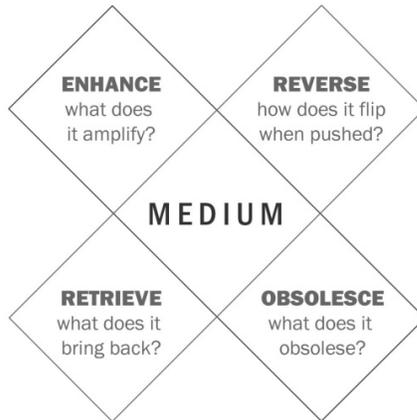


Marshall McLuhan (b. Winnipeg 1911, d. Toronto 1980)

Key Terms:

FOUR LAWS OF MEDIA



Tetrad of Media Effects
McLuhan (1988)

Example: The automobile enhances our mobility, makes the horse and buggy obsolete, retrieves the knight in armor and reverses into the traffic jam.

The Myth of Narcissus: The Gadget-Lover

The Greek myth of Narcissus comes from the term Narcosis or numbness. Narcissus mistook his own reflection in the water for another person. This extension of himself by mirror numbed his perceptions so he didn't recognize himself. The nymph Echo tried to win his love with fragments of his own speech, but in vain. He was numb. He had adapted to the extensions of himself and had become a closed system.

We are also fascinated with extensions or reflections of ourselves in any material other than ourselves (mirror, photos, facebook).

Media is an Extension of Humanity

We extend our bodies through our media.

We need to numb our central nervous system when it is extended and exposed, or we will die.

This makes us unconscious of our actions and apathetic about the world that doesn't affect us.

The media that surrounds us is invisible to us. We have to pay attention to see it.

The Medium is the Message

The content of any medium is always another medium. The Medium shapes and controls the scale and form of our action and meaning. Content or uses of media are diverse and distracts us from the effects of the medium.

" We can know the nature and characteristics of anything we conceive or create (medium) by virtue of the changes - often unnoticed and non-obvious changes - that they effect (message.) McLuhan warns us that we are often distracted by the content of a medium (which, in almost all cases, is another distinct medium in itself.)

He writes, "it is only too typical that the "content" of any medium blinds us to the character of the medium." (McLuhan 9) And it is the character of the medium that is its potency or effect - its message. In other words, "This is merely to say that the personal and social consequences of any medium - that is, of any extension of ourselves - result from the new scale that is introduced into our affairs by each extension of ourselves, or by any new technology."

The Global Village

In the introduction to McLuhan's *Understanding Media* he writes: 'Today, after more than a century of electric technology, we have extended our central nervous system in a global embrace, abolishing both space and time as far as our planet is concerned' (1964: p.3).

The book is no longer "king," says Marshall McLuhan, a professor at the University of Toronto's St. Michael's College. McLuhan studies the effects of mass media on behaviour and thought. Electronic media has transformed the world into an interconnected tribe he calls a "global village."

There's an earthquake and no matter where we live, we all get the message. And today's teenager, the future villager, who feels especially at home with our new gadgets -- the telephone, the television -- will bring our tribe even closer together.

Electronic media brings back the village where everyone knew everyone else and news travels fast. You no longer have to be anywhere to do anything.