# Before 120, I thought of communication as the sending and receiving of messages in an overt or subliminal way.

Now I conceive of it more as a conversation taking place within the bounds of society and culture. This is important because it adds a whole new layer of nuance to communication, albeit implicitly. The sender/receiver model is logical but overly simplistic. However it simply cannot grasp all of the small details and messages being transferred in every conversation. Although I was obviously aware of certain biases and framing, such as socio-economic status, I didn’t realize the full importance that things like race and gender play into so much of our language and conversations. In fact I now believe it is impossible to view communication without the outside factors that influence the messages being transferred. Society communicates standards to its members at a very early age, even through parents themselves. These mold people’s viewpoints and beliefs so completely it creates a lens through which we view the world. This lens in turn also colors how we receive communications from others. It operates in a very subtle way too, with things such as body language, style of dress or eye contact transmitting different messages depending on who is sending and also who is receiving. *If the sender/receiver model is like rolling a ball, in this case the message, from one person to the other, then society is the ground on which the ball is rolled.* It may have roots, stumps, or other barriers, or it could be the waxed floor of a bowling lane.

Society is built and molded by its members, but it in turn most prominently builds and molds its member. By the time we are old enough to influence society, it already has a decade plus head start on moldings its constituents. *This is the ground from which we have sprung, fallen, and risen to success.* This framing cannot be ignored when discussing the communications between members of society. Every piece of communication takes place within the framework of society, making it the medium through which we interact with other people. In Comm 140 we read a piece entitled The Medium is the Message, and I believe it applies perfectly to this metaphor. Racial, gender, and monetary expectations are built into every conversation we have, whether we explicitly realize or discuss it or not. We generally don’t acknowledge the ground beneath our feet, but it is always there.

In general most people never spring too far from their roots. Although many travel for vacation in America, very few people will make the choice to venture forth and delve into a completely different culture and lifestyle. Some may move to different parts of the country, or a similar culture such as a European one. However very few would choose to live with an indigenous population in New Zealand or Angola. *We do not realize how much of who we are is rooted within the bounds of the only society we have ever known.*