Animal Communication Systems

- Bee dances
- Whale songs
- Seahorse make-up
- Vervet monkey calls

Features of Human Language

- Abstract talk, more than talk about the present
- Exchange
- Grammar (generative, boundless number of sentences)

- Correctness/felicity conditions
- Accountability of speaker

The utterances themselves are subject to norms, implying a kind of accountability the audience places on the speaker.

The vervet monkey call system is largely mimicking. Younger monkeys observe elder monkeys to shape their behavioral disposition. A human language has a more active shaping of behavioral dispositions.

Back to Grice

Grice is mostly concerned with the speaker/performer in meaning(nn). The suggestion is to put more emphasis on the audience.

What may make linguistic actions meaningful is that they are subject to norms and it is the witnessing creature that holds the speaker accountable to the norms.