

**Literature, Culture and Media**  
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**Lecture – 35**  
**Harold Innis**

Welcome dear participants to the last module of this week. So far, we have discussed the interconnections between media and culture and how they are being shaped continually by each other. We have discussed already how the shifting worldviews about the interconnections between media and culture have given rise to various theoretical approach.

In the middle of the 20th century, we find that the work of two major theoreticians Harold Adams Innis and Marshall McLuhan started to create waves. They started to talk about the relationships between communication, technology, media and also the way the institutions of our social economic and political modules work. They also try to understand how the formalities of power which are exerted by these institutions to interact influence the media and are also influenced by the way the media functions.

Harold Innis is one of the lesser known philosophers; however, we find that he has exerted major and significant influence on the contemporary understanding of media and also he influenced particularly among others the work of Marshall McLuhan. Innis was a trained social scientist, so he has tried to merge the methodology of social sciences with his attempts to understand how the forces of media work.

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## Major Theorists/Critics

- Shifting world views about media, culture and their interconnections
- Relationship between communication technology, media and the way social, economic and political institutions work
- Formalities of power exerted by these institutions in interaction
- Harold Adams Innis (1894- 1952)
  - Methods of social scientists; social history of media usage not very well-known
- Marshall McLuhan (1911-1980)
  - One of the most important theorists; uses methods of literary criticism; technological determinism



He has started to talk about social history of using media and how we can try to understand the development of different empires and civilizations through a history of media at a time when people were not aware of this approach. Marshall McLuhan has used methods of literary criticism. He has been influenced by the new critics, particularly by F. R. Leavis. His approach is sometimes termed as technological determinism and he is one of the most cited theorists in the area of media criticism.

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## Harold Innis (1894- 1952)

- Canadian Political theorist
- Interested in Sociology, History and Economy
- Staples theory—Canadian economy based on the export of staples: raw materials, fish, fur, lumber
- Analyzes U.S. policies of economy and defense
- Uses basic concepts of time and space to understand the rise and fall of empires
- Major analysis of civilizations after Edward Gibbon (published during 1776-1789)



Harold Innis was primarily a political theorist in Canada. He was interested in sociology, history and economy and he became popular with the projection of his Staples theory, in which he tried to show how Canadian economy is based on the export of his staples. For example, raw materials, fish, fur, lumber et cetera. He also tried to analyze the US policies of economy and defence and how they were working under the era of cold war politics.

He also tried to show how the media has influenced our understanding as well as our creation of the cold war. He has used basic concepts of time and space to understand the rise and fall of different empires in human history. We can almost say that after the work of Edward Gibbon was published, in which he has tried to analyze the reasons of the decline and fall of the roman empire, he is one of the major theoreticians, who has attempted this task of the analysis of civilizations.

Harold Innis has also tapped the civilizations which were covered by Gibbon as well as he has taken up the social history in the intervening duration. In his famous book *Bias of Communication*, he has concentrated on trying to create a social history of the media or the communication media. He has talked about how the media influences our perceptions of time and space. And he also started what came to be very soon known as a “Toronto school” of media studies.

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- Turns to communications theories in his later work.
  - In *Bias of Communication*, he concentrates on the social history of communication media.
  - His theories of how communications media influence perceptions of time and space gave birth to the "Toronto school" of media studies.
- Consistent approach towards media theories, methodology of Social Sciences.
  - Anticipates historical archaeology as well as documentation of Foucault
- Innis’s historical approach and his study of communication and media directly influenced McLuhan’s approach in *Understanding Media*
- Opined that the equilibrium and proportion of media in a culture determines how stable they are.



As he was trained in the methodology of social sciences we find that there is a consistency in his research methodology. His methodology as well as his arguments have anticipated what we today understand as historical archaeology as well as the methods of documentation propounded later on by Michel Foucault.

He had historical approach and his study of communication and media directly influenced McLuhan’s approach in his famous book *Understanding Media*. He also suggested that the equilibrium and proportion of media in a culture determines how stable they are.

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- 1947 presidential address to the Royal Society of Canada, analyzed the evolution of communications media from the cuneiform script inscribed on clay tablets in ancient Mesopotamia to the advent of radio in the early 20th century.

"I have attempted to suggest that Western civilization has been profoundly influenced by communication and that marked changes in communications have had important implications."

"In each period I have attempted to trace the implications of the media of communication for the character of knowledge and to suggest that a monopoly or oligopoly (limited competition) of knowledge is built up to the point that equilibrium is disturbed."



Innis has tried to trace the implications of the media of communication to understand how the character of knowledge is formed in a particular civilization. In his presidential address to the Royal Society of Canada which he had delivered in 1947, in his analyse the evolution of communication media from the cuneiform script inscribed on clay tablets in ancient Mesopotamia to the advent of radio in the early 20th century. And he says that he has tried to “suggest that western civilization has been profoundly influenced by the communication and that marked changes in communications have had important implications for the way the western culture and economic forces have developed”. He also suggests that ‘a monopoly or oligopoly’, which is a limited competition of knowledge, is built up in the contemporary western civilization to a point that equilibrium is disturbed.

And therefore in his works he has also talked about certain threats which are inbuilt in the contemporary western media. He was the first media theorist to emphasize the role of media and communications in the process of empire formation and their maintenance since the beginning of the civilization. Unlike McLuhan he says that media is not an extension of our sense organs or cognition. And he has tried to structure his theory on the perception of space and time and how these perceptions influence the empire building throughout our history.

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- First one to emphasize the role of media and communications in the processes of empire formation and their maintenance since the beginnings of civilization
- Media is not an extension of human sense organs or cognition
- Theory is structured around space-time
- Control over land/territory and its reproduction over time
- Innis: All kind of media exhibit bias--features that help in the control of space-time



He has also talked about how all kinds of media exhibit a certain bias features that help in the control of space and time and in the formation and continuation of different empires throughout human history.

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## Communication Technologies and Social Change

- For Innis, the development of communication media is the key to social change.
  - How do particular communication technologies function?
  - What norms do they take from and how do they contribute to society?
  - What forms of authority do they encourage?
- According to Harold Innis, monopolies of knowledge eventually face challenges to their power, especially with the arrival of new media.
- Forms of media contain a preconception or bias in terms of the structure and mechanism of information.



We can also say that the development of communication media in the work of Innis is the key to understand social changes. He has talked about certain issues for example how do particular communication technologies function in different societies, what norms do they take and how do they contribute to society as well as what forms of authority and power do they encourage.

According to Harold Innis, monopolies of knowledge eventually face challenges to their power especially with the arrival of the new media. Forms of media contain a preconception or bias in terms of the structure and mechanism of information.

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- The bias they encode is in terms of their characteristics:
  - Type of material: Durable/non-durable; light/heavy
  - Ease of access: Scarcity of production areas of papyrus; decentralization of production of paper
  - Production conditions: slow stone carving; timeliness of signs; quick drying clay, water supplies for production of parchment and paper; technical know-how
- Stability involves balance between space-biased media and time-biased media
- Media technologies and their functioning is intimately tied to the creation of the monopolies of knowledge



The bias they encode in terms of their characteristics have been listed in three categories by Innis i.e. the type of material, ease of access, and the conditions of production. In the type of material, he talks about the durability or the non-durability of a medium whether a medium of communication is light or heavy to transport whether it can be transported at all or not. Secondly he talks about the ease of access. For example, the scarcity in the production areas of papyrus ultimately led to the rise of those civilizations which could easily have access to it. He has also talked about the decentralization of the production of paper and how it has encouraged the civilizations towards a democratic approach. He has also talked about the production conditions of media for example the stone carving was so time taking and transportation of it was nearly impossible. So he talks about the timeliness, the quickness in which the clay tablets could easily replace the stone carving, water supplies for the production of parchment paper and the technical know-how.

He also suggest that stability in the use of a media involves balance between space biased and the time biased media. Media technologies and their functionings are intimately tied to the creation of monopolies of knowledge.

Innis has said that in the early days of human civilization power and knowledge were concentrated in the hands of the clergy. The role of the priests, the scholars, the monks and



the scribes who used to work within monasteries which had spread throughout Europe after the fall of the Roman empire.

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### Early Days of Papyrus and Codex

- Role of priests, scholars, monks, scribes in this monopoly of knowledge within monasteries that spread in Europe after the fall of the Roman Empire
- Power was vested, therefore, in a scribal and literate, religious elite
- Their authority and privilege in deciding the scope and nature of what can be known and what cannot be known
- The illiterate worshipers depended on priests for interpretation of scriptures and on image-driven media, eg., paintings and statues that depicted the central figures in Biblical stories.



Also dominated the production and spread of knowledge and thereby controlled power in contemporary Europe. So the power was vested in a scribal and literate religious elite and their authority and privilege was accepted by the illiterate masses for the interpretation of the text and also they decided what could be known and what could not be known.

So the illiterate worshippers depended on priest for interpretation of the scriptures and at the same time the only other thing they could interpret was the image driven media. For example paintings and statues that depicted the central figures in biblical stories. But this medium also had a certain limitation, soon we find that this monopoly was challenged by the space binding medium of paper which was initially imported from China.

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- The space-binding medium of paper imported from China, expedited challenges from Islam and later from a rising commercial class.
- Resulted in growth of trade and centers of education beyond the control of the monasteries/Church
- Rise of vernacular languages reducing cultural dominance of Latin
- Printing Press
- Balance shifted decisively in favor of space over time.
- The Protestant Reformation; European exploration and empire; the rise of science; and the evolution of the nation-state



This import of paper from China also expedited challenges from Islam, Islamic Kingdoms and later also from arising commercial class. As we have already seen in the previous modules, it resulted in the growth of trade and commerce. It also resulted in a growth of centres of education and universities which challenged the control of monasteries and church over education.

There was a simultaneous rise of vernacular language challenging the cultural dominance of Latin language and we find that the balance gradually shifted towards the space overtime. It also lead to protestant reformation, European exploration and the empire formation by the western powers and at the same time it gave impeaches to the scientific investigation and irrational spirit of enquiry.

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Sums Up:

- “The dominance of parchment in the West gave a bias toward ecclesiastical organization, which led to the introduction of paper, with its bias toward political organization.”
- “ With printing, paper facilitated an effective development of the vernaculars and gave expression to their vitality in the growth of nationalism. The adaptability of the alphabet to large-scale machine industry became the basis of literacy, advertising and trade.”
- “The book as a specialized product of printing and, in turn, the newspaper strengthened the position of language as a basis of nationalism. In the United States, the dominance of the newspaper led to large-scale development of monopolies of communication in terms of space and implied a neglect of problems of time.”





To sum up we can say and then here I am quoting Innis, he says that “the dominance of parchment in the west gave a bias towards ecclesiastical organisation, which ultimately led to the introduction of paper which had a bias towards political organisation”. So we find that there was a particular cultural dominance of parchment which resulted in a bias towards a particular type of organisation. So Innis wants to suggest that every medium of communication has a certain bias towards a particular type of organization.

He again continues to say that “With printing paper facilitated an effective development of the vernaculars and gave expression to the vitality in the growth of nationalism. The adaptability of the alphabet to large scale machine industry also became the basis of literacy, advertising and trade” which in turn affected the commerce, the international establishment of European empire and various scientific investigations.

So we find that the book replace the parchment and in turn the spread of the newspaper strengthened the position of language which also generated a bias towards nationalism. He has taken up a study of the United States and he says that “the dominance of the newspaper in the United States lead to a large scale development of monopolies of communication in terms of space and implied a neglect of problem of time”.

As we have already commented, the research methods which Innis has used, are based on his training in social sciences. His work is based on a study of history.

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## Method

- Based on study of history
  - Finding clues and evidence; cross-checking information, data, facts etc.
- Communication technology at the center of historical evolution
- The technological determinism: fundamental to the information society model, development of communication technology leads to change

### Criticism

- Reductionist, cannot account for different strategies and conflicts
- Ignores difficulties and challenges facing contemporary societies that do not primarily result from the evolution of information and communication technology--poverty, exclusion, social inequities



He has tried to find clues and evidence, cross checking information data, and facts continually. However, his understanding of historical evolution is centered on the technology which different civilizations used to communicate their ideas. Sometimes it is said that he has also taken up an approach of technological determinism, which is fundamental to the information society model.

The development of communication according to Innis leads to change and changes are dependent on the way communication technology takes shape and shapes the society. He has also been criticized. Critics often say that he is basically a reductionist and he is unable to take account of different strategies and conflicts outside the immediate area covered by the communication technologies.

He has also ignored and sideline the difficulties faced by those people who were on the margins. He has not been able to take into account issues like poverty, social inequalities and exclusion of certain people from the main streams of the society.

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### Time-Biased Media and Space-Biased Media

- When it comes to media, society is usually concerned with duration over time and extension in space
- Innis was concerned with establishing the conditions for societies to control the space where they live and survive over time:
- "It has seemed to me that the subject of communication offers possibilities in that it occupies a crucial position in the organization and administration of government and in turn of empires and of Western civilization" (Innis, 1972, p. 5).
- Identifies two types of media: time-biased media and space-biased media




Innis has differentiated between the media as being time biased or space biased. He says that our society is usually concerned with duration overtime and extension in terms of space. He suggested that the conditions for society to control the space where they live and their attempts to survive overtime create certain media and in turn are also influenced by the media and I quote from him.

“It has seem to me that the subject of communication offers possibilities in that it occupies a crucial position in the organisation and administration of government and in turn of empires and of western civilization” To understand this point further let us try to find out what are the differences between the media, which is time biased and the media which is space biased.

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Time-biased media	Space-biased media
Eg: Stone, Clay, Vellum • Speech or primarily oral culture is time biased	Paper based • Written or primarily print culture is space-biased
Durable and heavy, thus, difficult to move or transport	Light and portable; can be transported over large distances
Do not support territorial conquest and extension	Support expansion of empire/society over space




A time biased media primarily has an oral culture. He has taken examples of the mediums of stone, clay or vellum which were time taking. Writing any message on them, inscribing any message on them was difficult. The preservation was also difficult and therefore these cultures were time biased. On the other hand, he has said that the cultures which were based on paper were basically space biased. Because the paper could be transported over space in a quick fashion.

He also says that the time biased media is durable and heavy and therefore is difficult to transport. For example, stone tablets or clay tablets were very difficult to carry. Sometimes, they could not also be transported at all. So they do not support territorial conquest and extension in the way a space biased media which is light and portable based on paper or parchment is.

The space biased media can be transported over large distances and therefore it supports expansion of the empire or a particular type of social efforts over large tracks of space. The time biased media may be long lasting and therefore it may keep records of an empire existing for a very long time. It can also encourage development of certain civilizations overtime and therefore it is normally favoured by the religious and theocratic organisations.


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Time-biased Media	Space-biased Media
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Long lasting, hence, encourage development of empire/civilization over time</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Short life span; but portable</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Theocratic/religious model</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Associated with militaristic model</li></ul>



In comparison to that we see that the space biased media has a short life span; however, it has a portability, which cannot be compared by a time biased media and because of it is easy portability space biased media is normally associated with a model, which is basically linked with military and empire related expansion. He also says there are continuous tensions between time-biased and space-biased media.

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- Tensions between time-biased and space-biased media
    - The innovation of writing led to the first attempts to record oral culture.
    - The tradition of writing considered oral culture preserved once it was recorded or written down.
    - Writing down the tradition does not necessarily mean that society is learning from past knowledge.
    - As Carey notes, "Whereas the character of storage and reception of the oral tradition favor continuity over time, the written tradition favors discontinuity in time through continuum over space."
  - Writing culture, in its emphasis on present and future, moves "forward" from the traditions, knowledge systems and ceremonies that were embodied within the now "preserved" oral culture, leaving oral culture itself behind. | <https://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/innis-mcluhan/030003-1030-e.html>
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He also says that the innovation of writing the way we learn to write led to the first attempts to record oral cultures. However, normally it is thought that once we have written down or recorded what is included in the oral culture we normally feel that our work is over; however, it is not true. Writing down a tradition does not mean that mankind is also learning something

important from that. So a past knowledge maybe recorded, but mankind may still not be able to learn anything from it.

And here it becomes pertinent to quote Carey, who says that “whereas the character of storage and reception of the oral tradition favors continuity overtime, the written tradition favors discontinuity in time through come over space”. So we can say that the culture which is based in writing has an emphasis on present and future and it moves forward from the traditions, knowledge systems and ceremonies that were embodied within the oral culture which is now only preserved and documented. And therefore it leaves behind the oral culture and moves on. So this is a culture of discontinuity which has been suggested by a media, which has a bias towards space.

Innis also believed that within any system of media the changes come from the margins or from the periphery. People who are at the periphery ultimately develop their own media.

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- Believed change came from the margins/periphery
  - People at the periphery develop their own media and over time, it inevitably challenges the center.
- New media helps in the consolidation of power
  - E.g.: The media of the church (Latin written on parchment) was challenged by the secular medium of vernacular language written on paper.
- Oral tradition: malleable, humanistic
- Written tradition: Inflexible, impersonal



And over a passage of time it comes to inevitably challenge the centre and new media also helps in the consolidation of power. He again takes the example of how the media of the church was challenged by the secular medium which preferred the use of paper. He also says that the oral tradition is malleable and humanistic whereas the written tradition is inflexible and impersonal.

However, there has to be a balance in every culture between the space biased and time biased media if it has to survive for a long duration and this is exactly his criticism of the western contemporary media in which he says that the equilibrium has been lost.

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- Certain social forms encourage evolution of new media which then challenges the existing forms to produce a new worldview
- Not a technology determinist: examines the authority invested in communication technologies and monopolies of knowledge to mold cultural forms
- Shifting monopolies--newspapers to radio to television to the internet.
- Each medium has its own bias
- Juxtaposition of biases with their own set of technologies



He says that there are certain social forms which encourage the evolution of a particular type of new media. And therefore they also are able to evolve a different worldview. Even though he has often been criticized as being a technology determinist, we can also say that he prefers to analyse and examine the authority which is invested in communication technologies and monopolies of knowledge to mould the different understandings of culture.

He has also talked about the shifting monopolies for example how the monopoly of oral culture has been replaced by the medium of print and how the medium of print for example the newspapers et cetera has been given over to the radio and then it has been taken over by the television and then later on by the internet. So the monopolies keep on changing but each medium has its own biases which it wants to preserve.

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- Certain social forms encourage evolution of new media which then challenges the existing forms to produce a new worldview
- Not a technology determinist: examines the authority invested in communication technologies and monopolies of knowledge to mold cultural forms
- Shifting monopolies--newspapers to radio to television to the internet.
- Each medium has its own bias
- Juxtaposition of biases with their own set of technologies



However, the juxtaposition of biases with their own set of technologies is also another aspect which Innis has tried to interpret and discuss in detail.

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- Societies with monopolies of knowledge based on film, print, or television become susceptible to emergent forms of new technologies
- In conclusion, Innis is a technological realist who mediates the technological humanism of McLuhan, who lay emphasis on the inventive possibilities of each new medium and the idea of technological dependency.
- Quick transmission of information over long distances has upset the balance required for cultural survival, shifting it in favor of space and power. Industrial societies cut time into precise fragments suitable to engineers and accountants.
- Western civilization suffers from an "obsession with present-mindedness" eliminating concerns about past or future.



Innis has also suggested that monopolies of knowledge and media are continually shifting. He also says that the contemporary monopoly of knowledge which is based on, in his times, film print or television et cetera is susceptible to emergent forms of media. So we can say that he is a realist in understanding the impact of technology and media over the way mankind thinks about the worldview.

He also suggest that quick transmission of information over long distances has upset the balance which is required for cultural survival. His idea is that in the western industrial societies the time is being cut into precise fragments which is suitable to certain

specialisations like that of engineers or accountants; however, this fragmentation of time into precise modules is not suitable for the continuation of cultural forms or even for the cultural survivals.

And therefore he says that the Western civilization is suffering from what he terms as obsession with present mindedness in which it has absolutely eliminated concerned about the past or for the future. He has also tried to enumerate in this light the threats which contemporary western media had.

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#### Threats within Contemporary Media

- Communications monopolies that run the media do not have any outside challenge. They speak the language of the masses and can shape public opinion by appealing to their emotions.
- American media is particularly effective at mobilizing large audiences owing to advertising and therefore its mass appeal
- Political propaganda through radio and tv
- US: Space-media. Occupied with military power in the cold war era
- Influenced by Innis Marshall Poe proposed a theory on the creation of new media. He proposed that new media are "pulled" into being by organized interests after inventors have developed the technology, or its prototypes, necessary to support the media.

He says that the communication monopolies which were running the media in his times did not have any challenge from the outside. Because unlike the previous media forms they have learn to speak the language of the masses and therefore they have an easier and quicker access to the masses.

Whereas other forms of media were limited, the contemporary media, which had started emerging in the days of Innis, had learned to speak the language of the masses and therefore had a maximum possibility to appeal to the emotions of the people and say their opinion. He says that the American media because of its efficiency to use advertisements is particularly effective at mobilizing large audience.

He has also referred to the way political propaganda was being circulated using different media innovations in his contemporary days particularly how the radio and TV was being used. Innis has also criticized the US media in his contemporary days during the days of the

cold war era for being a space centred media because the occupation of the contemporary media was only with the supremacy of the military power.

And therefore it did not bother to maintain its equilibrium with a time centred media approach. This idea of Innis has also influenced various media theorists. Major among them is Marshall Poe, who had proposed a theory on the creation of new media, proposing that new media are pulled into being by organised interests after inventors have developed the technology or at least the prototypes of a technology which is necessary to support the media.

So in a way Marshall Poe has tried to envisage the way market forces are responsible for popularizing a particular innovation in technology and generating a particular type of opinion among the masses for it.

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Major Influence:  
Marshall McLuhan (1911-1980)  
"The Medium is the Message"

- Professor and theorist; pioneer of Media Studies
- Trained under Leavis and I.A Richards; Influenced by New Criticism
- Appointed in 1963 to create the Centre for Culture and Technology at University of Toronto
- Major works: *Gutenberg Galaxy* (1962) and *Understanding Media* (1964)



Innis has influenced the shape of thinking about the interconnections, which exist between media and culture and contemporary worldviews. He is also a major influence on the theories of Marshall McLuhan who was a contemporary, a co-worker for several years and is primary known for his term, 'The Medium is the Message'. McLuhan is also considered to be a pioneer of media studies and as we have already remarked, he was influenced by new critics. He had trained under F. R. Leavis and I.A Richards. In 1963 he was appointed to create the centre for culture technologies and is primarily known for his work entitled *Understanding Media*, which came up in 1964 as well as one of the work, which was published prior to it with the title *Gutenberg Galaxy*.

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- These works had a huge impact on the history and development of media studies.
- Both these books examined the history of media technologies and how innovations in media changed individual behaviour and culture
- Interested in exploring and studying the psychic effects of media technologies on individuals
- The change in cognition—how media technologies shape and determine cognitive structures
- McLuhan is known for the phrase: “The medium is the message” (*Understanding Media*).



His works have had a major impact on the history and development of media studies. He has tried to examine the history of media technologies and how innovations in media do not only change the culture at a bigger level, but also how do they change the individual cognition and individual capabilities of perceiving things. He has also tried to find out to what extent media can have a psychic effects on individuals. And how it is possible to change the cognition of individual human beings with the help of media technologies. He is primary known for the phrase “The Medium is the Message”, which he has used in understanding media, suggesting that form is more important than content

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- Form is more important than content
- Medium/channel of communication determines or shapes how content/message is received
- Each medium has its inherent effects which shape the uniqueness of the message it conveys
- Draws attention to the ways in which forms of media change perception
- Psychic effects of media technologies
- Medium and cognition are deeply related
- The message of any media technology is the change of scale or pace or pattern that it introduces into human affairs.



He is not happy with the way people were trying to focus on analysing the content which was being pirated through various media forms in these days. But he suggested that we should

also try to understand and study medium or the channel of communication which also determines or shapes how a content or message is received as well as it is communicated.

His idea is that each medium has a particular and inherent effect which shapes its uniqueness as well as which shapes the uniqueness of the message it conveys. He also draws the attention towards the fact how the individual perceptions are changed because of the unique ways of formatting a particular message. The message of any media technology is a change of scale or place or pattern that it introduces into human affairs.

He has taken the example of railway network to illustrate his idea that the medium is also more significant or at least as significant as the content is. He says that railways in themselves did not bring about any movement in terms of human culture.

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- McLuhan takes the example of railways to elucidate what he means by change of scales
  - Railway didn't bring about movement or transportation.
  - It accelerated and enlarged the scale of previous human functions, creating totally new kinds of cities and new kinds of work and leisure.
- What McLuhan says about the railway also applies to the media of print, television, computers and now the internet.
  - "The medium is the message" because it is the "medium that shapes and controls the scale and form of human association and action."



What they did was to simply accelerate and enlarge the scale of previous human functions and therefore created new kinds of cities, new kinds of works and also they were able to create new perceptions of leisure within human activities. So, what McLuhan has said about the railways is also applicable to the media of print, television, computers and now internet.

"The medium is the message" because it is the "medium that shapes and controls" the scale and form of human association, action and interaction with other human beings. In the next module, we would discuss the ideas of Marshall McLuhan in detail. Thank you.