

Re: genes and language (Homer, Richard Dawkins)

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Language is the means of getting help and understanding from those we depend upon (my definition from 1974/75), and a basic need of social beings is to belong: to be accepted and estimated as valid members of the various communities we are a part of, we are partaking in.

I told you of Nera, a dog from India; how she placed her head on the table, played her white eyebrows in her black face, begging for food from our meal – and ate a whole heap of peanut shells, for sharing a meal with us made her feel accepted as a true member of our tribe.

I also told you of a little girl I used to take with me to shopping; how I once made a joke by telling her that I was already gone, and on my way to the village, while standing right in front of her, and how the poor mite began crying. The fear of being abandoned is so strong that it can overflow the mind and blind the eyes (while big promises can blind people in a metaphorical sense).

The human brain easily recognizes angry voices, due to the amygdoid nucleus (a new discovery). We are always fearing to be excluded in one way or another, so when we hear an angry voice we wonder whether someone might be angry at us? and if so, why? and can we possibly do something about it? in order to be accepted again?

There are frightening examples of people who have been excluded from their tribe and died; a shaman or witch doctor spoke his banning formula, and the banned person died two days later, from no obvious reason other than the spoken words (I read about such a case from Africa, in a reliable book; alas, I can't remember its title).

Not being spoken to is hard punishment, while words console and heal. Even chatting is a pleasure; no need to say much, the mere sounds – or words on a screen – weave a band of mutual belonging. Which is why not only

sci.lang: Re: genes and language (Homer, Richard Dawkins)

the much abused forum sci.archaeology but also the well
kept forum sci.lang are mainly chatrooms ...

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Regards Franz Gnaedinger www.seshat.ch

- > *The loving embrace and soothing voice of a mother tells*
- > *her baby, her child: you belong to me, to us, to our*
- > *family. When a child grows up, the embraces and touches*
- > *become less, while the words take over and weave a band*
- > *among the members of the family, of the tribe, of the*
- > *various communities, of the nation, of the world.*
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