

Preface

This book is about communication. We are living in an era when essential communications and services are suspended, interrupted, and disturbed – yet unwanted communications – the junk mail and unsolicited telephone calls – continue to pour into our lives. The focus of this book is on extra-linguistic messages – nonverbal expressions that are part of every communicative/ behavioral event. It is a collection of authors who are seeking to discover the *structure of behavior in human communication and interaction* with each other and with their environment. The articles treat current research, with one exception. This is a reprint of a 1948 article that pleads for ‘the unity of science’ – written with the idea that only by means of a cross-disciplinary approach can we draw nearer to an understanding of human behavior.

It is my belief that major decisions are made in the world, and in the home, by protean emotions and attitudes – not by reasoning and use of factual information. It has been noted that emotions control the stock market. An economic consultant to institutional investors says:

The stock market has always held a mirror to investor’s emotions. That was true even before the late Gerald Loeb enunciated it by noting that market values are fixed by the hopes and fears of humanity – and by greed – more than they are by balance sheets and income statements. And it is as true today as it ever was. (Bernstein 1977: 23)

A consultant to the Rand Corporation puts it another way:

One thing is certain. Economists will never solve inflation or even make a dent in it. Poring over figures instead of looking into the human soul, they may be the last people to know what it is. (Kellen 1979)

Thus, economists will never solve the problems of inflation; linguists will never solve the language problems in the schools. Specialists cannot solve the problems of the world with their particular knowledge about the environment, diseases and their cures, food supply, crowded conditions, and so on. These problems will not be solved until it is known how decisions are made –

by individuals and by nations. It is difficult not to think of human beings as evolutionary mistakes, because of their inability to balance reason and emotions. History — and the daily newspaper — announce that human beings seem unable to function without permitting destructive mechanisms to dominate. But maybe God will find a way out!

The authors represented here are from academia and scientific research centers; they are doing their part to learn something about human behavior. They come from many directions and points of view — from psychology and linguistics, and from the fields of physics, political science, geography, and zoology, and the art world. Many languages and backgrounds are represented: Chinese, Dutch, German, Spanish, and Russian, as well as English, assuring a cross-cultural perspective. Background studies include areas of animal communication, cognition, eye behavior, emotions, infant and child behavior, that of the deaf, quantum scattering theory, cerebral specialization, acquisition of language, gestural language, and judicial behavior. This all comes together by focusing on human interaction. I have not edited the authors' style or presentation; freedom of style is one of the charms of innovative research.

These studies, then, are further explorations into the matter of 'What makes people tick?'. What are those inexorable forces behind the actions of people, families, communities, and institutions? There are many different ideas and theories set forth here; some of what we say will be wrong — unwittingly, and some of what we say will be right — unwittingly!

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