

**A CRITIQUE OF HAROLD A. INNIS'S  
THEORY OF COMMUNICATION**

*Dissertation submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University  
for the award of the degree of*

**MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY**

**SANDEEP KUMAR PATEL**



**CENTRE FOR CANADIAN US AND  
LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES  
SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES  
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY  
NEW DELHI-110067**

**JULY, 2010**



CENTRE FOR CANADIAN, US AND LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES  
SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES  
**JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY**  
NEW DELHI - 110067

23.07.2010

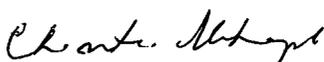
DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation entitled "A Critique of Harold A. Innis's Theory of Communication" submitted by me in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy** of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. The dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or any other university.

  
SANDEEP KUMAR PATEL

CERTIFICATE

We recommend that this dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

  
Prof. Chintamani Mahapatra

(Chairperson)



**CHAIRPERSON**  
Centre for Canadian, US &  
Latin American Studies  
School of International Studies  
Jawaharlal Nehru University  
New Delhi - 110067  
Tel: 267

  
Prof. Abdul Nafey

(Supervisor)



Centre for Canadian, US &  
Latin American Studies

*To*  
*My Revered*  
**LATE. GRAND FATHER**

# CONTENTS

|  |              |
|--|--------------|
| <b>Acknowledgements</b>  | <b>i-ii</b>  |
| <b>Chapter I: INNIS AND THE THEORY OF COMMUNICATION</b>                | <b>1-24</b>  |
| • Thoughts on Communication  |              |
| • Time and Space   |              |
| • Balance, Bias and Empire   |              |
| • The Bias of Communication  |              |
| • Methods in the Bias of Communication                                 |              |
| • Conclusion   |              |
| <b>Chapter II: COMMUNICATIONS AND MONOPOLIES<br/>OF KNOWLEDGE</b>      | <b>25-43</b> |
| • Monopolies of Knowledge  |              |
| • The Evolution of Civilisations: An Effect of monopolies of Knowledge |              |
| • Western Civilisation in Peril  |              |
| • Conclusion   |              |
| <b>Chapter III: COMMUNICATIONS MEDIA AND CULTURAL<br/>INSTABILITY</b>  | <b>44-67</b> |
| • Communications Media and the Effects on the Cultural Stability       |              |
| • From Religion-Dominated Culture to A Secular Culture                 |              |
| • The cultural Changes in Modern Civilisation                          |              |
| • Cross-cultural Communications  |              |

**Chapter IV: COMMUNICATION AND THE STATE**

**68-91**

- Transformation of the State
- Communication Media in the Modern State
- Conclusion

**Chapter V: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

**91-112**

- Contemporary Society and Innis's theory of Communication
- Concluding Observations

**References**

**113-122**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

*The present study is a result of fragmented expression of a long cherished desire. When I wrote a term paper on 'The political economy approach to study the Canadian economy' as part of my M.A. course work at School of International Studies JNU, I got introduced with the ideas of Harold Adams Innis. During my M. Phil at the Centre of Canadian Studies, SIS, JNU, I became more interested towards Innis's ideas of 'Staple thesis' and 'Communications'. For my M. Phil. Dissertation, I came up with the Innis's theory of Communication. Though I was besieged with the uncertainties to further my ambitions on the topic. But the discussions with some members of the faculty at CCUS & LAS obliterated my initial reluctance and helped me to push ahead with the theme. In this regard, I owe my deepest gratitude to my teachers - Prof. Abdul Nafey, Prof. Christopher S. Raj, Prof. Chintamani Mahapatra, and Dr. Priti Singh at the Centre o CCUS & LAS, JNU.*

*Foremost, I wish to express my earnest gratitude towards my guide Prof. Abdul Nafey, for his sincere dedication and continued help, support and encouragement at every step of the work. I can never forget his humane and kindhearted disposition during my academic years in JNU. An eminent scholar and a well-known personality, he has generously extended his cooperation to me in all possible ways during my research and campus life. He has been a loving teacher and guide to me and I feel elated and elevated to have undertaken this study under him. This study would not have seen the light of day without his constant supervision and help.*

*I am mesmerised with the incredible help of other faculty members like Prof. Chintamani Mahapatra, Prof. C.S. Raj, Dr. Priti Singh and J. L. Ferreria. All those were a constant source of my 'confidence boosting' and 'persistence' at a time when I was battling with naïve ideas and raw methodology. I am also thankful to the Centre's office staff members-Mrs. Neelam, Mr. Rajveer and others. I owe a special thank to the staffs of Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute and JNU Central Library who helped me lot to get the source materials.*

*Prof. Pintu Kumar had been a source of sensible friendship and extended help from time to time, which may not be possible to list here. Sacrificing his own priorities, he has taken care of the final editing and also provided his valuable suggestions. I pay my heartiest reverence to him.*

*My sincere thanks to Shiv Narayan and Dinesh Kumar who, readily extended a helping hand whenever I was in trouble and Anurag Tripathi and Ratnesh Singh who showed untold affection and concerns to me. I extend my acknowledgement to my friends Vivek Dey, Abhijit, Geeta Sir, Vikrant, Yagesh, Brijesh, Ashotosh, Amit, Chandan, Shubham, Prashant, and Digvijay with a sense of appreciation. Above all, they were always there to share my joy and sorrows. Garima Ma'am a rare combination of intellect and emotions, has remained as the best friend. I acknowledge her support and express my sincere thanks to her.*

*I express a very personal thanks to my family. I am highly reverent to my parents for their endless blessings and supports even though they are not clear what a two year dissertation would mean. I thank to my elder brother Arvind Patel, who always encouraged me at every step of the life. The other members of the family like Madhulika, Babita and Sanjeev have been the symbol of encouragement and confidence. Whenever I needed those things, they provided me such. I am highly impressed with the tender innocence of two pearls of the family-Bitiya and Betu. Their loveable playings gave me mental peace. They have stood by me always. Without their love, care and support I would never have reached where I am today.*



Sandeep Kumar Patel

## CHAPTER: I

### INNIS AND THEORY OF COMMUNICATION

Harold Adams Innis was a Canadian professor of political economy at the University of Toronto. He has done some brilliant works on media, communication theory and Canadian economic history also. Throughout much of his adult life, Innis was Canada's prominent thinker and theoretician. More than any other Canadian scholar in recent times, Innis's impressive writings on communications media shaped the views of his contemporaries like Marshall McLuhan, who is a world figure in communications theory and many others.

The life of Harold Innis was influenced by the major events of the first half of the twentieth century. These events were the First World War, the growing industrialism and the Canadian dependence on the US and Britain. He both witnessed and commented also on the major innovations in transportation and communications. Eric Havelock (1982) has stressed that Innis's primary rural surroundings strongly affected the nostalgia for the oral tradition, which was seen in his later communication studies. When Innis writes on communications, he seems interested in the historical traditions. In the First World War, he participated as a soldier. He felt some tragic experiences there. He got seriously wounded, but this also affected his mind. He began to think towards the civilisations' traditions. He himself asked some questions. He as a pacifist individual began to think about the Western civilisations imperatives. In satisfying this query, his intellectual interests moved towards the study of history. His biographer, John Watson, notes that the physical wound took seven years to heal, but the psychological damage lasted a lifetime. Innis suffered recurring attacks of depression and nervousness because of his military service. The Great War influenced Innis's intellectual outlook. It strengthened his Canadian nationalism; sharpened his opinion of what he thought were the destructive effects of technology, including the communications media that were used so effectively to "sell" the war (Watson, 1977).

## **Innis and Theory of Communication**

Innis made the basis for scholars to look at the social sciences from a distinctly Canadian perspective. His works on the Canadian economic history turns him into nationalist thinker. His ideas of the communications could be seen as the extension of his previous work. Innis was very much concerned towards the Canadian history and culture. His interests turned him into a so-called notion “the later Innis.”<sup>1</sup> Innis seems more nationalistic, when he tried to defend universities from political and economic pressures. He believed in the independent thoughts and also the independent universities, not influenced by the British and the American thoughts. He saw universities as the centers of critical thought. Innis’s theory of communication was a new invention to see the history in a different way. The evolutions now could also be seen through a new perspective. This perspective was later explored and became a viable source to make the historiography. Innis could advance his theory in more, but his sudden death checked him. His university colleague, Marshal McLuhan, showed grief on Innis’s premature death. He thought it as a disastrous loss for human understanding. McLuhan (1953: 43) wrote:

I am pleased to think of my own book *The Gutenberg Galaxy* as a footnote to the observations of Innis on the subject of the psychic and social consequences, first of writing then of printing.

### **Thoughts on Communication**

Harold Adams Innis first seems as a political economist. But he is also widely known for initiating an important discourse on media with a distinctly Canadian perspective. He influenced other scholars like Marshall McLuhan<sup>2</sup>, who later became a central personality in communications theory after popularisation of his thoughts.

After the end of Second World War, Innis turned his area of interest. He was aware of the communications technologies, which were introduced in the World War,

---

<sup>1</sup> Scholars’ use the term later Innis, for his late works. And this late work was the study of communications throughout the history.

<sup>2</sup> Marshall McLuhan was his colleague, who later explored the communication theory.

namely radio was the decisive instrument and played a crucial role. Until his death in 1952, Innis worked and investigated the social history of communication. He traces the communication media of the last 4000 years. His vast studies came forth with the two pioneering communications works: *Empire and Communications* (1950), and *The Bias of Communication* (1951).

McLuhan (1964) suggests in the introductory pages of *The Bias of Communication* that reading Innis shows us a new way to read history. Most writers occupy the content of philosophy, science, empires, and religions. Innis very interestingly considers the domains of power made by these structures, when they mutually interacted.

One of Harold Innis's major contributions in the field of communications was to apply the dimensions of time and space to the various media. Innis's concept of communications media was very unique, when he invented the concepts, namely time and space. He saw the history and its evolutions by the spectacles of time-biased and space-biased media. It was a new way to make a new historiography.

### Time and Space

Innis divided communications media into two types, namely time-binding and space-binding media. Time-binding media contain clay or stone tablets, hand-copied manuscripts on parchment<sup>3</sup> and oral sources such as Homer's epic poems.<sup>4</sup> All these were the communications medium. These mediums carry information's throughout the civilisations. These modes of communications are intended to carry stories and messages that last for many generations. But with its limitations these modes reached only to the limited audiences. At the same time, it carries some profits also. Time-binding media favour stability, continuity, tradition and religion. All these favours could be seen in the societal structures. These structures were very apparent throughout the history. Families, kinship, priestly arrangements and oriental states, which were political entity and several

---

<sup>3</sup> It was a writing sheet, made of the animal's skin. In the ancient era this was the dominant mode of communication.

practiced stability, continuity and traditions. The growth of religion also could be understood in terms of time-binding media.

On the other hand, space-binding media is more ephemeral. It includes modern media such as radio, television, and mass circulation of newspapers. These mediums carry information over vast areas as many as possible over long distances. But the problem with this medium of communication is that it does not last long in time. Space-binding medias facilitate rapid change, materialism, secularism and empire. In the course of development, changes always occur which marked some ideological transformations. Materialism, secularism and the evolution of empire also mark these transformations. Innis elaborated more between time-binding and space-binding media in *Empire and Communications*.

The concepts of time and space reflect the significance of media throughout the civilisations. Media, which emphasises time, they are always durable in character. Parchment, clay tablets and stone were the carrying objects of this type of media. These objects were heavy materials and well suited to the development of architecture and sculpture. The hefty bulks could be seen today, which were singing the effects of the ancient era. Media, which emphasises space, are apt to be less durable and light in character. Now the mediums like papyrus and paper were crucial towards this development. The subsequent developments were suited to the wide areas in administration and trade also was the viable arena towards this. The conquest of Egypt by Rome gave access to supplies of papyrus. Papyrus was easily found in the Mediterranean provinces. Papyrus became the basis of a large administrative empire. Those materials, which had emphasised time favoured decentralisation and also the hierarchical types of institutions. Institutions were shared in between the priesthood and the monarchy. The power was also shared between these two. While materials, which emphasise space favour centralisation and systems of government, which were less hierarchical in character. The religion had gone away in the secular arrangement. All the structures were now centralised in the single entity. Therefore, no obvious hierarchy could be seen in this

---

<sup>4</sup> Homer's epic poems were Iliad and Odyssey.

development.

Societies how can be far away with these advancements? Societies, which were dependent solely on time-binding media, were oral. Though these societies were of ancient time, therefore they were tribal societies. Time-bound societies adopted the consensus to operate the societies. Since time-bound cultures do not rely on written records, they preserved their traditions in story, song and myth also. These traditions were handed down from one generation to the next one, but unchanged. Therefore, memory becomes a crucial in the determination of information. The existing generation revered the wisdom of ancestors and elders. The nature of information was concrete and they rejected the abstract forms of thought. On the other hand, societies, which were dependent on the space-binding media such as printed newspapers and books tend to favour abstract thought and control over space. These societies had little regard for tradition. When we compare this society with the previous one, the oral societies, we find their ways of thinking were apt to be more rational, linear and impersonal.

Time-biased or time-binding societies, which were dependent on durable media, were difficult to transport. For example ancient empires were reliant on stone or clay tablets, and medieval Europe employing parchment. Like oral societies, which Innis saw time-bound, these civilisations were tradition-oriented. They emphasised custom, continuity, community, and sacred and moral values. These practices were flourishing in terms of expressive communication. In the civilisations, the time-biased media led to the hierarchical social orders, which created an elite group, whether Egyptian or Babylonian priests or the Catholic clergy of the Middle Ages. These groups turned themselves into a powerful class with exclusive access to a monopoly of knowledge.<sup>5</sup> In Egypt, papyrus challenged stone and later also helped to bring about the expansionist Roman Empire. In medieval Europe, paper and later print, both were adaptable to use of the vernaculars. These later innovations challenged the Latin specified scribal culture dependent on parchment. Space-biased media were able to do this because the rigidity of the time-

---

<sup>5</sup> This concept is another dimension of the Innis's theory of communication. It will be later discussed in the next chapter.

## **Innis and Theory of Communication**

bound empires created tensions, which left them susceptible to major upheavals. A Hegelian dialectic<sup>6</sup> could be seen here, i.e. thesis-anti thesis and synthesis. Thus, space-biased media seems more instable.

Unlike tradition-oriented, time-binding media, those are biased toward space, they tend to be present and future directed. They facilitate expansionist empires, which subjugate marginal groups. Such empires are characterised by administration over vast areas, complex political authority, the growth of secular institutions and technical knowledge also. These features are very complex. They set a new setting of monopolies of knowledge, which entails the loss of a sense of place and community. In today's world, space-biased media in the form of modern electronic communications have assumed unparalleled and uneven influence. It is the rich and powerful nations able to exploit these technologies to its full limits and extend their information empires vastly. Earlier nations not, but the eligible elite played the same role in the formulation of monopolies of knowledge and respective empires.

### **Balance, Bias and Empire**

In the way of tracing the effects of communications media, Harold Innis has examined the rise and fall of ancient empires. He looked at the several media modes, which led to the growth of an empire. When a particular mode got sustained became successful. And when a particular communication mode changes, it caused an empire's collapse. He tried to show that media biases toward time or space affected the complex interrelationships, which is responsible for the sustenance of an empire. These interrelationships included the partnership between the knowledge or ideas, which is necessary to create and maintain the empire and the power or force, required to expand and defend it. Innis wrote that the interplay between knowledge and power was always a crucial factor in understanding empire:

---

<sup>6</sup> Hegel was a modern political thinker. He used the dialectics in the formulation of truth. When anti-thesis challenges the thesis, a synthesis comes out, which would be a highest truth.

## Innis and Theory of Communication

The sword and pen worked together. Power was increased by concentration in a few hands, specialization of function was enforced, and scribes with leisure to keep and study records contributed to the advancement of knowledge and thought. The written record, signed, sealed and swiftly transmitted was essential to military power and the extension of government (Innis 1950: 106).

Innis was conscious towards all these generalizations, which tended to obscure the differences between empires. Therefore, he embarked on specific studies of the civilisations of ancient Egypt, Babylonia and Mesopotamia. He also mentioned the effects of the oral tradition on Greek civilisation and the written tradition of the Roman Empire as well. His book *Empire and Communications* reflected all these civilisations, which carried the combined effects of parchment and paper in the Middle Ages, and paper and the printing press in the development of modern societies also.

Innis's staple thesis also proved its ability to formulate the media analysis. Paper is a major product of timber. In the eastern Canada a large number of lumber companies began manufacturing pulp and paper in the eighteenth century. It was a major area of investment then, which resulted a concentrated industry in Canada. Exports of paper to the United States were in a huge amount. It had a large impact on the development of the American newspaper industry. Newspapers in the American commercial centres had developed a business hub there.

According to Innis, by the 1830s, supplies of paper were increased, which was accompanied by the technological advancements in the production of newspapers, i.e. printing press technologies. This technology marked a new way in the market place of the newspapers. This new development was the penny presses. The new kind of press focused on the mass circulation and emphasised on the sensational news. These presses were sustained by advertising, which was directed towards the consumers' needs. Supply usually paves the demand. Therefore, he declared: 'Expansion of the pulp and paper industry has supported intensive advertising and revolutions in marketing essential to the demands of the city'. He added further

This expansion has coincided with the decline of editorials and of freedom of speech, and the emergence of headlines and the modern newspaper with its demands for excitement, including wars and peace (Innis 1942: 13).

For Innis news was for the cheap papers and rather papers a device as an advertising medium. Freedom of the press<sup>7</sup>, as guaranteed by the US Constitution, Innis observed that it had narrowed the marketplace of ideas. He found it obvious because of growing industrialisation. When industry began, it accommodated the interests of its advertisers. And when it grew up into large, oligopolistic enterprises came into existence. Innis investigated also the role of the telegraph in transforming both the nature of news and the structure of the American newspaper industry. He later studied the rise of the Associated Press news monopoly, the role of copyright in strengthening that monopoly and the role of patronage in the creation and selection of the news.

For Innis, newspapers eroded freedom of thought. The press was concerned most with the sensational events of the last twenty-four hours. Another factor was its emphasis on discontinuity. According to Innis, it was common characteristic to all the newspapers. According to Innis, there was the danger with the growing knowledge, which was being so vast in the social judgments, since life is short and intellects are limited.

Innis's study of empires, essentially ancient and modern, led him to warn the durability and territorial integrity of modern empires, which were threatened by two factors. First, there were greater instabilities in the economic arrangements of modern empires. This idea is significant, because he essentially was apolitical economic thinker. Another way to provoke the instability, with the modern empire lies with the crisis management. The modern empires use the force as an essential thing in resolving the crisis. Second, he counts the cultural disturbances also as a threat to the modern arrangements in the twentieth century. Innis tells about the causes and said that the factors were related to the rapid development of information and communication

---

<sup>7</sup> Freedom of the press is generally guaranteed in the liberal democratic countries. It is seen as a

technologies.

Innis's writings on communication explore the role of media in shaping the culture and development of civilisations. He argued that a balance was necessary to flourish a particular civilisation. And it should be between the spoken word and writing patterns. He showed the flourishing of ancient Greece in the time of Plato. Balance could be seen there. Plato carried his ideas by recording the conversations of Socrates.<sup>8</sup> He adopted the Socrates' dialogue forming his writings. His philosophy thus preserved the power of the spoken word on the written page. Plato's method of using poetic dialogues used in the prose enabled him to arrive at new philosophical position. Thus he created a balance between time-biased medium, which was speech and the space-biased medium, which was writing. But this balance later became upset, when the oral tradition lost its significance and it gave way to the dominance of writing. Now the plate of empire shifted towards the Rome.

In the course of time, whenever balance disturbed and writing felt the advancements, empire necessarily changed. Innis's analysis of the effects of communications of the rise and fall of empires led him to warn the Western civilisation. He said that it is now facing a profound crisis. The development of powerful communications media like mass-circulation of newspapers had shifted the balance decisively in favour of space and power. And this is so over the time, continuity and knowledge. To save itself balance is essential. And this is required for cultural survival. He said that the "mechanized"<sup>9</sup> communications media has to transmit information quickly over long distances. These media had contributed to an obsession with "present-mindedness". It is also creating an artificial environment, which neglects concerns about past or the future. Innis wrote that

---

fundamental right of the peoples.

<sup>8</sup> Plato and Socrates were the Greek Philosophers. Plato's master Socrates used the dialogue model in spreading the knowledge, He had influenced Plato, but Plato also started to use the writings.

<sup>9</sup> Mechanised knowledge could be understood in term of the modern communications medium. In the twentieth century technological innovations are creating space for this kind of information.

The overwhelming pressure of mechanization evident in the newspaper and the magazine, has led to the creation of vast monopolies of communication. Their entrenched positions involve a continuous, systematic, ruthless destruction of elements of permanence essential to cultural activity (Innis 1952: 99).

He argued that recovering the balance between space and time could only save western civilisation. So, he emphasised on the oral tradition within universities. He advocated for the independence of the institutions of higher learning from political and commercial pressures. In his essay, '*A Plea for Time*' he suggested that a genuine dialogue within universities could only produce the critical thinking. And this kind of thought seems necessary to restore the balance between power and knowledge. Only in this situation, universities could have courage to attack the monopolies, which had jeopardised the civilisation.

What would be the effects when two different civilisations meet? Innis saw this in the encounter of two European traders namely France and Britain. One adopted the traditional way and was oriented to preserve its tribal culture in time. So naturally, they practiced tradition and customs, thus continuity. While the other hand, the next civilisation spread its influence over long distances. One thing was common for both civilisations that they used guns in war and conquest also. For example, these facilities enabled the indigenous peoples to hunt more efficiently. This attempt led to the rapid destruction of their food supply and the other rich resources. These indigenous societies were also depended on to obtain the European goods. Innis's biographer John Watson says that to apply Innis's concept of media bias in a mechanical or deterministic way is harmful. He writes:

Innis emphasises, in dealing with concrete historical cases, the necessity of a balance of various media whose predispositions [or biases] complement each other to make for a successful imperial project (Watson 1977: 51).

## **Innis and Theory of Communication**

Watson points out that for Innis, balance was crucial in sustaining an empire. Innis examined each empire to discover how time-binding and space-binding media contributed to the necessary balance between power and knowledge. He also searched about the balance among ruling groups like religious, political and military. Innis himself wrote:

Concentration on a medium of communication implies a bias in the cultural development of the civilization concerned either towards an emphasis on space and political organization or towards an emphasis on time and religious organization. Introduction of a second medium tends to check the bias of the first and to create conditions suited to the growth of empire. The Byzantine Empire emerged from a fusion of a bias incidental to papyrus in relation to political organisation and of parchment in relation to ecclesiastical organisation (Innis 1951: 201).

### **The Bias of Communication**

Innis's central focus is the social history of communication media. He believed that the relative stability of cultures depends on the balance and proportion of their media. To begin the inquiry into this area, he suggests some basic questions that specific communication technologies how could be operated? What assumptions do they take from the society? And what contribution they give to the society? And also what forms of power do they encourage within the society? For Innis, a key to social change is found in the development of communication media. He claims that each medium embodies a bias in terms of the organisation and control of information. Time-biased media, such as stone and clay tablets, are durable and heavy. Therefore all these are difficult to move, they do not encourage territorial expansion. However, on the other hand they have a long life, therefore they do encourage the extension of empire over time. Time-biased media facilitate the development of social hierarchies as in the ancient Egypt. These kinds of media, are durable, thus enforces stability. Space-biased media are light and portable. They can be transported over large distances. They are associated with secular and

territorial societies. They facilitate the expansion of empire over space. Paper is such a medium; it is readily transported, but has a relatively short lifespan. Space-biased media, are not much durable, therefore they enforce stability.

David Godfrey summarises Innis in a following way:

For Innis, the organization of empires seems to follow two major models. The first model is militaristic and concerned with the conquest of space. The second model is religious and concerned with the conquest of time. Comparatively, the media that have supported the military conquering of space have been lighter, so that the constraints of long distances could be lessened. Those media that supported theocratic empires had relative durability as a major characteristic so that they could support the concepts of eternal life and endless dynasties (Godfrey 1986: 113).

Innis's conviction was that stable societies were able to achieve a balance between time and space biased communications media. He also believed that change came from the margins of society because people on the margins had and have developed their own media. The new media allow them, which were on the periphery to develop and consolidate power. And they do so to challenge the authority of the centre. Latin writings on the parchment did, and the medium of the Christian Church was attacked by the secular medium of vernacular writings on paper. Paper challenged the parchment. Speech, on the other hand was challenged by the written word. Speech was an oral communication, considered by Innis to be time biased because it requires the relative stability of community for face-to-face contact. Knowledge, which were passed down orally depends on a lineage of transmission. These are often associated with ancestors, and ratified by human contacts. The margins caused a necessity for change, while the centre marked the changes.

## **Innis and Theory of Communication**

Innis looks a dialectical relationship between society and technology because they influence each other mutually. According to this view, certain social forms and situations encourage the development of new media. These media, operating within existing situations, react back on society, which produce a new cycle of change. Thus, it would be a mistake to consider Innis a technological determinist. He does not believe that technology drives merely social evolutions; rather he appreciates the power, which is invested in the communications technologies and monopolies of knowledge also, which give a shape to the culture. So Innis can be seen as a technological realist.

### **Methods in the Bias of Communication**

Innis's major contribution to the theory of communication was the Bias of Communication. He concludes that the relative emphasis on time or space will imply a bias of significance to the particular culture, in which it is embedded. The relative lightness or heaviness of the medium is not always a reliable indication of its particular bias. Rather it is more useful to think the bias of media, which is related to the ability of the ideas to make transmission. And the impact over space or over time also is viable towards this notion. If we compare parchment with papyrus or paper, we see that the weight is not really a crucial element. And it is not the heaviness of stone, which necessarily makes it a time-biased medium but rather it is the medium's ability, which considers the elements and natural disasters so that it could communicate its message for the centuries and later also. The pyramids, temples and other huge monuments and cathedrals of the world also are still able to communicate something, which is essentially the very meaning of the communications media.

It was easy to preserve the writings more on clay tablets and on stone effectively than on papyrus. Since durable commodities emphasise time and continuity, studies of civilization have a bias toward religion. Therefore, it neglects the problems of space,

namely the administration and law. Today we are able to know the history of empires largely from the time-biased monuments and documents. Innis suggests that a particular civilisation adopts a particular media. And this activity shapes the character of knowledge, which is transmitted by that culture. With this idea McLuhan's "*the medium is the message*", seems justified. Innis's analysis seems complex and multi-dimensional because he understands that the longevity of empires depend on their ability to extend themselves over both time and space. It is a question of balance. He claims that the Egyptian civilization

appears to have been powerfully influenced by the character of the Nile. Utilization of its periodic floods depended on the unified control of an absolute authority. The discovery and adoption of a calendar with the certainty of dates for religious festivals [the sidereal calendar measured time by the movement of the stars] facilitated the establishment of an absolute monarchy and the imposition of the authority of Osiris and Ra, the Nile and the Sun, on Upper Egypt. Success of the monarchy in acquiring control over Egypt in terms of space necessitated a concern with problems of continuity over time. (Innis 1950: 78)

Innis outlines the need for continuity, which is needed for claiming territory. Balance always plays a vital role in the empire building process. And very significantly media of communication determines it. He argues: "The monopoly of knowledge centering around stone and hieroglyphics was exposed to competition from papyrus as a new and more efficient medium". It is the monopolies of knowledge, which determines the longevity of empires. New media threatens the previous monopolies of knowledge. If priests can gain a monopoly on papyrus and writing, then they will gain power relative to the king who depends on stone monuments. New arrangements are formed and new monopolies are created, thus. Today also, we have witnessed such shifting in the monopolies. This transformation could be seen in the delivery of news to the mass printing from newspapers and to the radio to television and lastly to the Internet. Each medium has its own bias. Innis tells that media are inter-related in their impact on the

## Innis and Theory of Communication

survival of empires. In his essay "*Minerva's Owl*,"<sup>10</sup> Innis suggests that the high flowering stage of an empire comes just before its decline and fall: "Minerva's Owl begins its flight only in the gathering dusk." Innis makes a reason that "a monopoly or an oligopoly of knowledge is built up to the point that equilibrium is disturbed". Thus, we could see that all great empires are most vulnerable, at the time when it reaches at its highest stage. Innis's thought could be generalise that all the things do their journey till its highest stage, after getting that point, it moves towards its decline.

## Conclusion

More than a half century after his death, Harold Innis remains Canada's pre-eminent communication theorist. Innis is certainly less famous than his self-proclaimed 'protege', Marshall McLuhan, who termed his book, *The Gutenberg Galaxy*, 'a footnote to the observations of Innis'. Innis remarkably inaugurated the debate on the media. The modes of transmitting messages like speech, the means of inscription like clay tablets, stone, papyrus, paper and electronic modes like radio, television etc have significantly different consequences for cultures and civilisations.

Innis emphasised the time and space bias of the various media. He proposes that particular modes of communication encourage either control through time, i.e. in the sense of continuity and duration, or control over geographical expanse, i.e. in the sense of empire. In the terms of time and space, his contentions are sweeping. Like each civilisation, which has its dominant form of communication, in the same way it has an influential bias in the cultural orientation towards time or space. A situation of balance rarely takes place. According to Innis, the way time or space focused through communications is a crucial factor in the rise of civilisation and its ultimate collapse.

---

<sup>10</sup> *Minerwa's Owl* in *The Bias of Communications* by Harold A. Innis (1951)

## Innis and Theory of Communication

In his media analysis, Innis featured the concept of monopolies of knowledge. He claims that in any given era a particular mode of communication is aligned closely with a particular type of knowledge. Therefore, it creates a particular class of people and empowers them; they control the medium and exercise the knowledge associated with that. McLuhan followed the Innis's footsteps, but he diverted Innis's media thesis by focusing on biases in the mode of perception, which was essentially eye vs. ear rather than the time and space bias of the modes of transmission.

Harold Innis began his scholarly career as an economic historian. He specialised his deeds in Canadian economic development. He formulated the staples thesis<sup>11</sup> to explain Canadian economic history. In the process of further studies, he developed his analysis of 'media bias' and 'monopolies of knowledge'. Later it was coined as the 'media thesis'. He applied the staples thesis into the sector of media. In the economic development the rise of staples could be seen: first fish, then fur, then comes lumber, followed by mining and wheat. In other words, new staples required major modifications to the economic infrastructure, which is the system of transportation and energy. Those groups, who have control over the new staple and the new technology, they preserve the power, whereas those groups, who are associated with the old ways of staple, lost their influence. Innis viewed staples as linking the centres, which were imperial in nature and the margins, which were colonial in nature. This position also could be seen in his later media analysis. Thus, his influence could be felt over media imperialism and dependency theory.

Innis thought economic developments as the prominent features in the formation and instabilities of the modern empires. Today communication technologies are working more and more towards the aspects of economic life, this further includes the influence of organised commerce. Media and advanced technologies formed a necessary infrastructure for the rise of mass society in the western world. This included newspapers, printing,

---

<sup>11</sup> Staples thesis was Innis's primary work. He did the brilliant work on the Canadian Economic History. Primarily he became a political economy thinker.

steam transport, the telegraph and the telephone, radio and television and recently the Internet. Bias is the centerpiece, which Innis makes his guiding concepts for both communications history and modern media studies.

History is perceived as a series of eras separated by discontinuity. Discontinuity breaks the historical developments into the phases. This arrangement makes the historical studies easier. The interaction between media and social reality creates biases, which strongly affect the society's cultural orientation and values. These communication biases work as a first and last point from which we can assess the character of a civilisation. From the oral tradition of indigenous cultures, which were preliterate to the different types of writing and print, to the electronic media of our own time, communications have been integral to the functioning of all social institutions. In understanding a particular society from a history of communications perspective, the dominant medium is need to be considered either in a primary oral culture like stone, clay tablets, papyrus, or parchment in early civilizations or printed paper and electronic media in the modern times.

Innis gives more importance to the understanding of oral tradition<sup>12</sup>. For Innis, the important feature of an oral tradition is not its aural nature, but rather it emphasises dialogue and inhibits the emergence of monopolies of knowledge, which creates a leading political authority, territorial expansion and the uneven distribution of power and wealth. Historically it has facilitated abstract thought. Although it freed thought from the subjective realm of the oral tradition, but it caused the explicit social obligations in law and economic sector. In his study of communication in Greek civilisation, Innis was impressed with the vitality of the pre-Aristotelian culture, which emphasised the spoken rather than the written word. The oral tradition, according to Innis, was responsible for flexible laws, truthfulness, economy of words, and creative thought. This tradition was

---

<sup>12</sup> By an oral tradition Innis meant a "selection from the history of a people of a series of related events, culturally defined as significant, and their transmission from generation to generation."

creative because it could be interpreted according to the needs. Early Roman times were also characterised by a powerful oral tradition, which was beneficial for the early development of the legal system. But, with the advent of writing, both intellectual and political development suffered. Innis of course, did not use this oral literature and advocate a romantic return to the former. Rather it functioned as an element in a critical theory of knowledge.

Studying communication in historical context, Innis developed some interesting perspectives concerning the impact of changes in communication on cultural development. During most of his professional career he was concerned with the study of various Canadian industries, such as the railway, the fur trade, mining and the cod fisheries. When he shifted his explorations towards the subject of pulp and paper industries, he found himself compelled to extend his research to the trade routes of the mind and of public opinion, which were printing, newspapers and finally, media of communication of all kinds like radio, television and Internet. He did his study historically from Egyptian times to the present.

Innis was writing in the twentieth century, when worldwide popularity of television and the rise of information technologies were growing. But despite all these changes a very conceptual framework he proposed. Bias of communication should not be regarded as a sacred text but as an open-ended project because it provides a framework to understand the relationships of communication within the history and society.

Innis was pleased, when he saw Elizabethan England because he saw restrictions on the importation of paper from the continent. This restriction delayed the advent of printing and continued an emphasis on the spoken word. This emphasis caused development of the drama. In today's world the introduction of the new media, which emphasises the spoken word, has weakened the popularity of the book. The printing press

## Innis and Theory of Communication

and the radio address the world rather than the individual. An oral discussion privately involves personal contact and consideration for the feelings of others.

Innis is much concerned with the cultural disequilibrium, which is created by the mass media. The significant influence of the book, which is sustained by intellectual efforts, has been destroyed by new developments in periodicals and newspapers. A new trend emerged out of this. Under the pressure of publishers and advertisers, the journalist has to rely on the striking phrases rather than the fitting phrase. They started to emphasise on crisis rather than developmental trends. Recently, the radio and the motion picture have fostered superficiality and impermanence.

Much of Innis' work in the field of communication is of primary interest to the economist and the historian. Perhaps no other modern writer has demonstrated clearly the relationship between changes in communication and cultural change. Innis' analysis of the mass media, help us to a critical awareness. Finally, his concern with the oral tradition is a needed tendency in modern education. Innis clearly deplores the overemphasis on textbooks, the examination system and the written mechanised tradition at the expense of face-to-face discussion in the modern university. He interpreted his own work as an oral tradition. He looks it as a basis for a revival of effective vital discussion. He believes in the discourses. He looked upon the teacher as a vital link between the written and the oral tradition, and also between books and the conversation. Information through the oral and critical tradition, should be grown up, he thinks so.

Innis's interest in communications was not independent of his concerns for economic history. Rather, the former grew out of the latter. In the study of the economic history of Canada, Innis was confronted by two important questions. First, what are the underlying causes of change in social organization? Second, What are the conditions, which promote stability in any society? Innis felt that the concern related to the source of

social change could be found in the technological innovations. Here he seems similar to McLuhan. Both are agree that there are various kinds of technology like military, industrial, and administrative. These technologies are not equal in their influences on society. Innis supposes the technology of communication as a key factor to all other technology. He justified his views in the both way, logically and historically. Innis assumes that man comprises a unique relationship with the technology. McLuhan's phrase, 'technology is literally an extension of man, as the axe is an extension of the hand, the wheel of the foot', (McLuhan Marshall, 1964.) proves the Innis's idea. Instruments generally have the tendency to extend the man's physical capacity. But communications technology, on the other hand, is an extension of thought and consciousness. Therefore, the communications media could be seen as the extension of mind. Innis argued that the existing media of communication strongly affects the forms of social organisation. The social organisation is not independent entity of the man's knowledge, i.e. the consciousness. Control of communications gives the way to control of both consciousness and social organisation. That's why, whenever a medium of communication and the groups, which control the media, have hegemony in society. And when a new media comes in practice, undermines the existing centers of power and it does create new patterns of association and articulates new forms of knowledge.

Innis argues that all the medium of communications is biased in terms of the time or space control. So the media could be classified into two types. First, media, which are durable and difficult to transport are generally the time-biased. For example parchment, clay tablets, and stones. Second, media, which are light and less durable, are spatially biased. For example paper and papyrus are space-binding. They are light and easily transportable. They can be moved across space very fast. Thus, they favor administration over vast distances. Space-binding media encourage the growth of the state, the military, and decentralised and expansionist institutions. Time-binding media foster concern with history, custom and tradition. It favours the growth of religion rather than the secular authority and the hierarchical organisation. Innis looks not only towards the major organisations, rather also analysed the effects of those organisations on the secondary

institutions. The hegemony of either religion or the state imposes an influential characteristic pattern on all the secondary institutions like education. It seems interesting to see that this development further makes the way to compete the existing mode of communication and to break down its hegemony. As a specific communication media favours the growth of a certain kind of institution, it also does assure the domination of a particular culture of that institution.

7H-18797  
On the cultural level, his principal contrast was between the oral and written traditions. Speech was not the only means of communication in traditional societies, rather the principal means. Traditional societies were organised in terms of certain features of speech. It created dialectics there. When we compare speech with the other mode of communications, find that it not only moves over short distances but travels slowly also. Life in traditional societies was collective and communal. Harmony could be seen there. Innis argues that speech encourages the development of a society with a strong temporal bias, a society which focuses on the past and which emphasises tradition, which attempts to conserve and preserve the existing stock of knowledge and values. Such societies are likely to have limited conceptions of space (Godfrey 1986). Oral traditions and time-binding media led to the growth of a culture oriented towards a sacred tradition, which built consensus and place it on values, morality and metaphysics at the centre of the civilisation. While written traditions, on the other hand, led to quite different cultures. They were usually space-binding and favoured the growth of political authority and secular institutions. Rather than emphasising the past, it emphasises the present and the future. It emphasises on the technical order and favours the growth of science and technical knowledge, rather emphasising knowledge on the moral order. The competition between time and space-biased media makes the way for the monopolies of knowledge.

Innis believed that monopoly of time or space, religion or the state, the moral or the technical, was the principal dynamic of the rise and fall of empires. The bias toward time or space produced instability in society. A stable society could be found possibly



only by establishing balance between competing forces. In *The Bias of Communication* Innis commented that in the western civilisation, a stable society is dependent on a proper balance between the concepts of space and time.

Writing in the 1930s to the 1950s, Innis seems an advocate of inter-disciplinarily approach. It was a new dimension in the social sciences. Thus, he was elaborating the domain of social sciences. Charles Tilly (1984) calls his approach a 'world-historical' research programme. In his most appropriate study for the Communications, Innis moves from Ancient Sumeria, Babylonia and Egypt to the Middle Ages and from Plato's Greece to the Hitler's Germany.

Innis's interest in the communications media dates from the early 1940s, when his thinking about the industrial society led him to reconsider the role of communication technologies in history. Thus, he made a new historiography. After two decades as an economic historian, which had concern with the relationship between economics and geography, he began to look industrial societies with a new outlook. During the 1940s, Innis began to study pulp and paper industry, which was central to the Canadian economy. This research provided a spillover from his work on staple to his communications studies. Biographer Paul Heyer writes:

Innis followed pulp and paper through its subsequent stages: newspapers and journalism, books and advertising. In other words, from looking at a natural resource-based industry he turned his attention to a cultural industry in which information, and ultimately knowledge, was a commodity that circulated, had value, and empowered those who controlled it (Heyer 1981: 92).

Innis's communication approach was acceptable for the historians. Both the economic historians and the cultural theorists were influenced by his thoughts on communications. The cotemporary post modernist scholars like Michel Foucault

(information environments) and Jacques Derrida (the linguistic context of all knowledge) are gaining insights from his ideas, those see information as a prevalent mode of thinking.

Innis has discussed primarily the links among culture, communications and monopolies of knowledge. His former colleague Donald Creighton (1952) noted that Innis was always ready and willing to promote the interests of scholarship. W.A. Mackintosh argues that his later work is suggestive and will stimulate further inquiries in the field. While emphasising Innis's work on communications, W.T. Easterbrook suggested that the work in communications represented a speculative and philosophical departure at odds with his earlier, more solidly grounded work in economic history and political economy. Moreover, by maintaining that Innis came to study communications as an extension of his earlier analysis of staples (Easterbrook 1953: 297). According to McLuhan,

the later Innis turned to study archaeology and anthropology where any separation of economics and society was meaningless, and where he could make use of simpler societies as working models on which to base a critique of our total civilization..... Once he had crossed that bridge to the network of information and ideas he never turned back to the merely economic network (McLuhan 1953: 57).

Two main phases of Innis's intellectual activities are, the staple approach of the early Innis and the communication studies of the later Innis. Communication became a code word to describe the final phase of Innis's work. Leslie Pal suggested that rather than divorcing later Innis from earlier concerns, it would be fruitful to think of Innis more in terms of "political theorist" concerned with understanding how communications within empires were linked to humanistic scholarship, public opinion, and the production of knowledge (Pal 1977: 38). Havelock examined him as "the philosophical historian" after realising Innis's last five years, when he was involved in studies of communications.

## Innis and Theory of Communication

Unlike McLuhan, Innis never forgot that time was being constructed by industrialism. And he favoured nostalgia for Greek culture, although he was a big admirer of that culture because of its freshness. He was concerned with the present and emphasised on the encouragement and cultivates oral resistance to space-biased communications. Innis's invention to see the history in terms of time and space-biased communication has provided an alternative to mark a new historiography. His emphasis on the oral tradition has introduced the discourse element in the society. The practices of debate and discourse are an essential element for the sake of an open society. In the era of cultural imperialism, such elements could be more vital.

## CHAPTER: II

### COMMUNICATIONS AND MONOPOLIES OF KNOWLEDGE

We have come across the earlier and later life of Harold Innis in the introductory chapter. He shifted his analysis from economic sphere to the general kind of analysis, i.e. communications theory. His later studies include subject matters like; how communications affect the society and the emergence of states and its transformation from oriental to empire, religious to political and also in the form of nation-states. Innis was very much concerned with the rapid changes, which occurred during the first half of the twentieth century. The rise of some powerful states and the fall of others influenced him more. The decline of Europe and the emergence of USA, he saw closely. He was well aware of the technological innovations. During the World Wars, Radio's role was very critical in the determination of the victorious party. When he tried to search the underlying causes, then came his later studies.

Prior to the idea of communications, Innis already was familiar with the historical events. In his study of political economy of Canada, he brought out the historical evolutions, which had shaped the today's Canada. Later, when he shifted his matter of analysis towards the communications, very extensively he studied the historical developments. All the civilisations had a particular medium of communication and vice-versa. The determinant thing for a specific civilisation was the medium's durability. Innis emphasised durability more but in the terms of time and space. What was the nature of a medium? In other words, it was a time-biased or space-biased? The thing, which Innis has more concern with, was the knowledge and its monopoly. A bias either towards time or space had created the monopolies of knowledge. The monopoly was so rigid that it had created big empires. The religious dominance against the secular states was also in existence before the emergence of modern secular state. Innis found the balance, very significant in the practices of any civilisation. Whenever balance was disturbed, the changes came drastically. In other words, if one monopolies of knowledge got shrunken, then comes another one to

create monopoly again. As history moves ahead, so do the communication media. Balance is necessary for all the spheres, whether the monopolies of knowledge or the communications media. Bias for a particular media could destroy the existing arrangements. In the course of time, whenever particular bias had shifted, it created way for another bias.

### Monopolies of Knowledge

Innis has extended the economic concept of monopoly to include culture and politics. If we consider that a society has a network of communications systems, we can see that there are key junctures or nodal points where significant information is stored, and from where it is transmitted to other parts of the system. Arthur Kroker suggests that Innis "*sought to explore the interstices of the technological habitat.*" Traditionally, the universities have attempted to monopolise certain kinds of information. This practice is like the professional associations such as doctors or engineers or lawyers have and as have governments. Innis has demonstrated that individuals or groups who control access to those points wield great power. Those who monopolise knowledge are also in a position to define, whatever as the legitimate knowledge. To justify this statement, the organised church comes immediately to the mind. The scientific community also emphasises the objectivity of knowledge and at the same time also advocates for a rigid method for obtaining that knowledge.

Monopolies of knowledge derive their power from several sources:

**Performativity:** Just as Egyptian priests were able to accurately predict the regular flooding of the Nile because knowledge of writing allowed them to make calculations, this is very same like access to public opinion, which allows pollsters to predict elections within certain percentage parameters.

**Speed:** Advantages get those who have the knowledge first. Business or agreement done in the back rooms or in the corridors of power is often never reported in the media.

**Ability to afford high costs:** The cost of production value in design, recording, television, and Hollywood movies makes it difficult for lower budget artifacts to compete for attention (Flaherty 1993: 293-302).

Monopolies of knowledge tend to polarise societies into a mass of the ignorant and a knowledge elite. Monopolies of knowledge encourage centralisation of power. Those who control knowledge have the power to define reality. It can be useful to think of the media blackout during the Gulf War or how confession is used to convey the moral teachings of the Roman Church.

Finally, monopolies of knowledge promote tendencies toward instability. Competitors and critics are always looking for ways to subvert monopoly power, and perhaps gain it for themselves. Nuclear proliferation is one such example of this instability. Some countries have the nuclear weapons, but at the same time they talk about the proliferation. Rather power should be seen as a dynamic process, which should be reasserted always for its continuance.

### **The Evolution of Civilisations: An Effect of Monopolies of Knowledge**

Perhaps the best way to see the link, which Innis had in the mind between information and empire, can be seen in his concept of the monopoly of knowledge. He sometimes calls it a cultural monopoly of knowledge. In his analysis he applied the economist's concept of monopoly to the wider issues of knowledge distribution and information. He assumes that the media of communication seem vital to see any epoch's characteristics. The properties of the dominant medium facilitate knowledge and information. This tendency causes power, lastly. Remember the pre-existing institutional structures also remain in this process, though they used non-movable medium of communications. This is also true for the Middle Ages Europe and even in the modern times. The flow of knowledge was okay for all those civilisations, but the mediums always have been transformed time to time, which were essentially non-

movable to movable types. The huge monuments passed through the clay tablets to the papyrus, later parchment to the printing press. Twentieth century alone marked the intense transformations from radio to television and recently Internet.

Ambiguity can be seen in the Innis's writings on the monopoly of knowledge. At the particular moment when monopolies seem shattered, they reassert themselves. It can be seen in the following example: the dominant control of knowledge by the parchment, which wielded clergy of the Middle Ages was challenged by the print. Printing arrangements itself, which had caused the development of the vernaculars, were challenged by the mass production of newspapers. Later it also got a blow by the mechanised form of knowledge, namely radio, television etc. Innis has mentioned the evolution of communications media from the cuneiform script, which were inscribed on the clay tablets in ancient Mesopotamia to the advent of radio in the 20th century.

In each period I have attempted to trace the implications of the media of communication for the character of knowledge and to suggest that a monopoly or oligopoly of knowledge is built up to the point that equilibrium is disturbed. (Innis, Harold A. 1952.)

A complex system of writing, namely the cuneiform script resulted a growth of a special class, which was master of the scribes. Such special class later became more specific. Such writing ensured those masters to a specific privileged class. In the beginning, Innis saw in the Mesopotamia, a special class grown up through the reed styles writing on the clay tablets. In this way civilisation emerged, along with an elite group of scribe priests. Those classes later codified the existing laws. Egypt also followed the same way by using papyrus, the brush, and hieroglyphic<sup>1</sup> writing.

Writing was a difficult and specialised art. It required a long practice and reading those specialised arrangements needed a long period of instruction. Thus, the

---

<sup>1</sup> Hieroglyphic writing was a system used by the ancient Egyptians that contained a combination of logographic and alphabetic elements. Egyptians used cursive hieroglyphs for religious literature on papyrus and wood.

god of writing got more importance and reflected the power of the scribe over religion. The scribe had the full notifications of a special profession. The privileged class comprised the upper strata of the society, i.e. the kings, priests and nobles. Those classes were in sharp contrast with peasants, fishermen, artisans and labourers. The growing complexity within the society favoured increasing control of the priests. It was an apparent monopoly, which had confined the knowledge to those special classes. Innis argued that this priestly or scribal monopoly disturbed the essential balance between the religious bias, which was towards time and continuity and the political bias towards the space and power. He pointed out the imbalances, which came forth because of the priestly monopoly over writing and knowledge, which supported an emphasis on time and religion, but at the same time it also neglected the political problems, which had concerns with the empires extended in space.

Innis finds that monopolies of knowledge eventually face challenges with the arrival of new media. He pointed to the monasteries,<sup>2</sup> which spread throughout Europe after the fall of the Roman Empire. Their monopoly of knowledge depended on their control over the production of the time-binding medium of parchment, which was useful for preserving hand-copied manuscripts. These valuable scripts were written in Latin. Power, here could be seen in a scribal and literate, religious elite. The huge populations of illiterate bodies were dependent on priests, who interpreted the scriptures and on image-driven media such as paintings and statues.

Innis finds out the space-binding medium of paper, which was imported from China. It had facilitated challenges from Islam and later from a rising commercial class. Paper supported the growth of trade and cities and of education beyond the control of the monasteries. Paper also supported the rise of vernacular languages, which reduced the domination of Latin writings. Innis (1950) wrote that the Catholic Church fought to preserve its time-oriented monopoly of knowledge with the Interrogation, but lastly, it was the paper, which achieved a greater power with the

---

<sup>2</sup> Monastery was a form of rule. It was the rule of religious community. In this form of government, religion dominates all the sphere of life, whether political or social.

invention of the printing press around the middle of the 15th century. Now, the balance shifted decisively in favour of space over time. The Protestant Reformation followed, along with European exploration and empire, the rise of science and the evolution of the nation-state. Characteristically, Innis summarises the far-reaching implications of the new medium of paper that starts with the middle Ages and ends with the modern United States:

The dominance of parchment in the West gave a bias toward ecclesiastical organization, which led to the introduction of paper, with its bias toward political organization. With printing, paper facilitated an effective development of the vernaculars and gave expression to their vitality in the growth of nationalism. The adaptability of the alphabet to large-scale machine industry became the basis of literacy, advertising and trade. The book as a specialised product of printing and, in turn, the newspaper strengthened the position of language as a basis of nationalism. In the United States, the dominance of the newspaper led to large-scale development of monopolies of communication in terms of space and implied a neglect of problems of time. (Innis 1950: 197)

In his essay "*A Plea For Time*" Innis has described the ways through the civilisations started his journey and advanced one by one later. He finds the biological time during the ancient era was significant. In Egypt and Babylonia the importance of Nile floods and dependence on irrigation were linked with the celebration of religious festivals. Peoples' these activities determined the necessity of time. The Egyptian dynasties maintained their relations with the sidereal year in respect to the appearance of the star Sirius. The pyramids reflected the power of the absolute kings over time and space. Pyramids were the standing monuments, which justified their absolutism.<sup>3</sup> The mummification of the kings showed the eternity, thus the belief in immortality grew up. In the course of time, the power of absolute monarchy got wounded by the coming priesthood, which was relying more on the reliable solar year. Thus, the power of the monarchy reflected in the monumental architecture of the pyramids and

---

<sup>3</sup> Absolutism is a character of any type of rule. It denotes the supreme authority. It is generally married with the monarchy.

in sculpture was disturbed by the power of the priesthood, which was based on a complex system of writing and the use of papyrus.

In Babylonia, the power of the priesthood was dependent on a mastery of complex cuneiform writing on clay tablets. The Kassites, the Assyrians and the Persians also recognised the power of the Babylonian priesthood. In Egypt the power of the priesthood checked the possibilities of political development of the monarchy. Thus, monopolies of control over time exercised by the priesthods of Babylonia and Egypt made the problems of political organisation in the Assyrian and Persian empires. In other words, priesthood privileged the monopolies of knowledge during all this era.

After the history of stone and papyrus writing, clay tablets and cuneiform became the next organ to be written down. As a medium, clay demanded a shift from the pictograph<sup>4</sup> to formal patterns. The gap between picture and word is bridged. The writing became more stylish. The necessity of more writing developed the sufficient scripts, thus advanced the use of signs.

Sun-dried tablets could be broken easily. This danger was overcome by the use of fire. Because of durability to use over a long period of time, clay could be admired. But its heaviness creates problem; it was less suited as a medium of communication over large areas.

---

<sup>4</sup> A pictograph is an ideogram that conveys its meaning through its pictorial resemblance to a physical object. It is an ancient or prehistoric drawing or paintings found on rock walls. Pictography is a form of writing, which uses representational, pictorial drawings. Early written symbols were based on pictographs (pictures which resemble what they signify) and ideograms (symbols which represent ideas).

The limitations with the monopolies of knowledge during all these civilisations were shown in the instability of political organisations. All those were evident in the emergence of simpler forms of writing centering on the alphabet. The alphabet responded to the demands of a spoken language by linking sound to letter. The Greeks carried the adaptability of the alphabet to the point of developing certain letters as vowels. The limitations of the monopolies of knowledge of Egypt and Mesopotamia and the adaption of the alphabet to the demands of a powerful oral tradition were evident in the freshness and flexibility of Greek culture. In the fifth century it emerged as the basis of Western civilisation as contrasted with civilisations of the Far East and of the America (Innis 1950).

---

In the Roman Empire the extension of control over territorial space prominent. It also included diverse of languages and organised force, therefore religion proved an inadequate effort. The importance of space over time was increasing. But in the face of barbarian invasions, control over time and religion got the importance. In this monopoly, emphasis was placed on Latin as a language and as a device to offset the divisive influence of several languages. So the monopoly of knowledge seems a flexible idea, which could be accommodated at any time. In the course of time, a monopoly over time invited competition. In this competition the monopoly of Latin language was destroyed. This was done by the introduction of paper and the use of the vernaculars. The increasing supply of cheap paper supported the growth of a literature of the vernacular in Italy and France. Reformations of Germany, Netherlands and England also took place in the middle of the last millennium. The influence of paper on the development of writing and of printing in the Europe was impressed by Roman Empire. Now the monopoly was reserved for the copyists. On the other side the paper industry in Italy started to grow. Various vernaculars in different regions became prominent, which later proved its ability in the determination of political boundaries.

The modern states<sup>5</sup> with political boundaries were influenced by the paper and printing industries. And these industries were the consequences of the spill over effect of industrial revolution<sup>6</sup> and the application of steam power to the paper and printing industries. The modern nation-states and later the more advance regionalism<sup>7</sup> could be seen in the wake of vernaculars and languages. The idea of the freedom of the Press is more significant towards these developments. But the most important development, which was and is happening today, is that the problem of duration or monopoly has been neglected. Now time has been cut into pieces by the length of a day's newspaper. A grave threat to the continuity is seen now because of tyranny of monopoly over time. The concept of progress arises from a type of monopoly concerned with control over time to a type of monopoly concerned with control over space.

In Egypt the gain of a united monarchy by material victories, funerary beliefs and practices had created a social situation, which invented the writing habits. The words were seen as divine objects because they acted on gods, kings and various natural things. The spoken word possessed creative efficiency and the written word in the tomb perpetuated it. Pyramids and the art of mummification were significant instruments towards this. From 4000 B.C., the names of kings, wars, political events and religious doctrines were started to write down.

In the coming times, royalty got the significance. The royal family introduced a new calendar after the replacement of monarchy. Extension of privileges to the

---

<sup>5</sup> Modern states are regarded as the nation states. Nation states were the obvious output of the reformation through the whole Europe. Nation-states have the essential character of the sovereignty. In the cotemporary era, this formation is shrinking; globalisation is the real cause for such type of development.

<sup>6</sup> Industrial revolution took place in Europe firstly. Rapid development of industry occurred in Britain in the late eighteenth century. It marked the use of machinery in the production system. Later it spread all over. Industrial revolution was a key change, which had influenced the whole spheres of life, political, economic, social and cultural also.

<sup>7</sup> It is a form of grouping. Regions get the significance rather than the central systems. It is a socio-political and economic affiliation towards a region.in the contemporary era it is growing rapidly and transforming the very nature of the nation states.

priestly class brought a new transition to oligarchy.<sup>8</sup> Now the religious rights became more liberalised. The management of royal lands was farmed; partial ownership of houses and tombs was permitted. Another development was the free exercise of trades and administrative offices were now into existence. Now peasants, craftsmen and scribes also rose to an administrative post and got the participation in assemblies. Thus, scribes now got important participation in the society. Earlier it belonged to privileged class.

The emphasis on papyrus<sup>9</sup> rather than on stone disturbed the Egyptian civilisation. Now a more democratic organisation was in practice in place of absolute monarchy. In contrast with stone, papyrus as a writing medium was very light. Brushes were used for writing. Writing on stone was characterised by straightness, whereas writing on papyrus permitted cursive forms. This style of writing was well suited to the rapid writing. Writing on stone monuments was carefully formed and decorative in character. When writing was on papyrus, they became simpler and more rounded in style.

When the medium was changed thought gained lightness. Secularisation was introduced in all the spheres like writing and the thoughts also. The fluent writing marked a new social revolution between the old and new Kingdom. And a displacement of religious approach took place by the secular literature. With the increased use of papyrus and the simplification of hieroglyphic script, administration became more efficient. Apart from the army for war purpose, an army of scribes was promoted. Literacy was valued as a key to the prosperity and social rank.

---

<sup>8</sup> It is a form of rule, where a small group of people controls the whole country. It is the supreme decision-maker within the country and represents itself supreme outside the world.

<sup>9</sup> It was made from a water plant, which was restricted in the habitant of Nile delta. Papyrus was the dominant mode of communication during the Egyptian Empire. Later, it was replaced by the parchment, which caused the rise of Roman Empire.

The spread of writing after the democratic revolution caused the practice of a new religion and it was of Osiris. Osiris was seen now as a sacred scribe, administrator and the inventor of speech and writing. He was now the Lord of the creative voice, master of words and books. Osiris became the centre of a popular and priestly literature.

The demands of the Nile required unified control and the ability to predict the time, so that the predictions of the floods could be made. Perhaps, the monarchy was build up in relation to these demands and strengthened its position by construction of the pyramids, which reflected the power of the monarchy over space and time. But a new competitive medium, namely the papyrus, favoured the position of religion because it did the predictions based on the solar year. In this contradictory scenario, when a fusion took place between monarchy and priesthood, it became the basis of an Egyptian Empire. A successful Empire, for its survival is need to be address the problems of space, which was essentially military and political in nature and of problems of time, which were dynastic and religious.

Dependence on stone as a medium provided the background for an absolute monarchy. But its monopoly position invited competition from papyrus, which created a new monopoly dominated by religion. It held control over writing with the complex hieroglyphics. The new monopoly thus created problems for the Egyptian Empire and also to other Empires, which sought to exercise control over Egypt. Monopoly over writing supported an emphasis on religion and the time concept, which defeated efforts to solve the problem of space.

Unlike earlier empires of the East, where writing was developed slowly, the rise of Greece was marked by the technology of the alphabet with a strong oral tradition. Although in the determination of monopolies of knowledge, oral society got defeated. The well thing with the oral tradition was that it was so flexible to determine so many things. So, the possibility of direct transfer of the original oral content to

writing helped to avoid the extremes of theocracy<sup>10</sup> and militarism,<sup>11</sup> which was a central character of the previous empires. And the rapid adaptation of written materials to new social needs also helped to avoid those extremes. The alphabet technology undermines the monopolies, which had been based on complex systems of writing. These systems had sustained religious and military empires in the East. The alphabet tradition in the Greece created the rationalism.<sup>12</sup> This concept was against the absolutism. The oral form of alphabet gave rise to the liberal thoughts among the peoples. Dialogue was prominent in all over the Greece. Homer's epics were the key towards this development. The death of Socrates represented the death of the oral tradition. On the other hand the rise of Plato and Aristotle represented the growth of a new civilisation based not on poetry and the authority of gods, but on the alphabet and the rationality of mankind. The achievements of a rich oral tradition in Greek civilisation became the basis of western culture.

Geometry transferred from Egypt and astronomy transferred from Babylonia were used first to improve navigation and then as the basis for a new rational, anti-mythological philosophy. Although this early science was still linked to the natural and the supra natural, but it was distinct from theology. It was concerned with the production of generalisations acceptable to everyone, not simply to a religious and tradition bound hierarchy. The use of prose by the scientist and philosopher was significant. All of these developments were facilitated by the lack of priests and second languages within the Greek, oral culture. All further mark of the alphabet's influence came with the writing down of laws. The demand was strong in the colonies and spread to the original city-states. But in the city-states the move to codification was tempered by a continuing oral tradition. Solon built the judicial courts not on an

---

<sup>10</sup> Although this term is used for the political arrangements, but the meaning of this is the rule by the religion. Here, the religious principles guide the political arena.

<sup>11</sup> When a country protects its national interests only through the military capabilities. Countries, who rely on military capabilities, could be referred as a 'authoritarian regime.' It can be used on both sides; internally and externally also.

<sup>12</sup> Rationalism is a belief, based on the reason and knowledge rather than the religious beliefs and emotions. Rationalism helped in the secularisation of knowledge.

aristocratic base, but on a semi-democratic popular base. A written body of case law was based on strong debate and open procedures.

In the way of monopolies of knowledge, the introduction of libraries has been a crucial factor. Easy access to supplies of papyrus facilitated the development of the Alexandrian library.<sup>13</sup> Cheap subsidised supplies of papyrus became the basis for an extensive administrative system and large libraries as well. Alexandria brought together the philosophical or religious ideas of both East and West, of India, Palestine, and Persia and of Greece. The oral tradition of Greece, which was shown in the writing of Plato and Aristotle, had profound significance for Alexandria. But it was the Alexandria and other libraries also, which had caused the decline of oral tradition because libraries only could have the written plates in their selves.

Libraries destroyed the oral tradition. The spread of writing reinforced Greek influence. In the third century B.C. books and readers emerged to meet the needs of the state and demands of the law also. In the second century books were to be circulated everywhere. Papyrus sale was regulated under royal monopoly. But private individuals also cultivated and prepared it in factories. States purchased the best quality of papyrus for the use of notaries. Egypt had the dominance and huge access to the papyrus.

The government of the large areas had problems to control its own territory. To overcome this problem the respective governments started to rely on the bureaucratic arrangements. A new evolution thus came to short out the problems of space. For example the models could be seen in the large secretarial departments of Hellenistic kingdoms.<sup>14</sup> Concentration of control weakened the power of the Senate.

---

<sup>13</sup> Alexandria was a chief port in Egypt. A famous library (332 BC) was made there, by Alexander the great.

<sup>14</sup> After the death of Alexander the great, these kingdoms came into existence. These were spread through the Mediterranean Sea and the near East and later Asia got this arrangement.

The provinces of the kingdoms nominally were protected by regulation of the senate; rather Roman governors hold the absolute power in the terms, namely wealth and ambitions. This arrangement was disastrous to the Republics. A fixed system was imposed on conquered nations. The rise of absolutism in a bureaucratic state reflected the influence of writing. This arrangement was strengthened by the huge availability of papyrus. Rome was the chief importer of papyrus. Now manufacturing centers were shifted from small villages to the more important towns. The marsh lands of the Nile delta became more important. The raw material in the form of papyrus, it supplied in a convenient way. A reasonably priced material was well suited for the growth of an administrative organisation, which covered a sizeable territory from Britain to the Mesopotamia.

In the course of time, parchment offsets the problems of papyrus. Papyrus needed more sheets for any documentation. But parchment could be used on both sides. It was economical, durable, convenient and easy to transport, write on, read and consult. Ink could be removed and also used again. A pointed pen could be used in place of the reed. The influence of waxed tablets of Roman cursive writing in the first three centuries declined and parchment fulfilled the remained gap for the communication. Demands for durability in schoolbooks were followed by an increase in the use of the parchment codex. A permanent medium suited to use over wide areas facilitated the establishment of libraries and the production of a limited number of large books, which could be copied. Since the material of an earlier culture must be recopied, an extensive censorship emerged in which material suited to religion and law was given enormous emphasis.

### Western Civilisation in Peril

Communications media, which transmit information quickly over long distances had upset the balance required for cultural survival. Innis wrote:

The overwhelming pressure of mechanisation evident in the newspaper and the magazine has led to the creation of vast monopolies of communication. Their entrenched positions involve a continuous, systematic, ruthless destruction of elements of permanence essential to cultural activity. The emphasis on change is the only permanent characteristic (Innis 1951: 56).

He finds that the West is facing its own crisis and it is worsened because the communications monopolies are largely immune from outside challenge. They literally spoke the language of the masses and penetrated popular consciousness and shaping public opinion. Innis studied the Western media more, especially the American communications media. He finds that the American media was largely depended on advertising. Therefore it had the tendency of mass appeal, which was extremely effective in the mobilisation of large audiences. Apart from this the American media, he finds, was engaged in the making of propaganda by the sides of political elites.

Innis believed that the overwhelming spatial bias of modern media was heightened in the United States by the development of powerful military technologies, including atomic weapons. The advent of the Cold War led to such an emphasis on military preparedness that the U.S. was placed on a permanent war footing, its economy increasingly dependent on the manufacture of weapons (Heyer and David 1991). As Canadian scholar, Arthur Kroker also writes:

Innis's political lesson was clear: the United States was now a fully 'space-oriented' society, with no inner coordinating principle and with no organic conception of 'lived tradition,' time, succession or duration which might act as an inner check against the politics of imperialism. (Kroker 1984: 88).

In an essay entitled, "*Technology and Public Opinion in U.S.A.*," Innis concluded that the United States depended on a foreign policy shaped by military power. Dependence on organised power and a traditional antipathy to coloured peoples weakens political sensitivity, and lack of experience with problems of

continuity and empire. These trends threaten the Western world with uncertainty and war. Innis was among the first to suggest that the U.S. had lost the balance between power and knowledge, which was essential for its long-term survival.

Innis after counting the problems, suggests also the solution that western civilisation could only be saved by recovering the balance between space and time. It meant reasserting the oral tradition within universities, while on the other hand institutions of higher learning should be freed from political and commercial pressures. In his essay, "*A Plea for Time*", he suggested that genuine dialogue within universities could produce the critical thinking necessary to restore the balance between power and knowledge.

### Conclusion

Innis drew attention towards the connection between the press system and the broader economy. He notes that by holding down the price of subscriptions and thereby expanding circulation, newspapers favoured a marked extension of advertising'. Innis continued:

The economy became biased toward the mass production of goods, which had a rapid turnover and an efficient distribution system. The advertiser was concerned with constant emphasis on prosperity. Disappearance of muckraking in the financial field was accompanied by a decline of restrictions on speculative activity (Innis 1952: 6).

Innis's historical and critical insights are worth able to reconsider in the cotemporary age. Today's issues like embedded journalism, media concentrations, advertiser influence, public relations, the media-military-industrial nexus, and war-related propaganda could be seen through the communication insights. Indeed, Innis's study of history may well serve to increase our critical thoughts towards media.

Innis in his concept monopolies of knowledge moves between different meanings. This term sometimes denotes a privileged access to a limited body of limited knowledge, which is essentially a sacred text written in Latin and astronomy as a basis for the calendar etc. and sometimes it denotes the exploitation of and sometimes control over a medium, which is temples, the paper trade, the publication of newspapers, etc. Civilisation flowered when time and space were in some balance and woven together. Very much emphasis on either time or space at the expense of the other made a society vulnerable for invasion. This threat comes from the outside. But rebel also can take place in this situation. Eventually, the challenge for the monopoly is as much cultural as it is economic, military, or political. Innis couldn't comment much on the effects of television because his death came very soon in 1952, when television was about to grow.

Innis links knowledge, communications and power. Practical knowledge helps one's action to match its original intent over time. Culture, language, religion, institutions, interests, media and so on mediate human intelligence and power. Since social turbulence adds spice to the normal complexity of the information environment. That is why Innis rejected any universal language or pure mind. Robin Neill remarks that the Innisian rationality is bounded, symbolic, situated, in contrast to the naive rationalism of much modern thought. Rationalist illusions about the mind's absolute power imply the technocratic fantasy of controlling nature (Neill 1967).

No theory is pure, free from social interest or impact. Every theory has its respective bias. Social science might be able to diagnose and foresee social problems and could help to control their impact. But it would be possible only, if it remains independent from the institutional and social interests. Bias could destroy its indigenous nature. Innis didn't dismiss government control of culture and social reproduction; for him, "*education is the basis of the state.*" Specialised knowledge tended to monopolies of knowledge and media controlled by powerful elites. In the

course of time monopolies fall of their own weight because they invite competition and realignments of power, thus a new elite. Competing monopolies of knowledge developed and declined in relation to the medium of communications either bias towards time-biased or space-biased.

Since elite monopolies exclude other groups from communication and information, therefore it can be argued that competing, open public media are needed to subvert dominant monopolies of knowledge. Contemporary information society is spread through out the knowledge monopolies. The pharaoh<sup>15</sup>, in the ancient time had no way of knowing whether his scribe was representing his thoughts authentically. The opportunities for mischief were great because the real power lay in the hands of the scribes. So the mediums played a crucial role in the societal arrangements.

Nonetheless, freedom is possible because each communications medium also has a tendency to create monopolies of knowledge. Another factor, which creates possibility for the freedom, is that that the human spirit has the tendency to reach at a new level of society. The monopoly metaphor is economic, and Innis theory assumes that knowledge has value and affects the power arrangements. Different kinds of knowledge have the different kind of values. Therefore knowledge perception is changeable. So how knowledge is encoded and stored is a matter of socio-political significance. Power and knowledge meet in communications media. They both encode knowledge and mediate the struggle for social supremacy. The user-friendly and liberal interpretative codes and easily accessible media reinforce the democratic groups, while difficult codes and less accessible media facilitate elite control (Brooks and Gagnon 1994).

Innis distinguished the power impact of oral versus written media, vernacular versus foreign or dead languages. Christ's attack on the monopoly of knowledge

---

<sup>15</sup> Pharaohs were the king in ancient Egypt.

possessed by scribes, which itself was rested on oral media. The oral tradition was democratic. It was shown in the position of the assembly, the rise of democracy, the drama, the dialogues of Plato. Knowledge enables one to diagnose, correct and partly transcend the bias of the times. It is a key weapon in the struggle for social supremacy between empires, churches, cities, elites and so on.

## CHAPTER: III

### COMMUNICATIONS MEDIA AND CULTURAL INSTABILITY

In the previous chapter, Innis was interested to show the evolutions starting from the beginning of the civilisations to the modern age. In between different era have different sets of communications medium. In other words, each civilisation and empire had its respective medium of communications. Every empire was marked by the certain kind of monopoly of knowledge. Every political entity has some certain attributes. It could be of various types whether monarchy, theocracy, authoritarian or democratic. All those were in existence for a certain period in the history. Some could be seen even today. The common thing in all the traditions was the medium of communication. But communication media itself was of certain type according to its political needs. In other words, monopolies of knowledge have determined the particularity of the entities. When big Empires were in practice, the mode of communications was stable in nature, i.e. time-biased. When fragmented states came into existence space-biased communications dominated the arena. After mentioning the time and space<sup>1</sup> contexts, the bias of communications in the introductory chapter, Innis comes with the monopolies of knowledge<sup>2</sup> in the next chapter.

In the *monopolies of knowledge* Innis looked at the several dimensions of the historical evolutions. After examining those factors, he comes to a conclusion that every era in the history could be recognised with a certain kind of monopoly, which was essentially a circulation of knowledge. Knowledge was distributed on the several plates. Clay and stones were the initial mode of communications, later replaced by the papyrus. It was interesting for Innis to see the oral tradition popular in the Greek culture. After the written tradition, the introduction of oral tradition was a strange

---

<sup>1</sup> This concept is discussed extensively in the chapter one. Innis has classified the historical evolutions in terms of time and space-biased medium of communications.

<sup>2</sup> In the chapter two monopoly of knowledge is mentioned. Monopolies of knowledge are crucial in the determination of the political entities.

phenomenon in the course of communications' history. Though Innis favoured this tradition more. For him, the good thing in this tradition was the nature of the discussion. He said: "My bias is with the oral tradition, particularly as reflected in Greek civilisation, and with the necessity of recapturing something of its spirit."

After the introduction of parchment things began to change rapidly. Now empire shifted from Middle East to the West. Roman Empire started to flourish. A new monopoly marked by parchment came into existence. The paper also was viable towards this monopoly shifting. Very later, in the fifteenth century, when enlightenment started to begin, a new monopoly was created. This time paper marked a new monopoly. Knowledge spread through the paper was so rapid in comparison with the other modes of communication. Later printing press shifted itself into a printing industry. The duo of printing press and paper affected the every aspect of life. Stability, which was popular during the earlier civilisations, now seems shattered. Instability, because of the lighter medium of communications has been a general incident in the modern age of society. Now monopolies of knowledge are no more viable in the present context, as it was in the earlier civilisations. It is viable in the other form, i.e. media controlled by the specific classes. The certain media groups monopolise knowledge.

### **Communications Media and Effects on the Cultural Stability**

For Innis, culture was not simply a matter of enjoyment or diversion, but rather it was the poverty or prosperity of values. The assessment of values was away to see a culture's stability. Innis was much concerned, about the "cultural instability." At a particular period of time, he finds, a medium causes the instability. Instability was brought by the mass media in the modern times. The prominent influence of the book, which was a product of prosperous intellectual efforts, has been destroyed by the new developments like periodicals and newspapers. The mass media are diminishing the relevance of the books. Under the pressure of publishers and advertisers, the journalists have been compelled to seek the striking objects rather

than the suitable phrases. They emphasise on crisis rather than developmental trends. In other words, traditional patterns are abstaining from the knowledge world. Recently, the radio, television and the motion picture have fostered superficial objects and thoughts, therefore emphasised impermanency. His analysis of communications and the rise and fall of empires led him to warn the Western civilisation that it is now facing its own profound crisis. Communications media play a key role in the struggles to maintain social supremacy among elites, institutions and societies also. John Watson (1977) looks communication and media, which earlier got appeared in Innis's work "*as a grim motor force for cultural collapse.*"

Innis's felt the changes in the modern world because an increasingly depraved culture, which was overrun by commercialism and the unbalanced emphasis on speed. On the effects of industrialised cultural forms, he wrote:

Modern civilisation, characterised by an enormous increase in output of mechanised knowledge with the newspaper, the book, the radio and the cinema, has produced a state of numbness, pleasure and self-complacency perhaps only equaled by laughing-gas (Buxton 1997: 41).

Innis argued that any civilisation might be understood as a function of its principal medium of communication. He found the communication technologies in the same way as he had analysed the economic staples as the key determinants of institutional, cultural and social formation. Innis assumed that technology serves as an extension of man. It increases his physical capacity. Therefore an axe seems to be an extension of hand and the wheel can be seen as an extension of the foot and so on. And the communication media is an extension of the mind.

The medium is message, he thought. This kind of analysis is much helpful to understand any kind of society and also the advancement of the technology. He argued that some media tended to persist over time, i.e. parchment, clay and stone, while others like papyrus or paper dominated large territories or space. The particular bias of communication of a society influenced both its institutions and its culture. In a

time-biased civilisation history, traditions, customs, community, moral order, ceremony, religion and hierarchical institutions were valued. Ancient civilisations either Egypt, Babylonia, Assyria, Greek and several others were of this kind. A space-biased civilisation emphasised growth, expansion, empire, present-mindedness, science, materialism and secular authority. The evolution of society from a straight line to a complex one was always dominated by the concepts of time and space biases. The civilisation of Roman Empire lies between these two. Relying on the oral tradition, it seems different from the others. The introduction of parchment and paper started to become a crucial factor in the determination of civilisation. In the modern age also, especially after fifteenth century, when science and reason were a growing factor the space-biased civilisation got the initial momentum.

The modern World clearly had a pronounced space bias. The invention of printing in Europe in the mid-fifteenth century enabled the mass production of written matter. It had not only intensified mass production but also resulted the rise of nationalism<sup>3</sup> and the extension of political bureaucracies. Nationalism and bureaucratic arrangements are the far-reaching characteristics of the modern nation states. By the twentieth century newspapers and magazines had become vast monopolies of communication. In this scenario, the society of USA became a controller of other empires. Innis also talked about the electronic media. He viewed radio as an extension of the print. It further enabled the expansion of print-based empires.

Innis saw the dialectic method in both the developments of economics and communications. The Hegelian dialectic (Stamps 1995) could be a useful instrument to understand the Innis's view on communications.<sup>4</sup> He characterised the history of civilisations by successive patterns of decentralisation (promoted by the time-biased

---

<sup>3</sup> It is a patriotic feeling. The invention of the modern nation states could be seen as the outcome of this feeling. Nationalism essentially demands the political independence.

<sup>4</sup> Hegel, a German philosopher had given a three-stage process of reasoning, namely thesis, anti-thesis and synthesis. Dialectic refers to the higher truth, which he termed synthesis comes into existence after the clash between two apparent contradictions, which he termed thesis and anti-thesis.

media) and centralisation (marked by the space-biased media). He further emphasises the balance, which was an essential thing in the maintenance of stability. The key to historical change could be seen in the conflicts over control of communications system. Conflicts were emerged when competing social groups fought for monopolies of knowledge. Innis thus approached the ideology of nationalism from the functional point of view. Nationalism could be harmful if it led to excessive centralisation and monopolisation of power, while it could be beneficial on the margins as a counterforce against the empires. He saw that Canada had become a communications dependency of USA. It exports vast quantities of pulp and paper to New York and Chicago. Exports were done just to buy it back in the form of newspapers, which was essentially an American worldview (Acland and Buxton 1999: 344). So, Canada's position remains at the margins of American supremacy. Because of having this view, Innis is referred as a nationalist thinker.

Revolution always marks a far-reaching effect on the existing arrangements. The mass media also are greatly affected by the information revolution. The development of new technologies and the day-by-day advanced innovations have affected the telecommunication sector. The fundamental fact is that previously distinct boundaries between telecommunications, information services and cultural industries have become blurred in the past decade and today, very rapidly, it is growing. The two major consequences are the increased competitiveness among the different services and increased internationalisation.

The content of the mass media is mass culture. The term culture is more complex and difficult to grasp than communication. What is communicated by the mass media is not simply artistic expression. Rather, it is a representation of a society's beliefs, values and traditions. In other words, communication media seem a whole way of life. The media reflect both our culture and also help to mould it. Media select the objects and accordingly interpret for us. In this way society grows up. They provide us a framework of understanding. That is why communication theory seems more viable in the study of the evolution of culture and society.

Scholars first became interested in the mass media in the years after the First World War. This War has damaged the idealistic notion of historical studies. This lacking caused the necessity of a new empirical method to study the history's evolutions. The innovation of mass media thus came into practice, having the assumption that it's the culture, which affects the mass media and vice versa. Early studies determined that the mass media were a powerful social force. This observation was the result of popularity and rapid spread of mass newspapers, magazines, movies and radio. The effectiveness of the propaganda utilised by many governments during the First World War was a successful story of the media. For example, media used by Hitler in the 1930s. It was also based upon the existing assumptions of sociologists that industrialisation and urbanisation had created a mass society, which was rootless in nature and consist alienated peoples. They were no longer bound together by traditional church, customs and traditions, family and community ties. Because of all those nature, manipulators could manipulate, whatever they needed to.

A second stream began in the late 1940s. Now study was being more realistic. A number of researchers began to verify the earlier conclusions with empirical studies. This was done to determine whether media messages really do change people's minds or not. The conclusion was that they do not. Experiments indicated that individuals were very selective in the understanding and remember only those objects, in which they were interested from the media. They are rational beings. But the major problem was that much of this early empirical work had been based upon the false notion that one could demonstrate media influence only by showing how it changed people's minds. On the contrary, the next generation of scholars argued that the major influence of the media is not altering but rather it reinforces, consolidates and fortifies the values.

It was Innis's work on the history of communications that brought together his several observations on markets, culture and technological change. His observations found that the medieval world was closed to the outside and authority bound by the church. Thus, clergy got the significance. They controlled those, who could read. On the other side, books were expensive to produce and the production was controlled by

the Rome. The idea of a popular literature was unknown though the oral transmission of culture was the viable source of information. Like the discovery of steam engine, which caused the modern factory system of mass production, the invention of printing was a giant event, which touched every aspect of life. The mass media was now coming into practice. Businessmen needed books to trade; governments saw the potential effects of the books and used it as an administrative source of power. People were hungry for knowledge and the newly established Protestants movements<sup>5</sup> understood the power of the printed word in enhancing their cause. In other words, the secular nation state world was about to born.

The print revolution came to symbolise not only the emerging world of capitalist commerce and administration, but also the social revolution. The word revolution now became very popular in the every aspect of life. Statecraft, nation-building, warfare, the organisation of knowledge, the modern city state with its merchants, physicians, bankers and dispossessed also were part of this cultural and intellectual movement. New classes were about to born; older ones faced hard to survive. Modern scholarship emerged as a result of consequence of the revolutionary impact of the spread of book knowledge. His studies had shown him that the typographical revolution did not occur all at once. It had followed the evolutionary process; from stone to the wooden typography, parchment to the printing and electronic typography, too.

Innis's conceptualisation of the world of good production and the world of money and information gave him a particular lens so that he could capture the dynamics of cultural change in the emerging liberal society. The liberal society, which was essentially market-centered and give importance to the knowledge and information, became the cross over point between his early studies on the political economy and later influential studies on empire and communications. His communications theory exhibits his feeling, which was necessarily economic in

---

<sup>5</sup> This movement emerged as against the Roman Catholic Church. Printing became more helpful in the movement because now the ideas of this movement could be spread out easily.

nature, that the new information technology's wealth generation was different from the exploitation of resources. The movement of invisibles like money or information was significant because both can be stored up and might be used to generate more money and more information. The uniqueness in this case is that information is a limitless resource. It is recyclable and saleable also. Therefore information becomes a crucial factor in the evolution of a culture.

Innis made a twofold classification: first, he looks throughout the history that the secular exercise of power was used by the elites. The control of the technology of communications was the principal necessity towards this happening. Second is the concept of monopolies of knowledge. Either the monopoly of military or religious or administrative or corporate authority controls the social space and the social order. This classification permitted him to divide civilisation into two types. Those, which have a bias of time and are, organised to enhance their social cohesion by means of powerful belief systems. The respective systems are the family, kinship and religious ties. And those, which have a bias of space, control regions of empire. These are the secular ideas and present-mindedness. The first one seems thus stable while the second one is comparatively unstable.

The presence of these two biases had dramatic implications for politics, culture and the structure of the markets. Each civilisation and culture comes to depend on the existing techniques or modes of communication. Technologies exist to acquire, store and disseminate the information. Information could be mentioned by the various ways. Writing on clay tablets or parchment promotes continuity and therefore a time bias. The Egyptian civilisation discovered the calendar, having clearly established feast days. It helped to set up an absolute monarchy with a state-sponsored religion. Practices like calendar, feast days and religion remained same even today but the outcomes like monarchy didn't remain stable. By contrast, the printing of a newspaper encourages a space bias and present-mindedness. It seems more realistic. In the nineteenth century, when the advanced high-speed press system replaced the slower and expensive flat-bed press, publishers now could have the possibilities of printing on the both sides of paper. Now newspapers were mass circulated. In this

situation, there was no technological determinism rather one invention sparked another. The spill over effects could be applied here. This was the true nature of the communications revolution. The discovery of “penny press”<sup>6</sup> also came out of this. This invention shows the present-mindedness.

Not only as a cultural historian, Innis also accepted the centre-periphery dynamics.<sup>7</sup> He examined that how the new communications technology enhanced the power of the state, either the military or giant global entities, over the individual. His studies of civilisation demonstrate that the worlds of time and space are bound to clash. When inequalities in income and wealth are maldistributed or when the territorial aims of empire produce large counter movements, then struggle takes place between the centre and periphery. In other words a disturbed balance causes tensions. In these circumstances, a battle for control against the powers of the dominant social and economic forces, i.e. money and information, emerge. The most important consequence of the print revolution was to exercise the power. This invention gave a concentrated influence in the hands of the few, who knew how to read and write. The specialised knowledge therefore might be used both as an economic weapon and as an instrument of power. The empires, nations and states seeking to impose their control over other people and territories used this power. When a new one tradition and social norms assault an old technology, the old beliefs and politics must fight for their lives. A new social arrangement makes a new tradition in the place of an old one.

On the effects of industrialised cultural forms, Innis wrote:

Modern civilisation, characterised by an enormous increase in output of mechanised knowledge with the newspaper, the book, the radio and the cinema has produced a state of numbness, pleasure and self complacency perhaps only

---

<sup>6</sup> As the middle and working classes grew, so did the new public's desire for the news. This kind of development replaced dry political conversations and with coverage of crime, tragedy, adventure and gossips. They represented the crudest form of journalism because of the gossips.

<sup>7</sup> Especially came out in the context of Latin American countries. It's a political concept and economic as well to see the relations among developed and underdeveloped states.

equaled by laughing-gas..... the danger of shaking men out of the soporific results of mechanised knowledge is similar to that of attempting to arouse a drunken man or one who has taken an overdose of sleeping tablets (Buxton 1998: 328).

Innis understanding of the culture in the modern world was developed in response with developments in Canada at the time. The two decades after the First World War saw the several of a number of ideas about nationhood and culture. The awareness initiated the rise of cultural nationalism. Innis took all the initiatives seriously and transferred his interest of area from economic history to the cultural studies.

It is perhaps a unique characteristic of each civilisation that it believes in its uniqueness and its superiority over other civilisations. It can be said because writings on culture can be divided into two types; those attempting to weaken other cultures and those attempting to strengthen their own.

In the contemporary era, the development of armed force to a high state is crucial for the intense cultural activity. In the ancient era, cultural activities were evident in architecture and sculpture. Those monuments were capable of impressing peoples over a wide area. It was a matter of vast prestige. It became an index of power. The pyramids were an index of power in the Egypt. Later, the prestigious monuments were replaced by some other power worth arrangements. Today advanced armed forces are represented as a prestigious power.

A civilisation based on a medium of communication needs the significance of the peculiarities of the medium. The particular medium reinforces the particular civilisation. The parchment codex was adapted to large books and further lent to religion and law in the scriptures and codes. A permanent medium, namely parchment was well suited to use over wide areas, which later facilitated the establishment of libraries. The production of books and the copied arrangement of the oral tradition

were preserved in the libraries. Since the material of an earlier culture must be recopied, an extensive censorship emerged in which material suited to religion and law was given enormous emphasis (Innis 1950: 117). The stable objects of a particular civilisation make the further way for another. For example, religion was of this nature. The size of the scriptures and the writings of the Fathers made heavy demands for the copying purpose. With the breakdown of the Roman Empire in the west and the increasing importance of the Church, law was largely neglected. Remember this law was not the rule of law; rather it was the guiding and binding arrangements of a society.

The commercial revolution began in the third quarter of the thirteenth century, which was marked by the spread of paper manufacturing in Europe. Paper was so useful that it facilitated the growth of credit in the use of documents. Therefore Arabic numerals got significance. It enhanced the efficiency of commerce. Several paper mills were established. Paper makers started to provide employment. The growing employment facilitated the skilled labour. Those labours had monopoly over this particular industry. With the development of this industry, a new phenomenon, i.e. migration came into practice. When papermakers' migration started the notion of monopoly got checked. In contrast with parchment, paper was essentially a product of the cities in terms of cheap supplies of rags and markets. The control of monasteries in rural districts over education was replaced by the growth of cathedral schools and universities in cities (Innis 1950: 128). Urbanisation thus got momentum.

In Europe France, Germany, England and Netherlands and several centers established the news services. So the media got institutionalisation. The press smuggling was a new development in the field of printing press. Suppression or criticism under a despotic monarchy caused this development. Another dimension of the press was the "pamphlet debates."<sup>8</sup> This was easier and influential way to criticise

---

<sup>8</sup> This trend was popular in Europe after the introduction of printing press. The access of printing created the space for knowledge. Therefore the exchange of knowledge emerged. It had popularised the democratic ideas against the monarchical regime.

the monarchy. These debates were helpful in the mobilisation of the peoples for the sake of revolution. This tradition caused the tendency of discussion. The impact of printing was evident not only in the philosophy of the seventeenth century, but also in the rise of parliament. Printing contributed the efficient conduct of business in the parliamentary system.<sup>9</sup> Law escaped the influence of the concept of nature. The rise of reason got importance. The reason further marked the significance in the rise of science.

With the beginning of the nineteenth century, industrial revolution spill over in all the existing sectors. The manufacturing of paper and printed material came under the influence of the industrial revolution. The paper machine was invented in France and improved and adopted in England. An increase in population also influenced the printing industry. Since, growing population needed more information, created the scope for the printing industry. Textile production enhanced the paper and printing industry. More production caused the lower prices. Once price was lower, this development further advanced the scope for periodicals and magazines. The growing necessity demanded the elimination of taxes on knowledge. Another characteristic in this century was the rise of penny establishments. Due to growing complexities and the rising crimes within the society made the scope for the rise of penny press. The editions were very cheap just like the contents of the edition, i.e. day-to-day crimes and civil crimes etc. for penny publications' political issues were not the good contents.

The media are one of the principal means by which we learn about our own society. They are also our main source of information and ideas about other societies. The cultural industries are special because they sell products, which affect not just the actions but also the thoughts. What influence do media have to shape or to alter our perceptions? What power do they have to create or to preserve culture? And to what

---

<sup>9</sup> This was a kind of government. After the revolution of 1688, the parliamentary government started to make its own way in England. In this form of system peoples took participations through the representatives.

extent they are the instruments by which one nation can create or reinforce the dependency of another? All these notions could be justified only through the role and influence of the media.

The communication can be defined as a process by which information is exchanged between individuals through a common system of symbols, signs or behaviour. Therefore the process of communications involves a two-way exchange. This definition of communication is also applicable to the mass media. The content of the mass media is mass culture. In the cultural studies media is seen as the makers of community. The media creates a common outlook, which form a basis for a shared consciousness. A culture is composed of groups. The cultural cement holds the all-interacting entities with one another and with the media.

Mass-communications scholars have developed several analyses of the mass media in the past. The current scholarship emphasises certain key points. First, the mass media are rooted in the power-relationships of our society. Without examining the political, technological and economic infrastructures, one cannot understand their functions. Second, the mass media are themselves institutions. They are in practice within the larger society.

### **From Religion-Dominated Culture to A Secular Culture**

In the communication theory of Innis, the religious dimension also could be seen. John Keane notes: "religion was for him the basis of empire." (John Keane, 1988) An empire for Innis is not merely a large state; it also lasts a long time and reproduces its own culture and civilisation through the generations. Religion was of imperial use in ancient Egypt. Innis assumes that the priesthood enjoyed a monopoly of knowledge of astronomy and the calendar, which was an appropriate communications media. Protestant Bibles, which were printed in the vernacular form, spread the word throughout Europe. This effect diminished the Rome's monopoly of

religious knowledge and power. By the use of the vernacular languages, Protestantism<sup>10</sup> promoted a sectarian divisiveness, which was self-destructive in nature. It later opened the way for a new secular state's emergence over the church. Analysed prominently by Machiavelli<sup>11</sup>, this shift was confirmed in Bodin's doctrine of sovereignty<sup>12</sup>. The social supremacy of the state was assured, after the Locke's<sup>13</sup> First Treatise on Government, which attacked the religious rationale for monarchy.<sup>14</sup>

The spread of Mohammedanism reduced exports of papyrus from Egypt. It had been imported for the use in schools and in the bureaucratic administration. But later introduction of parchment replaced the papyrus (Innis 1950: 117). In contrast with papyrus, which was produced in a restricted area under centralised control to meet the demand of a centralised bureaucratic administration; parchment was the product of a widely scattered agricultural economy. Parchment was well suited to the demands of a decentralised administration. Mohammedanism was spread over through the help of parchment writings.

The peculiarities of parchment gave an important impetus to the power of monastic organisation. In Egypt, monasticism was given a higher religious status. This was the true state at that time. In the duration of Roman Empire, Church was

---

<sup>10</sup> It is a faith; essentially adhere to the forms of the Christian doctrine, but regards as Protestant rather than Catholic or Eastern Orthodox. During the middle of the previous millennium, it was emerged as a religious movement against the Catholics. It had further secularised the religious arena and political as well.

<sup>11</sup> A political thinker, whose ideas had influenced the nationalism in Italy, which further caused its unification. He believed in the acquisition of power. Power could be gained through whatever the way, either ethical or unethical. For him, ends justify the means.

<sup>12</sup> Bodin was the first thinker to develop the political notion of sovereignty. He freed this term from the religious term. Sovereignty refers to the rule of state. This is a state's political supremacy over the all domains of state.

<sup>13</sup> A social contract theorist, who ruled out the religious authority and gave the notion of the rule of political authority. Later in the development of parliamentary form of government and the United States governance were influenced by the ideas of Locke.

<sup>14</sup> It was a form of government. A monarch remains as a governmental head. 'King is a living representative of God on the earth', this is the key assessment, which a monarch keeps in his mind.

encouraged extensively. Church got the central importance in the entire arena. When Mohammedanism came, Christianity got affected in the east and the west also. Mohammedanism developed its strength in relation to various peoples who came under its control by emphasising the sacred position of the written word. (Innis 1950: 120). The oral tradition now was blurred. In contrast to the west, Christianity regarded images as useful for the illiterate. The illiterate people could read atleast by looking at the walls what they cannot read in the books. Images were a certain kind of writing medium. Later, church took initiative in the educational developments for the writing styles.

Parchment, as adapted to the demands of monasticism, had contributed to the development of a powerful organisation in the Western Europe. Monasticism admits only the groups of upper; it neglects the lower groups of the society. When the paper was introduced, the existing monopoly of knowledge invited competition from a new medium of communication. It was contrast to the previous arrangements; it was available to meet the demands of lower strata of society. The significance of paper and brush had been evident in China and the Far East. Its influence, by an advanced form, was enhanced by substitution of the pen later in other parts.

In China paper was used to establish Confucianism<sup>15</sup> in classical literature and to supplement the oral tradition in development. This development was very much like the developments of Mohammedanism, which used the parchment and also supplemented the oral tradition. In education competitiveness was initiated. Examination system for the selection of administrative talent was introduced. The governing official class was made up of scholars. The empire was organised in districts connected by roads. This facility gave access to the exchange of the official reports, newsletters and official gazettes to and from the central administration. Imperial organisation was designed to check independent thought. Therefore, the Chinese were consistently cynical to the most of their officials all the time. Student

---

<sup>15</sup> Confucian enlightened China in second century B.C. his ideas later known as Confucianism.

movements, developed in relation to the civil service. But they did not get success because they had a little amount of personal civil rights, and it was easy to suppress their efforts (Youtang 1936: 20). In between the wide gap between the governing and the lower classes facilitated the spread of Buddhism<sup>16</sup> from India. The existing monopoly of the knowledge of the Veda by the Brahmans invited the introduction of a medium, namely Buddhism from the periphery, which appealed to the lower classes. The power of the oral tradition, controlled by a priestly class, namely Brahmans in India, was so much that it had resisted the spread of Buddhism and writing. But after the invasion of Alexander<sup>17</sup>, it spread rapidly with the encouragement of Ashoka.<sup>18</sup> In China, Buddhism found an efficient medium of communication in paper and an emphasis on the importance of knowledge of writing. The paper facilitated the rise and growth of Buddhism.

The Mohammedans, on the other hand concentrated on paper production for two reasons: firstly, they were prohibited from using pig skins for parchment and were reluctant to use other animal skins because of difficulties of detection; secondly they were located at considerable distance from supplies of papyrus in Egypt.

By the end of the fifteenth century, presses had been established in the larger centers of Europe. They had been concerned with the reproduction of manuscripts. These manuscripts were for the use of the Church, law, medicine and trade also. They had reproduced manuscripts in Latin, Greek and vernaculars. With these developments, a book trade had been built up and the size of printing establishments increased. This was very natural that the monopoly of monasticism was further undermined. The authority of the written word also came to decline. The age of

---

<sup>16</sup> Buddhism has no creator god; it believes in the doctrine of 'karma'. Siddhartha founded Buddhism. This philosophy emerged in South Asia in fifth century BC. Later it spread all over, especially in the East Asia.

<sup>17</sup> Macedonian king. He established a big empire by conquering Persia, Egypt, Syria, Mesopotamia and Bactria. He also invaded India in 326 B.C.

<sup>18</sup> Ashoka was a great king of the Maurya dynasty ruled over Magadha. After the war of Kalinga in 261 B.C. he adopted the Buddhism and spent his rest of life for promotion of this religion.

cathedrals had passed now. This development had brought a new age, which was the printing press.

### **The Cultural Changes in Modern Civilisation**

We have emphasised the significance of communication in determining the characteristics of earlier civilisations and changes also in methods of the communication. The discovery of printing in the middle of the fifteenth century was a far-reaching innovation. It implied the beginning of a distinct type of civilisation dominated by the eye rather than ear. In other words, writing was replacing the oral tradition. With printing and an increase in the use and manufacturing of paper, cities strengthened their position and facilitated a break from the church. The rise of materialism was a growing factor and it was against the church like empires. But the full impact of printing did not become possible until the adoption of the Bill of Rights<sup>19</sup> in the United States. Bill of Rights had guaranteed the freedom of the press. Printing assumed mass production or reproduction of words. Once it escaped from the pattern of the parchment manuscripts, it compelled the production of vast quantities of new materials. These materials were able to fulfill the demands of science and technology. Improvement of communication intensified the development of markets and of industry. Now the communicational instruments had been commercialised. The industrial revolution intensified the printing industry. In the nineteenth century, steam power was a significant innovation, which supported the printing industry.

In contrast with the Greek culture that “nothing in excess” modern civilisation is dominated by machine industry. The values have been transformed. It has concerns with the specialisation, which might be described as “always in excess.” The concern with specialisation and excess prevents the possibility of understanding of the older values like balance and proportion. Industrialism implies technology, which cut the

---

<sup>19</sup> This can be recognised as the first ten amendments in the US constitution. This incident took place in 1791. This amendment ensured the freedom of speech, worship and so on.

time into fragments suited to the needs of the specialised knowledge. Constant changes in technology become a crucial factor in determining the cultural values. In the post-modern society<sup>20</sup> the cultural values of an industrial society are not the cultural values of other societies, for example, the development of radio and television in a particular society and the status of the women, sensitivity towards the animals etc. also might be different in relation with the others.

The monopoly position of the publishing trade had significant implications for the age of enlightenment in England. After the glorious revolution of 1688, parliament grew importantly and public opinion became more effective as the basis of power. By the demands for greater responsiveness to public opinion, parliament made numerous concessions. Towards all these developments the role of printing media was prominent. The role of public opinion was determined by the availability of paper and the cost of printing. The discourses on the parliamentary arrangements were higher in numbers. The influence of the press had extended to the other countries, particularly after the reduction of the postal rates in the early eighteenth century. The development of postal routes was also crucial towards this direction. The market for newspapers and books was lucrative in the eighteenth century. The establishments of the post office marked this development. Children's books also emerged as a clear but subordinate branch of English literature in the same century. So all the people of a society were in the grip of communication instruments. Information was growing all over the world.

Innis showed that patterns of transportation and trade in Canada were shaped by the ongoing imposition of European administrative and commercial imperatives in the indigenous landscape and culture. It was done first through the trade routes, then but the administrative patterns of governance. Industry and finance, on the other hand, created Canada as a colonial nation. The transformation to colony was facilitated by the construction of transport and communication technologies. This strategy enabled

---

<sup>20</sup> A recent transformation of the nation-state, where materialism has been satisfied and the quality of life is emphasised.

European colonisers to penetrate the cultures of a new world. Innis conceives that the production of the space and the production of the social life are one process. Communication technologies are understood as practices, which do respond and mediate also the social relations of a particular society. While natural resources play a role in the creation of geopolitical margins, colonial space on the other hand, is not a product of nature, but rather of social practice.

Focus on the production of imperial space for Innis was a dynamic inverse interdependence between time and space (Brebner 1953: 178). With the help of this communication technologies shape the materials of knowledge. The relationship between space and time is inversely interdependent in which communication technologies expand their power. In this scenario, they also seek to create monopolies of knowledge by emphasising either time or space. Communications media shape societies through the various effects of space bias and time bias. The dominance of knowledge over space or over time ensures the foundation for an Empire, but at the same time, it also ensures its downfall. In modern Western culture, space-biased modes of communication such as paper and telegraphs and several related technologies like satellites, computers etc. allow the acquisition, transmission and control of information over geographical space, which naturally has the tendency of expansion (Leebaert 1991). Since they are light, easily carried, reproduced and disseminated and quickly replaced, they could not be monopolised by elites, thus knowledge could be preserved for perpetuity.

Freedom of the press in the United States was an outcome of The Bill of Rights. The Bill of Rights was a milestone in the favour of the freedom of the press. The increase in the demands of advertising necessitated an increase in the supply of paper. Now advertising was going to become a crucial factor in the communicational developments. It was same like the invention of penny press. Technological advances in the production of newspapers and of paper supported the competition of a new type

of newspaper. Technology was now more advanced. The double cylinder press<sup>21</sup> displaced the hand press. Advances in technology in metropolitan newspapers were contrast with those of smaller centers in the interior areas. Since capital was concentrated in the cities and these were also the centers of industries, therefore those were the places of such advancement.

As the middle and working classes grew up, the new public's desire for news also emerged. Penny papers emerged as a cheap alternative to the standard dailies. They replaced dry political conversation with coverage of crime, tragedy, adventure, and gossips. The penny papers represented the crudest form of journalism because of the sensational gossips, which was reported. (Charles Knight's Penny Magazine) The press into pieces, i.e. morning paper, afternoon paper and evening papers, now hampered the monopoly position of the Associated Press.<sup>22</sup> The influence of the press was evident also in the campaign for the election of presidents.

The ultimate objective of most communication activities is to change behavior. To achieve an employee behavior change, many communicators work on the principle that they need to change employee attitudes first. However, even if attitudes are changed, habits may be too strong to break and therefore behavior may not change. And if behavior does change, it may take a while to happen. It is therefore mostly better to focus on attempting to directly change employees' behavior. (Crowley 1981: 239). Communications can provide information, which directly affects behavior, e.g. rules, company policies and practices, procedures and systems, rewards, recognition and incentives, etc. Since people like to be consistent with their attitudes and their behavior, their attitudes are likely to become consistent with their new behavior. The effectiveness of the communication can be evaluated by measuring behavior before and after the communication effort.

---

<sup>21</sup> It was an advanced machine. This machine had replaced the flat-bed system of printing press, which absorbed the hand-made system. It had created the mass amount of information.

<sup>22</sup> It is a international news service, located in New York City.

Communication is interactive. So the need is to see so its effectiveness in ones' relationship with others. Do they hear and understand what we are trying to say? Are they listening well? Are we listening well in response? So many answers of these questions could be found. The answers to these questions will provide some clues about the effectiveness of communication (Johnson 1986: 71).

### **Cross-cultural Communications**

There is always a possibility of miscommunication; which could be occurred at any time and anywhere. It is so because there are several cultural differences between communicators. The obvious consequence of this happening is the conflicts among the agents. People always make the several meaning of the world, whether it is clear or not. In this module, cross-cultural communication will be outlined and demonstrated by examples of ideas, attitudes, and behaviour involving four variables: Time and Space, Fate and Personal Responsibility, Face and Face-Saving, and Nonverbal Communication (LeBaron 2003).

Time is one of the most important notions, which separates cultures and cultural ways of doing things. Time tends to be seen as quantitative imperatives, which reflect the journey of progress. It is an approach, which favours linear structure and focus on one event or interaction at a time. When this approach is applied in the long course of history, this approach finds its way successfully. In the various civilisations, we could find a particular communications media dominated all over. Only after the introduction of a new one, it got changed. It could also be justified by the notion of quantitative imperative. Whenever media grew in the numbers, it started to monopolise the objects.

Another important variable, which affects communication across culture is fate and personal responsibility. This refers to the degree to which we feel ourselves the masters of our lives, versus the degree to which we see ourselves as subject to

things outside our control. When the landscape is expansive, an epic sense of life grows up. In this sense ideas are big and hopes stand for bigger. they are encouraged to redouble their efforts, to try and try again. It also can be seen in the historical events. When a particular region started its journey of expansion, it turned itself into a big Empire. Even today the American influence could be seen under this parameter. But this notion is not always right. A much smaller territory has a different type of story. Territories like Northern Ireland, Israel and Palestine etc. give emphasis on the destiny's role in human life.

Another important cultural variable relates to face and face-saving. Face is defined in many different ways in the cross-cultural communication literature. Novinger says that it is the value, which a person has in the eyes of others; and it relates to pride or self-respect. Sometimes it is referred as "the negotiated public image, mutually granted each other by participants in communication." In this definition, face includes ideas of status, power, courtesy, insider and outsider relations, humor, and respect. The idea of face and face saving could be seen in the both time and space- biased communication. The idea of face has concerns with the space-biased communications, which is not permanent. The various numbers of peoples could manipulate face variously. Therefore stability could not be seen here. But the process of face saving seems stable because it is tried to maintain the existing establishments.

Nonverbal communication is hugely important in any interaction with others. We use different systems of understanding gestures, posture, silence, emotional expression, touch, physical appearance, and other nonverbal means. Cultures also attribute different degrees of importance to the nonverbal behaviour. The image-driven media was a mode of non-verbal communication. And even today through advertising in the newspapers, nonverbal communication is in use. Some elements of nonverbal communication are consistent across cultures. For example, the emotions of enjoyment, anger, fear, sadness, disgust, and surprise in similar ways.

Low-context cultures like the United States and Canada tend to give relatively less emphasis to nonverbal communication. This does not mean that nonverbal communication does not happen, or that it is unimportant, but that people in these settings tend to place less importance on it than on the literal meanings of words themselves. In high-context settings such as Japan or Colombia, understanding the nonverbal components of communication is relatively more important to receiving the intended meaning of the communication as a whole (Lebaron 2003: 18).

In the last some decades of the twentieth century, the pattern of communications transformed. Information society, digital society and so on came into practice. The age of information society began. Information society is a society in which the creation, distribution, diffusion, uses, integration and manipulation of information is a significant economic, political, and cultural activity. In this scenario knowledge becomes integral to the economy. The knowledge economy is very contrast. It is an economic arrangement, where wealth is created through the economic exploitation of understanding. Peoples, who partake in this form of society, are sometimes called digital citizens. Infact the world is entering in a new phase of society. The markers of this rapid change may be technological, economic, occupational, spatial, cultural, or some combination of all of these. Information society is seen as the successor to industrial society.

In the twentieth century, when concerns about the new electronic nation were mounting, Innis proposed that nations emerge in a particular historical condition. Innis seems a historical determinist, here. But it would not be right to say so because his studies shows that he was a progressive thinker. He studied both the rise and the decline also. The uniqueness of a specific mode of communication makes a specific type of society. Earlier time-biased communications' medium had created the stable kind of civilisation. Later in the modern age, when space-biased communications' medium was popularised, the instability occurred everywhere.

Innis was first to theorise international media imperialism<sup>23</sup> and its relation to dependency paradigms. He was also the first to link this with the knowledge and ideas in addition to the economics of the cultural industries. Innis's this conclusion keeps similarities to Antonio Gramsci,<sup>24</sup> whose thinking also emerged in a changing indigenous national cultural space. Though both contemporaries were separated by distance, culture and ideology. But the points, which they made, reveal their different roles in cultural studies. In both cases there is the same interest and concern with the non-coercive elements of ideological social control, but Innis has mentioned a history of empire, which led him to add the economics with monopolies of knowledge. While Gramsci, on the other hand saw the struggle of competing systems of knowledge and its provisional settlement. He described it as hegemony.

The communication discipline is formed from three other major studies: sociology, psychology, and anthropology. Sociology is the study of human behavior, psychology is the study of society and social process, and anthropology is the study of communication as a factor, which develops, maintains, and changes culture. Communication seems as central determinant to the human experience and vice-versa. Communications media involve the understanding that how people behave in creating, exchanging, and interpreting messages. So the communications' effects on the culture were huge, previously and even today it is so.

---

<sup>23</sup> The Media Imperialism debate started in the early 1970s when developing countries began to criticise the control developed countries held over the media. Remember this was the period, when Dependency theory, which talked essentially for the developing countries, was getting its voice against the developed countries. The media imperialism debate was integral to this approach.

<sup>24</sup> Antonio Gramsci was a political-cultural thinker. He emphasised that the cultural values legitimise the political authority. He developed the notion of 'hegemony', where western culture dominates the rest cultures, through the mechanism of cultural practices like education, media and other source of communication.

## CHAPTER: IV

### COMMUNICATION AND THE STATE

Innis studied history from the cultural point of view. The analysis of culture was the core subject of his scholarly writings. His earlier study of history, which was essentially a political economy perspective, showed the beginning of a culture in Canada. This culture was brought from Europe. Earlier Innis was centered only to the Canada and its master Europeans. In other words, the economic history also was affiliated with the cultural values. The later Innis moved towards the broad gauge of history. His study later spilled over and it crosses boundaries of the Western Hemisphere. Now it reaches out to the worldwide: from west to the east and north to the south.

Innis's study of communication showed that in the course of time, no culture seems stable. Transformation is must and in this process history makes advancements. It is said that history repeats itself, but Innis' study shows that it's only a kind of incident. The technological advancements bring the societal changes, which marks the cultural values. So a culture remains only for a specific era. The durability of a culture depends on the bias of communication. The bias could be either time-based or the space-based. A space-biased communication is always more unstable. No permanency is the integral part of such a medium. As history advances, society also goes on.

As the monopoly changes, new kinds of arrangements emerge. A new ruling elite establishes new norms and values as ruling guidelines. Priesthood got importance in Egypt when Nile River was so significant. Peoples got a new invention, namely calendar. Scripts' on the stones were not movable, thus caused a bounded society, which was essentially a time-biased. Society not was interacted more with the rest of world. When monasteries were introduced interaction got significance. Clay and tablets were worth able to move. Societies now started to be open slightly.

Innis had identified printing and the book as significant factors in the transition from medieval to the modern times. Thus, Innis's effort provides ample evidence of the importance of the technologies of the paper and printing, and their pivotal role in societal change. In the course of time, several modes of communications came into and transformed society as well and also introduced different sets of culture. Time biased mediums had specific kind of cultural values, while space-biased mediums had different kind of culture, norms and values. The evolution of society and their respective culture shows that it had the tendency to transform from time-biased to the space-biased. In the beginning of the modern era (after the middle of the previous millennium) space-biased medium of communications got rapid advancements. Culture evolved itself day-by-day. The lightness of the mediums was easy to carry. Therefore, ideas, inventions and many others were not bound. The invention of printing press and the use of paper extensively made the new cultural values. Cultures all over the world started to interact with each other. The era of close society began to close.

The advent of the new technologies in the twentieth century, essentially all were very advanced. These new inventions were radio, television and in the last decade of this century Internet was more advanced than the previous twos. Now monopoly of knowledge was no more alive. That can be seen in the new form, i.e. certain groups have their monopoly over these inventions. Now society was so open and cultures were so interacting that instability could be seen worldwide. Now thousands of cultures are transforming each other. All are taking something and giving also to each culture. A space-biased society is seen today. It has the tendency of instability. Permanency is nowhere. The earlier cultures were time-biased, where the permanency was evident. The communications media is providing space for all the cultures, equally. But it is also evident that monopoly of knowledge could be seen in other way. Resourceful entities have captured the media and its flows. Innis seems to be right for the popular medium of communication and its monopoly, but he was unable to see the monopoly of media's drivers.

Apart from the cultural behaviour of society, the nature of state also changed. From priesthood to monarchy and after that big empires also came into. Theocracy, feudal arrangements also could be seen in the course of history. The emergence of modern nation states and the secular phenomenon also was viable in the historical evolutions. On the basis of monopoly of knowledge state's evolution could be seen. When Empires were the dominant mode of political arrangement, the monopoly of knowledge was of heavy materials' communication. When it transformed into a lighter one, then came the nation-states. The monopoly of the books had replaced the papyrus and parchment's monopoly. When mediums became lighter, nation-states gave up its attributes. A new arrangement thus emerges. In the age of globalisation, the transformation of nation- states could be felt.

### Transformation of the State

Communication has a larger impact on the nature of state. Different media mediate the competition for social supremacy among institutions and elites. This is the core of Innis' political theory since the effective government of large areas like empires and states depends to an important extent on the efficiency of communication and other space-binding technologies, like weaponry, transport and the law. Transportation is the classic space binder; hence the significance of the Nile to Egypt, roads to Rome, the sea to Britain and the great interior waterways to Canada. The control of large areas, from Egypt and China to Rome, has required appropriately light, easily transportable, space-binding communications media. In this respect paper was superior to parchment. In the sixteenth century, after the invention of printing, the new space-binding paper book with standardised print replaced the old time-binding parchment manuscript. Books encouraged the rise of secular knowledge and new scientific, literary and political elites. It also facilitated the victory of the absolute state over religion in the sixteenth-century struggle for social supremacy. In other words, sovereignty comes into practice. The word sovereignty first was used to separate the states from the religious interfere. After the Westphalia treaty this term got popularity with the attachments to the nation state. Prior to the emergence of such

specific meaning of a state, its emergence could be trace back to the initial days of the civilisations.

Innis traces back the Egyptian civilisation and got a clear idea of a geographical entity. Monarchy he, invented there, where the position of monarch was strengthened by development of the idea of immortality. The giant pyramids and the developed system of mummification carried with them the art of pictorial representation<sup>1</sup> as an essential element of funerary ritual. These big monuments were the communications medium during this era. Innis found all them a time-biased communications media. The initial medium, namely pictography has connection with the rituals.

A later form, hieroglyphics<sup>2</sup> was advance in some extent. It was a sacred engraved writing. From 4000 BC, the names of kings, wars political events and religious doctrines were written. The earliest documents were names and titles on vases and wooden tablets (Innis: 1950). The political events and rivalry of kings show the several political entities, which were engaged to prove their supremacy. The concept of sovereignty was not particular at that time, but the outputs and feedbacks of this notion were seen all over. A kingship emerged to meet the demands for a uniform system of administration. Its power was strengthened with the beginning of the measurement of time. This was the time, when sidereal years and invention of calendar was introduced. River Nile and the floods became the source of time measurement.

---

<sup>1</sup> A pictograph is an ideogram that conveys its meaning through its pictorial resemblance to a physical object. It is an ancient or prehistoric drawing or paintings found on rock walls. Pictography is a form of writing, which uses representational, pictorial drawings. Early written symbols were based on pictographs (pictures which resemble what they signify) and ideograms (symbols which represent ideas).

<sup>2</sup> Hieroglyphs were a formal writing system used by the ancient Egyptians that contained a combination of logographic and alphabetic elements. Egyptians used cursive hieroglyphs for religious literature on papyrus and wood.

The permanency of death became a basis of continuity through the development of the idea of immortality, preservation of the body, and development of writing in the tombs by which the magical power of the spoken word was perpetuated in pictorial representation of the funeral ritual. The tombs of courtiers were placed around the pyramids of the king; they shared his divine glory and had ultimate consubstantiality with him, partly derived from him and partly inherent in themselves (Innis 1951). Apart from the king, bureaucrats also had the prominent role to play. This could be seen in the associated monuments, which were attached with the huge monuments.

A decline of centralised bureaucratic power and a shift from an emphasis on control over space reflected in the pyramid to decentralise bureaucratic power took place. And it was with an emphasis on continuity and religion to be seen in the spread of writing and the use of papyrus. The extension of the empire and organisation of space and inclusion of new peoples imposed strains on bureaucratic arrangements. In a decentralisation bureaucracy, the demands of administration increased. Therefore, art of writing was encouraged; hieratic<sup>3</sup> industry and the use of papyrus were explored. Now the magical properties of the hieroglyphics were diminishing and the influence of written and spoken languages were increasing.

After the Egyptians, and the influence of river Nile, when started to decline, two other rivers, namely Tigris and Euphrates dominated Mesopotamian civilization. The irregular flooding created Clay in a large amount. Now the turn was of clay tablets to maintain the legacy of communications medium. But it was difficult to write on the moist clay. It further led to the disappearance of pictographs and the emergence of conventional signs or formal patterns of cuneiform.<sup>4</sup> With a language, which was

---

<sup>3</sup> Hieratic is a cursive writing system, which was used in the provenance of the pharaohs in Egypt It was primarily written in ink with a reed brush on papyrus, allowing scribes to write quickly without resorting to the time-consuming hieroglyphs.

<sup>4</sup> Cuneiform script is one of the earliest known forms of written expression. It emerged in Sumer around the 30th century BC. Cuneiform documents were written on clay tablets, by means of a blunt reed for a stylus.

largely monosyllabic, signs were introduced to meet the demands of economy and the necessity of uniformity to establish communication between scattered cities. The irregular floods caused the irregular cities, which were scattered.

In contrast with the civilisation of the capital and Nile that of the Euphrates and the Tigris lacked the necessity of unity and was characterised in its early development by a number of small theocratic city-states in which the chief priest of the temple was direct representative of the god. Accumulation of wealth in temple organisation involved rivalry and warfare between city-states. This led to the emergence of a military leader and an army. The problems of control over space in contrast to the success with which problems of time were met in a religious organisation. This problem necessitated centralisation in the hands of a king. Control over large stretches of territory meant delegation of authority and an emphasis on law as a mean of offsetting religious jealousies. (Innis, Harold A. 1950) To the same end old capitals were destroyed and new capitals were built to strengthen the prestige of the king, and the deities of conquered cities were arranged in hierarchies under the deity of the conqueror.

In contrast with an absolute king in Egypt who cultivated an interest in the next world and immortality, Sumerian and Babylonian priests by virtue of the importance of religion had little interest in the hereafter but were concerned with the systematising of knowledge and an emphasis on sense of law and order (Albright 1940: 156).

Monarchy, priesthood and several writing traditions were identical during the rivers' civilisations, namely Egyptian, Sumerian, Babylonian Assyrian and many others. Some had used pyramids like monuments to write, namely pictography, hieroglyphics and hieratic also, while others preferred clay tablets. Papyrus transformed the very nature of the political entities. Empires now started to grow rapidly, but with the intense rivalry. Parchment in the Europe became more popular.

Now the civilisations' dominance was shifting. From the East, it had jumped to the West. Only written tradition had not its monopoly, rather oral tradition also was in existence.

A concern with communication by the ear assumes reliance on time. Persistence of the oral tradition in Greece implied an emphasis on poetry associated with music and a time art. Verbal poetry goes back to the fundamental reality of time. Migration conquest weakened the influence of place on religion, accentuated the importance of oral tradition. The oral tradition in the Homeric epics reflected the character of early Greek society. The Iliad<sup>5</sup> reflected a monarchy<sup>6</sup> and the Odyssey an oligarchy<sup>7</sup>. The oral tradition was also popular in India, during the Vedic age.<sup>8</sup> This was the era when four Vedas and several subsequent literatures were in practice, but with the oral tradition. Later, oral traditions were written down. The great epics were also written during this era.

The Greeks escaped the effect of contact with the Egyptian and Babylonian civilisations because there was necessity to cross the Mediterranean and other waterways. They established their own significance and favoured the oral tradition rather than the written. The Homeric poem thus got the prominence. These poems were the work of generations of reciters and minstrels and reflected the demands of generations of audiences to whom they were recited. A key factor in the establishment of Empires was that it had been built up on communication based on the sight, which was in contrast with Greek political organisation because Greek tradition had emphasised oral tradition. The special thing in the Greek civilisation was that it

---

<sup>5</sup> Iliad and Odyssey were the great epics in Greek, written by the great Homer. Both epics were a political documentation of that time.

<sup>6</sup> It's a kind of government, in which ruler is known as the king. After that his dynasty continues. It was popular in the ancient age.

<sup>7</sup> Oligarchy doesn't have a king, rather a group of some wise men, who hold the power to rule. This could be referred as Aristocracy.

<sup>8</sup> Vedic age in India could be traced back from 1500 BC to 500 BC.

escaped the problem of the worship of the written tradition, which had embarrassed the oriental empires.<sup>9</sup>

The oral traditions were protected, successfully because there was delay in the introduction of writing, the difficulties of securing large and regular supplies of papyrus from Egypt and the limitations of stone as a medium. The Greeks never wasted their energy in learning a second language. They were not interested in creating the monopolies of knowledge, which was built around a complex script. But later, with the accessibility of papyrus from Egypt in the late seventh and sixth centuries and the use of the lyre as a musical instrument, the position of professional minstrels<sup>10</sup> was weakened. Music emerged as a new source, which started to break the spirituality.

This was the initial stage, when nature and science were started to get the significance. The supernatural things were replaced by the concerns with the science and nature. This was the time, when Olympian traditions were established. The new traditions, i.e. emergence of science, music and geometry etc. were started to limit the powers of God. The science of nature dominated by geometry involved a concern with the internal properties of things rather than their relations with other things. A concern with geometry and spatial relations were reinforced by the place of land and the search for land in colonisation in Greek life (Innis 1951). The result was obvious that it followed attempts to monopolise land. This was the stating attempt, which later caused the huge empire and ultimately the western domination in the medieval age and modern age, too. Now the oriental civilisations' dominance was at the lowest level and the western civilisation started its journey to go on the top level.

---

<sup>9</sup> Those civilisations, which were grown up near the coastal areas of the rivers were known as oriental. In political terms those could be referred as 'Oriental Empires.'

<sup>10</sup> This was a professional class during the Homeric era.

Increased trade and a concern with money suggested the limitations of an interest in geometry and spatial relations and the necessity of an interest in arithmetic and time. The philosophy of spatial externality involved discreteness and neglected the importance of continuity. This was the time, when philosophy of numbers was introduced. This was so in the place of geometry. Solon's reforms were also introduced in the sector of land, space and geometry. He rescued control over time from the nobles and introduced a solar calendar, which governed a definite system of rotation elections to the councils. Now the family state was replaced by the city-state (Innis 1951).

The effectiveness of the oral tradition in the development of the state became evident in the success of Greek tradition, because the Greeks checked the expansion of the Persian Empire. Cultural flowering of Athens was prominent in the fifth century. In the second half of the fifth century writing began to make its encroachments on the oral tradition. The tragedy of the Homeric period became distorted by the introduction of joyful music. Another development was also vital, which was the growing interest in prose. The increase in laws reflected so. Literature in prose increased rapidly. In the fourth century BC, political philosophers like, Plato, Aristotle and others were creating the written philosophies.<sup>11</sup> Now the oral traditions of Sophists<sup>12</sup> were diminishing. The political ideas were deeply concerned with the city-states. It was significant that Aristotle founded a library in 335 B.C. The public libraries were also started in 330 B.C. and onwards.

The role of the oral tradition in providing the milieu for the cultural activity of Greece had a profound significance for the Western culture. The immediate significance was for the history of Rome. Greek culture awakened the native forces of Rome. Flexibility was evident in the oral tradition, which was suitable for the

---

<sup>11</sup> Athens had a rich tradition of philosophers like Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. All the aspects of life these scholars, touched in their thought. They developed the earlier notions of the state, namely the city-states.

<sup>12</sup> Sophists were the paid teacher of philosophy and rhetoric in ancient Greece. They were associated in popular thought with moral skepticism and specious reasoning.

constitutional changes and the activity of lawyers became easier. Now the customs were criticised. The religious and ceremonial character of law was weakened also. Harshness was now no more rather equality was promoted.

The adaptability of Roman law with the oral tradition facilitated the extension of Roman Empire. Thus, Roman arms followed the success. A new capital in Alexandria was formed and a huge library also was established. Now the use of the pen was encouraged at the expense of the Hieratic system and the reed and brush writing. Parchment was now replacing the use of papyrus. Thus, the effect of Egypt got shattered.

Now the city-states were transforming into the Empires. In the place of Republics, which were popular in the city-states, were replaced by the newly Empires. Emperors' worship gradually became more important. The now developments were the absolute monarchy and the bureaucratic administration. The Greek emperors were unable to link Greek and Persian civilisation. Therefore, bureaucracy had splintered into two divisions, namely Latin West and the Greek East. The success in solving the problems of administration over vast areas was dependent on supplies of papyrus. The bias of this medium became apparent in the monopoly of bureaucracy. When the availability of papyrus disturbed, the parchment started to monopolise the bureaucracy.

A supremacy in the religious domain also changed. Now Christianity got prominence over the Eastern religions, namely the Persian religion. The Alexandrian scholars started to write in the Hebrew Scriptures. A Christian thus, downplayed the Babylonian priesthood. Innis used the term religion in a very broad sense. John Keane notes that for Innis, religion was the basis of empire (Keane 1988). An empire for Innis is not merely a large state; it also lasts a long time and reproduces its own culture and civilisation through the generations.

Religion was of imperial use; in ancient Egypt, Innis held, the priesthood enjoyed a “monopoly of knowledge” of astronomy and the calendar, resting on appropriate communications media. It allowed religious authorities to predict the Nile’s flooding, which was the lifeline to Egypt’s agricultural economy, and to control the calendar well into the early modern era. In Egypt that monopoly of authority rested on the priest’s exclusive access to the complex writing medium of hieroglyphics on durable time-binding materials like stone and the pyramids. Theocracy,<sup>13</sup> the supremacy of religion over the state, was the goal of Egypt’s priestly elites, as it was later in Israel and is at present in Iran. From the late Roman Empire the Western church’s temporal power rested on a similar monopoly of knowledge, based on complex manuscript writing and durable parchment. This time-binding durability and continuity of power and knowledge lasted a thousand years, but it assumed religious form in the Roman West and political form in the Byzantine East,<sup>14</sup> whose balanced civilisation lasted for centuries. Religion’s “monopoly over time” had stimulated competitive elements in the organization of space, especially by the state. Governments do not quietly accept religion’s claim of social supremacy. This has the idea of the secular state. The pharaoh<sup>15</sup> of the Egypt was the high priest, deemed himself a god, and claimed immortality. His control of the army and economy helped to countervail priestly power. Some pharaohs also sought to simplify the state religion, and promoted the tolerance for other religions. They developed the simpler competing media by using papyrus. The state has always competed with religion to control knowledge through archives, libraries and schools. Alexandria became the means towards this purpose.

Monarchy, too, is a time-binding institution, since it rests the legitimacy of the state on the reproductive power of the family. The violent rise and fall of states,

---

<sup>13</sup> It was a kind of governing arrangements, which emphasised the supremacy of religion over political arrangements. In this kind of rule religious texts become the fundamentals and as a guiding principles for the governance.

<sup>14</sup> It was developed on the shores of Mediterranean Sea. It was essentially an empire of the Babylonian and Persian influences.

<sup>15</sup> Pharaoh was the name for the kings. In Egypt Pharaohs were the rulers.

churches, and religious as well as secular elites was the harbinger of modern class conflict. But it was mediated through the Innisian notion of competing communications media. Protestant Bibles printed in the vernacular rapidly spread the word throughout Europe and overthrew Rome's monopoly of religious knowledge and power. Reinforced by the use of vernacular languages, Protestantism promoted a sectarian divisiveness and opened the way for the new secular state's victory over the church. The concept of sovereignty emerged in the writing of political thinkers like Machiavelli and Bodin. The social supremacy of the state was assured when Locke's First Treatise on Government attacked the religious rationale for monarchy. The Church's drive for social supremacy over the state and its claim to be a spiritual power are material and temporal affairs. They rest on the time-binding properties of appropriate communications media. Classically states have sought to make political space prevail over religious time. States and religions differ less as worldly/unworldly institutions than as competing time-binding and space-binding worldly powers. Different media mediate the competition for social supremacy among institutions and elites.

Later monopolies of knowledge controlled by monasteries were followed by monopolies of knowledge controlled by copyist guilds in the large cities. The high price for large books led to attempts to develop a system of reproduction by machine. This occurred successfully due to the industrial revolution. Commercialism of the publisher began to displace the craft of the printer. The vernacular offered new authors and new readers. The portable size of books and the huge amount of pamphlets began to replace the large folios. Very interestingly Drama and the oral traditions emerged once again in the modern era. It was so, when restrictions were put on the scholarly writings. These writings were creating consciousness among the peoples and this was against the absolute monarchies. After the French revolution the smuggling of books increased in the other parts of the region. It was so, because French revolution could guide the revolution in the other parts.

## Communication Media in the Modern State

The hold of Catholic Church was very strong all over the Europe. The Reformation and the rise of Protestantism broke the hold of the Church and led to the new national religions. On the other hand the growth of towns and cities and a new merchant middle class (or bourgeoisie) had also challenged the feudal form of authority. This was the era, when absolute monarchs were started to rise. With increased centralised authority and centralised tax powers, a new role emerged for the monarchy from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries. Absolutism gave real power to kings and queens and reduced the power and authority of feudal lords. In this entire scenario, the emergence of national languages also could be seen.

An increased trade and the movement of peoples set the standardisation of national languages, which began to replace the many different local languages and dialects, which were spoken throughout Europe. Until this period, Latin had been the common language. With the decline in power of the Roman Catholic Church national languages became common and this period also marked the beginning of national literatures written in vernacular languages. This was so against the Latin. The invention of the printing press allowed people to print books in national languages, which led to consistency in spelling and increased standardisation. All these factors meant that the idea of nation-states and centralised government became common throughout Western Europe. This was the idea, which endured for hundreds of years. Today, in the early years of the twenty-first century, the idea of the nation as the basic political unit is being challenged by globalism. There is considerable debate about promoting political and economic structures that can transcend national boundaries.

The religious reformation of Europe was so significant that it affected the very nature of the political development. The emergence of the nation state was the outcome of the Reformation dominated most of sixteenth century Western Europe. It encouraged the continued secularisation of Europe, i.e. the separation of Church from state and the rise of nation-states. The authority and dogma of the Church was

subjected to question. The influence of Renaissance, humanism and individualism, too had led to a growing belief in a direct relationship between man and God that did not require the mediation of a priest.

The Renaissance was fundamentally a transition from the God-centered civilisation of the Middle Ages to the human-centred, secular civilisation of the modern world (Clark 1969). The Reformation signaled the end of religious ideology as the dominant international force and this reinforced the emergence of the nation-states and the rise of secular power and authority. Although the Catholic Church was replaced in many countries by Protestant national religions, the new forms of government tended to be commerce-oriented absolutist states, largely freed from religious domination.

The invention of the printing press was as a single most important invention in the making of the modern mind. Johannes Gutenberg invented the printing Press in 1439 in what is now Germany. Frank Campbell described the fifteenth century as "*the compost from which modern (Western) culture shoots*" (Man 2002).

Paper had been introduced in the early 1400s from China and the invention of the printing press by Gutenberg in 1439 had revolutionised communication and learning. Printers were among the first capitalists: Burke<sup>16</sup> sees presses as '*licences to print money*'. He makes the case that, with printing, information became a commodity for the first time. At the same time, the power of elders diminished; their memories were no longer needed once you could read everything in books. As Burke says, with a book, you can hold people's minds in your hands; you don't need to meet them. This period marks an important shift from an oral culture to one dominated by written expression, even though we still use speech, of course. Those of you taking courses in Aboriginal Studies might like to draw comparisons, as many Indigenous Australians are confronting a similar move away from a predominantly oral culture and are

---

<sup>16</sup> Edmund Burke was a prominent political thinker in England. He was the thinker of conservative ideas.

experiencing a number of the changes identified above.

Books were published on every topic. Publications of the Bible in vernacular languages (as opposed to Latin) led the way. Modern science began soon and the other subjects included medicine, pharmacology, surveying, geometry, poetry, ballads and history. All this new learning and scholarship, and the technology to print it led to the rise of national literatures, printed in the vernacular, which assisted the stabilisation of nation states.

The press also ensured the survival of Shakespeare's plays, mostly written in the late sixteenth century.<sup>17</sup> Many of his plays, particularly the historical dramas, show this new sense of national identity being popularised and reinforced. Shakespeare wrote some of the world's most beautiful poetry, but in his great tragedies he also reveals the secular nature of man. Writing towards the end of the Renaissance, he reflects the glory but also the despair of man, liberated from God. Print culture, ushered in by the Gutenberg press in the middle of the fifteenth century, brought about the cultural predominance of the visual over the oral tradition.

A successful empire requires adequate appreciation of problems of space, i.e. military and political, and also the problems of time namely dynastic and religious. In the historical evolutions, empires always have emphasised on the two dimensions of political organisation, on the one hand the length of time over which the organisation persists, and on the other hand the territorial space brought within its control. These time-binding and space-binding properties were associated with religion and the state respectively. Media which are space-binding facilitate and encourage the growth of empire, encourage a concern with expansion and with the present, and thus favor the hegemony of secular political authority.

---

<sup>17</sup> Shakespeare was an English poet. He has the mastery in formulating the dramas. His poetry was very popular in the modern age and in the contemporary era even. His poetry in the modern age can be seen as the Homeric epics in the ancient age.

The history of the books can be seen as a communication revolution, through which we can watch the whole of a vast socio-cultural, political, and economic change happen over a long period. By following the developments in manuscripts and print book productions, we can also chart the various changes in social organisation, politics and economics from the feudalism of the 7th century, to the advent of the early capitalism in the 15th century.

The implications of the printed word are vast. It is generally said that the Protestant revolution could not have taken place if it were not for the printing press. But this is not entirely valid because there were some other deep concerns like social, economic and political problems. In the shifts in the world from the mid 15th century to the end of the 18th century, it is possible to trace the divergence of science from religion and the opening up of the new world.

Historians find that the printing press was somehow the single most important invention of the Middle Ages, that it and it alone was responsible for the changes of the European Literary, Scientific and Artistic Renaissance and the Protestant Reformation. But there were other significant factors, which contributed to the rise of intellectual activity in Europe in the mid-15th century. For instance, society in Europe changed during the Renaissance because of a secularisation of learning that occurred with the growth of the university (Lucien and Henri 1999).

The printing industry had sustained the revolution, with the promotion of vernacular languages and new information. The first books to show up in print shops were bibles and religious tracts. The next books to attract publishers were the humanist texts.

The power of the Roman Catholic Church was based in part on the ability of the church to enforce the use of Latin as the language for the worship of God. It was just as the manuscript books were the main visual means of revering God, so to Latin

was the only verbal means of communicating with him. In *"Imagined Communities"*, Benedict Anderson notes:

as long as the Church could maintain this link, and as long as it controlled who learned to speak and write Latin, the Church could maintain its position in the world. With Latin was the only language for religious texts, the priest represented the only true path to God and way to salvation (Anderson 1991: 101).

Later, Luther challenged the concept of Latin as the only language appropriate to worship or the only path to God. His challenge was fostered and enlarged by books, most notably Bibles and prayer books, in vernacular languages. The teachings of Luther and the practice of the vernacular language, both helped each other mutually. Luther wanted a complete distance from the older tradition, namely the Catholic tradition. So it was obvious for him, to rely on the vernacular language. The invention of vernaculars gave a life-line to Protestantism. And vernacular language itself got prominence through the Protestantism.

At this time there is also the expansion by Western Europe into the other continents like Africa and the New World. In Europe books were the sourceful medium to know the whole world. Kings of the European countries started to send the missions to explore the world. Prince Henry of Portugal sent his fleets to explore the coast of Africa in the 1440s and Columbus falls into history by stumbling over the America's at the end of the century. One of the consequences of this push into the world was that books become a way of disseminating information about the outside world. Europeans took interests for the new information about a new world. The natural consequence of all these were that the travelers were forced to rely on the descriptions of those who had made the journeys.

Another dimension emerged due to the rise of Science as a replacement for religion as a way of seeing the world has to do with the changing nature of libraries.

Instead of a few repositories, usually in the control of the church, people began to accumulate private libraries. The period between the 13th and 16th centuries saw the rise of a print-dominated society, one that moved away from the Church's monopoly of information that existed during the manuscript book period.

Okay, the invention of printing was significant, but it did not drive all the changes. There were social and political and economic changes that made print important. But, those changes might not have happened as quickly or perhaps at all without print. The technology of the printing press, doubled with the surrounding changes in the political and economic system, made the changes in the ways in which Western Europe saw its place in the world.

In the intellectual and moral progress the printing press had played a vital role. We can make a conclusion that the information technologies are instruments not just of enlightenment but also of power. In ancient times, writing had afforded power; when literacy spread, power spread all over and developed a tiny group of elites. With the exploration of printing press and its proliferation, have done decentralisation of power. The power of the priestly world, namely the pope was downplayed during the Protestant Reformation. The printing of the Bible fostered the peoples' consciousness. Without coaching from the pope people could understand the meanings of the church's doctrine and the religion. The printing press lubricated protest. It did so by lowering the cost of reaching and mobilising a large audience. Now, religious fundamentals were questioned. Peoples easily started to look harshly at the religious doctrines. Peoples started to use reasoning. Rationalism thus got the place in the minds of the people. The knowledge got the secular status. Once secularisation got prominence, it further lowered the church's supremacy and made the way for the emergence of the nation-states.

The "wars of religion", which had racked Europe in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries were also the wars of politics. Catholics, Protestants and

Calvinists fought to each-other in the process to grasp the power. In other words, the efforts were to destroy the Roman Empire's hegemony in religious domain and political as well. The States' rights against the Holy Roman Emperor became important. By the mid-seventeenth century, the Holy Roman Empire was effectively dead. A primary cause towards this was the centrifugal force of the printing press. The press mobilised religious dissent and political dissent.

The efficient communication through the printing created a political aspiration, a religious belief and a common language. It worked in both the directions. It opposed to a central authority. Its consequence was the fragmentation of power, i.e. diffusion of power. On the other side, when it stretched across the existing boundaries, aggregated the power. For example nationalism could be seen. It shared the national sentiments all over the region. The obvious outcome of this sentiment was a centrally governed and culturally coherent region, which was bound by a sense of shared heritage, shared interest and shared destiny. These were some essentials for the existence of the nation state.

The press reinforced the drive toward national rule in two ways. First, it unified the cultural base of large amount of land, standardising custom and mythology and above all a common language. As the political scientist Benedict Anderson has called them:

The press changed that, tamping down dialectical differences, creating large blocks of mutual intelligibility—unified fields of exchange and communication. (Anderson 1991: 111)

Second, the press began to foster a day-to-day national consciousness. By the early 1500s, the single-topic “news pamphlets” were harmonising English sentiment, reporting on battles, disasters, and celebrations. This was a revolutionary invention during this era. In the coming centuries, as journals and true newspapers evolved, the printing press would give more and more space to the national feelings. Whole states

would become, an “*imagined communities*”.<sup>18</sup>

The development of printing and nationhood differed from place to place. The emergence of nations did not come together. The Italians, the Germans, the French and several others took their own respective time to grow as the nation states. This development shows the evolution of press and the other communication media.

Communication shapes organisation and it is applicable to all varieties of collective behavior in social institutions: large and small, formal and informal and hierarchical also. Communications media is seen as the nervous system of the various organisations. It is generally seen that large, formal, hierarchical organisations tend to have more one-way communication than small and informal organisations. It is essential that every organisation must have a communication system of some shape, size, and sort. In the words of Edward Sapir (1930):

The studies of communication range from the glance of a pair of lovers to debates in the League of Nations.

Therefore, they include the family, the neighborhood, city, the hospital, the corporation, the nation, and bilateral, multilateral and global negotiation as well. For example, United Nations is seen as a “*world forum*,” i.e., a multinational message center for the exchange of information. Apart from the United States, various regions itself are promoting the information flows. These formations are providing the stages to short out the differences, what the states have. Therefore, communication media might be seen as the medium of peace resolution.

By the early 1960s, electronic interdependence increased, when electronic media replace visual culture with oral culture. In this new age, humankind started to move from individualism and fragmentation to a collective identity. This was a new trend, which enhanced a tribal base within a state. This development emerged as a

---

<sup>18</sup> Benedict Anderson has used this terminology.

major check for the nation states. McLuhan, a prominent communication thinker coins this new social organisation as the "*global village*."<sup>19</sup>

Each new communication technology in the modern period worked to draw more and more aspects of economic life, and further reaches of territory into the influence of organised commerce and its system of markets. Media and transportation technologies formed a necessary infrastructure for the rise of mass society in the western world, yielding newspapers, high-speed printing, steam transport, the telegraph and the telephone, radio and television. Innis used the term bias in a significant way. He makes the term his guiding concepts for both communications history and modern media studies.

Earlier studies on globalisation of national cultures by transnational media portrayed globalisation as the suppressing of national cultures by the Western culture, which was referred as '*cultural imperialism*'.<sup>20</sup> Western culture, particularly of the United States was popularised by the American transnational visual media, which dominated the global until other nations were able to come up with their media. With the emergence of transnational media from other nations, it became possible to break the monopoly of cultural imperialism, which America had enjoyed for decades. Transnational media globalisation has generated the de-centering of Western cultural hegemony, i.e. U.S. hegemony. Non- Western players now actively collaborate in the production and circulation of global media commodities. (McLuhan, Marshall and Powers, Bruce R. 1999.) The predominance of Western culture has been seriously challenged by the intensification of intraregional cultural flows and connections in the non-West. Transnational media from other nations proliferated with a different agenda and changed the rule of the game. Unlike the American transnational media, which sought to brainwash the global populace with her culture, the upcoming

---

<sup>19</sup> It's a new phenomenon in the twentieth century. The nation states have been transformed into a global arrangement. Tribalism is not an advanced form. Therefore the term village is used.

<sup>20</sup> The Cultural Imperialism debate started in the early 1970s when developing and underdeveloped countries found the western influences as a new variant of domination. The dependency theory encouraged identifying such imperialism. Through the media imperialism, the cultural dominance of West over the East was in practice.

transnational media from other nations targeted their media messages at national communities in Diaspora.

### Conclusion

In the era of modern history, which experienced the rise of mass-communication the media have been mainly owned and operated or regulated at least by official agencies of the nation-state. So it remains, especially with the more recent electronic rather than the print media, in the world today. The rise of electronic media is significant in the cotemporary era. The electronic mode of communications, rather have the characteristics of the electricity. As electric flow is very rapid, so does the electronic media. The communication gap, which nation- states had earlier, now transforming. The mass connectivity of the nation- states is transforming the existing gap between them. Now, states are involved in the process of globalisation and very recently transforming into regionalism.

There are some contextual variables, which set the conditions under which national communication systems operate. The contextual variables are: (1) size and shape, (2) mobility and participation, (3) disposable income, and (4) options and decisions. Size and Shape are critical for mass communication, as they determine density and dispersion of population. Where the ratio between land and man is high, communication tends to be high. And where a population is lightly dispersed over a vast terrain, mass communication tends to be low. In this scenario, when we do a cost-benefit calculus, it becomes expensive and it is perceived as less urgent than other societal needs, such as road or rail. Thus, Greenland needs mass media less than Canada, Canada less than the Soviet Union, and the Soviet Union less than China.

The world polity has changed significantly since the “great powers” of Europe fought each other for supremacy in World War I. Since the imperial dominion of Europe over most of the world has ended, the two non-European superpowers,

namely the United States and the Soviet Union, have shaped much of world history since World War II. At the same time third world has also entered the global arena to interact with the great powers. These changes in the world political arena have the influential changes in the world communication network. In the changing process of communication, three factors could be surfaced since World War II: (1) the great leap forward of communication technology, (2) the global diffusion of mass media, and (3) the new demand for open societies. The technology explosion of the past quarter-century has produced highly visible and audible transformations in the world communication network. The picture tube, the transistor, and the satellite have brought new sights and sounds into every variety of social organisation on earth. It is fair to say that a true "world communication network" is the creation of satellites. Thus, the new technology, diffused as mass media, has transformed social organisation. A whole new array of audiences has been created everywhere to interact with the new technologies. Out of this has grown the demand, everywhere, for open societies.

Innis' theory of communications has thrown lights on the world history. The states' evolutions from monasteries to the big empires, and from monarchy to the nation states and very prominent to the recent developments in the structures of the nation state could be understood with the communications perspective. Therefore his theory becomes the subject matter of the international relations. Innis' scholarship deserves scrutiny by International Relations' theorists for a variety of reasons. First, he is a world order theorist, interested in the constitutive features of civilisations and how these features come into being and are transformed. Although his work doesn't give a fair picture to the civilisations, but it would fair to say that his over arching concerns was with the dynamics of large-scale social and political change. Such a focus is particularly appropriate today because modern system of sovereign states is transforming itself. His concepts of time and space are very useful to understand all those transformations Innis' work provides a rich vocabulary of fundamental transformation. Civilisations fixed their place not in a static way, rather the transformations occurred with the ups and downs. The one thing, for the civilisations, Innis found very common was the communications media. The contemporary discussions even like the collapse of the Soviet Union, end of the Cold War, the

loosening grips of sovereignty, and the significance of globalisation all could be seen in the lights of the communications media. Innis seems very relevant for all these purposes. Second, Innis' work covers a broad range, historically, geographically, and philosophically.

## CHAPTER: V

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

When Innis shifted his interests of study towards a new arena, namely communications in the historical contexts, he did not know perhaps its demands in the present days. Today communications are the nerves of the world-wide movements. Innis during his study of pulp and paper, which he was applying in the economic contexts, got an idea to explore it extensively. When he was exploring the role of staples in the Canadian economic history, he paid attention towards the European cultural dominance all over the Canada. His studies went further towards this direction and a new dimension in his research work came out, which came to be known as communications theory. The later Innis was recognised for initiating the communications debate.

The later studies of Innis were concerned with the archeology and anthropology. History of civilisations make the way for archeological surveys, while the study of culture and society counts the individuals more. Therefore, his work becomes a subject matter for the anthropology.

The continuity can be seen in Innis' analyses. He starts with the early civilisations, and after describing several others; he comes to the modern era. But all the civilisations had their necessary contacts with the each other. This notion can be seen in the Hegelian dialectic, which says about the thesis and its contrasting views namely anti-thesis. After the contradiction between both, a new phenomenon takes place, i.e. synthesis. Innis seems influenced by this idea. That's why the contradictions between the mediums of communications can be seen, which lastly popularises a new medium of communications. But Innis's effort was not totally influenced by Hegel. Rather he introduced a new concept of time and space. He saw the historical advancements in terms of time and space-biased communications. Innis

found civilisations earlier were time-biased. Uses of stones, clay and tablets as a writing sheet, were the heavy medium of communications. Having such type of mediums, societies were oral in tradition. This was so because modes of communications were not easily movable.

Innis emphasised on the balance more. He finds that the reason behind western civilisations' fall is the uneven balance between time and space. Today's space-oriented societies are unstable. By restoring the balance between these two could save the western civilisations, especially American influence.

Innis seems very critical towards the limitations on the freedom of thought. He has deep concern with the discourses. Therefore, he hailed the Greek culture, which was essentially oral in nature. He stated that his bias was with the oral culture. The media either press or electronic now are interested to the sensations. The serious discourses are not worth able to mention in the tabloids. Innis was not happy with all these.

Innis was not alive to see the more rapid changes in the communications technologies. These changes were so advanced that the old technologies seem older and older. Though he mentioned the radio, but could not predict its more advance form, which was the television. The advent of Internet was beyond his imagination. But Innis' conceptualisation seems general, applicable to any type of communications' mode, either totally or in some extent.

In the next chapter Innis' concept of monopoly of knowledge is discussed. This was another conceptualisation regarding the communications discourse. Monopoly of knowledge was as important as the introductory chapter contains the concepts of time and space. He brought the term monopoly from the economic arena. It was easy to import the term because earlier Innis was interested in the study of Canadian economic history.

Information in all era was the key for the transformations. When Innis talks about the monopoly of knowledge, he naturally meant the monopolisation of information. Time-biased information or space-biased information makes the monopoly of knowledge. Innis says that the balance between these two was crucial in the course of time. When balance got shattered, a new source of information gets the importance. A new monopoly would be recognised then.

The changes in technology, which essentially occurs in the positive way causes although the downfall of the existing monopoly, but at the same time it creates anew way for a new monopoly. Both happenings occur at the same time, one goes down and other stats to go up. The invention of writing on the lighter mediums like papyrus and parchments shattered the existing monopoly of the stone and clay tablets' writings.

Industrial revolution was a landmark incident in all spheres of the life, whether political, social, economical and cultural also. It had transformed the existing technologies in anew form. Communications technologies how could be an exceptional one. The invention of printing was viable in the sphere of communications. It had created the bias of communications in favour of space. The use of paper intensified the printing more. Comparatively a lighter mode of communication was best suited to carry the ideas worldwide. Now monopoly transformed itself and in the form of printing press it spread all over.

The monopoly of knowledge became diversified. The era of information began, but the information came from the various sources. So, the monopoly in terms of medium, i.e. information was seen but it was diversified extensively. Continuity existed only in terms of information, but instability was very frequent and today no knowledge seems permanent. Whatever comes today in the light, its contradictions emerge at once. It was geographically diversified. In the modern era the monopoly of knowledge would be significant only in terms of space-biased communications. The obvious consequence of this tradition could be found in the characters of instability.

Continuity, which is facilitated by the time-biased communication, is diminishing its potency.

The monopolies of knowledge are not a self-sustaining phenomenon; rather it takes its power, which depends on the sources like the medium's performance, its efficiency, the speed and the ability to afford high costs. Another dimension of this concept is that it tends to centralise the power. Monopoly of knowledge becomes ignorant for the masses; it turns itself into an instrument for the elites, which controls the knowledge. Those who have control over information will have the power to define reality. This concept thus becomes an instrument to guide the society. In the modern era press has been a tool to control the society.

What are the consequences of communications, especially on the cultural behaviours are examined in the chapter three. Communications and the cultural instability was a central theme, which Innis gave more importance. The words like evolutions, advancements, progress and several others show the instability in the course of time. Instability in all the spheres whether political, societal or cultural are a general happening. Innis chose the cultural instability for the purpose of his study.

Cultural values of a society when changes, transforms the several routines of that specific culture. It is important to see the effects, which take place are the outcome of cultural values or these culture are transforming itself due to some other effects, i.e. mediums. Innis goes with the second notion that it was the communications media, which had caused the cultural instability. Whenever modes of communications had changed, very profoundly it transformed the cultural values.

It was Innis's work on the history of communications, which brought together his far-ranging observations on markets, culture and technological change. The advanced technology in communications has created a space-biased environment, where knowledge's durability seems skeptical. After the invention of steam engine

the press got a new life, it expanded itself hugely. The mass media emerged to fulfill knowledge needs of the masses.

After the introduction of mass media balance got shifted in the favour of space, while time-biasness was forgotten now. The continuity was break and uncertainties got a life. Another development during this period was the invention of penny press. This kind of development was born by the needs of the peoples. The complexities of life created the complex environment all over. This had further created interests in the day-by-day events, sensational news and so on. Innis seems wrong here, when he says that communications determine the culture because in the case of penny presses this occurs but in a contradictory way. Here, cultural values determine the modes of communications.

Innis said that the modern civilisations are characterised by an enormous increase in output of mechanised knowledge with the newspaper, the book, the radio and the cinema. It has produced a state of numbness, pleasure and self-complacency. He equals this tradition with the laughing gas. The danger of a shaking man, produced by mechanised form of knowledge is very similar like a drunken man or one who has taken an overdose of sleeping tablets.

The media are significant means by which we learn about our own society. They are the main source of information and ideas about other societies, too. The communications media shape the perceptions of a society, either in favour or against of any society. Media also have a bigger role to preserve the culture and sometimes it creates or reinforces the dependency of another.

The communications can be defined as a process by which information is exchanged between individuals. And this is done through a common system of symbols, signs or behaviour. In other words the process of communications involve a two-way exchange. This definition of communication is also applicable to the mass

media. In place of the individuals the content of the mass media is mass culture. In the cultural studies media is seen as the makers of community and creating the common outlooks, which form a basis for a shared consciousness. No longer is the audience an anonymous mass of isolated individuals, but rather it is composed of groups.

In the previous chapter the evolutions of states are discussed. How the communications media have influenced the nature of states has been a matter of deep query for Innis. The emergence of state, its growth and the current form all could be analysed through the means of communications.

When the communications medium' were stones, as the pyramids and big monuments in Egypt, the big monarchs emerged. Though the mediums were unable to move, they caused a closed arrangement, a state within a certain boundary. Monarchs enjoyed a bounded sovereignty but absolute over its peoples. Continuity remained for a long period. When mediums started to become lighter, existing arrangements got shattered. Writing on clay and tablets brought some other civilisations, namely Mesopotamian, and Sumerians. Later the introduction of papyrus, which was essentially lighter than the previous, transformed the civilisations. Now it felt transformation towards the big geographical entities, i.e. Assyrians.

When popularity of papyrus declined, a new medium, namely parchment came to replace this. Though scripts written down on the parchments were easily carrying. Now the values related to any entity were movable. This was helpful to explore the ideas across the geographical boundaries. The access of parchment thus worked in the establishments of the empires. The Roman Empire now got the chance to encroach the rest of the world. The oral tradition now was unable to hold the administrative complexities. The written tradition was worth able to hold the norms of administration and to carry forward the values of the existing culture. The easy-carrying nature of the communications medium initiated the secularisation of

knowledge. Knowledge and information came out from the mere domain of religious practices. The political ideas became more popular. The secularisation even of religions' got momentum after the industrial revolution.

The modern state with political boundaries were influenced by the paper and printing industries. And these industries were carried forward by the industrial revolution and the invention of steam power to the paper and printing industries. The modern nation-states and later a more advanced form of this, namely regionalism, could be seen in the wake of vernaculars and languages. Today's fashion in the era of nation states is the growing regionalism. Amongst the several bases for this development, one is the common language. The commonalities in the form of vernaculars are transforming the very nature of the nation-states.

### **Contemporary Society and Innis's Theory of Communications**

A critical survey is necessary for the communication theory. Innis's effort could be seen remarkably for having inaugurated the media thesis. He had a profound influence on critical media theory<sup>1</sup> and communications. His colleague McLuhan argued that the medium's "*sensory bias*", i.e. the books and newspapers appealed to the rationality of the eye, while radio played to the irrationality of the ear. (McLuhan, Marshall 1964) Thus, both McLuhan and Innis assume the centrality of communication technology. But McLuhan talks much about the perception and thought but ignores the institutions, while Innis, on the other hand says much about institutions and little about perception and thought. Innis had studied the political institutions since the emergence of civilisations.

---

<sup>1</sup> There are various theories related to media. The realist theory looks media as a source of power, which does suppression of individuals and social groups. The cultural-functionalist theory, very differently looks media as a medium of debate and discourses, which highlights the demands of the society and culture's aspirations as well.

McLuhan recognised the need to incorporate the theory of communication into evolutionary theory of social systems. He said:

No matter how abstractly formulated are a general theory of systems, a general theory of evolution and a general theory of communication, all three theoretical components are necessary for the specifically sociological theory of society. They are mutually interdependent (McLuhan 1960: 568).

In the way to study the historical evolutions through the medium of communications, Innis rather was doing the study of social system and the respective culture. As the social system gets maturity, so does the communication system. So, both travel simultaneously. The theory of communication thus provides a way to understand the social system.

A question is generally asked about the relevance of Innis's ideas. Innis was writing in the age of popular mass media, although radio had been introduced there and it was used successfully in the World War. Today, scenario is different. Electronic media has been profound, mass media itself has been crossed its limitations and the notion of communication has crossed the Innis's imagination. But Innis's ideas are still relevant. The communication thinkers are relying on the Innis's ideas.

Today's world is the land of information's. An information society is growing, in which the creation, distribution, diffusion, integration and manipulation of information is a significant economic, political, and cultural activity. The social beings are involved in all these things through the information. The world is entering in a new phase of society. The markers of this rapid change are technological, economic, occupational, spatial, cultural, or some combination of all of these. Towards all these electronic media is a crucial factor. It is facilitating the mechanisation of information. Peoples, who are participating in this form of society,

are sometimes called as digital citizens.<sup>2</sup> Information society has close concerns with the various concepts like industrial society, post-industrial society, post-modern society, knowledge society, telematic society and network society.<sup>3</sup> Apart from these some concept are also in existence. In such new formation, Innis could be understood in terms of space-bias communication. This concept emphasises on the instability of the culture. A space-biased society could not create an Empire, as Innis supposes. Here we also see Innis's idea very true.

The media imperialism debate started in the early 1970s when developing countries began to criticise the control, which developed countries held over the media. These kind of thought emerged out of the dependency discourses. Later during the 1980s and 1990s, as multinational media grew larger and more powerful many believe that it will become increasingly difficult for small, local media outlets to survive. A new type of imperialism started to grow. Media imperialism is not always an international occurrence. When a single company or corporation controls all the media in a country, this too is a form of media imperialism.

Another concept related to communication is the concept of the knowledge industry. It can generally be distinguished into five sectors: education, research and development, mass media, information technologies, information services (Machlup 1962). A knowledge industry has evolved through a transition from an economy based on material goods to that based on the knowledge. The economy of a knowledge society is largely driven not by material inputs, but by symbolic or knowledge-based inputs. A post-industrial society, on the other hand is based on service. In such society information, rather than the muscle power is seen as a powerful determinant of society. Lyotard says that postindustrial society makes

---

<sup>2</sup> This term is referred to those people, who are relying on the electronic media of communications. Today information flows everywhere through the electronic media. The digitalisation of information is creating such peoples.

<sup>3</sup> These new variants of the society emerged after the introduction of electronic communications. The post- arrangements came into existence after the mass- arrangements of the society and culture. Post-modernity comes after the modernity and post- industrialism came after the industrialism.

knowledge accessible to the layman because knowledge and information technologies would diffuse into society and break up Grand Narratives of centralised structures and groups (Lyotard 1984: 18). Another scholar says “Contemporary society may be described as a knowledge society based on the extensive penetration of all its spheres of life and institutions by scientific and technological knowledge” (Stehr 1994: 34). In recent years the concept of the network society has gained importance in information society theory. Manuel Castells suggests: “As an historical trend, dominant functions and processes in the Information Age are increasingly organized around networks. Networks constitute the new social morphology of our societies, and the diffusion of networking logic substantially modifies the operation and outcomes in processes of production, experience, power, and culture” (Castells 2000: 28). This can be seen as the result of informationalism,<sup>4</sup> a new technological paradigm. The information has been the nervous system of society.

Another output in the modern days’ media is digital divide.<sup>5</sup> This came into practice after the 1990s. This term came into debate for the problems in access of computers and Internet. The term digital divide refers to the gap between those people, who have access of digital and information technology and those, who are with very limited or no access at all. The term is closely related to the knowledge divide. The digital divide may be classified based on gender, income and race groups, and by locations also. The term global digital divide refers to differences between the countries or the whole world, in terms of access in technology.

The global digital divide has been so profound that country’s economy could be analysed by this divide. The growing divide widens the gap in economic divisions around the world. Countries with a wide availability of Internet access can advance

---

<sup>4</sup> Informationalism is seen today as a principle in the world of political theory. The importance of informationalism is so high that it is treated as a technological paradigm, which is marking the societal changes.

<sup>5</sup> This is a Gulf like gap between those people who have the access of advanced technology, namely computer and Internet and those who don’t have such access.

the economy. In today's society, jobs and education are directly related to the Internet. In other countries, where the Internet and other technologies are not accessible, education is suffering there. Uneducated people and societies cannot be competitive in the global economy. Therefore underdeveloped and developing countries, which don't have the access of technology, are suffering greater economic downfall.

The information society depends largely on the information, signals, symbols, and images. The society has been transformed into a scientific civilisation based on services, education, and creative activities. This transformation would be the result of a scientific-technological transformation based on technological progress and the increasing importance of computer technology. Science and technology would become immediate forces of production (Richta 1977: 78).

The newly concepts like information society, knowledge society, network society, postmodern society, postindustrial society, etc. has created the impression that we have entered into a completely new type of society. These approaches stress discontinuity. In the contemporary society, nothing in common could be seen in society, as it was 100 years ago. This shows a distinct space-biased society. All these assumptions have ideological in character. Contemporary society seems a capitalist oriented. It is towards accumulating economic, political, and cultural capital. This attribute is reinforcing and encouraging globalisation and informatisation within the society. These are the overall capitalist structures (Webster 2006: 56).

The contemporary society is based on a dialectic of the old and the new and continuity and discontinuity. Now computer networks are playing a crucial role in the cultural determination of the modern world. These networks are the technological foundation, which allowed the emergence of global network capitalism. In this form of arrangement computer networks are functioning as a communication medium. Through these transnational networks the economic, political, and cultural systems are restructured. But the global network capitalism is based on structural inequalities. It is

made up of segmented spaces in which central hubs like transnational corporations, certain political actors, regions, countries, especially Western have monopoly over the production of economic, political and cultural capitals like property and power. This segmentation expression is the competitive character of contemporary society (Fuchs 2008: 34).

The notion of informationalism is based on the dialectics of technology and society. In this equation technology embodies society, while society uses technology. The society for its movement needs technology. And technology for its production needs the practice of capitalism. So the mode of development is shaped by the capitalist production. And it is interesting to see that society contains the capitals. Therefore, ultimately society and its culture determine the mode of communication technologies. Innis here seems wrong, when he says that the monopolies of knowledge determine a particular type of culture.

The contemporary society is an Empire capitalist domination, which is based on the immaterial labour.<sup>6</sup> Immaterial labour creates immaterial products, like services, knowledge, information and communication. Intellectual labour is crucial towards this development. They produce ideas through the communications media in the form of symbols, codes, texts, linguistic figures, images, etc.

### Concluding Observations

Innis's theories of political economy, media and society remain highly relevant. He had a profound influence on critical media theory and communications. He offered groundbreaking Canadian perspectives on the function of communication

---

<sup>6</sup>This kind of labour is different from the traditional kind of labour. Traditionally labour was engaged in the accumulation of material needs and could be referred as blue-collar workers. But the immaterial labour doesn't work through the hard labour, rather it does with the knowledge and known as white-collar workers.

technologies as key agents in social and historical change. His works advanced a theory of history in which communication is central to social change and transformation. Writing one year after the death of Innis, Marshall McLuhan observed:

If one were asked to state briefly the basic change, which occurred in the thought of Innis in his last decade it could be said that he shifted his attention from the trade-routes of the external world to the trade-routes of the mind. (McLuhan 1953: 386).

Innis's late work could not be seen only in technological term. The innovation of technologies has disrupted and transformed also the societies into an economic level. This is a half side of a society. Innis also should be seen in terms of media, mental conditioning, and human psyche and for mindful thought.

The theory of communication consists several blends of other existing theories like authoritarian theory, free press theory, democratic theory and communist theory as well. When ruling class guard the freedom of thought, then comes the authoritarian model. When a powerful middle class grows up and makes demands for participation in ruling arrangement. Elites essentially the ruling class started to use the mass media for their sake. Censorship is, thus promoted and it is justified that the state always has supremacy over individual. This theory has a well response with the Innis's idea of communication theory. In the modern era, when people became resourceful due to the several revolutions in the every aspect of life, the demand for participation increased in the political and economic sphere. Because of such demands, the ruling elite started to censor those demands. The politics turned itself in the dictatorship. Even today the democratic governments also could use such a way to have control over such demands.

The theory of free press also stands with the Innis's notion of communication media. Innis's evolution of history shows the individual's right prominently. The free marketplace of ideas was crucial in the determination of a particular mode of communication. In the oral traditions, Plato, Aristotle and several others promoted the

dialogue process. Later the strengthening of communication shows that it has evolved due to the freedom of expression. The tradition of pamphlet debate and the development of penny press were the suitable inventions, in the process of free press theory. Innis covers all these arrangements, thus seems relevant.

Innis's theory of communication also could be justified on the basis of communist notions of media. Innis had mentioned the huge monuments as the medium of communication. Who were the controllers of such monuments? The elites, i.e. the kings had the monopoly over those monuments. Such type of explanation has similarity with the Marxist notion of bourgeois ideology, where the elites have control over the proletariat. In the course of time when writing and reading got importance, only those who were resourceful had controlled both the things. An illiterate how could read and right. Even in the modern era the influential classes have captured the media. A very recent development, namely Internet, in some extent is doing well for the sake of all. Now the ideas are traveling freely from the both sides, i.e. up and down.

Innis' early works could have been suggested a form of technological, geographical or economic determinism. It has revealed a wide socio-technical reach or social ecology. James Carey notes that "*soft determinism*"<sup>7</sup> is compatible with freedom. Innis was concerned with the concrete conditions of human knowledge, freedom and action. Innis' soft determinism reflects a naturalist ecological approach to philosophy and political theory. Innis' concept of freedom thus embraces a soft philosophical determinism and is appropriate to Innis' biological, evolutionary and social ecology (Carey 1967: 23). In drawing attention to the importance of communications, Innis was working largely in intellectual isolation because the notions of communications were not a popular idea at that time.

---

<sup>7</sup> Innis, generally is referred as a media determinist theorist. He tells about the technology, which he saw the determinant of the social system. But soft determinism refers to the societal determinant. The demands made by the society affect the technological developments.

Soft determinism refers to the communications media. The influence of this on the society is not so intense as political influences has.

Innis's principal source of inspiration was the ancient phenomenon rather than modern. He admired the bias with the oral tradition, which was particularly reflected in the Greek civilisation. He did so for the oral tradition of Greece because of its freshness and elasticity, which achieved a balance between reason and the emotions.

By holding the ancient practices in his studies, he seems affected by nostalgia, in some extent. But this notion doesn't suit well for Innis's thought. Innis created a new outlook to see the history. The historical evolutions he saw in the terms of time and space. These concepts were so useful that history could be seen in the both perspectives, namely continuity and the discontinuity, i.e. ups and down. In the way of state formation tradition and religion show the continuity, while on the other hand materialism and secularism had shown the discontinuity. Apart from the conclusions, Innis also talked about the mediums, which carried the evolutionary processes. The concepts of time and space-biasness are so vital that both cover a wide range of the modern days' issues. How the secularism grew, the formation of the nation states and the recent transformation into the global world, all could be covered through the notion of time and space. So Innis's concepts of time and space seem fruitful for ancient, medieval and modern eras. Even the contemporary issues can be dealt with through the Innis's thought.

But the problem also exists with these concepts. Innis argues that the events could be grasped in the terms of time-biased and space-biased media. Why culture seem instable. The answer sides with the bias. But this notion has certain flaws that the communications media itself are outcome of the peoples' necessities. In the course of time, people needed certain things, so that they could fulfill their aspirations and desires. Therefore they invented the communications tools. So it is the societal changes, which determines the communications' technology. The cultural instability moves ahead to get stability. In this process it uses the existing technologies and sometimes causes the invention of a new technology.

Innis's another concept was the monopolies of knowledge, where he emphasised on the technological changes with the medium of communications. Innis's concept of communications technology as the central determinant of social change reinforced and encouraged the study of communications theory, throughout the history of western civilisation. His analysis of technological determinism was significant for the purpose of economic, political and cultural imperialism. His arguments about the spread of homogenising secular empires via the print media seem even more apt today. The study of print media shows the secular empire's victory over the religious empires. The print media and the electronic media are the space-biased innovations, which reinforce the secular arrangements all over the world. In this way the different cultures are about to be homogenised. But these conclusions cannot be applied because in the process of homogenisation, the existing cultures are got affected. Therefore tensions emerge between a new aspiration and the existing systems. So secularism, itself seem harmful for the existence of existing arrangement. A space-biased media causes instability, only this idea of Innis seems right here.

More specifically, Innis's contribution has remained central to the Canadian debate. His perception was that Canada since the middle of the twentieth century was subordinate to the modern monopoly of knowledge centered in the United States. Innis's perception has intensified a cultural debate among the scholars. Gorge Grant in "*Lament for a nation*" pointed that country like Canada, as a nation the product of the modern age, is trying to establish itself as an independent entity by embracing technological change. He wrote:

Nationalism can only be asserted successfully by identification with technological advance. But technological advance entails the disappearance of those indigenous elements that give substance to nationalism (Grey 1989: 98)

Innis's perception of the cultural domination and subordination provides a way to see the history through a different perspective. The roots of a well known approach, namely dependency theory, could be seen in the innis's perception. Apart from the

staples thesis<sup>8</sup>, thoughts on communications were also viable to innovate the debate on dependency theory.

Innis's effort was very helpful in the study of cultural studies. First, Innis offers a perspective on the relationship among media, monopolies of knowledge and the structures of the power within the society. He provides a useful way to understand empire and also the multiple peripheries. He applied it also on the Canadian state. He found that the transportation and communication technologies were the key factor in the state's development. Second, Innis emphasises the transportation of resources into economic and cultural commodities.

As Innis's thinking developed, it gave an impetus to the theory of dependency. For example, the export of staples like pulp and paper and the imports of books could be mentioned for this purpose. The same dynamics in the production and the circulation of culture within Canada also can be seen, i.e. a form of self-colonisation. This link between the economics and the culture is not solely in terms of commoditisation rather the mode of circulation of ideas. His ideas are worth able in the analysis of a contemporary empire.

The globalisation of money, markets and information flow demands a powerful and lasting framework for updating the Innis's legacy. The current restructuring of economies has accelerated capital mobility and information flows among the peoples, governments and states. And all those are bringing unintended consequences. Trade has become the steam engine of the twenty-first century, breaking down national economies. This tradition is redrawing the new dimensions of the nation-state. Today, information flows function in the way like once did railway. Worldwide movements of print and electronic information accelerate the intensity and

---

<sup>8</sup> Staple thesis, given by Innis, was another significant insight, which studied the Canadian economic history. In this approach Innis saw the economic development in the terms of domination and subordination. Staple thesis later had influenced the dependency theory.

scope of social change. Communication networks link people globally as never before. But at the same time, monopolies of knowledge in private hands prevent a continuous flow of information across national boundaries, within countries and among communities. So such interplay between markets, peoples, states and the global trading system is creating a new global order. The state and the government themselves are liberalising the monopolies of knowledge. They are doing so for the purpose of business. The flow of knowledge has been a matter of profit. In the course of time, whoever had the monopoly over knowledge, guided the effects accordingly. But today matter is different. Nobody seems able to create the monopoly over knowledge. Therefore, Innis's notions like time and space-bias, monopolies of knowledge, cultural instability and the nature of state and several others need a rethinking in the changing scenario. His ideas seem uneasy to use. But Innis's writings are still relevant for our time, for example:

1. Freedom of the press has been an essential ingredient of the communications media. It works to obscure the monopolistic characteristics.
2. The conditions of freedom of thought are in danger of being destroyed by science, technology, and the mechanisation of knowledge. Innis always proposed the discourse process. He believed in the oral tradition of Greek and criticised the mechanisation of knowledge.
3. Innis was aware by the introduction of the penny presses. The emergence of advertising media has caused the death of free thinking and writing. The journalism, has been now commercialised, rather it should be dutiful. Innis was critical towards this development. The business of sale and purchase are in practice through the media rather than the news.

Apart from the staple theory, his view on the communication introduces the administration of borders and exchange, which maintains the circulation of culture. He was aware of a shift from an industrial to a post-industrial order, from the dominance of print to the broadcast. He has shown the monopolies of knowledge in all the dominant era. In the context of decolonisation, Innis found new dimensions of colonisation, new regimes of thought and new forms of empire. Today in a new

alignment, when nations are promoting the world economies, intense accumulation and global capitalism as the path to development and peace; the need is to recall Innis again, his analysis and skepticism.

Innis was much aware with the mechanisation of knowledge; unlike McLuhan he did not see communication media as a sensory bias. Watson adds that Innis believed very different media could produce similar effects.

For Innis, the yellow press of the United States and the Nazi loudspeaker had the same form of negative effect: they reduced men from thinking beings to mere automatons in a chain of command (Watson 1977: 48).

Watson argues that while McLuhan separated media according to their sensory bias, Innis examined a different set of interrelationships, the dialectic of power and knowledge in specific historical circumstances (Watson 1977). Both Innis and McLuhan shared a similar dilemma over the book culture. According to them book culture tended to produce fixed points of view and it enhances the homogeneity of thought. It was interesting to see that both scholars had produced a mass amount of the books. But Innis's method was different, since he relied on the natural form of conversation and dialogue rather than of written discourse. He admired the oral tradition of Greece since its freshness. This kind of tradition always develops the insights rather than the classified knowledge, which was overvalued by print-trained scholars. McLuhan, on this added: "How exciting it was to encounter a writer whose every phrase invited prolonged meditation and exploration" (McLuhan 1953: 389).

The audio-visual media in the contemporary era are leading the return to a new orality. Today making a call is easier rather than the writing letters. The vast existence of such media is making the book form of communication obsolete. So the printing media is facing a new crisis, which was essential to the intellectual progress. In terms of human physiology the ear seems once again to be beating the eye. So the Innis's admiration of oral tradition is getting importance. But at the same time another admiration for the print culture, in some extent, which was essential for

intellectual progress, is getting the blow on its existence. The ear is dominating the eye in the contemporary age.

History progresses through stages, until it arrives at the present. Innis had showed the several eras all through the historical stages, from Empire, dominated by the monuments' communications, passing through the oral communications, to the state system, dominated by the print communication. Different era had different cultures, accordingly. The new history can be marked as a dehistorisation. Changes that began with the two world wars and the expansion of world trade have brought the current experience. Now, new peoples and nations are being introduced as autonomous actors. The strengthening of the nation states are very different from the early history of the Empire systems even very recently nation state system itself is facing a profound crisis. Because of globalization and growing regionalism, nation state system itself is facing a profound crisis. In this scenario, Innis's historiography needs not to be well suited.

During Innis's lifetime, the concepts of empire popularised in Canada were of the constitutional historians. They only had the concerns with the British Empire, which was the existing form of government there. Innis tried to change this tradition, by introducing a new concept, which made a new way to look at the history. His ideas such as monopolies of knowledge, time and space etc. have examined the Empires all through the history.

Innis's earlier study, staple thesis and the later relied on the dialectics give a sense that he was influenced with the Marxism. Both Innis and Marx had similarities when they assumed that the fundamental and determining factor in all societies was the mode of economic production. All the important changes in the culture could be explained in terms of changes in the economic substructures. This could be said truthful in the Canadian economic arrangement, in some extent. Earlier Innis might be influenced by those ideas, but it was his nationalistic views. He differs with the Marx that the ultimate solution of this structure remains in the revolutionary attempts; rather

he was a liberal thinker. In the terms of dialectics, which he used for the communications purpose, he doesn't seem influenced by the Marx's ideas. Even Marx himself had granted this notion from Hegel.

Today communication technologies are no more stable. The shrinking world of instant communications technology and specialised forms of knowledge provides Innis's later work so much relevance. The globalisation of money markets (seems relevant for staple thesis and communication as well) and information flows provide a significant and lasting framework for updating the Innis's legacy. The current restructuring of society has accelerated the information flows between peoples, governments and states. Worldwide movements of print and electronic information accelerate the intensity and scope of social change. The information revolutions are determining the social behaviour.

Innis was aware of the potential of technologies. He always emphasised to everyone that they need to be conscious of the contradictory potentials of the technologies. That is why getting access to knowledge and information has become a vast arena of struggle between businesses, communities and nations, globally and within also. It is the technology, which' spreads consciousness among the peoples and marks their cultural advancements. But at a certain time, when it reaches to a highest point, causes a monopoly of knowledge. A mechanised knowledge thus emerges, which prohibits the free thinking and behaviour. In other words, the natural growth of society gets stoppage and only technology becomes a guiding factor of the society.

Innis spent much of his life as a public figure inside and outside the university. He defined himself as an intellectual activist rather than as a political activist. He was fond of the democratic ideas. His intellectual works show that he was trying to promote a democratic society rather than advancing the special interests of a particular class and region also.

## References:

### **Books**

Acland, Charles R. and Buxton, William J. (eds.) (1999) *Harold Innis in the New Century*, Montreal: McGill Queen's University Press.

Albright, W.F. (1940), *From the Stone Age to Christianity: Monotheism and the Historical Process*, Baltimore.

Anderson, Benedict (1991), *Imagined Communities*, London: Verso.

Audley, Paul (1983), *Canada's Cultural Industries*, Toronto: James Lorimer.

Berland, Jody (1992), "Angles Dancing: Cultural Technologies and the Production of Space", in Lawrence Grossberg, Cary Nelson and Paula Treichter (eds.) *Cultural Studies*, New York: Routledge.

Brooks, Stephan and Gagnon, Alain G. (1994), *The political Influence of Ideas*, New York: Praeger.

Carey, James W. (1975), "Canadian Communication Theory: Extensions and Interpretations of Harold Innis", in G. J. Robinson and D. Theall (eds.) *Studies in Canadian Communications*, Montreal: McGill University.

Carey, James W. (1981), "Culture, Geography and Communications: The Work of Harold Innis in an American Context", in Melody, Salter and Heyer (eds.), Norwood N. J.: Ablex Publishing Corporation.

Carey, James W. (1989), *Communication as Culture: Essays on Media and Society*, Boston: Unwin Hyman

Castells, Manuel (1996), *The Rise of the Network Society*, Chichester West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell.

Christian Fuchs (2008), *Internet and Society: Social Theory in the Information Age*, New York: Routledge.

Christian, William (ed.) (1980), *The Idea File of Harold Adams Innis*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Clark, K. (1969), *Civilization: A Personal View*, London: BBC Books.

Creighton, Donald G. (1957), *Harold Adams Innis: Portrait of a Scholar*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

- Crowley, David (1981), "Harold Innis and the Modern Perspective of Communications", in Melody, Salter and Heyer (eds.), *Culture, Communication and Dependency: the Tradition Of H. A. Innis*, Norwood N. J.: Ablex Publishing Corporation.
- Drache, Daniel (ed.) (1995), *Harold A. Innis: Staples, Markets and Cultural Change*, Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.
- Drummond, Ian M. (1987), "Innis, Harold Adams (1894-1952)", in John Eatwell, Murray Milgate and Peter Newman (eds.) *The New Palgrave: A dictionary of Economics*, vol. (2): 857-80, London: MacMilan.
- Eamon, Ross A. (1987), *The Media Society: Basic Issues and Controversies*, Toronto: Butterworths.
- Febyre, Lucian and Martin, Henri (2006), *The Coming of the Book: The Impact Of Printing 1450-1800*, Calcutta: Seagull.
- Frank, Webster (2006), *Theories of the Information Society*, 3rd edition. London: Routledge
- Friedman, Matthew (1997), *Fuzzy Logic: Dispatches from the Information Revolution*, Montréal: Vehicule Press.
- Fritz, Machlup (1980), *Knowledge, its Creation, Distribution and Economic Significance*, Princeton N. J.: Princeton University Press.
- Godfrey, D. (ed.) (1986), *Empire and Communications: Harold A. Innis*, New Edition, Toronto: Porcepic.
- Goody, Jack (1986), *The Logic of Writing and the Organisation of Society*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Grant, George (1965), *Lament for a Nation: The Defeat of Canadian Nationalism*, Toronto: McClelland and Stewart.
- Grey, John (1989), *Liberalism: Essays in Political Philosophy*, London: Routledge.
- Havelock, Eric (1982), *Harold A. Innis; A Memoir*, Toronto: Harold Innis Foundation, University of Toronto.
- Havelock, Eric (1986), *The Muse Learns to Write: Reflections on the Orality and Literacy from Antiquity to the Present*, New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Heyer, Paul (1981), "Innis and the History of Communication: Antecedents, Parallels and Unsuspected Biases", in Melody, Salter and Heyer (eds.), *Culture, Communication and Dependency: The Tradition of H. A. Innis*, Norwood N. J.: Ablex Publishing Corporation.

## References

Heyer, Paul and David Crowley (eds.) (1991), *The Bias of Communication*, New Edition, Toronto: Toronto University Press.

Hissey, Lynne (1988), *Introduction to Communication Theory*, Burnaby, B.C.: Simon Fraser University.

Gurevitch, M., Bennett, T., Curran, J. and Woollacott (eds.) (1977), *Mass Communication and Society*, London: Edward Arnold.

\*Innis, Harold A. (1950), *Empire and Communications*, Oxford: Clarendon Press

\*Innis, Harold A. (1951), *The Bias of Communication*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press

\*Innis, Harold A. (1952), *Changing Concepts of time*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press

\*Innis, Harold Adams. (1964), *The Bias of Communication*, 1951. Intro. Marshall McLuhan, Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Keane, John (ed.) (1988), *Civil Society and the State: New European Perspectives*, London: Routledge.

Kern, S. (1983), *The Culture of Time and Space, 1880-1918*, Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.

Kroker, Arthur (1984), *Technology and the Canadian Minds: Innis/McLuhan/Grant*, Montreal: New World Perspectives.

LeBaron, Michelle (2003) *Bridging Cultural Conflicts: A New Approach for a Changing World*, San Francisco: Jossey Bass.

Leebaert, Derek (ed.) (1991), *Technology 2001: The Future of Computing and Communications*, Cambridge: MIT Press.

Leiss, William (1989), "The Myth of the Information Society", in Ian Angus and Sut Jhally (eds.) *Cultural Politics in contemporary America*, New York; Routledge.

Lewis, Wyndham (1957), *Time and Western Man*, Boston: Beacon

Littlejohn, S. W. (2002), *Theories of human communication*, Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Lytard, Jean-Francois (1984), *The Postmodern Explained*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Man, John (ed.) (2002), "The Gutenberg Revolution", *The Weekend Australian*.

## References

- McLuhan, Marshall (1964) "Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man", New York: McGraw- Hill.
- McLuhan, Marshall and Powers, Bruce R. (1999), *The Global Village: Transformation in World Life and Media in the Twenty First Century*, Oxford University Press.
- McPhail, Thomas L. (1987), *Electronic Colonialism: The Future of International Broadcasting and Communication*, Newbury Park: sage Publications.
- Melody, William H., Salter, Liora, and Heyer, Paul (eds.) (1981), *Culture, Geography and Communications: The Work of Harold Innis in an American Context*, Norwood N. J.: Ablex Publishing Corporation
- Melody, William H., Salter, Liora and Heyer, Paul (eds.) (1981), *Culture, Communication and Dependency: The Tradition of H. A. Innis*, Norwood N. J.: Ablex Publishing Corporation.
- Merton, R. (1945), "The Sociology of Knowledge", in G. Gurvitch and W. Moore (eds.) *Twentieth Century Sociology*, New York: Philosophical Library.
- Meyrowitz, Joshua (1985), *No Sense of Place: The impact of Electronic Media on social Behaviour*, New York: Oxford University press.
- Miller, K. (2005), *Communication Theories: Perspectives, processes, and contexts*, New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Mosco, Vincent (1989), *The Pay-Per Society: Computers and Communications in the information Age*, Toronto: Garamond Press.
- Neill, Robin. (1967), *The Work of Harold Adams Innis: Content and Context*, Ann Arbor, Mich: Duke University Press.
- Novinger, Tracy (2001), *Intercultural Communication*, Austin T.X.: University of Texas Press.
- Patterson, Graeme (1990), *History and Communications: Harold Innis, Marshall McLuhan, the Interpretation of History*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Paz, Octavio (1985), *One Earth, Four or Five Worlds*, New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- Poster, Mark (1990), *The Mode of Information: Postculturalism and Social Context*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

## References

- Radovan, Richta (1977), "The Scientific and Technological Revolution and the Prospects of Social Development", in Ralf Dahrendorf (ed.) *Scientific-Technological Revolution: Social Aspects*, London: Sage, 25–72.
- Robinson, G.J. and D. Theall (eds.) (1975), *Studies in Canadian Communications*, Montreal: McGill University Press.
- Rosenthal, R. (ed.) (1968), *McLuhan Pro and Con*, Baltimore: Penguin
- Rotstein, A. (1988) "The Use and Misuse of Economics in Cultural Policy", in R. Lorimer and D. Wilson (eds.) *Communication Canada: Issues in Broadcasting and New Technologies*, Toronto: Kagan and Woo.
- Said, Edward (1993), *Culture and Imperialism*, New York: Vintage Books.
- Salter, Liora (1981), "Public' and Mass Media in Canada: Dialectics in Innis' Communication Analysis", in Melody, Salter and Heyer (eds.) *Culture, Communication Dependency: The tradition of H. A. Innis*, Norwood, N. J.: Ablex Publishing corporation.
- Slack, Jenifer Daryl (1984), *Communication Technologies and Society: Conceptions of Casuality and the Politics of Technological Intervention*, Norwood, N. J.: Ablex Publishing Corporation.
- Smith, Anthony (1980), *The Geopolitics of Information: How Western Culture Dominates the world*, London: Faber and Faber.
- Stamps, Judith (1995), *Unthinking Modernity: Innis, McLuhan and the Frankfurt School*, Montreal: McGill-queen's University Press.
- Stehr, Nico (2005), *Knowledge Politics: Governing the Consequences of Science and Technology*, Boulder: Paradigm Publication.
- Stehr, Nico (2002), *Knowledge & Economic Conduct*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Tilly, Charles. (1984), *Big Structures, Large processes, Huge Comparisons*, New York: Russell Sage.
- Vipond, Mary (1989), *The Mass Media in Canada*, Toronto: James Lorimer and Company Publishers.
- Virilio, Paul (1977), *Speed and Politics*, New York: Semiotext.

Webster, A. (ed.) (1974), *The Intellectual revolution of the Seventeenth century*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Werner, E. (1989) "Cooperating Agents: A Unified Theory of Communication and Social Structure", in L. Gasser and M.Huhns (eds.) *Distributed Artificial Intelligence*, (2), Morgan Kaufmann and Pitman Press.

Westfall, William (1981), "The Ambivalent Verdict: Harold Innis and Canadian History", in Melody, Salter and Heyer (eds.) *Culture, Communication and Dependency: The Tradition of H. A. Innis*, Norwood N. J.: Ablex Publishing Corporation.

Whitley, R. (1985), "knowledge Producers and Knowledge acquirers", in Terry Shin and Richard Whitley (eds.) *Expository Science: Forms and functions of Popularisation, Sociology of Sciences Yearbook*, 9, Dordecht: Reidel Press.

Wilson, Kevin (1988), *Technologies of Control: The New Interactive Media for the Home*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

Williams, Raymond (1972), "The Exciting Alternatives in Communications", in K. J. McGarry (ed.) *Mass Communications*, London: Bingley.

Youtang, Lin (1936), *A History of the Press and Public Opinion in China*, Chicago.

Zerker, S. (1983), "Innis", in William Toye (ed.) *The Oxford Companion to Canadian Literature*, Toronto: Oxford University Press.

### Articles

Angus, Ian (1993), "Orality in the Twilight of Humanism: A Critique of the Communication Theory of Harold Innis", *Continuum*, 7 (1): 16-42.

Angus, Ian, and Shoesmith, Brian (1993), "Dependency/Space/Policy: An Introduction to a Dialogue with Harold Innis", *Continuum*, 7 (1): 5-15.

Barnes, T.J. (1993), "Focus: A Geographical Appreciation of Harold A. Innis." *Canadian Geographer*, (37): 352-364.

Beale, Alison (1993), "Harold Innis and Canadian Cultural Policy in the 1940s", *Continuum*, 7 (1): 75-90

Bonenfant, J.C. (1953), "Review of H.A.Innis's Changing Concepts of Time", *Culture*, (14): 208-10.

Brebner, J.B. (1953), "Review of Changing Concepts of Time", *Canadian Historical Review*, (34): 171-73.

Buxton, William J. (1997), "Time, Space and the Place of Universities in Western Civilization: Harold Innis's Plea", *International Journal of Canadian Studies*, 15 (Spring): 37-48.

Buxton, William J. (1998), "Harold Innis's Excavation of Modernity: The Newspaper Industry, Communications and the decline of Public Life", *Canadian Journal of Communications*, 12 (2): 321-39.

Campbell, Sandra (1995), "From Romantic History to Communications theory: Lorne Pierce as Publisher of C.W.Jefferys and Harold Innis", *Journal of Canadian Studies*, 30 (3) (Fall): 91-116.

Carey, James W. (1967), "Harold Adams Innis and Marshall McLuhan", *Antioch Review* (Spring): 5-39.

Castells, Manuel (2000), "Materials for an Explanatory theory of the Network Society", *British Journal of sociology*, 51 (1) (Jan.-Mar.): 5-24.

Christian, William (1977), "Harold Innis as Political Theorist", *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 10 (1) (March): 21-42

Collins, Richard (1986), "The Metaphor of Dependency and Canadian Communication: The Legacy of Harold Innis", *Canadian Journal of communication*, 12 (1): 1-18

Comor, Edward (1994), "Harold Innis's Dialectical Triad", *Journal of Canadian studies*, 29 (2) (Summer): 111-27.

Comor, Edward (2001), "The role of Communication in Global civil Society: Forces, processes, Prospects", *International Studies Quarterly*, 45 (3) (Sep.): 389-408.

Cox, Robert W. (1995), "Civilisations: Encounters and Transformations", *Studies in Political Economy*, 47 (Summer): 7-31.

Deibert, Ronald J. (1999), "Harold Innis and the Empire of Speed", *Review of International Studies*, 25 (2) (Apr.): 273-289.

Drache, Daniel (1969), "Harold Innis: A Canadian Nationalist", *Journal of Canadian Studies*, 4 (2): 7-12.

Dudley, Leonard M. (1995), "Space, Time, Number: Harold A. Innis as Evolutionary Theorist", *Canadian Journal of Economics*, 28 (4a) (Nov): 754-69.

Easterbrook, W.T. (1960), "Problems in the Relationship of Communication and Economic History", *Journal of Economic History*, 20 (4) (Dec.): 559-65.

- Easterbrook, W. T. (1953), "Innis and Economics", *Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science*, 2 (3) (Aug): 291-303.
- Fulford, Robert (1985), "Communications", *Canadian Encyclopedia*, (1): 382-98.
- Grossberg, Lawrence (1993), "Cultural Studies and New World", *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, (10): 1-22.
- Innis, Donald (1953), "Comment on H. Innis", *American Economic Review*, 43 (1) (March): 22-50.
- Innis, Harold A. (1942), "The Newspaper in Economic Development", *Journal of Economic History*, (2) (Dec.): 1-33.
- Innis, Harold A. (1944), "On the Economic Significance of Culture", *Journal of Economic History*, (4): 80-97.
- Jhally, Sut (1993), "Communications and the Materialist Conception of History", *Continuum*, 7 (1): 161-82.
- Johnson, Richard (1986), "What is Cultural Studies Anyway?", *Social Text*, 16 (6): 38-80.
- Kumar, Krishna (1993), "Market Economy and Mass Literacy: Revisiting Innis's Economics of communication", *Economic and Political Weekly*, 28 (50) (Dec.): 2727-2734.
- Lang, Kurt (1989), "Mass Communication and Our Relation to the Present and Past", *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society*, 2 (3) (Spring): 404-413.
- Lerner, Daniel (1973), "Notes on Communication and the Nation State", *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, 37 (4) (Winter): 541-550.
- Marshall, McLuhan (1960), "Effects of the Improvements of Communication Media", *Journal of Economic History*, 20 (4) (Dec.): 566-75.
- Maseey, Doreen (1992), "The Politics of Space/Time", *New Left Review*, (196): 65-84.
- McLuhan, Marshall (1953), "The Later Innis", *Queen's Quarterly*, (60): 385-94.
- McMaster, Gerald (1993), "Creating Spaces", *Harbour Magazine*, 3. (1) (Winter): 8-19
- Melody, William H. (1985), "The Information Society: Implications for Economic Institutions and Market Theory", *Journal of Economic Issues*, 19 (2) (Jun.): 523-539.

## References

- Munton, Don (1983), "Public Opinion and the Media in Canada from Cold War to Détente to New Cold War", *International Journal*, 39 (1) (Winter): 171-213.
- Neill, Robin. (1987) "Rationality and the Information Environment: A Reassessment of the Work of Harold Adams Innis", *Journal of Canadian Studies*, (22): 78-92.
- Neuman, Russel W. (1996), "Political communications Infrastructure", *Annals of the American academy of Political and Social Science*, 546 (Jul.): 9-21.
- Norcia, Vincent di (1996) "Communication, Time and Power: In Innisian View", *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 23 (2): 335-357.
- Onufrijchuk, Roman (1993), "Introducing Innis/McLuhan Concluding", *Continuum*, 7. (1): 43-74.
- Palmer, John R. (1971), "theories of Social Change and the Mass Media", *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, 5 (4) (Oct.): 127-149.
- Pal, Leslie (1977), "Scholarship and the Later Innis", *Journal of Canadian Studies*, 12 (5) (Winter): 32-44.
- Parker, Ian (1977), "Harold innis, Karl Marx and Canadian Political Economy", *Queen's Quarterly*, 84 (4) (Winter): 545-63.
- Radner, Sanford (1959), "The Communication Concepts of Harold Innis", *College Composition and Communication*, 10 (2): 77-80
- Raley, Rita (2004), "eEmpires", *Cultural critique*, 57 (Spring): 111-150.
- Scheuerman, William E. (2001), "Liberal Democracy and the Empire of Speed", *Polity*, 34 (1) (Autumn): 41-67.
- Shoesmith, Brian (1993), "Introduction to Innis and History of Communication", *Continuum*, 7 (1): 121-31.
- Stark, F. M. (1994), "Harold Innis and the Chicago School", *Journal of Canadian studies*, 29 (3): 131-45.
- Watson, John A. (1977), "Harold Innis and Classical Scholarship", *Journal of Canadian Studies*, 12. (5): 45-61.

## References

Wernick, Andrew (1986), "The Post-Innisian Significance of Innis", *Canadian Journal of Political and Social Theory*, 10 (2): 128-50.

Whitaker, Reginald (1983), "To Have Insight into Much and Power over Nothing: The Political Ideas of Harold Innis", *Queen's Quarterly*, 90. (3): 818-31.

Williams, Raymond (1973), "Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory", *New Left Review*, (82): 3-16.

Young, Walter D. (1981), "The Voices of Democracy: Politics and Communication in Canada", *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 14 (4) (Dec.): 683-700.

\*\*\*\*\*