

**Introduction to Mass  
Communication:  
*Media Literacy and Culture*  
8<sup>th</sup> edition**

***Stanley J. Baran***

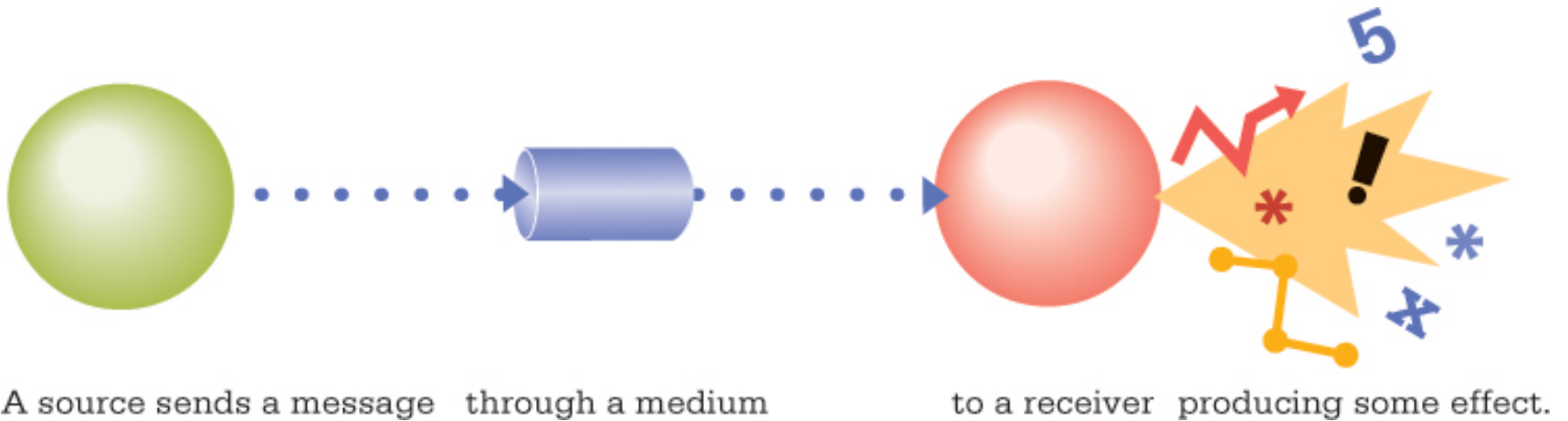
# Chapter 1

## Mass Communication, Culture, and Media Literacy

# What Is Mass Communication?

- **Communication:** the transmission of a message from a source to a receiver.
  - Must be sharing (or correspondence) of meaning
  - Feedback
  - Interpersonal communication

# Communication Occurs When?

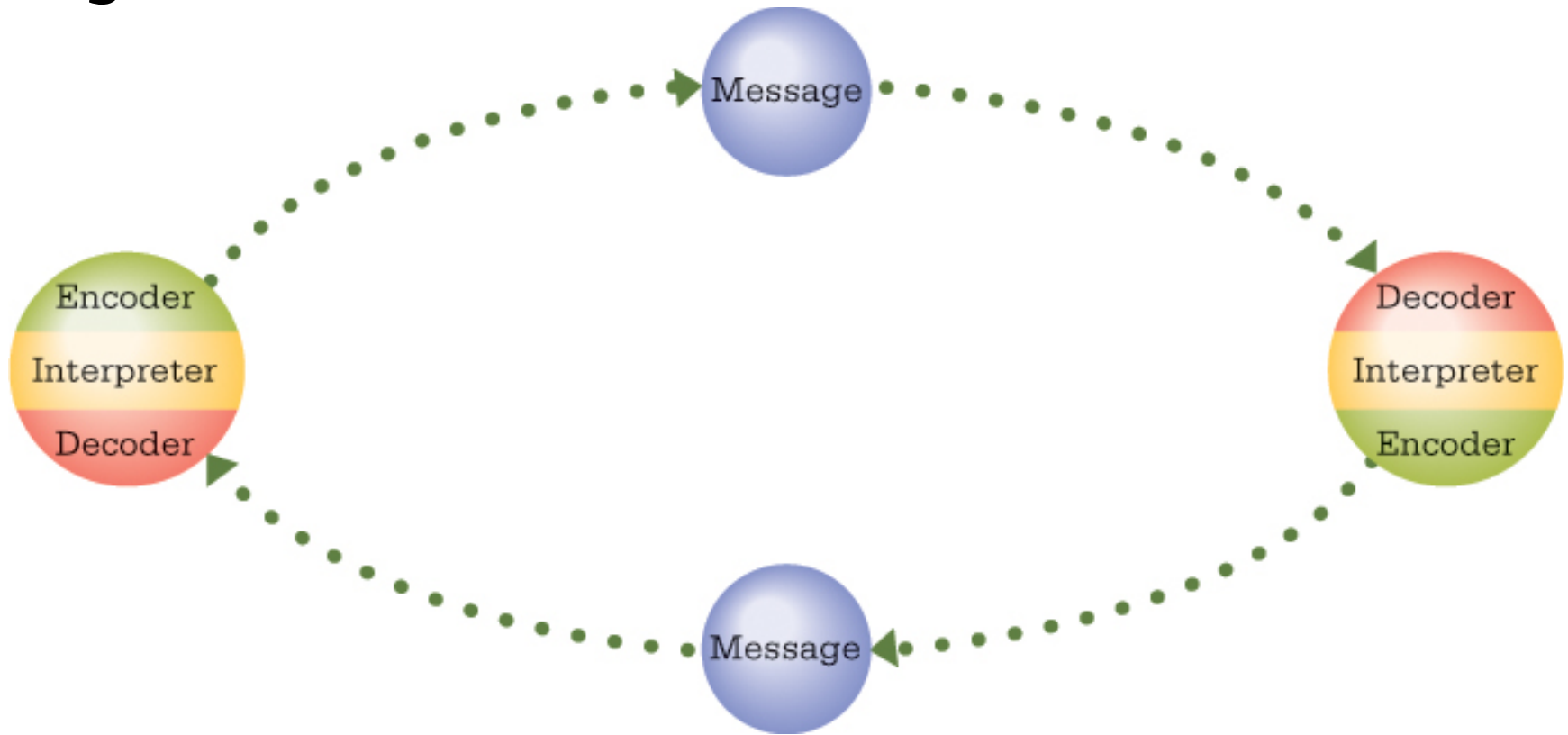


# What Is Mass Communication?

- *Media* plural of *medium*
- Messages are **encoded**
- Once received, messages are **decoded**
  - **Noise**
  - **Medium**

# What Is Mass Communication?

## Osgood and Schramm's Model of



Source: From *The Process and Effects of Mass Communication* by Wilbur Lang Schramm, 1954.

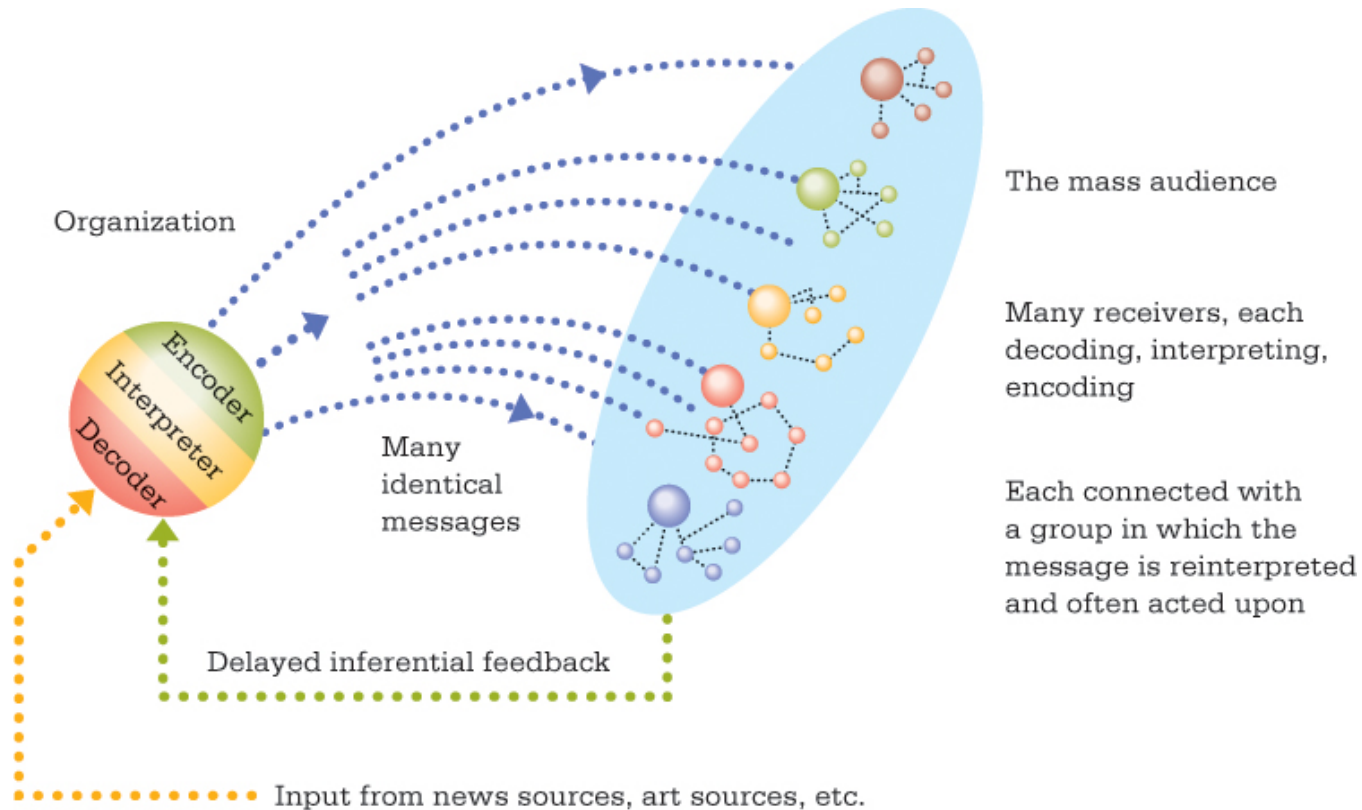
Reprinted by permission of Wilbur Schramm's heirs.

# What Is Mass Communication?

- **Mass communication:** the process of creating shared meaning between the mass media and their audience.
- Schramm's mass communication model represents feedback by **inferential feedback**—indirect rather than direct.

# What Is Mass Communication?

## Schramm's Model of Mass Communication



Source: From *The Process and Effects of Mass Communication* by Wilbur Lang Schramm, 1954.  
Reprinted by permission of Wilbur Schramm's heirs.



# What Is Mass Communication?



**Interpersonal Communication**  
You invite a friend to lunch.



**Mass Communication**  
Levitan-Lloyd produces *Modern Family*

	Interpersonal Communication		Mass Communication	
	Nature	Consequences	Nature	Consequences
<b>Message</b>	Highly flexible and alterable	You can change it in midstream. If feedback is negative, you can offer an alternative. Is feedback still negative? Take a whole new approach.	Identical, mechanically produced, simultaneously sent Inflexible, unalterable The completed <i>Modern Family</i> episode that is aired	Once production is completed, <i>Modern Family</i> cannot be changed. If a plotline or other communicative device isn't working with the audience, nothing can be done.
<b>Interpreter A</b>	One person—in this case, you	You know your mind. You can encode your own message to suit yourself, your values, your likes and dislikes.	A large, hierarchically structured organization—in this case, Levitan-Lloyd Productions and the ABC television network	Who really is Interpreter A? Levitan-Lloyd Productions' executives? The writers? The director? The actors? The network and its standards and practices people? The sponsors? All must agree, leaving little room for individual vision or experimentation.
<b>Interpreter B</b>	One or a few people, usually in direct contact with you and, to a greater or lesser degree, known to you—in this case, your friend	You can tailor your message specifically to Interpreter B. You can make relatively accurate judgments about B because of information present in the setting. Your friend is a vegetarian; you don't suggest a steak house.	A large, heterogeneous audience known to Interpreter A only in the most rudimentary way, little more than basic demographics—in this case, several million viewers of <i>Modern Family</i>	Communication cannot be tailored to the wants, needs, and tastes of all audience members or even those of all members of some subgroup. Some more or less generally acceptable standard is set.
<b>Feedback</b>	Immediate and direct yes or no response	You know how successful your message is immediately. You can adjust your communication on the spot to maximize its effectiveness.	Delayed and inferential Even overnight ratings too late for this episode of <i>Modern Family</i> Moreover, ratings limited to telling the number of sets tuned in	Even if the feedback is useful, it is too late to be of value for this episode. In addition, it doesn't suggest how to improve the communication effort.
<b>Result</b>	Flexible, personally relevant, possibly adventurous, challenging, or experimental		Constrained by virtually every aspect of the communication situation A level of communication most likely to meet the greatest number of viewers' needs A belief that experimentation is dangerous A belief that to challenge the audience is to risk failure	

# What Is Mass Communication?

- **Cultural definition of communication (1975)**
  - James W. Carey: “Communication is a symbolic process whereby reality is produced, maintained, repaired and transformed.”
  - Carey’s updated definition (1989) asserts that communication and reality are linked. It’s truest purpose is to maintain ever-evolving, “fragile” cultures; communication is that “sacred ceremony that draws persons together in fellowship and commonality.”

# What Is Culture?

- **Culture:** the learned behavior of members of a given social group.
- Culture as Socially Constructed Shared Meaning
- Functions and Effects of Culture:
  - Limits our options and provides guidelines
  - Culture's limiting effects can be negative
  - **Dominant culture**

# What Is Culture?

- Cultural values can be *contested*
  - **Bounded cultures**
  - Divide and/or unite
  - Culture/communication
  - Differentiation can divide

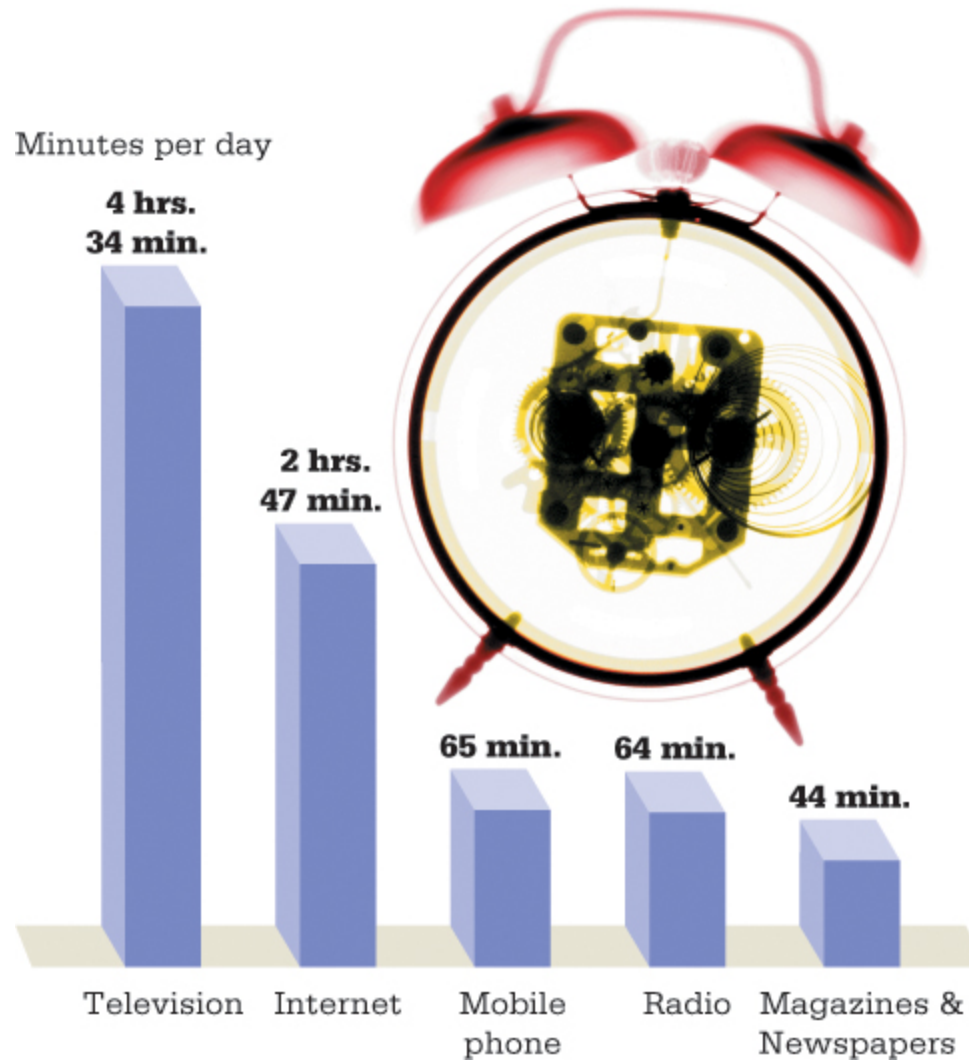
# Mass Communication and Culture

- Our stories help define our culture
- The aim is to shape in a professional and ethical way

# Scope and Nature of Mass Media

- The role of technology
  - **Technological determinism**
- The role of money

# Scope and Nature of Mass Media



# Mass Communication, Culture, and Media Literacy

- Media literacy
- Literate culture
- Oral or preliterate cultures



# The Gutenberg Revolution

- Printing Press
- The Impact of Print
- The Industrial Revolution

# Media Literacy

- Critical thinking that leads to independent judgments
- Understanding the process of mass communication
- Awareness of impact of media on the individual and society
- Strategies for analyzing and discussing media messages

# Media Literacy

- Understanding of media content as insight into our cultures/lives
- Ability to enjoy, understand, and appreciate media content
- Development of effective and responsible production skills
- Understanding of the ethical and moral obligations of media practitioners

# Media Literacy Skills

- Understand content
- Pay attention
- Filter out noise

# Media Literacy Skills

- Respect for power of messages
  - **Third-person effect**
- Emotion vs. reason
- Heightened expectations of content

# Media Literacy Skills

- Genre conventions
  - **Genre**
  - **Conventions**
- Ability to think critically
- Knowledge of internal language
  - **Production values**