

FOREWORD

Several years ago when pondering why I understood so little about stuttering, a problem I presumably knew much about, I awoke one night with a novel notion. Maybe stuttering has its roots in evolution. Perhaps the vocal-signal system we inherited from our simian ancestors gets out of synchrony with the symbol-system humans subsequently developed. As I explored this possibility and discovered its explanatory powers, I also discovered that Drs. Allen and Beatrix Gardner, of Project Washoe fame, were interested in our concerns with disorders of spoken language. They accepted my invitation to guest edit this issue on the evolutionary basis for the emergence of language as it relates to our interests. They are professors in the Department of Psychology and fellows of the Center for Advanced Study at the University of Nevada Reno.

As fate would have it, their manuscripts arrived in the midst of my revising a theory of stuttering that is based on evolutionary principles that are addressed brilliantly in this issue. These authors have provided us the broadest of views, at once fascinating and illuminating, with which to deepen understanding of disorders of human communication.

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