

Glossary

AESTHETIC

In Media education usually understood as one type of code amongst several, the aesthetic domain describes *visual* language in cultural contexts.

AFFORDANCES

Describes opportunities (usually new ones) provided by new forms of technology or online spaces.

ANCHORAGE

The 'pinning down' of meaning through image being placed in relation to text, or vice versa. The shipping metaphor suggests a wild sea of potential meaning, with the sign (boat) needing to be motivated through grounding.

AUDIENCE

An umbrella term for the person or people reading any media text. Digital technology has led to increasing uncertainty over how we define an audience, with general agreement that the notion of a large group of people, brought together by time, responding to a text, is outdated. Furthermore, advocates of 'Media 2.0' claim that the way people engage with culture is now the 'concept formally known as the audience'. See the journal *Participations* for contemporary research in this domain.

AVATAR

An on-screen icon or representation of the user / player in a computer game or virtual world. Now in the everyday lexicon as a result of the James Cameron film.

BINARY

Western thought, it is said, is framed by a tendency for use to think in opposites – eg old/new, rather than embrace ambiguity and difference. In digital coding, binary describes the coding of digits as noughts and ones.

BRICOLAGE

The construction of meaning through remixing a combination of elements to make a new style. Ranges from surrealist work where things are deliberately put out of context to postmodern media where there is no sense of 'original' material to worry about as everything new is made up of a bricolage of the old – what was already there.

CITIZENSHIP

The role of a person in a contemporary democracy is described in this way and the critical student of media assesses role of the media in constructing us as modern citizens and in enabling enlightened citizenship (see Cortina, 2011).

CONVENTIONS

The repeated, normative practices expected within a culture. In the context of Media Studies, we are concerned with the normative elements of a particular type of media text that come to be expected within genres.

CONVERGENCE

Hardware and software coming together across media, and companies coming together across similar boundaries, to make the distinction between different types of media and different media industries increasingly dubious. Also, the way that media access is now multi-modal – eg watching TV on an iPhone, and the means that social media affords us new opportunities to be creative and / or participative – is described by Henry Jenkins as '*Convergence Culture*'.

CRITICAL

Asking questions, not taking things for granted, seeking to analyse the reasons for seemingly 'common sense' ideas about people and the world.

CULTURAL CAPITAL

From Bourdieu and Passeron (1977). Symbolic acquisition that can be exchanged, including qualifications, knowledge, family background, taste, values and other non-material forms of status.

CULTURAL IMPERIALISM

Within broader discussions of globalisation, the practice of dominant groups and nations imposing their cultural preferences and claims to legitimate knowledge on other people and nations. Hollywood is the classic example.

DECONSTRUCTION

At its simplest, taking apart texts at the 'micro' level to see how they work to make 'macro' meaning. At the more complex level, students investigate intertextuality and ways in which texts can only be understood in relation to other texts.

DEMOCRACY

Society founded on equality, in which the decision-making powers are elected and are thus representative and accountable. Whether the media is democratic is a very different question, as we do not elect newspaper owners such as Rupert Murdoch or powerful producers like Simon Cowell, for example.

DEMOGRAPHIC

Breaking down society or a sample of people by characteristics such as age, gender, ethnicity, occupation, income and socio-economic status (quantitative means).

DIALECTICAL

An exchange of points of view, or propositions (theses) and counter-propositions (antitheses) resulting in the creation of new ideas, which are

then new propositions to be countered (a such dialectical thinking is infinite).

DIASPORA

The process by which people who are dispersed around the world take elements of their culture with them so that the cultural imperialism model is disrupted by people using media in relation to hybrid identities. See Ruddock (2007).

DIEGESIS

Describes what is present in the world of a text, as opposed to the extra bits (eg soundtrack or voice-over) that exist only for the audience.

DIGITAL NATIVES

From Prensky (2010), the idea that young people, being born into a digital world, are 'at home' there, local to it, whereas the older generation are 'migrants'.

DISCOURSE

A coherent system of speaking, thinking and understanding, in language. Systematically organised ways of using language to order the world, from Foucault (1988).

ELLIPSIS

What is left out of a narrative, but remains in the story.

EMANCIPATION

Freedom from oppression. In Media Studies, new technologies – if they seem to offer an enhancement to democracy and access to the public sphere, can be hailed as 'emancipatory'. In some ways, Media Studies itself is seen this way – challenging the media hegemony through critical media literacy.

ETHICS

Issues of morality (always up for grabs). Often different to legal considerations, an important distinction.

ETHNOGRAPHY

A research method that involves spending time in the specific situation the research participants operate it, so the 'data' is grounded in their real experience rather than being observed from the outside.

FALSE CONSCIOUSNESS

Marxist term describing a state of being in which individuals are happily distracted from the truth (by ideology) and are thus convinced, or at least prepared to accept, that things are as they have to be.

FEMINISM

Often misunderstood as an 'extreme', militant politics, for us feminism is nothing more outrageous than the belief that we should oppose media

texts that represent women as unequal to men, or as mere unthinking objects for male scrutiny. There are a wide range of types of feminism with more political, symbolic or textual approaches.

FOUCAULTIAN

An approach influenced by the work of Michel Foucault – seeking to analyse discourse and how language ‘delimits’ ways of thinking about ourselves and the world around us, to understand ‘the technology of the self’.

FRANKFURT SCHOOL

Marxist school of thought, featuring Adorno, concerned mainly with ideology and the role of mass media (the culture industry) in reinforcing hegemony and manufacturing consensus.

GATEKEEPING

The role played by editors, producers, owners regulators in opening and closing, to greater and lesser extents, the flow of media information through processes of selection and construction.

GLOBALISATION

The idea that a proliferation of digital technology, deregulation and convergence combine to allow multinational and cross-cultural media production and consumption within a global economic system founded on the free market. A contested idea.

GLOCAL

Global media adapted to suit a local context. The global and the local working together.

HEGEMONY

A process by which people in power create the impression that their view of the world is neutral and the most ‘common sense’ view to take.

HYBRID

A fusion of more than one media form or a mixing of global and local or a mixing of identities.

HYPERREALITY

A state in which images, and simulations, take on more reality than the state they represent, so that the distinction between reality and representation is no longer sustainable. From Baudrillard (1988). See Virtual and Postmodern

IDENTITY

Culture and discourse construct subjects (from Foucault, 1988), so for Media Studies the task is not so much to consider the relationship between texts and identities taken on by individuals as to analyse the

plurality of identities that subjects play with and the ways in which these are mediated and increasingly virtual.

IDEOLOGY

A dominant set of ideas presenting itself as common sense or truth. Power relations are reinforced through ideology. Marx, Althusser, Gramsci and Chomsky are key writers in this area.

IMMERSION

Used in analysis of videogames, in two ways. Firstly, perceptual (the senses are dominated by the experience of the game) and secondly, psychological (the player is drawn into the game in the imagination).

INTERACTIVE

Media texts which offer audiences the opportunity to shape the text in some way. Not necessarily the same as democratic (see Turner, 2009).

INTERPELLATION

The misrecognition of oneself in a media text (from Althusser, 1971) – for example, women or men recognizing, in magazines or advertising, an idea of their gender which was not their construction.

INTERTEXTUAL

The chain of signification, in which texts always make overt or more subtle references to one another. All language is intertextual, and as all experience in culture is languaged, hence reality becomes intertextual by nature.

LIFEWORLD

The network of experiences of families, hobbies, social gatherings, leading to culturally transmitted ways of understanding the world.

LONG TAIL

Chris Anderson's idea (2006) that the large amount of niche markets are now worth as much as the smaller amount of big markets.

LUDOLOGY

The study of play.

MALE GAZE

From Laura Mulvey (1975), an analysis of media images which suggests that the camera represents a male perspective, and as such casts men as subjects and women as objects.

MARGINALISATION

A process by which groups of people are excluded from mainstream discussion or representation. Not direct prejudice but a more subtle form of marking people out as 'different' or 'other'.

MARXIST

All theory derived from the works of Marx, founded on a belief that the ruling classes in any time and place maintain their economic and systematic power through controlling not only the means of production but also culture and ideology. Marxist theory, traditionally, seeks to expose the falsity of dominant ideology and reveal the truth previously obscured, and as such it has empowerment of the alienated as its primary objective.

MEDIA ACCESS

Describes the degree of ease with which citizens can be seen and / or heard in the media and respond to the media and be provided with a dialogue with institutions, and the amount of opportunities evident for people to produce media texts themselves and for them to be distributed – clearly this is greatly increased by social media but not necessarily by reality TV – see Turner (2009).

MEDIA LANGUAGE

An umbrella term to describe the ways in which audiences read media texts through understanding formal and conventional structures (for example, the grammar of film editing). So media literacy describes our ability to read and write in this extended sense of language.

MEDIASPHERE

John Hartley used this term to describes a 360-degree environment for media consumption, which fundamentally changes how we need to think about media audiences.

MEDIA STUDIES 2.0

A response to web 2.0, proposed by Will Merrin (2007) and then by David Gauntlett (2007), in which the role of online user generated content and sharing is seen as fundamental to how we understand media audiences. This makes it mandatory for Media Studies to change how it operates. The subject of a 'heated debate' and by no means a generally accepted idea among media teachers and academics.

MEDIATION

The idea that our everyday lives are so woven together with media that our existence is 'mediated' – we cannot separate 'the media' from 'life'.

MEME

An idea, or creative item, that is passed on virally from person to person to the point where lots of people know about it and are talking about it.

METALANGUAGE

When we are able to step outside of language to analyse meaning rather than just using language to make meaning, we have a metalanguage. This is an advanced form of literacy.

MICRO

A small, specific example.

MICROPOLITICS

The way that small, seemingly insignificant decisions and interactions amount to outcomes that impact on people's lives.

MISE EN SCENE

Everything that is put into the frame (essentially considering the paused moving image as a still image). Includes set design, location, costume, actors and make up, non-verbal communication, colour and contrast, lighting and filter. Primarily an aesthetic practice.

MMORPG

Massively Multiplayer Online Role Playing Games. For example, *World of Warcraft* and *Club Penguin*.

MODE OF ADDRESS

How a text, in any media, speaks to its audience.

MORAL PANIC

Exaggerated media response to the behaviour of a social group. A phrase coined by Stanley Cohen in 1972, this refers to overstated reactions to seemingly deviant aspects of popular culture, usually mobilised by the mass media. More recently, videogames have been the subject of widespread moral panics and they are often blamed for declining moral standards in general as well as specific cases of violent behaviour and tragedy. Social networking is also the subject of a moral panic.

MULTILAYERED

Meaning that can be interpreted on many different levels. All media is multi-layered, when we drill down to the detail, but the term commonly describes texts which have been explicitly constructed with different readings or more and less complex interpretations as an intention.

MULTIMODAL

A form of semiotics, multimodal theory attempts to understand the way that human communication mixes together a variety of forms and how it simultaneously represents, orientates by establishing relations between people and organises. Has in recent years influenced the field of 'new literacies'.

MYTH

From Roland Barthes, who analysed the way that dominant ideas in a culture take on the status of myth, so they appear natural and neutral. In semiotics, signs and symbols when added together amount to a system of myths.

NARRATOLOGY

The study of videogames as stories – usually seen as in conflict with ludology, which foregrounds the study of games as play.

NEWS AGENDA

The observation that a particular news provider will select and construct news within a framework influenced by political, corporate, cultural and commercial objectives. Brought very much to public attention in the UK in 2011 by the News of the World phone hacking scandal.

THE 'OTHER'

Through marginalisation, exclusion or representation, a group of people are marked out as exotic, alien or different to 'the norm'.

PARADIGM

A framework of understanding scientific or cultural phenomenon. All messages, of any kind, are selected from paradigms. A 'paradigm shift' describes the point at which the usual ways of comprehending culture become outdated.

PARODY

A text which does not simply imitate the style of another (pastiche) but instead is transformative in that it either mocks or shifts in some way the original text's conventions.

PLAYBACK

'Prosumer' media being viewed online, sometimes with comments as a 'feedback loop' among peers.

POPULAR CULTURE

Culture which is consumed by a wide range of people, as opposed to a smaller group, configured in some way as an elite, tend to be described as popular and that this implies a derogatory view of tastes.

POSTMODERN

Postmodernists believe that it is no longer sensible to describe media texts in terms of how they represent real life or events, but instead we should see reality as increasingly mediated, so the boundaries between reality and media-reality are blurred. The most famous postmodern philosophers are Jean Francois Lyotard who described 'the postmodern condition' and Jean Baudrillard who wrote about this blurring of reality and simulation, which he called 'hyper-reality'.

PROLIFERATION

A significant and sustained increase in something.

PROSUMER

The consumer becomes the producer.

PROTECTIONIST

An approach to media which sees it as having harmful effects, against which people should be protected either through regulation or education. Media literacy is sometimes presented as a protectionist strategy.

PUBLIC SERVICE

Founded on principles of democracy as opposed to profit. Avoid overstating binary oppositions between public service and commercial media, however.

REALISM

A variety of ideas about the degree to which, and the variety of ways in which, media texts represent an idea of reality. There are a range of 'realisms' – social realism, classical narrative realism, neo-realism, magical realism.

RECEPTION

Contemporary audience theory is concerned with audience response and reaction and subsequently our understanding of a text's meanings emerge more from attention to audience interpretation than producer intent.

REGULATION

The surveillance and the threat of action by organisations, sometimes governmental, sometimes from industry, leading to a degree of self-regulation on the part of media institutions, and actual punitive measures in response to self-regulation breaking down. Regulation is sometimes economic, sometimes cultural and always political. There are always calls for more or less media regulation.

REPRESENTATION

Media do not offer a transparent 'window' to reality but offer instead a mediated re-presentation of it. The processes by which audience members come to understand media texts in terms of how they seem to relate to people, ideas, events, themes and places.

SEMIOTICS

The science of signs and symbols. From linguistics and structuralism. The analysis of 'units of meaning' (signs) in terms of their connotations within cultural myth systems.

SIMULATION

The artificial imitation of an experience or a process with the intention of making the imitation as close as possible to the 'real thing'. Baudrillard and Zizek are key thinkers. See 'virtual'.

SOCIO-CULTURAL

Describes considerations of how our social experiences and cultural choices combine and how meanings are constructed by audiences through experience as much as through any fixed, intended, preferred messages from producers' points of view.

SPECTATORSHIP

How a reader of moving images behaves, which will be culturally specific. So watching a film is not a practice that can be described as though it is a universal experience.

STRUCTURALISM

An academic approach to analysing meaning as structured like language. Semiotics and narrative theory are two areas of Media Studies which are informed largely by Structuralism.

SYMBIOSIS

Two forms arranged in an interactive, organic relationship. Used to describe relationships between different media products.

TECHNOLOGICAL DETERMINISM

When technology is seen as in itself the reason for a development.

TEXT

Texts carry meaning that is constructed and Media Studies looks at texts in order to deconstruct them. All media products are texts. But we can extend this term to include people, ourselves and others – anything that is made up of a range of signs that are decoded and interpreted by people.

TRANSGRESSIVE

A practice which transcends conventional approaches, and either subverts these existing ways of working, or challenges their value.

TRANSMEDIA

See Jenkins (2010) – an approach to studying and making media that recognises convergence and sees media production as being ‘spread out’ across different types of media forms.

VERISIMILITUDE

The logical, seemingly authentic world of a text. Not the same as ‘realist’, because every text has a logical, sensible world constructed through continuity, detail and recognition. *Harry Potter* has verisimilitude but is not claiming to mirror our social reality.

VIRTUAL

A simulation of the real. Whether we can any longer distinguish the real from the virtual and whether experience is the new reality, is an important question in contemporary Media Studies.

WEB 2.0

The term is from Tim O’Reilly and it describes the second phase of the internet where the focus shifts from people receiving information and services to people creating and sharing material. Defined by collaboration, social networking and the democratic development and distribution of content by ordinary people.

WE MEDIA

An adaptation of Gillmor’s ‘We, the Media’ (2004). Describes members of the public creating media that challenge the mainstream media hegemony. For Gillmor, the best example is ‘citizen journalism’.

WIKINOMICS

Tapscott and Williams (2006) coined this term to describe the impact of web 2.0 on economics as well as media.

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Top (15) Websites

Big Think: Zizek

<http://bigthink.com/experts/slavoj-zizek>

Hub for blog posts, articles, videos from / about Zizek

British Film Institute – Education Resources

<http://www.bfi.org.uk/education/>

Provides a range of study materials for aspects of cinema and television related to Media Studies.

David Buckingham

<http://www.davidbuckingham.net>

The main man.

The Case for Global Film

<http://itpworld.wordpress.com/>

Very useful blog offering a theoretical perspective on world cinema.

The Centre for Excellence in Media Practice

<http://www.cemp.ac.uk/>

Part of Bournemouth University, follow the links to interviews and presentations related to their annual Media Education Summit and the Media Education Manifesto.

Civic Media Project

<http://civicmediaproject.org/works/civic-media-project/index>

Resources for exploring relationships between media, technology and civic engagement.

Adam Curtis

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/adamcurtis>

Great documentaries for engaging with media, democracy, civics.

The Disrupted Journal of Media Practice

<http://journal.disruptivemedia.org.uk/>

VERY current theoretical work on media practice

David Gauntlett

<http://davidgauntlett.com/>

Gauntlett is a prolific user of the web to share his work so this is a portal to a vast array of interesting videos, articles and links to related academic work.

Henry Jenkins

<http://www.henryjenkins.org/>

Henry Jenkins' blog covers theories about fandom, participation and new media.

LSE Media Policy Project

<http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/mediapolicyproject/>

Aims to start conversations between policy makers, civil society actors, and media professionals about the latest media research.

Media Education Association

<http://themea.org/>

Subject association for Media Studies.

Media Magazine

<http://www.englishandmedia.co.uk/mm/index.html>

Useful online material for A Level and undergraduate Media students. Media Magazine also publishes student articles.

Participations

<http://www.participations.org/>

Journal publishing extensive and accessible online articles on the theories of audience, culture and change

Rushkoff.com

<http://www.rushkoff.com/>

Leading author / thinker on media, technology, and society.