

MEDIA PRAXIS

Integrating Media Theory, Practice and Politics

Bad Video: From meaning to feeling, YouTube Tour #4

February 27, 2008

In my Tour #4, The Vernacular, Visual and the Vlog, I propose that there are two dominant forms of video YouTube: the vlog, characterized by its poor quality and vox populi, and the corporate video, easily identifiable because it is all the vlog is not: high quality production values referring to corporate culture. My students nuance this list by suggesting that there are 5 forms (see "[The Video Forms of YouTube](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AaR3D0tCAiE)" (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AaR3D0tCAiE>), "mperry08)—talking heads, spoofs, corporate videos, inside jokes, and appropriated—but I think these fall nicely into my big two.

Tour #4: The Vernacular and the Visual



"Bad" videos are made by regular people, using low-end technology, with little attention to form or aesthetics while attending to the daily life, feelings, and thoughts of the individual (so here we'd include dumb inside jokes and also badly-shot event-footage: birthdays, parades, baby's first step). They are typically unedited, word or spectacle reliant, and accrue value through the pathos, talent, or humor of the individual. "Corporate" videos look good, like TV, because they are made by professionals, are stolen from TV, or are re-cut TV. They express ideas about the products of mainstream culture, in the music-driven, quickly-edited, glossy, slogan-like vernacular of music videos, commercials, and comix. Vlogs depend upon the intimate, mundane communication of the

spoken word. Corporate videos are driven by strong images, sounds, and sentiments; they consolidate ideas into icons. Meaning is lost to feeling. (See "Worst Movie Ever Made (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P9E-j8c6KZc>)," by baxteric1)

YouTube is a radical development in that the production of real people holds half of the vernacular of the medium, and undoubtedly this dramatic opening up of expression profoundly alters how we must think about media. However, by reifying the distinctions between the amateur and the professional, the personal and the social, in both form and content, YouTube currently maintains operating distinctions about who can own, make, and change culture.

And, what to make of those very many videos that fall off this binary—beautifully rendered art video, professional documentaries on politics, the video essays my students and I experimented with for this class? Yes, the serious work of those attending to form and ideology outside of dominant culture can be found on NicheTube, but this functions as does all alternative media in its ongoing role as marginal, if inter-dependent with mainstream media, force-of-conscience. Given the imperatives of corporate culture, YouTube is already thought of as a joke, a place for jokes, a place for regular people whose role and interests are not of real merit. A people's forum but not a revolution, YouTube video manifests the deep hold of corporate culture on our psyches, re-establishing that we are most at home as consumers (even when we are producers).

Posted by MP:me

Filed in camcorder, critical pedagogy, digital media form, documentary, media theory, praxis, web 2.0, YouTube

Tags: alternative media, consumer video, corporate media, critical pedagogy, education, humor, self-referentiality, spectacle, vlog, web 2.0, YouTube

8 Comments »

8 Responses to "Bad Video: From meaning to feeling, YouTube Tour #4"

Sarah Says:

March 23, 2008 at 4:55 am

"so here we'd include dumb inside jokes and also badly-shot event-footage: birthdays, parades, baby's first step"

i would see this as corporate as well- it is parents viewing children as possessions, filming them, being "proud" of their appearance, and i doubt they are interested in the children beyond making them smile for the camera, and i doubt they perceive or display the children's real feelings. family videos are formalities we use to promote our own family unit. birthdays and first steps are not interesting or original, they are socially ordained mind control. they brainwash the masses to believe that children are more innocent and precious than grown ups, when really, they are no better, and i do not care about them anymore than myself.

"Corporate" videos look good, like TV, because they are made by professionals, are stolen from TV, or are re-cut TV."

i like vlogging and youth media, because they are focused on real people, and real feelings.

“Meaning is lost to feeling.”

meaning is lost to sensation. meaning arises from feeling and emotion, and meaning is lost when we depend upon sensation, spectacle and intellect.

Reply.

Alexandra Juhasz, “Bad Video: From meaning to Feeling” (2008). Says:

August 1, 2008 at 5:38 pm

[...] “Bad Video: From Meaning to Feeling,” Media Praxis [...]

Reply.

We’re Not in Kansas Anymore « MEDIA PRAXIS Says:

August 4, 2008 at 6:25 pm

[...] of the human in front of them,” I find a set of quickly calcsifying media conventions that reduce the individual’s empowerment to the realm of authentic, mundane feeling. Where Michael might see the FREE HUGS campaign as an [...]

Reply.

Dr. Strangelove Says:

December 9, 2008 at 2:44 am

Nice commentary. I am trying to explain the way the YouTube audience FEELS that amateur online video provides a more real, a more authentic, experience. Without worrying over the epistemological difficulties of such claims, any thoughts on the ‘more real than tv’ side of YouTube?

Dr. Strangelove

<http://www.strangelove.com>

Reply.

MP:me Says:

December 9, 2008 at 4:14 pm

The home-video style of production (word-reliant, image-compromised) affirms a real person and place. The hand of an amateur compelled to communicate. While I agree that we all believe this is more “real” than TV, I am currently trying to figure out how doubt and skepticism also color that reality effect.

Reply.

Dueling Banjos « MEDIA PRAXIS Says:

June 18, 2009 at 4:53 pm

[...] Snarks like me see thorns: [...]

Reply.

Everything on YouTube is Video Art...Nah « *MEDIA PRAXIS* Says:

September 10, 2009 at 6:02 pm

[...] videos on YouTube are neither surprising nor poetic, falling as they so easily do into the quickly consolidating vernaculars of either “good” corporate production or “bad” people-made videos (a case I made earlier in [...])

Reply.

Juhasz, A. “Bad Video: From meaning to Feeling” (2008). Says:

May 10, 2012 at 5:43 am

[...] “Bad Video: From Meaning to Feeling,” Media Praxis [...]

Reply.

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