

Comm 130

Psychology, Behaviorism



COMM 130 I. INTRODUCTION A. Mass media as a product of modernity B. The development of communication and media as an academic discipline C. DEFINING THEORY Theory — system of law-like propositions THEORY — helps make sense of phenomena THEORY — helps in guiding action THEORY — helps predict consequence/behavior of reality THEORY — propositions to understand reality KINDS OF MEDIA THEORY * Social Scientific * based on systematic and objective observation of media and other relevant factors * quantitative * the dominant theory * Normative * concerned with prescribing how media ought to operate if certain social values are to be observed or attained * they don't describe, they prescribe * Operational * the practical ideas applied by media practitioners for their own media work * e. g. to producers, what genre sells the most * Common Sense * the knowledge we all have from our own experience with the media * e. g. news as true events, soap operas as somebody else's mind's creation

2 PERSPECTIVES OF THEORY AND THEIR CONTRASTING ASSUMPTIONS | OBJECTIVE PERSPECTIVE | INTERPRETIVE PERSPECTIVE | Ways of knowing | Discovering Truth | Creating multiple realities | Human nature | Determinism — we plan our moves; predictability of human behavior | Free will | What is valued most? | Objectivity | Emancipation; find truth that will set us free | Purpose of theory | Universal laws (if we keep proving theories, we get closer to the Truth) | Rules for interpretation | Research methods | Experiments, surveys | Textual analysis, ethnography | What makes a theory good? | Explains data | New understanding of people | | Predicts future | Clarifies values | | Relative simplicity | Aesthetic appeal (e. g. justice) | | Testable hypothesis | Agreed by many | | Practical utility | Societal reform |

7 TRADITIONS OF

COMMUNICATION THEORY Tradition | Communication is... | Socio-
 psychological | * Interpersonal | Cybernetic | * Information processing *
 Affected by development of technology * A system of interrelations |
 Rhetorical | * An artful public address * A persuasive factor | Semiotic | * The
 process of sharing meaning through signs * A system of signs that a group of
 people share and understand | Socio-cultural | * A creation and enactment of
 social reality | Critical | * A reflective change of unjust discourse * Unjustly
 distributed * Unfairly controlled | Phenomenological | * Experience of self and
 others through discourse | WHY SCIENTIFIC METHOD IS DIFFICULT FOR
 SOCIAL RESEARCH 1. Significant forms of social behavior are difficult to
 measure. 2. Human behavior is complex. 3. Human beings are self-reflexive.
 4. Notion of casualty is troubling when it is applied to us. II. MASS SOCIETY
 AND MASS CULTURE THEORIES D. MASS SOCIETY THEORIES (19TH — 20th
 CEN.) CONCEPTS OF SOCIETY * Collective Organism * by August Comte *
 society has structure like an organism * society has specialized parts that
 functioned together * the whole was something more than the sum of its
 parts * Organic Analogy * by Herbert Spencer * discussed social order in
 terms of growth, structure, functions, etc. * division of labor was the basic
 unifying factor of society * evolution is the most fundamental process of
 nature * interfering with natural development will result to disastrous effects
 * Theory of Social Bonds (Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft) * by Ferdinand
 Tönnies Gemeinschaft — people are bound together through tradition,
 kinship, friendship or some other socially cohesive factor Gesellschaft — a
 contract keeps society together * contract — rationally agreed upon
 voluntary social relationship in w/c two parties promise to fulfill specific

obligations to each other (e. g. industrialization) MASS SOCIETY * After World War I, the belief that mass communication is powerful emerged. * Media was thought to have the power to shape public opinion. * Industrialization gave way to new social order * big cities sprang and expanded * different people live together, thus removal of traditional support group to work * thus people became vulnerable to information given by media ASSUMPTIONS OF MASS

SOCIETY THEORY 1. Media is so powerful it can subvert essential norms and values so it must be put under elite control. 2. Media are able to influence average people. * Magic Bullet Theory * media messages are received in a uniform way * immediate and direct response by the audience 3. Once media has transformed people's thinking, bad long-term consequences are likely to result, creating social chaos. 4. The social chaos initiated by media will likely be resolved by establishment of a totalitarian state. 5. Average people are vulnerable to media because in mass society, they are isolated from traditional social institutions. 6. Mass media debases higher forms of culture. MASS SOCIETY THEORY TODAY Strengths * draws attention to media ownership and ethics * speculates about media's important effects

Weaknesses * unscientific * underestimates intelligence and competence of audience * underestimates personal, societal and cultural barriers A.

PROPAGANDA THEORIES HISTORY * "propaganda" — emerged during the 17th century out of battle between science and religion as source of knowledge DEFINITION * Propaganda * no-holds-barred use of communication to propagate specific beliefs and expectations * control of opinion by significant symbols * technique of influencing human action by the manipulation of representations * not to be confused with persuasion *

persuasion * symbol-manipulation designed to produce action in others *

persuasion is propaganda when it is perceived that the said act would benefit the source but not the receiver

OBJECTIVES OF PROPAGANDA (WARTIME) * Mobilize hatred against the enemy * Preserve allies * Procure the cooperation of neutrals * Demoralize enemies

MASS MEDIA AND PROPAGANDA * Mass media was an effective means for controlling large populations * According to behaviorism by John B. Watson * Media is an external stimuli which triggered immediate response from people *

According to Freudianism * war-heavy analysis * irrational behavior came from conflict of the self's fragmented parts: Ego (rational mind), Id (darker side, egocentric part) and Superego (internalized set of cultural rules, follows what others say) * when Ego loses control to the Id, irrational behavior occurs * media stimuli, along with the Id, could trigger actions that the Ego and Superego can't stop * even the most educated people would be influenced by media because they're highly vulnerable * Magic Bullet Theory * developed in the 1920's * gives great power to mass communication * suggest that people are extremely vulnerable to mass-communicated messages so when the message " hits the target" the desired effect will occur * media messages when received in a uniform way, trigger immediate and direct response

PROPAGANDA THEORIES * Harold Lasswell's Propaganda Theory * success of propaganda relies on vulnerability of the people, not the substance of the message * formed during a time of economic depression and political conflict * people were psychologically imbalanced and vulnerable * society changes from traditional to different bonds * Walter Lippmann's Theory of Public Opinion Formation * suggested that control of

information gathering and distribution be given to a benevolent technocracy
 * he doubted that average people could govern themselves * proposed that
 a quasi-governmental intelligence bureau be formed to evaluate information

A. NORMATIVE THEORIES ASSUMPTIONS OF NORMATIVE THEORIES *

describes the ideal way for a media system to be structured and operated *
 the “ norm” media * norm — standard, model, pattern * describe the way
 things SHOULD be * describe ideal roles and practices and uses these ideals
 to critique existing ones NORMATIVE THEORIES * Authoritarian Theory (16th
 — 17th Cen.) Assumption * stems from philosophy of absolute power of
 monarch * all forms of communication should be under governmental or
 authoritarian control * to support policies of government and service the
 state * to protect and preserve social order Criticism * require royal
 permission in anything * forbidden criticism of political affairs * require
 censorship * cultivation of homogenous culture * Libertarian Theory (17th —
 18th Cen.) Assumption * an opposition to authoritarian theory * stems from
 philosophy of rationalism and natural rights (Period of Enlightenment) *
 emphasized individualism and minimal government roles in society * notion
 of free press * free marketplace of ideas * gave emphasis to public debate to
 forge better social order * if no interference of government, the free
 marketplace will assure that good ideas will drive out the bad ones and
 truth will prevail Criticism * What about humans being irrational creatures? *
 remember Id, Ego, Superego * Is there balance of ruling ideas? (Marxist) *
 ruling ideas are those of ruling class * but media is also licentious * Social
 Responsibility Theory (20th Cen.) * agreement between Authoritarian and
 Libertarian Theories * media should accept and fulfill certain obligations to

society * regulated the press * press should be a common carrier for ideas * should provide forum for exchange of discourse * should prioritize cultural pluralism * opposed free marketplace of ideas * unregulated mass media serves interests of socially dominant groups * Soviet-Totalitarian Theory Assumption * media are controlled by the economic and political systems of the government as well as by surveillance * only loyal and orthodox party members could use media regularly * movement to return the control of media * Development Media Theory Assumption * advocates media support for an existing political regime * media must be supportive rather than critical of the government * media should help in economic development * Democratic-Participant Theory * media should be used to stimulate and empower pluralistic groups * calls for development of innovative, “small” media * everyone should participate * e. g. public broadcasting

I. THE SCIENTIFIC TURN

A. LIMITED EFFECTS THEORY (1930s) HISTORY * started as a Halloween prank War of the Worlds broadcast that talked about alien invasion * audience panic was not caused by the program but by word of mouth ASSUMPTIONS OF LIMITED EFFECTS THEORY * Media doesn't directly influence the audience * Media effects are limited * contradiction to Mass Society and Propaganda Theories LIMITED EFFECTS THEORY: SCIENTIFIC APPROACH * methodologists used empirical methods to measure media influence * it's believed that scientific methods provide the essential means to understand and control media's power * Two Step Flow of Information * by Paul Lazarsfeld * Media Opinion Leaders Opinion Followers * Opinion leaders screen and pass media messages * Carl Hovland's Controlled Experimentation * integrated studies on the effects of motion pictures, film

strips and radio programs * identified elements that might influence attitudes * results * Propaganda effects were not as instantaneous as mass society theory or behaviorist notions suggested * Media is not highly effective in influencing attitudes * time was key variable to attitude change * attitude change is complex MEDIA AND LIMITED EFFECTS THEORY * media is no longer feared as instruments of manipulation * media has potential for social good * its role is generally positive but it can be dysfunctional to some * no government regulations were necessary to prevent manipulation * the public itself is resistant to persuasion * people are influenced by other people, not media * importance of opinion leaders in communities * media is relatively powerless in shaping public opinion because of individual differences * more power is given to individual as compared to mass society theories LIMITATIONS * experimental research have methodological limitations * ignored other types of influence because it focused more on whether media had immediate effects CONTRIBUTIONS * supplanted limited effects theory * prioritized empirical observation rather than speculation * provided useful framework for research B. ATTITUDE CHANGE THEORIES THEORIES * Learning Theory Factors * the credibility of communicator * trustworthiness * professionalism * dynamism * objectivity * content of communication * fear-arousing content facilitates attitude change * audience * the more highly people value their membership in a group, the more closely their attitudes will conform to those of the group * consideration of individual differences * Consistency Theory * people seek media messages that are consistent with their beliefs * people tend to be selective in information in different ways * Inoculation Theory * unchallenged beliefs are

easily swayed once attacked because people aren't used to defending them

C. LIMITED EFFECTS PARADIGM (50s-70s) EMERGENCE 1. TV gains attention as it becomes popular. (50s-60s) * spawned a number of researches 2. The paradigm was like a " half-constructed skyscraper" * its utility was not yet obvious 3. Development of the Middle Range Theory * Middle Range Theory * by Robert Merton * consisted of limited sets of assumptions * provided an ideal rationale for limited effects research LIMITED EFFECTS THEORIES * Functional Analysis Approach Assumption * society can be viewed as a " system in balance" * it's neither good or evil * the society consists of complex sets of interrelated activities, each of which support each other * Information Flow Theory * focused on determining whether similar barriers impeded the flow of information from media to typical audience members * Barriers: level of education, interest in news, etc. Limitations * simplistic and linear * a source-dominated theory * assumes that status quo is acceptable like most limited effects theories * information originates from elite sources and flows to " ignorant" individuals? * Diffusion Theory * extension of Lazarsfeld's two-step flow model Assumption * Innovation awareness of people adoption of innovation by early adopters early adopters pass learnings to opinion leaders Opinion leaders to opinion followers late adopters Limitations * also source-dominated * assigns a limited role to media * Phenomenistic Theory by J. Klapper Assumption * media rarely have direct effects and are relatively powerless compared to social and psychological factors * e. g. status quo, group membership, strongly held attitudes, education, etc. * now known as reinforcement theory media's primary influence is to reinforce, and not change existing attitudes and

behaviors I. EFFECTS THEORIES A. Social learning and violence theories

BACKGROUND During Mass Society Era * there was increase in violence which coincided with growth of media like public acceptance of Hollywood movies During Limited Effects Era * Payne Fund Studies * found that movies have important and predominantly negative effects on children TELEVISION VIOLENCE THEORIES * Catharsis Theory Assumption * viewing violence reduces the likelihood of aggressive behavior * frustrations are relieved through vicarious participation in someone's aggression Limitations * common sense not regarded * e. g. does your sex drive lessen while watching sex scenes? * makes TV violence a social utility SOCIAL LEARNING THEORY Assumption * much human learning takes place through watching other people model various behaviors * vicarious reinforcement occurs * viewers learn by simply watching * SLT as Middle Range Theory * Middle Range Theory — theory that doesn't discuss everything * SLT is aimed at individual actions, not shared behaviors * SLT has difficulty of conceptualizing the manner in w/c children's understanding and use of media content interact with each other in their daily lives A. Theories of the active audience (80s) Audience — aggregate of persons forming the readers, listeners, viewers for different media THE ACTIVE AUDIENCE * interprets the message they see * each individual from the audience have the power to believe or not the message ENCODING-DECODING MODEL Assumption * Texts are polysemic * may be interpreted in different ways depending on identity, culture and opinion of interpreter * by Stuart Hall, British sociologist * Terms * encoding — texts are created by producers * decoding — audience interprets and understands the text * Types of decoding * dominant reading

* hegemonic * oppositional reading * counter-hegemonic * ignores meaning of text because they differ with the belief * negotiated reading

ASSUMPTIONS * we can't assume that meaning of text is fixed * theory focuses on the audience's role, not on the text itself * audience plays a very active role in understanding texts. * people interpret texts in their own ways because society is diverse * media is influenced by society * media will reflect the values of the predominant because it needs to please society *

Audience accepts encoded meanings but reject it for cultural, ideological and/or political reasons. CRITICISMS * no universal truth * truth can be

constructed * some audiences are passive which results to meaningless media use * difficult to evaluate texts since core values are rooted in these

texts B. Systems theories I. THE CULTURAL TURN CULTURAL ANALYSIS VS.

CRITICAL CULTURAL STUDIES | Cultural Analysis | Critical Cultural Studies |

Origin | US | Europe | Approach | Anthropologic | Marxist | Focus | How media reshape everyday life | How elites use media to propagate hegemonic

culture | Solution | Description of changes and attempt to understand them |

Speculation on the suppression of alternate forms of culture | Goal | Provide

audience with greater insight into the role of media in their lives | Cause

social change that improves quality of life for average people | Researchers |

Sociologists, literary scholars | Literary scholars, political theorists |

SIMILARITIES * both assume the importance of media in shaping culture *

both regard that culture itself is important in shaping society * media plays a role in shaping people's views of themselves and their environment * media

have had a significant impact on modern social orders * both have

developed innovative ways of exploring cultural influence of media * both

developed elaborate theoretical frameworks * both pioneered useful methodological developments

DIFFERENCES Cultural Analysis | Critical Cultural Studies | Microscopic Concerned with typical people's use of media Concerned with everyday life of the mundane and their routine De-emphasis of larger issues about social order | **Macroscopic** Concerned with larger social order Concerned with how the media affect social order as a whole Assume that there is something to be changed | **Apolitical** Not interested in influencing social policy Doesn't constitute social movement | **Highly political** Aims to shape social policy Argue for social change, form movements for it |

A. CULTURAL ANALYSIS 1. RITUAL RATHER THAN TRANSMISSIONAL PERSPECTIVES LIMITED EFFECTS PARADIGM VS. CULTURAL PARADIGM * Limited effects theories * focus on transmission of accurate information from a dominant source to passive receivers * transmissional perspective * mass communication is a process of transmitting messages at a distance for the purpose of control * Cultural theories * concerned about the everyday rituals * they look at our everyday experience * ritual perspective * mass communication is a means of maintaining society over time

Limited Effects | Cultural | objective | Subjective | Researcher distance | Closeness to subject | Universality | Uniqueness | Quantitative | Qualitative | Social control | Self determination | Concerned w/ methods | Concerned w/ theory |

2. SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISM * addresses how we learn and use culture * rejected simplistic concepts of stimulus-response concepts

THREE CORE PRINCIPLES OF SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISM

1. Meaning * construction of social reality * humans act toward people or things on the basis of the meanings they assign to those people or things

2. Language * source of

meaning * meaning arises out of social interaction 3. Thought * the interpretation of the individual is modified by his/her own thought processes * ASSUMPTIONS * society is a system of meanings * symbols — structure our ability to perceive and interpret what goes around * people make decisions in accordance with their subjective understanding * people's actions are based on their interpretations * the bonds that unite people are personal constructions emerging from symbolic interactionism * one's self is a significant object defined through interaction with others * individual conduct in a given situation is guided by labels people associate with that situation * behavior is not an automatic response to stimuli of external origin * we create symbols and at the same time symbols create us 3. SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY BACKGROUND * Alfred Schultz * started early discussions on social construction of reality * argued that we could conduct our lives with little effort because we've developed stocks of knowledge that we use to quickly make sense of what goes around us * e. g. typifications * Typifications * enable us to quickly classify objects and actions that we observe and then structure our own actions in response * " stereotypes" * but they also distort and bias our experiences * Social Construction of Reality by Berger and Luckmann * " there is ongoing correspondence between my meanings and their meanings in the world" * " we share a common sense about its reality" ASSUMPTIONS * sees media as central to the representation of shared beliefs rather than just imparters of information * people have correspondence of meaning when they use symbols and signs 4. FRAMING AND FRAME ANALYSIS (1970s) BACKGROUND * Erving Goffman * used theatrical metaphor * we're all actors and the world is a stage * we perform

according to expectations * “ the interpretation of a situation is the definition of the situation” TERMS * Strip * sequence of activities * Frame * organizational pattern used to define the strip * specific set of expectations that are used to make sense of a social situation at a given point in time * Frame Analysis * determines how individuals organize and understand their behaviors within a given situation * answers how we use expectations (frames) to make sense of everyday life ASSUMPTIONS * Framing transfers the salience of attributes * Framing selects some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communication text MEDIA + FRAMING AND FRAME ANALYSIS * news content is organized through: * selection * emphasis * exclusion * elaboration * idea of framing in news: theme, context, news angle, news value EFFECTS OF FRAMING * can affect the way audience interpret the issue 5. CULTIVATION ANALYSIS B. CRITICAL CULTURAL ANALYSIS 1. Classical Marxist theory TERMS * Ideology * set of ideas that structure a group’s reality * framework for understanding truth * function: to naturalize the way things are * Discourse * language that has developed socially in order to make and circulate a coherent set of meanings about an important topic * language that supports dominant ideology * what you’re allowed and not allowed to say * Base (economy) * socio-economic relations * bourgeois/proletariat * the focus of Classical Marxism * Superstructure * ideology * family, church, media, government make up the superstructure * Means of production * determines the nature of society * e. g. slave, feudal, capitalist * Aristocrat * gained power through inheritance * Bourgeoisie * middle class * factory owners * the ruling class * Proletariat * sells labor to bourgeois ASSUMPTIONS * Ideology can be disguised as “ false

consciousness" * means by which ideas of the ruling classes become accepted * becomes the dominant discourse; the "common sense" * the ruling ideas are the ideas of the ruling class * Ideological apparatuses are homogenized ideas that makes person exposed to these accept it as the truth * Social change is inevitable through revolution or physical force * The status quo is present

MASS MEDIA AND MARXISM * mass media is a means of production * mass media disseminates the ideas and views of those who own it, thus propagating false consciousness

2. Neomarxist theories and other theories of ideology

ASSUMPTIONS * Mass media is a public arena in w/c cultural battles are fought * a dominant, hegemonic culture is forged and promoted * 3. Frankfurt School 4. British cultural studies 5. Political economy theory 6. Critical theory of technology 7. Semiotics 8. Structuralist theory 9. Narrative theory 10. Poststructuralist theory 11. Postmodern theory 12. Reader-oriented theory 13. Postcolonial theory 14. Feminist, gay, lesbian and queer theories

C. Current Debates in Media Theory

a. Communication Science vs. culture-centered paradigm: Is synthesis possible?

b. The blurring of disciplinary divisions: the multi-, trans-, and cross-disciplinary approach