

**Banal Transnationalism:  
The Difference that Television Makes**

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A better way of listening: listen to the unexpected, no longer knowing what one is listening to.

Elias Canetti (1991, p. 82)

All across the European space now, Turkish-speaking populations are tuning in to the numerous satellite channels that are broadcasting programmes from Ankara and Istanbul. Just like other migrant groups - Maghrebis, Arabs, Chinese, Indians, Afro-Caribbeans, and many more - they are now able to make use of transnational communications to gain access to media services from the country of origin. This has been an entirely new phenomenon, a development of the last decade, which has very significant implications for how migrants experience their lives, and for how they think and feel about their experiences. What, then, is the significance? What precisely is the difference that television makes for those who live in migrant contexts? What is the nature of their engagement with the new transnational media? These are key questions that will be posed in the following discussion, with particular reference to Turks living in Europe.

We shall draw on research that we have been undertaking amongst the Turkish-speaking populations in London, in order to see how it is that ordinary Turkish people are relating to the new transnational media. If we are to understand what it is that they are doing with television, then we have to listen to Turkish people talking about their responses and reactions to it. Trying to make sense of what they have to say will therefore be a primary aim of this paper. What we then have to recognise, however, is that the interpretation of what they are telling us is far from being a straightforward matter. For so much clearly depends on the conceptual and theoretical framework in terms of which we seek to make sense of these Turkish reflections on transnational media services. Elsewhere (Aksoy and Robins, 2000; Robins and Aksoy, 2001a, 2001b), we have argued that the currently prevailing framework - which has been mainly concerned with how transnational satellite broadcasting systems sustain new kinds of 'global diasporic cultures' or 'transnational imagined communities' - is

deeply problematical. It is problematical, we maintain, because it seeks to understand transnational developments through what are essentially categories of the national imaginary - and is consequently blind to whatever it is that might be new about emerging transnational media cultures. In our own work, we have sought to move beyond the national mentality and its fundamental categories - those of 'community', 'identity' and 'belonging' - in order to explore alternative possibilities of transnationalism. A second endeavour of this paper, then, will be to further open up this agenda concerning the appropriate categories for understanding what is happening - actually, what might unexpectedly be happening - in transnational cultural experience.

### **Migration and Diasporic Cultural Studies**

Migration and movement from one country to another, whether in the form of economic migration or asylum seeking, has involved an experience of separation - the migrant has inevitably left behind his or her home, relatives, friends, surroundings, familiar objects and the everyday routines of everyday life. We shall be moving on to consider what such cultural transition means now for Turkish people living in London. But first - because it provides an important point of reference for our own arguments - we need to briefly consider how the theme of separation and distance has been made to figure in contemporary discourses on migrant identity. Here we are referring to accounts of migrant experience - and the recent literature of cultural, migration and postcolonial studies already contains a great many examples - that have developed around a narrative of migration as exile, loss and longing. We are concerned with a particular imagination of migration, one that has taken (what it declares to be) the drama of separation and the pathos of distance from the homeland as its core issues.

It is essentially an imagination of migration as estrangement, as Sara Ahmed makes apparent. Migration may be considered, she says, 'as a process of estrangement, a process of becoming estranged from that which was inhabited at home... It [involves] a process of transition, a movement from one register to another' (1999: 343). Migration involves both 'spatial dislocation' and 'temporal dislocation': it is about separation and distance from the homeland, and also involves the experience of

discontinuity between past and present. Through the process of migration, a radical break is assumed to have taken place; and this break is associated with a sense of acute discomfort, involving 'the failure to fully inhabit the present or present space' (1999: 343). Ahmed makes it clear that there are ways to redeem the sense of alienation, ways of creating new communities to substitute for the lost community. But it seems that this kind of redemption can only ever be partial, and that the original home will continue to function as a key point of reference. What migration always involves, according to Ahmed, is 'a splitting of home as place of origin and home as the sensory world of everyday experience' (1999: 341).

From a somewhat different perspective - actually that of a group analyst working with Turkish-speaking immigrants in London - Seda Şengün develops a similar argument. For her, too, migration involves a process of estrangement, associated with 'separation from the mother culture' (2001: 68), as she puts it. 'For the immigrant things once thought to be objectively perceived are no longer so,' says Şengün. 'There is a completely different reality. The language one always spoke does not make sense to others... Everyday things which are taken for granted are either not there any more or strongly questioned' (2001: 65-66). This experience of cultural dislocation is again regarded as one of discomfort (potentially it is a 'traumatic experience' (2001: 76), we are told). Like Ahmed, Şengün believes that there are ways of coping with the 'anxiety of separation' (2001: 68). But, here again, we find the sense of a deep, underlying antinomy of 'mother culture' and 'new culture'. 'Sometimes,' says Şengün, 'the conflict between the new and the old culture and experiences becomes so intense and unbearable that, as a defence, strong splitting occurs' (2001: 69). Again, it is the image of splitting - this time in a more explicitly psychoanalytical sense - that is being deployed to describe the migrant's situation 'between cultures'.

Whilst Ahmed and Şengün come out of rather different theoretical contexts and orientations - one from cultural studies, the other from transcultural psychotherapy - their concerns are remarkably similar. Both of them are addressing, in their different ways, that sense of loss and consequent yearning that has seemed to be such an integral part of migrant experience. Each draws our attention to the ever-present desire to affirm, and often idealise, the culture of the homeland. This affirmation may often be simple and quotidian. Şengün tells us that the 'own' culture may function

'like a teddy bear during the mother's absence': 'Familiar tastes, smells, tunes and gestures provide containment and comfort, reducing the anxiety of separation. When a migrant eats food which is specific to his original country, or listens to a song in his own language, he is immediately linked to his past and his own culture' (2001: 68). At other times, in other contexts, holding on to the lost culture may assume more epic and dramatic dimensions, and involve the invocation of a 'mythic past', as Ahmed (1999: 342) puts it. As an example of this tendency toward mythologisation, we might cite from Eva Hoffman's acclaimed autobiography, *Lost in Translation*, where the experience of separation is conceived in terms of a fall from paradise. 'Loss,' says Hoffman, 'is a magical preservative. Time stops at the point of severance, and no subsequent impressions muddy the water you have in mind. The house, the garden, the country you have lost remain forever as you remember them. Nostalgia - that most lyrical of feelings - crystallises around these images like amber' (1991: 115). Nostalgia is, as Vladimir Jankélévitch (1974: 346) observes, a melancholy brought about by 'awareness of something other, awareness of somewhere else, awareness of a contrast between past and present, and between present and future' - and migrations have created the conditions for its most intense and elaborated forms of expression.

Estrangement from the 'mother' culture, distantiating from the place of origin, processes of splitting, involving idealisation of, and nostalgia for, the 'homeland' - these have all by now become familiar (if not over-familiar) themes. We have briefly introduced the theoretical - and evocative - elements of what has become something of a conventional stance in diasporic cultural studies. And we have done so in order to be able to go on now and reflect on how it might be possible to move beyond these established and routine tropes. For we ourselves have considerable difficulties with this diasporic agenda. As Roger Rouse (1995: 356) has argued, it involves 'asserting and organising around either revalorised versions of ascribed identities or new ones that the (im)migrants develop for themselves.' This is an agenda that regards individuals as socially or culturally derived and driven - an agenda that works to perpetuate the 'assumption that the possession of identities and processes of identity formation are universal aspects of human experience...' (Rouse, 1995: 356). Our fundamental problem with diasporic cultural studies is that, in the end, it remains caught up in the mentality of imagined communities, cultures and identities - which is grounded essentially in the national mentality.

In the present discussion, we do not want to enter directly into a theoretical discussion of the categories of culture and identity that are being proposed in these analyses of diasporic communities. Our critique will assume a more oblique form, moving the argument into an empirical frame, via an exploration of certain new developments in migration that cannot be made sense of within this diasporic cultural frame (and that may actually be affecting the conditions of possibility of the diasporic imagination). We want to consider new practices that seem to open up alternative, and potentially more productive, dimensions of migrant experience. We are concerned with the kind of developments described by Alejandro Portes and his colleagues, in which ‘a growing number of persons... live dual lives: speaking two languages, having homes in two countries, and making a living through continuous regular contact across national borders’ (Portes *et al*, 1999: 217). Through a ‘thick web of regular instantaneous communication and easy personal travel’ (1999: 227), it is argued, migrants are now routinely able to establish transnational communities that exist across two, or more, cultural spaces. In what follows, we want to look at how these new kinds of transnational networks and mobilities may now be changing the nature of migrant experience and thinking. We shall be concerned with the cultural potential that may be inherent in these transnational developments Like Roger Rouse (1995: 370-373), we shall be attentive to the possibilities that these new connections may be creating for moving beyond identity and imagined community.

To come now to the particularities of our Turkish case study, we may say that it provides an excellent example of the new kinds of transnational connection that Portes and his colleagues are signalling. The relative proximity of Turkey to western Europe, the availability of cheap and frequent flights, and the recent proliferation of new media services and communications links, are developments that are now making it possible for Turks living in Europe to achieve a new mobility across cultural spaces. Here we shall focus on what we regard as *the* key innovation in the lives of Turkish migrants - which is simply the ability to routinely watch television from Turkey, and to be thereby in synchronised contact with everyday life and events in Turkey (we should note here that, for the most part, Turkish satellite broadcasting provides access to services being watched in Turkey; there are very few services targeted specifically at ‘Turks abroad’). What we are arguing is that the arrival of Turkish television has

made a difference - a crucial difference - for Turkish-speaking immigrants living in Europe. But what precisely is the nature of that difference? If we were to put it in the terms of diasporic cultural theory, we might say that transnational television has introduced completely new dynamics into the management of separation and distance.

### **The Difference that Television Makes**

There is a growing body of work on transnational communications within the framework of diasporic cultural studies. Here it is being argued that new media technologies are making it possible to transcend the distances that have separated 'diasporic communities' around the world from their 'communities of origin'. 'Diasporic media' are said to be providing new means to promote transnational bonding, and thereby sustain (ethnic, national or religious) identities and cultures at-a-distance. They are being thought about in terms of possibilities they offer for dislocated belonging among migrant communities anxious to maintain their identification with the 'homeland' (and the basic premise is that this kind of belonging must be the primary aspiration of any and every such 'community').

Now, of course we can recognise a certain kind of truth in this argument. From our own work on Turkish migrants in London, it is clear that access to Turkish-language media can, indeed, be important for overcoming the migrant's experience of cultural separation. But if there is some kind of truth here, we would say that it is only a very meagre and partial truth. The problem with diasporic media studies is that its interests and concern generally come to an end at this point. The inquiry is brought to a premature halt, with the ready acceptance that transnational broadcasting does in fact, and quite unproblematically, support the long-distance cohesion of transnational 'imagined communities' - and without ever confronting what it is that might be new and different about the experience of transnational broadcasting. Because it has been principally concerned with acts of bonding and belonging, the diasporic agenda has generally been blind to what else might be happening when migrants are, apparently, connecting in to the 'homeland' culture. The limits of diasporic media studies come from the readiness to believe and accept that migrant audiences are all behaving as the conventional and conforming members of 'diasporic communities'.

The problem is simply that the theoretical categories available to diasporic media and cultural studies make it difficult to see anything other than diasporic forms of behaviour. Individuals are derived from the social orders to which they 'belong'; they amount to little more than their membership of, and participation in, any particular 'imagined community'. This is a clearly an example of the kind of social theory that is powerfully criticised by Anthony Cohen, an approach that treats society as an ontology 'which somehow becomes independent of its own members, and assumes that the self is required continuously to adjust to it' (1994: 21). In this kind of approach there is no place for self-awareness and self-consciousness - and, as Cohen argues, by neglecting self-consciousness, we inevitably perpetrate fictions in our descriptions of other people' (1994: 191). To see anything more than diasporic behaviour in migrant audiences, it is necessary to introduce the category of the self-conscious individual, who is 'someone who can reflect on her or his experience of and position in society, of "being oneself"' (1994: 65). As Cohen says, the imperative should be 'to elicit and describe the thoughts and sentiments of individuals which we otherwise gloss over in the generalisations we derive from collective social categories' (1994: 4). The crucial point is that individuals are endowed with the capacity for both emotion (feelings, moods) and thought (reflecting, comparing, interpreting, judging, and so on). We should be concerned, then, with their minds and sensibilities, and not their cultures or identities - with how they think, rather than how they belong.

It is in such terms as these that we now want to think about the experiences of Turkish migrants living in London. What do they think and feel about Turkish channels and programming? What is the difference that transnational television has made for London Turks? We will start from the crucial question of distance - from the idea that the new media systems can now work to bridge global distances. And we will do so by reflecting on what this seemingly straightforward idea might actually mean. In the frame of the diasporic cultural studies, we suggest, it is about the maintenance of at-a-distance ties; about the supposed capacity of transnational media to connect migrant communities back to the cultural space of their distant 'homeland'. On the basis of our own research, we would characterise what is happening somewhat differently: in terms of how - in the case of our informants - transnational media can now bring Turkish cultural products and services to them in London, and of how 'Turkey' is

consequently brought closer to them. As one focus group participant puts it, '[I]t gives you more freedom, because you don't feel so far away, because it's only six foot away from you, you don't feel so far away from it. Cyprus is like one switch of a button away, or Turkey even, mainland Turkey, you are there, aren't you?' (Focus group, Enfield, 21 April 2000). Even a young woman who migrated when she was quite young, and who is therefore not really familiar with the country, has this sense of greater proximity to the actuality of Turkey. She thinks that it is very good to be able to watch satellite television 'because you too can see what's been going on in Turkey, the news... I used to think that Turkey was a different kind of place [*başka bir yer*]. It's bringing it [Turkey] closer [*yakınlaştırıyor*]' (Focus group, Islington, London, 29 March 1999). Television makes a difference because it is in its nature - in the nature of television as a medium - to bring things closer to its viewers.

In one of our group discussions, two women tell us of how satellite television now allows them to be synchronised with Turkish realities. 'Most certainly [Turkish] television is useful for us,' says one. 'It's almost as if we're living in Turkey, as if nothing has really changed for us.' The other confirmed this, saying that 'When you're home, you feel as if you are in Turkey. Our homes are already decorated Turkish style, everything about me is Turkish, and when I'm watching television too...' (Focus group, Hackney, London, 7 December 1999). The key issue here is to do with the meaning of this feeling of 'as if nothing has really changed for us.' In the context of the diasporic agenda, this feeling of synchronisation would be thought of in terms of long-distance bonding with the 'homeland', the maintenance of at-a-distance links with a faraway 'somewhere else'. For us, in contrast, it is simply about the availability in London of imported things from Turkey - where we might regard the availability of television programmes as being on a continuum with the (equally common) availability of food, clothes or furnishings from Turkey. 'Nothing has really changed' does not refer to ethno-cultural re-connection to some imagined 'homeland', but simply to the possibility of having access in London now to Turkish consumer goods and the world of Turkish consumer culture. It is 'almost as if we're living in Turkey' in that sense, being Turkish in London, that is to say, and not at all in the sense of 'being taken back home'.

Television brings the ordinary, banal reality of Turkish life to the migrants living in London. The key to understanding transnational Turkish television is its relation to banality. Jankélévitch notes how people who are in exile can imagine they are living double lives, carrying around within them 'inner voices... the voices of the past and of the distant city', whilst at the same time submitting to 'the banal and turbulent life of everyday action' (1974: 346). This is precisely the mechanism of splitting - where the banality of the 'here and now' provides the stimulus for nostalgic dreams and fantasies about the 'there and then'. Now, what we regard as significant about transnational television is that, as a consequence of bringing the mundane, everyday reality of Turkey 'closer', it is undermining this false polarising logic. The 'here and now' reality of Turkish media culture disturbs the imagination of a 'there and then' Turkey - thereby working against the romance of diaspora-as-exile, against the tendency to false idealisation of the 'homeland'. We might say, then, that transnational Turkish television is an agent of cultural de-mythologisation.

This process of de-mythologisation can work in different ways. Here we will give two examples of how television can be used as a kind of reality-testing device. The first comes from an interview with an active member of London's Turkish-Cypriot population, a man in his forties who has been settled in Britain for many years. We find ourselves discussing the question of young people, relationships and the family, and he expresses quite critical opinions about what he clearly regards as the out-of-date morality of the Turkish-Cypriot community. 'In many ways,' he says, 'you become almost frozen in your understanding of where your community is. The longer you are here the more you are likely to have views and attitudes that are more conservative and out of date. I've seen people my age and even younger, expecting things of their children that they have rebelled against.' He then moves on to suggest that transnational television could actually play a positive role in countering this migrant conservatism. 'In many ways,' he comments,

I wish they would watch more Turkish television. Some of their attitudes are far behind what the messages are. You turn on the Turkish television, and some of it is refreshingly modern. It's quite normal to watch people having affairs, or who are having relationships, who aren't married, on Turkish television. You would never have had that twenty years ago. But some of the mind set is relating to that. The first time a girl is having a relationship is when they get married - you see that with second-

generation people. They don't get that from satellite. They get it from their parents (Interview, Camden, London, 20 April 2000).

What he is arguing is that television programmes and images that show how life and morals are in Turkey now can serve as a valuable corrective to migrant attitudes that, he believes, have become stuck in some ideal and timeless image of Turkish-Cypriotness.

Our second example comes from young woman of eighteen, we shall call her Hülya, who migrated to Britain from eastern Turkey when she was seven years old. At one point, towards the end of our discussion, she tells us how much she likes watching old Turkish movies on television, 'especially the love films', which she likes to watch 'to see the old Turkey...[] It gives you a very sweet sense.' But earlier she had spoken about a very different experience of watching Turkish television:

We have one TV set, and this is why we have arguments, because I'm irritated by the news. I find it bad for my health. You might find it funny but, really, you sit in front of the television, you are going to watch the news, you are relaxed, everybody is curious about what's happening in Turkey; and then it says, 'Good evening viewers, today four cars crashed into each other'. God bless them. They show these things, people covered in blood. People who know nothing about rescuing, trying to drag these people out, they pull them, and in front of your eyes people die. I am a very sensitive person. Somebody dies in front of you, and they show this, and they don't do anything. For me, this is like torture. For them maybe it is not like torture, but for me it is. Two or three years ago, I was *very* upset, when this guy was killed because he had a tattoo saying 'Allah' on his back. Then, I don't know this person, but I was so touched that I cried. And I called Ahmet Taner Kışlalı [a famous journalist]. These kinds of events make me very sad, because I'm delicate, and they wear me out, so for that reason I don't watch (Focus group, Hackney, London, 3 November 1999).

What is made apparent here is television's great capacity for conveying harsh and cruel aspects of the Turkish reality - Turkish news programmes are far more explicit than British ones in showing scenes of violence and bloodshed. For a great many Turkish viewers, news programmes are very disturbing - the often intense discomfort of watching the news was an issue that ran through practically all of our focus groups. In some parts of its schedules, then, television may nourish warm and nostalgic feelings. But at news time, especially, the principle of reality will always return,

through images of Turkey that frequently provoke and shock. The news can be profoundly unsettling for migrant viewers. As Hülya says of her own experience, it 'creates a psychological disorder' [*psikolojik durum yaratıyor*].

What is important is the evidential nature of television (which may be constructive, as in our first example, but also disturbing, as our second example makes clear). What we want to emphasise here is the capacity of the reality dimension of television to undercut the abstract nostalgia of the diasporic imagination. Turkish viewers come to participate in the mundane and banal world of everyday television. It is this aspect of television culture that goes against the idea that the proliferation of Turkish transnational media is now associated with an ethnicisation of media cultures and markets in western Europe (for such an argument, see Becker, 2001). In our own work, we have not found this to be the case. We are inclined to agree with Marisca Milikowski when she argues that it is, on the contrary, associated with a process of *de-ethnicisation*. As she says, Turkish satellite television 'helps Turkish migrants, and in particular their children, to liberate themselves from certain outdated and culturally imprisoning notions of Turkishness, which had survived in the isolation of migration' (Milikowski, 2000: 444). The world of Turkish television is an ordinary world, and its significance resides, we suggest, in its ordinary, banal and everyday qualities - which are qualities it has in common with countless other TV worlds.

Turkish audiences look to the ordinariness of Turkish television. Like any other viewers of broadcast television, they want 'the familiar - familiar sights, familiar faces, familiar voices,' as Thomas Elsaesser (1994: 7) puts it, 'television that respects and knows who they are, where they are, and what time it is.' And, to a large extent, we may say that they are able to find what they are looking for. And yet, at the same time, there is still something that is wrong, something that does not quite work properly with transnational Turkish television. At the same time as they can enjoy them, migrants can also find Turkish channels disturbing, unsettling, frustrating. This is apparent in a very dramatic fashion in Hülya's abrupt shift from feeling relaxed in front of the television to feeling worn out by what she saw on it. Many, many other people expressed these kinds of affronted and disgruntled feelings about the programmes they were watching. In one group, a woman objects to the production standards of Turkish television. 'We perceive Turkish television as being of poor

quality,' she says, 'and rather sensationalist, and unedited, so it's a bit crude... I mean, it will show you things in an unedited way, whether it's blood and guts, or violence or whatever.' And she adds, in a joking tone, 'I can't take it seriously if it's Burt Lancaster with a Turkish accent - doesn't really appeal' (Focus group, Haringey, London, 22 November 1999). There is something about Turkish television that presents itself as in some way inadequate, deficient, unacceptable. The experience of watching transnational television is ordinary, but never straightforwardly.

When Turkish people talk about what frustrates them, they point to the images, the programmes, the scheduling, or the nature of particular channels. But, somehow, it seems to us, this doesn't really get at what is 'wrong' with watching television from Turkey. There is something more that is disconcerting about watching transnational television, an elusive something else. We can perhaps get at what this something might be from a passing observation that was made by Hülya. We were talking about Muslim festivals, and about the sense that she and her friends had that the significance of religious holidays was diminishing in the London context. We asked whether Turkish television help to remind people of the traditional holidays, and to create the festival atmosphere that seemed to have been lost. 'How could that help?', says one young woman sceptically. And Hülya says 'It's coming from a distance... It's coming from too far. It loses its significance. I mean, it could have significance, but it's coming from too far.' Later, when asked whether the availability of satellite television had implications for her identity and her relation to Turkish culture, she picks up on the same idea. 'No,' she says, 'it can't, because it's too distant. Imagine that you were talking to me from I don't know how many thousand miles away. How much would this affect me?' (Focus group, Hackney, London, 3 November 1999). Perhaps we can make sense of this by referring back to Thomas Elsaesser's observation that the audiences of broadcast television want television programmes that know who they are, where they are, and what time it is. Is it that television from Turkey doesn't seem to know its transnational audiences in this way? Is Hülya pointing to something that is new or different about the working of transnational television? Is she signalling something that might actually make transnational cultural interactions distinctive?

## **Migrant Experience and Television Theory**

Turkish migrants clearly have quite complex thoughts and sentiments about the television channels and programmes that they are watching. And what is also clear is that they have a *critical* engagement with the new transnational television culture. What they say demonstrates considerable awareness and thoughtfulness about different aspects of this culture, from the aesthetic and production values of particular programmes, through to the overall impact of the new services on the quality of their lives in Britain. What we now want to do is to go on and reflect on these complex attitudes and relations of Turkish migrants towards transnational television. We want to try to make sense of what Turkish people are telling us in the context of more general ideas about the role and significance of broadcasting in modern life (which Turks are as much a part of as any other group).

For the most part, as we have suggested above, transnational media of the kind we are concerned with here have been considered in the special context of ‘diasporic culture’ and identity politics. Migrant audiences have been seen as, in some way, different; and the study of their supposedly different dispositions and preoccupations has seemed to belong to the specialised domain of ethnic and migration research. We ourselves believe that their media activities should be looked at with the very same media theories that have been applied to ‘ordinary’ (i.e. national, sedentary) audiences. Marisca Milikowski (2000: 460) is quite right to insist that we should look at migrant viewing from the point of view of ‘ordinary uses and gratifications’ - for, as she observes, ‘non-ideological and non-political gratifications usually go a long way to explain a certain popular interest...’ This we regard as an important principle of methodological democracy and justice. We should reflect on what is happening through transnationalisation of Turkish media culture in the light of media theory concerned with ordinary uses of, and gratifications from, everyday television.

Here, we think that the work of Paddy Scannell (1996: 2000) can serve as a particularly useful and productive point of reference. We have reservations, we must say, about certain aspects of Scannell’s overall project - it is very national in its orientation, and often seems to be treating British broadcasting as an ideal-type model (for critical observations on the politics of Scannell’s agenda, see Morley, 2000, ch.

5). But we do think that there is a great deal to be learned from his detailed analysis of the emergence of distinctive modes of address in broadcasting culture - how broadcasters learned to address listeners and viewers in appropriate ways (ways in which they would wish to be addressed). Scannell's work alerts us to significance of the particular rhetorical structures that have come to mediate the relation of producers and consumers of broadcasting services. What he provides us with is a sustained account of the communicative structures and ethos that have made broadcasting culture work for its audiences. It is, moreover, a historically situated account, showing how the specific communicative forms of radio and television developed and functioned in the particular context of national broadcasting systems. Scannell's concern is with how, at a particular historical moment, broadcasting media came to develop communicative forms that functioned as arguably the primary mediation between the private domain of everyday life and the public life of the nation state.

It seems to us that these communicative and rhetorical aspects of programming and scheduling are absolutely crucial for our own exploration of transnational Turkish television and its audiences. Of course, the codes that have evolved in the Turkish context differ somewhat from those of Scannell's British case - the state broadcaster, TRT, has always had an 'official' tone, and it was only in the 1990s, through the development of private channels, that more informal modes of address came to be elaborated (Aksoy and Robins, 1997). But we may say that they have functioned in the integrative way, working to mediate the relation between private and public spheres of life in Turkey. And what seems to us to be a key issue, in the context of our own present concern with Turkish satellite broadcasting in the European space, is what happens to these communicative structures in the changed circumstances of transnationalisation. The point about Scannell's analysis is that it is essentially a phenomenology of national broadcasting - or perhaps, more accurately, a national phenomenology of broadcasting. It assumes that there is something universal and timeless about the way in which national broadcasting cultures have worked. What we would suggest is there will be difficulties when communicative structures that have worked more or less well in a national context are then made to do service in new transnational contexts. We are concerned with the communicative limits of structures that have served to mediate between the private and public lives of the nation.

There are two (closely related) arguments that we want to make here. The first is straightforward, emerging directly from our previous discussion, and can be made quite briefly. Scannell is concerned with what he calls the 'care-structures' of radio and television, by which he means the practices that 'produce and deliver an all-day everyday service that is ready-to-hand and available always anytime at the turn of a switch or the press of a button' (1996: 145-146). What this means, he says, is 'making programmes so that they "work" every time', and in such a way that viewers or listeners come to regard them as 'a natural, ordinary, unremarkable, everyday entitlement' (1996: 145-146). In considering these care structures, Scannell has put particular emphasis on the temporality of broadcasting, on what he calls its 'dailiness'. 'This dailiness yields,' he says, 'the sense we all have of the ordinariness, the familiarity and obviousness of radio and television. It establishes their taken for granted, "seen but unnoticed" character' (2000: 19). And what Scannell wants us to recognise and acknowledge is the immense pleasure that this mundane quality of broadcasting has for viewers - the pleasure that comes from the combination of familiarity, confirmation, entitlement and effortlessness.

And what we want to emphasise is that this particular pleasure principle is not exclusive to sedentary viewers. Turkish broadcasting culture also exists as an ordinary and mundane culture. And the appeal of Turkish television, as with other broadcasting cultures, is equally the appeal of its ordinariness. Through it, Turks living in Europe have access to, or can extend their access to, what Jostein Gripsrud (1999) calls the domain of 'common knowledge'. They can be part of the great domain of 'anonymous discourse' that broadcasting has brought into existence, the banal domain of 'inattentive attention' (Brune, 1993: 37). What we are arguing, then, is that migrant viewers are looking to find what the national television culture has always provided. Like any other viewers, Turkish-speaking viewers in Europe are also in search of broadcast television that is meaningfully and effortlessly available. They are also wanting - and to a quite a large extent finding - the pleasures of familiarity and confirmation. And our point is that the desire for such an engagement with Turkish television is entirely *social*, and not at all ethno-cultural or 'diasporic', in its motivation. Migrant viewers are in search of ordinary social gratifications, precisely the kinds of gratification that Scannell is concerned with.

Our second argument is more complex, and takes us back to what Hülya said about Turkish television seeming to come from a distance and, consequently, losing its significance. What we want to get at is the particular feeling of *ambivalence* that very many Turkish people have about transnational television (which is more than the routine ambivalence that we all seem to have). They enjoy and appreciate the programmes they see; and yet, at the same time, watching them can frequently cause frustration and provoke resentment. Sometimes, it seems, transnational engagement with Turkish television culture doesn't 'work'. In Scannell's terms, we may say that the care structures of television break down. And what we want to suggest, as an explanation for this, is that, whilst considerable gratification may be got from everyday television, there are particular difficulties with its 'sociable dimension', which Scannell regards as 'the most fundamental characteristic of broadcasting's communicative ethos' (1996: 23). Put simply, Turkish television often seems to its transnational viewers to be failing or lacking in its sociable aspect.

Scannell draws our attention to the remarkable capacity of broadcasting to generate a sense of 'we-ness', through the creation of 'a public, shared and sociable world-in-common between human beings' (2000: 12). What Scannell means when he talks about the creation of a 'world in common' is, of course, a national world in common; what is at issue is the contribution of broadcasting to the institution of the 'imagined community'. His account is extremely idealistic, but what we think Scannell usefully brings out is the way in which television and radio have worked to create a public world with 'an ordered, orderly, familiar, knowable appearance' (1996: 153). It is a world in which television and radio contribute to the shaping of our sense of days' (1996: 149). The dailiness of broadcast media gives rise to the sense of '*our* time - generational time - the time of *our* being with one another in the world' (1996, p. 174). The broadcasting calendar 'creates a horizon of expectations, a mood of anticipation, a directedness towards that which is to come, thereby giving substance and structure (a "texture of relevances") to everyday life' (1996: 155). According to this ideal-type scenario, broadcasting produces a 'common world - a shareable, accessible, available public world': what it does is 'to create and to allow ways of being-in-public for absent listeners and viewers' (1996: 166, 168). It connects 'everyone's my-world' to the 'great world', which is 'a world in common, a world we share' (1996: 172, 174).

And what we are arguing here is that it is this sociable functioning of broadcasting that doesn't 'work' properly for migrants watching Turkish television in Europe. Transnational viewers are often disconcerted because, on very many occasions, they cannot relate to Turkish programmes as a natural, ordinary, unremarkable, everyday entitlement. In the case of news this is particularly apparent. If, as Scannell argues, 'the care structures of news are designed to routinise eventfulness' (1996: 160), then we may say that in our Turkish case, at least, these care structures do not function well across distance. In the transnational context, there is a problem with the mode of address. Broadcasting works on the basis of what Scannell calls a 'for-anyone-as-someone' structure of address: it is addressing a mass audience, and yet appears to be addressing the members of that audience personally, as individuals. 'The for-anyone-as-someone structure expresses and embodies that which is between the impersonal third person and the person first person, namely the second person (the me-and-you),' says Scannell (2000: 9). 'The for-anyone-as-someone structure expresses "we-ness". It articulates human social sociable life.' In the Turkish case, it seems that viewers may often be made to feel like no one in particular. The conditions no longer exist for feeling at home in the 'we-ness' of Turkish broadcasting culture.

Why does the 'my world' of Turkish migrants no longer resonate properly with a Turkish world in common? Why are there problems with the mode of address in the case of transnational broadcasting? Why are the care structures of broadcasting disrupted? The reasons are to do with the context of consumption. As we have said, transnational broadcasting is not about magically transporting migrant viewers back to a distant homeland. It is about broadcasting services being delivered to them in their new locations - in the case of the Turks we have been discussing, it is in London. What this means is that the world of broadcasting is not seamlessly connected to the world of the street outside, as it would be for viewers watching in Turkey. Migrant viewers cannot move routinely between the media space and the 'outside' space of everyday Turkish reality. And since so much of what broadcasting is about has to do with connecting viewers to the life and rhythms of the real world of the nation, there are bound to be difficulties with the dislocated kind of viewing that migrancy enforces. Turkish migrants will often protest that Turkish television exaggerates. 'When you see these things you naturally believe them,' one man said to us. 'But I've

been back from Turkey for two weeks, and it's nothing like that really. It's nothing like how it's shown. Turkey is the same Turkey. Of course, there are scandals, and there are people who live through them. But television doesn't reflect things as they are' (Focus group, Hackney, London, 16 December 1999). Migrants tend to forget that exaggeration is an integral part of television rhetoric in Turkey, and it is only when they go back for a visit that they recognise the discrepancy between screen reality and street reality (whereas viewers in Turkey are checking out this discrepancy on a continuous basis). We may say that the decontextualisation of the migrant viewing situation often results in a kind of interference in the reception of cultural signals from Turkey.

A further consequence of the dislocated context of consumption is that migrant viewers can never be in a position to watch Turkish television naively or innocently. We must be aware that they actually operate in and across two cultural spaces (at least) - Turkish and British. As well as watching Turkish channels, most of them are very familiar with British television. And they will often make comparisons between the two broadcasting cultures (concerning, for example, programme quality, scheduling, bias, censorship). We may say that there is a constant implicit comparison going on, and very often the comparisons are explicit - Turkish programmes are always watched and thought about with an awareness of British television in mind. As one man put it to us, 'We have the opportunity to compare things we see with what happens here. Before, we didn't know what it was like here' (Focus group, Hackney, London, 16 December 1999). When we say that Turkish migrants cannot watch Turkish television innocently, we mean that they can no longer watch it from the inside, as it were. They cannot recover the simple perspective of monocultural (national) vision. They are compelled to think about Turkish culture in the light of other cultural experiences and possibilities.

We have said that watching transnational Turkish television can be a frustrating and often disillusioning experience. What we want to add in conclusion is that this disillusionment can also be a productive experience. Through their engagement with Turkish (alongside British) media culture, Turkish migrants develop a comparative and critical attitude, and may become more reflexively aware of the arbitrariness and provisionality of cultural orders. In the present argument, we have been principally

concerned with how the ordinary world of broadcast television can work to undermine the diasporic imagination. What should also have become apparent in the course of our argument, however, is the potential that exists, too, for working against the grain of the national imagination, against the confining mentality of imagined community.

### **Conclusion: the Minds of Migrants**

It all depends on the rifts and leaps in a person, on the distance from the one to the other *within himself*.

Elias Canetti (1991, 20)

In this chapter, we have been highly critical of diasporic cultural studies and the agenda centred on ‘diasporic media’. Our objection has been to what we regard as a fundamental wrong assumption made by its exponents: that the people who watch transnational satellite television do so as mere ciphers of the ‘imagined communities’ to which they are said to ‘belong’. What we think has to be called into question is the idea that migrants function principally in terms of the categories of collective attachment and identification. As Roger Rouse observes, ‘the discourse of identity suggests that social collectivities are aggregates of atomised and autonomous elements, either individuals or sub-groups, that are fundamentally equivalent by virtue of the common possession of a given social property’ (1995: 358). Human individuals are reduced to the status of being the poor representatives of whatever imagined community they happen to have once been aggregated into. Rouse points to the socio-cultural efficacy of this logic of identity. We may consider it, he says, in terms of ‘hegemonic efforts to make ideas about identity frame the ways in which people understand what it is to be a person, the kinds of collectivities in which they are involved, the nature of the problems that they face, and the means by which these problems can be tackled’ (1995: 356). We have a fundamental problem with the project of diasporic cultural studies because it seems to us that it is, in the end, contributing to the extension and perpetuation of these hegemonic efforts in the context of contemporary global change. Everything, every possibility, remains predicated on the logic of identity.

In our discussion of transnational broadcasting from Turkey, we have been working actively against the diasporic imagination. We have tried to show how the rhetorical structures of Turkish television - the structures that have been mobilised to organise the experience of the national audience - are disrupted in the transnational context. In the migrant context, we think, where the ideal rhetorical situation of Turkish national television is significantly undermined, there may be possibilities for a more reflexive and critical engagement with television from the 'homeland'. What we have tried to suggest is that, in the Turkish case at least, transnational television might actually be working to subvert the diasporic imagination and its imperatives of identification and belonging. But our critique goes further than this. We have also argued that it is necessary to jettison the basic concepts of 'identity', 'imagined community' and 'diaspora'. Like Anthony Cohen, we have felt it necessary to go against the grain of the prevailing culturalism, and to take greater account of human consciousness and self consciousness - to recognise that the minds of Turkish migrants may provide a more significant and interesting research focus than their identities. This means moving our agenda away from the 'problem' of migrant culture and identity, to consider how it is that migrants experience migration, and how they think and talk about and make sense of their experiences.

The point about identities is that they require simplicity. In the case of minds and consciousness, what is important is always their complexity. And it seems to us that transnational developments might open up new possibilities for the way we think about mental space - putting a new value on the rifts and leaps inside a person, and provoking those who are open to experience to travel the distance from the one to the other within themselves.

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