

COMMUNICATION, TRUTH, AND SOCIETY

RICHARD MCKEON

I. COMMUNICATION

THE task of diagnosing the problems of one's own time involves the same difficulties as characterizing past ages. The historian, however, can hardly escape the realization that the perspective of the observer has influenced the qualities ascribed to times, at least in the case of other historians. The characteristics of ages tend to change in conformity with the conditions and values of successive historians. During the twentieth century the darkness of the "Dark Ages" has grown shorter and less obscure, and the distinction between sleep and waking during the "Renaissance" has grown more subtle. Recent changes in aesthetic and dialectical taste have altered the historically recorded characteristics of Hellenistic and fourteenth-century art and logic. The vast increase of available information concerning primitive thought and expression is a result of preoccupation with mores and values today, but it has had the effect, in turn, of altering the "primitive mind."

The analyst of contemporary problems encounters these differences of perspective as opposed views and solutions, which he shows to be inadequate or false in the development of his own analysis. His statement is based on "facts" which have no alternative interpretation and which therefore preclude alternative antecedent histories. There is no direct or simple way of altering or supplementing the facts on which an analysis is based; and, as a consequence, efforts to initiate a "discussion" of problems usual-

ly produce "disputation" or, even worse, "controversy." The experience of historians with past ages, however, suggests an indirect means by which contemporary problems might be treated in the broader and more tolerant modes of "discussion," at least as preparation for disputation, and possibly as prevention of controversy. An age usually characterizes itself effectively by the manner in which it poses basic problems and by the means which it employs in seeking solutions to them. These characteristics of attitude and method do not share the ambiguity of the more disputable characteristics with which the historian elaborates his construction, and they reappear in the varieties of historical interpretation. The analyst of contemporary problems, likewise, does not question these basic approaches but accepts them as unanalyzed and probably unavoidable ingredients in the fashions of his times. Future historians who record what is being said and done today will find it difficult to avoid giving a prominent place to our preoccupation with "communication." It is a wise precaution, by the same token, to begin the statement of any broadly inclusive contemporary problems with an examination of how those problems are formulated in terms of "communication" and what the implications of such a formulation are.

"Communication" does not signify a problem newly discovered in our times, but a fashion of thinking and a method of analyzing which we apply in the statement of all fundamental problems. It is

a term which has spread in use and implications during the past two or three decades from the problems of mass media, public relations, and promotion, to include all practical and social problems. Together with its companion term "behavior," it has modified the technical vocabulary of the social sciences, and the social sciences, in response, tend to become, in name and in fact, "behavioral sciences" and communication arts, for communication has become verbal behavior, and behavior has become an extension of communication to non-verbal symbols. Moreover, the change is reflected in the statement of basic problems in other fields. Natural scientists are concerned about the conditions of communication—difficulties of digesting their massive literature, dangers of restrictions on publication, consequences of limiting access to data—and they tend to express criteria for the acceptability of theories or interpretations of experiments in terms of consensus of experts rather than in terms of the structure of nature or phenomena. Artists are concerned with the influence of conditions of communication—economic, social, and political—on the work of creative artists and thinkers and on its reception. Philosophers have learned to talk about ordinary language and formal language, about symbols and sentences, semantics, syntactics, and pragmatics.

Other ages have found their characteristic vocabularies for the statement of theoretic and practical problems by recourse to things or to thoughts rather than to words. There have been ages which have returned from all questions to principles found in being and existence, in permanence and change, and which have adjusted thought and expression to cosmological frames and to metaphysical distinctions. There have been ages which

have hesitated to pronounce on the nature of things before examining the forms of thought, the limits of knowledge, and the foundations of certainty. There have been ages, finally, which have abandoned the quest for certainty and the search for reality except as they are involved in problems of symbols, signs, and actions, and in so far as they are determined by the structure, limits, and efficacy of communication. The speculative innovators who herald these changes—as Kant used the expression "Copernican revolution" to celebrate the transition from problems based on the nature of reality to problems based on the forms of thought—justify them in the hope that they will simplify inquiry by separating real from meaningless questions. Yet fundamental questions reappear in translated form in the new vocabularies as discoveries made possible by the new methods. The language of reality is an inclusive one: a metaphysics of being carries implications concerning how beings can be investigated and known, and concerning how knowledge and values are adequately and appropriately expressed. The language of criteria and forms of knowledge implies a conception of the nature of things and of the requirements of statement, proof, and construction; but the specter of an unknown *ding an sich* usually rises in the background of phenomenal and known things. Some philosophers have hoped to avoid problems of reality and of mind by recourse to the language of semantics and communication, for sentences about being and non-being are unlike sentences about particular things and therefore may be dismissed as meaningless, and meanings expressed by sentences need no "mentalistic" interpretations. Yet unstated dimensions of things and thoughts spread out from the interpretation of language:

discourse denotes objects and embodies values, and communication is used by men to express themselves and to establish communication with other men.

All problems can be stated as problems of communication. The nature of a problem may be explored by examining what we are talking about or the warrant for asserting anything we propose to say about it; it may also be explored by considering the conditions of stating the problem or saying anything whatsoever about it. A problem is determined not merely by what is the case, or by what is understood to be the case, but also by what is stated and by communication elucidating what is said. The problems of an age arise in what is said—in the communications of the age—and they cannot be formulated accurately, intelligibly, or effectively without taking into account how they arise and in what context they are stated. The vogue of “communication” today is no accident, but rather a response to the problems we face. When problems are broad and complexly interrelated, the initial distinctions must be found in communication itself. The consequences of beginning with communications, however, run contrary to the sense, which we carry over from times when society and knowledge were more orderly, that communications should be adapted in form and structure to the subject matter they set forth or to the thoughts they express. Yet recognition that the discovery of truth and the formation of thought are evidenced and tested only in communication need not lead to skepticism or relativism. On the contrary, the means to avoid sophism and dogmatism are provided by communication, and criteria of truth and value are translated into means of improving the content and efficacy of communication and of fore-

stalling its use as an arbitrary and authoritarian instrument of control.

Some insight into the uses of communication can be derived from the experience of previous ages which shared our propensity to state fundamental problems in terms of discourse and expression. The Romans and the men of the Renaissance speculated concerning the nature of statement and communication in their bearing on political, aesthetic, historical, moral, and philosophical problems. Their analyses yielded insights into the relations of freedom and society and of expression and values, which continue to influence communication and theories of communication. We have come to a similar interest in communication but for different reasons, and our problems are similar in general statement but not in means available for resolution. The problem of communication became central during the Roman Republic and Empire as a result of the growth of the state and the assimilation into it of peoples of diverse cultural values, social structure, and political institutions. The problem of communication was a problem of establishing contacts among peoples within a political structure. That structure was provided by the development of Roman law—*jus gentium* as well as *jus civile*—and the instrumentality by which it was advanced was the elaboration of rhetoric as a forensic art of pleading, in spite of the decay of the deliberative rhetoric of debate as a result of the concentration of imperial power, and in spite of the proliferation of the display rhetoric of entertainment. The problem of communication became central during the Renaissance as a result of growth of interest in art and literature under the influence of classical models. The problem of communication was a problem of expressive forms and of values expressed

rather than of contacts of peoples and agreements arrived at. It led to the development of humanism as a way of life and as a theory of values and to the elaboration of rhetoric as an art of criticism which embraced problems of deliberation and adjudication as well as problems of appreciation.

We have returned to the problems of communication today as a result of the invention of instruments of communication and the massive extension of their use. The contacts of peoples and the forms and contents of communication are not primary motivating causes but consequences of the availability and use of media of mass communication. The distinctions we use in treating the resultant problems are similar to those developed in Roman and Renaissance theories of communication, but the context of their application has altered. There is no universal frame of law within which to order the communications of the peoples of the world as they bear on practical questions. Opposed legal and political conceptions contend in communication today, and fear is expressed that they might be extended by force—as the Romans extended their empire—in military, economic, cultural, or political imperialisms. There are no commonly esteemed models or forms to guide the expression of traditional or new values, and the problems of basic education for all men have taken precedence over the problems of increasing the efficiency, refining the taste, or elevating the morals, of princes and merchants. Societies have themselves become systems of communication uniting men, and the problems of communication in one society reflect the larger problems of communication concerned with all the peoples of the world and with the plurality of cultures in which they have been formed. Individ-

uals and nations are alike engaged in an effort to preserve and to create values, while resolving their respective and common problems, modifying traditions to adjust them to changed conditions which include the influence of other traditions of action and culture.

When we take communication as our beginning point for the statement of problems, without common frame to determine how means of communication should be utilized or common content of values to determine what they should express, we tend to consider the means rather than the communication and to be put off by the mechanical analogy. We impute motives to speakers, analyze structures of content, and study opinions, in order to account for communication as effect or as cause; and we study the powers, habits, and virtues of machines in cybernetics, to construct a model for negotiations, societies, inquiries, and the creation of values. The prospect that the problems of communication might yield to a mechanical solution derived from the instrumentalities which caused them is attractive, but the result of these analyses of how, why, and to what effect statements are made is that communication is ignored or transformed into the oppositions and cautions of disputation and controversy. The alternative to treating communication as causal or discursive sequence on the model of the machine is to consider what is said and how what is meant might be influenced by communication.

One of the striking characteristics of communication in all fields is the uniformity of verbal statements concerning basic attitudes, purposes, and principles. In international communication, where common influences are few and slight, all major nations profess to be “democratic,” and to be concerned with the

advancement of "freedom," the cultivation and extension of "values," and the pursuit and recognition of "truth." At worst these statements indicate nothing more than a prudential use of means of communication to placate the people; at best they are ambiguous and often lead to opposed courses of action. Ambiguities are faults in proof and statement, but they have their uses in providing latitude for continuing discussion and inquiry. The only alternative to profiting by ambiguity to continue discussion until ambiguity is removed by communication is to control, restrict, or prohibit forms of communication thought to be injurious or dangerous. Much communication—or at least the communication with which we disagree—is ambiguous, disingenuous, deceptive, false, immoral, and, fortunately, ineffective. Verbal agreement, however, provides a minimum basis for the continuation of communication, and if men say often enough and explicitly enough that they are democratic, and that they promote freedom, seek values, and pursue truth, the possibility is left open that they may approximate a common meaning, and that their practice may come to approximate their profession. Communication depends on common principles—assumptions and meanings, purposes and values—but common meanings can be established only by communication and agreement. Only our tenuous agreements in communication can provide a frame today comparable to the frame of law of the Romans or the frame of values of the Renaissance—which were not without their working ambiguities—but we shall also need to elaborate an accompanying art of deliberative rhetoric or speculative grammar to reduce ambiguities for the discussion of differences and to provide common significances for

values. The character of that art can be made apparent by examining what is involved in a radical reduction of basic problems to problems of communication. Its purpose must be to use communication to make men of one mind in truth, and to accomplish that purpose its devices must extend beyond consideration only of opinions, emotions, and interests.

II. TRUTH IN A PLURALISTIC SOCIETY

The primary function of communication is to establish relations between men. It provides a bond of association and of community. A democratic society may be defined as a community based on communication: it is a framework of institutions and customs which are an expression of common acceptance and agreement and which provide means to discuss further differences and to come to agreement concerning them. To translate problems into terms of communication, therefore, is to place them in a social dimension of interchange. Moreover, the interchanges of communication provide both the initial definition of problems and the dynamism of their evolution: agreements begin with the conceptions men have of situations, interests, and dangers, and the consequences of agreements can be worked out only by communication, even when the result is a reluctant acquiescence under the influence or fear of force. Exercise of the primary function of communication depends on the exercise of three related functions of discourse: the communication which relates men to men also provides conditions essential to self-expression and freedom; it provides a medium for the embodiment of common values; and it provides an instrument for the discovery of truth. Viable communication moves in four dimensions: it relates man to man, and that relation deter-

mines and is determined by what man can become, by the ideals which inspire him, and by his conception of the objective circumstances which environ him.

These four functions are inseparable parts of the problem of communication. Their interrelations provide the only means of solving problems of communication. In spite of the vogue of "communication," we are reluctant to submit all problems to this process, for we would prefer to reserve some assumption, some fear, some preference—or when we express the reservation abstractly, some truth, some freedom, some value—from the uncertainties of discussion. Even the statement of this limit, however, must survive the processes of communication if we are to make it generally effective by securing agreement concerning it. The consequences of treating all basic problems as problems of communication can be discovered only by examining the nature of communication in its broadest scope, in which the strand of verbal agreement is most tenuous and ambiguous. The ambiguities of the "cold war" and of the numerous less inclusive controversies which color all the problems of our times depend on their ambiguities for the continuation of communication such as it is; and the threats of force and violence which would follow a rupture of communication can be understood best by analyzing opposed theories of communication as they operate in reducing ambiguities. Since communication functions as a bond binding people together in society, the ways in which communication operates can be stated as opposed conceptions of how truth functions in a society and how it influences the workings of society, or—what is the same thing—how men are made of one mind in truth. The differences which separate opposed theories

of communication are differences concerning how the four dimensions of communication are interrelated.

The theory of truth in a unitary society is a simple equation of the four functions of communication established by control of communication. Society should be ruled by truth, and therefore a single philosophy should be imposed on all men. The values of art, science, philosophy, and religion should be cultivated in the service of that truth and according to its prescriptions. Freedom is advanced not by permitting men to act as they please but by inducing them to act as they should to advance that truth. The agreements or institutions which are the basis of society must be established by a dictatorship of the men who possess the truth, at least until such time as contrary errors have been extirpated and force is no longer necessary. The ambiguities of discussions to which this project of communication leads can be traced to the perverse meanings which are attached to all the basic terms. A truth which is not subject to discussion is an impediment to the discovery of truth; an ideal which is used as an instrument is an impediment to the enrichment of values; a freedom of conformity is an impediment to the freedom of self-realization; an authoritarian society is an impediment to all processes of discussion and government by agreement.

We deceive ourselves, however, if we translate these statements about conditions of communication into statements of fact. We cannot assume that the effort to make men of one mind in a unitary society is doomed necessarily to be ineffective. The facts of history and contemporary observation are evidence contrary to the assumption that truths, values, freedom, and agreement are not

achieved in an authoritarian society or that a unitary conception of truth is without attractions to uncommitted minds. Science has flourished under despotisms in the Hellenistic kingdoms, in the Roman Empire of the second century A.D., and in the Prussian Empire: the Soviet Union has made vast progress in technology, and evidence concerning progress in science there is not clear. The arts have flourished and have waned under highly diverse conditions. Freedom has developed slowly and in parts, and it has nowhere reached the ideal point at which it applies to all men and to all human rights: a sense of freedom is a sense of liberation, and men in various parts of the world value freedoms to which other men are insensitive and they see threats to freedom where other men see none. Men support agreements which they had no part in establishing, finally, through interest, fear, and inertia; and unexpressed dissent, like the aversion which "good Germans" discovered to nazism after its fall, is tacit agreement. The processes by which men are made of one mind by the processes of unitary communication will not be stopped by mechanical or inevitable impediments; they will be stopped only by the clarity and efficacy of communication which provides and employs alternative ways of making men of one mind.

To state the opposed conception of truth in a pluralistic society as a problem of communication is not to abandon truth to a relativism of opinions, formative influences, and force, or to the prudential calculations of skepticism. Such a statement should, on the contrary, be an exploration of means by which opposed errors can be combated. A truth which we do not succeed in expressing and communicating is inef-

fective, and we shall not be able to communicate it to others if we do not understand the communication by which we achieve it, put it into operation, and safeguard it. A pluralistic society is one in which the four dimensions of communication function independently, and the basis of truth in a pluralistic society is communication which facilitates the statement and discussion of differences, and the clarification and utilization of agreements. Men are unified in the institutional agreements of society, and their lives are enriched by the diversity of the interpretations and developments of these agreements. The basic problem of a pluralistic society is to use unity to promote diversity and diversity to strengthen unity. A society which is based on agreement through communication must provide conditions in which truth will emerge from the oppositions of opinions in communication. If the frame of discussion and agreement predetermines what shall be accepted as truth or gives undue weight to what one party to the discussion says, communication takes on the characteristics of communication in a unitary society.

If we knew the *truth* and if the truth could be stated once and for all, it would be reasonable to argue that deviations from that truth should be prohibited since they would, by its standard, be unclear, indistinct, inadequate, or false. But the truths with which we deal are humanly stated truths, and they are neither certain nor final. We have a natural disposition to view doctrines to which we are attached as if they possessed that certainty and finality. But the problem of truth in society is not limited to the use of truths already established; it is also a problem of inquiry to discover new truths and their applications, in the course of which old truths

must be restated in new contexts, and truths, old or new, must be distinguished from falsities, fictions, and errors. If truths emerge in the oppositions of opinions, no marks antecedent to discussion suffice to distinguish truth and error; nor are there reasons to suppose that truth might be advanced by restricting communication or access to information.

If we possessed a unique and satisfactory expression of the *values* which inspire and motivate mankind, it would be reasonable to argue that deviations from its form or content should be prohibited, since they would, by its standard, be trivial, improper, obscene, or dangerous. But the expression of values has its basis in the circumstances and forms of expression of a times; and the potentialities of circumstances are expressed in ideal realizations. The function of creative artists and thinkers is to discover the unexpressed values of the society in which they live and to express them creatively in forms which other members of society may experience. The common values which unite men of different times and places are given different expressions appropriate to, and determined by, their respective periods and cultures. Values are brought to attention and operation by communication, and they exist only as expressed.

If we possessed a unique pattern for human behavior, it might be proclaimed as the model and rule for *free* action. But even those philosophers who hold that the wise man or the good man alone is free do not suppose that freedom is therefore reduced to a single pattern of action. Wisdom and virtue depend on conditions of choice; and men achieve their destinies and are free on different patterns, which are determined by their individual powers and circumstances. Freedom is individualism; it is absence

of external constraint; it is the condition of advance in the moral and intellectual virtues. There is no freedom except the freedoms men feel and employ. Truths and values may enter as conditions influencing choice if men are free, but restrictions and prohibitions are external constraints poorly suited to make men either free and responsible or wise and good.

If we knew unquestionably what the form of the perfect *society* is—whether a utopia ruled by philosophers or scientists, or a classless society of free men who need no coercion—it might be argued that we would be justified in using every means for its realization. But societies are communities of individuals and, short of liquidation or the use of stratagem, individuals can be formed into a community only by communication. Societies may be established or destroyed by force; but they are continued and improved only by means of communication. Since communication depends on discovery of truths, cultivation of values, and extension of freedoms, a society must, if it is to endure and grow, permit the plurality and promote the communication by which those ends are realized.

The basis of truth in a pluralistic society is the independent functioning of communication in the four dimensions which bear on truth, values, freedom, and community. The simple statement of that independence, however, is nothing more than the construction of an ideal which has at best the virtue of indicating the requirements for preserving communication from the errors and distortions imposed by a unitary society. The problems of how to achieve and preserve that independence are difficult and paradoxical, for if all problems are problems of communication the independence of the four dimensions of communication can

be preserved only by interrelations established among them by communication. The pattern of communication in a pluralistic society is diversity and unity, pluralism and agreement, freedom and control. To maintain that pattern, diversity must be prevented from disrupting unity and agreement from suppressing differences. Communication is an art, and it must develop powers as well as achieve effects: communication will contribute to truth, values, freedom, and community if the processes of communication are such as to foster responsiveness to truth, sensitivity to values, recognition of the implications of freedom, and concern to preserve the institutions by which men resolve their differences from perversion by force, fraud, or neglect. General considerations concerning communication will not solve the subtle and difficult problems of control and freedom, but they will suggest distinctions for their analysis and criteria to guide their discussion. The dimensions of communication range between the agreements of society and the requirements of truth, value, and freedom. The basic problems which occupy communication in all fields range likewise between the extreme of demands for limitation, restriction, control, prohibition, isolation, censorship, segregation, and preservation; and the extreme of demands for rights and freedoms for all kinds and classes of people, in all phases of life, for all varieties of purposes. Some of them are problems which have become pressing because the increase in communication makes their solution practicable for the first time; some of them are problems which have arisen from the development of communication. Both kinds are firmly grounded in communication, and their treatment depends on the limits and nature of communication.

If society is an agreement based on communication, it would seem that some limitations must be put on communication in the interest of preserving that agreement and the institutions by which agreement is advanced. Pressure for censorship and for other limitations on many sorts of communication has recently been advanced by such arguments. Arguments for and against censorship are arguments in a tradition of communication; and examination of its implications provides, not the solution of the problems treated in it, but criteria to clarify the complex issues it treats. The arguments for censorship, restriction, labeling, and control rest on the consequences of the communication to be censored, not on its characteristics as communication. Obscenity and the depiction of violence may affect the character and actions of the immature, the uneducated, and the defective; disloyal, dishonest, and unscrupulous men may conspire to mislead, confuse, and subvert; bigots may misrepresent and libel groups, peoples, races, and beliefs. The form of the argument is not an accident. Error, obscenity, conspiracy, and libel are the recurrent grounds advanced for censorship, and they have often been used in conjunction or even interchangeably. The provisions for freedom of the press in the first and the fourteenth amendments of the United States Constitution have been interpreted as precluding censorship in the strict sense of prepublication suppression, and secondary forms of suppressing or of restricting distribution and accessibility have concentrated on the effects attributed to communication, and their defenders have argued that they do not interfere with truth, value, or freedom. The distinction is itself an achievement of the tradition of communication established in political discussion and law.

It provides a minimum element of agreement, a basis of communication, and criteria for arriving at further agreements.

Defenders of censorship, while seeking to control consequences in action, acknowledge the distinction between communication and action and the guarantee of freedom of speech and expression. Opponents of censorship, while urging the dangers of any restriction on communication, acknowledge the existence of official communications—some of them in the statute books of the states, postal regulations, and customs procedures—which do restrict communication. The problem of freedom or restriction of communication is in the middle range in which statement is distinguished from action. All the terms of the discussion are so vague as to be indefinitely extensible: “obscenity” was applied, in France in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, to censor scientific and philosophic writings; “libel” was employed, in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century England, to eliminate political opposition; “conspiracy” and “treason” have been extended, in the United States in the twentieth century, from their strict senses to apply to any position one opposes—to a point where the two major parties can play with the terms as means of describing and criticizing each other. The statutes are poorly written and difficult to enforce, and there is a growing tendency to have recourse to extra-legal action and influence—to arbitrary action by chiefs of police, to economic boycott, or to social pressure. The dangers of these tendencies to truth in a pluralistic society are obvious, and the criteria of communication concerning those dangers is no less obvious: objective examination of whether the consequences alleged could plausibly follow from the communication;

clearly formulated statutes and explicit regulations to control consequences; legal procedures of enforcement and easily available legal procedures of review; communication and discussion based on probable consequences rather than on alleged intentions imputed to the author or on distaste aroused in the critic by the communication; effective discouragement and control of extra-legal procedures.

Criteria of control based on consideration of the limitations of communication, however, must be supplemented by criteria of use based on consideration of the nature of communication. Communication can be controlled only when communication in any true sense has failed. Communication can embody values, realize freedom, promote the ends of society, only by advancing truth and using truth. To do that it must form in those who participate in communication an attitude and ability to judge truth, to be sensitive to values, to develop in the use of freedom, and to build confidence in the institutions of society on truth, values, and freedom. To strengthen these attitudes and abilities is to make men of one mind in truth; and the art of communication—which has been referred to earlier as deliberative rhetoric—is the art by which that can be done.

We have tended in our analysis of communication to reduce the minds of men to opinions and to neglect active attitude and ability by concentrating on what is passively received. Communication is education, and education should train men to judge all communication, not in its technical details but as it bears on common problems, to appreciate the statement of ideals, and to be inspired by them, to use freedom to regulate passions by reason and interests by right,

and to temper caution and fear by tolerance and love in social and political activities. It is in this development that the four dimensions of communication find their proper and effective interplay: a just society is advanced as its citizens advance in truth, values, and freedom. The art of deliberative rhetoric is not a technical or abstruse discipline. On the contrary, it is the instrument of democracy in so far as democracy is based on a conviction that the people are better qualified than any limited or select group to make decisions concerning truth as it affects them, concerning the values presented for contemplation and guidance, concerning their individual destinies, and concerning their common good. Men of one mind can build a society, a nation, and a world community. But to be of one mind is not to be of one opinion. Men are of one mind when they possess reason to judge statements of truth, understanding to appreciate statements of their own values and those of others, desires ordered under freedom, and love of the common good for which men are associated. When men are of one mind in these abilities, they can be of different opinions without danger to society or to each other.

Communication can make men of one mind, and understanding the nature of communication can guide its use. Moreover, the order in which our problems must be treated becomes apparent from the analysis of communication. There is no simple means to bridge the gap between the communication of a pluralistic society and the communication of a unitary society: the frame within which communication between those two modes of communication takes place is a tenuous, temporary, and ambiguous agreement. We must begin by understanding

better the implication of communication as it is committed to the truths of a pluralistic society and by bringing our actions more and more into accordance with the requirements of that communication. To the extent that we succeed in understanding and promoting communication in our own society, we advance in our communication with other peoples who are engaged, like us, in an effort to come to one mind by communication, and who suspect what we say and the nature and purpose of the communication we employ in saying it. If the scope and effectiveness of communication is extended, the ambiguities of the communication between the extremes are likely to be lessened. The danger to communication in a pluralistic society is that it may be transformed by imperceptible degrees and unsuspected devices into forms of communication which make for a unitary society; but by the same token the hope for communication in a unitary society is that it may be transformed by circumstances, if not by reason, into forms of communication which prepare for a pluralistic society. The primary problem is not an external threat beyond the limits of communication but an internal problem which can be solved by communication. Men can be made of one mind in truth by communication in a pluralistic society: such a society is based on confidence resulting from insight into truths, understanding of others, and freedom for self-development. The one alternative to such communication is communication which builds a society based on fear, guided by guesses concerning the dominant direction or party, conformity to general expectations, and coercion to remove deviations.