

Re: genes and language (Homer, Richard Dawkins)

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Franz Gnaedinger wrote:

>

> *What is the difference between language and communication?*

> *You shall know the answer by the end of this message.*

So, the message hasn't ended yet?

> *Here again my basic definition of language from 1974/75:*

> *Language is the means of getting help and understanding*

> *from those we depend upon in one way or another – and*

> *every means of getting such help may be called language.*

>

> *I told you about Nera, our funny, kind, and clever dog*

> *from India. She could express herself in many ways: bark,*

> *whine, moan, howl, seldomly growl, and sometimes kind of*

> *sing; play her white eyebrows in her black face; wag her*

> *tail and give other body signals. We replied to her using*

> *human language, and she obviously understood several words.*

> *And if not the actual words then surely the tone including*

> *undertones. In an 'Oh no, don't you see I am working?' she*

> *could hear a concealed message: 'I should work, but I can*

> *need a break, so let us fool around some.' She understood*

> *our body language, even some of our mimic, I guess, and*

> *certainly other signals dogs can interpret, such as odors*

> *released in the sweat, and perhaps further signals we are*

> *conveying unconsciously.*

>

> *All those signals together may be called communication.*

> *If language resembles a car, a bicycle, a horse wagon,*

> *et cetera, communication resembles the traffic, the sum*

> *of all vehicles in motion, passing by on a street ...*

>

> *The world is brimming of communication. The cells in a*

> *body communicate by exchanging molecules and even small*

> *organelles, ions and photons; some trees warn each other*

> *of insects feeding on their leaves by emitting a gas;*

> *animals evolved many ways of communicating; even bacteria*

> *emit signals, calling other bacteria to join them e.g. on*

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- > *a drop of fat in a sink; and the greatest accomplishment*
- > *of biological agents, namely the biosphere, is maintained*
- > *via zillions of "voices" we don't hear – as we don't ever*
- > *notice all the calls to cell phones radiating through the*
- > *air, travelling accross the sky; we just receive the one*
- > *call that has our name or number to it.*

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