

**THE GRAMMAR OF HYPERTELEVISION.**  
**An identikit of the convergence age television.**  
**(Or how television is simulating new interactive media)**

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**Abstract**

The arrival of 'new media' like the web and multimedia mobile devices is transforming 'old media' such television. If we consider that the new textualities coexist with the old ones in the same media ecosystem, then it could be an interesting exercise to analyze the contaminations between them. In this article we analyze the aesthetics of new audiovisual productions –i.e. the acceleration of rhythm, the multiplication of characters and narrative programs, etc.- and the transformations of the television interface in order to identify the pertinent traits of what we define as *hypertelevision*. The article concludes with a reflection on the simulation of interactive experiences in contemporary television.

Keywords: neotelevision; paleotelevision; hypertelevision; convergence; remediation

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The arrival of ‘new media’ like the World Wide Web and multimedia mobile devices, the diffusion of collaborative environments like the Web 2.0 (O’Reilly, 2005) and the increasing importance of interactive experiences in cultural consumption such as videogaming, are transforming ‘old media’ such as press and television. It could be said that the arrival of new species in the media environment is changing the whole ecosystem. It is not so easy to develop a scientific discourse about these transformations. Theoretical reflections on these mutations is an ongoing process that must be developed while the diffusion of new technologies and practices are still transforming the, until recently solid, bases of the broadcasting system (Scolari, 2008a).

In the last fifteen years many digital communication researchers have been so occupied analyzing the ‘new media’ – characterized by hypertextuality, multimediality and interactivity - that they have forgotten about the consequences of this irruption for ‘old media’. Television research was very intensive in the 1990s but it was almost totally TV-centered research. In other words, few researchers analyzed television transformation from the perspective of ‘new media’. If we consider that the new textualities coexist with the old ones in the same media system, then it would be an interesting exercise to analyze the intertextual contamination between them.

The transformation of television runs in parallel to the transformation of the viewers. The hypertextual experience – a sense production and interpretative practice that is part of web navigation, videogaming, computer-mediated communication or mobile phone interactions – has affected conventional audiovisual production. Television’s *implied viewer* (Eco, 1979; Casetti, 1988) has changed since hypertextual experiences between users became common practice. In other words, 21st century television ‘is talking to’ a different viewer, a viewer formed in different media experiences, so it must modify its sense production device.

In this article we analyze a series of ‘symptoms’ – such as, for example, the aesthetics of new audiovisual production, the multiplication of characters and the

transformations of the television interface - with the objective of presenting the pertinent traits of what we define as *hypertelevision*. In this context, the article concentrates on certain topics and only mention important issues of today's television research agenda, like the advent of novel formats, such as reality television (Holmes & Jermyn, 2004; Murray & Ouellette, 2004), or the analysis of 'transmedia storytelling' (Brooker, 2001; Jenkins, 2003, 2006; Evans, 2008; Scolari, 2009). The article starts by describing the transition from *paleotelevision* to *neotelevision* (Eco, 1983; Casetti, 1988; Casetti & Odin, 1990) and from *neotelevision* to *hypertelevision* (section 1). The second section presents an identikit of hypertelevision (fragmentation of the screen, multiplication of characters, diffusion of non-linear narratives, etc.). The article concludes with a reflection on the simulation of interactive experiences in contemporary television (section 3).

The article is mostly based on a narratological approach to audiovisual production, and focuses on television series.

The analysis of recent TV series is of particular narratological interest, since during the 1990s TV series increasingly began to employ experimental narrative techniques like multiperspectivity and unreliable narration as well as innovative functionalizations of voice-over narration and audiovisual presentation of consciousness. Quite often it is also possible to observe such experimental techniques as intramediality, intermediality and metafictionality. Many of the narrative forms which have come to be used in contemporary television series have been made possible by technological innovations (Allrath, Gymnich & Surkamp, 2005, p. 4).

This focus on new productions does not mean that traditional television formats or rhetorics are no longer present in the new context. Paleotelevision did not dissolve inside neotelevision, as printed books still survive in the kingdom of digital text. It could be said that the old television does not vanish but survives in the media ecosystem, adapted to the new conditions and combined with the new configurations. In this sense, the article may be considered as a contribution to the scientific conversations about an old media in transition (Spiegel & Olsson, 2004).

## 1. Towards hypertelevision

### *1.1 From paleotelevision to neotelevision*

Television was the most impressive media experience of the 20th century. Born with a strong commercial spirit in the United States, in Europe television has been characterized by a public service philosophy since its origins. Between the 1970s and the 1980s television underwent a radical transformation. While in the United States the diffusion of cable and satellites multiplied the channels and immersed the audience in a flow (Williams, 1975), in Europe the creation and consolidation of private networks – like Silvio Berlusconi's empire in Italy – also introduced viewers to new, richer screen experiences.

This non-miraculous multiplication of channels influenced the television economy (the segmentation of audiences and advertising), television consumption (now fragmented following the pace of channel surfing) and television research. If Raymond Williams proposed the concept of *flow* to describe the new situation, in Italy Umberto Eco described this transformation as the transition from *paleotelevision* to *neotelevision* (Eco, 1983). This successful opposition – at least among European and Latin American

scholars - was later introduced into a theoretical framework by Francesco Casetti and Roger Odin (Casetti, 1988; Casetti & Odin 1990). In Table 1 we present the main characteristics of paleotelevision and neotelevision as they have been interpreted by different researchers.

Paleotelevision	Neotelevision
Public service philosophy (public monopoly).	Commercial philosophy (private/private and private/public competence).
One channel.	Multiplication of channels (public and private) and technologies (cable, satellite, VTR, etc.).
Genre differentiation: spectacles and games are not compatible with information and knowledge. Three basic genres: education, information and entertainment.	Dilution of fiction/information frontiers. Diffusion of a mosaic culture. Two macro-genres (fiction and reality) sometimes integrated in a unified format (for example news). Syncretism and contamination of genres.
Fixed cameras in studio. There is no outdoor registration or invasion of private spaces.	Camera mobility. Registration from public spaces and private space intrusions.
The TV set is a totem in the home living room.	TV sets everywhere in home (kitchen, dining room, bedroom) and public spaces (bars, train stations, airports, waiting rooms, etc.).
Television represents reality.	Television constructs reality.
Receptor-viewer attentive and exclusive ("all ears").	Consumer-viewer active and fragmented (surfing culture).
Audiences are big collectivities.	Audiences are collection of individues.
Pedagogical relationship between television and audiences (transmission of knowledge).	Interpellation of audiences (television 'looks for' the viewer creating a participation effect). Questions/exchange of opinions.
Inserts are exceptional in the large syntagma of television discourse.	Hyperfragmentation of texts (inserts are not exceptional).
Rigid temporal/syntagmatic structure of programs (regularity of programming).	Structure of programs based on the pace of everyday life (protoform emission).

Based on Eco (1983), Casetti and Odin (1990), Semprini (1994), Cavicchioli and Pezzini (1993), Imbert (1999), Farré (2004), Carlón (2004, 2006), and author contributions.

Paleotelevision versus neotelevision  
Table 1

The paleo/neotelevision opposition was particularly successful in the 1990s. We can identify the traces of Eco's contribution in research on participatory shows (Marturano et al., 1998), reality shows (Abril, 1995) and news (Farré, 2004), and in more general studies like Bruno (1994), Stella (1999), Imbert (1999) and Carlón (2004, 2006). The

opposition was also considered useful by researchers that investigate inside different paradigms, like critical theory (Malmberg, 1996) or cybercultures (Piscitelli, 1995).

### *1.2. Television and media ecology*

The media ecosystem may be considered a socio-technical network, a hypertextual structure made up of producers, consumers, texts, media and interfaces that maintain reciprocal relationships. In certain moments a group of nodes of this network activates and creates new relationships and configurations. The arrival of a new media or interface – or, in other words, the creation of new nodes - changes the structure of the whole network and produces new hybrid species that integrate the new and the old. From this perspective we can analyze how the arrival of cinema changed theater or the collateral effects of television diffusion in the 1950s on cinema and radio. A linear model of media evolution (i.e. from paleotelevision to neotelevision) only represents one single aspect of this process.

Eco's opposition between paleotelevision and neotelevision may also limit researchers to considering that one television substitutes the other one. However, this is not right. Within the neotelevision flow it is still possible to identify paleotelevision experiences. In other words, in present-day television we find that archaic and postmodern traits coexist.

Furthermore, the configuration of the media system is not the same in all societies. Verón sustains that the opposition between paleotelevision and neotelevision 'has marked the European history of public television' but this 'evolutionary scheme has also been valid, with certain arrangements, in the history of general mass television'. Anyway, we must consider that there are 'different rhythms in the implantation of

television in different regions of the world, and in some cases the trends cross themselves and coexist' (Verón, 2001).

### *1.3. Hypertelevision: a first definition*

At the end of the 1990s many characteristics and transformations of neotelevision accelerated and went deeper, for example the confusion between information and fiction, and the consequent transformation of the real world into reality shows. These developments made it clear that the mass media in general and specifically television do not 'represent' reality but rather 'construct' it (Verón, 1983, 2002).

However, television transformations in the 1990s may not only be reduced to an augmentation of neotelevision properties. The combination with other media species like web pages or videogames, the process of industrial convergence and the appearance of new formats and audiences have re-designed the television system. These transformations are so deep and radical that the classic opposition between paleotelevision and neotelevision has been surpassed by the media ecosystem evolution.

How can we define the 'new television'? In European and Latin American research circuits authors like Piscitelli (1998), Ramonet (2002), Riera (2003) and Missika (2006) have opted for the concept of *posttelevision*. Other researchers have criticized this term. After discarding the concept of *posttelevision*, scholars like Verón (2001) predicted the death of traditional television without proposing a new term.<sup>i</sup>

In a completely operative and provisional way we propose the concept of *hypertelevision* to define the current television system situation. Hypertelevision should not be considered a new phase of the paleo-neo series but a particular configuration of the socio-technical network.

Before exploring the world of hypertelevision we'll reflect on the prefix *hyper-* and the *hypertextual experience*. What are the properties of hypertext? For theoreticians of hypertextuality (i.e. Bolter, 1991; Landow, 1992, 1994) the text in these structures is fragmented and atomized, so that it promotes non-sequential reading paths and augments the spectrum of possible interpretations. In this context the reader – now transformed into a user – assumes a more (inter)active role during the reading process. This hypertextual experience is currently present in many everyday situations, from web navigation to interactive fiction reading, from videogaming to collaborative writing experiences in blogs or wikis. Therefore, the prefix *hyper* references not only a large number of texts but also the reticular structure that allows readers to jump from one textual unit to another, to interpret simultaneously a jungle of open windows and applications and to deal with stressing situations inside virtual worlds. The concept of *hypertelevision*, by extension, is not just expressing 'a large amount of (television) programs' but rather it attempts to define the complex and rapidly changing network of formats, screens, narratives, audiences and practices that compose the contemporary television environment.

## 2. Grammar of hypertelevision

In this description of the most relevant characteristics of hypertelevision grammar we will focus on determinate texts and situations that may be considered 'symptoms' – like the emerging tips of an iceberg - of the new configuration of television in the media ecosystem. Every one of these pertinent traits deserves a longer analysis but in the context of this article we will just describe them. These characteristics of the grammar of hypertelevision will be complemented with the descriptions of other transformations



in the television system, for example the diffusion of a peer-to-peer distribution philosophy or the explosion of new screens.

### *2.1. Multiscreen (screen fragmentation)*

Screen fragmentation was first applied in news transmissions to modularize information and show different interlocutors - the anchorman in the studio and the correspondent – at the same time. News programs also include modules to present last minute information, financial data or sports reports in the lower part of the screen. This development in television aesthetics runs parallel to the massive diffusion of graphic user interfaces in the 1980s and 1990s. Scholars like Vered (2000) described this trend as the consolidation of a ‘windows aesthetic’ in contemporary television. Presenting news in easy to read modules may also be found in online and printed journals (Cooke, 2005). As we can see, the hybridization of interfaces in the media ecology was extremely elevated in the last decade and simultaneously affected different media (press, television, web, etc.).

Series like *24* (Fox, 2001-2007) introduced this audiovisual rhetorical device to increase the sense of ‘real-time’ and represent the parallel development of different stories. The multiscreen representation is one of the distinctive traits of *24*. This rhetorical device, first applied by the pioneers of cinema a hundred years ago – in *Suspense* by Weber and Smalley (1913) - and employed by modern directors in specific situations - like the ball scene in Brian de Palma’s *Carrie* (1976) -, has been reintroduced today on our screens by one of the most innovative series of the decade.

### *2.2. Acceleration of rhythm*

Speeding up the rhythm is not new in television – it's been present for the last decades in news or spots – but the introduction of high-speed narratives in fiction may be considered a characteristic of hypertelevision. This introduction runs parallel to the diffusion of 'brief formats' (Pezzini, 2002) like music videos, clips, trailers and promos in the last decade. The frenetic succession of images, camera movements and stories has converted fictions like *24*, *ER* (NBC, 1994-2009) or *Desperate Housewives* (ABC, 2004-2009) into something like an hour-long music video clip.

### 2.3. Real-time effect

Real-time effect used to be a characteristic of artistic productions or a particular author's style (like the 'live' transmission of Orson Welles' Martian invasion in 1938). In the 1990s a couple of episodes of *The X Files* (*X Cops* – Season 7 – Fox, 2000) and *ER* (*Ambush* - Season 4 – NBC, 1997) had already experimented with the real-time effect in mainstream television. In *The X Files* the real-time effect was constructed in post-production (the episode appears to be an allusion to *The Blair Witch Project*, it was completely filmed with a hand held camera to create a live effect), but in the second case a NBC camera crew was disguised as a crew making a documentary film in the hospital. The actors performed the show again three hours later so that the West Coast airing would be live as well. Series like *24* exploited this real-time transmission sense effect and extended it to the entire season.

### 2.4. Endless intertextuality

Citations, excerpts, tributes and quotations are other traits of postmodern textual aesthetics that are exploited on hypertelevision screens. What started in the 1980s and

1990s as a limited exercise of citation - from this perspective *The X Files* could be considered one of the most interesting productions of contemporary television - nowadays is a characteristic of many productions. Hypertelevision productively consumes other mass media and itself, amplifying a trend that was already present in neotelevision. This trend – that could only be defined as *audiovisual cannibalism* - is also present in reality shows like *Big Brother*. In this case the contents of this show are consumed and exploited at any hour in every program. This real-time cannibalism, where the viewer can follow the stories inside the house while watching a news program or a talk show, could be complemented with another trend: the diffusion of *metatelevision* (Carlón, 2006), a second grade television that presents dissections or critical citations of other programs.

### 2.5. Rupture of linearity

Even if the flashback is a basic and classic component of audiovisual grammar, what is new for mainstream television is constructing complete episodes with flashbacks and flashforwards, sometimes coming back to the same event but from the point of view of different characters. We can find interesting examples of these narrative temporal breakdowns in episodes of *ER*, *The X Files*, *House M.D.* (Fox, 2004-2009), *Reunion* (Fox, 2005), *Lost* (ABC, 2004-2009), and *The Nine* (ABC, 2006-2007). This timeline breakdown in contemporary series substantially increases the cognitive skills needed to interpret these fictions: usually flashforwards and flashbacks are introduced inside the episodes without visual transitions. Hypertelevision, as we have already indicated, is talking to new viewers with new competences and experiences.

### 2.6. *Multiplication of characters*

In hypertelevision fiction the characters multiply and integrate themselves in a very complex choral structure. Sometimes it is really difficult to identify the main character of these contemporary fictions because most of the characters have about the same status in the narrative. When the main characters are perfectly defined (like Jack Bauer in *24* or Gregory House in *House MD*) they are always surrounded by a dense network of characters – not just secondary ones – that support and make the narrative more complex.

Television series have increased the number of characters in the last decade. Traditional series developed a model founded on a basic set of characters (between four and six) with one of them as the main character (Lucy in *I Love Lucy*, Cliff Huxtable in *The Cosby Show*, etc.). The simplicity of these structures can't be compared with contemporary series like *ER*, the *CSI* saga, *24*, *Desperate Housewives* or *Grey's Anatomy*, in which more than 10 characters are present in more than 50% of episodes (Scolari, 2008b). Even choral structures like *Dallas* (CBS, 1978-1991) - the most watched fiction in the 1981, 1982 and 1984 seasons - are distant from the complexity of these new productions.

*24* presents a network that is at least three times as complex as *Dallas*: the number of characters; the number of distinct groups; the connections between characters, and between groups; the number of relationships that are central to the episode's narrative (Johnson, 2006, 112-113).

This augmentation of characters is not only present in series; it can also be found in other formats like reality shows, in which a high number of participants must ‘survive’ by fulfilling different tasks and earning the public’s approval.

### 2.7. *Multiplication of narrative programs*

Hypertelelevision expands the number of characters and therefore multiplies the narrative programs. These characters have *desires* and they *do something* in the plot: like in Vladimir Propp’s folktales, they have objectives to accomplish and receive support from helpers in order to defeat their opponents (Propp, 1968). In hypertelelevision these narrative programs constitute a complex network of stories far beyond the simple structure of traditional series in the 1960s and 1970s.

In short: while paleotelevision fictions introduced unitary and basic lineal stories – for example *Inspector Columbo* used to concentrate on one crime and the rest of the characters were secondary ones, with the exception of the criminal – hypertelelevision productions propose a text made up of a network of narrative programs. The same complexity as *ER* can be found in *24*, *Lost*, *Desperate Housewives*, *Sex and the City* (HBO, 1998-2004), *The Sopranos* (HBO, 1999-2007) or *Six Feet Under* (HBO, 2001-2005).

After this brief description of the increasing number of characters and the multiplication of narrative programs, many pertinent traits of hypertelelevision may now be re-signified: for example in Fox’s *24* the use of multiscreens supports the multiplication of characters and narrative programs. It could be said that one screen is not enough to represent the simultaneous development of different narrative programs.

The same may be said about the accelerated rhythm and fragmentation: this is the only way to tell so many stories in a single 45-minute episode.

### *2.8. Many-to-many television*

The contamination between television and the web is producing new phenomena like collaborative television or television 2.0. Platforms like Google Video or YouTube challenge traditional television by promoting amateur creation and peer to peer distribution of audiovisual productions. The explosion of collaborative television and user-generated contents was the ‘new thing’ of 2006 and it’s still difficult to evaluate its effects on the media ecosystem. However, audiovisual production and distribution companies need only look at the music market to form a picture of the possible consequences of the diffusion of P2P distribution in television.

### *2.9. New screens*

The consolidation of the third screen (PC) after cinema (first screen) and television (second screen) and the rapid diffusion of the forth screen (mobile devices) represents a challenge for television aesthetics (Dawson, 2007). If the diffusion of television in the 1950s changed the aesthetics of cinema, the spreading of mobile phones and ubiquitous devices will introduce transformations in audiovisual grammar. It is not the same to develop a story for a ‘big’ screen (cinema or television) as creating a mobisode to be consumed on a 2” screen. If cinema stories are designed for a sedentary viewer inside a big dark cave, and television productions are mostly made for a home viewer, mobile television has a different viewer profile: nomad, used to fast interactions, with a few

minutes of free time for consuming news or fiction. This *interstitial television* is one of the new frontiers of audiovisual production companies.

### 2.10. *Asynchronous consumption*

The revolution of VTR in the 1980s has gone deeper with digital devices: now Williams' flow is the personal construction of each viewer. The diffusion of digital video recorders (DVR) like TiVO and the successful introduction of DVD box sets onto the market (Kompere, 2006) is changing viewers' consumption routines. If traditional television imposed its rhythm on the viewers, now hypertelevision can be easily recorded, manipulated and re-emitted so that it is adapted to the viewer's rhythm.

This everyday practice challenges traditional television in two ways. Firstly, it breaks television's classic business model based on the diffusion of spots. The disappearance of 'appointment TV' – big audiences watching the same program at the same time will be an exceptional event in the future – is introducing new logics into the television economy:

Consumers may opt to buy episodes without advertising or skip through content on demand where possible. Unlike the DVR the on demand model is managed intensively by content owners and networks. The bottom line is that as these new technologies move from the early adopter stage to the mass audience, we expect continued downward pressure on TV advertising (and the traditional 30-second spot) as even the most passive viewer enjoys ad-skipping and time-shifting (choosing when a TV program is viewed) (Berman, Duffy, & Shipnuck, 2006, p. 5).

Secondly, this asynchronous consumption fractures McLuhan's global village. In contemporary television the community of viewers in front of the television set, watching the same program at the same time, explodes into thousands of different consumption practices. If one-to-many television is no more than the ideological cement of society, which media/institution will develop this function? How will hegemony be constructed in a fragmented environment where viewers live different and personal screen experiences throughout the day? The social and political consequences of this breakdown of traditional television's social sense production device are not clear and should be kept under scientific surveillance.

### *2.11. Hypertelevision: a new audiovisual language?*

As we can see, over the last years television has introduced different mutations into its communicational device. Many transformations – like changes in rhythm or narrative structure – have affected television textuality. However, it would be risky to say that television is developing a new language: the grammar of hypertelevision is simply recuperating and integrating traditional rhetorical devices, originally developed by cinema avant-gardes, such as flashback, flashforward, screen fragmentation, etc., into a new framework. In a few words: we're dealing with a new configuration of old forms. Other transformations that have influenced television distribution or reception processes – for example the introduction of a peer-to-peer logic or the diffusion of new asynchronic consumption practices – come directly from the digitalization of the media ecosystem.

## 3. Conclusions: Hypertelevision And The Simulation Of Interaction

Why has television introduced all these innovations into its rhetorical device? If every text constructs its reader (Eco, 1979) and every interface constructs its users



(Scolari 2001, 2004), it could be useful to ask what viewer is constructing contemporary television. The implied viewer of hypertelevision is not the same as the viewer of paleotelevision or neotelevision. Paleotelevision talked to a post-war viewer formed in radio, cinema and press consumption experience. Neotelevision talked to new generations that had grown up watching television, with high interpretative competencies in audiovisual language. Hypertelevision is talking to viewers with an elevated expertise in fragmented textualities and advanced skills in navigating interactive environments. In this context contemporary television must evolve its aesthetics and contents to satisfy the desires of a new generation of viewers formed in *hypertextual experience* (see section 1.3.). To survive, the ‘old media’ must *adapt* to the media ecosystem and *adopt* traits of the new interactive environments.

Why adapt? Because television must talk to a new generation of digital natives; younger generations that grew up with a joystick in their hands and an interactive screen in front of their eyes. They have developed new perceptive and cognitive skills – and narcotized other competencies, as McLuhan would say – that audiovisual producers must take into account. The television for audiences formed in cinema, radio or press experiences is not the same as the television for expert videogame players, software users or web navigators. In this sense, the adoption of a ‘windows aesthetic’ is a logic response to new audiences:

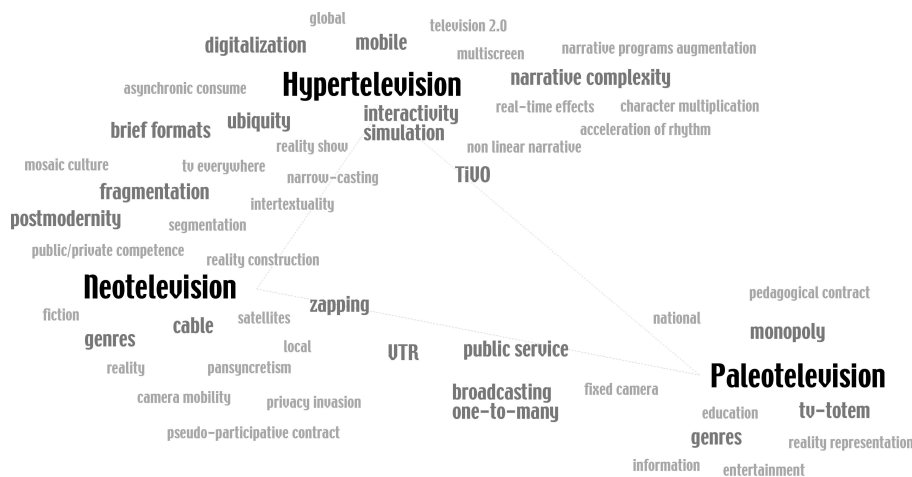
By presenting and representing the illusion of interactive capability, framed within the safety of the fully domesticated TV screen, windows TV is aggressively marketing the idea and desire for interactive TV through the illusion of an interface (Vered, 2000, p. 51).

Why adopt the pertinent traits of interactive media? For over 50 years television has been the perfect paradigm of the one-to-many and non-interactive media. Now television has a big competitor in interactive environments. In this period of transition characterized by strong tensions in the media ecosystem *television is simulating digital interactions*. From our perspective this remediation (Bolter & Grusin, 2000) of new media is the key element to understanding hypertelevision.

The convergence of media outlets, technologies, and processes creates a unique cultural/visual environment in which designs distinctive of one medium can easily be appropriated by other media. This is significant because a single communication style is no longer predicated on a specific medium. That is, the pictorial mode of communication that has been associated with television news appears in the information graphics of a newspaper front page and in the thumbnail-sized icons on a news website. Similarly, the ticker-tape delivery style that was made popular by news websites is now a standard feature of many cable news programs (Cooke, 2005, p. 25).

How can television simulate interactive media? By splitting the screen, creating ‘pop-up’ information like in the MTV classic *Pop-up Video* (Rutsky, 2002), increasing the number of characters, introducing real-time effects in storylines, programming multi-camera productions like *Big Brother*, etc. This mutation of traditional television may be simplified by a single axiom: ‘if an interface can’t do something, it will simulate it’ (Scolari 2004, p. 191). In other words: hypertelevision is not ‘interactive television’ but (traditional) television simulating interactive experiences.

A theoretical approach to television should refuse the lineal conceptions that would consider hypertelevision as just a new phase of media evolution (paleo – neo – hyper). How can we represent these mutations from a non-linear perspective? To conclude this article we propose a conceptual map that integrates different television characteristics. At this moment in the evolution of the media ecosystem one area of the network is particularly active, and the contaminations are very high in this sector of the map. The keywords of this sector are fragmentation, multiplication of characters, augmentation of narrative programs, simulation of interactivity, etc. (Figure 1). The future evolution of the media may activate other sectors of the map, introduce new ‘species’ and articulate new configurations of the socio-technical network.



**Semantic map of television evolution**  
**Figure 1**

This article introduces a first approach to hypertelevision. Further research should analyze many other characteristics and experiences, for example the ever present question of television genres. If neotelevision programmers in the 1980s contaminated genres and proposed syncretic formats, what's happening to genres in hypertelevision?

Are we assisting the birth of new hybrid genres? The reciprocal influences between television, web interfaces, mobile aesthetics and old media should be kept at the center of media research. Another basic question for peer-to-peer environments is who decides on the genres. It is possible that we're leaving behind the traditional genre conflicts and entering the age of tagging and folksonomy, a place where genres are defined by viewers and not by programmers. As we can see, the study of hypertelelevision introduces many challenges into social and media research.

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<sup>i</sup> Gilder's book *Life After Television. The Coming Transformation of Media and American Life* (1992) may be considered the first reference to the 'death of television' movement. But viewers shouldn't worry; television survived Gilder's text and was so alive that Missika killed it again in *La Fin de la Télévision* (2006). An actual reflection on the "end of mass media" may be found in Carlón & Scolari (2009).