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October 4, '79

Dear Professor Bunge:

I very much like your suggestion of attribution or predication for what it *gets rid of*
~~leaves out~~--those mental acts entailed by both inference and hypothesis for which there is as yet little or no evidence in the ape (I say "little" because some find inference in conservation, and Sarah does conserve; but I leave this for another occasion). What alone troubles me is the peculiar nature of the property involved in the attribution. Though the logical representation of attribution for observable and nonobservable properties will not differ, I cannot believe the psychological process is the same. It may be no surprise that apes attribute redness to apples, but somewhat more of a surprise that they attribute intentions, knowledge, and the like to actors. Here too, of course, I cannot yet specify exactly what the ape attributes--and especially not with regard to the distinction between observable/nonobservable--so it is a bit premature to pose the problem. Although I'm sure you won't object to my posing it hypothetically. Do you find no problem in the fact that the attribution may be for properties that are not observable?

Cordially,
David Premack
David Premack

Van Leer Jerusalem Foundation
P.O.B 4070, Israel----here until end of December

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