

Editorial Introduction

The Heart of the Issue: Ronald C. Arnett's Scholarly Tenacity

Annette M. Holba

This issue of the *Journal of Dialogic Ethics: Interfaith and Interhuman Perspectives* continues the theme of the celebration of Ronald C. Arnett's contribution to the field of communication and other disciplinary fields of study through his dialogic teaching, scholarship, and service. In this celebratory issue, there are multiple perspectives ranging from direct scholarly discussions about Arnett's work to employment of the metaphors that drove his scholarship and engagement.

In the first essay, "Dialogic Scholarship as the Praxis of Tenacious Hope: A Review of the Monographs of Ronald C. Arnett," Michael R. Kearney and Susan Mancino write as two former graduate assistants, now successful college professors in their own right, who worked under the tutelage of Arnett in the PhD program in rhetoric at Duquesne University. This essay focuses on six single-authored books that Arnett published with Southern Illinois University Press, including the book that announced the metaphor of tenacious hope, *Communication Ethics and Tenacious Hope: Contemporary Implications of the Scottish Enlightenment*, which was published in 2022. Kearney and Mancino embrace the metaphor of tenacious hope, situated as the praxis of Arnett's dialogic scholarship. Also in this essay, Kearney and Mancino apply Calvin O. Schrag's (1986) communicative praxis coordinates of *by*, *about*, and *for* to Arnett's scholarly engagement. They state directly to readers that they want to offer a story of dialogic communication scholarship that is *by* Arnett, *about* his ideas, and *for* others. This essay demonstrates the interrelation between teacher, student, and colleague.

The second essay in this collection, "Tenacious Hope in Hollow Modernity: Respiratory Revelations," continues the metaphor thread of tenacious hope as Özüm Üçok-Sayrak develops a dialogic connection between tenacious hope and the revelatory. The essay employs several of Arnett's well-developed metaphors, including derivative agency, attentiveness, and existential homelessness, as well as his critique of individualism, pointing to what Özüm Üçok-Sayrak refers to as

a theme at the heart of Arnett's work—the revelatory. Üçok-Sayrak enters this conversation through the notion of tenacious hope, situating it as a revelatory phenomenon connected to the current historical moment. She suggests that this particular historical moment can be described as “hollow modernity,” referencing that this moment is post Zygmunt Bauman's (2000, 2005) announcement of liquid modernity. Üçok-Sayrak describes how hollow modernity offers a disembodied presence in an environment of excess stimuli and the experience of a loss of the freedom of attention and empathy. Üçok-Sayrak argues that this environment feeds the condition of thoughtlessness and a disposition lacking discernment. Üçok-Sayrak states that she is providing an initial sketch of a respiratory philosophy of communication ethics that reveals the breath and the need for breathing as necessary for participation in the world.

In the third essay, “Arnett's Existentialist Call: Attending to the Ground, Soil, and the Mud of Everyday Life,” Matthew P. Mancino explores how existential philosophy informs Arnett's thinking around dialogic ethics and philosophy of communication in interpersonal communication. Mancino invites existential philosophers into conversation to provide for the field of communication a textured understanding of how existential philosophy informs Arnett's work. Mancino makes the case that Arnett attends to the lived experience and embodiment of individuals as they navigate the world with others. Mancino explores how Arnett uses the metaphors of ground, soil, and mud of everyday life, referencing the dialogic philosophy of Martin Buber as a guide through Arnett's thinking and doing. This illuminates the importance of existential philosophy for the communication discipline and, in particular, a better understanding of human interactions and interpersonal relationships.

In the next essay, “Corporate Communication Leadership and Ethics in the Mud of Everyday Life,” Fr. Lazarus Langbiir, CSSp, situates Arnett's concept of tenacious hope in the mud of everyday life. Langbiir identifies the need to be attentive to the effects that strategic corporate communication decisions can have on the everyday lives of people who are situated within their own narratives and stories. Langbiir acknowledges that the purpose of his essay is truly to honor the work and legacy of Arnett's scholarship, especially around communication ethics and corporate communication leadership. Langbiir suggests that communication in corporate and organizational settings is where the rubber meets the road in that it speaks to ordinary people working in their everyday lives and dealing with the challenges that come and go in a corporate organizational setting, especially involving leadership. Langbiir suggests that communication in this setting must tend to the mud of everyday life because, at any given time, people within an organization are entangled in challenging or difficult situations. This takes an authentic commitment to working with others, especially for leaders within their contexts.

The next essay, penned by Richard H. Thames, is entitled “The Wild Child and the Voice of the Other.” Thames is a skilled storyteller. He wrote and inscribed this essay “For Ron Arnett.” Arnett's friend and colleague over many years, Thames offers a poetic, Burkean essay around language and the other. Thames references “the wild child,” recalling the 1970 discovery of a thirteen-year-old girl

from Los Angeles, California, who was so isolated by her parents that she never learned to speak as other children learned. The wild child was not called into language by the voices of others. As Thames argues, she only learned to hear language; she could not speak it because she was not called into it by a certain age. This is a beautiful essay *for* Arnett, *by* his dear colleague and scholar Thames, and *about* language, the other, and more particularly the embodied voice of the other as an ethical commitment to the other. The approach Thames takes to this essay demonstrates Schrag's communicative praxis as discussed in the essay by Kearney and Mancino.

I am pleased to present the last two essays as a form of dialogic scholarly engagement around a book review. Melba Vèlez-Ortiz's review of *Human Dialogue*, volume 5 of *Towards a Universal Civilization*, lays out and explores ideas involving human reality and human excellence as being tied to one's humanity. We then have a response to the review by the author of the book, Michael H. Mitias. *Human Dialogue* provides an interesting and thoughtful discussion about dialogue, the human condition, and human communication in general. We are very grateful that we could have this dialogic exchange of ideas between reviewer and author.

Ronald C. Arnett is a formidable scholar committed to opening spaces for all voices in dialogue with one another. The spirit of Arnett's scholarship is ever present in this issue. The importance of dialogue, its impact, and its praxis will continue to shape and reshape, be formed and informed by contributors to the body of dialogic scholarship as we move into the future. Arnett's voice is a cornerstone of this scholarship.

References

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