

# **COMMUNICATION IN THEORY AND THE PROBLEM OF COMMUNICATION ACCORDING TO KARL JASPERS**

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## **PREFACE**

Dear readers, welcome to have a glimpse of the world of communication and the world of Philosophy. I do not claim to have done justice to either of the two topics, since they are both oceans in themselves and cannot be comprised in a short work like this.

In this work I begin with introducing communication and proceed to present the need to study communication as a theory and especially mass media communication. Then I move on to the realm of philosophy from the realm of communications and in particular to the philosophy of communication. From within the realm of Philosophy of communication, I once again narrow down to existential communication and in particular to the philosophy of Karl Jaspers, a German existential philosopher. I further concentrate on, what he has to say concerning the problem of communication. Then, I move on to give a critique of his philosophy.

I conclude this paper with highlighting the richness of Karl Jaspers's Philosophy, which has not only helped communication in a big way, but also helped the whole of humankind in realizing their own existence through communication.

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### **1.1 Communication**

As long as people have wondered about the world, they have been intrigued by the mysteries of human nature. The most commonplace activities of our lives, the things we take for granted become puzzle when we try to understand them. Communication is intertwined with all of human life; any study on human life must touch on this subject. Some scholars treat communication as central while others see it as more peripheral, but it is always there.

### **1.2 What is communication theory?<sup>1</sup>**

Any attempt to explain or represent an experience is a theory, an idea of how something happens. Everybody uses theories we cannot live without them. Our theories guide us in understanding things and deciding how to act, and they change from time to time as we observe new things and acquire new perspectives. Our theories identify patterns of events so we know what to expect. They draw our attention to what is important and what is not. And they enable us to predict what will happen next.

The term communication theory can be referred to a single theory, or it can be used to designate the collective wisdom found in the entire body of theories related to the communication process.

Communication is one of the most pervasive, important, and complex aspects of human life. The ability to communicate at a higher level separates humans from animals. Our daily lives are strongly affected by our own communication with others as well as by messages from people we don't even know, living or dead, from many parts of the world. Because communication is so vital to our lives, surely it deserves our careful attention. Theories are crucial because they permit us to make our way through what may be a rather difficult thicket.

Everybody tries to make sense of their own experience. We assign meaning to what is going on, both inside us and around us. Sometimes the meaning is shared, and sometimes it is not. Sometimes it is clear and other times vague or contradictory. By developing an

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<sup>1</sup> Stephen Littlejohn, *Theories of Human Communication*, (Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1999), 2.

understanding of a variety of theories of communication, we interpret events in more flexible, useful, and discriminating ways.

The study of communication theory would help one to see things they never saw before. One writer put it this way “The paradigm observer is not the man who sees and reports what all normal observers see and report, but the man who sees in familiar objects what no one else has seen before.”<sup>2</sup> This widening of perspectives or unhitching of blinders helps us transcend habits and become increasingly adaptable and flexible. To borrow some analogies from Philosopher Thomas Kuhn, “Looking at contour map, the student sees lines on paper, the cartographer a picture of a terrain. Looking at the bubble-chamber photograph, the student sees record of familiar subnuclear events.”<sup>3</sup> Theories, then, provide a set of useful tools for seeing new and useful things.

Although communication has been studied from antiquity, it became an especially important topic in the twentieth century. One author describes this development as a “revolutionary discovery,” largely caused by the rise of communication technologies such as radio, television, telephone, satellites, and computer networking, along with industrialization, big business and global policies. Clearly communication has assumed immense importance in our times.

Intense interest in the academic study of communication began after World War I, as advances in technology and literacy made communication a topic of concern. The subject was further promoted by the popular twentieth-century philosophies of progressivism and pragmatism, which stimulated a desire to improve society through wide spread social change.

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 3.

## CHAPTER 2

### GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO COMMUNICATION THEORY

#### ***2.1 The fact and meaning of communication***

Communication is a fact in the world of humans, animals and plants, and in the ever-continuing process going on all the time. It is necessary to human, animal and vegetable existence to life itself. Halt communication, and the life process withers and dies. The need for communication is as basic as hunger and thirst. In the beginning, after all, was the 'Word' or 'AUM' the first syllable ever uttered.

Communication is the name we give, to the countless way that humans have of keeping in touch – not just words and music, pictures and print, nods and becks, postures and plumages; to every move that catches someone's eye and every sound that resonates upon another's ear.<sup>4</sup>

The latter part of the observation holds good for animals, birds and bees, as well as other land and sea creatures too. The singing and chirping of birds, the croaking of frogs and salamanders, utter sounds, Visual and olfactory signals among bird and beast are also forms of communication. The dance of the honeybee is a sophisticated means of communication, for it conveys to other bees the precise direction and distance of the place where nectar will be found.

Interaction, interchange, sharing and commonness are ideas that crop up in any attempt to define the term communication. Derived as it is from the Latin *communis*, which means "common," the idea of commonality is frequently stressed in talking about communication. As Denis McQuail defines, "Communication is a process which increases commonality-but also requires elements of commonality for it to occur at all."<sup>5</sup>

Communication then presupposes a shared environment, a social relationship between those who participate. What it leads to is a social interaction, contributing to a sense community.

Since the world of birds and beasts too, manifests and communicates these relationships, the need arises to speak of 'human communication' rather than 'communication' in general, though many do not like the distinction. Recent writers, however, have opted for the more precise term "human communication."

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<sup>4</sup> Keval Kumar, *Mass Communication in India* (New Delhi: Jaico Publishing House, 1981), 1.

<sup>5</sup> Denis McQuail, *Towards Sociology of Mass Communication* (Collier-Macmillan, 1969), 2.

Denis McQuail, for one, sees 'human communication as the sending from one person to another of meaningful messages'. These messages could be oral or written, visual or olfactory. He also takes such things as laws, customs, practices, ways of dressing, building gestures, gardens, military parades, flags, excursions to be messages.

Communication and culture:

But Ashley Montague and Floyd Matson go a step further:

Human communication, as the saying goes, is a clash of symbols, and it covers a multitude of signs. But it is more than media and message, information and persuasion; it also meets a deeper need and serves a higher purpose. Whether clear or garbled, tumultuous or silent, deliberate or fatally inadvertent, communication is the ground of meeting and the foundation of community. It is, in short, the essential human connection.<sup>6</sup>

W.S. Cardon, a leading kinesicist (student of body language), develops the argument still further, stating that the interaction within a culture, is governed not so much by language, but by "body synthesizers" set in motion almost immediately after birth and thereafter conditioned by culture. Communication, therefore is not a matter of isolated entities sending discrete messages' back and forth, but a process of mutual participation in a common structure of rhythmic patterns by all members of a culture.

Lundberg views the phenomenon from yet another angle: he believes that communication is the form of interaction which takes place through symbols. The symbols According to him may be gestural, pictorial, plastic, verbal, or any other which operate as stimuli to behaviour which would not be evoked by the symbol itself in the absence of special conditions of the person who responds.

It is clear, therefore, that communication is a word which like a chameleon takes on different colours depending upon the predilections and interests of the one who uses it. It is such a comprehensive and complex phenomenon that isolated defamations only scratch the surface of its meaning. It encompasses all forms of expression which, it is hoped, serves the purpose of mutual understanding. However, numerous hurdles-cultural, psychological and physical-have to be crossed, before that purpose is truly served. Indeed the chances of communication leading to mutual misunderstanding are much higher.

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<sup>6</sup> Kumar, 2.

## **2.2 The need for communication<sup>7</sup>**

Human beings' need for communication is as strong as his need to sleep and love. It is an individual and social need. It is both a natural individual demand and a requirement of social existence to use communication resources in order to engage in the sharing of experiences, through symbol-mediated interaction.

The severest punishment for a child is to be isolated, to be left alone, not to be spoken to. North Indian children meet up this punishment when they say '*kuttie*' to their playmates, holding out their little finger as an accompanying gesture.

Grown-ups too, especially the aged, need company to fulfil their need to communicate. Society punishes criminals by locking them in solitary cells, thus starving them of the basic need, and indeed the fundamental right to communicate. Communication involves active interaction with our environment—physical, biological and social. Deprived of this interaction, we would not be aware of whether we are safe or in danger, whether hated or loved, or satisfied or hungry. However, we take this interaction, this relationship for granted, unless we experience some deprivation from it.

When it happens, we adapt ourselves to the environment so that we don't lose touch with it as to suffer isolation.

This basic need for communication can perhaps be tracked to the process of human evolution from lower species. Animals, for instance, have to be in sensory communication with their physical and biological surroundings to find food, protect themselves and reproduce their species. A loss of sensation, the inability to hear a predator, for instance, can mean loss of life. Similarly, to be lost from primitive social communication, from the pack, from the heard or the tribe is to be condemned to death.

What happens to a person, who is "excommunicated" literally, cut off from communication by his/her group or society? Malcom X, the Black Muslim leader, described the experience of being expelled from his/her group as "a state of emotional shock." Elaborating, he said that this state was like that of someone who for twelve years had an inseparable, beautiful marriage partner and then suddenly one morning at breakfast the marriage partner had thrust across the table some divorce papers. I felt as though something in nature had failed, like the sun or the stars. It was that incredible a phenomenon to me, something too stupendous to conceive.

Others who have been isolated for a period of time from human company are known to have experienced nightmares and hallucinations. Indeed social isolation can be hazardous to the

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 3.

heart as much as to the mind. It is estimated that single men without friends run two to three times the amount of risk of developing heart diseases as their more sociable counterparts.

However, lack of communication can be as disorienting an experience as too much of it. In fact the apparent effects of sensory deprivation and sensory overloads are frequent similar anxiety, apathy, impaired judgment, strange visions are something akin to schizophrenia. The information explosion in some western industrialized societies is an instance of this sensory overload.

### ***2.3 Interpersonal and group communication***

Interpersonal communication is a face-to-face communication between two persons, in other words, a dialogue or a conversation without the intervention of a machine like the telephone. It is personal, direct, intimate, allowing the maximum interaction and exchange in word and gesture.<sup>8</sup>

Group communication shares all these qualities, though in a much less measure. The larger the group, the less personal and direct the exchange. In fact, as the group grows in size, communication tends to become more and more of a monologue, for participation turns difficult. The degree of directness and intimacy, therefore, depends upon the size of the group, the place where it meets, as also the relationship of the members of the group to one another, and to the leader (or speaker). Group communication is, therefore, more complex than interpersonal communication. The level of mutual understanding suffers as a result. In inter-personal communication, too, mutual understanding may not be complete, especially if the non-verbal cues are not paid attention to; but the possibility of checking up and correcting misunderstanding is quicker and easier.

Feedback is a key word here. While in inter-personal communication, feedback is instantaneous, it is not so in group communication. What is more, is that it allows, for instance, response to feedback received. In group communication, on the other hand, feedback is more difficult to measure, and to respond to. It takes time before meanings are clarified, and responses assessed. That explains why the art of effective speaking (the art of public speaking in a large group) is more necessary in group communication than in communication at the inter-personal level. Face-to-face communication is more persuasive and influential, for it involves the interplay of words and gestures, and the warmth of human closeness. So, advertising people still depend on the door to door salesman or sales girl in an age of mass media.

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<sup>8</sup> Littlejohn, 17.

Sincerity and enthusiasm are easier to convey, and to reach to in a face-to-face situation. In group communication, particularly if the group is very large, deception and pretence cannot be detected immediately. It is, therefore, not surprising that acting is associated with group communication.

The reach of communication can be as wide as the group, provided all its members are assembled together. If that is not possible, written communication is the answer, to a more exact method of conveying messages. Though it is a slower, group communication has turned into a formless mass.

At the same time, the group has not been totally destroyed. On the contrary, groups like the family, caste, class, professional groups, social, religious and political and linguistic groups have grown in size and strength, bringing pressures to bear on the mass media of communication. Group culture is still intact, but it is slowly being eroded by mass culture.

## **2.4 Mass communication**

Mass communication is generally identified with modern mass media like television, radio, the cinema, and the printed media, but these media are processes and must not be mistaken for the phenomenon of communication itself.<sup>9</sup>

Indeed the term 'mass communication' ought to refer to the totality of communication which takes within its compass not only the electronic media, but also the spoken word, song, drama, dance, painting, sculpture, and architecture. Traditional communication media like the *keertana*; and the whole treasure house of folk-dance and folk theatre are organs of the mass media in a developing country. They are far less expensive organs, and much more effective as they communicate at a direct and personal level. Their reach, too, is far and wide in our country.

The obvious advantage of the modern electronic media is that they are "the great multipliers." As Schramm explains "Just as the machines of the industrial revolution are to multiply human power with other kinds of energy, so are the communicating machines of the communication revolution able to multiply human messages to a degree previously unheard of."<sup>10</sup> It is only when the multiplication of human messages is combined with a whole lot of other factors economic means, availability of inputs, a strong infrastructure, the presence of personnel, etc. can local or national development result.

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<sup>9</sup> Kumar, 6.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 6.

### **2.4.1 A discipline**

Mass communication has now become an independent academic discipline and can be considered an important aspect of modern man's study of his civilization. The discipline has a bearing on sociology, especially that branch of sociology called cultural anthropology, and also on economics, politics, literature, the performing arts and the electronic media. It is this interdisciplinary nature of mass communication that makes the study of it fascinating.

### **2.4.2 An elastic concept**

What the electronic media have done for communication is extending its reach to millions of people all over the world. The term "mass" in mass communication has kept stretching its meaning to include ever greater numbers with the development of every new technological tool for communication. It has thus become an elastic term referring to no fixed number of a country's or world's population. How many people ought to be reached, for instance, for a communication via a traditional or electronic medium to be called "mass." The concept of "mass," like "communication" itself is vague and indefinite. The concept "mass communication" is doubly so. Nevertheless, Janowitz attempts to pin down the term "mass communication" thus: "Mass communication comprise the institutions and techniques by which specialized groups employ technological devices (press, radio, films, etc.) to disseminate symbolic content to large, heterogeneous, and widely dispersed audiences."<sup>11</sup>

### **2.4.3 The communication process**

"Communication," Says Peter Little, "is the process by which information is transmitted between individuals and or organizations so that an understanding response results."<sup>12</sup> The "information" transmitted is not just news and knowledge of different kinds, but the attitude or frame of mind of the communicator. Moreover, warns Little, it is possible to communicate accidentally, or unconsciously even against the communicator's wishes and for a response to result that the communicator did not desire at all. For instance, a TV newsreader betrays his/her bias in the very tone and manner he/she reads the news of various events, the pauses he makes, and, above all, through his facial expression. Most of the time he is totally unaware of the 'body language' (sometimes called 'silent language') he speaks, which is often much louder than the words he reads. It is thus clear sometimes to the discerning viewer whether or not the newsreader really believes what he/she reads, or is indifferent as to its impact.

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<sup>11</sup> Littlejohn, 17.

<sup>12</sup> Kumar., 6.

#### **2.4.4 Elements**

Professor Harold D. Lasswell's question, "Who says what, in which channel, to whom, with what effect?" describes the process of communication in as simple and sufficient manner as possible. The elements in a communication process are, therefore, the sender ("who"), the message ("what"), and feedback ("effect"). All disturbances or distractions, whether technical, physical, cultural or psychological, are clubbed under the comprehensive term "noise." They are also called 'barriers' to effective communication.

The message which may be in the form of words, pictures or signs is transmitted over a channel, which in the case of mass communication, is one of the mass media: TV, radio, film, the print media.

It must be noted that transmission is not communication. For effective communication, the message has to reach the "receiver," and produce "an understanding response": preferably the one intended by the sender. To find out whether that has truly taken place, feedback is necessary. "Feedback" is the receiver's reaction to the message, whether favourable or hostile. It may take the form of a letter to the editor, or a demand for a repeat airing of a particular programme. In interpersonal communication, feedback is immediate, while in the mass media which use technical means of transmission, it takes much longer, and is much complex.

## **2.5. Barriers to Communication**

### **2.5.1 Cultural and linguistic**

Language is the expression of the thoughts and experiences of a people in terms of their cultural environment. It is ambiguous by nature. The words of a language are mere symbols, and these results in misinterpretation. Again, words (or symbols) possess objective and subjective meanings. The objective (or denotative) meaning points to objects, people and events, whereas subjective (or connotative) meanings point to emotional and evaluative responses. The favourable or unfavourable associations of a word or phrases depend upon the context in which they are used.

Meanings exist not in words themselves but in the minds of people who use them. Even simple words themselves but in the minds of people who use them. Even simple words like "love," "honour," and "democracy" mean different things to different people.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 8.

In order to minimize misinterpretation, an effective communicator must see to it that they know in what sense and with what association various words are used. In case of doubt, the listener could ask politely, “What do you mean?” or “But what does it mean?”

### 2.5.2 Psychological

Each of us has certain “frame of reference” from which we look at the world, people, events and statements. This frame of reference is directly shaped by our attitudes, beliefs and opinions, which in their turn have been influenced by our experiences, particularly the experiences of our childhood. We tend to listen attentively to, and interpret favourable messages, which give a boost to our self-image, and reject or misinterpret those messages, which threaten that same image. We thus distort the meanings of messages at a subconscious level, in terms of our own frame of reference.<sup>14</sup>

The first step to take in overcoming this barrier is to accept the fact that all of us speak and understand messages in terms of our own frame of reference of other people. We also need to accept the frame of reference of other people to be as valid as our own. In brief, we must learn to listen and understand a message from the speaker’s point of view, not from our own a difficult task for most of us.

Other physiological “barriers” which are due to our “frame of reference” are:

- a) *Unjust assumptions* made, for instance, by a broadcaster who wrongly assumes that his listeners understand all that he says, and that he is being affected.
- b) *Resistance to change* is generally a resistance to the new ideas, because they are a threat to our feeling of security and stability.
- c) *The tendency to prematurely evaluate* speakers and writers in terms of our own frame of reference. This tendency is heightened in those situations where emotions are involved. This barrier can be overcome by listening with understanding.
- d) *Communication selectivity*: Individuals tend to give their attention only to information to which they want to attend through a “turning in” or “turning out” process. And the information to which we attend is selectively perceived according to our experiences and desires. We interpret them the way we want, or are perceptually able to, or to reinforce our attitudes and beliefs.

We retain only that information we want to remember or that which is pleasant to us or boosts our ego. For example, we recall only the good old days and forget the bad.

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 9.

The more ego-involved we are, the more we tend to retain grudges over a period of time we forget the source, and remember only the content. And a more status a speaker or writer has, the more we believe him.<sup>15</sup>

### **2.5.3 Confused presentation**

In an oral presentation the following can result in some confusion:

- i) Faulty emphasis,
- ii) Wrong ordering of material,
- iii) Bad delivery of speech.

In a written (or printed) presentation, the following can lead to misunderstanding:

- i) Long winding sentences in which connectives like ‘if’, ‘but’, ‘unless’, ‘except’ are too freely used.
- ii) Wrong types of print and spacing.
- iii) Negative statements, if too many of them are employed.

### **2.5.4 Limitations of the receiver’s capacity**

The receiver has a limited span of attention. Beyond that, his mind begins to wander. This results in loss of information, which in turn leads to misunderstanding. The processing of information by the receiver depends upon his level of intelligence, and also the level of his capacity to understand. Further, the receiver’s long-term and short-term memory also plays an important role in his/her understanding of the message.

## **2.6 Influence of technology on communication<sup>16</sup>**

The story of mass communication begins around 1450 in Mainz, Germany, with Johannes Guttenberg’s invention of printing press from movable type.<sup>17</sup> Instead of having to make copies laboriously by hand, numerous copies could be turned out of a machine that was worked by hands. Books like the Bible became easily available to all those who were literate. Indeed, the invention of printing made possible the spread of education in schools and universities. No more was learning the monopoly of a few monks.

With the growing sophistication in the techniques of printing, communication with the literate masses by writers and leaders became a simple matter. Political revolutions like the

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<sup>16</sup> Kumar., 12.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 10.

French and the American could involve the masses in the revolutions because of speedy and efficient communication from the leaders.

### **2.6.1 The first wave**

The invention of printing (which Marshall McLuhan considered an extension of the eye) led to the tendency to see reality in discrete units, to find casual relations and linear serial order, it allowed individuals to withdraw, to contemplate and meditate outside of communal activities. Printing, therefore, encouraged “privatization, the lonely scholar, and the development of private points of view.” Indeed, “the very linear and rectilinear layout of words on the printed page transformed the nature of spelling, grammar and prose style.” In oral face-to-face “tribal culture gave way, with the help of new technology printing, to a ‘detrribalized’ visual, linear and symmetrical culture.” The logical, the linear and the orderly now came to prominence in human ways of seeing and communicating.

By the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, printing press brought the newspaper, the greatest challenge to the printed book. The arrangement of news, and later of pictures, on the pages of a newspaper was not linear, but in the form of a mosaic and montage. There was no specific order in which they had to be read or looked at. Thus, the linear and the symmetrical communication culture gave way under the onslaught of the mosaic and montage modes of communication. Technology has once again revolutionized our ways of seeing and of sending and receiving communication.

### **2.6.2 The second wave**

The 19<sup>th</sup> century also saw the invention of the telegraph, the telephone and photography. Then along came Thomas Edison with his phonograph, his movie camera and projector which made it possible to store sound and moving pictures. DeForest’s invention of the triode vacuum tube in 1907, opened up the new worlds of radio and television. All these technological innovations led to another revolution in communication. This dramatic development has been called “the second wave” of modern communication, “the first wave” being ushered in by print technology.

Just as print extended the eye, radio proved to be an extension of the ear. In McLuhan’s words “printing upset the balance between oral and written speech photography upset the balance of ear and eye.” With radio, oral speech and the sense of hearing regained their importance. Together with the phonograph (or gramophone), a new aural culture was beginning to take shape, when the movies, and then television launched the audio-visual revolution in communication. In McLuhan’s words, “If the movie was the mechanization of movement and gesture, TV was the electronification of the same.”

Satellite communication via television has now transformed the world into a global village. Man has been retribalised, returned to the state of the tribe, to his/her sensorial wholeness. “The speed of information in the global village means that every human action or event involves everybody in the village in the consequences of every event.” Wishful thinking! While this might have been true of the small close-knit primitive tribe, it does not apply to the scattered millions of the universe who are caught up in the little worlds of their own caste, religions and communities.

### **2.6.3 The third wave**

The third wave of communication between man and machine was set in motion almost at the same time as the first, but climaxed only in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Computers and the concept of information retrieval have brought about mind-boggling changes in the processing of information and communication. It is now possible for man to instruct machines to develop and work other machines. This has resulted in automation and the dawn of the forth wave.

### **2.6.4 The fourth wave**

The computerized or the electronic newspaper is already with us. Press a button, and the latest headlines appear in bold letters in the, the daily issue of the *New York Times*, or the magazine *Cosmopolitan* which are available on video discs.

Cable TV technology has made possible multi-channel and local broadcasting. The choice in communication has become virtually unlimited. A New Yorker, for instance, can choose from among 150 channels. The information explosion is no more a reality; it has turned into a nightmare due to modern technology. Audio-visual man no longer needs writing, the book and the newspaper. He has already bid goodbye to Guttenberg!

## **2.7 Influence of mass communication on culture**

Does mass communication result in a homogeneous mass culture? For instance, has the Hindi cinema which is in every sense the most popular form of mass entertainment in our country made any dent in our centuries-old cultural values and behaviour? Or, has television in any way affect the culture of our city folk in any significant manner?

The reach of mass communication through the electronic media is rather limited to the urban areas. It would, therefore, be ridiculous to suggest that the modern mass media have in any tangible way influenced Indian culture which itself is an extremely composite phenomenon, and impossible to define precisely. Indeed, the word culture, too, is so comprehensive that it

encompasses every facet of our lives, from the most superficial to the most profound and intimate.<sup>18</sup>

Mass communication may influence, depending on how forceful it is, also it hardly ever depends on the attitudes and beliefs we hold so dear just like in the areas of clothes, hairstyle and outward behaviour. We may go to the extreme extent of acting out what we see or hear in the mass media, say a violent gesture or a protest, but without changing our basic attitudes.

### **2.7.1 The Phenomenon of Mass Culture**

“The concept of mass culture refers to a whole range of popular activities and artefacts to entertainments, spectacles, music books, films, but has become identified with the typical content of the mass media, and especially with the fictional, dramatic and entertainment material which they provide.”<sup>19</sup>

The reach of the mass media is so limited in India that one wonders what relevance Denis McQuail’s description of mass culture has to our society. Mass culture in our country still by and large prevails in our villages where over 75% of our people live, and where Indian culture (or Hindu culture, if you like) is untouched by the mass media. Folk media continue to provide the main source of entertainment, and also of instruction and education in religious, social, economic and political matters. While there is a great variety of folk forms in every region, and numerous languages and dialects in which they are presented, the themes have their source in the two epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. The Muslims, who make up the second largest religious community in the country, have preserved their own traditional folk form like the *gazal*, the *kawali* and the *mushaira*. The tribals, too, continue to entertain themselves with age-old folk songs and folk dances. The mass media have, however, entered into the lives of the upper and middle classes in particular, in the cities and towns. The cinema is the most popular entertainment, as it is the screening of the production of nearly 700 films a year, and the screening of them in 10,500 theatres. This popularity is also seen in the number of film oriented programmes on Vividh Bharati and the television.

The Indian cinema has the qualities of a mass-culture product, but it is doubtful if it has given rise to a mass culture.

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>19</sup> Denis McQuail, *Towards Sociology of Mass Communication* (New York: Collier-Macmillan, 1969), 22.

### **2.7.2 Features**

Mass culture, as it is understood by Western sociologists, has three main features:

1. Immense popularity among all classes, particularly among the working class in individual societies.
2. Mass production and mass distribution.
3. Unlike elite or “high” culture its aesthetic and literary standards are low, and commercialized, as its mass produced programmes aim at the mass market.

The mass culture propagated by the mass media is not necessarily the popular culture of the masses of the majority community in the country. More often than not, as in the Hindi cinema, it is a synthetic culture all its own, paying lip service occasionally to the values of popular culture. The glossy film magazines, and the garish type of calendar art, greeting cards, and advertising posters that have made their appearance in the cities during the last decade or so, offer further examples of mass culture in our cities.

Besides, it is the communication between peers and close friends that makes waves today, this can be seen clearly through the “mobile/cell communication,” that has picked up momentum and has become the fastest medium of communication. It also helps in interpersonal communication to a large extent.

## CHAPTER 3

### THEORIES OF COMMUNICATION

#### ***3.1 Why do we need to study media?<sup>20</sup>***

When we study philosophy of communication, we should be aware of the “media” which is the most important word in communication. According to Len Masterman, there are seven reasons for studying media.

- 1) The high rate of media consumption and saturation of contemporary societies by the media.
- 2) The ideological importance of the media, and their influence as consciousness industries.
- 3) The growth in the management and the manufacture of information, and its dissemination by the media.
- 4) The increasing penetration of media into our central democratic processes.
- 5) The increasing importance of visual communication and information in all areas.
- 6) The importance of educating students to meet the demands in all areas.
- 7) The fast-growing national and international pressures to privatize information.

#### ***3.2 Principles of communication<sup>21</sup>***

The following seven principles are essential to understand communication in all its forms and functions. They help us to grasp the various dynamics at work in any communication.

- 1) Communication is a package of signals.
- 2) Communication is a process of adjustment.
- 3) Communication involves content and relationship dimensions.
- 4) Communication involves symmetrical and complimentary transactions.
- 5) Communication sequences are punctuated.
- 6) Communication is a transactional process.
- 7) Communication is inevitable, irreversible and unrepeatable.

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<sup>20</sup> George, 3.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 5.

### **3.3 Right to communicate<sup>22</sup>**

The right to communicate has been declared a fundamental right by United Nations Charter, but what human beings need much more fundamentally is in fact the right to communicate. It is such a right that gives men and women their dignity and their freedom, as well as the ability to participate in the social, religious, economic and political life of a nation.

The right to communicate is now seen as a fundamental human right, much more comprehensive than existing freedom of speech, freedom of the press, etc. It is the basic right of the individual and it extends, in some degree at least, to groups, nations and the international community, and have important legal, economic and technological implications. It needs to be included in national and international ways of guaranteeing communication freedom. It is closely related to the democratization of communication within and between countries, and to concepts of 'access,' 'participation' and the 'two-way' flow.

### **3.4 Prerequisites for massmedia<sup>23</sup>**

#### **3.4.1 Source**

Mass communication is a complex organization that goes to great extents to construct and transmit messages. Although mass communication cost a great deal or the producer, they cost the receiver or consumer very little, at least directly. Books are perhaps the most expensive media products because the consumer must pay the entire cost of production. It cost us nothing to watch a broadcast television program or to listen to a radio show. We pay for these shows indirectly by purchasing the advertisers' products. The advertiser assumes the direct cost through the purchase of airtime for commercials.

#### **3.4.2 Audience**

Mass communication addresses the masses an extremely large audience. Because of the vastness of the audience and because it is essential for the media to give the audience what it wants, the messages of mass communication must focus on some typical or average viewer. In this way, the media secure the largest number of possible receivers as their audience.

However, this work only for certain widely used products and hence certain programs. The media and the advertisers carefully research and divide the mass audience into smaller, more

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 8.

clearly defined targets. The process of segmenting a large audience (for example, the television audience) into more narrowly defined small groups (for example, children from 6-10, women from 25-40, or teenage boys) is referred to as demassification, advertisers can direct their appeals to the specific group they wish to reach. The entire family is affected there, than in cycle or road and track which have fewer but more interested readers.

### **3.4.3 Vastness and Speed**

The entire mass communication experience is a public one. Everyone has access to the message of the mass media. Unlike a talk at a bar or a classroom lecture, anyone can receive mass communication.<sup>24</sup>

The communication is also rapid: the messages are sent to an audience with very little delay. This characteristic speed has several qualifications, however. A novel may take years to write and television series years to put together, yet once they are completed, there is little time lost in the transmission of the message. This rapid nature of mass communication refers most specifically to the broadcasting of news items and events. We can see fires, robberies, political rallies, and speeches while they are common knowledge.

### **3.4.4 One-way communication**

In one sense, mass communication is a one way process. It goes from the source to the receivers. In contrast, in interpersonal communication,<sup>25</sup> communication goes from source to receiver and then from receiver back to the source. In mass communication the message flows from the media to the receivers but not back again, except in the form of feedback-letters to the editor, audience ratings, box office receipts, and the like.

In another sense, however, mass communication is also a two –way process. Both media and audience make selections. First, the media selects the portion for the total population that they will try reach. Next the receiver selects, from all the media available, particular messages to attend to. Some will read Time while others will read Personal Computing, Discover, and so on.

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<sup>24</sup> B.N. Ahuja, S.S Chhabra, *Communication Yesterday Today and Tommorrow*, (New Delhi: Surjeet Publications, 1989), 5.

<sup>25</sup> Littlejohn, 17.

### 3.4.5 Context

Mass communication operates in a social context.<sup>26</sup> The media influences the social context. There is, in other words, a transactional relationship between the media and society. But, economic conditions also influence the media.

Similarly, the media influence the political environment and at the same time the political environment influences the media.

At one time the media, especially television, reinforces only the values and the attitudes of the dominant culture. With the proliferation of a wide variety of cable channels, however, there is today considerable cultural diversity. There are now numerous foreign language programs directed largely at newly arrived immigrants, as well as programming aimed at gays and lesbians, senior citizens, the politically conservative and the politically liberal, and the religious of varied faiths.

### 3.4.6 Effects and controls of mass-media<sup>27</sup>

The greatest effect of mass media is its ability to persuade people (listeners/readers/viewers etc..) in many ways for many purposes. They could be categorized under the following headings:

#### 3.4.6.1 Social

Massmedia brings greater awareness among people on health care, literacy, family planning and agricultural programme, etc.<sup>28</sup> It facilitates to know various happenings in the world and instantly, too. Depending on the use mass media can unite or divide the people under various categories. Massmedia, through its impact, confers status symbol on people depending on the products and brands people use in their daily life. Mass-media could as well be used to manipulate and exploit the venerable sections of human population, for example, women and children.

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<sup>26</sup> Vincent F. Montero, *An Introduction to Mass Media*, (Chennai: YSM Publication, 1990), 7.

<sup>27</sup> George, 13.

<sup>28</sup> S. Ganesh, *Lectures in Mass Communication*, (New Delhi: Indian Publishers Distributors, 1995) 134.

### **3.4.6.2 Cultural**

Through mass media cultural integration could take place between societies, nations and tribes. If care is not taken, it could lead to degeneration and destruction of native and traditional cultures.

### **3.4.6.3 Economic**

Massmedia bring revenue to government and business groups. The Doordarshan alone brought a revenue of Rs 4,90,00,000 between the years 1997-1998 from the TV advertisements<sup>29</sup>. Each new mass-medium introduced, established and run creates a vast scope for employing people at different levels. However, any import of material from the West drains our foreign exchange. Another danger in the use of mass media is the growing consumerist culture among the common people. It creates innumerable artificial needs among the people.

### **3.4.6.4 Political**

Massmedia bring political awareness among the voters. This in turn makes the politicians to be more responsible. As of now, since the control of media is under the hands of the political leaders who form the executives of the nation, it faces often the danger of being used as a tool to manipulate information and thus the people in general. Situation needs a change.

### **3.4.6.5 Moral**

Misuse of the massmedia does have lot of moral impact on people, especially on the vulnerable groups like children and women. Any excessive propaganda of one group against another brings about communal disharmony among people. Social stereotypes projected through media perpetuate social and moral evils in society.

## **3.5 Controls of Massmedia<sup>30</sup>**

### **3.5.1 People**

Ultimately, the consumer is the controller. If a particular programme or media event is liked or approved by larger number of people, then no matter what such programmes or

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 364.

<sup>30</sup> Kumar, 16.

events will cause competitors the loss of their mass appeal and eventually will lose their market in the field.

### **3.5.2 Specialists**

Since mass communication comprises of institutions and techniques of special nature, specialized individuals, groups and agencies do control the media by their expertise and ideologies.

Our environment, for better or for worse, is massmedia oriented.<sup>31</sup> People today learn almost everything they know through some medium of mass communication. Therefore there is a dire need for media studies.

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<sup>31</sup> Edwin Emery, *Introduction to Mass Communication*, (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1975), 3.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE PROBLEM OF COMMUNICATION

The problem of communication has become crucial for humankind. Human beings do not understand each other. They have become alienated from one another. Much tension and conflict can be evaded if communication was achieved. The future of humankind depends upon an effective solution of this problem. At no time in history was our world so inter-dependent as it is today. At the same time, there is greater struggle, violence and conflict. Our world is constantly threatened by nuclear weapons and total annihilation. To avoid such a catastrophe, unity of humankind is a prerequisite. This unity can be achieved not by any rational scientific universal, or by a universal religion, or a conventional language. “Unity can be gained only in boundless communication.”<sup>1</sup> Jaspers as a responsible thinker, as a man totally alive to his situation, attempts a solution of this problem.

According to Jaspers, communication is not possible at the level of *Dasein*, or of consciousness-as-such or even of spirit. It is possible only at the level of Existenz. Let us not move on to clarify what Jaspers means by the words “*Dasein*,” “consciousness-as-such” and “spirit.”

#### 4.1 *Dasein*

In the state of *Dasein* a human being has yet not become self-conscious. He/she lives in a dream-like state. His/her individual consciousness coincides with the general consciousness. Real communication is mistaken for life with other or communal relations. Here, a human being is conscious but not self-conscious. There is identification with all. I do what everyone else does. I do not ask about myself. I believe and think also like everyone else. A human beings fears, joys and goals are all common. “Living in the medium of this community, I am not yet in communication because I am not yet aware of myself.”<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Karl Jaspers, *Way of Wisdom*, trans. Ralph Manheim (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, n.d), 106.

<sup>32</sup> Karl Jaspers, *Philosophy Vol. 2*, trans.E.B. Ashton (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press Chicago and London, n.d), 48.

## **4.2 Consciousness-as-such**

This is the level of clear, cogent and generally valid logical thinking. At this a human being became self-conscious. He distinguishes himself from others. Each individual is an existing “ego atom.” Communication at this level merely means relation between one intelligent being and another. Let us consider the form of Pseudo communication attempts at this level:

A being can try to understand another being by having a common goal and selecting appropriate means for its achievement and both the beings may attempt to understand each other by jointly comprehending some objective thought content. But this is not genuine communication but only an intellectual give and take in which the entire attitude is thoroughly impersonal.

I may reduce the other to the level of an “object” or “matter” and attempt to manipulate things. In the previous case the other was not reduced to an object. The interest in the matter being is considered and in the person only because he was related to the matter but still impersonally I had granted self-hood to him. But here I rob the other of his self-hood. We work on him as on a natural object and try to get him in exactly the position we want to. We have our own ulterior motives in relating to him, which the other knows nothing about. I use means to fulfill my motives which the other does not understand.

If the other also tries to exploit me in making me an object, a struggle will ensue, each attempting to reduce the other to an object by whichever means available. This strife cannot be called communication unless I become myself, I cannot communicate. Mere intellect or rationality cannot make me myself.

## **4.3 Spirit or idea**

A human being is not merely vital existence and a formal intellectual self but cannot know fully. Spirit or idea integrates the individual. But communication is not possible at this level either. For as spirit I am, totally absorbed in my profession, in my society, the state or my family.

No doubt, participation in the idea alone will grant substance to my life, yet in it I am not myself. Communication at the level of spirit brings human beings closer to each other, differently than, at the level of Dasein or consciousness-as-such. But still an absolute proximity, whereby substitution of the other by somebody else is absolutely impossible. Thus communication is not achieved at this level.

Thus the above three levels do not achieve genuine communication; instead they only articulate the direction. In them I am not committed as myself, as indispensable but I am committed only in one particularity- as existence, as intellect or as a function of an ideal entity.

Communication is possible only at the level of Existenz. When the two concerned are nothing more but themselves. They are not mere representatives. They dare to stand naked before each other. All formalities, all conventions, all reserves of ordinary intercourse are given up. The

person concerned cannot be substituted for anyone else. He/she is not interchangeable. Communication and self-realization go hand in hand. It is only when I communicate that I become conscious of myself. To be myself I require another.

## **4.4 Elucidating the existential communication**

### **4.4.1 Solitude and Union<sup>33</sup>**

Communication has often been described as a “breakthrough of individual solitude” or loneliness. Loneliness has been looked upon as essential to communication. Without loneliness there cannot be communication. Jaspers has himself experienced this solitude even as a schoolboy. This awe-inspiring solitude is there in all great philosophers. But at the same time communication involves union. I cannot communicate alone. “All truth presupposes another.” I will go to waste when I am nothing but I. Communication is possible only when two persons join in unity but remain two. There must be a unity in difference.

Solitude or loneliness is a state of non-being of Existenz. I have not yet become myself. From this state of non-being or negation I can come to reality or myself only by taking a decision to communicate. Loneliness can further be described as a “lack of communicative ties”<sup>34</sup> with others.

In my busy life, in the hustle and bustle of our every day society, I may all of a sudden experience this sense of loneliness or non-being. If I have led a life involved in objectivities in which I, like others, was just a mask, something interchangeable having no depth or roots, I may feel a desperate emptiness at some moment. In these moments my entire world will collapse. All that, which I regarded as having value, my social relations, my friends, will all prove to be sham and shallow. They will turn to ashes. This experience may shake me thoroughly and create in me a need to communicate, to go deeper down in myself and to see below the superficialities.

In order to get rid of my loneliness, I must communicate. But I cannot communicate unless the other is prepared to. I may suffer pangs of loneliness if I permit the other’s communicative will to flag.

I may feel desperately lonely when I discover that I have never communicated. I find that I do not have anybody. One is reminded of the excruciating loneliness of Kierkegaard. It was this loneliness which ultimately landed Nietzsche in a mental asylum.

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<sup>33</sup> Jaspers, *Philosophy*, vol.2, 56.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 56.

Loneliness may arise when all those with whom I used to communicate have died and are no more. I alone remain. This loneliness is not the youthful loneliness of “may be never,” but it is a loneliness of “never more.”

Though communication is a conquest of solitude or loneliness, it gives rise to a new solitude. Ultimately, loneliness cannot be conquered. Communication cannot become permanent. We are like ships meeting each other and passing by. As long as I am I, solitude cannot disappear and I cannot be anything but I. Jaspers confirms the ultimate solitude of the self.

#### **4.4.2 Manifestation and realization**

Selfrealization is not possible without selfmanifestation. I cannot manifest myself without another, in isolation. To myself as an individual I am neither manifest nor real. It is only by revealing myself to another that I reveal myself to me.

Jaspers does not believe in a substantive view of the self or Existenz. Existenz is not a substance having a number of qualities which come to light when I manifest myself. Existenz has infinite possibilities. Out of these possibilities in an act of communication, some are realized. Manifestation is a process of self-creation. If I want to realize myself, I must manifest fully, keep nothing hidden or withdrawn. I must risk myself completely in communication. I must put the way I am completely at stake. The way I am is not my Existenz. It is only my empirical existence. When I am fully identified with my *Dasein*, I will avoid manifesting myself. I am then afraid that this manifestation will destroy me. To manifest means to have a grip over this empirical reality and to conquer this reality for the sake of possible existence. In manifestation I loose my *Dasein* in order to gain my possible Existenz. Both cannot be simultaneous. It is the absolute “either/or” of Kierkegaard. There is no *madhyam marg* or middle path.

I cannot manifest myself unless the other manifests himself. Unless I manifest myself I cannot realize myself or be myself. So Jaspers says, “I cannot be myself unless the other wants to be himself; I cannot be free unless he is free; I cannot be sure of myself unless I am sure of him. In communication I feel not only responsible for myself but for the other, as if he were I and I were he.”<sup>35</sup>

Thus only selfmanifestation can make me myself and it is only when I become myself, (which involves the other becoming himself) can I communicate.

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 53.

#### 4.4.3 Loving struggle

Communication has also been called loving struggle. The word 'struggle' has been used because I am struggling to manifest myself in order to realize myself. At the same time, it is a loving struggle because in struggling to manifest myself I also manifest the other. It is a struggle between self and self for their mutual manifestation. It is a co-operative search for truth.

The love involved in this is not a blind love which fixes upon the object as readily as another but it is a struggling love which is clear-sighted. It challenges the other possible Existenz, raises difficulties for it and questions it, all in order to realize oneself and the other. The struggle involved is both for oneself and for the other. It is in contrast with self struggle and competition in the flat lands of "common life" or at the level of empirical existence. At this level the struggle does not "love" but a "deadly combat" between foes who are thirsty for each other's blood. All means fair or foul are used. Deception, cunning, treacheries are the order of the day. The other is looked down as an object, as objective resistant nature.

The struggle between "Existenz" and "Existence"<sup>36</sup> is totally different. The struggle here is a *joint venture*. Both are, so to speak, in the same boat. They drown or save themselves together. It is *not a struggle against another but with another*. This makes all the difference. Here there is complete openness. No concealment whatsoever and a concrete submission to probing question. Nothing is to be bypassed, however sacred. All answers are demanded and given. Challenges are thrown and accepted. By way of further clarification Jaspers lays down a number of rules.

1. Superiority in not what is desired in communication. Superiority and victory, if gained, will be felt as disturbing because communication is possible only at the same *niveau* the same level of existence. Approximately the two concerned would be of the same rank. Minor difference in capacities and achievements are immaterial. This is the reason why Nietzsche could not communicate and became a victim of increasing loneliness before his final collapse. He was far too superior to find an equal partner. Jaspers comments on two of Nietzsche's letters written to his sister: Never does he meet his equal in kind or rank hence, in the end he is forced to say: "I am too proud to think that a human being could love me. This would presuppose that he knows who I am. Just as little do I believe that I shall ever love anyone: this would presuppose that I would, for once find a human being of my rank" (Mar, 85). Perfect friendship can exist only inter-pares (July '86). Complete equality is a prerequisite to communication. If one of the partners concerned has a better

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<sup>36</sup> Kiran, 57.

memory, or is less prone to fatigue, or is better read, his technical knowledge is deeper or is more intelligent, and then he will handicap himself and thus equalize the difference.

2. Nothing should be left unanswered. Unlimited repose is essential. If I hear a nuance in a figure of speech, something that is implicit, I am still going to take it seriously and will react to it. I do not attempt to persuade or to compel; I ask questions and demand answers. What is not answered, will not be forgotten but remain an unanswered challenge.
3. Implicit trust or friendship is required. This friendship is not Aristotle's "friendship of utility" or of "pleasure," but his "friendship of goodness." Trust will prevent from any calculating reserve or concealment. It will preclude the presence of can't, hypocrisy, false modesty, envy, malice, ridicule, exhibitionism, condescension, depreciation and the like."<sup>37</sup> Unless there is trust, honesty will go by the boards. St. Paul in his letter to the church in Corinth, describes succinctly what is needed, "Love is never boastful, not conceited, not rude, never selfish, and not quick to take offense. Love keeps no score for wrongs... but delights in the truth."<sup>38</sup>
4. Communication is not possible among the members of a self-sufficient group. These groups give security by providing common sympathies, beliefs and ways of behaving. They believe that they are already in the possession of truth, so the questioning of anything does not arise, e.g. Parsee community. Communication is possible only when a human being is deprived of this security like state, church, objective metaphysics, rational morality, and an ontological grasp of being. Thus communication is not possible between like-minded people belonging to the same group i.e. in the presence of any kind of a structure.
5. In this loving struggle the participants cannot 'help' each other by enabling the other to believe. In this connection Jaspers is against the Christian concept of 'grace' by which Christ helped others by dispensing grace. Neither can they help each other by giving the truth itself as is presumed by dogmatic philosophers. Neither of the members of the contest are already in the possession of truth. So both are on the way. They are both in doubt so the question of helping in the above sense does not arise. The above sense presupposes that truth is already possessed and only its distribution has to be done, whereas, Jaspers position is that the two arrive at the truth only in communication. If the word "help" is to be used, then Jaspers would use it in the sense of awakening and

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<sup>37</sup> Charles F. Wallraff, *Karl Jaspers, An Introduction to His Philosophy* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1970), 132.

<sup>38</sup> Amin, 182.

appealing to the other. He can be compared with Socrates who was the first to declare his ignorance: “for certainty I have never thought myself wise in anything, great or small...I do not imagine myself to know things about which I know nothing at all.”<sup>39</sup> This was the key to the wisdom of Socrates. He knew that he did not know. His method of attaining truth was the *maieutic* method.<sup>40</sup> *Maieutic* method means eliciting the truth by appealing to or awaking the other.

6. Some of the psychological drives, e.g., egotism, envy, aggression must be controlled. They cannot be extirpated or destroyed but can be controlled and taken into account. If left unchecked, they will lead to isolation and self-centeredness and thus hinder communication.
7. All kinds of disembarassments, i.e., chivalry, etc. may be used with common consent. But they have only a temporary place. If used indiscreetly they will rupture communication.
8. Respect is implicit in the struggle. I may reject others opinions or views but that does not tantamount to my rejecting him/her as a person. The word respect smacks of a worldly meaning. It may mean recognition of the rights, privileges and prerogatives that are due to a person having a certain status and character. But this sense is not what is meant here. What is meant here is that an incomparable solidarity exists and it is this which sustains the struggle and transforms it into a joint venture.
9. All factual material and argumentative means employed are placed entirely at the disposal of both parties. All cards are laid on the table.

What Jaspers is describing here is a precious and extremely rare experience. It is more of a nature of a “gift” than something which can be achieved by planning or an object to be sought. Like Christian grace, it fills us with a sense of unmerited favor. Jaspers was fortunate to have had such an experience with his brother-in-law, Ernst Mayer, with his student friend Hanna Arendt, and he repeatedly achieved this fully with his wife Gertrud. That is why many books of his bear the inscription Gertrud Jaspers Gewidmet.<sup>41</sup>

Communication can also be achieved with people long dead, through their books. Jasper communicated with Plato, Kant, Kierkegaard, and Nietzsche. Thus loving struggle is a struggle

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 183.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 83.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 184.

for truth. It is not an objective battle, which others can see and take sides. In it the closest of friends in the eyes of the public may be locked in the fiercest of battles. The struggle is for the truth by manifestation, manifestation of oneself and the other. In this contest each self holds, reveals and cultivates its own ground. Communication “has this paradoxical feature about it; that it respects, emphasizes and intensifies the differences between one Existenz and the other, instead of hiding them as is the rule in average life.”<sup>42</sup>

#### **4.4.4 Communication as content**

We may tend to reduce communication to a purely internal matter. An unveiling of one soul before another. A pure immediacy beyond space and time, having the quality of the eternal. No doubt this experience is there but it lasts only for a short time. In the world, however, Existenz cannot directly meet another Existenz. They meet only in substantial media. They require the realities of action and expression. “Without mundane contents, existential communication has no phenomenal medium...if mundane contents are not taken seriously, there can be no possible Existenz.”<sup>43</sup>

#### **4.4.5 Communication as a process**

Communication is not achieved once and for all but it is a constant process. For moments we achieve it and then it is lost. We have to re-achieve it. We constantly struggle for communication. Communication is the medium by which a self manifests itself. If Existenz or the self had limited possibilities, they could all have been realized and that would have been the end of communication. In Jaspers view, Existenz is infinite and has never-ending possibilities. As situation arises, these possibilities are actualized. But the possibilities of Existenz cannot be exhausted. It is constantly becoming, constantly realizing itself. One is reminded here of Heraclitus and his theory of constant becoming or flux. We can further compare it with the Buddhist theory of momentariness. Communication is achieved for a moment and then it is lost. It is only a moment's certainty. It becomes untrue as an objective result that is held fast. In these moments Existenz is not anything stable but is constantly becoming. Buddhism does not believe in any stable entity. It reduces the world to a flow of moments (*ksnas*) in which each moment is *svalaksana* i.e. unique and unrepeatable. In the words of Kaufmann, “all genuine communication is in a kind of restless Heraclitean flux. Each moment is unique not to be arrested

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<sup>42</sup> P.A. Schilpp, *Philosophy of Karl Jasper* (Illinois: Open Court Publishing Company, 1981) 213.

<sup>43</sup> Karl Jaspers, *Philosophy* vol.2 (Chicago: The university of Chicago Press, 1970), 62.

and not renewable. It is the fleeting contact of two poles.”<sup>44</sup> Since all the possibilities of Existenz can never be realized, nobody can ask perfection of another, or of him/herself.<sup>45</sup> Jaspers’ existentialism is essentially a philosophy of human adventure in which we try to actualize the maximum number of possibilities.

#### **4.4.6 Communication and love**

Though love and communication are not identical, they are inter-dependent. Without love there cannot be communication. Jaspers has called communication as loving struggle. It is love that gives rise to truthfulness in this struggle. Love is the fountainhead of communication. It is a basic requisite. Jasper says, “It (love) is its (communication’s) font and its luminary.”<sup>46</sup> Without communication no love is possible. Love must undergo the test of communication. The end of communication is the death of love. If love is real, communication will not cease but change its form.

By “love” Jaspers does not mean eroticism. In eroticism I do not commit myself fully. Neither does he look upon love as a remedy for loneliness or as possessiveness. The word is being used here in a much superior sense. He calls love a “phenomenon which is like a monologue of original being. It is like the “reunion of those already joined in eternity.” As Plotinus says:

Welcome me not when I come, my darling, say no farewells when I go, for when I come I’ll never be back and I’ll never be gone when I go. A look at the beloved is like a look at being itself [...] the sight of a person turns into a transfiguration devoid of illusions.<sup>47</sup>

#### **4.5 Rupture of communication<sup>48</sup>**

Communication means agreement from a source that is unique every moment. Rupture of communication means the hidden ness of this source. Neither the source of communication can be expressed nor the rupture made understood. We cannot give reasons justifying the break. If I break with another because I can no longer manifest myself in his presence, I cannot justify my

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<sup>44</sup> P.A. Schlipp, *Philosophy of Karl Jaspers* (USA: Open Court Publishing Company, 1981), 213.

<sup>45</sup> Jaspers, *Philosophy*, Vol. 2, 63.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 64.

<sup>47</sup> Schilpp, 65.

<sup>48</sup> Jaspers, *Philosophy* Vol. 2, 73.

action. Neither can I understand the reason if another ends the communication. I just have to bear the separation. If both of us break communication with each other, either we part like animals without even bidding good-bye or we may still retain the capacity to communicate with each other.

If a man was truly communicating with the other, he can never get over the agony of the rupture. Human knowledge is finite, no man can be perfect. I might have been wrong in my judgment of the other. If I retain this attitude then no matter how decisive the quarrel might have been, I still stand a chance of reconciliation.

Before my communication was ruptured with another, it was already ruptured with myself. I broke with myself before I broke with another. Communication does not break in solitude, but it breaks in myself. Communication arises in solitude. Communication breaks in myself because it was my will to struggle with myself and to communicate, which broke off before I broke off with the other. Rupture of communication does not mean destruction of the source of communication. The buried source is not destroyed; it remains a possibility of self-manifestation.

If I cease to communicate with the person concerned, it does not mean that I would not be able to communicate with any one else or that I will have to breakup with all others with whom I am in communication. No doubt that my failure in this particular case to communicate will have an adverse effect on my other relationships, but this can still be continued.

I cannot communicate with every one I come across. I jeopardize communication if I try to achieve it with the largest number. "A person who loves mankind as such does not love anyone in particular." This hunt for a large number will only fill my existence with superficialities.

Whenever communication is ruptured I will feel a sense of guilt. I feel guilty because I cannot justify my action or that of another in breaking up a communication. The source as well as the rupture is ineffable. Besides, I am guilty because I am unable to entice the other to enter this contest. From his point of view, I do not see and evaluate him in a proper light. In both cases I am guilty.

Just because I am unable to communicate temporarily, it does not mean that communication has been ruptured. After a certain time has elapsed I can take up from where I left off. Time is a great healer.

The rupture in communication may be due to fear of the destruction of self-existence. This self-existence is "the opaque, autocratic, unreasoning and uncommunicative will to be the

way I am.”<sup>49</sup> At the last minute I may withdraw exposing myself before another because of this instinct of self-preservation. I want to be for myself what I want, not for another, not what he wants me to be.

This self-existence is the source of my concern for material good, prestige, etc. It is there in everyone. Without this, communication is not possible. Existence has no reality outside it, but acknowledgment of it alone will be the death-knell of existence, who has destroyed his desires, who does not want anything for himself, who has become thoroughly detached and renounced the world cannot communicate. “No one can give up his existence without breaking of communication also.”<sup>50</sup>

This position of Jaspers is different from that of Indian spiritualism. Indian spiritualism believes that truth is revealed only when a human being has overcome his ego-existence; in Jaspers terminology, truth is revealed only when he has overcome his self-existence. A *sthitaprajna* or a yogi has been defined as one who has obtained “equanimity” or balance of mind (*samabhava*). In the *Gita* a yogi has been described as the ideal ascetic who curbs his passions and maintains calmness in cold and heat, in joy and sorrow, in honour and dishonor.<sup>51</sup> Jasper believes that communication is possible, or truth is revealed only in the tension between existence and Existenz. Existentialism is a philosophy of tension. Indian philosophy believes in overcoming tension. It is a philosophy of equanimity.

#### **4.5.1 Forms of Rupture in Communication<sup>52</sup>**

The forms of rupture are the ways in which I delude myself and the other. Ways in which speech and action do not mean what they should but are all pretence. There are many ways of such deceptions but those which are most common we shall consider:

1. I resist communication when I say, “I’m too old to change” or “You have to take me as I am.” Or “I am made that way.” These statements are deceptions because in actuality I am a free being and such statements amount to an admission that I am determined.
2. I resist communication when instead of deciding myself, I turn the matter over to an expert, a specialist, a priest, a teacher, etc. It is only when I “decide” that I manifest myself. All knowledge has elements of uncertainty in it. But saying that “this is beyond

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<sup>49</sup> Jaspers, *Philosophy* Vol. 2, 75.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 76.

<sup>51</sup> Amin, 189.

<sup>52</sup> Kiran, 69.

me; I am no expert” I close the door to the communicative self-being within oneself. I practice deception because it is my fear of taking risks and responsibility which is making me shrink from deciding, whereas, superficially I plead lack of knowledge.

3. I resist communication when I refuse to consider any view except my own, e.g., “We would never be willing to accept that” or “I won’t allow anyone to take my religion away from me.” It was in this way that the Greeks distinguished themselves from the barbarians. The Greeks were ready to listen to reason. They were broad minded, whereas, the barbarians declared, “You’ll never make us change our mind.”
4. I may resist communication and deceive another by declaring, “I am too young” or “I am too old.” When I am faced with a situation demanding an unconditional decision, I may try to avoid it by throwing up my hands and declaring, “I can’t stand it, this is unbearable; I am going to have a breakdown!” I may go into self-pity and say, “I am worthless,” “I am no good.” It is a different matter when I delay due to my physical condition, e.g., I may require some sleep before I decide. A delay is not an evasion, but in the above case due to extreme distress of existence, I am instinctively trying to make the other act in my favor and so deceiving both him and myself.
5. When placed in a tight corner, I may react by saying, “You can’t ask me to discuss such things.” I may breakup communication abruptly by saying, “I don’t want to hear anymore” or “I will not be spoken to like that.” I am using here pride, honour, dignity in order to avoid communication and hence committing deception.
6. In order to avoid communication I may confine myself only to externals. I keep repeating some well-known sayings or formulae, or I may appeal to what is universally accepted, to be the “decent moral thing.” I am assured that none will contradict me. Or I may morally frighten the other by just saying, “These charges if leveled against anyone will have serious consequences.” All such deceptive tricks are adopted by politicians, diplomats, bureaucrats, etc.

#### **4.6 Impossibility of communication**

There are certain human attitudes which forever frustrate communication:

1. A human being who is governed by a rational morality, decides everything on the basis of reason. Instead of living, he/she just passes judgments. Jaspers would not accept the Categorical Imperative of Kant. The moral law of Kant is rationally determined. Kantian ethics is based on practical reason or the will. “The only thing that is good without

qualification or resistance is goodwill.”<sup>53</sup> It is the purpose of reason “to produce a will which is good in itself.” The categorical Imperative is stated as, “I ought never to act except in such a way that I can also will that my maxim should become a universal law.”<sup>54</sup> A man following Kantian ethics, in Jaspers’ view cannot communicate. Though Jaspers is a Kantian existentialist, he would never agree with Kantian Ethics. He would call it ‘dehumanizing’.

2. A human being who is interested in conquest, and wants to conquer people and to own them, such a human being would like to identify the world with himself. His/her stubborn pride would never permit him/her to show any weakness or inferiority. He/she wants to possess the world. The only relationship which such a human being can accept is between a conqueror and the conquered.
3. Those people who lead a thoroughly objective life and have become alienated from themselves and from other people. Self-alienation means that a person is so much immersed in the world that he/she looks upon it as the ultimate reality. He/she fails to come back to him/herself and so lacks individuality and authenticity. He/she lacks rootedness in his own ground. He/she leads life like a robot and is like a well-gearred machine. Such a man cannot communicate. It is against this depersonalization and objectivization that thinkers like Jaspers, Kierkegaard, Heidegger and Nietzsche revolted.

Man’s alienation from man is due to the inhuman conditions in the factory world of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Man was lost in “forges, furnaces, smoke and satanic wheels.” Man was an object to be exploited and employed, instead of being respected as a speaker and hearer in interpersonal communication. The Romantic poets like Blake, Wordsworth and Coleridge have all raise their voices in protest against the Industrial Revolution and all that it stands for. Industrial Revolution is not only responsible for the growing shallowness in personal life but also responsible for creating a mechanical substitute for social communication- “robots that behave more and more like persons, while persons behave more and more like robots.” Such persons involved in “ossified objectivity” are unable to carry on a sensible conversation. They just talk past whatever is being said. They cannot concentrate. their minds are like the ghost of the elder Hamlet now here and now gone.

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<sup>53</sup> Amin, 191.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 192.

In Gulliver's Travels, Swift has given a description of the Lilliputians which bring out beautifully what Jaspers attempts to say. Swift describes the Lilliputians as oddlooking creatures. "Their eyes do not focus on the person or object before them but their one eye is turned one eye upwards as if gazing at the stars and the other eye is turned inwards in empty introversion". This is a very powerful satire on our civilization. Such people cannot communicate.

#### **4.7 Scientific communication**

The Logical positivists believe that scientific language should be regarded as a model for communication. Philosophy and our everyday exchange should adopt it. Jaspers believes that this is not possible because science is very different from Philosophy and our everyday life.

The ideal of clarity of science cannot be attained in life or philosophy. Many of the items we refer to are too impalpable, transparent, complex, or inaccessible to be clarified,<sup>55</sup> e.g., we are aware of consciousness but we are unable to describe it clearly, similarly we are unable to define civil rights yet we favor them.

Unlike science, universal validity is not possible in extra-scientific areas. Scientific truths can be proved and so become compelling for all. But philosophical truths are dependent on history, upon the culture or the situation in which they are born, e.g. some truths of Indian Philosophy are difficult for the West to grasp.

In scientific research the scientist himself is irrelevant what he thinks is more important than what he is. This is not the case in philosophy. Here truth is the result of communication with the other and myself. Here the truth I live by is more important than the truth I merely think about. A scientist can cultivate dispassionate objectivity. This is not the case in life or philosophy. Philosophy provides man with truth he lives by, determines what he is going to become and offers a inner certainty in which a whole man's whole being participates. Philosophical truths move us more deeply than any scientific knowledge.<sup>56</sup>

Thus scientific communication is very different from philosophical communication and is totally unsuited for philosophy.

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<sup>55</sup> Wallraff, 115.

<sup>56</sup> Karl Jaspers, *Way of wisdom*, 8.

#### **4.8 Communication among academic philosophers**

Speaking on the basis of his long experience in German universities, Jaspers points out that communication among academic philosophers has become a shameless travesty of genuine communication. It has become riddled with all sorts of deceptions and prejudices. A graduate with a philosophical career in mind usually identifies “truth” with his/her “interest.” Even though he/she may believe that traditional philosophy is on the wrong track he will never reject it. Later on as he matures he starts believing that there are only two kinds of philosophy the one he/she believes in and the other, its misguided alternatives. He/she makes use of many all possible techniques to defend his views.<sup>57</sup> He/she may ridicule his opponents by simply saying that his opponent is talking irrelevantly. He/she may ask his/her opponent to be brief and then show dissatisfaction with the answer given. He/she may state dogmas as facts or change the topic by failing to understand. He/she may try to confuse his/her opponent by making use of specious distinctions, e.g. interpret differences in degree as differences in kind extraversion and introversion. The presuppositions of an ideology are usually not stated explicitly. So in order to muddle the opponent, the philosopher may change them and draw unexpected conclusions from them. Or he/she may attribute to his/her opponent ridiculous versions of what was actually said.

1. A critic may criticize communication by saying that it is an impossibility. It is nothing but subjectivism. A lonely isolated man/woman, to get rid of his/her isolation imagines communication. Communication, as we have seen is the actualization of the potential of Existenz. A critic may say that this is nothing but self-deification, an overestimation of oneself.
2. Jaspers answers this objection by pointing out that there is no absolute, objective truth. That truth lies in subjectivity. Being cannot become an object. Further, the criticism regarding Existenz. If we attach importance to empirical existence then the charge of self-deification can be made but here we are concerned with Existenz and not existence or *Dasein*. Existential Philosophy is nothing but an appeal to man’s potential or Existentez.
3. If I demand rudely what communication is and how it is to be archived. My question is merely an intellectual one and I want to an intellectual answer. Since such an answer is not forthcoming I dismiss communication as humbug.
4. In reply to such a man, Jaspers points out that he is existing solely on the level of consciousness-as-such. His criterion of truth is intellectual objectivity. His assertion

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<sup>57</sup> Amin, 194.

involves a denial of all individuality or Existenz. Our criterion of truth is a thought is philosophically true to the extent to which its thinking promotes communication.

5. Fritz Kaufmann in his article “Karl Jaspers and Philosophy of Communication”<sup>58</sup> criticizes Jaspers for restricting the term communication to that between man and man alone. It does not extend upwards to transcendence or God or downwards to nature. Kaufmann discusses the possibility of speaking of communication on three levels- the impersonal level, one that of things, the inter-personal one between man and man, and the supra personal as the way in which-being superpersonal itself – Transcendence speaks to us.<sup>59</sup>

In Jaspers view, Transcendence of God cannot speak to us directly. God is not a living father who communicates directly with his creatures, God communicates only indirectly. He speaks in his very silence. Objects of the world become mere ciphers and it is through them that God speaks to Existenz. To take an example the spreading of the heron’s white wings against the blue sky was the cipher through which <sup>60</sup> Transcendence communicated with Ramakrishna Paramahansa in his youth.<sup>61</sup>

There is no communication, in the literal sense between God and Existenz. His presence is felt when two people meet in the spirit of unconditional presence. Love is the communication among men who have become selves is the highest possibility there is within this life. God speaks only through the love of man for man. Heaven is the state of gracious communication.

Neither is communicating possible with nature. All intimacy with nature in a lonely world become problematic to me if it does not lead back to human community and serve this community as background and medium of expression.<sup>62</sup>

In Jaspers writings nature appears more as empirical matter, being there to be dominated and molded, or as an object of loving contemplation, yet without responsibility on our part and without responses on hers, Jasper is not in favor of a union with nature we lose ourselves.<sup>63</sup> He looks upon it as something distracting and detracting from the realization of selfhood. Though

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<sup>58</sup> Schilpp, 211.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 270.

<sup>60</sup> Amin, 197.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 197.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 197.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 198.

Existenz is unworldly it is still looked upon as unnatural. In its decision Existenz stands outside the natural events.

Jasper replied to by Fritz Kaufmann criticism in his book *Reply to my Critics* by saying that "Fritz Kaufmann wants to give to communication a broad, yes all encompassing meaning."<sup>64</sup> He distinguishes three types communication: impersonal...personal...and supra personal whereas, in my thinking communication, in its proper sense, means mutual reciprocity.

Communication means Transcendence if permitted will be merely one-sided affairs. There will be no real reply. The language of nature, poetry and art can have reality for me only by way of analogy to communication proper.<sup>65</sup>

Communication with God is not permitted because it offers the opportunity to run away to God from the neighbor. Thus communication with nature or God proves distracting and encourages man to run away from man and find an asylum in nature or God. Jasper repeatedly asserts that real communication takes place only between men, any other communication can be asserted only as a simili, in as much as it is carried out by us one-sidedly.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Schilpp, 785.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 786.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 787.

## CHAPTER 5

### CRITIQUE OF KARL JASPER'S PHILOSOPHY

Among all those thinkers, past and present, who may roughly be classified as “existentialist,” the German Philosopher Karl Jaspers comes closest to a systematic and integrated presentation of his philosophic creed. This is so despite the fact that, in contrast to Heidegger, Jaspers does not acknowledge the need for an ontology, that is, a fundamental discipline embracing the totality of being. The “philosophy of existence” a title to which the philosophy of Jaspers definitely lays claim and must be satisfied with the illumination of the possibilities of individual, concrete existence in its freedom, uniqueness and ineffability.<sup>67</sup>

In the act of freedom my existence enters into communication with other existences. I cannot really become myself in isolation, says Jaspers, but only in communication and collaboration with others. Not only do I become myself in this “loving strive” of communication with others, but the same is equally true for others, i.e., they also attain to self-realization and self-possession in communication. Self realization in communication is, according to Jaspers, like a “*creation ex nihilo*” a new richness of being is acquired and revealed. And, conversely, the absence or the refusal of communication leads to a corresponding absence or loss of being.

The reason with which Jaspers explains the need for communication in the process of self-realization follows the line of argument of the Hegelian dialectic<sup>68</sup>: I am an ego, says Jaspers, only by setting myself off from a none go, by asserting myself in the face of “the other” by opposing myself to “the other.” This kind of self assertion however, leads me to the edge of “the abyss of absolute estrangement” in regards to “the other.” And my desire for the unity of being urges me to bridge this abyss in the union of “being-with-the-other.”<sup>69</sup> Thus communication originates and is consummated.

Existential communication differs from all objectively verifiable relationships among human beings. It surpasses ordinary friendship, affection and love as well as reciprocal esteem, mutual psychological understanding, and a mere unanimity of thoughts, convictions, and aspirations. All these have a proper place in *Dasein*, not in “existence,” they are all insufficient to

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<sup>67</sup> Kurt F. Reinhardt, *The Existentialist Revolt*, (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1952) 117.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 186.

<sup>69</sup> Jaspers, *Philosophy* vol.2, 3.

link existence in the profundity of their unconditional freedom. This does not mean, however, that existence can enter into a relationship of full and unrestricted immediacy. Such an immediacy of communication is prevented by the temporal condition of existences, that is, by their embodiment in the contingency of *Dasein*. But it is in these conditions and circumstances of ordinary, everyday life that “communication situations” arise, in the various forms of mandate and service, in discourse, in social relations, and in social and political action. These contacts and relationships within the structure of *Dasein* are, as it were, “the body” or the material substrate of existential communication, the visible and tangible manifestation of its “invisible soul.”<sup>70</sup>

What in particular, asks Jaspers, entices and attracts my “will to communication?” He answers that it is not so much what “the other” *has as* what he *is*: I want to reach “the other” in the original and irreducible ground and substance of his freedom. My own freedom, in other words, is in search of the freedom of “the other,” my own self requires other selves with whom to enter into a dual relationship of opposition and unification. “I cannot become myself,” writes Jaspers, “if the other does not wish to become his self: I cannot be free if the other is not free.”<sup>71</sup> In genuine communication those who enter into the existential relationship “open themselves” and “reveal themselves” to each other without reservation in the original depth of their being, ready to see and to be seen, to penetrate, to mold and to be molded in a reciprocal give-and-take. In order to gain “existence” I am willing to forsake all my attachments to empirical goods and values, so that I may become free to experience sympathetically the profound existential truth of “the other.”

Existential communication does not lead, however, to a fusion of existences. Such a fusion would entail the submersion of the individual in the collective, as happens, for example, in the undifferentiated being of primitive or totalitarian societies. True communication, on the contrary, respects and preserves the distinctions between my truth and the absence of truth, between my faith and the absence of faith. And since I am identical with my truth, I cannot “objectivate” it by placing it outside myself and regarding it as one object among others.

Like existence, communication is thus indefinable and ineffable: it cannot be expressed in abstract concepts; it carries with it a certitude which is objectively inconceivable and unknowable. What can be objectively known, seen, and appreciated is the material effects of existential communication; its “existential” consequences, on the other hand, are beyond the

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 57.

<sup>71</sup> Reinhardt, 186.

reach of any objective criterion. “The consciousness of possible existence alone is capable perceiving their truth in the bond of communication.”<sup>72</sup>

Jaspers, like Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, and Heidegger, is aware of the dangers which threaten human existence, when it surrenders its inalienable personal prerogatives to the impersonal, soulless anonymity of the masses. The existing individual, even in communication, must always preserve the integrity of his “self.” His “being-with-others” must be in the nature of a voluntary, personal “engagement.” “he who only loves ‘mankind,’” writes Jaspers, “loves nothing but an empty abstraction; he only loves truly who loves this particular being.... I destroy communication if I seek it in a communion with the greatest number.”<sup>73</sup> Such a communion must of necessity lose in depth what it gains in numerical extension. True communication always brings to light something in human beings which makes them feel that they did not meet each other by chance in the domain of *Dasein* but that they have been related to each other from eternity.

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<sup>72</sup> Reinhardt, 187.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 187.

## CONCLUSION

Karl Jaspers created a uniquely humanistic existentialism. He is not only a prolific writer but also a thinker whose many works reveal the wide range of his interest. The depth and breadth of his philosophy is awesome. He was a psychopathologist, a philosophical anthropologist, and a political scientist. During his life he opened new avenues of thought in the philosophy of history, philosophy of religion, and literary criticism.

Death, suffering, chance, guilt, struggle, and the insight that "man is always more than what he knows or can know"<sup>74</sup> are the themes Jaspers handled with scientific dexterity. He transformed philosophy into a systematic exposition of human nature, while creating a viable matrix for future ideas.

The aim of Jaspers's philosophy is not to give a new picture of the world, nor is it to add to our knowledge of the nature of human beings, nor is it to fabricate a new novel metaphysical doctrine; his philosophy aims at "reawakening man"<sup>75</sup> to his authentic human situation.

Jaspers's philosophy is not a closed system in which everything is placed before the reader, but it is an "eye-opener." It is meant to awaken the reader and to make him/her conscious of his/her *existence*. European philosophy has never been so preoccupied with the individual and his/her state of being as we find it in Jaspers philosophy. We see this intense concern present only in a handful of thinkers.

The entire focus of Jaspers philosophy is on *personal existence*. Anything which satisfies the mind and is taken as a substitute for personal existence is rejected outright by Jaspers. Throughout his philosophy there is an emphasis on personal existence or Existenz. This is the reason why his philosophy is called "existential philosophy." Heinemann is of the opinion that, the "First place among philosophers of existence is due to Karl Jaspers, the originator of the movement."<sup>76</sup>

Jaspers does not believe that any direct communication is possible between man/woman and God. The problem of communication has been tackled very lucidly by Jaspers. Jaspers believes in an I-thou relationship. He says that alone one falls into despair. It is only in the presence of another that I become myself. God is present only when two persons are

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<sup>74</sup> Schrader, *Existential Philosophers*, (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1967), 111.

<sup>75</sup> Amin, 236.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 246.

unconditionally present for each other. Warfare and strife can be avoided if men/women understand each other or if they can communicate. For Jaspers, philosophy is not divorced from life but has a direct bearing upon it. He is a responsible thinker and acutely aware of his situation.

Jaspers philosophy is an attempt to recall us, to touch our innermost depth, to awaken us. If we try to reduce this attempt to recall to a doctrine, we are doing Jaspers an injustice and living, as Jaspers would say, at the level of *Dasein*. His philosophy must be taken as a stimulus to inward action which each one “must perform for himself [or herself] in communication with the other.” His philosophy is essentially “theapeutic” which aims at curing us from the malaise of objectivity.

Karl Jaspers performed valuable service in and through his “existential communication.” He has not received sufficient attention from those in interpersonal and dialogical studies, and that has somehow not carried him to greatest distances. Jaspers voice must be further supplemented with other contemporary and historical voices, identified as having independently arrived at dialogical perspectives.

The contemporary dialogical school now needs a lot more thinkers to reflect and draw fresh insights from his works. As the new century and millennium begin, a more dialogical orientation is being advanced within interpersonal communication studies by those who argue that we need a fresh paradigm to guide our theory, research, and practice, highlighting the dynamics of relationality and dialectics.

All those in interpersonal communication studies have not yet begun to discover the gold-mine that is Jaspers's life work. It is my conviction that the existential communication philosophy of Karl Jaspers must be included in our scholarly conversation to further open our dialogue, broaden our intellectual base, and extend our thinking in important ways.

## **Jaspers's message for modern men/women**

“[Communication is]... limitless communication between man/woman and man/woman,” becoming “master of our thoughts” and believing in “no form of exclusive knowledge,” and looking upon “love as the final guide.” (Jaspers, 1948)

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