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"Televisuality' is a theoretical term coined by John Caldwell in the mid-1990s to characterize a change in the look and practice of television programming. This change began around 1980 and continues to the present day. Describing and discussing television through the lens of televisuality requires one to consider television as a mode of mass communication reliant on popularity with viewers and created in an industrial context whose labor relations affect how

shows are produced. Overall, the main identifying feature of 'the televisual' is 'an excess of style.' Thus, programs produced from the 1980s onward are likely to break with traditional 'invisible' production styles and to innovate in ways that call the viewer's attention to the constructedness of the show—that it is a televisual text and that the viewer is watching (or, in a best-case scenario, participating) in the construction of meaning through attraction to or investment in the style of the televisual text."

—Encyclopedia of Gender in Media

Televisuality

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Style, Crisis, and Authority in American Television

John T. Caldwell



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