

Televisie Studies

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Democrataintment



CIMS CENTRE FOR CINEMA AND MEDIA STUDIES II

Praktisch

- 11 november: geen les, verlof
- 18 november: feedback groepsoefening

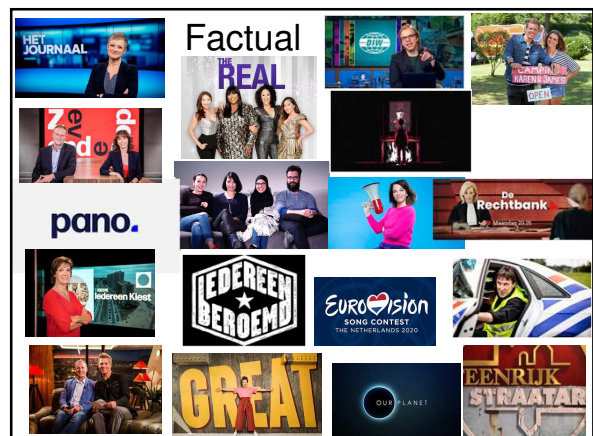
Oefening 4: televisiecontent en burgerschap

Geef twee voorbeelden van televisieprogramma's die volgens jou bijdragen tot de democratie en burgerschap en geef aan waarom

Oefening 4: televisiecontent en burgerschap

Algemeen: soms enkel beschrijving wat men doet, maar niet de waarom aangegeven.

Aanbrengen van thema's => wat bewerkstelligen? (diversiteit tonen, samenhang aangeven, bewustwording, hoe overheid werkt, normen meegeven, collectiviteit, aanzetten tot actie, ...)



Inhoud

- Factual
- Factualiteit
- Infotainment
- Factual entertainment
- Nieuws
- Tabloidisering
- Talkshow
- Televisiecontent en moraal
- Televisiecontent en sociale verandering
- Televisie en cultureel verzet



Leesteksten

- Hartley, J. (2004). Democrataintment. In R.C. Allen & A. Hill (Eds.) *The television studies reader* (pp. 524--533). London: Routledge.
- Hartley, J. (2009). Less popular but more democratic? In G. Turner & J. Tay (Eds.) *Television Studies After TV: Understanding Television in the Post-Broadcast Era* (pp. 20-30). London: Routledge.

Geef je favoriete non-fictieprogramma ooit

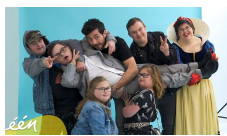
- 5 vermeldingen
(* Richard Attenborough)
Taboe
- 3 vermeldingen
De Mol
Down the Road
Planet Earth
- 2 vermeldingen
De Columbus
De Rechtbank
Louis Theroux

Factual?

- werkelijkheid = observatie, ervaring en indirecte kennis =>
- Veelheid aan formats



Factual?



Geef je top 3 van slechte programma's ooit (fictie en / of non-fictie) die je gezien hebt.

	aantal keer vermeld	hoogste notering in de top 3
1. <i>Love Island</i>	13	33
2. <i>Temptation Island</i>	9	23
3. <i>Thuis</i>	6	15
4. <i>FC de Kampioenen</i>	6	14
5. <i>De Buurtpolitie</i>	7	12
<i>Familie</i>	6	12

Factual?



Factualiteit

- Abstract vs ervaringsgericht
- Zakelijke vs persoonlijke
- Rationeel vs emotioneel
- Analytisch vs intuïtief
- Universeel vs contingent
- Cognitief vs affectief
- Woord vs beeld
- Belangrijk vs onbelangrijk nieuws

Factualiteit

- 3 vormen van documentaire beelden (Corner)
 - Illustratief (illustratie, ondersteuning structuur, getuigen uit tweede hand, etc.)
 - Observatie (gewijzen, fly-on-the wall, camera als getuige, etc.)
 - Symbolisch/associatief (compositie, framing, editing, muziek, associatieve beelden, etc.)
- 6 manieren van aanspreken (Corner)
 - Commentaar ('voice of god', voice-over)
 - Presentator (directe aanspreking)
 - Interview speech in het shot (komt zeer vaak voor, soms two-shot, als marker voor authenticiteit)
 - Interview speech als voice-over ('first-hand')
 - Overheard interchange (natuurlijk alsof de camera niet aanwezig is)
 - Dramatische dialoog (reconstructie eventueel met eigenlijke gelijk of beelden met muziek etc.)

Factual

- Commerciële media omgeving: veranderingen
 - Oprah-ization (> Arabische televisiemarkt, Pan-arab market)
 - 'Ordinary people opening up'
 - Life verslaggeving (1950 En direct de)
- Verandering in journalistieke principes
 - Emotionalisering
 - Personalisering
 - Visualisering
 - Narrativisering (storytelling en climax-building)
 - Conversationalisering
- Invulling democratie ('Citizenship is not a spectator sport' Putnam)
- Nood aan ANDERE soort informatie:
 - Hoe participeren
 - Hoe gelijkgezinden vinden
 - Hoe inbreng in besluitvorming hebben

Infotainment

- Infotainment: genre mix
- Manier van presenteren belangrijker dan inhoud
- 'Sleazoid infotainment culture' (Bernstein)
- Dumbing down' discourse (Thussu)
- Profileren van 'all news channels'
- Nieuws als entertainment => globalisering van infotainment
- Hollywood based television culture
- Society as spectacle (cfr. Kellner)
- Personality driven shows

Infotainment

- '40: candid camera
- '50: celebrity programs (Miss America 1954), talk show (The Tonight Show 1954-)
- '80: game & talent shows, News bunny (GB, Life TV)



Factual entertainment

- Presentatie van 'realiteit' als entertainment
- 'Post-documentary' (cfr. Corner)

- 'For television news is a cultural artefact; it is a sequence of socially manufactured messages which carry many of the culturally dominant assumptions of our society. From the accents of the newscasters to the vocabulary of camera angles; from who gets on and what questions they are asked, via selection of stories to presentation of bulletins, the news is a highly mediated product.' (Glasgow University Media Group, 1976)

Nieuws

- Concurrenties BRTN => Nederlandse zenders
- 1989: VTM
- Dorpstraatjournalistiek @wetstraatjournalistiek
- Journaal = inzet concurrentiestrijd
- VRT: vernieuwingsoperatie



Tabloidisering

"Relatively little attention to politics, economics, and society, and relatively much to diversions like sport scandals and popular entertainment." (Sparks, 2000)



Tabloidisering



Tabloidisering

VTM-presentator excuseert zich voor manier waarop hij overlijden Marieke Vervoort aankondigde



Talkshow

- Debat staat centraal
- Democratisch rationeel en onpartijdig
- Habermasiaanse invulling publieke sfeer
- Deliberatief overleg doel an sich
 - Beter begrip
 - Eventueel consensus
- Debat op verschillende niveaus & plaatsen
- Verwachtingen burgers
 - Geëngageerd & geïnteresseerd
 - Actief info zoeken
 - Bereidheid tot (rationeel) debat

Talkshow

Jongerenlagerhuis (2004)

Talkshow



Late night talkshow



Freakshows



Talkshow

TV-nieuws
VTM pakt vanaf 28 oktober uit met
talkshow 'Wat een Dag'



Wat een Dag, Heidi Dooij Persoonlijk, Heidi Dooij Persoonlijk



Talkshow

- Onderwerpen (late night vs. day time)
- Twee, zelfs drie publieken:
 - Live audience
 - (Taped audience; e.g. canned laughter)
 - Publiek thuis
- Elk publiek heeft haar eigen rol, maar staan in relatie tot elkaar
- 'Entertainende' conversatie
- Vaak weinig kritisch
- Specifieke rol van de presentator:
 - Zelf een 'celebrity'
 - Brugfunctie

Televisiecontent & moraal

- Narrativiteit: 2 onderdelen (story en plot)
- Closure => moraal
- Impact op het morele denken?
- Morele verbeelding: mens als verhalend wezen (cultuurproducten als verhaal)

- "As we tell stories about the lives of others, we learn how to imagine what another creature might feel in response to various events. At the same time, we identify with the other creature and learn something about ourselves." (Martha Nussbaum)

Televisiecontent & moraal

- Moraal (wat 'zou moeten', gedrag/actie, gevolgen)
- Narratief biedt drie soorten inzichten:
 - Morele items
 - Morele perspectieven
 - Menselijke aard
- Narratief is een 'laboratorium' => oefenen van morele keuzes, totale vrijblijvendheid

- 'Accordingly, it is with narrative closure that the greatest pressure for the text's preferred reading may be activated' (Thwaites, Davis & Mules, 2002)

Televisiecontent & moraal

- Liefde, vriendschap, familie, omgangsvormen, autoriteit, geweld, dood, overtuiging, heldendom, goede leven, fair play en politiek (cfr. T. Krijnen, 2008)

- => genre specifiek
 - Nieuws/actualiteit: politiek, omgangsvormen
 - Drama/soap: liefde, familie, vriendschap, omgangsvormen
 - Lifestyle programma's: het goede leven, omgangsvormen

Televisiecontent & moraal



Televisiecontent & moraal

- *'Emotions are forms of evaluative judgment that ascribe to certain things and persons outside a person's own control get importance for the person's own flourishing. [...] emotions always involve thought of an object combined with thought of the object's salience or importance; in that sense, they always involve appraisal or evaluation.'* (Nussbaum, 2001: 23)
- Morele kwesties brengen emoties mee
- Emotie duidt op belang
- Belang wordt gewaardeerd op basis van de emoties
 - => link publiek

Televisiecontent & sociale verandering

Kan televisie maatschappelijke verandering teweeg brengen, of volgt het maatschappelijke tendensen?

Televisiecontent & sociale verandering

- Meeste televisie content = hegemonisch
- "Unable to achieve social change on its own"
- Maar kan/moet wel een rol daarin spelen
- Hoe?
 - Verschillende repertoires aanreiken
 - Een pluralistische representatie
 - Normative practices in vraag stellen

Televisiecontent & sociale verandering

Britse realityshow zet kandidaten voor verscheurende keuze: "Word vegetariër, of eet je huisdier op"

MVO | 17 oktober 2019 | 10:00 | Bron: The Guardian



YouTube
© Britse realityshow hakt in op emoties.

Televisiecontent & sociale verandering



Televisiecontent & sociale verandering



Televisiecontent & cultureel verzet

- Fiske: sites of resistance
- Productiezijde:
 - Programma's met een maatschappelijke kritiek
- Tekst zelf
 - B.v. satire



Televisiecontent & cultureel verzet

- Niet gericht op het volledig (om)verwerpen
- Onderdeel van de hegemonische orde
- Maar erosie: 'subversion from within'



Less popular but more democratic?

Corrie, Clarkson and the dancing Cru

John Hartley

Cultural climate change

The central cultural experience of modernity has been *change*, both the 'creative destruction' of existing structures, and the growth – often exponential – of new knowledge. During the twentieth century, the central cultural platform for the collective experience of modernizing societies changed too, from page and stage to the screen – from publishing, the press and radio to cinema, television and, latterly, computer screens. Despite the successive dominance of new media, none has lasted long at the top. The pattern for each was to give way to a successor platform in popularity, but to continue as part of an increasingly crowded media menu. Modern media are supplemented, not supplanted, by their successors.

Broadcast television has proven to be no exception. What constitutes 'television' now is quite different from how things appeared when its broadcast form emerged in the 1950s. As the internet, Web 2.0 and mobile devices shift from their open, 'generative' stage (Zittrain 2008), towards a stabilizing phase of adoption and retention through market-based 'affordances', it has become clear that 'television' has been transformed radically. What counts as television is diversifying, across technology, mode of production, viewing experience, programming, production base and geography:

- *Technologically*, TV includes non-broadcast technologies (DVDs, TiVo, BitTorrent files), and it can be viewed on computers (YouTube) and mobile devices (phones, iPods) as well as via traditional TV sets, which have evolved to flat-screen technologies.
- Television has physically *migrated* out of the domestic living room and is now integrated into bedrooms, offices, shops, cars, clubs and cafés. It is personalized and portable, integrated with clothes, phones and music platforms.
- Its *mode of production* has also been transformed: the giant studios that were once the unarguable sign of a powerful broadcaster are now largely empty, industry production having migrated to naturalistic settings or just-in-time facilities.

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- It is a different *viewing experience*. Broadcast TV can be used as an adjunct to other activities (e.g. a TV stream on the office computer). You can customize TV by decoupling viewing from transmission (e.g. collecting DVDs or files and wallowing in a favourite series for a weekend).
- *TV entertainment* has evolved to take user participation into the heart of programming – plebiscitary TV (Hartley 2008a: 126–62). The fragmentation of platforms, many of them associated with a specific demographic segment, has fed back into the evolution of television forms, resulting in both format repetition (e.g. clones of a given format like home-improvement shows) and creative innovation (repurposing a traditional genre for a specialized audience, e.g. *Skins*).
- Most radically, the *production base* has broadened to include, in principle if not (yet) in practice, everybody with access to a computer. You can make TV yourself or with others, and you can 'redact' existing content. Either way, you can publish your efforts to family and friends and to the world at large. And then, the restlessness of imaginative creativity being what it is, some bright spark can turn that DIY format into a brilliant new type of 'TV' drama (online internet video log) – *lonelygirl15* and *KateModern*.
- *Spatially*, television has diversified from its origins in national and city-based communications systems to overlapping personalized and social networks that may be next door or global. Migrants, taste constituencies, communities of interest (around identities, sport, politics, pastimes) and enterprising creatives can exploit the 'long tail' characteristics of the internet to find content or an audience from anywhere.

Broadcast TV: a representational regime

Broadcast television was always a mixed blessing, displaying at once the positive and negative aspects of a regime of semiotic and political representation in which common, generalized experience was represented on screen and in legislatures by professional expert elites (actors and politicians, *mutatis mutandis*). So *everyone was represented* – ordinary life and everyday choices were the real 'platform' of mass media – but simultaneously *no one spoke for themselves*. Everything was realist but nothing was real.

On the plus side, television's domestic setting, live immediacy, leisure-time availability, casual continuity, operational simplicity (two knobs) and the human scale of its screen were all suited to the context in which it thrived best: private life and family building in conditions of expanding consumer affluence, otherwise known as the suburban experience. On screen, broadcast television excelled at head-to-head dramatic conflict, both fictional and factual: drama, comedy, news, sport and kids' shows. While encouraging people to stay at home, it taught neighbourly comportment, and experiential and national togetherness, and it continuously brought new information and experience to all sections of the public. It could also coordinate population-wide (sometimes

planet-wide) attention to, and emotional investment in, periods of excitement and high uncertainty, as during sporting finals, end-of-season cliffhangers, elections and political crises. It was the bellwether of change for a population living through change.

But at the same time, television was a worry. The high capital cost of production and highly regulated distribution networks resulted in an extreme 'division of labour' between corporate expertise and lay audiences, who seemed to be at the mercy of powerful persuaders, commercial marketing and political manipulation. 'Network' television came to mean the universalization of corporate will, encapsulated in advertising that reduced audiences to consumers, agency to behaviour, and modernity to an endless pipeline of products, carried from manufacturers and retailers to waiting, willing, wanting housewives, whose job it was to buy the things that were advertised, serve them up to the family (slouched on the couch watching TV), then clean up the house and the bodies in it using more TV-advertised products. Broadcast television perfected its role as the purveyor of what was needed to sustain domestic life by reducing it to a flow of consumption – products came into the house, went through the alimentary system and then safely out again, chased by cleansing agents from toothpaste to Toilet Duck. No wonder they called it the Tube.

'That sign needs changing': representational semiotic democracy

Fifty years later and trillions of tissues down the toilet, some things have changed – for instance, the mode of TV production, the domestic context, the content (and the study) of television, not to mention the identity, lives and general outlook of all the people involved on both sides of the screen. But there is continuity too. Some things have stayed very much the same; for instance, the world's longest-running soap opera, first broadcast (live) on 9 December 1960 and still going strong – the United Kingdom's *Coronation Street*. Ena Sharples (Violet Carson) uttered *Coronation Street's* first line, 'That sign needs changing.' She was referring to a shop sign (a new owner was moving into the corner shop), but perhaps this was a prophetic assertion of semiotic futures more generally. Either way, whether you were watching at the time or not yet born, there is a recognizable sense of continuity in *Coronation Street* from that day to this, and also in television more generally, as a cultural form.

The essence of that continuity is in the *viewing experience* of broadcast television, including generic realism onscreen in news and serial drama, which from the point of view of the audience is not about change or difference so much as stability and recognition, both at home on the couch with the biscuits and sisters and in the diegetic world of the characters with their unfolding dilemmas about relationships. Continuous over half a century is a *representative*

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model of the broadcasting relationship, based on one-way transmission of narrative entertainment from a centralized corporate industry to a receptive but unproductive domestic audience. Another, matching continuity is that much of the disputation in television studies has pivoted around this relationship and how it should be explained or evaluated. While there were undoubtedly negative aspects to the 'powerful producer/purposeless consumer' model, there was also something positive in it for both sides:

- *Economically*, the media industries burgeoned and became influential beyond their scale during the century of mass media.
- *Culturally*, the 'imagined community' of very large populations was coordinated into semiotic unity when 'we' all watched the same programmes.
- *Individually*, the experience of TV was cheap, open, sociable and full of emotional immediacy.

Broadcast TV proved to be better than the press, cinema or even radio at *riveting* everyone to the same spot, at the same time – in fear, laughter, wonderment, thrill or desire. Television's emblematic moments – the shooting of J.R. Ewing in *Dallas* or J.F. Kennedy in *Dallas*; the moon landings; the twin towers; Princess Diana's wedding and funeral; the Olympics and football World Cup finals – the cliffhangers, weddings, departures and finales gathered populations from across all demographic and hierarchical boundaries into fleetingly attained but nevertheless real moments of 'we-dom', a simultaneous commonality of attention that could sometimes aggregate to the billions.

Less popular?

Because audience choice is increasingly fragmented across more channels and platforms, it is unlikely that any single fictional TV show will ever again achieve the audience numbers of *I Love Lucy's* top-rating episode (1953), Elvis Presley's *Ed Sullivan* debut (1956), the 'Who Shot JR?' episode of *Dallas* (1980) or the series finale of *M*A*S*H* (1983). Even so, it is still possible to experience *live community* through television – *Survivor*, *Lost*, *Idol*, the Super Bowl, the Olympics, and occasionally the news. Sometimes television is still used to experience the *live polity*. For instance, according to the *New York Times* TV Decoder blog, the telecast of Senator Obama's acceptance speech at the Democratic National Convention in August 2008 reached 38.3 million viewers (plus millions more on PBS, C-Span). This was the highest rating in history for a convention speech – until Senator McCain's 38.8 million the following week (Serjeant 2008). Both were also watched by unknown millions worldwide, many of them also tuning in to a live feed. For once, politics out-rated sport and reality TV: 'Mr Obama's speech reached more viewers than the Olympics opening ceremony in Beijing, the final *American Idol* or the Academy Awards this year' (Stelter 2008b). Such a result is all the more

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surprising when compared with the 'tiny' ratings achieved by routine network programming:

Sen. Barack Obama may have earned record-breaking ratings for his acceptance speech on Thursday ... but *network television attracted otherwise tiny audiences during prime time*. According to Nielsen's final ratings, CBS led the night with *Big Brother*, which drew 6 million viewers at 8 p.m. ... CBS broadcast a rerun of *CSI* at 9 p.m. (5.3 million).

(Toff 2008)

Even more surprisingly, perhaps, during that convention week the subscription news channel CNN out-rated all three free-to-air broadcast networks (ABC, CBS, NBC) in head-to-head competition, again for the first time in history:

In nearly three decades, CNN has never beat all three broadcast networks in viewership when competing directly ... This year, CNN had 5.38 million viewers, while NBC had 5.36 million, ABC had 3.48 million, CBS had 3.46 million, Fox had 2.7 million and MSNBC had 2.3 million.

(*New York Times* 2008)

Even as they show how television can still bind a nation around an exceptional event, these figures also record some epic changes. The ratings for regular US network entertainment, topped at a mere 6 million for *Big Brother*, are pitiful compared with TV's heyday. By comparison, the 1994–2004 sitcom *Friends* routinely rated between 20 million and 30 million viewers; its range was from a low of 15 million to a high of over 50 million (Dan n.d.). Meanwhile, pay TV has begun to beat network broadcasting, albeit with figures lower even than those scored by *Big Brother*. Thus has the proliferation of platforms destroyed the unity of the imagined community. It is a long way from the finale of *M*A*S*H* in 1983, when 105 million Americans tuned in (Wikipedia n.d.).

However, it would not be entirely true to say that the millions are abandoning *television*, only that they are choosier about when they watch and what platform they watch 'TV' on. The audience has migrated to subscriber, online and mobile platforms. As a result, global popularity may significantly outpace even US prime-time audiences, and yet not register in traditional broadcast ratings. For example: 'It is popularly believed that the British TV show *Top Gear* is one of the most watched shows around the world. It is ... purportedly watched by up to one billion people' (Wikipedia n.d.). Admittedly, the evidence for a billion viewers is shaky, precisely because no ratings system can follow a show's multi-platform career, but nevertheless such global reach is possible. Let *AutoTrader* explain how:

From Australia to Albania, Kazakhstan to Vietnam, travel abroad and you're never far from the show. It's licensed to 117 countries via BBC

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World and BBC Prime ... More than 1.3 million hotel rooms have access to the show, 37 airlines use it and you can watch it on 29 mobile phone platforms ... It's licensed to 48 cruise ships. Before it was wiped off, one Clarkson clip had received almost a million views on YouTube ... *Top Gear* magazine's Michael Harvey claims *the show is the planet's most pirated programme*. Since its re-launch in 2002, the show has been a worldwide phenomenon.

(Hearn 2007)

Top Gear remains a favoured piratical prize. A September 2008 search of YouTube yielded 52,000 *Top Gear* videos, headed by Jeremy Clarkson's test drive of the Ariel Atom, with nearly 4 million views, 8,000 ratings, 20 video responses and 4,000 text comments. Further comment will be needed on the extent to which increasing decentralization – *distributed popularity* if you like – seems to entail increasing silliness, or at least dancing, for this may turn out to be an important theoretical, or at least taxonomic, principle of post-broadcast television.

More democratic?

But before that, it is necessary to consider a couple of conceptual paradoxes: first, what might be thought to be *democratic* about old-style popular television, given the extreme asymmetry in a representative system between the corporate, expert makers and the domestic viewers of broadcast communications; and second, why the *declining* ratings of mainstream broadcast television might nevertheless entail a *more democratic* television system. How on earth, in short, did we get from Ena Sharples to Jeremy Clarkson? The answer lies in the *model of the broadcasting relationship*. In the heyday of live, broadcast, expert-made, choice-restricted television, the model is that of *representation* (both semiotic and political). This is what has changed. Now, with streamed, downloaded, mobile and DIY/DIWO or consumer co-created TV, the model is that of *productivity*. And to cap it all off, the increasingly democratic system of viewer choice and participation seems also to require increasing silliness.

During the heyday of representational broadcasting, popular TV was hailed as democratic, both politically (it reached most people) and semiotically (it represented ordinary folk on screen). What, for instance, could be more democratic than *Coronation Street*? It was a popularization of a radical spirit on the British left of the 1950s that sought authentic expression for ordinary people's lives, in the spirit of Richard Hoggart's *The Uses of Literacy* (1957), which included a sympathetic and influential portrait of working-class communities in the back-to-back terraces of northern England's industrial cities. *Coronation Street* was Richard Hoggart incarnate – the British architectural critic Reyner Banham dubbed it 'Hoggartsborough' at the time (Banham 1962; see also Whiteley 2003: 94ff; and Turner 2003: 41). Richard Dyer (1981) makes the same point, as has Maroula Joannou more recently (2000: 69).

Not only was *Coronation Street* enormously popular among working families, it also represented their strongest character traits, sometimes giving the show an emancipationist edge despite the street brawls and class sentimentality. It is 'character led' rather than 'issue led'; its democratic spirit lay in the overall representativeness of the drama, not in the demographic proportionality of the characters. Instead of finding a place for each minority identity or social issue, its writers from Tony Warren onwards have wanted to share good stories about ordinary life among ordinary people. That they are consistently good at this has been recognized well beyond the reaches of any remaining working-class district – as, for instance, when Melvyn Bragg's highbrow *South Bank Show* named *Coronation Street* the 'best drama' of 2005 (Henderson 2007: 32–3). *Coronation Street's* model of democratic inclusion is typical of broadcasting: not to identify separately but to enfold narratively; not to speak for but to speak to. It wants to encompass its audience and entertain them, but it doesn't want them to do very much in return, except watch.

From *Coronation Street* to *Corrie*

How things have changed! One look at *Corrie* on the web will suffice to illustrate how different is the *representative mode* of broadcasting from the *productivity mode* of broadband. Developments in technology, globalization and consumer activism have challenged the broadcasting model of a nationally bounded, vertically integrated, monopolistic, expert paradigm TV industry dedicated to leisure entertainment. Instead, a new model is emerging, based on social networks, consumer-created content, multi-platform publication and a semiotic long tail. These changes, wrought in and by media technologies and the uses of Web 2.0, have altered the way television is produced, distributed and consumed, even the way it might be imagined. The medium has transformed from mass to DIY, from 'read only' to 'read and write', and from network TV to social networks – in short, from a regime of *representation* to one of *productivity*.

On the net, *Corrie* is a quite different animal from *Coronation Street*. For a start, it becomes what consumers want it to be, and beyond that the distinction between producer and consumer becomes very uncertain. So, for example, since 1999 *Corrie.net* has been 'a website by *Coronation Street* fans for *Coronation Street* fans'; its pages of profiles and updates are 'the work of many *Coronation Street* fans from all over the world'. It is distinct from the show's 'official' ITV website, although it credits people from the production company. *Corrie.net* is information rich and archival, a classic user co-created site. However, it is much less 'consumerist' than the show's own site.

Meanwhile, *Corrie Blog* is produced by Shiny Media, a commercial stable of technology, fashion and lifestyle blogs. *Corrie Blog* is edited by Sue Haasler, herself a successful romance author. On the day I visited, she had posted a news item about a new *Coronation Street* scriptwriter, which prompted the following exchange of comments:

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I'd seriously love to write for *Corrie*. That's what i plan on doing when i am older. After completing my A levels i plan to head on up to Manchester uni and hopefully get a job doing anything at Corrie, just so i have my foot in the door. It's my dream :) *Posted by: Clare*

Clare – Good luck with your plans! It would be fantastic if you became a *Corrie* writer. Hope you achieve your ambitions. [Sue H] *Posted by: Sue*
Thank you very much Sue, it's much appreciated. *Posted by: Clare*
(www.corrieblog.tv/2008/09/so_you_want_to.html)

Although this is a commercial site, Sue Haasler responds directly to the wishful thinking of young, hopeful Clare. A quick Google search reveals why – perhaps fellow feeling?

Sue Haasler was born and brought up in Co. Durham and studied English Literature & Linguistics at Liverpool University. After graduating she moved to London and worked for three years as a residential social worker.

(www.hilaryjohnson.demon.co.uk/SueHaasler.htm)

This bio is one of the success stories listed on the site of a professional authors' advice service, which seems to have assisted Haasler towards her own debut as a published author. This string of links is typical of what any internet search exposes: a *social network* of both fans and professionals, readers and authors, newbies and experts – people who are more than willing to share their stories with each other, using *Corrie* literally as a pretext for social networking in the name of what used to be called the 'republic of letters'.

Over on YouTube, *Corrie* blossoms. Thousands of clips have been posted, in which fans classify 'The Street' according to their own tastes and interests, whether these are prompted by the show (vintage episodes, favourite scenes) or by external criteria ('Gay *Coronation Street*', '*Coronation Street* Babes Past & Present'). Spoofs abound, both DIY and pirated professional (e.g. Victoria Wood as Ena Sharples). Comments and tribute videos continue the conversation and extend the network.

But there is no need to extend these examples further. The point is that 'television' online takes on the open and productive characteristics of the internet, while maintaining intricate relations with its broadcast form and audience. There is one issue that should be mentioned, however: episodes of *Coronation Street* are highly protected properties, especially if you are using a computer located outside the United Kingdom. The clips available to UK viewers on the official site won't play; lawyers crawl across YouTube issuing take-down orders; you can't get whole episodes through torrent streaming. From the corporate perspective, knowledge shared is knowledge lost, so *Corrie* is treated by *Coronation Street's* owners as a virus to be controlled, Viacom style, not a mode of propagation to be encouraged, viral style.

The more democratic – and the sillier?

Jonathan Gray, Jeffrey Jones and Ethan Thompson introduce their book *Satire TV* (2009) by observing the 'unique ability of satire TV to speak truth to power' (2009: 12), and not only in the anglophone countries – they cite examples from China and Iraq too. They conclude:

Gradually satire TV has crept up on the news as one of the pre-eminent genres used to understand varied political realities, rendering it an ideal entry point for a study of politics, audiences, television, comedy, entertainment, and citizenship in the early twenty-first century.

(Gray et al. 2009: 47)

Now, all this may be true – and it is a substantial claim on behalf of 'damn funny' TV (2009: 46) – but turning audiences into activists requires something stronger than old-style US network TV. Shows like *The Colbert Report* and *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* know from the outset that the polity is partisan, the audience is fragmented and the platforms have proliferated. They thrive on subscription TV (Comedy Central); they rely on viral propagation (clips on YouTube; fan sites like ColbertNation); and they relish a mainstream adversary, trading (mercilessly) on the failings of Fox News and CNN.

The success of 'satire TV' is a measure of the extent of popular disaffection with both mainstream politics and mainstream TV – political and semiotic representation alike. But such shows are only the tip of the iceberg. The extension of television's productive and distributive base via the internet reveals infinite demand for an alternative to the regime of representation. The demand is for 'just anyone', if not everyone, to do it themselves (or with others). DIY and DIWO give the population formerly known as the audience something to do; it makes real what was meant to be a contradiction in terms, the 'productive consumer'.

However, concomitantly it seems, the more productive 'we' get, the sillier we become. Elections are now marked not only by online citizen journalism (Bruns 2008a: 69–99), but also by homemade spoofs, satire, parody and take-offs, some of which out-rate the official campaigns – for instance, Hugh Atkin in Australia and Obama Girl in the United States (Hartley 2008b: 687–8). The collapse of long-held (but always wobbly) distinctions between public and private life, power and entertainment, politics and celebrity, television and viral video, was spectacularly evidenced by the entry of Paris Hilton into the 2008 US presidential campaign. Posted on the 'Funny or Die' site, her reply to a negative comment by John McCain soon attracted over 7 million views, 2,000 responses and 500 favourites. Tagged as both 'political ad, president' and 'hot swim suit photo', the uncanny attraction of the parody was that, while it was knowing, sly and funny, Paris's energy platform was also quite plausible: as one response put it: 'She's right, though. The offshore drilling thing?

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Totally hot. Anyway, it's just funny that she's kinda right' (More Cowbell Girl).

Although the official presidential nominees did not take up the Paris challenge directly, it should be noted that much of Barack Obama's early appeal was credited to his easy competence in the protocols of online DIY television. For instance, in a video posted to 'Barack TV' on YouTube in June 2007, Senator Obama is taped on a hand-held camera, in an informal setting with available light, talking directly and apparently unscripted to the camera. Instead of telling viewers what he thinks and wants, he appeals to viewers to 'send us your stories' and to share stories about ordinary people making a difference. Obama uses both the aesthetics and the participatory ethic of Web 2.0 to reach those who have 'turned away' from politics as usual.

How many answered the call is unknown. But there were certainly competing attractions. When silly is 'hot', the serious players get up and dance. One of the most dynamic and popular features of YouTube is dancing, from the original girls in the bedroom miming to favourite songs, such as the classic 'Hey Clip' (24 million views), to more elaborate dance competitions. These have become so popular that they have attracted the participation of celebrities. A good example is Miley Cyrus's *M & M Cru* – responsible for 'the biggest dance battle in YouTube history ... an onslaught of videos packed with celebrity cameos, MTV parodies and more "WTF!?" moments than you can shake a tail feather at' (Watercutter 2008). This was a competitive exchange of dance videos between serious celebrities: 'Pop wunderkind Miley Cyrus and the director and star [Adam Sevani] of *Step Up 2: The Streets* have officially taken the art of the YouTube smackdown to a whole other level.' No matter that Miley and Adam were 15 and 16 at the time, these videos were 'hot', good enough to attract the same number of viewers as *Big Brother* and CNN over on regular TV – 5 to 6 million hits each and many thousands of comments. Naturally the whole thing ended up on prime-time TV as the 'dance off' was decided at the MTV Teen Choice Awards, which Miley Cyrus hosted (and won). Here was cyberdemocracy in full 'party' mode, all difference between user and celebrity erased, and everyone enjoying both making and watching the show. Or as Angela Watercutter (2008) put it: 'The sheer silliness of this exercise (and its overuse of the concept of stepping things up) notwithstanding, what say you?'

Implications for television studies

After a quiet period when everyone wanted to talk about new media, television studies is certainly enjoying a resurgence; the quality, boldness and interest of many new books is remarkable. Perhaps like cinema studies, it will flower most luxuriantly just after the medium to which it is attached has ceased to be popular on a mass scale. At the same time, television studies has begun to taxonomize itself, with ever narrower specialisms. It seems at last to

be emerging into a formal order as a discipline in its own right. However, this is no time for coalescence into orthodoxy, because television studies is subject to the same forces of change that beset its object of study. In television evolution, some species are headed for extinction (e.g. network TV, couch potatoes), some look forward to open futures (e.g. social network markets, distributed expertise) and, as old antagonisms decay (e.g. cultural versus scientific approaches), new political struggles emerge (e.g. corporate DRM and copyright enforcement versus knowledge-sharing systems). The changes that affect television also have an impact on television studies. Only recently established and still a contested field, television studies is already being forced to recast some basic assumptions, metaphors and methods. It needs to shift from explanations based on structures of power to ones based on the mechanics and dynamics of change. Such a shift brings into sharp focus the most important innovation in television as the TV industry migrates out of the boardroom, and the TV experience out of the sitting-room – the *democratization of productivity*.

The problem faced by television studies is not simply one of how to *account for* distributed expertise among the general population. Such an approach would only confine it further within the regime of representation, where the purpose of scholarship is to encompass the whole object of study and to represent it in knowledge. Rather, the problem is how to take the risk of *releasing television studies itself into the evolving system* of networked productivity, using the affordances of Web 2.0 in ways that were not available in the broadcast environment. Integrating scholarly and 'vernacular' knowledge systems is itself productive, and can lead to new forms of professional expertise, just as amateur efforts like the Hey Clip get recoded into M&M Cru's dance-off. But as television studies chases DIY TV into its participatory reaches, won't it too get silly? Can it survive the participatory turn? We may look pretty silly for a while, but that's the challenge: academic expertise will have to learn some nifty new steps if it doesn't want to end up looking like an Ena Sharples trying to do a Miley Cyrus.