



Media Rituals

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Introduction: Media Events

by providing privileged access to social realities that matter, the media reinforce social cohesion (Dayan and Katz, 1992)



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What other events can you use to support the notion that media help in social cohesion?



A Durkheim-inspired Approach

myth of the mediated centre: the naturalised idea of the media as our privileged access point to the things that truly matter in society

“The media that any society happens to have tend to be naturalised as its ritual frame onto the social, so that the distortions built into that particular institutionalisation are naturalised away, beneath the sight-line of political or social conflict.” (Couldry, 2002)



A Durkheim-inspired Approach



The Hunger Games and
the Myth of the Mediated
Centre?

[http://theguidon.com/
katipunan/2012/06/08/
reading-reality-in-the-
hunger-games/](http://theguidon.com/katipunan/2012/06/08/reading-reality-in-the-hunger-games/)

A Durkheim-inspired Approach



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Media rituals

practices that naturalise the idea that the media possess privileged access to the “inner sanctum” of social reality (Couldry, 2003; 2012)



Media rituals: Liveness

-“What is special...is the potential connection it guarantees with real events, rather than the actual portrayal of real events themselves.” (Couldry, 2003)

-“The liveness of an event does not require that every element of it be broadcast live, but rather the belief that, taken together, the media consumption provide shared, but privileged access to the event as it unfolds...Indeed, liveness is not a simple fact but a ‘conventional expectation’ (Saenz 1994, 576), an assumption of togetherness that the media work hard to construct.” (Couldry, 2002)

Media rituals: Liveness

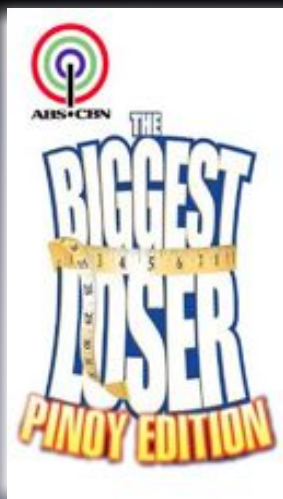


Media rituals: Reality as True Fictions/ Fake Truths

-“The claim of television to present *reality*...is a thread throughout its history, and is part of a wider *ideology of naturalism*.” (Couldry, 2003)

-“The media [are] both fictional space and window onto reality. There is no need for the media to resolve such ambiguities, since it is precisely on such ambiguities that the media’s symbolic authority relies.” (Couldry, 2002)

Media rituals: Reality as True Fictions/ Fake Truths



Media rituals: The Media/Ordinary Divide

- “Ordinariness is indeed what the media frequently claim to show us.” (Couldry, 2002)
- “Yet...it [is] precisely the transition from ordinary (nonmedia) person to celebrity(media) person that [is] the purpose of the game. This [is] the master-frame without which the game ma[kes] no sense...” (Couldry, 2002)

Media rituals

Celebrities (Couldry, 2002; 2003)



Media rituals: The Media/Ordinary Divide

Media frames (Couldry, 2003)



Media rituals

Places of pilgrimage (Couldry, 2003)



Conclusion

Couldry's (2003)
suggestions:

- alternative versions of social centres
- alternative mediated points of access



Critique

How useful might the concept of media rituals be in societies shifting towards the audience-fragmenting digital media? (see Turrow, 2012 'The Daily You' and Couldry, 2012 'Media, Society, World')

