
From: Rupert Shelldrake [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, July 4, 2016 10:55 PM
To: jeffrey E.
Subject: harmony

Dear Jeffrey,

I much enjoyed our conversation and have been puzzling over the evolutionary basis of our appreciation of harmony, not something I'd ever thought about before until you brought up this fascinating question.

Fortunately as I was puzzling over it, the sounds of a workshop my wife, Jill Purce, was giving in a large room below me in our house came wafting up. She teaches chanting and meditation and was giving a special master class on overtone chanting, a form of chanting which brings out the overtones which are always implicit, that are made explicit in this Mongolian technique.

So I think the answer is fairly clear. Although harmony in musical sense of the word is not a major part of our evolutionary heritage, harmonics certainly are. If you and I sing the syllable ooo on the note C, our voices will sound different and will be recognisable to any people who know us because there are different patterns of overtones. This is why a flute playing C sounds different from a cello or a trumpet. Just to recognise somebody else's voice requires this detection of overtones which are, quite literally, harmonics and the same is true in the animal kingdom. Sheep can recognise their lambs by sound, and vice versa, again based on a subtle detection of harmonics.

So our brains and our mental habits have over a long period established the ability to detect harmonics, and to recognise different patterns of harmonics. So when musical harmonies come along, our brains and minds are naturally receptive to them having had millions of years of practice.

I myself think that the three dimensional patterns of rhythmic activity set up by the perceptions of sounds, and indeed all other sensations, resonate with previous similar patterns and involve an inherent memory given by morphic resonance.

Best wishes

Rupert

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