

<<发现社会>>

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前言

媒介是神奇的，社会也是神奇的，媒介与社会的耦合生产出无限的神奇。

从涂尔干《宗教生活的基本形式》关于“社会”与唤起社会意识的符号与仪式共生的理论来看，媒介使社会显得神奇的过程也造就了自身的神奇。

人类在现代大众传播成为现实之前对于“神奇”的感知是经由巫师及其巫术的转化来实现的。

澳洲土著在图腾舞蹈的狂热中感受到超个人的社会力量的存在。

满身披挂的萨满用舞蹈和神歌请灵降神，让已经消逝的显露原形，让凡人通常不可见的显现真身，让千山万水之遥的即刻大驾光临。

借助巫术，时间和空间的障碍可以暂时克服，过去的、未来的都可以在现实中出现，墓室中的、仙山上的都可以召唤到面前。

这些神奇经验在现当代越来越彻底地被大众媒介所造就，电视、网络等图像传输技术在其中发挥着关键作用。

大人物像变戏法一样总跑到百姓居室内高谈阔论，历史的亡灵在荧屏上招之即来，挥之即去。

媒介使常人具有千里眼、顺风耳，看见那原本遥不可见的，听清那从前根本就听不到的。

媒介是神奇的，它在社会中的运行有如巫术。

几百年的现代化对世界“祛魅”，结果我们看到人类社会所集聚的全部的“魅”都汇聚于媒介，并被媒介无限放大。

长期耳濡目染，媒介的神奇人们已经习以为常了，就像前现代的人对巫术习以为常一样。

但是，这个过程一直都是知识界探讨的课题。

现代大众媒介的各种新形式从一开始出现的时候就会被知识界作为新事物加以关注。

从较早的照相、无线电广播到电影、电视，再到近年的新媒介传播，关于大众传媒研究、文化研究、虚拟社会研究的知识生产就一直紧随媒介发展的步伐。

媒介研究在发达国家已经形成庞大的群体和细密的分工，这个群体既能够追逐传播领域的新事物，也能够通过专业的眼光让人们习以为常的许多方面显出怪异来，从而引发众人的注意和分析的兴趣。

我们国内的媒介研究在这两个方向上都需要培育自己的能力。

依靠现代大众媒介运行的社会是一种机制极其不同的社会，中国社会正在越来越深地涉入其中。

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内容概要

对于19、20世纪卷帙浩繁的社会理论的梳理，不啻为一项艰苦而艰巨的工作。呈现在读者面前的这本书出色地展现了其著作者广博的知识、精湛的写作技巧和清晰的思路。本书选取了19世纪以来卓越的社会理论家，以他们对社会发展的突破性的思想贡献，在作者巧妙的构思下，连成一条新的意识变迁的长河。

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章节摘录

It was not the Revolution that destroyed the decentralized institutions of France, Tocqueville found, contrary to what most conservatives held. Rather, it had been the French kings themselves. Back in the Middle Ages Tocqueville class, the aristocracy, had jealously guarded their independence from the king. Parliaments and independent courts had been created by coalitions of nobles as a balance of power to resist the control of the king. Such institutions had existed all over Europe, even in Russia and Spain. The kings counterattacked and managed to destroy the power of the aristocrats by creating a royal bureaucracy, into which the courts were incorporated as subordinate agencies. The aristocrats were made royal officials, and their representative institutions were reduced to virtually nothing. This process went furthest in Russia and the East and least far in England. In England, in fact, the courts and lawyers remained almost totally independent, and parliament won the final struggle with the king in the seventeenth-century revolution led by Oliver Cromwell. In France the struggle went on the longest. There the king built a mighty bureaucracy, but the aristocracy still held many powers, and the showdown did not come until the end of the eighteenth century, when a new commercial era had accentuated the trend to equality and created the massed population of Paris that would prove so important in French politics. The inefficiency of the French regime, balanced between an autocratic king and a parasitic aristocracy, led to the government financial crisis of 1789. In the temporary government deadlock the floodgates broke, and the masses attacked. The spirit of equality had been unleashed by the leveling bureaucracy and the growth of commerce, and the aristocrats who lived on with their old privileges but without their old powers and functions were to feel the vent of its fury. In the end the main effect of the Revolution was to strengthen and streamline the central government, something that could not be done as long as the aristocrats stood in the way. The Revolution merely consolidated the structure the kings had labored to create. This account sharpens the irony of America in world perspective. The United States has the most protection against the instabilities of modern mass society because it derives its institutions especially its decentralized courts and local governments—from the early period of British history. The colonists of the seventeenth century who founded American society were from the conservative, minor aristocracy of England, and they brought with them the institutions of decentralized feudal control. America thus escaped even from what centralization the English kings had managed to carry out. The United States, far from epitomizing the new era of politics, has come to have one of the oldest government forms in the world.

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