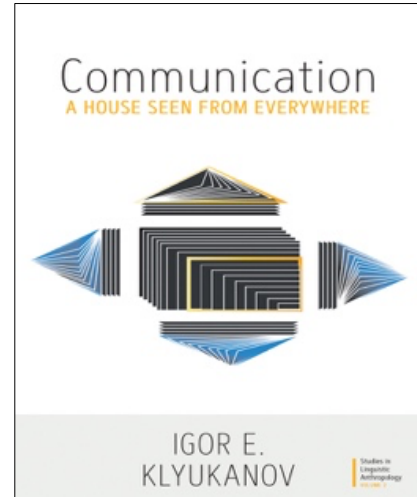


Igor E. Klyukanov, **Communication: A House Seen From Everywhere**, New York, NY: Berghahn, 2022, 246 pp., \$116.00 (hardcover), \$49.00 (Kindle).

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Communication is the vehicle through which knowledge is gained and disseminated, hence, its strong connection with philosophy—the love of knowledge. To philosophize, one must communicate. To understand communication, we must subject it to philosophical inquiry (Muhammad, 2016).

In **Communication: A House Seen From Everywhere**, Igor E. Klyukanov, professor of global and intercultural communications at Eastern Washington University, presents a philosophical and contemplative analysis of the nature of communication studies. The author examines the origins, meanings, and functions of communication as a philosophy and as a science. Through the chapters, the author provides an expansive conceptualization of communication, describing it as a natural, social, cultural, and rational science, in what is modeled as a semiotic square in chapter six.



In the first chapter, Klyukanov addresses the identity and legitimacy of communication. The author begins by presenting different perspectives on communication by leading scholars, including Christian Fuchs and Jack Qiu, who describe communication as a field in ferment. Communication is compared to beer that needs to undergo different stages of fermentation to be transformed into a state of high quality and taste. The author also presents Wilbur Schramm's metaphor of communication as a field at crossroads. Communication is like a road on which many pass, but few tarry. The author argues that communication is dynamic. It is a field in constant flux and cannot be disciplined. As a science, communication is insecure, hence, it suffers an identity crisis.

In chapter two, Klyukanov discusses communication as a natural science. Communication interacts with matter and energy. According to the author, communication can be studied empirically through the lenses of biology, chemistry, neuroanatomy, and neurophysiology. Communication binds all natural species together. All natural species have defined ways of communicating. The interaction of different beings results in the emergence of organized structures, whose communications can best be explained through conversational analysis.

In chapter three, the author considers communication as a social science. Communication focuses on links between individual actions and social relationships, and the importance of social rules and norms. The author argues that communication is more than just a human science, as widely viewed, and has deeper dimensions yet to be explored and understood. The author also highlights the problem of method, stating

that social scientists need to develop their unique research methods, rather than relying on empirical methods from the natural sciences.

In chapter four, Klyukanov views communication from the lens of the humanities. According to the author, the humanities allow us to view communication as a cultural science that gives us a better understanding of our humanity. The humanities study cultural products created by humans through history. The author states that communication allows us to gain a better understanding of the human spirit through verbal expressions (rhetoric), signs (semiotics), and interpretation and understanding (hermeneutics).

In chapter five, the author focuses on the philosophy of communication. The author argues that like philosophy, communication addresses all issues, whether they be important or mundane. Like philosophy, communication aims to understand how all things hang together. Scholars of communication should not focus on divisions in the field such as interpretive, cultural, discursive, and postmodern but should rather focus on philosophizing communication as a unified and typological subject. This focus will help scholars to improve their understanding and relationships with nature, aesthetics, and seemingly mundane experiences. The author ends the chapter by outlining roles of the philosopher of communication to include critical reflection, formulation of actionable postulates, and attention to language.

Chapter six could be described as the climax of the book. The author describes and unifies the four semantic categories of communication, including natural science, social science, cultural science, and rational science, in a model called the semiotic square. According to the author, the semiotic square is based on the four Aristotelean primary causes: material, formal, efficient, and final, representing nature, society, humanity, and monstrosity. The author argues that the semiotic square should not be viewed as an abstraction but as a representation of the kinesthetic relationships that occur in daily communications.

In chapter seven, the author argues that just as Aristotle's theory of being can be understood in different ways, so can communication. Each view of communication is dependent on which of the four sciences is highlighted and which three are left in the background. The author argues further that the four categories are interconnected; however, the challenge of highlighting this interconnection is the responsibility of the communication scholar.

Chapter eight presents a critical reflection on the nature of communication through the discursive lens of four theorists: Lee Thayer, Gregory Shepherd, Robert Craig, and Silvio Waisbord. According to the author, one question unites the various perspectives put forward by these authors—Is communication a unique science? The author warns against allowing the perspectivism of experience to confuse our meaning of communication. Communication is not separate from other objects. Scholars should focus on its four manifestations.

In chapter nine, Klyukanov presents a chapter-by-chapter recap, reminding us of the complicated and ever-changing nature of communication. The author argues that communication is always in a state of flux, hence, the need to focus on one of its manifestations at a time. However, trying to gain a full understanding of communication is an ideal that cannot be attained due to its dynamic nature. The author closes with a metaphor, describing communication as a house seen from everywhere by everyone. All are invited to live and engage in the house of communication.

Overall, the book's writing is sophisticated and witty, demonstrating the author's depth of knowledge of communication studies, philosophy, linguistics, history, and science. The book makes copious references to Western philosophers and leading figures in communication, the humanities, and social sciences. Every argument or concept in the book is supported with strong citations and references.

However, the book has a few shortcomings. The author's arguments and concepts are anchored on the works of major Western philosophers and thinkers like Aristotle, Plato, Kant, and Marx. There are some references to Russian thinkers and their ideas. This stance gives the impression that only Western figures are relevant in the field of philosophy of communication. Nothing is mentioned of the philosophers and philosophies of communication in Africa, Asia, or South America. It would be good for the author to compare and critique Western and non-Western philosophical thoughts on communication. There is a need for more diversity of thought to enrich future editions of the book.

We are currently in an age where attention spans are getting shorter and patience for deep, contemplative, and aesthetic writing is decreasing in favor of time on mobile phones, social media, and TV shows (Ephraim, 2013; Spjeldnæs & Karlsen, 2022). Considering these factors, it would be good for the author to make the writing a bit more inviting and relatable to younger readers in future editions. The author could use more examples from contemporary life to illustrate deep philosophical concepts. The book's current writing is complex. The language usage is dense and poetic, requiring a good background in philosophy, history of science, and linguistic anthropology to fully understand and appreciate it. Simplifying the writing style and language will help attract and keep younger audiences, including millennials and Gen Z, and potential audiences in nonnative-English-speaking contexts.

In spite of a few shortcomings, the book is unique. It presents an intellectual analysis of the nature of communication and how it functions. The book stands out as an important contribution to the field of philosophy of communication. Graduate students and scholars in communication theory, rhetoric, linguistic anthropology, and semiotics will benefit from the important knowledge frameworks expounded in the book.

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