Television & New Media

http://tvn.sagepub.com

Dialogic Absurdity: TV News Parody as a Critique of Genre

Zoë Druick Television New Media 2009; 10; 294 DOI: 10.1177/1527476409332057

The online version of this article can be found at: http://tvn.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/10/3/294

Published by:

http://www.sagepublications.com

Additional services and information for Television & New Media can be found at:

Email Alerts: http://tvn.sagepub.com/cgi/alerts

Subscriptions: http://tvn.sagepub.com/subscriptions

Reprints: http://www.sagepub.com/journalsReprints.nav

Permissions: http://www.sagepub.com/journalsPermissions.nav

Citations http://tvn.sagepub.com/cgi/content/refs/10/3/294

Dialogic Absurdity

TV News Parody as a Critique of Genre

 Z_e D ick

This a ticle elamines the self as hen men in fine as diesing the concest of gene. While gene is fien ed a a categor find it ials doct in and maketing, the aith age that Mikhail Bakhtin' in tin of gene as a ciall embedded aethetic of mall of the nde tand the life at in fine as diesa a commenta in the cial aith it of the ness. Of make a male of manda, the UK, and the United State, the aticle age that the litical ignificance of intestet all cials comminication in eide in the doblene of the total ask and a dience to edgine the blem of of ficial of most of the hill imitane of the intested and the minance. The aticle of each main of hot that me else and the new ith the ethat act all ative litic, and end ith adic in the control of the con

Keywords: Mikhail Bakhtin; ne a d $\uparrow \uparrow \cdots D / \cdots \uparrow \uparrow \cdots C \cdots t \cdots t$;

In the eal 1990, Chi Fale ec ded a fam ketch n /t / L. (NBC, 1975). Int d ced n the l ng-nning / L. ketch a Bennett Bae, Fale gie a h m l ina iate ne e t, di lging fat man e nal detail ab t hi abject tate a me ne h ha ec lia g ming habit and a ange finte e nal difficitie. Bae'c m liedicle, al ng ith hi laid jacket and licked back hai, fl in the face f the ne ente' lick image. Bt mt ignificant ab t thi ketch i the a that Fale im Itane l t ange e tele i in'n m and im t them the gh the e fai te, the mimede i alent f cae te. Hi im tatin f an the' ice, in thi cae the ice f n matie a th it, eeg, indentifie hat he b th l ng f and eject. Hi a catic t ne at nce a eal t the ie e t hae hi ide and eaffirm the cetne f the n mal beha i he cann t attain.

In thi ketch, Fa le emblemati e hat in R ian c It al c itic Mikhail Bahktin' (1895–1975) te m c ld be called dial gi m and ill t ate im eccabl Bakhtin' the f the tte ance (H l i t 2002). Fa le dem n t ate a n mbe f

Significated (G) Figure FT/Red FT/Re

Connecting Bakhtinian Concepts

Bakhtin' c nce ti n f dial gi m e e ent a lifetime' c mmitment t eeing the elf in the the, hat Ken Hi chk ha called an ae thetic f dem c ac (Hi chk 1999). Ae thetic actice e e ent ne ite he e ice c mingle, t ggling t be hea d; b t dial gi m elate t a la ge inci le, the elati n f each the ance t the the ance (T d 1984, 60). Dial gi m i cl el c nnected t Bakhtin' anal i f the ca ni al. In hi b k / / / / / (1984b), Bakhtin int d ce a ne , c lt all mate iali t meth d t lite a c itici m, a g ing that the ld f the ca ni al e e ed in Rabelai a elated t the la ca nial f medie al E e that e e, at the n et f the Renai ance, c ming t an end. W iting f m ithin an inc ea ingle e e i e and dange at m he e in the S iet Uni n, Bakhtin ffi0i ie[(that i iela gg(en (S iel()10(a)) ie[(te)) ie[(l eaat i iel aa nend dn (S 420(f)403tthig .f)403ttf eiend S 420(f)403aeniclea icalf ialimg that Bakhtin (anal ffi0i 74((i0i 74(t ei0i 74((f)-184(eeach)-74(ba ffi0i 74(in)) i tce, ef me, aend f m the the fe b t methigd i-

Bakhtin th ffe a meth df c nnecting a t and life, lite at e, and litic. Bakhtin identifie Rabelai ' ignificance a a ec de f a ce tain la, n n fficial i it; hi at a c m i ed f hi abilit t all f the ice f the ca ni al in hi iting. N t nl a cani al it elf dial gic, then, c m i ed f ice in c nflict the fficial being m cked b the n fficial b t Rabelai' k n the de el ment f the n el f m h ed that lite at e c ld ab b and ef ame n nlite a (and n n fficial) ice, di lacing the ing la a th ial ice f the e ic em, f e am le.

In T ... D/L ... I/L ... I/L(1984a), Bakhtin de el ed hi n ti n f the ecial le f the n el a an a t f m a tic la l ell ited t the iti ning f m lti le ice. E e ing a n nidealit it in n lang age, Bakhtin (and membe f hi ci cle) in i ted that ign e e mate ial f m and the ef e all e e i n a eliant n the cial and hi t ical c nte t f eech, athe than indi id al ch 1 g (V 1 n in 1973). M e e, eech a gani ed b ciall 1 cated eech gen e . Unlike the ab t act and lite a n ti n f the entence, Bakhtin t ned hi attenti n t the tte ance, a mate iall 1 cated ie f e bale e i n. He a g ed that the tte ance i al a at fall ng chain fitte ance. It ine itable ndt mething and addee it elft aft e hea e (Bakhtin 1986, 69, 95). The tte ance, he te, i filled ith dial gic et ne (Bakhtin 1986, 92).

Thi dial gic a ect t lang age a eech im licate all the ance in hat Bakhtin efe edt a the cent ali ing m n l gic tendencie f e that attem t t ed ce diffe ence and c eate h m geneit. At the ame time, a c nte f ce, Thi e anded and ciall embedded c nce t f gene int d ce a cial and hit ical la e f mediatint all ignificatin. Bakhtinf c ed n the hit ical eme gence f the n ela hat he c n ide ed a dial gic and elf-efle i e f m. A g abl tele i i n, ith it e ce i e te t, it tendenc t h b idi e, and it actice f ignaling elf-efle i it in a n mbe f a , i an e all hit icall ignificant dial gic medi m. Within it, elf-efle i e c med i a a tic la l t ical f m. Of c e it ma be aid that a a c mme cial medi m tele i i n i inhe entl c n e ati e, t ing t ec mbine e i ting cce f l f mat int h b id j t innati e en gh t kee a dience attentin (Fi ke 1987, 114; Gitlin 1994, 63 85). N nethele , thi ce i a e i n f the hit ical de el ment m tatin f c lt al f m.

Bakhtin and Media Studies

In a c m letel diffe ent ein, hi eading f W d Allen' m ck-d c menta (1983) a an a ect f dial gime ating in N th Ame ica i al entiel c n incing. Stam h that Z matche f m and c ntent, m bili ing the t e f the tele i i n d c menta t tell the im ible (ficti nal) t n t e f m, a chamele n. D a ing n the eech gen e f the hi t ical d c menta film, ith tatin f m ficti nal and eal ne eel, a ell a acted itne ith eal ndit, cha S an S ntag, the film a die and b e t en e f d c menta ' te t al acce t t th (Stam 1989, 204). In Stam' eading, Z e em lifie c eati e n n iginalit (Stam 1989, 200), a e fect metah f dial gi m.

P ima il a film the it, Stam get et a d the a licabilit f Bakhtinian c nce t t media m e b adl in hi b k' final cha te. He ite:

... a a mat i in hich cent i etal-d minant and cent if gald battle, the ma media can ne e c m letel ed ce the antag ni tic dial g e f ice ... The e a e atte n f ne hi, and clea ide l gical tendencie, b t d minati n i ne e c m lete, f n t nl i tele i i n it ne and ind 1 ial manage; it i al it ceatie a tici ant, it ke, and it a dience, hich can e i t, e e, and dec de. (Stam 1989, 220)

Alth gh Stam g e n f the ith thi a g ment in , hi in ight a e d cti e f media ch la attem ting t t etch anal i be nd the identificati n f d minant ide l g in main t eam media te t.

him t be, like Stam, a e en iti e the i t f dial gic media. He ite:

Gen e i a c lt al actice that attem t t t ct e me de int the ide ange f te t and meaning that ci c late in c lt e f the c n enience f b th and a dience . . . Tele i i n i a highl gene ic medi m ith c m a ati el fe ne- ff g am falling t ide e tabli hed gene ic categ ie . (Fi ke 1987, 109)

Inte te t alit, he n te, i n ta actice f tati n, b t athe efe t the e ei fclt altet:

Inte te t alkn ledge e- ient the eade t e littele i i n' l em b acti ating the te t in ce tain a , that i , b making me meaning athe than the . St d ing a te t' inte te t al elati n can ide ith al able cl e t the eading that a a tic la c lt e bc lt e i likel t d ce f m it. (Fi ke 1987, 108)

Significant 1, Fi ke n t nl ackn ledge the cent i etal a ect f tele i i n a a c mme cial medi m, b t indicate that the dial gic tential f the tele i al tteance i c n tantl nde mined.

Gen e i a mean f c n t cting b th the a dience and the eading bject: it k in the ec n mic d main i a alleled b it k in the d main f c lt e; that i , it k in infl encing hich meaning f a g am a e efe ed b , ffe ed t , hich a dience . It d e thi b efe ing me inte te t al elatin and their a ciated meaning e the and in fa a the elatin it efe a eth e ed b the ind t , it k i likel t be each in a . . . Gene icall dien inte te t allet i finall c n t aining and d e little t en the te t t the eade: imilal, it d e little t ad ance nde tanding f the ine itabilit finate te t alit , f the inte te t al a the ime ite f c lt e. (Fi ke 1987, 115)

Fi ke he e identifie the nece a il dial gic elati n f media a c lt al ce Fi ked e n t c nnect the te m gen e and inte te t t dial gi m and ch n t e b t film ch la Vi ian S bchack d e in he a ticle L nge Time: P t a C i e and the Ch nt e f Film N i (1998). Ch nt e efe t the ea e f ace and time that it are and b nd an gi en gen e. A ad m ie e i e a ad. A ne cat e i e a ne m and anch. A mel d ama e i e a famil h me. And, acc ding t S behack, film n i e ate in the the c extail 1 nge, the nightcl b, the ba, the h tel m, the b a dingh e, the dine, the dance hall, the adide cafe, the b and t ain tati n, and the a ide m tel, lace that ignified blic in t a Ame ican c It e (S bchack 1998, 130). Thi neithe h me n a the nat all habitat f the e citing and dange n nd me tic mi ed t elea e de t the film 'd med male tag ni t. S bchack hile cial and litical cie f the ta eid, cha inflatin and a ing h tage, emain t ide the fame and the na ati e, atial meta h ide the mean finf ing the e e da ith a ag e an iet. The l - f-h me feeling i t an lated int a lack f ha h me and a e cc at i n ith the liminal ne ft an ience t ide the famil d main. With he e tended anal i, S bchack ill t ate T d ' int that gen e i b nd ith ch n t e a t make them alm t indi ting i hable (T d 1984, 83).

In h t, Bakhtinian c nce t f gen e, dial g e, and ch n t e ha e been ecgni ed a ignificant f the t d f media, b t fa a lied nl iecemeal and in me hat limited fa hi n. In the emaining ecti n f the a ticle, I attem t t dem n t ate h d cti e the e idea can be f the t d f tele i i n' tendenc t a d elf- efle i it.

Television, Parody, and Dialogue

The ne a d elie n the ie e' ec gnitin f the n titene f the c mic ne. The t ic f ne a d al ai e la ge e tin ab t the meaning and t an f matin f tele i al te t and gene. The c nce t int d ced ab e, dial gim, the c nnectin f each the ance t a ling i ticall mediated cial field, and gene a the atic la ea e f time and ace d ced b the le

gani ing clale e i n, idea ef lf amef anal i. Ne a gene in the Bakhtinian en e in ite a eading f ne a d a an inte te t that b th call n the a dience t effect n the d cti n f tele i i n ne and, tentiall, t e ti n it a th it a the fficial tele i i n di c e fthe eal.

H m i a inted e am le f dial gi m. Acc ding t Je Palme, me f the k fh m i the c eati e j ta iti n f nlikel te m (Palme 1987, 61) and in thi en e h m i a telling e am le f a m lti iced di c e. H m can make the edictable in edictable and defamilia i e the e e da (Palme 1987, 46). In ne a die e actl chan e ati n cc : the edictable te t ignaled b the ic nic ne et, tent ian ice, and e i demean f the anch i made t ange b e lacing ne f the te m f the ne eech gen e. T deli e the ne , the anch m t cc , in te m f eech, de , and demean , a e -deg ee f de iati n f m the n m (M e 1986, 57). The anch 'abilit t the legitimate e i the ef e a tem ting ta ting lace f di ting the chain f n mati e tte ance a ciated ith ne . Je Palme a g e that h m i the ce dit bing n mal age (Palme 1987, 218), f c n t cting ab d actant tatement and/ the ance (Palme 1987, 90). In the beit cale this circuit in can a k in the a dience a citical ea e ment (c nfi mati n) f me alte nate i i n f ealit. The b tt f the ab d, ite Palme, i al a , inhe entl, a feat e f the eal cial ld in me f m the (Palme 1987, 90). If the e ailing ne cena i c mbine a be-l king e n ith e i d ce at ted ne ce, ne m cke need t e lace at lea t ne te m t bet the e ectation of the eech gene: ill e n delie inge i ne; ill e n deli e ing ill ne ; e i e n deli e ing ill ne . Ch i Fa le e ting a Bennett B a e n hi n abjecti n i ne ch e am le.

Pa d i a d ble- iced di c e and, a chh the eal ne b a a dic e i n. Beca e a d ha a a a itic elati nt e-i tet, it e i flen de c ibed a limited. Pa d't an ge i n lti-matel emain a thied a thied b the e n mit eek t bet, ite Linda H tche n. E en in m cking, a d einf ce; in f maltem, it in c ibe the m cked c n entin nt it elf. The eb g a anteeing their c ntin ed e i tence (H tche n 1985, 75). Thi tem a in e i n i ed lent f ca ni al.

In the cale for coeffine atie, not not ill the addicted demonstrate it normal a ibility, it ill all indicate, boing lication, the ten not followed in the calculation of the addiction of the calculation of the addiction of the calculation of the addiction of the calculation of th

News Parody as Social Satire

In a ecent a ticle n , n , I , J , UI ike H. Meinh f and J nathan Smith into that the half a eall a atien f B itihalitic and a and f B itihalitic and an and f B itihalitic and and and an and made la ith the thing eal ead half-kne about tele i in it elf, and about the aninhich, ehaling eal ead half-kne about tele i in it elf, and about the aninhich, ehaling eal ead half-kne about tele i in gene eal ead half-kne about tele i in gamme a econcei ed and atched (Meinh f and Smith, 2000, 60). U inglife i elate et to caicat elell-knoon blic figure, the hachie ed mimetic tato f both homan and tele i in gene eal both the infinitel malleable et ignifie for the homan efect, the homan end ent in the lade event both the ecific ele and eent, and flen aloth tand in for the . The et all ed for the bole end homan life; laced in econgia able tele i in for mat, the alomade a tinging citie entele i in and eliance not for knoon ledge about the bliche e.

Ja n Mittell n te a imila ce at k in animated e ie, ch a $\frac{1}{4}$. The gh a dic c n enti n ch a ca icat e and h e e agge at in that a et ical fanimation, for the ce the etienthe ce de fealing a ciated ith lie-action tem fee e entation (Mittell 2001, 24; ee alogo Ga 2005). It beannting that b the continuous continuous from the continuous formula for the continuous formula for the ce at in, 1989) and E and E and E are continuous formula for the ce in the continuous formula for the ce in the ce and, a gable, in the continuous formula for the ce in the near the near the near the ce and had dedicated to the fiction of the contains the ce in the near the near the near the contains the near the

lam ning the m it f the ne eade and the ne it elf, athe than ab t c mmenting n a tic la eal- ld ne t ie.

Unlike e i ketch c med h in Canada that had incl ded ne ketche M. t made tele i i n it f c and integrated a ide a a f ketche int an e all ne f mat.³

the eb mimicking the time that characterie ne gathering and brackating. The home editiel dec not could be the court of the court formain the earning the ame feed at the new that them ele. The along the commentation, mainly form CNN and Formain the elementation is the edition of the court elementation of the edition of t

M de t ed the a t ind t . He i a mendaci , m ck-aking, l d-m thed b ll h ll chea t nt t blicl h miliate c nt . And, he i a te ible d e e . J ining me n i filmmake Michael M e.

Afte h ing a cli f M e being h ted d n b La King n CNN, C lbe t dial gicall c mbined the ight- ing diat ibe ith the inte ie, highlighting the idel gical mi i n fan c e age fleft- ing e ecti e n main t eam media. Unlike h D , he e J n Ste a t and Michael M e ag eed ab t the dit e ing i e f the Ame ican health ca e tem, C lbe t in i ted th gh t the inte ie that the f ee maket tem did it j b ell, namel c eating diffe ential citi en hi, and that the i ilege f i ate et en e that tele i i n c ntent i c n t ained b n : Pha mace tical c m anie a f the nightl ne . The gett . . . that time....I ill ne e a an thing again t m nIt' n t ab t telling the th. We are elling thing (C med Cent al, J 1 19, 2007). Unlike $\frac{1}{100}$ D/ he e M e ag eed and e anded the h t' b e atin, n C t M e did little m e than la gh. C lbe t dem n t ate n t nl the ab dit f the ighting ie hee nd, he al e e the gene ic e ectati n f the t di inteie it elf. At ne int C lbe t ine that he feel t cl et M e and a k hi d ce t be c nnected ia atellite h k- in tead. On c e, the t in e a ate mall c een, M e' indicating that he a in Flint, Michigan, hi bi thlace. When C lbe t a ked that he be em ed e en f the, M e a eca ti ned a being I cated in Flint, B a il. In thi a, the all h k- i denat ali ed and ai ed ith cial c de f di c mf t and the in a i n f e nal ace.

Utili ing the ch n t e f the ne et, the t di inte ie and the atellite h k-, ne a die cha C tengage the ie e a ac lt al a tici ant. Offe ing ca ni ale e in e i n f the al de, the e h e the c lt al kn ledge f gen e t et e ectati n and defamilia i e a th itati e and ide-Mainatreammediaeanbee ref-2cæ riousvie98(8(in)40(v)1vie98(se)-9use)-119usal w2(so ling i tic, make Bakhtin a c cial thinke f tele i i n t die . F e am le, tele i-i n might be een a an inhe ent1 dial gic f m, a a the n el bef e it, ne g a ling ith it it in a b th c lt e and c mme ce. Tele i i n' ima m de an e ential a ect f it eech gen e i the inte ie, in hich m lti le ice, metime ith m lti le accent, eflecting thei di e e it i n in the cial field, a e b ght int c ntact. Alth gh tele i i n ma k diligent1 t e 1 e ide 1 gical c nflict in fa f the ling cla the d minant e i n f the ld (ee, f e am le, Jame n 2000) eali m i ce tainl a ef 1 in thi ega d it i idel acce ted that tele i i n e e e m e ie than it f ecl e. F e am le, the k f H ace Ne c mb and Pa 1 Hi h n tele i i n a a c l-t al f m and the t die f Elih Kat and Tama Liebe n c -c lt al ece tin f Ame ican h b th indicate that the ea n f the m lti licit f dec ding f tele i i n ha t d ith the ambi alence b ilt int it te t. The e ambi alence, the a g e, de i e f m tele i i n' eflecti n f hat in Bakhtinian te m c ld be een a the ee accencenn 5(5 (5 n2 Td[(1 4(c)4)cn4(g)4(h3(t))-3(5 n2 Td[(1 4(c)4)29)]).

- Jame n, F ed ic. 2000. Reificati n and t ia in ma c lt e. In J. , ed. Michael Ha dt and Kathi Week . O f d: Black ell.

- Kitea, Jlia. 1980. D. Ne Yk: Clmbia Uni e it Pe.
 - . 1984. Ne Y k: C 1 mbia Uni e it Pe .
- Ma bin, Janet. 2001. Lang age, t ggle, and ice: The Bakhtin/V 1 in ting. In D. Arm. A. Arm., ed. Ma ga et Wethe all, Ste hanie Ta 1, and Sime n Yate. L. nd. n: Sage.
- McKain, Aa n. 2005. Not nece a il not the ne : Gatekee ing, emediation, and D .

- M e, Ma ga et. 1986. The tele i i n ne e nalit and c edibilit: Reflectin n the ne intanitin. In the ne intanitin. In the ne intanitin. In the ne intanitin. It the neighbor to the neighbor to
- Neale, Ste e. 2000. G. . . / . . H. L nd n: R tledge.
- Ne c mb, H ace, and Pa l M. Hi h. 2000. Tele i i n a a c l. al f m. Intrace. At the control of the dition, ed. H ace Ne c mb. O f d: O f d Uni e it. Pe.
- Palme, Je . 1987 t L nd n: BFI.
- R c e, Jane, and C aig Hight. 2001. Et ... t: M. ... v / ... t ... / t / t . Manche te : Manche te Uni e it Pe .