

Cinematicity on Television: An Aestheticization of Time

With the popularization of television series of very high quality and production value (*Breaking Bad*, *Game of Thrones*...), film and media scholars have begun to discuss the idea of a “cinematization” of television. But what exactly does it mean when we use the term “cinematic” in reference to media other than the cinema itself? What techniques and qualities must television shows demonstrate in order to receive the distinction of “cinematic”? I will argue that one of the primary criteria that situate certain television series within this category of "cinematic" has to do with their repertoire of devices aimed at *aestheticizing time*. This treatment of time is not only a question of seriality and of narrative structure, but it is also a privileged feature of the formal palette of these shows, borrowing from the cinematic toolbox of devices such as the prolific use of the long take, deliberate contemplative moments of plot lag, a dedication to the episodic and the quotidian within the narrative, and the common occurrence of episodes which serve a purely aesthetic function instead of the advancement of the plot. Furthermore, many of these can be traced through a direct lineage to cinematic traditions and modes of production such as Italian neorealism, “slow” cinema, auteurism, and the so-called “New Hollywood”. This paper will examine the formal devices used to aestheticize time in contemporary Anglo-American television series in relation to the cinematic movements they are borrowed from.

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