Film and Television in Interaction

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Discussions of live television usually proceeded along one of two paths. The first one being a comparative analysis between television and other art forms, and the second one being a type of inventory of the medium’s imminent limitations. These discussions served the purpose of presenting the medium, identifying it, and placing it in a context. The “television as art” discussion generally came about as an introduction to a comparative analysis of the medium. Even though today it might seem rather out-dated, given the context it was necessary

The first method serves as a form of comparative analysis to mirror television in other art forms such as film, theatre, radio, literature, painting, sculpture, photography, and music. This is not unlike the debate that concerned film during it's birth at the turn of the century, in which evaluative questions such as, “Is film art or is it just a reproduction of images?” arose. Not surprisingly a similar debate came about during the advent of television as a way to analyze, understand, and evaluate the new medium. A debate that carried no clear-cut answers but which served the purpose of making a comparative analysis between the medium in relation to other art forms. Today's media situation is experiencing a similar transitional state changing from analogue to digital technology. Not only technical but also fundamental changes within television and film have occurred, so that once again we have to question what television is in order to recapture it's status as an art form. While film was criticized for only reproducing images, television was being questioned as an art form, because it was viewed only as a transmitter of other art forms. That television was difficult to define is displayed by the fact that as late as the 1970's it was still being discussed in relation to other art forms. The difficulties inherent in defining television were in part complicated by the fact that the nature of the medium changed over time from live to film and then to video. During the seminal early years when the discussion of the medium was forming, the technically nebulous character of television complicated the building of theories. Symptomatic features such as immediacy,
intimacy; spontaneity, and simultaneity were directly connected to television as a live form. Another feature that was closely linked to immediacy was intensity. The technological changes from live to film in the beginning of the 1950's and later to tape made these terms more or less invalid as a way to describe and distinguish it from others. Television criticism was striking in its exactitude but was preoccupied with the live form, which became quite a rare commodity in the late 1950's.

The other way of approaching television served the purpose of distinguishing television in terms of its strengths and its weaknesses. Such things as lighting, sound, space, and time as well as movement, composition, and mise-en-scène specific for the medium were discussed—in other words an isolated study of the medium and its significant features. The emphasis was placed on the limitations, and how to overcome these in order to reach a form of convincing realism. The display of immanent restraints showed what the medium could and could not do. The purpose of early television was to overcome the obstacles that practitioners encountered, and create a quality product that attempted to be as good as film. Considering the embryonic state the television technology was in at the time maybe the preoccupation with technology represented form of justified technological determinism.

Theory from this time centered on the emblematic aspects of the medium. Live television was afflicted with technical limitations concerning time, space, lighting and finally sound. The time problem had many facets. How much time could be put at a program’s disposal? This was further complicated by the fact that television time was sold in slots to advertising sponsors. Programming became secondary to the primary goal of selling advertising time. These two were of course dependent on each other for existence and lived in a symbiotic relationship. The ambition to repair the mistakes made in radio during 1920s seemed at the beginning to have been successful. In 1950 Gilbert Seldes happily expressed his satisfaction over the development of television, "The error made in radio has not been repeated;
in television the stations propose to be the prime creators of entertainment. They don't refuse to accept programs put together by package merchants outside, but they have a stronger position.”

This satisfaction was symptomatic of an optimism that sprang from the future of a medium that was still shrouded in mystery. Seldes’ assumption that television was master of it's own destiny was soon shown to be overly optimistic. It was an opinion that was quite common in the transitional state television experienced in the first years of the 1950s. Soon the industry would conquer this media too, through the power of the advertising agencies, which became instrumental in executing the industry’s decisions thereby garnering more power for the industry. An example of the change in politics could be seen in the choice of Pat Weaver as president for NBC. He was, according to accessible literature, an ardent defender of quality entertainment. However, what made him qualify for the job was experience in the advertising business. He had worked previously in the advertising agency of Young & Rubicam, and in The American Tobacco Company where he served as advertising manager. His first assignment at NBC was to introduce the same magazine concept of multiple sponsors that he had established within radio. 

Early on a single sponsor had financed most shows. Shows like Westinghouse Studio One or Philco Television Theatre were identified with the brands, but the rising production costs put an end to this practice.

Instead, a system was implemented where sponsors paid for a specific block of time, and the fact that the program had to fit into these blocks, constituted a very definite limitation. For instance in any of Playhouse 90’s productions shown, for example, "The Comedian" (1957), the production was sold to the sponsors in acts. When the series started in 1956, the production cost for television had increased dramatically and the single sponsor shows were on the decline.

The more expensive the show, the more sponsors had to be involved, and Playhouse 90 was

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possibly the most expensive at this time being the only 90 minute drama produced. Live dramas had three acts and therefore three main sponsors, for example, Singer (sewing machines), Royal McBee (portable type writers), and Marlboro cigarettes sponsored “The Comedian”. As the production costs escalated, alternate sponsors were involved as well. In *Playhouse 90’s*, "The Comedian" only one alternate sponsor was involved, which could be explained by the fact that it was broadcast the first season. Sometimes several brands stemmed from the same company, which were used as alternate sponsors; as was the case with Bristol Myers (hygiene products), and it’s brands: Ipana (tooth paste), and Bufferin (pain killers). In other *Playhouse 90* productions, Bristol Myers used a third brand such as Vitalis V7 (hair-lotion) or BAN (roll-on deodorant), usually one for each act. Often the breaks did not fit the material to be broadcast temporally, the trick then was to sacrifice material without weakening the over-all effect.

The time limitation connected to advertising breaks resulted in one of the more troublesome features in television, and in particular for television drama. The visual aspect makes television somewhat dependent on action. Visualized action consumes a great amount of time that is not always in proportion to its contribution and to its effect in the over-all production. Live drama on the other hand, came to depend almost entirely on dialogue scenes, which in opposition to action scenes were quite difficult to shorten without losing the point of the drama. Physical action had an advantage over live drama because it was easier to temporally adjust to the advertising breaks placed within the show with mathematical exactitude. One can only assume that the producer tried to place key events or bits of information further, rather than closer, to an oncoming advertising break, because if the drama encroached upon the advertising time, either the network would have had to compensate the sponsor, or key events and information would be lost as the commercial break began. Another temporal aspect of course was the time restraint imposed by the short production time. An episode of *Playhouse 90* was allowed three weeks of production, which was considered a long time in television, but when
one contemplates the logistics behind it, it was quite a short time. Usually the discussion surrounding the demise of the golden age concerns the fact that the bleak world presented in these shows contradicted the prevalent view presented within advertising, which was based on the assumption that no problem was so large that it could not be solved by a consumer decision. The interval between advertising breaks was more easily mastered without excessive dialogue and with more action. This in turn partly explains the convenient transition to sitcoms and westerns, in which the episodic character places the spectator in an ideal mood, from a consumer’s perspective, of not being reminded of real life problems. A more refined world of fantasy was essential to promote unrealistic solutions to real problems. The myths and fables of the old west were ideal in that context, because they also dissociated the spectator historically.

Live television in general lacked elliptical time, a signature feature in film. When someone walks through a door in a film unnecessary information is edited out to create narrative efficiency. The difference could be seen in the way the length of the scenes are distributed over film productions compared to television productions. In Playhouse 90’s, "The Days of Wine and Roses" (1958) the production follows the script like a play. The shortest scene measures 35 seconds and the longest is 9 minutes 51 seconds. The constructions of the scenes also follow a pattern of relevance, not a pre-planned editing strategy that serves to produce a specific effect. When a scene conveys something important it tends to extend temporally, as the text, not the image, remains the tool for mediation. The film adaptation of The Days of Wine and Roses (Blake Edwards, 1963) introduced a new editing pattern. On the surface it might not seem important but a closer look shows the following: the editing of the film follows a tight strategy in which the scenes become gradually shorter approaching the end. The first scene being the longest scene in the film measures 3 minutes and 26 seconds. Every scene that follows is a couple of seconds shorter until the last one, which is timed 1 minute and
53 seconds. The purpose of making every scene shorter than the previous scene is to create a
sense of invisible dramatic escalation.

The slower narrative rhythm found in the television version doesn't automatically lead to
a slower pace but places a stronger emphasis on the actor and the text, which is a typical feature
from this time. *Playhouse 90’s*, "The Days of Wine and Roses" contains a long scene in the
beginning, which serves the audience in better comprehending the underlying motivations of the
protagonists. The scene is 7 minutes and 13 seconds long, and deepens the understanding for
who they are, and serves as a base for characterization. The different dramatic components are
clearly divided and delineated in *Playhouse 90’s*, "The Days of Wine and Roses". According to
convention the characters are subsidiaries to action and can only be understood in relation to the
events.⁴ This is why the necessity for an intricate social framework is called for. The more
detail that is put into the environment the more likely it is for us to understand the character
pattern of behavior. The assumption could be that in a perfect play the necessity for scenes
written to characterize the personalities would be superfluous. This is however less important
than the fact that even if the character is perfectly characterized it is still dependent on the
environment for the spectator to understand. A possible problem within live television was to
overcome the exclusion of a social environment. This was done in the explicatory fashion by
describing the problem in a narrow super reality. The dialogue and the acting had to replace the
social framework, therefore the long scenes.

After the long exposition in *Playhouse 90*, "The Comedian" 11 minutes and 22 seconds
has passed without any temporal ellipses. The major characters have been presented and the
major themes have been established. The story revolves around the preparations for the
premiere of a TV show due to air two days ahead. Historical information is, as in theatre, and in
earlier examples from *Playhouse 90*, divulged by the dialogue. The inability to stage historical
information, such as flashbacks, restricted the narrative possibilities and claustrophobically
closed in the story’s inability to unfold visually. It could therefore be used constructively in a
drama that rests on a psychological foundation. The temporal continuity in the drama also
creates a density, a strong presence, which only with great difficulty could be obtained that way.
This prevents the director from applying a contrived style resulting in visual overstatement.
Anthology drama is rather known for visual understatement that entails a risk of being too
neutral and creating camera work that fails to sustain the emotional narrative. In failed attempts
the camera resumes to passively registering what is in front of it without adding anything to the
wholeness. Playhouse 90’s, “The Comedian” is however not typical in this sense, as it contains
some truly elaborate shots and the production shows that there was an ambition to avoid the
visual stagnation that threatened any live production. Normally an ambitious script had to
compensate for the camera’s inability to capture the finer nuances of the story.

The story time in film is no different from the one in live television drama, however the
discourse, or the way the story is executed, is radically different. To tell a story using elliptical
time in live television becomes an almost insurmountable obstacle. The constraints of the closed
circuit television theatre create a sense of artificiality when jumps in time are applied as they
could be experienced as contrived in relation to the non-elliptical time normally used. The
temporal limitations and the lack of editing within live TV did not allow rhythmical narration.
In film, time could be sped up by editing out superfluous information or slowed down and
stretched out through overlapping montage or simply avoiding to editing altogether to create
suspense. In other words temporal contraction or expansion couldn’t be used to effectively
dramatize the story in live television as it could in film.

The time limitation taking place within the drama logically influenced the screen writer
who consciously imposed the restraint of time on himself to adjust to the overall demands of the
live production. The feature, described by Reginald Rose as elapsed time, means that the play
takes place within the shortest possible timespan. Some of Rose's more famous plays; Tragedy

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in a Temporary Town (1957); Twelve Angry Men (1954); and Almanac of Liberty (1954) all take place in exactly the same time as the play progresses. The time of the play and the plot time are one and the same — real time in other words. This means that act two begins exactly where act one ended and so forth. Only the story time is aloud to stretch out and therefore can be said to follow the classical form being within one day. Moreover, he has never made a play that spans over more than three days.\footnote{A. S. Burack, \textit{Television Plays for Writers} (Boston: The Writer, Inc., 1957) p. 304} In \textit{Westinghouse Studio One’s}, “The Defender,” the commercial brakes are used to jump forward in time. This effect of temporality was supported by the fact that it was sent in two episodes (supposedly the first mini-series). Rose’s pragmatic treatment of the temporal aspect can be seen as an extreme example amongst the television writers, but also as symptomatic of a tendency to eliminate elliptical time altogether. This treatment of temporality was one that governed most television writers even though Rose applied the approach more thoroughly than others.

Time compression and time expansion serve a particular purpose in filmed television being a way to express excitement and spectacular changes. However, a live television production keeps the same time code as the spectator, which creates a unique sense of presence and identification. Immediacy, intimacy, and spontaneity reflect this. The recreation of an environment more ordinary, less fantastic, and with less manipulated time, becomes a foundation for identification through recognition. Identification, not only with characters because of recognizable traits, but also identification with real time. From this perspective, the restraint of time and space can be viewed, not as a limitation, but a quality. The technical possibilities that come with the use of film can also create a distance between the spectator and the film and film being viewed creating a fiction even more fictitious. Imposed time limitations can be seen as typical for the stage and therefore also typical for live television drama. They can even be felt even in the flashback structure of \textit{Playhouse 90’s}, “The Days of Wine and Roses” where it serves as a means to incorporate the story that spans over considerable time into the
plot construction, which consists of the AA meeting during which almost the entire story is narrated by the protagonist. The flash back used in *Playhouse 90’s*, "The Days of Wine and Roses" constituted a convenient way of moving from one space and time to another, if not seamlessly so at least motivated by the narrative.

Another way of manipulating time that came to be almost a signature feature for many live productions was the slow lap dissolve. In transitional scenes when people move from one place to another, layers of images were superimposed over one another, not only to show the transportation from one place to another, but also the passing of time. Examples of this use can be seen in *Playhouse 90’s*, "Winter Dreams" (1957) and *Playhouse 90’s*, "The Violent Heart" (1958). In *Playhouse 90’s*, "Winter Dreams" the dissolves are used in a conventional fashion as the story is told in retrospective with voice-over. What separate it are the frequency and the length of the dissolves. The first scene is followed by a 27 seconds dissolve from present to past following the protagonists voice over from the present to the past. The transitions are in many cases 15 –25 seconds long and dream like transitions without actually being a dream. Then again, a person reflecting over the past is quite close to a dreamlike state as the title suggests. The story time constitutes the protagonist's entire life and the discourse is his reflection or recollection of his past at the brink of collapse or after the catastrophe when he has resigned all hope of future happiness. It's relation between story and discourse is therefore quite classical.

In *Playhouse 90*, “The Violent Heart,” the dissolve is used to show spatial and temporal transitions. In a 37-second long dissolve in which layer after layer of new images is superimposed over one another, the protagonist gets lost in a Mediterranean coastal village with narrow streets and under a burning sun. In this scene dissolves are used not only to show passing time but also to show how the protagonist is getting in a place that becomes more labyrinth like with the use of dissolves. In addition to overcoming time and space limitations dissolves are used to depict the protagonist’s gradually increasing sunstroke. *Playhouse 90’s*, "The Violent Heart" is also an example of how a person gets lost internally. This scene signifies
the protagonist's transition in straying from her sheltered and repressed normality. The dissolve is, in this case, carrying the theme.

According to the editing principles followed in most live productions the end of an act, or longer narrative segment was followed by a fade out. Normally advertising came after that and then the next act started with a fade in. The transition from fiction to a commercial motivated the use of this stylistic feature. A cut would have been interpreted as jump cut, and the dissolve as an attempt to splice the film textually with the advertising. The rigid time code gave few possibilities to manipulate time with the exception of dissolves which could be used within in sequences between scenes to create a sense of passing time. The fade out, being a stylistic feature that consciously separates one strip of film from another, served the purpose of demonstratively showing the end of one part and the following fade in was the beginning of something else. The fade out made the narration come to a sudden halt, which is why it was only used in moments such as in connection with advertising breaks. It stands in opposition to the dissolve, which serves the purpose of merging two shots. Within a scene, the switch (a cut refers to editing of film) from one camera to another was used extensively, but in transitions within long sequences, the dissolve became the possibility, the valve, to manipulate time. The slow superimpositions of images also constituted a possibility to create a foundation for comparison, a comment, or a message. The dissolve worked also as sort of tool to show stream-of-consciousness effects like nightmares or hallucinations as shown in Playwrights 56’s, "Lost", in which amnesia is the defined problem. In this example dissolves are used to insert fragments from the protagonist’s life previous to the memory loss, and in so doing accomplished fragmentation of the protagonists past, in which several layers of traumatic incidents are combined in a nightmare lacking of space and time.

Just as the short production time consisted a restrictive factor during rehearsal, similarly the small crammed television studio provided the production crew with limited space. Early on, when live drama was broadcast from New York, the studio was normally a retrofitted radio
studio not even made to record moving images. From an aesthetic perspective the television camera was limited to monocular vision compared to the binocular space that our eyes experience. In film space could be deconstructed to compensate for the loss of dimension, and rebuilt to fit the desired emotion in a scene. For the next shot the camera was easily moved to a new position. In doing so the space was once again reconstructed and the new angle served the purpose of capturing the optimal emotion from another perspective. In that way film could remain binocular through ingenious editing. The most advantageous angles were consequently chosen, and the variations were infinite. Television was contrary to film subordinated to a strategy of coordinating a multitude of cameras and technical staff and the cameras all positioned in relation to the actors. The most advantageous angle where in television subordinate to the overall organization of the crew. A diversion from the strategy had the same effect as an actor forgetting his lines or a boom man walking in front of a camera.

A consequence of the inability to prepare every shot as one could with film, lead to a necessary use of wide angle lenses which in turn resulted in a distorted perspective — a constant problem within TV. The over use of medium shots, or rather the exclusion of long shots and extreme long shots, and replacing them with medium shots made the wide angle lens a logical tool. The result of diffused backgrounds and loss of depth of field at close-ups were not considered disturbing, however at medium shots the loss of depth of field was problematic. Live television usually represented several people in the same image, in medium shot, due to difficulties in switching between cameras. Now, instead the gathering of several actors in the same shot carried the risk of a problematic distortion if wide-angle lenses were used — diffusion if not. It is particularly obvious in the productions made by John Frankenheimer that he favored shots containing two or more characters geometrically positioned at different depth of field — quite complicated considering the minimal screen and considering that the camera was required to be very close to capture at least one character in extreme close up or close-up. An example of these aesthetic preferences are found in, *Playhouse 90’s, "Journey to the Day"*. It
contains a vast amount of shots from a low slightly tilted camera angle, often tilted to fit in several elements. The left third of the screen is filled with half a face (a slice), in the right field a man is sitting in medium shot, and in the middle a man could be seen in a long shot. The eyes are important and the characters’ eye line is accentuated. So there are three different elements on different planes, and the glance in between them is what determines the camera position.

Frankenheimer it ought to be stated usually chose a low camera angles sometimes-high angles but not so often a normal eye level. He is not as dependent on the décor, the architecture, as for instance Franklin Schaffner was, who made elaborate use of architecture in several of his productions for Playhouse 90. Frankenheimer is on the contrary flaunting the inadequacy of the staging by letting the camera drift past dividing walls or above them into and the adjoining space as in Playhouse 90’s, "The Comedian" or Climax!’s, "The Louella Parsons Story" (1956). Schaffner doesn't break the illusion by revealing shots like this. Instead he has a preference for shots from one space into the next adjoining space as if trying to break down the theatricality of the sets and create a sense convincing realism as in Playhouse 90’s, "The Playroom"(1957) or Playhouse 90’s, "The 80-yard Run"(1958). This comparison is an example of how different directors emphasize different aspects of the mise-en-scene to solve the same problem and reach the same goal. Schaffner tries to compensate for the imposed limitation of space by creating a sense of reality through architecture. Frankenheimer treats the spatial limitation by directing actors in different planes to underscore the depth of field.

It ought to be emphasized at this point that the close up, normally considered television’s most distinguishing feature, was something that was adapted in a grand scale when television went from live to film. This could be explained by the technical possibility of editing that came with film. The use of close ups was choreographically complicated in a crowded TV studio, the camera could easily catch any of the other cameras in the periphery of the frame. The result became a hybrid between TV and theatre. The camera within live television in most cases watched the action from a distance just as the film camera places itself and the spectator in the
middle of the action — in the centre. Conclusively, one has to distinguish between different technological foundations within television, and in each particular case, consider type of technology a production has relied upon dealing with different aesthetic features. The close-up at this time, existed within television but was not nearly as domineering as has been stated in the past. Not even if film was used, was the close up automatically a prominent feature. The multiple cameras filming as provided by Karl Freund for *I Love Lucy*, lacked all close-ups. *I Love Lucy* was shot live in front of an audience — proscenium style. Three cameras shot everything simultaneously and the result was post-edited. It was when single camera shooting was used, or possible multiple camera shooting without audience participation, that the close-up became more prominent. Close-ups were used to emphasize variations in the dialogue through reaction-shots, and shot-reverse-shots in dialogue scenes. The shot-reverse-shot became the true staple within TV and compensated for all lack of imagination in the visual expression, being the easiest shot. It was of course used excessively in film already, particular in low-budget films, which is no contradiction it just proves that the close up is connected not solely to the television medium, but instead to a specific technology. Certain scenes as for instance phone conversations became emotionless in live television and were only used sparingly and when supported by the narrative. When two people spoke to each other over the phone it was shown from the perspective of a third person overhearing the phone call connecting the suspense to the space as in *Phileco Television Playhouse*’s, “Time of Delivery”(1954). In the play a man’s desperate attempts to reach his brother over the phone is watched by a loan shark. It’s based on the suspense of the phone call but still contained within one room. In tele-film phone conversations were used as dramatic interruption and didn't at all slow down the narrative, such as in *Westinghouse Desilu Playhouse*, "The Man in The Funny Suit" (1960). In this production the characters suddenly receive surprising and dramatic information, and with such a high frequency that it can be explained only by the fact that it is shot on film. The use of film sustains the emotion and successfully creates a sense of location that would have been difficult
in a live production were a week sense of geography, the singular use of interior scenes, easily undermines the illusory sense of distance. Within live production the imposed restrictions set definite limitations. He technology behind early live productions is not so complicated to identify. They were broadcast live and if they are in existence today it's due to the fact that they were recorded on kinescope. The Kinescope was a specially designed motion picture camera that was pointed at a high intensity five-inch television screen. 6 Everything recorded before the advent of video 1956 was kinescope, if not filmed, and therefore easier to distinguish technologically. For instance the episodes of Philco Television Playhouse’s, "Holiday Song" (1953) "Beg, Borrow, Steal" (1954), "Adapt or Die" (1954), "Time of Delivery", and "A Man is Ten Feet Tall" (1955) end with information about the recording: "Philco Television Playhouse originates live in Radio City New York. This program was reproduced by the kinephoto process".

When VTR was put to use it was connected to television’s move to the west-coast New York productions such as Philco Television Playhouse, Goodyear Television Playhouse (or Goodyear Television Theatre both titles exist) and Westinghouse Studio One all came out of New York and were consequently broadcast live and recorded on kinescope with consideration to time delays connected to the airing of the program on the west coast.

Judging the productions after 1956 it becomes more complicated to distinguish the technology behind the production. The VTR was invented but didn't have the same position then as now. Furthermore the titles on the productions didn't provide any information regarding the fact that, now, the productions were taped instead of recorded on kinescope. Maybe this can be attributed to the fact that there was no actual editing of the videotape in the beginning, just taping of live. Anyway the technological transition to video didn't make the producers feel compelled to include these changes in the titles at the time. The editing process for the VTR

was not yet developed but the quality of the video image was vastly superior to the Kinescope and tape was also less expensive which is why it came to replace its unpopular predecessor. *Playhouse 90* for instance must have been video taped from the start. It was recorded and video taped at CBS’s Television City in Los Angeles. However the nature of VTR at this juncture in time didn't really impose a threat to the live format. It was still film that was the logical other medium. The video didn't entirely replace live television but altered it. The production method used for live had to be maintained due to the fact that that even though a show was videotaped it could not be appropriately edited. The videotapes still in existence from this time basically consist of taped live recordings (with few exceptions which shall be dealt with further on). Even though video was now invented the choices were basically the same as in 1951. A program could be shot on film or broadcast live. The difference was that now a more inexpensive and quality wise better method for saving the film was accessible. Also presentations of *Playhouse 90* were usually preceded by the following message, "Live from television City in Hollywood" after the titles in the end the voice over (belonging to Dick Joy) concluded, "*Playhouse 90* is the only weekly hour and a half dramatic program on television. Portions of the preceding program were pre-recorded. *Playhouse 90* is a CBS Television Network Production. “That it was a CBS television network production came to be a valuable piece of information considering that all productions shot on film were not by CBS but usually by a subsidiary to a film company specialized in TV-productions. For instance *Playhouse 90*’s, "The Massacre at Sand Creek", was produced by Screen Gems (Columbia) and just aired on CBS. During the presentation of these films it is also clearly stated that they were going to show a film. Almost without exception *Playhouse 90* contained the text, “portions of the previous program were pre-recorded”. This could have been in the beginning of the series, stock footage of exterior shots. Later on, in the series videotaped segments when necessary. It seems clear that the use of video at the time wasn't considered to alter the show as a live program since it was executed in sequence as a performance in the same manner as before. Judging from the importance the
producers placed in making the distinction between live and film in these productions it would have been odd if they had not made the same distinction between live and video. The problem seems to be that we today have a different view of the video as a recording device than they had at the time.

The technical contrivance of kinescope disappeared with the arrival of video recording. The method of recording discussed above remained intact for some years due to the lack of proper editing equipment. It could as a final note be mentioned that the first production entirely made on video was Fred Coe’s production of Du Pont Show of the Month’s, “The Red Mill” (1958) directed by Delbert Mann. At the time no one was really willing to gamble recording an entire production on video. The shooting resulted in very long sequences due to proper editing methods. All cuts had to be accompanied by fade-outs as the manual editing of video tape through the television image out of sync. It was not until 1963 that manual editing disappeared and video seriously could be discussed as a possible replacement for film and videotaped live shows. Ampex presented the first version of a computer controlled videotape editor, "Editec". Before the invention of the Editec, editing was done manually, cutting and splicing the tape or by electronically making edits by manually transferring information from a playback VTR to a recording VTR which created and edited master tape, but this was performed on a hit-or-miss basis since each edit was made by cuing up the recording VTR and the play-back VTR and simultaneously starting both machines. In other words before the Editec one had to rely solely on the human factor for precision. In video technology contrary to film this did not work so it was not until this obstacle had been overcome that the idea of video become a possibility. First through electronic editing, later digital.

An example of their unwillingness to change or alter the methods of production is provided by Playhouse 90’s, "The Clouded Image" (1957) in which Farley Granger played a double roll. One would have thought that a situation like this would require that they shoot the
scenes they had together with a double, combined with ingenious editing. Instead the production was shot entirely in sequence with one of the character’s parts videotaped. As the two characters had their encounter the second character was video taped superimposed on the over the image of the first character. When his one character is to encounter the other he acted against a projection of himself on video. The second character was videotaped without being edited which made the operation convenient. The above-mentioned attempt in Du Pont Show of the Month’s, “The Red Mill” to record and edit an entire production on video was a premature attempt and the preservation of the production method in combination with technology remained intact reasonably intact.

The third of the limitations of live television was the inability to set light after each shot as in film, and this limitation was possibly more disturbing than the previous limitations. Setting light in film was a complicated and time-consuming procedure. After each shot an intermission was scheduled to allow time for the technicians to readjust the light so it matched the next camera set up. This was not possible in a television studio. The stage had to change the lighting gradually as the show proceeded and by doing so the lighting man or had to memorize all the camera movements to prepare for the changes in lighting. This in turn restrained the camera movements but also put a considerable responsibility on the actors’ ability to maintain at the desired place when the camera and the lighting interacted him or her. It was not unusual to gather the actors in the middle of the stage, so that they all at the same time became accessible to camera light and sound. The controlling of light and sound superseded the choreography. If they scattered of the studio floor the filming would have been extraordinarily complicated. The choreography created consequences, not only for the camera but also for the shadow of the cameraman, the grip. Likewise, the sound affected the choreography by the constant presence of a boom operator.

7 Arthur Schneider, p. 86-87
Another aspect of this twofold problem was the difficulty to adjust the image to the television screen. The television image was created in light, and transmitted to a receiver. Light causes the screen to glow with a visible image and it was by painting with patterns of light that the lighting director gave the screen image meaning. To accomplish high quality television images has not been satisfactorily solved until modern time. In the early recordings, particularly the ones from the first half of the 50s, this problem resulted in overexposed faces led to a loss of the expressive features of the face, which was particularly important in television. The backgrounds were considered gray and diffused as a consequence of underexposure. The overexposure of the faces, and loss of expressiveness, was particularly damaging as the medium's reputation rested on a form of intimacy between the spectator and the television screen unlike the one experienced by a large audience in a movie theatre.

Sound, the final obstacle that had to be overcome, could be handled in film in a variety of ways, but this was not an option available within live television. Within film the actors could move around in the scenic space without the same consideration for sound. Problems with sound reproduction were often solved with help of post-synchronization. In TV everything was coordinated so that the boom operators could follow the actors around with movable microphones to pick up the dialogue (the same goes for the lighting man too cuing instructions about light to stage hands). A sudden movement in the wrong direction automatically resulted in a loss of sound (or a step out of a spotlight) geared towards the actor in a particular movement. They were basically hooked up for recording like astronauts but with image and sound analogous to a highly technological life support system — for life on the screen. Music, if used, was played simultaneously by an orchestra or from records.

A study of this process leads to the conclusion that the medium was governed by a series of limitations to which the director or the producer had to subordinate himself. The freedom of the film and the luxury of post-production were, in television, replaced by rigorous planning — pre-production. The technique or method was based on rehearsal and detailed planning of the
actual shooting of the performance. Anthology drama grew out of rehearsals with the actors, and rehearsals with the technical staff that also had to be coordinated and rehearsed simultaneously. Jean Renoir called these “invisible actors”. He explained that during a film production the work of the director lay in the work with actors in front of the camera. In a live recording the whole staff becomes a part of the performance. The method used within live television did, in itself, not result in anything new, but the performance was to a certain extent governed by the actor, with only a limited possibility for the director to interfere.

As a consequence of these limitations in time, space, lighting, and finally sound reproduction, emphasis was placed on the performer and the dramatic text. The emphasis on the performer can seem paradoxical considering the limited possibilities of expression that early television offered. The distanced camera, and the lighting that erased expressive features in the faces of the actors were weaknesses that were compensated by the depiction of ordinary problems in society, in an environment the spectator could associate to — the home. Another new feature with television was that it didn’t direct itself towards a big audience. Instead it directed its attention towards groups of two or three people, which created a sense of privacy and which also made the medium more suitable for serious subjects.

The internal structure of the television drama revolved around what could be termed “the problem”. The problem was could be alcoholism, greed, racism, insanity etc. The center of the story was the individual and his or her attempts at tackle the problem and eventually solving it. The problem in Paddy Chayefsky’s Westinghouse Studio One’s, "Marty" (Delbert Mann, 1953) is women. Westinghouse Studio One’s, "Twelve Angry Men" (Franklin J. Schaffner 1954) the "problem" is the arbitrariness of the judicial system towards the individual. But it is also about the individual and the importance of taking responsibility. In Westinghouse Studio One’s, "The Defender" is also concerned with imperfections within the judicial system; "The Defender"

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8 Jean-Luc Godard, "Renoir and Television” in Godard on Godard, publish. And trans. Tom Milne (New York; Da Capo Press Inc., 1972) s. 143-146 (initially published in Arts nr. 718, April 15 1959)
operates on two different levels. On the surface it is a murder trial but the "problem" is the defense lawyers disbelief in the judicial system. In *Playhouse 90’s*, "Days of Wine and Roses" a man sinks deep into alcoholism to forget his dissatisfaction with his life and his work.

*Playhouse 90’s*, "Requiem For a Heavyweight (1956) concerns greed and cynicism within the boundaries of the boxing world. And finally *Playhouse 90’s*, "Comedian" deals with how the hunger for love can make a person cruel and manipulative. In a TV drama such as in *Playhouse 90’s*, "The Comedian", "the problem" is almost without exceptions clearly displayed in the exposition, which have the additional purpose of involving the viewer before they changed channel.

Ideally the television exposition opens with a series of spectacular events; an approach that stood in opposition to film in which the story could slowly unfold to maintain suspense. The hook in television typically concentrated the whole episode, or the theme of the show, in the opening segment. Television directors who made feature films after their time within television often maintained this flair for opening shots, that is, starting a film with a hook.

How this transcended into film can be viewed in the film version of *Twelve Angry Men* (Sidney Lumet, 1957). This is a film that, besides a short prologue and short epilogue, is entirely shot in one room. Therefore it’s significant in its similarity to a TV production or a play. The prologue and the epilogue feel as if they are tagged on. The films begins with an elaborate shot, which was usual within television to catch the attention of the spectator. When attention was considered secure, the titles were superimposed over the images moving in the background, a typical television feature that was a consequence of an ambition to avoid interruptions in the flow. The titles were usually placed in a scene of lesser informative value and therefore the spectator didn’t risk missing anything of value. The delay of the titles and superimposition of them over the moving image was a feature that was later adopted by film.⁹

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In *Twelve Angry Men* the titles are superimposed over the jurors arriving to the room in which the accused’s guilt will be determined. A similar method is used in *Ford Star Jubilee*, "The Caine Mutiny Court-Martial"(1955), in which the titles are rolling over the characters arriving at the courtroom. The same effect can be noted in the titles of *Playhouse 90*, "Days of Wine and Roses" in which the title is superimposed against the shadow of a man emptying a bottle.

In the first image in *Twelve Angry Men*, and also in the first of the films two exterior shots, the camera follows the thick columns of the courthouse from the ground level up to the tympanum. The sheer size of the film screen allowed another dimension, or possibility of experimenting with verticality. The camera focuses on the text “*Administration of Justice is the Firmest Pillar of Good Government*” — a comment to the monumental size and impression of the building in which the law resides. Initially we think of the pillars as carrying the law, as a symbol or manifestation of safety. Later we understand that all this is all an illusion and that the fragility of the law is contrasted to the solidity of the temple in which it’s executed. In the beginning there is a concentration of this main theme of the film that, during the course of the film, will be analyzed. After the camera tracks elevates to the ground and enters the building — as if someone said the show could begin. The camera leads us in through the courtroom and in the same shot we witness the end of the trial. The jury withdraws into the room in which the rest of the film will take place. While the camera enters the room, it places itself high above the characters as if some invisible force was watching the people who slowly arrive. Finally the titles come on superimposed over the people arriving and in a moment were nothing happens. This scene function as a type of subheading for the actual title of the film by providing the viewers with the theme that was to be treated.

In television the hook was followed by an advertising break after which a narrator or a host presented the show, normally a representative from the network sometimes a spokesman for the sponsor addressed the audience. Television reshaped everything to fit a small and
intimate format. In most Playhouse 90 shows a star from an up-coming episode helps with the presentation. The use of star tied in nicely to an up-coming attraction that was to be shown the following week. Normally a segment of this episode was shown video taped or tagged for the occasion. The narrator in turn, personalized the event by intimately turning himself directly to the spectator. A presentation tailored to fit the spectatorial environment of the home was noted in the way the advertisers phrased their messages American Gas Association became Your Gas Company and Pontiac become Your Local Pontiac Dealer.

In film, just as in TV the up-tempo exposition came to a sudden halt as the titles were superimposed over a static camera. In Twelve Angry Men it is the jurors slowly taking their seats in the jury room. The actors slowly entering the stage, was used in several shows notably courtroom dramas which already has the expository character built in. Westinghouse, Studio One’s, "The Defender" (1957) starts in this way, as does the Ford Star Jubilee’s "The Caine Mutiny Court Martial" (1955). The camera remains normally distant observing and static at these moments. However in Westinghouse Studio One’s, 'The Defender" the camera is used in this moment to provide the spectator with additional information provided by the audience in the courtroom.

The presentation of the problem in the exposition of the production is inherited from the theatre. The rest of the play is acted out in restricted space and in a limited time span in accordance with the Aristotelian principles. Generally these are quite well contained within the television drama even though diversions from these principles exist.

The problem is clearly articulated and there are seldom any dramatic changes within the narrative. The wheels of destiny are turning relentlessly as the protagonist encounters his problem to eventually solve it. The first scene in Goodyear Television Playhouse’s, “Marty” ends with the neighbor, a young wife, asking Marty, “When you gonna get married”. 11The

10Jay Boyer, Sidney Lumet (New York, 1993), s. 2
exposition does not always provide the spectator with such a clear articulation of the problem. Barnouw’s described television drama as, “plays of a tight structure attacking the story close to its climax. He meant that the structure of these dramas related to the circumstances they under which they were produced. This description that fits the attic tragedy, but even more so the 19th century well-made-play due to its dependency on structure. The tight structure in live television was a consequence of the primitive technology that enforced a theatrical method, which in turn lead to an aesthetic. Several components can of curse be found in all drama but more so in the French drama such as the dramatic exposition with a presentation of the problem to be solved. The obligatory scene an encounter made necessary by the logic of the plot with a clash between opposing forces is almost always a part of the drama. The emphasis on emotions that usually had the purpose of covering up possible weaknesses in the internal structure of the play. In other word an event that should not be important is made important by the reactions of the actors. A part of this also concerned the establishing of a clear articulated problem in the exposition. Barnouw’s description would exclude for instance Ibsen. Instead of developing the plays by a presentation of the problem in the exposition his plays begin at a crisis. The period of preparation and increasing tension is omitted and the play begins at the brink of catastrophe. The exposition is included but revealed through the characters backwards looking through the entity play. By not compacting the exposition in the first act the narrative becomes retrospective. Even though he was indebted to the formula of the Well-made play he tried to disturb the interpretation through retardation in the presentation of the problem.

In *Ghosts* (Henrik Ibsen, 1881) the central information is kept from the spectator. The relationship between Helene Alving and Minister Mander is developed. However the real dramatic turns are in the narrative concerns the paternity of Regine the maid. That she is the daughter of Mrs. Alving’s late husband is only the beginning of the dramatic escalation. Regine

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falls unknowingly in love with Mrs. Alving’s son, her half brother, Oswald, who, to make things worse, returns from Paris after having contracted syphilis. Even though it sounds like a soap opera, summarized like this, the events serve the purpose of delaying the exposition and more importantly, gradually change the conditions by feeding the spectator with new information and in doing so building and maintaining the suspense. Even if all events are interconnected and related to a singular theme, infidelity and the consequences thereof, the internal structure of the play is consciously veiled from the spectator. This contradicts, for instance, the drama provided by the advocates of well-made plays: Eugene Scribe, Alexandre Dumas fils, or Victorien Sardou, who relied on a fixed form. Just as in the well-made play the form within live television was dependent on structure, but as mentioned previously for different reasons. In the live television drama the problem came out clearly in the first act and often even in the first scene as in the example with Goodyear Television Playhouse’s, “Marty”. It is notable that the problem is often displayed with an immediacy that almost upsets and the equilibrium that normally precedes the problem, and signifies the opening, as in the case of Goodyear Television Playhouse’s, “Marty”. The announcing of Marty’s problem in the first scene starts the play before the spectator has any background.

The principles concerning maintaining temporality and spatial relationships are ancient and can be noted in the Attic tragedy. The extended story and the compressed discourse usually less than a couple of days sometimes just a couple of hours. Spectators invited at a moment when problems built up under a long time culminates and finally erupts. The colliding forces are finally about to clash.

The exposition delineated above is governed by the maintenance of the temporal and spatial relationships. Just as in the Elizabethan drama, the descriptive dialogue compensated for, and filled gaps created by a barren stage, lack of props, and decor. In film the dialogue could be reduced and the environment through camera work could paint the inner landscape as images

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13 John Howard Lawson, op. cit., p. 80
replaced dialogue. Even if certain similarities seem unavoidable it is important to make the distinction that in the theatre the interaction between characters on a stage replace the facial expressions of the individual actor in television. Facial expressions became even more valuable in television even more so because of the psychological realism applied. The dialogue is important in television but not as in the theatre in which dialogue served as the main expression. However, this is not true for the live drama, where a turns or a change in the sequence of events can show up in stage directions, meant only for the director.

The restricted space in television drama works similar to that of the theatre with limited possibility to refer to a location outside the actual stage and constructively build the negative (the invisible) space into narrative narrative. It's through the dialogue that this possibility exists and by reference.

In the closed circuit television theatre the dialogue compensated for a minimalist stage design. The inability to use nature and part of the narration and stage exterior scenes made it more theatrical. Everything had to be presented or hinted symbolically or in dialogue instead of actually being shown as would have been the case in the film with it’s added possibilities. This also makes the use of props and decor to some extent theatrical or stage like

However, less successful plays show an over reliance on stock photography. In *Playhouse 90’s, “The Death of Manolete”* (1957) stock-photography of bullfighting scenes was used to overcome the sense of restricted space and to recapitulate the drama within bull fighting. The failure to compete on the level of action becomes problematic as the live mediums imposed boundaries are rejected. Instead of concentrating on the interior structure and the reliance on the text and acting the filmed footage becomes a disturbing bridge between every scene. In the core of the live drama was a style that made the limitations an advantage not a lack. *Playhouse 90, "The Comedian's"* success lies in the fact that the limitations of the live medium has been recognized and imposed on the production. The moment it would have tried to be cinematic it would have failed. Several episodes of *Playhouse 90* were shot on film or
mixed live and Video. As long as video and live was mixed one could always rely on the fact that the production was broadcast as a live production. The primitive editing methods, as discussed, limited the possibility to use video as anything else than a replacement for kinescope recordings but with a superior image quality. The surprisingly slow demise of the live format can only be attributed to, as mentioned, the problems within video editing as shown in *Playhouse 90*, "The Clouded Image" (1957). The alternative was of course film and in *Playhouse 90*, "The Massacre at Sand Creek" (1956) which was shot like a film in every sense. Not surprisingly the montage replaced camera movements in the filmed productions. Typically the camera in a live television production reframed to fit additional elements into the television frame and adjusted to interaction with the actors movements. This was performed by editing in film, but by small alterations in live television. One would think that the film productions resulted in more fluid camera work but the fact is that the short production schedule resulted in a great deal of editing no tracking shots. Instead pan with zoom became the signature film feature. Film directors with a background in filmed television such as Robert Aldrich, Robert Altman and Sam Peckinpah to mention a few of the more influential once clearly took a strong influence from their background within television.

Discussions of technological differences and similarities between live television and tele-film, as well as generic differences and similarities between live television programming from the so called golden age vs. reality shows have grown out of the misconception that reality television is more than another form of fiction. The reality show is only, vaguely related to the documentary which it supports oneself on generically. The style has not grown out of an ambition to make live television but to create a sense of dramatic presence, which is an aesthetic feature inherent in, live. The tool that achieves this is, in turn, technological one — a consequence of lightweight cameras.

The production process within reality TV is the same as *I Love Lucy*, that is shot live on film with three cameras and, and post edited. Compare this a reality series, for instance,
Expedition Robinson (SVT, 1997-), the original survivor series went on for 13 weeks with constant television filming around the clock and. The competition was in the initial episode four teams with three members in each shaped around a series of tests and the dividing of teams named after the four cardinal points. Every episode ended with voting out the weakest. The episodic structure combined with the tests, and the finalizing votes served the purpose of replacing a narrative that would have existed in a fictional product. Even so an enormous amount of footage was needed to create a sense of intensity. If it was an attempt towards a reality but a controlled and well contained one. The real becomes a raw material for creating a narrative that is quite accomplished considering that the series is actually created out of editing the real in order to make sense to make the conflicts between the teams come to life.

Reality television reflects an ambition to generically create a sense of "real". The live television dealt with here, doesn't have that goal — it projects fiction. The live element does not concern itself with content, but is rather a consequence of technical limitations, when then the mistakes can't be mended. When Whit Bissell, in Playhouse 90’s"The Comedian" accidentally pokes Edmond O'Brien with a cigarette mounted in a long cigarette holder and ashes to the top of O’Brien’s shoulder. Then this is a consequence of technical limitations that imposed a stifling effect on almost every live production even if it was taped because its created in the moment.

When the scene starts and the camera is on air the action is no longer entirely in the hands of the director during live. This is why craftsmen such as the cameraman, gaffer, or the boom operator, can be termed invisible actors. Jean Renoir explained during a time when he tried to implement the ideas of live recording into his films, [...] I am trying to extend my old ideas, and to establish that the camera finally has only one right...that of recording what happens. This means working rather like newsreel cameraman films a race, for instance he
doesn’t ask the runners to start from the exact spot that suits him. He has to manage things so that he can film the race wherever it happens.\(^\text{14}\)

Just as with the live shows during the golden age a reality show today, such as the Expedition Robinson, is shot in sequence. However, the mass of film opens up almost unlimited possibilities during postproduction, something that couldn’t be done in live television. The quote from Renoir doesn’t fit as a definition of reality television as the race always can be altered changed or shown from a different perspective with excessive footage. This can be done because a method has been developed that utilizes the possibilities of live television to create a form of highly selective reality.

Live television provided a limited imagery built on technical restraints. Consequently, the medium developed simplified ways of showing what in film could be done with considerable ease. Success in live television was dependent on extensive pre production and performance in sequence. The style was the consequence, of a coordination of all production elements, and could only be accomplished in one way in order to reach a successful result. The method stood in opposition to film, which was built on segmentation (shooting out of sequence) and postproduction. To some extent, the live medium actually benefited stylistically by the intrinsic technological limitations that under any other circumstances would have been a problem. The theatrical performance with its reliance on scripts and acting, and most importantly, the continuous shooting, created a strong tension that only with great difficulty could be obtained with the use of film. Generically the live drama was forced into a niche of psychological realism with closed sets and scripts dialogue laden, and in which the camera operators, and the boom men also where actors — invisible ones— playing almost in real time. In other words, some of the tangible excitement with the form grew from the fact that it was performed live and this created a tension. Can this sense of live be successfully recreated on film? That’s a question

\(^{14}\) Charles Barr, “‘They Think It’s All Over’: The Dramatic Legacy of Live Television” in Big Picture Small Screen: The Relations Between Film and Television, Academia Research Monograph 16, ed. John Hill and Martin McLoone (Luton:
open for debate. If the word “live” equals a certain loss of control over the events as they
develop within the framework of a production, then no. The media environment is permeated by
realism but has little to do with the real. Realism on television represents just a generic
preference. In live television it was a technological consequence

Watching Goodyear Television Playhouse’s, “Marty” today, 50 years after it was broadcast
the first time (1953) it is still described as a live performance, even though it's half a century
ago. Switching between cameras during a live television production is a simultaneous activity
therefore a part of the actual performance. Altering the result by manipulating the footage
during postproduction takes the work into the realm of fiction technologically. The creator adds
his aesthetic judgment or rather creates it later instead of as in previous example during the
broadcast.

Footnotes

3 Pat Weaver with Thomas M. Coffey, The Best Seat In The House: The Golden Years Radio and Television (New
6 Arthur Schneider, Jump Cut! Memoirs of a Pioneer Television Editor (Jefferson, North Carolina & London:
7 Arthur Schneider, p. 86-87
8 Jean-Luc Godard, ”Renoir and Television” in Godard on Godard, publish. And trans. Tom Milne (New York; Da
   Capo Press Inc., 1972) s. 143-146 (initially published in Arts nr. 718, April 15 1959)


14. Charles Barr, “‘They Think It’s All Over’: The Dramatic Legacy of Live Television” in *Big Picture Small Screen: The Relations Between Film and Television*, Academia Research Monograph 16, ed. John Hill and Martin McLoone (Luton: University of Luton)

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