

Expression, “Representation,” and Animal Mind

Andrew Bartlett

Abstract

The uncompromising human exceptionalism of generative anthropology risks leaving the impression of a disrespect in GA of animal minds. Michael Bavage and Ian Ground’s investment in the concept of expression and their delimitation of the meaningful expressiveness of animal bodies in *Can We Understand Animal Minds?* (1994) provide resources to reduce the risk. An intensive analysis of their one remark on the origin of language and their chapter on expression leads to the conclusion that not all expression is linguistic, but human language is naturally expressive and must have been expressive at its origin. By contrast, materialist cognitive science’s black box fixation on “mental representations” as neurological states in a universe of physicalized items incapable of expressive behaviour cannot be compatible with generative anthropology. Although human artifactual representation is never simply expression, expression always accompanies such representation. Furthermore, to read the expressiveness of animal bodies may be to read them as signs.

Keywords: human exceptionalism / expression / representation / origin of language / animal mind / animal consciousness / embodiment / physicalism / significance

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Ever since Peter Singer’s 1975 treatise *Animal Liberation* appeared, the battlefields contested in what is now called Animal Studies have been attracting intellectual soldiers in spectacularly growing quantities.^[1] Nowadays, most dinner guests arrive at one’s door with opinions derivative of a conviction that humans treat nonhuman animals, despite their natural goodness and helpless innocence, exceptionally badly. Pervading the field is a heated, inelastic tension between the common sense of human self-respect and the plea that we respect nonhuman animals and their minds.^[2] The conversationalist recruit who wishes to defend human exceptionalism may do so only furtively, aware that the very idea of it strikes many people—from self-identified animal lovers who consume bacon anyway to disciplined followers of vegan philosophy and dietary codes—as heresy.^[3] Does originary thinking have any dialectically tension-reducing intervention to stage on this ethical and intellectual battlefield?

In the fields of struggle just sketched, a cavernous silence occupies the empty space between ideas of “empirical concepts” (Millikan, “How” 136), “animal knowledge” (Bonjour 322), “perceptual mindreading” (Bermudez in Lurz), “proto-concepts” (Proust), “perceptual representations” (Burge), non-conceptual content, and other kinds of “mental representation” confidently ascribed to signal-emitting nonhumans; and—across the great divide, the idea that there are features of cognition acceptably attributed to humankind alone—such as “semantic holism” (Millikan 136), “triangulation with other subjects” (Campbell 269; see also Davidson 12ff.), “discursive knowledge” (Lehrer 638), and “creative presupposition” (Carruthers). To the extent that the originary hypothesis *minimizes* the difference between our earliest ancestors and their ancestral primate kin, the Darwinian gradualists who dominate animal studies[4] ought to find it congenial.[5] That they ought to find it congenial is the good news. The bad news is that only a tiny minority know the good news. Those who are developing generative anthropology live the absurdity of riding a cruise liner in numbers so few that a lifeboat would do. Efforts to get more people on board are ongoing.

I believe the 1994 volume *Can We Understand Animal Minds?* by British philosophers Michael Bavidge and Ian Ground remains, almost thirty years later, particularly pertinent to the possibilities of generative anthropology’s intervening in questions about human-animal ecology. I believe that partly because in the volume, Bavidge and Ground do not claim that animals possess something really like human language. Let me qualify and digress at once. Eric Gans has consistently, even impatiently, rejected the contemporary tendencies toward belief in the likeness of animal “language” to that of humans.[6] He has rejected belief in the value of attempts to find in animal signalling precursors of language.[7] So it is reassuring, to some extent, that Bavidge and Ground are similarly willing to describe nonhuman animals as languageless: many powerful philosophers and ethologists do stop short of ascribing “language” to nonhuman animals (see for example Jamieson in Lurz, or even Millikan, “Thoughts” 71ff.). However, little of significance has changed, for the debate has quietly shifted from the question of language to the question of “cognition” and the power, sophistication, respectability, value-conferring status and the like of nonhuman animal “cognition.” The current question is whether language lets humans *know* anything truly significant that other animals without language do not or could not possibly know.[8]

To reduce the current tendency to a skeleton: since animals can know “the environment” and humans are nothing but parts of “the environment,” the assumption is that there is nothing *significant* that humans could possibly know that nonhuman animals do not also know. It is “the environment” or “Nature” that forms the scene of human history; and all that is real, is “Nature.” From a point of view informed by generative anthropology, we might say that “Nature” thus conceived has nothing in it of “the scenic.” What follows for such thinking is that it becomes routine to discount or underplay or both the significance of differences between human and animal *cognition*—at least wherever a reductive materialist empiricist rules the roost. The work of Hilary Kornblith represents this tendency:

While the human ability to reflect allows us to form beliefs in ways which other creatures cannot, they should be understood as simply one more means to achieve the very kind of state which we have in common with other animals—namely, knowledge—rather than producing a state which is somehow different in kind (“Reply” 340).

The only kind of “knowledge” that matters is that which allows us to survive in the *physical* environment, as other animals survive primarily in the physical environment. From the outset, simply ruled out and expelled is the possibility of an environment conceived as one in which symbols and signs, the raw material of cooked culture, have an ontological level of their own.

The other reason for the pertinence of Bavidge and Ground’s 1994 book, beyond their comfort with the idea that animals are languageless, is that, meanwhile, and more positively, working in the tradition of Wittgenstein, they deploy the concept of “expression” to argue that acceptance of the reality of animal mind should shape the animal sciences.[\[9\]](#) They define expression as “. . .the way in which subjective points of view manifest themselves in the world” (148). Their chapter “The Expressive World” (145-65) opens with a thought experiment: imagine intelligent aliens passing by in space, looking down on earth and recording observations. We wave frantically at the aliens. They see the bodily movements that we would call our waving, but they do not see them as we do, as expressive bodily movements—they “catalogue” them according to their own sciences (147).[\[10\]](#) The aliens thus miss the objective fact that we (humans) express ourselves and have points of view. Why “objective” fact? Bavidge and Ground deploy this paradox: “Because expression manifests a point of view, the truth about it is independent of points of view” (148). If we don’t recognize the expressiveness of much nonhuman animal life, are we to animals as the aliens were to us? Their answer is *yes*. We do well *not* to miss the expressiveness of animal bodies, regardless of the fact they do not possess anything like human language.[\[11\]](#) The thesis we shall pursue in what follows is this: Bavidge and Ground’s investment in the value of the concept of expression, despite first appearances, is an investment compatible with originary thinking.

To connect Bavidge and Ground’s work to originary thinking, let us scrutinize the single passage in their book that is relevant to the question of the origin of language. It helps to know in advance that the antecedent of the “this” with which the passage opens (what *this* suggests) would be something like “the ineradicability of the bodily quality of highly conventionalized expressive behaviour” (my paraphrase).

What this suggests is that the conventions that constitute language arise not from rules devised to map reality in a mental medium, but from the ever-increasing modulation of expressive interactions. If we want to regard language use as part of, and not in opposition to, the natural order, we should try to see language,

fundamentally, not as a species of representation, but as a kind of ultra-modulated expression. (154)

A formulation such as “the conventions that constitute language” jostles against what we might expect to be the correlative phrase in originary thinking: the *signs* that constitute language. The signs of language are conventional to the extent that they are arbitrary; to that extent, there is no cause of dissonance between Bavidge and Ground and the notes on animal communicativeness most frequently sounded by Eric Gans. But Bavidge and Ground would include “behavioural” conventions, since they are investing in the concept of expression, including bodily expression. Moreover, the notion of behavioural conventions links to the antecedent of “this” in the pronoun’s opening “What this suggests.”

Now in the immediate context, Bavidge and Ground have been analyzing “agency,” one of four features of the expressive life that they emphasize. The fact that expression is a manifestation of agency becomes more visible, they have claimed, when we recognize that creatures modulate their expressions, and such modulations are best located on a spectrum extending from the pole of “spontaneous” to that of “forced” (152). In its inseparability from embodied agency, expression connotes freedom. The connotation of freedom will almost certainly provoke deterministic behaviourists in the animal sciences—with their assumption that “physical agency” is a self-contradiction—into rejecting the concept of expression altogether so as to undergird their prohibition against anthropomorphism (151).^[12] Bavidge and Ground believe that the anxieties motivating such rejections are nourished by “a clandestine Dualism of determined system and ‘free will’” (151). And they counsel us to jettison “the glib dualist contrast between active, willful behaviour and passive will-less bodily events”; we should instead learn to “. . . see agency as a concept that allows of degrees and a reality which has evolved from the appetitive life of the animal kingdom” (152).

Before considering the dichotomy of spontaneous and forced expression, let us linger over “expression” itself—partly because it has been given very little attention in the work of Gans and the *Chronicles of Love and Resentment*, which are far more comfortable with and invested in the concept of “representation.” I quote Bavidge and Ground again: “The distinction between spontaneous and forced, which does apply to expressions, runs parallel to the active/passive distinction, but is very different. It refers to the pressures and compulsions of social interactions which are different from the causes and outcomes of physical processes” (152) [28]. In passing, a suggestion: we might say that considering the originary sign as discovery, the expressiveness of its emission was “spontaneous”; considering the originary sign as “invention,” the expressiveness of its emission was “forced.” That we cannot place the emission at one extreme of the forced/spontaneous spectrum as opposed to the other suggests one reason that the specifically scenic linguistic expressivity of human animals operates at an ontological level apart from (or “above”) that of nonhuman animals. That may be one reason Bavidge and Ground indicate their

awareness of a boundary leapt over in the phrase “a *kind* of *ultra*-modulated expression” (emphasis added): the phrase appears to concede both that the difference may be one of kind and that the modulation would have been so intensely felt (“ultra-modulated”) that it would have had to become its own kind of modulation.

This preamble aside, we can now consider how, in describing instances of expression, a dichotomy between “spontaneous” and “forced” works better than one between the willed-active and the predetermined-passive. Bavidge and Ground take human laughter as one helpful example not of highly conventionalized, but minimally conventionalized or “spontaneous” expressive behaviour. Laughter can range from the raucously uninhibited to the politely nervous, but the openness of its ranging follows from the fact that “the pressures and compulsions of social interactions” make up the context in which creatures who belong to communities of expression in which laughter is possible operate. Those social pressures and compulsions differ, and differ in kind, from the “causes and outcomes of physical processes” (152). Noticing that expressions are always modulated helps make it clear that “expressions are actions of agents” (152). Even untutored infants modulate their cries, and we teach growing children to control the expression of their feelings (152). Active modulation conveys communicative content: an expression “acquires its communicative content through being at one point rather than another in a range of possible modulations” (153).

We are approaching the question of the *expressive* behaviour that must have been occurring at the origin of language, the interactions through which language “arose.” Now why should the ineradicability of the bodily quality of any expressive behaviour—including laughter—lead us toward seeing that from which language originally arose as a “kind of ultra-modulated expression” rather than “a species of representation”? Bavidge and Ground are moving from the fact that embodied non-linguistic expressive behaviour can be highly conventionalized *not* toward the reductive thesis that such conventionality reduces the linguistic to the merely expressive, but toward a reminder that the conventionality of linguistic behaviour must have an expressive dimension. Not all expression is linguistic, but language is naturally expressive, and must have been expressive at its origin.

Those who do generative anthropology and wish to cease neglecting the expressive qualities of language might take that up as a mantra: *Not all expression is linguistic, but language is naturally expressive, and must have been expressive at its origin.*

Let us linger over the minimally conventionalized case of laughter as expression. If one laughs in helpless abandonment, tears running down one’s face, uncontrollably, lost in hilarity, the joke (say) that has provoked the laughter may be part of its “cause.” But not even the minimally conventionalized abandonment-modulation of such laughter could result from the verbal content alone of the joke, as if its “meaning” could be detached from the historical network of custom and exchange in which the joke is shared. The same joke

delivered in a different context, with different interlocutors in different relationships, could produce nervously polite, forced laughter—or it could cause offense. It could do any number of things. In short, the degree of modulation of the laughter presupposes a context of nonlinguistic “behavioural” conventions.

The relevance of expressive context becomes clearer when we consider examples of *highly* conventionalized expressive behavior. As examples of it, Bavidge and Ground cite the “elaborate rituals to express deference and disdain” once witnessed at Versailles; the “sardonic smile” that can “succeed as a communication” only when “an enormously complex social context” is in place; and the way involuntary expressions of pain obey conventions of vocalization despite their involuntariness: English “ouch,” French “Aie”(154). Expression is modulated because concrete social situations demand its modulation.

Now Eric Gans has made the claim that “. . .representation is never simply ‘expression’” (“Personal Origins of GA 2”). The thesis here being pursued does not require erasure of one iota of that claim. But although representation is never simply expression, neither is representation ever unaccompanied by expression; expression always accompanies representation. Part of the idea of the originary robot as a mechanical creation is that it speaks in an unexpressive monotone, without modulation. A realization that participants in the originary event could not have been robots can reanimate our intuition that language users are expressive agents. Our earliest ancestors exchanging the ostensive would have been expressing *fear* of violence, *desire* for the center, *resentment* of the center, *anxiety* at the possible failure of the sign, *pleasure* in the production of the sign, and more (as the advertisers say)—a unique medley of blended emotions.[13] Mixed emotions seem impossible for nonhuman animals.[14] And that is not even to mention the pre-declarative “beliefs” the originary scenic humans might be said to have been expressing in their exchange of representations.

Consider that a focus on expression makes visible the concreteness of the originary hypothesis. The *abortive gesture of appropriation* is bodily. The abortive gesture of representation must have been “handed” as Raymond Tallis would say; situated, interactive, communal, expressive; and all that, rather than disembodied and abstract, detached from points of view, mechanical, unattracted to scenic centers of appetitive joint attention. Bavidge and Ground, by leaning away from the primordially hidden mental “rules” and leaning instead toward the priority of modulated, expressive “interactions,” are preferring anthropological concreteness not unlike that which Gans attributes to the originary hypothesis to the reductive physicalism of their behaviorist opponents. Moreover, to prioritize expression over representation as Bavidge and Ground do is to approve the priority of desire over cognition, a principle fundamental to originary thinking. We did not think our way into language as unfeeling, unexpressive observers; we found ourselves using language as we expressed feelings, including the felt will to get out of an impossibly dangerous situation by exchanging signs.[15]

Now we may be prepared to appreciate a bigger point: when Bavidge and Ground recommend not seeing language fundamentally as a “species of representation,” they do not mean by “representation” that which it means in the discourses of generative anthropology.

There is a kind of philosophy of mind relevant to animal studies, which seeks to naturalize epistemology in a certain way. A novice from schools of garden-variety literary analysis in which the term “representation” includes only so much, will learn from reading this kind of philosophy—fascinating work such as that of Fred Dretske, Ruth Garrett Millikan, Hilary Kornblith, and Tyler Burge—that “representation” can mean something far less on-view and concrete than a song, a poem, a speech, a picture, a sculpture, or the exchange of expressive gestures performed by embodied creatures on a scene of pragmatic paradox and interactive crisis: what I will henceforth name *artifactual representation*. By “representation,” such philosophers mean something that is best described as a process happening inside the black box of the brain. John Haldane captures this massively unquestioned and dominating tendency in his observation: “But in recent representational and cognitive theories of mind all this [incapacity of the skeptical Cartesian heritage] is swept aside with the claim that bodily activity can result only from (and be sustained only by) internal monitoring, calculation, and behaviour implementation” (303). The most obvious evidence of the “mental representation” tendency may be the ease with which the phrase “perceptual representation” is deployed in studies of animal cognition. Such “perceptual representation” from the point of view of originary thinking would be, unless I misunderstand, a misleading oxymoron. Indeed, Tyler Burge’s well-received 656-page magnum opus *Origins of Objectivity* (2010) has as its thesis the claim that *perception is representation*: the claim that the perceptions of animals as simple as the Portia Jumping spider *are* “representations.” Here is Robert Lurz summarizing Burge’s thesis: “Sensory perception, Burge argues, is psychologically, phylogenetically, and epistemically the most basic form of objective representation of the physical world—it is not derived from more primitive forms of representation of sense data or proximal stimuli, or dependent upon supplementary forms or propositional thought, or reducible to functionally useful causal covariation” (“Review” 775). Sensory perception *is* representation. In any case, whatever physical processes, social and environmental, the serial events comprising a process culminating in representation include, they must “cash out” in a neural event—the substantive outcome must be brain-guaranteed physical firings, or it is nothing. Now it is true that such philosophers in thrall to the empirical neurosciences may be attentive to complicating ecological concepts such as that of affordance, or attentive to nuances in biology such as environmentally “situated cognition.” All the same, “representation” is coupled with the adjective “mental”; and a “mental representation” is code for something happening in the individual brain of an individual organism. It cannot be stressed enough that *artifactual representation* of the sort that the originary hypothesis seeks to thematize, as that which is unique to humans, cannot be reduced to this kind of perceptual representation.^[16] I am not objecting to the observation that jumping spiders do something special in Nature. I am objecting the way “mental representation” as a category lumps

human agents and jumping spiders, rather than splitting them.

Regardless, it is the assumption of the benefits of such physicalism in philosophy of mind that Bavidge and Ground, with their rejection of “language . . . as a species of representation,” are contesting and combatting. When Bavidge and Ground reject the idea that “the conventions that constitute language” might have arisen from “rules devised to map reality in a mental medium,” it is the residual authority of a certain mind-from-brain-splitting Cartesian dualism that they are rejecting. And it is a splitting that generative anthropology similarly rejects. Once we realize that the “representation” Bavidge and Ground do not wish to accept as the origin of language is nothing like the artifactual representation at the heart of ordinary thinking, we can more comfortably open ourselves to the value of their foregrounding of expression.

Agency, embodiment, and community of expression are three features essential to the concept. A fourth is that expression must answer to the need for determinacy of sense. To quickly access the determinacy of sense problem, consider: when my West Highland terrier greets me at the front door jumping up and down against the glass, what is she expressing? “Master is now home”? Does she have a concept of “master” as opposed to “disciple,” or distinguished from “owner” or “boss” or “king”? What words can we as language-users use to describe *her* thinking, which is not in language? Even if we found reasons to accept the translation “master is now home,” how would we integrate the fact she could not possibly be thinking “the fifth child of L- and M- Bartlett is now home” or “a teacher of University writing” is now home, with our sense that she is minded?

Bavidge and Ground open their discussion of determinacy of sense by acknowledging that desires to attribute intentional significance to animal behaviour have often operated in conflict with desires to avoid anthropomorphism. We can reduce the conflict between the desire to attribute and the desire to avoid, they argue, by reminding ourselves that even with language, “the determinacy of thought and talk is not something fixed objectively, independently of human ways of going on” (158-59). The logic hidden behind skeptical demands for a rigid specification of the content of expressions of animal mind, Bavidge and Ground capture in a slogan: “representation precedes communication” (159).^[17] The idea this slogan conveys—for them, a false idea—is that before we can in the first place attribute “subjective experience” or anything worthy of the name “mind” to a nonhuman animal, we must be able to imagine and verify the presence of a “representation” internal to the animal’s body, in its brain (159). “Representation precedes communication” encapsulates the presupposition that “what makes a piece of behaviour expressive is that the component bodily movements happen to be connected with internal [brain] states with a particular content” (159).

To help us grasp the backwardness of such an ordering, Bavidge and Ground ask us to imagine a dog that emits one identical bark. Its one unchanging bark is connected to one

brain state, so neuroscientific reductionists might be satisfied with the correspondence. However, the unnaturalness of such a creature shows the mistake in assuming that “the significance of some particular piece of behaviour can be determined in isolation from the rest” of an animal’s behaviour (159). Some scientists and philosophers believe the determinacy of sense problem will be solved by neuroscience’s eventually proving the reality of “the representational character of the neural states with which [psychological states] are identical” (160). Questioning confidence in that belief, Bavidge and Ground observe that “the theoretical solution to the mind/brain problem along [such] empiricist lines” thus hoped for is extremely distant. Anyway, the belief permits unjustified scepticism about the very existence of animal minds. Bavidge and Ground reject, following Wittgenstein, the physicalism of such brain science: “. . . the capacity to represent something is not some fundamental property of parts of the physical world. . . . Rather, representation is a kind of activity in which some animals can engage” (160-61).

Whatever I can understand of my West Highland terrier’s expression in greeting me at the door (the bodily activity in which she engages, within a specifiable behavioural routine), such understanding is *not* dependent on my having a neurological description of her brain state. The “community” in which expressive lives are lived cannot be reducible to a physical environment in which quantities of energy are transferred—unless, of course, to go back to our examples of the aliens who do not see us waving, the goal of science is to remove expressive life from the “objectively” considered universe. And, true, such removal is not a theoretical impossibility. But that one is always free to conduct oneself as a mad Frankenstein playing God does not mean that one ever should.[\[18\]](#) Not to play God with nonhuman animals is no less important than not playing God with other humans.

Bavidge and Ground’s exposition of embodiment as a feature of expression (154-58) closes with their probing the unnatural, perhaps immoral, quality of systematic campaigns of denial of the intuitive principle that human and nonhuman animal bodies are in fact expressive: “It takes an effort not to see the body as bearing meaning” (156). Our sensitivity to other human bodies is pervasive and general: “We are aware of the presence of others and the character of that presence” (156). Bavidge and Ground clarify that expressive behaviour is not reducible to or identical with body language, and the “philosophical significance” of a universal, unlearned, uncontrolled and reliable human body language would be limited: even if such a “language” existed (they doubt it does), the problem of its meaning would not be solved by virtue of such properties (157). Nonetheless, body language reminds us of the “environment of meaning” that we inhabit, surrounded as we are by “embodiments of thought, desire, and intention” (157). Questioning the cultivation of what they call body-blindness, Bavidge and Ground observe that in “sinister practical programmes of de-signification” such as those implemented in concentration camps, there are “routines . . . designed to make the inmates and their feelings invisible to their oppressors” (157). Pro-animal activists draw parallels between such institutionalized human cruelty to humans and human experimentation on animals, following a negative conviction

Bavidge and Ground seem to endorse: "Behaviourism is a methodology to secure body blindness" (157-58). Bavidge and Ground suggest that those who find such analogies exaggerated might still be troubled to learn that some animal researchers do deny that "animals are conscious," and that such consciousness-deniers recommend that we fight our common sense selves and learning techniques of desensitization to the expressiveness of animal bodies, especially if we want to do good work in the laboratories (159-60). Bavidge and Ground argue that interactive, communicative methodologies in animal studies are preferable: "Recognizing expression, like understanding meaning, is not a matter of speculation but of insider-dealing. [Recognizing expression] involves the opposite of the sort of objectivity which requires distance, detachment, and the abandonment of personal perspectives" (158).

Having reviewed the key features of Bavidge and Ground's exposition of the concept of expression, let us consider the implications. The idea that language is fundamentally an activity of animals who have invented, under some unspecified exigency, an "ultra-modulated" expression is closer to the originary hypothesis than the idea that all animal minds, whether human or nonhuman, are reducible to representations as brain states.[\[19\]](#) Rather than a principle such as "representation precedes communication," Bavidge and Ground recommend instead "the priority of communication over representation" (161). It is worth observing that many formulations of Eric Gans, proffered in the context of like rejections of monolithic materialist doctrine, show an attachment to the belief in "the primarily communicative function of language" ("Language Origin").[\[20\]](#) Bavidge and Ground argue that we should accept the way that instances of the determinacy of sense established by interactive studies of animal life will never be just like equivalent instances that linguistic expressivity makes possible: "What is plainly wrong is to demand of a non-language-using animal determinacy of sense that applies only to the experience of language-using animals" (161). They conclude their analysis of the determinacy of sense problem by defining their hopes for interactive ethological research as follows: "Determinacy of psychological states is secured not by the articulate structure of the medium [such as language] in which representations occur. . . The content of the psychological state of an animal is fixed by the place of the characteristic expression of that state in the repertoire of expressive behaviour available to the animal" (161). [\[62\]](#).

I repeat: *the content of the psychological state of an animal is fixed by the place of the characteristic expression of that state in the repertoire of expressive behaviour available to the animal*. It follows from that claim that we might wish to consider the experiences of animals "meaningful" insofar as their expressive behaviour is meaningful; and that would be so despite the fact of the gap between human intuition and animal experience that Gans delimits in the following.

The relationship of Kant's space and time to the phenomena that appear within them is analogous to the relationship between the world of the signs of language and the world

of objects to which these signs are made to refer. No doubt animals may be said to have “experiences,” but they cannot have what Kant calls “intuitions,” since they cannot formulate their experiences in such a way as to share their *meaning* with others, or express it to themselves. (“Notes”)

Once we grasp and put to work the concept of expression, there is no need for the scare quotes that Gans has put around “experiences.” The scare quotes drive a wholly unneeded wedge through the center of the expressive world to kowtow to principles of “. . . the ontological priority of ‘language’ to knowledge” (“Notes”). It would also be impossible to explain animal behaviour if we were prohibited from hypothesizing, investigating, and representing as best we can what animals know. Indeed, any non-reductive materialist ontology after Darwin needs to be open to thoughts of “experience” being meaningful to many living creatures, certainly all mammals. As Bavidge and Ground assert without hesitation, “The fact that behaviour is instinctual does not mean that it has no character as experience” (136); “Philosophy, if it is to justify its claims to generality, needs to be far more wary of the risk of species-specificity in its accounts of belief, concept-possession, and experience” (143). I hasten to add that a wariness of the risk of species-specificity in thinking about the experiences of nonhuman animals should not entail a discounting or denial of human exceptionalism. Bermudez’s *Thinking without Words* (2003) is an excellent survey of the science and exploration of the philosophical challenges in describing animal minds.

Can the concept of expression as it is outlined by Bavidge and Ground assist interventions in tension-troubled discussions of the human-animal ecology? Perhaps this formula can serve to resituate the originary hypothesis so that workers in the discipline of generative anthropology are better equipped to direct toward “animal mind” the attention it deserves: *although representation is never simply expression, expression always accompanies representation*. The world we share with nonhuman animals is the expressive world, the world of expressive creatures.[\[21\]](#) Perhaps it is another paradox of human reality that the only world worth living in is one we share with nonhuman minds. If we keep in mind the way that expression rather than linguistic representation alone manifests animal mind, we can be confident that animals in fact have “minds,” and any dignity or value the term “minds” might be taken to confer. However, because expression and representation will have been disentangled, we will be better enabled, should we accept the mission, to defend a human exceptionalism that commits itself to describing the big differences—biological differences,[\[22\]](#) psychological differences,[\[23\]](#) moral differences,[\[24\]](#) technological,[\[25\]](#) economic,[\[26\]](#) onto-theological[\[27\]](#) differences—that our uniqueness as the only language-users in the animal kingdom confers on us.

In our lives as expressive creatures, we can become closer than we will ever know in language to nonhuman animals. The history of attempts to avoid anthropomorphism contains signs suggesting that the otherness of animal minds is not unlike the otherness of

the mind of God.^[28] The nonhuman animal in the scenic center whom we recognize as expressive reveals a central locus of being that appears to demand to be named, even as the demand makes us conscious of nothing so much as our freedom, and responsibility, to choose to perform (or not) such originary naming.

Further pursuit of the thesis proposed here might encourage us to explore the following formulations. Our model for the expressivity of “bodies” in general is the expressivity of the sign. Therefore, our model for the expressivity of animal bodies is the expressivity of the sign. The sign itself is expressive only if we *choose* to attach it to “consciousness” (or the scenic necessity of the deferral of violence): we recognize the abortive gestures of appropriation of others on the scene *as expressive*. In somewhat the same way, we will read animal bodies as expressive “signs” only to the extent that we defer our violence toward them (not necessarily abolish it, which may be an impossible thing for many people to do, but certainly defer it). Regarding anthropomorphism, therefore, consider that maybe the real question is whether and how animals are “like” signs—expressive, significant, meaningful, worthy of attention—rather than whether and how animals are “like” humans. (One recalls that heads of cattle were counted as one of the earliest forms of money.) Likewise, to empty the sign of all significance—to believe, while rejecting physical agency, that scenic exchange is reducible to physical “mental representations”—is to empty animal bodies (including our own again) of all significance.

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Notes

[1] I lump under the label "animal studies" several disciplines. See Hurn, "What's in a Name?" for some mapping of the overlapping. For evidence of the field's spectacularly rapid growth in relation to literary studies, see McDonnell, who reports that the following fourteen humanities-related journals at the time of her writing had recently produced special issues on animal-related themes: *Parallax* (2006), *Configurations* (2006), *Mosaic* (2006-2007), *TDR: Journal of Performance Studies* (2007), *Oxford Literary Review* (2007), *PMLA* (2009), *Minnesota Review* (2009-2010), *Safundi: The Journal of South African and American Studies* (2010), *JAC: Journal of Rhetoric, Culture, and Politics* (2011); *Postmedieval Studies* (2011); *New Formations* (2012); *Hypatia* (2012); *Journal of Victorian*

Culture (2012); *Angelika: Journal of the Theoretical Humanities* (2013). The non-scientific scholarly periodicals devoted entirely to the field include *Society and Animals*; *Humanimalia*; *Journal for Critical Animal Studies*; *Antennae*; and *The Animal Studies Journal* (Australia).

[2] Such tensions are not limited to those between, say, animal “lovers” and people who find animals boring, or those between meat-eaters and vegetarians. There are incompatibilities of commitment and unpleasant tensions within the animal welfare community between the “abolitionist” (purist revolutionary vegan) and “protectionist” (moderate reformist vegetarian) camps: see Francione and Garner for the surprising evidence.

[3] I speak of a defensiveness that would be self-preserving *within* the fields of humanities-based animal studies. Bermudez’s excellent *Thinking without Words* (2003) is a fair-minded and generous study of cognitive ethology “from within” that does not shy away from the huge differences language makes, while taking care to credit nonhuman animals for the thinking they do. For robust defenses of human exceptionalism from outside the field, see Bickerton (2014), Guldberg (2010), Parker (2010), Reichmann (2000), Scruton (1996), Suddendorf (2013), and Tallis (2012). Langer’s (1958) thesis—“In the specious analogy of the hive and the city, lies . . . the basic philosophical fallacy of all totalitarian theory, even the most sincere and idealistic” (271)—retains, half a century later, all its relevance and power. For a fascinating and attractive exploration of “pluralistic monism” as a position “midway between reductive physicalism and human exceptionalism” see Cabrera Jr. (2011).

[4] My assumption is that a writer who claims that human-nonhuman animal difference is one of degree, not kind, is professing adherence to “the Darwinian gradualism that dominates the field.” Typical is this remark by Matthew Day, in a nonetheless valuable study of the way Darwin moralized his scientific defense of notions of human-animal similarity: “Slightly rephrased, the trouble with convincing portraits of human uniqueness is that on any given point the distance between ‘us’ and ‘them’ is astonishingly small” (49). Day’s purportedly factual report strikes me as a factual error: what astonishes me is the ease with which so many fail to find the “distance” at most points “astonishingly” large.

[5] Gans on the *minimality* of the discovery/invention of the originary scenic ostensive: “. . . the claim of the originary hypothesis is to minimize an explanatory leap between animal and human that cannot be eliminated” (“Minimal Faith”).—“In all this ‘empirical’ study, no one seems to consider the obvious idea that the first language must have been minimally simple, one step removed from animal signals, and it could not have depended on a ‘language module’ for its implementation” (“Minimal Language”). Gans does not deny that animals have mental lives: “The otherness of the sacred object is derived from its otherness as a material object of desire; the prior existence of appetite, eliciting among higher animals goal-directed behavior involving intelligence, self-control, etc., provides the seed of the dichotomy that eventuates in significance” (“Christian Monism”). —Also in his analysis of

Condillac, Gans —albeit in a negating context —attributes thought and short-term knowledge to animals: “Condillac anticipates contemporary neurocognitive research in his contention that *thought without language, such as animals are capable of achieving*, is effective only in its immediate context and leads to no long-term acquisition of knowledge. This reliance on the sign as, one can almost say, a neuronal focus for thought, is also a major step in the direction of originary thinking” (“Language Origin”). Early in the *Chronicles*, we find this passage, one of the most generous he has written about animal minds: “Mimesis . . . provides the link between it [the sign-world] and the world of nature. It is entirely understandable that higher animals can make marginal use of language through the use of their near-human mimetic powers. Our near-relatives are not far from being able to make the mysterious leap that separates them from the human. Their use of our linguistic symbols shows how close they can come. Animals, even plants, have *concepts* in the sense of slots into which some phenomena fit but not others. A dog who sniffs my socks can distinguish me from anyone else; he possesses a Gans-concept. Chimpanzees can be taught to use sign-language to manipulate such concepts. But . . .” (“Mimetic Simplicity”). —More recently, we find this positive assertion: “Animal-like creatures are the most appropriate bears because we know that animals have a certain awareness of the world and lack only the faculty of representation to be human” (“Bear Theory”).

[6] Gans: “Animals use signals, and can even be taught to use human signs, but they cannot understand the originary purpose of the sign as a replacement for an object made sacred by desire. (Or perhaps experimenters can teach religion to chimpanzees)” (“Minimal Thinking”).

“For faith . . . originary analysis provides a minimal model or structure of understanding: faith is the mode of shared representation. However much animal signals may be learned, animals have no signs whose reference must be taken on faith” (“Minimal Faith”). Gans points out that the signals animals send never “ . . . become the object of a formal intention” and that animals never engage in “ . . . the project of producing a certain form of the gesture itself” (“Transcendence”). Language is not reducible to an animal behavior: “In emitting the originary sign, the act that defines us as human, we turn from the ‘horizontal’ world of appetite to the new, ‘vertical’ dimension. In the originary scene, the sign is the first act that is not a product of the interplay between appetite and inhibition responsible for the gamut of animal behaviors” (“Four Freedoms”). The difference between human language and animal communication systems is one not of degree but kind: “That Durkheim lacked the conceptual vocabulary to characterize these [shared] representations as *different in kind* from those of other animals is a trivial matter in respect of his achievement in valorizing the specificity of the human community that makes possible their sharing” (“Emile”) (emphasis added). Those who seek in “play” behaviour the origin of language are misguided and misleading: “This doesn’t mean that a chimp, or a far less advanced creature, is incapable of ‘free play,’ the fanciful triggering of routines as a result of who knows exactly what random inputs. But a playful reaction to one’s environment, in which

one is not immediately engaged in activities such as eating or sex that are directly involved in individual or species survival, is not the equivalent of nor indeed in any way connected to the intentional formation of representations, any more than animal language is directly connected to human language" ("Nim").

[7] Gans (in an unusually mocking tone): "The social sciences tell us that a sign is simply one thing substituted for another. Signs are used by animals as well as humans; our sign system is merely one more elaborate, not different in kind. We have religion because we are weak and observe the strength of the forces of nature, we are mortal and observe the permanence of the world beyond our death. And as for culture, animals too make beautiful displays, birds sing lovely songs, and who can say that whales don't tell each other stories. . . . Our choice is between these worthless explanations and originary thinking . . ." ("Mimetic Simplicity") [paras.6–7].

"However pregnant with future evolutionary possibilities, animal play is not comparable to human symbolic representation, in which words and things belong to different universes rather than one being a 'non-serious' form of the other. . . . The original source of the dog's inhibition, we may assume, is fear of being bitten back, and eventually dogs come to 'know' they are playing, but only an uncritical anthropomorphism would extend this knowledge to awareness that their nips 'denote' real bites" ("Gregory Bateson's").

[8] A personal note: I find tedious and nauseating the omnipresence of the noun "cognition" and with its twin "cognitive": insert "cognitive" into the title of your research proposal and doubtless its chances for success will multiply exponentially. Like Moliere's bourgeois gentleman who was surprised to learn he had been speaking prose all his life, perhaps those of us who do generative anthropology may be surprised to learn that all this time we have been doing something like "cognitive archaeology."

[9] To add to Bavidge and Ground's account of Wittgenstein on expression or animal mind or both, I have relied on Dilman (1978-79), Finn (1975), Garcia (2013), Haack (1982), Jamieson, "Science" (1998), Klagge (1998), and Winch (1996). Garcia's is the most directly relevant study. He writes: "To sum up and come to a close . . . Wittgenstein's conception of animal minds includes the following three main theses. One, animals express their minds through non-linguistic behaviour, in contrast with the complex linguistic expressive behaviour of humans. Two, the differences in linguistic abilities are differences in the forms of life; and so linguistic abilities signal the existence of a distinctive human form of life to which animals do not belong (and into which children are progressively introduced). Three, human expressive behaviour acquires its significance against the backdrop provided by a set of practices, hence expressive behavior is not as such prior to, and independent of, linguistic-cum-conceptual abilities" (120-121).

[10] Bavidge and Ground play on the famous lines from *Star Trek*: "They do not see them

[the movements] as emanating from *us*. They continue their mission, unseeing, unmoved, and unresponsive; to boldly catalogue where no one has catalogued before" (147) [8].

[11] Bavidge and Ground: "But [the story] also identifies the kind of thing we are missing when we deny that other animals could have points of view. The pieces of world that we miss, or misdescribe, are those objects and events which, as a matter of fact, make up a creature's *expressive behaviour*" (149).

[12] Gans's opinions on anthropomorphism are complex. He seems not to place any error-phobic blanket prohibition on anthropomorphic thinking. On the contrary, consider these remarks, the tone of the first implying no hostility to that which Hegel preserves and the tone of the second expressing disapproval of the sacrificial move in modern analytical philosophy: "Hegel's idealism has not yet thrown off the originary anthropomorphism that metaphysics inherited from religious thought"; "Modern analytical philosophy in rejecting anthropomorphism sacrifices the human altogether, although it has recovered some of it through 'ordinary language'" ("Minimal Thinking").

Other passages relevant to the question of anthropomorphic thinking present the appearance of an inconsistency: Gans is certainly content to celebrate the deliberately anthropomorphic projections he analyses in "Bear Theory" and "Biddy the Hedgehog, RIP." One might then be mystified to notice what one might misinterpret as stinginess toward owners of pets (such as I am) who attribute human-like thoughts to their beloved animals (such as I do): ". . . attributing human-like thoughts and feelings to animals, as some pet owners are wont to do, steps over the line and is less playful than silly" ("Biddy"). So much depends upon a red wheel barrow, and so much depends on what one means by "human-like thoughts."

I would claim that the inconsistency is only seeming: Gans's unspoken assumption seems to be that the explicitness and obviousness of the fictionalizing in the former cases (bears and Biddy the hedgehog) prevents the humans engaged in such play (play that surely from some perspective or another could also be called "silly") from blurring the reality of the human-animal boundary, whereas the emotional investment of owners in their pets dims the obviousness of their fictionalizing and may increase beyond the point of their control ("rational" control of thought? morally responsible self-control, restraining sentimentalism?) the temptation to blur the "real" boundary of human-animal difference in ways that undermine human self-respect. I venture the claim that the more time people spend regularly interacting with animals, and, one hopes, "training" them if they are pets, the less likely people will lose control due to emotional investments. As the likelihood of error decreases, so decreases the "silly" quality of their attributing "human-like thoughts and feelings" to the animals whose repertoires of expressive behavior they come to know. With his characteristically uncanny wisdom, Gans seems to be aware of this likelihood when he teases pet owners—in a *playful* way—for spending time and money on real animals when

they could derive just as much pleasure from ensouling (stuffed plush inanimate) “bears”: “An animal is not human; one can love it dearly, but projecting human consciousness onto it, as pet owners are occasionally wont to do, is just making [the pet] into a bear, and if what you want is a bear, it’s a lot easier to take care of a creature that requires no feeding, cleaning, or “walking,” let alone putting to sleep” (“Bear Theory”). The deep point—one that pays “real” animals a compliment—may be, I take it, that precisely because there *is* an extra-human reality of animal mind that is worth describing and understanding in “scientific” terms, pet owners unintentionally demean and disrespect their animals when they treat them as “bears.” They should be attributing pet consciousness and not human (or “bear”) consciousness to their pets. My taking the passage this way fits with Gans’s objections to internet videos of animals: “. . . videos that are cute and harmless but ultimately cloying and dehumanizing, in that the animal is presented as either trying and not quite succeeding at being ‘human,’ or else showing that whatever our desires and expectations, he/she really doesn’t care to be human” (“Bidly”). —Finally, it perhaps is worth noticing that Gans characterizes certain cognitive scientists with the same epithet, “silly”: “Only cognitive scientists are silly enough to believe that there is only a difference of degree between humans and animals. The special nature of bears is that it is we who grant them the gift of human consciousness” (“Bear Theory”). His characterization “silly” seems to kick in when denials of the difference of kind between humans and languageless animals go into operation.

[13] Consider the following remark of Gans, which seems to insist on an absoluteness in the expression-representation divide, if we read “reaction” as a variation on “expression”: “The event of deferral is not a visceral reaction of fear; the deferral of satisfaction is a mode of communication, a communion that prefigures the feast to follow. One renounces life as an animal in order to live it as a human being” (“Affirmation”). I would qualify this by insisting in turn that “communication” does not make the “visceral reaction” cease to exist: the exchange of signs continues and transfigures the expressive life; it does not end it. It would be absurd to think of signs as inexpressive. Perhaps we could say simply: animals express themselves first with their bodies; humans express themselves first with signs—on the scene of representation, our bodies (initially, that portion of our handed body that performs the abortive gesture of appropriation) cannot help but already be themselves signs.

[14] For evidence that animals do not feel mixed emotions, see the relevant chapter in Grandin and Johnson; see Roberts in Lurz.

[15] For a brilliant analysis of the concept of expression as it relates to “criteria” and “symptom” in Wittgenstein, an analysis that concludes—regarding humans—“There is no such thing as the expression of a feeling one does not feel,” see the essay by Finn. Finn’s conclusion may be relevant in connection to the fact that animal emotions are not complex, but simple—their simplicity perhaps adding to the reliability of their expressiveness.

On the fear of danger in the originary event: “In contrast with animals, humans pose a greater *danger* to themselves than do the rigors of the extraspecific world. Hence if we need a new system of communication, it is not to signal the location either of predators or food, but to avert the *danger* of mimetic conflict. According to the originary hypothesis, human language originates when the pecking-order animal dominance hierarchy is no longer able to regulate such conflict” (Gans, “Fundamental Paradox”) (emphasis added).

Consider too the choice of the verb “expresses” in the following: “It [the transcendent] is experienced as governing a community *to which each belongs*, and to which each expresses his allegiance through emission of the sign. In biblical terms, the transcendent stands in a *covenantal* relationship with the community” (“Transcendence”) (emphases in the original). Can one express a feeling of allegiance that one does not feel?

[16] For a careful critique of Burge’s whole project, see Campbell. For unequivocal examples of research engaging with this dominant mode of “mental representation” discourse, see those essays in Lurz’s *The Philosophy of Animal Minds* volume by Rescorla, by Tetzlaff and Rey, by Camp, and by Proust; see Allen, “Mental Content.” Another helpful example is this programmatic formulation by Fred Dretske: “Learning . . . also gives rise to elements that have an informational function. Such items are the concepts essential to thought. Thoughts are the internal representations whose information-providing function has been acquired in learning, the kind of learning wherein is acquired the concepts needed to have these thoughts” (“Nature of Thought” 192). See also Dretske, “Introspection” (271, 273). For a very helpful analysis of what is at stake in the deployment of such a vocabulary, see Margolis and Laurence.

[17] Bavidge and Ground: “So until we can, for example, determine how the mouse represents that cat to itself, we cannot say it is frightened of it. Representation precedes communication could be the slogan for this point of view and, if it is true, appealing to expression will not help us understand animal minds” (159) [54].

[18] See my *Mad Scientist, Impossible Human: An Essay in Generative Anthropology* (Aurora, Co.: Davies Group Publishers, 2014).

[19] Gans: “As a ‘system of cells,’ we may be only quantitatively different from other animals, but as a ‘system of representations,’ we are ‘absolutely different,’ because our minds not only *contain* representations in the sense of perceptive traces, but *create* representations in the sense of words and artificial images” (“Emile”).

[20] Gans showing an attachment to the belief that language is primarily communication: “Before logical or linguistic categorization can take place, the community must establish through its exchange of signs a transcendental universe of representation, the world of Derrida’s *différance*” (“Gregory Bateson’s”). He credits Bateson for his “awareness of the interactive nature of thinking” and his “refusal to be confined within the individual psyche”

("Gregory Bateson's").

And this: "It will suffice here to point out that the minimal demonstration of the transcendental character of the linguistic sign is the fact that its meaning inheres not in the minds of the individual members of the community but in the shared understanding of the community as a whole. There is no physical locus, neuronal or otherwise, in which the meaning of a linguistic or other cultural sign can be found. Whether or not we attribute it to a supernatural source, the transcendental status of human representations is the defining trait of the creature that Aristotle defined by its possession of the logos" ("Notes").

Gans rejecting monolithic materialism: "The 'indexical' signals used by animals are traces of the impingement of objects on their sense and should therefore be understood as belonging to the same world as these objects, whereas human language, constructed of 'symbolic' or 'arbitrary' signs, occupies a different ontological space . . . *the representations that inhabit the intellect are made of nothing but language*" ("Notes") [emphasis added].

And this: "We may express the genetic code as a set of patterns that we can name by symbols, but we do not need to postulate a cosmic mind in which these symbols or their equivalents originated. Words, on the other hand, exist for their users as *forms* or in Platonic terms, *Ideas*, that utterances only instantiate" ("Transcendence").

And more: "In this perspective, the event of the human is an innovation comparable to the emergence of life. But the difference between the emergence of life and that of the human is that whereas DNA and its precursors 'encode' the means of self-reproduction, humans remember and *thematize* occurrences of emergence, and are consequently the only beings for whom *events* may be said to exist" ("Originary Hypothesis, Stanford").

And this: ". . . the speaker is not simply accidentally foregrounding an object . . . but he is *thematizing* it, *intending* it, *putting it on scene*, which is inseparable from indicating to his interlocutor *that* he is so doing. Tallis calls the material of human representational consciousness *thatter* to contrast it with the *matter* that the neuromaniacs think human consciousness can be reduced to" ("Scene of Language").

[21] Gans has already to some extent anticipated (and pre-endorsed) this thesis, although the foregrounding and emphasis placed upon it is something for which I take responsibility. Consider: "*Both humans and animals communicate through indexical signs, expressions of emotions* that provide information to conspecifics, such as a cry of fear that serves as a warning signal. In contrast, the category of symbolic or . . . *arbitrary* signs, belongs only to humans . . ." ("Gregory Bateson's") (opening emphasis added).

[22] Gans: "Human ritual may then be characterized not as the assimilation of the extraneous element of independently-evolved language into the more general structure of ritual, but as the attempt to reproduce this scene, that is, as a *historical* phenomenon, in

contrast with biologically driven rituals” (“Roy Rappaport”).

[23] Gans: “Although preliminary versions of these relations are found in animal communication, we should beware of seeking human categories in animal interaction. One animal gives a signal and the others follow. We may call this an example of ‘firstness’ if we like, but it [animal signal-following] is not exercised in *a context of conscious reciprocity* and therefore arouses no awareness of the first-later distinction that generates resentment in humans. Animals do not have a sense of equality” (“Reciprocity”) [emphasis added].

[24] Gans on human-animal difference in the context of moral intuitions: “. . . I was struck by the clear parallel between Nim’s inability to construct declarative sentences and his more dangerous inability to acquire a moral sense. Although far more intelligent than a dog, he couldn’t learn the inhibitions that the dog has inherited in the process of domestication. What the dog could ‘learn’ of human morality through Darwinian selection while remaining an animal, the chimp could not learn the way a human would learn it” (“Nim”).

“One renounces life as an animal in order to live it as a human being” (“Affirmation”).

“Animals do not have a sense of equality. They are mimetic enough to want what they see in the possession of others, but it is meaningless to speak of animal ‘morality,’ with respect to either egalitarianism or pity” (“Reciprocity”).

[25] Gans on human-animal difference considered technologically: “. . . apes . . . do not use projectiles as weapons in a systematic way. . . . In order to take aim at something, we must first stand back from our appetitive movement toward it; we intend it. The possibility of peacefully intending the sacred object via the sign is also the possibility of violently intending it through a missile. My difference from Girard on this point is ‘merely’ to insist that the latter intention [violently intending through a missile] is dependent on the former [peacefully intending via the sign]” (“Minimal Language”).

[26] Gans on economic “value” as something only humans can produce (contrary to the environmentalist insistence on the already-sacred “inherent” or “intrinsic” value of nature prior to human contact with it): “Although higher animals imitate another’s appetitive actions, both positive and negative, in the search for food or in flight from predators, in designating a particular object, the mediating animal does not modify its intrinsic value; this designation neither arouses desire nor privileges its specific object over the general category of which it is a member. Consequently, it can modify the appetitive value of the object only in the long-term context of Baldwinian (behavior-driven) evolution. Human mimesis does not need to change the genetic code to influence behavior, or desire itself, because relationships between human beings are mediated by the scene of representation” (“Rene Girard and”).

[27] Gans on human-animal difference considered onto-theologically: “The first assertions,

in a proto-language that could not have articulated them in declarative sentences, must have been themselves religious and consequently, as Durkheim insists, useless as a means of understanding and communicating about empirical reality What these propositions come into being to oppose is not another (falsifiable) kind of proposition, but a pre-human world lacking in shared symbolic signs of any kind, in which no communal meaning, and consequently no communal interdiction, is possible" ("Roy Rappaport").

"Presence in the human sense is precisely not the kind of presence that obtains in an animal's field of awareness; it [human presence] exists only as deferral, whereas presence in the sense of 'immediacy,' whether controlled as in ritual [sacrifice] or occasioned by loss of control as in Girard's scenes of lynch mob violence [scapegoating], is always accomplished by filling in and effectively abolishing this space of representation—a space that elsewhere in the animal kingdom simply does not exist" ("Minimal Language").

[28] Greek philosophers and Christian theologians wrung their hands over the risk of demeaning the gods by ascribing human qualities to them long before modern scientists fretted over the risk of elevating animals by ascribing human qualities to them: in one case, the deity occupies the scenic center; in the other, the animal subjected to "scientific" scrutiny (all too often with its accompanying Frankensteinian cruelties) occupies it. Bavidge and Ground treat anthropomorphism in their chapter "The Happy Chimpanzee" (89-106). The anthology edited by Mitchell, Thompson, and Miles is a rich source of interdisciplinary research on the problem (some say, the epistemological virtue) of anthropomorphism.