

"The Proper Domain of Psychological Predicates"

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Many people readily accept that chimpanzees, dolphins, corvids, and other relatively large and complex animals can think and feel. New research throughout biology has also led scientists to ascribe decision-making to plants and fruit flies, learning to worms and honeybees, linguistic communication to bacteria, and preference to neurons (inter alia). How seriously should we take these unexpected psychological ascriptions? Very seriously: the terms are being used literally to describe the new findings. I'll present evidence for the unexpected uses and explain why a literal interpretation is best. In a word, we are finally in possession of scientific tools that are enabling us to abandon the anthropocentrism of our traditional understanding of psychological capacities.