

COMMUNICATION—THE GATEWAY TO REALITY

Communication is a wonderful thing. It is more or less taken for granted because it is an obvious tool of our social relationships. We hear a great deal about the art and science of communication applied practically. To a member of a society so profoundly influenced by technical advances, the mere suggestion of this term, "communication," suggests wonders of telephone, telegraphy, radio, television, and motion pictures; all of which are technical devices to further widen the extent of our communication. But here we wish to concern ourselves with communication itself as it applies to man, the agent and receptor of knowledge, beliefs, and feelings. We often consider the many technical changes that have taken place and continue to take place by the invention of new communication devices, yet there are, perhaps, more changes made in our outward medium of communication, language. Meanings of words today have a force exerted on them from all fields. This is especially true in the increased specialization which prevails in the complexities of modern society. We cannot all be authorities on semantics, but we can at least be aware of the tremendous capacities which communication has of bringing people towards truth and emulation of the good.

The human mind has evolved a great multiplicity of languages with which to communicate its impressions and thoughts to others. Communicating with each other is still, however, a great problem. Some people, for instance, are not sure enough of what they think to be able to communicate well, while others are so thoroughly convinced by their prejudice that they cannot do justice to proper communication. We can see more clearly these problems attached to communication when we consider the many ways in which it functions. Communication is so wide in scope that sociologically, it is involved in all human associations. Since people seek to inform to clarify thought, to entertain, to advance particular ideas or beliefs, and to direct, guide or control, communication, then, can be viewed as the medium through which people do these things. Communication on this latter level is greatly concerned with how authoritative people with responsibilities use it. Not only must we learn to use words well, but we must also make those words increasingly instrumental in promoting mutual understanding. Nearly every field of human knowledge has made its contribution to our semantic confusion. The varied needs of modern diction have led to specialized languages, each with its own little glossary to steepen, as it were, the importance of the particular field of endeavor. Thus the lawyer wants to appear strictly adherent to legal terminology, and the professor to sinewy abstractions. The writer wants to impress us with his treatment of the tough modern idiom, and thereby fashions a style which may make his a "best-seller." The advertising man in showing us his product of "taste and distinction" must reveal that he is up on the current trend.

REALITY

or less taken
relationships.
mmunication
rofoundly in-
of this term,
telegraphy,
are technical
cation. But
n itself as it
beliefs, and
es that have
ition of new
anges made
Meanings
ields. This
prevails in
authorities
endous cap-
wards truth

This changing terminology is highly significant in our culture. It is familiar to us in the term "lingo", yet the general public remains insufficiently aware of how language and symbols may be manipulated to control thinking. In analyzing the various properties of language, social scientists tell us that man has a highly conditioned reaction to the stimulus of words. This accounts for the great disproportion of meaning which many words assume under the disposition of those indulging in the "self-expressive" modern usage. We see evidences of this abounding in our very midst, even when we sit down in the evening to enjoy our meal or are walking down town through the shopping area. Politically we are idealists under the pretence of being broad-minded, and describe such and such an alien nation as being a "Socialist Democracy", thus effacing what was once a highly valid and esteemed term, "democracy". Socially we are "graciously exuberant," after an evening of light entertainment one does not merely "have a good time", but now "has a ball". This makes the use of superlatives appear utterly incongruous.

How many of us are able to keep our eyes clear in these verbal dust storms? What are the lasting words of humanity? They are those that surmount the differences of individual disposition and time because they come from men who have a charitable and genuine interest for their fellowmen. Communication is more than a matter of command of words, it is a sincere desire to communicate in an unbiased and sympathetic disposition with the ideas and emotions of others. Communication today, however, is different in certain ways and affects us differently now than at any time in the past. The difference is most likely to be in our increasing psychological knowledge of how communication may be made to function constructively or destructively. So it is for us to decide in what ways and with what proximity will the tool of communication bring man toward reality.

—EDITORIAL—

IN QUEST OF A CULTURE

With the advent of Greek philosophers, culture began to take on its true meaning. Its uniqueness and fructifying power arose from the fact that it pursued a great and constantly developing ideal, the humanist ideal. It is due to this very ideal that the best in European civilization and consequently our own, has come to be firmly established. For the Greeks, culture meant the over-all educating of the individual. By making use of this form of education, culture on the whole was set up to develop all the potentialities of man.