

Spiritual Enlightening and 'Clockwork Orange' Coexist in Human Brains

Michael Gurevitz *

Department of Plant Molecular Biology & Ecology, Tel Aviv University, Ramat Aviv 69978, Tel Aviv, Israel.

***Corresponding author:** Prof. Michael Gurevitz, Department of Plant Molecular Biology & Ecology, Tel Aviv University, Ramat Aviv 69978, Tel Aviv, Israel.

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Abstract

Listening to enjoyable classical music frequently instigates pleasant emotions mixed with admiration of the ingenuine composers and talented music players. Feelings of 'melting heart', "sweetness", even "tears of joy", may often describe the emotional stimulation and satisfaction of hearing beloved compositions. Such good feelings are common to many music lovers, raising the question "what do these harmonious sounds stimulate in the human brain?" Yet, besides the transcended stimulation and philosophical cogitations on the spiritual heights and wonderful achievements, it also raises confusions as to the discrepancy between such emotional pinnacles, on the one hand, and the unbelievable malicious acts and cruelty of mankind, on the other hand. The coexistence of the two opposing facets in individuals able to evaluate and enjoy good music in an evening concert, and hurt or kill people the next day without discernible conscientious scruples (e.g., the Nazis) is hard to understand.

Keywords: listening; music; spiritual enlightening; human brains; clockwork orange; melting heart

Summary

Listening to enjoyable classical music frequently instigates pleasant emotions mixed with admiration of the ingenuine composers and talented music players. Feelings of 'melting heart', "sweetness", even "tears of joy", may often describe the emotional stimulation and satisfaction of hearing beloved compositions. Such good feelings are common to many music lovers, raising the question "what do these harmonious sounds stimulate in the human brain?" Yet, besides the transcended stimulation and philosophical cogitations on the spiritual heights and wonderful achievements, it also raises confusions as to the discrepancy between such emotional pinnacles, on the one hand, and the unbelievable malicious acts and cruelty of mankind, on the other hand. The coexistence of the two opposing facets in individuals able to evaluate and enjoy good music in an evening concert, and hurt or kill people the next day without discernible conscientious scruples (e.g., the Nazis) is hard to understand. This is particularly bothering in light of the educational systems that teach since childhood the differences between good and evil and between positive and negative personalities. The perception of humanism nowadays includes, among numerous positive features, generosity, compassion, readiness to share, emotional warmth, and ethical and moral behavior (e.g., Buddha, Jesus, Gandhi),

whereas evil people are often arrogant, aggressive, violent and readily sacrifice others to accomplish their aspirations (e.g., Atilla, Genghis Khan, Napoleon, Hitler, Khamenei). However, the division of humans to good and bad, is quite naïve because many people may exhibit both behavioral facets depending on their emotional status, desires or lack of success, as well as on persuasive stimuli. So how to explain those able to express deep emotions when enjoying beautiful music or other fine arts, but also hurt, torture and kill other humans without any restrictions? Not only that such dichotomy is annoying, it actually irritates those who believe in a continuous positive humanistic progress of mankind. The arising question is what are the reasons for the development of evil personalities that ignore their educational tenets and the most significant value of human societies - 'sanctity of life'? The answer should probably take into consideration the evolutionary process of homo sapiens (part of Mammalia, a class in the animal kingdom) and the consequences of selective pressures that played a role in survival. Despite the enormous achievements of mankind, the establishment of urban societies with moral and ethical rules, and a whole set of restrictions and Taboos enforced by law, humans still maintain inherited animal traits and urges that were significant in the past when fighting over resources and territories, but changed in time up to the present situation where cruelty, egocentric behavior, and evil conducts no longer support their survival, and instead

are considered despicable. Under pressures of daily difficulties, poverty, life under a brutal regime, or national aspirations provoked by charismatic individuals, the scale-of-values may change leading to exaggerated, often insane, malicious and cruel conducts. Under extreme stress, the moral constraints may fade away allowing for 'animal-like' behavior to prevail (a phenomenon that regretfully exists among humans of all societies). It is otherwise almost impossible to explain the murderous acts and torture of young children or babies by German soldiers during WWII, even under command. Such lack of moral restraints suggests that humans may turn

occasionally into 'wild beasts', despite their education, semblance of civilized manners and social rules. This is obviously a very disappointing conclusion that enfeebles in a way the claims that music, sport, love, and other positive activities may unite humanity, diminish aggression and cruelty, and promote a worldwide peace. Whether or not homo sapiens may gain a higher level of morality by losing these 'animal-like' traits, while building-up constraints to prevent evil acts (no matter what), seems at present quite elusive.



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