

The
Pennsylvania
Scholars Series

Herman Cohen

Introduction
..... Calvin L. Troup

Herman Cohen: Rhetoric, Democracy, and the History of a Discipline
..... Thomas W. Benson

Herman Cohen and His Labors of Love
..... Dennis S. Gouran

More than a Historian – Herman Cohen: Incomparable Teacher, Exemplary
Scholar
..... Maureen C. Minielli & Sharmila Pixy Ferris

Herman Cohen's Legacy
..... Janie M. Harden Fritz,
Janet Reynolds Bodenman, Ann Jabro, & Mary Mino

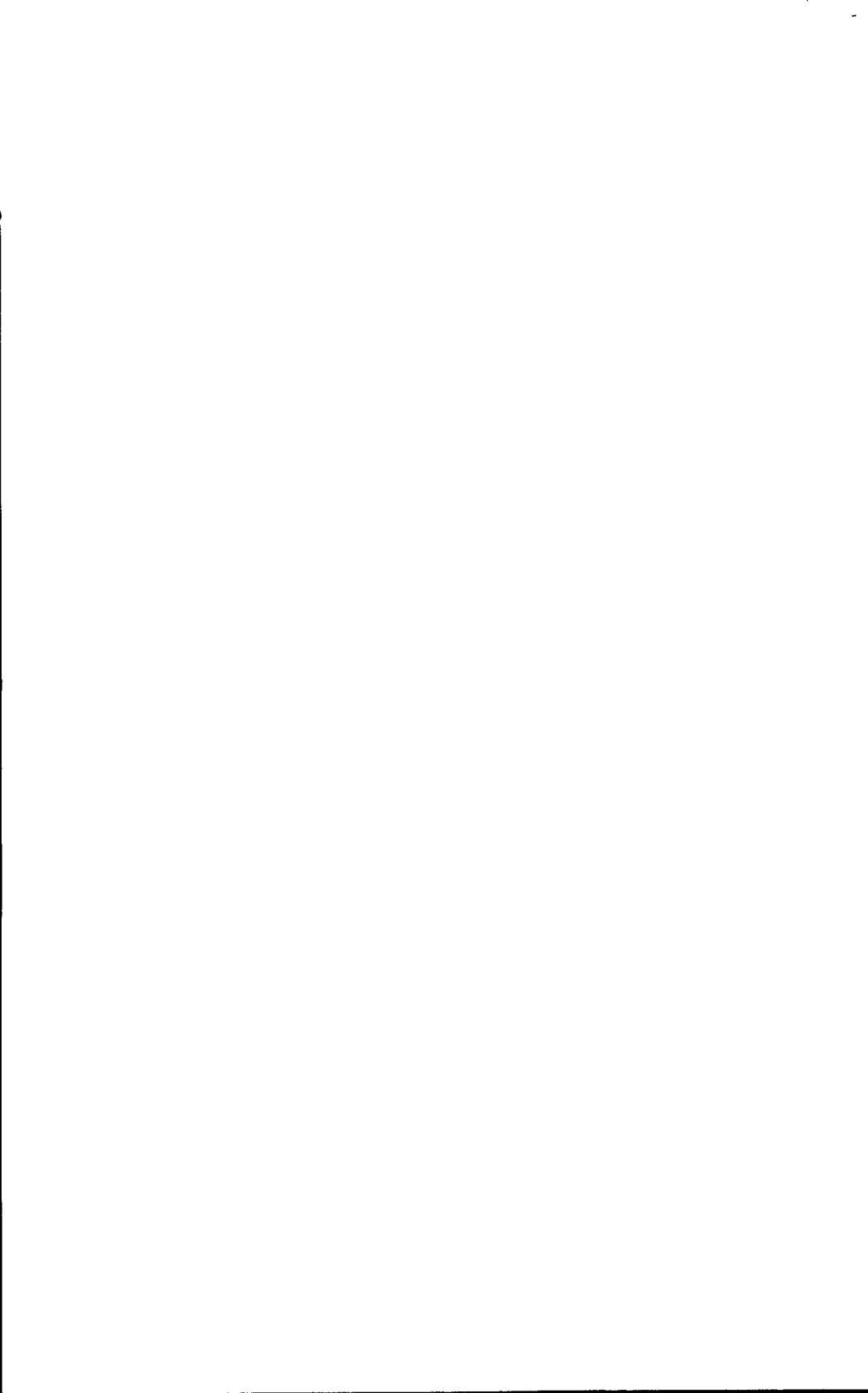
Navigating Our Emergence: Cohen's Question
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Historian of the Discipline

Published by
The Pennsylvania Communication Association

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Historian of the Discipline

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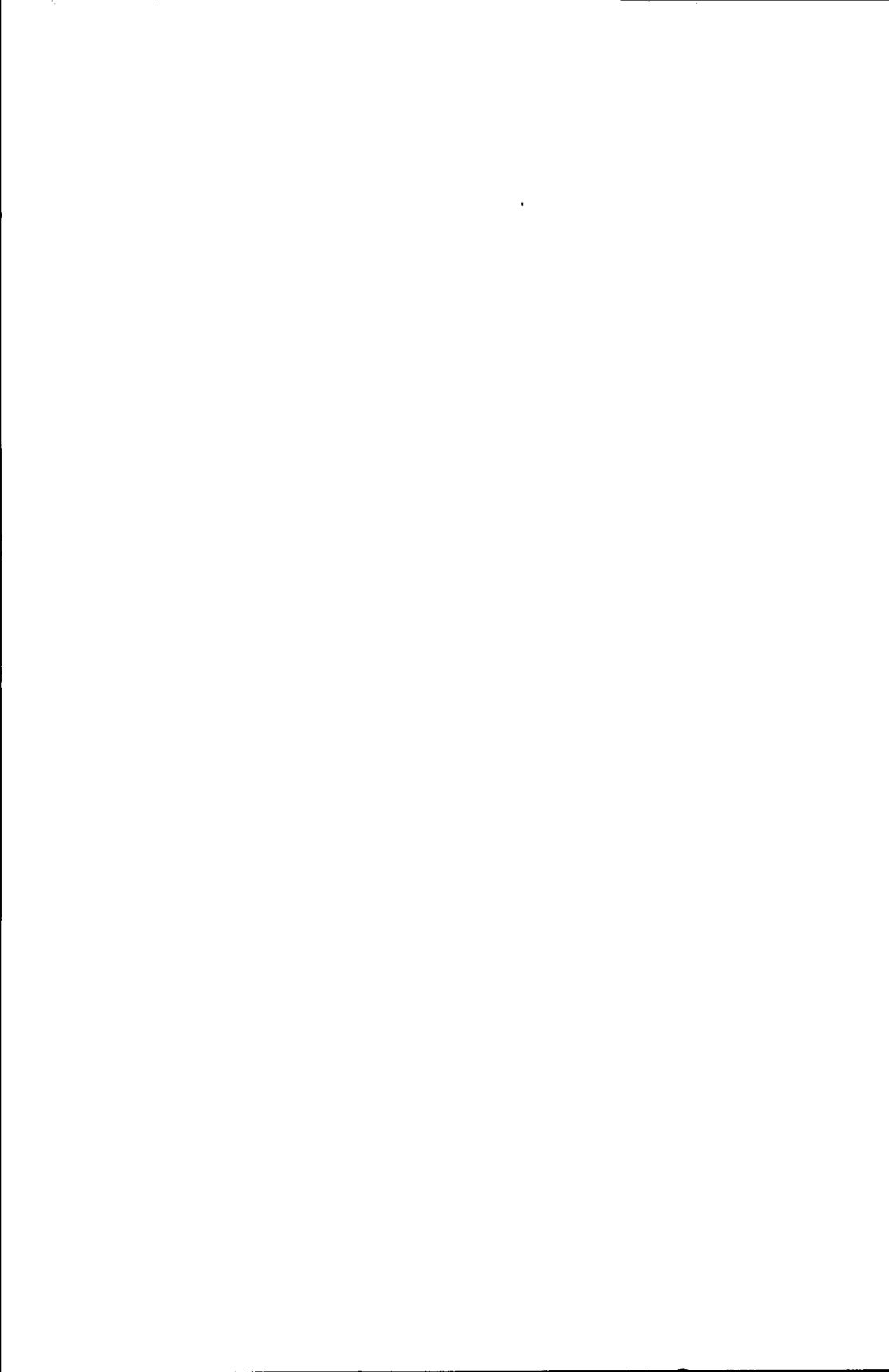
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Introduction

The Pennsylvania Scholars Series, published by the Pennsylvania Communication Association, honors distinguished scholars who have contributed to the strength and the well-being of the discipline in the state, while simultaneously contributing to the discipline at a national level. This edition honors Herman Cohen.

Dr. Cohen is perhaps best known for his pivotal work, *The History of Speech Communication, The Emergence of a Discipline, 1914 – 1945*, for which he can be called “the historian of the discipline.” However, as people who have worked closely with Cohen know, and readers of this volume will learn, his contributions to the discipline involve scholarship, teaching, and service of similar quality and much greater depth.

Contributing to this volume are colleagues, students, and research associates of Herman Cohen. The articles provide new openings into Cohen’s life as a professor to be emulated, one who in his personal vocation embodied so much that is good in the world of academia. The authors sketch Cohen’s contours as a well-earned tribute to the impact of his scholarly work and the dividends colleagues and students have reaped from his generous investment of mind and heart. Each essay provides a unique perspective from which to consider Herman Cohen’s distinguished career and contributions.

In “Herman Cohen: Rhetoric, Democracy, and the History of a Discipline,” Thomas W. Benson situates Cohen’s scholarly contributions within the historical moment in which they were framed. We are encouraged to learn intellectual generosity in a form that propelled Cohen’s critical insight, constructive questioning, and disciplinary development through embodied, determined scholarly work during turbulent times in society and in Communication as an academic field.

In “Herman Cohen and His Labors of Love,” Dennis S. Gouran focuses on the content of *The History of Speech Communication: The Emergence of a Discipline, 1914-1945* as symbolic of Cohen’s broader and deeper contributions to the discipline. With great care, Gouran traces how the

emergence of the book parallels the people and places Cohen served over the course of a long and fruitful professoriate.

In “More than a Historian – Herman Cohen: Incomparable Teacher, Exemplary Scholar” Maureen C. Minielli and Sharmila Pixy Ferris provide an inside account of Cohen’s scholarship, teaching, and service based on extensive, continuing work with him, first as graduate students, later as researchers, and now as junior colleagues. They help us to hear Cohen’s patient voice guiding an integrated agenda of scholarship and teaching through interaction with people, texts, and times from which he drew great significance.

In “Herman Cohen’s Legacy,” Janie M. Harden Fritz, Janet Reynolds Bodenman, Ann Jabro, and Mary Mino reflect together on the breadth and depth of Cohen’s impact—not only in Pennsylvania, but throughout the field of Communication. They focus attention on the patterns of care in assimilating people into the discipline, professionalism in support for the discipline, encouragement of graduate students, and mentoring as an active role model.

Finally, in “Navigating Our Emergence: Cohen’s Question,” Calvin L. Troup and Jill Seibert Burk consider the current status of some of Cohen’s guiding questions concerning the discipline. They postulate how Cohen’s questions and principles might be reconfigured to realize some of his own scholarly hopes for the field in a new historical moment.

Together, contributors and readers constitute a generation following in Dr. Cohen’s footsteps. We trust that by honoring Herman Cohen rightly, this volume will inspire us to serve as Cohen did—aspiring not to advance his own legacy, but to elevate the quality of scholarship, instruction, and service that constitutes the academic discipline and professional field of Communication.

Calvin L. Troup
Duquesne University
September 2008

Herman Cohen:

Rhetoric, Democracy, and the History of a Discipline

Thomas W. Benson, The Pennsylvania State University

Herman Cohen and I have been colleagues at Penn State University for almost forty years. Herman arrived at Penn State as head of the Department of Speech Communication in 1970; I arrived a year later. Herman is now an emeritus professor and is still a presence in the department. In a long and distinguished career, Herman Cohen served in a series of important professorial and administrative posts. He was president of the Speech Communication Association (1975); editor of the *Western Journal of Speech Communication* (1964-67); head of the Penn State department of Speech Communication (1970-1975); and professor of speech at the University of Oregon, the University of Massachusetts, and Penn State University.

Herman Cohen was born on December 29, 1924. His college education was interrupted by military service in which he found himself part of an occupying army in postwar Germany. He soon began to make up for lost time. He graduated from the University of Iowa in 1948 and completed his M.A. at Iowa in 1949. In 1949 he began work as an instructor at the University of Oregon, completing the Iowa Ph.D. in 1954, at which point he was promoted to assistant professor. He was promoted to associate professor in 1959 and to professor in 1965. At Oregon he served as assistant dean of Liberal Arts (1966-67) and as director of the Honors College (1966-67). In the late 1960s, the University of Massachusetts began a rapid expansion that included an initiative to develop a major doctoral program in rhetoric. Under the leadership of Karl Wallace, Herman Cohen joined the faculty at Massachusetts in 1967, in a group that included Herman Stelzner, Jane Blankenship, Ronald Reid, and Vincent Bevilacqua. In 1970, Herman Cohen was persuaded to become head of the Department of Speech

Communication at Penn State. He retired from Penn State on December 31, 1991.¹

Herman Cohen is a historian of rhetorical theory and of the discipline he served, and so it is perhaps fitting to honor his work by a review of what he has had to tell us about our history and to reflect on the lessons that he found in that history. Throughout a long career of scholarship, Cohen traced the historical development of rhetoric and communication in eighteenth-century Britain and twentieth-century America. Running through the whole body of his work is a devotion to the historical context of rhetorical theory and to the struggles of a discipline to find a realistic, convincing, and productive description of how the practice of rhetoric arises in and contributes to democracy.

Cohen emerged into the general view of the discipline with his 1954 University of Iowa dissertation, "The Rhetorical Theory of Hugh Blair." His interest in Blair led to his first article in the discipline's primary journal. "Hugh Blair's Theory of Taste" appeared in the October 1958 issue of the *Quarterly Journal of Speech*.² This early essay on Blair's theory of taste announced themes that preoccupied Cohen for forty years of productive teaching and scholarship. In taking on Hugh Blair (1718-1800) in his dissertation and in a series of published essays, Cohen had chosen a theorist whose work was regarded by historians of rhetoric as one of the major figures informing the discipline of Speech.

In 1948, Warren Guthrie noted that, "With the action of the Yale administration in 1785, stipulating that Blair's *Lectures on Rhetoric* was to be used as a textbook, there was begun a domination of American rhetoric by a few great English works which was not to end for many decades."³ Blair was a central figure in the history of rhetorical education, and Cohen was joining leading scholars in the discipline who wrote about his work in the journals. In his 1958 essay, Cohen notes that, "Blair was alone in his time in discussing taste as a part of rhetoric. . . . Only Blair, among contemporary British rhetorical theorists, undertook to investigate the manner in which a listener may judge the merits and faults of a discourse." Nevertheless, notes Cohen, "Although much of Blair's rhetorical theory is firmly rooted in the classicists,

his theory of taste is essentially that of the eighteenth-century School of Taste which held that taste was an innate but precisely improvable talent.”⁴

In this early work on Blair, Cohen was formulating an approach that matures throughout his scholarly career. He focuses on rhetorical discourse as an at least potentially distinct art. He finds in Blair a provocative and historically situated understanding of nature versus nurture in rhetoric, and a vocabulary of forces that seeks to understand the proper relation of nature, the rules of reason, and “the tastes of mankind in general.”⁵ He seeks to understand the special features of rhetoric as a social practice. He inquires in detail as to the originality and the intellectual heritage of the ideas of the theorist he is studying. He asks how rhetorical education may contribute to improvement in the production and criticism of discourse. He takes seriously the role of historian of rhetorical theory, tracing out the comparative context in which Blair’s theory arose. Cohen’s developing method as both a historian of theory and a teacher of speech prompts him to see in Blair—but not necessarily to endorse—a view of taste that appears to function for rhetoric both as a standard of practical criticism and as the foundation of rhetorical practice.

Cohen repeatedly returned to Blair as his own views matured. Almost thirty years after the publication of his essay on Blair’s theory of taste, Cohen was asked to participate in an interdisciplinary panel on “The Most Significant Passage in Hugh Blair’s *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*” at a meeting of the Rhetoric Society of America. Cohen chose Blair’s definition of “style” at the beginning of Lecture X. Blair wrote:

It is not easy to give a precise idea of what is meant by style. The best definition I can give of it, is the peculiar manner in which a man expresses his conceptions by means of language. It is different from mere language or words. The words which an author employs may be proper and faultless and his style may, nevertheless, have great faults. Style always has some reference to an author’s manner of thinking. It is a picture of the ideas which rise in his mind, and of the manner in which they rise there; and hence when we are examining an author’s composition, it is, in many cases, extremely difficult to separate the

style from the sentiment. No wonder these two should be so intimately connected, as style is nothing else, than that sort of expression which our thoughts most readily assume.⁶

Of this passage, Cohen observes that “Blair’s interest in, even preoccupation with, matters of language and style is not only significant; it is the foundation of his rhetorical and literary theory.”⁷ Hence, it is especially important, argues Cohen, that Blair, who was a conventional eighteenth-century thinker in most respects, bases his definition of style “on individual differences, not on the common characteristics of mankind” (283). For Blair, “language and style are not at all synonymous. Style is the product; language the means” (284). Style refers to an author’s manner of thinking and to the author’s personal sentiments, which may themselves be inflected by cultural and ethnic differences (285). Here again we see Cohen negotiating the double terrain of history and theory, a task that has been at the center of the history of rhetorical theory.

Twentieth-century American historians of rhetorical theory, at least those who were working in departments of Speech, were conventionally faced with this double task—to reconstruct a historical theory in its own time and place as it would have appeared to its contemporaries, and at the same time make use of that theory, critically, as a resource for contemporary rhetorical theory, criticism, practice, and pedagogy. This double task of the rhetorical historian can result in a mishmash of doubletalk and equivocation, unsatisfactory as either history or theory, but if practiced with care the double perspective can be illuminating. Herman Cohen was a skilled practitioner of the art, able to see the historical work clearly in its own time and place, and then to extrapolate from it the potential news for the rhetorical theorizing of his readers. The key, it seems to me, is that his essays in rhetorical history are not in an unseemly rush to appropriate the theorist he is studying to his own thesis. He meticulously follows a theoretical thread through a complex text, and typically reports fully on the ways in which it corresponds to other theorists—in Blair’s case, theorists both of the classical period and of the eighteenth century. Only then does he consider how his findings, and the views of his subject, speak to our own concerns, though of

course his very choice of subject is itself a claim that the theorist has something to say to us.

Herman Cohen's acuity as a comparative historian of rhetorical theory and his boldness of vision appeared early, both in the essay on Blair's theory of taste and in a 1958 essay in *Western Speech* on "Charles Rollin: Historian of Eloquence." Rollin was Professor of Eloquence at the University of Paris in the eighteenth century. Cohen's essay considers Rollin's *The History of the Ancient World*, which appeared in English translation and was well known to American students of rhetoric in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. With considerable ingenuity, Cohen argues that Rollins, who taught and wrote during the despotic reigns of Louis XIV and Louis XV, developed a theory of eloquence in the ancient Greek and Roman worlds based not, as in Blair's account, on contentious democratic debate, but on peace, tranquility, and cooperation. "The absence of a free forum in the France of the early 18th century," writes Cohen, "appears to distort Rollin's theories to such an extent that the elements of freedom and democracy, as energizing forces of eloquence, were largely overlooked; naïve and superficial explanations were put in their place. . . . As a writer in a society where rhetoric was not an important social instrument, Rollin praised eloquence, not for its usefulness as a means of persuasion and communication, but for the personal power over others which a mastery of the rhetorical discipline would bring."⁸

Herman Cohen was widely acknowledged as a scholar of eighteenth-century rhetorical theory from the early days of his career. Soon, Cohen brought his experience and training as a rhetorical theorist and historian to the history of his own discipline in the twentieth century.

Herman Cohen began his professional career at the beginning of the Cold War, and his earliest years as a teacher saw the rise and collapse of McCarthyism, which sent waves of suspicion, caution, and reaction through universities in the United States. Cohen's career from the time of his college graduation in 1949 until his retirement in 1991 precisely fits the period of the Cold War, which influenced in a variety of mostly invisible ways how our discipline shaped its descriptions of public life. Years later, Cohen returned

to the question of communication and democracy in his 1975 presidential address to the Speech Communication Association. Noting the restricted communicative climate in a country dominated by concerns about national security since 1941, and still reeling from Vietnam and Watergate, he told his colleagues that, "We must not be reluctant to criticize persons, institutions, or bureaucracies which restrict the freedom and openness of communication."⁹

For many years before his retirement in 1991, Herman Cohen taught a graduate seminar on the historical development of the discipline. The seminar drew students together from both the rhetorical and the communication theory sides of the program, encouraging students to examine how the discipline developed and to inquire in detail into the intellectual foundations of their own specialties. One major fruit of the seminar was Cohen's *The History of Speech Communication: The Emergence of a Discipline, 1914-1945*, published by the Speech Communication Association in 1994.

Cohen concludes his book on the early years of the discipline in 1945, fifty years before the publication of his study. He describes old disciplinary struggles that were forgotten, only to be repeated by later generations of scholars. The book displays how Cohen's abiding interest in the social and ideological assumptions of rhetorical theory and speech communication more generally continued to deepen and how Cohen now strikes a more skeptical note. The emerging discipline he discovers in the early years was marked by high ambition but also, too often, it was derivative, self-satisfied, and superficial. Cohen writes that

The reader must remember that the period we cover [1915-1945] was quite different from our own. The present Speech Communication Association came into being in the midst of the First World War, and my examination concludes at the end of the Second World War. The social and political climate of those days may not be readily understandable today. For most of this period we found an intense patriotism, especially during the war years. The patriotism was often accompanied by statements of praise for democracy. Articles and

books were motivated by the perception that speech was an inherent characteristic of democracy. The profession viewed the teaching of speech as a means of providing students with the tools of democracy. The commitment to speech in the interest of a democratic society was most marked in the late 1930s and 1940s, when the totalitarian states of Europe, who suppressed speech, seemed antithetical to American ideology.¹⁰

Still, Cohen notes, the journals of those early years were littered with racism, bigotry, and bias; he quotes one scholar in the discipline as casually remarking, in print: "Upon the appearance of the Jewish presiding officer and the speakers of the evening, the applause became enthusiastic."¹¹

Cohen's history traces the emergence of the discipline of speech communication from nineteenth- and early twentieth-century roots in Elocution, with its virtually exclusive attention to the arts of delivery. Rhetorical education survived the period in English departments, which taught both oral and written composition. The composition teachers "saw themselves as being concerned with the substance of communication—with logical thinking, clear use of language, cogent organization and purposeful discourse. They saw the elocutionists not only as superficial and trivial but as perverters of rhetoric who stressed all that was offensive to rational discourse. . . . They helped set the stage for and they provided some of the material for their new rival" – speech.¹²

Cohen describes the founding of the Eastern association in 1910 and of the National association in 1914, tracing in detail the organizational forces that contributed to these events. He then turns his detailed historical analysis to the intellectual debates of the early association as it struggled to define a research agenda, which, he argues, arose in response to the institutional need to produce research rather than from any obvious set of research questions or methods. He tells again, and with added nuance and detail, of the debates among James Winans, Charles Woolbert, and Everett Lee Hunt over the proper role of science in the research of the discipline. Woolbert advocated a scientific approach rooted in the discipline of psychology.¹³ Hunt advocated a humanistic and rhetorical foundation. In the midst of their early debate,

Cohen discovers some neglected treasures that, he argues, might have led to more productive scholarship. For example, Cohen gives several pages to an admiring review of Mary Yost's 1917 *QJS* essay, "Argument from the Point of View of Sociology." Yost, a professor at Vassar and perhaps the first member of the association to hold a Ph.D., challenged the faculty psychology that supported a distinction between conviction and persuasion, anticipated a situational and communicative approach to argument, and emphasized the role of the sense of self, association, identification, and narrative. She asked, "If the narrative of the murder of a man is given by the lawyer with the purpose of winning the jury from a belief in the prisoner's innocence to a belief in his guilt, is not this narrative an argument since the speaker designs it to fulfill the function of argument?"¹⁴ Cohen regrets that Yost's invitation to a fresh way of thinking about communication was neglected, and in his detailed narrative of its reception tells us of the last published round in the debate between Charles Woolbert and Everett Lee Hunt, with Woolbert initiating a "psychological attack" on Hunt, portraying Hunt's objections to Woolbert's arguments in Freudian terms as "an interesting study in the escaped wish." Cohen comments that "Seldom has such a personal attack appeared in the pages of *The Quarterly Journal*. . . Woolbert's remote psychoanalysis of Hunt's personality hardly seemed warranted."¹⁵ In any case, Cohen concludes that "Charles Henry Woolbert's name may not be widely known to present day members of the discipline, but, without question, he must be regarded as the founder of an important and durable conception of what the new discipline should be, and how its research should be conducted. Disputes between 'humanists' and 'scientists' have arisen from time to time in the history of the discipline; the grounds of the disagreement, however, were established in the confrontations between Woolbert and Hunt."¹⁶

Returning to a theme that had appeared in his work from the earliest days, Cohen devotes an entire chapter of his *History* to "Ethics, Freedom, and Democracy." He had first considered these issues more than forty years earlier in his work on Blair, Rollin, and other eighteenth-century rhetorical theorists. Now, when he might be expected to have ripened into a habit of

merely celebrating the discipline in which he had for decades been a leader, Cohen takes a highly skeptical view of the early days of the profession. He depicts a debate in which the advocates of moral improvement and democratic values were too often prone to slip into patriotic piety and empty jingoism, and in which some of the advocates of value-neutral skills training simply abandoned the question. Although Cohen provides no way through this thicket, he does provide an uncomfortable and original review of an intermittent struggle.

Cohen describes a debate between Everett Lee Hunt, then at Cornell University, and James O'Neill of Wisconsin, one of the founders of the national association, that drew in others and went to the crux of the ethical duties of the speech teacher—but without resolution. Hunt proposed in 1922 that since the point of training in public speaking was to train citizens for participation, the instructor should help them find suitable material for practice speeches by providing, “as source material, a group of essays or addresses which treat a limited number of fundamental subjects upon which any liberally educated man should be able to speak intelligently and effectively in public.”¹⁷ As Cohen points out, this suggestion by Hunt seems entirely inoffensive. But it touched a key debate in the emerging discipline. O'Neill responded by arguing that the content of public issues such as “taxation and tariff” is outside the competence of speech teachers, and proposed instead that the proper content of speech courses was to be found in the history of rhetorical theory. “I recommend,” wrote O'Neill, “a complete course from Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian, down to date. . . . In this historical line can be found ample content for courses of sufficient academic responsibility to sit at the head of the table with the wisest and best in any university curriculum in America.”¹⁸ And yet, Cohen shows, both O'Neill and Hunt, in their contrasting ways, strongly supported the notion that training in speech was central to freedom and democracy. Cohen again quotes O'Neill, who wrote in 1941 that, “The complete and adequate training of men and women to function fully and properly through speech in a free society should be the aim and essence of education. . . . If we are to demonstrate our professional maturity in the world today, we must do

everything in our power to see to it that all the educational forces of this country, in so far as we have influence, shall insist upon the development of the power and the preservation of the opportunity to speak fully and freely whatever things men have to speak to their fellow men."¹⁹ The association of speech and democracy was, Cohen shows, often asserted in the journals, though with differing advice as to the consequences for teachers. The foundational concern with the relation of speech and democracy found its way into a series of related questions having to do with the ethics of speech practices, and with the question of whether speech training could or should produce moral education. The discipline sometimes worried about unethical practices both within the discipline and in the larger society's discursive practices. Cohen traces ethical worries through the journals, including complaints about competitive debate, ghostwriting, and low standards.

Cohen observes that "one is struck by the high moral tone of the profession [in 1915-1945] and the importance that was attached to the responsibility of insuring that the teaching of speech measured up to scrupulous standards. Perhaps those years were a more naïve and less 'scholarly' time. Nevertheless, one must admit to warm nostalgic feelings for the idealism of early writers."²⁰

But Herman Cohen's nostalgia does not extend to the whole record. Despite his admiration for the idealism and energy of the earliest members of the discipline, he repeatedly discovers scholars whose work is often limited in scope, unsophisticated in method, and derivative. He closes the book by suggesting that after 1945 the discipline gained increasing scholarly sophistication, though perhaps at the cost of fragmentation, abandonment of fundamental philosophical issues, and a loss of direction. As a historian, he reminds us that though we are in many ways a different discipline now, and perhaps a better one, we have failed to accomplish some of the highest goals of the founders, and continue to fight some of the same old battles. Cohen concludes by noting signs of promise, but also indicators of failure. This is not a comfortable book, and at least one reviewer took Herman to task for creating a history of the discipline that might be dangerous in the hands of a dean or discouraging in the hands of a graduate student. In his characteristic

way, Herman never responded to that review, nor did I ever hear him complain about it, but perhaps now it is clearer that his close attention to the early twentieth-century scholars who founded the discipline pays them appropriate respect by just the mixture of admiration, attentiveness, skepticism, and disappointment with which he reads them.

Herman Cohen's long published record and his guidance of graduate students shows a keen discernment for the big questions that motivate the study of rhetoric and communication, respect for all modes of study, a maturing allegiance to the link between democracy and speech coupled with a skeptical unwillingness to engage in empty pieties, and a patient historical attention to the details of a text and its context. These are big achievements, and they are in the record for us to study. For this, we owe him our attention and our gratitude.

Notes

¹For portraits of some other Penn State faculty with whom Herman Cohen served, see Robert T. Oliver, "The Way It Was: All the Way," *Communication Quarterly* 45 (1997): 1-130; Thomas W. Benson, "Carroll C. Arnold: Rhetorical Criticism at the Intersection of Theory, Practice, and Pedagogy," in *Roots of Rhetorical Criticism*, ed. Jim A. Kuypers and Andrew King (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2001), pp. 157-174; Thomas W. Benson, "Richard B. Gregg and the Scholarship of Critical Disclosure," *The Pennsylvania Speech Communication Annual* 57 (2001): 1-14; Thomas W. Benson, "History, Criticism, and Theory in the Study of American Rhetoric," in Thomas W. Benson, ed., *American Rhetoric: Context and Criticism* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1989).

² Herman Cohen, "Hugh Blair's Theory of Taste," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 44 (1958): 265-274.

³ Warren Guthrie, "The Development of Rhetorical Theory in America, 1635-1850," part 3, *Speech Monographs* 15 (1948): 61. In the same article, Guthrie traces the American histories of George Campbell, Richard Whately, and Alexander Jamieson.

⁴ Cohen, "Blair's Theory of Taste," 265.

⁵ Cohen, "Blair's Theory of Taste," 274.

⁶ Hugh Blair, *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* (London: William Sills), 115-116; quoted in Herman Cohen, "The Most Significant Passage in Hugh Blair's *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*," *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 17 (1987): 281. Other contributors to the RSA panel were Lois Einhorn, Edward P. J. Corbett, S. Michael Halloran, Charles Kneupper, Eric Skopec, and Barbara Warnick.

⁷ Cohen, "Most Significant Passage," 282.

⁸ Herman Cohen, "Charles Rollin: Historian of Eloquence," *Western Speech* 22 (1958): 93.

⁹ Herman Cohen, "1975 Presidential Address," *Spectra* (April 1976), 7; the address was delivered at the 61st annual meeting of the Speech Communication Association, Houston, Texas, 28 December 1975.

¹⁰ Herman Cohen, *The History of Speech Communication: The Emergence of a Discipline, 1914-1945* (Annandale, VA: Speech Communication Association, 1994), xi. An earlier version of some of the work leading to his book may be found in Herman Cohen, "The Development of Research in Speech Communication: A Historical Perspective," in Thomas W. Benson, ed., *Speech Communication in the 20th Century* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1985), 282-298.

¹¹ Cohen, *History*, xi.

¹² Cohen, *History*, 28.

¹³ On Everett Lee Hunt, see also Thomas W. Benson, "The Cornell School of Rhetoric: Idiom and Institution," *Communication Quarterly* 51 (2003): 1-56.

¹⁴ Mary Yost, "Argument from the Point of View of Sociology," *QJS* 3 (1917): 121, quoted in Cohen, *History*, 69.

¹⁵ Cohen, *History*, 75.

¹⁶ Cohen, *History*, 77.

¹⁷ Hunt, quoted in Cohen, *History*, 139. Such a collection of readings was soon forthcoming – A. M. Drummond and Everett Lee Hunt, ed., *Persistent Questions in Public Discussion: Addresses and Essays* (New York: Century, 1924).

¹⁸ James M. O'Neill, quoted in Cohen, *History*, 139.

¹⁹ James M. O'Neill, quoted in Cohen, *History*, 150.

²⁰ Cohen, *History*, 157

Herman Cohen and His Labors of Love

Dennis S. Gouran, The Pennsylvania State University

Herman Cohen's illustrious professional career is one marked by significant achievements. A 1954 Ph.D. from The University of Iowa, over the course of that career, he held positions at The University of Oregon (1949-1967), The University of Massachusetts (1967-1970), and The Pennsylvania State University (1970-present), where he has been Professor *Emeritus* in the Department of Communication Arts and Sciences since 1991. Professor Cohen also served as a Visiting Professor at The University of Iowa (1957), The University of Edinburg (1964), The University of Oregon (1969), San Jose State University (1979), and The University of Vermont (1982). During his nearly forty post-doctoral years of active service at these institutions, he amassed a record of accomplishment that makes him a more than worthy recipient of the rare honor that being the focus of a volume of the *Pennsylvania Scholars Series* confers on one. That record is the focus of this document.

Professor Cohen's Accomplishments in Teaching, Scholarship, and Service

As one surveys Professor Cohen's *curriculum vitae*, it becomes quickly apparent that he took seriously the expectations for involvement in teaching, scholarship, and service that ostensibly go with membership on faculties of the types of universities with which he has been associated, but which many of those identified with them have frequently failed to fulfill. Moreover, he always undertook the related responsibilities with enthusiasm, if not outright pleasure. For Professor Cohen, trying to live up to expectations in all three categories was a way to be continually engaged in what he perceived to be the important work of the modern university and to do whatever he could to further it, as I hope to demonstrate in the remainder of this manuscript. Before proceeding, however, I think it important to note that the typology of teaching, scholarship, and service is, I suspect, apt to be one that Professor

Cohen would regard as artificial at best. Over the years I have known him, I have developed the distinct impression that he envisions the three categories of professional activity as so inextricably intertwined that separation leaves misleading impressions of what it means to be accomplished in teaching, scholarship, and service. However, the labels provide a sort of organizational convenience of which I have chosen to take advantage in the interest of producing as coherent an account of Professor Cohen's various labors of love as I can.

Teaching

In teaching, Professor Cohen was actively involved at both the graduate and undergraduate level throughout his career and even volunteered to take on sections of honors courses for a period of time following his formal retirement—sections in which, incidentally, I am told by a former Director of the Schreyer Honors College at Penn State he had among the highest ratings of anyone teaching for it. Unlike many of the members of faculties at Research I universities, both today and in the past, level of instruction was never an issue with Professor Cohen. He was too absorbed with the activity of teaching to let level and the status people attribute to it influence the respects in which he was willing to involve himself in the instructional domain. He was every bit as willing and happy to teach an introductory undergraduate course as he was advanced graduate seminars, or anything in between.

That he was focused on what he could do to help students learn rather than being ego-centered in his teaching is further evident in the capacities in which Professor Cohen served on M.A. and Ph.D. Committees. It mattered not to him whether he was Chair or merely a member of such academic bodies. It was the opportunity for the exploration of ideas and interaction with students about them that excited him and sustained his enthusiasm for being of assistance to them from his entry into higher education as a professor through his retirement. I hasten to add here that he selflessly continued as a member of advisory committees of graduate students with whom he had started but who had not completed their

programs of study at the point he retired. That was not only good for the students in assuring continuity, but also for other members of the Faculty who otherwise would have been called on to step in as his replacement, possibly with very little knowledge of such students' backgrounds and research projects.

Professor Cohen also contributed to teaching via some of his publications. Aside from those that represented his research interests and that found their way into reading lists for graduate courses, his publications include a textbook for an introductory undergraduate course (see, Cohen & McCall, 1963), a chapter in an edited collection relating to oral performance (Cohen, 1986), and two pieces involving forensics (Sikkink, Cohen, & Richards, 1956; Nobles & Cohen, 1959). Hence, by means of such vehicles, he was able to provide instruction to large numbers of people he had never even met.

A good deal of Professor Cohen's teaching was of what one might refer to as "the informal variety." To him, teaching is not merely something one does in classrooms or through his or her writing. Nor is it an activity confined to interactions with students. When one passed Professor Cohen's office during his years of active membership on the Penn State Faculty, only infrequently would he or she fail to observe a student or colleague conversing with him. Even more rare were occasions on which such conversations were about matters not of intellectual significance. In many respects, one could say of Professor Cohen that to him opportunities to interact with students and colleagues were also almost invariably opportunities to teach. "Professor" was much more than a title in his academic world. It literally was the descriptor for one who engages in certain types of scholarly discourse and exchange. "Inveterate" would not be too strong a term to apply to Professor Cohen *qua* teacher. A genuine intellectual by the account of anyone having more than a passing acquaintance with him, yet a modest and highly approachable man, Professor Cohen had a profound interest in the critical examination of ideas. Those who took advantage of occasions to interact with him when "professing" in whatever venue typically

came away more well informed, often enlightened, certainly enriched, and generally better for the experience.

Scholarship

That Professor Cohen was also serious about his scholarship should be obvious from his publication of ten books and chapters in books, his twenty-two articles in professional journals, the forty-two papers he presented at meetings of professional organizations after 1979 (we were not able to locate the presumably much larger number prior to 1979), and his lectures at such institutions as The University of Texas, The University of Utah, The University of South Carolina, The University of Oregon, and California State University at Fullerton, not to mention presentations abroad in Germany, Switzerland, Italy, and Finland. This level of activity is clearly appreciable and well in excess of the norm for those entering the profession at the same time Professor Cohen did.

Of greater significance than the quantity of Professor Cohen's published scholarship and presentations are its range and the command of intellectual history it reveals. As one examines the list of publications, he or she finds contributions relating to such diverse topics as Hugh Blair's theory of taste (Cohen, 1958), Giambattista Vico's "New Science" (Cohen, 1987), Wayne Morse's presidential campaign (Cohen, 1960), and the evolution of research as a focus in the discipline (Cohen, 1985). Individuals of such range are no longer common in Communication Arts and Sciences, and possibly never were.

Of all the scholarly interests that Professor Cohen developed over the course of his storied career, the one about which he was most passionate, and which eventuated in perhaps his most significant contribution to the field, *The History of Speech Communication: The Emergence of a Discipline, 1914-1945* (see Cohen, 1994), was his treatise concerning how the field of communication as an area of study in colleges and universities in The United States came into existence following the founding of the National Association of Academic Teachers of Public Speaking (currently, the National Communication Association) in 1914. Inasmuch as this concern

led to the volume mentioned above and represents the scholarly achievement of which Professor Cohen was in 1994, and remains today, justifiably proud, I have chosen to take a more than cursory look at its contents.

I first became aware of Professor Cohen's interest in the project for which he has now acquired some notoriety in the early 1970s when I was a member of the then Speech Communication Association's Research Board and he attended one its meetings in Falls Church, Virginia to emphasize his strongly felt need for a formal, authorized history of the discipline. He made clear at the time that he did not have in mind chronologies or mere inventories of developments to which scholars turned their attention in given specialties, such as Robert T. Oliver's (1965) *History of Public Speaking in America* or Karl R. Wallace's (1954) *A History of Speech Education in America*, but instead a considered exploration of what led to the creation of the discipline and was at the base of its subsequent evolution.

Professor Cohen's concern was alleviated somewhat with the appearance of Carroll C. Arnold and John W. Bowers's (1984) *Handbook of Rhetorical and Communication Theory* and a year later Thomas W. Benson's (1985) *Speech Communication in the Twentieth Century*. These anthologies, while providing a flavor of how the discipline came to deal with different sets of issues, Professor Cohen nevertheless felt were primarily summaries of research and theory in domains of specialized inquiry and as such did not constitute genuine histories, at least not in the sense he had in mind. His view encompassed consideration of the driving forces, debates, and external developments that came to define what interests, subjects, and modes of investigation were germane to the study of human communication.

Professor Cohen was also concerned that increasing numbers of those entering the profession as graduate students and members of faculties in departments such as those with which he had always been associated had little sense of a disciplinary identity, let alone understanding of its precursors or the figures most responsible for setting its development in motion. I shared that concern in noting in the preface to the volume Professor Cohen invited me to prepare that, "Upon entering the profession in 1968, I was struck by what appeared to be an identity crisis among representatives of the

field—and which to some extent continues to this day” (Gouran, 1994, p. vii).

Finally, Professor Cohen was concerned that too much contemporary scholarship was derivative, even imitative, of what scholars in other disciplines were doing. He felt that this was not good for the health of ours if it were to enjoy high standing and make original contributions to knowledge. As he states in the Epilogue to his book, “In almost eighty years since the formal establishment of the discipline, it has not yet attained the central position in education, either in the schools or the colleges, that its founders had envisioned” (Cohen, 1994, p. 327). Continuing, he lamented that, “Many institutions feel that they can do without Speech Communication departments, and their reputations seem not to have suffered for their neglect” (p. 327). A history of the field, he felt, could help to reverse this situation and refocus attention on matters unique to the study of social interaction in its many and varied social contexts. Consequently, not seeing anyone with his same vision for what an appropriate published history of the discipline would encompass, he decided to undertake the task of producing one himself.

In *the History of Speech Communication: The Emergence of a Discipline, 1914-1945*, Professor Cohen begins his journey through time with an overview of the British elocutionists and their work, as well as the appropriation of rhetoric by departments of English in colleges and universities throughout The United States, as antecedents to events precipitating to the establishment of the National Association of Academic Teachers of Public Speaking, as well as the Eastern Public Speaking Conference four years earlier. Neither tradition, he establishes in the opening chapters, adequately addressed concerns focusing on communication in the public arena. Despite their scientific bent, elocutionists were ultimately concerned with perfecting the oral reading of literature, and the focus of rhetoric, as represented in the curricula of departments of English, was written composition. There were arts and sciences of communication in academic disciplines in the Nineteenth Century, but in the minds of those who would come to be the principal instigators in the formation of a new discipline, the foci were too narrow,

exclusionary of important aspects of human communication, or even in many instances misplaced.

Despite a common interest in orality as the central defining concept, the separation of those who spearheaded the creation of the upstart discipline were not without tensions that contributed to various conflicts and struggles, as well as to a good deal of continuing self-examination, diversification, and reorganization. Not the least of these had to do with whether or not the discipline should view itself as primarily, if not exclusively, dedicated to the pursuit of teaching-related concerns or to the production of original knowledge. Related was the question of whether or not the matters of interest to which representatives of the burgeoning discipline qualified it as humanistic or scientific, as reflected and enacted in ongoing debates initiated by and identified with such figures Everett Lee Hunt and Charles Woolbert, and which in some quarters continue to the present. Professor Cohen has done a magnificent job of not only chronicling, but also sharing his unique insights into, these "growing pains" to 1945, the point at which the volume ends.

In tracing the early development of the discipline, Professor Cohen discusses several topics that attracted considerable attention in the slightly more than thirty years he covers and as exponents continued to search for, as well as to develop, its unique identity. One of these was the relationship of speaking and personality--in particular, the improvement in personality to which speech training presumably could lead. Remnants of this perspective remain in evidence as more recent and sophisticated work with communication anxiety has gone forward into the current century. Of lesser, but nonetheless significant, concern was the relationship of speech and ethics, with an emphasis on training students to uphold the highest standards of morality in their public utterances, or the Quintilian view of the "good man speaking well." This interest has also persisted but has a far less prescriptive character in contemporary scholarly inquiries. In yet another chapter, Professor Cohen notes how little concern those in the fledgling discipline had for the criticism of rhetorical practice. Rhetorical criticism, a major emphasis in rhetorical scholarship today, was just beginning to come

into its own in the early 1930s, but by 1945 had established itself as a major dimension of what rhetorical scholarship should entail. In by far the longest chapter of his book, Professor Cohen examines how the preoccupation with historical figures among those identified with this area of the discipline began to show signs of weakening by 1945 and what was at the base of a subsequent virtual explosion in the development original theory, as well as what qualifies as rhetorical artifacts and processes of communication.

Professor Cohen's final chapter deals with group discussion, which in its own way seems to be a microcosm of what was occurring in the evolution of the discipline more generally. Having little presence in the interests of those identified with the new discipline prior to 1922, Professor Cohen traces the transformation of group discussion primarily as a forum for the presentation of individual views relating to subjects of common interest to participants and their audiences to the beginnings of an area of study reflecting Lewinian notions of interaction as central to collective decision-making and problem-solving, the processes of influence implicated, and the relational outcomes that can accrue. Major advances in research and theory in this sphere of communication did not begin to occur until the 1950s, but the '30s and '40s, as Professor Cohen ably shows, unquestionably set the stage for them.

The information to which Professor Cohen exposes readers in *The History of Speech Communication: The Emergence of a Discipline, 1914-1945*, in my view, has done much to help us understand how what we now embrace as the academic field of communication came to have the contours and character it does today. He has provided in this work a kind of genealogy that holds the same sort of fascination as its family-focused counterparts. At least, it does for me. I frequently find it distressing that so many people currently in the discipline appear to know so little about it. This is not to suggest that we all should become experts in its history, but neither can we afford to be without some awareness of it. Any substantial ignorance of the history somehow seems to be intolerable for people who like to think of themselves as well educated.

In his introduction, Professor Cohen echoes this theme: "This book was motivated by a realization that the field that has evolved into the

discipline of Speech Communication is lacking not only a formal history but any real historical sense. In contrast to almost every other academic field, we seem ignorant (sometimes blissfully) of how the discipline reached its present stage” (p. ix). In disturbing our bliss, Professor Cohen has also gone a long way in helping us to divest ourselves of our lack of knowledge if we will but indulge in what he has, through his considerable efforts, made available to us in his excursion through thirty very important years of history. For that opportunity, the discipline owes him a good deal of gratitude.

Service

In addition to the many achievements in teaching and scholarship to which I have alluded in this overview of the professional life of Professor Herman Cohen, to have as complete a picture of him as possible requires that one also know something about his contributions to service. Is it a facet of academic life that in the minds of many represents something to which one attends, often perfunctorily, and for a variety of uncharitable sounding reasons, for example, the person has “lots of time on his or her hands,” he or she is a “poor teacher, scholar, or both and, therefore, ends up on lots of committees,” and it helps one to “make all the right lists.” None of these would apply to Professor Cohen. Free time was not something he ever had in great abundance, as I have shown above, he was both a talented teacher and productive scholar throughout his career, and no one who knows him well would ever accuse him of the sort of ambition that leads to a person’s seeking “appearances” on “all the right lists.” Self-importance is a quality in which, as best I am capable of determining, Professor Cohen is completely lacking.

If such reasons for engaging in service as those I have mentioned above are alien to Professor Cohen’s character, then what does account for his impressive record of service throughout his career? Is he simply an altruist? In part, he is, but from my vantage point, Professor Cohen always seemed to view service as an instrument by which some people in the academy ultimately enable not only themselves, but many others as well, to do a better job of contributing to the missions of teaching and research. Let

me attempt to make this case more clearly by examining some of the sorts of service-related activities in which he took part over the course of his career.

As a member of the faculty at The University of Oregon, Professor Cohen served as Assistant Dean in the College of Liberal Arts, as well as Director of the Honors College. Although assistant deans typically have limited authority, they also frequently are chosen for the position because of a presumed commitment to undergraduate education and are expected to identify, develop, and implement initiatives that result in improved teaching, as well as better learning outcomes. This sort of role is perfect for an individual with Professor Cohen's interests in teaching, and it makes perfectly good sense, therefore, that he would accept the position of Assistant Dean at the University of Oregon when receiving an offer. It makes even more sense that he would accept the position of Director of the Honors College, as that would give him greater opportunity to function within the sphere of a more specialized and rarefied set of concerns—specifically, maximizing and, thereby, enriching the educational experience of the institution's most intellectually promising undergraduate students. As I noted above, Professor Cohen seemed to have a gift for teaching superior students that fully manifested itself even in the years following his retirement when he taught sections of honors courses *gratis* and presumably for the sheer enjoyment in challenging undergraduate students to do their best work.

In addition to his service at the college level of administration, Professor Cohen was also the Head of the then Department of Speech Communication at The Pennsylvania State University from 1970 to 1975. He took the position following the departure of an Acting Head and Head before him for a deanship in one case and a vice-presidency in another. He saw the Department he had inherited through some difficult years, but nevertheless remained steadfast during that period in his commitments to assure the integrity of the undergraduate and graduate programs, as well as to maintain Penn State's flagship status and reputation as an exemplar in the production of high-quality scholarship, and was active in efforts to attract newcomers who could contribute to those ends. Upon leaving the Headship, moreover, he even took on the responsibility of training the instructors

assigned to teach in the Department's nationally prominent reticence program. Many people would interpret such activity following service as a Head as beneath their station. Such a thought, I am sure, never entered Professor Cohen's mind. He was much too concerned that those in the program receive the quality of instruction that would help them overcome obstacles that their anxieties concerning speaking created.

Sharing of expertise was another way in which Professor Cohen was of service. In addition to participating in programs and seminars focusing on administrative concerns, as he had done in the area of teaching, he chose the vehicle of publication to help others in communication administration find ways to perform their roles more adeptly and, thereby, to function more successfully. For instance, in collaboration with Jackson McCormack, he published an account of the problems of coordinating local programs in a multi-campus structure in such a way as to assure curricular integrity (see McCormack & Cohen, 1974). In another article, he discussed his experiences in preparing the previously mentioned instructors assigned to specialized sections of the University's required General Education course in oral communication in conjunction with Penn State's reticence program (see Cohen, 1980).

Professor Cohen's record in service also includes many contributions to the profession and its organizations. Among them are his roles as Chair of the SCA Winans Award Selection Committee (1967), Chair of the SCA Nominating Committee (1968), Chair of the SCA Committee on Committees (1976), Chair of the SCA Wallace Award Committee (1978), Chair of the SCA Awards Committee (1985), President of the Pennsylvania Communication Association (1981), and President of the Eastern Section of the Kenneth Burke Society (1987). Most noteworthy, of course, was his succession from 1972 to 1975 from Second Vice-President to First Vice President, President, and Immediate Past President of the Speech Communication Association. Note that in every case, the service indicated relates to a position of leadership and in nearly all instances in one way or another to the promotion of excellence in the pursuit of scholarship by representatives of the discipline. Because such service-related work provided

opportunities to contribute to this end, they had all the more appeal to Professor Cohen and excited his interest in being part of the action.

One could make the same claim in relation to Professor Cohen's participation in reviews of communication programs at The University of Southern California, Southern Illinois University, Emerson College, Marist College, Kean State University, Muskingum College, and the University of Massachusetts. The assessment of academic programs and the quality of advice that review teams provide in preparing them can make important differences in how well the faculties involved and, hence, the institutions they represent subsequently perform in carrying out their teaching and related scholarly missions. Professor Cohen was always willing to make the sacrifices in time and effort necessary to assure that the results of reviews would have such positive consequences.

Another important respect in which Professor Cohen was consistently willing to be of service in assuring the health of the discipline involves his editorial work on behalf of the journals of professional organizations. Inspection of his *curriculum vitae* reveals a pattern of continuing service in this extremely important domain. From 1961 to 1964, Professor Cohen was an Associate Editor for *Western Journal of Speech Communication* and was its Editor from 1964 to 1967. From 1961 to 1964, he also served as an Associate Editor of *Quarterly Journal of Speech*. He was Book Review Editor for *Philosophy and Rhetoric* for the period 1976-1983, as well as the Editor for the *Speech Communication Association of Pennsylvania Annual* from 1984 to 1987. Throughout this time frame, he was recurrently an Associate Editor for both *Communication Quarterly* and *Communication Education*.

In my judgment, membership on an editorial board or being an editor for a professional journal is the most important form of professional service one can perform because the quality of publications in such outlets cannot exceed the competence of those who take part in the screening process. Unfortunately, those most well equipped to provide this type of service often decline membership on editorial boards because they are "too busy," will be "on leave," are "in need of time" to do their "own work," and the like. Fortunately, there are enough Herman Cohens in the profession to

prevent the unwillingness to serve from becoming too much of a problem, but that may not always prove to be the case.

Conclusion

In this essay, I have attempted to illuminate the many contributions that Professor Cohen has made as a representative of the discipline in teaching, scholarship, and service. I was able to do so from a variety of vantage points: as a fellow alumnus of The University of Iowa, as a colleague at The Pennsylvania State University, as an individual who followed in Professor Cohen's footsteps as a department head and President of the National Communication Association, as an admirer, and as a friend. This combination of perspectives facilitated the task of arriving at what I hope has proved to be a meaningful synthesis of his career and the labors of love it reflects.

Professor Cohen is an individual of significant demonstrated accomplishment. If I have not succeeded in establishing that by this point in my examination, I am not sure what doing so would require. For those not already acquaintances of Professor Cohen, I hope that I provided a suitable introduction to him and given you a better appreciation of the man, what he has meant to the discipline, and his character. For those who are acquaintances, I trust that I have done justice to what I am sure is the highly favorable image you have of the man and his work and the esteem in which you hold him. He is deserving of that image, as well as esteem, and I would not wish to do anything to tarnish either.

My late father was fond of applying the label "the genuine article" to those he admired, not only by virtue of their achievements, but also their complete lack of pretentiousness or hint of self-aggrandizement. To him, these were the sorts of people who make a difference and have positive impact on the well-being of others who are fortunate enough to have encountered them. The labors of selfless love conspicuous in Professor Cohen's career, I am confident, would have led my father, had the two been acquainted, to say of him, "He's the genuine article."

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More than a Historian –

Herman Cohen: Incomparable Teacher, Exemplary Scholar

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Herman Cohen may best be known as *the* historian of the communication field, yet his influence extends far beyond his caretaker role to a lasting legacy across the academic triangle – in teaching, research and service. The quintessential, “complete” academician, the values and practices Cohen exemplifies have made a lasting mark on his students, and have extended to the many communication scholars and practitioners who have engaged him professionally or socially. Herman Cohen is one of the discipline’s “Renaissance Men,” knowledgeable and articulate in a variety of areas, and expert at drawing historical and contemporary connections. The opportunity to discuss Cohen’s influence on his students and his contributions to the discipline is a privilege. Although in one short essay we cannot do justice to his influence, Herman Cohen has shaped our lives. We continue to use Cohen as a standard for our own teaching and writing practices, and as a model for the professional goals toward which we work.

Indeed this sounds like effusive praise, but those who know Herman Cohen will know that we are being factual rather than fulsome. Our focus in this essay will be a discussion of Dr. Herman Cohen’s contributions to the discipline, organized around the areas where he has had a profound impact on us personally, but also on our field. We begin with his teaching contributions and his legacy to the professoriate—perhaps an unusual place to begin such an essay, but Cohen is no usual educator! We then move on to his research contributions, discussing their significance and impact on the communication discipline, as well as considering how his model of scholarship has influenced our own approaches to research. We point to the effort and love Herman Cohen has given us and our discipline and honor his legacy, although we can only scratch the surface in a short essay.

Cohen as Incomparable Teacher

Although higher education today is largely defined by “assessable” scholarship rather than excellent pedagogical practice, this trend has lately been challenged by proponents of the Carnegie Foundation’s focus on quality teaching (Boyer, 1990). Academics looking to become better educators can look no further than Herman Cohen for a model master teacher. In his six decades of teaching, Cohen has exemplified superior instructional practice, from the undergraduate classroom to the doctoral seminar. His career demonstrates what many of us are beginning to acknowledge – that teaching has the greatest impact on our students, on us personally, and on our profession. Publications in higher education are increasingly specialized and rarefied, and as such our writing reaches an increasingly limited readership. Our teaching, however, allows us to make a significant impact upon the profession as we create lasting impressions on the attitudes and practices of our undergraduate students, and shape the profession in meaningful and measurable ways through our graduate students. No less important is our impact on the field through teaching-related participation in the life of the discipline. In all these areas Herman Cohen’s legacy is impressive. His teaching spans more than five decades, seven institutions and two continents. He has taught full-time at the Universities of Oregon (1949 -1967), Massachusetts (1967-70) and Pennsylvania State (1970-1992), and has had visiting professorships at such notable institutions as the Universities of Iowa, Vermont and Edinburgh (U.K.). Cohen has taught multitudes of students, and through the quality of his teaching has touched each of their lives in meaningful ways.

Take Don Boileau for example, who recently attended a panel honoring Herman Cohen at the Eastern Communication Association’s 99th Convention in Pittsburgh. Cohen had a real and lasting influence on Boileau, starting decades ago when he was Cohen’s student in graduate school at the University of Oregon. Boileau went on to obtain a doctorate, moving on to teach several generations of students, who in turn went on to shape the world in their own ways. Thus Cohen’s influence, as a good teacher, has

passed on to and through Boileau. This single example illustrates how the impact of good teaching can be both substantial and exponential, being transferred on from teacher to student, student-as-teacher, and teacher-to-teacher.

The power to touch so many lives is awe-inspiring and can be subject to abuse in higher education, where research too often eclipses teaching. Today compassionate, “civilized” teaching has sadly lost standing as it became synonymous with K-12 teaching that panders to students’ self-esteem at the price of quality learning, while collegiate-level teaching has become increasingly defined in assessable terms (Glassick, Huber & Maer, 1997). But Cohen’s pedagogy hearkens back to a higher standard of collegiate culture—caring, compassionate teaching that brought out the best in students while promoting excellence in learning. We do not give this accolade lightly. We have seen many teachers in their journey to their doctorates, through (jointly) seven institutions of higher education small and large, private and public. Many of the lessons we learned in Cohen’s classes stay with us – lessons in content, form and process. He taught us the value of kindness and humor in the classroom, showed us the worth of accepting students as individuals, and reinforced the value of learning over simply *teaching*.

As well as valuing learning, the intangible, hard-to-assess “processes” of teaching make an excellent teacher. Cohen mastered these processes. As a gentle instructor he earned his students’ respect. He was often humble in the classroom, reminding us of his own human flaws. He taught with humor, both verbal and visual. His sketches on the papers we submitted were valued by his students. Cohen accepted our individual learning interests, and encouraged us to develop our knowledge further by tying our research interests with his own enthusiasm for eighteenth-century rhetoric. His passionate interest in the historical development of speech communication as an academic discipline in the United States infected his graduate students, many of whom continue his legacy by teaching their own students the value of historical roots.

Through his teaching about the development of the discipline, Cohen encouraged us to bridge gaps created within the discipline and to avoid valuing one area over the other. He instilled in us a keenness for examining our disciplinary foundation, and prompted us to rise above schisms, both real and artificial. The authors of this contribution, as a long-standing research team, illustrate the positive impact of these lessons. For example, Pixy's primary focus within speech communication was with new technologies. Yet after a class with Cohen on the history of the discipline, she chose to take additional classes with him on Blair, Whately and Campbell, who seemed arcane figures at the time. To this day, the writings of these eighteenth century rhetoricians fuel a love of prose and the conviction that social scientists should not sacrifice good writing in the name of empiricism. Maureen's work as Cohen's graduate assistant on his book tracing the discipline's lineage from 1915-1945 impressed upon her the need to be aware of non-rhetorical sub-disciplines as they helped shape and impact the direction of rhetorical studies. In addition, she learned the art of finishing a large project by breaking it down into smaller pieces and working chronologically, piece by piece, until the project was completed; as well as teaching her the patience and time it takes utilizing this approach. Cohen also drew constant attention to the interdisciplinary nature of the field, including its heavy borrowing from the social sciences like psychology and sociology, and liberal arts like English and philosophy. Since then, her work has continued on the book project Cohen started to expand the disciplinary lineage of Communication from 1945 to 1971 and the Wingspread Conference. In addition, both authors, like many of their peers among Cohen's students, continue to teach the value of interdisciplinary work.

Another important "process" of teaching we learned from Cohen was to value our students as he did. As students in his classes, we knew that Cohen genuinely liked his students and embraced their differences in research interests, ages, gender and academic backgrounds. Respect for students is a buzzword today, yet many professors simply do not like their students. This can be seen over and over again in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, and is reinforced frequently to Pixy in her role as Director for the

Center for Teaching at her institution. Just as students learn better from a teacher who is enthusiastic about a subject, so also do they react to teachers who are condescending. Although Cohen knew his subject far better than his students ever could, he encouraged meaningful dialogue in his classes. Beyond Socratic dialogue, his classes were true seminars. He challenged graduate students to master a particular rhetorician thoroughly, and then teach one another under his careful tutelage. His consideration in the classroom transcended the typical professor-student relationship we all have experienced as both students and teachers; Cohen invested individual attention and care, inspiring us to value our own students. This caring and compassionate style of teaching generates a genuine and lasting impact on generation after generation of students.

As he earned our respect, we also learned that Herman Cohen loved the discipline. He nurtured it as an educator and scholar, as well as through his various service commitments. These ranged from the state-level Speech Communication Association of Pennsylvania all the way to his tenure as the President of the Speech Communication Association in 1975. In a time when criticism of the discipline abounds, fragmentation persists, and schisms remain strong, Cohen's deep interest in the discipline's well-being has been inspirational. Beyond serving as a historian accurately documenting the roots and development of speech communication, Cohen drew his students into the investigation and shared with us his passion for cultivation and caretaking. This taught us more than the value of caretaking; it gave us training in broader issues affecting our careers in higher education. In Cohen's classes, we read and critiqued manuscripts from the founding fathers, considered the cultural and historical influences on the discipline's development, and traced the fragmentation of the parent-discipline into many sub-fields that either branched off into independent disciplines or entered contentious "sibling" relationships that continue today. As we debated issues of territoriality, legitimacy and competing paradigms, we learned valuable lessons that went far beyond the classroom: we became knowledgeable about the politics, culture and even the economics of teaching.

While the process of teaching is as important as its content, the content of Cohen's teaching was significant, shaping our views of our discipline. Although we share common roots, the Communication Studies/Rhetoric schism remains strong, and departments have changed over the past few decades, with many new divisions also existing within the discipline. For example, Media and New Technologies along with other emerging sub-disciplines, have further splintered an already fragmented field. The "umbrella" departments of the mid-twentieth century are a thing of the past, with the areas they subsumed (rhetoric, communication studies, radio, TV, film, journalism, and so on) separated into clearly defined departments. The state of the field today can be illustrated in the existence of specialized organizations like the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, the Broadcast Education Association, and the Association for Theatre in Higher Education, to name just a few. Cohen has taught us to understand the origin of the schisms that led to the founding of such organizations, and to see past them in our own teaching. We now inform our own students of how the various areas that make up Communication grew out of the larger discipline, which nurtured them until they were ready for independence. As these sub-disciplines gained their own academic legitimacy, they often forgot their roots, as many in the larger discipline of Communication continue to do.

It is important for our students to learn what we learned from Cohen: that such forgetting stifles our growth and promotes schisms, reinforcing barriers rather than encouraging opportunities for cross-disciplinary collaboration that build upon common roots. Cohen has led us to believe that all the "children of the discipline" can learn from our historical roots and has emphasized the importance of acknowledging communication study in all its eclectic aspects. This frees us from the artificial barriers that have been created by past and current scholars. We pass on to our students this liberating knowledge, which can hopefully show them that they can define their own careers without being boxed into corners or compartmentalized by narrowing labels. By teaching this, Cohen has

remained far ahead of his time, as the popularity of interdisciplinary studies grows nationwide (Davis, 2008).

The views of our discipline we learned from Cohen constitute an important lesson. As we learned *about* the history of our discipline from Cohen, as he persuaded us of the *value* of knowing our historical roots, we came to realize that it is necessary to take ownership of our history and in turn teach it to our students. In effect, Cohen passed the torch to us, as we pass it to future members of the discipline. All communication students can learn from our past to understand the current state of the discipline and its potential future. For example, the beginnings of the discipline in 1914-1915, with its separation from the discipline of English, foreshadowed the subsequent separation of sub-disciplines into independent full-fledged disciplines. This process continues today. As well, the early debates over how the discipline should define itself and conduct its research continue today. The questions of whether we as a discipline should emulate the humanities in our theories and methods, or align ourselves more closely to the sciences, have not yet been answered. Thus it is important for us to know our history well in order to teach it effectively.

Cohen's sweeping, perceptive illumination of the discipline--past development, current trajectories and future directions--shapes the scope of our students' understanding, whether they are headed for the professional workplace or academia. This is one legacy he has passed on -- to us, and many generations of future communication practitioners and scholars.

Significantly, Cohen's legacy goes beyond mastery of teaching processes and content. His excellence as a teacher was promoted beyond his classrooms with a range of activities which the Carnegie Foundation now classifies as defining a master teacher (Glassick, Huber and Maer, 1997). Once again, Herman Cohen was a teacher ahead of his time. He carried his skills into the discipline, with leadership and vision in the development of the field, from his work as departmental chair at the Pennsylvania State University, and SCA presidency, to his many contributions as speaker and panelist regionally, nationally and internationally. Post-retirement, Cohen

continues this active participation in disciplinary conferences and Associations.

Cohen also was mentor par excellence with a gentle, genuine interest in his students. To this day Cohen continues mentoring former and current students. For example, he continued to mentor Maureen through the years, showing compassion and encouragement during the extended journey toward completing her doctoral dissertation. Another example is Kathryn Sue Young, an Interpersonal/Small Group scholar, who credits Cohen with the gentle impetus behind her first book. But perhaps the best example of Cohen's mentoring can be seen in the recent ECA panel honoring him, with attendees ranging across five decades of Cohen's teaching, from one of his earliest students, Don Boileau, to some of his last students who include the authors of this essay. Attending the panel were Cohen's past students across a wide range of communication fields. They included media scholars, rhetoricians, and interpersonal, organizational and intercultural specialists like David Dzikowski, Mary Mino, Janet Bodenman Reynolds, Calvin Troup, and Jerry Zolton.

Cohen as an Exemplary Scholar

Herman Cohen established himself as a master teacher, ahead of his time; his scholarship has also been exemplary, particularly in the context of his own academic tenure, an era prior to the "publish or perish" imperatives of today. Prolific in his own specialization, Cohen published over 30 articles and book chapters, co-authored a public speaking textbook, and made a seminal contribution to the field with his text on the history of the discipline. He accomplished all this while pursuing his interest in the history of rhetorical theories with a specialization in eighteenth century rhetorical theory (Intercom, 1992; Cohen, 1994). Cohen's scholarship is a model of meaningful accomplishment. As a theoretician, by the careful crafting of his research, and in his valuing of collaboration, Herman Cohen is truly an excellent scholar.

As a rhetorician, Herman Cohen is exceptional. One of his pedagogical tenets, the question, "How do you know where you are going if

you do not know where you have been?” also guides a rhetorical critic’s research practices. In effect, he asks “How can we analyze a present artifact or make future projections without knowing anything about its history?” When rhetoricians conduct analyses, we are treating artifacts as individual Polaroid snapshots, analyzing a rhetorical work at a given moment in time. But while we do situate our analyses within a larger context of previous established research (the survey of literature), we often do not consider the larger, historical continuum of rhetorical theory. Can a rhetorical scholar know where she is going without knowledge of rhetorical theory’s historical legacy? Can research based solely on “Polaroids” fit within the bigger communication picture? Obviously not. Cohen’s work illustrates both the value and necessity of scholarship conducted with research sensibilities informed by a broader historical context.

For Cohen, familiarization with rhetoric’s historical legacy helps define and shape the trajectory of a rhetorical analysis, as well as grounds the scholar’s broad understanding of rhetorical theory and criticism. A scholar’s knowledge of rhetoric’s development enriches subsequent studies, which become stronger as his/her knowledge of history provides a foundational backdrop that enriches the analysis and situates the “Polaroids” within the larger spectrum of artifact theory development and critical application. Lineage knowledge helps the scholar understand how the sub-discipline of rhetorical theory has developed over time. Careful historical work reveals mistaken paths that were taken and corrected, underdeveloped and historically-focused initial approaches, and more sophisticated subsequent developments. Armed with this knowledge, contemporary scholars can gain a better appreciation of the discipline, and nurture their contributions to its growth.

As part of Maureen’s work with Cohen on his history of the discipline, she gained a greater appreciation for the “forgotten voices” often left on library shelves, neglected by scholars who train their attention toward contemporary academic journals. Over the course of four summers, she brushed the dust off many rich, old disciplinary books. This not only taught her the value of meticulous, methodical and careful analysis as a necessity for

the best scholarship, but gave her invaluable knowledge of the roots of the discipline. Sloppy, haphazard and incomplete research not only reflects poorly upon the researcher, but also upon the discipline. Cohen instilled this commitment to thorough and painstaking scholarship in many students, a badge of scholarly excellence that indicates his status as a master scholar. Cohen's influence on our scholarship remains strong, and many of us work hard to ensure we are exemplifying the values and ideals he inspired.

Cohen practiced what he preached as a scholar. His seminal *History of Speech Communication* was crafted masterfully from many years of research. Convention presentations by Cohen on the subject began in 1980 and he published a 1985 book chapter analyzing the research development within the field from a historical perspective (Cohen, 1985). His meticulous research over a period of 15 years, culminated with his major treatise on the emergence of the discipline. The quality of the book demonstrates that some of the most significant scholarly contributions cannot be rushed. Furthermore, the book aptly demonstrates how Cohen carefully and thoughtfully crafts concepts. As a wordsmith, he composes sentences masterfully to express meanings. In addition, he considers rhetorical artifacts, painstakingly explores the winding path the discipline took in its infancy and early years, and traces the development of the broader academic discipline as it attempted to gain legitimacy by other disciplines (a quest that continues today).

In addition to his rhetorical scholarship and the publication of the seminal *History of Speech Communication*, another of Cohen's notable legacies as a scholar comes from his practice of connecting people and things. We like to think of it as "the interconnectivity of all things 'communication'." Cohen's careful attention to the collective whole taught us the value of collaboration, across disciplinary schisms. Cohen himself lived this value, as we noticed in our time as doctoral students at Penn State. He had strong and lasting connections with two noted scholars, Gerald Phillips and Dennis Gouran. Gerald Phillips, a self-styled polymath was in many ways the polar opposite of Herman Cohen. Phillips' research was not limited to any one area of specialization; his teaching style, although just as effective, was very

different from Cohen's; but it was their personalities that really differentiated them. Yet Cohen and Phillips were firm friends who spoke on the phone every evening, often for at least an hour, discussing and debating a wide range of issues both intellectual and pedestrian. Dennis Gouran, a leading scholar in small group research, is the quintessential Communication Studies researcher, whose applied and theoretical work could not be farther removed from the historical rhetoric that is Cohen's specialty. Yet the two would meet on Saturday mornings at the local McDonald's for coffee and camaraderie, both professional and personal.

These models of personal and professional relationships have been passed onto us. The two of us, with very different scholarly and personal interests have collaborated since we graduated from Penn State. Moreover, we continue to establish similar relationships with others across the discipline and outside it, following Cohen's tutelage—that our research should follow our interests, not status quo academic mandates. Professors who defy conventional wisdom, that would seem to dictate a clear and distinct research agenda—are sometimes deemed academic dilettantes. But we are a rhetorician publishing in computer-mediated communication and a social scientist incorporating rhetoric in computer-mediated communication research. We collaborate and publish with colleagues in international and intercultural communication, psychology, business, anthropology and education. These disciplinary and inter-disciplinary relationships have taught us that it is good, even imperative, to cross artificial boundaries, connect across the human experience, and create works that are fuller, richer, deeper and better developed. And as a personal bonus, we have found that collaboration can be energizing and freeing!

Conclusion

In this essay we hope to have shown that becoming the “compleat” scholar means eradicating boundaries. We learned these and other lessons from Herman Cohen, the educator, researcher, scholar, and mentor. Cohen represents to us one of those rare breed of scholars who embodies the vision of a true academic, scholar and gentleman. The model of scholarship and

teaching practiced by Cohen has been promoted over the last decade by the Carnegie Foundation, but Cohen lived it well before Ernest Boyer (1990) or Charles Glassick and his colleagues (Glassick, Huber and Maery, 1997) popularized the holistic model of teacher-as-scholar. The French historian Jacques Barzun has been quoted as saying "In teaching you cannot see the fruit of a day's work. It is invisible and remains so, maybe for twenty years." This holds true not just for teaching but also for scholarship. It is the rare teacher or scholar who can see his influence in his own lifetime. We believe that Herman Cohen can – in us and in his contribution to the discipline.

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Herman Cohen's Legacy

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Academic disciplines are characterized by unique attributes and identities that shape the faculty, staff, and students within them (Becher, 1981; Becher & Trowler, 2001; Gardner & Barnes, 2007). Disciplines find life through the embodied action of their adherents, enduring through the mentoring work of investment in others who will follow and carry on that tradition. Graduate school socialization as socialization to an academic community (Golde, 1998), a particular type of professional socialization (Brim & Wheeler, 1966), ensures the continuance of an academic discipline and also shapes its nature and character, including the values embraced publicly by its members and manifested in professional practices.

The work of graduate student socialization is carried out both intentionally and indirectly through the daily activities of members of a profession in interaction with potential and emerging members and with other full members of a profession (Tinto, 1993). In this matrix of interaction, aspiring members learn the content and norms of a profession with regard to its knowledge base and practices, its subject matter, and its culture and values, including how to engage other members of the profession, how to do the labor of the profession, and what is important or deserving of time and attention in that profession. The ontological, epistemological, and axiological assumptions (Anderson, 1996) of a profession emerge through the socialization process, reproducing, refining, and shaping the future of a profession. Hence, the role of professional mentor as socialization agent is indispensable to the future of a field.

It stands to reason that professional socialization should be particularly important for a derivative discipline seeking to define and

understand its history and identity. Graduate students in such a discipline need to know the roots of their profession and acknowledge the lineage of disputes and questions that arise periodically in order to contribute to its future direction. Communication is such a discipline (Cohen, 1994), one that has endured, developed, and flourished because of standard bearers who have served as mentors and agents of professional socialization for its students. Herman Cohen's volume on the history of the discipline of communication (Cohen, 1994) is replete with exemplars of scholars and teachers who made a difference in the lives of others, guiding them to the profession and assisting in their formative development. Herman Cohen is himself such a standard bearer, serving as mentor to countless graduate students who have made their way into the field and constitute its vibrant membership.

In this essay, we highlight the experiences of three women—Janet Reynolds Bodenman, Ann Jabro, and Mary Mino—who have carried Herman Cohen's legacy forward through involvement in the field of communication through the lives of their students, through contributions to professional organizations at the state, regional, and national level, and through their collegial encouragement of others. Their memories are integrated into the narrative of this manuscript to provide a portrait of a legacy that lives on in their scholarship, pedagogy, and service. Cohen's genuine, warm concern for others, support for the discipline at all levels, outstanding teaching, and identity as a professional role model of commitment to students, scholarship, and service create a gestalt of a standard bearer of the discipline of communication.

Invitational Care

Herman Cohen earned his degrees from the University of Iowa (B.A., 1948; MA, 1949; Ph.D., 1954). From there, he took a position at University of Oregon from 1949-1967. For 18 years he contributed to University of Oregon's rhetorical studies program. He taught at the University of Massachusetts from 1967 to 1970. Cohen's final academic position was in the department of Communication Arts and Sciences at the Pennsylvania State

University in State College, where he served for more than 25 years and penned what most experts consider to be one of the critical foundational texts of the communication discipline (Cohen, 1994).

Herman Cohen was and is an unassuming man, a great scholar who downplays his own importance. Cohen had a mind that constantly searched for truth and an eye for detail that served him well both in his research on the history of the discipline and in his genuine care and concern for the human beings in his life. Although his focus of attention was on ideas rather than on his own or others' private lives, he was committed to the process of self-discovery and served as a "life mender."

Cohen's office was located in the Sparks Building, one of the oldest buildings on Pennsylvania State University's campus. On most days, a student could walk the long green and crème speckled hallways and know that the brown oak door to Herman's office would be open. Peering through the door, one observed a tall and slender man with a thick head of white hair. His warm and comforting style coupled with his intense respect for conversation made students believe they were important scholars and their ideas had the potential to revolutionize the discipline. He'd be engaged in lively discussion or calculated debate with a colleague, student, or member of the administration, but never too involved that he didn't acknowledge a visitor's presence. Students and colleagues could enter his office and talk about anything—music, history, politics—and find support for their existence as whole persons with hobbies and perhaps families. One author recalls an instance of such support. She was married, and Cohen would always ask, "How's John doing?" It was a small thing, but it meant a lot. Another of the authors recalls returning to teach at Penn State after being away for two years and meeting Cohen at a nearby McDonald's—she and he and her children would sit and talk with him. She recalls an eye for the particular accompanying his intellectual acuity, noting that later, he would ask how each child was doing, naming their identifying features—big brown eyes or beautiful curly hair—with faultless accuracy.

Cohen's care for others extended beyond his personal circle at Penn State. He was loyal to the discipline of communication in its many public

manifestations, serving as a champion for professional associations at the state, regional, and national levels and nourishing it with his own scholarship, ensuring an enduring legacy with his contributions.

Support for the Profession

Herman Cohen considered every professional convention to be important in its own right, each assuming a unique role in the discipline and providing endless opportunities for colleagues to engage in lively intellectual discussion and, more often than not, debate. The Pennsylvania Communication Association (formerly the Speech Communication Association of Pennsylvania) continued to thrive because Herman and others like him around the state would encourage their students to attend the convention. Not only did Cohen encourage support for the discipline's local, regional, and national groups, but he also served these organizations in leadership roles. While the national convention was (and remains) important, he and his colleagues considered it vital to maintain local ties, balancing cosmopolitan and provincial (Roberts & Arnett, 2008) realms of professional activity. The context of the Pennsylvania Communication Association provided a location to gather and get to know potential colleagues, determining mutual compatibility of theoretical and pedagogical frameworks. These opportunities represent the strength of weak ties (Granovetter, 1973) provided by collegial interaction within organizations such as state and regional associations.

Participation in state and regional associations was part of what Herman and those of his generation considered a progressive professional socialization process. Beginning scholars would start their careers with presentations in the graduate classroom, moving step by step to more comprehensive venues, gaining experience at local, then regional, and then national and international conferences (Mino, 2008). Another component of progressive professional socialization is the scholar's ability to defend professional contributions to the discipline in a public forum. Cohen, his dear friend and colleague, Gerald M. Phillips, and other colleagues from the discipline often staged debates at conferences to motivate critical thinking,

arouse curiosity, and encourage students to come prepared to engage in lively discussion of a specific concept or theoretical perspective. Students were “primed” during classroom discussion to explore multiple perspectives on an issue, which promoted academic inquiry and pursuit of the truth. This gradual immersion in the discipline was systematic and incremental; Herman Cohen and those of his generation offered their students this framework for involvement, a model that has been passed down to subsequent generations of students.

Herman Cohen understood the discipline of speech communication not as becoming too fragmented or niched, but as becoming more sophisticated and diverse. He is noted as having expressed concern that scholarly primacy in rhetorical theory and criticism risked being returned to the discipline of English. “Much of our work remains dependent on disciplines other than ours,” one author recalls him as saying (Jabro, 2008). During a number of productive years at the Pennsylvania State University, scholars in the discipline of communication were contributing to theory, laying a strong foundation, but it is not clear that the current generation of scholars have taken it to the next level.

Cohen’s noted opus *The History of Speech Communication: The Emergence of a Discipline* (1994) emerged from classroom teaching experience. Cohen hailed from the old tradition of scholarship where one didn’t necessarily publish everything that could have seen print. His lectures were publishable, taking the form of a dialogue between teacher and students. His was the old school form of instruction in which he would come into the classroom and sit down and begin to talk about whatever the focus of the day was. His graduate students, Maureen Minielli, in particular, convinced him to get all of these ideas down in book form and helped with the nuts and bolts of the book. This volume is important for the discipline, because it’s not clear whether graduate students in communication in the United States are learning this vital historical background during their coursework. This book provides that opportunity to many.

In his history, Herman Cohen is calling us, as did Gerald Phillips (Fritz, 2005), to reflect on what our predecessors have done in our discipline

and to continue to develop our own theories instead of being dependent on other disciplines. Even in the classroom setting, he was adamant that it was time for communication scholars to look more closely at the actual process of communication in different contexts and to theorize in original, discipline-specific ways—we still tend to be focused too much on practice and education (Bodenman, 2008).

The historical background provided by the course during which the book developed, and now by the book itself, provides a context for understanding the entire scope of the communication discipline. Such information helps inform understanding of material encountered in courses such as organizational communication. For example, what is the relationship of organizational communication to rhetoric? What is the relationship between a course in organizational communication and courses in industrial and organizational psychology and organizational behavior? How is what we are doing different from other social science disciplines? The historical treatment offered in Cohen's class from which the book derived and the subsequent book itself helped establish the roots of the interpersonal, organizational, and small group communication realm (Bodenman, 2008). Each of these areas had a beginning, and these beginnings help demonstrate how our discipline is different from psychology, sociology, and organizational behavior. It is rare to find such exploration of this theoretical lineage, and it is much needed.

This legacy continues into the present moment in today's communication classroom in the teaching of the three authors who sat under Cohen's tutelage. For example, in organizational communication classes, material from Cohen's class is employed to explain the origin of the ideas that are taught today. Students with double majors in communication and psychology discover the distinctiveness of their communication degree, and professional colleagues from other disciplines learn the legitimacy of the communication discipline (Bodenman, 2008). Herman Cohen is the living embodiment of knowledge of the origins and heritage of these ideas. He stands as a bridge between today's generation of scholars and those who shaped him; he has been noted as remarking that his own teaching and

scholarship were most influenced by A. Craig Baird, Karl Wallace, and Gerald Phillips. As they taught him, so he has taught others, welcoming new generations into the field of communication by means of classroom, conversation, and cultivation of relationships.

Constructive, Supportive Professor

Herman Cohen taught the honors course in public speaking at the Pennsylvania State University as well as in the Ph.D. program. His influence was thus far-reaching. Herman Cohen not only taught students, but incited and guided their intellectual development. He took students on an intellectual field trip; he would start class with a question based on the assigned reading. That question would integrate all the concepts of the day and carry the residual message of the presentation.

In the classroom, he modeled how to question students and, instead of giving them answers, would help students come to their own answers. Several queries might be forthcoming: "Why do you feel that way? How do you see that point connect to that point? What do you mean? How did you get from here to there? Now that you're at this point, is your position accurate based on the theory? What about the theory points to this? Doesn't it? Why not? What's wrong with the theory?" (Mino, 2008). This dialogic pedagogy invited critical thinking and emergent meaning in the classroom setting, permitting students to engage in analysis, synthesis, and integration at high levels of intellectual engagement (Bloom, 1956).

Cohen brought research into the classroom, integrating scholarship with pedagogy. At the time one of the authors was Cohen's student, Cohen was entrenched in writing his *History*. Each class session was an extension of the chapter he was working on. Cohen would talk about the research process and describe how he was retrieving information. He would ask, "Hey, did you hear what I found out?" Students in the class could go further in their own research when they found out what he was reading. Cohen connected research to the classroom, providing opportunities for students to pursue related avenues of research based on his foundations (Jabro, 2008).

Herman Cohen was intellectually generous in the classroom. One of the authors specialized in oral interpretation and needed to understand the functions of rhetoric. He was very helpful to students in her position who were not focused on rhetoric but needed a basic grasp of conceptual foundations. During her time in graduate school, rhetoric was a separate area. Cohen was very gracious, making complex ideas clear to the novice (Mino, 2008). He also prevented a number of arguments among graduate students about concepts and theories, redirecting potential arguments with questions. For instance, he might direct students to inquire about the historical context of Hugh Blair's writing or provide for students the historical background for a given rhetorician, and students would listen to what he had to say. It might be clear at that point that one of the discussants was more "right" than the other, but Herman made it clear how each person had at least a segment of what was right in a given response. In the classroom, even if a student was unprepared, he'd ask a question that was answerable, such as, "Where are we starting today?" He refused to embarrass someone; he would start from where that student happened to be. In this sense, Cohen's legacy echoes that of Paulo Freire, with his emphasis on learning as saving face (Arnett, 2002).

Graduate students often feel overwhelmed in their roles as emerging scholars, seeking to learn disciplinary norms, sort through a great deal of information, and balance time constraints. During such times, Cohen's stories were a welcome means of instruction. Cohen, an expert storyteller, contextualized all information. His approach was like that of a systems theorist (e.g., Monge, 1977), highlighting external and internal environments, discussing what was happening in the world and what was happening in the discipline and how communication scholars were responding to a particular set of circumstances. Cohen was an outstanding teacher, responsive to multiple modes of learning. If a student was a kinesthetic learner, needing written and tactile information, he would find a way to provide that modality. He would start with a prompt and write a word or two on the board, and bring in different manuscripts—literally, books with yellow slips of paper in them that students could touch and examine (Jabro, 2008).

Cohen was a warm professor—generous with his time, willing to listen, and gentle in his critiques (Bodenman, 2008). He didn't coddle students, but he was more supportive than critical. When he was critical, it was clear that he wanted to help whoever was on the receiving end of the comments. His aim was to help the particular student figure out that student's own issues. He'd pose questions that prompted the listener to figure out what the problems were without his telling the listener what they were.

One memory held by many is that of graduate student days sitting in a small seminar with Cohen and the textured, rich cultural experience of visiting his office. He always seemed to have time for students, offering a place to sit and just talk. No particular purpose was necessary; students could simply come in and ask questions. These sessions always ended up being extremely fruitful, interesting learning experiences, even if students didn't know why they were going in there in the first place. These opportunities and spaces for informal, serendipitous, emergent learning are the heart of dialogic education, where a focus on ideas permits relationships to emerge as a byproduct (Arnett, 1992). Indeed, Cohen cultivated the type of professor-student relationship that didn't end once students walked out of the institution with a degree—he would help them perpetually.

Mentor and Role Model: Praxis Engagement

The quality of being present for students, being interested in their lives, dreams, passions, being a supportive listener and encourager—those commitments were good lessons for an aspiring member of the academy. In any academic field, the pressure seems to run against those values. Cohen certainly never placed a higher value on teaching than on research, but incorporated all of it together. He was the kind of person who was an excellent role model—the kind of professor graduate students want to become.

It is easy to forget how one comes to take on a particular identity and set of practices. These three authors have incorporated a great deal of what he taught them not only in terms of his scholarship, but in his enactment of

professional practice of the discipline. In his life and deeds are embodied the history of the speech community. If two focal points were selected to highlight as an influence on these authors, it would be the class on the history of ideas in the discipline and the way he interacted with his graduate students, in his modeling of a professor who puts students first, who lives his research.

One example of this connection of scholarly commitments to life practices is found in the case of the movement to unionize the faculty at Penn State University. Both Herman Cohen and Gerald Phillips were involved in that movement. They were committed to the idea of the marketplace of ideas and democratic practice. In the case of this public institution, they attempted to cultivate that commitment to what was important in the academic realm of communication. Their theory always informed their practice.

His research was not driven by a desire to count a given number of publications to present a particular scholarly image, but by questions he had that were useful to other people, significant for other people to understand. The humility with which he approached the very task of articulating this history was remarkable, borne out by the fact that it took his colleagues and his graduate students to motivate Cohen to stop researching the discipline and publish what information he had already amassed. As Cohen remarks in the Introduction of his text, he collected and wrote so much information that the history of the discipline had to be presented in two volumes. Dr. Cohen is optimistic that the second volume will be completed.

Perhaps Cohen's delay in publishing the first volume of the history of the discipline is rooted in the technologies available to scholars during this era. His original tools of the trade were a No. 2 yellow pencil and a yellow notebook, and he wrote many of his manuscripts by hand (Jabro, 2008). A secretary would then transcribe the written word and the editing and review process was engaged. Though not himself an innovator, he could be considered an early adopter (Rogers, 1995), and it was Gerald Phillips, an innovator himself, who persuaded Herman to acquire his first computer in 1987. Today, Herman does all of his writing on the computer. After 30 years

in the field, he wouldn't have had to adopt at all had he been reluctant to do so, but he was willing to try anything that would keep him productive as a scholar. In this sense, Herman Cohen models insightful, focused, reflective, and contemplative use of the tools of the craft, contextualizing the use of technology as part of current scholarly practice.

Conclusion

Herman Cohen's legacy lives on in the lives of those he mentored. A standard bearer for the discipline, he has passed on to others his welcoming spirit, enduring support for the discipline of communication through service at every level and through scholarly contributions, dedication to educating the next generation of scholar/teachers, and commitment to living out the ideals of the profession in multiple spheres of life. We view and define Dr. Cohen as the personification of all that is associated with professorship and follow in his footsteps because, as Gerry Phillips always stressed, if you want to attempt to become good at something, find a person who is the best and do what that person does (Mino, 2008). We owe him great tribute, and that tribute will live on in outreach to those who meet us in our classrooms, in the pages of our scholarship, in continued engagement with our communities as we move theory into practice. This gratitude we offer with deep respect for a great scholar, teacher, mentor, and human being.

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Navigating Our Emergence: Cohen's Question

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To call Herman Cohen a bibliophile would be an understatement. With Cohen, it may be fair to say that no one ever did an “independent study,” although many graduate students did experience “directed readings” under his guidance. At least one master’s student has had the experience of being invited into an “independent study” for the purpose of developing a thesis proposal—work which was accomplished over a three-to-four week period after reading, with Cohen, *The Grammar of Motives*, *The Rhetoric of Motives*, *Human Understanding*, *The Uses of Argument*, *The New Rhetoric*, *The Ethics of Rhetoric*, *Rhetorical Criticism*, and a few other titles including something by Habermas in the earlier weeks of the term. It seems fitting, therefore, to reflect on how Cohen has contributed to the field with books, particularly with a book of his own, as we engage in the work toward which he has pointed us. As Neil Postman has said, each generation of scholars contributes to knowledge while standing on the shoulders of their predecessors (189).

Cohen’s major contributions to the field of Communication can be seen from a number of vantage points. One starting point is the invitation of a recurring question that resonates from Cohen’s scholarly, classroom, and organizational work. What is the theme of Cohen’s question?: “Why do Communication scholars and teachers depend so heavily upon ideas imported from other fields?...from philosophers and psychologists, from sociologists or historians?” Over the years, many a student has tried to answer this question in futility, only to be interrupted by Dr. Cohen, who already knew that to scratch the surface of the question more than a semester’s work was needed. This essay returns to Cohen’s question as posed in his history of the discipline. In the process of offering a provisional answer, we turn the question in response, and offer a reading of the

discipline that hopes for a concrete, Cohen-satisfying response in a deep horizon by suggesting local and personal protocols patterned after Cohen's own work.

The Problem

The conclusion of Cohen's authoritative history of the discipline, *The History of Speech Communication: The Emergence of a Discipline, 1914 – 1945*, suggests that Communication, though now close to 100 years old as an independent scholarly field, is a discipline that has yet to fully come of age. Cohen concludes the book by stating a problem through which he summons the discipline to move forward. Cohen states:

The historical situation for Speech Communication is not entirely salubrious... In the almost eighty years since the formal establishment of the discipline, it has not yet attained the central position in education, either in the schools or the colleges, that its founders had envisioned. Many institutions feel they can do very well without Speech Communication departments, and their reputations seem not to have suffered for their neglect. Indeed at the collegiate level most of the most prestigious colleges and universities offer no courses in speech communication. In the early days of the profession, especially in the Eastern Public Speaking Conference, Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Dartmouth, and Swarthmore, among others were active. Today none of them are active. In more recent years, we have seen the elimination of departments in some of our leading universities such as Michigan, Stanford, U.C.L.A., Oregon, and Vermont. The question may certainly be raised about whether the discipline has put a distinctive stamp on its research and teaching. I hope to deal with these kinds of questions in the succeeding volume (327).

Will higher education soon judge schools deficient that do not house a reputable Department of Communication? Under what conditions might elite universities initiate Communication departments and other leading

universities reinstate theirs? Cohen's "call to action" encourages us to contemplate such future questions in light of the origins of the discipline.

Contributions of the Book

Historical accounts of the academic field are not plentiful, but in 1994 two books discussing the history of the Communication discipline were published. One was Herman Cohen's book, *The History of Speech Communication: The Emergence of a Discipline, 1914 – 1945*, and the other, *A History of Communication Study: A Biographical Approach*, was written by Everett M. Rogers. The books present widely divergent accounts of the creation, formation, and growth of the discipline; as Robert Craig states in his review, the texts "do not overlap at all; not a single person or topic is more than mentioned in both" (181).

Cohen's text is an authoritative history of the discipline in the sense that he treats the roots and the growth of the discipline, tracing the movement of the field institutionally and intellectually through founding faculty and departments of what has become the National Communication Association (NCA). He recounts the nuances that led to the evolution of the discipline from "speech." His constructive narrative invites members of the discipline to follow and understand the story, its characters and the plot. As a discipline that houses many research areas and foci, Cohen's work opens us to the ebb and flow of ideas and initiatives as well as various crosscurrents in Communication. He works from a standpoint, but does not privilege his own.

Nevertheless, it is no surprise that Craig characterizes the distinction between Rogers' and Cohen's histories of the discipline in terms of conflict between social scientific and rhetorical scholarship (179). But Cohen treats the conventional demarcation equitably, and rejects such dichotomies as unhelpful and patently false.¹

¹ Cohen's legendary, decades-long poker games with Gerald Phillips (a confirmed social scientist) make implausible any standing quarrel between Cohen (an inveterate rhetorical theorist) and social scientific scholarship in the field.

Traditional rhetoricians and the new 'empiricists' regarded each other with disdain and sometimes even contempt. From the perspective of the 1980s that great dispute turns out to be nothing more than a family squabble. The conflict was mostly about methodology, not conceptualization. ("The Research and Development," p. 234)

A more careful distinction might recognize that Rogers frames the discipline in terms of a "great man" theory that did not start until after World War II. Rogers' account attributes the birth of Communication to research agendas conducted by a few scholars at a few elite universities within a narrow slice of the broader field that Cohen describes as beginning at the turn of the century. As Craig notes, Rogers grounds the intellectual heritage of the field in Darwin, Freud, and Marx and charts its course exclusively through research in the human sciences, whether quantitative or qualitative (180).

Both Rogers and Cohen make valuable contributions to a relatively limited literature on the history of the field. But Cohen's groundbreaking work seems to provide greater leverage for the field-at-large as we move into a disciplinary future not much more coherent than our heritage. Cohen provides an intellectual and institutional genealogy that silhouettes an expansive family tree we call the discipline of Communication. His work enables people from disparate parts of the family to look back to a common trunk and to sense deep roots that have supported the discipline from antiquity. Through Cohen's text, Communication teachers and scholars can find a home, whether the discipline is viewed as a network of organizations or as a conglomerate of related scholarly literatures. Organizationally, the discipline has come to be associated with the National Communication Association, its regional and state affiliates and a variety of related national and international professional and learned societies.

Cohen - An Exemplar to Emulate

Cohen's perspective is more than a scholarly account. To a significant degree, Cohen's history is autobiographical. But he says little about his personal investment at every disciplinary level. Cohen served in

instrumental leadership roles with the Pennsylvania Communication Association (PCA), the Eastern Communication Association (ECA), and the National Communication Association (NCA). He was President of the Speech Communication Association of Pennsylvania (now PCA) in 1981 in addition to the active role he took in the Speech Communication Association, now NCA, where from 1972 – 1975, Cohen served as First Vice President, Second Vice President, and President. In addition, he led the Eastern Section of the Kenneth Burke Society as President in 1987. Cohen's service to the discipline continued, as he edited a number of different journals in the discipline. From 1961 – 1967, he served the *Western Journal of Speech* as Associate Editor and Editor. He was also associate editor of the *Quarterly Journal of Speech* for three years beginning in 1961. In the 1980s, Cohen worked as Associate Editor for *Communication Quarterly* and *Communication Education* and was Book Review Editor for *Philosophy and Rhetoric* from 1976 – 1983.

As his record suggests, Cohen is a consummate professor. *The History of Speech Communication* provides, first and foremost, a scholarly perspective on the field. But he writes as a participant *in medias res*, not as a spectator. The book is not his life's work, but emerges from a good life's work—facing realities and holding out hope in ways unique to seasoned professionals. To honor Cohen by emulation would mean to work from a standpoint within a broad, liberal expanse of historically-informed knowledge and wisdom rather than narrow-minded ideology and demagoguery more prevalent today than when he entered the academy.

Indicators That The Discipline is Healthier Today

Communication, as a discipline, continues to display signs that it is healthier today than it was in 1994, when Cohen published his book. For example, more undergraduates earned communication degrees in academic year 1999 – 2000, than they had in previous years. At the turn of the century, 56,910 Bachelor's degrees were awarded in the field of Communication compared to 10,802 in 1970 – 1971 (“Student Statistics”). In addition, the amount of doctoral degrees conferred at 75 different institutions across the

country increased from 145 in 1970 – 1971 to 357 in 1999 – 2000 (“Student Statistics”). The primary scholarly organization in the discipline, The National Communication Association (NCA), began in 1914. It is the oldest and largest professional organization to promote the advancement of the discipline. NCA “promotes the study, criticism, research, teaching, and application of the artistic, humanistic, and scientific principles of communication” (“Communication Scholarship,”3). During the period of 2004 – 2007, NCA membership increased by 12% and currently has over 8000 members (“Communication Scholarship,” 3).

Through its meetings, scholarly divisions, programs, journals, and scholarly affiliations, NCA continues to develop new inroads for Communication scholarship in academia. Since the publication of *The History of Speech Communication*, The National Communication Association (NCA) entered the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) and the National Humanities Alliance. The NCA became a Constituent Society of the ACLS in 1997 (“The American Council of Learned Societies”). The ACLS promotes the advancement of humanistic studies in addition to the maintenance and strengthening of relations among the national societies devoted to such studies. Sixty-nine national scholarly organizations are members of the ACLS (“The American Council of Learned Societies”). In 1981, the National Humanities Alliance was created “to advance the cause of the humanities by promoting the common interests of its members with regard to national policy, programs, and legislation that impact work in the humanities” (“The National Humanities Alliance”). The numerical growth in the field and the recognition within learned societies both point to enhanced standing of Communication within higher education.

Another sign of disciplinary growth is the NCA’s 1996 commitment to the *Preparing Future Faculty* program. The Pew Charitable Trusts of Philadelphia launched the *Preparing Future Faculty* national initiative in 1994 “to address the issue of how research universities can be more effective in preparing the next generation of college and university faculty members without compromising the traditional research-oriented aspects of doctoral education” (“Preparing Future Faculty”). The *Preparing Future Faculty*

program is coordinated by the Council of Graduate Schools and the Association of American Colleges and Universities, and is embraced by NCA. By committing to this program, NCA is advancing the preparedness of new Communication Ph.D.s and increasing the visibility of the field within higher education.

In 2007, the NCA published *Communication Scholarship and the Humanities: A White Paper Sponsored by the National Communication Association*. An example of NCA's priority on advancing Communication scholarship, the white paper features the depth and scope of humanistic scholarship occurring in the discipline, describing "the unique contribution communication scholars already have made to the field of the humanities" (3). Notably, the paper also "identifies ways in which these domains intersect and extend their points of inquiry, thereby raising new questions and possibilities for humanistic scholarship in the twenty-first century" (4). In 2002, NCA published *Communication: Ubiquitous, Complex, Consequential*, and prepared the presentation *Communication Research: Profile of a Discipline* which together provided foundational and introductory information about the discipline and its research to scholars outside the field ("Communication: Ubiquitous & Communication Research"). More work to cultivate scholarly connections with other disciplines is expected.

At the end of his book chapter titled, *The Development of Research in Speech Communication: A Historical Perspective*, Cohen states, "To many outsiders our work seems to duplicate the work of other disciplines. In short, we do not seem to be selling a product that is different from or superior to that offered by other disciplines" (297 – 98). As the discipline continues to show signs of growth, colleagues in higher education and the marketplace seem to be gaining greater understanding of the scholarship produced in the discipline, thus allowing for the formation of mutually beneficial relationships. By a number of broad measures, the discipline appears to be making modest progress.

Today's Realities in the Discipline: Turning Cohen's Question

Despite some real indicators of growth, Cohen's question persists: "Has the discipline placed a distinctive stamp on its research and teaching?" Some conversations frame responses to this question pessimistically, calling the discipline fragmentary and directionless. From most vantage points, no particular emphasis within the field thinks of itself as ascendant beyond the confines of Communication. Furthermore, Communication cannot claim a unitary body of knowledge that seems to compare with established disciplines in the liberal arts like philosophy, sociology, history, or psychology.² When we look to the horizon, it may be still be difficult to see significant remedies for the diminutive disciplinary status that so troubled Cohen.

However, we would seek to honor Cohen's contribution, without presuming to know his conclusion, by considering Cohen's question from a different perspective and in a different way. What does it mean to be a strong discipline or a healthy field if we forsake attempts to match long-established academic disciplines in the liberal arts? What might some inductive paradigms for scholarly health look like? We will consider this question first from the perspective of Communication departments and then from the perspective of new faculty members entering the field.

Patterns of Achievement for Departments

Our discipline does not command instant credibility. Rarely does a college or university consider a Communication department the academic jewel of the institution. Therefore, Communication departments need to commend themselves to their respective institutions and make themselves indispensable in other ways.

At the most basic level, no department should out-work Communication in scholarship and teaching. As Ronald C. Arnett has noted, Communication departments are the "proletariat of the liberal arts." We earn our respect through "sweat equity." A healthy department finds creative ways

² Plato's *Gorgias* and Aristotle's *Rhetoric* establish the idea that Communication is "no definite science" and has no body of knowledge that it can claim exclusively from antiquity.

to support scholarly research and teach good, well-enrolled courses. The faculty should invest in institutional life through service, but should never expect service to compensate for poor performance in either scholarly productivity or teaching quality. Liberal arts faculty can whine, complain, and feel ill-used, raising these activities to a high art; but a good Communication department will not join the chorus. Focused work to achieve institutional measures of quality using approaches informed by our own scholarship can make Communication departments locally indispensable.

Within our own institutions, we can practice collegiality while observing discretion about interdisciplinary activity. Protect disciplinary integrity in the faculty and curriculum. Keep Communication faculty working diligently within the field—avoiding split appointments, whether in tenure-track or non-tenured positions. Support interdisciplinary scholarly work and special programs in ways that advance Communication scholarship and departmental teaching excellence.

Finally, situate the mission of the department explicitly within the mission of the larger institution. The discipline can serve every department to great advantage precisely at this point. Avoid the temptation to make any particular department a “full-service” Communication department that tries to approximate the breadth of the field. Instead, we should be framing departmental missions to match disciplinary emphases to the institutional mission of the particular college or university. Few departments today command the resources to offer an outstanding, full-spectrum Communication curriculum. But every department can invite students into the field through a door that covers disciplinary basics with strong emphases that fit its community and institutional home.³

Patterns of Achievement for Junior Faculty

How can faculty members, especially new Ph.D.s just entering the discipline, enhance the reputation of the field? Departments should embrace

³ A number of programs at different levels have established themselves in this way, from Wabash College’s undergraduate emphasis in rhetoric, to West Virginia University’s distinctive doctoral program in educational communication.

high scholarly standards of quality departments in closely-related, established fields and expect new faculty to meet or exceed the performance of their peers in other disciplines, within their own institutional contexts. Of course, the relative quality of journals and presses is field-specific and must be explained within promotion and/or tenure dossiers, but the basic standards should be observed, met, and exceeded. The field cannot gain strength if departments complain about standards and make excuses for poor performance.

Achieving high standards and exceeding expectations demands care, support, and encouragement from established faculty members. For example, such standards often mean that non-tenured faculty need to teach at-or-above the standards of their respective college (or school) while publishing journal articles *and* writing scholarly books to earn promotion and tenure.⁴ As we shall see, writing books may be one of the best long-term strategies for establishing the academic reputation of the discipline.

Cohen, in *The Development of Research in Speech Communication: A Historical Perspective* (287), reports a “negative trade balance” between Communication and closely related disciplines. “We import much more than we export. We frequently cite the work of other fields but our work is seldom cited” (287). Cohen made this claim, with much supporting evidence, on many occasions to many people in many forms before it ever was seen in print.⁵ The common sense reason for what may feel like a profound imbalance is that disciplines tend to be insular about their own journals. Journal articles seem to cite scholarship mainly from the journals of their own fields. And for most of the modern history of Communication, excellence in scholarship has been associated with publication in our own top-tier journals. As noted earlier, Communication scholars need to be deliberate about discipline-specific work in their research agendas, including

⁴ Rising standards apply at many different types of schools, including teacher/scholar institutions.

⁵ According to many reliable witnesses, questions on this line of reasoning were regularly included in the proceedings of graduate program meetings, thesis and dissertation proposals and defenses.

continuing publication in our journals. But our journals will not distinguish Communication scholarship beyond the discipline.

To contribute beyond our own discipline and gain academic respect, our scholarship needs to be read *and used* by colleagues in other fields. If we want to be cited by colleagues from other disciplines, we do not need image management or reputation management initiatives. We need to write scholarly books.

For example, just looking at a healthy sampling of book award winners in this decade, the pattern is clear. Most of the books have already been cited at good rates beyond the discipline, a few remarkably so.⁶ Good scholars in the liberal arts read widely. But they read books—good books—without careful regard for the discipline of the author. The question of credibility becomes the quality of the press and the affinity of the content with a reader's own research agenda. Therefore, if we take our membership in the American Council of Learned Societies seriously, we will recognize the comparative value of publication in our own journals, which allows for the continuing internal development of our own field, and the publication of books with reputable scholarly presses.

The discipline has been moving in this direction and the breadth of our own discipline offers Communication scholars legitimate access to a much broader spectrum of quality academic presses than may be available to narrower fields. To some degree, academic presses are oriented more to subjects than toward disciplinary boundaries. Therefore, we may have greater opportunity to publish books than to publish interdisciplinary work in journals of other disciplines. Unconventional scholarship that advances knowledge significantly may find academic press reviewers more receptive than our own journals because of greater familiarity with similar questions, ideas, and literatures being pursued by scholars from a variety of disciplines.

A shift toward publication of scholarly books will eventually result in a healthier “trade balance” with other disciplines—a condition that Cohen

⁶ NCA annual book awards as reported in *Spectra*. The most-cited volume in the group, *Speaking into the Air*, by John Durham Peters, published in 1999, has already been cited over 200 times, xx outside the discipline.

insists is the case for all scholarly fields. As important, scholarly books will earn greater regard within institutions--our Communication colleagues will benefit when being considered for promotion and tenure or for contract renewal at every level.

In other regards, new faculty members will help us departmentally and in the discipline by becoming high functioning, low maintenance colleagues. The intensity of work and productivity required to earn promotion, tenure, or contract renewal is great enough without distractions. And the collective work of a department and the discipline as a whole can be set back as much by the common distractions of academia by which colleagues divert their attention from teaching and research to fruitless, if common, pursuits.

To summarize, departments that work to contribute to the broader mission of their own institutions can always find substantial disciplinary work to propel their departmental lives in harmony with their intellectual and pedagogical home. A Communication faculty, so situated, can achieve significantly for both the college or university and advance the reputation of the discipline in the process. New faculty members can be socialized effectively into the school and the discipline ready to earn respect through sweat equity and a kind of productivity that may one day see the entire discipline gain a kind of academic respect it has not yet enjoyed in American higher education.

Conclusion

Because Herm Cohen has understood and practiced our profession from a scholarly perspective expansive enough to know the intellectual genealogy of the most prominent ideas of the field, he has made vital contributions that point us toward constructive ways to distinguish our own field within the larger academic project. He has done so, first and foremost, by reading books, reviewing books, teaching books, and—as we argue here—indicated that our field may best correct our intellectual trade deficit with other fields by writing books.

We are suggesting that the answer to Cohen's question for the discipline, may not require a manufactured monolithic identity or a reduction to one dominant form of scholarship. In fact, the nature of the Communication discipline itself works against such characterizations. Instead, we can emulate the work and aspirations of leaders like Herman Cohen, a man who has invested his life fruitfully and has advanced our work significantly—through departmental and organizational leadership in the field, and through scholarship and teaching that many of us have been privileged to experience personally. Herm Cohen devoted his life to ideas, to institutions, but most of all to inviting students to share these good things with him. We would all do well, as a discipline and as colleagues, to follow.

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