

Raymond Williams's Flow and the Study of Music in Contemporary Dutch Television

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Abstract

According to Raymond Williams, “flow” is the “characteristic organisation, and therefore the characteristic experience” of television (Williams 1974, 86). Television is planned in such a way that different programmes are tied together to create a unified experience. His concept is widely used in television studies and in studies of the music in television. However, television is in constant transition, and several changes have made scholars rethink Williams’s concept of flow. William Uricchio described a shift from planned flow to viewer-determined and metadata-flow, due to changes in television technologies, whilst Will Brooker described a change in viewer activity through his concept of “overflow” (Uricchio 2004; Brooker 2001).

These alternations raise the question to what extent Williams’s concept of flow is still useful in the study of television music. In this thesis, the description by Ron Rodman of music in different semiotic spaces of television, and Rick Altman’s functions of television music are discussed in relation to revisions of flow (Rodman 2010; Altman 1986). An analysis of an evening of Dutch commercial broadcaster RTL4 shows that music is mainly used to maintain the original experience of planned flow: to entertain and create a sense of continuity for the viewer and to prevent them from making the decision to switch the channel.

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Introduction: Raymond Williams's experience

When Welsh academic Raymond Williams visited the United States in the seventies and switched on the television in his hotel room, he was fascinated by the experience he went through. To refer to this experience, in which different programmes constantly follow each other and are tied together, Williams coined the term “flow.” Instead of the timed units that are suggested by broadcasters in television guides and commentary, these sequences compose “the real broadcasting” (Williams 1974, 90). Flow is one of the most important concepts in television studies, and even though Williams's idea was based on American commercial television specifically, it has been used worldwide as Jostein Gripsrud mentioned (1998). The concept was important in the study of music in television too, as can be read in writings by Rick Altman (1986) and more recently Ronald Rodman (2010).

However, television has undergone a lot of changes since its inception, such as digitalization and internet distribution, and the prevailing conception today is that television is a medium in constant transition (Spigel 2004). The experience of watching television and the way it is consumed have changed over time as well: other devices like smartphones or tablets are often used in front of the television screen. This idea of a medium in transition raises the question whether Williams's flow fits the study of television music nowadays, forty-three years later. Scholars have noticed this, but how have they revised Williams's concept of flow? And what has been written about the relation between flow and music? Can new perspectives in television studies revise the ideas on television flow and music? To what extent is Williams's concept of flow useful in the study of contemporary television music?

In the following pages, I will first examine how Williams's concept of flow has been revised by several authors in television studies. I will focus on changes in television technology and viewer activity, two main aspects that have shifted and changed the experience of television, inspiring scholars to adjust Williams's ideas. Afterwards, I will explore the different views musicologists have expressed on the functions music has in television in relation to flow. With the revisions of flow in mind, I will then investigate to what extent these influence the music that is used in contemporary television.

Because television and the meaning it has in different cultures are in constant transition, it is not always clear what exactly is meant by it, and therefore it is important to notice what kind of television has my focus. In accordance with Williams, my research is on broadcast television: the sounds and images sent by broadcasters to the viewer's television set. Certainly, many television programmes are available online and it is possible to watch those that you as a

viewer missed during its initial broadcast, but this new kind of television removes the programme from the context it was originally in. Moreover, flow is based on *commercial* broadcast television and this thesis will be as well, because I do not want to state the obvious by analysing a public service broadcaster without, for instance, advertisements as programme interruptions. Lastly, I will focus on Dutch television, because that is best accessible to me as Netherlands-based student. Contemporary Dutch commercial broadcast television is similar to the American television that inspired Williams to coin his concept, because both are a system in which viewers are sold to advertisers. Advertisers pay more if the audience of a channel – the audience that they can reach – is bigger.

To illustrate the different viewpoints on flow and music, I have analysed one evening of Dutch commercial television channel RTL4 (RTL4 2017). This evening consisted of ca. four hours of television and five programmes, for which the schedule as communicated by the broadcaster in programme guides can be found in Appendix 1A. However, as Williams pointed out with his notion of flow, the four hours of television contained more than only those five shows. In Appendix 1B I have given an overview of how the evening of television was precisely constructed. The analyses above are loosely based on the techniques of the “long- and medium-range” analyses that Williams used to reveal the several layers of flow (Williams 1974, 96). While long-range analysis shows the sequential programmes, medium-range analysis goes a bit more into detail, by illustrating what comes between the programmes. Thirdly, there is what Williams calls “close-range analysis,” which is a detailed description of the words and images (96). He does not take sound into account and therefore I will not use this precise type of analysis.

Flow revised

To multiple authors, Raymond Williams’s concept of flow was questionable for several reasons. John Ellis argued that flow is not necessarily the characteristic experience of television, but that it is rather a matter of segmentalisation. According to him, “the segmental commodity is found right across TV’s output,” because it exists of distinct programmes and advertisements (Ellis 1992, 119). In the cinema, the audience is there for “a single text which performs and completes the narrative image circulated for it,” while television consists of segments with a different meaning of their own (Ellis 1992, 126). Jostein Gripsrud agrees with Ellis, because “day-to-day talk about television among people tends to be about specific series, discussions, documentaries

or whatever”; viewers watch and discuss these different programmes, not television in general (Gripsrud 1992, 28).

However, it is important to recognise that there is a difference between how the viewer *thinks* they watch television and how this is in reality. Indeed, someone might switch on the television set to watch *The Voice of Holland* or *RTL Nieuws* specifically, but the advertisements that are interrupting these programmes and (perhaps) next programmes are all part of the viewing experience of that night. That is exactly what the television broadcaster wants and what Williams means with his concept. Moreover, it is necessary for the broadcaster to create a continuous flow of images and sounds, to keep the audience from switching to other channels. Criticism such as Ellis’s and Gripsrud’s has not been convincing enough against Williams’s concept, considering the appearance of flow throughout the history of television studies, in which the original meaning was changed, but often kept as starting point.

Several developments surrounding the television experience have made scholars rethink flow, and to keep a clear overview of the impact these developments had on the concept, I have structured these into two groups: changes in television technology and changes in viewer activity. These are by no means distinct groups, because developments in both can have mutual influence.

Changes in television technology

Amanda D. Lotz wrote that, because television technologies such as control devices disrupt the characteristic experience of flow, Williams’s concept needs revision (Lotz 2007, 34). William Uricchio did this in one of his essays (Uricchio 2004). He repositions “flow as a means of sketching out a series of fundamental shifts in the interface between viewer and television, and thus in the viewing experience” (165). He does consider flow a useful term, because the way it is used in the past reflects developments in television studies and “it also illuminates the clustered experiences of the medium, the generational vision of television” (166). The form of television that Williams experienced was very specific for that time, and these different generational visions of television changed this way of viewing. According to Uricchio, Williams’s television was program-based flow, but with the remote control (RCD), viewers were given direct control over what they were watching, resulting in “a shift from Williams’s idea of flow to flow as a set of choices and actions initiated by the viewer” (170). They have become able to easily switch the channel whenever they want, instead of walking to the

television set and doing it manually. Concerning television music, the RCD was known as “television silencer,” because the sound could be muted with just one button (170).

After this shift from flow as programming strategy to flow as initiated by the viewer, “the most fundamental transformation (...) can be found with the application of metadata systems and filtering technologies to the process of program selection” (Uricchio 2004, 172). With this system, the television experience nowadays lies in the hands of the technology and metadata programmers. Important to notice is that Uricchio uses the American television system TiVo as his example, but this is just one of the systems on the market.¹ The extent to which television directly steers the programme choice of a viewer via metadata depends on the specific television technology they have at home. Another way programmes come to their attention nowadays is via metadata on the internet: online activity on social media, e.g. Facebook and Twitter, can lead to targeted advertising for television programmes.

The commercial television industry became anxious because they were losing control, and with programming techniques they tried to prevent the viewer from switching between the rising number of available channels. A popular programme at the beginning of the evening, the hammock (a weak or new programme between two popular programmes) and programmes of a similar genre scheduled after each other are common techniques (Uricchio 2004, 173). Omitting advertisements between programmes and dropping the theme song of the next programme at the end of the previous one, were important techniques to maintain continuity and blur transitions between programmes (173). In short, Uricchio claims that changes in television technology necessitated broadcasters to develop their programming techniques to keep a sense of flow. In Appendix 1B, it becomes clear that RTL4 uses at least one of these techniques, because, apart from some single advertisements, there are no several-minute-blocks of advertisements between the different shows that aired after 8pm. I will come back to Uricchio’s ideas later, when I examine and discuss the use of music in relation to flow in detail.

Changes in viewer activity

The adjustments that Uricchio made to Williams’s concept of flow were based on changes in television technology, but the situation in the living room also changed, because broadcasters have been participating in a process that Henry Jenkins described as cultural and media convergence (Jenkins 2006, 3). Cultural convergence happens when viewers use multiple media

¹ TiVo is an originally American media player with the possibility to record television programmes. It also provides an extensive television schedule, based on the interests of the viewer.

at the same time, and media convergence is the choice programme directors make to use multiple media to tell a story. This last type of convergence is also called “transmedia storytelling,” and the ideal situation Jenkins described for this is when one story is told bit by bit through multiple media, and all these together constitute the complete story (Mittell 2014, 255). Nonetheless, as Jason Mittell argued, the television story often functions as the “mothership,” while stories told through other media are additions that are not necessary to understand the television story (255).

Will Brooker noticed that this convergence changes the experience of television and requires a new vision on Williams’s concept of flow. Following all the stories in a transmedia environment requires an active attitude of the viewer, and their participation is rewarded with more information about what happens with main characters in the programme. The “text of the TV show is no longer limited to the television medium” and through (online) participation, the viewer is “not just a bewildered observer, but (...) becoming part of the broader text,” in other words, the programme “overflows the bounds of television” (Brooker 2001, 457). The television experience does not only encompass what happens on television as with Williams’s flow, but goes “beyond the scheduling framework”, hence “overflow” (461).

Brooker wrote his article in 2001 and concludes from his research that the degree of cultural convergence with an audience depends on socioeconomic background. Only a small part of the audience for his case study of *Dawson’s Creek* had a mobile phone and access to the internet, but this is different in 2017. The larger part of the television audience has a mobile phone which provides easy access to the internet and to other ways of participating with television programmes.² Yet, as Mittell argued, in most cases, it is still not necessary to use other media to follow the story told on television. In the *Goede tijden, slechte tijden* app GTST: Meerdijk, viewers of the series can access exclusive content after they solve puzzles, such as pictures and conversations between characters, but viewers who do not have this app can still follow the series only through the television episodes (CLT-UFA NL 2017a).

Next to the difference in internet-accessibility since Brooker’s research, it is also important to keep in mind that most of the programmes that constituted my case study are non-fictional, opposite to *Dawson’s Creek*. However, because of choices directors need to make concerning the editing and selection in their programmes, it can be considered as a way of storytelling as well, even though these stories itself are not fictional. In *RTL Late Night* for instance, certain subjects are chosen to discuss, and in *The Voice of Holland* the contestants tell

² Market research has shown that in January 2017, 83% of the Dutch population (> 13 years old) has a smartphone (GfK 2017).

stories about their lives and about the rehearsals for their battles. Viewers can get to know more about these subjects and stories when they visit the website of both programmes. Moreover, viewers of *The Voice of Holland* can download the RedRoom app, in which they can get to know the participants of the show, watch their backstage vlogs, and follow music lessons, “Vocal Sessions,” from the judges (CLT-UFA NL 2017b).

Brooker described his overflow in 2001 in terms of television that goes on after the programme broadcast has ended, but with the faster and smaller laptops, and devices such as mobile phones and tablets, television texts often overflow the television set simultaneously with the broadcast. In *RTL Late Night*, viewers are recommended to use the hashtag #RTLLN and discuss the subjects of that evening on social media. *The Voice of Holland* does the same (#TVOH), and in the app the audience can decide which participant is better. The broadcaster uses these opinions in the programme by showing the percentage of viewers who agreed with the judge’s decision. This makes the audience feel part of the show, and watching the show during its initial broadcast is “rewarded” with this possibility of participation, what Henry Jenkins calls participatory culture, and shows that viewers are no longer passive (Jenkins 2006, 3). Furthermore, *The Voice of Holland* gives viewers the possibility to experience the show as if they are present in the television studio: a specific set of Philips lights can be connected to the app, which then follows the colour scheme of the lights in the studio.

Television music and flow

Raymond Williams’s concept of flow has been used in different ways in the study of television music. John Ellis wrote that sound is an important aspect of television, because “[s]ound can be heard where the screen cannot be seen” (Ellis 1992, 128). With a television in your own house, it is easy to walk away while waiting for a certain programme to commence, and the sound can reach ears even while their owner is not in the same room. Apart from this observation, Ellis does not elaborate on the different ways in which sound can attract the audience’s attention, but other authors did.


Ron Rodman and spaces of television

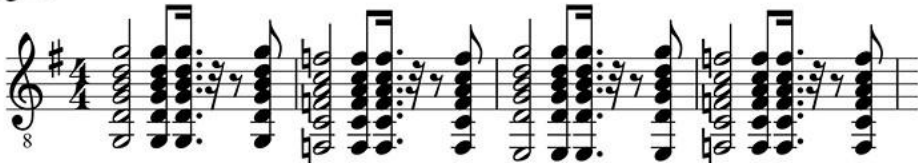
Ron Rodman discusses flow and television music in relation to narrativity in his book on *American Narrative Television Music* (2010). According to him, “from the perspective of narrativity and narrative agency, the context of flow can be seen to operate in three semiotic spaces, with each part representing a different narrative agency” (Rodman 2010, 53). Rodman

borrowed categories as explained by Gérard Genette, and applies them to television music. The first category is music in the extradiegetic space, where all elements and texts that form the television flow are ordered and coordinated. It “is a sort of meta-narrator of television” and here music primarily “functions as a vehicle to transition in or out of extradiegetic space” (53). When programmes on RTL4 are interrupted for advertisements, the channel logo appears with the word “reclame,” always accompanied by the same musical motif. The second category is the intradiegetic space, which “consists of those aspects not within the actual story world itself, but those things that convey the tone or mood of the story” (53). For instance, the low strings that slowly descend while one of the characters in *Goede tijden, slechte tijden* gets fired are situated in this space. To the third category, diegetic space, belongs everything that has to do with the story world, like the performances in *The Voice of Holland* and *RTL Late Night*, or a radio that is switched on by one of the characters in *Goede tijden, slechte tijden*.

When we consider the viewer-determined flow that was described by Uricchio, music with the function of transitioning in and out of extradiegetic space might be more important in a time when it is easier for the audience to switch to another channel, because of recognisability and continuity. When a viewer gets acquainted with the bumper of RTL4, it is easier to recognise when advertisements start and end, and these moments and the entire channel might become familiar to them.³ The use of the same music also creates a form of continuity over the entire programme, and most of all it ties the different texts together to create the continuous flow over programmes. If this happens smoothly, the viewer might be less tempted to switch the channel after an episode of their favourite programme has come to its end. The bumper on RTL4 often appears in combination with the first advertisement, for instance at the start of the second block during *The Voice of Holland*. The channel logo appears on the left, over the image of a woman waking up and taking a shower with Andrélon shower gel. Example 1 shows a simplification of what happens in the music. In the beginning, the standard bumper-tune plays,

Example 1

Bumper RTL4 

Advertisement Andrélon 

³ A bumper is a distinctive image and melody that belongs to a television channel which often appears before and after a block of advertisements.

which ends on the notes C, D, F, and G. During the last note, the word “reclame” shortly appears on the top right and a G chord on acoustic guitar sounds along, which is part of the music that belongs to the Andrélon advertisement. After the last note of the RTL4 motif, the logo and word disappear and only the advertisement is left: a smooth transition into the block of advertisements.⁴

RTL4 uses this technique to keep the audience from switching the channel when the advertisements start, but Uricchio also pointed out that the RCD was a “television silencer,” so muting the sound is another, rather simple option for the viewer to eliminate the probably annoying sound of advertisements in the break. Therefore, advertisers have to make sure the viewer does not do this, and one way of making advertisements more attractive is to use popular music that entertains the people. David Huron points out that the use of entertaining music can be traced back to vaudeville theatre, where the music served to “render the advertisement less of an unwanted intrusion” (Huron 1989, 560). With this in mind, it is not striking at all that quite a few of the advertisements on RTL4 use popular music. The ad of supermarket chain Jumbo is set in a log cabin in a forest, with a family celebrating Christmas, and uses “The Christmas Song (Chestnuts Roasting on an Open Fire)” by Nat King Cole. Swarovski uses an obviously appropriate cover of Rihanna’s “Diamonds,” and the ad for Nederlandse Spoorwegen (Dutch Railways), with the message that home is the most beautiful destination, contains a cover of Simon and Garfunkel’s “Homeward Bound.” This entertaining music contributes to flow, because it keeps the audience from leaving the television flow they are in.

Rick Altman’s functions of sound

Another author who examined flow and the functions of music in television, more generally the function of sound, is Rick Altman. Before I review these functions, it is important to understand his particular view on Williams’s flow. Altman points out that television critics mostly focus on image and leave an elaborate analysis of the sound out of their studies (Altman 1986, 39). With his essay dedicated to this “forgotten” element of television, he describes the way television sound relates to flow and herewith criticizes Williams’s concept. However, Altman intends “not to criticize the notion itself, but the claim that it is characteristic of television in general” (40). According to Altman, it depends on what kind of industrial system surrounds the television culture, which varies in different countries. The level of flow is higher when it is a more competitive system, because different broadcasters want – and need – to keep the audience

⁴ This specific way in which music creates continuity only occurs once in this evening of television.

connected to their frequency. With rating systems, broadcasters can show advertisers the size of the audience they want to sell, but because rating systems do not measure attentiveness, the audience does not necessarily have to watch the television set.⁵ Altman mentions that inattentive viewing is the most common viewing mode because of the operation of daily activities near the television set, which he describes as “household flow” (41-42). “The presence of flow is dependent not on competition between channels (...), but on *competition with household flow*,” and the soundtrack functions in several ways to let television’s planned flow win this competition: the sound must make the plot easy to follow, cue the most important things, create continuity over programmes and give basic information that is desired (such as indication of time) (44; italics in the original).

Altman has a good point in stating that different kinds of television demand different levels of attention and different levels of flow. However, as I have shown, some things have changed in television experience. Altman writes that the viewing mode differs from watching television when one goes to the cinema, because “when it’s time to watch the film, you leave the household behind” (Altman 1986, 44). This might be true, but nowadays the viewer can often watch television series whenever they want via their television set or on the internet, in the case of RTL4 via RTL XL. When they decide to push the play button for a particular programme, are they not automatically more attentive viewers? And, with Uricchio’s shifting agency in mind, is it still the case that the plot must be easy to follow through the audio and that the most important things get cued by sound, if television technologies allow the audience to pause, rewind and replay scenes and entire episodes? Uricchio describes the changes from planned flow to viewer-determined and metadata-flow, and nowadays we can speak of a bigger competition than the one claimed by Altman: a competition between these three kinds of flow *and* household flow.

Moreover, Altman already mentions kids doing other things in front of the television set than watching television, such as reading books or playing with toys, but technological devices have widened the range of possibilities of what one can do. While it was more difficult for broadcasters to engage the viewer with their programmes when books and toys distracted them, technological devices can connect the viewer to their programmes on a whole different level,

⁵ Attentiveness is still not measured in Dutch rating systems in 2017. The software that measures the viewing behaviour keeps track of the amount of time the television is set to a channel. It does include postponed viewing, only if this happens within six days after the original broadcast (Stichting Kijkonderzoek, n.d.). <https://kijkonderzoek.nl/het-kijkonderzoek-in-vogelvlucht>

as Brooker's overflow suggests.⁶ As I have argued, it does not seem that broadcasters try to ignore this media convergence, but they embrace it with e.g. mobile applications. From this point of view, household flow is not a competition, but *becomes part of* planned flow, that is, part of the television experience.

Because of these changes to the position of Altman's household flow in relation to other kinds of flow, not all his functions apply to contemporary television music. He writes about six techniques that are commonly used in the television soundtrack, which support and maintain the relationship between planned and household flow (Altman 1986, 44-51). An overview of these can be found in Appendix 2, in which I have grouped them into sound that tells the viewer what is happening (*histoire*) and sound that tells the viewer when it is important to watch the screen (*discours*) (50). Altman's functions are about *sound* in television, but only music is the subject of my research. Opinions differ on when a collection of sounds can be called music, but I will consider all sound except speech, audiences and diegetic sound effects (e.g. the sound of a crashing car or a car horn) as so. Therefore, internal audiences are not important in the remaining part of this thesis.

In my case study, Altman's functions are not as distinct as they seem to be. After watching RTL4 for a while, the motif of the bumper I described earlier tells the viewer when advertisements are starting or ending without having to watch, something Altman calls labeling. At the same time, this tells the viewer that a programme break is over, so they might have to go and watch the set again, which is a case of italicizing. This occurs in the extradiegetic space, but music in the diegetic space could serve these same functions, for instance in *The Voice of Holland*. After every battle, the judges discuss the performance, and when they are about to reach their final decision, the lights change, and a recurring musical motif sounds in the studio: a short drum roll, followed by celli that play a repeating pattern of eighth notes until the judge speaks his/her final verdict. This works the same as the bumper, because the viewer can recognize the almost leitmotivic function of this music after watching the programme for a while, and its sudden appearance tells it is important to go and watch which contestant wins.

The question is to what extent Altman's functions still apply to television music, and if so, how? Most of them serve to attract the audience's attention to the television set, to take

⁶ When it comes to programmes, broadcasters can connect with their audience through what Catherine Johnson calls *diegetic*, *pseudo-diegetic* and *extra-diegetic merchandise* (Johnson 2007). Books can be diegetic (part of the programme-story) and pseudo-diegetic (not part of the story in the programme, but an independent story that connects to it). Toys are most of the time extra-diegetic merchandise (not part of the story, but connected to the programme), unless it is a toy that is played with by characters in the story world. Diegetic and pseudo-diegetic merchandise connect the audience to the programme to a higher extent than extra-diegetic merchandise.

viewers out of the household flow and get them into television flow. Italicizing for instance is based on John Ellis's idea that "there is hardly any chance of catching a particular program 'tomorrow,' or 'next week sometime' as there is with a cinema film" (Ellis in Altman 1986, 45). However, as I have argued, with viewer-determined and metadata-flow as new competitors with household flow, it is not extremely important any longer to get the attention of the viewer, because programmes can be paused and viewed at any time.

Altman's function of the sound advance is quite interesting, because he writes about it as a short-term warning in sound for something that is about to happen. The decision-time-musical motif in *The Voice of Holland* is such an example, but RTL4 also does something in a more long-term sense that resembles such a sound advance. In the block of advertisements during *RTL Late Night*, there is a one-minute teaser about what is going to happen in the show after the break. Contrary to expectation, there is no music at all during this teaser, the presenter only tells the subjects that will come after the break, so this sound advance exists out of sole speech. The recognisable trumpets from the *RTL Late Night*-tune do appear after the entire break, where it serves as a wake-up call. That the programme's music does not sound during the teaser might mean that viewers would be confused, because there are more advertisements to come and the programme does not yet start. Altman does not mention something like a wake-up call, but this seems to be a hybrid form of several of his functions. It is labeling because it tells the viewer the programme is starting again, and it is italicizing as well as a sound advance: the viewer is told to rush to the television set because the break is over.

Overflow and music

The alternations that were made by Uricchio automatically returned in my discussion of Rodman's and Altman's ideas on flow and music, but what about Brooker's overflow? I have stated that with overflow, household flow becomes integrated in the television flow, but this is especially the matter for the visual aspects of overflow. None of the apps purposely use music during the broadcast on television, because it would be inconvenient if music in an app plays at the same time as what happens on television.⁷ Ears are always reached, but visuals are not, and it is easy for the active audience who uses the app to choose what to focus on with their eyes, because what they cannot see will not disturb them.

⁷ There is content in both GTST and RedRoom apps that contains music, but this is not meant for use simultaneously with the broadcast.

That does not mean overflow does not happen in relation to television music. After the television broadcast, music is one of the ways in which broadcasters can continue to engage with their audience. This is most pertinent with *The Voice of Holland*, because this programme has music as its main subject. Not only the “Vocal Sessions” and videos of rehearsals in the app, but also the possibility to stream performances on Spotify, show that music is used to engage with the viewer. *RTL Late Night* shares all their (extra) performances via a playlist on YouTube (RTL Late Night 2017). For both programmes, this online musical content is an addition, it is not necessary to watch everything to fully understand the television programme. Because this is the same for all other content, musical overflow is not a revision, but rather an *addition* to Williams’s concept of flow.

Conclusion: the usefulness of Williams’s flow

The television experience has changed since Williams coined his concept of planned flow, because of changes in television technology and viewer activity. Uricchio claims that there has been a shift from planned flow to viewer-determined flow, because it is easy to switch channels. This was followed by a shift to metadata-flow, in which metadata create an evening of television for the viewer. Rick Altman wrote that the characteristic experience of television is a competition between planned flow and household flow, but with Uricchio’s revisions, it is more of a competition between all four kinds of flow.

My analysis of an evening RTL4 has shown that music is used by the broadcaster, not so much to *attract* attention as Altman wrote, but most of all to *keep* the attention of the viewer. Music can create continuity, and keep the viewer from switching channels, so it is primarily used by broadcasters to support the original concept of flow by Williams, to keep the audience as much part of planned flow as possible. Therefore, it is still very important to keep Williams’s concept of flow in mind while discussing music in television. It serves as the foundation with which an increasing number of elements started to compete. Broadcasters try to undermine this competition with clever use of music, it is their ultimate weapon to connect the viewer to their planned flow. Advertisers use the element of music to make sure their audience are at least still approachable via their ears: entertaining music must ensure viewers do not mute the television sound in the advertisement breaks.

Another alternation that was made to Williams’s flow is Brooker’s overflow. However, I have argued that, in the case of music, this is not a revision, but more of an *addition* to flow. Some programmes encourage their audience to use apps and social media while watching, but

these do not include music. Because ears are reached at all times, it would be inconvenient to use extra music during the broadcast. After the broadcast, music is one of the main ways in which broadcasters engage their audience with their programme.

I recognise that one evening of RTL4 only partly illustrates the function that contemporary television music has in relation to flow, but further research can get into more detail. It could also make interesting research to examine how television music and flow are related in other systems of television, for instance public broadcasting systems. Besides, this thesis is, to put it in Uricchio's words, merely a generational vision of flow. It is only a matter of time before television reaches a new era again as the medium in transition that it is. Still, Williams's flow will undoubtedly continue to influence the debates around it for many more years, one way or the other.

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Appendix 1: RTL4, Friday December 22, 2017

A. Schedule

- 19.30 *RTL Nieuws*
News programme.
- 19.55 *RTL Weer*
Weather forecast.
- 20.00 *Goede tijden, slechte tijden*
Fictional television series, airs every Monday-Friday at the same time and has been aired on RTL4 since 1990. Follows the lives of characters in the fictional town of Meerdijk.
- 20.30 *The Voice of Holland*
Talent show in which participants audition in front of four judges (professional singers) in chairs that are facing the audience. Judges can choose if they want to coach the participant initially solely based on the voice, and if they decide to do so the chair turns. In this episode, participants who got through have to sing against each other in a battle, after which their coach decides who is better and who has to go.
- 22.30-23.40 *RTL Late Night*
Late night show with several guests, hosted by Humberto Tan.

B. Scheduling in reality

- 19.30 *RTL Nieuws*
- 19.50 Advertisements
- 19.58 *RTL Weer*
- 20.01 Advertisement with countdown to next programme
- 20.01 *Goede tijden, slechte tijden*
- 20.13 Advertisements
- 20.20 *Goede tijden, slechte tijden*
- 20.32 *The Voice of Holland*
- 20.50 Advertisements
- 20.57 *The Voice of Holland*
- 21.20 Advertisements
- 21.27 *The Voice of Holland*

21.46	Advertisements
21.53	<i>The Voice of Holland</i>
22.17	Advertisements
22.25	<i>The Voice of Holland</i>
22.34	Advertisement with countdown to next programme
22.35	<i>RTL Late Night</i>
22.51	Advertisements
22.54	<i>RTL Late Night</i> (“Straks”)
22.55	Advertisements
22.59	<i>RTL Late Night</i>
23.35	End of RTL Late Night

Appendix 2: Altman's functions of television sound

The six functions of television sound as described by Rick Altman in his "Television/Sound," grouped into sound as histoire and sound as discours (Altman 1986, 44-51).

Sound as histoire

- Labeling: television is made up of "menu items," and the sound labels them. The audience that is only listening knows what kind of things are happening (45).

Sound as discours

- Italicizing: sound calls the audience to attention and tells when important things are happening.
- The sound hermeneutic: audiences look for sources of sound, and "television spectators are led to believe that they have power over the image" (47).
- Internal audiences: sound "provides an internal audience guiding the viewing choices of the external audience" (49).
- The sound advance: sound calls the audience to attention before something important happens, so it can see the event.
- Discursification: Sound can address the viewer, which makes them believe television is "just for me" (51).