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## **Time on TV: Temporal Displacement and Mashup Television**

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their relations with personal media such as letters, phone calls, email or instant messaging. Differences were visible on media ecology, technical difficulties, modalities for information processing, critical thinking, personal values and perceptions of reality, but these differences did not prevent the media-related activities. As the authors conclude, enabling the creation of intergenerational bridges, Communication Camps are complementary to traditional learning settings and should be seriously considered by public policies.

From the Netherlands, Eugène Loos and Enid Mante-Meijer present another research project that compares actual navigation behaviour of older and younger people searching health information. Eye-tracking, a non-intrusive tool, assures a comparison between ways of navigating online. Conclusions of this study make the authors, who are also co-editors of this volume, underline the notion that black and white distinctions between 'digital natives' and 'digital immigrants' were not remarkable. The authors also noted that the main differences were visible *within* the group of older people. Accordingly, and in line with Chisnell's and Redish's orientations noted above, Loos and Mante-Meijer stress recommendations for website designers: taking into account diversity between and *within generations*, not forgetting that older people are much more diverse in terms of life experience and levels of capability and disability than their young counterparts.

Our last note goes to Alexander van Deursen's contribution. Having researched digital divide and social inequality, this Dutch scholar discusses four types of internet skills and identifies distinctive problems related to each type. Two are medium related (operational and formal skills) and two are content related (information and strategic skills). Empirical research based on this analytical tool makes visible that although young people perform far better in terms of medium-related internet skills, they still show a strikingly low level of information and strategic internet skills, similar to people of all ages. The author concludes that 'the most important factor – determining all types of internet skills – is the level of educational attainment' (p. 181). Learning internet skills merely by trial and error is a limited strategy since 'information and strategic internet skills do not actually increase with years of internet experience or with the amount of time spent online' (p. 182). Rethinking the obvious on the 'natural dichotomy' between generations is therefore an imperative for further research and for inclusive policies, namely in education. With so many cases and discussions, this book provides an excellent tool for this challenge.

Paul Booth, *Time on TV: Temporal Displacement and Mashup Television*, Peter Lang: New York, 2012; 255 pp.: £24.00

**Reviewed by:** Emily Keightley, Loughborough University, UK

Media studies is currently experiencing a turn towards time, temporality and memory as analytical categories for the exploration of traditional and more recently emerging digital media and the social and cultural structures and experiences associated with them (e.g. Ames, 2013; Garde-Hansen et al., 2009; Hassan and Purser, 2007; Keightley, 2012; Van Dijck, 2007). *Time on TV* follows this turn towards time in media studies but departs

from the majority of existing studies of mediated time in two interconnected ways. First, Booth examines both traditional and 'new' media, not in temporal contradistinction from one another, but in an attempt to trace their interrelationships. In doing so he positions television and social media as part of the same cluster of aesthetic and structural changes to temporality taking place in contemporary culture. Second, existing temporal analyses of media have tended to focus on the ways in which temporal transformations in social life and culture are facilitated by contemporary media technologies. In contrast, Booth's analysis is located squarely in the tradition of television criticism with a clear emphasis on the aesthetics of television content (see Ames [2013] and Holdsworth [2011] for other recent examples of the temporal analysis of televisual content). By attending to televisual content, Booth attempts to link an aesthetic analysis of the temporal displacements that characterize contemporary television with a reflection on the broader social and cultural transformations in the experience of time in digital culture.

The book is organized into four substantive sections: Time on TV; Memories; Temporalities; and a general conclusion. The first section is comprised of two chapters which introduce the core features of the relationship between time and contemporary television and lay the conceptual groundwork for Booth's central contention that 'recent mashup television content focuses on shifting temporal expectations in television narrative and on altering representations of time, in order to reflect and teach about changes brought to our everyday life through the use of transgenic media' (p. 1). In the introductory chapter Booth elaborates on this claim, which operates on the premise that aesthetic changes in television content can tell us something about larger cultural changes brought about by online media (p. 4), by demonstrating that contemporary television content is characterized by the same 'temporal displacements' that structure our use of social (transgenic media). Booth describes two kinds of temporal displacement devices used in contemporary television programmes: those which relate to the narrative structure of television content, and those which refer to character and memory. In the remainder of the introductory chapter, Booth provides definitions for the other two conceptual categories on which his analysis is based: transgenic media, which refer to online media that integrate content from another medium which is characterized by the intent to share this content (p. 9); and mashup television, which refers to televisual content which mashes together the 'characteristics of online media with characteristics of traditional media' (p. 11). In the following chapter Booth examines more closely the relationship between television and 'transgenic' media to argue that the introduction of the temporal imperatives of online social media into television content reflects a 'growing change with the way our culture understands and deals with time, memory, and history' (p. 22).

In the second section of the book, 'Memories', Booth explores the ways in which memory as a device for temporal displacement is used in television content, particularly in relation to television characters. Over the course of the section Booth attempts to demonstrate that the ways in which memory is constructed and utilized in televisual content relate closely to the simultaneous externalization and internalization of memory facilitated by transgenic media. In the first chapter of this section, Booth does this by focusing on the instability or provisional nature of mediated memories, both in televisual content and in our everyday use of social media. Conversely, in the second chapter, he examines how jumps in time made by characters to reflect on their pasts and futures

offer opportunities for audiences to learn how to make sense of their own personal histories using transgenic media.

The third section focuses on the ways in which temporal displacement relates to issues of time, narrative and history. In each of the three constituent chapters Booth uses the metaphor of 'time travel' as a heuristic device to examine 'how changes in transgenic media use affect our everyday lives' (p. 107). In the initial chapter this involves an examination of the ways in which transgenic media have introduced a permanence or durability into our personal histories and that this permanence is reflected aesthetically in the narrative structures of the BBC programme *Dr Who*. Time in these narratives is not singularly linear, but involves 'simultaneously co-existent' temporalities (p. 121), in the same way as our pasts persist digitally in online environments. The second chapter in this section addresses the simultaneously present aesthetic of impermanence in the temporal structures of television and transgenic media use. Taking wiki sites as an example, Booth argues that transgenic media destabilize historical time in their infinite mutability, and again, observes this characteristic as an aesthetic feature in the narratives of *Dr Who*. In the final chapter of the section Booth uses the notion of the social network to attempt a synthesis of this paradoxical permanence and impermanence in both mashup television and transgenic media. Booth concludes by exploring the interconnected futures of television and transgenic media. For him, mashup television and the temporal displacements it involves provide an ongoing site for audiences to make sense of and come to terms with the temporal displacements which structure their own lived experience in digital culture.

*Time on TV* makes an important contribution to the increasing body of research on the mediation of time and mediated temporalities by foregrounding televisual content as a key site for the articulation of emergent temporal structures and characteristics of contemporary social and cultural life. This has largely been neglected to date. By examining television and digital media in combination, Booth is able to develop an analysis which moves beyond a 'silo' based approach to media studies and instead positions media content as part of a wider cultural landscape in which media are meaningful in relation to, rather than separately from one another. It is also important to recognize that in emphasizing the importance of a temporal analysis of media content, Booth takes care not to fall into a purely textualist account of temporality. By continually exploring the ways in which audience engagement and practices of reading relate simultaneously to their lived temporal experiences with transgenic media in social life, and to their identification with the temporalities of televisual narratives, television content is positioned as part of a wider cultural landscape in which media are not only creatively read, but creatively read *between*. Booth's analysis operates at the interstices of audience and text and positions cultural narratives as realized at this juncture. This allows him to integrate the notion of the participatory audience, not only in his analysis of 'transgenic' media, but also in relation to the more traditional medium of television.

However, it is in relation to this point that the argument is at risk of over-reaching itself. While the aesthetic content of television is at various points quite helpfully conceived in terms of a metaphor for the temporal experiences fostered by the use of transgenic media, the extension of this claim to suggest that the structuring of time in televisual content constitutes a deliberate attempt to provide audiences with ways of making sense

of their experience of transgenic mediated temporalities, or that audiences actually use this televisual content in this way, seems on somewhat shaky ground without the production of some empirical evidence. Booth claims that 'by demonstrating mastery over the temporality of a narrative television show, active viewers can satisfyingly return to their digital technology, with all its insubstantial temporality in check', but on the basis of the analysis presented, this seems like a possibility afforded by televisual narratives, rather than a guaranteed outcome of their consumption (p. 209). This also calls into question the extent to which the 'interaction between television and transgenic media' constitutes a radical shift which moves us beyond existing media theory (p. 209) since the extent to which the temporal displacements of either televisual content or transgenic media are actually realized in the viewer's everyday temporal experience, memories and historical knowledge remains to be empirically substantiated. Nevertheless, it is important to note that these observations do not necessarily constitute flaws in Booth's argument – they are merely a call for further enquiry into the important potentialities of temporal displacement in television content that he identifies. Even without this empirical substantiation, the book provides an excellent aesthetic analysis of the ways in which contemporary televisual narratives work and the temporal devices which routinely structure them.

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