

# THE SELF, CONSCIOUSNESS AND COMMUNICATION: AN EXPERIENTIAL MODEL OF THE SELF AND CONSCIOUSNESS IN COMMUNICATION

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**This article explores intrapersonal and transpersonal communication as the principal derivatives of a subjective, inner reality. These levels relate to different states and levels of consciousness and corresponding levels of self-awareness. Since an exploration of the nature of the self and its possible confluence with states and levels of consciousness necessitates a multidisciplinary approach, theories and constructs in Psychology, the New Physics (Quantum Physics), Mysticism, and Philosophy are integrated with contemporary communication notions of the self and consciousness. Integration and inclusiveness consequently form the bedrock of this article.**

## INTRODUCTION

The importance and relevance of this article lie in the consideration and in-

vestigation of the spiritual and transcendental aspirations of humanity in an era where technology is viewed as the principal determinative in the lifestyle of people, and where individuals are described mostly in terms of that which could be objectively and empirically quantified. Additionally, the nature of the content of the article could expand the boundaries of communication as a discipline and also concurrently promote inter-disciplinary dialogue.

An exploration of the various theories of human communication indicates that communicologists tend to refer to the individual as the 'kingpin' of the essence of communication, the essence being the creation and sharing of meaning. However, little if any referral is made to how meaning is created within the individual or the self. This is so since the major impelling force in communication research to date has been in interpersonal communication.

Additionally, how intrapersonal and transpersonal communication contribute to the dynamics, enhancement and transformation of the self and consciousness, with the self and its dimensionality as the object of inquiry, has not been incorporated into mainstream communication theory. Venter (1995) defines intrapersonal communication as the exploration, processing and understanding of the conscious and subconscious aspects of the self, and

transpersonal communication could also be referred to as vertical, religious or spiritual communication (Rensberg, 1989).

## THE NEED FOR AN INTEGRATIVE PARADIGM IN COMMUNICATION

The need for a new integrative, and more inclusive paradigm has been expressed by physicists and humanists alike. Studies by Rensburg (1989), Slabbert (1992) and Venter (1994) on intrapersonal and transpersonal communication, indicate that these levels should be included more comprehensively in mainstream communication theory and research.

Additionally, various trends in the sociocultural environment, the humanities and scientific disciplines are indicative of the need for an integrated, non-linear approach to communication research.

McAurthur (1990:94) refers to a 'unitive' system as the follow-up to holism. He asks the question, "...how can we hope to be holistic and cosmopolitan all the time? The unitive answer - since it is unitive and not simply holistic - is that we have to live with all our fragments as best we can as well as with our glorious comprehensive dreams. The idea of integration presupposes a disintegrated state, a diversity that is not simply going to dissolve once we are whole". The unitive option evidently makes allowances for the built-in disunities, which means making allowances for humanity's 'centricity' expressed in *egocentrism*, *ethnocentrism*, *eccentrism* (stepping out of the central area). The crux of unitive thought, with its emphasis on harmonious diversities, seems plausible and

applicable to communication theory and human existence alike.

The current transactional view of communication also includes the notion that all communication components are interrelated and interdependent. Each element and component relate integrally to every other element. There can be no communicator without a receiver, and no message without a medium. Because of interdependence, a change in one element will induce a reciprocal change in another (Tubbs & Moss, 1994:7).

This concurs with the principle of non-summativity, the first principle of the systems theory (Littlejohn, 1996) incorporated in the pragmatic perspective of communication by Fisher (1978). The principle explains the interdependence of components of a system. The implication is that all the components of communication are interdependent, hence a change in one unit or component will influence the rest of the components in the system. Changes in an individual's self-awareness through intrapersonal communication, as the smallest unit of analysis in communication, will consequently have a ripple effect on the subsequent communication 'components' in the system.

This principle is also reflected in the recent developments in quantum physics which indicate that what occurs on the subatomic and subsystem levels reflect and influence occurrences on the systems and suprasystems levels (Goswami, 1993). These developments encourage a re-consideration and evaluation of the importance of individual subsystems as components of intrapersonal communication. The internal aspects of, for example, individual consciousness, attitudes and beliefs are as important as the external-

ized, macroscopic and observable communicative behaviour.

In the words of Ken Wilber (1983:1) what is needed is "...a *'transcendental paradigm'*, meaning an overall knowledge quest that would include not only the *'hard ware'* of physical sciences but also the *'soft ware'* of philosophy and psychology and the *'transcendental ware'* of mystical-spiritual religion". Wilber (1983:2), however, continues to explain that a new and broader paradigm has been argued as being unempirical and having no valid epistemology, and therefore, in relation to empirical sciences, is invalid, nonsensical, and meaningless.

Capra (1983, 1992) is of the opinion that our Western culture has favoured, for example, self-assertion over integration, analysis over synthesis, and rational knowledge over intuitive wisdom. This view is, however, changing as Capra (1983:15) himself notes. He implores scientists to reconsider their frames of reference: "*The patterns scientists observe in nature are intimately connected with the patterns of their minds; with their concepts, thoughts and values*".

Wolf (1985:204) says: "*It is my dream that quantum physics will bridge the gap between science and mysticism. As such it must lead thinkers and researchers to a new way of human behaviour. B. F. Skinner was not so wrong in attempting to deal with behaviour scientifically, but he was the Newton of behaviourists. We now search for the Einstein and the Bohr of human behaviour to develop the quantum model for human beings.*"

From the above it should be clear that two very important assumptions could be made: 1) The aim of the new integrative approach should be to inte-

grate scientific analysis with intuitive and subjective knowledge, and not the annihilation of either one; and 2) communication science should strive to incorporate physical, mystical, holism and the transcendental perspectives in their focus of research.

Drawing these assumptions and questions to their full conclusion, we need to integrate intrapersonal and transpersonal communication into the existing body of knowledge of communication to develop a new perspective or paradigm of the psyche and communication. We hence need to evaluate and re-define our current beliefs about humanity and its means of expression.

Such an integrative perspective would originate in the introspective and not the extrospective, yet including both as units of analysis. Thus, rather than using interpersonal communication as a mirror of intrapersonal and transpersonal processes to arrive at answers, different tools of analyzing intrapersonal and transpersonal functioning should be applied to improve interpersonal communication.

Humanity needs alternative methods to understand and express its existence and improve its sense of self worth, and those methods are rooted *inter alia* in intrapersonal and transpersonal communication. Communicologists, moreover, need to facilitate humanity's much needed transcendence to an awareness of cosmic-connectedness and responsibility.

## THE STATUS OF INTRA-PERSONAL AND TRANS-PERSONAL COMMUNICATION IN CONTEMPORARY COMMUNICATION THEORY

Contemporary communication theory mostly reflects contradictory assumptions regarding intrapersonal and transpersonal communication. Essentially most communication theorists, for example, Fisher (1978), Myers and Myers (1985) and Adler and Towne (1990), are questioning the status of intrapersonal and transpersonal communication as fully-fledged levels of communication, and independent units of scientific analysis.

The debate about intrapersonal communication being a scientific unit of analysis relates to two questions. It firstly poses the question of whether only one participant constitutes communication in terms of communication's nature, structure and function. Secondly, from the physiological, psychological and metaphysical perspectives, it questions the nature of an individual's internal information processes, since these processes cannot directly be observed and measured.

Fisher (1978:151) comments that the question surrounding the possibility of intrapersonal communication is "*disgustingly trivial*" and that "*it is infinitely more valuable to think of communication occurring at different "levels"...As a "level" intrapersonal is an analytical focus rather than a one-person social setting for communication to take place.*" He goes on to say: "*Rather than being a one-person setting or event for communication to occur, intrapersonal communication embodies the phenomena going on within the individual during any communication*

*event regardless of how many people are involved"* (Fisher, 1978:152).

Vocate (1994:x) is of the opinion that "*an integrated theoretical framework of some sort is essential to set guidelines from which to examine a specific topic or context in a coherent fashion. Otherwise, the conceptual divergence of unexamined metatheoretical assumptions about a particular phenomenon, such as intrapersonal communication, may yield logical inconsistencies and invalidate any progress in theory construction*". This statement indicates the need to examine and integrate intrapersonal and transpersonal constructs into current communication theories and perspectives.

Most communication researchers, for example, Littlejohn (1996:56), have mostly described intrapersonal communication in a very superficial and somewhat mystifying manner, if they described it at all.

However, the psychological perspective of communication, which Fisher (1978:136) describes as an addendum to the mechanistic perspective, focuses strongly on certain aspects of intrapersonal communication (Venter, 1994:106). According to Fisher (1978:144), "*...a psychological model focuses on the source receiver, the individual human being, and delves into the internal cognitive and affective makeup of the communicating agent*".

The General System Theory was applied to Communication and is called the Pragmatic System Approach. The main caveat in the Pragmatic System Approach is that it does not address intrapersonal communication, or for that matter transpersonal communication, as a level. It views the smallest unit in a system as the communication relationship between two individuals. This re-

sults in a fundamental inconsistency with the General System Theory, according to which the smallest unit of a system determines the functioning and effectiveness of the total system. The smallest unit of the communication system should be intrapersonal and transpersonal communication, which will determine and constrain interpersonal communication (the next level). Intrapersonal and transpersonal communication are not taken into account because the Pragmatic System approach is a functional theory, and intrapersonal and transpersonal communication cannot be measured in an empirical way.

Adding on to this, Neuliep (1996:45) explains that a new and emerging metatheoretical perspective in communication, called the bio-social approach, involves the notion that behaviour is concurrently caused by some biological factors as well as some free choice options and the drive to achieve goals. According to Neuliep these bio-social theorists employ a combination of causal and practical necessity in their explanation of human communication.

An interesting reference to intrapersonal communication, which includes an allusion to transpersonal communication, is made by Neuliep (1996:285,286) in discussing the systems-interactional approach, where he mentions self-transcendent change, which is creative change by the system (the individual) itself in an attempt to reach out beyond his or her environment to learn, develop and change.

He also refers to the individual in his/her physical and psychological capacity as part of the cybernetic principle of feedback, self-regulation and homeostasis. "This model applies specifi-

cally to human systems. Here the system is made up of a receiver, a control apparatus, and an effector...Here the control apparatus could be the human brain...The effector's actions return to the receptor as feedback" (Neuliep, 1996:283).

What is alluded to in the above mentioned statements is essentially an incomplete representation of the total and complex nature of humanity in communication theory. This could mainly be attributed to mechanistic determinism which assumes that reality consists of objects and events that exist separately with measurable distances between them. For example, mechanistic determinism posits that mind and matter exist as distinct opposites. The opposites described in mechanistic determinism are apparent in the distinction between intrapersonal (mind or phenomenal) and transpersonal (spirit or transcendental) properties of communication and interpersonal properties (matter or socio-cultural).

Moreover, an exploration of the nature of intrapersonal and transpersonal communication, that relates to and involves all the 'subatomic' components mentioned by Wolf (1985), Capra (1992) and Goswami (1993), suggests that the self and its levels and states of consciousness should be considered the quantum of communication: the smallest and most essential unit of analysis in communication. Quantum in this sense is viewed as meaning the smallest identifiable yet covert, but principal particle of a structure or cluster of structures. It is thus obvious that the self and its states and levels of consciousness have the inner technologies of the levels of intrapersonal and transpersonal communication available to grow and develop.

This dynamic relationship between mind, matter and perception (observation) is extensively examined by Capra (1992:79) who states: *"The Cartesian partition between the I and the world, between the observer and the observed, cannot be made when dealing with atomic matter."*

Adding on to this, Wolf (1985:19, 81) made the following remarks: *"States of consciousness, feelings, emotional states, and psychology as a science may depend on the recognition that mind, the consciousness of the universe, arises through quantum physics,"* and *"...the new physics sheds light on some old, perplexing concepts such as normality, mind control, order, disorder, observation, entropy, information, and the human condition"*.

Both Wolf (1985) and Capra (1992) indicate an intricate relationship between mind and matter that is far from distinct. Reality cannot only be the result of social interaction, and the self cannot only be viewed as a product of interpersonal communication.

A complete study of intrapersonal and transpersonal communication, which relate to and involve all the components mentioned by Wolf (1985), should consequently consider 'subatomic' elements. These 'subatomic' elements can be equated with the intrapersonal and transpersonal constructs in communication and specifically the pivotal components, the self and its levels of consciousness.

## THE SELF

The relationship between intrapersonal and transpersonal communication, and the self and levels of consciousness is highlighted by the following:

- In Jung's (1875-1961) model of the psyche, the self is referred to as *"the archetype of all archetypes"*. He considers the self as *"...the organizing genius behind the total personality, responsible for implementing the blueprint of life through each stage of the life cycle...The Self, therefore, provides the means of adaptation not only to the environment but also to GOD and the life of the spirit"* (Stevens, 1991:41).
- Intrapersonal communication is *"...the exploration, processing and understanding of conscious and subconscious aspects of the self"* (Venter, 1995:87). It centers on the internal and subjective processing of information about reality. The focus of intrapersonal communication is hence on the individual, 'the self', and the magnitude of idiosyncratic personal variables that make up the self are crucial and strategic components in the application of techniques in the management, development, transformation and transcendence of the self.
- The transformation and transcendence of the self are also related to transpersonal communication. Venter (1994:87) is of the opinion that intrapsychic growth (self-growth) for one, represents an expansion or development of awareness and consciousness of an individual. She refers to this process as a possible outcome of transpersonal communication. Transpersonal development includes, religious and mystical insights during altered state of consciousness, as well as communication experiences which transcend the self and limitations of

space and time. (Venter, 1995:88; 1994:158).

- Rensburg (1989), in her initiatory study on vertical communication, indicates that humanity strives to both comprehend an 'ultimate reality', and to be reunited, through transcendental awareness, with its Creator by means of the vertical axis of communication.
- Adding on to this, Slabbert (1992:summary) states that "*religious communication takes place where interpersonal (horizontal axis) and the spiritual/intuitive communication (vertical axis) intersects in the self by means of intrapersonal communication.*"

The intrapersonal and transpersonal levels of communication are thus intricately intertwined with constructs about the self and levels and states of consciousness, and the individual's needs to manage, develop, transform and transcend himself or herself. All self-management, development, transformation and transcendence effectively start with the self - the central component of intrapersonal and transpersonal communication.

*"The self is at the beginning and end of all communication"* (Burton and Dimbleby, 1995:1). Littlejohn (1996:162) indicates that "*[t]o state that a person has a self implies that the individual can act toward the self as towards others*". However, Hewes and Planalp (1987:147) are of the opinion that the place of the individual in communication has been vastly oversimplified in current theory and research. The functioning and development of the self are mostly viewed as a result of communication with others, and not as the result of an independent, transcending self operating on more than one level of

consciousness. This notion is reflected in most theories of the self, where most of what is known and experienced is determined outside the boundaries of the self, but processed within the self (Fisher, 1978:141). How this is processed within the self is seldom addressed.

Burton and Dimbleby (1995:5), for example, indicate that intrapersonal communication is motivated by needs that are geared to satisfy a sense of self, to defining that self in relation to others, and to producing a sense of esteem and the worth for that self. An individual is particularly motivated to construct a self that is attractive to others, hence a person behaves in certain kinds of ways which will bring success and satisfaction in social relationships. They explain that the nature of this constructed self reflects the culture and society to which an individual belongs, and that the self is stimulated and motivated by both personal and social needs to initiate: 1) the formation of a specific kind of self, presented in a way likable to itself but mainly to others, and 2) external action or communication. Additionally, the development and maintenance of the self are mainly attributed to the influence of others in terms of feedback from others, comparisons made with others, roles played and identifications made with others (Burton & Dimbleby, 1995:22).

Therefore, it is proposed that an analysis of the self should include an assessment of intrapersonal and transpersonal components on the 'subatomic' and 'transcendental' (subconscious and altered consciousness) levels which could lead to the unfolding of different and unexplored relationship constructs, rules and norms such as space and time, and processes of evolution and involution of the self.

Certain theorists are of the opinion that a more holistic approach to the self should be followed, for example, Vaughn (1995:112) indicates that *"to identify with soul is to expand the sense of identity from body/mind to include those elements of the psyche that are nonlocal in time and space"*.

### **The self as reflected in communication perspectives, genres, theories and approaches**

Venter (1994:110) explains that there is uncertainty with regard to the meaning of the term 'self'. She elucidates that this may be ascribed to the different schools of thought in psychology emphasizing different aspects of the self, and the 'unscientific' nature of the exploration of the concept by Eastern mystics and religion.

Berger and Metzger (1984:273) indicate that the concept of self is of fairly recent origin in social science and philosophy. Although the older theories of communication saw no need for the analysis of the self-concept, the nature of the process of forming a self-concept is centrally indicated in contemporary discussions of metatheoretical issues relating to communication.

Noteworthy contemporary theoretical perspectives and theories on self and self-consciousness include Rogers' theory of self, Sullivan's interpersonal theory, Allport's propiorium, social comparison theory, cognitive dissonance theory, locus of control construct, role theory, objective self-awareness theory, and self-perception theory. Research perspectives that exemplify and test the preceding theories include, among others, social comparison research and cognitive disso-

nance research (Berger & Metzger, 1984:278-327).

Fisher (1978:134-136) makes the statement that only certain psychological precepts or characteristics have been developed in communication study. Most characteristics have been derived from social psychology with no direct bearing on the phenomena of human communication. This may explain why certain constructs in both intrapersonal and transpersonal communication have not been delineated to their full conclusion and intricacy.

Griffen (1994:116) states that interactionists view the self as a function of language. *"Without talk, there would be no self-concept"*. This notion is reflected in Vocate's (1994) theory of self-talk, inner speech and coding. Symbolic naming hence creates the self. This 'self-portrait', 'self-picture' or mental image is termed 'the looking-glass self' and develops solely through role-taking or symbolic interaction with significant others (Griffen, 1994:115, Littlejohn, 1996:162).

According to the Meadian interactionist tradition (The Chicago School) the basic nature of the self consists of the 'I' and 'me' dimensions or facets which are interdependent and inseparable. The interaction between the 'I' and 'me' within the self is viewed as the embodiment of the self and other in social interaction. The 'I' is described as the impulsive active portion of self that is able to behave, whereas the 'me' performs the function of the 'other' that directs behaviour through the application of social mores, definitions, attitudes, values, and behavioural tendencies (Fisher, 1978:166-167).

The 'I' experiences and the 'me' observes the experience as another person would, to allow the necessary 'ps-



psychological distance' to transcend the immediate situation and to go beyond the limitations of individual past and present experiences. This process is called self-indication through self-observation by the 'me' dimension of the self. The interdependency between the 'I' and 'me' is reflected in the following statement: "*The 'me', through self-observation of the act and relating it to past observations of other people's actions, builds the behaviour*" (Fisher, 1978:167).

According to Fisher (1978:167), the duality of the self takes on additional meaning through the process of self-indication. The 'me' contains consciousness of the 'I' that acts, past experiences of the 'I' and reactions of others to the self. Self-indication is basically a process of introspection which originates in, represents and functions as a social process. The individual develops by the observation of the conduct of self towards self, and self towards others. Fisher (1978:168) adds that the Meadian concept of the 'I' and 'me' should not be confused with the Freudian structural tripartite division of the id, ego, and superego. Rather, the Meadian I-me duality should be viewed as a social process of self-indication where the construction of reality within the self represents a microcosm of the construction of a social reality in interaction. This construction of reality in interactionism requires the internal social process of self-indication and interpretation.

Littlejohn (1996:162) states that the distinguishing feature of the interactionist view of meaning is conscious interpretation. Conscious interpretation differentiates nonsymbolic interaction (a reflex) from symbolic interaction where significant symbols are utilized. In using these significant symbols and role taking or 'behaving as others be-

have', a person develops a self-concept. "*The self-concept is unified and organized through internalization of this generalized other*".

Neuliep (1996:47) is of the opinion that interactionists believe that an understanding of human behaviour requires the study of covert behaviour. This understanding of the internal functioning is not a process of introspection (Griffen, 1994:115), but rather the self must go outside the self to do the interpreting. *[T]he individual can assume the interpretative process (called standpoints) of others in order to define the self*" (Fisher, 1978:171).

The individual's psyche or consciousness could be viewed as the subsystem within the bigger system of the individual. The inputs and outputs occur outside the individual, but the throughput occurs inside the individual by means of intrapersonal communication. Individual choice in the processes of intrapersonal decision making and argumentation is facilitated by an internal dialogue. The individual uses his or her mind, through self-talk and introspection during consciousness in intrapersonal communication to arrive at psychological insight, such as an understanding of emotions and feelings.

Venter (1994) proposed a hierarchical systemic communication model which embraces the levels of intrapersonal and transpersonal communication, as well as the ultimate supra system, namely the transcendental reality. Although the elements of sender, medium and recipient is identified, it should be noted that transpersonal communication is **unmediated** and that on this level these elements are blurred and they flow into each other. The sender could be God, a Supreme being or the Higher Self. The message is transpersonal insights and the re-

ipient is the individual consciousness. Conceptual filters (e. g. attitudes, values, motives) no longer play a role. The nature of the transcendental reality is non-empirical and the transpersonal communication subsystem thus functions as a bridge between the empirical reality and the transcendental (non-empirical) reality.

It is evident that the exclusion of the **spiritual self** from current communication theory could seriously hamper the future development of theory construction. What seems needed then, is the inclusion of the 'spiritual I' in intrapersonal and transpersonal communication. However, the expansion of the dimensions of the self in communication theory is bound in the inclusion of levels and consciousness and altered states of consciousness. Such an inclusion relates to the investigation of the constructs about consciousness. The investigation of constructs about consciousness is particularly relevant if the inclusion of intrapersonal and transpersonal levels of communication is argued.

## **The self and consciousness**

Various contemporary constructs about the self in communication theory, whether social scientific or humanistic in nature, are embedded in the sociological, psychological and philosophical academic disciplines. Evidently only particular aspects have been incorporated into mainstream communication theory.

The conjunction between philosophy and intrapersonal communication is apparent in the similarity in Hippocrates' (460BC) opinion that 'all is in the brain', Descartes' (1596-1650) opinion that 'all is in the mind through thought', and Vocate's (1994) and Riccillo's

(1994) assertions that the brain becomes the mind through thought forms in intrapersonal communication.

Hume's (1711-1776) concept of perception as the only 'objective reality' available because of memory, still persists in the mostly existential and empirical contemporary interpersonal communication theory. Locke's (1632-1704) opinion that the mind, as a blank slate, gains impressions through external sensory perceptions and internal states of mind, is also still very pertinent in both intrapersonal and interpersonal communication theory.

Potentially generative ideas and constructs of direct relevance to intrapersonal and transpersonal communication, however, have been overlooked. Although the reasons for the disregard of a multidimensional self may be multitudinous, the principle reason ostensibly relates to the behaviouristic and empirical trends in communication theory. Communicologists still 'chant' the empiricist's creed of turning 'the mind upon itself'. According to this view, 'the self is a conscious thinking thing' and sensory perception represents the only consciousness in communication.

The inclusion of the spiritual nature of man as a soul, rarely features in contemporary communication theory. Great thinkers such as Adler (1870-1937), Rogers (1902-1987) and Maslow (1908-1970), among others, have mostly incorporated their notions of the self into the existential framework, by viewing the transcendental needs of humanity as centered in the sociocultural environment of the 'here and now'. It is important to note that the term 'soul' has never once been used in the communication theory that has been reviewed. The soul, in this sense, refers to the spiritual dimension of a person.

Mysticism, with its emphasis on the spiritual, perennial and somehow neutral nature of humanity, ostensibly relates more to contemporary transpersonal psychology and transpersonal communication. However, the spiritual aspects of communication, as represented in transpersonal communication, are not incorporated in the constructs of the self and levels of consciousness in mainstream communication theory.

Furthermore, all the thoughts, ideas and concepts and constructs explored somehow attest to an underlying alliance between the self and different levels and states of consciousness. The significance of understanding the exact nature of consciousness, and the various levels and states of consciousness, lies in its association with the processes and dynamics of intrapersonal and transpersonal communication.

It is believed that intrapersonal and transpersonal communication play crucial roles in the awareness, transformation and transcendence of consciousness. It is the self, the quintessence of all levels and forms of communication, that directs and revises awareness.

The demystification of consciousness is a painstaking task since the concept is both complex and abstract. Sources of information about the concept, particularly as it relates to intrapersonal and transpersonal communication, are limited. Additionally, because of its historical association with mysticism, it is met with cynicism in academic circles and research is discouraged. It is only recently that attitudes towards the need to understand the phenomenon started to change.

Wallace and Fisher (1983:1) ask the following questions: "...*should we fail to study dreams because we (the scientist) cannot see them (share them) with the dreamer? Should we fail to study hypnosis or meditation because these phenomena are not directly measurable in the true behaviouristic sense?*". They are of the opinion that the answer to these questions is a definite "no" because "*we have only begun to touch the surface in our understanding of consciousness, especially of the different levels of consciousness and what takes place in them*" (Wallace & Fisher, 1983:5).

A similar opinion is expressed by Sommerhoff (1990:1) who says: "*There is probably no aspect of human life less clearly understood by science than the faculty of consciousness and the nature of its embodiment in the brain/body system*". Sommerhoff's (1990) solution to this scientific indiscretion, is by defining and describing consciousness in very scientific terms and hypotheses.

Sommerhoff (1990:2) is of the opinion that current theories about the higher brain functions associated with consciousness as such, e. g. theories of perception, cognition, thought and memory, occupy a "*gray area between physiology and psychology, in which physiological concepts tend to be mixed with mental concepts and other of sub-scientific standards*". He asserts that consciousness is the faculty of a living organism, and that an organism is a 'physical system'. Consciousness holds the key to all mental life, and all mental events can only be understood when science has learnt to understand the nature of consciousness (Sommerhoff, 1990:3).

The alleged controversy regarding the humanistic versus scientific approach

to human consciousness presumably has its roots in the multitude of ways in which the human psyche is being viewed. An absence of consensus about different levels and states of human consciousness is reflected in the denotations or definitions cited for the word 'psyche', i. e. "*soul, spirit; mind*" (The Concise Oxford Dictionary, 1985:831). The Hamlet Pocket Thesaurus (1979:384/751) lists the word 'psyche' under "*intellect*" and "*affections*" along with terms such as "*inner self*", "*soul*", "*spirit*", "*self*", "*unconscious*" and "*subconscious*", among others.

Ante-behaviourists' views of consciousness comprise different levels of consciousness. Levels of consciousness represent the structure of consciousness and hence the hierarchical organisation of the self. The ego, as enunciated by James (1832-1900), Freud (1856-1939), and Jung (1875-1961), forms the center of normal waking consciousness. Additionally the ego is the link between the personal conscious, personal unconscious, collective unconscious and the Self, where the Self is our essential being as propounded by Jung (1875-1961). Freud (1856-1939) also viewed the conscious ego as the link between conscious elements of the superego and the repressed, unconscious id.

Behaviourist and phenomenological views of consciousness represent a continuum of states of consciousness, hence ego-consciousness determined by mental activities engendered by the mind and brain. Normal waking consciousness represents thought, perception and feelings during awareness and alertness (Morris, 1990:134). Altered states of consciousness are viewed as mental activities which are notably different from waking consciousness and which include natural

and spontaneous states such as day-dreaming, dreaming, and sleeping, which could also be described as a continuum of consciousness. Other altered states of consciousness are deliberately induced activities such as hypnosis, meditation and intoxication (Morris, 1990:143).

Levels of consciousness of the self could imply intrapersonal and transpersonal communication between different levels of the self, or different components of the self on the same level, for example the 'I-me' aspects of the self.

Intrapersonal communication in terms of the behaviouristic notion of consciousness could occur between different part-systems of the mind or modules of the brain. Intrapersonal communication hence acts to 'regulate' the information flow. According to Stacks and Anderson (1989), modular theories of the brain indicate that 'neuro-communication' or 'interhemispheric communication' may be a true form of intrapersonal communication.

Transpersonal communication cannot be accommodated in this view of consciousness unless it is viewed as communication between higher and lower mental activities to achieve integration and hence transcendence of lower mental activities.

Certain forms of communication evidently plays a crucial role in the ascent of humanity in terms of the transformation and transcendence of human consciousness. Wilber (1980:37) states that the successive stages of the ascent of consciousness is accomplished by or accompanied by some type of symbolic structure. He describes various forms of communication as 'symbols of transformation'. He adopted this concept from Jung (in

Neumann, 1973) who asserted that the path of evolution from the unconscious to the conscious can be traced to transformations and ascent of the 'libido'. Jung referred to the libido as a neutral, general psychic energy which has the symbol as its mechanism to transform energy.

The self and consciousness are intimately linked both to one another and to the cosmos. Intrapersonal and transpersonal communication play important roles in both the development and transcendence of the self in its movement from one level of consciousness to other levels.

### **The self and consciousness in intrapersonal communication**

Communication theory draws heavily on mental constructs propounded in psychology where consciousness is mostly described in terms of a continuum ranging from normal waking consciousness to altered states of consciousness. Consciousness in intrapersonal communication is referred to as conscious and subconscious internal processes.

Thought and language are seen to be embedded in the functional and structural properties of the brain, and are viewed as constituting consciousness in intrapersonal communication.

The concept of a modular mind postulated by Jaynes (1977) and Ornstein (1977) holds implications for intrapersonal communication. According to Stacks and Anderson (1989:274), modular theories indicate that 'neurocommunication' or 'interhemispheric communication' between brain modules may be a true form of intrapersonal communication.

The transmission of messages between brain hemispheres or modules is a distinctly intrapersonal communication process. Thus, interhemispheric communication is the essence of intrapersonal communication, but interhemispheric communication is not equal to thought since modules or hemispheres can 'think' or operate on information independently (Stacks & Anderson, 1989:281).

The components of the intrapersonal communication process that are present in the brain are messages sent by a source (one hemisphere) through a channel (corpus callosum) to a receiver (the other hemisphere). Intrapersonal communication functions to prepare the individual for communication with his or her environment and/or other people (Stacks & Anderson, 1989:281).

Stacks and Anderson (1989:279) assert that *"the process by which brain centres or modules collaborate to produce unified behaviour can be described as a preverbal stage or a preinterpersonal stage of communication. This preverbal stage serves as a loading mechanism for an individual's verbal and nonverbal communication."* During this stage the intrapersonal system is established by operating as a storage center for attitudes, values, scripts, goals, and plans and beliefs. This stage also acts as a screening system for subsequent communication behaviour.

Intrapersonal communication hence serves to integrate left hemispheric interpretations (logical, analytical and social) and right hemispheric interpretations (analogical, emotive and holistic) of the same incoming information. Verbal language is a function of both hemispheres, but the right hemisphere codes information into a less con-

scious form of language (Stacks & Anderson, 1989:281).

The concept of modular mind and its implication for intrapersonal communication denotes a linear interpretation of communication. It does not incorporate levels of self.

Both Tart (1986) and Jordaan and Jordaan (1989) denote the individual as a system within a system which is maintained through information flow, a prime concern for communication. In fact, the content, focus or intensity and quality of information may sustain or alter states of consciousness.

In Tart's (1986) paradigm, communication is one of the most important tools of 'stabilising' reality and consciousness. Both intrapersonal and transpersonal communication evidently play an important role in constructing the inner world of the individual. (Jordaan and Jordaan, 1989).

A complicating factor in describing consciousness and other forms or states of consciousness, is the differentiation between awareness and arousal. A person should be sufficiently aroused to be aware. Arousal, however, does not guarantee awareness. Awareness of internal and external stimuli in an observable, objective reality requires intrapersonal communication. Communication facilitates a consensual agreement and a means (language) to describe the experiences within the dimensions of space, time and evolution and provides the focus and content of consciousness.

In a sense then, psychologists argue that consciousness is related to awareness and arousal, but at the same time the degree, focus and content or quality of arousal and awareness will determine the state of consciousness.

One may deduce that symbol systems, for example language, act as principal indications of normal waking consciousness, since the description of experiences and the reconstruction and abstraction of reality are facilitated by **communication**.

## **The self and consciousness in transpersonal communication**

Communication not only plays a role in the transformation and transcendence of consciousness in ego-transcendence, but also plays a role in the maintenance and, evidently, the development of a particular level or stage of consciousness. An individual's sense of self is hence transformed from one level of consciousness to the next by symbols, and maintained by an almost endless stream of 'translations' which operate on signs (Wilber, 1980:42).

Transpersonal experiences such as peak experiences, during the advanced stages of meditation, can likewise induce a transformation of the ego-self. Peak experiences are explained in quantum theory by nonlocality which is the communication or propagation of influence without local signs (Goswami, 1993:204). Paranormal experiences such as telepathy, and nonlocal synchronicity such as simultaneous scientific discoveries, provide examples of nonlocality.

Goswami (1993:207) explains that when we are dreaming, or are under hypnosis, the secondary experiences of awareness of the ego are absent, hence the weakening of normal inhibitions against collapsing repressed mental states. He states that dreams and hypnosis are useful for bringing the unconscious to conscious awareness.

Adding on to this, he proposes that secondary awareness as opposed to primary awareness (ego-awareness as opposed to quantum-self awareness) produces a time lag; the difference in reaction time between the collapse of a space-time event and the verbally reported secondary classical mode, or introspection-based experience of the ego. *"Our preoccupation with the secondary processes (indicated by the time lag) makes it difficult to be aware of our quantum self and to experience the pure mental states that are accessible at the quantum level of our operation"* (Goswami, 1993:194). Meditation is said to eliminate the time lag, and puts individuals in touch with pure mental states in their 'suchness'. Peak experiences and exalted experiences in athletes may also occur because of the time lag reduction in primary and secondary experience.

## **A MORE COMPLETE DIMENSIONALITY OF SELF AND CONSCIOUSNESS INCORPORATING INTRAPERSONAL AND TRANSPERSONAL COMMUNICATION**

There is an inherent interrelation between levels of self, and levels and states of consciousness. Intrapersonal communication plays a crucial role in pre-personal and personal consciousness (this will be explained in more detail later), and the lower levels of transpersonal consciousness, in terms of the management, development, transformation and transcendence of the levels of awareness of the self. It is hence through intrapersonal communication that awareness of consciousness, and the corresponding sense of self is facilitated.

The self in current communication theory is a limited, unidimensional construct. The self is viewed in terms of a dualistic entity that can enter into an internal dialogue with himself or herself mainly through language. This internal self-talk is engendered by the sociocultural environment and sustained by interpersonal communication. Intrapersonal communication is consequently viewed as a process to decipher and internalise social constructs about an external existential reality.

In contemporary communication theory self-awareness is viewed as the individual's internal recognition of who he or she is (ego-boundary) in the sociocultural environment. Self-actualisation is the highest achievement of the individual within the sociocultural perimeters in which he or she finds himself or herself.

Transcendental self-actualisation, which incorporates transpersonal, religious communication and a movement towards a mystical union, is not a possibility within this view, **because there is no existing hierarchy of self to transcend to**. Vertical movement or transcendence in terms of the unidimensional view of humanity, only means fulfilment of excellence on a **single** level of existence. This may imply that an individual is intellectually, emotionally and religiously exemplary and upright according to unchangeable standards set by the sociocultural environment. Alternatively, an individual could be exemplary in one crucial and socially accepted area and hence forgiven for imperfections in other areas such as altruism.

Humanity's inherent existential and spiritual need to actualise its ultimate and essential being, which evidently is facilitated by intrapersonal and transpersonal communication, is not

represented in contemporary communication theory.

The incorporation of different states of self, and levels of consciousness in intrapersonal communication, in terms of the behaviouristic notion of consciousness, possibly occurs between different modules of the brain. Intrapersonal communication hence acts to 'regulate' the information flow. Transpersonal communication, however, cannot be accommodated in this view of consciousness unless it is viewed as communication between higher and lower mental activities to achieve integration and hence transcendence of lower mental activities.

The expansion of the dimensions of the self in communication theory to allow the incorporation of the spiritual dimension of humanity, is dependent on the inclusions of levels and altered states of consciousness. This is evident in the roles played and functions performed by intrapersonal and transpersonal communication to maintain (manage), integrate, expand (transform) and transcend ego-awareness.

It is consequently proposed that the integration of the constructs of the self and levels and states of consciousness, ensuing from the exploration in this study, be included in a more representative and inclusive model and theory of the self in intrapersonal and transpersonal communication.

## **AN EXPERIENTIAL MODEL OF THE SELF AND CONSCIOUSNESS**

It is proposed that the process and structure of the Self and consciousness could be illustrated as follows:

## **Explanation of the model and the delineation of constructs**

The model in figure 1 depicts the unfolding and union of the Self (the upper case S refers to the individual as soul and to the Self as central components of the psyche. This self is also referred to as the Higher Self or God within.

The intrapersonal and transpersonal levels of communication are intricately intertwined with constructs about the self and levels and states of consciousness and the individual's needs to manage, develop, transform and transcend himself or herself.

Different symbol systems operate in the different levels and states of consciousness. These symbol systems represent both individualised and archetypal meanings which activate the Self's awareness of its need to transcend its lower, immature interpretation of an inner, subjective reality.

This awareness, in turn, effectuates the Self's incremental movement towards the next level of maturation and unfolding. Each incremental move embodies the dawning of an awareness of a different yet more complete sense of Self.

## **The Self**

The Self in this model represents an entity's essential being which comprises the tripartite of soul, mind and body. The Self strives to unfold its awareness and comprehension of a higher (and broader) 'Ultimate reality', and to integrate its dualistic nature. This Self is an archetype of transcendence and wholeness. The unfolding and transcendence of the Self advance sequentially through successive



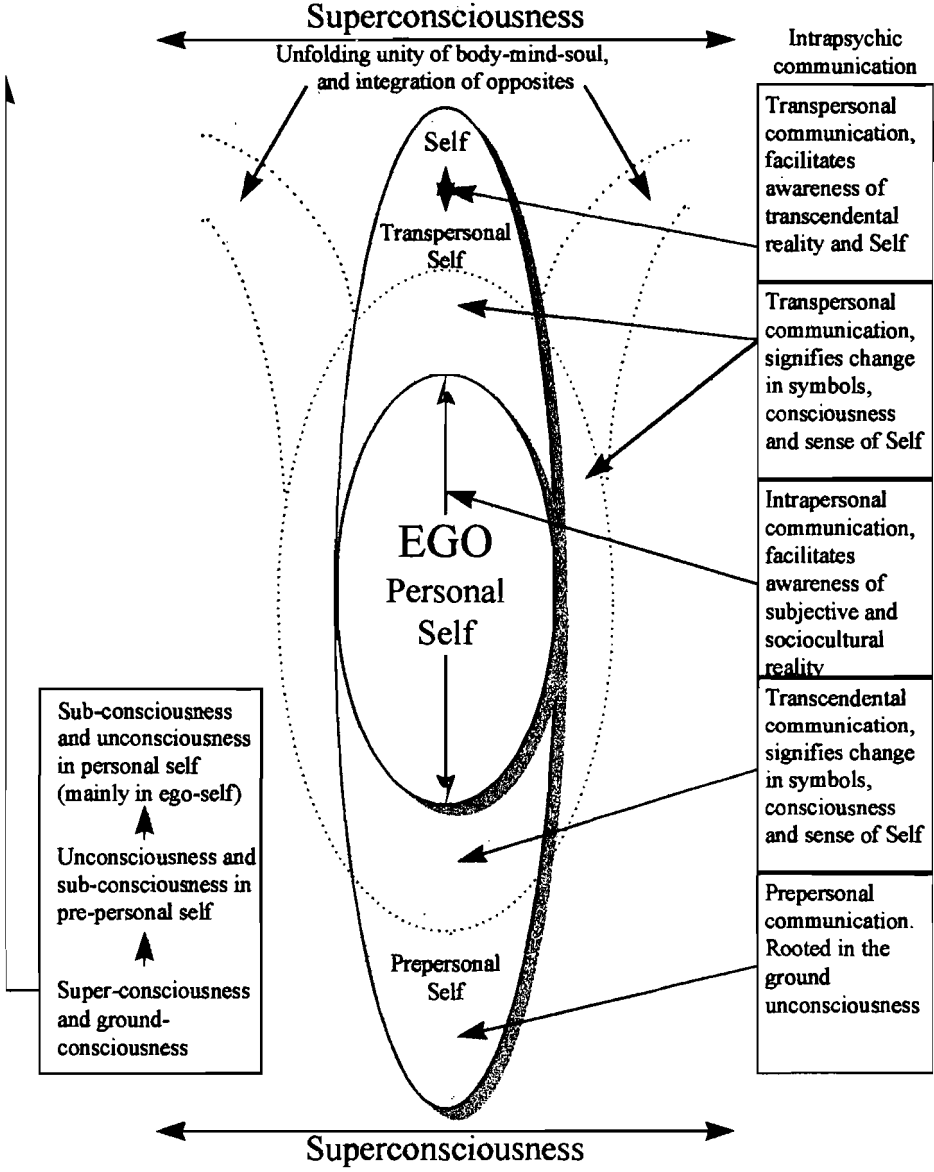


Figure 1 : The Unfolding of the Self through Intrapsychic Communication

levels. Each level of the Self forms part of the next level in the evolution of consciousness. Each level is hence superimposed upon its predecessor in such a way that it includes but also transcends it.

The Self comprises the following levels:

- The prepersonal-self relates to an awareness of self that is both primitive and physical in nature. The self in this level develops mainly in terms of a differentiation between a body-image and the material environment. The prepersonal self is able to use pre-verbal imagery as a means of expression: hence the level of prepersonal communication (this level of communication will be discussed in detail at a later stage). This level of awareness is the seat of basic emotions which is subconscious, instinctual and embedded in the ground and archaic unconscious.

The transcendence of the prepersonal-self is facilitated by the acquisition and development of language. Symbolic language hence serves to expand consciousness. Symbolic language marks the onset of a verbal and mental reality. The transcendence of the self to a higher-order self is facilitated by transcendental communication which is characterised by a change in symbols, and hence a change in the focus and content (awareness) of consciousness.

The acquisition of language likewise results in the development of interpersonal relationships, at this stage primarily with care-takers and significant others.

- The personal-self is focused on mental and verbal associations, and the establishment of an ego with its sub-personalities of the particularised and generalised other, and the 'I' as enunciated by Mead (1934).

The relationships with others are internalised and become intrapsychic structures through verbal and mental conceptualisation. Interpersonal relations, between, for example, parent and child, include intrapersonal communication between the sub-personalities of the ego. The personal-self engages in mental internal dialogue (self-talk), which points to role-taking as the social origin of the self. Awareness in intrapersonal communication is mainly linear, cognitive-conceptual, abstract and verbal.

The personal-self has at its core the ego which comprises a self-concept (a thought-self) which is mainly mental, verbal and conscious. The ego also includes the submergent (screened-out information) and embedded unconscious (selectively unattended and repressed information).

The transcendence of the personal-self is again facilitated by a change in symbols. Transcendental communication aids the change in consciousness of the personal-self. This marks the onset of transcendence of the ego-mind to a trans-egoic level of consciousness. This is referred to as self-actualisation.

- The transpersonal-Self embodies the integration of the ego and dualities of the Self. The transpersonal-Self is supercon-

scious and transverbal, for example, which signifies communication experiences that possibly relate to universal symbols and hence beyond words. Transpersonal communication represents, for example, a cognitive process of intuition, intentionality, precognition, telepathy and vision-image.

Consciousness in the transpersonal level comprises the astral and psychic planes of consciousness. The pinnacle of transpersonal communication is the absolute unfolding of the Self and the unity of opposites. The Self is both aware of its individuality and its cosmic connectedness in the superconsciousness, which envelops the Self.

## **Spectrum of communication in the Self**

It is proposed that the term 'intrapersonal communication' be used to represent the total spectrum of communication in the Self before it is immersed in the 'Ultimate Transpersonal-Self'. This will facilitate the incorporation of the spiritual component of the Self into the current dualistic and mechanistic representation of the self in communication theory.

Intrapersonal communication consequently represents all the levels of communication within the Self with their corresponding levels of consciousness. Intrapersonal communication includes:

- Prepersonal communication which refers to communication in the prepersonal-self. Communication in the prepersonal-self is pre-verbal and pre-conscious.

Experiences are mostly derived from the senses and are archaic in nature. The progressive unfolding of the prepersonal-self is signified by the incorporation of fantasy in children. Prepersonal communication is embedded in the physical body where language has not yet emerged as a mental activity. (Wilber, 1980).

The inclusion of the prepersonal-self and its mode of prepersonal communication will facilitate the inclusion of the lower dimensions of the self in communication theory.

- Intrapersonal communication. The term 'intra-personal' indicates that awareness operates mainly in the realm of the personal/ego as opposed to the prepersonal pre-conscious self and transpersonal superconscious Self, which respectively relate to the physical and transpersonal integration of consciousness.

Intrapersonal communication is the awareness centre of the ego which is at the core of the personal-self. Intrapersonal communication facilitates awareness, 'translation' and interpretation of both intuitive and sensory information. It is through intrapersonal communication that the inner world of the individual is described in terms of both the external and internal realities. It represents the way in which the outside world is subjectively explored, experienced and understood. Intrapersonal communication is hence the center of the ego - the ego is both maintained and controlled through thought in language.

Intrapersonal communication acts as a foundation for and conduit of awareness in the creating of meaning for the personal-self. This is effected through the integration of levels of awareness. The intrapersonal process is believed to follow a cyclical two-sided, but opposite progression between transpersonal and interpersonal activities, with the intrapersonal acting as the 'looking glass' and storehouse of awareness. The pinnacle of the intrapersonal process, namely self-actualisation, denotes the apogee of the ego/self. Transcendental self-actualisation becomes the genesis of the transcendental self that is created only through an evolutionary process of awareness and enlightenment.

- Transpersonal communication is the integration, expansion and unification of the Self through archetypal symbol structures in nonlocal superconsciousness. The nature of transpersonal communication does not represent a process or structure since it is nonlocal and not bound by time.
- Transcendental communication facilitates intuitive 'growth experiences' which are personal but not transpersonal. The process of ego-transcendence, as well as the integration of the ego, are achieved through transcendental communication.

Transcendental communication relates to both intrapersonal and transpersonal communication as an agent of inner transformation and ego-transcendence. Transcendental communication is operational on every level of the self

where integration and identification with the next level occurs.

Transcendental communication provides the 'crosswalk or cross-stalk' between levels of the self. This is represented as the 'fusion' between the different symbol structures of the different levels of consciousness. It represents a continuous, accumulative integration of the lower levels of the self with the higher levels of the self. It also embodies the integration of contrasts between the mental and intuitive properties of awareness through intrapersonal communication.

Transcendental communication entails the expansion of the individual through intuition, whereas intrapersonal communication facilitates the awareness and 'translation' of both intuitive and sensory information.

### **The process of intrapsychic communication**

Time and space are of no significance to the Self; they are nonlocal. All is One at once in the Self. The Self is also at once goal and process (Jung, 1875-1961). This represents the ultimate paradox of the Self. The paradox of the Self, operating as both process and goal, is of utmost importance in intrapsychic communication. The implication is that if the Self is in transit or 'process' in intrapsychic communication, its position cannot be determined since it is not stationary and cannot be observed.

If the Self is motionless as the goal, for example where the goal is to be reunited with the 'Ultimate Reality', its movement cannot be perceived and

determined. The movement of the Self to be re-united with the 'Ultimate Reality' is the goal of the Self.

This interpretation of the paradox of the Self, postulated by Jung (1875-1961), resembles the behaviour of subatomic particles as has been observed in quantum physics. The implication is that the Self can never be observed in totality. Its position or its movement is a probability, depending on which aspect is being observed.

The Self is both the origin and the goal of ego-consciousness. The Self is also both personal and transcendent since it includes or embraces the personal but operates in the transcendent. Wilber (1980) likewise indicates that at certain points of development, the Self cannot see its structures, because it is those structures.

The concept of awareness, and its application in intrapsychic communication means that to become aware of something may cause the thing to change itself (Campbell & Brennan, 1994:127).

It is believed that consciousness cannot be experienced as a distinct experience. Rather, a sense of self is experienced by an individual in different levels of consciousness because of the change of symbol structures, and content and focus of information. Differences of levels in self are hence experienced through different forms and levels of communication which facilitate a change in content and focus in consciousness.

## CONCLUSION

An exploratory study of diverse literature indicates that society, through relationships, facilitates the motivation

for self-actualisation and transcendence; or it may serve to deter any further aspiration of self-enhancement, which, according to system theory, feeds back to society. The latter reflects as a society made up of individuals with starved and deprived selves.

The worth of intrapsychic communication, which comprises prepersonal, intrapersonal, transcendental and transpersonal communication, lies in its facilitation of awareness, comprehension, and transcendence of an imprisoned and deprived ego-self. This facilitation is achieved through the exploration of the confluence between consciousness and communication: the de-mystification of consciousness and the self.

The inclusion of the spiritual dimension of the self, and the indication of an intrinsic need for wholeness, unity and transcendence in intrapsychic communication dignifies humanity. The realisation that 'All is One' through intrapsychic communication marks the re-emergence of both a responsibility towards self: to manage, develop, transform and transcend self; and a responsibility towards others: to dignify self means to concurrently dignify others. It is proposed that the inclusion of both Eastern and Western 'ancient', enduring, transpersonal and mystical constructs of the self, could only serve to enrich, enliven and broaden the boundaries of human communication studies.

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