

DOWNLOAD PDF ITS NOT TV, ITS HBOS ORIGINAL PROGRAMMING

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Chapter 1 : It's Not TV: Watching HBO in the Post-Television Era, 1st Edition (Paperback) - Routledge

Kim Akass and Janet McCabe KIM: Whenever we start thinking about Quality TV, particularly in preparation for papers such as these, our discussions more often than.

In creating incessant divisions in genre, authorship and aesthetics, HBO incorporates artistic norms and principles of evaluation and puts them into circulation as a succession of oppositions – oppositions that we will explore throughout this paper. What we learn from HBO, in how it systematically sets about legitimising a discourse of television distinction and prestige, is how the company functions as a site of cultural legitimisation. Such thinking helps us explain how HBO has aligned its brand with already legitimated cultural forms to authenticate an institutional model of restricted cultural TV production; and this model makes sense of what they do and how they understand themselves and their field, as well as influences behaviours and thinking about how we consume and understand distinct and prestigious television in the post-network era. Taking forward this idea of HBO as global brand, and understanding the implications of its transnational appeal beyond the United States, gives us the opportunity to speak to the themes of this special issue, to look at of what motivates re-makes and filiations at the level of ideas, and to examine how HBO bestows a sense of prestige, value and exclusivity on that endeavour. Our article sheds light on what the practices of the company can teach us about the complex interaction between television, culture and commerce; we aim to tease out their implications for the production of contemporary original serial drama and demonstrate how, in turn, the aesthetic style and storytelling practices developed at HBO, and the value placed on them, have been adapted in and through other TV institutional contexts across the globe. Rather than merely listing features of serial storytelling that could be defined as original and innovative, this article is concerned with searching out the very site of discourse – of power and knowledge – in which this kind of television is defined and made possible in the first place: Key to our approach is the work of political sociologist Pierre Bourdieu ; Scholars working on the cultural legitimation of contemporary TV culture have frequently turned to him as an important critical source Michael Z. Taking forward this idea of how HBO bestows a sense of prestige, value and exclusivity on its cultural enterprise, and mobilised by the membership of this field as well as contemporaries invested in this particular reading of it, this article sheds new light on what the sustained presence the company situated in its specific cultural field can teach us about the complex interaction between television, culture and the economics of TV – to tease out the implications for how the field of cultural production in which HBO operates has imposed a particular vision of television as culture in the contemporary age. Television screens have become wider, larger, flatter and HD. Newman and Elana Levine, allowed for new ways of consuming, watching and appreciating television ; Across its history HBO has repeatedly pushed the boundaries of the medium – in terms of delivery, form and content – motivated by its economically precarious and, at times, institutionally marginal position in the US audiovisual media ecology. As of December HBO had an established 43 million domestic subscribers and by that figure had risen to 49million, which included users of its newly launched streaming service, HBO NOW Statista. HBO has gone from a small, almost regional service in the northeastern and Mid-Atlantic area of the United States to become a truly global brand and an internationally networked owner-syndicator. In establishing this pay-wall, the company set itself apart from the ordinary economics of the basic cable and free-to-air networks as a way of delivering a television not seen elsewhere. Until the mids, HBO busied itself establishing a coherent and highly visible brand identity, offering exclusive access to what could not be seen elsewhere on either free TV or basic cable e. Post saw a shift, in part because HBO had established its brand, and in part because the TV landscape was changing with the proliferation of production and flow propelled by accelerated economic and technological forces Strauhbaar Thus when Jeff Bewkes took over as president and CEO in , he instituted a different concept of creative control, with the aim of creating a more intense, long lasting relationship between subscribers and the HBO brand in and through its production of original series. Rather than relying solely on

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Hollywood or producing one-off TV events, such as boxing matches and comedy specials, to fill its schedules, this owner-syndicator as producer took responsibility for the production of series perceived to be of a different quality from the opposition and thus distinguished itself from its cable rivals. As it positioned its original series in the US market, HBO not only disseminated the idea of an exclusive viewing experience a gated community through subscriptions , but also brought into play particular viewing protocols and ways of thinking about its series, which would enable and encourage the viewer to discriminate an HBO original from ordinary television. Central to its success in transforming the company from an occasional use channel into a truly cultural phenomenon was its audacious logo: In order to give a better focus to this argument, we will concentrate on the post era. In part, because the history of HBO until this point has been relatively well documented see for example, Edgerton and Jones ; Leverette, Ott and Buckley, ; DeFino, ; but in part because the resignation of Chris Albrecht, following his arrest for assault Steinberg, , came at an uncertain time for HBO. It did for all intent and purpose appear as if HBO as a cultural force was at an end. Far from being in decline, and as we shall argue, HBO had built sufficient cultural and symbolic capital to remain a gatekeeper and tastemaker of contemporary TV culture. In the period following it has normalised ways of thinking about and practising what it means to be original in contemporary television seriality, and established its platforms as an alternative site for consuming that kind of television as art. Within this broader field, HBO represents a restricted small-scale cultural production. This is a belief in the value of the work as art, knowledge that functions to define the restricted field of cultural production, but also in the circulation of this kind of television as prestigious cultural commodity. Its original series comprise of fewer episodes 13, as opposed to the 22 made for network , lasting a full-one hour as opposed to 42mins, because of the need to accommodate commercials and limited runs as opposed to being extended and repeated across the network cycle ; the originals air without being audience tested first and are initially only available via subscription, box set or streaming services such as HBO Now. Implanted in its original programming philosophy, and made intelligible in each series and repeated with every new one, is how HBO nurtures a particular idea of delivering television to its audience in opposition to the mainstream commercial TV. It is able to conceive and bring into effect its own values and its own codes of legitimacy while at the same time repudiating outside sanctions and demands. It is imperative not to see these two subfields as somehow fixed categories “mainstream broadcast network television, restricted small-scale cultural TV production at HBO, but instead as elements in a sliding scale of cultural practice, distinguished by two hierarchical principles defining the struggle to take up a position within the cultural field of production: Game of Thrones is arguably one of the most successful recent series coming out of the HBO stable, in part capitalising on the initial advantages of the innovative methods of delivery, using HBO Go, its VOD service, as well as the exclusive deal with companies like Sky Atlantic to air its series outside the United States. Here we can see not only how HBO makes use of originals to attract an audience for its new delivery service, but also how other channels adopt the HBO exclusivity as a way to boost their own reputation. What goes around comes around in the world of HBO originals and the premium cable channel has come full circle with its investment in series to increase audience share. It is at this point in technological developments that cultural capital begins to make economic sense and shows how HBO seeks to remain in the forefront of the television game. Reputation is essential before a discourse of what constitutes innovation in television drama can be uttered and, more importantly, sanctioned and guaranteed. By moving television into this domain of the cultivated tastes HBO shifts its own originals up the cultural hierarchy, while leaving in place those very distinctions of worth and respectability that denigrate television as a medium in the first place. Reliance on a single authorial vision finds HBO placing a high premium on the kind of authorship already consecrated elsewhere in the field: Appreciation of the authored HBO original requires understanding of the subtle codes and rules required of commercial US television, a comparison that allows for HBO to reject the commercial TV norm and assert its unique willingness to accommodate talent. Structured in this artistic field, the writer is located outside mainstream network practices and the demands to appeal to the largest possible market. Note, for instance, how HBO waited for over a year

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for the storied mind of David Chase to find inspiration to write a third series of *The Sopranos*; or the mythology that swirls around David Milch and his creative if flawed genius. Known for his cerebral and unorthodox approach to scripting, for the profanity of his dialogue and precision of his plots, Milch is positioned at HBO as elevating the very possibilities of the medium in which he works – a reputation only enhanced by failed projects like *John of Cincinnati* and *Luck*. *Boardwalk Empire* may not have gained the popular acclaim of *Breaking Bad* or *The Sopranos* but it is one of the most exceptional, multi-layered television dramas of the past 25 years. How they oozed class. But what made the series such a success overall was that it was so intricate. *Boardwalk Empire* ran for 5 seasons over a relatively short span of 4 years, but in that time the critical acclaim it received, principally for its lavish visual style and historical accuracy, saw the series receive 57 Primetime Emmy Award nominations, of which it won. This exceptional industry recognition further positions the audience within this relationship between the author, HBO and the critic, enabling viewers to interpret and appreciate the work and develop more refined preferences than those associated with more mainstream commercial television. HBO has, for example, influenced the behaviour and attitude of TV creatives, in particular filmmakers, scriptwriters and actors. In its gatekeeper role HBO gives exposure a scheduled slot to showcase talents, recognition judged as worthy enough to be chosen and ideally also prestige selected for primetime slots and esteemed awards and honours. The image of HBO, in terms of the way in which it orientates its productions as distinct and original in the field, attracts those who are already established in a similar position in related fields. Martin Scorsese, associated with the American New Wave and an auteur deemed independent from Hollywood dominance, may have brought his reputation to HBO for reinventing the classic generic rules of the gangster genre when he came to direct the pilot of *Boardwalk Empire*, but conversely HBO is a place where creatives like Scorsese, but also Todd Haynes *Mildred Pierce*, Jonathan Nolan brother of film director Christopher, Lisa Joy and JJ Abrams *Westworld*, acquire symbolic capital: HBO thus provides a framework for understanding this group of diverse group of creative. Put another way, these creatives share a certain cinephilic disposition with HBO and its field of cultural production critics, industry professionals. For filmmakers, an HBO Award offers industry credibility, with an opportunity to showcase their work on the premiere-pay network, revenue from award prizes and licensing deals to begin their next project, and direct access to acquisitions and development executives. Such a circuit not only addresses issues with socio-political relevance, but also are exactly the kinds of distinct, peripheral and controversial cultural products that find a home at HBO. This conceptualisation of HBO deals with the way it fosters ways of making and nurturing an appreciation about television, contributing to the largely unconscious function of rules, categories and values in television production. This article has made sense of what HBO does and how they understand themselves and their position within their field, as the company competes for, and takes up, positions, not only in and through the institutional structures of global television, but also the incorporated structures the habitus, which allows them to participate in the first place. Suffering fatigue and in the face of growing scepticism, the subsequent withdrawal of critical validation gave rise to a notion that HBO was in decline. Still, what we see post is how robust HBO is within its field, as it continues to function as an influential site of cultural legitimisation. Its cultural consecration continues to lend a commonsensical notion of what constitutes originality in contemporary television seriality – its aesthetic values, an autonomous and strong authorial voice, complex storyworlds, long narrative arcs and high production values, a set of arrangement held up by the beliefs and practices of the TV business, critics and audiences.

Chapter 2 : It's not TV : watching HBO in the post-television era in SearchWorks catalog

Identifying a new kind of program that had first appeared on American screens in , which was "better, more sophisticated, and more artistic than the usual network fare" (12), he initiated a debate for defining quality at the very moment HBO was in the process of rebranding its original series as "not TV."

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Chapter 3 : Publications â€” Department of Film, Media and Cultural Studies, Birkbeck, University of London

It's Not TV, it's HBO's Original Programming: Producing Quality TV, Janet McCabe and Kim Akass Part II: Text and Contexts Introduction: The Not TV Text, Brian L. Ott.

Chapter 4 : It's Not TV - Marc Leverette, Brian L Ott, Cara Louise Buckley - HÃ¥ftad () | Bokus

It's Not TV provides fresh insights into the "post-television network" by examining HBO's phenomenally popular and pioneering shows, including The Sopranos, The Wire.

Chapter 5 : It's Not TV : Marc Leverette :

/ Shawn McIntosh -- It's not TV, it's HBO's original programming / Janet McCabe and Kim Akass -- Introduction: The not TV text / Brian L. Ott -- CarnivÃ le / David Marc -- Challenging sitcom conventions / Lisa Williamson -- "Cocksucker, motherfucker, tits" / Marc Leverette -- Baltimore on The wire / Blake D. Ethridge -- Introduction: The not TV.

Chapter 6 : Holdings : It's not TV : | York University Libraries

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Chapter 7 : Project MUSE - The Essential HBO Reader

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