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THERE IS MORE(S) IN TELEVISION

STUDYING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TELEVISION AND MORAL IMAGINATION

ACADEMISCH PROEFSCHRIFT

ter verkrijging van de graad van doctor
aan de Universiteit van Amsterdam
op gezag van de Rector Magnificus prof. dr. J.W. Zwemmer
ten overstaan van een door het college voor promoties
ingestelde commissie,
in het openbaar te verdedigen in de Aula

op **donderdag 26 april 2007 om 12.00 uur**

door

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geboren te Breda

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FOREWORD

For all my live, I have been a 'narrative junkie'. I read books and comics, I wrote stories and papers, I watched television and I studied for seemingly endless periods. In 2002 I finally got where I wanted to be: as a PhD-student working on a dissertation about the love of my life: television. This dissertation is not a story on its own. Naturally, this story is part of my own individual story and that of many people surrounding me. As this is the first page, I think this an appropriate place to thank those without whom this story would have known a premature ending and no closure at all.

Let the story begin with 'my Ph.D. club'. As a television specialist I have been warmly welcomed by the 'internet people'. Because of the interdisciplinary character of our projects we could find each other in our two weekly meetings and I have benefited greatly of your comments. Coming from different disciplines you have dared me to open my eyes for the blind spots of my own specialism.

Over the years, I have been a member of several reading groups. As a starting scholar I tremendously enjoyed the discourse reading group at the ASSR. The open sharing of thoughts and opinions have inspired me to be more critical towards my own work. The VOC group forced me to go beyond my own discipline, which has enlarged my view of academia. Not to mention the pleasure that is found in debate. Last but no least, the 'no wuckas feminist reading group' in which I found friends that like me enjoy feminist theory in a no wuckas sense. Besides breaking the habit of writing and speaking in traditional truck drivers English, they have helped me through tough times and quite often made me think: 'no wucka's mate!' CHEERS!

As most stories, this story has been born in sometimes wobbly circumstances. In concern of this wobbliness I want thank Giselinde, Joost and Jeroen who have kept an eye on me, supported me, and often gave me good advice. I have to add, that they also make for good company and fortunately I have more often enjoyed their friendship than their advice.

Turning back to the topic at hand, I want to especially mention Jeroen Jansz, Sandra Zwier, Peter Neijens, Liesbet van Zoonen, and Claes de Vreese for their support and their willingness to make quick decisions.

To take a dramatic turn in this narrative, it is time to thank all colleagues that have made my time at ASCoR joyful. There were of course the people from the Media Entertainment section, people I have shared rooms with, 'teaching colleagues', and 'course colleagues'. With many I have enjoyed a chat in the corridors of the OIH, a coffee in the canteen, a drink in the Engelbewaarder, and an occasional dinner, all of the above make working life pleasurable.

For now, it is time to write a few lines for my highly appreciated supervisor, professor dr. Klaus Schönbach. To do this properly I switch languages:

Sehr geehrter Herr Professor Schönbach, lieber Klaus. Unter Ihrer Begleitung bin ich zur Forscherin geworden. Ihre Begeisterungen für das Thema dieser Dissertation, aber auch die Großzügigkeit, mit der Sie Ihr so breit gefächertes Wissen mit mir teilten, haben wesentlich zu meiner professionellen Entwicklung und der Entstehung dieser Dissertation beigetragen. Als ein Doktorvater im wahrsten Sinne des Wortes haben sie mich mit der Wissenschaft spielen lassen. Ab dem ersten Moment unserer Zusammenarbeit erlaubten Sie mir frei zu denken, und ich danke Ihnen für das hierbei so erforderliche Vertrauen. Unsere gemeinsame Liebe für die Schlichtheit war stets eine Motivation, meine Gedanken deutlich und klar in Worte zu fassen. Für all dies meinen aufrechten Dank.

As every narrative, this one needs to be situated also in the private sphere. I would especially like to thank my dear friends Thomas, Pascal, Sandra, Femke, Guido, Miranda, Marloes, Alex, Suzanne, Paula, Frank, Juul, Noor, Annemieke, Kars, Lia, and Marieke. Besides providing the necessary distractions, they have helped me to get 'the job jobbed' by collecting data. Endless hours of prime time television were videotaped by them, their family members, colleagues and partners were 'lend out' to me as 'interview-material' and as guinea-pigs for my survey.

Furthermore, I would like to thank the Schrijver family for welcoming me so heartily into their family. The 'easy going' and care sometimes kept my mind of things that worried me and often cheered me up.

Last but not least, there is Remco. His 'natural science', non-political way of thinking often shed a different light on the various hurdles I faced during the last two years of writing this dissertation. However, there is so much more than that. At least one plot line in my narrative has reached closure over the last few years. Thanks to you, Rem, I can finally say: 'I am home'.

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

'So, why then do you still like Sesame Street?' 'Well, when I was a kid I used to learn things from it. I remember, Bert was just sitting there and then Ernie walked in. Ernie, being a prankster, wanted to play a joke on Bert and gave Bert a really good fright. Bert started screaming and waving his arms around. That was when I understood that it is not funny to frighten someone, because Bert was really scared.' This conversation took place in a bar between two men just over 20 years old. Firstly, this story brought to mind the scene he was describing. I remember Bert sitting there in his chair, Ernie sneaking up to him, and giving a good blow on his trumpet, Bert jumping up and running around screaming.

Secondly, the story also touches the edges of other things than my personal memory. The second man explained how he understood something about the consequences of an action taken. The consequence in this case was someone being genuinely scared. An emotion recognised and maybe judged as uncomfortable, unattractive, undesirable. The second man understood as a boy that giving someone an unpleasurable emotion was something he did not like to do and thus set him onto the road of morality and moral reasoning.

Though of course Sesame Street is pre-eminently an educational programme, the concept of learning something from television that can be evaluated as morally positive is almost the exact opposite of beliefs about the relationship between television and morality. This relationship is often referred to in public as well as in academic debates, even though it is under-researched. The common beliefs about this relationship can be considered as myths, for as we will see in the next sections (§1.1. and §1.2) there is no systematic proof, though 'they are common-sensical, plausible, and convincing' (Schönbach, 2000: 7). This study then, concentrates on the relationship between television and the development of morality, or rather the development of moral imagination (a concept that will be explained in chapters 1 and 2).

§1.1 Television in Debate

Television is commonly regarded as taking a central place in contemporary society. Especially in the Western world people spend a lot of time with media, and in particular with television. In 2005 for example, people in the Netherlands watched television for 195 minutes per day on average (Stichting Kijkonderzoek, 2006). The public and academic debates concentrate primarily on the consequences of this central place television occupies in our everyday lives. Often, Williams (1990) argues, television is thought of as a medium that has altered our society although, he continues, this cause and effect relationship is mostly an assumption and under-researched. Arguments pro- and contra- television are widely spread, in the public as well as in the academic debate. Two distinct dimensions can be recognised in the debate on television and morality. The first dimension of the debate dismisses television as a popular culture product in general; television can only be for the worse and not for the better of our morals. Hence, this dimension concentrates on contra-television arguments. The second dimension of the debate revolves around television's content and reception and more specifically focuses on certain genres. This dimension of the debate is where arguments both pro- and contra-television and its effects are found. Nevertheless, we will see that the arguments against television or certain genres that would 'degrade' our morals are rarely based on empirical evidence, and seem useful only for other purposes, such as sustaining the Culture/culture dichotomy.

§1.1.1 The Public Debate

'Violence and sex on TV have a negative effect on children. They could imitate the violence and think it's normal. Explicit sex could cause children to see this [sex] as separate from love' (CDA, 2004). 'The remarkable thing about television is that it permits several million people to laugh at the same joke and still feel lonely' (TV-Turnoff Network, 2002). 'Korthals Altes [Minister of State] suspects the medium television to be the cause of the identity crisis [of the Dutch government]' (Du Pré and Remarque, 2005). The previous statements are a pick from the various debates about television that are commonly read about in newspapers or when one

'Googles' the words 'television and effect'. These debates cover topics ranging from watching violence on television provoking aggressive behaviour to television's influence on politics. These arguments, however, do not sound strange, or farfetched. On the contrary, the arguments could be considered as common sense. Spigel and Curtin (1997) even speak of the naturalisation of considering television as equal to social pathology. We recognise the first dimension in the debate on television here, the rejection of television in general.

Since its early days, television has been closely linked with public morality and specific concerns about it. Television is commonly considered as contributing to the construction of moral panic, or television itself is considered a subject of moral panic. According to Hall, Critcher, Jefferson, Clarke and Roberts (1978) a moral panic can be understood as a discrepancy in what is perceived and what the perception is of, a gap between threat and reaction, an ideological displacement of meaning. As a subject of moral panic, television is considered the culprit for society's moral decay. Notably, public issues such as family values, civil conduct, and democratic values have a strong connection to television as a subject of moral panic (Tavener, 2000). Television is then considered as undermining these values. In Hall's et al. terms this means that the threat of television is perceived as a much larger one than it actually is. One has to note that most (new) technologies have once been similarly blamed (for example the car has also been blamed for the fracturing of family life (Leavis, 1930)).

As the constructer of moral panics, television is regarded as a powerful tool that can influence people's opinions and feelings about issues, for example how safe one should feel in the streets, or the presence of needless violence (Vasterman, 2001). In Hall's terms this means that television presents the threat of needless violence as a much larger one than it actually is. In this line of argument, television is often opposed to high Culture. In opposition to television high Culture supposedly prevents society's moral decay (Spigel and Curtin, 1997; Cohen, 1999; Tavener, 2000; Kantelberg, 2001; Jensen, 2002; Fiske and Hartley, 2003).

The public debate seems rather one-dimensional in pronouncing how to feel about television, namely, that it is something to be ashamed of. With arguments stating that watching television is a waste of time, purely a distraction, or escapism since television programmes contain nothing but predictable, indolent entertainment, one is provoked to distance oneself from watching television (cf. Van Zoonen, 2004). The example in the introduction illustrates this argument when we consider the additional fact that the first man in the conversation was full of disbelieve about the other man's positive experience with a television programme. A twenty-year-old man (though age and gender are coincidental characteristics and have nothing to do with the argument here) saying he actually learned something useful from television and refusing to discard a programme as 'just entertaining'[1] seems exceptional. By presenting television as the activity for the so-called couch potatoes the public debate dictates us to distance ourselves from watching television, or even to position oneself contra-television. As Kantelberg (2001: 10) points out: 'For television is not to look at, but to look down on[2].' To position oneself contra-television seems useful to show others that one is above this 'doltish, brutish and barbaric' television (Jensen, 2002).

The second dimension of the debate, which focuses on certain genres, is less visible in the public debate and much better observable in the academic debate. Nevertheless, it seems again a matter of common sense to value the evening news as useful and informing (and therefore not so much a waste of time) and soap series as escapism, mind numbing, and diverting (and therefore the ultimate waste of time).

[1] Though Sesame Street is of course one of the programmes that is widely recognised as educational and therefore usually not discarded as 'a waste of time'.
[2] The original citation was in Dutch and is translated by the author. ('Want de televisie is niet om náár te kijken, maar om op neer te kijken.' (Kantelberg, 2001: 10)).

§1.1.2 The Academic Debate

In the academic debate the arguments against television are more nuanced, and often concentrate on the second dimension of the debate, the dismissal of specific genres and not of television in general. Additionally, pro-television arguments are frequently formulated; sometimes by the same authors of critical pieces on television. As Hermes (2005: 3) explains: 'It requires a balancing act to both do justice to the pleasures and uses of the popular and reflect on it critically.'

Television is widely recognised as an important storyteller in contemporary (Western) society. It is argued that among other institutes, such as family, school, friends, and the church, television tells us the stories we need to give meaning to our symbolic world. In this sense, television is considered an important resource for enculturation. People learn from these stories the dominant cultural rules that organise the society lived in, either for the good or the bad (Gerbner, 1998a ; Fiske, 1987; McKinley, 1997). In the work of academics engaging with television, a distinction can be made in the focus of the arguments. On the one side we find academics that concentrate on the content of television stories, on the other side academics focusing on the reception of these stories can be found. In both lines of work we find pro and contra-arguments on television.

Focusing on content, George Gerbner did groundbreaking work in the 1960s and '70s. Concentrating on violence (Gerbner, 1988) and the film hero (Gerbner, 1969), he concluded that the stories told by television are rather one-dimensional, meaning that these stories contain an unambiguous message. Based on his research, Gerbner (1998a) developed the cultural homogenisation thesis: since television stories are carrying similar messages on a global level, it is possible to speak of a worldwide homogeneous enculturation. This homogeneous enculturation will result in the loss of specific cultural values. However, Gerbner has focused primarily on certain genres and on American television, neglecting to actually research cultural homogenisation.

Gerbner's emphasis on certain genres, mostly light entertainment and popular drama, is common. Lusted (1998) formulates this focus on specific genres as a common feature of the academic world:

'There can be a genuine concern here to investigate areas of popular culture with sympathy for the mass audiences who appear its willing consumers. Often, however, that sympathy is extended less towards the forms of popular culture themselves, where residues of suspicion can still be discerned' (Lusted, 1998: 176).

Lusted observes two important things: firstly, sympathy with popular culture is limited to certain genres. Secondly, academics who are engaged with popular television also have a tendency to focus on the extrinsic values of television, which brings us to authors focusing on the reception of television, such as Ien Ang (1985), John Hartley (1992; 1999), John Fiske (1987), Tamar Liebes and Elihu Katz (1990), and Shaun Moores (1993). These authors have adopted a positive viewpoint on popular television. Ang's (1985) work on the reception of *Dallas*, for example, emphasises the pleasure people experience in watching this often reviled television series. However, these authors focus primarily on special interest groups, such as women or ethnic minorities, or counter-hegemonic practices. Television genres seem to be valued differently, with good genres such as news, current affairs and 'serious drama', and bad genres such as game shows and quizzes (light entertainment).

Of course we also find 'hard core' anti-television arguments in the academic debate, which reflect the first dimension (rejecting television in general). What appears remarkable is the fact that especially this position often is only theorised and lacking empirical support. A good example is Bourdieu's (1996) essay on television. Bourdieu starts with regretting the 'lost' power of television, that could have led to a direct democracy, he claims: 'but behind all this are anonymous, invisible forces that bring with them all kinds of censorship and that make television into this formidable tool to sustain the symbolic order'[3] (Bourdieu, 1996: 19). His aversion to

[3] (Bourdieu, 1996: 19): "..., maar daarachter gaan anonieme, onzichtbare mechanismen schuil die allerlei vormen van censuur met zich meebrengen en die

television becomes even more visible through arguments such as (Bourdieu, 1996: 16): 'Nowadays, the screen is some kind of Narcissus' mirror, a place where exhibitionist-narcissist needs are satisfied.'[4] Bourdieu's arguments are similar to some arguments in public debate. With a sharp tongue he distances himself far from that barbaric television. Nevertheless, it is important to note that these arguments are not supported by empirical evidence.

Cohen (1999) elaborates on this aspect of the academic debate on popular culture. According to him, academics who are involved with popular culture such as movies often position themselves as being involved with the arts. Jensen (2002) argues along similar lines when she describes how most research on popular culture is done within a classic theoretical canon. Again, both Cohen and Jensen claim, this seems useful in order to show others that one is not contaminated by one's object of study.

This aversion towards popular culture, and thus towards television, has its roots in the Culture/culture debate. This debate has equipped us with an instrumental perspective on culture (and thus also on television) that is articulated in the assumption that Culture, the Arts, are good for us, and that culture is bad for us. As we have seen, this instrumental perspective echoes in academic and in public debate on television. Nevertheless, empirical evidence supporting these viewpoints is rare, and therefore they can be considered as mythical. One might wonder, then, why popular television cannot be good for us, or if all television is bad for us, and whether it is justified to value sometimes comparable media so differently - for example literature as a high culture narrative medium, and television drama as a low culture, but also narrative, medium. The aim of this study, then, is to research whether television can be good for us; as we will see in §1.3, 'good' is understood to mean 'being of moral value to the individual'.

---

van de televisie een formidabel middel tot handhaving van de symbolische orde maken."

[4] (Bourdieu, 1996: 16): "Zo is het beeldscherm tegenwoordig een soort spiegel van Narcissus geworden, een plek waar exhibitionistisch-narcistische behoeften worden bevredigd."

§1.2 The C/culture dichotomy.

The instrumental perspective, as one of the legacies of the high and low culture distinction, appears in the enormous amount of research on television's violent content and its effects on young children, or the amounts of research on how television commercials could affect consumer behaviour. Valuable and nuanced as the research often is, the instrumental perspective does imply television's audience to be passive, to have no agency. Agency can be understood in terms of a subject having the ability to make a choice, or to be more precise: 'the capacity of acting and willing subjects within existing societal and social structures to exercise choice' (Rosengren, 1994: 8). The instrumental perspective implicitly states a view on media as 'what the media do to us', instead of 'what we do with the media'.

When we look at the different effects that different stories (since television is a storyteller) supposedly have, the persistent distinction between high and low culture manifests itself. High culture stories, such as literary stories, or rather narratives (e.g. Thomas Mann and Marcel Proust are frequently called upon as examples by the literary tradition), are commonly understood as a resource for people to become better people (as we will see 'better' is understood as 'morally better'). These literary narratives supposedly evoke the development of the imagination. Reading low culture narratives, such as of the romantic genre (e.g. Barbara Cartland[5]), is not expected to improve people, or people's abilities, in any way. On the contrary, such popular narratives are supposed to numb the imagination.[6] A similar line of arguments can be distinguished for television narratives, and this is where we recognise the dimension in the debate around television focusing on certain genres. If one has to watch television at all, it is considered acceptable to watch informational or

[5] Barbara Cartland is known as the 'Queen of Romance' and wrote over 600 novels in the romantic fiction genre.

[6] Additionally, Schönbach, Fisher, Bodenstein, Bendler (1971) point out that even though this genre is widely read (and thus should be considered a mass medium) it is rarely considered as a topic of serious academic research. With few exceptions, contemporary researchers still do not engage very often with this object of study.

educational genres such as current affairs or the evening news. In opposition, watching genres such as soap operas, docudrama and talk shows is considered to be wasting the hours away.

Arguments in the C/culture debate are often hardly defensible. There is, for example, no proof that listening to classical music would turn anyone into a better person (Hartley, 1992; Cohen, 1999; Jensen, 2002). Additionally, according to Cohen (1999) similar arguments could be in force for high culture as well as for low culture. The well-known 'waste-of-time' argument used for television could well be used for the Arts too (Cohen, 1999: 142): 'Gallery-hopping and museum-visiting and concert-going can seem idle activities, mainly self-indulgent and distracting.' In other words, concluding anything about the effect of a certain medium on a person's morality seems premature at the very least. And, as Jensen (2002) argues, by emphasising the effects we pass over the intrinsic value of both high and low culture. In similar vein, authors such as Jenkins, McPherson and Shattuc (2002) argue for 'a new cultural studies' in which the form of popular culture is explicitly taken into account. They even warn of the danger of asking the wrong questions, if we continue sustaining this Culture vs. culture dichotomy. In this way, De Leeuw (2003) argues, the assumed low culture content of television causes cultural pessimists to dismiss television as something we cannot expect anything good of. While on the other hand, defenders of television as a low culture medium unjustly keep television away from cultural criticism.

Another issue connected to the instrumental perspective on television is the 'agency' the audience is granted. Although the 'hypodermic needle model' has been outdated for a long time, in the C/culture debate this model still seems to implicitly exist. Jensen (2002) formulates the 'media + education = medication' translation of this idea, indicating how high culture is expected to inoculate us against the bad effects of low culture. As mentioned before, there is no univocal research that supports this 'medication' but it shows how the first dimension of the debate on television that rejects television in general takes form.

According to Schudson (1989) we can view culture from two perspectives: 'culture-as-mould' and 'culture-as-resource'. The instrumental

perspective on television corresponds to 'culture-as-mould'. In this perspective television narratives knead people into the desired mould. Ideology is a core principle and is a powerful tool of the elite to suppress the masses[7]. A good example of this perspective on television narratives is the cultural homogenisation thesis (Gerbner, 1998; Gerbner, 1998a; Gerbner, 1999) — the cultural environment becomes more and more similar on a global level: we all watched *Dallas* then and we all watch the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy[8] now. As Schudson (1989) points out, this 'moulding' idea ignores the viewer entirely.

A second example that fits the 'culture-as-mould' model is the idea of the collective memory — some historical events become part of the collective memory of a society and some do not, depending on the narration of the event by television (Barnhurst and Wartella, 1998; Bishop Dessommes, 1999). An example of this concept is the image of the Dutch Prince Claus taking a girl on the back of his bike during the Queen's birthday celebrations in 1999. This image has been repeated often. Not only in 1999, but also after Prince Claus passed away in October 2002, and the event is frequently included in documentaries on the Dutch royal family. Through repetition in the media, this image became imprinted in the Dutch collective memory.

In opposition to this we find the 'culture-as-resource' perspective. Television narratives then functions as a toolkit where the individual finds equipment that can be used to his or her own understanding[9] or liking. The television viewer has 'agency'. An example of this perspective is the 'uses-and-gratifications-approach' (Palmgreen, Wenner and Rosengren, 1985), which is concerned with people's psychological and sociological needs for

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[7] '"Ideology" (or the somewhat more slippery term "hegemony") is viewed as a potent agent of powerful ruling groups, successfully molding the ideas and expectations and presuppositions of the general population and making people deferent and pliable.' (Schudson, 1989: 155)

[8] Although very recent research on the reception of the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy does not indicate the trilogy to cause a cultural homogenisation, it seems very hard to find patterns in reception of the trilogy among international audiences (De Kloet and Kuipers, 2006).

[9] 'At the other end, concepts of culture cluster around a more optimistic view of human activity, a voluntaristic sense in which culture is seen not as a program but as a "tool kit" (...) or "equipment for living" (...)' (Schudson, 1989: 155).

which gratification is sought in (among other things) media consumption. Even though the uses of the viewers are as versatile as the gratifications, we can easily imagine that, for example, an expectant woman feels a need for information on pregnancy, how other women experience their pregnancies, et cetera. The motivation is a need for information, television offers plenty of programmes dealing with this topic, the pregnant woman watches these programmes and is satisfied in her need for information. The active choice of the pregnant woman is of importance here, as she has to take her pick from the variety of programmes offered by television.

A second example of this perspective on television is the so-called 'reflexive function' of television narratives — television narratives evoke reflection on everyday living and reflection on how to give meaning to this everyday life (Coolen, 1997; Coolen, 2001). We can imagine someone using the amorous vicissitudes in a soap series to contemplate their own relationship. Questions one might ask are: How do I feel about the way character A deals with the feelings of character B?, or: How do I want my relationship to take form.

Culture-as-mould and culture-as-resource should not be employed as a dichotomy (Schudson, 1989). Often, authors find themselves in between these two extreme positions since.

> 'Neither extreme position is very satisfying and, I think, for obvious reasons. The arguments made on behalf of each extreme seem to me perfectly adequate grounds for rejecting adherence to the opposite extreme. The study of culture is the study of what meanings are available for use in a given society from the wider range of possible meanings; the study of culture is equally the study of what meanings people choose and use from available meanings.' (Schudson, 1989: 156)

Schudson pleads to strike the golden mean: the viewer is active and gives meaning to cultural expressions, in this case television narratives, but the viewer is unable to give meaning to that which is not offered by the narrative. This view on culture, or television narratives, is similar to perspectives on television. Firstly, it is similar to Hall's (1973) encoding-decoding model in which a message is encoded by the narrative's producer

and decoded by the narrative's viewer. In between, a meaningful discourse occurs. Secondly, Schudson's idea is similar to the transactional model of Früh and Schönbach (1982) in which both media and audiences are taken into consideration and the focus lies with the attention on the active choices of the audience from the *options* offered to them by the media. This study applies this perspective on culture. Television's audience is considered active, while simultaneously the importance of television's content is acknowledged.

§1.3 The Ubiquitous Narrative

Turning back to the main topic, television and morality, we have already noted a few things. Television is regarded as one of the most important storytellers in society. The notion that television stories are important to our enculturation is widespread (Fiske, 1987; Allen, 1992; Gerbner, 1998a). According to Gerbner (1999) three kinds of television stories can be distinguished that each have a particular function in this enculturation process. The first kind of stories offers us insight into how things work, into the hidden dynamics of life. The second category of stories is of a descriptive nature and offers insights into what things are supposed to look like. The third kind of stories offers us insights into what we should and could do, into values and norms. This last kind of stories comprises the first and the second kind and together they form our cultural environment.

The role of television stories in the enculturation process might be much more complex than Gerbner suggests. According to some, stories do not simply carry over the rules of the society or culture we live in. In fact, we should not speak of stories, but of narratives. Narratives are considered quintessential in the process of giving meaning to our experiences in everyday life. Narratives are the building blocks in making sense of life. They can be understood as a structuring principle for lived experiences. Mark Johnson (1993) explains narrative as a 'mode of understanding'. Fiske (1987) calls the narrative: 'a basic way of making sense of our experience of the real'. Roland Barthes (1985) goes even further when he points out why narratives are of such great importance:

'…narrative occurs in all periods, all places, all societies; narrative begins with the very history of humanity; there is not, there has never been, any people anywhere without narrative; […] narrative never prefers good to bad literature: international, transhistorical, transcultural, narrative is *there*, like life.' (Barthes,1985: 95)

Narratives then are of fundamental importance in human lives. Bruner (1987: 12-13) argues along similar lines when he explains there is no other way for humans than to describe 'lived time' in narrative form: 'It [life] is constructed by human beings through active ratiocination, by the same kind of ratiocination through which we construct narratives'. A further explanation of narrative and *how* narratives are important for human lives can be found in chapter 2.

From this (narrative) perspective television could be considered as offering us narratives that we can use to give (moral) meaning to our lives. *How* narratives can be of importance in everyday living, *how* narratives play a role in the enculturation process, and *how* people use narratives to formulate episodes in their lives in narrative form, are all questions that are answered by what Richard Rorty (2000) calls the 'literary culture'. This literary culture concentrates, as the name indicates, on literary narratives and involves authors such as Martha Nussbaum, William Booth, and Richard Rorty. Though authors from the 'literary culture' do emphasise that other non-literary narratives are of importance too, these other narratives are habitually left aside.

Though narratives are considered the fabric of life, and television is widely recognised as an important storyteller, television is rarely considered as offering valuable narratives. This makes the questions formulated in §1.1 even more pressing: if narratives are of such great importance for everyday living, why does television as a narrative medium raise so many objections when other narrative resources are valuated highly? Is it possible to consider television narratives as something that might be 'good' for us?

This distinction between (literary) narratives that are of importance to giving meaning to everyday living, and television narratives that are disregarded, is also bedded in the C/culture debate (Fiske and Hartley,

2003). What remains opaque in these arguments is in what way people become better or worse. An answer to this important question can be found when we return to the roots of the C/culture debate: the Age of Romanticism. In this era the notion that reason alone is too limited to base one's (moral) judgement upon was reborn.

The Enlightenment, preceding the Age of Romanticism, recognised a rational individual and an instrumental way of thinking (Poole, 1991). In the Age of Romanticism, this rational straitjacket was questioned. Rosenblatt (1938: 192) phrases this development as follows: 'science may give us the facts, but it cannot give us the standards of what is desirable or undesirable, of what is good or evil.' The capacity for judgement that during the Enlightenment became situated in reason had to be extended with an affective, emotional dimension. This dimension was formulated in terms of the imagination. The imagination is of two kinds. On one side we can imagine something, and on the other side something can be imagined. From these images and by developing our imagination we supposedly become (morally) better people, and turn into (morally) wiser people (Hoogewerff, 1948).

This imagination then could be developed through the arts. The arts could shake us up, could evoke an emotional shock experience that would give rise to new insights (Benjamin, 1939). In other words, an affective, emotional dimension should be added to reason to reach a certain maturity, a mature capacity for moral judgment (Rosenblatt, 1938). In John Dewey's 'Moral Theory and Practice', imagination and morality are even more closely connected. Dewey thought that a purely theoretical, read rational, approach of morality was irrelevant for moral action (Dewey, 1891: 100): 'Some…entertain the idea that a moral law is a command: that it actually tells us what we should or should not do! The Golden Rule gives me absolutely no knowledge, of itself, of what I should do …' Dewey suggests that the imagination bridges the gap between moral principles and moral action.

The aim of developing the imagination through reading literary narratives is to enrich people morally, to reach moral maturity. Moral maturity can be understood as an individual's capacity to 'assume the

responsibility for working out their own [moral] solutions and making their own [moral] judgments' (Rosenblatt, 1938: 201). The contemporary authors of the literary culture formulate this aim in terms of 'preventing unnecessary harm to others'. Thus, we are not dealing with 'just' imagination, but with moral imagination.

The aim of this study is to approach television in a different way, trying to avoid reproducing the Culture vs. culture dichotomy, and to valuate television as a possible resource for people to develop a capacity for moral imagination, thus to become morally mature people. Though narratives are commonly considered as an important resource for the development of moral imagination, television is rarely considered to offer these narratives. In this study, an oppositional point of view is adopted: television is considered an important resource of narratives that offer insights that can be used to develop a capacity for moral imagination. Fostering the moral imagination is necessary in order to become morally mature. The leading question of this study is:

How do people in the Netherlands use television narratives as a resource to develop a capacity for moral imagination in order to become morally mature?

At this point, I want to explicitly state that what is called for in this study is not a comparison of television narratives with literary narratives, but to evaluate television as a resource of narratives valuable to become morally mature. Firstly, literary narratives are simply not a point of debate in this study. Secondly, television narratives and literary narratives have very different historical backgrounds, for example in their history of production, reception, and technological development (Fiske and Hartley, 2003). To conflate these two narratives into one of a kind seems unjust to both television and literary narratives.

CHAPTER 2. TELEVISION IN A LITERARY FRAMEWORK

As we have seen in §1.3, the most important thoughts on the contribution of narratives to the development of a capacity for moral imagination are found in the literary tradition. The significance of literary narratives is emphasised, though other narratives are thought valuable as well by authors from the literary tradition. Nevertheless, television as an important storyteller in contemporary western society is rarely considered to offer narratives that could function as a valuable resource for the moral imagination. Even authors such as Fiske and Hartley (2003) and Berger (1997), that do consider television as a narrative medium, seldom relate these narratives directly to morality.

The literary tradition can be characterised by several authors and philosophers. Nussbaum (1990; 1995; 1997) and Booth (1988) postulate that reading literary narratives develops a capacity for compassion and empathy. Rorty (1989) stresses the importance of narratives to gain insight into the human character, meaning not only the Other but also the Self. Deanne Bogdan (1992) elaborates on the importance of the affective dimension in one's response to a narrative and the reflection this might evoke. Although these authors all focus on different aspects of how literary narratives can function, there is one communal point: the ultimate aim is to prevent and to diminish needless suffering in this world. Still, this is a theoretical point of view and whether narratives, and specifically television narratives, could contribute to making the world a better place is a question to be answered.

Taking the perspectives of the literary tradition into account, narratives could be thought of as some sort of moral laboratory. As a laboratory, narratives offer an opportunity to explore and reflect upon moral issues and deliberation without enduring the consequences of everyday moral decisions (Widdershoven, 1993). It is these experiments that supposedly evoke the development of moral imagination, necessary to become morally mature. Deriving from the literary tradition, in this chapter a framework is developed in order to research how television, moral imagination, and moral maturity are related.

§2.1 Moral Imagination and Television

To become morally mature one needs to develop a capacity for moral imagination. What then can be understood as moral imagination? Johnson (1993: 202) defines moral imagination as: 'the ability to imaginatively discern various possibilities for acting within a given situation and to envision the potential help and harm that are likely to result from a given action.' Johnson's definition is very similar to Dewey's conception of morality and moral imagination. Dewey (1891) perceives one's morality as a stock of theoretical notions (such as moral rules or principles) about moral conduct and character upon which judgements about his own and others' lives are based. In a moral situation one analyses the issue according to these theoretical notions to decide what action should be taken, taking all relationships between people involved into consideration. Though Dewey does not literally speak of moral imagination, he speaks of how moral conduct should always be thought of as situated. Every moral action depends on a unique situation and the recognition of the relationships at hand. Furthermore, Dewey (1891) positions moral insight in everyday intelligence and practice. We might conclude, then, that moral imagination can be understood as the extent of one's moral comprehension and the adequacy of one's capacity to reflect on everyday moral issues. The larger the range of possible viewpoints we can imagine, the richer our moral imagination (Rorty, 1989; Johnson, 1993).

According to Johnson (1993), narratives could offer us three kinds of insights that together construct the moral imagination. Firstly, narratives offer us insight into morally relevant issues. To ponder upon a moral issue, one needs to recognise it as such. Secondly, insight into the various ways of deliberation about the moral issue is offered. There are always different perspectives and solutions to a moral issue. Thirdly, insight into the human character, into the consequences and feelings of the self and the others involved is offered. To attain the 'envisioning of the help and harm that are likely to result from a given action' (Johnson, 1993: 202), it is important to gain insight into when people are helped or harmed and to learn to understand how others feel. Or as Nussbaum (1997: 85) puts it:

'We must also cultivate in ourselves a capacity for sympathetic imagination that will enable us to comprehend the motives and choices of people different from ourselves, seeing them not as forbiddingly alien and other, but as sharing many problems and possibilities with us.'

These three insights that the television narrative might offer are the foci of attention throughout this study.

§2.1.1 Insight into: Morally Relevant Issues

The recognition of an issue, dilemma, or question as of moral quality is the first element of moral imagination. In order to make a moral judgment, one first has to regard a situation as a moral one (Johnson, 1993; Turiel, 2002). Television narratives could show which issues, dilemmas, and questions are of moral importance in the society or culture we live in. Which issues get assigned moral quality is defined by the moral traditions of that society. Yet, what can we understand as moral? Is morality equal to norms and values? Is morality the same for everybody? Morality is a diffuse concept and the opinions on what morality exactly contains diverge. Additionally, the central object of this study, moral imagination, has an explicit affective emotional dimension. As is argued in §1.3, reason alone is considered insufficient to make moral judgements and an affective dimension should be added in order to reach moral maturity. Therefore, moral imagination does not fit with the traditional (Kantian) conception of morality. In this study, Poole's (1991) conception of morality is embraced, which might be considered non-traditional in our Western society since it integrates this affective dimension with a rational one. First though, a 'common' understanding of morality is explored.

In general, morality and ethics are two notions that are either used as synonyms, or are explicitly distinguished from one another. 'Morality' stems from the Latin *moralis* and mostly indicates manners, or conduct. 'Ethics' stems from the Greek *ethos* and mostly indicates character. Often 'ethics' is also referred to as dealing with good and bad and 'morality' as dealing with duty and obligation. According to Dewey (1894), ethics is a branch of philosophy dealing with the investigation of values. Vardy and

Grosch (1999) for example, describe a conception of ethics as behaviour that is judged in accordance with one's virtuousness of character. In opposition to that, they formulate a conception of morality as behaviour that can be judged as either good or evil. Obviously they do distinguish between morality and ethics, although the distinction remains blurry. Other conceptions of morality and ethics can easily be traced when one has a quick look in the enormous amount of books on 'ethics' or 'morality'. There are for example utilitarian approaches that centralise the wellbeing of humankind as the core of morality. In addition, there are approaches that understand morality as a solution to practical problems, as a Hobbesian social contract necessary for us to gain the benefits of social living. All of these conceptions take a rational human being as a starting point of moral theory. According to Rachels (2003: 14) a minimum conception of morality can be defined from this wide range of opinions:

'Morality is, at the very least, the effort to guide one's conduct by reason – that is, to do what there are the best reasons for doing – while giving equal weight to the interest of each individual who will be affected by what one does.'

In this minimum conception, morality is understood as trying to decide rationally which way is best to deal with a certain situation, while respecting other people's interests. This minimum conception can be understood as a Kantian conception of morality. Kant (1796) explained how reason drives humans to feel the need to surround themselves with other people, in an effort to develop their natural capacity for reason. Simultaneously, reason also drives humans into disliking other humans since everyone wants to shape the world according to their own ideas. In this way, reason brings discord between humans. Dealing with this discord is when conduct becomes moral. Dealing with discord means that a rational person deals with another rational person based on so called a-priori statements[10]. Moral rules are based in pure reason only and not in

[10] Kant distinguished between synthetic statements stemming from observation (e.g. this swan is white) and analytic statements (a swan is a bird), in which the predicate is contained in the subject. Analytic statements are a-priori, which means that they are there beforehand. A-priori statements have a fundamental

human nature, or in the circumstances in which humans find themselves. Johnson (1993) calls this conception the 'Moral Law Folk Theory' since it seems a common sense conception of morality. According to Johnson (1993: 5) this conception is too narrow since it sketches a biased image of the 'human concepts and reason':

'It is morally irresponsible to think and act as though we possess a universal, disembodied reason that generates absolute rules, decision-making procedures, and universal or categorical laws by which we can tell right from wrong in any situation we encounter.'

Johnson (1993) points out that the Kantian perspective on morality is based on a misunderstanding of human nature and the functionality of moral rules. Firstly, humans are not solely rational beings; they also have an affective constitution. It is important to note that what is argued for is not to replace reason with emotion in moral reasoning, but to *add* an affective, emotional dimension to the rational one (Poole, 1991; Johnson, 1993). As Nussbaum (1995) explains, it would be rather dangerous to substitute one with the other in moral reasoning, but an affective dimension should be considered part of the whole of public rationality.

Secondly, Johnson (1993) argues that universal and categorical laws are not sufficient to distinguish right from wrong. This point of view we encountered earlier in chapter 1. Rosenblatt (1938) and Dewey (1891) discussed the limited abilities of reason alone to make moral judgements. Dewey explains that moral rules and principles are only useful to analyse a situation, to determine which action should be taken, in each specific case. A moral principle such as 'one should not lie' is problematic since the rule does not clarify for example what telling the truth *is*, or which conduct would fulfil this rule. According to Dewey, we cannot define a-priori the best action to be taken, since situations, relations, and people involved are always unique and require unique judgment. Similarly to Kant, however, Dewey argues that the serious analysis of a situation takes into account the objectives and opinions of all involved.

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validity. According to Kant it was possible to make synthetic a-priori statements (Smith, 1998).

To overcome this distinction between a rational approach to morality and an affective one, in this study Poole's (1991) conception of morality is used. As we have seen in chapter 1 (§1.3) the affective dimension in relation to morality became important during the Age of Romanticism. Poole (1991) adds to this distinction that the traditional conception of morality is formulated in terms of duty and obligation in the public sphere, and a traditional conception of ethics in terms of affection in the private sphere (see also §2.1.2). He argues for a convergence of ethics and morality, in which he also sees a convergence of rationality and an affective dimension. Ethical philosophy revolves around the question: 'What counts as a good life?' According to Poole (1991), the minimum conception of morality only becomes important when people perceive 'treating people justly' — morality — as an important part of 'the good life' — ethics — and not as an obligation. This wider conception of morality relates morality to ethics instead of formulating them as separate from one another (cf. Taylor, 1989). We can imagine that treating another person in an honest way is not only judged to be morally right behaviour, but also that we consider honesty an important part in our considerations of the 'good life'. This wider conception of morality is adopted in this study.

As we all know, moral evaluations can be very different for different people. The way in which we reach a moral judgment or evaluation is called moral deliberation — the second part of moral imagination.

§2.1.2 Insight into: Moral Deliberation

Narratives offer us insights into the different ways to deliberate a moral issue (Johnson, 1993). From those insights we might learn multiple solutions to one moral issue or dilemma. It is during this deliberation of a moral issue that it becomes clear to us which moral value is most important to us in this particular situation and what our moral action is going to be (cf. Dewey, 1891). The more perspectives on a moral issue one can imagine, the richer the moral imagination is supposed to be.

Part of the most important theory building on moral deliberation is found in the Kohlberg-Gilligan discussion (Kohlberg, 1984; Gilligan, Ward and McLean Taylor, 1988). In a hierarchical model on moral development Kohlberg (1984) identified six moral stages and three moral levels. These levels of moral development are connected to the logical stages and the social stages in an individual's development. On the first level, the pre-conventional level, moral behaviour is guided by punishments and rewards. The individual is mainly egotistic. According to Kohlberg children up till nine years old, some adolescents, and most criminals are on this level. On the second level, the conventional level, moral behaviour is guided by interpersonal relationships and social relationships. The individual starts to value other people and his or her social environment. Most adolescents and adults are on this level of moral reasoning. On the third level moral behaviour is guided by universal moral principles. The individual is aware of a social and individual responsibility for her or his own moral actions. This level is reached only by few adults.

Noteworthy is the fact that Kohlberg (1984) argues that most people never reach the last stage of moral development. Another remarkable observation of Kohlberg is that women on average are on a lower level of moral development than men. According to Kohlberg, this is caused by the difference in the social lives of men and women. Since men more often function in the public domain they get a chance to develop reasoning that is oriented on society as a whole. Women do not get this chance, since they are often confined to the private domain[11].

This staircase model of moral development is criticised by many, but most importantly by Carol Gilligan. In particular, Gilligan scrutinises Kohlberg's evaluation of the differences in women's and men's levels of moral development. Gilligan argues that the hierarchy in moral development that Kohlberg created is a misunderstanding of moral reasoning and ends up adding an important dimension to Kohlberg's existing theory (Gilligan, Ward, & McLean Taylor, 1988). In Gilligan's opinion it is not about a higher or lower level of moral reasoning, but

[11] We have to note that Kohlberg formulated his observations over 20 years ago when Western society was organised differently to the way that it is today.

about fundamentally different kinds of moral reasoning. Gilligan formulates two moral orientations on moral deliberation, or modes of moral judgment: *ethics of justice* — a perspective on moral deliberation as founded on principles and rules that are blindly applied to a situation (Kohlberg's formulation of moral reasoning) — and *ethics of care* — a perspective on moral deliberation as founded in involvement and care for one another, taking the context of the moral situation into account (Gilligan and Attanucci, 1988; Lyons, 1988). Though it would take too long to describe the Kohlberg-Gilligan controversy in detail, Gilligan's moral orientations are considered a valuable addition to Kohlberg's theory of moral development. It is these two moral perspectives that are used throughout this study when regarding moral deliberation.

An 'ethics of justice' style of reasoning is a perspective that is based on independent, rational individuals that have the same rights and obligations towards one another. Reciprocity is central to the relationships between individuals. The solutions for moral issues are based on moral rules that are applied independently of the particular situation. According to Gilligan et al. (1988), men learn to formulate their identity in terms of independence and rationality and are therefore oriented on an ethics of justice more often than women.

An 'ethics of care' style of reasoning applies an interdependent view on individuals. Response is central to the relationship between people. The solution to a moral issue is based on care for the relationships with others and preventing others coming to harm. A solution is particular for a certain issue, at one moment in time, in a specific place. According to Gilligan et al. (1988) women are raised to formulate their identity in relation to others and to care for the relationships, for example within the family. Therefore women are oriented more often on an ethics of care than men are. We have to note here that Gilligan's explanations for the difference between men and women in moral reasoning are not so much the opposite of Kohlberg's explanations. The differences between men and women, however, are explained as two approaches to moral reasoning that are evaluated as supplementary and not as higher and lower levels.

The two styles of moral reasoning appear as each other's opposites. While the ethics of justice recognises core concepts such as rationality, disembodied individual[12], rules and obligation, the ethics of care presents core concepts such as emotion, embodied individual, response and care. This apparent opposition is of course related to the dichotomies we already encountered (Poole, 1991; Johnson, 1993). The ethics of justice is a Kantian perspective on moral reasoning. We recognise the minimum conception of morality (see §2.1.1). The principle or rule that is the foundation for moral deliberation can be viewed as a Categorical Imperative. The rational individual is the reasoning party. Contemporary Western society acknowledges primarily the ethics of justice as *the* moral reasoning. In opposition, an 'ethics of care' style of reasoning is often not acknowledged as moral reasoning (Gilligan et al., 1988; Benhabib, 1992; Johnson, 1993; Rachels, 2003). Benhabib (1992), Gilligan et al. (1988), and Rachels (2003) argue for an integrated approach (as did Poole (1991) for the conception of morality). Both styles of reasoning are supplementary to one another and should not be considered as mutually exclusive. Not only since ethics of care contains more clearly an affective dimension and an ethics of justice a rational one, and as already argued, the affective dimension and the rational one should be considered complementary. Additionally, research shows that most of the time women and men use both perspectives to deliberate a moral issue (Lyons, 1988).

This study focuses on the insight into styles of moral reasoning that television narratives offer and the ways in which people use these insights to develop the moral imagination. It needs to be emphasised that an evaluation of these styles is not of concern. The consequences of the dichotomy of moral styles of reasoning will be a point of debate though. Questions are 'Is an ethics of care style of reasoning taken as seriously in television narratives as an ethics of justice style of reasoning is?', 'Do people acknowledge or recognise different styles of reasoning?', 'What does

[12] The disembodied individual is a concept that indicates that the individual is considered an abstraction, without the material features such as gender, age, ethnicity, class, sexuality, et cetera that have an impact on the social-historical context of the individual.

it mean to people if they are confronted with an ethics of justice *and* an ethics of care in one television narrative?'

How one relates to other people seems pivotal in moral deliberation. This relation to others brings us to the third part of moral imagination: insight into the other and the self.

§2.1.3 Insight Into: The Human Character, The Other and The Self

When deliberating a moral issue, we take into account the consequences of our moral actions for all people involved, including ourselves (see §2.1.1). We take into account the harm and help to others that might be the result of our actions. According to Nussbaum, Rorty, and Bogdan, one of the major problems with this 'taking into account' is that we do not always recognise other people as people, as humans similar to ourselves. When other people are considered to be lesser humans, or not even human at all, moral deliberation changes dramatically and always for the worse (think, for example, of sexist or racist arguments). This last part of moral imagination, insight into the human character, refers to the capacity to put oneself into the other's shoes, or as Nussbaum (1997) argues, to learn to recognise the other as simultaneously similar and dissimilar to oneself.

Narratives could give us insight into different people and what the consequences might be for all people involved in a situation. Nussbaum (1995; 1997) and Bogdan (1992; Bogdan, Cunningham and Davis, 2000) explain how we can gain insight into the other through reading narratives. From narratives we can learn that other people have a similar emotional constitution to our own, but that we never have a one hundred percent insight into someone else's emotions. Therefore, we learn to recognise other people as similar to ourselves, while simultaneously acknowledging a difference. Rorty (1989) applies a wider notion of this insight and speaks of insight into the human character including our own. We should develop the sensitivity to recognise other sorts of human beings as fellow sufferers: to not think of 'them' but as 'one of us' (or as Dewey (1891) elegantly puts it: to think in a warm '*meum*' instead of a cold '*tuum*'). This can only be achieved by a detailed description of what unfamiliar people are like and a redescription of what we ourselves are like. We should develop insight into

our acts of cruelty (even though often we are often unaware of them). With this knowledge we can prevent ourselves from needlessly harming others.

People distinguish between people around them according to: 'similar to me' and 'different from me'. A distinction should be made between 'other people' — referring to people 'similar to me' — and 'the Other' — referring to people 'other from me'. This distinction can be based on a variety of characteristics: sex, age, sexual preference, ethnicity, profession, religion, class, region, et cetera. According to Donna Haraway (1988), the list of important characteristics is an endless one. Therefore, she argues, it is more important to realise that different characteristics have different consequences in different times and places. People seem to have an enduring need to categorise people in terms of a 'we-group' and a 'them-group'. The Other in this study refers to people in the 'them-group'.

This categorising of people in 'we'- or 'them'-groups is also connected to the styles of moral reasoning and thus to moral imagination. As we have seen in §2.1.2 on the different styles of moral reasoning, there are different perspectives on the other and the relationship with the other. On one hand the other is considered as a rational, disembodied individual; on the other hand the other is a social-historical situated[13] individual. With regard to moral reasoning, Benhabib (1992) differentiates the *generalised other* – a rational individual with the same rights and obligations as oneself - from the *concrete other* – an individual with a specific history, identity, and an affective-emotional constitution. When we are deliberating a moral issue and consider the people involved as generalised others, Benhabib (1992) refers to the *veil of ignorance*. Since we do not take into account the specific historical and social context that influences the other's situation, the other disappears as an individual that could be known as similar to oneself and thus turns into the Other. An actual insight into the Other is not developed, nor is the insight developed

[13] The concept of situatedness is also derived from Haraway (1988) and indicates reflection on the social-historical context of an individual. This context implicates that we never gain an objective, overarching knowledge, but only a partial, a situated, knowledge.

that because of specific social and historical traits the Other might not have the same rights or obligations as oneself.

Television narratives could offer us insights into the other and ourselves that may be used to develop the moral imagination. Narratives give us the opportunity to 'live other people's lives' and to experiment with feelings and experiences (Widdershoven, 1993). Additionally, a true insight into the Other might be developed, thus turning the Other into the other. This insight, according to the literary culture, is crucial in order to prevent needless suffering.

§2.1.4 The Consequences for Television

We have seen in the previous paragraphs that the C/c dichotomy has its roots in the Age of Romanticism during which a 'critique' on the Enlightenment ideals of rationality was formulated. There are several consequences of this 'clash' between the ideals of the Enlightenment and the Romanticism ideals: a distinction between reason and emotion resulting in different ideas of what morality and moral reasoning should be like. Furthermore, a distinction between the private sphere (as connected to emotion) and the public sphere (as connected to reason) results in a difference between men and women in their approach to moral issues (i.e. the styles of moral reasoning). We can now turn back to our topic: television and morality, since the first and second dimension of the debate on television and morality (the rejection of certain genres) also are a result of these differences.

The sex difference[14] in the use of style of reasoning is connected to the artificial rational vs. emotional dichotomy (Gilligan et al., 1988). Johnson (1993) and Poole (1991) describe how reason and emotion during the Age of Enlightenment are constructed as a dichotomy. In addition, they are connected to the public and private domains. The private domain is (supposedly) ruled by emotion and the public domain by rationality. Benhabib (1992) and Poole (1991) both suggest that the styles of moral reasoning are also connected to the public and the private sphere. An

[14] 'Sex' refers to the physical characteristics of men and women; 'gender' refers to the sex-related socialisation of people (Goffman, 1976).

ethics of justice style can be expected to connect to the public sphere and an ethics of care style to the private sphere. The television genres that are generally rejected (i.e. light entertainment) usually deal with issues in the private sphere. For example, popular talk shows such as *Dr. Phil* and *Jerry Springer* always deal with topics in people's personal lives, all with feelings involved; docudrama often focuses on lost loved ones or specific personal problems (hence the term 'emotion TV'). Even though these genres often deal with moral issues connected to the private sphere, they are usually not taken seriously as offering valuable moral narratives. This rejection of the moral value of these genres is primarily caused by the dominant view on morality as being based in reason only. It will be interesting to see which styles of reasoning, connected to which moral issues, are offered by the various genres of prime-time television in the Netherlands. Do soap operas, popular talk shows and docudrama only offer us ethics of care style of reasoning connected to issues taking part in the private sphere? And do current affairs and news programmes only offer us an ethics of justice style of reasoning connected to the public sphere? It is anticipated that the two styles of moral reasoning might be related to genre and to moral issues, with reasoning through an ethics of care more prevalent in fictional genres such as drama and soap opera - because these genres deal more often with private matters - and reasoning through an ethics of justice more prevalent in non-fictional genres like news, current affairs and talk shows.

§2.2 The Narrative and Moral Imagination

In the previous paragraphs, the insights we could gain from television narratives were explicated: which issues, dilemmas and questions could be deemed morally relevant, what different solutions can be considered, and finally, what are the consequences of our moral decisions in terms of consequences and feelings for the Other and ourselves (Johnson, 1993)? Though, as we have seen with Schudson's (1989) explanation of 'how culture works', (§1.2) what is inside the cultural toolbox still needs to be used by the audience. In other words, what are the conditions governing how and when the moral imagination is developed through narrative? Some

of the next questions in need of answers are: What do we understand as a narrative? Do we 'just' develop a capacity for moral imagination from any narrative we are confronted with? Are all narratives equally suitable? The literary framework also offers us insights into the conditions necessary to develop moral imagination. These conditions are concerned with the content of the narrative and the reader of the narrative. How these conditions apply to television narratives will be explained after it becomes clear what exactly we speak of when we discuss narrative.

§2.2.1 Television as a Narrative Medium

Television is not always considered as a narrative medium. And, as we have seen in chapter 1, television is rarely considered to offer narratives that are of value for the development of moral imagination. To complicate things even more, the term 'narrative' has multiple meanings. For example, sometimes the terms 'narrative' and 'story' are conflated. While one person speaks of narratives when referring to fairytales and bedtime stories, another speaks of narratives only when a certain narrative structure can be identified. In this study I will use the term 'narrative' to indicate the stories people use to make sense of everyday life. Some of these narratives are fairy tales or bedtime stories, while other narratives are television programmes or a recounting of life experiences.

Narrative, then, is a textual mode in which events are represented in a certain sequence (Berger, 1997; Thwaites, Davis and Mules, 2002). A narrative can be understood as 'one of the main textual strategies used by seemingly very different texts to represent reality … Narrative is a way cultural signs are organized.' (Thwaites et al., 2002: 118). Narrative is an organising principle. It organises a series of actions, events and experiences into a whole. These events can be considered as different from the narrative, and only together (as a whole) can they be thought of as a narrative (Chatman, 1978). Internal coherence of the narrative is pivotal to keeping these actions, events and experiences together, and not necessarily a chronological or spatial continuity or a connection to an individual (Verschaffel, 1990). Chatman (1981) explains this as the double time structuring of narratives: the time of the presentations of the events

in the text, and the time sequence of the plot events. According to Chatman, these two time orders are independent of each other. Though this might sound mystifying, it is an easy viewpoint to understand when we think of soap opera. Several actions of different characters in different spaces together have meaning as one narrative; it is their internal coherence, the relationships of the events with one another that construct this meaning (even though the time sequence is often not chronological, for example because of the use of flashbacks, dream sequences, and visualisation of fantasy).

A narrative represents the events in a certain time sequence (which does not mean *chronological* per se), which is known as the 'structure' of the narrative. The structure can take multiple forms, though one structure is dominant: equilibrium - disruption - equilibrium/closure (Kozloff, 1992; Porter Abbott, 2002; Thwaites et al., 2002). The first equilibrium contains a situation in which we find a certain balance, nothing much happens, all is at peace. For example, a mother duck and her six ducklings swim in a small creek on a spring day. Then a disruption arises that upsets the balance. A huge rat appears that wants to eat the ducklings. This disruption needs a solution in terms of the balance being restored. The mother duck pecks the rat in the eye. When the balance is restored, the second equilibrium, and often a closure, is reached. The danger is warded off, mother duck and the ducklings are swimming in a creek. All is at peace again and the narrative comes to an ending. According to Kozloff (1992) and Thwaites et al. (2002), this basic structure of a narrative is very often used in television programmes.

Even though there is a dominant structure to narrative, narrative is not fixed to one genre. As Barthes (1985: 95) explains: 'it [narrative] is present in myth, legend, fable, tale, tragedy, comedy, epic, history, pantomime, painting […], stained-glass window, cinema, comic book, news item, conversation.' Narrative thus transcends genre, meaning that not only drama series can be considered as narratives, but also non-fictional genres such as news, game shows, and current affairs (Barthes, 1985; Fiske, 1987; Kozloff, 1992; Berger, 1997). In fictional genres it just seems easier to identify the narrative form. For example the sitcom *Friends* is

composed of episodes in which the basic narrative structure is used each time. In each episode the characters lead their daily lives, they work, they have relationships and they visit the local coffee shop. The state of affairs is set, there is equilibrium. Then an issue arises (disruption). Rachel falls for roommate Joey and wonders what to do, Phoebe's brother and his wife are doomed to stay childless unless Phoebe becomes a surrogate mother, Chandler accidentally takes a seat on his father-in-law's lap and is pondering upon how to solve the situation. Within half an hour, all issues are solved and at the end of the episode balance is restored. However, even some sitcoms can be considered more complex than described above. In long-running sitcoms like *Friends* some events have impact on other events in later episodes, sometimes even in later seasons. Thus overarching narratives are also existent. For example the relationship between the characters Ross and Rachel in *Friends* has an impact on Ross's later relationships with other women (e.g. when standing at the altar, he calls his bride-to-be 'Rachel' instead of 'Emily', resulting in the end of that relationship).

As already argued, non-fictional genres can also be understood as a narrative. A game show, for example, starts with a welcoming word from the presenter. The competing candidates are introduced and their hobbies discussed. There is equilibrium. The disruption arises when the competition begins. Usually the contestants compete for money or valuable prizes. Ultimately one of the candidates wins and receives a prize. The equilibrium is restored, the contestants are thanked for being present, the programme ends. A game show can thus be read as a narrative about one contestant triumphing over another (Kozloff, 1992).

The narrative closure is of special importance for this study. A narrative closure refers to how the disruption is resolved and is to be distinguished from the narrative's ending. It is in restoring the balance that the preferred meaning (and as we will see the moral meaning) becomes visible. The importance of the closure is emphasised by Thwaites, Davis, & Mules (2002: 124): 'Accordingly, it is with narrative closure that the greatest pressure for the text's preferred reading may be activated'. Hall (1973) argues along similar lines when he explains that the preferred

meaning of a narrative is suggested in the closure. This preferred meaning suggested by the closure is what Porter Abbott (2002) refers to as moral clarity. White (1981: 14) goes even further when he argues that 'every [...] narrative has as its latent or manifest purpose to moralize the events of which it treats'. According to White, narratives are told in terms of following or not following the moral rules of the society or culture we live in.

One important note on the closure is that the absence of a specific closure might point out a polysemic potential. Porter Abbott (2002: 59) argues: 'And this openness is not necessarily a bad thing. By not closing, the plays of Shakespeare, like so many other powerful narratives, don't tell us what to think but cause us to think.' Porter Abbott (2002) explains how we tend to regard narratives with a closure as 'lesser' narratives (as being intended for children, for example). But, he asks, what is it that is actually wrong with a clear moral closure? In other words, according to Porter Abbott (2002), there are no reasons to expect failure or success for the narrative depending on the presence of closure.

It can be argued then that the narrative closure also can be understood as a moral closure. One might even argue that there might be a preferred moral meaning encoded in the television narrative. The preferred (moral) meaning of the television narratives is the main focus of the content analysis in chapter 3.

Though the narrative closure suggests a preferred moral meaning, a narrative is always polysemic, can have multiple meanings (Hall, 1973). According to Hall (1973) the (preferred) moral meaning encoded in the text is not always consistent with the moral meaning decoded by the audience. This polysemic potential is produced by both the text and the reader. The reader will be discussed in §2.2.2, while here I will discuss the part of the narrative. The polysemic potential of the narrative, the number of meanings a narrative might have, is not to be understood as indefinite. The elements in a narrative all have a function. These functions limit the multiple meanings of the narrative, but also reinforce them. Additionally, there are certain rules to the television narrative (for example, one can encounter an alien life form in a science fiction or cartoon series, but not

in a soap series or a western) (Chatman, 1978). This function of elements and the rules of the narrative are both important for the meaning encoded in the narrative (Hall, 1973; Fiske, 1987). There are two ways in which the narrative characteristics influence the meaning it might be given: genre and discourse.

Firstly, genre conventions are of importance for the meaning a narrative is given. In the short narrative about the mother duck and her ducklings, I neglected to insert a sentence about what happens when the rat gets pecked in the eye. The reader fills this gap in the narrative. As Kozloff (1992) explains, the temporal succession of events evokes a sense of causality (in this case, most readers would expect the rat to flee). In this sense, the reader has power over the narrative. However, the rules according to which the narrative gaps are filled by the reader is partly dependent on genre. If the narrative was of the nature documentary genre, the mother duck would be presented as trying to defend her offspring in the daily struggle for survival. The narrative would be closed with a statement such as, 'For today, the danger has been successfully averted, but the ducklings still have a long way to go before they reach the relative safety of adulthood.' On the other hand, if the narrative was of the cartoon genre, it would be no surprise if the mother duck subsequently took a hammer from under her wing and knocked the rat unconscious. The rat would follow up with more attacks, all in vain because the mother duck was too smart to be tricked. The narrative would end with a laughing duck and her ducklings, swimming off into the sunset, leaving behind a confused and dazed-looking rat. The event of pecking a rat in the eye and what happens next does get meaning according to some rules related to genre. Even a short and simple narrative about ducks can have multiple meanings that are to a certain extent defined by genre.

Secondly, the meaning of a narrative also relies on discourse. The most obvious meanings of a narrative — the preferred meanings as formulated by Hall (1973) — are dependent on societal discourses. A Foucauldian conception of discourse is used in this study. Discourse can thus be understood as a group of statements about a particular topic at a particular historical moment in a particular culture; a way of representing

the knowledge about this topic (Foucault, 1970). Discourse is related to power, in the sense that discourse determines the 'normal' at a certain time and place, but also has the power to distinguish and sanction the 'abnormal' in that same time and place (Foucault, 1970). According to Foucault (1970), there are internal and external procedures to control and delimit the discourses that tell us what is normal and what is not, what is true and what is not, who is to be taken seriously and who is not. These procedures will not be discussed in detail, but their results (inclusion and exclusion) will be important to the content analysis and the in-depth interviews.

Because of some discourses being dominant in a certain society and at a certain time, some meanings of the narrative are more obvious than others. For example, when watching a drama series in which friendship between two women is central, we do expect the characters involved to act in certain ways: that they stand up for each other, and are honest with one another. Furthermore, they will be around the same age, or at least both will be adults, and their relationship will be the platonic kind. These expectations do not appear out of the blue and not only dependent on genre conventions, but part of a (Western) discourse about friendship (or as Raymond Williams (1990) would phrase it, which kind of friendship is *authorised* by society). Television narratives not only reproduce these societal discourses, but could also be thought of as (partly) producing these discourses. Part of this study will concentrate on which (moral) discourses are presented by television narratives in the Netherlands. What is defined as 'normal' and what as 'abnormal' in Dutch television narratives? What are the sanctions for the 'abnormal' in these narratives?

§2.2.2 The Content of Television Narratives

According to authors from the literary framework both the genre and the narrator are of importance. Nussbaum (1995; 1997) and Rorty (1989) emphasise that the literary narratives are not the sole resources to be used to develop the imagination. As Rorty argues (1989: xvi): 'This [a detailed description of others and a redescription of our selves] is a task not for theory but for genres such as ethnography, the journalist's report, the

comic book, the docudrama, and, especially, the novel.' What Rorty and Nussbaum do argue for is the importance of the 'realistic-fictional character' of the narrative. Nussbaum argues that a narrative's *fictional* nature enables the reader to identify with a character, thus establishing a sense of similarity or shared experience. The *realism* simultaneously allows the reader to keep a distance, so she or he can critically reflect on the experiences presented and become aware of differences with a particular character. This critical reflection makes it possible to develop compassion (Nussbaum, 1997).

Additionally, Nussbaum (1995; 1997) emphasises that narratives show us things that *could* have happened, not what *has* happened. This emphasis on the fictional nature of narratives also touches upon the question of whether the television narrative is true, or representative of our everyday reality, that is often central to debates on television content (Berger, 1997; Fiske, 1987; Fiske and Hartley, 2003; McQuail, 2005). And it is here, with the question of reality or realism, that we see a reappearance of the second dimension of the debate on television that dismisses specific genres.

The television narrative is different from everyday life. In television narratives the succession of events for example is many times faster, more intense, and more excessive than in everyday living. Nevertheless, the events in television narratives are recognisable since they do resemble events in everyday life (Berger, 1997). As Fiske and Hartley (2003: 128) argue: 'The more 'realistic' a programme is thought to be, the more trusted, enjoyable – and therefore the more popular – it becomes.' Fiske and Hartley (2003) refer to a sense of 'realism' that should be understood as a narrative producing a sense of credibility. Another conception of 'reality' refers to a sense of the narrative being more factual, closer to mirroring a representation of our lived, physical, experiences. The factuality refers to objectiveness, and therefore to rationality which is believed to be value-free. While this latter conception of reality in television is rarely objected to, the first conception of reality is often thought of as harmful. It is, for example, hard to imagine anyone objecting to the evening news because it would teach its audience a bad moral with

all its narratives on crime and war. Even though in this era of the digitalisation of television questions are asked about the relation between reality, visualisations and images (Van Dijck, 2002).

Television encompasses a large variety of genres, all with a unique sense of realism (for example the evening news narrating real events, or the realistic events in drama series). Due to hybridity and mutation more and more genres come into existence and there is much discussion on the use of strict genre categories (Turner, 2001). Creeber (2001) distinguishes seven main genres, namely, drama, soap opera, comedy, popular entertainment, children's television, news and documentary, all of which encompass sub-genres. For example, the main genre 'popular entertainment' contains the sub-genres of the quiz show, the celebrity talk show, the confessional talk show, sports, music on television, and advertising. Though in this study different genres will be distinguished during the content analysis, it is important to note (see also §2.2.1) that all genres can be thought of as narrative forms. The analysis of different genres becomes possible through the concept of narrative. The emphasis on fictional narratives in the literary framework and the sympathy for certain (mainly non-fictional) narratives (see §1.1.2) in (some) television studies makes it even more interesting to look at the moral content of different genres in prime time television.

The second feature of the narrative that is of importance for the development of moral imagination is the narrator. Nussbaum (1997) explains how the narrator has a certain power in determining the identification by making some characters more sympathetic and likable than other characters. The reader, or in this case the viewer, of the narrative will be inclined to identify with sympathetic characters and not with unsympathetic ones. The narrator has the power to influence the viewer of the narrative in deciding which characters are going to be recognised as 'similar to oneself' and which characters as the Other.

This perspective is very similar to Foucault's (1976) formulation of subject position. In his *L'Ordre du Discours* Foucault explains how discourse mechanisms determine who can be considered a subject and who cannot. Foucault (1970: 31): 'There is a rarefaction, this time, of the speaking

subjects; none shall enter the order of discourse if he does not satisfy certain requirements or if he is not, from the outset, qualified to do so.' Not all regions of discourse are accessible to all. Berger (1997) argues along similar lines when he describes how the role of narrator defines the distinction between subjects — who act and relate to others — and objects, whose actions are only described. So the narrator not only steers our insight into who is recognised as the Other or as similar to oneself, but also our insight into what position (subject or object) the Other might have in the narrative.

§2.2.2.1 Previous Studies: Morality In Prime Time Television

Many studies concentrate on the content of (prime-time) television. There are, in general, three categories of television content studies: studies that concentrate on role patterns, studies concentrating on communication patterns, and studies that concentrate on values in television (Alexander, 2001). I give a few examples here from the two categories concentrating on communication patterns and values in television. These studies more directly than other studies address a relationship between morality and television. Therefore they give us an idea of what we can think of when we relate television to morality.

Well known are the studies of Gerbner, on the film hero (1969) and on violence (1988). In his study on television violence, Gerbner uses a cultural indicators approach and focuses on violence as a scenario of social relationships with many potential lessons. For the purposes of the study, violence was defined as hurting and killing or threatening to do so, in any way and in any context. Gerbner's study implies that television is saturated with violence, but does not tell us what potential lessons can be distilled from television's content. The cross-cultural study on the film hero (Gerbner, 1969) contains a content analysis of what the film hero looks like. According to this study, a hero stands out as being bold, attractive, clean, and intuitive. Furthermore, a hero can have different goals (such as sexual and amorous goals, or evil goals). Though this study gives a broad insight into the character traits of the hero and his or her goals, the study

primarily reports on how many times character traits and goals were found and is not connected to morality.

Skill, Robinson and Wallace (1987), Skill and Wallace (1990), Strom Larson (1993), and Bryant, Aust, Bryant and Venugopalan (2001) focus on the representation of family and communication within the family on prime time television. Their results indicate that families on prime time television are strongly-tied units that support each other, no matter what happens. Family is represented as the cornerstone of society. Though these studies do concentrate on the value of family as presented in television, there is no direct link to morality. Nevertheless, these are interesting results when referring back to the moral panic partly revolving around family values (see §1.1.1), as television is usually blamed for devaluating family values.

Selnow (1990, 1986) focuses on values in prime-time television, to conclude that the values present in American television are the traditional values in American society. Furthermore, Selnow argues that the 'good' personal values are enforced since they are connected to people with authority, thus arguing that television also has a positive message. However, Selnow emphasises the 'Americanness' of the values. It will be interesting to see which 'good personal values' are presented in Dutch prime time television.

Another example concentrating on the ethical value of television is Hawkins' (2001) study on how entertainment over the years has become more and more a guide to how to live the good life (in a philosophical sense). However, her study focuses on the documentary and lifestyle programmes and does not review other genres. Hawkins' (2001) study does raise questions about other genres though.

Harrington and Bielby (1991) concentrate on fictional representations of romance, arguing that these representations depict cultural norms, mores and ideals. They conclude that the representations of romance can still be called traditional in the sense that they depict romance as a case of lifelong commitment and self-sacrifice. Which norms, mores, and ideals on romance are depicted in contemporary television in the Netherlands is a question still to be answered.

Rosenkoetter's (1999) study focuses on the moral lessons in situation comedy (according to Rosenkoetter, around half of the episodes in sitcoms presents a moral lesson). Furthermore, he studies the effects these moral lessons have on children's pro-social behaviour. He concludes with the statement that sitcoms can have positive addition in terms of (moral) lessons on what pro-social behaviour is. Again, questions of other genres' positive value are raised.

Last but not least, Baym's (2000) research on how a sense of moral authority is constructed in the news. The news items analysed can be considered as maintaining (and updating) the consensus on what is right and wrong and who can say so. It would be interesting to see what other forms of authority are represented in other television genres.

These studies deal with moral themes in one way or another, and give us a first impression of how to relate television narratives to morality. Questions that arise are: which moral themes are presented in television, how many times are they presented, or are moral themes available in various genres. These are all questions that will be answered by the content analysis in chapter 3.

§2.2.3 The Viewer of the Television Narrative

Schudson (1989) explained how the television narrative as a toolkit requires the audience's agency (which is similar to the decoder in Hall's (1973) encoding/decoding model as explained in §1.2). In a similar vein, the literary framework poses the reader as a second relevant factor for the development of a capacity for moral imagination.

People formulate episodes and experiences in their lives in narrative form. This does not mean that all experiences take narrative form (Varga, 1990; Jansz, 1993). An experience such as getting up and eating breakfast in the morning does not need interpretation, since it is a daily routine. An experience such as a first date with someone attractive, however, will get meaning in narrative form. We can imagine telling a friend about how the date went and how we interpret what happened. The meaning of what happened, what was said, which looks were exchanged - all would be formulated in narrative form. Trying to imagine a non-

narrative form of recounting and interpreting such an experience simply seems impossible. These narratives, however, are constructed out of other narratives; narratives we learn in the society we live in, in school, from our parents, and from television, and that we use to interpret and give meaning to our experiences.

The meaning given to a narrative is very much dependent on the social-historical background of the viewer. Readers with different identities will respond to different aspects of the text. Each human being has his or her own specific social-historical context that forms a unique frame of references (Fiske, 1987). This frame of references allows for different meanings given to the text (see also: Gerbner, 1985; Johnson, 1993; Boler, 1997; Bogdan et al., 2000; Turiel, 2002). However Berger (1997) notes that maybe these differences in the meanings given to a text are far less significant than the similarities between readers. Maybe, Berger argues, one's characteristics are less determining for one's reaction on a text than is one's state of mind on a particular moment, or one's emotions.

In addition, narratives offer us a certain flexibility in dealing with our social-historical context and simultaneously limit us in shaping our lives. As Johnson (1993) explains, a daughter cannot withdraw from the family and the history of that family she is born into. Nevertheless, there is a possibility for flexibility: there is a limited opportunity to choose *how* the daughter wishes to fulfil her part as a daughter; there are different narratives available to her to give meaning to her role as a daughter. For example, she can be the daughter taking her elderly father into her home and providing him with daily care. Otherwise, she can be the daughter that arranges a good nursing home for her old father. The decision for either option is very much dependent on the social-historical context of the daughter. (Where does she live? What kind of duties does she have? How is the relationship between her and her father?) Thus, this flexibility is a part of moral imagination.

According to Johnson (1993: 180) this flexibility is interdependent with our narrative understanding: 'Our moral reasoning is situated within our narrative understanding.' The need to explain ourselves to people in a

narrative form, to decide which actions are appropriate in which (moral) situation are, according to Johnson (1993) not due to logical reasoning, but are essential to being human. Narratives are the foundation for our moral imagination (and hence to become morally mature). For example, imagine having to reflect on the moral question of donating one's organs after death. There are multiple narratives that we could use to deliberate the question and come to a decision on which action would be appropriate. There are narratives that frame this as a religious issue and would formulate having, for example, a kidney disease, as God's command. As a human being you should not overrule God and donate your organs (resulting in curing the disease). Other narratives that also frame this issue as a religious standpoint could argue to 'love one's neighbour' and therefore promote donating one's organs. Yet other narratives apply a material conception of human life and consider the human body as nothing more than a cluster of chemical combinations. In that case we can imagine that organ donation would be chosen, since it is just chemistry. The narratives used to reflect upon a moral issue depend on the individual involved.

Several authors from the literary traditions do emphasise different characteristics of the reader that are of importance for the development of moral imagination. We can distinguish three important characteristics: sex, age, and ethnicity. Bogdan (1992; Bogdan et al., 2000) and Boler (1997) both argue for a situated and embodied perspective when concerned with moral imagination. From a gender perspective Bogdan (1992; Bogdan et al., 2000) explains how identification (important to evoke the reflection needed to develop the imagination) while reading a narrative is not always a positive experiment. When a woman for example identifies with a misogynistic character in a narrative she is identifying against herself. This kind of identification and its consequences (1992; Bogdan et al., 2000) might be harmful for the individual (and thus, a narrative can also have a negative effect).

Megan Boler (1997) adopts Nussbaum's concept of developing the imagination and argues that the imagination does not just develop all by itself. Reflecting on one's own situatedness is vital for the development of the imagination:

'Although used to give the illusion of universalised experience, empathy cannot produce one kind of universal relation between reader and text. Empathy is produced within networks of power relations represented by reader and text, mediated by language, narratives, genres and metaphors.' (Boler, 1997: 261)

According to Boler it is not a matter of course to critically reflect on anything while reading and to develop imagination. An active mode of reading and reflecting on the power structure one lives in is quintessential in becoming morally mature. Boler does emphasise ethnicity, while Bogdan emphasises gender. If these two characteristics are important for developing the moral imagination through reading literary narratives, they are expected to be of similar importance for developing it through television narratives.

Elliot Turiel (2002) explains how people of different ages deliberate different moral issues. He bases his viewpoint on research and argues that this is caused by the degree of relevancy of different moral issues in different phases of one's life. It could be anticipated, then, that people from different age groups do relate to different moral issues in the television narrative.

Finally, I would like to argue that educational level is also an important characteristic. Firstly, since Kohlberg (1984) situates the difference in moral level between people according to social class (i.e. blue collar workers and women are on a lower level than men on a higher position in society). Secondly, the literary culture presents us with this issue. The authors who emphasise the value of literary narratives such as Thomas Mann and Marcel Proust assume a certain educational level in order to be able to read these narratives. In this way, I would argue, exclude people with a lower educational level from becoming morally mature. For these two reasons, it will be interesting to see whether educational level does make a difference, or whether television is a class-transcending medium as Gerbner (1969) claims it to be.

This unique social-historical context of the individual is based on narratives but is also indicative of which narratives appeal to us and which meaning they are given. Cooper (2001) formulates this in terms of

relevancy, while Bird (2003) speaks of a personal chord that needs be struck. Both authors point towards the same concept: one's social-historical context determines when a narrative becomes interesting or important to us, and how we make sense of it. Television narratives offer us insights into the different roles we can fulfil within our unique context. Nonetheless, our unique context also determines the meaning we give to the television narratives.

§2.2.3.1 Previous Studies: Moral Reflection Induced by Television

As with moral content of television narratives, there are to my knowledge no studies on television narratives and moral reflection in general. Nevertheless, there are some studies that do concentrate on specific moral themes or on moral reflection of special interest groups such as adolescents. This short overview presents an idea on how to relate television to the moral reflection of its viewers.

Recently, Lumby (2003) described how teenage girls use reality television (in this case *Big Brother* is discussed) to reflect on everyday morality. She argues that reality television 'might be said to humanise ethical dilemmas, which are too often discussed in abstract terms, and to offer a forum for reflection on the politics of everyday life.' (Lumby, 2003: 23). Of course this raises the question of whether other genres offer similar forums, but also of which ethical reflections are evoked, which dilemmas are reflected upon and how they are discussed.

Bachen and Illouz (1996) studied young people's romantic imagination. They focused on popular media images of romance and what young people expected on a romantic level in their own everyday living. Bachen and Illouz (1996) conclude that media images are very much recognisable in young people's expectations and ideals about romance. Interestingly, they also conclude that characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, and social class are unimportant when concerned with romantic imagination. Their results do raise important questions about moral imagination in general and viewer characteristics as discussed in the previous paragraph.

Close to the previous studies are the studies Gauntlett (1995) describes that address the idea that children and adolescents actually do pick up on implicit moral messages in the television programmes they watch. The studies (by Grant Noble) are from the seventies and show that instead of corrupting television drama can constitute moral values. Which moral values and whether the people in which the values would be constituted can be adults as well instead of children and adolescents is unknown.

Last but not least, Bird (2003) discusses how scandals on television (especially in tabloid-style television programmes) interrogate the moral values and moral boundaries in society. Though Bird does make her point in a study on scandals in 'tabloid tv', her argument on why popular narratives actually are popular (their importance for interrogating morality) might be applicable to other genres and topics as well. Chapter 4 will concentrate on the reception of representations of moral insights in prime time television.

§2.3 Critical Notes on the Literary Framework

In the previous paragraphs a framework derived from the literary tradition is developed in order to research how television narratives can be of value for the development of moral imagination. This development is necessary to become morally mature. Becoming morally mature through is necessary to diminish the needless suffering in the world. If we become morally mature, we will make better decisions about what moral actions should be taken and we will prevent others from coming to harm as best we can (Rorty, 1989; Nussbaum, 1995). This noble aim and its supporting theory lead me to ask a few additional questions to the critical notes already heard from Boler and Bogdan.

Firstly, the emphasis in the literary tradition is on theory. No matter how plausibly the different authors propose their viewpoints, empirical research is scarce. One of the aims of this study is to add empirical research to the literary framework.

Secondly, the literary framework seems discriminatory from a class perspective. Within the literary framework it is often assumed that

everyone has access to literary narratives. I object to this point of view since not everyone is able to read, not everyone has the same mental abilities, not everyone has the time to read literary narratives, nor does everybody enjoy literary narratives. As Hartley (1992: 154) puts it: 'Shakespeare's art is lost on generations of groaning students [...], for whom it is as universal and liberating as a well-swung sock full of sand.' It seems peculiar and contradictory in an argument for getting to know the Other through a classic literary canon (Marcel Proust, Thomas Mann, et cetera) that the Other seems already defined. Another question that arises is what happens to cultures that do not know the script as a central axis of their culture? Are they not able to become morally mature?

Thirdly, I want to raise questions about the arguments formulated by Martha Nussbaum. Nussbaum (1997) discusses the development of a capacity for sympathetic imagination through Greek tragedy and how in ancient times tragedies were explicitly used as a narrative resource. Bringing to mind Sophocles' Antigone or Euripides' Helena, we have to ask ourselves: knowing that the Greeks watched these kind of tragedies time after time, and if we suppose they would develop a capacity for sympathy with the Other through these tragedies, why then did the Other, women or slaves for example, have such a wretched position in ancient Greek society? Or could the opposite be argued, that their position would have been worse without the tragedies? Nussbaum (1997) herself touches upon this subject when she argues that even though sympathy evoked by a narrative does not effect immediate change, this should not keep us from valuing its worth. Despite this, however, there seems to be a gap in her argument. We will return to this topic in chapter 4 when the results of the interviews are discussed.

In the next chapters the development of moral imagination will be researched. Special attention will be paid to these critical remarks.

§2.4 Research Questions

To answer the main question of this study, as formulated in chapter 1: How do people in the Netherlands us e television narratives as a resource to develop a capacity for moral imagination in order to become morally

mature? this chapter developed a literary framework that can be used to study the relationship between television and moral maturity. It was explained what a narrative was, which insights constructing moral imagination a narrative can offer, and how the content and the viewer of the narrative are of equal importance. Additionally, in each paragraph questions were raised that will be answered in the coming chapters. For reasons of clarity, the questions and assumptions for each partial study are summarised here first.

The first partial study concerns a content analysis of Dutch prime-time television narratives. As explained in §2.2.1, §2.2.2, and §2.2.2.1, the research questions for this partial study concentrate on the three moral insights: insight into morally relevant issues, into moral deliberation, and into the human character. Furthermore, the different genres in Dutch television are taken into account:

I. *Which issues, dilemmas, questions and rules are presented as morally relevant in Dutch television narratives?*
II. *Which ways of moral deliberations on moral issues, dilemmas or questions are presented in Dutch television narratives?*
III. *Who is presented as a moral subject in Dutch television narratives?*
IV. *In what way do television genres in the Netherlands differ in terms of insights into moral issues, moral deliberation and moral subjects presented?*

The second partial study concerns a reception analysis of the moral insights offered by television narratives. As explained in §2.2.3 and §2.2.3.1, this study will concentrate on the three moral insights and the meaning of the sex, age, ethnicity and class of the individual for the reception of these insights. Central aim of chapter four is to explore how the three insights offered by television narratives are used to develop the moral imagination in order to become morally mature. The main questions for this study are:

I. *How do people of different sex, age, ethnic group, or educational level in the Netherlands use the moral insights offered by television narratives to reflect on everyday moral issues?*
II. *How does genre preference matter for the development of moral imagination of the individual?*

The third partial study involves a survey, in order to be able to examine whether the results from the previous study are valid for larger groups. A specific aim is to distinguish moral television generations. The word 'generations' does not so much refer to age groups as to cohorts that can be distinguished on the basis of their use of television narratives to develop the imagination. The concept of moral television generations will be developed further in chapter 5. The leading question for this study is:

Do people with different demographic characteristics in the Netherlands differ in using television narratives as a resource to develop moral imagination?

Hypotheses for this study can only be derived from the content and reception analyses. The survey's aim is to study the results of the interviews for a larger group that is representative of the Netherlands, and therefore the results of the interviews will be of influence on the survey's content. Nevertheless, it is possible to formulate some hypotheses at this stage. The four characteristics of sex, age, ethnicity and educational level are of importance, as will be the three moral insights, and genre preference. The hypotheses can be formulated as follows:

I. *Men and women differ in the use of television narratives to reflect on moral insights.*
II. *People from different age categories differ in the use of television narratives to reflect on moral insights.*
III. *People with a difference in educational level differ in the use of television narratives to reflect on moral insights.*

IV. People with a dissimilar genre preference differ in the use of television narratives to reflect on moral insights.

A mixed-method design, namely sequential triangulation, is used to answer all these research questions. Sequential triangulation points to a form of triangulation in which qualitative as well as quantitative methods are used in different phases of the study. The results of the first phase of a study are essential for the second phase (Creswell, 1994). The first research question is answered through a qualitative content analysis of television narratives in the Netherlands, focusing on the three moral insights as presented. The results of the content analysis are used to develop a topic list for the in-depth interviews. During the interviews the moral insights offered by narratives will be addressed, to study what the viewer actually does with these insights. The second question is thus answered by reception analysis. The results from the reception analysis and from the content analysis are used to develop a survey in order to answer the third question. In chapters 3, 4 and 5 a detailed description of the methodology will be given, and I will elaborate on how the results of the previous chapters are used in the next.

CHAPTER 3. MORAL INSIGHTS IN PRIME TIME TELEVISION

To answer the first research questions focussing on the moral content of television (as formulated in §2.4) two weeks of prime-time television were analysed. As this is an exploratory study that concerns narrative, a method of narrative analysis was designed[15]. This study then is of a two-sided nature. On one hand some categories of analysis are already defined as explained in chapter 2. These already-defined categories concern the moral issues, ways of moral deliberation, and moral subjects. On the other hand this study also has an explicit exploratory nature, meaning that the analysis did not only focus on the defined categories, but also on insights 'outside the box'. These included moral issues not yet defined from theoretical insights, and characteristics of moral subjects that are not defined by the literary tradition as being of relevance. Additionally, this dual nature of analysis also means that the results are presented in a diverse style that suits the analysis.

§3.1 A Mixed Method Analysis

To gain insight into the moral insights offered by television narratives in the Netherlands, two weeks of prime-time television were analysed. The first week ran from 5 May to 11 May 2003, the second from 6 September to 12 September 2004. The first week was analysed entirely analysed by me, the second week was analysed in cooperation with a student assistant[16]. To train the student about one third of the programmes were analysed together, thus ensuring a large amount of agreement. The selection of the seven channels analysed was based on their relatively large market shares of least 5% each in May 2003 (Stichting Kijkonderzoek, 2003). Included were the three public channels Nederland 1, Nederland 2, and Nederland 3, and the four commercial channels RTL 4, Yorin, SBS 6 and Net 5.

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[15] The entire method of analysis was developed in cooperation with a research group focussing on similar themes in British, Swedish and Georgian primetime television respectively, supervised by Dr. I.C. Meijer at the Amsterdam School of Communications Research.

[16] Govrien Oldenburger is thanked for her efforts and the enormous amount of work she has done for the project.

(Channels such as RTL 5, V8, MTV, TMF and National Geographic were excluded because they had a market share of less than 5%).

Since television in the Netherlands attracts the most viewers between 8pm and 10pm, programmes in this timeslot were recorded. All programmes that for the greater part fell within the prime-time slot were included. Programmes that started before 7:30pm or ended later than 10:30pm were excluded from the analysis. This meant that most soccer games and movies were excluded, which is a serious limitation to this study since it means that two genres are more or less absent. Furthermore, the prime-time slot constitutes another limitation, since it excludes children's programmes. However, since this is an exploratory study with the aim of forming a first impression of moral insights in television narratives, I think these limitations are surmountable. In total, for the week of May 2003 80.3 hours of prime time television were included in the analysis. In September 2004 81.3 hours could be included. In total 161.6 hours of television programmes have been analysed on the moral insights they offer. A complete list of the programmes analysed can be found in Appendix I.

In order to distinguish different genres, which was a vital step towards answering the fourth research question (i.e. *In what way do television genres in the Netherlands differ in terms of insights into moral issues, moral deliberation and moral subjects presented?),* all programmes were allocated to a genre. Using Creeber's (2001) typology of genres freely, fifteen genres are identified in prime time in this study: news, current affairs, crime report, docudrama/reality TV, documentary, game show, lifestyle/service, music programme, talk show, sports, satire, comedy, drama series, movie, soap opera. In total six programmes could not be allocated to a genre. Since the research question is rooted in the assumption of the literary culture that (realistic) fictional narratives are most suitable as a resource to be used to develop the imagination (see §2.2.2) the genres are grouped together in three categories: fictional genres, non-fictional genres, and infotainment/entertainment genres. I refer to Appendix I for an overview of analysed programmes per genre.

One particular feature of prime-time television in the Netherlands is its enormous variety in origin of programmes. Next to programmes of Dutch origin, there is a relatively large amount of programmes of, among others, American, German, and British origin. Referring back to Gerbner's cultivation thesis (see §1.1.2), the variety in origin of programmes offers an opportunity to look at the homogeneity of moral insights in programmes of different countries. An additional question in this study then is: '*What moral insights do programmes originating in different countries offer?*' This question will be answered in §3.6.

In order to answer the first research question (*Which issues, dilemmas, questions and rules are presented as morally relevant in Dutch television narratives?*), the attention was initially focused on the (verbal) moral closure of the narrative. As explained in §2.2 the narrative closure is of importance for the preferred (moral) meaning. Therefore it seems useful as the starting point of analysis because with the restoration of the narrative's equilibrium, (moral) judgement may be passed on its preceding events (Thwaites et al., 2002).

This moral closure was identified on the basis of specific verbal expressions in the narratives. According to Rachels (2003) *moral* expressions can be recognised by three characteristics: firstly their use of 'ought' and 'should', secondly their aim on conduct, and thirdly a good/bad evaluation. Thus, the moral closure is recognised on the basis of these three characteristics. Of the 161.6 hours of the prime-time programming analysed, 96.5 hours ended on a specific moral note. An example of a programme with a verbal moral closure is the current affairs programme *Nieuw Economisch Peil (New Economics*). This programme dealt with the pros and cons of globalisation and the solution to world poverty. After globalisation activists on both sides argued their case, the programme concluded with a statement from the anti-globalisation activist Noreena Hertz. She claimed that if we care about our future, we should do something about world poverty, thus arguing that it is our moral obligation to help poor countries.

Other programmes in the sample failed to have such unambiguous moral closure. One example is an episode from the Canadian series *Rail*

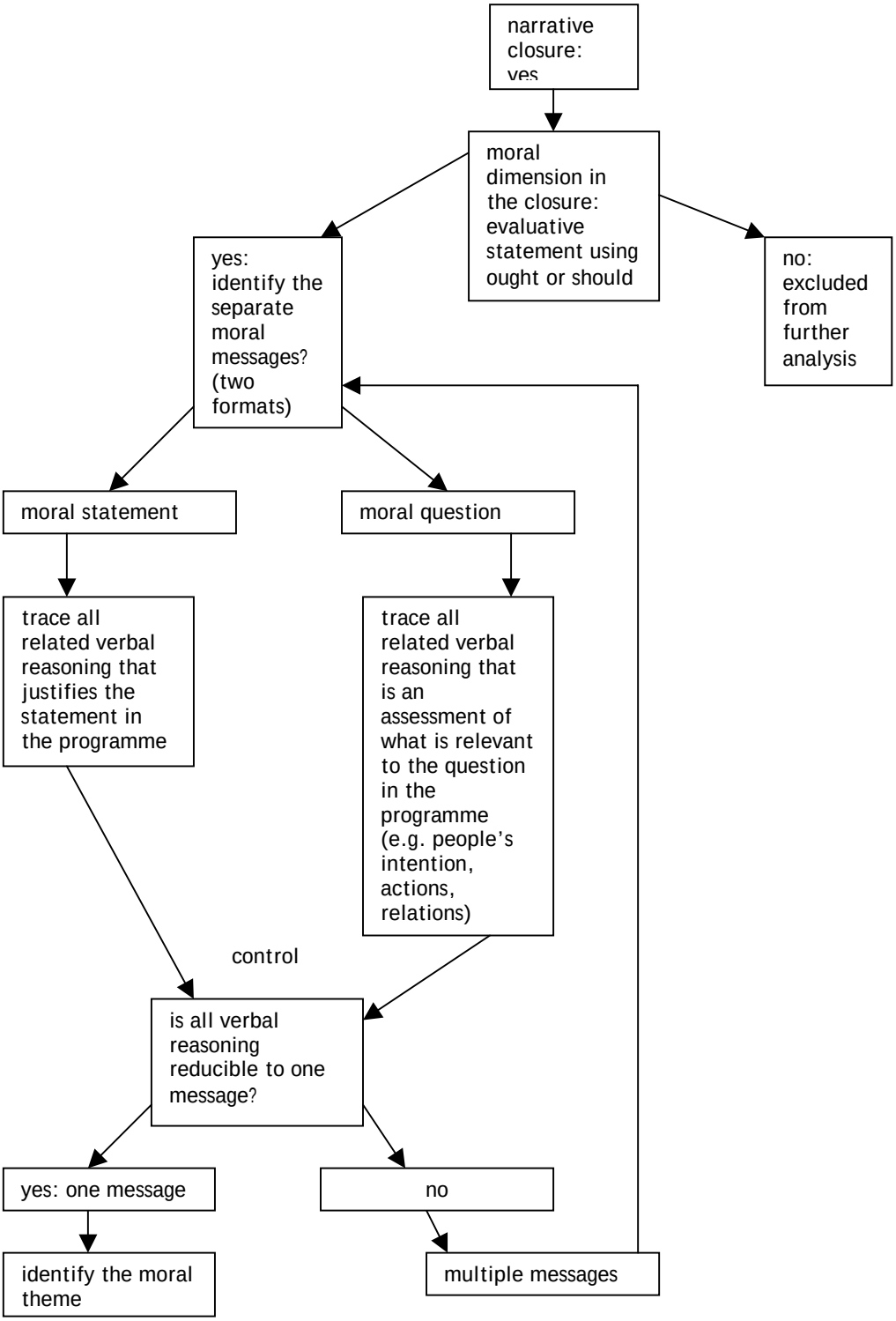
Away, an informational travel programme that featured a train trip from Halifax to Toronto, giving information on the different cities along the way and closing with a reference to the subject of the series' next episode. Other narratives sometimes presented a moral theme, but did not have moral closure and were thus excluded from the analysis. However, this exclusion does not mean that the programme does not have a moral significance. On the contrary, as Porter Abbott (2002) explains, the lack of closure might indicate a potential for inducing reflection (see also §2.2). Nevertheless, of the 157 programmes analysed, only 11 contained some sort of morality but did not have a moral closure. Most of these programmes were of the satiric fictional kind (for example: *Frasier*, *Curb Your Enthusiasm*, *The Powers That Be*). Again, I want to argue that the exclusion of 11 programmes is defensible due to the exploratory nature of this study.

In connection to the previous limitation, visuals were not explicitly taken into account during the analysis, even though television is pre-eminently a visual medium. However, the visual features of television can be expected to carry similar messages as the verbal text does. Maybe the visual supports, nuances, diminishes, enlarges, undermines, or amplifies the verbal, but it rarely communicates an entirely different message. Some genres, such as current affairs, news programmes, and soap series, emphasise the verbal. Other genres, such as action movies, drama, and satire, more often emphasise the visual. Not taking the visual into account might therefore result in an under- or over-estimation of moral messages, but not in an entirely wrong assessment. Hence, I do believe that this exploratory study does give us genuine insight into the morality in prime-time television.

For the programmes in the sample with an explicit moral closure, the moral theme(s) and moral messages were identified. In a sense, the analysis went backwards through the programme. Once a moral closure was found, the moral messages conveyed by the closure were identified. These moral messages may be presented as either a moral statement, such as 'A child should be the number one priority in your life.' (*Birth Stories*; docudrama), or a specific question, involving, for instance, 'How should

one deal with a relationship that has turned into a daily grind?' (*Hearts and Bones*; drama series). After identifying all moral messages, the moral theme(s) they constructed were named. Based on related studies discussed in §2.2.2.1 and §2.2.3.1 some moral themes were formulated beforehand. These themes are: family (Skill et al., 1987; Skill and Wallace, 1990; Strom Larson, 1993; Bryant et al., 2001), authority (Baym, 2000), heroism (Gerbner, 1969), violence (Gerbner, 1988), love (Bachen and Illouz, 1996), civil conduct (Rosenkoetter, 1999), the good life (Selnow, 1990; Hawkins, 2001). Other moral themes emerged during the analysis, due to the fact that the messages did not fit an already formulated moral theme. These themes included politics, death, conviction, friendship, and fairness. As an example, the moral message from *Birth Stories* stated above was identified as a message constructing the moral theme 'family'. Regularly, several moral messages in one programme were identified. Figure 1 shows how the identification of moral themes and moral messages took place.

Figure 1. Methodological flow chart of moral complexity in prime time television



To summarise, a moral theme is constituted by several moral messages. The moral messages are found in the moral closures of various programmes and can be formulated as either a moral statement or a moral question. The moral statements or questions have to comply with the three criteria of morality (the use of 'ought' and 'should', aim on conduct, and a good/bad evaluation). Furthermore, all arguments and questions related to the moral message throughout the programme are used to interpret the message and allocate it to a moral theme.

The second research question (i.e. Which ways of moral deliberation on moral issues, dilemmas or questions are presented in Dutch television narratives?) was answered through the analysis of all arguments or questions that were tied to the moral messages. As explained in §2.1.2, inspired by Gilligan (1982, 1988), two styles of moral reasoning are adopted: an ethics of justice style of reasoning and an ethics of care style of reasoning. Every argument or question was assessed on style of reasoning. For example, in the drama series *Spoed (Emergency*; hospital drama*)* one of the plot lines deals with the practice of a process-server. The moral message declares: 'If you borrow money, you ought to pay it back.' (This message was allocated to the moral theme 'civil conduct'.) The message is constructed throughout the programme with eight arguments. An argument such as: 'The only thing we [the process-servers] do, is maintain the law. People get what they deserve,' is assessed as an ethics of justice style of reasoning. The rules are blindly applied to an individual that is not situated or embodied. Another argument constructing this message runs: 'Maybe they [people in debt] cannot always be blamed for their problems and we should take that into consideration.' Since this argument takes into account the specific situation and aims at solving the problem in the best way for all (i.e. trying to prevent people coming to harm), this argument is assessed as an ethics of care style of reasoning.

The third research question (*Who is presented as a moral subject in Dutch television narratives?*) was addressed by assessing who formulated a question or argument, and whose point of view was presented. When

possible, the subject was described in terms of sex, age, ethnicity, class, region, et cetera. As explicated in §2.2.3 four characteristics (sex, age, ethnicity, and class) are especially relevant since they are emphasised in the literary framework more than others. Therefore, special attention was paid to these characteristics of the subjects. Furthermore, social class was divided into three main categories: lower class, middle class, and upper class. Age was also categorised according to the age categories used by Statistics Netherlands (*Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek),* resulting in five categories: 20 years or younger, 21 to 40 years of age, 41 to 65 years of age, 66 to 80 years of age, 81 years and older.

Characteristics of the subjects formulating the moral questions or arguments were often not readily identifiable and had to be estimated. Sex was the only characteristic of the subjects in the two analysed weeks that was easily identified. In opposition, age, class, and sometimes ethnicity were not always obvious features. Famous Dutch people were often traced on the Internet for their biographies, as were actors in American dramas, in order to establish their age and ethnicity. The tracing of the more famous people did function as a sensitising process towards these characteristics, as the estimation was made first and checked later (most often through the Internet). Additionally, I would like to argue that when someone appears to be 35 years old in a television programme, but in reality is 47 for example, one can still argue that the subject position presented on television is one in the age category of 35. The same line of argument is valid for ethnicity. Ethnicity is often only visible when someone is presented as a representative of a certain ethnic minority group, when her or his name appears on the screen, or simply by skin colour. These characteristics obviously do not cover all ethnic representation on television. However, I think it reasonable to argue that when a person that originally belongs to an ethnic minority but does not appear as such, the subject position presented can be thought of as a white one.

§3.1.1 A Short Note on Two Weeks of Prime-Time Television

The results that are discussed in this chapter are based on two weeks of analysis. In discussing the results I will not distinguish week 1 from week 2. A question that immediately arises is whether a comparison of these two weeks is justified. The first week from 5 May to 11 May 2003 is the week of the Dutch celebration of the ending of World War II and the week in which the murder on the Dutch politician Pim Fortuyn in the previous year was commemorated. In contrast, the second week that ran from 6 September to 12 September 2004 knew no such national events, but contained the Darts World Cup that took up most of the broadcasting time of the commercial channel SBS 6, thus resulting in a higher amount of non-fictional programming. Nevertheless, the two weeks still seem comparable since most characteristics remained the same. For example the amount of hours per genre is similar:

Table 1. Amount of Hours per Genre per Week

	amount of hours week 1:	**amount of hours week 2:**
news	3.5	3.5
current affairs	9.4	5.6
docudrama	9.4	9.2
soap	2.5	4.0
sitcom	2.9	2.2
talk show	4.5	3.9
drama	17.0	12.2
game show	4.8	4.1
crime report	4.6	0.0
satire	1.8	5.1
documentary	2.9	5.6
sports	0.6	14.1
lifestyle/service	4.6	5.8
music television	4.3	3.8
film	5.2	1.7
other	2.5	0.6
total:	80.3	81.3

Though there are differences, the resemblance remains noteworthy. The largest difference is caused by the broadcasting of the Darts World Cup, resulting in 14.1 hours of sports in week 2. When one thinks of the kind of programming usually broadcast by SBS 6 (some current affairs, docudrama, drama series, and films) the number of hours for drama and film would be more equal, as well as the amount for current affairs. Surprisingly enough, this bias in hours per genre did not result in big differences for the spread of moral themes. As we can see in table 2, the three themes of civil conduct, the good life, and politics are dominant in both weeks.

Table 2. Themes per Week

theme:	week 1:	week 2:
love	9	10
family	17	7
friendship	3	4
civil conduct	25	26
authority	9	6
violence	6	2
death	4	0
conviction	2	0
heroism	7	2
good life	13	15
fairness	3	2
politics	16	16

In week 1 the theme 'family' was more dominant than it was in week 2. This result was probably caused by the amount of docudrama in week 1 that revolved around giving birth. Programmes such as the American *Birth Stories*, in which each episode follows three couples who will have a baby very soon, occupied almost 44% of the 9.4 hours of docudrama. In contrast, in week 2 no such programme was broadcast at all.

§3.2 Moral Issues in Dutch Prime Time Narratives

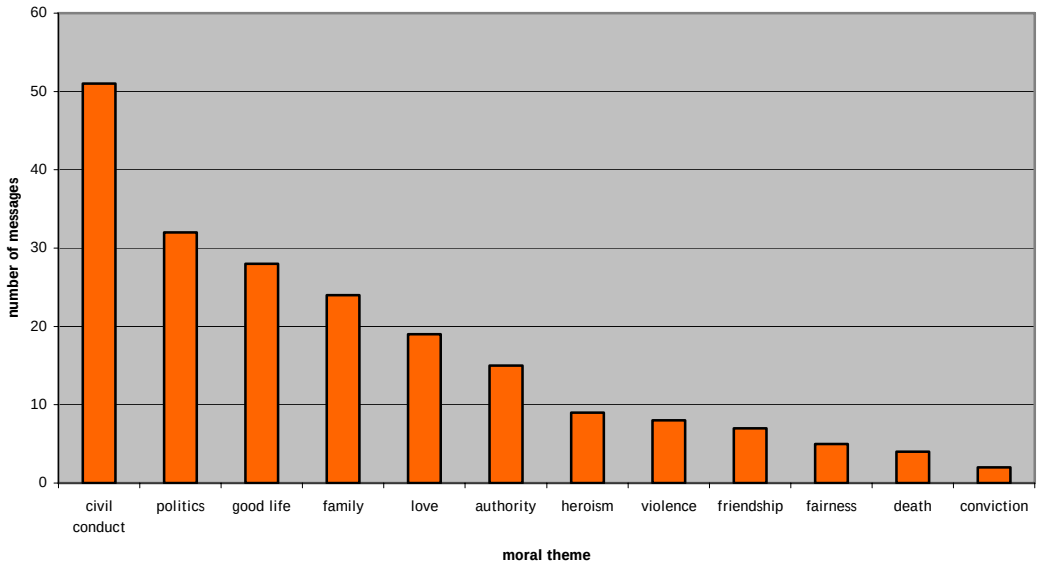
The first research question that now can be answered is:

Which issues, dilemmas, questions and rules are presented as morally relevant in Dutch television narratives?

The analysis of two weeks of prime-time television reveals that Dutch television narratives offer a variety of insights into moral issues. In total 204 moral messages were identified that constituted 12 moral themes: love, family, friendship, civil conduct, authority, violence, death, conviction, heroism, good life, fairness, and politics. The themes cover a large range of messages. For example the moral theme 'heroism' is constituted in prime-time narratives by nine moral messages such as: 'A real hero knows the difference between good and evil' (*Charmed*; drama series), 'When someone offers resistance to wrong social practice, he is a hero' (*NOS Journaal*; news), or 'A hero chooses to save lives over prestige.' (*John Doe*; drama series)[17]. The messages were spread over the moral themes as pictured in figure 2.

[17] Please note that the messages throughout this chapter are not always verbally formulated by the presenter or main characters in the programme the message was found. Sometimes the message was formulated by people being interviewed, or special guests of the programme.

Figure 2. Moral Messages per Theme



The first thing to notice is that the moral theme 'civil conduct' is overall dominant with a total amount of 51 messages. The themes of 'family' (24 messages), 'the good life' (28 messages), and 'politics' (32 messages) are also constituted by a larger amount of messages than other themes. Together, these four moral themes construct 66% of the total amount of moral messages[18].

§3.2.1 Moral Themes and Moral Discourses

As we have seen, four moral themes (politics, civil conduct, family and the good life) are constituted by more moral messages than others and together made up 66% of all moral messages in prime-time television. Since these four themes are so strikingly dominant and contain so many messages, it is possible to describe the discourses on civil conduct, politics, family, and the good life as constructed in this sample of Dutch prime-time television.

[18] What is interesting is that Herzog (1944) found the same themes dominating daytime serials on the radio in 1944. Apparently, the thematic content of entertainment does not change so much over time.

§3.2.1.1 Civil Conduct

The most dominant moral theme in the two weeks of prime-time television analysed is civil conduct. This theme is constructed by 51 moral messages and topics range from lying and keeping one's promises to employers stealing money from their employees. In total 190 questions or arguments were tied to these 51 messages. Most messages revolving around civil conduct were reasoned about in an ethics of justice style (88% of the time), and thus quite often formulated as moral rules (e.g. you should not lie). Furthermore, the messages seem to operate on three levels: an individual level, a social level and societal level. At the individual level, we find quite a few regulatory behavioural rules on civil conduct. For example, 'One should not lie' (*Goede Tijden, Slechte Tijden;* soap opera), 'One should always keep one's promises' (*Goede Tijden, Slechte Tijden;* soap opera), 'One should not value money over people' (*Het Glazen Huis;* soap opera), 'One should behave respectfully at a funeral' (*The Adam's Family;* docudrama), 'One should be respectful to one's neighbour' (*The Adam's Family;* docudrama), and 'One should not always speak one's mind' (*Jensen!*; talk show/*Sex and the City;* drama series). These messages are aimed at the individual; it is what 'you' should do. Though these rules are explicitly formulated, it is unclear what happens if one does not follow these rules. In that perspective, the excluding power of discourse does not seem very large (see §2.2.1 where the excluding power of discourse is explained).

The second category of messages on civil conduct operates on a social level. These are messages that tell us how one is supposed to deal with others in the same society. In other words, what is decent behaviour in direct relation to other people? Of course, 'not lying' also has to do with other people, but the formulation is directed towards the individual and individual behaviour, while messages in this category focus on interaction. The messages in this category explicitly indicate the second party for whom the individual's behaviour will have consequences. This social category contains messages such as 'You should always end a contract with your employer in a decent way' (*Patty's Posse*; docudrama), 'A game should always be fair' (*Tijd van ons leven;* game show/*Netwerk*; current affairs),

'Employers should not enrich themselves at the expense of employees' (*Zembla;* documentary), 'Psychiatric patients should be treated in a respectful manner' (*Je zal het maar hebben;* documentary), and 'What is good teamwork?' (*Mensen van de Dierentuin;* documentary). Again, the sanctions on not following these rules are not clear and can only be guessed at.

The third category of messages in prime-time narratives revolving around civil conduct operates on a societal level. This category contains messages revolving around (governmental) institutions and how they should behave in a decent manner. Topics range from forensic research to health care, but are all formulated as 'the decent thing to do' and therefore are allocated to civil conduct. Messages in this category tell us for example that 'Good health care is a question of decency' (*Netwerk;* current affairs), 'When the government makes a mistake, it should have the decency to take responsibility for it' (*Netwerk;* current affairs), and asks, 'What is a decent way to solve problems between different ethnic groups in society?' (*Netwerk*; current affairs). A good example is a discussion on forensic research in the current affairs programme *Netwerk*. In this programme the idea of transcending privacy matters through DNA-samples is discussed. It is pointed out that a DNA-sample gives much more information about a person than is needed for research in a crime case, for example whether the person is genetically prone to suffering a terrible disease such as cancer. Throughout the discussion, the moral issue revolves around the question of what would be a decent way of dealing with this privacy matter. It is in this category that sanctions become more visible. The consequences, though implicit in the programmes, could be harsh. For example, when the problems between ethnic groups in society are not resolved a society cannot function and, as suggested by the programme, could be a ground for racism. Similar argumentation can be used for good health care. If health care is not good, people might die.

Furthermore, the discourse on civil conduct operating on an individual level is mostly constructed in fictional programmes (soap series and drama) and infotainment/entertainment programmes (reality TV, game show, talk shows), while when operating on a societal level it is

mostly constructed in non-fictional programmes (current affairs and news). Civil conduct seems to be more formulated in terms of behavioural rules and decent manners for individuals as well as for governmental institutions. Breaking these rules, however, is without great consequences. The lack of consequences for breaking the rules on civil conduct is in sharp contrast with the way the discourse on politics — the second-most-dominant theme — is constructed.

§3.2.1.2 Politics

Politics in Dutch prime-time television is formulated around the question of what is a good way of governing a country. The answer to this question indicates that a good way of governing is anything that is similar to Western democratic form of government. In total, 32 moral messages, and 157 arguments or questions constructed the theme 'politics'. Almost all (93%) of these arguments or questions were formulated in an ethics of justice style of reasoning. The discourse on politics was constructed through a large number of rules about what constitutes a well-governed society. The discourse on a well-governed society presents us a very clear picture of the Western idea on democracy. Prime-time messages on politics tell us that 'In a well-governed society freedom is valued the highest' (*NOS Journaal;* news), 'Fidel Castro's regime is not well governed since it is repressive' (*Netwerk*; current affairs), 'A good government is not corrupt' (*NOS Journaal*; news), and 'In a well-governed society people live peacefully together' (*Netwerk*; current affairs). Sanctions are severe: badly-governed societies are excluded as subjects in international politics. In the two weeks analysed, a good example was found in the evening news (*NOS Journaal).* One of the messages was: 'A good government should not withhold any information from its people.' The reasoning behind this message makes clear that withholding information is considered corrupt and therefore the government and relative society (in this case the news item was about Putin's regime in Russia) are excluded as a serious partner in politics. Another example is found in the sitcom *Becker*, in which the main character Becker is called upon to serve jury duty and tries to get out of it. The discussion between the different characters in the sitcom

revolves around the moral question of how to be a good citizen. In this episode the juridical system of the U.S. is criticised and ridiculed.

The discourse on politics is primarily constructed in non-fiction genres (with the one exception of the message in the sitcom *Becker*). The severity of sanctions on not following the rules as they are constructed in the discourse indicates that there is no agreement on the idea of what 'a good way to govern a country' actually is. Obviously, other ways of governing than the Western idea of democracy are flourishing, and the dismissal of those modes of governing is one of the discourse mechanisms to reinforce the Western ideal of democracy.

§3.2.1.3 Family

The third dominant theme 'family' was constructed by 24 messages in total. The messages were made up of 101 questions or arguments and are mostly (93%) formulated in an ethics of justice style of reasoning. A peculiar tension became visible in the discourse on family as constructed in prime-time television. On the one hand the discourse on family constructs the family as a natural unit, and as the cornerstone of life. Messages such as 'Children belong with their parents' (*Prem Time*; current affairs), 'Parents should always be available' (*Birth Stories*; docudrama/*Kinderziekenhuis*; docudrama), 'Having a child is the most important thing in life' (*Birth Stories*; docudrama), 'You should never let your family down' (*Charmed*; drama series/*Medical Detectives*; crime report/*Spoorloos*; docudrama/*Patty's Posse*; docudrama/*Moesha*; sitcom/*Stuart Little*; film), and 'A good mother is omniscient' (*Medical Detectives*; crime report) formulate the family as a natural group with incredibly strong ties one cannot live without. On the other hand, the sanctions for breaking the rules are surprisingly brutal: namely the loss of children, sometimes even death. In particular, mothers who fail to be good parents (or are not omniscient mothers) are sanctioned. These severe sanctions suggest that the family is not such a natural unit after all. Assuming that the worse the sanctions are, the less 'naturalising power' the discourse might have. A good example on how this theme is constructed is found in the American crime report *Medical Detectives.* One of the items is about a woman who was murdered

by her husband. This man had also murdered his previous wife, a fact that went undiscovered for a long time. The way this issue was presented in the programme made it clear that no one could have prevented this horrible event. Nevertheless, the item was constructed around the parents, especially the woman's mother who blamed herself for not being able to protect her daughter, stating: 'I should have smelled the rat'. Something similar happens in an episode of *CSI Miami*. A young boy is thought to have been murdered, but later in the episode it appears that he committed suicide because his parents did not pay enough attention to him. The episode is closed by the message that runs: 'Parents should never let their children down.'

There are also positive messages constructing the discourse on family. These messages celebrate the importance of having children, of wanting to become a parent, and focusing your life on your family. These messages naturalise the central position of family. Furthermore, the family discourse in Dutch prime-time television is clear on what a family looks like. When it consists of a mother, a father, and some children, within this family everyone feels very connected and attached to one other. These strong ties are even there when there is no such thing as a biological connection. For example in the movie *Stuart Little* a mouse is adopted into the Little family and by the end of the story, he feels like 'a real Little'.

What is interesting is the fact that children, though they are presented as everyone's heart's desire, do not have a say in this. When children occupy a subject position in these matters, they are hardly taken seriously[19]. Children can be angry, but most of the time, there are no consequences and sometimes they even are presented as young ones who still have to learn. For example, in the drama series *Everwood*, the young boy Ephram blames his father for being away from home too much. He is angry about it and feels neglected. At the end of the episode he has learned his father's reasons for being away and apologises for his angry behaviour. His point of view on the functioning of the father within the family is thus neglected.

[19] Nor are children taken seriously in subject positions tied to other moral themes.

The majority of the discourse on family is constructed in fictional genres and in infotainment/entertainment genres. Interestingly though, most messages on family were formulated in American docudrama (such as *Birth Stories*) or drama series (e.g. *Gilmore Girls, Charmed, Touched by an Angel*). This apparent American origin of the 'family discourse' raises interesting questions about cultural homogenisation (of morality), and about how a Dutch audience deals with themes like this. I will elaborate on the origin of programmes and their moral themes in §3.6.

§3.2.1.4 Good Life

Connected to the messages that naturalise the central position of family in one's life are messages revolving around the good life. Sometimes these messages are conflated in one: to lead a good life, one ought to have a family. In total 28 messages constructed the moral theme 'the good life' in Dutch prime-time television. A total of 130 questions and arguments constructed these 28 messages. Once more, the ethics of justice style of reasoning dominates with 97% of the arguments.

Throughout the two weeks of television analysed, a lot of messages could be connected to this theme. In these 28 cases the messages were specific in their emphasis on what kind of life is worth living. Breaking the rules for living a good life is not explicitly sanctioned, but unhappiness and sometimes a wasted life is at the very least suggested. First, the discourse on what the good life is connected to the body. One should feel comfortable in one's own body to live a good life. These messages were mainly formulated in lifestyle programmes such as *Make Me Beautiful,* but also in programmes that focus on people who have to deal with disease. For example in the drama series *Diagnosis Murder,* one episode deals with an actress who apparently dies from an eating disorder - but later on appears to have been murdered. The episode ends with another girl (who has an eating disorder) in the hospital receiving the message 'You should never hurt yourself for beauty reasons.' Notably, this message is the exact opposite of what happens in the so-called 'makeover programmes' in which people are encouraged to undergo serious operations (thus hurting themselves) to obtain a body in which they can feel comfortable. Two

contrasting programmes with a similar moral message: one should feel comfortable in one's body. One might argue that in prime-time television two solutions are offered for the one moral issue.

Secondly, the good life is also presented as a mental life. One should be able to separate happiness from the material world, or rather, one is expected to evaluate internal, or mental richness as being worth more than any material richness. For example, the report *The Making of Ellis in Glamourland* not only documents the making of the Dutch movie *Ellis in Glamourland*, but also discusses the theme of the film. The movie revolves around a woman who takes a course called 'How to Marry a Millionaire'. The discussion focuses on the question of whether money is a precondition for happiness and is closed with the statement that 'Money cannot buy you internal happiness' (which is in turn a condition for the good life). This seems to connect to the point of view on the things money cannot buy, such as art experiences (aesthetic experiences), personal happiness and peace of mind, which are the ingredients for a good life.

Lastly, within the discourse on the good life, some messages are formulated in terms of virtues one ought to have. To live a good life then, one ought not to be greedy, one ought to be monogamous, and one ought to be modest. Connected to these virtues are of course the vices. The discourse on the good life in prime-time television presents this idea through messages as: 'If you deliberately kill someone you are not a human being' (*Netwerk*; current affairs/*Medical Detectives;* crime report) and 'If you rape someone, you are not a human being' (*Medical Detectives*). The sanctions for breaking these rules are severe. Murderers or serial rapists (and recently terrorists might be added to this group) are not considered human at all and are excluded from humanity.

It seems more than a coincidence that these virtues and vices reflect some of the Judeo-Christian commandments. Though in Dutch prime-time television they are taken out of a religious context and formulated as ingredients for living a meaningful good life, these messages do underline the deep-rooted Christian values that Western society is based upon.

The discourse on the good life is constructed in all genre categories, though slightly more often in infotainment/entertainment genres (13 messages) than in fiction genres (eight messages) and non-fiction genres (seven messages).

§3.3 Moral Deliberation in Prime-Time Narratives

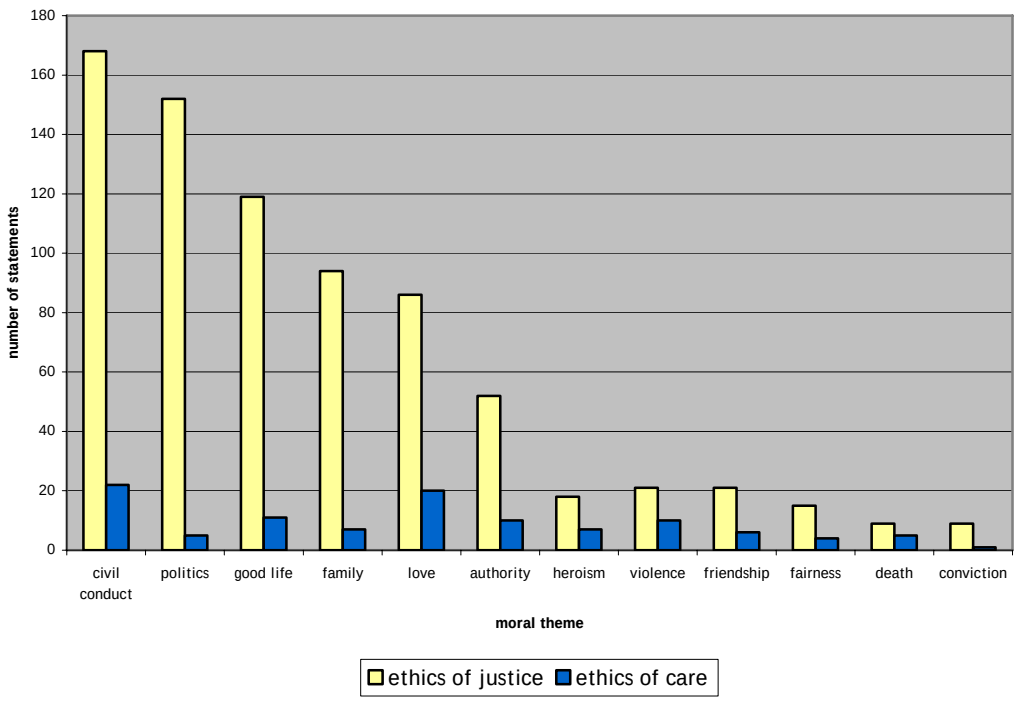
The second research question is:

Which ways of moral deliberations on moral issues, dilemmas or questions are presented in Dutch television narratives?

In order to answer this question, all arguments and questions that constructed a moral message were analysed in terms of an ethics of care style of reasoning or an ethics of justice style of reasoning.

In total 872 verbal questions or arguments tied to the moral messages were identified. An ethics of justice style of reasoning was dominant in Dutch prime-time TV: 88% of the moral expressions were formulated in this style (leaving 12% of verbal moral expressions reasoned in an ethics of care style). The two styles of moral reasoning, the ethics of care and the ethics of justice are distributed over the moral themes as pictured in figure 3.

Figure 3. Style of Reasoning and Theme



These results reveal that reasoning in an ethics of justice style is extremely dominant in these two weeks of prime-time television. Sometimes, reasoning in this style seemed rather forced. For example, in the American docudrama *Birth Stories*, the moral messages revolved around the overall importance of having children and the question of what makes a good parent. Moral reasoning through an ethics of justice expressed itself in arguments such as those from Sari, a young woman who is in hospital for six weeks due to complications in her pregnancy. The only thing she worries about is her son, who is at home. Sari feels guilty for not being there. When the new baby is born, she comes home. Her son is angry with her, refuses to talk to her, and disobeys her. Sari explains that she has been a bad mother for not being there. In other words: good parents are always available, that is the basic right of children. If the narrative had given space to moral reasoning through an ethics of care, Sari would have accepted her son's anger because he was very young. How could a four-

year-old be expected to understand the situation? In this style of reasoning Sari would be presented as feeling less guilty because her position was life threatening. This might be considered as more important than being available to her son full time, especially as her husband had been taking care of their son all the time, so the son had not been neglected. Strikingly, instead of offering two styles of moral reasoning — which seemed to make sense considering the situation — only an ethics of justice style of moral reasoning was presented: a mother should be there for her child, irrespective of the situation.

Interestingly, the styles of moral reasoning presented in Dutch prime time television are related to genre, but not so much to moral themes. Of the reasoning in an ethics of justice style 36% was presented in fictional genres, 39% in non-fictional genres, and 25% in infotainment/entertainment genres. Of the ethics of care style of reasoning 61% was found in fictional genres, 24% in non-fictional genres, and 15% in infotainment/entertainment genres. Especially in the fictional genres the ethics of care style of moral reasoning is presented more often than in other genres, as expected (see §2.1.4).

Additionally, the two styles were only partly related to private sphere or public sphere topics. For example, in the evening news of 8 May 2003 the US Secretary of State, Powell, requested to discontinue the U.N. sanctions against Iraq. This request was presented in an ethics of care style of reasoning. Powell explicitly requested friend and foe to unite in giving aid to the Iraqi people, thus to prioritise the relationship with the Iraqi people and their welfare — a public topic and theme argued in an ethics of care style.

Whereas none of the moral themes was exclusively reasoned about in either an ethics of justice or an ethics of care style, the ratio between the styles differed per moral theme. An ethics of justice style of reasoning prevailed in four themes in particular: family (93%), the good life (97%), civil conduct (89%), and politics (93%). For the latter two this prevalence is closely in line with Benhabib's (1992) and Poole's (1991) suggestion. The moral themes of civil conduct and politics were often linked to public topics in which rules and obligations were discussed (see also §3.2.1.1 and

§3.2.2.2 where the discourses on civil conduct and on politics were described). The dominance of an ethics of justice style of reasoning in messages revolving around the theme 'family' was surprising, because family seemed to be the theme most closely associated with the private sphere. The moral theme 'the good life' is neither a specifically private-sphere, nor a specifically public-sphere- related theme. Therefore a realistic expectation of which style of reasoning would prevail was not formulated.

The ethics of care style of reasoning did not dominate any of the moral themes in prime-time television. Nevertheless, this style of reasoning was presented in connection to some themes more often than to others. Commonly, messages involving violence, heroism and friendship were presented with a relatively large share of reasoning in an ethics of care style (respectively 32%, 28%, and 22%). For example, in an episode of the popular Dutch police series *Baantjer* a murder gives rise to the moral message 'Should we excuse violence out of loyalty and defence, or should we consider all violence to be wrong?' The victim is a notorious wife-basher who dies after two female friends of his wife try to teach him a lesson. They just want to beat him up (with a baseball bat!) but the victim trips and topples over a balcony. While reasoning through an ethics of justice gives way to arguments about the issue that physical violence is never a proper solution to a problem, reasoning through an ethics of care prompts arguments on the wife's position. Because she was unable to resist her husband's aggression, her best friends intervened. This female solidarity is appreciated openly in the end, and even though the violence was unjustified, the reason for it was understood. The welfare of the victim's wife was taken into account, as well as the relationship between the women.

The dominance of an ethics of justice style of reasoning and the relation of styles of reasoning with the public and the private sphere (and thus with moral themes and genre) is partly present in the two weeks analysed. As argued in §2.1.2 the styles of reasoning are also expected to be related to subject positions (namely men and women). Who is presented as a subject is the topic of the next section.

§3.4 Subject Positions in Prime-Time Narratives

The third research question is:

Who is presented as a moral subject in Dutch television narratives?

Relevant features are sex, ethnicity, class, and age. In total 773 subjects were identified. The 99 other verbal arguments were formulated by a voice-over stemming from an institution (for example in a current affairs programme, when the opinion of a company is stated by the programme's presenter), or were formulated by fantasy creatures (such as demons or animals). These 99 were excluded in the analysis of subjects, for sex, age, educational level and ethnicity seem irrelevant when concerned with a talking cat (*Stuart Little*; film) or the chief of all vengeance demons *(Buffy the Vampire Slayer*; drama series). Figures 4a and 4b depict how the subject positions of men and women are spread over the moral themes and which style of moral reasoning was used.

Figure 4a. Ethics of Justice per Theme

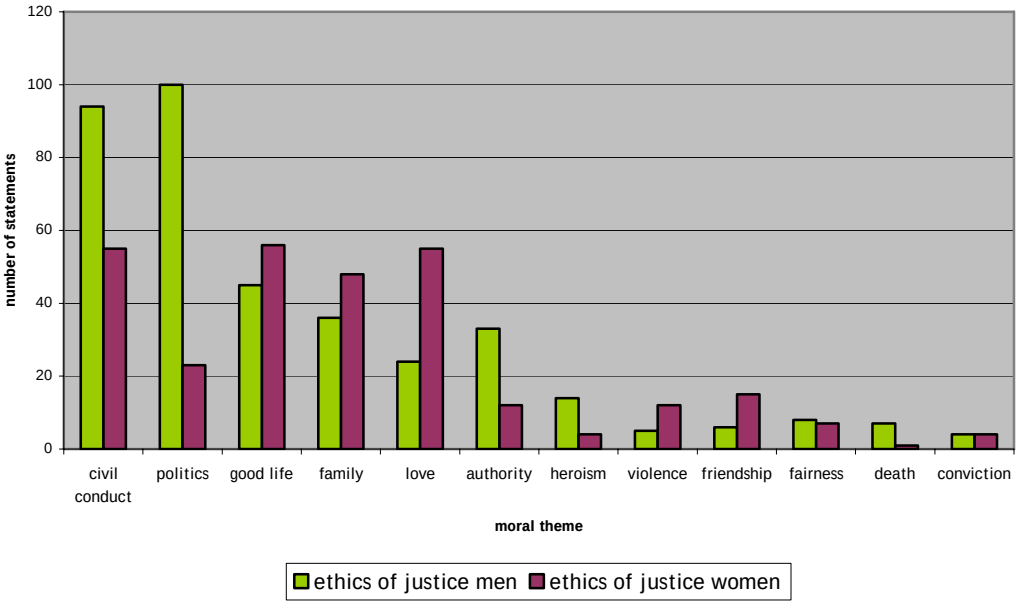
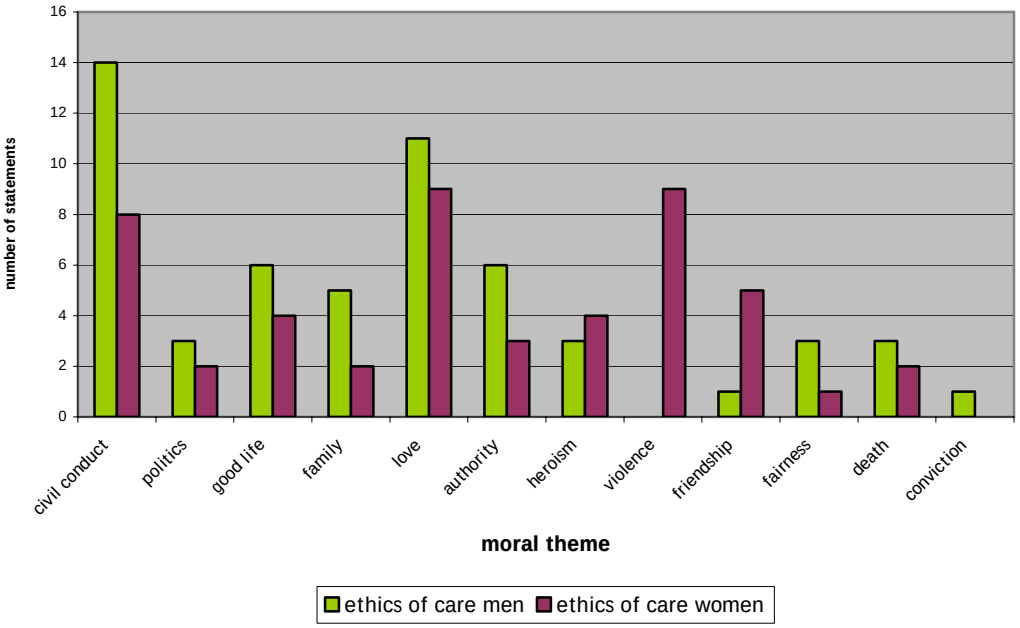


Figure 4b. Ethics of Care per Theme



Women took up 44% of the moral subject positions while men expressed 56% of the moral concerns. Though this still seems a rather large difference in representation, these results do suggest that women are not excluded as moral subjects (and neither are men). In addition, styles of moral reasoning in Dutch prime-time television were not gendered. For the dominant style (ethics of justice), the distribution of women and men in subject positions is respectively 44% and 56%, which is an almost perfect reflection of the percentages of men and women in moral subject positions on Dutch prime time television. A similar reflection is visible in subject positions in verbal reasoning in an ethics of care style. Women took up 47% of the subject positions, while men took up 53% of the positions. The styles of moral reasoning are thus equally distributed among men and women.

A consideration of the separate moral themes reveals a few striking patterns. Although it is hardly surprising that men figured more prominently as moral subjects in narratives that dealt with public sphere issues like civil conduct, authority and politics (Benhabib,1992; Poole, 1991), messages revolving around violence were dominated by women (81% of the subject positions). This unexpected outcome might be explained by the fact that most of the narratives addressing violence as a moral theme took place in the private sphere (e.g. domestic violence, rape, and robbery) or dealt with violent acts by women. Violent acts by men might be considered more common and thus less newsworthy or less interesting as a moral theme, and hence less visible as a morally relevant topic than the violent acts of women. This result does suggest that male violence is more 'normal', and therefore accepted, than is female violence (cf. Foucault, 1976). However, it is worth mentioning that extreme violence such as premeditated murder will exclude the perpetrator from humankind. In these cases though, it was not violence presented as a moral theme, but humanity and who belongs to it (i.e. the good life, see §3.2.1.4 in which the discourse on the good life in Dutch prime-time television is discussed).

Regarding the relationship between morality and specific subject features (ethnicity, class, and age), this study also reveals some eye-catching results. Of the 773 subject positions, non-Western ethnic

minorities took up almost 15% of the moral subject positions, while in the Netherlands in 2003 only 10% (CBS, 2003) and in 2004 only 10.3% (CBS, 2004) of the population belongs to a (non-Western) ethnic minority group. Though on first sight this slight overrepresentation of ethnic minorities as moral subjects might suggest a colourful picture of Dutch television, the overrepresentation is more likely due to the fact that the first week (5 to 11 May 2003) included the national celebration of liberation day (5 May) and the commemoration of the assassination of the Dutch politician Pim Fortuyn in the previous year. This last event in particular evoked a lot of debates on the multicultural society in current affair programmes, in which the majority of people taking part in the debates or interviews were of Moroccan descent. Nevertheless, genres such as talk shows and sitcoms also had a large percentage of subject positions taken by non-Western ethnic minorities (respectively, 39% and 31%). Apparently, there is no indication to assume there is a connection between ethnicity and moral reasoning on prime-time television.

Of the moral subjects in prime-time television some 45% fell in the age category between 20 and 40 years of age, and another 45% in the category between 41 and 65 years of age. In contrast, in 2004 only 28% of the Dutch population was in the 20 to 40 age category and 33.6% was in the category 41 to 65 (CBS, 2004). Even though by necessity the data on age are in part based on estimates, these results suggest that children, adolescents and the elderly were underrepresented as moral subjects in prime-time television[20]. On average, women appeared younger than men. While a slight majority of men seemed to be the 40 to 65 category 53%), a slight majority of women looked as if they were between 20 and 40 years of age (57%). Women who used an ethics of care style of reasoning were of various ages, ethnicities, positions in family, et cetera, while the majority of the men who used this style of reasoning were Dutch, older and from one of the higher social classes. These men were in general presented in positions with a more varied style of moral reasoning than younger, lower-

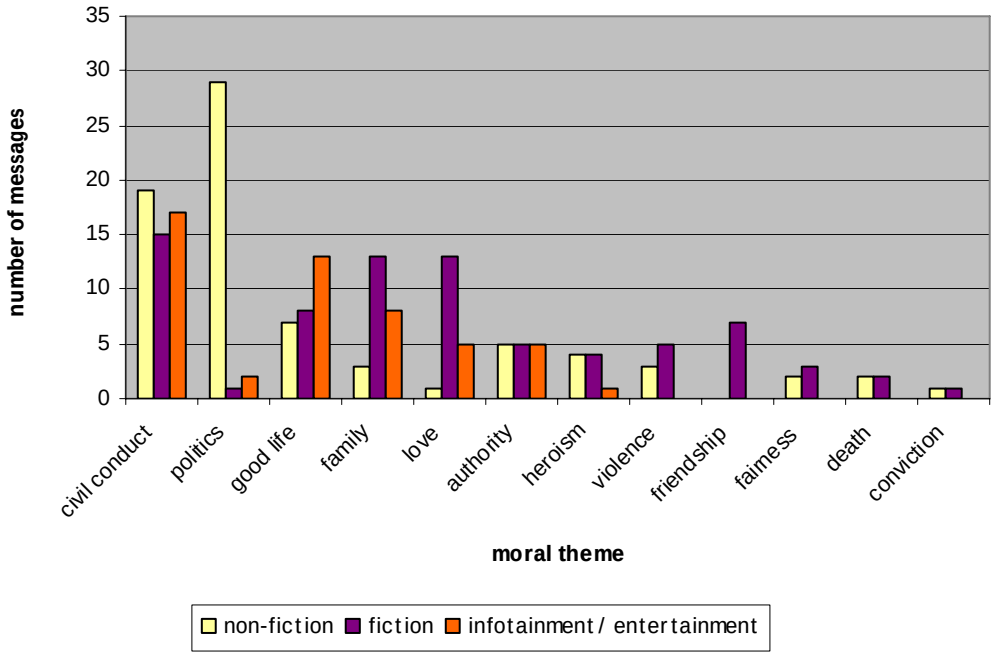
[20] One might note that children, adolescents and the elderly are generally under-represented in prime time television (Sterk & Van Dijck, 2003). Therefore the under-representation of them as moral subjects is no surprise.

class, or black men. In the American sitcom *Friends*, for example, one moral message involved the notion of good family. In a sauna one of the main characters, Chandler, accidentally sits down his father-in-law's lap. Chandler feels the need to apologise to his father-in-law face to face, because that is how it should be done (an example of reasoning in the ethics of justice style). His father-in-law responds as follows: 'I understand completely, there's nothing more horrifying than embarrassing yourself in front of your in-laws.' Later in the episode he promises to never mention the issue again, because he understands Chandler's embarrassment and does not wish to harm their good relationship as in-laws. In this sample, an ethics of care style was typical for upper-class Dutch men over 65 years of age. These observations suggest that instead of being related to gender, styles of moral reasoning are related to class and age.

§3.5 Moral Insights in Fictional, Non-Fictional, and Infotainment/Entertainment Genres

The moral messages and the moral themes are not equally distributed over the various genres. The amounts of fictional, non-fictional, and entertainment/infotainment programmes are not exactly in balance. Of the 161.6 hours of television programmes, 48.2 hours were fictional programmes, 60.5 hours were filled with infotainment/entertainment programmes, and 53.0 hours were non-fictional programmes. In other words, almost 30% of all programmes within these two weeks of prime-time television was of fictional nature, 37% of the infotainment/entertainment kind, and 33% of non-fictional nature. The moral themes and their messages were spread over the genres as depicted in Figure 5.

Figure 5. Messages and Genre



The moral themes are not equally distributed over the fiction, non-fiction, and infotainment/entertainment genres. Of the moral messages 77 were found in fictional programmes (38%), 76 in non-fictional genres (37%), and 51 in infotainment/ entertainment genres (25%). However, fictional, non-fictional, and infotainment/entertainment programmes seem to emphasise different moral themes.

Firstly, as is visible in Table 3, fictional genres pay more attention to moral themes that are situated in the private sphere; family, love, and friendship are the dominating themes. In non-fictional genres the emphasis lies more on themes in the public sphere as politics and civil conduct are dominating themes. In the genre category of infotainment/entertainment the theme 'the good life' is most present.

Table 3. Amount of Themes per Genre Category

	non-fiction	fiction	infotainment/ entertainment
civil conduct	19	15	17
politics	29	1	2
good life	7	8	13
family	3	13	8
love	1	13	5
authority	5	5	5
heroism	4	4	1
violence	3	5	0
friendship	0	7	0
fairness	2	3	0
death	2	2	0
conviction	1	1	0
total:	76	77	51

As explained in §2.1.4, some genres such as current affairs, documentary and news could be expected to deal with more themes connected to the public sphere, and other genres such as drama, docudrama, soap and film could be expected to deal with more themes revolving around topics connected to the private sphere. As we can see in Table 3, this was partly played out in the results.

Secondly, when studying particular genres, some genres seem to offer more insights into moral issues than others. In Table 4 the number of themes per hour per genre is given.

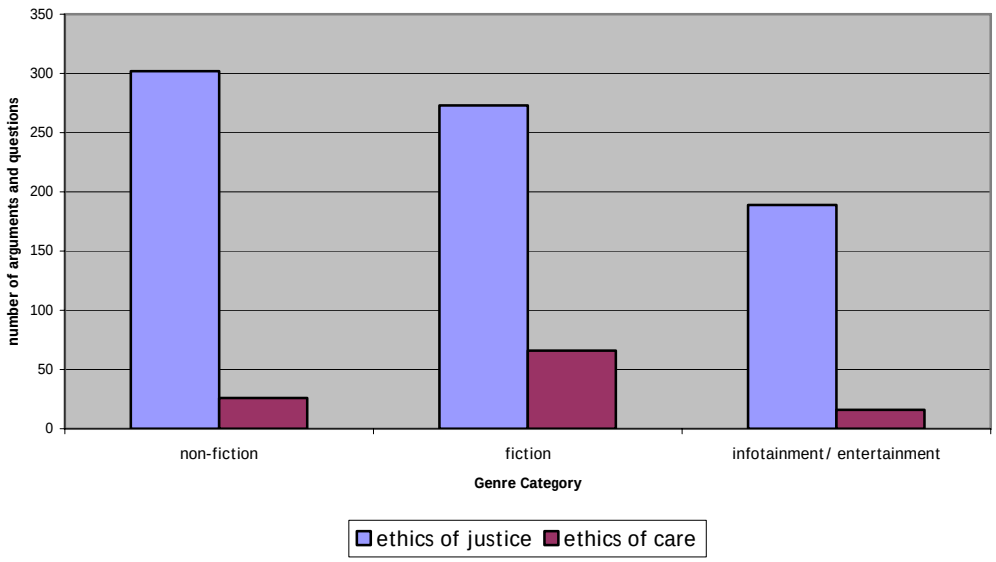
Table 4. Amount of Themes per Hour per Genre

genre	amount of hours	amount of themes	themes per hour
comedy	6.1	8	**1.3**
crime report	4.6	6	**1.3**
current affairs	15.1	41	**2.7**
Docudrama /Reality TV	18.5	30	**1.6**
documentary	8.5	7	**0.8**
drama	28.7	54	**1.9**
film	6.9	6	**0.9**
game show/quiz	8.8	3	**0.3**
life style/service	10.3	6	**0.6**
music television	8.1	1	**0.1**
news	7	20	**2.9**
satire	6.4	4	**0.6**
soap	6.5	9	**1.4**
sports	14.7	0	**0**
talk show	8.3	7	**0.8**
other	3.1	2	**0.6**

Surprisingly enough, current affairs and news programmes seem to offer most moral messages per hour: respectively 2.7 and 2.9 themes per hour. All other genres offer fewer than two messages per hour. In both current affairs and news programmes the moral themes of civil conduct and politics dominated. Even though it is especially news and current affairs programmes that are expected to be objective and factual, it is these genres that are relatively rich with moral messages. Due to the method of analysis, this also means that these genres are morally closed more often than other genres.

Thirdly, a difference in genres could be found in an emphasis on either ethics of care or ethics of justice style of reasoning. The styles of reasoning were distributed over the genre categories as shown in Figure 6.

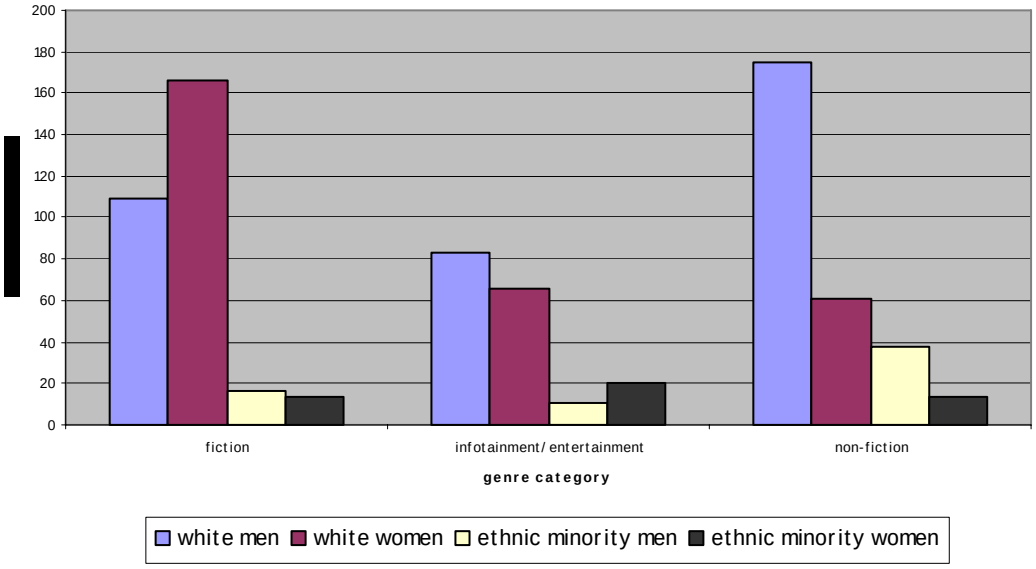
Figure 6. Style of Reasoning and Genre



Of all questions and arguments that were formulated in an ethics of justice style, 36% were found in fictional programmes, 25% in infotainment/entertainment programmes and 40% in non-fictional programmes. Of the arguments and questions that were formulated through an ethics of care, 61% were found in fictional programmes, 15% in infotainment/ entertainment programmes, and 24% in non-fictional programmes. It might be argued that since non-fictional genres are generally taken more seriously, the moral orientation ethics of justice is also taken more seriously. Nevertheless, non-fictional programmes still present a relatively large part of the arguments and questions presented in an ethics of care style of reasoning.

Last but not least, analysis of the subjects' sex and ethnicity per genre category reveals some interesting results. As visible in Figure 7, men and women are not equally distributed over the genre categories. Nor are white people and people who belong to an ethnic minority.

Figure 7. Subjects per Genre



Women and men are overall unequally distributed over the different genre categories. While men are more prominently present in non-fictional programmes (48% of the total of men present appear in non-fiction), women are presented in fictional programmes more often than men (57% of the total of women presented).

Secondly, women from ethnic minority groups are presented in infotainment/entertainment programmes more often than in other genre categories (42% of the total of women of ethnic minority groups are presented in infotainment/entertainment genres). Contrastingly, men from ethnic minority groups seem to be distributed over the genre categories similarly to white men.

§3.6 The Origin of Programmes

One characteristic of Dutch prime-time television, and logically also of the two weeks analysed, is the relatively large number of foreign programmes. In this study, 31% of the programmes analysed were of foreign origin. A specification is found in Table 5.

Table 5. Origin of Programmes and Themes per Genre

Country of Origin	Number of Progr.	Number of Non-Fictional Hours	Number of Themes Non-Fiction	Number of Info/Enter-tainment Hours	Number of Themes Info/Enter-tainment	Number of Fictional Hours	Number of Themes Fiction
Netherlands	109	44	68	54	39	12.5	16
U.S.	30	2.5	4	5	7	26	49
U.K.	10	2.5	1	5	8	3	2
Germany	3	0	0	0	0	3	2
Belgium	2	0	0	0	0	2	5
Australia	1	0	0	0	0	2	3
Denmark	1	0	0	0	0	0.5	0
Canada	1	0.5	0	0	0	0	0

Looking closer into these programmes and their origin, a few interesting results are revealed. Firstly, the largest share of non-fictional programmes is of Dutch origin. As noted, current affairs and news programmes are relatively rich with moral messages and moral themes revolving around politics and civil conduct. The fact that these messages are constructed in programmes produced in the Netherlands suggests that the discourses constructed in the television narratives — as described in §3.2.1 — are a reflection of the contemporary Dutch discourses around these themes.

Secondly, most fictional programmes originate in the U.S. As noted earlier, fictional genres emphasise the moral themes of love, friendship, and violence. Investigating the moral themes themselves reveals that the moral theme 'love' is represented in programmes of Dutch origin (nine messages) as much as in programmes produced in the U.S. (eight messages). The moral themes 'family' and 'friendship' are present in programmes originating in the U.S. more often than in programmes from other countries. The moral theme 'family' was presented with 13 messages (of 24 in total) and the moral theme 'friendship' with five out of seven messages in programmes produced in the U.S. Since narratives are culturally specific (see §2.2.1), these results suggest that narratives in prime-time television do offer moral insights on love, family and friends

that are from a variety of cultural backgrounds, with an emphasis on the U.S.

Thirdly, the largest share of infotainment/entertainment programmes originates in the Netherlands. Interestingly though, programmes in this genre category originating in the Netherlands seem to be less rich with moral themes than programmes in this category originating in the U.S. or the U.K. However, similarly to themes in non-fiction, it can be argued that the most dominant themes in this genre category, 'civil conduct' and 'the good life', construct a Dutch discourse on these topics.

§3.7 Conclusions

In this chapter television narratives, as a cultural or, more specifically, moral toolkit were explored. Narratives from different genres were analysed on the moral insights they offer. The analysis reveals that prime-time narratives offer a varied range of moral messages of which over 66% of the moral messages focused on four moral themes: the good life, family, civil conduct, and politics. It is the latter three of these moral themes that are often the topic of the moral panic constructed around popular television — the loss of family values, dysfunctional behaviour, and the weakening of democratic values. In prime-time television these values dominate the moral landscape, and thus argue against the first dimension of the debate around television that rejects television in general.

Moreover, the content of these moral themes conflicts with the arguments used to maintain the moral panic around television content. In other words, prime-time television often frames these particular themes in their positive sense, as pro-family, pro-democracy and pro-civility values. The theme 'family' is dominated by messages such as 'Family should never be let down' and 'A child is the number one priority in life.' Instead of devaluating family values, these messages reinforce the idea of the family as the cornerstone of society. Secondly, the moral theme politics contains messages that reject non-democratic forms of organising society and celebrate the Western idea of democracy. Examples are statements such as 'We ought to live together peacefully' (Israel-Palestine conflict) and

'Democratic freedom ought to be estimated as the supreme good in society.' The weakening of democratic values, it seems, is less likely to be part of the content of television. Finally, the moral theme 'civil conduct' contains messages such as 'Arguing is done verbally, not physically', 'You should not lie', and 'You should always keep your promises.' These messages seem to promote 'functional' behaviour instead of 'dysfunctional' behaviour. When we look at the other themes potentially tied to 'dysfunctional' behaviour, such as the contemporary discussion on random acts of violence, we find similar results. For example, in general violence is judged as bad in prime-time television, unless exceptional circumstances are at stake.

Nevertheless, I do think that some alertness is necessary when looking at the moral messages in prime-time television. The messages can not all be evaluated positively. For example, in §3.2.1.4 the discourse on 'the good life' as presented in television narratives was described. Part of this discourse revolves around feeling comfortable in one's body and is constructed in so called 'makeover programmes'. The suggestion that one might need to undergo extreme surgery in order to 'feel comfortable' is at the very least of debatable moral quality.

Additionally, as explained in §1.1, there is another dimension of the C vs. c debate, the different appreciation of television genres. The results of this analysis suggest that not only is the moral panic surrounding television not justified, but the rejection of specific genres is also unwarranted. The well-appreciated programmes such as news and current affairs do celebrate pro-social behaviour and democratic values, but the often-reviled infotainment/entertainment programmes in particular also offer a substantial number of moral insights. Furthermore, the different genres are not as different from each other as is often suggested. Current affairs and news are thought of as being objective and factual (which is usually considered a benefit) even though it is these genres that are richest in moral messages (and we can hardly call moral messages factual).

The fact that the non-fictional genres are the richest in moral messages also indicates that the suggestion of the literary culture, that fictional narratives are more suitable to function as a resource to develop

a capacity for moral imagination, is not reflected in these results (Rorty, 1989; Nussbaum, 1995; Nussbaum, 1997; Bogdan et al., 2000). This of course is not an argument against literary narratives or the literary culture, but at least shows that for television narratives the offering of moral insights is not dependent on genre.

Though all genres offer moral messages, all moral messages are primarily constructed in an ethics of justice style of reasoning (as was shown in §3.3 of the moral expressions 88% was reasoned in an ethics of justice style). The overall dominance of this style of reasoning does suggest that Gilligan's (1988) observation that the ethics of justice is recognised as *the* moral reasoning is reinforced by television narratives. Contrastingly though, the styles of reasoning were not gendered. These results suggest that Gilligan's observation of gendered styles of moral reasoning is not applicable to moral reasoning in prime time television. One could argue that styles of moral reasoning on television are more equally distributed between women and men than earlier research would suggest. Additionally, the styles of reasoning were also not related to moral themes connected to the private sphere or moral themes connected to the public sphere (as suggested by Benhabib (1992) and Poole (1991). However, the styles are (partly) related to genre, suggesting that the distinction between private and public, and the ratio vs. emotion dichotomy are still existent when morality is presented in television narratives. The extreme dominance of an ethics of justice style of reasoning, however, indicates that prime-time narratives in the Netherlands offer a rather narrow insight into moral deliberation.

In conclusion, the evidence suggests that the moral panic that is construed around the content of prime-time television is unwarranted. As indicated by Tavener (2000) and Jenkins et al. (2002), this moral panic is especially useful for sustaining the high versus low culture dichotomy (see also §1.1.1). However, by insisting on this particular distinction between culture and Culture, we keep ourselves from studying the intrinsic value of popular culture in critical and productive ways. For no good reason we discard television narratives as a useful tool in the effort aimed at raising and educating morally mature individuals.

Nevertheless, it is impossible to tell whether television narratives are either rich or poor with moral insights, since comparable studies are absent. I can only conclude that television narratives offer insight into a variety of moral issues, a narrow insight into moral deliberation, and a limited insight into the human character. Additionally, there is no telling what the audience actually does with these (manifest) moral messages. Does the audience read with the grain and celebrate the idea of family as one's heart's desire? Do they reflect on the insights offered by television narratives, and if so, do they reflect on the moral insights as offered? These, and other, questions will be answered in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4. MORAL MATURITY EVOKED BY TELEVISION

The previous chapter explored the moral insights offered by television narratives. Additionally, it was noted that learning the moral content of narratives is not sufficient to know what the audience actually does with these insights, what moral meaning is given to the narratives and how the narratives are used to make sense of everyday moral issues. The research questions for this part of the study were formulated in chapter 2:

I. How do people of different sexes, ages, ethnic groups, or educational levels in the Netherlands use the moral insights offered by television narratives to reflect on everyday moral issues?

and:

II. How does a preference for either fictional, infotainment/entertainment, or non-fictional genres matter for the development of moral imagination of the individual?

These questions are of an exploratory nature, as was chapter 3. The central aim of this chapter is to explore how moral insights offered by television narratives are used to develop the moral imagination and to reach moral maturity. Therefore, the in-depth interview and grounded theory approach are relevant methods since they offer a way to advance theory. Ragin (1994) explains how knowledge gained by qualitative methods offers very rich material that is better than otherwise gained material suitable to advance ideas. Because qualitative methods offer an in-depth knowledge about one or more instances of a certain case it is possible to research commonalities and differences, and thus come to a theoretical understanding of the concept that is researched.

§4.1 Methods: the In-Depth Interview and Grounded Theory

To answer the research questions 41 in-depth interviews were conducted. In-depth interviews are exceptionally useful for answering the research question, since they give room to the interviewees to construct their own view on reality in their own words (Wester, 1995; Potter, 2004). As explained in §1.3 (moral) narratives are used as building blocks in the process of making sense of everyday living. The in-depth interview (also called the active interview) is particularly suitable for this study since it gives the interviewees the opportunity to relate the moral narratives of television to their own everyday lives (Holstein and Gubrium, 1999). Therefore it is important that a special effort is made by the interviewer to create an atmosphere in which the interviewee feels comfortable, in order to give just that room to the interviewee's voice (Wester, 1995; Holstein and Gubrium, 1999). The quality of the in-depth interview is therefore partially dependent on the interviewer.

Moreover, the interviewer is important in yet another way. One has to take into account that the interviewer, as much as the interviewee, has a unique social-historical background (Holstein and Gubrium, 1999). This means that the interaction between interviewer and interviewee is unique for the two people involved and can never be reproduced. However, since the aim of this study is not to find out whether the interviews are a perfect match with the interviewee's opinions, but rather to gain an insight into *how* television narratives are used to develop a capacity for moral imagination, the raw data are extremely useful for theory-building (Ragin, 1994).

The 41 interviewees were selected on the basis of sex, age, educational level, and ethnicity. As noted before in §2.1.3 sex, age, class and ethnicity are especially emphasised by the authors from the literary tradition and therefore also in this study. The interviewees were therefore asked for their age and ethnicity, while sex was in all these cases a visible feature. Additionally, class is deduced from educational level and (if relevant) profession. These two features are taken together in order to nuance the concept of class. For example, in this way it becomes possible to distinguish people that have had little education, but over the years

have climbed up the social ladder (and are thus not blue- collar workers), from people with a similar educational level who have not. The term 'educational level' is used throughout this part of the study to stipulate class. Educational level is categorised in primary education (people who have not left primary school just yet), low educational level (people who have finished a lbo, leao, vmbo, or primary school), average educational level (people who have finished an mbo, meao, mavo, mulo, havo, vwo; or are still at school and at mavo, meao, or mbo level), and high educational level (hbo, wo, or people who are still in high school and are at havo, vwo or gymnasium level)[21].

The age categories were constructed along the lines of the changes of television broadcasting in the Netherlands and the different experiences the interviewees might therefore have with television in the Netherlands. The first category of people of 66 years of age or older contains people who were already adults when they experienced the advent of television in the Netherlands in 1951. The second category, people between 41 and 65 years of age, have more or less grown up with television, but have also seen the appearance of cable, multiple channels and foreign channels. The people in the third category, between 19 and 40 years of age, have grown up with public *and* commercial television. Also they have experienced the entry of the VCR and 'breakfast television'. Last but not least, I distinguished a group of 18 years of age or younger since this group has not only grown up with television as a medium, but also with the availability of a large variety of channels (there are for example 19 Dutch channels (Stichting KijkOnderzoek, 2004)), television via the internet, VCRs and DVD players, and forms of interactive television (for example the voting for candidates in talent contests such as *Idols*).

Although a special effort has been made to spread the interviews as much as possible over different groups of people (with an emphasis on sex, age, ethnicity and educational level), the 41 interviews are not

[21] Please note that there is a distinction between (young) people in high school at havo, vwo, or gymnasium level and people who have finished this level of education as the only education they followed.

representative of the Dutch population. All results thus refer to how *these* 41 people use television narratives.

All interviewees were contacted with the help of acquaintances of the researcher. Except for three participants, the interviewees were not related to or direct friends of the interviewer(s). The interviews with three participants acquainted with the researcher were originally meant to be 'try out' interviews. However, the interviews were of such quality that taking them into the analysis seemed useful. Additionally, to prevent the interviewees taking a moral position beforehand, they were asked if they wanted to cooperate in an interview on watching television and were only told about moral imagination in the debriefing. Almost all interviews took place in the homes of the interviewees. Two interviewees preferred to use their workplaces as the location for the interview.

The interviews were unstructured and guided by a topic list (Wester, 1995; Buddenbaum and Novak, 2001). The topic list is of special importance in the in-depth interview, since it makes the different interviews comparable (Wester, 1995). The topic list was constructed out of the literary framework and the content analysis and therefore contained topics such as: what moral issues and styles of reasoning are recognised in television narratives, who is considered the Other, and what favourite genres does the interviewee have? The topic list as used in the interviews is found in Appendix II. The interviewees were guided by the interviewer(s) to talk about the topics in their own language.

§4.1.1 Method of Analysis

All interviews were transcribed *ad verbum*. Transcription is of importance in order to be able to interpret all relevant quotes in their context. The context of individual aspects is necessary to interpret these aspects (Ragin, 1994). Additionally, transcription makes it possible in a later phase to recognise 'meaningful pauses' of the interviewees, hesitations, laughing, and intonation (with the cause indicated in the transcript). These might all be important for the interpretation of the quotes. The analysis of the 745 pages of interview material was aided by the computer programme Atlas.ti. This programme made it possible to maintain an overview of the

data in all three phases of the grounded theory approach that was adopted. Strauss and Corbin (1998) formulated three coding phases: open coding, axial coding and selective coding.

In the first phase, the open coding, the interviews were thematically coded. Strauss and Corbin also refer to this as micro coding. All quotes addressing a moral topic (based on the three characteristics described by Rachels (2003): the use of ought/should, an evaluation of good or bad, and aimed at conduct) were traced. Some quotes were only a few sentences long, while other quotes were sometimes even a page long. Following this, the quotes were assessed on styles of reasoning used. The features of an ethics of justice style of reasoning (principles of right and obligation, disembodied individual, reciprocity) and an ethics of care style of reasoning (response and care, embodied individual, preventing harm) were again of importance (Gilligan et al., 1988). Then these quotes were labelled in a precise way according to which moral insight they could be allocated. Simultaneously the quotes were categorised in relevant groups. For this study, relevant groups can be understood as the moral issues the interviewees came up with, different styles of moral deliberation, insights into the self and others, et cetera.

In the second phase all interviews were compared. Similarities were noted in order to find commonalities between the interviews. For example, all quotes addressing a similar moral theme were grouped together. Differences were noted in order to refine categories and concepts. Some quotes, for example, did not fit any moral theme that had emerged from the content analysis in chapter 3, meaning that new moral themes were formulated. Even though most interviews lasted more than an hour, it was still not possible to elaborate on all moral themes as analysed in chapter 3 since the interviewees — and the interviewers — would simply have become exhausted. This meant that insight was not gained into how many people reflected on which issues were evoked by which programmes. Fortunately, the survey in chapter 5 will be most helpful in answering these questions.

Furthermore, in this phase special attention was paid to groups of interviews, meaning that the interviews were grouped in terms of gender,

age, ethnicity and educational level. In the third phase of coding, selective coding, the categories that emerged during the axial coding phase were grouped together, leading to a reduction of relevant categories. After the reduction, overarching concepts were formulated that explained what happened in the interviews. Though the phases are formulated as follow-up phases, the phases are not as distinct as described. This process of analysis should be considered a more organic process, meaning that the three phases intertwine and overlap. We can easily imagine, for example, that finding differences (phase two of the analysis) in the way a moral issue was represented in several interviews would make one turn back to phase 1 to see if there were more instances of this kind of representation, or to see if maybe there were quotes that need to be split or merged.

§4.1.2 Introduction of the Interviewees

Twenty-six of the 41 interviews were conducted by me, and fifteen were conducted by students[22] that I had extensively trained in interview techniques. The interviews took place between September 2004 and June 2005.

Of the interviewees, 27 were women and 14 were men. The youngest interviewee, Merel[23], was 10 years of age while the oldest interviewee, Jurgen, was 94. In total eighteen interviewees were 18 years old or younger, eight interviewees were between 19 and 40 years of age, ten interviewees were between 41 and 65 years of age, and five interviewees were 66 years of age or older.

Looking at ethnicity, of the interviewees thirty-four were of Dutch, one of Moroccan, two of Indonesian, two of Surinamese, one of Chilean, and one of Antillean ethnicity. The interviewees were also distinguished according to educational level. Of the interviewees, five were still in primary school, six had a low, eight an average, and twenty-two a high education level. An overview of the interviewees is found in Table 6.

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[22] Joice van Casteren, Vanessa Pattipeilohy, Marleen Swart, Mayke Donkers, Kim Spoelstra, Tessa Eekman, Sandra Grüneberg, and Joyce van de Berg are thanked for their good efforts.

[23] All interviewees' names have been changed in order to protect their privacy.

Table 6. Overview of the Interviewees

	men	women
interviewees to 18 years	2 (PS*, Dutch) 1 (AE, Surinamese) 1 (HE, Indonesian)	2 (PS, Dutch) 1 (PS, Chilean) 1 (LE, Indonesian) 2 (AE, Dutch) 1 (AE, Surinamese) 7 (HE, Dutch)
interviewees between 19-40	4 (HE, Dutch)	3 (HE, Dutch) 1 (HE, Moroccan)
interviewees between 41-65	2 (LE, Dutch) 2 (AE, Dutch) 1 (HE, Antillean)	1 (LE, Dutch) 2 (AE, Dutch) 1 (HE, Dutch)
interviewees 66 plus	1 (HE, Dutch)	3 (LE, Dutch) 1 (AE, Dutch) 1 (AE, Dutch)

* PS = Primary School, LE = Low Education, AE = Average Education, HE = High Education

The duration of the interviews ranged from 40 minutes up to 1 hour and 45 minutes.

§4.2 Moral Reflection Evoked by Television Narratives

The analysis of the 41 interviews reveals that people do use television narratives to engage in reflection on morally relevant issues. In total 217 quotes could be coded as moral reflection evoked by television narratives. This means that, on average, five quotes concerning a moral issue were formulated in an interview. As noted before, these quotes could consist of just a few sentences, or a fill a whole page. During the analysis of the interviews three modes of moral reflection emerged. In phase 1 of the analysis (i.e. open coding) it became apparent that not all quotes addressing a moral issue were comparable. Some quotes seemed to directly address topics as offered in programmes, while other quotes addressed issues only remotely related to the moral topics in television programmes. Since these results indicate that reflection on moral issues is not a one-dimensional concept, and additionally that reflection transcends the insights offered, these modes of moral reflection are worth illustrating.

§4.2.1 Three Modes of Moral Reflection

Due to their natures, I named the modes of reflection 'interpretative reflection', 'additional reflection' and 'associated reflection'. Interpretative reflection dominates, covering around seventy-five percent of the total amount of moral reflection (in total 166 of the 217 quotes could be labelled as interpretative reflection on a moral theme). Additional and associated reflection had an equal share in the remaining part, respectively 26 quotes and 25 quotes.

Firstly, interpretative reflection indicates reflection on a moral issue as it is offered by a narrative. It is called interpretative reflection because the interviewees reflected on a moral issue while interpreting the narrative. For example, Anouk (30 years old, Dutch woman, high education) brought up a topic on civil conduct when explaining why she likes watching *Expeditie Robinson* (*Survivor)* a reality programme revolving around two teams of people surviving together on a deserted island. Anouk elaborates on one of the team members who was not accepted by the others[24]:

Anouk: 'It's about two islands where people, who do not know one another, where they are dumped, so to speak. But, they are supposed to, as long as possible … to survive together […] But, it's just, it's nice to watch the psychological warfare…'

Later on:

Anouk: 'But you start thinking about it, where does he go wrong? […] Or at least, you start to, to think up some things, or that you really, that he really is plotting with, with one of the women, or that is saying weird things about someone, that's when you think: surely, that's not very clever.'

While interpreting a part of the programme — the rejection of one team member — Anouk simultaneously reflects on the issue of civil conduct,

[24] The original language of these quotes is Dutch and all have been translated by me. Appendix III contains the quotes in their original form.

trying to answer the question where this person went wrong in his interaction with others.

Another example is Gijs (11-year-old Dutch boy, primary school) who is reflecting on the violence in his favourite movies: James Bond films. After explaining his attraction to James Bond, Gijs elaborates on why he really enjoys the violent events in James Bond films, and what they are about:

Gijs: 'Well, yeah, for example, if the bad guy or something, if you, if he wants to let something explode or something, something really bad, and then in the ending there will be a fight, if he wants to let something explode they are going to fight. Throwing a grenade, that kind of stuff, if that person already did something. But furthermore, not really.'
Interviewer: 'So, only if someone did something?'
Gijs: 'Yes, if someone is just, with someone, fought with someone, or if he killed someone.'

Gijs is discussing why the violent acts in James Bond movies are allowed and enjoyable. If the bad guy wants to cause harm, James Bond is bound to fight him, which is in Gijs' opinion a good and just course of action. Obviously he is interpreting the movies as well, since James Bond films are about the 'good guy' conquering the 'bad guy'. This mode of interpretative reflection was most common among the interviewees and concerned 75% of the 217 quotes.

The second mode of moral reflection that emerged during the analysis is called additional reflection, indicating a supplementary mode of reflection. The interviewees did not only catch on to a moral issue offered by the narrative, but added something to it from their own point of view, something outside, and thus additional to the narrative. For example Clark (14-year-old Surinamese boy, low education) is talking about the relationship between two characters in the drama series *Gilmore Girls*, Lorelai and her mother. In the episode under discussion, Lorelai does not dare to tell her mother about her new partner. When asked what he thinks about Lorelai's actions Clark explains his understanding:

Clark: 'Yeah, since, maybe I would do the same, 'cause she [the mother] is always doing him down, and maybe she would start doing her [Lorelai] down as well. So, maybe it is very understandable.'
Interviewer: 'Would you do the same?'
Clark: 'Uhm, no, I would have wrapped it up in something else and then I would have told.'
Interviewer: 'What do you mean, wrapping it up?'
Clark: 'First, lots of positive things of what he [the new boyfriend] has experienced and stuff. And then I would tell, this and that and after that I would mention his name.'

After he positions himself in a similar situation, Clark is asked how he would handle the situation, and this is when Clark adds to the narrative. Clark suggests a different way of dealing with the situation as presented in the narrative, and thus adds to the possibilities of a solution.

Another example of additional reflection is Frank (63-year-old Dutch man, average education) when he discusses the sanity of characters in the Spanish movie *Hable con Ella*, a movie about two men becoming friends while both visiting and caring for a loved one in the hospital. The somewhat bizarre events in this psychological drama (one of the men rapes a woman who is in a coma and she subsequently gets pregnant) give rise to Frank's reflections on the mental health of the characters involved, Frank moves on to the more extreme topic of paedophilia:

Frank: 'The atmosphere in the movie, what it was about, anyhow, a bit absurdist, but also .. also realistic. It shows something about the prevalent craziness among people that in general, is controlled quite well with a briefcase …. So I guess you are a reasonable person, but maybe you're not. It's a matter of finding the right button … And that movie, in my opinion, really shows that, so, and I don't feel the need to be judgemental about that …, that kind of behaviour, or whatever. I always, that kind of deviating behaviour, I always look upon that with, with, yeah, how shall I put it, a feeling of pity is too condescending and easy, but… For example, people who engage in, in paedophilia, aye, that is pretty serious …. That is something that is passed judgement on very harshly, which in itself is just. But I think it is mainly sad …, sad that people yearn for such things. Even sadder of

course that they suit the action to the word. So, that is how I consider these things.'

While Frank reflects on a moral issue in the movie he has watched — questioning the mental state of a man who is able to perform the actions in the movie — he starts adding to the moral issue that is the topic of the programme with his own reflections on paedophilia, a related but different moral issue. About 12.5% of the moral reflections evoked by television narratives were of the additional kind.

Thirdly, a mode of moral reflection emerged that I called associated reflection. Associated reflection reaches even further than additional reflection in the sense that interviewees were induced to reflect on issues that could be associated with, but were entirely different to, the issues offered by a narrative. A good example of this is the reflections of Karin (84-year-old Dutch woman, low education) who discusses a movie she watched the day before the interview (Karin does not remember the movie's title, but it was found in the television guide: *Double Jeopardy)*. The movie revolves around a woman who is falsely accused of killing her husband. When she gets out of prison, she discovers that her husband framed her for the crime. The woman then decides to *really* kill her former husband since she already has been in jail for it anyway and a U.S. law (called double jeopardy) states that no one can be convicted of the same crime twice. After summarising the events of the movie, Karin declares that she thinks the whole affair is terrible since:

Karin: 'Yes, and the children always have to suffer for it. And whether they're young or old, the children always have to suffer for it. 'Cause, I remember from my brother. A brother of mine, was also married, she [his wife] went to the pubs often. In the end, she ran of with the pub owner and he had one little boy, who was just three, four years old. But my brother, of course, had a job [...] and he was stuck with the child. Didn't know what to do with him [...] So, in the end I took care of the child for two years, or four years.'

Karin associates the events in the movie with an event in her personal life and ends up reflecting on a different moral issue than was offered by the

television programme. From the cruel deception of the woman by the husband she moves on towards the suffering of children in marriages that do not work out.

Another example of associative reflection is performed by Inge (28-year-old Dutch woman, high education). She is discussing an episode of *CSI* (detective series) that she has watched the week before. The episode deals with a mentally handicapped girl who is seduced by her boss and gets pregnant. The core issue revolves around the question of whether the girl was actually mentally able to consent to having sex with her boss. Inge then continues to talk about an issue associated with the pregnancy of the girl:

Inge: 'Yes, what really evokes the discussion, for me, is whether you can always decide yourself to keep your baby, or to get pregnant. Everyone is allowed to get pregnant and have babies, but not everyone is allowed to keep theirs. It is weird that you are allowed to keep your baby and carry it for nine months [...] but it can be the case that if you're a junkie, or you don't have a house, or whatever, that as soon as the baby is born, it is for the next 80 years, well, up till it's 18 placed outside the home by Child Protection.'

After summarising the events of the movie, Inge associates its moral issue (the capabilities of a mentally challenged girl) with an issue revolving around having children. Of all reflections on moral issues, almost 12.5% were of the associative kind.

These three modes of reflection on moral narratives on television might not be the only three modes. There is much research on reflection which shows that reflection is a complex term with many forms and meanings. The *Kenniskring Reflectie* (Knowledge Group Reflection) (2006), for example, distinguishes eleven different forms of reflection that are each suitable in their own unique way for reflecting on issues in everyday life. It is beyond the scope of this study to discuss all these different forms of reflection, but it is important to note that this exploratory study just gives us a first introduction to moral reflection evoked by television narratives.

Additionally, the modes of reflection do not have a one-on-one relationship with the decoding positions Hall (1973) has formulated (see §2.2.1 for an elaboration on Hall's encoding/decoding model). Clark's, Frank's, Karin's and Inge's reflections might be read as oppositional or negotiated readings of the narratives. However, I would like to argue that they are more an *expansion* of these concepts. The additional and associated reflections are playful and are marked with a high level of involvement on the part of the interviewees. They seem however to go further than negotiated or oppositional readings, and therefore should be considered as a supplementary to these readings.

§4.2.2 Insight into: Morally Relevant Issues

All interviewees used television narratives to reflect on morally relevant issues. The themes reflected upon were authority, politics, death, family, violence, friendship, civil conduct, love, religion, heroism, the good life, the knowable, good vs. evil, and sexuality. Notably, the interviewees reflected on three themes not present in the content analysis: the knowable, good vs. evil, and sexuality. One moral theme — fairness — that is offered by prime-time narratives was not reflected upon at all by the interviewees. An overview of moral themes and the number of quotes on each one as found in the interviews is given in Table 7.

Table 7. Number of Quotes per Moral Theme

moral theme:	number of quotes:	percentage:
civil conduct	64	29
violence	35	16
love	30	14
the good life	19	9
family	18	8
authority	16	7
politics	9	4
friendship	8	4
sexuality	8	4
religion	3	1
the knowable	2	1
good vs. evil	2	1
death	2	1
heroism	1	0.5

Three moral themes were reflected upon more often than others: civil conduct, (29% of all moral issues discussed), violence (16%), and love (14%).

Moral issues revolving around civil conduct ranged from reflecting on how people are dealt with in television programmes to reflecting on human interaction in everyday life. Interaction between people in programmes often concerned famous people. For example the behaviour of talk show hosts or comedians was often a topic interviewees reflected upon. For example, Jurgen (94-year-old Dutch man, high education) explains why he does not like to watch the average talk show:

Jurgen: 'Well, all those ordinary. I am irritated by the, by the vulgar, all those sexual topics do not interest me the slightest bit. I think those ridiculous, all those dirty words they say. I think you have to remain civil. I, look, I like saying crazy things when I know people fairly well. To be a bit smutty. But on television, I think: stay decent. And I think often, those duologues are an incredible waste of time, I think. A waste of energy.'

While explaining his dislike for talk shows Jurgen simultaneously reflects on civil conduct. He judges the behaviour on these shows as 'uncivil', which he feels is inappropriate for television programmes.

Another example of how talk show hosts' behaviour is reflected upon is the way that some interviewees think talk show hosts lure their guests into saying things they do not want to, in order to cause a sensation. For example Joke (65-year-old Dutch woman, average education) explains her dislike for talk show host Andries Knevel. She brings up an episode in which Andries Knevel is talking to a Dutch man that became a Muslim. The topic of conversation is the death threats received by Geert Wilders, a Dutch politician who is known for his controversial statements.

Joke: 'Andries Knevel going like: so you would want that Wilders, he has to die? …And that's when he [the guest] said it: yes. Aye, and, yeah, do you want to kill him? Well, no, that's not necessary. Yes, but he can get a terminal disease for example? And then I think, and that guy answered: yes. But I thought it, how that Andries Knevel was pushing too hard, aye. 'Cause he actually fed him the words, and I don't think that's reasonable. I think: you shouldn't do that. Aye, that guy probably did want to. I might believe that. But, you should not make someone say things.'

This behaviour, considered 'uncivil' in both television programmes and everyday life, is viewed in the same way by almost all of the interviewees.

Secondly, the moral theme 'civil conduct' was reflected upon in terms of human interaction more related to everyday life (as opposed to being related to specific people on television, such as talk show hosts). A good example is found in the interview with Margot (17-year-old Dutch woman, high education) when she discusses the competitive element of the makeover programme *The Swan.* The candidates in this show get a physical makeover via extreme cosmetic surgery and then enter a competition to decide who is the prettiest. After discussing the value of these programmes for the participants, Margot states that she doesn't like the competition element of *The Swan*:

Margot: 'Yeah, it is a rejection once again…'
Interviewer: 'And you think that's not very good?'
Margot: 'No, it is, you're just done with the programme, and you …you know that you look good and then all the sudden …you're in a competition and you think: oh, I'll win or something and then, you say,….the other one wins. I don't think that's very good for you, that's again less self confidence…I don't think that is very nice, you standing there: okay, I lose, oh, all right.'

Margot dismisses the way candidates in *The Swan* are made to feel insecure again. She disagrees with it (though she does like the programme) and thinks it harmful for the candidates.

The second-most-discussed theme in the interviews was violence. Though violence is not often presented as a moral theme in prime-time narratives, it appears to be a topic of great interest to the interviewees. Violence in television programmes and violent acts in society are often grounds for reflection. For example Dineke (86-year-old Dutch woman, low education) reflects on an issue in the news she has discussed with other people while watching television together in the communal room of her nursing home. The issue revolves around the Dutch Prince Bernhard, who paid the fine given to two employees of a supermarket after physically tackling a thief (this incident took place in 2002). Dineke discusses this issue in terms of an understanding for the violence used by the employees of the supermarket:

Dineke: 'Cause, yes, I would, I thought it was marvellous. I say that he [Prince Bernhard], he paid the fine for those, for those Albert Heijn [supermarket] employees. But, that hasn't been received with thanks. I say, yes, I know. I say, but he still did it. Yes, yes. 'Cause I think, those are just employees, but that boy, of course, but just a normal business or shop, you become furious, if, if so much of your, your Albert Heijn is being stolen. They should keep their hands off other people's stuff.'

In this way Dineke formulates her thoughts and an understanding for the violent act in a repeat of the conversation she has had with other people.

Additionally, violent acts in fictional programmes were also used to reflect on the moral theme violence. For example Anton (29-year-old Dutch man, high education) explains his thoughts about violence used by two women in a detective story. The two women attempted to save their friend from a violent husband and accidentally killed him (This scene is indeed the scene described in §3.3). Anton, while trying to imagine being in a similar situation in everyday life, tries to find ways to deal with the situation and formulates different perspectives relevant to the situation:

Anton: 'Well if, if I, if one of my friends, so to say, would be in a situation in which their partner would be really, well, yeah, boorish towards [...] a friend of mine [..]. Well, in any case I would think that a really bloody awful situation. And... yeah, I, I, I think that I would first talk, mostly with acquaintances, about, about how to solve this. [...] What I would do, I would, I wouldn't, I don't know if I'd go to that person to talk about it ... And I definitely would not waylay that person with a baseball bat. No, I would, so I would try to hand that, that friend the tools, so to speak, to solve his own or her situation, I would more, yes, more like that, I would handle the situation.'

Later on:

Anton: 'So I don't know how, how intense that [knowledge of a friend being abused] is. So, I can, I can imagine it's pretty intense [...] But then I would, yeah, I would myself, yeah, I think it a bit, that you, you, well yeah, one way or another you're punishing someone in such a way that I think... you're taking the law into your own hands and ... I would go to the police, or if, if I really think the person is in so much trouble and can't handle it on their own...'

So while acknowledging the wrongness of violence Anton also shows an understanding for the two women who committed the murder. Violence was often reflected upon in this way, disapproved of, but often the motives for the use of violence were understood as well.

Last but not least, love is the third moral theme that is discussed by the interviewees more often than other themes. Reflection on this theme

concentrates on what real love is. For example Bart (54-year-old Dutch man, low education) discusses his favourite programme *Boer zoekt vrouw* (*Farmer seeks wife*), a reality programme in which farmers looking for suitable wives. The programme was a surprise hit in the Netherlands. Bart explained how he missed the last episode in which the farmers made their final choice. When asked who he expects to have become a couple and why, Bart explains:

Bart: 'Yes, I think that if you fall for someone, that is not only because of good looks, but also because of one's attitude to life, I think. If you, I can imagine that if you, when you are a convinced vegetarian, for your whole life already, and you meet the woman of your dreams and she eats meat and you are really disgusted by that, then I can imagine that it doesn't work out.'

From Bart's explanations of why people can or can not become a couple it appears that Bart finds that love is more than just physical attraction, or as he calls it himself: 'one's attitude towards life'. Most reflections on love were evoked by fictional programmes.

What appeared to be the most important condition for reflection was the connection that a moral issue had to the interviewees' everyday lives. In interviews it was often obvious that a moral issue was directly relevant to the interviewee's life, thus showing the involvement of the interviewee with the issue at hand. This involvement might be explained with the concept of (empathetic) emotions as explained by Tan (1991)[25]. However it would stretch too far to discuss the role of emotion (and consequently identification) in watching television, since this study concentrates on the development of moral imagination. An example is taken from an interview with Marie (46-year-old Dutch woman, high education). During the interview Marie explains why she likes a docudrama that follows people who dramatically change their lives (by moving to Africa to start a hotel business, for example). Repeatedly, Marie

[25] According to Tan (1991), an empathetic emotion can be understood as an emotion that is marked by the fact that the perceived, imaginary appeal of the situation to the character in a movie is part of the appeal to the viewer.

emphasises the moral issue of 'the good life' and how important it should be to reflect on this issue constantly. Later on in the interview she returns to this topic. It appears to be relevant for her daily life, since Marie is planning to make a similar change:

Marie: 'Yeah, and *Het Roer Om* [Shift the Helm] is a programme that strikes me deeply [...], 'cause, that, I would want to do something similar, and I'm planning to. So it affects me.'

Later on:

Marie: 'Just to see how they do it, how they [participants in the programme] cope [...] How, how, in spite of all setbacks, you can still be satisfied with the choi, choices you made [...]. And after one year, you can say: we're not there yet, but we could never go back [...]. Since we have a better life here, qualitatively better...'

The reason for Marie to reflect on a moral issue such as 'the good life' is because it is immediately relevant to her current life. Planning to make a radical change herself induces her to reflect on the programme's topic: what counts as a good life? For other interviewees the moral issues reflected upon were relevant in terms of profession, leisure activities, familial situations, and many other things, depending on how the topic connected to the interviewees' own narratives.

§4.2.2.1 Situated Interviewees

Even though all interviewees used television narratives to reflect on moral issues, there were some interesting differences in terms of sex, age, and ethnicity. The differences were not found in the modes of reflection — women and men engaged in all three modes in similar ways and equal amounts. The moral issues reflected upon, though, did differ. The groups of interviewees are not exactly equal in size, therefore it seems relevant to speak of percentages of reflections for different groups of interviewees.

First, an interesting difference appeared between men and women concerning the topics reflected upon. Women reflected more often than

men on issues revolving around family (women reflected on this issue three times more often than men), friendship (men never raised this issue) and the good life (six times more often than men). Men reflected more often than women on the moral issue of violence (men reflected on violence issues 2.5 times more often than women). Additionally, when women discussed violence it was often in the context of domestic violence (rape, abuse, et cetera). Men tended to discuss violence more in societal terms such as the war in Iraq or the murder of Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh (on 2 November 2004). For example, Michiel (26-year-old Dutch man, high education) reflects on the representations of violence encountered by American soldiers in Iraq, induced by a documentary:

Michiel: 'Yesterday I watched a piece on how American soldiers return from Iraq.. got wounded…a traumatised story they told, by a Dutch interviewer….Very interesting. Also, to show the other side of the coin, usually it is presented as a success by CNN and, incidentally you hear that twenty civilians got killed and one American soldier, or whatever the proportions are…in this case, presented as a body count….Of course an American perspective again, being hit by the Iraqis, but a human, a fine, image.'

For the moral issues around family and the good life there was no difference in topics emphasised by either men or women. Apparently, the emphasis on what moral issues are reflected upon is different for women and men.

Secondly, age seems to be of importance for moral reflection. Elderly people and people younger than 18 use television narratives differently to others when engaging in moral reflection. People in both categories take moral positions while discussing television narratives. People under 18 seem to take a secure moral position on the issues appearing in television narratives. For example, Martin (12-year-old Dutch boy, primary school) discusses a love affair between two people in his favourite soap opera for youth: *ZOOP*. The two characters involved have an age difference; the girl is a few years older than the boy. Martin does not

engage in reflection on love, but seems sure about the impossibility of the whole affair:

Martin: 'They don't fit together [...]
Interviewer: 'Why don't they fit together?'
Martin: 'Well, 'cause there's a few years between them, and it sounds weird, like the pupil and the teacher. [...] The age .... And it's similar to someone of 16 years old going for a nine-year-old boy.'

When children become older, they gradually seem to become less secure about moral issues and grow into a more reflexive position. Maybe young people still have to learn to recognise many issues as moral ones. In Martin's case it might be he himself has not engaged in a loving relationship yet and therefore is not able to give meaning to the events in *ZOOP* in any other way. Martin knows a few societal rules (eg. that the age difference should not be too large) but does not consider this as something moral. It appears that an important step in developing a capacity for moral imagination, recognising an issue as of moral quality, still needs to be taken by the very young.

When people grow older they seem to take a different, more liberal, moral position. In the group of interviewees above 66 years old this moral position became especially visible. As the older interviewees in this group themselves claim, they are just not that interested any more in what kind of affairs other people engage in. They seem milder towards others and the dilemmas and choices they face. For example, Karin (86- year-old Dutch woman, low education) literally says she does not care about what other people do, think, or say since 'people need to live their own lives'. Additionally, the elderly seem to use television narratives to reconstruct an overview of their lifetimes. As Jurgen (94-year-old Dutch man, high education) explains, television gives him the opportunity to attend everything, from funerals of royalty to an education in dance and music. When explaining his preference for history programmes, he wonders about all the things that have happened in his life span:

Jurgen: '… cause I think it extremely interesting. And then I think: what you have lived through, and you have forgotten all of it, buddy [indicating himself].'

Thirdly, groups of interviewees were compared in terms of level of education and ethnicity. Neither feature seems to be relevant for the moral reflection evoked by television narratives for these 41 interviewees. Although, on first sight, a small difference in moral reflection between people from different ethnic groups appeared. People of Moroccan and Indonesian ethnicity seemed to reflect more often on religion-related issues. On second glance, the interviewees who did raise issues of religion also expressed a religious identity during the interview. Thus, this difference between ethnic groups has nothing to do with ethnicity but with the experience of religion. For example, Malika (29-year-old Dutch-Moroccan woman, high education) explains that Islam is an important moral guide to her and how that influences her perception of television.

Malika: 'Well, in the sense that there is a lot of nudity on TV and that, well, and Islam, at least to me, my Islam, […] I have the conviction that, my religious conviction is that you should not let yourself be tempted. And when you expose yourself to temptations, those temptations could become larger, and then, I consider the devil as the temptation. And it could be, that you take the wrong path, or at least, what to me as a Muslim, is wrong. It doesn't need to be wrong according to the norms of this society, 'cause a lot of things are normal here. But, according to my conviction it's not okay.'

Malika explains her dislike of nudity in MTV video clips, why she is (morally) against it and how this relates to her religious conviction.

Additionally, a difference between people of different educational levels appeared in the level of language used. However, since this analysis focused primarily on the content of the discussion, the language used to express it was not taken into account. In the end, the reflection on a moral issue is of importance, and not the manner in which this reflection is formulated. For example Clark (14-year-old Surinamese boy, low

education) is explaining how sexuality is different for boys and girls of his age. This issue is evoked by an episode from *Gilmore Girls* in which one of the characters, Paris, temporarily had a relationship with two men at the same time. Through additional reflection Clark then turns to his own experiences at school:

Clark: 'Well, lately there were a girl and a boy and they were going out together. And at the schoolparty the school party that girl had kissed two boys, and the boy had kissed three girls. And the boy was a man and that girl a whore. That's what they call her.'

Though Clark is not yet able to use words as monogamy, sexism, and heterosexuality, it is content-wise what he is trying to point at. Therefore this quote is analysed similarly to quotes from others who do use these words, since the difference is in quality of language and not in quality of reflection.

§4.2.3 Insight into: Moral Deliberation

All interviewees used both styles of moral deliberation (i.e. ethics of care and ethics of justice) to explain moral issues that had caught their attention. For example, Dewi (12- year-old Surinamese girl, low education) explains a scene in the American drama series *Gilmore Girls* in which reasoning through an ethics of justice is applied while Dewi herself reasons through an ethics of care. In this episode one of the characters, a girl named Paris, breaks up with her boyfriend over the phone, without giving the boy any explanation about the breakup. Dewi then explains:

Dewi: 'And I think it's really, really a pity. She [Paris] doesn't give a real reason, she just says: it's over and then, yeah, because it just doesn't work she says, but she doesn't give the, the reason. I think, yeah, I would break up with a reason. That's really better.'
Interviewer: 'Better?'
Dewi: 'Yeah, that's better, if you break up with a reason, because the boy will think: what did I do now. That it's his fault, while it's actually her fault. He will start to feel really guilty.'

So, while explaining a breakup scene in *Gilmore Girls*, Dewi reasons through an ethics of care. In Dewi's opinion Paris is doing something wrong, because it unnecessarily harms the boy (resulting in him feeling needlessly guilty).

Most interviewees showed approval for a narrative offering different styles of reasoning. Inge (28-year-old Dutch woman, high education) explains why she likes *Baantjer* (a Dutch police series) and expresses an admiration for the end scene of each episode in which the main characters reflect on what has happened and what the motives of the perpetrator were. In this end scene several opinions are expressed and different styles of reasoning seem explicitly used by the characters:

Inge:	'...and subsequently the analysis of *Baantjer*, from De Cock [main character of the series] and his...comrades, of what has happened and what life is about.'
Interviewer:	'What life is about? Do tell.'
Inge:	'He always says something sensible. That it's a shame, or life takes its own turn, [...] I think it's meant like that: which lessons can we learn?'

For Inge the different points of view in the end scene are something she explicitly likes about the programme.

Nevertheless, while the interviewees used different styles of reasoning to explain their preferences, their reflections on moral issues and the human character, they did not seem to use the styles offered by television narratives to develop their own. The moral styles were used, but not reflected upon when offered by a narrative. Inge would have reflected on styles of reasoning if she had addressed, for example, the idea that the different perspectives on a moral issue presented in the end scene of *Baantjer* offered her additional perspectives on the issue, which she had not had before that moment. Instead, Inge sticks with appreciation. This result indicates that television might not add so much to gaining insight into ways of moral deliberation.

§4.2.3.1 Situated Interviewees

Surprisingly, the styles of reasoning were not related to gender (or any other feature of the interviewees). As explained in §4.1.1 during the analysis, all quotes were assessed on styles of reasoning used, upon which groups of interviews were compared. Though Gilligan et al. (1982, 1988) suggest that women are oriented more towards an ethics of care style of reasoning, and men towards an ethics of justice style of reasoning (see §2.1.2), the sex, age, ethnicity, and level of education of each of the 41 interviewees seem irrelevant factors for style of reasoning used. Although combined with the fact that interviewees did not reflect on styles of reasoning, these results might say more about television narratives' inability to evoke reflection on moral deliberation than suggesting anything about the styles of moral reasoning.

§4.2.4 Insight into: the Human Character

The third part of moral imagination, insight into the other and ourselves (the human character) is developed through television narratives. Additionally, according the interviewees, it is also an important reason to favour a programme (ranging from current affairs to soap operas). Reflecting on the human character appears to be a pleasurable process for all interviewees, independent of their sex, age, ethnicity or educational level. For example, Jelle (53-year-old Dutch man, low education) explains that his reason for liking his all-time-favourite programme *Hill Street Blues* is found in the array of different personalities:

Jelle:	'..., and the characters, let's say, they were kind of magnified ... Aye? And you can show characters as .., either extremely unsympathetic or .. extremely sympathetic... And .., someone who is extremely sympathetic also has some bad habits and manners, and, and vice versa. And that, that, they were very good at that.'
Interviewer:	'Cause it is actually a whole palette of...'
Jelle:	'Yeah, it's a whole palette of different personalities.'

As do the other interviewees, Jelle shows an appreciation of the narrative offering opportunities to gain insights into the human character.

Insight into the other was not only reflected upon by the interviewees, but also enabled the interviewees putting themselves in a television character's place. In particular young people (up to 18 years old) seem to engage in this practice. For example, Lisa (13- year-old Dutch girl, average education) puts herself directly into the shoes of one of the main characters of her favourite soap opera *ZOOP*, while discussing the issue of giving a friend some advice concerning his love life:

Lisa: 'Well, … he is in love and he can't just, he can't just stop that, so you just have to go for it and find out what she thinks of him. So, I would give him that kind of advice.'

By putting herself in the character's place, Lisa seems to be able to imagine what she herself would do and thus gains insight into her own moral position.

Though all interviewees reflected on the human character, this reflection did not always result in gaining insight into the other. Sometimes a clear them/us distinction emerges when confronted with people other than the self in television narratives. Some interviewees expressed these feelings towards people they encountered in television narratives. A good example is Pien (23–year-old Dutch woman, high education) who explains why she is interested in people who participate in popular talk shows such as *Oprah* and *Dr. Phil*:

Pien: 'But I used to watch it more from a sociological perspective or, I don't know whether I should name it like that, and anthropological … maybe, because it, it is often a different class these people are from, in general they're not scientists who are in there [the talk shows]... and who participate in talk shows, since they're not, they are not highly educated people, so they do have another level … And that's something you certainly notice in those talk shows. […] So, I think it is interesting to watch these shows such as Catherine Keyl [the Dutch Oprah Winfrey], I just want to see … how these people think and talk about such issues. […] And also to figure out if the topic is something that concerns, concerns me, or that I, that I find important, how I can with

those people, or how I could, so to speak, outline a policy or something like that…'

By treating people who participate in talk shows as objects of study, Pien not only puts herself in a position in which she knows better than the people actually involved, but also creates a very sharp us vs them distinction. Pien is thus limited in developing her ability to gain insight into people other than herself.

Secondly, this us vs. them distinction was sometimes evoked by the moral issue in a television narrative. Some interviewees felt that some aspects of programmes (the moral issue, or the people in the narrative) were intruding, or they could not connect to a certain topic presented in the programme. Sometimes this resulted not only in us vs. them distinction, but also caused the interviewee to create an emotional distance towards the programme. André (27-year-old Dutch man, high education) explains his inability to understand the participants of Temptation Island. Temptation Island is a reality show in which several couples are split up and agree to temporarily live with groups of singles of the opposite sex, in order to test the strength of their relationships. After he briefly mentions his gloating over the difficulties experienced by the participants, he continues:

André: '… I think it [*Temptation Island*] a very bizarre thought that, and I enjoy watching that. To see how difficult they find it, there is a bit of sadism on my side for that.'

Interviewer: 'Can you explain that?'

André: 'Well, I, I, first of all, that whole monogamy command has, has always been a bit strange to me. I actually do have a certain, what's it called, respect for human feelings and so on, so it's not like I just think it is strange. But I, it never connected with me at an emotional level and that's why I think it a bit strange that they do that to themselves [..] But they have to, the whole time, up till, up till, till, till the moment they burst into tears, control themselves, to not give into something I would have given into long time ago, so to speak. So that's the sadistic element.'

The reason for André to distance himself emotionally from the participants of *Temptation Island* is his inability to connect to the concept of monogamy. In this way, André creates a us vs. them distinction and as a result is also limited in developing insights into the other. This way of distancing oneself often revolved around people who were from a lower class than the interviewee was and almost all interviewees did this at one or more moments during the interview.

§4.2.4.1 Situated Interviewees

Interestingly enough, all interviewees used television narratives to reflect on insights into the human character in quite similar ways. Again, age seems a more important feature when concerned with developing insight into the human character than sex, ethnicity and educational level. While men and women from different educational levels and ethnic groups reflect on the human character in very similar ways, young people engage much more often than older people in reflections on the human character through identification with a television character. As explained in §4.2.2.1 the elderly find themselves in a position in which they declare that everybody is able to decide for themselves who and what they are, thus reflecting less on the human character than other people.

§4.2.5 Genre Preference and Moral Reflection

Finally, as posed by the second research question, genre preference was investigated in terms of how it matters for the development of moral imagination. Surprisingly, the interviewees with a preference for fictional genres did not reflect on different moral insights than interviewees with a preference for non-fictional genres, infotainment/entertainment genres, or with a non-specific genre preference did. Since no differences were found, the answer to the research question is simple: it does not matter. These results are nevertheless interesting, since the content analysis indicates that different genres emphasise different moral themes. The viewers, however, appear to reflect on moral themes for other reasons than them being on offer. Despite this, it is important to note that though the interviewees' favourite genres were topics of conversation, the in-

depth interview might not be the best instrument to establish genre preference (e.g. people might only refer to programmes they remember watching last week, or programmes they prefer above others, instead of programmes they actually watch).

§4.3 Kohlberg Meets the Literary Culture: An Integration of Approaches

Now that both research questions have been answered, a few striking results have become visible. One of the most interesting results is the importance of age for the development of moral imagination through television narratives. In this study, the initial distinction of the age groups was based on their (assumed) shared experiences with television (see §4.1). The results of the in-depth interviews indicate age to be of importance in a somewhat different manner: depending on age some moral insight offered by a television narrative is more reflected upon than others. Older people for example appeared to reflect less on insights into the human character than younger people did. To explain how and why age is of such importance, I want to argue for an integration of Kohlberg's model of moral development with the concept of moral imagination. Not only does such an integration seem extremely useful in order to understand the relation of television narratives with moral imagination, but additionally the integration sheds some light on how the narratives that one has lived through are of relevance.

As discussed in §2.1.2 Kohlberg (1984) distinguishes six moral stages on three moral levels. The highest stage, the stage of the universal ethical principle, in which an individual is aware of a social and individual responsibility for her or his own moral actions, is only reached by a few adults, while the fifth stage is reached by most once they are simply old enough. Kohlberg's model of moral development focuses primarily on moral reasoning, is of a hierarchical nature, and has an end stage that one reaches around 25 years of age. Sure, the differences with how the literary culture conceives of moral imagination are great and obvious (for example Kohlberg applies the Kantian conception of morality, only values an ethics of justice style of moral reasoning, and connected to these, the disembodied individual is central in his conception of moral development).

But, the results of this analysis suggest that Kohlberg is right about the idea that there are different phases in development. Once a phase has been passed, one cannot fall back into a previous phase. I want to argue that the three insights necessary to develop the moral imagination can be developed separately from each other, and that once an insight is gained it does not get lost ever again too.

However, there is not so much hierarchy in the three moral insights: one insight can not be considered more valuable than other insights, since all three are of equal importance. Additionally, age should rather be considered an important predictor for the emphasis on insights that are developed at a certain stage in life. As we will see, it is merely the case that while one seems to reflect more on insights into moral issues, instead of on insights on moral deliberation or the human character, this does not mean that the latter two are not reflected upon at all. A first idea of television generations emerges.

Generations can be understood as cohorts of people. The cohorts can be characterised by one's birth date that leads to shared characteristics on individual (course of live, value orientations and behaviour) and systematic (extent and composition, generational culture and generational organisations) levels (Becker, 1992). Simply said, a generation is a group of people who have shared similar experiences because they are for example born in the same country and in the same decade, and therefore these people have things in common such as similar attitudes toward television. This concept of generations closely connects to the concept of social-historical background. In §2.2.3 we have seen that social-historical background determines the use of narratives to give meaning to everyday life experiences, but it is also indicative of which narratives one is attracted to.

We can now understand how the age categories can be seen as moral generations: generations have different experiences — not only with television, but also simply because they have lived through different epochs — and therefore have a different arsenal of narratives usable to give meaning to television narratives. Additionally, Kohlberg's model helps

us understand why there is a difference between generations in the emphasis on which of the three moral insight is reflected upon.

The people interviewed can be thought of as representing four generations: people up to around 14 years of age, people up to around 20 years of age, people up to around 60 years, and people who are older than 60 years of age. The people in the different groups were distinguished by the moral position they placed themselves in. The moral positions can be illustrated along the lines of moral insights developed.

Firstly, a group of very young people (up to 14 years) can be described. These children mostly take an inflexible moral position. They formulate strict opinions on right and wrong. An example is Supiati (13-year-old Indonesian girl, low education), who judges the lying of one of the characters in the American drama series *Gilmore Girls*:

Supiati: 'No, yes, I think lying is wrong anyhow.'
Interviewer: 'No? Why?'
Supiati: '...I think that's just wrong. You should not lie to anybody I think.'

But later on, when the interviewer inquired about other characters that were also lying, it becomes clear that Supiati is still struggling with the concept of lying as a moral issue:

Supiati: 'Yes, I think it..yes. 'Cause she didn't dare to tell her mom. No, but she [the mom] is laughing at her, I wouldn't tell either.'
Interviewer: 'That doesn't count as lying?'
Supiati: 'Yeah, actually it is, 'cause she [the liar] promised that Jason she would tell...'
Interviewer: 'It's difficult, isn't it?'
Supiati: 'Yes.'

People in the age category up to 14 are engaged in gaining insight into moral issues and deciding when an issue is of moral value when reflecting on television narratives. Their young age accounts for a limited amount of life experiences and therefore they might not have so many narratives to

give meaning to moral issues. Additionally, the first exclamation about the wrongness of lying fits Kohlberg's pre-conventional phase.

The second group that can be distinguished consists of people up to 20 years of age. They create moral positions for themselves that are less secure than the positions of the previous group. A good example is Wendy (17-year-old Dutch girl, high education) who discusses the problems of one of the characters, a boy called Jess, in the drama series *Gilmore Girls.* The boy has turned into a troublemaker, while his uncle Luke tries to solve the boy's problems. The interviewer asked Wendy what she thinks of all the problems Jess creates and the fact that Luke tries to solve them:

Wendy: 'Between Luke and Jess, it's war I think. His [Luke's] sister thinks that he's [Jess] been kicked out of the house, while Luke didn't send him away, but he left himself. He went back to his dad. Because he was just too hard to handle.'

But later on, Wendy explains that she understands Jess's situation and appreciates Luke's efforts to help his nephew:

Wendy: 'Yeah, yeah, on one hand, I think it's okay, 'cause that Jess is having a rough time. He could not live with his mom, 'cause she couldn't, I think, take care of him. So, he had to live with Luke, and with Luke it didn't work out either. So he went back to his dad, but that also doesn't work. So, actually, yes, that boy has to go and live somewhere else, but yeah, where do you go and live? If it doesn't, if you're just, he is in the middle of puberty, he can't find his niche. So, I think it's nice, yes, I think it's nice of Luke that he still tries to do something sweet for him.'

Throughout the interview Wendy continuously compromises between various dimensions of moral issues, without reaching a definite conclusion, which is characteristic of this generation. While recognising moral issues and dilemmas, they seem insecure about the limits of what is right and what is wrong. Furthermore, they take into account the consequences for the people involved and try to think about the motivation of the actor. People in this category appear more engaged in developing insight into the

human character while the complexity of moral issues increases. Of course their stock of useful narratives has grown during adolescence, which could make it more difficult to evaluate moral issues. Additionally, their reasoning seems to comply with Kohlberg's conventional stage of moral development, in which moral behaviour is also guided by social relationships.

The third group can be characterised by people up to 60 years of age. They take varying moral positions. Instead of becoming less secure, their moral reflections seem to become more complex over the years. They acknowledge the societal moral rules while simultaneously finding coping strategies for exceptions. For example Mirjam (58-year-old Dutch woman, average education) is reflecting on a violent act in the Dutch soap series *Goede Tijden, Slechte Tijden*. The male character Nick has raped a girl in one of the previous episodes, and in the episode under discussion his wife Charlie finds out and shoots Nick with a nail gun. Firstly, Mirjam acknowledged the moral rule that physical violence is always wrong and then continues to describe a context in which she can understand both the act of rape and the shooting:

Mirjam: 'And, there she got him within range. And she wanted him to admit that he had raped her [the other girl]. And he didn't want to, so he was kind of making a fool of them and then she shot, and she shot him in his foot. Then he stumbled inside and Charlie was in a kind of state and she still had that, that nail gun. And then she held within range, and then, yes, that's when he said it. You saw pictures, those flashbacks of him, when he raped her. But, I think, he was so…drunk…that he didn't realise till then, what he actually did finally. Those flashes you saw, you had to translate it like that, I think. So, you had to understand that all the sudden he looked like: Oh! I did do it after all.'

Various insights into moral issues and the human character are continuously redefined by the interviewees. The two insights are not separate anymore (as was the case in the first two categories of people) but are intertwined. This category can be situated in Kohlberg's post-conventional level of moral development. Nevertheless, the development

of insight into moral issues and into the human character is not finished by the age of 25 but continuous throughout the years. From a 'narrative' point of view, this continuing development makes more sense. One's narrative is never finished, and therefore, obviously, one's moral narrative is therefore also in continuous development.

Last but not least, the fourth category that can be distinguished consists of people over 60 years of age. They can be said to take a 'mature position'. They have different ways of arguing for people's own responsibility to make their own moral decisions. For example, they argue that moral issues change over time and therefore should be evaluated on their own merits, and that one never knows the fine details of someone else's life and that these should also be taken into account. For example Barbara (75-year-old Dutch woman, high education) who is a retired lawyer explains her pleasure in watching current affairs programmes.

Barbara: 'For example, take an issue such as the, the ill-treatment of, of, of women, and in 1981 there was already a conference, here in [removed for reasons of privacy] about violence against women and girls, and that was also about sexual violence, since I did do sexual offence law as well. I meddled with that as well. But *all* those things, and my husband says so as well, we have heard before. And they pretend that it all brand new. So, that's why I also like to hear it. That's when I think: Oh, what have they come up with now?'

Instead of taking a moral stance, Barbara discusses the fact that the moral issue of sexual violence is not a new one and has been discussed many times before. As indicated by 'mature position', this category and their reflections are very close to Rosenblatt's (1938) formulation of moral maturity as being an individual's capacity to 'assume the responsibility for working out their own [moral] solutions and making their own [moral] judgments.' (see §1.3). Important to note is that though this mature position is often taken by the elderly, even the elderly have not finished developing the moral imagination. Sometimes television offers narratives that make even older people take a quite radical turn in their lives. Jurgen (94-year-old Dutch man, high education) for example made a major change

to his life only a few years ago. Jurgen enjoys watching the television channels National Geographic and Discovery Channel and became interested in the idea of the expanding universe. This expanding universe was such a mystifying concept to him that at his very advanced age he became a Christian:

Jurgen: 'So, it is like this, I don't understand it [the expanding universe]. The only thing I understand is that there has to be something more. And you have to, I believe, be good to your fellow, fellow human beings. Except for, when you are … that is Christianity.'

Even though people of this age category do very often take 'morally mature' positions, they still develop their moral imagination. These results seem to suggest that there is no final stage, and that developing the moral imagination is never finished.

§4.4 Conclusion

The question central to this chapter is how people of different sexes, ages, ethnic groups, or educational levels in the Netherlands use the moral insights offered by television narratives to reflect on everyday moral issues. This reflection is expected to enhance the moral imagination, a necessity to reach moral maturity (see also §2.2.2). From the analysis, moral reflection emerged as a complicated concept. I distinguished three modes of reflection — interpretative, additional, and associated reflection. These modes were used to reflect upon various moral issues. To complicate things even further, moral reflection induced by television narratives exceeds the manifest insights offered by the narrative. One of the more important conclusions is that television narratives evoke moral reflection, but none of the interviewees took the moral message as presented in a narrative at face value. A moral message often gave rise to reflection on the moral theme it was allocated to, and sometimes to other themes (eg. associated reflection).

The interviewees reflected upon three moral themes more often than on other themes (violence, love, and civil conduct). The domination

of civil conduct may be explained by the amount of messages offered about these issues by prime-time television narratives in the Netherlands (Krijnen and Costera Meijer, 2005). Issues revolving around love might be reflected upon this often because love is one of the core feelings of human beings and human life, and therefore we also want or need to be in touch with it, explore it and reflect upon it (cf. Nussbaum, 1990). Last but not least, the dominance of the moral theme 'violence' might be explained by the public (and academic) debate that partly focuses on violence as an effect of watching television.

Furthermore, a part of the pleasure of watching television seems to be directly related to moral reflection. Gaining insight into the human character and insight into morally relevant issues are two important reasons interviewees gave for enjoying a certain programme or genre. However, when reflecting on the human character, interviewees sometimes created a us vs. them distinction. Pien's sharp exclusion of 'them' from even participating in outlining a policy is a very classic Foucauldian way of robbing people of their voice in order to maintain a certain status quo (Foucault, 1976; see also §2.2.2). This us vs. them distinction limits the interviewees in developing an insight into the other, but it might also be a strategy to 'keep the joy' in watching television. It will be interesting to look further into the experience of pleasure and (moral) reflection, since it might be part of the answer to the question: Why do so many people like watching so much television?

Though all interviewees used television narratives to reflect on moral issues, there were also interesting differences found between people based on their sex and age. Women reflected more often on themes related to the private sphere (family, friendship and the good life) and men reflected more often on a theme related to the public sphere (violence). These results indicate that the suggestions of Benhabib (1992) and Poole (1991) about the relationship of morality with the public and private sphere and the ratio vs. emotion dichotomy (see §2.1.4) are also valid when concerned with moral reflection evoked by television narratives.

The similarities between groups of people of different ethnicity and educational levels might indicate that other aspects are more important (such as a religious identity). However, it is important to note that it would be equally surprising if results indicated the opposite (for example that people of Surinamese descent reflected less on issues such as love and civil conduct). Nevertheless, this result raises philosophical questions such as the cultural specificity, or maybe even universality, of moral values.

Furthermore, it is important to remember that people with different educational levels often have a preference for different programmes (Kuipers, 2006). The similarity between different groups is interesting, since it suggests that even though the programmes watched are different, people still do similar things with them. This finding thus confirms the results of chapter three, in which it became visible that all genres and programmes offer moral insights.

Connected to this topic is the irrelevance of genre preference. Contradictory to what Nussbaum (1997) and Rorty (1989) claim (i.e. fictional narratives in particular are likely to induce moral reflection), interviewees do not appear to use fictional narratives more often for moral reflection than they use non-fictional or infotainment/entertainment narratives.

Finally, a first outline for moral generations emerged from the analysis. Integrating two models is useful to gain a more complete understanding of developing the moral imagination. The first outlines of television generations are sketched. Nevertheless, only 41 interviews were conducted. A further development of these outlines will take place in chapter 5, in which the results of a representative survey will be discussed.

CHAPTER 5. MORAL GENERATIONS AND TELEVISION NARRATIVES

The previous chapter revealed that people do use television narratives to develop the moral imagination. The emphasis of the reflection lies on insight into moral issues and insight into the human character. Though all people interviewed did show some kind of moral reflection, there were also some differences noticeable. The most important characteristic of a person that seemed important for the development of moral imagination was age. From the interviews an outline of moral generations emerged. As noted, generations in this case indicate cohorts of people with similar experiences with television and focus on the insights developed. Nevertheless, 41 in-depth interviews are sufficient to gain an understanding of the process of developing a capacity for moral imagination using television narratives, but not to gain understanding into who uses which narratives to gain what insights. In other words, we still do not have any answers to questions such as: Does every person reflect on every moral issue all the time? Is there a difference between groups of people, for example women and men, in the kind of moral insights they gain from television narratives? The leading question of this chapter is:

Do people with different demographic characteristics in the Netherlands differ in using television narratives as a resource to develop moral imagination?

To answer this question a survey was developed and employed in cooperation with Veldkamp Marktonderzoek BV[26]. For construction of the survey the same concepts that are relevant throughout this dissertation are of importance: the three insights that together construct moral imagination (moral issues, moral deliberation and the human character). Furthermore, four demographic characteristics of the audience are of significance, namely sex, age, ethnicity and educational level. The results

[26] I would like to thank Professor F. Bronner for his help at the very early stage of the survey and his suggestion to get into touch with Veldkamp Marktonderzoek BV, without whom this study would have been very difficult, if not impossible, to conduct.

from the in-depth interviews indicated that a fifth characteristic needs to be added: religiousness. Last, but not least, genre preference and the amount of television exposure (i.e. the amount of hours one watches television per week) are also expected to make a difference in the development of a capacity for moral imagination (see §2.2.3). The three moral insights, genre preference, amount of exposure, and the characteristics of the audience, are reflected in the survey and are also used to formulate the hypotheses to be tested:

I. Men and women differ in the use of television narratives to reflect on moral insights.
II. People from different age categories differ in the use of television narratives to reflect on moral insights.
III. People with a difference in educational level differ in the use of television narratives to reflect on moral insights.
IV. Religious people and non-religious people differ in the use of television narratives to reflect on moral insights.
V. People with a dissimilar genre preference differ in the use of television narratives to reflect on moral insights.
VI. The amount of television exposure makes a difference in the use of television narratives to reflect on moral insights.

Before turning to the results I will first discuss the sample, how the concepts derived from the content analysis (see chapter 3) and the in-depth interviews (see chapter 4) are made operational, and the survey construction.

§5.1 Research Design

Veldkamp Marktonderzoek BV provided a sample representative of the Netherlands in terms of gender, age, educational level, and religion. Unfortunately, it was impossible to include ethnicity in the sample, simply because there were not enough people from ethnic minority groups in the database the sample was selected from. This limitation is defensible for two reasons. Firstly, the in-depth interviews did not indicate that ethnicity

was a factor in the development of moral imagination and as I already argued, it would be rather surprising if people from different ethnic groups did indeed differ in the moral insights they reflect upon (see §4.4). Secondly, recent studies in the Netherlands concentrating on media use (d'Haenens, Van Summeren, Saeys and Koeman, 2004) and the meaning given to popular culture (De Bruin, 2005) among adolescents of various ethnic groups also reveal ethnicity to be a less important factor in these processes than, for example, sex.

Veldkamp Marktonderzoek BV were also responsible for the data gathering over the Internet in the first two weeks of April 2006. The Internet was chosen as the medium for the survey for several reasons. Firstly, the sample was selected from a database with people whose demographic characteristics were known, thus making it possible to select a representative sample that would indeed answer the survey questions (and therefore circumventing the problems with mail surveys or telephone surveys). Secondly, the Internet survey is quick (since there is no waiting for the mail to arrive, for example), has relatively low costs, and is more precise in data gathering (there is no transferring the respondents' answers from paper to computer for example).

Of course there are also some limitations one has to take into account when conducting a survey over the internet. Though 78% of the households in the Netherlands have access to the Internet this still leaves 22% of the population without access to the Internet (CBS, 2006), and these people are therefore excluded from the original database the sample was selected from. Additionally, Dillman (2000) points out that computer literacy and the technology itself can both have an effect on the survey in terms of problems for the respondents (do they know how to answer the questions, for example). However, the sample is selected from a database of people who complete Internet surveys on a regular basis. Therefore these problems were expected to have a minimal or no effect on the survey results.

§5.1.1 Survey Construction

The first aspect of moral imagination, insight into morally relevant issues, was measured by two scales. The first scale consisted of 17 items that each referred to one specific moral theme derived from the content analysis and the in-depth interviews, namely: family, friendship, love, civil conduct, politics, authority, violence, heroism, death, conviction, the good life, fairness, sexuality, good vs. evil, and the knowable. Of these themes, the first twelve emerged from the content analysis as described in chapter 3. The latter three, sexuality, good vs. evil and the knowable were added during the analysis of the in-depth interviews as explained in chapter 4. Each moral theme was represented in the survey by an item in terms of a typical formulation of that theme as found in the content analysis or the in-depth interviews. Each item started with: 'During or after watching television I am occupied with….'. The moral themes of civil conduct and the good life were presented in the two weeks of prime-time television analysed in chapter 3, in two categories, and are therefore represented by two items in the scale. The answer categories were: 1 = 'never', 2 = 'seldom', 3 = 'sometimes', 4 = 'often', and 5 = 'always'. Thus the items of the first scale are:

moral theme:	**During or after watching television I am occupied with…:**
family	how parents should raise their children.
friendship	how real friends treat each other.
good vs. evil	that you can divide people into good and evil ones.
love	what a loving relationship between two people should look like.
civil conduct	that people should always keep their promises.
the good life	how we should deal with people who do terrible things, such as murderers.
violence	that you always should solve an argument with words.
authority	who is supposed to make the rules in society.
politics	what a democracy actually is.
death	that is important to remember people who have passed away.
good life	what the best way is to become truly happy.
conviction	what a religion actually is.
heroism	when you can call someone a real hero.

civil conduct	that people of different groups in society should respect one another.
fairness	how unfair life sometimes is.
sexuality	whether love and sex should always be connected to each other.
knowable	how people always search for explanations of the thing they do not understand.

From the interviews in chapter 4 it became apparent that reflection on moral themes offered by a television programme also takes place when people are engaged in conversation with other people such as family, friends, or colleagues. These people also reflect on the moral theme but instead of it being an internal affair, it seems rather expressive and conversational. Therefore, a second scale was constructed with the same items as the previous one, only now the respondents were asked to answer the question of whether television gave rise to conversation about the themes (even when a theme did not occupy one's mind while watching television). The theme 'civil conduct' for example in this scale was represented by the item: 'A television programmes gives rise to conversation with others about that people should always keep their promises.' The answer categories were also: 1 = 'never', 2 = 'seldom', 3 = 'sometimes', 4 = 'often', and 5 = 'always'.

Factor-analysis of both scales together indicated that the two scales indeed measure something different, and therefore the two scales are kept apart. Both scales were homogeneous with a high Cronbach's α. Of the first scale, called 'being occupied with moral themes while watching television', Cronbach's α is .90. Of the second scale, called 'talking about moral themes induced by television programmes', Cronbach's α is .92. The Cronbach's α for both scales is extremely high which could also indicate that the items in the scales are more or less each other's synonyms and therefore the concept measured is very narrow. On the other hand, a high Cronbach's α can also be evaluated in a more positive sense, in that the items are strongly related. Since both scales are homogeneous and reliable, they were transformed into new variables. The first scale 'Being occupied with…' is transformed into a variable called 'internal moral reflection' and the second scale 'Talking about…' is transformed into a variable called 'expressive moral reflection'. For both new variables the lowest score is 17,

indicating that a respondent never reflects on any moral issues at all. The highest score of 85 indicates that a respondent always reflects on all moral issues while watching television.

The second aspect of moral imagination, insight into moral deliberation, was measured by a scale of seven items that focused on the aspects of the two moral orientations distinguished before: an ethics of justice style of reasoning and an ethics of care style of reasoning (see §2.1.2). This scale was based on a study focusing on the development of ethical awareness through reading literary narratives (Hakemulder, 1998). The original scale consisted of 28 items. The items that best reflected the two styles of reasoning were selected for this study. Furthermore, they were adjusted for television instead of books. Answer categories again were: 1= 'never', 2= 'seldom', 3 = 'sometimes', 4 = 'often', and 5 = 'always'. The items of this scale were:

1.	When I watch television I think about the idea that each decision you make has consequences for others as well.
2.	When I watch television I think about the idea that everyone has reasons for the behaviour they show.
3.	I enjoy thinking about what the reasons are for someone's behaviour on television are.
4.	When I watch television I think about the idea that every problem between two people has more than one side.
5.	I think the causes for someone's behaviour on television are most of the time very complex instead of simple.
6.	When I watch television I think about the idea that when someone does you a favour, you ought to do them a favour as well.
7.	When I watch television I usually put effort into explaining someone's behaviour on television.

The higher a respondent scores on each item, the more he or she uses television to reflect on an ethics of care style of reasoning. This scale proved reliable with a Cronbach's alpha is .88. A new variable was computed, 'moral orientation', of which the lowest value - 5 -would indicate that a respondent is solely reflecting on an ethics of justice style of reasoning when watching television. The highest value of this variable is 35, indicating that a respondent with this score is reflecting only on an

ethics of care style of reasoning. The median score 20 would indicate that a respondent with this score is reflecting on both styles of reasoning.

The third aspect of moral imagination, insight into the human character, was measured by a scale that was partly derived from Van der Bolt's (2000) research on the affective reading experiences of children. The items that concentrated on characters in the narratives were transformed into 10 items focusing on characters in television narratives. Once more, answer categories were: 1= 'never', 2= 'seldom', 3 = 'sometimes', 4 = 'often', and 5 = 'always'. The items of the scale to measure insight into the human character were:

1.	When I watch television, I imagine that I also participate in it.
2.	I would like to be like someone on television.
3.	If someone on television is sad, I feel that sadness too.
4.	I think that the things that people on television have to deal with are really awful.
5.	There are people just like me on television.
6.	When someone is happy on television, I almost feel that myself.
7.	Things happen on television that I experience too.
8.	When I watch television, it is like it is about me.
9.	I want to be like the people on television.
10.	When people are sad on television, I would like to comfort them.

This scale also proved to be homogeneous with a Cronbach's α = .83 and was transformed into one variable 'Insight into the human character', with the lowest value - 10 - indicating that a respondent with this score does not reflect on the human character at all when watching television and the highest value 50 indicating that a respondent is reflecting all the time on the human character when watching television.

Other questions of the survey enquired demographic characteristics, genre preference, amount of television exposure, and media use. For a more detailed insight into the survey I refer to Appendix IV that contains the complete survey as conducted.

§5.1.2 The Sample

The sample initially consisted of 500 people. Five people were removed, since they indicated that they did not watch television at all. Of the remaining 495 people, 257 were men, and 237 were women. (In one case the respondent did not report anything for the variables sex, age, and educational level. Nevertheless, the number of hours watched per week and her or his religion are known. Therefore this case remained in the sample.)

The age of the people in the sample ranged from 12 years old to one case being over 98 years old. The age categories were defined to match the age categories used for the in-depth interviews. Table 8 shows how many respondents were found in each age category.

Table 8. Survey Respondents and Age Category

Age Category:	Number of Respondents:
12 to 20 years	54
21 to 40 years	165
41 to 65 years	196
66 years and older	79

The educational level of the respondents was reported in three categories: low, average and high educational level. Table 9 shows how the respondents were spread over the three levels.

Table 9. Survey Respondents and Educational Level

Educational Level:	Number of Respondents:
low	115
average	240
high	132

Of all respondents, seven cases were reported 'missing' and one respondent was not willing to supply information on educational level.

Of the 494 respondents (one case was reported missing), 265 identified as belonging to a certain religion. Though the survey question specified religion, for the analysis this specification was unnecessary. The

aim was to discover whether religious people and non-religious people reflect differently on moral insights when watching television, and not to discover whether various religions each have their own specific effects. This means that the term 'religion' therefore contains a diversity of religions ranging from Roman Catholics to Buddhists. Non-religiousness was reported by 218 respondents and the remaining 11 respondents did not want to tell or did not know whether they felt religious.

Furthermore, respondents were asked to estimate the average amount of hours of television they watched per week. Of the respondents, 493 answered to this question and reported an estimation of the amount of (whole) hours they watch television per week. These amounts range from one hour per week up to 70 hours a week (*M* = 16.7 hours, *SD* = 10.82). This is six hours less per week than the average amount of hours reported by the Dutch Audience Research Foundation over the year 2005 (Stichting Kijkonderzoek, 2006). The cases are spread over the quartiles as reflected in Table 10.

Table 10. Distribution of the Amount of Television Exposure in Hours

Mean:	16.7
Mode:	20
Percentile: 25	9.0
Percentile: 50	15.0
Percentile: 75	21.5

Last but not least, genre preference was measured by asking the respondents to select the programmes that they really like to watch from a list of 61 programmes that cover all sorts of genres and were broadcast at the time of the survey. To enable the respondents to report their favourite programmes, the list concluded with an open question where the respondent could list them. As we have seen in §1.1, the second dimension in the debate on television concentrates on the (assumed) bad effects of certain genres, most often called light entertainment (Lusted, 1998). Furthermore, the literary tradition concentrates on (realistic) fictional narratives as *the* resource for the development of moral imagination. Thus,

it seems sensible to allocate the various programmes to three categories of genre preference: preference for fictional programmes (all drama and films, including cartoons; 20 programmes in total), preference for non-fictional programmes (news, current affairs and serious talk shows; 18 programmes in total), and preference for infotainment/entertainment (lifestyle and service programmes, reality television, gossip programmes; 23 programmes in total).[27] The respondents were spread over the various genre preferences as shown in Table 11.

Table 11. Number of Survey Respondents and Genre Preference

Genre Preference:	Number of Respondents:
non-fiction	249
fiction	130
infotainment/entertainment	109

§5.2 Results

First of all, the analysis focused on a general exploration of the four scales, and the relationships between them were studied by means of Pearson's correlation coefficient. Secondly, the analysis concentrated on testing the hypotheses as formulated in the introduction.

In general, the results of the survey show that television evokes people to reflect on moral issues both internally and expressively, on moral styles of reasoning, and on the also on the human character.

[27] These preferences constructed new variables (non-fiction preference, fiction preference, infotainment/entertainment preference) with a relative score for each. To compute a relative score the total score on non-fictional programmes was divided by 18, the score on fictional programmes by 20, and the score for infotainment/entertainment programmes by 23, in order to make the scores comparable. To get an idea of how genre preference was present in the dataset, another variable was created: genre preference with the values 'fiction', 'non-fiction', and 'infotainment/entertainment'. This variable was created by assigning each individual case a score on genre preference according to which genre had the highest relative score. Please note that the scores on genre preference only give us an idea about the direction of the preference.

Table 12 shows the means for each scale[28]:

Table 12. Correlations, Means and Standard Deviations of the scales (N: 494)

		1	2	3	4
1	Internal Moral Reflection				
2	Expressive Moral Reflection	.72**			
3	Moral Orientation	.63**	.61**		
4	The Human Character	.49**	.49**	.59**	
	M:	40.13	36.92	17.48	21.07
	SD:	10.33	10.381	5.51	6.16

** p < 0.001

The exploration of relationships between the different variables does show some interesting results. The analysis concentrated on the relationship between 'internal moral reflection', 'expressive moral reflection', moral orientation, and insight into the human character. For each of these relationships, Pearson's correlation coefficient is calculated. Firstly, there are positive correlations between 'internal moral reflection' and 'expressive moral reflection' ($r = .72$, $p < .001$), moral orientation ($r = .67$, $p < .001$), and insight into the human character ($r = .49$, $p < .001$). This result indicates that when the amount of 'internal moral reflection' increases, the amount of 'expressive moral reflection', the score on moral orientation, and reflecting on the human character increase as well (though the latter is not a very strong correlation).

Secondly, there are positive correlations between 'expressive moral reflection' and moral orientation ($r = .61$, $p < .001$) and reflecting on the human character ($r = .49$, $p < .001$). These results indicate that when the amount of expressive moral reflection increases, the score on moral orientation and the amount of reflections on the human character also increase (though the latter is again not a very strong correlation).

Thirdly, a positive correlation exists between moral orientation and insight into the human character ($r = .59$, $p < .001$). This result indicates

[28] Please note that for internal and expressive moral reflection the possible minimum was 15 and the possible maximum 85; for reflection on styles of reasoning the minimum is 7 and the maximum 35; for reflection on the human character the minimum is 10 and the maximum is 50.

that when one becomes more oriented towards both styles of reasoning, the amount of reflection on the human character increases.

Overall this means that when reflection on moral issues increases, the reflection on other insights increases as well. These results indicate that the insights constructing moral imagination are dependent on each other.

§5.2.1 Insight into: Morally Relevant Issues

As described in §5.1.1, two scales were developed to measure insight into morally relevant themes that were later transformed into two variables. An exploration of these variables shows that people reflect regularly on moral themes both internally and expressively. Not all moral themes are reflected upon equally, as Table 13 shows:

Table 13. Means of 'Being Occupied by Moral Themes' and of 'Talking about Moral Themes'

Moral Theme:	M Being Occupied with:	SD:	M Talking About:	SD:
family	2.34	1.08	2.21	1.00
friendship	2.46	1.09	2.38	1.01
good vs. evil	2.55	1.05	2.46	1.02
love	2.64	1.05	2.47	1.01
violence	2.60	1.07	2.43	0.99
authority	2.72	1.06	2.48	1.00
death	2.71	1.06	2.45	1.04
the good life	2.73	1.07	2.44	1.02
conviction	2.80	1.15	2.43	1.07
heroism	2.58	1.11	2.39	1.00
fairness	2.72	1.07	2.49	1.03
sexuality	2.68	1.07	2.46	1.02
knowable	2.77	1.01	2.46	1.01
civil conduct	2.94	0.96	2.66	0.91
politics	2.89	0.97	2.69	0.91

What is interesting about these results is that people apparently use television narratives to talk about moral themes less often than they use these narratives to reflect internally about them. Further analysis of the specific groups with different demographic characteristics reveals that this result can be more nuanced. For this analysis, t-tests are used to test the differences between men and women, and between religious and non-religious people. ANOVAs are used to explore the differences between people of different educational levels and from different age categories. To test whether the amount of television exposure is related to 'internal and expressive moral reflection', Pearson's correlation coefficient is used. All tests are performed with $\alpha = 5\%$.

The first hypothesis indicated that a difference is expected between men and women regarding the amount of reflection on moral themes reported. This hypothesis is accepted: women ($M = 41.44$, $SD = 10.44$) are more often occupied by moral themes when they watch television than men ($M = 38.86$, $SD = 10.06$) are. Women report 'internal moral reflection more often than men do, $t\ (492) = -2.79$, $p = .005$. Similarly, women ($M = 38.67$, $SD = 10.604$) also talk about moral themes after or during watching television more often than men ($M = 35.21$, $SD = 9.839$) do. Women also report 'expressive moral reflection' more often, $t\ (492) = -3.76$, $p < .001$.

Additionally, after taking a closer look at the individual moral themes (i.e. family, friendship, good vs. evil, love, violence, authority, death, the good life, conviction, heroism, fairness, sexuality, knowable, civil conduct, and politics), results indicate that men and women differ in the amount of reflection on some moral themes. Women significantly more often reported 'being occupied while watching television' regarding the moral themes (all p's $< .05$):

Table 14. Significant Differences between Men and Women in Being Occupied with Moral Themes

Moral Theme:	M men:	SD men:	M women:	SD women:	T (492) =
family	2.22	1.06	2.46	1.08	-2.47
friendship	2.35	1.08	2.57	1.08	-2.34

love	2.54	1.08	2.74	1.08	-2.15
death	2.60	1.02	2.83	1.09	-2.40
the good life	2.63	1.05	2.84	1.07	-2.23
conviction	2.68	1.14	2.93	1.14	-2.41
fairness	2.60	1.01	2.85	1.11	-2.61
knowable	2.67	1.08	2.87	1.01	-2.04

The results of the t-test regarding 'expressive reflection' indicate that women more often report talking about all moral themes (except heroism) with others than men do (all *p*'s < .05):

Table 15. Significant Differences between Men and Women in Talking about Moral Themes

Moral Theme:	M men:	SD men:	M women:	SD women:	T (492)=
family	2.11	0.96	2.32	1.02	-2.32
friendship	2.23	0.98	2.53	1.02	-3.26
good vs. evil	2.36	1.01	2.56	1.00	-2.20
love	2.34	0.97	2.60	1.03	-2.95
violence	2.32	0.98	2.56	1.00	-2.67
authority	2.39	0.96	2.58	1.04	-2.11
death	2.35	1.00	2.55	1.07	-2.13
the good life	2.33	1.02	2.56	1.01	-2.57
conviction	2.33	1.02	2.53	1.10	-2.02
fairness	2.34	0.96	2.64	1.07	-3.32
sexuality	2.35	1.00	2.58	1.03	-2.54
knowable	2.33	0.95	2.60	1.07	-3.05
civil conduct	2.54	0.87	2.78	0.92	-2.98
politics	2.56	0.89	2.83	0.92	-3.28

Apparently, women use television significantly more often than men as a catalyst for discussion about moral themes.

The second hypothesis about insight into morally relevant issues assumed a difference in reflection on moral themes between age categories. This hypothesis is also accepted. Significant differences for the age categories were found for both 'internal moral reflection', F (3, 490) = 3.04, p = .029, and 'expressive moral reflection', F (3, 487) = 4.54, p = .004. To gain more insight in how the specific age groups differ from each other a Bonferonni post hoc test is used. A Bonferonni post hoc test is a multiple comparisons test in which t-tests are used to perform pair wise comparisons between group means. The significance level is divided by the amount of comparisons made (thus controlling the overall error rate). In this way, insight is gained in which groups differ from each other significantly and which groups do not (De Vocht, 2004).

Table 16. Means of Internal Moral Reflection and Age Category

Age Category:	M Internal Moral Reflection:	SD:	M Expressive Moral Reflections:	SD:
12 to 20	1.83	0.67	1.70	0.69
21 to 40	1.91	0.71	1.97	0.72
41 to 65	2.03	0.69	2.04	0.68
66 and older	2.14	0.73	2.14	0.73
Total	1.99	0.71	2.00	0.71

The results of the Bonferonni test indicate that none of the age categories make up for the difference in reporting on 'internal moral reflection'. Thus, all age categories differ slightly from one another with the means indicating that the older one gets, the more 'internal moral reflection' is reported on. These results are confirmed by the correlation test for age[29] and 'internal moral reflection' (r = .16, p < .001) even though the correlation is very weak.

On the other hand, there are significant differences between specific age categories in reporting on 'expressive moral reflection'. People

[29] For the correlation tests the original reported age of respondents is used and not the constructed age categories.

in the age category 12 to 20 report less on expressive moral reflection than the other two categories. The results of the Bonferonni test for 'expressive moral reflection' indicate that the age category 12 to 20 significantly differs from the age category 41 to 65, *Mean Difference* = -.33, p = .012, and 66 years and older, *Mean Difference* = -.44, p = .003. These results are also confirmed by the test for correlation (r = .17, p < .001), even though, again, correlation is very weak.

Having a closer look at the individual moral themes that the age categories can be either 'occupied with' or 'talking about' also results in some significant differences. The age categories seem to differ significantly in being occupied with the following moral themes (all p's < .05):

Table 17. Significant Differences Between Age Categories in Being Occupied with Moral Themes

Moral Theme:	**F (3,490) =**
violence	3.62
authority	4.37
heroism	5.02
fairness	4.02
sexuality	4.80
civil conduct	2.97

Again, a more detailed analysis of differences between specific age categories reveals that not all age categories differ significantly from one another. Results of the Bonferonni test reveal only a few significant differences between specific age categories on several themes. In Table 18, these differences are summarised with the understanding that the age category first mentioned reflects significantly more often on the moral theme mentioned than the second (and third) age category mentioned[30]. The reported Mean Differences indicates the difference between the means of the two age categories compared (all p's < .05):

[30] This way of reporting the results of the Bonferonni post hoc tests is used throughout this chapter.

Table 18. Significant Differences between Specific Age Categories Being Occupied with Moral Theme

Moral Theme:	Age Categories:	M:	Mean Difference:
	41 to 65	2.90	
authority	21 to 40	2.54	.35
	66 and older	2.89	
	12 to 20	2.33	.55
heroism	21 to 40	2.39	.49
	66 and older	3.01	
fairness	12 to 20	2.41	.61
	41 to 65	2.80	
sexuality	12 to 20	2.31	.49
	66 and older	2.89	
sexuality	12 to 20	2.31	.57

No difference was noted between the other age categories. Furthermore, the Bonferonni test did not indicate that any one of the age categories causes the difference for the moral issues violence and civil conduct. However, these results do suggest once more that older people are more often occupied with some moral themes than are younger people.

Additionally, some significant differences were found for talking about moral themes between the different age categories. The age categories differ in talking about the following moral themes (all *p*'s < .05):

Table 19. Significant Differences Between Age Categories in Talking about Moral Themes

Moral Theme:	F (3, 490)=
family	4.89
love	3.06
violence	2.66
death	2.78
heroism	3.00
knowable	5.00
civil conduct	3.68
politics	6.19

Specific age categories do differ from each other in talking about moral themes. Again the results suggest that the older people get, the

more often they use television narratives to talk about moral themes with other people. The results of the Bonferonni test are reported in Table 20 (all *p*'s < .05).

Table 20. Significant Differences Between Specific Age Categories Talking About Moral Themes

Moral Theme:	Age Categories:	M:	Mean Difference:
family	41 to 65	2.37	
	21 to 40	2.03	.34
love	41 to 65	2.53	
	12 to 20	2.00	.41
love	66 and older	2.61	
	12 to 20	2.11	.50
heroism	66 and older	2.61	
	12 to 20	2.13	.48
knowable	41 to 65	2.63	
	12 to 20	2.13	.50
	21 to 40	2.33	.31
civil conduct	41 to 65	2.69	
	12 to 20	2.31	.38
civil conduct	66 and older	2.82	
	12 to 20	2.31	.51
politics	21 to 40	2.65	
	12 to 20	2.24	.41
politics	41 to 65	2.78	
	12 to 20	2.24	.54
politics	66 and older	2.86	
	12 to 20	2.24	.62

The Bonferonni test did not indicate a significant difference between specific age categories in talking about the moral issues of violence and death.

The third hypothesis regarding insight into morally relevant issues assumed that people with different educational levels would differ in the amount of reflection on moral issues. This hypothesis is rejected. The F-

test indicates no differences on either 'internal moral reflection', F (2, 484) = 2.13, p = .120, or 'expressive moral reflection', F (2, 481) = 0.06, p = ns.

A closer look at individual moral themes confirms this result, though a significant difference for 'talking about good vs. evil' appeared, F (2, 484) = 3.51, p = .031, appeared. The Bonferonni test indicates that people with a high educational level talk about this moral theme more often than people with a low educational level, *Mean Difference* = 0.31, p = .048. No other differences between people of different educational levels were found regarding reflection on moral issues.

The fourth hypothesis assumed that non-religious people would differ in moral reflection from religious people. This hypothesis is partly accepted. The results indicate that religious people (M = 41.33, SD = 10.33) report internal reflection on moral themes while watching television more often than non-religious people (M = 38.74, SD = 10.03), t (481) = -2.77, p = .006. However, no significant differences are found between religious and non-religious people for expressive moral reflection, t (481) = -1. 69, p = .091.

Having a closer look at individual moral themes a few significant differences are noted on which kinds of moral themes these groups are occupied with while watching television. Religious people are more often occupied with the moral themes (all p's < .05):

Table 21. Significant Differences between Religious and Non-religious People in Being Occupied with Moral Themes

Moral Theme:	M religious:	SD religious:	M non-religious:	SD non-religious:	T =
family	2.45	1.09	2.20	1.04	-2.54
friendship	2.58	1.13	2.30	1.08	-2.86
good vs. evil	2.66	1.03	2.43	1.04	-2.43
authority	2.82	1.04	2.61	1.07	-2.12
the good life	2.83	1.02	2.63	1.10	-2.04
conviction	2.94	1.11	2.66	1.16	-2.65
politics	3.00	0.96	2.78	0.95	-2.47

The fifth hypothesis regarding insight into morally relevant issues assumed that people with different genre preference would differ in the amount of reflection on moral issues induced by television. This hypothesis is only partly accepted. People with a different genre preference do not report differently on 'internal moral reflection', F (2, 485) = 1.11, p = ns, but they do report a different 'expressive moral reflection', F (2, 482) = 3.57, p = .029. The results of the Bonferonni test indicate that people with a preference for non-fiction programmes report more 'expressive moral reflection' than people with a preference for fiction programmes (*Mean Difference* = .20, p = .028).

Looking closer at individual moral themes some results can be reported. A significant difference in talking about moral themes is found for (all p's < .05):

Table 22. Significant Differences between People with Various Genre Preference in Being Occupied with Moral Themes

Moral Theme:	F (2, 482)=
authority	3.43
knowable	4.06
civil conduct	4.54

Again a Bonferonni test is used to gain more insight in the differences between groups with a different genre preference. Results indicate a few significant differences between groups of people with a different genre preference (all *p*'s < .05):

Table 23. Significant Differences between Specific Genre Preference and Being Occupied with Moral Themes

Moral Theme:	Genre Preference:	M:	Mean Difference:
authority	non-fiction fiction	2.56 2.28	0.27
knowable	non-fiction fiction	2.56 2.25	0.31
civil conduct	non-fiction fiction	2.73 2.46	0.27
civil conduct	infotainment/entertainment fiction	2.75 2.46	0.29

No difference in the reflection on these three themes was reported between the other specific groups. What is interesting about these results is that people who prefer non-fiction seem to be occupied more often with certain moral themes than people who prefer fiction.

Last but not least, the sixth hypothesis assumes that the amount of television exposure does make a difference for the amount of moral reflection. Based on the correlation coefficient this hypothesis is rejected for both 'internal moral reflection', $r = .04$, p = ns, and 'expressive moral reflection', $r = .03$, p = ns. These results indicate that the amounts of internal and expressive moral reflection reported are not dependent on the amount of television exposure.

§5.2.2 Insight into: Moral Deliberation

To measure the respondents' reflection in either an ethics of justice style of reasoning or an ethics of care style of reasoning, a scale was developed and later transformed into one variable 'moral orientation' as described in §5.1.1. An exploration of this variable indicates that people sometimes reflect on moral orientation when watching television ($M = 17.48$, $SD = 5.51$). On average people reflect more on an ethics of justice style of

reasoning than on an ethics-of-care style of reasoning. Looking only at specific groups shows a limited amount of significant differences. Again, for these analyses t-tests are used to test the differences between men and women, and between religious and non-religious people. F-tests are used to explore the differences between people of different educational levels and different age groups. To test whether the amount of television exposure is related to moral orientation, Pearson's correlation coefficient is used. All tests are performed with α = 5%.

The first hypothesis on insight into moral deliberation assumed a difference in reflecting on moral orientation between women and men. This hypothesis was rejected, t (491) = -1.75, p = .081. Men and women both reflect more often on an ethics of justice style of reasoning than on an ethics of care style of reasoning.

The second hypothesis assumed a difference in moral orientation between people of different age groups. The results of the F-test indicate that the means of moral orientation are different for people in different age categories, thus this hypothesis is accepted, F (3, 489) = 3.47, p = .016. Again the Bonferonni test was used, and the results reveal that people of 66 years and older are significantly more often reflecting on both an ethics of justice than on an ethics of care style than people in the age category 12 to 20 years of age, *Mean Difference* = 2.99, p = .012. There were no significant differences between other age categories, although the means suggest that the reflection on moral styles of reasoning increases over the years.

Table 24. Means for Moral Orientation and Age Category

Age Category:	M:	SD:
12 to 20	15.91	5.50
21 to 40	17.18	5.72
41 to 65	17.63	5.32
66 and older	18.90	5.28
total	17.49	5.51

Nevertheless, all age categories are reflecting more on an ethics of justice than on an ethics of care style of reasoning. These results are confirmed by

Pearson's correlation coefficient, $r = .17$, $p < .001$) though again, the correlation is very weak.

The third hypothesis assumed a difference in moral orientation between people of different educational levels. This hypothesis is rejected, F (2, 483) = 1.70, p = ns. People of different educational levels do not differ in reflecting on moral styles of reasoning.

The fourth hypothesis assumed a difference in reflection on styles of reasoning between religious and non-religious people. The results of the t-test indicate that religious people are not reflecting on either an ethics of justice or an ethics of care style of reasoning more or less than non-religious people. Thus this hypothesis is rejected, t (480) = -1.33, p = ns.

The assumption of the fifth hypothesis was that people with different genre preferences do differ in their reflection on the moral styles of reasoning. Again this hypothesis is rejected, since the ANOVA does not indicate that people with a certain genre preference differ from people with other genre preferences, F (2, 484) = 2.21, p = ns, in their reflections on both styles.

Finally, the sixth hypothesis assumed that the amount of television exposure would cause a difference in reflecting on moral styles of reasoning. On the basis of the correlation coefficient, $r = .07$, p = ns, this hypothesis is also rejected. The amount of television exposure does not make a difference for the amount of reflection on both styles when watching television.

§5.2.3 Insight into: the Human Character

A scale was developed to measure the development of insight into the human character that later on, like the other scales, was transformed into one variable. Exploring this variable indicates that people on average sometimes reflect on the human character when watching television (M = 21.07, SD = 6.16). Looking at the scores on this variable for the specific groups, a few interesting results can be reported. For these analyses, t-tests are used to test the differences between men and women, and between religious and non-religious people. F-tests are used to explore the differences between people of different educational levels, and from

different age categories. To test whether the amount of television exposure makes a difference, Pearson's correlation coefficient is used. All tests are performed with $\alpha = 5\%$.

The first hypothesis regarding insight into the human character assumed that women and men differ in their reflections on the human character when watching television. Women report significantly more often ($M = 22.19$, $SD = 6.34$) that they reflect on the human character while watching television than men do ($M = 20.01$, $SD = 5.81$). Thus, based on the t-test this hypothesis is accepted, $t\ (491) = -3.97$, $p < .001$.

The second hypothesis assumed a difference between people from different age categories in reflection on the human character. This hypothesis is accepted, $F\ (3, 489) = 3.39$, $p = .02$. This result indicates that there is a difference in the reflections on the human character between different age categories. However, the Bonferonni test shows no significant differences between the specific age categories. The different means for reflections on the human character of the age categories do indicate that younger people more often report reflecting on the human character when watching television than older people do.

Table 25. Means for Reflection on the Human Character and Age Categories

Age Category:	M:	SD:
12 to 20	22.70	6.93
21 to 40	21.76	6.09
41 to 65	20.33	5.98
66 and older	20.27	5.89
total	21.06	6.16

Again these results are confirmed by the correlation coefficient, $r = -.12$, $p = .007$, pointing towards a negative relationship between age and the amount of reflection on the human character reported (though once again the correlation is very weak).

The third hypothesis assumed a difference in reflections on the human character between people with a different educational level while watching television. Based on an ANOVA the hypothesis is rejected, F (2,

483) = 0.12, *p* = ns. Different educational levels do not result in a difference in reflecting on the human character.

The fourth hypothesis assumed that religious people differ from non-religious people in the reflection on the human character while watching television. This hypothesis is rejected *t* (480) = -0.85, *p* = ns, indicating that religious and non-religious people do not differ from each other in their reflections on the human character while watching television.

The fifth hypothesis assumed a difference in reflection on the human character between people with a different genre preference. Based on an ANOVA this hypothesis is accepted, *F* (2, 484) = 4.97, *p* = .007. The Bonferonni test shows a significant difference between people who prefer infotainment/entertainment programmes and people who prefer non-fictional programmes (*Mean Difference* = 2.20, *p* = .005). People who prefer infotainment/entertainment programmes more often report reflecting on the human character while watching television than do people who prefer non-fictional programmes.

The sixth hypothesis assumed that the amount of television exposure would make a difference in the amount of reflection done on the human character. This hypothesis was rejected, *r* = .08, *p* = .073, indicating that the amount of reflecting on the human character does not depend on the amount of television exposure.

§5.3 Discussion and Conclusion

Having an overall look at the results we see that sex, age and religiousness are more important determinants for the development of moral imagination than educational level, exposure to television, or genre preference are. This leads me to two conclusions. Firstly, I want to argue that the relevancy of a moral theme to one's everyday life is of importance for the use of television narratives to develop the moral imagination. Secondly, I want to argue for the generations as outlined in chapter 4.

As we have seen, the insight into morally relevant issues was measured by two scales that were transformed into two variables. All respondents reported reflecting on some moral themes when watching

television, though none of the themes seemed to dominate (see §5.2.1). Looking at specific characteristics, a few patterns and differences in amounts of reflections were found between women and men, people from different age categories, religious and non-religious people, and people with different genre preferences. Though one might be tempted to draw the conclusion that older, religious women who enjoy non-fictional programmes reflect the most on moral insights while watching television, this conclusion is wrong. An analysis of interaction between the independent variables (a test used to see if, for example, age and sex together explain more variance of the dependent variable moral orientation) shows that there is no interaction between the variables. Looking at individual moral themes, however, I want to argue that relevancy of a moral theme is an important determinant for reflection on a moral issue.

According to these results, women use television narratives to reflect on moral issues and on the human character more often than men do. This is an interesting result, since there are no reasons or explanations found in theory or in the data (the amount of television exposure did not result in any differences, thus the explanation for this difference is also not found in television exposure[31]). A closer look at the variable 'internal moral reflection' reveals that women only differ from men in moral reflections on specific moral themes: family, friendship, love, death, the good life, conviction, fairness, and the knowable. Women reflecting more often on the first four themes, family, friendship, love, and death could be explained by the argument that these are mostly affairs taking place in the private sphere. As already explained in §2.1.4, Poole (1991) and Benhabib (1992) argue that since women are supposedly connected to the private sphere, they are also expected to be connected to morality in the private sphere as well. Yet this reasoning leaves no room to explain the reflection on the other four themes. Furthermore, one would then expect men to reflect more often on moral themes such as civil conduct and politics,

[31] Additionally, men and women do not differ in the amount of television exposure anyway. An independent samples t-test, $\alpha = 5\%$, proved that the average amount of hours that men and women watch television does not differ significantly, $t(490) = 0.71$, p = ns.

which is not the case. The interviews in chapter 4 showed that reflection is evoked when a moral insight connects to an insight already present in the viewer. Hence these results present us with a chicken and egg problem: is it the case that television narratives offer more insights into moral issues relevant to women's experiences than to men's, or is it the case that women are occupied with moral issues more often and therefore women use television narratives for moral reflection more often than men do? This question should be answered in another study.

A closer look at the variable 'expressive moral reflection' demonstrates that women talk more often than men do about moral issues with others in general (except about the theme of heroism). Instead of dismissing women as a 'bunch of chatterboxes' I would rather argue that the line of thought that believes that women define themselves in relationship through others (cf. Gilligan, 1988) is also valid with regard to moral imagination. Women develop their moral insights in relation to others. These others, I want to argue, seem to function as moral referents. Moral referents are then the people one makes use of to discuss the limits of what is right or wrong, which courses of action might be suitable, and how to position oneself in moral issues or dilemmas.

The differences found between religious and non-religious people are similarly explicable as the differences between women and men. Religious people report internal moral reflection more often than non-religious people, and specifically on the moral themes family, friendship, good vs. evil, authority, the good life, conviction, and politics. I want to argue that all these themes can be explained by the themes being more directly relevant to religious people's lives than to non-religious people's lives. Most religions emphasise the importance of family values, the battle of good vs. evil, who makes up the rules (i.e. authority) about the 'good' way to live life, and what an ideal world would look like. In my opinion it is reasonable to argue that being religious also leads these themes to be more relevant to one's personal life than they otherwise would be, and therefore it is logical that religious people reflect more often upon in them in their daily lives as well as when they are watching television.

Of course this explanation leaves out the differences between age categories and genre preference. For example, according to these results younger people are less often occupied by sexuality when they watch television than older people are. One can hardly argue that sexuality is less relevant for the age category 12 to 20 than for the age category of 66 years and older. This leads us to the second conclusion: the generations as they were outlined in chapter 4. The age categories for the moral generations were defined as a result of the interviews. Since the survey took place before these moral generations were formulated, the sample of the survey concentrated on the 'original' age categories (12 to 20, 21 to 40, 41 to 65, 66 and older) as formulated in chapter 4. Looking at the defined age boundaries of the moral generations resulted in only 18 respondents in the age category 12 to 14, and 36 in the category 15 to 20. Therefore it was impossible to compare the age categories as defined for the moral generation in chapter 4. However, analysis of the age categories and their reflection on various moral insights does result in a comparable outcome.

Firstly, comparable to the first moral generation, the youngest age category (12 to 20 years of age) reports less internal and expressive reflection on moral themes in general than do older people. Additionally, they are more oriented towards an ethics of justice style of reasoning than the older people, but do reflect more on the human character than the older ones. According to Kohlberg (1984), people in the pre-conventional phase still need to learn to take a more social perspective when pondering moral dilemmas, while in the conventional phase the moral reasoning is guided by social relationships. It thus becomes understandable that, as suggested in chapter 4, these young people are still developing insight into which issues are morally relevant, since their life experiences are simply not sufficient to allow them to relate to all moral issues they encounter (see §4.3). Additionally, the amount of reflection on the human character is also apprehensible. As Kohlberg (1984) explains, in this phase moral reasoning is guided by social relationships. Therefore, the emphasis on gaining insight into the human character is understandably important to this age category.

Secondly, the second age category (21 to 40 years of age) and the third age category (41 to 65 years of age) do not differ in reflecting on moral themes either internally or expressively. Additionally, the third age category reflect a little more on both an ethics of justice as an ethics of care style of reasoning than the second age category.

Thirdly, the fourth age category (66 years and older) reports the highest rate of reflection on moral themes (internally and expressively) of all age categories. Furthermore, they are also reflecting most on both styles of reasoning. Understandably, from their more mature position as suggested in §4.3 (the older one gets, the more likely one is to think that everyone should lead their own lives according to their own insights), they also reflect a little less on the human character than do the other age categories. These results indicate that older people are indeed more liberal, but also that they are 'more occupied' with moral themes than other people.

What also seems to be suggested by the survey results is that the development of moral imagination is a gradual process. More often than not, there were no sharp differences between the age categories in the levels of reflection on moral insights, but an overall increase or decrease when aging. Overall it seemed that the older a person became, the more he or she reflected on moral issues and styles of reasoning. I would like to argue that this is also an argument against a staircase model of developing the imagination.

There were also significant differences between people with different genre preferences. People with a preference for non-fiction programmes reported more expressive moral reflection than people who preferred fiction. People who prefer infotainment/entertainment programmes reflect more often on the human character than people with a preference for non-fiction. These are extremely interesting results with regard to theories on moral imagination and with regard to the second dimension of the C/culture debate. Firstly, authors from the literary culture argue that (realistic) fictional narratives are best suited for use as a resource for developing the imagination. The results of the survey indicate that this argument is not valid for television since people who

prefer fictional programmes reflect less on moral themes and the human character than do people with other preferences. Furthermore, it is not even that surprising that people are more often occupied with moral issues that are non-fictional, i.e. existent in the physical world, than with fictional events.

Additionally, the most reviled genres — the so-called 'light entertainment programmes' (see §1.1) — are used the most for reflection on the human character, and thus one might assume that this insight is developed best by people who enjoy this genre. However, one has to note that the survey does not teach us what people learn with respect to the human character. But we do know from the interviews in chapter 4 that the reflections of people on the human character are regularly of the positive kind. Thus, we might say, the rejection of light entertainment and even accusing these programmes of causing society's moral decay seems at very least an unjust misconception of these genres.

CHAPTER 6. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This story started with another story that, hopefully, clarified the purpose and aim of this study in its very early stages. The aim was to explore the relationship of television and moral imagination. The underlying aim was to explore how television might be valuable in reaching moral maturity in order to diminish needless suffering in this world. To give form to these aspirations, the main research question that was the starting point of this dissertation was:

How do people in the Netherlands use television narratives as a resource to develop a capacity for moral imagination in order to become morally mature?

To answer this question, a framework derived from the literary culture was developed. The authors from the literary culture emphasise that the content of the narrative, as well as the reader are of importance for the development of moral imagination. In this study the television narrative was considered as a 'cultural toolbox' that offers moral insights that the active viewer still needs to give meaning to and can use to give meaning to everyday life experiences. Three studies were conducted that each focused on a different aspect of 'how culture works': the content of the toolbox has been researched as well as the audience(s). One of the leading threads running through this dissertation is the Culture vs. culture dichotomy that delivers us with an instrumental perspective on media. Two features of the debate on television were distinguished. The first dimension, primarily found in public debate, dismisses television in general as a popular medium. The second dimension, found in the public as well as in the academic debate, dismisses certain genres, mostly light entertainment.

§6.1 The Content of the Toolbox

A narrative analysis of the moral insights presented in two weeks of prime-time television in the Netherlands revealed the relative richness of Dutch

television with these insights. On average, Dutch television presents us with one (manifest) moral message per half hour that is (on average) constructed out of four moral statements or questions. The moral messages illuminate 12 different moral themes (i.e. family, friendship, love, civil conduct, politics, authority, violence, conviction, fairness, death, good live, and heroism). Nevertheless, the three main topics that are usually the centre of public debates revolving around moral panics caused or constructed by television — family values, civil conduct, and democratic values — are presented more often than other moral themes. Furthermore, television offers a rather rosy picture of these moral themes (argued from the perspective of the people who worry about the bad morale television supposedly teaches). A traditional portrait of the family as the cornerstone of society, quite strict rules regarding civil conduct, and a Western idea of democratic values were constantly promoted in the two weeks analysed. However, I want to distinguish civil conduct from the other two themes, since civil conduct is presented as a more ambiguous moral theme than the other two. As we have seen in chapter 3 the rules on civil conduct were presented as less strict (there were no sanctions involved), and more varied than the rules on family and politics. Given that moral imagination is about being able to ponder upon different perspectives on a moral issue, I want to argue that themes that are presented with different perspectives (i.e. more ambiguous) are more suitable for use in developing the moral imagination than other themes are. If watching television does degrade family values and democratic values, then it might be because these themes are presented as so one-dimensional in television narratives that they do not evoke moral reflection as much. This line of thought, then, argues for a more multi-dimensional presentation of family and of good forms of government than is currently the case in Dutch prime-time television.

This study aimed to apply a specific approach on morality as it integrated two views (i.e. ethics of justice and ethics of care). Morality then is both a private and public affair, morality knows a rational and an affective dimension, and is always situated. It is argued by many (among whom we find Carol Gilligan, Ross Poole, Louise Rosenblatt, John Dewey,

and John Rachels) that the traditional conception of morality (ethics of justice perspective) is usually acknowledged as *the morality*. An investigation of the presence of the different perspectives in prime-time television reveals that an ethics of justice perspective on morality is dominant in the narratives offered. We can conclude that our toolbox offers mostly a one-dimensional insight into moral deliberation, to be precise a traditional one.

Next came an investigation into who was presented as a moral subject in prime-time narratives. Due to perspectives on morality and the C/culture dichotomy it was anticipated that white men would dominate as moral subjects in prime time television. However, the proportions of women and men from various ethnic groups presented as moral subjects were quite balanced in the two weeks analysed. These results indicate that women and people from various ethnic backgrounds are not excluded from moral subject positions. What is striking though is the fact that children and the elderly (although underrepresented anyway) are excluded as moral subjects. One might argue that if children are never presented as moral subjects, and therefore children never see themselves presented as moral subjects, television offers them less chance to gain moral insights than it offers to others. However, due to the fact the analysis focused on prime- time, television programmes especially produced for children were excluded from the analysis. Maybe children's programmes do present children as moral subjects and children do get a chance to learn to see themselves as moral subjects.

Last but not least, there was no distinction by genres. The literary framework emphasises fictional narratives as useful resources to develop the imagination, while the public and academic debates revolving around television discard 'light entertainment' as useless, and sometimes even as the cause of society's moral decay. This study shows that indeed the light entertainment genres offer slightly fewer moral insights than other genres. However this of course does not mean that these genres offer insight into 'immoral issues', are mind numbing, or only valuable to give air to escapist feelings, but are offering fewer tools to the audience as other genres do. Furthermore, news and current affairs in particular offer more moral

insights than any other genre. We may conclude now that all television genres offer moral insights and could therefore be considered as a resource for the development of moral imagination. An important caveat is necessary, since television *narratives* do not all offer insight into moral issues, moral deliberation, and the human character; they could not and should not be judged as equal to one another. In other words, not all television narratives can be considered 'good' for us.

The first overarching conclusion can now be formulated. I think the time has come to start asking different questions. This study has proven once more that the conception of television as a social pathology is a myth. The lingering prejudices towards different cultural forms (which we inherited from the Enlightenment and the Age of Romanticism) are once more proven unjust. To discard television, or certain genres, is not only undeserved but also a waste of chances. Not because we all have to like television narratives equally or even enjoy them, but because as a popular culture medium, television can contribute to the moral maturity of its viewers. Television as a narrative medium should not be considered a problem, but part of a solution, as White (1981: 1) argues that narratives enable us to fashion 'human experience into a form assimilable to structures of meaning that are generally human rather than culture-specific.'

§6.2 The Audience's Use of the Toolbox.

To explore the audience's use of the insights offered by television narratives, 41 in-depth interviews were conducted. Interestingly enough, the analysis of the interviews showed that people to reflected on 15 moral themes, of which three themes were not offered by the two weeks of prime-time television (i.e. the knowable, good vs. evil, and sexuality). These three themes were mostly talked about as 'implicit themes' in television programmes, which makes it understandable that the themes do not appear in a content analysis that concentrates on manifest, verbal moral themes. Rather, I want to argue, the interviewees of course did not speak about the verbal moral messages, but about television, hence including the visuals. As explained in chapter 3, the visual aspects of

television usually communicate a similar message to the verbal aspects. The visual, though, is not expected to be exactly the same. The visual might enlarge certain aspects of the verbal message, or diminish them. So, not only can we expect the 'new' themes to be presented by prime-time narratives after all, but also the interviews to give some insight into which moral messages are presented besides the verbal ones.

As became apparent, not all narratives are used all the time by everyone to reflect on every moral issue at hand, but the reverse is true: everyone uses some narratives some times to reflect on some moral issues. This idea points towards the uses and gratifications approach of the not at all so powerful media, but also at a not at all very active audience: television does not determine what moral themes people think about. People are relatively lazy and only reflect on those issues that were already important to them and only when they feel like it. Moreover, the enjoyable process of reflection that the interviewees demonstrated can be considered as an addition to Hall's negotiated and oppositional reading positions. Maybe an oppositional reading only occurs when a text becomes really important to the reader (for example when one is a fan of a particular programme).

This approach to watching television becomes even more apparent in the three modes of moral reflection that emerged from the analysis of the interviews. The additional and associative modes of reflection can be considered as connected to the social-historical backgrounds of the viewers. Moral issues offered by television narratives are seized by the audience to reflect upon moral issues that are only remotely, or not at all, connected to the insight offered. The moral issues that are reflected upon are indeed already present in the viewers' everyday lives, in the viewers' narratives. Of course, here the question can and needs to be raised of whether people actually learn something new if it is really the case that they only reflect upon things that were already there in their minds. I want to argue for Hermes' (2005) balancing act (see §1.1.2): to celebrate the possibilities of television narratives to evoke moral reflection without celebrating television as a medium that could offer us brilliant insights into morality that we could not learn anywhere else. Television then might be

thought of as bolstering and amplifying moral insights already there, instead of inspiring new insights. However, something new might be learned as long as the insight is presented in a way that the viewer can connect with it.

As noted before, what moral insights are reflected upon is dependent on their relevance for the viewer. This relevance is mostly defined by the phase of life the individual is in. In the end, three moral generations can be distinguished when concerned with the development of moral imagination and the use of television narratives. This study originally anticipated differences in moral reflection evoked by television narratives between men and women, people from various ethnic groups and people of different educational levels. Age as the determining characteristic for the development of moral imagination is thus unexpected, though one might not find it earth-shaking news. As argued in §4.2.2.1 it would have been much more shocking if people from different ethnic groups had actually differed in their reflections on everyday moral issues. It is self-evident that moral issues such as love, family, friendship and civil conduct are of importance to people from various ethnic groups. A similar argument is valid for people with different educational levels.

'Age' is a very imprecise term in this conception of developing moral imagination, since it is not age that is determining it, but someone's phase in life (or generation, as explained in chapter 4). An integration of the literary culture's conception of moral imagination and Kohlberg's model of moral development made it possible to understand these generations. For example, from the interviews it became apparent that young people are involved with learning to recognise moral issues as such, simply because their experience is limited due to their age. When people become older, some shared experiences did become visible. Older people often worry much more about news items revolving around the world famine problem and connect this to their horrible experiences during World War II, trying to raise children during the 'Hunger Winter' of 1944 when many people starved. As a result, I think it just to speak of television generations based on lived experiences.

Another interesting result from the analysis of the interviews is the fact that all interviewees used different styles of moral reasoning to explain the issues they reflected upon. Nevertheless, none of the interviewees used the insights into deliberation offered by television narratives to develop their own. This result might well be caused by the limited amount of insights offered, as became visible when examining the toolbox.

Finally, all interviewees do reflect on insights into the human character. Moreover, quite a few interviewees pointed out that reflecting on the 'other' is a reason to favour some programmes over others. What is interesting is that these preferences are extremely varied. Some interviewees enjoyed current affairs for this reason, some enjoyed drama, or popular talk shows for this reason. So, no matter which genres people seem to watch, they seem to do very similar things with them (i.e. reflection on moral issues and the human character). This seems another argument against dismissing certain genres (or television in general). Not only do all genres offer moral insights, also they are all used to develop the imagination.

A second overarching conclusion can now be formulated. This first exploration of what people do with television narratives on a moral level does indicate that television can make a difference in its audience's moral maturity. People use television narratives as a valuable tool to reflect on moral issues that are important in their everyday lives. Which issues are important and which television narratives are used is mainly dependent on the individual and his or her generation. Depending on the narratives the individual has build up through everyday experiences, moral insights offered by television are more or less appealing to reflect upon. This reflection on moral insights is also an enjoyable process, since people call upon it to explain why they favour some programmes over others.

§6.3 A Quantitative Approach of the Use of the Toolbox.

Though the analysis of the in-depth interviews gave insight into how people can become morally mature by watching television, it did not give insight into how many people reflected on what. As a third study, a survey

was constructed to be able to formulate more precise conclusions on these last questions.

A first striking result is that women use television narratives more often than men to reflect (both internally and expressively) on moral issues and the human character. As explained (see §5.3) these results present us with a chicken and egg problem. Either women are more occupied with moral issues in their everyday lives and therefore they use television narratives more often than men for moral reflection. Or television narratives offer more moral insights that connect to women's experiences. This problem remains unresolved in this study, but provides ample opportunities for other research.

Furthermore, the three television generations that were outlined in the interview results differentiated themselves in the survey results. It became apparent that the older an individual becomes, the more they reflect on moral issues and moral deliberation. The younger one is, the more one reflects on the human character.

Surprisingly enough, people seem to use the infotainment/entertainment genres and the non-fictional genres more often to reflect on moral issues than they use fictional genres. This is surprising, since the framework of analysis in this dissertation is derived from the literary culture, which specifically points at fictional genres as being useful for moral reflection (and thus the development of moral imagination). Additionally, the content analysis showed that these genres offer less moral insights than other genres.

The use of infotainment/entertainment programmes for moral reflection might be caused by the 'gossipy' quality of these genres. As explained by Fiske (among others), gossip is one way to establish and explore the moral rules of everyday life. I do want to argue that these genres that are usually called 'trash', 'garbage', ‘pulp' and many more ugly names might partly be the moral glue (or in Geraghty's (1981) terms: social cement) of society. Instead of dismissing them, these genres might be more important than others in the process of becoming morally mature, even though these genres are relatively less rich in offering moral insights than other genres.

Furthermore, the non-fictional genres news and current affairs not only appeared to be relatively rich with moral messages, they are also frequently used to reflect on moral issues. On first sight this seems a surprising result. Firstly, authors from the literary tradition argue for (realistic) fiction as the resource to evoke reflection. Secondly, non-fictional genres are expected to be 'objective' (and thus not containing moral messages). However, is it really that hard to imagine people reflecting on moral issues that are actually existent in real life? Of course not, the interviews show nothing else than people reflecting on issues they are involved with already. It is maybe just more important to abandon the 'value-free' conception of these genres, and consider them not only useful as informational genres, but additionally as narrative resources.

A third and last overarching conclusion can now be formulated. There seems no reason to reject television, or certain genres. On the contrary, television could, and therefore should, be considered one of the important narrative resources in the process of becoming morally mature. Does it not make more sense to grasp the opportunity and use television narratives as a starting point of conversation, if we know for example that young people enjoy reflecting on the human character so much evoked by television narratives? Does it not make sense to use television narratives as a starting point of making it possible to speak with a warm *'meum'* instead of cold *'tuum'*? We should examine the toolbox to see how this toolbox can be expanded so that it offers more than moral rules on what a family ought to be, how one should behave in a civil manner and what a democracy looks like. We should find ways to fill the toolbox so that it offers more than a traditional conception of morality. I explicitly do **not** argue for turning television in a moralising storyteller. As we have seen, people do not take moral messages at face value so to permeate television with them seems pointless (and frankly, I am frightened by this vision of moralising television, it would be as enjoyable as Hartley's well-swung sock full of sand; see §2.3). Rather, I think it is essential to look for those narratives that can be connected to the audience's narratives, in an effort to solve societal problems. This research justifies considering television as valuable for developing the moral imagination. Television is valuable in the process

of learning to make mature moral judgements, discerning every situation as a unique one, with unique people involved. Television, then, is valuable to become morally mature and to prevent people from needless suffering.

§6.4 Further Research

As with all narratives, the narrative written down in this dissertation is a continuing one. Though we have reached a closure, this closure is not the same as an ending. The studies do not only answer the questions asked, they also raise more questions about the relationship between moral imagination and television.

A first question that can be raised has to do with the content of prime time television. The exploration of prime-time television provided us with 12, rather manifest, moral themes. The analysis of the in-depth interviews turned up 15 moral themes, of which three were new ones. These three themes were mostly talked about as 'implicit themes' in television programmes. These results do raise questions of what the content analysis would turn up with if it were enlarged with (for example) a discourse analysis. This is a question that should be answered in another study.

A second question that comes to mind concerns the rather rosy picture that this analysis of television narratives sketches: television narratives can be good for us. One might wonder, and the author of this dissertation does, if television narratives can be bad for us as well. Of course, during the interviews one has to account for social desirability and not many interviewees would so easily admit gloating over other people's difficulties as André did. Also, sometimes interviewees seemed to use coping strategies when a moral issue became difficult to deal with. The methodology used in this study is of exploratory nature and should be developed further in order to expand the understanding of the relationship between television and morality.

A third question that is connected to the previous one concerns the emotional involvement of the viewer. Moral insights are especially reflected upon when they can be connected to the viewer's everyday life, when there is already some kind of involvement with the moral issue at

hand. This connection points towards emotional involvement — and throughout chapter 4 we have found more than one indication — with moral reflection. For example, the identification with characters in television narratives is connected to the reflection on the human character. Moreover, I do believe that emotions and the reflection on either moral or immoral insights are connected with each other and therefore should both be taken into account in a further exploration of the relationship at hand.

These questions are in need of answers. Therefore I, as the author, can now sincerely write the last words of this dissertation:

— To be continued —

SUMMARY IN DUTCH

Televisie neemt een belangrijke plaats in de huidige (Westerse) maatschappij in. Als verhalenverteller wordt zij vaak verantwoordelijk geacht voor het overbrengen van culturele en sociale regels. Rondom deze veronderstelling concentreren zich zowel publieke als academische debatten. De vraag is daarbij niet zozeer óf mensen iets leren van televisie, maar wat te denken van hetgeen dát ze leren. Niet zelden wordt televisie dan ook gezien als boosdoener in het kader van het algeheel moreel verval van de samenleving, het creëren van morele paniek, of het afstompen van de menselijke geest. Deze studie concentreert zich op het verband tussen televisie als verhalenverteller en het bereiken van morele volwassenheid. Een individu heeft morele volwassenheid bereikt wanneer hij of zij volledige verantwoordelijkheid kan nemen voor de genomen morele beslissing en de gevolgen ervan. Om de volwassenheid te bereiken is het noodzakelijk de morele verbeelding te ontwikkelen.

Om te ontdekken of en hoe televisieverhalen een bijdrage kunnen leveren aan de morele verbeelding is een raamwerk ontleend aan de zogenaamde literaire traditie. Daar wordt veronderstelt dat het (literaire) verhaal kan fungeren als een soort laboratorium, als een oefenruimte waarin men vrijelijk kan experimenteren met diverse morele overwegingen en beslissingen zonder daarvan daadwerkelijk de consequenties te ondervinden. Deze experimenten zouden leiden tot een ontwikkeling van de (morele) verbeelding. Deze morele verbeelding bestaat uit drie delen: (1) het kunnen herkennen van een situatie als moreel relevant, (2) de verschillende perspectieven die in de situatie van belang zijn en (3) het kunnen inschatten van de consequenties (ook op emotioneel gebied) voor iedereen die bij de situatie betrokken is.

Buiten dit raamwerk ontleend aan de literaire traditie hebben drie overwegingen voor dit onderzoek een belangrijke rol gespeeld. Ten eerste is moraal geconceptualiseerd in termen van een rationele als wel een affectieve dimensie. Ten tweede zijn de inzichten van Lawrence Kohlberg (en aanvullend die van Carol Gilligan) wat betreft rechtvaardigheidsethiek

en zorgethiek gehanteerd om het overwegen van de verschillende perspectieven die in de morele situatie van belang zijn te onderzoeken. Ten derde zijn Rorty's ideeën over het gelijkwaardige belang van het Zelf en de Ander gebruikt om de consequenties van een morele kwestie voor de betrokkenen te onderzoeken/interpreteren.

Het ontwikkelen van de verbeelding is van belang omdat verwacht wordt dat naarmate zij beter ontwikkeld is men ook geacht wordt op volwassenere wijze morele beslissingen te kunnen nemen. De vraag die de kern vormt van deze studie luidt: 'Hoe gebruiken mensen in Nederland televisieverhalen als bron ter ontwikkeling van hun morele verbeelding zodat zij moreel volwassen kunnen worden?' Om deze vraag te beantwoorden is wat betreft methoden gebruik gemaakt van zogenaamde 'sequential triangulation': drie deelstudies zijn ontworpen die niet alleen sterk samenhangen maar ook 'doorbouwen' op elkaar. Zo zijn de resultaten van de eerste deelstudie gebruikt om de tweede te ontwerpen. De eerste deelstudie richt zich op de morele inhoud van televisieverhalen, de tweede deelstudie onderzoekt de receptie van de morele televisie-inhoud, en de derde deelstudie richt zich met behulp van een enquête op een generalisatie van de resultaten van het receptieonderzoek.

De analyse van de morele inhoud van televisieverhalen die in Nederland worden aangeboden is gebaseerd op bijna 162 uur prime-time televisie. In twee afzonderlijke weken zijn op zeven kanalen tussen 20.00 uur en 22.00 uur alle programma's opgenomen en vervolgens geanalyseerd. Drie vragen waren daarbij van belang: welke morele thema's worden aangeboden, hoe wordt over die thema's gereflecteerd en wie voert daarbij het woord? In totaal kwamen 12 morele thema's aan bod, in de aflopende volgorde van voorkomen: omgangsvormen, politiek, het goede leven, familie, liefde, autoriteit, heldendom, geweld, vriendschap, rechtvaardigheid, dood en overtuiging. Een opvallend resultaat is dat familie als enige thema vrij eendimensionaal aanwezig is in televisieverhalen (het kerngezin als centraal punt in het menselijk leven), dit in tegenstelling tot andere thema's. Zo varieert het thema goede omgangsvormen van liegen tot hoe je als werkgever op fatsoenlijke wijze met je werknemers hoort om te gaan.

Over deze 12 thema's wordt relatief eenduidig gereflecteerd in prime-time televisie: 88% van alle redeneringen en argumenten die in verband met een morele kwestie werden aangedragen is gestileerd naar de ethiek van de rechtvaardigheid. Deze uitspraken worden door ongeveer evenveel mannelijke als vrouwelijke actoren gedaan (respectievelijk 56% en 44%). Wel zijn deze morele subjecten overwegend van Nederlands-autochtone afkomst en zijn vrouwen over het algemeen iets jonger dan mannen. Personen tot ongeveer 20 jaar en personen ouder dan 65 jaar komen nauwelijks voor in de positie van moreel subject.

Opvallend genoeg vinden we slechts kleine verschillen tussen de verschillende televisiegenres en zijn het juist nieuws en actualiteitenprogramma's die een hogere dichtheid van morele thema's kennen (2,9 en 2,7 thema's per uur) dan de overige genres. Mannen waren vaker present in non-fictionele programma's en vrouwen vaker in de fictionele.

In de tweede deelstudie is de *receptie* van het morele aanbod in televisieverhalen onderzocht. Daartoe zijn 41 diepte-interviews gehouden met mannen en vrouwen van verschillende leeftijd, etnische afkomst en opleidingsniveau. Deze interviews waren open van karakter en werden gestuurd door de onderwerpen afgeleid uit de resultaten van de inhoudsanalyse.

De geïnterviewden toonden verschillende manieren van reflectie op morele kwesties in televisieverhalen. Ten eerste 'interpretatieve reflectie', een manier die heel direct ingaat op het morele onderwerp zoals dat door een programma wordt aangeboden. Ten tweede kon 'additionele reflectie' onderscheiden worden, wanneer het onderwerp van het programma aanleiding vormde voor de geïnterviewde om iets toe te voegen aan het verhaal. Ten derde werd de 'associatieve reflectie' onderscheiden. Hier wordt niet alleen iets toegevoegd, maar wordt dermate op het morele onderwerp van het programma geassocieerd dat de morele reflectie uiteindelijk niets meer met het concrete onderwerp van het programma zelf te maken heeft. Deze drie vormen van reflectie vinden alleen dan plaats wanneer het morele onderwerp op enigerlei manier gepast kan worden in het narratief (of levensverhaal) van het individu zelf. Er was

geen enkele keer sprake van het direct 'overnemen' van de letterlijke boodschap zoals zij in het programma werd gepresenteerd.

Naast de twaalf thema's zoals aangeboden in televisieverhalen bleken de geïnterviewden ook nog te reflecteren op 'seksualiteit', 'goed vs. kwaad' en 'het kenbare'. De reflectie op deze thema's vond plaats in verschillende stijlen van moreel redeneren. Mannen en vrouwen deden dit wederom in gelijke mate, evenals mensen van verschillende etnische afkomst en opleidingsniveau. Er bleken wel verschillen tussen mensen uit diverse leeftijdscategorieën. De allerjongsten (tot ongeveer 14 jaar) nemen een inflexibele morele positie in en lijken zich het meest bezig te houden met de vraag wanneer een kwestie moreel relevant is. Adolescenten (tot ongeveer 20 jaar) geven blijk van een veelal onzekere positie op moreel gebied en lijken meer gericht te zijn op de ontwikkeling van inzicht in het menselijke karakter. Volwassen tot ongeveer 60 jaar gaven blijk van een morele positie die de complexiteit van morele kwesties onderkent. Deze groep leek zich te richten op zowel de complexiteit van morele kwesties als wel het ontwikkelen van inzicht in het menselijke karakter. Tot slot de oudste groep die blijk gaf van een 'liberale' morele positie. Zij gaven veel vaker aan dan anderen niet te kunnen oordelen over specifieke situaties omdat zij noch de omstandigheden, noch de betrokkenen kennen.

In de derde deelstudie is aan de hand van de resultaten van inhoudsanalyse en de receptiestudie een enquête ontwikkeld. Hier gin het ook om de generaliseerbaarheid van de diepte-interviews. Een representatieve steekproef van Nederlanders wat betreft sekse, leeftijd, opleiding en religiositeit (N=500) heeft de enquête op het internet ingevuld (met dank aan Bureau Veldkamp BV). Deze enquête wijst uit dat iedereen soms televisieverhalen gebruikt om te reflecteren op morele thema's, stijlen van moreel redeneren, en het menselijke karakter. Vrouwen doen dit op alle vlakken significant vaker dan mannen. Opnieuw tekenen zich verschillen op leeftijdsgebied af. Hoewel het onderscheid tussen groepen van onder de 14 en tot de 20 jaar niet kon worden gemaakt (en dus één groep lijkt te vormen) blijken de overige verschillen zoals geschetst door de resultaten van deelstudie 2 bevestigd.

Samenvattend kan men dus zeggen dat Nederlandse televisieverhalen een variëteit van morele inzichten aanbieden. Mensen gebruiken deze verhalen en inzichten, naar gelang ze in hun individuele narratief passen, om te reflecteren op morele kwesties. Televisie levert dus een bijdrage op de weg naar morele volwassenheid. Haar rol lijkt daarbij meer op een moraalbevestigende verteller, dan op een voor de tegenwoordige maatschappij gevaarlijke verteller. De boodschappen op televisie promoten immers goede omgangsvormen, democratische waarden, het kerngezin in plaats van ze te ondergraven.

Televisie kan op verschillende manieren een bijdrage aan de morele verbeelding leveren, maar hieraan lijken wel een aantal voorwaarden verbonden. Ten eerste, juist die thema's die op televisie multi-dimensionaal worden aangeboden (d.w.z. geen eenduidige boodschap omtrent het thema construeren) lijken aantrekkelijker voor reflectie dan thema's die eendimensionaal gepresenteerd worden. Ten tweede ontwijken mensen de letterlijke boodschap die ze wordt aangeboden. Om televisieverhalen te doordrenken met letterlijke morele boodschappen in de hoop dat deze worden overgenomen is dus niet zinvol. Ten derde zijn er morele generaties te onderscheiden die elk op een verschillend vlak de verbeelding ontwikkelen. De morele reflectie is dus niet alleen afhankelijk van het narratief, maar ook van leeftijd.

Tot slot pleit ik voor een benadering die televisie ziet als (deel van de) oplossing bij maatschappelijke problemen (met een morele achtergrond) in plaats van als veroorzaker van deze problemen.

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APPENDIX I. PROGRAMMES ANALYSED PER GENRE

Genre	date:	broadcasting time:	channel:	with moral message in closure (amount of minutes)	without moral message in closure (amount of minutes)
Comedy:					
Becker	5-5-2003	21.30-21.52	NL 3	22	
Curb Your Enthusiasm	12-9-2004	20.31-21.05	NL 3		33
Frasier	6-5-2003	20.06-20.33	NL 3		27
Friends	9-5-2003	20.33-21.04	Yorin	25	
Friends	6-9-2004	20.30-21.07	Yorin	37	
Keeping up appearances	8-5-2003	19.59-20.34	NL 2		35
Moesha	8-5-2003	20.08-20.35	NL 3	27	
Mr. Bean	5-5-2003	21.09-21.34	Yorin		31
The Powers that be	8-9-2004	20.32-21.02	NL 3		30
Schiet mij maar lek	8-5-2003	20.34-21.05	RTL 4	31	
Toen was geluk heel gewoon	11-5-2003	21.44-22.15	NL 1		31
Will & Grace	10-9-2004	20.32-21.06	Net 5	34	
Crime Reports					
De Geheimen van Enschede: de onbekende dader	11-5-2003	21.10-22.05	SBS 6	55	
Medical Detectives (misdaad)	5 t/m 9-5-2003	20.00-20.30	Net 5	150	
Peter R. de Vries	8-5-2003	20.31-21.41	SBS 6	70	
Current Affairs					
Bevrijdingsdag	5-5-2003	20.28-21.00	NL 2	32	
Exclusief	5-5-2003	20.00-20.30	SBS 6	60	
Knevel op zaterdag	10-5-2003	20.32-21.04	NL 1	32	
Knevel op Zaterdag	11-9-2004	20.32-21.05	NL 1	33	
Levy & Sadeghi	9-5-2003	20.47-21.03	NL 3	16	
'De Messias', visie op Pim Fortuyn	6-5-2003	21.04-22.00	NL 1	56	
Netwerk (6x)	5 t/m 9-5-2003 11-5-2003	20.30-21.00	NL 1	180	
Netwerk (6x)	6 t/m 10-9-2004 12-9-2004	20.30-21.00	NL 1	180	
Nieuw Economisch Peil	5-5-2003	21.16-22.00	NL 3	29	
PREMtime	7- 9-2004	21.29-22.00	NL 3	31	

Genre	date:	broadcasting time:	channel:	with moral message in closure (amount of minutes)	without moral message in closure (amount of minutes)
Tegenlicht	11-5-2003	21.05-22.00	NL 3		55
Tegenlicht	12-9-2004	21.05-22.00	NL 3	55	
Typisch Fortuyn	6-5-2003	20.35-21.36	RTL 4	61	
Zembla	8-5-2003	21.16-22.00	NL 3	44	
Zembla	9-9-2004	21.12-21.51	NL 3	39	
docudrama/Reality TV:					
Adam's Family	10-5-2003	21.03-21.43	SBS 6	40	
Bachelor	6-9-2004	21.07-22.06	Yorin		59
Bevallingsverhalen	5 t/m 9-5-2003	20.00-20.30	Yorin	150	
Blik op de Weg	10-9-2004	20.27-20.59	NL 2	32	
Centrale Huisartsenpost	6-9-2004	19.56-20.26	NL 2		30
Expeditie Robinson, kandidaten	6-9-2004	20.32-21.16	Net 5		44
Expeditie Robinson	12-9-2004	20.24-21.32	Net 5	52	
Het leven Gaat Door	10-9-2004	19.55-20.27	NL 2	32	
Je zal het maar hebben	7-9-2004	21.20-21.56	NL 2	36	
Jouw Vrouw Mijn Vrouw	6-9-2004	20.32-21.34	RTL 4	62	
Kinderziekenhuis	7-5-2003	19.58-20.27	NL 2	29	
Kraamafdeling	11-5-2003	19.56-20.33	SBS 6		37
Memories	6-9-2004	21.08-22.06	NL 1	58	
Mensen van de dierentuin	9-5-2003	20.03-20.33	NL 2	30	
Mijn vieze vette vervelende verloofde	7-9-2004	21.29-22.23	Yorin	54	
Model Behaviour	9-9-2004	21.32-22.02	Yorin	30	
Patty's Posse	9-5-2003	20.33-21.04	Yorin	31	
Puinruimers	11-5-2003	20.33-21.10	SBS 6	37	
Roer Om	9-9-2004	20.34-21.36	RTL 4		62
Spoorloos	5-5-2003	21.02-21.58	NL 1	54	
Temptation Island	10-5-2003	19.59-21.03	SBS 6		64
De Verloskundigen praktijk	7-5-2003	20.31-21.29	SBS 6	58	
Wielklem & Co	8-5-2003	21.04-21.35	Yorin	31	
Documentary:					
Airport (5x)	6 t/m 10 - 9-2003	20.00-20.30	Yorin	150	0
Andere Tijden	6-5-2003	20.33-21.07	NL 3	34	
Andere Tijden	7-9-2004	20.55-21.29	NL 3	34	

Genre	date:	broadcasting time:	channel:	with moral message in closure (amount of minutes)	without moral message in closure (amount of minutes)
Dokwerk	6-9-2004	20.33-22.00	NL 3		87
Ga eens naar bed met een cabaretier	10-9-2004	20.26-20.56	NL 3		30
Goede Vraag	9-5-2003	20.03-20.07	NL3	4	
Rail away	8-5-2003	21.24-21.55	NL 2		31
Sportpaleis de Jong	9-5-2003	20.26-20.47	NL 3	21	
VPRO Klassiek	9-5-2003	20.17-20.26	NL 3		9
World Wide Video Festival	9-5-2003	20.04-20.17	NL 3		13
Yorin Travel	11-5-2003	20.00-21.00	Yorin		60
Yorin Travel	12-9-1004	19.54-20.31	Yorin		37
Drama Series					
The Agency	9-5-2003	21.04-22.00	Yorin	56	
Baantjer	9-5-2003	20.39-21.38	RTL 4	59	
Baantjer	10-9-2004	20.32-21.36	RTL 4	64	
Buffy the Vampire Slayer	7-5-2003	21.28-22.20	Net 5	52	
Charmed	7-5-2003	20.34-21.28	Net 5	54	
Commisaris Rex	10-5-2003	20.01-20.59	RTL 4		58
CSI	6-9-2004	21.34-22.29	RTL 4	55	
CSI Miami	7-9-2004	20.31-21.29	Yorin	58	
Diagnosis Murder	6 t/m 8-5-2003	19.33-20.35	SBS6	186	
Everwood	6-5-2003	20.33-21.28	Net 5	55	
Fields of Gold	6-5-2003	21.07-21.59	NL 3		52
Flikken	7-9-2004	20.22-21.20	NL 2	62	
Gilmore Girls	7-9-2004	20.33-21.27	Net 5	54	
Halifax FP	7-9-2004	20.39-22.24	RTL 4	107	
Hearts & Bones	11-5-2003	19.39-20.34	NL 3	55	
John Doe	6-5-2003	20.33-21.29	Yorin	56	
Koekoeksclub	11-5-2003	20.34-21.05	NL 3		31
Medicopter 117	5-5-2003	20.36-21.35	RTL 4	59	
Medicopter 117	11-9-2004	20.01-21.03	RTL 4		62
Mysterious Ways	11-9-2004	20.02-20.59	Yorin	57	
Sex in the City	6-5-2003	21.28-22.04	Net 5	36	
Sex and the City (6x)	6 t/m 10-9-2004 7-9-2004	19.00-20.30	Net 5	180	
Spoed	11-5-2003	20.55-21.47	NL 2	52	

Genre	date:	broadcasting time:	channel:	with moral message in closure (amount of minutes)	without moral message in closure (amount of minutes)
Strong Medicine	11-5-2003	20.32-21.24	Net 5	54	
Touched by an Angel	8-5-2003	20.34-21.24	NL 2	50	
Vrijdag de 14e	5-5-2003	21.02-21.30	NL 3		28
Zes Minuten	9-9-2004	19.58-20.29	NL 2	31	
Film:					
First do no harm	7-5-2003	20.35-22.23	RTL 4	112	
Forever Love	8-9-2004	20.39-22.22	RTL 4	103	
Grijpstra & De Gier	10-5-2003	20.23-21.50	NL 2		87
Mothers in Arms	7-5-2003	20.03-20.28	NL 3		25
Stuart Little	6-5-2003	20.35-22.04	SBS 6	89	
Game Show:					
Achmea Kennisquiz	12-9-2004	20.02-21.02	RTL 4		60
De Lage Landen	8-5-2003	21.12-21.59	NL 1		47
Per Seconde wijzer	5-5-2003	20.33-21.02	NL 3		29
Per Seconde Wijzer	7-9-2004	20.27-20.55	NL 3		28
Ter land, ter zee en in de lucht	9-9-2004	20.29-21.40	NL 2		71
Tijd van ons leven	9-5-2003	21.34-22.20	NL 1	46	
Triviant	7-9-2004	21.08-21.54	NL 1		46
Twee voor twaalf	8-5-2003	20.35-21.16	NL 3	41	
Twee voor Twaalf	9-9-2004	20.33-21.12	NL 3		39
Wie is de mol	10-5-2003	21.04-22.06	NL 1		62
De zwakste schakel	11-5-2003	20.02-21.03	RTL 4		61
Lifestyle/Service:					
1000 Seconden (kook-spel)	7-9-2004	19.49-20.22	NL 2		33
10 Jaar jonger in 10 dagen	12-9-2004	21.02-21.34	RTL 4	32	
Gordon Ramsey: Oorlog in de Keuken	9-9-2004; 11-9-2004	20.30-21.32; 20.59-22.02	Yorin	125	
Huis op Stelten	10-9-2004	21.01-21.48	NL 1		47
Keuringsdienst van waarde	9-5-2003	21.29-22.00	NL 3	31	
Looking Good	8-5-2003	21.05-21.35	RTL 4		30
Love Test	10-5-2003	19.59-21.03	Yorin	64	
Make me beautiful	8-9-2004	20.33-21.37	Net 5	64	
Modepolitie	5-5-2003	20.33-21.09	Yorin		36
More sex tips for girls	7-5-2003	21.32-22.02	Yorin	30	

Genre	date:	broadcasting time:	channel:	with moral message in closure (amount of minutes)	without moral message in closure (amount of minutes)
Ook dat nog	11-5-2003	20.53-21.44	NL 1		51
De smaakpolitie	7-5-2003	21.29-22.02	SBS 6		33
Vinger aan de Pols	8-9-2004	19.58-20.42	NL 2	44	
Music Television					
Bevrijdingsconcert	5-5-2003	21.00-22.17	RTL 4		77
Eurovisie Junior Songfestival	11-9-2004	19.58-21.03	NL 2		65
Het gevoel van	9-5-2003	20.33-21.28			55
Idols in concert	7-5-2003	20.33-21.32	NL 2		125
Jan Smit	6-9-2004	20.26-21.05	NL 2		39
Reis van je Leven	8-9-2004	20.42-21.44	NL 2		62
Welkom Mariss Jansons	10-9-2004	20.56-22.00	NL 3	64	
News:					
NOS Journaal (7x)	5 t/m 11-5-2003	20.00-20.30	NL 1	210	
NOS Journaal (7x)	6 t/m 12-9-2003	20.00-20.30	NL 1	210	
Satire:					
Andermans veren	12-9-2004	20.55-21.41	NL 1		46
Best of Comedy Factory (5x)	6 t/m 10-9-2004	20.00-20.30	NL 3		150
Brigitte Kaandorp Badwater	11-9-2004	20.12-21.59	NL 3		107
Freek de Jonge & Metropole Orkest	9-5-2003	21.07-21.29	NL 2	22	
Kopspijkers	10-5-2003	20.09-21.05	NL 3	56	
Soap:					
Glazen Huis (3x)	11 t/m 12-9-2004 6-9-2004	21.05-21.35	NL 2	90	
Goede Tijden, Slechte Tijden (5x)	5 t/m 9-5-2003	20.00-20.30	RTL 4	150	
Goede Tijden Slechte Tijden (5x)	6 t/m 10-9-2004	20.00-20.30	RTL 4	150	

Genre	date:	broadcasting time:	channel:	with moral message in closure (amount of minutes)	without moral message in closure (amount of minutes)
Sport:					
Darts Bavaria World Trophy	6 t/m 7 - 9-2004; 9 t/m 12 - 9-2004	19.54-22.21; 19.57-22.22; 19.58-21.52; 20.00-22.03; 19.59-22.29	SBS 6		678
Studio Sport (2e deel)	11-5-2003	20.17-20.55	NL 2		38
Studio Sport (2e deel)	12-9-2004	20.16-21.02	NL 2		46
Voetbal EK KW	8-9-2004	20.25-22.24	SBS 6		119
Talkshow:					
Beau	6-5-2003	21.29-22.29	Yorin		60
Gordon's Late Nicht Show	11-5-2003	21.00-22.02	Yorin		62
Jensen!	8-5-2003	21.35-22.33	Yorin	58	
Laat ze maar lachen	11-9-2004	21.03-21.59	RTL 4		56
Het Lagerhuis	10-5-2003	21.05-22.00	NL 3		55
Praatjesmakers	9-5-2003	21.02-21.34	NL 1		32
Sonja, de meester en de leerling	8-9-2004	21.02-22.00	NL 3		58
TV Show	10-9-2004	21.28-22.30	NL 2	62	
Villa Felderhof	9-9-2004	21.03-21.58	NL 1	55	
Other:					
De avond van het boek	7-5-2003	20.28-22.00	NL 3		92
Making of Ellis in Glamourland	10-9-2004	20.59-21.28	NL 2	29	
politieberichten	7 t/m 8-5-2003	20.24-20.33	NL 1		18
Politieke Partijen (PvdA)	5-5-2003	21.52-22.01	NL3		9
Politieke Partijen (CDA)	9-9-2004	21.51-21.59	NL 3		8
Reclame, Reclame	11-5-2003	20.00-20.32	Net 5		32

APPENDIX II - THE TOPIC LIST

1. Testing of Recorder

2. Introduce yourself
- who am I
- what is the interview about and what is the structure of the next 45 minutes
- grant the anonymity of the interviewee

3. Background information interviewee
- age
- place of birth
- familial situation
- education
- profession
- hobbies
- description of a regular week day

4. Medium Use/Viewing Situation
- Which programmes have been watched last week?
- Was there a programme you did not watch, but would have liked to?
- Watching alone or together?
- Activities while watching television (reading, computer games, household chores, et cetera)
- What is your first television memory?
-

5. Genre Preferences
- Programmes usually recorded
- Programmes that are never watched
- All time favorite programme and why
- Irritation caused by programmes

6. Moral themes
- Talk with others about television programmes (during or after)
- Topics that are specifically attractive?

7. Styles of moral reasoning
- Retelling of last episode of favourite programme.
- What was the main topic?
- What did you think about it?
- Can you imagine something similar happening to you? What actions would you take?

8. Insight into the Human Character

- People that are familiar or unfamiliar in television programmes.

9. There are no more questions. Does the interviewee have any questions or remarks?

10. Check topic list for anything that is not addressed yet.

11. Thank interviewee for her/his time and the conversation.

APPENDIX III. ORIGINAL INTERVIEW QUOTES

Anouk: "…twee eilanden waar mensen op uh, mensen die elkaar niet kennen waar ze op uh gedumpt worden zeg maar, 't is dan de bedoeling dat ze lang mogelijk uh…uh met elkaar zien te overleven. Maar op zich uh, is het gewoon wel mooi om te zien uh, beetje psychologische oorlogsvoering."

Anouk: "…maar je, je gaat wel denken van wat doet ie nou fout. Of tenminste, daar ga je over uh, verzin je gewoon vanzelf wel wat dingen over, of dat je echt, ah dat ie een soort complot smeedt met uh, met een van die vrouwen en uh, of rare dingen zegt over iemand anders uh, dat je denkt van ja, da's gewoon niet handig."

Gijs: "Ja, uh, als bijvoorbeeld, nou, de slechterik of zo, als je dan als ie dan iets wil laten ontploffen of zo, en dan iets heel erg, en dan is het zo op het eind een gevecht, als die dan iets wil laten ontploffen en dan gaan ze ook vechten of zo. Granaat naar binnen gooien, nou, zulk soort dingen als degene al iets heeft gedaan. Maar voor de rest niet echt."
Interviewer: "Dus alleen als iemand iets gedaan heeft?"
Gijs: "Ja, als iemand zelf ook gewoon, met uh iemand anders ge, met iemand anders gevochten heeft, of die iemand anders gedo, vermoord heeft."

Clark "Ja, want dat zou ik misschien ook wel doen, want ze [de moeder] kraakt hem steeds af en misschien zou ze haar [Lorelai] dan ook wel gaan afkraken. Dus misschien is het wel begrijpelijk."
Interviewer: "Jij zou hetzelfde doen?"
Clark: "Hmm, nee, ik zou het wel eerst verpakt hebben met andere dingen en dan zou ik het wel gezegd hebben."
Interviewer: "Hoe bedoel je met andere dingen?"
Clark: "Eerst heel veel positieve dingen of wat hij allemaal heeft meegemaakt en zo. En dan zou ik vertellen, dit en dat en daarna zou ik wel de naam noemen."

Frank: "De sfeer van de film uh, waar het over ging uh sowieso, een beetje absurdistisch maar wel uh… ook wel realistisch. Laat iets zien over de uh heersende gekte onder mensen die uh in het algemeen goed bedwongen wordt met een aktetas. Dus ik schat dat je een redelijk mens bent, maar misschien wel niet. Kan ik de knop vinden. En dat vond ik in die film

wel heel nog eens keer, liet het dat ook zien, dus, ik heb ook niet het gevoel en de behoefte om daar een oordeel over te hebben, over dat soort gedrag of wat dan ook. Ik kijk er altijd, dat soort staaltjes hiervan uh afwijkend gedrag kijk ik er altijd met uh, met uh, ja, hoe zal ik het zeggen, een gevoel van uh medelijden is weer te neerbuigend en te makkelijk, maar. Bijvoorbeeld, mensen die zich bezig met, met wat pedofilie, hè, da's toch vrij ernstig. Daar wordt heel erg hard over geoordeeld en dat is op zich terecht. Maar ik vind het vooral treurig, treurig dat mensen dat soort dingen nodig hebben. En nog treuriger natuurlijk dat ze het ook nog doen. Dus zo kijk ik naar dat soort dingen."

Karin: "En de kinderen ben altijd de dupe. En of ze nou jong zijn of oud, kinderen en altijd de dupe (T. mhmh). Want ik weet het van mijn broer. Broer van mijn, die was ook getrouwd, zij kwam ook veel in een café. Op langers ging ze met die caféhouder d'r vandoor en hij had één jongetje, dat was toen ook drie, nog geen vier jaar. Maar mijn broer wist niet wat ie met 'em aan moest [..] Dus ik heb nog twee jaar op het kind van mijn broer gepast, of vier jaar."

Inge: "Ja, wat bij de discussie oproep, roept is dat je altijd zelf mag beslissen of je je kind houdt, of je zwanger wordt. Iedereen mag zwanger worden en kinderen krijgen, maar niet iedereen mag zijn kind houden. Het is wel raar dat je mag beslissen je kind te houden en negen maanden mag dragen,[...] Maar dat het zo kan zijn dat als je verslaafd bent, of geen huis hebt of andere redenen dat zodra dat kindje op de wereld is dat ie voor de komende 80 jaar, nou ja tot 18 jaar meteen door de raad van kinderbescherming uit huis wordt geplaatst."

Jurgen: "Ik erger me aan het, aan een ordinaire, al die seksuele onderwerpen interesseren me geen donder. Die vind ik belachelijk, al die vieze woorden die ze soms zeggen. Ik vind, je moet beschaafd blijven. Ik, kijk, als ik mensen goed ken dan hou ik er van om gekke dingen te zeggen hoor. Om, ook wel een beetje schuine dingen te zeggen. Maar ik, zo op de televisie, denk ik: nètjes blijven. En ik vind vaak dat ze van die tweegesprekken hebben waarvan ik denk: ja jezus, wat is dit eigenlijk ongelofelijk zonde van de tijd denk ik. Zonde van de energie."

Joke: "Andries Knevel van: dus, u zou die Wilders, die moet dood?...En toen zei die ook, ja. He, en, ja, wilt u 'em nou vermoorden? Nou nee, dat hoeft niet. Ja, maar kan ie bijvoorbeeld toch ook wel een ernstige ziekte krijgen? En dan denk ik, en toen zei die vent: ja op. Maar, ik vond het ook wel, hoe dat, toen Andries Knevel teveel door duwde, hè. Want hij legde 'em eigenlijk de woorden in de mond en dat vind ik ook niet reëel. Ik denk: dat moet je niet doen. Hè, die vent zal dat wel gewild hebben hoor. Dat geloof ik ook wel. Maar, je moet het iemand niet laten zeggen."

Margot: "Ja het is wel weer een afwijzing dan weer meteen..... "
Interviewer: "En dat vind je niet zo heel goed? "
Margot: ".....Nee, het is wel, je bent net klaar met het programma en je.. en je weet dat je er goed uitziet en dan opeens dan..kom je in die strijd en dan denk je oh ik win wel of zo en dan zeg je.., dan wint die ander. Denk niet dat dat echt goed, dat is weer dat het wat minder zelfvertrouwen...denk niet dat dat echt leuk is, dat je daar staat van oh ik heb verloren, oh oké.."

Dineke: "Want ja, ik zou, ik vond het enig. Ik zeg dat ie die, die die boete betaalde voor die, voor die a, a, Albert Heijn medewerkers. Ja, maar dat is 'em ook niet in dank afgenomen. Ik zeg, ja, dat weet ik. Ik zeg, maar toch hij heeft het maar gedaan. Ja, ja. Want ik vind, dat zijn maar medewerkers, maar die jongen, natuurlijk, maar toch een gewone zaak of winkel, word je toch woest, als, als er zoveel van je, van je Albert Heijn gestolen wordt. Met d'r handen van een ander zijn spullen af blijven."

Anton: "Nou ik, als, als, een van mijn vrienden zeg maar in een situatie zit waar een partner nou ja echt heel erg lomp is tegen een vriend van of een vriendin van mij. Dan, nou zou ik dat in ieder geval heel erg klote vinden. En...ja, ik, ik, ik denk dus dat ik eerst gewoon vooral met, met mijn bekenden praat over hoe dat, hoe dat dan weer op te lossen. Wat ik zou doen, ik zou, ik zou niet, ik weet niet of ik naar die persoon zou stappen om, om een gesprek met die persoon te gaan hebben of. Ja, al helemaal niet met een honkbalknuppels opwachten. N ee, dus ik zou het, ik zou eerder zeg maar proberen die, die vriend of vriendin of mij zeg maar, nou ja, wat, wat in handen te geven waarmee die zijn eigen of haar situatie kan oplossen, ik zou meer, ja, meer op die manier zou ik d'r mee om gaan."

Anton: "Dus ik weet ook niet hoe, hoe diep dat kan gaan. Dus daar heb ik, ik kan me wel voorstellen dat dat wel diep gaat. Maar dan zou ik, ja, ik zou daar zelf toch ook, ja…ik vind dat wel een beetje dat je, dat je, nou ja, een of andere manier iemand gaat straffen op zo'n manier dat ik denk van ja. Dan ben je eigen rechter aan het spelen en ik zou toch zelf eerder naar de politie stappen of als, als ik echt het idee heb van nou, die persoon zit dusdanig in de, in de shit en die komt er zelf niet uit."

Bart: "Ik denk toch dat als, als je verliefd wordt dat dat niet alleen door, door uiterlijk bepaald wordt, maar ook door je levenshouding, denk ik zelf. Als je oo, ik kan me voorstellen dat als je, dat als je overtuigd vegetariër bent, al je hele leven en je, en je ontmoet de vrouw van je dromen en die is vleeseter en je walgt daar echt van, dan kan ik me voorstellen dat het ge, dan niet doorgaat."

Marie: "Ja. Ja, en het Roer Om is een programma dat mij persoonlijk dan heel erg aanspreekt om, dat, ik dat ook zou willen en misschien wel ga doen. Dus dan raakt het me persoonlijk ook."

Marie: "Gewoon kijken hoe zij dat doen, hoe zij d'r doorheen slaan. Hoe, hoe je ondanks alle tegenslagen toch blij kunt zijn met je keu, de keuze die je hebt gemaakt. En dat je, dan, na een jaar kan zeggen van: nou, we zijn nog lang niet waar we willen zijn, maar we zouden ook nooit meer terug kunnen. Want we, hebben hier toch een beter leven, kwalitatief beter…"

Michiel: "…Gister, heb ik een stuk gekeken over hoe Amerikaanse soldaten weer terug kwamen uit, uit Irak.. gewond waren geraakt…getraumatiseerd verhaal vertelden, door Nederlandse interviewer…. Heel boeiend. Ook een andere kant van een medaille belichten wordt altijd normaal gesproken succesje uitdrukt via CNN en, dat je incidenteel hoort dat er weer eens twintig burgers om zeep zijn geholpen en een Amerikaanse soldaat hoe die verhouding ook ligt in dit geval als body count gebracht…Natuurlijk wel weer een Amerikaans beeld, geraakt zijn door de Iraki's, maar het menselijke, mooi beeld."

Martin: "Ze passen niet bij elkaar. "
Interviewer: "Nee, waarom passen ze niet bij elkaar?"
Martin: "Nou, er zit wel een paar jaar tussen. En het klinkt ook raar. Bijvoorbeeld een leerling met de juffrouw.[...] En ...Dat is hetzelfde dat iemand van 16 op een jongentje van 9 valt."

Jurgen: "...want ik vind het ongelofelijk interessant. En dan denk ik: wat heb jij toch meegemaakt en dat ben je allemaal vergeten jongen."

Malika: "Nou, in die zin dat er heel veel bloot is op televisie en dat, nou ja en de Islam, tenminste voor mij, mijn Islam, laat ik het bij mezelf houden. Ik heb de overtuiging dat, vanuit mijn religie de overtuiging dat dat je je niet moet blootstellen aan verleidingen. Ja, wanneer je je wel blootstelt dan, kunnen de verleidingen steeds groter worden en wij zien de duivel als de verleiding. En, nou ja, het kan zijn dat je dan het verkeerde pad op gaat, tenminste, wat voor mij als moslim dan verkeerd is. Hoeft niet verkeerd te zijn in, voor de waarden en normen van deze maatschappij, want heel veel dingen zijn hier normaal. Maar in mijn overtuiging is het niet oké."

Clark: "Nou, er was laatst een meisje en een jongen die hadden met elkaar. En op het schoolfeest had dat meisje met twee jongens tegelijk gezoend en die jongen had met drie meisjes gezoend. En die jongen was een man en dat meisje was een hoer. Zo noemen ze haar."

Dewi: "Vind ik ook heel erg, heel erg zielig. Ze geeft niet echt een reden, ze zegt gewoon het is uit en dan ja, omdat het gewoon niet klikt zegt ze, maar ze geeft de, de reden geeft ze niet. Vind ik ook zo, ja, ik zou het uitmaken met een reden. Dat is iets beter."
Interviewer: "Beter?"
Dewi: "Ja, dat is iets beter als je het met een reden uitmaakt, want dan zal die jongen zal wel denken van wat heb ik nou weer gedaan. Dat het zijn schuld is, terwijl het haar schuld is. Gaat hij zich heel erg schuldig voelen."

Inge: "...vervolgens de analyse van Baantjer, van De Cock en zijn kornuiten van wat was gebeurd en hoe het leven in elkaar zit."

Interviewer: "Hoe het leven in elkaar zit? Vertel 's."
Inge: "Nou, hij zegt altijd iets wijs. Dat het zonde is, of dat het zo kan lopen of,...
Ik denk dat het zo bedoeld is, welke lessen kunnen we d'r uit leren."

Jelle: "Ja, de personages die die laat ik het zeggen, die waren wat uitvergroot. Hè, en je kunt personen uitermate onsympathiek maken of bijzonder sympathiek. En, iemand die bijzonder sympathiek is die heeft zijn onhebbelijkheden en, en andersom ook. En dat, daar, daar zijn zij dan heel sterk in,..."
Interviewer: "Want dat was eigenlijk een heel pallet aan uh."
Jelle: "Ja, is een heel pallet aan verschillende karakters."

Lisa: "Nou .. als hij nou eenmaal verliefd en dan kan hij dat niet meer, niet zo maar stoppen dus dan moet je er eigenlijk gewoon voor gaan en kijken wat zij van hem vindt. Dus ik zou denk ik ook wel zo'n advies geven."

Pien: "...maar ik keek dat eigenlijk meer uit een soort van sociologisch oogpunt of ik weet niet of je dat zo moet noemen, en antropologisch misschien, omdat het gewoon. Het is vaak een ander andere klasse mensen dan, het zijn geen wetenschappers over het algemeen die daar zitten. En die meedoen aan die talk shows, want het zijn geen, niet heel hoog opgeleide mensen, dus die hebben wel vaak een ander denkniveau toch. En dat zie je zeker terug in van die talk shows. Dus ik vind het dan interessant om zo'n show te kijken als van Catherine Keyl dan, die ik dan gewoon wil kijken, hoe wordt er onder die mensen over dat soort dingen gedacht en gesproken. En wat ook om te bedenken hoe, als het onderwerp is wat mij, mij aangaat, of dat mij, wat ik belangrijk vind, hoe kan ik er met die mensen, hoe zou ik daar met, bij wijze van spreken, beleid voor kunnen ontwikkelen of zo, om dat bespreekbaar te maken."

André: "Ik vind dat een hele bizarre gedachte, en dat vind ik leuk om te zien dan. Te zien hoe ze daar moeite mee hebben, daar gaat ook een bepaald sadisme mee gepaard van mijn kant."
Interviewer: "Kun je dat uitleggen?"
André: "Nou, ik, ik, ik vind het ten eerste, dat, dat hele monogame gebod is, is mij altijd een beetje vreemd geweest. Ik heb er wel degelijk een bepaald, hoe noem je dat, respect voor

menselijke gevoelens en zo, dus het is niet alsof ik het alleen maar, alleen maar gek vind. Maar ik, het heeft gevoelsmatig nooit goed op mij aangesloten en daarom vind ik het ten eerste een beetje vreemd dat ze zichzelf dat aan doen, [...] Maar zij moeten dan hele tijd zich zelf tot, tot op, hè, tot, tot, tot in, tot, tot op het moment dat ze in tranen zijn moeten ze zichzelf inhouden zeg maar om niet toe te geven aan waar ik al lang aan toe zou geven zeg maar. Dus dat is een soort sadistisch element daarbij."

Supiati: "Nee, ja ik vind liegen kan sowieso niet."
Interviewer: "Nee? Waarom niet?"
Supiati: "... ik vind dat gewoon niet kunnen. Je kan niet tegen iemand liegen vind ik."

Supiati: "Ja ik vind het wel ja. Want ze durfde het niet tegen haar moeder te zeggen. Nee maar zij lacht haar ook uit, dan zou ik het ook niet zeggen."
Interviewer: "Is dat geen liegen?"
Supiati: "Ja eigenlijk wel, want ze had het beloofd aan die Jason dat ze het zou vertellen."
Interviewer: "Is moeilijk hè?"
Supiati: "Ja."

Wendy: "Tussen Luke en Jess is het een beetje een beetje oorlog denk ik. Zijn zus heeft het idee dat hij uit huis is gekikt, terwijl Luke hem niet uit huis heeft gestuurd, maar dat hij zelf is weggegaan. Hij is weer terug naar zijn vader gegaan. Omdat hij was gewoon niet te handhaven."

Wendy: "Ja, ja aan de ene kant vind ik het wel oké, want ja die Jess heeft het toch ook moeilijk. Hij kon niet bij zijn moeder wonen, want die kon, volgens mij niet voor hem zorgen. Dus hij moest maar bij Luke gaan wonen, en bij Luke ging het ook niet goed. Dus ging hij weer terug naar zijn vader, maar daar gaat het ook niet. Dus eigenlijk ja, die jongen die moet eigenlijk gewoon ergens anders wonen, maar ja waar moet je wonen? Als je nergens, als je gewoon, hij zit gewoon echt in de pubertijd, en hij kan gewoon nergens echt zijn plekje vinden. Dus ik vind het wel lief ja, ik vind het wel lief van Luke dat hij dan toch wat liefs probeert te doen voor hem."

Mirjam: "En, daar heeft zij hem onder schot genomen. En ze wou dat hij toegaf dat ie d'r verkracht had. En dat wou ie niet, dus hij stond ze een beetje voor de gek houden en toen schoot

ze en toen schoot ze in zijn voet. Toen is ie naar binnen gestrompeld en Charlie ook in alle staten en zij had nog steeds dat, dat spijkerpistool. En, toen hield ze hem onder schot en toen zei, toen moest hij toegeven, en toen, ja, toen zei ie het. Toen zag je die beelden, die flashbacks terug van hem, toen hij haar verkrachtte. Maar volgens mij was ie zo, dronken, dat het nu pas tot hem doordrong, wat ie eigenlijk allemaal op het laatst had gedaan. Die flitsen zag je, zo moest je dat eigenlijk maar vertalen, volgens mij. Dus je moest vertalen van dat ie ineens zelf zo keek van: oe, ik heb het toch gedaan."

Barbara : "Als je nou iets neemt als de, de mishandeling va, van, van vrouwen en in 1981 al was er een congres hier in [verwijderd i.v.m. privacy] over geweld tegen vrouwen en meisjes en dat ging ook over seksueel geweld, en ik heb dus ook de zedelijkheidwetgeving gedaan. En daar heb ik me ook mee bemoeid. Maar àl die dingen, en mijn man zegt dat ook, dat hebben allemaal al een keer gehoord. En dan doen ze nu of het allemaal nieuw is. Dus daarom vind ik het ook leuk om te horen. Dan denk ik: o, wat hebben ze nu weer verzonnen."

Jurgen: "Dus het is zo, ik begrijp het niet. Alleen ik begrijp dat er wel iets moet zijn. En je moet dus geloof ik, goed zijn voor je mede, medemens. Behalve anders, als je zelf aan [...] dat is het Christendom."

APPENDIX IV - SURVEY

1. Below a few activities are listed. Mark per activity how many times a week you usually perform these activities.

	every day/almost every day	a few times per week	once per week	less than once per week	never
reading a newspaper					
listing to the radio					
reading a magazine					
listing to cd's					
reading an on-line newspaper					
consulting the internet otherwise					
watching television					
leisurely reading a book					

2. How many hours per week do you usually watch television?
…….hours

3. Below you find a list with television programmes. Mark all those programmes you really enjoy watching.

1 tegen 100
America's Next Top Model
Andere Tijden
Baantjer
Battlestar Galactica
Beugelbekkie
Buitenhof
CSI
Desperate Housewives
Discovery Channel
Dr. Phil
Editie NL
Eigen Huis en Tuin
Expeditie Robinson
Films
Friends
Gek op Wielen
Gilmore Girls
Goede Tijden, Slechte Tijden
Hart van Nederland
Idols
Kassa!
Keuringsdienst van Waarde
Koefnoen
Lingo
Looking Good
Mooi! Weer De Leeuw
MTV
Na de Diagnose
Netwerk
Neighbours
Nova
O.C.
Onderweg Naar Morgen
Oprah Winfrey
Peking Express
Peter R. de Vries
Raymann is Laat
Rotzooi en Co.
RTL Boulevard
Schaatsen
Shock Dock
Show Nieuws
Smaakpolitie
Sponge Bob Square Pants
Studio Sport
Taggart
Tegenlicht
Temptation Island
TMF
Top of the Pops
Totally Spies
Twee voor Twaalf
Villa Achterwerk
Voetbal
De Afvallers
What's with Andy
Will & Grace
Zembla
Zoop
't Zonnetje in Huis

4. Are there any other programmes you really enjoy?
- no
- yes, namely:.....

5. Some topics on television can really occupy people during or after watching television. Below some of these topics are listed. Please, mark for each one proposition how often the proposition is valid for you.

The next topics keep me occupied after or during watching television:

	never	seldom	sometimes	often	always
how parents should raise their children					
how real friends treat each other					
that you can divide people in good and evil ones					
what a loving relationship between two people should look like					
that people should always keep their promises					
how we should deal with people who do terrible things, such as murderers					
that you always should solve an arguments with words					
who is supposed to make the rules in society					
what a democracy actually is					
that is important to reminiscence people who have passed away					
what the best way is to become truly happy					
what a religion actually is					
when you can call someone a real hero					
that people of different groups in society should respect one another					
how unfair life sometimes is					
whether love and sex should always be connected to each other					
how people always search for explanations of the thing they do not understand					

6. Some topics on television do not so much keep one occupied as that is topic of conversation with for example parents, spouse, friends, or colleagues. Below the propositions are listed again. Mark for each proposition how often you talk about it with others.

After watching a programme I talk with others about:

	never	seldom	sometimes	often	always
how parents should raise their children					
how real friends treat each other					
that you can divide people in good and evil ones					
what a loving relationship between two people should look like					
that people should always keep their promises					
how we should deal with people who do terrible things, such as murderers					
that you always should solve an arguments with words					
who is supposed to make the rules in society					
what a democracy actually is					
that is important to reminiscence people who have passed away					
what the best way is to become truly happy					
what a religion actually is					
when you can call someone a real hero					
that people of different groups in society should respect one another					
how unfair life sometimes is					
whether love and sex should always be connected to each other					
how people always search for explanations of the thing they do not understand					

7. Mark for each of the propositions below how often you do that.

	never	seldom	sometimes	often	always
When I watch television, I imagine that I also participate in it					
I would like to be as someone on television					
I someone on television is sad, I feel that sadness too					
I think that the things that people on television have to deal with are really awful					
There are people just like me on television					
When someone is happy on television, I almost feel that myself					
Things happen on television, that I experience too.					
When I watch television, it is like is about me.					
I want to be like the people on television					
When they are sad on television, I would like to comfort them.					

8. Some people think about the people on television while they are watching. Underneath you find some propositions about this. Mark for each proposition how often you do this.

	never	seldom	sometimes	often	always
When I watch television I think about the idea that each decision you make has consequences for others as well.					
When I watch television I think about the idea that everyone has reasons for the behaviour they show.					
I enjoy thinking about what the reasons for someone's behaviour on television are.					
When I watch television I think about the idea that every problem between two people has more than one side.					
I think the causes for someone's behaviour on television are most of the time very complex instead of simple.					
When I watch television I think about the idea that when someone does you a favour, you ought to do them a favour as well.					
When I watch television I usually put effort in explaining someone's behaviour on television.					

9. I am a
- man
- woman

10. I was born in 19..

11. The highest form of education I have finished is:
- primary school
- lager beroepsonderwijs
- mavo/vmbo-t
- middelbaar beroeps onderwijs
- havo/vwo
- hoger beroepsonderwijs
- university
- other, namely …….

12. Do you have a job, or did you ever have a job?
- yes (continue with question 13)
- no (continue with question 14)

13. What is your last occupation: …….…….

14. I was born in:
The Netherlands
- Morocco
- Turkey
- Indonesia
- Antilles
- Suriname
- other, namely….

15. My father was born in:
- The Netherlands
- Morocco
- Turkey
- Indonesia
- Antilles
- Suriname
- other, namely….

16. My mother was born in:
- The Netherlands
- Morocco
- Turkey
- Indonesia
- Antilles
- Suriname
- other, namely…….

17. Are you religious?
- no
- yes, Roman Catholic
- yes, Protestant
- yes, Dutch Reformed
- yes, Reformed
- yes, Islamic
- yes, Hindu
- other, namely…….