

News of the World

World cultures look at television news

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Klaus Bruhn Jensen

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*K. P. Jayasankar and Anjali Monteiro**

The news of the state and the state of the news

This chapter attempts to conceptualize how 'spectator' identities are negotiated within networks of power and resistance (Foucault 1984: 93) as a specific group of viewers – ten families in the city of Bombay, India – encounters the discourses of the state, as represented by news from Doordarshan, Indian state television. The authors draw on Foucault's formulation of the state as a new distribution and organization of an old power technique, originating in the Church, namely, pastoral power (Foucault 1986: 213). The state, accordingly, becomes a "structure in which individuals can be integrated, under one condition, that this individuality would be shaped in a new form and submitted to a set of very specific patterns" (ibid.: 214). The state's power is thus both individualizing and totalizing, and works toward the constitution of subjects as spectators.

The first part of this chapter, "The news of the state," contains a broad overview of television in India, and situates the notion of crisis that emerged as a dominant theme in the viewers' responses. The second part, "The nation-state and the other," examines, in the context of this sense of crisis, the construction of national and ethnic identities *vis-à-vis* the discourses of news. The negotiation of viewer identity appears to involve the invocation of various 'others,' an issue which is also explored in that section. The concluding part, "The spectator, the state, and the other," delineates the flows of power and resistance that emerge from the interpretation of viewer discourses.

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The news of the state

M3: 1 (. . .) TV amounts to a medium for government propaganda. What else is it? There's nothing called news in it . . .

The Indian television network, Doordarshan, is entirely state owned and controlled, and its programming is in consonance with a state agenda; it is impossible to separate television news in India from the state. At the time of this study, there was only one channel available to the bulk of the viewers. Channel 2 (the Metro channel) and the other three state-owned, satellite channels were restricted either to the major cities or to a small segment with access to cable networks. The main daily news programs were on Channel 1 on Doordarshan.

For Indian viewers, the news is inextricably tied up with their identities as citizens, their stance towards the news bearing within it a stance towards the state. This became apparent in the responses about news programs:

F4: 11 (Daughter-in-law): (. . .) TV is government controlled . . . it is but natural they will use the media to voice their opinion. I wouldn't be surprised . . . tomorrow if any other party comes to power – they will do the same . . .

All the Indian respondents acknowledged this relationship in their interpretation of news, even while drawing varied inferences from this perceived nexus. Some viewers thought it was inevitable:

B6: 16: (. . .) any government which comes to power will use the media for their own weightage . . . [advantage]

YOU THINK IT IS INEVITABLE?

B6: To some extent, it is inevitable because after all . . . the state has its own life, it has to exist . . . I think any government in the world will do it.

An analysis of the news items on Doordarshan during Newsweek (Table 4.1) bears out the conclusion that the bulk of the items were related to the state and its machinery. Of the 143 stories recorded, about 35 percent were reports on the activities of the state (whether of its executive, legislative, or judicial arms). If one adds the items concerning foreign relations and terrorism, which directly involve the state, an overwhelming close to 60 percent of stories reported the news of the state.

One noteworthy feature of viewers' discussions is that they digressed from the specific news stories of the days (several days, for practical reasons) when the interviews were conducted (11, 12, 13 May 1993) (see Table 4.2) to a range of other issues. The discussions tended to focus on events of the recent past and on TV as a medium. India, as a nation, has witnessed widespread communal and ethnic violence in recent years. These incidents find their way to viewers'

Table 4.1 Classification of Doordarshan news programs, 5–11 May 1993

| <i>Topic</i> | <i>N</i> |
|---------------------|----------|
| Govt. – Executive | 34 |
| Govt. – Legislature | 12 |
| Govt. – Judiciary | 5 |
| Terrorism | 21 |
| Foreign Relations | 12 |
| Bosnia | 3 |
| Accidents | 3 |
| Economy | 2 |
| Misc. Political | 3 |
| Misc. Foreign | 16 |
| Misc. Domestic | 16 |
| Sports | 16 |
| <i>Total</i> | 143 |

Note: N = number of news items

accounts of the various facets of news reception. The bland newscasts consisting mainly of reports of parliamentary proceedings and ritualistic government programs were quite imaginatively short-circuited by viewers to discuss general issues related to the nation-state, the body-politic, the role of television – in short, their world. To facilitate a more detailed discussion of these issues in later sections of this chapter, a brief overview of the development of television in India follows.

*Television in India***

Doordarshan (DD) was instituted in the 1960s in the context of media policies informed by modernization theory – specifically, the communication approach to development (Krippendorff 1979). In a country characterized by a bewildering linguistic and cultural diversity, where less than a quarter of the population are native speakers of the national language, Hindi, an ambitious agenda was set for the media, the attempt being to foster a pan-Indian identity based on secularism (see Madan 1987; Nandy 1988).

** Portions of this section are taken from Monteiro and Jayasankar (1994). For a historical overview of Doordarshan, see Mitra (1993).

Table 4.2 Lead stories on Doordarshan news programs, 11–13 May 1993

| <i>Date</i> | <i>Item No.</i> | <i>Topic</i> |
|-------------|-----------------|--|
| 11 May | 1 | Parliamentary debate on impeachment of Supreme Court Judge |
| | 2 | Supreme Court cancels bye-election to Haryana State Assembly |
| | 3 | India and Tanzania hold high-level talks |
| | 4 | Botswanian delegation calls on Indian President |
| 12 May | 1 | Lower House of Indian parliament approves extension of President's rule in four states |
| | 2 | Ruling party abstains from voting in impeachment motion |
| | 3 | Leader of Opposition condemns ruling party's stance |
| | 4 | Impeachment motion (May 11) fails |
| 13 May | 1 | Parliament approves extension of President's rule in four states |
| | 2 | Prime Minister exhorts police and intelligence service to break terrorist-drug mafia nexus |
| | 3 | India asks Pakistan to hand over bomb-blast suspects |
| | 4 | USA accuses Pakistan of drug smuggling |

The growth of television in India can be broadly divided into three phases, the first phase consisting of the period up to 1980. It was during this time that the Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE) was conducted – in 1975–6 – in order to arrive at a relevant prototype for the use of television in development. SITE covered 2,330 villages in six states and was geared to the rural audience, being disseminated through community television sets. The production of programs was undertaken under the aegis of a state-run development communication organization, and the thrust was primarily on educational and information-based programs in the areas of agriculture, health, and family planning. The structure and content of SITE reflected the dominant national credo of the 1960s and early 1970s: self-reliance, 'socialism,' and progress through technological input.

Up to the early 1980s, television in India had a negligible viewership. In 1983, while the reach was 210 million (28 percent of the population), the viewership was only 30 million (4 percent of the population) (Singhal and Rogers 1989: 66). The introduction of color television, the liberalization of television imports, and the installation of the satellite Insat 1-B marked a qualitative change in both state policy and the structure of television viewing. With this, one sees an abandoning of the old development paradigm in favor of a more commercial variant with marketing techniques and commercial sponsorship of programs being invoked to sell development. This new approach to development involved changes at the level of production structures, programming, as well as in the modes of reception. With the introduction of commercial sponsorship of TV

serials in 1980 and of private software production in 1984, and with the shift in emphasis from community television sets to a proliferation of individually owned sets, the stage was set for a new, second phase of television.

The state's strategy of going commercial with television has been regarded by many researchers as a dilution of its development goals (Chowla 1985). However, it is precisely this strategy that has made possible the entry of the state into the familial space and, in the process, redefining the viewers' relationship to both the public and private spheres. The marketing approach used for development communication was also extended to the political arena where, for the first time in the 1984 general elections, the Indian National Congress and other parties relied heavily on media campaigns designed by advertising agencies.

Starting from the decade of the 1990s, a third phase has been marked by the emergence of transnational networks such as CNN, STAR, BBC, etc. Private cable networks bring these programs to many households, in cities and small towns, at a nominal cost. These networks have made considerable inroads into Doordarshan's viewership in a city like Bombay. With the growth of cable television and multinational satellite networks, DD has intensified its strategy of going commercial. The change in programming – with more time being allotted to feature films and entertainment serials and the number of programming hours being increased, as well as the leasing of the Metro channel to private sponsors – has been seen as inevitable if DD is to survive the competition from its new challengers.

Subsequent to this study, DD has gone on to augment its services to include a Movie Club channel and several regional satellite channels. It has also changed its formats for news presentation, including more varied camera angles, a larger number of newscasters, and an increased use of on-location reporting, trying to model itself along BBC lines. Since 1996, major transnational networks such as Star Plus, BBC, and Zee TV have started national newscasts in Hindi and/or English. Though figures are not available, from the commercial sponsorship that these newscasts have been able to attract, they appear to command an elite viewership. These programs have extensive live reporting and exclusive interviews and teleconferences with political leaders. The weather forecast, which had been a drab affair with DD, has been transformed into a spectacle by Star Plus with slick graphics and an attractive anchor. In a country where the weather has never been a topic of conversation due to its predictability and constancy, it is striking that this forecast has become a popular attraction and, hence, an arena for marketing with sponsorship from multinational automobile and air-conditioning giants.

At the time of the study, cable television was relatively new, but had already considerably reduced news-watching. Previously, in most households, the TV set would be switched on to the main Doordarshan channel at 7:30 or 8.00 pm, and kept on until 10 pm or later. News was watched as a part of this flow, often only by the male members of the household. However, with the proliferation of cable channels, the viewership of the national network has been eroded, with

the Metro channel (now a film-based entertainment channel in the place of a channel in regional languages) and Zee TV constituting a serious threat. Perhaps the program to be affected most by the multiplicity of channels is the national network news in Hindi and English. DD audience research ratings for the week of 29 May to 14 June 1994 indicated a 16 percent viewership share for the English news, as opposed to 50–60 percent for Metro channel serials (*The Times of India*, 26 June 1994). When selecting households for the present study, it was difficult in fact to locate households where the national network news was watched as a regular feature. Even households without a cable connection would prefer the Metro channel to Doordarshan news on the main channel.

The news of the crisis

G1: 8: (...) In our own lifetime ... everything is getting split ...

The major super-themes that inform viewers' discourses are those of 'crisis' and 'identity,' as examined further below. The constitution of identity involves "dividing practices" (Foucault 1986: 208) that invoke an 'us' versus 'them.' The viewer identity, invoked by all respondents, thus relates to contested concepts of nationhood and the state. In this study, the two super-themes come out as interrelated.

The super-theme of crisis sets the horizon for a number of the viewers' accounts of the news, though there was no news item directly pertaining to the crisis that most viewers nevertheless chose to speak about. The intensity with which the super-theme of crisis informs the viewers' accounts is related to the specific conjuncture described below, and it would no doubt be articulated differently if the interviews were to be done in, say, 1997. However, the strategies that viewers deploy in order to define their identities would hardly be different (Monteiro and Jayasankar, forthcoming).

During the six months prior to this study, Bombay witnessed the most savage and prolonged violence in the post-independence period. In December of 1992, proponents of *Hindutva* (Hindu-ness), represented by political parties such as the Bharatiya Janata Party and the Shiv Sena, and by organizations such as the Rashtriya Svayamsevak Sangh and the Bajrang Dal, demolished the centuries-old Babari mosque in the town of Ayodhya on the grounds that the mosque was built over a temple marking the birthplace of the Hindu deity Ram. The government remained a mute spectator to the demolition, perhaps because of the possible effects at upcoming elections of antagonizing pro-Hindu sections of the population. Arson and clashes broke out all over the city, lasting for about a week. There was a fresh upsurge of communal violence in early January of 1993. During this phase, *Hindutva* supporters systematically targeted Muslim households, business establishments, and localities, ostensibly

to revenge alleged attacks on individuals of their community by the Muslims. This was followed in March by a series of bomb blasts in public places, leaving hundreds dead and injured. These blasts were allegedly engineered by Dawood Ibrahim, a Muslim mafia don, in retaliation for the attacks on Muslims during the riots. This series of events dealt a blow to the identity of the city as a cosmopolitan melting pot, a thriving commercial center, untouched by the ethnic strife that has affected other parts of the country:

M4: 16: (. . .) over there [Punjab and Kashmir] life is so . . . that way, we are lucky in Bombay . . . we are safe and . . . but after this bomb blast thing, the position has reversed, now, now, our life is more in danger and their life has become safe now . . .

It seems as if terrorism or ethnic violence, which had hitherto been an 'object,' suddenly transformed itself in to a 'subject' (Masselos 1993). When an event was seen as an object, "apparent meaning was imposed on what was happening, according to the perceptions and viewpoints of those who made the ascriptions (. . .) The terminology linked it into other occasions and sets of ideas – and engendered a variety of connotations outside the originating situation and suggested appropriate behavior as a result of those connotations" (Masselos 1993: 183). As opposed to this, the event as subject evokes a reaction that perhaps makes it resistant to reification: it poses itself as an 'active text' that needs to be negotiated immediately:

M10: 18: Yeah, but it's like only when Bombay was rocked by the riots and bomb blast that Bombayites woke up and said, "Oh, we never thought that would happen to us." We heard about it happening in Delhi, but how many Bombayites got up and spoke up. No one. Only when it happens to you immediately, that you are going to speak . . .

In the transformation from object to subject, certain issues that once were distant had become immediate. This transformation, in turn, spawned various other objects that were to influence the production and circulation of news, myths, rumors, and stereotypes. Most of the interview responses in this study merit the status of objects that were generated subsequent to the riots.

The riots brought to the fore the assertion of communal and national identities, leading to a hardening of divides and a breakdown of trust between communities. For instance, for one Indian family, an upper-class Muslim household living in downtown Bombay, their sudden vulnerability during the riots brought home to them their Muslim-ness, which for them had perhaps never been a crucial marker of their identity prior to the riots:

F9: 20: Like, we [though Muslims] have more friends in the Hindu

community than our own community but now, you know, the situation is also such that we hesitate. Things have changed now.

YEAH, IT MAKES YOU MORE CONSCIOUS . . .

F9: Yes, it does make you conscious and it makes you feel, are you secure and safe now in this own country of yours (. . .) It was like, we used to eat from one plate, one hearth, but now, we hesitate. (. . .) The people who used to sit down and share the same table as us — they are the ones who are doing this to us. So you feel a little . . .

All sections of the population appear to experience feelings of insecurity and threat, including communities not immediately affected, as the following excerpt from a discussion with a South Indian Christian family indicates:

M8: 8: (. . .) Now this bomb blast is happening everywhere . . . nobody knows where it may happen . . . anytime, anywhere, without any prior notice, it is happening . . . so there is no safety in Bombay . . . it is becoming a miserable place to live . . . so even we are feeling to shift [thinking of moving] from Bombay . . .

For several of those belonging to the Muslim community, however, the post-riots situation was experienced as one where their basic rights as citizens of a democratic country were in question:

F9: 10–11: Because even freedom of writing . . . nowadays . . . everything is censored. You have to think ten times before you put down in writing, ten times before you say anything (. . .) the rights of a democratic country . . . you can do whatever you want . . . you can say whatever you want . . . those rights have . . .

THAT YOU THINK HAS HAPPENED BECAUSE OF THE EVENTS OF THE LAST THREE MONTHS?

F9: No, it has been gradually . . . gradually . . . and more after the riots.

The feeling of crisis extends to other spheres of life, as well. For instance, breakdown of morality, law, and order is another recurrent theme. In Household 1, the father, in response to an item on the proposed impeachment of a Supreme Court Justice on grounds of corruption, felt that he could not take a stand on the issue because, in the public domain, there was no longer any way of separating true from false:

M1: 2: And, nowadays, it is like that . . . in work matters, honesty becomes dishonesty . . . with one's brains one can implicate any man . . . if this can happen to such an important man — then what becomes of small people . . .

The husband in Household 3 strongly articulated the pervasive sense of disenchantment with the functioning of the state machinery, and its implications for public order:

M3: 4: (. . .) People have lost faith in law. If today someone says that Sharad Pawar [the chief Minister of the Indian state of Maharashtra, whose capital is Bombay] was also involved in the bomb blast, people won't get a shock. People are so fed up.

The same person went on to characterize the malfunctioning of the state as the main cause of the crisis facing the country today:

M3: 9-10: (. . .) So, our rules and regulations have become such a jungle that if a police officer wants to do something he is asked whether something else will be destroyed. That's why no government officer wants to put himself into a problem. That's why he does not do any work. They tell the common man, this is according to the law. What is the law, nobody knows . . .

Still other manifestations of crisis, mentioned by the father in Household 1, are the increasing impersonality of city life and the spiraling cost of living. The predominant stances that appear to emerge in the course of the discussions are not those of victimhood or passive subjection, but more an assertion of anger, outrage, and surprise. Even where viewers regarded their lives as being under threat, they still articulated the need to speak out, to do something about this situation.

The nation-state and the 'other'

G9: 20: I think it is war between the politicians into which the common man has been pulled, and from all sections of society, be it a Hindu, Muslim, or Christian. Everyone is being pulled into it.

At the core of the present crisis gripping the Indian nation-state is the question of national identity. The construction of identity, in the context of the modern nation-state, involves the creation of communities imagined through language (Anderson 1983) and a "new imagination: a new vision of calendrical time (linear teleological history), a limited but generalized space, occupied by homogeneous and equal 'citizens,' who are the protagonists of this new drama of the 'movement of history' " (Smith 1986: 169). Paradoxically, however, the new sensibilities of national identity are built up on a premodern ethnic core of myth, memory, symbol, and value.

In a multi-ethnic country such as India, the process of forging a homogeneous national identity is fraught with tension: Which of these identities gets

represented in the 'national' identity? Which alternative traditions and local cultures get suppressed? For instance, the nationalist movement in India owed much of its populist appeal to the invocation of Hindu myths and symbols. The contradictions of a secular India, built on a mass base of *Hindu Rashtra* (Hindu Nationhood), continue to bedevil the polity as bitter ethnic battles are waged over the reinvention of history and definitions of national identity. The present resurgence of *Hindutva* sees the past solely in terms of the golden age of pre-Muslim India and, conversely, the barbarity of the subsequent period of Muslim rule. In the popular reconstruction of history, the Muslim appears as the proselytizing invader who desecrated the shrines of other religions (Pandey 1993).

There were no news reports on any of the days of interviewing that related to religious or ethnic issues. Despite this fact, the construction of 'others' along religious divides figured prominently in viewer discourses. Doordarshan has an almost absurd way of skirting references to religious groups. To cite a purely hypothetical instance, it would not be altogether unusual to find a news item on the lines of, "In Bombay, members of two communities clashed after a shrine belonging to a particular community was set afire by miscreants . . ." In some instances, the euphemisms adopted are 'minority' and 'majority' communities, to refer to Muslims and Hindus respectively. The euphemism of 'minority' does not appear to include other non-Hindu religious groups. After the riots and blasts in Bombay, there was a tendency, even among other religious minorities, to constitute the Muslims as the 'other.' It seems amazing that a South Indian Christian (M8) chooses to interpret the demolition of a mosque by Hindu religious fanatics as proof of the basic aggressive nature of Indian Muslims in general:

M8: 9: As such, our church or Hindu religion, specially our Christian community, we adopt peaceful methods. Whenever anything happens, our leaders think over it . . . and give the message to the people to be peaceful . . . don't enter into violence . . . they tell the people . . . also they keep the people in the pocket in a silent manner, which keeps us [Christians] silent . . . that activities are there . . . that has a direct effect . . . for example, this Ayodhya issue took place . . . Muslims were more aggressive . . . at a certain time they lost their freedom in India . . . so they were afraid of their position . . . so they were also taking violence in their hand to make others to fear . . . one day [in the Mughal era, early sixteenth century AD], it was [a] temple, tomorrow they may spoil some other thing . . . so they are actually opposing . . . to restrict it . . . whereas our community, we [Christians] remained impartial . . .

There is also a class dimension to this portrayal of Muslims as *lumpen*, uneducated, and "not so much refined":

M8: 9: (. . .) But these people are taking the message of the Almighty

in their own language which is being interpreted by their own . . . so the value that is going into them is [of] their quality . . . their values are being reduced to the human state . . . so these values are not so much refined.

While constructing Hindus as basically tolerant and nonviolent, Hindu nationalism upholds the myth of the intolerant Muslim aggressor. This definition is applied to create a stereotype of Muslims in India today as fanatical, aggressive, and anti-national. The opposition to this is the 'secular' Hindus:

M6: 2: Yes, communalism has to be rooted out, because secularism is very much required in the country, because I think in our country, people of so many religions, caste, and creed are living together . . . secularism is very much essential for our country.

The movement for the Hindu nation equates nationalism with an upper-caste, homogenized, and modernized version of Hindu culture (Nandy 1993b: 17), in which Ram becomes not merely a Hindu deity, but a national hero, and reverence to Ram a condition for Indian citizenship. The destruction of the Babari Masjid at Ayodhya was aimed at recreating the lost glory of the Hindu nation as well as at settling scores with the Muslims (the 'other') and showing them their place in the Hindu order of things. Holding Muslim politics responsible for the partition of the original colonial territory into India and Pakistan, the Hindu fundamentalist view cannot but see all Indian Muslims as Pakistanis at heart, unless proved otherwise. Both the Muslim families interviewed for this study (Households 9 and 10), appeared to be aware of this collective onus to demonstrate their Indian-ness and their secular credentials. They regarded the sanitized euphemism of 'majority' and 'minority' communities as loaded and objectionable:

G9: 19: India is a secular state first . . .

M9: We know we [though from the Muslim minority community] are first Indians. So we are all equal, so why do they keep saying minority community and majority community?

Household 10 further contested the exclusive claim of the proponents of *Hindutva* to represent true nationalism. M10 pointed to the regional chauvinism of Shiv Sena, a political party which, until recently, claimed to represent the aspirations of people from the state of Maharashtra (with the capital of Bombay) and had targeted even Hindus from other Indian states for their attack:

M10: (. . .) We [as Muslims] do feel we are Indian and we have given up going to Pakistan at the time of partition. We have personally opted

for India. What I feel is that there are a number of people who hardly feel anything for India as a whole. They may feel, “we are Maharashtrians or this thing,” . . . not doing anything for integration.

Even international political relationships get refracted and rarefied by this discourse of Muslims/Pakistan as the ‘other’. For instance, referring to the issue of ethnic strife in Bosnia, M2 remarked that even there, the Hindus and Muslims are fighting each other! The following excerpts frame the news of Bosnia in surprisingly different ways. M6 is a retired railway employee, a Hindu who had to flee Pakistan at the time of the partition in 1947, and B10 belongs to the Muslim community:

M6: 8: Yes, I think Bosnia is [important] international news, because the major reason is Yugoslavia is no more . . . now they are all different states now, who are fighting among one another . . . the Muslims of the [Yugoslavian] states are aided by other Muslim states . . . they are sending mercenaries.

BUT WHY DO YOU THINK BOSNIA IS IMPORTANT?

B10: 4: If you look at it — we are not communal or anything like that. But the entire media all over the world is controlled by the Christian, Christian world basically. Right now, this Islamic revivalism and fundamentalism and a break-up of Russia. I think these people really fear this revivalism. So you find a lot of emphasis being given to the things happening in Islamic countries and probably, the negative aspects are brought out more, and this might also be getting reflected in our TV . . . I don’t know . . .

In the present study, also apart from Hindus and Muslims, minorities and majorities, secularists and communalists, the authors encountered many an ‘other’ (see also Crigler and Jensen 1991, on ‘powerful others’), employed strategically to constitute various multi-layered spectator identities. The anti-thetical pairs included: India/Pakistan, Citizens/Terrorists, Friends/Enemies, Big People/Small People, Politicians/Common People, Doordarshan/Cable, and National/International. They are examined further below for their relations to the super-themes of crisis and identity, as well as to the respondents’ perceptions of different media and political factions.

India/Pakistan : citizens/terrorists : friends/enemies

The discourse of Doordarshan on terrorism was exemplified by three items in the English and Hindi newscasts of 13 May 1993 (see Table 4.2):

- The Prime Minister, while addressing a conference of high-ranking police

functionaries of the country, calls on the police and intelligence agencies to break the terrorist-drug mafia nexus. He also commends the role of the police in curbing terrorism in Punjab;

- India again asks Pakistan to hand over the Memon brothers, prime suspects in the Bombay bomb blast case. India accuses Pakistan of aiding and abetting terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir;
- The US accuses Pakistan of smuggling heroin into the US through Pakistan International Airline (PIA) flights, threatening to cancel all PIA flights into the US.

These items bear witness to the “home-brewed, hard state-oriented ‘theory’ of political terrorism” (Nandy 1993a: 38) which Doordarshan has been producing and circulating in recent years. This theory is built around the myth of the powerful modern nation-state – modelled after global powers such as the US – which privileges the totalizing abstraction of a nation over the lives of its citizens, a myth which may be accepted by citizens and viewers:

MI: 3: So, we feel that . . . this Indian government has so much of a burden on it . . . because of the terrorism (. . .) some solution to this should be found.

This type of ‘pastoral’ power allows for the annihilation of the enemies of the state for the collective good of its majority. The aspirations of smaller orders that form this nation-state, are seen as illegitimate, insofar as they do not fulfill the agenda of the state. Terrorists are constructed as mercenary professionals, using sophisticated technology, backed by the ‘foreign hand,’ mainly Pakistan, which is held responsible for the current crisis in Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir:

M8: 2–3: (. . .) something that is affecting our country . . . now terrorism is spread all over . . . it is causing destruction. As such there is no clear solution. We used to analyze who is doing this, whether Pakistan is involved . . . whether Pakistan is getting any international help . . . and why are they doing . . . as such our India is a poor country . . . it is a developing country . . . so, our development even with all these constraints is quite rapid . . . our technological developments and all is quite rapid (. . .) So, they [Pakistan] may be more jealous . . . so they may be trying all these things . . . or they may be having memories of Partition, or they may be thinking their state is not developed, or some individual persons in their personal capacity might be getting money . . .

Such an interpretation, however, elides the fact that most insurgency movements in the country have started as something like popular resistance to the

state's power, but have been gradually and conveniently branded as terrorism and forced to live up to this name by the excesses of counter-terrorist measures of the state. This threat to the nation-state, in a widely held myth, can only be eliminated by the use of high-tech counter-terrorist initiatives of the law-and-order machinery (Nandy 1993a):

B6: 1: These stories are very important, because terrorism is the biggest enemy, as it is said, of the democratic structure of the country, therefore, whatever the Prime Minister has said to the police and the intelligence bureau is very important. Second thing, [the stories are important] because peaceful co-existence of the country is important for the economic development of the country (. . .) I feel so long as the country is ruled peacefully and there's no strikes and such like things . . . destruction in the country . . . then the possibility of advancement of the country . . .

The mass consumption of these myths through the media has certainly increased because of the immediacy of ethnic violence in the lives of many in the city of Bombay, as suggested also by the respondents. The riots and blasts as 'subjects' have created many 'objects' and 'others':

M8:1: (. . .) But this terrorism is the existing subject. That seems to be more important, and that too is an external creation . . . It is not created by our own people . . . or a momentary, spontaneous happening . . . it is most important.

The analysis of the interviews found only one account that was critical of the theme of police-as-defenders-of-the-nation, in an interpretation of the ceremony awarding the police for its role in Punjab:

F7: 4: Yeah, because when there were riots and all, what did they [the police] do . . . they are not able to handle things properly and then are getting awards for what? When there are riots, they can't handle it and the army is called in.

The syntactic arrangements of the three news items on terrorism, mentioned above, are noteworthy: the law-and-order machinery is exhorted to fight the terrorist-drug mafia nexus; Pakistan is requested by India to extradite the bomb-blast suspects, and also accused of aiding terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir; and Pakistan is accused by the US of smuggling heroin. Put together, the three items construct Pakistan as a deviant terrorist state that breaks the law in every way, not only the laws of India, but also the laws of its friend, the US. Its opposite is the normal, law-abiding Indian state which follows legitimate protocols to combat terrorism. Viewers can unambiguously position themselves

as citizens of this normal state. As in the televisual portrayal of the Gulf War of 1991, the human costs of this process of eliminating terrorists may be lost in an abstraction akin to a video game. Here, good triumphs over evil “through the ‘right’ kind of media coverage provid[ing] the Indian middle classes with the slight, delectable touch of nervousness which thrills but does not kill, especially at a distance from the places where the action is” (Nandy 1993a: 37).

The three respondents of Household 4 (of the Parsi or Zoroastrian community, a micro-minority, settled largely in Western India) are interesting for their different interpretations of this battle between good and evil, with varying degrees of understanding. F4 is a social worker/teacher who has done extensive work in the area of substance-abuse counseling and rehabilitation. She foregrounded the issue of drug dependence in her account:

F4: 1: Drug abuse, however invisible it may be . . . because we don’t go out much where the abuse is, but it is there . . . I think drugs at that national level are . . . and all of us are aware that much of the terrorist activities in the country are funded out of the money earned by drugs smuggled into the country, and I think it is of great national importance.

F4 went on to add that “(. . .) somewhere inside I said, ‘very good, they [Pakistan] have really been culprits for so,’ . . . I mean . . . I think Pakistan also hasn’t been spared.” She quickly went on to qualify her statement: “I am not happy that Pakistan is being banned, but happy that at the international level, now people are coming together to do something about it” (F4: 2).

In contrast, B4, the husband in the family, was more categorical about the need to take stern action against Pakistan, bringing together the themes of drug trafficking, terrorism, and bomb blasts:

M4: 3: (. . .) Pakistan drug trafficking and all that, because Pakistan is playing a very important role in it on the borders. And secondly, even in the Bombay bomb blast also it has been proved that Pakistan hand was there — they were involved — so I think, some step should be taken against them.

And G4, in her account, linked up the bad things being perpetrated by Pakistan with the most traumatic event of Indian history, the Partition. She sees the drug trafficking as a plot by Pakistan to destabilize the Indian state:

G4: 3: That Pakistan thing . . . means first Pakistan was with India. After becoming separate they are doing all bad things with India, means they are smuggling drugs . . . it is very bad thing for the generations of India as well as Pakistan . . . if they continue to do this, it is bad for both India and Pakistan . . . no . . . and they do bomb blast and all in

India and so the population of India is also decreasing . . . so many people are dying . . . there is so much unrest is there . . .

In this battle between good and evil, the side taken by other countries, particularly the US – Pakistan's 'friend' – becomes crucial:

B6: 7: From the point of view of India's stability, we are more concerned or we are more exposed to Pakistan's involvement in various issues in India . . . it has been highlighted . . . and I am directly concerned because it concerns Pakistan and USA, USA and India . . . so the interests of all the three countries are involved . . .

This positioning also sets up lists of friends and enemies globally. Any item related to international affairs tends to be interpreted in terms of its implications for the India–Pakistan relationship: "(. . .) the Queen of England [referring to former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher], like she has said — that they [the UK] are also enemies of terrorism like India — so like this, we get support from outside . . ." (M1: 5), and from Russia that is "India's friend" (G9: 3).

Viewers who may have been situated earlier in 'our little corner of the world', now find themselves at the hub of events, which were previously mere 'objects,' but underwent a transformation into 'subjects.' The rest of the world becomes significant insofar as it impinges on what is happening to 'us.' The interpretation of events ranging from Bosnia to US–Pakistan relations, comes within the ambit of this transformation:

M8: 5: Normally we are conscious about the American developments . . . for example, what is happening with Pakistan . . . Now, these Clinton . . . if any Clinton news is there, we watch that consciously . . . what is his reaction to Pakistan and other neighboring countries . . . because it affects us . . . and our country also . . . or what is his reaction to India or these Gulf countries . . . what is happening there . . . Iran, Iraq, and other countries. So that is of importance to us . . . so we watch that and store that information in mind and see that next day what development has taken place, we talk about it and analyze.

Responses that would not agree with such generalizations about friends and enemies, or which see the portrayal of Pakistan as a construction, run the risk of getting branded as anti-national, perhaps particularly when they come from a Muslim:

B10: 5: Similarly, the other two news, there were 2–3 times that they showed about Pakistan /

G10: PIA [Pakistan airline] /

B10: PIA was most irrelevant in terms of /

G10: It was like a smear campaign against Pakistan. But it is relevant from the point of view of Pakistan, from the angle of the United Nations declaring Pakistan as a terrorist state. So USA is banning trade with them and threatening them. They can't do without USA.

*Immediacy/credibility : television/newspaper : Doordarshan/cable :
national/international : illiterate/educated*

M1: 9: (. . .) the meaning of news is that, despite everything, things remain as they are . . . so we think, forget the item . . . let's go on . . . all this . . . the problem of terrorism, problem of inflation, what can a man do?

The feeling of crisis and the emergence of ethnic violence (as an immediate 'subject' and its documentation and impact as 'objects,' discussed in earlier sections) apparently have changed the viewers' relationship with the news. News no longer represents distant stories of terrorism and violence from Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir, but is a means to fathom the immediacy of these events in one's own life, something that "affects our very lifestyle . . ." (M8: 8). Paradoxically, however, the frequency of regular newsviewing in the country has been reduced considerably. Also most of these respondents would watch news only 'when something happens.'

When it comes to credibility, television as a medium was preferred over newspapers by the Indian respondents. The argument was that the visuals make television unambiguous: "(. . .) On TV, everything can be clearly shown (. . .) everything can be seen" (G1: 9). Stories in newspapers, in contrast, can be constructed, making them opaque to spontaneous and active reading. TV cannot easily accomplish this, for the spectator can actively witness the event to arrive at independent interpretations. Moreover, with television, since most viewers rely on Doordarshan's newscasts, they do not have to confront conflicting versions. Most respondents agreed with this generalizing assessment of the univocality of TV, in contradistinction to the possibility of multiple interpretations associated with the newspapers:

O2 (Daughter-in-law): 6: However many newspapers are there, it is different in them — all the newspapers don't give the same news — on TV, the news in English and Hindi is the same. But in case of newspapers — if you read many papers — it is different in each one of them — so one can't have faith in that (. . .) on TV, we see with our own eyes, so we have more faith that such a thing is happening — in the paper they give incorrect news also.

One reason given for this preference, then, is the presence of video images in TV newscasts. Other interpretations, however, regard the visuals as entirely superfluous:

F4: 6: (. . .) the TV visuals take away our attention from what they are actually saying . . . and that is one disadvantage of TV throughout turned elsewhere (. . .) I think people become more insensitive . . . at least I did not see CNN, but people who watched the Gulf War on CNN said . . . they . . . after some time, it becomes like watching any other serial [soap opera] . . .

These generalizing assessments of television as a medium do not necessarily hold true for Doordarshan – here the opinions were more diffuse. The fact that it is controlled by the state was seen by some as the major obstacle to DD's credibility:

G9: 10: So that's why whatever is of benefit to the government, they show only that . . . it is a propaganda of the government. What is happening behind, that they don't show — only the good side of the government, they want to show.

DD is also seen to represent the interests of the ruling party:

M2: 6: They [Doordarshan] have been bought — the lies of big people are presented as true — different parties hide the facts about themselves.

On the other hand, state control, to some respondents, imbues DD with a ring of credibility:

M6: 5: TV is more able or it is [an] authority.

WHY DO YOU SAY THAT?

M6: Because it is controlled by the government, they're responsible for that . . . they have to answer for that.

BUT DON'T YOU THINK THERE IS A DANGER OF THE GOVERNMENT TRYING TO USE THE MEDIUM FOR ITS OWN ADVANTAGE?

M6: The danger is . . . but because of the structure of the country which is democratic . . . people have the right to ask anyone while utilizing that . . . so they are answerable to the public . . . but the newspapers are not answerable to the general public . . . the public cannot do anything against the paper.

The discourses invoked here relate to the place and role of the public sector, and of private enterprise, in the country at the present juncture. These discourses have gained a lot of currency in the country due to structural adjustment programs, economic liberalization, free markets, and the proposed privatization of many public-sector undertakings. Popular conceptions about the public sector hold that it is inefficient, poorly managed, and easy on its

employees, resulting in low productivity and quality. At the same time, it is seen as serving the valuable social functions of generating employment and providing subsidized services without the sole motive of profit as well as providing job security to their employees. Given this image, government-controlled institutions are seen as impervious to petty motives of furthering their own interests, which, even if they wanted, their inefficiency would render it difficult to achieve:

YOU FEEL DOORDARSHAN IS MORE RESPONSIBLE?

B10: 12: I don't know about being more responsible, but maybe because Doordarshan doesn't have the time and space to go on and on. They stick to certain norms and just report the main . . .

M10: They don't have so many colorations.

WITHOUT TOO MUCH COLORATIONS, WHICH MEANS IT IS OBJECTIVE . . . ?

B10: I think so . . . because the newspapers can very easily be biased according to who is publishing it . . .

In comparison, the sole motive of the private sector is to generate as much profit as possible. This motive makes it imperative to have tougher production control mechanisms, incentives for efficiency, and higher levels of automation. DD represents the unwieldy yet friendly 'neighborhood' public sector, while cable TV and newspapers stand for the efficient private sector. In contradistinction to DD, other networks and newspapers have to sell themselves to survive and, hence, some respondents felt that this leads to sensationalism in their news coverage:

B6: 16: (. . .) I find that other than BBC, I would say a lot of unnecessary thrill is put in the news which I don't approve. If an accident has taken place somewhere, then you will send your reporters to the maximum possible extent and get the person's views, even if he is dying and you put him on the television . . . even if the person dies after two months or two days and you don't bother about it . . . you have used him. That kind of thing is more in commercial privatized kind of thing than in Doordarshan.

BBC . . . ?

B6: BBC, I would rate a little better but . . . I would say, yes, it covers quite details, but again in BBC, I have seen the weightage given or the order of the news depends again on the importance of the news in connection with . . . not necessary the international this thing . . . but they want to fairly highlight, expose and use the item for their own benefit . . . I think that way only . . . in the public sector like Doordarshan, this kind of thing is much less . . .

Further, the portrayal of India by transnational networks was regarded by F4

as stereotyping the Third World and as an affront to the national pride of an Indian:

F4: 16: Because abroad the tendency is to show droughts and famines in India, poor people begging in India, elephants walking on the roads . . . they [transnational networks] do not show good things about India . . .

Still, the perceptions of BBC by B6 and F4 were not shared by many respondents. They instead regarded 'private' networks like BBC and CNN to have changed the viewers' expectations of news, making them more critical of the fare being dished out by DD:

M5: 5: The definition of news has changed . . . as it is happening in CNN or BBC . . . they show while it is happening, but here [on DD] they don't show . . . they will censor something . . . whatever is convenient for the . . . only that part they will show in an encapsulated form.

The transnational networks were seen by most of these respondents to have more credibility ("more realistic than our news," M8: 2) and professionalism than DD:

M9: 11: (. . .) there was a cartoon by Laxman in *The Times of India* sometime back that a minister is sitting in his office and there is a demonstration, by some people, outside. So the minister asks his secretary to switch on the BBC to know what is happening outside his office. He himself does not know! (. . .) there is no question of comparing DD with BBC or CNN. BBC and CNN are free. They have no restrictions, they can show anything. Whereas here, whatever news they get, first it is censored.

However, the fact that the cable networks are transnational may deprive them of immediacy. They seem unable to present relevant news, except during moments of crisis, when India appears on their agenda, and when the issue of credibility and the possibility of knowing what exactly happened impel people to turn to these networks in preference to DD:

F3: 5: (. . .) Their visuals are nice, they [BBC] show interviews on the telephone and they have all the modern techniques, but India does not have prominence in their news, unless something very important happens, like the bomb blast, which means if it is of importance from their viewpoint only, then they show it. So, as an Indian, I do not get the news that I am looking forward to every day. First about my Bombay, then about Maharashtra, then about India, and then about

the world, this is my priority which BBC etcetera can never fulfill.

M8: 1: It [international news] is not of much importance to us. It is not directly affecting us. It is a secondary part of the news. If it is directly affecting our country . . . then we will be more conscious . . . because the problems are internal . . . like terrorism and all that . . . this is just information for us.

There is also the belief that BBC and CNN are for the elite (“I think the educated class do not watch the Doordarshan. They will always prefer BBC,” F9: 11), setting up yet another ‘other’, who may not be able to handle the truth. In M8’s account, there is an implicit assumption that these “mass[es] in a mobile condition” can and do cause riots, hence justifying censorship of news by the state:

M8: 2: (. . .) Because all people are not aware, some are not bothered, some are indifferent, some are more careful, some are least concerned . . . some are more conscious, some are more aggressive. If all the news are [sic] given . . . the mass will be in a more mobile condition. Because if all news is given . . . everybody’s interpretation will be dangerous. That may spoil the peace . . . there might be destruction. To avoid disturbance, normal learned people may react differently.

Given its national character, DD has the potential to achieve immediacy, but appears unable to do so because of various factors (“Doordarshan has become very ‘Door’ [far] !,” M9: 14). One of the reasons cited was the control over it by politicians in power:

M7: 9: (. . .) they were showing Sharad Pawar and Narasimha Rao visiting the blast sites. But I am not interested in seeing their faces. What I would like to see is the families of those who have died, their agony, you know, how many have died . . . such things . . . I am not interested in seeing the politicians making their rounds!

DD’s definitions of newsworthiness were equally questioned by several respondents:

B10: 9: In fact, I think that the news is very stunted.

M10: Frankly, I mean, all these things are there. They are not world-shaking news, as such!

NO, THEY ARE NOT NEWS . . . ?

F10: They are just filling in the time . . .

There is also the suspicion that the newscasts of DD are outdated, as in the case of its reporting during the riots all over the country. DD is commonly accused of dragging its feet and of being way behind international news agencies. The reason given is that DD officialdom and the political mandarins are not sure of people's ability to stomach controversial and traumatic news. But as witnessed during the Bombay riots, this only led to an erosion of DD's credibility. In the absence of credible news, rumors ruled the roost:

M3: 4: There is so much of frustration and they [Doordarshan] show all false things, that's why people don't have any faith in them. They think they can fool the public, but it doesn't happen that way. Because of such factors, people resort to riots, the reason is only this.

G9: 11: (...) when BBC and CNN give news, Doordarshan proclaims that it is a wrong kind of news, specially where the figures of death toll are concerned. They are always accusing BBC. So basically there is always a conflict, they are trying to prove something, and BBC is giving us some other news.

The suppression of video coverage of sensitive events like the demolition of Babari Masjid, which in any case was shown by BBC, is a case in point. F4 felt that there was an overdose of such visuals on BBC, and felt that such repetition was not called for as it desensitizes people:

F4: 6: BBC showed the same thing again and again. Advani [Hindu rightwing leader] is being interviewed as he is coming down the staircase and he says the government is going to fall.

In contrast, M3 set up such reporting as an ideal toward which DD should strive:

M3: 2: (...) Though TV is a visual medium, they don't use TV with the idea that TV is a visual medium. That they don't understand (...) it has more of talking rather than showing. They should show news on TV news, and for that they should collect news. Wherever it is, they should reach there ... that does not happen, that's why on STAR TV, the BBC, and CNN, news that they show is watched even by people in Dharavi [a large slum area in Bombay] who cannot even understand English.

According to M5, rather than trying to learn from its first encounter with the transnational networks, DD is struggling to retain its hold by imitating them, in terms of increasing its film-based and entertainment-oriented programming:

M5: 15: This [cable networks] is called cultural invasion. When there is this kind of invasion, these people [Doordarshan] are imitating them rather than facing them. Just similar kind of stuff. But more degenerative kind of stuff, that is what they [DD] are doing.

Politicians/common people : big people/small people

The most virulent critique of politicians and of the political machinery came from M7: 4: "(. . .) Given a chance, [I] would like to shoot all those [political] leaders," so as to escape the fate of seeing them constantly hogging the lime-light in the newscasts of DD. Other comments common to almost all the respondents, though less vituperative, constructed the politician as the most loathsome 'other':

F9: 2: (. . .) You know, the politicians which are always there (. . .) the focus is on them . . . whether it is the Prime Minister or the Chief Minister or Finance Minister or the Home Minister . . .

M9: (. . .) We feel there should be nothing by the name of politics. I think even if this thing [impeachment of the Supreme Court Justice Ramaswamy] comes in front of the common man or a small child also, even that person will be able to understand that all these things are just to save the person's chair. Everyone is involved in saving their own chair — and in that, they harm each other.

This state of affairs of DD news is, according to M5, an indicator of the larger malaise affecting the country — an amoral and opportunistic political milieu. No political party is an exception to this, whatever the ideology it espouses. He regarded the present ethnic crisis in the country as exacerbated by these very forces:

M5: 3: The entire political culture here is such that . . . no matter whatever its label, you know, [every party] tries to get a political mileage out of it [communal sentiments] — they do not view any issue in a broader perspective, in a national interest (. . .) See, the degree of this thing may differ, but when the crux of the matter is this, they work in the same fashion . . . and no party is an exception to this (. . .) whenever it is convenient for them . . . they play these cards, whether it is caste, communal, or anything . . . which suits them.

Many of these respondents were cynical of the goings-on in the name of legislature, perceiving it as a game played by the ruling and opposition parties:

G9: 4: I think Doordarshan was trying to show that the opposition is playing its role as an opposer as usual.

THAT THE OPPOSITION IS PLAYING THE ROLE OF AN OPPOSER?

G9: That's their basic ideology.

F9: The opposition is always opposing ! [*F9 and G9 laugh*]

This leaves no space for issues related to the common man. Several viewers felt that DD news did not touch on their everyday lives:

M1: 14: Yes, like . . . they show everything about important people, but there is no voice at all of poor people (. . .) Like if anything happens to poor people's hutments . . . they don't show anything. When the whole world burns, then they show it . . . and like you said . . . if any small thing happens to big people, they show it.

Conclusion: the spectator, the state, and the 'other'

The viewers in the present study adopted various strategies for constructing their identities as spectators, at the site of the discourses of news. These constructions assign varied uses to news and its place in everyday life. For M7, the uses of news ranged from personal safety and security, to budget planning, to its use in conversation with friends. He constituted himself as a discerning viewer who interprets news in the light of his past experiences and opinions:

M7: 2: (. . .) Like there is a riot and it is affecting the peace in the neighbourhood, then definitely there is interaction in the house . . . between us . . . that such and such a thing has happened . . . what we should do, what we should not do . . . to take better care of ourselves, meet friends or people living close by, then we happen to talk about it. Or in case of money matters . . . if there is a budget then we think of how to use our money accordingly . . . in planning our budget. (. . .) I know whom to keep . . . who are the good apples, who are the bad apples . . . so certain opinions are formed in my mind . . . by seeing what is happening around, reading newspapers, at least, in my personal capacity, opinions get framed . . . and there are interactions with people, we discuss things . . .

To M10, the very act of watching news was linked to his status as a citizen of the country:

M10: 17: I think it makes you conscious of your status as an Indian citizen by the fact that you are watching the news . . . means you are interested in the affairs of the country.

Several respondents – for instance, G1, M1, and M3 – felt that the news in its present form does not have much use, first, because as a viewer, one is

powerless to influence the course of events and, second, because DD newscasts focus on useless information such as government ceremonies and the visits of dignitaries from abroad. M3 also pointed out that while the news talks about various government schemes, in practice, the average viewer would be unable to access these schemes due to a lack of detailed information and to bureaucratic obstacles. In terms of the uses of news in the immediate context of viewing in the family, only F4 referred specifically to newswatching as a family occasion that takes place around the evening meal and becomes a source for dinner-table discussions.

The viewer as critic appears as a recurrent theme in M5's accounts of the news. As opposed, for instance, to M6, cited later, who regards the news as educative and his own identity as a spectator as unproblematic, M5 foregrounded the assertion of his identity as a critical viewer – this element appears to be more significant than the news as such:

M5: 11: (. . .) we normally . . . we have the ability . . . it gives a certain level of intellectual satisfaction . . . because we tend to view some things critically . . . with a critical view . . . and when things are happening at a high level, we definitely look at them critically, you know . . . and discuss it with friends . . . and from your own point of view . . . you are already holding certain views and opinions . . . from that point of view . . . definitely find it interesting.

M8 adopted yet another subject position. While he accepted the objectivity of the news and of the state, the visual element of news made him aware of his position as a privileged spectator, giving him a sense of mastery over the news as object:

M8: 3: (. . .) By seeing this picture we are seeing as if the original at that time . . . we are understanding . . . that feeling is there . . . when we see something, there is something to recount it later . . . so it [TV news] is more interactive . . . that is a practice of our intelligence or our mind.

Summing up, the identity of Indian 'spectators' *vis-à-vis* news is mediated in flows of power, related to the state and the 'other' (see further the model in Chapter 9, Figure 9.1). The relationship with the state appears to be primary – news is the news of the state. The stance of viewers *vis-à-vis* the news becomes, in effect, a stance towards the state. Thus, for instance, viewers who regarded Doordarshan news as neutral and transparent would also construct the state as the guarantor of truth and security. M6, for instance, saw a potential for education and awareness through newswatching:

M6: 10: When I watch the news, what I am looking for is a striking point, an educative point. If the news is striking or educative, if

anything is new to me, I keep it in mind and make whatever use of it I can. The general news, that is of no use to me . . . that I can't store within me. My idea is simply to know the things that are unknown to me . . . so far as I come to know new things, it is good!

At the same time, the same respondent appeared to be oblivious of the role of news-related discourses in constructing his own identity as a citizen:

M6: 12: Television doesn't give me more for identifying myself as a citizen of this country . . . citizen of this country, I am already there, then I was a citizen of this country . . .

In contrast to M6's reading, M5 adopted a stance of resistance towards the news and the state. This resistance is expressed in categories of credibility and of immediacy (in the sense of Foucault, with resistance being directed at the most immediate power flows). News is a representative of the state:

M5: 15: No, the way they present news . . . there is so much of resentment . . . You get more conscious as a citizen . . . because you get more critical . . . [*laughs*]

Such resistant readings would not be uncommon among the educated, upper-class urban Indians as also among, for example, minorities who perceive themselves as being marginalized by the state (Monteiro 1993: 256).

The relationship with the 'other' is, by definition, a relation of exclusion and resistance. The self is a construction opposed to the various 'others' invoked. And, the specific relationship of the spectator to the state also emerges in the relations of the 'other' to the state. To cite examples, when the 'other' is terrorism, the spectator's relation with the state is one of identification, for the state is also against the terrorist. When the 'other' is politicians, the resistance is directed towards the state as well as the 'other' – the state can be seen as a guild of political power. When the transnational networks become an 'other', the spectator assumes the identity of a loyal citizen. Conversely, when DD is regarded as the 'other', the state is simultaneously resisted.

These positions in relation to the state/'other' are not necessarily consistent. In other words, the same respondent may assume differing stances *vis-à-vis* the state, depending on the 'other' being invoked. There are modes of "contradictory interpellations" of the subject within discourses, thus pointing to the "unstable, provisional and dynamic properties of positioning" of subjects (Morley 1980b: 166). M1, for instance, in speaking about terrorism, sympathized with the burden on the Indian government, but would see himself as small, being pitted against the 'other' of big people, who are in league with the state.

In the Indian context, then, it appears almost impossible for viewers to prob-

lematize television news without problematizing the state – the stance adopted towards news is congruent with the stance taken towards the state. When the relationship of the ‘other’ to the state was one of resistance or antagonism, these viewers would identify with the state. Conversely, when the interests of the ‘other’ and the state were seen to coalesce, the viewer’s resistance could be directed towards both. The news, particularly its credibility, comes out as one of the most immediate points of resistance to, or identification with, the state.