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The Expansion of British Television in the 1950s and 1960s: Institutions, Society and Culture

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Abstract:

This thesis explores the expansion of British television in the 1950s and 1960s and its relationship to social and cultural change. During this period, television developed into an industry and mass medium and this coincided with a cultural shift from a seemingly consensual society of post-war austerity to a society characterised by fragmentation, individualism and consumerism. By combining a re-examination of existing histories of British television with a discussion of television programmes and sociological theory, this thesis explores the complex relationship between the expansion of television and that social and cultural change.

The thesis shows how television represented these changes, and how it presented competing discourses about consumer culture in a range of programmes including action adventure series, pop music and women's programmes. It also demonstrates how television promoted class and cultural conflict in its individual programmes such as situation comedies and dramas, and through juxtaposition of high and low cultural vales, themes and forms in its mixed programme schedule. By looking at issues such as intimacy, performance, authenticity and sociability, the thesis argues that television promoted its own status as an increasingly centralised cultural form. It proposes that television established social categories which became embedded and naturalised over time, and this created the potential to define social experience. The thesis therefore concludes that the examination of the expansion of television in the 1950s and 1960s is of importance for understanding the operation of media power today.

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Author's declaration:

Introduction

This thesis is about the expansion of British television in the 1950s and 1960s and its relationship to society and culture. Television as a technology, cultural form and practice had existed in Britain since the 1930s, with a low-definition 'experimental' service being transmitted from BBC Broadcasting House from 1932, and the opening of the BBC's licence fee funded high-definition service from Alexandra Palace in north London on 2 November 1936.[i] Yet the passing of the Television Act of 1954 controversially broke the BBC's monopoly of broadcasting to establish commercial television in Britain. This new commercial service, which came to be known as ITV (Independent Television), was to be funded by advertising revenue and was to be made up of different regional broadcasting companies. A regulatory body, the Independent Television Authority, was quickly set up to issue franchises to the new regional companies, and the first of these started broadcasting in the London area on 22 September 1955. The new commercial service reached the Midlands and north of England in different stages in 1956, parts of Scotland in 1957 and parts of Wales in 1958. Programme companies continued to open until 1962 when the fifteenth regional company opened. From 1955, therefore, British television broadcasting was constituted by two services, the BBC and ITV. In the Television Act of 1963, a third television channel was awarded to the BBC, and BBC2 started transmission on 21 April 1964.[ii] Just as importantly, during the same period, television changed from a minority interest watched by a small percentage of the population to being a cultural activity of national interest. From 1954 to 1964 the number of television licenses held in the United Kingdom, with one license per household, rose from just over three million to almost 13 million, effectively a national audience (Briggs: 1995).

This expansion of television services and of the television audience also coincided with profound social and cultural changes taking place in Britain. Following a period of post-war austerity, characterised by rationing and meagre provisioning, there was a boom in the economy in the 1950s, with full employment, a housebuilding programme, new technologies and the advent of a new consumer culture. Although consumerism

had been evident in British society before this period (Sandbrook: 2005), the 1950s and 1960s were characterised by an economic affluence and social change that set it apart as a 'Golden Age' (Hobsbawm: 1995). Technological innovation and new manufacturing processes also meant that a range of new commodities were available and accessible to a mass public for the first time. They included domestic appliances such as refrigerators and washing machines, and items more associated with leisure such as transistorised radios, electric record players and vinyl records. There were developments in women's and men's fashions, an increase in the number of private cars, and an increase in the number of people taking holidays abroad. These developments lead to improvements in living standards, to new forms of leisure pursuit for a larger public, and the development of new cultural forms such as rock and roll and skiffle. Importantly, these changes marked an apparent cultural shift from a Britain characterised by post-war austerity and consensus to a society marked by consumer culture, social fragmentation and individualism. So profound were the changes from the late 1950s onwards that Britain could be said to have experienced a 'cultural revolution' (Marwick: 1996).

This thesis will therefore explore the complex interrelationship between the expansion of television in this period and this social and cultural change. In particular, it will be driven by three important and interrelated questions. Firstly, what was the impact of the expansion of television on television *itself*? This potentially raises definitional issues as to what television *itself* is. As John Corner (2003: 275) has suggested, television is a 'multifarious' object of study, which is constituted by institutions (organisations), practices (programme-making), programmes (forms, representations and aesthetics), technology and, in a wider sense, its diffuse connections with society and culture ranging from the world of politics to domestic audiences. This thesis will consider all of these aspects to understand how television developed as a *whole*. So it is necessary here to differentiate between television institutions and *the television institution*. One of the contentions of this thesis is that television emerges as an institution in this period, that is, as a complex social and cultural set of practices and relationships which increasingly come to be defined by industrial and professional

practices and its programming. The television *institutions* that form the television *institution* in the 1950s and 1960s are the BBC, ITV and the ITA.

This thesis will examine the connections and similarities between the BBC and ITV television services – both of which came to define the television duopoly until the arrival of Channel 4 in 1982 – as well as their differences. The arrival of commercial television in the mid 1950s was clearly a key moment in the expansion of television. An emphasis on the similarities between BBC and ITV is crucial here because it allows us to understand the workings of television from the late 1950s as a consolidated industrial and cultural form. To examine both television services together is also, in part, to make up for an absent history. As Johnson and Turnock (2005a) have argued, ITV has often been marginalised in British broadcasting histories because of a set of persistent prejudices. This is because ITV has not been popularly or academically associated with either public service values or with the production of quality programming, both of which have been seen to be the domain of the BBC. Part of the problem, Johnson and Turnock conclude (2005a), is that there is an academic disdain for what is perceived to be commercial culture. This disdain is both intellectually and culturally inherited, and it stems in part from academic anxieties about studying 'serious' culture and from Frankfurt School type critiques of popular culture. At the same time, it potentially stems from middle-class distaste for popular 'mass culture'. As a result, Creeber (2006) has argued that when academics have considered ITV they have often done so from the perspective of the impacts it has had on BBC television. Such an approach, by situating changes in television as the dialectical interplay of two competing television services, however, misses some of the fundamental characteristics and complexities of television's organisation, practices, technologies and programming. This thesis will therefore explore what it is that BBC television and ITV have in common, and it will look at the impact that their combined expansion has on television culture in Britain.

The second and third questions here are ones of context. What was the significance or impact of the social and cultural context on the expansion of the television institution

in Britain? And what was the impact of the expansion of television on that social and cultural context? The first of these two questions clearly sets the scene in which the television institution expands in the 1950s and 1960s. As will be explored in chapters one and two, for example, the government influenced the construction and operation of television by acts of parliament and committees of inquiry, and this raises important issues about concepts of national and public service broadcasting. Cultural discourses about television as a communications technology since the 1930s were also to influence the development and deployment of recording technologies in the 1950s and 1960s, and this was to have an impact on television programme forms and aesthetics, as will be explored in chapter three. At the same time, as will be seen in chapter four, demographic change was also to have an impact on developments in television. The post-war baby boom, the expansion of suburbs and development of new towns, slum clearance and the development of new housing are important for thinking about the rise of television as a domestic phenomenon, and for thinking about the subject matter of much of television programming. Of course, the development of consumer culture, which will be looked at more closely in chapters five and six, is also a key constituent of the social and cultural context in which the television institution expands.

Examining the impact of television on the social and cultural context is, however, much more difficult. This is because its 'multifarious' nature and diffused interconnections with other social and cultural activities make it potentially too big and too complex to make macro assessments that are both meaningful and academically sensible. Yet Janet Thumim (2004) has demonstrated that it *is* possible to assess the profound impact that television has on society and culture in her feminist analysis of the development of television culture in the 1950s and 1960s. For Thumim, the multiple, competing and contradictory representations of women on television in this period were watched by a generation of young women who went on to become feminist scholars in the 1970s. This means the ability to *see* representations of women had long-term social, cultural and political impacts. Crucial to Thumim's analysis is John Ellis's theory of 'witness' (2000). For Ellis, the Twentieth Century was the century of 'witness' where, through the media of photography, film and television,

mass audiences could see new places, people, objects and events from afar. These audiences, by becoming witnesses to events then became complicit in them. As Ellis suggests (2000: 9), '"I did not know" and "I did not realize" are no longer open to us as a defence.' It is this seeing, knowing and realising that politically motivated a generation of women in the 1970s. In exploring 'witness' and the representation of women, Thumim (2004: 1) was able to understand and demonstrate how television could not only 'reflect cultural change in the mid-twentieth century but also to produce it.'[iii]

This thesis will be cautious in thinking about how television produces social and cultural change. This is mainly here because social and cultural change in the 1950s and 1960s was already taking place. Nonetheless, television was still to have an impact on those changes, and it is important here to differentiate the promotion of change and the production of change. In looking at the promotion of change this thesis too will recognise the significance of 'witness' (Ellis: 2000). As will be explored, television in the 1950s and 1960s allowed viewers to see new places, people, objects, events and ideas for the first time. To an extent, photography and cinema had already made this possible in the last half of the Nineteenth and first half of the Twentieth centuries respectively. As this thesis will demonstrate, however, television's communication of these phenomena into the home, on a daily basis, was a profoundly novel experience. As television institutions expanded, with the arrival of more services, and with the expansion of the television audience at home, a whole nation of viewers was brought into contact with the outside world. As will be discussed, the novelty of this experience in the 1950s was felt in several ways. Importantly, the acquisition of the television set was often a visible marker of a new found affluence, and its development was a marker of 'modernity', of entering into a 'new Elizabethan age' characterised by 'The Coronation', the jet aircraft and the atom bomb. While the austerity of the post-war period had been brightened by the 'New Look' in women's fashions (Hopkins: 1963), television made a public act of looking in the 1950s a domestic phenomenon. It made the world newly visible to its audience at home. I would suggest, therefore, that while the late 1940s were characterised by the 'New Look', the 1950s might be characterised

by a 'new visibility'. This new visibility is central for understanding the way that television promoted social and cultural change.

This thesis will contend that the expansion of television institutions *promoted* social and cultural change by the development of production practices, technologies and programme forms that made culture increasingly visible in this new way. It is this visibility which promoted consumer culture and class conflict. At the same time, the thesis will show that the phenomenological experience of television itself, as a cultural form with newly emerging practices of production and consumption, promoted, legitimised and embedded new forms of social and cultural activity. Yet there is also a sense in which television did *produce* social and cultural change. By drawing together discussion from across the chapters here, and by thinking about sociological theories of social change and media power, it will be possible to consider the profound impact that the expansion of the television institution has in the 1950s and 1960s. This thesis will conclude that television's expansion *produced* social and cultural change because it established television itself, its institutions, practices, programmes, technologies and socio-cultural relations, as a significant cultural form that had the power to promote change and define social experience. As a result, this will not only tell us about an important moment in the development of television, about a period of profound social and cultural change in Britain, but it will also help us understand the workings of media power today.

Approaching the histories:

The approach of this thesis will be multidisciplinary and this is in recognition of television's 'multifarious' nature (Corner: 2003). As previously indicated, there are five different aspects of television that can be studied: institutions, programme-making practice, programmes and genres, technologies and the socio-cultural position of television (ibid.). Each of these different approaches requires different methodologies and disciplinary paradigms. Television institutions, for example, have often been the domain of institutional or political historians, involving document archives and, when

possible, interviews. The main examples of this are Asa Briggs' five volume histories of the BBC, and the different histories of ITV between 1946 and 1992 by Sendall (1982; 1983) Potter (1989; 1990) and Bonner (with Aston: 1998; 2003). The second approach to looking at television is at the way television programmes are made. Contemporary productions studies can be conducted by a combination of interviews and participant observation, such as Silverstone (1985), but historically would also involve the analysis of archive papers and, again, where possible, by interviews. The third way television can be studied is through programme forms, genre and aesthetics. In recent years there have been a number of studies which have combined an anaylsis of programme making with programme forms and genres. Of the studies which fall within the period under discussion in this book these include James Chapman's analysis of action-adventure series (2002), Susan Sydney-Smith's examination of early police dramas (2002) and Catherine Johnson's analysis of 'telefanstasy' (2005). Programme and genre studies often focus on some aspects of their production or critical reception, but the programmes themselves are subject to textual analysis.[iv] As Corner (2003) suggests, however, one of the problems of conducting this kind of analysis in historical study is often an absence of the very programmes that make, for example, textual analysis possible. One approach to this, which shares much in common with a process of archeology, is an analysis of the discourses surrounding programme form and aesthetics which exist in archived documents and other press and magazine publications from the period. This particular approach has been pioneered in Jason Jacobs' seminal study of early television drama (2000), and has also recently been used in Su Holmes' investigation into cinema programmes in the 1950s (2005). The fourth way to look at television, as Corner suggests, is as a technological form. Corner offers the work of Raymond Williams (1974) and Brian Winston (1998) of ways television has been understood technologically, and these might be said to offer more cultural and media studies insights into understanding television.

The fifth way to look at television is as a socio-cultural phenomenon and this, given its wide-ranging and diffuse connections, has meant it has been studied from a range of perspectives and disciplines. This has meant that television studies has often adopted

and appropriated theories and methodologies from a range of disciplines such as sociology, social anthropology and social psychology. These have proved particularly influential in the study of television audiences, using a range of social survey and ethnographic techniques. These disciplines have also been influential in some key works which have sought to theorize television, most notably in the context of this thesis Roger Silverstone's *Television and Everyday Life* (1994) and Paddy Scannell's *Radio, Television and Modern Life* (1996).

In light of these approaches to understanding television it is important, as Corner suggests (2003), to try and understand the connections which operate between these five different aspects historically. Clearly, as Corner further suggests, studies which focus on a specific, single aspect of television have the benefit of depth and breadth. To negotiate the demands of a multi-disciplinary approach with the advantages of more in-depth and ranging analyses, therefore, this thesis will also be revisionist and theoretical. It will build on existing histories of the period which have explored their subjects in more detail and which have already looked at institutions, programme-making, programmes, technologies and wider social-cultural elements. It will look at other social and cultural histories of the period to better understand the changes that were already taking place in Britain. Crucially, it will draw on sociological theory to understand television's relationship to social and cultural change. It will also supplement this with discussion of programmes and programme forms from the period by way of examples and case studies. This will allow the thesis to develop its theoretical propositions to make strategic links between different areas, themes and developments.

This more theoretical approach is consistent with the idea that historical analysis is an interpretive process that has a complex relationship with facts. As the historian E.H. Carr (1987) has demonstrated, for example, facts are deployed in the service of history rather than constituting that history. This is because the past (as is the here and now) is full of facts and events. The work of history is to decide what constitutes a relevant or meaningful fact. Relevance or meaning is therefore subject to a hierarchy of historical

values (which are subject to change), models of historical thinking (which are subject to change), and the individual historian's thesis. Yet the individual historian's thesis is also a theoretical construct because it narrativises the past and it puts it into a coherent structure. As Keith Jenkins has argued, drawing on the work of critical historiographer Hayden White (1978), 'people in the past *did not actually live stories* either individually... or collectively...', (1995: 20, original emphasis). So the stories that historians tell, Jenkins argues, and the coherence and structure that historians give to the past, are effectively imagined or fictional. Events in the past were not experienced as stories or structures by the people alive at the time. For Jenkins, this means that historians need to be explicit about the interpretive framework which they use to make sense of the past or, in the context of television history, what Corner (2003: 276) has described as 'normative schemes'.

The interpretive framework here is mostly organised through a sociological rereading of historical studies of television in this period. There is a danger, of course, that by drawing on existing accounts that this thesis will potentially reproduce the pre-occupations of scholars who have already studied this period, and this is a necessary evil. The historical turn in the study of television is still also a relatively recent phenomenon, and there are therefore a number of key texts which will recur here. These are, for example, the studies of ITV by Bernard Sendall (1982; 1983). As discussed earlier, there is a dearth of writing on the history of ITV and its programmes compared to the BBC, so Sendall's work is particularly important here. The work of Janet Thumim (2004) is also referred to on a significant basis. This is because it is a recent work which covers much of the same period as this thesis. Although, as will be seen, this thesis, with its wider and more sociological and contextual underpinning, takes a different approach to Thumim's more 'practical feminist approach' (2004: ix). For an understanding of Britain in the period, the thesis also draws significantly on the wide-ranging and multifaceted historical works of Hobsbawm (1995), Marwick (1996) and Sandbrook (2005). Although this thesis will draw on some sociological work and literature from the period, these historians have already brought together a wealth of social and cultural detail to offer rich and vibrant histories. What will invigorate the

historical analysis in this thesis, however, and this is the cornerstone of the interpretive framework deployed here, is the use of key media and sociological theorists. This will include Paddy Scannell (1996) for his phenomenological understanding of broadcasting, Pierre Bourdieu (1984) for his insights into taste and class conflict, Georg Simmel (1971) for his analysis of the pathologies of 'modern' society, Erving Goffman (1990) for his social psychology of everyday interaction, and Nick Couldry (2003a: 2003b) for his compelling analysis of media rituals and power. The significance of these theorists is that they will provide the social and cultural theory by which to better understand the relationship between the expansion of television in Britain and its social and cultural context.

There is a final point here, and this relates to the period of history that this thesis is concerned with. Corner has alerted television historians to the 'problem of periodization', (2003: 277). Grouping together a range of developments into a particular period can help establish relationships and patterns, but it can also place undue stress on certain relationships, or fail to notice developments over a longer term. As Corner suggests (ibid.), 'The most obvious example of this is the treacherousness of decades as a way of classifying historical change'. Yet clearly television goes through significant changes in the 1950s and 1960s, and this is something the historical accounts concur on. A lot of this change happens in a ten-year period between 1954 and 1964. In 1954 the Television Act is passed which legislates for the start-up of commercial television in Britain, the breaking of the BBC's monopoly and the beginning of a period of expansion of personnel, studios, broadcasting hours and programmes. Ten years later, in 1964, the arrival of BBC2 could be said to mark the end of this period of expansion and the consolidation of the television duopoly between the BBC and ITV which lasted until the arrival of Channel 4 in 1982. This kind of periodization was deployed by Janet Thumim (2004), for example, in her feminist analysis of the development of television culture in Britain between 1955 and 1965. For Thumim, this period begins with the opening night of ITV in September 1955 and ends broadly in 1965 as, effectively, the mid 1960s. A similar approach was also adopted in Dominic Sandbrook's recent history of Britain which covered the period

between 1956 and 1963 (2005). Sandbrook's rationale is that this covers the period of Harold Macmillan's Conservative government and the rise of consumer society. The main title of Sandbrook's book, *Never Had It So Good*, is itself drawn from Macmillan's infamous phrase which seemed to sum up the new found affluence apparent in Britain. Yet both Thumim and Sandbrook allude to the leakiness of these periodizations. Thumim refers to some earlier debates about broadcasting and to television for the 1990s and 2000s. Sandbrook, on the other hand sees elements which were seen to characterise the late 1950s and early 1960s in earlier periods, such as youth violence at the end of the Nineteenth Century and consumer culture in the 1920s and 1930s. This thesis will mainly focus on the period between 1954 and 1964: between the passing of the 1954 Television Act and the start of BBC2. However, it too will permit a certain leakiness, with reference to developments in broadcasting in the 1930s and 1940s, as well as programme forms in the later 1960s.

The arrangement of this thesis:

The thesis has been arranged into six chapters. The first examines the developments that took place in the nascent television industry in the 1950s, partly spurred on by the arrival of ITV. It will explore the ways in which industrial and institutional practices emerged and the effect these had on discourses of professionalism, programme production and internal reflexivity about television broadcasting. The second chapter will explore the way television in this period negotiated between regional and national broadcasting. In particular it will look at the regional principle legislated by the Television Act of 1954, and how it operated within an increasingly national structure constituted by the ITV network. It will also go on to look at how discourses of nationalism were circulated in major 'media event' style programming. It will examine issues of consensus and fragmentation, and will go on to argue that the structuring of television via the duopoly and the mixed programme schedule served to offer a model of cultural centrality, but that this model should be treated with a significant degree of caution. It will also look at issues of reflexivity and 'confidence' within the medium and its forms. The third chapter will examine the role of technological development in

the expansion of television broadcasting in the 1950s and 1960s. It will look at the use of film, telerecording and the development of videotape in a range of programming, including advertising and television comedy and drama. It will look at the discourses which had inhibited the deployment of recording technologies in the 1950s and before, and it will go on to suggest that the use of these technologies permitted an increasing range of styles of choices for producers in the 1950s and 1960s. This meant that producers were able to respond to changing pre-occupations and concerns in the period. These first three chapters will emphasise the significance of the expansion of television institutions and the television institution in this period. The second three chapters will begin to emphasise the impact this had on its programme forms, and how programming interesected with the changes taking place in British culture and society.

Chapter four will look at the relationship between television and major social and demographic changes taking place in Britain. It will discuss the nature of these changes, such as the development of new housing in suburbs and new towns, before discussing the way that television sets became increasingly prevalent household items. It will go on to assess the ways in which television depicted some of the concerns and anxieties about social change through television drama. It will end by examining how television negotiated distance from the local to the global, by looking at ways in which the new medium brought the outside world into the home in a range of new programme forms, and the potential cultural consequences of this. Chapter five will examine how television circulated discourses of consumer culture. It will explore advertising as a new form of television programming, and models of social aspiration in programmes such as action adventure series, women's and music programming. It will go on to explore class and 'taste' conflict in sitcoms, and then the kind of cultural judgements of taste and distaste made about programme forms such as quiz and gameshows. Chapter six will explore the ways that the consumption of television itself further promoted consumer culture. It will examine quiz and gameshows and issues of 'celebrity' in the 1950s and 1960s and the way in which some forms of television performance obscured the relationship between production and consumption of television programming. It will explore the way television became a quotidian cultural form for the first time, and

the way its 'dailiness' promoted and naturalised the process of consumption itself. It will go on to examine the way that television had the potential to legitimise and embed new social categories for the first time, categories which may have longer term significance for shaping social experience. The conclusions will draw together the discussion over the thesis as a whole, and will examine the implications of this for thinking about television and social and cultural change, and for thinking about theories of media, culture and society today.

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[i] The low-definition service ran on a 30-line system. The high-definition service, which started in 1936, alternated on a weekly basis between John Logie Baird's 240 line system and Marconi's 405 line system. From February 1937 the BBC television service ran on the Marconi system.

[ii] Both the 1954 and 1963 Acts were consolidated into a single Act of Parliament in 1964.

[iii] Thumim's original emphasis.

[iv] Other programme forms and genres which have received analysis of this kind have included drama, see for example Caughie (2000) and Cooke (2003), and current affairs, see Lindley (2002), Holland (2006) and Goddard, Corner and Richardson (forthcoming).

Chapter 1: Rationalisation

The growth of television in Britain in the 1950s and 1960s can be characterised in four ways. Firstly, there was the extension of television broadcasting to a national audience through a programme of transmitter construction. This was conducted initially by the BBC in the early and mid-1950s, and then complemented by a rival wave of transmitter construction in the second half of the decade with the advent of commercial television. Secondly, though not necessarily contemporaneous or directly commensurate with the extension of the broadcast signal(s), television came of age as a mass medium as more households adopted the new technology. Thirdly, there was an extension of the number of hours of television broadcast each week. From 1936 the BBC had broadcast around 20 hours of television per week, whereas by 1950 the BBC was allowed by the Postmaster General (PMG) to transmit 30-35 hours per week, on average. From September 1955, after negotiation between the PMG and the ITA, broadcasting hours for both ITV and BBC were extended to up to 50 hours a week each (Thumim: 2004). Fourthly, the start up of the new commercially funded companies radically expanded the production base of television, with new studios, personnel and equipment. These new companies, funded by spot advertising revenue and licensed by a publicly appointed regulator, were based around the UK to serve regional communities and to countervail the metropolitan, predominantly London-centric bias of the BBC. With the arrival of BBC2 in 1964, the emergence of a full-blown television industry meant *more* television production and *more* television programmes. This expansion had a profound impact on the range of programmes being made. Significantly, it also both reflected and constituted an important development in the relationship between cultural production, commerce and the state in Britain, and as such it marked an important stepping stone in the larger shifts said to take effect from the 1970s onwards.[i]

In broadcasting, the relationship between cultural production, commerce and the state was evident earlier in the century when the BBC, in its genesis as the British Broadcasting *Company* in 1923, had provided the rationale for the sale and purchase of

radio sets. Radio manufacturers in the early 1920s had realised that no one would buy their sets if there was, in effect, nothing to listen to. There had also been commercial competition to BBC radio in the 1930s from Radio Luxembourg and Radio Normandie which transmitted English language programmes, with adverts, into Britain.[ii] In terms of programme content, from the start, the BBC had also promoted events, stars, performers and performances that were already part of a larger entertainment economy. Furthermore, as with early radio, the BBC (apart from some very early experiments by John Logie Baird) had provided the only television service until the mid 1950s. An existing television service, too, was a rationale for the acquisition of a television set by which to receive sound and images. Nonetheless, by the early 1950s, manufacturers wanted an additional service to promote television sales and rentals further.

The relationship between the state and broadcasting in Britain in the 1950s had also been a long-standing one. Although the BBC had been free from direct editorial and institutional control from the government,[iii] the Corporation had received its charter and finance by government legislation since the late 1920s. The arrival of commercial television did not substantially alter this relationship between the state and broadcasting in the 1950s. ITV, 'Independent' television, was not so independent of government as it at first appears. Although commercially funded, the new programme companies were licensed and regulated by a public body, the Independent Television Authority (ITA), appointed by government and mandated by an act of parliament. The government also had the ability to change legislation to alter the shape of commercial television or even, as was threatened by the Labour Party in the 1950s, to overturn legislation and take ITV off the air. As a result, the legislation of commercial television marked a degree of continuity with principles which had governed the early development of British broadcasting. These principles marked an ongoing commitment to the ethos of public service established by the BBC in the 1920s and 1930s.[iv] As the BBC historian Asa Briggs notes (1995: 4):

> As far as the constitution of the ITA was concerned, the language of the Act of Parliament of 1954 that created the new Authority was borrowed language that

had related previously to the BBC. It obliged the Authority to 'inform' and to 'educate' as well as to 'entertain'.'

Yet what is significant here is that the expansion of television in the 1950s and 1960s consolidated, on an industrial scale, the relationship between culture, commerce and the state. The advent of commercial television, in particular, explicitly contributed to this by placing commercial principles and imperatives within British broadcasting, and by making cultural productivity (programme making and cultural dissemination) an increasingly economic activity. Significantly, though, both BBC television and ITV stood within a triangular framework between state, commerce and culture. Occupying an increasingly strategic position in the articulation and dissemination of cultural forms, the expansion of television broadcasting in this period both required and promoted the expansion of bureaucratic and capitalist *rationality*. In the 1950s and 1960s this process in broadcasting marked a crucial step towards postmodernity where the expansion of capitalist markets was accompanied by an intertwining of state control, bureaucracy and industrial process in which culture became increasingly commoditised (Jameson: 1991).

It is this rationalisation and its relationship with British television which is the focus of this chapter. In exploring the expansion of television, emphasis will be placed less here on the difference between the two existing television channels, BBC and ITV (and then BBC2), and more on the commonality the two broadcasters shared. It will show that rationality was promoted both *in* television and *through* television. Firstly, rationalisation *in* television brought about an increasingly streamlined, efficient and cost-effective mode of production. With the expansion of broadcasting, it led to both *professionalisation* and *industrialisation* of television broadcasting, and this had impacts on both production culture and the production of culture. As will become clear, the expansion of television also involved a rationalisation of culture *through* television, a sense of centralised cultural provision, and this will be the subject of chapter two. To summarise the direction I will take over these two chapters, the expansion of the television institution in the 1950s and 1960s meant that the production

of television programmes became increasingly complex and industrialised, and this lead to an increasing diversity of broadcast outputs and genres. As a result, the evolving technological medium, organised along bureaucratised and industrial lines to service a mass audience, increasingly made visible disparate aspects of British society and culture and brought them together into a unified cultural form – characterised especially by the mixed programme schedule.

The political economy of a new television service:

According to John Ellis, the historical development of television globally has been marked by three distinct eras (2000). The first was the 'era of scarcity', which lasted mostly until the 1970s and early 1980s, in which a very few channels only broadcast for part of the day. This is compared to the 'era of availability' in which television channels 'jostled' with each other for audience attention, and the 'era of plenty' in which the broadcasting industry predicts the accessibility of television via new technologies with 'interactive TV' and 'television on demand' (2000: 39). British broadcasting in the period in question clearly falls within Ellis' 'era of scarcity'. From 1936 until 1955, with a break due to the war between 1939 and 1946, the BBC held the monopoly of high definition television broadcasting in Britain.[vi] At the beginning of the 1950s, however, the BBC did not necessarily have a monopoly of television *production*.

Prior to the advent of the new programme companies which constituted the new commercial television service, independent film production for television (as opposed to in-house production for the BBC) was already evident in the early 1950s. There had, for example, been film production for television by ABDC, a company related to High Definition Films at a studio in Highbury, north London, since 1952. ABDC later became incorporated into Associated-Television, one of the new television licensees based in the London area, and was in a position to show filmed programmes to members of the Independent Television Association as early as 16 September 1954 (Sendall: 1982). This was only a matter of weeks after the 1954 Television Act of

parliament had received Royal Assent to establish the new television channel, and just over a year before the actual launch. At the same time, as Susan Sydney-Smith has noted (2002), another film company, Trinity Productions, was making episodes of *Fabian of the Yard* (1954-57) for broadcast on the BBC and for sale abroad from 1954 onwards.

Nonetheless, television broadcasting in Britain up until 22 September 1955 was effectively constituted by a single channel operated by the BBC from London. The acrimonious and bitter debates that surrounded the emergence of the second channel have been usefully described and summarised elsewhere,[vii] but it is worth revisiting some key points. What becomes evident is the strong connection which emerges between state, commerce and broadcasting from the initial debates through to the set up of the new channel.

The issue of competition in broadcasting was not entirely new, which will be explored further below, but the impetus for competition in television in the 1950s arose from a particular conjunction of factors. As Andrew Crisell argues in his book *An Introductory History of British Broadcasting* (1997), there were three main reasons why competition became such a burning issue. Firstly he argues that the debate surfaced because of deficiencies in the television service at the BBC. At the beginning of the 1950s there was suspicion in the BBC hierarchy about the value of television, and more importance was attached to radio within the Corporation. This led to some dissatisfaction amongst staff in the BBC television service, and a leading advocate for a new commercial service was an ex BBC executive, Norman Collins. Secondly, Crisell argues that there had been a change in the socio-economic climate, a shift towards democractisation, with a backlash against what Briggs (1995) describes as the sense of managed information and 'bureaucratic paternalism' which had characterised the BBC during the Second World War. This apparent backlash, however, might not have been so widely felt or expressed. This was because the public was largely absent from the debates surrounding the new channel (Curran and Seaton: 1997; Sendall: 1982). When the public was consulted its view of commercial television was not so

favourable. In a Gallup poll held in June 1953, only 36 per cent agreed with the idea of a commercial channel competing against the BBC (Gallup: 1976). The reaction against the BBC may therefore have been more prevalent amongst particular interested parties in positions of authority or influence. This leads to Crisell's third reason, 'perhaps the most powerful' challenge to the monopoly, which was economic (1997: 77).

After years of what has been known as 'post-war austerity', Britain in the early 1950s was on the verge of economic prosperity. The end of austerity was most visibly signalled by the end of rationing in 1954, but other economic indicators such a rising incomes gave advance warning that the situation was improving.[viii] For this reason it is important to add here a qualification to Ellis' characterisation of the early period of television as the 'era of scarcity'. This is because this era does not necessary coincide with a period of economic scarcity. In this sense, during the 1950s, even though there were effectively only two television channels (with the caveat that ITV was constituted by a number of programme companies), Britain experienced a major economic upturn. It was in July 1957 that the Conservative Prime Minister Harold Macmillan publicly declared that 'most of our people have never had it so good'. This does not mean to say that there is no correlative effect between television and the economy. It was around the same time that Roy Thompson, Chairman of Scottish Television (STV) was to announce that having a television station was like having a 'licence to print money' (Sendall: 1982).

As Crisell argues, the growth of the economy resulted in the growth in production of commodity items which resulted in a corresponding demand for advertising space in newspapers and magazines. In 1954, for example, there was three-month waiting list for advertising space in *Vogue* magazine (Crisell: 1997).[ix] Advertisers therefore saw potential in the relatively new medium of television. Indeed, as Sendall argues, a number of individuals from some of the larger advertising agencies were 'crucial' to the final success of the campaign for commercial television (1982:18). That said, the battle lines drawn between those in favour and those against the breaking of the BBC's monopoly were far from clear. As Sendall (1982:18) further argues, some advertisers

were hostile to these new developments, and the Institute of Incorporated Practitioners in Advertising 'adopted a policy of more or less benevolent neutrality' with regards to competition because it had previously campaigned for advertising on the BBC. The possibility of the appearance of advertising on the BBC in the 1950s was not as unlikely as it might now seem looking back. In debates surrounding the future of broadcasting, the BBC Director General Sir Ian Jacob submitted a report to the BBC Governors early in the decade outlining 'Possible Broadcasting Systems' (Sendall: 1982). Out of four plans discussed, three involved revenue from advertising, and one even included advertisements being included by the BBC.

Significantly, those driving through legislation in Parliament for a competitive television service were drawn from the backbenches of the Conservative Party who had been elected to power with the slimmest of majorities in 1951. These backbenchers were comprised of a handful of individuals, coming from the world of free-enterprise and competition, and a semi-official association known as the 'One Nation Group' who were opposed to any form of monopoly, and not just that of broadcasting (Sendall: 1982). As H.H. Wilson pointed out in his book *Pressure Group: The Campaign for Commercial Television* (1961), the government's majority of sixteen may have provided the small but cohesive band of backbench 'libertarians' with a disproportionate amount of influence over the Government. Negotiations took place in the back rooms of government between Lord Woolton, the Tory party Chairman, and the 'One Nation Group' to focus on breaking the BBC's monopoly in television (Sendall:1982). As Sendall argues, the Party leadership saw television as being less important than radio, and had also felt that it had been in radio that BBC had made its reputation. What is clear is that a deal was done allowing the Tory agitators to have commercial television as long as they left radio alone.[x] Such a move may been seen as a matter of political expediency and would not necessarily have conflicted directly with views held at the BBC's headquarters in Broadcasting House where many in senior positions were still suspicious of the relatively new medium of television.

Of importance here, as Curran and Seaton suggest (1997), is that the campaign for commercial television was supported by powerful entertainment industries, including Pye Radio, West End theatre management, as well as some advertising agencies. Inevitably, the new commercial television service proved highly lucrative to its financial backers. In *Pressure Group*, Wilson went on to argue that the campaign for commercial television in Parliament constituted, more or less, a capitalist conspiracy. These claims were followed by those of Clive Jenkins, who listed the company interests of the television franchise holders in his book *Power Behind The Screen* (1961). The official ITV historian Bernard Sendall denied such claims, suggesting (perhaps in a somewhat woolly manner) that the list of influential political figures who supported the campaign for commercial television should prove that it was not motivated by profit." The Lord Chancellor, in response to such claims in 1962, also denied that the campaign for commercial competition was motivated by financial gain (Sendall: 1982). It is not the purpose here to prove or reject such claims, but what is evident is that commercial enterprises *did* have much to gain from backing the new television channel. Such enterprises, within a capitalist economy, are rarely run for altruistic reasons. The point here, simply, is that with the Television Act of 1954 and the establishment of the new commercial television service, big business had a significant investment in cultural production in a major way.

Nonetheless, the new television channel was subject to strict controls. Marking a degree of continuity between the BBC and the new channel, and being under a regulatory framework legislated by government, the new channel was still subject to a level of state control. Not least, it was still in the government's gift to repeal the Act. In fear of the potentially degrading excesses of commercialism, the Independent Television Authority was established to provide a regulatory framework for the new competing programme companies. What is important is that the new channel still had to conform to a 'public service' remit in much the same way as the BBC, with a duty to educate and to inform as well as to entertain. In this way ITV had to provide a news service, as well as providing religious programmes, be closed for the same periods, for example the 'toddler's truce', and conform to specific rules about Sunday

broadcasting. Furthermore, as a consequence of the Beveridge Report (published in 1951), which had criticised the metropolitan bias of the BBC, the new channel was to be comprised of programme companies representing regional interests. These regional services will be discussed in the next chapter and, as will be seen, a certain metropolitan bias continued to prevail.

There was also another way in which the new television channel *could* have had stronger links with government. Indeed, as Sendall (1982) has argued, had not misjudgement on the part of the programme companies interfered with negotiations, the ITA could have set a precedent for the commercial service to be partly funded by licence fee. In the initial Act of Parliament, the ITA was to appoint commercial companies to make programmes – this was a function separate to the regulatory work of the ITA. However, the Postmaster General (PMG) promised that a sum of £750,000 should be made available to the ITA from the television licence fee in the event that it felt programmes should be 'made up' to maintain a proper balance of programmes. This balance was to ensure that public service, minority and 'high brow' programming that failed to attract advertising revenue should be produced as well as popular and commercially successful programmes. This money was to be especially important should the regional companies find themselves in financial difficulties. As it turned out, the PMG was far from forthcoming in providing this money as the government did not want to be seen to be giving money away to a commercial venture in the wake of the Suez Crisis in 1956. This was a political fiasco caused when the British and French governments sent troops to seize the Suez Canal after it had been nationalised by Egypt. This produced an international outcry, however, and the British and French governments were forced to back down. Not only was the military adventure a diplomatic blunder, but it was financially costly. As a result, the British government felt the need to be seen, at least, to be tightening its belt. Nonetheless, after much wrangling between the ITA and the government, the PMG agreed in November 1956 to allocate £100,000 to the authority for the financial year 1957/58. The payment was to be made to the ITA as (PMG statement cf Sendall: 1982: 177), 'a purely temporary device… for the purpose of procuring the inclusion in the programmes of items which

in its opinion are necessary for improving the balance of the subject matter of the programmes'. The types of programming the ITA had in mind at that time were religious services, news and related programming, educational and minority programmes. Yet the statement was made in government at a moment when the Chairman of the ITA was abroad, and in his absence the four biggest programme companies (the 'Big Four') issued a joint statement suggesting, politely if unreasonably, that that PMG could keep his insulting sum of money. With such a public rebuff the offer of money was withdrawn. Unfortunately, the affair had been completely mishandled because the money had been offered to the ITA and not the programme companies.[xii] Bernard Sendall concedes that the PMG had probably been right to prevaricate over the money in the first instance as the larger programme companies were soon posting large profits, and were therefore well able to afford to maintain balance within the television schedules. But he goes on to argue that the larger programme companies had behaved inappropriately and exceeded their authority because the loss of money potentially disadvantaged the smaller ITV companies who had been tied into unequal networking arrangements (which I will discuss further in the next chapter). A short while after this incident, the Managing Director of Television Wales and West (TWW) wrote to the ITA lamenting that some of this money would have been useful to help pay for Welsh language programming (Sendall: 1982). As will be seen in chapter two, another Welsh programme company had difficulty in meeting its original commitments to Welsh language programming and went out of business. In any event, what was lost to the ITA was not so much the small amount of money involved but the principle that commercial television could claim a proportion of the BBC's licence fee money in the future.

Television and competition

It has often been popularly suggested that the arrival of competition in the form of ITV shook up BBC television in the 1950s. Yet this is to misunderstand long-term developments in British broadcasting more generally, and television in particular. In the first instance, as previously suggested, there *was* already competition in British

broadcasting in the 1950s. This was between the three BBC radio services (The Light Programme, The Home Service and the Third Programme), the commercial Radio Luxembourg being transmitted from abroad, and BBC television itself. Secondly, part of the BBC's philosophy, as evidenced by the three radio services, was based on choice. As the Director General, Sir Ian Jacob, wrote in *The Listener* in 1954:

> A public-service broadcasting service must set as its aim the best available in every field... It means that in covering the whole range of broadcasting the opportunity should be given to each individual to choose freely between the best of one kind of programme with which he is familiar and the best of another kind which may be less familiar.[xiii]

Indeed, television in the 1950s could have extended to a second BBC television service rather than a commercial competitor. In the early 1950s, according to Jacob's article, the BBC was very keen to expand and develop, but it was under intense strain through a lack of resources, with Government keeping a firm control of capital expenditure, which inhibited the development of the Corporation. Certainly one of the biggest challenges facing the BBC early in that decade was the extension of the service to a national audience through a wave of expensive transmitter construction not sufficiently funded by the limited number of television licenses then held. The initial capital investment had to be spent before audience members invested in television sets and licences. Yet the ambition to expand was still there, and it was publicly suggested as early as 1955 that the BBC was intending to run a second television service (Baily: 1955). So the BBC was developing the television service, according to Jacob, but was inhibited by a lack of resources during the period.

The third point to make here is that when ITV did arrive in 1955, it did not look that different from the BBC. Grace Wyndham Goldie (1977) has observed that the new television service was constituted in the mirror image of the BBC, set up by statute and operated, like the BBC, via licence from the Postmaster General. It was regulated by a public body, and the members of this body, who came to be known as 'Members of the

Authority', effectively had a similar function as the governors of the BBC. The Authority members, like the BBC's governors were appointed from the same pool of the 'great and the good'. Indeed the two men at the top of the ITA had been steeped in public service and arts cultures. The first Director General of the ITA was Sir Robert Frazer who had been Director General of the Central Office of Information. The first Chairman was Sir Kenneth Clark, who had been Chairman of the Arts Council, and prior to that Director of the National Gallery (Sendall: 1982). In organisational terms the BBC and ITV separated out editorial control from their main funding sources. The BBC received a licence fee and the ITV companies received funding from the sale of spot advertisements, but in both cases the role of day-to-day programme-making was conducted by specific production teams separated from the business of administration and management.[xii] As will be seen, many of the people who worked at the ITV companies had originated from the BBC anyway, and took with them BBC ideas and methods for doing things.

One of the big debates at the time concerned the competition for audiences between BBC television and ITV. A popular and recurring view is that ITV 'stole' the BBC's audience. The durability of this view stems partly from the fact that ITV programme companies were constantly shouting about their apparent successes from the rooftops, no doubt in a bid to inspire confidence amongst advertisers. The hyperbole of ITV claims was, however, transparent when viewed from the ground. Writing in *Sight and Sound* in the spring of 1956, the critic David Robinson wrote:

> After the publication of the ITA's first Annual report began the battle of the statistics, which eventually destroyed all faith in figures, and culminated in the publication by ARTV [Associated-Rediffusion Television] of a triumphant half-page advertisement in The Times proclaiming, as it appeared, the utter rejection of the BBC's claims upon any audience.[xv]

Warming to the theme, Robinson went on to add, 'In the opinion of some statisticians who have practical concern with the measurement of television audiences, an

unqualified acceptance of all the figures Sir Robert [Frazer] quotes is not recommended.' What emerges however is a discrepancy in the way in which the figures were calculated. The restricted number of people who could receive ITV was far outstripped by those who watched BBC. Right up until the early 1960s, the BBC had the majority audience, yet the figures published were based on those who *could* receive ITV.[xvi] This might suggest that where audiences had a choice, they preferred the new service. This is complicated by two related factors, however. To be able to receive the new service viewers had to either purchase a new television set or modify their existing aerial. People who had therefore gone to the effort or expense of accessing the new channel may therefore have been more predisposed to watching it. The corollary to this, those who did not go to the effort of making modifications or purchasing new sets may have been less interested in ITV. The moment when the BBC were credited as maintaining a 50 per cent audience with ITV in 1962 was exactly the moment that ITV had national reach. This is further complicated by the continuing growth of television ownership, and another supposition is that the popular appeal of ITV drove up the number of people purchasing or renting television sets for the first time. The economist Chris Hand (2003a: 20) has asserted that in the 1950s, 'It would not be correct to attribute all of the increase in the level of television ownership to the appeal of the new commercial television channels.' Hand argues that the introduction of a second channel would have meant, effectively, a price cut for consumers who were buying the new ('multi-channel') television sets: they would be receiving two channels for the price of one. The significance of this is that consumers were adopting a new cultural experience in general, television, rather than this necessarily being due to the supposed appeal of ITV in particular.

What also seems evident, in the early days at least, is that both critics and audiences alike had some difficulty in differentiating between the two channels. Writing in *The Listener* on 6 October 1955 (p569), the drama critic Philip Hope-Wallace wrote optimistically:

So the *TV Times* and *Radio Times* are spread out, red and blue pencils are sharpened, and presently ticks and whorls and crosses disfigure those fair pages. Kierkegaard with his 'either or' could not be more tormented.

Three weeks later, in *The Listener*, 27 October (p717), however, he was writing:

> The best parlour game today is trying to decide which of two almost exactly similar programmes you wish to watch. Hesitate long enough and with luck you may miss them both.

As for the audiences, in a Gallup poll from October 1955, an unsurprising 66 per cent did not know whether ITV programming was better than the BBC. What is not clear is whether this 66 per cent had actually seen ITV or not.[xvii] Of the rest, 11 per cent said that ITV was better, 11 per cent said that BBC was better, and a further 12 per cent saw no difference at all. In a Gallup poll from December 1957, of preferences for ITV or the BBC, 29 per cent did see ITV as better compared to 19 percent who said that the BBC was better. Meanwhile 20 per cent said they saw no difference and a further 32 per cent did not know. Of those who did have an opinion, 49 per cent clearly did not see ITV as the better channel. This is also confirmed by a question in the same poll asking respondents what the name of their favourite television programme was. Only one ITV show, *Sunday Night at the London Palladium* appeared in the top five. The other programmes, all BBC, were *Panorama*, *What's My Line?*, *This is Your Life* and *Hancock's Half Hour*. It is commonly held that ITV 'stole' the BBC's audience through its variety and light entertainment shows. This might be confirmed to a certain extent by a poll which asked respondents which programme types they thought ITV or the BBC did better. For variety, 41 per cent felt that ITV did better compared to 8 per cent for the BBC. This might seem conclusive, but the majority of respondents, 51 per cent, stated that there was no difference. As another example, it has often been suggested that ITN popularised and democratised news provision. Yet the same poll has 31 per cent claiming that they thought BBC news better compared to 15 per cent in favour of ITN. Again, however, the majority, 54 per cent, saw no difference. These

figures raise questions about the validity of claims that the 'mass' audience preferred ITV. What is also clear is that there was a large audience who saw no tangible distinction, or at least saw no distinction in terms of preference, between BBC and ITV in the early days. Yet even Bernard Sendall, the first official ITV historian saw little difference in the programming between the two services, suggesting (1982: 123):

> ...the general ITV programmes were not complete innovations; with the possible exceptions of *Sunday Night at the London Palladium* and the 'giveaway' shows, they might have been made, albeit in a different style, by the BBC.

This seeming lack of differentiation between the two channels is important for understanding the expansion of television in the 1950s and 1960s. The commercial and BBC television services constituted a 'duopoly' with a unity and commonality which transcended any perceived differences between them. As Bernard Sendall also concedes, in institutional terms, the competition between BBC and ITV television became increasingly subordinated to a 'planned co-existence' (1982: 93). Significantly, the expansion of this duopolistic broadcasting system had an impact on the culture of production, as will be discussed below, by making it internally competitive, self-reflexive, professional and industrial.

Expansion, industrialisation and professionalism:

Probably the biggest change to occur within television in the 1950s and 1960s was the enormous rate of expansion. Within the BBC, this expansion was in many respects under way at the beginning of the 1950s. In the 1940s the shortage of studio space was acute, and while the BBC moved into film studios at Lime Grove in 1950, plans were afoot in 1949 for a completely new, purpose-built television studio at White City in west London to be opened in the late 1950s. There was also an increase in the number of personnel at the BBC. In 1956, for example, the BBC had around 880 staff working exclusively in television, but by 1964 it had 9,640 – including some technical and ancillary staff (BBC Handbooks 1955-64). The arrival of commercial television also

significantly expanded the numbers of personnel working in television. In doing so, it also helped consolidate hierarchical structures while at the same time increasing fluidity of movement within the industry.

In the first instance, the setting up of the new service, comprised of a number of regional licensees, was to provide a range of staffing and technical problems.[xviii] The Television Act which heralded the launch of the new commercial service received Royal Assent on 30 July 1954, and only a matter of days later, on 4 August, the ITA held its first meeting in London. The ITA envisaged a federal structure to fulfil the requirements of the Act, and on 24 August advertised the first round of licences for three areas, London, the Midlands and the North of England, with franchises split between weekday and weekends to accommodate four companies. The ITA received 27 applications and announced its decision on 26 October 1954. The London weekday contract was awarded to a company which came to be known as Associated-Rediffusion (A-R). The London weekend and Midlands weekday contract to the Associated Broadcasting Development company, which came to be known as Associated Television, and the North of England weekday contract was offered to Granada. The Midlands and North of England weekend contracts were later offered to the company that operated as ABC Television. These four companies came to be known as the 'Big Four'.

Independent Television formally began transmission in the London area on 22 September 1955, and this meant that the London franchise holder, Associated-Rediffusion, had less than a year to start a programme company from scratch. This meant moving into a building on Kingsway in the centre of London, recently vacated by the Air Ministry, which became 'Television House', with newly equipped offices and studios, and further studios at Wembley and other London locations. Over 1,000 staff were recruited to Associated-Rediffusion in this period, with many of them having to endure the dust and rubble of the frantic building work going on around them. Associated Television (ATV), being formed out of the Associated Broadcasting Development Company and the Incorporated Television Programme Company, already

had access to film production studios space in Highbury, north London. It also had access to a number of theatre spaces including the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, The London Coliseum, the London Hippodrome and the London Palladium. By September 1955 the company had a television control centre in Central London and its own theatre in Wood Green, north London. Significantly, ATV also had two outside broadcast (OB) units which were able to transmit the first *Sunday Night at the London Palladium*, with the popular comedian Tommy Trinder and singer Gracie Fields, during its opening weekend on 25 September. With administration, production and engineering, it is estimated that ATV recruited around 200 staff for its weekend London operation.

Due to the engineering challenge of building new transmitters across the country, the non-London contracts had a slightly longer period in which to organise themselves. The Midlands service began on 17 February 1956, and a crude partnership was formed between ATV, who owned the weekday franchise and ABC who were to operate at weekends. Between them they formed a joint company, Alpha Television, to set up joint studios in a Nineteenth Century theatre which had been converted into a cinema. The partnership between the two companies was never an easy alliance as they were both in competition for advertising revenue. Furthermore, as Sendall (1982) has noted, both companies had interests elsewhere (ATV in London and ABC in Manchester), and as they used the Alpha Television studio as a kind of temporary half-way house to stage production when required, neither company fully settled in the Midlands region. This was only finally resolved in 1968 when ATV lost its London contract and became the seven-day-a-week franchise holder in the Midlands. In the north of England, the technical difficulties of transmitting a television signal across the high ground of the Pennines meant that commercial television reached the region in two separate stages. Granada television finally began broadcasting to Lancashire on 3 May 1956 and to Yorkshire on 3 November of the same year. Preparation for transmission included the construction of a purpose built television studio, including workshops and offices, in Manchester. The Granada operation also included two 'Travelling Eye' units, which were specially designed 'studios on wheels, capable of being serviced by mobile power

generators and with sound and vision links direct to the transmitter' (Sendall: 1982: 122).

The roll out of ITV companies continued over several years. These included Scottish Television which opened on 31 August 1957, Television Wales and West on 14 January 1958 (for south Wales and the west of England), Southern television in the south on 30 August 1958 and Tyne-Tees in the north-east of England on 15 January 1959. Further stations opened with Anglia Television for the east of England on 27 October 1959 and Ulster television on 31 October 1959. The full service was not complete until 14 September 1962 when Wales (West and North) went on air. By this time, there were fifteen programme contractors in operation for fourteen franchise areas.[xix] This expansion in programme companies was also complemented by the Independent Television News company (ITN) which had started up in 1955 to provide an independent news bulletin service nationally across the commercial network.

The expansion of broadcasting in commercial television was also complemented by the launch of BBC2 on 20 April 1964. The opening night of BBC2 was an inauspicious beginning. A fire at Battersea Power Station in south west London caused a major blackout across the capital, affecting transport, lighting, and the first night of the new service. A raft of programmes to be broadcast from Lime Grove was replaced instead with a makeshift service, with a man providing intermittent news updates from behind a desk at the aging television studios at Alexandra Palace. The following night the BBC2 service began properly with a candle being blown out and the studio lights coming on.

The setting up of BBC2 marked an uneasy conjunction of broadcasting policy, political debate, technological change and the rapid expansion of the television industry. For many years the BBC had been considering a distinct and separate second television service. Indeed, the idea of 'healthy competition' between BBC broadcasting services had been openly discussed in BBC radio during World War Two. Following the end of the war BBC radio was divided into three services, the Light Programme, the Home

Service and the Third Programme, with the Reithian mission to 'inform, educate and entertain' broadly spread across services aimed at low-brow, middle-brow and high-brow tastes respectively. As we have seen, in the early 1950s consideration was already being given at high levels in BBC management for expansion of the television service, although at that stage the immediate concern was the expensive wave of transmitter construction to extend television broadcasting nationally. Despite these financial constraints, it was already being admitted publicly by the BBC that they were interested in opening a second television service to extend the range of programming to appeal to more educational and 'minority' interests. Following the breaking of the BBC's monopoly of television in 1955 and the expansion of the ITV network, the government convened a committee of inquiry under Sir Harry Pilkington in 1960 to review the new commercial service and report on the future of British broadcasting. The report of the Pilkington Committee, published in 1962, was highly critical of the ITV companies for a lack of adequate 'balance' in programming. The Committee recommended that there should be an entire overhaul of the commercial system and that the ITA should take control of programme planning and sale of advertising. It claimed that the ITV companies were intransigent to the power and effects of broadcasting, and ruled that a future television service should be awarded to, what they deemed to be, the more publicly responsible and quality conscious BBC. It also considered technological developments taking place within European broadcasting and ruled that British television should move from the 405 line VHF system to the higher-definition 625 UHF system. The proposed overhaul of ITV was rejected, but the government did award the new television service to the BBC on the 625 line system, and this was legislated in the Television Act of 1963. The award of the new service to the BBC seemed to validate a rigorously public service mission to provide an extended range of educational and minority programming. However the new 625 line system, which BBC1 and ITV would later have to adapt to, imposed programming restraints on BBC2. This was because viewers had to buy new television sets or modify their existing sets to be able to receive the new UHF service, and there might be little incentive to do this for solely educational or minority programming. To attract viewers to switch over to the new system, and to appease the demands of television set

manufacturers and retailers, the new television service had to appeal to a much broader audience.

Yet the radical expansion of the television broadcasting infrastructure from its small beginnings at the BBC was perhaps never quite as big as the intense period around 1955 and 1956 with the start-up of the first three franchise regions. The start-up of these big companies in the mid-1950s required new personnel, and one ready source of trained and experienced television practitioners was, of course, the BBC. With such a short period of time to start up the new television companies in London, Associated-Rediffusion and Associated Television lured BBC staff away with lucrative new contracts. This was jokingly alluded to by the ITA's Chairman, Sir Kenneth Clark, in his speech at the inaugural ceremony of ITV at the Guildhall in London, transmitted live on the opening night on 22 September 1955. Commending the hard work of the personnel behind the launch of the new service, he said, to laughter, 'the programme companies have discovered and equipped their studios, collected – or should I say *kidnapped* – their staff'. So large was the exodus from the BBC to the ITV programme companies that Sir George Barnes, Director of Television Broadcasting at the BBC estimated in 1956 that during a sixth month period he had lost a quarter of his staff to ITV (Briggs: 1982). A large proportion of these were technicians. As the respected documentary film-maker Harry Watt at Granada was to observe at the time, in the Daily Express on 8 March 1955, 'I have to get hold of men who are with the BBC. They have the monopoly of technicians,' (cf Briggs: 1982: 18). According to Tom Burns (1977), who conducted extensive interviews with BBC staff members in the 1960s and 1970s, the Corporation certainly did not do itself any favours by placing its own staff on short-term contracts in the run up to the launch of ITV. As Sir George Barnes at the BBC concluded, however, it was effectively the development of BBC training schemes, which trained up existing and replacement personnel, which helped Corporation sustain the haemorrhage of staff. The BBC was later to complain to the Pilkington Committee that ITV did not institute enough training schemes, leaving the senior broadcaster to bear the brunt of most training needs for the industry (Briggs: 1995).

What is evident is that the emergence of the new commercial service brought an increasing degree of career mobility and fluidity within television. Television practitioners had an expanded range of employment opportunities. Yet that mobility was still regulated. This was a direct result of the expansion of television broadcasting which entailed an increasing degree of bureaucratic organisation, hierarchical structuring and an increasingly specialised division of labour. This was profoundly implicated with a shift within the television 'institution' which increasingly saw itself as an industry, and which placed more and more emphasis on professionalism. This was partly reflected by the expanded involvement of a range of trade unions in television during the very early days of ITV, who represented the interests of a range of staff with particular work experience and specialised skills.

Up until 1956, the interests of personnel at the BBC had been represented by the BBC Staff Association. This was the only union recognised by the BBC for workers in radio and television, but it was a union that lacked any significant bite. In 1949 only 46% of the BBC's staff belonged to it (Briggs: 1979), it had not applied for affiliation to the Trades Union Congress (TUC), and was not held to be particularly popular with any of the other unions. Part of the reason for this was that it was not particularly militant. In 1950, the Association's General Secretary, Leslie Littlewood wrote in the Association's own bulletin (cf Sendall: 1982: 111), 'Staff of the Corporation, whether or not they are members of this Association, regard the broadcasting service as one which, above all, should be free from interruption by disputes.' As a result, the Staff Association was treated with some suspicion by the other unions for being 'dominated by establishment orientated middle class individuals who had no notion of 'real' unionism', (Seglow: 1978: 30). With the advent of commercial television, the Association, as the only de facto union representing radio and television workers, sought to make some headway with the new companies and changed its name to the Association of Broadcasting Staff in 1956. Although the Association had some initial success in recruiting members from the new companies, it ultimately lost out to the Association of Cinematograph and Allied Technicians (ACT) whose members were

engaged in film work for the new programme companies. The power of ACT was demonstrated as early as April 1955, even before the official launch of ITV, in a dispute with Associated-Rediffusion over the recording of a television play at the Shepperton film studios. A-R fell foul of ACT by failing to recognise the rights of the union to represent its members directly in the negotiation of employment terms and conditions. ACT promptly advised its members not to work on the production, and A-R quickly acquiesced, also promising to advise the other programme contractors to enter into negotiations directly with ACT. Shortly afterwards the union became the Association of Cinematograph Television and Allied Technicians (ACTT), to reflect its increasing interests in television. The role-call of other unions involved in negotiating with the commercial companies demonstrates the diverse range of professions and trades, often from film and theatre, increasingly finding employment within television. In the 1950s these included Equity, the National Association of Theatrical and Kine Employees. Film Artistes Association, Electrical Trades Union, Concert Artistes association and the Musicians Union.

Yet the BBC had also been undergoing a period of job specialisation during the 1950s. This was evident. for example, in the BBC's drama department, and this had led to new functions and job titles. One development was the inauguration of a Script Unit and a play library in 1949. This was to help organise the various scripts the BBC had at its disposal and to build up a raft of new works especially designed for television rather than for stage or film. This in turn helped evolve a more organised planning and scheduling policy, rather than the last-minute nature of drama programming up until that point (Jacobs: 2000). This was also complemented two years later when Nigel Kneale and Philip Mackie were hired as the BBC drama's first television staff writers. At the same time there were other changes. The BBC's move to the Lime Grove Studios in 1950, bought from the Rank film company, brought about a rationalisation of production and planning. It signalled a strict division of labour with new ancillary departments including make-up, costume and telerecording (Jacobs: 2000). This included a rationalisation of administrative and communications systems with colour coded paperwork for departmental requests. So white forms were available for make

up and costuming, orange for captions and pink for film (Jacobs: 2000). The increasingly routine nature of programme production, evolving as it was into a more industrialised mode of production, also required staff who were experienced and competent in specific areas. This was reflected in the establishment of a proper training arm at the BBC in 1951. In BBC drama increasing specialisation also involved, at a relatively early stage, the separation of the function between the director and producer. Up until the early 1950s, the drama producer was effectively assigned to manage and 'put on' a drama production, but during this decade the technical aspects came to be increasingly designated to a 'director'. This partly emerged, as Jason Jacobs has noted, out of nurturing less experienced staff in programme production. Citing an article by Head of BBC Television Drama in the 1950s, Michael Barry, from the *Radio Times*, Jacobs (2000: 111) notes:

> The distinction between drama 'producer' and 'director' was also established during the 1950s, as part of a training process where the 'director is responsible for the casting, rehearsal and transmission of the piece under the overall responsibility of the producer whose hand, probably more experienced in television practice, may be seen helping in the background'.

The shift towards more serialisation taking place at the BBC in the early 1950s, which will be explored further, was also responsible for bringing about a separation in the role of producer and director (Sydney-Smith: 2002). The development of 'striking it weekly' meant that the producer had overall responsibility for the long run of script and budget, but individual directors would be responsible for particular editions or episodes (ibid.).[xx] Another new function which emerged out of the rationalisation of television drama in the 1950s was the role of story editor. This was first pioneered under Sidney Newman at ITV on ABC's *Armchair Theatre* strand (ABC 1956-69; Thames Television 1970-74). Comprised of single plays, this was not serialisation in the sense of a long running format with same characters, settings and casts. Yet it did involve the production of weekly live broadcast outputs using the same crews and production personnel. One of the story editors which Newman appointed was Irene

Shubik who has written about the intimacy and camaraderie of working under such conditions: 'We always worked with the same excellent camera crew. Everyone concerned with the productions on a week-to-week basis knew the talents and temperaments of everyone else,' (2000: 26). When Newman was poached by the BBC and started there in January 1963, he divided up the drama departments into separate sections for series, serial and plays, and also established the story editor function at the BBC (Cooke: 2003) This helped rationalise production further with stable teams of personnel. Shubik was subsequently enticed by Newman to the BBC, but was to complain that working for the BBC meant having to deal with new personnel and crews. Given the further expansion of the industry with the advent of BBC2, many of the staff she had to deal with, directors, designers, wardrobe, make-up and camera crews, were often new at their jobs.

What is crucial here, and this is intricately bound up with issues of industrialisation, is that the hierarchy and the division of labour, evident through routine production, staff training and the consolidation of new posts, were all part of an increasing discourse about 'professionalism' in television. John Caughie (2000) has argued that the BBC's post-war television service was characterised by amateurish qualities. He goes on to argue that the arrival of competition in 1955 and developments in technology brought about increasing professionalisation and the beginning of the process of institutionalisation of the TV mode of production. This is echoed by Susan Sydney-Smith who refers to the period 1955-1965 as the 'era of Professional Television' (2003: 19). This sense of professionalism infused a whole range of programme-making. It included, for example, news and current affairs. During the 1950s, ex Members of Parliament such as Christopher Mayhew and Aiden Cawley appeared on television as commentators and interviewers. This was characterised by Grace Wyndham Goldie, Head of BBC Talks and Current Affairs as 'the era of the MP as television commentator' (1977: 79), but as the decade wore on it was superseded by the 'era of the full-time professional television journalist' (Goldie: 1977: 90). As we will see in a short while, professionalism in current affairs programming facilitated staff movement between companies.

The emergence of professionalism also raises important issues about competition and about reflexivity within television production. In a very clear sense, many have argued that ITV woke the BBC from its complacent monopoly to improve broadcasting standards and to compete directly in programming and scheduling. Yet competition was much more complicated than a straightforward battle between two broadcasting institutions might at first suggest. As I discussed earlier, the BBC as an institution was no stranger to competition. Not only had the BBC faced competition from English language radio services from abroad since the 1930s, but radio and television producers faced competition from each other *within* the BBC. Producers working in television had been competing with the BBC radio for audiences since the start of the high-definition television service in 1936. On ITV's opening night in 1955, for example, BBC television did not just face competition from the new commercial service but also with BBC radio, which killed off the character of Grace Archer in the long running soap *The Archers*. It is estimated that nearly nine and a half million peopled tuned-in to this episode (Briggs: 1995). There were also institutional struggles within the BBC between television personnel and a radio friendly management that was suspicious of the new upstart medium. This meant that senior television staff at the end of the 1940s and beginning of the 1950s were often in conflict with BBC management over organisation and administration, resources, personnel and facilities.[xxi] Competition within the BBC was not just restricted to senior managers, but also between programme-makers on the ground. While senior television personnel lobbied for additional funds, staff and equipment, producers at the hard end of programme-making also had to compete with each other for resources and access to airtime for their programmes. Janet Thumim (2004) has described, for example, how production personnel in the Women's Programme Unit of the BBC Talks Department in the early 1950s had to compete with other sections for access to resources, including trained staff. Yet despite the problem of access to resources and staff, BBC producers still had to, according to an internal BBC written report by H. Rooney Pelletier in 1951, 'develop new forms of television' and give 'professional presentation to almost any subject'.[xxii] A long-term spur to professionalism may have been the starvation of

funds and management support which meant that television programme-makers had to become efficient at working to tight constraints, deadlines and budgets. The pressure for programme-making resources is likely to have impelled professional competence because the television practitioner must use, and must be *seen* to be using, his or her resources competently and effectively.

This impetus towards professionalism is also likely to have meant that individual programme-makers and production personnel sought the approbation of their peers. This is because the social psychologist Erving Goffman (1990) has argued that social groups, especially occupational and professional groups, conform to what he describes as 'team behaviour'. Groups such as doctors, lawyers or teachers tend to have standardised codes of behaviour and will adopt a uniform professional demeanor to other groups or teams, especially client groups. Thus doctors will all tend to behave in the same way towards patients, and teachers all in the same way towards pupils. Members of different teams, such as patients, pupils or clients do not tend to belong to that professional world, and are therefore not qualified to cast professional judgement on good practice or professional service. Only members of the same team, one's professional peers, or those of a higher hierarchical status in the same occupation have the right to question, criticize or commend individual practice. The more 'professionalised' and rigid the nature of that occupation, such as through lengthy training or experience (often both), the less authority an alternative 'team' has in making judgements or statements. Such team behaviour is equally applicable to the broadcasting context.[xxiii] Individual creative practice, in a range of programme-making roles, effectively becomes more professional by the scrutiny and approbation of one's peers, not necessarily by one's audience. Such a phenomena was observed by Tom Burns (1977) in his classic study of the BBC in the early 1960s and 1970s when he saw that television programme makers were perhaps less bothered about what the audience thought of their programming than what their fellow colleagues or superiors thought. In the 1950s and 1960s this kind of reflection was taking place in meeting rooms, corridors, staff canteens and bars. With the development of recording technology this also became increasingly formalised as programmes on film and videotape were re-

viewed by staff for training and feedback purposes, such as at BBC sport (Whannel: 1992a).[xxix]

Significantly, this was further emphasised by the expansion of broadcasting in the 1950s and increased mobility of staff. As the sociologist Georg Simmel (1971) has written, when any social group expands there tends to emerge an increasingly complex social organisation. As a result, within social groups marked by complex hierarchical social structures individuals in any one group may tend to have more in common with a person of similar status in another group than people of higher or lower status within their own social group. This is an appealing model in connection with the hierarchical structures of television broadcasting here, not least evident in the union activity taking place within the commercial television companies, but also amongst those engaged at the hard end of television producing and directing. This was especially the case where ex BBC staff had moved to the commercial companies. Not only did they effectively import BBC values and practices into the new companies, but they had left behind old friends and colleagues at the BBC. It is perhaps no surprise that Goldie was to write (1977: 112). '...there was a camaraderie at the lower levels between the television staff of the BBC and those of commercial television, however cut-throat the competition became at the top.' As a result, ITV workers might have been friends with workers at the BBC and tried to impress them, and vice versa. Within the commercial context, television workers from different ITV companies were in competition with each other for the sale of programmes to the network, and this too would have engendered friendly (and perhaps at times not so friendly) rivalries. This professional competition was particularly evident, for example, in the newly developing area of current affairs television in programmes such as *Panoroma* (BBC 1953-), *This Week* (Associated-Rediffusion 1956-68) and *World in Action* (Granada 1963-98).[xxv] Amongst these programmes, and overlapping with the area of news, there was often an exchange of staff. In 1959 for example, two high profile reporters Robin Day and Ludovic Kennedy were lured to *Panorama* after they had been presenting for ITN news and *This Week* respectively. A compelling example of the emerging professional *esprit de corps* in current affairs occurred in 1963 when the ITA refused to transmit a particularly

contentious edition of Granada's *World in Action* because it was deemed to lack journalistic balance (Goddard, Corner and Richardson, forthcoming). After collusion between the respective production teams, an extract of the *World In Action* programme, 'Down the drain' – about Britain's wasteful spending on defence, appeared on the next edition of the BBC's *Panorama*. This led to a senior figure at Granada and *World in Action*, Denis Forman, referring to 'the freemasonry amongst television producers' which transcended individual companies or programme series.[xxvi] This sense of peer-review, reflexivity and mutual professional respect was highly important for the development of existing and new forms of television programming.

Intricately linked with all these processes, expansion, emergent divisions of labour, a sense of professionalism and rationalisation, was the increasing industrialisation of the television mode of production and institution. This was particularly evident with the emergence of what has often been described as 'the programme factory'. This referred to the mass production of programmes which can be explicitly associated with the rise of serialisation, and then facilitated and consolidated by emergent recording technologies.

Serialisation at the BBC can perhaps be traced back as early as 1951 to a weekly half-hour crime story-documentary programme *I Made News* (Sydney-Smith: 2002). This was an experimental programme which emerged from the BBC's Documentary Unit which looked each week at the exploits of crime investigators in the news, and which included the work of, for example, the Dutch police and the United States Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). The programme would be introduced by the actual detective in question, followed by a dramatised re-enactment of events, and closing again with the same detective. It was significant because it was conducted as an experimental case-study to see whether the BBC could handle serial production on a 'weekly strike' (Sydney-Smith: 2002). This had been instigated by Cecil McGivern, Controller of Television Programmes at the BBC, who, though not initially interested in the series form, saw the practicality of efficient practices and had been impressed by methods in the United States for weekly production.[xxvii] The series also experimented

with the separation of producer and director roles, with the producer imposing a continuous style over a series and directors being responsible for individual programmes. This constituted a more efficient division of labour, and what it established, according to Sydney-Smith, 'was a more collaborative process, taking away the authority of the writer and delegating it to a team,' (2002: 77). As Sydney-Smith goes on to state (2002: 77-8):

> Series as such could not happen in 'live' television until the weekly strike had been perfected. *I Made News* introduced a new unit scheme with a single producer and two directors, each working on two separate, overlapping productions. This system of production worked on the lines of film practice, having a producer in charge of all productions, but with the newly appointed directors, responsible for rehearsal and studio presentation. The system was to remain in place from 1952 onwards and formed the basis of series television production as we know it today.

The development of the series form also had other advantages. As well as helping institute an efficient division of labour within a collaborative team enterprise, it also had the advantage of being cost-effective. As the 1950s developed, there was an increase of serialisation in forms ranging from cop shows such as *Dixon of Dock Green* and soap operas such as *The Grove Family*, to the filmed adventure series associated with the new ITV companies such as *The Adventures of Robin Hood*. These provided a way of making programmes on the basis of an 'economy of scale', where production costs could be offset on a weekly basis by the repeat use of sets and costumes. Each week the same police station set, suburban living room or wardrobe of green tights could be wheeled out without any great additional expenditure. The cost-efficiency could also be applied, initially, to cast members, with actors being hired at a job lot rate across a series rather than being paid perhaps a slightly higher amount for a single play. Although the individual actor might earn less for a single programme hour, they would certainly benefit from having continuous employment and a regular, stable wage. The advent of serialisation certainly had a number of advantages, yet this was particularly consolidated by the increased use of recording technology. The development of

recording television programmes will be explored in more depth in chapter three, but it is worth noting here that recording helped facilitate a mode of production which was more efficient in its use of staff, crew, cast, studio space and equipment as and when they were available. This in turn had an impact on programme aesthetics.

Programmes and criticism:

The expansion and rationalisation of television broadcasting in the 1950s and early 1960s clearly lead to an expanded range of television outputs, both quantitatively and qualitatively. The quantitative increase in the number of television channels, from one to three, with an increase also in broadcasting hours in the day, entailed the production of *more* television programmes. The qualitative expansion of broadcasting, on the other hand, can be considered in two interrelated ways. Firstly it can be understood as the dramatic expansion of the range of programmes being made, of different tone, style, format and genre at the end of the 1950s and early 1960s. These included new kinds of quiz and game-shows. In drama it meant new kinds of series and serials, including soap operas, cop shows, and filmed adventure series ranging from the costumed swashbuckler to the modern action-spy hero. It also included new kinds of news and current affairs programme, from which the satire boom on television found its antecedents, new forms of sitcom, and new forms of music programme. Yet, as I have discussed, these new changes were not *simply* propelled by the advent of commercial television, but were part of a more diffuse form of reflexivity brought about by rationalisation, professionalisation and industrialisation.

The second qualitative expansion in broadcasting relates to the kinds of quality assessments that this expanded range of programming was subjected to. As we have seen, increasing professionalism and competence in programme production itself required the scrutiny and approbation of one's television peers. These issues became explored in a range of different media as television increasingly became the subject of interest. Janet Thumin (2004) argues that over this period there was a dearth of serious television criticism in the press, with only short reviews appearing regularly in some of

the broadsheets and tabloid newspapers. Thumim argues that this presented itself as a potential problem for programme-makers looking for useful critical feedback, such as in the area of television drama. Nonetheless, it should be noted that what limited press criticism there was complemented other print media, in magazines and books, which generated and catered for a broader public interest in television. This included the *TV Mirror* and *The Listener*, and the yearly round up in the *Television Annual*, and weekly listings magazines such as the *Radio Times* and *TV Times*. More specifically, however, space for industry discussion and reflection was provided in a range of trade magazines and trade union newsletters. These included, for example, *Ariel* (1936-) the weekly staff newspaper of the BBC, the *Television Mail* (1959-73) which later became *Broadcast* (1973-), and *Admap* (1964-) a monthly magazine for media, advertising and marketing industries.

Print media discourses surrounding television were also accompanied by self-referentiality in television itself. This will be discussed further in the next chapter, but a useful example here would include the BBC's *Points of View*, which has run since 1961 and was initially presented by Robert Robinson, a programme allowing viewers to write in and complain, or praise, the BBC's television outputs. Other programmes, such as the ATV documentary *The Dream Machine*, broadcast on ITV on 11 November 1964, explored the production of a television variety show, and the show's producer, Francis Essex, is seen in the staff bar explaining his philosophy of programme production. In these and other programmes, implicit value judgements were made about broadcast outputs in the period. It has been argued that a pre-occupation with the workings of television on television itself can potentially indicate a lack of confidence and maturity within the medium. Su Holmes (2005) has suggested for example, that the depiction of the workings of television (and film) in the early 1950s, in the cinema programme *Current Release* (BBC 1952-53), indicates a self-consciousness about television as a new technology. In a different context, writing about radio in the 1930s, Paddy Scannell and David Cardiff (1991) argue that the lampooning of serious radio outputs in light entertainment programmes in the 1930s also reflected self-consciousness and lack of maturity in the radio medium. What I

would argue, and I will explore this further in the next chapter, is that by the 1960s some of the programme forms which are reflexive about television and which show its workings demonstrate a self-assuredness and professional confidence.

Moral judgements were also made about broadcasting in public and political debates. Concern was increasingly expressed about the power of television over its audience, and in 1958 the Nuffield Foundation published its results into the study of television and children, and this was followed by joint research conducted by the BBC and ITV. The school teacher Mary Whitehouse also launched a campaign to 'clean up' television, and the first convention of the National Viewers and Listeners Association was held in 1967. Politically, a clear articulation of the kinds of moral questions relating to broadcasting were found in the Pilkington Report which accused ITV of trivialisation and pandering to 'populist' tastes out of commercial interest. As we will discuss in the next chapter, such accusations reflected a clear middle-class bias, replicating values derived from a Victorian culture predicated on paternalism and philanthropism. The so-called 'working classes', in whose interests these Victorianist descendents were claiming to speak, may have felt differently.[xxviii] These political debates impacted on the television industry through legislation and its onward impact on BBC charter renewal and ITV franchise rounds. The kinds of moral judgements made in these political debates also had aesthetic consequences. In the mid-1960s, for example. the serious intent and disorientating narrative and style of the ITV drama series *The Prisoner* (ATV 1967-68) could be seen as a response to some of the criticisms of 'trivialisation' made by the Pilkington Committee (see, for example, Johnson 2005).

To briefly sum up here, the arrival of ITV in 1955 marked a continuity with public service values and state sanction which had previously characterised the BBC radio and television services. While the BBC had not existed in a commerce-free vacuum, however, with radio and television services providing the rationale for the marketing of radio and television receivers, the arrival of ITV brought the triangular relationship between state, commerce and culture into sharper focus. Furthermore, the arrival of

ITV companies (and subsequent arrival of BBC2) characterised a radical expansion of the television institution. As I have argued, this expansion helped accelerate the emerging tendency towards a more rationalised, industrialised mode of production within television, and new discourses of professionalism and organisational structures started to institutionalise programme-making practices. This expansion, coupled with the development of new broadcasting technologies, as I will argue in chapter three, was to have a significant impact on the number, sophistication and diversity of programmes being made. Yet significantly, this rationalisation of the emerging television industry coincided with the extension of television to a national audience. As a consequence, not only did expansion of the television institution lead to a rationalisation of the emergent television industry itself, but it also entailed an increasingly centralised form of cultural provision. This will be explored in the next chapter.

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[i] See. for example, Jameson (1991).

[ii] Both services closed down during the Second World War, and Radio Luxembourg commenced broadcasting again after the war ended

[iii] There had been some exceptions to this, however, such as during the Second World War. See Briggs (1970).

[iv] See. for example, Briggs (1995) and Curran and Seaton (1997).

[v] There were numerous prescriptions and proscriptions. For example, ITV was obliged to provide religious programmes, it had to adhere, initially to the 'toddler's truce', and it was not allowed to cause offence or disrespect to anyone still alive - a condition that inhibited the development of satire on the service in the early 1960s. See Sendall (1982) for full details of regulations, and see Carpenter (2002) for satire on ITV.

[vi] The Baird Television Development Company had begun experimental 30-line broadcasts from a BBC transmitter in the London area as early as 30 September 1929. This was followed in 1932 by the BBC's first public low-definition television service from Broadcasting House in London, using a Baird equipped studio. This was superseded in 1936 with the launch of a new high-definition service on 2 November. For details see, for example, MacDonald (1994), Briggs (1965) and Crisell (1997).

[vii] See, for example Sendall (1982), Briggs (1995), Crisell (1997), Curran and Seaton (1997) and Johnson and Turnock (2005b).

[viii] See Marwick (1996) and Sandbrook (2005) for full details.

[ix] See Tunstall (1983) for details of how advertising expenditure on television (out of all media) increased from 1.1 per cent in 1955 to 24.5 in 1964.

[x] See also the programme *This Week*, 'The Birth of ITV', Thames Television, transmitted 16 September 1976, producer Lesley Mitchell.

[xi] Bernard Sendall, although the authorised historian for Independent Television in the two volumes which cover the period 1946-1968, was also the former Deputy Director

General of the ITA (and then IBA). This means that his extensive and important account is inevitably, at times, partisan.

[vii] This tale is drawn from Bernard Sendall's account (1982), and it raises the question of why no-one else senior at the ITA intervened or responded on the Chairman's behalf. This might be partly answered by the fact that there was a culture at the regulatory body (ITA and, later, IBA) of 'Members of the Authority' ignoring the advice or over-turning decisions of members of staff (see Goddard, Corner and Richardson, forthcoming). So this may have led to a climate where important decisions or issues were 'referred up' or, in this instance, deferred.

[viii] Sir Ian Jacob, 'The Tasks Before the BBC Today', in *The Listener*, 21 October 1954, Vol. 52, no. 1338, p661-662.

[ix] The institution of spot advertising had been a recommendation of the Beveridge committee to keep editorial control away from sponsorship constraints. The ITA could in *theory*, however, exert the ultimate editorial control by withdrawing licences.

[x] *Sight and Sound*, Vol. 25, No. 4, Spring 1956, p200.

[xi] See, for example, Curran and Seaton (1997).

[xii] See Gallup 1976 for details of polls in this period.

[xiii] See Sendall for the full details of the company start-ups discussed here.

[xiv] The other companies were: Westward Television for the south west of England starting from 29 April 1961; Border Television for the Scottish borders from 1 September 1961; Grampian Television for north east Scotland from 30 September 1961; and Channel Television for the Channel Islands starting from 1 September 1962.

[xv] Sydney-Smith explains that this is 'a stage-derived term name from striking the set', (2002: 20).

[xvi] See, for example, Jacobs (2000).

[xvii] 'Report on Television Talks and Documentaries', BBC Written Archive Centre document reference WAC T31/164/1 A0 April 1951 (cf Thumim: 2004: 49).

[xviii] I will return to Goffman's analysis of 'teams' in chapters four and six.

[xix] The development of recording technologies will receive extended discussion in chapter two.

[xx] See Lindley (2002), Holland (2006) and Goddard, Corner and Richardson (forthcoming).

[xxi] See Goddard, Corner and Richarsdon (forthcoming) for further details about this incident.

[xxii] At this time, recurring programme titles tended to appear on television at about once a month at most. See Sydney-Smith (2002).

[xxiii] Discussion of cultural provision will be discussed in the chapter two in relation to regionality, and will be discussed specifically in terms of class in chapter five.

Chapter 2: Centralisation

In the period immediately following the Second World War, it has been popularly suggested, Britain was marked by a degree of cultural and social consensus. Britain had, after all, emerged triumphant from seven years of gruelling war. This was a war in which national conscription forced young men from around the country, from different social strata, to fight common enemies together. On the home front, a civilian population not only rallied round to support the 'war effort' but had to endure rationing and the blackout. Parts of the civilian population itself were effectively placed in the frontline as British cities and industrial centres faced intense aerial bombardment. The sense of collective spirit was ideologically emphasised in wartime propaganda films such as *In Which We Serve* (directors Noël Coward and David Lean, UK 1942) and *Fires Were Started* (director Humphrey Jennings, UK 1943), and found daily iteration in the collective experience of listening to BBC radio broadcasts.[i] Yet despite the collective rhetoric of cultural forms during the war, the sense of unity and shared purpose may not have been evenly felt or experienced. Angus Calder's book *The Myth of the Blitz* (1992), for example, argues that there was a gap between reality and 'myth' about the home front during the Second World War. Despite the myth of the 'Blitz spirit', of everyone pulling together, parts of British life were still characterised by a range of social ills as they had been during peacetime, from adultery and illegitimate children on the one hand, to looting, crime and blackmarketeering on the other. Following the War, there were also different experiences. One marker of this was the wide political division about the future of Britain which manifested itself in the results of the 1945 General Election (Marwick: 1996). Another was the different geographical experiences of war and its aftermath across Britain (Marwick: 1996: 22):[ii]

> The tangible effects of the war... were distributed unevenly as if by some ferocious, but casual, wizardry. Tracts of London, Merseyside, the Midlands, Plymouth, Clydeside, and many historic towns besides, lay desolate; in other areas, new factories, new roads, new bridges, gave an air of bustle and prosperity which had been lacking for a generation.

One of the ways in which a *sense* of consensus was sustained following the war was through centralised cultural provision. During this period, 'culture' was perceived to be the 'high modernist' arts, in architecture, sculpture, painting, music and literature, often sponsored by the state and promoted by the 'establishment'. This reflected what has been described as an 'Arnoldian consensus' (Weight: 1995) after the Victorian philanthropist Matthew Arnold. In his influential book, *Culture and Anarchy*, first published in (1869), Arnold argued that intellectuals and artists should take an important lead in social and cultural affairs. Echoes of this thinking were clearly found in an establishment consensus in the 1940s and 1950s that cultural institutions such as the Arts Council, National Trust and the BBC should play an important role in the country's intellectual and cultural life. This consensus was clearly articulated in the relationship between the Arts Council and the BBC because, as the historian Richard Weight has argued (1995: 62), '...the success of the Council's work "on the ground" depended to a large extent on the BBC's ability to prepare a mass audience for it.' This cultural promotion was effectively fulfilled by the BBC's Third Programme on radio, and its constituency was a new cultural establishment of artists, composers, writers and intellectuals. This establishment were fiercely *for* the promotion of 'high culture' and fearful of American mass consumer culture. As Weight suggests (1995: 66):

> As a result, the canteens of the Arts Council and BBC became as fierce a
> battleground to prevent American supremacy as the committee rooms of the
> Foreign and Colonial Office in the 1940s and early 1950s.

The debates over high and low culture over this period were, of course to find their acrimonious articulation over the advent of commercial television, undermining any notion of an easy cultural or political consensus. Weight (1995) has argued that it was the arrival of ITV that signalled the end of the 'Arnoldian consensus' and marked an apparent shift towards a more fragmented and individualised society. It was the explicit promotion of the arts at an elite level, however, that lead the Cambridge academic Raymond Williams to argue that Britain up to 1950s had been characterised by two

cultures – an establishment arts culture and a working class popular culture that was hardly visible (1983). In most intellectual and academic discourses at the time working class culture was barely 'culture' at all (a view that still finds expression today, in some quarters, as an antipathy towards the academic study of television, the media and popular culture).

In the post-war period, Krishan Kumar (1981) has suggested that the process of centralisation and homogenisation of British culture was promoted from a 'golden triangle' between London, Oxford and Cambridge. However, the historian Richard Weight has argued that (up to the time he was writing) there was more arts legislation passed by the Labour government in the post-war years than in any other period of British history, and the aim of this legislation was to *decentralise* British culture. This was due to the belief by government and the intelligentsia that a regional pluralism lay at the heart of British life. It was also believed that the way to democratise British culture was to encourage participation in the arts at local level. This view was consistent with arts policy during the war which had sought to promote the arts in the provinces. It was also a response to Scottish and Welsh nationalism. Following the 1945 General Election, both the BBC and the Arts Council announced their regional policies. The BBC restored its six regional home service departments, and the Arts Council established 12 regional offices to help distribute funds more efficiently. This decentralising tendency was evident in the Beveridge Report which called for increased regional broadcasting, especially from Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Although the report's findings against competition were overturned with the passing of the Television Act in 1954, the principle of regionality was retained to countervail the mainly London-centric, metropolitan bias of the BBC's television service.

According to Briggs (1995) regional broadcasting in radio, however, had been very strong. Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland were described as National Regions, and each was represented on the board of Governors. In 1958, there was a substantial amount of radio programme output from the regions where one-seventh of the BBC's staff was employed. As well as the three 'National Regions', there were three English

regions. There was the North region, (located in Manchester), the Midland Region (based in Birmingham), and the West Region (based in Bristol, but extending as far east as Brighton). London and the south east, which had never had a regional frequency assigned to it, relied on national programmes transmitted from London.[iii] Regions enjoyed considerable autonomy between 1945 and 1955, while radio remained the dominant medium (Briggs 1995). 'BBC Television, however, was organised from the start on a national basis,' according to Briggs (1995: 623-624), and where regional activity spread, it 'was grafted on to a national system. It could not develop "from below"'.

One of the organising principles of ITV, however, was the development of regional television companies. This was effectively an extension of the 'decentralising' arts policies of the 1940s and early 1950s. Yet it was also an attempt to encourage powerful and resourceful companies in the provinces (Sendall: 1982). Economically speaking, why should London monopolise the jobs in the nascent television industry? The success of this regional principle in commercial television is, however, on several levels, debatable. As we saw in chapter one, the initial round of franchise appointments was located in three main regions, London, The Midlands and the North. The 'Big Four' companies which serviced these regions, as we have seen, were Associated-Rediffusion (A-R), Associated Television (ATV), Associated Broadcasting Company (ABC) and Granada. Yet the structuring of four companies across three regions probably inhibited a fully developed sense of regional output. In the case of Associated-Rediffusion, the company was completely London based. On its opening night on 22 September 1955, transmission started with a stiff voice-over eulogising London's long history with shots of the Houses of Parliament, Westminster Abbey and the Tower of London. Before moving to live transmission of the inaugural dinner and speeches held at the Guildhall, the voice-over continued to firmly locate the birth of commercial television, as a 'miraculous' feat of organisation and engineering, both geographically and historically within the nation's capital:

In January this year, the contractors charged with the execution of this new Elizabethan enterprise had nothing more than paper letterheads and hope. Now, nine months later, something approaching a miracle of organisation and design has been accomplished: studios, staff and technical equipment have all been assembled. A new public service is about to be launched over the rooftops of London.

With studios and a range of entertainment interests in London, the new contracting companies, rather than providing an alternative to the London-centric and metropolitan bias of the BBC, effectively endorsed it. As we have seen, the practicalities and cost efficiencies of a regional service in the Midlands being run by two companies across the week and the weekend meant a sharing of local resources. The joint company owned by ATV and ABC, Alpha Television, was constituted as a temporary measure, with neither company fully establishing itself in the Midlands until franchise re-allocations in 1968. The exception to a lack of clear regional focus at this early stage was Granada who had constructed purpose built television studios in Manchester, and who made a range of distinctive programmes, the most popularly known, surviving today, being the soap opera *Coronation Street* (1960-).

Yet before we examine the roll out of regional contractors in other areas, it is also worth noting that programme outputs from the companies often overlapped in terms of regional interest or bias. A-R (based in London) made a documentary, for example, called *Beat City* which was transmitted on Christmas Eve in 1964 about the burgeoning pop music scene in Liverpool. On the other hand, Granada made a documentary, *Sunday in September,* about a CND rally in London on 17 September 1961 and transmitted it the following day. Providing a snapshot of a day in the life of London, it starts with the chimes of Big Ben at 7 am, with road cleaners working their way down rainswept streets, and pigeons playing in puddles in Trafalgar Square. As the day progresses, a Royal Air Force parade marches down Whitehall, past the names of the dead on the Cenotaph, for a memorial service at St Clement Dane's church in the Strand. Crowds of young people start to amass in Trafalgar Square, and in the late,

damp afternoon, they start to stage a mass sit-down. Scuffles ensue with police, resulting in arrests and people being dragged away. The documentary closes with an empty Parliament Square, a night-time Piccadilly Circus, and shots of demonstrators in London pubs relaxing with drinks or examining police bail papers. On one hand this documentary could be read as critical of a political event taking place in London. On the other hand, though, made by a northern television company, it could be argued that this documentary celebrated the lived experience and public spaces of London streets, and located them as the site of struggle between national institutions of authority and popular revolt. The programme, however, was not networked or shown in the London area because Granada had been unable to plan ahead and secure a place for it in the schedule (Goddard, Corner and Richadson: forthcoming).

After the initial round of contracts in the mid-1950s came the roll-out of ITV franchise companies with regional ties explicitly announced by their company names, such as Scottish Television (1957), Southern (1958), Television Wales and West (1958), Tynes-Tees (1959) and Ulster Television (1959). The emergence of these new companies did add a number of programmes with specific regional themes. It also marked a trend, in some cases, towards explicit nationalism. Jamie Medhurst (2002a) has argued, for example, that broadcasting has played an important role in the cultural life of the Welsh nation.[iv] In 1937 BBC Radio Wales was granted autonomy as a National Region. BBC Television arrived in Wales in 1952, and commercial television in 1958 with Television Wales and West (which also served the west of England area). When the ITA cast about for its last licence contractor for the west and north Wales region, there were many who felt the company should be in Welsh hands, due to an anxiety about creeping Anglicisation. The contract was given to Teledu Cymru (Wales West and North) a home-grown company with high aims and ideals headed by the Director of Education for Flintshire, Dr Haydn Williams. The view was held that ITV could be the saviour of Welsh language and culture, with a plan to broadcast Welsh language programmes during peak hours. Within ten months the company had folded. Part of the problem was a delay in transmitter construction, with only one out of the three promised ready for transmission in September 1962. Had all three been ready,

WWN would have had an audience of 1 million. Medhurst suggests that the problem may also have fallen at the door of the ITA as parts of Wales were already being serviced by two companies. Granada (north) had been broadcasting since 1956 and had included a miscellany programme called *Dewch I Mewn*, as well as taking Welsh language programmes from TWW. As a result, it was deemed that any company in the area could only make marginal profits. Consequently, the company had had to bow to commercial pressure not to show Welsh language programmes during peak hours, signalling a clear clash between culture and commerce. It might be speculated as to whether WNN might have both survived financially *and* provided a peak-time service in Welsh had money been available from the licence fee in the form discussed in the last chapter. In the end, when WNN closed down, the ITA reduced the rent for the three transmitters and ABC, Granada and ATV provided programming free of charge until TWW was able to take over the franchise.

The complex relationship between regional programming, nationalist discourses and a de facto national network can be seen in a number of programme examples from the period. In the opening night of Television Wales and West on 14 January 1958, for instance, there was a twenty-minute programme presenting well known local stars to the audience, *Stars Rise in the West*. In this programme national and international performers from Wales, such as Stanley Baker (film)[v] and Harry Secombe (radio), were introduced to the audience and invited to say some words. The actor Donald Houston said 'hello' to his grandmother on camera, and the performer Tessie O'Shea, one of only two women to top the bill at the London Palladium, who was both Welsh and still resided in Wales, said 'hello' to her relatives and her old school headmistress. In retrospect, the programme appears excruciatingly gauche and self-conscious, but in fairness, part of the problem of course was that the newly emerging industry was still finding its professional form. Yet parochialism was perhaps something that the industry and its performers were aware of. On the fifth anniversary of its launch, STV staged a celebratory programme in 1962 with music and dancing. The programme included live pieces from other shows from the period, including *Lucky Diamond*, an STV local talent show, and a music programme called *Jig Time*. Introducing the *Jig*

Time segment, the anniversary programme's presenter, Bill Tennant, alluded to either a genuine sense of cultural conflict, or a sense of twee chocolate box parochialism:

> They called it *Jig Time* and they put it out tentatively wondering if the previous association of English television hadn't perhaps weaned the Scots off their traditional obsession for the ceilidh... Yes, dressed as he may in his bowler hat and English cut suit, the Scot is still, in imagination at least, a claymore swinging highlander who likes to invade the dance floor with a blood curdling shriek and swing some bonnie partner into breathless dance.

Before the programme finished with prayers and a discussion between clergymen, an award was made for the best (presumably Scottish) television presenter of the year, which went to Bill Tennant. Perhaps out of modesty, but perhaps also out of recognition of the small pool of talent eligible for the award, or the inward-looking and partisan nature of the local television audience, Tennant accepted the award with a groan and said it '...just shows how parochial we are.'

Nonetheless, the principle of regional broadcasting was fundamentally undermined in two significant ways. Firstly, there was still the continued centralisation of production from London which remained both the economic and talent capital (Sendall: 1982). This was mainly pragmatic as television had started in London (both BBC and ITV), and this was where initial production facilities had been concentrated. This was also complemented by a larger entertainment industry located in London, including theatre, film and radio interests, which employed performers and a larger supporting infrastructure such as agents, administration and management. As Sendall remarks (1982: 303):

> The Authority's policy had always been to moderate this metropolitan tendency and that was why it had appointed companies not for the whole network of London, Midlands and the North, but for individual areas.

Yet he goes on to note (ibid):

> It had to be admitted that there was a 'pull' in programme production towards London, and a good many programmes produced by ATV, Granada and ABC Television were, in fact, produced there.

For example, the ABC studio, a former cinema, in Didsbury in Manchester was the location for the live performance of *Armchair Theatre* from July 1956. Performances, however, were initially rehearsed in London and then transmitted from Manchester with just one rehearsal day in the studio (Sendall: 1982).[vi] In another example, on the closing night of Television Wales and West in on 3 March 1968, the poet John Betjemin paid tribute to the regional programming of 'Tellwelly' coming out of Bristol and Cardiff, and claimed its loss was 'like the death of an old friend'. He alluded, however, to a centralisation of talent and culture.

> It [TWW] realised the importance of London…at times you have to be there.…If you are in the world of entertainment and journalism, and television is both, you have to come to London for artistes and ideas, otherwise there's the risk of getting too narrow.

Medhurst (2002b) notes that although TWW had proved relatively successful and its annual income had risen to £5m, one of the reasons it lost its franchise in 1967 was the charge that the company was too 'London based'. Part of the problem was that TWW had its head office in London, and a rival applicant for the local franchise (the successful HTV) had made a lot of this fact (Medhurst 2002b; Davies: 1994). Significantly, however, the ITA itself (and then the IBA) was based in London. This was to cause a particular problems for Granada and its current affairs series *World in Action*, when potentially controversial programmes produced in Manchester had to be approved in the last few days before transmission by the London based regulator (Goddard, Corner and Richardson: forthcoming).

While TWW had opened with the programme *The Stars Rise in the West*, which featured national and international stars who had come from Wales, the opening night special *The Big Show* on Tyne-Tees television on 15 January 1959 featured performers who had originated from outside the region. The programme was a curious mix of skits and segments to illustrate forthcoming programming. There was certainly a sense that there would be something of interest for locals, with a local talent show, and a segment where members of the audience were shown film clips from members of their family on active duty in Cyprus. Yet the segments were linked by presenters with a certain 'received punctuation' with little in common with the more local vernacular. It also included a segment featuring Surrey born southerner Bill Maynard with locals telling their favourite short stories or jokes, the film star Bill Travers playing out a sitcom scene with Virginia McKenna, and various dance routines including an interpretation of 'Beguine la Beguine'.

The second way in which ITV regionalism was undermined was through programming arrangements between the companies, and these had arisen out of practical and economic necessity.[vii] As Sendall states (1982: 303-304):

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> Not only was it cheaper and more convenient to produce television programmes
> where the primary pool of talent existed, but it was just not possible, given the
> costs of television production, for there to be a number of independent major
> centres of production, each providing all the programmes for the local area. ITV,
> however profitable it had turned out to be, could not operate economically if each
> programme company was responsible for all its own output.

Networking therefore provided a means of programme sharing to allow each company to reduce or cover its costs. Yet the system that emerged in the late 1950s may well have served some companies better than others, and this raises an issue about the nature of television competition. Under the terms of the Television Act of 1954, the ITA was instructed 'to secure that there is adequate competition to supply programmes between a number of programme contractors,' (cf Sendall: 1982: 63). In the spirit of

monopoly-breaking and free-enterprise, the ITA originally had a different vision for how the commercial service would look. This vision included companies competing with each other in a given region. In the ITA's first Annual Report it was stated that competition (cf Sendall: 1982: 63):

> ...can be obtained fully only when viewers have at all times a choice of two or more programmes, or in other words when there are at least two stations covering each area. This the Authority hopes ultimately to bring about.

The ITA had been unable to do this in the first instance due to the lack of frequencies allocated to it. Having just broken the monopoly, the ITA seemed confident that future frequency allocations would allow them to expand the commercial service to allow for more than one station in any area. As Sendall states (ibid):

> Monopoly had at last been broken: they can hardly be blamed, in view of all that had been said, for assuming that it was to be succeeded by genuine plurality and not by mere duopoly. They were not to know that in later years the notion of competition, except in terms of competition between BBC and ITV, would lose favour; and that even between these two organisations competition, as distinct from planned co-existence, would come to be increasingly deprecated.

In the event, the ITA had awarded the initial round of franchises to the 'Big Four'. As the system expanded, the newer, smaller regional companies set up affiliation agreements with one of the larger companies which effectively acted as a 'parent' to supply the majority of programming material. The small affiliated company would pay a fixed programme charge and a percentage of its net advertising revenue, calculated on the basis of population coverage, to the parent for the widest range of programming. Yet although an arrangement had been made only with the parent company, the other three big companies also agreed to make their programmes available to the smaller company. The smaller companies were at first happy to enter into this arrangement because it guaranteed a regular and dependable supply of programme material to fill

airtime, but as this temporary solution to programme production and supply became more permanent problems were later to emerge.

In the first instance, in a process which Sendall describes as the 'network carve up', the smaller regional companies had to take programmes they did not want. Effectively the 'Big Four' divided up between them regular patterns of programme provision and supply[viii]. Tied by affiliation agreements, the smaller companies were obliged to take programme material provided by the 'Big Four', and were resentful at being excluded from programming decisions. The smaller companies also felt particularly resentful because they were not always happy with the quality of programming coming from their parent companies, feeling that they themselves could do better. Indeed, a further cause for resentment was that they had difficulty in selling their own programmes to the network. According to Sendall, there was a feeling that the big companies had made a deliberate policy to exclude the programme output of the smaller companies. Sendall however prevaricates on the issue, saying that it was only natural that the big companies, who had taken big risks in undertaking the commercial television enterprise, were justified in seeking to spread their costs in programme sharing and sales to affiliated companies. The bigger companies also saw the newer ones as being ungrateful because the success of the new stations was predicated on their earlier risk-taking, and on the established popularity of shows that the big companies had either produced in Britain or bought in. At the same time, Sendall also argues that the newer companies had *not* been contracted to provide programming to the network. The newer companies had been contracted to provide programming for their local areas, and franchise applications with grand plans had been discouraged. This had been the case with the southern, north-east England and east Anglian franchises where return lines to London had not been included as part of their contracts. As Sendall states (1982: 308):

> The producing of programmes for the network by the smaller companies could... be regarded as in a sense a diversion of their efforts from their proper job of serving their local area.

The bias towards the centralised provision of national and established programmes was evidenced on the opening night of Anglia Television on 27 October 1959. Starting with aerial footage of the region, and then local scenes from Essex, Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridge, it moves inside the studio at Anglia House in Norwich. The show promotes its new local programming, including local news and programmes such as *All About Anglia, Farming Diary* and *Town and Gown* (a programme about Cambridge). Yet the show also goes on to promote programmes which had already proved popular on the network including *Sunday Night at the London Palladium, Educating Archie, Emergency Ward 10, What the Papers Say, This Week* and ITN headlines four times a day. It also included in its list pop programmes, such as *Boy Meets Girl, Cool for Cats*; quiz shows such as *Take Your Pick* and *Double Your Money*, and a raft of popular American westerns such as *Maverick, Rawhide* and *Gunlaw*. So even though Anglia was a regional franchise, it was still heavily dependent on nationally networked programming.

Furthermore, locally produced programming within the franchise areas covered by the smaller companies, such as Anglia, tended to be restricted to those areas. The network did not offer up a fully competitive system between companies and it did not allow for a plurality or diversity across the areas. So the small companies were unable to exchange or buy and sell programmes between themselves. What programme provision there was came from the 'Big Four' companies that still reflected a metropolitan bias (Manchester, Birmingham and London), with Manchester and Birmingham still predominantly deferring to London's talent capital.

Media Events:

During the 1950s and 1960s, there were other programme forms and outputs which conflicted with a sense of regional diversity to offer a more collective sense of 'Britishness'. These sought explicitly to establish a rhetoric of national reach and interest. One example was television news – as constituted by both the BBC and ITN. Yet perhaps a more useful example would be the television coverage of major 'media

events'. Such events included the Coronation in 1953, the State Opening of Parliament in 1958, The General Election in 1959, Winston Churchill's funeral in 1965 and the World Cup Final in 1966. The basic model of 'media events' as formulated by Dayan and Katz (1992) is that they are planned live events which interrupt and dominate the schedules and attract large audiences. They can cover major state events such as the Queen's Coronation, or the funerals of John F. Kennedy and Churchill, they can cover major sporting events such as the World Cup, or groundbreaking events such as the first landing on the moon. They are organised outside the media establishment, but uphold the definitions of the event as posited by the event's organisers. Provided with access to the whole event (or most of it), with cameras in multiple, pre-arranged locations, and with voice-over commentary and exposition, the audience at home is often drawn more into the symbolic meaning of the event than the people in actual attendance. When the event is organised by the state or the establishment, audience size becomes a marker for the significance of the event, and the ratings are read (Dayan and Katz: 1992: 139) 'as a confirmation of loyalty, as a reiteration of the social contract between citizens and their leaders.' In many respects, Dayan and Katz's arguments are compelling and they have proved influential. This is not least here because it conforms to the BBC's own claims of providing a central focus for the British nation state. As Scannell (1990: 14) suggests in his discussion of early public service broadcasting, the early BBC philosophy was that:

By providing a common access for all to a wide range of public events and ceremonies – a royal wedding, the FA Cup Final, the last night of the Proms, for example – broadcasting would act as a kind of social cement binding people together in the shared idioms of public, corporate, national life.

Reflecting on the first address made by a monarch on radio, King George V at the British Empire Exhibition on 23 April 1924, John (later Lord) Reith was to describe the effect as 'making the nation as one man', (cf Scannell: 1990: 14). Indeed, the Queen's Coronation on 2nd June 1953 seems like an apposite model for both Dayan and Katz's thesis and for BBC claims because it has been exemplified as an indication of

national unity and solidarity. It has also been popularly heralded as one of the defining moments in British television. Yet while the Coronation stood alongside the festival of Britain as one of the two major state festivals to sponsor national unity in the early 1950s, it proved to be the site of much debate and negotiation (Weight: 1995). There were many arguments over the meaning and purpose of the Coronation, and they did not strictly fall into debates between left-wing and right-wing factions, but between traditionalists and populists. Such debates often centred around television, and Winston Churchill was among those vehemently opposed to the televising of the service for fear that it demystify the workings of authority and make profane an otherwise sacred event. There were also complaints about exploitation of the event by the government and private companies. As Weight (1995: 190) suggests, 'The arguments were based on traditionalist fears that a sacred religious event was being turned into a mere entertainment for the masses.' Yet the Anglican *Church Times* supported the televising of the event, and it was also reported that the Queen herself wanted the cameras to be there. The issue was forced through a House of Commons debate and the populisers won.

It took the BBC a whole year to organise (Briggs 1979), and it proved it capable of embarking on an event of national scale. For Scannell, the Coronation marked a singular transformation of the monarchy from being the symbolic head of the aristocracy to being the symbolic head of a whole nation, the whole of British society. This was achieved, he argues, by virtue of the media (Scannell: 1996). Yet this had previously been predicated on the evolution of a new kind of public which was commensurate with the whole of society. This was achieved prior to the war with the BBC offering a new kind of democracy to its listeners (Scannell and Cardiff: 1991). As Scannell and Cardiff argue (1991: 14), 'Broadcasting equalized public life through the principle of common access for all.' As a result of this equalization (ibid.: 277):

> If the culture of radio depended on a shared public life brought into being by broadcasting itself, a central aspect of this process was the creation of a sense of participation in corporate national life.

In just the same way that the BBC had provided a ready audience for the work of the Arts Council, so too had the BBC paved the way for a 'corporate national life' symbolised by the monarchy. On the day of the Coronation, the BBC's live television coverage lasted eleven hours with some 56 per of the adult population cent watching the service on television. A further 32 per cent listened to the event on radio (Weight 1995). In Dayan and Katz's terms, the enormous audience signified an act of national solidarity and a legitimation of the monarchy. Later in the decade, the sociologists Edward Shils and Michael Young were to write that the Coronation constituted an act of national communion where people from the periphery of society were reconnected to its centre and rededicated to its values (1956). In one of their examples, a pair of feuding neighbours were reconciled so that one could invite the other in to watch the event on television.[ix]

Yet this perception of community and consensus should perhaps be treated with a degree of caution, just as we have already had to question the notion of consensus at the end of World War Two and at the beginning of the 1950s. The support for the monarchy, and its symbolic role as head of a national community is perhaps the first thing that should be queried. In his classic quasi-ethnographic analysis of the British working classes (first published in 1958), Richard Hoggart (1969) argued in *The Uses of Literacy* that the working classes were distinctly indifferent to royalty. As he suggests (1969: 110), the working classes were:

> ...not royalists by principle. Nor do they harbour resentment against it; they have little heat. They either ignore it or, if they are interested, the interest is for what can be translated into the personal.

Hoggart argued that some adolescent girls may have been interested in royalty for its glamour in much the same way as they would be interested in film stars, and that others more likely to be interested in royalty were women over 25 years of age. However, he argued, men were on the whole uninterested or even 'vaguely hostile',

remembering the unwelcome discipline and rigours of military parades during national service.

Aside from attitudes to royalty, there is also the question of how people responded to the Coronation and its coverage as an event, and whether or not they were genuinely interested. In one sense, a radio and television audience had been created for the Coronation coverage because people had been given the day off work. Nonetheless there were organised street parties on the day and community activities, and so listening and viewing would have, in many cases, been conducted amongst a range of other activities. At the same time, the potential indifference or ambivalence of part of the audience towards the monarchy complicates this further. As such, viewership of the Coronation may have been distracted, disrupted and, in some situations, boisterous. Actual audience behaviour in front of the screen, or in private, can often be dismissive of any of the core texts or values being presented on television (or radio). Scannell and Cardiff (1991) record, for example, that during the radio coverage of the Coronation of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth in 1937 there were those in the country who were not entirely deferential or attentive. Of course such lack of apparent respect amongst an audience is not just the preserve of those watching on television or listening to radio.[x] As Richard Dimbleby (1975), the BBC commentator for the day, was to ruefully notice when he returned to Westminster Abbey in the evening for a postscript to the event (cf Scannell: 1996: 83):

> Tiers and tiers of stalls on which the peers had been sitting were covered with sandwich wrappings, sandwiches, morning newspapers, fruit peel, sweets and even a few empty miniature bottles.

For Weight, a popular appeal of the Coronation may have been a reminder of previous times of togetherness, with images in the popular press of people sleeping in the rainswept Mall at night being reminiscent of the Blitz. Indeed, empirical social research from the time seems to confirm this point. As Philip Zeigler notes (1978; cf Weight: 1995: 195):

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...Mass Observation returns revealed that people felt uplifted not so much by a bright display of pageantry amidst the continuing gloom of austerity Britain, but by the return of wartime cameraderie which they felt had been absent since the euphoria of VE Day.

The popular appeal of the television coverage, with such high viewing figures, may well also have been the novelty of television itself. As Chris Hand (2003b) has observed, for most people to have seen the Coronation on television they had to have watched it somewhere other than their own home. What this suggests is that viewership might have been predicated on the combination of social setting and the novelty of watching television itself rather than any clear legitimation of the national values being represented and celebrated on the television screen. This clearly undermines some of the sense of Dayan and Katz's description, explanation and expectation of what media events are and what they are about.

A myth of centrality:

It is worth briefly summarising the key points so far in this discussion of regional and national culture and consensus. First of all, the claim that the arrival of ITV signalled an end of consensus culture is problematic. This is because consensus itself may have been mythical, with different regional situations and contexts, not to mention class contexts, defining a variety of different British experiences. The advent of regional programming with the arrival of ITV was itself an innovation in television, but as we saw, this may have had varying degrees of success. In many cases, such programme provision was still predicated on talent and cultural institutions based in metropolitan centres, most significantly London. At the same time, the construction of collective, British television experiences through media events is also problematic, mainly because a large audience does not necessarily guarantee consensus of attitude, experience or behaviour. Can for example, the viewership of the General Election on television in 1959 really have had a united audience? It may have united an audience in

interest, potentially, but it would probably not have been politically united. Furthermore, what kind of collective unity would have been experienced following England's win of the World Cup in 1966, which Briggs has argued broke all records for viewership of a sporting event (1995)? Did viewers (if they were watching) in Scotland, Wales, or Northern Ireland necessarily share in the ecstatic jubilation? So in negotiating between regional and national culture, the regional programming and media event genres may not have been entirely successful in their institutional (ITA and BBC) aims. Yet there did appear to be a tendency towards cultural rationalisation and centralisation in television, which appeared at odds with an increasing sense of fragmentation in British society and culture.

As we have seen, Scannell (1990) argues that Reith saw the role of the BBC as a kind of 'social cement'. The result was a common form of culture for all social groups (who listened), by bringing together things which had previously been discrete and separate within the mixed programme schedule on radio. In one sense, this implied commonality had to be constructed, and it was constructed on the basis of what was familiar to all, or that with which its listeners would be familiar. As Scannell and Cardiff note (1991: 273), 'One resource that could always be relied on as a shared point of reference available to all listeners was the culture of radio itself.' As a result, a sense of collectivity and common audience-hood was constructed from broadcasting techniques such as catch-phrases and signature tunes, as well as recurring topics and subject matter. One example Scannell and Cardiff refer to was the composer Stravinsky. 'It is notable', they argue (1991: 254-5), 'that Stravinsky is presumed to be a familiar topical reference – familiar, that is, only through the widely accessible cultural resource that radio itself constituted.' This was also evident in a degree of self-reflexivity and lampooning of some of the more serious programme forms by other artists in variety and comedy acts. Scannell and Cardiff suggest that this was because BBC radio was like one of Erving Goffman's 'total institutions' which effectively allow 'inmates' the chance to let off steam, or as they put it – a way of 'laughing off the BBC's most acute embarrassments', (1991: 254). Scannell and Cardiff imply that

this was because BBC radio in the 1930s was still an immature form, and that it still had to find its own mode of being.

The developments in television in the 1950s had some parallels with the earlier development of radio. In the first instance, both BBC television and ITV had mixed programme schedules. For the BBC, the public service broadcasting ethos of open access to a range of entertainments previously accessible to small audiences changed the nature of public participation in Britain's social life. 'Particular publics were replaced by the *general* public constituted in and by the general nature of the mixed programme service and its general, unrestricted availability,' (Scannell: 1990). With the arrival of ITV, this ethos continued, and the ITA was eager to ensure a 'balance' of programme provision from the ITV companies. Yet for the programme companies the mixed programme schedule was also a matter of practicality and showmanship. When Lew Grade, Deputy Managing Director at ATV, was asked in a documentary about how he put together a successful schedule, his answer was 'varied entertainment'. Comparing scheduling with running a variety bill at the theatre, Grade went on:

> Because when you put a variety bill together, you cannot please the whole audience with the whole programme. Therefore you need to have sufficient elements so that at least half the programme appeals to all the audience. I used the same tactics on television.[xi]

As Janet Thumim (2004) has argued, the mixed programme schedule was the way to attract the widest possible audience, by offering them a variety of programmes of mixed appeal and interest. In this, Thumim argues that the magazine programme, which was characterised by short segments on different topics in different tones, and which was used to build an audience and develop a television culture in the 1950s and early '60s, is paradigmatic of television itself. Yet what this mixed programme strategy effectively established, in both the case of the BBC *and* ITV, is a unified cultural form which places discrete and separate cultural activities into a direct relationship with each other. News programmes could now co-exist alongside sitcoms, opera alongside

variety, drama alongside music, and with the advent of ITV they could also co-exist alongside advertisements for beer, cigarettes, toothpaste or washing power. A typical example of an evening's mixed programming on ITV might be the schedule Palm Sunday, 22 March 1964. It included a specially produced programme *The Rise and Fall of a Hero*, which consisted of a simple darkened stage and a number of performers, including Keith Barron and Jane Asher, singing songs, reading poems and narrating sections from the Bible. The evening included a US adventure series about private investigators in California, from Warner Brothers Studios, *77 Sunset Strip*. There was variety in the form of *Val Parnell's Sunday Night at the London Palladium*, and a comedy with Millicent Martin and Roy Kinnear, *Happy Moorings*. The evening also included two bulletins from ITN, one a brief summary of the headlines, and the second a longer edition with some filmed footage and analysis. Items included details of a power strike due to take place the next day, negotiations about the release of US aircrew shot down over East Germany, and the funeral in Dublin of Irish playwright Brendan Behan. There were adverts for Dutch panatella cigars, Cannon cookers, Michelin tyres, Courage beer, and Atrixo hand cream.

The relationship of these programmes to each other was a temporal arrangement as part of the television 'flow'. Irrespective of whether an individual was watching BBC or ITV on a particular evening, different programmes, themes, issues, ideologies and values were conjoined in relation to each other in a new way by being part of the television broadcasting experience. This temporal arrangement was the significant way in which fragmentation was negotiated within a unifying cultural form. It was in this way that television addressed itself as being central to the social and cultural life of Britain. As already observed, the BBC in radio had manufactured a sense of total British experience. This had been consolidated during wartime, but was also potently articulated, Scannell and Cardiff observe (1991: 278), through the calendrical arrangements of broadcasting:

> Nothing so well illustrates the noiseless manner in which the BBC became
> perhaps *the* central agent of the national culture as its calender; the cyclical

reproduction, year in year out, of an orderly and regular progression of festivities, rituals and celebrations – major and minor, civil and sacred – that marked the unfolding of the broadcast year.

This too was replicated in television with the annual round of sporting events, memorial and religious festivals. On the week of the launch of ITV, for example, the BBC held a special event to commemorate the anniversary of the Battle of Arnhem in World War Two. Scannell and Cardiff (1991) argue that one of the major events of the broadcasting year was Christmas, marking a conjunction between state, religion and the home. On radio this was also marked by the 'invented tradition' (Hobsbawm: 1983) of the monarch's address to the nation, and this was instituted on television on Christmas day on BBC and ITV in 1957. It was also supplemented by the kind of major events referred to above such as the Queen's Coronation, which *appear* to have a unifying 'function' in Dayan and Katz's terms. Such events were also broadcast by ITV. as will be discussed below. As I have already noted, however, such media events can prove problematic in assessing consensus or unity. Yet although people may be watching for different reasons or with different feelings and thoughts, the temporal act of viewing - a simultaneous moment of spectatorship - can articulate a powerful sense of the nation. of what the historian Benedict Anderson has described as an 'imagined community' (1991). For Anderson, it is impossible for the members of a nation to know all its other members, as a result a sense of nationhood, or community, is very much an imagined experience. The imagining process is facilitated by mass media such as newspapers which both promote issues of common interest and, by publishing daily in morning or evening editions, imply a shared moment of readership. This sense of shared moment is enhanced in the broadcasting experience by the transmission of any single programme to a mass audience which may potentially number millions of viewers.

The ostensibly centralizing tendency of television as a cultural form was also reinforced by the increasingly reflexive nature of the medium. As we saw in the case of early radio, Scannell and Cardiff (1991) saw self-reflexivity as a BBC response to

constructing an audience which had something in common, even if that 'something' was radio itself. At the same time, they argue, reflexivity in terms of humour was a sign of an immature self-consciousness – with one part of the radio's address embarrassed by the other. Certainly, self-reflexivity was apparent within television in the 1950s. One example of this is the celebrity slot on the BBC panel game *What's My Line?*. Every week, panellists would be blindfolded and have to guess the identity of the celebrity guest by asking them 'yes-no' questions. One edition featured the big band leader Victor Sylvester, who at that stage had had the longest running television show in the world. At that time, Sylvester would only have been known to most of the audience, or his work at least, through television or radio. Similarly there were other BBC shows which celebrated or interviewed well known people including *This is Your Life* and *Face-to-Face*. The first ever *This is Your Life* (transmitted on 29 September 1955) was hosted by Ralph Edwards, the host of the version aired in the US where the show had originated. The unwitting victim was Eamonn Andrews, the *What's My Line?* presenter who went on to host *This is Your Life*. A particularly notorious edition of *Face-to-Face*, an intimate one-to-one interview programme hosted by the former MP John Freeman, featured perhaps the best known television celebrity of the 1950s, Gilbert Harding. The interview (transmitted on 18 September 1960) was deeply probing and exposed Harding's profound sense of unhappiness and disappointment. It touched a very raw nerve on the subject of bereavement, with Freeman being unaware that Harding's mother had died only a short while earlier. Not long afterwards, Harding himself was dead.[xii] The point, however, is that like the early days of radio, television had to address an audience which shared the same common denominators. However, at this time, when the television audience was still expanding, such self-reflexivity was a means by which television could validate its own personalities while simultaneously making them known to new viewers.

Yet as we have discussed, Scannell and Cardiff see the early days of radio-reflexivity as a sign of potential immaturity (1991). By contrast I want to argue that this self-reflexivity in television at the end of the 1950s and 1960s was a sign of increasing sophistication and maturity. Certainly by the early 1960s, the satire within programmes

such as *That Was the Week That Was* demonstrated a confidence that audiences *would* know the names, faces and voices of people in the public domain. People would have found Willie Rushton's impersonation of Harold Macmillan funny only if they knew what Macmillan looked like, what he sounded like and what he stood for. This self-reflexivity was dependent on other areas of output within the mixed programme schedule, and also on the output of the 'other' channel. Reflexivity was self-supporting and mutually comfortable. A useful indicator here (again) is the realm of media events and politics which, as we have seen, also *seemed* to uphold the claim that television *was* something central to British life. This claim was reinforced by the arrival of ITV, especially when both channels covered or reported on major events. This is because television is seen to depict that which is important. One example of this is the live televised State Opening of Parliament in 1958, broadcast on both BBC and ITV. As Scannell observes (1996), there were two very different 'demeanours' towards the event by each channel's commentator. At the closing stages of the event, Scannell (ibid.: 87-88) compares the two commentaries.

Richard Dimbleby (BBC): The Throne remains, rich and shining, near and yet remote, the symbol of this rare meeting of the Queen, the Lords and the Commons – the Three Estates of Parliament. And so begins, with ceremony that springs from the very roots of our democratic history, the fourth session of the three hundredth Parliament of the Realm.

Robin Day (ITV): Everyone is wondering at Westminster what Government will write the next speech from this Throne. Before Her majesty sits on it again there may be a General Election. That is when we have our say. And what Her Majesty reads from this Throne depends on what we put in the ballot box.

These 'demeanours' demonstrate the different approaches of the two broadcasters, but despite this, both services validated the same occasion as an important event. In the

case of the BBC this is achieved through the positioning of the Queen as symbolic head of the nation, legitimised by the weight of tradition and history. With ITV this is achieved through the positioning of the audience as participants in the democratic process. Although the commentaries are different, each channel shores up the legitimacy of the other channel's coverage.

Television's construction of events as important, shared national experiences was 'worked through,' in John Ellis' sense (2000), in some of the political satire on television in the early 1960s. In *That Was The Week That Was*, transmitted on 28 December 1963, David Frost performed a spoof commentary of the Queen joining a barge in the Pool of London to sail out to the Royal Yacht Britannia. In a reverent tone, spoken slowly with received pronunciation, Frost delivered a commentary in a slow, solemn style familiar to viewers well versed in royal events.[xiii]

> And as the barge moves slowly away from the quayside it is becoming clear that something has gone wrong. The Royal Barge is, as it were, sinking. The sleek royal blue hull of the barge is sliding gracefully, almost regally, beneath the waters of the Pool of London. Perhaps the lip readers amongst you will be able to make out what Prince Philip has just said to the Captain of the Barge...

> ...and now the Queen, smiling radiantly, is swimming for her life. Her Majesty is wearing a silk ensemble in canary yellow.

Such a sketch does not reflect an embarrassment with other forms of BBC output per se, but an embarrassment with certain forms of television generally. Or it could be read as critical of other establishment institutions (such as the monarchy), or, more likely, the 'establishment' itself. In an almost philosophical sleight of hand, the satire too (on television) established itself as having unparalleled access to a sense of how things 'really are' or being at the centre of events. Not only was this constructed in *That Was the Week That Was* through reference to political events in the national news, it was also signalled in by the visibility in-camera of other cameras, lighting rigs, other studio

equipment and the studio audience. Su Holmes (2005) has argued that the fascination with the workings of television in cinema programmes in the early 1950s demonstrated a self-consciousness about the development of the new medium. With *That Was the Week That Was*, however, there was a bullish confidence about breaking the conventions of television, about deliberately having the mechanics of television's operation in vision. This was later described as 'the new television brutalism' by the jazz musician and critic George Melly, a reference to the modish 'brutal' architecture of public buildings and council estates in the period (Melly cf Sandbrook: 2005: 546). The impression was one of being up-to-the minute, of seeing 'behind-the-scenes', witnessing the workings of broadcasting, and having less 'mediated' access to the issues of the day (or week) that were central to national public life.

There is, however, a problem here, namely the idea that television (or radio) *can* act as a 'social cement', or allow an audience access to the central concerns of society or public life. Nick Couldry (2003a, 2003b) has been critical of the way certain academics have suggested that the media can either connect people to the central values of society or, as is increasingly the case with theories of postmodernism, that the media *itself* constitutes that centre. As seen here, Dayan and Katz (1992) subscribe to the view, following Shils and Young (1956), that media events connect people at the peripheries of society to its core, central values. Yet Couldry, drawing on classical sociology, argues that because society is an abstract entity, it cannot exist in a concrete form, it cannot be touched or tasted, and it therefore cannot have a centre.[xiv] As a result, the media cannot offer access to the central concerns of society, nor can they constitute such a centre.

Couldry's argument can help us to understand the relationship between cultural fragmentation and centralisation implicit within the television structures and schedules of the BBC and ITV in the 1950s and 1960s. By providing a mixed programme schedule aimed at developing a television culture amongst a diverse audience (Thumim: 2004), and with an increasing range of programming that addressed issues of class and difference (which we will explore in the following chapters), ITV and

BBC could discursively claim to offer a range of perspectives on the 'British' situation. Yet, while it is tempting to see ITV and its regional companies as exposing the geographical (and hence cultural) fragmentation which had been hitherto concealed by a dominant ideology of cultural consensus, perpetuated from London, this too would be to succumb to the idea of a social or cultural 'centre'. It would imply that the television duopoly, constituted by BBC and ITV, positioned television as a centralised site of culture where it was possible to view and measure cultural fragmentation. Instead, I want to argue that television did not constitute direct access to the central concerns of British society, or act as a central cultural site through which the absence of consensus was measured, but rather that through its mixed programme schedules it *looked* as if it did.

This development was a consequence of the expansion of television in the 1950s and 1960s, and it has implications for thinking about the construction of media power. The way television *looked* as if it connected its audience to the central concerns of society, or to a central site where difference was made apparent, relates to the idea of the newly visible. Television, as a visual medium, constructed and made visible these cultural propositions the first time. I will return to this issue in chapter six and in the conclusions. In chapters four and five I will look at the relationship between programme forms and social and cultural change. Before that, in the next chapter, it will be necessary to examine the impact that the expansion of the television institution has on recording technologies. This is important because it connects with processes of industrialisation and the development of the programme factory in the period. It also connects with the increasing commodification of television, with recorded programmes being exported and imported, allowing audiences in different regions or countries to watch programming at different times. The development of recording technology also has important aesthetic impacts, and it allows television to respond and reflect ongoing social and cultural change, and to extend the range of programme forms in the mixed programme schedule.

[i] See Scannell's discussion of the inclusiveness of wartime radio programmes (1996).

[ii] There are numerous historical accounts which have sought to challenge the 'myth' of consensus. See, for example, Ben Pimlott (1988) and Stephen Brooke (1992).

[iii] This reinforces the notion, perhaps, that London is equated with 'the national'.

[iv] See also Medhurst, 2005.

[v] See Holmes for a discussion of how television in the 1950s attempted to 'borrow and capitalise on cinema's glamour' (2005: 10).

[vi] It is important to note, however, that other behind the scenes' work on the production would have been conducted in Manchester, such as the construction and striking of the set.

[vii] As indicated previously, however, the main account here is Bernard Sendall's who was Deputy Director General of the ITA, so his defence of the regulator's position here has to be understood in terms of both his proximity to events and to his potentially partisan position.

[viii] The wheeling-dealing Lew Grade, Deputy Head of ATV was later to claim in interview that six months of scheduling for the ITV 'network' was worked out over three separate meetings in three days between the four main companies. *The Persuader: The TV Times of Lord Lew Grade*, transmitted 27 August 1994, BBC2.

[ix] The more jaded observer might suggest, however, that the apparently magnanimous neighbour was only showing off his or her new acquisition (television) to make the other jealous.

[x] For more discussion of this issue see Couldry (2003a; 2003b), and for examples of ambivalent or indifferent audiences responses to recent royal related events such as the death and funeral of Diana, Princess of Wales, see Turnock (2000) and Thomas (2002).

[xi] Cited from *The Persuader: The TV Times of Lord Lew Grade*, transmitted 27 August 1994. BBC2.

[xii] The subject of celebrity and 'television personalities' will receive more extended discussion in chapter six, but for more details about Gilbert Harding and the *Face-to-Face* interview see Medhurst (1991).

[xiii] Although ITV companies had experimented with some satirical revues, such as *Melvillainy* on Southern Television, satire was, however, inhibited by a clause in the 1954 Television Act. This prevented programme companies (though excluded the BBC) from 'offensive representation of, or representation to, a living person'. See Sendall (1982) and also Carpenter (2002).

[xiv] See Couldry (2003a and 2003b) for his criticism of the functionalist assumptions which underlie the notion of the 'centre'. There are also academics who argue that the concept of society is no longer helpful. See, for example, Ingold, T. (1996).

Chapter 3: Technologies

One of the reasons that it is often difficult today to study 'old' television programmes is that they simply no longer exist. Until the late 1950s and 1960s most (though not all) programmes were broadcast live and were not recorded. One of the major changes in the 1950s and '60s within television broadcasting, both in Britain and abroad, was the increased use of recording technologies. These were film[i] and video. The development and use of these technologies was to have profound impacts on television's mode of production, programme aesthetics, broadcasting economics and cultural politics. Yet the development of film and video in television broadcasting is not a simple tale of chronological progress, advance or improvement. When television began being broadcast in high definition services in Europe in the mid-1930s, film had been around, effectively, for forty years. Its use in television in Britain, however, was constrained by a range of factors, including debates about what television actually *was*, and about what television should *look* like. With video, development was necessarily predicated on research in plastics and sound recording technologies in the 1940s, yet its use was inhibited by a range of practical and economic considerations at the end of the 1950s. These included the development of different types of videotape, broadcasting economics, international broadcasting policy, and also the increased use of film. In many respects, the arrival of ITV facilitated the use of these technologies.

Yet the developments and discourses surrounding television recording technologies found their roots prior to the 1950s and, complemented by a range of institutional, economic and cultural factors, these continued into the 1960s and beyond. This chapter will first explore the highly visible ways that commercial television made use of film. It will then go on to look at the ways in which developments in recording had been mainly pioneered by the BBC, both prior to the arrival of commercial competition, and then after it. The chapter will then conclude by looking at the way that recording technologies helped extend new forms of visibility over space, and in space, in relation to television drama. It will show how this permitted a new range of drama styles and aesthetics, and how it made them accessible to a diverse television audience. This will

link directly to discussion in the following chapters of how television is able to represent and promote social and cultural change.

Film and ITV:

Perhaps the three most immediately visible programme innovations that ITV introduced in the middle of the 1950s were all film related: advertising, the import of programmes from the USA and action-adventure series. Indeed a striking but often overlooked feature of the new ITV channel was the advent of advertisements, which were all produced on film. This deployment of advertising on television, which had, after all, been one of motivating factors behind the campaign for commercial television (see chapter one), proved to be a major upheaval in the advertising and film industries (Meyrick: 1976). Prior to 1955, apart from some advertising in cinema and on Radio Luxembourg, most advertising forms took place in print, in newspapers, magazines and on billboards. Not only a challenge for the advertising industry, the presentation of television advertisements was also a novelty for the television audience. On the opening weekend of ITV in London, the comedian Tommy Trinder announced to the audience at home (cf Meyrick: 1976: 109), 'Now, you lucky people, what you've all been waiting for, THE COMMERCIALS!' The first advert on the opening night of ITV was for Gibbs S-R toothpaste, and further advertisements promoted other products still known today, such as Kraft Cheese and Guinness. Looking back on the early days of television advertising for ITV's 21st anniversary in 1976, advertising consultant David Meyrick (ibid.) argued that 'Many got it wrong at the beginning.' He offers a number of reasons why, but what becomes clear is that the attitude towards television advertising at its outset was similar to the attitude which had characterised early definitions of television – and that was its 'hybridity'. Rather than simply existing as a medium in its own right, television in its early forms, in the 1930s, was perceived as a mixture of film, radio, theatre and newspapers (Jacobs: 2000). With television advertising in 1955, a similar attitude emerged in an advertising industry uninitiated to the new medium. Within this new 'hybrid' television advertising form print and cinema were the dominating influences.

In the first instance, advertising up until 1955 was predominantly a print-based medium, and the vogue for print-based copy at the time was a whimsical style (Meyrick: 1976), using slightly fanciful or florid writing. An advertisement for Nestle's Cream on page 2 of the first edition of the *TV Times*, dated 20 September 1955 gives a slight impression of this type of style.

Going... Going... Gone!

If a mother leaves two growing boys, not to mention a husband alone in the house with Nestle's Cream, what can she expect? Nestle's Cream keeps fresh and ready to use indefinitely – but only as long as the family will let it.

Nestle's Cream is real cream, pure cream and nothing else. Ask any strawberry! Ask any peach!

As Meyrick argues, advertising agencies and copywriters did not necessarily know how to adapt to the new medium. On the opening night of ITV, for example, an advert for Guinness tried to bring one of its existing advertising billboards to life with a zoo-keeper chasing a sea-lion with a bottle balanced on its nose. This advert had itself been trailed with a small print advertisement on page 37 of the same *TV Times* with the caption, 'Guinness posters come to life on commercial T.V.'.

The second medium that dominated the new advertising form was film (both as a technological form and as an industry). Yet this was to prove highly problematic at the outset of television advertising. Part of the problem was that film studio techniques had changed little since the war (Meyrick: 1976). Cameras were large and lighting was numerous and bulky. Most film lighting, at this stage, was still created for cinema, and most lighting crew and cameramen were unable to meet the demands of the poor definition television screen (Meyrick: 1976). The traditional cinematographer also lacked experience in product shots. Up until that time, product imagery had been the

domain of still photography. Many agencies brought stills photographers onto the film studio floor, creating an uneasy alliance. As Meyrick notes (1976: 110):

> On ITV's first night, Kraft demonstrated that they had the right idea with a Cheese Slices spot, but the technical know-how was missing. The slices looked even more like floppy rubber than they usually do, and instead of showing one really appetising sandwich, the camera settled on five, which the lack of technique and the low definition managed to reduce to a rather limp mass.

What quickly became clear was that putting stills photographers and cinematographers together was not working. Over time, however, equipment became lighter and more versatile, advertising agencies started developing their own television departments, and through experience experts began to emerge (Meyrick: 1976). As a result, a number of successful production companies appeared, and they adopted a more industrial, factory style approach to producing adverts. As Meyrick suggests (1976: 110), 'Top directors and cinematographers were signed to exclusive contracts and they could script, produce, shoot, edit, record, print and distribute your commercial.' Interestingly, many working in advertising defected to the mainstream commercial cinema industry, though as Meyrick argues, the skills and experience which increasingly became required meant that television advertising soon ceased to be a temporary stop-gap for production personnel between film or television contracts. Like the main television industry itself, so too did those working in advertising adopt rationalised industrial practices amidst discourses of professionalism.

Yet one of the major aesthetic developments which occurred in the first few years of television advertising was a result of the time pressure which each advert faced on transmission. Up until 1955, advertising occupied space on the page of newspapers, magazines or billboards. It could be measured in inches, often literally in column inches. With television, advertising occupied time, airtime, and in the very early days advertisements ran for as long as 60 seconds. A minute's airtime afforded many producers the luxury of including a range of standard film techniques. An

advertisement might therefore include an establishing shot, a series of medium close-ups, ending in a long or pack shot. Running times were, however, soon reduced to 30 seconds. Indeed, by 1964, some advertisements on the Palm Sunday ATV evening were running for as little as 15 seconds. This meant that the advertising agency producer was forced to condense material into a severely restricted timeslot. 'Given that situation,' argues Meyrick, especially in instances where film shooting ran over by a number of seconds, 'it's hard not to see how the jump cut was born,' (1976: 110). In the mainstream film industry, continuity editing had been the dominant style, with narrative action being linked by connecting scenes. Increasing time pressure in television advertising, however, required more elliptical editing, which meant that extraneous connecting narrative sequences were omitted. As a result (ibid.), 'a commercial could really start to move. The photographic techniques were joined by an equally fluid system of editing.'

The second highly visible programme form that arrived with ITV was a large number of filmed series imported from the USA. Most of the initial raft of imports tended to be comedies, westerns or, slightly later, police or detective shows. The very first to hit ITV screens, however, was *I Love Lucy*, a sitcom starring Lucille Ball who appeared on the first cover of *TV Times*. This sitcom had been running in the USA since 1951 and its novelty was that it was recorded with three cameras using film. During production, the performance was made in front of a studio audience, and then edited together in the cutting room with footage from the three cameras. The result was a tight and fast paced comedy, and with one camera trained on Ball at all times, scenes could be intercut with close-up reaction shots (Goddard: 1991). Yet although it was filmed in front of an audience, a programme could be shot discontinuously, with scenes being restaged if necessary. As well as the fast pace and polished delivery, *I Love Lucy* also had popular appeal in America because the on-screen husband-and-wife relationship between Lucy and Ricky Ricardo was mirrored by their real-life marriage as Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz (Landay: 2003). The advantages of recording were demonstrated in 1952 when Lucy's on-screen pregnancy imitated that of Ball's real pregnancy. In an episode filmed on 3 October 1952, and broadcast on 8 December 1952, Lucy tells

Ricky for the first time that she is pregnant, but circumstances conspire against her delivering the fateful news. The final scene is played out in Ricky's nightclub, and in the first take both Ball and Arnaz became intensely emotional. The scene was re-shot as originally scripted with a more upbeat ending, but it was decided to keep the original, emotional take (Landay: 2003). The synopsis for the scene ('roll clip') therefore came to read (cf: Landay: 2003):

> Ricky gets an anonymous note that a woman wants to tell her husband they are expecting a 'blessed event' and Ricky goes from table to table looking for the couple as he sings 'Rockabye baby.' He comes to Lucy, realizes it is her, and after an emotional moment of realization, sings 'We're Having a Baby' as he walks around the stage with a tearful Lucy. The episode ends with a close-up of the couple, crying and laughing.

The climax of the pregnancy narrative came when the filmed episode of Lucy giving birth to a baby boy was transmitted on the same day that Ball had been booked to have her baby delivered by Caesarean section, 19 January 1953. Ball and Arnaz's own baby also turned out to be a boy, and the next day the news headlines in the *New York Daily Mirror* read 'Lucy Sticks to Script: A Boy it Is!', (Landay: 2003). Though recorded, *I Love Lucy* was able to blur, in America at least, 'the line between reality and artifice with the synchronic "real-life" and "fictional' births",' (Landay: 2003).

According to Goddard (1991), a pre-filmed *Amos 'N' Andy* had been shown on the BBC prior to the arrival of ITV in 1955. Following the success of *I Love Lucy*, however, no fewer than 12 US comedies had been shown on British television, more or less evenly divided between BBC and ITV, by the end of 1956 (ibid.).

The other highly visible development, which emerged subsequent to the arrival of ITV in 1955, was the profusion of filmed series involving some kind of action or adventure. They included both American and British fare. The main imports from the US fell within two genres, the western and the cop/detective show. The use of film as a

recording technology and the emergence of these two distinct genres was very much a product of the increasing involvement of the US film industry in American television. This signalled an increasing shift from New York as a site of production, traditionally associated with Broadway and the theatre, and away from the live televised play. Instead, Hollywood emerged as a leading player within the television industry, with rationalised serial production minimising overheads, and with a ready supply of scenery and props from its film production of then popular genres such as the western and film noir. Not least, these filmed programmes could be transmitted across the USA in different time zones. Being recorded, as opposed to live transmission, they had repeat value, and could be sold on abroad. The advantage was that domestic sales could recoup costs of production, whereas foreign sales were a way of making a profit. As such, these programmes could be sold relatively cheaply, and were very attractive to foreign television companies looking for an affordable way to fill their schedules. In the latter half of the 1950s, therefore, a number of well-known American television series graced the British television screen. In the western genre they included *Gunsmoke* (first televised on ITV as *Gun Law*) first shown in 1956, *The Lone Ranger* (BBC 195⁻). *Cheyenne* (ITV 1958), *Maverick* (ITV 1959), *Rawhide* (ITV 1959) and *Bonanza* (ITV 1960). In the cop or detective genre there was *Dragnet* (ITV 1955), *Highway Patrol* (ITV 1956) and *77 Sunset Strip* (ITV 1960).[ii]

Yet serial production on film also expanded in Britain. While imported serial programming was a very cost-effective way of filling the schedules, and while popular foreign series provided a relatively stable, known-entity for television advertisers, there were quota restrictions as to how much foreign material British broadcasters could use. With the opening up of the commercial sector in television, foreign quota agreements had been made with British trade unions to ensure that their members, engaged in a range of television production capacities (acting, writing, music, cameras, sets and lighting for example), did not lose their jobs. At ITV, an agreement had been made that foreign-filmed programmes should not exceed, on average, seven hours a week, of which not more than four on average could be shown in the evening. This worked out

as a quota of 14 per cent a week (Sendall: 1982).[iii] Production of British filmed serials was therefore one way of ensuring work for British employees.

At the same time, there are three other reasons why there was a significant expansion of filmed serial production in Britain in the second half of the 1950s, which then went through a further resurgence in the 1960s. The first, as we have already seen, is that serialisation is a useful way of reducing costs. Cast, crew and equipment can be operated on an economy of scale. With film technology, a piecemeal production line - known as the 'programme factory'[iv] - can also rationalise the programme-making process even further, with the cost effective use and time-allocation of resources. Secondly, some of the interests of the new programme companies already included film production facilities, such as ABDC and ITPC which had film studios in north London. This coincided with a general decline in British film industry revenues at the time.[v] The use of the film industry within British television production was a further rational use of available resources. Thirdly, television entrepreneurs such as Lew Grade shrewdly saw (much as senior personnel had started to see the potential of BBC programming in the early 1950s) that recorded programming could provide a major revenue earning export commodity.[vi] Certainly, several figures were alert to the international potential of filmed serial production, and many of the players in the field were of a transnational hue. Two of the pioneers of filmed serial production in Britain in the late 1950s were, in fact American. The brothers Harry and Edward Danziger made a number of crime and thriller series cheaply for ITV such as *Mark Saber* and *Man from Interpol*. Other international productions included *African Patrol* (South Africa) and *Hawkeye* (Australia). Such imports or international co-operation was not solely the preserve of the new commercial television channel, however. The BBC was involved with international co-finance and production with, for example, *The Third Man*.[vii]

Yet it is perhaps the filmed swashbucklers which are most remembered by audiences in Britain from the end of the 1950s. One filmed action-adventure series which is often fondly remembered is *The Adventures of Robin Hood* (1955-1959), made by ITC in

conjunction with Sapphire Films for Associated Television (ATV) with Richard Greene in the title role.[viii] It was successfully sold in the US market at the end of 1955 for a reported million and a quarter dollars, or half a million pounds (Chapman: 2002). A number of other swashbuckling adventure series about costumed adventurers, knights and seafarers followed suit. The big company success story in this respect was ITC, which became a full subsidiary of ATV in 1958, and acted effectively to provide its own international distribution. Three years later ITC acquired the British National Studios, re-equipped and re-furbished it, now calling it the Elstree Studios, where it became the centre of ITC's production for its most successful programmes in the 1960s and 1970s (Osgerby and Gough-Yates: 2001). For a brief moment, in 1960, however, *Kine Weekly* reported that filmed serial production was slowing up, with only ITC producing one series (*Danger Man*) and a number of pilots (Chapman: 2002). One reason was that British television companies had become interested in the new technology of videotape or (as still the case with later series such as *Z Cars* at the BBC) producing drama live. This was complemented by the fact that film production was still very expensive. In the first series of *The Avengers* in 1961, for example, when episodes were transmitted live or recorded on videotape, the average cost per episode was £3.500. By 1965, however, with the use of colour film, an average episode was costing around £35,000-£40,000 (Chapman: 2002).

The filmed serial at ITC seemed to go through a renewed phase of vigour in the 1960s. Moving from the costumed swashbucklers of the late 1950s, there now emerged in British television new types of action and adventure programming of which *The Avengers* was a prime example.[ix] Probably the first, however, was the only series in production by ITC in 1960, *Danger Man*. This announced a vogue for modish spy thrillers, and was in some ways modelled on the novels and cartoon strips which eventually spawned the James Bond franchise in the early 1960s.[x] *Danger Man* ran in two incarnations, a 39 half-hour episode series which ran from 1960-61, and 45 hour long episodes which were transmitted over a three year period between 1964 and 1967. It was the second incarnation that broke through the American market, being called *Secret Agent,* and which sported Edwin Anstey's famous 'High Wire' theme tune,

which had been changed to give it more of a Bond feel (Chapman: 2002). With the rise of other action adventure heroes, such as Simon Templar in *The Saint*, and with the success of sales abroad, Lew Grade's ITC was the most profitable company in this area. Its foreign earnings amounted to $10.5 million in 1965 and $15 million in 1966, Grade himself was knighted and ATV won two Queen's Awards to Industry for its export success. So successful was Grade that he was able to pre-sell *The Persuaders* to ABC in the USA in 1971, even before its stars Roger Moore and Tony Curtis had even agreed to appear.[xi] The most successful individual programme, however, was *The Avengers*. Starting life very differently, first being transmitted live and then recorded on video, it featured two male leads in a dowdy quasi-realist detective style drama, with a dour jazz soundtrack and claustrophobic interior settings. *The Avengers* morphed over a period of years into a glossy adventure series, archly parodying the form, yet at the same time providing a glamorous and ludic edge to a stylish British modernity - perhaps pre-figuring an aesthetic shift to postmodernism (Chapman: 2002). As Chapman has argued (2002: 10):

The Avengers was the first British series screened on primetime network television in the USA (the other series had been bought primarily as schedule fillers) and, pound for pound, was probably the most profitable television export of the decade.[xii]

Film technology and the BBC:

Despite the high-profile visibility of filmed programming on ITV, film as a recording technology on British television had been pioneered by the BBC. At the outset, however, what defined the television medium was its 'liveness'. This was because television was philosophically perceived as a communications technology. From its first beginnings with John Logie Baird's test transmissions of 'Stooky Bill' (the head of a ventriloquist's dummy) in the mid 1920s, 'television' was effectively an exercise in transmitting an image from one space to another in real time. In perhaps a similar vein to the way radio broadcasting had emerged in the early 1920s, out of technology used for (military) communication purposes, television had not been conceived

necessarily in aesthetic terms. When the BBC started to transmit low-frequency television signals in the early 1930s, they were mainly talking heads or scenes of dancers. Yet this seemed to be more a matter of extending the range and vision of a particular performance to a wider audience situated elsewhere. When the high-definition television service started on 2 November 1936, this apparent function of communications 'relay' persisted.

The relay function was also perceived as being the modus operandi in televised drama. Three dominant discourses in circulation at the BBC during the 1930s were that television was a medium characterised by 'live immediacy', 'intimacy' and 'hybridity'.[xiii] and this profoundly influenced the presentation of dramatic material. Before the Second World War, much drama transmission centred on scenes from West End stage plays, either transmitted via outside broadcasting equipment – or re-enacted within the television studio itself. The prevailing ideology of 'liveness' meant that transmission was concerned initially with the theatrical mode of production, and that the close up, on the multi-camera set (variable lenses were not developed and deployed until the 1950s) provided a way of seeing better into the actor's performance. That is not to say, however, that (all) early television drama should be dismissed as 'stagey'. Although theatrical discourses and tropes persisted in television well into the 1950s and 1960s, this was neither due (necessarily or merely) to technological limitation or lack of aesthetic ambition. As Jason Jacobs has eloquently and convincingly argued, there were those producers who thought about the aesthetics of the new medium, and who sought to explore ways of presenting drama with camera movement and cutting (2000).

Yet it would be wrong to assume that 'liveness' was *the only* form of television in the early years. This is because television often transmitted filmed programmes such as cartoons, documentaries and newsreels (Barr: 1996). When the BBC television service closed down on 1 September 1939, prior to the imminent outbreak of war, it infamously did so halfway through a Disney Mickey Mouse cartoon. Nonetheless, these were films that had been made for cinematic exhibition and had not been

specifically produced *for* television. When television did produce its own films, in these early days, it was for demonstration purposes. Charles Barr notes (1996) that these films tended to 'simulate' live transmission, but were produced for transmission outside ordinary television hours to help television salesmen demonstrate their product to potential buyers. Film was also used over this period as inserts within live televised drama. This tended to be stock film footage culled from cinematic features (such as battle scenes), and it was not until the late 1940s that film was produced in-house for this purpose.

As Jacobs (2000) notes, however, the use of specially filmed sequences within live drama was surrounded by competing discourses. One of the issues centred on how to stage drama taking place out of doors. Only the film insert, telecined into the live action, could provide the large contrast in scale between interiors and exteriors. Yet this was seen as adding 'impurities' to the aesthetic of live drama, because it interfered with television's 'intimacy' in two ways - temporally and spatially. According to Jacobs (2000: 127) this was because the inserts 'vitiated the live co-temporality between performer, audience and producer, and expanded the production beyond the smaller spaces of the studio.' Some at the BBC felt that the use of film within live television drama denigrated the quality of dramatic presentation. There was also the technical difficulty of matching the filmed material to the lighting and tempo of the studio scenes, and the difference in visual textures was perceived as 'unprofessional'. In early televised dramas, film inserts had three particular uses. They could provide special effects, such as rain, fog and fire, by being superimposed over one or more of the camera channels. They could provide location or exterior shots that would have been difficult to do in the studio – such as establishing shots or battle scenes. They also provided a practical breathing space for scenery and costume changes. Following the Second World War there was a shortage of filmed material at the BBC, so the Corporation established a Film Unit which produced newsreels, travelogues and documentaries. The Film Unit also made inserts for live dramas using actors from the plays. Yet the problem of matching studio aesthetics with the film aesthetic remained. As a result, in the early 1950s studio producers and directors were themselves

increasingly engaged in the production of external sequences. There were still unhappy consequences, difficulties and arguments, however, as television producers themselves often had little experience of using film equipment. When these producers used the film equipment, they tended to favour the replication of the visual style of the studio (tempo, lighting and composition) rather than working in more cinematic tropes. This was further complicated when the producers had little contact with the film editors who cut and spliced the images together (Jacobs: 2000).

This was to change because, while some had seen the use of inserts as problematic, others saw the use of inserts as a means to extend television drama's visual range. Although inserts had been used in the early days of television drama, its impact was perhaps more popularly felt in the early 1950s with the work of people such as the producer Rudolph Cartier. Cartier has been much credited with pioneering ways of overcoming the spatial limitations of live studio drama with a combination of filmed inserts and camera mobility. Interestingly, Cartier had come from a film background before the war, and with his experience of studio work at the BBC he was well able to bridge the gap between the hitherto distinct and separate filmed and live sequences. Cartier also specifically wanted to push the aesthetics of the television medium outwards, in contradiction to discourses which placed, and wanted to keep television within an 'intimate' mode of address (Jacobs: 2000). As Sydney-Smith has argued, the use of filmed inserts could expand the screen story world by introducing 'extra-diegetic space' (2002: 9). In Cartier's work, therefore, the film insert did not merely constitute an establishing or linking shot, or offer brief respite for harried cast and crew, but particularly provided a way of furthering the action and drama. Perhaps the best two examples of Cartier's oeuvre here, both in collaboration with the writer Nigel Kneale, are his six part series *The Quatermass Experiment* in 1953, and his version of George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, first transmitted live on 12 December 1954.[xiv] I will return to the work of Cartier and Kneale later in this chapter.

Telerecording, as it was known in Britain, was a new technology which had emerged after the war following developments by the US Navy and Air Force. Called *kinescope*

in the USA, it recorded a programme output at the moment of transmission onto 16mm or 35mm film. It could not be prepared in advance, however, prior to transmission. Yet it did mean that once a programme had been recorded it could be repeated. With the advent of this recording technology, programmes could also be reviewed by producers, production teams and executives to reflect on techniques and representation styles. This development had been predicted in the late 1940s by Maurice Gorham, who had for a short while been Head of the BBC's Television Service.[xv] His argument, written in 1949, has been neatly summarised by Jacobs. Telerecording would mean that (Jacobs: 2000: 80):

> Producers would be able to see and evaluate their own productions after transmission (during transmission the producer would see both preview and transmission monitors). Telerecordings could also be used as training material for new producers.

Although this probably became a more common-place practice once the use of film and videotape had become more widely established, telerecordings still provided a useful tool for analysis at a relatively early stage. This turned out to be case with the telerecording of sporting or other occasions. This was because events could be recorded and repeated at convenient times for viewers. An early example of this was the 1949 Oxford-Cambridge boat race which was shown live in the afternoon, but also repeated in the evening. Such telerecordings were closely scrutinised at yearly meetings at the BBC to review sports commentary and presentation (Whannel: 1992a). The use of telerecording, however, still perpetuated the ideology that television was a 'relay' technology. Events were still transmitted live, but now the primary event being relayed by the camera (for example a sporting event) could be shown again for an audience at a later time or date.

Primary events did not just have to be sporting occasions or special broadcasts, they could also be live studio drama performances. Up until the early 1950s, the BBC had re-staged several dramas. For Jacobs (2000), this meant that producers had the

opportunity to experiment with the television form, trying out different ways of executing the production. One example of this was Patrick Hamilton's stage play *Rope* from 1929, which was first adapted for television in 1939, and then revised in 1947 and 1950. However, the BBC also produced straightforward repeats of a live drama production within a short while of original transmission, using the same cast, principal crew, scripts and technical specifications. Such repeat performances were a useful way of filling airtime. In 1949, Gorham recognised that telerecording a live performance could provide valuable savings in resources. Effectively it would save studio space and time because cast and crew would not need to re-occupy a studio to re-stage the live performance. As Gorham stated (1949: 39 cf Jacobs: 2000: 80), 'At Alexandra Palace, for instance, it [telerecording] will be the equivalent of one new fully equipped studio, if not more.'[xvi] This was not fully realised until 1954, but agreements with Equity, the actor's union, had to be struck because performers did not want to lose fees from repeat performances. The potential financial benefits of recording drama productions were undermined, however, when the compromise deal dictated that recordings could only be made of the *second* live performance.[xvii]

The production of plays was to cause other problems for the BBC. When it wanted to produce a live version of *Clive of India* in 1938, for example, the BBC had to obtain permission from Twentieth Century Fox who had made a film version four years previously.[xviii] Rights clearances became even more problematic with recording, and there were cases of recorded material being destroyed or recording prohibited such as when, in 1951, Warner Brothers banned the recording of Robert E. Sherwood's play *The Petrified Forest,* which had been made into a film in 1936 (Jacobs: 2000). One way that the BBC sought to overcome this problem was through the commissioning of its own drama writers, and it did this with the appointment of its own staff writers Nigel Kneale and Philip Mackie in the early 1950s. As Jacobs (2000: 12) notes, this constituted an attempt by the BBC to generate new material which was owned and could be recorded by the BBC itself: 'This would not have been an issue before telerecording when television programmes could not be thought of as *material* commodities.' Maurice Gorham had predicted in 1949 that telerecorded programmes

could become commodities for potential export, and in 1952 the BBC established a transcription unit to distribute telerecordings and purpose made BBC films abroad, especially to Canada and Australia. In 1953 a recording of the Coronation was rapidly processed and flown to the north American continent by Royal Air Force jet bombers for next day transmission.^{vii}

Developments prior to the arrival of ITV, however, also suggest that the BBC was interested in promoting or importing programme material that was shot directly on film. In July 1954, the BBC showed a twelve part filmed serial from the USA, *I Am the Law*, an early example of the US 'cop show' genre. Several months later, in November 1954, the BBC transmitted the first British filmed police series, *Fabian of the Yard*, which ran from November 1954 to March 1957. The series followed the exploits of the real-life Scotland Yard detective Bob Fabian, who was played by the actor Bruce Sefton. The programme was shot in a mixture of studio settings and on location, with much of the footage using asynchronous sound and voice-over. Each episode would also end with the real Bob Fabian directly addressing the camera. While attempting to signal the show's authenticity, this led instead to a conflation of styles and registers. 'Such a confusion of the "codes" of representation', Susan Sydney-Smith suggests (2002: 101), resulted 'in an identificatory problem in which both the real-life detective, "Bob" Fabian himself, and the actor Bruce Sefton, lost out, each proving the other false.' Yet although based on a British character, and depicting a particular vision of a consensus post-war Britain, *Fabian of the Yard* was also made as an export commodity. Produced by a British film company external to the BBC, Trinity Productions, the programme was made with an eye firmly on the American market. This is explicitly marked by the snippets of introductory London history offered by the voice-over commentary in many of the external scenes shot on location. Such scraps of information assume an interested, yet uninitiated audience. In 'Bombs in Piccadilly', a 1955 episode about a series of terrorist attacks in London, the voice-over introduces a number of historical curiosities. These include the Tower of London, the building of which was 'started by William the Conquerer in 1078', and also the hundred year old Stock exchange. Action also takes place in a bombed-out house, 'a victim of Hitler's

air raids', and a chase on-foot through Chelsea passes 'near the studios of James Whistler, famous American painter'. Such trivia might possibly have been neither new nor interesting to a domestic audience. In any event, what this demonstrates is that the BBC were taking a new interest in film as a recording technology (and serialisation) prior to the arrival of ITV.

Although, in many respects, videotape was to become a dominant medium of recording at the BBC in the early 1960s, and was, in drama, confined to the studio, film was to play an important part in the emergence of the so-called 'Golden Age' of drama (McLoone: 1996). This included Peter Watkins' documentary dramas *Culloden* (1964) and *The War Game* (1965), and standards from the drama canon such as Ken Loach's *Up the Junction* (1965) and Tony Garnett's *Cathy Come Home* (1966).[xx] This was in part facilitated by developments in lightweight 16mm synchronised film camera equipment which could more easily be carried into the 'field' by a camera person and accompanying sound person. This meant an increased use of *actual locations* in dramatic works, thereby opening up screen space into new 'outside' spaces. This new equipment was to prove particularly useful to programme makers such as Ken Russell and Peter Watkins who had learned their 'film-craft' in the amateur film-movement of the 1950s.[xxi]

Videotape:

Despite the widespread use of film, it is generally agreed that one of the most important technological developments in British television in the 1950s and 1960s was the advent of videotape. The impact of videotape was, however, slowly felt for a number of reasons. Firstly, it did not simply arrive overnight, but was the result of several-years of research and development. Secondly, it was not immediately adopted by television practitioners. It was also very expensive, which meant that it was not very popular with managers in television. Thirdly, videotape editing was pioneered very slowly. This meant that in the early days programmes were recorded 'as live' – in

chronological sequence in the same way as if they had been performed live in front of an audience. Fourthly, video tape was predominantly confined to the studio.[xxii]

In the first instance, videotape emerged over a number of years, and when it was adopted by broadcasters, technical developments were still ongoing.[xxiii] The developments which made videotape possible occurred in plastics and in sound recording technologies. These had first been developed in sound tape at the end of the 1940s, which had been used in radio in the United States. The use of this new format had been impelled by pressure from performers who had to repeat radio performances across different US time zones. At that time, disc recordings offered a much poorer sound quality than live transmission. In 1947 the American singer Bing Crosby had been particularly impressed by Ampex sound recordings which used a reel-to-reel tape-recorder, and radio broadcasters in the USA caught on to the development. Ampex continued with their own research and development into video forms, and they met with success in 1956. In February that year, Ampex held a successful demonstration to 30 of its own employees, showing a programme recorded an hour previously, and then playing back a two minute sequence recorded during the meeting itself. In the weeks that followed, Ampex showed in secret its new 4-head 'Quadruplex' system to representatives from the major broadcasters in the USA, CBS, ABC, NBC. It also showed the new technology to representatives of the BBC. The equipment was publicly demonstrated in Chicago in April 1956, and by the end of the year Ampex had orders for around 84 video tape recorders (VTRs). Importantly, this included two for Associated-Rediffusion in London. Videotape went on air for the first time in the USA on 30 November 1956 from CBS Television City in Los Angeles. It was in use with NBC at the beginning of 1957, and ABC April 1957. During this time it was claimed that tape was saving the networks $10,000 a week in film and processing (Abramson: 2003). Yet the large number of orders meant that distribution was relatively slow, and it did not arrive with Associated-Rediffusion until the summer of 1958. This was partly because the Quadruplex system had to be converted for UK transmission. At the time, the machine itself cost £20,000, and a 12 and a half inch reel of tape cost £100, but the economic saving was that this reel could be used 100 times.

In the meantime, the BBC itself had been conducting its own research into videotape technology from as early as 1952. According to Peter Axon, who was head of the Recording Section of the BBC's Engineering Research Department (1953-1958), the BBC had always maintained a continuous and active interest in engineering developments. This included recording and quality in sound and vision. The fruits of this labour, Vision Electronic Recording Apparatus (VERA), were formally unveiled to the public in an April 1958 edition of the current affairs programme *Panorama*. Within this live programme, the veteran television presenter Richard Dimbleby asked the audience at home to note the time on the studio clock. He then talked through pictures of the BBC's new technology as it was recording before asking technicians to stop the machinery and rewind to the moment where he asked the audience to note the time on the clock. After showing the recorded sequence, he explains to camera, 'That was VERA. This is me again here, now, really.'

The BBC's new system offered a range of benefits and advantages over film to the television producer. In the first place, unlike film, it offered instant playback of the recorded material without any further processing. Furthermore, the picture quality from the camera could be monitored *as* material was being recorded. The videotape itself could also be re-used (recorded on) again and again. It also offered very good picture quality on the 405 line system then in use in British broadcasting and, as well as high quality sound it was able to use the half-inch sound tape currently available. These features VERA shared in common with Ampex. However, more impressive than Ampex at the time, which had not developed a successful means for video tape editing tape, Peter Axon claimed that producers could cut, join and edit using VERA without disturbing picture quality in subsequent reproduction. Yet despite this significant advantage, the BBC's VERA system was short-lived. This was not due to any intrinsic fault of the system itself, but very much a matter of timing, with the US Ampex system being adopted at the BBC for several reasons. Firstly, while VERA tapes could accommodate 15 minutes of programme time, Ampex could record material for as long as one hour. Secondly, although it had yet to be formally agreed, planning was under

way in the UK, and most of Europe (except for France), for a shift to a 625 line television high-definition service. Although VERA had the bandwidth to accommodate the 405 line service, it would not have been able to accommodate the higher-definition picture. On the other hand, Ampex had the technical advantage that it *could* accommodate the new system. The third reason, related to this, was both operational and economic. As Ampex and the new system were likely to be adopted round Europe, the BBC believed that standardising its own system in line with the rest of Europe would facilitate more simple and convenient programme exchange. Not only would the exchange of programmes be easier, but it would also be cost-effective. This is what perhaps sealed VERA's fate. Axon (1981: 18) believed that improvements could have been made to the BBC's VERA system, but at the time Ampex simply represented an off-the-peg alternative, 'a manufactured machine in the first stages of adoption as a world broadcasting standard.'

The BBC acquired Ampex in October 1958, and it was put to use in four editions of *Hancock's Half Hour* in November and December that year. It was testament to the prestige of Tony Hancock's show that he was allowed to use such expensive equipment so early on (Goddard: 1991). At that time, the pressure of live performance had been exerting an intolerable strain on Hancock. The show had also been changing direction from its earlier incarnation as a radio show programme in the early 1950s.[xxiv] Writers Ray Galton and Alan Simpson had begun to introduce a note of increased realism, with less farcical situations, more simple and believable plotlines, and relied more on characterisation than jokes and gags. Characters started to behave in ways in which the audience found more believable. There was also an increasing interest in using close-ups and reaction shots, which had heightened characterisation and comedy moments in *I Love Lucy*. As we saw previously, in Lucille Ball's show there were usually three studio cameras, with one permanently trained on Ball herself to capture her reactions to events around her. With recording and editing on film, *I Love Lucy* had caused an impact with its fast pace and punchiness when it appeared on ITV screens in 1955.

Yet although the new Ampex technology had been used on Hancock by the BBC in 1958, it was not immediately able to adopt the fast paced cutting and editing of *I Love Lucy*. This was simply because of the technical limitations of the new recording technology. As I previously indicated, one way in which Ampex could not compete with film in this early stage of its development was in editing. It was not possible to edit on the Ampex videotape system. As a result, programmes which were recorded on the new technology were produced 'as live'. In one sense it was possible to shoot in a discontinuous manner, because a scene could be re-staged and recorded *over* the previous take. But recording still had to follow the chronology of the script because it was not possible to intercut scenes or remove errors or fluffs at a later stage. Each production only had one (chronological) chance to get it right. Those programmes shot on early video that still survive in the archives today, such as some of the first episodes of *The Avengers*, can sometimes be seen to contain 'fluffs' and moments of ad-libbing.

In 1958 Ampex engineers had still not solved the problem of editing, but instead came up with a splicing block, and it was left up to the individual engineers of the different broadcasting companies to come up with ways to cut and join the tapes. At the BBC, Hancock's producer Duncan Wood experimented and discovered that tapes could be cut and spliced together without loss of picture quality. Wood's technique, though effective, was still relatively crude and was not cost friendly because it meant that the cut tapes could not be recorded over again. At £100 a reel, the BBC considered this to be prohibitively expensive (Goddard: 1991). Hancock, however, forced the BBC's hand by refusing to sign a contract for another series unless his programmes were recorded on videotape. With Wood's splicing technique, *Hancock's Half-Hour* could now be shot discontinuously, in a stop-start manner, with cast and crew able to prepare themselves better for the next shot, and scenes could potentially be shot out of sequence. The consequence was that the show became increasingly faster paced. Time did not now need to be spent on superfluous bridging dialogue while characters changed costumes, sets were rearranged or camera positions moved. It also eliminated some of the mistakes and gaffs. As Goddard (1991) has noted, it also meant that the principal characters could spend more time on screen. This was because cameras could

spend more time on each character and not have to be constantly moving and ready for the next live shot. This meant more time on reactions and close-ups.[xxv]

With videotape proving expensive, and with different companies being forced to experiment themselves with video-editing techniques, the roll-out of video was necessarily piecemeal. Whereas a third of BBC programmes were being recorded on videotape by 1961, some ITV companies were still officially denying that videotape could be edited as late as 1963 (Goddard: 1991). When an editing technique which did not destroy the re-use value and subsequent reproduction quality of the tape was discovered at Granada, however, the development was hailed by Denis Foreman, a senior Granada figure, as 'rather more important than the invention of sliced bread,' (Foreman cf Barr 1996: 64). Nonetheless, despite the benefits of discontinuous recording and the 'programme factory', there was still the problem of cost. As Foreman points out, some managements were still reluctant to embrace the new technology as it was highly expensive to install and use. Yet once the technology took hold, management policy became increasingly relaxed. As Forman notes (cf Barr: 1996: 65):

> Rules were set down – shows must be recorded in real time, edits must be authorised by a member of the board, there may only be two edits in a show, three edits, six edits, and as the months went by, a show may take no more than 50 per cent more time than it did when it was being transmitted live.

At the BBC, however, the use of Ampex was characterised by pros and cons. As Briggs notes, the technical and operational advantages of Ampex gave the television producer a degree of flexibility hitherto only known to the film producer. As a result, 'by 1963 the practice had spread to music production, religious broadcasting, and school and adult education broadcasting,' (Briggs: 1995: 835). The experimentation with colour television on the new 625 line system at the BBC was also to feed back into the development of videotape in the United States. In 1964 Ampex developed the VR-2000 Hi Band Colour Videotape based on requests from the BBC (Ginsburg:

1981). However, the use of videotape was to cause some anxiety. Citing from the minutes of an Operations' meeting on 22 October 1964, Briggs (1995: 835) goes on to state that 'there were complaints that very few directors had "any experience at all of handling live productions".' Briggs also cites a range of complaints about how crews and casts became increasingly 'fatalistic' about making mistakes. By 1967 it was estimated that studio time ran for three times the length of the final production and as much as two-thirds of tape ended up on the cutting room floor.

Yet while some recordings were perceived as having commodity or re-use value, other programmes were still deemed ephemeral and disposable. This was the view, for example, of the Light Entertainment producer Francis Essex who worked for the BBC and then ATV. In an ATV documentary called *The Dream Machine*, transmitted 11 November 1964, about the staging and recording of a one-off variety show, *Six Wonderful Girls*, with appearances by Millicent Martin and Honor Blackman, Essex stated his credo:

> Television is a transient medium, and I am a person who becomes bored with long runs in the theatre or any other form. I like the thought that I work to a deadline, and the ideas have to be thought of by such and such a time. And when the show happens it's finished, and I'm the next day onto the next show.

This ephemerality was foregrounded at the beginning of the documentary. Introductory shots focus on a number of clocks, and then on a man with an open-reel videotape working on a machine while the voice-over, in a staccato manner - in rhythm with the ticking clocks - explains what is happening.

> Clocks everywhere,
> Time king,
> Time precious,
> Time passing,
> Nothing permanent.

A videotape,

On it, a recording of a play,

Sound and vision,

Costing thousands to produce.

And now wiped,

Gone forever,

Lost.

It was the high cost factor of tapes, and an enduring attitude which saw some television as a transient and ephemeral form, which led to many potentially 'classic' programmes being lost to the archives and to newer generations of viewers and researchers (Fiddy: 2001).

Recording technology and the new visibility:

The significance of the development of recording technologies was that television could now expand its range of stylistic choices for the presentation of different kinds of themes and issues in different kinds of programmes and genres. In so doing, it made new cultural forms (television itself), and forms of culture (the subject and themes of television) visible to the newly expanding audience. One way of apprehending how radical an impact recording technology had is to think, phenomenologically, about how it changed how television operated in 'space' and 'time'. In the first instance, film and video meant that television forms could be extended *over* space in new ways. This was because the new technologies facilitated the movement of programmes as solid artifacts (film reels or videotapes) between different places. As we have seen here, programme material began to be viewed increasingly as a commodity export (and import) in the 1950s, and it meant that people in Britain could see American programming, and vice versa. Recording technology also extended television programming over time, and it did this here in two ways. In audience terms, an event which had taken place at a particular time or on a particular day could now be played back at a more suitable time for a mass audience. This proved to be the case initially

with sports and ceremonial events in Britain, but had been an important technological driver in the USA where different time zones created scheduling difficulties. From the perspective of production it also meant, as we have seen, that a programme could be made over a period of time, as opposed to the instantaneous live transmission of an event taking place in front of the cameras. With the use of film (on location) and videotape (in the studio – once editing techniques had been developed) recording could be discontinuous and conducted piecemeal on an industrialised scale. Such developments were allied with the expansion of the television industry and increasing discourses of professionalism.

Significantly, the use of recording technology meant that television production could be extended *in* space, it could now enter *into* and articulate dramatic space in a different way. It has been argued that in early live studio drama there had been limitations in ways in which screen, or dramatic space could be used. One of the reasons for this is that television cameras could not effectively enter screen space, meaning that they could not enter into and occupy the same physical and narrative space as the characters on set. This was because studio cameras in the US, for example, were arranged in a line during the live transmission of drama (Hans Burger, 1940, cf Auslander: 1999). Cameras could not enter into three-dimensional screen space for fear of catching another camera, a microphone or another part of the television apparatus in vision (Auslander: 1999). As Auslander argues (1999: 21):

> As a result, the television image was frontal and oriented toward the viewer in much the same way as a performance on a proscenium stage would be. This was reflected in the actors' playing, which Burger describes as 'aimed... at the fourth wall' in front of the cameras 'much as it is on the stage'.[xxvi]

In this view, live television drama was effectively 'stagey', and this was an aesthetic restriction imposed by the technological limitations of the cameras.

Yet Jason Jacobs (2000), drawing on archive papers, complicates the view that the aesthetics of early television drama in Britain were determined solely by technology. Dismissing easy, and potentially lazy, assumptions that early dramas were 'stagey', he argues that drama producers at the BBC had aesthetic ambitions and had experimented with forms of dramatic representation on television. This, he asserts, could be demonstrated by transitions of sound and image sources, such as mixing live studio drama with filmed inserts. This allowed for transitions in narrative spaces, such as the movement from inside to outside. There was also scene dissection: before and immediately after the Second World War it was technologically impossible to cut directly and quickly between cameras during transmission, but cutting *could* be achieved by dissolves between cameras (Barr: 1996; Jacobs: 2000). There was also camera movement when out of vision, such as when shots were being transmitted from another camera, or filmed inserts were being telecined, and camera movement on-air with live transmission of tracking shots. What significantly prohibited development of drama forms in the 1930s, 1940s and early 1950s, Jacobs argues, were conventions and discourses surrounding 'liveness' and 'intimacy'. In drama, television's liveness assured 'immediacy'. This was an enduring perception based on the premise that television was an instrument of communications relay. After all, it was possible to make filmed programmes and then telecine them on transmission. But in live television dramas the work of the television camera was seen to be to capture the pre-camera event and, as a result, co-temporality (the sense of shared moment) in drama was perceived as signifying authenticity and realism. The performance taking place in front of the camera in real time was, as in the theatre, *really* taking place. Perceived as an ephemeral medium, recording technology initially seemed anathema to the television experience while, at the same time, moves towards recording programmes were inhibited by copyright and talent union agreements to ensure actors repeat live performances. Liveness was also related to intimacy. According to Jacobs, intimacy was understood by critics and producers in terms of reception, the 'intimate sphere' of the home. Some critics believed that drama broadcast into the domestic sphere required a softer visual register, a restrained performance style and should be conversational in tone, rather than 'declarative'. In this view, television plays were expected to tackle

emotional and psychological issues, and were based in 'intimate' interior settings. Thus characters' inner feelings and emotions were rendered through a *close-up* style of the television camera. This intimacy was provided by nearness of observation. This was significant for performance styles because the nearness of the camera, within a confined studio space, required concentrated work and use of facial expression by the actor. Television critics at the time therefore argued that television could see better into the performance. The actor on television had to use facial expression with more subtlety than on the theatre stage. For Jacobs, the close-up style of the television camera was not used to visualise the 'motives and emotions' of character, but to monitor closely the performance and interpretations by the actor. As Jacobs suggests (2000: 121):

> Such a close observation of performance details required a responsive production technique that privileges the close up style. The responsive production technique meant that the producer functioned as a 'stand-in' live audience, mediating performance through his creative and responsive consciousness, and choice of camera style. Live drama production had to be sensitive to – intimate with – the rhythm and tempo of the performance itself. This meant an intimate response to an intimate style.

As a result, in discourses of early television drama, the use of film was seen to disrupt both the temporal and physical sense of intimacy. Yet by 1953 there was already an alternative school of drama style. This coincided in the early 1950s with the expansion of the BBC television service and its production base. BBC television personnel had moved into larger studios at Lime Grove, with plans for a purpose built studio at White City. The move to Lime Grove brought with it new equipment, such as the arrival in March 1952 of new cameras which had variable lenses which broke through the shallow field of focus. It also coincided with the appointment of a new head of television drama, Michael Barry, who particularly advocated that drama should rely more on the power of the image (Jacobs: 2000). The new 'expansive' style, what Jacobs refers to as the 'expanding screen', was heralded by the arrival of Kneale and

Cartier who, as we saw above, challenged 'intimate' drama directly. Cartier, who had been a scriptwriter and director in the German film industry in the 1920s and early 1930s, was aware of the discourses surrounding the intimate domestic sphere of the home, but felt that television did not demand any singular style of address. Cartier is now recognised as a major influence on the visual development of British television drama. Indeed, Catherine Johnson (2005) demonstrates how Cartier combined both filmed inserts and live television for shock effect as early as 1953 with *The Quatermass Experiment*. In one sequence an astronaut faints and falls directly towards the camera (suddenly filling the viewer's screen at home) and, in another, television's own workings are shown as an Outside Broadcast team capture an alien monster on camera, climbing up the inside of Westminster Abbey. The film inserts were not simply used as linkages, but expanded the drama outwards and moved the narrative forward. Jacobs (2000) has also shown that Cartier used filmed sequences to transcend the spatial limitations of *Nineteen-Eighty-Four* to similar effect a year later. For Cartier, film extended the range of stylistic choices available, and these complemented the continued use of close-ups for reaction shots, emotional expression and shock scenes. The increased use of recording technology in the 1950s and 1960s, rationalised and institutionalised within industry practises, allowed television drama producers a much wider range of aesthetic and stylistic choices.

In the US it has been argued that the use of film made television drama more cinematic. This is because the use of film in the US occurs more explicitly in the early 1950s when the geography of television production shifted from New York, with its thriving theatre and radio scenes, to Hollywood, the centre for film-making in north America (Barnouw: 1990). It marked a shift from live single dramas to filmed television series. One consequence was that the 'syntax of televisual discourse became that of cinematic discourse,' (Barnouw: 1990:133-4). This situation in Britain, however, is certainly complicated by the increased range of stylistic choices that were opening up to drama producers and directors. In the early 1960s, for example, some television dramas were still being performed live, including early episodes of *Z Cars* and *The Avengers*. Nonetheless, filmed series such as *The Adventures of Robin Hood*,

The Saint and *Danger Man*, clearly did have something in common with the more cinematic discourses of US television made in Hollywood, partly because they were produced with an eye for export to the American market. In such television, the drama moved away from a sense of relay of live theatrical performance where, as John Caughie (2000) describes, narrative was subordinate to performance. Instead, it moved towards a style of drama where the organisation of space and time, through discontinuous recording and editing (and, I would suggest, performance), was subordinate to narrative in the sense of the 'classic' Hollywood cinema' described by Bordwell, Staiger and Thompson (1985). This shift of emphasis towards narrative and action, especially in series drama where cast reiterated their roles on a weekly basis, would have been a significant development at a time when television was newly expanding to a mass audience. It would have marked a shift from the overtly *actorly* and 'staged' performances associated with middle-class theatre, which may have been less familiar to a mass audience. Instead, the newer filmed drama series might have seemed more accessible to a newer, wider audience already familiar with cinematic tropes of staging, editing and performance. This may have been especially the case amongst those of the audience who had participated in the cinema-going boom in the immediate post-war period.

Yet I do not want to be technologically determinist here. As I have suggested, such developments in the use of film in action-adventure series constitute only one of many different styles and asethetics in television drama. Most television drama in Britain, when it was recorded, tended to be shot on video, still in the studio. Yet in other instances where film was used the intention and effects appeared more experimental. This ranged from the more documentary aesthetics of dramas by Watkins, Loach and Garnett, or the potentially more avant-gardist sensibilities of *The Prisoner*, which at times played with conventional narrative structures and challenged the reliability of what the viewer was seeing. By contrast, explicitly performative styles from political theatre were still found in television dramas in the 1970s, such as John McGrath's *The Cheviot, The Stag and the Black, Black Oil* (BBC, 1974).

These developments in recording technology and the impacts they had on drama presentation over this time importantly coincided with other developments. Changes in drama styles in the 1950s and 1960s coincided with new pre-occupations in drama themes. Since the mid-1950s there had been an increased fascination with working class life in theatre, literature and cinema. In theatre this was marked in 1956 with the staging, at the Royal Court Theatre, of John Osborne's play *Look Back in Anger*. In literature there was also John Braine's novel *Room at the Top* which was about the ruthless self-determination needed to achieve any degree of success in life. Such works were characterised by their provincial settings, and the writers themselves came to be known in the press as 'the angry young men'. Other novels, including Shelagh Delaney's *Taste of Honey*, were later turned into films which came to be known as 'kitchen sink dramas' or the British new wave. This was reflected on television in dramas ranging from *Armchair Theatre* to *Cathy Come Home*.[xxvii] It was these developments in British television drama that made working class life more visible. While middle-class audiences could now watch the drama of working class life, working class audiences themselves - who constituted a new audience for television in the 1950s - could now witness their experiences represented dramatically on the television screen. As the range of styles and themes in television drama expanded over the 1950s and 1960s, this made a wider range of programmes possible and available, and it made television accessible to larger and more diverse audiences.

In summary, the increasing use of film and video recording technologies had a profound impact on programme forms and programme aesthetics. It meant the advent of new programme forms, ranging from advertisements to action-adventure series. The new technologies meant that there was an increase in the range of styles that producers could choose from to cover an expanded range of narratives and themes. In particular, it meant that programmes could move away from more theatrical tropes of presentation towards styles of programming, such as the action-adventure series, which potentially had a visual grammar accessible to a wide audience familiar with mainstream cinematic presentation. In a wide range of programming, recording technologies allowed increased flexibility in programme production, facilitating the development of

the 'programme factory'. The deployment of recording technologies was not just, or necessarily, conceived in aesthetic terms, but as a means of rationalising production and making economic savings, and this was part of the shift towards the increased professionalism and industrialisation in television discussed in chapter one. The increased use of recording technologies also benefited the economics of television by providing commodities for export and import. Programme sales abroad generated money for British broadcasters, and buying in programmes from abroad was also a cost-effective way of filling in air-time. Furthermore, as will be discussed in the next chapter, film technology also meant that the emerging television news could now cover filmed reports in a wide range of locations, and there was also the development of other programme forms such as television documentaries and current affairs series. The use of recording technologies in drama and in news and documentary allowed television to better represent the changes that were taking place in Britain and around the world. This will be the focus of the next chapter.

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[i] By 'film' here I refer to the technological process of capturing sequences of images on a strip of chemically treated, light sensitive material which, when developed and projected at an appropriate speed, presents on screen the appearance of life-like movement. In the period being explored here, recording of sound and film at the same time in the studio had been well established, but capturing sound on location was still a relative innovation. For a history of film technology see, for example, Winston (1996).

[ii] For details of some of these programmes see Vahimagi (1996).

[iii] Calculation was made on the basis of an *average* figure over a three-month period. On any given week, the total number of imported programming could not exceed 10 hours (Sendall: 1982).

[iv] See, for example, Bakewell and Garnham (1970) and Crisell (1997).

[v] For an erudite discussion about declining audiences and factors inhibiting the British film industry in the 1950s see Docherty, Morrison and Tracey (1987).

[vi] For details of this at the BBC see, for example, Jacobs (2000) and Sydney-Smith (2002), and for details for ITV see Osgerby (2001), Osgerby and Gough-Yates (2001), and Chapman (2002).

[vii] For details of these programmes see Vahimagi (1996)

[viii] For a further discussion of the production of *The Adventures of Robin Hood* please see Neale (2005).

[ix] See for example, Osgerby and Gough-Yates (2001) and Chapman (2002).

[x] See Chapman for discussion of relationship between *Danger Man* and James Bond (1999; 2002).

[i] See *The Persuader: The TV Times of Lord Lew Grade*, transmitted 27 August 1994, BBC2. For a discussion of the iconic status that Lew Grade holds in television historiography see Bignell (2005).

[ii] See chapter five for discussion of the relationship between these action-adventure series and consumer culture.

[iii] See Jacobs (2000) for a discussion about the aesthetics of drama on early British television.

[iv] For further discussion of *The Quatermass Experiment* see Johnson (2005), and for *Nineteen-Eighty-Four* see Jacobs (2000).

[v] Gorham served as Head for 18 months in 1946-47, but had resigned because of the BBC's then apparent lack of commitment to the medium.

[vi] The BBC had been chronically short of studio space through the latter part of the 1940s and 1950s. The Corporation moved into vacant film studios at Lime Grove in 1950, and had to wait for a decade until purpose built studios were constructed near Shepherd's Bush in west London.

[vii] See Jacobs (2000) for details of some of the wrangles and conditions involved.

[viii] *Clive of India* had been a successful West End stage play in 1934 by W.P. Lipscomb and R.J. Minney. See Jacobs (2000) for details of discussion with Twentieth Century Fox and case study of the televised version.

[ix] The transmission of the Coronation footage in the USA, not hindered by the tyranny of live events, was punctuated by advertisement breaks, and this caused a storm of protest amongst campaigners in Britain who were vehemently opposed to commercial television.

[xx] *Up the Junction* and *Cathy Come Home* will be discussed further in chapter four in relation to the representations of social change in Britain.

[xxi] I am grateful to John Ellis for reminding me of the importance of this development. The use of 16mm film was also particularly important in news, current affairs and documentary work.

[xxii] Videotape could not be used on location for programme recording, except for well resourced departments like sport. This is because it needed vast amounts of power; the cameras had to be linked to the recording apparatus by cables, and the recording apparatus was very heavy and could not be moved except when installed in specialised outside broadcast (OB) trucks. I am grateful to John Ellis for emphasising this point.

[xxiii] For detailed discussion of the background details of developments in video see Abramson (2003) Armes (1988), Axon (1981), Barr (1996), Ginsburg (1981) and Kirk (1981).

[xxiv] For an extended discussion of Tony Hancock and the development of the sitcom form see Goddard (1991).

[xxv] It is important to note, however, that many programmes were still shot before a live audience in the studio to help with the performer's timing.

[xxvi] Sections in quotes cited from Hans Burger "Through the Television Camera," *Theatre Arts*, 1 March 1940: 206-9.

[xxvii] See Caughie (2000) for detailed discussion of these movements and their relationship to television.

Chapter 4: Spaces

As we have seen so far, television underwent radical expansion in the 1950s and 1960s, and this had consequences for the professionalisation of the nascent industry, for the articulation of local and national cultures, and for the use of recording technologies. As I have argued, these developments coincided with social and cultural changes taking place in Britain during the same period. In this chapter I will more explicitly examine the *social* change which was affecting a large part of the British population, and will explore television's relationship to that change. In a very straightforward sense, television's programming outputs made some of those changes more visible. As we will see, television dramas explored some of the themes and tensions which were preoccupying television writers, producers and their drama audiences. Yet television itself emerged as a mass medium precisely because of some of these social changes, in particular the demographic shifts that were affecting Britain. Homebuilding, urbanisation and suburbanisation were to have major impacts on how people lived their lives and spent their time. It was as a result of some of these changes that television was taken up by a national audience and why it was to become such a potent cultural force. As I will argue, television itself opened up new public space just as its audience became increasingly domesticated and housebound. At the same time, television offered the possibility of transcending domestic and local space to become, in the words of the *Panorama* catchphrase, 'a window on the world'. This chapter will therefore start by looking at the urban and suburban change which affected so many people before going on to examine some of the reasons that homes and families adopted the new medium. It will then explore the representation of the changes in the British social landscape and their consequences in a range of television dramas. Finally it will go on to look at how television negotiated the domestic, the global and the political.

Urban and suburban change:

One of the most important developments taking place in Britain in the 1950s and 1960s was a wave of housing construction. The ground had been paved by the 1946 New Towns Act and 1947 Town and Country Planning Act which led to slum clearances (the evacuation and destruction of older, substandard properties), and legislated for the development of new towns and the rebuilding of city centres, some of which had been severely affected by the war. This legislation was particularly important because it addressed the issue of the long-term expansion of the urban population, fed by a migratory drift from the countryside, and which was already characterised by increasing urban sprawl and an expansion in suburbs, estates and satellite communities. The conscious policy of targeting development was facilitated by industrial change. Making use of the sites of wartime industry, which had often been placed farther out of reach of German bombers, government policy deliberately promoted the construction of factory units outside of town centres. As the historian Arthur Marwick (1996: 24) notes:

> A new urban pattern emerged very clearly. Whereas older industries had been located along the rivers with copious provision of railway sidings, the new industrial estates developed on the outskirts of towns, and depended upon the roads.

These new industrial estates articulated a shift in modern industry, from heavy industry to new hi-tech, super-modern plants, refineries and factories. This also entailed a shift in labour patterns and working class culture. It meant that workers moved from heavy physical and manual labour towards factory production line processes which were cleaner, lighter, and more likely to involve the supervision and maintenance of technology. Yet it meant the establishment of new communities and new towns to provide workers, and homes for the workers, for these new industries. For example, the Royal Ordnance Factory at Aycliffe became the new town of Newton Aycliffe in the

north east of England, and in South Wales a combination of traditional industries and new industries led to the development of the new town of Cwmbran (Marwick: 1996).

Other new towns, suburbs and estates emerged out of growing urban sprawl. This particularly affected the London area and the south east of England, with movement out to suburban estates in places like Basildon, Bracknell, Hemel Hemstead and Hatfield. By 1956 these towns were growing by 9,000 houses a year (Marwick: 1996). While low rise housing characterised the new towns and suburbs (accommodation which often included gardens and green spaces), the slums demolished in the inner cities were replaced by high rise estates, such as the award winning scheme, the Alton East Estate, set in parkland in Roehampton, south west London. The slum clearances and the expansion of homebuilding lead to radically improved living circumstances for many in the working classes. At the beginning of the 1950s, 70 per cent of dwellings dated back to late nineteenth or early Twentieth Century, or even earlier (ibid.). Many urban centres were characterised by dilapidated tenements, crowded 'two-up and two-downs', densely packed terraces, and houses situated back-to-back. The shortage of housing at the beginning of the decade meant that conditions were cramped and crowded. For many their living environment was squalid, and at the beginning of this period a third of houses did not have a bath, and many had shared or outside toilet facilities. Located within industrial districts, there was often soot, pollution and grime. In 1956, in the huddled terraced houses along urban hillsides, by canals or the centres of Victorian industry, the three daily battles were against darkness, cold and filth (Sandbrook: 2005). As Richard Hoggart was to note in his seminal study of working class life, *The Uses of Literacy*, life for the inhabitants of these spaces was a matter of coping, of trying not to slip down or succumb to the dirt or squalor (1969). In the new homes of the 1950s and 1960s, therefore, many experienced the luxury of baths and indoor toilets for the first time. In some cases even electricity was a novelty.[i]

These developments across Britian were uneven. Yet where these new urban and suburban landscapes emerged there was a profound impact on working class culture, and it was not necessarily a happy one. In the first instance, developments may have

lacked aesthetic appeal. Part of the issue was that economic growth and geographical redistribution of industry and housing had led to a radical overhaul of Britain's roads. In the 1950s and 1960s the ownership of motor vehicles exploded, with just under two and a half million cars and vans in 1950, over five and a half million in 1960, and over nine million in 1965 (Marwick: 1996). The expansion of Britain's road networks led to the construction of Britain's first motorway, the M1, in the second half of the 1950s. In 1963 the government's Buchanan Report, which acknowledged traffic congestion in towns and cities, recommended more motorways and roads. Car congestion and the upgrading of the road network in the mid 1950s was viewed ambivalently at the time. In 1955 the *Architectural Review* predicted (cf Sandbrook: 2005: 116), 'By the end of the century, Great Britain will consist of isolated oases of preserved monuments in a desert of wire, concrete roads, cosy plots and bungalows.' Yet it was not necessarily 'cosy plots and bungalows', or even leafy suburbs, which occupied the spaces between the tarmac roads, but often large concrete developments. In this period, many of the new housing estates and public buildings were built in the new 'Brutalist' style, a form of concrete architecture that combined Corbusian modernism with Nineteenth Century industrial architecture (Frampton: 1992). This style, of which the Alton East Estate in Roehampton was a model example, came to define the architecture of the Welfare State. And while the new architecture was perceived as innovative, modish and utilitarian by those responsible for social housing in the period, it may not have been so well received by the people who actually had to live there, as an example from one of the dramas we will discuss later in this chapter suggests.[ii] Combined with road building and slum clearances, the construction of new estates created radically new urban (and suburban) landscapes. For Marwick (1996: 119), these changes represented a bleak architectural vision descending on Britain, as the 'guts were torn out of cities such as Newcastle, Glasgow, and Birmingham and replaced with an ugly jungle of urban motorways and high-rise buildings.'

These changes did not just have aesthetic impacts, but also psychological, emotional and geographical ones. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, with the exception of the wartime disruption and national service men and women, people rarely ventured far

from home. Local employment and a lack of adequate public transport tended to keep people within small communities. Working class social life was also split along gender and age lines, with men spending their time in the pub, club or on the football terraces, women visiting neighbours or relatives, and younger people visiting the cinema (see for example Hoggart 1969 and Docherty et al 1987). For Richard Hoggart (1969: 68), however, housing policies and developments, and the redistribution of working class communities, in the 1950s had negative consequences:

> We all know of working class people's difficulties in settling into the new council-house estates. Most react instinctively against consciously planned group activities: they are used to group life, but one which has started from the home and worked outwards in response to the common needs and amusements of a densely packed neighbourhood. In these brick and concrete wastes they feel exposed and cold at first, they suffer from agoraphobia; they do not feel 'It's homely or neighbourly'. Feel 'too far from everything', from their relatives and from the shops.

The shift to these new places in the 1950s and 1960s moved people away from the communities they knew. In the cases of the new estates, the rebuilding of city centres and the redistribution of sites of industrial labour, working class communities were often broken up and shifted miles away from friends, family and their traditional forms of leisure pursuit. One of the victims of this shift was cinema-going. Whereas people used to go to the cinema regularly because it was close by, and because it was a warm space for being with friends (or for 'courting'), the cinemas were now further away and attendances started to dwindle (Docherty et al.: 1987). At the same time, the new homes on the council estates were often more expensive than the slums whose rents had been capped by legislation. In the new local authority housing, however, rent could be as much as three times higher than what they had been paying in the slums (Marwick: 1996). This meant that people had less disposable income. In particular, men who had traditionally given their wives 'housekeeping' money found they had less money for their normal leisure pursuits of beer and cigarettes, so they could afford to

go out to the pub less frequently. As a consequence of these changes, public houses were another victim, and between 1939 and 1962 around 30,000 pubs closed down (Sandbrook: 2005). At the same time, there had been a baby-boom in the immediate post-war years, and by the middle of the 1950s children at home were another reason that many more husbands and wives stayed-in. Children would also have been a financial burden. Yet despite the availability of less disposable income, a relaxation of hire-purchase arrangements meant that people could obtain commodity items such as television sets and other household appliances on credit (and I will discuss this further in the next chapter). It was within this wider demographic context that television emerged as a major domestic leisure activity.

Television and the home:

It seems clear that the advent of better housing and the loss of local community created a new space for the television medium to occupy. Yet there are two additional points I want to explore here in relation to the emergence of television in working class homes. The first relates to the expansion of the television service and the arrival of commercial competition. The second relates to the domestic life of working class families and their relationship to home and the new medium.

Since the 1950s, it has been popularly assumed that the arrival of ITV promoted the uptake of television receivers. The standard view is that ITV appealed to a working class audience because of its mode of address, and because it contrasted with stuffy BBC values. The implication is that the incentive to acquire television was derived from competition. It is often popularly argued that competition between television services leads to a lowering of standards, or to an appeal to the 'lowest common denominator'. This notion has recently been challenged, with studies showing that the expansion of television competition and services in the 1980s and 1990s has had the effect of allowing 'quality' programmes and niche programme markets and audiences to evolve.[iii] In the 1950s, however, commercialisation brought anxieties about low quality television, brash consumerism and also fears about the Americanization of

culture. These fears had attended the debates surrounding the 1954 Television Act, and had had wider currency in other British cultural institutions such as the Arts Council since the end of World War Two (Weight: 1995). As such, the arrival of commercial, popular television seemed to undermine the arts promotion and educational policies of an elitist cadre in the establishment, and it was feared it did this by direct appeal to the working class masses. Such anxiety had caused some press controversy in 1956 and 1957 when struggling ITV companies appeared to abandon more high-brow programming in favour of popular gameshows (Sendall: 1982). These programmes, such as *Double Your Money* (A-R) and *Take Your Pick* (A-R) were also known as 'the give-aways' because they awarded members of the public cash prizes or commodities as rewards. These quiz and gameshows, as we will see chapter five, caused particular concern amongst cultural critics and commentators because they appeared to promote a crass consumer culture in which people could expect to be rewarded for doing nothing. Programmes like these also worried people like Richard Hoggart who believed that they threatened traditional forms of working class life (1969). Hoggart strongly articulated these concerns as a member of the Pilkington Committee, which went on to be heavily critical of the new commercial broadcaster.

The arrival of commercial television, with an apparently populist ideology, and the expansion of the television audience in this period has often left the impression that ITV drove up the acquisition of television sets amongst a working class audience. Yet this idea is unproven. The economist Chris Hand (2003b) has argued that the idea came about because of two mistaken assumptions. The first assumption is that the ITV institution itself drove demand for television, rather than the establishment of choice through the advent of a (any) new television service, and the second assumption is that without the arrival of ITV, television sets would not have been found in working class homes. For Hand, the first assumption raises questions about the specific economic nature of television. This is because the decision to acquire a television set is a 'derived demand', meaning that a television is purchased or rented not for the intrinsic value of the television set itself, but for the ability to watch television programmes. Hand describes television in economic terms as an 'experience' good, so that if certain

audiences wanted to purchase television sets (or modify their existing aerials) *specifically* to watch ITV, they would have had to have had some prior knowledge or 'experience' of the ITV service. During the 1950s, most people would have seen television in locations outside of their own home. These would have been in department stores, television or rental shops shops or rentals companies, or (decreasingly, if we recall many in the working classes had been isolated from their traditional communities, friends and family) at the homes of friends or relatives. Drawing on the National Readership Survey from 1957, Hand (2003b) shows that people without television sets were likely (unsurprisingly) to watch television less than once a week. This meant that potential viewers who had not yet acquired a television set were perhaps unlikely to have developed a preference for a particular service or, more significantly, were unlikely to have made the decision to acquire a set on the basis of liking one channel. To have made a decision on the basis of channel preference they would, one assumes, have had to have watched more hours of television. Yet as Hand (2003b: 12) points out, 'In order to increase their viewing, non-owners would have to acquire a television set (or find exceptionally accommodating neighbours!).' The other possibility, of course, is that the marketing of the new ITV service in the press might have been made television seem more attractive, and more research needs to be conducted in this area.

As for the second assumption, that without the arrival of ITV television sets would not have emerged in low income households, Hand can find no evidence to suggest this would have been the case. Instead, drawing on research by Bain (1962), Hand argues that ITV expanded the television market by only 7 per cent, which is not a significant increase. As a result, the effect of ITV on the acquisition of television may instead have been related to the expansion of choice itself. As Hand argues, (2003a: 4):

> One can view the introduction of ITV as effectively a price cut. In return for purchasing or renting a multi-channel television set and a TV licence, the household gained access to two television channels where previously only one was available for the same price.

The acquisition of television in the late 1950s may also have been related to continuities in working class life. As we have seen, the redistribution of new industries and housing seemed to have broken down the patterns of traditional working class life. Yet some sociologists[iv] and commentators such as Hoggart argued that many patterns of working class life persisted. As Hoggart (1969: 32) suggests, 'The working-classes have a strong ability to survive change by adapting or assuming what they want in the new and ignoring the rest.' One of these was the way in which the home still remained a private sphere as it had in the working class terraces and tenements. While men and women often spent time at the pub or visiting relatives, the rest of the time was spent 'staying in'. As Hoggart states (1969: 35):

> The hearth is reserved for the family, whether living at home or nearby, and those who are 'something to us', and look in for a talk or just to sit. Much of the free time of a man and his wife will be passed at the hearth, 'just staying in' is still one of the most common leisure-time occupations.

While it was a common middle-class leisure activity to invite friends round to visit for an evening, the working class domestic 'hearth' space was a more intimate, familial space. Yet with new housing developments, family were now often further away and they came to visit less. Therefore an increasingly privatised lifestyle also reflected an adaptation of long standing working class norms of social activity to new economic social conditions created by mobility and separation from kin (Goldthorpe et al: 1969). So the home space remained a private space, but one where the occupants were removed from other family and friends, and from other leisure pursuits. There would therefore have been an increased psychological and emotional commitment to the home space (Docherty et al: 1987). With a baby boom, more income would have been spent on child rearing and the purchase of domestic household items such as refrigerators, cookers and televisions. Indeed, as the cost of television sets gradually came down over the decade (and the size of television screens increased in proportion to the size of the receivers), it seems that one of the incentives to acquire a television

set was the presence of children amongst some households. For some families the television set was seen as educational and 'improving' (O'Sullivan: 1991). In interviews conducted by Tim O'Sullivan about early memories of television, one respondent noted (1991: 166-7):

We did buy it for ourselves, but I remember thinking that it would help the children get on at school, that they would know more about the world and what was going on, they'd be more 'in touch' and be able to see and understand things better – I'm not sure if it did, mind, but we certainly felt that at the time.

Other audience research conducted during the 1950s also indicated that children could be a significant consideration in the decision to acquire a television set. Drawing on such research Hand found that the presence of children in the household made the acquisition of a television set more likely. He goes on to suggest that this might also be related to class, and the expansion of the audience, since working class families have traditionally tended to have more children than middle-class families. Hand points out, however (2003b: 6):

It should be noted that the presence of children may not directly influence the demand for television, but rather may be the effect of having children on the parents' leisure time and lifestyle. As opportunities for going out were restricted by having children, this could have increased the demand for in-home entertainment such as television.

As well as the demographic changes taking place in the 1950s and 1960s, issues of class and status may also have had consequences for the uptake of television. In the historical research conducted by Tim O'Sullivan (1991: 166), the acquisition of television in the 1950s was marked as a form of status and progress:

The act of getting a television generally seems to be remembered above all as a sign of progress, a visible sign of joining, or at least of not being left out of, 'the new'.

It does also seem that there was a certain amount of 'keeping up with the Joneses'. In a handful of instances it seems, households without television sets put up aerials to impress the neighbours. Television licensing staff on patrol in detector vans recorded several occasions when they found householders had put up aerials without owning a set or a license.'

Dramatic Change: television as a *translocational* medium

As we have seen, Britain in the 1950s and 1960s experienced a major shift in terms of housing. This involved the establishment of new towns, suburbs and estates. At the same time, television expanded to reach a national audience. It is this 'coincidence of the architectural and the televisual,' (Silverstone: 1997: 9), the development of suburbia and the growth of the British television service, that has lead Roger Silverstone to argue that television is essentially a suburban medium (1994; 1997). Television, according to Silverstone, is also a suburban medium because it dwells on suburban themes (ibid.). These are themes of community, family, morality and sexuality. Silverstone concedes that that these are not exclusively suburban issues, nor that television is itself watched exclusively in the suburbs, but that the articulation of these themes is grounded in suburban bourgeois experience. However, I want to qualify Silverstone's suggestion that television explores suburban themes by examining the way in which television, in the 1950s and 1960s at least, often articulated anxieties about suburban *and urban* changes taking place in Britain. Furthermore, as we will see in the next section, television mediated between the domestic and the global. As a result, rather than describing television as a suburban medium, I would prefer to describe television in the 1950s and 1960s as a *translocational* medium. It is translocational because it took the viewer from one place (the place of viewership) to another (the place of the television event). It is also translocational during this period

because dramatic themes often concerned the effects of social movement and demographic shifts, the movement – and displacement – of people from one location to another. It is this latter point which I will look at first.

The changes in housing, and the rise of new urban areas discussed above provided the visible backdrop to some of television's dramas in this period. In some instances, that change provided the premise for some of those dramas. In an obvious and evident sense, the backdrop of physical urban change was to provide some dramas with a sense of 'realism'. 'Realism' is a hotly contested term, but I use it loosely here, in this chapter, to denote authenticity of setting. The London landscape in *Fabian of the Yard*, filmed on location for example, is as much a character in the drama as the eponymous Scotland Yard detective, his sidekicks and the criminals he pursues. As we saw in chapter three, a chase sequence through the wreckage of a house in the 1955 episode 'Bombs in Piccadilly' is accompanied by a voice-over explaining that parts of London were still scarred by the Blitz. Not only did this visible bomb damage signify a devastation of the landscape, it signalled an urban trauma that needed both physical and emotional rebuilding.

Another television programme from the mid-1950s was *The Grove Family* which was transmitted on television in 15 and 20 minute episodes between 1954 and 1957. Arguably Britain's first television soap aimed at adults,[vi] the series featured a lower middle class family of seven living in a house in a suburb in north west London. The family included a 90 year old grandmother, two grown up children, two younger children and husband and wife, Bob and Gladys Grove. The family were named after the Lime Grove Studios in west London, which had been a film studio before the BBC took it over in 1950. The Bob Grove character was a builder and had his own yard nearby. One of the creators, Michael Pertwee, explained in an interview in the *TV Mirror* in 1954:

Being in business for himself the man would be subject to all the fluctuations of fortune caused by economic conditions. He would have many more problems being in the open market.[vii]

The series was heavily characterised by a 'public service ethos', with storylines dealing with social and consumer issues, and these included how to buy a television licence or how to prevent burglary. Although little of the series survives, a spin-off film was made in 1955 called *It's a Great Day*, featuring the television cast and made by the series producer John Warrington. One of the main storylines for the film features Bob Grove trying to complete a building project on a housing estate in time for the opening ceremony to be attended by the Queen. Filmed sequences take place around the building site for the new estate, and Grove has to fight against local government bureaucracy, and becomes implicated in corruption and a black market economy for building materials. The film ends happily with the construction project completed on time and Bob Grove cleared of any wrongdoing. Yet the film (and by dint also the television series) hints at a pre-occupation with social issues at the time, and at genuine changes in the urban and suburban landscape and the practical problems that attended them.

The building construction programme of the period also provided a backdrop to two other famous series from the 1950s: *Quatermass II* and *Quatermass and the Pit*. Although these series dealt with the 'fantastic', with the eponymous Professor battling against alien invasion or alien influences, the landscape and the series' premises provided what has been described, after Todorov (1981), as socio-cultural verisimilitude.[viii] In this sense, the backdrop lent a degree of authenticity to the dramatic action, and the circumstances which initiated the drama were drawn from plausible events. Although much of the space technology in the *Quatermass* series was farther advanced than in actuality in the 1950s, the setting was visibly of that decade, and the audience was invited to believe that it was contemporaneous. No matter that a programme is 'fantastic', aspects of the drama and action relate in some way to most people's experience and understanding of the world. The premise of the third

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Quatermass serial. *Quatermass and the Pit*, transmitted in six parts between 22 December 1958-26 January 1959, grew out of urban regeneration. In this series the writer Nigel Kneale based his idea on the real-life rebuilding on London's bomb-sites. During this period, building and excavation work had unearthed archaeological remains, so Kneale took the further step of wondering what would happen if the remains were more sinister. In the first episode of *Quatermass and the Pit*, Professor Quatermass is called to a building site in Knightsbridge, where engineers building an extension to the London underground have found what looks like a bomb left over from the Blitz. In the end, the object turns out to be a Martian spacecraft which had crash-landed five million years previously, but the telefantasy premise is based on socio-cultural verisimilitude, and an understanding of what audiences knew to be real.

The *Quatermass* series also articulated other anxieties. During the period, as well as the development of new towns and suburbs, many greenfield sites were developed as part of a new wave of modernisation in industry. Many saw this modernisation as progressive and beneficial, and it was described by the Labour leader, Harold Wilson, in the 1964 General Election as 'the white heat of technological revolution'. It included the building of Britain's first nuclear power station, Windscale in Cumbria, later known as Sellafield, which started producing electricity in 1956. Yet there were also anxieties about such developments. Concern over nuclear weaponry, for example, led to the establishment of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament in 1958. In *Quatermass II* (a six part series, transmitted on BBC television on 22 October - 26 November 1955) the professor investigates a secretive new chemical plant which has been built over a village at the fictional Winnerden Flats. In Episode 3, 'The Food', a working class married couple and their young son on holiday stop for a picnic by the sea near the secret government refinery. In the drama, the medium shots and close ups of the plant were filmed on location at the Shell Haven refinery. The wife complains to her husband that it is a pity that the village that they visit every year has disappeared, a result of the development of the refinery. In the following episode, 'The Coming', Professor Quatermass visits a local pub to speak to workers who have relocated to the nearby 'prefab' town to help construct the new plant. A worker enthusiastically tells

them of the 'terrific pay', but an older woman, the wife of one of the workers, regrets moving there, complaining that they are 'right away from the world'. The disappointment of the picnicking woman and the displacement of the worker's wife articulates an anxiety about social and geographical change. The countryside is spoiled by the new town and the chemical plant, and the workers have been, albeit voluntarily, displaced from their traditional homes and communities. As the episode develops it transpires that the chemical plant, surrounded by murderous armed guards, is a breeding ground for aliens planning to take over the world. As the fictional articulation of a cultural anxiety about the rash of new, hi-tech and sometimes secret installations sprouting up around the country, *Quatermass II* is perhaps peerless.

At the beginning of the 1960s there emerged two social realist dramas which offered two very different accounts of the urban landscape, *Z Cars* and *Coronation Street*. Running from 1962-78, *Z Cars* grew to become one of the BBC's 'flagship' programmes (Sydney-Smith: 2002). It was based on rigorous documentary research, and one of the series creators, writer Troy Kennedy Martin, argued that by focusing on policemen the drama would be 'a key way of getting into a whole society,' (cf Syndey-Smith: 2002: 164). The series was located in the north-west of England and set in a fictionalised version of Liverpool, with Seaforth becoming Seaport, and Kirkby New Town becoming, simply, Newtown. Almost self-evidently, Newtown represented the new kind of urban development we have explored here, yet the representation is a bleak one. As the *Radio Times* highlighted on 28 December 1961 (cf Laing: 1991: 129):

> Life is fraught with danger for policemen in the North of England overspill estate called Newtown. Here a mixed community, displaced from larger towns by slum clearance has been brought together and housed on an estate without amenities and without community feeling.

In *Z Cars* the inhabitants of Newtown are portrayed as rootless, displaced and dispossessed. The first episode, 'Four of Kind', transmitted 2 January 1962, laid out the

premise for the series. A policeman on the beat has been murdered in a robbery, and in response to an increase in crime in the area, the local force want to establish crime cars that can respond to trouble quickly, the eponymous 'Z cars'. As a detective explains in the episode, 'If we'd had crime patrols like other divisions Reggie Farrow [the murdered policeman] would be alive today,' (cf Sydney-Smith: 2002: 167). The incidence of crime in the series reflected a growing tide of violent crime in real life which had begun to increase from the mid 1950s onwards. In 1955 the number of violent crimes stood at 5,869 for the year, rising to 11,592 in 1960, and 15, 976 in 1964 (Marwick: 1996). Driving through Newtown in the first episode, two of the detective characters lament the area's lack of community, with new buildings springing up and providing 'just good hiding places for tearaways and villains', (cf Sydney-Smith: 2002: 167). The emphasis on documentary research, (rigorous attention to policing methods, fallible characters who smoke on duty, argue, beat their wives, and are not too distant from the some of the people they policed),[ix] and narratives grounded in believable situations afforded the series a 'realist' label. There were a lot of debates about the nature of 'realism' in television during this period,[x] but Z Cars' director John McGrath claimed in a daily newspaper, emphasised by capital letters, 'IT IS A SIGHT MORE TRUE TO LIFE THAN ANYTHING ELSE SO FAR.'[xi] In one sense, McGrath was claiming that Z Cars was more realistic than previous television police series, in particular the then popular Dixon of Dock Green, (BBC 1955-1976). Dixon offered a more comfortable version of both urban life and urban policing. Set in a fictitious part of London's East End (the original theme tune was a whistled rendition of 'Maybe it's because I'm a Londoner'), Dixon's representation of London life resembles that of the Ealing films, and Dock Green almost has the feel of a village community (Sydney-Smith: 2002). This cosy depiction, however, perhaps veered between caricature and myth. As Tise Vahimagi (1996: 48) argues:

> The series' early mixture of everyday suburban station life, petty larceny, and homely moralizing rarely strayed from its reassuring, never-never world of hearts-of-gold coppers and 'cor blimey!' crooks.

Yet McGrath's claim that *Z Cars* was more realistic than any other previous police television programme 'so far' *could* also be an implicit (if not necessarily intentional) critique of the other new social realist television drama from this period. This was the soap *Coronation Street* which had started in December 1960. Made by Granada, the programme was originally designed as a twelve week series, but has run continuously to the present day. The soap centres round the lives of 'ordinary' people living in the eponymously titled street, a row of terraced houses, set in an industrial working class district in north west England. As Lez Cooke argues (2003: 33):

> In its iconography, character types and storylines, *Coronation Street* tapped into the new mode of social realism, or 'kitchen sink' drama, that had been popularised in the theatre, and in literature, since the mid-1950s.

For Cooke, the series provided a shock of recognition for working class people living in the north of England, with its depiction of the way people lived their daily lives. Yet there is a problem here, and Cooke alludes to this when he describes the series' title music as 'a melancholy signature tune, itself redolent with nostalgia,' (2003: 34). In a sense, the vision of working class life in *Coronation Street* might itself have been nostalgic. While the period was characterised by working class themes in literature, theatre and film. Richard Dyer, in his analysis of *Coronation Street* (1981), argues that this moment in British cultural history was 'decisively marked' by Richard Hoggart's *The Uses of Literacy* discussed above. In many ways, *Coronation Street* follows closely some aspects of Hoggart's romantic vision of working class life, the gregariousness of spirit, neighbourliness and the significance of the local shop and pub to community life. One of the main (and longest lasting) characters was Ken Barlow, a 'scholarship boy' who had benefited from a middle class education which led him into conflict with his working class family. This too was a subject of Hoggart's writings, and Hoggart himself had been a 'scholarship boy'. So *Coronation Street* can perhaps be seen as a romanticised account of working class life, a way of life that in many ways seemed to be passing. It appeared to contradict the experience of demographic change

felt by certain sectors of the working class. At the very least, it appeared to contradict the depictions of those changes in other television dramas.

In the mid 1960s, two further seminal single-play television dramas, *Up the Junction* (1965) and *Cathy Come Home* (1966), caught the mood of radical change in the urban landscape, and equally reflected a cultural anxiety about this change. Both were shot on film and exemplify aspects of recording technology discussed in the previous chapter. *Up the Junction* was based on the novel by Nell Dunn about the lives of young working class people around Clapham Junction in south west London.[xii] The drama was mainly filmed on location using 16mm, which gives it a documentary feel. Introductory scenes and establishing shots at the beginning of the programme situate the drama around the huge railway junction area in Clapham, with shots of the lines, platforms and steam trains. The camera then draws back to show shots of modern office blocks next to huddled and smoky terraces. Several sequences focus on houses being demolished in the area, with images of derelict buildings, men swinging pickaxes and walls collapsing, clearly reflecting the slum clearance programme of the 1950s and 1960s. The cramped and squalid circumstances in which people live are articulated in character dialogues and asynchronous voice-overs. In one sequence, one of the male characters, Dave, picks up one of the female characters in a pub and shows her where he used to live. Filmed footage shows them climbing through the carcass of a building, amidst rubble and broken walls, and Dave's voice-over is heard explaining to the girl, 'This is where we lived, 'till it got demolished. Slum Clearance.' As we saw earlier, the people from these slums were relocated to new housing estates and schemes. Yet even the award winning estates like the one in Roehampton may have been negatively experienced by the people who lived there. Scrambling through the Clapham rubble, Dave tells the girl, 'They moved us out to lousy Roehampton.' Yet like the depiction of rootlessness in *Z Cars*, this is no Hoggartesque romantic depiction of working class life. Conversations between characters reveal a bleak future, for both women and men. For the women, the future holds an early marriage, and one young girl, already working, tells her workmates that she is going to get married when she's sixteen. In one plotline, an unwanted pregnancy is resolved controversially by an illegal,

backstreet abortion. In another depressing plotline, a 'Tally man', a door-to-door salesman-come-debt-collector who sells goods on hire-purchase, explains to camera that the women he deals with are stupid for getting themselves into debt. The depiction of the men is equally depressing, with the recurring male characters dabbling in petty criminality or 'on the make'. Unlike Hoggart's working class sense of community, the representation of working class life here marks a degree of continuity with the pessimistic vision of *Z Cars*. The fictitious characters of *Up the Junction* are just like those rootless and dispossessed inhabitants of *Z Cars'* fictional Newtown.

The other seminal drama from the period was *Cathy Come Home* (1966), shown in the BBC's 'Wednesday Play' strand. Held up as an example of the so-called 'Golden Age' of British television drama, it draws together documentary and drama conventions to tell the story of a young woman who runs away from small town life to London. She marries and sets up home with Reg in modern, rented accommodation. Cathy's dream of a new life and comfortable living is shattered when Reg has an accident at work and cannot continue to earn a living. They cannot afford their rent and are forced to move into Reg's mother's home, but overcrowding and arguments ensue and they have to move on again. The couple's situation deteriorates as they find themselves in a series of increasingly squalid homes, and finally they are separated and their young children taken away from them. The drama ends with Cathy returning to her hometown by herself. The story is told in an episodic structure and held together by a voice over commentary by Cathy. Cathy's story itself was not based on any one individual's recorded experiences, but an amalgamation of a number of different documented experiences of housing difficulties. The filmed footage, shot on location, is also on one occasion augmented by a documentary style voice-over, reading government statistics about housing conditions and homelessness. The drama shows the loneliness and alienation of modern, city living, with Cathy dispossessed, separated as she is from home and community. Rather than demonstrating the developments and benefits of modern housing and planning policy, *Cathy Come Home* shows up the failure of the welfare state to replace a loss of community and to look after people who experience housing difficulties.

As I have suggested, these depictions of new urban landscapes represented a cultural anxiety about the social and cultural changes taking place in Britain in the 1950s and 1960s. As we have seen, this pre-occupation coincided with technological changes which allowed the television camera to escape the studio walls to explore outside, social spaces, while, at the same time, the television set became an increasingly significant component of domestic, private space. The extension of the camera into the outside world opened up new diegetic spaces in drama for the exploration of different classes and regions. Yet by showing the demographic and geographical mobility of much social change, and by bringing it into the home, television at this time could be described, as I have suggested, as a translocational medium. Not just a dramatic representation of the lived space literally outside the front door, however, television was also increasingly bringing representations from further afield, across a range of non-fiction genres. As the domestic sphere became the site of domestic consumption, television increasingly opened up an outside, global sphere and brought it into the home.

Mediating the home and the global:

Television in the 1950s and 1960s, then, was a translocational medium in that it depicted demographic and social changes taking place in Britain, as well as the consequences of people moving from one place to another. Yet television itself also took (and takes) the viewer from one location to another, from the site of viewing to the site of the television event. The site of viewing was the home itself. As Roger Silverstone suggests (1997: 10):

> Television, above all, offers that route to the global, to an infinity of reach, metronomically playing tunes of alternate threat and reassurance as we watch from the more or less comfortable surroundings of suburban lounge or parlour.

The global reach from domestic space opened up to the British television audience for the first time during this period. It was this development which allowed for what the geographer David Harvey has called 'time-space compression', where information can travel great distances at great speed (1989). For John Ellis, this has consolidated the Twentieth Century as the century of 'witness' (2000), in that television allows the viewers to see political faces, historical events and far away places. In the 1950s and 1960s this was a new experience. Technical and geographical reach made places newly visible in live transmissions and recorded footage. At the same time, television documentaries exposed hidden social and institutional worlds, and news and current affairs programming made a political and public sphere highly visible for the first time.

To begin with, we have already looked at two ways in which the use of film in television dramas made social space visible in a new way. In the first instance, the increased use of film in British television drama meant that 16mm and 35mm cameras could escape the confines of the studio walls and venture into the outside world. Yet the dramatic experiences being represented may have been taking place down the road, in the next street, town or city. As we also saw, this could provide dramas (and drama-documentaries) with added 'realism' and socio-cultural verisimilitude by being shot on location. The use of film (and video) also meant that television programmes could be both exported and imported as commodities. In this way, the importation of American filmed programming in the mid-1950s discussed in chapter three, with comedies such as *I Love Lucy*, westerns such as *Rawhide*, and cop and detective shows such as *Dragnet* and *77 Sunset Strip*, all brought a slice of US culture into British homes. Encroaching Americanization had been a cultural anxiety for many years, and could be witnessed, for example, in George Orwell's 1946 essay 'The Decline of the English Murder'.[xiii] It was something that was feared and reviled at the beginning of the 1950s and, as we have seen, it was something that government and cultural institutions such as the Foreign Office, Arts Council and BBC had sought to fight against (Weight: 1995). As we have also seen, fears of Americanization had also emerged during the acrimonious public debates for and against the breaking of the BBC's television monopoly and the advent of ITV.

Yet technological developments took the viewer to a wider range of new spaces (and space). In a very simple sense, the expansion of telecommunications technologies helped extend the reach of live transmission on a global scale. On the evening of 27 August 1950. for example, the first cross channel live television pictures between Calais and London were transmitted, an event which Asa Briggs describes as 'the first real landmark in post-war European television history,' (1979: 484). In a 60 minute special programme, BBC viewers saw the iconic Clock Tower of the Hotel de Ville in Calais, a torchlight procession, dancing and a firework display, accompanied by a commentary from Richard Dimbleby and Alan Adair. Four years later, in June 1954 it was announced that a television link would connect eight different countries in Europe in a system which had been nicknamed by a journalist as 'Eurovision' (Briggs 1979: 484). The advent of the satellite age was also to expand the possibility of live transmission and image relay. As early as 1956 Richard Dimbleby showed a model of the communications satellite Telstar on an edition of *Panorama* on 10 July of that year – a year even before the first satellite, Sputnik I had been successfully launched into space. At the start of the manned space race, BBC television broadcast the first ever live transmission from Moscow to London of the new Soviet cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin after his successful mission (Briggs: 1995). A year later, in July 1962, Telstar transmitted the first pictures across the Atlantic from the USA to Britain. Perhaps the biggest technological feat, the BBC television and ITV broadcast live coverage of the Apollo 11 moon landing on 21 July 1969, symbolising the farthest reaches of what television could make visible. Transmitted in black and white on BBC and ITV, the moonshot was shown in colour on BBC2, where a full colour television service had started in December 1967 (see Briggs: 1995). An occasion of global proportions and significance, what Dayan and Katz have referred to as a Media Event (1992), it is estimated that the landing was watched by 723 million people in forty-seven countries (Vahimagi: 1996).

As well as the televising of live events from different spaces, the increased use of film recording in television non-fiction programming also took the British viewer to new

parts of the world. At the start of the 1960s, for example, Asa Briggs argues (1995: 141-2). 'There was not one week in 1961 when BBC cameramen were not filming in a foreign country.' A very early type of non-fiction programming filmed abroad was later to become known as the natural history film. In the early 1950s the form on television was non-existent, and matters of a scientific or natural history bent came out of the BBC's Talks Department. A popular panel quiz of the decade, for example, was *Animal, Vegetable, Mineral?* (BBC TV 1952-59). In each studio-bound edition a panel of eminent archaeologists, art historians and scientists had to identify artefacts, which were on occasion natural objects. A popular 'regular' on the programme was the archaeologist Sir Mortimer Wheeler who both knew his subject and knew how to give good television. As the researcher on the programme at the time, David Attenborough, recalls (2003: 20):

> Whatever archaeological object we chose, it seemed to turn out that Sir Mortimer himself had personally dug it up. He played outrageously to the gallery, twirling his moustaches, pretending initially to be baffled then discovering a clue and finally bringing his identification to a triumphant conclusion.

Attenborough, who went on to carve out an illustrious career in television,[xiv] had started as a researcher on *Animal, Vegetable, Mineral?*. He went on to initiate a programme idea in 1954 to accompany an expedition to Sierra Leone in west Africa to collect different species for London Zoo. Attenborough took a cameraman armed with a 16mm clockwork film camera, and the expedition collected numerous species, including chameleons, weaverbirds and pythons. Produced by the Talks Department, the creatures were presented in the studio show, *Zoo Quest*, over a number of weeks and intercut with the filmed footage taken in Sierra Leone. One of the 'nominal' reasons to go to Sierra Leone was to catch the rare bird Picathartes gymnocephalus, and the 'quest' for this bird became the narrative drive throughout the first series. The effective impact of this, Attenborough recalls (2003: 46), was felt when he was driving in London's Regent Street in an open topped sports car, and a bus driver leaned out of his window and asked, ''ere Dave…are you going to catch that *Picafartees gymno-*

bloody-cephalus or aren't you?' Six more *Zoo Quests* followed between 1954 and 1961, and they included trips to Guiana, Indonesia, New Guinea, Paraguay and Madagascar.

At the same time the BBC was also showing wildlife documentary films by the Belgian film-maker Armand Denis and his wife Michaela Denis. The couple lived in Kenya, and their work centred around African wild animals, and included *Filming Wild Animals*, (BBC TV 1954-55) and *Filming in Africa*, (BBC TV 1955). They also had documentary films shown on ITV (ATV) between 1955 and 1958 entitled *Michaela and Armand Denis*. As Tise Vahimagi (1996: 67) suggests, 'Their on-camera treks across Uganda, Kenya, etc., with Michaela's shapely form constantly darting in front of the lens and Armand's relaxed, almost domestic manner when soft-shoeing after dangerous creatures established the couple as TV favourites during the 1950s.' As the transmission of the Denis' eponymous films on ITV suggests, the BBC did not have the monopoly on depicting the exotic through the lens of the educational. Globetrotting ITV series included *Survival*, a series of natural history programmes from Anglia Television from 1961, and a documentary series from ATV, *Great Temples of the World*, 1964-66. ITV also boasted a travel series with Orson Welles, *Round the World with Orson Welles*, which started on the second night of the new commercial service on 23 September 1955. As the *TV Times* billed it, 'In this series of films Orson Welles, who is a great cosmopolitan, visits some of the famous places of the world.'[xv] The BBC's own urbane and smooth cosmopolitan was Alan Whicker, who started reporting features on the BBC's *Tonight* programme, and *Whicker's World* began in 1959 as a look back at some of the *Tonight* films (Vahimagi: 1996). Subsequent programmes in the 1960s included *Whicker Down Under* (BBC TV 1961), *Whicker on Top of the World* (BBC TV 1962) and *Whicker Down Mexico Way* (BBC TV 1963).

Not just an examination of the distant, foreign or exotic, other programming also started to explore spaces and experiences previously kept hidden, spaces which the social psychologist Erving Goffman (1990) calls 'back regions'. For Goffman, everyday life is a matter of performing certain roles. This can be ascertained by the

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way that people behave differently with other groups, whether they be friends, family, colleagues, clients, bosses, subordinates, teachers, students or strangers. The settings for these performances are carefully circumscribed and are kept separate, with specific occupational locations demanding specific behaviour, actions, words and language, and these might be particularly associated with the kind of 'team behaviour' we discussed in chapter one. So, for Goffman (1990: 109), 'A region may be defined as any place that is bounded to some degree by barriers to perception.' Significantly, what Goffman calls a 'back region' is a space where the performer can be 'off duty' – often from other teams (often client or customer groups). As we have seen, television drama can explore such spaces. In *Z Cars*, for example, police officers are seen in the spaces which the public does not have access, such as in the police station canteen or in their homes. It was the depiction of fictional policemen as smokers, gamblers, people who complained about authority or who beat their wives that was to provoke the anger of senior police officers in real life (Laing: 1991). In *Z Cars* the characters are seen as behaving in ways which contradict their institutional roles and public performance of order and control.

Yet during this period, non-fiction, documentary television also started to examine the 'back regions' of institutions or particular social groups. Between 1958 and 1964, for example, the BBC ran a controversial series of programmes called *Your Life in Their Hands* which took viewers behind the scenes of hospitals, and inside operating theatres to give a close-up view of the work of doctors and nurses (Vahimagi: 1996). A single documentary, on the other hand, *The Deliverers* (ATV, transmitted 22 January 1964) was a look at the lives of the RAF crew of a Victor bomber which carried a nuclear payload. Shown two years after the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962, the documentary painted a picture of a group of ordinary people who had, in effect, an extraordinary job. Though uncontroversial in its depiction of the routine and mundane lives of the aircrew at work and at leisure, the documentary's ideological intent is even handed (or unclear). Either the programme ideologically underpins the principle of nuclear deterrent by demonstrating Britain's military capability, and by reassuring the viewers that their safety is in good hands, or it suggests with pathos that the power to kill

millions is held by a small group of ordinary people. The title of the programme itself is clearly euphemistic. Sometimes the exploration of institutional and public 'back regions' was more controversial. The Granada documentary *The Entertainers*, for example, was initially banned from transmission by the ITA in 1964. Made by producer Denis Mitchell, and the first documentary shot on videotape, the programme follows the everyday lives of a group of real strippers, wrestlers and pub and cabaret singers living together in a single house. Taking a behind the scenes look at showbusiness and the entertainment industries, *The Entertainers* depicts a grubby, squalid and seedy world. A striptease sequence in particular caused some anxiety at the ITA. and it took a year of negotiation before transmission was allowed on 13 January 1965.

Also during the period, television's own 'back regions' were the subject of programming. Broadcasting itself is a matter of staged behaviour, because even though events and performances take place in front of the camera, most of the work of television production takes place off-camera. Goffman (1990: 121) himself briefly refers to this kind of staging in relation to broadcasting:

> In these situations, back region tends to be defined as all places where the camera is not focused at the moment or all places out of range of 'live' microphones.

Many programmes took cameras into television's own 'back regions' to show its workings to the viewing public. An early example from the 1950s included a BBC *Children's Newsreel* of the new children's television studio opening at Lime Grove, transmitted 13 February 1952. Editions of *Panorama* were also given over to the behind the scenes technical work of BBC television, such as Richard Dimbleby giving a tour of the Alexandra Palace Studios, 4 June 1956, and a demonstration of the BBC's VERA videotape system in 1958. Other examples included news coverage of a press visit to the new BBC Television Centre, broadcast on 15 June 1960, and news coverage of the start of transmissions from the Centre on 29 June. There was also a filmed documentary made by the BBC, directed by Richard Cawston, which was deliberately

designed to promote the BBC in anticipation of a government inquiry into television broadcasting (which was to be the Pilkington Committee). The documentary, *This is the BBC*, followed the work of the BBC (both television and radio) over a 24 hour period. Quite radically, the black and white film ended with a short colour film sequence of a television studio experimenting with new colour television technology, implying that it was only a publicly funded broadcaster that could invest in research and development. The film was projected at meetings around the country, to the great and the good, and was transmitted on television on 27 November 1959 (although, of course, the colour sequence would have been seen in black and white on television at the time). Such depictions of the BBC at work were both a promotion of television technology and the work of the BBC itself. As we saw in chapter three, an ITV documentary that explored the 'back regions' of television is *The Dream Machine* (ATV) which was transmitted on 11 November 1964. Produced by Francis Essex, it shows the preparation and production of a light entertainment show, *Six Wonderful Girls*. The documentary demonstrates the studio recording process and it also shows the wiping of videotapes. Sequences take place in the office, in rehearsal rooms, in the staff bar, and in the studio gallery. The opening up of these back stage areas humanised and personalised their institutional protagonists. Significantly, the relationship between the protagonist and the viewer at home is one that is characterised by informality and a new kind of intimacy. While the 'back regions' of broadcasting are opened up on television, the viewer him or herself is situated in the private sphere of the home. This too can be constituted as a 'back region' where people can be 'off duty' from the work of public performance (in the street, at school or at work). The apparently open handed way in which television offered its workings, a communication from back region to back region, could be said to offer a new sense of immediacy and connection.

There were other ways in which television could link the home to the global while at the same time offering immediacy and connection. These were news and current affairs programmes. Developments in these programme forms over the 1950s, in a similar manner to the broadcasting of global live events and exotic films and documentaries described above, helped bring images into the home from far-flung places. Not only

did television use satellite relay and film recording, but developments in civilian air travel meant that reporters could traverse the globe quickly. At a time of global change and conflict. and with former European colonies in Africa and Asia uneasily making transitions to independence, there was much to report from abroad. On ITV this was also characterised by a sense of 'internationalism' in its current affairs programmes *This Week* and *World in Action* (see Holland: 2006; and Goddard, Corner and Richardson: forthcoming). As well as technological advances there were four other key developments which affected the growth of television news provision and current affairs. The first was the end of what was known as the 'Fourteen Day Rule'. This had been established between the government and the BBC towards the end of the Second World War to constrain controversial coverage of political issues. It meant that news or talks programmes could not report on events which were being discussed in parliament, or were about to be discussed, within the next fourteen day period. This was the cause for much editorial chaffing, and the rule was finally suspended at the end of 1956 after the political debacle of the Suez Crisis. The second development was the presentation of in-vision newsreaders. Traditionally BBC radio had sought to depersonalise its presenters as much as possible to represent a unitary BBC identity and to add an air of impartiality and authority. Up until 1954, news on BBC television was provided by newsreels of the 'topical' kind seen at the cinema. After 1954, however, filmed footage was accompanied by voice-overs from BBC journalists for the first time. As the first British television newsreader Richard Baker announced on the first proper BBC news broadcast, 'Here is an illustrated summary of the news. It will be followed by the latest film of happenings at home and abroad.' It was over a year later, just before the arrival of ITV and ITN, that the BBC allowed newsreaders to appear on screen.[xvi]

The arrival of the commercial service marked the third and fourth developments in television news: competition and professionalism.[xvii] It is commonly and popularly held that the advent of ITN news bulletins forced the BBC to revamp their television news service. As Andrew Crisell argues in his book, *An Introductory History of British Broadcasting* (1997), the ITN news was of higher quality than the BBC's. It had been set up in May 1955 under the editorship of Aidan Crawley, who had been both a

journalist and an MP, and it recruited a team of people to present the news, including Robin Day and Christopher Chataway. They were charged with the duty of being authoritative and journalistic, and were encouraged to emphasise their individual personalities. ITN also used (Crisell: 1997: 92-3) 'an unprecedented quantity of film in its bulletins and incorporated as much informed comment as possible to give viewers a better perspective on events.' At the same time, however, the BBC were also becoming more comfortable with in-vision presenters alongside filmed reports. As a result, the journalist Hugh Greene, who was to go on to become BBC Director General, was reluctant to agree that changes then underway at BBC News had been a result of competition with ITN. In a BBC internal report in 1958 he instead argued that 'one cannot be sure that they [BBC News] would not have attained today's standard even without competition.' (cf Briggs: 1995: 156-157). Furthermore, as I discussed in chapter one, a Gallup poll from December 1957 found that 31 per cent of people found BBC news better than ITN, compared to 15 per cent who favoured ITN. Yet as we also saw in chapter one, the expansion of broadcasting in the 1950s and 1960s certainly facilitated the development of a *professional* ethos. By the end of the 1950s, television news was presented and run by professional journalists, while current affairs was increasingly being characterised by a professional cadre of journalists and presenters.[xviii]

What news and current affairs shared with some of the other programmes described above was the face-to-camera address of the presenter. This replicates a fundamental social encounter between people: face-to-face interaction. Writing in the *Journal of Psychiatry* in 1956, Donald Horton and R. Richard Wohl argued that the to-camera presentation of light entertainment hosts such as Johnny Carson, in the *Johnny Carson Show* on US television, constituted a form of 'para-social relationship'. This is a seeming face-to-face encounter between the presenter and the viewer. This relationship between on the on-screen performer and the viewer at home is characterised by 'intimacy at a distance', a form of ersatz intimacy separated by physical space (Horton and Wohl: 1956).[xix] In certain circumstances, this form of representation can *promote* the television experience as a sociable encounter. Paddy Scannell (1996), drawing on

the work of the sociologist Georg Simmel (1971), argues that people like to watch television or listen to radio because it is sociable – it is an activity that is not instrumental or functional, it is a charming way of spending time. I will critically evaluate Scannell's understanding and deployment of the concept of 'sociability' in more depth in chapter six. I will do this to explore the relationship between on-screen presenters and members of the public in certain television programmes and to examine the way that media power is constructed. For the moment, however, it is worth hanging on to the term sociability here because it alludes to an easy-going charm and social-ness in certain of television's programming.

In the 1950s, one particular programme which transcended generic boundaries associated with talk and light entertainment programmes to produce this kind of charm was *Tonight*, which ran on BBC television between 1957 and 1965. *Tonight*, a current affairs magazine programme, was scheduled in the tea-time slot which had previously been kept clear of programming, a gap in the schedules in which television traditionally 'closed down' to allow parents to put their children to bed, a slot known as the 'toddler's truce'.[xx] For John Corner (1991: 8), the most significant aspect of *Tonight* was that 'the programme developed a modality of easy, familiar address which seemed to resonate perfectly with emerging ideas about social conventions and public values across a wide spectrum.' *Tonight* was a forty minute, topical magazine programme that combined studio items with filmed reports, a programme that looked at big stories and how they affected individuals. As Briggs notes (1995: 162):

> Through its magazine mix, which included music, *Tonight* deliberately blurred traditional distinctions between entertainment, information, and even education; while through its informal styles of presentation, it broke sharply with old BBC traditions of 'correctness' and 'dignity'. It also showed the viewing public that the BBC could be just as sprightly and irreverent as ITV.

The programme's magazine format was a recognition that at this time of the day people would be coming home from work, doing homework, having dinner or getting ready to

go out. So the fragmented magazine format could accommodate a distracted audience for short bursts of viewing. The chief presenter was Cliff Michelmore, described in parts of the press as 'avuncular, pink-faced, middle brow' (cf Briggs: 1995:162). The programme mixed serious items with comic items and music, and many of the team that worked on the programme in the BBC Talks Department went on to work on the satirical *That Was the Week That Was*. For Corner (1991: 12), 'the success of *Tonight* indicates how powerfully television could employ its immediacy and intimacy to construct the terms of a new sociability.' *Tonight* proved very popular with a viewing audience, and in 1957 the programme was attracting an audience of 9 million viewers.

The development of new forms of broadcasting, with an emphasis on para-social interaction, intimacy at a distance and sociability (here) may, however, have had negative implications. The emergence of news and current affairs programming in the 1950s increasingly put politicians and others in authority on the screen on a daily basis. Placed within the television flow of the mixed programme schedule that we discussed in chapter two, politicians, world leaders, civil servants, doctors, scientists, policemen, teachers, artists and writers were as much a part of the television schedule as cabaret singers, dancers, rock stars, films stars, quiz show hosts and comedians. In one sense, the placing of these people within the television schedule might have been democratising, bringing these people down to earth, making them newly visible and accountable to the viewer and voter. Television brought 'Them' into the home. Richard Hoggart, in *The Uses of Literacy*, suggests that for the working classes, 'Them' were the bosses and public officials, the people who 'got us into this mess', people such as politicians. These people, 'Them', were not the 'Us' of the working classes (Hoggart: 1969). For Silverstone, this quotidian display of politicians, leaders and people in authority on television has resulted, long term, in the suburbanisation of the public sphere (1994; 1997). The (political) world is viewed through the prism of the home. Yet the breakdown of the barrier between the home (private sphere) and the public sphere for the first time in the 1950s and 1960s might have seemed invasive. As part of a society in which the welfare state and government bureaucracy was an increasing part

of everyday life, the intrusion of the public sphere into domestic space via the television set might have made the political process appear oppressively pervasive.

It was for this reason that Stephen Wagg (1992) argues that a 'satire boom' emerged in the early 1960s. This was a moment when satire was in vogue across a range of media and arts, and included satirical revues in the theatre, the launch of the satirical magazine *Private Eye*, and the BBC's television show *That Was The Week That Was*. This 'boom' signified a disenchantment with the world of politics, and marked a retreat and engagement from the political sphere. For Wagg, (1992: 255):

> The principal thrust of the comedy [the satirical depiction of politics, and establishment and social institutions] has, I believe, been toward an elevation of the *private* sphere of individual activities and decision-making at the expense of the *public* realm of parliamentary and 'party-political' deliberation.

Satire was a way a distancing oneself from the issues of the day, by pricking the pomposity of politicians and leaders, by not taking them seriously. By viewing public life from the comfort of the home, and by witnessing politicians and leaders as part of the television flow. as part of the ready supply of entertainment, it was possible to take them less seriously. As a consequence, 'They' and 'Them' may have been more visible, but in being brought into the home they may also have been less powerful.

To sum up here, the demographic changes in British society created the space for the new cultural form of television. Jobs in the new modern industries and homes in the new estates, suburbs and towns meant that people were displaced away from family, friends and community. At the same time, the post-war baby boom meant that young couples were more likely to be at home looking after their children. As will be explored in the next chapter, changes in credit arrangements meant that people could obtain a range of domestic items, such as television sets, on hire purchase. Yet for many people, slum clearances and new homes were the cause of anxiety and unhappiness. This was explored in television drama forms ranging from telefantasy to

police series and single dramas. The emergence of television in the home, and a combination of the development of recording and relay (cable and satellite) technologies meant that the viewer was connected to other people, places and events locally, regionally, nationally and globally. Television not only connected the domestic audience to far-flung places, but also behind the scenes of institutions such as hospitals, the Royal Air Force, the entertainment industry and even television itself. It is for these reasons that I have described television in this period as a *translocational* medium. It both depicted the demographic movement and displacement of people around the country from their traditional homes, and it connected audiences from the place of viewing to the spaces being occupied and captured by the television camera. New programme forms such as television news, current affairs and documentaries facilitated this increasing sense of connectivity. With some of the programmes characterised by intimate forms of presentation, there appeared to be an erosion of the boundaries between the public and private spheres. In a society characterised by welfarism and state bureaucracy, the daily presentation of the world of politics and international events in news and current affairs programming may have made the sphere of government seem omnipresent and oppressive. Within the flow of the mixed programme schedule, which combined politics and serious drama with comedy and entertainment, this would have constructed and perpetuated the sense that television connected its viewers to the central institutions and concerns of society that I discussed in chapter two. The next chapter will explore how television circulated discourses surrounding consumer culture and how this promoted economic and cultural difference and class conflict.

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[i] In 1956 14 per cent of homes were still without electricity, and in many of the older houses wiring was often unreliable or dangerous (Akhtar and Humphries: 2001 cf Sandbrook: 2005).
[ii] The effects of slum clearances are referred to in the drama *Up the Junction* (1965), and the Roehampton estate merits a brief, disparaging mention.
[iii] See, for example, Cauldwell (1995) and Johnson (2005).
[iv] See, for example, Goldthorpe et al. (1969).
[v] Reported in an article on television detector vans, Geoff Howard, 'Pirates', in *TV Mirror*, 20 February 1954, Vol 2, no. 8, p10.

[vi] A domestically set series called *The Appleyards* was transmitted by BBC television 1952-57 but was aimed at children.

[vii] See the Television Heaven website, www.televisionheaven.co.uk/grove.htm

[viii] See Johnson (2005) for an extended discussion of socio-cultural verisimilitude in relation to the *Quatermass* series and 'telefantasy', and Neale (2000) for a discussion of the theory in relationship to film genre.

[ix] See Laing (1991).

[x] See, for example, Caughie (2000) and Cook (2003).

[xi] Cf Sydney-Smith: 2002: 153. Originally quoted in 'Why do Z-men shock the police? TV chief answers that "oafs" criticism', in the *Daily Sketch*, 1 May 1962.

[xii] See Cooke (2003) for an extended discusson on the drama.

[xiii] In Orwell's analysis, the 'perfect' English murder in the pre-war period was committed cunningly by a professional, such as a solicitor or dentist living a respectable bourgeois life in the suburbs, who had been stirred by strong emotions. Americanization, spurred by both Hollywood films and the effects of the war, instead meant that murder had become sordid and meaningless, with an air of thrill and cheap glamour. See Orwell (2003).

[xiv] Attenborough was to become Controller of BBC 2 and presenter of landmark BBC television series as *Life on Earth* (1979), *The Living Planet* (1984) and *The Trials of Life* (1990).

[xv] 20 September 1955, p21.

[xvi] See *Radio Times: 50 Years of BBC TV News*, p2, supplement to *Radio Times* 3-9 July 2004.

[xvii] For a critical history of ITN between 1955 and 2005 see Harrison (2005).

[xviii] See, for example, Goldie (1977), Briggs (1995), Holland (2006) and Goddard, Corner and Richardson (forthcoming).

[xix] Such intimacy has also been discussed in terms of non-reciprocity and 'quasi-mediated interaction', see Thompson (1995).

[xx] See Corner (1991) and Hill (1991) for a discussion of the demise of the 'toddler's truce', the emergence of *Tonight* during the week and new pop programmes on Saturday evenings.

Chapter 5: Consumer Culture

This chapter will explore the way that television promoted consumer culture and promoted a sense of social fragmentation and class conflict. In Britain in the 1950s and 1960s the economy boomed. There was full employment, which meant that there was competition for labour and wages were higher. In 1954 rationing came to an end and there was a relaxation of hire-purchase (HP) controls. This meant there were fewer restrictions on what consumer goods people bought. With increased affluence people could spend more on commodities and services or, where money was tighter, they could acquire goods on HP and make regular payments over a period of time. In the year following the end of rationing, consumer spending in Britain rose by 8 per cent, and in particular spending on durable goods such as televisions and refrigerators rose by 10 per cent. By 1957 British shoppers were spending £1004 million pounds on durable goods, and in 1960 £1465m.[i] Yet according to the historian Dominic Sandbrook (2005), the consumer boom in the 1950s was an extension of long-term consumer developments which had begun in the Victorian era, and which had continued in wealthy pockets in the 1920s and 1930s - despite wider spread poverty and economic depression. This had been disrupted by the war and its immediate aftermath, years that were characterised by restrictions and austerity. From the mid 1950s the combination of full employment, relative affluence and better housing meant that there was increased spending on household items on a much wider scale. A survey conducted by the *Financial Times* found that in a two year period from 1957 to 1959 the number of households owning a television had increased by 32 percent, washing machines by 54 percent, and refrigerators by 58 per cent. This expansion of electrical goods had been dependent on electrification before the war, and new housing which had more reliable wiring. Shopping itself was also undergoing radical changes with the rise of the supermarket. In 1956, for example, there were around 3,000 supermarkets and self-service stores in Britain, by 1962 there were 12,000. Consumption was not just restricted to household goods, but also cars, holidays and, for young people, fashion and pop music.

This is not to say, however, that the development of consumer culture was evenly or fairly felt. The television dramas in the previous chapter demonstrate that there were negative cultural consequences of the demographic changes taking place in Britain. Despite the advent of the Welfare State, and despite an economy characterised by full employment, many experienced hardship and low standards of living. For those who were struggling to make ends meet, hire-purchase and debt exacerbated an already difficult situation. In the drama *Up the Junction*, the 'tally man' who went around collecting HP payments was critical of the young women finding themselves in debt. Yet it was not just the worst-off who found themselves depending increasingly on credit and HP but a wider range of people wanting to enjoy the good life. In 1962 a British civil servant, John Vassall, was found to be a spy in the pay of the Soviet Union. When questions were asked in parliament about why no-one had noticed Vassall's lavish lifestyle, sponsored by his espionage, the minister responsible replied 'How many of us are living beyond our incomes?'[ii] Yet despite the uneven spread of affluence, and continuing deprivation in some quarters, rapid technological advances, rapid economic growth and the overall improvement of living conditions in Britain marked out the period as, what Eric Hobsbawm (1995) has described it in his history of the Twentieth Century, a 'Golden Age'.

Television's role in the emergence of a strong consumer capitalism in the 1950s is a complex one. The expansion and development of television broadcasting and the extension and expansion of the television audience discussed so far were both symptoms and agents of this change. This chapter will look at the way in which television's content and forms circulated discourses of consumerism and made practices of consumption visible. It will also examine the ways in which such visible practices were related to social affiliation. Consumer culture is directly related to issues of lifestyle and class membership. Cutting across this are also issues of age and gender. So the representation of social and cultural activity, in television's newly expanding range of outputs in the mixed programme schedule, from drama to comedy, light entertainment and factual programming, makes lifestyle and class tastes visible to a wider range of social and cultural groups. It includes the kinds of visible markers

people display on television, the clothes they wear or the way they clean or decorate their homes. The programmes themselves, drawing on different heritages such as middle-class theatre or working class variety shows, also constitute and represent cultural and class values. The broadcasting of these different programmes and forms on television in the mixed programme makes it easier for a range of audiences to be judgemental about the tastes and activities of different groups and classes. As this chapter will demonstrate, the promotion of consumer culture engenders a sense of cultural fragmentation and promotes class conflict.

Advertising consumer culture:

One way that television explicitly made consumerism visible was, with the arrival of ITV in 1955, by placing advertising on screen. As we saw in chapter three, the arrival of commercial television in 1955 brought about a new form of filmed programming to television, the adverts. The expansion of advertising through television had been a major impetus for the campaign for commercial television in the early 1950s, with agencies and companies with goods to sell looking for additional promotional outlets at the dawn of the decade's economic boom (Crisell: 1997). Yet the institution of 'spot advertisements' was a particularly British way of negotiating the demands of market and public service values in commercial television. In 1951, the Beveridge Report had recommended against the adoption of commercial broadcasting in Britain. One of the reasons was that the Beveridge Committee had been unhappy about the way radio and television programmes in the USA were sponsored by advertisers. The fear was that programme sponsorship by advertisers could influence editorial decision-making in the production process. If an advertiser was unhappy with a particular programme – be it the characters, the personalities or the narrative – then they could exert influence over the production and the programme's content. The ultimate sanction was that the advertiser could withdraw sponsorship money, leaving the programme's financing and future in a perilous condition. As a consequence, during the debates around the breaking of the BBC's monopoly, it was envisaged that 'spot advertisements' would be an important means of keeping finance and editorial decision-making separate in

commercial television. A programme would be made by one of the ITV programme companies, but advertising air space would be sold separately to agencies. Obviously, an advertiser might not want their promotions aired alongside a programme that might reflect negatively on their product. In such an instance they could move the advert, but they could not impel the alteration or cancellation of that programme.[iii]

The rules on what could be advertised were handled by the ITA, but under supervision from a statutory Advertising Committee, and could face close scrutiny from government. On the whole though, the rules were mainly liberal, with no bar on alcohol or tobacco. On the other hand money-lenders and fortune tellers were banned from advertising, and no adverts were allowed to be associated with specific religions or the Royal Family. There had been questions of whether gambling could be advertised, but this was deferred at the time when the Pools Promoters Association indicated that it would not be seeking advertising airtime in the early days of the new service (Sendall: 1982). When commercial television began in 1955 there were strict rules about how much advertising could be shown. The ITA established from the outset that the commercial programme companies could not place advertisements of more than an average of six minutes in an hour, with a maximum of seven minutes on any specific occasion.[iv]

As well as spot advertising, there was another kind of promotional programme on ITV. This was a hybrid called the 'advertising magazine', or more popularly the 'admag', and this caused a problem for the ITA because there were was confusion as to whether it constituted programme sponsorship or whether it exceeded advertising's six minute rule. The 'admag' form had been discussed in the Television Act of 1954 as 'shoppers' guides', and they were an early type of consumer programme featuring spots in which specific products were promoted. The difficulty, however, was that advertising had to be clearly distinguishable from other television programming, yet the 'admag' blurred this distinction. The principles governing the 'admag' turned it into a curious animal. One of these principles was that all the goods or services being advertised in these magazines had to be related in some way, and this relationship was to be made clear by

the presentational links. Yet product promotion was paid for by the advertisers in a programme which was made by one of the ITV programme companies, rather than by an advertising agency in-house production department. At first it was suggested that the advertisers should also pay for the presentational links, but this was soon relaxed. The links themselves were often conducted by well-known television personalities who gave the item being promoted an additional fillip. Often the presentation of the programme appeared to be fictional or semi-documentary (Sendall: 1982). Perhaps the most famous 'admag' from the period was *Jim's Inn* which was made by Associated-Rediffusion and ran between 1957 and 1963. This particular 'admag' focused on a married couple who ran a pub in the fictional village of Wembleham, and they would discuss the price and quality of various real consumer products with their customers. The programme's arch premise and delivery provoked some uncomplimentary criticism, and was satirised in a sketch in *Beyond the Fringe*, a stage revue at the Edinburgh Festival in August 1960, featuring the line-up of Alan Bennett, Peter Cook, Jonathan Miller and Dudley Moore. In Ronald Bergan's (1989: 12) book about *Beyond the Fringe*, he describes *Jim's Inn* as a 'puerile advertising playlet in which people in a pub, quite straight-faced, introduced products for praise in conversation.' In the sketch, the barman Jim was played by Dudley Moore, with customers Basil and Nigel played by Jonathan Miller and Peter Cook.

Basil: Good gracious me – out of the corner of my eye I thought you were wearing a good cashmere.

Nigel: I'm glad you thought it was cashmere but it's not.

Basil: I'd put money on it being cashmere.

Nigel: You'd lose your money, Bas. It's a Niblock Histamine Non-Iron Oven-Dry Visco-Static Dynaflo, all designed to make a nice sweater with peak purchasing power.[v]

Hundreds of admags were broadcast between 1955 and 1963, and they included *Homes and Gardens* (ATV), *What's in Store* (ABC) and two holiday programmes, *Where Shall We Go?* (ABC) and *Over the Hills* (Associated-Rediffusion). Yet there was still an anxiety about whether these 'admags' constituted ordinary programming or specifically a form of advertising. For Sendall (1983: 108), 'There can be little doubt that, however carefully they were labelled, the more successful advertising magazines were seen (even enjoyed) as *programmes* by at least some viewers.'[vi] The problem was that it looked as if these programmes had been sponsored through the back door. As Sendall goes on to explain (ibid.):

> The more plausible and 'intrinsically interesting' the linking theme of an advertising magazine was, the more readily it would resemble a programme and incur, however unjustifiably, the charge of programme sponsorship. The less plausible the theme and the less effective the linking, the more the magazine would seem to be no more than a bunch of unrelated spot advertisements which should rightly be counted against the daily allowance for such.

During the submissions to the Pilkington Committee at the beginning of the 1960s, the first ITA Chairman himself recommended the abolition of the admag form, agreeing that they had become a form of programme sponsorship. The Committee itself was unhappy with admags and 'concluded that even if the magazines were within the letter of the Act, they offended against its spirit, (Sendall: 1983: 109). As a result of the Pilkington recommendation, the Postmaster General issued a directive in 1963 that no more 'admags' be made.

Visibility and material display:

Advertising and 'admags' were not the only ways, however, in which consumer culture was promoted. In a fairly obvious way, the new visibility provided by television promoted a variety of cultural forms and activities through the relay and, ultimately, 'witness' of cultural events, performances and representations. As we saw in chapter

one, the impetus for broadcasting itself had been the promotion of buying and consuming culture. With the advent of first radio, and then television, broadcasting effectively promoted cultural consumption to a wider audience, that is, consumption of musical performances, plays, light entertainment, talk programmes and sport. As we saw in chapter two, the work of the Arts Council in the late 1940s and early 1950s was predicated on the idea that the BBC had already created a national audience for artistic activity. Alongside print media, entertainment outlets and public institutions, broadcasting effectively served to cross-promote a variety of cultural activities within the mixed programme schedule.

In the 1950s and 1960s, the newly expanded television institution promoted new forms of art and culture to a newly established national audience in new and wide ranging forms of programming. This is linked to class and consumerism in a number of ways. This is because it was not just the cultural consumption of a range of arts that was promoted, but a newly visible range of commodities and lifestyles. As the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1984) has shown, art, culture and commodities constitute forms of class communication directly related to lifestyle – both desired and actual. Taste and lifestyle thus become both constituents and definitions of class. As a result, commodities can signify 'lifestyle' while at the same time 'lifestyle' can be bought via commodities. This suggests that social or class definitions and positions are not necessarily static. As an earlier sociologist, Thorstein Veblen (1934), has shown us, material consumption is one way of expressing a form of class mobility. In his analysis of the French 'nouveaux riches' at the end of Nineteenth Century (originally published in 1899), Veblen demonstrated that status could be bought by particular social groups through 'conspicuous consumption'. In Veblen's example, an emerging social group built on new money sought to dress up its social pretensions by emulating established wealth. Of course, such an attempt at cultural incorporation into a higher social group was not necessarily successful, and the term 'nouveaux riches' has negative connotations. I will explore this issue later in relation to class conflict, yet what this reveals is that consumerism and the purchase of new commodities and services has class implications.

So, in this period, television showed its audience new commodities in advertising, but also in a range of other programme forms. It also presented a range of lifestyles, and new forms of behaviour including, but not necessarily restricted to, social mobility, individual and personal freedom, material comfort and convenience. Often this new behaviour involved the conspicuous display of (and in some cases relied upon) material goods and commodities. In a range of programmes material goods and lifestyle were linked and potentially made desirable. Yet the wide range of programme forms within the mixed programme schedule, with often different and contradictory ideologies, makes it difficult to draw any easy conclusions about how television promoted consumer culture in its programming. Some examples should illustrate the contradictory ways that television explored consumerism and lifestyle.

In an explicit sense, the ability of television cameras to film and broadcast from around the world in the 1950s and 1960s promoted travel as a particular aspect of cultural activity. As we saw in the last chapter, television was able to report from abroad, and this potentially offered an image of the exotic, of charming and desirable foreignness. The expansion of air travel and the advent of the so-called 'jet age' certainly made it possible for camera crews, and people like Orson Welles and Alan Whicker, to travel round the world more quickly and conveniently. Foreignness, in natural history programmes and travelogues, became a staple of television output and it was teasingly and tantalisingly promoted under the educational and informative veil of public service broadcasting. It certainly seemed to place Britain at the centre of a world map and imply, in a neo-colonial manner, that Britons (even working class ones) had the right, if not a duty in the interest of education, to travel and consume the wildlife and culture of foreign places. Yet, of course, it was cheap air travel, package holidays, relative affluence, hire purchase arrangements and the 'keeping up with the Jones' which were key factors in the increasing numbers of people travelling abroad on holiday. In 1951, for example, two million foreign holidays were taken by Britons, rising to four million in 1961 and seven million in 1971 (Marwick: 1996). In the first ever episode of the popular and enduring sitcom about two young working class men in the north of

England, *The Likely Lads*, shown on BBC2 in 1964, the characters Bob and Terry are seen arriving home from a holiday in Spain. The image suggests that even two working class lads from the north can aspire to, and achieve, travel to exotic locations.

Yet holiday-making was not an isolated aspect of consumer culture, it vied with other goods and services for consumer spending. In the same year as *The Likely Lads* above, an episode of the BBC1 sitcom *Meet the Wife*, starring Freddie Frinton and Thora Hird, clearly demonstrates how consumerism impacted on working class couples and families, and the kinds of financial anxieties it caused. In the episode titled 'Getting Away', transmitted 21 April 1964, the comedy centres around Thora and Freddie, a northern middle-aged, working class couple planning to go on holiday. At the beginning of the episode Thora and Freddie are seen arguing over whether they can afford to go abroad, and their argument demonstrates the competing financial claims that the new consumer boom has on their money, as well as the need to be seen to be 'keeping up' socially. Part of what inspires Thora to want to go abroad is a sense of competition with her friends and neighbours. Reading a holiday brochure in bed, Thora announces, 'The Hotel Splendide, Majorca. Now that's where Mrs Jackson from the sweetshop stayed.' Freddie counters that they cannot afford a foreign holiday because of the money they have spent on household items. 'You've spent too much money around the house, only last month this new bed cost fifty quid.' Thora claims that she only wants what everyone else seems to be doing, 'Why, even the milkman's just come back from Bulgaria. How can he afford to go?' To which Freddie's crisp reply is, 'It was a free gift with his washing machine.' In the end Freddie relents, and books a two week holiday at the Hotel Splendide with air tickets on British Airways. When Thora asks how they could afford it after all, Freddie tells her that he won the money betting on the dogs. It turns out, however, that he booked the holiday secretly on HP. In a twist to the story, Thora tells him that she would never obtain anything on credit because of people they know crippled by debt. In the end, Thora finds out Freddie's secret, but they still manage to go on holiday to Spain with the Post Office savings she has. The episode makes gentle fun of Thora's aspirations of planning to show off her suntan at the launderette, even though she now has a washing machine, and of her anxieties over

flying and foreign food. Some of the comedy comes from Thora packing too much in her suit case, including her new pair of slacks, a travel iron, a hot water bottle, and all her various medicines in case of tummy upsets. What the episode articulately demonstrates, however, is the preoccupation with consumer culture and the financial and social anxieties this culture entails.

The way that television also positioned part of the women's audience in the period also demonstrates the complex and contradictory ways that programming promoted consumer culture. From the late 1940s the BBC had identified women as a distinct audience that was available to view programming during the daytime (Thumim: 2004). As Janet Thumim argues, the targeting of women as a specialist category was part of a larger strategy to expand the television audience and to establish a wider culture of television viewing.[vii] At the same time, as Joy Leman (1987) suggests, it was also a way in which television producers could make use of studios and broadcasting personnel during the day. By situating women in the home during the day, as housewives, they were considered to be both consumers and workers in the home – they kept house, shopped, cleaned, cooked and raised children. As Leman indicicates (1987: 91), 'The ideological operation of the programmes arose from society's hegemonic definitions of the family, children and domestic labour, and the desirable attributes and behaviour of men and women.' It was therefore seen as desirable that women in the home conform to idealised visions of womanhood, as both being attractive and efficient domestic workers. It also negated women's wider experiences outside of the home, in the workplace. So from the late 1940s the BBC broadcast numerous daytime programmes in a magazine format, segmented into short, discrete sections tackling different topics such as children, house and home, shopping, cooking and personal appearance. Programme titles included *Designed for Women* (1947), *About the Home* (1952) and *Family Affairs* (1955).

The segmented format of these programmes had been inspired by the fragmented style of print magazines which had already transferred to radio. Furthermore, by dealing with a wide range of topics it also appealed to a wider audience (Thumim: 2004). As

we saw in chapter two, Thumim argues that the magazine format is paradigmatic of the mixed programme schedule in this period. This is because a range different programmes (in a range of styles and formats, on varying themes and subjects), appeals broadly to a much wider audience. This was particularly important for television broadcasters trying to build a culture of viewing. The magazine format was also seen as desirable, in the US at least, because segmented programmes allowed women to conduct their housework while watching discrete items of interest or value to them (Spigel: 1992).

When ITV arrived it too adopted a similar model of providing daytime magazine programmes for women who were perceived to be at home during the day, and these tended to be transmitted in the morning. These programmes included *Morning Magazine* (1955-56), *Sunday Afternoon* (1955-56), *Home with Joy Shelton* (1955-56), and *Television Beauty Salon* (1957). However, commercial pressure meant that morning programmes for women were wound up, and by 1957 women's concerns were increasingly seen to be catered to by admags (Leman: 1987). On the BBC, women's magazine programmes during the daytime tended to evaporate in the early 1960s. The scheduling slot for women's programmes in the afternoon started to be moved around, and then it became increasingly replaced by outside broadcasting of sport. By 1964, there were no longer any programmes on BBC television that specifically addressed women. As Thumim argues (2004), this was because competition for programming resources squeezed out 'women's' programmes as a special category, and because television broadcasting no longer needed to enlist specialist categories of audience to develop viewing cultures.

There is also a class issue here. The tone of the early programmes, in the late 1940s and early 1950s was clearly aimed at upper and middle class women. This was because in this period it was only parts of an affluent set in the south east of England who could afford television. Joy Leman (1987) refers to an edition of *About the Home* in 1952, for example, which clearly demonstrated class prejudice in an item on food hygiene. The item used a drama documentary technique to depict a stereotypical working class

family living in unhygienic conditions to illustrate to wrong way to prepare food. As Leman explains (1987: 82):

> References to flies, dirty washing-up cloths, meat warmed up in the oven, cats and 'grubby boy's dirty fingers' all pointed to the conclusion that 'their' dirty habits were the reason for outbreaks in food poisoning.

As a result, there emerged a 'separation between the "innocent" viewer (assumed to be middle-class) and the "guilty" subject (presented as working-class),' (ibid.). Yet as Leman (1987) argues, *About the Home* sustained this tone, even in the face of the expanding television audience which was perceived as being increasingly working class, and the arrival of commercial television. These kinds of programmes, and the admags, would also have complemented women's magazines of the day, and in this they would have offered a contradictory models of cultural capital, especially for middle class women. Janice Winship (1992) has argued that women's weekly magazines in the 1950s promoted consumption as a way for women to gain success in their careers as mothers and wives. Knowing the right price of goods, and knowing how better to cook and to clean with the electronic goods and detergents that were becoming available, was increasingly important for women in household management. In this sense, women became 'professionalised' managers (albeit unpaid) of their households. On the other hand, Winship also suggests that, despite such professionalised status, middle-class women were effectively 'proletarianised' in a material sense after the Second World War because they had to take over the domestic chores which would previously have been conducted by a maid or hired help. It could therefore be argued that programmes oriented towards women concerning shopping, cooking and cleaning, may have sought to elevate the housewife's status as a household manager while at the same time condemning her to being a de facto domestic drudge.

Nonetheless, Thumim (2004) argues that the demise of programmes' specifically aimed at women by the early 1960s meant that women's issues were subsumed into

that of a larger, general audience. Within the newly expanded television institution, across the later 1950s and 1960s, women were made visible in a range of television outputs, both factual and fictional, across the mixed programme schedules. It was these representations of women's role within patriarchal society that a younger generation of women grew up with in the 1960s, and it was from this constituency that a new wave of feminists emerged in the 1970s (Thumim: 2004).

Television (amongst other media such as radio, vinyl records, jukeboxes and magazines) also provided for and gave high profile to a newly emerging social group in this period, teenagers and youth culture. There were several reasons why youth culture came to prominence in the 1950s. The first was that education was extended and younger people did not need to support the extended family as they had previously. Combined with full employment and higher wages for a mobile workforce, this meant that young people who had left school had significantly more disposable income. Young women working in shops and offices, unfettered by the usual male expenditure on beer and cigarettes, were now better able to spend money on commodities such as records, clothes or make-up (Hobsbawm: 1995). It was not just women who were affected, however, because in the 1950s a shift in male culture was underway. National service was finally abolished in 1956, therefore a new generation of younger males had more free time, more money, and more freedom to choose the way they dressed. Up until the 1950s, the 'suit' had been the predominant mode of male dress – characterised by the issuing of a 'demob suit' to all servicemen at the end of the war. From the end of the 1940s it was increasingly possible for young men to dress in ways which signified class or group affiliation. In the 1950s in particular the 'Teddy Boy' emerged, a working class fashion self-styled (and short for) 'The New Edwardians', derived from their Edwardian form of clothing, with long jackets with velvet collars and waistcoats. The 'Teddy Boy' style had itself been appropriated from upper class young males at the end of the 1940s, and young working class men could pay up to £100 for their outfits (Sandbrook: 2005). Yet although 'Teddy Boys' have in some ways become synonymous with the 1950s, and at the time they were associated with youth crime and deviance, it was effectively a fleeting fashion. The term 'Teddy Boys' was

first used in 1954, yet the movement had already passed by 1957 when rock and roll became a music phenomenon. Importantly here, the emergence of rock and roll in Britain is bound up with the development of new forms of television programming at the end of the 1950s (Hill: 1991). Programmes such as *Cool for Cats* (A-R 1956-9), *Six-Five Special* (BBC 1957-8), *Oh Boy!* (ABC 1958-9) and *Juke Box Jury* (BBC 1959-67) helped support and fuel interest in the nascent 'rock and roll' movement (ibid.). These programmes promoted the consumption of music and performances (much as BBC radio had in the 1920s and '30s) and the purchasing of records. At the same time, these programmes also promoted complementary trends in youth fashion. This was not just the dress and demeanour of popular performers, but also members of the studio audiences in some shows. As John Hill (1991: 95) has observed, members of the studio audience in *Six-Five Special* became 'unofficial guides' to fashions in haircuts, clothing and dancing. This was equally the case in *Ready, Steady, Go!* (A-R 1963-66) where 'the audience were as much the stars as the musicians,' (Hill: 1991: 103).

Yet the passing phase of the 'Teddy Boy' above demonstrates that the conceptualisation of youth culture cannot be a stable one. This is because cohorts of teenagers grow older, as do the performers who appeal to them. The rock and roll stars on British television at the end of the 1950s, such as Cliff Richards, Tommy Steel and Adam Faith increasingly became associated with more mainstream showbusiness by the start of the 1960s. This partly reflected the aging of their fanbase, as teenagers grew up, married and started to raise families (Sandbrook: 2005). Furthermore, teenagers of a given period do not necessarily constitute a homogenous group. In the early 1960s there were the Italian influenced Mods, sharply attired in suits, and the more bikerish Rockers dressed in denim and leather. These groups gained public notoriety in the early 1960s with a series of clashes at seaside towns during bank holidays (Cohen: 1972). Yet the rock and roll teenager was not a classless phenomenon. At the end of the 1950s and early 1960s, many middle class youngsters, especially those associated with the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) tended to be more interested in jazz (and later folk music). Over this period there was intense snobbery about music,

and jazz fans were particularly contemptuous of working class teenagers and 'pop' music (Sandbrook: 2005). These different kinds of music were all promoted to varying degrees within the mixed programme schedule of television, and therefore vulnerable to critical distaste. Pop music shows such as *Six-Five Special* were also characterised by the magazine format because they were scheduled in primetime early evening and had to appeal to a wider audience than just teenagers. As a result, *Six-Five Special* combined elements of variety in a magazine format, with music, comedy and items (Hill: 1991). At the same time, however, elements of rock, pop and jazz featured in other mixed bill variety programming. A 'trad jazz' performance, for example, appeared in almost every edition of *Sunday Night at the London Palladium* in 1962 (Sandbrook: 2005). The inclusion of different kinds of music across the schedule meant it was possible for different audience groups to be exposed to the musical tastes and cultures of other parts of the audience. This became the cause of taste conflict.

A particularly compelling example of this is the BBC programme *Juke Box Jury* which began in 1959. Based on an American idea, the show was hosted by David Jacobs who sat next to a fake jukebox, and played the week's latest pop releases to a panel of four judges who tended to be showbusiness personalities known to the audience. The panellists would then have to decide whether or not the single was going to be a 'hit' or a 'miss'. The programme was scheduled initially on Mondays, but then moved to a slot on Saturdays in the early evening, and so was particularly aimed at capturing a family audience. The show proved immensely popular, and regularly attracted 12 million viewers. For younger people the attraction was the opportunity to hear the latest record releases, whereas for older viewers the interest lay in the showbusiness panellists. The show became, in its way, a generational battleground. As John Hill (1991) argues, the guests often articulated the same barbed and disdainful comments that the parents might make. At the same time, the younger viewers did not necessarily want the older personalities, or their parents, to understand the appeal of the music. For Hill (1991: 102), 'The art of *Juke Box Jury*, in this respect, was to have it both ways, both confirming adult and youthful prejudices at the same time.' As a result, the show's

popularity was based on a form of cultural conflict between different age groupings, and also, it is likely, the taste cultures of different sections of the youth audience itself.

Another programme form which visibly celebrated material display, but in a different way, is the action-adventure genre, especially those involving spies, secret agents and crime solving adventurers, including *The Saint* and *The Avengers*. It has been argued that the adventure series can be seen as a by-product of Americanization. This was very much a case of British television remaking and remarketing genres that had originally been imported from the US (Osgerby, Gough-Yates and Wells: 2001). Jeffrey Miller (2000) has argued that these genres were appropriated, re-interpreted and synthesised with cultural elements drawn from Britain and continental Europe. The end product was something that looked very British (Miller: 2000). Yet there is an explicit connection with consumer culture here. Osgerby and Gough-Yates (2001: 24) argue that there is a connection between the aesthetics of these adventures and pop culture, with 'the spy's talent for masquerade and mobility representing an ideal vehicle for the exploration of style, surface and "look".'[viii] The heroes and heroines of these action adventure series were socially mobile and sexually liberated characters, whose mobility and liberation were articulated by a masquerade comprised of dressing up and conspicuous consumption. In these series characters wear sharp, expensive clothes, drive fast cars, visit exotic locations and appear at ease in a number of social milieux. In this sense, Osgerby and Gough-Yates argue (2001: 3), 'Action series can be seen as a kind of "lifestyle" television in the way they combine fantasies of thrilling adventure with mythologies of affluence and consumption.' *The Saint*, for example, achieved cultural purchase by connecting with important changes taking place in consumption, lifestyle and masculine identities in Britain and the USA, painting hedonistic role models.[ix] Of course, as Osgerby and Gough-Yates point out, the situation is far from clear-cut. Rather than a straightforward representation of young men living the 'high life', the series effectively serves, they argue (2001: 43), as 'a mythologised fantasy, a vehicle for aspirational fantasies and desires.'

On the other hand, these series, such as *The Saint* and *The Avengers*, could perhaps be read as parodies of those male, 'mythologised fantasies'. In being playful and tongue-in-cheek, the series might be seen to be sending up adolescent daydreams of sexual freedom and masculine omnipotence. A different series in the action-adventure mould however, *The Prisoner*, had very serious intellectual pretensions, and this contradicts with the visual celebration of style and material display. *The Prisoner* (1967-1968) was about a secret agent being kept captive in a strange village by the sea. He is given the title 'Number Six', and the series follows his attempts at escape or resistance to the seemingly absurd rules and restrictions of 'The Village', where life is characterised by surreal goings-on and overwhelming surveillance. As a result, one way of reading the series is as 'an existentialist disquisition on the nature of individual freedom in an age of ever-increasing bureaucracy and social control,' (Osgerby, Gough-Yates and Wells: 2001: 25). This is succinctly articulated in the first episode, and repeated in the title sequence for the rest of the series, when the main character shouts in frustration at his captors, 'I am not a number. I am a free man!' Furthermore, it has been argued that *The Prisoner* is rooted in conservative assumptions: anxieties about growing media manipulation and cultural conformity (Buxton: 1990). The series could therefore be read as offering a critique of mass society, the potentially oppressive conformity of fashion and increasing consumerism.

As we have seen then, the different range of programme outputs in the mixed programme schedule promoted often contradictory ideologies surrounding consumer culture. In many respects, it could be argued that television showed audiences *what* to consume and *how* to consume it (and in many cases how to *get* it). Programmes may have promoted consumerism in ways which transcended class, appealing instead to gender and age and, in doing so, offering the possibility of social mobility. Some programmes provided potential role models for the first time in the 1950s and 1960s. They could offer and suggest models for appropriate types of behaviour in particular situations. Identifications reinforce patterns of consumption by suggesting that by dressing a certain way or acquiring certain commodities, you too can become like the person on screen. Such models do not necessarily work purely at the level of social

class or grouping, but also operate at the level of sexual desire. This might be crudely formulated as 'if you wear the smart suit, you too could get the girl'. Yet as we have seen, social mobility through consumption, in Veblen's sense, implicitly points to elements of class negotiation or conflict. The depiction of consumer culture in programmes I looked at above, which circulated around youth or which were specifically aimed at women, contained within them, or represented, problematic positions, such as intragenerational conflict amongst teenage cohorts, or the potential 'proletarianisation' of middle-class women in the home. Programmes which also appeared to celebrate images of classless masculinity and sexuality through highly conspicuous displays of material affluence may also have been playful with, and even critical of, those very same images. What is clear here is that television made different forms of material display more visible, and in doing so it promoted competing discourses about consumer culture. These displays were bound up with issues of taste, lifestyle and cultural capital. As Bourdieu (1984) has shown, taste, lifestyle and cultural capital are not only markers of class distinction, they are also the weapons of class conflict.

Conflict:

Class conflict was depicted in a range of dramas in film, theatre, literature and on television during the period. Yet it was also well exemplified in 'classic' sitcoms such as *Hancock's Half Hour* and *Steptoe and Son*. As Peter Goddard (1991) has argued, the sitcom was a new form of television programming in the 1950s, and the comedian Tony Hancock was one of the first to develop the form in Britain from simple slapstick, stand-up or sketches, towards action and humour that were narratively driven. *Hancock's Half Hour* had started on radio in 1954 (running until 1959) before being shown on BBC television from 1956-1960, with two series of *The Tony Hancock Show* on ITV (A-R) in 1956 and 1957. As well as other appearances on ITV and BBC, Tony Hancock's eponymously titled sitcom, *Hancock*, ran on BBC television in 1961 and included the famous episodes 'The Bedsitter' and 'The Blood Donor'.[x] Throughout the radio series and subsequent television sitcoms the *character* Hancock, rather than

the performer Hancock, comes across as a man on the edge: on the edge of the middle class, on the edge of suburbia, and on the edge of respectability. Hancock was a man with pretensions towards culture and respectability, even though he hailed from the lower-middle-class. Given the increasing overlap in material existence between the working classes and the lower middle classes in the 1950s, the lower-middle-classes were often more conscious of their precarious cultural status. This material existence was frequently geographical, with working class and lower-middle-class households often living in close proximity. The fictitious address for Hancock is a case in point: 23 Railway Cuttings, East Cheam. The place Cheam itself was a very comfortable middle class suburb of South London in the period, but the appendage 'East' had connotations of the East End of London which was known for being home to working class communities (Wagg: 1998). The Railway Cuttings address also established the location as being next to the railway lines (perhaps on the 'wrong' side of the tracks) and as being a terrace, rather than the more comfortable semi-detached houses of what Medhurst (1997) calls 'high suburbia'. Hancock's countenance displays a mix of ill-directed guile, pomposity and laziness. As Goddard argues, Hancock is 'the seedy misfit with intellectual pretensions, sure he was missing out while those around him had never had it so good...' (Goddard: 1991: 78). His companion Sid (Sid James), while not deliberately holding him back, is intransigent to Hancock's class manoeuvring. While James' obvious working class demeanour acts as a foil to Hancock's pretensions, his dodgy geezer 'on the make' appeals to Hancock's laziness. In this sense they make the archetypal buddy pairing of opportunist chancers. Yet despite being a comedy, Medhurst (1997: 253) argues that the Hancock series 'added a little grit to the suburban blancmange, which interrogated suburban values rather than taking them for granted.' While Medhurst (ibid.) cautions that the circular nature of sitcom, which returns characters back to where they started, tends to militate against an agenda of radical change, Hancock '...raised the possibility that suburban lives might be restricted lives, petty lives, lives that prompt thoughts of escape.'

While *Hancock's Half Hour* is concerned with class struggle on the fringes of respectable suburbia, *Steptoe and Son* more explicitly demonstrates the conflictual

nature of capitalist and consumer relationships. Running on and off between 1962 and 1974, *Steptoe and Son* are father and son rag-and-bone merchants who live in a rundown, decrepit junkyard in west London. The son, Harold Steptoe, played by Harry H. Corbett, takes the horse and cart out every day to pick up old objects and scrap, which they then try to sell on. The objects that are collected often provide the furniture and fittings for the Steptoes' rundown home. The collection of junk and scrap means the programme can be read in two ways, as a celebration of consumer culture, or as a critique of consumer culture. In one sense the programme is a celebration of objects. It is what the two men (mainly Harold) salvage, and they are often seen arguing over the merits of a particular artefact. These artefacts may have functional or aesthetic value, but never far away is the spectre of class and the cultural capital of the objects they claim. As a celebration of commodities, it demonstrates that each object has a biography, that it can represent something new to whoever finds it.[xi] Objects are part of a constant circulation of meaning. Yet a more pessimistic reading might be that, in many ways, the objects they retrieve are worthless. When they find a functional object it has clearly been discarded not because of its lack of use value (in Marxist terms) but because of its lack of cultural and economic value. The series demonstrated the poverty of an endless consumption in which objects that were once new commodities will eventually be discarded. Buying one object is not enough, it has to be discarded, replaced or superseded by something that works better or *looks* better, or has more modish, class based cultural capital. There is also a darker edge here, as described in the *Radio Times Guide to Comedy*: 'It [*Steptoe and Son*] dealt with an underclass previously seen on television only in realistic dramas like *Armchair Theatre*,' (Lewisohn: 1998: 637). As part of an underclass the duo have to live in very squalid conditions. There is perhaps an implicit moral here in that what defines an underclass is an inability to consume material objects in an appropriate manner. The objects and furnishings which adorn the Steptoe home are not the desirable consumer objects bought new from department stores for the homes that were being built around Britain. As members of an underclass, Alfred and Harold are aberrant because they are not part of the cycle of consumption of mainstream society.

The relationships in *Steptoe and Son* are also very complex. Part of the drama is premised on the love-hate relationship between father and son Alfred and Harold. The series started out as a one half hour 'playlet' transmitted on 5 January 1962 as part of an anthology season of comedies written for the BBC by Alan Simpson and Ray Galton. The original programme was called 'The Offer', and centred round Harold preparing to leave his father because he has an 'offer' of work elsewhere. Despite being a comedy, the dramatic tension perhaps has more in common with Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, as Harold opines on why he must go and how he must make his life better. In the end, however, he is thwarted by his own inability to leave. As Beckett's protagonists are frustrated by Godot's very non-appearance, Harold is denied his escape because his father does not offer him the use of the horse to pull the cart with his belongings. In a sense, despite Harold's desperation to leave, part of what holds him back is his own fear and anxiety. In the subsequent series, the ongoing tension comes from Harold trying to escape the grimness and squalor of life where both home and work constitute a 'prison' (Lewisohn: 1998). Harold's attempts to better himself and find a romantic partner in life are counterpoised against Alfred, a lazy, selfish old man who wants Harold to stay at home to look after him in his old age.

As well as being a generational conflict (a newer generation, restless against the constraints of an older one), the comedy is infused with class conflict. Harold's attempt at self-betterment and refinement, amidst the jumble and the junk, comes across as pretentious and pathetic. Instead, Harold seeks cultural capital through the commodities he acquires. As Pierre Bourdieu (1984) has demonstrated, consumption and taste define class interests and groupings. Class grouping is not just predicated on economic capital, in Marx's sense, but also on cultural capital, knowledge and learned behaviour that ascribe to the social rules, conventions, attitudes and moralities of a specific class. Part of that capital involves the cultural display of artefacts and commodities in a manner appropriate to a particular class. So Harold Steptoe's attempts to acquire the status of middle-class refinement and respectability, through ownership of objects and artefacts, are laughable because he lacks the necessary cultural capital to display middle-class status. In collecting junk, Harold particularly

prizes the objects and artefacts that bring with it middle-class cultural capital, even if he does not fully understand their significance. In the episode 'Sixty-Five Today', for example, Harold has been collecting books for his bookcase. Sorting through his new finds, he picks up a book by the existentialist French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre and utters in astonishment: 'Here, there's a girl here with a bloke's middle name! It's like me being called Harold Gladys.' The pathos is that Harold is denied the very cultural capital (education) that the book represents.

As Bourdieu asserts, it is the display of cultural knowledge that provides the grounds for class conflict. In this conflict, Harold Steptoe's awkward and cringing cultural displays can be funny for a middle-class audience - they are likely to get the joke, because they have the relevant cultural capital. On the other hand, the working-class audience might equally find Harold's actions laughable because he is trying to get 'above himself', that he is trying to adopt 'airs and graces'. In this sense, as Stephen Wagg (1998:13) has suggested, the message of *Steptoe and Son* is essentially conservative because the comedy has the effect of 'telling members of lower social and cultural groups that they should know their place.' As Wagg further suggests, this relates to the depictions of working class life in *The Uses of Literacy*, in which Hoggart describes a fatalistic and pragmatic attitude towards life which was necessary for survival (1969). Amongst the working class described by Hoggart, there was no sense of aspiration and, in work terms, there was little chance of career advancement, promotion or trying to get ahead. There was also no attempt at competition with others, since a sense of community dictated that you should not put the other man out of a job. For Hoggart, working class struggle was a struggle against the environment, against dropping further down the scale rather than a struggle to move upwards. According to Hoggart, the people the working classes did not particularly like were 'stuck up folk', so Harold's attempts at self-betterment and his snobbery were ill conceived, and his embarrassing failure an appropriate comeuppance.

Distaste:

As well as being depicted in television dramas and sitcoms, cultural conflict was also waged over particular genres of programming on television in the 1950s and 1960s. Due to the way in which a wider world was newly visible, the activities and interests of other groups were now on display on a regular basis in television programmes, and this could become the focus of *distaste* and cultural antagonism. For Bourdieu (1984) distaste, as a prejudice against other forms of taste, is a key weapon in class conflict. In the late 1950s, one form of programming which was subject to criticism was also notable because it both explicitly and implicitly celebrated consumer culture. This was the quiz and gameshow. Part of the problem was that the more spectacular versions of these shows appeared on ITV and were couched in discourses of popular appeal, and seemed a long way away from the sober Reithian values of the BBC. Criticisms of the new quiz and gameshows were grounded in class discourses. In particular, the distaste felt amongst the middle-class for gameshows of the ITV variety were grounded in a disregard for the working class vulgarity of showbusiness kitsch, the fairground knockabout, conspicuous consumption, and the idea that people might be winning something for nothing. Such programmes did not necessarily promote specific, branded commodities, but they did promote generic commodity items such as refrigerators, washing machines and televisions. Not only did they promote the desirability of such commodity items, but they celebrated a culture of desirability for such items. More complexly, and more implicitly, the formal articulation of the quiz and gameshow genre *as entertainment* de-emphasised the relationship between programme-maker and audience as a relationship of production and consumption. As a result, as will be explored in the next chapter, quiz and gameshows not only facilitated the promotion of consumer culture with desirable commodity items or sums of cash as prizes, they metaphorically instilled wider practices of consumption and ideologically, routinely and ritually celebrated them in spaces of television performance.

Although particularly associated with the arrival of commercial television, the quiz and gameshow's genesis was an evolution out of existing cultural forms, including

magazine and newspaper competitions, holiday camp and village fete contests and, in broadcasting, BBC TV panel game shows, pre-existing radio shows and US television programmes. The new ITV shows, however, which came to occupy a significant amount of airtime, were to cause some anxiety to the ITA and the members of the Pilkington Committee. In the first instance, the new shows were adopted by ITV companies as a cheap and successful way of building and keeping the necessary audience numbers that were attractive to advertisers. In the very early days of the ITV service, companies struggled to attract advertising revenue and there was genuine concern that the commercial enterprise would prove a failure. According to the ITA Annual Report for 1955/56, the programme companies were so worried that they reduced the number of more serious programmes such as news, serious talk programmes and classical music by a third (Sendall: 1982). As Roland Gillett, Programme Controller of Associated-Rediffusion pronounced (cf Sendall: 1982: 328):

> Let's face it once and for all. The public likes girls, wrestling, bright musicals, quiz shows and real-life drama. We gave them the Hallé Orchestra, Foreign Press Club, floodlit football and visits to the local fire station. Well we've learned. From now on, what the public wants, it's going to get.

Quiz and gameshows were part of this drive for audience numbers (Sendall: 1982). During the first week of the ITV service in September 1955, the *TV Times* listed two, *Double Your Money* (A-R) and *Take Your Pick* (A-R). *Double Your Money*, hosted by Hughie Greene, was a filmed programme which ran for thirteen years. Based on the US television show *The $64,000 Question*, the premise of the show was that contestants answered a series of questions, with the cash prize doubling on each question. The climax of the show was the contestant being locked in a soundproof booth for the last question, with a cash prize of up to £1,000. *Take Your Pick* was also a filmed show, hosted by Michael Miles, with each contestant overcoming minor challenges to have the chance to 'take his or her pick' amongst thirteen boxes which contained ten expensive prizes and three booby prizes.[xii] Contestants had to make the agonising choice of whether to take the cash prize offered by the show's host, or chance a dud

box to win a much bigger prize. By January 1957, however, there were eight gameshow programmes each week, with two more gameshow segments embedded in other programmes, such as 'Beat the Clock' in *Sunday Night at the London Palladium*. As well as *Double Your Money* and *Take Your Pick*, other quiz and gameshows included *Make Up Your Mind* (Granada), *Two for the Money* (A-R), *Do You Trust Your Wife?* (ATV) and *Spot the Tune* (Granada).

For Sendall, this profusion of quiz and gameshows, described by the press as 'give-away' shows because of their relatively lavish prizes, was damaging to the reputation of ITV. The reduction of more serious programming and the favouring of quiz and gameshows raised questions about the proper 'balance' of programming, and was described in the press as a 'retreat from culture', (Sendall: 1982). Such a view saw quiz and gameshows as a 'low' form of culture or, as the phrase 'retreat from culture' suggests, barely recognisable as culture at all. The genre gave ITV a bad name, pandering to critics who saw this as evidence of crass commercialism and broadcasting to the 'lowest common denominator' (Sendall: 1982). Although such shows helped the ITV programme companies stave off financial collapse in the earliest stages of the new service, Sendall (1982: 348) notes that the case of the quiz shows 'strikingly illustrates how ITV found easy success and lingered too long with it for its own eventual well-being.' Despite an ITA intervention early in 1957 limiting the programme companies to one quiz or game show per-day, the genre was exemplary of the kinds of 'trivial' programmes for which the Pilkington Report criticised ITV.[xiii]

These brash shows, with their big prizes, were a far cry from the small, quieter and more intimate panel shows of the BBC from the 1950s, which had more in keeping with Edwardian parlour games. One of the first panel games from the period, discussed in the last chapter, was *Animal, Vegetable, Mineral?*, on which eminent scholars had to identify curious objects placed before them. Produced by the Talks Department of the BBC, and dwelling on archaeological or natural history artefacts from British museums, the programme ostensibly fulfilled a more Reithian purpose of informing, educating and entertaining. The most popular of the panel shows of the period, or at

least the most well known, was *What's My Line?* (1951-62). Although it was very much in the format of a parlour game, the programme was in fact derived from a show in the United States. Unlike *Animal, Vegetable, Mineral?*, *What's My Line?* included general members of the public in the game. The simple premise for the show, hosted by Eamonn Andrews, was that a panel of four television personalities had to guess the secret of each contestant. In most cases the contestant was a member of the public, and the panel had to deduce their occupation or, in some cases, their hobby. The panel had to ask questions to which the contestant could only answer 'yes' or 'no'. The contestant won the competition if the panel had still not guessed their secret after ten 'no's. The successful contestant's prize was simply a certificate to say they had beaten the panel. In each edition, the panel would also be blindfolded while they had to guess the identity of a celebrity. Another BBC panel game from the period was *The Name's the Same* hosted by Bernard Braden. In a similar style to *What's My Line?*, a panel of four television personalities had to quiz a contestant with 'yes or 'no' style questions to find out the name they shared with a famous person. In one clip, shown in the programme *What's My Quiz?*, (transmitted on 22 July 1991 as part of a day's programming on BBC2, *The Lime Grove Story*, to mark the closing of the BBC's Lime Grove Studios). panellists had to guess the name of a school teacher by the name of William Shakespeare and, in another clip, the panellist Frank Muir had to guess the name of a contestant by the name of Frank Muir.[xiv]

At first glance, what marks out the ITV quiz and gameshows from the BBC panel games are the prizes. Whereas on the BBC shows the prize was ostensibly a certificate of some form, Root (1986) suggests that the real prize was meeting the television personalities and appearing on television itself. On ITV contestants could win actual commodity prizes such as refrigerators, washing machines and television sets. The prizes reflected items that working class families in particular might have found desirable, and in some cases difficult to afford. Although the prizes were not as lavish as in the USA, where in one competition is was possible to win a house, the top British cash prize of £1,000 in *Double Your Money* was a significant sum in the 1950s. The

awarding of commodity items and large cash prizes, however, was seen in negative terms by many cultural commentators.

In the *Uses of Literacy*, Hoggart derided the competitions which appeared in popular newspapers and magazines. Such competitions, he argued, not only nurtured a materialistic outlook amongst the working classes with their prizes but also, in terms reminiscent of the Frankfurt School writers, induced a sense of 'shared passivity' (1969: 189). For Hoggart, the competitions in the popular press could only be won by 'pure luck'. This reinforced the prevailing culture amongst the working classes that no-one was better than anyone else, that no-one should strive to get ahead, and that one should accept one's fate with a certain sense of humour. The winning of a prize in a competition by good fortune was a happy occurrence, but it did not mean that you were in any way superior to your family, friends, neighbours or colleagues. As a member of the Pilkington Committee of Inquiry, Hoggart was well able to express his unhappiness with competitions in newspapers and magazines, and this was iterated in the Pilkington Report's disdain for television quiz and gameshows. For Whannel (1992b) the Pilkington Report's contempt for the form reflected a middle-class disapproval of gambling and the idea of people winning something for nothing. Part of the problem was the relative ease of the questions, the element of chance, and the disproportionate prizes for the skill or knowledge required. As a result, Pilkington recommended that the value of prizes be reduced, and that they should be more closely linked to the skill or knowledge required (Whannel: 1992b). Yet as Jane Root (1986) suggests, it seems ungenerous to suppose that the contestants of these programmes were motivated by greed, or that viewers enjoyed purely the vicarious delight of material gain.

In many respects the attractiveness of these shows to audiences was the enjoyment of the games being played. In this, the BBC panel games had much in common with the ITV 'give-away' shows. In shows involving knowledge or deduction, the audience at home was actively invited to participate. In BBC programmes such as *What's My Line?* or even *Animal, Vegetable or Mineral?*, the audience watching on television had the choice of trying to deduce the contestant's secret, or the artefact's identity, from the

questions being asked. If they wanted to play the game at home, the compere advised them to look away from their television sets as the contestant's secret or the object's identity was revealed on screen. Alternatively the viewer could see the 'secret', and enjoy the progress of the game as panellists drew nearer to guessing the correct answer, or wandered off on unrelated tangents. In ITV quiz shows, the viewer at home could simply try and guess the question before the contestant did.

The supposed ease of the questions of some of the shows (as anxiously commented upon by Hoggart and Pilkington) reflected a wider set of values concerning shared knowledge. As Tulloch (1977) has argued, quiz shows celebrate knowledge as possession of certain facts, divorced from context and excluding reasoned argument or interpretation. As a result, the kind of knowledge required has more in keeping with a Victorian style school education premised on rote learning (Tulloch, 1977; Whannel, 1992b). It should also be considered to what extent these shows increasingly relied on questions relating to the medium of television itself. As we saw in chapter one, in an edition of *What's My Line?*, the celebrity contestant was Victor Sylvester who had had a long running music television show in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Without being a regular viewer of television, the audience member would not had access to the cultural information which would have allowed them to participate or enjoy this part of the game. As a result, the organisation of television knowledge may be articulated by Scannell's formulation that television should address the *anyone* of the audience as *someone* (2000). Though addressed in a general way, the audience member recognises that the television host or presenter is addressing them. As a result, I would argue here, the knowledge of quiz and panel shows, especially in respect of television knowledge itself, is socially validated as *knowledge that is available to anyone and everyone.* Television therefore, in some instances, validates its own knowledge provision. It is perhaps easy to see why critics such as Hoggart might have been anxious about the kinds of knowledge increasingly being displayed in the quiz shows as they decreasingly relied on discourses of learning from 'high culture' and the arts.

To summarise, this chapter has demonstrated the way that television promoted consumer culture in the 1950s and 1960s. It did this on the ITV service through advertisements and 'admags'. Yet television, both ITV *and* BBC, promoted consumer activity to its audiences through developments in programming which provided viewers with a range of identificatory resources. Through the *widest* range of television output, from dramas and sitcoms to women's programmes, pop shows and quizzes, lifestyle and cultural activities were presented in a range of guises. These developments in television broadcasting made particular groups visible to each other. Visibility, organised around the mixed programme schedule and by increasing programme diversity, became a marker of cultural fragmentation as groups and classes were exposed, explicitly and continuously, to the culture and entertainments of other classes. In the sense of Pierre Bourdieu's *Distinction* (1984), where taste and consumer choice can become the grounds for class conflict, the new visibility now made it possible to voice disdain for the 'debased' or 'pretentious' cultures of other groups being regularly exposed on television for the first time. As a result, differences in consumer, lifestyle and cultural tastes on television became the matter of class conflict. The next chapter will explore how television's ability to promote consumer culture and class conflict became embedded and naturalised over time, and it will examine the implications this has for the construction and operation of media power.

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[i] The statistics in this section have been cited from Sandbrook's wide-ranging historical analysis (2005).
[ii] Cf Sandbrook (2005: 597).
[iii] This separation of advertising revenue and editorial decision-making can perhaps be seen most evidently, and successfully, in current affairs programmes on ITV such as *This Week* and *World in Action*. Until the arrival of Channel 4 impelled changes in accounting practices at ITV in the 1980s, journalists and production personnel in these programmes had a lot of financial freedom to follow stories and investigate leads. See Holland (2006) and Goddard, Corner and Richardson (forthcoming).
[iv] See Sendall (1982) for further details.
[v] Cited from Bergan (1989: 12).
[vi] Sendall's emphasis.
[vii] The other special category of audience that the BBC identified was children, see Thumim (2004).
[viii] See also Buxton (1990).

[iv] For a discussion of the promotion of fashion in *The Avengers* see Chapman (2002).

[v] For further details see Hancock's entry in Lewisohn's *The Radio Times Guide to TV Comedy* (1998).

[vi] See Appadurai (1986) for an examination of how objects have a 'social life'.

[vii] See Sendall (1982) and Vahimagi (1996) for further details.

[viii] See also, for example, Whannel (1992b).

[ix] The definitional term used to describe people who regularly appeared on television in this period will be discussed in the next chapter, as will an analysis of the on-screen relationship between presenters and ordinary members of the public.

Chapter 6: Consuming Television Culture

As we saw in the last chapter, television promoted consumer culture and a sense of class difference and conflict in the 1950s and 1960s. This chapter will explore how the developments I have discussed in this thesis promoted not just consumer culture but a culture of consuming television. To examine this I want to concentrate on a particular form of television output: the quiz and gameshow. Focusing on a specific genre can illuminate wider elements of television culture. As I have already discussed in this thesis, Janet Thumim (2004) has argued that the magazine programme is paradigmatic of television more widely in the 1950s and 1960s. This is because the segmentation of programmes into short, discrete items of varied interest were designed to appeal to broad audiences. This segmentation also characterised the mixed programme schedule which was also designed to appeal to a wide audience and develop a television viewing culture in Britain. I will argue here that the quiz and gameshow also tells us something important about the wider development of consumer and television culture in the period.

In the first instance, these programmes are significant because they were popular and they helped ITV, in particular, build an audience in its early years of operation. Quiz and gameshows are also interesting because, as we saw in the last chapter, they were the subject of class based criticism. They also explicitly promoted consumer culture through the display of desireable commodities and consumer items and prizes. Quiz and gameshows shows are also significant because they contain 'television personalities' - professional presenters and performers. This chapter will therefore also focus discussion on early 'celebrity' in television. It will argue that appearing on television as a professional necessarily constitutes work. This is counterpoised with the inclusion of ordinary members of the public in these programmes. Quiz and gameshows therefore highlight the emerging relationship between professional television people and non-professional television people. They demonstrate how viewers appropriate the labour of people working in and on television.

The chapter will then go on to look at the development of 'fixed point scheduling' on British television. It will examine the phenomenological properties of television and the relationship between scheduling, programme serialisation and the increasingly routine consumption of television in the home. It will argue that watching television is analogous to and legitimises other forms of consumption. It will then return to look at issues of celebrity and the hierarchical relationship between the professional presenter and lay person who appears on television. By combining an analysis of fixed point scheduling with the emerging relationship between presenter and ordinary member of the public, the chapter will go on to show how unequal relations of power became increasingly naturalised and legitimised on television in the 1950s and 1960s.

Fun as ideological work:

Quiz and gameshows on television (and radio) were a development from a combination of parlour games and holiday competitions. Yet what separates the quiz and gameshows from parlour games at home and other public entertainments is the glitz, glamour and fun of the television event. As Richard Dyer has discussed in regard to television variety shows, there is a celebration of gaiety and abundance, a vision of a utopian world where work, drudgery, need and want are dispelled (1973). Whannel (1992b) has argued that the same is also true of quiz and gameshows. The fun of the games, the glamour of the television world, and the lavish prizes go towards dispelling the drudgery of the everyday. Yet it is under the disguise of fun that the ideological work of promoting consumer and television culture here is conducted.

A significant part of the quiz or gameshow, and part of the fun, as Whannel (1992b) suggests, is the presence of 'celebrities'. 'Celebrity', however, might be a problematic term when thinking about television in the 1950s and 1960s. This is because television was still in the process of defining and establishing its own well-known personalities. As Frank Muir has dryly observed about television panellists in the 1950s, for example, 'There was no established pool of telepersons, so an extraordinary cross-section of people were invited to take part, most of whom did something quite different

for a living."[i] In early editions of *This is Your Life*, for example, the subjects of the show were often members of the public who had been notable for heroic deeds during the war or who had done good works for the community (Holmes: 2006). In many ways the panellists on BBC shows in the early 1950s, and the subjects of *This is Your Life*, might conform to what Chris Rojek (2001) has described as 'achieved celebrity', where persons earn a degree of fame through success in their fields. 'Achieved celebrity' would include sportsmen or women, actors, musician or artists. It could also be stretched here to include television panellists such as Lady Isobel Barnett, a JP (Justice of the Peace) and doctor, on *What's My Line?*, or Sir Mortimer Wheeler, the regular archeaologist on the panel of *Animal, Vegetable, Mineral?*. The difficulty comes when thinking about Rojek's term 'attributed celebrity', however, where persons achieve fame through intensive and compressed media attention. Such a category is certainly useful when considering the almost paradigmatic hold 'celebrity' has had over the media landscape in the 1990s and early 2000s. During this latter period, as television moves into an 'era of plenty' (Ellis: 2000), multi-channel television has not only promoted 'celebrity' through the routine exhibition of well known actors and presenters, it has even elevated ordinary members of the public to 'celebrity' status in reality television programming. Such celebrity has been promoted across a range of media platforms such as tabloids and glossy magazines like *Hello*, *OK* and *Heat* which circulate images, news and gossip about celebrities, and numerous fan and celebrity sites have grown on the internet. What characterises 'celebrity' culture of the 1990s and 2000s is the expanding range of media outlets and platforms which circulate an ever-increasing volume of 'celebrity' traffic at an ever-increasing velocity. By contrast, the extent and speed of media circulation of 'celebrity' discourses in the 1950s was more limited and much slower. Drawing on John Ellis' suggestion (1982) that television creates personalities, and Andy Medhurst's (1991) discussion of Gilbert Harding, whose case I will explore below, it seems particularly useful here to use the term 'television personality'. This allows us to differentiate the condition of television-generated fame in television's era of scarcity (using Ellis' historical periodization of the development of the medium (2000)) from the notion of 'celebrity' in the emerging era of plenty.

In the 1950s the 'television personality' was an emerging phenomenon (Medhurst: 1991). This was a phenomenon which was reflexively and tautologically recognised by television itself, with programmes valorising performers from other shows, such as big band leader Victor Sylvester appearing in an edition of *What's My Line?* and Eamonn Andrews – also the presenter of *What's My Line?* - being the victim of the 'sting' in the first ever British edition of *This is Your Life*. Indeed, one of the biggest names in television (and radio) in the 1950s, and the 'first paradigmatic television personality' (Medhurst: 1991: 72), was the *What's My Line?* panellist Gilbert Harding. An unlikely candidate for television fame, Harding was a middle-aged man who had studied at Cambridge University before a succession of jobs, including working as a teacher, a policeman and journalist in the 1930s. With aspirations to work in the more serious and intellectual side of broadcasting, he unhappily found himself in the field of Light Entertainment after the war. Although he had first appeared as a panellist on *What's My Line?* in 1951, Harding found notoriety in the following year when he took a dislike to a contestant and told him live, on-screen, 'I am tired of looking at you.' As Medhurst (1991: 62) suggests in his study of Harding, 'Now it was, perhaps, not one of the great savage put-downs of all time, but this was 1952… when the world of BBC television was a world of almost inconceivable niceness.' For Medhurst, the explosiveness of Harding's simple statement had as much power as when the critic Kenneth Tynan first used the word 'fuck' on television in the following decade. Harding's uncivil comment was reported in the national press, long before television reached a national audience, and the incident ensured that Harding was thereafter known for his rudeness and irascibility. He was constantly in the news, and over the decade turned in a number of appearances across a range of media. These included working with television cook Fanny Craddock, appearing in films including the 1959 *Expresso Bongo* alongside the young pop star Cliff Richard, he wrote newspaper articles, and a number of books appeared under his name – but were in fact ghostwritten.[ii] Harding's forthrightness and rudeness were underpinned by his deep rooted unhappiness and dissatisfaction, and on occasion fuelled by alcohol, but his irritable outbursts were what the public came to enjoy and expect. Medhurst suggests

that the public perceived Harding's demeanour as an 'act', while in fact it was an *aspect of who* he was. Harding had himself claimed (cf Medhurst, 1991), 'I just behave as I am and talk as I think, which for some reason appears to be remarkably novel.'

There is, however, another interpretation for Harding's popularity. Rather than enjoying Harding's 'performances' as an 'act', perhaps the audience, or at least parts of the audience, appreciated Harding's honesty, or *authenticity*. Since the 1960s, writers such as Goffman (1990), and (later) theorists in the post-structuralist and postmodernist schools, have come to see individual lives and biographies as fragmented, performative, and constructed by social discourses. Goffman (1990), for example, describes an individual's everyday life as a set of performances displayed before different audiences (family, friends, teachers, clients, colleagues and bosses). In such views, there is no centralised self, but a number of different selves that experience the world, and speak and behave differently at different times and places, and amongst different social groups. This fragmentation of self in the contemporary world may be a significant reason why media coverage of 'celebrity' holds such fascination. The sociologist Jeremy Tunstall has argued that celebrity in Britain is characterised by 'integrated personality'. So in Britain, a celebrity is (Tunstall: 1983: 2):

> A real person with real teeth, a real accent, and amusing prejudices – who can be presented in such varied settings as a talk show, an awards ceremony, a record request session, a quiz game, a newspaper interview.

This can be interpreted to mean that a celebrity (in Britain, at least) can be constituted as someone who maintains a unity and coherence of persona across a range of media platforms. Such unity and coherence, if the persona is perceived as 'real' or 'authentic', and especially if accompanied by charisma and good looks, can prove powerfully attractive and reassuring in a world that is otherwise characterised by fragmentation. In the 1950s, Harding could hardly have been described as good looking, but his irascibility and forthright rudeness transcended a number of media platforms, and his

outbursts were certainly honest (Medhurst: 1991). As a result, his audience appeal may have derived from his *apparent* honesty and, therefore, his authenticity.

Authenticity here relates to the concept of sincerity in broadcasting. For Paddy Scannell, performance implies insincerity, whereas sincerity presupposes a lack of performance. For persons to be perceived to be 'real' or the 'genuine article', they must be seen to eschew performance. Sincerity is important because it is the basis for trust and intimate relations (Scannell: 1996). So for the television encounter between the presenter and audience member to constitute intimacy-at-a-distance Horton and Wohl (1956), as we discussed in chapter four, there has to be trust that the presenter is speaking sincerely. This is particularly important in forms of factual programming such as the news and certain kinds of expositional documentaries. Yet it is common in other forms of broadcasting where presenters speak to camera, even in light entertainment formats where the presenters are well known personalities, and where talk is characterised by joking and humour. As we discussed in chapter four, drawing on the work of Georg Simmel (1971) and Paddy Scannell (1996), the television studio becomes a sociable space, where conversation, chat and joking (sociability) appear to take place for their own sake, for the sheer enjoyability of the social encounter. For the sociable encounter to work the audience member must feel as if they are being treated equally, and must feel, in effect, that they are being treated fairly and honestly. There is a problem here, however, since 'authenticity' or 'sincerity' can be staged. While Gilbert Harding was apparently behaving authentically and honestly in the 1950s, it was a painful irony that he kept his homosexuality hidden (Medhurst: 1991).

The *appearance* of sincerity here is significant for the promotion of consumer culture and consumption, since most people who were seen on television in the 1950s and 1960s were paid. The whole range of 'television personalities' in the 1950s and 1960s made a living from appearing on television, whether it was newsreaders like Kenneth Kendall or Robin Day, presenters such as Eamonn Andrews or Bruce Forsyth, or comedians like Tony Hancock or Benny Hill. Television for these people was work, and in these positions they had to perform numerous roles. Television requires

performance in some way. As Paddy Scannell has observed, however, sincerity involves a 'performative paradox' (1996: 58). If a presenter or 'television personality' effectively invokes sincerity, then they are also crucially proposing a lack of performance. If performance is work, then sincerity proposes work's absence. When 'integrated personalities' appear across a range of media platforms displaying a unified and coherent persona, then they are effectively appearing as 'themselves', and the lack of apparent performance means it looks as if they are not working. This does not just occur in talk programmes or other shows in which 'television personalities' address a presenter or the audience directly, but in the widest range of programmes. As we saw in the chapter four, much of the work of broadcasting takes place behind the scenes, in the space that Goffman (1990) describes as a 'back region'. This work is usually hidden. As we saw in chapter three, for example, Tony Hancock demanded that the BBC let him use Ampex Video to record his shows because the strain of live performance was too stressful. This demonstrates that live performance *is* work, but the work is even more effectively hidden by the use of new recording equipment. What was therefore happening on television for the first time in the 1950s and 1960s was that the work of the 'television personality' comedian or performer was becoming increasingly hidden from the viewer. Yet the viewer was consuming and appropriating this work under the guise of fun and entertainment.

In quiz and gameshows, it was not just the work of the host or presenter that was being consumed, but also the 'work' of the contestants. While middle-class commentators may have complained that contestants and participants in these shows were effectively 'getting something for nothing', they were in fact having to work for their prizes. In one sense there is the strain and nervousness that accompanies an appearance before cameras, either live or recorded. There is also the potential humiliation that one might answer a question wrong, or make a fool of oneself in one of the games. Significantly here, in the context of fun as work, members of the public have to, as Goffman (1990) would argue, 'swap teams'. As Goffman has suggested, in any social encounter individuals play a performative role. This is especially the case where the individual performance is associated with a particular team. Teams are social groups which

demand a coherence and unity of performance, and are often visibly found in the work place.[iii] In Goffman's analysis, embarrassment and humour is often occasioned when an individual changes team. They are derided (with good humour or ill) by their former team-mates for leaving them behind, and they are teased and belittled by their new team members because they have not yet been fully initiated or assimilated into the new group. This is exactly a description of the television experience for a member of the public appearing on a quiz or gameshow, since the audience itself constitutes one team, and the producers of television another. The member of the public who stands in front of the camera is effectively changing teams. Humour can be derived from this situation, and the audience may support, cheer or jeer at the on-screen competencies of the lay performer. At the same time the participant is compelled by codes of sportsmanship to accept their subsidiary role to the central performance of the presenter, and are often the subject of gentle ribbing, jokes and asides (Whannel: 1992b). Although the member of the public is on television, a potentially privileged position, they are certainly not in command of the situation.

As Whannel (1992b) has observed, the appearance of a member of the public on television in a quiz or gameshow often points up the professionalism of the television presenter. The presenter, often an experienced broadcaster, is paid to appear on television, whereas the member of the public is an unpaid television amateur. On Tyne Tees opening night programme *The Big Show* on 15 January 1959, for example, Bill Maynard presented a short segment to highlight a forthcoming show to appear on the new service. In this new programme members of the public have the chance to tell their own jokes and anecdotes.

In the promotional segment Maynard is dressed casually in slacks, with a shirt and tie topped by a cardigan. This contrasts markedly with the two members of the public, clearly drawn from the audience, who come in front of the camera to tell a joke. They are dressed smartly in what appears to be their 'Sunday best'. The man is dressed in a suit with a shirt and tie, whereas the middle-aged woman is dressed in hat and coat. In particular the hat and coat appear at odds with the seeming informality in which the

more casually dressed Maynard presents the segment, joshing with the audience and making gentle jibes at the man and woman's expense. A segment featuring the audience later in the show also captures men and women sitting formally in hats and coats. This direct contrast clearly signals Maynard's status as separate and distinct from the audience. While he does display a slight nervousness in the live segment, and while the piece perhaps does not work as successfully or as wittily as intended, Maynard is clearly the person in charge. Importantly here, Maynard's performance constitutes work. Yet in the context of the segment here, with the glamour and lights of showbusiness, with a sense of abundance, prizes and attendant 'television personalities'. the performances look like fun. This fun disguises the inherently ideological process of consumption, where the labour of another individual (or team of individuals) is consumed and appropriated in the viewership of television.

Yet while Paddy Scannell would describe the above enounter as a 'sociable' occasion, this would not fit Simmel's strict definition which is that 'sociability' is a 'play form of association' (1971: 134) that operates between equals and without motivation. The situation here, however. has not emerged between equals (in play), but is a *structured* event, taking place within the formalised setting of the television studio, scheduled in advance and staged by television producers and supporting personnel. The encounter between the host. Maynard, and the non-professional performers is far from equal and, indeed, there is an emerging discourse here based on formalised and unequal relations. Occupying the newly socialised space of the television screen, this consumption of labour and the hierarchical relationships it involved were publicly and *ritually* celebrated on television. As I will argue, this kind of encounter in quiz and gameshows can be characterised by the term *structured sociability* or, for thinking about how such on-screen relations become naturalised over time, *ritualised sociability*. This latter term in particular will be important for thinking about how television promotes consumer culture, and the consumption of television itself. Before returning to this I want to examine how the expansion of the television industry coincided with the production of programme formats and the development of new forms of scheduling. I will then explore the impact this had on the relationship between the broadcasting institution and

the viewer him or herself. I will then develop this further to show how scheduling and familiarity legitimises the inequalities inherent in *ritualised sociability*, and it will consider the implications this has for the construction of media power.

Scheduling and television's *nearness-over-time*:

As Paddy Scannell has succinctly argued, television occupies time, airtime (1996). The expansion of television in the 1950s and 1960s had a direct relationship to the temporal arrangements of broadcasting (production and scheduling), and this facilitated the development of consumer culture during this period. As we saw in chapter one, rationalisation of the nascent television industry led in part to the routinisation of production and the emergence of the 'programme factory', a piecemeal production line approach to programme-making. It made the programme-making process quicker and cheaper. Recording programmes meant that they could be shot scene-by-scene in a cost-effective and efficient manner. It also meant that production could also take place when actors and performers, production personnel and studio resources were available. At the same time. with the development of recording technologies the production process created programmes for sale as commodities on film and video. Yet as Scannell (1996) has observed, the routinisation of production had another consequence for the nature of television programming. If production line processes and recording technology meant that staff, casts and studio resources could be used more cost-effectively and efficiently, then cost-effectiveness and efficiency could be increased even further by making more editions or episodes of the *same* programme at the same time. A direct consequence of this was the emergence of serialisation.

For Jacobs (2000), this new routinisation complemented the television aesthetic of 'intimacy' in the 1950s by repeating television as a familiar pattern. It did this in two ways: *internally* and *externally*. Familiarity and 'intimacy' were achieved internally by the weekly representation of cast and characters in television series. The internal construction of familiarity was not just significant for drama, but also for a range of other television formats. This could be argued for news, for example, which shares, as

Ellis (1982) has suggested, some of the formal properties of serial dramas such as soap operas in which there is a recurring cast list of players. For Jacobs, familiarity was also constructed externally, through the arrangement and timing of programmes amidst the wider output - the other programmes in television's mixed programme schedule. To understand how familiarity is structured externally, we have to pay some attention to the emergence of a new kind of scheduling in the 1950s, fixed point scheduling – the transmission of a television series at the same time and on the same day each week. This was different to the way that scheduling on BBC television had previously been organised which was less structured and more ad hoc. This was partly the result of production practices in live television, and partly the result of a wider philosophy about the relationship of the BBC to its audience.

In the first instance, a change in scheduling came about as a response to the increasing rationalisation and professionalism of the expanding television industry. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, for example, there was much dispute at the BBC over the last minute scheduling of programmes (Jacobs: 2000). As a predominantly live medium before the 1950s, a small number of television producers and staff at BBC television ran a small number of programmes, on shorter production cycles, and were subject to the availability of casts and performers. Television broadcasting was therefore also subject to last minute change. As staff and technological resources grew, however, programme making became increasingly industrialised. With a more bureaucratised and efficient management and organisational structure emerging, production had to be carefully matched with available transmission times. Advance management of schedules could mean better rationalisation of production resources. Fixed point scheduling meant that producers could better plan series productions more strategically, they knew longer in advance when a particular episode or edition of a programme was required. Even if the programme was a live current affairs programme such as *Tonight*, which required a turnaround in production on a daily basis, an effect of more rationalised scheduling was that the production infrastructure, the allocation of resources such as studios and personnel which made daily transmission possible, had been established in advance. At the same time, the development of recording

technologies meant that repeat or new programmes could be stockpiled for future transmission.

Scheduling was significant in other ways. In the mid-1950s it became an important strategy in facing television competition. As Jacobs (2000) argues, scheduling was impelled by the necessity to differentiate BBC products from ITV, and this meant that schedules started to be organised around precise and consistent patterns that viewers could become familiar with – they could know habitually *when* their favourite programmes were on. Fixed point scheduling therefore helped build and sustain audiences in the mid 1950s, and in commercial terms this was important because ITV and advertisers could better predict and target audiences for specific programmes (Curran and Seaton, 1997; Sendall, 1982). Indeed, it was during this period that market and audience research became an important phenomenon in television broadcasting. Prior to this, the BBC had conducted audience research amongst radio listeners in the 1930s when they were facing competition from Radio Normandie and Radio Luxembourg. In the mid 1950s, as Caughie (2000) asserts, the BBC now 'vigorously' pursued audiences, and audience research grew in importance. As an example of viewing figures as a commodified form of knowledge, the BBC sold some of its own research to some of the programme companies, but mainly the ITV companies used outside audience research companies such as TAM (Television Audience Measurement) or the US company Nielsen. What is significant in the 1950s is that viewers were increasingly positioned by audience and market researchers as consumers rather than members of the public. Advertisers and market researchers not only needed to know what audiences were viewing, but *when*. As a result, viewers were now placed within the new economy of commercially organised broadcasting.

To return to the earlier point about familiarity, Jason Jacobs (2000) has argued that the establishment of the fixed point schedule in the 1950s complemented early television's 'intimate address'. This is because intimacy is facilitated by the familiarity of regular, routine and habitual viewing. At the same time, the expansion of broadcasting effectively meant more television programming. By 1964, a national audience could

watch television seven days a week. Television had evolved from being a medium for special occasions and for selective, intimate viewing for a minority audience towards being an everyday form of cultural activity for a national audience. In this sense, we can argue that television's definitional characteristics shifted in nature from the intimate to the *intimate-and-quotidian*. While television dramas tended to expand on-screen diegetic space, which undermined earlier notions of television intimacy, other programmes still negotiated intimacy-at-distance (Horton and Wohl: 1956) and characterised the viewing experience by familiarity, informality and structured sociability. At the same time, television receivers still occupied privatised domestic space. so the television apparatus itself was characterised by nearness. This relationship between intimacy and the everyday is a vital clue in understanding how television newly promoted consumer culture in the 1950s and 1960s.

As Roger Silverstone (1994) has argued, television schedules are intricately connected to how people live their lives. In a broadcasting environment that seeks to maximise its audiences. schedules are designed to reflect who will be watching and at what time of the day. In the 1950s, as we saw in the previous chapter for example, it was anticipated that housewives would be at home during the day, so television programmes for women were aired during daytime hours. Peak hours for viewing were considered to be in the evening when men had returned from work and when women had completed their household chores. In the mid 1950s there were, however, certain viewing restrictions. such as a ban on programming between 6pm and 7pm, the 'toddler's truce'. This ban was lifted in February 1957 after ITV companies lobbied the Postmaster General to extend programming hours. One of the programmes which appeared in the new slot on BBC television was the *Tonight* programme, previously discussed. One of the innovations of *Tonight* was that it took account of the domestic viewing experience, assuming that 6pm was a busy juncture in household activities, with dinner being prepared and husbands and children coming and going (Goldie: 1977). As a result, the segmented structure and magazine style of *Tonight* permitted both fragmented and distracted viewing.

This dovetailing of the routines and activities of everyday life with the daily and repetitious natures of broadcast scheduling can have a reassuring influence. It contributes to a confidence and trust in the routines and taken-for-granted habits of the everyday, what the sociologist Anthony Giddens (1991) describes as ontological security." One of those habits, for the first time in the 1950s and 1960s, was the process of everyday consumption which took place within the act of viewing television. As Roger Silverstone (1994) argues, television provides symbolic resources for the imaginative work of consumption and identity appropriation through a range of programming. It also offers models of group behaviour, whether predicated on class, age or gender. As we have seen, the cultural capital displayed on television – associated with different classes, ages and genders – can be appropriated through television and become the grounds of group conflict. With the expansion of broadcasting in the 1950s and 1960s, and the mixed programme schedule, different classes and groups were exposed to the cultural tastes and activities of other groups. This meant that groups were able to voice distaste for the cultural tastes of other groups. The middle-classes voiced disapproval of 'vulgar' and 'tacky' shows derived from explicitly working class forms of entertainment. It was this that had caused anxiety amongst an establishment elite who had sought to promote 'high' culture and the arts (Mandler: 2003). At the same time, working class audiences could voice disdain for the 'stuffy' and 'pretentious' entertainments of the middle-classes. It was this new articulation of conflict and distaste that seemed to undermine an establishment view of cultural consensus.

Furthermore, as we have also seen, the act of viewing television itself involves the act of consumption of something, work, that is produced by other people. In some cases, new styles of television 'being', the 'television personality', or new styles of performance, hid the process of work implicit within television production. As a result, the process of consumption, through television itself, became both hidden and routine. There is a further point to be made here. The process of consuming television programming itself is analogous with the process of ownership, and the routine way in which television is watched legitimises and habituates other consumer and

consumption activities. Georg Simmel (1971), writing in Germany at the beginning of the last century, has argued that, just in the same way that workers in capitalist societies are alienated from the products of their labour in a Marxian sense, so too do people have the potential to be alienated from the objects they consume. The objects that people consume are not necessarily inherent or intrinsic to their lives or to their being. The ownership of items such as cars, television sets and fashionable clothing is not a necessary condition of human existence. Many people find them valuable parts of their lives, but that value is culturally constructed. The objects, the material artefacts themselves are physically distinct, separate and apart from the individual, so how can one be said to consume them? The answer is that the consumption and subsequent material display of these cultural artefacts is made possible legitimately, in capitalist societies, by purchasing the object (or by hiring it or receiving it as a gift). As a result, Simmel argues that ownership of property is the means by which people best try to appropriate alienated products. The act of purchase may seem self-evidently necessary for the acquisition of a new commodity (other than hiring, receiving gifts or thieving), but the sociological point is that the process of ownership is the means by which it is possible to keep these objects near and available for use. As a result, it can be proposed here that the process of ownership involves the maintenance of an asset, which has use value and/or symbolic value which is *near-over-time*. The characteristic properties of this asset are effectively available, nearby (near), for the duration of the asset's or owner's life (time).

At the same time, as we have seen, the television set is an object that is intimately located in the household and, as it is likely to have been purchased or rented, it too is physically *near-over-time*. Yet there is an even more profound relationship between television, ownership and consumption. As I have argued in this thesis, television in the 1950s and 1960s was a translocational medium, and from this period onwards it negotiated intimacy-at-distance, and constructed familiarity, informality and structured sociability. With the extension of broadcasting hours, the serialisation of programming and the rationalisation of the fixed point schedule, I have also argued that from the same period television's definitional properties can be increasingly characterised as the

intimate-and-quotidian. This suggests that television's properties have something in common with the *nearness-over-time* that characterises the process of ownership. Television is an object that is near-over-time, and television's regular broadcast outputs bring programme forms (and the places, events, people and objects they display) near-over-time. This includes the potential for both continual and serial viewing of programmes, and their constitutive performances, their invitations for identifications and resources for imaginative work, and their valorisation of commercial and consumer values. Indeed, within the television flow, watching one programme is never enough. Like the perpetual consumption of commodities and artefacts within consumer society, watching television constitutes an on-going consumption practice. In a sense, therefore, the consumption of television becomes the model of consumption *par excellence*. In the 1950s and 1960s, the newly expanded institution and the newly expanded audience of television allows this to happen for the first time.

Ritualised sociability:

As I suggested earlier in this chapter, the kind of performances that take place in programmes such as quiz and gameshows constitute a form of *structured sociability*. As the sociologist Georg Simmel (1971) has argued, sociability revolves around a sociable encounter which is enjoyable and entertaining for its own sake. This has *something* in common, therefore, with the kinds of joking and banter one encounters in the broadcast experience. As a result, this has lead Paddy Scannell (1996: 23) to describe sociability as 'the most fundamental characteristic of broadcasting's communicative ethos.' Yet Simmel also argues that for sociability to work, it must negate the structures and hierarchies which determine ordinary interaction and encounters between people. As a consequence, Scannell overlooks the ways in which sociability in Simmel's sense is undermined by formalised codes and conventions of interaction within certain broadcasting encounters. In light entertainment programmes such as quiz and gameshows where presenters interact with ordinary members of the public, there are conventions for how the member of the public should behave. In these encounters there is an unequal relationship between the professional presenter, who

controls or manages the on-screen encounter, and the amateur lay-person. These situations can therefore be characterised by inequality and hierarchy. This we saw, for example, in *The Big Show* segment featuring Bill Maynard and two ordinary people telling jokes. This means that the broadcasting experience of this encounter cannot be described as 'sociable' in Simmel's definition. Being structured within the production processes and schedules of broadcasting, and operating under the *appearance* of sociability, the on-screen encounter between a television presenter and a member of the public in light entertainment programming constitutes, I would argue, *structured sociability*.

In television in the 1950s and 1960s, the repetition of structured sociability on a daily basis across a variety of programme forms across the schedule means that the on-screen encounter between the television host and ordinary person has the potential to be *ritualised*. As a result, the iteration of structured sociability in broadcasting over time constitutes what I would describe as *ritualised sociability*. This is partly because of the way that television culture, and cultures of television viewing, evolved new patterns of production and consumption over this period. With the development of the fixed-point-schedule, which I discussed above, the consumption of television, by an audience, could become an increasingly routinised and habituated activity. Viewers could come to know when a particular television series was broadcast on a particular day and at a particular time in the week. This meant that television viewing could become embedded increasingly within everyday practices and routines.

Couldry (2003b) argues, however, that there are other ways of thinking about the media and ritual, and these are useful for understanding the way that media power is constructed, legitimised and exercised in everyday life. Couldry is particularly interested in formalised actions, repeated in strictly determined or conventionalised ways, which have a transcendent relationship to wider social values. These kinds of formalised action can be found precisely in ritualised sociability. In television in the 1950s and 1960s, for example, the encounters between the professional host and the amateur member of the public in the quiz and gameshows became formalised by the

demands of programming *formats*. As we have seen, Paddy Scannell (1996) has argued that with industrialised modes of practice a format becomes a template by which other programmes are made on a weekly basis. Performances within specific formats were therefore routinised. The rules of *What's My Line?*, for example, were repeated every week. And although the individual panellists may have varied from week to week, and the members of the public changed constantly, the programme followed the same process and patterns in each edition. It was not just the repetition of the rules of the show that were repeated each week, but also the quirks and characteristics of the panellists which came to be repeated. It was this repetition which allowed members of the television audience the pleasure of anticipating one of Gilbert Harding's regular outbursts.

At the same time, as we have seen, lay-participants have to follow codes and conventions for appearing on-screen. They have to endure the 'good natured' and gentle ribbing from the professional host who commands the situation and manages the on-screen space. Within this relationship, in quiz and gameshows, the guest participant follows the format's rules to win prizes. Not only does this constitute formalised action, but what specifically constitutes these encounters as a form of ritual is that they connect the performers and participants to wider, transcendent values. The relationship between ritual and transcendence can be demonstrated, for example, in those religious rituals where a participant might feel that they are transcending earthly bounds to experience some kind of spiritual communion. In sociological terms, drawn from Emile Durkheim in his seminal work *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (1915), the individual is effectively communing with the rules and values of a wider society. It might be argued, therefore, that viewing a quiz or gameshow in the 1950s and 1960s (especially on ITV) *might* constitute a transcendental experience for two reasons. Firstly, because the programme itself takes the viewer from the space of viewing to the space of production, the *translocation* I discussed in chapter four. Secondly, because the viewer is taken from the dreary world of everyday-life, as Dyer (1973) argues, towards a utopian fantasy of plenty. These programmes celebrate the

wider values of consumer culture through glitz and through the highly visible display of commodities as prized objects.

Yet Couldry (2003b) argues that the relationship between media, ritual and transcendence does *not* lie in the consumption of media content. What he argues is that 'media rituals' are *actions* which revolve around media related *categories*. These actions validate hierarchical values which relate to categories such as 'media sites' (spaces of media production) and 'non-media sites', and 'media people' and 'non-media people'. What these categories refer to is the sense that media sites and media people are different and symbolically more important than non-media sites and non-media people. Therefore 'media rituals' refer to specific modes of action which are both constituted by, and sustain, that hierarchical value that the media is more *special* than other aspects of social life. A media ritual might therefore be constituted by a tourist, an ordinary person, visiting (or making pilgrimage to) a media site such as a television or film studio. It might also be constituted by the same ordinary person meeting a media person, such as a film or rock star, and asking for an autograph. What is significant is that both of these encounters may be experienced as special by the ordinary, non-media person.

In certain light entertainment programmes of the 1950s and 1960s, therefore, such as the quiz and gameshows discussed here, the act of meeting a media person (a television personality) occurs within media space (the television studio) and within the media itself (on screen and on television). The ritualised sociabilty of the on-screen hierarchical encounter, broadcast repetitively on a daily basis across schedules constitutes a 'media ritual' revolving around media categories. These are now categories that television itself has established: the television personality and the non-television-lay-participant. In this encounter, the television personality, the host, has more authority that the non-television person. This legitimises the notion that television people (media people) are somehow more special than non-television people (non-media people). By expressing this hierarchy, television makes visible a mechanism by which it asserts its value and importance over everyday life. It asserts that what is

presented on television is significant, and that the 'television people' who appear regularly on it are more important than ordinary people who do not. As a result, the wider, transcendental values to which ritualised sociability connects is the sense that television itself has more special value than other elements of ordinary, everyday life.

This relates directly to the exercise of media power. As Nick Couldry argues, 'media rituals' validate and naturalise the media's claim to 'symbolic power'. The concept of 'symbolic power' was developed by the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu who defined it as 'the power of constructing reality' (Bourdieu: 1991: 166 cf Couldry 2003b: 2). As a result, for the purposes of my argument here, the construction of 'reality' can be considered to be definitions of the world that have real effects, such as creating, sustaining and legitimising hierarchies and power structures. In the encounter between a television personality (a media person) and a non television person (a non-media person) discussed above, for example, the event is characterised as special or remarkable precisely because the television itself has already defined television people (and television space) *as* special. This clearly demonstrates that television has the ability to define specific experiences of social reality.

Couldry himself questions, however, the *extent* to which the *media* does have the power to define (all of) social reality, but he seeks to make explicit the mechanisms by which the media makes those claims that it does. In any event, what is important here is that the broadcast encounter that I have described here, structured sociability, replicated and broadcast extensively over time across the television schedules, has the power to create and maintain television categories of television-person and non-television person. These categories make claims that television has the potential to define hierarchical values and social experience. Connecting the formalised actions of structured sociability to wider, transcendent relations of media power, repeated over time, means that this process can be described here as *ritualised sociability*. The longer term, historical effects of this in relation to wider society and culture should be the subject of further important analysis. The point here, however, is that in the 1950s and 1960s, in a television culture which had newly expanded and industrialised, and which

now reached a national audience, television was able to establish and maintain its own media categories for the first time.

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[i] *What's My Quiz?*, BBC2, 22 July 1991

[ii] See Medhurst (1991) for further details.

[iii] A simple example is the relationship between a service industry worker in a shop or restaurant and his her client. Both belong to different teams, and both will often complain about the other to their fellow team members: the worker about rude and obnoxious customers, and the client about impolite and inefficient service.

[iv] See Silverstone (1994) for an extended discussion of Giddens' theory and its relevance for understanding television.

Conclusions

This thesis began by asking three interrelated questions about the expansion of British television in the 1950s and 1960s. It asked, firstly, what the impact of this expansion was on television itself. In other words, what was the impact of expansion on television institutions, production practices, technologies and programmes? Secondly, the thesis asked what the impact of the social and cultural context was on the expansion of television. Namely, how did the social and cultural conditions of Britain in the 1950s and 1960s influence the development and expansion of television? Thirdly, the thesis asked what impact the expansion of television had on those social and cultural conditions. This third question in particular poses some knotty and intractable problems. As indicated at the outset, 'television' is such a multifaceted, diverse and complex phenomenon, and its relationships with other social and cultural activities and practices are so diffused and various, that it is difficult to make sensible and meaningful assessments about its overall impacts on society and culture. A difficult task is further compounded by the fact that British society and culture in this period was already undergoing profound changes. So trying to pin down television's role in this change is very much akin to trying to shoot at a moving target.

Nonetheless, in these conclusions I shall review how I have tried to answer these three questions over the last six chapters and how I have sought to explore television's relationship to social and cultural change. So we will briefly revisit the different factors relating to the expansion of the television institution in the 1950s and 1960s. This includes the emergence of ITV and BBC2, the industrialisation and professionalisation of the television institution, the development of recording technologies and new programme forms, the changing social and demographic landscape of Britain and the emergence of a new and powerful consumer boom. We will also revisit the distinction that has been made here about the ways television can promote change and produce change. That is, some of the ways that television can be considered to promote changes that were already culturally consistent with developments in the period and some of the ways that television can be *seen*, or said, to produce new experiences and

understandings of the world. I will also want to end by recognising that television articulated a novel form of authority and influence in the 1950s and 1960s, and that this is a development that has significance for understanding the operation of media power today. To do so I will look specifically at elements of the structured organisation of broadcasting (the mixed programme schedule and broadcasting encounter between personalities and ordinary people) to try and identify something of the mechanisms by which this authority and influence asserts itself. That is not to say, of course, that these are *the* mechanisms by which any such authority and influence are articulated. The relationships between television, then and now, and the articulation of any power structures and discourses in the media, culture and society, are much too complex to be reducible to any single or small number of mechanisms, practices or representations. Yet by identifying some of the mechanisms that emerge in this period, I hope to open up the way for further thinking about the television institution, culture and society. Furthermore. I hope to use this to demonstrate the value of the revisionist approach to television history I have deployed here, and the value of history for contemporary accounts of the media. Of course, what has been crucial to all of the developments discussed in the thesis is the expansion of the television institution itself. This is where we will begin here.

The expansion of television

As we have seen. in the 1950s and 1960s (in particular the ten-year period 1954-64), television in Britain emerged as an industry and as a mass medium. The expansion of television occurred in a number of ways. In the first instance, television spread geographically across Britain as both the BBC and ITV embarked on transmitter construction to extend the television signal out from London. This was both a function of the BBC's national mandate and a consequence of ITV's remit to produce and broadcast programmes regionally across the country. At the same time, as explored in chapters one and four, the spread of television was not just a matter of geographical distribution, with new audiences being created when a new transmitter was opened, but also by the mass uptake of television in areas where television had already been

established. This was to a large degree a consequence of the social and cultural changes taking place in Britain in the period. With the consumer boom of the 1950s, with full employment, high wages, and loosening of regulations regarding borrowing and hire purchase, television was one of the new, mass produced consumer items that emerged. At the same time, demographic changes altered traditional patterns of cultural and leisure activity of a significant part of the audience. The post-war baby-boom meant a generation of young couples became increasingly housebound. This was exacerbated by changes to new sites of employment, processes of suburbanisation and the development of new towns, estates and schemes, meaning that people were often relocated away from friends and family. This apparent progress, part of a programme of change consistent with the development of the welfare state, was painfully felt with the clearance of slum housing in some areas which had the negative effect of destroying traditional working class communities. It was into an increasingly domesticated, isolated and affluent society that television emerged as a significant cultural form.

The arrival of, first of all, the ITV companies and then BBC2 also expanded the institutions of television. As explored in chapter one, these new services expanded television by establishing and equipping new television studios and creating new jobs. As the production base of BBC television and ITV expanded so too did the number of programmes being produced. The number of hours that BBC television could broadcast a week from 1950 was around 30-35 hours (Thumim: 2004). These hours were extended to 50 hours a week on the arrival of ITV, which was also allowed in each region to broadcast the same amount. In a crude formulation, this meant that television programme hours transmitted in any given week shot up from 30-35 hours to around 100 hours. This expansion of the production base of television, and the number of programming hours required to fill more schedules had two interrelated consequences. First, the *way* in which programmes were produced and, second, the *range* of programmes that were produced.

In the first instance, there was rationalisation, industrialisation and professionalisation. These three issues are closely related, and the way that industrial practices, on a larger, mass scale could operate came through rationalised administrative and management structures, such as an expanded bureaucracy and more planned use of resources and scheduling. One particular development of industrialisation, and this also came about due to the increased use of film and video recording technologies which was explored in chapter three, was the advent of the 'programme factory'. This was programme production along increasingly industrialised lines, very much like factory production lines where a specialist worker constructs part of a product before passing along to the next stage in the production process where another worker completes a specialised task. In this way products, or programmes here, could be produced on an economy of scale. As suggested in chapter one, this was facilitated by increased specialisation of production roles and professionalisation. This was evident, for example, with the increased unionisation of television with the arrival of ITV, which meant that specific technical staff were contracted to work in specific roles. As explored in chapter one, this was also evident when the development of weekly programming meant that there was an increasing separation of the producer's and director's roles in television production. A producer increasingly came to have control over the running of a whole series, whereas directors had responsibility for leading the specific, on the ground production of individual episodes or editions (Sydney-Smith: 2002). This was also facilitated by training courses (at the BBC), increased staff movement between broadcasting organisations and media (such as radio, film and the press), and increased reflexivity amongst professional peers (through team reviews of recorded programmes, management intervention in programming decisions, trade press and interpersonal dialogue and discourses). The establishment of professional groupings can also have a tribal quality, creating strong allegiances to immediate professional peers, and was highly visible in the area of journalism, for example. Professional practice was not necessarily confined to industrial and individual competence in programme-making, but was also concerned with debates and discourses surrounding aesthetics and generic innovation.

This links directly to the second consequence of the expansion of television. This was the increasing diversity of programme outputs. The increasingly industrialised patterns of production, facilitated by increased professional specialisation, technological developments and more efficient systems of management and administration, favoured in one sense a move towards series programming and a standardisation of programme formats. Yet within the developing *ecology* of television broadcasting in the 1950s and 1960s this did not mean the simple reproduction of a handful of programme formats and styles, but it meant the flowering of diverse programme forms and outputs. This was partly a function of the public service broadcasting ethos of television in this period which favoured the mixed programme schedule. This had something of a Reithian imprint on it, to inform, educate and entertain. The new ITV service inherited some of these principles in the 1954 Television Act, and the appropriate balance of outputs in the mixed-programme schedule was to cause much handwringing at the ITA. Reaching a broad audience was also one of the key principles of the mixed programme schedule in this period. As Janet Thumim (2004) has argued, different programmes, both factual and fictional, in different styles and tones, on different subjects and themes, were able to appeal to a wide range of people. It is for this reason that Thumim suggests that the magazine programme, made up of short discrete segments in different styles on different subjects, is paradigmatic of television's endeavour to develop an audience and viewing culture in the 1950s and 1960s (2004). The appeal of the mixed programme schedule was explicitly articulated by Lew Grade when he argued that television scheduling should be like planning a mixed bill at the variety theatre – in this way most of the audience will be pleased some of the time. This appeal was also particularly evident in the way that BBC2 had to back away from minority and specialist programming to offer a more mixed schedule to try and persuade members of the public to acquire new 625 line television sets.

With the expansion of television, however, with new industry practices, more production personnel, professionalisation, new technologies, and more broadcasting hours to be filled within the mixed programme schedule, it was increasingly likely that there would be an expansion in the number of new programme forms and innovation in

existing forms. In metaphorical terms, in the biological sciences (and in sociology) it is well understood that as any organism (or organisation or social grouping) expands it grows more complex. As it grows more complex, there is an increasing likelihood of mutation, diversity and differentiation. As the ecology of television broadcasting expanded in this period, therefore, complexification meant there was more likelihood of change and diversification. At the same time, the expanding variety of programme forms became better able to reflect the emerging differences and changes within British society. While the expansion of the industry lead to new programme forms and styles, the changes in British society and culture provided the material and backdrop for television's outputs. This material ranged from the desirable consumer prizes for its quiz and gameshows explored in chapter six to the grim new landscapes of Britain which became the subject of, and provided the background for, its realist dramas explored in chapter four.

Culture and the new visibility

This expansion of television was complexly interwoven with social and cultural change. As television expanded in the 1950s and 1960s, with a wider range of programmes, of different kinds in different styles, with competing and even contradictory representations, and broadcast within the mixed programme schedule, it brought 'witness' (Ellis: 2000) into the home on an increasingly daily basis. With live and recorded broadcasts from around the country and abroad, and with the television camera reaching new spaces, even outer 'space', the viewer was able to experience the world in new ways. It is for this reason that this thesis has proposed that the expansion of the television production base, the expansion of programming and the expansion of the television audience can be characterised as creating and constituting a 'new visibility'. By making social and cultural phenomena visible in a new way, television emerges as a cultural force that has the capability to promote change. Two highly visible and related ways that television promoted change was through the presentation of social and cultural *difference* (which promoted class distinction and cultural conflict) and the promotion of consumer culture.

In the first instance, in histories of the 1950s the arrival of ITV is often seen as the moment when the consensus culture of post-war Britain was ruptured (Weight: 1995; Marwick: 1996). For the historian Richard Weight, this is because it signalled the end of a top-down model of cultural provision. Until the arrival of ITV, culture was seen as being provided to the masses by an educated elite through Oxbridge institutions and through the interdependent work of the BBC and the Arts Council. It is this top-down model which dominated elitist views of culture in this period. This was particularly articulated by Raymond Williams who argued that Britain was characterised by 'two cultures' – an elite arts culture and a mostly invisible working class culture (1983). As an early proponent of cultural study and analysis Williams was keen to recognise that the term 'culture' was not just defined as intellectual or artistic activity, such as in literature, music, theatre, painting and sculpture, but also as the 'way of life' of particular groups of people (Williams: 1976). So it was not just popular cultural forms (such as music hall, variety or sports) that were invisible to (or looked down upon by) the purveyors of high culture but also the values, attitudes and practices of the working class way of life. One of the reasons the arrival of ITV was therefore considered problematic was because it made visible working class culture (cultural forms and, as I shall return to below, cultural life) and this appeared to undermine the top-down work of the cultural elite.

A sense of cultural difference was probably most evidently articulated, however, within the structure of the mixed programme schedule itself on ITV *and* BBC. As we have seen, the mixed programme schedule was crucial in building an audience (Thumim: 2004) and also in delivering public service values (Scannell: 1990). As television expanded to a wider audience, television produced and transmitted a wide range of programmes, in different forms and styles, to appeal to a diverse audience. This meant that different forms of culture were explored and represented on television: that is, culture both in terms of the different arts and entertainments of different social groups, and also the different practices and way of life for those groups. These were featured in, and came to be constituted by, programme forms ranging from action

adventure series, soap operas, sitcoms, variety shows, quiz and gameshows, magazine programmes, serious drama, talk programmes, arts programmes, news and current affairs. Within the television schedule, in terms of arts and entertainments, programmes drawing on working class culture such as variety shows were shown alongside 'serious' programmes about art or music which drew on more middle-class discourses. The presentation of variety shows, drawing on working class traditions of variety theatre and end-of-the-pier entertainments, made working class cultural forms highly visible and brought them into the home on a regular basis. This made forms of working class culture (arts and entertainment) visible, for the first time, for educated and middle class elites. and it was this that seemed to disrupt a sense of cultural consensus (for that middle-class elite).

There was particular anxiety in the late 1950s, for example, when there was an apparent 'retreat from balance' (Sendall: 1982), as ITV companies scheduled an increasing number of quiz and gameshows to try to build audiences to overcome initial anxieties about advertising revenue. The problem was that these shows were criticised for their brassy celebration of consumer culture, offering lavish prizes to ordinary people for winning relatively easy quizzes or games. These kind of entertainments were particularly attacked by Richard Hoggart (1969) who was an influential member of the Pilkington Committee which went on to heavily criticise the ITV service for apparently promoting popular, shallow and 'trivial' culture. Yet just as Hoggart was able to criticise the ITV quizzes and games, so too was it possible for members of the working class audience to dismiss or sneer at more serious 'bourgeois' programming. This demonstrates that the schedule itself, as well as particular forms of programming, could become the focus and articulation of class difference and conflict.

As the double meaning of the term culture explored by Williams (1976) suggests, television not only reflected the cultural forms and preferences of different social and class grouping, but it also *represented* the different ways of life of different social groups in a range of programming. Dramas and documentaries about the police force, hospitals or the armed services mentioned in chapter four provided insights into the

cultures of those institutions. At the same time, sitcoms, soap operas, dramas and documentaries provided insights into aspects of working class life (such as *The Likely Lads, Coronation Street* and *Up the Junction*) or into middle or upper-class life, and news and current affairs programming often provided cultural insights into professional or political life. This therefore exposed the cultures, the way of life, of different groups, classes or communities to television audiences made up of different groups, classes or communities. In a different context, the sociologist Dean MacCannell (1976) has argued that the phenomenon of tourism allows individuals in affluent western societies to engage in a wider social totality, to transcend the social and cultural limitations imposed on them by the division of labour. By going on holiday, a western worker is able to engage in a wider range of cultural experiences, meet new people and encounter a different range of lifestyles in a way that the daily temporal and spatial structures of working life prohibits. In a similar way, television made visible for the first time in the 1950s and 1960s a wider range of social and cultural experiences to its viewers at homes, experiences that might otherwise be inhibited by age, gender, class or economics. As a consequence, television made visible in Britain a wide range of cultural differences that would have challenged a view of consensus culture and would have presented a challenge to elitist views of what 'culture' should actually be.

As this discussion of difference suggests, however, consensus in the early 1950s was illusory. Britain was deeply divided by class, and as Arthur Marwick (1996) has observed there were also vast regional differences, partly due to the effects of war, and partly because of economic and demographic changes. As a result, television was making visible pre-existing social and cultural faultlines. Yet the advent of the new consumer boom was also seen to disrupt a sense of cultural consensus. Up until 1954 there had been rationing, so there was a certain degree of homogeneity in what people could purchase or afford. After this, however, there was a major upturn in the economy, with full employment and high wages, with relaxed rules on hire purchase, and with a range of new desirable consumer goods to spend money on. Consumer goods, ranging from clothing to record players and washing machines are markers of style and lifestyle – they are the markers of different kinds of culture – ways of life. In

Pierre Bourdieu's sense (1984), style and lifestyle are markers of taste, and taste is a marker of class. Although there were middle-class and elitist anxieties about the rise of a homogenous consumer culture, in this period, the expansion of affordable commodities meant there was an increasing number of ways in which social groups, defined by class or age, could differentiate themselves.

As a result, the second way in which television promoted change was through its complex relationship to consumer culture. To start with, advertising was a significant part of the new ITV service, and it had been the early promise of the consumer boom that had prompted some advertisers and retailers to agitate in favour of the new commercial service to increase advertising opportunities for a wide range of commodities. Yet, importantly, television promoted consumer activity in other ways. The expansion of programme forms, and innovations in aesthetics and performances, as we saw in chapters two, three, four and five, provided viewers with a new and wide range of identificatory resources. Whether it was the image of the efficient and attractive housewife smoothly running her home, the sharply suited, sexually liberated and mobile secret agent, or the leather and denim clad rocker, television's programming offered different and often new cultural models of social behaviour to be accepted, applauded, emulated, rejected or sneered at. Just as Thorstein Veblen (1934) demonstrated that social groups such as the French nouveaux riches could acquire social status through conspicuous consumption, the conspicuous display of consumption on television provided potential models for how people in different groups could display their social allegiances. The representation of different commodities, and different forms of lifestyle and consumption, even when consumption is absent in documentaries about poverty or deprivation, are therefore closely bound up with class identities and behaviours. The absence of consumption, or the inability to participate in the new consumer culture, is itself an indicator of social, cultural and economic status. The representation of different forms of culture therefore, signified by different forms of consumption and lifestyle, could be seen to express forms of class conflict within society in the 1950s and 1960s. Such conflict around

commodities, lifestyle and class were particularly evident, for example, in the sitcom *Steptoe and Son*.

Importantly, television was a commodity item in its own right, alongside record players, washing machines and refrigerators. So the purchasing or hiring of the television set itself can be seen as both consistent with, and a constituent feature of, consumer activity. Not only is it characterised by the consumer parting with cash in single or several instalments, but also by an ongoing relationship where the viewers consume television programming. This consumption takes place on an everyday basis. This is significant because both Silverstone (1994) and Scannell (1996) have drawn attention to 'dailiness' as television and broadcasting's key phenomenological characteristics. Yet, though established in radio, the 'dailiness' of television was a new experience in the 1950s and 1960s for a majority of the audience. With the television set in the home, through routine television production practices, fixed point scheduling and serialisation, programming schedules and individual programme forms became familiar and everyday. This promotes consumer culture because it establishes a long term relationship between television and the viewer at home. As I argued in chapter six, watching familiar programmes on an everyday basis is analogous with the process of ownership. This is because ownership can be characterised as a relationship to an object which is *near-over-time*. Even if television programming for the viewer in this period was ephemeral (the viewer not being able to record or keep the images), the regular patterning of series programming over the schedules meant that television programmes too were near, available to the viewer through the domestic screen, over time. Janet Thumim (2004) argues that television promotes the development of a viewing culture in this period through the mixed programme schedule by appealing to a broad audience. Fixed point scheduling and serialisation also promote viewing culture because they invite sustained viewership. This therefore also promotes consumer culture because it suggests that consumption is endless. Watching one programme in the flow of television is never enough.

Television and media power

The complex relationship between television, consumer culture and cultural difference suggests that there is also a relationship here to a broader discussion of media power. In one sense, television's relationship to consumer culture could already be said to implicate it within wider power structures in society. This would especially be the Frankfurt School and Marxist perspective where the presentation of popular culture and the advertising and presentation of desirable commodity items is seen to promote capitalist ideology, false consciousness and the alienation of labour. This has generated intense debate, for example, about whether consumer or consumption practices constitute subservience to capitalist hegemony or whether they constitute individual autonomy and creativity. This has often been the terrain of cultural studies, and is evident in, for example, the work of Hebdige (1979) and Fiske (1989). I want to avoid here, however, becoming too attached to a simplistic and deterministic (left-leaning) model of power or embroiled in a Manichean debate about the pros and cons of television. This is exactly because television is such a diverse and complex phenomenon. Instead, I want to focus here on two of the mechanisms by which television, as a new, mass-cultural phenomenon, can be seen, or said, to exert a new form of authority and influence on society and culture in the 1950s and 1960s. That is not to say that these mechanisms are exclusive and determining in the relationship between television (and the wider media) and society and culture. But understanding these mechanisms will help us to understand some of the longer-term implications of the expansion of television in Britain in the period. In particular, it will help shed further light on more recent theories about the construction and operation of media power in contemporary society.

So to start with, I want to focus on a particular mechanism in the promotion of consumer culture - the consumption of another person's labour implicit within the television personality, or celebrity, encounter. As I argued in chapter six, much of the work of broadcasting, the production process, goes on behind the scenes, spaces that Goffman (1990) would describe as 'backstage'. With the exception of occasional

programmes such as *That Was The Week That Was* and *The Dream Machine*, the work that goes on 'backstage' is mostly unseen. Of course, most of the labour that goes into producing a range of commodities and services in contemporary society goes unseen. To excavate this point further in relation to television, however, I want to concentrate on the work that goes on front stage, or literally on-stage. This is the work conducted by presenters, panellists, comedians and musicians, and a whole range of people who appear *on* television on a regular basis, the people who can be considered as celebrities or, as I have preferred to refer to them in this thesis (after Ellis, 1982, and Medhurst, 1991), television personalities. In thinking about celebrity, Tunstall (1983) has argued that these are people who present a unity and coherence of persona across a range of media. In the 1950s personalities such as Eamonn Andrews and Gilbert Harding appeared across a range of television programmes, and were also presented in different media. As I argued, the attractiveness of these individuals, presenting coherent personas, is that they appeared authentic or sincere. That is to say, they appeared to be 'themselves'. Yet as we saw, authenticity and sincerity can be performed and staged. Even though Gilbert Harding might have been perceived as being authentic, because of his grumpiness and irascible outbursts, his homosexuality was kept hidden. The point here is that performance constitutes work, and the more successfully the presenter or personality can convince an audience of their sincerity, the more they are effectively hiding the process of their work. An immediate effect of this is that the work of the performer is being consumed, but it does not look like work. The process of watching such encounters on a daily and long term basis goes some way to validating and naturalising practices of production and consumption.

However, this cannot be understood here simply in terms of a conceptualisation of ideology based on the notion of 'false consciousness' and the deliberate misrepresentation of relations of economic power within capitalist societies. This is because such performance on television can be enacted and experienced in a multitude of different ways, and that sometimes this means the foregrounding of professionalism and work. As we saw in chapter six, Gary Whannel (1992b) has argued the amateurishness of the member of the public often points up the power, authority and

professionalism of the presenter in quiz and gameshows. Not only does this suggest that performance and work can be explicit and recognisable, but it also suggests that there is potentially a tension here between the idea of someone appearing as themselves and appearing professional. There are three ways to consider this. Firstly, the television personality does not produce any given performance in isolation, but in conjunction with a wider range of performances and appearances that they make across the mixed programme schedule over any given period of time. Therefore the roles he or she chooses to undertake as 'themselves' – such as being a presenter or panellist (not acting in a role in an explicit work of fiction or drama) – are *likely* to be consistent with their coherent persona. This is not to say, however, that that persona cannot change over time or dramatically – through subsequent appearances and performances. Secondly, the television personality's professional demeanour can be read as the way they negotiate their coherent individual persona (their apparent sincerity) and the control they are required to exercise in the broadcasting encounter with an 'ordinary' person in programmes like quiz and gameshows. The smoother they can negotiate the interplay between their individual persona and their professionalism the more seamless (and potentially more effective and compelling) the performance.

Thirdly, the performance of the television personality in a given role (such as being a presenter or panellist) has to have some coherence with other roles and performances of other presenters and panellists across a range of other programmes, formats and television channels. This is because there are codes and conventions for how television people should behave in particular on-screen television scenarios. Or, more specifically here, such conventions were emerging on television in the 1950s. As we saw in the last chapter, the television personality belongs to what Goffman (1990) describes as a 'team'. The audience constitutes one team, and the on-stage 'television personality' belongs to the broadcaster's team. In Goffman's analysis, humour will emerge when an individual changes team, and they will often be the focus of teasing from members of new team. In television light entertainment forms which feature ordinary people there tends to be joking and humour, with the ordinary person having to endure gentle ribbing and mockery from the show's presenter. For Scannell (1996), drawing on the

sociologist Georg Simmel (1971), this kind of joking and joshing in broadcasting can be considered as 'sociable'. As I argued in the last chapter, Simmel himself claims that the sociable encounter is unstructured and negates hierarchy. As the hierarchy of the presenter over the ordinary person in the broadcasting setting is an unequal encounter, so this cannot be described as 'sociability' in Simmel's sense. The difference between Scannell's interpretation of Simmel from the one here is one of perspective. For Scannell, the sociable dimension is wrapped in broadcasting's 'communicative ethos'. As he suggests (1996:4), '...if programmes are not, really and truly, sociable in the ways they address viewers and listeners, then no one would care to watch or listen'. So for Scannell, as for Simmel, the talking and communicating for sake of talking and communicating is a positive aspect of human relations, and it can joyfully disregard the hierarchies, structures and constraints that characterise modern life. I would not in any way want to disregard the pleasurable aspects of such sociability (and its potential significance for social and community relations), but I do want to emphasise the way in which, whether we like it or not, there are structured elements to many of the sociable encounters we see in the broadcasting situation. And this, in a medium which was beginning to attract mass attention in the 1950s and 1960s, must surely implicate the fun and joy of television's sociability increasingly with the ways in which television made the outside world apparent, and the way it could articulate the kind of 'symbolic power' described by Bourdieu (1991). That is, the power of television to define and shape our understanding and experience of a social reality. In the context of television personalities and celebrities here, there is something about them that sets them aside from, and potentially makes them seem superior to, ordinary people and ordinary daily experience.

As a result I have developed the term *structured sociability* to describe an encounter which has the appearance of sociability but which is hierarchical and unequal. In this period, in the 1950s and 1960s, as television increasingly became a mass medium, with industrialisation, serialisation and fixed point scheduling, these kinds of encounters became increasingly visible and repeated. This means, on the one hand, the repetition of the competition rules in quiz and gameshow formats which feature ordinary

members of the public and it means, on the other hand, the conventionalisation of the on-screen power structure between the presenter and lay-participant. Over time the kind of encounter that I have characterised as structured sociability becomes *ritualised sociability*. What I mean by ritualised is not the common-sense notion that ritual is a habitual or routine activity (although television viewing *could* become increasingly habitual and routine within the period). Instead I have referred to Couldry's understanding of 'media rituals' as formalised actions that connect to transcendental values. For Couldry (2003b), ritualised action is not the consumption of media content, but relates to actions that revolve around the creation and maintenance of media related categories. Most powerfully, media related categories are comprised of the distinction between media people and non-media people, and between media sites and non-media sites. In creating these distinctions, the transcendental value to which these media categories point is the media's own ability to define categories which have broader social and cultural resonance. This resonance is a sense that the media experience itself is more special, and potentially more powerful and important, than ordinary, everyday experience. So the act of a tourist visiting a television studio or meeting a celebrity and asking for an autograph is experienced as a special event because the media has already defined media space and media people *as* special. Of course, the processes that Couldry seeks to identify relate to the total media landscape of today. Yet my analysis here shows the ways that television in the 1950s and 1960s makes explicit the distinction between a television personality and a non-television personality. With the expansion of the nascent television industry, with an expansion of formats and serialisation to a new, mass audience, we can see the way that television started to define its own media related categories for the first time. Ritualised over this period, these categories could point to television's increasing ability to potentially define social experience.

This is complemented by the way that the television duopoly's ability to define social experience was consolidated, embedded and naturalised by the mixed programme schedule in which different forms of culture, and different cultural forms could be presented and represented within a unified flow of broadcasting. Television, viewed

nationally by a mass audience, provided the cultural references, discourses and talking points which could be shared by all. As we saw in chapter two, it is tempting to see television as the unified cultural form against which cultural fragmentation and difference could be measured. This, however, would be to perpetuate what Couldry has described as the 'myth of the mediated centre' (2003a). This would be to uncritically assume that the media, in its entirety, allows access to the central issues and concerns of society. In more contemporary perspectives of the media, as Couldry (2003a) suggests, this would also be to assume that the media itself constitutes that centre. Even to suggest that the media provides the arena in which competing ideologies and discourses are played out is to perpetuate this myth. So to argue, for example, that television in the 1950s and 1960s was the way in which cultural consensus was disrupted or measured against, or to suggest that television provided a form of 'social cement' in the context of public service broadcasting would, in sociological terms, be highly problematic.

The fact that television can potentially be *seen* in these terms is, however, important. As Couldry has argued, there *are* beliefs or assumptions that somehow the media connects its audience to the centre of society, or that it speaks on behalf of society. This thesis has focused on the development of television in the 1950s and 1960s, and it has argued that the medium's ability to make aspects of British society and the world newly visible had a profound social and cultural impact. Yet in some respects the development of television here has some continuity with other forms of media. Benedict Anderson (1991) has, after all, demonstrated the significance of print media in the long-term development of national consciousness, or the 'imagined community'. Much has been written of the nationalistic and propagandistic value of film and cinema in the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s, and the original notions of broadcasting acting as 'social cement' were discussed in relation to early BBC radio and British society. If the idea of the 'nation' is seen as a good thing, then the role of media such as newspapers, cinema, radio and television in creating and perpetuating a sense of 'imagined community' must also be seen as a good thing. The potentially positive power of the media can be seen in the broadcasting of media events such as coronations, state

funerals, sporting events and moon landings, explored by Dayan and Katz (1992). On these occasions, such as the 1953 Coronation covered by the BBC on television and radio, the disruption of everyday schedules, the concentration of media focus and the apparent attention of a national audience powerfully evokes a sense of community, and it seems to draw a direct connection between the media and the central concerns of society. Of course, there are also potentially negative connotations to this, such as the alienation and disenfranchisement of many of the audience from the television coverage surrounding the death and funeral of Diana, Princess of Wales in 1997 (Turnock, 2000; Thomas, 2002) – despite a rhetoric of national unity and 'grief'. The issue here is the extent to which certain kinds of media event can genuinely speak for and represent a national audience, and there are some potentially dangerous political implications if television can powerfully evoke a particular perspective and silence others.

So, to return to the third question that was posed at the outset of this thesis, regarding the impact of television on society and culture in Britain in the 1950s and 1960s, a number of key points can be concluded here with some confidence. Firstly, the expansion and development of television in this period was significant socially and culturally because it made Britain and the world apparent to its audience in new and different ways. In a related manner, that a relatively new medium, accessed by a mass audience for the first time, could present a sense of cultural difference and social distinction was also an important development. That it could promote consumer culture (while also critiquing aspects of consumer culture) was an important development too. That television's personalities were presented within the structures of broadcasting encounters as hierarchically superior to ordinary members of the public was also an important development that has connected long-term with other developments in the media and the rise of a so-called celebrity culture. This can be particularly seen as a specific mechanism in the development of media influence and authority. That television could be *perceived* as holding together or representing a whole society, or accessing the central and core concerns of that society, is not just an important development but a very powerful effect. So not only does television promote a number

of ongoing changes and developments in the 1950s and 1960s, the arrival of the new medium itself is an enormous social and cultural development. The change that the expansion of television *produces* is the arrival of this new, influential mass medium itself – a medium that is intricately woven with Britain's social and cultural life in the period.

Of course, it is extremely difficult to follow through all the diffuse and complex implications of this. Furthermore, just as there is a danger here of media-centricism (or even a television centricism - with different institutions, personnel, technologies, practices and programme forms being reified into a single institution), there is also likely to be something tautological and teleological at work here in this thesis. That the change television produces is television itself is something of a slippery proposition, though it does suggest that something complex and profound is going on here. That this development brought us to this very moment, the 'climax of history', is also potentially slippery. It might suggest that all roads led us, inevitably, to this moment and this state of affairs. Part of the problem too is that by drawing on recent social and media theory that I am making inferences about the past from the position of the present. All these raise various historiographical and philosophical demons. Nonetheless, I would defend my approach here. This thesis has shown that drawing on more recent theories of television and the media has value for understanding the development of the television institution in the 1950s and 1960s and its complex relationship to culture and society. At the same time, combining historical analysis with recent sociological thinking helps us understand the operation of television today. Nick Couldry (2003b) has been keen to emphasise, for example, that 'media rituals' and the organisation of contemporary media are necessarily contingent. This is partly because he does not want to preclude the possibility of some kind of social or cultural change in the future. The value that this thesis has for thinking about Couldry's work, and also for Silverstone's (1994), is that it demonstrates how some of the contingent practices and experiences of television that we know today came into being in the past. This is the value here of history. As Corner has argued (2003: 275), the promise of history, and broadcasting history, is 'that it will help us in better understanding

questions of change and of causality, that it will solve some of the mysteries of structure, process and agency in human affairs.' This thesis has shown how the expansion of the television institution in Britain in the 1950s and 1960s impacted on social and cultural experience by making Britain and the world visible in a new way to the new television audience – the British public. And it was in this period that television (its institutions, practices, technologies, programmes and representations) became, for good or ill, part of our daily lives in a matter of fact and taken for granted manner. This in itself was a profound development.

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