

CA *Carroll C. Arnold*

1997

JAMES C. McCROSKEY

The Carroll C. Arnold Distinguished Lecture

On October 8, 1994, the Administrative Committee of the National Communication Association established the Carroll C. Arnold Distinguished Lecture. The Arnold lecture is given in plenary session at the annual convention of the Association and features the most accomplished researchers in the field. The topic of the lecture changes annually so as to capture the wide range of research being conducted in the field and to demonstrate the relevance of that work to society at large.

The purpose of the Arnold Lecture is to inspire not by words but by intellectual deeds. Its goal is to make the members of the Association better informed by having one of its best professionals think aloud in their presence. Over the years, the Arnold Lecture will serve as a scholarly stimulus for new ideas and new ways of approaching those ideas. The inaugural Lecture was given on November 17, 1995.

The Arnold Lecturer is chosen each year by a committee composed of the immediate past editors of the Association's six journals, with the committee chair being selected by the First Vice President. When choosing the Arnold Lecturer, the committee is charged to select a long-standing member of NCA, a scholar of undisputed merit who has already been recognized as such, a person whose recent research is as vital and suggestive as his or her earlier work, and a researcher whose work meets or exceeds the scholarly standards of the academy generally.

The Lecture has been named for Carroll C. Arnold, Professor Emeritus of the Pennsylvania State University. Trained under Professor A. Craig Baird at the University of Iowa, Arnold was the author of *Public Speaking as a Liberal Art* and *Criticism of Oral Rhetoric* (among other works) and co-editor of *The Handbook of Rhetorical and Communication Theory*. Although primarily trained as a humanist, Arnold was nonethe-

less one of the most active participants in the New Orleans Conference of 1968 which helped put social scientific research in communication on solid footing. Thereafter, Arnold edited *Communication Monographs* because he was fascinated by empirical questions. As one of the three founders of the journal *Philosophy and Rhetoric*, Arnold also helped move the field toward increased dialogue with the humanities in general. For these reasons and more, Arnold was dubbed "The Teacher of the Field" when he retired from Penn State in 1977. Dr. Arnold died in January of 1997.

The founders of the Arnold Lecture specifically called for distributing the lecture widely in printed fashion after the oral presentation has been made and to send it to relevant scholars in allied disciplines as well. This charge became reality via the gracious help of Allyn and Bacon Publishers and by the generosity of friends, colleagues, and students of Dr. Arnold (listed in the back) who honored his scholarly contribution with their personal donations.

Funds for the Arnold Lecture are still being solicited, a task being overseen by a steering committee consisting of Professor Robert Avery, University of Utah; Professor Roderick Hart (co-chair), University of Texas; Professor Stephen Lucas (co-chair), University of Wisconsin; Professor James McCroskey, West Virginia University; and Professor Julia Wood, University of North Carolina.

Those interested in supporting this endeavor should make out their checks to the "Arnold Lecture Fund" and forward them to Dr. James Gaudino, Executive Director, National Communication Association, 5105 Backlick Road, Annandale, VA 22003.

Why We Communicate the Ways We Do

A Communibiological Perspective

James C. McCroskey

The Carroll C. Arnold Distinguished Lecture
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James C. McCroskey is a Professor in the Department of Communication Studies at West Virginia University. For 25 years (1972–1997) he served as chair of that department. McCroskey received his B.S. degree in Speech and English from Southern State (SD) Teachers College, his M.A. in Speech from the University of South Dakota, and his D. Ed. from the Pennsylvania State University. Prior to joining the faculty at WVU he held positions at Illinois State University, Michigan State University, Pennsylvania State University, Old Dominion University, and the University of Hawaii. He also taught high school Speech and coached debate in Scotland and Watertown, South Dakota.

McCroskey's research and teaching interests have varied over his career, including persuasion and public communication, interpersonal communication, organizational communication, nonverbal communication, instructional communication, intercultural communication, and general communication theory and research. His devotion to programmatic research and the social scientific approach to scholarship has been evident in all of his research programs.

His early research, stemming from his doctoral work, involved experimental studies of the persuasion and attitude change process. Much of his work centered on message variables, particularly evidence, in persuasion. The work in this area for which he is best known is that on ethos and source credibility, the first article on this topic being published in 1966 and the latest being a paper at the 1997 NCA Convention.

Another of his research programs has dealt with communication apprehension and related constructs—willingness to communicate, shyness, talkaholism, and communication competence. His first work in this area, a study of the use of systematic desensitization for reducing public speaking anxiety, was presented at the SAA Convention in 1968 and his most recent books in this area, one focusing on communication avoidance and the other on trait perspectives of the communication process, have just been released.

Another of his research programs which has made a substantial impact in this field, as well as other unrelated fields, has been his work on the role of communication in instruction. In conjunction with his colleagues and his students, McCroskey's work on classroom management, immediacy, and other topics related to communication and affective learning have provided a whole new perspective on instruction, one that has received numerous awards not only from the communication field but also from such disparate fields as pharmacy and teacher education.

McCroskey is probably best recognized for his prolific scholarship. He has published over 200 articles and book chapters and over 30 books and revisions, as well as over 30 instructionally related books. His first book, *An Introduction to Rhetorical Communication* originally published in 1968, is now one of the oldest continuously published books in the field. The seventh edition was recently (1997) published by Allyn and Bacon.

McCroskey is an active member and present or former officer of numerous professional associations. He has received NCA's Kibler award and distinguished service awards from the Eastern Communication Association and the World Communication Association. He has edited *Human Communication Research*, *Communication Education*, and *Communication Research Reports*.

While best known nationally for his scholarship, McCroskey does not sacrifice his teaching in the name of research. For the past 25 years, although serving as department chair and continuing an active research effort, he has on-average taught seven classes per year. He has received West Virginia University's Outstanding Teacher award.

For McCroskey, the field of communication is also a family affair. His spouse, Dr. Virginia P. Richmond, is a frequent co-author, and a professor at West Virginia University. One of his daughters, Lynda L. McCroskey, is currently completing work for her Ph.D. at the University of Oklahoma and teaching communication at the California Poly State University in San Luis Obispo.

Why We Communicate the Ways We Do

A Communibiological Perspective

I wish to begin by expressing my appreciation to the selection committee for choosing me to present this lecture. I am deeply honored. As the first non-dean chosen to deliver the Arnold lecture, I find it a difficult challenge to follow the superb lectures which many of you heard presented by Dean Wartella and Dean Zarefsky at our last two conventions. However, as the first, but certainly not the last, former student of Professor Arnold to present this lecture in his honor, I will do my best to reflect positively on his memory. Since Carroll was always open to new ways of looking at our field, and willing to give new approaches a fair hearing, I believe he would have appreciated the comments I will be making.

I wish to share my thoughts with you concerning a new perspective on communication research, and ultimately a new way of thinking about and understanding how human communication behaviors are formed, repeated, and changed. It is what my colleague, Professor Michael Beatty, and I have chosen to call the "communibiological perspective." While we refer to this as a "new perspective," some who have read our unpublished work suggest it actually is a call for adoption of a "new research paradigm." I will let you decide. Before I directly consider this "new" approach, it is important that we understand how we arrived where we are and the nature of the status quo perspective which I will argue should be changed.

The Traditional Rhetorical Perspective

The rich rhetorical perspective which we inherited from the ancients was the dominant orientation of most people in this field through the first half of the 20th century, and continues to be a focal point of study and teaching in the field today. This perspective centers on communication within a one-to-many context where sources and audiences are clearly distin-

guishable and play very different roles. The classical rhetorical view, which I was privileged to study with Professor Arnold, focused much attention on audience analysis and adaptation. Aristotle, for example, emphasized this and spent a considerable portion of *The Rhetoric* explaining why people behave as they do. It was felt that to be an effective persuader, one needed to understand the people to be persuaded and adapt one's message to them. This view remains at the core of persuasion theory today.

By the mid-1960s a different perspective was striving for our attention, and beginning to receive it. This was a time of massive change in our society, and even more dramatic change within the academy. Many of us who lived through the sixties did not fully understand at the time the profound changes in our field which were occurring. Women, minorities, and white males of the middle and lower classes flowed into high schools and colleges in enormous numbers. The interests of these individuals were not fully consistent with those of the former occupants of higher education—those representing the economic and cultural elite. Many of these "new students" did not envision themselves as future public speakers. Instead, they saw their communication future to be involved primarily in dyadic and/or group contexts, and their goals to be both cooperative and persuasive. This gave birth to what we now recognize as the "interpersonal perspective," an orientation which is very influential in many of our institutions today.

With the advent of the interpersonal perspective the concepts of "sources" and "receivers" began to blur. Scholars began to recognize that these distinctions were much less useful in interpersonal communication than in one-to-many communication. Everyone in a small group or dyadic encounter is both a source and a receiver. Viewing communication primarily as an

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interpersonal encounter caused us to see old concepts in new ways. When we took a traditional rhetorical perspective, we learned that “stage fright” was a severe problem for some people. When we adopted an interpersonal perspective we learned that about one person in five had similar problems in virtually all communication contexts—and we came to study communication apprehension, shyness, and reticence. While we had looked at trait personality variables as matters sources needed to understand in order to persuade audiences, with our interpersonal perspective we came to recognize these same traits (and subsequently many others) had direct impact on both source and receiver behaviors in interpersonal contexts—in social, organizational, educational, and service encounters. We looked to our colleagues in personality psychology for help. We learned about extraversion, dogmatism, Machiavellianism, and other personality traits.

At this point some people in our field began to develop programs of research investigating the impact of traits on communication behaviors or communication outcomes. Others were distracted for a while by concerns about whether human communication behavior is a function of the context within which the communication takes place or the traits of the individuals communicating. Once we recognized that the impact of any context was mediated by how people perceived that context, and that such perceptions are also trait-based, we began to comprehend the overpowering potential of traits. People have trait responses to contexts. Highly apprehensive people might perceive the context of giving a two-minute speech in a classroom as being more threatening than a less apprehensive person in our field would see giving a lecture such as this! Simply put, in terms of impact on communication behavior the context does not exist separate from the trait-based perceptions of the people within that context.

Clearly people vary greatly in their trait communication behavior patterns. And this is true in all cultures. In addi-

tion, an individual’s trait communication behavior pattern usually is quite consistent across contexts. However, I do not argue that people are perfectly consistent in their behavior across communication contexts. Certainly our behavior can vary from one context to another. In fact many believe, myself included, that such versatility is highly indicative of our level of communication competence. Nevertheless, most of us communicate the ways we do, most of the time, with minimal variation produced by the context of the behavior. Our communication behaviors are mostly trait-driven. It is no longer a question as to whether individuals’ traits impact their communication behavior; the questions are: 1) Which traits are most important? and 2) How do those traits come to exist?¹

We will leave the first of these questions for another time. Tonight, I will focus on the second. How do communication traits come to exist? Two views have existed throughout time. The dominant view for the past thirty-plus years has been that communication traits are primarily learned by exposure to one’s environment—culture, parents, school, peers, siblings, etc. The other view is that traits are primarily inborn, the product of the biological reproduction process of genetic replication. We will consider the learning explanation first.

The Social Learning Model

The fields of educational and social psychology have directed a great deal of attention throughout much of this century to determining how people learn. Conditioning, reinforcement, and modeling approaches were among the many explanations which were advanced, and enormous amounts of research were devoted to each. Each had its devotees in psychology, and subsequently in communication. The work of Bandura and his social learning/modeling theory captured much of the attention in this field. His theory, and the fascinating research associated with it, was as intuitively compelling as it was ultimately unpredictable. However, the learning approaches fit well

within the religious and political views of the time. The field's commitment to the idea of "free will" and the rejection of inborn differences reflected the dominant protestant religious views of most of the leadership in the speech field and the political unacceptability in the United States of anything that reminded people of the Nazi genetic research prior to and during World War II. To put it in the modern context, the social learning approach was "politically correct" for its time.

When we began applying learning theories (Educational Psychology was my doctoral minor) to interpersonally based constructs such as communication apprehension and verbal aggressiveness, we found them to predict very little variance in human behavior. Similarly, while social learning theory seemed to explain why people in different cultures communicate in somewhat different ways, it simply could not account for why there was so much more variance in communication behavior within any given culture than there was between any two cultures—when all the people in a given culture were exposed to repeated doses of the same or highly similar models. Also, as observers of mass communication, we were initially convinced that children (and some adults) learned all kinds of anti-social behavior from watching television (as we had been told about comic books a generation earlier). But we became disillusioned with the theory when we realized it could not explain why only a minority of viewers usually seemed to be affected. We were forced to recognize that individual differences in viewers were probably more important than what actually appeared on the screen (or in the comic book).

But, do not mistake my point here. People *do* learn by imitating others around them and by imitating what they see on TV (and in movies, and in comic books, etc.). Indeed, this is how the culture maintains and changes itself. But this does not explain why people differ so dramatically from one another even though they have essentially the same models in their environment. Research based on

this theory rarely accounts for more than 5 to 10 percent in the variance in communication behavior—and often far less than that.

Let's give social learning more credit than it has earned and double the amount of variance it predicts—make it 10 to 20 percent predictable. When multiple applications of a theory leave 80 to 90 percent of the variance unexplained, it is not a strong theory. It probably should be discarded, or at least relegated to the classification of "minor theory." It is not so much "wrong" as that it is has been demonstrated to be of limited value. As one of my hard-science colleagues once commented to me, "We would never have gone to the moon if we could have explained only ten percent of how to get there!" We have been following the siren's song. This theory and research paradigm normally explains a trivial amount of variability in human communication behavior, so little that many authors wishing to avoid public embarrassment do not even report the effect sizes they obtain in their studies. We are not approaching our research and theory goals of explaining human communication behavior. As every serious theorist is well aware, the predictive power of a theory is the most important criterion for determining its value. Without predictive power, a theory's elegance, parsimony, and intuitive appeal are nothing more than window dressing.

We must move on. If traits are produced either by learning or by biology (or a combination), and learning leaves at least 80 percent of the variance unexplained, it may be that if we turn to the biology of communication traits we will be better able to make more progress toward our goals. Scientists in other fields have already made this move.

Contemporary Science in Other Fields

In recent years psychobiologists have been working mostly under the rubric of *temperament*, which is seen as individual, biologically based differences in behavioral tendencies across various kinds of situations and times. They have made impres-

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sive advances in the understanding of human behavior, especially in social contexts. In addition to providing extremely strong evidence for the biological bases of traits, much of the foundation of this evidence comes from behaviors which are easily recognizable as what scholars in our field consider to be interpersonal communication behaviors. Shyness, extraversion, communicator style, aggressiveness, assertiveness, and empathy, all have been strongly linked to inherited neurobiological processes. And these are just a few examples, ones which are very obviously communication-centered. Consequently, no theory of human interaction can be taken seriously unless it is informed by this massive body of research literature that has already established strong effects for inborn, individual differences in neurobiological processes that underlie major dimensions of social behavior.

It should be noted, that no reference to any work in our field is present in this literature, nor is this work generally acknowledged in our field. While Joe Cappella, as well as Mark Knapp and his colleagues, has at least written articles suggesting we should pay attention to some of this work, the only study in this area conducted by a person in our field was one reported by Cary Horvath in *Communication Quarterly* in 1995. Incredibly, this research was done for her M.A. thesis! The psychobiological work is extremely significant scientific research on interpersonal communication, and it is not informed by work in our field.

The work conducted by the psychobiologists and neurobiologists is part of a ground-swell of scholarship investigating genetic differences in humans. The Human Genome project may well be the most important scientific project ever undertaken. Its ultimate purpose is to map every human gene. Already this work has enabled development of prenatal genetic tests for 450 genetically based diseases. Genetic bases of anxiety also have been identified, which certainly have implications for those of us concerned with communication apprehension.

Much of the most revealing research has involved comparative studies of identical versus non-identical twins. This is because identical twins share the same set of genes whereas non-identical twins are no more genetically alike than other siblings. The degree to which the correlation of traits between identical twins is larger than that for non-identical twins provides a conservative estimate of the variability which cannot be attributed to sharing a common environment (learning), and thus what can be attributed to the twins' shared genetics. A couple of examples can illustrate this approach. The results of one study indicated that if one twin has agoraphobia, it is five times more likely that her/his twin will have that phobia also if they are identical twins than if they are non-identical twins. In another study seventy percent of obesity was found to be predictable in identical twins, whereas only 40 percent was predictable in non-identical twins. Interestingly, particularly for those who wish to cling to the learning theory of traits, research comparing adult identical twins with non-identical as well as identical twins who had lived their lives near each other, found that identical twins, whether they were separated at birth or lived their whole lives near one another, became more alike as they got older, whereas the non-identical twins did not.

It is clear that science is producing one breakthrough after another which indicates the powerful impact of genetics on human traits. Many of these traits are the foundation of human interaction. We cannot continue to ignore what is going on around us. Conducting our learning experiments and writing our insightful ethnographies will not make us relevant in a future we can now see—a society that understands and adapts to the fact that much of human communication behavior is genetically influenced and difficult to control or change. Certainly some communication behavior is learned—otherwise we would all speak the same language with the same accent and people in all cultures would engage in highly

similar nonverbal communication behaviors. Hence, some work with the learning model will certainly continue. However, if the failure to learn certain communication skills is not the cause of a problem, our normal skills-training course is not likely to be the solution. We cannot be part of the solution if we do not understand the problem. That is why I call for a shift of emphasis to the communibiological perspective in both our scholarship and our teaching.

The Communibiological Perspective

I do not have time this evening to outline fully the communibiological perspective which Professor Beatty and I are advancing, much less to provide the detailed support for each of the five central propositions of this approach. Fortunately, a pre-publication copy of our book which includes chapters related to this work is available at the Hampton Press display area at this conference, and two articles have been accepted for publication (by *Communication Monographs* and *Communication Quarterly*) and will be available shortly for those of you who wish to probe this area more deeply. I will, however, try to provide an overview of this approach which may help you decide if you want to consider it for your use.

Although the five propositions I will delineate shortly represent a radical departure from current thinking about human communication on the part of serious communication scholars, these propositions are widely accepted among psychobiologists. These propositions are parallel to those which form the underpinnings of psychobiology.

Proposition 1: All psychological processes—including cognitive, affective, and motor—involved in social interaction depend on brain activity, making necessary a neurobiology of communication.

Simply stated, theoretical speculation about thinking, feeling, and behaving during human interaction must be consistent with available knowledge regarding

brain and brain-related functioning. Although the communication literature is replete with constructs positing processes that hint at neurobiological activity of some sort (e.g., assembling, differentiating, selecting), communication scholars have not yet specified the neurological activity expected to underlie the supposed processes, nor have they validated the constructs against appropriate neurological criteria. We do not know whether cognitive or affective processes inferred by scholars from the behavior of communicators exist within neurobiological reality. In our field conceptual labels, whether referring to processes or traits, are merely metaphoric surrogates for complex neurobiological systems. As such, most of the constructs in our field represent starting points, requiring further elaboration which consists of linking proposed constructs to specific neurobiological operations. In the absence of these linkages, such so-called theories are no more than word games—they provide no method of scientific verification or disproof.

While our scholars have been prolific in generating speculations about what goes on in people's heads (often based on ex post facto self-reports), psychobiologists have been making considerable headway mapping the neurobiological circuitry associated with psychological processes. Although the neurobiological functions are not yet totally understood, much is now known about extraverted social behavior, shyness, hostility and aggression, self-imposed constraint in social situations, impulsivity, approach and avoidance behavior, selective attention, focus, and memory. The importance of this work to the study of communication was made explicit by one temperament researcher when he stated "there is general agreement that temperament is manifest largely in the context of social interaction."

Proposition 2: Brain activity precedes psychological experience.

Scholars addressing issues regarding the nature of the relationship between brain activity and subjective experience (often

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referred to as the “mind-brain” problem) have taken one of three stances: 1) *Physical reductionism* holds that all psychological experience is a product of brain functioning; 2) *Mentalism* posits the existence of a non-biological form of consciousness that directs brain activity in efforts to carry out its will; 3) *Interactionism*, assumes that both reductionists and mentalists are partly correct. The communibiological perspective is decidedly reductionistic. We see no scientific grounds to be otherwise.

If scholars insist the psychological processes underlying communicative behavior are subject to autonomous control, they must describe the mechanisms making such processes possible. Certainly, scholars taking a mentalist or interactionist position on the mind-brain problem take on the obligation to describe the circuitry that allows an extra-physical mind to orchestrate changes in the physical brain. It is noteworthy that mentalist and interactionist philosophies emerged at a time and in a culture in which church and state were not separate and such positions were often required to make room for religious convictions in the concepts of “spirit” and “free will.” These are the same forces which led to our listening to the siren’s song of social learning—and much earlier holding fast to the theory that the Earth was flat and the sun, moon, and stars revolved around it. This time, we choose not to listen.

Proposition 3. The neurobiological structures underlying temperament traits and individual differences are mostly inherited.

As I mentioned before, traits are labels used by theorists to describe collective samples of cognition, affect, or behavior. As such, traits are not inherited, but the neurobiological structures are mostly due to heredity. Recent studies of identical twins have produced strong evidence for this position regarding a wide-range of socially significant results. On a wide variety of variables there has been little difference observed between the correlations for identical twins who were raised

apart and those who were raised together. This indicates that shared environment is of little importance for these traits. Some of these variables include altruism, empathy, nurturance, aggressiveness, assertiveness, constraint, and (most importantly) general happiness. In the latter case, many studies have indicated that at least 50 percent of general happiness is genetically based. However, the most recent study indicated that approximately 80 percent was genetic.

Some may question, if our proposition is true, why we don’t anticipate genetics predicting 100 percent of the variance in communication behavior. First, as with all social science research, a variety of methodological imperfections attenuates the observed effects. If better measures of the traits were developed, more predictable variance should be expected—but probably never 100 percent, for we are unlikely ever to have perfect measures. Second, there are other (unmeasured) biological influences which can have an impact on neurobiological influences (nutrition, prenatal drug or alcohol use, etc.) beside heredity. And, of course, we do not rule out the existence of learning effects. This proposition says “mostly inherited,” not “entirely inherited.” Given our generous estimate of 20 percent learning effect to 80 percent error, the genetic explanation certainly promises to be at least as parsimonious as the learning perspective, and probably more so. In addition, it is highly likely that genetics and learning interact with each other to influence communication behavior.

Proposition 4: Environment or “situation” has only a negligible effect on interpersonal behavior.

The research on “happiness” or “well-being” helps to illustrate this proposition. While the research clearly indicates that these feelings are genetically based traits, that does not mean that we don’t feel good when we get a raise or have a personal success, nor that we don’t feel bad if we fail a test or lose our job. However, as intense as these feelings are at a given time, they are merely fluctuations about a stable tem-

peramental set point (another term for trait) that is characteristic of us.

The principle that boundaries of individual reactions to environmental stimuli are defined by individual temperament is embedded in the concept of *temperamental set points*. In the case of communication apprehension, for example, a person's specific response to a given demand for social interaction is difficult to predict, for there are other traits which will normally also be in operation as well as the communication apprehension trait. However, the class of responses to communication apprehension can be predicted with considerable accuracy when several members of the class are observed. So called "situational" effects are most likely the impact of genetically based differences in temperamental set points.

Proposition 5: Differences in interpersonal behavior are principally due to individual differences in neurobiological functioning.

Traits are based on neurobiological structures. Various neurobiological structures underlie clusters of various social behaviors. Since different individuals will differ in their neurobiological structures, they will engage in different interpersonal behaviors. No one knows precisely how many distinguishable and relevant traits there are at this point. But we do know that sometimes an individual may have traits that conflict. In these cases it is difficult to predict one's behavior, because he or she is a unique neurological being. These conflicting orientations can be referred to as "competing traits" and it is believed that these are most likely to arise from different neurological systems.

To understand the importance of competing traits, consider a young man with extremely high stage fright. Presume also, that he does not need to take a public speaking class to graduate. His behavior is highly predictable—odds are very good he won't take the class. However, presume he must pass a public speaking course with a "B" to graduate. He is now motivated by the desire to graduate and inhibited by his fear of public speaking. He may give up on graduating (and experience sanctions

for that behavior) or try to give the speech (and experience extreme stress). He may lose either way, for his stress may make it impossible to give the quality of speech necessary. However, predicting which option will be chosen will be difficult even if we know both (or all) of the traits involved, and probably impossible if we do not. What is much more likely is that this young man will spot this potential conflict in advance and behave in such a way as to prevent the conflict from coming to fruition. He may transfer to a new major where public speaking is not required, or to a different college or university where the requirement is not present. He will try to make his world fit him if he perceives his traits do not fit his world.

Each of us recognizes these kinds of conflicts in our own lives—and we behave as much as possible so that we don't get forced into those choices. That is, we try to place ourselves in situations where our traits do not come into conflict. Simply put, we impact our situations rather than letting our situations impact us. We behave in ways consistent with all of our traits rather than having to choose just one.

These are the propositions underlying the communibiological perspective—or paradigm if you prefer. If you are, like me, one who bought into the social learning model over the years, it may be difficult to swallow all of this in one bite. I encourage you to read more widely in this area. While I have emphasized in my remarks problems with some of the science in our field, the implications of these remarks may be even more crucial for qualitative scholars and teachers. Research in this area suggests that our traits drive our qualitative scholarship, just as they drive our other communication behavior. Qualitative researchers are no less susceptible to social learning's call than quantitative researchers. It is our vision of the nature of human communication and its precursors which needs to be re-examined, not just the approach by which we choose to study it.

I was honored by your attendance and I appreciate your attention.

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NOTE

1. My co-authors and I have addressed the importance of traits in considerable detail elsewhere:

Beatty, M. J., & McCroskey, J. C. (1998). Interpersonal communication as temperamental expression: A communibiological paradigm. In McCroskey, J. C., Daly, J. A., Martin, M. M., & Beatty, M. J., Eds. *Communication and Personality: Trait Perspectives*, Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.

Beatty, M. J., & McCroskey, J. C. (In Press). It's in our nature: Verbal aggressiveness as temperamental expression, *Communication Quarterly*.

Beatty, M. J., McCroskey, J. C., & Heisel, A. D. (In Press). Communication apprehension as temperamental expression: A communibiological paradigm, *Communication Monographs*.



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