

## A Completion to the Traditions Matrix-Standard - R. T. Craig, Induced By the Transformation of Communication-As-A-Field Membrane in Communication-As-A-Universe Membrane

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### Abstract

*The study is part of the Communication Ontology. We aim to find a solution for the contradiction which appeared between the actual communication complexity (Communication-as-a-Universe Membrane) and the functional theorization accredited by the Communication-as-a-Field Membrane (Robert T. Craig). First, a critical analysis of the classification criteria is performed, to which Robert T. Craig refers in his study called "Communication theory as a field" (1999). We reveal that so called Matrix-Standard - R. T. Craig (of the „seven major traditions” of the „communication theory field”) can be updated. We can also notice that the taxonomy of “traditions”, as a rule accepted in the USA and in UK, was questioned there, as well. David Myers’ (2001) and Chris Russill’s (2005) articles are remarkable, to which R. T. Craig replied in different ways (2001, 2007). F. Cooren instantiates “A response to Craig’s call: Communication as ventriloquism” (2012). With a few exceptions at high level (such as Wolfgang Donsbach) the standard R. T. Craig hasn’t found a full resonance in Europe. As a completion to the Traditions Matrix-Standard – R. T. Craig, we suggest the Communication Axes Matrix-Standard, based on the axialization” thesis of the study of communication. So, the study of communication is divided according to the adherence to the ideas expressed by the 15 axes. The Matrix-Standard - R. T. Craig, by calling himself “of traditions”, could have stressed communication study dispersal, due to communication natural evolution. The Axes’ Matrix-Standard confutes him by regarding the discipline of communication as a unity of fields organized on different axes between which there is a mutual competitive stimulation. If “traditions” remain steady, in terms of number and configuration, as the past is gone, the axes are alive both as internal development and as numerical amplification. The axialization is necessary because communication is not only a field. Communication is a patchy and a heterogeneous universe: a multi-space and a multi-structure cosmos. The two taxonomic matrix-standards are situated in two ideational contradiction membranes. The Communication-as-a-Field Membrane is breaking by the Communication-as-a-Universe Membrane.*

**Keywords:** Communication Ontology, taxonomy, Traditions Matrix-Standard, Axes Matrix-Standard, Communication-as-a-Field Membrane, Communication-as-a-Universe Membrane

### 1. The Traditions Matrix-Standard - R. T. Craig

In his study called „Communication theory as a field”, Robert T. Craig proves that “seven major traditions” have created the actual “field of communication theory”: rhetorical, semiotic, phenomenological, cybernetic, socio-psychological, socio-cultural and critical (Craig, 1999, pp. 119-161). This idea is iterated in „Theorizing Communication: Readings Across Traditions” (Craig & Muller, 2007). On that basis, Robert T. Craig give profile to an ideational configuration that we called Membrane of the Field; that centers on the idea that communication is a field: accessible, ordering, homogeneous, clear delimited and robust configured. (We understand “membrane” as an elastic, coherent, dynamic, and vibrant ideational configuration that modulates the trans-paradigmatic thinking of a scientific community. Membrane indicates, more than a paradigm shift, a substantial and radical change of the line of thought in an area of study - Vlăduțescu, 2013e).

The article of Robert T. Craig revolves round the idea of uniting the communication theories in a meta-model, according to the „seven major traditions”.

Matrix-Standard R. T. Craig has been quoted in Stephen W. Littlejohn's and Karen A. Foss's books (2011, 10<sup>th</sup> edition) and in E. A. Griffin's books (2011, 8<sup>th</sup> edition) or in fundamental encyclopedias: W. Donsbach (2008), S. W. Littlejohn and K. A. Foss (2009), W. F. Eadie (2009).

We agree that his study is exceptional: it used to be and still is useful in organizing communication field. The organization that Robert T. Craig made is an outstanding landmark. It is salutary to a field that is not very regular. The historian Thucydides, in „History of the Peloponnesian War”, quotes Cleon who used to say that „cities with bad, but obeyed laws will defeat those cities with good, but broken laws”. We shall draw a parallel and say that a discipline which is poorly organized is ontologically and epistemologically superior to a discipline which, pursuing perfection, is not organized at all. Consequently, we think that organizing according to 7 traditions is excellent to teach students. It can be only partly accepted as paradigmatic by the scientific community. We shall give only one example of un-sustainability of a tradition. Our PhD in philosophy with the thesis “Communication and message in philosophy” helps us understand that there was no phenomenological pre-paradigmatic tradition of communication. Of course Richard L. Lanigan's and the “communicology” advocates' research with methodological phenomenological connotation is outstanding (Lanigan, 1979; Lanigan, 1992; Lanigan, 2008), but tradition means evolution through at least two generations.

To phenomenology, for the first generation, reaching Edmund Husserl by communication is way too much. Calling Martin Heidegger (who worked with E. Husserl), K. Jaspers or M. Merleau-Ponty, from the second generation is something right, or Jacques Derrida and Emmanuel Levinas from the third generation, but building a phenomenological tradition of communication is something else. We accept that one of the methods used in studying communication is, mainly, the descriptive reductive phenomenological method. Briefly, we do not agree with the idea of a phenomenological tradition without natural fixed stars. Tradition is made by personalities, “fixed stars”, who have contributed to the discipline evolution, which does not apply to the phenomenological tradition of communication (see also Cooren F., 2012, about “Ventriloquism and the seven traditions”).

The standard of traditions gives a rigid perspective which, though it hints at unifying the theory of communication's space in the long term, does not allow it. Here is what we have observed:

- a) some traditions are not traditions, for a tradition sets in at least two generations of intellectuals: in the 1940s, when communication defined itself, there were two traditions: the Rhetoric' (a strong tradition) and the Semiotics' (a weak tradition);
- b) some traditions are not sustainable through communication, for they do not have any tradition of their own: for example, the Cybernetics was born in 1948, that is at the same time with communication as a discipline, just like the Social Psychology; they did not have any tradition of their own to be included in communication (Borchin, 2001; Ritt, 2004; Shopovski, 2011);
- c) some traditions have as communication field an area of preoccupations which does not take into account the paradigmatic evolution and, subsequently, the paradigmatic evolution of communication: for example, the Rhetoric and the Semiotics are known as traditions for communication, though they can be assessed only as theory, idea and concept providers for the pre-paradigmatic communication;
- d) just like in defining a nation or a people, those who have to be qualified/classified should be asked what tradition belong to; specialists in communication know, in essence, where the communication field is situated; along the same line, the question is: who belongs to the Cybernetics tradition of communication today? We do not think there is anyone (Vlăduțescu, 2013a; Vlăduțescu, 2013d).

## **2. The Communication Axes Matrix-Standard**

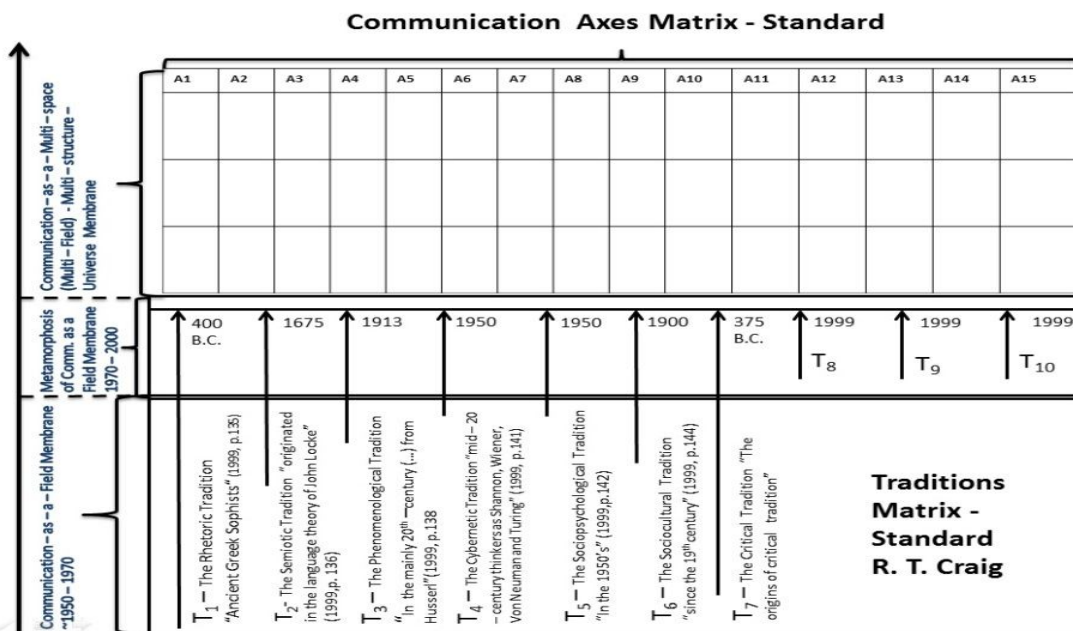
Our opinion is that a flexible standard of “X-raying” and censuring the communication is the standard of axializing the communication universe. In communication we identify 15 axes: communication ontology-A1, communication epistemology-A2, communication methodology-A3, communication axiology-A4. There are 8 soft axes, namely: communication history-A5, communication psychology-A6, communication sociology-A7, communication anthropology-A8, communication hermeneutics-A9, communication praxeology-A10, communication ethics-A11, communication logics-A12, communication ecology-A13, communication philosophy-A14, communication law-A15.

The semblance almost confirmed is that in the field of communication there is no ontology, epistemology, methodology or axiology. The truth is that, in different stages of development, all these exist. The researchers' hard work has led to the creation of different components or “branches” of the discipline of communication.

Fuentes Navarro speaks about 4 dimensions of communication: „gnoseological, teleological, praxeological (...), ethics” (Fuentes Navarro, 1999, p. 64) (see also Tran & Stănciugelu, 2003). Regarding the development of the discipline of communication, Robert L. Heath and Jennings Bryant stresses: “An academic discipline grows because of what its scholars share. To this end, scholars need to understand the discipline's history, have a common sense of the object of inquiry, focus on similar and compatible questions, agree on the best methodologies, and create a common terminology, or lexicon, with which to discuss the discipline ” (Heath & Bryant, 2000, p. 89). As we can see, ontology comes last, though it is decisive. Epistemology (“object of inquiry”, “questions”), methodology (“methodologies”) and history (“discipline’s history”) are also called up here (see also Craig, 2013).

Stephen W. Littlejohn and Karen A. Foss speak about epistemology, ontology and axiology in terms of „philosophical assumptions” which „every theory, explicitly or implicitly, includes” and which refer to „nature of the knowledge and how it is obtained, what constitutes existence, and what is valuable” (Littlejohn & Foss, 2008, p. 16). The two famous specialists number epistemology, ontology and axiology and discuss them in this order. On the other hand, they regard these three elements as „branch of philosophy”. This means that they see them as external branches. We consider them internal axes. Moreover, we speak about 15 axes, not only 3 (also, Gorun & Gorun, 2013; Păun, 2013).

A discipline can exist and develop only in the presence of at least an ontology and a realistic epistemology, and also of a methodology, and an axiology, as weak as they may be. The accreditation process depends on their sharing by a large community of scholars, researchers, theorists, scientists (Burdescu & Mihaescu, 2013). Ontology, epistemology, methodology and axiology are essential. So, communication has integrated, during its short autonomous existence as a science, 15 axes. We can talk about at least 15 communication fields. Robert T. Craig regarded the whole communication as one field with 7 ”traditions”. In the information domain, Marcia Bates speaks about „13 metatheoretical approaches” (Bates, 2009) (see also Fărte, 2004; Preda, 2006; Cace, Arpinte, Cace & Cojocaru, 2011; Cobley & Schulz, 2013).



Our basic thesis is that communication is, at the present time, a systemic universe with 15 crossed fields, having different consequences and different levels of cohesion. Communication universe is expanding; certainly will occur and other axes.

Communication is an irregular and heterogeneous universe: multi-space and multi-structure. Each field crystallizes around an axis and looks like a space having a certain systemic location, having a certain orientation and internal coherence of structure. The axis is situated in the middle of the field. The power of the axis is the power of the field. The field belongs to the axis, not the other way round.

We think that the 15 components-branches should be considered axes, directions and theoretical constructive-cognitive-cogitative, as well as applicative-practical crystallization paths of communication. The axes are specialties of the discipline of communication (Vlăduțescu, 2013b).

Here is our reasoning. Philosophy, up to Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz and Immanuel Kant used to be a discipline which included science, knowledge, in general, for the philosophers were men of science. With Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, the most important philosopher of the XIX<sup>th</sup> century, philosophy segregates from science and becomes an autonomous discourse which no longer includes science, but explains it (Anderson, 1996; Wilson & Feng, 2007; Averbek, 2008). The integrator and explicative philosophy used to be seen as a coherent cogitative system: ontology, gnoseology, axiology, logics, ethics, aesthetics, etc. But with Martin Heidegger and Ludwig Wittgenstein, philosophy enters an implosion phase. The idea of a system disappears. Philosophy becomes a question, a reflection on the main subjects of the man's existential and social condition; it focuses a lot on language. Thus, the system dissolves: some of its elements become automatic, others remain „dry branches” of philosophy.

Our idea, stated in the PhD thesis - "Message and communication in philosophy" (Vlăduțescu, 2006, pp. 7-33), is that „dry branches” can become green again. They must be brought to life again. They must be turned into useful tools in theory and in practice. From components of philosophy, ontology, epistemology, methodology, axiology and praxeology become theories' and science's components. It is a grafting process. Dry branches are grafted, they are transplanted to the new, living trunk of science (Vlăduțescu, 2004). The philosophy-meditation lives its destiny as philosophy, but, subsidiarily, it becomes an internal part of science, of the scientific cogitative system or of the theoretical cogitative system. After losing its branches, the philosophic trunk and the branches represent together a useful set of branches, which can be brought to live again (Cojocaru, 2005; Berger, 2010; Cojocaru, Bragaru & Ciuchi, 2012). The new sciences, the new cogitative systems engross both the branches of philosophy - as their own components - and, generically as a branch, the reflexive method of philosophy (Strechie, 2009; Sandu, 2009; Balaban & Abrudan, 2011; Frunză, 2011; Tudor, 2013).

As the new cogitative systems assume branches from a distinct concept which has the tendency to keep them, they integrate them as axes. We consider the "axis" a polarizing internalized branch of specific knowledge. This is the preliminary reasoning on which we base our constructive-cognitive-cogitative approach. It is guided by the standard of the ordering axes: communication has 15 internal axes around which the synchronic and diachronic communicative knowledge is crystallized and which make it systemically and procedurally functional. The research has led us to the conclusion that, over time, communication has been tackled from 15 perspectives: ontologically, epistemologically, methodologically, axiologically, historically, philosophically, hermeneutically, anthropologically, sociologically, praxeologically, ethically, logically, ecologically, philosophically and legally (Vlăduțescu, 2013c; Ionescu, 2013). It has been searched on the crystallization structure of 15 axes, which represent the internal pylons of communication.

The general internal system of communication has 15 axes. The approaches revolve around the internal axes of communication. In other words, communication has been organized into 15 axes and it has allowed 15 approaches so far. The 15 axes organize the whole field of communication: they unify it, they make it coherent as a communication space (multi-space), they make it complete as a structure (multi-structure) and they give it the chance to integrate future communication emergences. All the studies and the theories on communication can be distributed in one of the axes or in an inter-axial area: we can speak about studies on the ontology of communication, about ontological theories of communication, about ontological standards of communication, or about studies on the epistemology of communication, or about epistemological theories of communication. Each concept can get an axial determination: ontological concept of communication, epistemological concept of communication, hermeneutical concept of communication, ethical concept of communication etc. Every ontological pattern of communication can get an appropriate axial attribute: epistemological pattern, axiological pattern, hermeneutical pattern, ecological pattern etc.

On each axis there are strings which vibrate lively and objectively. On the hard axes (communication ontology, communication epistemology, communication methodology, communication axiology) the vibration is lower. On the soft axes, though, (communication history, communication psychology, communication sociology, communication anthropology, communication hermeneutics, communication praxeology, communication ethics, communication logics, communication ecology, communication philosophy, communication law), the vibration and the number of strings are greater (Kulczycki, 2012; Vasantha Kandasamy & Smarandache, 2013; Vlăduțescu & Ciupercă, 2013).

The standard of axialization is fixing some of Craig traditions standard's problems. Primarily, our standard allows each researcher to register on an axis, which, in general, represents specializing in the discipline of communication. Around each axis revolve strings. Taxonomically, these strings can be open: if they touch tangentially the axis or if at least one bottom is situated in the subject radiation area. They can also be closed: if their vibration or extension are situated in the magnetic area of the axis (Dima & Vlăduțescu, 2012a). During communication, the axes are clearly limited. They meet only in the volcanic core, which means "communication" (Tudor, 2001; Traistaru, 2013). For example, communication logics axis and communication philosophy axis meet only in what we call the mutually distributed idea that is in the centre of communication. Regarding communication ethics as "a branch of applied philosophy of moral value and rules" (Christians, 2008) – (C. G. Christians is one of the famous specialists in communication ethics) - means subordinating an axis to another one and cancelling a specialty of the discipline (Dobrescu, Bârgăoanu & Corbu, 2007; Ionescu, 2008; Enăchescu, Hristache & Paicu, 2012). It is not true now that ethics is a branch of philosophy. Philosophy has lost its power to control ontology, epistemology, ethics and its other components. Branches have estranged from the trunk and they now live autonomously. Communication ethics is different from the philosophy of communication (Dima & Vlăduțescu, 2012b).

It is true that some of the open strings of the communication ethics axis or of the communication logics axis touch one another and can vibrate in harmony with open strings of the communication philosophy axis or with other axes'. In such cases, we deal with inter-axial, pluri-axial and trans-axial researches. These complex researches are not multi disciplinary (Iorgulescu, 2009; Gifu, 2011). They are included in Basarab Nicolescu's transdisciplinarity theory (Nicolescu, 2008) only analogically: the axes are not disciplines, but specialties of a discipline. In our case, the discipline is communication (whatever we call it - communication science, communication theory, communicology, communication studies, communication study or sciences de l'information et de la communication). To sum up, the discipline is communication and the axes are specialties of communication: communication ontology, communication epistemology, communication methodology, communication history etc. (see also Craia, 2000; Marinescu, 2011; Martino, 2003; Hsab, 2005; Bratosin, 2007).

We do not consider the 15 axes of communication external branches of other sciences and theories, but internal coordinates of the communication field. If we think that any theory stated by any person will be registered willingly or unwillingly on an axis radiation, we shall be able to see communication freely and we shall be able to develop its study in any direction we want. Moreover, a greater frame will give the possible para-consistent or contradictory points of view the opportunity to find a mediator within communication, not outside of it. The axes are organizing and mediating cogitative infusers. They wrap convergent the research spectrum that has been done so far. At the same time, they allow contradictions to develop to superior levels (Rus, 2002; Donsbach, 2006; Sandu, 2012; Vlăduțescu, 2013f).

The idea that stands behind the standard of the ordering axes is diagrammatically represented as a field where 15 bidirectional vectors meet. The axes have a bottom through which, as vectors, meet in the large spherical, pervious and flexible communication core. At one bottom the vector comes to the nuclear meeting, the other bottom expands the communication space to a non meeting space. Thus, communication looks like a multi-space. As its structure has a different consistence around each axis and along it, we can speak about a non-homogeneous structure. Non-homogeneous structures have intense structuring knots and structural relaxation knots. Eventually, the axes will reveal in the global communication structure other regional structure having a recognizable profile. After creating a multi-space of communication, the axial standard allows emphasizing the multi-structure. The communication is multi-space and multi-structure universe. Moreover, communication universe expands.

### **3. Conclusion**

By establishing the standard of axes, by axialization, we avoid what Andrew Abbott used to call „the chaos of disciplines”, that is the disorder in the „disciplinary system” (Abbott, 2001, p. 122). The axialization of the communication universe and introducing the standard of the communication axes reveal the multi-space and the multi-structure of communication and give coherence and cohesion to the global configuration of communication. Beyond an implicit unification, considering communication as having 15 axes will avoid the risk of disordering fragmentation and will create an ordering one.

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