



real world. My thinking tends to go in the other direction. Something real happens to me and I generalize it to a concept applicable to science fiction. A recent few days dog-sitting my brother's schnauzer Seamus has gotten me thinking about inter-species communication (ISC). It is not a subject many people give thought to outside of science fiction.

I grew up with a dachshund Sam. We had all sorts of elitist jokes about how dumb a dog Sam was. More and more now I am impressed with Sam's intellect in ISC. Seamus is a bright dog too, I guess, but his ISC is abominable. He has his own rules about how he must be served dinner or he won't eat. It used to be the food had to sit out overnight and then be dumped on his newspaper before he would eat. Why? We never found out because of his poor ISC. Admittedly, getting Sam to eat was n\_e\_v\_e\_r a problem, so there was never any need to communicate the reason for strange eating customs and rituals. Sam's mind was very much like the humans he lived with; Seamus has a mind that could have been hatched on Planet Zork. But when it comes down to issues of each trying to communicate, Sam had a real edge over Seamus. When Seamus wants something, he comes up to you and starts whining. Item 1--that Seamus wants something--has come across very well. Item 2--what it is that Seamus wants--zero points. No communication whatsoever. Seamus just thinks, "You have opposable thumbs, you walk upright, your throat is bent to give you language. With all that going for you, you should know why I'm whining."

Sam reasoned that he had to communicate both items. He would whine a little--not as much as Seamus--but he would also give some thought on how to communicate what it was he wanted. He often used a surprising degree of abstraction. 2 AM. Sam wants to go outside. He goes upstairs to my room and scratches on the wall under the window. He was afraid of heights. He knew he did not want to go through that wall. But what he wanted was in that general direction. As soon as I gets up he runs to my bedroom door. If I put on a pair of pants, sitting on the bed, he goes back and scratches under the window. When I stand up, it was back to the door. This is a dog who has some idea how to communicate his desires.

At 4:45 in the afternoon he had some pretty unambiguous ways of expressing himself. It was getting near the time he was used to eating dinner. Over he went to the cupboard door and he would swing it back and forth with his nose. "Isn't it time to open this cupboard?" "No, Sam, you get fed at five." A little more swinging and he decided to be more explicit. Lots of cans of different things were kept in that cupboard. He knew which were dog food. He would pull out a can of dog food and knock it onto its side. He \_ n \_ e \_ v \_ e \_ r in his life pulled out the wrong kind of can by mistake. Maybe the can had a scent he recognized, but I doubt that. Cans are pretty well sealed. That's how they work. I think he had to be able to recognize the labels. He knocked over the can and rolled it to my feet. At the time I thought this was a cute trick. Today I recognize it as a solution to a problem in ISC. He was also pretty good at picking out, understanding, and remembering human words. These days I wonder if you could somehow put a new human brain into the body of a dachshund, could you tell the difference? For that matter, which would be smarter?

2. Jerry Ryan points out that I probably meant July 3, \*1863\*, not 1963, for the time travel contest. I did.

In answer to my questions "Can one really make a copy of a distinctive-looking pearl as easily as of a crystalline gem?" and "[Why] do the people in these stories have these copies made anyway?" Mike Lukacs says, "YES; Given access to the original (to make an impression) or a complete and detailed set of photographs, a nearly undetectable copy of a baroque pearl could be made much more easily than one of a cut transparent stone. The owners of fabulous pieces of jewelry (in the \$million\$ plus category) will often have a good replica made to wear. Since person X is known to own the Fleigleman diamond, and is not expected to hand it around at parties for testing and inspection, the copy is just as good to wear as the original, and much less expensive and risky. (For major bucks type jewelry, insurance companies charge steep fees for every day or hour that the item is outside of the bank vault where it is normally stored.)"

Now I suppose my question is, "Can one buy a copy of the Fleigleman diamond without having the real one? Is there a market in ersatz

Stars of India? Is this on Canal Street right next to the purveyors of Rolex imitators?" (Yes, I know one buys the diamond for investment. But it would seem that there must be some people who want to invest and not wear it around, and others who would like to wear it without actually investing.) [-ecl]

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The great enemy of truth is very often not the lie--deliberate, contrived, and dishonest--but the myth--persistent, persuasive, and realistic. Too often we hold fast to the cliches of our forbears.

-- John F. Kennedy

BICYCLING THROUGH TIME AND SPACE by Mike Sirota

Ace, 1991, ISBN 0-441-05735-7, \$3.99.

A book review by Evelyn C. Leeper

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Jack Miller gets an offer from an alien--a bicycle that will let him ride "The Ultimate Bike Path." He can visit different

worlds, as well as the past and the future, and then he can return to his own when he gets tired. This could have been interesting, but it wasn't.

Why not? Well, for starters, the structure didn't use the premise well. It's not that Sirota didn't have Jack visit enough worlds; Jack visits too many, and they're not very interesting. Jack can visit millions of worlds; we see him visit seven. The first episode is a slap-stick humorous fantasy (where the humor consist of Jack having to ride in a dung cart). The second is a four-page quickie in which Jack meets Adolf Hitler as a boy. The third is a typical kill-the-evil-sorcerer tale. The fourth is another quickie--a world of cliches. Then comes a theme park world, a Native American spirit world, rock-and-roll heaven, and a junk food world. Mercifully, we are spared his adventures in the world of the sex kittens.

It's a hodge-podge, more in the tradition of T h e S t a r l o s t than of Douglas Adams (which the cover claims--an early warning sign these days). There are enough loose ends to threaten a sequel even without the closing line: "I'll be back." But I somehow don't think more volumes will be forthcoming. Maybe B i c y c l i n g T h r o u g h T i m e a n d S p a c e would appeal to science fiction fans who are also bicyclists, but I doubt even they would enjoy it.