An elaboration of Harold A. Innis: The example of the Iroquois Indians (Canada, oral tradition).

Lisa Morgan-Hovsepian

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AN ELABORATION OF HAROLD A. INNIS:
THE EXAMPLE OF THE IROQUOIS INDIANS

by

Lisa Morgan-Hovsepian

A Thesis
submitted to the
Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
through the Department of
Communication Studies in Partial Fulfillment
of the requirements for the Degree
of Master of Arts at the
University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario, Canada
1990
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ABSTRACT

It was in 1744 that Vico, in his book *New Science*, first outlined the differences between the oral and written traditions and put his favour with the former. Since then, thinkers around the world have contemplated these two traditions in an effort to better understand the circumstances that surround contemporary, as well as ancient, life. In Canada this area of study has most effectively been pursued by scholar Harold Adams Innis who, during the course of his lifetime, contributed the notions of time, space, and balance to our understanding of empire and social organization and the influence of the primary means of communication on its development.

The most important, as well as most often overlooked contribution made by Innis, however, was not any of these singular classifications, but rather was the related dialectic of power and knowledge he so passionately described. For Innis, the development and survival of empire depended not only upon balancing time and space concerns, as influenced by the primary means of communication in any given society. More importantly, empire depends upon and is greatly influenced by the person or group of people who control the means of communication and thus the knowledge-base of that society. In the final analysis, Innis decided that power and knowledge are more widely distributed in oral cultures, since these societies encourage more direct participation in daily life and social structure, than the vicarious experience encouraged in print-based societies.
Innis found the culture of Ancient Greece to be that which most exemplified the life-giving characteristics of oral culture. However, he need not have travelled so far in space and time to find that exceptional example of the democracy and humanity fostered by a culture primarily based in orality, as the Native Indians of North America could attest. This thesis is an historical study of the Iroquois of North America, including their customs, lifestyle, and world-view before the arrival of the Europeans, and a critical study regarding the ways in which Iroquoian (and thus North American) life changed after the spread of European culture, here represented by Christianity, capitalism, and literacy.
To My Son Andrew -

Always Believe
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

During the course of a lifetime, there is often the temptation to take personal credit for the goals you have achieved. I would like, at this time, to make a deliberate attempt at avoiding this form of conceit. Naturally, there are a number of people without whom the completion of this thesis would have been questionable, including baby-sitters, friends, relatives, and, of course, departmental secretaries. Still, there are some people who deserve special mention and heartfelt thanks.

One of the first people I must thank is Dr. Jim Winter, the Head of my Thesis Committee. His constant help and friendship have pulled me through the inevitable peaks and valleys of graduate work and life in general. I hope he may someday realize the extent to which his zest for life and learning has fueled my own desire to grow.

Second, I would like to acknowledge the considerable contribution of Dr. Irv Goldman. Knowing that Dr. Goldman has always believed in my dedication and ability gave me the courage and confidence to strive for something I have long wanted; this act of giving must not be underestimated.

I would be sorely remiss if I did not take this opportunity to thank Dr. Bernie Harder, who agreed to join my Thesis Committee on very short notice. Dr. Harder added an insight and passion to this work that may not have otherwise been present.
Despite the unique and irreplaceable role played by each of these gentlemen, I must give my greatest vote of thanks to my family. My mother and father instinctually provided me with the stability and unconditional love and support necessary for not only the completion of this thesis, but for life itself. It is a debt I can never repay but through the pride and respect I continue to develop for myself and others.

To my sister Noelle and her husband Anthony I must extend a special thanks. These two wonderful friends have shown me how exciting and warm life can be; without ever asking anything in return. They know how important they are to me.

To my brother Dave and his wife Cheryl I would like to say "thank you" for their steadfast belief in me and their constant strength and presence in times of happiness and pain. Knowing that I could always rely on them made it easier to get through the events of these last few years.

Most importantly, I would like to thank my son Andrew. We have gone through many joys and sorrows together and I thank him for letting me see life through the innocent, sensitive, and wonder-struck eyes of a child.

The memories of my undergraduate and graduate years in the department of Communication Studies at the University of Windsor will always be a source of happiness and inspiration. I thank all of you for believing in me and helping to make this dream a reality.
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INTRODUCTION

Though many have studied the means and implications of the transfer of information, one of the most important Canadian communication scholars who worked in this area was Harold Adams Innis. During his lifetime, he made many significant, though often overlooked, contributions to the study of communication and human social organization. Of prime interest have been the notions he developed regarding time, space, balance, and monopolies of knowledge.

Innis placed much emphasis on the importance of maintaining balance between space and time for the survival of empires. He believed that the successful empire would be the one that could blend and balance the space (military, political, literate) and the time (dynastic, biological, religious, oral) aspects of civilization.

However, this does not represent the central contribution of Innis’ work. Related to space, time, and the primary mode of communication in use in a given society at a given time is the foundation made by the dialectic of power and knowledge in that society. In an oral-based society, according to Innis, since the majority of people have equal access to the means of communication, the power and knowledge\(^1\) are more equally distributed than is the case in literate and especially print-based cultures. As print becomes more widespread, the means of communication become increasingly exclusive, putting control into the hands of the few while increasing their sphere of knowledge, power, and influence; hence

\(^1\)The importance of the consideration of knowledge in this thesis is not to indicate that the quantity of knowledge was or is greater in literate versus oral culture, or vice versa. Instead, what is meant is to indicate a difference in the nature of knowledge in oral as compared to literate culture.
monopolies of knowledge develop. In large part, this is manifest in the pervasiveness and concentrated ownership patterns of the modern mass media. whose role it is to "inform" us of that which those in control believe we need or want to know, and do our knowing for us.

Having access to such great amounts of information, we ought to be an educated public, capable of making and executing rational and effective decisions and actions. Today, however, it is often indicated that it is because the general public is so saturated with information that we can barely exercise power, form sensible opinion, or impose pressure on the political environment; all crucial elements to the successful operation of democracy. Too much information not of our own choosing breeds apathy and an inability to develop any strong or lasting commitment to any one cause. Without our ability to tune-out some amount of information, we would be rendered catatonic.

This phenomenon in part owes its origins to the nature and effect of writing, which is inherently shallow in its insights and cannot reach the essential principles of truth which can only be achieved dialectically (Carey, 1981). For Innis the breakdown in oral discourse and culture held grave consequences for democracy, especially since an oral society is made up of an autonomous public not as subject to easy control by state or commercial monopolization. According to Carey, the
consequences of this breakdown for democracy were realized in that literacy produce[d] instability and inconsistency because the written tradition [was and] is participated in so unevenly....Rational agreement and democratic coherence become problematic when so little background is shared in common....Literate culture is much more easily avoided than an oral one and even when it is not avoided its actual effects may be relatively shallow. Lacking an oral culture, one may easily fall prey to experts in knowledge who do our knowing for us, who inform us but whose knowledge does not easily connect to our actual experience and to the basic transactions of life. (Carey, 1981:87)

Through an attempt to understand these phenomena and how they relate to the structures and principles governing a particular society at a given time, we can add to the present store of knowledge regarding the course of North American "progress" and the implications of the same. A key aspect of this research is the consideration of the transition from an oral to a written culture - its characteristics, explanations, implications, and players - against the backdrop of world-view and balance.

Innis was no stranger to this type of endeavour and, in fact, has inspired many after him to continue the effort. For him, the most important area of study in this regard was the oral tradition of Ancient Greece, which was able to withstand the initial advance of writing and continue to reflect the power of the spoken word, an achievement that, for Innis, set it apart as exemplary of oral culture.

With the decline of the oral tradition Innis' concern for humanity grew. In the advance of writing and print, he saw a falling away from the more democratic, spiritual, and humanistic traditions of oral life, and a movement toward a mechanization of spirit and a greater propensity toward the monopolization of knowledge (Godfrey, 1986). While Riesman (1960), interpreted Innis' concern as
being focused on the belief that the materials on which words were written often
counted for more than the words themselves, a broader reading of Innis suggests
that his real concern centred around the fact that words had been written down in
the first place. For these reasons, among others to be considered, Innis was much
more impressed with the nature and implications of oral culture on human being
and interaction than those of literate culture, especially after his hopes for the
newspaper industry and higher education were not realized.

Obviously, this cursory elaboration of Innis’ thought regarding oral culture is
in no way meant to encompass all he believed to be valuable and noteworthy in the
oral tradition. It does, however, make evident the example missing in Innis’ work as
a Canadian, namely that of North American Native Indian culture. Consequently, the
subject area was left to be investigated, though subsequent writers on the subject
have not formed any sort of coherent and complete picture of the aspects of Native
oral culture and the changes that have taken place within it because of imposed
technologies, religions, and economic and political systems. There is, therefore, the
need to extend Innis’ writings in this direction. Elaborating on the writings of Innis
provides a strong and Canadian-based sounding board for such efforts that will
attempt to reconcile Innis’ ideas with the Native oral traditions.

Naturally, it must first be recognized and admitted that Native Indian culture
was very different from that introduced by the European Christian missionaries,
traders, educators, and political and legal agents who came to North America. One
forceful element that gave these groups their combined ability to overcome
traditional customs was the introduction of writing which, when paired with

4
capitalist-driven trade patterns, forever altered the physical and psychological landscape of North America.

It was in the early part of the 16th century that the Recollet and Jesuit missionaries were added to other aspects of the European economic mission to the New World. The Black Robed and bearded strangers whom the Natives discovered floundering in their rivers, had an apparently straightforward mission: the substitution of Christianity for "paganism." A primary means of bringing this about was the introduction of literacy. But the missionaries' task proved more difficult than the complementary goals of the coureurs de bois, who had the Natives travelling ever further afield in search of beaver pelts.

For the Natives, oral communication and spiritualism were entwined, indeed inseparable. Notably, the term "spiritualism" itself was adopted in post-contact times in an effort to describe the Native belief systems. Indeed, the Natives did not have words to express many aspects of their world-view, a phenomenon that led many Europeans to the false conclusion that these aspects did not exist in Native life. Nevertheless "spiritualism" has been accepted as the term which most approximates Native life and thus continues to be used in this regard by Natives and non-Natives alike. Because of the interrelationship between oral communication and this spiritualism, substituting the literal for the oral was comparable to, and indeed part and parcel of, substituting Christianity for Spiritualism. The Recollets and Jesuits failed to realize that rather than being welcomed by "uncivilized savages," who were "Godless pagans," they were facing an advanced civilization, one with a differing world-view, and with orality and spiritualism as its base.
(Parenthetically, almost four centuries later this point is also lost on provincial and federal governments and their mercenaries at Oka, Quebec, who can only think of golf courses, property rights, and "terrorists.")

For all of his positive traits and legacy, someone else who suffered from this form of myopia was Harold Innis. Perhaps Innis was explaining his own deficiency in failing to elaborate the Native example when he noted that it is impossible to understand one culture from the perspective of another. Certainly Innis was better at explaining the written, which surrounded him, than he was the oral to which he aspired. A major part of the problem, of course, is that explaining oral culture means understanding a philosophy and world-view which are quite foreign, though indigenous. Given the strong Christian background of Innis, born and raised as a devout Baptist, this might be expected to further inhibit his understanding of Native culture, continuing the long tradition begun by the Recollet Missionaries.

In this thesis, we will elaborate the Iroquoian tradition and use it to enlighten the communications theories of Innis, who noted that the dominance of the book paralleled the growth of monotheism, in particular, Christianity, and the rise in the use of paper was closely followed by a shift to materialism (Christian, 1980). The interdependence of these historical developments cannot be dismissed as coincidence. The example of the Iroquois Indians will be used to support this theory by illustrating how, in time, and with the introduction of literacy, capitalism, and Christianity, Native spiritualism was overcome by modern materialism. This phenomenon continues into the 1990's, writes Valpy (1990), in the way the one-time Liberal Premier of Ontario, David Peterson, continued to identify "growth" and
"progress" as his priorities, rather than working to re-establish harmony with the planet, each other, and ourselves. This New World has become one in which everything has a monetary price and exists for use in the production, distribution, or consumption of goods.

These circumstances indicate the gradual disappearance of oral and spiritual time-biased monopolies; a disappearance, wrote Innis (1951:88), which "facilitated the rapid extension of new religions evident in fascism, communism, and our way of life." In North America, fascism and communism did not become the new religion - largely because of their perceived consequences for individual recognition and material accumulation - as much as did a materialistic way of life. The prevailing world-view, or religion, can be characterized as consumerism.

This research will trace these key aspects of North American cultural development and show that since all of Native experience can be effectively understood by what may be termed "spiritualism," the missionaries could not have hoped to simply change some aspects of Native oral life - namely the economic and religious organization and primary means of communication - without altering their entire belief system and thought processes.

The method used in this thesis is also an elaboration of Innis' contribution. In response to a growing movement toward the inclusion of communications in the realm of the natural sciences and psychology, Innis corrected, completed, and widened the tradition begun by the Chicago School of emphasizing the interdisciplinary nature of social knowledge that includes communication studies as the entire process whereby a culture is brought into existence and maintained. This
methodological revolt against formalism rejected the behaviourist approach that made communications a branch of learning theory or social psychology. In its place, Innis produced a body of historical and theoretical speculation grounded in the analysis of the peculiarities of time and space, history, and geography. According to Carey, "the great challenge of Innis' work is not to attempt to figure out what he really meant. Rather, it is the attempt to apply and extend some of his major ideas by interpreting them within the context of concrete episodes" (Carey, 1981:87-88).

This is just the method used in this study; a tradition of inquiry employed not just by the Chicago School and Innis but, in modern times, by writers like James Carey, who has stressed the importance of historical and cultural approach in the area of communications research. The method of this thesis, then, avoids the fragmentation decried by Innis and others and instead takes an historical-cultural approach to the study of the role and effect of literacy - and other interdependent elements - on the life of the Native Indians.

The goal is not to assign blame for the consequences of imposed systems to one or all of the dominant institutions of our time or times past, but rather to recognize the existence of some individual and collective human complicity in the perpetuation of these phenomena. In so doing, it is sincerely hoped that as individuals we will claim due responsibility for the current North American situation and make some effort toward improvement, at whatever level possible.
CHAPTER ONE: THE LEGACY OF HAROLD ADAMS INNIS

"If he desires that all should look up to him, let him permit himself to be known but not to be understood." (Hallam in Innis, 1986:166)

Without a deeper investigation into the labyrinth of Innisian thought, this statement could be taken to be the legacy characterizing his work. Although his writings have been, to a greater or lesser extent, a part of Canadian education in the social sciences, his contributions typically have neither been altogether understood nor fully appreciated. Perhaps some of the responsibility for this lies with Innis himself, in his unconventional methodology, writing style, and eclectic orientation. However, those who draw upon the work of Innis also have contributed to the erroneous fragmenting of his work into what has become known as the "early" and the "late" Innis. Within this perspective, writes Watson (1977), Innis seems to be operating from two separate frames of reference based upon the two phases of his intellectual activity. This is in reference to the political economy of the "Staples Approach" of the early Innis, and the communication studies of the late Innis. In attempting to read Innis' work and discover the link between what seem to be virtually unrelated areas of interest, one becomes aware of the means by which the confusion, frustration and breaking-up of Innisian works occurred. Nevertheless, there is a basic theme which underlies his study and makes somewhat clearer the true legacy of this passionate Canadian.

Born in 1894 and raised on a farm in Oxford County, Ontario, Innis grew more and more concerned about his country and especially her survival as a separate entity in the face of popular culture sweeping in from the United States during the mid- to late 1940's (Winks in Innis, 1970). His early and obvious
interest in Canadian economic history - as evident in his study of the fur trade in Canada, the Canadian Pacific Railway, the cod industry, and the pulp and paper industry - led him not only to his "Staples Theory," which incorporated the notions of the hinterland and the periphery, but also spawned intense research into the importance of communication.

Throughout this study of Canada's economic history, Innis found himself confronted by two basic and recurring questions: "what are the underlying causes of change in social organization," and "what are the conditions that support stability in any society?" (Carey, 1967:6) According to Carey (1968), Innis believed that a society's stability was based upon its capacity to adapt to political and economic change, while at the same time maintaining the integrity of its culture with respect to attitude, sentiment and morality. These criteria have as their focus the ability of a society to achieve a balance between space- and time-oriented concerns.

While the social history of the Western world is usually explained either in terms of August Comte's understanding of the "progressive transformation of culture from the theological to the metaphysical to the positivistic" or Lewis Mumford's theory of the "transformation in social organization from the tribe to the town to the city," Innis attempted to draw these ideas into a unified whole, while asserting a connection between changes in social organization and culture and changes in communications technology (Carey, 1967:9).

Partly due to this emphasis on communications, early understandings of Innis classified the aspects of space and time purely in terms of media characteristics. That is, space-biased empires, which emphasize expansion and the military, in direct
opposition to time-biased empires, which emphasize history and religion, relied largely on media systems that were easily transported across space but non-durable over time. The nature of the primary means of communication would in turn bias social organization by fostering the growth of particular interests and institutions at the expense of other competing ones. As outlined by Watson in Table 1 below, this allowed the empire to be characterized in terms of its communications technology.

TABLE 1

Characteristics of Empires

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>With Durable Media</th>
<th>With Non-Durable Media</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(stone, clay, parchment)</td>
<td>(papyrus, paper)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heavy Media</td>
<td>Light Media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biased towards time (duration)</td>
<td>Biased toward space (expansion)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral tradition</td>
<td>Written tradition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuity</td>
<td>Discontinuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poetry</td>
<td>News</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious institutional maintenance of government</td>
<td>Secular/military government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>Armed force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritualism</td>
<td>Materialism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communal man</td>
<td>Individualism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ear</td>
<td>The eye</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decentralization</td>
<td>Centralization</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Watson, 1977:55)

Explaining social history in these terms has led some to consider Innis as a technological determinist. However, when one considers Innis' work in its entirety, a
common thread becomes evident in that;

he wrote history as the formation, interaction and dissolution of monopolies of force and knowledge. From this point of view, time- and space-binding relate not so much to media characteristics as they do to a concern with knowledge on the one hand and with immediate power on the other hand. (Watson, 1977:54)

Innis, then, was concerned with the dialectic between knowledge and power and how various aspects of social organization affect and are affected by monopolies of knowledge (Winter and Goldman, 1989). His concern for Canadian economic, political and cultural survival led to his interest in political economy, and it was from these beginnings that Innis was drawn to the study of communication and the survival of empires. It was in this context that Innis reached the conclusion that public discourse is the single most important element in providing the balance necessary to prevent gross monopolies of knowledge, and thus unsuccessful empires with less desirable characteristics.

The Oral and the Written Tradition

By its very nature, public discourse requires that those living within its system emphasize the collective, communal and celebrative aspects of life. This is the essence of the oral tradition, where there are mutually accepted attitudes and values that serve to place morals and metaphysics at the centre of civilization (Carey, 1967). In this society, the primary means of communication is personal dialogue; the norms, values, traditions and heritage of a group are transmitted from generation to generation through, what some have termed "recitation and repetition." However, as Illich and Sanders (1988) have pointed out, neither recitation nor
repetition were possible in prehistoric times as no text existed that could be reproduced. Where recitation and repetition are interpreted as word for word transmissions of epics, they are misused. With each oral transmission of an epic or story the bard, minstrel or storyteller is able to adapt the content to reflect his own absorption in the story as well as the needs of the time. The key is the transmission of heritage, not the exact recollection of data, as became the case after the onset of printing.

The passing on of narrative becomes a social occasion unto itself and symbolizes both continuity in time and social cohesion and meaning in the present. The oral tradition was shared by the entire people and thus served to perpetuate the life of the group itself. Much of this was due to the degree of storytelling involved in oral life, such that it created recognized standards and lasting moral and social organizations, rooted in the feelings, attitudes and linguistic habits of the members of the group (Kenyon, 1954). In fact, in The Bias of Communication, Innis indicates that the oral tradition and religion, at this time, served virtually the same purpose.

This is the symbiotic relationship between language and religion in the oral tradition:

Language [is] the physiological basis of oral tradition and religion [is] the sociological mechanism through which traditions [are] established, directing and enforcing the contribution of individuals in the interest of the community, maintaining group life and creating a lasting organization of society independent of a living leader. (Innis, 1951:105)

In the oral tradition, the good of the group supersedes the desire of the individual. Every member works toward the betterment of the group, as it is through the life of the group that each individual person and event is given meaning and
significance. However, this pattern could not continue in the light of changing technological, political, social and economic systems. The discovery of the alphabet altered the course of human social organization as it created radical upheavals - each to be addressed at the appropriate time - in religious (time-biased) and military (space-biased) institutions. In the religious sphere, the conciseness of the alphabet was paralleled by monotheism, the political sphere witnessed the advance of written law, and philosophy saw the growth of rationalistic science (Godfrey in Innis, 1986).

The abstractness of the written word means a minimal set of graphic symbols used to reduce and represent a vast range of vocal symbols that cannot always be effectively translated in such a limited, systematic fashion. The past is statically summarized on a one-dimensional pallet that is expected to adequately transfer the meaning and experience of, according to Innis (1986), military exploits, commercial transactions, legal cases, principles, myths and epics. While there is an extent to which certain matters can be satisfactorily represented in the literal tradition; oftentimes the adequate communication of the range of experience involved, precludes the use of the literal tradition as a singular or primary means of communication. Innis believed that since the essential principles of truth could only be achieved dialectically, the breakdown of oral discourse would hold grave consequences for social organization and democracy as it relates to the balance between knowledge and power, concerns shared by both Plato and Socrates, as we shall see. The atomistic nature of the written word fosters the atomization of society and the individual, and creates a monopoly of knowledge in which individualism and instability perpetuate the illusion of democracy and freedom of speech.
In short, Innis believed that the unstated presupposition of democratic life was the existence of a public sphere, of an oral tradition, or of a tradition of public discourse as a necessary counterweight to printing. [This is due to the fact that] literate culture is much more easily avoided than an oral one. Lacking an oral culture, one may easily fall prey to experts in knowledge who do our knowing for us, who inform us but whose knowledge does not easily connect to our actual experience. The strength of the oral tradition in his view was that it could not be easily monopolized. Once the habits of discourse were widespread, the public could take on an autonomous existence and not be subject to the easy control of the state or commerce. (Carey, 1981:86-87)

In contemporary society, the influence of print is clearly evidenced in the omnipresence of and bias toward: constitutions, documents, guarantees of freedom of the press, the rights of the individual, the present and the future, technical order, scientific growth and knowledge, and personal and professional contracts. Even within the university system, the once cherished Socratic method of oral instruction has been weakened by alphabetic mechanization where books require that ideas and knowledge be grounded upon what can be seen and proven in writing and reduced to a convenient size.

The Example of Ancient Greece

Innis' penchant for oral culture is easy to understand given his values and the characteristics of oral versus written traditions. His concern with the dialectic between power and knowledge amplified Innis' admiratio. of those things embraced by the oral tradition and he sought models of that organization to increase his understanding and appreciation. It did not escape his attention, however, that there is a great and inherent difficulty in understanding a culture steeped in the oral tradition, as a constituent of the written, viewing and experiencing the world from
that perspective. In examining the survival capabilities of ancient empires, Innis discovered that the society of Ancient Greece was one of the more successful, as it was able to appreciate and balance the problems of both space and time for a longer period than most other empires. For these reasons, Innis stressed the example of Ancient Greece as the model of life in the oral tradition to the exclusion of other possible examples, including the Native one.

Because Innis appreciated the social history of Ancient Greece, he used it as his example of the evolution of the oral to the written systems and thus encouraged those interested to follow a similar path to understanding the nature of oral culture and what has been lost by its obsolescence. It was from the Greek oral tradition that the Socratic method mentioned above emerged and flourished. This is one example of those things that Innis believed made Ancient Greek culture the example of the oral tradition.

The highlight of oral culture, according to Innis, was the Homeric epic. The elements of the oral tradition that could be found in the Homeric epics closely reflected the character of early Greek society. According to Russo (1978), the epic communicated multiple, reciprocally reinforcing messages that were explicit and implicit in the narrative and constantly implicit in the rhythms and formulaic patterns of the epic. Homer, and the other poets, maintained an emphasis on Eros - a worldly force of fertility and creation - rather than Logos which focused on intellect.

Two popular epics - the Iliad and the Odyssey - emphasized the importance of music and the role of minstrels or bards in oral culture. Minstrels had intellectual
status and a limited monopoly because, as happened with the Ionian minstrels, a
dialect became the basis for a common bond among Hellenic peoples\(^2\) (Innis, 1986).
In their lyrics, the oral tradition was extended to include the needs of women and
others not usually offered the rights of expression granted those in power.

Although Innis extolled the virtues and democracy of Ancient Greece, one
cannot overlook the blatant abuses in Greek society. Slaves were bought and sold in
these times, and were mostly female domestics. They were, on occasion, treated
brutally, though often accepted as members of the family (Durant, 1966). This was,
undoubtedly, a patriarchal form of social organization, where land was owned by the
family or clan but administered and controlled by the father, who, incidentally,
could not sell the land. Shopkeepers, artisans and bankers were among those denied
the right to vote, as was the unquestioning housewife of whom Thucydides said;
"The name of a decent woman, like her person, should be shut up in the house"
(Thucydides in Durant, 1966:305). Apparently, Greek society, including that of the
Heroic Age, was not a true democracy although it did, as will be illustrated, attempt
to approximate that system.

According to Innis (1986), the Homeric epic rose and fell with monarchical
organization, but as the minstrel tradition became a profession, the *Odyssey*, with a
more conspicuous presence of minstrels, began to reflect a changed, decentralized
society that divided up and sold the common lands to rich individuals and became
closely associated with oligarchy, while the *Iliad* continued to reflect monarchy, with

\(^2\)For an alternative view regarding bards and monopolies of knowledge in oral
culture, see Hassanpour (1989).
its community lands. Finally, the increase in writing perpetuated literature and thus weakened the minstrel tradition and changed social organization such that paternal authority and family unity decreased and individualism grew. This introduced a new type of philosophy and philosopher to Greek society.

As mentioned, the bards and minstrels were considered to be the carriers of the oral tradition and resisted the advance of writing. This advance, along with a new stress on accuracy of detail, became necessary for the spread of religious doctrine. The demand for exact renderings continued to grow however, and the appearance of written copies of Greek poems in the sixth century - the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were committed to writing between 700-550 BC (Havelock, 1978) - signalled the decline of the minstrel and oral tradition and the rise of spatially-based philosophy.

The role of philosophy was in some ways tailored by the lack of a single sacred book and attendant priesthood to dispense clear-cut final causes to the populace. The philosophers, then, continued a specific pattern of development from the oral through to the written tradition, and sought to provide distinct generalizations that would be accepted by all members in that society. The roots of Greek philosophy were undoubtedly firm in the oral tradition of Socrates and Plato, as it was Plato who said:

> If men learn this writing it will implant forgetfulness in their souls; they will cease to exercise memory because they rely on what is written, calling things to remembrance no longer from within themselves but by means of external marks; what you have discovered is a recipe not for memory but for reminder. And it is not true wisdom that you offer your disciples, but only its semblance.... (Carey, 1981:85)
In *Empire and Communications*, Innis gives a brief and yet insightful account of the transition of Greek philosophy from the oral through to the written period and how these systems grew off of one another. The following is an attempt to draw to light the major points Innis and others have made in this regard.

**Socrates and Plato’s Dialogues**

Probably the most well-known of Greek philosophers was Socrates [470-399 BC]. He used the method of conversation to teach his pupils, depending on question and answer, freedom of arrangement and inclusiveness. This method was true to the oral tradition, emphasizing dialogue and meditation as the tools for discovering truth and arousing interest.

Socrates' student Plato [427-347 BC] was and is a far greater enigma than was his teacher. His style was regarded by Aristotle as half-way between poetry and prose, as too was his attitude. It has been said of Plato that "the power of the oral tradition persisted in his prose, in the absence of a closely-ordered system...He would not surrender his freedom to his own books and refused to be bound by what he had written" (Innis, 1986:60).

However, it cannot be ignored that there was, within Plato, a hostility toward the poetic experience and the imaginative acts that accompanied it (Havelock, 1963). Plato indicated that he preferred the descriptive rather than the dramatic since his reality was composed of the rational, scientific and logical. This was the source of human salvation. Plato saw the substance and style of poetry as imitation and argued that poets should be experts on the topics of which they speak so that poems
could be encyclopedias or repositories of useful knowledge rather than wrapped up in emotion and instinctive reaction. He defined the "philosoph" as one who would seek to restate poems and stories in a language that would substitute reasoned analysis as the basic mode of being (Havelock, 1963:283).

While Plato claimed that the oral state of mind became the enemy when the technology of communication changed to writing, he nonetheless saw writing as a threat to the meditative search (Illich and Sanders, 1988). Plato truly stood on the threshold between the oral and the written. He did not seem to present a consistent argument in favour of either means of communication, and perhaps this is the legacy and persistent value of his work.

The Notes of Aristotle

"In Aristotle [384-322 BC], the power of the spoken word declined sharply and became a source of confusion. The dialogue form was used, but with an important change in which he made himself the interlocutor." (Innis, 1986:61)

The popularity of writing continued to spread during the time of Aristotle and was evident in the movement to collect and preserve books. In the main, Aristotle was a scientist, most at home in the areas of biology and metaphysics (Durant, 1966). The shift from poetry to prose accompanied this shift to physical sciences and spatially-based philosophy. Both Plato and Aristotle wrote in an age after the tragedy of the oral tradition had been witnessed in the fall of Athens and the execution of Socrates.
With the death of Socrates, much of the oral tradition died and left open the way for a new civilization based not on poetry and the gods, but on the alphabet and the rational side of human kind. The essence of many philosophers was these spatial concepts that grew out of distinct interest in geometry and rational science which coincided historically with the development of writing.

The oldest Greek inscriptions have been dated to the seventh or eighth century and were written from right to left (Durant, 1966). The use of prose spread not only through philosophy, but into genealogy, geography, and history. It increased interest in the individual as manifested in the growing concern for particular characters in stories. In 470 BC, Athens had no reading public, but by 430 BC book form was considered the most convenient way of storing and transmitting ideas (Innis, 1951), in much the same way the computer is seen today. Literary creativity peaked in the fifth century, perhaps due to the fact that book production was very low. It was also toward the end of the fifth century that Greeks began writing from left to right. The first Greek public library was built in 330 BC (Innis, 1951).

**The Spread of Writing**

Although this spread seems to have been quick, the written tradition in Ancient Greece was subordinated to the demands of the oral tradition for a much longer period of time than is or was the case for other empires. This was due, in part, to the difficulty in obtaining papyrus as well as to the geography of Greece that kept her somewhat isolated from her neighbours and those she conquered, and
thus separate from their influence. Even so, the literate Greek culture was a manuscript culture, rather different from print culture, which emphasizes mass production of popular books that can be sold for the greatest profit. Manuscript culture, as will be shown, is still in many ways oral in that it maintains quality craftsmanship over quantity, the clan, and precedent as the source of custom, law and values. The alphabet, nonetheless, became the basis of political organization, because of its ability to efficiently control vast territories, and of religious organization through its ability to foster monotheism - a topic to be elaborated in a later chapter.

A further indication of the influence of the written word was evident in the developing need to have written laws. In early Greek history, societies were ruled in peace by the family and in crisis by the clan - a group of people who acknowledged a common ancestor and a common chieftain (Durant, 1966). Families defended and revenged themselves. In this age, precedent dominated "law," for which there really was no word, because precedent was custom.

However, this law, which was once a part of theology and sacred custom, became a collection and co-ordination of customs put into writing. With the accumulation and growth of the body of law it came to be that a magistrate could not decide a case based upon unwritten law (Durant, 1966). The demand for this practice was strong in the colonies and eventually spread to the original city-states, but in the latter instance the shift to codification was tempered by a continuing oral tradition (Innis, 1986). For example, concepts of individual responsibility for the common peace and good were allowed to develop, but slowly, and although a
written body of case law was built up, those cases were based upon strong debate
and open grievance. The strength of the oral tradition was evident in this slow
development of codes, the position of magistrates, powers granted to lawmakers in
times of difficulty and the constitution of the judicial courts out of members of the
populace.

Perhaps inevitably, the conflict between the alphabet and oral culture saw
the defeat of Greek oral society, although without the extremes of theocracy and
militarism usually associated with such shifts. Along with this transition,
collectivism was replaced by individualism, a loss of faith in social life, weakening
family systems - often fuelled by the introduction of wills that made it possible for
non-family members to be made heirs to an estate - and a shift from bartering to a
money based economy that stressed ownership by labour (Innis, 1951). Coined
money was introduced from Lydia as the result of an increase in trade. This was
made possible by the development of a simple alphabet which could traverse space
in that others could share in and understand this simple code, thus facilitating trade
and the outside influence of other lands.

This simple alphabet also made it possible for geometry and astronomy, from
Egypt and Babylonia respectively, to be transferred to Greece so that navigation
could be improved. This provided a basis for a new rational, anti-mythological
philosophy of early science that, while linking the natural and supernatural, was
distinct from theology. Instead, it concentrated on the object and the separation of
the self from external forces and objects (Godfrey in Innis, 1986).
Plato was one of the first philosophers to identify the "subject" in relation to that "object" which the subject knows (Havelock, 1963:201). From this, Plato developed his "psychology of the autonomous individual" who rallies her own powers to impose organization through self-generated and discovered inspiration (Havelock, 1963:202). Obviously, this philosophy requires that many of the basic tenets of orality be abandoned so that self-consciousness can be created and take precedence over group or clan consciousness. This change was facilitated by the changing technology of communication. The ability to refresh the memory by means of the written word allows the reader to rid himself of most of that emotional identification the acoustic record recalls. It was a shift that Plato desired away from "identifying with" and toward "thinking about" that separated the poet from the poem.

Unfortunately, once absorption with the poem has ended, its structure is necessarily changed and the poem itself is ended. The language and the rhythm of the poem are rearranged to express and describe something calmly and reflectively "known" (Havelock, 1963:217). That which is known becomes the object and is separated from time, space and circumstance so that it can be abstracted and render irrelevant the acts and events that once surrounded it in the oral tradition. The facts themselves are only important, not the persons and events which comprise the history and the reasons behind these facts. All is reduced to the mathematical equation of the physical world, including such moral imperatives as goodness and right-ness.
Consequently, the imbalance that Innis notes in Greece at this time was more philosophical than media related. The major players in this imbalance were the philosophers and the religious leaders. The religion of the times was based upon the belief that "every object or force of earth or sky, every blessing and every terror, every quality - even the vices - of mankind was personified as a deity" (Durant, 1966:176).

Each of the gods and goddesses had a story attached to him or her that became a faith or philosophy. These deities were seen as energy whose quantity would remain unchanged despite changes in form. The Greeks worshipped gods of the sky, earth, fertility, the animal and subterranean worlds, their ancestors, and the Olympians (Durant, 1966). The people worshipped and honoured the dead so that the generations - past, present and future - could be bound together in sacred unity. Such belief served, as did all of oral culture, as a defense against the egoism of the individual. For example, victory in war might be attributed to the assistance of Athena, or one of the other gods, rather than being the result of individual success.

Philosophy first strengthened the influence of religion, but as it changed in focus so too did its effect on religion. As indicated, religious rituals promoted union with the deity, tradition and myth, and although these elements were virtually destroyed by the advent of the written tradition, the new philosophy was not yet strong enough to form the basis of a permanent and active state (Godfrey in Innis, 1986).

Still, for Innis, the essence of many of the philosophers rested in the spatial elements that grew out of geometry, while most religions emphasized re-birth as a
means of overcoming death-in-time. It was the written and rational versus the oral and sacramental. Science became a means of discarding allegory and myth and, since it was written in prose, reflected a dramatic break that appealed to rational authority and the logic of writing. It addressed itself to the problems of religion and drew a firm line between human beings and the gods and human beings and nature. Traditional gods of Ancient Greece were unable to meet the demands of the new system in which it was deemed necessary to find order, coherence, and explanation in the world: thus the Greek view of the relationship between people and the gods became mechanical, and meaningless - in terms of the values of the oral culture. This new science was pluralistic, rationalistic, fatalistic, opposed to other-worldliness, and created a perspective of the world as simply a distribution of land into spatial provinces (Innis, 1951).

By drawing the rational and the sacramental together the Greeks withstood repeated invasions and the empire survived. Out of this fusion grew accomplishments in politics, sculpture, music and theatre, though political decline occurred more and more rapidly (Godfrey in Innis 1986). The spread of writing contributed to the collapse of the Greek empire, ironically, because it widened the separation between the city-states. For example, in Athens the concern for the individual and democracy continued, as did its growing power as a maritime empire, while in Sparta oral culture, music, law, discipline, and military organization vied for prominence under the veil of oligarchy. Athens fell to Sparta in the Peloponnesian War in 404 BC and Sparta fell to Thebes, which was for a short time a leading power in Greece, in 371 BC.
Despite the rich history of the oral tradition of Ancient Greece, her ultimate influence was to be intellectual. It would be these concepts discovered in Greece that other nations would adopt and carry through. The similarity between the Greek and the modern alphabet and the intimate relationship between Greek and Western civilization seems to suggest that the study of Ancient Greece could be valuable to the understanding of North American social history and present conditions.

The Use and Spread of Paper and Print Technology

With the development of paper in 105 AD, the written tradition became inexorably tied to world history. Within the courts of the Middle Ages, for example, one would no longer swear on a ring dipped in the blood of a sacrificial animal, but rather on the cross, relics, the altar, or the Bible (Illich and Sanders, 1988). Thus oath, and other broad areas of everyday life previously governed by the oral, were now governed by a legal type of literacy. Before objects could be owned, they had to be described and written down (Illich and Sanders, 1988). Trust was now with the sealed document rather than one’s word.

The commercial revolution that began around 1275 AD was matched by the spread in the manufacture of paper to Europe; even in Egypt its use surpassed the use of papyrus and in the 11th century mummies were disinterred for their supplies of cloth for paper making (Innis, 1986). The printing industry became so lucrative that publishers were more concerned with marketing than quality production. A one-
time handicraft had become an industrial enterprise and a part of the industrial
revolution.3

The influence of paper went far beyond the economic. Innis, along with his
colleague Marshall McLuhan, was concerned about the role of print technology, the
future of public discourse and the role of those in power. According to Cooper;
"Innis attacked icons out of a sense of opposing injustice and avoiding the dangers
of fascism and monopoly. McLuhan as artist pictured his purpose as one of
galvanizing his audience to resuscitate their consciousness" (Cooper, 1981:160).

Both Innis and McLuhan were concerned about the balance between power
and knowledge and agreed that it was print technology that served to pave the way
for linear thinking and specialization. The innovation of writing would record and
freeze the past, making it interesting only to those studying ancient times or
peoples. It would separate from the oral tradition and become the favoured means of
communication. When this occurs, institutions that are compatible with that means
of communication flourish while competing traditions - like the oral - would be
driven out, defined as illegitimate or radically transformed. This is the mechanism
by which print destroyed the oral tradition and drove values, metaphysics and
morals underground, and while it did not destroy religion it did, as Max Weber has
pointed out, transform religion to meet the needs of the state and the economy
(Carey, 1967). Ultimate knowledge would now be sought in science rather than
religion.

3Authors such as Eisenstein, Winchester, and Tannen have remarked upon the
profound influence of printing, and their contributions, along with those of other
anthropologists and historians, will be examined.

28
This shift affected both the society and the individual in much the same way. As McLuhan (1964) has pointed out, communication in the oral tradition involves all of the senses and thus produces a depth of involvement in life itself as the principle means of communication. In contrast to the interdependence of the senses in the oral tradition, in the print tradition knowledge is acquired and experience confirmed by sight alone. To live in the oral tradition, one acquires knowledge only through contact with other people in communal activities, not in the withdrawn privacy of individualism and detribalization sponsored by the discrete, linear, uniform causality of writing (Carey, 1967). The resultant overemphasis on reason has resulted in one's alienation from the self and inner feelings, family, society, nature and experience. Because the spoken word involves all of the senses dramatically, this separation of the senses and the individual from the group virtually cannot occur without the development of writing, as was seen in the separation of the knower from the known in Ancient Greece and, as will be shown, in the example of Native Indians of North America.

Comparing Ancient Greece and the Natives of North America

As an extension of all senses simultaneously, oral communication is considered the richest art form in which human beings can participate. McLuhan shares this view with Innis who has indicated that an important element of oral intercourse is the interplay of the senses working in busy co-operation and rivalry, each "eliciting, stimulating and supplementing the other" thus preventing subjective and external disunity (Innis, 1951:105). This disunity is what has led to the
atomization of society, its obsession with individuality, and a monopoly of
knowledge that threatens to destroy North American civilization as we know it. This
civilization once was steeped in the traditions and values of oral communication that
were and are held as central by traditional North American Native Indians.

Ultimately, as was the case for Ancient Greece, Native Indian life was
"civilized" by the arrival of literacy and its attendant characteristics. According to
McLuhan, with regard to the importance of the unity of senses and experience in
oral and written cultures; "Tribal cultures may be greatly superior to Western
cultures in the range and delicacy of their perceptions and expression. They cannot
entertain the possibility of the individual or of the separate citizen" (McLuhan,
1964:84).\footnote{For an elaboration of this concept, see the discussion of Native life in Chapter
Three.}

As was the case with the Assyrian empire of Babylon and Egypt, the multi-
cultural "problem" in North America, and especially with regard to Native peoples,
the solution is large scale deportations, the destruction of homelands (Godfrey in
Innis, 1986), and banishments to bantustans and reserves. Homelessness leads the
victimized group to develop trade as a means of survival and this economic change,
along with the change in the primary means of communication, can do nothing if
not alter the lifestyle and world view of the group. This is more than the
destruction of empire.

Innis’ ideal type of oral culture was that of Ancient Greece. Unfortunately,
the oral tradition of Native Indians is virtually non-existent in his work. McLuhan’s
formulations regarding Native life are more inclusive than Innis', though they still lack any reference to the "racial and cultural genocide of Native peoples facilitated by the imposition of new technologies" like the print industry (Heyer, 1981:254). Some of Innis' contemporaries, including Eisenstein, Sapir, Ong and Goody and Watt, have dealt with the nature of oral culture and occasionally that of Native Indians. Perhaps by beginning with some reference to the anthropological contributions of these authors, with regard to the oral and literate traditions, we can establish a solid base from which to elaborate the Native example.
CHAPTER TWO: ANTHROPOLOGICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

The Unacknowledged Revolution

The first great breakthrough in the invention of writing was in Sumeria (Iraq) 5000 years ago with the development of word-signs that would recur consistently as standardized symbols (Hoyles, 1977). For the most part, these symbols were memory-aids rather than organized systems of writing that directly represented concepts themselves. This phenomenon was reserved for the development of script, which was in use by a good many populations by 1500 BC (Ong, 1967). Unfortunately, according to Elizabeth Eisenstein (1985), most accounts of the transition from oral to literate culture fail to acknowledge the presence of this third force or movement inherent in that history. The leap between oral and literate can and must be bridged by the recognition of another type of culture, script or manuscript culture, which embraced characteristics of both aforementioned traditions. Accepting history as a process rather than as a sequence of clearly defined shifts in theory and practice helps make obvious the probability of this intervening system that prevailed after the invention of the alphabet and before the popularity of the printing press. Table 2, taken from Hoyles (1977), outlines the basic differences between print and manuscript culture such that one can readily perceive the position manuscript culture has occupied between orality and literacy.
### TABLE 2

**Script and Print Culture**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Script</th>
<th>Print</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feudal</td>
<td>Bourgeois</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International</td>
<td>National</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin</td>
<td>National Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Varied Orthography</td>
<td>Accuracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changeable Texts</td>
<td>Permanence and Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Aloud</td>
<td>Private Silent Reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authorship Unimportant</td>
<td>Authorship and Copyright</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copying Approved</td>
<td>Idea of Plagiarism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books Bequeathed in Wills</td>
<td>Books Commonplace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illiteracy</td>
<td>Middle-class Literacy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Hoyles, 1977:21)

The technology to mechanically reproduce design was available to those of manuscript culture, but since their social organization was so completely oral in nature the idea of using such a process to transmit accurate information seemed ridiculous (Ong, 1967). For people of these times, communication was still associated with speech, not space; they believed what they heard. In highly oral cultures, even after they possessed a script, thought moved ahead communally and individualism was quickly encysted - if indeed it ever appeared.

The transition from oral to written and an increase in range and influence of the activities of medieval scribes was accompanied by the decline of liturgical worship and a rise in theological scholarship. The priest-king was replaced with the desacralized law-king who emphasized the administrative, rational and constitutional rather than the oral, pictorial and liturgical (Stock, 1983). Polyglot editions of the
Bible, in which texts in several languages are printed in parallel columns, made the Scripture (words of God) seem more multiform, while repeatable visual aids made nature (works of God) seem more uniform. Because the emphasis was shifting more and more to the general and concrete, printing played an important part in weakening the confidence in scriptural revelation while strengthening trust in mathematical formulae and reasoning (Eisenstein, 1985).

While script culture obviously retained some of the characteristics associated with orality, it also made evident the new wave in communications technology and the way this wave would alter the manner in which people would think about themselves, their world, and the relationship between the two. The transition from one primary means of communication to another is more than a reorganization of the sensorium. More dramatically, it represents social, economic, religious, political, and psychological change as well. According to Ong (1977), the technological inventions of writing, print, and, eventually, electronic verbalization, nurtured a new kind of alienation within the human life-world in that they restructured human consciousness, affecting one’s presence to the world and to oneself and creating new interior distances within the psyche.

By its very nature, a reading public is far more dispersed, atomistic, and individualistic than an oral one. The sense of traditional community and the gathering together to receive a given message was weakened by the ability to duplicate exact messages and thus bring the solitary reader to the fore and enhance vicarious participation. "Personal attendance was increasingly supplemented by
vicarious participation in civic functions and municipal affairs....Even public festivals could be experienced by stay-at-homes." (Eisenstein, 1979:133)

A sharper division between private and public life indicated the nature of the transformation provoked and nurtured by print. Local ties were loosened and links to larger collective units were forged. These collective units, writes Eisenstein (1979), are based upon printed materials that have the inherent ability to encourage silent and passive adherence to causes whose advocates and followers are a distant and invisible public. As a result, new forms of group identity develop and compete with the more traditional and localized nexus of loyalties.

Words As Tools

As indicated by Goody and Watt (1968), most of the significant elements of any genuine human culture are transmitted by the use of words and the attendant attitudes and meanings members of the group in question attach to those verbal symbols. The verbalized learning of these symbols normally took place in an atmosphere of celebration or play, as evidenced in the games, parties and songs of Ancient Greece (Ong, 1967). In this type of culture words are more celebrations than tools. The value of words as events is clear in the understanding and continuity of time and space as they depend upon language for their most direct and comprehensive expression. It is this directness between the symbol and its referent - or the degree to which it exists - that represents one difference between oral and literate cultures. Within the framework of an oral culture, words are seen as events, not as records of events. Written culture, conversely, establishes a different kind of
relationship between word and referent in that it is more general, more abstract and less closely connected with person, place and time.

The world of the word is the world of sound, sound that assigns a critical role in the centre of actuality and simultaneity. In contrast, vision - the world of the written and reproduced symbol - situates one in front of things and in sequentiality (Ong, 1967). Sight, what one can see, is limited to what is within the field of vision at any given time. In order to see what is behind us, for example, we must redefine our field of vision to include that space. We cannot take the surroundings in all at once, it must be done sequentially - in bits and pieces. "The mind does not enter into the alphabet, the printed book or the computer so much as the alphabet, the printed book or the computer enters the mind, producing new states of awareness there." (Ong, 1977:47) Carey elaborates;

Besides making us dependent on the eye, printing imposes a particular logic on the organization of visual experience. Print organizes reality into discrete, uniform, harmonious, causal relations. The visual arrangement of the printed page becomes a perceptual model by which all reality is organized. The mental set of print - the desire to break things down into elementary units (words), the tendency to see reality in discrete units, to find causal relations and linear serial order (left to right arrangement of the page), to find orderly structure in nature (the orderly geometry of the printed page) - is transferred to all other social activities. Thus science and government, art and architecture, work and education become organized in terms of the implicit assumption built into the dominant medium of communication. (Carey, 1967:19)

In considering the world of sound and the way in which we are capable of hearing, simultaneously, all of the audible stimuli in front of and behind us without altering our physical orientation, it becomes apparent that the commitment of the word (sound) to space (writing) necessarily alters perceptions, feelings and
relationship toward the world. The world of intellect and spirit become silent, giving way to the new art of individualized, isolated thinking. In turn, the neutralized, devocalized physical world creates a "stranger, spectator and manipulator rather than a participator in the universe" (Ong, 1967:73). The interiorization of the technology of the phonetic alphabet moves people from the magical world of the ear to the neutral visual world (McLuhan, 1962).

Historically, literate cultures have been tempted to regard the oral-based attitude toward the word as superstition. This is due, in part, to the notion that cultures which do not reduce words to space, lend great power to words. They believe that words in themselves can achieve effect, as evidenced in the use of curses and charms. In oral culture, a forger is not someone who has altered legal text, but rather is a traitor. He or she has betrayed the relationship, not between words and things, but between people. In fact, it was only through the commitment of property claims to a written record of ownership that the opposite - and present - point of view could prevail (Stock, 1983).

With the advent of writing, words were reduced to objects in space and thus were further away from reality. They could be dissected into spatial parts and, at the same time, impose order, control and arrangement onto space. While any script has the ability to impose some degree of order onto the world around it, it is only the alphabet that does it in such a radically simplified fashion. The objectifying nature inherent in writing, however, was not fully realized until print. The invention of print, then, intensified the commitment of sound to space which the alphabet
"It seems no accident that formal logic was invented in an alphabetic culture" (Ong, 1967:45).

The Movement Toward Literacy

While literal meaning was taking its place of prominence over symbolic meaning even in the manuscript culture, this spatialization of sound was reinforced in 15th century Western Europe by the invention of the printing press. It was at this time that people began to link visual perception to verbalization. The tenacity of the oral tradition, however, was still evident in the 18th century use of writing in connection with oral expression. The first age of writing was the age of the scribes; the second age, introduced by print, became that of the author. By the 19th century even the poet retired from the oral world - giving up singing (or even talking) to anyone (Ong, 1967). Because of this, the reader was separated from the original author and context. The object became the only relevant matter, the author and contemporary readers made no difference. Texts, unlike conversation, became things rather than events and existed in relation to other texts more so than to spoken language (Ong, 1982). Observation became the key to knowledge as the sensorium narrowed and individualism fostered by isolation came into its own. The popularity of the isolated thinker diminished the role of personal loyalties as people no longer relied upon the social group and folk-memory for the acquisition and verification of knowledge. Instead people turned toward a standard set of rules outside the sphere of influence of the person, family or community, manifest in the written word that
could best be studied and understood in peaceful solitude (Stock 1983). The printed word, like the door, encourages isolation; the reader wants to be alone.

Above all, the change in the primary means of communication altered the conception of self in society. The whole concept of the "self" was non-existent in epic times. The "I" existed only in the act of speaking out loud or to oneself. Locked into the oral culture, consciousness has not the kind of self-knowledge that technology can confer. The writings of Martin Buber concerning the "I-Thou" and "I-It" relationship help make this distinction somewhat less confusing. According to Buber, in the spiritual history of primitive peoples, the I-Thou was and is spoken in a natural way and before one has come to an awareness of oneself as "I." (Herberg, 1956) It was during this time that there were only two partners in the world - people and all that confronted them. The I-It came into existence when the human body became the bearer of perceptions and was separated from the world around it. The "I" steps forth and declares itself to be the bearer and the world around it to be the object of perceptions. This is the creation of the subject-object relationship. The statement "I am hunting deer"

no longer tells of a relation between the man - I - and the [deer] - Thou - but establishes the perception of the [deer] as the object by the human consciousness, the barrier between the subject and the object has been set up. The primary word I-It, the word of separation, has been spoken....Things become composed of their qualities and are for the first time set in time and space in causal connection, each with its own place and appointed course. Only "It" can be arranged in order....The "Thou" knows no system of co-ordination. (Herberg, 1956:51-52)
To describe the hunt in terms of I-Thou, would be to say instead that "We [including the deer] are in the hunt," thus not constructing a subject/object relationship.

It was with the alphabet that both the text and the self became possible as social constructs - thus Plato’s separation of the subject and the object. Even within the laws of Western grammar the person can be split into the subject and the object, the "I" and the "me," the public and the private self (Potter and Wetherell, 1987). In constructing the self in this way, other constructions are excluded. The development of this type of "self" gave rise to the belief in personal rather than communal responsibility and thereby made guilt, shame and conceit possible. The American invention of the autobiography is an example of the conceit allowed to flourish within which the author could create a new being by smoothing out difficult life transitions, cleaning-up past mistakes, and producing a "polished and attractive literary self" (Illich and Sanders, 1988:76-77).

Printing, which has been linked to the Protestant Reformation, capitalism, nationalism, novels, essays, exams and scientific methodology, in its earliest days was considered part of an institute for advanced learning. Printers would sponsor scientific research, collect data themselves, and act as press agents for their clients, all within the confines of the print shop (Eisenstein, 1985). However, the content and subject-matter of the earliest forms of writing were not based upon religion, philosophy, or abstract speculation, but rather economic need. It was most common to commit to writing lists of possessions and accounts of victories in war. "The
seal, as the mark of ownership, is the parent of writing and printing" (Hogben, 1977:15).

Nonetheless, religious and political crusades of the time did aid in the spread of writing. In fact, it has been argued (Eisenstein, 1985), that printing was both a prerequisite for and precipitant of the Lutheran revolt. In addition, it was the drive to spread the Christian Gospels in the hope of increasing the number of converts that helped to power the early presses. The Divine Art of printing combined with the capitalistic urges to expand the marketplace, outdo competitors, and increase book sales. Evangelism and capitalism combined forces to launch a powerful and irreversible movement.

Christianity, with her Protestant Bibles and Catholic breviaries, manuals and textbooks, popularized the vernacular and expanded its influence to encourage the first vernacular technical literature in modern science (Eisenstein, 1985). With the ensuing growth of the new science, proponents of quantification and observation fought an embittered battle against the oral component in the world of science and academics. By contrast, the world of commerce, technology, and manufacturing readily accepted the shift in world-view and interpreted argument as being unproductive. If differences did surface regarding commercial interests, the publicized reasons for the differences would be politically framed (Ong, 1967).

The communication shift changed the way classical, scientific and religious traditions were transmitted and received. For the first time in history, one could study Greek culture without having a Greek immigrant present. One could finally preserve the works and portraits of great artists and thus contribute to the growing
tide of individualism and the publicity-drive for personal fame. Literacy also freed
the mind of details so that it could dwell on generalities, enabled the simultaneous
consideration of many objects and connections independent of immediacy, and
permitted the indefinite extension of argument encased in leisurely consideration and
re-consideration, and without the interference of emotion (Winchester, 1985).

The Consequences Of Literacy

"If you cannot read, you cannot be an obedient citizen." (Postman, in
Hoyles, 1977:22)

One of the most basic changes that occurred with the continued growth of
literacy was the decline in the amount of involvement associated with human
communications. The focus of communication shifted away from the interpersonal
involvement and instead emphasized the amount and kind of information conveyed.
This difference is illustrated in the varied approaches toward narrative. While the
Greeks long approached narrative as a form of storytelling, Americans see it as a
memory task, emphasizing not theme, but rather accuracy of details, creator’s skill,
and the value of the work as artifact (Tannen, 1985). Even today, people often
expect the point of a story to be explicit; they want speech to make use of
strategies associated with writing. Rather than having more involvement in the story
than information, and thus having a dramatized and inferred point to the story,
people want information to overtake involvement and thus have the events of the
tale hold more importance than feelings and themes therein.

This difference in view may be closely related to the way in which written
works are decontextualized, not only with regard to content, but in the way the
reader and writer are separated from one another in both time and space, thus eliminating personal involvement. Printing intensified this interiorization process, disengagement and analytic objectivity. Of course, in a highly technological society the excessive amount of communication with strangers makes impersonal communications the most efficient means of transferring data. Unfortunately, this system has lead to misunderstandings even within the business world where Greek, Japanese and Arab business people, unlike their American counterparts, seek the establishment of personal relationships as a prerequisite for business dealings (Tannen, 1985). Nonetheless, this system has proven most effective in fulfilling its role in modern Western society. It allows us to close the nonverbal and paralinguistic channels that once made our attitude toward the message and the communication evident without its specific lexicalization. As a result, the literal replaces the symbolic and focuses on the belief that having the exact words someone has uttered means that one has apprehended the exact meaning of that communication.

The growth in interest and use of the visual, literal and mentally perceptible was paralleled by a new sense of time, both internally and externally.

To personalities shaped by literacy, oral folk appear curiously unprogrammed, not set off against their physical environment, given solely to soaking up existence, unresponsive to abstract demands such as "job" that entails commitment to routines organized in accordance with abstract clock time (as against human, lived or "felt" duration). (Ong, 1977:18)

Calendars and clocks became more and more popular as means of structuring days, weeks and lifetimes. Meanwhile the psychological change in internal time-keeping was fostered by the rejuvenation of monasticism. "The convent walls not
only provided a haven from doubt and insecurity; they imposed upon the changes of
seasons and climates a [hu]man-made system of discipline and self-control." (Stock,
1983:84)

Importance did not lie solely with the correctness of measurement, but in the
interposition between people and events of a system of temporal reckoning
independent of said people or events (Stock, 1983). Time was externalized, and thus
acted as a parallel to the abstract, depersonalized, and objective world of the text.
Time as reference to the past, present, and future in speech and social institutions
gave way to a concept of time as important only insofar as it related to individual
need.

Literacy, then, has made possible modes of thinking that could hardly be
acquired in any other way. Perception of reality, as indicated, became abstract and
theoretical, allowing one to conceptualize, generalize, draw inferences, and construct
logical relationships. This separation of the knower from the external universe and
him or herself made possible both abstract art and science.

In a series of studies conducted by Luria, (see D'Angelo, 1982:155ff), it was
indicated that the mental life of non-literate peoples was not as highly differentiated
as that of literate peoples. On a sensory level, it was noted that their senses were so
closely linked together that a stimulus would not only arouse its corresponding
sense, but may also arouse related senses. For those steeped in primary orality - the
orality of a culture which has never known writing - life is integrative, fostering an
empathic identification of knower and known. On the cognitive plane, Luria noted a
phenomenon of classifications based solely upon concrete activities of everyday life;
items were grouped together on the basis of their function in the life of the people, which did not usually correspond with the classification given the items by literate people. Finally, cause and effect explanations rendered by literate people are for the most part scientifically based on the hypothetical, abstract and objective. For the pre-literate, however, cause and effect is explained by means of description and narrative.

As demonstrated by Luria, this mode of thinking is neither inferior, indicative of less than human capacity, nor genetic. Luria was, however, vulnerable to the phenomenon of the primary means of communication of his own culture imposing itself upon him as an absolute, and did seek to alter the peasants' mode of thinking and being to more adequately reflect that which he saw as "best." As a matter of fact, in his experiments of 1931 and 1932, he demonstrated that most of the peasants involved, after a brief training in literacy, were easily able to shift from "situational to abstract thinking best suited to a technological culture" (D'Angelo, 1982:157). The fact that these peasants were not living in a technologically advanced culture seemed to be of little if any import to the experiment.

The preceding passage, other than communicating the data conveyed in its literal form, is also an accurate example of modern popular attitudes toward literacy. Some believed, in the early days of literacy, that when it became universal, literacy would lead to freedom and equality for all. However, even though there was a majority Sunday newspaper public in Great Britain by 1910, a majority daily newspaper public in 1918 and a majority book public by the 1950's, there has not been any basic change in the power structure of that society (Hoyles, 1977). Print
has failed to live up to these expectations of freedom and equality because, although it is true that when first introduced print tends to generate "intense involvement, radicalism, artistic innovation and institutional upheaval" (Postman, 1973:91), after it has been pre-eminent for over 400 years it fails to generate new patterns of behaviour as the public becomes accommodated to it and the awareness that they are powerless to influence its direction or that of those who do control it.

Regardless, literate culture has become the standard by which all cultures and all cultural achievement are now measured. In fact, today we think of early oral cultures in terms of literacy and define them as "illiterate," "pre-literate," or "non-literate." Ong (1967:19) compares this habit of referring to oral cultures in terms of literate as akin to "working out the biology of a horse in terms of what goes on in an automobile factory." Even those who study oral culture often believe that the information they have collected can only be considered reliable if it has been corroborated somewhere in writing or by physical artifact. The "data" must be categorized, classified, verified, and written down (Vansina, 1965).

Within North American society itself, the push continues to educate children in the process and uses of literacy. What many fail to understand, however, is that reading encompasses a "definite political position on how people should behave and on what they ought to value" (Postman, 1973:86). This philosophy carries over into the school system that is more an arena of job training than pure education, another favourite theme of Innis'. The division between scholar and craftsman, university and workshop were and are significantly diminished by printing. Before print became a major aspect of the educational system, the university was seen as an
open forum for the exchange of thoughts and ideas. The capacity of print to standardize and make a commodity of knowledge altered the role of the university to that of a training centre, where the accumulation of textually bound methods of thought and action replaced debate with acceptable routine. Education became rule-bound and texts took on a degree of truth that ought not to be questioned. The present growth in enrolment in departments of business attests to the perceived role of the university as a training ground for future employment.

Children are taught that literacy will help them to be good citizens in that they will be better able to follow the laws of the land and exercise their rights. As Chomsky (1988) notes, the most highly educated are the most obedient. In truth, being a good citizen means being an obedient citizen and an enthusiastic consumer. Passivity and acceptance toward that which becomes expected is fostered not only by the content of what one reads but by the very nature of the medium, as indicated by McLuhan’s assertion that "the medium is the message." In fact, writes Postman (1973:90), "each medium, by its very structure, makes us do things with our bodies, our senses and our minds that in the long run are probably more important than any other message communicated by the medium."

Sadly, it is within this system that literacy is equated with intelligence and is said to be the richest form of aesthetic experience that can be had by human beings. Literacy may be a means to a specific kind of knowledge that has its own biases which are not best suited for exploring novel ideas and personal feelings. Contrary to popular belief, not all knowledge can be translated into written words. For certain
uses of language, as in the expression of the range and intensity of human emotion, literacy is not only irrelevant but is an absolute hindrance (Ong, 1967).

The true danger lies where people begin to believe that they somehow own words, as the principle of copyright illustrates. Language becomes some sort of commodity; words and texts take on a life of their own. We begin to think of facts not as merely recorded in texts for the sake of convenience, but as existing in texts and apart from actual lived experience. The written word becomes the ultimate authority, often-times regardless of personal experience. This is not the case for primarily oral people who distrust what they have not experienced and thus refuse to use such premises for any subsequent reasoning. Unfortunately, print detaches knowledge from experience and utterance and makes knowledge a commodity that can be owned by each person in isolation. For this reason, it normally takes a literate culture to produce individuals like Newton, Einstein, and Descartes. Where knowledge is a tribal possession, progress is communal and not reliant on any one individual's store of knowledge. "Culture must advance as a unit" (Ong, 1967:232).4

With the development of print, however, technology fused with the human consciousness and mass production came into being in no other way than through the production of the printed book (Ong, 1982). Written knowledge could now be mechanically produced and reproduced thus training the mind to become familiar with and accept extensive analytic thinking that would soon become obligatory even in the diminished oral sphere.

4For an alternative view in this regard, see Hassanhour (1989).
Along with written texts, Stock (1983) points out, the first coinage appeared, markets became more popular and were increasingly governed by the laws of supply and demand. As book markets expanded and the division of labour increased, female readers were increasingly differentiated from male and child readers. Separation, isolation, differentiation, and social ranking altered the conception of self and his or her relationship with the rest of creation. The shift toward contractual obligations made inherited status obsolete, and quantitatively structured society thus replaced the more qualitative and moral-based society. Texts, reading, study and meditation offered a technical tool in an effort to restore the spiritual unity that had been lost in the process of becoming literate. Alienation from oneself, the environment, others, and spiritual connectedness illustrates the consequences of literacy as being rooted in social organization and the conceptualization of such relations.

In sum, "oral" refers to ordinary commonsense experience as the basis of knowledge, whereas "written" refers to objective knowledge and formal schooling. Oral is a universal human device that is unspecialized, flexible, all-purpose, low in conventionalization, with negotiated meanings in terms of social relations, context and prior world knowledge. Written knowledge, Olson (1967) indicates, is a specialized tool of a literate, schooled culture, whose significance is often overlooked by the mistaken assumption that writing is merely speech put down. Some of its characteristics include: its demand for explicitness of meanings, its permanence as a visible artifact compatible with repeated scrutiny and reflection, its tendency to cause a realignment of social and logical functions to objective
knowledge, its tendency to determine what society designates as conceptual intelligence, and the way in which it has become the predominant instrument of formal schooling and thus helps develop certain forms of intellectual competencies, to the detriment of others.

Historically, Western culture, especially in the European-settled Americas, has held low regard for commonsense knowledge. Even the Greeks, after written culture took prominence over oral traditions, were thoroughly intellecualist, trusting only what they could prove and not the variable appearance of things. Since Descartes' time, modern science and mathematical proofs, which began as propositions artificially divorced from the actual experience of living, have been relied upon to validate life experiences. For Bacon, commonsense experiences were the "idols of the tribe," and for the Enlightenment they were considered a collection of irrational superstition and cliche. The advances made in and into science lead to the fall of commonsense knowledge, myth, and superstition. Myth and history merged into one unit, making the elements of the cultural heritage which cease to have contemporary relevance soon forgotten or transformed. As the individuals of each generation acquire their vocabulary, genealogies and myths, they are unaware that various words, people, and stories have dropped out, have changed their meanings, or have been replaced (Goody and Watt, 1968). This progression set up the dichotomy between practical and theoretical conceptions of reality and their respective followers.

In oral communication, the focus is on what is meant rather than what is actually said, as is the case with regard to written or literate communication.
Meanings are not explicitly represented in the text of oral societies but are found in their "street smart" ability to be assimilated into a commonsense reality or set of expectancies held by the participants. Writing, because it is visible, becomes a reality in its own right, rather than a reflection of reality. It turns utterances as descriptions into propositions with implications. In North American culture, intelligence is little more than a mastery of the forms of literate uses of language, that is, the particular, biased set of symbols for representing experience that are passed on through formal schooling. It is the development of this explicit system that helps account for the prominent features of Western culture. The word separates being from meaning.

Unfortunately, this provides a poor fit to daily, ordinary, practical and personally significant experience, whereas oral language draws on a depth of resources and universal means for sharing understanding of situations and actions within a shared culture. Oral utterance encourages a sense of continuity and participation with and in life. For oral peoples, culture refers to a harmony and depth in life that provides for inner satisfaction and a sense of spiritual mastery.

When culture becomes a manner rather than a way of life it is no longer genuine. The test of the genuineness of a culture, according to Sapir (1949), lies in its attitude toward the past as reflected in its institutions, art, and thought patterns. Genuine culture honours the past, not as relic but as the expression of a human spirit akin to its own.⁶

⁶Perhaps in an effort to determine if and how Canadian culture differs from American, these tests can be applied.
The Native Example

Pairing these notions with the characteristics of oral culture, it becomes evident that a prime and intimate example of a people with a genuine culture are the Native Indians of North America. For the American Indian tribe, every part of life, past, present and future, is bound together into a significant whole in respect to which the Indian is far from being a passive pawn. The Indian allows full and appreciative expression to all senses, uses practical commonsense and recognizes all types of reality as they are experienced (Radin, 1957). One can hardly speak of individuals in the modern sense in such cultures as individuation to some degree requires social distance and isolation.

Native Indians cannot be born, become of age, be married, give feasts, be invited to a feast, take or give a name, decorate his belongings, or die as a mere individual, but always as one who shares in the traditions and usages of his tribe and crest....[It is] a traditional index of the fullness of life and of the dignity of the human spirit which transcends the death of the individual. ( Sapir, 1949:345)

Once books enter that environment, it can never be quite the same again. As Riesman (1960) points out, these were not illiterate people living in a literate world, they were oral people living and thriving in an oral world. In fact, there were roughly 1,150,000 Native Americans living in North America (Sapir, 1949), when they discovered Christopher Columbus on the shores of their country. Aboriginal truth and the social organization that provides cultural wisdom are created and recreated by a relationship to time and space unfamiliar to European philosophy.

When the political integrity of the tribe was destroyed by contact with the whites, the Indian retained an uneasy sense of loss "of some vague and great good,"
some state of being that cannot be defined, but which instills a "courage and joy
that latter day prosperity never quite seems to have regained" (Sapir, 1949:318).
The life and history of the Native American is indeed much more than simply an
inferred social pre-history of our own culture.
CHAPTER THREE: THE EXAMPLE OF THE IROQUOIS

When one group of people is concerned with the problems of space and another is concerned with the problems associated with time, the beliefs and actions of either group cannot make a great deal of sense to each other. Such was the case with the arrival of the Europeans and their subsequent contact with the Native Indians of North America. Not only did these peoples emphasize different philosophical problems in relation to time and space, but they also had different conceptions and interpretations - influenced by their respective primary means of communication - regarding "time" and "space" themselves. For example, the Western European coming to North America saw time as occurring in a linear fashion and often believed, as do most North Americans today, that at some particular point in that chronology they became the guardians of all. Westerners see time as a flowing continuum in which everything proceeds at an equal rate, carrying the observer away from the past and into the future (Whorf, 1953). This understanding of time is in opposition to that imbedded in an oral culture, as will be shown in the discussion of Native Indian beliefs. Pre-contact Natives had no distinction of weeks, and the days of the week had no name in any of their languages. They recognized only four fixed points in the day - sun-rising, sun-setting, mid-day and mid-night. Most importantly, in recounting events, they emphasized more the lesson or meaning of the event, rather than situating it within the time elapsed since the event had occurred - a Western literate phenomenon (de Charlevoix, 1966). For example, in traditional native cultures sunrise and sunset ceremonies are held, to share in and
celebrate the event. Contrast this with the noon whistle or alarm watch going off, imposing an external order and regimen.

Amerindian Jamake Highwater (1981) has identified three core attitudes that have grown out of the elementary differences between Westerners and Native Indians, and which continue to prejudice Western conceptions of Native culture and philosophy.

1) An ethnocentric view related to the theory of evolution, which holds that the farther back in the ancestral "cave" you live, the more "primitive" you are and the more lowly by comparison with the white male who places himself at the crown of creation. According to this view, materialist/technological development is advanced "civilization."

2) A disdain for subsistence living, and a lack of specialization in "high" culture pursuits such as the arts. Among Amerindian languages, there is no word for "art." To them, everything is "art," and so an equivalent translation would be "living." Everyone is an artist, craftsperson, farmer, hunter, shaman, et cetera.

3) Belief in the innate superiority of monothecism over polytheism, especially treating the honouring of animals as Fetishism. (Hovsepian and Winter, 1989)

These three attitudes are based upon five aspects that serve to distinguish Native and Western thought, namely: holism, collectivism, environmentalism, views on mortality, and materialism. The discussion of traditional Iroquoian culture to follow includes aspects of their lifestyle adapted from Hovsepian and Winter (1989).

Holism in Native thought provides perhaps the strongest link to Innis, who decried the fragmentation and specialization of society. Whereas Western cultural identity is separated into the religious, medical, political, psychological, economic, sociological, and so forth, for Natives these share a common historical perspective (DeLoria, 1973). Tied into this is the belief that we are all interrelated: animal,
vegetable, mineral and the "inanimate," throughout the world, as through the threads of a spider's web (Highwater, 1981).

The related notion of collectivism means, for example, that a Wintu Indian speaks of "deer" or "salmon" without regard to numbers. To them, flocks, herds, or schools are a singular whole, not a collection of individual elements. By comparison, Westerners seemingly cannot mention something without indicating whether it is singular or plural. Similarly, rather than saying "I can't kill any deer," the Native would say "The deer do not want to die." Likewise, we have no equivalent of the Iroquois term "Orenda" which is the fundamental life force or energy inherent in everything. People enervate the power which gives them life; when they pass on, the tribe, community and Orenda remain (Highwater, 1981). Pre-contact Iroquoian culture, for example, was highly collective, with community fishing, hunting, and agricultural ventures (cf. Trigger, 1984; Jaenen, 1976; Parker, 1910). Whereas Christian religion is a personal relationship between a deity and each individual person, Native spiritualism is a covenant between a god and a community (DeLoria, 1973).

Environmentalism amongst Natives reflects their perceived oneness with "mother earth" and is in sharp contrast to Westerners' fear of, and attempts to distance themselves from and dominate nature (DeLoria, 1973). Unlike Whites, Natives do not see themselves as the centre of the universe, with all else subservient. Insects, animals, trees, plants, rocks -- all are equal to man in their importance to the Great Mystery of life.
Tribal people are relatively unafraid of death, and far less concerned with issues of mortality, as expressed by William Nelson, a Mohawk Indian on the reserve at Oka, Quebec, who has repeated the words of Chief Dan George, "It's a good day to die" (York, 1990:A1). This is ironic in view of the positive portrayal of the Christian heaven. You would think that if anyone would be anxious to die it would be the Christians! The explanation for differing attitudes of Christians and Natives lies first of all in the Native expectation of life after death, specifically in reincarnation. But secondly, unlike Westerners, for Natives "the integrity of communal life didn't create an artificial sense of personal identity that had to be protected and preserved at all costs" (DeLoria, 1973:181). In a description which leads into the next category, DeLoria (1973:186) quotes Arnold Toynbee as describing death as "totally 'unAmerican', an infringement of each individual's right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

The final aspect of Native philosophy to be addressed here, and once again one which Innis would fully identify with oral culture, is lack of materialism. Little need be said here about the contrasting condition of Western life, which will be elaborated elsewhere. It is suggested, however, that the traditional Native emphasis is on Spiritualism rather than materialism, and that all of the above disciplines are subsumed by the Native concept of "spiritualism." Hence, the European missionaries could not simply substitute one "religion" for another, without severe ramifications for Native culture as a whole.
The Iroquois

In North America, there are currently seven cultural areas of Indians; the Eastern Woodlands, the South-eastern, the Plains, the South-western, the Plateau, the California and the North Pacific. Within the Eastern Woodlands division, there were both hunting and agriculturally-based tribes. The Montagnais, Algonquin, and Chippewa/Ojibwa were migratory hunters, while the Huron, Tobacco, Neutrals and Iroquois were agriculturally oriented. According to anthropologists, the Iroquois were much superior in cultural development than all other Indian tribes in Canada, and include, anthropologically, the tribes of the Huron, Petun, Neutral of Ontario, Erie of New York, Susquehannock of Pennsylvania, Mohawk, Onondaga, Oneida, Seneca and Cayuga7 (Reaman, 1967). However, when considering the history and customs of the Iroquois, one usually refers to the original five (or eventual six) nations in the League of the Iroquois.8

The agricultural nature of the Iroquois meant that they could live in permanent villages on the banks of rivers and lakes, between the Hudson River and Lake Erie, rather than having to follow the migratory patterns of animals for the survival of the tribe. A central trail passed through their land from east to west that was intersected by cross-trails along the banks of lakes and rivers (Morgan, 1962).

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7Because of the great number and diversity of Indian tribes in North America, the Iroquois have been chosen as the focus tribe in this thesis. The aspects of Native philosophy held most in common by North American Indians will be presented, along with their special application to Iroquoian life.

8The League of the Iroquois is a major part of Indian history and will thus be given considerable attention. The original five nations in the League included the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga and Seneca. The Tuscarora eventually became the sixth nation in the League between 1712 and 1715 (Parkman, 1963:59).
These trails connected the major villages of the Iroquois and eventually were used by the Europeans as a route of travel into Canada on the west and over the Hudson River on the east.

The time of greatest prosperity for the Iroquois, speaking in terms of population, came around 1650 when the populations of the tribes were as follows; Seneca - 10000, Cayuga - 3000, Onondaga - 4000, Mohawk - 5000, and Oneida - 3000. A century later, their total population was half of what it had been in 1650, the Mohawk being the most diminished (Morgan, 1962:27). This decline in population began with their first contact with the Europeans, who brought with them firearms, alcohol, books, disease and a world view in such great opposition to that of the Native Indians that misunderstandings, intolerance and drastic change were inevitable.

The European colonists landed on the coast with the deliberate intention of taking possession of the country and displacing the Natives. From the very beginning the Indians fought, not merely for their land, but for their lives; for it was from their land that they drew the means of living. (Hale, 1969:83)

**Traditional Iroquoian Culture**

Admittedly, there is some injustice in the attempt to identify such a rich oral tradition within the confines of one chapter. A difficulty here, of course, stems from the fact that writings on the topic are naturally of a post-contact nature, and are therefore limited and biased in their account of ancient Iroquois tradition. However, in order to understand the ways in which invading elements such as literacy and Christianity have altered the way of life of the Native Indians, one must first
become at least somewhat acquainted with Native life - as perceived by the early missionaries and explorers, noted scholars, and the modern Iroquois themselves.

One of the fundamental elements of Indian life was and is the notion of circularity and balance in all things, as the foundation of health, peace and well-being in the world. This balance is unrestricted in that it applies equally to the development and support of all elements of life, human and other-than-human. Each aspect of living - spiritual, physical, emotional, intellectual, earth, wind, fire, water, north, south, east, west, spring, summer, autumn, and winter, et cetera - is to be equally nourished so that a people can realize the fullness of balance and contentment (Bopp, Bopp, Brown, and Lane, 1985). The wisdom from which balance emanates is found in the past, in the long experience of the race. Life is seen as one. The sacred is not divided off from times and places considered secular in contemporary wisdom. Thoughts and actions of tribal people, then, are governed by the circle, as representative of wholeness and continuity reflected in nature and Native myth, ceremony and community. Commenting upon this basic belief, Black Elk, an Oglala (of the Siouan family), said:

You have noticed that everything an Indian does is in a circle, and that is because the Power of the World always works in circles, and everything tends to be round. The east gave peace and light, the south gave warmth, the west gave rain, and the north with its cold and mighty wind gave strength and endurance. The life of a man is a circle from childhood to childhood and so it is in everything where power moves. (McLuhan, 1971:42)

This philosophy was reflected in the traditional government, religious life, customs and lifestyle of the Iroquois. These were a people whose sachems (chiefs) had no city, riches, or insignia of office, whose religion had no temples, and whose
government had no written record⁹; their oral-based understanding of the balance
between time and space made such fragmentation unthinkable.

**Iroquoian Government - The League of the Iroquois**

Placing the traditional Iroquoian form of government onto a continuum with
which Westerners are familiar may do some disservice to the complexity and
meaning of their system. Nonetheless, it is a part of that learning pattern to which
we have become accustomed.

Originally, argues Morgan in *League of the Iroquois* (1962), the relationship
of chief and follower was usurped when several anthropologically related Iroquoian
tribes first united into one nation, causing the power of the chiefs to cease being
several and become joint. This more oligarchical form of government - here
indicating the rule of the few and not the traditional Greek meaning of oligarchy as
a degenerated aristocracy - was again altered when several Iroquoian nations united
into a Confederacy or League. The tribal rulers became a united body, constituting
oligarchies within an embracing oligarchy, based upon equality and a spirit of
freedom (democracy). The original five tribes that made up this 16th century
democratic form of self-government - whose perfection to date has been unsurpassed
- were: the Mohawk (Canienga), Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida and the Seneca.

⁹While the Iroquois had no alphabetic written record, they made use of
"wampum" as a means by which to keep track of treaties, covenants and trade
arrangements with other tribes and peoples. Wampum strings and belts were created
using shells, and could be translated only by those who were trained in the
interpretation of these shell arrangements. A more elaborate treatment of the
changing role and use of wampum follows.
The origin of the League is a part of a very complex mythology. In some traditions, it is said that Hiawatha - or "Ayonwatha," in some spellings - of the Onondaga tribe, was first to call together the tribal leaders of the five nations and devise the Confederacy.¹⁰ Both heredity and the elective system were employed to choose the successors of the original leaders. This Confederacy which, incidentally, gave preferred status to women, was founded upon three Great Doctrines: health of mind and body, peace among individuals and groups of individuals and righteousness in conduct, and equity in the adjustment of rights and obligations (Reaman, 1967).

Authority in this system flowed upward from the smallest and most organized units, rather than downward from the top, as is conventionally done in government or other such modern bureaucratic organizations. Unanimity, or consensus, was a fundamental law of the council - they had to be of one mind in decision making - thus, all members of the nations were allowed to speak at gatherings. The idea of majorities and minorities was entirely unknown (Morgan, 1962), and hence the custom of alienating or disenfranchising up to 49.9 percent of the people. The Iroquois were of one mind when it came to the most important of issues and, in times of difference, all members of the tribe were entitled to speak to the Council and present their interpretation of an issue.

¹⁰The national leaders at the time of the formation of the League were: "One Whose Name Must Not Be Mentioned" of the Mohawk tribe, Odatsehtie of the Oneida, Atotarho of the Onondaga, Akahenyonk of the Cayuga, and Kanyadariyo and Shadekaronyes representing the two great divisions of the Seneca (Hale, 1969:28). This origin, however, remains disputed by the Ojibwa.
Men and women were both entitled to vote and women were also a part of the confederated council. Women chose the chiefs and could depose them if they were not adequately fulfilling their functions. It was also the women who decided if there would be war.

The aim of the League was, from its outset, one of peace-making and peace-keeping. Its National Constitution is called Kayanerenh, which means "peace," and, notes Hale (1969:33), "the regard of Americans for their National Constitution seems weak in comparison with the intense gratitude and reverence of the Five Nations for the 'Great Peace'."

**Iroquoian Lifestyle and Customs**

Since the arrival of the whites in North America, the customs and practices of the Native Indians have been misunderstood and denigrated. This is due, in part, to the Europeans' desire to establish their own culture in the New World and to dispense with any element that would threaten their cultural or economic "progress." A brief synopsis of the most prominent of Iroquoian customs may allay some of the misconceptions regarding the nature and lifestyle of these peoples.
Land and Agriculture

"First they took the land," she says. "But that wasn't enough for them....Then they took the river." She waves an arm at the concrete embankment of the St. Lawrence Seaway, which virtually walls off the [Kahnawake Mohawk] reserve from the river's main course. "Then," she continues, "they took away the sky." She points to the bridges, railway trestles, and highways that arch over the reserve....We get our power from the white water - our spiritual power. They wanted to turn it into electricity so people could have more microwave ovens. (Arden, 1987:395)

The Iroquois, like all North American Indian tribes, consider the land to be the warm and intimate Mother Earth for all to enjoy and for none to abuse. The streams, lakes, wildlife and people are all her children and she allows them to use her resources for their sustenance. This is the source of Iroquoian love for Mother Earth and their kinship with all of nature as basic to the life of the Six Nations Indian.

The agricultural emphasis of the Iroquois, however, was both a strength and a weakness for them once the whites came. An advantage of this system was the ability to congregate in semi-permanent villages with adequate food and water for all. The disadvantage emerged with the arrival of the European, who discovered that this aspect of Iroquoian lifestyle could be used against them by means of sudden invasion and destruction of crops. General Sullivan, during the time of the Colonial Wars, destroyed the crops of the Seneca and thus left them with no means of subsistence (Reaman, 1967). In this way, almost immediate disaster is brought to the tribe, putting them at the mercy of their attackers.

The earth and her products also play an important role in the ceremonies and celebrations of the Iroquois because of their reverence for the earth itself. They have
a profound belief that the earth belongs in common and that present generations are simply guardians of the land for future generations seven times removed. The land belongs to the past, present and future and therefore cannot be owned by individuals. The Indian has never been able to understand the idea of the possession of the land as sought after by the European settlers. When land became a commodity, the relationship between the Indian and the whites continued to deteriorate to the point of war and massacre. An old Wintu woman of California lamented:

The white people never cared for land or deer or bear. When we Indians kill meat, we eat it all up. When we dig roots we make little holes...We shake down acorns and pinenuts. We don't chop down the trees. We only use dead wood. But the white people plow up the ground, pull down the trees, kill everything. The tree says, "Don't. I am sore. Don't hurt me." But they chop it down and cut it up. The spirit of the land hates them....The Indians never hurt anything, but the white people destroy all....How can the spirit of the earth like the white man?....Everywhere the white man has touched it, it is sore. (McLuhan, 1971:15)

The Iroquois had three main sources of nourishment - maize, beans and squash - which they referred to as The Three Sisters. They were considered to be sacred gifts from the Great Mystery and were the supporters of life. Like all elements of nature, these agricultural products were a major part of their social and ceremonial life. Today, the Great Mystery is referred to as the Great Spirit, a name

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1In the literature regarding the Native Indian, most often this being is referred to as the "Great Spirit." However, before the arrival of the whites in North America, the Natives had no word for; "Heaven," "lead into temptation," "glory," "virtue," "reason," "beatitude," "Trinity," "Holy Spirit," "angels," "archangels," "resurrection," "paradise," "hell," "church," "baptism," "faith," "hope," or "charity" (Jacnen, 1976:52). Consequently, they could not have used the term Great "Spirit," as North American and European writers indicate. Instead, they referred to this being as the "Great Mystery," which is a totally different concept.
introduced by the French as an early translation, but which is a totally different concept.

The Great Mystery is the Source that provides the living interrelationship of all things seen or unseen - touched or sensed. The Great Mystery is the living Essence, is the every manifestation in the Universe. The Great Mystery is the Universe.

The Great Mystery is the Expression of all matter. Thus, it is not limited in any form such as being male or female. (Yehwehnnode Two Wolves, 1988:6)

Social and Ceremonial Life of the Iroquois

The Iroquois lived in what was called the Longhouse - a simple structure made of bark and wooden poles that was sufficient to comfortably fulfill the limited needs of the Iroquois. But it was more than a residence and storage area, it served as the locale for ceremonial celebrations, was the heart and soul of their culture and, therefore, basic to their world view and philosophy.

The Iroquois held six major ceremonies or festivals throughout the year, all based upon the gifts of the Great Mystery. The festivals were a simple, mild, humanizing, and gentle means of giving thanks for the blessings of life and nature and ensuring future abundance and favour of the gods. The festivals included: the Seed Planting Ceremony, the Strawberry Festival, the Raspberry Festival, the Green Bean and Green Corn Festival, the Harvest Ceremony, and the Mid-Winter Festival (Reaman, 1967). These ceremonies were observed from generation to generation and at the same seasons of the year by the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga and Seneca, and consisted of story-telling and singing - as basic for the survival of their Indian culture - games, dance, and, more often than not, music.
The Hunt and Usages of War

Being primarily an agricultural people, the Iroquois did not put as much emphasis on the hunt as did other tribes. The passion and excitement often associated with the hunt did occupy certain status in the life of the Iroquois male, but the primary reason for the hunt was subsistence. Deer, elk, moose, bear and wild fowl were the primary game of the Iroquois, who wasted no part of the downed animal due to their respect for life and their belief in collectivism and reincarnation (Morgan, 1962). The hunters would most often set off in the autumn, return for the Mid-Winter Jubilee, use the wintertime as a season of idleness, fish in the spring, and take repose in the summer. Obviously, the seasons suggested what ought to be done at a particular time of the year.

In the case of war, a common misconception regarding the Iroquois deals with the practice of scalping. Although scalping did occur in rare instances before the arrival of the Europeans, it was actually the whites who made it so widespread and, in fact, practised it themselves. It was the white people who "introduced firearms, which increased the fatalities in a conflict, brought the steel knife, facilitating the taking of the scalp, and finally offered scalp premiums"\(^{12}\) (Friederici, 1985:3). Before the arrival of the whites, scalping was a proof of courage and power over one’s enemies. Jaenen (1976) indicates that the skull or scalp gave control over the spirit of the victim. It was the English, French, Puritans, Dutch and

\(^{12}\)For more details regarding the European influence on scalping, see Friederici, (1985:10-15)
Roman Catholics who accepted the practice and encouraged it by paying the Indians per head for fighting the battles of the English and French (Reaman, 1967). The barbarity of the Europeans often goes overlooked in such discussion, though it is worthwhile to note that, as Jaenen (1976) reminds us, the French practised such cruelty as roasting people alive bit by bit, making one subject to being bitten and mauled by dogs and swine, employing the guillotine, stocks and the rack, thumbscrews, and cutting off the hands of a thief.

As far as intertribal warfare before the arrival of the whites, once declared, a tomahawk, painted red and adorned with red feathers and black wampum¹³, would be stuck in the war-post in each village of the League so that anyone would know they could organize a band and invade. Once prisoners were taken, an exchange was never sought, the options were adoption or torture and death. According to Morgan (1962), a distinguished war chief, if captured, could be released out of admiration for his achievements and returned to his tribe. In cases such as these, the released chief was bound by honour never again to declare war against that generous enemy. If the prisoner was to be adopted, families who had lost members to war were given the first chance to adopt him or her; the women decided which captives

¹³Originally, "wampum" referred to a white shell - later replaced by the bead - that was used to make belts that would be passed from one nation to another in all treaties, declarations and transactions. Its purpose was to preserve the record of history. Every statement and pledge were woven into the belt, shells of different colours and shapes documenting a particular intention of the agreement. These strands and belts were the only visible record of the Iroquois and often required trained interpreters to decode them. In later days wampum was used for personal adornment, as symbols of authority and power to be surrendered upon defeat in battle as well, in colonial days, as money among Indian tribes. The use of wampum as money was of European invention, as the Europeans of that made and passed counterfeit wampum (Reaman, 1967:20-21).
should be adopted into the tribe. Male captives had to undergo tests of power and endurance in order to be considered for adoption, and once adopted into one of the clans affections and loyalty shifted to that adoptive tribe. Rejected captives were tortured and put to death. This, however, was not necessarily seen as a degrading thing, as the glory of the race evolved and was illustrated in the manner of each members' death. They would always go to their death singing their war song. The focus was always on the needs and glory of the whole, rather than the individual.

The Individual and the Clan

In all aspects of Indian life, it is impossible to conceive of an individual alone because of the complexity and interdependence of Indian life. In fact, writes Cox (DeLoria, 1973:201). "tribal man is hardly a personal 'self' in our modern sense of the word. He does not so much live in a tribe; the tribe lives in him." They are a people guided by reason and inspired by the sentiments of honour and love for their country. The glory of the tribe and the motive of honour are the prime movers in all Native endeavours. "Never since the days of Sparta," writes Parkman (1963:52), "were individual life and national life so completely fused into one."

The Iroquois nation is a united brotherhood wherein the clan, rather than the single family or individual, is the natural unit of social organization. Within each Iroquois nation there were eight tribes - the Wolf, Deer, Bear, Snipe, Laser, Heron, Turtle and Hawk - that were arranged into two or more clans (Morgan, 1962). This "phratry," or grouping of clans into two related divisions, constituted the tribe. The
clan consisted of a grouping of families related by blood, tracing descent through
the maternal line. Each clan was divided into maternal families comprised of a head
woman and her immediate male and female descendants and their issue continuing
in the female line (Reaman, 1967). Members of different tribes could belong to the
same clan so as to help keep the Confederacy together, though members of the
same clan did not marry one another. In the eyes of an Iroquois, every member of
his or her own tribe, in whatever nation, was as much his or her brother or sister as
if they were children of the same mother.

Marriage, Divorce and Naming

When a young man wished to marry, writes Sagard (1939), he would ask
permission of the parents of the girl then paint his face and adorn himself before
giving a present to the girl, often a necklace, bracelet or earring made of wampum.
If the girl liked the suitor, she would accept the present and the two would sleep
together for three or four nights to see how they would get on. If either or both of
the parties were unhappy, that would be the end of the arrangement and no
marriage would take place. If they wished to proceed, on the other hand, the
announcements and ceremony would follow. The nationality or tribe of an individual
could never be lost or merged with another as a result of marriage.

While plurality of husbands and wives was practised among the Iroquois, no
form of consanguinity was accepted. When one spouse died before the other, the
remaining spouse was obliged to marry the brother or sister of the deceased, or
such person as the family of the deceased had chosen for him or her.
After contact with whites, and especially the Christian missionaries, these practices changed quickly, extensively, and dramatically. The sense of morality consistent with Native beliefs was found to be abhorrent - because of a lack of understanding and respect - to the missionaries who struggled to impose their customs and standards on the Iroquois. After European contact, marriage in Iroquoian society was based solely upon the physical necessities of procreation, rather than affection. The announcement and ceremony of marriage underwent great and many changes, adopting an increasing number of Christian European traditions.

In many instances, marriage was similar to a contractual arrangement, designed by the mothers of the parties involved who looked for partners similar to their children in disposition and temperament. After negotiation between the mothers, the impending marriage would be announced. This announcement would most likely be the first mention of marriage made known to the parties involved. Nevertheless, neither party ever objected, but rather accepted one another as a gift from their respective parents. In these days, when mothers began arranging marriages, they were deemed responsible for the harmony and success of the marriage. They would, in times of difficulty, give advice and effect reconciliations, but if troubles lingered the couple could separate by mutual consent or by one party's refusal to continue to acknowledge the marriage relationship. Whereas divorce was rampant in traditional times, it was in post-contact times that this practice began to evoke public censure (a result of Christian missionary influence), and was therefore infrequent.
If a marriage that was breaking up involved children and the husband and wife were of different tribes, the children, considered members of the mother's tribe, could not be given over to their father for custody or nurturing (Morgan, 1962). They were, therefore, often estranged from their father in the case of divorce. In Indian life, however, parental affection was less with the father than with the mother, at least until the boys grew older and could be taken on the hunt.

The passion associated with love - a belief accepted by the Iroquois in pre-contact times - was made unacceptable by the missionaries for the post-contact Iroquois, who would rarely practice pre-marriage socializing between males and females. Affection between the married couple grew over time, and if a man maltreated his wife, he was disgraced forever. Another characteristic associated with European influence was the propagation of myths by the Europeans regarding the social life of the Iroquois. For example, it has been falsely indicated by de Charlevoix (1966), that in ancient times the married couple could live together for a period of one year without having intercourse. This practice was said to support the belief that the couple had married out of friendship, and not to gratify passions. The missionaries, believing the Iroquois to be sinfully passionate, made every effort to tame and control the intensity of emotion felt and expressed by the Iroquois.

The naming of children was also entrusted to the maternal line. Soon after the birth of an infant, the near relatives of the mother's tribe would select a name - usually one of significance that once belonged to a now deceased member of the tribe. For this reason, one could usually determine the tribe of an individual by his or her name alone (Morgan, 1962). In the case of the naming of lakes and rivers,
the usual practice was to name them after a village or locality along the border of the body of water. In these instances, the same lake or river could be known by more than one name, depending upon where the individual who was referring to it lived. This illustrates the Indian notion that not one individual or group has exclusive rights to any tract of land or water, even insofar as naming it is concerned, as evidenced by the practice of saying "I call this maize," rather than "This is maize."

Property

The property owned by the Iroquois was often limited in its amount and variety and consisted mainly of planting lots, orchards, residences, implements of the chase, weapons, clothing, domestic utensils, ornaments, grain, skins, and inventions of necessity (Morgan, 1962). As previously indicated, no one individual could obtain absolute title to land, although one could cultivate unoccupied land to any extent desired, and as long as he or she used the land, their right to enjoy it was secured. The notion of common property was central to Iroquoian life and was thus a source of great schism between the whites and Indians.

In a letter from the River St. Joseph on August 16, 1721, de Charlevoix (1966:107-108) points out that the Indians were ignorant of and had no desire for the false goods which we so much admire, which we purchase at the expense of real ones, and which we so little enjoy. All of our conveniences...and riches affect them so little....There was never so much a single Indian that could be brought to relish our way of living.
In the earliest times, if a mother died her property went immediately to her children. However, if the father died his wife and children had no right to his property as they were not considered of his tribe. By common law the belongings had to remain within the tribe. As European influence increased, a man could give his property to his wife and children in front of a witness, but if he died with no disposition of his effects they were handed over to his near relatives of his own tribe (Morgan, 1962).

The Criminal Code

The limited criminal justice system of the Iroquois was accompanied by little crime since private interests, which so often provoke crime, had no influence over those who never thought about hoarding. Although crime was very infrequent among the Iroquois, they nonetheless held certain infractions intolerable and punished the guilty as they saw appropriate.

According to Morgan (1962), cannibalism and polygamy were unacceptable and never practised. This, however, was not the case, as has in part been discussed with regard to multiple marriage partners. In addition, in traditional times, according to Jaenen (1976), if someone had died while being brave in torture, parts of the victim's body would be eaten so that those who participated might imbibe the heroic strength of the courageous and valiant person. Eating the heart of the captive was seen as the highest tribute one could be paid. Nonetheless, an anti-social appetite would lead to the immediate exile or death of the guilty party. Natives, in
fact, would refuse to eat human flesh except for religious reasons or in extreme circumstances (Jaenen, 1976).

In post-contact times, new elements and desires were added to the life of the Iroquois making the four crimes considered the most severe in post-contact times — witchcraft, adultery committed by women, murder and theft — all virtually unknown before the European invasion and obviously influenced by the missionaries.

Despite the severity of some of the punishments employed by the Iroquois, public indignation and banishment were and, in many cases, remain the most severe punishment known to the Indian. The criminal was more deeply affected by the mortification he or she saw the public suffer on his or her account than that criminal could possibly have been by his or her own mortification. According to de Charlevoix (1966), their zeal for the honour of their tribe was a much more powerful deterrent on crime than the fear of death, punishment, or the most severe of laws.

Their love of the truth pervaded all aspects of life; the Indian spoke the truth without fear or hesitation. In fact, the Iroquoian language has no provision for double speaking or for the perversion of the words of the speaker (Morgan, 1962). Their life, as reflected in their language, was simple and direct. They had unwavering fidelity — even in the face of treaties broken by the whites — and held with sacred regard the public faith.
Character and Hospitality

According to Reaman (1967), the earliest missionaries and settlers did not fail to notice the charitable nature of the Iroquois. In fact, wrote de Charlevoix of his own experience; "The nearer we view our Indians, the more good qualities we see in them" (de Charlevoix, 1966:20). They never abandoned the aged or infirm, never swore - in fact they had no word for "swear" - never used the term "squaw," which meant "prostitute," and had no regard for frugality, punctuality, orderliness, or the retention of money - which was unknown in pre-contact times. They adopted illegitimate children into the tribe without question; the Indians shared all they had with each another and with those they did not know. They treated one other and strangers with a gentleness and respect unknown in even the most polite of nations. Their houses were open day and night to family and strangers, whom they would entertain as they could afford. Whenever a guest entered, he or she was immediately fed. If the host had already eaten, he or she was still obliged to at least taste the food offered and thank the host. This practice was quite similar to the notion of the "common table" of the Spartans. For this reason - along with communal property, crops, hunting and fishing - hunger and destitution were virtually unknown in Indian culture, except in times of crop failure and drought when everyone suffered equally (Morgan, 1962). It was primarily for this reason that the Natives were amazed to hear the stories and see the inequality and poverty in Europe.

In his letters regarding his voyage to North America in 1721, de Charlevoix notes further similarities between the oral culture of the Iroquois and the Ancient Greeks. These comparisons were made with respect to the extreme perfection of the
internal and external senses of the Indians, the capacity of memory - which made it suffice for them to have been in a place but once to have an exact idea of it - their clear, quick and ingenious judgement, and, most notably, the strength, nature and pathos of their eloquence in narration that carried all the beauty of their language (de Charlevoix, 1966). The Iroquoian language, though complicated, is certainly not less persistent, and probably better maintained, than those of the written Aryan tongues. "The primitive Indian...is a dream of poets, rhetoriticians, and sentimentalists" (Parkman, 1963:87).

Spiritual Life

The Ancient Greeks were one of the first known civilizations to believe that there are traces of divinity in every object of nature. The character of their legends, fables and notions regarding the spiritual world holds some degree of coincidence with those of the traditional Iroquois, who believe that all aspects of living - human and other-than-human - are imbued with an essence of good or evil. The Great Mystery, Hawenneyu - a being of more excellent nature than others (de Charlevoix, 1966) - and Hanegoategeh, are conceived of as brothers, one responsible for all good and the other for all evil (Morgan, 1962). To communicate with the Great Mystery, the Iroquois burn tobacco and thus send up their petitions with the ascending incense. In like manner, it is believed that anyone could become possessed by an evil spirit and be transformed into a witch who could assume, at will, the form of any animal, bird, or reptile, then either resume its original form or
transmute into an inanimate object (Morgan, 1962). When one became a witch, he or she ceased being himself or herself.

Besides these beings, other spiritual entities were also recognized in both the good and evil realms, such that every living element became "spiritual." To some of these beings a bodily form and/or name was ascribed.

Like most Native Indians, the Iroquois make no pretense as to the exclusiveness of their beliefs. Their spiritual revelations constitute a particular experience at a particular place, with no universal truth emerging, but rather an awareness that certain places have a qualitative spiritual nature (DeLoria, 1973). These places give the Iroquois a feeling of rootedness, but there is still no hypocrisy or bigotry in the Iroquoian belief system. If another tribe was to join them, they would be permitted and encouraged to express their beliefs in their own way. It is unfortunate that the European missionaries did not see the value in this practice. In fact, they believed that if a given tribe did not have a particular word for "religion," it meant they had no belief system (Raunet, 1984). However, in reality, the Indians included their spiritual life in their overall practice of living. In reflecting upon this phenomenon, a Chippewa Medicine Man, Sun Bear, commented that the sad thing about "modern" society is that people tend to put everything into little boxes. "Religion is in this box, and religion doesn't have anything to do with the growing of corn or the making of love or anything else in those boxes over there. All things can come together in harmony. This is a natural thing, a balance thing." (Steiger, 1984:203)
This specialization that pervades Western life has also invaded the realm of religion, even to the degree of dividing up specific functions and creating impenetrable, impersonal hierarchies. In Iroquoian life, there are no spiritual dignitaries, but rather those with the desire or special talent are appointed in each nation to take charge of and supervise the festivals. These "Keepers of the Faith" occupy an elected office and continue in that capacity as long as they are faithful to the trust given them (Morgan, 1962). When elected to the office, they are given a new name and may relinquish the office by laying aside the new name and reclaiming the old one. Women and men are appointed Keepers of the Faith in equal numbers and are selected by both the wise men and the matrons (head women). This office is one of necessity for which there is no material reward or particular honour for the individual.

Concerning tribal beliefs regarding death, in a sense, it is seen as a means by which one fulfills his or her destiny, for as the body becomes dust and returns to the earth, the Indian once again contributes to the ongoing life-cycle of creation. The Iroquois is not estranged from nature and does not see death as punishment. He or she fears not death itself, but meaningless death that would discredit the community and violate one's beliefs. Death is seen as a demonstration of the belief in the continuity of the community (Morgan, 1962).

It goes beyond this however. Although it is not clear that Morgan and other whites are aware of this, the Iroquois believe in reincarnation. Perhaps this helps explain their reverence for all life, as they, their family and friends, and all of creation may be reincarnated into any life form. This reinforces their notion of
collectivism earlier discussed. The Iroquois believe in the immortality of the soul, but not a state of future reward or punishment. According to de Charlevoix (1966), some acknowledge the existence of two souls in all animate and inanimate beings, one which leaves the body yet preserves the same inclinations and passions it had in its former state, and the other which does not leave the body until it is to pass into some other. Whether or not his interpretation of Indian belief is accurate, de Charlevoix is one of the few writers to acknowledge reincarnation as an aspect of the circular nature of Indian life and death.

The custom of capturing a bird and freeing it over the grave after the burial was designed to carry away the spirit of the deceased person to its final rest. There was no recognition of the doctrine of atonement for sin or of the absolution of sins. Instead it was believed that one's good deeds cancelled the evil. This stemmed from their assurance that all of creation was good and did not include a "fall." For them, creation itself meant that all aspects of it functioned together to sustain itself, whereas for the Christian, people are given dominion over all of creation. For Natives, kinship between animals, reptiles, birds and humans means that none constitute an "insensitive species" but are all "peoples," and all share in the notion of equality as recognition of the "creatureness" of all creation (DeLoria, 1973). Indeed, the Iroquois believe that we are other creatures in other lifetimes, hence the expression "All my relatives," used to refer to the non-human world. Differing tribal accounts of the story of creation were not held under suspicion, as it was never a matter of trying to establish power over others.
According to Bittany (1988), North American Native Indians had a belief in "beneficent divinities" in all of nature, but it is not possible that the idea of a single personal divinity had been developed by them before their contact with the European Christian. Because of the nature of oral tribal life, there could be no personal relationship with a personal saviour. In typical egocentric Western fashion, Parkman (1963:86), because of his failure to understand Native philosophy and celebration, noted: "It is obvious that the Indian mind has never seriously occupied itself with any of the higher themes of thought." On the contrary, the Indian mind has more closely approximated the purest and highest forms of thought and existence compared to any modern scientific individual or nation.

The Iroquois and the Christian Missionary

In the Indian conception of "God," the missionaries found, there was no consideration of moral good; the Great Mystery did not dispense justice for this world or the next. In no Indian language could the early missionaries find a word to express the idea of "God" as they intended it. The focus, then, of the Jesuits was to make the Great "Spirit" a distinct existence, a pervading power in the universe, and a dispenser of justice, in order to compel the Natives to adopt Christianity based upon the new-found concepts of heaven and hell, reward and punishment (Parkman, 1963).

The first Indian Reservations in Canada were in French Canada in the 17th century (Patterson, 1972). By means of a controlled environment, the Indians were to be gradually lead into a new way and view of life more compatible with Western
values. According to Raunet (1984), the Europeans had little contact with the Natives until they deemed it necessary to convert the Indians to Christianity, most often so that trade could progress. In an attitude and practice begun by the Recollet Missionaries around 1600, missionary Robert Tomlinson indicated the impatience of the white man in his effort to convert the Indian "from ignorant, blood thirsty, cruel savages to quiet, useful subjects of [the] gracious Queen...The time had come for white administrators to develop a more direct presence in Native societies." (Raunet, 1984:52-53) The attitude of the Iroquois toward the role and attempts of the missionaries was similarly expressed. Red Jacket, a Seneca Chief, said of the Christian missionary in 1824:

They do us no good. If they are not useful to the White people and do them no good, why do they send them among the Indians? If they are useful to the White people and do them good, why do they not keep them at home? They [the white people] are surely bad enough to need the labor of everyone who can make them better. These men [the missionaries] know we do not understand their religion. We cannot read their book - they tell us different stories about what it contains, and we believe they make the book talk to suit themselves. If we had no money, no land and no country to be cheated out of these black coats would not trouble themselves about our good hereafter. The Great Spirit will not punish us for what we do not know. He will do justice to his red children. These black coats talk to the Great Spirit, and ask for light that we may see as they do, when they are blind themselves and quarrel about the light that guides them. These things we do not understand, and the light which they give us makes the straight and plain path trod by our fathers dark and dreary...The red men knew nothing of trouble until it came from the white men; as soon as they crossed the great waters they wanted our country, and in return have always been ready to teach us to quarrel about their religion. Red Jacket can never be the friend of such men. If they [the Indians] were raised among white people, and learned to work and read as they do, it would only make their situation worse...We are few and weak, but may for a long time be happy if we hold fast to our country, and the religion of our fathers. (McLuhan, 1971:63)
This statement was made long after the Society for the Promotion of the Gospels began its work among the Mohawk in 1704, and the founding of the Roman Catholic St. Francis Xavier mission for the Iroquois in 1669. Already the terms "Great Spirit" and "punishment" have intruded into the language belief system of the Iroquois.

The Iroquois fought the French, including the missionaries, until 1650, while they traded with the Dutch who were not inclined to religious conversion. So, until the Huron genocide, the missionaries were at arm's length, but as with the Huron, the missionaries' presence was a prerequisite for trade. The French fur traders found war between the Huron and the Iroquois more useful than peace, fearing that at peace the Iroquois would lead the Huron to trade with the Dutch, who were geographically closer. Similarly, the French believed that the Dutch design was to have the French harassed by the Iroquois "to such an extent that they may constrain them to give up and abandon everything" (Mealing, 1963:58). Nonetheless, Her Majesty's Chapel of the Mohawks opened its doors in 1785, as did the first school on an Indian Reserve. This was the first Protestant church in Ontario - if not the first church of any denomination - and is the only Indian Royal Chapel in the world (Reaman, 1967).

More so than the Roman Catholics or the Methodists, the Anglicans insisted on the primacy of the written word and attached scarcely less importance to school teachers than to preachers (Grant, 1984). Basic to all of their teaching was the notion of the Bible as the inspired Word of God. The permanence and uniformity of
Christian documents made the traditional myths of the Iroquois seem unreliable and in danger of quickly fading away.

Peace, hospitality, charity, friendship, harmony, integrity, religious enthusiasm, [and] the domestic affections found generous growth and cultivation among the Iroquois. Genius, learning and Christianity change the features of society, and cast over it an artificial garment, but its elements continue the same. (Morgan, 1962:181)

**Literacy, Social Change, and the Iroquois**

I had learned many English words and could recite part of the Ten Commandments. I knew how to sleep on a bed, pray to Jesus, comb my hair, eat with a knife and fork, and use the toilet... I had also learned that a person thinks with his head instead of his heart. Sun Chief (McLuhan, 1971:108)

According to Goody (1977:37), the whole of culture is a series of communicative acts, and "differences in the mode of communication are often as important as differences in the mode of production, for they involve elements in the storing, analysis and creation of human knowledge, as well as the relationships between individuals involved." Literacy makes it possible to scrutinize and criticize discourse, thus making rationality, scepticism and logic possible and valuable. In the establishment of a cumulative tradition of these elements, ways of thinking and modes of communication between person and person, person and God, and person and nature are altered.

One of the earliest and most common uses of writing in Ancient Mesopotamia and among the Native Peoples was the list which relies on discontinuity and physical placement, can be read in different directions, has a clear-cut beginning and precise end, and encourages the ordering of items by number or
initial sound or category (Goody, 1977). In these ways, lists differ from the products of oral communication and are especially important within a bureaucratic system whose economic activities are based upon the movement of staples, materials or finished products, like that system perpetually found in Canada.

The presence of writing not only alters the world "out there," but also the collective and individual psyche.

It encourages reflection upon and the organization of information, permits the reclassification of information by those who can write, legitimizes reformations for those who can read and changes the nature of the representations of the world (cognitive processes) for those who cannot. (Goody, 1977:109-110)

Cognitive changes that take place with the introduction of writing include: alterations in the structure within primary areas of thought, such as time and space, the refinement of cognitive abilities already in existences, and changes in the basis of knowledge.

However, in order to determine whether or not true social change has occurred Clammer (1976), suggests we attempt to answer six basic questions: what is it that has changed, how has it changed, what is the direction of the change, what is the rate of change, why did the change occur or why was it possible, and what are the principle factors in social change? In answer to these questions, one might indicate that what has changed is the social structure and culture of the Iroquois, including ideas, knowledge, religion, morals, institutions and relationships. In answering the second through to the fourth question, it is most prudent to look at the matter in purely historical terms, thus considering internal and external sources of change, conditions from which the changes stem, how rapidly the changes
occurred, and to what extent the changes were fortuitous, causally determined or purposive, both in terms of their origins and ramifications (Clammer, 1976).

In any study of social change, one must also consider the cultural background and the protagonists in the drama, the ramifications and processes of attitude change, the means of resistance, and the mechanisms of assimilation and transformation - including cultural borrowing - employed by the group whose social structure is or has been under attack.

The adoption of Christianity and the borrowing of ideas, habits and techniques from the Europeans have led to the assimilation of these aspects into Native tradition, though it must be kept in mind that both systems have been at least minimally modified during the integration process. Changes in the primary sources of knowledge and authority are usually considered important indicators of relevant social transformation and change in world view. Traditional myths, divination, and contact with spirits have been demoted from first rank of sources of knowledge, authority and legitimisation, and have been replaced by that which is backed by literacy and written, scientific documentation.
The success of the European order lay in its ability to control the network of communications and thereby control the power of indigenous pressure groups...to expand the power of European interest groups...to restrict the possibility of the local population dictating the disposal of goods and services, to control the flow and content of information...to direct the social organisation of specialised knowledge through management of the educational system and by preventing pressure groups...from forming, to define the conditions under which trade and social intercourse were possible and, through the manipulation of the belief system and the control of its material correlates, to influence ideological development, hence the principles which legitimate authority. (Clammer, 1976:198)\textsuperscript{14}

The transformation from one social structure to another is characterized by consistency between the new behaviour and the new belief. There is a direct relationship, argues Clammer (1976), between the provision of literate education and the decline of traditional oral customs which either proved to be inconsistent with the ideology of education, or were given up for the pursuit of knowledge (this was especially the case for those customs hated most by the missionaries).

From the outset, education had been regarded as an indispensable part of the Indian mission project, and in the end came to overshadow all other avenues of missionary work. Every denomination involved in Indian missionary work expanded its education programs during the 1880’s and 1890’s. According to Grant (1984), Indian education had a threefold aim: the temporal, intellectual and spiritual "improvement" of the Indian situation such that the Indians would be able to communicate and do business with others in a white-dominated society.

Teaching the Indian children to read, however, was not that simple. Consider the fact that several studies cited by Stubbs (1980) have shown that most non-

\textsuperscript{14}These are all aspects of the manipulation of knowledge that so concerned Harold Innis, as discussed in Chapter One.
Native children, before they start to read and in the early stages of learning, are quite confused or vague about the relationship between reading, writing and speaking. Their difficulty is in understanding the purpose and value of such activities as they are completely beyond the needs and experiences of the children. This case is all the more applicable to the Indian child who has been raised in an oral-based tradition.

In a study of Indian children on Vancouver Island in 1969, it was found that many of them relied on non-verbal cues, provided unconsciously by the teacher, for information regarding what response to make when asked to perform a given task such as going to the door or opening a book. It was concluded that these Indian children may "never learn to be taught" (Phillion and Galloway, 1972:169). There is an obvious mismatch here between the learners' language and experience and the language and experience demanded by the teacher. According to de Charlevoix (1966), the Indian principles of honour, which they preserve through their whole lives, conflicted with the education imposed upon them by the whites which sought to denigrate the traditional customs and beliefs of the Iroquois and replace them with the European values.

This was also the case in the days of the early missionary schools, where selective attendance at church and school fortunately hampered the rate of acceptance of Western culture by the Indian. Since Christianity, agriculture and Westernization were seen as signs of "progress," European administrators decided

\[13\text{For further details regarding these studies, see Reid (1958, 1966); Mason, (1967); Downing (1969); and Vygotsky, (1962).}\]
that agriculture, the settled life and schools would be the mechanisms by which the
desired cultural changes would take place. The Iroquois, being both agriculturally
maintained and settled, fulfilled two of the above stipulations long before the
Europeans arrived. It is curious, therefore, that the Europeans would take credit for
having so quickly and easily "civilized" the "barbaric" Iroquois.16

Financial aid was given to parents who sent their children to residential
schools which were, incidentally, most often located near whites so that cultural
assimilation could occur faster. Sometimes these residential school-children were
under the pressure of physical punishment to give up their customs, spiritual beliefs,
and language (Patterson, 1972). The Indians, in general, gave up their political and
economic initiative more easily than their social and spiritual identity - if one can
really separate these aspects in the first place.

Specific Changes in the Iroquoian Way of Life

According to Morgan (1962), the clan, in traditional times, could be
characterized by the following rights, privileges and obligations:

1. The right of electing its chiefs.

2. The right of deposing its chiefs.

3. The obligation not to marry within the clan.


16An 1844 report on Indians on reserves in Upper and Lower Canada showed
the extent of Westernization achieved in terms of economic changes, religious
changes, schools, and the adoption of European dress, housing and language. Of all
of the tribes studied, the Six Nations Indians were deemed to be the most
Westernized (Patterson, 1972).
5. Reciprocal obligations of help, defense and redress of injury.

6. The right of bestowing names upon its members.

7. The right of adopting strangers into the clan.


9. A common burial place.

10. A council of the clan. (Shimony, 1961:29)

Today, of this list, only the first, second and sixth functions still fall under the jurisdiction of the clan, and the first and second are more lineage than clan characteristics. The example of the current situation at the Akwasasne Reserve may help to clarify this relationship. The Mohawk of Akwasasne live on 24,000 acres of land that joins New York state, Ontario and Quebec, and abuts one of the United States' worst toxic waste dumps (Arden, 1987). In 1796 though on the Canada-United States border, Akwasasne considered itself a Mohawk nation and was represented by 12 chiefs "appointed for life by the matriarchs of the four major clans," which were the Turtle, Wolf, Bear, and Snipe (Horn, 1990). Unfortunately, in 1802 this system changed when the New York legislature created a dual political system by appointing three chiefs to represent the American part of Akwasasne. This division, writes Horn (1990) was made even more apparent when the Canadian Parliament passed the Indian Act in 1876 which recognized only residents on the Canadian side as legally "Indian." Ten years later, the Canadian government decided to force the Mohawks to elect a chief representative in alliance with Western political practice, thus bypassing many of the traditional chiefs who refused to take
part in the election. "Akwasasne remained divided politically and socially until the late 1930's, when the traditional Longhouse religion attracted a small following on the reserve. By the 1950's it was well established as an institution many felt they needed to resume their identity as Mohawks." (Horn, 1990:A7)

Today the Mohawk of Akwasasne are becoming more and more united as they fight for their right to be a separate and autonomous entity, regardless of the international border that occupies their land. In fact,

for the first time, representatives of all the various factions on the reserve - Catholic, Methodist and Longhouse adherents, American and Canadian - sat down together and organized a "people's committee" to deal with mutual problems. Because it drew from the people's historical practice of making collective decisions rather than being governed from above, this committee revitalized the influence of traditional government....A community such as Akwasasne amounts to one big family....The concept of kinship forms the basis of Native identity....Iroquois people...[use] family ties to weave together their society - from the individual to the tribe, to the nation, and finally, to the Confederacy. (Horn, 1990:A7)

Although the role and responsibility of the clan has changed over the years and indeed continues to do so, the change has for the most part been imposed upon the Iroquois living on reserves by the political, social, and economic system of North America. Today the power of the unity and tradition of the Native Indian is being rediscovered by non-Natives around the globe - much to their dismay - and promises to reclaim and nurture the influence and interdependent support of ancient times.

The third function of the clan indicated above by Morgan has been retained spottily, and the younger generations have returned to the pre-contact idea that marriage should be with a freely chosen partner.
For the Longhouse marriage, the bride's family cooks a Canadian meal - little ritual food is required - and invites some family and friends over to celebrate. Since the 1920's, elaborate wedding ceremonies, dances and receptions have become more and more popular among people of the Longhouse, while separation and divorce have become easier and more readily accepted socially (Shimony, 1961).

The fourth function of the clan regarding mutual rights of inheritance is almost entirely lost. Property is now owned individually and bequested by will to members outside the clan. The fifth function regarding redress of injury is now a function of the Longhouse.

The right of bestowing names upon its members still belongs to the clan, though this practice is fading due to the failure in remembering older names - a side-effect of growing dependence on the written word. At any rate, the clan association of a name is functionally irrelevant. The remaining functions on Morgan's list have been lost or transferred, most often to the domain of the Longhouse (Shimony, 1961). The clan has become the least important social unit and "my family," "my relatives," and "my Longhouse" have become the most important functional units. The Longhouse is no longer a place of residence but more of a political arena. Individual families have moved onto scattered farms which they are able to own.
Borrowing Culture

There are certain other areas of Iroquoian culture that have changed in such a way that they now resemble modern Western culture. While some of these changes were imposed upon the Indians through the regulations of the Canadian government, others have become a part of Iroquoian culture through the process of assimilation brought about by economic necessity. These aspects include the naming of children, attitudes toward legitimacy, games, costume, charms, education and religion.

Any child born at the Six Nations Indian Reserve is immediately given a common name and surname so that he or she may be registered on the official tribal roles. If the child is from a Longhouse family, as opposed to being Christian, he or she should also be given an "Indian" name at the first Green Corn or Mid-Winter Ceremony so that the child can be adopted into Indian society and partake of Indian cures. As far as legitimacy is concerned, it was never considered a moral issue until Jesuit times when much emphasis was put on legitimacy for purposes of band registry and as an aspect moral integrity (Shimony, 1961). Today, the attitude of the Mohawk toward pregnancy exemplifies the life-force of the Iroquois.

It must be understood that when a woman is pregnant, her husband is also pregnant. Whatever health and mental precautions are observed by pregnant women, the father is also obligated to observe as well. This is the traditional Mohawk or Iroquois understanding. "...[The] most precious gift in all life [is] that of a new baby. It [makes] no difference if it [is] an animal, human or bird...The baby does feel and detect all feelings of emotion both physically and emotionally from both parents. (Sakokwenonkwas, 1989:115)

When considering traditional tribal games, Shimony (1961), notes that the Javelin game has been obsolete at Six Nations since the 1940's. Boys are usually
given snow snakes, bows and arrows and lacrosse rackets, and both boys and girls have discovered a few new games - softball, tug-of-war, and football. Today, the Six Nations have formed their own lacrosse team the "Iroquois Nationals" that competes internationally, representing not Canada or the United States, but the Iroquois nation itself (Arden, 1987).

Schooling for Iroquoian children, both of the Longhouse and Christian, is now mandatory. From the outset, the Indian children were constantly under what were considered to be "civilizing" influences which were meant to make of the Indian a "competent," "intelligent" citizen. The control of the educational system by Europeans was a conscious effort at obvious oppression. Children were taken out of their homes and villages. Physical and psychological force was used to persuade the children to abandon their traditions, language, and cultural norms. Interesting is the fact that while Longhouse children now seem more disciplined in the school setting, they are often bored with the curriculum, as it is not related to their practical experience. Orthodox parents, as recently as 30 years ago, were still opposed to having their children learn to read and write, and comic books were often the only reading material available in these homes (Shimony, 1961).

In many instances, noted Morgan (1962), the articles of clothing worn during the festivals are much the same as in traditional times, although some of the materials have changed. Deer-skin has been replaced with broadcloth and porcupine quills have been replaced by bead work. Turtle shell rattles are still common as are the hours-long recitation of the prophets' words in the native language during the still-practised Strawberry Festival. The difference today lies in the way the
strawberry drink - still believed to possess medicinal powers - is followed by an abundant lunch topped off with strawberry shortcake and mounds of whipped cream - certainly not traditionally on the menu (Arden, 1987). When not in the middle of a religious festival, the Iroquois today most often can be found sporting denim jeans and other such North American garb (Arden, 1987).

Finally, in the spiritual domain, it has been noted that celebration, among Longhouse families, has gone without basic change for centuries, though they have adopted some ideas of the missionaries that were in some ways already consistent with their own creed. Responding to concerns regarding the borrowing of European customs and material culture, an old Longhouse Indian asserts; "All these things (clothes, house, Longhouse) may be made of the white man's material, but they are outside things. Our religion is not one of paint or feathers; it is a thing of the heart."(Shimony, 1961:128) The Christian Iroquois, however, are far different than the Iroquois of traditional times, or even compared with the modern Iroquois of the Longhouse. Today, the chiefs of the nations of the Confederacy still gather in the Longhouse for a "Grand Council" - whose decisions still require unanimity facing each other across the fire - which is today a cast-iron stove (Arden, 1987). The world of the Six Nations today is scattered into 17 separate and complex communities in the United States and Canada.

Some are governed by traditionalists allied to the Grand Council at Onondaga. Others have elected tribal councils not affiliated with the confederacy. The independent "progressive" Seneca nation at Cattaraugus and Allegany, for instance, has one of the country's oldest elected councils, established in 1848. But confederacy adherents...are active throughout the Iroquois diaspora. They include mostly Longhouse religion followers, but also some Christians. (Arden, 1987:386)
For the Indians living on the Six Nations Reserve, life has become complicated, though those of the Longhouse recognize the importance of continuing to live according to the original constitution of the Five Nations. They do not accept any government money and indicate that they do not want any. They only ask to be left alone, to develop according to their own principles (Arden, 1987). They want their wampum belts back from the Museum of American Indian history in New York as a record of their history and tradition. To them these belts speak and exude life-giving power. "The voices of my people call to me through them" (Arden, 1987:397).

Undoubtedly, the culture of the Indian was far different from that of the European. One forceful element that gave Christianity its ability to overcome traditional customs was the introduction of writing. When the missionaries arrived, they naturally brought with them the Christian Bibles. So revolutionary was the idea of writing to the Huron people, for example, that they would urge the Recollet Missionary Gabriel Sagard to: "Mark with your snowshoes in the snow," for this was the closest approximation to writing in their understanding (Sagard, 1939). What he was writing on parchment and reading in his bible could only be compared to tracks in the snow.

The Christianity preached to the Indians of oral tradition came predominantly out of the written tradition. This "new" form of communication functionally rendered useless the holistic thought patterns of the Indian and replaced them, by the very nature of the written word, with a linear, atomistic method of thought, and therefore, perception of the world. The written word was seen and portrayed as
sacred. The differences in tradition and world view between oral Native tribes and literate Western culture are inextricably tied to their respective primary medium of communication.
CHAPTER FOUR: CHRISTIANITY AND THE NEW RELIGION

A central theme underlying the discussion thus far has been the changing relationship between time, space, and balance as they relate to knowledge and power in any given society. The transition from an oral to manuscript to written culture in Europe and its consequences for the development of North American culture are today reflected in our everyday life. This change is directly evident in the way the contemporary religious lifestyle or world view lies in direct opposition to the primitive spiritualism of early North America, and in direct compatibility with corporate capitalism.

In many of his writings, Innis directly indicated that a stress on religion is an aspect of the time-biased society. That is, a society in which tradition, oration, and the sacred are some of the things given prime value by the peoples who inhabit that society. It would seem obvious to conclude from this that once a society's notions of "time" changed so too would its spiritual belief, in order that it may maintain some balance on the space-time dichotomy. When comparing oral notions of circular and continuous time to notions of time held today, the schism is obvious. Today, writes Ewen (1977), there is an industrial definition of time and space, circumscribed by the wage system of corporate capitalism. This has altered religious belief based upon spiritualism to one based upon materialism and consumption.

This discussion is grounded in large part on the people and events that were instigators and victims of this transformation of time and religion. The saga primarily began in Europe, and was naturally transported to North America with the first Christian missionaries and traders in the New World.
According to Grant (1984), the first recorded presence of clear Christian teaching to the Indians within the present boundaries of Canada took place at Gaspe on July 20, 1534, when Jacques Cartier erected a cross and indicated to visiting Iroquois - as best he could - that they should look to this cross for their redemption. It is reported that the indigenous people, the Iroquois, were deeply offended. It was not until Samuel de Champlain, however, that the request for regular missionary work in the New World was made. When Champlain returned to France after his voyage to Canada in 1608 he asked Bernard du Verger, the Superior of the Recollets (Franciscans), for missionaries for "the roving hordes of savages that filled the forests of Canada from Quebec to the shores of the 'Chinese Sea'" (Harris, c1912:27). On 24 April 1615, four members of the Order sailed with Champlain to the New World. Father Le Caron said of the Huron;

Perhaps of all the races of red men, the Hurons, living like brute beasts, without law, without religion, without God, [are] the least liable to be attracted by, or become attached to, the practices of Christian life. They [are] given over completely to sensuality, feasting and pleasure. Their every inclination...is brutal. (Harris, c1912:30)

Father Le Caron was, however, received hospitably by them and directly proceeded to prepare a dictionary of the Huron language. The Natives, however, often refused to aid the missionaries in making translations as they saw this as a means by which the missionaries could gain greater power over them.

At the same time, Father Viel began teaching the Indians to recite the "Our Father," the "Hail Mary," and the "Creed." The success of the Recollets, however, was not encouraging. This was attributed to the notion that the Indians had no fixed
belief system, evidenced by the absence of altars, priests, temples and oblations - all necessary elements to the European understanding of "spiritual life."

While Le Caron continued his efforts for converting the Hurons, Champlain went off with Algonquin warriors to invade Iroquois country, because of the Iroquois trade agreement with the Dutch and the obvious financial threat that this arrangement posed to the French. This attack created an intense distrust of the Iroquois against the French. The Hurons, on the other hand, were bound to the French in war and trade, making missionary relations with the Huron somewhat easier than similar relations with the Iroquois. Nonetheless, the Huron were not entirely trusting of these strangers, who introduced strife as well as disease. The "Hurons were convinced that the missionaries were sorcerers, imposters come to take possession of their country, after having made them perish by [the missionaries'] spells, which were shut up in [their] inkstands and in [their] books." (Jaenen, 1976:64)

Without a doubt, commercial interests were dominant in the mind of those who first sought to establish permanent occupation of North America, and the exploitation of Indians as primary producers, especially in the fur trade, loomed large in all such planning. Yet in the letters of Champlain, there seemed to be a genuine interest in the moral and spiritual welfare of the Natives (Walsh, 1968). Ironically, this interest coincided with an unusual outburst of religious zeal in 17th century France, which soon became concentrated on the conversion of North American Indians. The embodiment of this zeal came in the form of a 1604 charter granted to Sieur de Monts, in which it was stipulated that "in return for a monopoly
of the fur trade in Acadia, he was to propagate the Roman Catholic faith among the Indians" (Walsh, 1968).

The limited success of the Recollet missionaries, fuelled by financial problems, compelled them to send a contingent to Quebec and plead for greater help from the Company of One Hundred Associates, the commercial company to which had been assigned the monopoly of the fur trade in Canada and which was under charter obligation to further the conversion of the Indians. The refusal of the Company incited the Recollets to write to France and request the help of the Jesuits who had the necessary financial and educational backing to support a successful mission. In 1625 the first Jesuit missionaries arrived.

While the Jesuits enjoyed many advantages over other missionary groups, the major key to any success they would have was something they shared with their European rivals - their ability to read and write and their possession of printed books, including the Bible. The first European to describe the reaction of the Indians to the printed word was ethnologist Thomas Harriot, who travelled aboard the second Roanoke voyage in 1585. He noted that Indians believed the sea compass, telescope, clocks, guns and books seemed "rather the works of gods than men" (Axtell, 1988:89), or at least had been given to the English by the gods. The Indians' reaction to Harriot's printed Bible seemed especially noteworthy. Likewise, when Gabriel Sagard ministered to the Huron in 1624-1625 the Indians were said to have spent whole days and nights, if allowed, counting the pages of the French books and admiring the pictures therein. Of a note requesting aid that he had sent to the missionaries at a nearby village, Sagard wrote the Huron "said that that little
paper had spoken to my brother and had told him all the words I had uttered to them here, and that we were greater than all mankind" (Axtell, 1988:90). As soon as Sagard reached Quebec, he turned the Huron’s admiration to practical advantage. When Father Joseph Le Mercier reported to his superiors in 1638, he drew up a list of what he believed most inclined the Hurons to Christianity. At the top of the list was "the art of inscribing upon paper matters that are beyond sight" (Axtell, 1988:97).

However, since all spiritual power was seen as double-edged, the Europeans and their mysterious "talking papers" were often blamed for the epidemics that swept through so many Native villages during the early years of contact. This blame was not unjustified, however, as the whites brought with them many diseases and vices previously unknown and thus not treatable among the Indians.

In trying to determine why the Natives were so affected by the printed word, one need consider the very nature of their oral culture and its shamanic spirituality. In part, their awe was simply an appreciation for the technology of print, but the books were less amazing as objects than for what they enabled the Europeans to do. Every European who could read a note from a distant correspondent could, so it seemed to the Indians, see into the writer’s mind; heretofore only Native shamans could see into the hearts and minds of the people. Not to dissuade the Indians from this belief, the literate European missionaries told the Natives that the Bible contained the words of the Great "Spirit," thus firmly identifying literacy with spirituality (Axtell, 1988). The reaction of the Indian to the book was not solely favourable and awe-inspired. In true sarcastic tone, one Native commented; "If we
had (the ability to learn from reading and writing) we should be as wise as you...and could do and make all things as you do: [such] as making guns and powder and bullets and cloth...and peradventure the great god of the English would cause us to turn white as you are." (Axtell, 1988:95)

Nonetheless, the belief in the "shamanic" quality of writing served to gradually increase the acceptance of Christianity, making the magic of literacy, rather than the cold reality of theology, the first impetus to lead the Indians to monotheistic religion. As evident in the above quotation, this was inextricably bound up in the material goods. The Jesuit missionaries were best able to capitalize on literacy’s potential for religious conversion since the Recollets were too few and too poor to spend the time necessary to learn Native languages that would help them expound the virtues of the written word.

The first argument they used in the conversion process was that Christianity was immutable and therefore superior to Native "religions" because it was preserved in a printed book as it had been delivered by God. "The Scripture does not vary like the oral word of man, who is almost by nature false" (Axtell, 1988:96). During a narration of the Christian creation story, an old Christian man asked; "Where are the writings which give us faith in what thou sayest?" To which Father Sebastien Rale answered;

All those words that I have just explained to you are not human words; they are the words of the Great Spirit. They are not written like the words of men upon a collar [wampum belt], on which a person can say everything that he wishes; but they are written in the book of the Great Spirit, to which falsehood cannot have access. (Axtell, 1988:96)
The authority given to the written word was already manifesting itself in North America; stories could not be believed unless they were written down, and once put to print, stories were considered immutable truth.

The Protestants, however, did not profit to the same extent as the Jesuits from books and writing. The Protestant missions were mounted too late and by too few; the Natives had already been acquainted with some 15 000 Plymouth settlers, half of whom could read and write, thus eroding the magic and novelty of print. According to Axtell (1988), the cultural inflexibility of the Protestants also hindered their missionary success. They were incapable of adopting the role of shamans and instead sought to destroy it. "To them Native life was foul and devil-ridden and had to be scourged and reamed before Indians could be reborn in Christ." Additionally, unlike the French, the Protestants did not use muskets as an award for conversion but instead openly traded them to the Iroquois (Trigger, 1985). Finally, the Protestant habit of too quickly translating Native languages and opening schools to teach Indian children to read and write diminished the mystery of literacy.

While labouring among the Hurons, the Jesuits had their minds on the Iroquois, though it was not until 20 years after the Jesuit arrival that an opening came for winning a way into the hearts and land of the Iroquois. The first attempt saw the death of the missionaries. The second attempt at establishing a mission in Iroquois country came 10 years after the first and at a time when agriculture and trade were at a standstill. "The time seemed ripe for a mission and a colony to serve as a centre of civilization and act as a barrier against the Dutch and English
of New York who hitherto had monopolized the trade of the Iroquois." (Marquis, 1916:100)

Of all the tribes of the Eastern Woodlands, the Iroquois seemed the most resistant to conversion because of the degree of integration between Native spirituality and tribal life. The Iroquois were deemed the "craftiest, most daring, most intelligent of the North American Indians [and] the terror of every Native band east of the Mississippi before the arrival of whites" (Kenton, 1956:xxvii). The Iroquois, according to a letter in The Jesuit Relations (Thwaites, 1898), were seen as the major stumbling block to the successful spread of Christianity and were known as enemies of the faith.

Stories of the "savage" cruelty of the Iroquois toward the missionaries and their allies are well documented. Unfortunately, the Iroquois have been to a great extent misrepresented. The relations regarding the missionaries and the Iroquois tell of times when the Iroquois would openly accept the presence of missionaries in their villages, then, without notice or provocation, turn on these same missionaries and inflict upon them extreme torture until death. This series of events seems inconsistent with the character of the Iroquois earlier discussed. This is not to say that the missionaries and their allies were knowingly lying about the occurrences in the New World, but is meant to suggest that they did not understand the world view of the Iroquois and thus could not understand the means by which the Iroquois

17The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents provide many accounts of torture inflicted by the Iroquois upon Jesuit missionaries, as was their custom for any prisoner of war. The 1654 letter by Father Simon Le Moine is a prime example of the "open acceptance then cruelty" story related by many missionaries of the day (Mealing, 1963:79ff).
could be provoked. The values of truth and honour were and are the basis upon which the Iroquois live and conduct themselves in war and peace. The violation of these tenets constitutes the violation of the most sacred trust, and thus incites the Iroquois to redeem their loss. The Iroquois were fighting not only to maintain what European's call "religion," but their entire life-world. The passion of their fight one would expect to be equalled by modern-day North Americans faced with a similar threat of Western capitalist annihilation at the hands of Russian communism, but this, of course, would be "freedom fighting," not "savage barbarism."

One of the biggest criticisms levied against the Natives, according to Jaenen (1976), was their lack of knowledge of letters, mathematics and science, and lack of conception of hierarchical political, legal or social organization. The desire to convert the Amerindians, then, was not clearly distinguishable from the more general and profitable aim of assimilating them into European culture. Conversion to Christianity was, in many respects, merely a means by which to hasten this process. The Protestant missionaries, who came to Canada in 1749, came to the conclusion in the early 19th century that the only way the aborigines could survive would be by becoming like the Europeans - learning to cope with their technology, economic patterns, manner, dress, and values of frugality, industry and enterprise. Education was deemed the most effective method of encouraging Indians to adopt European ways.

In 1841, Methodist missionary Sylvester Hurlbut saw hope for the Indians only in schools "where the rising generation [could] be brought up entirely away from the instruction of their parents" (Grant, 1984:94). This seemed to signal a
significant shift in the missionaries' conception of their task. Instead of helping the Indian converts make voluntary adjustments to the new situation, they saw it as their duty to increasingly impose Western values upon the Indians - whether the Indians were willing or not. The goal was to have the Indians enter into the labour market and become a part of a homogeneous nation. The "emphasis on self-reliance, self-support, and therefore on industry, temperance, and thrift, often identified as elements of a "Protestant Work Ethic," were common coin of the entire missionary operation." (Grant, 1984:184-185)

It was here that the alliance between theology and economics became evident, for it was those Native practices that were fundamentally foreign to the European social and economic system - in that they were incompatible with capitalism and individual accumulation - that it was deemed necessary to destroy. Because Native spiritualism and culture are inseparable, they both had to be eliminated so that the missionary and capitalism could succeed. In a lengthy account by Sir George Simpson, Innis quotes;

There may be a difference of opinion as to the effect the conversion of the Indians might have on trade; I cannot however foresee that it could be at all injurious, on the contrary I believe it would be highly beneficial hereto as they would in time imbibe our manners and customs and imitate us in Dress; our Supplies would thus become necessary to them which would increase the consumption of European produce & manufactures and in like measure increase & benefit our trade as they would find it requisite to become more industrious and to turn their attention more seriously to the Chase in order to enable to provide themselves with such supplies; we should moreover be enabled to pass through their Lands in greater safety which would lighten the expence [sic] of transport, and supplies of Provisions would be found at every Village, and among every tribe; they might likewise be employed...[so that their services could be] turned to profitable account. (Innis, 1946:151)
It may seem odd that Christianity has here been linked to capitalist development. However, according to Max Weber, "the widespread acceptance of a traditionally based explanation and justification of a deity-determined social order led people to engage in activities to demonstrate their pre-selection for eternal rewards." (Altheide, 1980:27) These activities included the making of profits in this world as the preferred method and criterion for legitimacy and thus became the way in which one "proved" his or her preferred or elevated status. It was commonly believed that this status would continue in the Christian after-life. This explanation illustrates a tradition of effort to link Christian religions and economic interests. The missionaries and their efforts provide an application that supports this relationship, as evident in the musket-for-Christians approach outlined earlier.

Weber's interest in this area includes his notion of rationalization and the trend toward secularization. For example, Weber points out that earning money in order to secure one's standard of living is rational, while rationalized money-making for the sake of making money as an end in itself is irrational (Bottomore & Mulkay, 1982). The irrationality of capitalism developed within a rational way of life, rationalism being a by-product of printing and literacy. In this instance, both religion and the economy are affected by and affect the current of rationality that connects the Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism, as both are based on a general ethos that Weber attributes to the Western bourgeoisie (Bottomore & Mulkay, 1982).

Before more fully exploring the interrelationship between Christianity and capitalism, an intervening variable must be considered. Among other major
developments of the era that saw the rise of literacy in Europe was the growing
trend toward nationalism and religious reformation. The use of the vernacular in
printed material, especially that of a political or religious nature, fostered a sense of
national division that drew the European countries together based upon an
ethnocentric world view. The printing press supported the Reformation and
destroyed the monopoly of the church over time. The position and authority of the
nation-state superseded that of the long-dominant Church. In fact, holidays once
determined by the Church were suppressed and new holidays were created by the
modern state. Weakening control over time by the Church, wrote Innis (1951), and
a still limited control by the state left a void which was summarily occupied by
industry. "The fanaticism of faith and the fanaticism of reason tore Europe apart and
intensified the problem of adjustment between obsession for the state and obsession
for the church and led to the growth in the name of science of new monopolies to
exploit faith and incredibility." (Innis, 1951:131)

The infant newspaper industry was one of the first establishments to bridge
the gap between church, state, and capitalist industry. Communion with the Sunday
newspaper, especially, replaced church-going. Church sermons that once included
news about local and foreign affairs and real estate transactions were replaced, after
printing, by the more efficient means of the gathering and distributing news by the
laity. This, notes Eisenstein (1979), marked the beginning of the secularization of
Western Christianity. The monthly gazette was replaced by the weekly, and finally
by the daily paper. By the 19th century, church-goers could learn about local affairs
simply by scanning the columns of newsprint within the isolation of their own
home. This displacement of pulpit by press - as a change in the means of communication - is connected with secularization, the weakening of community ties, the shift in the sense of what it meant to participate in public affairs, and the Protestant Reformation.

The religious complexities of the Reformation have undoubtedly been the subject of numerous books, studies and articles, but seldom has this analysis included the state of the communications media at the time. Any attention called to the connection between the development of printing, literacy, and the spread of the Bible - which mark the beginnings of Protestantism - is done in an external fashion. These studies often restrict themselves to the ability of print to "spread ideas," "make the text of the Bible available," "put the Bible into the hands of the people," or "encourage more people to read," while neglecting the important and resultant internal change in psychological and sociological structures (Ong, 1967). Print played a decisive role in the intellectual and artistic revolution in that it compelled the individual to reflect more intensively and in different areas, ushered in the development of commercial property while contacts and economic relations lost their personal colour, and saw great artists and individuals rise from the ranks of notaries (Innis, 1951). According to Dickens,

between 1517 and 1520 Luther's 30 publications probably sold well over 300,000 copies. In relation to the spread of religious ideas, it seems difficult to exaggerate the significance of the Press, without which a revolution of this magnitude [the Protestant Reformation] could scarcely have been consummated. (Eisenstein, 1979:303)

Even before Luther, however, Western Christendom had already hailed the new technology as a gift from God to provide superiority over those who did not
possess its power. The Protestants in Europe, nonetheless, were the first to fully exploit the potential of print as a mass medium, in the form of pamphlets, broadsides, and caricatures designed to get the attention and arouse the passions of its readers. The reliance on sacred scripture as an ultimate source of truth, writes Eisenstein (1979), was an important factor in the development and expansion of the printing industry in the West - as also evidenced in the example of the first missionaries to North America. This transfer of social functions from the church to the state, along with notable advances in scientific theory and practice, fostered an indifference toward the traditional organized religion of the day. Science met the demands of navigation, industry, trade, and finance by the development of astronomy and refined measurements of time, which inevitably left little place for myth or religion (Innis, 1951).

One means used to preserve historic dogmatic Christianity, in light of modern science, was the notion of bringing religion "up-to-date" (Hayes, 1941). This philosophy found a much warmer welcome in Protestantism than in Catholicism, which was determined to hold strong to the traditional belief in the authenticity of Christian miracles. The basis of Protestantism, on the other hand, was much more adaptable to the changes and complexities involved in the intellectual and industrial developments during the era of materialism. The ideal of material progress was duly identified with the individualism and thrift of traditional Protestant ethics.

Eventually, and in like manner, according to Hayes (1941), Pope Leo XIII Christianized modern industrial society. His most famous encyclical "Rerum
Novarum" (1891), defined private property as a natural right and stressed the dignity of labour.

In *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, Tawney describes the new understanding of the ideal "capitalist Christian."

The ideal investment for Christians is one in which the lender shares risks with the borrower and demands only a fair share of the profits....Men must not sell above the maximum fixed by public authority - when there is no fixed maximum, they must follow the market price. (Tawney, 1936:217)

This new definition makes very little distinction, by virtue of its loop-holes, between the Christian capitalist and the capitalist. Christianity, and Calvinism in particular, instead of being the soul of authoritarian regimentation, became the essence of utilitarian individualism. This individualism, congenial to the world of business, also became the distinctive characteristic of Puritanism which, having become a political force, was at once secularized and committed to a career of compromise (Tawney, 1936). In fact, it became common belief that money-making ought to be carried out for the great glory of God as the second most important duty of the Christian, the first being to know and believe in God, and thus be required to serve God in some employment in this world. Work, in the sense of gainful employment, has long been regarded one of the cornerstones of a capitalistic, as well as a Christian, way of life. In this way, the conscientious discharge of duties became the loftiest of religious and moral virtues.

...A creed which transformed the acquisition of wealth from a drudgery or a temptation into a moral duty was the milk of loins. It was not that religion was expelled from practical life, but that religion itself gave it a foundation of granite....The good Christian was not wholly dissimilar from the economic man. (Tawney, 1936:253)
Poverty, once considered a Christian virtue indicating a lack of concern for the values of the material world and a concentration on the life to come, gave way, in the centuries after the Protestant Reformation, to a view of poverty as a measurement of sin. The expression "poor but honest man," writes DeLoria (1973:197), indicated that a person was poor because he or she was dishonest - or perhaps even the reverse - and God had thus refused to bless the labours of that individual. This trend could also be seen in the white populace of Christian North America which had become increasingly more affluent as the notion of stewardship developed. This theory rationalizes that the wealthy are not really greedy, but have been blessed with their wealth by God who trusts them to exercise good stewardship in that regard. In other words, insists DeLoria (1973:197), "the organizational church must have its cut for us to be good stewards." This shift in doctrine followed a shift in cultural values toward material wealth and accumulation; the church was merely being brought "up-to-date."

During this shift, nobles who were more skilful at duelling and hunting than at literate endeavours suffered a loss of prestige which was summarily adopted by military strategists, lawyers, and bureaucrats. This rise in the educated and literate lay establishment did not necessarily entail, at this point, the rise of a new social class. Instead "it often meant merely a new kind of schooling for well-born offspring" (Eisenstein, 1979:396). This restructuring of European aristocracy - away from ecclesiastical influence and toward scholars - marked the age of the schoolmaster and textbook publisher.
Concentration on technique and abstract systems began for the Western world with this rise of scholastic method in theology in the 12th century. Eisenstein points out (1979) that instruction became more and more inclined toward amoral secular ends and was designed with large circulation figures in mind. In the United States, the importance of religion to the growth of commerce was evidenced in the growing number of denominational periodicals and their promising returns to advertisers in a national market. Patent medicines, in particular, capitalized on an age of faith in miracles in the U.S. by emphasizing cures, which led to the growth of advertising, trade, and scientific development. This, coupled with the establishment of printers’ workshops, firmly entrenched book production in the hands of profit-seeking capitalists. Changes in the means of communication are not the only significant factors that influence social and psychological organization, recognizing who controls the means of communication also affects the establishment of the social climate (Goody, 1977). This reiterates the importance of knowledge and power that Innis saw as central to the establishment, conduct, and survival of empire.

Perhaps the most powerful phenomenon of the last third of the 19th century was this spread of literacy among the masses in Europe and North America. Literacy, along with some technical training, would improve the industrial efficiency of the working class, thus enabling them to "avoid unemployment and welfare." In addition, literacy, paired with patriotic and physical education, would increase national loyalty and war preparedness. Literacy went hand-in-hand with the sort of indoctrination that would effectively prepare the masses to participate in "democratic" government. The cause of popular education soon became a sacred
cause since the school, writes Hayes (1941:176), "was a powerful propagandist instrument, the full potentiality of which could be appreciated only when popular education was reinforced by popular journalism, cinema and radio."

By the early 1700's, the decline of political journalism and the rise of popular journalism had begun. Contemporary literate democracy, according to Guizot (Innis, 1946:95), "readily sacrifices the past and the future to what is supposed to be the interest of the present." This unfortunate circumstance was accentuated by the reign of the newspaper and its obsession with the immediate. Such a trend was largely responsible for the decreasing importance of the printer and the increasing importance of the publisher. With the support of the Copyright Act, effective 1 April 1710, printers rapidly became publishers concerned more with industry and markets than with the craftsmanship associated with the manuscript era (Innis, 1986).

The development and spread of printing effectively implemented this drive toward rationalization, systematic organization and uniformity. When book producers took over the work once primarily done by the monks, capitalistic enterprise was coupled with spiritual edification and evangelical drives. The monks were also the first begetters of the methods of abstract finance, making the object of this systematic process production and finance, rather than God (McLuhan, 1951). The shift from script to print culture, brought on by advanced machine technology, signalled a transfer of power from the theological to the economic realm. Eric Gill's assertion that "Where religion is strong, commerce is weak," fails to give proper recognition to the important and changing role religion was able to play in the
growth of commerce as a result of the capabilities of the printing press (Innis, 1946:90).

During this era, on one important subject, that of practical ethics, there was little conflict between scientists and theologians. In everyday life, traditional Christian virtues were still generally considered the highest of virtues. "It was apparently easier to change one's ideas about the universe than to alter one's pattern of personal and social behavior" (Hayes, 1941:130). By the 1870's, Christianity seemed in clear alliance with the ultraconservative aristocracy and bourgeoisie class against the common urban masses. The impediments to capitalist development of a religion with innumerable gods, in contrast with the efficiency of Christianity which reduced the numbers and enhanced economic efficiency, gave way to the idea of eternal reward and punishment which, in turn, impeded interest in social reform. A drift away from traditional religion meant that Christianity was to take on a new role in order to survive. Notes Chomsky (1989:18);

The Church must correct the evil work of Christ by offering the miserable mass of humanity the gift they most desire and need: absolute submission. It must "vanquish freedom" so as to "make men happy" and provide the total "community of worship" that they avidly seek. In the modern secular age, this means worship of the state religion, which in the Western democracies incorporates the doctrine of submission to the masters of the system of public subsidy, private profit, called free enterprise. The people must be kept in ignorance...for their own good....The forces of miracle, mystery, and authority [are employed] "to conquer and hold captive forever the conscience of these impotent rebels for their happiness" and to deny them the freedom of choice they so fear and despise, so the "cool observers" must create the "necessary illusions" and "emotionally potent oversimplifications" that keep the ignorant and stupid masses disciplined and content.
A new capitalist spirit emerged, with the new genre of promotional literature perpetuated by a realization by the publisher that "time is money" and that profits and piety go together. They were the initial carriers of a spirit of capitalism that was in command of the new dominant communications industry. The pace set by machines was relentless and unceasing. Early printers, therefore, had to develop some degree of knowledge regarding time-motion studies so they could effectively and efficiently keep their workers consistently busy and productive. Idle presses signified disaster for the print shop, thus helping shape a hedonistic and utilitarian work ethic.

In the advertising world, the mechanization process is taken a step further in that it is equally applied to the word and the image, which is

...reinforced by toilet-training, feeding schedules, train schedules...and the well-run suburban household - all integrated towards the mechanical movement of personality. The rhythm of life is distorted into the dance of death....Life in the rough, or on the average, should be there in its natural grace, chaos, and beauty; not cut down and arranged into a machine-made system....[wherein] the life and beauty depart from it. (Theall, 1954:104)

The growing importance of advertising was first manifest in the newspaper industry, the first advertisers in the press being books or products of the press, quack medicines, tea, and chocolate. By 1740, all morning papers gave "commercial intelligence and advertising relative and regular space" (Innis, 1946:3). The effects of metropolitan advertising were evident in the growth of evening newspapers with large sections of department store advertising designed to reach the female reader. Because of this trend, the morning papers began losing advertising revenues and were thus compelled to initiate Sunday editions largely made up of feature stories.
With the growing awareness that it takes emotion to move merchandise, advertisers began using slick, automatic tones of profound human interest - much like the growing arena of the feature story - such that the news item and the advertisement could barely be distinguished. Today the pressure remains to create advertisements more and more in the image of audience motives and desires, for if the advertisements were to abandon or digress from the centre of shared experience and feelings, they would immediately lose their effect. It seems as though the actual product being advertised matters less, while making the product an integral part of social purposes and processes matters more. In this society, "democratic freedom very largely consists in ignoring politics and worrying, instead, about the threat of scaly scalp, hairy legs, sluggish bowels, saggy breasts, receding gums, excess weight, and tired blood." (McLuhan, 1964:229)

It is the concern for the material and the immediate. This clearly does not share the understanding of time held by those of oral culture. According to Theall (1954:103),

The world in which advertisement dwells is a one day world. This is the...world of time as sensation, the business world where "Time is Money," the advertising world which is necessarily a plane universe without depth. Upon this Time lays down discontinuous entities, side by side; each day, each temporal entity, complete in itself with no perspective, no fundamental exterior reference at all.

It was the ability to measure distinct units of time that facilitated the growth of newspapers and advertising, modern business contracts, credit, the rise of exchanges, and the calculations of the predictable future necessary for the development of insurance and capitalist society. Long term credit became the new basis of modern belief. The change in attitude toward time represented by this trend,
and preceding the modern obsession with present-mindedness, meant that the balance between time and space had been seriously disturbed. The very source of modern civilization - scientific and technological advance - ends up undermining its own basis and creating an enchained intellect (Watson, 1977). The limits of what once constituted time and space have exploded and mutated beyond recognition.

To remedy this, the connection between religion and technology must be broken, argue Marxists, so that confusion and conflict in the mind of the masses can be eliminated. This, however, according to McLuhan (1951), is simply repudiating the parent while still idolizing the offspring, which is the potential of modern capitalist production and consumption. The overabundance of uniform products, the importance of the process of acquiring wealth, and the belief that anything can be bottled, boxed, and sold diverts the masses into a jovial, optimistic and self-satisfied view of life that serves to virtually destroy human autonomy, freezes perception, and sterilizes judgement. The new philosophy is strictly utilitarian, positivistic and materialistic. Unfortunately, in the long run, utility, like everything else, wrote Nietzsche, "is simply a figment of our imagination and may well be the fatal stupidity by which we shall one day perish" (Innis, 1951:86).

When success is equated with utility and consumption rather than human temperament and talent, human freedom becomes the freedom to be and do the same as everyone else. Citizens have their freedom, but the power to tell them that they are free and that they are consumed with the spirit of rivalry and success belongs to the centralized power of the commercial world. The human capacity to "get up and go" and take part in social reform has changed to the desire to "get up
and get" things that will immediately and painlessly make the conditions under which one lives temporarily more livable (McLuhan, 1951:120). A great passivity has settled upon industrial market society.

For people carried about in mechanical vehicles, earning their living by waiting on machines, listening much of the waking day to canned music, watching packaged movie entertainment and encapsulated news, for such people it would require an exceptional degree of awareness and an especial heroism of effort to be anything but supine consumers of processed goods. Society begins to take on the character of the kept [man or] woman whose role is expected to be submission and luxurious passivity. Each day brings its addition of silks, trinkets, and shiny gadgets, new pleasure techniques and new pills for pep and painlessness. (McLuhan, 1951:21)

Even for those who find their days’ labour in the production of goods and services there is no relief. The production process, like all aspects of life, has become a series of seemingly unconnected specialties, further alienating people from the world in which they live. This reification process, indicates Watson (1977), by which the products of humanity come back to their producers in an increasingly horrifying and alien form the more the knowledge and power of production are extended, intensifies the sense of isolation and helpless dependence experienced by modern society. Cochrane, laments; "Of all the sorrows which afflict mankind, the bitterest is this, that one should have consciousness of much, but control over nothing." (Watson, 1977:50)

The fleecy of profits from mechanized industry into banking and credit reservoirs then into corporate promotion to the nourishment of even bigger and newer plants seems itself to go on with a precision and efficiency all its own. These mechanics of capitalism had already been provided with a scientific base and given practical application in the century prior to 1870 (Hayes, 1941). Since then, it has
merely undergone a perfecting and extension like the mechanics of mass production itself. The new type of business corporation - the monopoly - dispenses nominal ownership while centralizing actual control. It enables the few directors and company officials to enrich themselves on other people’s money and become "irresponsible captains of industry; tsars of paper-credit empires" (Hayes, 1941:100).

Society has long been warned about the dangers of corporate mechanisms of thought control aided by the nature of modern technology to offer immediate profit and comfort. Paradoxically, modern society is still permeated with some medieval spirit of religious intensity that longs to be channelled into a productive direction. Religion, as the never-ceasing attempt to discover a road to spiritual serenity against the complexities and dangers of everyday life, often allies itself with art and science (Sapir, 1949). These elements are then used as steppingstones toward this conquest of reality and search for spiritual serenity, which is different for virtually every culture. In North American culture, that force which unites belief and intensity of emotion to the point of establishing the existence of the unanalyzed conviction of religion was and remains grounded in the world of consumption. This religious sentiment, like all others, is typically unconscious and bound up with a compulsive sense of universal values, the feeling of sacredness, holiness or divinity such that certain objects, ideas, experiences, or personalities are set apart as symbols of ultimate value, and the potential presence of the feeling which results from the thwarting of the religion’s norms (Sapir, 1949). Consumption, as the collective spirit of the group, that is, its religion, preserves and acts as a cohesive force for social solidarity.
The birth of this religion in North America coincides with the European invasion of the continent. The characteristics that were to be created and nurtured in the New World would be far more compatible with capitalism - since they were born of and in the service of that system - than were those qualities inherent in the life of the Indian. It has become a society in which everything has a monetary value and exists for use in the production, distribution or consumption of goods. The Native lifestyle of respect toward nature, society, tradition, balance, and all of creation was surpassed by a new form of respect for immediate self-gratification and material accumulation in spite of the consequences. Unfortunately, this world view requires an environment in which people and nature are not merely separate, but are at odds. Nature and civilization were opposing forces in a battle which nature was to inevitably lose. Nature is no longer an object of contemplation, but is nothing more than a "material for an action aimed at transforming it" (DeLoria, 1973:70).

The Indian, not in the habit of distinguishing between spiritual and material benefits that seem self-evident to Westerners, sees success as the inevitable result of living in harmony with creation. Within the context of the battle to displace Native spirituality, this philosophy was not merely lost, but was reversed. White (1967:1205) says that:

The victory of Christianity over paganism was the greatest psychic revolution in the history of culture...Christianity, in absolute contrast to ancient paganism...not only established a dualism of man and nature but also insisted that it is God's will that man exploit nature for his proper ends.

This victory of Christianity over paganism was also the greatest justification for the material revolution of possessive materialism and capitalist consumption.
It is within the character of Christian-supported capitalism that nature is an inhospitable force, a "hopeless anachronism" (Ewen & Ewen, 1982:58) wherein the rights and powers of creation are given over to industrial production. In sharp contrast to the symbiotic and respectful relationship between the Native and nature, with its attitude of abhorrence regarding waste, lies the present-day arrogant and abusive relationship the men and women of the New World have constructed between themselves and nature. That this relationship has become so destructive was and remains an inevitable result of the character of consumerism as religion. The rate and amount of production must constantly be increased so that suppliers can continue to satisfy the inexhaustible needs they have helped to create.

Apparently, it has been a very convincing force that has so blindly yet purposefully led compliant North Americans to believe and trust that basic human needs can be met via the purchase of material goods and services. By making use of the more base of human emotions, advertisers have been able to latch on to a seemingly endless stream of disposable income and credit. This is what keeps the religion alive: the disciples dare not turn back and gaze upon the wasted lives and unfulfilled promises of those who have come before them (Morgan, 1988). Advertisements effectively de-emphasize the pleasure that can be achieved by home and community and create a fear within people so that they will search for something to appease that feeling - coincidentally, the advertisers offer just the remedy for public discomfort - as Lasch (1979) discusses - in the array of goods and services they produce and sell.
The fear of being judged by others is the glue that holds people together as they seek to become in all ways identical while forever exclaiming their individuality. Consumerism, then, spawned by advertising, becomes a philosophy or way of life whose structures engulf and displace modes of communication, patterns of family life, social mores, and the communitarian bonds typically found in traditional societies (Ewen, 1977). Whereas personal and social relations were the dominant forms of communication in oral societies, advertising has taken over as the pre-eminent form of social contact. Commercial speech is perhaps best seen as a cultural phenomenon whose social power and significance is together greater than its economic significance (Rutherford, 1988). Like religion, it provides an ideological base upon which decisions are made and satisfaction sought. By perpetuating the myths of the virtues of the capitalist way, people working in advertising have become the "missionaries of modernity" (Rutherford, 1988:105). Ironically, where Durkheim (Schoeffeleers & Meijers, 1978:38) points out that "religion is society's way of adoring itself," Schudson, in like manner, indicates that advertising is capitalism's way of saying "I love you" to itself (Rutherford, 1988:112).

For many, the consumer culture was born out of spiritual or material deprivation. The ability to purchase goods is seen as an act of power and symbol of status. The commitment to consumerism as a way of life renders consumerism a religion and calls on it to give unto its followers an encounter of social and psychological experience they have not had at any previous time. Today's believer relies upon the experiences to be had within a shopping mall to meet the
requirements of spiritual revival. As once the tribe served as the environment in which sharing and interaction occurred, the congested atmosphere of the shopping arena has become the premier place to make and build social relationships. Instead of sitting and talking with one another, many are more comfortable shopping or dining out together, where discussion is limited and judgement frequent and critical (Morgan, 1988). In this way, no participant is called upon to disclose any information about anything truly relevant, personal or controversial required to increase self and other awareness. This new religion saves one from his or her conscience. Consumerism means more than just achieving status and reducing anxiety. It is not simply empirical proof of social position, prestige or power, but more of an "uneasy reaching out for some sort of purposeful activity" (Veblen, 1953:76).

Consumption undergoes a specialization as regards the quality of the goods consumed [such that] the motive principle and proximate aim of innovation is no doubt the higher efficiency of the improved and more elaborate products for personal comfort and well-being. But that does not remain the sole purpose of consumption. Since the consumption of these more excellent goods is an evidence of wealth, it becomes honorific, and conversely, the failure to consume in due quantity and quality becomes a mark of inferiority and demerit. (Veblen, 1953:64)

Whereas McLuhan found hope in the concept of planned obsolescence, in that the buying public exhibits a casual indifference when scrapping old cars for new and thereby cannot be considered machine lovers, it can be equally well argued that this need to replace goods once their novelty wears off is indicative of the extent of conspicuous consumption in modern society, as discussed by Veblen above
(McLuhan, 1951). If not "machine lovers," North Americans are surely "new machine lovers." We are conscious of the shabbiness of a year-old product.

The advent of private ownership of goods - a concept foreign to the Native Indians - and an industrial wage labour system were the vehicles upon which conspicuous consumption was delivered to the masses. One could say they acted as missionaries of consumerism (Morgan, 1988). The case against such ostentatious economic practice was first based upon ethical considerations, though after 1600 the issue was transposed from the moral to the economic sphere. The ruling powers were afraid that large amounts of spending would disturb the organization of the classes, weaken national productive activity, increase imports, weaken home markets, and thus discourage thrift and industry (Mason, 1981). It soon became evident, however, that these fears would not be realized and the movement toward consumerism would not be reversed.

In contrast to traditional societies where there was a lack of any significant social or economic stratification and in which any individual attempt at conspicuous consumption was unprofitable in social, economic, and political terms, this proved not to be the case in "achieving societies." Rather than material wealth providing a status commonly looked down upon, individuals in modern society now measure contentment not simply by how much one owns, but by the ratio between what one owns and what one believes one ought to own in order to maintain self esteem in the face of "normal" consumption standards accepted by one's peers (Leiss, Kline & Jhally, 1986).
Even children are separated from traditional arenas of socialization and led to where the realities of commercial life are the guiding principles (Ewen, 1977). In an interesting article about Santa Claus, Belk (1987:90) characterizes the jolly fat man as the "symbolic god of materialism." Unfortunately for almost everyone, this material emphasis regarding Santa serves to socialize children into the consumer culture. North American societies, either consciously or unconsciously, use Santa to get children to believe in boundless abundance and the rapture brought about by having goods bestowed upon them. This, says Belk (1987), serves to indoctrinate children into the set of societal goals and values that will prepare them to assume their role as consumer as soon as this is deemed necessary.

Schools, churches and the mass media all support Santa as the god of consumerism, and they use him to "decontaminate products that originate in the marketplace and make them suitable for the sacred act of giving" (Belk, 1987:93). This is done to make citizen-consumers feel better about spending money by legitimizing conspicuous and impulse purchases.

Santa, being the centre of the secular Christmas, seems quite naturally enthroned in department stores and shopping malls, as these are the temples of consumption. Within the department store, goods are graced in monumental splendour since, from their beginnings, department stores were publicized as "cathedrals," thus surrounding practical and not-so-practical concerns with a religious atmosphere (Ewen & Ewen, 1982).

Unfortunately, North Americans are not satisfied to simply pass on this religious heritage to their own children. People tend to believe and rely on the
assumption that if others adopt these values it would serve to justify one's own materialism. As such, the missionaries of the consumer movement were and are World War II military men and women, movies, advertisements, television, travellers, shoppers, and the more traditional Christian missionary. The industrialization that nourishes materialistic philosophy provides means and opportunity for Christian missionaries, both past and present. It enables those insincere missionaries to flood the Christian population at home with cheap mechanically printed propaganda favourable to the foreign missions, which greatly adds to their financial support. These missionaries may receive donations from their homeland if the literature they send home indicates great and welcome progress in the conversion effort abroad. According to Hayes,

> Even the most materialistic statesmen and citizens, who were quite unsympathetic with Christianity, were likely to abet Christian missions abroad as steppingstones to the imperialism of their respective nations...The vast majority of...missionaries came from the most highly industrialized and materialistic nations [England and the United States]. (Hayes, 1941:148-149)

As in days past, Christian missionaries serve as effective instruments for spreading "Western" civilization, particularly through the numerous schools and hospitals through which many non-Christian Natives acquire exposure to the education, science, machinery, clothing and pastimes of contemporary Europe and America. Furthermore, like the first missionaries to North America who blamed the "guns and tomahawks of the Iroquois" for the failure of the Jesuit mission and the
resultant decline in the Huron population\textsuperscript{18}, modern missionaries blame the ineptitude and backwardness of those they are trying to "save" for the failure of modern Christianity in becoming worldwide, writes Parkman (1963) - and with it consumerism as the new religion.

The consumption-based character of modern life has rarely been desirable to those Native peoples sought after for conversion. Regarding this phenomenon, Axtell (1988:142-143) notes:

\begin{quote}
Although the Natives were quick to acknowledge the superiority of certain items of European technology...they were most reluctant to praise the life that the white man made from them. They simply preferred their own...They were infinitely happier than the grasping strangers, they said, because "we are very content with the little we have."
\end{quote}

However, as the environment changed through the centuries due to the intrusion, imposition, and dominance of white culture, so too have many of the values, 

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{18}The irony of this passage is manifold. First, and perhaps most obviously, the Huron had no possession of or use for guns before the whites gave them to the Indians as an impetus toward conversion. In a Relation of 1642-1643 a Jesuit missionary noted;

The use of arquebuses [firearms of the 15th-16th century], refused to the infidels...and granted to the Christian Neophytes, [was] a powerful attraction to win them [the Indians]: it seems that our Lord intends to use this means in order to render Christianity acceptable in these regions. (Thwaites, 1898:27)

Secondly, the notion that the Jesuit missions were a failure is not entirely accurate. Perhaps in establishing permanent Christian villages these missions fell short of their goal, but in the purpose of curbing aspects of Indian culture imimical to modern capitalism, the missions were a rousing success. Finally, the notion that conversion to Christianity and the adoption of the European lifestyle would have prevented the decline in Indian population is hardly open to proof, if not entirely false. According to Morgan (1962:27), within a century after the first European contact, the Iroquois population alone was half of what it had been according to the best estimates of pre-contact Iroquoian population.
\end{flushright}
attitudes, and behavioural patterns of the Indian. The following schemes developed by Hendry (1969) are useful, providing they are recognized as generalizations based upon both observed facts and conjecture.

**TABLE 3**

**Scheme I: Dominant Value Orientation Prior to White Dominance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHITE</th>
<th>INDIAN-ESKIMO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Human nature is evil but perfectible</td>
<td>All creation is good - not inherently evil.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People dominate, exploit and control nature</td>
<td>In harmony with nature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present and future oriented</td>
<td>Past and present oriented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing and activity oriented</td>
<td>Being-in-becoming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individualistic</td>
<td>Collaborative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capitalistic\commercial</td>
<td>Communistic\sharing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nationalistic</td>
<td>Communal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Hendry, 1969:32)

The following scheme, though extreme in some of its generalizations, is useful in bringing to clear focus the effect of white values and technologies on a people so inclined as the Indians, with their emphasis on sharing, community, and harmony.
TABLE 4

Scheme II: Indian Accommodation and/or Lack of Accommodation to Dominant White Culture

BEFORE | AFTER SUSTAINED EXPOSURE

In harmony with nature  | Loss of integrated whole and personal integrity
A sense of wholeness   | Cumulative concept applied to the individual
Community concept of possession | Individualistic relations
Collaborative relations | Hostility, contempt, suspicion
Friendliness\trust | Increased license due to cultural breakdown
Concrete behaviour governed by moral codes | Ecologically trapped in poverty, dependent on subsidies
Interdependence

(Hendry, 1969:35)

Though exaggerated and perhaps somewhat biased, these schemes as proposed by Hendry constitute effective juxtaposition of Native oral and Western literate life. The ability to respond directly to the word enjoyed by early oral peoples has been attenuated by the objectification of the human life-world through the abnormal increase in the size of the visual realm and its obstruction into the verbal realm. Hendry’s comparison in large part supports the characteristics of time and space biased cultures elaborated by Innis. The value orientation of the white versus the Indian cultures corresponds to the distinguishing characteristics of time and space biased empires as studied by Innis and outlined by Watson in Chapter One. Similarly, the discussion of the degree of Indian accommodation to white
culture serves to some extent as a summary of the effects of literacy and capitalist materialism on a spiritually based oral culture.

[Restating] Buber's terminology, we have maximized the "it" and minimized "I" and the "Thou"...[as] the inevitable result of the evolution of the media. Maximizing the it, the objective, visual-tactual aspect of existence necessarily accompanies the restructuring of the sensorium and of the psyche demanded by the evolving relationship of [people] with [their] communications system and its environment. (Ong, 1967:289)

The disappearance of the time monopolies associated with oral "I-Thou" culture facilitated the development of new religions, evident, says Innis (1951:88), in the nature and practice of "fascism, communism and our way of life." North America, not open to the somewhat anti-capitalist forces of either fascism or communism, passionately embraces, as its newly chosen religion, its way of life - the capitalistic consumerism made possible by science and technology. It is, however, not an entirely original religion, as it found its birth in the changing focus of Christianity as a captive of the novelty of American life, forced to protect itself by supporting the political-economic structure of secular America (DeLoria, 1973). Advertisers are the preachers and advertisements the sermons for this ritualistic religion in which the individual is subordinated to a collective symbol. In fact, writes McLuhan (1964:232); "Historians and archologists [sic] will one day discover that the ads of our time are the richest and most faithful daily reflections that any society ever made of its entire range of activities."
CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

Tracing the history of North American colonization, from the perspective of its only indigenous population, does not encompass the sense of closure so often associated with historical analysis. Instead, such efforts seem to open new doors and raise new questions at every turn; the most basic of questions being whether or not there can be an objective account of history, unbiased by the interests of the researcher or author. Undoubtedly, each group involved in the drama of colonization will have its own interpretation of events that may be increasingly altered over the decades and centuries. Nonetheless, interested persons must continue to pursue the lessons of history in an effort to clarify their significance for the past, present, and future.

More than a history of colonization, this study has considered the special relationship between modes of communication, Christianity, materialist consumerism, and their combined influence on the oral tradition of the Iroquois. This oral/aural world of the ancient Iroquois was supplanted by the written tradition introduced by means of the bibles of the Christian missionaries. As has been shown, this transformation in the primary means of communication affected more than just the transfer of messages. More importantly, the decline of the oral tradition left room for a new way of perceiving the world; the literate universe was now seen as a finite container in which all people, things, and events could be arranged in some linear, geometric order. Primitive people were able to live for thousands of years without imposing a straight line on the multi-centred and reverberating sense of nature, but today, because most of the information we gain comes through our sense
of sight, McLuhan and Powers (1989:36) indicate that "we can't live with a circle unless we square it."

This linear, causal perception of life and the world is a side effect of the "uniform, continuous, and fragmented character of the phonetic alphabet" (McLuhan & Powers, 1989:35). Just as letters and words could now become fixed in time and space, so too could ideas, perceptions, and people themselves, as illustrated by the work of Euclid and Newton. Thought now had to have a beginning, middle and an end. As science grew, so too did the emphasis on the logical, rational capabilities of the human brain, to the exclusion of the rest of its abilities. Locked into the categorical hierarchies of linear conceptualization, "either-or" became the only possibility. The oral "mentality of the multitude" (McLuhan & Powers, 1989:39) that allowed the Iroquois to conceive of and believe in two possibilities at once, was eradicated by the technologies of the 15th century transported to North America. Cash money, the compass, and the book created a linear and visual environment - from art to architecture - to replace the circular and oral universe experienced and felt by the Native North Americans.

The history of the Western world since the time of Aristotle, as expressed by McLuhan and Powers (1989), has been overshadowed by the flat, homogeneous character of print. Although the intervening manuscript culture still held firm to the aural-tactile qualities of the oral tradition, the Gutenberg technology led to the systemization of knowledge and increasing levels of public acceptance of the book. After this point, all knowledge that could not be reduced, classified and reviewed in
book form became part of folk tale and myth. It was no longer taken seriously, but rather ridiculed as the naive musings of the inferior and uneducated classes.

Writing and print became a means by which leaders could govern over long distances. To trace the flow of messages from one region to another McLuhan and Powers (1989) indicate that clocks and calendars were devised, making centralization of power and control more feasible and successful. It was with the advent of the Industrial Revolution and its influence on communication technology that writing and print became increasingly important to this modern political process. The use of print and newspaper technology helps those seeking power to reach greater numbers of potential voters in a novel way. In a constant post-revolutionary atmosphere of war, tyranny, depression, and environmental ruin, writes Wernick (1986), the result was a present-mindedness that fuelled extensive contradiction. "The sensitivity to long-run consequences that industrialism made urgent was at the same time precluded by the forms of communication that industrialism installed." (Wernick, 1986:142)

The new era functions for the maximum immediate profit, creating negative side-effects for future generations of that empire. Unfortunately, the emphasis on the present, fuelled by the "in today and out tomorrow" nature of the media, precludes concern for the future and lends credence to Innis’ assertion that "Each civilisation has its own method of suicide" (Wernick, 1986:412). This set of circumstances is illustrated today by the example of the large corporation and the environmental pollution crisis. Major corporations lobby against clean air legislation that would impose upon them the responsibility of spending money to make their factories less
of a threat to the planet. Unfortunately, these corporations can afford the long-term legal battles and so far inconsequential fines levied against them for the failure to comply with existing standards. These businesses are more concerned about the initial, one-time financial outlay needed to install environmentally safer systems than they are about the future health and survival of the planet. Mass production, consumption, and profit are incompatible with nature and its preservation.

Inventions in commercialism have destroyed the sense of time embraced by the Iroquois and other primarily oral peoples. Modern culture has as its understanding of time a present-centred, linear notion. Obviously, for different people in different eras the concept of time takes on a variety of meanings. In his writings, Innis (1951:62) distinguishes between astronomical and social time in which eras are "qualitatively differentiated according to the beliefs and customs common to a group." Of course, different kinds of time can exist both simultaneously and separately. That is, linear and social time can co-exist, though oral understandings of time cannot co-exist with notions of time that rely on absolute measurement to "cut [time] into pieces the length of a day’s newspaper" (Innis, 1954:94) with a beginning, middle, and end.

It was through Christianity, Judaism, and the Islamic religions, writes Vansina (1985), that absolute measurements of time on a universal scale grew in popularity. This system of time did not exist in oral societies which measured time "by the return of natural phenomena, by the occurrence of extraordinary events, by reference to human lifespan and reproduction, and by reference to the return of
recurrrent social events" (Vansina, 1985:174). For the Iroquois, these elements often took the form of the passing of seasons, the festivals based on the harvest and other celebrations, and in the recounting of stories by tribal elders.

Once they had become literate, it was not that tribal people rejected the notion of conceiving of things chronologically because they could not, but rather because they did not want to look at life and the world in such a restrictive manner. This is an important notion for oral cultures. For oral peoples like the Iroquois the world is conceived of as a single entity whose elements live in unison. All entities interact to influence life; there is not a singular causal agent, but rather a cooperation among all forces. This philosophy instills a degree of peace and satisfaction generally unknown in literate societies and helps that society survive and flourish. Other aspects of oral life that aid in the longevity of the culture of the Iroquois, according to Morgan (in Robie, 1982), include the political structure of their league and the verbal effectiveness of their spokespeople. In large part, Robie (1982) says the Iroquois kept the French and English off-balance for so many years, moreso by their oratory ability than by what they did on the warpath.

In modern times this was experienced when the Miskito Indians of Nicaragua invited the Iroquois to support them in their peace negotiations with the Sandinista government. During the talks, most speakers slammed their fists and talked loudly, heatedly, and angrily. When it was Iroquois Chief Lyons’ turn to speak, though many had expected more hot words, he was curiously calm. The following are excerpts from his speech and reaction from a white reporter who had been invited
to the talks by Lyons.

"We are the Haudenosaunee," he began, his words slow and measured, as though the angry words of a moment before had never been spoken. "We are made up of Six Nations...each of us equal...each of us sovereign...and we come together in a confederacy. Our business is peace, not war...." Voice unwavering, he told of the confederacy's origins and government. He explained how decisions must be reached by consensus, how no problem was important enough to cause disunity. "We must be of one mind," he said, echoing the Peacemaker's ancient words. By the end of the speech his audience was transformed. Anger had been replaced by calm, and turbulent emotion had changed to cool lucidity. And that, I realized, had been his intent from the beginning. I was watching a master tactician, a gifted diplomat in action, who was representing his people as a nation among nations. (Arden, 1987:403)

In light of this, it becomes evident that more needs to be done regarding the orality of the Iroquois and the cultural and mental changes experienced by them with the introduction and spread of literacy by the whites. Much of the cultural and mental pressure for change came from the ignorance of the European settlers with regard to the values and world-view of the Native Indians. From their arrival the whites denigrated the Indian and set the stage for future actions and attitudes of North American settlers. According to Martin Luther King Jr.;

Our nation was born in genocide when it embraced the doctrine that the original American, the Indian, was an inferior race. Even before there were large numbers of Negroes on our shores, the scar of racial hatred had already disfigured colonial society. From the sixteenth century forward, blood flowed in battles over racial supremacy. We are perhaps the only nation which tried as a matter of national policy to wipe out its indigenous population. Moreover, we elevated that tragic experience into a noble crusade. Indeed, even today we have not permitted ourselves to reject or to feel remorse for this shameful episode. Our literature, our films, our drama, our folklore all exalt it. (King, 1964:120)

The negative treatment of the Native Indian people from European arrival up to and including the present has not gone unnoticed by the Indians themselves. In
Canada, the situation has historically only been better by comparison. It is a matter of putting Indians on reservations versus their outright slaughter. However, instead of focusing on the injustices committed against their people, the Iroquois are more deeply concerned about the lasting effects that the attitudes and behaviour of the non-Native will have on the earth and the generations to come. The misperceptions continue today and prevent modern societies from accessing alternative, more beneficial interpretations of the responsibilities of and relationships between all elements in the universe. Chief Corbett Sundown, keeper of the Iroquois confederacy’s spiritual fire at Tonawanda, comments;

You know, you white guys come down here and you don’t see anything. Then you write your articles about how poor we are. Well, let me tell you, we’re not poor. We’re rich people without any money, that’s all. You say we ought to set up industries and factories. Well, we just don’t want them. How’re you going to grow potatoes and sweet corn on concrete? You call that progress? To me "progress" is a dirty word. I’ve got a warning for you. You can’t go on destroying and poisoning everything. Our prophecies say there’ll be signs of the end of the world: We won’t be able to drink the water, trees will die from the tops down, babies will be killed like dogs....Now its all happening - only you call it water pollution and acid rain and "legal" abortion. (Arden, 1987:398)

The European attitude certainly does not seem to coincide with the popular tenets of Christianity. The message of peace proclaimed by Christianity was really never an important aspect of the missionaries’ relationship with the Iroquois. The desire of the Recollets and Jesuits to convert the Indians into literate, productive Christians negated the Indians’ right to self-determination. Th’s effort was made infinitely more successful by the phenomena of print and printed bibles.

Certainly one of the most fruitful periods to examine in terms of the history of the word and its relationship to the history of Christianity is the age of the
Protestant Reformation. As discussed, Ong (1967), along with others, has considered such an examination. In the final analysis it becomes apparent that "given the initial importance of the [printed] word in Christian teaching," Christianity, in all likelihood, would not have become so widespread without it (Ong, 1967:264). Furthermore, in his book Propaganda, Jacques Ellul points out one of the most crucial features of Western history and Christianity. According to Ellul (McLuhan & Powers, 1989:60), Christianity has forever been dedicated to propaganda and propagation, and thus adopted the concepts of Greco/Roman phonetic literacy, making the "perpetuation of Greco/Roman literacy and civilization... inseparable from Christian missionary and educational activity." Propaganda requires the literate aspects of Western culture in order to succeed, and thus is one reason why Christianity has been able to flourish.

The analytic, rather than synthetic mode of thought prescribed by literacy and Christianity, led to an internal change in the psychologic aspects of human thinking. However, so long as reading remained basically recitation, as was the case in the manuscript culture of the Middle Ages, its isolative effect was kept to a minimum. When print developed though, silent reading was encouraged and "forced the individual into himself [or herself] and out of the tribe" (Ong, 1967:272), thus ushering in a "silent revolution."

The basic developments in culture - in terms of the evolution of print - cast a new light on Christianity and its relationship to "secular" culture. In a society dominated by its oral past, any division between the sacred and secular cannot be conceived. Conversely, in literate culture, this distinction is believed to be positive.
and necessary. For this reason, the recurring battles regarding the church-state relationship in the United States, asserts Ong (1967), could not have developed without the dominance of writing and print, which encourage separation, individualism, and linear reductionist thought. In fact, individualism may be what made the Greco/Roman style so attractive to Christians in the first place, "since Christian revelation stresses the private responsibility of all individuals in its doctrine of the resurrection" (McLuhan & Powers, 1989:62). Even in Europe, as pointed out by Innis (1951:131), there was a division between the fanaticism of faith and fanaticism of reason that tore the nation apart. Obsession for the church competed against obsession for the state and led to the growth of new monopolies to exploit incredibility, namely those fuelled by capitalist industry.

This popular church-state relationship is being increasingly overshadowed by an alliance between the church and the business world. In fact, the activity of North American Christianity has, from the outset, worked toward the interests of the modern commercial world. By converting the Indians the missionaries were setting the stage for easier and more profitable trade. As has been discussed, Indian practices deemed detrimental to trade were considered by the missionaries to be threatening and expendable. Indian spirituality was denigrated as the missionaries sought to replace it with Christianity.

The Western world-view, as transported from Europe to North America, is based in a strongly commercial environment. As such, the exultation usually reserved for popular religious objects, people, and experiences is now attached to commercial expansion itself. According to Ong (1957), this has led to the sense of
mission felt to reform whatever civilization the business world encounters. As a result of this emphasis on and passion for commerce, traditional nature symbols are replaced, in the human mind, with symbols from the mechanical and commercial world. A case in point is made by Ong (1957), in the way security has become associated with life insurance instead of stable interpersonal relationships, or in the way advertisements show how far the automobile has come as a psychological substitute for meaningful relationships.

Much to Innis’ dismay, this courting of the business world is extending into the university system – including the Catholic university. As a part of the university curriculum, commerce merges with the study of history, philosophy, chemistry, and psychology to help solve the problems generated by modern industry. Textbooks, the backbone of the educational system, locate and permanently lock words in exactly the same place on the page. "It is curious to see scientific teaching used everywhere as a means to stifle all freedom of investigation in moral questions under the dead weight of facts. Materialism is the auxiliary doctrine of every tyranny, whether of the one or of the masses." (Armell in Innis, 1951:82)

By virtue of these phenomena, knowledge becomes a commodity that one can buy from the educational institutions or the publishing industry, and possess. The growing confidence in the word-in-space is shown in the credibility given to written over verbal accounts as in the Christian – especially Protestant – stress on the primacy of the written word of the Scriptures. In this society, everything has a monetary price and exists for use in the production, distribution, and consumption of goods. This prevailing world-view, or religion, can be characterized as consumerism.
Calling consumerism a religion can be, though it need not necessarily be, justified by defining a religion as "a system of common beliefs which legitimate existing social arrangements" (Turner, 1983:49). Religion has also been characterized, by Durkheim (in Schoffeleers, 1978) as an enlarged, transformed, and idealized conception of social reality. Whether or not one accepts either of these cursory explanations of religion, or one of the more complicated notions of religion as the attempt to solve the basic problems of human survival, it soon becomes obvious that the status of consumerism today is compatible with any of these definitions.

In comparing the religions of Christianity and consumerism, Ong (1967:262) writes; "Religion expressed through physical or verbal aggression cannot be real." Obviously, the missionaries to the New World used these physical and verbal techniques to persuade the Indians toward Christianity. For the Natives, then, this religion could never be real the way their own spiritualism could. Consumerism, on the other hand, is not usually forced on people, instead we actively seek out and participate in the principles upon which it is based. We want, at some level, to be an active part of that system. One of the side effects of this system is that even though we may be aware of the negative consequences of living in this manner, we may still refrain from doing anything to change the situation. Deciding to give up one's religion is not an easy thing to do, and it is even harder to implement corrective action once the decision has been made. One cannot expect to change an entire lifetime of socialization in a matter of months.
The power of consumerism, according to Ewen and Ewen (1982), lies in the fact that it creates a memorable language, a system of beliefs, and a continuous channel to inculcate and effect common perceptions. The self-congratulatory nature of consumerism becomes "embroiled in our intimacies; tattooed upon our hopes" (Ewen and Ewen, 1982:75). Sadly, this style of "living" continuously bombards us with the idea that to buy is to succeed. Unfortunately, this success turns quickly into failure since one cannot honestly hope to satisfy human needs by inhumane methods.

The Native Indians were and are aware of this truth and realize that ways of thinking become ways of being. Therefore, Turner (1983) concludes that the unique traits of any religious thought, including its beliefs, myths, dogmas, and legends, are either representations or systems of representations that serve to express the nature of "sacred" things. This equation can be applied equally to either Native spiritualism or consumerism as religion. For the Natives of the oral tradition, the central goal of life is to experience it in its fullest sense, in co-operation with human and other-than-human forces. However, life for those of written or consumer culture is based upon the "good life," not in the sense of life lived according to moral laws, but rather in the sense of a life "abounding in material comforts and luxuries" (Belk & Pollay, 1985:887).

It has also been made evident that any distinction between the spiritual and other aspects of life is impossible for Native tribal oral cultures. Looking at this phenomenon in terms of consumerism as a religion it becomes apparent that we do not separate this new materialist religion from the other areas c.° our life. They are
inextricably bound in that all aspects of life are applications of our "religious" point of view. Perhaps this is some indication that the new modern electronic media - made prevalent after Innis’ death - have "retribalized" people into McLuhan’s global village such that we now have the ability to achieve a cohesiveness and integration in life unknown since the times of tribal oral cultures.

McLuhan’s optimism and belief in retribalization as the result of modern electronic communications has not proven to be a characteristic of contemporary culture. This is the case since each new medium of communication, instead of bringing us closer to one another, effectively reduces communication. That is, technological advance in communication implies a narrowing of the range from which material is distributed and a widening of the range of reception, so that large numbers receive, but are unable to make any direct response. Those on the receiving end of material from a mechanized central system are precluded from participation in healthy, vigorous, and vital discussion. (Kenyon, 1954:98)

If communication is supposed to, in some way, unite people with their world and the people around them, then dependence on the mass media reduces the network of human relationships to a mechanical transmission of statements that have become increasingly meaningless. In the electronic mass media, the use of verbiage does not include any sensitivity to the "word," but rather cheapens it. People become alienated from themselves, each other, and their world by virtue of the individualized self-consciousness developed with the aid of print and electronic media. Physical and empathic proximity are replaced by electronic proximity. In the end, the control over the transmission of meanings and messages passes to the elite minority whom we allow to do our thinking for us.
Innis was no doubt concerned about the effect the advent of modern mass media - in his day being radio and the daily newspaper - would have from the point of view of this dialectic of knowledge and power. When the communications that affect life are controlled by a central source there would, according to Innis (Watson, 1977:58), be a "tendency away from critical thinking and towards following orders on a mass scale," all occurring within an atmosphere in which an overabundance of information has replaced intelligence. We are drifting toward passive acceptance of mechanical messages, as evidenced by the growing sophistication and success of public opinion and persuasion efforts.

The concept of the balance of power, then, was more of a concern to Innis than any attempt to classify individual media as either time or space biased. The main problem with print and other modern media is

not the fact that messages [are] reaching us in a changed sense proportion of sight and sound, but that they [are] centrally produced and mechanically distributed. This [induces] passivity rather than thought and manipulation rather than personal interaction. The essence of the oral tradition is not that it is heard but that it is dialogue. (Watson, 1977:59)

It is within this environment that monopolies of knowledge can more readily by claimed, as they develop and disintegrate partly as the result of the dominant primary medium of communication upon which they are built. It was the sensitive nature of the economy built up in relation to newsprint, and its monopoly position in relation to advertising, that hastened the emphasis on the new medium of radio (Innis, 1986). Both illustrated newspapers and the radio responded to the needs of advertisers for national coverage. The effect of these media in being able to reach the entire nation with a single message was to foster a degree of nationalism
previously impossible to achieve, given the geographic terrain and expanse of the country.

This capability of the media is especially relevant in the area of politics. By use of radio and television, politicians are able to appeal directly to constituents and put the pressure of public opinion on the Legislature. Boundaries imposed on the political machine by the limitations of print disappeared, writes Innis (1951), and the spoken word provided a new base for the exploitation of nationalistic sentiment on a larger scale than before possible. In like manner the demands of the new media which make for both greater realism and the possibility for greater delusion, were imposed on the newspaper and the book.

These new media have supplanted the alphabet, but do today's media distract from true spiritualism? The maximizing of the "It" and the minimizing of the "Thou" is, as we have seen, an inevitable result of the evolution of the media. This, coupled with the fact that we are now separated from the world in which we live, means that people are either looking away from the world or staring at it - neither of which can help achieve a spiritual presence. The missionaries, for example, urged the Indians to "seek God," but in the nature of Native spiritualism, this request makes no sense. For the Native, there is nothing in which the Great Mystery cannot be found, it is a finding without seeking. There is nothing in which the Great Spirit can be inferred because the Great Spirit is everything. "Here world. There God' is the language of the 'It'." (Herberg, 1956:57)

The spiritual problems of modern people centre around the propensity toward secularization as a result of the accumulation of knowledge about the natural world.
The shift from a life-world based on sound to one based on sight is related to advances in science that effectively eliminate the need or desire for faith and mystery. All people, places and things are determined, scientifically, to be no more than the sum of their parts. Reality becomes only that which we can see, touch, or prove quantitatively. Whereas the world-view of the Native was founded in spiritualism, modern life is based in materialism. This lifestyle has invaded even our conception of time.

Time and space are central themes in the work by Innis, especially in terms of establishing some degree of balance between the concerns of these two biases. In a Western civilization, according to Innis (1951), the stable society appreciates the need for balance between time and space. In our culture, we want control over both vast areas of space and stretches of time. In reality though, Watson (1977) notes that while we can often solve the problems of space - as indicated by the ability to put people on the moon - we are still in many ways helpless against the problems of time - as indicated by our inability to control problems like inflation.

Today then, the empire itself, as well as its leader, is deified. Empire is capable of taking any of three forms; religious, military, or commercial. While religious and military empires are basically concerned with the conquest of time or space respectively, the commercial empire is motivated by the desire to conquer productivity. In this sort of empire, the stress is on technique and efficiency. The modern day obsession with absolute efficiency involves what Ellul (1964) believes to be the compulsion to adopt the most efficient way of doing things regardless of the consequences. It becomes not one value among many, but rather the prime value
superseding all others. Ironically, the emphasis on efficiency leads to inefficiency as only short-term goals are sought. For example, we invent robots to do menial jobs more efficiently without first considering the long-term effects this will have on employment and worker well-being.

If our culture is so excessively void of the considerations of time as outlined by Innis - including emphasis on the sacred, history, collectivism, and oration - then one might wonder how the Western world/empire has been able to survive without the necessary balance. Further study into this area would prove fruitful, especially if pursued in the direction of the altered notion of time prevalent today. That is, there cannot be the kind of balance today that existed in the past because of the modern understanding of time as an aspect of the material commercial world. If one then argues that the United States holds the position of the space-biased element on the scale - considering its expansionistic tendencies - it could also be argued that consumerism as a new religion is creating and obeying the new concepts of time, and is thus taking the place of the time-biased element on the scale. At any rate, this area of study could prove interesting and enlightening.

Godfrey, in his introduction to Innis’ Empire and Communications (1986), points out other areas of study that may be undertaken using Innis’ work as a foundation. While discussion of commerce and that of the Natives are obvious in their absence in Innis’ work, this thesis has attempted to bring these concerns more prominently to the fore. Advancing this consideration to include detailed effects of the modern electronic and telecommunications media is an area yet to be investigated, as is discussion of the role and position of women in oral, print, and
electronic culture. We may also want to consider just how those who control the media use them, and what the role of the non-literate people is in a society in which the sources of power are increasingly passing into the hands of the literate. None of this, however, offers any solution to the situation as it exists today. One might wonder what, if anything, can or should be done in an attempt to regain some of the more positive aspects of oral culture and avoid serious monopolies of knowledge. Perhaps this is one of the most important areas for further study.

While this study indicates and elaborates on an area lacking in Innis’ work, it also serves to increase the understanding of that which Innis did discuss. Obviously this is true in the areas of time and space and oral and written cultures as it brings the example to Canada and puts it in terms Canadians may interpret as relevant today. More importantly, however, it continues the central tradition in Innis of comparing the dialectic of knowledge and power in primary oral and print cultures. As indicated by Innis, in oral societies monopolies of knowledge, and therefore power, are less likely than in the specialized print-based societies. The difference in the primary means of communication in the respective societies changes the distribution of power. In oral culture, since the population has a relatively balanced access to and makes use of the means of communication, equal numbers of people can send and receive messages. However, as communications become increasingly mediated the range of potential senders decreases, while the number of those they can reach with their messages — often simultaneously — increases dramatically. When this happens, knowledge and power transfer into the
hands of the few who control those media recognized as crucial for the effective manipulation of that society.

This was Innis’ greatest concern; that a shift in the balance between power and knowledge would leave the public alienated and powerless. In 1990 this has been made evident in the alienation of Ontario’s voters over Meech Lake and the loss of jobs. The public feels deserted by its elected officials who profess to have the best interests of the voters at heart. As a result, the voters in the Ontario provincial election of September 1990 ousted the majority Liberal government and replaced it with a majority New Democratic Party government - an historical first. The people fought to regain some sense of power and control over their own destiny. Such is also the case with the Mohawk Indians in Ontario and Quebec - as well as Native peoples across North America. They are taking matters into their own hands and fighting for what is rightfully theirs, using the most effective means available to them.

The power to influence the direction of the advancement of North American civilization had been wrested away from them by literate Europeans who altered the means of communication and prevalent world-view in the New World. Today, as made evident by the Iroquois on reserves across Canada - most notably in Quebec and Ontario - the Indian people are fighting back to regain the pride, respect, and ironically, the property due them, including past and future generations. Theirs is not a selfish fight for individual, monetary, or commercial gain, but rather a fight for a nation of people already born and yet to come, and for the protection of the
generous Mother Earth that has been so wounded by greed. There needs to be a redistribution of knowledge and power.

Like others, such as Noam Chomsky or C. Wright Mills, Innis questioned the applicability of the term "democracy" to the society he saw developing, replete as it was and is with "religions," the superficial, and the materialistic. In sharp contrast, the Iroquois were the very model of democracy, superseding the model of Ancient Greece chosen by Innis, with an absence of slaves and an important role for women. What's more, the primary medium of communication for the Iroquois, speech, encouraged discourse, compromise, understanding, and consensus. Obviously this contrasts with the selective, uni-directional mass media, whose role is to "inform" today's society.

The modern Iroquois have had to use these modern media to garner recognition and support from and for their brothers and sisters worldwide. Unfortunately, the inherent limitations of the modern media mean that though they may be able to reach vast numbers of people globally, understanding or sharing are neither ensured nor even likely. While print fostered the popularity of the solitary reader cut off from interpersonal interaction, the electronic media can be used simultaneously by many people, thus once again bringing people into contact with one another. However, though the nature of these electronic media do bring us into physical proximity with some, they also foster a false sense of security, awareness, and familiarity. We may be physically near to family and friends while watching, but we are not truly present to these people or ourselves; we do not communicate on any meaningful level. True, in many ways we are closer to those in far away
parts of the world in that we can see and hear more about foreign cultures, lifestyles, and lands, but we are still further away from ourselves, our family, and our community. And finally, this understanding we gain about foreign peoples from the electronic media is not verifiable for most receivers. How can we be sure that news reports, documentaries, and films accurately portray the reality of the lives of their subjects? We simply let those who control the media do our thinking for us and just pass the "answers" on to the willing and trusting audience.

In any event, there has been a literate revolution in North America. Its causes, courses, and some of its consequences have been traced in this study. In the final analysis, the role of literacy with regard to the Iroquois was not simply to change the mode of communication, but to extended what Clammer (1976:201) terms the "cultural horizon - the realm of cultural meanings and possibilities," to never before dreamed of limits. Literacy forced the acquisition of new and abounding information, introduced new knowledge, created new wants, and led to spiritual, social, and economic revolution. When the Iroquois were forced to reformulate their organization and perception of their society and culture, Iroquoian culture became a mixture of the traditional and the invented, a distinction that becomes more and more difficult to delineate.

In large part this has been an essay in the sociology of knowledge; a consideration of the way a change in the primary means of communication for the Iroquois culture has influenced belief systems, the way belief systems change, and their relationship with social structures. With this, the role of knowledge producers - herein the missionaries and traders - in relation to other units of society, has been
recognized as fundamental. Literacy has been portrayed as a vehicle for the introduction of a new belief system that includes new forms of religion. In fact, religion and literacy have, historically, been so interdependent that it is most unwise to attempt to separate them.

Most importantly, it has become evident that the role of literacy as a basis for stratification, its relation to knowledge and power and decision-making, has forever altered the spiritualism once pervasive in North America; a development not unrelated to pollution of the air, water and earth, and the minimalization of self (Lasch, 1984).

While only partly successful - as there was not wholesale destruction of traditional ways - the ignorant transformation of the Iroquois into a literate and Christian people was and is one of the most extraordinary conscious acts of the missionaries to North America. Rather than attempting to develop a microcosm of the forces that transform societies, this thesis has been undertaken in order to increase understanding of Native culture. It is hoped that upon being made aware of the situation, we may feel a need to look at the atmosphere of modern life - including our own role and spirituality - and make some effort to improve the human condition we have constructed for ourselves (and forced upon others), by fundamentally redistributing the balance of power and knowledge.
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VITA AUCTORIS

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