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Introduction: Comparative European Perspectives on Television History

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There is currently no scholarly study of European television history. There are books on international television history (for example, Hilmes & Jacobs 2003, Smith & Paterson 1998), but these are compilations of separately authored chapters on national television histories without a common ground of shared questions or methodological reflections. In order to facilitate study of the complex and disparate development of television in Europe, this project defines chronological and thematic paths charting that development. The book is a systematic comparative historical analysis of television's role as an agent and instance of technological, economic, political, cultural and social change in European societies. An important aspect of this is that the development of television in Europe is uneven; for example Britain's national broadcaster began operating the 1930s while other nations had no developed television service until the late 1960s or even after. For this reason, the book is organised around critical debates rather than chronologically, and we introduce these debates in this introductory chapter. The book combines a structural historical approach (a comparison of the institutional development of television within different political, economic, cultural and ideological contexts) with a media-theoretical approach (theoretical work on the aesthetics of television as a medium and the intermedial relationships between television and other media). In this way *A European Television History* offers a unique historical and analytical perspective on the leading mass medium of the second half of the twentieth century.

Aims and Audience

The cultural identity of 'Europe' is a contested discursive and material space, which expands and contracts its boundaries, and changes over time. In this book we have followed Chris Barker's (1999: 172) understanding of identity in general in regarding European cultural identity as 'A temporary

stabilization of meaning, a becoming rather than a fixed entity. The suturing or stitching together of the discursive “outside” with the “internal” processes of subjectivity. Points of temporary attachment to the subject positions which discursive practices construct for us.’ Thus as the book proceeds we have removed the ‘scare quotes’ from around the term ‘Europe’ and its derivatives since the book as a whole consists of a debate both implicit and explicit about how television has taken part in the construction and deconstruction of Europe as a political entity, a rhetorical crux in different kinds of discourse, and a spatial territory acted upon by the implementation of different technologies, textual forms, and modes of distribution and reception. ‘Since words do not refer to essences, identity is not a fixed universal “thing”. Cultural identity is not an essence but a “cut” or snapshot of unfolding meanings’ (Barker 1999: 172). Television has played a role in the construction of Europe as a discursive entity, for example in television coverage of European Union politics, but with uneven and partial results. Work by Klaus Schoenbach and Edmund Lauf (2002) investigated the ‘trap’ effect for television to disseminate political information to people uninterested in politics and to influence them more than other media. They found that in 12 European countries during the 1999 European elections the effect was unimpressive, even when proportionally more television news coverage of the elections and fewer competing channels with alternative programming were available to viewers. Similarly, a comparative cross-cultural content analysis by Peter and de Vreese (2004) studied British, Danish, Dutch, French and German television news and in the majority of countries EU politics and politicians were marginally represented. But where the EU was covered, EU politics were more prominent than other political news, especially in public broadcasting, in countries with higher levels of public satisfaction with democracy, and during EU summits. They concluded that the Europeanisation of television news was more an illusion than a reality.

We have written this book in English in order to address the greatest possible range of readers, and this question of language mirrors questions of linguistic dominance in European television as well. English-language television programmes, primarily those made in the USA and next, those made in Britain, are the most exported within Europe and to elsewhere in the world for screening either with subtitled dialogue or with a dubbed soundtrack. Television advertisements are also sometimes shown in several different countries, with the same visual images but with a soundtrack made in another language. Audiences in Britain (and the USA) are notoriously resistant to watching programmes in languages other than English, but this is relatively unusual. For example, in Poland imported foreign-language programmes have the dialogue of all the speakers dubbed into Polish by a single actor; in France and Italy British and American programmes are shown with multi-actor dubbing; while in the Netherlands British and American programmes are shown with Dutch subtitles. The significance of linguistic variation, translation and the meaning of television as part of nationalism are clearly impacted by this,

since around Europe the import of television in non-native languages is immediately a marker of difference. In nations such as Belgium or Switzerland where there are several languages of broadcasting, or in the regions within nations such as Wales and Catalonia, the issue of identity and television takes another distinctive form as part of the variation across the European mediascape, further complicated by recent transnational channels such as Hellenic TV (Greek language), Polonia (Polish), Al-Jazeera (Arabic) and Phoenix TV (Chinese). Writing a comparative history of European television provides a forum for assessing these differences in both temporal and spatial terms, and raising theoretical questions of identity in a specific and significant context.

Thus our theoretical premise develops from the post-foundational theoretical work developed at first in Europe itself in the post-1945 arena of critical theory, bringing together in different ways the insights of post-Marxist, structural and psychodynamic theories. An exemplar of this tradition is the British academic Stuart Hall (1996: 1), who noted:

There has been a veritable discursive explosion in recent years around the concept of 'identity', at the same moment as it has been subjected to a searching critique . . . The deconstruction has been conducted within a variety of disciplinary areas, all of them, in one way or another critical of the notion of an integral, originary and unified identity.

Academic studies of television have attempted a range of definitions of the medium, primarily based on how the medium communicates, which have mainly involved distinctions between television and cinema or radio. The subject's analytical methodologies have derived from disciplines including film studies, its methods of discussing audiences and television institutions have come from sociology, and overall these ways of describing the development of television can amount to different ontologies and histories of the medium. Charlotte Brunsdon (1998: 96) has summarised this in terms of the issue of television specificity, negotiating between 'on the one hand, radio (broadcast, liveness, civic address), and on the other, cinema (moving pictures, fantasy), with particular attention . . . to debate about the nature of the television text and the television audience'. Because of television's internal difference as a broadcast form (so many different programmes, channels and modes of address), even at one point in time in a single geographical region, it has proved very difficult for critics and commentators to produce useful general insights into the medium. This is even more the case once the history of the medium and its regional variations across countries and regions are considered. As a result, this book thematises this problem rather than concealing it, and the constituent chapters return repeatedly and comparatively to the different ways that television as a referent of discourse has been rhetorically deployed in debates about its history, its place in European spatial territories and political-economic structures, and its significance for audiences and commentators.

In the earliest European nations to develop television broadcasting, predictions of what television would be emphasised liveness and its ability to relay real-world actuality, although this actuality might include live staged performance. Television was considered unable to compete with cinema as spectacular entertainment, and these assumptions conditioned the ways in which realism, contemporaneity and the protection of the home as a viewing space were promoted. The connection of television technology to immediacy predisposes it to linear scheduling with fixed points for key programme types, and an emphasis in critical discourses on the issue of temporality, thus producing an obvious relationship with radio's similar theorisation in terms of time. Film, on the other hand, has been theorised in terms of space (the screen space, the cinema as social space), and this has fed into theorisation of television in the form of models of spectatorship, identification and point of view. The emphasis on television's live temporality remained central to the medium's self-presentation throughout the twentieth century, as work by Jérôme Bourdon (2000) showed. Although live broadcasting declined as a technical phenomenon, it remained as a regime of belief among viewers. Bourdon proposed a typology of liveness, from major live media events to the semblance of liveness in game shows, from edited and recorded programmes influenced by live television such as documentary to the minimal relevance of liveness to most television fiction.

The influential concept of television as a 'flow' was developed by the British theorist Raymond Williams in a study first published in 1974 (1990: 86), which claimed that 'in all developed broadcasting systems the characteristic organisation, and therefore the characteristic experience, is one of sequence or flow. This phenomenon, of planned flow, is then perhaps the defining characteristic of broadcasting, simultaneously as a technology and as a cultural form.' Williams is less interested in analysing specific programmes or forms of programme than in the experience of television itself. The normal and heterogeneous flow of material constitutes the experience of television and also carries a flow of meanings and values deriving from culture which express the structure of feeling of that culture. However, Williams developed this insight after travelling to the USA, and he uses the American television experience as paradigmatic of all television. American television becomes a horizon towards which all television seems to progress. Rick Altman (1986: 39–54) argues that flow is not a characteristic of television itself but part of a specific cultural practice of television. This is American commercial television, where audiences are measured and sold to advertisers, and flow is required to ensure that the television is switched on even if audiences are not watching it. If so, the fact that programmes flow does not illuminate anything about the texts which are part of this flow, or the ways in which audiences actually respond to them. Williams's concept of flow confuses a property of the text (the continuing flow of images) and a form of audience response (a flow of feelings and experiences).

Historiographies of European Television

Doing history depends, on the one hand, on the questions and conceptual frames guiding the interpretative look of the historian; on the other hand it is very crucially dependent on the availability and accessibility of sources. On the archival level, both the amount of material available (conserved) and the modes of accessibility differ from country to country. While some countries have a central audiovisual authority taking care of the cultural heritage of television (like INA in France, or Beeld en Geluid in the Netherlands), archival research in other countries is a highly complicated affair, often depending on the goodwill of individual archivists or informal connections and contacts. In addition to the different situations of access to the historical material, doing television history reflects the disciplinary backgrounds (literature and film studies, social sciences, history) and institutional contexts in which scholars are trained in specific methodological approaches or socialised in alternative interpretative traditions. It is therefore not surprising that the national contexts of television scholarship vary considerably as well.

As historiographical overviews of television and media history have shown (Anderson & Curtin 2002, Bernold 2001, Bleicher 2003, Bourdon 2000, Corner 2003, de Leeuw 2003, Fickers 2007, Keilbach & Thiele 2003, Maase 2004, Roberts 2001, Scannell 2004), the literature on television history in both academic and popular kinds of writing has concentrated on the emergence, development and political or social importance of the medium in strictly national contexts. Within these different national narratives, it is possible to detect five different phases of television historiography, reflecting the institutional embeddings of television as a public service or commercial medium and the intellectual agenda of television research over the years. A first phase of both popular and scholarly television literature which is often neglected in television historiography is the phase that we propose to describe as 'ego-history'. This comprises documents written by early television pioneers and popular writings about the technical miracle of 'seeing by electricity'. To a certain degree it is not really surprising to see that the long prehistory of television (around 75 years, if one starts it with the first serious experiments on picture telegraphy in the late 1870s and counts the post-war years as the real takeoff of television as a mass medium) has generated an extremely rich and fascinating literature shaping the horizon of expectation for the complex implementation of television as a newcomer in the mass media ensemble of the 1930s and 1940s. This prehistory of television has gathered some attention by media archaeologists like Siegfried Zielinski (1989) or André Lange, but still offers enormous potential for a cultural history of television. Such a history would be interested in the discursive construction of television both as a new communication technology and a new mode of aesthetic expression.

A 'serious' academic interest in television starts only in the 1960s, focusing on the institutional development of television and mostly interested in the reconstruction of the political or governmental contexts that shaped the emergence of television as a public service medium. This second phase of historical writing on television is characterised by large and voluminous studies, often initiated by or closely linked to the public service institutions themselves (see Bausch 1980, Briggs 1985). A curious characteristic of these institutional histories of television is, perhaps surprisingly, that they were almost exclusively based on the study of written sources, reflecting the political and social conflicts in broadcasting organisations but neglecting television as a visual, programme-driven medium.

The emergence of the third phase of television historiography was inaugurated by the advent of what we would like to call 'audiovisual consciousnesses' in the 1970s and 1980s. The most important consequences of this political change in philosophies of cultural heritage were to be found in the changed roles and responsibilities of television archives. In several Western European countries the 1970s and 1980s witnessed the emergence of large national institutions for the conservation of television material, such as the Institut National de l'Audiovisuel (INA), Deutsches Rundfunkarchiv (DRA) and the Nederlands Audiovisueel Archief (NAA). This went along with an increased scholarly interest in the study of television and the establishment of academic journals that included the *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* and national and international associations for the 'advancement' of broadcast history. The most active of these associations included the International Association for Media and History (IAMHIST), Vereniging Geschiedenis Beeld en Geluid in the Netherlands, the Comité d'Histoire de la Radio/Télévision in France and Vereinigung Rundfunk und Geschichte in Germany.

One of the results of this crucial phase of enhanced archival protection, occurring alongside slowly improving conditions of access to television programmes, was the diversification of the research agenda in the late 1980s and early 1990s. A bundle of new historical questions, methodological approaches and theoretical perspectives deeply challenged the classical political and institutional approach to television history. While institutional questions remained on the research agenda – especially because of the wave of commercial and private television stations all over Europe in the 1980s – television as a professional practice and a cultural industry became a new and important field of interest. The research generated from this conjuncture was not so much driven by a historical perspective, but instead by the new interest in television from British Cultural Studies. Television Studies as an independent academic discipline emerged and promoted the study of the medium from new perspectives, mainly turning academic attention from a perspective centred on the sender of television communication to its receivers. This new interest in television audiences and the sociocultural dimension of television as a daily lived reality opened the door to the most recent phase of television historio-

graphy and scholarship. This current paradigm is influenced by inter-disciplinary or transdisciplinary approaches, and sets the agenda as one of studying television in its role as a prominent actor in the construction of cultural identities and as an agent in the transnational or global circulation of aesthetic forms and cultural meanings.

In a book that addresses television history across a large and changing geographic space and across a period of about seven decades, an evident starting point for terminology to describe and evaluate regional, national and transnational interrelationships is the concept of globalisation. This is itself a contested term, but we adopt Chris Barker's summary of its referent, which is: 'Increasing multidirectional economic, social, cultural and political global connections and our awareness of them including the global production of the local and the localization of the global. Often associated with the institutions of modernity and time-space compression or the shrinking world' (Barker 1999: 172). This work on globalisation forms a starting point but also a set of problems in considering space, time, agency, power and cultural meaning, since it addresses each of these and attempts to unpack their application to historiographical narrative: 'globalization and global cultural flows should not necessarily be understood in terms of a set of neat linear determinations, but instead viewed as a series of overlapping, overdetermined, complex and "chaotic" conditions which, at best, can be seen to cluster around key "nodal points"' (Barker 1999: 37).

Any discussion of European television needs to take account of the social and political significance of how transnational and national cultures of broadcasting work in relation to each other. What is at issue is the degree to which the meanings of television are dependent on the kinds of institutions which make and broadcast it, and the conclusions which can be drawn from studying television in terms of its ownership, organisation and geographical spread. There are inequalities in production funding, and different roles of domestic and imported programming in national television cultures, and it has been argued that 'world patterns of communication flow, both in density and in direction, mirror the system of domination in the economic and political order' (Sinclair, Jacka & Cunningham 1999: 173). Globalisation theses proposed by Herbert Schiller (1969, 1976), for example, have argued that the globalisation of communication in the second half of the twentieth century was determined by the commercial interests of US corporations, working in parallel with political and military interests. This discourse connects cultural imperialism with the dynamics of colonialism, arguing that the colonial empires of Britain or France have been replaced by commercial empires. Traditional local cultures are said to be eroded by dependencies on media products and their attendant ideologies deriving from the USA, with the effect of globalising consumer culture across regions and populations which become constrained to adapt to its logics and desires, despite the lack in some of these regions (in the developing world) of resources to participate in them. This cultural

imperialism thesis, developed in the 1950s and 1960s, pays scant regard to local and national specificities in media organisation or consumption, nor to regional flows of media products.

Regional flows and institutional arrangements have been developed in Europe to foster and protect its television culture. The European Broadcasting Union (EBU) was formed in 1950 by 23 broadcasters across Europe and the Mediterranean, with further national members and associate members (some of them outside Europe, such as broadcasters from Canada, Japan, Mexico, Brazil, India and the USA) subsequently joining from the public service and commercial sectors. Based in Geneva, it promotes members' co-operation and represents their legal, technical, and programming interests (Brack 1976, Eugster 1983, Zeller 1999). The EBU runs Eurovision to pool programmes and coordinate joint programme purchases, and organised the relay of Queen Elizabeth II's coronation in 1953 to France, Denmark, the Netherlands and Germany, and the live *Television Summer Season of 1954* from Montreux, Switzerland. The Eurovision network is carried on satellite and terrestrial transmission stations, exchanging news footage since 1958 and since 1993 via Euronews in English, French, German, Italian and Spanish. Eurovision also coordinates joint purchasing of coverage of European sports programming. A further organisation, the European Audiovisual Observatory, was set up in 1992 by media practitioners and governmental authorities including the European Commission to improve the mechanisms for the flows of television across Europe, access to market and economic, legal and practical information, and to provide authoritative information about the television, cinema and video industries.

Because of the specific relations, actualised differently in different times and spaces, between European television and the television cultures, technologies and economies of US television, the important focus of much globalisation theory on US hegemony in electronic media is also relevant to this study. According to a feature article in the British *Radio Times* listings magazine (Eden 2006), the most popular programme in the world in 2007 was the American police drama series *CSI: Miami*. In the list of most viewed programmes around the world, compiled by comparing charts from most of the world's countries, American programmes dominate and include *Lost*, *Desperate Housewives*, *The Simpsons*, *CSI* and *Without a Trace*. Again, we emphasise not the teleological progress of US media hegemony in Europe, but the unevenness of the impact of different aspects of US television, and their contestation in specific contexts: 'the impact of Anglo-American television in a global context may be understood as the creation of a layout of western capitalist modernity which overlays, but does not necessarily obliterate, pre-existing cultural forms' (Barker, 1999: 42). Research by De Bens and de Smaele (2001) tracing the origin of films and series on 36 public and commercial channels from six European countries in 1997 confirmed the dominance of American drama and the limited distribution of European drama, despite the efforts of the

European Union to combat these tendencies by quotas and subsidies. Public channels broadcast a wider range of national, non-national European and American drama, with domestic drama series predominating over American series in prime-time on both public and commercial channels. De Bens and de Smaele found that European drama was constrained by considerations of language and cultural proximity in ways that American drama was not.

However, in relation to histories of European television, but also those of other temporal and spatial formations, globalisation is understood as generating or at least defining its own other, namely localisation. But Morley and Robins (1995: 116–17) caution against idealising the local, as a redemptive force that might rescue economies, identities and cultures from globalisation understood as its antagonist. Localisation in television is relational, and relative to globalising processes, and this can be seen in the presence of localisation initially as an other to national broadcasting (the setting up of regional television channels and forms in the UK and Spain, for example) and then to transnational and global television developments. Indeed, for global television institutions, whether commercial corporations or regulatory bodies, negotiations between rather than the overcoming of, global, national, regional and local television have been evident in recent decades.

Methodologies for Comparative and Interdisciplinary Histories of Television

Comparison as a methodological and/or theoretical concept is nearly as old as modern scientific thinking itself. As Jürgen Schriewer (2003: 9–54) has shown, the comparative method became a central tool in the scholarly development and disciplinary differentiation of modern science during the so-called scientific revolution. In the philosophy of language, anatomy, geography, law and religious studies, comparison and comparative studies both promoted and reflected the spectacular widening of the spatial and thereby historical horizons of European scholars in the era of enlightenment. In the late nineteenth century, scholars like Karl Marx, Max Weber and Emile Durkheim introduced the comparative approach into their works on social history and historical sociology.

The work of canonical historians like Marc Bloch, Charles Tilly or Hartmut Kaelble (1999) has demonstrated the scholarly benefit and intellectual potential of the comparative approach for understanding the complex nature of modern societies. But despite their common interest in using the comparative approach as a heuristic or epistemological tool for the interpretation of past realities, the definition of what a historical comparison is or should be varies considerably from author to author. Charles Tilly, in his 1984 essay *Big Structures, Large Processes, Huge Comparisons*, has considerably promoted the conceptualisation of comparative historical methodology by introducing four

different forms of historical comparison. The first of these is the individualising comparison, interested in the study of alternative developments of a few comparative cases. His second category is the encompassing comparison, looking at the relatedness of different cases to a common institution (for example, economic development in Britain, Canada and India in relationship to the British Empire). Thirdly, Tilly distinguishes the variation-finding comparison, interested in a comparative study of a general or global process such as the national and regional paths of the process of industrialisation. Finally, he identifies the universalising comparison, which searches for common rules of historical developments or processes of historical change. Building on Tilly's and other conceptualisations, Hartmut Kaelble (1999) has developed a categorisation of comparisons, differentiating them by focusing on their heuristic motivation or intention. He thereby distinguishes the structural, the analytical, the clarifying and judging, and the comprehensive comparison, each of which are characterised by the interest or motivation for knowledge (*Erkenntnisinteresse*) of the researcher.

These classical approaches to the comparison of societies or civilisations in their political representation in the forms of nations are extremely rich and eloquent studies, but their status has been challenged by three subsequent conceptions. Each of the three has been more theoretically discussed than empirically tested, but is helpful to the project of this book. These models or concepts have been identified under the labels of 'transferts culturels' (cultural transfers), 'entangled history' and 'histoire croisée' (crossing histories). While the concept of transfer emphasises the mutual processes of reappropriation and resemantisation of cultural goods in the era of globalisation (Espagne 1999), 'entangled' histories apply this perspective with a special focus on the relationships between colonising and colonised societies, aiming at breaking the Eurocentric angle of most studies (Conrad & Randeria 2002). Last but not least, the concept of 'histoire croisée' is inspired by a general scepticism towards the idea of more or less stable national milieus, languages, institutions or values and promotes the vision of deeply transnationalised modern societies (Werner & Zimmermann 2003). As we discuss below, these recently developed methodologies and theories of history are highly suited to the historical study of television.

Our account of Tilly's and Kaelble's work noted that each of them has been eager to systematise both the different functions and forms of historical comparisons. In contrast to this rather mechanistic approach to the question of comparison, Michael Werner and Bénédicte Zimmermann, as two of the main protagonists of 'histoire croisée', have criticised the classical comparative approaches for being too rigid and formalised in the use of their categories, and most significantly, for neglecting the relational and fluid character of the categories and objects of comparison their work has identified. Inspired by the heuristic concept of 'double reflexivity' proposed by the British sociologist Anthony Giddens, Werner and Zimmermann (2006: 32) propose to explore

processes of cultural transfer by questioning ‘scales, categories of analysis, the relationship between diachrony and synchrony, and regimes of historicity and reflexivity’. In their article ‘Beyond Comparison: Histoire Croisée and the Challenge of Reflexivity’, summarising their basic theoretical assumptions, Werner and Zimmermann (2006) present five central questions or problems, reflecting the methodological implications of the ‘histoire croisée’ concept. The first of these is the question of the observer and the impact that the researcher’s perspective has on the problem at hand. The second problem that Werner and Zimmermann identify is the scale of comparison and how this scale or scope determines the issues and results of a study. Third is the problem of the definition of the object of comparison, which clearly sets boundaries on the topic and thus also limits the comparison’s conclusions. Fourth, the conflicts between synchronic and diachronic logics are highlighted since comparative studies of single time periods versus historical analysis across time periods will raise different problems. Finally, Werner and Zimmermann identify the difficulties arising from the various kinds of interaction between the objects of comparison.

Some of the claimed gains of reflexivity made by Werner and Zimmermann lose a certain revolutionary touch when the rich literature on the philosophy of history is considered, though some of that literature (for example Johann Gustav Droysens’ *Historik*, published in 1868) is now little known. Nevertheless, their accentuation of the intersection of both heuristic categories and the constructed objects of study have interesting insights to offer for television historians as much as historians of other aspects of culture. In highlighting that entities and objects of research are not merely considered in relation to one another but *through* one another, they invite historians to look at the complex processes of interaction, circulation and appropriation between objects of study, and in doing this, to conceptualise these entities and objects as dynamic and active, rather than stable or immobile, as is often assumed in comparative approaches. This process-oriented dimension of the ‘histoire croisée’ concept is especially fruitful for a cultural history of the media, since in our view that history should be interested in phenomena of adaptation, resistance, inertia and modification in the complex trajectories of cultural transfers of forms and contents.

At the present time, comparative research in media history remains the exception. As Michele Hilmes (2003b: 1) has stated: ‘Most histories of broadcasting have stayed within national boundaries. Comparative studies have been few, and largely confined to discussion of structures, laws and economies. The tricky business of comparative cultural studies of the media remains largely unexplored.’ This is also true for television history in particular, within the larger disciplinary field of media history. While national disparities have been widely researched, they have hardly been analysed at all from a comparative perspective. There are a few exceptions, such as Jane Chapman’s (2005) study which explicitly addresses the problem of comparative media history, but even

that suggestive work presents a rather eclectic compilation of historical findings and is clearly focused on the history of written media, especially newspapers. A sophisticated theoretical and methodological reflection about comparative historical analysis has been absent. This book offers both structural comparisons, such as the analysis of different television institutions, and analytical comparisons of the societal impact and cultural meaning of television in different times and places, together with comparisons ranging across a variety of both synchronic and diachronic historical perspectives.

Key Theoretical Concepts

This book is divided into chapters that are arranged thematically, each focusing on a specific set of historiographical problems and brief case studies that explore these problems in specific contexts. Across the book as a whole, there are recurrent research questions that our contributors have used to guide their studies. In the remainder of this chapter we illustrate what these guiding questions are, to outline for readers how the tensions in writing a comparative history of European television address the medium as a hybrid mediating interface that offers a terrain not only to narrate a history but also to question the process of historiography in relation to the medium. To make this process clear, we offer in this section a chain-narrative of pairs of concepts, chosen to highlight the methodological stakes and challenges of this book.

Television spheres: private versus public

One of the most prominent metaphors and iconographic strategies to promote and advertise television in the early years was to present it as a ‘window to the world’. The seductive promise was that television would offer completely new kinds of mediated participation in world affairs or public entertainment. Without the need to leave the domestic sphere, the viewer would be able to travel to all corners of the world, and become a witness to the most distant happenings while sitting comfortably on a sofa. As ‘armchair theatre’, television combined the experience of simultaneity (liveness) with a new form of spatial transgression that deeply challenged the public–private relationship. Of course television was not the first medium to offer these possibilities for mediated experiences of immediacy and simultaneity. Radio historians like Paddy Scannell (1996), Susan Douglas (1987, 2004) or Michele Hilmes (1997) remind us that the fascination and ontological quality of early radio listening left probably much deeper impressions of wonder and amazement on the individual and in the collective memories of its public than did television a few decades later. The religious vocabulary often used when trying to describe the listening experience is a powerful sign of the imaginative force of the medium (Peters 1999). As ‘picture radio’, television added

the visual to this mediated experience of the distant, but probably borrowed most of its imaginative power from associations with the cinematographic dispositif and not from radio broadcasting.

Despite these differences between early radio and television discourses, both deeply challenged the notion of the public sphere and the classical situations of mass communication. As Paddy Scannell (1996: 69) has argued, radio had reversed the public–private relationship ‘because in all its output it speaks to the domestic and private, it has the pervasive effect of bringing the values that attach to the private realm into the public domain’. Television reinforced this by making the invisible visible. By introducing a television camera into the sacred space of a church or into the private apartments of the Pope, for example, television enabled a hitherto unknown intimacy and complicity with persons, places and situations, creating a strong feeling of eye-witness and authenticity by means of televised images and narratives. This new form of medial participation was most prominently experienced in early television events like the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in 1953 or major sporting events like the World Cup Football Championship and the Olympics. The inherent quality of television as a broadcast medium to create imagined communities or to shape collective viewing experiences still is one of the most powerful ingredients of the attraction of television as a mass entertaining and mass information medium.

But the apparently total access to the private sphere that is witnessed in contemporary ‘reality TV’ formats is of course by no means representative of the history of European television. It must be seen as the result of a gradual process of the public conquest of private space, and a lowering of taboos and rights to privacy step by step. But this inversion of the private–public relationship was at all times a contested and publicly debated process. This can be demonstrated by the case of the French presidential elections in 1953. Inspired by the successful transmission of the British Coronation festivities in June 1953, for the first time in the history of the French Republic the French public broadcaster Radiodiffusion-Télévision Française (RTF) decided to cover the presidential elections taking place at the convention hall in Versailles on live television. The election procedure started on 17 December 1953, but no one had foreseen that it would take 13 ballots to finally designate René Coty as the new French president. After six days of interminable discussions and failed initiatives, the programme director in charge finally decided to stop the live coverage with the justification that this ‘spectacle’ would produce a negative image of the French political class and democratic culture abroad. The journalist of *Le Monde*, Michel Droit, commented on this unfiltered insight into the strange parliamentary culture of the Fourth Republic with a biting question, asking whether the transmission of parliamentary debates should be seen as a new form of entertainment programme or as a serious means of political information (Cohen 1999: 38). Despite the fact that political broadcasting today, especially at election time, has been increasingly staged by means

of formats that offer visual and dramatic forms of entertainment (such as graphical representations or combative interviews), this episode of French television history shows that there were various forms of political, moral or cultural resistance to the televisual takeover of the public sphere. This process has been catalysed with the advent of commercial television stations all over Europe beginning in the late 1970s.

Within a few years of its first broadcast on Dutch television in 1999, *Big Brother* had been adopted with some nationally specific variations in diverse television territories. The antics of its contestants varied, as did the reaction of the programme's broadcasters to content that could be considered offensive or potentially challenging to the norms expected of television in different nations. For example, the first British series of *Big Brother* included contestants stripping off their clothes, covering themselves with paint and creating imprints of themselves on the walls of the house. By contrast, the American *Big Brother* contestants talked a lot about sex and relationships, but remained modestly clothed and no sexual liaisons took place. In the Netherlands the contestants were more uninhibited than in Britain, and there was some sexual activity, but the programme was not permitted to be screened at all in some Muslim nations beyond the borders of the EU. These differences cannot be explained by simply drawing on national stereotypes, and are instead the result of two main forces. One of them is the regulatory environment for television in different countries, where some words or images could not be broadcast (though live streaming over the internet had lower thresholds in this respect), and the other is the internalisation of norms of privacy in social life in particular cultures, inflected by the fact that the contestants knew they were on television and therefore must have modified their behaviour in relation to what they expected that television could and should show. What look like national differences between individuals in reality TV must in fact be national differences between how people who know they are on television adapt themselves to what they think television is and can do. Notions of privacy and the use of television by non-professionals to air personal concerns are also relevant to participation in talk shows, since they allow 'ordinary' people to express themselves. But work by Kathleen Dixon and Sonja Spee (2003), for instance, showed in the case of the Flemish talk show *Jan Publiek* that participants negotiated shifting and even contradictory identities with other participants, the host, the producers and the conventions of the programme as well as discourses of gender and class, but were unable to voice their feelings and opinions because of their inexpert media literacy.

Television spaces: national versus transnational; regional versus global

Although the private-public relationship has a distinctive spatial connotation, we propose to differentiate between television spheres and television spaces.

While the notion of ‘spheres’ refers to the philosophical concept of a communication-based public sphere laid out in the work of Jürgen Habermas, the term television spaces stresses the topographical and geographical dimension of political communication communities. For media historians, talking about communication spaces has the advantage of emphasising the importance of linking the transmission and reception of information to the physical contexts of both the distribution and the appropriation of mediated communication. While philosophers or theoreticians of communications sometimes tend to idealise or deterritorialise diverse phenomena of mediated interaction from their concrete and situational performance, the early history of television teaches us how important it is to confront the public discourse about television with the ‘real’ spread of television, both in terms of transmission coverage and the average percentage of households equipped with a television set. For both parameters we see substantial differences when comparing European nations in the 1950s, 1960s and even in the 1970s. The realisation of so-called ‘television nations’ (Bernold 2001: 8–29) was a process which reflected the different economic dynamics of European states in the phase of ‘modernization in restoration’ (Schildt & Sywottek 1993), and even within countries the development of television infrastructures varied considerably. The expansion of television coverage from urban to rural areas was a lengthy process and mainly funded by state capital spending. It produced many inequalities and at least in the early days of television, it reinforced embedded separations between centre and periphery that were expressed as distinctions between the city and the countryside. While nationwide coverage of television signals was realised in Britain by the mid-1950s, the same national reach only happened in France or the Netherlands some ten years later.

This gradual construction of the television nation was paralleled from a transnational point of view by a techno-political instrumentalisation of television, most prominently illustrated in the different choice of black-and-white line standards by the leading European television nations. The effort to establish dominance among the nascent national television industries was concretely expressed by the introduction of different television systems, when Britain introduced a 405-line standard, France an 819-line standard and the Germanic and Scandinavian countries a 625-line standard. This resulted in a serious complication of European programme exchanges and hampered the emergence of a European imag(e)ined community (Fickers 2007). Both the black-and-white line-standard debate and the similar national conflicts over colour television in the 1960s are powerful demonstrations of the nationalistic instrumentalisation of television and serve as historical correctives to unreflective but widespread discourses about the globalising or transnational scope and impact of television.

Global television infrastructures have been inflected in different national and regional contexts. But it has been widely argued that global consumerism, in

terms of the tendency of commercial television institutions and advertising-financed television services to impact increasingly on European television culture, has had growing effects on the meaning of European television as a descriptive term and on the perception of television in Europe by audiences. The argument here, as stated by Stuart Hall (1995: 176–7), is that global consumerism

spreads the same thin cultural film over everything . . . inviting everyone to take on western consumer identities and obscuring profound differences of history and tradition between cultures . . . Sometimes, cultures are caught between, on the one hand, the desire for mobility and material rewards of modernity and, on the other, the nostalgia for a lost purity, stability and traditional coherence which the present no longer provides.

In this respect, television organisation and television programming has experienced a perceived challenge to national identities. It is important to consider national identities not only as the structural residue of laws, political cultures and spatial geographies but also as discursive formations. Chris Barker, for example, defines national identity as: ‘A form of imaginative identification with [the] nation-state as expressed through symbols and discourses. Thus, nations are not only political formations but also systems of cultural representation so that national identity is continually reproduced through discursive action’ (Barker 1999: 174). This discursive action consists not only in discourses about television, but also the discourses of television. For instance, Angeliki Koukoutsaki’s (2003) work on Greek television drama production since the 1970s demonstrated the importance of local context, where continual increases in programming hours for drama and the increasing subdivision of drama into specific genre types led to the evolution of nationally specific programme forms. The testimony of Greek television practitioners confirmed that the national characteristics of Greek television production, in a small and politically unstable context with a short history of television broadcasting, led to genre differentiation in part because of the constraints of local settings and financing. The discursive action of television making in Greece fed into the reproduction of national identity in the aesthetic forms of programmes.

To take another example, in the post-imperialist context of Britain Jeffrey Richards (1997: ix) recalls that

It became unfashionable in the 1960s and 1970s to talk about national character and national identity because of their nineteenth-century overtones of race, empire and hierarchy . . . [but] ever since [the Falklands war in 1982] there has been a massive and continuing academic interest in questions of national identity, national character and patriotism. This has taken the form of an unending stream of conferences, articles, books and collections on Britishness, Englishness, national identity and so forth. It has resulted in some extremely good and some dismayingly shallow work.

It is useful in the context of this book to note that Richards goes on to argue that the discourses of national identity are then placed in the context of the regional and transnational fracturing of that identity, demonstrating how the conception of the nation itself can be understood as a mediating concept that points both outward and inward:

The academic interest has been sharpened, widened and enhanced by Britain's uneasy relationship with Europe, the continuing struggle over the status of Northern Ireland, the rise of nationalist and Home Rule movements in Scotland and Wales, criticism of traditional British institutions such as the monarchy, the law and the Church of England and the ideological dominance . . . of Thatcherism with its nationalist rhetoric. The combination of circumstances has undoubtedly resulted in an intellectual and emotional crisis of national identity. (Richards 1997: xi)

The force of discourses of national identity in relation to European television is that they function to unite nations in response to perceived internal and external challenges.

But there are conceptions within national and regional ideologies that have operated as mediating links between nations or regions, demonstrating the actual hybridity and permeability of the European ideological space. One of these is children's television, comprising the programming made for it, the personnel creating it, and the sometimes extra-televisual textual properties on which it is based. Continental European animated programmes for children were reconfigured for British television in the 1970s and early 1980s, for example, and instantiate a series of methodological and theoretical issues about programme import, production and adaptation in the context of programmes aimed at young audiences. While animation has been dominated by US imports in Western Europe and there is a strong tradition of British animation, animation from continental Europe has been important to British television. The role of animation as a predominantly short-form programme type useful for gap-filling in British schedules, and for compliance with regulatory demands for children's programming, coexists with an industrial context of international programme, format and personnel exchange. The separation of image and sound tracks allowing re-voicing also conduces to its exportability. To name a few indicative examples, the stop-motion animation series *Barnaby* (1973) was based on French books by Olga Pouchine and made by the French producer Albert Braille and Polish animator Tadeuzs Wilkoz. British animation company Q3 translated them and sold them to the BBC for the slot formerly occupied by the originally French puppet series *Hector's House*. The drawn animation *Ludwig* (1977) was created by the Polish documentary film-maker Mirek Lang, who migrated to Britain in 1968 for political reasons, and worked on the series with his son Peter. Produced in Britain, the series illuminates the integration of European personnel into the British industry. The stop-motion series *The*

Moomins (1983), based on the Finnish Tove Jansson's books, was screened by ITV but reshaped from the Polish Semafor studio's original one-hour episodes into 100 five-minute stories. These brief examples indicate how complex the attribution of nationality can be, and how through the 1970s British children's television integrated European programming because of the transportability of children's animation as a form that could be re-voiced in different languages, the transnational links between children's literature publication and character ideas based on shared ideologies of childhood, and the conception of children's television production as a transnational market for programme makers and programmes.

The imagining of the nation, as Benedict Anderson (1983: 16) powerfully argued, has been actualised in concrete action, most obviously by means of war:

It is imagined as a *community* because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal, comradeship. Ultimately, it is this fraternity that makes it possible, over the past two centuries, for so many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willingly to die for such limited imaginings.

In television, the different television roles of the combatants in the Second World War are instructive here. In Britain television broadcasting ceased, while in Germany and in German-occupied France it continued at least for several years. In these nations where television continued during war, its function was to reproduce the hegemony of national identity, imagined in different ways depending on whether television was broadcast in an invading or in an occupied nation, despite challenges from internal and external agencies. As a general point, we concur with Smith (1991: 143) in his overview that: 'Of all the collective identities in which human beings share today, national identity is perhaps the most fundamental and inclusive . . . Other types of collective identity – class, gender, race, religion – may overlap or combine with national identity but they rarely succeed in undermining its hold, though they may influence its direction.' Theorists of television have emphasised that at the levels of production, distribution and consumption it is possible for the significance of global television to change, and argue that globalisation is not a natural and unstoppable process. In production, global television corporations can be restrained by national or local laws and regulations which make them operate differently in different places. Global distribution networks may transmit the same television programme over a very wide area, but the ways in which the programme is received (by whom, how, and the significance of receiving global television in a particular society) will be different in different contexts. John Sinclair and his fellow authors (Sinclair et al. 1999: 176) explain that 'although US programmes might lead the world in their transportability across cultural boundaries, and even manage to dominate schedules on some channels in particular countries, they are rarely the most popular programmes

where viewers have a reasonable menu of locally produced programmes to choose from'. The theory of globalisation is a way of addressing both processes which homogenise television and those which reduce differences, but also a way of addressing processes of differentiation. Furthermore, globalisation theory brings together approaches to television which concern economic, institutional, textual and reception practices.

Television institutions: public service versus commercial television

Broadcasting evolved from prior technologies that included the telegraph, the telephone and wireless (radio) ship-to-shore communication, and services based on these technologies provided both point-to-point and point-to-multipoint communication. The verb 'to broadcast' was adopted to express the idea of scattered, undefined, anonymous dissemination of information on radio waves, and derives from the farmer's method of hand-sowing grain by casting it broadly, letting seeds fall where they may. The physical properties of radio waves mean that they are not affected by political or geographical boundaries, and from the first this made them an issue for cross-border negotiation and legislation. Radio clubs, national amateur associations and popular magazines testify to the first stage of a 'radio boom' even before the emergence of broadcasting in the modern understanding of the term. It was the First World War that brought an abrupt end to this first phase of the boom, though inaugurating another. The exclusive use of radio frequencies for military purposes in all countries involved in the war not only demonstrated the military and political importance of radio technology in times of crisis, but even more significantly instituted a process of state-controlled use of radio frequencies as means of private or public communication. The concept of broadcasting was the result of 'a concerted effort on the part of big business and government, feeding on the elite public's fear of the masses, to change that vision to the highly centralised, one-way, restricted-access system that is broadcasting' (Hilmes 2003b: 29).

From a transnational historical perspective the process of institutionalisation of radio broadcasting after the First World War must be interpreted as a process of national appropriation and social shaping of radio as a broadcast medium. While nearly all nation-states extended their existing authority over the legal regulation of wire communication technologies to radio transmissions (especially the allocation of frequencies), governmental intervention in the institutionalisation of broadcasting stations strongly varied from country to country. Three institutional models emerged, reflecting the political, economic and sociocultural structures of the hosting states: the commercial or private broadcasting model, the national or centralised model, and finally the public service model.

The influence of British television organisation in Western Europe has been very great, because of the early establishment of the BBC as a public service

broadcaster in radio from 1922 and in television from 1936, and because of the broad acceptance of social-democratic ideologies in Western European societies. The organisation of the BBC as a semi-autonomous public corporation was inherited from the late Victorian corporations which had monopolies to provide services such as gas, electricity and water, distributed widely to domestic consumers and subject to regulatory standards despite central control by a single corporation. Their control of supply and freedom from competition was granted in exchange for a remit to operate for the public good. The BBC took seriously its aims to raise the standards of the entire national audience in terms of sophistication of taste, intellectual appetite and levels of knowledge, while supplying a range of material targeted at the diverse interests of a diverse audience, and this set up the expectations for television to be understood as a form of public service broadcasting. In addition to the paternalistic public service model as represented by the BBC, a whole range of alternative public service models existed in Europe. In West Germany, a federal public service model with independent broadcast authorities in each Land came into being, collaborating under the umbrella of a federal (but not state-controlled) agency. After having experienced a very liberal radio broadcasting system in the inter-war period, France experienced a strong centralisation and governmental control of both radio and television broadcasting after the Second World War, and this centralised public service model is probably the clearest example of the governmental instrumentalisation of broadcasting in a democratic political system. One of the most curious forms of public service model is to be found in the Netherlands, where the main political or sociocultural classes of Dutch society (*zuilen* in Dutch, perhaps best translated as ‘pillars of society’) each formed their own broadcasting association. Established during the institutionalisation of radio broadcasting in the 1920s, this ‘pillarised’ public service model is still existent. But interestingly, television was one of the most prominent actors in the process of ‘de-pillarisation’ of Dutch society in the 1950s and 1960s. The existence of only one channel fed by the limited amount of programmes provided by the different pillars in the early decades of television had the effect that audiences consumed all of the scarce output regardless of the originating pillar of the productions.

The main alternative to this model in Western Europe was that offered by the organisation of television in the USA, where corporations such as RCA and General Electric developed television production and reception equipment during the 1920s. It was not the government, the Hollywood film studios or individual entrepreneurs who worked on television but the firms producing radio equipment. Television was modelled on radio broadcasting, rather than cinema or the public services, and the radio broadcasters NBC and CBS promoted television as a market for their programmes. Television in the USA, like radio, used national networks supplying programmes to local stations, gaining income from commercials and sponsorship. This commercial model has rivalled that of public service television increasingly through the history

of European television, in parallel with the gradual erosion of political ideologies of paternalism, social democracy and statism, in favour of compromises between public and private ownership, and consumerisation. In France in the era of de Gaulle, the ORTF channel was overwhelmingly sympathetic to the interests of the government and its management was appointed through government patronage, and the same was true of RTVE in Spain during the control of the state by the fascist regime.

In Eastern Europe, however, the institutions of television were closely controlled by the Soviet-influenced governments of the post-Second World War period until the revolutions of 1989. During that period, the prospect of citizens watching programmes and channels made in the West or beamed to them by satellites operated by Western corporations led to signal jamming, prohibitions on the use of satellite dishes and the development of regional systems of programme exchange closely related to the economic bloc of COMECON. The suspicion of commercial and foreign television in Eastern Europe derived from a quite different understanding of the functions of television in society, which were that it would publicise the decisions made by the ruling party, educate the population, and establish a channel of communication between the party and the people. The transition to western models of television distribution, marketisation and modes of address to the audience in Eastern Europe demonstrate a gradual movement from state control, with an emphasis on information, political programming and entertainment programmes based on state-approved national values, to increasing commercialisation and diversity. The Eastern European nations, however, exhibited some distinct differences in the degree of political control over their television services. In Romania, programming and production were closely controlled by the state, and the country's weak economy could contribute little to what from the outside seemed a very impoverished television culture. In Czechoslovakia, the Russian invasion of 1968 imposed rigid state control but western imports were commonly used because of the inability of domestic production or imports from fellow communist states to produce sufficient programming hours to fill the schedule. Similarly, in Hungary, by the mid-1980s significant numbers of hours of programmes were imported from Britain, West Germany and the USA.

The incursion of commercial television institutions into nations and regions formerly characterised by public service television or state television has been imagined as both an opportunity for democratisation, and as a threat to both cultural independence and the public good of the citizenry. In each of these different contexts, the nation has been seen as a residual entity, threatened either by a dominant form of television organisation that is perceived to be new and thus a harbinger of modernity, or as an alternative cultural form that offers a space of resistance. For the commercial television institutions, who are responsible to owners and shareholders which are likely to be transnational corporations such as banks, investment funds or media firms, the nation is an outmoded obstacle. As Morley and Robins (1995: 11) suggest: 'The

imperative is to break down the old boundaries and frontiers of national communities, which now present themselves as arbitrary and irrational obstacles to this reorganisation of business strategies. Audiovisual geographies are thus becoming detached from the symbolic spaces of national culture, and realigned on the basis of the more universal principles of international consumer culture.⁷ Since commercial television is associated with the USA as the dominant commercial broadcasting arrangement in the world, suspicion of commercial television has run alongside suspicion of US programming products and especially those targeted at youth audiences such as pop music programmes and channels, television screening of Hollywood cinema and American drama, and imported US children's programming. Each of these genres had commercial success, and throughout the second half of the twentieth century the critique of Americanisation, the defence of nationalism and the valuation of tradition have occurred around the totemic figures of the child and the teenager. There have been significant and ongoing debates in Europe about public service and state television, seen either as an old-fashioned and monolithic system which prevents change, or as a space in which television that challenges commercial values and aspires to artistic quality might find an audience. In this context, the comparative analysis of both institutional structures and of European television programmes illuminates the variant grounds for valuing structures and programmes, as more or less conducive of social change, or more or less worthy of consideration as creative and interesting.

The processes of globalisation are open to regulation by individual nations, rather than being an autonomous and unstoppable process, and global markets are regulated by contracts and by international and national laws. But the transnational European organisations which oversee international television agreements generally support the lowering of national restrictions and quotas, because they seek to create a free-market economy in communications. The European Free Trade Association, for example, has provided support for cross-border television exchanges which are based on the principles of unrestricted commercial exchange. The apparently free and uncontrollable television market is not a natural fact and depends on political decisions about deregulation and competition in television by nation-states and groupings of states. The European Parliament issued the Television without Frontiers Directive in 1989, for example, which insists that the majority of programming in member states must originate from within that state. The Directive has been periodically updated and modified since its creation, taking account of new developments in technology, and has gradually weakened its requirements to allow a more commercial market approach to television in Europe. Countries and regional groupings of countries tend both to deregulate and to encourage globalisation, but also to introduce further regulation to protect their societies against it. However, in the global television landscape the concepts of society and nation are diminishing in usefulness. As the sociologist Anthony Giddens (1990) has argued, the concept of society as a

unit bounded in time and space loses its force when, for example, live television news or sporting events confuse the sense of time and space by broadcasting across time zones.

Television audiences: active versus passive audiences

As much as nations are, audiences are also imagined communities, which are summoned into existence by specific discourses. For broadcasters, audiences may be conceived as commodities which can be sold to advertisers, or as relatively homogenous national communities defined by their occupation of a national broadcasting footprint and who are addressed as citizens of that territory. In northern and western European nations where television developed earliest in the years following the end of the Second World War, a relatively prosperous and urban or suburban middle class were those who could most easily afford the time and expense of watching television. The expansion of private space (larger rooms, more bedrooms and big gardens, for example) made space for television, but also created social dislocation and intense consciousness of social status. Television was regarded as a remedy for these problems because of its creation of social cohesion through collective viewing by both families and extended friendship networks. Television thus stimulated social talk that was given new interest by television programmes and supported public service ideals, which were to encourage viewers to expose themselves to a range of programme genres, some of them requiring concentration and promoting self-improvement. Notions of discrimination, taste and active viewing that were already evident in discourses about radio listening were available as rhetorical structures for articulating the uses and gratifications of television in the 1930–50 period.

In the early days of television, the medium was not only in search of its identity as a new player in the existing mass-media ensemble, but it was also in search of its potential audience. In distinction to the USA, where television was promoted as a private and commercial activity for the entertainment of a domestic public right from the beginning of a regular service that started during the New York World's Fair in 1939, many European countries envisaged and often organised television as a public and communal viewing experience. Before the Second World War, home and 'theatre television' developed side by side, and it was by no means clear at that time that the domestic setting would become the dominant model of television viewing (West 1948: 127–68, Winker 1994). The two leading television countries of the pre-war years, Britain and Germany, realised large screen projection for television broadcasting in cinemas or specially created *Fernsehstuben* (television viewing rooms). Philip Corrigan (1990) reports that in 1937 there were more than a hundred public venues for watching television in Britain, which included railway stations, restaurants and department stores. Audiences sometimes as large as a hundred people watched television collectively. The Nazi

government in Germany in the 1930s was interested in the propaganda value of television broadcasting, and partly in competing with the large American corporations that were investing in television production and television sets. Staging the Olympic Games of 1936 in Berlin was a stimulus to German television, and broadcasts were received not in individual homes but in viewing rooms established in cities, and some of the buildings used for television screening could hold audiences as large as four hundred. But industrial corporations in Germany had considerable political influence during the Nazi era, and their plans to develop a domestic television receiver market meant that public screenings gave way to domestic viewing in the late 1930s (Uricchio 1989).

Among the small but privileged group of people who could experience television before the Second World War, a large majority did so in public viewing settings. While the concept of public viewing in combination with large-screen projection slowly died out in the post-war years, even domestic reception was often a collective experience. Numerous early television viewers recounted memories of the attendance of friends, neighbours or relatives (Bourdon 2003: 13) in what John Ellis (2002) has called television's 'age of scarcity'. And as the Italian example of the popular television programme *Non è mai troppo tardi* (*It's never too late*) shows, some television formats were even designed to reach a classroom audience. The programme was financed by the Italian Ministry of Education to promote literacy in rural regions, and was broadcast by the national public service broadcaster RAI between 1959 and 1968, for a mainly older audience who watched the programmes on a weekly basis in classrooms or municipal buildings. In France, also, teachers and municipal authorities inaugurated and promoted the formation of 'Télé Clubs', especially in rural regions, where people could attend television transmission once or twice a week. These gatherings mainly took place in primary schools and were followed by a public debate about the programmes, thereby attempting both to take television seriously as a 'high-culture' form and also to embed the new medium in a democratic discourse (Lévy 1999: 107–32).

But in the more prosperous households of the post-1980 period in Western Europe, the proliferation of television sets has made it common for different age groups and genders within the home to view different programmes in different rooms in different ways. Other domestic technologies such as video games, computers and mobile phones have rivalled the television as the centre of home leisure and also rivalled the collective experience of viewing. Across Europe, unevenly developing in a broadly west to east and north to south direction, audience fragmentation has been matched by new approaches in both academic studies and industry research to the issue of television viewership. The availability of multi-channel television in developed countries has the effect of diminishing audiences for terrestrial channels as hundreds of new channels split up the audience. For commercial channels, the splitting up of the audience threatens their income from advertisements, since smaller audiences mean less revenue from advertisers unless especially valuable sections of

the audience can be targeted by their programmes. Falling audiences for non-commercial network terrestrial television channels – such as Britain’s BBC – pose a threat to their right to funding, since they cannot expect viewers to pay television licence fees if they are rarely watching BBC programmes. But to try to grab audiences back by imitating the programme formats and audience address of commercial television programmes causes another problem for such channels, since duplicating the programme forms of their rivals means they have no claim to being an essential alternative to commercial television.

However, in both academic work and in the discourses of broadcasters’ audience measurement, it has been increasingly recognised that audiences are fragmented, differentiated and often unpredictable. Stuart Hall (1996: 4) points out that this leads to a need for the historicisation of the concept of audience, because of the different ways in which audience has been discursively conceptualised over time:

Identities are never unified and, in late modern times, increasingly fragmented and fractured; never singular but multiply constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic, discourses, practices and positions . . . Precisely because identities are constructed within, not outside discourse, we need to understand them as produced in specific historical and institutional sites within specific discursive formations and practices, by specific enunciative strategies.

In relation to television’s mode of address by means of programme texts, interstitial programming such as commercial and idents, and the peripheral texts that enfold television programming in discourses such as listings magazines and press commentary, European television is part of a much larger process of identity formation for viewers. It can be argued in general, along with Chris Barker (1999: 5–6), that identity is

the meeting point, the point of suture, between on the one hand the discourse and practices which attempt to ‘interpellate’, speak to us or hail us into place as the social subject 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.

These processes of audience interpellation have taken a distinctive form in the twenty-first century because of the gradual adoption across Europe of interactive television.

Discussing interactivity in television is complex, because the term is used both to refer to the software of television, a text whose understanding and decoding involves the active input of a viewer, but also to television hardware, where digital technology enables viewers to make decisions about the programmes they are watching and how they are watched, such as their scheduling according to a menu of preferences accessed via a remote control button.

Theories of the active audience in television studies have established that audiences respond actively to texts, and engage with their meanings. But this is not the same as interactivity as it is more recently defined, since this refers to the intervention of the viewer in the text, in the form of a communication between the viewer and the source of the programme. The study of this issue is becoming increasingly important, not only because of the pervasive penetration of interactive television into the majority of European homes, but also because the heavy cost of producing this technology has given more influence to the big corporations that already seek to dominate the television landscape (Jenkins 2004). The concentration of media ownership has happened at exactly the same time as the kinds of media consumption have become more diverse and apparently more democratic. The power of the audience seems to exist at the same time as, and potentially in opposition to, the increasing power of media conglomerates.

Television technologies: transmission versus reception

The history of television in Europe (and elsewhere) has too often been assimilated into a narrative about the progressive improvement of technology. From the earliest mechanical devices for audiovisual broadcasting, through the introduction of magnetic tape in programme production and as home recording technology, to cable television and satellite transmission, it has too easily seemed that the history of television is driven by technological innovation. By contrast, however, technical innovations require the resources of large organisations, and the will to implement technologies in applications which can be represented and sold to a public. They require the stimulation of demand, and a framework of regulation and law to govern their implementation. Technologies cannot be seen as in themselves the drivers of the development of television in Europe, since recognition of a potential market, and both modes of viewing and offers of programme content that can be presented to this market, are preconditions for the adoption of a new television technology.

Television became a centralised business early in its development, in which large corporations and institutions controlled the facilities for programme production, and the networks for distribution from central transmission sources to the television audience. Whereas production and distribution involved a small number of centralised organisations, reception was differentiated and audiences were relatively passive and understood either as markets or as relatively unified citizenries. By contrast, in the late nineteenth century television technologies were imagined to be more like telephone systems (Gripsrud 1998: 20–1), in which people equipped with small television recording devices would make and send pictures and sound to domestic receivers in a much more personal, unregulated and cheaper form than actually became the case. Politically, therefore, television might have been a popular medium, in the sense that it could have been made and received by individuals and informal net-

works. The two decisive factors in the actual development of European television were capitalist firms interested in developing new product lines for mass markets to purchase for domestic use, and national governments which cooperated to establish technical standards for television equipment and transmission systems. This also led to the creation of professional elites of highly trained technicians and production staff to undertake the making of programmes and a cadre of professionals to carry out the management of television.

Radio and television engineers without doubt played a crucial role in the infrastructural integration of the European broadcasting space. The transnational character of radio waves made them an issue of cross-border negotiation and legislation from the very beginning, resulting in the foundation of international, non-governmental broadcasting institutions. The International Broadcasting Union (IBU) was founded in 1925, the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) in 1950, and the Organisation Internationale de Radiodiffusion et Télévision (OIRT) in 1946. The EBU quickly became the most important platform for the development of a Western European television infrastructure (Zeller 1999). The first initiatives to realise transnational television transmissions in Europe were the bilateral experiments of the French and the British broadcasting corporations, leading to the 'Calais experiment' in 1950 and the 'Paris week' of 1952. The mutual praise lavished by RTF and BBC officials after the realisation of 'Paris week' in 1952 show that both the British and the French saw themselves as the pioneers of a coming European television era. This era started with the live coverage of the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in 1953, which was the first truly European television event. For the first time in television history, an event was broadcast live into five countries: Britain, France, Germany, Denmark and the Netherlands. From a cultural history perspective, the effect of this transmission on the public cannot be overestimated. The feeling of televisual participation created by the live transmission of motion pictures undoubtedly gave impetus to television development all over the world. Although the coronation transmission had been carried out by the national broadcasting institutions of the five countries involved and therefore was not an official EBU activity, its impact on the EBU was great. As Wolfgang Degenhardt (Degenhardt & Strautz 1999: 38) and others have shown, the technical expenditure was enormous, especially the costly equipment for the line-conversion of the pictures transmitted, but the propagandistic effect of this pioneer performance was worth more than money. Without doubt, the Coronation event shaped a new horizon of televisual expectations in many European countries and promoted the idea of television as a 'window to the world'.

Both on a material, institutional and symbolic level, television infrastructures are probably the most prominent witness of the hidden integration of Europe as a communication space. On the material level, the technical infrastructure of broadcasting, comprising transmitters, networks of relay stations, cables and satellite dishes is evidence of Europe as a technically connected

communication space. Institutionally, European broadcast institutions (like the IBU, the EBU or the OIRT) have functioned as crucial gateways for realising transnational interaction, both technically and juridically as well as on the level of intercultural communication. Beyond their function as gateways they can be analysed as mediators of changing discourses about Europe. As networks for the flow of intercultural communication, broadcast infrastructures have shaped European communication spaces and thereby territories for the negotiation of European identities. The sonic and visual icons of Europe (for example, the symbolic force of the Eurovision hymn) represent Europe as a cultural space and demonstrate the discursive infrastructures (Fickers & Lommers 2009) that contribute to its formation.

The separate layers of European broadcast infrastructures are theoretical constructions, and in fact interact with each other in various ways. While political conceptions of Europe as a community of sovereign but legally committed nations have influenced the (fragmented) construction of a European broadcasting space, broadcast technologies (such as short-wave radio or satellites) have challenged the politicisation of the ether and offered unexpected possibilities for civilian, amateur appropriations of Europe as a transnational communication space. In this sense, the 'reversion of the public/private relationship' (Scannell 1996: 69) through broadcasting can be interpreted as a structural transformation of the European political public sphere. The early live Eurovision transmission opened up a window on just handful of Western European nations, but Telstar satellite transmission experiments in 1962 inaugurated the age of global television coverage. Only five years later, in the same year as the introduction of colour television in Germany, Britain, France and the Soviet Union, the first global television programme was broadcast around the world. *Our World*, a two-and-a-half-hour programme conceived by the BBC producer Aubrey Singer but realised in collaboration with the EBU, was transmitted to 31 countries and reached an estimated audience of 400 million viewers. Today, it is most famous for the segment starring the Beatles. Performing at the height of the Vietnam War, the group wanted to spread a message of peace and love to the world. They broadcast a live set, singing John Lennon's song 'All You Need is Love' which had been written specially for the occasion.

European commercial broadcasting by satellite began with ASTRA in 1989, and could be received by 56 million households (35 per cent of total households) in 22 European countries in 1995 (Collins 1990). ASTRA and its sister satellites are operated by a private Luxembourg company, SES, which leases satellite transponders to broadcasters. Their footprints extend from Iceland to northern Morocco and the Canary Islands to Budapest, and can be received by home receiving dishes or through cable networks. The media entrepreneur Rupert Murdoch was ASTRA's first client in 1988, for Sky Television in Britain and Western Europe, followed by German broadcasters for commercial entertainment channels, and the gradual financial success of

the system led to the 1995 launch by the European Satellite Agency of its first satellite to compete with ASTRA. Transnational television institutions in Europe have provided exchange networks for news broadcasting that have created closed circuits among broadcasters in the region, producing a European news market. Raw television news footage is offered to broadcasters by news agencies such as Eurovision, and is accessed through the European Broadcasting Union (EBU). This network is connected other transnational exchange services, and six times a day satellite links exchange news footage between Eurovision and Asiavision, for example. Satellite technology enables the international news agencies such as Visnews and Worldwide Television Network to operate 24 hours a day, sending both raw footage and complete news packages to national and regional broadcasters. Because of the different languages of television broadcasting in different nations, the news agencies mainly distribute images without commentary. This makes it more likely that their news footage will be perceived as objective by news editors, and this impression is reinforced by the neutrally phrased written material which the agencies provide with the footage to explain what their pictures denote. The agency footage can have a range of meanings attached to it by the voice-over commentaries which individual news broadcasters add to it in programme packages.

Television discourses: between hopes and fears

Television is known for its engagement with the current time and space of its audience, the 'here and now', but in its representations of that spatial and temporal world tailored to the competences of its audiences, it has also functioned as a mechanism for utopian imaginings of the different. The hopes for television are part of a larger function of utopian thought in general, which both represents and actualises the possibility of change. As Levitas (1993: 257) has argued, utopian thinking may be

understood more broadly as the desire for a better way of living expressed in the description of a different kind of society that makes possible that alternative way of life. There may be many reasons for finding utopian thought interesting, but the political importance of utopia rests on the argument that a vision of a good society located in the future may act as an agent of change.

The specific role of television in expressing utopias in its programming content, and also representing in its own form as a mass broadcasting technology the hopes for what media will offer to societies in the future is therefore connected to larger political and cultural utopianisms. Television has stood in Europe as a totem or currency representing greater transformations: 'Politically, utopia is important because of its potential role in social transformation. The absence of utopian thinking may then be construed as a

problem because it paralyses political action or prevents it from cohering into a force capable of effecting fundamental change' (Levitas 1993: 257). The very presence of television as a technology, an aspect of social life, and a mediator of representations, has enabled utopian discourses to adopt television in various ways as an example or symbol of what a better future might be like.

As William Boddy, William Uricchio and Carolyn Marvin have demonstrated, the discourse surrounding the emergence of television as a new medium is part of a larger narrative pattern, reflecting the ambivalent role of technology in the process of modernisation. They argue that every time a new medium enters the existing mass media ensemble, 'the consequences of technical innovation, real and imagined, provoked both euphoria and unease within and without the communication industries' (Boddy 2004: 3). But these dialectical positions in relation to the benefits and the downsides of new communication technologies not only mirror the cultural or societal disputes about the role of media in modern societies. They also actively interfere in the process of technological development by shaping the horizons of expectation that influence both the developers and the users of new technologies.

Both the processes of invention and innovation of new media technologies, as well as their histories, seem to follow certain patterns of narration. The international saga of the invention and innovation of radio, television or the internet (among the other 'new' media that entered the mass media ensemble in the twentieth century) can be read as a serial technological drama. Following Bryan Pfaffenberger (1992: 286), we argue that these narrative patterns not only characterise historical storytelling about acts of invention and processes of innovation, but that the technological artefacts themselves implicitly have the momentum to shape specific paths of development:

To emphasize the metaphor of drama, too, is to employ a richer metaphor than text. It is to emphasize the performative nature of technological 'statements' and 'counterstatements', which involve the creation of scenes (contexts), in which actors (designers, artefacts, and users) play out their fabricated roles with regard to a set of envisioned purposes (and before an audience), and it is also to emphasize that the discourse involved is not the argumentative and academic discourse of a text but the symbolic media of myth (in which scepticism is suspended) and ritual (in which human actions are mythically patterned in controlled social spaces).

There are three recurring narrative patterns discovered in analysing the history of television. The first is the metaphorical description of the act of invention, second the (melo)dramatic accounts of glory and failure in the process of innovation, and third the mythical charge that technology carries in techno-political regimes, and together they perfectly demonstrate the 'symbolic media of myth and ritual' and show the performative nature of the technological development of television (Fickers & Kessler 2008).

But the dramatic narratives of television are not limited to the prehistory of the medium, where the technical qualities of the invention gathered the most popular attention. Since the time when regular television services started, the message of the medium was as much the object of public debate as the medium itself. As Vincent Crone (2007) has recently demonstrated in relation to the Dutch case, both scientific and popular discussions about the harmful effects of television watching on the physical and mental state of its viewers have gone along with the development of television since the mid-1950s. These dramatic narratives occur in cyclical waves, and they should not be analysed as a rhetorical symptom accompanying television as a cultural form and as a technology, but as inherent parts of television as a discursive construction. It is of course the task of the media historian to contextualise these recurring narrative patterns and to interpret their cultural meanings or political and ideological implications, and the (few) existing publications with a media comparative focus encourage us to explore this methodological path (Damann 2005).

However, television is an emblem of the future as well as the present because it exemplifies postmodern fragmentation, the absorption of history into a continual present, and the reduction of spatial and cultural specificity, as Morley and Robbins (1995: 112) suggest: ‘What is being created is a new electronic cultural space, a “placeless” geography of image and simulation.’ Television might also be understood as preventing the progressive improvement of European societies, as Morley and Robins (1995: 112) continue:

The formation of this global hyperspace is reflected in that strand of post-modernist thinking associated particularly with writers like Baudrillard and Virilio. Baudrillard, for example, invokes the vertigo, the disorientation, the delirium created by the world of flows and images and screens. The new global arena of culture is a world of instantaneous and depthless communication, a world in which space and time horizons have become compressed and collapsed. The creators of this universal cultural space are the new global cultural corporations.

For some, television embodies the end of history and thus the end of ‘grand narratives’ of utopian thinking. As Levitas (1993: 258) argues:

postmodernity creates difficulties about thinking about the future. The spatial replaces the temporal, while the fragmentation of experience underlines the contingency of all interpretations of the world and renders problematic any commitment to an alternative, let alone an alternative future. The condition of postmodernity is one in which the future presents itself as foreclosed – or indeed fails to present itself at all.

However, this pessimistic narrative about postmodernity, very relevant to television since the medium has been seen as one of its chief embodiments,

is challenged by the historical work on television that we present in this book. Levitas (1993: 258) continues:

The claim that postmodernism and/or postmodernity have extinguished the utopian imagination is not altogether true, and this for two reasons. First utopian speculation continues although there have been changes, and quite important changes, in the space that utopia is able to occupy in contemporary culture. Second, the causes of these changes are not to be located solely or even primarily in the ideological sphere. They are not caused by a failure of the utopian imagination, but result from a more concrete problem, that of the difficulty of identifying points of intervention in an increasingly complex social and economic structure, and of identifying the agents and bearers of social transformation. It is difficult, therefore to imagine and believe in the transition to an imagined better future.

Work on the hopes and fears about television that have persisted in its history in Europe demonstrate these problems. Changes in television technology have always made it difficult to identify how television might offer better or worse futures for societies, though they have encouraged speculation about the issue. Some of the nodal points for this speculation and the airing of hopes and fears have included the invention of television itself, through to the changed understandings of television associated with video recording and consequent time-shifting. Currently, hopes and fears crystallise around the proliferation of channels made possible by new satellite and cable networks, and the new modes of delivery through digital streaming and the possibility to watch television on different kinds of receiver (computers, mobile phones, etc.). It is no more difficult or easier in the 2000s to assess the accuracy of hopes and fears for television than it was in the 1930s or 1950s. The complexity of television as a technology, institution, aesthetic form and mode of cultural experience have both permitted utopian thinking about it but also repeatedly disconfirmed both hopes and fears.

Television norms: high versus low quality

The dramatic narratives of television often include implicit moral or ethical appraisals, expressed in simple qualitative juxtapositions such as ‘good’ or ‘bad’ programmes, ‘high’ or ‘low’ cultural standard, and so on. Intellectuals, moral authorities (like churches) or political parties have all expressed their concerns about the basic standards of quality in programmes from the early days of television onwards. A recurrent pattern in these discussions about the quality of television is the tension between the ‘serious’ and the ‘popular’ mandate of television as a mass medium, and this is often exemplified by the differences between the European tradition of public service broadcasting and the American model of commercial stations. The academic field has

paid extensive attention to the processes of so-called ‘Americanisation’ or ‘Westernisation’ of European cultural traditions in the nineteenth and especially the twentieth centuries. In the processes of transnational circulation and national appropriation of goods and meanings, the media have without doubt played a crucial role as mediators and actors of cultural transfer. But as both Valeria Camporesi and Michele Hilmes argue, it is important not to analyse these processes as one-way phenomena and examples of cultural imperialism from the USA to Europe, but to more carefully interpret them as complex forms of interaction, mutual construction and interdependent development between the two continents. The continents themselves are of course abstract constructions, simplifying and reducing the enormous diversity and complexity of cultural traditions and their national or regional specificities. As Valeria Camporesi has stated: ‘This whole work of translation, resistance, adaptation, rejection, selective learning puts the very notion of “Americanization” to serious test’ (Camporesi 2000: 199). While Camporesi’s work concentrated on the relationships between the BBC and the USA in the inter-war period, Michele Hilmes (2003a: 26–7) has recently extended this warning about ‘historical dualisms’ to the whole history of broadcasting in the twentieth century:

Now, as the national systems of control established in the early decades of the last century are breaking down under the forces of deregulation and globalisation; now that technologies such as satellites and the Internet provide us with new models of communication that defy centralised national control; now that corporate influence over the institutions of the State has rendered moot many of the old distinctions between private and public; now that our understanding of democracy as cultural as well as political means that the old ‘one size fits it all’ standards of the past can no longer be justified: we might re-examine the public vs. commercial, British vs. American dichotomy and turn our attention instead to the similar social functions of both systems.

Academic studies of television have had little interest in valuing programmes or television forms comparatively, while by contrast journalistic coverage, informal talk and professional discourse in the television industry place evaluative issues high on the agenda. The industry criteria of quality, as well as reflecting considerations of economic success and profile within institutional hierarchies, have also reflected a concern for aesthetics and professional skill, but the divisions between these types of valuation have tended to blur into each other. For example, the Golden Rose (Rose d’Or) festival for entertainment television in Montreux, Switzerland, began in 1961 as a means for national broadcasters to find low-cost programmes that could be presented as ‘quality’ television during the summer period when schedules were occupied largely with repeats and low-budget entertainment. This resulted in an international variety programme with a competition format that could be exchanged for productions produced in other countries. The first winner

was the BBC's *Black and White Minstrel Show* and subsequent winners have included circus specials, sitcoms, game shows and cartoons including *The Muppet Show*, *The Benny Hill Show*, *Monty Python's Flying Circus*, *Cirque du Soleil*, *The Simpsons* and *Mr Bean*. Juries for prizes are designed to avoid domination by the most powerful producing nations, or by public service or commercial broadcasters. The expansion of the festival led to the demise of direct programme exchanges and instead the evolution of the event into a programme market, Videokiosk, in which representatives from up to forty nations bought and sold formats as well as programmes, and series as well as one-off specials. So the festival began from the start as a mechanism for fulfilling broadcasters' scheduling and supply needs, as well as a competitive contest for quality in light entertainment. Its subsequent evolution into a programme market simply makes explicit confusion between industrial imperatives and aesthetic criteria that were evident from the beginning.

The example of the Golden Rose shows that criteria of evaluation have common features across Europe, but there are also significant differences, and this book distinguishes and debates the ways that a programme (or a channel, or an evening's viewing) has been considered 'good' in different parts of Europe at different times. Quality television is an informal category that often separates prestigious dramas, documentaries, art films and adaptations of literary sources from 'popular' television. Although in recent decades academic television studies have taken popular television seriously, because it is the television most people watch the most, criticism in the press, and sometimes in the television industry itself, has evaluated popular television as unimportant, merely commercial, and lacking in artistic value.

John Fiske and John Hartley (1978: 125) argued that the discourse of television comprised a mixture of 'literate' and 'oral' codes. 'Literate' components are those shared with literary texts and other high-status forms of written communication which are 'narrative, sequential, abstract, univocal, "consistent"', whereas features which are more similar to informal communication, spoken language or popular songs are 'dramatic, episodic, concrete, social, dialectical'. The literate codes of television underlie programmes' novelistic narrative structures and linear explanatory forms, and can be regarded as reproducing the unifying and official languages of social power, which impose an ordered worldview. On the other hand, the 'oral' features of television derive from organic communities and everyday discourses, and are thus a representation of popular culture. In the context of critiques of social control, and the valuation of ordinary people and their worldviews, the oral mode of television is a vital and progressive element possessing radical potential. Discourses of evaluation of quality have tended to value 'literate' modes while devaluing 'oral' ones, but the identification of 'oral' and popular aspects of television in Europe gestures towards academic studies' increasing desire to validate the ordinary viewer, popular culture and the contribution of television audiences to meaning.

The question of quality in television is closely connected with two contrasting cultural values, namely experimentation and heritage. Lowenthal (1997: ix–xi) argues that on one hand, heritage has a protective function in overcoming dissatisfaction with the present or recent past, or veiling the anxious prospect of an expected future. In these respects, the role of heritage is to be a consolation, and thus works to prevent change and progress. As a cultural phenomenon closely associated with nationalism, it may also have xenophobic resonances. However, on the other hand, heritage makes links between viewers and their ancestors and offspring, and has potentially positive benefits in creating bonds between individuals, national television communities, and regional groupings of television cultures across Europe. The heritage of television, and heritage in television programming content, can be understood as a mechanism and conduit for the production of a sense of shared history and the continuity of European identities of different kinds.

In contrast to some television cultures such as Britain, where heritage on television has developed a relatively specific meaning (as the adaptation of literary classics, programming about symbolic national landscapes, elite or popular institutions, and examples of well-known television from the past), some European television cultures have a much more contested and problematic notion of heritage. This goes to prove Michel Foucault's (1986: 82) point that

we should not be deceived into thinking that this heritage is an acquisition, a possession that grows and solidifies; rather, it is an unstable assemblage of faults, fissures and heterogeneous layers that threaten the fragile interior from within or underneath . . . The search for descent is not the erecting of foundations: on the contrary it disturbs what was previously considered immobile; it fragments what was thought unified; it shows the heterogeneity of what was imagined consistent with itself.

Television rituals: ordinary versus event

The discursive construction of Europe, European identities and European spaces are most visible in so called European 'events'. Until recently, events have been the favoured objects of study of sociologists interested in the 'extra-ordinary', in social agency or collective activity transgressing quotidian or routine social behaviour (Knoblauch 2000: 33–50). Generally speaking, events as social happenings are planned and organised occasions of collective participation, whether in the form of either mediated or proximate participation. While events originally consisted in a bodily and physical experience of an organised happening by a larger group of people (such as Roman circus games lasting several days, a medieval conclave or a modern political event such as the Vienna Congress), modern communication technologies have deeply changed both the nature and the experience of social events. The live coverage of events by

various media technologies has transformed the social situation of the happening: those who directly participate have themselves become the points of access for the unknown mass of mediated participants. Together they perform what Daniel Dayan and Elihu Katz have described as ‘media events’. Focusing their investigation on television, Dayan and Katz (1992: 1) define media events as extraordinary experiences of medial participation: ‘Audiences recognize them as an invitation – even a command – to stop their daily routines and join in a holiday experience. If festive viewing is to ordinary viewing what holidays are to the everyday, these events are the high holidays of mass communication.’ While the definition of media events by Dayan and Katz has been criticised for being too rigid in its characterisation of media events as pre-planned and highly stereotyped forms of mediated social interaction (Wanning 2001), media sociologist Nick Couldry (2003) wondered whether they can be ‘read’ as expressions of social order at all or should be interpreted as medial constructions of collective identities.

Ordinary television is a repository of the accretion of different and often contrasting forms of representation and relations with audiences that play an important role in the constitution of cultural identities in Europe, especially national ones. Thus ordinary television can be understood overall as a narrative ‘by which stories, images, symbols and rituals represent “shared” meanings of nationhood. National identity is a constitutive representation of shared experiences and history told in stories, literature, popular culture and . . . television’ (Barker 1999: 68). In this respect, the functions of ordinary television are not as dissimilar as they might seem from the identity-forming functions of television events and television as itself an event, since these too work to focus conceptions of regional, national, transnational and global identities around a specific television moment. This moment may be one created for television, one already existing whose circulation is made possible by television and thus assumes a different character, or one that is relayed by television but remains tied in its form and significance to factors that are independent of its transmission. A significant example of a television event is the Eurovision Song Contest, beginning in 1956 and along with *Jeux Sans Frontières* one of the prime activities of the EBU. In 1954 there were fewer than five million television receivers in the continent, 90 per cent of which were in Britain, but the audience for the programme grew because of satellite transmission to reach North Africa, the Middle East and Eastern Europe. While Eurovision initially focused on sport, news and public affairs, in the 1950s the EBU wished to reduce the influence of American entertainment and expanded the San Remo Song Festival in Italy into a European television event. The first Contest was held in Lugano, Switzerland, and by the end of the twentieth century was watched by 600 million people in 35 countries. Early contests were dominated by ballads, contrasting with the American domination of national popular music by rock and roll, but by the late 1960s entries aimed at teen audiences began to predominate and songs either used

English lyrics or very simple, non-specific phrases such as 'La la la' (as in the winning Spanish entry of 1998). Rule changes in the later 1970s encouraged entries based on national folk traditions, but by the 1980s further influences from British and US pop choreography and eroticisation were combined with professionalisation and promotion by the music industry.

Television events in Europe contribute to new ways of thinking about time, space and relationships with the world. Since information circulates across different time zones, local time and the sense of familiar space can be understood as partial and local variations within a European or even global time and space. Local activity can be seen in the contexts of transnational and global problems and opportunities, where traditional and historic ways of understanding subjectivity, community or nation are overlaid or even replaced by transnationally dominant ways of thinking. Television events enable their audiences to witness different places and times of different nations and cultures, such as news broadcasting of the 1990s conflicts in the former Yugoslavia. In the years leading up to the revolutions in Eastern Europe in 1989, in some nations images of the apparently comfortable lives and abundant consumer goods of Western Europe aided the populations' desire for political change, and images representing western culture such as satellite broadcasting of MTV stimulated change in the Soviet Union in the late 1980s.

But in contrast to 'event television', ordinary television such as prime-time entertainment shows offers some evidence for the industrial and ideological homogenisation of television in Europe in the recent past. In the recently deregulated television cultures of Eastern Europe, factual entertainment programmes such as 'people shows' or 'makeover shows' have been developed in national versions deriving from formats successful in Western European cultures. Examples of these programmes include *Big Brother* (the most successful example), but also programmes featuring lifestyle and self-improvement documentary series and contests. Although there was widespread condemnation of these programmes for 'dumbing down' the audience (Biltereyst 2004), they have also been defended as 'just entertainment' and as a benefit of increasing viewer choice, as part of a generalised movement towards populism and the democratisation of television. The parallel between choice and democratic empowerment is of course a false one, though in principle there is no reason to regard choice as antagonistic to democracy. If viewers in newly commercialised television cultures, where consumer capitalism takes over from state control or paternalistic regulation, choose to watch makeover formats and other kinds of reality TV programming, this can be seen both as an embrace of the new culture of selfhood as a project of secular perfectibility, and also as a testing or ventilation of social anxieties about the processes of the commodification of the self and the body as things to be worked on, improved, modified and shown off. The pain involved in the exposure, testing, risking and failure of the self thus shown under construction is as much at stake as the pleasures of watching and identifying with contestants engaged

in projects of self-improvement and self-analysis. The episodic serial process of pressuring, testing, exposing and judging selves and bodies in *Big Brother*, for example, can be seen as an opportunity for questioning the shift to body/self projects of perfectibility as well as a celebration of it.

The use of television as a medium in which makeover formats are translated and exchanged across different local and regional spaces in Europe draws attention to the temptation to take television as a causal agent of local and regional social change based on the specific form it takes in the USA. This is partly for the pragmatic reason that theories of television are readily available from US academics and theorists. It is also the result of the assumption that the model of television institutional organisation in the USA is the historic destiny of television in all contemporary societies. For example, the de-differentiation of space and time in transnational makeover forms and formats relates interestingly to theoretical work on the medium (based on its US forms) in the work of Margaret Morse. She argues that television is parallel to the freeway and the shopping mall, noting first the flow and movement in which billboards are driven past on an American freeway, and secondly the segmentation and multiplicity of products in the self-contained and privatised space of the shopping mall. For Morse (1990: 197), television, the freeway and the mall are 'derealized or *nonspace*'. Television can take the viewer anywhere in time and simulate the past (like the artificial village square of the shopping mall) and can also shift the viewer in space by offering visions of distant places that are rendered the same as each other as they rush past in an evening's viewing (like the infinite horizon and endless journey of the freeway). This produces a mobile subjectivity and an experience of distraction which is dislocated from traditional spaces and times at the same time as it simulates and commodifies them, turning them into products offered for the audience to choose. As in many theoretical accounts of the specific aesthetics and politics of the television medium, the metaphors used to analyse it connect television to America, postmodernism and feminisation in their connection with consumption, the erosion of boundaries and the liquidity of flow. So the argument is that makeover television abstracts the people who are transformed from their specific spaces and times of existence, making each made-over self and body equivalent to all the others that are subjected to reality TV's weekly transformations. Some reality TV formats are adapted to particular localised cultures, and the expectations about identity, private space and the role of television in different societies. However, the fact of transnational export of formats in itself represents an erosion of local particularity, and the adoption of television modes of address to viewers about identities and bodies that derive from western models.

Gamedocs have been traded in Europe as international formats that are locally produced, and this had previously been a distribution model adopted by the owners of more conventional game-show formats such as *The Price is Right* or *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire*. The pre-designed and tested formats of

reality TV cost less to produce than wholly new programme ideas devised for specific national channels, and reduce the risk that new programmes face of finding the right audience and becoming popular. Annette Hill's work (2002: 325–6) on the different national audiences for *Big Brother* demonstrated the format's role as means to define the brand identity of individual national channels and to raise the profile of a channel. The first version of *Big Brother* was produced in Holland by John de Mol Productions for the Veronica channel. De Mol's company Dutch Endemol is owned by Spanish media company Telefónica, and formats that Endemol has devised include a range of reality TV variants such as *Fame Academy*, *Changing Rooms*, *Fear Factor* and *The Salon*. In the Netherlands, the first *Big Brother* series peaked at 6 million viewers when two contestants enjoyed a moment of physical intimacy, and healthy ratings for the programme assisted in making the format an attractive prospect for broadcasters in other countries, but perhaps equally important was the profile of the programme as evidenced by press and television coverage, which supported a rapidly growing public culture of talk, consisting largely of speculation about the contestants and the outcome of the competition. This word-of-mouth circulation of information has been a key aspect of *Big Brother's* success internationally, and has the spin-off benefit of drawing viewers to the channel broadcasting the series and potentially keeping them watching it for other programmes in its schedule.

In Germany, *Big Brother* was produced by Endemol Entertainment for the RTL2 and RTL channels. Its success meant that a second series was commissioned during the summer run of the first series, so that a second series could begin in autumn 2000 as soon as the first one finished. RTL2 was a small broadcaster with an average 3.9 per cent share of the audience in *Big Brother's* time slot, and the channel increased this to 15 per cent for the second *Big Brother* series. Then a third series was commissioned for the post-Christmas season (finishing in May 2001) but the ratings did not equal those of its predecessor. The opportunity to raise a minority channel's audience share was more dramatically demonstrated in Portugal, where TVI screened *Big Brother* (produced by Endemol Entertainment) from September to December 2000, gaining an average share over this period of 61 per cent in contrast to its normal average share of 9 per cent, and a peak share of 74 per cent in the series' final week. Similar success followed when a second *Big Brother* series was screened by the same channel. *Big Brother* in Spain was broadcast by Tele 5 (produced by Zeppelin Television) in April–July 2000. Tele 5 had a normal average share of 21 per cent, and although at the start of the *Big Brother* series the channel's initial share was 13.7 per cent, this rose to 30 per cent with a peak for the final episode of 70 per cent, when the ratings for this climactic end to the competition overtook those of the Champions League soccer semi-final. *Big Brother* in Belgium was on Kanal 2 (produced by Endemol Entertainment) from September to December 2000, and the channel's average share rose from 9 per cent to a peak of almost 50 per cent.

Similarly, *Big Brother* in Switzerland was on TV3 (produced by B&B Endemol) in autumn 2000 and increased the channel's share from an average of only 2.5 per cent to 30 per cent. *Big Brother* in Sweden did not get high ratings or audience share, but achieved high levels of publicity and profile for its broadcaster. The series was on Kanal 5 (produced by Metronome Television) in autumn 2000, and the channel's 10 per cent share remained steady during the run. However, the media profile of *Big Brother* in Sweden was a significant factor in Kanal 5's decision to commission a second series with a modified format. The ways in which personnel, format ideas, programmes and ways of interacting with television occur in different locations suggest at least the westernisation of ideas about the self, the body and community.

Television politics: democratic versus totalitarian

When television began in Europe in the periods immediately before and after the Second World War, all of its programmes were live because recording technology had not been perfected. On one hand, television gave and still gives viewers an experience of immediacy and credibility, because of its mythology of transcription or denotation. The dissemination of information and actuality beyond the local and personal experience of its viewers can be argued to broaden the experience and awareness of the audience. The political effects of this have been for television to assist national and European institutions in involving citizens in social and political debate and to contribute to the public sphere. On the other hand, television's necessary selectivity, conventions of representation and governance by television institutions and legal regulation empower television to relate the viewer to the world and separates the viewer from his or her experience of reality. If television substitutes mediated and partial versions of information and understanding for authentic experience, then its effect is to deter discussion and debate. For example, Wulf Kansteiner's (2004) work on the West German public television station ZDF between 1963 and 1993 showed that programming on the history of the Third Reich was interesting to viewers except during a brief period in the mid-1970s. However, the characteristics of this programming in the 1960s reinforced an apologetic tone that ignored the Holocaust, whereas in the 1980s a more self-critical representation developed though it still did not directly confront active Nazi perpetrators in the Holocaust or the people who passively witnessed it at the time.

Problems of the contribution of television in Europe to democracy, versus its relationship with social control or totalitarianism, are linked directly with understandings of the audience as a citizenry, and questions of passivity and consumerisation. For Chris Barker (1999: 230), 'television on a global scale has the capacity to contribute to democracy (via the principles of diversity and solidarity) through its range of representations, genres, arguments and information. However, the vision of television as a diverse and plural public sphere

is seriously compromised by its almost complete penetration by the interest-based messages and images of consumerism.’ A concrete example of this in recent history is provided in the work of Deborah Philips (2005) on television home makeover formats such as *Home Front* and *Changing Rooms* that mediate between the private, domestic space of the home and the public world of television. Expert designers become television personalities who act as ‘tastemakers’, contributing to pan-European processes of privatisation of property and the symbolic effects of rising housing costs so that an avowed democratisation of taste in these widely exported formats in fact confirms the superior knowledge and cultural capital of television experts to erase differences in personal taste in favour of its commodification.

The hope that television would be a strong agent of democratisation was part of the dramatic narrative of early television. There have been numerous statements to this effect by politicians and state officials, bearing witness to the extraordinary expectations of television as a means of democratic political communication. The first director-general of post-war public service television broadcasting in West Germany, Adolf Grimme, presented television in 1953 as the medial reincarnation of the classical ideal of democracy. For Grimme, what made politics in ancient times a publicly shared activity for all returns in the age of mass media, for television takes the place of the agora, or meeting-place of the whole nation in which direct democracy can be realised. Kurt Wagenführ, one of the most prominent German radio and television journalists, saluted Grimme by stating that the television camera in parliament would be an omnipresent eye of democracy, enabling a direct link between the inner sphere of the parliament and the whole German nation. A few years later, Gabriel Delaunay, Grimme’s French equivalent and director-general of the Radio Télévision Française (RTF), made exactly the same historical comparison: ‘The columns of the Forum Romanum, too fragile to resist time and wars, have collapsed. Politics had to take refuge in strange temples called “parliaments”. But radio and television have given birth to a new conception of the Forum in installing it around every table of a household’ (Delaunay 1958). The French television historian Évelyne Cohen (1999: 26) interpreted the political function of television during the de Gaulle years as a genuine ‘national language’, a privileged vehicle of national sentiment and community. Television’s role as a stabilising force of the nation has been widely researched, but the transnational impact of programmes and people crossing the borders of ‘television nations’ needs to be researched in a much more detailed way.

Transnational news channels are one of the key examples for the debate about the impact of television on national political structures of news value and the public sphere. Complete news programmes are broadcast by satellite by the American institution CNN, which broadcasts to about 130 countries with content in major regional languages, and Britain’s Sky News and BBC World. BBC World was launched in 1991 as BBC World Service Television, drawing on the global recognition of the BBC’s radio World Service and using

the radio service's 250 correspondents and 57 regional bureaux, as well as the BBC's television studios, technicians and reporters already stationed around the world. This scale of operation makes the BBC the world's largest newsgathering organisation. Half of BBC World's 24 hours of television consists of news programmes, each half an hour in length, and the other half is BBC current affairs, factual and entertainment programmes. BBC World is the biggest rival to the CNN network, and has a contrasting style. Rather than emphasising breaking news and live broadcast, BBC World is based around the journalistic comment on news which its correspondents and reporters can offer, and the very diverse international coverage which it can provide using World Service radio's expert staff. In 1992 the service reached three continents, constituting 80 per cent of the world's population. Soon deals had been negotiated for BBC World to be broadcast by satellite to continental Europe (including Russia), and the channel was the first to offer simultaneous translation of its English-language news programmes into other regional languages, then followed by CNN.

The selection of news stories on national television networks around the world, and the structure and form of news broadcasting there are influenced by CNN and BBC World because their global coverage and broadcasting have the effect of bringing its selection of stories to the attention of national broadcasters. These channels can also affect the events which are being reported, since coverage of events almost live can have the effect of altering the progress of a news event, for example by alerting officials to the perception of their actions abroad. However, it would be mistaken to claim that transnational news broadcasters have direct effects on shaping events or attitudes to them. Apart from the theoretical insight that television's effects need to be considered within national institutional, legal and cultural constraints which delimit and redirect them, there are specific restrictions on the gathering of news and the accessibility of transnational television news. Attempts to manage news broadcast journalists by national politicians is common, in order to influence the representation of events outside a particular country where a transnational television news broadcaster is operating. The influence of the broadcasters is limited also by the fact that their programmes are in English and/or the languages spoken by affluent elites who are attractive to advertisers, so that only a relatively privileged sector of many societies has access to the transnational channels.

The proliferation of television channels in recent years has given rise to new channels that address audiences who have been dissatisfied with competitors and who are most likely to produce negotiated readings of dominant television news agendas offered by national and transnational channels such as BBC World or CNN. The international channel al-Jazeera was launched in 1996 and initially broadcast only in the Arabic language from Qatar, funded by the country's ruling emir. Its aim was to offer a new kind of journalism to audiences in the Middle East, following western norms by reporting opposing views

instead of the official news agendas and opinions of government sources in the region. But despite this aim for objectivity and neutrality, the channel repeatedly annoyed western governments, especially the USA, by broadcasting videotape messages sent to it by the anti-western Islamic organisation al-Qaeda. These videotapes featured Osama Bin Laden, widely regarded as the terrorist leader behind al-Qaeda and the instigator of numerous attacks on western targets, including the destruction of the World Trade Center in 2001. Al-Jazeera started a new English-language channel in 2006, al-Jazeera International, attracting prominent British and other non-Arab journalists to present its programmes. The opportunity to follow stories that have not received much coverage in existing national and international news, or have been covered from a predominantly western point of view, is the main thing that al-Jazeera offers to its audiences and journalists. But the perception that the channel is unlike CNN or BBC World in this respect also meant that some of its presenters and reporters were cautious about its links with political and religious movements attacking the Western powers. Al-Jazeera employs over 200 staff from 30 national backgrounds in its news team, which it claims will permit reporters with local knowledge to offer new perspectives on news stories. The agenda is to avoid the categorisation of news according to the stereotypes of western-based channels, so that items from Africa, for example, will not be driven by the narratives about famine, AIDS and war which have often dominated coverage of the region. The programme schedule of the channel is timed to match the time zones of its viewers, so that over one 24-hour period, moving East to West, it broadcasts for four hours from Kuala Lumpur, 11 hours from Doha, 5 hours from London and 4 hours from Washington. As well as offering English-speaking audiences new kinds of coverage, and a new balance of coverage that favours the developing world and non-western nations, the channel expects to attract audiences from Muslim backgrounds who cannot speak Arabic but are interested in the non-western perspectives of its journalists and may be resistant to coverage of news on western channels such as CNN or BBC. There are 1.2 billion Muslims in the potential global audience, but only about 240 million speak Arabic. The channel is initially available free of charge to viewers via cable and satellite, though broadband streaming on the internet is likely to follow. In Britain, the channel is carried by Sky and when it launched at the end of 2006, al-Jazeera hoped to find viewers in about eight million British households.

Work by Jean Chalaby (2005) showed that cross-border television channels operate in different ways and proposed a typology comprising ethnic, multi-territory, pan-European channels and transnational networks. His interviews with media executives revealed that each of the four types of cross-border television had different relationships with nation-states, geographical space and culture. The pan-European channels such as Eurosport and MTV (Chalaby 2002), broadcasting across Europe, localised their pan-European output in the 1990s by means of local advertising, dubbing or subtitling, local programming

and the opportunity for local opt-out within a particular territory. As a business strategy, localisation has facilitated globalisation processes by allowing transnational media players to cope with cultural diversity and operate more efficiently as multinational institutions.

Television changes: old versus new

The narrative of European television history has often been assimilated into the narrative of globalisation. In some respects the creation of European political institutions, especially the EU and its progressive erosion of physical borders between nations, and laws permitting citizens to work in nations other than that of their home, have made the globalisation narrative more pertinent in Europe than in other regions of the globe. Morley and Robins (1995: 87), for example, connect this to the narrative of modernisation: 'It is through the logic of globalisation that [the] dynamic of modernisation is most powerfully articulated. Through proliferating information and communications flows and through mass human migration, it has progressively eroded territorial frontiers and boundaries and provoked ever more immediate confrontations of culture and identity.' Television has not only borne witness to these changes in news and documentary programming, for example, but can also be seen as an agent of the new because of the export and exchange of formats and programmes across national boundaries. Morley and Robins (1995: 87) continue, quoting the French historian Pierre Nora (1989: 7): 'Where once it was the case that cultures were demarcated and differentiated in time and space, now "the concept of a fixed, unitary, and bounded culture must give way to a sense of the fluidity and permeability of cultural sets". Through this intermixture and hybridisation of cultures, older certainties and foundations of identity are continuously and necessarily undermined.' Television's hybridisation of cultures by means of programme and format exchange, and the possibility to dub or subtitle images with locally specific languages mean that television can exemplify modernity both in its content and in the transnational harmonisation of transmission standards and broadcasting technologies through the twentieth century.

Karen Siune and Olof Hulten (1998) set up a series of oppositions between older media and new media. In relation to the institutional control of the broadcast networks, the distinction between 'old' and 'new' media landscapes is between monopoly and competition. The organisations dominating the two epochs also have different primary goals, since television institutions were originally part of a larger enterprise towards democracy, whereas they are now driven by survival and the struggle for success and profit. While both 'old' and 'new' institutional forms have as primary activities the management of selection processes governing what material is screened, and the programme mix that enfold it, the 'new' institutions have much less control over pro-

gramme production, because of the outsourcing and privatisation of production processes and facilities. For Siune and Hulten, the logic governing the activities of television institutions was formerly based on responsibility, whereas more recently that logic is drawn from the market and economics. The selection criteria have shifted from political relevance to sale, and the reference group for the institutions has changed from citizens to consumers. Their focus has changed from the decisions taken and the power structure to the process of policy making and new conflict dimension. The perspective of institutions is no longer that of the nation or media system, but of individuals and global reach. This changed television culture has led to debates (in Norway, for example, as Syvertsen (2003) explains) about the national regulation of television to protect national public service television from the perceived threat of media convergence, transnational television institutions and commercialisation.

If television is an emblem of the new, it is so in part because of its containment and processing of memories of the old. Its adoption of some of the modes of radio (centre to periphery broadcasting, national organisation and regulation, adoption of inherited formats, forms and modes of address – including some that were hitherto borrowed by radio from theatre and other kinds of performance or journalism) connect television both to the past and to other media. This ability of a ‘new medium’ to adopt, integrate and appropriate functions and forms, aesthetic conventions and narrative patterns of ‘old’ media, have recently been discussed under the label of ‘intermediality’. As Frida Chapple and Chiel Kattenbelt (2006: 12) state, intermediality is associated historically with the exchangeability of expressive means and aesthetic conventions between different art and media forms. But intermediality is by no means a phenomenon of the television or internet era, but (as recently has been argued by theatre historians) a classical characteristic of live theatre performances. In film and literary studies, the concept of ‘intertextuality’ has been stressed to analyse the various ways and forms of relationships between different ‘texts’ and their mediated and appropriated meanings (Kristeva 1980). In addition to that, the term ‘transmediality’ has been introduced in media and communication theory to describe processes of translation both of content and aesthetic forms from one medium to another (often referred to as ‘adaptations’). In recent times, two other notions dealing with these phenomena of translation, transgression or interaction between contents and forms have been circulating in the field of media studies that are the notion of ‘remediation’ and ‘convergence’. While the term ‘remediation’ – most prominently advertised in the book of that title by Jay Bolter and Richard Grusin (1999) – mainly stresses aesthetic and narrative implications of digital media in the context of visual culture, ‘convergence’ as defined by Henry Jenkins (2006: 2) describes ‘the flow of content across multiple media platforms, the cooperation between multiple media industries, and the migratory behaviour

of media audiences'. With the exception of Jenkins's definition of 'convergence', which rejects the classical digital revolution paradigm that presumed that new media would displace or fully absorb old media, and stresses the importance of technological, industrial, social and cultural (user) contexts in both the circulation and appropriation of mediated texts and meanings, most media scholars have studied and analysed these processes while focusing on the textual or aesthetic dimension.

Reasoning about processes of remediation or convergence from a historical and comparative perspective obliges theorists to reflect more systematically on the interconnectedness and the directions of flows between the chosen objects of study, for example early television and radio or early television and film. Intermedial relationships have too often been analysed as one-way processes or flows, either by looking at the impact of old media on new by means of discourse analysis, or by analysing the impact of new media on old as an example of remediation. The real challenge of comparative media history from a 'histoire croisée' perspective would involve thinking of the processes of media in transition as processes of mutual co-construction, or simultaneous phenomena of invention of new and reinvention of old media, thus problematising the phenomenon of convergence and understanding it as a two-way flow.

The blurring of boundaries between spaces and times, newnesses and oldnesses in television produces not only an uncertainty about where television's specificity begins and ends, but also how this technology embedded in the home has impacted on the sense of what home means. Like the discourse on heritage discussed above, the history of television in Europe involves the continual negotiation of the meaning of the familiar (the old, the habitual, the domestic, the homely) and the unfamiliar (the new, the novel, the other, the uncanny).

Television ontologies: 'us' versus 'the others'

Television reproduces the familiar, in the sense not only of presenting it again, but also effectively creating and renewing it. This process delimits what is familiar and knowable but also what is other and alien. The task 'of catering to the various forms of "nostalgia" – for a sense of community, tradition and belonging – falls increasingly on the electronic media'. (Morley & Robbins 1995, 4–5) For the history of television in Europe, this means investigating the different kinds of home that television has produced and supported, as well as those that it has repudiated. Here, home not only refers to the domestic context of reception and the images of domestic life that are offered and contested, but also the larger homes represented by regions, nations and transnational groupings. In this context, Europe itself as a common home is a key point of debate in this book. Morley and Robbins (1995: 89) suggest about this wider meaning of home and homeland (in German, *Heimat*):

It is around the meaning of European culture and identity in the new global context that this image – this nostalgia, this aspiration – has become politically activated . . . Yet *Heimat* is an ominous utopia. Whether ‘home’ is imagined as the community of Europe or of the nation state or of the region, it is steeped in the longing for wholeness, unity integrity. It is about community centred around shared traditions and memories.

The most famous example of a representation dealing explicitly with this issue is the German television serial *Heimat*, but versions of this television meditation on home and homeland in the context of a European belonging that is either welcomed or feared can be found in all television cultures across the continent. This in itself demonstrates the significance of this problem for European societies. ‘*Heimat* is a mythical bond rooted in a lost past, a past that has already disintegrated: “we yearn to grasp it, but it is baseless and elusive; we look back for something solid to lean on, only to find ourselves embracing ghosts”’ (Berman 1983: 333). It is about conserving the ‘fundamentals’ of culture and identity. And, as such, it is about sustaining cultural boundaries and boundedness. To belong in this way is to protect exclusive, and therefore excluding, identities against those who are seen as aliens and foreigners. The ‘Other’ is always and continuously a threat to the security and integrity of those who share a common home (Morley & Robins 1995: 89). Programming strategies for multicultural programming have therefore been developed by commissioning editors and programme-makers in public broadcasting institutions to address both minority and mainstream audiences. As Leuridijk’s (2006) study of this process in five west European countries showed, ideologies of universality, focusing on experiences like death, birth, love and friendship in factual entertainment or infotainment formats were developed to address urban and young audiences, producing moves away from west European heritages of social realism and away from older target audiences or recent immigrants.

Television has brought new ways of understanding the European symbolic spaces of locality, region or nation, and transnational symbolic spaces like the notion of the Cold War, a global ‘war on terrorism’ or a New World Order, for example, which change understandings of subjective place in the world. Because television broadcasts such a range of images of culture, such as versions of what youth and age, domesticity, work and gender might mean, for example, the tensions between national and transnational television in Europe have provided the possibility of reflecting on local cultures. Transnational television provides resources for viewers to think about themselves and their social environment, in the same ways that local or national television does. Sinclair and his fellow authors (Sinclair et al. 1999: 187) give this example from a British context: ‘An Egyptian immigrant in Britain, for example, might think of herself as a Glaswegian when she watches her local Scottish channel, a British resident when she switches over to the BBC, an Islamic Arab expatriate in

Europe when she tunes in to the satellite service from the Middle East, and a world citizen when she channel surfs on to CNN.' Europe's television citizens negotiate their sense of place, time and community in relation to local, regional and global television cultures, and do so by borrowing from or resisting television structures, modes of address and representations. The diasporic communities in Europe have been given new ways of constructing identities by the transnational channels and cross-border distribution of television that began in the 1980s with satellite television. Aksoy and Robins (2000), for example, have shown how transnational television from Turkey included programmes from the state broadcaster TRT, a range of new commercial broadcasters, and channels specifically aimed at Muslim viewers. This diversity made it possible for Turkish viewers inside and outside Turkey to actively construct and reconstruct their identities and sense of place and belonging without a necessary anchorage to a singular symbolic and geographical reference point.

The Aims, Methods and Problems of this Book

Finally, we can draw these research problems together as specific manifestations of the greater conceptual tension between identity and difference. The three key questions addressed in this book are, first, what a comparative history might look like, as a discourse that acknowledges difference while functioning as a unified discussion. Second, this is a television history, so that how television operates to find an identity as a medium by establishing difference and similarity with other media is an important feature of the book. Third, we aim to write a history of European television, so that the identity of Europe as an entity (more accurately, as several overlapping kinds of entity) impacts on each of the preceding two issues. This chapter has outlined the central questions of the project and the methodological approach. Each chapter that follows begins with an introduction outlining central questions and introducing case studies and sources. The main body of each chapter comprises comparative analysis of the political, economic, aesthetic, ideological and social-cultural contexts of the development of the aspect of European television addressed, and specific case studies instantiating it. A conclusion and annotated bibliography complete each chapter. The questions addressed here are taken up in the concluding chapter, where we offer synthesising theses about the issues addressed across the book as a whole.

This book is the result of a real European co-operation, between 28 television scholars of 15 different nationalities (27 of them being affiliated to a European university), developing historical case studies of 15 European countries and 3 European regions. It is easy to demonstrate the adventurous character of this project, which may best be understood as a scholarly experiment by the rather small community of European television historians, driven by the intellectual belief that the field of media history has to break out of the

national frames in which it has developed and grown since the 1950s and 1960s. Without diminishing the value and necessity of national media and television histories, we think that the transnational and comparative approach is a more adequate one for the study of television as an object and practice characterised by its placing on and across cultural borderlines.

In order to guarantee a real comparative perspective for each of the chapters we invited the members of the European Television History Network to form teams for collaborative writing. Under the editorial responsibility of a lead author, the teams discussed the scope and the case studies to be presented in each of the thematic chapters, inspired by the general design of the book as developed by the editors. With the exception of the first chapter on the prehistory and early visions of television, for which it proved to be problematic to create a writing team, the case studies that form the historical evidence of the chapters reflect both the national and scholarly profiles of their contributors. While each chapter reflects on the European dimension of its topic in a more general sense, the concrete comparative dimension is based on a necessarily limited number of case studies. The originality of this book lies not so much in the presentation of new case studies but in the comparative interpretation and analysis of these cases from a European perspective.

Neither the book nor the chapters therefore claim to offer a holistic view of Europe in all its geographical and cultural diversity, but instead pay attention to interesting, relevant and – at least in certain cases – representative moments in the history of television in Europe. This is a Europe which is in itself rather a discursive construction of fragmented, diverse and often diachronic narratives than a homogeneous and essentialist phenomenon. The eclectic structure of the book is both the result of the initial decision to build on the competences and expertise of our collaborators and is also a reflection of the existing landscape of academic television history in Europe. Despite the broad geographical scope of the case studies presented, ranging from Sweden to Greece in the north–south direction and from Wales to Romania on the west–east axis, we are painfully aware of a certain Western European emphasis in the book. Although we attempted to find and invite colleagues from Central and Eastern European universities to participate in the workshops organised by the European Television History Network that initiated this project, our success in finding partners in these countries remained rather limited. It is our greatest hope that this publication might help to further stimulate and initiate dialogue and scholarly collaboration of this kind. Nevertheless, thanks to the diversity of the personal and intellectual biographies of all the participants in this collective experiment, we hope to offer a book that reflects the spirit of European ‘diversity in unity’, witnessing an intellectual curiosity to explore the complexity of television as a cultural phenomenon and a unique academic and social engagement. This project is a truly collective, transnational and interdisciplinary experiment which we hope will prompt the further enrichment of comparative European television historiography.

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