



Since TV burst into our homes to stay, it has been competing and gaining territories from radio, magazines and newspapers. In the past these were the only intermediaries between the public and the world at large and information about the most trivial event or most exotic place was devoured. Today we travel around the world in installments and TV from space is an everyday event. As a result, television has been slowly eroding the power, effectiveness and contents of newspapers and magazines which have had to adapt to these facts changing its goals and styles.

Photojournalism has to compete with TV as well, in content and technology. It is an intense competition but at the same time a liberating one. When photography appeared, painting could finally throw away the ballast of being the sole medium capable of reproducing reality which allowed for a revolution in language unsuspected until then. Today's papers carry yesterday's events which we have probably already seen on the evening news. The reader is therefore more interested in the different ways the information is presented to him rather than in the news

themselves. In the text as well as in the pictures what matters most is analysis and point of view. Photojournalism in newspapers can then free itself from having to show every aspect of the daily events which have already been seen on TV.

Pictures have to offer the readers an innovative vision, different from the one proposed by television. It has to synthesize and surprise: photographers have to roam the borders of events and behind the scenes. They have to produce images that inform, amaze, move, discover hidden aspects of reality, that are not easily forgotten. The daily flood of televised images are the fast food of information: once digested they are erased. On the other hand when photography is enhanced with an informative, emotional or aesthetic component it stays in our memories.

Photography is a powerful means of expression and the photographer besides reporting the facts must use it as such. It is not enough to register the event in a supposedly objective manner: often, "objectivity" actually hides indolence. Splendid photographs are sometimes the product of circumstance, when the event is so extraordinary that its mere capture assures its greatness. But the images that succeed in ripping the curtains of the obvious can only be the product of a great effort: besides dominating the photographic language - composition and the use of light - what is needed is an attentive and perceptive eye, a knowledge of reality, a point of view, the ability and will to say something about what is being photographed.

Regarding new technologies, this example can help us imagine the future. Some days ago, the cover of Clarin, an Argentine newspaper, showed us in a conclusive manner with an image, how Claudio Cannigia, a soccer player, was in an illegal position in the field (this action was followed by his team scoring a goal which the referee validated anyway). Clarin had 4 photographers covering the match but none of them could get this document, which was the most important of the day. El Gráfico, the leading sports magazine, had 10 photographers but they couldn't capture the moment either. Clarin's photograph was lifted from the videotape of

the match with a computer.

It's obvious that nobody can pretend that sports photographers have to cover all aspects of the game from every angle: this explains the need to use the TV feed, with the game taped in its entirety with many cameras from different positions. This is not the first time the print media uses still images produced by television. And it certainly won't be the last: this is a tendency that will grow stronger with new technological developments. What the future holds for us is a restatement of the practices of photojournalism.

The first discussion that appeared with the arrival of digital photography (computers, scanners, film less cameras) was centered around the manipulation of the photographic image and its contents. This was a necessary discussion which was settled fairly quickly: after the first attempts to alter photographs with these new techniques the system's antibodies worked (inside and outside journalism) and today this practice has been mostly eradicated from the media, though nobody is exempt from a bad praxis, in pictures as well as in text.

The development of new technologies in the production, storage and distribution of images announce even more profound changes. In an first stage, the cyber-photojournalist will arrive to the soccer stadium with his high definition video camera: a still image has the same definition of a 35mm film frame. He will place himself in the best place according to his experience and talent and instead of photographing the action he will tape in shorts bursts of video a whole play, for instance from the corner kick to the goal and the celebration. Back at the paper he will look at his work on the computer screen and chose the perfect image to illustrate the story.

In a second stage he will probably send a live feed to the photo department and the picture editor will choose the images as they are being sent. At the same time he will be in constant communication with the photographer (actually video journalist ) and he may suggest new angles or emphasis according to the changing nature of the story. For the first time, the "decisive moment" will change hands from the photographer to the editor. A way of working, which was dependent on the photographer's reflexes and some luck, will have disappeared.

The mergers of communication companies which is happening globally (Time-Warner, Disney-ABC, Murdoch, etc) is explained in part by the hoped for synergy between the different parts of each conglomerate. And so, in a third stage, it is certainly possible that a picture editor will choose the images he needs for his paper from the high definition feed of the TV channel belonging to the group, liberating the photographer from the technical aspects of the game. At the same time, with the arrival of the electronic versions of newspapers and magazines on the Internet, it will be possible to click the mouse on a photograph and have the whole video sequence of the action.

These speculations are obviously referred to certain events, particularly those subjects where action plays a dominant role and there are numerous unforeseen elements difficult to control like demonstrations, sports, rock concerts, some fashion, etc.

The video journalist will cover certain information and the photojournalist will still use the more traditional formats (digital, with still image transmission capabilities) to cover other types of stories: reportage, documentary photography, portraits, fashion, etc.

In both cases we will still need his talent and capabilities to tell us how he sees the world.

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<http://www.zonezero.com/magazine/articles/goldberg/tvandfuture.html>