MAEVE CONNOLLY
Between the Seasons*

Through television […] the tensions of the outside world become domesticated […] Television can take the continuous present, the present in which we perceive ourselves as existing, and give it back to us in a formalised set of routines of meaning. This is where television and cinema are most different.[1]

Television news, talk shows and soap opera, the characteristic narrative and discursive forms of the medium, are deeply implicated in the process of 'giving back' the present. These are the formats in which liveness and immediacy are most explicitly intertwined with the experience of television as routine and everyday. Yet television does not simply structure or organise the experience of everyday life, instead it is concerned with the working out of experience, through repetition, until it becomes acceptable. This process of giving back the present is, as John Ellis notes, "subject to multiple repressions and distortions."[2]

The insistent presentness of television is articulated both through the regularity of the schedule and through the simulation of liveness. This temporal and spatial order has continued to evolve since the early years of broadcasting but remains marked by a continued orientation towards the 'here and now' of viewers and listeners, articulated through a variety of discursive forms, such as the seasonal schedule or the corporate logo. However these forms are not simply the ubiquitous features of television; instead, they are figurations of a complex economic and narrative relation.

Television, unlike cinema, is characterised by an address towards both the time and the space of face-to-face discourse. The flow of information is grounded in a 'live' moment, which is shared by broadcaster and viewer. But constant *presentness* necessarily involves a simultaneous disavowal of the virtual, rather than actual, relation that exists between viewer and television subject. Margaret Morse has theorised television as one of many contemporary "virtualities," deeply implicated in the gradual de-realisation of everyday life.[3] These virtualities or "fictions of presence" are not the product of technological advance, nor are they debased simulations of a once authentic form of face to face conversation. Instead they are both possible and pleasurable because of the gap that has always existed between language and the world. Morse emphasises that *all* forms of subjectivity are based on the "'enunciative fallacy'. That is 'I' and 'you', 'here' and 'now' are *not* the subjects, place and time of the act of enunciation [instead] these linguistic forms are 'shifters' and 'simulacra' within the discourse that *imitate* the act of enunciation within the utterance."[4]

Simulations of the here and now structure many interactions in daily life, including those which take place in the world beyond television. In television however, a continual orientation towards the here and the now is effectively inscribed in the discursive framework that links discrete segments. The continuous 'flow' or passage between direct discourse and disengaged story is accomplished through a range of "discursive shifters," which include graphics, gestures and speech. These passages are fundamental to the experience of television as unified and contained rather than as heterogeneous and fragmented.

Continuity and Myth

The animated corporate logo or 'station ident' is arguably the most sophisticated and elaborately textual form of passage. Logos are the representation of a corporate being which is both tangible and intangible and as such they are the locus for a display of symbolic wealth. Although only a few seconds in duration, station idents are designed for repeated viewing, serving as a kind of host or narrator, leading the viewer through television space. The logo signifies a temporal shift; a passage between the 'here and now' to the time and television space. The logo signifies a temporal shift; a passage between the 'here and now' to the time and space of the story world. But these sequences also articulate a temporal order which extends beyond the immediate context of viewing. The repeated use of familiar symbols, such as the BBC's globe or the NBC peacock, foregrounds continuity across generations; a history which can be textualised within the sequence itself. The globe and the peacock are the graphic articulation of elaborately constructed corporate identities: signalling the BBC's 'authority' and NBC's commitment to quality.

RTÉ, Ireland's national public service broadcaster, repeatedly references 'traditional' cultural symbols such as the St. Brigid's Cross in its logos and animated idents.[5] The cross is a religious emblem woven from reeds, associated with the myth and folklore surrounding the figure of St. Brigid. Although less prominent in recent years, this symbol remains a feature of RTÉ's graphic iconography. It appears in a recent (1998) station ident, as a luminous pattern on the surface of a misty lake. Accompanied by melancholy pipe music, this shape of the cross transforms into the letters 'RTÉ', which hover above the water for several seconds. The lake then seems to tip forward on the z-axis towards the viewer, rippling with reflected light as the title 'RTÉ' morphs into the letters 'ONE', which is rendered in glowing green transparent letters in the final frame.

RTÉ studios and corporate headquarters are based at Montrose, in the suburbs of Dublin. Yet the graphic continuity sequences produced by or commissioned for RTÉ One often take the form of a journey through a mystical rural landscape. This space resonates with references to Ireland's past, figured in the form of standing stones or the symbol of the woven cross, but in general there is little evidence of recent human occupation. Several of the recent animated idents do feature models or actors, but they are represented as mythic or super-natural beings. In one of these sequences (RTÉ's 'Millennium' ident) an ethereal female figure appears suspended in the sky above a silvery expanse of water. As the camera circles around her, to the tune of a dramatic orchestral composition, shafts of light are reflected onto the surface of the water. Close-ups of this silent woman are interspersed with images of the glowing ball in her hand. Towards the end of the sequence the landscape seems to tilt forward towards the viewer and water rushes up as if to flow out of the frame. As the water recedes the woman disappears in an arc of light, to be replaced by the word 'ONE' written in glowing silver letters. Despite the many signifiers of 'futurity' (rapid editing, digital morphing and other special effects) in this twenty second sequence the silent and ethereal woman is a very familiar image within Irish

literary and pictorial representation.

In its most literal form, this image suggests a religious visitation, recalling either the apparitions at Knock shrine in Mayo or the more recent appearance of Sinéad O'Connor as the Virgin Mary in Neil Jordan's *The Butcher Boy*. However it must also be located within the context of a wider tradition of representation. Ireland has repeatedly been allegorised within both colonial and republican discourse as female; figured either as a pure young woman or as a suffering mother. Richard Kearney defines these images of the feminine as archaic signifiers of forfeited and forbidden origin, suggesting that the Celtic Motherland imagined in the works of Irish literary revivalists, provides a reassuring vision of "sacred time," a time outside history.[6] The ident sequences seem to occupy this same mythic time and space, signifying continuity through the figure of 'woman' as represented by the St. Brigid's Cross or by a more overt image of mystical femininity.

Through mythic signification, history is naturalised. But all myths, as Roland Barthes notes, have a historical foundation. Images of continuity, such as those figured in the RTÉ sequences through the familiar and ancient figures of 'woman' and 'nature', call attention to the historically constituted temporal and spatial order of television discourse. The mythic character of the RTÉ sequences may be overt but graphic shifters are, in general, characterised by representations of rapid aerial motion and magical transformation. Margaret Morse reads these journeys through television space as figures of induction; the technological expression of an archaic fantasy of psychic or cultural transformation. This fantasy is primarily one of immersion in a miniature world, a fully realised virtual world in which the subject is entirely submerged.

In this account it is the journey rather than the destination which is privileged; these immersive virtual worlds are "underdeveloped […] as if as a culture, we have prolonged the effort of getting somewhere because we don't know where we'll be or what we'll do when we get there."[7] Do the RTÉ idents dramatise the desire for a return to that which is both familiar and unknowable, through the representation of the timeless feminine?

Desire and Excess

These graphic sequences are undeniably fantastic; vivid displays of technological and symbolic sophistication, in which speech is absent but musical and visual excess predominates. It may be that this excess is the very sign of repressed desire. Geoffrey Nowell-Smith has proposed 'excess' in film melodrama as an articulation of the repressed fears and desires of the nuclear family.[8] Melodrama, as a bourgeois form, is addressed towards individuals with only a limited degree of social power. The locus of power is the family and individual private property, and what is at stake is the survival of this structure. The attainment of a place in this system, where individuals can be both themselves and 'at home', is invariably problematic and the happy end can be achieved only at the cost of repression. Nowell-Smith emphasises that the basic conventions of melodrama are those of realism. It is the laying out of problems 'realistically' in the movement towards narrative resolution, which generates an excess that cannot be accommodated in the discourse. Through repression, this excess is displaced onto the body of the text, where it is expressed through music and visual spectacle or

Lead-in to 1998 'Ireland on Screen' film season.
Designed by Conor Cassidy at RTÉ Graphics Department.
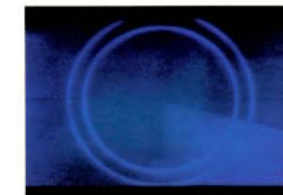
Millennium Identity.
Commissioned by Andrew Burns.
Graphic design by Rory Kelleher.
December 1999.

through the breakdown of realist representation. In this process, that which remains unspeakable at the level of narrative is continually displaced into the *mise-en-scène*.

Station idents or logo sequences display many of the features of narrative; characters in the shape of animated letters or more human figures; action in the form of a journey through a landscape; resolution in the form of readable lettering in the final frame. As narratives they evidently display the visual and musical excess of melodrama. Here, however, excess is not simply the result of an orientation towards narrative resolution. Instead it is the return of an idea that is repressed within the 'fiction of presence' that constitutes the segmented flow of television. That which returns is the actual, rather than virtual, relation between television subject and viewer. This relation is characterised by temporal and spatial disjunction rather than by stability. It is possible to read the discursive framework of television therefore as a site of repression, in which ideas that cannot be expressed at the level of discourse are nonetheless articulated through excess.

As a genre, melodrama "arises out of a formal history [...] a set of social determinations, which have to do with the rise of the bourgeoisie, and a set of psychic determinations, which take shape around the family."[9] Melodrama, as with the realist novel, "supposes a world of equals," in which author, audience and subject matter inhabit the same (bourgeois) social sphere. However melodrama's characteristic mode of address is not only towards the middle ground of the bourgeoisie, but towards the home and the family. As a genre, melodrama both arises out of and signifies an orientation towards the home-centred way of life that characterises modernity. This orientation towards the domestic is exemplified in the discursive forms of broadcasting.

The press, the photograph and the motion picture are, for Raymond Williams, all varying responses to an "increased awareness of mobility and change, not just as abstractions but as lived experiences."[10] These new systems of social communication which emerged from existing cultural forms such as portraiture or the theatre function as mediators between increasingly separate worlds of home and work and in this respect they articulate a changing experience of time and space. In contrast, broadcasting, in the applied form of radio or television, is associated with a complex of consumer durables which are both the product *and* the resolution of the problems posed by this reorganisation of family and community life. Radio, and then television, satisfied the needs which had previously been met by more varied forms of social communication: it brought both news and entertainment into the family home. Broadcasting therefore provided an experience of community and public life which was, at the same time, distinctly private. Thus, the domestic orientation which characterises film melodrama is institutionalised in broadcasting.

Television offers a simulation of temporal and spatial stability, which is both private and public. Although the address is towards the privatised domain of the self-contained home, television provides an experience of time and space which is ostensibly shared by a collective. This shared experience is, however, structured by the logic of consumption: television is inseparable from the complex of other institutions of mobile privatisation, such as the car, the freeway and the shopping mall. These institutions function as distribution and feedback systems, mediating between imaginary and mundane worlds and between diverse spaces of consumption. The consumer circulates within this world of images and objects, passing between different modes of attention. Significantly, for Morse, broadcasting offers an experience of consumption which is *national:* "television serves as the nationwide distribution system for symbols in anticipation and reinforcement of a national culture presented not only as desirable but as already realised somewhere else." [11]

A World in Common?

Paddy Scannell has charted the establishment of this institutional model, through a history of BBC radio. Although his analysis centres on systems of 'national' broadcasting, it does not address changing conceptions of spatial boundaries, which characterise both the experience and the institutional structures of television. In fact, Scannell reads the temporal order of broadcasting simply as a response to, rather than an articulation of, the psychic and social changes brought about through modernisation. He defines it as "a mediating response to [...] large scale displacements and readjustments in modern industrial societies where custom, tradition and all the givenness of social life has been eroded."[12] For Scannell, the cyclical forms of scheduling are the mark of a continual orientation towards the lived experience of listeners and viewers. In this model the BBC functions as a national 'calendar', responsible for "the cyclical reproduction, year in year out, of an orderly and regular progression of festivities, rituals and celebrations – major and minor, civil and sacred"(18).

Scannell documents the evolution of conventions such as regular scheduling. In the early days, broadcasters treated radio as an occasional resource, like theatre or the music hall and actively discouraged casual or continuous listening. However, they soon modified the content and structure of programming in order to "take account of the phased activities of the population through the hours of the day [and to] support the new and modest utopia of the suburban nuclear family"(24). The schedule developed through research into the activities of listeners and is therefore the product of an increased knowledge of 'everyday life' gradually acquired by broadcasters either in the interests of 'public service' or commerce.

The modified structure of broadcasting took the form of a seasonal schedule, which was established during the 1920s and 30s through the integration of events from sporting, social and religious life and the natural world. The 'first song of the nightingale' was a regular feature of this calendar and the highpoint was Christmas, the festive or holiday season. Seasonal schedules were explicitly used to build audiences. The autumn season, for example, was "always carefully designed to woo the fireside listener with a varied menu of new plays, concerts and variety programmes."[13] Significantly, radio could transcend as well as match existing temporal and spatial norms, providing year round music at a time when concert halls would have been closed during the summer months. In this way radio brought the distant and the familiar together, mediating between the actual and the imagined.

Broadcasting is therefore not simply a 'response' to the destabilisation of temporal or spatial boundaries. It both extends and articulates this process through its own discursive forms. In this respect it is implicated, as with all systems of representation, in a process of distortion and spatialisation. All forms of representation, even writing, effect "a spatialisation of sorts, which automatically freezes the flow of experience and in doing

so distorts what it strives to represent."[14] The 'live' moment of broadcasting is the extreme form of this process. It provides a simulation of shared time and space, modelled along the lines of the nation, which supersedes that of the map or the newspaper: "In class-divided nation-states, radio first and later television unobtrusively restored (or perhaps created for the first time) the possibilities of a knowable world, a world-in-common"[24].

The experience of television, in the era of terrestrial domination, is characterised here as one of temporal and spatial stability. However, the community of the broadcast nation is constituted through a discourse which is both normative and national. An extreme example of this normative discourse can be found in the tradition of the 'toddlers truce', a feature of British television broadcasting in the late 1950's, in which television services between six and seven p.m. were suspended "partly, it was said, to make it easier for parents to get their young children to bed"[26].

This orientation inevitably involves a simultaneous disavowal of the actual, rather than virtual, relation, which exists between viewers. Even in the days of terrestrial domination the normative and national orientation of public service broadcasting could result in disjunction. Since the 1960s, a significant percentage of Irish homes on the east coast have been able to receive British terrestrial transmissions, leading to a "pronounced regional imbalance."[15] The escalation of the 'troubles' in Northern Ireland, and the subsequent implementation of existing censorship legislation in Ireland, demonstrated that the notion of a "world-in-common" was untenable.[16] In recent years, however, the experience of disjunction between the virtual and actual world-in-common has become more widespread. It is increasingly evident in the discursive forms that have emerged in the era of deregulation and fragmentation.

Cyclicity and Change in Television Discourse

Contemporary European television is widely considered to be moving away from established public service traditions towards a more commercial structure. The new forms of cyclicity are deliberately mechanical, oriented towards clock-time rather than towards the daily routines of a viewing public conceptualised as a national audience. Theorists of the new media age have charted shifts in cyclicity in both the new satellite and digital services and in the forms of scheduling adopted by terrestrial broadcasters. Richardson and Meinhof, in their recent account of European television discourse, emphasise an increase in the 'stripping' of programmes (scheduling the same programme at the same time each day) and the emergence of highly repetitive hourly, rather than daily, cycles (particularly in 24-hour news channels).[17]

A parallel trend can also be observed in the proliferation of 'themed' seasons, in which a series of linked texts are scheduled and signalled in advance, through continuity announcements or graphic sequences. This is the discursive framework of niche television, a mode of address which solicits viewer loyalty on the basis of exclusivity. Richardson and Meinhof analyse the practice, in contemporary European 'cultural television,' of embedding programmes inside thematic evenings or other longer schedules.[18] They categorise this form of scheduling as an appeal to epistephilia, the pleasure of "knowingness" or of expertise.

Richardson and Meinhof suggest that this mode of address is both "egalitarian and elitist" because it "seeks to extend the principle of expertise across all its offerings."[19] All tastes, not just those associated with 'high art', are taken seriously. This new form of scheduling and cyclicity seems to exemplify an orientation towards a shared here-and-now in which viewers are linked by tastes rather than by an illusion of temporal or spatial synchronicity. However this mode of address is explicitly that which is critiqued by Adorno and Horkheimer, in their reading of mass culture. According to Miriam Hansen they "ascribe the effectivity of mass-cultural scripts of identity not simply to the viewer's manipulation as passive consumers, but rather to their very solicitation as experts, as active readers."[20]

This critique pertains primarily to the codes and conventions of (film) genre in which "the identification of a familiar face, gesture or narrative convention takes the place of genuine cognition"[51]. However, it seems equally applicable to the address of niche television. According to Adorno and Horkheimer, the 'hieroglyphics' of mass culture mimic the figurations of unconscious or preconscious fantasy. By disguising the very fact that they were written they create the regressive illusion of a common discourse. Hansen notes that, for Adorno and Horkheimer, the hieroglyphics of mass culture mask this absence of meaning, disguising the effects of reification, alienation and fragmentation: "if the commodity beckons the consumer as a real thing, its value, its 'real' meaning, is determined by its […] position within a total system of exchange"[50].

Hansen emphasises that the notion of hieroglyphic writing is historical. It traces a return to a (pre-enlightenment) symbolic language, in which nature is conceptualised as cyclical, endlessly renewable and permanent. The fusion of word and thing means that language and content are distinct yet inseparable with concepts both constituted and reflected in the form of the word. With the enlightenment and the fall of language from an originary (hieroglyphic) form of writing to a phonetic form, word and thing are separated. The word becomes a sign without any meaning and the object becomes only the abstract instance of the word. This loss of history and contingency prepares the way for a return to myth.

For Barthes, the excess of mythic signification, which characterises contemporary life, is inseparable from bourgeois ideology.[21] In this account, disavowal is central both to the workings of ideology and to the particular character of myth, which transforms history into nature but naturalises this transformation. Walter Benjamin's meditations on the temporality of commodity society and the cyclical rhythms also trace this return to myth through fashion. In the *Arcades Project* Benjamin writes "Fashions are the medicament that is to compensate for the fateful effects of forgetting, on a collective scale."[22] Susan Buck-Morss, elaborating on this reading of fashion, adds:

[The ritual of commodity fetishism] could not have been more distinct from those tradition-bound rites of holidays and seasonal celebrations by which the 'old' nature had been revered, marking the recurrent life cycles of an organic nature. The spring rites of fashion celebrated novelty rather than recurrence: they required, not remembrance, but obliviousness to even the most recent past.[23]

Thus fashion is a mode of forgetting, which takes the form of a cyclical structure now drained of meaning. Television occupies a privileged place within this mythic temporality. It is "the first cultural medium in the whole of history to present the artistic achievements of the past as a stitched-together collage of equidistant and simultaneously existing phenomena, largely divorced from geography and material history." [24]

However fashion and television are characterised by different modes of address. The branded seasonality of fashion is explicitly oriented towards the future rather than the present. "Fashion", according to McKenzie Wark, "is a social mode of the experience of time under affluent overdeveloped capitalism; a way of *luxuriating* in successive and disjunctive moments of the present where the relation to the past is controlled according to the rules of a rigorous aesthetic."[25] The rituals and routines of fashion, unlike those of television, are a celebration rather than a disavowal of disjunction.

The rapid convergence between fashion, television and other forms of consumption may, however, effect a fusion of these apparently distinct temporalities. The temporal and spatial relations that characterise television in the era of deregulation and fragmentation are already articulated in emerging forms of cyclicity and scheduling. The season, in its new incarnation as themed collection, signifies the ritual of the commodity rather than the regularity of nature. It articulates a return to myth in the form of an empty cyclical time. Television, like fashion, is deeply implicated in the spatialisation of history and narrative. It brings the distant and the exotic together, into the domain of the domestic and the private, approximating them in relation to the self.

Figures of Induction: *Ireland on Screen*

Ireland on Screen is the title of a recent RTÉ season of contemporary Irish cinema. The 1999 season was scheduled across two channels (RTÉ One and Network Two) in a relatively concentrated period of time; approximately thirteen films over two consecutive months.[26] When broadcast, the season was identified within the flow of programming by a graphic lead-in sequence that prefaced each screening. This sequence features several references to cinema: a 'letter-box' format: whirring mechanical sounds, suggesting a film projector: blurred circular shapes resembling a digital reworking of a leader strip. The letters spelling the title *Ireland on Screen*, move in and out of focus, as they travel past the viewer into televisual space.

Television and cinema ostensibly offer radically different forms of pleasure: the disavowal of the spectator is as central to theorisations of classical cinema as direct address is to accounts of television.[27] The film lead-in, such as the sequence which prefaces *Ireland on Screen*, articulates the passage into the story world of the film segment. It signifies a shift into a plane of discourse which is positioned as distinct from that of television. Yet, television and cinema are, in fact, inextricably intertwined within the plane of exchange. This relation clearly structures the formal and narrative codes of particular European genres, such as 'heritage' cinema, which lavishly recreate historical spectacle for consumption on the small screen. However it is also articulated in the discursive forms of television, such as the film season.

According to Thomas Elsaesser, narrative and economic orders in television function as figurations or allegories of each other.[28] In the most extreme form of this figuration, the television series, like the studio tour, provides a means through which the economic and narrative wealth of cinema history can be productively exploited. *Ireland on Screen* can also be read as the textual form of a particular logic of production. The films shown in this season share a referential link with Ireland, in contrast with other film slots on RTÉ One and Network Two, such as *The Midweek Movie* or *Cine Disney*, which are defined by genre or producer. *Ireland on Screen* consists only of films made in Ireland. Thus the lead-in to the first screening in the 1999 season was prefaced by a 'live' introduction by an onscreen presenter; "Now on One, we kick-start our season of *Ireland On Screen* with the world television premiere of one of the most successful Irish movies ever – *I Went Down*...."

The Ireland which is represented 'on Screen' is not simply a geographical entity however; it is the 'Ireland' of the film location, a recognisable and saleable commodity. 'Ireland on Screen' is also the title of the directory of Irish film production houses and facilities, published by Film Ireland, and it is a promotional title used at festivals, such as MIPTV 2000 in Cannes, by Network Ireland Television, a distribution company which specialises in Irish features and short films. All of the films shown in the RTÉ season are, to some extent, the product of a particular instrumental cultural policy. They are the beneficiaries of the subvention measures introduced by the Irish government to promote film production in Ireland.[29] This thematic season is not simply a collection of contemporary representations linked by a shared referent. Instead it is the textual form of a particular logic of production.

According to John Ellis "cinema and television need each other. They advertise each other. They depend on each other. Television needs cinema's glamour. Cinema needs television's audience [...] It needs to sell itself through television [...] And cinema needs television's money: crucially in Europe and the rest of the world, and even in the USA to some degree."[30] Yet Ellis suggests that this economic and narrative co-dependency is disguised. He suggests that television takes cinema's films and shows them as its own creations and he cites television slots such as *Film on Four* as examples of this.

But this reading neglects the structures of commercial sponsorship, which usually form an integral and a prominent part of the film season on television. *Film on Four* is now largely an advertisement for Channel 4's digital subscription service. In an even more obvious instance of corporate sponsorship, one of RTÉ's mid-week film slots is now 'presented' by a multinational chocolate manufacturer. The film season is, in fact, the very sign of cinema's position within the nexus of exchange. The branding of film, in the form of a collection of texts within television discourse, articulates an orientation towards the site of consumption rather than towards the lived contexts and circumstances of the viewer.

If the lead-in to the *Ireland on Screen* film season articulates a fantasy of induction into a virtual world, this is a world already structured according to the conventions of the 'location'. These films are not simply representations that must conform to a particular film-industrial definition of 'Irishness'. At the most basic level this means that these films must make use of Irish personnel and facilities in order to qualify for funding. But signifiers of 'Irishness' also circulate within a wider network of

exchange, across a variety of diverse but synchronised media channels and technologies, within which television plays an integral part.

Television is not simply a distribution or funding mechanism for cinema. Instead it provides a model of consumption. In television, multiple and fragmented narratives are held together by the discursive framework of the programming schedule. Production and reception are structured according to the logic of serialisation and repetition. The field of *film* production is also increasingly characterised by repetition and serialisation, through the distribution and consumption of the film text across multiple but distinct media channels and technologies. The blockbuster film exemplifies this process but it is impossible to locate other forms of production, such as arthouse or 'national' cinemas, outside the nexus of exchange.[31]

Within this network of distribution and consumption the film commodity offers pleasures and roles other than that of spectatorship. Participation is invited through the multiple commodities which echo, repeat and retransmit the film experience. All texts are thus implicated in the processes of serialisation and repetition, functioning as "transitional objects" which include the "echoes, after-images and after-effects created in the subject (the temporal trace of memory, fantasy investment, projection and identification) and in the social sphere (the spatial presence of objects such as badges, toys, posters, tee-shirts, tea-mugs and calendars)."[32] Participation may be extended beyond spectatorship, through the spatialised narratives of the theme park for example, but it remains structured according to the conventions of consumption.

Through these processes the temporal dimensions of history and narrative evaporate. Public life is brought closer, in proximity with the self, but rendered in the form of a collection. Thematic seasons such as *Ireland on Screen*, articulate this process of serialisation and repetition through the linking of texts that share the recognisable signifiers of 'Irishness'. The fantasy of induction into a virtual world, figured in the discursive excess of the graphic lead-in, is therefore not simply the expression of an archaic desire for a return to forbidden origins. Instead, both seasonality and the excess which surrounds it, can be seen to articulate that which is repressed within contemporary television discourse; the impossibility of a shared here-and-now outside the space of consumption. ●

NOTES

* I would like to thank Orla Ryan, Brian Hand and Stephanie McBride for their comments and suggestions.
1. John Ellis, "Cinema and Television: Laios and Oedipus," *Cinema Futures: Cain, Abel or Cable?* ed. Thomas Elsaesser (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1998) 135.
2. Ellis, 135.
3. Margaret Morse, *Virtualities: Television, Media Art and Cyberspace,* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1998).
4. Morse, 11. Emphasis in original.
5. Peter Meech analyses the use of traditional Scottish imagery in "The lion, the thistle and the saltire: national symbols and corporate identity in Scottish broadcasting," *Screen* 37. 1 (1996): 68 – 81.
6. Richard Kearney, *Postnationalist Ireland*, (London, New York: Routledge, 1997) 113.
7. Morse, 96.
8. Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, "Minnelli and Melodrama," *Home is Where the Heart is*, ed. Christine Gledhill (London: British Film Institute, 1987) 70-74.
9. Nowell-Smith, 70.
10. Raymond Williams, *Television: Technology and Cultural Form* (New York: Schocken, 1975) 16.
11. Morse, 119.
12. Paddy Scannell, "Radio Times: The Temporal Arrangements of Broadcasting in the Modern World," *Television and its Audience: International Research Perspectives*, ed. Phillip Drummond and Richard Patterson (London: British Film Institute, 1988) 29. Further references are included within the text.
13. Paddy Scannell, *Radio, Television and Modern Life: A Phenomenological Approach*, (Cambridge, Mass and Oxford: Blackwell, 1996)154.
14. David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity* (Cambridge, Mass. and Oxford: Blackwell, 1990) 206.
15. Lance Pettitt, *Screening Ireland: Film and Television Representation* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000) 149.
16. For a detailed analysis of this issue see Luke Gibbons, "From Megalith to Megastore: Broadcasting in Irish Culture," *Irish Studies: A General Introduction*, ed. Tom Bartlett et al (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1988).
17. Kay Richardson and Ulrike H. Meinhof, *Worlds in Common?: Television Discourse in a Changing Europe* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999) 29.
18. Richardson and Meinhof examine the schedules of ARTE a bilingual (French/German) cultural channel, available on satellite and cable, 150-151.
19. Richardson and Meinhof, 151.
20. Miriam Hansen considers the notion of the 'hieroglyphic' in "Mass Culture as Hieroglyphic Writing: Adorno, Derrida, Kracauer," *New German Critique* 56 (1992): 51. Further references are included within the text.
21. Roland Barthes, *Mythologies* (London: J. Cape, 1972) 141.
22. Cited by Susan Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project*, (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1991) 98.
23. Buck-Morss, 98.
24. B.Taylor cited in Harvey, 61.
25. McKenzie Wark, "Fashioning the Future: Fashion, clothing and the manufacturing of post-Fordist culture," *Cultural Studies* 5.1 (1991): 61–77. Emphasis added.
26. The "season of films coming your way this autumn on RTÉ" was reviewed by Michael Dwyer in an article entitled 'Legends of the Fall' in the *RTÉ Guide* Sept. 1999: 16.
27. Tom Gunning and Andre Gaudreault have drawn attention to somewhat different mode of address, which characterises 'primitive' or pre-classical cinema. This "cinema of attractions" is exhibitionist, willing to rupture a self-enclosed fictional world to solicit the attention of its spectator. See in particular, Gunning's *D.W.Griffith and the Origin of American Narrative Film: the early years at Biograph* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1994).
28. Thomas Elsaesser, "Fantasy Island: Dream Logic as Production Logic," *Cinema Futures: Cain, Abel or Cable?*, ed. Thomas Elsaesser (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1998) 143 – 158.
29. The films in the 1999 *Ireland on Screen* season all received funding from the Irish Film Board.
30. Ellis, 127.
31. Stephen Crofts, for one, has analysed the interdependence of commercial, Arthouse and national cinemas and persuasively argued that Hollywood both "sets the terms of national cinemas self-marketing" and limits the circulation of national cinemas outside the country of origin. See "Reconceptualizing National Cinemas," *Quarterly Review of Film and Video* 14. 3 (1993) 58.
32. Elsaesser, 158.

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