For my parents, who always encouraged the animal in me.
encyclopedia of human-animal relationships

idea that all animals are worthy of wonder. This is, in fact, the central theme of "Gandhi's Banana" by Richard Sibles. In this paper, there are several passages that describe how animals are valued. The passage that stands out is: "The wonder of the animal world is not in the beauty of their forms, but in their ability to be感动 and to affect us."

Further Resources

Literature

Human Communication's Effects on Relationships with Animals

To understand how human communication with animals affects and shapes human relationships with animals, one must first accept the idea that human language and the associated communicative practices do not constitute a mere expression of the way humans perceive the world. Instead, these practices are a way of representing and reinterpreting the world. In other words, the way humans communicate about animals helps inform the way they think about animals and the way they experience animals.

Communication Carries an Action Plan

Every instance of human communication serves to negotiate and control meaning. If one reflects on the "human relationship with animals," the inclusion of the word "other" before the word "animals" emphasizes the extent to which we see animals as distinct entities. This is not to say that animals are not the same as humans, just that they are different. Some recent research suggests that animals may have the capacity for more advanced forms of communication, such as understanding the intentions of others. For example, one study observed that animals are capable of understanding the intentions of others in order to achieve a goal. In this case, the animals were able to understand the intentions of the humans and use that information to achieve their own goals.

French philosopher and historian Michel Foucault (1926-84) developed the theory that discourses, not systems of language and representation, are productive, not just descriptors of communication that permeate society at every level with power relations. For Foucault, not only do discourses produce meaning, but they also regulate the way people behave and construct the way we view ourselves and the world. Contemporary scholars have been profoundly influenced by this idea. They view communication as a means of restructuring, or the cultural or discursive act, as one of the most significant processes that shape the social order in society over many years.

The level of success is a good place to start, looking at small-scale but important elements of discursive interactions and their connection to the human relationship with animals. When a creature is depicted as being a "animal," or a survivor of the collective exclamations, "We treat them as animals," certain culturally conventional meanings are associated with the word "animal." In the animal's case, "animal" connotes a certain level of respect or even life. Likewise, when someone refers to another creature as a "chicken," or a "pig," certain meanings are conventionally associated. "Chicken" connotes cowardly, and "pig" connotes glutinous or filthy. Although it may be obvious that the popular connotations in these instances are negative and often inaccurate (chickens bravely protect their chicks, and pigs avoid smelling their own feet), one cannot entirely dismiss the role of language in shaping our understanding of animals. How we communicate about animals helps inform the way we think about animals and the way we experience animals.
Word and Grammatical Choice and Meaning

Some scholars argue that certain language choices help perpetuate a widespread phenomenon of human discrimination against animal species, or species. For instance, Jean B. Damay argues that in English, through the popular pronoun choice of "it" for most animals, humans cause not only animal death, but also their very unconscious. By calling an animal "it," humans group that animal with fruitless objects—robbing the animal of existence and the capacity to feel, think, and have consciousness. More than mere word choice, scholars agree that grammatical choice in communication is generally less conscious about choices of language than about words. Grammar conveys least ideology, or hidden cultural assumptions, and is powerful in shaping realities and reproducing "common sense." Knowledge that appears natural and neutral but instead always is socially constructed. For instance, some scholars argue that English grammar has been culturally constructed to privilege human agency—at the ability to consciously effect change—and control animal agency

Examples include choices about passive or active voice through internal arrangement and choices about transitivity through the order of a sentence that determines the "who does what to whom." English grammar tries to set up the human as the act, subject (the one who does things to others) and the nonhuman animal as the passive object (the one to whom things are done). For instance, in English and in some other languages, humans cause, hurt, run, lure, and control animals. Try to put these actions into grammatical arrangements where the animal has equal or more agency, and one will land in a difficult conflict with the English grammatical code available.

On the other hand, certain languages, including many naturalistic cultures' languages, allow more refined grammar that represents the human-animal relationship as interrelated rather than causal with humans as agents. An alternative, for instance, is found in the case of certain animal cultures, in which animals are seen as equal to humans, if not more powerful, and are grammatically represented as being equal to humans.

Strategic Discourse

Although much of the discourse discussed so far has been communication that circulates among people in everyday interactions, in certain instances, communication is used more deliberately to legitimate certain relations with animals. Many such strategic discourses exist. An example is provided further discussion would be an institutional discussion such as meat-industry discourse.

Carley Glenn examines how the meat industry uses two dominant discourses to construct consumer support: "meatpeak" and "speaking animals." The first strategy, "meatpeak," is the use of meat language that is intentionally misleading by being ambiguous or disingenuous to hide violent practices internal to the industry. For example, in discussing industry practices, the industry uses the term "naturality" to describe the practices of workers killing pigs and rare small (for industry use) by holding their back legs and slamming their heads against the floor. The word "naturality" represents the practice as humane and conceals—and as the process consists—the details of the act and the inflicted violence and suffering. The second strategy, the use of "speaker" animals in advertisements, is to make meat-related issues seem more "natural," involving Western society eating on a grill or cannon shooting eating "processed" it-up. This strategy of showing happy animals cooking or eating themselves implies the need to continue ways of thinking that obscure the suffering of animals killed for their meat and reduce industry practices even in the face of serious concerns raised by environmental and animal advocates.

Across the globe, how meat-industry publications use linguistic devices—from semantic classification schemes to persuasive speech—that work to reproduce ideological assumptions that make animal oppression seem both unavoidable and benign and that encourage the disregarding of pain and suffering for the sake of market profits. One example is in the industry's use of seating, or the symbolic use of a single characteristic pin to stand out for a more complex whole. An excerpt from industry text provides an example: "There's enough power to run the beef...you'd end up cutting its head off while the beef was still alive..." In this case, the more complex whole of a living cow is metaphorically symbolized by the product; the industry gets from killing the cow, creating the meaning of a cow as a meat source for human and reducing the meaning of killing a live, sentient being. One may imagine the use of an alternative, as the cow's relational role (e.g., "There's not enough power to run the calf's mother" would do to shift meaning.

Mastery View as Dominant Discourse

Discourse can be talked about at different levels, as in the level of discourse in everyday communication (e.g., friends or strangers talking), at the level of strategic or
institutional discourses (e.g., industry or scientific communication), or at the level of more widespread cultural discourses (e.g., overarching values and norms that influence all scales of communication). Existing cultural discourses about the human relationship with animals include but are not limited to mastery discourses (humans having a relationship of dominance over animals), stewardship discourses (humans having a relationship of overseeing and taking care of animals), and mutuality discourses (humans having an interdependent relationship of reciprocity and respect with animals).

The dominant cultural discourse of human relations with animals in Western settings is one of mastery. This mastery discourse is reproduced in economic, scientific, religious, governmental, and other institutional discourses and on an everyday interpersonal communication scale. The power that human exercise over other animals is both coercive (by force) and material (e.g., hunting, fishing, culling), and the concern and its material results are both culturally justified and legitimated via this mastery discourse.

A core value assumption in mastery discourse is anthropocentrism, in which other animals are constructed as inferior to humans. Anthropocentric ideals treat other oppressive discourses of racism and sexism. In anthropocentric discourse, nonhuman animals are seen in a similar role to that of oppressed minority in race or women in sex.

The animal is positioned as the subordinate “Other” and the human is in the role of the dominating and omnipotent “Center.” Val Flusin, writer for The Faith, explores how the shared discourse transmits anthropocentric racism, sexism, and xenophobia, but also allows for the recognition of nonhuman others as moral agents and to be treated with respect. This recognition allows for a more nuanced understanding of the relationships between humans and other animals and emphasizes the importance of respecting and valuing the perspectives and experiences of nonhuman animals.

Countercultural discourses, although dominant meanings are reproduced, alternative meanings are also introduced and negotiated in communication, bringing with them different ways of understanding and practicing human-animal relationships. These discourses challenge the dominant mastery discourse and keep the cultural imbalance, or tension, between the dominant discourse and such countercultural discourses in mind. Countercultural discourses, in fact, are always in circulation and provide opportunities to avoid dominant understandings.

We, although countercultural discourses provide choices of how to represent the human relationship with animals, the choice is still a strained one. The selection of a countercultural discourse or an interpretative ideology requires the choice of ignoring the dominant discourse and, with it, the decision of whether to represent or compromise one’s own values, to oppose or accept this more or less powerful institutional discourse, to be heard or not heard, to be celebrated or to be stigmatized against.

### Discursive Struggles of the Gorilla

Ethnographic fieldwork at an American zoo provides an illustration of the struggle between dominant discourse and countercultural discourses with an example of a schoolchild's tour guided by the gorilla. The tour guide, in her role as zoo authority and legal adult among a group of mostly children, has extensive power to use communication to both establish and reverse the dominant themes and meanings. In the observations that follow, the discursive constructions drawn on by the tour guide include dominant mastery and stewardship discourses, animals as performers, and anthropocentricism. A few children attempt to push forth countercultures of captivity, connection, and freedom.

When the tour stops at the exhibit, a mono-and-a-half-year-old gorilla just a little smaller than the children runs up to face them. She raises her arms above her head and begins to loudly pound her palms on the glass that separates her from them. The tour guide discretely frames the gorilla's actions as playful, funny, and performative, saying, "This baby being really cute over here; He's in the glass here, this baby even has red playing a toy on the window. "If we give her a drum set, it might be really interesting to see what she do."

A child, however, counters the tour guide's statements by saying, "Maybe he wants to be let out." The guide then does quick work reassuring and rearticulating the authority to reprimand, saying, "Oh, you think so, I think she's just playing. Nonhuman elements of discourse show work in representation—as how the guide uses emphasis on the child's "don't" and de-emphasizes on her own "don't" to differentiate the weight and accuracy of each of their statements, subordinating the girl's "don't" to her own.

Another child then says this of the young gorilla, "She's trying to get the lock and run." The guide thus uses her louder adult voice to speak over the resistant discourse and continue the work of reifying, again using her de-emphasized, superfluous "don't" to help do her work. "I think she's not showing all for you. Would you guys want to let her go? It's a beautiful environment. They get fed every day."

Another child is facing the gorilla, and the gorilla is looking at the child as she pounds the glass. The child says to the gorilla, "Hi!"

The children here have introduced resistant countercultures. Their discourses foster recognitions of capacity and desire for freedom as well as a connection with a sentient being. In her positioning as the authority, however, the guide has the final word, as well as the physical (concrete) control over the children in deciding when they are to stay at this discursive site and when they are to leave. The guide's final communication puts one last time to the "Hi!" the baby gorilla is having, legitimizing the guide's dominant representation and then removing the children from the sight and sound of the gorilla.
ENCyclopedia of HUMAN-ANIMAL RELATIONSHIPS

And so it is that there is a good of time has a pending away—all right, all right; my eagles, we're going to move along; right, this is the...

Such dichotomies raise serious Wittgensteinian problems, such as the existence of a shared sense of reality, which raises epistemological questions, such as the existence of a shared sense of reality, which raises epistemological questions, which raises epistemological questions, which raises epistemological questions, which raises epistemological questions, which raises epistemological questions, which raises epistemological questions, which raises epistemological questions, which raises epistemological questions, which raises epistemological questions, which raises epistemological questions, which raises epistemological questions, which raises epistemological questions, which raises epistemological questions, which raises epistemological questions, which raises epistemological questions, which raises epistemological questions, which raises epistemological questions, which raises epistemological questions, which raises epistemological questions, which raises epistemological questions, which raises epistemological questions, which raises epistemological questions, which raises epistemological questions, which raises epistemological questions, which raises epistemological questions, which raises epistemological questions, which raises epistemological questions, which raises epistemological questions, which raises epistemological questions, which raises epistemological questions, which raises epistemological questions, which raises epistemological questions, which raises epistemological questions, which raises epistemological questions, which raises epistemological questions, which raises epistemological questions, which raises epistemological questions, which raises epistemological questions, which raises epistemological questions, which raises epistemological questions, which raises epistemological questions, which raises epistemological questions, which raises epistemological questions, which raises epistemological questions, which raises epistemological questions, which raises epistemological questions, which raises epistemological questions, which raises epistemological questions, which raises epistemological questions, which raises epistemological questions, which raises epistemological questions, which raises epistemological questions, which raises epistemological questions, which raises epistemological questions, which raises epistemological questions, which raises epistemological questions, which raises epistemological questions, which raises epistemological questions, which raises epistemological questions, which raises epistemological questions, which raises epistemological questions, which raises epistemological questions, which raises epistemological questions, which raises epistemological questions, which raises epistemological questions, which raises epistemological questions, which raises epistemological questions, which raises epistemological questions, which raises epistemological questions, which raises epistemological questions, which raises epistemological questions, which raises epistemological questions, which raises epistemological questions, which raises epistemological questions, which raises epistemological questions, which raises epistemological questions, which raises epistemological questions, which raises epistemological questions, which raises epistemological questions, which raises epistemological questions, which raises epistemological questions, which raises epistemological questions, which raises epistemological questions, which raises epistemological ques...
PETA, in turn, precisely because of this refrain, was able to make a media event out of the controversy and to draw attention to its alternative message.

**Language Change**

Because discourse is dynamic, the problems of 6-emota discourse such as map-discourse creating wide gulf between human and animals cannot simply be fixed by erasing certain words from the vocabulary. These changes do little if the meanings and associations of the new words that replace them reproduce similar configurations of meaning. Struggles over discourse, however, are secretaries and interrelated part of wider struggles for change. For example, the feminist movement, in addition to battling on economic, domestic, and public fronts, has waged a war against successful struggle over transvestite discourse. Debates over language that eliminate the use of "he" as a gender generic in the English language do serve to help change the perception of social meanings and choices available. Thus, change in linguistic practices—indeed, the move toward social change if it is coincident with and complemented to larger-scale societal transformations.

In ways similar to feminist language activism, scholars have begun to offer suggestions of word and grammar change for the human relationship with animals, including the use of operators to convey views of individual animals' lives, grammatical choices that make humans subjects if they are the primary actors or victims (e.g., the human approached the pig), and verbs that imply emotional intention (e.g., the deer "looked" instead of "stared").SEM also suggests vestigial expressions that stress humans above other animals (e.g., "the sanctity of human life," human-animal com-

**Changing Understandings Through Conscientious Communication**

This essay begins and will end with metaphors because they can be powerful linked discursive structures for creating new knowledge of alternative human relations with other animals. One can use metaphor as a lens for change by developing awareness about how the metaphors one lives by and by having one's personal experiences with animals form the basis of alternative metaphors. In this way, one can develop some of Lokhorst and Johnston's call as "experiential metaphor" to engage in an unsettling process of viewing one's life through new metaphors that open alternative ways of thinking.

Ethnographic research on whale watching in the Pacific Northwest provides an example. Many whale-watching tour operators and Cognitive Semantics use the word "whale" to describe the physical distance and emotionally exciting experiences you have with the whale, to invoke, for example, a certain form of whale-watching experience on the whale, as the whale moves in a certain form of "whale." This is quite a show today, but now amusements close by the whale or engage in similar low-interest activities such as fishing, sleeping or shearing out of the way.

Because each word gets its meaning by virtue of its relationship to other words and descriptive formations within its respective system, one can suggest how the particular word choice of "whale" relates to popular W-term communication, informed by subepistemological sameness of existing or emerging animal behavior as in "whale."

Women, more directly and literally, representations by the marine mammal industry of captive orcas trained to perform tricks for humans. Such actions representations, however, are contradictory to fit good faith intentions of intervention and expansion to educate viewers about the behavior of whales in their natural habitats and to inform respectful understandings.

The wide and pervasive societal use of "show" to popularly describe positive human viewing experiences of animal behavior, however, makes a different choice of representation difficult. While interesting summaries and captions must select among existing the same representations if they are to be understood. At the same time, the use of "show" as a term to serve in reproducible domestic discourse, directing and shaping way of seeing the human relationship with the whale. Although this choice is incorrect—indeed, the "show" behaviors are not a show but an unspoken action in their lives that humans happen to see—then the metaphor because of the word choice gets lost in the repeated use of "show" small "show" may become the very meaning of the representation.

When a couple of seamen heard about this observation, they went right to the deck to come up with alternative ways of representing the experience, ways they felt were closely related with their visual experiences and feelings around the whales and the meanings, they wanted to convey to those audiences came up with "that was a really good
day," evoking that the 5th formmate and pleased to have been near the whales. "We don't mean ships and that way. Another naturalist came up with that as a gross encounter," evoking a valued and mutual interaction with the whales.

This type of reflection on the subsequent shifting of language to represent the experience itself can help us think about how relations with animals—per se, in particular ways, the naturalists were able to critically reflect on the whale watching industry's use of communications and how to constructually use one’s use of language to fill their actual perceptions of their experience and their educational goals—to help humans think about the ocean not as animals performing for human entertainment, but as animals who have their own voice and agency, who make their own choices in their behavior and interactions, and whom humans wereterminate to examine.

Scholars, therefore, argue that a crucial step in changing the human relationship with animals is in the act of decentering the view of language and assigning communicative meaning. One who wishes to change human relations with animals must reexamine a mode of the previous discourse of assigning and examine a critical and self-reflexive understandability. As such, one must refrain to take communications about animals at face value and must instead always question the way they are, if the preferred discourse is thought in nature or a nature, not in the fact, in this context, of assigning communicative meaning to behavior and communication. This can be both an emancipatory and an emancipatory understanding, one that is assigning understanding about the social construction of human-animal relations and one of representing and creating compelling and alternative visions of possible futures.

also see
Classification—The Scales System
Ethics and Animal Protection—Factory Farm Distraction

Further Resources


Ansa Milton

Literature

Moby Dick

Herman Melville (1819-1891) is best known for his novel, Moby Dick, published in 1851 and now regarded as his masterpiece, as well as a testament of American literature. Moby Dick, a white whale, is obsessively hunted by Captain Ahab, who, in his rage, takes an oath to avenge a right whale upon the whale. Melville's novel is a masterpiece of its genre, combining psychological, social, and philosophical themes with a vast array of characters and settings. The novel is known for its complex narrative structure and its exploration of themes such as obsession, revenge, and madness.

In Moby Dick, Melville provides a lengthy description of whaling and those who lived by it. He reveals the rich history of whaling in the 18th-century, the whale trade, how the whale was killed, and the methods used to harvest whale oil. The novel is a rich source of information about the whaling industry and the lives of those who participated in it.

The novel is also known for its vivid descriptions of the whale, including the famous passage, "Moby Dick! Moby! Moby Dick!" The whale is shown in all its majesty, its strength, and its beauty. The novel is a testament to the power of the whale and the awe-inspiring nature of its beauty.

In conclusion, Moby Dick is a masterpiece of American literature, combining elements of the sea, adventure, and philosophy. It is a testament to the power of the human spirit, and it remains a timeless work of art that continues to inspire readers today.