

wholly unconscious, and lacks any mechanism for focusing it and keeping it together. Common nouns provide just such a mechanism. With the aid of a word, you can handle a general concept, manipulate it in its wholeness, carry it about with you, remind yourself about it when none of the particular objects that compose it are present . . . . Human beings have thus reached a new stage in the development of language. We may call it the stage of speech, and define speech as the use of arbitrary symbols to convey information, including words for things. Man has been defined as the tool-making animal; but in a very real sense the most important tools that he possesses are words.

-- Julian Huxley and Ludwig Koch, *Animal Language: How Animals Communicate* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1964), pp. 24-25.

But what about the developments in communication with apes which were reported from 1967 on through the 1970's? What about the work of Allen and Beatrice Gardner of the University of Nevada, who taught the chimpanzee Washoe to use 132 signs in American Sign Language? What about the work of Ann and David Premack of the University of California at Santa Barbara, who taught the chimpanzee Sarah to use plastic symbols of different shapes and colors to represent words, and claimed that Sarah had learned 130 words and even mastered some phrases? What about the work of Duane and Susan Rumbaugh at the Yerkes Regional Primate Research Center in Atlanta, who, using a language of their own invention, Yerkish, claimed that they got two chimpansees to communicate with each other in this language by pressing appropriately marked keys on a console? And what about the work of Francine Patterson at Stanford, who claimed she had taught a female gorilla named Koko more than 400 signs; and that Koko had proceeded to use word combinations to insult her trainers (You nut) to compose rhymes (bear hair, squash wash), and to invent metaphors (eye hat for mask, finger bracelet for ring)?

In the March 10, 1980 issue of Time an article appeared entitled "Are Those Apes Really Talking?" The article states:

Though a few experts expressed skepticism, these claims of the apes' linguistic ability were widely accepted during the 1970s. But now many scientists are beginning to have second thoughts. They suggest that much of what the animals are doing is merely mimicking their teachers and that they have no comprehension of syntax. What is more, they say, the primate experimenters are probably so eager to prove their case that they often provide inadvertent cues to the animals, who quickly realize which 'right' answer will bring them some