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# What Is Expression?: How A Formal Theory Can Clarify The Expressive Possibilities Of Language

*By Alex Scott*



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## What Is Expression?: How A Formal Theory Can Clarify The Expressive Possibilities Of Language By Alex Scott

What are the elements of expression? What are the origins, aims, and functions of expression? An adequate theory of expression can help us to address these questions and to recognize the diversity of the many modes of expression (scientific, ethical, aesthetic, religious, and sociocultural).

Alex Scott describes the interdependence of the modes of expression, showing that a theory of expression can promote social understanding by illuminating the nature of our interdependence as individuals in society.

Expression theory, as described by Scott, is not merely a theory of art. It is a theory of the ethics, aesthetics, psychology, logic, language, and politics of expression. It is a theory that enables us to examine in a more comprehensive way the question of whether there are any logical limits to the expressive capacity of language.

Expression theory is also a theory that enables us transcend the dialectics of the said and the unsaid, the sayable and the unsayable. It enables us to address the question of whether the communicability of a person's thoughts or feelings is determined solely by that person's communicative competence or whether there are some kinds of thoughts and feelings that are truly ineffable and incommunicable.



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#### **About the Author**

Alex Scott is a philosopher and physician who lives in Baltimore, Maryland. He is the author of *The Conditions of Knowledge: Reviews of 100 Great Works of Philosophy*, and *Christian Semiotics and the Language of Faith*. His interests include ethics, semiotics, and the philosophy of language.

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