MILLY BUONANNO*

FOREIGN FICTION: FROM THREAT TO RESOURCE
TOWARD A NEW CRITICAL THEORY OF INTERNATIONAL TELEVISION FLOWS

> *Those who travel have stories to tell.*
> Hulf Hannerz, Cultural Diversity.

The article re-examines the classic question of the international flows of television, putting forward the proposal of a new theoretical approach to it. As it is widely known, this discursive field has gone for longtime through the hegemony of the media imperialism paradigm, according to which the imported media (mainly consisted of TV fiction), as emanation of alien culture(s), represent a serious threat to the integrity and originality of the local cultures of the importing countries. Although the media imperialism has been criticized from different perspectives - hybridization and cultural proximity among others - the criticism has been effective in order to neutralize the idea of the threat, but it didn't go beyond that. The further step called for by the author involves a radical inversion of the assumption of the threat in its opposite, the resource. Drawing on a wide range of socio-anthopological literature, and re-examining the role of television in the light of the travel theories, the author hypothesizes that the imported media - re-defined as travelling narratives - are likely to provide indirect access to other territories and to the alterity of people living there, and so to improve and enhance mediated cross-cultural encounters.

Keywords: television, deterritorialization, imagination, hybridization, inter-cultural encounters, alterity.

* University of Florence and Fondazione Hypercampo, milly@mclink.it

1. Travel stories, travelling stories

I take my cue from the popular saying quoted by Hulf Hannerz, to tell a travel story myself , by way of a prologue.

I shall do this by deliberately following the beginning of a far more famous, resonant and influential travel story in the field of television studies: that in which Raymond Williams narrates his first encounter with American commercial television, basing on this experience, totally unheard of for a spectator who had just arrived from the old continent, the elaboration of the fortunate concept of "flow". "One night in Miami, still dazed from a week on an Atlantic liner, I began to watch a film ..." (Williams 1974).

Even though the flow of television as the sequence of uninterrupted programmes, in Williams' meaning, is different from the television flows as the transfer of programmes in geographical space considered in this article, the two different meanings of the term can find in the evocation of the travel - in the first case, Williams' journey which is at the origin of the concept - a consonance and common foundation.

I shall therefore tell that "one night in Bergen, bewildered by the persistent glare of the midnight sun, I began to watch television ...". For an inhabitant of Mediterranean Europe, even though used to moving about around the continent, the Norwegian television of the year 2000 is probably not less alien than American television was, over thirty years ago, for a resident of the British Isles (with the addition of the language barrier). Going quickly from one channel to another, I could not find anything that roused, not so much my curiosity and the stimulating sense of the exploration of something new and exotic - to which the grogginess due to the late hour and the unusual night light made me completely resistant - but rather the irresistible attraction to the reassuring call of the well-known and familiar. This was until my ever increasingly nervous, unsatisfying zapping from one channel to another came across the unmistakable figure of Andy Sipowicz; and sitting in front of *N.Y.P.D.*, I finally felt at home.

This type of experience is not at all exceptional nowadays. If, on the one hand, it confirms the widespread idea that the main unifying factor of European television space consists in the American contents, on the other hand it offers greater and more general reasons for interest where it is considered from the travel perspective.

In fact, there are two dimensions of mobility involved and intersected here: the corporeal mobility of the individual in real geography; and the transfer of cultural material, shapes and symbolic meanings amalgamated into a narrative, by means of the international and intercontinental television flows.

This is how it happens - and in other ways: for example, when diasporic communities are reached by satellite broadcasting coming from their lands of origin - that "moving images meet de-territorialized viewers" (Appadurai 1996: 4). But even more important, the encounter of the two trajectories of de-territorialization can give rise to a re-territorialization - feeling at home with *N.Y.P.D.* - to a new, even if temporary, *ubi consistam*, a particular sense of place: where the latter is a "textual place" and imagined (Tomlinson 1999). This "imagined sense of place", an experience characteristic of mediatized society, is perhaps not less important for maintaining identity and the sense of ontological security (Giddens 1991; Silverstone 1994) than the sense of the real place, *the result* of first hand experience and territorial knowledge.

Moreover, the encounter between the mobility trajectories of individuals and symbolic materials comes about by means of exploring the screen, actually a further form of travel. The TV language is one of mobility and motion; we say "go on ... stop ... come back", "we walk, drive, fly, sail: we travel" (Larsen 1999: 114) on the television screen. Switching channels, especially in an environment reached by satellite television, often corresponds to a change in territory, therefore experiencing a delocalization that takes on the meaning of an "indirect journey" or an imaginary one (Urry 1995; Urry 2000).

The fact that television offers itself as a kind of "travel machine" to our experience (Loshitsky 1996), a means, not so much of transport in the true sense of the word, but as a connection with and between different and distant spaces, constitutes - even though all the implications have not been gathered - a knowledge acquired to our awareness, on which it is presumably not necessary to insist any further. On the other hand, two other equally crucial associations for the considerations that I intend to make are less acquired to the taken-for-granted patrimony.

The first association, which is actually the one I began with when quoting Ulf Hannerz (Walter Benjamin also quotes the same proverb, or a very similar one: 1966) is between the travel and the work of the imagination. Travels generate stories, inevitably and often quite happily tribu-

taries of the imagination even when they claim to be faithful; and the stories themselves make people travel by their imagination.

Among the contemporary scholars (Arjun Appadurai 1996) was the first to strongly emphasise the close, organic relationship between motion and imagination. Appadurai identifies the distinctive characteristic of modern subjectivity in the work of imagination, and with an explicit reference to Durkheim, highlights its statute of authentic social fact of a public and collective nature. It is just as important that he recognises in the electronic media the primary forces which, together with migration, strongly feed the work of the imagination in the present era. These propulsive forces mobilise, move and put into circulation both individuals and symbolic representations, and bring them together sometimes in unpredictable ways. Repertoires of (imagined) lives and possible worlds, outside the perimeters of local territories, are offered to the vision and experimentation, that is fantasised or lived by individuals, thanks to the images of the media in motion, and to the real migratory movements. After all media and migration create the conditions for the possibility, and offer new resources, for the construction of a plurality of imagined worlds, which become part of the cultural experience of daily life. (An expression like "plurality of imagined worlds" gives the resounding echoes of social phenomenology in the words of Appadurai; see Berger, Berger and Kellner 1974).

The other connection to be re-established is the relationship between mobility and experience of alterity. The same social phenomenology mentioned above gives some useful indications in this regard, provided we are aware that in the phenomenological approach the pluralization of the life-worlds represents the extreme segmentation of the public and private spheres of modern society. We are however reminded that, moving continuously from one world to another - Berger, Berger and Kellner speak exactly about "migration" - pluralization obliges individuals to become aware of the existence of "*others* ... (from this point to the end of the paragraph, the italics are mine) whose lives are dominated by different, sometimes contradictory, meanings, values, and beliefs" (ibid.: 80).

Encounters with others at different degrees of proximity are made possible and favoured - besides obviously by the physical movements in geographical space, by corporeal journeys - by indirect travels and symbolic and imaginary practices of movement realized through the media. Just as they can take the de-territorialized viewers home or to a familiar neigh-

bourhood, the images in motion are able to de-localize audiences that are situated locally, introducing them to far away territories and to the alterity of their inhabitants (James Lull 1995) remarks in this connection how we build "narratives of the *other*" through the media materials. (John Thompson 1995) emphasises that "individuals can form some kind of idea, no matter how partial, of the ways and conditions of life which are completely *different* from their own ..." (ibid.: 247), later adding that "the images of *other* ways of life are a resource". For Arjun Appadurai those landscapes of technology and representation which he defines as mediascapes offer resources to create scripts of "imagined lives, of their own as well as those of *others* living in *other* places" (1996: 35).

2. Travelling narratives

By means of notions - de-territorialization and pluralization, imagination and alterity - displayed up to now, even if in a more evocative than analytical way, my intention was to immediately emphasise my primary interest in the potentialities (not necessarily actualized in their concrete form, and therefore not to be intended as the only ones possible) of electronic media, and in particular of television, of offering audiences indirect access to countries that are distant from their experience of living (Meyrowitz 1985), to feed their imagination of the other, to let them participate in *cross-cultural encounters*.

Claiming that this had never happened before the advent of the electronic media would be the same as to run into a mistaken presentism. As we are reminded by Giddens, "virtually all human experience is mediated" (1991: 23) at least through the language, the spoken words. Over the centuries the human beings have imaginatively travelled listening to the stories and adventures of far away regions told and sung by oral storytellers, bards and the like. It is not accident that Walter Benjamin identifies the sailor-merchant as a major figure of traditional narrator: he travelled, or had travelled, and listening to him the audience shared, although in indirect or mediated way, his experience of visiting other countries. Being in jail, Marco Polo told to the co-prisoner Rustichello da Pisa about his travel to China, and also when *Il Milione* was made available as a written text the mass of illiterate individuals "encountered" the far East and its inhabitants through the oral retelling of those who had read the book. In times more close to us, the fiction and nonfiction travel literature flourishing in books and magazines all along the 19th century and

beyond, has played the same role of placing "distant and foreign regions within the national consciousness" (Lund 1993: 83).

However, if the phenomenon can hardly be considered new, the media of the modernity have intensified it through "the tremendous increase in the mediation of the experience" (Giddens 1991: 24) which they brought about. And, of course, the modern media are many more than television: movies, print journalism, books, radio, cartoons, the internet, each of them contributes in its own way to make us travel by imagination, to bring into the horizon of our minds the awareness of other people living in other countries.

However, it is undeniable that, among the modern media, television holds a special place and plays a prominent role. The television set is firmly established within the home, and most of our consciousness of the world is actually mediated by the small screen. *Home and Away*: the title of the Australian soap opera aptly grasps and renders the peculiar bi-locality of the televion experience. More than any other, the domestic electronic medium enable us "to be in a sense in two places at once" (Urry 2000: 67) virtually all the time, bringing into the home "images of other places which provide a kind of imaginative travel" (ibid.: 70). As such, despite of being a fixed inside object which not even require us to move outside, television is first and foremost a medium of symbolic mobility.

This argument is in tune with the position of those (among others Tomlinson 1999; Morley 2000) who, even recognising in mobility the value of the central experience of the contemporary condition, maintain that the trope of the travel understood in the literal sense of the corporeal movement of people over geographic space should be de-emphasised - since most people participate in quite a limited way or do not participate at all in the nomadic tendencies, that can be as much the prerogative of privileged subjects as the burden of marginal members of humanity.

On the contrary, the concept must be preserved in its metaphorical meaning, to designate the double and often reciprocally articulated dislocation of cultural materials, on the one hand, (in television industry jargon, not by chance, it is said that certain genres travel and others do not) and of the human imagination, on the other. Even though they are not the only ones, electronic media are among the principle agents of these forms and experiences of dislocation, equivalent to a travel without departure, to a migration without leaving one's place of origin (Moores 2000). In their own way, they give recognition and satisfaction to the uni-

versal right of departing and travelling, of which Charles Baudelaire (quoted by Gitlin 2002: 55) complained the exclusion from the Declaration of Rights of man and citizen.

My intention, at this point, is to reposition and re-examine in the theoretical perspective of the travel the unresolved question of the "international television flows". Even though I am aware that the various forms of mobility and the routes of cross-countries television, especially in the conditions of growing interconnection of contemporary television landscapes, cannot be fully described in the traditional terms of the "flows" of television import/export, I maintain that at both a theoretical and empirical level, the question continues to be of extreme importance. Particularly insomuch as the contents involved in the flows are the narratives, the stories - in other words television fiction - which is notoriously the majority part of international television trade.

The anthropologist James Clifford (1997) coined the expression of *travelling cultures*, intending to put the emphasis on mobility, on the practices of physical and symbolic movement by means of which, in the incessant dynamics of inter-cultural import-export, cultures are created and recreated. He also recognised, in a conversation with Christina Turner, that the travel must not be understood in the referential sense: "The movement can involve forces that strongly pass through" (ibid.: 42). The media, like tourists, goods, armies, are powerful crossing forces, vectors of travelling cultures which in turn create the conditions for the symbolic experience of the travel.

I will therefore introduce, following James Clifford, the definition of *travelling narratives*, to designate the fiction programmes involved in the import-export of television material; they are doubly connected to the subject of travel, both because they "expatriate" from the places of origin and because, in the place of destination, they meet and are met by individuals who can achieve by means of them an experience of imaginary deterritorialization - the specific cultural experience of the mediatized world.

Included in this theoretical horizon, the "international television flows" (in my re-definition, travelling narratives or travelling fiction) may appear under a new light. We may now be led to consider them and reconceptualise them as flows of symbolic mobile and mobilising resources, available for widening our imaginary geography, for pluralizing our symbolic worlds of life, for the familiarization with those which are different and those which are far away, the creation of "senses of imagined places".

To travel the world and meet alterity under the protection of the mediated experience (Tomlinson 1994; Buonanno 1999).

3. The neutralized threat

We naturally need to be aware that these are potential resources and that in this case, as in many others, there is no room to romanticise anything. While subsequently I shall take a critical position (and therefore not at all celebrative) with regard to empirical dynamics - essentially, what travels and where, or what the most common routes are - according to which even today the international television flows are organized, I would now like to highlight the radical change that has taken place by the adoption of the category of "resource" , with respect to the theoretical approaches that in the television trade (compared to *cultural threat*) have essentially identified a restriction or a "threat".

Serious alarms over the incumbent risks of colonization and homogenization of indigenous cultures by foreign cultures brought in by the imported media (in fact, in most cases, products of American television) have been launched in particular by the for a long time accepted perspective of media imperialism, the vast notoriety and influence of which as an authentic dominant paradigm hardly need to be brought back to this context (Schiller 1969, 1976, 1985, and 1991). It is equally known that the paradigm has been seriously and cogently criticised for more than a decade, both in its classical version as well as its most up-to-date metamorphosis as a coherent variation, corollary or spin-off of the globalization theory (Tomlinson 1991; Thompson 1995; Buonanno 1999; Morris 2002, and many others). However, even if many arguments intended to dispel the alarms and downsize the risks have been convincingly put forward by numerous critics, and the incitement to go "beyond media imperialism" (Straubhaar 1991; Golding and Harris 1997) has repeatedly resounded, there has been no progress in pursuing and radically rethinking of an alternative to a theoretical construct based on the assumption of the cultural threat.

This assumption has however been demolished or invalidated by a vast amount of empirical literature (e.g. Elasmar 2003; Wang, Servaes and Goonasekera 2000) and by an important work of discussion, from which I - knowingly running the risk of reducing the wealth of the debate - shall choose two of the conceptual categories that are more often and more authoritatively put in place.

One is *hybridization* (see Garcia Canclini 1989; Pieterse 1995; Kraidi 2002), which is found in a vast range of more or less synonymous terms; mestijaze (Martin Barbero 1993), creolization and syncretism (Hannerz 1996), indigenization (Appadurai 1996; Tomlinson 1999; Buonanno 1999), glocalization (Robertson 1995). Hybridization, or any other term adopted to indicate the same thing - the processes of contamination and inter-cultural mixture - refers to a concept of culture as a symbolic and material complex always "becoming", in constant tension between permeability and resistance to external influences that at various moments of time it has to face: probably no culture exists that has survived and developed without being modified on contact with and in relation to, and without mixing with, alien shapes and matters. That which to a temporary observation appears to be a local, original specificity, can turn out to be the result of a process of interpenetration between the outside and the inside, of average and long duration. Fundamentally contributing to de-essentialize the concept of culture and cultural identity as something pure, uncontaminated at the origin and given once and for all (Remotti 1996; Morris 2002), the theories of hybridization therefore overturn in vital dynamics that which in the context of media imperialism is presumed to represent a mortal threat.

The other category with a strong impact in the criticism of media imperialism is *cultural proximity* (Straubhaar 1991; Straubhaar 1992): a leading factor in the television demand and consumption, according to primary needs and pleasures of recognition, familiarity, belonging. In other words: in the symbolic materials offered to their choice, the audiences firstly seek and love to find the worlds which refer to their own experience, the customs and the life-styles, the accents, the faces, the gestures, the well-known landscapes and anything else perceived as being close and similar to them. And since nothing is closer or more similar than that which concerns and comes from the society and culture of origin, the television audiences of a certain country tend to systematically prefer local programmes, when available.

We can see the principle of cultural proximity at work - which usually precedes, but does not completely exclude, other criteria of choice and is in any case differently distributed according to the social and cultural capital of the individuals (Straubhaar 1998) - in the history of television consumption of each country; and we can observe the interesting implications of this fact in the present era of satellite television. We just have to think of the growing localization of the contents diffused by interna-

tional channels, or of the even more important phenomenon of the creation of large regional or geo-linguistic-cultural markets (Sinclair, Jacka and Cunningham 1996; Straubhaar 1996). The Hispanic language and culture, for example, hold together an enormous market extending from the central and south American countries to communities and territories of the United States, Europe and Asia. For the audiences of these regions, whose emergence has already contributed towards creating new circuits of international television flows no longer dominated by North America, satellite technology is or can represent the direct vehicle of contents with a high degree of cultural proximity.

Hybridization and cultural proximity are powerful concepts and both effectively cooperate in deflating the alliance between "the myth of unadulterated culture" and "the threat of imported media", as Nancy Morris (2002) recently defined the undemonstrated assumption on which so much literature on international television flows has been built.

However I believe that both hybridization and cultural proximity are concepts which are as intellectually illuminating as they are insidiously "demobilizing" - if one is satisfied with the reassurances they give with regard to the theoretical and empirical groundlessness of the cultural threat (homogenization, Americanization and all that goes with it) contained, according to the above mentioned literature, in internationally broadcast television contents.

We are now aware, in fact, that local cultures are not dissolved in a global mélange of North American style but mix together creatively upon contact with other cultures; and we shall see that, however invasive the foreign/American presence may be on national televisions, the audiences will however choose and prefer domestic products - and if these audiences are de-territorialized and diasporic, they will do it by means of satellite technologies, which are proving to be carriers of locality and not only of globality (Robins 1998).

I do not intend to belittle the importance of acquiring a more fine-tuned awareness of the dynamics of change of cultures, and the models of preference which orientate television consumption. Better still, I maintain that having demystified the threat and discovered the factors of risk neutralization, this should not give us the illusion of having settled the theoretical accounts with the question of international television flows. It is not because media imperialism and its allies have been handed over to history, or should we say, to the archaeology of the television studies, anything goes.

In an only apparently paradoxical way, it is the overturning of the primary assumption - from the negative category of the threat to the positive one of the resource - that makes the persistent criticality in the import/export field of television fiction emerge. Such an inversion, brought about in the lights of the theories of the travel mentioned at the beginning, in fact leads to the immediate ascertainment of a deep imbalance and a considerable deficit in the measure and range in which the resource of the travelling narratives is made available and accessible to most of the contemporary television audiences. I will make the example of the European countries, but the imbalance and deficit to which I refer go beyond the European case alone.

There is no need even to abandon the discursive contexts in which the effective deflating of media imperialism was formulated to adopt this inverse perspective. The hybridization argument, in particular, is perfectly integrated in this and offers the appropriate cues for problematization. Once established, in fact, that imported media participates in the everlasting process of hybridization through which cultures are created, recreated and changed, and that anyway the contact with "cultural others" - here in shape of foreign television programmes - can favour the formation of vital syncretisms, it evidently makes sense to ask oneself with which "cultural others" exactly, there are concrete opportunities for contacts and any possible creative mixing. Reformulated in the terms of my discourse, the question becomes: where do they come from, and to which territories do they give indirect and imaginary access, the travelling narratives offered to and chosen by - even though subordinately with respect to domestic programmes - the national television audiences? Even though there may be, in details, more than one answer, according to the different geo-cultural areas of the world, the model they refer back to is largely shared: a model in which the possible variety of places of origin of foreign fiction is reduced (or almost) to the unity of a dominating provenance. Quite frequently, it is once again the United States.

This state of things doesn't stop being a problem, whatever perspective it is seen from. Not, however, because of the old story of the threat of the imported media: but because what happens is the real impoverishment of the symbolic resources available and usable for the experiences of de-territorialization, the work of imagination, the encounters with the plural other, and, last but not least, the processes of cultural hybridization.

4. The European case

To bring the subject back from the rarefied areas of theoretical abstraction to the solid ground of empirical reality, I shall use the European television space as a quick case study, with particular reference to the fictionscape of the five largest countries (Germany, United Kingdom, France, Italy, Spain).

Periodical research (De Bens and de Smaele 2001) and longitudinal studies (Buonanno 1997 - 2003) show how in the programme schedules of the main European (terrestrial) televisions a model of offer of fiction programmes was consolidated during the 90s, that could be roughly summarized in the dichotomy: prime-time is domestic, off-prime-time is American. This splitting into the two different times zones acts in turn as a detector of the *bipolar structure of the offer* made up of local fiction, on the one hand, and American fiction on the other. This hegemonic dualism leaves just residual margins to the narratives of different origin and provenance: non-national European, Latin American, Canadian, Australian, or others - which together, except for a certain variation among the different countries, do not go over the share of 15%.

Although from one half to two thirds of the fiction broadcast in an average week in the five major European countries comes from the USA, it would be wrong to draw the conclusion of an irrevocable supremacy of the North American product over the domestic one. In fact, the amount of imports from the United States has been decreasing over the years - the historical series of the sample weeks monitored by Eurofiction records a decrease from 65% in 1996 to 49% in 2002, taking all five countries into account. Furthermore, in each European country the massive use of American products is limited to some specific channels, more often than not commercial, which are characterised either by a young target or by the shortage of resources intended for the original production, or for an editorial line inspired by a combination of qualitative and cosmopolitan criteria: in the United Kingdom, for example, a cultured and minority channel like Channel Four creates its own distinction also on the selective offer of the best of American fiction.

Again: an overabundant part of the American fiction programmes broadcast during the day is made up of repeats, the temporal stratification of which goes over various decades. It can also be added that the American imports only have limited access to prime-time, and in general to the time slots coinciding with the widest audiences pool.

In contrast, the domestic programmes take the lion's share during prime time; and also thanks to the advantage of this position, they are the most followed and popular among national audiences, as of course happens in every part of the world (an impressive and repetitive amount of empirical evidence confirms this). Everywhere the viewers' preferences go to the domestic programmes, provided with the competitive resource of cultural proximity. The convincing demonstrative effect of the success of local fiction leads broadcasters to increase the quantity in the offer, and this is one of the factors that has contributed to the re-launching of the national television industries over the last decade, particularly with regard to Italy and Spain. In 1996 the yearly volume of the offer of fiction produced locally amounted to 4,210 hours, altogether in the five main European countries; in 2002 this increased to 5,713 (Buonanno 1997 - 2003).

The opposite dynamics of expansion and contraction concerning domestic and North American fiction respectively, do not harm but reaffirm the bipolar structure of the offer: of which the non-local and non-American programmes represent a short, inelastically stable addition under the threshold of 15%.

It is in this residual area, which could be defined as the area of *marginalized alterity*, that the non-national European fiction can be found.

I cannot dwell at length on the complex of reasons that have up until now consistently minimised the circulation of European programmes outside national boundaries. I would just like to stress how a state of things, the result of political and practical circumstances that are consolidated but not to be considered unmodifiable for this reason, has been essentialised and transformed into a sort of "ontology": that which is expressed in the widespread and unproblematic conviction that "European fiction does not travel" especially in Europe. Instead, it is true that the ruling bipolarism of the offer, no less based on the audiences' models of preferences as much it contributes to supporting and reproducing them, creates the condition of an inhospitable environment for foreign programmes: even if originating in neighbouring countries and united by belonging to the European Union. Obviously, North American fiction is also foreign: but this is a now *familiarized* extraneousness due to its long-lasting presence and consumption, even though as a second choice.

The essentialistic conceptions, no matter how conscious, blot out the fact that structures of collective feelings such as proximity and familiarity are created, reconfirmed and preserved by means of their everlasting re-

proposal. The proximity is such also because it is reaffirmed, the familiar is such because it is continually re-familiarized. In the same way alterity, distance, extraneousness are reconfirmed through the practice of marginalization and expulsion.

The re-proposal and legitimization of what is close and familiar in this way ends up by having the better of the discovery of the new and on the familiarization with the unknown (Livingstone 1999), neutralizing a primary resource of mediated knowledge and travelling narratives: the access to the other, the experience of the imaginary travel into the territories of the elsewhere.

The poor cross-border circulation of the fiction produced in the different European countries excludes, for example, television narratives from the possibility of giving a contribution to the work of imagination on the "other European", and on the other non-American in general. It is not a question, in the case of Europe, of cultivating the illusion of a common European identity; Philip Schlesinger (1991, 1993) convincingly warned us, in this regard, about the crude determinism of the "fallacy of distribution" - the distribution of the same cultural products does not lead to the same interpretations or to a common culture. It suffices to appeal to the most modest objective to favour an opening, which does not necessarily produce communality and cultural sharing, towards a "plural other".

In conclusion I would like to make it quite clear that what I consider should be a serious problem is neither the centrality of domestic fiction in the panorama of television offer (unquestionably, audiences need, like and have a right to listen to stories about their own country), nor the presence of the North American product: but the absence or the marginality of all the rest.

The question of imported media has always been faced with the fear and paranoia of the other, by an *anti* perspective - anti-American for the most part, but also anti-Japanese and anti-Latin American, according to whoever was the other in different circumstances, perceived as an invasive threat. The moment might have come to shift perspectives and affirm the value of the encounter with cultural extraneousness. An American hospital series, a Brazilian telenovela, a German cop show, a Spanish dramedy, an Italian period drama, an English sitcom, or anything else: coming together into a multi-coloured and multi-cultural fictionscape, travelling narratives moving from everywhere could contribute towards spreading "an awareness of the world as one of *many* cultural others" (Tomlinson 1999: 194).

References

APPADURAI, A. (1996). Modernity At Large, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press (Italian translation: Modernità in polvere, Roma: Meltemi 2002).

BENJAMIN, W. (1966). Angelus novus, Torino: Einaudi.

BERGER, P.; BERGER, B. & KELLNER, H. (1974). The Homeless Mind, New York: Vintage Books.

BUONANNO, M. (ed.) (1997/2003). Eurofiction. Television Fiction in Europe, Strasbourg: European Audiovisual Observatory & Firenze: Fondazione Hypercampo.

BUONANNO, M. (1999). Faction, Napoli: Liguori.

BUONANNO, M. (1999). Indigeni si diventa. Locale e globale nella serialità televisiva, Milano: Sansoni.

CANCLINI, N.G. (1989). Culturas hibridas, Mexico City: Editorial Grijalbo (Italian translation: Culture ibride, Milano: Angelo Guerini Editore 1998).

CLIFFORD, J. (1997). Routes, Cambridge: Harvard University Press (Italian translation: Strade, Torino: Bollati Boringhieri 1999).

DE BENS E. & DE SMAELE H. (2001). The Inflow of American Television Fiction on European Broadcasting Channels Revisited. *European Journal of Communication* XVI, 1: 51-76.

ELASMAR, M.G. (ed.). (2003). The Impact of International Television, London: Laurence Erlbaum Associates.

GIDDENS, A. (1991). Modernity and Self-Identity, Cambridge: Polity Press (Italian translation: Identità e società moderna, Napoli: Ipermedium 1999).

GITLIN, T. (2002). Media Unlimited, New York: Holt and Co. (Italian translation: Sommersi dai media, Milano: Etas 2003).

GOLDING, P. & HARRIS, P., (eds). (1997). Beyond Cultural Imperialism, London: Sage.

HANNERZ, H. (1996). Transnational Connections. Culture, People, Places, Television and Common Knowledge, London: Routledge (Italian translation: La diversità culturale, Bologna: Il Mulino 2001).

KRAIDI, M. M. (2002). Hybridity in Cultural Globalization. *Communication Theory* XII: 316-339.

LARSEN, P. (1999). Imaginary spaces: television, technology and everyday consciousness. In: GRIPSRUD, J. (ed.). Television and Common Knowledge, London: Routledge.

LIVINGSTONE, S. (1999). Mediated Knowledge: Recognition of the Familiar, Discovery of the New. In: GRIPSRUD, J. (ed.). Television and Common Knowledge, London: Routledge.

LOSHITZKY, Y. (1996). Travelling Cultures / Travelling Television. *Screen* XXXVII, 4: 323-335.

LULL, J. (1995). Media, Communication and Culture. A Global Approach, New York: Columbia University Press.

LUND, M. (1993). America's Continuing Stories, Detroit: Wayne State University Press.

MARTIN BARBERO, J. (1993). Communication, Culture and Hegemony, London: Sage.

MEYROWITZ, J. (1985). No Sense of Place, Oxford: Oxford University Press (Italian translation: Oltre il senso del luogo, Bologna: Baskerville 1993).

MOORES, S. (2000). Media and Everyday Life in Modern Society, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

MORLEY, D. (2000). Home Territories. Media, Mobility and Identity, London: Routledge.

MORRIS, N. (2002). The Myth of Unadulterated Culture Meets the Threat of Imported Media. *Media, Culture and Society* XXIV: 278-289.

PIETERSE, J. N. (1995). Globalization as Hybridization. In: FEATHERSTONE, M.; LASCH, S. & ROBERTSON, R. (eds.). Global Modernities, London: Sage.

REMOTTI, F. (1996). Contro l'identità, Bari: Laterza.

ROBERTSON, R. (1995). Glocalization. Time-Space and Homogeneity-Heterogeneity. In: FEATHERSTONE, M.; LASCH, S. & ROBERTSON, R. (eds.). Global Modernities, London: Sage.

ROBINS, K. (1998). Spaces of Global Media, *Transnational Communities Programme. Working Paper Series* 98/6. Retrieved July 27, 2004 from http://www.transcomm.ox.ac.uk/working_papers.htm

SCHILLER, H. I. (1985). Electronic Information Flow. New Basis for Global Domination? In: DRUMMOND, P. & PATERSON, R. (eds.). Television in Transition, London: BFI.

SCHILLER, H.I. (1969). Mass Communication and the American Empire, New York: Augustus M. Kelley.

SCHILLER, H.I. (1976). Communication and Cultural Domination, New York: White Plains.

SCHILLER, H.I. (1991). Not Yet the Post-Imperialist Era. In: *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* VIII: 13-28.

SCHLESINGER, P. (1991). Media, State, Nation, London: Sage.

SCHLESINGER, P. (1993). Wishful Thinking. Cultural Politic, Media and Collective Identities in Europe. *Journal of Communication* XVIII: 6-17.

SCHUTZ, A. & LUCKMANN, T. (1974). The Structures of the Life-Worlds, London: Heinemann.

SILVERSTONE, R. (1994). Television and Everyday Life, London: Routledge (Italian translation: Televisione e vita quotidiana, Bologna: Il Mulino 2000).

SINCLAIR, J.; JACKA, E. & CUNNINGHAM, S. (1996). Global Television. Peripheral Vision, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

STRAUBHAAR, J. (1991). Beyond Media Imperialism: Asymmetrical Interdependence and Cultural Proximity. *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* VIII: 39-59.

STRAUBHAAR, J. (1992). Asymmetrical Interdependence and Cultural Proximity. A Critical Review of the International Flow of TV Programs. Paper presented at the Conference of the Asociaciòn Latinoamericana de Investigatores de la Comunicaciòn, San Paulo.

STRAUBHAAR, J. (1996). Distinguishing the Global, Regional and National Levels of World Television. Paper presented at the ICA Conference, Chicago.

STRAUBHAAR, J. (1998). Cultural Capital, Language and Cultural Proximity in the Globalization of Television. Paper presented at the ICA Conference, Jerusalem.

THOMPSON, J.B. (1995). The Media and Modernity, Cambridge: Polity Press (Italian translation: Mezzi di comunicazione e modernità, Bologna: Il Mulino 1998).

TOMLISON, J. (1991). Cultural Imperialism, London: Pinter Publishers.

TOMLISON, J. (1994). A Phenomenology of Blobalization. Giddens and Global Modernity. *European Journal of Communication* IX: 149-172.

TOMLISON, J. (1999). Globalization and Culture, Cambridge: Polity Press (Italian translation: Sentirsi a casa nel mondo, Milano: Feltrinelli 2001).

URRY, J. (1995). Consuming places, London: Routledge.

URRY, J. (2000). Sociology beyond societies, London: Routledge.

WANG, G.; SERVAES, J. & GOONASEKERA, A. (eds.) (2002). The New Communication Landscape, London: Routledge.

WILLIAMS, R. (1974). Television. Technology and Cultural Form, London: Fontana (Italian translation: Televisione. Tecnologia e forma culturale, Roma: Editori Riuniti, 2000).