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Television Strategies and Culture

Television has evolved greatly to accommodate the evolving viewer needs. The audience is for the most part dictating the content that appears on most cable and internet television platforms. The fact has seen television strategies change over time in order to accommodate different household lives. In a very significant way as well, the structuring of time and scheduling procedures is being tailored to accommodate and serve various household lives.

The strategies being employed are being directed toward accommodating different needs for consumption. Therefore, there are emerging new consumptions that are being catered for as well. Finally, television and its consumptions is having different meanings to different people in the wake of its revolution. The following paper examines television and the organization of time and scheduling. In this way the paper also explores house hold lives and television in order to explore different audiences served by different scheduling and material decisions. The household life is expected to shed light on new consumption patterns observable in the industry today. Further, television's personal meanings to people will be explored in order to create a connection between scheduling, household life and personal meanings of television.

Television and the Organization of Time

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The household is not particularly a nuclear family. It represents the different audiences with access to television and basic viewership. For this reason, it is important to study how television scheduling times implicate on the lives and routines of different people. In the same way, understanding how the routines people take are tailored around the different times that shows are aired and the frequency of airing. There are many different ways in which television is incorporated into people's lives to include their normal routines and activities. Studies conducted by different sociologists have shown that people tailor their lives after work according to their television interests (Barker 236). An example is the time spent by families with television used as a leisure device to be used after homework, workdays and as a family activity like movie nights.

The above is the reason for Ellis to construct a narrative construct with scheduling blocks. Essentially, Ellis notes that scheduling is done to accommodate different audiences and for the networks to brand themselves in particular ways (Ellis 25). Branding allows networks to acquire their own unique identities from which they acquire their niche audiences. Further, the scheduling times chosen also are a reflection of the audience and the advertising platforms networks are willing to create in the moment. In a bid to deliver audiences to advertisers, the viewing schedules are divided into blocks that include either times of the day or durations for the shows. The show durations are usually in series blocks of sitcoms that go for half and our and full length series that take an hour. Similarly, the times of day also dictate the lucrativeness of the spots with blocks divided into morning, daytime, early evening, prime time and late nights (Ellis 33). Different networks tailor their shows to deliver different products during these blocks. In essence, the blocks do a lot to collect data on viewership and popularity for the shows. The

blocks are also used to give perspective on future shows that could potentially fill the slots left by concluding features.

Television's ability to capture and retain attention is dictated by the way most shows are arranged to air. A good example is the arrangement of the shows *Big Bang Theory* and *Young Sheldon*. *Big Bang Theory* started to air before *Young Sheldon* and continued for about eleven years before *Young Sheldon* was conceived, shot and aired. In this way, scheduling allowed a new show that was almost a rerun of the previous one to occupy the air with a bang from the very start. Both shows center on comedy with one being a sitcom and the other a comedy flashback about the lives of the main character in *Big Bang Theory*. The shows play almost similar roles in the cultures that they attempt to project. The main themes on both is the peculiarities of a genius life. The shows show a young man's life as an extra ordinary human being of superior intellect as well as the normal and ordinary lives that surrounds him. In essence, the scheduling decision made for the shows to follow each other, back to back, weekly, is phenomenal. *Young Sheldon* airs right after the twenty minute sitcom ends. In many ways, it allows the audience to connect the stories told on the *Big Bang Theory* with the man that the main character Sheldon became. The fact that they are aired on the same network gives an idea on the procedure and strategies applied when deciding to allow continuity in the shows aired by any network. In this case, the plausibility of *Young Sheldon* becoming a successful show was hinged on the twelve years that *Big Bang Theory* had managed to run.

In a very significant way, the decision to air the shows successively shows television used the organization of time and how different viewing blocks are utilized to fill required slots. To a great extent it shows how household life and television works in determining consumption. As Ellis puts it that ratings, "can only be increased by a subtle strategy of targeting particular

sections of the audience on competing channels and providing something that will appeal to or satisfy them more”(Ellis 32). In this way, the network’s decision to closely put the shows on the same time grid shows the consideration of culture and viewership that one of the shows has already managed to create. The strong loyalty created by *Big Bang Theory* is transferred to the new show by subtly placing it right after it. In this way as Ellis explains, the network is able to secure the slot for itself as well as fight off any competition that would arise in case one of the shows is terminated as *Big Bang Theory* looks to do this year with its final season. The end of *Big Bang Theory* will see *Young Sheldon* occupy its space with significant loyalty. In the same way as seen household life in television, different families keep different schedules for television. For this reason, the spot selected for shows usually coincide with the already television schedule times that different households have set for themselves. Consequently, keeping the shows at relatively the same times as their predecessors ensures that the traditions are carried further. In addition to keeping households on various grids the use of social media is gaining traction as ways for networks to evaluate the extent of viewership they receive from different shows (Hill & Benton 2). Essentially, social TV is the term used to describe the integration emerging between social media interaction and television programming.

Social TV interaction with Television Programming and Culture

Social media platforms are allowing television programming influences where people can share in real time the feelings that they have about programming and different shows they receive. The past several years have seen platforms like message boards, Twitter and Facebook introduced into the traditional television culture making them sort of water cooler platforms for the tech savvy viewers. The proliferation of social media platforms coupled with smartphone usage is allowing social interactions television programming to be shared vastly and

simultaneously. Studies show that more than 10 million comments are shared daily centering on television shows content (Hill & Benton 2). The ability to comment on running shows in real time is allowing viewers to not only interact with their beloved characters but also to increase the popularity of live television shows that enable the comments to be done in real time and about ongoing events on the screen at the time. For the first time in history, advertisers as well as schedulers are receiving authentic feedback about the numbers, reactions and effectiveness of the ads and products that they present to their audiences. In a very significant way, the trend is dictating ways in which networks can determine the various reactions they get from their viewers. Undoubtedly, a good amount of data is collected from the interactions viewers have with the shows they watch. The challenging part about the data is perspective (Hill & Benton 3). The accuracy of data collected during different airing and schedule times is relatively hard to decipher by itself.

In the case of *Big Bang Theory* and *Young Sheldon*, the network is able to collect vital information from the audience about the characters they introduce on the show at different times. An example is a character known as Kim. Kim was introduced to the audience in the rerun part of the show, that is, on *Young Sheldon*. The character's introduction forced the original show to feature him on the show in order to create an air of authenticity and continuity between the two shows. The use of the same characters on different versions of the same shows is a phenomenon that is being viewed to be adapted by several shows as well. An example is the show *Full House* that used to air in the 80's and then the same characters were called in for the renewal and introduction of the show that was dubbed *Fuller House*. The strategy shows that loyalties created can be used in the new consumption strategies employed by the networks in introducing new content to the market (Kohnen 4). In a very significant way, social media's interaction with

programming gives feedback on the decisions made to kill or introduce different shows as dictated by the ever commenting audience. As Ellis puts it that the schedule plans between different genres and their cost across the network, it can be understood that the modern age of social media TV allows for the genres and costs to be determined more effectively through the intensity of interaction observed when some shows are on and the frequency of their mention in social media platforms (Hill & Benton 6). In this way, sponsors can use the data collected during the interactions to make important decisions about the composition of audiences best suited for their commercial needs.

The *Big Bang Theory* is also a show rife with cultural baggage as some people might put it. It starts with the fussy Sheldon and his compulsively insecure roommate Leonard. In the first instance, the show gives us the perception that genius or high intellect is synonymous with awkwardness and social incompetence. The same is reinforced when the audience meets the two other male main characters, Howard and Rajesh. Howard is a momma's boy with an awkward sexual drive and he always behaves incompetently around women in a bid to please them. His momma's boy inclinations show even at home with the shouting matches the man has with his mother. Rajesh on the other hand is a man of Indian descent and represents the Asian inclinations to intellect. He is also a highly intelligent man with a disorder that renders him unable to speak in the presence of women. Essentially, over the years, *Big Bang Theory* has created a culture that exemplifies geekiness but also shows the awkward and peculiar behaviors of superior intellect.

Another culture that the Big Bang Theory has pushed is one of epitomizing genius with the male species. All the character geniuses are male. Essentially, the show's other main character, Penny, is a literary blonde girl who is a total ditz. She does not seem to understand what the geniuses say and she finds their lives extremely boring, out of place and generally

awkward. However, she is pursued by the men and represents the sexual attractive aspiring actress. The show paints the man as intelligent and socially awkward and the woman as dumb, attractive and struggling. In most ways, the Big Bang Theory tries to create geniuses relations with each other and with the world in general. The men's lives with ordinary people like Penny are seen to be incongruous but interesting.

It is easy to see that the timeline slot selected for *Big Bang Theory* and *Young Sheldon* is meant to elicit the effects of Social TV. The audience is urged to participate owing to the cultural themes that both shows bring to life (Newcomb & Hirsch 2). One important theme that pervades path shows is the peculiarities of intelligence. The younger and older versions of Sheldon Cooper are seen to be extremely intelligent. Both are observed to receive high acclaim for their academic prowess. However, the intelligence is merely one part of the story. The audience is taken through all the peculiar things that the 'genius' is not able to deal with outside academic strength. For example, the fear of driving is expressed strongly in both shows where the younger version of Sheldon is afraid of the front seat and the grown up is not fond of driving but likes to be chauffeured around by his friends. The kind of scenes where the genius does 'stupid' things make for hot topics that are introduced to the interactive platforms in terms of hash tags and discussion invitations (Hill & Benton 7). Indeed, the time that the shows are aired at night are ideal to allow participation from audiences spanning from children to adults since the shows are rated in a parental guidance slot. Another theme that the shows capture is the culture of friendship. The long term friendships exhibited by the characters show the potential of long term friendships to the audience. In a very significant way, the shows also show the protection that family avails to its members also invites audiences to commenting on the progression of the shows.

The following discussion has shown television and the organizations of time that go behind different schedules for various genres and features presented by networks. The strategies used to schedule shows have been observed to be considerate of several factors. The most important scheduling strategies have been seen to be based on feature lengths and the times of the day that programs are aired. In this way, it has been seen that different time organizations are used to offer costing and exposure potential for sponsors (Ellis 33). However, the use of social media in the interactions of television programming procedures have been observed to be essential in collecting information about the viewers and their preferences.

The data collected on the viewers like scheduling procedures is able to be processed and used by sponsors to select slots that are most suitable for their immediate needs. In a very significant way, social TV is becoming a trend that is enhancing live televisions' interaction with audiences as well as specializing genres according to the groups observed on the social media platforms. The example of *Young Sheldon* and *Big Bang Theory* has clearly shown how networks use shows to close gaps in airing times and to take care of competition. It is clear that the eventual ending of *Big Bang Theory* will have given the *Young Sheldon* enough time to gain traction with the audience while still keeping the household routine used by different families intact. Household life affects the habits people acquire on following different shows and the schedules they set for themselves to enjoy television and the various themes that they find interesting.

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