IT'S ABOUT TIME: TEMPORALITY IN MAGAZINE FEATURE STORIES

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ABSTRACT

The media play a role in socially constructing time, among other things. This textual analysis examines how the concept of time is used in 12 award-winning magazine feature stories. This study was conducted to better understand how this basic aspect of narrative is presented, especially when considered alongside existing theories of time and narrative in fields such as history and literature.

This research shows that time is a central element of these 12 stories. While the subject matter of each story and social convention appear to drive the way an author writes about time, each author displays a high amount of autonomy when determining the order of events of his or her story’s larger narrative structure. The organizing of time in each story appears to be a result of the author attempting to address a central problem or thesis. The problems or theses in these feature stories can be considered time-based problems.

In the end, this research shows that time is in many ways a tool to be used rather than a rule of narrative or force of nature by which authors abide. On a theoretical level, this study supports the idea of the social construction of time and some of the ideas of narrative found outside journalism, particularly David Carr.