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Basics in Communication and Media Studies

Edited by Mahmoud Eid & Aliaa Dakroury

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Mass Communication Theories: Explaining Origins, Processes, and Effects
by Melvin L. DeFleur

Communication Theories: Origins, Methods, and Uses in the Mass Media, Fifth
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by Werner J. Severin and James W. Tankard, Jr.

Media Ethics: Cases and Moral Reasoning, Eighth Edition
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by John R. Baldwin, Stephen D. Perry, and Mary Anne Moffitt

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by Everette E. Dennis and Melvin L. DeFleur

Comparing Media from Around the World
by Robert McKenzie

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PREFACE

The advances and uses of technologies following World War I have contributed to the arrival of the academic fields of communication and media studies to the social sciences and humanities. However, it is imperative to recognize that communication thought has a long history and is directly linked to human existence. Simply put, human beings cannot live without communication—be it intra-personal, inter-personal, group, organizational, transnational, intercultural, or international. Human beings possess innate communicative instincts; since our first experiences with fire, light, wars, and diseases, and even earlier by recording symbols and images on the walls of old caves. In modern times, we communicate through a seemingly endless smorgasbord of intuitive technologies, such as print, television, radio, satellite, Internet, social networking sites and smart phones!

Repeatedly, we receive feedback from students, especially at the early undergraduate level, who think that introductory communication and media textbooks succeed in establishing two assumptions. The first is the high level of elusiveness and abstraction in presenting communication and media scholarships to the extent that some believe that communication and media theorists are idealists who babble only about abstractions. The second trap is the over simplification of the study of communication and media to a minimal, or lack of, critical understanding of the fields. Hence, students often resent the term “theory”, thinking that it merely represents the tangled ambiguities of academia and that it has no relation to real life.

Basics in Communication and Media Studies is designed to lessen the tensions between theory and practice by providing the rationale of communication and media theories. This is done by explaining how they are based on our daily observations, and the continuous questioning, investigating, and researching of alternatives. It provides a fundamental overview of communication and media issues to inform students about the intellectual origins of the study of communication, its development, and its current trends and practices.

Consuming media is a daily habit, if not a necessity. We wake up listening to music on our alarm clock; we listen to radio while driving; we read a book or a magazine while waiting for the bus; we go to theatres to see movies; we wear the latest fashion; we download music for our media players and iPods; we text each other using our cell phones, and we develop relationships through our many social media sites. In short, we are media creatures—constantly immersed in the various communication platforms that surround us. We are continually affected by our peers, celebrities, and media institutions. Hence, as communication and media students (and consumers), it is important to understand the established body of knowledge behind our daily practices, and critically analyze and synthesize its approaches. It is important, however, to note that communication students may have backgrounds in different disciplines such as political sciences, sociology, psychology, international affairs, history, Canadian studies, human rights, law, political economy, and philosophy, among others. Thus, it is essential to engage them in communication studies by introducing the ways in which communication theories and topics affect them on the human, intellectual, and practical levels.

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Let us ask some questions, in order to give the reader meaningful examples of the application of communication and media theories: How many of us see a stop sign in our daily travels to the university campus? Many, if not all of us, right? But how many of us have perceived this stop sign as a medium of communication? Probably few! This stop sign represents one of the useful examples of how the theories of “semiotics” are evident in our daily lives. We can decode the stop sign’s red colour that symbolizes the meaning of stop when driving. How many of us have a Facebook or Twitter page or a YouTube channel? Millions use such media for social networking and communicating via time and space. In fact, the predominance of Facebook interactions among students in our classrooms is an interesting example of the “uses for gratifications” theory that argues that human beings use media to gratify specific needs in their life. This is what we do when we chat on-line, watch a specific program, or vote for our favourite Canadian idol. Even more recently and with the ongoing Arab Spring, one has to underscore the uses of social media sites not only for leisure and entertainment, but for social movement and advocacy. Contemporary scholarship on media studies examines the viral uses of social media networks to orchestrate riots and demonstrations against Tunisian, Egyptian, Libyan, and Syrian governments. To that end, government equally weighted the massive impact of social media that fuelled such revolutions to the extent of disconnecting these tools of information from their users and audience to weaken their efforts, fragment their power, and alienate their activism.

Therefore, the purpose of this book is to show that theory exists everywhere. We are continually bombarded with a seemingly infinite amount of media messages that set our news and information agenda and priorities. Yet, what is important for communication students, researchers, and future professionals is to follow the systematic line of thinking and reasoning; observe and ask questions; and look for alternatives in order to obtain answers and reach conclusions. In this, scientific thinking becomes very distinct from the typical processes of day-to-day life. For example, it is important to examine the reasons behind the creation of icons such as the teen pop culture sensation, *Justin Bieber*, and his use of media technologies. His global stardom began with simply posting his video clips on his YouTube channel when was only twelve years old, which went on to catch the attention of music executives and producers. Another interesting example of massive online attention is that of Rebecca Black—the young teen who posted her song, *Friday* in 2011 on YouTube, receiving polarized feedback on the video. In sum, the electronic media possess the ability to create extensive debate across Facebook walls, chatrooms, and among music reviews and critiques. As such, this book is designed to provide an overview of the different intellectual, philosophical, and empirical tools necessary to conceptualize, research, and study communication successfully. Thus, this book may perhaps be best described as a portal for communication students to understand, observe, reflect on, and critically analyze the various intellectual, historical, and theoretical approaches to communication and media studies, while also demonstrating how these theoretical approaches relate to social and cultural spheres.

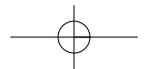
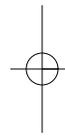
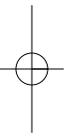
In addition to the various intellectual threads that have affected the study of communication and media since their conception following World War I (such as the study of public opinion, audience persuasion, and the spread of propaganda), there are still important ideological positions that reflect a useful understanding of current media practices. For instance, the ethics of communication practice in a democratic society represents one of the recent and most important claims among media researchers, academics, and professionals. Questions are raised with regards to what would be the most appropriate philosophical system of media governance. Such positions advocate the importance of the Foucaultian understanding of governmentality; or the art of self-governance where communication flows from the people themselves and not from their institutional powers. Particularly, from their own civic participation and practice of democracy, such decentralized power is built on effective public communication and reciprocity. For example, the viral use and dissemination of information using mobile media has impacted even the journalistic practices which traditionally depended on media corporations and their reporters to cover news and events. With the use of cell phones and handy cameras, the phenomenon of “citizen journalism” dramatically changed the practice of news gathering. Various reputed media organizations depend on those freelancers who report and feed directly to their online blog, Skype and/or FaceTime. Thus, this book provides a collection of communication research that focuses on this critical dimension of communication and media studies by delving into landmark theories, their elaborations, assessments, criticisms, and validations in our modern society. If the agenda-setting theory was initially launched in the late 1960s assuming that the media are setting our news agenda, it then becomes even more crucial now, with the advent of new media technologies and with the existence of giant media corporations, to critically re-assess such theory and examine its applicability.

Integral to *Basics in Communication and Media Studies* is the argument that there is not one-way to study communication and media; rather, communication and media must be examined from a variety of perspectives. This book will provide introductory materials that cover fundamental topics for readers who need to gain the basic knowledge of communication and media studies. It is divided into parts, each of which is a composition of a group of chapters designed to provide students with essential materials that facilitate the understanding of the major concepts of communication and media studies.

Editors

Dr. Mahmoud Eid
Dr. Aliaa Dakroury

Department of Communication
University of Ottawa, Canada



ABOUT THE EDITORS

Mahmoud Eid, Ph.D., is an Associate Professor at the Department of Communication, University of Ottawa, Canada. Dr. Eid previously taught in the University of Regina's School of Journalism in Regina, and in Carleton University's School of Journalism and Communication in Ottawa. He has been teaching communication and media courses in Canadian and Egyptian universities for more than two decades. His teaching experience, research interests, and publications concentrate on international communication and media studies, communication and media ethics and effects, communication research methods, terrorism, crisis management and conflict resolution, and the political economy of communication.

Dr. Eid is the Editor of the *Global Media Journal -- Canadian Edition*, and serves on the editorial boards of several academic journals and as an organizing committee member for various international conferences. He is the author of *Interweavement: International Media Ethics and Rational Decision-Making* (2008), series editor of *Research Methods in Communication* (2011), *Communication and Media Studies: An Introduction* (2010), *Introduction to Communication and Media Studies* (2008), and *Communication Research Methods: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches* (2007) and co-editor of *The Right to Communicate: Historical Hopes, Global Debates and Future Premises* (2009) and *Introduction to Media Studies: A Reader* (2007).

Dr. Eid has presented numerous papers at global conferences and has contributed chapters to several books published by Pearson, Hampton Press, Peter Lang, Rodopi, Rowman & Littlefield, Kendall/Hunt, and Oxford University Press, among others. In addition, he has published articles in various refereed journals, including *The Journal of International Communication*; *The European Journal of Communication Research*; *International Journal of the Humanities*; *First Monday*; *INFORMATION*; *Journalism Ethics for the Global Citizen*; *Corporate Ownership and Control*; *Journal of Integrated Marketing Communications*; *International Journal of Technoethics*; *Middle East Journal of Culture and Communication*; and *Journal of Mass Communication & Journalism*.

Aliaa Dakroury, Ph.D., is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Communication, University of Ottawa, Canada. She previously taught at Carleton University's departments of Communication, Sociology, and Law. She has been teaching communication and media courses for many years. Her teaching experience, research interests, and publications concentrate on communication history, human rights, the Right to Communicate, media representations, culture, globalization, Diaspora, information and communication technologies, and Canadian public policy.

Dr. Dakroury is the Managing Editor of the *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences*, and serves on the editorial boards of several academic journals and as an organizing committee member for various international conferences. She is the

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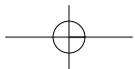
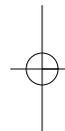
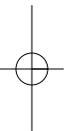
author of *Communication and Human Rights* (2009), editor of *The Right to Communicate: Historical Hopes, Global Debates and Future Premises* (2009), and co-editor of *Communication and Media Studies: An Introduction* (2010) and *Introduction to Communication and Media Studies* (2008).

Dr. Dakroury is the winner of both the 2011 *Ontario Leading Women Building Communities Award* and the 2005 Canadian Communication Association (CCA) *Van Horne Award*. She is an active member of many human rights organizations, such as the Right to Communicate group, International Freedom of Expression eXchange (IFEX), and the World Association for Christian Communication (WACC), among many others. She has been recently nominated as an *Honorary Expert in Islamic Studies* in the Islamic Resource Bank (IRB): A joint project of the Minaret of Freedom Institute, the Association of Muslim Social Scientists and the International Institute of Islamic Thought.

Dr. Dakroury has presented numerous papers at Canadian and international conferences of major communication and media associations, such as: the Canadian Communication Association, the Middle East Studies Association, the Association of Muslim Social Scientists, and the Canadian Ethnic Studies Association. Her publications appear in various refereed journals, such as *The International Communication Gazette*; *The Journal of Intergroup Relations*; *Culture, Language, and Representation*; *The Global Media Journal*; *Reconstruction: Studies in Contemporary Culture*; *Media Development*; *Journal of the World Association for Christian Communication*; *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences*; and *The Journal of International Communication*.

PART I

Introduction



CHAPTER I

Introduction to Communication and Media Studies

Aliaa Dakroury & Mahmoud Eid

For newcomers to the fields of communication and media studies, it is crucial to learn about theories and investigate their history. In order to study any field scientifically, one must not only rely on its theories, but one must equally work towards improving and developing them. Similarly, as is the case with other disciplines, understanding the history of communication and media helps to better understand their present and future.

Communication and media have great power in society. Ethics and responsibility provide a check on this power for the benefit of society and humanity, which results in power “with responsibility”, as opposed to power “without responsibility”. Communication and ethics are both very rich fields: connecting these results in an even richer area of research. For that, and given that ethics is individual while morality is collective, communication and media researchers need to understand that the world’s media systems follow various philosophies, which guide and influence their ethical conduct.

There has been a long tradition of theories, approaches, and models in communication and media studies, through which researchers have learned about the uses and effects of media and communication in society. These include a group of theories that are still widely researched and considered cornerstones for students of communication and media studies.

Communication and culture are interconnected; hence, the significance of the intercultural communication research. Levels of understanding of various cultures and differences among those cultures and groups are effectively reflected in the nature of communication. As a result, one needs to study communication in relation to language, semiotics, and representation.

Finally, it is important for Canadian communication students, researchers, and professionals to become acquainted with the contribution of the prominent Canadian scholars to communication studies research. To this end, we aim to shed some light on the significant input of two key Canadian names in the fields of communication and media studies—Marshall McLuhan and Harold Innis.

4 PART I INTRODUCTION

Communication Theory and History

Communication is much more complex than is generally perceived to be. Metts (2004) argues that communication is based on a process in which messages, whether intentional or unintentional, create meaning. Social organization exists as a result of the different communicative mechanisms adopted through its norms, rituals, cultural values, and so on. In some societies, however, communication can also be constrained based on the mechanism adopted, as in totalitarian and dictatorship regimes for instance, where freedoms of speech and expression are restrained. For that, social structures are used to determine the norms of society in both professional and social situations. Sociologists Berger and Luckmann (1966) explain that this interplay of tension and influence between social structures and communication is often called a “dialectical process”. Examples, among several in social arenas, include: discoveries and technological advances in the material world, and wars and revolutions in the political world. Communication at the social level might be strategic and/or consequential. It may be strategic in the way messages are constructed with certain goals or motivations in mind. This also relates to certain communication theories that try to explain why some communication messages are more effective than others and the factors and contexts involved in their effectiveness. Communication messages can also be consequential because they do not always have strategic goals and can potentially carry unintended or unanticipated implications. These might include unintended perceptual, behavioural, or relational consequences.

Perceptual consequences refer to our assumptions about others, such as level of education, social class, attitudes, and so on, as well as others’ assumptions about us. Our assumptions also make us believe that people are sending us messages through their appearances. However, opinions may also change, without intent from third parties, but these changes in opinions are based on the messages to which one has been exposed. Behavioural consequences refer to changing one’s own behaviour without outside influence. This may be a result of choosing to be around people you enjoy spending time with and avoiding spending time with those who make you feel uncomfortable. Conversational synchrony occurs when you match someone else’s communication pattern. For example, a student may avoid using slang around a teacher as the teacher does not typically use slang, or a person may use an enthusiastic tone when the person she/he is speaking with is also speaking enthusiastically. Relational consequences occur when interaction patterns are repeated and sustained within professional, social, and personal relationships. For example, family, workplace, and school interactions stress patterns of repetitiveness and sustainment.

Communication theories are distinguished from lay theories, which attempt to explain merely how and why things occur in our world, from wondering why the computer will not turn on, to why your roommate is messy. When producing lay theories one generates variables in order to attempt to understand the situation. From a scholarly perspective, the same is true; however, scholars must account for the required validity that their peers will find convincing based on the research methods that were used. Thereby, theory describes concepts and the

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specification of relationships between, or surrounding, these concepts. Theories can change depending on new concepts that are introduced and/or the potential of hypothesized relationships. Concepts are the building block of theories because they refer to features, qualities, or characteristics of elements in categories. Thus, concepts are definitions used in assessing the categories scholars want to isolate and study in order to understand and assess theories.

The relationships that exist between concepts are based on three types of propositions: temporal relationships, correlational association, and causal propositions. A temporal relationship stresses that some concepts come before other concepts in time; a correlational association stresses that two or more concepts tend to occur or change together in a patterned manner; and a causal proposition, which is the most complex association, stresses the notion of cause and effect. For the notion of cause and effect to hold true, it is required that one concept precedes another, that a relationship exists between the concepts, and that one concept causes or motivates the other concept. Complexity arises in causal propositions due to the challenges in assessing cause and effect in the social sciences. When cause and effect are introduced in communication theories, they are based on statistical probabilities or statistical laws, which raise the possibility that other potential reasons exist. Additionally, descriptive/sensitizing schemes are not formal propositions, but do assess concepts and relationships among concepts when creating descriptive frameworks for studies of human behaviour.

Generally, scholars construct theories based on inductive and deductive approaches, using each when necessary. Inductive theory (often bottom-up) building is used in indiscriminate observations. In presenting this form of theory building, theorists sometimes use their observations with minimal alterations. Another example of this form of theory building would be typologies or categories that are used to organize observation. Inductive approaches can be advantageous, as they avoid the blind spots that preconceived assumptions tend to create. Deductively (often top-down) building theories require that scholars begin by hypothesizing how a process works along with the relationship between concepts and then use observation methods such as statistical values in testing their hypothesis. This is often called hypothetico-deductive theory because the goal is to test and confirm assumptions rather than to discover something new. Deductive approaches can be advantageous because they allow for systematic testing and refining of speculations. An example of deductive research is the investigation of public speaking and political discourse.

The basic functions of a theory include organizing, describing, explaining, predicting, and controlling certain phenomena. In order to find out whether a theory is successful at explaining its concepts, the following criteria should be used: utility, scope, parsimony, heurism, and falsifiability. Utility is based on its cumulative usefulness and contribution to the field of communication research, and is also tied to three other criteria to be described below. It is important in order to judge the legitimacy of a theory, as the author stresses this point again before the conclusion of this chapter. However, utility has been criticized for not being able to identify the audience who evaluates a theory's real-world applications. A blurred line is also created by assessing the difference between the criteria of a theory and the criteria

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of a utility. Predictive validity is one difference that requires a theory to be anticipated. Scope can be a subset of utility but also works independently in the evaluation of a theory. Simply put, scope is the amount of focus placed on communication—whether broad and across culture and/or context or narrow in focus to a specific context. However, scope must be thought of as a continuum and not as a dichotomy. Parsimony refers to the manner in which a theory is written. Regardless of whether a theory is simple or complex, for a theory to have parsimony it must present the concepts as simply and clearly as possible. Heurism refers to new ways in which a theory or theories allow one to perceive phenomena, processes, and issues, thereby promoting further research. Well-defined concepts and clear relationships between concepts tend to have heurism. An example of this is the media effects theory, which has spawned several studies in understanding its usage and effects. However, theories that tend to be harder to test empirically, such as the spiral of silence theory, spawn fewer studies and may not be considered heuristic. Falsifiability explains whether the claim made by a theory can ever be proven false. It is more likely to be used in a traditional social science theory than the descriptive or inductive theories described above.

Practically, an understanding of the history of mass communication helps one better appreciate the role of the media in contemporary society. Understanding the history of mass communication also allows us to learn about how we gain information and can help us be more critical of the things we know. There is a difference between the real world and the inaccurate picture of the world that is painted by the media. Public relations strategists and privacy issues can alter the media's portrayal of the real world based on their influence in the process of gathering and delivering news. To illustrate this, Rebecca Carrier (2004) gives an example of a 1988 Exxon Valdez oil spill, when a public relations campaign stated that the oil spill had been taken care of when in fact it had not. Time-constrained journalistic research, among other factors, plays a role in creating a false image of the news for the audience. Politicians and the government also play a role in distortion within the media, which arguably reoccurred more recently in the British Petroleum April 2010 coverage in the Gulf of Mexico.

In response, research suggests that media create what is termed a “Pseudo-environment” for audiences as it becomes difficult for them to distinguish reality from information that has been manipulated by public relations strategists, as well as the packaging done by journalists in delivering the story. Direct experience is more trusted than media experience, but since direct experience is not always possible we must be cautious of experiences reported by the media.

It is interesting to mention that the media's increasing use of persuasion and propaganda techniques began around the time of Walter Lippmann's book, *Public Opinion* (1922). Advertising was on the rise, as was the threat of World War I followed by World War II. His book was one of the first texts to explain the role of the media in shaping public opinion, creating stereotypes, and so forth. The limited effects perspective began to take shape in the 1960s due to the limited role, it was thought, that the media played in persuading their audiences. Before this time, a macroscopic view tended to generalize and group the media and audiences in a homogenized fashion. Since researchers from the 1970s and 1980s were unsatisfied with results from the 1960s with regards to media effects, they began

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION TO COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA STUDIES 7

to look at potential and more specific effects of mass communication. The limited but powerful effects perspective explains how media are powerful in shaping only limited sets of our beliefs.

Several scholars had fundamental interactions with earlier forms of media beginning in the early 1900s with Charles Cooley, Robert Park, Harold Lasswell, Paul Lazarsfeld, and John Dewey, who all stressed the influence of mass communication. The magic bullet theory (hypodermic needle theory), which implied the powerful effects of the media, was based on the Payne Fund studies in the 1920s about the effects of motion pictures on children. The results showed that the media had a strong influence on the young audience. However this view assumed that all audiences were identical, holding the same values and beliefs. Secondly it assumed that they would react the same way to the messages conveyed. Believing the results of the Payne Fund studies could work, Frank Capra, a Hollywood director, was hired to produce films which would rally soldiers and the citizenry in support of World War II. Researchers at Yale, after testing the films on audiences, found that they had very little effect. In the eve of Halloween 1938, Orson Welles of CBS radio aired a dramatization of the H. G. Wells science fiction *The War of the Worlds* that played deadly attacks of Martian on the Earth. Listeners who tuned in late to the show missed the introductory statements and fled their homes in panic proving the assumption of the mass society theory (or the magic bullet effect of media).

As a result, and around the same time, Paul Lazarsfeld and his colleagues conducted a study on the influence of political media messages on voters in Erie County, Pennsylvania. Their conclusions showed that the media had direct influence on a small group of opinion leaders; however, generally speaking, the media only reinforced attitudes people already held. The two-step flow of communication was created out of this study, which explained that less informed masses receive filtered and reshaped media messages through a small group of informed people. The limited effects theory then asserts the limited effects of the media, and juxtaposing the magic bullet theory taking into account social relationships, as well as psychological processes. The individual (based on race, age, gender, religion, political affiliation, etc.) was now the focus for researchers. This opened the door to attempting to understand how and why individuals interpret messages the way they do. Because of the assumed limited effects, two generations of scholarly work largely ignored the media and their effects. However, advertisers were spending a lot of capital in attempting to reach diverse audiences who, as research stressed, would be difficult to persuade.

Yet, in the 1970s and 1980s the notion of limited (in some areas), but powerful effects of the media arose again in research circles. Three approaches explain this theory: agenda-setting theory; framing or frame analysis; and media system dependency theory. According to Bernard Cohen (1963), agenda-setting theory stresses that the media tell audiences not “what to think”, but “what to think about”. In essence, the media’s messages in society serve as a catalyst in public opinion. From a macroscopic view, the media often present problems about society that the public find important. Devoting more time and space to a story (in print or on air) as well as the choice of a particular type of coverage explain the role of media in setting what is important and what is less important for the audience. Framing or frame analysis theory stresses that social cues are carried through soci-

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ety by advertising and other media forms. Frames are ways in which we make sense of social situations and act as signals for ways to respond to these situations. Media system dependency theory expresses that the media have a powerful effect when people have no personal contact or experience with situations and events (natural disasters, etc). Research concluded that it is not necessary to rely solely on the media when people have adequate information from interpersonal contact with others, such as friends and family. As a result, when interpersonal contact on a situation or event is absent, the power of the media increases significantly.

In refuting the tradition of powerful effects of the media, uses and gratifications theory explains the power of an individual's use and non-use of media messages and media products based on their wants and needs and can often produce different results from the same messages. The theory, alongside the limited but powerful effects model, tends to focus on the goals, motivations, and reasoning of the audience. This theory assumes that the audience is not a passive target of the media, but rather, an active recipient of media messages and uses the media according to a set of wants, needs, and preferences. In other words, uses and gratifications theory explains what the media do not do to the audiences, but what the audiences do with the media.

Finally, highlighting the cultural aspect of media consumption, cultivation theory views media and culture as inseparable, stating that media images affect culture in far-reaching and pervasive ways. Originally evolved by George Gerbner's 1970s study on violence in the media, the theory suggests that frequent television viewing in contrast with limited viewing causes frequent viewers to experience suspicion and fear of others in society. This fear is labelled the mean world syndrome. Television is able to cultivate an audience's perception of religious values, sex roles, race, and so forth.

Media Ethics and Philosophy

Ethics is a branching field of philosophy that deals with right and wrong actions. William Neher and Paul Sandin (2007) explain that ethics refers to a systematic method for making judgments concerning voluntary actions. They highlight four points when defining ethics:

- 1) A system is necessary for objectivity in decisions or judgments we make and their justification to ourselves and others;
- 2) Judgments about the actions taken determine whether they are right or wrong, according to the principles of the method applied;
- 3) Judgments are important because they demonstrate that the actor always had choices or options in making the ethical decision; and
- 4) The chosen actions are done internally by the actor, who knew what their intentions were in their choices/actions.

Communication ethics applies ethical thought to areas involving human communication (whether interpersonal, political, religious, mass communication, and so on). Integrity is a key ethical principle, which entails the unity of a person and the

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principles or virtues one holds in which these characteristics are consistent to that person. Problems that arise include the difficulty of being consistent every single day of one's life and the challenge of coming to a consensus on a definition of integrity. Integrity becomes more a basis of idealism than reality.

It is important to underscore that philosophies of media systems act as a diagnostic, imperfect tool that may help us understand how and why media systems appear to have different purposes across various cultures. Furthermore, a media system philosophy is perceived as a root network that feeds the media system with characteristics from the surrounding culture. According to Robert McKenzie (2006), there are six philosophies for media systems. The first four philosophies are titled legacy philosophies (formerly normative theories) while the last two are titled contemporary philosophies. The legacy philosophies are: 1) authoritarian; 2) libertarian; 3) communist; and 4) social responsibility. A bias existed about early normative theories because they did not account for societies in which corporate interests and peer pressures dominated media systems, and only focused on government and military control of the media. Thus, philosophy research of media became the term used because it better evaluated how media systems might operate and now how they should operate. The two contemporary philosophies are: 5) developmental; and 6) democratic-participant.

According to authoritarian philosophy, the head of the country is an all-knowing ruler who demands obedience and acquiescence. This philosophy holds that no external cultures may encroach on the traditional cultures and values held by the authoritarian state. Traditional theorists of this philosophy include Plato and Machiavelli. The governance of society through authoritarian philosophy is done through three main areas: 1) the decree issued by a ruler, and then adhered to by government agencies and citizens without much formal debate; 2) the legislative process in which a ruler submits the proposed policy to a deliberative body that discusses it only for formality and then enacts it into law; and 3) interpretation of religious doctrine through sacred texts, which is then enacted into policy or law. Three points are listed for a media system that draws its roots from an authoritarian philosophy: 1) to serve the goals of the state; 2) the immunity of the state from media criticism; and 3) state control of the media. McKenzie then lists ways in which this philosophy is implemented by the state, including state censorship and self-censorship. Retributions by the state against media systems that counter the authority of the state include punishment and seditious libel.

Yet, in libertarian philosophy the individual is the most important. The state's purpose is to defend against external hostilities and to avoid interfering with the individual. Based on seventeenth century philosophers such as John Locke, John Stuart Mill, and Adam Smith, libertarian philosophy countered the absolute monarchy of its time. This philosophy was later adapted by capitalists for whom a free-market was crucial to economic success. The governance of society through libertarian philosophy is done through two main areas: 1) constitutional law, and 2) legislative and judicial law. Three points are listed for a media system that draws its roots from an authoritarian philosophy: 1) most media are privately owned and operated; 2) governments can enter the marketplace only to maintain fair competition; and 3) the media regulate themselves. Rewards are given to

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those who engage in fair competition, while punishments are dealt to those who do not compete fairly in the marketplace.

As for communist philosophy, the state's role is to be the caretaker of society. The ideal society is egalitarian where there is an equal distribution of wealth with no poverty present. Benefits of society are based on the collective and not the individual. This philosophy maintains that materialism is bad and that the bourgeoisie exploit the labour of the proletariat to maximize wealth. The governance of society through communist philosophy is done through two main areas: 1) the decree issued by the communist party which may be voted on at the party level but not the public; and 2) the planning objective is developed and administered by a central government committee. Three points are listed for a media system that draws its roots from a communist philosophy (the first two are to promote tasteful material programming): 1) state ownership of property; 2) use of media to elevate public tastes; and 3) the teaching of communist doctrine. Media that do not abide by the communist rule are censored and punished.

Social responsibility philosophy holds that government influences the news media to provide fair and balanced information for the greater good of society. The media tend to regulate themselves; however, the government steps in when self-regulation is not sufficient. In return, media outlets are allowed access to non-classified documents if they avoid criticizing the government. This philosophy tends to be based on a mutual relationship between the media and the government. This philosophy first came about in the United States during World War II and rose again in the 1980s. In short, the social responsibility theory asserts that media should be free from government control in order to properly serve the public's interest and their right to know. The governance of society through social responsibility philosophy is done through two main areas: 1) the bully pulpit, where government action is threatened if media professionals are unable to establish their own code of conduct; and 2) legally binding regulation set forth by the government. Three points are listed for a media system that draws its roots from the social responsibility philosophy: 1) news media routinely provide factual coverage tempered with contextual information; 2) news media content must contain balanced opinion and commentary; and 3) editors and directors should clarify societal goals and desires (such as on-air editorials, letters to the editor, etc.). Finally, this philosophy is primarily implemented through public accountability (through laws and regulation) and secondly through public admonishment.

Developmental philosophy is based on improving quality of life in developing countries by means of government funding for establishing institutions. It holds that government is to support media that acts as a stimulus for social change. This philosophy is a product of the UNESCO debates in a report by Sean MacBride called *Many Voices, One World* (1980), albeit the theory had originated 25 years earlier. The governance of society through the developmental philosophy is done through two main areas: 1) the legal establishment of media freedom (independence from government control); and 2) government mandate that requires media to perform certain tasks in exchange for funding. Three points are listed for a media system that draws its roots from the developmental philosophy: 1) the media serve as a watchdog on the activities of government, specifically to

improve physical infrastructure; 2) media pursue cultural autonomy by maintaining the country's own distinctive culture; 3) media export domestic media content to other countries. Finally, this philosophy is commonly implemented through international assistance (World Bank loans, debt forgiveness, etc.) as well as the public's expectation of their media to act as a stimulus for social change.

Finally, democratic-participation philosophy holds that citizen-created media content is essential to all forms of government. This philosophy, established between the 1970s and the 1990s in the United States, is still an emerging philosophy. The idea behind this philosophy is to formulate media operations in a way that involves citizens in all phases of producing media content. Furthermore, this philosophy argues that two common situations often create disenfranchisement: 1) in countries where media systems operate largely by transnational media conglomerates; and 2) in countries where media systems are mainly administered by government agencies. The governance of society through the democratic-participation philosophy is done through two main areas: 1) citizen-group pressure, in which individuals usually at the local level attempt to gain greater access to media production equipment and to the creation of institutional media content; and 2) alternative media start-ups by organizations. Two points are listed for a media system that draws its roots from the democratic-participation philosophy: 1) citizen-initiated media content; and 2) citizen groups are guaranteed the freedom to express opinions without fear of retribution from the government or corporate media. Finally, this philosophy is commonly implemented through citizen viewpoints, citizen participation in the process of producing content, and citizen access to media facilities.

Communication Research and Media Effects

Following World War II, researchers attempted to understand the mass media's impact on audiences. Some believed that mass media held the future of democracy, while others believed that mass media were actually an impediment to democracy—these opinions were based on the powerful effects (magic bullet theory) of the media. Joseph Klapper's (1960) conclusions maintained the following in regards to mass communication studies: 1) the media have less effect/power than once assumed by the average citizen; 2) effects are felt by the audience in response to media messages, however they are minor; and 3) the conditions are more complex in regards to the effects the media do have on their audience.

A new approach to the effects of mass media on audiences was needed as numerous factors played a role in the relationship between the media and audiences. As Lowery and DeFleur (1995) explain, the secondary stage of the two-step flow assessed that the receiver/audience member of mass communication had social ties with family and peers who influenced their interpretation of mass media messages and what to do with them—it was not simply mass communication effects on a mass audience. Thus, a social model was important in analyzing the flow of information between the media and the mass audience. The rediscovery of the primary group was a term given to demonstrate new research, which showed the impact of society and culture and interactions with groups within society, leaving behind the notion of biological factors. The Hawthorn study, con-

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ducted in the 1930s, demonstrated this effect with worker productivity based on strong social ties between workers.

Katz's and Lazarsfeld's (1955) *Personal Influence* study showed conformity within primary groups (small groups) when assessing opinion leaders. Katz and Lazarsfeld explain that when the media attempt to portray presidential elections, they often use ambiguous and contradictory information. Individuals frequently turn to members of their immediate social groups, or primary groups for interpretation, which in turn creates a reality for that individual. Common values are another point in which people tend to be drawn to one another within the primary group. They are also known as a reference group, since individuals refer to other members for advice and other forms of help. Katz and Lazarsfeld's *Personal Influence* links other important social factors and activities to mass communication behaviour.

Opinion leaders come in many forms, including those in positions of authority. They make up the principle guides of numerous institutions and impact socio-economic life. However, there are opinion leaders within the primary group who have face-to-face contact with those whom they influence. The Decatur study is considered to be a significant step to study the two-step flow of communication more systematically. Particularly, it examined the influence of opinion leaders on others in everyday life situations. These included: marketing leaders; fashion leaders; public affairs leaders; and movie selection leaders. The research procedure involved selecting the research site and then finding a sample. The site selected was Decatur, Illinois, since it possessed the characteristics the researchers were looking for in terms of economic status, mass communication usage patterns, commercial activities, and so forth.

Despite its importance, the Decatur study would falter upon contemporary research techniques. It was limited in sampling techniques, validity, statistical analyses, measurements, and so forth. However the study was a milestone in mass communication research because it provided a pivotal point in redirecting research. Katz's and Lazarsfeld's *Personal Influence* was an excellent opportunity to study the two-step flow model. It also reduced the notion of the powerful effects of the media.

There has also been intensive research on the agenda-setting function of the press. This research relies on the idea of returning to the known subtle influence of mass media and studying their presence within contemporary society. What is known so far about mass media is their consistent flow of news. Additionally, mass media are known to be selective in which news they communicate due to gatekeepers, financial constraints, and efforts to maximize profit. However, mass media do present an agenda to audiences with respect to which issues to think about and which issues to respond to. Walter Lippmann (1922) suggested that experiencing events firsthand is not always possible and media needed to provide information on these events. As noted earlier, Bernard Cohen (1963) is one of the earliest scholars who studied the notion of agenda-setting function of the media in his assertion that that the press may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is acutely successful in telling its readers what to think about; hence the notion of the agenda-setting function of the media.

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Following that, the exploratory study by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw (1972) was conducted to observe the idea of the mass media functioning as agenda-setters in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. A sample of voter responses was compared to what they thought were key issues during the 1968 presidential campaign versus what the media were presenting during that period of 24 days. The sample of 100 respondents was purposive, as the researchers wanted to deal with undecided voters, and thus, narrowed their sample. The media studied included five newspapers, two weekly news magazines (that reported on the campaign), and two network TV news broadcasts. The results were astounding in describing the correlation between campaign issues expressed by the media and that of the voters' judgments on the importance of these issues. This was achieved by analyzing the results of the rank order of party issues provided to the sample, which was then compared to the media's emphasis on the same issues. What the media emphasized was also emphasized by the sample.

Particularly, the presidential election campaign between Richard Nixon and George McGovern in 1972 was another opportunity for McCombs and Shaw to expand on their original study and increase its sophistication. Accumulation and expansion of knowledge was known as programmatic research. In 1977, McCombs and Shaw with other members of their research team released their findings in *The Emergence of American Political Issues: The Agenda-Setting Function of the Press*. The research had multiple objectives but was all related to the agenda-setting function of the news media. The following five objectives were listed:

- 1) Defining the concept: it had to explicitly define the concepts and state relationships between independent and dependent variables with a systematic approach of agenda-setting.
- 2) Information sources for personal agendas: an attempt to understand where people received information was key in order to assess the salience of rank ordering the issues of the campaign. It is quite possible that the two-step flow, in which opinion leaders were influential as a source of information, was possibly another source for information.
- 3) Sequencing over time as a major variable: the idea that agenda-setting issues raised by the media affect the public through a time frame.
- 4) The personal characteristics of voters: the type of people mostly influenced by the agenda-setting hypothesis and the idea that possibly, some more than others, turn to media for their information. The voting age had been lowered from 21 to 18 and it was wondered if younger voters would turn out.
- 5) Politics and agenda setting: the overall picture of the study once the data are in. It may reveal the answer to the importance of the agenda-setting function to the political process in the United States, if it has negative or positive effects, and so on.

Charlotte, North Carolina was chosen for the research site because of the following factors: 1) it is located further away from major cities; 2) it has less media and hence can narrow focus; 3) the population was 354,000, which was large

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enough in diversity but small enough for the sample needed; 4) its growth in population, social and economic activity had grown/was growing; 5) it historically voted republican. The panel design idea expressed that the sample of respondents be interviewed at different points in time to assess the role of the media from the beginning of their agenda-setting, and then the audience's reaction to it. The sample was 227 registered voters who were interviewed over a period of three times, and 24 black voters who were added to the list in October and contacted in November. The researchers were aware of the limitations in their samples due to record keeping issues on Charlotte's part, but the results yielded useful data.

Shaw and McCombs (1974) determine the agenda-setting hypothesis in a cognitive rather than an affective framework since they do not believe in the powerful effects of the media. They adopt the work of Lippmann and others on the notion of the media's role in generating a common culture of shared beliefs about certain political aspects of our environment that play a significant part in bringing us together at election time. This hypothesis is used in relation to independent and dependent variables and is fairly simple until it accounts for its relationship with a web of complex factors that produce gatekeepers, media agenda setters, and public individual agendas. This social system deals with the social construction of shared meanings that are a result of interpersonal and mass communication in modern society. TV networks presented their version of agenda-setting while newspapers provided theirs. However, both media discussed the main issues that were brought up by the candidates. These included: Vietnam, youth and drugs, the economy, USSR-China, Watergate, and the environment. Results revealed that the reporting from TV networks, and to some extent newspapers, were the major sources of information. They played a larger role than interpersonal discussions of the issues at hand. Between the four-month periods of the study (June-October), there was an increased media-voter correlation on agenda setting. Furthermore, paid political advertisements may have helped solicit feelings about candidates as individual people but did not appear to strongly influence their personal decisions about the main issues.

The issue surrounding the study's time sequence and determining a causal relationship was that as time progresses, it could very well be voter behaviour that creates the media's agenda setting rather than the other way around. It was clear that the newspaper's agenda was influential on voter agenda during the four-month period, while TV networks did not show similar results. Researchers wanted to know: why do some voters respond to media content more than others do? Three major factors were explained: 1) level of interest of the voter in media news content, based on perceived relevance to their concern; 2) degree to which the voter was uncertain about the issue within the content; and 3) effort required to find reliable sources of information. A concept called "need for orientation" was revealed, based on the first two factors, which address individuals with low, medium, or high orientation. The orientation need is described as a personality factor in seeking exposure to the media content. Results indicate that the higher the orientation needs, the higher the media usage; hence the hypothesis that orientation needs lead to media exposure and then to agenda-setting influences. Mass media, specifically news media, engage in agenda-setting as part of the

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communication processes in society by which individuals develop and share political meanings. This relates to the social construction of reality by voters in instances of election campaigns, aspects of political issues, and candidate images. The press also influences elite political culture since key decision makers are often consumers of the socially constructed reality.

The evolution of effects theories in mass communication has received significant attention by communication scholars. For example, Severin and Tankard (2001) list four reasons: 1) the public is concerned about the effects of mass media messages on audiences; 2) creators of mass communication messages are concerned about the effects of their efforts; 3) understanding causes and effects is one of the most powerful kinds of human knowledge; and 4) analyzing mass communication in terms of causes and effects fits well with the scientific model of research.

The bullet theory (also known as the hypodermic needle theory or the transmission belt theory) predicts strong and universal effects of mass communication messages on all audience members who happen to be exposed to them. It originated during World War I when the power of propaganda was used, and continued before World War II with common fear surrounding the possibility of a Hitler-like person coming to power in the United States. The Institute for Propaganda Analysis was created in response to this fear, and it began a massive campaign to educate Americans on the techniques of propaganda. The limited-effects model posits that mass communication typically has small effects on receivers. Research on orientation films, cartoons, and elections (by Lazarsfeld and associates) showed the limits of mass communication. Mediating factors, as Klapper (1960) describes in his findings, were based on selective processes, group processes, group norms, and opinion leadership. The powerful-effects model suggests that the mass media, with the right combination of techniques and circumstances, can have a significant effect on a large number of people.

Cultivation theory is a specific theory of media effects that explains the effects of television viewing on people's perceptions, attitudes, and values. George Gerbner and his colleagues believe that American culture is centered on the television set. Cultivation theory explains that television elicits repetitive messages in which frequent watching makes people feel that the world is an unsafe place. In response to criticism that this theory fails to account for other variables, Gerbner and his team revised the theory and added two notions to it: mainstreaming and resonance, where the first is said to occur when heavy viewing leads to a convergence of outlooks across groups, while the second maintains that the cultivation effect is increased for a certain group of the population. Conflicting results of the cultivation theory also found that viewers actively and differentially evaluate television content, rendering them an active audience. Other critics have come up with the extended cultivation hypothesis, which says that the cultivation theory may only work for certain types of television programming genres (such as crime programs), or local news stories, which give the perception that crime hits close to home. However, Gerbner continues to assess certain aspects of his theory because of the economic motivations toward large audiences, in which the most popular type of program material presents consistent and complementary messages, often reproducing what has already proven to be profitable.

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The spiral of silence theory explains that the mass media are more powerful than any other theory proposes. This theory believes that people holding opinions that they perceive to be part of the minority tend not to voice those opinions due to a fear of social isolation. This silencing of opinions creates a downward spiral that influences others to refrain from expressing their own views. Mass media contribute to the phenomenon because they provide a significant means for individuals to gauge majority opinions. Three characteristics of mass communication play on the formation of public opinion, which affects the spiral of silence. The first is cumulation, referring to the build-up of certain themes or messages over time. The second is ubiquity, referring to the widespread presence of the mass media. The third is consonance, referring to the unified picture of an event or issue that can develop and is often shared by different forms of media (televisions, newspapers, etc.).

The third-person effect hypothesis proposes that people tend to overestimate the influence that mass communication messages have on the attitude and behaviour of others. This effect involves two major hypotheses: the perceptual hypothesis, suggesting that people perceive that a mass media message has greater effects on others than themselves, and the behavioural hypothesis, suggesting that because of that perception, people might take various actions. The application of the third-person effect is stressed in political campaign communication as well as certain kinds of censorship or attempts to control or limit information in which advocates of censorship worry more about censoring others than themselves. Furthermore, its usage is helpful in discussing rap music with violent lyrics, as well as mass media portrayal of ideal body images. The greater the social distance between the individual and the comparison group, the greater the third-person effect.

According to the media framing concept, a frame is a central organizing idea for news content that supplies a context. It suggests what an issue means through the use of selection, emphasis, exclusion, and elaboration. If advocates succeed in people's acceptance of the framed debate, then they have already won. Media framing is often done through news coverage. Traditional concepts of bias tend to change when news events are seen as being framed; framing may be more subtle which increases its power, while bias is sometimes clearly evident. Framing is occasionally defined by those in power, with the media simply transmitting the framed message—as was the case in the 1980s with the Reagan administration's framing of the communist threat from Latin America. Research has also shown how media framing may have an effect on the audience's interpretation of an issue. Frames may sometimes work with devices such as headlines, leads, pull quotes, and nut graphs, which then fit into a category called "advanced organizer". This organizer explains that information that is stored in a person's head is organized in a hierarchical manner along with specific information that is centralized under broader principles.

Marshall McLuhan's media determinism stresses that "the medium is the message". Essentially, McLuhan believes that communication media's most important effect is on their receivers' habits and perceptions of thinking. This deals with human beings' five senses—sight, hearing, touch, smell, and taste. However, through technology, the media are able to emphasize and encourage using one sense over

the other. Television, for example, places emphasis on more of the senses, while print emphasizes vision. Television utilizes a balance of our senses while drawing us closer together through a “global village”. Furthermore, it is not the content of the medium, but the medium itself which influences us. Testing McLuhan’s theory has proven difficult as the effects McLuhan mentioned were pervasive and far-reaching, hence it took longer to witness the effects of the medium, and test results were only short-term. The National Assessment of Educational Progress concluded in a study about declining literacy rates among youth that it was an effect of the medium of television and the decline of focus on print.

Media hegemony attributes wide and possibly powerful influence to mass media. The concept of hegemony states that those in privileged positions within society also dominate with ruling ideas, which are accepted by citizens. Thus, media hegemony, based on news and other media content, dictates capitalist and/or corporate ideologies.

Hypotheses on the effects of television violence on viewer behaviour include: the catharsis hypothesis, which stresses that television violence releases the viewer’s aggression in a controlled, vicarious way; and the stimulation hypothesis, which believes increased exposure to violent television causes increased aggressive behaviour. This leads to the imitation or modeling hypothesis, which holds that people reproduce aggressive behaviour learned from television. A final hypothesis entitled the disinhibition hypothesis, suggests that because of violent or aggressive programming, people will tend to see violence as a norm in engaging and relating with others in the real world by lowering their inhibitions on violence/aggression. With the numerous studies done on these hypotheses, only a handful of people supported the catharsis position while many more supported the disinhibition and imitation hypotheses. Limitations to the studies conducted include being in a controlled environment, where reprisal for aggressive behaviour would not be sought, as well as the fact that the studies had only produced short-term effects.

Research on what people do with the media is often termed as the uses and gratifications theory, which shifts focus from the purposes of the communicator to the purposes of the audience. As Severin and Tankard (2001) explain, the research findings show that different people can use the same mass communication message for very different purposes. They present studies done in the 1964 general election in Britain with the questions: why people watch or avoid party broadcasts; what uses they wish to make of them; and what their preferences are between alternative ways of presenting politicians on television. The majority of the results indicated that people used the political broadcasts as a source of information about political affairs. The uses and gratifications approach has drawn some criticism for being non-theoretical, vague in defining key concepts, and essentially nothing more than a data-collecting strategy. Furthermore, media hegemony is also not factored into the theory. A further challenge to the uses and gratifications theory is the use of mass media as a ritualistic or habitual form of “mildly pleasant stimulation”, in which audiences navigate media in autopilot.

A few studies have been conducted to determine the uses and gratifications theory based on the increased choices of audiences, such as cable television,

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which provides new and diverse opportunities for the audience to become active. An individual's channel repertoire is based on the subset of available cable television channels that correspond to one's interests. Furthermore, viewers tend to use various scanning strategies to decide which programs to watch. These include automatic, controlled, elaborated, restricted, exhaustive, or terminating. The most active viewers tend to use controlled, elaborated, and exhaustive searching strategies. Videocassette recorder users have tended to be an active audience based on research. Computer connectivity is a term used to describe the use of computers to communicate with others through information services and the Internet. In relation to the uses and gratifications theory, research in this field showed that people who were logged on to networks or information services found them logging on out of ritualistic use. As a result, such behaviour might lead to users becoming addicted to being constantly online.

Recent development in uses and gratifications research includes treating audiences and media use as a variable, rather than as active or passive viewers. Sometimes media users are selective and rational in their processing of media messages, but at other times are using the media for relaxation or escapism. Also, temporary loneliness has recently been shown as a category for the uses and gratifications theory. Moreover, film scholars have begun to use an active audience approach to help us understand the viewing of extremely violent films. In sum, the uses and gratifications theory shows that people use media for numerous ends and that they are in control, in contrast to the hypodermic needle theory. The digital age will reveal more because audiences have more choice and control (recoding technology, the World Wide Web, etc.).

Communication, Culture, and Representation

John Baldwin and Suraj Kapoor (2004) define culture as systems of beliefs, behaviours, values, attitudes, a way of life, and so forth. Intercultural communication is then described as symbol systems and cultural perceptions that are distinct enough to alter the communication process. Intergroup communication (perceived differences, such as Democrat/Republican, Latino/Black, etc.) is different from intercultural communication due to its reliance on prejudice and stereotypes and the fact that it highlights different group identities rather than differing communication styles. A three-dimensional model of communication includes: intergroup, intercultural, and interpersonal communication (individual differences).

Cross-cultural communication is a term explaining a framework to compare cultural differences. Communication is the code (the spoken word), the context, and the meaning attributed to an event by communicators. Meaning is important in interactions with other cultures because people attribute meanings to other cultures based on their own cultural framework. High-context cultures tend to emphasize meaning whereas low-context cultures tend to emphasize the code. Geert Hofstede (1997) developed four dimensions of cultural difference: power distance, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity-femininity, and individualism-collectivism. Power distance refers to the acceptance and expectance of less powerful members of organizations and institutions of unequal power distribution within a

country. Uncertainty avoidance differentiates cultures based on structure and rule preferences. Masculinity-femininity asserts that direct goal-oriented communication is masculine while modest communication is feminine. Individualism-collectivism believes that individual cultures tend to focus on personal goals rather than group goals, whereas collectivist cultures tend to view the tribal family, work groups and so on, as essential to the group. Status and power distances are more predominant in collective cultures whereas urbanization and industrialization tends to produce more individualistic cultures.

According to Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson (1987), politeness theory asserts that groups tend to balance their own cultures with the cultures of others. This has been extended in order to explain intercultural interactions; face-negotiation theory of conflict and conversational constraints theory are both extensions of politeness theory. Face-negotiation theory of conflict, by Stella Ting-Toomey (1988), tends to explain the goals of each culture involved in the communication process. Her theory entails the notion of face-saving, face needs and politeness. It also entails styles of: domination or competition, yielding or obligation, avoidance, collaboration, and compromise. She also believes high-context cultures tend to be collectivist while low-context cultures tend to be individualistic. Min-Sun Kim's (1993; 1995) conversational constraints theory explains that communicators use procedural knowledge to guide their choice of communication tactics as well as the general assessment of communication competence. Face support and need for clarity are things used when dealing with constraint communication. In her model, Kim includes psychological gender (the degree of adopting traditional gender roles), self-construal (how individuals view themselves in comparison to others), and individualism-collectivism.

The communication theory of ethnic identity (CTEI) stresses that through communication, groups can culturally create identities. This notion states that identities (core symbols, rules, meanings, etc.) within the group can change while other elements remain the same. Intersecting identities within people may vary based on salience, intensity, scope, content, and relationship. Examples of scenarios are then given for this theory and terms such as personal level, dyadic level, relational level, and communal level are used to describe the interaction between a Caucasian American male and African American female.

The communication accommodation theory (CAT) explains that the degree to which people accommodate other cultures with different accents, languages, etc. depends on their perception of that culture. In speech, people may converge, diverge, or maintain usual speech patterns. Interpretability strategies can be used to converge or diverge by increasing or slowing down the speed of their speech or speaking more loudly. Discourse management strategies such as controlling or giving others control of the topic, along with interpersonal control strategies which include interrupting, using formal titles, and so forth, are used to converge or diverge in intercultural speech. However, diverging or converging is based on motives. Converging and diverging can be either good or bad, depending on the situation, as either method may have negative outcomes. Hyper-explanation would be an adverse outcome of converging speech since it tends to be used by Caucasians to over-

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simplify their words or grammar when speaking with African Americans. This results in Caucasians being viewed as prejudiced and/or condescending.

The standpoint theory, developed by Sandra Harding (1991), Nancy Harstock (1997) and others, assesses men, women and the use of power between gender differences. Feminism tends to believe that this power is never taken into account when discussing male and female gender roles. The standpoint theory states that the perception of men and women is based on the class structure being beneficial for men and that this position gives each gender a perception of the world. Three key points are stressed here:

- 1) A privileged standpoint (which a male occupies) is more powerful and therefore dictates the ways in which genders live;
- 2) This power is mostly harmful to the lower structure (women); and
- 3) The lower structure tends to understand the higher structure more (the oppressed understands the oppressor but the oppressor cannot understand the oppressed since such an understanding may show a need for change).

Another feminist theory is entitled muted group theory, which explains that anthropological research and accounts of cultures often deal only with male voices since females were seen as unimportant. Cheri Kramarae (1981) transported this theory over to communication studies and stated that women are twice muted—meaning that men are in privileged positions of authority which gives them the power to create language by being CEOs, film makers, poets, dictionary writers, etc., and women are ignored by men when they speak. Thus they become mute when they anticipate being ignored and not heard. “Chick flicks” and “guy flicks” are examples of this, as are more serious settings such as rituals (weddings, etc.).

Elaine Baldwin, Brian Longhurst, Scott McCracken, Miles Ogborn, and Greg Smith (2004) argue that language is a representation of a version and construction of the world. The attribution of human language deals with patterning sounds, sound attributions and so forth, which are called phonemes. Syntax explains construction of a phrase or sentence. Meaning and uses of language evolve over time. Language may represent or what it names because language is constructed to give meaning to human experience. Language has had a relationship with culture and thought because it arises from a culture’s perceptions and experiences.

Structuralism and semiotics (semiology) were influential to representation and communication of meaning. Ferdinand de Saussure’s work had influenced writers such as Barthes, Chomsky, Foucault, and others. Roland Barthes’s (1915-1980) ideas of structuralism and post-structuralism were influential to the early development of the field of cultural studies. An example is his semiotic analysis of a meaning of a photograph from a French magazine dealing with the Algerian conflict whereby the context of empire was crucial. In discussing photographs, important points about semiotics are developed:

- 1) Images or texts could have several layers or levels of meaning which include denotative and connotative;

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- 2) Meaning will depend on the context of the image/text, therefore, meaning is relational;
- 3) Some levels of code or meaning will be neutral and objective while others may hold discourses or social meanings; and
- 4) To understand these meanings involves decoding, which depends on the experience and knowledge of the analysis.

Therefore, signifier (image, printed word, sound) plus signified (mental concept) equal sign. Barthes demonstrates the association of different levels of meaning and makes a distinction between language and myth where myth represents structures of power favouring the bourgeoisie.

Signs convey meaning when organized into systems or codes. Codes are most often studied in advertising. Feminists suggest that advertising stereotypes women. Advertisements are constructed in a particular way in which we read them, thus placing us in restricted positions, as an ideology typically does. They create a sort of power in contemporary society and forms of powerful representation, which is also now being used within institutions, hence these institutions and practices are like advertising (logos for universities, “sound-bites” for politicians).

Communication of cultural meaning and representation is done through language in the sense that custom meanings are attached to words and particular ways of speaking in specific cultural and social context. Raymond Williams (1921-1988) created the notion of representation. It is a symbol or image, which is re-created and stands for something else. Furthermore, Williams placed significant emphasis on the notion of understanding language within social context and social activity. Language has become a medium, which has been politically charged due to culture politics and aspects of inequality in relation to power, which are based on class, gender, and race.

Baldwin, Longhurst, McCracken, Ogborn, and Smith (2004) explain that language does not represent any truths, nor is it neutral. Cultural imperialism dominated language in a sense through hierarchy, which was thus perceived as the truth of language (in actuality, *their* language, which does not speak for everyone), as Edward Said remarks. Israel, Canada, France, Spain, etc. are examples of countries trying to remove identities imposed by languages of others. Men dominate the public area and discourse, which is often encoded with meanings of males. Women must learn the male language and also fight to be heard. Even lower classes of women needed to struggle within the same social class as males. Men use aggressive and competitive speech, whereas women use cooperative speech. Thus far, language has been discussed by using a sociolinguistic model and applying it to society and hierarchy, power, and so forth. However, the notion of cross-cultural communication is suggested when men and women interact and it is not a case of domination of one gender over another. Rather, it is simply different language/speech. This raises the notion that language is open to interpretation.

From an actor’s perspective, ethnographic research sets to examine the acts of speech, both natural and experimental, so that the principles of generating and shaping speech can be observed/determined in specific social situations. A lot of

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information is required about the actor (personal life, social/personal characteristics, etc.) and the process involves analyzing the meaning of the transmission and reception. Attempting to theorize certain communication language acts requires several tests of communicating. These include face-to-face and faceless communication such as a telephone conversation. An example of a face-to-face conversation describes the use of a syntagmatic and paradigmatic axes diagram to indicate unfolding events along the connection of the two axes. Test results indicate that very rarely do these language interactions apply the full use of formal rules of language and grammar. The telephone is one such exception because the physical is not present, and as a result a more logical and formal conversation may take place in order to convey the right meaning/message.

Language is both arbitrary and conventional, creating a paradox since language is at once flexible, creative, and regulated. Language represents forms of meaning in certain societal contexts, and therefore is polysemic in character. Meaning may also be masked deliberately as language as it has no real truth to it (i.e. lying, etc.). Language does not define culture but encompasses it. Language also never colonizes social terrain within speech communities but does map it.

Debates on ideology were developed with studies based around the media. Stuart Hall (1977; 1997) was highly influential in this field; he viewed television content, among every other form of text, as meaningful discourse despite the complexity of messages. Hall was viewed as being highly important due to his work on cultural studies in interconnecting ideology, culture and politics, and identity. Encoding and decoding come into play when dealing with the language of semiotics and structuralism codes. Encoding and decoding is involved in this process where encoding is done by producers of the messages, while decoding is conducted by the audience. These social phenomena are susceptible to struggle and change. Hall assesses three different positions in which television decoding may proceed. The first is the dominant-hegemonic position, which has the viewer decoding the language in the way the encoders intended. The second is the negotiated position, which states that audiences may still be within the encoded framework of the first position (accepting the broader message), but may have disagreements about specific aspects of the code and challenge it. The third is the oppositional position, in which the audience directly resists the dominant-hegemonic framework.

The relationship, which exists between ideology, discourse, and power in television news, is the notion that it benefits those in privileged positions. They further stress the Marxist account of classes and the theory of representation. The Marxist account of ideology and its implication to media can be criticized within Michel Foucault's framework since the text within media messages is viewed as discursively constructed and not within a frame of representation because it does not represent. Discourse is useful here since language constructs the text within the language. Both discourse ideas are present within Foucault and Marx; however, the production, structure and consumption of texts are more dependent on results than are allowed by Marxists analysis. Therefore, discourse allows for contingencies, and thus, not all codes within complex texts are ideological in nature. Discourse attempts to move contemporary debates away from representation, stressing that discourses are created within different forms of texts and that these discourses are complexly related to the discourse of those who produce and consume them.

Canadian Communication Perspective

Generally, the Canadian mind, as Arthur Kroker argues, “may be one of the main sites in modern times for working-out the meaning of technological experience. . . . A general fascination with the question of technology extends like a brilliant arc across the Canadian cultural imagination” (1984: 8). Indeed, culture and technology have occupied a unique role within the Canadian communication history, and present times, and will remain one of the central challenges in its future. Important factors have contributed to shaping such understanding and, undeniably, creating communication policy demands. One reason for this position is that Canada’s geography represents “an immense challenge to maintain east-west traffic flows in the face of powerful north-south attractions” (Janisch, 1987: 1-2). Further, McPhail and McPhail (1990) explain that five different factors affect Canada’s understanding and perception of culture:

- 1) The French-English cultural tensions that resulted in the official development and implementation of the bilingualism and multiculturalism policies as from the late 1960s;
- 2) The cultural media invasion from the American media system that prompts the Canadian call for a distinct cultural identity;
- 3) The challenge of maintaining a balance between the concepts of free trade, competition, etc. on one hand and public subsidy, public interest, etc. on the other hand in Canadian communications public policy;
- 4) The federal-provincial tensions on regulating cultural policies; and
- 5) Canada’s own struggle to strive for a distinctly Canadian cultural identity.

As a result of these pressures, Canadian media have captured the interest of Canadian policy makers since the early 1930s. During that time, the Canadian government searched for possible solutions to confront the American cultural invasion of the radio stations arguing that they were affecting Canadian cultural identity.

Such efforts concentrated mainly on the nationalist stance that feared cultural and media invasion on the one hand, and depended on the media for “defining” our Canadian cultural identity on the other. Needless to say that these steps caused different feedbacks that varied from asserting the importance of governmental intervention in Canadian cultural policies and claiming that it is the only way of protecting our “identity” and heritage, to refuting such claims and arguing that cultural policies should not restrict Canadian access to “other” cultural and media production, rather that they should promote the production of a purely Canadian products that represent its society and people.

Canadian political economist Harold Innis, and the “prophet of media technology” Marshall McLuhan’s theoretical research on communication technologies have enriched the historical understanding of social change and its relation to the media of technology used in a given society. McLuhan, for example, was arguably the most famous communication scholar of his time. His ideas had a great impact in the 1960s in North America, spreading to politics and even the media. McLuhan’s observations made the media and their influence an important issue. “In the same way that Sigmund Freud identified the unconscious as an unknown

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force affecting our behaviour, or that Albert Einstein posited power at the level of atoms that was awesomely powerful, McLuhan told us that the media were transforming society before our very eyes though we couldn't observe it—until his theory revealed it" (Lormier & Gasher, 2001: 14).

Indeed, one important intellectual strand that shaped the Canadian vision of technology was Marshall McLuhan's, which spread like wildfire not only throughout Canada, but also around the world. Marchand says that by the late 1960s, McLuhan "was being acclaimed in the pages of the *New York Times Magazine* as the 'number one prophet.' . . . One Greenwich Village enthusiast, at about the same time, staged a multimedia event that was climaxed by his singing quotations from McLuhan's works" (1989: 172). McLuhan's personal secretary, Margaret Stewart recalls this time: "I also remember that, as Marshall's fame began to spread during the mid-1960s, Claude Bissell (President of the University of Toronto) arrived at the old Centre [for Culture and Technology] one evening with a group of wealthy Swiss McLuhanites. They implored him to return with them to Switzerland and become their 'king!'" (Zingrone, Constantineau & McLuhan, 1994: 24).

Marshall McLuhan (1911-1980) was born in Edmonton, Alberta, a place that influenced the breadth and landscape of his thoughts. Phillip Marchand, in his biography of McLuhan, cites him saying: "I think of western skies as one of the most beautiful things about the West, and the western horizons. The westerner doesn't have a point of view. He has a vast panorama. . . . He has at all times a total field of vision" (1989: 9). From an early age, McLuhan possessed charisma as well as a very high opinion of himself. Despite the fact that he was not a good student—he once said that he "never [had] a teacher who made me the slightest bit interested in anything I was studying" (Ibid: 18)—he was, however, a connoisseur of English poetry and the elocutionary arts that were introduced to him by his mother, who taught public speaking. For this reason, he believed that language was a "sensuous activity", in which he found a relationship between the body and the spoken word. When he became fascinated with technology, he regarded it as means to—or an extension of—this relationship (Marchessault, 2005: 7), an idea that was interpreted as representing a deterministic view of technology. Even after he moved to Winnipeg with his family and joined the University of Manitoba, McLuhan was not sure about his interests. He started out studying engineering, and then transferred to English literature in 1928. He admitted that "I never took university days in Manitoba seriously. All I knew was that I was not getting an education" (Marchand, 1989: 19). Surprisingly, a minor event in 1932 significantly changed McLuhan's life. One day he entered a used bookstore where he used to shop and found a book called *What's Wrong with the World*, which instantly attracted him. After reading it, he commented: "The simple and obvious answer is, 'You can'" (Ibid: 29).

In 1933, McLuhan received his Bachelor of Arts from the University of Manitoba, and won the university's Gold Medal in Arts and Science. The same year, he started his Master's in English literature. During these years, he published many articles in the university's student newspaper, *The Manitoban*. One of his 1934 articles, "Tomorrow and Tomorrow?", became the main theme of his first book, *The Mechanical Bride*. Finishing his Master's in 1936, he went to Cambridge University,

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where he completed his Doctorate in 1942. McLuhan taught in various universities before he moved to the University of Toronto, teaching at St. Michael's College from 1946 until 1979.

McLuhan's *Understanding Media* (1964) revealed to many the "magical" world: the new media of communication—radio, television, film, photography, satellites, and later computers—that were for many the means to "restructuring civilization" (Rosenthal, 1968: 19). McLuhan argued that with new electronic technologies human beings had returned to primitive, tribal ways of communicating. Particularly, he studied media technology as an extension of the individual, arguing that each medium embodies a certain bias toward one of the human senses (sight, sound, touch, etc.). He argues that media transmit our knowledge and experience embedded within the very structure of our society. As he puts it in his famous equation: "the medium is the message", which means that we should not only be concerned with the tools of communication (the media) and ignore the constructed (message). For McLuhan, each medium requires us to become engaged using a different bias. For example, television for McLuhan is a "cool medium" as it requires a "high" level of audience involvement or participation, contrary to the print "hot medium", which is "low" in audience participation. For that, McLuhan argues that the dominant medium in a given time shaped the way we perceive and understand the world around it.

Thus, McLuhan's main thesis is centered on the argument that with the new technological advances of the media (especially television during his time), societies are restoring the "tribal" character that existed before the invention of print. For him, print asserted the senses of individualism and competition as opposed to electronic media that created a "global village". He asserts that the world had become a "global village" where people send and receive messages instantly. The media reduced the spaces between, and the separation from, fellow humans and hence could alter their behaviour: "Our new electric technology that extends our senses and nerves in a global embrace has large implications for the future of language" (McLuhan, 1964: 80). For example, he believed that there was great potential in satellites, which for him exemplified how media could create a "global theatre". He told Ed Fitzgerald of CBC television in 1970: "You could say that with the satellite, the global village has become a global theatre . . . [with] everybody on the planet simultaneously participating as actors" (Benedetti & DeHart, 1997: 66).

The prophesy of McLuhan also promised that electronic media could foster education — one of the priorities of the times — through satellite distance education, allowing students from around the world to experience the same information environment, or bringing television into the classroom, where the learning and teaching experience would be totally "transformed". He told CBC's *Take Thirty* in 1965 that "TV . . . would blow the classroom to bits. . . . It would be exactly like bringing the Trojan horse inside the walls of Troy. . . . It would simply alter the entire pattern and procedures of the classroom and create an altogether new educational form" (Benedetti & DeHart, 1997: 124). It was not surprising, then, that some of his ideas connected to the deep Canadian belief in "technological nationalism"—similar to the railroad of 100 years earlier, technology brought

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“the capacity to create a nation by enhancing communication” (Charland, 1986: 197). Some believed that Canada could use McLuhan’s ideas to guarantee its future. In summary, the significance of the work of McLuhan is renewed in our current day with the advances of new modern communication technologies that have truly created a “global village”. For instance, from North America we can chat with our online friends with equal ease regardless of where they reside, be it Africa, Asia, Europe, etc. Likewise, we share the same news experience if we watch Al-Jazeera or CNN with their live breaking news, etc.

Harold Adams Innis (1894-1952) is another prominent Canadian theorist not only in the field of political economy where he started his academic research, but also as a communication and media pioneer. Much of his work focused on the historical relationship between power, political organizations and communication technology.

Born in Otterville, Ontario, Innis obtained both his Bachelor of Arts and Master’s from McMaster University, and his Doctorate from the University of Chicago. Harold Innis taught, worked, and chaired the Department of Political Economy at the University of Toronto until his death in 1920. Innis represents one of the pioneering scholarly efforts to understand how empires (as symbols of power) were extended and transformed through social control of the structures of media and culture in his two landmark books *Empire and Communications* (1950), and *The Bias of Communication* (1951). Nicholas Garnham asserts that Innis’ most important contributions came from his study of the influence of technologies not only on their messages’ reception, but rather on media technologies as “mode(s) of coercion and production”. He noted that Innis understood media as including “physical transport systems” and studied “their relationship to systems of economic and political power” (2000: 28). Viewed in this manner, Innis’ political economy of communication was prophetic in that it influenced future approaches to viewing the development of communication systems as central to the economic structure and powers of the state that could be seen in contemporary Canadian communication scholars (e.g., Vincent Mosco and Robert Babe). Garnham clarifies that Innis’ adoption of communication as a field of study had a significant impact on the direction of research in this field, influencing it to include the history of modernity in which arguments focus on state formation, bureaucracy, and modes of persuasion and production, rather than a perspective that merely focuses on the state as a mode of coercion (Ibid: 29).

Harold Innis emphasizes the importance of studying the effects of media in different contexts as he explains in his *The Bias of Communication*: “A medium of communication has an important influence on the dissemination of knowledge over space and over time and it becomes necessary to study its characteristic in order to appraise its influence in its cultural setting” (1964: 33). This Innisian pioneering perspective could be easily translated if correlated to our modern, advanced technologies in their global scope, and their powerful effect on the field of communication. Technology has impacted the lives of individuals in many cultures throughout the world. Indeed, new technologies have removed many physical and geographical barriers between people living in different and distant places around the globe.

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Harold Innis posed two key questions in his research: the first is about the reasons for change in societies. For him, the answer related to the ways in which different media of communication transformed social and human organization in society. He argued that the rise and fall of human civilization relies on the degree of competition of the existing forms of media. Specifically, Innis asserted the importance of the “monopoly of knowledge” and power domination of different means of communication technology. The second question is finding the reasons behind social and cultural stability, which Innis argues is related to maintaining a balance between the bias of “time” and “space” such as the case of Ancient Greek society. Innis genuinely studied media and culture, adopting a “macro” level of analysis, which has recently been criticized for being too abstract and difficult to read (McPhail & McPhail, 1990: 62-63).

Empire and Communications (1950) is another major contribution of Harold Innis. In this seminal work he tracks the uses of different media of communication in the ancient empires. He started his longitudinal research from the ancient Egyptian civilization. Particularly, he explained that with the use of papyrus in ancient Egypt, there was a move from carving into stone as a medium of communication (bias of time since these are heavy media) to writing on papyrus that resulted in a major shift from an absolute monarchy system to a more democratic system of governance. Innis explains the rise in power of religion, priests, and scribes as well as the increased demand for literacy. This, however, strained the Egyptian civilization, which was no match for the invasion and occupation of its civilization by the Syrian Semitic people with their advanced weapons of warfare. The Egyptians, as Innis explains, eventually fought back due to the complexity of their writing and culture, which the Syrian Semitic had trouble understanding.

With the expulsion of the invaders, the use of papyrus grew along with the expansion of the Egyptian empire and the emergence of the New Kingdom, the Pharaoh of Thebes. Innis then shifts focus to the medium of clay tablets and cuneiform writing and their impact and power over communication and society. Interestingly, new religions emerged as the effects of writing took shape after the democratic revolution. The worship of the Sun-god “Ra” diminished with “Osiris”—the god of the Nile—which took power over “Ra” and other gods. Furthermore, this revolution saw the redistribution of power among professional priests with the king gods benefiting through the eyes of the people (Crowley & Heyer, 2007: 24-25). Institutions had to be built to teach the new language structure and also how to read and write with special emphasis given to grammar and mathematics. Newly found schools had the names of the priests who had invented the signs, and the religious points of view in general knowledge and in legal decisions were known to embody those who controlled the art of writing such as priests, scribes, teachers, and judges. This, however, rendered priests and others in power powerless when warfare ensued, since they were not specialized in physical warfare.

Thus, Innis’ research helped explain the rise and fall of political empires (as the case of ancient Egypt, China, and Greece) by relating them to the social changes that resulted from the uses of different media technologies. Such research

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has indeed contributed to communication research as it took a historical approach through Innis' analysis of power relations associated with the media technologies. In short, Harold Innis has, as Marshall McLuhan outlined in his introduction in Innis' *The Bias of Communication*, opened new windows for us as communication researchers to read and understand history: "Most writers are occupied in providing accounts of the content of philosophy, science, libraries, empires, and religions. Innis invites us instead to consider the formalities of power exerted by these structures in their mutual interaction. He approaches each of these forms of organized power as exercising a particular kind of force upon each of the other components in the complex" (McLuhan, cited in Innis, 1964: ix).

To conclude, it is important to mention that despite the importance of their work, the work of Innis and McLuhan was either unknown to many (as the case of Innis), or misinterpreted (as the case of McLuhan). For example, McLuhan has often been accused of adopting a deterministic view of technology, a belief that technology "shapes" society. Scholars, such as Mark Dery strongly believe that "technological determinism is the keystone of McLuhan's theories. . . . If Marx believed that class struggle was the engine of history, then McLuhan held that the engine was the engine of history" (2005: 97). However, Kroker refutes this accusation, arguing that McLuhan regarded technology "as reason". Compared to Innis' technological *realism* (seen as the study of the balance between the power relations (in empires for example) and culture (through history), McLuhan's approach is more of a technological humanism, that is seen by some analysts as "expansive, pluralistic universalistic, and creative . . . because it privileges the relationship of technology and freedom" (Kroker, 1984: 16). In other words, McLuhan argued that any analysis of media technologies has to start with "human agency" in societies, something that strongly opposes a deterministic view of technology.

Based on a re-examination of McLuhan's *The Medium is the Massage* (1967), Kroker reveals that McLuhan did argue that we cannot understand a given technological experience without studying its social setting, adding that, "We can only comprehend how the electronic age 'works us over' if we 'recreate the experience' in depth". Kroker quotes McLuhan asserting that "any understanding of social and cultural change is impossible without a knowledge of the way media work as environments" (1984: 55). McLuhan has expressed this idea plainly, as he confirms that

I am resolutely opposed to all innovation, all change, but I am determined to understand what's happening. Because I don't choose just to sit and let the juggernaut roll over me. Many people seem to think that if you talk about something recent, you're in favor of it. The exact opposite is true in my case. Anything I talk about is almost certainly something I'm resolutely against. And it seems to me the best way to oppose it is to understand it. And then you know where to turn off the buttons.

(McLuhan, cited in Benedetti & DeHart, 1997: 70)

More than thirty years ago, James Carey was initially one of McLuhan's most severe critics, firing attacks such as,

A serious critic of traditional logic and rationality, his argument is mechanistic, built upon linear causality. . . . His terminology is ill-defined and inconsistently used and maddeningly obtuse. McLuhan is beyond criticism not only because he defines such activity as illegitimate but also because his work does not lend itself to critical commentary. . . . It is a mixture of whimsy, pun, and innuendo.

(Carey, 1968: 291)

Yet, with the advent of computer technologies, Carey later stated that it was time for "giving McLuhan some of his due". He admitted that "communication technology has developed along lines he [McLuhan] anticipated with great prescience" and that "McLuhan grasped the consequences of the globalization of communications, the extension of the body as image and the words as simulation for the human imagination" (cited in Grosswiler, 1998: 216).

The works of McLuhan and Innis represent major contributions to the study of communication and media. The media of communication are very important tools of democratic participation and inclusion in societies. Communication, culture, and technology have occupied the Canadian identity since the creation of the Canadian Pacific Railway when Canadian communication public policy attempted to use means of communication technologies (like radio, and later television) to create a unique Canadian cultural identity distinct from the powerful American airwaves.

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