

History of Media Studies Newsletter

August 2025

Welcome to the 52nd edition of the *History of Media Studies Newsletter*. The monthly email, assembled by Dave Park, Jeff Pooley, and Pete Simonson, maintains a loose affiliation with the *History of Media Studies* journal and the *Working Group on the History of Media Studies*. Please *contact us* with any questions, suggestions, or items.

1. Working Group on the History of Media Studies

Join us for the next remote session devoted to discussing working papers with authors. Hosted by the *Consortium for History of Science, Technology and Medicine* (CHSTM). Open to anyone interested in the history of the media studies fields. *Instructions to join are here.*

Wednesday, September 17

Wednesday, September 17, 14:00-15:00 UTC (10am-11am EDT)

Reading for discussion:

- Angela Xiao Wu, “Chinese Platform Thinking: Genealogy and Politics in Public Administration” (working paper)

For the Zoom link and the reading download, visit the *Working Group page*. *Instructions for joining the group are here.* Questions? *Contact us*

2. Conferences, Calls & Announcements

If you have a call or announcement relevant to the history of media studies, please [contact us](#).

1. *Call for Papers: Harold Lasswell and the Return of Propaganda: The Centenary of Propaganda Technique in the World War*

- Among the important events related to propaganda research whose tradition re-emerged in these first three decades of the 20th century, one stands out as a turning point: the first doctoral thesis on the subject, defended by political scientist Harold Lasswell in 1926 at the University of Chicago, which also celebrates its centenary. Published the following year, *Propaganda Technique in the World War* became the pioneering landmark in academic studies on war propaganda and transformed its author into the most important American expert on the subject for many years. This *Esferas* dossier celebrates not only the centenary of Harold Lasswell's thesis but also the approaching centenary of propaganda studies, founded on the need to understand this product of the media and which, despite its multiple facets, continues to present itself as an urgent problem to be interpreted in contemporary times.
- **Deadline:** 15 December 2025
- [More details](#)

2. *Cheiron Young Scholar Award*

- Since 2008, Cheiron has awarded a prize for the best paper or symposium presentation by a young scholar at its yearly conference. To be eligible for consideration, the young scholar must be the sole or first author of the paper and must be responsible for the bulk of the work of the paper. "Young scholars" are defined as those currently working toward their degree, as well as those who have completed their master's or doctoral work not more than 5 years prior to this year's meeting. Applicants should submit a "slightly edited" version of the paper presented at this summer's Three Societies conference in Paris. This may include small changes or additions, but the finished, polished paper should not exceed 5,000 words (including footnotes). Applicants should use the style required by the *Journal of the History of the Behavioral and Social Sciences* (*JHBS*). Submissions should be sent to Zed Gao (zgao@aup.edu) and Sharman Levinson (slevinson@aup.edu). Entries will be judged by members of this year's

Program Committee and Cheiron's Review Committee.

- **Deadline:** 30 September 2025
- **More details**

3. The Journal

History of Media Studies encourages **submissions (en español)** on the history of research, education, and reflective knowledge about media and communication—as expressed through academic institutions; through commercial, governmental, and non-governmental organizations; and through “alter-traditions” of thought and practice often excluded from the academic mainstream.

4. New Publications

*Works listed here are newly published, or new to the **bibliography**.*

*The **History of Communication Research Bibliography** is a project of the **Annenberg School for Communication Library Archives (ASCLA)** at the University of Pennsylvania.*

1. Carson, Charles E. "A Managing Editor Looks Back, 1991--2025." *American Speech* 100, no. 3 (2025): 294--306. <https://doi.org/10.1215/00031283-12010386>.

ABSTRACT: *[first paragraph, in lieu of abstract] It was going to be temporary, at least that's what I thought when I started working for American Speech 34 years ago. I had recently graduated from Duke University with a B.S. in cognitive psychology, a degree I cobbled together from my three semesters in Duke's School of Engineering, numerous electives across departments as I tried to find my calling, and several linguistics classes in various departments (Duke did not offer a linguistics major then). At the time, I was working at Duke's daily newspaper, The Chronicle, supervising the department that produced display ads, where I had worked as a work-study student when an undergrad. One evening on campus, I attended a panel on gay and lesbian parenting, after which I approached Ron Butters, one of the presenters, about the possibility of volunteer work for the journal. I had taken a class from Butters and knew he edited American Speech. My job at the paper was not a viable long-term option, so I thought working on the journal might help me determine my next career move, whether that be graduate*

school in linguistics or formal training in graphic arts. He surprised me by inviting me to apply for the job as his editorial assistant for *American Speech*. His partner, Stuart Aycock, who had held the position since 1983, was stepping down.

2. Castaldi, Jacopo. "Multimodality and Reception Studies." *Visual Communication* 24, no. 3 (2025): 535--42. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14703572251331136>.

ABSTRACT: [first paragraph, in lieu of abstract] Multimodal research has traditionally focused on the analysis of texts and their production, resulting in a wealth of theoretical and analytical constructs as well as approaches.¹ On the one hand, multimodal research on texts and their production has pushed the field forward; on the other hand, however, it has resulted in different, and at times contradictory, accounts of how different modes work individually and together in making meaning. One of the reasons for the divergent accounts is a relative lack of empirical evidence coming from the other end of the multimodal communication process, i.e. the reception of multimodal texts. It is crucial to note that 'reception' here is not intended as passive uptake of an encoded message in a unidirectional process, but as the purposeful, active interaction and engagement of participants with a text in what Barker (2021: 194) calls a 'two-sided affair' (emphasis in original). Over the last two decades, scholars from a variety of fields, including linguistics, communication science, media studies and critical discourse studies, have started to take on the challenge of investigating text reception. Reception studies come in different forms, with different focuses and methodological approaches, both qualitative and quantitative. However, the common denominator between them is the interest, as the name suggests, in exploring how people interact and engage with multimodal texts. This special issue on *Multimodality and Reception Studies* aims to contribute to our understanding of how we can integrate text-based multimodal research with a reception focus and take stock of what insights this line of enquiry has offered us thus far.

3. Knorr, Charlotte, and Christian Pentzold. "Making Sense of 'Big Data': Ten Years of Discourse around Datafication." *Big Data & Society* 12, no. 2 (2025): 20539517251330181. <https://doi.org/10.1177/20539517251330181>.

ABSTRACT: This article reconstructs the sociotechnical imaginaries of "Big Data" in Germany, South Africa, and the United States over 10 years. Our inquiry into the meaning-making undertaken on expansive datafication processes began from the observation that since its inception circa 2010, the buzz phrase "Big Data" has not only denoted a technology but has also gestured toward a vast array of ambitions and concerns that are reflective of values, economic perspectives, and cultural preoccupations. We use a frame analysis to investigate the unfolding journalistic discourse and discuss the sociotechnical imaginaries of Big Data in cross-national comparison. We found three dominant views that centered chiefly on rebuilding a datafied society, reviving datafied business, and retooling datafied surveillance.

Despite substantial data scandals and whistleblower revelations, affirmative views prevailed. The trope of reviving datafied business was most often evoked from 2011 to 2013, but rebuilding a datafied society became the central perspective from 2014 onward. This order of prominence existed in the United States and Germany, whereas a business-oriented view predominated in South African media. Some publications in all three countries ran counter to the general trend but only exerted limited influence on the overall picture.

4. Miller, Carolyn R., Celeste M. Condit, Lisa Keränen, Cristina Hanganu-Bresch, Michael J. Zerbe, and Gabriel Cutrufello. "Rhetoric of Science: Reflections on the History and Future of the Field." *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 55, no. 3 (2025): 340--56. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02773945.2025.2493479>.

ABSTRACT: *[first paragraph, in lieu of abstract] For this roundtable, we have invited veterans of the field to help make sense of its history, evolution, and possible future(s). In particular, we wanted to address issues related to internal disputes, such as those arising from Dilip Gaonkar's critique of rhetoric as universal hermeneutics, as well as various other methodological and definitional challenges. For example, should rhetoric of science scholars employ social studies methods (better defined in the distinct fields of social studies of science and/or science and technology studies) or should they stick to, for lack of a better word, Western traditions tracing their ancestry to ancient Greek rhetoric? Should the rhetoric of science be expanded to the rhetorics of science, technology, engineering, and medicine or, as we have witnessed the considerable growth of rhetoric of health and medicine, delimit its purview? To what extent do we engage with the public understanding of science and science communication fields, which are more prevalent in European academia? And how do we make rhetoric--and the rhetoric of science--matter in productive ways that lead to wider engagement and productive change? The questions we asked were generative and open ended, linked to our theme of dual crises in the sciences and in the rhetoric of science (see Introduction).*

5. Stroud (he/him), Scott R. "Toward the Inclusion of Caste and the Anti-Caste Tradition in Rhetorical Studies." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 111, no. 3 (July 3, 2025): 474--82. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00335630.2025.2519754>.

ABSTRACT: *The discipline of rhetorical studies has long ignored--or overlooked--caste as an important aspect to the theories and practices of the rhetorical traditions of India. Even when it includes India in its rhetorical histories, Dalit-Bahujan scholars, experiences, activists, and texts are left out. This essay argues that caste, and the tradition of thinkers who focus on critiquing it, matter for rhetoric and topics such as democracy and social justice. The value to our inquiries of the anti-caste tradition is explored in this introduction, along with what it means to attend to and include its prominent thinkers in our approach to*

rhetoric: Jyotirao Phule, Savitribai Phule, Bhimrao Ambedkar, and beyond. The essays in this forum call for including caste and the anti-caste tradition in rhetorical studies and illustrate the resonance of this moment with other instances of discipline-wide reckoning, such as the [#RhetoricSoWhite](#) and [#CommunicationSoWhite](#) turning points.

6. Thakare (he/him), Vishal. "Beyond Nyaya Rhetoric: The Relevance of Anti-Caste Rhetoric in Communication Studies." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 111, no. 3 (2025): 501--5. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00335630.2025.2525137>.

ABSTRACT: *In comparative rhetorical traditions, scholarship focusing on South Asia, especially on Vedant, Bhagwat Gita, and Nyaya presents itself as unique and distinct from western traditions of rhetoric. Though marginalized in western academic spaces, these dominant (brahmanical) narratives focusing on South Asia present themselves as dissenting discourses offering alternative thinking and meditation on communication and culture. But the discussion on caste and anti-caste tradition often goes missing in this discourse. This essay argues that caste is often ignored and silenced in rhetorical studies scholarship. I highlight the anti-caste tradition and importance of its praxis in doing rhetorical scholarship. Through critical analysis of hegemonic brahmanical rhetorical tradition I argue that communication scholarship in general and rhetoric in particular must be attentive to caste oppression due to its increasing global prevalence and the harms it causes to oppressed castes.*

7. Zerbe, Michael J., Cristina Hanganu-Bresch, and Gabriel Cutrufello. "The Rhetoric of Science in (Times of) Crisis." *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 55, no. 3 (2025): 207--22. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02773945.2025.2493481>.

ABSTRACT: *[first paragraph, in lieu of abstract] Fall 2026 marks the 50th year since Philip Wander's groundbreaking article "The Rhetoric of Science" was published in Western Speech Communication. Additionally, 29 years have passed since the publication of Rhetoric Society Quarterly's last special issue on the rhetoric of science. Rhetoricians such as Kenneth Burke, John Angus Campbell, James Kinneavy, Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca, and Chaim Perelman, and postmodern theorists such as Michel Foucault and Jean-François Lyotard, had already broached the idea that scientific discourse was rhetorical, despite longstanding claims to the contrary, even from within the discipline of rhetoric itself (see, e.g., Bitzer). Wander's article, though, represented the first time that the rhetoric of science as a field of study was the exclusive focus of an academic work--a proof of concept, as it were. A new academic discipline started to crystallize. A number of scholars began to talk informally about the rhetoric of science at professional conferences, especially those held by the National Communication Association, and the first disciplinary organization, the Association for the Rhetoric of Science*

and Technology, was established in 1992 (Walker, Malkowski, and Pfister 264-65). "Medicine" was added in 2016, leading to the current Association for Rhetoric of Science, Technology, and Medicine (ARSTM).

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