

[More From This Issue](#)

[Current Issue](#)

[Back Issues](#)

[Guidelines](#)

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Bridged Genres

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"Blurred Genres" is the first essay in Clifford Geertz's (1983) well-known book *Local Knowledge*. In this essay the renowned anthropologist reflects upon two observations he had made. First, he had observed increasing tendencies toward genre mixing in intellectual writing. Second, he had observed that analogies drawn from the humanities had come to play a new role in sociological understanding:



... many social scientists have turned away from a laws and instances ideal of explanation toward a cases and interpretation one, looking less for the sort of thing that connects planets and pendulums and more for the sort that connects chrysanthemums and swords (Geertz, 1983, p. 19).

It has been a while since 1983, and in the 1990s many sociologists and anthropologists regained their interest for the sort of thing that connects planets and pendulums (and used their words as swords, not flowers, when commenting upon Geertz's interpretational anthropology). Be that as it may, Geertz's reflections upon the value of genre mixing are still valuable.

In the present issue of *Voices* there are elements of genre mixing in several of the texts. Mercédès Pavlicevic's Essay, for instance, is short and in many ways approaches the genres of Column or Personal Reflection. We embrace this mixing of genres, as we acknowledge that there are aspects of music therapy experiences that are impossible to forge into the frames of established genres.

On the other side: The twenty years that have gone since the publication of Geertz's essay have reminded us about the obvious fact that genre mixing is only possible if there are genres left to mix. We want our electronic journal to have a mix of genres, while we also want the various genres to be distinct enough for writers and readers to discover the differences in potential and limitation in each genre. The main agenda of *Voices* is therefore not to encourage blurred genres, but *bridged genres*.

This issue of the journal includes texts in several genres. There is a Theoretical Paper, drawing on existing literature in order to present and evaluate theories on the musical nature of human interaction. There is a Clinical Paper, presenting a concept from psychoanalytical theory and exemplifying it through presentation of a vignette. There is an Essay, elaborating upon the issue of risk and responsibility in a sociocultural context. And, finally, there are two Reports, one describing the development of a new music therapy university training, the other describing a music therapy relief project.

These texts come from many corners of the world; from Brazil, New Zealand, Norway, South Africa and the United States. The narratives are as diverse as the contexts they come from. The Brazilian music therapist Cirigliano reflects upon the limitations of the therapist as a human being, suggesting that many of these limitations are unconscious. Pavlicevic takes the social and political context of her South African music therapy students as a point of departure, and discusses questions such as personal reactions and social responsibility in relation to the risks involved when working in community placements with people suffering from poverty and

disease. Frisch Hara shares her personal experiences of the power of music therapy when working in a relief project in New York, while Krout honors the work of the pioneers of music therapy in New Zealand when he reports from the efforts of developing the first full-time tertiary training course in this country. The Norwegian music therapists Tønberg and Hauge elaborate on shared human capacities for basic togetherness (or intersubjectivity) and explore the orchestra metaphor model of communication.

As different as the topics, contexts, and genres used are, what is then the bridge? I assume that many would say that the bridge is in the eye of the beholder, and what I have to offer is only my perspective. What I see is a care for music and a care for people that includes *and* goes beyond the interaction between client and therapist in the music therapy room. The going beyond suggests a *broader engagement*; it may be engagement in personal development, in the fight for political justice, in enhancement of cultural sensitivity, or in progress in interdisciplinary dialogue and discussion.

Other readers may see other bridges, and later issues of *Voices* will probably suggest other bridges too. What I hope we may maintain is the image of a bridge. We may think of a bridge as something that *connects* people and perspectives. We may also think of the bridge of say a violin, that is, as something over which strings are stretched. If we think of it this way, the bridge enables different songs to be sung and different voices to be heard.

We therefore want to encourage our future authors to use all the above-mentioned genres. In the Vision Statement of *Voices* we write: "Because culture has an important role in music and music therapy, we will encourage contributions that find their source in the cultural influences of each continental region." This is *not* to say that every paper in *Voices* should be about culture. You can *show* your child that you love her without actually *telling* her every hour that you do. We can demonstrate cultural awareness and sensitivity without actually discussing culture as a topic in every text. Theoretical papers and Clinical papers discussing any area of music therapy practice are therefore welcome in this electronic journal. And: Feel free to explore genres that allow for more creative and informal writing, such as Essays and Interviews. It will only add to the richness of the choir of voices.

Reference

Geertz, Clifford (1983). "Blurred Genres: the Refiguration of Social Thought." In: Geertz, Clifford. *Local Knowledge. Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology*. New York: Basic Books.

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