

Essay

Reimagining Broadcast Through Networked Audiovisuals: Connectivity as an Effect of Presence and Present Time in Television Genres

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Abstract

This study aims to examine transformations in television based on how its intersections with digital media destabilise one of the main distinguishing features of television genres: direct broadcasting. Does temporal simultaneity, which historically acted as a strategy for authenticating the effects of presence and present time in television mediations, still hold in the face of the new spectatorial experience interconnected with digital networks? To answer this question, this paper proposes that the complex temporal dynamics of digital networks, based on the idea of connectivity and algorithmic logic, alters our experience of television time, no longer recognised only by simultaneous action, but also by the action of multiple presences continually updated through comments, reactions, memes, reposts, edits, etc. This study's provocative arguments begin with the literature on the relationship between direct broadcasting and present time in the constitution of television genres, highlighting their distinctions when considering television interface with digital networks. The proposed approach is based on the conceptual articulation between the notions of connectivity and networked audiovisual as a means of understanding the effects of presence and present time in the television experience within a digital context.



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1. Introduction

The intersections between mass media and digital media have altered the logic of television production, circulation, and consumption, destabilised its canons of representation, updated power dynamics, and imposed an even more significant challenge on us: reimagining the concepts and descriptive categories that once sustained our understanding of television as a mass medium. Examining television today implies reflecting on a highly complex phenomenon, which goes beyond our knowledge of it as a mass media by encompassing interfaces with streaming, social media, algorithmic logic, platformisation processes, transmedia narratives and portable consumption, with fan communities, global content flows, and policies of business conglomerates.

Considering this new television media environment, this essay aims to reflect on transformations in our experience of television temporality based on how its intersections with digital media are reshaping genre conventions, with a specific interest in discussing one of the main distinguishing features of TV compared to other audiovisual media: direct broadcasting. The purpose is to examine transformations in the senses of present time and

presence—so central to television mediation—in relation to this new viewing experience marked by dispersion, fragmentation, heterogeneity, and the sense of connectivity associated with the algorithmic logic of platforms (Bucher, 2018, 2020; Gillespie, 2014; Introna, 2016; Papacharissi, 2015; Seaver, 2017; Van Dijck, 2013).

Historically, the entire television broadcasting process has been accommodated within the technical capacity of live broadcast, which was responsible for defining the very notion of a media event (Dayan & Katz, 1999). The temporal simultaneity (Whitrow, 2004) made possible by live broadcast acted as a strategy to authenticate the effects of presence and present time that mark the experience of television as a mass medium (Carlón, 2004; Dayan & Katz, 1999; Eco, 1979, 1984; Fechine, 2008; Gutmann, 2014; Jost, 2005; Verón, 1983). However, when we consider the ways in which TV circulates in the digital context, the effects of “here and now” are no longer sustained in these terms but are related to a kind of affective experience of presence (Auslander, 2012), whose temporal perception is permanently updated on the platforms. The proposal developed in this study is that, in digital networks, there is an even more complex temporal dynamic based on the connectivity idea (Van Dijck, 2013) that alters our understanding of television temporality, not only recognised by simultaneous action, but also by the action of multiple presences continually updated in comments, reactions, memes, reposts, edits, etc.

This essay considers classic approaches to media studies that have sought to understand the transformations of genres, formats, and television language in light of their interface with digital networks (Jenkins, 2006; Lotz, 2014; Mittell, 2015; Montpetit, 2009; Turner, 2009), with particular emphasis on the relationships between media events and live broadcasting (Brügger, 2022; Frandsen et al., 2022; Heikka et al., 2016; Hepp & Couldry, 2010; Jerslev, 2022; Scannell, 2022; Sonnevend, 2018). Building on these contributions and Grossberg’s (2010) argument that, given the complexity of this phenomenon, the descriptive categories of the media must be re-examined, we ask whether the notion of direct transmission, associated with the sense of simultaneity, remains sufficient to account for the present-time experience of hyper-connected television.

Later on, the study revisits key references on the relationship between direct broadcast and present time in the constitution of television genres (Carlón, 2004; Dayan & Katz, 1999; Eco, 1979, 1984; Fechine, 2008; Gutmann, 2014; Jost, 2005; Verón, 1983), highlighting their points of distinction when algorithmic temporalities (Bucher, 2020) and senses of connectivity (Van Dijck, 2013) in digital environments are considered. In the third part, the notion of networked audiovisual (Gutmann, 2021) is presented as a way of understanding the effects of presence in the television experience within the digital context. Drawing on the conceptual figure of the rhizome (Deleuze & Guattari, 1995) and on the understanding of technology as a constitutive dimension of social experience (Benjamin, 2012; Martín-Barbero, 2008; Martín-Barbero & Rincón, 2019), the essay proposes conceptual articulations between the notions of network and connectivity as a means of understanding new meanings of presence and present time emerging from this process of symbiosis between television and digital media.

2. Expanded Television and the Media Event Debate

Our tradition of media studies was strongly shaped by the notion of media specificity as synonymous with mass communication. Even if we consider what Grossberg (2010, p. 204) calls “an alternative formation of media studies”, rooted in a tradition of communication studies based on notions of culture, the category of media remains emphatic as a distinctive object of study—whether through the influence of social pragmatics, with Dewey (1980) as a crucial reference; Canadian theory, with a strong emphasis on McLuhan (2013); or British Cultural Studies, particularly in relation to the legacy of Williams (1989)

and his understanding of popular culture as a space of lived experience. Thus, the emphasis on the media meaning appears both in response to the scientific reductionism of the effects of mass communication, promulgated by theorists of the Frankfurt School, and as an alternative to approaches to language based on textual analyses arising out of literary studies (Grossberg, 2010).

Under the media sign, for example, the news programme can be defined as a television genre whose central promise—producing world representations based on news content—has live broadcast as an authentication feature (Jost, 2005). However, once characterised as a genre convention, this feature takes on other dimensions in the context of current circulation and consumption, when audiovisual forms go beyond the contours of their condition as a finished product conveyed by a specific medium. We often consume information from a given news programme from multiple temporalities that follow, compete with, and even precede the news broadcast. These television representations of the world, previously concentrated in a specific programme, are now also composed of fragments displayed on networks—edits, memes, reposts, comments, etc.—which often position the news programme as a consequent, accessory, or dispensable form of consumption.

There are countless moral and ethical issues in this process, especially those concerning fake news and misinformation, and this is precisely why it is urgent to examine the engagement form that characterises our digital communication experience. Information dissemination is no longer defined as merely a mass process, but rather an expanded, chaotic, dispersed, and highly disputed one. Television programmes, media events, genres, and formats are no longer understood simply as broadcasts from a specific location with a defined duration, and a specific language. Television on digital networks is consumed as a tangle of audiovisualities: programme edits, comments, memes, and so forth (Gutmann, 2021).

This phenomenon has been studied by several authors under various labels: trans-media television (Jenkins, 1992, 2006), social TV (Montpetit, 2009), post-network TV (Lotz, 2014); complex TV (Mittell, 2015); TV post-broadcast (Turner, 2009), among others. The idea of post-broadcast TV (Turner, 2009) aims precisely to address this new television landscape, driven by streaming, digital platforms, social networks, and mobile devices, which are destabilising the traditional model of linear broadcasting. Lotz (2014) proposes the term Post-Network TV to describe this same phenomenon, highlighting audience fragmentation and the expansion of content distribution modes as its main attributes. In this debate, the notion of Social TV (Montpetit, 2009) was explored to draw attention to the technologies and practices that enable social interactions on networks related to television content. More interested in changes in narrative construction modes, Mittell (2015) proposes the label 'complex TV' to describe the impacts of this expanded television on serial forms. Van Dijck's (2013) studies on the culture of connectivity were essential for understanding how television is transforming and expanding beyond the traditional screen, interacting with multiple environments and interactive practices.

Jenkins paved the way for this already extensive debate on new narrative modes in television connected to digital platforms, which include dynamics of audience participation, especially through fandoms (Jenkins, 1992). Fundamental to his work is the notion of convergence (Jenkins, 2006), understood as a process through which traditional and new media come together, encompassing not only the articulation of content across media, but also their cultural, production, and consumption logics. Interested in the practices of expanded and connected serial storytelling, the author coined the term transmedia to characterise the ways of conceiving and experiencing a television series beyond the traditional episode. By that logic, Jenkins defines transmedia storytelling as practices that distribute and articulate key elements of the same story across multiple platforms. According to the author, each media would contribute to the overall narrative at its best,

in a distinct, autonomous, and convergent form. In his most recent reflections, Jenkins explores how these fan-produced transmedia narratives have become strategies for identity and political engagement, which can manifest themselves in social movements or even authoritarian protests (Jenkins & You, 2024).

Also interested in the processes of transformation of communication and its apparatus in the face of the emergence of digital media, Bolter and Grusin (2000) use the notion of remediation to emphasise the interfaces between new media and predecessor media, and the process of mutual interference between them. While a new technology carries with it continuities with the previous one, it also reconfigures it. For the authors, digital media are not exactly new, but rather remodelled versions of previous ones, as they revise and update them. New media do not constitute an isolated innovation, but rather rival and revise photography, cinema, radio broadcasting, and so forth. (Bolter & Grusin, 2000). Drawing on the notion of remediation, in a recent study, Annabell (2023) analyses how Instagram, through the act of scrolling, produces memory-sharing practices that relate, for example, to the culture of diary writing and sending postcards.

All these authors have made undeniable contributions to the field by advancing our understanding of this phenomenon within the scope of media studies. The concepts of transmedia, convergence and remediation, for example, are valuable for understanding the processes of contamination between television and digital media. According to the first two, synchronous contamination between media is seen as a defining characteristic of contemporary audiovisual culture. Through the concept of remediation, a critical argument is established regarding the aura of novelty and innovation by emphasising the continuous processes of diachronic contamination between different media. Taking these contributions into account, we propose to reflect, alongside other authors (Bucher, 2018, 2020; Papacharissi, 2015; Van Dijck, 2013), on the importance of the ongoing debate about how the connections between mass media and digital platforms lead us to recognise reconfigurations of our social, cultural, and affective practices. How can we rethink our experience of present time through television, in light of this transmedia and convergent television environment?

The question leads us, at first, to revisit the meaning of the media event, as defined by Dayan and Katz (1999). The authors refer to the media event as a genre that employs the unique potential of electronic media: the live broadcast. These events relate to major coverage of planned events, called ceremonials, and those historical moments broadcast live as interruptions to routine, drawing the attention of a nation, such as President Kennedy's funeral. Scannell (2022) acknowledges the importance of Elihu Katz's work in his approach to television and media events as social and cultural phenomena. He uses the German term *Stimmung* to describe how Katz saw the media as deeply connected to the life and spirit of an era. The notion of media events can be seen as a way of capturing the *Stimmung*. Within this same understanding, there is also a recognised need to further reflect on how media events are presented in a cultural, social and technological context that differs from that in which the concept was originally formulated.

Although fundamental to understanding the television broadcasting model in the context of TV's consolidation as a mass medium, Dayan and Katz's notion has proven fragile in this new landscape of interfaces between television and digital media. Hepp and Couldry (2010) were among the first to propose updating the concept based on the idea of *eventization*. According to this understanding, the media, in a context of fragmented media landscapes, would not only report events, but also produce them symbolically, as in the case of Big Brother and the 11 September attacks. More recently, there has been an emphatic interest in re-examining the notion of media events, taking into account the participatory scenario in which social media users interact, interfere, transform or even

produce these events (Brügger, 2022; Frandsen et al., 2022; Heikka et al., 2016; Jerslev, 2022; Sonnevend, 2018).

Live television broadcasts, historically designed to unify audiences in a shared space and time through a sense of temporal simultaneity, have been reconfigured in today's fragmented digital landscape, where a multiplicity of platforms and voices destabilizes the linear and unified model of broadcasting. Brügger (2022) uses the Olympic Games from 1996 to 2016 as a case study to illustrate this argument, demonstrating how, over the decades, live coverage of the Olympics, previously controlled by traditional media, has become disputed by mobile devices for content distribution through social networks. This corroborates the argument that the idea of television broadcasting centred on a unified and stable thematic core loses strength in the face of the dispersion, decentralisation and instability of this live experience.

The issue of television temporality is also the focus of interest in the studies by Frandsen et al. (2022). While recognising this scenario of media event dispersion, in which users not only watch events but also comment, share and create content, the authors argue that this fragmented experience can work to attract viewers back to the original text. This argument can be supported by the metaphor of *vortextuality* (Whannel, 2006), used to describe how a shared temporal experience can persist, even in the highly dispersed environment characteristic of digital networks. These moments of shared attention are notorious in events of different magnitudes, such as the election of a new pope, sporting events, and the launch of a new season of a series.

Jerslev (2022) argues that although digital communication has transformed the contemporary media landscape, television still plays a central role in creating events that mobilise collective attention in a simultaneous 'time-space'. However, the author draws attention to the various forms of temporality that coexist in this process, which may stem from the sense of direct and simultaneous presence, the collective urgency of a shared experience, and the feeling of active and immediate participation when an event—although broadcast live—reverberates on social media in the form of memes and content that reinterpret its original temporality. This essay aims to reflect on these ways of experiencing the present moment in relation to how we experience television events on social media and through them.

In this sense, we return to Grossberg's (2010) argument that it is not enough to consider the processes of transmediation, participation and remediation; we must also re-examine the descriptive categories of media. According to the author, we continue to attempt to account for the complexity of such phenomena by placing them under the labels of media event and broadcast sign, without recognising that these categories also need to be re-examined (Grossberg, 2010).

The contemporary television experience, characterised by overabundance, fragmentation, interaction and the multiplication of voices and cultural events, prompts us to rethink the very meaning of live broadcast. This is because the current television experience is not limited to the spectator's relationship with the television (as a technological device); rather, it is entangled with a variety of audiovisual forms that span multiple platforms and temporalities. Williams's (1997) concept of television flow—which, instead of separate and isolated texts, viewed television textualities as uninterrupted flows to capture the complexity of programming's meaning—requires updating in light of the overlaps between multiple screens, interaction-interruptions-interconnections, and television broadcasts that intertwine with various platforms, constructing our social experience in contemporary times (Grossberg, 2010).

We watch a news programme—or a series, a reality show, a talk show, etc.—not as a single, finished entity, but as a collection of remixes in multiple, fragmented, dispersed, heterogeneous, and connected sequences. In this context, the notion of the direct broadcast

characteristic of temporal experience with TV is no longer sufficient for understanding the effects of the present time and presence in this expanding and highly connected communicational universe.

3. Effects of Presence and Present Time: From Broadcast to Connectivity

Although it had already become popular on the radio as an alternative to recorded phonograms (Holt, 2010), direct broadcast was the major innovation introduced by television, and, even though much of the programming was pre-recorded, it remained a central focus of reflection on the medium. It is no coincidence that academic discussions on televisual language were introduced based on the recognition that, through direct broadcast, television would come to define its distinctive features (Carlón, 2004; Dayan & Katz, 1999; Eco, 1979, 1984; Fechine, 2008; Gutmann, 2014; Jost, 2005; Verón, 1983).

Broadcast technology is thus associated with communicative simultaneity, that is, the possibility of inserting emission and reception in the same time interval, enhancing the immediacy and sense of proximity that characterising television mediation (Gutmann, 2014). The term simultaneous refers to the duration of events that do not necessarily happen simultaneously but occur in parallel. In other words, it has to do with the idea of temporal concomitance between independent actions, with the effects of common experience (Whitrow, 2004).

Hence, through direct broadcast, TV organises all our interpretations of its transmissions within the same temporal dimension (Carlón, 2004). In news programmes, for example, this is more evident as these are genres anchored by live studio presentations, regardless of the time of the events reported. However, even programming composed of material recorded prior to transmission—such as soap operas, series, advertisements, etc.—incorporates live broadcast features, thereby reinforcing its status as occurring in simultaneous time. This is because, regardless of the live content, the effects of present time in television are produced by the broadcast performance itself. That is to say: the sense of concomitant time on television—between what is broadcast and its consumption by viewers—is forged in an action that occurs simultaneously as its broadcast. In this sense, the experience of present time, supported by the idea of simultaneous action, is configured by a complex temporal dimension anchored in regimes of presence (Fechine, 2008).

Let us go back to the example of the news programme. Even before depending on a specific live content, the effects of present time in television news reside in the performance of the streaming itself, through which the reporter's duty is not only to present the news but to construct modes of presence (Fechine, 2008). The performances of presenters and reporters emphasise “looking at the camera” to summon spectator interest, staging a direct interaction (Gutmann, 2014). Verón (1983) uses Jakobson's classic model to state that the “eye to eye” in the presentation of the news programme is the truth of the phatic function (and progressively of the expressive function), and contributes to the referential function of the news, guaranteeing it greater credibility. Hence, the space-time experience of the television news genre is the result not only of the sense of present time but of the perception of a co-presence between the communicative subjects (Fechine, 2008).

When it comes to the television news genre, we saw that the founding values of journalism, such as timeliness and public interest, are configured by this kind of live poetics (Gutmann, 2014), which involves not only the technical capacity for live broadcast but also the performances of the mediators, elements of audiovisual composition (camera framing, shots, use of audio, etc.), which forge the sense of common time between the televised subject and the spectator subject.

Nonetheless, these meanings contributed to the present time experience made possible by broadcast technology and are contingent and dependent on their social and technological

contexts. According to [Auslander \(2012\)](#), the idea of live broadcast should not be taken as an ontologically defined condition as it constitutes a historically unstable mediation effect. When [Benjamin \(2012\)](#) understood technical reproducibility as a dimension of transformation not only of the canons of art but, mainly, of the sensorium of an era, he already recognised changes in temporal perceptions caused by photography and cinema. Such technologies strained the aura of the unique presence of the work of art through other ways of perceiving and feeling the world anchored in reproducibility.

The same can be said of present time experiences in the digital context, which are no longer defined in terms of the simultaneous presence of mediated human players. [Auslander \(2012\)](#) argues in favour of the public's affective experience based on the modes of connection between the platform, virtual entities, and human players. For the author, the meaning of 'live' is defined by the audience's sensory experience. Thus, the broadcast of a live programme, for example, archived on digital platforms, can be accessed at a different time by users who, when interacting with each other through the platforms, update their perception of the present moment. There is an even more complex temporal dynamic at play here based on the idea of connectivity, which is independent of the original broadcast time, as it is anchored and permanently updated by the senses of multiple presences ([Gutmann, 2021](#)).

[Van Dijck \(2013\)](#) addresses the meaning of connectivity by conceptualising networks as a kind of axis within what she understands as a connected media ecosystem—a gear that feeds and is fed by social and cultural norms expanding simultaneously in everyday life. This communicational ecology is constituted by intertwining technical and human artefacts. This argument supports the most common definitions of the platform as architecture that does not reflect or determine society but configures living and interdependent social structures ([Van Dijck et al., 2018](#)). This inherent process of intersection between platforms, in which each system is sensitive to changes in the other, accounts for what [Van Dijck \(2013\)](#) characterises as a culture of connectivity.

The author provides an example of how Google, as part of the epicentre of this ecosystem, plays a role of paramount importance in the process of networked sociability of television, which has dragged its production into the digital environment. "The growing interdependence between television and video-sharing platforms, and the frictionless exchangeability of YouTube, Facebook and Twitter's features, simultaneously reflect and construct the emergent culture of connectivity" ([Van Dijck, 2013](#), p. 111). Thus, each system is sensitive to changes in the other. "If Facebook changes its interface settings, Google reacts by tweaking its artillery of platforms; if participation in Wikipedia should wane, Google's algorithmic remedies could work wonders" ([Van Dijck, 2013](#), p. 21). Although it does not directly address the issue of temporality, Van Dijck's work contributes to the debate on the implications of algorithms in the structuring of social time on digital platforms. By updating, selecting, archiving, and prioritising content, algorithmic dynamics affect our perception of time because they also affect the rhythm of everyday life.

The idea of connectivity related to the algorithmic dynamics of platforms carries political, economic, social, cultural, and identity implications, on which the author and other researchers, such as [Bucher \(2018, 2020\)](#), [Seaver \(2017\)](#), [Introna \(2016\)](#), [Papacharissi \(2015\)](#), and [Gillespie \(2014\)](#), have analysed from diverse perspectives. In these approaches, the understanding of the algorithm is not as a synonym for code sequences, but as a set of social and material practices ([Bucher, 2018](#); [Introna, 2016](#)) that gains relevance active in cultural and political life ([Gillespie, 2014](#); [Seaver, 2017](#)) and which involves sensibility and affections ([Bucher, 2018](#); [Papacharissi, 2015](#)).

When reflecting on the relationships between algorithmic media and temporality, [Bucher \(2020\)](#) questions the notion of real-time. This temporal regime has been used to

characterise new media and is based on the feeling of instantaneity and immediacy made possible by digital technologies. Instead of real-time, the author proposes the logic of right-time to characterise the algorithmic temporal experience which she relates to Kairos time. “Algorithmic media systems carry with them the logic of Kairos, where instantaneous mediation is no longer the end goal, but rather the personalised timing of mediation” (Bucher, 2020, p. 1708). In Greek mythology, the temporal regime of Kairos is distinguished from Chronos, which is chronological, linear, and measurable time, and is related to a more subjective and non-linear temporal perception linked to opportunities.

Thus, if, on the one hand, the idea of simultaneity no longer seems effective to us for understanding the experience of time with television genres in interface with the digital context, the senses of instantaneity and real-time, until now used to characterise the effects of present-time in digital media, are also no longer sufficient. In her study, Bucher (2020) examines how Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram platforms perform at the right-time to produce perceptions of relevance about their information flows. Bucher also uses Williams (1997) to argue that, just as Williams theorised flow to understand the experience of television time—relating the programming schedule to the public’s consumption patterns—through the idea of the right-time it would be possible to understand the distinct nature of algorithmic temporal dynamics.

The notion of right-time is related to our habits, behaviours, desires, and ways of inhabiting digital environments, which are deeply rooted in the sense of the network. Connectivity, in this context, implies an affective dimension linked to network interactions (Gutmann, 2021). As a way of dialoguing with the theoretical framework outlined above, this study proposes a further speculative layer concerning the effects of presence in digital networks based on an approach to connectivity as a way of perceiving and experiencing our expanded and networked audiovisual experience.

4. The Networked Audiovisual Experience

Networked audiovisual has been explored as a term to conceptualise the experience with audiovisual circulation in digital environments, where the temporal dynamics of genres and television programmes are shaped by connectivity and multiple forms of presences. The term refers to the set of images, sounds, and oral texts articulated through digital networks, intertwining platforms and subjects in ongoing dynamics of production, circulation, and consumption (Gutmann, 2021). The concept helps us to destabilise the notion of the unity and specificity of the television programme, which, in the digital context, is no longer understood as a finished product with fixed duration, a unitary broadcast, and a clearly localisable medium, but rather as an expressive fabric (therefore, in a network) connected, heterogeneous, and multiple, in reference to the conceptual image of the rhizome (Deleuze & Guattari, 1995).

The rhizome, a term borrowed from botany, has been explored in the philosophical field as a descriptive metaphor for the proposed approach to the network idea. Deleuze and Guattari (1995) use the figure of the rhizome to express the production of conjunctions (“and... and... and...”), not as a sum of independent points, but as connections that refer to one another, including possibilities of ruptures and new associations. The emphasis on multiplicity is not explained by the quantitative abundance of points, but by the magnitudes that change nature when they are connected (Deleuze & Guattari, 1995). Accordingly, the rhizome is not a structural system or model, it is a creative orientation that produces ways of experiencing reality (Grossberg, 2013).

The rhizome is a powerful visual metaphor for our experience with television, which is not only expanded but also deeply entangled with other audiovisualities in digital environments (Gutmann, 2021). Watching a television programme does not necessarily

mean that it is broadcast on television, whether on open channels or cable TV. We followed a talk show from Reels on Instagram, the dramas and disputes of a reality show on X (formerly Twitter), and series and soap operas by Edits on TikTok. Television consumption now unfolds in a rhizomatic form, articulating the official narrative broadcast by the TV station with a set of micro-narratives spread across platforms, many of them constructed by the viewers themselves. Memes, tags, parodies, and reactions continuously rewrite the script of a programme.

Watching a television programme such as Big Brother does not necessarily require traditional television broadcasting. As a symbolically constructed media event (Hepp & Couldry, 2010), the official narrative of Big Brother Brasil—as the programme is known in Brazil—is broadcast by TV Globo in a meticulously edited version, simultaneously and continuously on pay-per-view, and in a more pulsating form in the endless controversies circulating on social networks. In this case, the temporal configuration is not solely linked to the time of the programme's broadcast on the official television channel, but also to the ways in which users establish their presence within the network. The memes, tags, cancellations, and characters created by viewers have not only rewritten the programme's script, creating parallel narratives that are often incorporated into the official plot, but also constitute modes of presence that continuously update the sense of the present time.

In this sense, regardless of the live broadcast on Brazilian free-to-air TV and its 24 h pay-per-view coverage, the viewing experience of the programme is collectively constructed and reimagined on social media in the age of connectivity. On X, for example, users comment on the challenges both during and after their airing, while gossip about the parties—promoted and broadcast live by the show—continues well beyond the official broadcast. This indicates that the experience of present time adapts to the temporality of social media, shaped by comments, gossip, reposts, and fan-driven controversies. The sensation of presence, therefore, transcends the show's formal limits and unfolds in the space of digital interaction.

The ways of experiencing the present time, through contact with this expanded and entangled web that connects television and digital media, are anchored in the multiple space-time couplings that constitute a network. In the field of communication and digital culture, it is important to highlight the relevance of Actor-Network Theory (ANT) in approaching the role of technical artefacts as co-actors in social and technical networks, especially through the work of Latour (2005), who developed an understanding of technology as deeply intertwined with social processes. Grounded in the notion of controversy, ANT sheds light on the circulation of actors around unequal power relations, stabilisations, and new destabilisations in the constitution of networks of human and non-human agents.

From another perspective, which dialogues with ANT but is not affiliated with it, this study follows Martín-Barbero (2014) and his emphasis on the receptive dimension of human experience when addressing the notion of network. The receptive nature of his theory does not equate it to reception studies, but to the approach to television mediations based on their grammar of use, and the relationships between technologies and sensibility. Inspired by this line of thought, this study draws on the figure of the rhizome, as proposed by Deleuze and Guattari (1995), to refer to the network as the logic of our modes of communicability through which we relate and interact with television in a way that is connected to YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, etc.

Benjamin (2012) understands technology as a constitutive dimension of social experience, a perceptive extension through which it becomes possible to understand historical transformations in communication and culture. When considering television as his initial object of reflection, Martín-Barbero (2008) uses the same argument as Benjamin (2012) regarding technical reproducibility as a reorganiser of our ways of perceiving and feeling

the world in order to conceive of television not merely as a medium, but as a form of cultural mediation

In this sense, this study reiterates the hypothesis that our perception of television mediation is grounded in the senses of actuality, present time, and proximity, which no longer follow a model of mechanised diffusion and reproduction, but rather one of diffuse and connected circulation. In these terms, the network would be the logic that underpins our modes of communicability, in which connectivity and interaction constitute other interfaces of presence. The networked television experience is thus positioned as a space for perceiving social structures and dynamics in contemporary times. It redefines the manners of relating to reality and introduces transformations in our perception of time (Rincón, 2019).

Network, in this understanding, corresponds to the fabric of our experience with television and audiovisual content on and through platforms shaped by connectivity and constant interaction (Gutmann, 2021). It represents the social spectrum through which multiple audiovisibilities constitute diverse and often divergent narratives, reiterating modes of collective experience. The network is the language through which contemporaneity is expressed (Martín-Barbero & Rincón, 2019). From this entangled experience, space-time groupings are forged through the connection dynamics of communities, whether on a platform, following an account, or organized into profiles, closed groups, forums, and so on.

If, in the broadcast television model, temporal simultaneity between the event and its dissemination functions as a distinctive element in producing the effects of presentness, then in the context of expanded and connected television, this temporal experience of the present dissipates into multiple temporalities. These are constantly updated by a collective sense of being together in the interval of connection, which often does not correspond to the temporal interval of the narrated event.

To illustrate the argument, let us take Lady Gaga's concert in Brazil, held at Copacabana Beach in Rio de Janeiro on 3 May 2025, as an example. The event was broadcast live on the Brazilian television channels Globo and Multishow, as well as on Globoplay, a Brazilian on-demand streaming platform. In addition to the 2.1 million people physically present on the beach, more than 34.5 million fans watched the show simultaneously through these platforms. Although the concert was not officially archived on streaming services, it circulated widely on social media through fan recordings. That present moment, although already past, has been continually reactivated through comments, interactions, and reposted images, shaping an ongoing experience of the present grounded in a persistent sense of connectivity.

In addition to Lady Gaga's concert in Copacabana, several other events—both planned and unexpected—have the power to mobilise large audiences under the logic of simultaneous live broadcasting: musical competition finals, such as the global phenomenon of Eurovision, the Olympic Games and World Cup matches, the funeral of Pope Francis, etc. In the current context, this simultaneous mobilisation is intensifying and expanding across a multitude of open screens on digital platforms, with broadcasts made by the fans themselves. Returning to our example, the prominence of mobile cameras, combined with the physical audience at Lady Gaga's concert, reverberates across countless screens connected to the event, often competing with the images produced by traditional broadcasters.

However, although the live audience still plays a central role in producing this rhizomatic and amplified temporal experience—in which viewers and users interact, respond, share, or even generate new events (Brügger, 2022; Frandsen et al., 2022; Heikka et al., 2016; Jerslev, 2022; Sonnevend, 2018) through reactions, memes, fancams, and other formats—the experience of the present no longer depends solely on real-time transmission. Recordings

of Lady Gaga's performance in Copacabana are constantly republished, commented on, re-enacted, archived, and revisited at different times, often disconnected in time from the original live event. Her sense of presence no longer hinges on simultaneity but instead emerges from the dynamics of connectivity and interaction enabled by digital circulation.

Therefore, the temporal perception shaped by the new modes of circulation of networked television genres is anchored in the ongoing updating of a "past" time archived on the platforms (such as the live duration of Lady Gaga's concert) sustained by the feeling of "being together." That is why comments on YouTube channels such as "Who is here in 2025" are so common, referring to an audiovisual released in previous periods to establish this effect of present and network presence. We are now dealing with temporal modes marked by the constant availability of updates produced by a community of followers through views, likes, dislikes, emojis, comments, reposts, and so on.

5. Conclusions

As early as 1936, Benjamin (2012), in his famous essay originally published in German as *Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit* (The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction), showed that technological changes drive not only transformations in artefacts and their values, but also radical shifts in our ways of feeling and perceiving the world. Almost a century later, Benjamin's argument continues to prompt reflection on how the interfaces between television genres and digital media have reshaped our perceptions of time as modulated through mass media. This study specifically examines the transformations in the senses of present time and presence, historically constructed on television through its technological capacity for live broadcast, within the context of networked television consumption.

The proposition presented here aims to shed light on the meaning of connectivity related to the algorithmic logic of platforms as a key to understanding a new form of experiencing television temporality. The temporal simultaneity enabled by the technical capacity of direct broadcast—crucial to the construction of values such as timeliness, proximity, and intimacy that characterise television genres—now coexists with the perception of a common time, one that is independent of the broadcast schedule and is strongly anchored by the sensation of multiple presences within sociotechnical networks. It is argued that the sense of simultaneity between broadcasting and reception no longer reinforces the effects of television mediation. When television is considered as an audiovisual form entangled in the digital context, what emerges is a more complex temporal dynamic, based on the perception of connectivity, no longer dependent on the time of direct transmission, but instead anchored in and continuously updated by the experience of multiple presences constituted in a network.

The provocative arguments of such a proposition are supported by the conceptual articulation between the notions of connectivity (Van Dijck, 2013), algorithmic temporality (Bucher, 2020), and networked audiovisual (Gutmann, 2021), which have been explored as a descriptive possibility for this new experience of television in contemporary times, characterised by dispersion, fragmentation, heterogeneity, and connectivity.

In a broader sense, this work positions itself within the field of communication and media studies as an effort to place into crisis—valuing the critical force that the term crisis expresses—certain features of the media—whether traditional or new—that continue to reinforce the same principles we have long relied on to understand the mass media. The criticism here does not concern the fragility or error of our conceptual categories, but rather the fact that they no longer account for the transformations of empirical objects, as projected in past decades. As Grossberg (2010) reminds us, we need to question them, unravel them, update them, and place them in context.

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