse device of “formulation”, or summarising and feeding back an interlocutor’s comments, to eliminate ambivalence and to win acceptance for one’s own version of “what has been said” (see Sacks 1992, p. 338; Fairclough 1992, pp. 157-158). Heritage (1985), finds the technique a staple of radio interviewing. Within the “public diagnosis” talk-relation of Pillowtalk it has a special salience.

9.5 “Formulation” as “editorialising”: how the “personal” diagnostic interview becomes a technique of social “connectedness”

Part of Dr Feelgood’s appeal as a broadcaster - and she has many notable qualities - is the directly “advisory” counselling role she adopts and its capacity
for and drive towards a summarising endpoint, or "formulation" (Heritage 1985). Often strongly colloquial, even semi-proverbial, these formulating comments act as "anchors" for a direct ideological positioning of what has transpired. They relate directly to the "editorialising" function of the commercial talkback host (see Chapter 4, above) and reveal once again a powerful normalisation tendency, operating, as Heritage (1985) shows for news interviews, to influence the "overhearing" audience or prospective caller, as much as the immediate caller.

It is at this point that the major split becomes apparent between the show’s apparently socially radical offer of “free” discursive terrain for callers, and its actual discursive practice. Its transformation of the conventionally intimate and private into the spectacular and public is conscientiously enacted within the “expert diagnostic” advisory work of the radio-doctor. Despite the many instances of quirky individualism or even radical social practice elaborated by callers to the show, Dr Feelgood’s advice-directed formulations work to regulate, discipline, and especially to normalise those social and sexual behaviours related to her.

In programme 5 an unusual, but in the programme’s terms highly desirable, double-application of the host’s diagnostic powers occurs, to illustrate the complex “transference” technique which the show is modelling. Caller “Brian” has phoned to relate how, during intercourse, his girlfriend becomes violent and actually hits him:

**Pillowtalk, April 28 1996: caller “Brian”**

1  F:  Aaand ... it’s: Brian! Hi Brian .... Are you there Brian? ....
2  B:  Yeah - I’m here
3  F:  Hell-oo ... How can I help you?
4  B:  Yeah ... you remember before ... girl was saying: people scream, during sex -
5  F:  Mm - yes -
6  B:  My girlfriend, during sex, she’ll say: ‘Oh you bastard!’, giving me a ... slap
7  F:  across the face, an’ a punch in the back!
8  B:  What?? ... Really? Is she - doing that as - does that, turn her on, or does she
9  F:  mean it??
10  B:  I don’t know!

The doctor-diagnostician is moving rapidly to attribute meaning to the events of the narrative, feeding back possible explanations as early as line 8, or within only two exchanges. When caller Brian asserts that he doesn’t have any answers, she
moves at once to extend her own interrogation into stage one of what ultimately becomes another surveillant and regulatory strategy - this time, one explicitly built around her other, "radio host" specialisation: communication. Brian is first urged to himself become the interrogatory agent, and to question his own situation:

11  F:  Have you asked her? - Have you asked her what -
12  B:  No I haven't asked her, no.
13  F:  I - I would say, it's probably reasonable to ask her ... Do you - do you like it?
14  B:  Ar, no, I don't mind it - [Oh you don't mind it - so it's not so hard- she's not
15  F:  punching you, in, in, nastiness: it's sort of a more, more of a, it's it's play-
16  B:  punching, is it?
17  F:  Yeah ...  
18  B:  OK: it: it's important that no-one gets hurt; if it's, something that's, she's just
19  F:  sort of, tiddley-punching and it doesn't worry you, then it's up to you: um,

As the doctor-host processes the caller experience, she moves through a sequence of direct and directive question-and-answer exchanges, in which the caller's strictly factual/experiential answers are immediately reformulated into a three-part cumulative staging of not only diagnosis, but prescriptive instruction:

**Sequence One: lines 11-13**  "Have you asked her?"
"No I haven't"
"It's probably reasonable to ask her".

Despite the weak modalities which surround it ("I would say ... probably") the sequence acts as both interpretive and directive.

**Sequence Two: lines 13-17**  "Do you like it?"
"I don't mind it ... “
"It's play-punching?"
"Yeah ..."

Here the formulation impulse operates to interpret the caller's behaviour back to him, strengthening the platform on which can be launched a double behavioural directive:

**Sequence Three: lines 19-20**  "It's important that no-one get's hurt"
"It's up to you".

With one strategy the radio-doctor has both dictated a social rule, “universalised” by its non-attributive agency and generalised pronouns (it’s important that no-one gets hurt”); and then directly attributed the functioning of the rule to the caller (“it’s up to you”).

She can then move on to a more explicitly reformative analysis of the experience. In three further steps she can firstly command active involvement from both caller and partner: (line 21: “She has to understand” - “ask her ...”); expand the project into a stepped-project: (line 22: “I’d like you to do several things”) and direct an interactive communication sequence which both partners must enact: (lines 23-34: “ask her what she likes doing”; “say whether you like it or not”). Finally, to emphasise the degree to which this is a regime of reformation based on communication, lines 24-25 initiate a communicative relation built around “charged” or over-lexicalising words: “have something called ‘safe words’”.

21 F: She has to understand and - I’d like you to ask her, um, how come it happens, um, is it just something she enjoys doing; I’d like you to do several things: I’d like you to ask her what she enjoys doing, and, and you’re allowed to say whether you like it or not, and, and what I want you to do is to have something called “safe words” - do you know what I mean by “safe words?”
22 23 24 25 26 B: Na, na ...

Having put in place a regulatory system, the host can then elaborate the scenario. Here once again she appropriates the caller’s life-space, rehearsing the caller and their partner from within not the directive and diagnostic mode of the radio-doctor, but the “fantasy-projection” strategies of the radio-host as DJ. To do this she takes over the caller’s narrative, re-enacting it in its reformed and “communicating” mode.

27 F: It means that ... while you can have a bit of fun and games that you may enjoy in that respect, there has to be a line, that you draw, when one or other of you - like, you’re starting to think “hang on, this has gone too far”, and it’s important that that word isn’t “stop”, or “no” - because, if she’s saying things like “Oh you bastard Brian!” you might think “oh, beauty, she likes it!” - or what she actually means is “whoa-stop” and she’s actually saying “whoa - I love this” - and so it’s actually gotta be a word like, oh, I don’t know ... “fax paper”, or “alarm clock” - some word that carries no emotion with it, so that she knows if you say you know, “white elephant” that means you’ve had too much and you want her to stop. You get my meaning?
At this stage, marking this shift, there is a sharp rise in the use of representational formulae - especially of attributed speech, through which the radio host plays out the caller identities. While the process is still prescriptive - largely a modelling of what can now happen to resolve the caller’s problem - it also operates as the kind of “fun-fantasy” conjectural narrative common in DJ talk. Conscious enjoyment of word-play is present for instance: the contrast between “whoa!” and “who-ho!”; the delighted introduction of increasingly inappropriate “safe words”, particularly marked by the multi-layered play in “white elephant”; even the host’s awareness that at least part of the audience will be familiar with the use of safe-word negotiation in S & M. Together these language-games transform this still-partly-directive talk from education to entertainment. It is in both modes however, drawn directly upon a sequenced regime of ways to communicate. The insight reveals the degree to which the techniques, the expertise and the terrain of authority are all those of a radio-doctor: “curing” only through talk.

Five calls are subsequently taken - including a classic “connectedness” sequence. In response to a semi-suicidal “Jenny”, a call from “Brett” offers on-air support. This networking of caller “experiences”, building away from individual distinctiveness and towards the representation of human universalism, in itself supports the regulatory or normative principles of the radio-doctor’s prescriptions. The tendency is however moved far closer to an illustration of the host’s own “mediating” and networking efficacy when “Debbie” - Brian’s girlfriend - phones in - a communicative acceptance of the regime the radio-doctor and the talk-host had prescribed at the close of the call from Brian:

36 F: - Is she there? I’d like to know why she
37 B: does it or, doesn’t she want to - talk on the radio ...
38 B: No - she’s not here at the moment
39 F: Oh ... well ... If she comes back before midnight, ask her why, and she’s welcome
to give us a call and tell us.

Debbie’s call initially derails the host, since this time the problem is completely different in its representation:

Pillowtalk, April 28 1996: caller “Debbie”

1 F: Hi Debbie!
2 D: Hi!

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9 Not the same “Jenny” as in Programme 4, above.
F: Now, Debbie: are you Brian's girlfriend?
D: Yes.
F: Now: do tell!
D: Um, it's just that it's ... too big!
F: Oooh, you are actually serious!

From having prescribed a communicative solution to a sex-play problem, Dr Feelgood has now to deal with not just a physiological but a lifestyle issue:

F: It it's too big - and you're serious: it's too big and it hurts, and you just want, to, him to stop, and it's -
D: Feels like it goes past my belly button, so - I thump him!
F: Yes, umph, feels like it - so yes: all of the above ... Is it, um, seriously uncomfortable that you don't like it?
D: Sometimes it is, sometimes it's not.
F: OK so that, he needs to learn, that when you - when you say those things to him that you actually want him to back off a bit do you?
D: Sometimes, yes, ah, he, um - he wants it too much, too: like he's up till three o'clock in the morning. I've got three kids and I've got to get up next day to them?
F: See: isn't it amazing when we hear the other side of the story, Deb? Isn't it amazing how it can, come over a different way, hearing it from the other side ... Deb: one of the things I said to Brian, and maybe you can use it in your case too, in that respect, is this use of safe words ...

Moving in line 20 to re-endorse her earlier communicative strategy, the radio-doctor both comments on the efficacy of her own programme as talking-cure, and re-launches the "safe word" regime. When Debbie counters this with the view that "he just wants it too much: is 24 hours a day normal?" the host falls back on the commercial talk-back staple: she offers the caller a "special gift that I want you to have" - an edition of the board game "Compatibility". The strategy allows her to end a now seriously problematic call on a positive note, and to take up as post-call topic-formulation not the illustration of the efficacy of communicative therapies she had hoped for, but at least a promotional spin for a sponsor's product, predicated upon much the same "connectedness" values of sociability and interactivity.

This pair of calls neatly encapsulates the radio-doctor's diagnostic direction towards the distribution of "unique", personalised caller experiences into a pre-existing set of generalised human behavioural categories. The technique operates on three levels.

In the first instance, since both partners call in, a "real" relationship is shown to occasion these calls, grounding the experience, guaranteeing its authenticity, and
endorsing the first caller's view that it is "problematic": an experience which "should not" occur; in need of remediation.

That the second caller, Debbie, disputes her partner Brian's account and interpretation of the experience, actually endorses its problematic nature - on the host's terms. Two intimately-relating callers are thus shown to be unable to communicate and so unable to resolve their dilemmas - except with the expert mediating intervention of the radio-doctor.

Finally, the Brian and Debbie calls illustrate the capacity of the radio programme to construct "support" networks across social space. Unknown and non-contiguous yet sympathising and empathising fellow-listeners can be "mediated" into self-care and self-cure, just like Brian and Debbie, through communication. And beyond the mediated procedures of Pillowtalk, with their residual traces of simulation, lie "real" networks of counselling and treatment-providing professionals and therapies, available within a "healthy" community, for individuals who can learn to self-monitor and reveal (talk out) their dysfunction to a professional. The urgent recommendation by the host that callers use these other networks plays a role in both the closure-as-case-resolution within individual calls, and the re-insertion of the callers into the social.

9.6 Formulation and closure: getting the last word

At first sight, given its colloquial and conversational surface, the show's discursive ethos appears broad, inclusive and non-judgemental, as the very minor role played by direct socio-moral commentary within both topic selection and ensuing talk has indicated. Such qualities are crucial to the show's success. But the host has a higher-power: the capacity to use both the diagnostic power of the doctor's role, and the editorial function of the radio host, to comment beyond the closure of a call.

This can be performed as a "subsidiary closing" sequence (Crow 1986, p. 472), or as a moment of spontaneous "editorialising" directed at the full audience, transforming the previous call into a case history, or even as a dialogue with the show's panel operator - a function also present on the US Dr Ruth programme.
(Crow, p. 473, “post-call talk”). These variants on the device of formulation, along with the ability to select and re-order listener-comments for future compilation or promotional play, undermine totally the appearance of an “open” programming.

Even more significantly, the “closure” which is practised in radio-doctoring goes well beyond the generic techniques used within broad-topic talkback - such as The Stan Zemanek Show - to pace and position calls. This is a carefully directive feature of the talk-texting, calculated to preserve the last word for the “expert” host. But in all cases the actual advice which summarises the case follows the same social trajectory. It inevitably deflects the case and its problem back towards social convention - even when no overt judgement appears to be given.

Caller “Monica” for instance, is worried that her boyfriend’s sister is “coming-on” to her. Her call is closed with the advice that she “back off and think about it”:

Pillowtalk, April 21 1996: caller “Monica”

6  Monica: ... about a week ago, we were going to go out and, he couldn't make it
7  Feelgood: Hmm-mmm ...
8  Monica: So - I went out with his sister, and ... she ... kind of, came onto me?
9  Feelgood: Mmmm
10 Monica: And, I didn't know what to do about it, and, I didn't do anything, and now I'm finding that I'm, actually attracted to her
11
12 Feelgood: Mm hmm
13 Monica: And, I, still want my boyfriend, and I just can't talk to them about it and I just don't know what to do ...
14
15 Feelgood: Mmmm, OK, - I 'spose, it's, you're in - if we take away that the fact that she's his sister: let's just say it's "an-other person".
16
17 Monica: Mmm?
18 Feelgood: OK, you have to think about - you're in a relationship with this guy, you're attracted to someone else, let's just say first of all, "someone else", um, ah, who - who are you going to choose to have a relationship with?
19
20 Monica: I don't know, I, I kind of like them both ...
21 Feelgood: Well that's something you're going to have to decide I think
22 Monica. I think it's a bit unfair to lead people on, and you can't lead either of them on without making some sort of decision. Now, the fact that complicates it is that it's his sister.

As usual, the radio-doctor’s diagnosis becomes decisive around line 20, when the caller’s narrative exposition is in place, and the initial tentative strategy has been tested (lines 15-16, where Feelgood initiates her “let’s separate the sexual preference from the relationship” strategy.) On this occasion, having produced
this resolution without overt resistance from the caller, she drives it home quickly and forcefully, summarising it as early as line 31, and subsequently closing the call:

31 Feelgood: You don't have to make a decision on your sexual preference
32 over just, one, person - it might just be that she might be,
33 um, I don't know, very... exciting or whatever... Back off
34 and think about it...

For Monica the problem is one of sudden confusing recognition that sexual responsiveness may occur outside normative expectations of a continuum building into “a relationship”. For Feelgood, it is one of testing that attraction against the powers of a hetero-normative ideal:

38 Feelgood: Do you want to be with him, or not... hang back a little bit.
39 What if it had been another guy? It’s a hard one Monica: very hard.

Caller “Blade” on the other hand, is concerned that he may fail to recognise the moment when he should take his pregnant fiancée to the delivery ward. He is reassured that some form of “natural” phenomenon will occur, and even that these are sexed and gendered matters, so that when the time comes, “your lady’ll understand…”


dc

Pillowtalk, April 21 1996: caller “Blade”

11 Feelgood: Basically, the beginning of labour pain is sort of, - and I’m
12 sure your lady’ll understand! It starts off, feeling like
13 period pain: then it, becomes contractions - of course in the
14 later weeks there’s these other things called Braxton Hicks
15 which are sort of false starts, and they’re nothing to do with
16 actually having, the baby... I know... I know EXACTLY
17 where you’re coming from, ‘cos, everyone feels the same
18 way, um, YOU’LL KNOW! - is the bottom line!

While in each case the closure-as-advice is equally assertive and assured, one problem is processed as a problem in need of a self-monitoring strategy; the other the exact opposite. Same-sex experimentation needs to be thought through, while medicalised childbirth is so “natural” that you won’t need to think at all. For Blade the body will “speak” its needs. For Monica, if it does, it had better be ignored. Closure as a technique for talk-management - the radio-host’s concern - and closure of diagnosis - the radio-doctor’s prerogative - are also operating here as socio-moral closure. Listener-callers are being differentially positioned, inside or outside bounds of acceptability, drawn over very conventional categories.
Both socially, in the retention of a deep embedding of hetero-normativity in her interpretation of caller life-experience, and professionally, by maintaining the expertise to herself-as-doctor, Dr Feelgood thus re-asserts traditional - and patriarchal - values.

The processing is however intensified and interestingly re-located, by the specific demands of its radio mediation. In the absence of the medical-diagnostic channels of visual symptoms and the physician’s touch, present in traditional clinical settings but absent in relations with radio-doctors, the listener-caller is required to enact their own self-examination. With the eye and the diagnostician’s touch denied, callers must be brought to itemise their condition, in physical and experiential terms, before both the “expert” medical authority who can name and “treat” their condition; and the general, “over-hearing” radio audience, who can apply the condition, the diagnosis, and the treatment to their own circumstances.

The technique is most evident on those “inverted” occasions, when the doctor suspends the conversational exchange in order to elaborate and describe the complexities of a caller’s medical condition to the broader audience. The caller will then take up the “assent” position often enacted by the host, offering consensual paralinguistic prompts and “continuer” cues, to “ground” the medical expertise in their own experiences. When “Mike” in programme 5 seeks advice over premature ejaculation, caused by a congenital “kink” in the urethral valve, his chorus of “aha”, “mmm”, “yes - ye!” accompanies Dr Feelgood’s explanation of the condition, and models the kind of consensual relation her joint doctorly diagnosis and talk-host projectional re-narrativisation of caller behaviours aims to produce.

The dual-extension of the surveillant regime: inwards, to establish the capacity for self-regulation, and outwards, to ensure multiple applications by an over-hearing audience, makes of such “counselling” programmes as *Pillowtalk* a triumph of contemporary enactment of Foucauldian “self” regulatory projects. The technique is worth examining in detail.
9.7 Radio doctoring: how medical authority transforms private diagnosis into public education

For a *radio* doctor, working on a medium conventionally considered "blind" (Crisell 1986), it is interesting to note how often *Pillowtalk*’s host “Dr Feelgood” evokes the conventional authority of medical “seeing.” “I can’t diagnose without seeing you,” she warns one caller, in a directly Foucauldian allusion to the prescriptive powers of the medical gaze (see *The birth of the clinic*, 1973).

Radio doctoring has however clearly evolved a compensatory, and arguably more powerful, technique. By requiring the caller-as-patient to describe their symptoms or narrate their case-history, always enmeshed in a structured dialogue of cues from Dr Feelgood, the programme elicits immediate caller involvement and complicity in what seems very close to self diagnosis. It manages however to pass to the private individual not the power of diagnosis, but the responsibility for self-observation, and even reporting, to the requisite “authorities”. Radio-doctoring intensifies the regime of self-surveillant scrutiny. Based on a “speaking-forth” or confessional impulse constructed in the preliminary “diagnosis” questioning; modelled in the “projection” sequences in which the host “enacts” and re-narrativises the caller’s talk-relations with partners, and finally prescribed as a general social requirement for “talking-out” of all dysfunction, this tendency becomes the core of the textual processing of *Pillowtalk*. It directly endorses a regime of “self surveillance” as “self responsibility” - the enterprise culture version of autonomy deployed by a conservative and “privatised” politics of “self health”. Most aggressively rendered within Thatcherite enterprise-discourse’s dismantling of British welfare systems and policies (Rose 1999), it has become most commonly formulated as “mutual obligation”.

*Pillowtalk* caller “Gary” for example, asking how to start going out again after the break up of a relationship, is told precisely how to “read back” his own

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10 And more recently within Howard Government welfare “reform” moves, where the same formation has been explicitly adopted in policy. Since the data for this study was collected only a matter of weeks after the 1996 election which brought the Howard Government to power, such discourse had not yet emerged in the Australian context. Its position however within the programming of a successful commercial broadcasting network is just as suited to its role.
behaviours, in order to modify them into efficacy. The prescriptive sequence here is: “That’s gotta be a healing time ... Listen to your body ... watching very carefully.” The synaesthetic cross between “listening” and “watching” helps bridge the problem of aural diagnosis of the physical, in a medical culture traditionally dependant, as Foucault discovered, on the gaze and on touch. Here the absent “clinical gaze” is translated into a clinical “listening” - an act in which the host models how audiences, both participating and over-hearing, should work. Your body must be monitored, to capture those moments when it will - inevitably, like that of Blade’s pregnant fiancée, - speak. You must strive not to decode the symptomology - still the role of the doctor as diagnosticon - but to speak forth or communicate its messages: to your partner - as with Brian and Debbie; to your GP; to your counsellor - even, as in Gary’s case, to the whole world of dateable people. The role of the doctor is to re-insert the caller-patient into the “healthy” world, via willing participation in the social institutions and practices of organised medicine and its rapidly diversifying specialisations. As radio-doctor, she activates the “communicativity” of radio to model how far each “cure” is now a “talking-cure”: one which must broaden its speaking-forth, in a world in which “choice” operates even at the level of treatment-selection. The radio-doctor too stands in for both Freud and Mayhew, prescribing correctly socially inserted and “activated” psycho-social selves.

At the same time however the sensory blurring, as the diagnostic gaze becomes the talking cure, adds to the general audience’s capacities to blur the generic purposes or uses of this diagnostic talk. Their “overhearing” shifts the talk-texts from individually applied medical diagnosis to general entertainment - even as far as the pleasures of aural voyeurism. As Bell and van Leeuwen have shown us (1994) such “questioning” genres as the radio-doctor diagnosis are at the same time detached - and thereby professionalised - and affiliative. While the diagnostic and prescriptive “doctorly” talk re-forms the individual caller’s experience into practices accessible to “remediating” social institutions - a directly educative role - the transformational techniques adopted in the “projection/re-narrativisation” stage run very close to the “performed” texts of media entertainment. Annexing techniques from the representational repertoires of fiction and drama, these programme segments, rich in word-play, tonal expressiveness and role-enactment, “characterise” and embody the “communicative” selves of ideal or “cured” social interactants. Pillowtalk thus
becomes in itself a “euphemised” space of symbolic social action. It is both directly instructional, as the medical expertise of the radio-doctor probes, categorises and diagnoses, and then indirectly affiliative, as the radio-doctor re-scripts caller behaviours in engagingly everyday scenarios, accessible to all, and entertaining in their own right.

Once acknowledged as present, these generic blurring effects can be seen to proliferate - and so license listeners to further re-appropriation. This programme has an overt role as direct “public education”, as the reference to the many adolescents who listen to the show makes clear. Teenagers secure in their bedrooms 11, and listeners contained within the perversely enhanced intimacy of the ear-plugged Sony Walkman (Hosakawa 1984; Chambers 1990; Bull, 1999) access “public service” information, privately. This continual series of slides across reception modes and reception spaces then enables the transgressive utilisation of medical authority as personal sexual titillation - a latter-day version of the sneaked look at the family medical encyclopaedia under the bed covers. While it legitimates the flow of the regulatory intrusion of authoritative sexual counselling into the processes of formation of a sexed and sexual self (Foucault 1990; 1986), it also performs the reverse function, of “mapping out” pathways “troubled” individuals - whether callers or general listeners - can take to access the “local” therapeutic services of their community. Like The Stan Zemanek Show, listeners move into and through the virtual, talk-texted “Thirdspace” of the programme, only to return, “reformed”, to their own locale.

9.8 “Consuming doubts ...” - externalising self-regulation for an overhearing audience

The “local” directedness of Dr Feelgood’s “authorisation” of felt response and its apparent validation of individual and private feeling becomes evident when she suggests that a caller undertake an externalisation procedure, to gain control of her decision-making. “Write down the reasons ...” she is advised. Like Robinson Crusoe’s religio-moral double-entry bookkeeping undertaken to decide a course of action, this accesses a broader cultural mode of rational weighing up: an acknowledgment of the valuation systems of the material base of culture as a

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whole. But it also introduces a disciplined regime of self evaluation by a process of self-scrutiny. In both instances, like the perverse licensing of “self-expression” via submission to Dr Feelgood’s professional judgement, this apparent endorsement of private control over self is immediately transformed into an externalised, concretised object of public scrutiny. The self-diagnosis exercise offered up by Pillowtalk callers for medical expert judgement is simultaneously the public performance of a master-class. More than one client at a time is being trained in its techniques.

Nor is there any doubt about on which side of the talk-relation the power resides. Caller “Jodie”, who has been diagnosed as having Hepatitis C, is shown clearly whose life is in chaos, and who has the power to re-order it. Dr Feelgood’s assurance that “We’re finding out more and more about it ...” evokes the world of medical and scientific research which she herself inhabits, and to which Jodie will have to appeal for remedy. With a single pronoun choice the host dissociates from the problematic caller, to assert her own powers as solution rather than problem; as order rather than chaos; as powerfully cohesive and coercive institution, rather than disruptive and distressed and in need of re-ordering.

This power is however in the final analysis just as uncontestable as Zemanek’s. It is very difficult to find a technique of resistance, when even silence is inadmissible as an option within the counselling/advisory strategies of Pillowtalk. On programme 5 “Luke” expresses concern that his partner (or his “lady” as he calls her) actually refuses counselling. Dr Feelgood asserts as strongly as ever her belief in the uses of regulatory talk:


<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Dr F:</th>
<th></th>
<th>Luke:</th>
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<td>11</td>
<td>OK we need to talk about the fact that this lady won't go for counselling, I ...</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>think you got to lay down the law.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>(:;): Well I mean - I think there's a lot of problems involved ah, on both sides actually, um, I mean, she won't - she just sort of clams up: she just won't ah, open up at all ...</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Luke, I think there is no question what this woman needs is counselling ... why - probably YOU need some counselling to be able to break away from this ...</td>
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Unable at second remove to act upon such refusal, the host resorts to an even more directive strategy:
Nor is such strong assertion the only weapon in her arsenal. Caller “Nicole”, whose ex boyfriend wants her back, fears any further involvement since he is diagnosed manic depressive. Dr Feelgood moves to vocalise empathy. Her voice drops as she says: “it worries me that he’s been diagnosed, but is refusing medication”; “is there someone else he can go to?” Note the unusual ownership of the first statement: “it worries me...” As with Dr Ruth’s direct address of camera (see Crow 1986; Dyson, 1994), the host is adapting her vocalisation to enact sympathy and seriousness: to return the exchange to the social. An opening for involvement is built into the questioning construction of the second contribution: not the imperative “he needs to go to someone”, but “is there someone else ...” Without loss of diagnostic resolution and directive intent, this opens the exchange to participation from the caller, whose vocality has revealed an unstable emotional state.

To some degree agency is required of the caller. Participation is invited, although with a very clear direction as to what that participation should, and will, involve. Dr Feelgood is thus able both to stress the need to re-engage institutional intervention (someone else he can “go to” where he will not refuse medication), and calculatedly drop from authority to intimate sincerity in her vocality, to break through into persuasion, and to control emotion. The sudden vocal drop into soft tones and open vowel glides is a dangerous dual strategy. It can both prevent break down (“I sympathise with you; you can be assured of a resolution”) and evoke it (“I’m being sympathetic: now we can cry together ... I feel your anguish ...”) For the broader listenership it codes the latter. It signals that “this is a serious call”; “this woman is in trouble” - “watch how I am going to resolve this.” For the caller however, it does even more. It immediately signals the seriousness of the situation, and begins the work of opening up to a resolution which, by focusing on and intensifying the emotional affectivity of the ex boyfriend’s grave problems, improves the chances of his remaining “ex”. Effectively, the acknowledgment of the caller’s intimacy and attachment to the boyfriend which the vocalised sympathy seems to address, switches to become an indicator of the gravity of the boyfriend’s problems - and so a never explicitly stated but nonetheless powerful caution to abandon him.

If the authority of the doctor and the inevitability of the move to regulatory intervention is the strongly established norm within the discursive relations of
the conversational exchanges, there is evidence that other normalisations are under construction within the advisory strategies the programme sets up. “Andy”, who wants his sex life jazzed up after three years in a relationship, displays a great deal of hesitation via his response cues as the doctor advises him. His subdued chorus of “aha...” and “ok ...” is less than enthusiastic, as Dr Feelgood diagnoses and advises and “cures” with strings of suggestions for “remedial” commodity consumption. She suggests romantic notes and gifts of flowers, and gives him a free movie pass - but provides no cues or spaces for the emergence of whatever it is the caller truly desires.

If unable to be pinned into a regime of either medical intervention, or “consumer therapy”, the individual caller-problem seems to have no discursive space on this programme. Space in radio broadcasting is of course silence, and silence is both dead air, and diminution of diagnostic power. It is also, and far more seriously, a breach in the elaboration of the surveillant self-healing mode as enacted by radio doctors. Listeners not themselves callers gain entry to the pseudo-autonomy construct offered within this non-personal, not-private Pillowtalk through accessing a prescribed and disciplined “flow” of talk. Refuse entry to the regulatory processing, and you remain inert, uniformed, un-selfed. While this may well prove the necessary preliminary to an act directed towards a Foucauldian “self-creation”, its direct rejection of the consumer-“self”-producer of Rose’s “steered” self makes it an unacceptable act within enterprise culture. The convergence of the “speaking out” confessional regime of “self-health” with the acknowledgment of a communicative base to social “connectedness” contributed by Pillowtalk’s role as “radio-doctoring”, leads both callers and general audiences through the same “mapping” of participating selves onto consuming networks as The Stan Zemanek Show. This time, the construction is less one of the modelling of actual commodity exchanges, as of the necessity for “self-health” of an openness to the whole concept of exchange itself. As caller “Luke” wryly remarks when told once too often to “seek professional help”, “I should have remembered that this was commercial radio...”

The following chapter will examine both those techniques used in diagnostic talk-relations and the techniques of radio production which produce this multiple “space” of communicativity and connectedness for commodification of a “healthy” surveillant self.
Chapter Ten

"Pillowtalk with Dr Feelgood, in bedrooms right across Australia - thanks to PhisoHex!" - reclaiming medico-surveillant intimate space for commerce

10.0 "In - and up - and all- around ...": the construction of a sexualised virtual sensorium of sound, and its imaginative occupancy

As we have seen in the previous chapter, while it appears to offer an intensified privacy of in-bedroom voyeurism, Pillowtalk sweeps both its public reach and its claims over sexual contact outwards and across the entire community. Alongside the detailed control of talk-relations lies an equivalent set of radio practices, working across every sector of production, to endorse the programme's capture of an intimately disciplined self for a "mutual obligation" consumerism.

On April 28 1996 Pillowtalk's promo voiceover has been multi-tracked\(^1\) to accentuate the spatial movement evoked in the innuendo-laden slogan: "All around Australia: in - and - up - and - all - around ...", picking up and amplifying the dual-speaker tracking of FM stereo sound to replicate an aural spatiality which is almost tactile (Jones, 1993; Kahn & Whitehead, 1992). This is "locus without ground", to invert Margaret Morse's (1998) formulation\(^2\) (see also

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\(^1\) That is, recorded on a multiple soundtrack recorder, so that sounds recorded at different times or at different locations can be "layered" above and below each other, to create a sense of depth and richness. Multitrack recording, often deliberately exploiting the capacity of FM radio's stereo separation into left and right speakers at reception, can be used to represent space and movement across space, as well as the presence or absence of mass. For a sense of the capacities of modern sound recording to evoke a complete "sensorium" with audio alone, see S. Davies et al. 1995, Essays in sound 2: technophonia Sydney, Contemporary Sound Arts.

\(^2\) Morse (1998, p. 102) uses the term "ground without locus" to describe the lost or "derealised" spaces traversed in cultures of high mobility or "flow", in which some locations are emphasised as (culturally and economically) "active" or meaningful, while others are just for passing through.
Lacanian work on the concept of “the sonorous envelope”\(^3\). It creates an aural illusion of spatiality, using stereo cross-over to simulate movement through space; echo enhancements and bass vibration to “bounce” sound off non-existent physical boundaries; tonal slides and volume differentials to give those non-existent boundaries character. Ungrounded in reality, this aural space operates as a powerful illusory “location”, already overlain with cultural associations which invite certain types of imaginative occupancy.

Working through the programme’s “mood-setting” intro, which calculatedly sets up an aural rite of passage into a different space from other programming (and so from other “selves”) the enhanced stereo sound of these recurrent promos is used to re-insert into listener consciousness the “special space” in which this programme is occurring. Careful multi-track recording places sound both across and between the stereo speakers, to open a layered sensorium of depth and movement (see especially Madsen 1995 and Schafer 1980, on “sound as durée”). Sound compression adds both mass and “edge”. A sharp-sound-quality sensation of physical occupancy tricks the ear into “hearing” already-occupied spaces not only “full” of “live” sound, but more full than in reality. This is the enhanced aural promise of Lefebvrian Thirdspace: a technologically and discursively produced simulacrum - for its “effects” are calculated on an acculturated set of fictional and dramatic stylisations of the “intimate” and “romantic” mood. Its aural evocation of such “settings” both depends upon, and exceeds and so re-models, lived space. If the talk of Pillowtalk is directed towards improved and enhanced selves: the counselling transformations of “problem” into “solution”; its sound-styling has already achieved it.

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She comments: “Practices and skills which can be performed semiautomatically in a distracted state - like driving, shopping, or television-viewing - are the barely acknowledged ground of everyday experience”. Since it is explicitly the socio-economic “activation” of selected sites which makes them meaningful, I suggest that the “spaces” evoked by precisely those socio-economic “activations” in commercial radio sound locations are locus without ground. They are over-realised representations of activated sites of desire which do not in fact exist.

\(^3\) The power of the constructed locus without ground is paralleled by the Lacanian ego-ideal’s status as an imaginative construct: one which sustains a sense of presence and reality from a base of absence and unreality. The idea of “the sonorous envelope”, an acoustic version of the mirror-phase, similarly gives to radio’s disembodied or virtual sound-scapes the power to “reflect back” to an otherwise uncertain self. This may well be the source of the “comfort” often attributed to radio by socially sequestered listeners, rather than a compensatory immersion in Scannell’s “sociability” (1996). See Schwarz, 1997, and Weiss, 1995.
10.1 "A REAL PERFORMER" - promotional selves in the role of the real

In contrast, the programme's host at the level of vocality is for the most part clear and "ordinary" - cheerful, crisp, friendly, and unhyped. She is frequently self-conscious about asserting both her "ordinariness" and her "real" status as GP:

Pillowtalk, April 14 1996: presenter introduction

1 Dr F: Welcome to Pillowtalk: I'm Dr Feelgood, and, as usual it's lovely to be
2 back in your bedroom, as I'm sure YOU think it's lovely to be back in
3 your bedroom! Don't we all just LOVE to go to bed ... Some people like to
4 go to bed to sleep, and some people like to go to bed to have - sex. Well:
5 that's what we're talking about for 2 hours every Sunday, as we have
6 done for many years and ... golly gosh: we're not sick of it yet! Um, we're
7 talking about sex, we're talking about it right round the country, and
8 I'm HAPPY, to help you with your problems. I suppose I haven't said
9 this for a while, so it's probably time I did: yes - to answer your
10 questions - I AM a real doctor, that is, well - people with PhDs say I'm
11 not real - I have a medical degree, I am a general practitioner: I am
12 practising and hopefully one day I'll get it right ... and I'd like to help
13 you if I can, just like your family doctor would like to help you - so -
14 you can give me a call for the next two hours: you might want to tell me
15 something that's happening to your life, with regard to your sex life,
16 you might want to ask me a question - or you might just want to ring up
17 and tell us a good story about how happy you are with your sex life.
18 Any of the above and all of the above. The number: 1 800 657 657.

It is important to consider the textual framing consciously built into each programme. Panellist, sound, music, promos, format, slot, station, accumulate a multi-layered context for the programme's conversations. The expert but female host, with the authority of a doctor but the sensitivity of a woman, is carefully displaced from direct contact with the technology of delivery. Her expertise is moderated by a male panellist, known only as "Troy". While she may teasingly comment on his status as her "T(r)o(y)-boy", he paces her call rotation and music and ad play. By performing all "links" and promos, he displaces both her

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4 "Links" are the forward-and-backward directed segments which tie a programme together. They include the following: "outros" or back-announcements of the previous programme; "promos" for next week's programme; promos for repeats; promos for following programmes; promos for other weekly programmes, live or cart-recorded; station Ids; time calls; "intros" or introductions of the next programme segment or topic; advertisements or sponsorship calls, live or cart-recorded; community-service announcements, and music bridges: short interludes which "cue" particular programme segments. When a technical panellist openly "drives" the programme in these ways, he or she becomes the "broadcaster", with the "host" becoming the "expert guest" or "talent."
doctorly authority and her feminine empathy with callers, shifting her back into
the private-domestic consumer space activated by commercial radio. The host
thus is made into the bridge into intimate space, for the regulatory consumer
machine. For all her claims to medical expertise, Dr Feelgood, suspended
partway between the powerful radio host and the empathy of Candace West’s
account of the female doctor, acts as the link between the private/intimate and
the public/surveillant. Texts produced within the inter-space: the locus without
ground evoked by the FM soundscapes of the show’s promotional bites, become
increasingly intermeshed with both private and public sphere meaning.

In the first instance, persistent generic appropriation of the diagnostic doctor-
patient dialogue by commercial scripts blurs distinctions between intimate
relations and commodity marketing. Pillowtalk Programme 3 for example opens
with one redaction of the PhisoHex pimple cream ad sequence - another scenario
for sustained sexual innuendo, inside the same conversational exchanges as the
programme’s host-caller relations:

Pillowtalk, April 14 1996: PhisoHex ad

1 Female voice 1: Jason’s got one that really works!
2 Female voice 2: You mean you SAW it?
3 Female voice 1: Oh yes! he wasn’t embarrassed! (voice lowers into innuendo
tone) He couldn’t wait to show me ...
4 Female voice 2: Mmm, sounds like his confidence is REALLY up! Hmmm?
5 Female voice 1: There ARE others, you know ...
6 Female voice 2: True ... but - he’s got a REAL PERFORMER!
7 Female voice 1: Do you think he’s serious?
8 Female voice 2: Reckon! If a guy’s using PhisoHex to get rid of his zits, he’s
10 serious. It really works you know.
11 Female voice 1: Aaaah, yeah ... It really does ...
12 Male voice over: For the confidence of clear skin, use PhisoHex facewash. It
effectively clears acne and pimples, and stop new ones forming.
14 PhisoHex.

The unsubtlety of this evocation of phallic power and female subservience is
immediately replayed in the programme opening, which segues into its intro
theme, and then:

1 Female voiceover: Good evening ...
2 Male voiceover: Welcome ... to Pillowtalk: frank, open
discussion, of sexual and relationship matters.
4 female panting
5 Male voiceover: If you think it might offend you, here’s some
time, to adjust your radio.

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Not, you will notice, to “turn your radio off”, or to “change stations”. This procedure is more a rite of (aural) passage into the intensified pleasure of the titillation already evoked in the PhisoHex innuendo, than a mandatory warning. The continuity thus constructed from ad to promo-intro is in fact something of a problem for the persona of the host, whose vocalisation and delivery contrast to it. As we have seen above, Dr Feelgood’s voice is phonically unembellished, and her style is straight-forward to the point of heartiness. The plain speaking in that text: “I am a real doctor”; “I have a medical degree”; “I’d like to help you ...” and the playful self-deprecation: “well-people with PhDs say I’m not real ...”; “I am practising and hopefully one day I’ll get it right ...” set up a conversational, friendly ordinariness, explicitly close to the role of the family doctor, who is also represented as available to “help you”. The simple compound sentences, the opening of the verb forms (“you can ... you might want to ...”) contrast with the hyped commercial voices of the ad sequences, which use an over-full vocal and emotional range to dramatise and enlarge statements. At the same time, the simple directness of the host’s invitations to “just ... ring up and tell us a good story about how happy you are with your sex life” plays interestingly against the ironic ploys of youth address in the ads, where meaning is established both conversationally and in terms of narrative, by *indirection*:

*Pillowtalk, April 7 1996: PhisoHex ad*

1. Male voice: Hi sis.
2. Female voice: Hi pest.
4. Female voice: Thanks.
5. Male voice: I got the answer.
6. Female voice: (sarcastic) Cut my head off?
7. Male voice: No seriously - I got you this.
8. Female voice: PhisoHex?
9. Male voice: Yeah! PhisoHex Face wash. (Imitates deep male voice of PhisoHex ads) “It effectively clears acne and pimples and helps stop new ones forming.”
10. Female voice: I take it all back! You're not a pest!
11. Male voice: Oh, that's OK ... Ah ... could you lend us ... five bucks till tomorrow?
13. Male voice: Thanks Sis ... Older female: Hi you twos!
14. Male/female: Hi Mum!
15. Older female: Aaaah, you found the PhisoHex I got you!
16. Female voice: YOU got me??
17. Male voice: (:::) - I'm outa here!
18. Female voice: Come back, you rotten little pest! (door slams)
This narrative enacts the sort of double-entendre/duplicity over which so many contemporary visual ads play. The "confidence trick" which the PhisoHex product offers, for "the confidence of clear skin," here operates within the repeating PhisoHex narrative structure, as well as within the commodity's transformative promise (Berger 1972; Williamson 1978; Fowles 1996).

10.2 "Healthy consumption": the real in the space of promotion

At the same time, the ad-text’s clever introduction of an intertextual reference to its own promotional phrases (lines 9-11) continues the blurring between the social and the commercial, insinuating commodity identification into "lived" discourses in a naturalising way. This in turn carries the ad into the dialogues of callers with host; the discourses of "expert" intervention into the lived "problems" - and ensuing social relations - of listeners.

In yet another Baudrillardian inversion of the simulated over the "real", ad-text "selves" model the correctly-oriented surveillant (consumer) self the programme works to produce. As Margaret Morse (1998) points out in her discussion of how far commercial TV has prepared us for its own disappearance into "push" Internet-TV marketing, "While interactivity is often understood as 'control' over machines, it could also be considered a way of inhabiting the 'you' produced by the virtual address of television" (p. 5). Castells (1997) creates a similar distinction between the "activator" of the new interactive communication technologies, and the "activated" self, which is disciplined to the machine's needs. To these I add the particular "activated" selves produced by the even more insidious relational processing discourses of commercial radio.

To take into account exactly how this processing of disciplined selves is carried out within the frame of direct and inter-seamed commercial discourse, it is necessary to make a further pass across the data. The advertising, promos and music play on Pillowtalk are central to its discursive positioning, given music radio's inextricable links with the emotional work of identity formation (Breen 1995; Berland 1992; Grossberg 1992; Hennion & Meadel 1986) as the music recording industries became aligned with promotional and marketing culture.

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3 See Fowles 1996.
Wernick (1991), working on the spaces opened within commercial or "promotional" culture for "active" audience engagement, comments on the degree to which such "spaces" are already occupied and directed - back towards more consumption. Examining the British newspaper *The Observer's* weekend "lifestyle" magazine, he says:

> For its advertisers, it provides a direct marketing outlet. It is even promotional for its readers, since much of its copy offers guidance about how to *self-advertise through appropriate lifestyle choice* (1991, p. 123; emphasis added).

To this appreciative reprise of Bourdieu’s (1984) theories of symbolic and cultural capital he might add in turn the lifestyle magazine’s provision for *direct self-advertisement*, through social display of their readership of this high-profile, high-status magazine, in bars and cafes, as well as conspicuous coffee-table positioning at home. For commercial radio listeners the appeal is similar. The promotional uses of a programme such as *Pillowtalk* arise not only inside its promise of embellished privacy for intimate revelation, but in the capacity to re-publicise “successful” intimacy (or PhisoHex “confidence”) either through phoning in to the programme, or discussing last night’s programmed calls among friends. For Wernick:

> To be caught up as a cultural consumer in the vortex of promotional signs is not only to be continually reminded of the myriad things and experiences we lack. It is to be engulfed, semiotically, in a great, swirling stream of signifiers whose only meaning, in the end, is the circulatory process which it anticipates, represents and impels (1991, p. 123).

Once activated, we become in turn activators. But it is the machine which prevails. Wernick’s (1984, 1991) sense of a universe of saturating textual self-referentiality still finds space for the evolution of a (correctly consumer-motivated) self, via his process of “artificial semiosis”, or pre-emptive calculation of textual gaps within the “great, swirling stream of signifiers”. Here consumers invest not the self-assertion of personal “needs” and desires, but enact what Morse (1998) reminds us is particular mode of the “dequotative ‘I’” - a self acting out a prepared public role to almost ritual levels, such is the strength of the discursive order regulating the performance. For Morse, this is “in effect transmitting culture itself,” (1998, p. 5). She sees it as a major feature of contemporary informational culture, in which
whether business or entertainment, in order to support a culture based on more than just the economic exchange-value of data, information that has been disengaged from the context of the subjects, time and place in which it is enunciated must be re-engaged with personality and the imagination (p. 5).

Just such spaces for “re-engagement” are being forged in Pillowtalk’s flow across calls - ads - promos - music play. Since the doctorly authority works to close down on caller interpretation, endorsing or re-configuring “experiences”, the ultimate transformative work is in the acceptance and willing complicity by listener-callers of their own entry into the programme’s force field. As a first priority Dr Feelgood delivers, as all commercial media must, not diagnosis to her callers, but a commodity-consuming audience to her station and its sponsors. And not just an audience, but one disciplined into the self-motivational enterprise of consumer culture: the establishment and constant re-assessment of “needs”. These needs, grounded in the life-world but validated by the dual authority of doctor and broadcaster, are asserted publicly. They are thereby available not only to marketing research, but already active within the constitution of equivalent behaviours in other listeners. Pillowtalk is as implicated in listener-commodification as The Stan Zemanek Show.

10.3 Inverting the “trans/missionary position”:
callers who create agentic space within commercialised privacy

This two-way move across social and technologised space carries the located, everyday self into simulation - but it can also bring it back again. The movement accentuates and intensifies the “reality” of commercial radio’s promised transformations: their capacity to bridge the material world and the symbolic world, and to remix them in the new, real-even-if-virtual of a Lefebvrian Thirddspace.

Two case studies from the programme data corpus show both strategies in play. The movement away from direct sociality, into virtual relation to the programme’s (hyper-sexualised) world, is shown in the first instance by a caller whose sex partners and subsequently sex toys both fail to satisfy, until he re-

4 Pillowtalk’s second favourite joke, the “trans-missionary position” appears in several of the show’s promos - and is very much the sort of media-reflexive joke enjoyed by contemporary Australian audiences.
engineers them into a total immersion unit he calls “The Apparatus”. In a counter move, in case two, the extremity of a caller’s life-situation evokes response not only from the programme’s virtual “contact” with a network of subsequent supportive callers, but also from his real, on-the-ground friends and neighbours, who learn of his dilemma only via the programme.

In case study 1, during a whole programme devoted to sex aids, we encounter “Pete,” whose sexual gratification explicitly moves away from the use of sex aids in a relationship, to permanent replacement of partner by machine. Two sex-toy shop proprietors are on the show, describing various implements. Their extended account of sexual techniques using sex aids reduces the caller list - so commodifying the programme far more than is usual. In this context caller Pete’s otherwise extraordinary identification with sex-aid more than with sex partner appears quite feasible.

Pillowtalk, May 5 1996: caller “Pete”

6  Pete: ... I’ve got a problem with marital aids, or sex toys, or whatever you
7    want to call them
8  Dr F:  Uhhm humm?
9  Pete:  And I’ve had quite a few embarrassing moments with them
10 Dr F:   Uhh hmm?
11 Pete:  And I had to make me own!

Aware of both the presence of sponsors, directly promoting their own “professional” products, as well as of the need to deflect listeners away from any degree of self-diagnosis which might threaten her own authority, Dr Feelgood intervenes. She must re-direct the narrative onto the sort of “problematic” territory which requires “connectedness” counselling:

12 Dr F:  What sort of embarrassing moments did you have?
13 Pete:  Sorry?
14 Dr F:  What sort of embarrassing moments?
15 Pete:  Well - listen: cut me off if I feel a bit brash but ah, the very first toy I bought,
16    was called an “Auto Suck”
17 Dr F:   Yes-
18 Pete:  And you plug it into your cigarette lighter.

As Pete’s narration continues, his combination of technicist authority and self-conscious sexually-charged language (see his disclaimer at line 15) controls the host’s participation, in ways directly opposed to her usual “command” modality.

7 Incidentally a degree of direct sponsorial practice which even Stan Zemanek has not attempted!
Increasingly, she is seduced into playing the appreciative respondent to Pete’s innuendo - as he delights in pointing out:

19 Dr F: Oh Peter I can imagine what you’re gonna come and - ah, say!
20 Pete: ‘Come’ and say - yeah, well what happened was - you, being a doctor, you get heaps a oxygen masks, right? Well it was like a miniature version of that
22 Dr F: Yes-
23 Pete: (uhh) but the trouble was, that when you would, ejaculate, the back pressure was that bad that bang! you got a real bad pain!
25 Dr F: Yes I can imagine!
26 Pete: And also, you blew the whole thing - if you know what I mean!

Pete outlines the specifications of his home-built sex-machine, “The Apparatus”. Patched together from familiar domestic items, it turns the suburban home into a virtual orgasmusron:

45 Dr F: What did you make it out of?
47 Pete: Well; if you can picture - have you got a spa at home?
48 Dr F: (coy) I do ...
49 Pete: Right: now - you know the pump that causes the actual spa, to circulate the water?
51 Dr F: Yes?
52 Pete: (uhh) I’ve adapted that, with a vacuum pump, with a pulse on it, right: now that thing’s got a cut-out, and it spasmodically hits, and stops - but you gotta have water on it.
55 Dr F: Yes-
56 Pete: Right- to stop the pump bumin’ out. An’ I’ve adapted - if you can picture a surgical glove - but - don’t think of the fingers: think of the actual wrist part of it -
59 Dr F: Yeah-
60 Pete: I’ve got that, and I’ve - put some sponge in it, and what happens is you’ve this suction and a pulse, and to enhance it, what you do is you put a little bit of tooth paste and the ah, ultrasound gel, which is quite ah, cheap to buy in bulk, (uhh) and you plug that in, and I find now that I’m having 4 to 5 orgasms a night with that, watching a real good say German porn on TV, an’ it works real good, an’ I don’t have to worry about, ah, diseases, or venereal warts, or any sort of ah side effects, I can, sort of quite easy get me rocks off, watch the videos, and use this pulse - doesn’t use that much electricity. The only draw back is
65 Dr F: Yeah-
69 Pete: That you’ve gotta have it plugged into a tap. So, I’ve got another TV set in my laundry, if you can picture this, I know it sounds crazy! but where my washing machine tub is I got the apparatus hooked up, and you’ve gotta use the actual - in a spa you’ve gotta ah, a hose that you can vacuum the spa with?
73 Dr F: Yes-
74 Pete: Well I’ve put an extension on that, and re-applied my apparatus so I’ve got a suction and a pulse, and I can lay back, and I can watch me video, and I can put that in and bingo! I’m a happy man 4 or 5 times a night!

Apart from the sound-proofing problems (“... what I’ve gotta do, is insulate it so the neighbours next door don’t hear the humming and the buzzing noise”, lines 85-86) the machine’s superiority rests in its unquestioning compliance with Pete’s
desires. In this instance at least, the host’s regulatory programme of social reinsertion is unable to find purchase.

102 Pete: But it’s a really good toy because I tell you what: I can easily have 4 to 5
103 orgasms a night, without a FAIL,
104 Dr F: Yeah-
105 Pete: An’ I don’t get the complaint of “I’m too dry, I’m too sore” or “Yah had one last
106 night!”
107 Dr F: Ow - but what about- what about - have you got a partner in your life at all?
108 Pete: I did have, but ah, the machine took over.
109 Dr F: Ah now, there you go - the machine took over because sex was more fun with the
110 machine?
111 Pete: Well - the machine don’t break down!
112 Dr F: Ohm but what about all the other bits: the sort of loving and the caring and the
113 hugging - the warm and fuzzies and the hugs and the kisses and all that sort of
114 stuff
115 Pete: Yeah, but look, look: I don’t have to pay any extra money, I own me own house, I
116 own me own property, and I don’t have to have any worries about sharing or re-
117 sharing - I mean: it’s great to have partner, yeah sure
118 Dr F: Mmm-mmm
119 Pete: But this thing doesn’t complain, it doesn’t get migraines,
120 Dr F: You don’t have to drive home at night
121 Pete: It doesn’t get period pains, and all of a sudden it doesn’t say “You had one
122 LAST NIGHT!”

Not only does the host’s attempt to reintroduce her “social connectedness” regime fail, but the prior stage in her technique for establishment of dominance in the talk-relation: occupancy of the imaginative space of the caller’s narrative, from where she can rehearse a “reformed” behaviour, is this time similarly barred. Caller Pete, partly through his technical expertise, partly through his capacity to sexualise his description, enacts his own narrative. Significantly too, he is able to shift - as Stan Zemanek did at equivalent moments of appropriation - from first to second person, to harness the generalising power of the second person “you”. The strategy begins at line 47, with a direct-address “you”, inviting the host’s participation:

“Well: if you can picture - have you got a spa at home?”

Once it is established that the host is now “imagining” the right sort of machine parts, Pete can guide her through his regime: the progressive construction of “The Apparatus”, which, since it suits his pleasure, must, by extension, suit any generalisable “you” who might be listening. Between lines 49: “Right: now - you know the pump that causes the actual spa, to circulate the water?” and 53: “… that thing’s got a cut-out, and it spasmodically hits, and stops - but you gotta have
water on it”; Pete has shifted into the “universal you” of Australian speech which opens the narration to the imaginative occupancy of all: “... what happens is you’ve this suction and a pulse, and to enhance it, what you do is you put a little bit of tooth paste and the ah, ultra-sound gel, which is quite ah, cheap to buy in bulk, (uhh) and you plug that in...”

It is also significant that the host’s one attempt to counter the masculo-centrism of all this is presented not as critique, but as commercial opportunism:

134 Dr F: Hey Pete: I’ve just thought of something: now that you’ve worked on this, why
135 don’t you work on one for women, and ah, we’ll like to hear about it; why - over
136 the next coupla months, why don’t you see if you can come up with the ultimate
137 sex toy for women!
138 Pete: Well I tell you what I’ll do - I’ll send you a photostat copy of this
139 Dr F: Oh OK! yeah give me a photocop-[
140 [ Of my machine, and if I come up with a
141 woman’s one, that doesn’t say “no”, [ and that’s always sparkling clean,
142 [ hahahaha
143 Pete: I’ll let you have that, and if we market it we can call it “The Feelgood Orgasm
144 Production”.
145 Dr F: Oh! Hey hey Pete: I’ve just - all that talk has just made our plastic wonder
146 woman fall on the floor! She’s just literally fallen-
147 Pete: Don’t talk to me about Wonder Woman! The last one collapsed on me! She
148 actually blew up!
149 Dr F: You said that!
150 Pete: When they call them “a blow up doll” you know why! they blow up on ya!

In a move not untypical of the show, this segment is immediately followed by a PhisoHex ad, where a young male attempts to “persuade” an unwilling girl - to give him her PhisoHex ...

*Pillowtalk, May 5 1996: PhisoHex ad*

1 M: Oooh, come on ...
2 F: NO!
3 M: Pleeease?
4 F: Nooo!
5 M: Just once!
6 F: No!
7 M: (=:) If you loved me you would ...
8 F: Oooh, don’t try that one! That’s emotional blackmail ...
9 M: Oooh, but my confidence is at rock bottom ...
10 F: Well I can’t help that ... (uhh) -you’ll have to go home, and do it there.
11 M: On my own!!
12 F: Sorry.
13 M: But I really need it!!

*See Wajcman, 1991; Zimmerman, 1981, for accounts of the ongoing equation between masculinity and technology.*
So do!! - Get your own PhisoHex!
For the confidence of clear skin, use PhisoHex face wash. It effectively clears acne and pimples, and helps stop new ones forming. PhisoHex.

The interplay between this imagined dialogue and those represented in caller Pete's dissatisfaction with women as sexual partners who will not co-operate with his "standard" creates resonances which are unpredictable - even surreal. They are however totally continuous with the programme's transformationalist impulses. The requirement that the adolescent male in the ad "go home and do it there", "on my own," has after all just been illustrated to the heights of masculine technicist fantasy, with all the correctly regulated fetishistic tropes of hygiene, in the preceding call. If PhisoHex "replaces" sex within the textual innuendo, it also displaces it as the motivational goal of the narrative's protagonists. Instead it interpolates a commodity between the social (sexual) relation rehearsed, and that actually promised to the individual who acquires "the confidence of clear skin" - the correctly disciplined (commodified) body onto which sexual success is inscribed. Similarly, if Pete has replaced the social-sexual relation entirely with commodity - quite literally "blown away" the Wonder Woman inflatable the programme's sex-toy merchandisers have been promoting - he is rewarded by the promise of direct payback within the true system of exchange relations. He is offered possibilities not only for marketing his Apparatus, but of pleasing the "marvel" radio "Doc" with his "Feelgood Orgasm Production".

10.4 "We put on the radio, and all of a sudden it happens: we have sex!" - the priority of the promotional over the real

Nor does this particular sequence of ads stop at the blurring of relations between the physical and the fantasy, for the next ad in line sweeps back into the other side of the equation, dissolving barriers between talkback radio itself and its "commerce" of callers and sponsors. Here NRMA Insurance sells its product via one in an ongoing sequence of simulated talkback-show calls, in which super-salesman "Wallace Fairweather" tries, yet again, to outwit "the talkback radio host" into ceding him free promotional airspace:

Pillowtalk, May 5 1996: ad break – NRMA ad

Radio host: Sohoho-let's go to the phones, and see what you think about the Grand
Prix! Our first caller is - Richard! 6

"Richard": Hello! Am I on?

Host: Yes! You're on the air Richard ...

"Richard": Well I think my fellow Victorian-ites are missing the important issue

Host: Which is-

"Richard": Home insurance!

Host: (Home insurance? wha-

"Richard": For example Paul, did you know that NRMA Insurance has a "new for old" Home Contents Policy?

Host: Our - topic is the Grand Prix, Richard ...

"Richard": Apart from carpet, NRMA will replace any household item, regardless of its age, with a brand new one, if it's stolen or destroyed ...

Host: Aaah it's YOU, isn't it Wallace! And the Judge barred you from ever phoning me again, didn't he! Didn't he! 10

"Richard": Oh heh! No, no heheh! I'm not Wallace Fairweather, insurance savant and all round nice guy!

Host: Noo- you're Wallace Fairweather, insurance fanatic and all round pa pain in the-

Wallace: assets-

Host: What??

Wallace: Assets - it's important to have all the assets in your home covered by NRMA insurance!

Host: Weeell, thank you Wallace ...

Wallace: "Richard!"

Host: For your insight into the Grand Prix ...

Wallace: You're very welcome Paul!

Host: Now let's go to Emma: hello Emma!

"Emma": (falsetto) I agree with the last caller Paul!

Host: Nice try Wallace ...

(hangs up)

Voiceover: To get a New for Old Home Contents Policy, call NRMA to S-A-V-E ...

The tight collaging of these ads, cut hard into each other and into the programming voice, switches the listener across multiple layers of audio illusion. The "embodied" reality of the caller world is in turn revealed as both illusory, and as hyper-real. The advertising copywriter who produced the NRMA salesman knows - and anticipates that the media-literate listener will also know - about the notorious case of the Tasmanian politician, recognised and "outed" by a talkshow host, while phoning in to support his own policies under the guise of a community caller. The relations between "real" and "mediated" are becoming very blurred. So too, Pete's cyborg existence in his wired basement, plugged into his own amalgamation of washing machine, spa and TV; insulated from his neighbours; is no barrier either to consumption - as he sends out for more

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9 Subsequent references to the Grand Prix (International Formula 1 Car Racing) and "my fellow Victorian-ites" reveals the "caller" as enacting ex-Victorian Premier Jeff Kennett.

10 A reference to a widely publicised case in which a Tasmanian talkback host recognised a local politician attempting to disguise himself as a legitimate "member of the public" in order to support his own policies.
supplies of porno videos and ultra-sound gel - or even engagement in the active
and entrepreneurial world of product development.

There are other transformational directions alluded to within these texts. Less
consciously represented, but nonetheless present in Pete’s world, is the role of
the Pillowtalk programme as sexual foreplay:

Pillowtalk, April 7 1996: presenter introduction

1 This is Pillowtalk, I’m Dr Feelgood, right around Australia into everyone’s
2 bedroom: well, I think everyone’s bedroom ... we are beaming: sex. Well we
3 might not need to beam sex because you might actually be doing it right –
4 look, if you’re doing it right now you can just wait! Please! - The number of
5 people who tell me - who just ring up here and say look: we have sex during
6 Pillowtalk: we go to bed on a Sunday night, put on the radio and - goodness
7 me, we’re listening to you and then all of a sudden it happens: we have sex.
8 Well, good on you! Hahahaha - if it feels good, and you’re both consenting,
9 and you’re both having a good time, what can I say?

The subtle diminution of her own responsibility for sexualisation of these
listeners’ Sunday nights - the suggestion of the intuitive and “natural”
spontaneously occurring: “- and then all of a sudden it happens: we have sex ...”
is a consistently recurrent ploy, cutting against the strong regulatory moves of
the programme at one level, only to reassert them at another. The doctor’s
approval at lines 6-7: “Well good on you!” in correctly idiomatic and friendly
terms, endorses both the spontaneity and its opposite: the use of her own
mediated intervention within their sexual regime.

Pillowtalk caller “Kelly” asks Doctor Feelgood about the morality of being a
phone sex worker, worried about whether it’s OK to do this in case she
normalises “unacceptable” practices. She receives no answer, beyond the
insistence that “some” fantasies should not be encouraged, and that, in a
Feelgood world, all phone sex users would be compulsorily counselled as to why
they “need” to use the service:

Pillowtalk, April 14 1996: caller “Kelly”

7 Dr F: Oh OK: um, oh look - um, I s’pose: it’s a very difficult thing to answer I think,
8 because I - I think if we could screen who the people on the other end were and
9 what their motives were it’d be alright but what worries me is, um, why
10 people are doing it. I - I’d love to - I’d love it if they had to go, I mean -
11 everyone’s gonna hate me for saying this but I mean if they could sort of talk to
12 someone seriously afterwards about why they did it.
The exchange ends with an interesting illustration of what Dr Feelgood presumably considers properly “screened” and correctly motivated use of phone sex. Kelly’s praise of her husband earns her not only a double movie pass, but the chance to provide a small sample of her performance, as Dr Feelgood urges her to kiss her husband on air, so that the embodied performance can actually be overheard:

21 Dr F: Give him another kiss: go on: I wanna hear it!
22 Kelly: OK hold on for another second:
23 Dr F: Give him another kiss!
24 Kelly: OK: M-M-M-M-M-s-s-s-mack!
25 Dr F: AHAHAHAHA! Well that’s lovely: live sex on the radio!

The programme, by its location inside the processing discourses of commercial radio, ultimately promises transformation only through what it actually already delivers: contact with the power of mediation itself. As with the Crestview Pools calls on The Stan Zemanek Show, the efficacy of the Feelgood formula has received the ultimate accolade: the “spontaneous” listener-testimonial.

10.5 The socially dysfunctional reclaimed for the network: reverse mediation and the social re-insertion of suicidal caller “Carl”

The second extended case, suicidal caller “Carl” - exemplifies the radio promise that it can “bridge” the private and the public: establish “connectedness” even in the most hopeless of cases. Carl is lifted in the duration of one programme from the locale of his despair and failure, into the virtual sociality of the programme, where he is subsequently shown to be re-engaged into the sociality of the local. He emerges as confessedly happier - all within the magic of radio time: diagnosis, remedy and cure for total despair - all in 47 minutes.

_Pillowtalk, April 14 1996: caller “Carl”_

28 Carl: ... Uh, I'm just ringing to get a bit of advice-
29 Dr F: Sure-
30 Carl: Uh, I've been seeing a therapist: uh::mm, (uhh) for about, two years ...
31 Dr F: uhmmmm ...
32 Carl: He reckoned uh: earlier on in my youth I was, s-sexually molested,
33 Dr F: uuhhm- oh dear ...
34 Carl: raped. An' that ... an' uhhmmm ... and, at the moment, I'm going
35 through er, crisis in regard to sexuality, now - I feel that I am bi ...
36 Dr F: -yes- uhhmmm
37 Carl: and - I don't know whether this has got anything to do with, ah, (uhh) my
past: I'm not sure

Dr F: -mmm- (:::) I'm not sure whether anyone ever does know,

know, whether you can actually trace a cause to these things, you know:

people can, postulate, an', guess, an' - you know, that sort of

mm mm - oh well ...

stuff, but, I don't know whether anyone can definitively ever say ... What
does your therapist say?

Carl: Pardon?

Dr F: What does your therapist say?

The host’s attempts to focus the caller onto his therapist’s regulatory programme
fail. As the narrative continues, this failure is shown to result from both social
isolation, and its obverse: a flawed attempt at social re-insertion.

Oh well, we never finished, um, going through the therapy, 'cos he sold up
shop, 'n', moved Interstate ... with no, ah, pre-warning or anything

ahhh ...

(uhhhhhh) - so I'm looking for a good one at the moment

- yeah ... right

(uhh) and, the - crisis part that I've got is, that, I have been married,

-yes, yes,

I've got a couple of kids um, who I love dearly, and I wouldn't do anything in
the world to hurt them?

Dr F: Yeah...

'n' um, (uhhh) but ... one of my ... siblings ... has turned round and told one
of my kids. That I am gay.

WHAT?? (::::) That's - just - not - FAIR!

And ... well, I know it's not fair, and it's not fair on the kids, 'cos they turn
their backs (voice breaks) (sobs)

For the caller, this multiplying of social isolation leaves no possibility of
resolution.

Oh Carl ... (::::) Oh Carl .... (::::) I can understand your being upset.

I just don't know where to turn, I just feel like ending it all.

Oh Carl, it's not worth that ...

(::::) (hhh) well how I feel at the moment, it wouldn't take much to jump in
front of a semi ...

Dr Feelgood however at once begins her own strategy for social re-insertion. At
lines 68, 70, 75, 80, 84, 99, 103, 105, 107, 109, 120, 122, 141 and 150 she runs
through an exhaustive list of possible sources of “support”:

Dr F: (::::) Carl?

Carl: (::::)

Have you got any family that are talking to you at the moment?

No. Not one.

What about your ex wife. Mmmhm?

(sniffs) Nah. (uhhh) She's remarried, an', everything else, so ...

Would she, will she at least, be able t-, to ... be a friend to you? or - it just
doesn't work that way ...
Carl: No, it doesn't work that way.

Dr F: Have you got any good friends?

Carl: (hhh) all the friends that I thought I had are no longer with me.

Dr F: Because of this?

Carl: Yep. (uhh) You tell it to them in confidence: the next thing you know, bang - they've gone.

Dr F: Carl, what you, your brother, that told the kids - is he - did he do it because he thought it was the right thing to do? or like, is he - could he be supportive to you?

Carl: Um, well, actually, it wasn't my brother.

Dr F: Or a sister then, or whatever -

Carl: Um, well they are supportive to your face, but behind your back - they throw the daggers in.

Dr F: What about right now, though: I'm worried about you right now.

Carl: Nup. I wouldn't talk to any of them right at the moment.

Dr F: Because of the way you're feeling

Carl: Yep. (uhhh)

Having failed to suggest a local connection for Carl, the host turns at last to deploy the “virtual community” of her own audience:

Dr F: oh - ye - thank you for ringing us then, Carl, because - you know we care.

Carl: (uhh) I'm glad somebody does, because I don't.

Dr F: Oh - well, we do, and I think you know if you listened to this programme before -

Carl: that um, you will find over the next hour or so that you'll get a lot of support calls coming through - Carl: are you somewhere at the moment where you, um, can reach other people, or are you completely alone?

Carl: I'm, (hhh) well, put it this way, if I was the only inhabitant of Kangaroo Island, that's how I feel at the moment.

At this point Carl's reversion to a specified location returns the host to the embodied problem, and the chances of an actual suicide bid:

Dr F: Hmmm ... Are you contemplating seriously committing suicide?

Carl: (uhhhhh) well, I been sitting on pins and needles (hhh) since two o'clock this afternoon ...

Dr F: Carl: have you been - have you actually planned things that you might do to yourself?

Carl: Nah.

Dr F: OK - that's a good sign, Carl, at this time, um, I'm not going to - I'm, I'm going to keep you on line, you're not, you're not going anywhere I can tell you that, 'cos we're going to put you, um, we're going to keep you on the line for a while anyway and have a chat with you while we go on with the rest of the show, because I don't want you to be alone for the moment.

Here Carl, whose experience with “disclosure” as part of his therapy of identity reformation has proven disastrous, is rescued for the social by Dr Feelgood's reinsertion of his dilemma into other conversations ... those occurring with her, and presumably also, through her agency, with emergency counselling services. Beyond this immediate carriage of Carl’s situation directly to social services, the programme is overtly able to return him from his felt isolation, to social
engagement. Simulated in the first instance, but then producing actual social contact within his own locus, contact is forged for Carl. By midway through the conversation (lines 93-95) the host is already promising caller support for “Carl”, directly requesting that listeners phone in with advice in line 174, where she begins the arrangements that will surround Carl with professional assistance from inside his own locale, to endorse her own. Calls do indeed arrive, in the first instance from callers presumably already on hold, since they subsequently move on to their own issues. “Frank” for instance identifies in Carl’s dilemma a similarity of response, if not of situation:

_Pillowtalk_, April 14, 1996: caller “Frank”

3 Frank: The, um, last guy that was on.
4 Dr F: Yeah: Carl?
5 Frank: Yeah, aah, l - i do feel for him, like - i didn’t have the same problem that he
6 had,
7 Dr F: mmm-hmmm?
8 Frank: (uhh) but he obviously feels now, that, if he’s just there on his own, ah, you
9 know like: i was going through a similar thing going back a couple years ago, i
10 actually tried: puttin’ a end to it: obviously i didn’t succeed, ah, i was seeing
11 doctors but, i think, other than doctors what really helped me when i needed to
12 talk to someone was Lifeline and Crisiscare.
13 Dr F: Yes exactly: Lifeline is a a very very good source because you ring them at any
14 time: there’s a 24 hour service, and there are counsellors there that can help
15 chat to you.

Having managed the promotional insertion of a professional service, Dr Feelgood then launches the strategy of using Frank’s experience to model full social re-connection:

15 Dr F: Frank: what was the one thing that made the difference to you -
16 to pull you through? Was there one thing?
17 Frank: Aah - just basically having a stint in hospital, because i got to the ah stage
18 um, to where - i was just that depressed, no self esteem, no self confidence,
19 an’ i felt, basically worthless i suppose, um, to where i just started, walking
20 around, crossing major highways, an’ i - couldn’ recall doin’ it -, till i’d done it?
21 So it was just sort of,
22 Dr F: With you they really needed to break that cycle. Didn’t they.
23 Frank: Oh for sure. You know, they - like i got, a Little Fella, and I thought well, if
24 i’m gonna be here for ‘im, i’m gonna hafta start doin’ somethin’ about it, ah
25 Dr F: That’s why - an’ i think i said to Carl about it, his dog, that i think when you
26 start to think about the people, or animals, or pets or whatever that you’re
27 leaving behind, you realise that YOU CAN’T DO IT TO THEM.
28 Frank: No! for sure, for sure ...

This reassertion of social responsibility, designed to pull the suicidal back into social networks, is represented as cultural value in its own right, as subsequent
callers phone through. "John" represents the virtues of mateship, and specifically of healing talk:

*Pillowtalk, April 14 1996: caller "John"

13 John: Oh I was just ringing up for a start to give some support - some support to, to, the
14 other guy that was on before -
15 Dr F: To Carl ...
16 John: Carl - yeah that's right, yeah, yeah-
17 Dr F: Oh, thanks ... that's excellent: what what sort of - points did you want to
18 make?
19 John: Oh, I've actually got a friend, um, I'd say they didn't know which way, he, he
20 was ...
21 Dr F: Mm-hm?
22 John: And ... it ended up, they found out he WAS - that way inclined, y'know, he was
23 completely gay
24 Dr F: Mmm-hm?
25 John: And ummm ... - he actually went through, trying to commit suicide, and ummm,
26 like, I used to spend hours with him, sort of like sort of, I'd go to his house and
27 spend nights sitting up late with him, you know, and talk to him, and
28 Dr F: Well good on you, John! That's fantastic! Oh it's really wonderful that there
29 are - that you're so supportive of any friend in need, and I think - yeah?

John subsequently moves to reveal a reciprocal relationship: that his friends have similarly supported him during suicide bids. Once again Dr Feelgood teases out the stratagem of social re-insertion and the power of connectedness:

38 Dr F: What's - what was the turning point: what turned you around?
39 John: Um, oh, well we just had a lot of - I actually had a lot of good friends myself,
40 and, they'd sorta like talk to me and I sorta like ring someone up if I was feeling
41 like it and they'd talk to me about it and they'd come over and they used to say
42 to me "Look: it's just not worth it", you know ... a permanent solution to a
43 temporary problem ...
44 Dr F: Exactly ... it's not even a solution: it's just - a way out
45 John: Yeah.
46 Dr F: Doesn't solve the problems, because they're often left behind: John - thanks
47 very much for your encouragement.

The degree to which in-studio practices are working to create these conversational therapies is marked by the host's conscious intervention into the programme running order at this point. She moves to take a call whose content and caller-identity must have been represented to her directly by production and call-screening staff, since her decision to prioritise the call indicates more familiarity with its content than is usually provided with on-screen communication from the control room. The deployment of 13-year-old

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11 Programme production staff maintain contact with broadcasters both through audio links - one earphone channelling broadcast sound, the other studio control instructions - and video screen.
“Emma’s” support call to Carl indicates a deliberate use of sentiment, escalated even from that strategically applied during the conversation with Carl:

Pillowtalk, April 14 1996: caller “Emma”

Dr F: I know you want to play a record but I want to take this next call because I really do.
Troy: Yes, I know - I was getting all confused-
Dr F: I know: sorry ... Emma: hi!
Emma: Hi.
Dr F: I wanted to take your call before we went to a record because I think you’ve got something very important to say: can I ask you how old you are?
Emma: Yes. Um, I’d like to say to Carl that, there’s, nothing to worry about, like, death, that’s not, like the question?
Dr F: (very low) Yeah ... Emma: ‘Cos I had, like, my father, a year ago, I found out that he was bisexual,
Dr F: (very low) mmm - mmmm ...
Emma And, now, we’ve grown to love him for what he is?
Dr F: Exactly ... Can I ask you how old you are Emma?
Emma: Thirteen.
Dr F: Look you’re a wonderful girl to call: thank you so much for calling ... Emma: That’s OK
Dr F: And um, I think what you say will mean a lot to Carl, and the thing is, what, when your Dad first told you you would have been I suppose, sort of “what’s going on here” type thing, but you’ve ultimately realised your Dad is still your Dad.
Emma: Yep.
Dr F: Oh Emma look, you’re wonderful ... Would you like to get some tickets to see a movie, maybe take your Dad?

The care taken to elicit the caller’s age (lines 7 and 14) and the attribution of response to Carl (line 18) as well as to the content of Emma’s initial reactions to her father’s bisexuality, indicate the degree of control the host is claiming as broadcaster. Here she is clearly arranging the stories of callers into narrative order with efficacy for her own transformative ends. At the same time, her larger, “counsellor” project: arranging for the transformation of callers’ LIVES, is also well in hand. Having held Carl in suspension pending caller support, she now returns to him - already aware, via her off-air continuing conversations, that her modelling of virtual sociality through supportive calls, has also altered Carl’s concrete circumstances:

Video notes include the running order of calls on hold, with topic and allocated caller-name, as well as mid-discussion suggestions for questions, commodity offers, etc. In the case of “Emma’s” call, the host appears to have been provided with far more detail of the likely content of the call than is normal. Either she has already spoken to the caller during a music break, or else her production staff have briefed her very thoroughly.
Dr F:  Now, I'm going to put Carl back on the air, because Carl has in fact been hanging on - are you there Carl? Hi Carl...

Carl:  Hi.

Dr F:  Now, you've been holding on for a long time, have um - you've heard a few people ringing up with support for you: how do you feel?

Carl:  Yeah - much better. Thanks to Emma: [

Dr F:  [ mm-hm: isn't she gorgeous? mmm ....

Carl:  OOOOh, yeah ... for a kid that age, to worry about somebody me - like me ...

Dr F:  And I think someone else might have been listening to Pillowtalk tonight.

Carl:  Yeaaahh, while I was on hold, um, my other line engaged, and uh, it was a friend of mine, uh, who I thought had probably turned their back on me - who recognised the voice, aand, got straight on the blower, and, wants me around there for the night?

Dr F:  Good. Oh Carl, that's marvellous: you see there are: just, - just when you think it's darkest, these friends come through. And Carl, um, I, if your friend is still listening, thanks you so much for caring that you're OK and Carl: you better hot-foot it round there!

Carl:  I sure will!

Dr F:  Carl, you keep in touch and let us know how you get on, and, ah, you got to go and see your doctor tomorrow morning and try and sort of get another counsellor organised, and - we're always here for you Carl!

Carl:  Good, and thanks very much - and thanks to the listeners ... thanks a lot: bye bye.

Lines 9 and 19 indicate not only the degree to which the host already knows the outcomes she is about to have “revealed” to her by the caller, but her consciousness of good broadcasting technique. She interpolates between caller and his friends the mediating efficacy of her programme: “someone else might have been listening to Pillowtalk tonight ...” Carl has been saved by radio. His virtual network has become real, in precisely the way commodity advertising claims it will. No surprise then that the promotional culture re-closes around this episode. Carl is invited to “keep in touch” - and no doubt to boost ratings - while the advertising sequences continue throughout his time on, and off-air.

10.6 The commercial fix: establishing “connectedness” from lifesaving-services to lifestyle commodities

The ad sequence played at length while the host goes off-air to her suicidal caller is worth examining, since it follows a familiar, but nevertheless curious pattern. First, as always, is the programme sponsor’s product, Phisohex, already established as heavily implicated in the programme’s operations through its dialogic scripting and its equivalent “insertion” of its own commodity as solution to all problems.
PhisoHex ads are followed by a mixed sequence of products and services: Coca-Cola, Silk lubricant, diabetes prevention services, police speed camera notices, Salvation Army appeals, and promotions for Austereo Radio Triple M afternoon hosts Martin and Molloy. What may appear a strange collection makes sense when read from within the ethos of Pillowtalk, as lifestyle admonition ads. These are each in their way promotions for “life-services”: safe sex; secure health; safe driving; safety-net charitable agencies - all of them fitting the “safe appearance” of the PhisoHex universe of confidence, anchored by the “Always” of the ubiquitous, funtime CocaCola, able to satiate all desire:

As long as there is thirst, there’s always the real thing
CocaCola is always the one ....
Whenever there is fun there’s always CocaCola!

Only then can the laughter of Martin and Molloy be released - that too, like the strategies of The Stan Zemanek Show, formed around the gender category-maintenance work of masculinity in its “jarrkin” rule-break mode. The “mateship” of talk and shared imaginative “acting-out” extends from programming like the Martin and Molloy shift, current heir to the classic DJ monologue, into the sorts of direct “support” talk urged on Carl by response-callers Frank and John, and enacted by Carl’s real world neighbours. As with the paired calls of Brian and Debbie in Chapter 9, which allowed the host to demonstrate the real world authenticity of her callers, this accumulation of support around Carl, from mediated talk to physical and embodied direct action, models the correct promotional flow of the programming: from simulated to real; from radio’s “publicity” to your “private” practices. Once positioned as acting on behalf of health and safety, goods and services as unlike as Silks and the Saivos find a place on Pillowtalk. The curious “flattening” of their origins, their core philosophies, their relative social status or acceptability in this or that domain, is yet another sign of the intensified postmodern circulatory power of promotional culture: a direct equivalent to the processing of life-narratives on the show, which serves equally to standardise calls and propose one-stop/one-shop solutions to all life problems.

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12 See Wertheim, 1979, for an account of the long history of radio comedy which provides the comic personae around which this “category maintenance” work is constructed.
Thus commercial radio has come to map the cultural desires of the listening community, and to itemise for us our ideal social relations. It creates virtual versions of desirable and approved social actions. It is no longer a representational medium - for, outside sports broadcasting, radio rarely now broadcasts "live" from the marketplace13 or "describes" social occasions in the Dimbleby/Wilfred Vaughan Thomas mode. Instead it is dominated by interview genres, extending, as Dr Feelgood's performance of sexual authority compellingly shows, beyond Bell and van Leeuwen's account of "personal interview" radio talk as direct identity work. In their analysis, the genre of the revelatory, confessional discussion much favoured on public "talks" radio depends on and perpetuates liberal-humanist ideas of an intimate self; a self with an almost eighteenth-century - and Habermasian - autobiographical urge.

Commercial radio has moved to a far more directly confessional and immediately regulatory governmental style. Both constitute in audiences an auditory voyeurism of desire for contact with identity as related "in its own words." In commercial broadcasting however the aesthetic of authenticity and sincerity has adjusted perfectly to a consumerist ethic of self-expression in the service of extended consumption, where normative behavioural and attitudinal regulatory processing is concealed beneath the discursive elaboration of "personality" and "uniqueness". Caller "Annalise", concerned that the problems motivating her own call to Pillowtalk don't add up to Carl's, is immediately reassured that every "crisis" is "unique":

*Pillowtalk, April 14 1996: caller "Annalise"

1 Troy: Taking your calls on 1800 657 657, Pillowtalk with Dr Feelgood: this is

2 Dr F: "Annalise"

3 Dr F: Hello Annalise!

4 Anna: Hi ...

5 Dr F: How are you!

6 Anna: Not too bad, thanks!

7 Dr F: What can I do for you?

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13 It is interesting to consider why the long-popular "shopping" programmes of "Women's Hour" formats disappeared from radio (Cramer, 1993). Certainly the "at-home" house-wife consumer has diminished as a major demographic, and commentators have also detailed the extraordinary power-struggles of celebrated "women's" broadcasters to sustain their popularity in the transition to television. But the aging demographic in most Western countries and the degree to which all commercial programming is commodity driven, suggests that a direct-marketing and promotional format "mapping" the day's bargains in the local high-street or mall could succeed again.
And so the narratives continue, elaborating the social connectedness and engagement in meaningful exchange which is the drive of consumerism. If, within the context of my analysis so far, we have seen radio as the terrain for the daily rehearsal of possible public/private selves - a technology of self acceding to each of Foucault's (1988) criteria, playing across Lefebvre's social cartography into thirdpase - Pillowtalk has shown us the public reaching right into and reconstructing as social those spaces Habermasian analysis would render as "private". In Zemanek's programming we have detected the maintenance of strong gender boundaries controlling access to public space. Despite much clever tactical manoeuvring and many contradictory elements in play, all is in the service of a masculinity re-drawing the social as a space of profit.

Next we move to a radio show which, like Pillowtalk, claims intimacy directly as its territory. Red Light Radio, run by a collective of sex workers, claims space for the intimate within the commercial, but self-directed, and self-defining. The following chapter will examine how far it can escape the pressures of an already-directed self-constitution, operating as it does within its own sector of the promotional culture of enterprise economics.
Chapter Eleven

Sex as private enterprise on Red Light Radio

11.0 Broadcasting from the intimate sphere: feminising radio and domesticating sex

Red Light Radio is produced by an all-female collective, on a community radio station. This absolute gendering of its “caring and sharing” talk relations works powerfully to establish a consensual base to the programme’s discussions of sex-as-work: an orientation which moves individual topics and the entire programme format well away from the personalised-problematic discursive positionings of sexual experiences on Pillowtalk. Here, the listener is actually directed away from participation - unless able to claim and prepared to recount experiences of sex-as-work. Rather than inviting interactivity through talkback, and claiming the listener’s experiential space as one accessible to direct transformational intervention, Red Light Radio specifically and openly casts its listeners as either fellow professionals, or fellow-travellers: “experts” sharing experiences to remediate and improve sex-work practices, or voyeurs, offered a privileged overhearing of what amounts to a series of masterclasses in sexual conduct. But while both groups, like listeners to Pillowtalk, are explicitly receiving a form of education, the discursive-directedness of the agents conducting that education is quite different.

Dr Feelgood uses the diagnostic-interrogative genres of medical counselling to access and reformulate her caller-clients’ sexual behaviours. Red Light Radio’s “Dr Trustia Lust” offers direct, almost “hands-on” instruction in the physical techniques of sex-work, passing her expertise freely to her colleagues and beyond. From a position of authority used to pull the private and intimate into the “spot-lit” space of media publicity, we move to one of a comfortingly-colloquial and plain-speaking expertise, both enacting and stressing the
“ordinariness” of the procedures outlined. *Pillowtalk* both exoticises and disciplines the private sphere and the intimate self, bringing their desires as “needs” into the market spaces of enterprise, to interact with and consume the services and commodities available there. *Red Light Radio* shows us that the market is already in fact “at home”, in a largely parlour-based sex industry,¹ reassuringly configured as feminised interior space and the familial domestic.

That the *radio* space for the elaboration of such a discursive construction is in community radio rather than either of its mainstream sister-services is no accident. In Australia “public broadcasting”, still more commonly termed community radio, has since its inception in the final heady days of the Whitlam Government² maintained a strong orientation towards a form of cultural activism. This leads it to support programming ventures from minority communities and special-interest groups not otherwise represented - or not represented in their own terms - in mainstream broadcasting, either commercial or national. Moran (1995) cites the PBAA objectives adopted in 1991 for what is now called the Public Broadcasting Sector as being to

... provide broadcasts in response to particular and general needs of the community as determined by that community, recognising an obligation to cater to the needs of those denied effective access to and those not adequately served by other media (p. 149).

Primarily as a result of this requirement to permit “access” to community groups for direct self-representation, but also arising from the ongoing difficulties of funding a full daily broadcast service, most community stations not only permit but actively foster volunteer staff across all aspects of their operation - including on-air presentation. Barnard (1989) sees this “accessibility” as an innovation within broadcasting with the potential to reform the entire industry. Where mainstream radio in the UK has restricted “specialist” or narrowcast programming to low-rating evening and weekend slots, community radio’s foundation in narrowcasting has the capacity to

¹ Fiona Patten (1997) of the Eros Foundation, the sex industries national lobbying group, outlines the 7 distinct State-based legislative frames for prostitution in Australia. South Australia, which has still failed to achieve legislative reform despite 20 years of bills, has a mostly parlour-based industry, with Police “regulation” through periodic raids and arrests.

² The legislation granting community-based radio licences passed through the Australian Federal Upper House around midnight on November 10, 1975 - less than 12 hours before the “dismissal” of the Whitlam Government.
... strike at the heart of the contrived daytime/nighttime dichotomy of popular radio and, perhaps more significantly, subvert the very definition of radio professionalism by making a priority of listener involvement in the programme-making process (p. 157).

For Barnard the UK’s late entry to community broadcasting has allowed an inordinate mainstream media focus onto the “maximal” audiences of a bland, daytime music-and.presenter chat format. Dyer (1973) characterised the formula which resulted as obliteration, contrast and incorporation: the selection of sentimentally-saturating music play and accompanying “cheery” chat which wipes away life realities, and replaces them with visions of an artificially secure world, built around romantic fantasy. Community radio, with its focus on specialist music play and talk programming, and its escalated admission of “non-professional” presenter voices and programming practices, liberates radio from these formats. Moreover, arising significantly later than Australia’s largely politically-driven 1970s moment of “cultural diversity”, narrowcasting took hold in Britain at precisely the moment at which market tendencies were moving to recognition of a diversified, even individualised “style” culture. For Barnard as early as 1989 it was possible to see that

... the radio audience is increasingly perceived (by administrators as well as practitioners) as a collection of individual communities rather than a single homogenous listenership, and as (crucially) the emphasis in advertising and business switches from mass marketing to demographically defined target marketing, so radio ostensibly aimed at minorities ... comes to assume a greater importance (p. 158).

Barnard points out that in the short term this also appears to have validated commercial and mainstream radio in retreating even further from pluralised programming; “maximising” the economic returns by a retreat into “Top 40” and “Golden Oldies” music formats and their talk equivalents (see also Counihan, 1990, 1992). However, the orientation to an increasingly diversified “consumer” self through not only the establishment of specialist programming but the provision for an active production participation, was well positioned to capture the postmodern, and beyond it the “informational” cultural moment, for community radio.

Barnard has been able to trace the slow rise of community broadcasting from within the otherwise unlikely space of Thatcher’s de-regulatory “enterprise” Britain. Moran, characterising Australian community radio as currently evolving
somewhere between the “soft multiculturalism” of its “utopian” cultural activist origins, and the “soft commercialism” of its pragmatic adaptations to funding needs, is less certain of its ultimate direction, even suggesting that it is a sector in decline, which may “wither and die” (op. cit., p. 159).

Moran’s characterisation of Australian community radio also reveals however that it too is currently oriented towards conflicting roles. While still a medium for representation of cultural diversity, community radio increasingly accommodates, rather than opposes, “enterprise” values. The confusion shows us both the spectacularly uneven development of Australian community radio to date, and a significant transition in its sectoral positioning, especially during the “policy drift” period of all Australian media after the collapse of Creative nation (1995) and two terms of Howard Government indecision on media futures.

A careful scan of a community radio training manual and its instructions for the formulation of “sponsorship statements” will reveal just how close everyday station practices now are to mainstream commercial practice. Monthly budget figures show that increasingly-aggressive marketing of local “sponsoring” enterprises is now displacing Government-grant funding and listener-subscriptions. Increasingly, community stations are learning to exploit their “locale” - whether, as Moran illustrates, geographical or dispersed-sub-cultural - to sustain their operations. In doing so, they are becoming both more tightly “tribal”, in Maffesoli’s terms, and more directly “promotional”, in Wernick’s (1991). Either way, community stations are interestingly aligned with the emergent “localisation” capacities and intensified commercial drives of DAB broadcasting, with its broadband range, narrowcast servicing. As Moran himself suggests, “a good deal of convergence is likely to occur between community radio, commercial radio and narrowcasting” (p. 161).

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1 It is important to remember the role allocated to “local” and narrowcast radio in Creative nation, especially in its capacity for what Triple J came to call “unearting” local music acts, and beginning their recording and promotional careers. In a period which witnessed both the “retreat” of the music recording industry from local talent identification and support, and the first instances of the “active audience” use of CMC technologies such as MP3 and Napster, which subsequently came close to subverting the entire music industry in its current centralist form, Creative Nation’s sense of the connections which Community Radio and National Radio could build within a diverse cultural base were founded in both “style culture” understandings, and an awareness of the market benefits of radio as a developmental and promotional tool.
In such a transitional sector the otherwise curious phenomenon of a suppressed industry claiming voice as a community makes rather more sense. To some extent elements of the kind of residual liberal pluralism of the “weak multiculturalism” Moran sees in contemporary Australian Community Radio programming are evident in Radio 5UV’s decision to air *Red Light Radio* (see its defence of the programme in the face of community complaints; below). But what is most startling about the broadcasts which ensued is their discursive connection between that ongoing radio rarity: a highly feminised talk-relation, carefully established and controlled within the on-air team of women-only presenters, and its deliberate construction of a normalisation and legitimisation of business strategies, located within the very core of the “private and intimate” sphere of a feminised and ultra-domestic social space.

This is not just programming which dares to deal in the activities of prostitution, but of a particular and very localised version of sex-work, centred in parlour prostitution. Historically and currently the dominant mode for the industry in South Australia, its voicing by the Red Light Collective reflects its longer-term integration into existing social-regulatory institutions within South Australia, including its establishment of recognised labour-unionisation (formerly the Scarlet Alliance; now the Sex Industry Network); co-operation with health screening work with the Health Commission; sustained lobbying pressure for legislative change in sex-industry regulation at state and local government levels; its established place within the state’s solidarity of feminist organisations, and its connections with local entertainment industries. As a specifically South Australian production, *Red Light Radio* is thus able to appeal to both a specialised and a generalised audience. It addresses in the first instance sex-workers socially sequestered in their parlours; but also a wider community of citizens. Positioned in their at-home domestic spaces, this latter group are primed for consideration of a discursive transformation of mainstream and essentialising media representations of “the prostitute” as a monstrous and troubling predatory presence, into “sex workers” as normalised, feminised and especially domesticated “family” selves. The *Red Light* community is not, like Dr Feelgood’s

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4 Moran (1995, p. 159) adopts Penman’s argument (1986) that Australian community radio reflected a “liberal” view of culture, and so multiculturalism, as “private, affective and folkloric” rather than determining social relations, roles, power distributions, wealth, knowledge status, and so on. In Britain this is sometimes called the “sambas, saris and samosas” view of culture.

5 And one woman-identified trans-sexual.
listeners, an undisciplined "community-out-there" which needs re-processing through communicative mediation, but a "community-in-there", which seeks acknowledgment as co-extensive with and already established within the central discursive and spatial frames of everyday life.

11.1 "Culturally-induced secrecy" - "coming out" to a Red Light community of listeners

The shift from commercial radio’s “Dr Feelgood” to the community radio programme which brings us “Dr Trustia Lust” is thus a shift across cultural positionings which reflects far more than the changes in broadcasting sector or the programme address might imply. While both programmes overtly characterise their listener-address in their programme titles, there are crucial differences in the processing of the talk-relations which establish and control that address.

The central problem for Red Light Radio in constructing a talk-relation suited to both the specialist and “public” address of its overtly educational aims arises in its semi-illegality. While prostitution in South Australia has three times come very close to achieving de-criminalisation⁴ - at one stage being 24 hours from achieving legislative change - it is still officially a criminal activity. As a result, open broadcasting of the identities of persons involved in the industry, or any part of the programming able to be interpreted as promotion of prostitution, or as direct client solicitation, are problematic. Indeed the broadcasting station involved in production and broadcast, Radio 5UV, owned and operated by the University of Adelaide, was immediately lobbied by community groups to take the programme off air. In one letter to station management, representatives of the Roman Catholic men’s organisation “The Knights of the Southern Cross” opined:

Many of today’s problems relating to sex and morals stem from the push to undermine the value of leading a good chaste lifestyle. Practising Christians and

⁴ The most recent being May 2001, when legislation was lost in the Upper House, despite an alliance between Government and Opposition women MLCs. Liberal Government Minister Diana Laidlaw, who voted for the bill, has stated that the vote was taken directly on gender grounds; women MLCs for; men against.
other religions appreciate the guidance given to young people urging them to be wary of casual sexual relations.

We believe that by introducing sex discussions on air, by those persons who have little or no moral conviction on sexual activity, can only confuse even more, young people who are confronting their sexuality for the first time and others who are having difficulty containing their sexual appetite.7

In reply, 5UV station management took the interesting stance of asserting the status of sex industry workers as constituents within their listening public:

Community radio came into being in Australia in answer to a need for minority and special interest groups to have a voice in this medium. Radio 5UV was the first community station to go on air in Australia 23 years ago. Since that time it has gained a reputation for being in the vanguard of radio programming winning many awards for innovative and informative programmes ....

[This programme] is aimed at informing sex workers and interested members of the community about safe sex practices, hygiene, social concerns and sexual attitudes. Sex workers are among those interviewed and who speak on the programme ....

If you had listened to the programmes you would have heard that very strong moral concerns are held by the participants. While they may differ from yours, they are still valid as moral concerns. Such matters as sexual violence, sex without consent and unsafe sex have been discussed as immoral.8

The Red Light programming collective, representing its case for programming space on the station, had this to say of their own sense of a “community” of sex workers and their need to establish a public voice:

As you might suspect, workers in the sex industry are perhaps the most anarchic and least likely to join a group. Anarchic habits are exacerbated by the fact that prostitution is still illegal and the only way to survive is through secrecy - secrecy to prevent the law from branding a worker as a criminal, secrecy to prevent friends and family from deeming her immoral, and secrecy so she won't be made to feel ashamed of the source of her income. It has taken ten long years for PASA (and more recently SA SIN) to inspire trust and confidence among sex industry workers to ‘come out’ to each other.

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7 Letter dated 20/12/95 from the Knights of the Southern Cross, signed Patrick J. Grealey, State Chairman, addressed to Dr Jeff Langdon, Station Manager, Radio 5UV; copies to the Registrar of the University of Adelaide Mr F. J. O'Neill; the Catholic Archbishop of Adelaide, L. Faulkner; the Anglican Archbishop of Adelaide, I. George; the Attorney General of South Australia, T. Griffin; the Federal Minister for Communications, M. Lee; the Editor of the Sunday Mail, and the National President of the Knights of the Southern Cross, Mr Rob Power. The letterhead reads: “Service and Christianity”.
8 Letter in reply to Patrick Grealey from Radio 5UV Programme Manager Laine Langridge, dated 08/01/1996; cc. the same. I am indebted to Laine Langridge for access to this correspondence.
Red light radio is an opportunity for members of this loose but committed group to 'come out' publicly, on the air, still maintain their anonymity, and reach out to other workers who remain isolated, and therefore unsafe in their culturally-induced secrecy.9

Across the broadcast programmes the collective have worked to establish "voicings" which maintain that complex balance: a public representation which preserves anonymity at the same time as it erodes "culturally-induced secrecy." This overtly (micro) political agenda has parallels with the broader dilemmas of representation of the intimate in the public. Added to its up-front consciousness of and constant reflection upon this problem, this makes Red Light Radio a valuable source for commentary on contemporary issues relating to the maintenance of a culture which aims to keep separate an "intimate" and a "public" self - and especially one which genders those selves, and allocates them different social spaces. At the same time, this programme was scripted and controlled by those same expert and self-aware public performers who argued for its funding.10 This positions its sense of itself as possessing a particular radio presence, a feature as far forward in its programming as its sense of its identity as an unusual representational space for prostitution.

The Red Light production collective, presenting its case to the station management in a funding application, is here arguing to receive funding for this programme not as a social service, (for instance, to provide for safe-sex education), but as a branch of community arts: as a performance. Characterising the activities of prostitutes as a branch of dramatic art, they state outright:

Prostitution is performance.

Prostitution is one-to-one interactive theatre.

The prostitute: scripts and performs fantasies (complete with plot, characters and dialogue), designs settings (set, lights and sound environments), designs and

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9 Extracts from a letter addressed to Ms Maria Sbizzirri, Senior Project Officer, Community Cultural development, Department for the Arts and Cultural Development, South Australia; from P. J. Rose, Red Light Radio Executive Producer and Presenter, and J. H. Vicqua, vocal coach and script consultant; for PASA Inc.: the Prostitutes Association of South Australia; dated 7/11/95. My thanks to Radio 5UV for access to their archives.

10 Phyllis Jane Rose is both an experienced community broadcaster and an academic. J. Helen Vicqua is an established creative artist and theatrical performer, as well as a professional sex worker and dominatrix. Both have made extensive and high profile contributions to women's rights, feminist causes generally, and legal reform in relation to the sex industries in particular.
constructs costumes and make up, often runs her own box office and often is her own house manager.

In the ancient Mediterranean, the word “har” (the root of the words “houri”, “harlot”, “harem” and “whore”) meant both actor and prostitute, and travelling troupes of “hars” were made welcome all over the world.

Pointing out the slow changes in attitudes to women as actresses in the 18th century, and suggesting a parallel contemporary shift in attitudes to prostitution, the collective members ask pertinent questions about representations of prostitution by outsiders to the industry. International sex performers Penny Arcade and Annie Sprinkle can be featured performers at the Adelaide Festivals of 1994 and 1996, while “city burghers ... vilify sex workers in South Australia” (Red Light Collective 1995). Local prime-time TV can promote the film Pretty Woman as “the perfect film for Mother’s Day”, yet continue to use in news coverage of prostitution issues, footage of “mini-skirted leggy women stalking cars on the rain-soaked streets of Kings Cross”, when “street soliciting in Adelaide is so minimal it’s invisible” (ibid.) In each case they are dismantling one set of discursive and semiotic positionings of prostitution - the safely genre-framed media and artistic images - in favour of another. This new set of positions may be built from within the same performative paradigms, yet this time, acknowledges the performative skills of a real, rather than an imagined industry, capable of asserting and controlling its own public imagery.

The collective summarises its aims:

Seldom do sex workers have the opportunity to speak to these images or to put forth their own images about their own lives.

The purpose of Red light radio is to provide this marginalised community - South Australian sex workers - with the training and opportunity to create their own images and present their own ‘set of values’ about themselves, to themselves, and to the general public.\[11\]

\[11\] Note here the consciousness that these are to be produced media images, requiring “training”. As argued in Chapter 1, the “community” radio “voice” is no more an expression of some otherwise marginalised or suppressed reality than those of national or commercial contributors. Here the PASA collective join me in taking issue with such views as those of Kress (1986). Having suggested that radio is “the most likely medium for revolutionary/subversive strategies”, he goes on to say that: “Of all radio-genres that of talk-back radio approximates most closely to that definitively private code, the conversation - a genre which, in its formal aspects, encodes equality of power-relations, and uses speech in its most characteristic form. Talk-back radio thus holds out the promise of actual dialogue, of participation, the possibility of private individuals having
Nor do they keep such views separate from their broadcasting, reproducing them in often parallel texts inside the programme. At this point the collective’s ideological positioning opens the first of a series of contradictions, inside their own discursive practice. Their view of radio is drawn from within its own conventions of its “dismemberment” (see especially Crisell 1986, but also Johnson 1988). The programmers see it as inherently able to provide an “invisibility” as a form of secure social space from which to deploy the counter-texts of a “marginalised” cultural voice. This is a space from which to penetrate public space - that occupied by a “general public” - otherwise closed to them, while maintaining privacy and closure around their own identities. It is a position shot through with contradictions: one which shows more clearly than many others the degree to which radio is itself a problematic social space. Promiscuously mingling public and private discourses under the sign of a public “free access” status, radio is at the same time wrapped around with apparatuses of privacy - precisely those, in this case, which the Red Light collective seeks out.  

11.2 “Whor-o-scop- (ophilia)”: talk technologies for controlling the public gaze

So how does such a programme find ways via the technologies of contemporary broadcasting to “talk sex” and to represent prostitution - to “openly present actual intimate sexuality in ways that everyone can hear” - while, at the same time, maintaining the anonymity necessary to a still illegal community of radically, almost neurotically, secretive individuals? Programme content analysis shows that a limited number of techniques can be deployed. Further, these are, access to the mass media” (1986, p. 415). While he acknowledges the abusive powers of the talkback technology, he fails to account for the maintenance of a deeply patriarchal aggressive masculinity established within talkback practice - and further, within “natural” conversation itself (see especially Coates 1998, for a view of conversation as a stage for the enactment of gender inequality.) Rose’s and Vicqua’s consciousness of the need to script and control their broadcasts thus occupies a more advanced position than Kress’s.

11 To this extent the sexualised talk on both Red Light Radio and Pillowtalk differs markedly from that reported on French youth radio, where expressivity, not control, is the aim: see Dauncey and Hare, 1999.

13 “Laura’s Whor-o-scope” is one of the suggested segments for Red Light Radio (see below). It is difficult to ignore the opportunity it provides to extend Laura Mulvey’s classic 1975 study on the positioning of the female body for the male gaze in Hollywood film and her analysis of “scopophilia”, into the aural “voyeurism” enacted with radio sex-programming. For a politicised inversion of the “gaze”, as enacted on Red Light Radio, see Gammon & Marshment, 1988.

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from the outset, subject to layers of control set up by two seemingly contradictory yet overt planks of the programme collective's platform: the consciously performative, and the need to maintain anonymity.

The programme is designed around seven recurring format-segments:

1. scripted "persona" performance, enacted as monologue or dialogue, involving the following "regulars":
   - "Dr Trustia Lust" on sexual health and hygiene
   - "The Lady of Easy Virtue" on the history and culture of sex work
   - "Laura's Whor-o-scope"

2. interviews by the programme presenter, "P. J."

3. documentary: interviews and "focus group" discussion between workers, with ambient sound; edited and presented with intercut music play

4. in-studio panel discussion, issues-based

5. "relayed" call-in. This is a modified talkback. To protect caller anonymity, questions and comments are not broadcast, but are noted by call-screeners and passed to the programme presenter, who relates them to the panel

6. "vox-pop" segments of issues-comment from unnamed passers-by on taped street interviews, by "Luke Streetwalker" - "Travelling Tranny Tart"

7. pre-record segments, including poems and fantasies read with music track, and extracts from an autobiographical "Sex Workers Speak Out" held before politicians and community leaders to lobby for legislative reform on prostitution.

Each in its way proves problematic - some to the extent of not ever achieving airplay. "Luke Streetwalker", the segment most at risk from the profession's illegality, perhaps proves too difficult, and never goes to air, while "Laura" seems never to have scripted her "Whore-o-scope." Similarly, while Dr Lust appears in most programmes, "The Lady of Easy Virtue" appears only irregularly. The programme thus has problems with both the ultra-control of pre-scripting, and the un-control of spontaneous vox-pop, as well as with ad-libbed or live content.

Full programme scripting is difficult to sustain over a 12 week series-run from a group already committed to the maintenance of quite another working life. All regulars and the presenter have other work to do, as collective-member Michelle demonstrates when she is actually called on her mobile while on air to do an
escort job. The late-night programming spot for the “protection” of listeners positions *Red Light Radio* right into “sex prime-time”, as culturally defined for both media and the sex industry.

At the same time the second suppression inside the programme, the difficulty in representing the sex-worker voice openly and spontaneously, and the client voice at all, creates even more strain on the programming collective. Either as advocates for the industry - regulars Penny and Jenny - or as “representative” voices of various professional roles within it, such as Helen, “a dominatrix”; Teresa as “professional submissive”; Michelle as “escort worker” - it is the role, not the person, called upon to speak.14 “Experiences” related as anecdotes are often established as “very common” or, as the programme presenter confirms at one point, “four out of four” universal, and the conversational work is consistently towards establishment and careful maintenance of consensus. In contrast to the sorts of authority-claims made within *The Stan Zemanek Show’s* construction of aggressively-masculine contestation talk, or *Pillowtalk’s* diagnostic-surveillant confessionalism, the talk-text types produced by the *Red Light Radio* collective are ultra-feminised (West, 1995).

Coates (1998) in her role as editor of the most recent collection of research into male and female patterns of conversation management and performance, has summarised the full research field on women’s same-sex talk. Its findings to date stress collaboration and affiliation over contestational talk, and include the

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14 The insight once again opens up new critical veins in established views of mediated talk-texts - this time, Tolson’s work (in Scannell, *Broadcast Talk* 1991). Tolson has shown how televised “chat” shows are formatted to allow a “functional contrast between main and subsidiary levels of discourse” - largely a matter of Hallidayan *register*. He views such “chat” as characterised by three features: “a topical shift towards the ‘personal’... displays of wit... and ... opening up the possibility of transgression”. As with Kress, there are unexamined predispositions here: a desire to view mediated chat as less generically constrained: as somehow more expressive and even liberatory, combined with a refusal to see the private and personal as “produced” in the same ways as more familiar and public media talk genres. The inclusion of “wit” is thus an interesting category, since it resists a more acknowledged tradition of learned behaviour and tightly controlled genres. It prefigures Tolson’s conclusion later in the chapter, that televised chat is both sincere and anecdotal - ‘personal’ - and “self-reflexive... ‘metatalk’” which acknowledges “the game... which is ‘good television’”. Ultimately, he comes to see contemporary chat genres as having eroded - if not collapsed - the “Western ‘experiential episteme’”. *Red Light Radio* works in the problematic space which remains, to produce an “authentic” self-expression of highly-privatised identity, but from a consciously performative perspective - and for a narrowcast audience. It thus confirms another of Tolson’s points: that mediated chat has reached the era of Fairclough’s (1989) “synthetic personalisation”, and exposes “the artificiality of the ‘human interest’ which has dominated popular broadcasting for 30 years”.

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following claims: "... for women, talk has a key role in friendship"; "... women’s friendly talk has as its chief goal the establishment and maintenance of good social relations"; "women’s friendly talk is co-operative in the strong sense that speakers collaborate in the construction of talk, and that the voice of the group has priority over the voice of the individual"; "the goal of friendly talk for both women and men is solidarity, but ... women and men adopt very different strategies to achieve this"; "for many men ... connection with others is established in part through ludic antagonism, in contrast to the mirroring self-disclosure more typical of women friends" (Coates 1998, pp. 212-214).

The conversational techniques Coates reports on, used to construct and preserve that sense of a harmonious sub-culture, are conveyed across each of the discursive layers of the Red Light Radio programme. They are carefully elaborated within what is thus made to appear a spontaneous and therefore "natural" conversational flow - producing an "authentic" voice for the culture of sex work. There is however an added paradox in the "produced" nature of this "natural" talk. It acts both to represent the Red Light collective as an "authentic" community of sex workers, and to define their consciously performative work as both sex workers and as on-air presenters. In each "community of practice" (Lave & Wenger 1991) a problematic contrast arises between controlled performativity and "authenticity" - a contrast played out, as is appropriate on radio, within the relations of talk.

11.3 Controlled performativity versus "authenticity": the problem of normalising a consensual familiality

In the first instance, Red Light Radio's talk represents itself as spontaneous or "natural" chat. Eggins and Slade (1997), in selecting occasions for analysis of "casual" conversation, rule out all but "talk which is NOT motivated by any clear pragmatic purpose" (1997, p. 19). They isolate as the features distinguishing between "casual" and "pragmatic" the duration of the exchange (purposive exchanges tending to be shorter) and the level of formality (casual conversational exchanges for instance tending to contain more humour.)

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15 Interesting in light of Tolson’s - problematic - inclusion of “wit” as a feature of televised or mediated chat. If wit is excluded from the repertoire of the performative by reason of its location in
The distinction remains problematic for radio talk. Many commercial programme formats in particular have moved in recent years towards an expanded "talk" within broadcast presenter-shifts: away from the DJ as singular vocality (Montgomery 1986) and into the more disruptive conversational flows of group banter (see Cook 1999). This makes claims for presentational talk as continuous with the call-in chat with listeners or the increasingly informal short interviews used in the dominant "magazine" format of contemporary radio, which crosses all sectors. Few commercial or national programmes however have moved into the format used by Red Light Radio to establish its "alternative" community voice: the constant presence of five to six collective members, operating collaboratively with programme presenter P. J. Rose. These co-broadcasters interview guests, convey off-line phone-in comment, read community announcements, discuss topics, and above all, relate directly the anecdotal evidence of their own current or past professional lives, as "authentic voices" of the sex industries. It is a format which anticipates, and so works to produce, even more consensual conversational control than that reported by conversational analysts for "friendship" or "cooperating workplace" groups in general, and female groups in particular.

It requires constant vigilance over talk relations and techniques to maintain a balance between "casual" conversational cooperativeness as a normalising sign of social authenticity, and the Red Light collective's dual experience of performativity - within the industry and as on-air presenters. By the last programmes in the 12 week series, the collective has shaken down into an easy familiarity, which displays not only the careful inclusivity they have worked for throughout, but the beginnings of the "tease" markers of casual conversational play. These break the more pragmatic (Eggins & Slade 1997, p. 20) and "estranged" formalities (Bell & van Leeuwen 1994) evident in "interview"

"the casual", then the public and the private must re-mix in one of two ways: either public laughter recognises and enjoys the display of everyday forms of witty talk: the private displayed in public; or else private conversation includes in its repertoires of cooperation/competition aspects of learned performative genres, to please or to impress: the public deployed in private. Either way, "wit" remains a problematic category of talk.

Within mainstream broadcasting the presenter-team is used most often in religious programming, and the still-emergent genre of "sports-chat". Both, for different social-historical reasons, are signalling their "community" base through use of the team.

6 See especially Johnson and Aries on "The talk of women friends"; Coates on "Language in all-female groups"; Nelson on "Interactive patterns in predominantly female research teams", in Coates, 1998.
relations used to keep the talk focused. In the extract below, not only does the group operate meta-textually, taking up a specific collaborative word-cue challenge suggested within the group, but “intertextually”, as they intercept and respond to each other’s positions.\(^\text{18}\) Note too how for the first time, they overtly challenge the presenter - and hugely enjoy her incapacity to respond.

*Red Light Radio, January 29 1996: the Programme Collective in discussion*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Star:</th>
<th></th>
<th>Helen:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>OK, I’ve come up with a word in the studio and it’s called “Pro-mode”!</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Is that one of your hormone drugs!</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Wee-e-e-ell, no! What it is, exactly - pro-mode is something that I go</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>through before actually going out - I sort of like - jump in the shower,</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>and I do my hair ... and as soon as I start getting dressed, it becomes a</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>“Pro-mode” sort of thing, where you can sort of like - ah: FLEX a lot:</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>take off a whole lot of crap, if you have to, um, be prepared for any-</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>thing: you’re like your senses go up high and alert: and you’re ready</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>for absolutely everything: uuum- yeah! It makes the job a lot easier!</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Michelle:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>And while um, Star’s been thinking of the word ProMode, everyone in</td>
<td></td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>the studio’s been trying to GET into Pro-mode! - So how are we going</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>girls??</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Helen:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Well I tell you - one look at my black suspender belt and I am</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>STRAIGHT into “PRO-MODE”!!</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>Penny:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Luckily you didn’t force US to look at it! Hahahahaha</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>Carole:</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>It’s lipstick that does it for me ... ‘cos I don’t often wear it in the</td>
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<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>daytimes, so it’s when I work, I put my lippy on and that’s it: yeah ...</td>
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<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Helen:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Right so there are all these little things, like I always wear lip</td>
<td></td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>LINER ... when I’m working, and not in my usual life ... and so that’s</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>part of - getting into - pro mode. And then I lower my voice and ... get</td>
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<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>quite naughty ... and all “Mmmm - hello darling!” and that also helps</td>
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<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>me it’s my VOICE, getting into it ...</td>
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<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Michelle:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>And - but it’s not just clothes, and lipstick - what else is it: - I think</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>it’s more of an attitude. Before Carole, you were saying something</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>about - not going into a booking thinking “oooh, I don’t want to do that</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>booking ...” - It was more like “YES! I’m gonna go and - GET THAT JOB! - “</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Carole:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Yeah - it - it’s knowing that, you’re working, you have to do it, so</td>
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<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>there’s no whinging about it. You go in there and you do it. And you</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>focus yourself too - you - well I anyway - get rid of from my brain</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>anything that’s not related to the job and just focus myself.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Penny:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>So P J - you’re always asking US questions! Now it’s my turn to ask</td>
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<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>You one! (hehe) How have YOU gone about getting into Pro-mode</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>with all of us tonight?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>PJ:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>(.....) Ye-e-e-e-ess ... hard to be - um, ah, I - er, er, it: WHEW! mmm-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>(laughter)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>Penny:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>Well maybe we’ll - maybe we’ll come BACK to P J! I mean um - she</td>
<td></td>
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<td>47</td>
<td>can have a little think about it!</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>48</td>
<td>PJ:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>I mean my Pro-mode for this show is of course is to get all the, all the,</td>
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<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>um, things that we’re playing on air in line, and in order, and make</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>51</td>
<td>sure I press the right buttons - and ALMOST know which</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>geographical place we’re landing in next! So that’s my Pro-mode at,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>you know, at this time of night! in this situation.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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And you’ve got - you know, you’ve got your pencil in your hand, and
you’ve got your ear-phones on ... [ and and - every single profession
I - every profession has their professional model!

Even out of profession, um, the mode ... to meet the mother-in-law!
Everyone’s reserved politeness ... etc etc. It’s just like a programme
and you wi- as Carole said, you wipe out everything from your mind,
and only um, look: Pro-mode is all you’ve really got to know, and have.

I like what Carole said about being focused. As I think - I think that,
myself when the client comes, what he’s paying me for is my time.
And he’s paying for my undivided attention ... during that time.
Because sometimes ...

... they only want to talk! Sometimes they
want to cry! Sometimes they want to be total sleazebags ... And one
has to be ready, um, ready for the mode that they want to be in.

Yeah ... you can leave your wandering ... for when you’re having
sex with your partners ... your mind wandering ... I do! hahaha ...

Star’s initiative in not only revealing her own techniques for settling into “Pro-
mode”, but enticing others to share their own cultural switch-devices, produces a
sustained period of the sorts of “self-mirroring” disclosure Coates (1998) sees as
typifying female same-sex conversation. Other features isolated by Coates (1998,
pp. 226-253) underpin the co-operativity of the talk: the epistemic modality of
Star’s exposé on “Pro-mode”, using tentative forms such as “sort of like ... sort of
thing ... you’re like ...” as she frames her reach for a “Pro” self and opens the
experience to others (lines 3-9); the progressive topic development in which speakers
invite one another to contribute, including Michelle’s “So how are we going,
girls?” (lines 11-12), Helen’s “I like what Carole said ...” (line 52), Michelle’s
“Before, Carole, you were saying something about...” (lines 24-25); and finally
simultaneous speech rendered as what Tannen (1984) calls the “overlap as
enthusiasm” rather than the straight interruption of argument (Hutchby 1996).
The extract constructs a set of interlocking and co-operative understandings
around both the “private” and “professional” selves of participants, which act to
normalise prostitution as an activity, as much as to relax “professional” on-air
presenter controls over conversational pacing and exchange. Technical producer
“P. J.” is displayed as outside the conversation, rather than controlling it - a
positioning which Dr Feelgood for instance could never command from her
panellist “T(r)oyboy”.

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It is the success of the mutual-support exchanges running among the presenter-team members which enables Carole, lines 60-61, to suggest that it is the private, “real” sex of her home relationship which she runs “on automatic”, reversing expectations of “professional” sex as “mechanical”, unpleasurable and disengaged. The shifts that are occurring between cultural expectations of what is “natural” and what is “performed” allow Penny (lines 31-33) and Helen (line 2) for the first time to actively tease not only other collective members, but presenter P. J. Each move further destabilises “natural-performed” boundaries, from Helen’s joke about trans-sexual Star’s hormone therapies (line 2), to Penny’s demarcation between Helen’s client performance in “black suspender belt” and her performance for the radio programme (line 15). The degree of interlocking rapidly intensifies, not only compensating the degree to which individuals now question each other, but transforming it into an illustration of collective trust. When Michelle quotes Carole (lines 24-26), or Helen endorses Carole’s views, (line 54) they do so to relate their own experiences onto common ground. They are however constructing not only agreement, but authenticity. They are building a representation of the “ordinariness” of what is conventionally extraordinary. Their conversational flow for instance equalises status for their interpretations and their experiences, as the conversation uses illustrative anecdote to establish - and so “normalise” - habitual behaviours. What results is the establishment of the strongly consensual culture which CA work on gender claims as “typically female”, but which works here to normalise the very “Pro-mode” or technique for dealing with the extraordinary, which is the ostensible topic. The strength of the consensus - itself “performed” as much as claimed - erodes distinctions between “performed” and “authentic” selves, with implications for both “industrial” as opposed to “domestic” sex, and the capacity of “community” radio to “voice” a given community, as opposed to discursively creating it.

11.4 The “authentic” as produced within the performative: “Pro-mode” goes PoMo

The acuteness of each speaker’s sensitivity to the “performed” nature of both their “Pro-mode” professional role and their display of a “natural” collectivity and consensus aligns with an emergent view in both gender studies and critical
linguistics that language, rather than in itself delimiting an individual’s conversational repertoire according to gender (or class, or ethnicity) is merely a stage upon which such identity-affiliations can be enacted. Cameron (1998) cites Butler (1990) in her belief that “Gender is the repeated stylisation of the body, a set of repeated acts within a rigid regulatory frame which congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a ‘natural’ kind of being” (Butler 1990, p. 33). As Cameron puts it:

Whereas sociolinguistics traditionally assumes that people talk the way they do because of who they (already) are, the postmodernist approach suggests that people are who they are because of (among other things) the way they talk. This shifts the focus away from the simple cataloguing of differences between men and women to a subtler and far more complex inquiry into how people use linguistic resources to produce gender differentiation (1998, p. 272; emphasis added).

In the case of the Red Light Radio collective the “differentiation” work occurs only partially over gender. While it displays the full range of techniques conventionally described as “female”, it does so not because it is produced by a team of female - or in Star’s case female-identified - individuals, but a team who consciously wish to represent a “community of practice” marked by the consensual politic of women’s collective speech. It is part of their drive towards normalisation of their industry, and discursive location of it within the familiar domesticity of the patriarchal oikos - a location from which not only can its female workers safely control it, but within which their hyper-feminised professional personae can more persuasively claim authenticity. That Red Light collective members take on meta-discursive positions in the constitution of this goal, as powerfully expressed inside “casual” on-air conversation as in lobbying documents, is thus predictable. They are, in Fairclough’s (1992) analysis, both claiming control over the world they aim to talk into being, and engaging in “... practice which contests and restructures the discursive structures (orders of discourse) which position them” (1992, p. 123).

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19 It is a long-established claim in prostitution law-reform circles that the South Australian sex industries are notably “domestic” and suburban, controlled by women, and less connected to organised crime than is the case interstate. This view explains both the century-long link and mutual support between feminist political groups and sex industry workers in South Australia, and the PASA comments in the funding bid quoted above, that media images of prostitution do not represent local realities.
In Red Light Radio programme 9, dedicated to sex as performance, just such a hyper-conscious discursive positioning underpins the choice of topic. This is planned "culture work" - "direct cultural transmission" (Morse 1998, p. 5) operating as ritualised role play over identity. Red Light's view of prostitution as performance extends to its media self-representations. Both the talk-text genres and the vocality of the performance are deliberately transformed, as the topic for Programme 9 is introduced in slow, huskily-voiced rhyme-recitative:

Red Light Radio, January 29 1996: Introduction

1 Voice 1: Voyeurism - fetish - leather and lace ...
2 Voice 2: S & M - B & D - Forbidden embrace ...
3 Voice 3: Golden Showers - Fish Nets - suspenders and heels ...
4 Voice 4: French Maid - Naughty Nurse - or someone who kneels ...

Since the presentational/performative voices we hear are already attributed with personal and professional identities, familiar by now to regular listeners, the duplicity of performance is set out for us. This is, in Bakhtin's terms, "double-voiced" talk-text. We know the idiosyncratic vocalities of these voices from earlier programmes. We are even reminded of this, once the pacing and vocal qualities, and the enhanced generic device of verse as a form of fantasy re-contacted from child culture, have each been evoked. These meanings are further estranged, in Brechtian or Russian Formalist terms, by the subsequent overt introduction of their performing agents:

5 PJ: Hi - I'm P. J. Rose, producer -
6 Michelle: Michelle, Private Escort Worker
7 Heather: I'm Heather, secretary of PASA, the Prostitutes' Association of South Australia
8 Jenny: - and I'm Jenny: peer-educator at SA SIN, the South Australian Sex Industry Network.

Here, even when only first names are given, the publicly known institutional position "identifies" each specifically. The anonymity ploy required both for protection in the sex industry, and for the opening into imaginative involvement in fantasy, is shattered. And yet the position taken on prostitution as cultural practice is centrally one that both claims it and enacts it as an art of fantasy:

1 PJ: Does that mean prostitution is a fantasy service, Jenny?

20 M. M. Bakhtin, The Dialogical Imagination, 1981. See also Morson and Emerson, 1989.
2 Jenny: (::) That's exactly what we'll be exploring, P. J.
3 Helen: And why, some of us speak, of prostitution, as performance art.
4 Michelle: (::) - for an audience (::) of one ...
5 PJ: Well stay with us, to hear more about - fantasy work, and
6 performance, from Jenny, Helen, Michelle, Vanessa, as well
7 as from Robin, Geoffrey and Mary. We'd be happy to hear from
8 you as well, ring us with your fantasies, or questions or
9 comments, at 303 5000 - and Carol will take your call.

The ambivalence of the word “performance” in line 5 alerts us once again to the
doubling of the discourse (Bakhtin 1981, p. 156). Here what is represented as
conversational dialogue is clearly scripted. As each voice gives its single line of
response to the set question posed by the producer, (lines 2-4) small hesitations
and unnatural speech breaks indicate the “performed” rather than spontaneous
nature of the comments. What subsequently emerges as a collective and
cumulative statement, endorses the view that fantasy sex is performance art. The
talk thus illustrates the proposition on demand as it were, clearly framed within
the producer’s direction, via opening question and closing extension into
listener-caller dialogue - which will, itself, be controlled through call screener
Carol. As radio, this highly pre-produced and literate piece of “secondary
orality” (Ong 1982) is dependent on pre-scripting. As Fairclough (1992) has
shown, the “control-claim” established by this calculated play over what is
otherwise represented as spontaneous talk, cuts straight back to purposive
ideological positioning.

11.5 “Performance art for an audience of one” - sex work and radio talk
as controlled and contrived fantasy

What is under construction here is a “normalised”, feminised, secure space
(Massey, 1984, 1994) for the enactment of sex-as-fantasy, guaranteed by the
“natural”, co-operative conversational talk-texts of the female presenters
(Masciarotte, 1991). Their “privatised” servicing and development of sexual
fantasies is normalised again and again in the experiences sex workers relate,
which work to establish the universality and “ordinariness” of the events
described. Invited to discuss whether their work is, like that of music-track artist
Lou Reed, an exciting “Walk on the wild side”, one speaker asks immediately, as
if the question were obvious:22 “Do you mean cross dressing?” and relates how “that's a very common fantasy.”

Not only the consensual talk-relations, but the locations in which the “common/fantasy” is reported to be enacted, contribute to the normalisation of experiences. The terms in which each sex worker in turn relates her experiences of “typical” client behaviour within the sexual fantasy service of cross dressing, foreground the interplay between what is appropriate within public as opposed to private/intimate social space - and how clearly these spaces are gendered:

**Red Light Radio, January 29 1996: presenter PJ and the programme collective**

1 Helen: Gentlemen like to dress in women's lingerie, and dresses, some of them
to the point of ah, going out into the public, yeah - it's a pretty common fantasy I think.

4 PJ: Have you each done that fantasy with clients?

5 Jenny: I have, yes ...

6 Mich: Yeah I have-

7 Van: Yeah- I have

8 PJ: Four out of four ...

As the (consensual) discussion develops, detail emerges of how far gender identity interacts with and relies on fantasy, as a performed “release” of possible identities. Any dangers of release into an unstable liminality are of course safely “contained” by the ultra-privacy of the sex-professional’s control. Red Light Radio has arranged double indemnity: its “walk on the wild side” related only via securely “disembodied” radio talk, even more securely anchored by being shrouded in collaboratively feminised and “ordinary” talk-relations. What is perversely being made public on Red Light Radio is still intimate and private, saturated as it is in the gendered signs for privacy. The performance of risky “fantasy sex” thus builds an image of concealed and feminised intimacy, coded as the logical corollary to an overt public machismo.

**Red Light Radio, January 29 1996: collective members Vanessa, Michelle and Helen**

1 Vanessa: Has anyone had the experience of a - of a, seemingly “normal” client, who comes in and then as he peels off his business suit or his jeans, he has a pair of frilly knickers on underneath?

4 Helen: Ye-hahahah yes!

5 Vanessa: Michelle has had haven't you Michelle?

6 Michelle: Yeah I saw a client not long ago: um, he was a very - what I’d

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22 As of course it is to those who are familiar with the song lyrics.
call a typical Aussie male of about 25 years of age, he came into
the brothel - and I’d seen him the day before, and he was quite
dine, drove a hot rod Torana you know: big man, big deal - he
comes in the next day - he must have felt comfortable the day
before, and he took off his jeans and he had silk stay-ups on.
That bit spun me out: I turned around and said “Wow!” and he
said “I feel really sexy with my silk stay-ups on!”
Helen: The last one I had came and borrowed some of my lingerie and
went down to the local pub - with his jeans on, over the lingerie,
and he found that amAZingly exciting ...

The complex interplay between dominant and submissive social gendering,
cultural notions of gendered access to public and private space, and the thrill of
inversion inside sexual fantasy, creates some interesting twists. Not least among
them are the sex workers’ assessments of their clients’ real sexual politics, never
entirely abandoned in even the most erosive of gender-identity inversions:

Red Light Radio, January 29 1996: programme collective member Helen

Helen: In the mistressing work it’s very common for slaves - they think of
themselves as slaves - to come along and want to dress in a pinny, and
do the housework ... they sound like treasures, don’t they, to do the
housework - but in fact they demand a lot of attention!

Again and again however, the terrain within which the fantasies are enacted re-
aligns around a classically Habermasian gendering of public and private. In a
later programme on the range of sex-service clients, there is discussion of how far
one very macho male working lifestyle: that of the truckie, is associated with a
markedly free sexual expressiveness:

Red Light Radio, February 5 1996: Programme collective members Vanessa, Penny
and Helen

Vanessa: Escort workers seem to get the low-down on going to stupid
places, I’ve gone to ... um, a couple of factories that make gas
bottle ... um - yes - mechanics and workshops seem to be the most
popular these days. Penny?
Penny: Well I - I’ve um - all my co-workers said that I was very foolish
to do this, but it turned out all right in the end. We got a call to
send a worker out to a um, to a truck stop, where a guy had
stopped - you know, he was driving interstate, and he’d stop in
his truck, and he had his little bed all set up in the back of his
track, so I went out there and um, did the job? - Everybody said
that he would you know, probably kidnap me and drive to
Sydney and you know - quite frankly I wouldn’t have really
minded!
Helen: I think the truckie's a great client! They're ah - because they've
got that freedom, all around the country, most of them are very
experienced, and they're very grateful and, and they're very
free and great fun, because they, you know, most of them are
away from home - I think truckies are fantastic clients - lot of
my friends have said they've done truckies in the back of their
cabin ... it's quite common - I think I've even seen it on the movies.

21 Penny: They tend to be a bit kinky though, have you ever noticed
22 Helen: Yes I have noticed that truckies are a bit kinky - and I think
23 that's because they get to see so many hookers, because they
24 CAN!

Here the fantasy is escaping from the client-driven scenarios which the sex
workers script, into broader social and (sub) cultural notions of escape. These
notions, as Helen’s comment in line 20 indicates, circulate within the
contemporary picaresque genres of many B movies - and possibly also drive
Penny’s comment in line 12, where she confesses a shared urge to “escape” the
local-as-mundane; the repression of possible selves which Helen suggests that
truckies evade “... because they CAN!” (line 24). This discursive strand ties
directly back to a dominant ideological position on male sexuality in particular
as suppressed and inexpressible within “normal” domestic space. Unable to
break free - without the help of the professional prostitute as “managing”
scriptor, its “necessary escape” can be aided by her careful and expert selection
of existing cultural texts, genres, performance roles and imagery. But the
discourses also reveal mainstream media impacts of Dyer’s (1973) formulation of
radio’s own practices in discursively underpinning the equation of a feminised
domesticity contrasted with an exciting and glamorously sexualised masculine
“roving” in “wildside” public spaces. Commercial radio’s “music play and
cheery chat” programming, explicitly directed at the at-home female housewife
listener, and designed to “obliterate, contrast and incorporate”, wipes away life
realities, and sweep listeners up into the emotional saturation of its lushly
romantic music play and a (safely disembodied) seductive banter from the male
presenter. Penny and Helen re-assert both the discursive construction and the
gendered spatial politics of such a formation.

11.6 Imaginative interiority: the role of music play in Red Light Radio’s
feminising and “privatising” of intimacy

Throughout this programming music play in particular is used to focus attention
on the “need” to find expression for an interiority culturally suppressed, and
emergent only in sexual fantasy. In one programme, listeners are urged to pay special heed to the lyrics of Nine Inch Nails’s song “Closer”:

You let me violate you / desecrate you / penetrate you / complicate you:
I broke apart my insides
I got no soul to sell
Help me think I’m somebody else...

Explicitly listeners are promised: “If you listen very carefully to the lyrics, you might be surprised”, while one collective member takes the opportunity to apply the song’s sentiments into her own “private” relationship:

Vanessa:  Hi this is Vanessa: I’d like to dedicate “Closer” to my lover Richard -
I love ya honey ...

Discussing the song lyrics after the music track plays, collective member Helen links back to an earlier discussion segment on fantasy as sexual release of cultural inhibition, specifically as the release of a more “real” or “natural” self:

Helen:  Well I think it’s like Dr Lust said: the object of the fantasy is to stop thinking, to get out of your head, and to FEEL ... He says “Help me get away from myself.”

Helen as a dominatrix, commanding the enactment of the suppressed, is quick to admit her own pleasure in the theatricality of fantasy work, both as a break from the mundane within the brothel, and as a chance for the sort of inversion in public and private roles which clients themselves seek.

Red Light Radio, January 29, 1996: Helen (professional dominatrix)

1 Helen:  The last enema fantasy I did was for a gentleman who came
2 along on his Harley Davidson, a lovely blue Harley Davidson,
3 dressed in his leathers, and so I put my leathers on, and we
4 drove down Hindley Street to the sex shop, and bought an
5 enema, and then we drove back home again, and we played
6 with the enema, but he didn’t want to use it: he just wanted
7 to go and buy one ... with me on the back, I mean - TAKES ALL
8 TYPES! It was great fun, we had a lovely time - I mean, DID
9 WE LOOK HOT!

The mix and the layering of pleasurable fantasies is both intense and contradictory. Helen’s sense of private pleasure, including the imagined rather than utilised enema at the core of her client’s satisfaction and the real and public thrill of the macho ride on the Harley down Adelaide’s sole wild strip: “DID WE
LOOK HOT!” reveal the play of public and private at the core of fantasy. Vanessa adds an even more significant case, asked to reveal the strangest location in which she had ever been asked to “perform”:

Red light Radio, January 29 1996: Vanessa

1. Vanessa: Well actually last week I did a job here in Adelaide, and um,
2. I knew that it was going to be in a shop, but when I got there it
3. was in a four-poster bed, in the front window, of a curtain factory!
4. He said - normally the bed is turned around, faced towards the
5. window, but today I've turned it around so that we're facing the
6. store. But it was really funny, because I could see the cars
7. going past on the main road, and I wonder how many saw me ...

The calculated thrill of the seen and yet unseen: the domestic within the public, a bedroom within a furniture display window, intensified by the traditions of the curtained four-poster bed, lifts the case straight into Piles’s (1996) work on sexuality in the city. The male gaze is formed within public locations in the Modernist city, where bourgeois sensibility “privatises” sexual practice by removing it into its “dormitory” suburbs - only to, simultaneously, resurrect it in the intensified, industrially specialised, transgressive practices of prostitution.

At once licensed and illicit, prostitution is dependant on precisely that spatial duality for its special cachet. Half in and half out of public space, prostitution’s relation to secrecy and the unseen includes moments when the Red Light Radio panel realise the additional thrill of how they are themselves “unseen” while on radio.

Red Light Radio, January 29, 1996: Helen, Vanessa, panellist PJ

1. Helen: Like THIS is a fantasy; we're all hanging around here in the radio
2. station - what a fantasy for anyone!
3. PJ: Oh you mean the people listening, not - we really ARE here Helen!
4. Helen: That's right - what a fantasy to be here, with a whole gaggle of
5. gorgeous women!
6. Vanessa: Wouldn't they all love to know what WE look like!

The problem for radio is precisely the degree to which it doesn’t reveal “authentic” truths. When that “safe space” opens, offering conversational contact as secure disclosure, it is in fact, as Helen and Vanessa realise and promptly toy with, a fantasy space. Every device is mediated. Radio’s music play, its fantasy vocalities, its genre selections, are orchestrated within a discourse relation which
remains marked by gendered relations of power. In this particular relation female subjects create a representation of a common culture, constructing carefully consensual “natural conversations” for their listening audience. The degree to which this is another type of performance is best illustrated by Star, commenting on the difficulties of representing voice within his new-found physical and mental femininity:

_red light radio, january 29, 1996: star

1 Star: Myself? Ah well - yes - being a transsexual, on hormones, growing boobs, losing body hair, facial hair, ah - the mind changes as well. Ah, the voice I think is just training, although it takes a long time.

Star’s blunt assessment of exactly what it takes physically to actualise her own life within his fantasy, has much to say of the other performed selves representing a culture of sex work on Red Light Radio. Both the liminality and the conscious control are elements of the construction of a particular version of private/public sphere segregation, seeking to discursively constitute a feminised interiority and a normative domesticity as a “locale” onto which can be inscribed selves and behaviours suited to a carefully designed sex industry. That what is at stake is ultimately control of that space is indicated in the specifics of the construction of Red Light Radio doctor: “Trustia Lust”. Aspects of her persona and of her advisory techniques will be analysed in the following chapter.
Chapter Twelve

"Clients! Do not attempt erotic asphyxiation on your own!" - policing sexual practice in the intimate sphere

12.0 A Red light “radio doctor”: the authority construction of Dr Trustia Lust

Chief among the “dramatised” personae on Red Light Radio is the programme’s own radio doctor, Dr “Trustia Lust”, a performance-vehicle designed to carry safe-sex and hygiene information as empowerment for both “professional” and general listeners. The role immediately demands of this radio doctor a very different sort of medical expertise, and technique of representing it. Dr Lust must be “professional” in a completely new way: “experienced” within the unrecognised expertise of the sex industry, and able to communicate at its non-medically-trained level - and yet also able to assert a degree of authority in order to ensure that her advice and admonitions are heeded. To this extent at least Dr Lust and Dr Feelgood share a complex discursive challenge. But at the same time, to gain and hold her audience while she carries out her educative function - especially through the infinitely loose medium of radio - Dr Lust must simultaneously contrive to entertain. For the professional audience at least - her first concern - there is no reward in either the exoticism or the sexual titillation of the topic, as there is for Pillowtalk listeners. Having taken this pathway, she must maintain an even more complex balance between control and accessibility than that constructed by Dr Feelgood.

At first hearing Dr Trustia Lust appears to produce the direct authority claims of other “radio doctors”. She seems in fact to be working close to the conventional
advice format of Dr James Wright, providing explicit medical instruction, and evoking the “trust” her name suggests by a strongly colloquial tone and plain-speaking style. Unlike Dr Feelgood, she speaks through the genre of generalised “case study” typification, avoiding actual diagnosis and interaction with callers, and so is able to pre-script and overtly perform her pieces, with the programme host and technical producer “P J” operating as her putative questioner. The riskiness of live interactivity with listener-callers cannot be deployed to enhance the skilled authority of the doctorly persona, as in Feelgood’s case. Nor can empathic tones of direct response to a real and embodied “personal” problem be used to generate trust out of an emotional sympathy. There is still however a strongly transactive quality to the Dr Trustia Lust performance. It equals that of both Dr Feelgood and Dr James Wright - but takes a completely different direction.

Dr Lust’s is a talk-text genre of direct instruction: text book anatomy reworked for the non-medically-qualified, but those still intensely experienced in matters of the body. Her tone is unsentimental, unsqueamish, and uncondescending. She tells both how, and why, a certain procedure should be carried out, and gives both medical and colloquial terms, without prioritising one above the other. Above all, despite the joking tone used to keep her segment entertaining, and the satirical elements of her own persona used to reclaim authority from scientised medicine, she clearly expects a serious social responsibility from her audience - which she both rewards and produces, by the equally serious procedure of passing her own authority and expertise to listeners.

How is this achieved? In every aspect, Dr Trustia Lust defies the relational positioning which Fairclough (1995b) identifies as characteristic in mediated diagnostic dialogues between practitioners and clients (pp. 128-135) - and which Dr Feelgood maintains in her programming. Overtalking and inequitable exchange ratios are of course not relevant, given the monologic or minimally dialogic nature of these segments. Highly structured interaction with the programme presenter enhances the unusual tendency for the doctorly persona to occupy only its own (conversational) space, rather than to claim the right to intrude on the self-definitional space of others - a sensitivity strongly contrasting the practices of both Dr Feelgood and Stan Zemanek. The presenter’s questions -

1 Long-time parental medical adviser on Australian commercial radio.
presumably scripted as part of the Dr Lust segment - flow in and out of the topic, and so are unable to interrupt or re-position the text. P. J.’s questions have their entry positions pre-prepared. The sorts of anticipatory and summarising power gained in a diagnostic talk-relation: the technology of the clinical gaze applied via voice which we saw with Dr Feelgood - now moves the discourse-formational power not from patient to doctor, but from doctor to patient. Where Dr Feelgood extends her “going second” capacity to “formulate” caller experiences into imaginary, re-formed scenarios in which she herself characterises and enacts the “correct” behaviours, Dr Lust offers her own scenarios up-front. She invites her listeners to compare them to their own experiences, only then drawing from them the prescriptive powers and command modalities of an instructional format. Instead of ceding control over the self to the authoritative doctor, and regaining it only when the guarantee of regulated behaviour is in place, the Red Light listener becomes “self/expert”, licensed to self-diagnose, to self-treat, and to treat and instruct others, rather than simply to “do as Doctor says.”

12.1 “Teaching at Traviata TAFE”: a radio “College for Sex Workers”

Most radio doctors establish and maintain their own medical authority over the behaviours, attitudes and knowledge of their callers and listeners - even when they appear to be passing on their knowledge and expertise. Dr Trustia Lust works in the first instance to educate, positioning the expertise she possesses for use by the persons receiving it. In the following segment she outlines not only anatomical information about the prostate gland, but does so in simple, colloquial and graphic detail. Her descriptions are designed to operate at the experiential level - to invite listeners to test out and actually “feel” the truth of the expert description. These are the techniques medical expertise uses in its own reproduction, not in its relations with patients. Dr Trustia Lust and P J as questioner set up for listeners the talk relations and educative techniques of medical instructors with students - but with the expertise claimed for and in the terminology of quite another profession.

Red Light Radio, January 15 1996: “Dr Trustia Lust” segment

1  PJ:  So where is the prostate gland exactly?
2  Dr Lust: Oh you can feel it, up the rectum, about a finger length in on the
3 belly button side. European masseuses do the prostate massage as a regular service, and Europeans have far fewer deaths from prostate cancer than we do. I reckon they’re not as homophobic as Aussie blokes. Now listen mates, if it worries ya, just ‘cos you like the old prostate massage, does not mean you’re queer.

8  PJ: So how does one perform a prostate massage Dr Lust?
9  Dr Lust: Carefully, P. J. ... Use surgical gloves, and plenty of lube. You can get both at SA SIN. Put the lube on the anus, and on the glove.
10 And massage the perineum and the anus tenderly. Then, when the patient or client is relaxed, you can start to ease past the first sphincter, gently. If they enjoy it and relax, you can move upwards and feel the gland.
14  PJ: And is it before or after the second sphincter?
16  Dr Lust: Oh after - and every human body will have its own variations.

Expert knowledge lies beneath Dr Lust’s anatomical descriptions - see for instance the reference to the international incidence of prostate cancer in lines 4 and 5 - but she represents it as experiential knowledge. The feelings and sensations she describes are duplicable by her listeners, and so act as transmissible expertise. Presenter P. J. explicitly works during the Dr Lust segment to pace the information flow for optimal listener absorption. She operates in effect as teacher-aid in a Socratic way, drawing out more detailed information, as the instructor maps her students through the imagined body. At the same time she can lighten the possibilities of information overload by acting as comic-feed for the frequent Lusty one-liners, cues to the co-existence in these procedures of the dual-professional responsibilities borne by a Dr LUST: to instruct in safe physical procedures, without losing sight of their foundation in pleasure. The interspersed jokes, like the constantly-present and slightly-over-performed caricaturing effect of the parody-Doctor role, signal that Dr Lust “owns” - and so “owns up to” - her own pleasure as well as competence in performance of these acts - and thus so can her “students”.

Red Light Radio, January 29 1996: “Dr Trustia Lust” segment

1  PJ: Are there any health risks with fantasy work Dr Lust?
2  Dr Lust: Well certain standard fantasies do a have a risk-factor PJ:
3  Golden Showers, for example - and Brown Showers ... Erotic Asphyxiation - Pins and Needles ...
5  PJ Wow - would you go through them one at a time for us ...
6  Dr Lust: (...) My PLEASURE! - May as well get a few pheromones dancin' myself!

The ease with which she acknowledges the multiple and diverse pleasures possible in sexual encounters or in sexual services (including her own, lines 6-7),
extends to her accounts of the possible pleasures taken in fantasies. Asked by P. J. to explain why a client might find pleasure in the act of asphyxiation, Dr Lust explains in universalised, everyday terms:

21 Dr Lust: Well, remember holding your breath when you was a kid? Even havin' competitions with your mates, to see who could hold their breath the longest. Erotic asphyxiation is trying to combine that swooney, fainty feeling, with the ecstasy of orgasm.

This capacity to evoke common cultural experience (lines 21-23) and translate it into extreme sexual practice, works to de-stigmatise and normalise. The generalising pronoun use: “remember holding your breath when you was a kid”; the participial present: “erotic asphyxiation is trying to combine ...” and the colloquial and embodied descriptors: “that swooney, fainty feeling ...” all add to the invitation to participate in and “feel” the described sensations. The technique removes known cases from the sensationalised “sex-shock” genres of media reporting, into a sympathetic and even empathic re-humanisation of the victim-perpetrator:

31 Dr Lust: Well the idea is to temporarily cut the air supply at the moment of orgasm, so the lack of oxygen to the brain induces dizziness which - in theory - heightens the orgasm. - A young British MP died of it in ‘93.
35 PJ: Somebody Milligan ...
36 Dr Lust: Stephen Milligan! The Tories were groomin' him to be Prime Minister ... Poor man: he died alone.
38 PJ: Well what would have been different if he'd seen a professional?
40 Dr Lust: He'd still be alive for a start! You see PJ, he died because he couldn't control the weight of the asphyxiation and the orgasm at the same time. So he strangled himself ... possibly in bliss ...
43 and probably unintentionally.

At this point Dr Lust moves to direct address to her dual audience, shifting from sympathetic interpreter of embodied feeling, to professionally authorised regulatory voice:

44 Dr Lust: Clients: do not attempt erotic asphyxiation on your own! Your life is WORTH the cost of professional expertise! Workers: do NOT offer the erotic asphyxiation service on your own. Make sure there are at least two sex workers given that service: one, just to keep an eye on the colour of the client's skin. If he starts turnin' blue or grey, he has to be released immediately.
Conventional if slightly old-fashioned direct marketing address - "Your life is WORTH the cost of professional expertise!" joins the plain-speaking and colloquial professional instruction: "keep an eye on the colour of the client's skin ... " This works alongside the establishment of common physical sensation, to modify the direct command used here. Unlike the Dr Feelgood establishment of a warmly empathic style which conceals regulatory authority, Dr Lust's anti-authoritarian drive to spread out her expertise, and to license, humanise and re-embodi even these least spoken of sensations, breaks open established genres of "talking sex". This is especially dramatic given the rapid rise of established genres of talking radio sex - as we have seen on both Pillowtalk and The Stan Zemanek Show.

Claiming the authority of a specialist teacher as well as of a general practitioner, through her satirical insistence that she is a lecturer at "Traviata TAFE"; her comic-fantasy "Technical College for Sex workers", Dr Lust licenses her claims on the discourses of both medical and social authority - and simultaneously sends them up. The strategy pre-empted criticism of her parodic performance of "radio doctor" expertise. Making overt her own self-awareness of the duplicity and playfulness of her position, she also licenses a simultaneous attraction and distantiation; comedic anticipation, alongside a desire for factual instruction. The relation between the two is however curiously inverted: listeners being actively "attracted" towards and drawn into the participatory instructional genres, while tensions arising from the unfamiliarity of the topics and descriptions as mediated - public, rather than private accounts - are carefully dispersed by the distancing of the comedy styling. The capacity to be simultaneously amused and impressed can then be shared by an audience of industry workers (programme regulars) and general listeners (station regulars) - since they can be taken up differentially (Collins, 1993).

12.2 "When you're out an' about": the dangers of an inverted private sphere

Unlike Dr Feelgood, Dr Lust both knows, and admits, her multiple roles and their frequent intersecting and clashing positions. She has a clear sense of the

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1 "Technical and Further Education", the Australian trade and commerce college sector.
contexts of her performance’s reception - a sense perhaps possible only in community radio narrowcasting. Even if community radio programmers are unable to prevent their messages being received by anyone who tunes in, they can at least openly prioritise their specialist audience’s needs. As the regular presenter P. J. comments in each Red Light Radio programme opening:

1 PJ: ... stay tuned for the rare radio opportunity to consort with prostitutes, and for the rarer opportunity on air or off, to enjoy that relationship free of charge.

This careful distinction between “casual” and “specialist” listeners - station regulars and programme regulars - creates in the programmers a consciousness of audience reception and use of the programme which is carried through to each of its presentational elements. Unlike Dr Wright, while Dr Trustia Lust advises sexually active listeners to seek medical intervention for what are diagnosed as medical problems, she also empowers those listeners to operate as their own medical agents, as well as to take action on behalf of their own (sexual) clients. The word “professional” is explicitly passed here to the specialist listeners, not retained and asserted as the provenance of the “doctor”. And the corollary, that even the non-specialist can take on responsibility for and direction of their own sexual understandings and practices, is also openly acknowledged and encouraged.

Red Light Radio, January 22 1996: “Dr Trustia Lust” segment

14 Dr Trustia Lust: As I never tire of tellin’ ya, Australian sex workers have
15 the best sexual health in Australia. Even so, they do
16 catch the odd STD now an’ then. But mainly from social
17 partners. Just ‘cos you’re good at sex at work, doesn’t mean
18 you’re protected outside. So girls, remember: when you’re
19 out an’ about, use your condoms and lubes, just as you
20 would at work! And, negotiate with your social partners,
21 about safe sex techniques.

Authority is extended not only from medical expert to the sex professional, but more broadly into the sexual social life of “workers at leisure” - a category seen as potentially more at risk and less “responsible”. The inversion drastically redraws spatialised conventions of both the personal and the public, and the dangerous versus the secure. Sex work here moves “inside”, a space drawn

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3 There is in fact an absurdity in “C” licences, which restrict broadcast signal to particular communities, without acknowledging the vagaries of radio signal transmission.
explicitly as both different from and safer than when you’re “out and about” (lines 18-19). Making your own “lust” trustworthy means living in a sexually responsible way as much as working safely - but here the Habermasian spatial genderings are reversed. Work is private, while one’s “private” sexual life is “outside”.

The tensions arising in this key and problematic inversion are resolved by what Rose (1996) reminds us is the “ethical pluralism” of contemporary culture: its capacity to have Weberian “styles of conduct”, arising in different social spheres, co-exist and interact:

... diverse regimes operate within a single a priori: the ‘autonomisation’ and ‘responsibleisation’ of the self, the instilling of a reflexive hermeneutics which will afford self-knowledge and self-mastery, and the operation of all of this under the authority of experts who claim that the self can achieve a better and happier life through the application of scientific knowledge and professional skill. The allure of expertise lies in its promise to reconcile the tensions formed across the soul of the individual who is forced concurrently to inhabit different spheres. For the new experts of the psyche promise that modes of life that appear philosophically opposed - business success and personal growth, image management and authenticity - can be brought into alignment and achieve translatability through the ethics of the autonomous, choosing, psychological self (Rose 1996, p. 157).

The programme’s - admittedly transformational - embrace of a conventionally-gendered “private sphere” of “secure” intimate pleasure, is being aligned in just these ways, and with just these “enterprise” values of choice, autonomy, responsibility - but with agency moving outwards from intimate space. The central claim to be already operating “a business”, with all the associated requisite behavioural qualities and social values, amounts to a social-institutional bid for recognition, through assertion of an existing self-actualising authority over the ethical domain, and an ongoing attempt at legitimation at the political level, resisting contemporary “governmentality” over the sex-worker self. At the level of the ethical, to take up once more Rose’s formulae (1996, pp. 152-153), Red Light Radio asserts the capacities of its “programme regulars” to

... construe, decipher, act upon themselves in relation to the true and the false, the permitted and the forbidden, the desirable and the undesirable (p. 153).

The curriculum of “Traviata TAFE” aims at just such ethical instruction. At the same time however, it pushes beyond Foucault’s “technologies of self” and
towards social-institutional formation which will introduce into the work-spaces of the sex industry

... certain assumptions and objectives concerning the human beings that inhabit them (Foucault, 1977). These are embodied in the design of institutional space, the arrangements of institutional time and activity, procedures of reward and punishment, and the operation of systems of norms and judgements (Rose, pp. 152-153).

Dr Trustia Lust’s role in particular is clear, alongside the “normalising” revelatory talk of the full programming team. While, like Dr Feelgood, her embrace of the “fantasising” genres of imaginative narrative play allows her to work transformatively across the more difficult “regulatory” moments, her simultaneous use of “plain-speaking” public-sphere authority talk-text-types admits direct prescription of new regimens, procedures, commands. The degree to which she is also operating to reform social uses of space becomes clear when, during the course of the series, the Red Light collective takes up the opportunity of re-playing a programme from ABC Radio National’s social documentary series Radio Eye, which admits not only the client voice, but the male domestic partners and even the “pimp” business managers of sex workers. This programme, Living Off the Earnings, offers Red Light Radio the chance to represent directly the economics of sex work. More importantly, it reveals the tensions relating to public-private division of “work” and “home” when a female-co-ordinated prostitution seeks to construct an ultra-privatised “work space”. The Red Light collective’s validation of their interiorised “sex-fantasy” world through hyper-feminised consensual talk-relations and colloquialised “mum to daughters” instructional modes, represents attempts made in this programme to normalise itself by representation of its continuity with everyday domestic life. It is interestingly destabilised by the only direct intrusion of the male voice. While the assertion of a “normalised” yet “enterprise directed” “domesticated” prostitution continues, those male selves seeking space within it prove, if anything, even more problematic.
12.3 "Police could kick the door down": private enterprise in public space

There has been a complex network of controls and barriers operating throughout the Red Light Radio season on Radio 5UV - a necessary corollary to the semi-legal status of the sex industries, and their fierce culture of confidentiality. There are risks of public revelation of identity involved when even "community" narrowcast involves public broadcast, as the presenter makes clear in a programme on disclosure. A national TV channel has struggled to overcome problems of preservation of confidentiality in order to film a live talkback sequence during the production of Red Light Radio - and finally abandoned the attempt. The event underscores awareness of the battery of techniques this programme uses to construct confidentiality around itself. At the same time, this complex positioning of a release of information into the broader community without loss of guarantees of privacy, flows from precisely the same positionings inside the sex industry itself. Programme after programme, topic after topic, speaker after speaker, Red Light Radio opens awareness of how complex a matter the operations of "closure" and the careful preservation of privacy are within prostitution.

In the Radio Eye programme dedicated to the concept of "living off the earnings" of prostitution, one speaker makes it clear how difficult it is to maintain that privacy within wider social institutional claims to control:

Red Light Radio, January 8 1996: Radio Eye: "Living off the earnings"

1 Anon. male voice: I'm the pimp - police could kick the door down and
2 arrest me for living off the earnings ... oh dear -
3 what if my mother found out!

For him the distress is as much in the possibility of involuntary disclosure as in the brutality of physical entry to the home. Nor is the sense of inviolability of that "home" any less developed than within homes not involved in sexual servicing. A sex worker’s partner remarks of his role as care giver to their young child: "We try to be as normal a family as possible ..." while "Hans", married for

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4 The decision was caused as much by the problem of TV’s "legitimising" function (Castells, 1997) in "publicising" the private, as by the Red Light Collective’s need to protect its members’ identities. See MacKinnon, 1994, for similar problems on French talk radio.
more than 20 years to sex worker “Patti”, outlines how he operates when her clients enter their home:

Red Light Radio, January 8, 1996: Radio Eye speakers Hans and Patti

1 Hans: A lot of the clients I met -
2 Patti: Some of them used to come here, to home -
3 Hans: That’s right! They still come, you know? An’, I know ‘em
4 all ... They sit here, have a drink with me, you know?
5 Interviewer: Really? And then they go off and have sex?
6 Hans: Yeah. I usually go, off in the car, fluff off to Woolies⁵ or
7 something, when I come home, s’only Pat here anyway,
8 everything’s been done, an’ the money is out ...
9 Interviewer: How do you think they feel, having you here?
10 Hans: Well I’m not here! When the business starts, I’m never here ...
11 Interviewer: People would say that’s incredibly open minded of you ...
12 Hans: Of course it is! Even friends of ours say, How do you do it?
13 Well, I know what Patti is doing. You don’t know what your
14 missus is doing, while you’re at work! hahahah!

Teenaged “Eli”, introduced as “son of an Adelaide prostitute”, is asked “Is it an embarrassment in your life that your Mum is a sex worker?” He answers by outlining how her work is managed by the creation of closed zones within the family home:

Red Light Radio, January 8 1996: PJ interview with Eli

1 Eli: ... sometimes it can be a bit awkward because my mother is a private
2 worker - she works from home. And, it can be quite, quite embarrassing
3 when there’s people I have invited over as guests an’ I have to refrain
4 [sic] them from entering the parts of the house that she’s using ... So
5 that can be embarrassing sometimes, it can create an awkward situation,
6 but on the whole it’s not an embarrassment because the people that we
7 have allowed to have access to that knowledge haven’t used it against
8 us. They respect that she is a member of - or that she is a prostitute.

“Eli” makes an interesting shift across the concept of privacy, from the closure of rooms within his home, to the sense of the dangers of disclosure, and the trust and social cohesion that is created from the sense of secrecy needed to control the relations of prostitution. He moves to a direct relation between ethical and social-institutional levels of consciousness of the operation of social power within his young life:

16 Eli: No I never had to lie, like, straight-faced lie ... I had to do a lot of

⁵ Presumably Woolworths Supermarket.
manoeuvring, and living with it, that we should be just watching the
Television in the back room, and it wasn’t cool to go and play with them
that kind of thing ...

Interviewer: I imagine some people might be horrified, that you were living in a
house, that in another part of that house, there was prostitution
happening ... Was that um, did it ever happen in front of you or did you
always feel that you were, protected, or ...

Eli: Yeah yeah, well, my mother was a very, very conscientious mother, she
obviously is a good provider, well I see her as a good provider, and she
was using her work as a way of getting money, which is what work is for,
so I never had to be exposed to it in any untoward way. Occasionally
she’d ask me to make a cup of coffee, or close the door, like to the kitchen
or something, but there was never any, never any like untoward exposure
to it, it was quite, from my point of view, I saw it as being quite
legitimate, it was confidential, private, and there was nothing, I never
felt, my personal space was never being infringed upon, it was her house,
she let me live there.

Interviewer: There’s a whole lot of confusion surrounding her work ...

Eli: Well my mother obviously is a therapist, ’cos she helps people to gather
an idea about their own sexuality, and how they can be fulfilled and
express themselves sexually, which is a very natural part of all of our
selves, so, in my eyes, she’s a, she’s a therapist, and the work that she
does is confidential and private, so I actually see that there’s nothing
wrong with it. Apart from well, all of us know now, these days, with
AIDS epidemics and things like that you must be very careful about the
way you expose your body to other people, uhh, but she’s very careful,
obviously she knows a lot about that, it’s a sacred art that she
understands, so I think that there’s nothing wrong with the fact that
she’s a therapist that helps people work through their sexuality.

For Eli this careful consideration of how space and social attitudes can both be
negotiated extends explicitly into a control over access to the body: “you must be
very careful about the way you expose your body to other people.” His
enhanced sense of the importance of this negotiated and negotiative approach to
cos - exist with a culture which is clearly otherwise directed, is marked in the
status - claims of terms such as “therapist” and “sacred art”. Eli sees a social and
cultural identity related to a private and individualised “sexuality”. In
comparison, Pillowtalk, the programme which appears to offer an intensified
privacy of in - bedroom revelations, sweeps both its public reach and its claims
over sexual contact outwards and across the entire community. On the April 28
1996 programme its multi-tracked promo voiceover accentuates even further the
range of spaces evoked in the innuendo - laden slogan: “All around Australia: up -
and - all around ...” The equation between sexual and electronic penetration is
made even more explicit on April 21, when it sees itself as “broadcasting - from
the trans / missionary position”, and again on April 7, when Dr Feelgood
suggests: “How about a bit of sex after the hottest hits from around the world?
Join me ...” for what she later (April 21) describes as programming which is “intimate, in depth, and in bedrooms across Australia ...”

Against this assertion of the right to enter all social space, Red Light Radio interviewees posit a counter-view of the dangers involved in actual sexual congress in spaces both public and private, which have not been carefully negotiated for sexual activity (Hayden, 1980). A sex worker’s partner discusses the problems of maintaining security for street sex workers:

Red Light Radio, January 8 1996: Radio Eye, “Living off the earnings”

1 Anon. Male voice: She works on the street, she doesn't work for a parlour, or anything like that. and, I wanted it that way because I could watch her? I could sit across the road on the bus stop and on the street, stand across the road, and ah, y' know, I could watch whatever happened and she’d get a job and she’d take it down the corner to the house, and I’d ah, walk her down to see that she got there ok, all the other side is the, you know the muggin' whatever, and, ah, you know I’d just sit until she came out.

For this speaker entry into unnegotiated sexual space is dangerous:

17 Anon. Male voice: Now, since the things changed where I’m at home, she’s been arrested twice now, and um she’s been bashed once. When I’m there I know she’s not gonna do certain things ‘cos she knows I’m there, an’, I’ll go an’ blow the job, if I think she’s takin’ too many risks. We have rules, like, I don’t like her to do car jobs, yeah? An’ I don’t really, like, I don’t like her to do home jobs, go to someone’s home, like they might say there’s no-one home, an’ she might get there, an’ there might be 3 blokes there ... But now that I’m not there she’s doin’ all these things, she’s admitted it, so you know I just sit here an’ I worry to death, an’ I really do ...

This show both examines and extends the complexities of the position of prostitution in contemporary culture. Semi-legal, it remains almost the only element of modern private experience which is not able to be recognised as private enterprise. Its major exclusion is from the world of capital exchange - that transactive processing to which even “purely” private, non-enterprise sexual identity work; that occupying the space Habermas described as “intimate”, is now clearly directed. Dr Feelgood, in advising her listener-callers to “seek expert advice” not only maintains the authority necessary to her own professional existence in a commodity exchange culture, but also works both directly and

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6 Note that this extract is from a Sydney-based programme re-broadcast on Red Light Radio: produced by Eurydice Errone from ABC Radio National’s documentary series Radio Eye.
indirectly towards the specialist commodity marketing in which her commercial radio shift, and her otherwise sequestered “professional advice”, are saturated. So it is that Red Light Radio and Dr Trustia Lust, the voice of illegitimate medical authority - of a self-conscious anti-authority - and of illegal sexual congress, must appear on community radio, the place for non-profit programming, arising out of voluntary and self-directing private work.⁷

Thus radio doctoring shows most clearly the role radio has concealed beneath its own incorporeality: how it carries the market ethos into the constitution of self. Mainstream radio programmes such as Pillowtalk and The Stan Zemanek Show bring the personal and private out into the public, arraying it as individual self expressiveness, while actually embedding it into the mass market consumerism and directly regulating it into normative behaviours most appropriate to that market. Where power does pass back to the individual, is where it is most transgressive: where women are seeking market control and legitimacy for this last remaining example of a truly private enterprise.

12.4 “And the bathroom’s all 24 gold carat plated!”- enterprise discourses in the business of prostitution

Across each edition of Red Light Radio a promotional and bridging sting is played, the ringing tone of an old-fashioned mechanical cash register reminding listeners that, no matter the focus of the particular programme, what is in play here is the operating ethos of a business. Along with the continual use of business terms: “customer services”, “client satisfaction”, “client relations”, there are constant assertions from interviewees and panel discussants of the sheer ordinariness of day-to-day prostitution, once removed from its mediated discourses of glamorous criminality:

Red Light Radio, January 8 1996: “Living off the earnings”, Hans and Patti

1 Patti: What you are doing is just basically a job, and it pays the rent -
2 puts food in your mouth ...

⁷ Australian Community radio is by conditions of its licence non-profit, and community-accessible. Radio 5UV on which Red Light Radio is broadcast has a core staff of 8, most of them part time, and about 80 volunteers. Radio 3d, which broadcasts The Prison Show (see Chapter 13) has one full time paid staff member, and between 100 and 150 volunteers.
Mary Ann Phoenix, Miscellaneous Workers Union officer for Victorian Sex Workers, comments during one programme on how decriminalisation to any level changes the social positioning of prostitution within public perceptions, and as conveyed in media texts. Suggesting that what she terms “the whore stigma” may be “starting to erode in Victoria”, she relates how “It doesn’t even make front page news now, issues around the sex industry ... it’s not such a titillating subject as it used to be.” Asked whether she thinks the industry has gained or lost value, in terms of public perception, after decriminalisation, she speaks of how the sex work is slowly becoming established as a socially-recognised professional life: “Some parts of the community are saying ‘yes - these people are workers ...”’

“Speak Out” extracts - edited sections of autobiographical “witness” given at a public seminar on prostitution in Adelaide, played from time to time on Red Light Radio, consistently tell of the speakers’ pride in their hard-won economic independence, explicitly represented as the capacity to support a family financially, and to practise that status through the weekly routines of domestic consumption. They stress their sense of the ordinariness of their work within discourses not of private but of public domesticity. “I’m normal. I mean I go to Coles, and I say hello to old people, and I pat dogs ...”

Similarly, music requests on Red Light Radio focus on earning, in marked contrast to the romance and sentiment of lyrics and dedications used in The Prison Show (see Chapter 13 following). Callers and programmers point attention to lyrics about financial independence:

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1      Vanessa:  Michelle has been waiting for this song, for oh about
eleven weeks, and here it is ...

                      Money talks ....
                      Money talks!
                      Dirty cash I want you,
                      Dirty cash I need you ...
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Mary Ann Phoenix makes the economic discourses running through the show even more explicit, when she describes a former Melbourne red-light district in

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8 Another major Australian supermarket chain.
terms of a shopping-mall. The location as described mixes social and economic activities, in the form of “sex-shopping”:

Red Light Radio, January 22 1996: Mary Ann Phoenix and Helen

Mary Ann: Eaton Square was a block of sort of 1930s flats um, in a, residential area, along one of our prominent sort of, streets going into Melbourne ...

... and clients used to just walk or you know drive in

or walk in there and they'd go from one to another and sort

of find out what - who- who was doing what ... a lot of

them would meet there and -

Helen: Go shopping -

Mary Ann: Go shopping: yes! Yes, there for someone to see and it was

a bit of a social thing.

Helen: It was quite a spectacle on a Friday - Thursday Friday

Saturday night, wasn't it! There's a saying in Victoria,

something's really busy, you say it's like Bourke Street

Mail - we-e-l-l, that's what Eaton Square was like on a

Saturday night; just men, TEEMING!

These normalisation strategies, equating prostitution with a semi-public but otherwise private domesticity, continue in the introduction to Red Light Radio’s re-play of ABC Radio National’s documentary by Eurydice Errone, “Living off the earnings”. Red Light presenter P. J. Rose makes clear the programme’s stance on the removal of prostitution from the accepted modes of commercial exchange:

PJ: Pimps are men who are living off the earnings of prostitutes. Are they exploitative, violent misogynists, as Hollywood and the law would have us believe, or are they ordinary blokes, with girlfriends and wives, who happen to work in the world’s most stigmatised profession. Laws around the world still reflect the attitude that the provision of sexual services for money is not a desirable exchange. But it’s not only prostitutes who are affected by prostitution laws. In aiming to protect prostitutes from exploitation, most countries have pimping laws: laws that prevent others from “living off the earnings.”

In Australia, even the most liberal-minded person will hold special contempt for so-called “pimps.”

The opening sequence of “Living off the earnings” makes its own position equally clear. Edited highlights of interview tapes, in which men who do live off the earnings protest their ordinariness, are intercut against the lush harmonies of full orchestral love-fantasy balladry. In this way the Radio Eye feature sets up a claim for “the real” as opposed to the romanticised - or in this case anti-romanticised - view of “pimpping.”
Music track: *Dream a little dream of you*

1. Female soloist: *Stars - shining bright above you,*
2. Male harmonists: *Ooh-ooh-ooh-ooh-ooh*
3. Male voice: That’s right: I was that you know, the real - pimp.
4. Male voice: Police could kick the door down and arrest me for living
5. Male voice: off the earnings, yeah, and - I’ve watched all these
6. Male voice: Hollywood movies, and I’m like the, greasy little pimp!
7. Male voice: I thought: “Oh dear - what if my mother found out!”
8. Female soloist: *Dream a little dream OF me ...*
9. Male voice: Pat used to ring me up at work, 12 o’clock at lunchtime,
10. Male voice: and said: “OK I’m finished for today!” She said: “I’ve
12. Female soloist: *Juuu-st - hold me tight and tell me you love me ...*
13. Second male voice: I said: “Jesus Christ! I work all day for a bloody lousy
14. Second male voice: hundred bucks, you know!” I said: “Jesus, you doing all
15. Second male voice: right! Any vacancies??”
16. Female soloist: *Dream a little dream ...
17. Third male voice: We’re a normal couple you know: like, we love each
18. Third male voice: other an’ that. Just because she does what she does
19. Third male voice: doesn’t make it - well makes it a little different, but; you
20. Third male voice: know - we try to be as normal family as possible. Yeah.

The reality of these everyday-located voices depends upon the intersection of a number of discursive features, each of them differently enhanced by its juxtaposition with the lushly romantic love song. In the first instance, the self-mocking good humour of the domestic and familial males’ sudden inferiority inside the sex industry stands well within the tradition of Australian masculinity’s laconic and colloquial realism, which can wonder whether there are any “job vacancies” in prostitution; can render the suburban and domestic horrors of being caught by their Mum, as opposed to the culturally-imagined menace of their role within Hollywood movie, or the TV cop-show cliché of the smashed down door.⁹ Normalised domesticity replaces media stereotypes, to evoke a world where a couple phones each other at lunch time, to confess that they “love each other an’ that.”

### 12.5 Legitimising the home/work space: radio’s sound sensorium of sex-as-work

Nor is the heterosexual conjugal relationship the only element under normalisation on *Red Light Radio*. As the “Living off the earnings” programme

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⁹ Not altogether a media cliché in Australian sex work: in June 1994 the South Australia Police took to axing down brothel doors instead of knocking.
progresses, the discursive work to establish domesticity within intimate relations is mirrored by an equivalent play across the recognised sound-locations of the workplace. As prostitute “Pat” and her husband chat to the minimally present interviewer - her role significantly reduced by the eager flow of Pat’s and hubby Hans’s story - their talk has ambient sound cut across it. As Pat retells the moment when she negotiated with Hans to retain her regular clients after they married, workplace ambience - first his and then hers - is cut into the narrative:

\[Red Light Radio, January 8 1996: Hans and Patti\]

1 Pat: Well when I said to Hans, I work as a prostitute, he turned around and said to me, well I’m a sheet metal worker. That’s your job: I’m a sheet metal worker - that’s my job. He said I love you, I want to marry you, and that’s it.

2 \textit{sounds of metal machining}

3 Hans: I was never really jealous, because ah, she always liked the ah, middle aged and older clients, you know? Not ah, spunkies you know what I mean?

4 Music track: \textit{The look ... of love ... is in ... your eyes ...}

5 Woman: Hello: how are you ...

6 \textit{Ambient sound: credit card machine ratchet}

7 2nd woman: One for me?

8 1st woman: Yes ...

9 Woman: Just the usual?

10 Male voice: Yep ... ahaahaa ... I’m a big man!

11 Woman: You can do whatever you want ...

The use of actuality sound both separates and unites the two worlds. The publicly recognised work of Hans’s sheet metal workshop is distinguished at one level from the illicit marketing of sex as an unfamiliar social and financial negotiation - and yet one which is rendered normal by the banality of the receptionist’s dialogue and the familiar sound of the credit-card impress. Immediately however the editing moves on to introduce a low-toned male voiceover, in which a pimp details the work-place set-up visually for the audience:

\[Red Light Radio, January 8 1996: Radio Eye – pimping sequence\]

1 Male voice: It’s a ... three roomed house, with a lounge room downstairs, three working rooms, Uhm (uhh) ahh... the ladies ... work ...

2 um, by sitting in a lounge room. Umm, being viewed, from the street. Unlike, a parlour, where it’s a totally different situation.

3 My lady is working, as a one-off, on a Sunday: she’s here by herself, I'm just here to keep company. (......) An' gettin' bored -
The effect is to re-introduce a sense of inappropriate positioning for both (male) speaker and audience, creating for one the sense of useless and inactive presence on the scene, for the other an equally uncomfortable sense of intrusive voyeurism, in which the object under scrutiny has emerged as not exciting and desirable, but somehow prosaic and banal. For all the public display we are told about, the transaction we overhear is as familiar as reception-counter work in any agency or business. Despite the familiar documentary voiceover-commentary which we expect to relate the new and unknown, what we get is actuality-sound-bites of routine nonchalance - and no access at all to the “action” at the core of the exchange.

A later edit clip from this same locational moment highlights even more clearly how far it is precisely the mundane financial transaction which dominates the culture of professional sex work:

Female voice: Hello how are you ... Have you been here before? No?
Prices start at $40, for straight sex, $50 for French and sex, $80 -
for half an hour. I'm the only lady on at the moment: there'll be
another girl coming in at about 12 o'clock ...

In between, we have been given some sense of the meaning of these negotiations for that separate, private space which the sex worker as domestic figure prioritises in her life, as Patti and Hans return to talk about what they do with “the earnings”:

Pat: And the bathroom's all 24 gold carat plated.
Interviewer: You're joking!
Pat: I wish I was! It cost me a fortune!
Hans: Cars ...
Pat: Showerhead ...
Hans: Cabin-cruiser ...
Pats: Taps ...
Hans: Good food ... air conditioners everywhere you know and, big
stereos ... TVs everywhere ... Money was no subject [sic], you know! She
had - $2,000 to spend every week!

The litany of domestic acquisitions is spoken out with the same precision and openness as the scale of charges, so that the two become domesticated together: the two ends of the same bargaining process. If social roles within this commerce
become confused and even exchanged, there is sturdy defence of their possibility as still well within the range of social normality. Indeed, it is most often through commodity acquisition and its public locations for consumption-display that the “norms” are asserted. When Pat for instance buys Hans the car she thinks he deserves, its size, price, loud styling and engine power move from a threat to his masculinity, to a sign of her excessive (private) love and (public) earning power:

1 Hans: I was at that time driving a Datsun 160B triple S, 2 door, (......) and
2 ... Pat had no car at all, but she had her licence, and she said “Hans, can I borrow your car?” and I said “Yeah ... go for it! Where you wanna go?” She said: “I wanna trade this bloody - thing in! (....)
5 And get you a proper car!” And she said “That's only a lousy 4 cylinder: I get a V8! (...) Bit of POWER!” And she picked me up, in the afternoon, from work, coming home in a maroon coloured Ford LTD ... And I too- she blew the horn an' I looked out the window: and I said “What's this bloody aircraft carrier doing down there!!" IT - WAS - HUMONGOUS a car - absolutely humongous. An' she said “Hans - you like your new car?” Lovely - electric windows, power steering, big V8 motor and I bloody freaked out, I said “Darling, how we gonna pay for dis?” And she said “Don’t worry - it's PAID FOR.”

This establishes the terms of their domestic relations. It encapsulates her perception of her capacity to enhance rather than diminish his social prestige: her safely “private” sex-work can publicly assert any masculine status he may lose at home, by provision of a “HUMONGOUS” car - with a V8 beneath the bonnet to provide a “bit of POWER”. His fears are carefully placated by her choice of non-“spunky” clients to assuage and prioritise her partner’s sexual role.

12.6 The politics of “Outside!” - the final irreducibility of spatial gendering

The troubling of the gender roles which occurs across all of these extracts into which the male voice has been allowed to intrude is underpinned in the account of a male who works as escort and security for a parlour in which his domestic partner works, but who sees himself, like Hans, as having entered a professional working world in which lines can be, and are, strictly drawn between public and private selves:

*Red Light Radio, January 8 1996: Radio Eye – pimping sequence*

1 Male voice: I've only ever had to do one thing: the guy was an idiot: um, I had to - Elaine called out and I had to come running in, tell him
to put his clothes on, and get downstairs before - he was escorted
off the property. He saw reason; decided to leave ...

Elaine: He saw reason - he'd already tried to rape me ... Huh!

Male voice: That's when it's difficult, because my reaction is ... rage - kill -
murder, maim, rip his head off! Which would be - really nice in
front of a Court of Law!

Elaine: Hahahaha! yeah, definitely!!

Male voice: Sure babe, but "I can understand - but you really did go a bit far
to take his head off physically!"

Elaine: Ahahahaha!

Male voice: "Oh - well - but I was a bit upset at the time ..." I mean, you've
got to be very careful. You say: you- you're controlling yourself,
saying "Scuse me - you put my girlfriend down: I would like to
discuss matters with you - outside."

The sense of multiple possibilities - even of alternative realities - in this text is
signalled in the subtle and only minimally marked shifts in address which the
speaker enacts. As he flows his dialogue across explanation to the interviewer
(lines 1-4), and the account of his rage, his performance is modulated by his
awareness of the likely outcomes in a court which will cede no legitimacy to his
anger (lines 7-8; 10-11; 13). He manages both a rendition of the cool professional
tone employed to control the rage, and assurances to his girlfriend that the rage
is nonetheless legitimate for having been suppressed.

Fairclough (1992, p. 119) shows how such moments of conscious “discourse
representation” permit both the use of an “outside voice”, and the opportunity
for “distancing oneself from the outside voice”. Here, the inside voice - the one
legitimated by the speaker’s private role - is the voice of anger and violence: the
response Elaine's reactions and comments (lines 5, 9 and 12) anticipate. The same
speaker, responding to public perceptions of his role as a parlor manager,
similarly re-enacts the fractures between public and institutional perceptions,
and private value systems formed within those same fields of social and cultural
norms, when he says:

Anon. Male voice: You think: "- am I one of them?? I'm not like that - I'm normal!
I mean I go to Coles, and I say hello to old people, and I pat dogs,
and I'm not some sleazebag", and you think "well, if I fronted a
Court I would be!"

“Tracey” (Programme 11) similarly comments: “We are everyday, ordinary
people who shop in supermarkets and love their kids ...” To her, social normality
is best rendered in the spontaneous sociality both public and private space
provide - old people and dogs encountered casually in the streets as much as
love for your own kids at home. The public self is specifically a supermarket self: one consuming in regular and predictable weekly routines, on behalf of a domestic order. What is surprising is the degree to which that same domesticity which asserts the probity of the private self, flows across into public display of moral worth - through the known regimes of respectable market consumption, as much as through participation in the other public rituals of family:

*Red Light Radio, January 8 1996: Radio Eye – parenting sequence*

(baby sounds)

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The speaker's unnamed male partner, like Hans, is prepared to take on feminised domesticity within his “reversed spatialised” life with a sex worker, but - also like Hans - takes the opportunity to discursively re-assert a compensatory excessive masculinity, working over heavy machines and the freedom of mobility:

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*Red Light* collective members too represent their private lives as occupying similarly established domestic spaces and normalised relations, often in song dedications which arise in quite startling ways from the professional details of sex work descriptions. “Hi - I'd like to dedicate this to my partner, just to tell him how much I really love him”, suddenly appears after fifteen minutes of intense discussion on techniques for delivery of anal sex.

When one collective member dedicates a song to the others, she chooses a track from the group Sister Sledge, which includes the lyrics: “We are family - I got all my sisters with me ...”

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10 King's Cross in Sydney, overtly a site for prostitution, illicit drug use and crime generally for over 50 years; now ikonic.
Red Light Radio, February 12 1996: panelist PJ and programmer Mary

1 PJ: Red light radio's Dr Trustia Lust dedicated that Sister Sledge
song, to her sisters. And we are family too in the studio, I'm P. J.
2
3 Rose, here with members of the Red light radio Collective:
4 Mary: Hi I'm Mary, and I'm in training to be a Mistress, I'd like to
specialise in bondage and discipline, and I'm out with the
family, this family, but not within my, family of birth.

None of this discursive establishment of everyday conjugal domesticity as "normal" private behaviour differs from the intimacies revealed on Dr Feelgood. What varies is the direction taken. On Pillowtalk, the cultural regulatory impulse accesses private sexual experiences, opening them to public display, and to social disciplining. On Red Light Radio control over the sexuality discussed remains with the speakers. As the outro suggests, this is a rare opportunity to consort with prostitutes - for free. They both relate and regulate their own "intimate" economy: its beliefs, expertise, behaviours, attitudes, versions of public and private.

It is initially something of a shock that we should see re-asserted from the midst of Red Light Radio's claims for a re-feminised intimacy as a "re-privatised" private enterprise of sex-work, Lefebvre's vision of how the private and the public "should" relate:

The sphere of private life ought to be enclosed, and have a finite, or finished, aspect. Public space, by contrast, ought to be an opening outwards. What we see happening is just the opposite ([1974]; 1991a, p. 147).

It is even more surprising that it should be community radio, still charged with representation of "minority" cultural positions and so home to direct social critique, which engages with a sustained claim for entrepreneurial control of a major industry.¹ Lefebvre himself however indicates why such a curious "break-out" of social-location for spatial critique might occur, reminding us (1991, p. 89) that the "new problem" in relation to industrial development and so enterprise culture is the problem of the reproduction of the social relations within which enterprise can continue to occur - and specifically, at the level of its representation. He calls for "an approach which would analyse not things in space, but space

¹ Fiona Patten (1997) calculates a cash flow of $A1.2 billion annually, with a potential to generate $A14 million in taxation revenue.
itself, with a view to uncovering the social relationships embedded in it" (1991, loc. cit.).

... instead of uncovering the social relationships (including class relationships) that are latent in spaces, instead of concentrating our attention on the production of space and the social relationships inherent to it - relationships which introduce specific contradictions into production, so echoing the contradiction between the private ownership of the productive forces - we fall into the trap of treating space as space 'in itself', as space as such (1991, p. 90).

By entering the "reserved" critical space for "minority" or reformist expression - community radio - the sex industry and its "inverted" production of spaced economic-power/gender relations is able to intensify and so powerfully represent the specifics of their "feminised/domesticated" sex-work's "production of space and the social relationships inherent to it." Commercial radio, more directly and more conventionally the space for representation of enterprise activity, is itself already implicated in circulation of those "... ideologies which serve to conceal the use of the productive forces within modes of production in general, and within the dominant mode of production in particular" (Lefebvre 1991, loc. cit.). Dr Feelgood's interrogatory and regulatory occupancy and reformation of the "locales" and specifics of her listener-callers' experiences; Zemanek's appropriation of all caller concerns into forms of sponsorship activity, and his "mapping" of caller locales into commercially-activated sites; all are directly in the service of Lefebvre's intensifying "productive forces", discursively reforming themselves through the 1990s as "enterprise culture".

That a collective of female sex-workers is seeking to assert intimate and domestic space as an element of enterprise culture is an accident of the historical geography of Lefebvrian "produced" space. South Australian "parlour" prostitution is a curious and localised phenomenon, subject from time to time to break-out into "wild side" street-sex formations, but otherwise rigorously patrolled both by very powerful madams, and a police force who prefer a domesticated and easily locatable industry to one more mobile, fragmentary and "open" to pressures from other unregulated "industries" (drugs, car-crime, street violence). The sometimes troublesome intersections encountered by the Red Light Radio collective as it attempts to assert a normalising discourse of private sphere and feminised domesticity over an illegal, "public"-serving, mostly male-
oriented enterprise, reveal very much the problems Lefebvre anticipates when he outlines the inherent “un-evenness” of the renewed flows of the forces of production across already-configured and inequitably-distributed social spaces:

The forces of production and technology now permit of intervention at every level of space: local, regional, national, worldwide. Space as a whole, geographical or historical space, is thus modified, but without any concomitant abolition of its underpinnings - those initial ‘points’, those first foci or nexuses, those ‘places’ (localities, regions, countries) lying at different levels of a social space in which nature’s space has been replaced by a space-qua-product (1991, loc. cit.)

Radio, as both the Red Light collective and the commercial producers of Pillowtalk and The Stan Zemanek Show understand, because of its radical sheering away from any direct “locatedness”, has developed powerful representational means to align itself with this or that discursive formation, arising as part of the “production of space” which accompanies a given relation of production. It may even be that community radio, as both Barnard and Moran have begun to suggest, by its “narrowcast” tendencies and relative closeness to local or “tribal” audiences, may become a preferred agent of the fragmenting and “multiplexing” forces of production within a digitised and informational economy. They have the “local” advantage in the drive to entrepreneurially “activate” hitherto commercially inactive, “unproductive” zones. Red Light Radio’s efforts on behalf of a “domesticated” sex industry could prove to be an early spatial claim within enterprise culture’s re-processing.

To test the possibilities of such a shift in community radio, re-positioning it from the “ameliorating drift” accusations of undirectedness, and from a compromise politics of “weak multiculturalism - weak commercialism” into an ur-texting medium for reclamation of locales for enterprise in the new informational productivity, my final analytical focus is on community radio programming explicitly produced by and for a population denied participation in both productivity and domesticity. Taking up social connectedness only at the level of the discursive, constrained by the most excessive spatial arrangements known in “rational” Modernist industrial society, community radio station 3d’s Prison Show uses radio to maintain contact within and across prisons, and to relay messages from prisoners to their families “on the outside”. Here a complex spatiality is largely enacted as gendered talk-relations, in a series of discursive plays across excessive masculinity constrained from occupancy of public space,
and equally excessive feminisation of interiority. The ensuing talk both denies the realities of the real geographic dispersal, and affirms the ongoing tensions of a gendered spatiality. The sexualised and strongly gendered “bantering” talk-relations which result are both continuous and discontinuous with those coming to dominate other radio sector practices, and call for a detailed examination.
Chapter Thirteen

* "Radio’s alternative dimension": discourses of social space on The Prison Show

* promotional sting from Radio 3d, Adelaide.

13.0  "Virility ... and repressive space": prison communications and gendered locales

Tune in to The Prison Show and at first you hear an old-fashioned music request programme. Letters from listeners are read aloud, and music selections, themed to the letters, are played. But these letters and requests are all directed from, or to, listeners in the state prison system, or their families - with particular emphasis on Nunga (South Australian Aboriginal) prisoners.

1 Recurring institutional codes: “to Lee in YLP ...” (Yatala Labour Prison); “from the girls at Unit A in the AWP ...” (Adelaide Women’s Prison); for all at the LSU ...” (Living Skills Unit) slowly resolve into a lived map of the local justice system. Listen across a series of weeks, and it is possible to trace the paths of individuals from institution to institution, as they are processed through the various operations of the Department of “Correctional” services.2

For all its narrowcast markers such intensely specialist programming has much to say to the broader cultural order - and specifically, to this study of radio. The mapping offered within The Prison Show’s textualisations of the prison experience proffers not only a multi-layered representation, but a contradictory vision of contestation over social spaces. The talk-texts are in themselves strongly disputational, displaying resistance as well as

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1 The programme offers an interesting opportunity to balance the focus of those few studies which do exist on Australian Aboriginal broadcasting; mostly policy studies, or descriptions of remote rural community programming; see Browne, 1990; Molnar, 1994.

2 The resistant nature of such a sub-cultural mapping is clear in De Certeau’s understanding of the “lived” geometry of streets selected by and made habitable by a community of users, where “space is a practiced place” (The Practice of Everyday Life, p. 117). Prison Show listeners, whether incarcerated or “out”, transform the alien and alienating “places” to which the Department of Correctional Services sends them, into more complex and liminal “spaces” of lived experience, by re-connecting them into social and even blood-relational networks.
acquiescence to the institutional ("disciplining") frames within which the various "maps" are constituted. At first sight [hearing] it seems surprising that this should occur inside a radio programme which is funded by the very Correctional Services institution which controls the spatial fragmentation over which the show’s discourses work. Yet both analysis of other programming, with similarly unlikely "break-out" talk behaviours, and contemporary cultural analysis, with its hyper-sensitivity to strategies of "difference", show us that a multi-positioned discursive response is likely. Grossberg, (1988, p. 36) speaks of his conviction that the "various sites of contemporary popular culture" cannot be delineated according to single, unitary models - even where a directly-bureaucratising institution may be seeking to do so. We must instead attempt to capture a newly mobile "form of articulation", understanding contemporary cultural formations as "techniques of mobility, enabling us to move between and through the sites of stability." The investigative positioning Grossberg recommends is particularly salient for a social fraction forcibly enmeshed within selected "sites of stability," and so debarred from participation in others.  

In its focus on the relations of discourse and social space this section of my study returns to Lefebvre’s (1991a) understanding that there are discursive elaborations of social signification which are extra-linguistic. For Lefebvre, as much meaning is constituted and revealed in the use and construction of social locations as there is in (texted) language - "use" for Lefebvre preceding "construction", because it is the slow accretion of social uses which renders a given social location meaningful. In particular, the relational elements of social spaces are concretised in both architecture and human behaviours, and so become culturally powerful:

> In the immediacy of the links between groups, between members of groups, and between ‘society’ and nature, occupied space gives direct expression - ‘on the ground’, so to speak - to the relationships upon which social organisation is founded (Lefebvre, 1991a, p. 229).

My analysis has established to date a variety of ways in which the talk-relations established in radio’s talk-texts operate to model flows of power across gendered as well as economically activated and de-activated "real" locales. In particular I have focused on those ongoing contestations across the cultural terrain of gender, as given social spaces become economically

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3 For analysis of the diversity of reception uses made of broadcast media by prisoners, see Lindlof, 1986.
accessible or disregarded, in various ways. It now becomes crucial to return to Lefebvre’s integration of simple, representational views of physical space (espaces perçus) and their symbolic rendering (espaces conçus) into a “thirdspace”, where the conceptual “folds back” onto the physical, to create a socially useful, culturally meaningful, discursively formed space. The Prison Show’s participants are, in various ways, debarred from occupancy of the “activated” spaces of consumption-production which confer social identity within informational society (Morris, 1994). Talk within this programme offers the opportunity to examine the intensity of discursive play over not one but the many social spaces evoked to make meaning out of the extreme social and cultural disruption of such radical exclusion from “the public”. The effects on talk-relations - especially those, such as gender relations, still built directly over differential access to public and private spheres - are extreme.

In particular this chapter examines the ways and degrees to which social space, and its organisation of Western conventions of the “inside/private” and “outside/public” realms of social experience and cultural meaning, are reworked in the attempt to mediate personal and interpersonal circumstances under disciplinary “correction” within a State justice apparatus. As this experience is encoded in publicly accessible formulae (Hall, 1980) the convolutions and inversions which result endorse Lefebvre’s view (1991a) that the “flattening” reworkings of social experience as it interacts with technologies of sign systems, conceal still-crucial strategies of power. However incommensurable or irreconcilable lived experiences may be, their transformation into cultural signs - whether talk-texts or built physical spaces - risks dissolving all distinctions at the level of form, while maintaining them at the level of lived reality. Similarly, radio’s talk-texting of prison experiences employs long-established “radio talk” genres and strategies which transform those experiences, in ways which threaten to smooth them out into ordered and “corrected” dialogues - a processing which is overtly and continuously under contestation on The Prison Show.

For Lefebvre, working over the terrain of contemporary (late Modernist) architecture and civic design, this contradiction is very much a feature of cultural positioning around space. What appears an “opening” and “democratisation” of architectural form found in both public and private space, actually covers its own opposite. Lefebvre argues that it conceals the operations of a phallocentric cultural power:
... the visual space of transparency and readability has a content - a content that it is designed to conceal; namely the phallic realm of (supposed) virility. It is at the same time a repressive space: nothing in it escapes the surveillance of power. Everything opaque, all kinds of partitions, even walls simplified to the point of mere drapery, are destined to disappear. This disposition of things is diametrically opposed to the real requirements of the present situation. The sphere of private life ought to be enclosed, and have a finite, or finished, aspect. Public space, by contrast, ought to be an opening outwards. What we see happening is just the opposite ([1974]; 1991a, p. 147).

This sense of a Foucauldian Panopticism becoming universalised in the "discourse" of architectural practice adds potency to the linguistic-discursive work of Fairclough (1992; 1995a). His isolation of a progressive erosion of the closed privacy of inter-personal discourse and its deployment in de-formalising the public discourses of governmentality follows much the patterns Lefebvre has detected. Fairclough adds (1995b) the concept of the general "conversationalisation" of all public discourses. He reveals this as prominent throughout contemporary media stylisation, but observable in many other interface social-governmental situations. This is much more than just the rigorous description of linguistically delineated social change. For Fairclough, as for Lefebvre, this trend amounts to significant change in the entire order of public discourse. It is part of the culturally and politically driven programme of a marketised state, confronting individual social subjects in a comparatively direct relation, after the erosion of traditional apparatuses of institutionalisation. Like Lefebvre's Modernist social space, it has eroded private space, which now is "opening outwards", and becoming "transparent."

Radio is a medium cohesive with postmodern claims to cross social boundaries and erode divisions and distinctions (see for instance Johnson 1988, on radio and "intimacy", pp.70-112). Such an agenda explicitly motivates The Prison Show, which sets out to dissolve prison bars, promising reunion between the socially sequestered. But this aim actually intensifies the tensions in Grossberg's modelling of the two sides of the postmodern formula: the "disciplined" and the "mobile." Contemporary identity work requires the capacity to articulate multiple potentials, working across a flow of possibilities ("the mobile"). But each threatens to harden into interpellation within a pre-established ideological construct ("the disciplined"). Lefebvre admonishes against reading that formula superficially or transparently. As

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4 His examples include for instance medical examinations, classroom interactions and baby-care manuals.
5 Or in De Certeau's terms, "place" and "space". See also Carter et al., 1993.
with the discourses of marketisation, to accept uncritically the "free choice" offers of an open "mobility" advantages those (interpellative) power structures inhering within promotional texts. Lefebvre shows us that the transparency of technological offers of "access" to powerful representation is another form of the ubiquity of power. He notes in terms of physical locations that same occupancy of all space by established discourses of power, which is so obvious in Zemanek's and Dr Feelgood's media practice.

In examining the talk-texts which cross between the restrictive locations of a correctional state apparatus, and the access claims of a broadcast medium, it is necessary to remain alert to the attempted mobilisations occurring as resistance or attempted negotiations, as well as to the transformational powers of talk-texts themselves. It is important then to focus on the sorts of cues which Fairclough (1992) claims as significant of conflict within discourse, and especially with the relational elements of talk-text processing. This time however, using Fairclough's "critical" discourse analysis, I hope to demonstrate that the relational processing extends beyond interpersonal or even gendered contestation. While these remain significant, they are only tactics within a broader set of social and cultural re-positioning discursive work, operating to structure access to persistent ideals of public and private space.

13.1 "He's gonna be caught, he's gotta be taught": setting up a Prison Show audience

From the outset The Prison Show positions itself problematically, in relation to the processes outlined above. This programme makes no concessions to any distinction between its broadcast and its narrowcast audience. Listeners are not cued to the purposes or format of the show. There is no mention of sponsors, nor any itemising of ways for listeners to contact the programme. Addresses for music requests or contact phone numbers are provided only once in the seventeen hours of audio transcription, across the eight weeks of programming in the data corpus for this study. Instead, an easy familiarity among the four presenters, known only as "George", "Helen", "Mark" and "Sue", implies a particularly "insider" (private) status, shared between presenters and listeners. Presenters take-for-granted listener familiarity with the programme's purposes, with its production team, and even with
individuals within the primary target population. But this is not the sole element contributing to its odd ambivalence. Equally obvious, and sustained across the entire series, is a curious disjuncture between the talk and the music - the very categories which music request shows conventionally attempt to link.

While this discordance is extreme, once again no explanations are offered. Since there is habitually no direct address of the social situation in which primary (prison) listeners operate, this absence consequently works to normalise their extremity. It parallels the emotional work of the letters, messages and song lyrics. In varying and sometimes contradictory ways, these too struggle to re-establish “central” cultural values: patriarchal rule; female subordination; heterosexual relationships; the family and “home life”; the extended family and friendship groups as social and emotional support systems. Only very careful listening - the sort which is no longer believed to exist within radio audiences (Potts 1989, Chapter 3) can solve the riddles of this programming for individuals or social groups who do not already have the key to its positioning. In many ways the extremity of the form is likely by then to have eliminated all but the target audience in any case: to have restricted this broadcast radio programming back into the narrowcast band of its primary focus.

Exactly how such a focus is achieved is as remarkable as why it is attempted. Each in its way has much to say about the diversity of social and cultural spaces contemporary radio helps to fashion. Radio can indeed cross the especially intense degree of social sequestration (Thompson 1995, Chapter 3) and inversions of social power caused by imprisonment. But in doing so it reveals a complex set of competing social discourses, each re-asserting “normative” behaviours and values across the rifts and absences which imprisonment opens in conventional social relations. There is heavy contestation of gendered power relations, within both family and the

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4 After listening to about half of the data corpus of tapes, I was able to construct not only a “place” map of where prisoners were in the system, but of who their “outside” partners and family members were.

5 See Barnard (1989) for an extended discussion of music presentation programming and its various talk-genres.

8 Since the Department of Correctional Services provides funding for The Prison Show, it is part of the conditions of that funding that no direct on-air critique be made of the system.

5 A task in which it is greatly aided by the music selections. The Prison Show is notorious among younger radio enthusiasts in South Australia, for having the shortest play list ever encountered on radio: no more than 30 tracks, mostly old heavy-metal rock classics or love ballads, constantly requested and so constantly replayed.
personal-sexual relations of “couples”. Listener letters, music selections and presenters’ commentary all contribute to this. Radio’s “virtual” presence - its simultaneous occupancy of multiple spaces, and its capacity to parallel divergent moments of time - is being used to access and foreground ideal (symbolic) rather than “real” (material) social spaces.  

Conventions of “seamless” broadcasting - the undetectable shifts across genres created in conventional views of radio “flow” (Potts 1989) - work to conceal disputed power relations and cultural positions inside *Prison Show* radio texts and practices. Of prime concern is not merely the programme content, but its stylisation: its formatting, in terms of its talk/music mix, and the play of talk in and out of, and often across both. This study contends, with Fairclough (1992, pp. 8-9) that the discordant and contesting elements of such programming as *The prison show* interact to “re-mix” its cultural values, as the culturally marginalised are brought to confront the central/hegemonic. The remit of its host broadcaster, Radio 3d, claims that the station’s programming seeks to constitute an “alternative dimension.” On this programme however, as its many discordant elements openly clash, some emerge more powerfully than others, while other elements of social order remain unchanged.

The programme’s theme-tune opens on a wail of rock music sound: a siren scream, a guitar riff reply, and the beat and chant-chorus of the heavy-metal rock classic *Blockbusters*:

You better beware -
You better take care -
You better watch out if you got long black hair ...

They come from behind
You go outa ya mind
You better not go -
You never know what you’ll find!

Does anyone know the way?

---

19 Note that Potts (1995, p. 20) extends Schaefer’s (1980) term “scizophonic”, which asserts audio-taping’s capacity to split sound from its point of origin; to describe what Potts calls the “schizochronic”, or the power to separate sound from its originary time. Potts however fails to comment on how radio enables taped sound to subsequently re-access its originary ground, and to re-suture itself into established and therefore “natural” zones of time. By extension, the “scizophonic” can also re-suture space - a definite part of what the excessively restructured and recurrent music play of *The Prison Show* does.
Did we hear someone say:

“We just haven’t got a clue WHAT to do!”

Does anyone know the way?
There’s GOT to be a way!
To BLOCKBUSTER!!!

Clues to the programme’s narrowcast positioning are openly present. Its chosen theme represents a violent and chaotic prison-break machismo of social disruption. Heavy metal music is an ideal choice. Denski and Scholle (1992, p. 44) point out that it is “... often cited as the most straightforwardly coded example of masculine, macho posing in rock ‘n’ roll”. Certainly in this instance its deliberate choice as programme “anthem” (Cagle 1995, p. 14) relates to the ways in which menace is sustained through the strident musical pitch and production-sound. The insistent lyric narrative of institutional control and individual resistance is an equally clear element:

The cops are out -
They’re running about -
Don’t know if he’s gonna be able to BLOCKBUSTER out!

He’s gonna be caught,
He’s gotta be taught,
Because he’s more evil
Than anyone here ever thought ...

The lyric encapsulates structural relations between social violence and law-and-order, inviting application of Hall’s thesis on broader public representation of crime (1978). It evokes exactly the sorts of resistant behaviours rock music most frequently takes up and endorses (Grossberg 1992; McClary in Ross & Rose 1994). The tension of the position can be seen in the way the track’s musical representations simultaneously glamorise and raise to heroic status responsive violences in the prison system. It connects them into a semiotic chaining of various drives for “freedom” in self determination: youth against convention, the main focus of rock’s generational anthems (Cagle 1994); but also masculinity as unfettered social mobility, against “feminised” social cohesiveness as acquiescence; black cultural marginalisation against white coercive institutionalisation. Rock music has a proven capacity to “travel” in such ways - to cross from its originary contexts to connect with the other, parallel, positions (see especially
Attali 1985). This has assured its multi-generational and international success. It has been available, as Hebdige (1979) and Cagle (1994) suggest, as a particularly flexible medium for social identification with struggle. It presents multiple and mobile points of access, for the constitution of subjectivities at once acquiescent (generationally or subculturally cohesive) and resistant (critically positioned in relation to dominant cultural forms.)

Here then is the clue to The Prison Show’s music selections, but also, I argue, its talk exchanges. Both play across particular experiences of social control and disruption. This programme is acutely aware of its status as virtual interface between disparate, even contradictory social institutions and the subjectivities they construct. Situating itself as a benign contact mechanism, it nevertheless conveys the sorts of heavily resistant and socially aggressive positions conveyed in its theme. But at the same time it also presents idealised and lyrical evocations of familial security and intensely focused personal relations, carried in listeners’ letters and messages. It acts then as both a crossing point and a plane of contention between subcultural positions. This is a place where identity boundary markers clash and dispute territory. The particularity of the contestations which result is demarked in the intensity of the generic and talk-relational clashes between discordant discursive positionings. Each is seeking to operate, in Grossberg’s term (1988, p. 37), as an “exclusionary machine”, which

... distributes both practices and social subjects by reconstituting the space of social differences according to its own structures and rhythms of stability and mobility.

The show’s theme asserts through the driving rhythms of its rock music foundations the values of a powerful, violent masculinity celebrated for its capacity to “blockbuster out”. In fact it deploys some of the very qualities motivating its social exclusion and sequestration, in order to re-achieve status and mobility. At the same time, these qualities, represented as “more evil ... than anyone here ever thought ...” - highlight the contrast with the still centres of family security. Claims for the social transcendence of love compete through the song lyrics and messages in listeners’ requests. They too invite, albeit differently, the deployment of the mechanisms of “correction” (“he’s gotta be caught/taught.”)

The mix which results is complex. Its “stability and mobility” claims compete and overlap in often perverse ways. As with Foucault’s sense in his later
work of the ultimate inversion and perversion of institutional social purpose, this “recombinant” element of *The Prison Show* signals the contemporary sense of a mixed and contestational inheritance of sustained social disciplinarities. Edward Said (1988), within whose postcolonial frame are arrayed the elements of the disciplinarity constraining the social definition of at least Aboriginal contributors to the show, details the developmental line in Foucault’s thinking which produced this insight:

In the beginning he seems to understand European social life as a struggle between, on the one hand, the marginal, the transgressive, the different, and on the other, the acceptable, the normal, the generally social, or same. Out of this struggle are born ... various attitudes that later develop into institutions of discipline and confinement ... Hence, we get the birth of the clinic, prison, or asylum ... These in turn produce resistance to and consequently changes in the very same institutions until ... prisons and hospitals are seen as factories for delinquency and illness respectively. Thereafter Foucault argues that power insinuates itself on both sides of the sequence, within institutions ... and eruptively and as a form of attractive but usually coopted insurrectionary pressure ... (1988, pp. 3-4).

Just such an “insurrectionary pressure” operates within the texts and practices of *The Prison Show*. Acknowledgement of the facts of social exclusion and its symbolic level, incarceration, is undercut by the deployment of compensatory, re-establishing power moves, built over differently institutionalised status differentials. Put simply, an apparently straightforward equation of the prison, violence, and “anti-social” attitudes opposed by the family, love, and immediate transition into “normal” social relations, is undercut again and again within the very terms of its own representation, inside *The Prison Show*.

13.2 “*The crew / that cares for you*”: normative discourses of social stability

Still inside the opening moments of the programme, the powerful, aggressive and anti-social masculinity established in the performance of the theme music is undercut, by the spoken programme intro. - showing little variation over the weeks:

*The Prison Show, March 31 1996: presenter “George”*

1 George: Good evening and welcome to *The prison request show*
2 with Sue, Helen and George ... and for the next two hours,
3 we’re playing your messages and requests to your families,
4 friends and your loved ones. So sit back and relax, and
This first disjuncture, between the up-front aggression of the series theme, and the quiet and unassuming introductory formula, opens the uncertainties of the show. It no longer appears a “blockbuster” of sound, confusion and resistance, but a calming, family-based service programme, into whose emotional comfort-zone listeners are invited to “relax”. From the loud and urgent claims for social disruption, for “mobile” social space and disputed subjectivity, we have been translated to a world of apparent certainties and stabilities, offered by “the crew that cares for you!”

Enhancing the equation of the programme presenters as core institutional vectors of security and social cohesion, is the lead presenter’s vocal presentation. The authority of his deep-voiced and patriarchal male maturity is underscored by his interactions with the other members of the team. Together they enter the next weekly programme ritual: a round of identity-establishing “hi there!” calls, disturbingly reminiscent of 1960s The Waltons family intro./outro. exchanges; evocative of weekly family news and gossip around the (middle class) dinner table. So strongly does this motif establish itself, that it eclipses the initial belligerence and tonal crisis of the opening theme music. As regular presenters - George, Helen, Mark and Sue - trade their news and experiences for the week, the familial and the familiar together are used to erase the disjunctive note initially established.

And yet there are significant, but ultimately dominant, exceptions. Ruptures arise in the discursive fabric of family and sentiment and “home”, working as Faircloughian discursive “cruces and crises”: “moments in the discourse where there is evidence that things are going wrong” (1992, p. 230). Such dissonances do not arise only from the spatial and emotional isolation of the imprisoned programme correspondents. The discord lies not in the loss of familial stability; the removal of - most often, the male - from the bosom of the family, but in the revelation through the discursive practices of both programme presenters and listener/correspondents, of incoherence and contradiction at the very heart of that construction.

Most notably, there are strong and persistent contestational exchanges among the programme presenters, especially between George and Helen, based on gender confrontation. Usually bantering but sometimes seriously close to real conflict, these provide part of the bridge to a paradoxically disjunctive
coherence for the programme. An oscillation is set up: a series of systematic swerves between variously-coded tropes of (ultra-masculine) violence and (heavily feminised) security. In the heart of the cosy family imagery is the recognition that it is precisely this “ideal presence” which is the key absence at the core of the programme. Constantly underscored by the saturating sentimentality of listeners’ messages and dedications, it constructs an impossible social realm of security and stability:

The Prison Show, March 14 1996: presenter “Mark”

1 Mark: “To my baby Robin: one day those prison gates shall open and yes, your family will be waiting, with tears in their eyes to take you home and be safe - is this year my biggest wish. I love you with all my heart, my heart is as big as the ocean So is my love for you. Be mine always no matter what OK? Love ya big time my Robin. Love you for always now and forever with lots of love,” Michelle D.

As the title should have reminded us, this is a family-based friendship connection service for prisoners, denied access to their family and friends; to “normal” social relations; to mobility across social space; to self directedness. What the programme’s attempted remediation (“correction”) actually displays however, is the degree to which such limitations are endemic outside as well as inside the prisons. This is a key distinction over which many of the correspondents play:

The Prison Show, March 27 1996: presenter “George”

1 George: And to Felix the Cat: “On ya: take a walk on the wild side and stay out of the inside! Party to the max ‘cos you can. I’ll join you on the flip side soon. Missing you babe, love from Your Pain”. And the song requested is, Comfortably numb, by Pink Floyd.

Is there anybody out there ...
Is anybody out there ...
Is there anybody - OUT there?
Is there anybody out there?

HELLO!

- Is there anybody IN there?

The sophistication of the correspondents’ rock-literacy shows here in their capacity to appropriate Pink Floyd’s already complex lyric to their own specifics. But ultimately this ability to switch from technicised to cultural alienation: the social to the psychological; moves the restrictive and regulatory social structures of “imprisonment” across to a much broader process of “correctional service.” Presenters as well as primary listeners are
implicated. As with The Stan Zemanek Show and Red Light Radio not one but a number of interlinked and contesting social spaces are being opened here, as “inside” and “outside”, “in there” and “out there” are each in their turn revealed as problematic. The social controls which operate within each space are shown once again to be fragmentary, contested, and constantly under reassertion.

From this point it becomes possible to read back the ironies of The Prison Show’s insistent lamination of the familial over the deprivations of imprisonment. The show seals and heals over a wound in the body social. Part of that process is the construction within the production/presentation team of a seemingly ersatz family, themselves with contacts across the prison-non-prison communities. This works not only to maintain the sentimental core of ideal family represented in both letters and song requests, but perversely and simultaneously to shred it. A series of less-than-ideal and shifting relations results.

13.3 “What! Both of us inside?” - discursive heterogeneity and spatial restriction

The Prison Show is, more than most radio programmes, aware of its capacity to cross physical boundaries, since it deliberately sets out to create new and compensatory forms of “contact”. From a Lefebvrian perspective, physical boundaries merely designate their more powerful but intangible sociocultural foundations (Zerubavel 1991). We begin to see that when a technology such as radio, sign in itself of boundary slippage, deliberately sets out to service those socially barricaded; constrained by Grossberg’s “exclusionary machine”; the degree of shift which ensues may be unpredictable, and even multiple in its resonances. It may in itself evoke countering impulses. In the primary case for this study, an up-front bantering war between presenters George and Helen lies over the largely unspoken violences of the prison system. These can be read in occasional “break-outs” in letters to or from prison, or within the music and its lyrics. They are especially present as a harsh and consequential reality beneath the “joke” codes of masculine cool:

*The Prison Show, May 5 1996: presenter “Mark”*

1 Mark: Well I’ve got an apology, from the ... “pillocks from Hell, to the ...
The listener who pauses to consider what the “pillocks from Hell” may have done to require an apology to the “guys in the Infirmary”, is immediately directed to Dylan’s driving narrative exposition of (racist) injustice and identity confusion in the justice system. How far might the requesters’ association with the song rest on a political, or a personal, parallel?

When a cop pulled them over to the side of the road,
Just like the time before an’ the time before that ...
In a town called Patterson that’s just the way things go
If you’re black, you might as well not show,
Up, on the street
Less ya wanna draw the heat

This is the story of the Hurricane
The man the authorities came to blame
For something that he never done
Put in a prison cell but one,
Time, he coulda been
The champion of the world ...

Dylan’s account of the case of black boxer Reuben, “The Hurricane”, most consistently positions the story as emblematic of a racist justice system - and so motivates its repeated appearance in this show. It also explicitly represents its innocent victim as opposing violent response. The Prison Show on the other hand provides a vehicle for expression of personal deployments of physical menace as technique for reassertion of social power. Prisoners and ex-prisoners (who are barred by prison regulation from visits) ¹¹ use the show to “straighten out” particular individuals:

The Prison Show, April 21 1996: presenter “Helen”

1 Helen: ... This is to a person (hahah) this is to a person at the
2 NPC: “What’s this I hear about you spreading shit: that
3 I’m using ya name, an’ you’re in there for stuff I’ve done.
4 Let’s get one thing straight: for whatever I’ve done, I’ve
5 done the time. I don’t think we can be mixed up, you’re
6 smaller than my left leg, so cut the crap, I’m not liking it,”

¹¹ One of the motivating factors in Correctional Services funding for this show, since - as becomes clear in many listener letters - it is not uncommon for different family members to be simultaneously in different jails, or for all of a prisoner’s family members to be ruled out as visitors because of prior convictions.
8 an' that's from Lochie. So that person should know who
8 they are, so in other words cut it out.

Nor are such appeals always predicated upon direct menace. Elsewhere the
requisite sense of urgency and call for action is configured as loving care
within the family frame:

_The Prison Show, April 14 1996: presenter “Helen”_

1 Helen: .... to Myrtle at Mobilong: “I tried to talk to you about
2 Dylan, hope you’re doin’ alright. I’ve been tryin’ to catch
3 up with you but as usual I can’t find you! Please ring the
4 station before 8 tonight, or ring Shirley for my phone
5 number. This is most urgent and your son’s welfare is at -
6 concern”. And that’s from Julie ...

When the family structure is itself eroded by the violence of institutional
intrusion, neither violent-resistant nor benevolent-consensual action appear
possible. Contact messages are realised as (intransitive) examples of non-
directed action (Halliday 1985; chapter 5), or randomised or unattributable
social intervention, deflecting, as in _The Stan Zemanek Show_, any possibility of
direct culpability or response:

_The Prison Show, April 14 1996: presenter “Mark”_

1 Mark: To Stewart in Port Augusta: “What! Both of us inside?
2 What a mess!” From ya loving mum, at the NPC.

Weaving both resistance and acquiescence in and out of its narratives, the
show attempts to maintain an apparently apolitical surface. It disallows any
direct presenter comment on prison conditions, policies or even incidents.
This restriction perversely plays up the degree to which violence, anger and a
range of resistances are strongly present in all of the show’s texts.

One example serves to indicate the suppression of what listeners know to be
occurring in the local prison system, and might expect to hear represented in
this show. During the collection of the data corpus from which this study is
drawn, the largest prison in the state system, the high-security, metropolitan,
Yatala Labour Prison (YLP) for men, entered a period of intensive instability
which ended with a week-long riot and occupation in the maximum security
wing. The two editions of _The Prison Show_ broadcast on either side of this
event made minimal allusion, and no direct reference, to any of these matters -
despite the effect they were having on individuals in the listener population,
and on members of the production team. Presenter Helen in particular acted
during that week as a media advocate for prisoners. Beyond the irresistible
teasing over her television appearances, only a carefully restrained comment in the closure of the programme - and a calculated music selection - spoke to the existence of the dangerously unstable conditions:

_The Prison Show, May 12 1996: presenters “Helen” and “George”_

1 Helen: Right this next song, we've picked it out: it's called “Stand up”
2 George: Get up, stand up
3 Helen: An' it's for - Get up, stand up, alright, an' we're dedicating it mainly to the guys in Yatala: we wish you all the luck -
4 we're here for you when you need us, an' if there's anything we can do just let us know. So you guys in Yatala, and everybody in the system: take care, be good. Here's Bob Marley with Get up, stand up.

Get up, stand up!
Stand up for your right!
Get up, stand up!
- Don't give up the fight!

Focus is displaced from direct comment on prison conditions onto the re-intensification of emotional bonds between “inside” and “outside”. This moment of suppression actually works to cue listeners, in or out of the system, to how the programme’s conventions of displacement work. Rather than direct appeal to an audience sense of the inhumanities of segregation, this programme moves to a strategy of compensatory contact. It re-codes its emotional transactions into a recessive series of allusions which at any moment may, or may not, be carrying a particular load of meaning(s) - may, or may not, be direct, indirect, or re directive ... This trans-textual slide: the slip and seamless juxtapositioning between genres, most often made without re-voicing, or what Fairclough (1992, p. 104) calls “reaccentuation”, most characterises The Prison Show. Paradoxically, it demonstrates the social _discontinuities_ operating in the core of a show ostensibly there to remediate segregation. If, as Fairclough says, “... a heterogeneous text may have an uneven and ‘bumpy’ textual surface, or a relatively smooth one” (1992, p. 104) this text is remarkable for the way it appears to regard the former as the latter. It rides roughshod over its marked heterogeneity.

This analysis works then into three distinctive features of the show, to show how it “dis/places” its meanings, transmitting ideas into otherwise sequestered social and cultural spaces. In the first instance, I will deal with the interplay of violence and sexuality, carried most obviously in the
sexually-charged gender-banter between presenters Helen and George, but extending into comments from Sue and Mark, and beyond them, to the music play and letter messages in the show. Secondly, I will examine the direct and intense sentimental address in listeners’ letters. This crosses the usual gender segregation of style and genre of speech in Australian conversation, and thereby I will argue, acknowledges a key inversion in social spatiality and power for this particular group. At the same time, I will review the music track selection, examining the degree to which it is repeatedly used to re-politicise the show’s social situation, carrying and modelling resistances where they cannot otherwise occur.

Finally, across each of these features, I will address the particular cast given to this programming by its predominantly Nunga (South Australian Aboriginal) presenters and listenership. While this feature is central to its discursive modes it too deflects away from clear statements into oblique references and coded exchanges. Such “in-group” behaviours may be common within suppressed cultural and social populations, but are rarely deployed within so public a location.

13.4 “Paybacks are a BITCH an’ am I gonna be a bitch tonight!” - women finding radio voice

The relatively unproblematic provision of a discursive “space” for virtual contact between the socially sequestered conceals a number of other degrees and modes of separation, which move forward during The Prison Show to claim the listener’s attention. Initially at least the most evident is the inversion in gendered power relations. Women presenters, taking voice in studio, are speaking to, and for, imprisoned men. Here, the traditions of “silencing” around gender and radio (Karpf 1987; Gill 1993; Bertrand 1993) are reversed. Not only are the women’s voices prevalent, but their powerfully assertive in-studio and listener-directed chat shows how far their social power may actually be enhanced by the absence of their male family members.

Immediately however there are moves to re-assert powerful masculinities to constrain the women presenters’ expression. Their repertoire of social expression is constantly under pressure to focus around the (hetero) sexualised. What results is a sexualisation of both the gendered combat, and the female voicing. This has interesting implications for the programme, recoding it as a struggle over re-assertion of a powerful masculinity.
Constrained by male "absence", this is restored by continued and prominent positioning of the male presenters as "in control" of their female counterparts.

In the first instance this struggle takes issue with the degree of social mobility claimed within the agentic discourses of the female presenters. Particularly with the stronger of the two female presenters, Helen, we gain a sense of the "outwardness" which inevitably lies behind this otherwise consistently "in-studio" production. It is rare in contemporary radio for a complete programme to go to air without any use of "multi-spacing" talkback, news bulletins, ad breaks or on-location interview cuts. These techniques shift the broadcast voice from the internal spaces of a central studio, out to the reception spaces of listenership. They establish a broadly-based social agency, shared between listeners and presenters in their own everyday, unmediated roles. It is rarer still in current radio practice for the representation of such wider social participation to be performed principally via read texts (in this case, listeners' letters.) Here this reversion to an intense interiority - in the sense of a predominantly in-studio production - is most clearly and most often breached by Helen. It is in this breach that her illumination of the powers operating to constrain wider social mobility can be observed.

At the most basic level she is, more than any other of the presenters, often caught off-mike - both inside and outside the studio. Despite this she is still audible: still fighting to be voiced. Even when her male co-presenters go to elaborate lengths to show how, only in Helen's absence, can they dare to build "teasing" insult sequences about her (James & Clarke, 1993), she is still able to sign the power of her presence in her own voice. In the extract that follows, note in particular the underlined sections. Each departs from the male presenters' alternating focus on programming moves ("what are we playing next ...") and joke telling ("did you know that ...") to check that Helen's physical absence from the studio is clear to the listeners:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>The Prison Show, April 7 1996: presenters “George” and “Mark”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>George: Yeah back on air again (CD track engages) that voice you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>can hear in the background's only Helen ... Big mouth ... an'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>we're playing ... what are we playing next? Shook me all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>night long ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Mark: Shook me all night long - George I don't know it's a -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>apparently, p'aps it's appropriately, Helen's not here at</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>the moment, 'cos bit of a surprise: I don't know if you know</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>or not but, she's been doing a correspondence course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>George: Who with?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mark: No no no, no, you know, she gets this correspondence right, it's it's - it's school - she's gone back to school, she's, she's learned how to READ FEET - y'know, some people learn how to read palms, (clunk sound off) hahaha

George: Sounds like she's learned how to fall over outside by the sound of that!

Mark: Some people learn how to read palms, an' other people learn how to read feet ... well before the show tonight I thought well you know: let's see how she's gone - 12 weeks of intense course - so I gave her my foot

Sue: Don't believe a word of this ...

Mark: I gave her my foot to read, you know - 20 minutes she sat there studying it, guess what she comes up with ...

"Reeboks."

(....)

George: Reeboks ... ?

Mark: Yeah! I figured that she was gonna try an' tell me ... read my feet ... never mind: read another - thing - here ...

George: I think we better eh! (uhhh) actually when - I remember when I first met Helen, she used to read palms.

Mark: Did she?

George: Yeah - but she got into this big palm tree an' fell out one day hahaha an' she couldn' do it anymore! Hahaha! It's easy to tell she's not in the studio isn't it! So whose got a message for this?

Helen: (a long way off, shouting) I can bloody hear ya!

The interaction of “absence” and “presence” here is complex. George and Mark take the opportunity afforded by Helen’s temporary move out of the studio, and so off-air, to build a sustained insult-sequence around an exchange of “punch-line” joke narratives (Goodwin, 1993; Norrick, 1993). These are exactly the sorts of stories which Helen’s presence normally interrupts. Her commentaries and glosses and responses to their positionings of her, generally work to destroy the sequencing of their jokes (Jefferson, 1978). She disrupts their word-play to counter every creative ambiguity with her own menaces or cautions. The following extract indicates the degree to which this has become formalised as a relation of conflict. This transcript is arranged into classic CA “adjacency pairs” (Sacks, Schegloff, Jefferson 1974) to reveal the conventional “question/answer” dynamic of the conversational “turns”, and the interplay of gendered power struggle which cuts across them as they modulate into “challenge/rejection”.

The Prison Show, April 21 1996: presenters “George” and “Helen”

George: Why you got a smile on your dial Helen?
Helen: I was thinking a’ Jim ...

George: Brings memories! hahahahaha!
Helen: No I was just thinkin’ of my baby that’s why I’ve got a smile on my face ...
George: Oh right now I s'pose I'd laugh too if I wasn't (indec)
Helen: I WASN'T laughing
4
George: Hohohohoho oh, that was just a smile!
Helen: It was - I'm not gonna say what I was -
5
George: A smile of satisfaction -
Helen: Exac - I'm not walkin' into that!
6
George: What do you mean?
Helen: Yes ... (indec)
7
George: Well why do you give him a message with No satisfaction?
Helen: I did not give him that message at all
8
George: Oh din't ya?
Helen: No I didn't ... he always satisfies me thank you very much!
9
George: She apologises for that Jim it's OK
Helen: I did not!
(hahahahahaha)
Sue: Oh give the girl a go!
10
George: Give 'er a GO!
Helen: Grrr!

Here the dyadic exchanges show not the simple question-response patterns which the opening gambit might suggest, but a politics of unequal distribution. They reflect less the classic conversation-analysis regulation of organising “turns” than a power-dynamic in which George clearly manoeuvres to dominate Helen. With every set, he claims rights not only to initiate, but to interpret, and even re-interpret her responses, including attribution of motive (sets 2 and 5); doubt (sets 3, 4 and 8) and innuendo (sets 5, 7 and 10). Helen is placed not only in the response position, but is revealed, in Fairclough’s terms (1992, p.153) as the “N-P” or “non-powerful” participant, only to negate propositions - which are presented as accusations (sets 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9). She even has to interrupt herself (Bilmes, 1997), breaking into her own response to control anticipated attack (sets 4, 5, 6 and 8). Ultimately she is left at the level of the para-linguistic (set 10).

From such a position of powerlessness, she can manoeuvre only as caller “Sandra” did in the Stan Zemanek Show extracts analysed elsewhere in this discussion - by maintaining an alert, monitoring consciousness of the whole procedure. She does exactly that in her “self disciplining” breaks in sets 4 and 5; a strategy habitual with her. Like Sandra, she is an especially self-monitoring and reflective speaker (Snyder, 1974), always assessing the likely contexts of reception. She frequently admonishes the “P” speakers for their inattention to the possible circumstances of broader reception of their
performance. Outside the immediate conversational politic of the studio banter, (prisoner) audiences may well take their “jokes” seriously:

*The Prison Show, May 19 1996: presenters “Mark”, “George” and “Helen”*

1. Mark: Well first I’d like to apologise to the poor woman that we’ve just had on
2. George: Lovely Jeanette!
3. Mark: Ohh, poor Jeanette we put her through the mill I really did,
4. George: Was Helen’s fault, Helen just wouldn’t control ‘erself
5. Mark: Yeah: she’d keep ‘er ‘ands to ‘erself it’d be alright ...
6. George: Ooooooo0000 ...... be so lucky!
7. Mark: Need to ‘ave eyes at the back of ya head that’s all
8. Helen: *(entering studio)* Now hang on you cannot say things like that
9. Mark: because ... my darling might think I’m doing things that are naughty. An’ I’m not.

“Calling the game” in this way (lines 9-11) is not however the limit of Helen’s repertoire. Her very capacity to sustain the banter attacks she experiences; to understand their ambivalences and intent sufficiently quickly to avoid or resist them, maintains her as both prime target, and occasional victor - especially in terms of her awareness of the broader audience. Helen has exactly the quickness in reading potential for linguistic ambiguity which George and Mark display. She adds to it however a sense of the social positioning of these texts as broadcast material: texts which operate within multiple contexts. She has a sense of radio’s spatial shift which inverts expected gendered considerations. Helen engages with a wider social context, while the prime concern of her male colleagues is with contestation and power display in the immediate (“inside”) setting. George and Mark work from every conceivable angle to “get Helen”, running even across listener messages to perpetuate a good running gag. Helen herself, like caller “Sandra” to *The Stan Zemanek Show*, is more concerned to police talk behaviours, with calls to acknowledge the possible uptake of their banter by listeners. In one exchange, sustained across several music tracks, George teases Helen over her massaging of the injured leg which subsequently hospitalises him. Typically, he sexualises the massage:

*The Prison Show, May 12 1996: presenters “George” and “Helen”*

1. George: Listen if you’ve never massaged my back, how come you
2. always insist I get the edible oil? The one you can lick off
3. and tastes nice?
4. Helen: *(shouting)* LET’S GET ONE THING RIGHT AND
5. STRAIGHT RIGHT NOW BEFORE JIM GETS UPSET: I DO
6. NOT DO ANYTHING TO YOU OR -
7. George: Hahahahahahaha - Jim - he wouldn’t get upset: he knows
I just talk CRAP!

At least you admit it: now see everybody in all the jails: he has just admitted that he speaks: “CRAP”...

Well everybody who knows me knows that ...

(…) They don’t … They sometimes take you very seriously

No well they shouldn’t because I’m a idiot.

Well WE know that but they obviously don’t … [serious tone] no they don’t: they sometimes do take you seriously …

Well the problem was I was born an idiot: you’re gonna get it later in life …

(…….)

(splutters) - I’m gonna leave that alone ...

You’re still studyin’ … Hey listen we’re gonna play a song

here it’s called Jet airliner so whose got a message for it?

At line 7 Helen again illustrates clearly her sensitivity to the broadcast audience - specifically the primary, prison audience. She uses direct address: “… now see everybody in all the jails …” to call witness to the admission she has forced out of George (lines 5-6) that he is playing games of mis-representation. Her move to a tone of harsh and powerfully monosyllabic anger forces George to back down and admit his own folly (which he performs with a - mock? - grammatical slip: “I’m a idiot …”) Her dual response (line 13) to his cave-in combines insult-riposte and a tonally-signalled shift to discussing the serious potential for misunderstanding and grave consequences outside the immediate conversational relationship. It demonstrates her consciousness of the patriarchal order both inside and outside the studio. George is subsequently able to “rescue” and re-assert his banter advantage and re-launch its techniques (lines 15 and 19). He moves (line 20) to suggest that it has been Helen who has been holding up the prime business of reading out requests and messages. But it is Helen who has scored the more powerful point here. She has inverted the audience prioritisation George and Mark cede to the in-studio conversation, to acknowledge the more important “absent” listenership. This is a characteristic gesture. At the same time, she reads accurately in the conversation a continuity of male power over her own capacity to speak out her position. Once more it is characteristic of her that she self-regulates to avoid even more trouble: “I’m gonna leave that alone!” (line 18).

Here Helen senses one powerful masculinity - the teasing one of George and Mark over her own powerful on-air presence - intersecting another: the social power over her sexuality conceded to her prisoner-fiancé Jim, even in his absence. The insight motivates her insistence on caution. In other words, her appeal for a focus on the context of reception is made from well inside a
conventional position on patriarchal power. No surprise then that her argument is finally acknowledged by George, who attempts to conciliate both all-too-present Helen and the absent Jim, with an explanation of the division of their “shared” responsibilities for her:

*The Prison Show, May 12 1996: presenters “Helen” and “George”*

31 Helen: Yep - an’ Jim is listenin’ to every word you’re sayin’ - he’ll get you for pickin’ on me ...
32 George: I tell ya what Jim: (...) by the time ya can get me, I’ll probably be, down there, flyin’ with somebody, anyway, a long long time to go!
36 Helen: Ya can’t - can I read this?
37 George: - He knows that I look after you Helen ...
38 Helen: Yes I KNOW an’ he -
39 George: He looks after you on the inside an’ I look after ya on th’ outside it’s just that I git more time with ya ... (...) (very low) I tell ya what it’s lovely -
42 Helen: Ooo - hahaha ...
43 George: *(shouting)* READ THE MESSAGE AN’ GET - GOIN’!

The resolution is an expression of male solidarity across institutional boundaries, centred in masculine desire to control “their” women. It fails to engage however the continuity of Helen’s disruptive presence across the whole range of programming elements. Her capacity to dispute finds existence well outside the contexts of a normative relationship with Jim and stand-in George. It extends into every activity of the programme, as well as out into details of the social lives of programmers and prisoners equally. Ultimately, returning to the show’s music theme, it is Helen who has “*gotta be caught/gotta be taught*”. Her behaviour becomes coded as both delinquent and recidivist. It is thus conveniently available for re-modelling by the properly recalcitrant “tough” masculinities of the male presenters. They consistently contrive to display the violence of their power, even in the heart of the feminised domestic nirvana of music request and listener message sentiment.

13.5 *“Ways we anchor ourselves into imaginary depths”: feminised discourses of domestic security*

When a disciplining apparatus - in this case the social institutions of the prison system - so de-limits the cultural sites to be occupied as to remove assertive masculinities from the processes of normalising familiality, what results within the discursive formations of the contact machine of *The Prison Show* is a range of re-establishing tactics. In this case, we see the dual
deployment of a saturating sentimentality across the feminised sites of “love” and “home”.

In Grossberg’s earliest formulations of what he later comes to call “nomadic subjectivity”, (1988; 1992), he speaks of a process he calls “disciplined mobilisation” (1988, p. 36). Those relatively stable sites at which we are hailed to stop and install our “selves” into “practices,” are crossed by more flexible and optional “directions and velocities” by which we traverse and select; take up and discard, possible cultural roles.

A ‘disciplined mobilisation’ describes the ways we travel across the surfaces of culture and the ways we anchor ourselves into their imaginary depths. It is an historical organisation, both spatial and temporal, which enables and constrains the ways space and place, mobility and stability, are practised or lived. Consequently, it is more than a map (which defines a rigid system of places) and more than an itinerary (which defines an enacted mobility.) It is precisely the conditions which make both the map and the itinerary possible. It defines the very possibilities of where and how we move and stop, of where and how we place and displace ourselves, of where and how we are installed into cultural texts and extended beyond them ...

A disciplined mobilisation is an apparatus organising a topography of cultural practices - defining the sites which we can occupy, the investments we can make in them, and the planes along which we can connect and transform them so as to construct a consistent, liveable space for ourselves (Grossberg 1988, pp. 36-37).

The Prison Show presents a cultural surface from which the tropes for “mobility” have been removed. It compensates the physical sequestration and the cultural partitioning of the disciplinary processes of “correctional services” with the saturating sentimentality of the feminised spaces of domesticity, sexuality and affect: “imaginary depths” into which to “anchor our/selves”, in Grossberg’s terms. But simultaneously it must enact masculine control over those feminised sites, to maintain the social powers of a phallocentric culture. On The Prison Show, this process is played out by proxy in the discourses of the presenters. Thus it is that George as dominant male centres his on-air persona around persistent baiting of dominant female Helen, while Mark’s contributions are those of the apprentice: celebratory homage to and tentative support for George’s initiatives. George is unable, even in his absence, to envisage a show which does not centre on this dimension of his own social presence.

*The Prison Show, May 5 1996: presenters “Sue”, “Helen” and “Mark”*

1 Sue: OK well we’re back again, so now George has rung us up, abusing us
2 or abusing you, I think it was, particularly Helen - or, just all of us
An occupiable space of power is reserved even for an absent masculinity. Despite these momentary victories however, the game never ceases. The “big voiced” man who can best be “picked on” when “e can’t fight back” still seeks what is overtly a kind of familial control, over the displaced family of co-presenters. He both models and mimics the work of requesters, who seek restoration of just such control, via the construction of a virtual family in the sentimental core of song lyric, greeting card genre “public” verse and “dedication”:

The Prison Show, May 5 1996: presenters “Sue”, “Helen” and “Mark”

The prisoner requesters/requestees are here constructed as permanently suspended in desire of an “inside” which is forever “outside”. This impossible dream seeks blissful, hermetic possession by love and secure family ties. While the in-studio banter appears to model the exact opposite of the sentimentalised relations of listeners’ letters, there is a degree of
resolution emerging. The presenters’ relentless drive over and across otherwise disparate forms, is allied to George and Mark’s claims on the power to represent experiences up to and including the already texted. They quote from earlier exchanges, playing over elements within a current exchange for ambiguity and - especially - innuendo. Their discourse-processing, used to contest power within the presenters’ talk-relations, echoes that of correspondents to the programme, who also seek to rework social relations through their texts. The “messages” sent between listeners, textual or in music play, allude in more or less coded ways to shared memories and hopes. They evoke idealised past or future relationships. They attempt to redirect family or institutional disputes into more favourable lines. Cumulatively this becomes the standard form for the programme. The allusive, the anonymous, the idealised, the transformed and transformative come to dominate - for these are texts of a complex and contradictory desire, arising from a complex and contradictory lifeworld.

The technique shows most clearly when listener texts work into the sorts of - especially sexualised - ambivalence George and Mark deploy. Some listeners’ letters display a conscious use of wittily twisted language, often lying over reference to previous, and private, understandings:

*The Prison Show, March 31 1996: presenter “George”*

1 George: OK and I’ve got one here to Caroline: Caroline Rice at the AWP:
2 “Yo baby - later!” - and that’s from Tony. And the song he’s
3 requested is *So long* by Fisher Zed - but sorry Tony - we haven’t got
4 that one so we’ll play your second request which is *Whole lotta
5 love* by Led Zep. “PS: Caroline that really wasn’t my message:
6 here it is - I’m outa here Tuesday so Up’m! and Onya! and “on ya” is
7 where I’d like to be! But that can’t happen right now so I’ll just
8 have to wait won’t I! So see ya later mate! Take care babe and keep
9 that smile on that pretty little dial of yours. I’ll see ya when I see
10 ya, and PS G’day Tish” and that’s from Tony apparently Caroline
11 and here’s *Whole Lotta love* by Led Zep.

Here Tony’s message contains both overt and covert elements of multiple address. There are messages to both Caroline and Tish, and primary and secondary messages to Caroline. There is a possible mixed intent in the first message to Caroline: “Yo baby - later!” as both pleasurable anticipation (“Can’t wait to see you!”) and implied menace (“You’ll keep ...”). Then there is a double-directed second message, which is both a sexualised play over sites: “... outa here ... Up’m! ... Onya! ...” and a calculated dismissal of current restraint. It is a *tour de force* in terms of the masculinities constructed through
the programme, claiming power over language, over women, and over the system, as it celebrates its own exuberant defiance of spatial restrictions.

It is significant that Caroline’s response, sent for the following week’s programme, handles the same contact in the same style - but picks up only the intensity of the sexualisation of the language:

_The Prison Show, April 7 1996: presenter “George”_

```
1 George: OK I've got one here “to My Darling Man in the YLP:” (. .) this is - I
2 think this is in answer to last week’s:
3 I'm sitting here in my slot,
4 I miss you babe, quite a lot.
5 My thoughts of you they are very hot,
6 And I wish they’d never stop.
7 For all the things that I would do,
8 With you upon me in my room.
9 I'd lay you down and get on top,
10 How I wish you'd never stop.
11 For the way I know you've made me feel,
12 All your kisses I would steal.
13 'Cos our lov-ing would be fun, (voice beginning to shake)
14 Then I'd have to make you come.
```

Other than the play in the final line, this is both unambiguous, and focused on the realm of privacy. No surprise then that the programme presenters, trying to conclude their reading of the message through the increasing un-control of their own response to it, have trouble in positioning it within their own sense of where the personal and the public align:

```
15 Mark: Huh! (all laugh and splutter)
16 George: "Missing you so much baby..."
17 Mark: (now laughing)
18 George: “Loving you always” (hehe) “from the Girl Next Door!” An’,
19 there’s, lots of, big kisses there for you too! ( . .) Helen:
20 Mark: Heheheheheheh! Did you write that Helen? (heheheheh!)
21 Helen: I DID NOT!!! Actually I was thinking of it but I wouldn't have
22 ever - WRITTEN it!
23 George: That's very clever actually...
24 Helen: It is extremely clever!
25 George: That's the answer to last week's ... message ... Remember last week,
26 they said “On them” and ah ...
27 Helen: ‘E said “on - up them, on ya’ - ‘n’ that’s where ‘e wanted to be on her
28 or something ...
29 George: I reckon that's quite clever, very clever
30 Helen: It is very clever: who wrote that ...
31 (...) George: It doesn’t say
32 Helen: Very very clever indeed
33 George: Very clever not to put a name to it!
34 Helen: No I'd want to be recognised for that: I thought that was good ...
```
This time, when George and Mark move to associate the text’s excess with undisciplined Helen, her response is especially interesting. She simultaneously accepts the intensity of its sexualised impulse; admires its “cleverness”, and denies its suitability as a public (“written”) text. This in spite of her own predilection for very direct sexual talk. Helen uses a persistently eroticised vocalisation (Coward 1984; Koestenbaum 1991) in her messages to her fiancé Jim in the YLP. Her frequent and emotional messages and song dedications are enacted as a kind of performance sex:

_The Prison Show, April 28 1996: presenter “Helen”_

1 Helen: Ri-i-i-ght, we’re back again ... This next message is to my fiancé Jim
2 Fricker ... Baby I had a great weekend even with our visits getting
3 cut short; you always make me feel terrific, even though we can’t
4 always get exactly what we want. But one day I promise you we
5 WILL ... I love you very much honey you’re the absolute Greatest,
6 an’ that’s love from me, an’ I FOUND that cheeky song for you! So,
7 just for you ... here’s George Michaels: (voice drops) I want your
8 s-e-e-ex ....

When Jim’s replies play across the same territory with the same strategies, their personal communication acquires a persistence and intensity which stands out from other messages:

_The Prison Show, May 5 1996: presenter “Mark”_

1 Mark: “To Helen. James Fricker gives all of his love to his DELICIOUS
2 Little Lady Helen. Top weekend again; ah, you sexy and gorgeous
3 little devil you! I love you so VERY very much ... An’ that’s love,
4 James.” And James tonight has requested Hot Chocolate, You sexy
5 thing ...

The reciprocal strategy becomes clear when the programme format cuts across the Helen-Jim arrangement:

_The Prison Show, May 12 1996, presenters “Mark”, “Helen” and “George”_

1 Mark: “Jimmy Fricker sends all of his love to his Little Lady, Helen ... Top
2 weekend, honey: it was great having extra time with you, and will
3 catch up with you in the morning. Love you heaps,” with all of his
4 love, from Jim. And Jim’s request: The Doors, with, Light my fire ...
5 Helen: But I wanna s- - I - I gotta message for him, first, see ...
6 Mark: (softly) oohh ...
7 Helen: See - wha - I actually requested that for him ...
8 Mark: (softly) did you?
9 Helen: - yeah - we’re playing the same song - ‘cos hopefully I’ll light his
10 fire like he does to mine?
11 George: You got a message too?
12 Helen: Yep! Have?
13 George: Well READ IT OUT! But let’s get on with it ...
14 Helen: My message is to my fiancé Jim Fricker: it WAS a great weekend: I

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enjoyed EVERY MINUTE of it, baby and BOY you can light my fire
any time ... an’ the song - I love ya heaps baby - an’ the song is:
Light my fire - you DO ...

George: Oho well I gotta fire hose I’ll put it out for you ... hahaha
Helen: He’ll just re-ignite it he is just - that kind of man..

George: Nooo - he’s notta - bad sort of bloke ...
Helen: He’s a honey I love him
George: We should say “Hello Jim!”
Mark: Hello Jim!

George: How ya doin’ up there ...
Sue: Hello Jim
Mark: G’day Jim ...

George: ... in Along-along..
Helen: I love ya honey ...

George: Do ya?
Helen: Not you; HIM - he knows who it is!

George: You said that about my vegemite last night: my peanut paste ...
Helen: I WHAAAT?

George: Now you come back: you “love me honey” ... OK here’s The Doors an’
Light my fire

Helen: (soft) And ya do ....

Here the sexualised reciprocity is breached not only by the programme running-order demands (lines 4 to 13), but by George’s frustration with Helen’s prioritisation of another task, and another man, over his own interests (lines 18 to 34). Helen’s drop into a sotto voce exchange with Mark (lines 6-9) “privatises” her desire to set up a direct and sexualised exchange, on-air, with Jim. George impatiently attempts to enter both the exchange and the relationship: to re-direct Helen and to replace Jim (line 11). Both desires are foiled by the intense directedness of Helen’s address.

What is represented by George and Mark as Helen’s particular excess: her direct sexual expressiveness - she herself disciplines into a careful focus onto only those areas where such play is permitted. While she is clear on acknowledgement of performative skills and aware of the necessities of speaking for herself, on her own activities, she also consistently suggests that there are dangers in the multiple reception spaces of broadcast speech. As George tries to constrain Helen’s predilections for “performance sex” in her messages to Jim, she makes clear her own distinction between legitimate and illegitimate sites for sexualisation:

*The Prison Show, May 12 1996: presenters “George” and “Helen”*

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>George: Why don’ ya read a message out - I can handle it! Here: get ‘old a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>ya tape - <em>(clunk)</em> aw HELEN: get ‘old of it don’t THROW it!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Helen: Hehehehehe! I don’t seem to get hold of much latexly ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>George: Obviously not seein’ ya gotta put it over air ya want somebody’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>sex!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Helen: Yeah: my man’s ... I’m allowed to want him</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7 George: Oh right...
8 Helen: Is that alright: I'm allowed to want
9 George: Yer write in - ya write into the personal ad columns too do ya?
10 Helen: No - I - I tell him exactly what I want - he knows ...
11 George: You've just told Australia wide what ya want!
12 Helen: I'm not ashamed to admit that I'm in love with a man and I want all of 'im!

At this point, and around this issue, Helen's apparently divergent comments then coalesce into a sustained assertion of a need to direct all speech in careful and considered ways. Even the ambivalence of wordplay and innuendo should be clearly directed to a particular listener. It is open to others, only as an illustration of skill in performance: the "proper" role of a presenter before an audience.

13.6 "Free and familiar contact between persons" - the continuity of conversation between presenters and audience(s)

It is at this point that it becomes evident that the discourses have shifted most significantly. For all their sustained needing of Helen, George's and Mark's claim to the right to re-work and "correct" her comments and behaviours ultimately backfires. Their jokes and innuendoes, in disrupting Helen's high seriousness, acknowledge and even help define her particular power. While their sense of licence at one level signals their expectations of (gendered) primacy, it is performed in the stylisation of that responsive, secondary and suppressed spirit which Bakhtin's work (1968, 1981) locates in "carnival", and attributes to popular resistances to authority. He comments on the culture of laughter as displayed in medieval and Rabelaisian excess:

... medieval man in a way led two lines: one official, mono-lithically serious and sombre; beholden to strict hierarchical order; filled with fear, dogmatism, devotion and piety; the other, of carnival and the public place, free; full of ambivalent laughter, sacrileges, profanations of all things sacred, disparagement and unseemly behaviour, familiar contact with everybody and everything ([1929]; 1981, p. 173).\(^{12}\)

Todorov (1984, pp. 78-79), discussing Bakhtin's ideas, lists as elements of such licensed foolery "... (1) rites and spectacles, such as carnival; (2) comic verbal works; (3) the familiar discourse of the public place".\(^{13}\) He sees the now

\(^{12}\) The "official" aligns with De Certeau's "place"; Grossberg's "discipline"; the "carnival and the public place" with De Certeau's "space" and Grossberg's "mobility".

\(^{13}\) Thus the desire of Kress (1986) and Tolson (1991) to see "wit" and "humour" respectively as resistant discourses. In contexts such as this however they can be deployed as devices of
critically familiar "carnivalesque" as a synecdoche for the whole, and notes how Bakhtin maintains a standard list of common "carnival" elements across all of his critical works:

The Rabelais provides a list of characteristic features of popular and comic culture: a material and corporeal principle of life; disparagement and debasement, hence parody; ambivalence: confusion of death with rebirth; the necessary relation to time and becoming. In the book on Dostoevsky, nearly the same table can be found; its elements are: free and familiar contact between persons; the attraction of the eccentric, the surprising, the bizarre; misalliances, the reunion of opposites; profanation and debasement (Todorov 1984, p. 79).

Bakhtin's work raises then not one but two issues in relation to the contestation over licensed foolery in The Prison Show. While many elements of the show are immediately recognisable in these lists of a powerful, popular cultural tradition, celebratory of resistance, such identifications can be made only if Helen, as representative of caution and order, is seen as "the official". In terms of The Prison Show's discourse formations, this is an astounding inversion of gendered authority. The male presenters, with their constant attempts at teasing destabilisation, must thereby represent themselves as the weaker, in order to become agents of (reactive) ambivalence and multiplicity.¹⁴

Bourdieu reminds us that such a positioning must be read as not merely a situationally-specific tactic, but as an element of a more inclusive strategy of power:

Linguistic exchange - a relation of communication between a sender and a receiver, based on enciphering and deciphering, and therefore on the implementation of a code or a generative competence - is also an economic exchange which is established within a particular symbolic relation of power between a producer, endowed with a certain linguistic capital, and a consumer (or a market), and which is capable of procuring a certain material or symbolic profit (Bourdieu 1992, p. 67).

For Bourdieu, the speakers' task in such conversational exchanges as those between Helen and George is to negotiate the "symbolic relation of power" not simply as a game of performative display, but as an element of cultural survival. Stuart Hall has similarly commented (1993) on the necessity to locate Bakhtin's enthusiasms over the spirit of carnivalesque resistance within constraint and containment - specifically working over gender, although, as I shall argue later, also over race.

¹⁴ This is of course exactly the tactical positioning Zemanek attempted to regain authority after his defeat by two women contributors to The 7.30 Report: see Chapter 5.
his dialogistic paradigm: to see it as an interactive and inherently disputational process of meaning negotiation. Means do not escape ends. Particular “relations of communication” occur within much broader processes of constituting and reiterating advantage. So it is with George and Mark as they manoeuvre to create Helen as unreasonable inhibitor of their licensed foolery. Bakhtin’s sense of such discourse as popular response to the constraints of “official life” - regulated behaviours - explains the use throughout the show of the temporary licence of live radio banter to elude and deride institutional control. But this is a partial view. The activation of such a response is in itself, as Bakhtin saw, admission of institutional powers. Further, we still have on The Prison Show the regulatory practices in play. Even in this most apparently open, informal and disputational of shows, there are restrictive controls operating. Mark for instance persistently refers during a lengthy passage of presenter banter, to the number of “yellow forms” - Station Programme Manager complaint reports - which will be issued against them for their continual breaches of “proper” broadcasting behaviour on-air.

There are then symbolic relations in play in these passages which are more extensive than, if entirely consistent with, those constructed between the four presenters. The descent from serious programming and community service into private jokes and wordplay in The Prison Show is in fact actively encouraged by both the “captive” and the broader audience. Bakhtin’s other reading of the idea of misrule: his observation that this licenses use of “the familiar discourse of the public place,” is borne out in listener responses, reported as overwhelmingly supportive of the chaotic, bantering excesses of The Prison Show team:

The Prison Show, May 12 1996: presenters “Helen”, “George” and “Mark”

1 Helen: (paper rustle sound) (very deliberate tone) I'll read a message
2 George: (falsely bright) That'd be nice, Helen!
3 Helen: But first, I'm going to apologise to Angela and Lee, (laughter) on behalf of Mark an' George, for tryin' [ ] Ta make me
5 Mark: [Oohhh!]
6 Helen: laugh while I's reading that message. Angela knows it was
7 you two!
8 George: Don' blame us for your inadequacies woman
9 Mark: ' Excuse me - exactly!
10 Helen: Excuse me - she can hear you two laughing: Pop's rollin' on the floor,
11 laughin' at me tryin' NOT ta laugh ...

The Prison Show, May 19 1996: presenters “Mark”, “George” and “Helen”

1 Mark: To Sue, Helen, George and Mark - thanks for a job well done each

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week - even with ya stuff ups! It turns out to become quite comical!
Thanks from all of us for a good show.

The Prison Show, May 19 1996: presenters “George” and “Helen”

1  George: Actually, Angela rang up, an’ she said - thanks - this is the truth,
2   she did ring up, an’ she said, to thank us for, such a good show
3   tonight, even though we stuffed her message up,
4  Helen: Oh that was awful ...
5  George: But that Pop (laughter) Pop was havin’ a beer, an’ ‘es crashed out
6   laughin’, an’ ‘es goin’ crook - now we gotta buy ‘im a beer ‘cos ‘e was
7   cryin’ that hard with laughter that ‘it’s all gone in ‘es beer an’ ‘it’s
8   gone weak!
9  Helen: Well we’ll buy you a beer Pop but we just had to apologise for that
10  ‘cos we sort of, lost the plot for a while there ...

Such audience responses are consistent with those for the top-rating Stan
Zemanek Show. Both shows recognise their audience’s pleasures in the plural
and shifting text. Spontaneous and unregulated, the talk appears as
unregulatable - powerful, authentic, “real” masculinity. As in The Stan
Zemanek Show, much of the teasing play with un-control on The Prison Show is
played out across “real” control demands from the “inner-world” of the
show’s construction and functioning. The Prison Show too is done live, with
the added confusions of a multiple presenter crew. Mark, Sue, George and
Helen appear to share panelling, letter reading, phone calls and incidental
tasks such as making coffee or dealing with studio visitors, in much the same
casual way they decide on the “what next?” of the running order of the
programme. There is constant bustle and confusion, showing not just in the
conversation, but in the technical control of microphone selection, music track
cueing, sound level adjustment, intercutting and sound fading, and so on.
George’s opportunistic exploitation of the chaos and his attempts to control it
are indicative of the complex ways in which masculinities seek to assert
themselves as at once part of, and resistant to, control and regulation.

The tactic is moreover particularly suited to its host broadcaster. It helps
construct the “alternative dimension” of 3d Radio. The station deliberately
evokes a popular-chaotic stylisation in all of its programming (Elder & David,
1984), situating itself in opposition to both the regulated behaviours of the
ABC and its University Radio community-sector clones, and the “big voiced”
(over) production of commercial stations. Station promo. stings played
during The Prison Show make the continuity of its positioning clear:

The Prison Show, May 5 1996: station Promo 1

1  Pompous male voiceover: (Ahem): “Ode, to 3 d radio ...”
Cagle (1995), citing Hebdige’s (1979) work on the “revolt into style” premise of youth resistance through popular culture, most notably in music, comments on the way inter-generational power relations are coded into representational surface when the reality of social and economic barriers cannot be overcome:

... through rituals involving fashion, music, language, and territory, working-class youth subcultures attempt to win cultural space as a way of resisting the dominant order. In this manner, youth subcultures are identified as being structurally relational to their working-class parent culture. The difference is that whereas working-class parents often use direct strategies when confronting dominant institutions, working class youth subcultures engage in ritualistic, symbolic forms of resistance (Cagle 1995, p. 22).

The (notably UNstylish!) Radio 3d stylisation can be read as just such an attempt, this time from within the particular frame of established radio practice. It consciously allies itself for instance to other elements of “radical” or marginalised (unvoiced) social presence: local (unsigned) music performance; minority interest community “narrowcast” programming (including of course The Prison Show); a taste for postmodern collaging of appropriated sound-bites, reconstructing meanings from chaotic and disparate pre-existing elements ...\(^5\) So it is that the “feminised” and intertextual multiplicity and chaos in 3d community “yof radio” styling, while failing at one level to accord with the regulatory power impulses of patriarch George, succeeds elsewhere as representation of his own calls on larrikin DISorder. Radio 3d encourages spontaneous mischief-making and destabilisation of other settled channels of social power. It is particularly so in relation to gender, where George and Mark’s attacks on Helen become in themselves at once impulses of “direct action” regulatory intent, and demonstrations of an orientation towards the counter-culturally subversive.

\(^5\) A publicity flyer for the station reads: “Our listeners are young, socially-aware, committed, and difficult to reach through mainstream media” (ThreeD 93.7FM, Who and What is Three D Radio? 1998).
13.7 “Less people left alone with no-one”: fragmentary discourse attempting formation

If Helen thus becomes simultaneously a target for George and Mark’s performance of power, and a source for its dissolution and contestation, she is not the only such figure on The Prison Show. As in The Stan Zemanek Show, there is at least one regular woman correspondent whose use of the show as a broader social contact mechanism directed towards her own interests breaks out of a male host’s teasing restraints. This caller’s interest is in serious social and political purpose. As with Stan Zemanek’s responses to his callers Dorothy or Missy, her interventions evoke direct and manipulative comment over the style of her contribution.

Regular Prison Show listener “Desma”, like The Stan Zemanek Show’s Dorothy, unashamedly has her own agenda for her favourite programme. She pursues it across multiple messages, directed to multiple correspondents, each week - despite overt disciplinary moves over the chaos of her textualisation from presenter George:

The Prison Show, April 14 1996: presenters “George” and “Helen”

1 George: We get these same messages every week, on six different bits of
2 paper, an’ the messages just go continuous an’ we gotta decipher ‘em
3 an’ stick ‘em together
4 Helen: Oh hang on yeah I just found the other half, yeah, righto -
5 George: So try an’ put ‘em all on one pa - you know, each message on one -
6 Helen: Separate ‘em, Desmai, [sic] please!

For Desma the separations and segregations of prison life need the urgent remediation of exactly the forms of contact radio can offer: a sense of the continuities of relationship, inside the institution, between institutions, and between the institution of the prison and that of the extended family:

The Prison Show, March 31 1996: presenter “Helen”

1 Helen: ... Right, I got a few messages here: “To all the girls in unit A -
2 Caroline, Gina Young, Swannie, Cathie, Chris, Koomba, Gloria,
3 Nicolle, Gina A, Ann, Toni, Monica, Deborah, Leanne, Jane,
4 Colleen, Tanya. You’re all a great bunch of girls to be with an’ I
5 love you all. An’ to Tanya: sometimes I feel like punching your eyes
6 out, but girl I must say you haven’t really grown up a lot yet, so I’ll
7 have to let you do some more growing up, OK? But I’m loving ya, I’m
8 not a vicious person, I’m a caring person.” And to Gina Young: “I love
9 being ya aunt: it makes me feel special, an’ I feel that you are like
10 my own. Since I’ve been here I’ve been touched by you - by your ways
11 to me; you are very special like you’re my daughter. Love you girl,”
12 an’ that’s from Auntie Desma.
The Prison Show, April 7 1996: presenter “Mark”

1. Mark: Ooh, very nice. Ah, “From Auntie Desma: Hey Koomba: sorry to hear that you're on the sick list with a stitch or two; so don't boogie too much yet like you tried last night in our Honeymoon Suite that me and Gecko we share 'n' have a great set-up. An' also a "hii" to all the Nungas in the other prisons around: love you all, an' we're thinking of yiz on this Easter Day, so you're not alone." And that's from Auntie Desma at the Adelaide Women's Prison ...

Friendship centred in shared experience ("you’re all a great bunch of girls to be with an' I love you all") crosses into family relations - real or "claimed" ("you are very special like you’re my daughter …"). It even extends into the particular disciplining which family relations bring: “Sometimes I feel like punching your eyes out …” At the same time, Desma builds a powerful bonding around a colourful evocation of prison friendships:

The Prison Show, April 21 1996: presenter “Mark”

1. Mark: “Hello to all my sisters that care: and that’s all the girls in Unit A. Love ya all an’ will never stop, loving ya - oh Yeah! by the way George: we had Six o’clock Rock last night! and had Gecko hopping and boking" - oohoo - can I start that again? " - we had Gecko hopping and bopping on her bed, and Carleen singing alongside of her, and of course me I was bopping and dancing with little Tweetie, we had a ball! And then comes along that Agostenelll! doing her bopping on the chair too until she ended up on the bed ... We made our night a ball. Also had a few spectators: Monica, Nan, an’ Puss 'n' Boots!" an' that’s from Desma ...

Nor does this remain at the level of the descriptive. Desma annexes her own creation of happy, family-like fun times, in order to offer support to “all the Nungas in the other prisons around”. Moreover, this careful elaboration of the powers of solidarity is not deployed solely at the level of affect. Desma builds in and out of her own web of connecting texts a set of references to political engagement with the horrors of prison isolation for Aboriginal inmates in particular. Hers is the only voice in the programme consistently attempting to maintain contact with all Nunga prisoners, across the whole system, rather than with direct relatives or friends:

The Prison Show, April 14 1996: presenter “George”

1. George: ..... Aaand, I got “Hi there to all the Nunga girls in Port Augusta: we all send our love to you, a special hello, (...) to Trish Carter, from Auntie Desma. She thinks about you all the time, an' so do Gina Young, an' my room mate Gecko, I'm missing you, hurry home. Also a big hello to Derek Bromley an' the Nunga guys at Port Augusta as well" an' that’s from Desma Rigney in the Adelaide
Women's Prison. “Love you all, I have a big heart that reaches out
to my people, in general, so you - you’re never forgotten and don’t
say you are.” And the song requested is, I will always love you, by
Whitney Houston.

Only Desma attempts critique of the system at the level of affect, rather than
in the abusive clichés or conversely the sentimental codings of other
messages. She puts her own experiences on the line as she asks for and gives
thanks for the personal support needed to help her through the system:

**The Prison Show, May 5 1996: presenter “Sue”**

1 Sue: OK I've got a message: “Ho there Angela, I'm still home I'm back
2 in court on 13th of May for sentence. So they're ready for me and I'm so
3 scared, so sending a cheerio to one of my closest people, that I have
4 become very close to like my own daughter, an’ that's you Angela”.

**The Prison Show, May 12 1996: presenters “Helen” and “George”**

1 Helen: “Hello to a heap of friends of mine in the Adelaide Women’s
2 Prison, that I think the world of. (...) As these people are like my
3 own. Well I can call them my own, as - I - don’t really have - much
4 of those supportive family on the outside, an’ I’m back in court for
5 sentence on May 13th, an’ that's gonna knock me around a bit, as
6 I’m going to do some time behind these walls. It's sad to say this but
7 I tell you these people are my own. So you guys” (ahem - ‘scuse me)
8 “so you guys - “
9 George: (off) pardon me
10 Helen: (off) thank you
11 Helen: “So” (haha) " - so you guys over there at The YLP be there as well
12 for me, eh.”

**The Prison Show, May 12 1996: presenter “Helen”**

1 Helen: (...) Goodbye .... “Hello to a very special person, in Angie, who is so
2 special you are my Goonji daughter as I am your Nunga mum. And
3 always will be girl. Love ya, heaps. Don't forget it, an’ keep on
4 smiling for me. Mum had a bad day Friday, an' was upset. Done
5 some serious crying, but that's all in it. Hello to Mum an’ Dad: look
6 after that girl of yours, she means so much to me as well. I love her
7 like my own two. Love yiz," an’ that's Desma, an’ a heap of kisses,
8 an’ a PS: “ Give the little ones a big hug from me too. An’ George:
9 can you play a real special song for these people, for me please,”
10 that's Desma an’ yes - Desma we are playing a pretty special song.

Her directness and her willingness to speak-forth her own fears and needs
equate with Helen’s sexualised expressiveness. Both have the capacity to risk
direct political comment. They sense and evoke the conditions of reception of
the show’s messages, as they direct their comments beyond the programme
presentation process, anticipating the problems of the wider prison audience.
So it is that Desma has the confidence to make directly political comment, in ways unparalleled elsewhere in the show:

_The Prison Show, May 19 1996: presenter “Mark”_

1. Mark: OK ... Hello to all the Nunga guys at the YLP. Desma says: “Hi there! an’ hope that you’re all doing your time OK. We don’t forget about you guys over there because we don’t ... know that you - you’re on your way, so if you and youse want to send a line or two, over here, please do so, and we’ll be waiting for a letter. That’s if you have no-one an’ want to communicate with others, while you’re doing time. Send it to Auntie Desma, care of the Adelaide Women’s Prison, and we’d love to hear from ya all. Love Desma”. PS: “Hope I don’t get in trouble for this but there should be ... less people left alone with no-one like myself. I’m a bit of a loner, and without these girls in here ... an’ that’s black and white, I’m nothin’ in the outside world. These girls are my family, an’ that is sad but I have to say it, because it makes me feel good.”

_The Prison Show, May 19 1996: presenters “Mark” and “Helen”_

1. Mark: “A big hello to all the Nunga guys at the ARC and Mobilon. Also a big hello to all those guys in the YLP. Desma sends her love, and says keep smiling guys: we’re all thinking of yiz, an’ remember: love one another, an’ we’ll get along in life. Please don’t be nasty.” From Auntie Desma.

2. Helen: “Seeing you all at the meeting on Friday¹⁶ guys was good, so let’s all come together and support one another more often. And don’t be shy as we’re all Nungas. Special hello to Danny, Tony and Warren. I think we’re going to be a team at these meetings with you guys: myself, Gecko and Gina Young. And that’s love again from Desma”.

Desma’s sense of a cohesion across what are some of the most regulated and patrolled social boundaries in contemporary Australian society is both intense, and consistently asserted. There is in her texts a sense of the powers of discourse itself: its capacity to represent empathic and collective experience; to lay and repay obligation; to build collective identity at the moment of greatest separation - and to do so with whatever materials are available. Her capacity to meld disparate social opportunity into a sense of (separated) togetherness may be as mythic as the “domestic security” sentiment of the other requesters. It is certainly not as apparently universal as a genre. It is nevertheless strongly and coherently asserted. In particular it is defended vigorously against the incidental criticisms of George’s attempts to regulate the breadth of Desma’s virtual embrace. In response to his critiques

¹⁶ A reference to an unprecedented series of inmate meetings for Aboriginal prisoners, set up by the South Australian Department of Correctional Services after the May 1996 Yatala Labour prison riots, in line with recommendations of the Federal Government’s Aboriginal Deaths in Custody Inquiry.
of her repeated, and apparently infinitely extendible, request lists, she asserts her rights as a Nunga woman to her own social role:

**The Prison Show, April 21 1996: presenters “Helen” and “George”**

1 Helen: Yes - “Hello George: what’s this about my requests - are you complaining already? You know I try my best to get them in: but if you’re going to stuff me around by saying things, I’ll have to put you in your place Goonja man!” Well you just do that!

5 George: Oooowch ... she can put me over her knee any time!

There is a fierce interplay here between gendered and raced power. Desma invokes (line 4) one of only two allusions to race and power differentials in the entire corpus: “I'll have to put you in your place Goonja man!”- only to have George revert to a sexualisation of the interaction. As the comments continue however, George moves to destroy any further gendered solidarity between Desma and Helen, by cutting Helen’s mike - and attempting to claim radio professionalism as his basis for critique of Desma’s contributions:

12 George: I wasn’t going crook about her putting her messages IN, on time - it’s try and keep a message to the page instead of going page to page!

14 Because we had to leave a little bit out tonight because we couldn’t work out where the hell it come from or what it belonged to!

16 Helen: Desma - look: the way it stands at the moment is Sue and I don’t get here till a little bit late and we’re leaving it to the MERE MEN\(^{17}\) to fix this (hehe)

19 George: I tell you what Helen: (cuts her mic) You’re off the air right? Now, Desma: try an’ keep your message completely on one page, y’know like, and then start a new page for the next message instead of the going over an’ over ‘em? Because it’s really hard to put ‘em together.

Desma’s marshalling of a collectivity in the teeth of oppositional disruptions is however unlikely to be deterred by engagement within the symbolic violences of talk-text disciplining. Her flow of fragmentary contact messages drives across barricades, whether spatial, racial, emotional, or gendered. While the programmers may register her notes and messages as chaotic, for listeners hers is the one constant voice, weaving its unchanging message from programme to programme, prisoner to prisoner, prison to prison.

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\(^{17}\) A reference to a long-running page of the Australian *Women’s Day* magazine, in which women wrote in with anecdotes about the follies and incapabilities of the “mere men” - or “MMs” - in their lives: fathers, husbands, brothers, boyfriends, bosses, sons...
13.8 "Cross dislocation of identities": how those "communities" which listen to community radio claim identity in its texts

Given that Desma's constructions of prison-to-prison solidarity are in themselves a form of resistance, why are they so strongly, even violently, contested, from within a location wholly dedicated to just such forms of contact? Stuart Hall (1992), addressing the politics of postmodern identity at its contemporary moment of hybridity, comments that the very recognition of multiple positioning brings with it exactly such contention:

We are always in negotiation, not with a single set of oppositions that place us always in the same relation to others, but with a series of different positionalities. Each has for us its point of profound subjective identification. And that is the most difficult thing about this proliferation of the field of identities and antagonisms: they are often dislocating in relation to one another (Hall 1992, p. 31).

Hall is attempting here a reconciliation of the complex of locational differences in (African) black identity construction across both historical and contemporary diaspora. He seeks to realign US and UK black identity politics, through application of Gilroy's (1991, 1993) "and ... and" strategy of multiple identity. Taking up Cornell West's insight into how the arrival of popular culture as a sign of US cultural dominance in the twentieth century carries still-suppressed Afro-American expressiveness into a location of potential power, he shows how the specificities of dispersed and local experience and stylisation engage unevenly with dominant forms. Hall comments on how black identity is configured within a dominant modality which is itself transgressive, but which carries within it no guarantees that it will cohere with the interests of all:

... to put it crudely, certain ways in which black men continue to live out their counter-identities as black masculinities and replay those fantasies of black masculinities in the theatres of popular culture are, when viewed from along other axes of difference, the very masculine identities that are oppressive to women, that claim visibility for their hardness only at the expense of the vulnerability of black women ... The way in which a transgressive politics in one domain is constantly sutured and stabilised by reactionary or unexamined politics in another is only to be explained by this continuous cross-dislocation of one identity by another (Hall 1992 p. 31).

Paul Gilroy (1993), in a discussion of the intersections of race and gender politics in contemporary British culture, also comments on the degree to

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See also Barlow, 1990, for examination of this phenomenon in African-American representations on US radio.
which the “crisis in black social relations” is persistently represented as at core a crisis in black masculinity. This is a feature he detects vectored through popular music tracks and styles, as much as through direct political formulation. He details in particular the ways in which reggae (a favoured music selection on *The Prison Show*, extending even to its selection as anthem of support during the May 1996 Yatala riots) refocuses a powerful and articulate advocacy of black male centrality, yet one founded in elsewhere-negative values of “gun culture, misogyny, and machismo” (1993, p. 311)\(^9\). Gilroy clarifies the degree to which such a move is allied with attempts to configure the politics of black identity within the discourses of “race as community”, and specifically, around the focus of family. Commenting outright: “I wish I had five bucks for every time I’ve heard the trope of the family wheeled out to do the job of recentring things ...” (1993, p. 305) he reveals how far it dislocates the potential for real investigations of hybridity and fluid identity. Hall (1992), invoking Gramsci, calls such moves a “war of manoeuvre” rather than a “war of position.” Gilroy’s analysis sees how the invocation of family as a means of centring racial identity is at heart a self-defeating strategy:

The trope of the family is central to the means whereby the crisis we are living - of black social and political life - gets represented as the crisis of black masculinity. That trope of the family is there, also, in the way conflict, within and between our communities, gets resolved through the mystic reconstruction of the ideal heterosexual family. This is the oldest conservative device in the book of modern culture (Gilroy 1993, p. 313).

Such a problem is of course exacerbated and redirected in its translocation into an Australian context, where myths of family have added salience from the Stolen Generation experience, the ways they feature in the log of interventions to Aboriginal Deaths in Custody cases, or the resistance against Mandatory Sentencing.\(^20\) However, the centrality within the discursive positionings of both listener letters and presenter exchanges on *The Prison

\(^9\) The same is frequently asserted of US rap culture.

\(^{20}\) The Stolen Generation refers to the forcible removal of Aboriginal children from their parents and their relocation either with white families, or in state or church-run institutions, during the period when Government policy was assimilationist. Aboriginal Deaths in Custody became a matter of widespread public concern in the mid 1980s, and programmes were put in place to attempt to remediate conditions - particularly isolation - for Aboriginal prisoners. Such deaths, from whatever cause, are however still common. Mandatory Sentencing refers to legislation in the Northern territory and in Western Australia which constrains judges and magistrates to imprison offenders, including juveniles, for recurrent minor offences. It is widely considered to be both a covert form of racist social control, and to deny the accused a fair trial.
Show suggests that it has the same complexity of relation to a politic of racial identity as elsewhere - albeit with differences in detail. Certainly, those families who do accept the programme’s invitation to “relax” and be “taken care of” within its discursive constitution of a “safe space” for emotional expressiveness, construct exactly the myths of idealised heterosexual - and patriarchal - familiality which Gilroy outlines. They even do so with the same sets of articulations into raced identity - “Auntie” Desma’s “all Nungas together”. And they disrupt any potential for an otherwise-gendered (or sexualised) self-actualisation. Thus Helen’s constant re-disciplining by George.  

The slow emergence then that this group of presenters actually ARE just such a family as the music requests and letters evoke, displays the ultimate in realisations of the constantly reasserted ideal. Careful listening across several programmes allows collation of randomly distributed pieces of information, which begin to explain why it is that this group interact in ways so redolent of intra-family politics. There are, indeed family ties across the group, as well as across the boundaries of the prisons. At one point a sister-in-law (Mark’s and George’s) gives birth during the programme - with constant telephone up-dates on her progress, and the show said to be being played directly into her “labour ward”, just as it is into the “Labour Prison.” But the degree to which such focus becomes yet again a means for the reassertion of masculinised “production” over the feminised, is immediately marked in the discussions which result between George and Mark:

**The Prison Show, May 5 1996: presenters “Mark” and “George”**

3  Mark: George: been a HUGE week! Absolutely huge!
4  George: Yeah yeah - an uncle again, an’ I’m a great uncle!
5  Mark: Yes, we - well, we’ve always thought you’re a great uncle ...
6  George: I know: a great guy that’s why (huhhahah)
7  Mark: Yes three big births this week George: three big births
8  George: Three big births?
9  Mark: Well first there was my brother Patrick his wife Lucia? Then we
  has ah, good friend of mine yes, that’s right ... then we had, ah, good friend of
10 George: (indee) a great uncle I’m very happy ...
11 Mark: mine Dianne ‘n’ Peter had little boy, William Angus
12 George: William Angus!
13 Mark: Pop would be pleased: William Angus!
14 George: He’d be sayin’ “Up ‘es kill”!
15 Mark: My word he would! An’ then the best: the biggest birth - the re-

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21 There is also within the *Prison Show* data corpus evidence for a constant reassertion of hetero-normalising narratives and discourses, policing any homosexual references. The theme is worth considering in another forum.
The unrepentant and repeated shifts here (lines 17) detail family links only to
give priority to football, revealing the male presenters’ position on what is
truly important in life. During the programme relayed to the labour ward,
effectively the same image-transfer is invoked:

_The Prison Show, April 28 1996: presenters “George” and “Mark”_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>George:</th>
<th>Mark:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>(slightly off mic) ‘m I a great unc - uncle yet? ooh ... yeah ...</td>
<td>(also off mic) No mate no - no ... early into the last quarter mate ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>early into the last quarter ...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The device asserts a reciprocity of exclusion: masculine evocation of key
moments of its own pre-eminence, during one of the few social and cultural
moments at which it can be sidelined. It is a clear example of the ways
“family” as the central trope within the programme’s discursive elaboration
of a social context is, in the final analysis, used only as a surface on which are
arrayed all of the contesting cultural identity positions of the day.

_The Prison Show, in the final analysis, reveals the extremity of appeal to those
few remaining discursively-established “imaginary depths” or points of
stability available to a community whose members are so severely
sequestered from active participation in the “techniques of mobility” fostered
in a consumer-producer social order. Here is a community with an over-
drawn “map” and an under-travelled “itinerary”, discursively enacting the
limits of its “topography of cultural practices” (Grossberg, loc. cit.). The very
extremity of the talk-relations and talk-texts which come into visibility
[audibility] however reveals the degree to which community radio fosters a
reactive space for rehearsal of the techniques of “disciplined mobilisation”: one in which both disciplinary techniques and mobility-claims are excessive.
Like Red Light Radio, discursive formations on The Prison Show play directly
into identity, working over those ongoing “spatialisations” on gendered
grounds, which were displayed in listener interactions on The Stan Zemanek
Show and Pillowtalk.

Despite the claimed disparities in their social directedness and sectoral
purpose, community radio and commercial broadcasting both seek to define,
in Grossberg’s terms, “the very possibilities of where and how we move and

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22 The Sturt Football Club, having lost the 1978 playoff for the State championship, entered a
period of massive decline from which it was only just beginning to emerge in 1996.
stop, of where and how we place and displace ourselves, of where and how we are installed into cultural texts and extended beyond them ..." (1988, *loc. cit.*). They are each, in their way, socially and culturally “topographical” (Ahlkvist & Fisher, 2000). Do they however agree in the directedness of that topography? Are they equally positioned for either the intensification of social re-positioning work in the new informational economy as outlined by Castells, or the necessary critique of its “globalising” order, as called for by Lefebvre? The concluding chapter of this study will return to the new “broadcasting” topography sketched out in preliminary provisions for Digital Audio Broadcasting. Using the evidence of “real audience” practices revealed in these four case studies, it will examine the degree to which audiences established within Australian commercial and community sectors are establishing “pre-dispositions”, in Bourdieu’s terms, to the new socio-economic conditions.
14.0 Everyday mediated experience: radio’s “immobile motility”

Throughout the twentieth century, institutions of communication, including radio, have simultaneously privatised and “massified” their operations, to construct a curiously semi-public space, with which everyday life has come increasingly to be intermixed. Raymond Williams (1974) has pointed out the degree to which, during this period, the apparently self-sufficient family home was also caught up in the need to establish new forms of social connectedness: ways of bridging its otherwise all-encompassing privacy to those systems of productivity and those channels of consumption which sustained it, both materially and symbolically.

Rose (1996) outlines an increasingly global order, operating in support of a political programme of advanced neo-liberalism and enterprise culture, within which the same ideals are not only proffered, but insisted upon.

Contemporary individuals are incited to live as if making a project of themselves: they are to work on their emotional world, their domestic and conjugal arrangements, their relations with employment and their techniques of sexual pleasure, to develop a ‘style’ of living that will maximise the worth of their existence to themselves (p. 157).

The intrusion into “project self” (Castells 1996; 1997) by enterprise discourse is revealed here in the use of terms such as “work”, “project”, “arrangements”, “techniques”, “worth.” Such lexical appropriation in turn exposes the degree of connection between this project-self as personal ethic, and as “governmentality” or political project - an equation already made

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1 “Broadcasting principles” is a common title for the introductory section in both technical broadcast training manuals (see for instance the 5UV training program) and in Journalism degrees. In both cases the irony appears to be lost.
obvious to us from the talk-text processing of commercial radio hosts such as Stan Zemanek and Dr Feelgood, where

... the individual is to become, as it were, an entrepreneur of itself, seeking to maximise its own powers, its own happiness, its own quality of life, through enhancing its autonomy and then instrumentalising its autonomous choices in the service of its life-style. The self is to style its life through acts of choice, and when it cannot conduct its life according to this norm of choice, it is to seek expert assistance (Rose 1996, p. 158, emphasis added).

Programming such as The Stan Zemanek Show and Pillowtalk promotes respectively that entrepreneurial drive and its remediating expert intervention, at the same time enfolding each within the other. Zemanek’s otherwise empty enactment of opinionatedness claims an expertise which constructs him for listeners as their “walkin’ encyclopaedia”, while in effect he proffers not advice, but endless demands that life be “styled” towards “choice”. Dr Feelgood’s personalised diagnostic technique opens her caller-patients to medico-counselling, and beyond that a generalised therapeutic-consumerist “connectedness”. The world of work, or productivity; and the world of consumption, or “styling choice”, become the two polarities of the system. Their arc of intersection however is not directly in the public marketplace as we might expect, given the economic basis of the formula, but in the private sphere: in the “interiority” of the self, and the “intimate space” of the family.

Rose (1996, p.162) echoes Habermas in suggesting that it is within the institution of the family that pressures of socialisation have increasingly been brought to bear. Shifting across the last century from direct disciplinary reclamation of a remnant “dysfunctional” minority, and towards a “responsabilisation” re-processing of all, discourses centring on “family” operate as both a mediated ground (a “disciplined place”) and an actual listener-consumer locale (a “space” of seeming mobility or “choice”). It is at the level of the everyday and local that, by maximising life-quality, we satisfy ourselves that we are successfully meeting ideal/normative social expectations. So crucial has this formation become that, as we have seen in the case of both Red Light Radio and The Prison Show, attempts to negotiate discursive entry to the domestic space of the family, or to exert varying forms of directive power within it, incur significant instabilities in the talk-text processing. Strongly marked by their social-institutional location outside the sphere of public power, those “selves” discursively constituted for and within
these “community” radio programmes prove equally problematic inside the private.

At the same time as such programming provides a space for “remediation”² of public-private identity formation and assertion, it also indicates an intensification of what Morse (1998) calls “the cycle of consumption”. This is to be enabled by the immense re-duplication of channels of mediation and representation in the approaching “informational” society, and their varied vectoring into the private family home as “mobile” space of consumption. The mobility or choice-capacity of the media user-consumer is maximised, inside the newly “virtualised” and de-localised exchanges of this globalising economy (Auge, 1995). Increasingly privatised yet increasingly accessible, this world of images, objects and commodities is “liquifying”, in Bauman’s terms, to ensure not only heightened accessibility, but its ready tailoring or “specification” to the needs, desires, and even dreams of each of the different roles a given individual now enacts, socially and culturally.

As mediation extends outwards from its original consoles [and tuners] and into other realms and techniques of everyday life; as screens [and speakers] shape-shift into variant spaces and roles; as recorded sounds and images achieve ubiquity; these liquidities accelerate.

This is precisely the scenario which audio-digitisation and DAB-casting offers: the multi-channelling capacity which will de-centralise our focus and its nexus. DAB must encompass and deliver, in Morse’s terms, “locus”, or the particularities of the real, as much as “ground”, or the mediated sense of a generalised but ultimately inaccessible location, constructed as much within discourse as from any engagement with “the real”. DAB’s offer of locally-tailored, automatic-insertion programme segments, principally promotional texts, carries specified “real space” markets, pre-selected to individual “tastes”. Having arrived at this moment, how will “audiences”, if the term is still appropriate: media users constituted within the imagined and discursive

² I use this term with the Bolter and Grusin (1999) use of it in mind: in acknowledgment not just of their view of all new media as appropriating the text types and techniques of earlier forms, but with a view to seeing Community Radio as working intentionally towards both a “re-mediating” and a remedial strategy. Most volunteer programmers are committed both to their social cause, and to a belief that radio can be improved by their contributions.
equation of real and image; of locus with ground; come to, or be brought to, engage with a mediation which actually can connect with locus? Digitised broadcast promises sufficient capacity, in terms of processing-space, signal-flow and enterprise-culture conceptual foundation, to service any kind of “self” which seeks to access it, with far more of its originary “local” – or its “global” re-stylisations - attached to it than ever before.

14.1 Globalisation = “endless parallel worlds”: universal receptivity, specified and localised activation

From The Stan Zemanek Show and Pillowtalk we have learned that within contemporary Australian commercial radio broadcasting the particular “selves” which are daily reconstituted already operate within a complex elision of “autonomous” enterprise selves with Heath’s “universalising” address to a “receptive” mediated subject: not one directed to any particular perspective, beyond the daily-renewed capacity to receive. Thus the otherwise inexplicable phenomenon, at least from within a “Panoptic” frame of powerful regulatory impulses, of the widely variant subjectivities called forth within radio talk. The unabashed consumer self of Zemanek’s programming for instance can be joined by the “liberated” confessionally-sexual subject of Dr Feelgood on Pillowtalk - a programme producing talk and encouraging behaviours which Zemanek would denounce as immoral (or worse - unproductive).

With Dr Feelgood, an authoritative female radio host, commercial radio’s powerfully authoritative and ubiquitous “phallic voice” demonstrated a capacity for especially tricky metamorphosis, or in Morse’s terms, “convertibility”. Authority as performance (Butler 1997) shifts from loud aggression and amplified domination, to a soft, “feminised”, but nonetheless assertive, diagnostic and summarising, control (see Chapters 9 and 10). The “ubiquitous” modes underpinning the concept of broadcasting, through which this persona is constituted, include, in Foucault’s terms, its capacity through its broadcast processing technologies for commercial radio’s discursive formations to undergo “replication, expansion, penetration, reduplication” – “the nexus of regularities that govern their dispersion” (1972 p 48). On Pillowtalk, these techniques of dispersion are given an added spin, as the capacity for intrusive investigation of “the private/intimate” is spilt into the public. The “clinical gaze” of summarising diagnosis, here rendered
as the “listening ear”, is equally quick to symptomatise, categorise, classify, “identify”. In the name of surveillant “health” it sets up a conceptual circularity which mimics that of the production of subjectivity itself. For Dr Feelgood and her listeners, the “sharing” of self-revelation is very clearly directed outwards, listener-callers persistently advised of the “good, healthy practice” of “open discussion” of what - interestingly - are still “their problems.”

The process parallels Castells’ (1996) view of “informationalism” as a circular and self-perpetuating impulse, in which data is itself the raw material of production. Each dispersion is predicated purely upon the increasing “liquidity” of the “real”: the degree of its capture within the processes of mediation. The accelerating incapacity to locate an originary source and moment or a clearly linear development for such “production” itself acts to maintain the system. What is represented as a privileged “goal” becomes instead a controlled, disciplined product. What is held out as the author becomes the text.

For Foucault, especially in his later work, the task of the cultural analyst resolved itself into the reading back of this interplay of constantly evolving cultural “technologies”: interlocking systems of cultural production, relations, representations and subjectivities, which both constitute and serve that culture (1988). With no possibility of finding a single explanation: a multiple if unitary structuring principle, the task in this study becomes more rather than less coherent. Radio, by definition a boundariless technology, can only be captured within an analysis which will permit mobility, multiplicity, contradiction, and paradox. While specific radio genres, formats, sectors, programmes, and presenter practices may strongly and clearly demark particular social relations and spaces (Gregory and Urry, 1985), these may also vary from moment to moment. Production practices show both consistency, and wide variation. Radio’s positioning within a production culture is contested across the three disparate Australian sectors; three very different broadcasting “cultures” interacting within policy debate and regulatory practice, as well as for community, industry and government funding and attention. Since both radio personnel and listeners move between sectors, the latter at the flick of a switch, the sense of individual “talent” and “taste” dictating programming styles recedes in favour of an
intersecting set of shifting practices and positions. The single and unitary “creative subject” and “historical agent” have gone, replaced by the idea of a continuous constitution of a self under particular, local, historical, disciplinary processes and concepts, which yet persuade us to think of ourselves as “individuals” with “subjectivity” - in fact prevent us doing otherwise (Foucault 1990, p. 38). Thus radio’s persistent invitation to listeners to “have your say”; “air your point of view,” is caught in a conceptual bind, for that is exactly how we constitute ourselves AS listeners. What keeps the system working however is the paradox that, in so doing, we operate neither a “free selecting”, unconstrained self-directedness, building towards the “rational autonomous self” of the Habermasian model (1984, 1987), nor yet one under tutelage to manipulative and irresistible media power. The compromise of Rose’s “self-steering” self is everywhere evident in contemporary talk-radio programming.

As Poster (1984) has indicated, the contemporary mode of production, in shifting from industrial commodity manufacture to information processing, has come much closer to the conceptual and ideological, eroding the Althusserian base/superstructure model. While this brings radio - the medium of informational choice in Australia⁴ - closer to a formational (constructionist) role, thus calling out new (mediated) public concerns over its “power”, these are most often rendered in older “historical agent” models ⁵. These mistake the on-air presenters’ personae and the institutional radio practices which construct them for personal “power”, and so lead to the launching of versions of the repressive hypothesis. Such explanations neglect the interactivity of the medium - a destabilising and sometimes freeing-up of

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³ This expanded recognition of the centrality of contested and “negotiated” positions is one reason for the growing format-dominance of the “double-hander” comedy-chat shift across all sectors of Australian talk radio. Once the preserve of radical “alternative” broadcasting on Triple J and Triple M, it is now found on such stations as ABC Adelaide’s 5AN - an ultra-conservative and middle-class “talk-forum” and light music station, and Christian radio’s community station Alta Mira - where its comedy-barter cuts oddly against Christian goodwill messages and Bible extracts.

⁴ Communications update for February 1997 provides the audience statistics for all privately owned Australian media in the period during which the programming for this study was collected. It provides audience figures of 62.72 for Austereo (which broadcast Pillowtalk); 27.02% for 2UE (The Stan Zemanek Show). The two Sydney newspapers The Sydney Morning Herald and The Daily Telegraph have only 27.8 between them. The highest single television rating in 1997 was the Seven Network with 71.38 coverage. In comparison, Community Radio 3d Adelaide claims a regular audience of 110,000 in a metropolitan population of around 1 million (Who and what is Three D radio? publicity flyer, 1998). No figures are available for Radio 5UV.

⁵ Thus the focus in the Adams and Burton study on Australian talkback (1997), onto hosts - as if presenter style, or “personality”, were the issue.
power which radio talkback hosts themselves often sense, but cannot articulate outside a commercial-promotional discourse of absolute “freedom of choice”.

Without accessing the entire constructedness of radio’s role in contemporary mediation, attempts to calculate and so counter its “power” are in vain. Only when the “powerful” host is removed from the centre of the analysis, and the inter-play between hosts, audiences, media production and social contexts is examined, can any new configurations become visible. In doing so however, rival claimants for centrality emerge in turn. Prime among them are the dominant representatives of the “activated” audiences of talkback radio: seemingly self-actualising “regular” listener-callers.

As they are brought to confront the infinitely multiplied choices and self-asserting techniques of DABcasting or Internet broadcast, how will the very active listener-callers and volunteer programmers of this study respond? Is this the moment which will deliver Foucault’s (1988) and Rose’s (1996) hopes for a “next step” in technologies of the self - if not a step to reflexive “disinvention”, then at least to a heightened visibility of means of contestation among possible selves? Does digitisation expand potential for new “active” listener-selves to aggregate into innovation, or for influential minorities to “self create”? Or will DABcasting further atomise and localise: control not through massing, but through subtle extension of the “autonomy-responsibility” motif, providing a very settled and pre-disciplined motility, already appropriated by the politics of choice, but rotating faster than ever.

As commentary on media-industry plans for mergers and de-regulation alerts us to a “re-massing” of corporate power (Fairchild, 1999), study of contemporary tendencies in talk radio practice alerts us to directions already under way to control even the “liquid” and interactive digital self.

14.2 Talking back: “unruly” subjection and the expression of “naive knowledges”

After close and detailed examination of four instances of contemporary talk programming, it is still tempting to see the host-caller relation as the dominant framing relation of radio in its current form. As with Foucault’s

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6 South Australian talkback host Bob Francis characterises this as the capacity to be at once “Abdullah the Sheik and Ali the serf” - the listener’s servant as much as the all-powerful radio star - and maintains that he is rather less constrained during an interview with a major political leader than he is when delivering sponsors’ “prizes” to listener’s homes.

7 Grant’s (1996) comments on the current roles of legitimate narrowcasting in Australia suggest a future of re-appropriation and multiplexed “re-massing”.

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work on de-centring the concept of historical continuity of the development of ideas in favour of an unequal, interrupted development, this study of radio interrelates disparate and contesting visions and practices, rather than tracing a single developmental line. The radio texts under examination come from formats and sectors which interrupt and deny one another - as do individual contributors to each text. But the aim of the study is focused too on critique of the unitary and originary myths that talk radio itself holds out - so oddly in a de-spatialising and de-centring medium. It becomes, as Foucault points out:

... a question of isolating the form of rationality presented as dominant, and endowed with the status of the one-and-only reason, in order to show that it is only one possible form among others (1990, p. 27).

While my study focuses in the first instance on the most popular and most powerful of talk hosts, seeking out the “forms of rationality” claimed, displayed, or enacted, it also highlights those performer-listeners who most strongly contest such forms of “rational” argumentation (see for instance Minister Ruddock, Sandra and Henry, Chapters 5, 6 and 7). Their specific forms of resistance to the “all-powerful” radio host demonstrate Foucault’s contention that ways of seeing, doing, being, “reside on a base of human practice and human history; and that since these things have been made, they can be unmade, as long as we know how it was that they were made” (1990, p. 37). This study has sought out in particular those subjugated or marginal knowledges which Foucault locates “low down” on hierarchies of ideas (in Gordon, 1980, p. 82), suggesting that for all their destructive abuse at the hands of the radio hosts, their capacity to prevail, and to elicit supportive follow-on calls, marks the counter-constitution, even within what I have called aggressive and contestational radio styles, of Fraser’s (1993) “subaltern counter-publics”, around whom social, cultural, and political difference can and do focus.

These often powerful representations of counter-vailing opinion can work within, or against, the dominant programming styles. Across the data corpus of this study, those aggressively competitive espousals of free-wheeling entrepreneurial agency which are coded as active masculinity receive equally aggressive, but differently directed, responses from listeners identifying as working class - or, in one case, from an Aboriginal listener. As Foucault suggests, in a culture where the panoptic systems of regulatory cultural surveillance are enacted most thoroughly by and on the bourgeois - and the male bourgeois at that - a more overt disciplining strategy is likely to be
deployed against those culturally positioned "outside" or on the margins of the regulatory processes. Within a frame - however mythical - of "free access" and equality, such a step outside the consensual is thrown into stark relief. So it is that an Aboriginal male, or those other listener-callers most marginalised from the particular economic power and cultural agency of this programming; elderly suburban women - are able to re-connect into the "positional discourses" offered by a dominating talkback host, and construct within his programme alternatively powerful roles. If they become, as Toby Miller (1993) has termed such behaviours, "unruly" as compared to "well tempered" subjects, their unruliness takes such a wide variety of divergent forms as to defy attempts to regulate, let alone standardise it.

What results is the paradox of a central, aggressively opinionated and urgently politicising mass-medium, perversely legitimating, in a number of variant relational discursive constructions, "unruly" subjects and their unregulated ways of knowing their worlds. The "subjugated knowledges" thus brought into play are both, in Foucault's terms, "historical contents that have been buried and disguised in functionalist coherence or formal systematisation ... present but disguised", but also

... knowledges that have been disqualified as inadequate to their task or insufficiently elaborated: naive knowledges, located low down on the hierarchy, beneath the required level of cognition or scientificity (1980, pp. 81-82).

For Foucault, as for Stanley and Wise (1993) it is precisely through the reappearance of this knowledge, or these local popular knowledges: these disqualified knowledges; that criticism performs its work. The position exerts a dual tension in regard to the particular form of socially "critical" commentaries enacted by talkback broadcasters. In the case for instance of Radio 2UE's Stan Zemanek, his self-styling as a "voice of the ordinary citizen" in contrast to the "out-of-touch" positions of decision-makers renders him too a representative of "disqualified knowledge", positioning him "low down on the hierarchy", and thus, presumably, validating the violence of his techniques. His aggressive representation of "suppressed" opinion is necessitated by the degree to which "the ordinary" views of himself and his

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4 See also Thompson's (1995) critique of Habermas, which suggests that, among other shortcomings, the theory of the public sphere was too limited in its elaboration of ONLY a bourgeois version of powerful public leadership: that alternatives existed - in, for example, working-class or non-conformist religious movements.
callers are disregarded, and need powerful reiteration. And yet, in dealing with his callers, he encounters almost exclusively other subsets of subjugees, who vary only in the degree to which they are, or are not, "unruly" or "well-tempered", in Miller's terms.

In following the paradoxes of such a position, it is worth considering Foucault's view of how power within any cultural system is exerted not from above, but from all points of a social system:

Power is everywhere; not because it embraces everything but because it comes from everywhere ... Power comes from below; that is there is no binary and all-encompassing opposition between ruler and ruled at the root of power relations, and serving as a general matrix - no such duality extending from the top down and reacting on more and more limited groups to the very depths of the social body. One must suppose rather that the manifold relations of force that take shape and come into play in the machinery of production, in families, limited groups and institutions, are the basis for wide-ranging effects of cleavage that run through the social body as a whole (1990a, pp. 93-94).

In the absence of any over-riding system of power, just such "powerful" behaviours as those Zemanek or Dr Feelgood practise, become necessary to the maintenance of hegemonic order. Reacting to and interacting with power as it exists contingently in every set of local conditions, their practice indicates not only how relations of force exist and operate, but how each must be read out from its local existence. Thus for instance, the inclusion within my data corpus for this study, of examples as diverse as the particular patriarchal positioning taken up in The Prison Show, (see Chapter 13) where programming directed to those doubly-removed from expression or enactment of powerful masculinities: Aboriginal prisoners, gives radio "voice" to an ongoing series of gendered conflicts between male and female programme presenters. The compensatory social agency afforded women in the absence of their prisoner partners is actively contested and its "imbalance" attacked, in the very programming which claims to offer a virtual de-sequestration for prisoners, back into the harmonious integration of conjugal intimacy. The specific structuration of programming discourses, "read back" from within the audiences they establish, reveals the social formations they serve. With careful analysis, it is possible to work back from talk and text to the organising systems which structure the discursive array: to locate within radio's daily practices across a range of often contradictory or even chaotic programming, dominant socio-cultural positions, working not

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9 See Kingston, 1999, who argues for the need to take such claims seriously, rather than dismissing them, in the Adams and Burton (1997) style, as "incoherent ravings".
by coercion - although that may well be deployed as a strategy at any given moment - but by assent.

As Fairclough has demonstrated, talk-texts “operationalise” existing power relations, operating simultaneously to construct social identities and “subject positions”; to build and maintain social relationships between people, and to contribute to systems of knowledge and belief (1992, p. 64). But they may also, as he later points out, become “invested” and even “reinvested” in particular ways, as they come into contact with “different social domains or institutional settings” (1992, p. 67). It is this capacity for “convertibility”, and not their monolithic patriarchal opinionatedness or social conservatism, which is most evident in contemporary talk-host/caller relations, and which has led to the dominance of host-caller relations as a focus within talk-radio analysis. Established within the talk-relations of the various programmes analysed in this study, evidence of caller capacity to subvert, deny, and even appropriate the powerful talk-behaviours of hosts makes interesting comment on the current state of radio as a “mass” communications medium. But to code such a process as a victory for self-actualisation is also to over-emphasise its efficacy; to extrapolate to all what is still the reserve of exceptional listener-calls, and to ignore the ongoing capacities of hosts to themselves “convert” and “reinvest” the contributions of active audiences. Still operating as hegemonic reinforcement of central socio-cultural values and even as a particular programme and station ethos, as much as conscious resistance, “active” listener-caller roles are a necessary part of contemporary radio practice. To capture the full operation of millennial broadcasting, and to consider its next, digital mode, is to acknowledge the paradox of the “active audience” as still regulated in these ways - most often BY their very acts of contestation.

14.3 “Testing for levels”\(^{10}\): establishing what radio will and will not express, foster, preserve, and reactivate

For Foucault, the multi-dimensionality required in analysis of the many levels at which meaningful social activity is structured, is theorised within his concept of an archive. By this he means not the single product of an act of critical research, involving collection, analysis and collation (in the case of this study for instance, the data corpus of radio talk transcribed off-air), but the

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\(^{10}\) The phrase is in daily use in radio production, as presenters and technicians measure sound-register levels before recording. “What is heard” by radio as a social technology is however equally as important.
forces lying beneath it and producing it. The texts, practices, and personae of this study’s archive are the terrain across which run the discourses located within the talk-data, constituting their central values, in an intersection of consensual and contestational gambits.

In this case, radio’s overt use of personae to perform variant social selves becomes especially pertinent, since it allows us to witness the “remake” processes (“convertibility”) transforming callers such as Zemanek’s Jockstrap Joe or Missy from anonymity into hot promotional properties. Counselling clients such as *Pillowtalk*’s suicidal Carl are similarly and quite literally “talked round” by an overwhelming combination of medical-psychological expertise, and listener-caller “life-experience” support. His re/mediation is in turn enacted in miniature by Dr Feelgood’s diagnostic technique, in which interrogation is passed back to the listener-caller through the host’s imaginative occupancy of the problem narrative: her dramatisation of the “corrected” behaviour, which closes each diagnostic exchange - but, as with Montgomery’s DJ talk, opens the narratives to imaginative projection by listeners.

What become apparent in such overtly regulatory exchanges are the particular cultural or subcultural codes of acceptability. The talk-texts become prime material for elaboration of Foucault’s archive: the activities which regulate what can actually be constructed as texts, through (in this case radio’s) talk. By “archive” Foucault means:

... not...the sum of all the texts that a culture has kept upon its person as documents attesting to its own past, or as evidence of a continuing identity... but [those that] appeared by virtue of a whole set of relations that are peculiar to a discursive level... in short... if there are things said... one should seek the immediate reason for them in the things that were not said in them, nor in the men that said them, but in the system of discursivity, in the enunciative possibilities that it lays down, or chance to have survived oblivion from this period (Foucault, 1972, p 129).

Foucault’s system sets us to locate the set of rules which at a given period and for a definite society define 1) the limits and forms of expressibility; 2) the limits and forms of conservation; 3) the limits and forms of memory; and 4) the limits and forms of reactivation.
It is possible within talk-radio’s discursive practice to see a given cultural archive under formation and in deployment, because radio is itself overtly “archaeological”. It continuously foregrounds in its own practices “the forms” of what may be expressed, and polices them. Radio is one of the “surfaces ... of emergence” (1972, p. 41) where discourses can be traced. Its capacity for audio-taping and re-editing: extending the life of a given discursive formation and reapplying it in changed contexts; disciplines cultural codes, modelling what is “worth” conserving and replaying. It thus censors and endorses and suppresses and advises; approves and disapproves of both what is said and how it is said. Radio edits, deliberately transforming texts for its various sub-cultural markets. It extends the length of influence of individual statements and entire orders of discourse with its re-runs, promotional intensification, rotational play modes, repeat programming, or release onto the permanence of cassette or CD compilations. It both evokes memory with its sound clips and jingles and tag lines, and restructures it with selective editing.\(^{11}\) Radio as cultural archive constructs and maintains an “interpretive” commentary. It “reactivates” itself as a dominant daily broadcasting practice, building its texts around the intertextual and transformational culling of sound-bites, music tracks, replays, promos, and print newsclip referencing - all of the techniques which constitute contemporary “broadcasting spontaneity” (see Burris 1988; Prato 1993; Shepard 1994).

This is not to suggest the totalising irresistibility of such a system - at least in relation to specific positions taken within it. As Heath made clear (see Chapter 1 above), the process is reproductive of itself, rather than of the consistent elaboration of a particular position on any specific instance. Thus the possibility of instances where the archive is able to shift beneath the text, without causing the entire system to founder - without, in fact, causing any marked degree of comment. In 1996, during the first spate of Australian talkback debate over the opinions of One Nation politician Pauline Hanson, Station Manager for Radio 2UE Sydney, John Brennan, was approached by an afternoon shift presenter, who declared his unwillingness to endorse caller support for Ms Hanson’s position on race, immigration and Aboriginal land rights issues. Brennan advised the broadcaster to remain on air, taking up whatever position he was able to represent - thus creating a situation in

\(^{11}\) *The Stan Zemanek Show* for instance uses bites from the Dr René Pols interview as promos for following shows - the rising ire of the host and interviewer deliberately selected, to demonstrate the show’s capacity to capture “hard debate” as entertainment.
which the political orientation of the station performed a double about-face within a single day’s programming. Subsequent ratings surveys indicated a minimal (1.1 point) drop in the listening audience. What counted was not the content or orientation of the debates presented on air, but the very fact of debate.

Such “unstable” moments become important. They reveal different forms of power contesting, engaged in the drive to establish social identity. Discourse has links with how human subjects are formed; how institutions attempt to “normalise” those on the margins of social life; how historical conditions of knowledge change. Discourse in the Foucauldian summation is not how subjects prior to it express themselves; rather, it constitutes the subject by selecting how it can express. It sets up places and positions in which subjects can form as X or as Y. The archive is thus not about constancy but about change. Within recurrent limitations, it establishes the fact that we are not firm and discrete identities, but fragmented and changing sites across which flows of power move. “We are difference ... our selves the difference of masks” (Foucault 1972, p. 131) enacting the range of social powers which we tell ourselves constrains us. As Rose (1996) puts it, adapting Deleuze and Guattari’s metaphor of the “swarm”:

Practices of subjectification might best be understood in terms of the complex interconnections, techniques, and lines of force between heterogenous components that incite, make possible and stabilize particular relations to oneself in specific sites and locales. Technologies of subjectification, then, are the machinations, the being-assembled-together with particular intellectual and practical instruments, components, entities and devices that produce certain ways of being-human, territorialise, stratify, fix, organise, and render durable particular relations that humans may truthfully establish with themselves.

There is no need to posit any ‘propulsive medium’ behind all these technologies, no primordial force or desire that courses through these assemblages and makes it possible for them to act, change, resist, mutate. The ‘question of agency’ as it has come to be termed, poses a false problem. To account for the capacity to act one needs no theory of the subject prior to and resistant to that which would capture it - such capacities for action emerge out of the specific regimes and technologies that machinate humans in diverse ways (pp. 186-187).

And so contemporary talk radio sets up conditions under which “listeners” become broadcasters, without ever being told they are. As they tell IN their experience, tailoring their anecdotes to the demands of the medium and its particular discursive strategies; using its structured and selective ways, they are themselves reformulated.
This does not occur in a “free field” of equalised access. Wiltshire (1993),
details the way medical narratives - even those “victim” narratives explicitly
set up to counter the dominance of scientific medicine’s accounts of a given
disease - are inevitably configured around those same dominant discourses.
He is able to show how even the fact of the elicitation of a “counter-narrative”
within the field of the medical gaze, distorts the “corrective” aim into a
reassertion of the original power of the medical perspective. While the
medical authorities take no part in the counter-narrating, they are still central
to its narrative. So too with the radio hosts, whose opinions - carefully
arranged to be optimally contentious - are presented as “teasers” at the
beginning of each programme - and re-introduced at any point throughout
their shift when caller response appears to be flagging. While at first sight
these appear to be constraining the opinion: pre-arranging what will and will
not go to air; the process is regulatory of opinion’s flow rather than of its
content. Teasers are designed as much to provoke as to entice. Argument as
much as assent is sought. It is the terms of debate, rather than the issues at
contention, which are being outlined.

Foucault sees discursive domains as having precisely these internal
regulatory functions - and stresses the meaningfulness of their
discontinuities:

Archaeology disarticulates the synchrony of breaks, just as it destroyed the
abstract unity of change and event (1972, p. 176).

Functioning within a given discursive domain is unlikely to transform the
outcomes of debate, for contention actually endorses and enhances the power
of the discursive domain. It is the activity itself which counts, rather than the
“merits” of an argument, the skills of a contributor, or the personality of a
broadcaster. While change is possible, in being achieved it must alter the
discursive formulae at some level.

Foucault’s work establishes some of the parameters through which such
change can be observed. He cites for instance “derivations”, or situations in
which a discursive application attaching to one object transfers to another;
“mutations”, or circumstances in which the boundaries of discursive domains
are extended or altered, so that the language of the discourse changes, its
subjects change, its place changes; or “redistributions” - when the relations
between discourses change.
The analytical aim then becomes one of examining dependencies within and between discourses, and between discourses and the periods of social-political change in which they arise. The technique, rather than seeking to "reclaim" a discourse, shucking off its "distorting" or corroded historical layers, aims to show what brought it into being; to locate its actual conditions of existence, rather than formulate its abstract "structural laws". A focus on contexts and social uses of radio programming, broadcasting sectors, and radio as a technology of delivery, must operate alongside the finely-detailed work on power-flows along the inter-relational axes of radio talk. As Bourdieu established in his work on language as symbolic and "euphemistic" enactment of power relations operative elsewhere, what counts are the specific fields of regulated social behaviour and cultural values which lie behind a range of selected linguistic practices and the power relations they reveal – as well as the communicative technologies selected to best operationalise their flows.

Digital broadcasting, which arises at the moment of advanced liberalism’s appropriation of the ethics of self directedness, seeks to spin added and intensified productivity from a re-working and “localisation” of information flow. Already observable as it defines its audiences and formats, are massive duplications and escalations of the technologies of the “choice” and “styling” formations of the self-steering self. These selves as elements of enterprise culture’s consuming “machines” are in themselves never entirely produced, and never entirely consumed, because always partial, always renewing and updating - feeding off their own data- flows to deliver the next phase. As Rothenbuhler (1996) has indicated, the logic of commercial broadcasting prioritises the logic of commerce. Since commercial broadcasting remains Australian radio’s dominant sector, and since digital broadcasting is being introduced in a period marked by the cultural and political pre-eminence of “enterprise”, commercial practices are most likely to prevail within the design and development of new digitised formats, genres and talk-techniques for DAB. How far then can such a system deliver change or diversity, when the cultural space required for such experimentation is already discursively occupied by the mechanics of enterprise-culture’s “choice”?
14.4 “Behind the great abstraction of exchange”: (... nothing?)

Foucault reminds us that the “new” discourses surrounding digital broadcasting will be constituted and transformed within particular fields of regulated social behaviours. Specific discourses emerge from within limited “practical domains” (1972, p. 121) and must be assessed in terms of their origins in and influences on social actions and interactions, rather than appearing in the first instance within language. As problematic as this may be for those like myself, dealing in the language-rich field of radio, those representations which language, like the world of visual images, uses to “encode” our perceptions, must ultimately be de-emphasised, in order to release understanding of the results of their deployment. It is the broader social function a specific language-use engages which counts:

Our society is not one of spectacle, but of surveillance; under the surface of images, one invests bodies in depth; behind the great abstraction of exchange, there continues the meticulous, concrete training of useful forces; the circuits of communication are the supports of an accumulation and a centralisation of knowledge; the play of signs defines the anchorages of power; it is not that the beautiful totality of the individual is amputated, repressed, altered by our social order, it is rather that the individual is carefully fabricated within it, according to a whole technique of forces and bodies (1979, p. 217).

The ceaseless operation of a disciplining power, acting at once from many quarters - what Foucault describes elsewhere as a “capillary” pressure - ensures the maintenance of a system, through the ultimate unlocatability of its primary force. Thus it is that those radio talkback hosts identified within a culture as unduly “powerful” can deny the charges with what appears as utter conviction. Their power lies not in their own sense of autonomous agency originating in a distinctive self - although they may enact this at various moments - but in their obverse sense that they are “harnessing” the opinions of “the majority”: rendering back what is rendered unto them. Perhaps oddly, their own summation of their role is at once more accurate, and more frightening, than that contained in the analysis of many of their critics - for the “monster” is surely less containable when already dispersed among us all. But does this mean that a Foucauldian model of a diffuse and recessively reduplicated social power means a social order which is unassailable?

Social change is indeed possible within such a theorisation, and the systems by no means totalising and monolithic. For Foucault a progressive politics needs to consider five modes of discursive operation. It must recognise the
historical conditions and the specified rules of a practice; define in a practice
the possibilities of transformation and the play of dependencies between
these transformations; not make "man" or the consciousness of the subject in
general into a universal operator of all transformations; define the different
levels and functions which subjects can occupy in a domain which has its
own rules of formation; acknowledge that discourses are not "the result of
mute processes or the expression of a silent consciousness, but ... form a
practice which is articulated upon the other practices", and so come to know
the manner in which discourses correlate with other practices (1978, p. 25).
Only by such dual work, attending to both the terms and the targets of
discourses, can the operations of power within a cultural moment and its
social reality be understood. For Foucault

there are manifold relations of power which permeate, characterise and
constitute the social body, and these relations of power cannot themselves be
established, consolidated nor implemented without the production,
accumulation, circulation and functioning of a discourse. There can be no
possible exercise of power without a certain economy of discourses of truth
which operates through and on the basis of this association. We are subjected to
the production of truth through power and we cannot exercise power except
through the production of truth (in Gordon, 1980, p. 93).

Just such discursive modelling of "truth claims" is under way in the
elaboration of new "informational" selves for the digitised broadcasting
market.

Already, its "economy of discourses of truth" is evident – and alongside it,
clearly identified "preferred selves". WorldDab 72, the premier international
promotional and experimental body for digital broadcasting, reported as
early as 1997 its preliminary European market-survey profiling of "an
immediate DAB market potential for 33 million families - initially for car
radios and soon for the home" (European Broadcasting Union, EN301.234
v1.1.1, 1998-2001, original emphasis). Its structuration of the "ideal early-
adaptor" - "men rather than women; the young rather than older people;
those with higher incomes; heavy radio listeners" is reflected in the resultant
grid of services to be offered: 12

12 See also Soothill, 1999 and Berryman, 1999, for predictions of Australian and local-regional
DAB services; and R.C. Oei Wen Hsien, Digital radio programming: altering the DNA of radio
broadcasting (forthcoming, 2001) for the Singapore Broadcast Service's preferred model.
Testing of DAB Market Potential: Illustrative “Tiers” of DAB Functions and Services

1. **Audio Enhancement**
   - Interference-free reception
   - CD quality sound
   - No need to re-tune on the move

2. **Audio Related Functions**
   - A display of the name of the station you are tuned to
   - The name of the song title or artist you are listening to
   - Information about programmes coming up on this station
   - Information about programmes on other stations of interest to you
   - A search facility to enable you to find certain types of station (such as news, sport, pop or easy-listening music)
   - The latest national and international news headlines
   - The latest local news headlines
   - Financial and stock market news headlines
   - The latest sports results
   - A "Tell me more" button to give you details about a news or sports item, for example, that you are particularly interested in
   - The latest local weather forecast in brief
   - Up-to-the-minute local traffic news
   - An entirely new station, specialising in your favourite kind of music

3. **Screen-based Information**
   - The latest news
   - The latest local news
   - Financial and stock market news
   - The latest local weather forecast
   - Environmental information like air quality
   - Local bus, train and airline timetables
   - Up-to-date information about local travel problems
   - Information for tourists, such as hotel availability
   - Lists of concerts and exhibitions
   - A theatre and concert ticket reservation service
   - A directory of radio stations in your area
   - A facility to call up the covers of the latest CD releases
   - Listings of houses and apartments for sale or to rent
   - Listing of cars for sale
   - Electronic yellow pages covering, for example, lists of restaurants, garages, builders and so on

4. **New Radio Stations: Free or Subscription**
   - A DAB station specialising in your favourite type of music
   - A DAB station specialising in national and international news
   - A DAB station specialising in financial news and stock market news
   - A DAB specialist sports station
   - A selection of five to ten such DAB radio stations from which you could choose
   - A DAB station specialising in culture: music, literature and science
   - A DAB station specialising in weather forecasts and traffic news across the nation

5. **PC-linked Services**
   - Lists of houses or apartments for sale or to rent, to a specification you have drawn up
   - Lists of cars for sale, again of a type you have specified
   - Listings (eg) of restaurants, garages, or builders that you have specified
   - The up-to-date prices of stocks and shares
   - An electronic newspaper that enables you to call up the sections you want to receive - such as fashion, finance or sport
   - Computer games
   - A computer software updating service
This is a map not of existing but of future users and uses: of “selves” to be brought into being, by the very systems they will be persuaded to want to use (Jensen, 2000). The historical conditions of an existing hi-tech and mobile informational demand produces a “psycho-demographic” which dictates the forms DABcasting will take, by elaborating the vectors of its insertion into social uses. The transformational tendencies required for the success of this insertion are already evident within the discourses of the map, with its repeated reference to “the latest”; its easy address of the promotional “you” - “the station you are listening to”; “other stations of interest to you”; and its appropriation of the “activating” and “specifying” self in such phrases as “a ’Tell me more’ button ...” The articulation of such discursive framings to an already-existent “enterprise” self is very evident - part of that seemingly self-actualising “autonomised” consumer who now stands in for the agentic self still proffered as part of this discursive frame. And finally, “choice” appears alongside an enhanced ubiquity: from radio “functions” to an increased number of radio stations; from DAB console screen or personal computer, services will flow to the “informed” self.

That this is a new insertion of a service, and not a new service, is signalled in the degree to which no “innovation” actually appears. In the ETSI-EBU proposals what we have is only a new bricolage. Inherently commercial, it simply re-streams audio-connectedness - directly into Lefebvre’s space of the “productive forces”, inside Castells “informational society”: the executive, mobile, urban, hi-tech-consuming young male executive as “enterprise man”. In Deleuze and Guattari’s (1987) terms, this is an attempt not to allow for a new “plane of consistency” to emerge, but to impose an already familiar “plane of organisation” (1987, pp. 261-270) onto a new technology of delivery.

The inherently commercial drive towards DAB is equally evident in the economic embeddedness of the new consumer-producer flows it enables. With DABcasting, the attraction for commerce – which has already successfully de-sequestered the private sphere to unprecedented levels, as we have seen – is that this new technology itself delivers the user-flow readings - no matter how complex. The mobility of DAB’s first-favoured psycho-demographic reveals an entire system shifting towards a new conceptualisation and realisation of its audiences. Digital capacity for instantaneous “massing” of consumption patterns delivers one vector of the new commercial topography. “The local” promises the other, in terms of a
readable, mobile mapping of entrepreneurial potential, across entire landscapes of small services and retail outlets. What “Tourist radio” brings you now: a limited field for your in-car tuner to pick up local visitor information, will be expanded infinitely, as commercial radio – and possibly the Community broadcasting sector, expanding its drive to commercial “sponsorship” – brings local businesses on line for the mobile listener-consumer.

Like its existing talkback radio counterpart, the apparently monolithic edifice which results will be designed to be maximally “open” to participation – despite being hedged around with complex systems of fee-for-service, data-flow protection hardware, ad-booking “avail” prioritisations, and so on. As both Lefebvre (1991a) and Virilio (1986) have observed within the more tangible apparatus of the market economy: the architectural constraints of the modern cityscape as a machine of capitalist activity; the entire massive structure of enterprise must be shot through with openings. Like capitalism itself, the discursive formation of entrepreneurialism is “an accumulation.” Within commercial radio’s virtual agora of discursive exchange, in which, as Bourdieu has indicated (see Chapter 2) a “profit” is sought as wholeheartedly as within its physical equivalent, you are ceaselessly invited to “air your point of view” and “have your say”: to participate in (discursive) trade. But in DABcasting your participation will register – whether you vocalise it or not. These are procedures which, rather than creating an oppositional system, seek to align you with the structures, via the practices, of the dominant discourse. Even inside existing broadcasting, in evoking either your endorsement or your opposition to its propositions, Fairclough’s “enterprise discourse” pulls you into its orbit.

Hence the major effect of the Panopticon: to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power. So to arrange things that the surveillance is permanent in its effects, even if it is discontinuous in its actions; that the perfection of power should tend to render its actual exercise unnecessary; that this architectural apparatus should be a machine for creating and sustaining a power relation independent of the person who exercises it; in short, that the inmates themselves should be caught up in a power situation of which they are themselves the bearers (1979, p. 201).

Radio is just such a “machine for creating and maintaining a power relation”; one which has not, as Potts (1989) has indicated ever ceased its discursive formulation since it came “on air” in the 1920s. It achieves exactly the surveillant power Foucault outlines, commanding engagement at all moments, voluntarily or involuntarily, via rediffusion in phone waiting, in
lifts, in shopping malls, and increasingly, from “inside” the head, as we have become “wired in” to the system via the miniaturised ear pieces of the Sony Walkman (Hosokawa 1984).

We not only encounter radio at any moment however, for we are not merely the “observed”, but the active listener-caller co-producers of radio’s social meanings, who, once correctly oriented, can be called upon to reveal the right knowledges as “regimes of truth” at any instant. Thus commercial radio’s unsolicited phone calls for “lucky numbers”; the quiz questions, and the concomitant requirement to respond with the correct station id. tags and promotional slogans, or to name the last-played music track, as evidence of obedient listenership. Such calls are immediately transformed into the materials of direct market engagement: edited into promotional stings, or their agents sent off to specific market locations to recite the formula: “tell them Stan sent you” in order to “win their prize”. And beyond these more directly market-engaged exchanges, complex instruction in the procedures of surveillant regimes proceeds. Dr Feelgood rehearses a staged induction into self-interrogatory “confessional” narratives and their imagined “corrective” dramatisations. The Prison Show presenters form a directly-disciplinary gender-ordering within their “joke” talk-relations, to construct claims for a compensatory powerful masculinity and a saturating feminised domesticity, where neither are actually available.

In such circumstances, for all its persistent play across “personality” and “free expression”, the programming has become precisely what its name suggests. It is a ceaseless disciplining of the docile listener-citizen, so well learned that it has become “independent of the person who exercises it.” Caught up in a system in which we are ourselves the bearers of that system’s powers over us, we have become as radio listeners simultaneously radio producers - producing ourselves as its product. With DABcasting, the formation becomes complete. Not only do we willingly “self steer”, but the automatic transcription of our selected topographies: our choices and preferences – perfects the circuitry.

14.5 “Liquid” informational identity and radio’s relational discourses: speaking to the cyborg self

This raises the question of what such a mobile, de-centralised, cultural network of symbol-creation might look like. How, as individuals within such
an informational society, we are to “be”. In realising the “individual listener” which Hilda Matheson’s BBC Radio Talks team of the 1930s invoked within the personalised-address radio performance for a “privatised” public, (1933; see also Hunter, 2000), how far has the postmodern “active reception” radio listener moved towards a new politics of identity? In Foucault’s terms (1988), which “technologies of self” accompany contemporary radio’s production practices?

There is already clear convergence between postmodern re-theorisation of the activities of achieving self-hood, and recent increased scholarly consideration of the ways radio may be contributing to such processes. Robert Wilson (1995), in discussing what he calls “the multiplicity of the human body” in its “cyborg” or half-human, half machine response to the intensified technologising of late twentieth-century postmodernity, comments that we can no longer be sure “where people’s edges are ...” or “where their identity begins and ends” (p. 243). Scannell, (1992) observing how British broadcasting has finally abandoned its high-culture exclusivity and “discovered the pleasures of ordinariness” (p. 325) sees how “broadcasting’s universe of discourse is as much a set of relations as a content” (p. 329). He detects an infinitely more open and contesting engagement with a more diverse range of positions, and the evolution of a textuality suited to a sociality of negotiation, constitutive of a rather more boundariless identity (Pryor, 1991).

Is radio then a cyborg technology - perhaps even the original cyborg technology? Gray, Mentor, and Figueroa-Sarriera (1995), attempting a cyborg definition which will embrace the rapidly-broadening range of associated technologies, suggest “an entity that mixes the mechanic and the organic - a creature that is part human and part machine” (p. 3). Every broadcaster, her thumbs switching across channels, fingers sliding faders up and down, realtime sound from the microphones in one ear, broadcast sound from the desk with its delay asynchrony in the other; the capacity to re-source from phone, other studio, outside broadcast source or relay transmission, or to shift into the “un-transmit” sampling of “cue” mode; knows the powers of radio transmission to “blur edges.” Even with the so-called “live” sound of actual, discoursing subjects (whom radio workers describe, in terms of classic metonymic disembodiment, as “the talent”), the technical enhancements available to achieve the desired sound reduce the “real” as against the technologised: “the organic” as opposed to “the mechanic”.

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Gray, (1995, p. 2) describes as a cyborg “anyone with an artificial organ, limb or supplement (like a pacemaker); anyone reprogrammed to resist disease (immunised); or drugged to think/behave/feel better (psychopharmacology)”. Hosokawa’s (1986) thesis that the most significant recent technology in radio is the Sony Walkman: its miniaturisation and portability “interiorising” radio signals in ways that have become familiar so rapidly as to signal an existing understanding of radio as having “entered us”, annexes Gray’s vision of the “already penetrated” self to the radio listener. Sony’s lightweight plastic headphones or ear pieces sign the most recent stage of an aural penetration which began long ago, and which arguably adds to the prosthetic repertoire of the cyborg exactly those elements which most cultural commentators still list as outside the new technologies:

Currently, every human body part other than the brain and the nervous system can be replaced prosthetically (Wilson 1995, p. 243).

Radio, with its capacity to dis-place and re-position: to redistribute mental focus across space and time, and yet appear at once to carry a plenitude of presence into the aural body cavities, its stereo sound relocated somewhere in the centre of the skull as its sounding chamber, is a medium which has already lost a sense of its own interface. There has been no significant new stylisation of the stand-alone radio receiver since the introduction of transistorisation in the 1960s - indeed, many new contemporary stand-alone radios are retro-styled into the art-deco forms of “wireless’s” period of dominance (Hill, 1978). Instead, radio receiver sets have become either integrated into other “sound systems,” miniaturised and portabilised, or else are reappearing on the Internet, or the telephone, or the bedside clock, seemingly “inside” another medium. Radio as a technology seems to be continuing its predisposition to disappear, resurfacing in our consciousness only at moments when its presence becomes unwelcome - such as that marked by the fury of talkback hosts, who still have to remind callers to turn down their radio sets to prevent feedback distortion on-air. The sheer recurrence of this behaviour after more than thirty years of talkback, signals the degree to which for the talkback radio caller, there is no mediation (Krueger, 1990), but exactly the immediacy of relation which the contemporary talk host forges with his “conversationalised” presentational mode. Once itself discursively elaborated into a central technology of marvel: an electric miracle of social connectedness, radio has itself now vanished into
the social - and is already in the process of absorption even more intimately, into the processing of individual identity.

14.6 "Double-consciousness": the “real” of the information matrix

What then are the impacts of radio’s increasingly naturalised and imperceptible multi-presence on identity? For Robert Wilson, cyborg identity is about multiplicity: “In having a prosthesis, I experience a double consciousness” (pp. 239-240). Not only is the sensorium enhanced, but the prosthesis has moved from a figure of compensation and so a sign of limitation, to suggest, as Anne Balsamo (1996) has pointed out, an improved, power-added existence:

Techno-bodies are healthy, enhanced and fully functional - more real than real. New body technologies are often promoted and rationalised as life enhancing and even lifesaving (p. 5).

For Balsamo, as for Soja, the new myth of “enhancement”, the triumph of the "mechanic" over the “organic”, accompanies a cultural shift into a hypothetical but already technologically elaborated “Thirdspace”:

In the development of virtual reality (VR) applications and hardware, the body is redefined as a machine interface. In efforts to colonise the electronic frontier - called cyberspace or the information matrix - the material body is repressed and divorced from the locus of knowledge (p. 14).

Nor is such intensified neo-Cartesianism without impact on those minds and bodies which participate:

In travelling through various virtual cyberworlds, it no longer makes sense to ask whose reality or perspective is represented in cyberspace; rather we should ask what reality is created therein, and how this reality articulates relationships among technologies, bodies and narratives (pp. 14-15).

As with Lefebvre’s sense of cultural shift into a (lived) “space of representation”, it is the attempt to read the “new” realities of the technologically recombinant sociality and identity which counts. The broadcaster too, in moving beyond realtime sound, exists as just such a multiple entity. The technologies with which she works to call her “radio self” into existence: those taped and recorded “recombinant” sound sources, are marked by their capacity to modify, cut and splice, multitrack. They are by definition “rearranged” within the terms of a culture beyond simple explanatory divisions between “real” and “representational”. Indeed, radio
texts are themselves recombinant at the point of their selection for broadcast: for instance in the arts of music “sampling”; in that Bakhtinian dual-vocality which is the “performed” talk of a professional persona; even, as discourse analysts tell us, in the saturating “intertextuality” of all talk texts. Thus the radio medium as a “production” technology is itself recombinant at core: dis-locating in terms of space.

The tendency aligns it interestingly with the mobility, duplicity and nearness to chaos which has conventionally had cultural definition as “feminine” (Gill & Grint, 1995). Sadie Plant’s take on cyberculture: one which, with Haraway, senses the “dangerous alliance” between machine and woman - suggests that the “spaces for disguise, concealment and masquerade” which each sees in social uses of the cyberspace networks of the new computer-mediated-communications (CMC) technologies, are another such element, bringing a post-gendered element to those media (1995b, pp. 4-5). In their analysis, the heavy gendering for instance detected - and contested - from the outset in regard to Internet use, has perversely offered opportunities for evasion of the very powers which constructed the systems: the “surveillant” techniques which Balsamo sees as the obverse of the liberatory myths of cyber-culture.

It is an opportunity women radio callers are clearly quick to exploit. Stan Zemanek Show caller Dorothy and regular Desma on The Prison Show, each in differing ways, dis-place their chosen radio venue further, Desma extending her voice across to the other Nunga in a distant prison system, Dorothy doing the same for suburban women sequestered within the private sphere. Nor do those women callers or presenters whose contribution is actualised less as directly instrumental than as performative miss an opportunity for disruptive play across radio’s capacity to re-render the self. Stan Zemanek Show regular caller Missy, playing out flirtatious masquerades which the host’s enthusiastic co-operation suggests he finds completely comprehensible; presenter Helen from The Prison Show, personalising her own messages to her prisoner-fiancé Jim, to an extent where they take on the characteristics of “phone sex”, each lift away from the selves of everyday, as well as from those allocated within the etiquettes of the broadcasting range offered to the “docile” woman (or indeed, as discussion during the Red Light Radio broadcasts suggests, to any women in the public sphere, unless she be professionally engaged in such “unruly” behaviours as the provision of fantasy sex.)
When broadcast production has shifted into a co-operative process, “the local” and quotidian picked up and amplified in radio’s technologised “space of flows”, the multiplicity of cyborg identity becomes available more broadly, and more disruptively, than early accounts of “heroic masculine” cyber-frontiership discourses have suggested (Bukatman 1994). This is not to discount the ongoing powers of such discursive formations, nor their capacity to re-contest challenges to their cultural primacy. The degree to which an overt male drive to occupy even this space of female-gendered and sexualised masquerade is evoked (see Chapters 4, 6, 8 and 13) shows how far countervailing techniques can be recaptured as strategies of power. If these “break-out” spaces operate as moments for contestation: as terrain in which existing relations are repeated and contested in known ways, radio’s offer of fluid identity is one made where the non-existing or “masquerading” body is still a body under surveillant and regulatory inscription (Balsamo 1996; Grosz 1994; Butler 1990; de Lauretis 1987).

Part of the problem is the existence within radio practice of two incommensurable versions of what is known as “radio flow”. In the first, and most commonly established version, there is the generic flow across the daily register of programming formats. Potts (1989) has itemised its uses, attributing to it the role of an overt social disciplinarity. The intercutting of texts, segments, voices, music styles, “paces” the listener’s day, from the up-beat music, regular news announcements and numerous time-calls of early morning shows, to the sentimental ballads, soft-voiced delivery and huskily intimate intoning of “late night listening.” In Scannell’s terms, it “routinises” everyday life.

A second way in which radio “flows” across listener consciousness lies within the realm of the amplified “phallic” radio voice, covering and suturing these seams of programme segmentation, as Goffman showed. As the still paradoxically patriarchal “personality” behind the microphone stitches together the varying segments; moves from guest to guest, music track to music track, he creates around himself a plenitude and presence - illusory, but powerfully compelling, the aural evocation of a unified and unifying “complete” self, which is radio’s representation of the Habermasian rational and autonomous individual. The fact that it is actually always interrupted, fluid and partial: that the enhanced voice (literally a cyborg voice) has a hollow and diminished interior space, is disturbingly demonstrated within talkback radio, where the “real” caller voices which intrude are marked by
the absence of amplification, perversely rendering them “authentic”. But while WAP technology and the mobile phone appear to promise an intensification of this ‘localised’ response, DAB, by its promises of “personalised” service flow, extends radio’s existing controls over the temporal/spatial nexus. By opting for pre-set, asynchronously delivered personalised programming, what we will access is only the illusion of “connectedness”, just as it always has been. But this time, what is promised but not delivered is contact with “the local” – our local. Like the digitised voices which already manage “our” phone messages, DABcast programmes will only partially – and unpredictably – be “live”.

Radio’s apparent fluidity across both social space and cultural identity thus shows again and again as having an emphasis on techniques of constraint - of control over fluidity. If the next generation of radio appears to offer an intensified fluid identity; a nomadic capacity to shift from space to space; if it carries signs of a high mobility, those elements of identity under offer are like those of today’s “active audiences” in talkback, always both already occupied at “broadcasting central”, and clearly directed to some point within existing cultural relations. What this study has offered is evidence for the powerful role radio is playing in both the disciplining, and the constant resistive reconstitution, of the self. As Rose remarks (1996, p. 197): “If we cannot disinvent ourselves, we might at least enhance the contestability of the forms of being that have been invented for us.” As WAP technology carries us beyond the textual biases of the Internet’s first generation as a global data net, into a verbal ephemera of informational flows few of us are prepared for, and as DABcasting shifts us into its increasingly “globalised” versions of our locale, such advice will become increasingly important.

*Keep listening.*
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Appendix One

Transcription Protocols

Transcription Method

The major part of the data for this study was transcribed from audio recordings taken during live broadcasts, recorded onto 60 minute TDK cassette tapes, on a SONY single-deck audio tuner/cassette recorder. Recordings of Red Light Radio, purchased from Warburton Media Monitors of South Australia, were taped onto 72-hour low-speed professional audit reels, and audio-transcribed onto cassette. The loss of sound quality which results from this technique was not significant for text transcription.

The audio tapes were monitored to log programme running order, and subsequently re-audited for transcription, using a SONY Walkman Professional audio recorder with high-accuracy manual pause control, earphone monitoring, and visual sound-level read-out.

Transcription was directly keyboarded into a Microsoft Word 6.5 file; originally in Ariel 12-point font, selected for on-screen legibility; reduced to Ariel 10-point before printing.

Initial transcripts were formatted to indicate only line number and speaker. For ease of location of line references, every fifth line number is in bold text.

Completed transcripts were then re-audited, and significant pauses, over-talking, stresses, interruptions, and indecipherable elements indicated.
Uncertain spellings (technical terms, placenames, proper names, non-English or dialect terms) have been checked whenever possible. Errors of idiolect and of dialect (malapropisms or colloquial forms) have been retained, and are specially indicated (marked sic) only when they might otherwise be read as errors of transcription.

Audio tapes were finally re-audited and the typescripts edited for accuracy.

**Transcription codings**

Given the often detailed analysis of talk extracts used in the data analysis, transcription techniques have been adapted from two major sources.

Codings not used in the present study are indicated in bold.

Ian Hutchby’s 1996 study of talkback radio conversation, *Confrontation Talk: Arguments, Asymmetries, and Power on Talk Radio*, Lawrence Erlbaum, New Jersey, p. 117 offers a simplified version of Sack’s CA (Conversation Analysis) transcription codings. He provides the following key to transcription symbols and conventions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Underlining</th>
<th>word</th>
<th>stress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Colons</td>
<td>wo::rd</td>
<td>extended sound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Left brackets</td>
<td>word[</td>
<td>overlap begins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right bracket</td>
<td>word]</td>
<td>overlap ends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equals sign</td>
<td>word=word</td>
<td>latching: one speaker cutting into another’s speech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dot- “h”</td>
<td>.hhh</td>
<td>audible intake of breath</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;h&quot;</td>
<td>hhh</td>
<td>audible exhale of breath</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bracketed “h”</td>
<td>wor(h)d</td>
<td>embedded laughter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree signs</td>
<td>&quot;word&quot;</td>
<td>quiet speech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chevrons</td>
<td>&gt;word&lt;</td>
<td>speeded up delivery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bracketed nos.</td>
<td>(0.0)</td>
<td>timed pause</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question mark</td>
<td>word?</td>
<td>rising intonation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comma</td>
<td>,</td>
<td>holding intonation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>falling intonation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dash</td>
<td>wor-</td>
<td>cut-off or glottal stop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capitals</td>
<td>WORD</td>
<td>loud talk</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


. certainty, completion, falling tone
no end of turn non-termination (no final intonation)
, parcelling of talk; breathing time
? uncertainty (rising tone, or wh-interrogative)
! "surprised" intonation
WORDS IN CAPITALS emphatic stress and/or increased volume
" " change in voice quality in reported speech
(words within parentheses) untranscribable talk
( ) transcriber’s guess
(words in square brackets) non-verbal information
== overlap (contiguity, simultaneity)
... short hesitation in a turn, less than 3 seconds
[pause - 4 secs] indication of inter-turn pause length
dash - then talk false start/restart
Appendix Two

Ratings

The Stan Zemanek Show

Radio 2UE Sydney; on relay to 4BC Brisbane
Producer: Shirley Collins
Ratings: AGB McNair Ratings Surveys 1997 No 3 (May); limited figures for Survey 1, February and Survey 3, 1996 – either side of the data collection.

Sydney: evening 7 p.m. - midnight

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zemanek</th>
<th>Total listeners</th>
<th>Average audience</th>
<th>Audience share</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2UE</td>
<td>210,000</td>
<td>37,000</td>
<td>14.6 (1996: 14.7/15.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilshire</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2GB</td>
<td>140,000</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>11.8 (1996: 8.3/8.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average other AM</td>
<td>57.667</td>
<td>6,667</td>
<td>2.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Average other FM</td>
<td>207,250</td>
<td>19,5000</td>
<td>7.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2JJJ</td>
<td>194,000</td>
<td>19,000</td>
<td>7.8 (1996: 7.0/8.0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

502
### Breakdown % of Average Audience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>M</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>10-24</th>
<th>25-39</th>
<th>40-54</th>
<th>55+</th>
<th>ABs</th>
<th>Cs</th>
<th>DEs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zemanek, 2UE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>23</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wilshire, 2GB</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2JJ</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Note:

The total age breakdown for the 1996 Sydney population:

|     | 24 | 29 | 24 | 23 |

### Occupation Groups/ income categories as a percentage of the labour force:

- **ABs** : Managers, administrative workers, professionals - 40%
- **Cs** : Sales assistants, clerical workers, para-professionals - 48%
- **DEs** : Machine operators, labourers - 12%
Appendix Three

Extract from *The Stan Zemanek Show*, Radio 2UE Sydney

Presenter: Stanley Zemanek
Producer: Shirley Collins
Interviewee: Dr René Pols,
Senior Psychiatrist at Flinders Medical Centre, South Australia,
Australian Medical Association Spokesmen on Legislative Reform
of the Use of Illicit Drugs.

Recorded off-air, April 1996; held in the collection of J A Cook
Transcribed November, 1996; J A Cook

*The Stan Zemanek Show;* debate with interviewee Dr Pols on use of marijuana

The following lengthy exchange between the programme presenter and on-line interviewee Dr Pols has been divided into sections, in order to highlight the developing strategies used by the host to control the caller’s talk, and to counteract his opinions. Each section is headed by a brief descriptive review of the direction of the argument and the positions taken up in the talk-relation.

Section A

A largely consensual introduction to the topic.

1  Zemanek: On Monday night I told you about the brochure being put out this
2   week by the Australian Medical Association telling of the
3   harms...of...ah ah cannabis use. (uhhh) Well, the brochure's out
4   and I've managed to track down Dr René Pols, the senior
5   psychiatrist at the Flinders Medical Centre in Adelaide, and I'm
6   pleased to say the good doctor is on the line: Hello.
7  Dr Pols: Oh hello, how are you
8  Zemanek: I'm very well: yourself?
9  Dr Pols: I'm well thank you
Section B

Dr Pols as guest attempts to provide the latest research evidence, while the host attempts to steer discussion to support his own known beliefs

Zemanek: OK so, a lot of people will ring this program up and say they’ve never been affected by, anything to do with ah cannabis, or mari(aju)ana or drugs, they never affect them, so what’s ah, what’s aah, medical investigation shown us about the use of marijuana?

Dr Pols: (uhh) well, there’s a very ah detailed agh ah review of it by the World Health Organisation which was carried out by Professor Wayne Hall at ah, University of New South Wales, and ah Dr Robert Aylly here in Adelaide together with some other people (uhh) and ah, they looked at all the the ah substantial reports that had actually been done all over the world and so forth and they also came to very similar sorts of conclusions which are, really reflected in the, little leaflet [ (indec)

Zemanek: [ is there a link with schizophrenia?

Dr Pols: Sorry?

Dr Pols: [ Is there a link with schizophrenia? (uhhh) well um, we-e-e, ah, don’t think that it actually, ah, causes schizo- phrenia, but, it seems to, precipitate schizophrenia and it certainly seems to precipitate more frequent breakdowns in people who have schizophrenia. (uhh) and also people who have bi-polar affective disorder, or what we used to call manic depressive illness.

Zemanek: OK alright: so ah, it doesn’t ah start schizophrenia, but it does ah, contribute towards it

Dr Pols: (uhh) it certainly precipitates people needing to come into hospital. um, if you look at hospital admissions in Australia, (uhh) if people need to be certified or detained or a compulsorily admitted to a psychiatric hospital?

Zemanek: Yeah

Dr Pols: Ah, about half of those, in about half those cases, aah, cannabis is a contributing factor.

Section C

The host becomes unwilling to accept the guest’s expertise. He moves from “OK” responses, to his first “but” marker of disagreement

Zemanek: OK - ah what other side affects can the use of marijuana have?

Dr Pols: Well, if you smoke it, and of course you can eat it and you don’t have that side effect sort of problem but if you smoke it um er it’s the same as aah the tobacco smoke, ah, um, and it’s because you’re burning ah an organic substance like ah ah leaf (uhh) at a fairly cool temperature (uhh) and that produces a whole lot of ah irritants and in infusion of cancer producing substances, and um some people have tried to estimate the difference between cigarette
smoking and marijuana smoke and in actual fact marijuana smoke has been thought to contain up to 20 times more cancer producing substances than ar than cigarettes - so one ar marijuana cigarette's equivalent to about 20 ordinary cigarettes.

Zemanek: OK in the short term it obviously affects people, also I guess in the long term it will so if somebody was smoking marijuana regularly the long term effect would be would be what? Short term memory loss?

Dr Pols: Oh no: the big long term affect is really on the respiratory system, ah ah it really ah causes very severe bronchitis, aggravation of asthma, and probably lung cancer. Umm, in terms of ahm, the affect on memory and so forth, (uhhh) it really has no effect on memory in the long term.

Zemanek: Mmm-hhmm and in the short term though?

Dr Pols: In the short term what it does it it interferes with your ability to learn, so if people are say having a joint or two at lunch time at High School, you know sitting on the oval or something, (uhhh) I mean you can write off the afternoon.

Zemanek: OK but isn't it ah when you're talking about learning, isn't the art of learning being able to memorise?

Dr Pols: (uhh) No, no: it's not just memory. It's it's it really affects our ability to pay attention to things. So you know, you you you your learning isn't really impaired but your ability to concentrate sufficiently for memories to be laid down is impaired.

Section D

The host attempts to move away from "expert opinion," which is refusing to endorse his views, and asks for "direct advice" he can pass on to callers

Zemanek: OK for those people that call me up on this radio program and saying you know, marijuana's never affected them whatsoever, what do I say to those people?

Dr Pols: (uhhh) Well they are killing themselves actually, um, ah ... in terms of long term effects, most people who occasionally use marijuana, for most people and, and ah, we've told doctors this, most people, it really does no long term harm. In the acute situation, certainly people with respiratory problems really shouldn't smoke the stuff at all. People who've got ah a family history of schizophrenia or bi-polar illness. They really should, stay, well and truly clear cause, it is, much more likely to cause them to have that sort of problem too.

Section E

Dissatisfied, the host moves back to direct questioning. Upon receiving an answer which he doesn't expect, he introduces more markers of open disagreement. At line 97 he interrupts for the first time. By line 104 he is constructing his own case, by reinterpretation ("formulation") of the guest's comments.

Zemanek: What are your views about the decriminalisation of mari(juana).

Dr Pols: Well, in actual fact the, Australian Medical Association that put out this leaflet supported decriminalisation, (uhhh) because
decriminalisation (uhhh) what it does does more good than
potential harm.

Zemanek: Doesn't, but doesn't that lead to ah more people using the drug and
therefore going on to other drugs as well?

Dr Pols: There is no evidence of this, you see, in in actual fact in states like
South Australia where there's been decriminalised for nearly five
years now, [ 7

Zemanek: [ Doesn't it expose young people though to illicit drug
use, and the the sub culture associated with it?

Dr Pols: Well there certainly it certainly va, um [ 100

Zemanek: [ So therefore doesn't that
expose them to dealers and other drugs?

Dr Pols: It certainly exposes them to dealers, it certainly exposes them
potentially to other drugs

Zemanek: So therefore marijuana can go can lead to other drugs?

Dr Pols: Well, there is no hard evidence to support that

Zemanek: But after using marijuana for quite some time doesn't the body build
up, a resistance so therefore to get the same sort of high as when
you first use it, don't you have to use more marijuana because the
body does build up resistance and therefore if it is building up a
resistance then, surely people would look to other drugs like heroin
cocaine for a bigger high.

Dr Pols: Well some drugs like heroin cocaine and alcohol are like that,
where people are ww what we called develop tolerance,
marijuana, in marijuana tolerance only develops when people use
extremely high doses, and the vast majority of people use
marijuana in relatively low doses - if people are having say half a
dozens bongs every day, yes they do develop some tolerance, but
you're looking at ah probably less than 2% of the marijuana using
population, who use it at that very high level.

Section F

The host repeats a question, unable to assail the expertise of the guest on the issue of
cumulative use. The host begins to compound his arguments, to rebuild the picture of
cumulative drug use (one leads to another) to re-claim a point he has already lost. He
claims mass support, at the same time distancing the arguments from himself ("but people
would argue...")

Zemanek: Would you like to see ah marijuana decriminalised for the whole of
Australia - I mean do you think that would solve [ 120

Dr Pols: [ That's the
policy of the Australian Medical Association, they - they have
supported that in Queensland and in in Canberra where they had
inquiries and so forth: and they would see it to be the same in other
states.

Zemanek: But people would argue though that if you start um making um
decriminalising marijuana, then er er I suppose the next step is that
they're going to look at heroin, they're going to look at cocaine, I
mean, haven't we got enough drugs on the scene now, we've got
cigarettes, we've got beer, we've got, a whole stack of other things
- why do we need to legalise another drug?

Dr Pols: Well you need to have a look at what what making other drugs
criminal actually does. There is ah ah ah good deal of evidence

507
that much of the corruption that happens within ah institutions in
countries is to do with the billions of dollars that are around ah in
the in the black market trade for drugs and it really affects the
whole fabric of Australian society. If in fact in some states you've
got something like 70 to 80% of all the people who're in jail are
there because of their ah involvement in one way or the other
with ar ar the criminal activities associated with illegal drugs,
then, you need to have a look at the, you know, why on earth
you've got all the - why on earth you've got, ah, ah a prison
system.

Section G

The host moves to intercept every point with a "but" marker, He moves to set up a
normative social group ("taxpayers") against which he can assert the undesirability of a
counter group ("de-criminalised drug users.")

145  Zemanek: But if you decriminalise the drugs then, who sells the drugs to the
146    public? If it's decriminalised?
147  Dr Pols: Well, I mean at the moment we've got brewers selling one sort of
drug and tobacco companies selling another
149  Zemanek: Yes but but alcohol is legal.
150  Dr Pols: Yes
151  Zemanek: Whereas marijuana at the present time is not, so you saying then
that what we do is we set up corner stores to sell marijuana?
153  Dr Pols: Well I mean they've got coffee shops in Amsterdam, and in Finland
er, the, ah, old, the er, Government owns all the all the alcohol
sales.
156  Zemanek: Hmmmm, alright, so you believe that we we should decriminalise,
and, and ah and that would solve a lot of our problems here in
158  Australia.
159  Dr Pols: We should seriously look at it yes indeed. Because the double
160    standards that there are in society at the moment ah[
161    ] But don't we
162  Zemanek: open up ah the fact that we're going to ah influence more people,
more people are going to use it because it is readily available there
so therefore the health risks that you've been talking about
165  tonight doesn't that in increase tenfold or a hundred fold and then
doesn't the cost increase on the tax payers, to ah to foot the bill for
these people's problems?

Section H

The guest for the first time comments directly on the host's positioning of the debate. The
host reads this as a direct attack on his own control of the terms of engagement.

168  Dr Pols: Well, you you really are confusing what I think are two
169    arguments. (uhhh) [
170  Zemanek: Well one follows the other.
171  Dr Pols: No no: it's not one way or the other, [
172  Zemanek: No no I said one follows the other. [
173  Dr Pols: No it doesn't. If you're actually looking at the public health way of
dealing with the problem, you're talking about things like
175  decriminalisation. That affects the population and you're looking
to do the most good for most people. When you do the most good for
most people, there are inevitably, some people, who'll be
negatively affected by it, for example: (uhh) flu shots, right? The
majority of people who have flu shots don't get the flu. About 10%
of people who get flu shots get a terrible bout of flu. Right? But
what it does it actually saves a substantial number of lives in
people who who are able to have chest problems and and who
would otherwise die. Flu shots overall have a good effect on the
whole population. There are a few people who're going to be
negatively affected by it.

Section I

The host is losing the debate over the terms of engagement, and attempts to return it to
the line he was building before, opposing "drug users" to "taxpayers". He is beginning to
lose control of the neutral vocal tone used in "expert" interviews. He begins to use the
ducker to over-ride the guest's comments - notably at line 174, where the guest tells him
outright he is wrong.

186  Zemanek:  (Getting quenulous in tone) OK but doctor th, th- but doctor this is a
187  preventative medicine, a preventative cure that you're talking
188  about, on the other scope there you're talking about marijuana, if
189  you open it up to more people then more people are going to have a
190  problem with it so then consequently one follows on from the other:
191  we are going to have more cost involved for the Australian
taxpayer having to fix and front the bill for more of these people
192  who get crook by it.
193  Dr Pols:  Unfortunately your argument is just not true. It is not correct. (indec)
195  Zemanek:  We (hehe) doctor - if you - if you make it more [
196  Dr Pols:  [ look [
197  Zemanek:  [make it more
198  available more people are going to use it so more people are going to
199  become [
200  Dr Pols:  (indec) are not [
201  Zemanek:  [people are going [
202  Dr Pols:  (indec) it is universally
203  available now.
204  Zemanek:  No, no I disagree with you [
205  Dr Pols:  (indec) buy it wherever you want to
206  Zemanek:  Yes, yes I know that, I know that, but if you make it available at
207  the corner store [
208  Dr Pols:  (indec) [
209  Zemanek:  If you make it more available at the
210  corner store, um, then, much more people, yer, you're ah ah
211  percentages are going to go up alarmingly; because[
212  Dr Pols:  (indec) not true!
213  Zemanek:  It's like anything doctor: in society, if you make more things
214  available, more services available, people take advantage of it:
215  you only have to look at our social welfare system, where people
216  take advantage of the dole, and ah other welfare um lurks and perks.
Section J

Dr Pols as guest moves to case-study information to disprove the host's position. The host moves to occupy the guest's "expert" position, citing other cases.

217  Dr Pols: Well, all I can do is, is point out to you what the facts are, and the facts are on, for example you take er, the Netherlands, right? That decriminalised marijuana er er about fifteen years ago, and made it available through coffee shops. The actual proportion of the Amsterdam population that was regularly heavily into marijuana was about 16%, when they actually started. (uhh) and that has gradually fallen, with marijuana being more available, to around about 6% of people being, being heavy users.

225  Zemanek: But isn't it also a fact that in South Australia more people have been turned onto drugs since they've ah since they've made marijuana more readily available?

228  Dr Pols: No that's not true at all!

229  Zemanek: Not true at all?

230  Dr Pols: Not true at all!

231  Zemanek: OK - what about in Morocco: 40% of hospital admissions for mental conditions are related to marijuana; is that not true at all?

233  Dr Pols: Oh I don't know Morocco's situation: I mean that (indec) may well be true [

235  Zemanek: [ well that's - well, let me tell you that's a report from the University of Stanford in the United States and also the United Nations.

238  Dr Pols: Well can I, can I just point back to you again, the most authoritative review that's been done [

240  Zemanek: [Well let me just tell you something else: you criticise my facts about South Australia: marijuana was decriminalised in South Australia in 1987 in place of the criminal legislation the South Australian Cannabis Ex ah ah -piation Notice Scheme [

245  Dr Pols: [(indec) yes [

246  Zemanek: [(obviously reading) "now imposes on the spot fines. Statistis [sic] assembled by the Australian Pharmacists Drug - Against Drug Abuse organisation show South Australia has the second highest reported marijuana use amongst Australians aged 14 to 19, and from 20 to 39". Is that the sort of society you want to see, where our young people of today are turned on to illicit drugs?

Section K

With both speakers attempting to occupy the same "expert" space, the exchange disintegrates into a fight for primacy.

253  Dr Pols: Well wait a moment: (uhh) if you also look at - [

254  Zemanek: [let me give you some other information [

255  Zemanek: [No no you (indec) [

256  Dr Pols: [No let me [

257  Zemanek: [No no hang on

258  Dr Pols: (indec) surely you'll let (indec) finish

510
Zemanek: [give you some other information because I think - I think you're absolutely distorting what is the truth in society] [It is so: have a listen to this some more facts]
Dr Pols: [no no no no no]
Zemanek: [no this is some more facts]
Dr Pols: (indec) [you're (indec) misquoting]
Zemanek: [no I'm not misquoting ... I'm not misquoting the facts at you]
Dr Pols: [these are - these are actual facts from the Australian Pharmacists Against Drug Abuse organisation - let me just let me just er quote you something else: since 1988 the proportion [well (indec)] [fine]
Dr Pols: of South Australians between 20 and 39 [who admitted using (indec)] [ahah] Zemanek: marijuana increased by 31%. So much for your figures, facts and figures from overseas! [a country!]

Section L

The host moves to direct insult. The guest tries to persevere with evidence to support his views.

Zemanek: It is just a load of crap. Just crap! a loada crap.
Dr Pols: (indec) (indec) (indec)
Zemanek: A loada crap.
Dr Pols: But s - look: [ (indec)
Zemanek: [Have a listen to this also: [... statistics: those statistics that you're quoting, (uhh) are no different to the rest of s- to the rest of the country! the, the review, of ah cannabis ah expiation fees in South Australia showed that there was absolutely no significant difference between South Australian figures and and and and other figures in Australia.
Zemanek: Alright, let me just go through some of those figures: Crime Fighter Bob Bottom has described Adelaide as the drug capital of Australia - he may well be right - a comparison of 5 capital cities have a listen to this doctor: Adelaide Brisbane Melbourne Perth and Sydney by the ABC found Adelaide residents used the most ecstasy, amphetamines and LSD. Compared to Sydney, ecstasy use in Adelaide was 300% higher, amphetamine use was 240% higher, and LSD use was 280% d higher. Doctor: I think you have your facts wrong, []
Dr Pols: [(indec) [ [and I think you should go back and research the whole thing because you obviously have got things a little cocked up.
Dr Pols: Sorry, I I disagree with you [You may well disagree and you may well, you may well [ (indec) on the (indec) campaign against drug abuse shows clearly that South Australia has no significant
Section M

The host now establishes his own "expertise" as able to question the guest's. Since the host has now occupied the position of authority, the guest is irrelevant. the host now cuts him off, just as he does to resistant callers.

310  Zemanek: Where do you get your facts from?
311  Dr Pols: Sorry these, these are the national figures produced by the National Drug Strategy, au, um,
312  Zemanek: The National Drug Strategy [ - strategy: the Federal Drug and [ so the so why do they differ then totally from the Australian
313  Dr Pols: Well, perhaps it is because the methodology of the two ah surveys was different, and perhaps the Pharmacists Against Drug Abuse ah are perhaps people who have a particular bias, [ mmm And your,
314  Zemanek: your organisation doesn't?
315  Dr Pols: Sorry, I think ah what I'm referring to is reputable surveys, done by reputable researchers, ah, with similar methodology right throughout Australia, ah that are recognised by people so, you know, I mean, I don't know the particular report from the Pharmacists Against Drug Abuse...
316  Zemanek: Well maybe you should go and get a copy of it and maybe you should read it up on it and then you'll be far better informed I thank you for being on the programme.
Appendix Four

Extract from The Stan Zemanek Show, Radio 2UE Sydney
Presenter: Stanley Zemanek
Producer: Shirley Collins
Caller: "Henry"

Recorded off-air, April 1996; collection J A Cook
Transcribed November, 1996; J A Cook

The Stan Zemanek Show; debate with caller "Henry", initially over the
caller’s accusation that the host is racist; mostly a male “calling out”
exchange

1  Zemanek: Thirteen thirteen thirty two is the number Henry hello::
2  Henry: 'e come up from Armidale
3  Zemanek: What's that?
4  Henry: 'e come up from Armidale 'e said [
5  Zemanek: [yes
6  Henry: How can you come up from Armidale when Armidale's north of
7  Sydney
8  Zemanek: Well he might be thinking that I'm in Brisbane you idiot
9  Henry: Oh
10  Zemanek: See this station broadcasts up in Brisbane as well, up in
11  Queensland, he may think I'm broadcasting from Queensland
12  Henry: Oh, that's where I'm from [
13  Zemanek: [yes, very good
14  Henry: So what 'a' ya got against us wharfies?
15  Zemanek: Against you wharfies?
16  Henry: Yeah (...) (and a) blackfella [
17  Zemanek: [ I don't have anything against
18  blackfellas as well [
19  Henry: [You DO ya has a go all the time
20  Zemanek: Well no I don't I don't have a go all the time, I call a spade a
21  spade
22  Henry: What, you calling me a spade now?
23  Zemanek: Aw... you idiot. I mean, what did ... what did you do for brains?
24  Henry: What are you doin' when you come up 'ere?
25  Zemanek: When I come up...
26  Henry: [ gonna come up 'ere? [
27  Zemanek: [When I come up where?
28  Henry: To Brisbane.
29  Zemanek: When I come up to Brisbane?
Henry: Yeah.
Zemanek: What about it?
Henry: When ya come up.
Zemanek: Yes, when I come up...
Henry: [...you're always pickin' on people
Zemanek: No I don't
Henry: You do
Zemanek: I give people [a serve who are... who're not doing the right thing
Henry: [(indecipherable) call 'em out [You what?
Zemanek: You wanna call 'em out all the time.
Henry: (...), Mate, you really have an inferiority complex.
Zemanek: Call - call you out for what?
Henry: I'll fight every time.
Zemanek: Who're you?
Henry: (...), I could beat you.
Zemanek: You probably could.
Henry: (...), Well 'ow come you always back down?
Zemanek: Back down for what?
Henry: From a fight. When someone calls you out.
Zemanek: Really? Are you calling me out?
Henry: Yeah.
Zemanek: OK, well, where do you live - where are you tonight?
Henry: In Brisbane!
Zemanek: In Brisbane! Alright, well you wanna meet me on the, aah, the,
the, the steps of the Town Hall in Brisbane tonight?
Henry: You're not up 'ere...
Zemanek: That's ve-ry clev-er of you: boy, what a bright spark YOU are!
Henry: When you come up in a coupla weeks eh?
Zemanek: Oh, look, yeah - when I come up in a coupla weeks how about I meet
you on the steps of the Town Hall?
Henry: OK
Zemanek: Will you be there?
Henry: I'll be there.
Zemanek: How will I know what you look like?
Henry: Well you can [You'll be the one with the dress on will you?
Henry: I beg your pardon?
Zemanek: Will you be the one with the dress on?
Henry: Come on now! I know you!
Zemanek: Eh? You big wos
Henry: Hey you! Hey!
Zemanek: You big wos!
Henry: Don't I - don't [(indecipherable)
Zemanek: [You are a big wos!
Henry: Don't - ha - you're going to hang up now... [
Zemanek: [ - you probably - you probably run round in sheilas' underwear do you?
Henry: Hey, you're not, you [You big wos, you big wos [Hey!
Zemanek: (indecipherable) I'll see ya, I'll see you there [You big fairy
Henry: (indecipherable) bring your mates for when you come up
Zemanek: You big fairy
86  Henry:  Hey!
87  Zemanek:  Eh?
88  Henry:  You - you pickin' on the wrong bloke 'ere!
89  Zemanek:  *imitates his voice*  aw really? Awhahaha! (own voice)
90  Henry:  Gee whiz! Well listen meet you on the steps of the Town Hall!
91  Zemanek:  (...) Yeah, well, I just gonna look for the big fella eh!
92  Henry:  The big fella!
93  Henry:  Yeah...
94  Zemanek:  Who's the big fella?
95  Henry:  You.
96  Zemanek:  Oh really?
97  Henry:  (...) Yeah...
98  Zemanek:  Well who am I gonna look for?
99  Henry:  (...) Well you look for the mean one.
100 Zemanek:  Someone with a, with a peanut on their head.
101 Henry:  (...) Hey!
102 Zemanek:  *imitates his voice*  Hey!
103 Henry:  Don't call me Joh!
104 Zemanek:  Ha HA HA HA hahahahahahah!
105 Henry:  You're-pick-in'-on the wrong bloke there mate! [
106 Zemanek:  *imitates his rhythm*  [
107  Henry:  wrong-bloke, yes, OK...
108  Henry:  Have you ever done a day's work? [
109 Zemanek:  [
110  Henry:  I've done plenty a day's work like today I worked for sixteen hours today
111  Henry:  I'm not I'm not talkin' about sittin' in the air-conditioned office I mean gettin' out there.
112  Zemanek:  Yes I'm out there every day of the week
113  Henry:  No you're not out [
114  Zemanek:  Working my guts out every day of the week
115  Henry:  Aaaaw...
116  Zemanek:  Tryin' to pay for bludgers like you.
117  Henry:  Hey! Why you call [ (ing me) a bludger!
118  Zemanek:  [ - you ever work - [
119  Henry:  [(indecipherable)  [worked all my life
120  Zemanek:  Have you ever worked in your life?
121  Henry:  Every day.
122  Zemanek:  What do you do?
123  Henry:  Eh?
124  Zemanek:  What do you do?
125  Henry:  I'm... worked on the wharves [
126  Henry:  [Well [
127  Henry:  worked on cattle stations...
128  Zemanek:  As I said - you've worked on the wharves? [
129  Henry:  [
130  Henry:  ... cattle stations...
131  Zemanek:  ... mate, if you worked on the wharves you never worked! [
132  Henry:  [...] in... Western Australia, worked in Northern Territory, I worked in, everywhere on the cattle stations
133  Zemanek:  Time: what time when you worked down the wharf was it your time to go into the, into the iron lung?
134  Henry:  Awww, come off it now...
135  Zemanek:  I mean that's what you do down the wharf isn't it, you take turns to go in the iron lung
136  Henry:  (...) What do you do?
137  Zemanek:  (indecipherable)
Henry: ... sit in an air conditioned office

Zemanek: No! no I don't, I work! work hard! [
Henry: [rest...
Zemanek: [... work hard, and

unfortunately I have to support idiots like you.

Henry: No! How much you earn last year?
Zemanek: How much do I earn... that's none of your business!
Henry: Ask me how much I earn!
Zemanek: I don't want to know how much you earn!

Henry: Aww...
Zemanek: How much did you earn anyway?
Henry: Thirty five thousand dollars.
Zemanek: You're worth every penny of it!

Henry: Eh?
Zemanek: You're worth every penny of it.
Henry: An' I've worked ... I've never had a day on the dole in my life.
Zemanek: You don't have to if you're a wharfie: you just sit on your big fat backside and do nothing!

Henry: I only been doin' that for five years.

Henry: Five years - [

Henry: (indecipherable) [
Zemanek: [ - so five years
Henry: [ (indecipherable) [

Zemanek: [ - tell me

Henry: something, do you walk around in a big blue T-shirt and those tight boxer shorts and those big black boots? [

Henry: (indecipherable) [

Zemanek: [ - and

those woollen socks? What? [

Henry: [... good clothes...

Henry: You wear good clothes do you?

Henry: Yeah.

Zemanek: Oh that's good.

Henry: I'm fifty eight year old only been workin’ ere for five years.

Zemanek: Hmm.

Henry: And the rest of me life I been workin’ all around Australia.

Zemanek: Wonderful, that's very good, well listen it's most, ah, interesting talking to you.

Henry: Why - yeah - I'll see you on the steps...

Henry: On the steps of the Town Hall in Brisbane.

Henry: And aw you, you'll probably back down anyway

Zemanek: I'll see you there.

Henry: I'll see you in Festival Hall

Zemanek: No, no, I'll see you on the steps of the Town Hall [ ]

Henry: [ - hall - [

Zemanek: [ - steps of

Henry: the steps of the [ Town Hall in Brisbane OK?

[ - Festival Hall (indecipherable) Festival Hall...

Zemanek: Festival Hall? I see... is that [

Henry: [... can wear gloves

Zemanek: Oh really?

Henry: - I'll wear the gloves...

Zemanek: [yeah, OK, you, you'd need to wear the g...

Henry: ...wise I'd hurt ya [

Henry: [... no you'd need to wear gloves you've been handling yourself much too much.
Appendix Five

Extract from *The Stan Zemanek Show*, Radio 2UE Sydney

Presenter: Stanley Zemanek
Producer: Shirley Collins
Callers: Programme Reporter Kathryn Tulich, and 2UE Presenter John Stanley

Recorded off-air, April 1996; collection J A Cook
Transcribed November, 1996; J A Cook

*The Stan Zemanek Show*, Kathryn Tulich and John Stanley reporting via phone-in, on the Radio 2UE-sponsored *Richard Clayderman Concert*

The following lengthy exchange between the programme presenter and “Stringer” Kathryn Tulich has been divided into sections, in order to highlight the developing strategies used by the host to control the caller’s talk, and so her opinions. Each section is headed by a brief descriptive review of the direction of the argument and the positions taken up in the talk-relation.

Section A

*Stan Zemanek Show "stringer" Kathryn Tulich phones in to give her (commissioned) report on *The Richard Clayderman Show* - but despite the rapid-fire fluency of her sales-pitch style, her voice keeps dropping out. There is serious sound-crunching from the mobile-net connections of her phone.*

1 Zemanek: Kathryn Tulich hello-o-o...
2 Kathryn: Hi, Stan!
3 Zemanek: How are you?
4 Kathryn: I’m great...I’m at the Hilton tonight, for the first night of the
5 Richard Clayderman (...) and I tell you what, it was a pretty good
6 evening, it was exciting (...) down really well, it was one of your (...)
7 Green was doing the (...) aando, she gave a, magnificent
8 performance, eh (...) -sted everyone, her singing was AB (...) superb,
9 and, Richard Clayderman came on, and I tell you what I was
10 sceptical about Richard Clayderman because I mean, he’s one of the
11 world’s greatest pianists but I didn’t know how I (...) like two hours
12 of piano playing would go (hhh) but it was wonderful, I mean he
13 was just so entertaining, he just - everythi - he’s got an album out at

517
the moment it's called *The Australian Collection* so he does things
like a wonderful version of *Love is in the air*, does things like *I go
to Rio*, and a few other Peter Allen songs, and he's got these
incredible medleys like a Beatles medley, and, he does a wonderful
medley from *West Side Story*... and he has some incredible
(indec) humour as well throughout the show so that you're not just
listening to music, you get a chance to have a few laughs with it as
well.

**Section B**

*Kathryn Tulich moves out of the descriptive account of the show to introduce the presence of other 2UE staff. Immediately, the host insists on his male "mate" being given access to the phone.*

But I tell you what the only problem with ah tonight was
there was a 2UE table and you just couldn't keep them down, they
were dancing on the - they were dancing on the table! And - I've
actually got John Stanley here - he wanted to have chat to you
about it [Ooh put him on! [Put him on!

[Here we go... [But that was very surprising
that you did like it, in in in light of what we had to say the other
night at the ah Regent... [ (indec) the other night, because you're
coming along to see you know a pianist, for two hours, and you're
thinking to yourself well I had no idea what to expect, and I was
very surprised; I was very entertained and the hours went like
that. [Yeah, [

You are gonna have a cracker of a night I think on
Saturday when they're expecting you HERE.

Well, yes, he ah - [... guest of honour! [... s'right he... we're
actually going to have, two pianos, up on the stage, and ah, we're
going to have, duelling pianos.

You (haha)'re gonna be up there playing the piano... [... that's
right, yes...

He doesn't do *Chopsticks*...

No (haha) ho-o, well, he-he-he's gonna hafta learn! (...) He's
gonna hafta learn!

Oh well -
Section C

The conversation shifts into a boy's game of one-up-man-ship insults - which are then elaborated into possible phone-in "games" for listeners

59  Zemanek: Listen somebody said they saw you out the Show ¹ today...
60  John: I was out at the Show today - well, you were out there...
61  Zemanek: But what were those - those...
62  John: ...after six o'clock, with the...
63  Zemanek: Wha-what were those kids tryin' a stick ping-pong balls
64  in ya mouth for?
65  John: You - you - you (haha) were there...
66  Zemanek: Ahahahahah!
67  John: The - guess the weight competition!
68  Zemanek: Yeah... I heard that, John, thanks very much...that's very
69  good of you...
70  John: And- and- and, ... who won?
71  Zemanek: Who won?
72  John: What was the - what was the: we should do this: between
73  now and midnight:
74  Zemanek: Yes...
75  John: People can ri... if you had - people can ring in and guess your
76  weight,
77  Zemanek: Yes...
78  John: Correctly,
79  Zemanek: Yes...
80  John: Why don't we give them , ah, some... - why don't we give
81  them a nice dinner for two?
82  Zemanek: Well ... there you go - well actually, what we could do, if
83  they can pick -
84  John: ... out of one of your many "contra"
85  Zemanek: restaurants [Yes... they could pick my weight, or, they could count
86  the number of hairs in your head!
87  John: Oh that's too easy actually, there's none there at all...
88  Zemanek: A - hahaha! [   
89  John: [No, pick your weight, before midnight, if
90  Zemanek: they can guess it bang on the money, [   [- yes - [   
91  John: and have dinner for two, what do you think?
92  Zemanek: Yes, sounds pretty good John.
93  John: Alright...

Section D

The conversation moves to blatant discussion of personal social occasions - in which brand name products and locations are "carelessly" mentioned. The segue back into discussion of another concert performance follows seamlessly on.

¹ Not the Richard Clayderman Show, but the Sydney Royal Easter Show, a major agricultural show held in the city each year, and featuring the sorts of sideshow-alley booth games to which John Stanley subsequently refers. Media outlets traditionally hold promotional events, including live outside broadcasts and promotional appearances by presenters, at "The Show."
Section E

The caller (co-broadcaster) "reads" the exchange as the spontaneous sponsorship piece it is - and plays around the idea of "surfacing" the entire process - a proposition which the host assumes is serious - and is prepared to cooperate with.

115  John: While we're here, why don't we mention a few... places that we want to try and do some deals with?
116  Zemanek: Well sure - go right ahead!
117  John: (indec) a few plugs, and see what we can do!
118  Zemanek: Yeah well OK, do you, you want to mention a few names?
119  John: No hohoho, I'm only joking, of course...
120  Zemanek: Ohoh, hohohoahHAHAHAHA
121  John: Nothing like that ever happens in radio, as you'd be aware...
122  Zemanek: No well that's exactly right John yes...

Section F

The caller/colleague continues the tease, again mocking the Zemanek entrepreneurialism - around the very issue which has led him to discount his official sponsoring caller in favour of this banter: the issue of the technological performance of digital mobile phones.

125  John: Now what do you think of the signa...how how how do we sound, do we sound, you know, quite clear?
126  Zemanek: Now, well you've got you're obviously on a digital phone...
127  John: No we tried to get through on one of those out-of-date analogues and couldn't get through, now. we're on a very clear phone
128  Zemanek: No, well you're not really, you you kept on dropping out before but that's your phone for you...
129  John: Yeah he he good on ya son! Why did are you are you have you set up for Zemanek Enterprises, selling analogue phones
Section G

Having come so close to revealing the host’s true broadcasting agenda as a note of humour, the caller/colleague now moves to a covert critique of Zemanek’s performance - implying first that the "good mates" chat they have indulged in is NOT the business of the show - and then very nearly revealing the broadcasters’ views of the callers as "lunatics"...

144 John: OK well, - are you getting paid for doing this?
145 Zemanek: Well of course: you know I don’t do things for nothing!
146 John: Yeah, well, why don’t we get off the phone and allow you to talk to some real listeners?
148 Zemanek: Well that sounds exciting to me Johnny boy! Listen why don’t you go off to...
150 John: You - you know the full moon’s on the way?
151 Zemanek: Well I could we (hehe) I imagine! I could well imagine!
152 John: Alright well listen you take care have a wonderful time
153 Zemanek: - 'Kay well the next couple of nights, full moon on the way, looking forward to hearing it.

Section H

The host shifts back to the concert review - attempting to take up the "spontaneous advertising" role he had pre-arranged with the stringer. The colleague then hands back to the real reviewer, Kathryn Tulich - whose segment is then promptly terminated on the original grounds that the phone quality is poor - despite the fact that the entire call - including her opening comments after the initial lines - had been made without sound problems...

155 Zemanek: And ah, you’ve seen Richard Clayderman tonight: what would you give him out of ten?
156 John: What would I give Richard out of ten?
158 Zemanek: - give him an eight actually!
159 John: Gee that’s ah - actually that’s seven more than what you were going to give him on Saturday night!
160 Zemanek: I’d give him an eight! He was very good
163 Zemanek: hahaha!
164 John: Hang on: here’s - here’s Kathryn: [
165 Zemanek: [ the what?
166 Kathryn: Hi!
167 Zemanek: Hello Kathryn?
168 Kathryn: Yeah hi.
169 Zemanek: Oh you’re back: obviously John wanted to go (hoho)...
Kathryn: Sorry?
Zemanek: Obviously Kathryn, John wanted to go, but anyway ah - you've got one of those digital phones, it's very difficult to hear because digital phones are not worth two bob thanks
Kathryn: (line closed) there she is Kathryn Tulich...

(music)
Appendix Six

Extract from The Stan Zemanek Show, Radio 2UE Sydney

Presenter: Stanley Zemanek
Producer: Shirley Collins
Caller: “Sandra”
Recorded off-air, April 1996; collection J A Cook
Transcribed November, 1996; J A Cook

The Stan Zemanek Show; debate with caller "Sandra" on use of marijuana

The following lengthy exchange between the programme presenter and caller “Sandra” has been divided into sections, in order to highlight the developing strategies used by the host to control the caller's talk, and so her opinions. Each section is headed by a brief descriptive review of the direction of the argument and the positions taken up in the talk-relationship.

Section A

The caller seeks to comment on drug use, openly discussing her own experiences. The host immediately escalates her misdemeanour, asking her if she is also "a prostitute". The caller attacks him for "unfair" tactics."

1 Zemanek: Yes, let's see what we've got here: Sandra, hello.
2 Sandra: Hay how are ya?
3 Zemanek: Very well thank you
4 Sandra: That's good um: I'm just going back on, about the marijuana thing.
5 Zemanek: Yes er Sandra
6 Sandra: Yeah um just a little bit there um I I reckon that ah um, that is I'd 7 be in that 2% drop (indec) which is pretty good, as far as I'm 8 concerned, I'm a solo mum, I've got a few kids [ 9 Zemanek: [Yes - and you're on
10 drugs too?
11 Sandra: Yeah I don't mind smokin' it occasionally? yeah there's nothin'
12 wrong with it in my eyes.
13 Zemanek: OK and, and wh-what, do you hand it round to your kids?
14 Sandra: No I don't
15 Zemanek: Do they see you smoking it?
Section B

The host moves into a strategy of leading questions to control the debate. The caller attempts to deny this as a base for the discussion. The host retaliates by re-setting the technical conditions of the call, making the caller go off-air to turn down her radio - and insulting her while she is away.

Section C

The caller unpacks her view on personal experience as a pre-requisite to social comment. The host insults her. She swears at him, and he activates the 2-second cut-off system.
I'll come back to you because you can't use those sort of swear words like that.

music-sting promo: "Night time entertainment - Stan Zemanek..."

Section D

In an unusual move, the host restores the caller to the air. These two "technical" power manoeuvres appear to have given him the advantage. He begins a long pseudo-parallel-case scenario to out-argue her - but she resists.

56 Zemanek: OK you still there?
57 Sandra: Yeah...
58 Zemanek: OK unfortunately, ah, you said a - [
59 Sandra: [Sorry, I shouldn't have spoken out of turn []
60 Zemanek: [ No, no, you shouldn't've... and, ah, unfortunately I suppose when you're on drugs you lose your inhibitions I suppose [ (indec) no
61 Sandra: no [ not at all - (indec) []
62 Zemanek: [Let's get back [Let's get back to something you just said, you said well, you haven't tried it so you can't comment on it. I also haven't driven a car at 300 miles an hour round a corner, ah, up the (indec)
63 hills or something, and I haven't jumped off a mountain, but I do have common-sense that says to me, I shouldn't do those sort of things because it will harm me. So therefore [ I know not to smoke [ (indec) well if it does
64
65
66
67
68
69
70
71
72
73

Section E

The host resorts again to direct name-calling. The caller refuses to concede. The host attempts again to construct her as "unwomanly."

74 Zemanek: You are a - dill.
75 Sandra: Beg your pardon?
76 Zemanek: You - are - a - dill.
77 Sandra: Dill? No, no, I'm just an outspoken person whose - maybe about time a lot [ of other people realised []
78 Zemanek: [ Yes [ - with no brains as well.
79 Sandra: Is that right?
80 Zemanek: Yes. Are you married?
81 Sandra: Ah - er - what concern is that - we're talkin' about a drug []
82 Zemanek: [ I'm just -
83 I'm just ah - I'm just wondering what your husband thinks of your drug taking.
84 Sandra: Has this got any business with this: it's got nothing to do with this whether I'm with someone or not?
85 Zemanek: I'm asking you does your husband concern himself with your drug taking?
86 Sandra: (uhh) No, he doesn't.
87 Zemanek: Does he live with you?
Section F

The caller comments directly on this as a strategy of control. She uses that position to resist other attempts to deny her a voice.

102  Sandra:  No no no no no hang on just a minute, see there you go and you put 103  words in someone else's mouth!
104  Zemanek:  Well you told me you, smoke marijuana, in front of the children!
105  (....)
106  Sandra:  No, I am saying is that - what I am saying is that [Do you you or do 107  you not smoke marijuana in front of the children?
108  Zemanek:  Yes I do.
109  Sandra:  I think that is a natural thing
110  Zemanek:  Well you're a very irresponsible person
111  Sandra:  Well I'm very sorry but I think you're wrong! [(indec)
112  Zemanek:  No - no I'm not wrong.
113  Sandra:  I think that is a natural thing
114  Zemanek:  Darling, I'm - it's NOT natural at all, you fool!
115  Sandra:  [You are a fool! ]
116  Zemanek:  Yes - DON'T call me a fool! [
117  Sandra:  No - no you see this is 118  where you like to cut people off I [
119  Zemanek:  No: no I'm leaving you on darling 120  because I wanna see - have everybody see what an imbecile you are!
121  Sandra:  No I'm not an imbecile mate.

Section G

The host is forced to recast strategies, to try to overcome the caller's capacity to sustain his abuse. His frustration at her ability to prevail over his habitual techniques of regulation of callers leads him to invoke ways of regulating her socially. He becomes confused in his (de) gendering abuse of her, calling her a "schmuck"

122  Zemanek:  How can you possibly go out there and smoke marijuana in front of 123  your children - how old are they?
124  Sandra:  What concern's that?
125  Zemanek:  Well I'm asking you how old are they?
126  Sandra:  (uhh) they're between 14 and 4...
127  Zemanek:  14 and 4 [Yeah [
128  Sandra:  [ So these kids see you wa - out on the wacky 129  tobacky, and ah, smoking your little brain off, getting whacked out

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131 Sandra: of your head, and ah - you are irresponsible, sweetheart!
132 Zemanek: No (indec)
133 Sandra: I mean if they had licences for mothers, they should revoke your
134 Zemanek: licence. [Yes, because you're totally [ ]
135 Sandra: Is that right [ ] (indec) [put people do... (indec)
136 Zemanek: because you've got no idea yourself...
137 Sandra: [Darling, you're a feeble minded schmuck, do you know that?
138 Zemanek: Slut? ] (indec) [Well I'm damn ]
139 Sandra: [No a schmuck: [s-c-h-m-u-c-k] [Feeble-minded-schmuck.

Section H

The caller argues that social change has already occurred, and that the host should acknowledge this. As the host moves back to name-calling abuse, she denigrates his simplistic techniques of argumentation - and refuses to participate in another of his "parallel case" strategies.

141 Sandra: - sure there's a lot more people out there that are just like me and they're proud of it [ ] [No - no! well the way I
142 Zemanek: And isn't that sad [to see that there are people
143 Sandra: like you ]
144 Zemanek: look at it is [ (indec)] my saying for the week is: Don't knock
145 Sandra: The unfortunate thing is darling you re-
146 Zemanek: - something you haven't tried, right?
147 Sandra: You're an idiot.
148 Zemanek: Yeah... yep...
149 Sandra: You are a first rate idiot. Do you know that?
150 Sandra: Well that's good to hear from you - at least you can put a label on it...  
151 Zemanek: So listen: would you jump out of an aeroplane without a parachute?  
152 Sandra: Would that be any business of yours?  
153 Zemanek: (...) (aside): typical. You're a fool. [  
154 Sandra: No...  
155 Zemanek: So OK would you jump out - would you jump off a mountain?  
156 Sandra: Would it be any business of yours? [  
157 Zemanek: Well, darling you're saying [ you're saying, you know, don't  
158 Sandra: (indec) What I'm saying is  
159 Zemanek: knock anything you haven't tried. I wouldn't jump out of an  
160 Sandra: aeroplane without a parachute would I -  
161 Zemanek: I'm not knockin' anyone for tryin' it am !!

Section I

The host moves to construct the caller as too unintelligent to debate. She counter-challenges him, firstly to look at current social conditions, then to make good on his threats to denounce her to authorities.

164 Zemanek: Well now - darling - but unfortunately you can't - because your brain  
165 Sandra: is so addled [and you can't think straight, you're very slow up  
166 Zemanek: [huh huh!]  
167 Sandra: on the uptake, that you-you-you have no reasoning at all  
168 Sandra: Is that right well it's about time that you woke up to yourself
anyway!

Zemanek: Why do I have to wake up to myself?

Sandra: For the life time of today you've gotta give it, give everyone a

break, and [ Give everyone a break: you're sitting there smoking the

wacky tobacky in front of your children, you should be - you should

be hauled up in front of the bloody gov't, in front of the

authorities, [ Yeah well good on ya: bust me!

Sandra: Bust you?

Sandra: Yeah. Do it! (indec) can take it!

Zemanek: Let me - let me tell you if I knew what your address was I'd - I'd

send round the bloody authorities straight away! You're an

irresponsible mother!

Sandra: No I don't think I am

Section J

Since the caller continues to deny his charges, the host begins a strategy of outright abuse.

Zemanek: You're an ab [- you're a drug addict! [ you're a dirty, [ (indec)

Sandra: (indec) I don't think I

am I [ (indec) at least my kids know what's [ (indec) [ you're a dirty,

Zemanek: dirty, [griry drug addict [ (indec) the reality of life - Oh, now you're being

Sandra: sick!

Zemanek: No - I'm not being sick darling I'm just - stating-a-fact.

Sandra: [No - no (indec) (indec) wake up to it

Zemanek: that you shouldn't be so [ (indec)

Sandra: [and you're - you're the reason, [ (indec)

Zemanek: bloody optimistic about the other people...

Zemanek: Optimistic? Optimistic! Sweetheart: you can't even put your

thoughts together - optimistic: you're not optimistic sweetheart!

You're pathEtic!

Sandra: I'm not talkin' about me I'm talkin' about you... [

Zemanek: Yes - I'm a - I'm not - [ very optimistic

about my future because I have a [ (pathetic? [

Sandra: [good time and I work

Zemanek: hard and I hopefully am gonna do well: but you sweetheart - are a

pathetic - [ course you do, course you do, [ (indec)

Sandra: [say to my children [ you sit

Zemanek: there - [ (indec) [at least they know what life's all about.

Sandra: You sit there with your wacky tobacky and your other drug - drug

addict mates...
Section K

The caller comments on how the host refuses to see anything but his own point of view. The host attacks the caller's capacity to reason.

213 Sandra: the way you like to see it that's not the way it is, I mean it doesn't
214 happen like that does it.
215 Zemanek: You poor... [but you like to put it in your head, to your listeners.
216 Sandra: Alright? The way it is, it doesn't happen that way, to anyone that
217 does smoke. That does no, it doesn't happen that way. It, the way
218 it is to me, is that, I would rather my kids see it than hide
219 something from them. That they're gonna find out about anyway.
220 Zemanek: Alright? And at least they know they can come to me with it.
221 Sandra: And so, we all - so find out about car crashes darling: are you gonna
222 put 'em in the family car tomorrow and go and ram the car into a
223 brick wall? 'Cos they'll find out about that as well. I mean your
224 reasoning is just not with it. You should get with the game
225 sweetheart? [I think you should!
226 Zemanek: Your brain has gone out to pasture!
227 Sandra: Has it?
228 Zemanek: Absolutely. Gone out to pasture.
229 Sandra: No, no that's where you're wrong. That's where you (indec) will
230 stick by my guns, all the way, my way.
231 Zemanek: Course you will! Course you will. 'Cos you been brainwashed, and
232 whatever's left of your brain you can't ah, you can't think of it - you
233 can't reason!
234 Sandra: Can't - I can reason with anything you like!
235 Zemanek: Yeah - oh well - [a very reasonable person...
236 Sandra: You're very reasonable? You're a fool! (....) You're an absolute fool!

Section L

The host moves back into attacks on the caller as a mother. She maintains her right to bring up her children "honestly".

240 Sandra: And you're a disgrace as a mother!
241 Zemanek: Am I?
242 Sandra: Absolute disgrace as a mother [Is that right...
243 Zemanek: Absolute disgrace as I said darling: if they handed out: if they
244 handed out registration certificates for mothers I'd hope that yours
245 would be pulled; I'd hope that yours would be revoked, because
246 Sandra: Yeah you like to put people down, you know what: I I - you know
247 what really gets me is the fact you don't even KNOW [See: you
248 Zemanek: - you don't even understand the fact your kids are sitting there
249 watching you smoke the evil weed, smoke a drug,
250 Sandra: I'd rather them see me do it then try and hide it from them.
251 Zemanek: So, so what - every week you sit there and smoke your head off?
252 Sandra: No, no - well see that's where we - that's where we're getting back,
now back to the story: now, like I said, it's not like you're playin' it. Alright: you play the game along here too, alright? Now I'll sit there and, rather than sit there and try and hide it from them, I let them know what I'm doin' - they KNOW that it's wrong.

Zemanek: So they know that it's wrong, but they see their mother smoking an illegal drug!! [ 
Sandra: (indec) they do! [ (indec)
Zemanek: [so when they grow up, as they're growing up, they say "Oh, well Mum's doing something illegal as well so it must be OK for us, so we'll get on the wacky tobaccky as well". Sweetheart, you are a [ 

Section M

The caller comments on the social construction of drug use as criminal. The host misses her point.

Sandra: [(indec) wanna go that - at least they know, that where it came from - it's not - the Government - it's not me that's made it wrong it's the Government that's made it wrong.
Zemanek: The Gov - how does the Government darling how does the Government [ 
Sandra: [(indec) into that it's about time people woke up to themselves
Zemanek: You feeble minded oat how does the Government, how does the Government make it wrong?
Sandra: By not legalising the shit!
Zemanek: Oooohhh, give me a break! sweetheart! What's gonna be legalised next! I mean we've got alcohol we got cigarettes how many more other drugs do you want? I mean are you gonna sit in your kitchen there, shooting up cocaine next in front of your kids?
Sandra: Oh now you're being stupid.

Section N

The host begins to name call. He attempts to entice the caller into one of his insult-traps. She evades it by "listening" without responding.

Zemanek: Oh really? But darling, you know, one drug leads to another
Sandra: No, not it doesn't!!
Zemanek: Oh it doesn't! But darling how does a feeble brained er buffoon like you actually reason
Sandra: A what?
Zemanek: A feeble bu- a feeble minded buffoon. That's what you are. A feeble minded buffoon. (:::) Do you understand that? (:::) Do you understand that?
Sandra: I'm listening...
Zemanek: Yes, but do you understand it...
Sandra: I said I'm listening.
Zemanek: But do you understand it?
Sandra: I know where you're coming from.
Zemanek: No, I'm asking you sweetheart, you are - I made this statement, you
297  Sandra:  are a feeble minded buffoon.
298  Zemanek:  I think that's absolutely degrading.
299  Zemanek:  Course it is. Of course it is sweetheart, but it is to normal people, but
to unfortunates like you [
301  Sandra:  [No well how come - what?
302  Zemanek:  I'm probably complimenting you. You have not any idea - in fact
303  Zemanek:  minded buffoon. You are [make me sick. [You make me sick. [  
305  Sandra:  Are you in this with an open mind are ya? (indec) mind shut.  
306  Sandra:  You are in this with your mind shut, you haven't got any -
307

Section O

Since the caller has detected his strategy, the host cannot proceed. He moves to claim moral nausea, then reverts to attacks on the caller’s mothering. He attempts to seek out a higher (male) authority: the caller’s husband. The caller refuses to cede the discussion. The host cuts her off with a final insult.

308  Zemanek:  I wanna go out the back door and vomit.
309  Sandra:  No matter who no matter whether it's a solo mother, [ no matter
310  Zemanek:  Who cares if you're a solo mother or not! The fact is -
311  Sandra:  your best friend next door!
312  Zemanek:  you're gettin' - you're smoking oh bullshit nothing listen
313  Sandra:  sweetheart unfortunately people like you, try to justify your own
314  Zemanek:  stupidity with some of the actions that you take and some of the
315  Sandra:  actions you take are sitting there smoking drugs in front of a 4 year
316  Sandra:  old and a 14 year old. You should not be a mother. You are a bad-
317  Sandra:  parent, sweetheart, you're a disgrace to the human nature. And
318  Sandra:  you should not be - where wh- wh is your husband there now?
319
320  Sandra:  Yes he is.
321  Zemanek:  Well what - put him on the phone!
322  Sandra:  No. No this is my conversation.
323  Zemanek:  No. No. Because you haven't got a husband, sweetheart he
324  Zemanek:  probably left you years ago.
325  Sandra:  Oh now you're being pathetic.
326  Zemanek:  NO no I'm not being pathetic he probably woke up to you and said
327  Zemanek:  listen I'm not going to hang around with this drug addict, you're a
328  Zemanek:  disgrace sweetheart. You are an absolute disgrace, and I've only got
329  Zemanek:  one more thing to say to you. (:::) You know what that is? (:::) Are
330  Zemanek:  you there?
331  Zemanek:  I'm waiting...
332  Zemanek:  You're waiting? OK, well you don't have to wait any longer: piss
333  Zemanek:  off.