Preface

On September 11, 2001, Millions of Americans—in fact, millions of people around the globe—went to bed in shock. The world had changed. The United States no longer seemed invincible. Americans no longer felt safe at home. As everyone, from politicians to pundits to the people next door, said, "Nothing would ever be the same again." Much, in fact, is the same; but not our view of the mass media. The questions we were asking about media in the immediate aftermath of 9/11 and the questions we are raising now are shaped in large part by what happened on that horrific day and by the events it spawned.

At first we were impressed, even moved, by the performance of our mass media. The coverage of the attack and rescue effort in all media was thorough, knowledgeable, courageous, even-handed, and sensitive. But then we started asking, Why were we caught so badly by surprise? Why didn't we know about the anti-American feelings in much of the world? Where were the media? This question was asked again and again as the invasion of Iraq produced none of the weapons of mass destruction that had been the *cause belli.* Had the media been too compliant? Was their lack of aggressive checking a function of economic factors such as concentration and conglomeration? Were the media's failures in the run-up to war the fuel igniting an invigorated media reform movement at home on the political Right as well as the Left?

As our national discussion about media and their roles and responsibilities unfolded, complete with much serious, healthy industry self-examination, Hurricane Katrina destroyed more than the Gulf Coast. It damaged our sense of ourselves as a people. Is this America? Does poverty such as we saw really exist within our borders? Why were the media more focused on runaway brides and missing interns than on the poorest among us? Once again, in the shadow of crisis, the media performed heroically; but once the initial, on-the-spot, reflexive coverage of the storm and its destruction ended, the questions gained new force. Where were the media before the winds and rain struck? Did they not have a higher function in our democracy than making a profit? And where were we—the listeners, readers, and viewers? Did we not have an obligation to demand and expect more from a mass communication system that, by design and tradition, is central to our ability to govern ourselves?

But it did not take a cowardly terrorist attack on civilians, an invasion of a hostile country, or scenes of death and destruction in our own land to start people thinking and talking about the media. These events chased from the cultural forum the relentless criticism of the media's performance in the 2000 and 2004 presidential elections. Dan Rather said that media professionals did not have egg on their faces after his industry's shameful failure of our democracy; they wore the entire omelet. People questioned the media's

priorities—news was disappearing from newscasts and newspapers, replaced by promos for upcoming television series and celebrity gossip. Others were complaining that movies were starting to look like extra-long commercials, while television commercials were getting increasingly shorter and all media, even novels, were seemingly drowning in more and more advertising. Critics across the political spectrum were concerned that media companies were merging at an unhealthy-for-democracy rate. Concern about media violence and sexual content remained unabated. Furor followed a television network's proposal to air hard-liquor ads. People who had lost their life savings wanted to know what the media were doing while Enron and WorldCom were stealing from them. To First Amendment advocates, new copyright rules designed to thwart digital piracy were undoing two centuries of fair use copyright protection, with consumers and democracy poorer for it.

The media, like sports and politics, are what we talk about. Argue over. Dissect and analyze.

Those of us who teach media know that these conversations are essential to the functioning of a democratic society. We also know that what moves these conversations from the realm of chatting and griping to that of effective public discourse is media education—the systematic study of media and their operation in our political and economic system, as well as their contribution to the development and maintenance of the culture that binds us together and defines us. We now call this media education *media literacy*.

Regardless of what an individual course is called—Introduction to Mass Communication, Introduction to Mass Media, Media and Society, Media and Culture—media literacy has been a part of university media education for more than four decades. The course has long been designed to fulfill the following goals:

- To increase students' knowledge and understanding of the mass communication process and the mass media industries
- To increase students' awareness of how they interact with those industries and with media content to create meaning
- To help students become more skilled and knowledgeable consumers of media content

These are all aspects of media literacy as it is now understood. This text makes explicit what has been implicit for so long: that media literacy skills can and should be taught directly and that, as we travel through the 21st century, media literacy is an essential survival skill for everyone in our society.

Perspective

This focus on media literacy grows naturally out of a *cultural perspective* on mass communication. This text takes the position that media, audiences, and culture develop and evolve in concert. The current prevailing notion in the discipline of mass communication is that, although not all individuals are directly affected by every media message they encounter, the media nonetheless do have important cultural effects. Today, the media are accepted as

powerful forces in the process through which we come to know ourselves and one another. They function both as a forum in which issues are debated and as the storytellers that carry our beliefs across time and space. Through these roles, the media are central to the creation and maintenance of both our dominant culture and our various bounded cultures.

This cultural orientation toward mass communication and the media places much responsibility on media consumers. In the past, people were considered either victims of media influence or impervious to it. The cultural orientation asserts that audience members are as much a part of the mass communication process as are the media technologies and industries. As important agents in the creation and maintenance of their own culture, audience members have an obligation not only to participate in the process of mass communication but also to participate actively, appropriately, and effectively. In other words, they must bring media literacy—the ability to effectively and efficiently comprehend and use mass media—to the mass communication process.

Features of This Text

The features that made this text successful in its earlier editions have been retained in this revision.

- **Emphasis on developing media literacy.** The pedagogical features of this book are designed to support and improve media literacy skills. Chapter 1 lays out the elements of media literacy, and an emphasis on media literacy is woven throughout the text. Chapter 2, The Evolving Mass Communication Process, is new to this edition. It presents in detail the array of profound changes buffeting the media industries and, by extension, the mass communication process. Naturally, its goal is to explain the expanded need for media literacy as the communication industries with which we interact—and the content they create and dispense—continue to change. Each chapter from Chapter 3 to 15 contains a section, specific to that chapter's medium or issue, on developing media literacy skills. For example, Chapter 4, Newspapers, offers guidelines for interpreting the relative placement of newspaper stories. Chapter 8, Television, discusses how to identify staged news events on television. Other media literacy topics include recognizing product placements in movies, identifying videonews releases, and interpreting intentional advertiser imprecision.
- **Cultural perspective.** The media—either as forums in which important issues are debated or as storytellers that carry our beliefs and values across people, space, and time—are central to the creation and maintenance of our various cultures. This book advocates the idea that media audiences can take a more active role in the mass communication process and help shape the cultures that, in turn, shape them.
- **Brief historical sections.** Historical sections at the beginning of each chapter on a medium offer relevant background information for students. By providing historical context, these sections help students understand current issues in the media landscape.

- **Focus on convergence.** Each chapter on a medium includes a section called Trends and Convergence. These sections emphasize the influence of new technologies on media and society.

- **Pedagogical boxes included throughout the text.** These boxes give students a deeper understanding of media-related issues and the role of media in society.

  USING MEDIA TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE These boxes highlight interesting examples of how media practitioners and audiences use the mass communication process to further important social, political, or cultural causes. For example, Chapter 6, Film, highlights the African American films and film industry that grew up in response to the D. W. Griffith film *The Birth of a Nation*.

  CULTURAL FORUM These boxes highlight media-related cultural issues that are currently debated in the mass media. Titles include, for example, Advertorials Aimed at Young Girls; What If There Were No Newspapers?; and Rock and Rap: Selling or Selling Out?

  MEDIA HISTORY REPEATS These boxes demonstrate that the cultural and social debates surrounding the different media tend to be repeated throughout history, regardless of the technology or era in question. For example, the public relations chapter discusses early PR efforts to encourage women to smoke, and the advertising chapter covers advertisers' more recent attempts to attract teenage smokers.

  LIVING MEDIA LITERACY These brief, chapter-ending essays suggest ways in which students can put what they have learned into practice. They are calls to action—personal, social, educational, political. Their goal is to make media literacy a living enterprise, something that has value in how students interact with the culture and media. Several use the stories of "everyday people" who have made a difference. Indicative titles are Start a Citywide (or Campuswide) Book Conversation, Help a School Start an Online Newspaper, and Smoke-Free Movies.

Key Changes to the Fifth Edition

Although the book maintains its commitment to critical thinking throughout its pages, several important changes were made to enhance and update this, the fifth edition.

- A number of important changes have been made to text structure. Chapter 2, The Evolving Mass Communication Process, is new to this edition. This chapter not only allows for a fuller conversation about the major forces reshaping the mass communication process—convergence, audience fragmentation, concentration and conglomeration, hypercommercialism, and globalization—but it provides in one place a discussion of how these forces are reshaping the structure, economics, content, and expectations of *all* media. Of course, as in past editions, these forces are discussed in the individual media chapters as they reshape the specific media under examination. But these relentless forces are also reshaping the mass

communication process itself and, therefore, audience members' media literacy responsibilities. Two more large-scale changes are the direct result of convergence. First, is it "television" if we are watching a program on a PC? On a cell phone? On a portable game console? Is it "television" if we are watching a Hollywood movie, delivered to our home by broadband cable directly to our laptop computer and wirelessly sent to the set in our bedroom? Or is it cable? Or is it Internet? Television, cable, and much, much more have been combined into Chapter 7, Television, Cable, and Mobile Video. Second, convergence has had a similar impact on radio—is it radio, satellite, Web-streamed, podcast, downloaded? As such, last edition's Radio and Sound Recording chapter has been expanded, rewritten, and titled Radio, Recording, and Popular Music.

- Every chapter has been newly informed by the events of September 11, the war on terrorism, and the conflict in Iraq. Concentration and conglomeration and their contribution to the media's failures in the run-up to the invasion of Iraq are part of Chapter 2. Embedded journalists and the PR of war are discussed in the public relations chapter. Ethical issues—for media professionals and for citizens—raised by the war on terror and the invasion and occupation of Iraq are presented: Does the Patriot Act go too far? Where is popular music's activist voice? Were anonymous sources misused in the outing of a CIA operative? Do you publish photos of war dead? Of civilian casualties?

- Boxes have been updated to cover current topics and issues. The coverage of international news, book censorship, the erosion of the firewall between newspapers' sales and news departments, the Pentagon's massive PR campaign in support of an increasingly unpopular war in Iraq, mandatory cable access for Internet service providers, and changes in the way we think about copyright are a few examples.

- All statistical entries have been updated. These changes include new information on Internet demographics, new media consumption statistics, and new statistics for all media sales and circulation figures.

- Coverage of media ownership has been updated to the extent possible. Although it is challenging to keep up with changes in media ownership, we have made a diligent effort to provide the most recent information on mergers and acquisitions in media conglomerate ownership.

Learning Aids

Several types of learning aids are included in the book to support student learning and to enhance media literacy skills.

- World Wide Web URLs in the margins of every chapter enable students to locate additional resources and encourage students to practice using the Internet.

- Photo essays raise provocative questions, encouraging students to further develop their critical thinking and analytical skills.

- Review Points allow students to make sure they have focused on each chapter's most important material.

- ■ Questions for Review further highlight important content and provide a review of key points.
- ■ Questions for Critical Thinking and Discussion encourage students to investigate their own cultural assumptions and media use and to engage one another in debate on critical issues.
- ■ Margin icons throughout the text direct students to view the *Media World* DVD, which includes Media Tours and Media Talk, the NBC video clips.
- ■ Historical timelines, chapter learning objectives, and chapter-ending lists of key terms guide and focus student learning.
- ■ An exhaustive list of references is provided at the end of the book.

Organization

Introduction to Mass Communication: Media Literacy and Culture is divided into four parts. Part One, Laying the Groundwork, as its name implies, provides the foundation for the study of mass communication. Its two chapters, Mass Communication, Culture, and Media Literacy and The Evolving of Mass Communication Process, define important concepts and establish the basic premises of the cultural perspective on mass communication with its focus on media literacy.

Part Two, Media, Media Industries, and Media Audiences, includes chapters on the individual mass media technologies and the industries that have grown up around them—Books (Chapter 3), Newspapers (Chapter 4), Magazines (Chapter 5), Film (Chapter 6), Radio, Recording, and Popular Music (Chapter 7), Television, Cable, and Mobile Video (Chapter 8), Videogames (Chapter 9), and the Internet and the World Wide Web (Chapter 10). All of these chapters open with a short history of the medium and continue with discussions of the medium and its audiences, the scope and nature of the medium, and current trends and convergence in the industry and technology. Each chapter concludes with a section on developing a media literacy skill specifically related to that medium and a call to action in the form of the Living Media Literacy essays. Throughout each chapter there is a focus not just on the industry and technology but also on cultural issues and the interaction of culture, medium, and audience. For example, in Chapter 10, advances in digital technology and computer networking are discussed in terms of our ability to maintain control of our personal data and our privacy. Chapter 3's examination of book censorship asks students to challenge their personal commitment to free expression and to reflect on how that commitment speaks to their belief in democracy. Radio and rock 'n' roll are connected to a discussion of race relations in America in Chapter 7.

Part Three, Supporting Industries, carries this same approach into two related areas—public relations (Chapter 11) and advertising (Chapter 12). As in the medium-specific chapters, each of these chapters begins with a brief history, continues with a discussion of audience, the scope of the industry, and current trends and convergence, and concludes with guidelines on developing relevant media literacy skills.

Part Four, Mass-Mediated Culture in the Information Age, tackles several important areas. Chapter 13, Theories and Effects of Mass Communication,

provides a short history of mass communication theory and compares and evaluates the field's major theories. It then explores the ongoing debate over media effects. The chapter considers such topics as media and violence, media and gender and racial/ethnic stereotyping, and media and the electoral process. Chapter 14, Media Freedom, Regulation, and Ethics, provides a detailed discussion of the First Amendment, focusing on refinements in interpretation and application made over the years in response to changes in technology and culture. The chapter analyzes such topics and issues as privacy, the use of cameras in the courtroom, and changing definitions of indecency. The chapter concludes with an extended discussion of media ethics and professionalism. Chapter 15, Global Media, looks at media systems in other parts of the world and concludes with a discussion of local cultural integrity versus cultural imperialism.

New and Updated Supplements

The supplements package includes a full array of tools designed to facilitate both teaching and learning.

- An *Instructor's Resource Guide,* available on the Online Learning Center, provides teaching aids for each chapter, including learning objectives, key terms and concepts, lecture ideas, video suggestions, a guide to using the Media Literacy Worksheets, and a test bank of more than 1,000 test items.

- Questions in a computerized test bank can be edited and new questions can be added.

- The *Introduction to Mass Communication* DVD offers students *Media World* video clips. These brief clips bring to life the concepts discussed in the text. Media Talk clips are from NBC News and *The Today Show.* McGraw-Hill's Media Tours provides an inside look at the operations of a television station, *Vibe* magazine, a radio station, a public relations firm, and the Internet. The videos are also available to instructors in VHS format packaged with an instructor's guide.

- The Online Learning Center (www.mhhe.com/baran5) has been thoroughly updated. The new site includes Media Literacy worksheets, PowerPoint® slides, a Web tutorial, chapter self-quizzes with feedback, hot links to media resources for the student, and more.

- *Media Literacy Worksheets and Journal,* now online (www.mhhe.com/baran5), has been revised to include worksheets for each chapter. Activities direct students to selected Web sites, suggest topics for entries in an ongoing Media Journal, and further explore the media literacy skills highlighted in each chapter. There are more than 75 worksheets in total.

- *PageOut: The Course Web Site Development Center.* All online content for this text is supported by WebCT, eCollege.com, Blackboard, and other course management systems. Additionally, McGraw-Hill's PageOut service is available to get you and your course up and running online in a matter of hours, at no cost. PageOut was designed for instructors

just beginning to explore Web options. Even the novice computer user can create a course Web site with a template provided by McGraw-Hill (no programming knowledge necessary). To learn more about PageOut, ask your McGraw-Hill representative for details, or fill out the form at www.mhhe.com/pageout.

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Reviewers are an indispensable part of the creation of a good textbook. In preparing for this fifth edition, I was again impressed with the thoughtful comments made by my colleagues in the field. Although I didn't know them by name, I found myself in long-distance, anonymous debate with several superb thinkers, especially about some of the text's most important concepts. Their collective keen eye and questioning attitude sharpened each chapter to the benefit of both writer and reader. (Any errors or misstatements that remain in the book are of course my sole responsibility.) Now that I know who they are, I would like to thank the reviewers by name.

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This edition is the third I have written with the support of my skilled team at McGraw-Hill. My development editor, Jennie Katsaros, remains as polished a professional as she is a lunchtime conversationalist. She intuitively understands the soul of this text and encourages me to write in its spirit. My editors—first, Phil Butcher, and later, Gina Boedecker—are questioning and imaginative. Confident in me, all three editors let me write *my* book. I also want to acknowledge my original editor, Holly Allen. She waited for me to *want* to write this book. If I had known how skilled a colleague and delightful a friend she would have become, I would have been ready years sooner.

Finally, my most important inspiration throughout the writing of this book has been my family. My wife, Susan, is educated in media literacy and a strong disciple of spreading its lessons far and wide—which she does with zest. Her knowledge and assistance in my writing is invaluable; her love in my life is sustaining; her fire—for improved media and for us—is emboldening. My children—Jordan, Matthew, and Simmony—simply by their existence require that I consider and reconsider what kind of world we will leave for them. I've written this text in the hope that it helps make the future for them and their friends better than it might otherwise have been.

S. J. B.