

CHAPTER 2

TELEVISION: THE POLITICS OF CONTROL AND INHABITED RESISTANCE

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Abstract

This chapter provides a new theoretical perspective for analysing television. Examining Deleuze's description of control, it is argued that television is a technology of control, albeit one that has the potential to produce resistance to control's operations. Although control's politics of resistance are not extensively explored by Deleuze, the chapter utilises related theory and commentary in developing the concept of 'inhabited resistance' for understanding political action in the society of control. Finally, the chapter signals the potential of certain styles of television comedy for illustrating television's relation of control and inhabited resistance.

INTRODUCTION

Television matters. While popular commentary frequently dismisses television as one of the great technological evils of our age, its capacity to provoke such rhetoric also highlights television's force in contemporary culture. It is not only popular commentary that has a tendency to characterise television as a bad influence in our culture. Television is also an object of scholarship and criticism across a wide range of academic disciplines, including psychology, sociology, health and education, and is frequently considered by them as a negative social influence. However, the issue for this chapter is not whether or not television is a positive or negative influence in contemporary culture. To reduce television's cultural force to the question of whether it is good or bad for its viewers is arguably simplistic. The fact that television remains a common topic for discussion signals the need to interrogate its cultural force further. This will enable television's power to be understood with a nuance beyond whether it is positive or negative. By exploring TV's technological power, we can prevent our understanding of television from sliding further into superficial generalisations of its perceived banality. With this point in mind, the chapter situates its discussion of television within the discipline of cultural studies, and the connected project of television studies.

Within the field of television studies television's force in contemporary culture has been addressed in many ways, employing analytical perspectives such as ideology, genre, audiences and government policy. This chapter's contribution to the academic project of television studies lies in its exploration of the nexus between television and the field of critical theory, particularly through the writings of 20th century French philosopher, Gilles Deleuze. The chapter further develops Deleuze's comments on the connection between television and what he sees as the contemporary operation of control. Specifically, the discussion focuses on television's capacity to produce and accommodate resistances to its operation of control. In doing so, the chapter proposes a new concept of 'inhabited resistance' to describe the potential for resistance within the televisual operation of control. Furthermore, the chapter outlines the way in which certain comic practices might produce formations of inhabited resistance within the televisual operation of control.

At first glance, the intent and focus of this chapter might appear quite specialised and with little relevance to the broader questions of how television is conceptualised as a vital force in contemporary culture. However, the position developed here for television has the potential to inform and connect with other debates about the technology. Indeed, as the conclusion to the chapter signals further, the theory of television discussed here has ramifications for future studies of television programmes and audiences. Such sites are central to the various academic perspectives and studies of television. Searching for new ways to engage with programmes and audiences means television will be maintained as a vital object of research and our comprehension of its power and function will expand.

CONTROL

Deleuze (1995a, 1995c) suggests that the operation of power in cultural sites and technologies has undergone a transformation. Drawing from Michel Foucault's powerful analysis of disciplinary power (1977), Deleuze argues a change can be observed to the contemporary operation of control. To contextualise the discussion of televisual control and inhabited resistance, it is helpful to outline some central principles of this operation of power. In 'Postscript on Control Societies' (1995c, pp. 177-182), Deleuze describes the society of control, drawing points of distinction with the operation of disciplinary power. It is important to realise that the relation between discipline and control is not characterised by opposition, or a linear transition from one to the other. Rather, there

is a connection between the two forms. As Massumi astutely notes, in the society of control, “disciplinary command functions are not dismantled, but rather released. They disseminate and vary, coming to be even more finely distributed throughout the social field” (Massumi, 1998, p. 56). Control, then, can be described as the intensive dispersal of certain disciplinary operations. Specifically, Deleuze discusses control in terms of its transformed operations of force, a characteristic smoothing of boundaries and as a mode of capitalism and production. These characteristics of control inform the chapter’s exploration of television’s politics of control and inhabited resistance.

WAVES AND MODULATION

Control operates through what Deleuze describes as processes of “modulation”. He observes how “[c]ontrol is short-term and rapidly shifting, but at the same time continuous and unbounded, whereas discipline was long-term infinite and discontinuous” (Deleuze, 1995c, p. 181). As Rodowick points out, here we can see a “wave-like” conception of force emerging, “[w]here the idea of waves or currents becomes the dominant conception of force” (2001, p. 208). Hence, Deleuze’s observation that controls, in contrast to discipline, “are a modulation, like a self-transmuting moulding continually changing from one moment to the next” (1995c, p. 179). This image of continual modulation is crystallised in Deleuze’s metaphor: “Surfing has taken over from all the old sports” (1995c, p. 180), a description that articulates the undulations and modulations of the operations of force in the control society. Clearly, there is a resonance that can be observed between control’s characteristics of force and television’s operations as a technology. Given television’s constitutive technical processes of scanning and transmission, Deleuze’s association of television with control would seem to be appropriate. Modulation and waves are also apt descriptions of the way the technology transmits a fluctuating stream of images and information.

SMOOTHING THE BOUNDARIES

Deleuze describes a second characteristic of control with the smoothing out of institutional barriers. As Deleuze notes, “[w]e’re in the midst of a general breakdown of all sites of confinement – prisons, hospitals, factories, schools, the family” (1995c, p. 178). He describes further how:

In disciplinary societies you were always starting all over again (as you went from school to barracks, from barracks to factory), while in control societies you never finish anything – business, training, and military service being coexisting metastable states of a single modulation, a sort of universal transmutation. (Deleuze, 1995c, p. 179)

Deleuze's comments on institutional breakdowns have had broader consequences and applications for other theorists. For instance, Hardt (1998) engages with this aspect of control, pointing out how Deleuze's comments provoke a new conception of space. In this "collapse of the walls that defined the institutions" (1998, p. 140), Hardt describes how "[t]here is progressively less distinction, in other words, between inside and outside" (1998, p. 140). He sees that this produces society as a form of "smooth space" (1998, p. 143), although he also explains that this description requires some qualification. Of this new formation of space Hardt writes: "It might appear that it is free of the binary divisions of modern boundaries, or striation, but really it is criss-crossed by so many fault lines that it only appears as a continuous uniform space" (1998, p. 143). Thus, in disciplinary societies there was a conceivable separation between institutions and spaces such as those of the family, school and work. With the boundaries between institutions and spaces that produce distinctive behaviours blurring, then individuals can be produced as child-student-worker in the open field of the control society. They modulate between each of these positions depending on the variable intensities of force at particular moments.

These ideas can be employed in considering other contemporary cultural sites and technologies. For instance, Wise provides an illustration of control's smoothing of boundaries with the increasing trend toward product placement in the media. As he observes: "Product placement represents the migration of advertisements from separated, regulated spaces into the spaces of programs, films, and eventually out of the media and into our lives" (Wise, 2002, p. 37). This familiar cultural practice is an instructive example of the smoothing of boundaries between advertising, entertainment and everyday life. These aspects of its production are synthesised as a product features in a film or television programme. Advertising, entertainment and everyday life connect in what Deleuze would describe as the "coexisting metastable state", characteristic of the operation of control.

These features of control resonate with the operation of television. In its production and flow of images, television also has the capacity to

smooth boundaries; between public space and private space, between local events and the saturating worldwide broadcast of them. The technology is mobile, with a reach that extends to all corners of the globe. Television has become an inescapable part of our culture, neatly described by Uricchio as “ubiquitous” (1998). TV transmits everything from wars, floods and famines, to cats trapped up trees, into both private and public spaces. This means that all places and events in our contemporary culture are implicitly or explicitly “televisual”. They have the potential to receive a television broadcast and they are potential sites for the generation of new TV images. Executing its technological mobility through an intense dispersal in our social and institutional fields, television is indeed a technology of control.

CONTROL AND CAPITALISM

Deleuze also describes the new procedures of the control society in terms of a “mutation in capitalism” (1995c, p. 180) in a way that resonates with television’s operations. Specifically, he comments on the contrasting capitalist modes of production between discipline and control:

[N]ineteenth-century capitalism was concentrative, directed towards production, and proprietorial....But capitalism in its present form is no longer directed toward production...It’s directed toward metaproduction. It no longer buys finished products or assembles them from parts. What it seeks to sell is services, and what it seeks to buy, activities. It’s a capitalism no longer directed toward production but toward products, that is, toward sales or markets. Thus it’s essentially dispersive, with factories giving way to businesses. (Deleuze, 1995c, pp. 180-81)

What Deleuze describes here is a widely accepted view of the changes in capitalism that have accompanied the explosion of consumer society since the mid-nineteenth century. Indeed, Massumi provides a succinct summary of this transformation in capitalism that supports Deleuze’s description when he states that, “[c]apitalism is now more processual than it is productive, more fundamentally energetic than object oriented” (1992, p. 134). We need look no further than the proliferation of media and mass communication technologies, including television, for the type of service, market-oriented capitalism that Deleuze identifies as characteristic of control.

By outlining some of control's central characteristics, including its modulating operations of force, the smoothing of institutional and social boundaries, and new procedures of capitalism, the chapter has highlighted connections and resonances between television and control. In this way, the chapter has explored in some detail Deleuze's observation that "television is the form in which the new powers of "control" become immediate and direct" (1995b, p. 75). However, what of television's capacity for resistance? Not only does Deleuze's description of the control society provide an instructive perspective on television's operation as a contemporary technology, the theory of control can also generate a discussion about the potential for forming modes of resistance as part of television's operation. The second part of this chapter examines comments by Deleuze and others on the question of resistance to control. This discussion formulates 'inhabited resistance' as a concept for describing one political and resistive strategy available within the control society.

DELEUZE AND TELEVISION

The possibility of resistance to television's operation informs Deleuze's discussion in 'Letter to Serge Daney' (1995b) where he comments on the relationship between television and cinema highlighted by television's operations of control. For Deleuze, the differences between these two technologies are questions of form and function. Cinema is an aesthetic form, while, in comparison, TV is characterised by a social function: a consequence of its operations of control. As Deleuze describes:

TV's social functions...stifle its potential aesthetic function. TV is, in its present form, the ultimate consensus: it's direct social engineering, leaving no gap at all between itself and the social sphere, it's social engineering in its purest form. (1995b, p. 74)

In his essay, Deleuze sees TV's social engineering, and its capacity to intervene directly in the social sphere, as significantly endangering cinema's viability as a cultural and artistic form. Indeed, Deleuze notes that "it's from television that there comes the new threat of a death of cinema" (1995b, p. 75). Deleuze explains that this is "[b]ecause television is the form in which the new powers of "control" become immediate and direct" (1995b, p. 75). In Deleuze's essay, television is characterised as an all-encompassing machine, on the verge of absorbing other visual technologies and remaking them in its own image. By observing that there is "no gap" between television and the "social sphere" (1995b, p.

74), the perspective also emerges that there is no space for negotiation, or resistance, in the encounter between the technology and its audience. In Deleuze's view, it appears television's forces of control are so intense that there is little space for producing articulations of resistance to TV's field of operation. Despite endorsing the rather tired cliché of the superiority of cinema to television, Deleuze's comments highlight issues that are productive to pursue in the quest to better understand this technology.

The issue of resistance is both vital and problematic. If we are to even attempt to counter the image of television as a controlling technology that produces intensely passive and subdued audiences, some concept of resistance is key to understanding television's technological power. However, just what form resistance to television's operations might take is a contested question also. If television resonates with the Deleuzian "society of control" (1995c, p. 177-182) how might we understand television's potential to produce formations of resistance to the operations of control? It is the connected issues of television as a technology of control and its potential to articulate formations of resistance as part of this operation of power that now become the focus of this chapter.

RESISTANCE

If the operation of control represents a shift in the formation and workings of social power, then it is possible also to consider the political dimension of this transformation. That is, to fully understand the control society we should consider what the procedures are by which control might be resisted. As Rodowick notes in his discussion of the relationship between control and digital culture:

Our urgent critical task is to understand how relations of power are being transformed, to formulate strategies of resistance equal to the task of challenging them, and to recognise new modes of existence being invented as the expression of alternative utopian longings that may result in new forms of collectivity. (2001, p. 219)

As Rodowick indicates, it is necessary to consider the question of resistance if we are going to make a way forward within control's transformed relations of power. Hardt (1995, 1998) also argues that resistance is a central issue for any exploration of control. He writes: "Analyzing the new technique of social control is only worthwhile to the extent that it allows us to grasp also the new potentialities for contestation and freedom emerging within this new paradigm" (1995, p. 41).

This is a vital point because, as Hardt (1998) clearly expresses, it is difficult to conceive of preceding practices of resistance as appropriate, or even possible. Commenting on control's smoothing of the boundaries between the public and private spheres, Hardt describes how the political effect has been that "[t]he place of modern liberal politics has disappeared and thus from this optic our postmodern or imperial society is characterized by a deficit of the political" (1998, p. 142). Implicit in Hardt's comment is that, with the transformation of the control society, oppositional critical positions are fast becoming both ineffectual and anachronistic. However, a more pertinent question is not whether control constructs an apolitical culture, but rather how the notion of politics and resistance changes with the emergence of the control society.

Deleuze is not very optimistic about the possibility of constructing effective modes of resistance in the society of control. His comments in this regard are fairly brief and a little speculative. In 'Letter to Serge Daney' Deleuze asks, "whether this control might be reversed, harnessed by the supplementary function opposed to power: whether one could develop an art of control that would be a kind of new form of resistance" (1995b, p. 75). Deleuze also questions control's politics of resistance in the conclusion of the 'Postscript' essay, asking whether trade unions still have a role to play, "or will they give way to new forms of resistance against control societies?" (1995c, p. 182). Indeed, he seems rather despondent at times about the consequences of control, somewhat pessimistically noting:

Compared with the approaching forms of ceaseless control in open sites, we may come to see the harshest confinement as part of a wonderful, happy past. The quest for "universals of communication" ought to make us shudder. (Deleuze, 1995a, p. 175)

The central difficulty with the control society seems to be that there is no outside position from which resistance might be developed and maintained. With the smoothing out of boundaries and the operation of control no longer specific to particular institutions, there is no escape from control's operations. Thus, indistinctness and flexibility in terms of critical positions also develop. This connects to Deleuze's point of dissatisfaction with television. Deleuze's description of the technology allows for no "gap" between its operation and the "social sphere". If that is the case, then it is extremely difficult to resist television's operations, because, as a machine of control, television does not accommodate locations from which to escape or oppose its operation. However, rather than simply

be defeated by the seemingly endless power of televisual control, we can also consider ways in which formations of resistance might be constructed to counter the intense and modulating forces of control.

Massumi describes control in terms of “the principle of *complicity*, or untranscendable control” (1998, p. 58). Again, we can see the implication in this statement of the difficulty of maintaining oppositional modes of resistance. Yet, complicity is a key point for any consideration of control and resistance. Deleuze hints at the type of complicit behaviours such resistance might encompass in his interview ‘Control and becoming’ (1995a):

It’s true that even before control societies are fully in place, forms of delinquency or resistance (two different things) are also appearing. Computer piracy and viruses, for example, will replace strikes and what the nineteenth century called “sabotage” (“clogging” the machinery). (Deleuze, 1995a, p. 175)

These comments by Deleuze suggest that the kind of resistive practice required for the operation of control is one generated from within the system, rather than from outside it. This is a significant point in terms of control’s politics of resistance, and the suggestion is elaborated on further by Rodowick in his discussion of the resistive strategies appropriate to control, which he conflates with digital culture. He writes:

The question then is how to introduce some friction into “friction-free” capitalism...The ethics and tactics of the “digital underground” are exemplary in this respect: culture jammers, guerrilla media, cyberpunk culture, warez or software pirates, hackers and phone freaks all provide rich material for examining the creative possibilities that already exist for resisting, redesigning, and critiquing digital culture. (Rodowick, 2001, pp. 233-34)

Again, the types of resistive behaviours Rodowick describes are practices that inhabit and take advantage of a system, disrupting and resisting from a position within it. Such practices recognise the unavailability of an oppositional, outside critique. By noting these examples’ complicit mode of operation and the ‘inside’ relation with the system they are disrupting, we can see the potential of certain practices to produce new locations from which to operate in different ways to that which the system proscribes. As Rodowick notes, this is a “tactical” and “creative” response to the operations of control.

It is this kind of tactical practice that the chapter is proposing can be called ‘inhabited resistance’. As a concept, inhabited resistance resonates with Deleuze’s suggestions on the forms which resistance might take: “The key thing may be to create vacuoles of noncommunication, circuit breakers, so we can elude control” (Deleuze, 1995a, p. 175). Deleuze’s choice of words is significant here. That is, we may momentarily “elude control”, but we cannot escape it. Again, his comments point to a tactical and complicit practice of resistance, rather than an oppositional mode of operation. The need for tactical, complicit responses to control is also evident in Deleuze’s more explicit request for creativity to form part of control’s transformed relations of power and resistance. He declares: “Our ability to resist control, or our submission to it, has to be assessed at the level of our every move. We need both creativity and a people” (Deleuze, 1995a, p. 176).

Massumi also sees that there is potential for resistance in the society of control but specifies that it must take a particular form. He points out that such resistance “would define itself less as an oppositional practice than as a pragmatics of intensified ontogenesis” (1998, p. 60). Massumi also comments on the particular characteristics of such a pragmatic form of resistance:

Productive interference patterns that fail to resonate with capitalist legitimization, either by excess or by deficiency or with humor, are at least momentarily unassimilable by the supersystem...Tactical noncommunication might take a ritualistic form, mimicking the ritual legitimization of capitalist power, to very different effect – and affect. For it would not be sadistic but joyful; not exorcistic but invocational, calling forth what are, again from the point of view of the supersystem, vague and alien powers of collective existence whose determinations escape. (Massumi, 1998, p. 61)

Again, we can see a reference to tactics here, as well as the potential of such tactics to encompass excess, humour and joy as ways of operating in a resistive relation to the processes of control. This is a point that it is useful to consider further in developing the concept of inhabited resistance for television, defined by pragmatic, tactical and complicit ways of operating in the control society. Moreover, Massumi’s description hints at the potential of Michel de Certeau’s writing on the tactical practice of everyday life for developing the concept of inhabited resistance for the society of control.

INHABITED RESISTANCE: TACTICS AND COMEDY

In *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984), de Certeau explores how everyday life can be understood as a “politics”. Through a consideration of the “tactical ways of operating” available to individuals in contemporary culture, his theory has some extremely productive resonances with Deleuze’s concept of control. De Certeau also points to the possible humour and joy that tactical practices of resistance can mobilise. Like Deleuze, de Certeau observes a transformation of the contemporary social field into a modulating and contingent space, describing both its freedoms and its intense, multiple procedures of control. De Certeau writes:

The system in which they [consumers] move about is too vast to be able to fix them in one place, but too constraining for them ever to be able to escape from it and go into exile elsewhere. There is no longer an elsewhere. (1984, p. 40)

For de Certeau, there is no longer an outside position from which critique and resistance can be generated. Reminiscent of Deleuze’s comment that the ability to resist control must be considered “at the level of our every move”, de Certeau describes how the transformed social field requires that:

One would thus have a proliferation of aleatory and indeterminable manipulations within an immense framework of socio-economic constraints and securities: myriads of almost invisible movements, playing on the more and more refined texture of a place that is even, continuous, and constitutes a proper place for all people. (1984, pp. 40-41)

In other words, the operation of power, which Deleuze names control, accommodates chance-like, unpredictable and unplanned movements of resistance within its field of operation. This is what de Certeau describes through his concept of the tactic, as movements that can pragmatically take advantage of a system, using it to different ends, while remaining complicit within it.

De Certeau details how such tactics operate, discussing how, “[a] tactic insinuates itself into the other’s place, fragmentarily, without taking it over in its entirety, without being able to keep it at a distance” (de Certeau, 1984, p. xix). Like the resistive practices suggested by Deleuze, Rodowick and Massumi that are complicit with, and inhabit, the system they are also resisting, we can see how the de Certeauian tactic is also a complicit, inhabiting practice; one that bears a creative and elusive

relation to its field of operation. As de Certeau notes: “It [the tactic] must constantly manipulate events in order to turn them into “opportunities”” (1984, p. xix).

In different ways, Deleuze and de Certeau each articulate a need to return to the local/micro level to partake in possible resistive practices within the operation of control. Deleuze invokes this through his call for a renewed belief in the world and a people, as the sites where the potential to engage in resistive manipulations of control exists: “If you believe in the world you precipitate events, however inconspicuous, that elude control, you engender new space-times, however small their surface or volume” (1995a, p. 176). Deleuze’s request for a return to belief in the world and the capacity of individuals to elude control initially reads rather idealistically, because he provides little elaboration on just how this can occur in practice. Interestingly however, de Certeau seems to have a somewhat clearer idea of the types of practices that such a Deleuzian belief in the world might entail. Distinct from the quasi-criminal practices discussed by Rodowick and Deleuze, de Certeau’s ideas resonate with Massumi’s comments suggesting the political potential of a resistive practice of humour, as well as the overall joy this might produce. De Certeau points out that, “such a politics should inquire into the public...image of the microscopic, multiform, and innumerable connections between manipulating and enjoying, the fleeting and massive reality of a social activity at play with the order that contains it” (de Certeau, 1984, p. xxiv). Here de Certeau invokes a joyful, contingent mode of resistive practice, one that is part of the social field as well as using it to a different purpose. Such a practice is defined by a playful, creative relation, producing an alternative mode of existence. De Certeau’s writing furthers the concept of an inhabited mode of resistance with some evocative images of tactical practice: “It poaches in them. It creates surprises in them. It can be where it is least expected. It is a guileful ruse” (de Certeau, 1984, p. 37). Moreover, de Certeau observes a potential connection between this mode of tactical practice and “wit”. By manipulating and enjoying the unexpected opportunities for resistance in the social field through “[c]ross-cuts, fragments, cracks and lucky hits in the framework of a system, consumers’ ways of operating are the practical equivalents of wit” (de Certeau, 1984, p. 38).

CONCLUSION: TOWARDS TV COMEDY

These tantalising comments on the potential for comic, humorous practices to produce formations of inhabited resistance warrant further consideration beyond the scope of this chapter. Proposing that comic

practices can function as a mode of resistance and critique is not new. From satire to slapstick, there are various comic techniques that make fun of and criticise ideas and social norms. The discussion in this chapter has arrived at a point where we can recognise the potential of comedy to produce forms of inhabited resistance as part of the televisual operation of control. And in certain styles of television comedy, practices of resistance emerge that critique the object of their attention. However they are also complicit with the target of their critique, which is very often the field of television itself.

Various forms of inhabited resistance can be suggested as possibilities for television's field of operation, visible both in certain images and programs as well as audience engagements with the technology. In terms of programmes, we can look at television comedy as producing scenes articulating control and inhabited resistance. One comic practice utilised on television which resonates with the concepts of control and inhabited resistance, is carnival. Explored in Mikhail Bakhtin's seminal work *Rabelais and his World* (1968), a feature of carnival is a comic, humorous practice that is complicit with the target of its critique. Particularly relevant in this regard are carnival's characteristic figures of fools and clowns. These are figures that inhabit a society, while at the same time resisting it through their comic practices. Carnival is also characterised by its grotesque aesthetic: the exaggerated faces and physicality of clowns and other carnivalesque figures. It is interesting to note that when the carnivalesque style has been incorporated into some Australian television comedy such as Norman Gunston, Roy and H.G., *Kath and Kim*, they have produced sites which critique 'outside' targets. For instance, Gunston can be read as a grotesque resistance and critique of the Australian cultural cringe, Roy and H.G. employ carnival tactics to subvert the masculine discourses of sport, and *Kath and Kim* provide a grotesque comedy on Australia's aspirational suburban classes. However, in these examples, the carnivalesque style is utilised in television comedy that complicitly critiques and resists recognisable television processes and styles. For instance, Gunston both inhabits and resists the familiar televisual genres of reporting and journalism through the comedic inflections of carnivalesque grotesque. Similarly, Roy and H.G.'s various sporting commentaries and programmes inhabit the traditional discourses of televised sport, while at the same time infusing it with a sexualised, grotesque aesthetic that resists the usual style of such programmes. *Kath and Kim* also utilises the grotesque carnival aesthetic, inhabiting and resisting the documentary impulse of the recent genre of reality television. In each of these examples, which are analysed in greater

depth in my doctoral thesis, we find television's field of production and connection to the operation of control disrupted and resisted within the appearance of its images.

Television's politics of control and inhabited resistance also offer possibilities for reconsidering the relation between the technology and the television audience. It may be that there is, as Deleuze's writing implies, no 'escape' from control's operations (no gap between television and the social sphere). However, this does not also mean that individuals cannot complicitly elude television's operation in a further formation of inhabited resistance. Inhabited resistance can also define our own connection to the technology, illustrated in various tactical practices such as questioning, critiquing, changing channels and even switching the TV off! Interacting with the technology, rather than remaining a passive viewer, also underlines the potential for audiences to effect changes to television's operations from a location that is also connected to television's field of operation. Indeed, television has now incorporated this practice into many of its programmes, specifically, those that offer audiences the opportunity to affect an outcome (for example *Big Brother* and its many counterparts). As television programmes continue to explicitly construct viewers with the power to direct the way a programme unfolds, the technology's processes of control intensify, together with the opportunities for audiences to resist its force. However, such resistance always occurs from an engaged and complicit position. Maybe there is no escape from this powerful technology of control, but this need not be cause for gloom and despair. Rather, with the theoretical concept of inhabited resistance, an opportunity emerges for conceptualising creative and vital modes of resistance in the televisual society of control. Recognising that television is a site for the formation of resistance to the operation of control, we can see clearly that television matters.

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