

*Introduction to John Cacioppo's 2016 SANS Distinguished Scholar Award address, by David Amodio*

It's an honor and great privilege for me to introduce the recipient of the 2016 Social & Affective Neuroscience Society's Distinguished Scholar Award: John Cacioppo.

John is the Tiffany and Margaret Blake Distinguished Service Professor at the University of Chicago, where he is director of the social psychology program and the Social Neuroscience Laboratory, and the founding director of the Center for Cognitive and Social Neuroscience.

And, more importantly to us here today, John is a true pioneer of social neuroscience—the original pioneer, to be more specific.

More than anyone else, by a long shot, John is responsible for creating the field of social neuroscience as we know it today. As a PhD student in Social Psychology at Ohio State in the mid 1970s, John confounded his mentors and colleagues in social psychology by immersing himself in neuroscience and psychophysiological methods. While at the same time developing a major theory of attitudes and persuasion with his friend and fellow student Rich Petty, John was convinced that in order to fully appreciate any aspect of human behavior, it was essential to consider the symbiotic interplay of social, cognitive, and physiological processes.

This view was far outside the mainstream at the time, however, and as you might imagine, John received pushback from all sides. At OSU, he had to do some of this work incognito. And when he went to his first meeting of the Society for Psychophysiology in 1974, people actually told him that his ideas were “cute” but ultimately a waste of time—that he'd never be able to study social processes from a neural perspective. It was truly a different time.

But this pushback only strengthened his resolve; he realized that for people to take him seriously, he'd have to work twice as hard and be twice as rigorous. He began to build his own electrodes, design new techniques, and develop new and more precise analytical methods.

By 1978, with Rich Petty as his primary collaborator, John began to publish studies using EEG and other physiological measures to index neural components of attitudinal and emotional processing. That he was able to publish these papers in the top outlets like *JPSP* and *Psychophysiology* was remarkable and completely unprecedented. Within a few years, John came to be seen as a respected innovator, even among the psychophysiologicalists.

In fact, by 1981, SPR recognized John with its Early Career Award, and John's award address was entitled “Social Psychophysiology: A classic perspective and a contemporary approach.” In that address, published the next year in 1982, he laid out the history of the approach, as well as its challenges and promise. And in an area where people sometimes want to claim being the first to have an idea, John actually described his work—in 1982!—as reflecting the third wave of this scientific approach. These early papers already revealed the breadth and ambition of John's scientific approach, his dedication to multi-level theories and methods, and his deep appreciation of scholarship.

I'll mention two other important early publications:

First, in 1983, he and Rich Petty published an edited volume called “Social Psychophysiology: A Sourcebook,” which covered topics and techniques associated with the brain and autonomic, skeletomotor, cardiovascular, endocrine, and immune systems. This book laid the foundation for modern social neuroscience.

It was around this time, in the mid-80s, that John began to run an NSF-funded summer school to train psychologists in psychophysiological research, helping to launch a new generation of researchers who appreciated the mind-brain-body interaction and its relevance to social behavior. This was just one of his many efforts to train scientists in this new approach.

And second, in 1992, he and Gary Berntson published a piece in *American Psychologist* called “Social Psychological Contributions to the Decade of the Brain: Doctrine of Multilevel Analysis,” which essentially reads as a treatise for modern social, cognitive, and affective neuroscience. By this time, they referred to the enterprise as “social neuroscience,” using the term to refer to every level of analysis linking biological and social processes with behavior.

Over his career, John has produced an impressive body of work, essentially creating the fields of social neuroscience and social psychoneuroimmunology and thoroughly elucidating processes such as attitudes, resilience, loneliness, and social attachment—core features of the human condition.

To these ends, he has authored more than 500 papers and authored or edited more than 20 books. On Google Scholar, his papers have been cited over 98,000 times! I expect he’ll break 100,000 by next Tuesday. [Edit (2/7/2018): it’s now 128,260]

His contributions have already been recognized and celebrated by multiple Distinguished Scientist Awards. These include Distinguished Scientific Contribution Awards from the:

- American Psychological Association (2002)
- Society for Psychophysiological Research (2000)
- Society for Personality and Social Psychology (2000)
- Society for Experimental Social Psychology (2015)
- Scientific Impact Award, Society for Experimental Social Psychology (2009)

So it appears we may be a bit late to the party. [*i.e., in giving him the SANS Distinguished Scholar award*]

John has also been deeply committed to the advancement and organization of psychological science, as seen by his generous service.

(Not just a fellow, but) Served as president for:

- Association for Psychological Science
- Society for Personality and Social Psychology
- Society for Psychophysiological Research
- Society for Social Neuroscience—this is a broadly interdisciplinary and international association that fosters research and training in the integrative study of the social neuroscience across species and all levels of analysis. The mission is highly complementary with that of SANS, and together, they have been connecting and galvanizing researchers across sub-fields under the broad banner of social neuroscience.

So, as you can see, John had a vision from the beginning, and he’s been following it through to this day. And, when he looks at what’s going on here today, I can only imagine he must feel amazement and, I hope, satisfaction on what the field has become.

I know I’ve said a lot here, though I’ve only scratched the surface of John’s profound, pervasive, and relentless contribution to the field of social and affective neuroscience.

I can think of no one more deserving of this recognition. Please join me in congratulating John Cacioppo.