

EASA Media Anthropology Network - discussions -

<http://www.media-anthropology.net/>

Informal discussion on BORAT

Medianthro mailing list
15 – 22 November 2006

Abstract:

"Borat: Cultural Learnings of America for Make Benefit Glorious Nation of Kazakhstan, often shortened to Borat, is a 2006 mockumentary comedy film directed by Larry Charles. It stars the British comedian Sacha Baron Cohen in the title role of a fictitious Kazakh journalist, traveling through the United States recording real-life interactions with Americans. It is the second film built around one of Cohen's characters from Da Ali G Show, following Ali G Indahouse, which also featured a cameo by Borat." [wikipedia.org]

This paper documents the informal discussion in reaction to the film.

From: danieltaghioff at yahoo.com (Daniel Taghioff, SOAS)

Date: Wed, 15 Nov 2006 02:49:20 -0800 (PST)

Subject: [Mediantro] Is there a noble cyber savage?

[...]

On another, more discordant, note, has anyone seen Borat? Whilst I have not yet seen it, it strikes me as related to our discussion of reverse anthropology. Or does it fall into the category of the 'profane' amongst anthropologists

Daniel

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 Daniel Taghioff
 Researcher

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From: jpostill at usa.net (John Postill, Sheffield Hallam University)

Date: Wed, 15 Nov 2006 23:06:25 -0000

Subject: [Mediantro] Borat

Adam Fish (UCLA) says Borat is a comedy feature with strong affinities to what he calls 'the contemporary wave of first-person, reality-based, adventure television', a thriving TV genre that specialises in 'Cross-cultural transgressions--and the production of cultural difference'. He also suggests we anthros could learn a thing or two from these transgressors, see

<http://jot.communication.utexas.edu/flow/?jot=view&id=1990>

From: woodell at rowan.edu (Deborah C. Woodell, Rowan University)

Date: Thu, 16 Nov 2006 16:20:36 -0500

Subject: [Mediantro] Borat

> Adam Fish (UCLA) says Borat is a comedy feature with strong affinities
 > to what he calls 'the contemporary wave of first-person,
 > reality-based, adventure television', a thriving TV genre that
 > specialises in 'Cross-cultural transgressions--and the production of
 > cultural difference'.

I really have no opinion on Borat, since I haven't seen it, but it's rather dismaying that some journalists have seen fit to interview the Borat character as if he were a real person:

<http://www.latimes.com/news/opinion/la-oe-stein14nov14,0,1646485.column?coll=la-opinion-columnists>

===
 Deborah Woodell
 Adjunct, journalism
 Rowan University
 Glassboro, NJ

From: danieltaghioff at yahoo.com (Daniel Taghioff, SOAS)

Date: Thu, 16 Nov 2006 17:21:41 -0800 (PST)

Subject: [Mediantro] Fwd: Re: Borat

Dear John and List,

I threw this in just for fun. I haven't seen the film either, but I can talk about my preconceptions, but only from a personal perspective.

I have a very double feeling about Sacha Baron-Cohen's characters. Firstly he takes an example of 'street' awfullness (Ali G) and uses it to send up famous and powerful people. He then takes this British National Class war type of thing and goes global with it, taking an awful Muslim to take the piss out of the Americans.

I feel like he is a member of British well-to-do Jewry ridiculing the usual suspects, the working classes, the nouveau riche, the fame obsessed, and now Muslims and the "unsophisticated" Americans. It smacks of a certain kind of 'neo-traditional' elitism, ironic from an established immigrant community, but something I feel I come across.

I am Jewish on my father's side, but ironically that side of the family came from central Asia, so I find myself on both sides of Cohen's humour. Not having seen the film, I can't say much more.

I am not so sure about the idea of Borat, as a boundary crosser, being part of the production of difference, via the media.

What occurs to me is that Satire is double-edged: Might not one perfectly valid response to getting The Joke about Borat's awfullness (and the American's too) be to reinforce a sense of a set of shared values. Also since he is not a "real" Kazakhi, and since the Americans do seem to get the joke too, maybe we are not all so different after all.

My feeling with Cohen is that for all his abrasiveness he is actually espousing some very traditional British modernist/humanist values. It is not really a coincidence that the Cambridge - boy's first film was about Parliament.

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From: M.R.Skey at lse.ac.uk (Michael R. Skey, LSE)

Date: Fri, 17 Nov 2006 11:29:01 -0000

Subject: [Mediantro] BORAT

I was thinking that maybe Borat was a disciple of Harold Garfinkel!

<http://www.hewett.norfolk.sch.uk/CURRIC/soc/ethno/intro.htm>

Basic premise of ethnomethodology; in order to try and understand the rules and conventions, identities and relations of power that govern or

frame a particular social situation, observe said situation and then go in and break the rules.

It seems to me that this is exactly what Borat is doing, in the process not only exposing the rules, conventions and, of course, prejudices that underplay, say, a posh dinner party in the South of the US but also satirising them.

Cheers

Michael

From: ptstrauss at yahoo.co.uk (Paul Strauss, University of Manchester)
Date: Fri, 17 Nov 2006 19:10:18 +0000 (GMT)
Subject: [Mediantro] Borat

Apologies if I missed the original context of the discussion on Borat, but I wonder if people are aware of the interesting piece Paul Gilroy wrote on Baron-Cohen's earlier character, Ali G? He argued that it is precisely the attempts of commentators to unpack and fix identity positions onto the character (ie a North London Jewish boy impersonating an Asian man who thinks he's black) which misses the point about what so transgressive and potentially liberating about that form of satire.

<http://www.16beavergroup.org/mtarchive/archives/000727.php>

Paul Strauss
PhD Candidate
University of Manchester

From: aaytes at weber.ucsd.edu (Ayhan Aytes, University of California, San Diego)
Date: Fri, 17 Nov 2006 23:12:37 -0800
Subject: [Mediantro] Borat

The piece by Richard Goldstein on the Nation puts Borat in a similar context:

Tao of Borat

<http://www.thenation.com/doc/20061120/goldstein>

"Comics like Silverman and Baron Cohen revive the strategy of Lenny Bruce: The jokes stick in your craw, if you let them. But their humor also plays in a conservative era that cherishes the sadistic gratification of bashing the vulnerable and the oppressed. It's the perfect comedy for an ideologically ambivalent time. Given that double message, much depends on how these jokers deal with their own identities. Silverman does that with a wink. "I'm just me," she burbles, "...white." But Baron Cohen can't afford such candor. His act depends on the pretense that he's transracial. Try watching him with the fact of his whiteness in mind and you can't really enjoy the show.

A dexterous delivery allows Baron Cohen to deny his race and class--which in turn allows his audience to do the same. This suspension of disbelief may free up the yuks, but the laughter is just as primitive as Borat's barbaric ways. And that's no joke. "

Meanwhile, we witness that Borat dropping his alter ego for the first time just when he needs to defend that controversial character and becomes his white self, Baron Cohen.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/entertainment/6153420.stm>

How about an ethnography that follows the actor after the curtains are down and extends its observation to the dressing room.

From: Alex.Wangler at gmx.de (Alexandra Wangler)
Date: Sat, 18 Nov 2006 17:01:01 +0100
Subject: [Mediantthro] Borat

I haven't seen the film, just some sections. Borat slips into the role of cultural difference. He provokes people to explain to him the "rules" of American culture. It is notable how people come up with something when they glance at themselves as part of a SPECIAL culture. Facing the other, the own becomes suddenly great and special.

Borat does not only mock homosexuals and "rednecks" by exposing them by someone else (by means of his deliberated interviews), but also exhibits the principle of excluding and stigmatizing thinking. For example, the homophobic Borat spends his first nice evening in the USA after having met some men at the Gay-Pride-Parade in Washington who don't seem to be shocked by his Kazakhian salutation (kissing stranger). Later, when someone tells him what the word "gay" means, he is appalled: "What" The nice man - was a homosexual?? Stigma has nothing to do with its meaning; it just means itself, Stigma.

See also the German article of Diedrich Diederichsen:
<http://www.zeit.de/2006/45/Komiker-Cohen>

From: sheos99 at yahoo.co.uk (G Benari)
Date: Sun, 19 Nov 2006 01:51:26 +0000
Subject: [Mediantthro] Borat

I have been following the discussion here and have only seen some clips from the film but can't help but wonder how teenagers (presumably one of the main target audiences) see the film? What do they make of it? Do they understand it is supposed to be a joke or will they think Borat is cool and what he says or does is a model for imitation. Imagine how the film plays to regions where these issues are sensitive, or people who have been directly affected by them.

The context in which all this takes place is important. From following the debate here, one could easily be mistaken in thinking that Borat was an academic project. It is not. Borat is about entertainment first, then making a moral point. And it is in this context that we need to assess the impact of what he does on his audiences.

Gideon Benari

From: labusia_xl at wp.pl (bogus)
Date: Sun, 19 Nov 2006 17:22:38 +0100
Subject: [Mediantthro] Borat

Dear List,

In Polish newspaper a week ago there was a short article about Borat (the film enters the cinemas soon, so I haven't seen it). The main lines of argumentation were like some on the list: that it is satire mainly on American society. However, what was interesting from my point of view is that the article also referred to the fact (if it is a fact I do not know - I have not been reading Russian newspapers lately) that the film will not be shown in Russian cinemas, and that supposedly it has been done by the Russian President on request of Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbaev who allegedly

assesses this film as damaging to the image of the nation.
Yet another context or rather several contexts.

Best,
Anna

From: mark.hobart at gmail.com (Mark Hobart, SOAS)

Date: Sun, 19 Nov 2006 18:23:18 -0000

Subject: [Mediantthro] What does Anthropology of Media tell us about Borat?

Am I alone in finding the discussion about Borat intriguing for telling us more about the predispositions of the commentators than about the film? As far as I can recall none of those who have waxed lyric about its 'meaning' have actually seen it or even the television series which preceded it. So the discussion raises interesting questions about the nature of evidence in anthropology of media. To judge by the discussion to date, you don't appear to need any.

Two different issues are getting entangled. The first is the attempts to determine what the film is about - the notoriously difficult question of its 'essential' message, or 'preferred meaning' in Stuart Hall's terms. That this is problematic is evident from the widely different accounts circulating. Also, with one or two exceptions, the provenance of the film seems to have been largely overlooked. It would appear to be part of a singularly British comedy genre. Certainly the various television series from which the film emerged seemed to me notable for how they drew on English schoolboy humour.

The second issue is how audiences understand and relate to the film. Presumably this is in significant part an empirical issue and contingent. There is therefore the risk that the academic commentators are reading their own predilections into the film (the more so considering virtually none has seen it) or inferring an essentialized reading of what the film is about from limited, situationally specific and often anecdotal evidence.

On the evidence of the debate so far, if this is the best that the supposedly innovative and path-breaking anthropology of media can do, quite how does it differ from previous approaches and in what does its originality lie?

Best
Mark

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From: s.abram at sheffield.ac.uk (Simone Abram, Sheffield University)

Date: Sun, 19 Nov 2006 21:02:13 +0000

Subject: [Mediantthro] What does Anthropology of Media tell us about Borat?

No, Mark, you're not alone. I had been wondering whether to make a rather similar comment.

Instead, I was observing how many people have seen snippets of film (presumably on youtube and similar sites), and consider that was sufficient basis on which to analyse the film and its reception. That is, the list itself had turned into a fieldsite, begging the empirical question about how viewers receive films, ie whether seeing the clips

and newspapers reports acts like the preparations for a ritual, to give the actual viewing of the film itself context and meaning beyond the immediate time-space of the film moment itself, or whether in our time-compressed world, the clip substitutes for the film as sufficient knowledge for office-gossip and other chat.

Perhaps list users are 'going native'?

Simone

From: sphughes37 at hotmail.com (Stephen Hughes, SOAS)

Date: Sun, 19 Nov 2006 21:06:46 +0000

Subject: [Mediantro] What does Anthropology of Media tell us about Borat?

No you are not alone. I too must jump on this bandwagon that Mark has started. I also have been thinking about how it is that everyone who has posted something on this issue has not seen the film. Not that I have any particular problem with this in itself, but it has given me pause to think. It is a good illustration of the fact that no one has to actually have to experience media to have an opinion. Any media product released is preceded and accompanied other media, which help us to situate, recognize, prejudge and make up our minds about it without us having to have experienced it directly. One poignant example of this was the case of "Satanic Verses." The outrage about this book spread so quickly amongst Muslims that angry crowds were mobilized on the streets of what was then called Bombay and people died without anyone having read the book.

All this demonstrates the point nicely that such media texts in themselves are not responsible for expressing their own meaning, but are always part of wider discursive practices. What everyone posting on this issue so far has been discussing is not strictly speaking the film, "Borat", but rather other media commentaries about "Borat" (and mostly in relation to the earlier thread unfortunately referred to as "reverse anthropology"). Because there is no one true reading/meaning of "Borat" out there waiting to be discovered, media commentary is exactly what we need to be asking ourselves questions about. To be clearer about what it is that we are talking about, we might want to call this remediation or intermedia. And "Borat" more than anything out there at the moment has done a good job of producing, provoking and bombarding us all with a vast cascade of media remediation- commentary, advertisements, press releases, ect. I am beginning to wonder whether I even need to go see the film myself?

steve hughes

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From: danieltaghioff at yahoo.com (Daniel Taghioff, SOAS)

Date: Sun, 19 Nov 2006 16:01:47 -0800 (PST)

Subject: [Mediantro] What does Borat tell us about Anthropology of Media?

Nice point from Mark and Stephen, but where does that take us?

I think that we are always part of the field, and that we are mostly trying to broaden the set of preconceptions we are dealing with, in the hope of some explanatory insights emerging (through lots of critical thinking admittedly.)

When do Anthropologists not "go native" to some extent, are they from

another planet?

Liberal-ironic-critical-sceptical-universalism is not universal, but very much a part of dominant liberal discursive positionings that are often encountered and discussed in relation to a sense of the here and now, our current hegemonic.

Of course it is always a safe position to take, because by doing so you commit to nothing, or at least very little: It is like a kind of intellectual "stealth bomber" strategy, it mostly keeps you off the radar.

It does however, have a tendency to lead you into a kind of insubstantive formalism, where you are like the reverse of a kitten, going round in circles, running away from your tail.

This is unless you are willing to discuss evidence, wherupon you are back on this planet, and have to pay attention to where you are positioned, and the kind of implied democratic value sets that you are most likely selling under the counter.

In that sense Borat and Anthropologists seem to have something in common to me in furthering and globalising this type of critical non-positioning.

Baron Cohen says in his interview with the BBC, that Borat is a tool against racism: A critical tool, which thus also has an implied value set.

Do we take him at his word, or is that too naive? Is this a case of false consciousness on his part? Ultimately unresolvable questions, but does that mean we shouldn't have a go?

Also, I wonder how many of the journalists, writing the articles that have been cited in this discussion, saw the film either, and more to the point, how would we find out?

And yes, now I really want to see it too, and discuss it with my friends who saw it. Most of them are saying things like, "Gross" and "I laughed myself silly" but clearly there are more critical-media-analysis performances to be wrung out of this over dinner.

Just talk?

Daniel

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From: sheos99 at yahoo.co.uk (G Benari)
Date: Mon, 20 Nov 2006 07:58:46 +0000
Subject: [Mediantro] Borat

The thing about Borate the movie is that it is pretty much the same thing that was on the TV shows, just in a larger dose. In that respect, it appears to me, that if you have seen a snippet of it you pretty much know what the film is about. So not having seen the entire film is not

the same as not seeing a full length feature film. In some ways people's discussion about the film is perhaps not as uninformed as might be suggested here.

Best

Gideon

From: latham.kevin at btinternet.com (Kevin Latham, SOAS)

Date: Mon, 20 Nov 2006 09:45:19 -0000

Subject: [Mediantro] What does Anthropology of Media tell us about Borat?

Dear All,

There is certainly an interesting debate arising here, particularly around what Steve is labelling remediation. In this case, I might add that there is also the danger of over-crediting the film with undue intellectual depth and profundity. As someone who has (unfortunately) seen the film I can reveal that it is about ninety percent crast toilet humour (literally). Not that there is anything necessarily wrong with that but after ninety minutes it is wearing and tediously dull. There is also little in the remaining ten percent to admire. If any of you have heard/read Mark Kermode's reviews of the film then you have a good idea of what to expect. In my opinion he is pretty much spot on.

If any of you are now tempted to go and see the film to contextualise this infinitely more interesting debate then my recommendation is: DON'T!

However, there is a further serious point about the remediation and pre-packaging/preconception/pre-experiencing of films through other media commentary here. The (p)remediation often overhypes and overdetermines the media product at the centre of discussion. We are also seeing in this discussion an instance of how intellectual commentary tends to objectify and extend the shelf-life of elements of popular culture that for other less academically inclined consumers is often relatively short and ephemeral.

In the end I think some of the more interesting anthropological questions that this film could raise relate to audiences and how they engage with the film. Again, we have seen an overdetermining of the 'text' of the film in this discussion.

Best wishes
Kevin

Dr. Kevin Latham
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From: guido.ipsen at uni-dortmund.de (Guido Ipsen, University of Dortmund)

Date: Mon, 20 Nov 2006 14:37:04 +0100

Subject: [Mediantro] Borat

Hi all,

what is MOST intriguing to me, and should be for anthropology at large, is going into the same direction as the "criticism without viewing the film" issue, namely what happens on the metalevel of discourse on the film in the first place.

Films such as this one (haven't seen it either, and is not available on TV or in the movies in Germany as far as I know, only know about it from a British friend who told me about it) become the subject of identification (also on a anthropological scientific level) through "talking-about".

This discussion is a good example for that.
So, any discourse analysts out there? Record this thread and off you go, have fun.

: -)

Guido

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From: adamfish at ucla.edu (Adam Fish, University of California, Los Angeles)

Date: Mon, 20 Nov 2006 10:41:58 -0800

Subject: [Mediantro] Performance of Ethnography in Borat

Dear Colleagues,

Our moderator began this discussion by linking you to my column comparing reality television protagonists to anthropologists. In that column --and in the spirit of seeing the anthropological in the everyday and with a commitment to a relevant popular anthropology-- I cheekily compare the celebutant Paris Hilton to an anthropologist. The thesis of that column, that reflexive ethnographers and adventure television hosts foreground their subjectivity in cross-cultural adventures, was tested on Borat. Here are the informal results.

My ability to see Paris 'and Borat' as anthropologists comes from a practice of everyday ethnography. This daily anthropology is made in conversation. I am always an ethnographer in praxis and thus more than an innocent in any dialogue. My subjectivity drives the discussion towards things I want to discuss. With this reduction in mind 'that ethnography starts with a known subject and goes toward a known object' I saw Paris's silly layovers in the American third world as strangely ethnographic. While moving with a known subject as she contacts another culture, as well as noting the points of friction and harmony, it seemed possible to see a popular anthropologist emerging from the swamps of reality television.

Some anthropologists might say that Borat is distinct from an anthropologist because he is fake while we are real. We are trained, while he is practiced as a performer. We have high ethical standards, while he has very little. (The spate of threatened lawsuits are proof of this as well as transgressions of genre where the literal laws of informed consent in 'documentary' are warped). We continue to advocate

for our collaborating friends while he hopes to never see them again. Other anthropologists believe that the intent of the anthropologist is distinct from what drives Borat to the US and A. I would say they are identical in one important way. Both locate, frame, and at times exaggerate 'and eventually get paid to commodify and simply in media-- a cross-cultural difference.

Borat is not a true anthropologist but in making an anthropology of the everyday and in finding a program in which public anthropology and television industries can both be happy-- I focus on the similarities.

Borat is a different type of ethnographer than Paris, who says very little. Her mere presence as a billionaire heiress is enough to provoke the display of radical cross-cultural friction. Borat, on the other hand drives the ethnographic moment or interview towards particular issues that resonate with Sacha Baron Cohen's ideological framework.

Borat is a funny, political movie. The contradictions between atheistic nationalism and indigenous mysticism; between doing homosexual acts and the language of homophobia; blind anti-Semitism and being Jewish; misogyny and polygamy; sexism and sexuality are all revealed. American media worked to meta-program in Khazak Borat a Manifest Destiny to Go West. Cohen transforms into Borat for the sake of providing the environment where the bigotry as well as the idealism in America are expressed. Anthropologists too take on a character to elicit responses. A Marxist anthropologist studying-up, an indigenous person working as a federal archaeologist 'participation in any cultural context to which you are an unknowing subject' is a performance.

At this year's AAA meeting I heard several people describe their ethnographic method as following the thoughts of the subject. If they talk of water, the ethnographer studies hydrology, if she speaks of human rights, the ethnographer will look into international law. I found this resoundingly disingenuous and idealistic. The specific subjectivity of the ethnographer predicts the ethnography more than these scholars are admitting. A pre-field thesis, needed to acquire funds, the ideological stance of our funders, and textual mode of representation all combine to subtly and graphically preselect our questions, the results of our research, and how it is eventually exhibited. Even in impossibly deductive work, our expectations --written, and performed for funders, committee chairs, and friends'drive our findings.

Being an ethnographer is one of the most unnatural professions and being ethnographed the oddest of experiences. Purposely leaving one's culture could be tantamount to suicide. Banishment was worse than death. Being casually observed for reasons you can't totally understand is equally absurd. Ethnography is a performance of scholarly, semi-objective, empathic, and judiciary subjectivity for a particular historical and functional reason: to produce specific knowledge about the other. Borat, too is a fake, but a character created to elicit from informants the structural bigotry in American cultures.

In essence, Borat and anthropologists both foreground the performance of subjectivity and have a preordained intent to produce a type of cross-cultural knowledge. In fact, if you look at Borat you might notice an applied neo-Marxist anthropologist with emphasis in gender studies and transnationalism. These moving picture shows? transprovential tourism, cultural slumming, commodification of the freak and exotification of the ordinary '-all bourgeois recreations in late capitalistic virtual reality-- refract moments in the history of ethnography, from innocence to self-consciousness to irony and spoof.

When will anthropology and comedy meet?

Yours,

Adam Fish
UCLA
Film - TV - Digital Media

From: aaytes at weber.ucsd.edu (Ayhan Aytes, University of California, San Diego)

Date: Mon, 20 Nov 2006 12:58:24 -0800

Subject: [Mediantro] Borat

I have actually seen the film, unfortunately...And my recommendation would be on the same lines with Kevin's. I want to ask the question that has not been asked so far. I wonder if any of the people who suggested "one needs to see the film in order to talk about Borat character" has actually seen the film themselves in order to be able to assert that?

I ask this question because, we somehow found ourselves talking only about the movie which in effect tries to "contain" the whole Borat character and the prejudices he utilizes in a packaged form. But Borat and his form of mocking cultural differences definitely extend beyond that package both historically and culturally. I think Adam's article is an important intervention extending that towards anthropologists themselves. But this discussion is also an important opportunity to talk about the role of comedy in enhancing stereotypes even while seemingly trying to criticize them. It is a rather slippery platform to do an analysis unless we look at the contentious moments in the performance. Another example to that just appeared today on the news:
<http://qqq.tzm.com/2006/11/20/kramers-racist-tirade-caught-on-tape/>

I am also not sure if in order to talk about the implications of a particular character one necessarily needs to perceive the character and its efforts as an academic effort. Moreover while there is a whole domain which applies performance theory on real life cases, abstaining from doing that in a case whose performativity is its most salient characteristics is particularly surprising to me... given the fact that the first objects that anthropologists brought from "native lands" were masks. Is this a resistance to see the masks in one's own culture, or the various faces behind them?

Ayhan Aytes

From: Jonathan.Marshall at uts.edu.au (Jonathan Marshall, University of Technology Sydney)

Date: Tue, 21 Nov 2006 12:47:33 +1100

Subject: [Mediantro] Borat

I have not seen the movie but have seen the show, and for me there is another comparison.

To make his supposedly sardirical points Cohen impersonates stupid people of another ethnicity to his own and who are outsiders to his audience; thus there is always a fundamental ambiguity as to who he is satirising. Many many years ago there used to be an Australian actor called Gary McDonald who impersonated a stupid and naive Australian journalist come TV host called 'Norman Gunston' on Australian TV, he was probably funnier than Cohen anyway, but the racism produced in that case *was* always ironic and was usually shown by his victim's response to him. Gunston did disrupt social rules ethnomethodologically and everything else claimed for Cohen and so on.

however, there was thus relatively little of the apparent sophisticated delight of ironically laughing at racial stereotypes of people from relatively marginal groups in a post modern context.

Anyway, the point is that Cohen's method does not have to require the use of ethnic stereotypes, but he chooses to use them, and having seen

any of his work you can criticise it or wonder about it if you want to, irrespective of seeing the movie - the context already exists.

jon

From: woodell at rowan.edu (Deborah C. Woodell, Rowan University)

Date: Tue, 21 Nov 2006 12:00:08 -0500

Subject: [Mediantro] Borat, meet O.J.

Steve wrote:

> *It is a good illustration of the fact that no one has to actually has*
> *to experience media to have an opinion.*

I think this is evidenced by the fact that everyone under the sun had an opinion about the no-longer-forthcoming book and TV interview by O.J. Simpson.

Deb

===

Deborah Woodell
Adjunct, journalism
Rowan University
Glassboro, NJ

From: eardevol at gmail.com (Elisenda Ardevol, UOC Catalonia)

Date: Wed, 22 Nov 2006 13:24:21 +0100

Subject: [Mediantro] Borat

Dear list,

I have not seen the film either, but I have had the opportunity to view a trailer and much more in Youtube:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JGM5SdRve78>

I am finding this debate very interesting because we can see how intertextuality works in global markets and how cultural difference is performed, caricatured and exhibit, becoming a central issue for mass consumption and entertainment. As far as cultural difference is one of our most important objects of study, and as far as we as anthropologist contribute to perform its social significance, we cannot dismiss the opportunity to analyze it and to express our "expert" and personal opinions, even though we have not seen the film, yet or some are not going to see it because of cultural taste or/and political reasons.

Lurking,
Elisenda

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