

## POST-MEDIA-SHOW

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*Amos Bianchi*

NABA Nuova Accademia Belle Arti, Milano, Italia  
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### *Abstract*

Which is the actual relationship between net and television? Could we find a point of contact between linear narration and hypertext? The last decade has brought about some radical changes: new ways of broadcasting the signal have been introduced, as well as new protocols containing new specifications about audio/video quality. One hour after the most significant TV programmes have been broadcast locally, they are made available on the p2p networks to the whole world.

The word "Television" was coined in 1947, during a congress in Atlantic City, to define the medium which made it possible to broadcast words and images over a distance in real time; according to its etymology, the term television indicates "far sight". The essence of television is threefold /1/. First of all, it is a technological and institutional infrastructure for broadcasting and receiving moving pictures and sound over a distance in real or deferred time. TV technological infrastructure was completely tuned up in the 1950s and, in the following decades, it underwent a number of technological improvements (the introduction of colour, for example), without any radical breaks. Opposite to this, the last decade has brought about some radical changes: new ways of broadcasting the signal have been introduced, as well as new protocols containing new specifications about audio/video quality; displays have completely changed /2/. Secondly, television is a temporalised stream (programme schedule) with a daily, monthly, yearly planning of the contents structured in a publishing system endowed with a specific language. However, the possibility of finding TV contents outside of the programme schedule (p2p networks, video on demand, TIVO) are currently revolutionising the fruition times, thereby leaving the viewers free to decide when to watch a given content and thus to organise their own programme

### *Sažetak*

Koja je stvarna veza između interneta i televizije? Možemo li naći dodirnu točku između linearne naracije i hiperteksta? Posljednje desetljeće donijelo je mnoge radikalne promijene: nove načine prijenosa signala, kao i nove protokole vezano za kvalitetu zvuka/slike. Samo jedan sat nakon prikazivanja na televiziji, važni događaji iz lokalne sredine, putem p2p mreža postaju dostupni cijelome svijetu.

schedule. Thirdly, television is a rational and social medium. TV viewers are scattered in their homes, unlike cinema and theatre audience who gathers in the same place. However, over a distance, Television has the power to gather together the viewers up to the extent of involving them in rituals /3/, /4/. The concept of show is connected with television. Show is what is shown and, at the same time, the act of showing. In Italian "show" and "viewer" have a very strong connection. A show presupposes a viewer, without whom it would not exist. The same does a TV show, in which the act of watching is over a distance. Traditional television, which was originated from a re-mediation of cinema, theatre, literature and publishing /5/, /6/ is undergoing a transformation induced by contemporary media: mobile communication, the Web, video games. At the end of this radical change, it will be understood what the features of television are, now that the show is going to disappear.

A show implies:

- Some content to be shown;
- The viewers;
- A system for broadcasting and receiving;
- A time collocation in the stream.

At the end of this mutation:

- The "content to be shown" is replaced with the "content to be lived" /7/;

- The “viewers” become “players”, i.e. they have a role to play in the post-show /8/;
- The system for broadcasting and receiving is replaced by a number of systems for broadcasting and receiving;
- A time collocation in the stream: the stream is the essence of television and all the possible evolutions of the means will be taken into account. If there is no stream, we can no longer talk about television, but we will have to speak of another medium /9/.

The end of the show leads to the implosion of television in the event. In an initial historical stage, TV broadcasting represents the event.

In a following stage a TV programme is the event, as the event would not exist if it were not broadcast by television. This research will analyse whether, at present, television and the event might collapse one into the other: the event is television and vice versa, as, thanks to the new technologies:

- An event can always be broadcast over a distance;
- A TV set can incorporate the whole world.

The following summarising question comes to the surface: is television capable of including interactivity and virtual reality as constituent parts, to such an extent that a radical change of the sensory, cognitive and social structure of its audience will be brought about? In the stage of analysis it seems to be useful to use the following categories: content, time, space, audience, authorship, aesthetics, TV narration, production systems. Each of the above mentioned categories is used to define a specific element of the rejoining – made possible by new technologies – of television with the other media.

**Content:** television has represented or created reality in the form of news, fiction and entertainment. The boundaries of television content are examined so as to understand what the boundaries of the television “whole” are, that is whether, in case television collapses into the world, any event will be television. The guiding question will be: is there a limit (technological, institutional, social) that will make it possible that something cannot be television content? If yes, what is this limit?

**Time:** television is a syntagmatic flux that is temporally organised in a programme schedule by the broadcasting system. Following the contamination of broadcasting with new technologies, the research will investigate what remains of the concept of programme schedule and what kind of de-structuring can affect the syntagm /10/.

**Space:** three spaces are defined: public space, private space and television space. The connections between them are studied so as to verify whether

television space can incorporate public and private space, according to Virilio’s prophecy that everything will be under the eye of TV /11/.

**Audience:** TV viewers are no longer faced with a show, but can interact in two ways with the TV system: a. they can be users and, thanks to the interaction with the TV system, they can contribute to the creation of their own programme schedule; b. they can be players and play a role in the television event.

**Authorship:** television, opposite to cinema, historically implies distributed and coordinated authorship systems. At a further stage, it must be inquired whether television can accept User Generated Contents and, if yes, how these can be included in a stream or in a programme schedule.

**Aesthetics:** the decrease in the costs of audio-video shooting makes it possible that everybody becomes producer of audio-video content. The quality of the image no longer represents the discriminant for being broadcast; the quality of the content is what interests most. Television is progressively abandoning the stylistic features typical of cinema production. Due to the lower image quality, audio becomes a determinant for the quality of television narration. As a consequence, television and radio get closer again.

**Narration:** Hypertext has replaced the linearity of traditional audio-visuals. Narrative skills:

- No longer consist in building stories but in creating fertile contexts from which stories are originated, without the need for further intervention from the author;
- Are distributed over various media. The narrative project is no longer intended for one single medium but is programmatically distributed over a series of media so that each single medium only contains part of the narration, but never the whole narration;
- Enhance virtual reality up to its extreme possibilities: it has to involve the audience to an extent that viewers no longer experience the TV content offered to them as a possibility, but as reality and, as a consequence, they are urged to play a role in it /12/.

**Production systems:** thanks to the current technological dimension the audience can enjoy the TV content without having to watch commercials – the main source of financing for the medium. It will be inquired what business models can support television in the post-show world in the absence of commercials.

The scope of this research will include various sectors: traditional broadcasting, IPTV, WebTV, folksonomy, artistic experimentation.

**Traditional Broadcasting:** it will be explored how big TV networks have positioned themselves on the web. Three main methods have been identified:

- web sites of the television broadcasting companies. It's usually possible to watch some shows, current and past, in streaming video, directly from the web sites;
- web sites related to the archives of the television broadcasting companies. TV shows usually available on video streaming, not downloadable;
- other kind of positioning (for example Alternate Reality Games or guerrilla marketing).

**IP TV (Internet Protocol Television):** the term describes a system aimed at using the IP transmission infrastructure to deliver TV contents in digital format via broadband Internet connection. TV content is very often provided as Video on Demand and may be bundled with Web access and VOIP, as these three services share the same infrastructure.

**WebTV:** this is an audiovisual service enabling to watch TV channels in streaming on the Web. This name assembles different solutions, whose lowest common denominators are: a programme schedule (usually shows are very short, a sort of MTV aesthetics); strong presence of UGC; possibility to watch WebTV in a linear way (like traditional television, following the programme schedule), or in a hypertextual way, selecting and linking contents (only information or music, for example). This kind of service also includes web sites streaming live specific audiovisual content, usually referred to a particular sport. Viewer can sometimes change the POV, for example selecting a camera point of view, or consult a complex hypertext rich in contents while watching. It is like television, but it offers only one specific type of content, and it is the entry page of a

complex hypertextual system.

**Folksonomy:** this sector includes video web sites, like Youtube or Google Video, most populated by User Generated Contents (UGC), containing considerable quantity of notable parts of TV shows.

**Artistic experimentation:** it is reputed extremely useful to adopt contemporary artistic products originating from the hybridisation of art, media and technology with continuous cross-references to contemporary aesthetics and epistemology as an anticipating tool. More precisely, the works of art that have involved and questioned some of the above mentioned categories (time, space, audience, narration) will be analysed. This aims at understanding whether artistic experimentation can offer starting points for reflection and ideas for projects that can become constituent parts of future television.

One hour after the most significant TV programmes have been broadcast locally, they are made available on the p2p networks to the whole world. Youtube (just to mention one of them) makes it possible to watch, as often as one likes, the most important moments of TV programmes that have just been broadcast. And television broadcast videos that had originally been uploaded onto Youtube. Fragments of TV series that have not been broadcast become mobisodes, available on mobile phones, or webisodes, available on the Web. Thanks to interactive television, the viewer can choose among various POVs. Television is destined to cross-breed with the new media. In this scenario of huge acceleration, will television maintain its role of window on the world – as it happened during the latest planetary event on 11th September 2001 – or will the TV stream be finally fragmented and dispersed in a myriad of media?

#### Notes

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