



# 媒介研究

文本、机构与受众

# MEDIA STUDIES

## TEXTS, INSTITUTIONS AND AUDIENCES

Lisa Taylor  
Andrew Willis



北京大学出版社  
PEKING UNIVERSITY PRESS



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# 《世界传播学经典教材》总序

龚文庠

传播学是上个世纪诞生于美国和欧洲的一门新兴学科,引进中国只有二三十年之久。五年前国家教育部才将它列入正式学科目录。中国经济持续高速发展,带动了媒体产业的大改革、大发展,传播学就成了顺应时代潮流的热门学科。

然而由于这是一门年轻的“舶来”学科,按照一些学者的说法,尚处在从“译介”到“本土化”的初级阶段。在教学、研究的过程中,我们常感到对一些术语、概念、理论难以把握,往往是众说纷纭、莫衷一是,有时在激烈争论之后才发觉问题出现在翻译上。例如将 communication 译为“传播”,有人就方便地将传播误解为“宣传+广播”。有人将新闻与传播混为一谈,用“新闻传播学”(news communication)来涵容传播学。有人说,新闻学研究新闻媒体,新闻媒体就是大众媒体,所以新闻学与传播学没有多大区别,因为新闻学研究的就是大众传播。于是出现了将传播学视为新闻学之分支的怪现状。究其原因,一些模糊或错误概念的产生,根子还在对原义的理解。例如英文 communication 在中文里没有对等词,译为“传播”是很勉强的。communication 含有双向的意思,如: to share or exchange opinions (Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English),而中文的“传播”有明显的从一方传往另一方的倾向。如果直接阅读英文词典或原著中对 communication 的界定和解释,就很容易把握原义,在讨论中也可以避免因译文歧义而白费口舌。

以本人阅读译文的亲身体验为例。在读亚里士多德的《修辞学》时我查看了几种英文译本,其中最令我受益的是 1926 年的译本,它采用希腊文原文与英译文逐页对照的版式。其他英译本多将书名译为“Rhetoric”(中国人民大学出版社的最新中文译本也译为《修辞学》),而 1926 年英译本却译为“Aristotle's 'Art' of Rhetoric”。这是按照希腊文原版本直译出来的,中文对应译文为《亚里士多德的讲演“读本”》。希-英对照译本传达了其他译本中“损失”掉的一个重要的意义:“art”在希腊文中是多义词,此处的 art 意为 handbook(读本、手册),也就是讲演手册。亚氏写此书的背景是,他不满足于当时“智者派”(Sophists)们撰写的多种读本(art),于是自己写一部读本来正本清源,因而书名为《亚里士多德的讲演“读本”》。如果不是读到 1926 年的希-英对照译本,笔者就无法了解原著书名所含有的如此重要而丰富的信息。

我们当然不能一概否定和取消翻译,因为没有翻译,不同文化之间就无法交流,艺术家、科学家、思想家的智慧就不可能为全世界共享,人类文明也不可能像今天这样灿烂。

然而目前我们的翻译作品,尤其是学术著作的翻译中,存在着浮躁、不负责任的风气。我们需要大力提倡认真、严谨的译风,像严复那样,“一名之立,旬月踟躇”。对于学术译作,如果有条件,我们还应当尽量提供方便,让读者在遇到疑问时能够查对原文。

基于以上理由,北京大学新闻与传播学院决定编选这套《世界传播学经典教材》书系,分为英文版和中文版两类。英文版为原著影印本,加上我们的导读和部分译文;中文版为全文翻译,而每部英文中译本都有原作可以对照。

这套书系选取下列类型的著作:1. 传播学中有影响的名著,如曾10次再版的《说服:接受与责任》(*Persuasion: Reception and Responsibility*)。2. 传播学的重要分支学科,如《组织传播:理论学派与传播过程》(*Organizational Communication: Approaches and Processes*)、《跨文化交流》(*Communication Between Cultures*)、《媒介法原理》(*Major Principles of Media Law*)、《电子媒介经营管理》(*Management of Electronic Media*)等。3. 综合性研究,如《媒介研究:文本、机构与受众》(*Media Studies: Texts, Institutions and Audiences*)、《影响的互动:新闻、广告、政治与大众媒介》(*The Interplay of Influence: News, Advertising, Politics, and the Mass Media*)等。书系中所有影印本和中译本都将依据我们获得版权的原著最新版本。

书系的编选将采取开放式,除已经取得版权的十几种著作,还将陆续纳入新的选题。传播学理论的译介是一项庞大的工程,我们欢迎并希望更多同行、专家和有志者参与其事,互相切磋,共同推进传播学在中国的发展。

书籍的前言中经常流行一句套话:由于时间仓促,水平有限,错误在所难免,请读者见谅。有人批评说,时间仓促就不要急着出书,水平有限就应当等水平够格再发表,怎么反过来要求读者原谅呢?这话说得真好。我们将以严肃负责的态度,尽力把好本书系的质量关。读者诸君如发现问题,恳请不吝赐教。

# 导 读

吴 靖

媒介研究是大众传播研究的一个分支,近二三十年才出现在大学本科的课程中,但是发展很快。所谓“媒介”,其实主要指以电子媒介为核心的现代大众传媒,近些年由于互联网的发展,对新媒介的研究在学术界方兴未艾,却还没有形成体系。广播、电视、电影等仍然是媒介研究关注的主要领域。

与大众传播研究的另一个分支效果研究不同的是,媒介研究的出发点是将电子媒介作为现代社会的一个重要组成部分,既有自己的组织结构、组织文化,也以各种方式同社会其它意识和生产领域发生联系,是研究现代社会的性质、文化、现代人的生存状态、思维习惯等必不可少的资源。而效果研究,尤其是主流的量化研究,主要将传媒作为达到某种宣传、推广、说服和影响的工具,研究的目标是短期的传媒效应,通过方法的更新和精致化来接近受众受传媒影响的真实状况。效果研究的发展在时间上早于媒介研究。二十世纪上半叶西方资本主义工业和市场的扩张,加上两次世界大战,为传媒效果研究提供了强大的动力和丰富的资源,在传播学专业院系进入大学体制之前就积累了大量实证资料,并形成了可继承和发掘的稳定的学术传统。而媒介研究作为固定的学术领域则是六七十年代以后的事。媒介研究并不主张从某个需要利用媒介的特殊利益集团的角度来测量使用效果,而是将媒介作为重要的社会、文化、经济机构和对现代社会人类生产生活各方面都产生重大影响的组织来进行剖析和研究,其目的是提高公众的媒介素养,使人们了解媒介的运作规律、经济体制、表意机制等经常隐藏在媒介的公众形象之后的东西,让媒介知识成为公共知识的一部分,希望通过公众对媒介机制和功能的充分了解,使得媒介权力和公共权力的天平倾向公共权力一边,令媒介成为社会公器,而不是某些强大势力的私器。其实,效果研究和后来才形成体系的媒介研究这两个分支也不是完全对立的,媒介研究中的受众研究虽然出发点不同,但在方法上和关注的客体上还是与效果研究有重合之处,这在下面会有论述。

媒介研究是一个跨学科的交汇点,原因是电子媒介成为主导媒介后,社会科学的各个分支都开始从自己的角度观察和研究其社会性质和文化功能。首先,大众媒介和流行文化进入学术研究的视野,就与五六十年代社会理论的转型息息相关。既然大众媒介已经取代或部分取代家庭、宗教、教育等传统机构,成为整合社会意识、建构社会文化并参与社会生产的重要因素,人文社科等领域就没有理由再将其排斥在学术研究之外。同时,大众媒介的技术特点、组织模式、经济结构和话语方式都冲击了传统学科固有的理论

和方法。一时间,从社会学、人类学、心理学,到文学、哲学、历史等学科都在不同程度上为媒介研究贡献了理论视角和方法资源。

媒介研究通常被分为三个研究领域,这也是这本教科书所用的分类模式:文本、机构和受众。文本是指媒介的内容,如何组织,如何形成,如何表达意义,以及如何传达给受众。这一部分研究受文学理论的影响,将电子媒介中声音、文字、画面等表达方式作为不同的话语类型加以研究。除了借鉴有关叙事、结构、符号学、意识形态等文学研究的理论和方法,对于摄影、电影、电视等视觉媒介话语特性的研究也发展出视觉修辞、类型片理论、心理分析等新的研究视角。文本分析的主要目的是解释意义是如何生成和变化的,影响意义表达的符号因素和文化因素有哪些,以及文本如何试图主导受众对媒介内容的接受和解读。将电子媒介的内容称为文本,就意味着承认电子媒介具有同传统媒介一样、甚至更加强大的表意能力和传播能力,应该被纳入对意义和文化的研究体系中。

机构就是指现代大众媒介的各类组织,主要有两种模式:以盈利为目的商业模式,和以社会服务或文化生产为目的公共媒介模式。这本书对两种模式的历史、特点都做了简单的介绍,并指出了商业媒介的发展趋势和所面临的矛盾,各类媒介机构在利润、权力、职业传统、社会责任等多种压力下如何运作,以及这些因素又如何影响到媒介内容和意识形态的制造。媒介的商业化所导致的对媒介运作的市场主导机制,和媒介重要的社会功能所要求的公众通过某种制度安排参与对媒介的管理和控制,是现代传媒机构面临的一对巨大的张力。媒介研究领域的核心问题是剖析资本主义市场制度与民主的社会制度之间的关系。两者并不像自由市场意识形态所声称的是同一个事物,可以相互替代,而是在媒介垄断时代有着越来越大的矛盾和反差。对媒介的政治经济学研究是机构研究的重要组成部分。对商业媒介基本经济规律的研究可以解释现代大众媒介的意识形态偏见、社会公器功能的减弱等许多方面的问题。另外,对媒介机构的研究还包括对媒介组织的职业原则、管理方式、行为规范等因素如何影响媒介从业人员的思维及行为模式的探讨,也是组织文化和组织传播研究所关注的问题。

如果将效果研究简单化,它可以被当作受众研究的一个流派。这本书对此也有简单的介绍,并分析了效果研究的不足,引入了英国文化研究的视角对以测量为基础的受众研究进行了批评和改造。文化研究更关注的不是文本如何影响受众,或影响程度的大小,而是从受众使用媒介的日常行为中发现权力的运作机制以及社会的整合、变化模式。因此,文化研究站在受众或整个社会的角度,而不是媒介控制者和操纵者的角度来关心媒介传播意义和意识形态的过程。通过结合文本分析和定性的受众调查,文化研究希望解释媒介再现的社会与现实社会之间的互动关系,以及媒介如何介入诸如阶级、种族、性别等社会身份的建构和解构当中去。在这里,对受众的研究不是以完成商业目的为导向,而是试图揭示以现代传媒为生存环境的现代文化状态和人们参与社会生活的心理机制。当代的受众研究倾向于强调受众相对于文本的独立性,认为受众在一定的范围内有



能力对文本做出符合自己需要和利益的解读。因此,文本并不是生成和控制意义传播的唯一因素,受众按照自己的方式参与对文本的解读过程,是一个多种意义生成、消灭以及相互碰撞、融合的过程。

这本书是一本本科生的教材,它全面系统地介绍了媒介研究领域的分类、主要概念、核心问题、研究切入点等,为初学者提供了进入这个学术领域并能够利用专业的概念和思路参与讨论的基础知识。本书的语言表述照顾到了初学者和本科生的水平,但在每章后面都添加了对进一步研究的指导和建议,引导学生熟悉理论研究的思路和方法。因此,本书既可以作为专业领域的入门书籍,也可以作为高校通选课普及媒介知识、提高媒介素养的教材,还能为从事媒介研究中某个侧面研究的学者了解整个领域的图景和各分支间的相互关系提供参考。从本书的内容和组织结构还可以看出以英国文化研究学派为核心的欧洲媒介研究与美国主流大众传播研究在课题设置、思路和方法论上的一些差别,以及二者近些年在学术界的互动与融合。

# Introduction

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Media studies is a rapidly growing area within higher education, with a range of media-based courses on offer to undergraduates. This book is designed to service some of the needs of students undertaking such courses. It aims to provide a comprehensive introduction to the key areas of study within the field. Ideas are presented in an accessible way and wherever possible key concepts and critical approaches are applied through the use of examples or case study material. However, while the book is aimed in the first instance at students who are new to media studies, it might also be used by those further on in their studies, who seek to reinforce or build on their knowledge of particular approaches or areas.

The book is divided into three parts – on texts, institutions and audiences – covering the major approaches to the media within media studies. This division is created to enable students to dip into each part and, with this in mind, each one stands alone as well as being integral to the overall book. Broadly, these parts represent the most common approaches within the subject. It is not a division that is designed to make false distinctions within the subject area; rather, students are encouraged to draw on the approaches dealt with in all three parts. We would argue that a fully comprehensive understanding of the media requires a knowledge of all three.

Part I, 'Texts', offers a range of textual tools, such as semiotics, *mise-en-scène* analysis, narrative and genre, which students might use as approaches to understanding the vast range of media texts encountered daily. Part II, 'Institutions', focuses on the organizations which produce media texts. It introduces students to the dominant critical frameworks used for understanding media industries. It also examines some of the key institutional debates in media studies: for example, the impact of the partial deregulation of media organizations and the meaning and status of independent media production. Part III, 'Audiences', investigates a range of diverse

perspectives on media audiences, from the effects tradition to the ethnographic cultural studies approach. It also investigates debates about the media and consumption: for instance, how the purchase and appropriation of media programmes and media technologies, from satellite dishes to 'quality' drama, can be used as a means to indicate social status. By examining these three interlinked areas the book provides the reader with a comprehensive overview of the main strands within media studies at an introductory level.

This book also acknowledges that study at undergraduate level is very different from that undertaken at earlier stages. It is therefore designed to help students to make the change to the new and different kinds of learning methods encountered in higher education. The first year in higher education is often a moment of transition, during which students become accustomed to these different study methods. This book, and in particular the final research chapter, aims to help students move on from the activities which might have characterized their work on, for example, an A-level or Access course, to the kinds of assignment which are typical on the first year of a degree programme. Study at university is generally less directed. Students will find themselves encouraged to develop independent study skills and take responsibility for their own learning. Perhaps the most fundamental change is that they are expected to research topics on their own. In the research chapter we provide some strategic suggestions for how to work successfully with the new challenges and expectations demanded by higher education.

A new media studies student will not necessarily have encountered the subject prior to arriving at university. This book aims to introduce the central ideas and concerns that may be encountered on a media studies course, and to illustrate the sorts of research assignment that will be set. Furthermore, we aim to show that investigating the media means gathering particular kinds of research material. This may include finding appropriate media texts such as films, specific episodes of television programmes or editions of magazines, as well as more traditional resources like government reports that relate to media policy. For this reason, each chapter concludes with suggestions for further work and reading which should encourage students to apply critical approaches in contexts that will help to develop their own independent learning.

# 1

## How the Media Communicate

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This chapter introduces the idea that each medium communicates differently, using a distinctive set of production codes and conventions. This is important to acknowledge, particularly when our subject of study – the media – is comprised of so many different forms, such as photography, radio, television, film, advertising, newspapers and magazines. Each medium requires analysis that takes the different and unique aspects of each form into account. Roy Armes in his book *On Video* (1988) issues a warning about the pitfalls of simply using the tools of film analysis to explore a related but crucially different medium, video: 'My initial difficulties in coming to terms with the new medium stemmed, largely, I now believe, from attempting to define it in ways more appropriate to film ... aspects of this theoretical work make its direct application to video hazardous' (p. 2). There may be the temptation, for example, to think of television as a miniature film screen, yet film and television are two very different mediums. As specific forms they are distinguishable in a range of ways: their screen ratios are quite different; while films are often shown as discrete texts, television, as Raymond Williams argues, can be thought of as a 'flow' of images which seem to merge almost indistinguishably together in continuum (1974, pp. 91–2); and both television programmes and films are produced with their contrasting contexts of consumption in mind. Film and television, even while they converge in terms of some of the visual strategies they use – invisible editing, for example – also have different conventions.

From the outset, therefore, it is vital that any textual analysis of a media product takes into account the specifics of the medium in which that text appears. In doing so, it is important to consider the formal aspects of media texts alongside any consideration of their content. The way in which a message is communicated within the media therefore becomes as important as the message itself. In other words, the form in which

a message appears contributes a great deal to the way in which we are able to decode and understand any media text.

### **Media forms and conventions**

Debates and discussions about the media often cite a divide between form and content. Form may be defined as the way in which a particular medium packages its message using its particular technologies and codes and conventions. The message itself, the ideas within, are the content. Each works using accepted methods of communication, often termed conventions, which are particular to the medium in question.

The textual strategies used by media forms establish currency by becoming conventional over time. New media texts require the social sanctions guaranteed by convention to ensure audiences will be able to read them. Mediums such as comics and radio exist almost within a predefined tradition of textual norms or conventions which generate audience expectations. Andrew Crisell in his book *Understanding Radio* (1986) discusses the role silence plays on radio. Silence is a signifier, Crisell argues, since its 'absence of sound can also be heard' (p. 55). On a station like Radio Four the use of silence signifies serious and dignified breaks before an important moment; silence falls before the five strokes of the time announcement, for example. As Crisell argues, 'silence can resemble noise (that is sounds, words and music) in acting as a framing mechanism, for it can signify the integrity of a programme or item by making space around it' (p. 56). In this sense, our acceptance of this particular function of silence is conventional, precisely because it has become an orthodoxy through repeated use.

Sometimes, however, texts play with convention, slightly altering the expected formula, while remaining for the most part within sanctioned boundaries. Manipulating what they have come to expect can be a source of pleasure for audiences because the text plays on, and indeed complements, the reader's knowledge of its conventions. The 1980s situation comedy, *The Young Ones*, is an example of a text which set out to break away from, and ultimately challenge, the formal conventions of its genre. Most notably, it refused to abide by the conventions of realism that dominate mainstream television production. Situation comedies conventionally construct the audience as the fourth wall, the unacknowledged observers of a slice of 'real' life. The direct address of the characters in *The Young Ones* destroyed the illusion of realism. Yet more anti-realist were the cartoon-like scenes where the student characters committed seemingly irreparable acts of violence against each other, only to survive completely unscathed. Flouting the fundamental rules of the form added a new dimension of comedy and gratification for audiences of this text; their laughter came from *The Young Ones'* departure from expected conventions.

The most straightforward method of exploring the ways in which these formal differences manifest themselves is to take a closer look at the ways in which a particular idea or content is realized in different mediums.

### Different mediums, different conventions: *The X-Files*

*The X-Files* is a popular 'cult' science-fiction thriller. Because of its perceived cult status the programme has been used as the fictional base on which a plethora of other *X-Files* commodities, such as comics, T-shirts, mugs and posters, have been produced. *The X-Files*, like a number of other media texts since the mid-1980s, has been successfully diversified into interrelated technologies and areas of entertainment so as to elongate the exposure of the text in all its different aspects. In so doing, the producers have been able to reap the maximum profit by presenting the text across multiple media (see illustration 1.1). Product diversification has meant that *The X-Files* exists in separate media forms: primarily the television serial, but also a comic entitled *The X-Files* and tie-in paperbacks such as *Whirlwind* (1995). All share the same fictional concept, but they present them using different codes and conventions. *The X-Files* is consequently



Illustration 1.1 'Concepts' are now designed to reap maximum profits across multiple media.

Source: The authors.

an interesting case study for analysing how these formal conventions operate.

The familiar *X-Files* viewer will have a number of expectations concerning its manifestations in different mediums. A number of the elements the viewer becomes accustomed to can be categorized as the narrative conventions of the science-fiction thriller. However, several of these conventions appear in ways specific to *The X-Files*, hence its off-beat 'cult' status. In the programme, FBI detective partners Scully and Mulder investigate crimes with a difference; a question-mark always hangs over the perpetrators of the crime at hand – though rationality dictates that a logical explanation can be uncovered, cues in the text invite the viewer to entertain the idea that an alien, paranormal force may be responsible. In the case of the television programme, the opening credit sequence, which is repeated before each episode, feeds the conviction that the alien source is the one to be taken seriously. The credit sequence opens with a series of computer-enhanced images which all suggest the existence of extra-terrestrial life: the opening shot shows the scanning and enlargement of a piece of footage of a moving UFO; another scans the eye of a creature unknown to humankind.

As FBI agents, Scully and Mulder break with the conventional gender mould of the ordinary crime series investigators. The character of Dana Scully is a challenging representation of a female detective. As a highly educated woman, marked by her status as a medical doctor, she always seeks rational scientific evidence. In contrast, it is the male partner, Fox Mulder, who has intuitive beliefs in the existence of extra-terrestrial activity. In this type of programme it is usually female characters who are seen to use so-called 'feminine' powers of intuition. As a result, dramatic tension emanates from the conflicting explanations each character produces for the crimes they are assigned to investigate and solve.

The FBI as an institution is represented as a secretive, suspicious organization. Because the government is repeatedly shown to be obstructive to the detectives gaining access to the information it holds about extra-terrestrial activity, the reader anticipates the intervention of the FBI whenever Scully and Mulder begin to uncover aberrant causes for the crimes they investigate. Constantly implied in the text is the state's desire to guard and ultimately control this information in order to pave the way for experimentation and research into the ways in which the power of the paranormal might be used as a means of extending both the state and the nation's power.

These narrative conventions are realized differently in each medium by the use of distinct formal conventions. With the use of an episode from the second season of the television series, a story from *The X-Files* comic and an advertisement for Vodaphone which uses the concept of the X-Files, the specific modes of communication adopted within each medium can be explored in some detail.

*The television X-Files*

The television episode *Die Hand Die Verletzt* opens in a school in Milford Haven, New Hampshire, governed by a board whose members are involved with the occult. One night, a group of youths meets in a nearby forest to recite a Satanist chant. Seemingly as a result, one of the boys is choked to death. The FBI is called in and Scully and Mulder inspect the crime site and question the school's staff. From an analysis of this episode it is possible to see that there is a range of visual strategies being utilized to infuse meaning into the text. Within television, the selection of close-up or mid-shot is crucial to the director. Close-ups often emphasize particular events with special narrative or thematic significance. In addition, this way of editing or juxtaposing one frame next to another enables the director to make heavy implications about who the viewer should suspect.

At one point Mulder and Scully walk down the school corridor troubled after their interview with the board members. In mid-shot, the camera tracks in front of Mulder as he walks ahead to drink from a water fountain. Mulder exclaims as he lifts his head after drinking; the water, counter to the norms of the northern hemisphere, travels anti-clockwise. 'That's impossible', remarks Scully. A close-up focuses on the small stainless steel sink; the image works to emphasize the strangeness of the water movement, impacting on the viewer as the camera dwells on the water for a few seconds. The grey sink is hard and shiny; the water's movement is cold material fact. The edit works both to reinforce Mulder's claim and to discount the rationality of Scully's reply. The following mid-shot shows Mulder turning from the sink to look at Scully: 'Something is making these things possible.'

A cut to the substitute teacher Phyllis Paddock, in long shot behind her desk, strenuously suggests an answer to the assertion made by Mulder in the previous shot. Moreover, her status as a substitute teacher raises questions about her reliability as a character. Her background is totally unknown, lending her character a transience which is open to foreboding speculation. The shot lingers to show her ending the class then cuts to show the girls present at the murder the previous night walking towards the classroom exit. The overlaying of synthesized music as the girls walk towards the teacher creates anticipation and furthers the viewer's suspicions that the teacher is not to be trusted. A mid-shot from a side angle shows the teacher speaking with the girls, asking them to confide in her if they need support; the choice of a mid-shot creates an intimacy which will be open to re-reading after the following series of shots; as the girls leave expressing thanks, the camera cuts to the teacher's hands and arms. She briskly gathers the assignments, banging them on the desk to neaten them into an ordered pile. The frame composition is sinister: to focus on the teacher's body without her face creates a feeling of dislocation. This, coupled with the briskness of her movement is potentially threatening.



