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Media & Culture Series

媒介、风险与科学

Media, Risk and Science

〔英〕斯图亚特·艾伦 著
Stuart Allan

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MEDIA, RISK AND SCIENCE

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总 序

传播学是 20 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。1998 年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”。既然新闻是宣传,传播也是宣传,就可以用“新闻传播学”来涵容,甚至取代传播学。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。仍以英文“communication”为例,这个词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”》。希一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,他不满于当时“智者”(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 年的希一英对照译本,笔者就无法了解原著书名所具有的如此重要而丰富的信息。

我们当然不能一概否定甚至取消翻译,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,反映出浮躁、不负责任的态度。

我们需要大力提倡认真、严谨的译风,像严复那样,“一名之立,旬月踌躇”。对于学术译作,如果有条件,我们还应当尽量提供方便,至少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与北京大学出版社共同编辑出版了《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,加上我们的导读或部分译文;中文版为全文翻译,而每部英文中译本都有原作可以对照。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。

《世界传播学经典教材》书系共 14 部,包括下列类型的著作:(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:方法与过程》(*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*)和《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。

我们即将推出的第二个书系是《媒介与文化》,包括《媒介文化中的罪与法》(*Crime and Law in Media Culture*)和《电影与文化的现代性》(*Cinema and Cultural Modernity*)等。

《媒介与文化》书系有三个特点:(1)主要是从文化批评的视角来剖析媒介、文化、社会的三角关系。(2)作者多为英国和澳大利亚学者,作品代表美国以外的学术观点。(3)这是一批研究性著作,但作者多数在大学任教或从事研究,他们既有深厚的学术功底,又善于将文章写得深入浅出,所以这些学术著作也多被推荐为大学相关课程的基础教材或必读参考书。

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。

龚文庠 于北京大学

2006 年 2 月

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Stuart Allan

SERIES EDITOR'S FOREWORD

The Issues in Cultural and Media Studies series aims to facilitate a diverse range of critical investigations into pressing questions considered to be central to current thinking and research. In light of the remarkable speed at which the conceptual agendas of cultural and media studies are changing, the authors are committed to contributing to what is an ongoing process of re-evaluation and critique. Each of the books is intended to provide a lively, innovative and comprehensive introduction to a specific topical issue from a fresh perspective. The reader is offered a thorough grounding in the most salient debates indicative of the book's subject, as well as important insights into how new modes of enquiry may be established for future explorations. Taken as a whole, then, the series is designed to cover the core components of cultural and media studies courses in an imaginatively distinctive and engaging manner.

Stuart Allan

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致谢

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1

INTRODUCTION: MEDIA,
RISK AND SCIENCE

Most voters are frankly mere info-peasants, scientific illiterates, vacant idiots at the mercy of glossy corporate-science propaganda and newspaper hysterias. They are told a 'government scientist' is an authority, whether he's spent his life on earthworms or planets. They don't ask about peer-group review. They don't even have a clear notion of scientific proof, or the simple big discoveries that lead to the front-page stories that shock them.

(Andrew Marr, journalist)

The world of science, judging from some media portrayals, is a world of white-coated boffins peering through microscopes, laboratory benches with bubbling flasks set above flickering Bunsen burners, and racks of test tubes and petri dishes emitting strange aromas. It is an insular world, cut off from the real world outside the laboratory window. The media tell us that this world of science is mind-numbingly boring and mundane in the repetition of its daily routines. Except, that is, for those rare moments when with a terrifyingly abrupt flash of insight (in the time it takes to, say, split an atom) the very future of humankind might suddenly appear to be hanging in the balance. If in the wrong hands science can be used to evil ends, in the right hands it is proclaimed to be our salvation. Scientists themselves tend to be represented as being decent, high-minded citizens tirelessly committed to the eternal pursuit of truth on behalf of their society. This endeavour, it follows, is a cornerstone of modern democracy, helping to make the world an organized, ordered system. Still, we are warned, there are exceptions. Lurking among their ranks are those intent on exploiting scientific knowledge for ominous purposes. These scientists, having been corrupted by greed or driven mad by a lust for power, are dangerously out of control.

The world of the media, at least according to statements sometimes made by scientists, is a superficial world driven by a frenzied obsession with entertainment over information, and with it style over substance. This is a world

of smoke and mirrors, where nothing is as it seems, and where talk of ratings, target audiences and financial profits all but silences the voices of scientific truth. Journalists struggling to report on a scientific development, no matter how well intentioned they may be, will more often than not succumb to the forces of sensationalism to make their news account attract the public's wandering eye. If it bleeds, it leads. By the same logic, scientific facts must not be allowed to get in the way of a good story. Across the media, in-depth discussions and debates about scientific inquiries are up against, and losing out to, talking dinosaurs befriending humans, magicians happily breaking the laws of physics, mystics foretelling lottery results in their crystal balls, and horoscopes revealing people's fate and fortune as dictated by the stars. For some scientists, this recurrent misrepresentation of the scientific world by certain members of the media is more than just scandalous, it is contrary to the fundamental values and interests of democracy itself. The media's failure to give science the respect it deserves, they warn, will have dire consequences for the future.

It goes without saying, of course, that these two 'worlds' are being deliberately sketched here with broad and colourful brushstrokes. My intention in doing so is to highlight how the often subtle boundaries demarcating what counts as 'science' in a modern society need to be situated in relation to the kinds of images one typically encounters in the media. More to the point, it seems to me vital that the contested limits of these boundaries be acknowledged from an array of different vantage points from across the science-media nexus. Precisely what science *is*, and what it is *not*, is anything but straightforward, as even a cursory glance at, say, a daily newspaper item about '**mad cow disease**' or a television documentary about **global warming** will immediately make apparent. Some might argue that science, like beauty, is very much in the eye of the beholder. In any case, to think of science and the media as separate worlds in constant collision with one another may be advantageous in some ways, not least with regard to identifying key sources of tension in public debates, but should not be understood too literally. Much more appropriate, in my view, is a critical engagement with scientific and media discourses that accounts for the complex ways in which they each strive to engender certain preferred ways of talking about the nature of reality. Such an approach recognizes that the extent to which their respective truth-claims converge or, just as importantly, are made to diverge from one another, will have a profound impact on our sense of the world around us.

The line of inquiry I want to pursue in this book takes as its point of departure the thesis that efforts to discern what constitutes science must necessarily address the salience of media representations. As will be shown,

ongoing debates about the ways in which the news and entertainment media represent scientific issues, and how their audiences are influenced as a result, are being constantly extended and enriched by new research from a wide array of disciplinary positions. It needs to be acknowledged here at the outset, however, that taken as a whole this research is still in a fairly rudimentary stage of conceptual and methodological development. Indeed, as Cooter and Pumfrey (1994) point out, surprisingly little has been written on science in popular culture over the years:

Still shrouded in obscurity are the effects of even the most obvious mechanisms for the transmission of scientific knowledge and culture: the popular press, radio and television, to say nothing of science texts, museums, school curricula, and the overtly propagandist productions of the science lobby itself. From coffee houses to comic books and chemistry sets, from pulpits to pubs and picture palaces, from amateur clubs to advertising companies, from Science Parks to Jurassic Park, our ignorance both of the low drama and the high art of science's diffusion and modes of popular production and reproduction is staggering.

(Cooter and Pumfrey 1994: 237)

Despite the relatively inchoate nature of research in this area, though, Cooter and Pumfrey are able to point to a number of significant recent developments, not least what they regard as a promising trend towards examining science as culturally situated. Both weak formulations ('science in culture') and stronger ones ('science as culture') share a recognition of 'how the shape and success of the sciences' are embedded in a complex array of social relations. These social relations link different scientific communities, in turn, with 'various allies, audiences, publics, consumers and reproducers; with powerful élites who bestow legitimacy and material support; and also with "lower" social groups whose willingness (or resistance) to engage with science is an equally important determinant of scientific culture' (Cooter and Pumfrey 1994: 240). It is the latter type of social relations, as Cooter and Pumfrey observe, that is frequently addressed by researchers as a matter of 'popularizing' science with the public.

Science and the public

Impassioned debates over how best to 'popularize' science are hardly new, and yet there appears to be a growing sense of urgency on the part of those who seek to speak on behalf of scientific inquiry today. Scientists themselves, as Dunbar (1995) points out, have seldom stopped for very long to query