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Maricel Oró-Piqueras and Anita Wohlmann (eds.) *Serializing Age: Aging an Old Age in TV Series.* Transcript Verlag: Bielefeld. ISBN 978-3-8376-3276-7

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Serializing Age: Aging an Old Age in TV Series is the seventh contribution to the Transcript Aging Studies series edited by Heike Hartung, Ulla Kriebernegg and Roberta Maierhofer. This foundational series of texts for scholars of aging studies and cultural gerontology provides a timely and critical lens for questions of age and aging in contemporary society, viewing aging as 'productive antagonism. Aging and growing older are processes which cannot be reduced to the chronology of years but which are shaped by the individual's interaction with the changing circumstances of life,' (ENAS, 2017).

Whilst not the first study to concentrate on time and television,[1] with its focus on age *Serializing Age* extends the body of literature, taking Ames' assertion that 'never before has narrative time played such an important role in mainstream television,' as its point of departure (2012, p.9). Oró-Piqueras and Wohlmann's introduction offers a concise history of the effects of the genres of television programming, noting that whilst time and temporality have always been a feature of television programming and consumption, new modes of consumption made possible by the Internet have disrupted traditional linearity (p.13). A strength of *Serializing Age* lies in its depth in drawing upon both 'old' and 'new' modes of production and consumption to explore the impact of these practices on representations of age and aging across time.

To focus on ways in which 'the temporal construction of narrative contributes to present alternative views of aging,' (p.13) *Serializing Age* brings together twelve insightful chapters, each responding to several overarching questions set by the editors. Together these chapters articulate the ways in which television constructs time and temporality in comparison to film, highlight and employ pertinent concepts that can be mobilised and shared between the disciplines (indicative of a broad cultural studies approach adopted by many of the authors), and discuss ways in which different TV genres produce different conceptualisations of time and, therefore, aging.

As one might expect for a book which brings together several analytic lenses to explore television, *Serializing Age* is grouped thematically according to the 'narrative and temporal experimentation' evident in each text (p.15). The first section explores connections between fictional narratives of television series and real-life experiences of growing older. Contributions in this section focus on time, memory and soap opera (Harrington), age, gender

and retirement on *The Wire* (2002-2008) (King) and questions of representational complexity in 'generically-hybrid' texts such as *Desperate Housewives* (2004–12) (Jennings and Oró-Picqueras). These chapters combine to produce a reading of aging (for both actors and audiences) that troubles existing formulaic representations of growing older. These reading positions televisual experiments with temporality as disrupting hegemonic discourses of old age, both on screen and in real-life, which currently depict aging as a linear and static progression to decline.

A major strength of *Serializing Age* is how concepts and arguments are threaded through sections, between chapters authored by scholars working in different fields and with different texts, highlighting a careful and thoughtful editorial process. The book's second section departs from connecting fictional representations and real-life experiences of aging, presenting chapters that focus on texts that feature experiments with magic, narrative and genre. Chivers' chapter on the cult of youth and paradox of aging in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (1997-2003) highlights the interconnectedness of contributions. Through exploring US teen horror programming, focusing upon *Buffy*'s aging of actors and the future possibilities, Chivers' chapter works in tandem with Harrington's study of aging (actors) in US soap opera. Miquel-Baldellou's focusses on the use of magical objects as catalysts of aging in anthology series *The Twilight Zone* (1959-1964), Colloseus' chapter on the depiction of life concepts in sitcom *How I Met Your Mother* (2005-2014) picks up genre and temporality as a central concern and Wohlmann and Reichenpfader examine age and non-normative lifestyles in sitcom, serial and soap opera. Together, these chapters present a powerful commentary on television's intergenerational imaginings of growing older, offering a critique of biomedical and consumerist models of old age that construct older bodies as abject and in need of 'potions' to halt the passing of time.

Serializing Age's third section groups chapters about sex and desire in older age, showcasing a range of approaches that utilise theories of time and temporality to unpack the assumption that in older age sexuality remains 'hedged with social restrictions,' (Gullette, p.66). Gorton's contribution on British drama *Last Tango in Halifax* (2012-present) and Küpper's chapter on age mimicry and ambivalent laughter in the *Golden Girls* (1985-1992) work together to showcase texts which transgress the dominant youth-obsessed media preference for romantic storylines featuring leading actors with firm bodies and an absence of wrinkles.[2] From a historical approach to representation of gay aging in US television shows that mines past television production and consumption practices to examine contemporary texts (Goltz), to mobilisation of queer studies theories to unpack aging in *Orange is the New*

Black (Krainitzki) this section offers a critical lens on heteronormative constructs of both time and aging.

Banerjee and Paul's final chapter departs from textual analysis, instead positioning the ongoing social and cultural relevance of studying age in television. They posit that instead of representing aging through biomedical, biopolitical and bioethical frameworks, future imagining of aging and old age might be as an 'anthropological inventory' (p.270) that celebrates and recognises complexity and differences in experiences of growing older. *Serializing Age* is an engaging volume that can be seen as an anthropological inventory, and which makes an important contribution in inviting audiences to begin to imagine aging beyond the limitations of chronometric time.[3]

1. See Ames (2012); Keightley (2012); Mroz (2012).
2. See Sobchack (2004).
3. See Baars (2012).

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