

Assignment 1

- +4
1. How television is like theater
 - a. Lynn Spigel, “Make Room for TV: Chapter 5, “The People in the Theater Next Door” +0.5
 - b. In Spigel's essay, she described how early television had strong and deep ties to theater. Spigel emphasized television appeal to its audience as “intimacy, immediacy, spontaneity” and which these three crucial factors played a key role in providing television a sense of authenticity. These factors aspired to provide the home audience a sense of having a perfect experience of live theater, which also brings uniqueness to television that audiences could watch a live performance in the front row without any interruptions. It is to say, television had played a role in the entertainment medium to amplify theatre. She then goes on to express the method of early television address the family audiences. Spigel said that family comedy “integrating two types of theatrical traditions that early television embraced.” This comprises theatrical realism that allows acting to convey a sense of authenticity and also adapt features from vaudeville to create humor but developed in a more genteel theater as well. +1
great!
 - c. The Big Bang Theory +0.5
 - d. Spigel had mentioned in her essay that sitcom “combined ridiculous, zany, slapstick and sight gags with the realistic characters and story development of more genteel theater”. The Big Bang Theory as a widely-known American television sitcom compromising between these two types of theatrical aesthetics had perfectly verified her statement. To make sure that television was like theater, Big Bang Theory was taped in front of a live studio audience so that it can be filmed as if the actors are performed on a stage, which delivers a sense of naturalness and authenticity. According to Spigel, it is necessary to “maintain aesthetic distance between actors and audiences”, which is also appears in the Big Bang Theory that actors never look into the camera, in order to create an illusion of reality. Besides, BBT is a TV show that mainly focuses on a popular fan base. Although it doesn't contain any visible violence and sexual innuendo that would scare off the young audiences that most vaudeville has, the character and plot setting of BBT is in a way adopting from the vaudeville that Sheldon and other scientists are both highly intelligent while silly in dealing with the actual society. 2

great responses!!

+4

2. Theater/live performance as a path to the authentic self
 - a. Abigail De Kosnik, "Drama Is the Cure for Gossip" +0.5
 - b. In relation to the contemporary tv shows, Professor De Kosnik in her essay discussed how live and improvisational performance had led to discover the character's authentic self. She explained that the recent TV shows had constantly "use of theatricality as a Foucauldian 'technology of the self'", which is through the art of improvisational performance to discover who we really are. She writes that the significant reason for proliferated "technology of the self" is the raising of internet gossip. Since the web-based social media requires carefully sustain self-image and reputations and have to keep refreshing the identity that was presented online; live performance, contrary to the internet gossip, by exposing the identity to others through theatrical performance, reveals the inner self to communicate and engage with the audiences. Then she later addressed the raising act of self-exposure can be explained as a reproducing therapeutic model, which unveiling one's deepest secrets to a watching public "may spur audiences to begin a self-help/self- improvement project" because tv is on the verge of giving up its position to the internet. Therefore, the television's present turn to theatricality allowed audiences the fantasy that they were able to find out the hidden authentic self and connect with the performance. +1.5
You got it!
 - c. The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel, Season 1 +0.5
 - d. In the professor's essay, she addressed couple of recent tv shows that contain characters discovering their true self through the art of improvisational performance. The amazon prime original series, The marvelous Mrs. Maisel has digged the self-realization of a housewife in the settings of 1960s on the Upper West Side. After figured her husband was fleeing off their marriage because the shame of booming on a stand-up comedy show, Mrs. Maisel was drunk and desperately heads to the downtown comedy club, where she would usually attend with her husband Joel. She grabbed the mic and surprisingly found herself talent as being a stand-up comedian, in which, according to Professor De Kosnik, by performing through an improvisational performance, the protagonist had found herself a "true self". Being a housewife as an upper-middle-class woman seems to be perfectly justified by the social value, but a housewife trying to start a comedy career would be spurned by the society, especially a divorced one. On the stage, Mrs. Maisel finally finds the career that she would love to devote for which presents a theatrical performance that women in that period of time can express their inner selves through performing as a comedian. Ultimately, the marvelous Mrs. Maisel showcases the true self of the character but also delivering the message that the most traumatic thing in one's life might also turn out to be something pleasing. +2
This is a great answer, yes!

+3.5

3. How reality TV relates to performance in the “neoliberal workplace”
 - a. How reality TV relates to performance in the “neoliberal workplace” +0 ???
 - b. In the article, Couldry has addressed the comparison between the workers in the neoliberal workplace and the people in reality TV show. He mentioned that the constant surveillance by the absolute external authority reality TV shows had shown some similarity with neoliberal workplace; “operating as a form of ‘common sense’, and that absolutely legitimates the market and delegitimizes the social”. Couldry claimed that the neoliberal workplace demands that work is equivalent to life, which indicates that you have the freedom to connect with work even in your off hours. Furthermore, Andre Gorz pointed out the idea of “total mobilization of [the worker’s] persona”, which described that workers must be “deep acting”, means that they must be “self and natural”. Later he emphasized five categories that reality tv mirrors the neoliberal workplace, includes constant surveillance of contestants, compulsory self-staging, required team-work, regulation by an unquestionable external authority, and unquestionable norms or values to which the worker must submit positively or even passionately. These five categories set the guideline for how reality tv mirrors the neoliberal workplace. +1
 - c. MasterChef (American TV series) +0.5
 - d. According to Lynn Spiegel, television has always been favored due to the blurring of reality and fiction. The competitive cooking reality tv show, MasterChef in a way satisfied people’s need to see real people doing entertaining things in private. In related to Couldry’s article, constant surveillance of contestant in a reality tv show is similar to the neoliberal workplace. Master Chef had recorded in a way that all the contestants’ cooking process was monitored, any small mistake would be used as a tool for the producers to amplify and attract audiences. In this tv series, Gordon Ramsey and other Michelin starred chefs who set as the “absolute external authority”, which regulated the whole tv show by this unquestionable external authority. Chefs would set up team competitions and required the contestant for teamwork. And more importantly, the contestants in MasterChef performed in front of the camera as a status of “passionate”. No matter how crucial the chef has played on the contestants, they have all “followed the unquestionable norms” with a positive attitude, which is similar to the neoliberal workplace as mentioned by Couldry. +2