



Introduction to Critical Media studies

How we know what we know

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3. Broadcast Media
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How we know what we know

Everything we know is learned in 2 ways

1. Somatically

Things we learned/experienced through directory sensory perception of our environment

We know what some things look, smell, feel, sound, or taste like because we personally have seen, smelled, felt, heard, or tasted them.

Example, "Rocky Mountain oysters" (bull testicles) are especially chewy because he tried them once at a country and western bar

2. Symbolically

We know through someone or something

such as a parent, friend, teacher, museum, textbook, photograph, radio, film, television, or the internet.

The type of information is mediated, meaning that it came to us via some indirect channel or medium.

Example, Rocky Mountain oysters have come to know that they are chewy as that information has been communicated to them through, or mediated by, this book. .

Before the invention of mass media, the spoken or written word was the primary medium for conveying information and ideas.

This method of communication had several significant and interrelated limitations

1. Transmission of information

Information was tied to the available means of transportation (foot, horse, buggy, boat, locomotive, or automobile, depending upon the time period), its dissemination was extraordinarily slow, especially over great distances such as across continents and oceans

2. Scope was limited

Not easily be reproduced and distributed

3. Alteration in information

information often passed through multiple channels (people), each of which altered it, if only slightly, there was a high probability of message distortion

Critical Media Studies is about the social and cultural consequences of that revolutionary capability. Recognizing that mass media are, first and foremost, communication technologies that increasingly mediate both what we know and how we know.

Categorizing Mass Media

Mass Media - those communication technologies that have the potential to reach a large audience in remote locations.

What distinguishes mass media from individual media, then, is not merely audience size.

We have organized the mass media into four subcategories: **print media, motion picture and sound recording, broadcast media, and new media**.

1. Print Media

- The first Mass media
- German printer Johannes Gutenberg invented the movable-type printing press in 1450, sparking a revolution in the ways that human beings could disseminate, preserve, and ultimately relate to knowledge.
- Printed materials before the advent of the press were costly and rare but after the invention of movable type allowed for the (relatively) cheap production of a diverse array of pamphlets, books, and other items.
- Suddenly knowledge could be recorded for future generations in libraries or religious texts, and social power increasingly hinged upon literacy and ownership of printed materials
- During the 19th and 20th centuries, the newspaper industry experienced rapid growth. This trend continued until 1973, at which point there were 1774 daily newspapers with a combined circulation of 63.1 million copies. This meant that about 92 percent of US households were subscribing to a daily newspaper in 1973.
- History of the magazine industry in the United States mirrors that of the newspaper industry. It began somewhat unsteadily, underwent tremendous growth, and is currently experiencing a period of instability. The first US magazine, American Magazine, was published in 1741. But the boom did not really begin until the mid-19th century. And though the industry continued to experience growth throughout the 20th century, more recently it has suffered a decline in both the total number of titles.

	2002	2007	2012	2017
Number of magazines	5340	6809	7390	7176

Table 1.2 Top 10 US consumer magazines by paid circulation in 1992, 2012, and 2017^a

Source: Adweek, March 29, 1993; Alliance for Audited Media, February 7, 2013 and June 30, 2017.

2. Motion picture and sound recording

In the span of 15 years, Edison and his assistant, William Kennedy Laurie Dickson, created what would later develop into the first two new mass media since print. Edison's first invention, the phonograph, in 1877, was a device that played recorded sound, and his second, the kinetoscope, in 1892, was an early motion picture device that showed short, silent films in peep-show fashion to individual viewers.

^aData excludes publications that receive membership benefits (i.e. AARP The Magazine (formerly Modern Maturity), AARP Bulletin, Costco Connection, and AAA Living).

- His goal was to Synchronize sound and visual images
- Sound films became possible during the early 1920s
- The eventual synchronization of sound and film launched talking pictures, or "talkies."
- Motion picture industry firmly established, sound recording began to receive independent attention and the record industry came to dominate the music industry
- By the start of the 20th century, profits from the sale of sound recordings quickly eclipsed those from the sale of sheet music
- This shift was fueled in large part by the continuous development of cheap and easily reproducible formats such as magnetic tape in 1926

Recording formats- Betamax (1975), LaserDisc (1978), Video2000 (1980), Betacam (1982), Video8 (1985), Digital Audio Tape (1987), Hi8 (1989), CD-i (1991), MiniDisc (1992), Digital Compact Disc (1992), Universal Media Disc (2005), Blu-ray Disc (2006), and DVD (as part of the 1995 DVD Consortium) formats.

- Several of these more recent formats have had implications for the motion picture industry, as they allow for the playback and recording of movies on DVD players and computers at home.

3. Broadcast Media

- Instead of media physically having to be distributed to stores or shipped to audiences, as books, magazines, and newspapers are, or audiences physically having to travel to the media, as in the case of film, media could now be brought directly to audiences over public airwaves.
- Important development, because it **freed mass media from transportation** for the first time in history
- Radio came on the scene first, experimenting with transmissions as early as the 1890s and making scheduled broadcasts in the 1920s
- Television followed shortly thereafter, with Philo T. Farnsworth, a Mormon from the small farm community of Rigby, Idaho, applying for the first television patent in 1927 and CBS launching the first television schedule in 1941

Table 1.3 Number of commercial broadcast stations in the United States*

Source: The Federal Communications Commission; US Census Bureau, Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2001, Table 1126; and US Census Bureau, Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2016, Table 1132.

	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2015
AM radio stations	2118	3539	4323	4589	4987	4685	4782	4684
FM radio stations	493	815	2196	3282	4392	5892	6526	6701
Television stations	47	515	677	734	1092	1288	1390	1387

*Data exclude educational broadcast stations.

4. New Media

- New media is the broadest and, hence, most difficult of the four categories of mass media to delimit and define
- "new media are the cultural objects which use digital computer technology for distribution and circulation."
- It includes must continuously be revised as computing technology becomes a more common mode of distribution.
- Development of digital television, film, photography, e-books, and podcasts, for instance, would place them in the category of new media along with the internet, websites, online computer games, and internet-capable mobile telephony
- The history of new media begins with the development of the microprocessor or computer chip. Introduced in 1971, the world's first commercial microprocessor, the 4-bit Intel 4004, executed about 60 000 calculations a second.
 - By the early 1990s, the 486 microprocessor, which was typical of computers at the time, could perform 54 million calculations per second. Intel's Pentium Pro, introduced in 1995, increased performance yet again to roughly 250 million calculations per second.
- Developed initially as a communication technology for the US Department of Defense, the internet began to catch the public's attention in the 1970s, when its potential for sending personal electronic messages (emails) became evident. But it was the development of a graphic-based user interface and common network protocols in the early 1990s that really popularized the internet, by transforming it into the hypertextual platform we know now as the World Wide Web.
 - Pew Internet and American Life Project reports that only 10 percent of American adults were using the internet in 1995. By August 2011, that number had grown to 78 percent of adults and 95 percent of teenagers.
 - The social networking site Facebook, which first appeared in 2004, attracted more than a billion active users worldwide in its first decade.

	Users in millions 2017	% increase over 2016	% of US population
Internet use			
Internet users	273.3	2.2%	83.9%
Social network users	191.1	2.9%	58.7%
Online video viewers	221.8	3.1%	68.1%
Facebook users	171.4	15.8%	52.6%
Dual device users	214.6	2.0%	65.9%
Computer-only users	17.9	-11.8%	5.5%
Mobile phone use			
Mobile internet users	223.0	6.0%	68.4%
Mobile social networkers	169.7	5.0%	52.1%
Mobile internet-only users	40.7	-14.2%	12.5%
Wearables (adult) users	44.4	12.6%	13.6%

Living in Postmodernity

The mass media develop and change over time. It is important, therefore, to study them in historical context.

Focus of this book is on contemporary mass media, this section reflects on the character of the contemporary historical moment. The present moment has variously been described as the information age, the network era, the third wave, post-industrial society, the digital age, and postmodernity.

Postmodernity - The contemporary moment, given its widespread adoption by media scholars. Describes the historical epoch that began to emerge in the 1960s as the economic mode of production in most Western societies gradually shifted from commodity-based manufacturing to information-based services

Postmodernity should not be confused with postmodernism, an aesthetic sensibility or "style of culture which reflects something of this epochal change, in a ... self-reflexive, playful, derivative, eclectic, pluralistic art.

Transition from modernity to postmodernity, the mass production of standardized, durable goods such as automobiles and toasters has steadily given way to the reproduction of highly customizable soft goods such as digital content providers and cell phone plans.

Modernity	Postmodernity
~1850s to 1960s	~1960s to present
Monopoly (imperial) capitalism	Multinational (global) capitalism
Industrialism	Informationalism
Fordism	Flexible accumulation
Manufacturing and production	Marketing and public relations
Mechanization	Computerization
Standardization	Customization
Heavy industries	Image industries
Durable goods	Information and ideas
Product-based	Service-oriented
Mass markets	Niche markets
Economies of scale	Economies of speed
Nation state	Global corporation
State macro-economic regulation	Free-market neoliberalism

Five key trends driving the mass media in postmodernity: convergence, mobility, fragmentation, globalization, and simulation.

CMFGS

Convergence

- First major trend in the mass media today involves the erasure of such boundaries
- **Convergence, the tendency of formerly diverse media to share a common, integrated platform.**

Today in light of the prevalence of streaming video, internet radio, and online newspapers, convergence is a relatively recent phenomenon that was considered visionary in the early 1980s when Nicholas Negroponte and others at the MIT Media Lab began exploring multimedia systems.

Before media convergence could become a reality, it had to overcome two major obstacles

- a. **Noise** associated with analog signals such as those used in television and radio broadcasting generated message distortion and decay over long distances.
 - **Was solved through digitization**, which reduces distortion by relying on bits rather than a continuous signal
- b. **Bandwidth limitations** prevented large data packets involving images and video from being transmitted quickly and easily over a communication channel.
 - **Improved data-compression techniques and bandwidth expansions** have made possible the real-time transmission of large data packets over communication channels.

Mobility

- Historically, mass media have not been very portable
- Even print media such as books, magazines, and newspapers were limited in their mobility, as their size and weight significantly restricted the amount of printed material one was likely to carry around.

- But with the development of powerful microprocessors and wireless technology is rapidly changing all this, and today, instead of us going to places for media, media can increasingly go places with us.
- **Mobility** refers to the ease with which an object can be moved from place to place.
- In light of the drive toward mobility, the next evolutionary stage is likely to see media go from being something we carry around or wear to something we embody or become in the form of cybernetic implants.

Fragmentation

- The mass in mass media has traditionally referred to the large, undifferentiated, anonymous, and passive audience addressed by television, radio, and print's standardized messages.
- Explosion of information in postmodernity has given way to cultural fragmentation, a splintering of the consuming public into ever more specialized taste cultures.
- Alvin Toffler has called the "**de-massification**" of media has been underway since at least the early 1970s
- **Decreasing production costs** have greatly altered the economics of the media industry, reducing the necessity for standardization
- Today, there are hundreds of networks, as well as premium cable services, with around-the-clock programming.
- The internet, of course, reflects the most diversified medium, delivering a dizzying array of content.
- Technology improves, we can count on media becoming more and more tailored to individual tastes.

Globalization

- Globalization, having captured the attention of academics, business leaders, and politicians alike. World has become increasingly fragmented by specialized interests, it has simultaneously become more global as well.

- Globalization is a complex set of social, political, and economic processes in which the physical boundaries and structural policies that previously reinforced the autonomy of the nation state are collapsing in favor of instantaneous and flexible worldwide social relations
- Globalization is multidimensional
- Spread of capitalism has fueled the rise of multinational corporations that wish to profit from untapped "global markets. Corporations aggressively support free-trade policies that eliminate barriers such as trade tariffs between national and international markets
- For the mass media, which are owned and controlled almost exclusively today by multinational corporations, globalization creates opportunities to bring their cultural products to distant local markets.
 - This fact has raised fears about cultural imperialism, the imposition of one set of cultural values on other cultures. The process is dialectical or bidirectional,

Simulation

- "Simulation," Baudrillard writes, "is the generation by models of a real without origin or reality: a hyperreal."
- According to Baudrillard, Western societies, and "America" in particular, are increasingly characterized by simulation, an implosion of the image (i.e. representations) and the real.
 - This argument is premised on, in Baudrillard's words, the precession of simulacra, which suggests that the image has evolved from being a good representation of an external reality, to a distorted representation of an external reality, to a mask that conceals the absence of a basic reality, to bearing no relation to any reality at all.
- The matter of simulation is an important one, as the mass media are the key social institutions fueling this social phenomenon.
 - The media, for instance, endlessly produce and reproduce images of love, violence, and family (to name just a few) that no longer point or refer to some external reality. Rather, they exist only as images of images for which there is no original.

- Simulation suggests that the media no longer represent, if they ever did, our social world; they construct a realer-than-real space that is our social world.

Why study Media?

Most important reason to study mass media today is because of their sheer ubiquity

Expanding number of hours the average American spends per day with select media

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Digital	4: 10	4: 48	5: 09	5: 29	5: 43	5: 53	6: 01
• Mobile (nonvoice)	1:28	2:15	2:37	2:54	3:06	3:15	3:23
• Desktop/laptop	2:24	2:16	2:14	2:12	2:11	2:10	2:08
• Other connected device	0:18	0:17	0:19	0:23	0:26	0:28	0:30
TV	4: 38	4: 31	4: 22	4: 11	4: 05	4: 00	3: 55
Radio	1: 32	1: 30	1: 28	1: 27	1: 27	1: 26	1: 25
Print	0: 40	0: 35	0: 32	0: 30	0: 28	0: 27	0: 26
• Newspapers	0:24	0:20	0:18	0:17	0:16	0:15	0:15
• Magazines	0:17	0:15	0:13	0:13	0:12	0:11	0:11
Other	0: 38	0: 31	0: 26	0: 24	0: 22	0: 21	0: 20
Total hours	11: 39	11: 55	11: 57	12: 00	12: 05	12: 07	12: 08

Though we may gradually be changing which media we use, the mass media remain a significant socializing force in contemporary society.

Socialization

Socialization describes the process by which persons – both individually and collectively – learn, adopt, and internalize the prevailing cultural beliefs, values, and norms of a society

When information passes through a channel or medium, it is translated from direct sensory experience into a set of symbols.

Since symbols are selective, privileging some aspects of the thing being represented at the expense of others, they function as filters.

Language is perhaps the most obvious example of how symbols operate as filters.

- When you listen to a friend tell a story or read about history in a textbook, you are not experiencing the events being described directly. You are only experiencing them symbolically

Mediated messages are composed of content and form. Broadly speaking, the content influences what we learn and the form influences how we learn. Both content and form are central to the socializing function of the mass media, content has typically been given more attention.

What We Learn (Content)

Content refers to the informational component of a message, to the specific details, facts, ideas, and opinions communicated through mass media. Audiences are often consciously aware of the content of mediated messages.

It should probably be noted at this point that the content of a message need not have use-value or truth-value to be classified as informational.

As both misinformation and disinformation would suggest, fairness and accuracy are not defining attributes of information. **Information need only be meaningful.**

The **content of the mass media matters for several reasons**.

1. **Mass media largely determine what we talk and care about.** By choosing to include or cover some topics and to exclude or ignore others, the media establish which social issues are considered important and which are considered unimportant.
2. **Content lacking a diversity of views and opinions significantly limits the scope of public debate and deliberation on matters of social importance.** Unpopular and dissenting viewpoints are essential to a healthy democracy, however, as they often reframe issues in fresh, productive ways

3. Media content is communicated using symbols and all symbols are selective, media content is necessarily biased. The language and images used to inform, educate, and entertain you also convey selective attitudes and beliefs

In short, the content of the mass media socializes us to care about some issues and not others, to see those issues from some perspectives and not others, and to adopt particular attitudes toward the perspectives it presents.

How We Learn (Form)

Form describes the cognitive component of a message.

- Form can be thought of as the way a message is packaged and delivered.
- Packaging of a message is a consequence, first, of the medium and, second, of the genre or class

Every medium or communication technology packages messages differently. The unique ways that a message is packaged influence how we process it. In other words, communication mediums train our conscious to think in particular ways: not what to think, but how to think.

Whereas language is highly temporal and thus favors a sequential or linear way of knowing, images are decidedly spatial and hence privilege an associative or nonlinear way of knowing.

- A simple way to confirm this difference is to place a page of printed text next to an image. While the printed text only makes sense when the words are read in succession, the elements within the image can be processed simultaneously.

Because the medium of a message conditions how one processes the informational elements within that message, some media scholars contend that message form is a more fundamental and important socializing force than message content.

This position is most famously associated with Marshall McLuhan, who succinctly claimed, "The medium is the message."

Given the transition to postmodernity, in which the image has steadily replaced the word as the prevailing form in mass media (even print media such as magazines and newspapers are increasingly filled with pictures), the belief that young people today are cognitively different than their parents is rapidly gaining adherents.

- If media guru Douglas Rushkoff is correct, then television and MTV, along with video games and the internet, may account for everything from the invention and popularity of snowboarding to the emergence and spread of attention deficit disorder.
- As such, critical media scholars must attend not only to what the mass media socialize us to think, but also to how they socialize us to think.

Doing Critical media studies

Critical media studies is an umbrella term used to describe an array of theoretical perspectives that, though diverse, are united by their skeptical attitude, humanistic approach, political assessment, and commitment to social justice

Attitude: skeptical

The theoretical perspectives that make up critical studies all begin with the assumption that **there is more at stake in mass media than initially meets the eye.**

To the lay-person, for instance, what gets reported on the evening news may appear to be an objective retelling of the day's major events.

But to the critical scholar, the production of news is a complex process shaped by the pragmatic need to fill a 1-hour time block every day, as well as to garner high ratings.

These factors, in large part, determine what counts as news, how the news is produced, and what the news looks like.

Just as there is value in looking more closely at the news, there is value in looking more closely at all media.

Thus, the various perspectives within the field of critical media studies adopt an attitude of skepticism, not as a way of rejecting media, but as a way of understanding how they work and what they do.

Some critics refer to this skeptical attitude as a "hermeneutics of suspicion."

Hermeneutics describes a mode of interpretation grounded in close analysis. So, a hermeneutics of suspicion would be a mode of close analysis with a deep distrust of surface appearances and "commonsense" explanations.

Approach: humanistic

Universities, like many other cultural institutions, are divided into various departments and units.

Though the precise character of such divisions varies from one institution to the next, one common way of organizing disciplines and departments is according to the categories of natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities.

These categories, while neither rigid nor entirely discrete, reflect a set of general distinctions concerning subject matter, outlook, and method (i.e. procedure of investigation).

To say that critical media studies is humanistic, then, is to associate it with a particular set of intellectual concerns and approaches to the discovery of knowledge.

Adopting a humanistic approach to the social world and our place in it, critical media studies emphasizes self-reflection, critical citizenship, democratic principles, and humane education.

This is an approach that entails "thinking about freedom and responsibility and the contribution that intellectual pursuit can make to the welfare of society."

Because of the subjective element of humanistic criticism, the knowledge it creates is never complete, fixed, or finished.

Assessment: political

But critical media studies is interested in the practical and political implications of those findings and, thus, entails judgment.

Though there is no universal criterion for leveling political judgments across individual studies of the mass media, critical studies are generally concerned with determining whose interests are served by the media, and how those interests contribute to the domination, exploitation, and/or asymmetrical relations of power.

A Feminist study of television sitcoms, for instance, would examine how the representation of male and female characters in such programs functions to reinforce or challenge gender and sexual stereotypes.

Critical studies view society as a complex network of interrelated power relations that symbolically privilege and materially benefit some individuals and groups over others.

The central aim of critical scholarship is to evaluate the media's role in constructing and maintaining particular relationships of power.

Ambition: social justice

One of the most unique and, at times, controversial characteristics of critical media studies is its desire to better our social world.

While scholars in many fields believe that research should be neutral and non-interventionist, critical media studies aims not only to identify political injustices but also to confront and challenge them.

Critical media studies is premised on a commitment to social justice and maintains that scholars should “have as their determinate goal the improvement of society.”

Many media scholars who work within the critical media studies paradigm belong to media-reform organizations such as Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR), the Media Education Foundation, Media Democracy in Action, Free Press, the Action Coalition for Media Education, the Center for Creative Voices in Media, and countless others.

Critical media studies scholars believe that it is incumbent upon citizens, and not just their governments, to hold big corporate media accountable.

Social activism can take many forms, from boycotts and culture jamming to producing alternative media and supporting independent media outlets

Theory

Theory is an explanatory and interpretive tool that simultaneously enables and limits our understanding of the particular social product, practice, or process under investigation.



Marxist Analysis

An Overview

Profit Motive

The 5 Mass Media Filters

1. Ownership
2. Advertising
3. Establishing Management and Control
4. Flack
5. Anti-(Communism, Socialism, Terrorism)

Patterns of Media Ownership

1. Concentration
2. Conglomeration
3. Integration
4. Multinationalism

Lecture topics

Cultural Hegemony

Alienation

False Consciousness

Media Manipulation

Untrustworthy organisation

Strategies of Profit Maximization

1. Synergy

2. Planned Obsolescence

1. Technological obsolescence

2. Psychological obsolescence

3. The logic of safety

4. Celebrity and Spectacle

5. Joint ventures

Advertising

NICHE marketing

Consequences of Ownership Patterns and Profit Maximization

1. Reduction of Diversity

2. Restrictions of Democratic ideals

3. Spread of Cultural imperialism

An Overview

Marxist media scholars are interested in how economic contexts and imperatives impact the production and distribution of media content.

Marxist scholars are concerned with how conceptualizing media content as products, in turn, shapes the way that content looks and circulates.

Marxism is both a social theory and a political movement rooted in the idea that "society is the history of class struggles."

Origins lie in the work of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, who collaborated on The German Ideology in 1845 and the Communist Manifesto in 1848.

The central premise of Marxism is that the mode of production in society (i.e. its underlying economic structure and practices) determines the social relations of production (i.e. its class structure).

This theory understands and makes sense of the world through the perspective of Historical materialism, which regards the character of social life as a reflection of the material conditions that exist at a particular historical juncture.

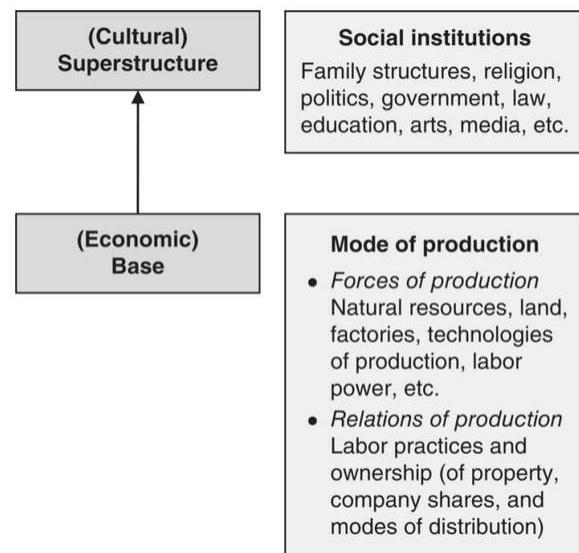
Marx believed that the material world (i.e. natural phenomena and processes, too much importance to money and material possession) **precedes human thought**: that the external, concrete, material conditions of social existence determine or ground human consciousness

Marxism is considered a **materialist philosophy (real)** rather than an **idealist philosophy (Unreal)**:

-idealists maintain that ideas, not material conditions, determine social existence.

Marx also believed that the **material conditions of societies change over time** and must, therefore, be viewed in historical context

Marxism holds that social consciousness, as encoded in institutions such as religion, politics, government, education, law, and art and media, which Marx collectively referred to as the cultural superstructure, reflects or mirrors the material conditions of society, which he termed the economic base.



Represents Marx's famous base/superstructure model.

The mode of production within any society is characterized by two elements: its forces of production, such as the land, natural resources, and technology needed to produce material goods, and its relations of production, such as labor practices and ownership (of property, company shares, or the ways goods are distributed)

According to Marx, a society based on a capitalist mode of production is inherently exploitive because it creates two classes, a working or proletariat class and a ruling or bourgeois class.

Bourgeoisie owns and controls the means of production in society, the only commodity that the proletariat has to sell is its labor

Ruling class exploits the economic value (i.e. labor) of the working class to increase surplus value or profits.

Capitalist system in many countries has changed dramatically since Marx developed his Labor Theory of Value, and the division of labor that produced such a harsh divide between the haves and the have-nots has been replaced by a system that sustains a large middle class, the petty or petite bourgeoisie, of small business owners and white-collar workers (i.e. lawyers, doctors, professors, etc.).

Their ideological domination – and it is domination (e.g. the middle class still behaves in a manner that sustains the ruling elite) – appears to be less grounded in their working conditions. This has led many contemporary Marxist scholars to reject deterministic models, which they label “vulgar Marxism,” that see the superstructure as having no autonomy from the economic base.

While Marxist critics are still interested in who owns and controls the means of production in society, they also recognize that ideology can and does influence modes of production. Thus, for them, the process is much more dialectical than unidirectional, and it is this dialectic that they wish to understand

Profit Motive

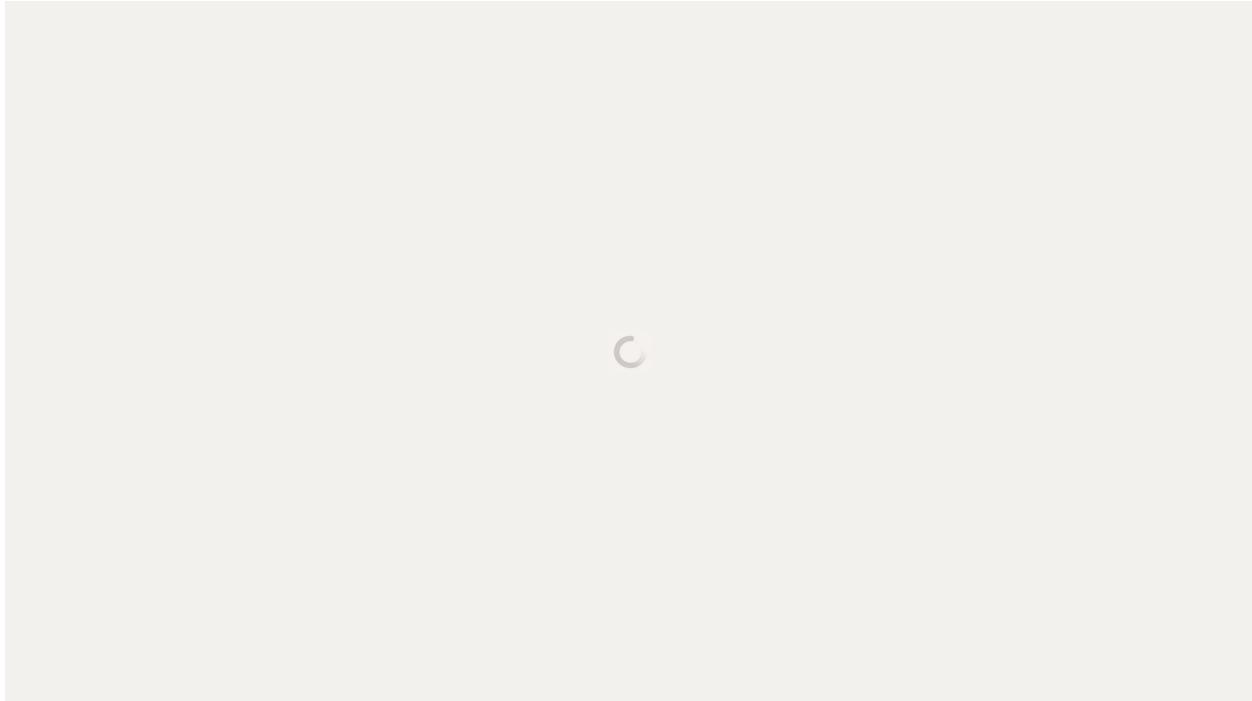
Capitalism is driven by the continuous desire to increase capital, an ideology known as the profit-motive. Problem is → Economics are valued higher than human life and well-being

Contemporary Marxist critics, many of whom identify as political economists, investigate both the prevailing patterns of media ownership and how the logic of capital (i.e. the profit-motive) influences media business practices. There is good reason to do so, as the media are big business ... very big business!

Table 2.1 Global consumer spending by media category in 2010–2020 (in billions of dollars)

	2010	2012	2014	2016	2018*	2020**
Media content (traditional and digital)						
Audio	53.5	54.5	56.8	62.7	64.7	68.8
Cinema	27.6	30.2	32.5	38.5	43.3	48.4
Consumer books	63.8	63.9	65.7	68.4	71.1	74.4
Consumer magazines	35.5	34.8	32.3	30.2	28.5	27.0
Educational publishing	35.7	35.7	37.3	37.7	38.8	40.0
In-home video	249.2	273.7	297.4	318.7	339.5	359.8
Newspapers	58.3	58.1	59.4	59.4	58.3	57.0
Video games	51.8	57.8	73.3	91.7	110.1	127.4
Media access						
Broadband	242.3	323.4	420.1	502.7	577.3	653.9
Total consumer spending	817.7	932.1	1074.8	1210.0	1331.6	1456.7

The 5 Mass Media Filters



1. Ownership

- Fox News (was FoxCorp/21st Century Fox, but now Disney –because Disney bought Fox and all its subsidiaries)
- CNN (AT&T's WarnerMedia)
- MSNBC (NBCUniversal → Comcast)

2. Advertising

- As advertising funds media for audiences, the media sells you to advertisers as a product
- It's in their interest to keep you watching

3. Establishing Management and Control

- System encourages complicity –push back and get pushed out

4. Flack

- For anyone who does push back or dissent, they are discredited and viewers' attention is diverted elsewhere

5. Anti-(Communism, Socialism, Terrorism)

- Creation of a common enemy, which can change with time, aids in diversion and re-setting of the narrative

Patterns of Media Ownership

Marxist analysis of mass media begins by examining the means and relations of production under contemporary capitalism, or multinational capitalism (what Marxist critic Fredric Jameson calls)

Like all economic systems, capitalism changes over time. The information-based service economy of the 21st century is substantially different than the industrial-based manufacturing economy of the 19th and 20th centuries.

It is vital, therefore, to consider how the media industry is organized and controlled today.

Toward that end, this section investigates four current and deeply intertwined patterns of media ownership: concentration, conglomeration, integration, and multinationalism.

1. Concentration

- The media and entertainment industry in the United States and much of the world is **highly concentrated**, meaning that it is owned and controlled by a small group of powerful companies.

The domination of an entire industry by just a few companies is sometimes referred to as an **oligopoly**, as opposed to a **monopoly** in which one company dominates an entire industry.

- Microsoft's domination of the software industry, for instance, is often considered a monopoly. Oligopolies reduce competition by making it all but impossible for small, independent, or start-up companies to survive in the marketplace. The big companies typically buy up the small companies or drive them out of business. Once an industry becomes highly concentrated, the few remaining companies function more like a cartel or partners than competitors. They each control such a large piece of the industry pie that the other companies do not constitute a real threat to their success.
- 2020: Comcast, The Walt Disney company, AT&T and ViacomCBS own about 90% of US media
 - 21st Century Fox used to be on the list, until Disney purchase for 71.3\$ billion
- **Concentration occurs both within particular media industries such as music and film and across the media industry as a whole**

2. Conglomeration

- A second prevailing and closely related pattern of media ownership is **Conglomeration**, the corporate practice of accumulating multiple companies and businesses through startups, mergers, buyouts, and takeovers.
 - **Concentration** describes the media industry as a whole and its increasing consolidation into the hands of fewer and fewer corporations
 - **Conglomeration** describes a corporate structure in which a parent company owns and controls a host of subsidiary companies. All the subsidiary company generate profit for Parent company

- Some scholars reserve the term conglomerate to describe large corporations whose media holdings reflect only one dimension of their overall corporate portfolio.
 - AT&T**, which is the world's largest telecommunications company owns **WarnerMedia**, but it also owns numerous companies involved in **fixed-line telephony, mobile telephony, home security, network security, and sports management**. Hence, its media holdings are only one dimension of its larger portfolio. Since media companies are among some of the most powerful corporations in the world, we regard each of the Big Six as conglomerates regardless of whether or not the majority of their holdings are restricted to media

Table 2.2 The Big Six US-based media conglomerates (2018)

Conglomerate	Film and sound	TV and radio	New media	Other holdi	Conglomerate	Film and sound	TV and radio	New media	Other holdi
Comcast (Brian L. Roberts, CEO) 2018 Revenue: \$95 billion	Universal Pictures, Illumination Entertainment, Focus Features, DreamWorks Animation, Gramercy Pictures, Working Title Films, United International Pictures (50%)	NBC, MSNBC, CNBC, Syfy, E!, Telemundo, USA Network, Oxygen, Golf Channel, Bravo, Universal Kids, NBC Sports Radio, 26 television stations	Fandango (70%), Rotten Tomatoes, PictureBox Films, Hulu	Xfinity cable provic MovieTickets.com	AT&T (Randall L. Stephenson, CEO) 2018 Revenue: \$171 billion	Warner Bros. Pictures, Warner Animation Group, HBO Films, DC Universe, HBO Go, TNT, Turner Classic Rock, Entertainment, New Line Cinema, Flagship Entertainment, Cinemax Films, CNN Films, WaterTower Music, Williams Street Records	CNN, HLN, HBO, The CW (50%), Cinemax, truTV, TBS, TNT, Turner Classic Movies, Cartoon Network, Adult Swim, Boomerang, AT&T SportsNet	Fandango (30%), Machinima Inc., iStreamPlanet, DramaFever, DC Universe, HBO Go, Hulu (10%), Warner Bros. Interactive Entertainment, (NetherRealm Studios, Portkey Games, Turbine, Inc., Avalanche Software, TT Games)	Direc'verse, iWireless, (seco) large provic Cricks DC C Mad Maga Otter (Fulls Inc.)
The Walt Disney Company (Bob Iger, CEO) 2018 Revenue: \$59 billion	Walt Disney Pictures, Walt Disney Animation Studios, Pixar Animation, Lucasfilm Ltd., Marvel Studios, DisneyNature, Walt Disney Records, Hollywood Records	ABC, ESPN, Disney Channel, Disney Junior, Disney Channel, Disney Junior, Disney XD, Disney Channel, History, H2, Lifetime, Lifetime, Disney XD, Marvel Television, Radio Disney, ESPN radio, 30 radio stations	ABC.com, disney.com, WatchESPN, Movies Anywhere, Hulu (30%), Babble.com, Disney Games and Interactive Experiences	Disney Resor Disney Resor Disney Resor Disney Resor Disney Resor Disney Paris, Kong Disney Resor Shang Disney Resor Disney Press, Marvel Comic Marv Toys, Books	21st Century Fox ² (James Murdoch, CEO) 2018 Revenue: \$30 billion	20th Century Fox, Blue Sky Studios, Fox Searchlight Pictures, Zero Day Fox, 20th Century Fox Animation, Fox Music	Fox, Fox News Channel, Fox Business Network, FX, FX Movie, Day Fox, 20th Century Fox, Animation, Fox National Geographic Channel, Nat Geo Wild, Big Ten Network (51%), MyNetworkTV	Fox Digital Entertainment, Fox Sports Digital Media, FoxNext, Hulu (30%)	Ender Shine Group (50%) TrueX Natio Geogi STAR LAPT
Viacom 2018 Revenues: \$13 billion	Paramount Pictures, Comedy Central Films, MTV Studios, Nickelodeon, Movies, Nick Records, United International Pictures (50%)	MTV, VH1, TV Land, BET, CMT, Comedy Central, Logo TV, Noggin, Nickelodeon, Nick Jr., Nicktoons, Nick Radio	RateMyProfessors.com, VidCon		National Amusements, Inc. (Sumner Redstone, CEO)	CBS Corporation 2018 Revenues: \$15 billion	CBS Films, CBS Records	CBS, Showtime, The CW (50%), Pop (50%), The Movie Channel, Flix, 30 television stations, hundreds of radio stations	Simone Schus Scrib Pock Books

Table 2.3 Annual revenues for The Walt Disney Company by unit (in billions of dollars)

Source: The Walt Disney Company, *2006 Annual Report*, *Fiscal Year 2010 Annual Financial Report and Shareholder Letter*, *Fiscal Year 2012 Annual Financial Report and Shareholder Letter*, *Fiscal Year 2015 Annual Financial Report and Shareholder Letter*, and *Fiscal Year 2017 Annual Financial Report*. Note: numbers may not add up to total due to rounding.

Disney unit	2002	2004	2006	2008	2010	2012	2014	2016
Media Networks	9.7	11.8	14.6	15.9	17.2	19.4	20.4	23.7
Parks and Resorts	6.5	7.8	9.9	11.5	10.8	12.9	15.1	17.0
Studio Entertainment	6.7	8.7	7.5	7.3	6.7	5.8	7.3	9.4
Consumer Products & Interactive Media	2.4	2.5	2.2	3.1	3.5	4.1	5.3	5.5
Total revenues	25.3	30.8	34.3	37.8	38.1	42.3	48.1	55.6

3. Integration

- Media conglomerates are by definition integrated. Integration is an ownership pattern in which the subsidiary companies or branches within a corporation are strategically interrelated.
- Corporations can be integrated vertically, horizontally, or both.

- **Vertical integration** describes a corporation that owns and controls various aspects of production and distribution within a single media industry like publishing or broadcasting.
 - Vertical integration **can significantly increase the profits** associated with a media product by allowing the parent corporation to oversee all stages of its development from production and marketing to distribution and exhibition.
 - A media conglomerate that owns music copyrights, record labels, sound recording studios, and record clubs, stores, and/or online distribution outlets would possess **strong vertical integration in the music industry**,
 - The filmed entertainment division at Viacom offers a concrete example of vertical integration. In 1972, Paramount Pictures produced the Oscar-winning film *The Godfather*, which had grossed \$134 million in the United States by 1973. Domestic box-office receipts are far from the end of the story, though. Today, Paramount Home Entertainment markets and distributes the film on DVD, Worldwide Television
- Horizontal integration describes an ownership pattern in which a corporation dominates one stage (or level in the value chain) of the production process.
 1. This typically takes one of two forms. Some firms achieve horizontal integration through ownership of multiple media outlets in one market, thereby reducing competition.
 - A company like Comcast, for instance, which owns 26 television stations, some of which are in the same markets, has strong horizontal integration. If a company were to control all or nearly all the radio stations, TV stations, or newspapers within a market, then it would have a horizontal monopoly in that market
 2. A second way for a corporation to achieve horizontal integration is to own and control companies across various media industries, but typically at the same level of production, distribution, or exhibition. This corporate structure is sometimes referred to alternatively as **cross-media ownership**.
 - Like vertical integration,

Distribution negotiates its broadcast on TV, and Famous Music licenses the use of its soundtrack. All of these companies, which continue to generate profit from The Godfather franchise, are part of the Paramount Pictures Corporation, a wholly owned subsidiary of Viacom. The popular, conspiracy-driven TV drama *The X-Files* (1993–2002) provides a second example of the benefits of vertical integration. The Fox Broadcasting Company produced the show, which then aired in first-run production on the FOX network. In addition to the profits generated by its initial airing, Twentieth Television, a division of Fox Television, syndicated three rounds of reruns on local Fox affiliates and other stations, collecting an additional \$35 million a year. Meanwhile, FX, one of Fox's numerous cable networks, also aired the show in rerun, generating \$69 million more in annual profits. In total, Fox's yearly profits from *The X-Files*, after subtracting production costs, of course, exceeded \$180 million dollars.¹⁰ Then, in 2016, fourteen years after the original

horizontal integration can have tremendous financial benefits, namely by enhancing synergy.

Table 2.4 Horizontal integration of the Big Six US-based media conglomerates (January 2013)

Conglomerate	Print media	Film and sound	TV and radio	New media
The Walt Disney Company (Bob Iger, CEO)	Disney Press, Hyperion Books, Voice, Marvel Publishing, <i>ESPN The Magazine</i>	Walt Disney Pictures, Marvel Studios, Pixar Animation, Lucasfilm Ltd., Touchstone Pictures, Walt Disney Records, Hollywood Records (Mammoth and Buena Vista Records), Lyric Street Records	ABC Family, Disney Channel, SOAPnet, ESPN (80%), A&E (50%), Lifetime (50%), History (50%), Biography (50%), HGTV (50%), Food Network (50%), Travel (50%), R&B (50%), Sports (50%), H2 (50%)	ABC.com, Disney.com, ESPN3, WatchESPN, Spoonful.com, Babble.com, DisneyBaby.com, Go.com, Hulu (32%), Disney Interactive Games
Time Warner (Jeffrey Bewkes, CEO)	Warner Books, DC Comics, <i>People</i> , <i>Time</i> , <i>Sports Illustrated</i> , <i>Entertainment Weekly</i> , <i>InStyle</i> , <i>Fortune</i>	Warner Brothers Pictures, New Line Cinema, Castle Rock, DC Entertainment	CNN, TBS, TNT, Cartoon Network, truTV, Turner Classic Movies, Adult Swim, CNN, HBO, Cinemax, The CW (50%)	CNN.com, DCComics.com, TMZ.com, KidsWB.com, NBA.com, NCAA.com, PGA.com
News Corp (Rupert Murdoch, CEO)	HarperCollins, Zondervan, Dow Jones, <i>Wall Street Journal</i> , <i>Barron's</i> , <i>New York Post</i>	20th Century Fox, Fox 2000 Pictures, Fox Searchlight Pictures, Fox Music, Blue Sky Studios	FOX, FOX News FX, FUEL TV, SPEED, FSN, MyNetworkTV, Big Ten Network (51%), National Geographic Channel (70%)	FOX.com, Amplify, IGN Entertainment, AskMen, Making Fun, Wireless Generation, Hulu (32%), MySpace (until June 2011)
Viacom (Philippe Dauman, CEO)	(Viacom has not owned any print media since its split with CBS in December 2005)	Paramount Pictures, Paramount Vintage, MTV Films, Insurge Pictures, Nickelodeon Movies	MTV, VH1, CMT, Nickelodeon, Nick Jr., Nick at Nite, Comedy Central, SPIKE, TV Land, Logo, BET, CENTRIC	ParentsConnect, GoCityKids, Atom Entertainment, Shockwave, Nick.com, GameTrailers
CBS Corporation (Leslie Moonves, CEO)	Simon & Schuster, Pocket Books, Scribner, The Free Press	CBS Films	CBS, Showtime, The CW (50%), The Movie Channel, FLIX, CBS Radio	CBS Interactive, CBSSports.com, Last.fm, CNET

series was cancelled, Fox revived it for a tenth and an eleventh season. Nor is the success of The X-Files limited just to television, having spun off two feature length films, as well as comic books, novels, video games, and other merchandise.

4. Multinationalism

- Multinationalism, or a corporate presence in multiple countries, allowing for the production and distribution of media products on a global scale
- Multinationalism should not be confused with globalization.
 - Globalization is a complex set of economic and political processes, and while globalization may be contributing to the rise of multinational corporations, it cannot be reduced to this ownership trend.
 - Multinational media conglomerates, also known as transnational corporations (TNCs), do not simply (re)distribute a static, pre-packaged product developed in one locale to various countries around the globe, nor do they completely reinvent the proverbial wheel each time

Lecture topics

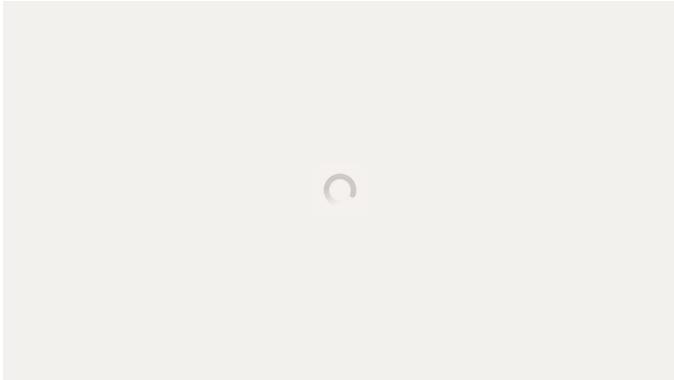
Cultural Hegemony

In Marxist philosophy, cultural hegemony is the domination of a culturally diverse society by the ruling class which manipulates the culture of that society—the beliefs and explanations, perceptions, values, and mores—so that the imposed, ruling-class worldview becomes the accepted cultural norm;

[1] need quotation to verify

[2] the universally valid dominant ideology, which justifies the social, political, and economic status quo as natural and inevitable, perpetual and beneficial for every social class, rather than as artificial social constructs that benefit only the ruling class.

[3] This Marxist analysis of how the ruling capitalist class (the bourgeoisie) establishes and maintains its control



Alienation, false consciousness, media manipulation, untrustworthy news organizations –these all lead to exhausted, distracted, cynical labourers, susceptible to manipulation

- If the ruling class also rules ideas, and we're too worn down to step back and think critically, we're less likely to be politically active, and more likely to just go along with all of this
- "There is no alternative...." → These are the ruling class' words, not "ours", but this is easy to forget
 - Ruling class = Ruling ideas
- Reduction of democracy and perpetuation of potentially problematic ideologies

Alienation

According to Marx, the worker is alienated because neither he receives satisfaction from his work nor receives the full product of his labour.

According to Marx, alienation results from the lack of sense of control over the social world.

In the opinion of Marx, **alienation would lead to dehumanization and devaluation of human beings.**

Alienation refers to the personal demoralization and psychic disorganization of the individual.

- The feeling of powerlessness, meaninglessness, rootlessness and isolation ; psychological disorders such as extreme anxiety states, despair, pessimism, perception of a loss of self, of beliefs and values, and of the sense of purpose and attachment, behavioural adaptations that demonstrate apathy, distrust, aggression and withdrawal symptoms.
- In what does this alienation of labour consist? First, that the work is external to the worker, that it is not a part of his nature, that consequently he does not fulfill himself in his work but denies himself . . . His work is not voluntary but imposed, forced labour. It is not the satisfaction of a need, but only a means for satisfying other needs. Its alien character is clearly shown by the fact that as soon as there is no physical or other compulsion it is avoided like the plague."

Alienation can be seen as having four basic components:

1. First the workers alienation from the object that he produces.
2. Secondly alienation from the process of production.
3. Thirdly alienation from himself.
4. Fourthly alienation from their fellow workers.

False Consciousness

The mass media perform their job of distracting people from their realities of society and of creating "false consciousness".

- A Marxist theory that people are unable to see things, especially exploitation oppression, and social relations, as they really are; the hypothesized inability of the human mind to develop a sophisticated awareness of how it is developed and shaped by circumstances
- Popular mass media tend to mask or excuse class inequality to avert class conflict

Media Manipulation

Media manipulation is a series of related techniques in which partisans create an image or argument that favours their particular interests.

Such tactics may include the use of logical fallacies, manipulation, outright deception (disinformation), rhetorical and propaganda techniques, and often involve the suppression of information or points of view by crowding them out, by inducing other people or groups of people to stop listening to certain arguments, or by simply diverting attention elsewhere.

Untrustworthy organisation

Strategies of Profit Maximization

But ownership alone does not guarantee financial success. Thus, the few multinational conglomerates that dominate the media industry typically follow a series of specific strategies designed to maximize profits. We are using the term strategy here in a very specific way.

The distinction between strategies and tactics hinges on ownership; only those who have a "place" to stockpile their winnings can carry out strategies.

Five key strategies of profit maximization in the media industry are: synergy, planned obsolescence, the logic of safety, celebrity and spectacle, and joint ventures.

SPLCSJ

1. Synergy

Synergy or the involvement of multiple subsidiary companies in the cross-development, production, and distribution of a media brand for the purpose of "exploiting it for all the profit possible"

Synergy is made possible by horizontal integration, and since all six of the major US-based media conglomerates are horizontally integrated, the examples are virtually endless.

- AT&T, which owns WarnerMedia, for instance, publishes over 900 comic book titles, including those of DC Comics, which features such well-known characters as Batman, the Flash, Green Arrow, Superman, and Wonder Woman

Increasingly, the summer blockbuster lies at the heart of cross-promotional efforts. In fact, big-budget films often only get made today if they can demonstrate strong cross-promotional potential. Typically, this means a film that will appeal to a wide audience and can be marketed to children through toy lines and the fast-food industry. While no media conglomerate has perfected this formula better than Disney, MCA/Universal offers one compelling example: the 1993 mega hit Jurassic Park.

2. Planned Obsolescence

One of the central challenges faced by the media industry is getting consumers to consume media continuously, especially when the content endlessly being churned out is formulaic rather than creative (see the section on the Logic of Safety). **One strategy designed to accomplish this is planned obsolescence.**

Planned obsolescence "is a business strategy in which the obsolescence of a product is planned and built into it from its conception

This is done so that in [the] future the consumer feels a need to purchase new products and services that the manufacturer brings out as replacements for old ones.

Planned obsolescence typically takes one of two forms: **technological or psychological**

1. Technological obsolescence

Technological obsolescence occurs when a development in technology causes the previous generation of that technology to become obsolete, such as how CDs made cassette tapes obsolete and digital music is now making CDs obsolete.

- Technological obsolescence is a mainstay of the media industry.
- The sound recording and film industries are forever releasing their content in new formats, which requires users both to regularly upgrade their playback equipment and to repurchase media content they already own in the new format

US consumer spending on home video rental and sales, 2000–10 (in billions of dollars)

Source: DEG Year-End 2010 Home Entertainment Report, 2011.

Category	2000	2002	2004	2006	2008	2010
VHS & UMD	11.4	9.6	4.4	0.4	0.1	0.0
DVD	2.4	8.6	16.7	20.2	18.4	14.0
Blu-ray	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.9	2.3
Digital	0.7	0.7	0.7	1.0	1.6	2.5
Total revenues	14.5	19.0	21.8	21.6	21.0	18.8

US home entertainment consumer spending by category, 2010–17 (in billions of dollars)

Source: DEG's Year-End 2011 Home Entertainment Report, 2012; DEG's Year-End 2012 Home Entertainment Report, 2013; DEG's Year-End 2015 Home Entertainment Report, 2016; and DEG's Year-End 2017 Home Entertainment Report, 2018.

Category	2010	2012	2014	2016	2017
Sell-thru packaged goods					
VHS, DVD, Blu-ray Disc	10.3	8.5	6.9	5.5	4.7
Rental					
Brick and mortar rental	2.3	1.2	.7	.5	.4
Physical subscription	2.3	1.3	.8	.5	.5
Kiosk	1.3	1.9	1.8	1.5	1.3
Digital					
Electronic sell-thru	.5	.8	1.6	2.0	2.2
Video-on-demand (VOD)	1.8	2.0	2.0	2.1	2.0
Subscription streaming (sVOD) [*]		2.3	4.1	7.3	9.5
Total revenues	18.5	18.0	17.9	19.4	20.6

^{*}Not tracked.

- Though the strategy of technological obsolescence can be found in all sectors of media, it is particularly evident in the video game industry, where new game consoles are released every couple of years. Many of these systems are specifically designed to prevent backwards compatibility, meaning that the newer systems will not play older games
- Technological obsolescence in the music, video, and gaming industries ensures that customers must continually “upgrade” (i.e. replace) their playback devices. **After all, media producers eventually stop producing media in older formats**, effectively rendering the technology that plays the older formats obsolete.
- **Technological obsolescence** is closely tied to innovations in technology, **Psychological obsolescence** is linked to the manipulation of time

2. Psychological obsolescence

Psychological obsolescence arises not when a new technology replaces an older one, but when a new style or product replaces an older style or product, such as the way new music is endlessly turned into hits through frequent radio play.

- Nor is psychological obsolescence limited to the news media. The ongoing success of the music industry depends upon consumers continuously developing an interest in new artists. Thus, new musical artists must constantly be discovered, packaged, and sold by the music industry as "the next big thing."

3. The logic of safety

Logic of safety, which is based on two principles: the belief that "nothing succeeds like success" and the idea that "change" and "innovation" are financially risky

- Because of the first principle, when a format or concept meets with financial success, media companies have a strong incentive to replicate it (often endlessly)
- Since exploiting proven formulas is driven by risk avoidance, media companies are, in most circumstances, reluctant to produce highly original, innovative, or creative content. The reward for trying something new and unproven, which may fail, is simply not worth the financial risk.

4. Celebrity and Spectacle

Celebrity refers to "those people who are well known for their well-knownness." This includes high-profile public officials, popular entertainers and artists, and others who seize, if only momentarily, the public spotlight.

If history has proven anything in the media industry, it is that audiences will pay to consume virtually anything that features celebrity personalities. Celebrity, it should be noted, has nothing to do with talent, only with well-knownness.

When celebrities are unavailable or too expensive to feature in media, the media industry frequently resorts to its other proven content strategy: **spectacle**. The concept of spectacle describes the media's obsession with the sensational and arresting, scandalous and shocking dimensions of a situation or context.

It refers to that which grabs hold of our attention either because it is tantalizing or because it is startling.

5. Joint ventures

Joint ventures to reduce financial risks. By splitting the costs of a new venture, neither corporation has to bear the full financial burden should it fail.

Advertising

But to focus only on the profits generated by the sale of media products would be to overlook a significant source of revenue in the media industry, namely advertising.

Advertising is a form of communication and marketing designed to persuade audiences to feel and/or behave a certain way toward a product, service, or corporate brand, and it plays a central role in media industry profits.

Estimating the precise amount spent on advertising each year is no easy process. Part of the difficulty is in deciding what to include in the calculations. Some estimates of advertising spending include commercial, noncommercial, and political advertising, while others focus exclusively on commercial advertising. Similarly, some estimates include both measured and unmeasured advertising spending and others do not.

- **Measured advertising** spending typically includes expenditures for network and cable TV, consumer magazines, newspapers, internet, radio, and outdoor (billboards, benches, etc.)
- **Unmeasured advertising** spending often includes expenditures for direct mail, telemarketing, and catalogs.

Despite these difficulties, eMarketer estimates that global spending on measured media advertising in 2017 was roughly \$535 billion

With the advent of new technologies such as the **remote control and digital video recording**, which allow for commercial “zapping,” advertisers began to complain that they were not getting what they paid for, namely consumers' attention. So, television adapted yet again.

- First, it reduced the length of the commercial break between two programs – or sometimes eliminated it altogether – as a way of preventing viewers from leaving to take a bathroom break between shows.
- Second, it began to sell product placements. Instead of characters in television using or wearing generic products, networks began to charge companies to promote their products by highlighting labels and name brands, or simply having characters mention a brand.

Advertising in the media is so **pervasive** that one media scholar, Dallas Smythe, argues that the chief commodity sold in the media today is the audience.

The mass media audience is sold to advertisers, and advertisers expect to get what they are paying for. So, the media industry has developed increasingly sophisticated strategies to package and sell audiences to advertisers. One such strategy is niche marketing.

NICHE marketing

Niche marketing is the targeting of a specific segment of the public that shares particular, but known demographic traits such as age, sex, or income. Niche marketing is sometimes referred to as narrowcasting as a way of distinguishing it from broadcasting, a model that targeted a large, anonymous, and undifferentiated audience.

The financial benefit of niche marketing is twofold.

- First, if a media company can deliver a niche audience that is highly sought after, then it can charge a premium for advertising
- Second advantage of niche marketing is that it allows media corporations to target and reach previously untapped markets

Consequences of Ownership Patterns and Profit Maximization

In any capitalist society, the patterns and strategies discussed in this chapter may not seem surprising or abnormal. We are, of course, socialized from birth to see capitalism not as one possible economic system, but as the only economic system.

In such a context, the desire to accumulate wealth appears to be intrinsic and instinctive rather than constructed and learned. But, when culture is transformed into nature (i.e. made to seem natural), we do not stop to question it. We do not ask, why does it matter that the media industry is highly concentrated? Or, what difference does it make that the major media

conglomerates operate according to a logic of safety? The remainder of this chapter begins with a reminder that late capitalism is only one structural (i.e. economic) possibility and that the patterns of ownership, strategies of profit maximization, and advertising practices that emerge in relation to it have significant social and political consequences that affect our lives.

Three implications in particular warrant our attention:

the reduction of diversity, the restriction of democratic ideals, and the spread of cultural imperialism.

1. Reduction of Diversity

Concentration, which severely restricts competition, **integration**, which leads to the development of some projects and not others, and the **logic of safety**, which drastically limits creativity, **collectively result in the homogenization of media**

Influenced by Marxism, scholars such as Herbert Marcuse, Theodor Adorno, and Max Horkheimer saw the mass media and popular culture as rigid, formulaic, highly standardized, and clichéd. They argued that media's unending sameness had a pacifying effect on audiences, eliminating the possibility for critical thought, and thereby producing our very consciousness.

They argued that media's unending sameness had a pacifying effect on audiences, eliminating the possibility for critical thought, and thereby producing our very consciousness

2. Restrictions of Democratic ideals

A second social consequence of ownership patterns and profit-maximization strategies in the media industry is the decline of democratic ideals.

Democracy is premised on the notion of egalitarianism, the free and open exchange of ideas, and the participation of diverse publics.

But, until the relatively recent development and spread of new media, it was virtually impossible for ordinary citizens to share their ideas and opinions with large, remote audiences. Thus, only those who owned and controlled the means of production truly had a "public" voice. Even as access is gradually becoming more democratic through personal and political blogs, for instance, the major media conglomerates continue to function as powerful gatekeepers.

Gatekeeping is a filtering practice that determines what makes it into the media and what does not. Media such as radio, television, and film remain almost entirely inaccessible to ordinary citizens. And even more democratic media platforms such as YouTube (owned by Google) and Instagram (owned by Facebook) are being bought up by the major conglomerates. Often, what starts out as creative, independent art is later co-opted for corporate profit.

By controlling what is included in (and thus excluded from) both news and entertainment media, the major media conglomerates also exercise an agenda-setting function.

Agenda-setting refers to the power of the media to influence what people are concerned with or care about.

- By covering some news stories and not others, or by treating some scenarios, themes, and issues in entertainment media and not others, the media greatly influence what the public regards as important.
- The idea of agenda-setting asserts that media do not influence what audiences think, so much as they influence what audiences think about. Typically, agenda-setting is discussed in relation primarily to the news media. But entertainment media also exercise an agenda-setting function.

In addition to gatekeeping and agenda-setting, the major media conglomerates exercise an important framing function.

Framing describes the viewpoint or perspective that is employed by the news and entertainment media when covering social and political issues.

- Just as the lens of a camera frames its subject, so media frames create particular windows through which audiences view issues.
- The news media's repeated framing of political issues around a conservative/liberal or left/right binarism, for instance, greatly limits the scope of public debate by marginalizing non-centrist or alternative perspectives.
- During political campaigns, third-party candidates are rarely taken seriously by the media. The naming and, hence, framing of third-party candidates as "on the fringe" works to ensure that they will remain there

In short, the gatekeeping (filtering), agenda-setting (focusing), and framing (structuring) functions of the major media conglomerates consistently undermine democratic principles and ideals.

3. Spread of Cultural imperialism

A third consequence of contemporary ownership patterns and profit-maximization strategies is **cultural imperialism**.

Cultural imperialism describes the exporting of US values and ideologies around the globe, usually to the detriment of local culture and national sovereignty.

While local culture certainly inflects upon and influences the media products such as television, film, and music imported from predominantly US-centered media conglomerates, the **cultural imperialism hypothesis** is rooted in the idea of **unequal flow**. This idea holds that, while cultural beliefs and values are flowing in both directions, the inward flow is so much greater than the outward flow that over time it causes cultural erosion in poorer countries with less-developed media industries

In some cases, exposure to outside cultural values can have devastating effects on local cultures.

There was a significant rise in infant deaths in a number of countries in Africa, for instance, when mothers switched from breast-feeding to bottle-feeding after seeing it repeatedly featured in European and US television programs and advertising. The mixing of infant formula with unsanitary water in this particular region resulted in an epidemic.



Organisational analysis

An Overview

Structure → Form, Framework

1. Hierarchy
2. Differentiation & Specialization
3. Formalization

Process → Substance

Organizational Cultures

Assessing Communicative Practice

1. Performance
2. Narrative
3. Textual
4. Management
5. Technology

Conventions

Motivated

Shared

Naturalized

Resilient

Directive

Professionalization

Training

Hiring

Evaluation and Promotion

Recognition and Awards

Professional societies

The News Media

News organizations and journalistic conventions

News Gathering conventions

1. Journalistic Beats

2. News Agencies

3. Punditry & Press Releases

News Reporting conventions

Political bias, pseudo news, and fake news

Media scholars employing an Organizational perspective seek to understand “why media organizations, a specific medium, or the mass media institution produces the kinds of content it does.” In other words, these scholars understand that an organization is more than merely an assemblage of disparate parts. The manner in which media companies organize and divide labor directly influences the character of the content they produce.

Organizational perspective, attending to the concepts of structure, process, and organizational and professional conventions.

An Overview

Our work lives are shaped in large part by whom we work with and for. Collectively, employers and employees form organizations: systems or networks of ordered relationships and coordinated activities directed toward specific goals.

Organization has two basic dimensions: **structure and process**.

An organization **consists of a system of structured relationships** and coordinated processes **directed towards** a specific goals.

Structure → Form, Framework

Structure describes the underlying framework **that shapes an organization** over time, and includes three key elements: **hierarchy, differentiation and specialization, and formalization.**



1. Hierarchy

- First structural element
- Refers to the specific arrangement of job roles and positions based upon authority within an organization.
 - Some persons or groups have more decision-making power than others within an organization, and thus are central to both the creation and the maintenance of a particular corporate culture

2. Differentiation & Specialization

- Second structural element
- Accounts for the division of companies into units, departments, and positions, each of which performs specific tasks
 - To the extent that these tasks require a unique set of skills and training, the positions within an organization are filled by professionals.
 - Professionals are individuals who possess expertise in a particular area or field that allows them to accomplish the distinctive tasks of their position
 - A book editor, for example, is a professional with specialized training and credentials in proofreading and copyediting

3. Formalization

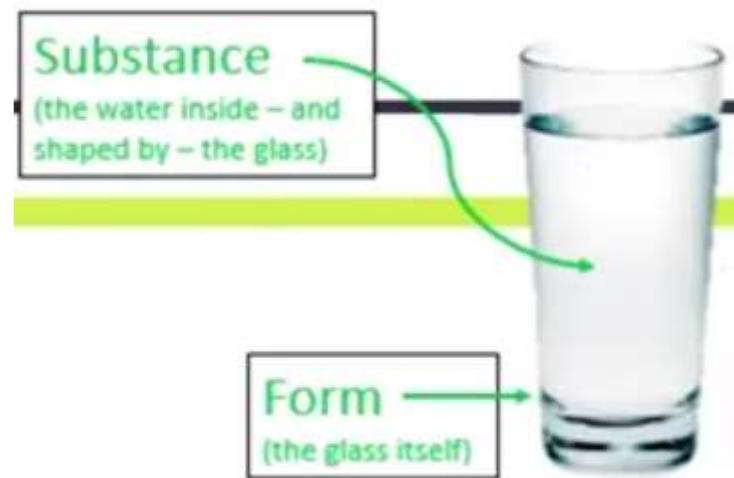
- third structural element

- Is the degree to which specific practices must conform to accepted organizational and professional conventions

Process → Substance

Whereas structure describes the underlying framework of an organization, process denotes the actual substance erected upon that framework.

Structure and process can be likened to Kenneth Burke's notion of "container and thing contained."⁶ Though a container has an identifiable shape and form, its contents can vary greatly



So, while every organizational member, as an individual, engages in unique behaviors and actions (i.e. process), such behaviors and actions are always constrained, which is to say limited, by the principles of hierarchy, differentiation and specialization, and formalization (i.e. structure).

Organizational Cultures

The media critic who adopts an Organizational approach or perspective is interested in the precise ways that structure and process mutually influence one another within a media organization.

One productive way of getting after that relationship is by analyzing the communicative practices that occur within organizations and how those practices create and maintain a particular type of organizational culture.

Assessing Communicative Practice

Every organization develops a unique organizational culture: the set(s) of norms and customs, artifacts and events, and values and assumptions that emerge as a consequence of organizational members' communicative practices.

Communicative practices are dynamic, contingent, and transactional, meaning that they are not static, universal, or bounded, but complex, improvisational, and continuous.

To understand an organizational culture, then, one must look at its communicative practices in local, social, and historical contexts, including why, when, where, and how they occur, as well as whether or not they are ignored, legitimated, and/or challenged by organizational members.

Five ways to study an organization's culture: performance, narrative, textual, management, and technology.

1. Performance

- Performances are **expressive** (i.e. productive and purposeful) displays (i.e. both process and product) that carry **symbolic significance** (i.e. meaning and implication) **in a particular context**.

- Four important types of organizational performance are
 1. Ritual

Ritual performances are those personal or organizational behaviors that members engage in on a regular or routine basis

One of the authors of this book, for instance, drinks coffee every morning as he reads his email. This is a personal ritual because it is not necessitated by his job. Such personal rituals are sometimes known as trademark performances because they are strongly associated with particular members.

Organizational rituals, by contrast, such as attending weekly faculty meetings, involve routine behaviors that are necessitated by or expected within a specific workplace environment
 2. Sociality

Refers to the codes of etiquette that are enacted with regard to friendliness, small talk, joking, and privacy within an organization.
 3. Politics

Politics are performed differently in every organization and influence the type and degree of independence, negotiating, and coalition-building that are acceptable
 4. Enculturation

Enculturation, emphasizes those “communicative performances wherein the newcomer learns the social knowledge and skills of the culture

2. Narrative

Though narratives are also a type of organizational performance, we have chosen to treat them separately given their unique complexity and importance

Stories are a ubiquitous feature of organizations, and the stories members tell about their workplace experiences are another way to evaluate the endless (re)creation of an organization’s culture

Narratives can be classified as

1. Personal stories
2. Collegial stories

3. Corporate stories

Each of these story types can function to affirm or discourage certain attitudes and activities within a culture.

Narratives that glorify the success of an action or event invite emulation, while those that recount or accentuate failure sound a cautionary tone

3. Textual

Another means of examining an organization's culture is through the texts – written or electronic documents such as company bylaws, policy manuals, procedure handbooks, training manuals, office memos, newsletters, mission statements, reports, etc. – it produces.

The purpose of formal texts like those just mentioned is to explicitly identify what are considered to be acceptable and unacceptable actions and activities within the organization.

Given the origin and relative permanence of such documents, they tend to represent and reinforce managerial perspectives

4. Management

A fourth lens through which to evaluate an organization's culture is a managerial perspective.

This approach concerns how "organizational culture is developed and directed by managers for the purpose of improving operating efficiencies, enhancing the bottom line, or creating satisfied customers."

Though this perspective, which conceives of organizations principally as businesses, emerged initially as a way to assist managers in achieving success by implementing strategies that enhance productivity, performance, and profits, it can be used by critical organizational scholars to evaluate the political consequences of managerial practices

5. Technology

In the context of an increasingly post- industrial and global economy, information technology (IT) has come to play a central role in the contemporary workplace.

Organizational scholars need to examine the ways in which technology structures work activities, as well as "influences organizational members' work roles and work relationships." The quick and easy access to information on wire services, for instance, has decreased the need for news organizations

Indeed, the decreasing cost and increasing availability of IT is directly related to the rise of citizen journalism

Studying performances, narratives, texts, management, and technology allows scholars to evaluate and assess how communicative practices mediate the tension between structure and process within an organization.

Organizations must also respond to external pressures such as the professional culture that prepares members to work in a particular profession.

Organizational cultures and professional cultures are not the same thing

Organizational culture is always unique to a specific organization and its practices, Professional culture may extend across many organizations. A professional culture, then, refers to sets of norms and customs, artifacts and events, and values and assumptions that emerge as a consequence of formal training (i.e. education, apprenticeships, internships, etc.), membership and participation (i.e. professional associations, conferences, workshops, licenses, etc.), and recognition (i.e. industry awards and honors) within a profession

To appreciate why workers carry out their jobs as they do, therefore, requires an understanding of both organizational and professional conventions.

Conventions

Conventions describe the norms that govern the technical and creative choices made by workers in the execution of their duties, art, or craft.

For media workers, conventions influence everything from how one dresses and with whom one eats lunch to the way a news anchor reads news copy and a cameraperson frames particular shots

If it were not for conventions, workers would confront a virtually infinite array of options in how to carry out their job-related tasks.

Norms

- That govern the technical and creative choices made by workers in the execution of their duties, art or craft.

Norms/Conventions can be

Motivated

- Though conventions may appear to be arbitrary and capricious, they typically develop out of some pragmatic need, even if that need is as simple as efficiency or the desire for a sense of community, belonging, and group cohesion
 - In the academic department of one of the book's authors, for example, faculty members playfully address one another as "professor," instead of by their first names. **This communicative practice heightens the sense of community among faculty by creating identification between those members of the department who have doctorate degrees**
 - **Conventions, then, are motivated rather than random. There is some purpose behind them, even if that purpose is not immediately self-evident**

Shared

- Though most of the practices in which people engage are purposeful, not all practices – even routine practices – become conventions.
- For practices to function as norms, they must be internalized by other employees. Simply put, conventions are shared. Creating and maintaining a curriculum vitae (i.e. detailed academic résumé) is a professional convention that academics share.

Naturalized

- A third characteristic of conventions is that they are naturalized and thus largely invisible
- Since conventions are "the norm," workers tend to adopt and abide by them unconsciously and unreflectively
- When persons act in accordance with the prevailing norms, their **behaviors appear to be "natural" rather than "cultural**

Resilient

- Conventions typically **endure over time, often as much out of tradition as anything else**
- The comment, "That's just the way we've always done it," for instance, which utilizes an appeal to tradition, is a fairly common response to the question, "Why do you perform that task in that manner?" **Though conventions are relatively resilient or stable, they are neither fixed nor static**

Directive

- They **sanction or authorize some practices and behaviors**, and discourage or disapprove of others
- In other words, conventions function not as mere suggestions for possible courses of action, but **as unspoken guidelines or rules for the correct or appropriate action.**

Because of their motivated, shared, naturalized, resilient, and directive character, conventions – be they organizational or professional – **have a significant impact on daily workplace practices, and consequently on the services and products offered by media companies**

Professionalization

The **existence and operation of professional conventions** leads to **professionalization or the socialization of workers** to do their work in certain ways and to produce certain kinds of products

Professionalization is the **internalization of professional conventions as common sense**

Professionals, then, **have many powerful incentives to adopt and follow professional conventions**, even if they are consciously unaware of them.

Training

These standards, in turn, serve as guides for making hires, conducting annual evaluations, determining promotions, and dispensing awards and recognition. The more fully one has been professionally socialized through one's education and training, the more likely one is to get a job.

After all, one already possesses the skills that have been deemed valuable and necessary.

Similarly, once in a position, the more one is able to conform to existing professional conventions, the more likely one is to be rewarded with money, promotions, responsibilities, recognition, and praise.

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Hiring

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Recognition and Awards

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Professional societies

Most professions also have professional societies to which their members belong.

These societies generate literature, conduct studies, and host conventions, all of which function to further reinforce professional norms.

They, in effect, continue the socializing role performed early in one's career by formal education.

The News Media

Journalism (especially following the Civil War) became increasingly fascinated with scandal, corruption, and sensational headlines: a practice that came to be called muckraking as a result of its fondness for dredging up "muck."

The trend toward salacious, personality-centered, entertainment-oriented, soft news only increased as newspapers aggressively competed for readers and advertisers

Local rivals battled for greater shares of the marketplace, quality journalism committed to covering hard news was replaced by **yellow journalism**: a style of news that lacked any sense of social responsibility and privileged sensational and even fabricated stories and photos.

Though yellow journalism was prevalent – as well as profitable – throughout the late 1800s, by the turn of the century it was slowly being challenged by a more responsible model: one that eschewed tabloid news, sensational stories, publicity stunts, and excessive commercialism in favor of the impartial reporting of information regarded as vital to the public

Writing in a broadly libertarian tradition, Lippmann was an ardent advocate for the journalistic standard of **objectivity**, or the reporting of facts in a fair and impartial manner. Though objectivity existed as a journalistic ideal long before Lippmann, he was vital to its widespread adoption as a professional norm following World War I.

The Commission, which was funded by Time Inc. CEO Henry Luce and headed by University of Chicago President Robert Maynard Hutchins, sought to address the question, "Is the freedom of the press in danger?"¹⁸ Comprising academics from Yale University and the University of Chicago, whom Hutchins had appointed, the Commission on Freedom of the Press released its final 133-page report, *A Free and Responsible Press*, in 1947. In this report, the Commission advocated a code of social responsibility for the press that included five basic services:

1. a truthful, comprehensive, and intelligent account of the day's events in a context which gives them meaning;
2. a forum for the exchange of comment and criticism;
3. the projection of a representative picture of the constituent groups in society;
4. the presentation and clarification of the goals and values of the society; and
5. full access to the day's intelligence.

Response to the report was both swift and harsh, especially from journalists and editors who resented the implication that they were not doing their jobs

News organizations and journalistic conventions

News Gathering conventions

Journalism was generally regarded as a reputable and critically important enterprise in the late 20th century. The structure and processes of news organizations worked to ensure the daily output of the media product we call "news." Ideally, the News refers to important, accurate, and reliable information that equips citizens to participate in civic life in responsible and informed ways.

Newsworthiness of occurrences, are based on schemes of interpretation originating from and used by agency officials within the institutions beat reporters cover

The two major situational constraints on news gathering are the news "hole" and the news "whole,"

The news hole, or the necessity to **deliver the news every day at the same time** (i.e. to "fill the hole"), is one of the most powerful institutional forces in journalism, and it has resulted in a series of concrete organizational practices and routines.

The need to produce the news every day by a specific deadline is a heavy burden for both local and national news outlets. To meet the daily demand for news created by the news hole, journalists rely upon a series of standardized practices for collecting news that include journalistic beats, news agencies, and punditry and press releases.

1. Journalistic Beats

Are the places and institutions where news is expected to occur on any given day.

For instance, police stations and courthouses make up the criminal/legal beat, and are reliable sources of news.

The events that are systematically excluded from public view (i.e. the so-called non-events) as a result of prevailing news-gathering conventions, then, are really nothing more than occurrences that, if reported, would call into question the legitimacy of the beats (people and institutions) that reporters depend on for news

"NEWSWORTHINESS" – WHAT NEWS IS WORTH PRIORITIZING?

The "news hole" and the "news whole"

- "News hole" = Need to produce news every day at the same time, to "fill the news hole"
 - 24-hour news cycle means the "news hole" is never filled, as compared to previous kinds of journalism and reporting
- "News whole" = Amount of time allotted to news reporting each day
 - Even with a 24-hour news cycle, it is not possible to cover everything, so decisions are made in how to extract from the "whole"



2. News Agencies

News agencies can be corporations such as Reuters that produce and sell stories to other news providers, or nonprofit cooperatives like the Associated Press that work with large media companies to generate news centrally and distribute it locally.

This is particularly **valuable to news organizations that must meet daily print and broadcast deadlines**

The consistency of the news across networks does not arise because various news organizations independently "discover" the same news every day, but because they all collect news from the same beats and news agencies.

3. Punditry & Press Releases

Punditry describes news that is pre-packaged by politicians and their public relations managers and press advisors (i.e. communication consultants) to promote a favorable image of the politician and her or his specific policy initiatives

Image management, consultants constantly seek to control both the news situation and message surrounding political actors.

Press release The strategies communication consultants employ to control the news situation are vast and sophisticated, and range from carefully staged, scripted, and acted pseudo events to scheduled press briefings where politicians set the agenda

News Reporting conventions

Information biases: personalization, dramatization, fragmentation, and authority-disorder. Let's consider each of these in greater depth

1. Personalization

Most news stories focus on individuals rather than institutions, and emphasize human-interest angles and emotional impact over and often at the expense of broader social contexts and political perspectives. Simply put, news stories are people-centered; they rely heavily upon interviews, first-person accounts, eyewitness testimony, and expert opinions.

The focus on individual people is designed to make stories feel more personal, direct, and immediate

2. Dramatization

The news is overwhelmingly **biased toward the narrative presentation of information**

The insistence on narrativizing the news has at least two significant consequences.

- First, since some issues are difficult to pictorialize and require sustained analysis, their dramatization leads to inaccurate or misrepresentative reporting
- Second, since narratives have beginnings, middles, and endings, dramatized news has the potential to impose a clean and tidy sense of closure on complex, enduring issues

3. Fragmentation

A third informational bias in the news is the tendency to treat stories in isolation, ignoring their connection to other stories and the larger contexts in which they occur

This can foster the misimpression that the world is just a series of random, unrelated events

Fragmented news **makes the world appear chaotic and unpredictable.**

Indeed, the prevalence of fragmented news helps to explain why the 9/11 attacks were so utterly incomprehensible to most Americans, who had no context for understanding the connections between the economic and foreign policies of the United States and the religious zealotry of Islamic

extremists. To most Americans, the attacks on the World Trade Center and

4. Authority-disorder isolated events with no prior history or context.

The fourth and final informational bias of the news is closely related to the first three, and in particular, **the way that personalized news becomes dramatized**. Since **personalization leads to a focus on individuals and dramatization favors the sensational**, it is common to depict the individuals and parties involved in a story as in conflict or tension.

This tension is typically represented as one **between authority** (i.e. police, government leaders, public officials) and **disorder** (i.e. criminals, natural disasters, terrorism).

Conventions of the news magazine

The four information biases just discussed are typical of daily reporting and are pervasive in both print and televised news. Consequently, one is just as likely to find the biases of personalization, dramatization, fragmentation, and authority-disorder on evening news programs

60 Minutes is the most successful television show in history, having finished as the top-rated series on television five times and ended in Nielsen's top 10 programs a record 23 consecutive seasons

The show combines investigative journalism with celebrity journalism, and typically consists of two or three separately produced segments. As Campbell has demonstrated, those segments generally follow one of four well-worn formulas

1. News as mystery

"investigative reporting," because it often involves journalists with hidden cameras uncovering wrongdoings by playing detective and surprising or ambushing interviewees

For Campbell, stories told using this formula proceed in four stages:

- (1) the **identification of key characters**, who are framed as villains or criminals;
- (2) the **search for clues of criminal violation**;

- (3) the stalking and ultimate confrontation of the wrongdoer about his or her misdeeds
- (4) an assurance that the wrongdoer has been brought to justice, and safety has been restored

2. News as therapy

This formula places the reporter **in the position of analyst or therapist, rather than detective.**

In this capacity, the journalist performs four key roles:

- (1) as a social commentator who endows the narrative with moral meaning by placing the interview in appropriate historical, political, or cultural context
- (2) as an intimate confidant to whom the interviewee can reveal private, personal details;
- (3) as a champion of heroic characters or a foil to villainous ones
- (4) as an inquisitor, who asks tough, confrontational questions that probe deviations from popular values.

3. News as adventure

The adventure-story formula plays like a Western, **with the reporter as tourist or well-informed traveler in search of drama and adventure.**

The reporter-tourist is portrayed in three recurring capacities:

- (1) as viewers' surrogate for exploring and ultimately understanding a new, unfamiliar, or exotic locale;
- (2) as nostalgic traveler (in search of a simpler, uncorrupted time: a past still reflected in small-town, Middle American values) or as seeker of the authentic, natural, or "real" America behind the fast-paced, high-tech modernist exterior
- (3) as protector from foreign or alien influences that somehow threaten traditional, American-heartland values.

4. News as arbitration

A final formula used in news magazines is news as arbitration, **which positions the reporter as referee or arbitrator**

Of the four formulas, this one shares the most in common with orthodox

- journalism by featuring the reporter
(1) as a **neutral observer**,
- (2) **deferring to experts or authorities**,
- (3) **emphasizing a dialectical rather than expository structure**,
- (4) abandoning the search for a clear, unequivocal villain,
- (5) resisting narrative closure and resolution.

Consequences of news convention (Gathering and reporting convention)

The professionalization of the news – and, more specifically, the journalistic conventions involved in gathering and reporting the news – has four serious consequences.

1. Gatekeeping and Agenda-setting

the news media exercise a powerful gatekeeping function: **the ability to control access to the public**.

Due to the pressures on journalists to meet deadlines, some issues, events, and actors are far more likely to be reported on than others.

This system privileges organizations and politicians who possess the financial and structural resources to provide newsmakers (i.e. journalists) with ready-made news, and disadvantages alternative, independent, and less well-funded groups and citizens seeking to promote their message. In the political arena, news conventions greatly benefit the two major political parties and their candidates, while marginalizing and ostracizing third-party or independent candidates.

This bias is one of the reasons why it makes little sense to debate whether the news is liberal or conservative; the blind reproduction of the two-party system means that news is overwhelmingly centrist.

An additional side-effect of gatekeeping is **agenda-setting**, or the belief that the

news media do not influence what people think so much as what people think about.

The news media, by covering some topics and not others, establish the important topics of the day; they, in effect, set the agenda for public dialog

2. Soft vs Hard news

Soft news describes news that is high in entertainment value, but low in educational value; this type of news is sometimes referred to as "infotainment" because it is packaged so as to make it look important and informational despite the fact that it has no intrinsic social significance

Soft news appeals to viewers primarily on an emotional level by evoking fear, concern, or outrage. Common topics of soft news include crime (especially heinous crimes like child molestation), alcohol and drugs, gangs and violence, and fires and accidents. The degree to which the news is dominated by these types of stories is sometimes referred to as the mayhem index

Hard news is characterized by sustained reporting on issues important to people's lives, in a manner that equips citizens to make informed decisions on public policy and social issues.

Even crime stories can be reported as hard news if they focus on the social causes and consequences of violence, rather than on the sensational details of the crime or the tremendous grief of the victim's family.

3. Attribution of responsibility

The way stories are framed by journalists influences how citizens understand social problems and, ultimately, whom they hold responsible for those problems

4. Homogenization

Just as news-gathering conventions limit the diversity of what is covered, news-reporting conventions limit the diversity of how it is covered.

The presence of multiple newspapers in one locale, then, only creates "the appearance of choice," as both what they report on and how they report on it are likely to possess greater similarities than differences.

Based on what we have learned in this chapter, it probably comes as no surprise that the news is dominated by episodic frames. This is because, as Bennett explains, "the (four) information biases in the news add up to news that is episodic."

The danger of episodic news is that it does not serve the public well as a basis for social and political action, since it frames problems as individual rather than institutional.

Political bias, pseudo news, and fake news

Journalism was respected and relatively trusted. While individual journalists during this period certainly held personal political biases, the conventions of journalism largely mitigated systemic political bias in the news.

Political bias refers to the ideological slant (i.e. liberal or conservative) of a news organization. In the 21st century, political bias is a significant and dangerous reality of our news landscape

Writing about political bias in the news is challenging since there is no apolitical center from which to judge the bias of any given news organization.

The dangers of political bias in the news are twofold.

- First, it **fosters ideological silos**, in which citizens seek out and consume news that conforms to and reinforces their pre-existing political opinions and beliefs.
- Second, and relatedly, it **contributes to hyper-partisanship**, in which people of differing political perspectives and viewpoints are unable to find common ground and, thus, unable to develop and implement solutions to real-world problems

Whereas political bias describes the ideological bent of a legitimate news outlet, pseudo news describes current-events programming that features political opinion and commentary but lacks the rigorous editorial standards and processes typical of serious journalism

pseudo news is often misinterpreted by audiences as legitimate journalism, it does not attempt to pass itself off as such

Fake news, by contrast, deliberately seeks to mislead consumers; it intentionally masquerades as news for the expressed purpose of manipulating people.
 fake news is a type of propaganda. While propaganda refers to strategic disinformation in any form, fake news refers to strategic disinformation that is specifically designed to resemble legitimate journalism. So, while not all propaganda is fake news, all fake news is propaganda.

Fake news can be motivated by

- (1) money, since articles that go viral can generate significant advertising revenue when users click through to the source;
- (2) mischief, since some articles are posted simply as pranks or jokes;
- (3) politics, since some articles are specifically intended to advance a political agenda or candidate

	Money	Mischief	Politics
Subject	2016 voter fraud	Hurricane Harvey	Child-trafficking ring
Source	Christian Times	Twitter (Jason Michael)	The New Nationalist
Fake news headline	“‘Tens of Thousands’ of fraudulent Clinton Votes found in Ohio Warehouse”	“Believe it or not, this is a shark on the freeway in Houston, Texas. #Hurricane Harvey”	“‘Pizzagate’: How 4Chan Uncovered the Sick World of Washington’s Occult Elite”
Revealed as fake by	S. Shane, “From Headline to Photograph, a Fake News Masterpiece,” <i>The New York Times</i> , January 18, 2017	A.E. Dastagir, “Hurricane Harvey: That Shark Photo is Fake – and Part of a Bigger Problem,” <i>USA Today</i> , August 30, 2017	C. Kang, “Fake News Onslaught Targets Pizzeria as Nest of Child-Trafficking,” <i>The New York Times</i> , November 21, 2016



Pragmatic Analysis

An Overview

William James

Habit

John Dewey

Meliorism

Richard Rorty

Relativism

Ironism

A Pragmatic Approach of Gov. regulation of Media

Consequences - Effects of Regulations

Contingencies - Factors at play during creation of regulation

Tension "Public Interest" vs "Free Market"

Interplay b/w Gov. regulation and media self regulation

Issues in the regulation of American Media

Media Ownership

1. Combating Monopoly

2. Protecting intellectual property

3. Maintaining National interest

Media Content

1. Promoting Diversity

2. Managing morality

3. Ensuring Accuracy

Violence in Media

Modes of Violence

1. Historical Violence
2. Ritualistic Violence
3. Hyper-real Violence

Social Effects of Media Violence

1. Aggressor Effect
 - A. Disinhibition
 - B. Enculturation
 - C. Imitation
2. Victim Effect
3. Bystander Effect
4. Catharsis effect

An Overview

This chapter asks the question, what should be the government's role in media? This relationship, of course, varies greatly from society to society. In some countries, the media is state-owned, -controlled, and -run, a sort of propagandistic arm of the government. In most democratic societies, the media functions relatively independent of the government, But even in democratic societies, government and media are not completely independent, and many media industries favor some level of involvement and regulation by the government it is very difficult to approach the relationship between government and media in a critical way.

Pragmatism is a branch of philosophy that assesses truth in terms of effect, outcome, and practicality. Unlike some philosophers, who view truth as a transcendental constant waiting to be discovered, Pragmatists claim that truth depends on the degree to which a concept or theory provides people with useful results in the process of solving problems

Pragmatism is often referred to as the only significant American contribution to world philosophy, and the connections between Pragmatism's emphasis on practicality and the American Protestant work ethic are not difficult to see.

William James

- Focus → Individual and habit, not structure ideology.....

Habit

James' psychological and Pragmatic interests is best represented by his conception of habit, or "a pathway of discharge formed in the brain, by which certain incoming currents ever after tend to escape.

- For James, predictable or habitual ways of thinking and acting arise when external phenomena register in the mind.
- The initial adaptation of the brain in response to something creates a mental pathway for the processing of any future experiences with that thing
 - This means that **habit is essentially practical in nature, for without habits, the mind would have to generate new thoughts and actions each time the individual experienced anything**
- James compares the formation of habits to a bone fracture: a broken bone may heal, but because of its interaction with something external, it is more vulnerable to future injury than a bone that has never been broken.
- **Habits, then, are not idiosyncratic qualities that an individual happens to possess; they are remnants of interactions with the real world that predispose future actions along somewhat predictable lines.**
Habits can be negative or positive.
- Since **habits can either help or hinder and are constantly open to revision**, James came to believe that "the whole function of philosophy ought to be to find out what definite difference it will make to you and me, at definite instants of our life, if this world formula or that world formula be the true one."
 - In other words, **rather than consider the unchanging truths of the universe, philosophers should explore practically how encounters with the world may give rise to better or worse habits within individuals.**
- James' imperative functions as a touchstone for the very material focus of Pragmatism today, but for much of his career he remained focused on what a Pragmatic orientation could do to better the life of the individual.

John Dewey

- Focus on Society and Larger Social Issues

- John Dewey is popularly known as a great pillar in American educational theory of the 20th century, but his theories on the nature of education are intrinsically tied to his own Pragmatic philosophy
- Dewey believed that ways of thinking were essentially habits, in the sense that human beings generate thought in order to overcome difficulties they encounter in the world. Unlike James, however, Dewey introduced communication and social interaction as critical nodes upon which human habits and thoughts rest
- The very operation of learning sets a limit to itself, and makes subsequent learning more difficult. But this holds only of a habit, a habit in isolation, a non-communicating habit. Communication not only increases the number and variety of habits, but tends to link them subtly together, and eventually to subject habit-forming in a particular case to the habit of recognizing that new modes of association will exact a new use of it.
 - In short, the ability to communicate with others is what keeps one's habits and thoughts from calcifying.

Meliorism

- PRAGMATIC MELIORISM → Seeking material, real-world solutions to improve human life in the world
 - Dewey's recognition of sociality as the key to altering habits inaugurated his crucial contribution to Pragmatic thought: meliorism, or the recognition of the elements present in a historical moment and the use of applied thought to develop ways of improving them. Social problems may exist as products of engrained habits, but the malleable nature of habit also means that these problems can be fixed, especially through communicative and social intervention.
 - With meliorism as his guiding principle, Dewey attempted to shift the focus in American education away from habits of rote memorization and toward an appreciation for flexible problem solving. As the American population changed its habits of thought, Dewey believed, it could work together to correct the many social problems that plagued the time

- Dewey mirrored James in his belief that the purpose of philosophy was to correct real and significant problems in the world, but he also extended James' focus on the site of those problems from individual to social levels

Richard Rorty



RICHARD RORTY
(1931-2007)

- **RELATIVISM** – BELIEF THAT VARIOUS APPROACHES TO AN ISSUE ARE ALL (POTENTIALLY) EQUALLY CORRECT
 - REJECTION OF CAPITAL-T TRUTH (STATIC – ONLY “ONE”)
 - **RESTRICTED RELATIVISM**
 - SOCIAL SITUATION AND PLACEMENT IN HISTORY
- **IRONISM** – A COMMITMENT TO SEEING THE WORLD IN TERMS OF CONTINGENT HISTORICAL CONDITIONS

Relativism

- Relativism → **Belief that various approaches to an issue are all equally correct**
 - Action becomes difficult in a relativistic lens because there is no consistent truth to act upon.
 - Because Pragmatism abandons the search for underlying truths on a topic, critics often see it as a relativist approach that cannot practically address the problems it purports to solve.
 - Rorty, however, drew an important distinction between relativism in the metaphysical sense and possibilities as they apply to the real world.
 - Pragmatists are relativistic when it comes to metaphysics, in the sense that all searches for essential truth are equally valid because none of them actually makes any real difference. But when it comes to lived experience and situations,
 - Pragmatists entertain options only to the point that they can be discussed, tested, and selected in the process of problem solving.

Ironism

- Those who engage in Pragmatic approaches may give up the awesome search for some deeper, more complete meaning in life, but they gain a more profound understanding of human systems and an appreciation for human agency.

For Rorty, this Pragmatic appreciation is best cultivated through ironism, or a commitment to seeing the world in terms of contingent historical descriptions (rather than in terms of an unchanging essence).

- We redescribe ourselves, our situation, our past, in those terms and compare the results with alternative redescriptions which use the vocabularies of alternative figures.
- We ironists hope, by this continual redescription, to make the best selves for ourselves that we can." By comparing the various vocabularies that constitute knowledge, then, ironists hope in a truly Pragmatic sense to create identities and societies that "work" for those involved in the moment.
- These social arrangements never adhere for long, however, because being open to doubt and enacting regular revision is the only way to maintain fidelity with the rhythms of living.

The collective ideas of James, Dewey, and Rorty regarding practical application, social utility, and informed discernment provide a foundation for a Pragmatic perspective on the government regulation of media industries. A critical assessment of media regulations is fundamentally melioristic in nature, recognizing that aspects of a historical moment may always be improved upon through human intervention.

Furthermore, Pragmatism allows us to judge the worth of regulation according to its perceived outcomes and effects. In a very rough sense, regulatory policy is "true," worthy, or good if it clearly benefits society or helps to concretely correct social problems.

Careful consideration of many factors and deliberation between multiple options are the hallmarks of quality government regulation; engaging in such debates helps ensure that the resulting policy best meets the many needs of those involved. "Bad" regulation, in turn, does not provide definite social benefits or stems from constant, predetermined, or uncontested truths and beliefs about the world. We present a formal paradigm for making these judgments in the following section.

A Pragmatic Approach of Gov. regulation of Media

Two concepts provide the standards for evaluation within a Pragmatic approach to media:

Consequences - Effects of Regulations

Consequences refer to the clear effects of a given regulation on society at large. Generally, consequences must be beneficial to society if we are to deem the regulation a good one.

The use of consequences as a standard of judgment reflects the Pragmatic focus on the tangible results of a belief as the measure of its truth. It should also be apparent, however, that the examples presented here are based on contemporary judgments of what actually constitutes a social benefit.

Contingencies - Factors at play during creation of regulation

Contingencies, or factors a regulation should address as a result of context and situation.

The social norms and predominant technologies of any given moment form a group of contingent factors that influence the possible types of regulation within that moment.

The historical advent of social media prompted the need for this debate, and the unique opportunities of the platform shaped it, but the debate was still centered on the consequence of increased transparency in advertising.

The use of contingencies to complement our understanding of consequences mirrors the Pragmatist focus on considering multiple options in the process of solving problems, as well as the spirit of doubt that animates Rorty's ironism. In short, then, the best regulatory solutions are those that have beneficial consequences according to their historical contingencies.

It may seem strange to you that a factor can be both regular and contingent, especially because Pragmatism itself hinges on a rejection of constants.

However, it is important to understand that these factors are regular in their presence but contingent upon one another at any given time.

Tension "Public Interest" vs "Free Market"

The first set of regular contingencies is the tension between free speech and public interest.

A media industry that is able to report freely and comment upon events functions as an informal check in the American political system

Before the advent of government-regulated telephone service, it was often necessary for families to possess multiple telephones, one for each privately maintained phone network to which they subscribed.

Thus, at times, it is necessary for the government to intervene in the interest of the public in order to make a media industry more efficient.

The resulting tension between the regular contingencies of free speech and public interest represents a uniquely American dichotomy that debates about government regulation must always consider.

Dominant social norms or political climates will typically direct which concept trumps the other in relation to regulation. Quality regulation, however, must always consider both.

Interplay b/w Gov. regulation and media self regulation

The second set of regular contingencies is the interplay between government regulation and media self-regulation.

These contingencies are in some ways an extension of the public-interest focus.

They are derived from the social-responsibility theory of the press, or the notion that the media are in the service of the public and therefore should be guided by issues of public concern.

Early media legislators reasoned that airwaves were a publicly owned, finite national resource.

Through the FCC (which regulates broadcasting, wire, satellite, and cable services) and FTC (which regulates advertising and public relations), the government has historically used the notion of public interest to decide which radio stations to license, at what times questionable content can be broadcast, and so on.

At times, however, media industries have made the conscious decision to regulate themselves in an effort to reduce the scope of government intervention.

While the FCC still controls industry aspects like broadcast licensing, many media outlets have devised their own rules in relation to best practices or questionable content.

Again, as with the first set of contingencies, the use of federal and industry-based regulation varies with the social and political climate, but the presence of the dialectic always informs new regulatory policy. Overall, the central tenets of consequences and contingencies provide a Pragmatic framework from which we can evaluate the regulation of American media. Regulation is directly tied to social and historical factors, but the American context also gives rise to the regular contingencies of free speech versus public interest and government versus industry self-regulation.

With all of these factors to consider, it should be clear that the process of deciding upon the best form of regulation is a difficult one. Government officials and industry representatives have to balance a number of different (and sometimes competing) issues in attempting to address social problems related to the media.

Issues in the regulation of American Media

This section focuses on six particular thematic areas that have rich and varied histories.

The first three themes deal primarily with patterns of media ownership, and the latter three with media content.

The six themes are: combating monopoly, protecting intellectual property, maintaining national interest, promoting diversity, managing morality, and ensuring accuracy.

Media Ownership

1. Combating Monopoly

Regulations designed to prevent media monopolies have focused historically on limiting the amount of a given market that any one company can own.

These policies cover broadcasting, programming, and a number of other aspects of the industry. Regulations in this tradition often work toward the practical goal of ensuring that healthy competition remains a vital part of the American media landscape.

Syndication, generally speaking, refers to the process of producing and selling programming.

Networks can purchase programs from independent production companies or commission programs from network-owned companies. Prior to Fin-Syn, ABC, NBC, and CBS were all moving toward a vertically integrated syndication system where they produced and broadcast a great deal of their own programming. **The newly enacted rules limited the amount of broadcast programming to which the major networks could hold financial rights.**

In combination with the Prime Time Access Rule, which reduced the amount of network-produced programming the three could broadcast between 7 and 11 p.m., the Fin-Syn Rules forced them to purchase syndicated programming from other, smaller production companies. In addition, the rules prohibited the networks from retaining financial rights to off-network syndicated shows

With the rise of the Fox network and the growing popularity of cable throughout the 1980s, the three networks slowly began to lose their perceived stranglehold on the American media market. Subscribing to cable services and their diverse array of specialty channels was now a viable option for many Americans. The FCC responded to this shifting social trend by relaxing the Fin-Syn Rules in 1993 to allow networks to hold the financial rights to half of their primetime broadcast line-up, and abolishing them altogether in 1995. This understandably resulted in a system where the networks produced or co-produced much of their primetime line-ups.¹¹ As a historical example of government regulation, the Fin-Syn Rules represent an attempt to halt a network programming monopoly and promote the growth of independent stations and production companies as a source of media competition.

Legislators at the time, however, believed that decreasing ownership barriers would in fact spur competition, increase content quality, and lower prices for consumers. The Act operated within the historical public-interest paradigm because it "equated the public interest with a competitive economic environment ... in which consumer and producer desires and needs can be matched efficiently in the marketplace, not structured by regulators."¹³ The prevailing logic was that fewer restrictions on ownership result in more possibilities for more people, thereby increasing the potential for competition across all media markets. The Act safeguarded against monopoly by instilling a traditional economic system of supply and demand that encouraged the media to monitor itself. As we will see, this "free-market" approach to the media is often used to justify acts of deregulation in the American context

From a Pragmatic perspective, the Fin-Syn Rules and the Telecommunications Act of 1996 invite a mixed judgment. Many critics of the 1996 Act agree that its free-market logic failed to inspire competition. Contemporary media industries are marked by an increase of corporate mergers and conglomerations that resemble monopolies (see Chapter 2). However, the Act was a genuine attempt to respond to the economic and social climate of the 1990s with flexible formulae, and revisions continue to invoke this same logic. **The Fin-Syn Rules, on the other hand, did not clearly consider multiple contingencies (benefiting smaller production companies to the obvious detriment of the**

networks), but they did result in a diversity of programming options for the American public. These examples reveal that the Pragmatic evaluation of regulation is often not a clear process of sorting regulations into "good" and "bad" categories, but rather a nuanced assessment of the factors that inform the creation and effect of a regulation.

2. Protecting intellectual property

Regulations concerning intellectual property in media industries deal with legally protecting the creative work of artists.

The most familiar form of intellectual property protection is copyright, or the granting of exclusive control of a creative work to that work's creator.

Contemporary copyright protection gives a work's creator the exclusive control over the reproduction, dissemination, and sale of the work.

A work retains this protection for the lifetime of its creator plus 70 years, or 95–120 years for anonymous works.

The legal system of copyright also stipulates rules regarding the distribution of creative works, and these systems have given rise to additional regulatory agencies within media industries.

A more recent form of intellectual property protection closely related to copyright is industry-based digital rights management (DRM): **any number of different software programs that media industries employ to control the distribution and use of digital intellectual property.**

DRM attempts to duplicate for the online/digital world the types of protection granted by copyright and medium in the real world.

Digital versions of intellectual property like music or movie computer files are by nature much easier to pirate than their real-world counterparts (CDs and DVDs), so **DRM represents an extra level of security** attached to these digital versions.

In theory, both copyright and DRM seem to represent attempts by the government and the industry to protect the intellectual property of individuals

Others claim that the rise of DRM signals a shift away from legal regulatory standards that historically work in the public interest to industry-based technological guards that privilege the rights of owners over customers.¹⁶

Pragmatically speaking, both copyright and DRM work toward correcting issues related to information piracy, but both fall short of ably balancing issues of free speech and the public interest

3. Maintaining National interest

Media regulations with the **goal of maintaining national interest are concerned primarily with American domestic infrastructure and global image.**

These regulations ensure that media technology and practices do not compromise national security and the government's ability to protect the public.

Encryption is the process of scrambling important digital messages by software so only those who possess a complementary decoding program can read them

The Standard outlined a system where the government authorized certain companies to **manufacture encryption chips (called Clippers)** that could be installed in communications devices like fax machines and computers.

An independent executive agency would collect the decoding keys, split them in half, and distribute them between two separate facilities.

It offered the public access to powerful encryption software, but it also provided a back door for government officials to decode and read encrypted messages. It was also a way for them to strike a balance "between a person's right to privacy and the government's ability to monitor hostile foreign governments, terrorists and criminals."

Media Content

1. Promoting Diversity

Regulations with the end goal of promoting diversity in media industries have attempted in some way to establish a sense of equality in media content.

Because **wealthy, privileged social groups usually have the most access to media outlets** (and very often own them), these regulations are motivated by the desire to ensure that minority viewpoints and perspectives find a place on television and radio as well

The rule results in equal access to the media for all public candidates, and it is built upon contingencies (current rates for advertising, rules that only apply when a station gives away free advertising, etc.).

2. Managing morality

Regulations concentrated on the management of morality in media content and programming are one of the more controversial areas in media industry law

Because one cannot truly "legislate" morality without endangering free speech, the types of regulations in this tradition often →

- **offer general guidelines rather than definite understandings of issues related to morality**
- **restrict access and consumption of questionable texts rather than their production**

The three key types of regulated media content are obscenity, profanity, and indecency:

Obscenity

Obscenity has been a historically difficult term to define, **but most obscene media content is sexually explicit in nature. Obscene material is not protected by the freedom of speech**

Content is considered obscene when it meets all of the following standards:

1. the average person, applying contemporary community standards, would find that the work, taken as a whole, appeals to prurient interest;
2. the work depicts or describes, in a patently offensive way, sexual conduct specifically defined by applicable state law
3. the work, taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value

The regulation of obscene content is straightforward: it is illegal. However, images or words are not obscene until someone challenges them as such in a court of law

the legal definition of obscenity acts as an informal regulation by shaping the decisions made about content so that it cannot be declared obscene

Profanity

Profanity is often equated with comedian George Carlin's act about the seven "filthy" words banned from public broadcast: shit, piss, fuck, cunt, cocksucker, motherfucker, and tits.

Generally, the regulation of profanity falls under the greater regulation of indecency

Indecency

Indecency refers to any material that is morally unfit for general distribution/broadcast, often depicting or referencing sexual and excremental activities. Unlike obscenity, indecent content is not illegal, but it is regulated in a number of ways. For example, radio and television networks may broadcast indecent programming only between the "safe harbor" hours of 10 p.m. and 6 a.m., when it is unlikely that any children are watching/listening

3. Ensuring Accuracy

Regulations aimed at ensuring accuracy primarily deal with the news broadcast and print industries.

Equally balanced between government- and industry-based standards, these regulations attempt to prevent the dissemination of false (and possibly damaging) information and provide systems of legal correction if such information does become public.

The two most important forms of government regulation aimed at ensuring accuracy are the twin legal concepts of slander and libel

Slander

Slander refers to publicly spoken, untrue, and defamatory statements

Libel

libel refers to false printed statements that similarly damage a person's character.

Neither is protected under the freedom of speech

Slander and libel laws together force reporters and broadcasters to double check their stories for accuracy.

Legal definitions of slander and libel are like definitions of obscenity in that they regulate primarily by guiding the informal decisions made about news content: industry workers avoid disseminating content that is slanderous or libelous

If a media outlet is found guilty of slander or libel in a court of law, it often must pay hefty sums in monetary compensation.

The most important of these is truth. If a statement is true, no matter how damaging it is to the character of an individual, then it is not subject to slander or libel laws.

Similarly, the media is allowed to remark on public figures and their actions under the doctrine of fair comment

A code of ethics is a self-imposed set of rules that outlines the ethical strivings of a particular media outlet (goals that typically revolve around notions of truth and fairness), and it often stipulates the particular ways that those within the organization should handle conflicts of interest, ethical dilemmas, and other problem areas.

By adhering to a code of ethics, news media outlets ensure that they consistently address issues accurately and fairly for the parties involved.

The heavy penalties that result from slander and libel legal cases push media outlets to remain ever vigilant about the facts that they report

Violence in Media

Many of the regulations we have discussed thus far do not occupy a significant place in the public consciousness. Issues like syndication rights, political advertisements, and libel laws often fail to attract the attention of the typical American media consumer.

The same cannot be said for violence. In fact, one would be hard pressed to point to a media issue that garners more public concern than violence in film, television, music, and video games. Because the perceived effects of media violence (especially on children) are so great, concerned parents, special-interest groups, and politicians often respond with extreme, reactionary proposals that border on outright censorship.

Violence in the media is often treated in a unified, monolithic way.

Representations of violence vary greatly in both form and function, and it is vital that the Pragmatist distinguish among the different forms of media violence

Modes of Violence

1. Historical Violence

According to Giroux, reflective or historical violence “probes the complex contradictions that shape human agency, the limits of rationality, and the existential issues that tie us to other human beings and the broader social world.”

This type of violence typically accompanies the portrayal of actual historical events and can be seen in films such as *Platoon* (1986), *Schindler's List* (1993), and *Selma* (2014).

The visual and narrative framing of historical violence invites audiences to contemplate the horrors of war or the historical atrocities perpetrated against particular social groups; it encourages audiences to think critically about the way violence is connected to hatred and social injustice.

Historical violence, then, can be said to heighten social consciousness by imparting larger philosophical messages about humanity and its struggles

2. Ritualistic Violence

Whereas historical violence engenders thoughtful reflection, gore or ritualistic violence generates mostly emotional excitement because, in Giroux's words, it is "pure spectacle in form and superficial in content."

Depictions of ritualistic violence are typically fast-paced, adrenaline-pumping, sensationalistic, and hyper-masculine.

This form of violence is common to both the horror (slasher) and the action genres, and it is exemplified in films like *First Blood* (1982), *Blade* (1998), and the *Avengers* series (2012, 2015, 2018, 2019).

Rather than imparting social messages, ritualistic violence serves primarily to stimulate and entertain.

3. Hyper-real Violence

Giroux's third category of media violence, stylized or hyper-real violence, is the most challenging to define. The difficulty arises, at least in part, because it blurs the boundaries between historical and ritualistic violence.

To borrow a phrase from the Police song, "Murder by Numbers," hyper-real violence turns "murder into art." Elaborating on the character of hyper-real violence, Giroux explains that it is "marked by technological over- stimulation, gritty dialogue, dramatic storytelling, parody, and an appeal to gutsy realism."

Like historical violence, hyper-real violence is extremely realistic and believable.

But like **ritualistic violence**, it is visceral and entertaining (not to mention graphic and shocking). Put another way, **hyper-real violence** combines the look of historical violence with the feel of ritualistic violence.

A few films that typify this form of media violence include Reservoir Dogs (1992), Sin City (2005), and The Purge (2013).

Since hyper-real violence lacks the reflective dimension of historical violence, it is unlikely to induce audiences to think critically.

Social Effects of Media Violence

1. Aggressor Effect

aggressor effect, which suggests that exposure to media violence triggers arousal and promotes hostile behavior

Accounts of this effect typically involve one of three theories: disinhibition, enculturation, or imitation.

A. Disinhibition

The theory of disinhibition posits that the consumption of media violence undermines the social norms and sanctions against violence that individuals would otherwise abide by

B. Enculturation

Conversely, enculturation theory speculates that long-term exposure to media violence actually constructs violence as the norm and thereby encourages aggressive behavior through social scripts.

In other words, violence begets violence by suggesting it is an appropriate and acceptable response to certain life situations

C. Imitation

Imitation maintains that some audiences will mimic the aggressive behavior they observe in media.

2. Victim Effect

Victim effect, in which people develop and experience a heightened fearfulness of violence.

individuals who consume heavy amounts of television undergo a process of mainstreaming in which they begin to view mediated images as accurate representations of reality.

In this theory, repeated exposure to media violence leads to an exaggerated sense of danger or mistrust about the world

Regular viewers of crime dramas like Law and Order, CSI, and Criminal Minds, for example, may develop an unrealistic perception of crime in the United States and subsequently an irrational fear of being the victim of crime themselves.

In short, heavy viewing of media violence leads people to see themselves as likely victims in a cruel and scary world.

3. Bystander Effect

Bystander effect, which holds that media violence fosters increased callousness about or insensitivity toward violence directed at others.

The bystander effect is rooted in the theory of desensitization, or the idea that repeated viewing of media violence leads to a reduction in emotional responses to violence and thus an increased acceptance of violence in real life.

The potential danger of desensitization and the bystander effect is that people "are less likely to intervene when they witness aggression [and] less likely to take action to prevent aggression" in their everyday lives

Historical violence promotes social consciousness and ritualistic violence is perceived by most viewers as unrealistic, the bystander effect is almost certainly associated most closely with hyper-real violence.

4. Catharsis effect

Catharsis effect, meaning that it can reduce and alleviate feelings of aggression

Catharsis effect is regarded as a pro-social outcome, as it leads to a reduction in real-world violence

Catharsis effect concerns the way that consuming media violence relieves individuals of their own violent urges by allowing them to live vicariously through the actors on screen, but we would like to suggest that catharsis need not be limited to vicarious release.

In contrast to hyper-real violence, which may result in increased aggression, historical violence is likely to reduce aggressive feelings and tendencies by inviting audiences to reflect on the negative social consequences of violence

Media violence must carefully balance its possible consequences (aggressor, victim, bystander, and catharsis effects) with relevant contingencies (various forms of mediated violence, such as historical, ritualistic, and hyper-real)

CONTINGENCIES IN RESPONSES TO ENGAGING MEDIA VIOLENCE

- SITUATIONAL-ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS
 - SALIENCE OF DISPLAY
 - FAMILY ENVIRONMENT
 - BEHAVIOR OF OTHERS PRESENT AT VIEWING
- INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS
- BEYOND THE INDIVIDUAL: VIOLENCE, SOCIETY, AND POLITICS



Rhetorical Analysis

An Overview

Theories of the Sign

Shared Meaning

Semiology- Ferdinand de Saussure (1857–1913)

The sign

Signifier

Signified

Characteristics of signs

1. Arbitrary

2. Linearity

Investigating the rules that govern Characteristics of sign

la langue vs Parole

Synchronic vs Diachronic analysis

Difference

Semiotics- Charles Sanders Peirce

Triadic theory of sign (Relation b/w sign,object, interpretant)

→ Sign-Object-Interpretant

Classification of Signs

1. Iconic

2. Indexical

3. Symbolic

System of Signification: Roland Barthes

Denotation

Connotation

Texts and Rhetorical Structures

1. Clusters

A. Association

B. Implication

C. Absence

2. Form

A. Progressive

B. Repetitive

C. Conventional

D. Minor / Incidental Form

3. Genre

Inductively

Deductively

4. Narrative

A. Story

B. Discourse

C. Narration

5. Impact of Form, genre, and narrative structures

Stereotypes

The Material Turn: Affect and Aesthetics

Affect

Generation of affect in media objects

Aesthetics

Impact of aesthetic choices

An Overview

Rhetorical scholars of the media, alternatively referred to as Rhetorical critics, analyze texts for the ways they encourage audiences to inhabit certain moods, adopt certain attitudes, and undertake certain actions.

The tendency to view popular media products like the film Blade Runner 2049, or the Netflix series Stranger Things, or the song "This Is America," or the video game PlayerUnknown's Battlegrounds as mere entertainment obscures the fact that media messages inevitably persuade as well as entertain us

Media messages cannot help but convey meanings, and meanings are never neutral or objective.

Consequently, films, television shows, songs, video games, and so on are **constantly inviting us to adopt certain attitudes, values, and beliefs, while simultaneously encouraging us to dismiss and discount others.**

This is because All media products are rhetorical

Historically, rhetoric referred to the ancient art of oratory, or as Aristotle famously defined it, "an ability, in each particular case, to see the available means of persuasion.

The art of rhetoric as practiced by Greek politicians in the fifth century BC may seem distant and unrelated to the art of rhetoric as utilized in the spectacular images of Avengers: Endgame (2019).

But both instances rely on symbols to influence what and how audiences think and feel.

Aristotle's definition, we might simply define rhetoric as the use of symbols by humans to influence and move other humans

But as we have already noted, all symbols are value-laden and thus all messages, as symbolic creations, are necessarily biased

Theories of the Sign

A sign is something that invites someone to think of something other than itself, such as the way an image of a person invites one to think of that person or the way the unique letter combination d / o / g invites one to think of a four-legged canine

Since nearly everything has that potential, virtually anything can function as a sign.

When multiple people agree on what a sign refers to, we say that it has **shared meaning**

Shared Meaning

Shared meaning is, what makes human communication possible.

Without it, no social structures or institutions could exist.

Moreover, since no sign (no matter how clear it may seem) can guarantee that everyone will interpret it the same way (i.e. understand it to be referring to the same thing), communication is an extremely fragile thing.

Think of all the times in your life you have said something to someone that was intended to be innocent, but that was (mis)interpreted as an offense

Signs are significant, then, because they are the fundamental building blocks of meaning and, hence, communication.

Three prominent scholars have theorized the sign: Ferdinand de Saussure, Charles Sanders Peirce, and Roland Barthes.

Semiology- Ferdinand de Saussure (1857–1913)

Saussure called his unique approach to linguistics semiology,

Which he defined as "a science which studies the role of signs as part of social life ... It would investigate the nature of signs and the laws governing them"

The sign

Since Saussure understood language as a system of signs, he began by asking what a sign is and what rules it obeys.

All linguistic signs, he argued, are a combination of signifier (signifiant) and signified (signifié).

Signifier

Signified

- The signifier, or sound-image, refers to the material form of a sign as perceived by the senses
- such as the word "dog" as heard by a listener.
- The signified, or mental concept, is the idea evoked by the signifier; in this case, the idea of "dogness." Note that an actual dog is not part of this equation.

Together, the signifier and signified constitute a sign, which Saussure designated in the manner

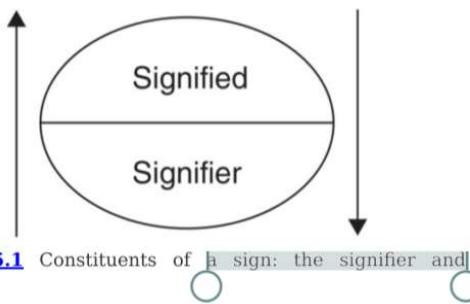


Figure 5.1 Constituents of a sign: the signifier and signified.

Characteristics of signs

1. Arbitrary

First, signs are arbitrary, meaning there is no natural correspondence, no necessary relationship, between the signifier and signified.

- It is precisely because there is no inevitable or inherent link between signifiers and signifieds that the idea of "dogness" can be conveyed by different signifiers: dog (English), perro (Spanish), chien (French), cane (Italian), Hund (German), 狗 (Chinese).
- We could even invent our own word for "dogness," such as plink, and if we agreed that plink meant "dogness," then we would have a new signifier.

"The fact that the relation between signifier and signified is arbitrary means, then," elaborates Culler, "that since there are no fixed universal concepts or fixed universal signifiers, the signified itself is arbitrary.

2. Linearity

The second key trait of the linguistic sign is linearity.

Since the signifier, being auditory, is unfolded solely in time, it is impossible to utter two distinct linguistic signs simultaneously.

- Go ahead: try to say two different words at exactly the same time. It is not possible.

Saussure recognized that this trait does not hold true for visual signs,

- Which can, in fact, "exploit more than one dimension simultaneously." So, when you look at a photograph, you can process multiple signs simultaneously.

Saussure regarded the principle of linearity to be a significant one because it means that **signifiers operate in a temporal chain, which if reordered, changes the meaning of what is being said.**

Investigating the rules that govern Characteristics of sign

To understand and appreciate his perspective, we need to introduce three additional ideas: **langue versus parole, synchronic versus diachronic, and difference.**

la langue vs Parole

- la langue, the linguistic system
- To study la langue is to study the rules and conventions that organize the system
- Saussure was a strong proponent of the la langue, which he believed to be the proper goal of linguistics.
- Parole, individual speech acts or utterances (i.e. actual manifestations of the sign system).
- To study parole is to study specific uses or performances of language.

Synchronic vs Diachronic analysis

- Synchronic analysis, concerns the state of language in general: the linguistic system in a static state.
- Saussure's principal commitment
- It aims to illuminate the conditions for the existence of any language by examining the rules of combination and substitutability within a system.
- Diachronic analysis, or evolutionary linguistics, by contrast, concerns the origins of languages and changes in sound or pronunciation over time (phonology).
- Since such changes are found in parole, Saussure did not see diachronic analysis as a suitable method for investigating la langue.

Difference

The final key concept in Saussure's science of signs is difference.

Saussure astutely recognized that signs signify by virtue of their difference (i.e. distinctiveness) from other signs.

The word "dog" can signify because it sounds and looks different than the words "dig," "frog," and "bag."

Though this may seem like an elementary observation, its implications are profound.

It suggests that if we cannot distinguish one sign from another, then we cannot communicate.

- This is what occurs when someone is speaking too softly or mumbling; though we can still hear sounds, we can no longer distinguish among them.
- Similarly, the difficulty in reading a professor's sloppy handwriting arises from an inability to distinguish the signs he or she has produced from other signs.

As long as a sign sounds or looks different from other signs, it can be used to communicate.

The specific character of such differences is unimportant so long as their meaning is socially agreed upon.

Semiotics- Charles Sanders Peirce

Pierce called his program semiotic (semiotike),

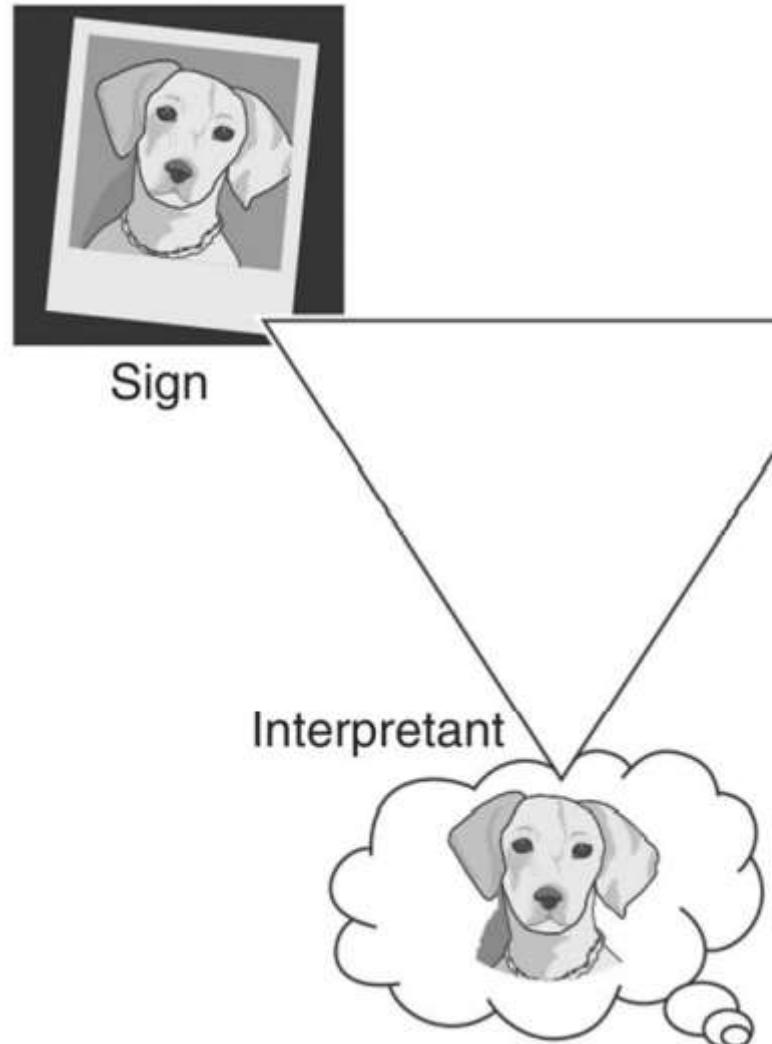
- which he defined as "the quasi-necessary, or formal, doctrine of signs.

Unlike Saussure's theory, which was conveniently compiled into one book, Pierce's work on signs spans across his writings and intersects with a diverse array of topics

Triadic theory of sign (Relation b/w sign, object, interpretant)

→ Sign-Object-Interpretant

- "A sign, or representamen," as Peirce called it, "is something which stands to somebody for something in some respect or capacity."
- The "equivalent sign" it creates in a person's mind is known as the interpretant, and the something that the sign stands for is its object
- In this scheme, the Representamen (sign) loosely corresponds to Saussure's idea of the signifier and the Interpretant to his notion of the signified.
- For Peirce, the image or picture of a dog functions as a sign that refers to an object, a real dog, and creates an interpretant, a mental interpretation of the dog



Pierce classified signs into three categories: icons, indices, and symbols

Classification of Signs

1. Iconic

- Iconic signs operate according to the logic of similarity or likeness;
- Icons are representamens that structurally resemble the objects they stand for.
- Examples include diagrams, maps, photographs, and other types of images

2. Indexical

- Indexical signs are linked by cause or association to the objects they represent.
- Since smoke indicates fire, it functions as an indexical sign for fire. Peirce noted that "anything which focuses the attention is an index,"

3. Symbolic

- Symbols, the third category of signs, are linked to their corresponding objects purely by social convention or agreement; symbolic signs are learned rather than intuited.
- As this is how language works, Peirce argued that "All words, sentences, books, and other conventional signs are Symbols."

It should be noted that Peirce did not regard these three categories as mutually exclusive, believing instead that certain signs can function in more than one way.

System of Signification: Roland Barthes

Barthes was famous not so much for proposing intellectually revolutionary ideas as for refining and expanding upon the ideas of others.

As we will see, Barthes' theory of signs, which we term the signifying system to distinguish it from semiology and semiotics, draws heavily upon the work of both Saussure and Peirce.

The signifying system grew out of Barthes' fascination with how "cultural" practices and beliefs are "naturalized" (i.e. made to appear natural), an idea he first began to explore in his writings on myth (see especially *Mythologies*). Over time, Barthes increasingly began to view myth through the lens of signification, and in particular through Saussure's conception of signs as signifier and signified.

Barthes famously introduced a distinction between denotation and connotation in *Elements of Semiology*

Signifier	Signified
Denotative sign Signifier	Signified
Connotative sign	

Denotation

- Denotation describes **first-order signification**, or what Barthes called **the first "plane of expression."**
- The denotative plane involves the literal or explicit meanings of words and other phenomena.
- At a purely denotative level, for instance, the word "lion" (signifier) evokes the mental image of a large cat (signified).
 - But Barthes recognized that meaning does not end there, that the signifying system is characterized by process, not product.
 - When one hears the word "lion," one may briefly form the mental image of a large cat, but that mental image (as a signifier itself) will evoke still other associations (new signifieds), such as "courage" and "pride."

Connotation

- Connotation is **second- order signification** and operates at the level of ideology and myth.
 - While "dog" and "perro" may evoke similar mental images (i.e. denotative meaning), the connotative meaning of "dog" can vary greatly from culture to culture (everything from "companion" or "family member" to "pest" or "food")

- The advantage of Barthes' signifying system over Saussure's semiology is not that it illustrates that meaning is always cultural but that it emphasizes that meaning is never final or closed.
- Like Peirce, Barthes recognized that signs need not be linguistic.
Moreover, he agreed that the relationship between the signifier and the signified is not really arbitrary so much as it is unmotivated.
But even in the case of image-based signifying practices such as photography and cinema or object-based signifying practices such as clothing and food, Barthes found value in the signifier/signified binary. Thus, when studying images, Barthes would isolate the signifiers and signifieds operating on both the denotative and connotative planes of expression

Barthes argued that the advertisement comprised three messages (codes):

Linguistic message (printed text)

- The linguistic message performed the function of anchorage
- limiting the (potentially infinite) meanings the image might have by "directing" the reader through the visual signifieds.
- In other image-based forms such as cinema or comic strips, the linguistic message can also perform a relay function, in which the words complement and reinforce the images

Denoted image (non-coded iconic message)

- For Barthes, the denoted image is analogical in nature, the visual signifier "tomato" referring to the mental idea of "tomato-ness," the visual signifier "net" referring to mental idea of "net-ness," and so forth.

Connote image (coded iconic message).

- Perhaps less obvious is the meaning of the connote image, which evokes the ideas of freshness or return from market, Italianicity, total culinary service, and "still life."
- Just as the elements in this image derive their meaning in relation to one another

Barthes believed that each element within a signifying system is dependent upon every other element in that system for its meaning. In other words, not only are the individual signs in a message key to its meaning, but so too are their arrangement in particular texts and rhetorical structures

Texts and Rhetorical Structures

Signs, of course, rarely exist or function in isolation.

They are combined with other signs to form media products or texts.

"A text," according to Barry Brummett, "is a set of signs related to each other insofar as their meanings all contribute to the same set of effects or functions.

Though the organizational pattern of signs that can exist in a text is potentially infinite, there are some general rhetorical structures that are shared by many.

This section focuses on four rhetorical structures

1. Clusters

Perhaps the most basic rhetorical structure in texts is the cluster, or the way individual signs are associated with and dissociated from one another.

A. Association

- Expounding on this idea, Kenneth Burke writes, "Now, the work [text] of every writer [or media producer] contains a set of implicit equations. He uses 'associational clusters.'
- And you [the critic] may, by examining his work [text], find 'what goes with what' in these clusters: what kinds of acts and images and personalities and situations go with his notions of heroism, villainy, consolation, despair, etc."

B. Implication

- To understand how the clusters in a text are working rhetorically, the critic should begin by identifying the key signs within the text: those signs that are privileged through repetition, intensity, or prominence

C. Absence

- The absence of certain signs or clusters in a text may also be central to its appeal
 - Fragrances ad, the association of the product with condoms, a half-naked Alyssa Milano, and a pristine, white bathroom all work to make the product more desirable by associating it with a series of positive signifiers.

2. Form

Form, explains Burke, is "an arousing and fulfillment of desires.

Simply stated, form is the creation and satisfaction of desire

When a gun is drawn by a character in a film, for instance, it fosters a desire for violence. Though the violence may not occur immediately, which further heightens our desire for it (by withholding or prolonging fulfillment), it must occur eventually; otherwise, our desire goes unfulfilled (this is known as "bad form"). If you have ever had a friend break a promise to you, then you know just how frustrating and disappointing bad form can be.

Form is at play in virtually all messages

Form comes in a variety of, for lack of a better word, forms.

Burke proposes that there are four general varieties of form: progressive form, repetitive form, conventional form, and minor or incidental form

A. Progressive

Progressive form describes the way a story advances step by step, each step following logically from the previous one

Progressive form is particularly evident in television crime dramas such as CSI. Each episode begins with a homicide, which (necessarily) leads to the search for a killer. As clues are gathered and analyzed over the episode, suspects are slowly eliminated until the culprit is finally revealed and confronted.

B. Repetitive

The second major type of form, repetitive form, "is the consistent maintaining of a principle under new guises. It is the restatement of the same thing in different ways."

Repetitive form can be seen in the actions of most characters on television; they are recognizable to us as "characters" precisely because they repeat the same behaviors over and over again.

Tyrion Lannister repeatedly violates both audience and in-universe expectations on Game of Thrones, and Rick Sanchez repeatedly treats others in exceptionally disrespectful ways on Rick and Morty

C. Conventional

Conventional form, the third major variety, is not so much an appeal within the text (as progressive and repetitive forms are) as it is an appeal of the text.

- When two friends are trying to decide what movie to go see and one of them says, "I'm in the mood for a romantic comedy," she or he is articulating a preference based on conventional form. One way of classifying media texts is according to the structural and aesthetic conventions they share.
- Horror films are scary, action films are thrilling, and romantic comedies are funny, or at least we "expect" them to be. We often select the media texts we do because we desire a particular set of conventions at a particular moment in time.
- When someone is depressed and chooses to listen to a sad, sappy love song, it is because that type of song fulfills the desire to wallow in self-pity

D. Minor / Incidental Form

The fourth and final variety of form, minor or incidental form, is sort of a catch-all category.

It includes the brief, frequently literary devices that may appear within a text, such as metaphor, paradox, reversal, contraction, expansion, and so on.

Minor forms are what allow us to take pleasure in segments, sections, or pieces of larger texts.

- One may delight, for example, in a particular scene from a film independent of the whole because it creates and fulfills a desire all its own.

3. Genre

A genre is a class or constellation of messages that share discernible stylistic or formal (syntactic), substantive (semantic), and situational (pragmatic) characteristics.

The idea that media messages can be categorized into identifiable genres according to the stylistic and substantive traits they share may seem rather obvious.

What is less obvious, but no less important, is that genres possess stylistic and substantive similarities because they speak to typical or recurrent situations in familiar ways.

In other words, **genres function as modes of social action; they are patterned responses to situations that audiences perceive as somehow similar or comparable.**

The study of genre is typically approached in one of two ways: inductively or deductively

Inductively

- Genres that are arrived at inductively are created by drawing general conclusions based upon the analysis of specific instances.
 - An inductive approach typically corresponds to what are known as historical genres. Historical genres, which are rooted in the observation of shared traits across media texts, are well known to most people.
 - Popular television genres such as soap operas, game shows, reality TV, sitcoms, and dramas (crime, medical, and legal) are common examples of historical genres

As we noted at the outset of this section, genres are based not only on the stylistic and substantive traits they share, but also on what they do (for audiences) – on the social action they perform in response to recurring situations. Genre operates, then, in much the same manner as does

Burke's notion of conventional form audiences are drawn to these genres in the first place because of the precise manner in which they deal with typical situations and, thus, fulfill particular psychological needs and desire

Deductively

A second way to study genre is deductively, working from a set of general propositions to specific conclusions.

- In contrast to an **inductive approach**, as reflected in historical genres, [a deductive approach generates and tests theoretical genres.](#)
- Whereas historical genres are based upon generalizations that emerge from the observation of multiple cases (such as our analysis of talk shows), [theoretical genres are rooted in the application of general principles to individual instances](#)

4. Narrative

Narrative describes **a series of real or fictitious events that occur in (often chronological) succession.**

For narrative theorist Gérard Genette, narrative can be divided into three levels: story (histoire), discourse (récit), and narrating (narration).

Elements of narrative

- I. Story (content plane): the totality of narrated events
 - A. Events:
 1. kernels (nuclei)
 2. satellites (catalyzers)
 - B. Existents:
 1. characters (actants)
 2. indices:
 - a. informants
 - b. setting (motif)
- II. Discourse (expression plane): the actual written or spoken words
- III. Narration: the very act (recounting) that produces the discourse
 - A. Tense (temporal relations)
 1. order
 2. duration (speed)
 3. frequency
 - B. Mood
 1. distance: quantitative modulation
 2. perspective: qualitative modulation
 - C. Voice (narrator)

A. Story

Story refers to what happens to whom in a narrative

It comprises events and existents

1. Events.

The particular events that occur within a story are further divided according to the function they perform:

- kernels (or nuclei) are the key nodes or hinges that actively contribute to a story's progression, while satellites (or catalyzers) are the more minor plot events that fill in the narrative.
- The distinction between kernels and satellites becomes evident when a story is condensed into its simplest form.

Villain kills victim. Victim's body is discovered. Hero begins search for villain.

Hero discovers clues to villain's crime. Hero captures villain.

Villain is punished.

- Each of these events functions as a kernel because it formally necessitates subsequent cardinal events.

The endless array of minor events that connect these kernels will likely be satellites

- After dispatching the victim, for instance, the villain might drive home (satellite), attempt to destroy any evidence of the crime (satellite), and return to work (satellite).

These events are satellites because they can be substituted with other events or even deleted without altering the basic story.

2. Existents.

Stories are also made of existents, which include characters (actants) and indices (informants and setting). Characters are often classified with respect to the actions they perform within a story.

Vladimir Propp identified seven typical characters: hero (seeker or victim), villain, donor (provider), helper, princess (sought-after person), dispatcher, and false hero

What audiences know about characters – specific details such as their age, hair color, and favorite food – are known as informants, while the location and

overall atmosphere in which characters find themselves

B. Discourse and the setting

Discourse, according to Genette, **describes the actual words, written or spoken, used to tell a story.**

- Since the narratives in contemporary media are increasingly visual, we would add images or pictures to this category

Because signs (i.e. words and images) are never neutral, the specific discourse of a narrative is central to its meaning

When analyzing how a narrative functions rhetorically, a critic ought to attend not just to what happens and to whom (i.e. story), but also to the precise language used

C. Narration

Third level at which we can approach narrative, **refers to the actual act of recounting (the situation within which discourse is uttered).**

It involves questions such as who is speaking, from what perspective or point of view, and in what relation to the listener/audience.

- To address these questions, Genette proposed analyzing narration along three axes: tense, mood, and voice

Genette proposed analyzing narration along three axes: tense, mood, and voice.

I. Tense

- Tense to refer to narrative temporality.

Tense, or the temporal relations of the narrative, can further be divided into the categories of order, duration (speed), and frequency

1. Order

- The category of order has to do with how time unfolds for the narrator, who may or may not also be a character in the story
 - Narrators can transport audiences to the past through flashbacks (analepses) or into the future through flash forwards (prolepses), or they can create anticipation for future events through character premonition

Reach

- The concept of reach refers to how far back or ahead the events the narrator recalls or anticipates lie

2. Duration (Speed)

- The second category of narrative temporality is duration or speed, and it involves the relation between the period of time described (story-time) and the period of time required for the telling (discourse-time).
- According to Sarah Kozloff, there are five possible relations between story-time and discourse-time:

1. Scene

- discourse-time and story-time are roughly equal
 - (such as the technique utilized during the first season of the television series).

2. Summary

- discourse-time is shorter than story-time
 - (such as the way a week can pass in an hour-long program)

3. Ellipsis

- discourse-time is zero

- (such as the way 2 or 3 weeks can pass with a simple cut in film or television).

4. Stretch

- discourse-time is longer than story-time
 - (slow motion)

5. Pause

- discourse-time is longer than story-time, which is zero
 - (freeze-frame).

3. Frequency

- Refers to the number of times a single event or incident is recounted by the narrator
 - Genette noted four potential expressions of frequency: narrating once what happened once (e.g. "Yesterday, I went to bed early"); narrating n times what happened n times (e.g. "Monday, I went to bed early. Tuesday, I went to bed early. Wednesday, I went to bed early"); narrating n times what happened once (e.g. "Yesterday, I went to bed early; yesterday, I went to bed early; yesterday, I went to bed early"); and narrating one time (or rather, at one time) what happened n times (e.g. "I went to bed early every day of the week")

II. Mood

- Whereas tense (i.e. order, duration, and frequency) describes narrative temporality
- Mood describes the "regulation of narrative information,"
 - such as how much or how little is told (distance) and through what channel (perspective)
 1. Distance
 - Distance involves the words and thoughts of a character,
 2. Perspective
 - Perspective or point of view describes who sees in the narrative and his or her capacities of knowledge.
 - Perspective varies greatly, as a story can be told from the point of view of (focalized through) or about (focalized on) a specific character

III. Voice

- Genette's final category, voice, entails the position, type, and relation of the narrator.
Questions of voice include: Is the narrator a character in the story (homodiegetic) or is she or he outside the story-world (heterodiegetic)? What is the narrator's degree of omniscience? Is the narrator reliable? Is the story told in first or third person?
- Genette regarded the distinction between voice and mood to be an important one because narrative voice frames how audiences understand and relate to narrative mood.
 - While a character in a story may have a particularly optimistic outlook about the future (mood), the audience may know that such optimism is unwarranted because the character is about to experience bad fortune (voice)

5. Impact of Form, genre, and narrative structures

Stereotypes

The Material Turn: Affect and Aesthetics

Rhetorical approach to media has focused on how signs or texts – sets of signs working together – create meaning and influence audiences

We have, in keeping with a rather traditional Rhetorical perspective, concentrated on how media appeal to or move us at a purely symbolic, cognitive level

Rhetorical scholars have begun to ask how rhetoric moves us at a material, bodily level. Music scholars, for instance, are quick to point out that the melody, harmony, and rhythm of a song do not function in the same manner as the words in a book, for they do not represent (i.e. stand in for) something else.

- Yet, these nonsymbolic elements of music clearly exert a powerful influence upon us. Our bodies literally feel and experience the rhythm of a song, which may, in turn, prompt us to tap our feet

Rhetorical scholars continue to investigate how messages move audiences, they are increasingly attending to media's materiality as well as its symbolicity

The historical bias in favor of symbolicity, over and at the expense of materiality, is a consequence of two closely related but mistaken philosophical assumptions:

- (1) that the mind and body are separate, independent structures
- (2) that meaning belongs primarily to the purview of the former.

Today, most scholars reject the mind/body dualism that originated with the French philosopher René Descartes in the 17th century

How, then, does one critically assess bodily experiences?

Bodies interact with their material surroundings, they experience various energies, intensities, pulsations, and rhythms, which through sensory data (sights, sounds, tastes, smells, and tactility) generate affect

Affect

Affect describes an intensity registered directly by the body and, therefore, operates on a nonrepresentational or asignifying register

Generation of affect in media objects

Rhetorical scholars have a well-developed vocabulary and set of critical tools (such as sign, text, cluster, form, genre, and narrative) for analyzing how media operate symbolically, but they lack a detailed vocabulary and sophisticated set of tools for understanding media's fundamental materiality. The distinction between affect and emotion reflects a desire on the part of Rhetorical critics to take seriously the way media move audiences materially. Viewing affect as "primary, non-conscious ... as signifying, unqualified, and intensive"³⁸ affords critics a tool for studying how matter, which makes up all music, film, television, and so on, appeals directly to the human sensorium.

Recognizing that matter produces sensation and, hence, affect is an important first step in understanding the materiality of media. But it does not yet explain why specific arrangements of matter such as a film or a song may elicit public or shared affect. To address this issue, we must consider the notion of the aesthetic.

Aesthetics

Just as the signs that make up media are organized into signifying or textual structures such as form and narrative, so the matter that makes up media possesses sensual or aesthetic properties such as "consonance, dissonance, harmonies of tone, light, colour, sound and rhythm." The aesthetic, as we are using it here, refers to those qualities of an artwork that, while as signifying, generate sensual experiences and evoke affective responses from audiences.

Unlike textual structures, the aesthetic properties of media do not function to symbolize. We might say, then, that the aesthetic produces presence effects – effects that prime our bodies, essentially predisposing us to experience an event and its attendant symbols in a particular way.

Though media aesthetics is frequently ignored by Rhetorical scholars because it is seen as involving purely subjective judgments and tastes, it is vital to the way media texts function materially. As Arthur Asa Berger explains with regard to film, "The way a scene is shot – the cutting, the editing, the use of music and sound effects, the lighting, the camera work – conveys a great deal of information and gives a sense of the importance of what we are seeing relative to other images and events in the text.

Impact of aesthetic choices

1. Color

- Though color can be symbolic, such as the use of red to mean hot and blue to mean cold, color also has an immediate “emotional quality, which derives partly from personal associations; partly from experience in nature.”
- The ability of color to impact our mood and feelings is well established in both psychological and media scholarship.
- Colour functions as the main modulator of sensation.
 - So, for instance, while red stimulates excitement, blue and pink have a calming effect.

2. Lighting

- Like color, light (or its absence) has a strong symbolic dimension. While light typically signifies good, virtue, and salvation, darkness signifies evil, sin, and doom.
- But light also operates on a material level and “can have profound effects on emotional states.” The intensity, focus, and shape of light can be used to guide or direct attention, to create depth and perspective, and to establish or enhance a particular mood.
 - Since darkness can induce fear, horror films use dimly lit images to reinforce feelings of dread and fright.
 - Meanwhile, films such as Christopher Nolan’s Batman trilogy and television series such as Netflix’s House of Cards employ darkness to create a general sense of malaise

3. Editing

- Editing describes the sequencing and length of individual shots within film and television, as well as the type (cuts, fades, dissolves, wipes, etc.) and frequency of transitions or shifts between shots. The way moving images are edited can have a profound influence on how an audience feels during a scene.
 - Quick cutting between shots creates a sense of excitement in viewers; they work in a way opposite to that of lingering shots, which slow things down.”
 - Identifiable editing practices often emerge in relation to specific media forms, and thus influence the way audiences respond to those forms. So, unlike in Hollywood’s classical narratives, whose editing functions to locate one in time and space, music videos rely on montage, a rapid editing style more likely to generate a sensation of discontinuity

4. Movement and framing

- Camera movement (i.e. panning, dollying, and tracking) and framing techniques (e.g. angle of elevation) can powerfully shape the way audiences feel about a person or event.
- Camera angles are only one of the many techniques involved in image framing. The critic who wishes to understand the emotional valence created by the camera will need to attend to viewpoint, field of view, and picture composition, as well.

5. Sound

- In media such as television and film, sound is omnipresent; while noises (i.e. sound effects) such as a ringing phone or car engine generate a sense of verisimilitude by actualizing time and space, music plays a central role in establishing mood.

The five aspects of media aesthetics discussed here do not constitute a comprehensive list, especially since different media have different aesthetics.

