

Propositions to accompany the PhD thesis

Inside interventional television. Media rituals in the age of participation

by Balázs Boross

1. While the traditional boundaries that separate performers from audiences seem to be crossed more routinely and naturally than ever in today's mediatized culture, this has not diminished the extraordinary character of 'being in the media' (*this dissertation*).
2. Interventional shows are based on the promise of (self)-emancipation: the outcome of the participants' endeavor both determines their future navigation of the social world and reflects this social world that they are trying to navigate (*this dissertation*).
3. To understand how reality television works as a site of self-actualization, one needs to consider the various modalities of motivating, experiencing, and rationalizing participation (*this dissertation*).
4. Televisual interventions heavily rely on what can be called the 'myth of participation'. This is a set of intertwining assumptions about media participation as a means of *integration* into a particular social order, as a means of advocating *social change* and as a means of giving voice to *difference* (*this dissertation*).
5. Producers employ a variety of tactics to both fulfill the imperative of creating spectacular transformations and accommodate participants' needs; but, as soon as these interests become difficult to meet or reconcile, they typically downplay their role and agency to bring changes to their practices (*this dissertation*).
6. Ritual theory allows us to keep asking large questions that media analysis ultimately strives to answer but often loses sight of: how the media are involved in engineering social relationships and how this work becomes constitutive of social collectivities and identities.
7. Rites, while directing our attention to the integrative end of a transformation, also naturalize the workings of *privilege* and *exclusion*.
8. The validity of ethnographic endeavor depends on the researcher's ability to enter into meaningful dialogues and to employ an interpretative imagination that is sensitive to how potential meanings are linked to the micro, mezzo and macro realities in which they are produced.
9. The perk of teaching media studies is to ask over again what is constant and what is fundamentally new in the ways audiences engage with the media over time (students in this sense keep you fresh – but also make you feel old).
10. One should not worry much about the defensibility of their PhD propositions – it is virtually impossible to make a statement that is academically *not* defensible (this is an epistemological claim, not the funny one).
11. I'm sorry
I can't
Don't hate me – (*Sex and the City*)