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[Current Issue](#)

[Back Issues](#)

[Guidelines](#)

Vol 3(1), March 1, 2003
mi40003000117

Perspectives on Meaning in Music Therapy

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[|Abstract|](#) [|Two Perspectives on Meaning in Music Therapy|](#) [|From Names to Language Games|](#) [|Aesthetics and Intransitive Understanding|](#) [|Meaning in Music Therapy Revisited|](#) [|References|](#) [|Notes|](#)

Abstract

In this article I discuss some questions on meaning in music therapy by taking as my point of departure the different perspectives of two British music therapists, Mary Priestley and Gary Ansdell. Since all discussions of meaning - even when considering "non-verbal phenomena" - are based on an understanding of language, I have found the philosophy of Ludwig Wittgenstein an interesting port of entry to this topic. Following an introduction to Wittgenstein's concepts of "language game" and "family resemblances", I give a brief discussion of Wittgenstein's relevance for aesthetic understanding, highlighting the concept of "intransitive understanding". These three concepts will then be used as a basis for examining the differences between Priestley's and Ansdell's perspectives, which may serve to expand our thinking about meaning in music therapy.

Introduction

Discussion of meaning in music therapy is quite complex. Such a discussion must embrace the meaning of music, of body language and of verbal language, the relationship between each of these in their own context, and the meaning of meaning in therapy, that is, what kinds of meaning are essential to change in therapy? This then involves discussion of the different theories of man, of knowledge, of music and of therapy. The scope of this article necessarily falls short of a proper consideration of all these perspectives. But I shall try to examine at least a few important questions, taking as a point of departure the differences in perspectives on meaning found in the writings of two British music therapists, Mary Priestley (1994) and Gary Ansdell (1995). I find their perspectives interesting because they represent two major models in improvisational music therapy: Analytical Music Therapy/the Priestley model and Creative Music Therapy/the Nordoff-Robbins model (see Bruscia 1987). Both models have inspired my own work as a music therapist with psychiatric clients. The main question considered in this article is, "What is the relationship between music and language?", which leads to a further question, "When discussing meaning, what is the relationship between music and context?"

All discussions of meaning - even when considering "non-verbal phenomena" - are based on an understanding of language, both because language is a constitutive part of human culture and existence, and also because we cannot discuss meaning without using language. In this regard I have found the philosophy of Ludwig Wittgenstein, one of the originators of the "linguistic turn"

in modern philosophy, illuminating. Before presenting some of Wittgenstein's ideas - his concepts of the "language game" and "family resemblances", his relevance for aesthetic understanding and, in particular, the concept of "intransitive understanding" - I shall introduce, as the basis for this discussion, some perspectives on meaning in music therapy as given by Mary Priestley and Gary Ansdell.

Two Perspectives on Meaning in Music Therapy

In 1994 Mary Priestley published *Essays on Analytical Music Therapy*. In this book, an edited collection of her papers, Priestley describes the model of music therapy that she has developed. From clinical examples she describes techniques and theoretical foundations of what came to be called Analytical Music Therapy, and discusses meaning and other major issues in music therapy. Priestley's model is influenced by psychoanalytical theories, especially those of Freud, Klein and Jung. It was initially developed in work with adult clients with mental health problems, but in later years was also adapted for work with children and other client populations.

An Analytical Music Therapy session for an individual usually consists of several procedural phases. First, the client and therapist identify an issue through verbal discussion. After the roles of the two participants are defined, this issue serves as a title for a musical improvisation. During the improvisation the therapist usually plays the piano while the client plays different percussion instruments, including Orff-instruments. The improvisation is recorded on audio tape, to which therapist and client then listen together, discussing the feelings and thoughts that have arisen through the improvisation and through the ensuing listening experience.

In such discussions the therapist participates with some pre-defined ideas on the meaning of music. Priestley suggests that music and words belong to two separate languages, and that translation between these languages is difficult: "... and the interpreters are few and far between". She remarks that there is a temptation for the music therapist 'to let the music created by the therapeutic dyad have its own hidden meaning, as Mendelssohn said "too precise for words", (Priestley 1983/1995, p28). But, she argues, the music therapist should make efforts to build bridges between these two languages. "The cathartic release of tension through the music, without the knowledge of what the feelings are about, gives temporary relief, but without understanding in words, the tension will mount again leading to the need for further relief..." (ibid p28). One of her main arguments as to why translation of musical meaning to verbal meaning is important in music therapy, then, is based on the view that feelings arising in the music must be brought to consciousness by verbal interpretation, in order to be integrated into the personality in the service of ego functioning (Priestley 1994).

What exactly then are the properties of music as a language, according to Priestley? Her perspective is not easy to detect, because much of her writing is focused on vignettes and case studies, and not on theoretical discussion. But I would summarise her perspective like this: music is the language of feelings, it expresses what is too subtle, embarrassing or unconscious to be expressed in words. The underlying idea is that through the process of therapy it should be possible to express in words more and more of the content of the music. At some levels Priestley considers that music denotes specific meanings which can be verbalised. For instance, she talks about meaning in music therapy connected to the psychosexual development of the client: "In music therapy the power struggle of the anal phase is usually experienced on the drums, often with quite sadistic phantasies of killing or crushing or breaking in pieces; or it can take an urethral aspect and be flooding, poisoning or overwhelming in rapid music that is prolonged unless it breaks off sharply in fear." (ibid p158)

Quite often, though, Priestley modifies her view. The passage I have just quoted continues: "It must not be taken that all glissandi indicate that the patient is at the oral stage or all drumming indicates anal phase activity. Just as for an eskimo there are many words for snow, for the music therapist there are many shades of expression in a musical sound." Exactly how and why we should interpret the music differently is not very clear in Priestley's text. She argues though - and this is a statement which deserves more attention than can be given here - that the countertransference of the therapist is essential in the process of interpreting the music. As we can see, Priestley's suggestions and modifications merit close examination. In Priestley's view, there is pre-referential and referential meaning in the music. The pre-referential meaning is given in the titles before the improvisations; the referential meaning evolves in the verbal interpretations of the music, client and therapist asking questions such as: "What feeling, thought or image does this music represent?"

"Music does not represent life: it is life", Charles Ives once said. Gary Ansdell (1995) borrows these words to set the tone for his book *Music for Life: Aspects of Creative Music Therapy with Adult Clients*. Ansdell is trained in the Nordoff-Robbins tradition, another major improvisational model of music therapy (Nordoff & Robbins 1977). This model - or "approach" - was originally developed for clinical work with children with developmental, neurological and psychological problems, but, over the past two decades, has also been adapted for work with adult clients.

In Creative Music Therapy the improvisations are non-referential. Therapist and client create music together without giving titles and without discussing the music. This, of course, is the only possible way when working with children or other clients, whose verbal means of expression is extremely limited or non-existent¹. Ansdell extends this practice to music therapy with verbal adult clients. Sceptical of "non musical theories", he argues that music therapists should not base their work so much on clinical theories from psychology and psychiatry, but should develop their own theories, taking insights from musicology more into consideration².

Building on the musicology of Victor Zuckerkandl and others, Ansdell (1995, p5) states that "Creative Music Therapy works the way music itself works". When discussing meaning in music, Ansdell says: "By musical "meaning" I do not suggest that the music represents anything else that can be put into words, images or even feelings. I mean that it is meaningful, that it makes sense in itself - that it connects together two minds, two bodies in the same experience" (ibid p13). Ansdell clarifies this perspective by contrasting it with Priestley's Analytical Music Therapy: "Here the attitude is unashamedly that the purely musical element can and should be talked about and that the improvisations are representations of thoughts, feelings and images from the client's inner world" (ibid p174).

The problem highlighted by Ansdell is that music is not a language with the capacity to denote specific meanings. He is concerned about the problem of talking about music. In musicology this is often referred to as "Seeger's dilemma". Ansdell writes: "It concerns how we reconcile what he called 'speech knowledge' which is about music (but extrinsic to its process), with 'music knowledge' which is within music (and intrinsic to it) - the intuitive and wordless thinking that goes on as part of our playing or listening to music..." (ibid p171). A major point for Ansdell is the difference between words and music. He states: "Words always point to something beyond themselves - their whole *raison d'être* is to refer to things. In contrast music, rather than 'having a meaning' becomes meaningful as one or more people build a structure of rhythms, melodies and harmonies within an overall form. We communicate with words to convey our meaning, whereas we improvise music to find something meaningful between us..." (ibid p26).

In summary, we could say that Priestley's perspective on the meaning of music seems to be close to what is traditionally called a referentialist position: music refers to something else; in therapy it refers to emotions and unconscious content. Ansdell is closer to the absolutist position, where music refers to nothing but itself³. Concomitant with these different perspectives are differences in opinion on the role of verbal discussion in music therapy. While Priestley argues that verbal discussions are an essential and necessary element of music therapy, Ansdell sees the possibility of *therapy in music*, without any verbal discussions. The differences between these perspectives are of both musicological and clinical interest. For many years these two major models of improvisational music therapy belonged to different clinical 'worlds', that of the adult and that of the child; but, since Analytical Music Therapy is now also used with children, and Creative Music Therapy with adults, this dichotomy has disappeared. How then to approach a discussion of these two perspectives on meaning? One possibility would be to choose a clinical theory as a basis for an argument. To me this would be to miss the point. The differences are more basic, connected to general differences in perspectives on meaning. We need a closer look at philosophical discussions on language, music and meaning. For this purpose I have chosen the philosophy of Ludwig Wittgenstein.

From Names to Language Games

Wittgenstein was born in Vienna in 1889. By way of engineering and mathematics he started to read philosophy, and he studied and lectured in Cambridge for several years. To give himself a silent place in which to live and work, he also stayed for several periods in a very small community in Western Norway⁴. Large parts of both his major works were written in Norway.

Wittgenstein is an important philosopher in the 20th century. His work has given inspiration to very different schools of philosophy, including logical positivism and analytic philosophy. Some of his later work is compatible with radical hermeneutics and more postmodern perspectives.

His style is idiosyncratic: complex thoughts are often presented in a vernacular language,

usually in the form of short, numbered remarks. These remarks discuss different topics and in some ways appear to be independent of each other. However, they have been carefully brought together in a specific order to form a cohesive entity. Considering the importance of Wittgenstein's style, my attempt to present his ideas in a short article may be seen as an illustration of my inability to understand him. Nevertheless, I want to try to use his ideas as a tool in this discussion. I am well aware that I cannot show the beauty of the tool I am using, and that not only are important details missing in my presentation, but also important dimensions.

It is well-known that one of Wittgenstein's main focuses was meaning in language, and that his perspective changed quite markedly throughout his life: to put it crudely, from seeing words as names to seeing them as moves in (language) games. The difference between his first major work *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, published in 1921, and his second *Philosophical Investigations* published in 1953 two years after his death, is amazing. In fact, in *Philosophical Investigations* he argues that the author of *Tractatus* was wrong in most of his ideas of how language works. Nevertheless, some common features occur in both works: the suggestion that the philosophy of language is essential for our understanding of all philosophical problems, and the idea of philosophy as a practice not aiming at solving problems but at resolving them through a better understanding of language. In his later work Wittgenstein compared philosophy with therapeutic practice.

In *Tractatus* Wittgenstein suggests that the most important function of language is referential, that the meaning of a sentence is its correspondence with the facts of the world. The facts of the world show themselves as states of affairs (Tatsache), that is not as single things, but as logical relationships. A sentence, to be meaningful, has a logical structure that is in correspondence with the logical structure of the actual state of affairs in the world. We could call this a picture theory of meaning. Mathematics and logic is the model of true language, and, in this sense, there is only one meaningful language. Thus, ordinary everyday language is imperfect; it needs to be clarified by logic.

This very short, incomplete presentation of Wittgenstein's perspective on language in *Tractatus* at least shows us that in this period Wittgenstein adhered to the widely held view that the main function of language is descriptive. His work represents a refined and developed version of this view, and exerted considerable influence on the Vienna Circle and the development of logical positivism. It might be argued, though, that this was based on a misunderstanding of Wittgenstein, in that the Vienna Circle appeared to ignore certain parts of Wittgenstein's work concerning ethics, aesthetics and religion, all of which Wittgenstein in this period named as 'mystical'.

One interpretation of his early work is that his major concern was not to show the importance of logical language, but to define the limits of this language. The more important things in life could not be expressed with this kind of language. Essential here is his distinction between what it is possible to say and what it is only possible to show. *Tractatus* finishes with the famous sentence "Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent"⁵. The most important things in life cannot be said, they can only be shown. This is a possible foundation for a philosophy of the unsayable, and as Hagberg (1995) reminds us, a Tractarian philosophy is the basis of Susanne Langer's aesthetic theory. According to Langer, and to paraphrase Wittgenstein: "Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must sing, dance or paint." The musicologist Victor Zuckerkandl (1973, p. 66) expresses this idea a little more abruptly: "Wittgenstein was wrong to write, 'What we cannot speak of we must consign to silence.' Not at all: what we cannot speak of we can sing about."

Wittgenstein, after completing *Tractatus*, considered all the major problems of philosophy solved, or rather, resolved⁶. He did not write much for almost ten years. In these years he helped construct and build his sister's house; and for some years he worked as a teacher in a remote village in Austria. As a teacher he became interested in how children actually learn and use language. This became a major starting point for his change in perspective (Sluga 1996), a fact that Colwyn Trevarthen (1997), the researcher on infant developmental psychology, finds significant⁷. In 1929 Wittgenstein returned to Cambridge, and to teaching and writing. Manuscripts from this "middle period" were found in his Nachlass, and were later published. Among these were *The Blue and Brown Books* (based on manuscripts of 1933-4 and 1934-5 and first published in 1958), which were preliminary studies for his second major work, the *Philosophical Investigations* (first published in 1953).

In his later work Wittgenstein rejected the "*Tractatus view*" of language, suggesting that the major function of language was not logical representation, but social communication. This change in perspective of course was not only a change in focus, it was also a result of

Wittgenstein's realisation of the logical problems connected to a definition of language as a logical picture of the world. In fact, Wittgenstein had given a metaphorical expression of this insight already in *Tractatus*, stating in 6.54, the second last note of that book: "My propositions serve as elucidations in the following way: anyone who understands me eventually recognizes them as nonsensical, when he has used them - as steps - to climb up beyond them. (He must, sa to speak, throw away the ladder after he has climbed up it)"

Wittgenstein's new perspective on meaning in language, already stated in *The Blue Book* (1958/1969, p. 5) is: "But if we had to name anything which is the life of the sign, we should have to say that it was its *use*". In this perspective, ordinary, everyday language is seen no longer as an imperfect and messy mass that ought to be cleaned up by logic and the language of science. Now ordinary communicative language is seen as something to study in order to learn more about what language actually is, and about how the "dead" signs get their life that is their meaning.

One concept developed by Wittgenstein to explain, or rather to show, how words get their meaning through use, is language games. He suggests that language must be seen as part of a practice, or a form of life. The words are moves in games that include both verbal and nonverbal activities. In the first part of *Philosophical Investigations* (§§2-21) Wittgenstein gives a well-known example: the language game of some builders. In this imagined and very limited language game only a few words are in use: "block", "pillar", "slab" and "beam". Traditionally, one would think that the word 'slab' acquires its meaning as representation of a flat thing to be seen in the physical world. But Wittgenstein shows how the word in this language game actually gets its meaning as a move in a communicative process. When two people are working together, "slab" might be an order, not a description. The meaning is not understood before someone complies, or refuses to do so.

Meaning, then, is constructed by the actions and interactions of participants following, or not following, certain rules. Of course, one could argue that "slab" is not always a part of this game, it is also a name; but then one is starting to transgress the limits of this particular game. This is probably one of Wittgenstein's major points: to understand, we must understand the particular game and the form of life of which it is a part. Logical definitions are not always clarifying; actually, they could bewitch our understanding and create confusion, making us blind because we think we see. If someone - for instance because English was not their first language - did not know any meaning connected to the word "slab", using a dictionary would not help them much in the understanding of the meaning of "slab" in this particular language game. And neither would more specific criteria for the definition of a slab as opposed to other building components. Language and context could not be separated.

In short, this means that meaning is local knowledge. Discussion of meaning must be connected to specific contexts and situations, where there is interaction between the use of words and other activities. One might argue then that the limits between language and non-language become unclear. What is language? The later Wittgenstein refuses to answer this. Concept words such as "language" bear more comparison with family names than with personal names. Wittgenstein discusses this in §65 in *Philosophical Investigations*: "...some might object against me: 'You take the easy way out! You talk about all sorts of language-games, but have nowhere said what the essence of a language-game, and hence of language, is: what is common to all these activities, and what makes them into language or parts of language' ...And it is true. Instead of producing something in common to all we call language, I am saying that these phenomena have no one thing in common." Wittgenstein continues, in §66, by comparing the proceedings that we call "games", arguing that there are common features between groups of games, but no common features of all games. In §67 he then states: "I can think of no better expression to characterize these similarities than 'family resemblances', for the various resemblances between members of a family... overlap and criss-cross in the same way. And I shall say: 'games' form a family."

Another important consequence of Wittgenstein's new perspective is that meaning is social; meaning as use is meaning as social use. In *Philosophical Investigations* this is discussed in the so-called 'private language argument' (§268ff.), where he shows that there cannot be a completely private language. Meaning is not just changed in different language games, it is created and constructed in such games. It would, therefore, be a misunderstanding of our earlier example of the game of the builders to think that there is some original or essential meaning of "slab", which is just changed in this context. It takes two to talk. As so often with Wittgenstein, his discussion of language has implications for our understanding of human life in general. In the private language argument, Wittgenstein illuminates the idea that our grasp of our inner life is dependent on the existence of outer criteria. This suggests that our

psychological reality is dialogical, and is compatible with a two-person psychology (and music therapy)⁸.

Aesthetics and Intransitive Understanding

As has already been suggested by the Norwegian music therapist and musicologist, Even Ruud (1992), the later Wittgenstein's philosophy is very relevant for the understanding of musical meaning. Music is always in a context and, as such, is a part of a meaning-producing process. In this process the participants of the game use sounds, gestures and verbal actions as interacting media for the construction and deconstruction of meaning. Music is a family name, it is not one thing⁹. Such an adaptation of the concepts of language game and family resemblance to the understanding of meaning in music might provoke a negative reaction from some. Music and language are different things, they might argue. The meaning of music - which is an aesthetic phenomenon - cannot be compared to the meaning of language. This objection invites us to take a closer look at the later Wittgenstein's contribution to modern aesthetics.

Some of Wittgenstein's lectures on aesthetics have been published (1978), and in some of the published Nachlass - for instance in *Culture and Value* (1980) - he frequently reflects upon music and aesthetic experiences. However, in *Philosophical Investigations*, as in *Tractatus*, he does not say much explicitly on aesthetics. Nevertheless, Wittgenstein's philosophy has had same major influence on modern philosophical aesthetics. The Norwegian philosopher Kjell S. Johannesen (1994) suggests that this can be noted in the following respects: 1) the radical indeterminacy of aesthetic concepts; 2) the logical plurality of critical discourse; and 3) the essential cultural historicity of art and art-appreciation. Johannesen (ibid) also argues that Wittgenstein might have even more important things to say about aesthetics, not only to be treated as a separate field, but connected to life, to ethics and to philosophical investigations. Let us see what relevance this might have for our discussion. In *Philosophical Investigations* (§527) Wittgenstein suggests: "Understanding a sentence is much more akin to understanding a theme in music than one might think... Why is just this the pattern of variation in loudness and tempo? One would like to say 'Because I know what it's all about.' But what is it all about? I should not be able to say. In order to 'explain', I could only compare it with something else which has the same rhythm (I mean the same pattern)." In §531 he continues: "We speak of understanding a sentence in the sense in which it can be replaced by another which says the same; but also in the sense in which it cannot be replaced by another. (Any more than one musical theme can be replaced by another.)"

This reminds us that "understanding" is not one thing. It depends on the game. In some games the names could be replaced and we would still have the same meaning. But we cannot necessarily always do this. We cannot replace a musical theme with another theme. We cannot just say: play another melody, and it will do just as well! Music (or rather musics) can, thus, be seen as a language game, but usually in a different way from that of descriptive language. Its use is different. We could compare music to poetry. To translate a poem to prose does not always create understanding. Translation may destroy it, or may reveal some misunderstanding of meaning. The poem - or music - has to speak for itself¹⁰.

Johannesen (1994) discusses this, using the concept of *intransitive understanding*. According to Johannesen, understanding music could be seen as the paradigm example of intransitive understanding. Such understanding cannot be explained by arguments, the "reasons" are further descriptions ("explanations come to an end somewhere", as Wittgenstein says in the §1 of *Philosophical Investigations*). These descriptions are dependent on metaphors, analogies, comparisons, gestures, hints, winks etc., and they seem to presuppose some familiarity with artistic traditions.

Another Norwegian philosopher, Hjørdis Nerheim (1989), develops the implications of Wittgenstein's statement that "understanding a sentence is much more akin to understanding a theme in music than one might think". When discussing the relationship between music and words, Nerheim argues that it is not very fruitful to talk about "two ways of understanding"; an infinite number of language games is possible. She suggests that Wittgenstein's comparison of the understanding of a sentence and a theme in music shows that all language games - including those that include reference to objects - presuppose some kind of inexpressible, intimate knowledge of the world. Although translations between music and language are not always possible, a closer look at the understanding of music might give same insight into our understanding of language (and vice versa).

Meaning in Music Therapy Revisited

Now, let us use Wittgenstein's concepts as a tool to examine the differences in perspectives on meaning given by Priestley and Ansdell. I would like to start by addressing two main problems that we can now see with Priestley's perspective: the first has to do with the idea of words and music as representations of our inner life; the other has to do with the problem of translation.

Priestley treats not only the "ego" but also "id" and "superego" as substantives. A critique of this linguistic mentalism is not only a critique of Priestley's music therapy, but of traditional psychoanalytical theory in general¹¹. While Priestley suggests that the ego needs clarification in words, we would, with Wittgenstein, suggest that the verbal meaning is not clarification but social construction. We would even have to take one more step. It takes two to talk, and it will also take two to create musical meaning¹².

The other problem with Priestley's perspective is the problem of translation, to which Priestley herself refers, yet she insists that we should persevere, that we should try to build bridges between "the two languages". And, to give her credit, while a Tractarian aesthetics would request silence in respect for the unsayable, we can with late Wittgenstein - see that it is possible to speak about music. And, while translations may be difficult or impossible, our verbal discussions participate in the social construction of meaning in music. The concept of intransitive understanding illuminates the problems of translation, but there is no dichotomy between words and language.

From this perspective we can see that a critique of some of Priestley's basic assumptions does not necessarily imply criticism of the basic elements in her model. She has many interesting, practical suggestions on how to integrate musical improvisations and verbal discussion in music therapy. In fact, the translations she suggests may be seen as *one* possible language game. But it is not *the* meaning of music. And, on this point, we should be careful. Such games (translating music to words), when played in music therapy, might develop our understanding in essentialistic directions. The therapist - usually the most skilled partner of the game - will have considerable power to colour the discourse. I can see two practical implications of this caveat: one should try to be very sensitive to the descriptions of an intransitive understanding, which are, as stated earlier, dependent on metaphors, analogies, comparisons, gestures, hints and winks. Interpretations should also be seen as a dialogical process¹³.

Let us now examine Ansdell's perspective. When he uses concepts such as "the fact of the musical experience" and argues that music therapy works the way music works, he seems to presuppose that music is one thing. Wittgenstein's concept of family resemblances may help us see that there are many musics, and that musical understanding is many things, depending on the game that is played. Music therapy may work in many ways. I acknowledge Ansdell's suggestion that musicology is very important for music therapy, but traditional musicology looking for immanent qualities in music seems to me less relevant than the 'new musicology' integrating anthropological perspectives on musics. For a discussion of new musicological perspectives on music therapy, see Ruud (in press)¹⁴.

Evidently, Ansdell has a simplified idea of words as representation. This creates an unnecessary dichotomy between language and music. The concept of language games might help our understanding of both words and music. Music does not represent life, it is life, Ansdell suggests. To some degree Wittgenstein might have agreed, but he would add that life is always lived in life forms. And rather than underlining the differences between words and music, Wittgenstein indicated some (less obvious) similarities between words and music. Words and music as communication might be polysemic, open and changing.

So why should not words be an important part of Creative Music Therapy? Verbal interaction - not as representation of inner states of affairs, but as mutual construction of meaning - is not only a possible, but a "natural" and potentially fruitful part of music therapy. Language might serve many needs also in therapy. But is language a necessary part of music therapy? In other words, is a *therapy in music*¹⁵ possible? That question, I think, could not be answered with the help of Wittgenstein's philosophy. To answer this question we need the help of clinical theories and research. I think we can see a parallel discussion in the literature of psychotherapy, where the relative importance of verbal interpretations versus the relational experience in therapy has frequently been discussed. More recently, there has been an increasing understanding of the fruitfulness of looking at the interaction between these two dimensions of the therapeutic process (Karterud & Monsen 1997). Labels such as "music in therapy" versus "therapy in

music" do not help us very much.

Looking at both Priestley's and Ansdell's perspectives, I think they have any problem in common: the idea of meaning as something immanent in the music. Writing this I have not forgotten Priestley's many modifications of her statements and Ansdell's suggestion that meaning in music is created through communication. However, I do not find their modifications and suggestions sufficiently radical. Wittgenstein's concept of language game suggests that meaning is local knowledge; it cannot be defined by any music therapy theory. This is a very general statement that does not initially offer us much assistance. But it can give some direction for clinical work and research in music therapy. It gives us reasons to believe that musical analysis and/or interpretations according to psychological theories will not give us the meaning of music. There is a need for clinical research which can give us a better understanding of how the participants create meaning in the communicative processes in the different contexts of music therapy.

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Notes

1 Although, of course, a therapist with other ideas than those of Ansdell could make referential interpretations even when it is not possible to share or discuss them with the client.

2 The discussion of the role of theory in music therapy has been especially creative and lively in the tradition of Creative Music Therapy. While Nordoff and Robbins started off with an anthroposophical influence, after some years Robbins started to use the humanistic theories of Maslow. This is discussed by Ruud (1980), who also suggests other possible theoretical foundations for this model. More recently, Mercedes Pavlicevic (1997) and others have suggested that the theories of mother-infant interaction, as developed by Daniel Stern, Colwyn Trevarthen and others, shed light on 'how Creative Music Therapy works', while Ken Aigen (1991) discourages music therapists from 'borrowing theory' and discusses the possibility of an 'indigenous' perspective on music therapy.

3 Although it might arouse emotions, according to the absolute expressionist position; see for example Meyer (1956).

4 Actually not too many miles from Sandane, where music therapy education has been established since 1988.

5 This statement appears in several versions, because I refer to different authors who have used different translations of *Tractatus*. The translation I have been using myself is "What we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence."

6 This may sound rather arrogant, but let us remember the ending of Wittgenstein's own Preface to *Tractatus*: "I therefore believe myself to have found, on all essential points, the final solution of the problems. And if I am not mistaken in this belief, then the second thing in which the value of the work consists is that it shows how little is achieved when these problems are solved."

7 I mention this, not only because of Trevarthen's position in the music therapy discourse, but also because both the anecdote and Trevarthen's response to it reminds us of the importance of the learning connected to our interaction with children/clients.

8 One of Wittgenstein's points is that "I" is not a substantive (but a relationship to the world). Many Western philosophers, from Descartes to Husserl, have suggested that man has a direct

access to his inner life, while Wittgenstein's perspective seems more compatible with the ideas of philosophers such as Buber and Heidegger, stressing the importance of man's interaction with the world as the access to himself.

9 And, as Dahlhaus (1978/1989) also shows in his discussion of the idea of absolute music, separations of musical and extra-musical elements are historical constructions, they are not logical or "natural". The commonplace (in Western culture) definition of text as something extra-musical is, for example, a construction less than two centuries old.

10 This argument works for modern poetry, maybe not so much for traditional and epic poetry.

11 For a discussion of Wittgenstein's critique of Freud, see Bouveresse (1995). See also Lorenzer (1970/1975) who used critical theory and Wittgenstein's concept of language games for a metatheoretical discussion of psychoanalysis.

12 Many, myself included, will have objections here. We seem to be able to have meaningful experiences of music alone, one could, however, as Østerberg (1997), argue that being alone is a marginal case in music, with a "virtual other" present. Also one would have to admit that our musical expressions and impressions include the use of social codes.

13 These implications might point in the direction of the Self Psychology developed by Kohut (Karterud & Monsen 1997), or of some of Stern's theoretical suggestions (1985). Wittgenstein's late philosophy could also be a point of departure for a critique of some of Stern's ideas, for instance his use of Langer's Tractarian Aesthetics.

14 Ansdell has recently expanded his view to include new musicology (Ansdell 1997).

15 Or, what Bruscia (1987) labels "music as therapy".

To cite this page:

Stige, Brynjulf (2003). Perspectives on Meaning in Music Therapy [online]. *Voices: A World Forum for Music Therapy*. Retrieved from <http://www.voices.no/mainissues/mi40003000117.html>

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