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## Introduction

### Does the World Really Need One More Field of Study?

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*Jennifer Holt and Alisa Perren*

The study of media industries is a varied and diverse project, incorporating research on everything from “mobisodes” designed for iPhones and the labor force manufacturing plasma television sets in Malaysia to the Creative Commons movement and trade shows in Budapest. Such work is conducted in film and television studies, communication, law, public policy, business, economics, journalism, and sociology departments. The research about these issues is dispersed across similarly vast terrain, as the media industries have been substantively explored and discussed in numerous arenas far beyond the traditional purview of academic study. Discourses in the trade papers, the popular press, and academic publications are supplemented by writing in digital communities, online journals and the blogosphere.<sup>1</sup>

This range of perspectives is both a necessary component and a constitutive element of this work; after all, to explore the media industries in the twenty-first century is to engage with an extraordinary range of texts, markets, economies, artistic traditions, business models, cultural policies, technologies, regulations, and creative expression. And yet, while such an array of resources and emphases sustains an inspiring breadth of scholarly endeavors, thus far these diffuse conversations have not been united by any specific disciplinary tradition. Further, there remains a dearth of formal gatherings and conferences for those researching the media industries,<sup>2</sup> as well

as an absence of journals or anthologies devoted specifically to the study of media industries as a coherent discipline.

While academic organizations and cross-disciplinary conversations focused on the media industries have been in short supply, the media industries themselves have been experiencing a period of unprecedented influence, prosperity, cultural debate, and transformation. Shifts in regulatory philosophy and political power have led to dramatic clashes between Congress and the FCC, which have put the regulation of these industries on the front page and at the center of heated public discussion. Trade agreements and other economic and geopolitical alliances have led to more regional and transnational collaborations in a globalized media culture. Technological and industrial convergence has eroded old relationships between media while cultural policies have created new ones. Audiences have become newly valued and “monetized” by media industries seeking the latest user-generated content, and at the same time new modes of distribution have undercut decades of industry tradition and thrown well-established business models into disarray.

Further, as the media industries grapple with the evolution of their products and structures, they are also affected by a multitude of external developments. These include the ascendance of neoliberal economic policy, the increasing power of new global

markets and trade, the growth of an international middle class (and the erosion of an American one), wars in the Middle East and Africa, dramatic Internet-induced changes in social interaction, and the changing definitions and roles of labor in the digital era. Meanwhile, shifting hierarchies of taste and value in popular culture are having a profound impact on media products and strategies; one need only consider the proliferation of television programming across digital platforms to understand how audience behavior, advertising strategies, and longstanding conceptions of “old” media are changing rapidly in the new millennium.<sup>3</sup>

These myriad developments have created a pressing need to bring interdisciplinary scholarship on media industries into a common dialogue. It is therefore our belief that media industry studies should be mapped and articulated as a distinct and vitally important field unto itself. This has become increasingly urgent in the present landscape of convergence, technological growth, and global exchange, and we believe that the time is right for such an intervention. To that end, we have enlisted the help of internationally renowned scholars to delineate and integrate the various traditions, historical trajectories, critical parameters, and potential paths of inquiry that define this discipline. These essays represent the early imaginings of what the field of media industry studies might look like. This book is neither a definitive blueprint nor a final statement. It is not an exploration of specific media industries in any particular locale. Rather, it is an open conceptual discussion about the many ways that media industry research has been undertaken in the past and what interdisciplinary models, methods, and visions it might embrace in the future. It is also a recognition of the fact that, while the world does not necessarily need another field of study, one has indeed emerged.

### Defining Media Industry Studies

In this volume, we focus on film, radio, television, advertising, and digital media. This list could easily be expanded to include music, newspapers, book publishing, and even telecommunications. Scholars who write about “creative industries” and “culture

industries” incorporate all of the aforementioned as well as a host of other areas in discussing both the art and economics of media industries. Those focusing on creative industries<sup>4</sup> have also analyzed the realms of architecture, art and design, performing arts, fashion, and software, among others. Cultural industries scholars have included museums, art institutions, libraries, live performance, and sport in their purview.<sup>5</sup>

Choosing the appropriate scope for this project has been challenging. We have decided to narrow our focus to primarily audiovisual media (with the exception of radio, which is inextricably bound to broadcast and advertising histories) for the purposes of initially mapping this critical terrain. Our parameters were determined by the disciplinary cohesion and shared academic traditions of these media, as well as the degree of commonality or overlap between their cultural and institutional histories, objects of study and modes of analysis. By no means do we consider industries such as music, publishing, or telecommunications to be “outside” disciplinary boundaries or of lesser significance; they were merely beyond what could be substantively and productively addressed by this volume.

Our main objective is to articulate the diverse academic traditions and common threads defining media industry studies while also illustrating how the integrated analyses of media texts, audiences, histories, and culture could enable more productive scholarship. Another goal is to situate this discipline within a humanistic context; while some of the methodologies and models explicated here are more commonly employed by the social sciences, we believe that the textually oriented concerns of film and media studies could be enhanced and enlivened by a broadened base of analysis without threatening the larger commitment to the qualitative, critical work associated with humanist paradigms. To that end, the essays in this book attend to constructs of text and image as they relate to industrial structure and economics, connect politics and policy to issues of art and audience, and develop theoretical and methodological paradigms that not only engage with the past but also offer ways of thinking about media industries in the present (and presumably future) landscape of convergence.

In the essays collected here, the authors address several key themes and concerns, including:

- the relative power and autonomy of individual agents to express divergent political perspectives, creative visions, and cultural attitudes within larger institutional structures;
- the means by which the relationships between industry, government, text, and audience can be conceptualized;
- the need for a grounded, empirically based understanding of media industry practices, including the operations, business models, and day-to-day realities of the media industries, past and present;
- the aesthetic, cultural, economic, and social values associated with the media industries and their contents;
- the degree of diversity in both the industries themselves and the products that they create and distribute;
- the power of the media industries to shape cultural agendas in local, trans/national, regional, and/or global contexts;
- the moral and ethical issues that emerge as a result of the activities and operations of the media industries;
- the roles and responsibilities of scholar-citizens in the process of describing and analyzing the media industries.

The discussion that follows emphasizes both the historical and future importance of these issues for scholars of media industries. In looking back on the formative influences on this area of study, we have opted for a macro-level survey that sketches the diverse disciplinary roots of a media industry studies approach. Since our contributors effectively provide the background relevant to their particular topics, our goal in the next few pages is to outline the relationships between a range of scholarly traditions and to show how these traditions both inform this field at large and illuminate the dynamics outlined above. In the process, we indicate ways in which future work on the media industries can further engage in a transdisciplinary conversation about the converging global media landscape.

### The Genesis of Media Industries Scholarship

#### *The culture industry and mass communication theories*

Many of the foundational ideas about the media industries emerged in critical/scholarly writing from the 1920s through the 1950s. The arrival of World War II – combined with the dominance of several forms of mass media including motion pictures and radio – contributed to the development of different strands of media industries research in both the humanities and social sciences. A key contribution to humanities-based scholarship came with the arrival of a number of German-Jewish emigrants, including Frankfurt School members Herbert Marcuse, Leo Lowenthal, Theodor Adorno, and Max Horkheimer, into the US. These Marxist theorists were previously based at the Institute of Social Research in Germany until the war led them to flee the country. As Douglas Kellner explores more fully in his essay, the ideas forwarded by the Frankfurt School influenced both political economy and cultural studies, as well as a wide range of other disciplines including philosophy and literature. For the purposes of our discussion, what is particularly significant is an essay written by Adorno and Horkheimer in 1944 entitled “The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception.”<sup>6</sup>

This essay has influenced how media industries are conceptualized by scholars in a number of ways. Adorno and Horkheimer expressed concern about the extent to which mass media commodified culture. They believed the commercialized media produced within industrial structures – which they labeled “the culture industry” – contributed to the cultural and artistic bankruptcy of American society. Further, they were troubled by the potential degree to which such large-scale media industries shaped the minds of the “masses.” They believed that the ideology perpetuated by mass media systems contributed to a depoliticized populace and to their willingness to accept the current social and political status quo. From their point of view, Hollywood represented the epitome of mass-produced culture;

its products cultivated superficial materialistic needs instead of leading people to see the way in which the capitalist system oppressed them and led to their continued domination by the established powers.

While many of these ideas are anathema to our current approach, they are important to understand because of the degree to which they have framed the discourses about the media industries for decades. Their work was significant in terms of raising questions about the kinds of texts produced by mass media industries and the ways these texts might impact audiences.<sup>7</sup> Nonetheless, from the perspective of contemporary media industry studies scholars, Adorno and Horkheimer's views become problematic for a number of reasons. First, inherent in their work was an elitist attitude toward what constituted art (e.g., such high culture activities as operas and symphonies qualified; Hollywood movies and network broadcasts did not). Second, they assumed a monolithic media industry when in fact, as Michele Hilmes and Cynthia Meyers show in their essays, even during the 1930s and 1940s there were numerous stakeholders *within* the industries that had different agendas. Though the metaphor of the "factory system" might have been applied to the Hollywood studios, for example, struggles continually took place between everyone from producers to directors to writers and cinematographers. The factory system also implied highly standardized, interchangeable products – a point that has been significantly challenged by work in such areas as film studies and cultural studies for decades.<sup>8</sup> Third, the vision of the industry constructed by Adorno and Horkheimer assumed a one-way flow of communication from a central industry out to a passive audience. This attributed a tremendous amount of power to the media, combined with minimal agency for individual viewers. What's more, it presumed that other social, cultural, and political institutions had little influence on movie viewers and radio listeners.

Concurrent with the rise of humanistically oriented research by the Frankfurt School, there emerged another strand of scholarship on the media industries out of the social sciences. This area, which was labeled as "mass communication" by the 1930s,<sup>9</sup> differed from the Frankfurt School in terms of its

politics and its methodologies. The Frankfurt School used qualitative analyses informed by Marxian critical theory; these analytical tools were designed to advance radical, polemical arguments about overhauling political and economic structures. Conversely, mass communication scholars generally used quantitative methods such as surveys and content analyses in the interest of better understanding the "effects" of mass media forms such as motion pictures and radio on the public. Their interest was less in the radical social change pursued by the Frankfurt School than in modifying the existing system in order to make it more democratic. Mass communication researchers often assumed minor modifications in media systems could contribute to a more democratic society. These views and methods made their work more amenable to government and industry funding.<sup>10</sup>

Notably, much mass communication scholarship viewed communication via the "transmission model" of "who says what to whom to what effect."<sup>11</sup> This model assumes a linear communication process with the greatest power and influence residing with the "who" (typically sectors of industry or government) and much less authority residing with the "whom" (namely, the audience). Communication scholars – as well as related fields of sociology and psychology – often focused on the ways messages (the "what") could be modified. For the government, the modification of messages was pursued largely in the interest of increasing public participation and civic involvement; for industry, the goal was to sell more of the growing number of consumer goods being produced on assembly lines. These two primary objectives contributed to the direction of much of the initial work on the media industries. Specifically, early communication-oriented studies of the media industries were frequently geared to looking at either advertising or news and information programming. To this day, researchers coming out of mass communication departments continue to focus extensively on these topics. For example, prominent books like David Croteau and William Hoynes' *The Business of Media* and Robert McChesney's *The Problem of the Media* are centered on deficiencies in news coverage and the continuing expansion of consumer culture.

These topics are framed in terms how the media industries add to – or, more frequently, constrain – democratic discourse.<sup>12</sup>

As these recent applications of decades-old ideas illustrate, concepts developed during the 1930s and 1940s continue to shape the research questions and approaches of scholars across the humanities and social sciences. It is precisely these perspectives that the contributors of this book are contesting, challenging, and reconceptualizing. While the ideas formulated by "mass culture" and "mass communication" researchers are valuable, they must be viewed largely as of historical value. The essays by Thomas Schatz and Victoria Johnson on film and television industry history reveal the degree to which such views on mass culture and mass communication were produced within specific Fordist economic, political, and social circumstances<sup>13</sup> (e.g., the Hollywood studio system and the classic broadcast network system).

While the "mass culture" and "mass communication" approaches may inform media industry studies, they are not central to its future development. As will be explored in the following pages, media industry studies favors different models of the media industries than those developed in the Fordist era. This means supporting analysis that more fully considers the interrelationships between industry, text, audience, and society. Further, the "industry" spoken of by media industry studies scholars is presumed to be anything but monolithic – a point underscored by Horace Newcomb in his provocative essay, which concludes this book. Rather, our approach perceives culture and cultural production as sites of struggle, contestation, and negotiation between a broad range of stakeholders. These stakeholders include not only sectors of industry and government, but also "ordinary people" (e.g., media user/consumer/viewers). In addition, media industry studies is no longer bound to old frameworks that operated predominantly in terms of nation-based media systems. Nor should we necessarily think only in terms of specific media forms. Changes in the industries, the texts they produce, and the ways these texts are consumed make media-specific formulations increasingly problematic. A number of authors in this collection, including Thomas Schatz,

P. David Marshall, Henry Jenkins, and Joshua Green explore the challenges that emerge in writing about "distinct" media, past and present, in light of industrial convergence. Thus, while this section has dealt with foundational and historical approaches to the study of the media industries, what follows is a sketch of influences and analytical frameworks that more immediately inform contemporary understandings of this discipline.

## Disciplinary Influences and Analytical Frameworks

### *Sociology and anthropology*

Mass communication and mass culture perspectives may have been prominent from the 1920s to the 1950s, but they were not the only ways media industries research was undertaken during those years. Indeed, a handful of scholars, including sociologist Leo Rosten and anthropologist Hortense Powdermaker, initiated ethnographically oriented studies of the Hollywood community and filmmaking process.<sup>14</sup> Rosten and Powdermaker looked at Hollywood from the "bottom up." These individuals were among the first to employ interviews and participant observation in order to better understand the complex nature of power relations in the media industries, the tensions that arise in the process of making meaning, and the ways in which audiences are conceptualized by both executives and creative figures.<sup>15</sup>

In spite of the richness that such methods can provide, few media industry scholars employed these strategies until the 1970s. When this work was taken up again, it was predominantly by sociologists interested in exploring the day-to-day operations of news organizations. In the late 1970s, American sociologists Gaye Tuchman and Herbert Gans, as well as British sociologist Philip Schlesinger, undertook studies that examined the ways institutional structures variably enabled or constrained newsroom staffs.<sup>16</sup> A handful of studies on the production of entertainment programming emerged simultaneously. These included several works by UK-based scholars; examples include John Tulloch and Manuel

Alvarado's observation of the production of *Dr. Who* and Tom Burns' ventures down the halls of the BBC.<sup>17</sup> One of the few scholars to have conducted examinations of both news production and entertainment programming is sociologist Jeremy Tunstall. Over more than 30 years, Tunstall has interviewed hundreds of individuals involved in both public and commercial media systems throughout Britain and the US.<sup>18</sup> Of course, no survey of cultural production is complete without referring to Todd Gitlin's landmark *Inside Prime Time*, first published in 1983. This study is distinguished by the degree of access he had to prominent US television executives, writers, and producers, as well as by the depth and breadth of his analysis.<sup>19</sup>

The ethnographically oriented accounts above have been complemented by organizational analyses by individuals such as Paul DiMaggio and Paul Hirsch. These writers have taken a more macro-level approach in examining the "sociology of work" in the cultural industries; they evaluate cultural institutions in terms of how they deal with such issues as uncertainty and change.<sup>20</sup> As John Caldwell discusses in his essay, collectively these strands of sociology and anthropology strongly influence the direction taken in scholarship on cultures of production. In addition, as explored in the next section, these studies provide useful counterpoints to the kinds of institutional analyses undertaken by media economists.

#### *Media economics and industrial analysis*

In contrast to the "bottom-up" approach employed by many anthropologists and sociologists, early researchers with backgrounds in business and economics examined the film industry through a "top-down" perspective of industrial and organizational structures. This work includes *The Story of the Films*, a series of lectures at Harvard's business school in the 1920s compiled by Joseph P. Kennedy; Mae Huettig's 1944 study, *Economic Control of the Motion Picture Industry*; and Michael Conant's *Antitrust in the Motion Picture Industry: Economic and Legal Analysis* (1960). Economists have provided media industry studies with models for discussing both the macroeconomic (e.g., industrial organization and

structure) and microeconomic (e.g., operations of individual firms and agents within the marketplace).<sup>21</sup>

Douglas Gomery has played a pioneering role in bringing industrial and economic analysis to the study of media industries.<sup>22</sup> Drawing from applied neoclassical microeconomic theory, he offered a concrete framework for conducting economic analysis via a discussion of industry structure, conduct, and performance.<sup>23</sup> Gomery's *Who Owns the Media* (written with Benjamin Compaine, 3rd edn. 2000) represents an extraordinary effort to address matters of policy and economics across a range of media industries including newspapers, publishing, radio, film, music, and television. *Who Owns the Media* supplements its extensive survey of the media industries with an assessment of the amount of competition present both within and across sectors of the media industries.

The degree to which an industry is determined to be competitive by economists impacts the extent to which it is regulated – or deregulated. Since the late 1960s, the subject of media de/regulation has provoked debate from scholars around the world. The debates about media concentration have been conducted by "traditional" economists and political economists, as will be explored below in more detail. A significant portion of this work has focused on the arena of telecommunications,<sup>24</sup> but there is also dedicated work on television (e.g., Mara Einstein's *Media Diversity*, 2004) and media conglomeration (e.g., Marc Cooper, ed. *The Case Against Media Consolidation: Evidence on Concentration, Localism and Diversity*, 2006)<sup>25</sup> that illustrates how productive economic analysis can be for media industry scholarship. The humanist aversion to statistics has loomed large in the somewhat strained historical relationship between media studies and economics, but recent work on the economics of creative industries (most notably that of Richard Caves) suggests how this disciplinary divide can be overcome with artful analysis and an emphasis on conceptual issues.<sup>26</sup> In his essay, Philip Napoli productively bridges this historic divide, outlining possible ways in which media economics can be applied to a study of the media industries that are sensitive to cultural, political, and aesthetic issues.

#### *Political economy and cultural studies*

One of the most prominent ways in which the media industries have been studied is through the lens of political economic analysis. While initial concepts in political economy were formulated by "classical" political economists such as Adam Smith and David Ricardo in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, its present-day "critical" orientation developed in the post-World War II period.<sup>27</sup> The dramatic social, political, and cultural transformations around the world provided the backdrop through which many of these early ideas were formulated. Vincent Mosco's comprehensive *The Political Economy of Communication* indicates the range of political economic approaches as well as the diverse means by which this framework has been applied globally. Though there are significant distinctions between approaches in Europe, North America, and the "Global South" (e.g., Latin America, Asia, and Africa), Mosco describes political economy as broadly concerned with the "study of the social relations, particularly the power relations, that mutually constitute the production, distribution, and consumption of resources."<sup>28</sup> A central interest is with the way in which resources are allocated, how they favor some at the expense of others, and how greater equity can be obtained throughout society. As Napoli discusses in his essay, these approaches tend to find "traditional" economic analyses problematic for the degree to which they are seen as sustaining and supporting dominant modes of power and existing capitalist structures.

There are various strands of critical political economy, and each has contributed to scholarship on the media industries in notable ways. The European strand described by Graham Murdock and Peter Golding is "holistic, historical, and centrally concerned with the balance between capitalist enterprise and public intervention."<sup>29</sup> The primary objective of scholars working out of this tradition involves the pursuit of social justice. Social justice is a central goal of several contributors in this collection as well, including John McMurria, Toby Miller, and David Hesmondhalgh. However, while the European-based political economic perspective influences these contributors' research, they all note

that the approach is not sufficient in and of itself. Rather, each author identifies ways that a media industry studies approach might be integrated with other modes of cultural and institutional analysis.

The "Global South" approach to critical political economy emerged most prominently in Latin America, though a growing body of work has developed in Africa and Asia as well. This perspective, which emerged during the 1960s and 1970s, has been shaped by the specific political, cultural, and economic inequalities that these regions have faced in relation to the "Global North" (e.g., Western Europe and the US). Early discussions here were framed largely in terms of "cultural imperialism" and "media imperialism."<sup>30</sup> These terms broadly suggested a coercive unidirectional flow of western – and especially American – media into developing nations. Members of less powerful and wealthy nations maintained that the "dumping" of Hollywood products (and western consumerist ideologies) prevented the development of their own local or regional media industries. The indigenous cultures and values of many of these regions and countries were seen as threatened by the arrival of American media. These views helped motivate local activism and impact policy-making in many countries around the world – a point Cristina Venegas explores in depth with her essay.

Along with Venegas, Michael Curtin and Nitin Govil acknowledge the continuing influence of the cultural/media imperialism framework. As they make clear, in spite of the fact that discussions of cultural imperialism have been replaced and complicated by more complex culturally based theories about global flows, these early political economic frameworks often serve as the baseline from which later analysis proceeds. Significantly, it was not only writers in developing nations who spoke about – and to varying degrees, continue to speak about – cultural imperialism. In fact, this perspective is also prominent in the North American strand of critical political economy as forwarded by scholars such as Herbert Schiller, Ben Bagdikian, Robert McChesney, and Edward Herman.<sup>31</sup> It should be underscored that many of the early North American critical political economists began writing during the same historical moment, and within the same



economic, social and political climate as those writing in the Global South.

Such work initially explored the expansion of (what were then) US-based media companies around the world; as the companies themselves transformed into multinational media conglomerates, scholarship shifted to address this development. However, as David Hesmondhalgh discusses in his essay, the underlying nature of this strand of scholarship has not changed significantly; individuals speaking from the "Schiller-McChesney" perspective, as he calls it, remain predominantly concerned with the ways in which a handful of media corporations have a homogenizing influence on media culture around the world. This line of research is criticized by authors in this collection for being reductive, simplistic, and too economic, and many political economists working in North America have since taken more nuanced approaches to analyzing the structures and business strategies of major media companies.<sup>32</sup>

Scholarly efforts to incorporate political economy and cultural studies have been widely attempted in the last couple of decades. This "integration" generally has been conceived of as uniting political economy's interests in ownership, regulation, and production with cultural studies' interest in texts, discourse, audiences, and consumption.<sup>33</sup> Supposed oppositions between these two approaches have been largely collapsed during the last two decades as a broad range of scholars including Douglas Kellner, Thomas Schatz, and Michael Curtin have reinforced how many of the same theoretical and political goals drive both perspectives.<sup>34</sup> It is our belief that one of the many virtues of a media industry studies approach is that it marks a further step beyond the discussions of "how to blend political economy and cultural studies." Indeed, that the integration of these two perspectives is vital to any productive analysis of the media industries in the twenty-first century is effectively axiomatic for authors in this collection (and fully explored by Kellner in his essay). The challenge, then, is to provide the most sophisticated models with which to undertake an inherently interdisciplinary and multi-methodological project. Any such undertaking must, from the outset, acknowledge the complexity and contradictions of media

texts as well as have a respect for media audiences consuming these texts. Further, such a project must understand the histories of specific media – along with the ways that they have been studied previously – in order to fully engage with present discourses circulating about contemporary media industries.

Ideas developed by the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) at the University of Birmingham in the 1960s and 1970s prove particularly useful for an emergent media industry studies. Several individuals influencing or affiliated with the Centre, including Richard Hoggart, Raymond Williams, E. P. Thompson, and Stuart Hall, helped develop scholarship that was taken up in the study of the media industries during the 1980s. A central contribution of this strand of cultural studies to media industry studies is its interest in the ways that cultural power is produced and reproduced, mediated and negotiated, circulated and consumed. Meaning is made – and by extension, cultural power is exercised – throughout the processes of making texts ("encoding") and interpreting texts ("decoding").<sup>35</sup> Historically, cultural studies scholars have more readily examined the "decoding" process, considering the ways that audiences can read mass-mediated texts in unanticipated, potentially liberating ways.<sup>36</sup> They have shown how, even if texts largely reproduce dominant ideologies (as per the Frankfurt School model, and a point of contention in itself), the ways that audiences interpret and respond to these ideologies differ widely depending on factors such as race, class, gender, sexuality, age, ethnicity, and national identity.

While the "decoding" process has been of central interest to cultural studies scholarship for several decades, a number of scholars recently have applied cultural studies' view of culture as a site of struggle, contestation, and negotiation to the industry itself.<sup>37</sup> This shift in emphasis to cultural production (referring here to everything from production itself to distribution, marketing, and exhibition practices) has helped foreground the role of individual agents within larger media structures and further challenged notions of a monolithic industry, past or present. More recent work in the "cultural studies of

production" has increasingly rendered this divide outdated.<sup>38</sup> Meanwhile, other media scholars, including Elana Levine and Julie D'Acci, have continued to refine Hall's encoding/decoding model (as well as Richard Johnson's "circuit of culture") in pursuit of more integrated approaches to media studies. These studies indicate how scholarship has further moved away from earlier linear or top-down models. In addition, recent discussions of the "circuit of media study" help to promote work that more fully brings together discussions of cultural production, artifacts, reception, and sociohistorical context.<sup>39</sup>

### Journalists and activists

More "traditional" scholars based in academe are by no means the only ones to explore the role of media industries in a cultural context. A range of individuals – from trade publication writers and members of the popular press to journalists and scholars – offer valuable alternative perspectives on how the media industries operate and how they deal with change. Their articles, books, blogs, and websites are often used to nuance understandings of contemporary debates and to provide a sense of the prominent discourses circulating among various stakeholders at given historical moments. Given the proprietary nature (and extreme expense) of much industry data, these publications have proven especially valuable to media industries scholars. The essays by Thomas Schatz, Victoria Johnson, and Cynthia Meyers are examples of how such data can be effectively employed in constructing historical analyses.

Members of the popular press have published a wealth of material on the media industries. The access granted to journalists, as well as the financial resources available to them to conduct their research, often far exceeds what is available to scholars. A prominent example of this work is Ken Auletta's *Three Blind Mice* (1991), which provides a look inside media corporations and the operations of their news divisions during a period in 1980s when they were in the midst of a radical structural transformation. Other journalists to have written extensively on various dimensions of media companies include

Alex Ben Block on the formation of the Fox Network, Edward Jay Epstein on the transformation of the film industry in the late 1990s and early 2000s, and Scott Donaton on the complex negotiations taking place between the advertising and entertainment industries in the early twenty-first century.<sup>40</sup> These projects have been complemented by a range of first-person narratives from executives and creative figures who have worked in the industry.<sup>41</sup>

A variety of public intellectuals – activist scholars and journalists – have also taken a critical approach in their examination of the products, institutions, policy and power attached to media industries. As global media corporations have wielded more cultural and economic influence, critical voices emerging from a number of activist scholars and journalists have become more prominent. Notable work comes from Naomi Klein and David Bollier, who look at the growing prominence of brand management by global conglomerates; Eric Alterman and Eric Klinenberg, who analyze the conglomerate control and political bias of news; and Jeff Chester, who investigates the threat posed by new media policy to democracy.<sup>42</sup> Media consolidation also contributed to the return of semi-retired journalist Bill Moyers to PBS. *Bill Moyers' Journal* regularly explores such topics as concentration of ownership and bias in news reporting from a liberal perspective.

Though ownership and concentration remain concerns to many scholar-activists, with the rise of digital media many have shifted their focus to a wider menu of issues including intellectual property rights, network neutrality, democratic Internet access, and privacy protections for consumers.<sup>43</sup> Stanford law professor Lawrence Lessig's role in the formation of the Creative Commons movement is an example of how those studying the media industries can expand the impact of their research and influence broader cultural conversations. Lessig as well as media scholar Siva Vaidhyanathan have recently generated a great deal of academic and public discussion about the intersection of digital technologies and intellectual property law with their work, demonstrating how researchers can serve as public intellectuals while at the same time making scholarly interventions.<sup>44</sup>

### Film and television studies

The humanities-based study of film and television has offered industry analysis far more than merely an object of study or a disciplinary residence from which to work. In fact, film and television studies have produced, developed, taught, and promoted a great deal of the research and work on media industries in the academy. Contributions to media industry studies have come from industrial historians as well as textual critics and theorists. As it would be impossible to discuss all the relevant work emanating from this field in such limited space, Michele Hilmes' chapter is dedicated to exploring this more fully. Here we limit the discussion to a brief overview of some prominent ways in which methods and frameworks developed in film and TV studies have been directed toward the study of the media industries. As the other sections of this introduction indicate, film and television studies have also drawn from other areas (e.g., political economy, cultural studies) and applied those areas to a study of different media forms.

A central site of analysis for film and television studies remains the text. As a methodology or focal point, textual analysis has not been associated with industry studies per se. However, many foundational studies have examined the intersection between industrial/economic factors and style. Out of cinema studies, a pioneering work was Bordwell, Staiger, and Thompson's *The Classical Hollywood Cinema: Film Style and Mode of Production to 1960* (1985).<sup>45</sup> Justin Wyatt's *High Concept* (1994) was notable for examining the interrelationship between motion picture marketing practices and New Hollywood aesthetics.<sup>46</sup> In television studies, John Caldwell's *Televisuality: Style, Crisis and Authority in American Television* (1995) showed how shifting production practices affected the kinds of programs aired on US television in the 1980s and 1990s.<sup>47</sup>

Studies of *authorship* represent another significant way that film and television studies have probed the relationship between industrial organization and individual agency while also retaining a close attention to the textual dimensions of these media. In their essays, Hilmes and Schatz both note how a central interest of humanities-based media industry

studies lies in the creative input of directors, producers, writers, or studio executives. In film studies, the auteur theory has been applied most extensively toward exploring the relative influence of the director; with television studies, scholars have focused more on the role of the writer-producer. However, the idea of authorship has been applied by both film and television studies scholars at the institutional level as well.<sup>48</sup>

The relationships between industrial structures, cultural conventions, and textual practices have also been directly linked to genre analysis. There is a rich tradition of work in film studies that explores how a range of players – from industry to audience, critics to filmmakers – interact to shape genre conventions over time.<sup>49</sup> Recent forays into genre study have looked at television as a means of addressing how industrial and textual practice combine to create strategies for reducing risk, ritualizing production, managing audience expectations, and codifying marketing practices.<sup>50</sup>

*Industrial histories* have yielded the largest volume of film and television studies scholarship thus far. These include media-specific surveys of particular companies and institutions, interactions between cultural regulators and industry, and examinations of the launch of new technologies.<sup>51</sup> What distinguishes these projects from other forms of regulatory and policy analysis discussed here is the degree to which these studies address the specific textual and industrial histories of film and television. A defining study for film historiography at large and media industry studies in particular was Allen and Gomery's 1985 book, *Film History: Theory and Practice*.<sup>52</sup> This book proposed an interdisciplinary approach to studying the medium, offering a model that encouraged scholars to integrate textual analysis with sociocultural, technological, and industrial/economic analysis of films. The essays in the first section of this collection continue the project of integrating these varied dimensions to the analysis of different media forms.

### Cultural policy studies

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, a number of scholars coming out of cultural studies became involved in cultural policy studies. As developed by individuals

such as Stuart Cunningham and Tony Bennett, cultural policy studies marked an attempt to "make cultural studies more relevant."<sup>53</sup> A great deal of debate ensued about precisely how closely scholars should align themselves with dominant political systems. Though the political perspectives of individual scholars have varied immensely, work done in cultural policy studies has marked a crucial moment in reintegrating matters of policy and industry into humanities-based projects.<sup>54</sup> Projects in cultural policy studies have employed a range of methods, from analyzing contemporary policy documents to interviewing representatives from local film commissions to mining archives for memos between government and industry.<sup>55</sup>

While work in this area has flourished in many places around the world, its application in the American context has remained noticeably limited. The paucity of cultural policy studies work in the US context can be seen in part as a function of the degree to which mainstream voices dismiss the idea that there is cultural policy in the US. Of course, as Miller and colleagues note in *Global Hollywood*, local, regional, and national governments implement media policies on a regular basis.<sup>56</sup> Indeed, everything from intellectual property laws to favorable trade policies to decisions about media preservation (a matter explored by Caroline Frick in her essay) are matters of cultural policy. However, many Americans' resistance to the idea that culture is regulated by the government – combined with the extent to which the media industries themselves formulate policy in the US – have made it difficult to successfully adapt a cultural policy studies approach in the American context.

Meanwhile, the deregulation of media industries around the world have made cultural policy studies difficult to sustain as an approach in other regions. As Toby Miller discusses in his essay, changes in leadership in many nations, continued privatization, and the rise of new technologies have contributed to a move away from cultural policy discussions and toward discourses about "creative industries" or "creative economies." However, this does not mean that an explicitly critical cultural policy studies does not have a place within media industry studies research. Miller's essay

illustrates how and why such an approach remains relevant and vital to those desiring a progressive model for analyzing the intersection of government and media institutions.

### Converging Media/Converging Scholarship

The convergence of entertainment, communication and information technologies in the early part of the twenty-first century has motivated a flurry of speculation and discussion by scholars, creative figures and executives about what the future might hold. As P. David Marshall, Mark Deuze, Jordan Levin, Joshua Green, and Henry Jenkins explore in their respective essays, the concept of convergence carries a variety of meanings and potential consequences. These authors investigate the implications of convergence for media aesthetics, institutions, labor, production, markets and regulation as well as culture and identity. Meanwhile, Michael Curtin, Cristina Venegas, and Nitin Govil explore how convergence occurs at the levels of the national, regional and global. All suggest ways we can continue to update our frameworks and methodologies for the study of the media industries.

Because convergence is occurring in media industries, forms, and technologies, it is the responsibility of scholars across a range of humanistic and social scientific disciplines to converge intellectually as well. As the historic divisions between media products, industries, audiences, and cultures become less and less recognizable, there are new opportunities to unite what have often been disconnected conversations. As Caroline Frick shows, new possibilities of media distribution force us to rethink the role and relationship of archivists to the media industries; for John Hartley, these same possibilities, as manifested in social networking, indicate the possibilities for a reorganization of relations between industry and user/producer/viewer.

As will become apparent in reading these diverse essays, sometimes ideas overlap; often sources do as well. Sometimes there are dramatic differences of opinion regarding what "media industry studies" has been, what it is, and what it could be. We do not

presume to offer the definitive answer here. Rather, this book is designed to jump-start the conversation about what has contributed to this emerging area of study in the past and what theories, methods, and models might be employed in future research. It was in this spirit that contributors were asked to articulate how their specific topic relates to the field of media industry studies. You will find very distinct interpretations and answers in these pages. Many of these essays also point out just how much research remains to be done in this complex and often contradictory arena.

## Notes

- 1 At this writing, online venues discussing the media industries include TV Decoder, <http://tvdecoder.blogs.nytimes.com>; Nikki Finke's Deadline Hollywood Daily, [www.deadlinehollywooddaily.com](http://www.deadlinehollywooddaily.com); Cynopsis Media, [www.cynopsis.com](http://www.cynopsis.com); Media Bistro's TVNewser, [www.mediabistro.com/tvnewser](http://www.mediabistro.com/tvnewser); the Media Access Project, [www.mediaaccess.org](http://www.mediaaccess.org); Free Press, [www.freepress.net](http://www.freepress.net); and The Hot Blog, [www.mcnblogs.com/thehotblog](http://www.mcnblogs.com/thehotblog). Websites accessed March 14, 2008.
- 2 Although that has started to change in recent years, with a pre-conference at the 2008 International Communications Association devoted to media industry study, large components of the semi-annual Media Reform Conference focused on industry scholarship and a growing number of panels on this topic at the annual gathering of the Society for Cinema and Media Studies. There is also NATPE's Educational Foundation outreach to academics researching the television industry through their annual faculty fellowship program, [www.natpe.org/educationalactivities/fellowshipprogram](http://www.natpe.org/educationalactivities/fellowshipprogram); and various opportunities for students and faculty offered through the International Radio & Television Society Foundation (IRTS), [www.irts.org/programs/programs.html](http://www.irts.org/programs/programs.html), and the Television Academy Foundation's Education Program, <http://cdn.emmys.tv/foundation/education.php>, accessed March 14, 2008.
- 3 For a discussion of the rapid transformation of television in the post-network era, see Lotz, A. (2007) *The Television Will Be Revolutionized*. New York University Press, New York.
- 4 John Hartley and Stuart Cunningham are widely regarded as pioneering this field. Another notable text employing economic and sociological analysis

This returns us to the themes outlined earlier in the introduction and to the point that we can engage with media industry studies in widely divergent ways. At the same time that we celebrate these possibilities, we also recognize a common call across the essays in this anthology for more integrated scholarship in this area. To that end, *Media Industries* is designed to encourage and promote cross-disciplinary conversation about the field as it has developed thus far, as well as to provide a "road map" for those just entering into the discussion.

- of the creative industries is Caves 2000. Hartley, J. (ed.) (2005) *Creative Industries*. Blackwell, Malden; Cunningham, S. (1992) *Framing Culture: Criticism and Policy in Australia*. Allen & Unwin, Sydney; Caves, R. E. (2000) *Creative Industries: Contracts Between Art and Commerce*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge.
- 5 An exploration of the cultural industries can be found in Hesmondhalgh, D. (2007) *The Cultural Industries*, 2nd edn. Sage, London. For additional applications of the "cultural industries" approach, see McRobbie, A. (1998) *British Fashion Design: Rag Trade or Image Industry?* Routledge, London; Toynbee, J. (2000) *Making Popular Music: Musicians, Creativity and Institutions*. Net Library, New York; Born, G. (2004) *Uncertain Vision: Birt, Dyke, and the Reinvention of the BBC*. Secker & Warburg, London.
- 6 Horkheimer, M. and Adorno, T. (2006) Culture industry: enlightenment as mass deception. In Durham, M. and Kellner, D. (eds.) *Media and Cultural Studies: Keywords*, 2nd edn. Blackwell, Boston, pp. 41–72.
- 7 Given the particular historical context within which Adorno and Horkheimer composed their essay, along with their status as refugees from fascism, it is easier to understand their fear that mass media systems were encouraging passivity and working against democratic ideals.
- 8 For example, see Schatz's (1989) discussion of the complexity of the Hollywood studio system. Schatz, T. (1989) *The Genius of the System: Hollywood Filmmaking in the Studio Era*. Pantheon, New York. Also see Scott, A. J. (2005) *On Hollywood: The Place, The Industry*. Princeton University Press, Princeton.

- 9 See McQuail, D. (1994) *Mass Communication Theory: An Introduction*, 4th edn. Sage, London, p. 13.
- 10 A classic example is Frank Stanton, who earned a doctorate studying audience effects and then put this work to use first for the US government during World War II and then as longtime president of CBS. See [www.museum.tv/archives/etv/S/htmlS/stantonfran/stantonfran.htm](http://www.museum.tv/archives/etv/S/htmlS/stantonfran/stantonfran.htm), accessed March 14, 2008.
- 11 Lasswell, H. D. (1948) The structure and function of communication in society. In Bryson, L. (ed.) *The Communication of Ideas*. Harper, New York, pp. 37–51.
- 12 See Miller (1990); McQuail (1994); McChesney (2004); and Croteau & Hoynes (2006). Croteau, D. and Hoynes, W. (2006) *The Business of Media: Corporate Media and the Public Interest*. Pine Forge, Thousand Oaks; McChesney, R. W. (2004) *The Problem of the Media: US Communication Politics in the Twenty-First Century*. Monthly Review Press, New York; Miller, M. C. (1990) *Seeing Through Movies*. Pantheon, New York.
- 13 The term "Fordism" literally refers to Henry Ford and the assembly-line system of mass production and mass consumption, which he initiated with the manufacturing of cars during the early twentieth century. However, the label has been expanded by scholars to refer more broadly to the assembly-line process of manufacture of standardized products prominent in many western nations from the post-World War II period to the early 1970s. Other key components of Fordism include a division of (unionized) labor, a large-scale production of highly homogenous products, and a concentration of capital, labor, and manufacturing in a limited number of locales. See Harvey, D. (1989) *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origin of Cultural Change*. Blackwell, Cambridge. In addition, for an application of post-Fordism to the media industries, see Curtin, M. (1996) On edge: culture industries in the neo-network era. In Ohmann, R. (ed.) *Making and Selling Culture*. University Press of New England, Hanover, pp. 181–202.
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- 15 For more on the roots of this research in anthropology and sociology – as well as precise means of proceeding with this form of analysis, see Deacon, D., Pickering, M., Golding, P., and Murdock, G. (1999) *Researching Communications*. Oxford University Press, New York.
- 16 Gans, H. J. (2004) *Deciding What's News*. Northwestern University Press, Chicago; Schlesinger, P. (1980) Between sociology and journalism. In Christian, H. (ed.) *The Sociology of Journalism and the Press*. Rowman & Littlefield, New York, pp. 341–69. Also see Fishman, M. (1980) *Manufacturing the News*. University of Texas Press, Austin.
- 17 Burns, T. (1979) *The BBC: Public Institution and Private World*. Palgrave Macmillan, London; Tulloch, J. and Alvarado, M. (1983) *Dr. Who, the Unfolding Text*. Macmillan, London. For an example of a US-based study, see Newcomb, H. and Alley, R. S. (1983) *The Producer's Medium: Conversations with Creators of American TV*. Oxford University Press, New York.
- 18 Examples of Tunstall's prolific output include (1973) *Journalists at Work: Specialist Correspondents: Their News Organizations*. Sage, London; (1993) *Television Producers*. Routledge, London; and his edited collection (2001) *Media Occupations and Professions*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.
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- Media Economics: Theory and Practice*, 2nd edn. Lawrence Erlbaum, New York; Doyle, G. (2008) *Understanding Media Economics*, 2nd edn. Sage, New York.
- 22 Gomery has not only surveyed all of the media industries, but he has also examined the histories and programming practices of specific sectors (for example, see Gomery, D. (1986) *The Hollywood Studio System*. St. Martin's Press, New York; Gomery, D. and Hockley, L. (2006) *Television Industries*. British Film Institute, London).
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At [www.fordham.edu/images/undergraduate/communications/caseagainstmediaconsolidation.pdf](http://www.fordham.edu/images/undergraduate/communications/caseagainstmediaconsolidation.pdf), accessed July 16, 2008.
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- 28 *Ibid.*, 25.
- 29 Murdock & Golding quote from page 311 in Wasko, J. (2004) The political economy of communications. In Downing, J. (ed.) *Sage Handbook of Media Studies*. Sage, London.
- 30 See Dorfman, A. and Mattelart, M. (1975) *How to Read Donald Duck: Imperialist Ideology in the Disney Comic*. International General Group, New York; for a thorough deconstruction of cultural imperialism also see Tomlinson, J. (1991) *Cultural Imperialism: A Critical Introduction*. Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore; Sinclair, J. (2004) Globalization, supranational institutions, and media. In Downing, J. (ed.) *Sage Handbook of Media Studies*. Sage, London, pp. 65–82.
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- 32 Various critical political economists, including Janet Wasko and Eileen Meehan, have acknowledged the contributions of cultural studies and explored ways to integrate political economic and cultural studies traditions. Janet Wasko, for example, discusses the value of combining these approaches in "The Political Economy of Communication" in *Sage Handbook of Media Studies*; also see Wasko's recent collection, McDonald, P. and Wasko, J. (eds.) (2008) *The Contemporary Hollywood Film Industry*. Wiley-Blackwell, Boston; Meehan, E. R. and Riordon, E. (2001) *Sex and Money: Feminism and Political Economy in the Media*. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis. In addition, for a useful recent history of media consolidation from a political economic perspective, see Kunz, W. (2007) *Culture Conglomerates*. Rowman & Littlefield, New York.
- 33 Paraphrased from Wasko, "The Political Economy of Communication," p. 323.
- 34 For extended discussion of these issues, see Ferguson, M. and Golding, P. (eds.) (1997) *Cultural Studies in Question*. Sage, London.
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- 36 Hall proposed three main readings: dominant, oppositional, and negotiated in his essay "Encoding/decoding." This approach has been used prominently in television studies. For applications of cultural studies to television studies, see Casey, B., Casey, N., Calvert, B., French, L., and Lewis, J. (2002) *Television Studies: The Key Concepts*. Routledge, New York. An application of cultural studies to film studies can be found in Willis, A. (1995) Cultural studies and popular film. In Hollows, J. and Jancovich, M. (eds.) *Approaches to Popular Film*. Manchester University Press, Manchester, pp. 173–91.
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- London, pp. 62–77; Levine, E. (2001) Toward a paradigm for media production research: behind the scenes at General Hospital. *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 18, 66–82; Havens, T. (2006) *Global Television Marketplace*. British Film Institute, London; Tinic, S. (2005) *On Location: Canada's Television Industry in a Global Market*. University of Toronto Press, Toronto; Curtin, M. (2007) *Playing to the World's Biggest Audience: The Globalization of Chinese Film and TV*. University of California Press, Berkeley.
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- 41 For example, see Bach, S. (1985) *Final Cut: Dreams and Disaster in the Making of Heaven's Gate*. W. Morrow, New York; Daniels, S. and Littleton, C. (2007) *Season Finale: The Unexpected Rise and Fall of the WB and UPN*. HarperCollins, New York; Vachon, C. (2006) *A Killer Life: How an Independent Film Producer Survives Deals and Disasters*. Simon & Schuster, New York.
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- 43 Prominent examples (all founded by activist journalists and scholars) include Public Knowledge, [www.publicknowledge.org](http://www.publicknowledge.org); Free Press, [www.freepress.net](http://www.freepress.net); and the Center for Social Media, [www.centerforsocialmedia.org](http://www.centerforsocialmedia.org). Accessed March 14, 2008.
- 44 See Lessig, L. (2002) *The Future of Ideas: The Fate of the Commons in a Connected World*. Vintage Books, New York; Lessig, L. (2004) *Free Culture: The Nature and Future of Creativity*. Penguin, New York; and Vaidyanathan, S. (2001) *Copyrights and Copywrongs: The Rise of Intellectual Property and How it Threatens Creativity*. New York University Press, New York.
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- 47 Caldwell, J. T. (1995) *Televisuality: Style, Crisis and Authority in American Television*. Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick.
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- 52 Allen, R. C. and Gomery, D. (1985) *Film History: Theory and Practice*. Knopf, New York.
- 53 This debate emerged out of dissatisfaction expressed by some cultural studies scholars with the growing number of studies that seemed to be focused merely on celebrating what audiences could do with texts. John Fiske's *Reading Culture* is often cited as representative of what some cultural studies scholars objected to. Meaghan Morris' essay, "Banality in Cultural Studies," represents some of the dissatisfaction felt by cultural studies scholars at the time. Fiske, J. (1989) *Understanding Popular Culture*. Routledge, London; Morris, M. (1990) Banality in cultural studies. In Mellencamp, P. (ed.) *Logics of Television: Essays in Cultural Criticism*. Indiana University Press, Indianapolis, pp. 14–43.
- 54 Examples of those who objected to less critical versions of cultural policy studies include McGuigan, J. (1992) *Cultural Populism*. Routledge, London; Miller, T. (1998) *Technologies of Truth: Cultural Citizenship and the Popular Media*. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis.
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## Part I

# History

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