

A response to Alison Creighton, Michael Atherton & Christine Kitamura's article, including a tribute to Denise Grocke (AJMT 2013 Vol 24)

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She is only a few months old. I am deeply moved by the flow of immediacy between us and her capacity to communicate. She offers a flow of musical sounds and body gestures. I join in through vocal "motherese" (Bateson, 1975). She turns away if she needs a break, and returns when wanted: always perfectly attuned. In such a mutual sharing there is a matching going on, a cross-modal way of relating. The infant is indeed an active co-creator of her personal - and my - intra- and interpersonal world.

The present article explores *Singing play songs and lullabies: Investigating the subjective contributions to maternal attachment constructs*. The author of the text has grasped the 'new' paradigm: Research on mother-infant vocal interactions shows an inborn musicality, independent of verbal communication. Sharing of feelings between the mother and child is of vital importance as their relationship in itself is seen as the basis for development and growth (Stensæth & Trondalen, 2012; Stern, 1985/2000). Analyses of "dances of well-being" elucidate a shared sense of time and the shaping of jointly created pitch contours. These describe phrases and narrative cycles of feelings within an intersubjectivity matrix (Trevarthen & Mallock, 2000). In such a communication between mother and child, it is *how* the interaction moves along that is at stake, rather than merely the themes or the musical actions per se (Stern, 1995). Essential elements in such a musical experience are timing, intensity, and form. It may therefore be described as a procedural dialogical construction process, "a flow of influence", conveying feelings/affects as primary agent. These dynamic forms of vitality, i.e. these inner experiences of being alive, which relate to how - as opposed to what or why - are always present for interpersonal relating (Stern 2010).

The present article offers interesting results as "findings reveal that singing facilitated a flow of interconnections between positive mental and emotional states". It also appears that "the therapeutic potential of singing to impact attachment lies within the positivity and flow of the mother's

intrinsic experience of singing”. These findings are vital as feelings and affects seem to be “contagious”. This seems to be the case especially during the sharing of play songs and lullabies, thus sharing togetherness in the presence of each other here-and-now. Another research study on parents and children and their shared experience of *lullabies*, shows positive health benefits in many respects. An example is the one father who proclaims that a lullaby allows for him to give *and* receive, even when he is very tired after a long day (Bonnár, 2012). Singing lullabies and play songs are indeed possible in many mental states of minds, not least due to their simplicity. Lullaby is peace with a sound track, a multi-sensory experience allowing for transformation, and a canal of vitality and nurturing to life itself (Ibid.).

In the present article the authors draw upon knowledge from Denise Grocke’s PhD study: *A phenomenological study of pivotal moments in Guided Imagery and Music (GIM) therapy* (Grocke, 1999). As a way of processing the data in the present article, the interviews were analysed using a phenomenologically informed process adapted from Grocke’s study. Grocke’s study is an example of research where both text and music are analysed through a phenomenologically informed approach, all the while searching for a possible essence that is rooted in the lived experience. She is both researcher and therapist as she explores music as an aesthetic value in itself as well as a means of communication. Such double approaches have indeed inspired people worldwide in using phenomenology to analyse text or music, be it improvised or published in written scores.

During her whole career, Grocke has been performing music, working as a therapist, and carried out research. She has an extensive publication list, including a broad spectrum of areas. Grocke has made an important contribution to the international music therapy literature, in addition to her contribution to the actual practice of music therapy worldwide through her roles e.g. as therapist, teacher, external examiner and supervisor. In addition, she has influenced music therapy worldwide through her work in the WFMT.

Personally I have had the privilege of knowing Denise for many years. I know her as a visionary and as a generous person. Moreover, she is an attractive guest speaker, be it at conferences, in the classroom, as a supervisor or as a GIM therapist. She has colleagues and friends all over the world who are listening to, and learning from her. Denise is indeed a

musical person as a dancer, a singer and a pianist. She carries her musicality within her from a relational point of view as well, making itself apparent as she is listening and tuning in as a friend and colleague. As an organizer and host, she is acting with personal and scholarly wisdom.

Denise Grocke is both older in years and wiser in academic knowledge than the infant described at the beginning of this text. However, similar words could be said: I am deeply moved by the flow of immediacy ... she is indeed an active co-creator of our shared interpersonal world in a broad sense. I am grateful for a much-appreciated friendship with a wonderful colleague 'Down Under'.

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