

# Graffiti for intellectuals



SIMON SAYS



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## HOW DO YOU TALK TO A RUSSIAN ROOSTER?

**A few weeks** ago I heard a report about a German shepherd that is working for our police department. The dog is a truly a remarkable animal: he sniffs out narcotics and explosives, pursues and subdues criminals, and can follow any trail. But, the report said, the dog reacts only to commands that are given in German!

I didn't like it. I am a strong supporter of English as the official language of the United States of America. Even if this dog is a recent immigrant from Germany he should be smart enough – just to be polite – to learn English and start understanding just the simplest commands like, "stop him", "sniff" and "follow this smell".

But then I looked at the problem from the dog's point of view. What about us, humans? How well do we understand what the animals are saying to us?



Before you assume that this is a theoretical problem that might be eligible for a government research grant but is of no practical use whatsoever, just think of this: most of our human unpleasantness is caused by our inability to understand one another.

Sociologists call this ethnocentrism". In the language of an ordinary person this means that we, that is, Americans, vegetarians, Irish Catholics, private pilots, democrats – members of any kind of a grouping to which we belong for one reason or another – believe that we are the ones who are right and that our opinions are correct. Even if we somehow manage to tolerate the peculiar people who hold, say, conservative, liberal, atheist, religious, chauvinist, socialist (and any others – you pick them) views, deep down inside our souls and minds we are sure that those misguided individuals are mistaken, or not thinking clearly, or misinformed or, maybe, they are just misled by the Devil.

We may be right or we may be wrong when we think that all those who do not share our views are barbarians. By the way, the word "barbarian" was invented by the ancient Greeks who believed that their culture and language were the only ones that deserved respect; all those who spoke another language could be teased and humiliated for making incomprehensible sounds that sounded like "br-br" and thus, they were "barbarians".

I am not attempting here to define who speaks and listens correctly. I simply want to

show how different people hear the same sound differently. You can draw your own conclusions. If you wish, you can use Freud and Jung to analyze the discrepancies or just think of it as an amusing topic without social significance.

Here is my thesis: we don't really listen to our animals all that often, but when we do, we hear and imitate them differently. I am certain that French and German dogs bark indistinguishably and that a Russian and American chickens cluck the same but we hear them differently.

Every culture transfers animal "speech" to its own language, literature and folklore (especially in fairy tales and children stories). For example, an American rooster crows "cock-a-doodle-doo", right? No, it isn't. In Russian he sounds, "koo-ka-ree-koo"!

I regret that I do not know how animals sound to Chinese or Indians but since I speak Russian as well as English, here is short table of comparisons for these two languages:

Animal	English	Russian
Pig	<i>oink-oink</i>	<i>khriu-khriu</i>
Frog	<i>gribbit-gribbit</i>	<i>kvah-kvah</i>
Horse	<i>neigh-neigh</i>	<i>yo-go-go</i>
Chicken	<i>quak-quak</i>	<i>kudakh-kudakh</i>
Dog	<i>bow-wow or arf-arf</i>	<i>av-av or gav-gav</i>
Sparrow	<i>chirp-chirp or cheep-cheep</i>	<i>chirik-chirik</i>
Cow	<i>moo</i>	<i>moo</i>
Cat	<i>mieow</i>	<i>mieow</i>
Parrot	<i>Polly wants a cracker</i>	<i>Popka doorak! (Transl. "silly parrot")</i>

(Actually, the last example is not quite applicable since the parrot was taught by humans to say what he does. But think, the American parrot wants a cracker and the Russian one admits that he is a fool. Doesn't this point to a deep and significant difference between the two societies? America is a prosperous country with crackers for everyone, including parrots, but in Russia food is scarce, while one fool more or less makes no difference )

You probably noticed that both the cat and the cow make the same sound in both languages and that these sounds both start with "m". I want you also to note that both of these animals' names start with a "k" sound in the two languages: "cat" and "cow" in English, and "koshka" and "korova" in Russian. I am convinced that this is not just a coincidence and that linguists and philologists can, after lengthy investigations and studies, come up with several meaningful and groundbreaking explanations that would result in several doctoral theses.



As for myself, I confess that I have no idea why this is so.

Some of you may think that this article is meaningless. There is, however, an obvious meaning to it: we have been listening to the same sounds for thousands of years and we perceive them differently. After all, it is possible that the bark of a dog and the neighing of a horse is neither "gav-gav" and "yo-go-go", any more than "arf-arf" and "neigh". Maybe the truth is somewhere in between. But meanwhile I am quite sure that it would not be possible to convince a single American that roosters do not crow "cock-a-doodle-doo" but rather a peculiar and ridiculous "koo-ka-ree-koo"!



**From time** to time I reprint an article from a newsletter that is published by one of the most intelligent, brave, outspoken and incorruptible men I have ever come across. We never met but I consider him to be an example to aspire to. He is a brilliant scientist—quite often I am frustrated and maddened by my incomprehension of what he considers to be elementary science—but this isn't Dr. Robinson's fault, just the fault of my personal inadequacy.

Here is an article that should be read by every politician. It won't be. But why don't you do yourself a favor and subscribe to the newsletter; it just might make you a more knowledgeable—and better—person.

OUR SHEEP ARE PROTECTED FROM COUGARS AND COYOTES BY A WONDERFUL AKBASH named Susan. This 80-pound Afghan dog lives with and guards the sheep. Without this protection, raising sheep in our location would be almost impossible.

Unfortunately, our current dog is 10 years old and will need soon to be replaced. She was unwell yesterday, so, since Zachary was away, Matthew and I took her to a local veterinarian. Diagnostic blood tests were performed in his office on a small, computer-sized analyzer. Based on two of the 20 measured values, the veterinarian made an immediate diagnosis.

Had Matthew needed the tests, they could not have been performed in the veterinarian's office. This would be unlawful. They also could not have been performed in a human medical doctor's office. This would be unlawful, too. The analyses would be required to be done in a commercial, government-regulated laboratory - at high expense for Matthew's health insurer. Moreover, Matthew would not have been able to order the tests himself. Only by paying a doctor would he be able to obtain permission for the tests.

Wholesale prices for these tests are entirely different from the billed prices. The veterinary clinic where Zachary works is near to a hospital with a commercial laboratory far human samples. His clinic sends its animal samples through this commercial because they are nearby, and their wholesale price is very low. If, however, Zachary were to send a human sample to the laboratory, he would be in serious trouble. He is you see, a DVM, not an MD.

Typically, the analyses your doctor runs on your blood or urine, measure the quantities of about 20 substances. There is no professional training at all needed for the interpretation of these results. In fact, a simple personal computer program would make a better interpretation than your doctor because he has been trained to look at the values one at a time to see whether they are individually above or below the "normal" range. A computer can do pattern recognition calculations on all of the measured values simultaneously, including those that are not out of range. It can extract more information from the data than can even a properly trained human mind.

The fact is that these testing procedures and their standard doctor-applied interpretations are at least 50 years out of date. They are locked into the medical procedures and have become almost impossible to change or improve. Improvements have gradually been made by the analyzers themselves, but, regardless of this, the costs charged to patients have risen inexorably.

Specialized disease-specific tests involving single-substance measurements have been gradually developed by the medical industry. These are generally expensive and are ordered only when the doctor suspects that a specific disease is present.

The medical monopoly is remarkable. This monopoly, with government-enforced restrictive rules to make sure everyone in the system is paid handsomely, controls everything from the provision of its product to the evaluation of its product - therapeutic medicine. The consumer is not permitted independent access to the information about whether he even needs the product; whether the product is benefiting him; or whether he could avoid use of the product by other actions. Moreover, the product is designed for delivery to him when he is in a state of discomfort and fear, and the product has such a high price that he pays huge sums to insure against these costs even when he is receiving no product at all.

The medical consumer is forbidden by law and prevented by inaccess to technology from making any independent technological evaluation whatever of the quality of the product that he is buying, even though this quality may well be a life-or-death matter for him.

Moreover, the medical monopoly has no incentive to prevent people from needing its product, so most preventive medicine is relegated to backwaters in the "alternative" medicine industry. There is always an unending line of scared and suffering customers at the monopoly's door. There is no incentive to shorten that line and no diminution of the customer supply when customers die.

While individual doctors no doubt are able to provide different qualities of product to the customers of this system, no data are available to the customers about this. So, not only are customers unable to evaluate the quality of their own care, they do not have access to

the records of the final medical outcomes of previous patients of their chosen doctor.

Individual doctors are not responsible for this state of affairs. They are victims of the system, which actively prevents the innovation and freedom needed to provide their patients with the best possible medical care. While doctors are still relatively well paid, most of the money in the medical system is not paid to doctors. Doctors are very closely controlled. Their licenses to practice medicine, their personal possessions, and even their freedom from incarceration is put at risk if they deviate from the legally imposed medical system. Moreover, any non-licensed person providing the services of a doctor, regardless of his ability, will soon find himself in prison.

Yet, this does not need to be a permanent state of affairs. Technology now exists that can transfer diagnostic medicine, except the large imaging devices, into individual homes as computer peripheral devices like laser printers and into data-gathering devices carried on the person himself. This has been made possible by the microprocessor revolution that has put enormous computer power and essentially unlimited communications technology on the kitchen table and any desk in the home. Now, high-technology, mass produced analytical devices can transfer health-analysis measurement away from the medical monopoly and into the hands of the people being measured.

Moreover, this allows longitudinal data to be taken - many data points on each person as a function of time and circumstances - which markedly increases the value of the analyses.

Medical care will be revolutionized when diagnostic medicine is taken away from the medical monopoly and placed into the hands of private individuals. Freedom to evaluate one's own health by means of the best technology will enable patients to evaluate their health and health care. Then therapeutic medicine will become a service industry, competing for its customers on the usual bases of prices and quality. The technology for this exists. It needs to be implemented. Ω

# SUICIDE, PROSTITUTION

# AND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION by Si Frumkin

Earlier this year the International Red Cross demanded that Guantanamo prisoners be provided bed sheets that could be placed on the entrances to their cells to prevent their rights to privacy being violated by the guards. On June 10, three prisoners committed suicide by using the sheets to hang themselves.

The almost universal reaction to the suicides was outrage at the U.S. Self-righteous commentators and media editorials accused the Administration of perpetuating its tradition of torture and human rights violations. News reports were full of hints at conspiracies by the prison authorities, involvement of other prisoners in the deaths and a lack of appropriate supervision that might have to prevent the suicides. There were also scholarly reminders that the Koran considered suicide a deadly sin and that, therefore, the suicides could not have taken place at all and must have been staged; this, of course, conveniently ignored the existence of Moslem suicide bombers who in addition to committing suicide were also guilty of yet another mortal sin: the murder of innocents.

Walter White, an international lawyer who specializes in human rights, told the BBC the Guantanamo camp was likely to be considered a "great stain" on the human rights record of the US and a group of international lawyers announced that the dead inmates had been "driven by despair".

The camp commandant, Rear-Admiral Harris, disagreed saying that there have been dozens of suicide attempts since the camp was set up four years ago - but none

desperation, but an act of asymmetrical warfare waged against us," he said.

President Bush expressed "serious concern" at the deaths and stressed that it was important to treat the bodies humanely and with cultural sensitivity. UK Prime Minister Tony Blair described the suicide as a "sad incident".

In short - outrage, criticism and sadness from just about everywhere.

I kept waiting for someone to say "Right on! I am glad that they are dead!" but, as far as I know, no one did. So let me say it now: "I am glad they killed themselves. I hope they will have set an example for many others to follow. Furthermore, I hope that we will stop trying to prevent them from killing themselves as we

and unpleasant procedures? Why not let them go to meet the 72 black-eyed virgins?

In its 1973 decision in *Roe*, the Supreme Court recognized that a woman's right to decide whether to continue her pregnancy was protected under the constitutional provisions of *individual autonomy and privacy*. *Roe* placed women's reproductive choice alongside other fundamental rights, such as freedom of speech and freedom of religion, by conferring the highest degree of constitutional protection -- "strict scrutiny"-- to choice.

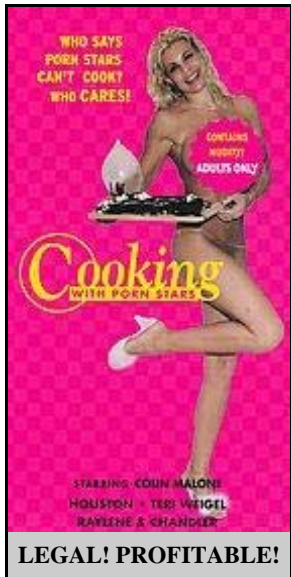
I wonder why in a society as litigious as ours there hasn't been a movement for the right to *individual autonomy and privacy* to include not only abortion but also the right to suicide.

I also wonder why this right is not applicable to prostitution - a decision to use one's body sexually, for remuneration. Currently consenting individuals, is a crime, but well-paid sex between consenting individuals that is filmed and taped for exhibition on DVDs and in movie theaters is a road to fame and fortune for the participants. Why?

And why is it that racial profiling by law enforcement is not acceptable and to be condemned, while racial profiling by businesses, universities and government contract and hiring policies, as in affirmative action, are lawful, beneficial and admirable?

I can only hope that somewhere there will be attorneys who are willing to take up the fight for a more encompassing definition of the right of an individual to control his or her own body. But since the cause would be very politically incorrect and more than likely there would be no money in it, I will not hold my breath waiting for this to happen anytime soon.

Meanwhile, I can only hope that the 2 Saudis and 1 Yemeni who decided to exercise their human rights by offing themselves will soon be joined by many of their colleagues. ﷻ



ILLEGAL! PUNISHED BY LAW!



Emaciated skeletal (?!!) Saddam Hussein on the 37th day of his recent hunger strike

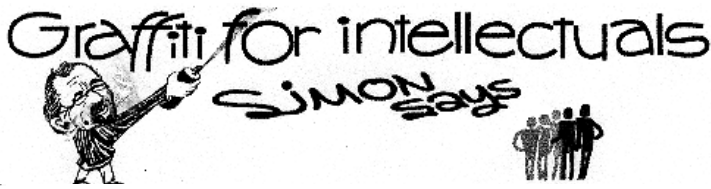
seem to be doing - I think that in the spirit of the *Roe vs. Wade* decision as well as the universal respect for human rights that support the right to privacy and the right to control one's body, the decision to stop living should be left to the individual. And if the individual in question is probably a murdering thug who will continue murdering if released - well, so much the better."

I feel the same way about the prisoners who go on hunger strikes and are force-fed to keep them alive. Why violate their right to control their lives - usually through painful

successful until now and that he did not believe the men had killed themselves out of despair.

"They have no regard for life, either ours or their own. I believe this was not an act of





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## MANNERS, MANNERS... by Si Frumkin

I THINK THAT ISRAEL AND ITS SUPPORTERS should be ashamed of themselves. They stubbornly persist in violating all historical precedents and accepted rules that govern the behavior of respected nations. Israel pretends that it is puzzled by the hostility and, what they refer to as 'unfairness' from most of the world's nations but they refuse to recognize that it is Israel's own fault. Israel is an irritation, an anomaly, an annoyance that stands out as a constant reminder to the U.N. and its members that the Jews in general, and Israel in particular, refuse to engage in civilized behavior that has been the norm throughout history.

President Charles De Gaulle of France summed it up best. In 1967, in a speech a few days after the end of the 6-Day War he made it quite clear that the Jews had lost his good will by rejecting his wise advice. He had told Israel's foreign minister, Abba Eban, that Israel shouldn't attack its enemies. He warned Israel: "If you attack we shall condemn your action."

Just two weeks later, rudely disregarding French advice, Israel wiped out the Egyptian air force. This confirmed De Gaulle's view of the Jews in general, and Israelis in particular: "The Jews, until then scattered about, were still what they had always been, that is, an elite people, sure of themselves and domineering...possessed of a burning and conquering ambition".

Israel never apologized to De Gaulle and France never forgave it. But France wasn't alone in being a victim of Israel's lack of manners. Israel kept disregarding the most basic rules of good behavior by insisting on continuing to exist.

Here are a just few historical examples of proper – non-Israeli - international behavior within the last 100 years:

Ethiopia has existed as sovereign country since 900 B.C.E. King Solomon, an ancient Israeli king was the father of Queen of Sheba's son whose descendants ruled Ethiopia for the next 2800 years.

In 1936, after almost 3000 years of independent existence, Mussolini's armies attacked and occupied Ethiopia. The army of Ethiopia's emperor Haile Selassie was no match for the Italian air force, artillery and chemical weapons. Selassie fled and demanded to be heard by the precursor of the U.N., the League of Nations in Geneva. His heartbreaking plea for help was broadcast worldwide and resulted in an outpouring of compassion and sympathy worldwide. Still, facts had to be faced – Britain and France, with regret acknowledged and accepted Mussolini's seizure of Ethiopia. Emperor Haile Selassie stayed in exile and it took World War II and the defeat of Italy to restore him and his country. All the participants observed good manners as an example for future diplomats.

In 1939 three more countries disappeared. Three members of the League of Nations, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, were occupied and absorbed into the Soviet Union. Ust like that they were no more. The U.S. refused to recognize their non-existence and kept their embassies open in Washington. No fuss - good manners prevailed.

Parentetically, there was another country that was supposed to be absorbed by the Soviets under a pact signed with Germany: Finland. Apparently it wasn't schooled in good manners because – like Israel - it decided that it didn't want to disappear. It fought back, bloodied the Russian bear, eventually lost due to overwhelming odds, but stayed independent and free. Terrible manners! De Gaulle must have been furious...

The League of Nations was replaced by the United Nations in 1945 but nations kept

decorously disappearing.

Biafra, a small African country, declared its independence from Nigeria in 1967. Its population – the Ibos - was a well-educated, prosperous, capable minority discriminated against by the majority Nigerian Hausas. Biafra's independence was officially recognized only by Israel and 6 African countries, its national anthem was written by Finland's Si-belius, and it received military and economic support from Portugal, France, Rhodesia and South Africa. It existed for just 3 years – 1967 to 1970 – and quietly disappeared. Sad compassionate words were said quietly in many countries and the world went on as usual. Good manners count...

Then there is/was Tibet. It existed for thousands of years, maybe even longer than the Jewish entity in the Middle East. It too disappeared after being taken over by its neighbor China – good manners and China's position in the Security Council dictated that a polite silence be observed by all. Manners, manners!

And so I am embarrassed for Israel and its obstinacy. It refuses to go away quietly and politely. It refuses to take the advice of France and the other Europeans to be nice to those who want it to disappear. It insists on having a good army and even a nuclear capability. It disregards the experts and scholars who explain, politely and persuasively, that Israel doesn't have a right to exist. It has withstood the double standard of the information media that hold Israel to a standard that no one else is expected to observe.

We are a stubborn and stiff-necked people, we the Jews. We refuse to go silent into the night. We may have no manners and we may be a disappointment to many who do not like us.

We will survive in spite of it. ☆