

From an auto/ethnographic perspective

I sit in my allegorical forest. safe and protected by the sound of my own voice

But I am truly nourished by the power of listening to what is around me

The energy of so many sounds intermingle like a timeless carpet of sonic colors and textures.

The sounds can seem meaningless, random, cacophonous and incomprehensible in complexity,

my heart and mind become absorbed, even transformed, as I listen.

The layered sounds of the allegorical forest
the wild sounds and tones outside
are a reticulum of secret languages, replete with bio-social, bio-chemical, electromagnetic and spiritual meaning
a world of information and meanings and potentialities that have not yet been noticed or decrypted by most humans

What is being communicated, what is out there that I have not yet deciphered?

Meditation on inner and outer sounds is calming.

As I listen inwardly to the wholeness that is formed by the myriad minutiae of sounds,
.it brings my mind to deeper realms of thought, brings new feelings and a sense of knowing.

I am grateful for that.

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Unlike human beings

Animals such as rats, monkeys or cobras are immersed in their world and probably do not reflect upon it.

Animals live their lives in each moment but are not able to transcend that setting.

It is generally agreed that many kinds of animals can hear, interpreting and communicating expressively, even with the use of elaborate codes and calls, and might possibly also be able to think in sentences. Humans are comforted by a sense of being the only creatures with communication skills based upon real syntax; and the only ones possessing an inclination for expression through art.

It is argued by scholars that one important distinction between humankind and animals (i.e. rats, monkeys, cobras, etc) is their lack of a theory of mind; the recognition that others have thoughts that are distinct from my own thoughts, and vice versa.

I speculate that baboons or ostriches or pythons or rats, probably do not worry or know about what other baboons or ostriches or pythons or rats know; and it is not clear to me that other animals possess a sustained urge to share or distinguish their individualized knowledge.

I can cautiously conclude that ostriches or baboons or pythons or rats differ from humankind in a large percentage of ways---but I do find that animals and humans share a curious range of similarities, such as in the ways that social hierarchies and interests are protected and sustained.

Because I am human, I have learned to form and link symbols and sounds in a formalized language that is loaded with underlying and interconnected meanings; and as a human I exhibit a specific intention and desire to share thoughts and knowledge. As an artist and scholar, I have carefully listened to the harmony and the cacophony of the allegorical forest; reflecting, revealing, and expressing my conscious

awareness of an exposed outer reality and an emerging sense of my inner life.