Contents

UNIT 1   MEDIA AND SOCIAL ISSUES   1

Issue 1.   Are American Values Shaped by the Mass Media?   2

YES: **Herbert I. Schiller,** from *The Mind Managers* (Beacon Press, 1973)   *4*

NO: **James W. Carey,** from *Communication as Culture: Essays on Media and Society* (Unwin Hyman, 1989)   *13*

Critical scholar of modern mass media Professor Schiller argues that mass media institutions are key elements of the modern capitalist world order. Media, he argues, produce economic profits and the ideology necessary to sustain a world system of exploitative divisions of social and financial resources. It is the job of the citizenry to understand the myths that act to sustain this existing state of power relationships. James Carey introduces the seminal ideas of ritual and transmission models of communication in this piece. Communication is not simply a process of sending messages as the transmission model would suggest. Communication is a symbolic process that is inherently linked to culture and our lives.

Issue 2.   Are *Harry Potter* Books Harmful for Children?   27

YES: **Rob Boston,** from "Witch Hunt: Why the Religious Right Is Crusading to Exorcise Harry Potter Books from Public Schools and Libraries," *Church & State* (March 1, 2002)   *29*

NO: **Lana A. Whited, with M. Katherine Grimes,** from *The Ivory Tower and Harry Potter: Perspectives on a Literary Phenomenon* (University of Missouri Press, 2002)   *36*

Though the popular *Harry Potter* series has received worldwide attention, the content remains questionable for some people. Writer Rob Boston examines the position of some members of the Christian Right, and identifies how and why some people think *Harry Potter* books endorse witchcraft and a belief in the occult. The controversy shows that children's books are often the subject of book banning and censorship, for a variety of reasons. Lana Whited and M. Katherine Grimes are English teachers who report that despite religious-based objections to *Harry Potter* books and films that are part of the fantasy genre in literature, children can be exposed to a number of situations and dilemmas that enhance children's moral reasoning abilities. Using a scheme developed by Professor Lawrence Kohlberg, they examine a number of situations in the *Harry Potter* series that they claim can help guide children's moral development.

In this issue, journalist Gal Beckerman discusses how Arab bloggers from the Middle East are challenging popular stereotypes of Arab and Middle Eastern culture. Because these bloggers are writing about their lives, the global public can read about their situations and understand them as individuals, rather than racial or ethnic group members. Jack Shaheen, an expert on the image of the Arab in film and television, discusses how Arabs have been the most maligned stereotype in popular culture, and how the images, post 9/11, that conflate "Arab" and "Muslim," have fueled misperceptions about "the Other" and have influenced people's perceptions about victims and combatants while we are engaged in the war in Iraq. He discusses how Hollywood's images influence politicians and citizens and contribute to public opinion.

Shari Dworkin and Faye Wachs discuss the results of their content analysis of health magazine ads and find that the ads tell men and women that a healthy body is attainable if they buy the products and pamper themselves. Fat becomes something to be feared, and grooming practices and fashion are "sold" as imperatives for both men and women. Michael Levine and Sarah Murnen also investigate magazine ads, but find the assumption that media cause eating disorders to be too limited. Instead, they cite a wide range of social, behavioral, and cultural issues over time to understand the complex conditions under which girls begin to adopt negative body issues that result in eating disorders.

Craig Anderson is an expert on the effect of violence in television and film. Based on extensive research, he holds the position that video games prompt young people toward even more aggression and violence than do other media content. Henry Jenkins tackles a broad array of misconceptions about the place and impact of video games on society. He argues that the primary audience is not children, that violence is not increasing in society, and that concerns about isolation, desensitization, and violence are overblown.

In this article, Siva Vaidhyanathan discusses how applications of copyright to music, film, publishing, and software companies all result in a complex system of trying to protect original ownership of intellectual property. The author gives several examples, including Google's efforts to digitize entire libraries, but reminds us that copyright also gives owners the right to say no. Independent researcher Stephanie Ardito examines how social networking sites have created problems for protecting copyright, because laws and enforcement of copyright law are so difficult. She believes big media companies and social networking sites will ultimately give up trying to enforce copyright, because it is too expensive and time consuming.

John Calfee, a former U.S. Trade Commission economist, takes the position that advertising is very useful to people and that the information that advertising imparts helps consumers make better decisions. He maintains that the benefits of advertising far outweigh the negative criticisms. Dinyar Godrej makes the claim that advertising doesn't really tell us anything new about products, but instead, it acts upon our emotions to create anxiety if we don't buy products. The result, then, is a culture in which we consume more than we need to, and still feel bad about ourselves. This type of consumer culture then permeates our lifestyles.

UNIT 3   NEWS AND POLITICS   149

Michael Schudson argues that although news is essential for democracy, the behavior of journalists makes them unpopular. Journalists' conflict orientation, obsession with facts and events, and "in-your-face"

interviewing are what make journalism effective and essential. And it is those behaviors that should restore faith in journalism. John Hockenberry is disillusioned about the ability of credible journalism to survive in the current corporate environment. Based on his experience at *Dateline NBC,* he explores the timidity of those in charge of newsrooms. Fear of corporate owners, of audience response, and of technology cripples authentic journalism.

This study examines political coverage of the first presidential debate and the political convention on *The Daily Show* and on network nightly newscasts. The study finds the network coverage to be more hype than substance, and *The Daily Show* to be more humor than substance. The amount of substantive information between the two newscasts was about the same for both the story and for the entire half-hour program. Barry Hollander examines learning from comedy and late-night programs. National survey data are used to examine whether exposure to comedy and late-night programs actually inform viewers, focusing on recall and recognition. Some support is found for the prediction that the consumption of such programs is more associated with recognition of information than with actual recall.

Mark Deuze, Axel Bruns, and Christoph Neuberger conduct case studies of news organizations that developed extensive plans to incorporate participatory news practices. The case studies reveal the rewards and difficulties of these decisions. David Simon testified in May of 2009 to a Senate Committee examining the future of journalism. His conclusion was that high-end journalism was dying in America and could not be saved by the Internet and/or citizen journalists.

UNIT 4   LAW AND POLICY   227

Citizens' "right to know" in a democratic society is a foundation of freedom of the press. Jeffrey J. Maciejewski and David T. Ozar examine multiple meanings of the concept of right to know, asking what this implies about conduct at the personal and institutional level. Maciejewski and Ozar then situate the concept in natural law and apply that understanding to journalistic decisions. In contrast, the *State of the First Amendment: 2004* report reveals lackluster support for the First Amendment in general and its application to controversial cases in particular. Few know the freedoms guaranteed or care passionately about them—almost one-third feel the freedom granted under the First Amendment "goes too far." Moreover, Americans seem less supportive of freedom of the press than of any other freedoms guaranteed in our Bill of Rights.

Issue 12.   Is Hate Speech in the Media Directly Affecting Our Culture? 256

In this essay, scholar Henry Giroux questions how and why our culture has become so mean spirited. By addressing media content in news and popular fare, he analyzes how the politics of a "pedagogy of hate" has become an exercise in power that ultimately has created a "culture of cruelty." As part of this imposed philosophy, citizens have begun to question and undermine our government's responsibility to protect their interests. Georgie Ann Weatherby and Brian Scoggins examine the content of the Web pages of four extremist groups on the Internet and discuss the persuasive techniques each uses. They find that the sites draw from traditional tactics that "soft-pedal" positions that emphasize recruiting, while downplaying the messages of hate.

Issue 13.   Has Industry Regulation Controlled Indecent Media Content?   273

Rhoda Rabkin strongly defends the industry system of self-censorship, and feels that any government intervention toward monitoring media content is doomed to failure. She examines a number of media forms and claims that any time there has been a question about content, the industry generally re-packages the products for different audiences and age groups. She advocates for voluntary codes of conduct over federal

censorship of entertainment. Shortly after radio shock-jock Don Imus lost his job for comments considered to be inappropriate for the air, the House of Representatives held a hearing at which different individuals from industry, academe, and social interest groups commented on inappropriate content. Karen Dill commented on the psychological processes of media images and the way they influence girls and women. Lisa Fager Bediako, president of Industry Ears, a group dedicated to examining the images of persons of color, testified that degrading images of violence, sexism, racism, and hate are rampant in contemporary media.

UNIT 5   MEDIA BUSINESS   293

Chuck Salter looks at the way musical artists have had to become business people to control the branding of their "products." He examines the business model established by John Legend, and describes how today's musical artists must retain control of their brand to survive in the music industry today. Eric Boehlert describes why radio has become so bad, with regard to diversity of music, and how little opportunity there is for new artists to get their music on the air. He describes what has happened to the traditional music industry/radio alliance, and how independent record promoters have influenced both businesses.

Clay Shirky argues that the old economies of newspapers are destroyed in the digital age. This is a revolution similar to that which occurred with the invention of the printing press. No one knows what the future will hold, but we can only hope that journalism is not lost with the demise of newspapers. All news media are facing challenges in these difficult economic times. Paul Farhi, a *Washington Post* staff writer, argues that newspapers have unique competitive advantages that should assure that the worst case won't happen.

Chris Anderson, an editor of *Wired* magazine, writes of the decline of the mass market and the rise of niche markets. He claims that the future of business, particularly in book, music, and DVD sales, will shift toward selling a wider range of media to audiences that have much broader interests. Professor Kathryn Montgomery looks at the cooperative relationships between social interest groups and media content providers, to better understand how themes with social objectives permeate media content.

UNIT 6   LIFE IN THE DIGITAL AGE   347

Penny Leisring discusses negative effects of using online technology to cyberstalk or harass someone. Use of social networking, e-mail, GPS systems, cell phone spamming, and caller ID all can be used to create a threatening or hostile environment for those people who use them for antisocial purposes. The author also addresses the situations that lend themselves most often to these undesirable uses of communication technology, such as in the break-up of romantic relationships, abusive relationships, or just plain hostile behaviors and interactions. Amanda Lenhart reports the findings of a Pew Internet & American Life Project that investigated the likelihood of teen harassment and cyberbullying and finds that the most likely candidates to experience online abuse are girls between the ages of 15 and 17, though the reported statistics for all teens of both genders are disturbing. However, Amanda Lenhart reports that, still, more teens report being bullied offline than online.

Linda Jackson et al. conducted a 16-month survey of Internet use by youth age 10 to 18 in low-income homes. They found that youth who used the Internet more had higher scores on standardized tests of reading achievement and higher GPAs. This work supports the optimism surrounding the Internet as a tool to level the educational playing field. Mark Bauerlein finds the hopes for better-educated youth in the digital age to be an empty promise. Youth spend much of their leisure time in front of computer and television screens, but the information age has failed to produce a well-informed, thoughtful public. Instead we have a nation of know-nothings who don't read, follow politics, or vote—and who can't compete internationally.

Author and professor David T. Z. Mindich addresses the sobering facts of why youth do not follow the news. He links this with low voter turnout, a widening knowledge gap between younger and older citizens, and a lack of trust in news media. The author of *Tuned Out: Why Americans Under 40 Don't Follow the News,* Mindich explores the essential link between news and information and being an informed and engaged citizen. The Pew Internet and American Life Project released *The Internet and Civic Engagement* in 2009. This report examined whether the Internet could change long-established patterns of civic and political involvement. Based on a sample of more than 2,000 adults, the project found that new forms of civic engagement based on the Internet, blogs, and social media have the potential to alter long-standing patterns of information and engagement of younger voters.

Boston Globe journalist Neil Swidey addresses the issue of anonymous online posters who register their opinions on the *Boston Globe* Web site, http://www.Boston.com. He discusses how some abusive and vitriolic postings sometimes have to be eliminated by site moderators, and how important it is to some people to have access to posting their opinions online. Unlike traditional newspapers, where comments to the editor contain a reader's name and address, the anonymous poster sometimes becomes so offensive that the nature and value of online commentary are called into question. In examining the legal relationship between privacy and anonymity, Ian Lloyd provides both a legal approach toward protecting privacy and anonymity, and provides examples of how everyday behavior challenges our expectations of anonymity and privacy when data collections violate a person's reasonable expectation of privacy. He writes that although the legal approach toward more online communication attempts to protect personal rights, good intentions often backfire, and life in the digital age comes with some possible breaches of trust.