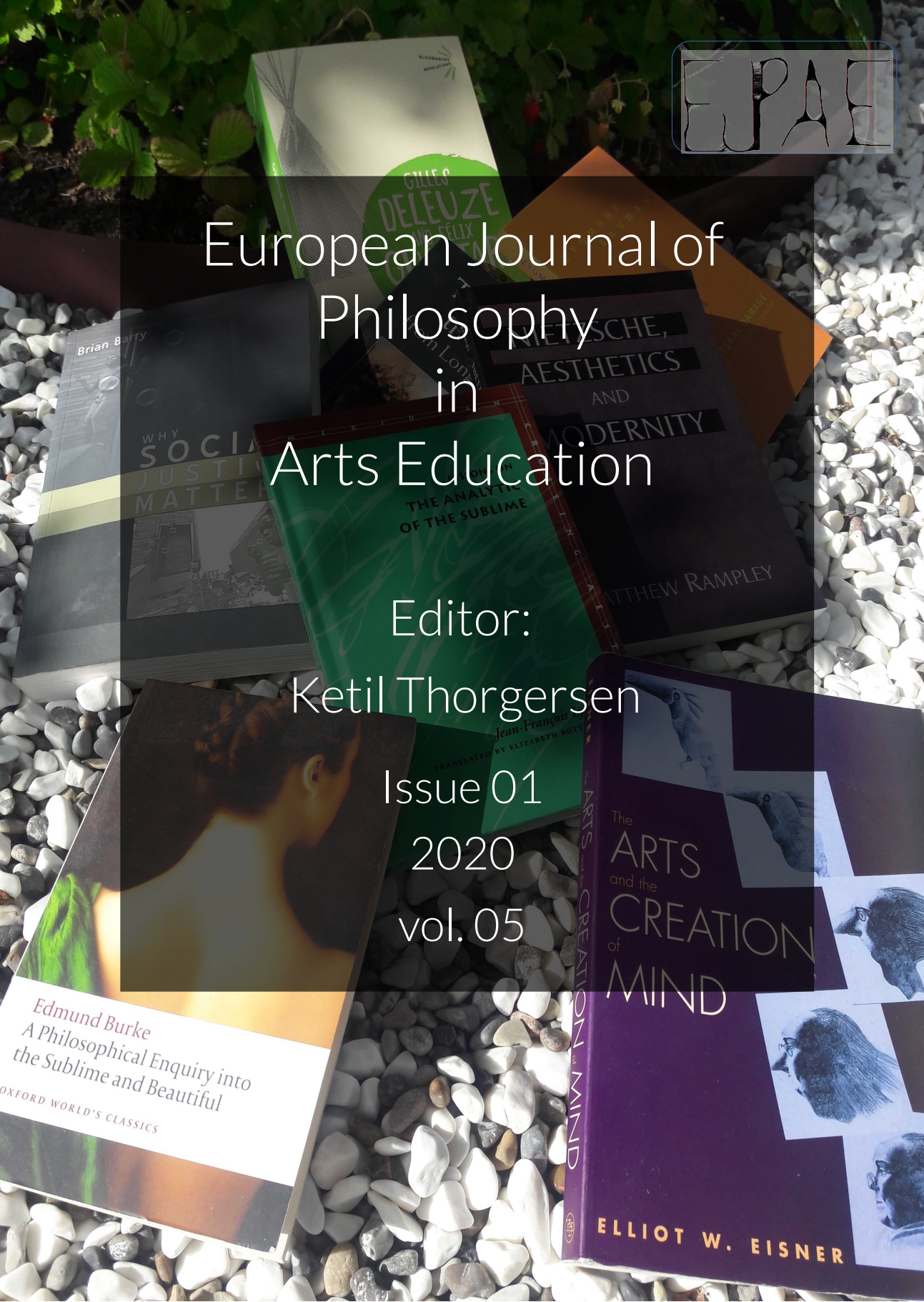
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European Journal of Philosophy in Arts Education
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# Editorial

## Seventh issue of the European Journal of Philosophy in Arts Education

Ketil Thorgersen
Editor in Chief

In really worrying times such as these, the arts and arts education proves more important than ever. When a pandemic stirs the lives of everyone, overtaking, at least for some time, the even greater climate crisis, people need something to provide meaning. People need to express themselves, communicate, create, process, enjoy, flee, protest... These human and social functions are among the most central for the arts – as a vehicle for meaning; personally and socially. In this issue I have the great pleasure of presenting three very different articles that were all written before the corona pandemic, but when read in the light of the social distancing and fear of getting ill, brings new and interesting dishes to the table of arts education. We have one article from the field of museum education and two articles coming from the field of music education, with one of them bridging the gap towards music therapy. In total there are six authors, three from Northern Europe, two from North America and one from South America. It is interesting and a nice receipt that EJPAE is getting recognition and is filling a void, that scholars from all over the world now wishes to publish in the journal.

The issue starts off with a very interesting article that is written as a part of the DAPHME (Discourses of Academization and the Music Profession in Higher Music Education) research project. Two Norwegians and a German scholar, **Øivind Varkøy, Elin Angelo** and **Christian Rolle,** discusses the line between artist and crafts(wo)man. Are musicians in a philharmonic orchestra artists, or are they "just" skilled performers of other's ideas? By employing ideas from Arendt, Heidegger, Sennet, Benjamin, Plato and others they pinpoint interesting dilemmas for music education relating to the nature of musicianship. To quote the article: "Must we let go of the ideas of art's fundamental unpredictability and unreliability, as well as the artist's calling to act unfaithfully and disloyally, ending up reducing art to some sort of "social handicraft"? If such ideas are to be considered with the depth and intensity they deserve, it presupposes a confidence with the disturbing features of art or art's outrageousness". Is it not necessary for art to hold elements of unpredictability and outrageousness? As the authors reminds us: the purpose of the article is not to solve the possible contradictions between art(ist) and craft(s(wom)an) but rather to bring to light discourses and tensions that influence teachers, students and artsts/crafts(wo)men alike. The text is a thought-starter and will continue to work in the reader for a long time after it is read.

The second article connects to the first in that it also uses Arendt for its arguments, even if Martin Buber's relational ideas are the fundament for this articles agenda. **Elizabeth Mitchell** and **Cathy Benedict**, two North American scholars representing music therapy and music education has written this article partly as a dialogue between the two scholars – a dialogue about how music education and music therapy can inform each other, what these traditions have in common and how they are separate. The article is written from a North American perspective, but also connects with European scholars to develop their discussion. Different academic disciplines often develop to become autonomous fields only referencing themselves, even in cases where they share the same challenges as questions as other fields. Articles like this

where scholars think aloud about how bridges can be built between arts education and neighbouring disciplines are much needed, and this is an excellent example of how this can be done. So for anyone from music therapy or music education who is curious about the other field, read the article!

Finally in this issue, EJPAE has the pleasure to welcome the first contribution from museum education, and also the first contribution from Latin America – Guatemala (even if the author is a PhD student in Norway). **Andrés Álvarez Castañeda** has written an intriguing article both about and utilising arts based research to investigate the possible learning in the Community Museum for Historical Memory in Rabinal, Guatemala. Referencing relational aesthetics, which is a reoccurring theme in EJPAE (see e.g. Vist & Holdhus, 2018 and Holdhus & Espeland, 2017), Castañeda argues that community museums such as the one he is investigating can be understood as venues that in themselves open for arts based research like learning. The museums multimodal and multisensory exhibitions are thoroughly presented and used to explain how the museum has the potential to provide "[...] an experience in métissage that forever transforms the visitor" (Castañeda, 2020, p 81).

I am proud to present this interesting and diverse issue in these testing times, and hope the articles will provide many of you with many hours of rewarding reading and thinking. Take care and enjoy!

Ketil Thorgersen

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# Artist or Crafts(wo)man?

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# Abstract

Are orchestral musicians artists or crafts(wo)men? This article offers a principal discussion of the concepts of *artist* and *crafts(wo)man*, as well as the relation between these concepts, from a philosophical point of view.

We discuss the concept of 'the crafts(wo)man' based on Richard Sennett's discussions of this concept, in which Hannah Arendt's thinking plays an important role. Then, we turn our attention to Aristotle's distinction between *poiesis* and *praxis*, as well as his concept of *techné*, as discussed by Martin Heidegger, and Plato's discussion of *inspiration* as a basic fundament for artistic performance. Next, we address Walter Benjamin's discussion on artwork in an age of technological reproducibility, and we draw lines between characteristic aspects in Sennett's argument and the tension between professional thinking and the philosophy of art.

This article is part of the ongoing project, *Discourses of Academization and the Music Profession in Higher Music Education (DAPHME)*, conducted by a team of senior researchers in Sweden, Norway and Germany and founded by the Swedish Riksbank. The overall purpose of DAPHME is to investigate how processes of academisation affect students at institutes of higher music education in Europe, especially the education of orchestral musicians of the Western classical tradition.

Keywords: crafts(wo)man, artist, *homo faber*, animal laborans, *poiesis* and *praxis*, inspiration, professional thinking and philosophy of art

# Artist or Crafts(wo)man?

Øivind Varkøy[1], Elin Angelo[2] & Christian Rolle[3]

## Introduction

There is tension among instrumental teachers in higher education, especially among those who deal with Western classical orchestral music, regarding whether musicians are artists or crafts(wo)men. In a previously published Norwegian interview study, one of the informants argues:.

> We still think that handicraft is important ... We believe that this is about getting up in the morning and practising ... To take care of the musical heritage depends on handicraft knowledge ... We think that this still is important, to take care about the musical heritage, as well as to create something new.[4] (Angelo, Varkøy & Georgii-Hemming, 2019)

Another informant says that "European orchestras demand musicians who can play as effectively as possible, who adjust themselves, not giving too much resistance" (Angelo, Varkøy & Georgii-Hemming, 2019). A third informant, a leader at one institution refers to handicraft as the 'arch-traditional knowledge' in the field and states that

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4 Translated from Norwegian to English by the authors. Quotes from and references to some informants cannot be generalised. They are only used here as illustrations of existing ideas and arguments in the field.

craftmanship displays a 'distinctive kind of quality' capable of massive and powerful reactions. Another leader in higher music education even argues that a lack of handicraft knowledge might become a consequence of the 'artistic research' doctoral programs as well.

Moreover, the empirical data in this study (also discussed in an earlier publication by Angelo, Varkøy & Georgii-Hemming (2019)) shows that the informants argue (a) that handicraft is one of the most important skills to develop in orchestral music education, (b) that orchestral musicians must be subordinate as crafts(wo)men in a collective under the conductor, who may be seen more as a performance artist than a crafts(wo)man and (c) that handicraft can be threatened in higher music education by increasing requirements to write, read and discuss academic texts, as these activities might consume the time and dedication that students and teachers should use for practice.[5]

The informants paint a picture of artists as entrepreneurs and freelancers who have to create their own jobs and distinctive artistic characters, while orchestral musicians find everything already prepared, organised and arranged, and their performances are, in a sense, the execution of what was prepared. The informants construct a distinction between artist and crafts(wo)man and between art and craft, and they argue in favour of an education that, in Norwegian, is called 'kunsthåndverkere' (or in German, 'Kunsthandwerker/innen'). This term translates to 'handicrafts(wo)men' in English and refers to persons who have close relations to both art and craft and can be flexible on the axis between the two.

Two more examples of the tension between art and handicraft and artist and crafts(wo)man:

5 See Moberg (2019) for a discussion on students' experiences of musical craftsmanship and artistic performance skills versus scholarly knowledge from higher music education.

In an interview with a Norwegian newspaper, one of Norway's outstanding viola players, Nora Taksdal, refers to musicians as crafts(wo)men and emphasises that she will never call herself an artist (Simenstad, 2017). According to Taksdal, there are, in fact, very few artists among musicians. Most musicians are crafts(wo)men. The reason she identifies more or less as a craftswoman and not an artist is not very clear. It seems, however, that this view may be due to her love for her instrument, the material of the instrument, the close relationship between the person who makes the instrument and the person who uses it and the "fingerspitzengefühl" ('finger tips feeling'/intution) that is required of a musician for treating his/her instrument well.

On the other hand, the Norwegian composer Henrik Hellstenius, professor at Norwegian Academy of Music, argues that those in higher music education need to talk about the concept of art and asks why the discussion of whether instructors educate artists or crafts (wo)men is problematic. Hellstenius argues that this has something to do with the lack of knowledge of other art forms among musicians. Even more important, according to him, is the problematic distinction between the artist and the crafts(wo)man. Finally, Hellstenius argues that his task is to educate artists, meaning to educate reflective performers and composers (Istad, 2018).

The quotes and references above, both from the interviews (presented and discussed in Angelo, Varkøy & Georgii-Hemming, 2019), and the references to Taksdal and Hellstenius, are examples of existing ideas among Western classical musicians in the field of higher music education. They serve simply as illustrations, explaining of how our interest in the tension between 'artist' and 'crafts(wo)man' was born. They are *not* empirical data to be discussed in this article.

In response to this interest, in this article, we discuss the concepts of *artist* and *crafts(wo)man*, as well as the relationship or dichotomy between these concepts, from a philosophical point of view. We first discuss the concept of 'the crafts(wo)man' based on Richard Sennett's discussions of this concept, in which

Hannah Arendt's thinking plays an important role. Then, we turn our attention to Aristotle's distinction between *poiesis* and *praxis*, and Martin Heidegger's discussion of the Aristotelian concept *techné*. We also present Plato's discussion of 'inspiration' as a basic fundament for artistic performance. Next, we look at Walter Benjamin's discussion on artwork and technological reproducibility before drawing connections between aspects in Sennett's argument and the tension between professional thinking and the philosophy of art.

Our purpose is not "to solve" the problematic relation between 'art' and 'craft', 'artist' and 'crafts(wo)man'. The aim rather is to focus ambiguity, heterogeneity and paradoxes in this field. Thus, Sennett, Arendt, Heidegger, Benjamin etc. represent different perspectives more than disagreements, even though diversities should not be concealed.[6]

## The Crafts(wo)man

In his book *The Craftsman,* Sociologist Richard Sennett (2009) discusses the relationship between craft and industrial and alienated labour. These discussions involve the tensions between art and craft, artist and crafts(wo)man. These tensions are, according to Sennett, characterised by ambiguity, displacement and paradoxes. One of Sennett's aims "is to explain how people become engaged practically but not necessarily instrumentally" (Sennett, 2009, p. 20). In this article, we will discuss some central aspects of Sennett's discussions of the relations and tensions between art and craft in relation to ideas from his former professor, Arendt, as well as Plato and Aristotle, Heidegger and Benjamin

6 Relating our discussion to a number of highly different philosophers and thinkers we are aware of the danger of ecleticism. We have however chosen to apply different ways of thinking and concepts as inspirations for our own thinking and argument.

Let us start our discussion by acknowledging the importance of Sennett's discussions as a project of raising the social status and understanding of craftsmanship, and in exploring "what happens when hand and head, technique and science, art and craft are separated" (Sennett, 2009, p. 20). According to Sennett the "craftsman represents the special human condition of being engaged," and he/she has a certain "material consciousness" (Sennett, 2009, p. 119). In addition, Sennett states that there is a strong connection between head and hand (Sennett, 2009, p. 149).[7] He argues that this is true for carpenters and lab technicians, as well as musicians in an orchestra (including the conductor).

> ... an orchestra is rehearsing with a visiting conductor; he works obsessively with the orchestra's string section, going over and over a passage to make the musicians draw their bows at exactly the same speed across the strings. The string players are tired but also exhilarated because their sound is becoming coherent. The orchestra's manager is worried; if the visiting conductor keeps on, the rehearsal will move into overtime, costing management extra wages. The conductor is oblivious (Sennett, 2009, p. 19).

The crafts(wo)man is defined as a person "dedicated to good work for its own sake" is of special interest because the definition seems to give craft intrinsic value (Sennett 2009, p. 20)". Sennett's argument about the 'intrinsic value' of craft(wo)man-ship will be reviewed alongside some discussions from Arendt, who discusses the product and not the process of good work, and Heidegger.

First, Arendt (1958) distinguishes between three forms of human activity: labour, work and action. 'Work' is 'craft'. According to Arendt, work, like labour, does not have an end in itself. They have no intrinsic value even though work and labour are of fundamental importance to human life. Labour and work are means to other ends

7 See Øyvind Lyngseth (2017) for fundamental discussions of this topic.

outside themselves. Arendt's discussions on human activities reveals that only *actions* (social activities) are ends in themselves, having intrinsic value.

Labour is performed by people who Arendt calls *Animal laborans*, and work is done by *Homo faber*. Animal laborans are slaves, and Homo faber, to Arendt, are crafts(wo)men. Labour is cyclic, and the result of labour is articles of consumption that do not survive the use of them (Øverenget, 2012).[8] On the other hand, Homo faber make products of a solidity, which is a quality that articles of consumption are lacking. The result of the labour by Animal laborans is brought in directly from nature itself (e.g. making food). To a certain extent, they can be prepared or fixed, but labouring is never about changing the form of nature. In contrast, while *Homo faber* retrieve their materials from natural surroundings, they create a new form for the material (e.g. making a table from wood). According to Arendt, however, *Homo faber* does not create art. *Homo faber* is only occupied with usefulness and cannot produce anything with intrinsic value that has an end in itself. Creating art is a human activity as action– having no end outside itself.[9]

Following Arendt's line of thinking, it is very difficult to consider the product of handicraft as having intrinsic value, whether it is the carpenter's table or the conductor's orchestral rehearsal. Intrinsic value is found instead in meals that occur

8 See Han (2018a) for a discussion of artwork in times of consumption.

9 On the other hand, Arendt focuses on the work of art as an object, as a product of work. Artwork is a product, and products are not ends in themselves but means for something else. This means art has some sort of double character, according to Arendt (1958). This double character (art as work and action) brings the term 'musicking' to mind. If music is seen not only as a product of a composer's production but as musicking — meaning to participate in a musical performance — as performer, listener, practitioner, composer or dancer, in fact even as ticket seller or cloakroom attendant, musicking is action, as well as production (Small, 1998, p. 138). Music is not only a thing, an object or a product. It is something that we do together. It is a verb; it is action. With this turn from solely focusing on the object or product of music to focusing on musicking as a process as well, music becomes action.

around the table and the connection between the music produced by the orchestra and its conductor and the listener.[10] In other words, neither the practice of the musicians nor the product of music (the work of art, either in print or performance) has intrinsic value. Concepts like 'intrinsic value', 'end in itself' and 'for its own sake' are reserved for musical experience.

At the same time, however, we are aware that crafts(wo)men may consider good work to have value in itself. In this case, experiences have meaning that can be found in the process of handcrafting, exclusively for the crafts(wo)man him-/herself. No score of music, no novel, no painting can be said to have intrinsic value as products. The products of crafts(wo)men are means with ends outside themselves.

Similarly, in Sennett's definition of the crafts(wo)man (in Arendt's terms, *Homo faber*) as a person who is dedicated to good work for its own sake, he speaks of the process of good work as having meaning and value for the engaged crafts(wo)men and not the product of the process. Sennett is interested in the phenomenon of people working with dedication and devotion. This is not restricted to artists. It is also possible that Sennett's argument serves his project of raising the status of craft and the crafts(wo)men more than as a philosophical argument about different forms of human activities. By raising the status of the crafts(wo)man in focusing on the crafts(wo)man's work as "work for its own sake", Sennett problematises the traditional distinction between art and craft in an interesting way.

To explore this problematisation, we first focus on Sennett's attempt to "rescue *Animal laborans* from the contempt with which Hannah Arendt treated him" (Sennett, 2009, p. 286). Sennett claims that "the working human animal can be enriched by the skills and dignified by the spirit of craftsmanship" (Sennett, 2009, p. 286). In

10 For a profound discussion of aesthetic experience as an activity, see Varkøy (2015a). See also Martin Seel (1996) who speaks of the practice of aesthetic perception, which is not restricted to works of art. From this view, intrinsic (aesthetic) value lies in the experience an object creates.

this statement, he problematises Arendt's distinction between *Homo faber's* work and art. In other words, Sennett does not agree with Arendt's distinction between *Animal laborans* and *Homo faber*.

In Ancient Greek philosophy and society, there was a clear distinction between *Animal laborans* and *Homo faber* (i.e. between slaves and crafts(wo)men). According to Greeks, the craftsman "occupied a social slice roughly equivalent to a middle class" and "*demioergoi* (the craftsmen) included, in addition to skilled manual workers like potters, also doctors and lower magistrates, and professional singers and heralds" (Sennett, 2009, p. 22). Thus, the term used for craftsman in Ancient Greek tradition, as noted in the Homeric hymn to Hephaestus, is demioergos, a compound made between *demios* (public) and *ergon* (productive). This group of citizens lived between the few aristocrats and the mass of slaves. However, a mistrust for all kinds of physical work developed in Greek culture, and the distinction between *Animal laborans* and *Homo faber* became blurred (Øverenget, 2001, p. 83). According to Sennett, this started with Aristotle's differentiation between architects and artisans. He defined architects as those who know the reasons for the things which are done and artisans as those who only do things, without knowing the reason for the doing. In this discussion, Aristotle abandons the old word for the craftsman, *demioergos*, and uses instead *cheirotechnon*, which simply means 'hand worker' (Sennett, 2009, p. 23). In this context, *Homo faber* is reduced to *Animal laborans*. Sennett's project seems to be the opposite: to raise the status of *Animal laborans* to *Homo faber*. Sennett attempts to transcend the distinction between Homo faber — the crafts(wo)man — and the artist, between craft and art, as well as the distinction between *Animal laborans* and *Homo faber*. See, for example, Sennett's discussion of autonomy and originality:

> Art seemed ... to place the artist on a more autonomous footing in society than the craftsman, and this for a particular reason: the artist claimed originality for

> his work; originality is the trait of single, lone individuals (Sennett, 2009, p. 66).

Sennett reminds us that few Renaissance artists worked alone. The line between an artist's studio and a craftsmen's workshop was relatively blurry. The artist's studio, like a craftsman's workshop, was filled with assistants and apprentices. However, the master of the studio "did indeed put a new value on the originality of the work done in them" in a time when originality was a value not celebrated by the medieval guilds (Sennett, 2009, p. 66). This contrast still informs our thinking. For example, Sennett argues that "art seems to draw attention to work that is unique or at least distinctive, whereas craft names a more anonymous, collective and continued practice" (Sennett, 2009, p. 66). We should, however, according to Sennett, be suspicious of this contrast as long as 'originality' is a social label, and "originals form peculiar bonds with other people" (Sennett, 2009, p. 66).

True enough, art has an individual, dominating agent, where craft has a collective agent: "In the Renaissance, the appearance of something sudden was connected to the art — the genius, if you will — of an individual", and art and craft are certainly distinguished by time: the sudden versus the slow (Sennett, 2009, p. 70). When we think of art and craft as distinguished by autonomy, we have to remember that, according to historical perspective, "the lone, original artist may have less autonomy, be more dependent on uncomprehending or wilful power, and so be more vulnerable, than were the body of craftsmen" (Sennett, 2009, p. 73). Similarly, Sennett focuses on how the term 'originality' races its origin back to one Greek word, *poiesis*, which Plato and others use to mean 'something where before there was nothing'. He considers how originality "is a marker of time; it denotes the sudden appearance of something where before there was nothing, and because something suddenly comes into existence, it arouses in us emotions of wonder and awe" (Sennett, 2009, p. 70). How-

ever, Sennett's focus on the process of crafts(wo)manship and not the product conflicts with the Greek concept of *poiesis*.

## Poiesis and praxis

According to Aristotle (350 B.C.), *poiesis* means to produce something, such as a house. This is end-means-thinking with 'originality of a second order'. The intellectual virtue that manifests itself in *poiesis*, is the good production of something. Therefore, poiesis is an activity that has no end in itself — the end is outside the activity.

On the other hand, the activity, called *praxis*, has an end in itself. The intellectual virtue that manifests itself in *praxis* is phronesis (practical wisdom). Following Arendt, aesthetical experience, as an activity of action, having its end in itself, is related to *praxis*, while producing music, activities of labor (as in practizing) and work (as in composing), having their ends outside themselves, is related to *poiesis*.

If Sennett argues in favour of the idea that a crafts(wo)man is a person who is dedicated to good work for its own sake, without distinguishing between the process and the product, crafts(wo)manship cannot be explained with the concepts of poiesis and praxis discussed by Aristotle.[11]

Let us further explore Aristotle's argument. According to Aristotle, all art (or *techné*)

> ... is concerned with coming into being, i.e. with contriving and considering how something may come into being which is capable of either being or not being, and whose origin is in the maker and not in the thing made; for art is concerned neither with things that are, or come into being, by necessity, nor

11 See Pöllänen and Ruotsalainen (2017) for a discussion of this topic in another art form (i.e. one that is not music).

> with things that do so in accordance with nature (since these have their origin in themselves). (Aristotle, 350 B.C.)

The phrase "either being or not being" in this quote may be understood through Giorgio Agamben's discussions of Aristotelian ideas about the talents and possibilities in a person and the tension between potentiality and reality. On this subject, Agamben (1999) argues that the knowledge of an artist also opens up for the opposite of creating: not to create. For example, a poet can choose silence or an artist can make powerlessness and destruction a part of their artwork. This is not a possibility for a craft(wo)man.

Further, the Aristotelian concept of *techné*, ('art' in English), which is often associated with *technique*, can be used to discuss the technical skills needed to play an instrument, as a musician needs to have technical knowledge. However, Heidegger (2000) argues that the term *techné* has nothing to do with what we think about today as technical skills and that it is to be interpreted as a way in which to have knowledge or to have seen. *To see*, according to Heidegger, is a perception of being just as it is and uncovering the deeper truth of being. Moreover, a central aspect in Heidegger's discussion is how we often focus on the fact that the Greeks used the word techné for both craft and art, but according to Heidegger, techné means neither craft nor art, and certainly not technical in the modern sense. Rather, the word techné indicates a way to perceive being. *Téchné* is not about producing something. Therefore, according to Heidegger's point of view, when art is called *techné*, this in no way means that the artist is a crafts(wo)man.[12]

This view of *techné* as the knowledge required to uncover the truth gets to the very heart of what it means to make or to perform music. Uncovering truth is what art is often about. For instance, when people discuss a musical performance, they

12 See Varkøy (2013) for a profound discussion of Aristotle and Heidegger concerning the techné concept.

rarely focus on technical skill alone. Instead, they focus on interpreting the music or on revealing "the musical truth" (Varkøy, 2013). This involves the relationship between craft and art, revealing the dual nature of the Greek term *techné*, which is evoked in music in the relationship between instrumental technique and artistic interpretation.

Heidegger's discussion of the Greek concept *techné* reveals the connection of craft and art, but how does craft differ from art? Sennett's main point is that, in terms of practice, the "line between craft and art may seem to separate technique and expression" (Sennett, 2009, p. 65). In the discussions in Plato's *Symposium*, it is observed that although all craftsmanship is quality-driven work (areté) and all craftsmen are poets (artists), "they are not all called poets; they have other names" (Plato, 2008, p. 109, 205b-c). Richard Sennett states that there is reason to worry "that these different names and indeed different skills kept people in his day from understanding what they shared" (Sennett, 2009, p. 24).

## Inspiration

Among the Ancient Greeks, there are two main theories about art. The first is Aristotle's concept of techné, and the second is Plato's view of art as inspiration (Skjervheim, 1996). In Plato's *Ion*, Socrates speaks with Ion, who is a reciter and interpreter of Homer (Plato, 2008). A central question in the dialogue is what it means to interpret. Socrates argues that nobody can be a good interpreter without understanding the meaning of a poem or song. To be able to recite a poem in a beautiful way is not equivalent to understanding the meaning of what one is reciting. If Ion really is an interpreter, Socrates argues that he has to understand Homer. Ion, however, does not understand what he is reciting, even though he thinks that he knows and understands everything Homer writes about. How could he sing Homer that well if he did not? And Socrates agrees (!), Ion *is* the very best reciter.

If Ion is a qualified reciter, this fact undermines the premise above (that you have to understand the meaning of the poem or song to be a good interpreter). Socrates, however, has a new premise to introduce. He argues that there are two possible ways of making interpretations — they can be made based on *techné* (knowledge) or *enthusiasmos* (divine inspiration). Thus, Ion is a man inspired by the gods, and he does not know what he is doing. He has a sort of embodied knowledge, mastering a certain set of rules for a certain human activity, and is able to perform this in practical life. Therefore, a prerequisite for being an artist is to have embodied knowledge.

Concepts like inspiration and Heidegger's 'uncovering the truth of being' are some sort of 'romantic' ideas. However, Sennett is not very fond of romantic ideas. See, for example, his statement concerning his lack of interest in the concept of *creativity*: " ... the word creativity appears in this book as little as possible. This is because the word carries to much Romantic baggage — the mystery of inspiration, the claims of genius" (Sennett, 2009, p. 290). However, when Sennett argues that crafts(wo)manship "may suggest a way of life that waned with the advent of industrial society" because craft is characterized by slowness, he reveals that he may not be free of romantic ideas:

> Craftsmen take pride most in skills that mature. This is why simple imitations is not sustaining satisfaction; the skill has to evolve. The slowness of craft time serves as a source of satisfaction ... Slow craft time also enables the work of reflection and imagination – which the push for quick results cannot (Sennett, 2009, p. 295).

Weber (2011) describes modernization as a general process of disenchantment of the world, which has existed since the Renaissance and Reformation periods and has made the world more prosaic and predictable and less poetic and mysterious. Similarly, Benjamin (2003) discusses the transformation of our aesthetic relation to objects and the world brought about by new technologies that allow for reproduction.

Through the concept of aura, Benjamin develops the idea of a reciprocal relationship between the subject and the world of things. More specifically, the aura experience refers to the aesthetic relationship to things and the world in general and, thus, our relation to works of art and artistic practice. The transformations that occur in the field of art are results of changes that concern our basic perception of matter, time and space. The most important change is that technology gives us a power over things that we did not previously have.

Moreover, Benjamin argues that we, in the age of handicraft, are at the mercy of the quality of things, but with new technology, the mystical nature of things disappears. The handicraft tradition allows things to retain a kind of distance and mystery. However, works of art, like all things, lose their aura when technological interference destroys their distanced mysteriousness. The ability to reproduce them— and, of course, the experience of them — as a result of new technology takes from their unique character.[13]

Sennett also notes concerns for craft(wo)manship with the introduction of technology. Specifically, he raises concerns about the erosion of crafts(wo)manship in industrialized societies. This is a not a concern limited to crafts(wo)manship as such, but as a way of life, the creation of a world, and the ability to shape our lives into something we find desirable. Even though Byung-Chul Han's views are not necessarily in line with Sennett's, we find it interesting to discuss Sennett's focus on the dwelling character of crafts(wo)manship in light of Han's philosophical project of 're-romanticising and re-auratising' artwork (Han, 2018b). Han argues in favour of a return to connecting a sense of awe and wonder to 'the otherness' of artwork, which is

13 Among a number of the thinkers referred to in this article at hand, a common premise is that there is some level of intrinsic value in music. The context implied by Benjamin might hint at alternative interpretations. However: this discussion is not a topic as such in this article (as it certainly is for instance in Varkøy, 2015a).

reminiscent of the idea that artwork is not an object but is part-subject/part-object. It is a *Thou*, not an *It* (Varkøy, 2020).

Sennett challenges the differences identified by Aristotle between poiesis and praxis, as well as those identified by Arendt between labour, work and action. He also challenges Heidegger's distinctions between things, utility articles and artwork. According to Heidegger (2000), works of art do not have an end or purpose beyond themselves. Heidegger argues that while products of craft are utility articles, works of art cannot be used for anything. They oppose use and application (Varkøy, 2015a).

## Professional Thinking and Philosophy of Art

We find an interesting parallel to Sennett's argument in favour of the crafts(wo)man in some discussions in professional thinking about art education as professional education and art as a profession (Mangset, 2004). Similar to Sennett, Mangset argues that an important element of the professionalisation of artists (through professional education) is the need to distance oneself from romantic ideas about art and autonomy, as well as romantic myths about 'genius artists'. However, this practice leads to the risk of art and artists becoming marginalized by ideas of craft and profession. The idea of the autonomy of art (and the artist) is no longer valued.

Professional education is targeted and directed. The professional is authorised to perform its special community service, a social mandate or mission. The value of professions and their basis for existence are connected to their serviceability (i.e. they should be good for something and function in a certain way). Abbot (1998) and Grimen (2008) talk about professions as heterotelic by nature. Another condition of a profession is that it must provide a service to society that professional education has to fulfil in order to maintain the contract with the employer, often public authorities. This means that professional education delivers education that is relevant to society.

Therefore, if learning is referred to as professional education, this implies that the education has direct relevance to society (Christensen, 2012; Angelo, 2012 and 2016).

On the other hand, Kant (1987), in his construction of the idea of the autonomy of art, explicitly draws a line between what can be aesthetically judged (like works of art) and what is judged by its usefulness or moral goodness. Kant differentiates between judgments of the beautiful without concern for whether the object is desirable and what appeals to us and makes us interested in its existence. In addition, the taste for what is pleasurable and appealing to the senses is what Bourdieu (1984) calls the 'taste of necessity', while the taste for the beautiful is the taste of freedom. An object that gives pleasure to the senses might be something we want to possess. In this case, we are dependent on our desires. The taste for the beautiful (and the sublime) is, on the contrary, disinterested. Hence, it is free from the focus on the value of utility. In other words, to experience something as art means emancipation. Thus, if the aesthetic experience is 'useful', this opens up the possibility that the relevance of this type of experience is related to questioning the hegemonic relevance thinking itself (Maritain, 1961). This represents a strong philosophical tradition in evaluating aesthetics and art, even to some extent supported by Pierre Bourdieu (1984). In his critique of the oppressive functions of Kantian aesthetics, Bourdieu surprisingly defends the idea of the relative autonomy of art. In addition, he argues that the relative autonomy of art is a prerequisite for our modern idea of art as critique.[14]

It is, of course, not our intention to reduce professional thinking to a project of regulation and control. However, although professional thinking also includes elements of emancipation of both the individual and social life in general, it is not possible to ignore the fact that professional thinking includes elements of regulation and control. We think it is of philosophical interest to ask if the frames of professional thinking can become too narrow. Must we let go of the ideas of art's fundamental

14 See Varkøy (2015b) for a more profound discussion of these aspects.

unpredictability and unreliability, as well as the artist's calling to act unfaithfully and disloyally, ending up reducing art to some sort of "social handicraft"? If such ideas are to be considered with the depth and intensity they deserve, it presupposes a confidence with the disturbing features of art or art's outrageousness

## Concluding remark

The ambiguities and paradoxes discussed in the previously published article referred above (Angelo, Varkøy & Georigii-Hemming, 2019) show there is a need for philosophical awareness and accuracy concerning the concepts of art and craft, artist and crafts(wo)man, within higher music education. As stated in the introduction, the aim of this article was to *discuss* these concepts, as well as the relationship or dichotomy between them, from a philosophical point of view. Our purpose was *not to solve* the problematic relationship between art and craft or artist and crafts(wo)man.

We need to rethink the tension between craft and art, crafts(wo)men and artists. It is not a good idea to create a discourse without distinctions and characterised by bluntness and a lack of philosophical accuracy. Why? The function of such discourse is often revealed to be soft manipulation in favour of an idea that is planned to win the discussion. That will certainly not be of any help in reflecting on craft and art, crafts(wo)man and artist, as well as the relationship and tension between these concepts, in higher music education. To focus and discuss ambiguities, heterogeneity and paradoxes in this field, as we have done in this article, may be more constructive.

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# Lives in Dialogue:

## Shared Musical-Relational Engagements in Music Therapy and Music Education

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# Abstract

Music therapists and music educators, within their distinct workplaces and often holding distinct mandates, share a common imperative to advocate for the value of music within society. This paper's authors—a music therapist and a music educator—engage in "genuine dialogue" (Buber, 1947/2002) as a "primary source of understanding" (Garred, 2006, p. 105) in exploring the purpose of music within their respective disciplines. Through interrogating common conceptions of music, music education and music therapy, they propose that the theoretical and practical points of intersection between their fields are far broader in potential scope than is typically assumed, particularly within the current North American interdisciplinary discourse.

Specifically, this paper's authors present music-centered theoretical perspectives from the field of music therapy (Aigen, 2014) as providing a meeting place for transdisciplinary dialogue and a renewed vision for the purpose of musical engagement, a fundamentally relational act. This perspective includes recognition of music's "paramusical" affordances, a concept that challenges overly simplistic distinctions between "music itself" and its "nonmusical benefits" (Ansdell, 2014). This perspective reminds the music educator that it would be remiss to neglect the personal and relational affordances of the medium, while imploring the music therapist to resist reducing music to a mere tool for achievement of a nonmusical outcome, thereby neglecting the medium—the music—itself.


Keywords: Music education, music therapy, music-centered, transdisciplinary, relational

# Lives in Dialogue:

## Shared Musical-Relational Engagements in Music Therapy and Music Education

Elizabeth Mitchell[1] & Cathy Benedict[2]

## Introduction

> It is in the nature of beginning that something new is started which cannot be expected from whatever may have happened before. (Arendt, 1958, pp. 177-178)

In the opening quote Arendt reminds us of the importance of not just a first meeting, but all meetings, regardless of what may have come before. This article first and foremost reflects our desire to begin. Throughout, we endeavour an engagement that embodies Arendt's (1958) belief that to distinguish ourselves through our encounters with each other means to risk the disclosure of who we are; without doing so our dialogue exists only as a "means toward the end" (p. 180). We thus embrace this desire to disclose through Martin Buber's (1947/2002) conception of genuine dialogue in order to open ourselves—a music therapist and a music educator—to the other. It is not to disregard the history and traditions of our disciplines but rather to challenge, as Buber asks of us, "the desire to have one's own self-reliance confirmed" (p. 23). It is above all to think together what we are doing (Arendt, 1958) unencumbered by presumptions and expectations.

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As we examine theoretical and philosophical matters at the heart of our chosen disciplines, we move beyond inter- to transdisciplinarity, "[concerning ourselves] with the unity of intellectual frameworks beyond the disciplinary perspectives" (Stember, 1991, para. 15). We are cognizant of and respect the important body of interdisciplinary scholarship regarding our two disciplines.[3] However, we find that this scholarship is often limited in scope, focused upon the "means toward the end" (Arendt, 1958. p. 180) such as the sharing of goals, projects, challenges, and the "learning (and re-learning) of concepts, ways of thinking and practicing" (Tsiris et al., 2016, p. 58). While this interdisciplinary dialogue is necessary and powerful in its impact upon both disciplines, it also often resides in Buber's conception of "technical dialogue" where "the focal point of the exchange" is to "understand something, or gain information" (Kramer & Gawlick, 2003, p. 33). In this paper, seeking a "higher level of integrated study" (Stember, 1991, para. 15), we see ourselves in "mutual relationship" (Buber, 1947/2002, p. 22) and enter dialogue in order to "[generate] new meanings collaboratively through the interpenetration of our knowledge and experiences" (Murphy et al., 2011, p. 112).

A recent article makes the distinctions between our disciplines within the confines of schooling seem apparent:

3 For example, the International Society for Music Education (ISME) commissions and special interest groups (SIGs) provide its members with opportunities to explore specialised areas of practice and research (ISME, 2016). The Music in Special Education and Music Therapy Commission is a clear avenue for interdisciplinary conversation and research between music educators and music therapists. The Community Music Activity Commission often engages with scholarship that is "located at the interstices of both community music and community music therapy" (Leske, 2016, p. 73) and a recent conference of the Spirituality and Music Education SIG was organised in collaboration with the Nordoff Robbins Centre for Music Therapy (see https://www.nordoff-robbins.org.uk/conference2017).

> Goals in music therapy can be physical, emotional, cognitive, or social and can be met through music experiences that include creating, singing, moving to, and/or listening to music. Music education involves the teaching and learning of music. Goals in music education are related to the acquisition of music skills and can be met through creating, performing, responding, or connecting to music. (Smith, 2018, p. 183)

While we respect the certitude that comes with such precise definitions, it is exactly this certitude that needs to be thought through. What does it mean to "teach music"? What is being taught, how, for whom, and for what purpose? And what is the rationale for the use of music as a medium for therapy, given that physical, emotional, cognitive, or social goals can also be attained through a multiple of other avenues? Furthermore, might not learning occur in therapy, and development in nonmusical domains occur in education?

That our disciplines overlap within school-based special education contexts is well-established (Bunt, 2003; Darrow, 2013; Hammel & Hourigan, 2011; McFerran & Elefant, 2012; Montgomery & Martinson, 2006). Within discourse surrounding the connections between music therapy and special education however, assumptions regarding the purpose of these fields, or the purpose of music in the lives of students/clients–with or without diagnosed disabilities–often remain unexplored, particularly in the North American context in which we both live and work. Though overlap between our disciplines is assumed within special education contexts (Bonde, 2019; Darrow, 2013; Smith, 2018), there is minimal consideration of broader theoretical and practical points of connection. We propose that there is a need for expansion of existing theoretical perspectives, or the creation of new ones, in order to validate our shared musical medium. Such transdisciplinary perspectives, though relevant to special education, would by necessity hold relevance within *any* music education context.

Much like Regelski's (2014) "ethic of resistance" (p. 82) we too strive to resist instrumental "strategic thinking" and focus on, as Regelski suggests, "the long term musical welfare of students" (p. 82), recognizing that "a relationship to music" is "an essential human need" (Aigen, 2014, p. 39). Our mutual commitment to praxis, and music as a shared medium, helps us to remain aware of the potential problematics of care (so often the uninterrogated guiding principle in our disciplines) construed as legitimizing educational or therapeutic intervention (Bowers, 2005, p. 17). Thus, we grapple here with the potential of both music education and therapy construed narrowly as "activities intended to produce external ends" versus music education and therapy "done as an end it itself" (Aristotle *Nicomachean Ethics* as cited in Hayden, 2014, p. 16), and seek a more nuanced approach that resists this false dichotomy and embraces both perspectives. Clearly, the potential is neither simple nor obvious, but we seek to perceive "the subjective worth rather than objectified utility" (Holler, 1989, p. 83).

In turning toward the other through dialogue, without seeking solutions, we welcomed "unpredictability and surprise, even possible discordance" (Garred, 2006, p. 100). While perhaps philosophical in nature we believe, as Biesta and Stengel (2016) do, that thinking together offers a way forward that "challenges, qualifies, deepens, and even transforms [an] understanding of a phenomenon ("Introduction", para. 1). To that end, in this article we work backward from in-person and "live" online dialogues. In those encounters we discovered, and uncovered, themes that both sprang from and spoke to both of us. Mutual relevance for the music therapist and the music educator emerged particularly in themes from music therapy such as "music-centeredness" and "para-musical". Out of these themes we were drawn to consider the ethical imperative of the relational aspects within contexts of meeting and musicking. Thus, in the following sections we first present literature and discussion from our disciplines that frames these themes. We then present an excerpt from one of our dialogues and finally, use our dialogues to think through the ways in which music-

centered perspectives from music therapy, and music's relational imperatives, transcend disciplinary boundaries.

## Music Centeredness and Relationship

In this article, we explore how the centrality of music within our respective fields provides a clear avenue to make our world in common (Arendt, 1958). Though we recognize and concur with the compelling argument that education and therapy–as conceived of broadly–share areas of common ground (Lampropoulous, 2001; Smeyers et al., 2007), we focus here upon *music* education and *music* therapy. In particular, we draw upon a music-centered theoretical perspective from music therapy, which asserts that "the clinical uses of music in music therapy...are continuous with the nature of music and its use in nonclinical contexts" (Aigen, 2014, p. 44). Music therapy is commonly perceived to be, in essence, the use of music as a tool to be used for the achievement of a nonmusical end. In contrast, music-centered music therapists propose that "music enriches human life in unique ways" and that such enrichment can be "a legitimate focus" of their work (p. 56). This perspective challenges us to understand music's value within human life as far more complex and nuanced than as a means to an end.

We propose that this notion of "music-centeredness" from music therapy scholarship is a natural starting point for the embodiment of Buber's genuine dialogue between a music educator and a music therapist. Recognizing that music-centered perspectives need not convey music's impacts as universal or automatic, we use the term "affordances", as per DeNora (2000), to convey that music's effects are ecological, "constituted from within the circumstances of use" (p. 44). Certainly, the discussion as to what constitutes music seems to have settled; most now agree music is not a page you can hold in your hand, but something alive, sounded, and socially constructed (Cross, 2014; Goehr, 2009; Small, 1998; Varkøy, 2015). On the other

hand, the purpose and function of music, in the context of both therapy and education, is not as equally settled, specifically as the disciplinary purposes of music education and music therapy are continually shifting. A music-centered lens reminds the music educator that it would be remiss to neglect the personal, social, and spiritual affordances of the medium, while imploring the music therapist to resist reducing music to a tool to arrive at personal, social, or spiritual ends, thereby neglecting the medium—the music—itself.

In our use of the term "relational", we draw upon the relational movement in psychology (Robb, 2006) and the work of feminist/therapist scholars, such as Gilligan (1993) and Miller (1986). These groundbreaking women challenge Western psychology's valourization of the autonomous, self-made monological "man" and propose an alternative framework, one in which "healthy development occurs when both people are growing and changing in relationship" (Jordan & Hartling, 2002, p. 51). This shift towards celebrating human development as wholly relational in nature, emerging from interaction (Garred, 2006), rather than as a trajectory moving from relationship to independence, resonates with Buber's call to embrace genuine dialogue, rather than technical or instrumental exchanges. Our relational perspective is intertwined with our perspective upon music, similar to Trondalen (2016), who describes musical relationships as "offer[ing] new ways of being with one another, an existential experience different from anything else" (p. 259). Though she is speaking here of relationships fostered within music therapy specifically, we suggest that music's affordances surrounding relational ways of being transcend disciplinary context.

Thus, in the next section we explore literature pertaining to the relationship between music therapy and music education and raise persistent issues in both disciplines. We do so in order to draw attention to possible meeting points as well as to the similar kinds of theoretical discussions that reoccur for both.

## Affinity, Affiliation, Alliance

In literature situated within a North American perspective, cited distinctions between music therapy and music education normally pertain to areas such as goals/purpose, training/education, and the nature of the relationships formed within these settings (Bruscia, 2014; Mitchell, 2016; Smith, 2018). Though clear on paper, these distinctions are often murkier in practice; in the area of *goals*, for example, learning often occurs in therapy (Bruscia, 2014) and personal growth certainly within education. The matter of goals is further complicated when one considers that definitions of music therapy vary depending on the context from which they emerge, even in areas of geographical proximity. For example, the American Music Therapy Association defines music therapy as the "clinical and evidence-based use of music interventions" to address goals in nonmusical domains only (AMTA, 2018), whereas the Canadian definition acknowledges the "musical" domain as an area of "human need" that can be addressed within therapy (CAMT, 2016). The subtle recognition within the Canadian definition that humans have *musical* needs is noteworthy, not least because it represents a potential point of connection between music therapy and music education. Relevant here is Ruud's (2008) proposal that music therapy be viewed "as a broad interdisciplinary field", rather than merely as a form of treatment; this invites conversation with music educators, and indeed anyone interested in "how we may use music to promote health and well-being" (p. 48).

That there exist connections between our disciplines is not a new assertion (Gaston, 1968). Historically speaking, early music therapists "seemed able...to maintain a flexible role and to work with a spectrum of musical/therapeutic activities" (Ansdell, 2002, "Towards Music Therapy", para. 4), a spectrum that included participation in performances, ensembles, and other musical experiences more typically associated with the work of music educators. A shift occurred as "music therapy was reinvented as a modern profession in the middle of the last century" (Ruud, 2004, p.

11); the field became affiliated with the natural science paradigm and its practitioners "insisted upon the boundaries between their discipline and others" (p. 11). It followed naturally that music therapy moved into private spaces and its purpose and aims required framing with medical and psychological terminology. Musical skill development was seen as counter to therapeutic purpose, and certainly music-making "for its own sake" was not the domain of this modern healthcare profession.

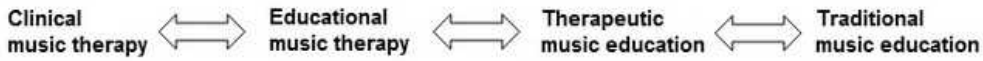
Over the past two decades, there has been a renewal in conversation regarding music therapy's intersections with other music-making practices. For example, approaches such as resource-oriented music therapy (Rolvsjord, 2010) and community music therapy (Ansdell, 2002; Stige, 2002) have invited music therapists to once again consider the clinical value of musical experiences such as skill-development and performance, thereby challenging the primacy of the medical model. With parallels to Habron's (2014) exploration of the conceptual connections between music-centered music therapy and Dalcroze Eurhythmics, in a 2016 article, I (Elizabeth) examined music-centered music therapy's theoretical relevance to students' personal growth within private studio lessons. Additionally, to support the notion that the fields of music education and music therapy are intertwined, several authors have proposed continuum models to represent points of intersection. For example, Bonde (2019) displays a continuum that progresses from music therapy ("music is a means"), to special education, and finally to music education ("music is the purpose") (p. 38). Robertson's (2000) version of a continuum between the fields is displayed below.

*Figure 1: Robertson's (2000) music education/music therapy continuum.*


My (Elizabeth) aforementioned article from 2016 proposed a continuum perspective in response to Robertson's. This continuum sought to include areas of music educa-

tion in which therapeutic goals might be a focus, whether or not these were contexts of special music education.

*Figure 2: Mitchell's (2016) music education/music therapy continuum.*




These continuums invite us to identify points of connection between music therapy and music education rather than dwelling only upon areas of distinction. In this paper, we strive to take this notion of "continuum" further still; as we discuss the affordances of music and relationship that potentially encompass *all* contexts of music education and music therapy, we recognize the limits of these above linear models, and embrace the connectivity between and among *all* points on these continuums.

In music education both purpose and goals have not only shifted but are continually shifting. Skill development, whether linked to the affective power of music, or heightened skill improvement in disciplines outside of music, is often assumed to be the purpose of music education and more often than not, is linked to the Western classical canon. Critical conversations and questions bound to purpose, however, have begun to guide the field, and critical reflection (grounded in decolonizing efforts), as to how these "skills" came to be defined and who benefits are no longer the outliers they once may have been. However, we also need to attend to the powerful and perhaps uncomfortable arguments Delpit (1995) makes when she argues that deliberate "skill-based schooling" (p. 12) is important for many children who may not have the same skills accessed through privilege. It is important to note, then, that the question as to the purpose of music education is complex and hardly universal. Music functions differently in different contexts.

Skill-based music education that extends and reproduces the Western canon *might* assist in developing skills that are helpful to have in particular contexts, but

certainly not in all. Much like scripted mathematics and reading programs, in which literacy often remains at the functional level, a singular focus on skill development (such as the ability to read Western notation), much like a singular focus on mastering phonics skills, comes at a cost.[4] Music curriculum that is not grounded in sociological and philosophical models that reflect nuanced understandings of multiple and critical literacies, social fulfilment, quality of life, and mutual relationship rarely move teacher and student beyond "silently consum[ing] other people's words" (Christensen, 2006, p. 393).

In the following section we shift out of the theoretical into the narrative. We choose to present our *thinking together* as a narrative for two reasons. The first is to engage with a relational process that mirrors Buber's (1947/2002) genuine dialogue as a movement toward the *I-Thou* encounter. Recognizing that we could not will the *I-Thou* encounter, we sought to be present to the other and to the "spontaneous unfolding of the moment" (Dodson, 2014). Thus, we desired to move beyond simultaneous or dueling monologues, or what Buber would refer to as the *I-It* relation, to an "immediate, direct engaging and being engaged in which attentive listening and inclusive responding flow back and forth" (Kramer & Gawlick, 2003, pp. 33-34). Dialogue in this context, or our story created in relation, then, served methodologically as "a means of sense making, a way in and through which we represent, interrogate, and interpret experience and come to know ourselves and [each other]" (Barrett & Stauffer, 2012, p. 1). While we shared many spoken conversations, what is presented here is a small portion of a much longer conversation we had in a live, online document. This writing format allowed us more easily to "[turn] to the silent place of attention" (Avnon, 1998, p. 120) without preconceptions of how the other might respond, or about what the other might write. We also believe this record demonstrates "the possibility of being surprised" (Kramer & Gawlick, 2003, pp. 33) that is integral

4 For a more in-depth look at functional and critical/transformative literacies in mathematics, language arts and music, see Benedict (2012).

to genuine dialogue; happiness and spontaneous joy is found in the unexpected. We were drawn to Barone's (1992) belief in the power of critical storytelling and "fashioned an honest and critical story in a nontheoretical, nonmethodical manner" (p. 145). Thus, we embrace the exclamation points, so often disparaged in academic writing, and choose not to provide reference citations for the authors of which we speak.

The second reason we present this section of dialogue is to reflect aspects of transdisciplinarity. We recognize this project as one that uses transdisciplinarity as a process rather than as a method of research and echo the belief of others that the "promise of transdisciplinarity [is] in terms of multidirectional conversation rather than unidirectional presentation" (Murphy et al., 2011, p. 112). Within our conversation we seek to "trouble certainty, and raise questions concerning the "taken-for-granted" (Barrett & Stauffer, 2012, p. 1).

## On Being in Dialogue

> The meaning of this dialogue is found in neither one nor the other of the partners, nor in both added together, but in their interchange. (Friedman, 1965, p. 6)

Elizabeth (Liz): Part of the reason I was drawn to study and earn my PhD within a department of music education was that, in my music therapy education, there was minimal acknowledgement of music therapy's relationship to other music disciplines, and at times even resistance towards such acknowledgement. And certainly, my music education training made no mention of music therapy. I'd had transformative experiences—both musically and personally—as a music student, and yet my training programs appeared to be invested in maintaining strict disciplinary boundaries. To me, these strict boundaries minimize the potential within our fields and I wanted to explore this.

*Cathy: In so many ways I am humbled and drawn to the positioning of you as the one that wanted to reach out to music educators. In my experience too often I did not reach out to therapists unless I could use them. Instrumental ends, as it were.*

Liz: And maybe that can be traced to particular beliefs about the purpose of music therapy and the role of the music therapist - that is, that the music therapist's role is entirely distinct from the educator's. Music therapists hold these beliefs too, namely, that music therapists are all about the nonmusical. And music educators focus on musical skill development, or music for music's sake.

*Cathy: I recognize the problems of speaking in generalizations, and I come from a very particular way of teaching music, but music teachers are, for the most part, about teaching music skill development.*

Liz: Absolutely, and this makes sense. The simplest way to define music therapy is often "the use of music to achieve nonmusical goals." And it is that. Music does have potential nonmusical benefits, and that's how I have to talk about my work when I'm sitting across the table from doctors, nurses, etc. But when music therapists focus only on the nonmusical ends, we can lose sight of the stuff going on in the music. And alternatively, music educators perhaps don't address other aspects of music-making, such as relationship, because it's not their domain—but—what if it was somehow a part of the medium of music?

*Cathy: I am led to think about "what's going on in the music." I often think that teachers have learned not to use the word aesthetic or refer to personal meaning that can be found and made in music. Perhaps it's because it is beyond difficult to explain and measure what that might be.*

Liz: It's so interesting. You say that music educators have moved away from talking about aesthetics—and—on the flip side, music-centered music therapists are trying to move away from exclusive focus upon the "nonmusical." It seems there might be a place to meet in the middle. Perhaps in the past, to talk about "what's going on in the

music" did just refer to aesthetics. But Aigen or Ansdell, as examples, propose that to be "music-centered"—to focus on the "music itself"—is far more than just focusing on sound. Aesthetics is one aspect, but we know that music is social, relational, spiritual, expressive, and so on, and we know these things because we can look at how human societies have always engaged with music. So, a focus upon the "music itself" can also affirm all of those potential benefits. I think it follows that those potential areas of impact are just as relevant for music education as they are for music therapy, since they're a part of music-making.

*Cathy: I think relevant and "works at what" are connected. Everything works. It's the "works at what" that needs articulation. Everything I do lately with the pre-service teachers with whom I work has to do with the conversations and reflections that take place out of the musical doing, the relationships out of the doing, the relationships IN the doing. Which is what you are addressing as well.*

Liz: To your last point, to emphasize relationship doesn't negate the music if music is itself an active and relational thing. And maybe we can bring in the concept of "paramusical" here – I think this is a helpful concept that music therapists have developed to find a meeting place between the poles of music "for its own sake" and music for its nonmusical benefits. Para-musical phenomena are all the "things" that go along with acts of music-making; they aren't the sounds themselves, but they are still entirely connected to the music. Argh, how to explain this? They would be occurring constantly in any musical environment, maybe how someone feels or what they think about while musicking, how a group acts towards one another while in music, etc. Ansdell uses the example that a group might interact differently within music than they do outside of music. But these interactions are wrapped-up in the music. It's not as simple as saying the music has led to a nonmusical outcome, as that different quality of interaction may or may not last once the music has ended. I'm not sure I'm explaining that well.

*Cathy: Oh gosh, lots there!! My first thought was I am not so sure how you are using "music for music's sake" – I don't think most music teachers use this phrase out loud as a justification anymore. But what I also hear you saying is that music for music's sake is much more nuanced and that the music is something that speaks to, or needs to "address," as Buber would say, each person individually. But what I feel might be more challenging for many music teachers is teaching a class with the relational first and foremost at its core, no matter how you would frame relational, Nel Noddings, anyone. The challenge for me is how to help pre-service teachers consider this powerful shift in pedagogical focus.*

Liz: I agree that many music educators may not feel prepared to work relationally, because they're not given the tools and perhaps they haven't had this modelled. And perhaps they have been actively steered away from the relational elements of their work, since they are teachers and not therapists. This is an amazing thing about music therapy education –because it's "therapy", we talk about relationship, read about relationship, practice relationship, and are evaluated on the relationships we form. When it's framed as "therapy", relationship suddenly matters. But if music is relational/social/communal—which music-centered therapists say, but so do most ethnomusicologists—then relationship is vital in music education as well. This is one of those transdisciplinary points. That these ideas from music *therapy* are really just ideas about music and people. And music education involves music and people.

*Cathy: This is fabulous for me to think through! What is relational, and for what purpose? What would our teaching look like if we embrace your last paragraph?*

Liz: We can't say that music-making will automatically create lovely and harmonious relationships with other people, but if we *can* say that it is relational—it implies being in relationship—then we perhaps have an ethical imperative to acknowledge this, and be clear about what kind of relationships we want (especially in the context of the inevitable power dynamic of teacher/student or therapist/client) rather than ig-

noring relationships and focusing on the notes. This is another place where music therapy scholarship can offer something to music educators.

*Cathy: This can be one manifestation for this transdisciplinary thinking of ours – the ethical imperative of relational, which is what Buber is addressing. What does that look like in a music class, in all of our engagements with others? Music-centered, then, also means relational – or embedded in the discourse of music-centered is the relational. In my experience this is not how music teachers would consider music-centered.*

Liz: Exactly. This is the work of scholars like Aigen and Ansdell – to be music-centered IS to acknowledge the "nonmusical" (or "para-musical") stuff like relationships because it's part of what music is/what music does.

*Cathy: Well, again, I am not convinced music does this, but rather it's something that a teacher or facilitator with students, together, can do. But it doesn't just happen magically. And relational needs to be defined in our context for music educators – more importantly what it is not ... i.e. cooperative learning groups, peer-to-peer teaching, or sectionals, etc. Of course, they could be, that's the issue, but just using those terms, and words, and groupings doesn't mean that relational as care and reciprocity is what becomes operationalised.*

Liz: Aha! I think I'm getting what you're saying now. Yes, to be truly "relational" means that the teacher or therapist also needs to be open to being changed in the process. It's certainly not just about changing the other person. It's collaborative. Which is different from a purely "student-centered" or "client-centered" approach, I think. The teacher/therapist matters too. I think that this idea that music "is" or "does" the relationship thing, is not about something magical in the music, but rather an acknowledgement that relationship will happen differently in a music therapy session versus a talk-therapy session. Because of music's musical-ness, relationship is somehow implied. Same as a music classroom as opposed to any other type of classroom.

This doesn't mean that the relationships are necessarily "better", but that they are musical in nature, and so unique. I think Aigen would say that as music therapists we have to hang our hats here. That what is done in music has unique affordances, and also that having a relationship to music is an important part of being human.

## Music-Centeredness and the Para-Musical

That music has unique affordances, and that our relationships to music are integral parts of being human, are fitting places to pause our "live" dialogue. We re-engage now more formally in thinking through how the themes that emerged from our dialogue go beyond matters of technicality and practicality, and are indeed transdisciplinary in nature. Certainly, music and relationship both transcend our created disciplinary boundaries, whether or not we invite them to. We turn first to a critical examination of the purpose of our respective disciplines and begin by drawing upon authors who challenge common practices regarding which students receive "therapy" versus "education."

Laes (2017) uses Resonaari, an extracurricular music school in Finland, to exemplify an inclusive and activist model of music education that promotes "musical agency beyond therapeutic care" (p. 139). Similar to Laes' recognition of the importance of musical agency for students "that have generally been relegated to remedial and therapeutic spheres of music education" (p. 139), Darrow (2013) advocates for "musical rights" (p. 13), including access to music education, for people with disabilities. Certainly, we concur with Darrow in this regard. Darrow goes on to say that "if children are only given music therapy, they are being discriminated against in terms of their cultural and aesthetic education" because "music therapists do not attend to the musical growth of the child" (p. 14). Darrow's point is valid if it is the threefold case that music therapy's sole purpose is to work towards functional goals in non-

musical domains, that the primary purpose of music education is "aesthetic education", and that musical development can be separated from development in non-musical domains through music.

Aigen (2014) too argues that it is problematic for access to music for individuals with disabilities "to be based upon nonmusical criteria that are different from other members of society" (p. 71); however, his argument diverges from Darrow's in his proposition that music therapy can be a context in which individuals access *music* for *musical reasons*:

> [I]f music enriches human life in unique ways, and if this enrichment is considered to be a legitimate focus of the work of music therapists, then what music therapy provides to people is different from that of other therapies. It provides experiences of music, self, others, and community, within music, that are essential to well-being and that are uniquely musical. (p. 65)

Darrow's (2013) perspectives on the purpose of music education—as "aesthetic education" (p. 13)—and music therapy— "to address nonmusical goals" (p. 14)—underestimate our professions' potentials and the affordances within music. Music education affords students' development far beyond the aesthetic, a domain often made manifest in the classroom as teaching the elements of the Western classical canon. This is only one culturally specific function of music, one which tends to favour a privileged way of knowing as well as limit other epistemic musicking possibilities. Similarly, we limit our clients in music therapy when we preclude domains of growth associated with the music itself, including the aesthetic (Aigen, 2005; Lee, 2003), and rather hinge participation solely upon the achievement of nonmusical goals. Thus, alongside our wholehearted support for Darrow's (2013) argument that all children should have access to music education, we propose the importance of transdisciplinary conversation (through genuine dialogue) regarding our shared medium of music,

rather than the further entrenching of rigid conceptions of music education and music therapy that are often found within North American contexts.

It is not that music therapists are misrepresenting ourselves when we talk about our practice(s) this way—musicking *does*, or more accurately, *may*, lead to nonmusical benefits—however, when we justify our work (in music therapy or music education) based upon the achievement of nonmusical outcomes, we do not provide a full picture of the value of musical experiences for individuals and communities. Aigen (2014) explains that within the traditional definition of music therapy

> the nature of the musical experience is essentially irrelevant... because it is not important as music; it is only important to the extent that it facilitates a nonmusical goal...If a better, quicker, or more efficacious tool can be found toward the nonmusical end, then there is no rationale for the provision of music therapy. (p. 65)

The concept of musical "affordances", defined earlier, is a starting point in recognizing that "music is different from being a one-sided stimulus" (Stige et al., 2010, p. 298). Music's effects—whether perceived as positive or negative—are never givens, as "it all depends on the *when, how,* and *with whom* of the given context" (p. 298, italics original). Grappling with the analytic dilemma involved in talking about music and its nonmusical benefits as if these were separate entities, Stige et al. propose the term "para-musical", a concept "which does not either *reduce* the musical to the merely physical or psychological or social, or, alternatively, artificially separate out music into its own rarefied realm, of 'music for music's sake'" (p. 298, italics original). Ansdell and DeNora (2016) explain: "Seeing music as more fluid and continuous within human experience and practice would rather suggest how *para*-musical phenomena accompany or work beside the musical, whilst not being purely musical themselves" (p. 35, italics original).

For music therapy, a field typically defined as "the use of music to achieve nonmusical goals" (Aigen, 2005, p. 56), this concept of the para-musical provides an invaluable tool for conceptualizing music's benefits in increasingly nuanced ways without disregarding our musical medium. For music education, whose relationship with the nonmusical is at best ambivalent, permission to acknowledge music's paramusical affordances opens up spaces that move the field beyond the polarities of either aesthetics or, alternatively, transactional conceptions of music's benefits. Neither music therapy nor music education's role need hinge upon the achievement of nonmusical outcomes, as "music enriches human life in unique ways" (Aigen, 2014, p. 65) and addresses "core human needs" such as developing as individuals, being in relationships and community, and experiencing the transcendent (p. 297). Rather than necessitating a choice between the "music itself" or its instrumental benefits, this music-centered framework encompasses both perspectives.

Put more simply, "What is musical is already personal and social" (Stige et al., 2010, p. 300). There is an inherent paradox here, as music may improve mood or spatial intelligence or numerous other things

> but such effects are mostly not what it does best, or indeed is primarily for.... Music is not primarily just a way of getting something done, but a way of doing things, or rather an indication of how to do things – musically. As such, musicking has value and purpose as an end in itself. Paradoxically, this is exactly how it achieves other things. (Ansdell, 2014, p. 299)

If music therapy can find theoretical grounding within music, and there exist "continuities between clinical and nonclinical use of music" (Aigen, 2014, p. 39), then music therapy is indelibly linked with other contexts of music-making. Just as music therapists can work with their clients on musical goals, with understanding that music's nonmusical affordances are implicated in these processes, conversely, these affordances will resonate in many settings of music education as well. And this is where

there is such untapped potential for dialogue: between music therapists looking to increase clients' access to and involvement with music, and educators looking to validate the potential that "core human needs" (Ansdell, 2014, p. 297) may be addressed through music.

# Concluding Thoughts

> Can we who live in a culture informed by a persistent instrumentalism that construes all things as tools or means to ends break out of that reduction and perceive beings as ends-in-themselves? (Holler, 1989, p. 83)

In a daily lived reality defined more and more by hardened positionalities of reason, objective understanding not only offers spaces of comfort, but respite from "think[ing] what we are doing" (Arendt, 1958, p. 5). That one would choose to not think is hardly surprising when one considers the often-high cost of challenging (and perhaps rejecting) that which *works*, or that which is *efficient*. Focusing on making one's place in our current reality favours "monologue disguised as dialogue" (Buber, 1947/2002, p. 22), self-reliance, and a dependence on one's own individual successes. Points of intersection where we pretend to find in common, might really be moments in which we are desirous to be in common, terrified of a superfluous existence. Reflecting on the "basis of human dignity" (Darrow, 2013, p. 17), Hayden (2014) reminds us that dignity is contingent upon "equal recognition" among each other as we make "in common" our world (p. 14). Dignity cannot be given by another, not if we desire to, as Holler asks in the above, "perceive beings as ends-in-themselves" (p. 183). Dignity can, however, be made in common when we engage in forms of resistance against therapeutic and educational models that define our needs and sanction our musicking engagements.

Ansdell (2014) asserts that "there is no intrinsic difference between how music helps in everyday life and within the specialist area of music therapy" (p. 295). Music therapy practice is indelibly connected to the ways in which human beings have always used music personally and socially, and thus is indelibly connected to community music, music education, and all other practice that connects humans and music. We are not asserting that music teachers are or should be doing music therapy; rather, we propose simply that, though music therapy has fought hard, and for good reason, to establish its boundaries, maintaining professional identities can no longer be at the expense of dialogue with those who are asking the same questions about the purpose of musicking and its connection to being human. Mendes-Flohr (2015) reminds us that the risk of genuine dialogue is that we may be "transformed cognitively and existentially" (p. 3). Within our fields we have concerned ourselves with protecting disciplinary turf for long enough; genuine dialogue can allow us to hear one another—even in our different and, oft times, conflicting theoretical perspectives—and open ourselves to transformation.

A music-centered perspective, and the concept of para-musical phenomena, suggest that the boundaries we have constructed, between "music itself" and "music's nonmusical benefits", are artificial and unhelpful as we endeavor to understand our work for ourselves and those who come into our care. By validating that a relationship to music is a healthy part of being human, music therapists can safeguard against disrupting the healthy relationships to music that our clients often already have. Music educators too risk disrupting naturally healthy relationships to music. The musical world in a school is controlled not only by the boundaries of the four walls of a music classroom, but by administrative and community expectations. Conceptualizing music as note reading and writing is tantamount to retreating into false comfort within those walls. If one believes that "making music is making social life" (Ansdell, 2014, p. 27), and one must if one believes that an education in music moves beyond

the classroom, then one must contend with imagining possibilities for music education beyond learner-centered or even music-centered perspectives.

Engaging in acts and encounters with others that allows music to retain its "wholeness as a phenomenon" (Ansdell, 2014, p. 299) seems a sacred beginning place for our clients, our participants, our students, ourselves. Meeting the other through relational silence, actions, words, and music, through dialogue, "makes" as Maurice Friedman (as cited in Buber, 2002) writes, "my ethical 'ought' a matter of real response with no preparation other than my readiness to respond with my whole being to the unforeseen and the unique" (p. xvi).

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# The Rabinal Community Museum (Guatemala, Central America)

## Arts-Based Research in Practice?

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## Abstract

The rich, multimedia, multisensory and embodied experiences presented by the Community Museum for Historical Memory in Rabinal, Guatemala, tell the stories of war, genocide, survival, resilience, and hope for a brighter future of the community it represents. It is métissage in practice: a place of encounter between the old and the new, the commemoration of death and the celebration of life, the presentation of historic and scientific data and artistic experiences. It promotes "conspirational" conversations between foreign visitors, community elders, school kids, anthropologists, and artists. Thus, it is not only susceptible of study from an Arts-Based Research (ABR) lens, but it also could be considered as ABR in practice.

Keywords: Guatemala, Rabinal, community museums, Arts-Based Research.

# The Rabinal Community Museum (Guatemala, Central America)

Andrés Álvarez Castañeda[1]

## Introduction

It is very important for me to clarify, from the very beginning, that I am not an arts-based researcher, nor do I intend to become one. I am a classically-trained anthropologist, with a clear preference for the Participatory Action Research (PAR) paradigm and a firm believer in applied social sciences as a way to impact the harsh realities of the vulnerable and the excluded. However, during my PhD studies in Norway, I came across Arts-Based Research (ABR), and I immediately thought it was an interesting theoretical and methodological perspective from which to understand one of my field sites: The Community Museum in Rabinal, Baja Verapaz, Guatemala.

In this article I wish to present the Community Museum as a network of people and activities that go beyond a mere exhibit, and that this network could be understood as an example of ABR in practice. My objective is to present some core con-

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cepts of ABR, be it the more classic ones, and then describe the museum and its activities, and how ABR could be seen as intertwined with these activities, and with the actors that carry them out.

It is only fair for me to say that I hold a close, personal relationship with this museum. I first knew of the initiative in the early 2000s, during my first trips to Rabinal. I got to know this magical community through a series of haphazard events which I hope to describe in future writings. Eventually, I did my undergraduate thesis about one of the most traditional handcrafts in the community, travelling almost every weekend, and eventually spending several months in the town center of Rabinal, doing ethnographic research.

Since then I have travelled to the township at least once a year, usually more times when I'm involved in a specific project. I helped out in organizing a cooperative, I have done fundraising for archaeological research, I have volunteered at the Community Museum, and even supported grass-roots political movements. Most importantly, since 2005, I have taken every single group that has taken my Cultural Anthropology course at Universidad del Valle de Guatemala (UVG) to Rabinal. A visit to the museum is always compulsory, and this has allowed me to witness the profound changes that this institution has undergone. I have also admired the continuity of the museum's vision through time.

This article is structured in the following way: it includes a brief summary of some key concepts of ABR and Community Museums. After this, I present a historical context and a comprehensive description of the museum itself. Finally, I expose my perspective on how this museum can be better understood through the theoretical and methodological tools provided by Arts-Based Research. I conclude that these tools are key to better understanding cultural phenomena form a rich, embodied and overwhelmingly human perspective.

The museum is a collection of artifacts, persons and sensory experiences. It invites visitor to engage in deep reflections about history, memory and heritage. This interaction involves colors, movement, smell, education, multimedia, feelings, and other rich stimuli, which is why I intend to expose the similarities between the museum's mission and focus and what I would propose to be ABR in practice.

*Figure 1: My 2017 Cultural Anthropology Students at the Rabinal Community Museum.*

## ABR: some basic definitions and concepts

Throughout the University of Southeastern Norway's Spring 2018 Course "Arts Based Research in Education and Culture", facilitated by professor Biljana Fredriksen, I had the opportunity to explore several concepts that have either originated in the arts, or sociological concepts that have been used and expanded in artistic contexts, the most important one being ABR.

## ABR as Social Justice and Métissage

So, what exactly is ABR? Simply put, it is the use of principles and procedures of art in conducting social research (Barone, 2012: 2). Leavy adds that there are at least three main sources for the current ABR movement: the study of the relationship between art and learning, the use of art as therapy, and the use of art as way of doing research, or the use of social research for art projects (2015: 12-19). Barone identifies at least two clear, defined purposes for ABR: enhance our understanding through transmitting subjective realities using art as a medium; and transcend the traditional epistemological dichotomy of objective / subjective knowledge (2012: 2-3). Leavy also reminds us of the similarities between qualitative social research and the arts, since practitioners in both fields do not simply gather materials and information and analyze them, they "compose, orchestrate and weave" them into something new (2015: 17).

Finley has established a specific genealogy for ABR that stems from postcolonial and postmodern tradition. He proposes a type of ABR that is morally and politically engaged and with great potential for contributing to social justice (2005: 681-682). The political is very present in arts-based research, since "social crisis suggests that the next phase in the development of arts-based research will bring into focus the potential for arts-based inquiry to confront postmodern political issues such as diversity and globalization and for its practitioners to implement critical race, queer, and postcolonial epistemologies" (Finley, 2005: 689). The relationship between social research and art is not a simple one, which is why Irwin (2004: 27-30) has decided to use the word *métissage* to describe the "life in the borderlands", in which artists / teachers / researchers who practice ABR are inhabiting. It is a space of interweaving of "knowing, doing, and making" (2004: 29).

## ABR and Storytelling

Storytelling is not something new in social sciences. Most of the anthropological tradition rests on an epistemological viewpoint that privileges the stories of indigenous peoples and the diverse meanings that they might have from a societal and cultural perspective. Leavy has done important work in compiling different evidences in how arts and learning are related, even at a neuropsychological level (2015: 13-15). Barone and Eisner described narrative construction and storytelling as a form of expanding traditional ideas in education and in ABR. Thus, educators and social researchers alike, have employed diverse mechanisms regarding to how and why we use stories, such as ethnodrama, short stories and poetry (2006: 98-99).

The use of storytelling is fertile ground for what Barone calls "conspirational conversations", understood as a way of imagining possible and desirable futures (2007: 39) that question the status quo. Fredriksen has also emphasized the importance of involving all the senses of children in their learning processes (2011), and this is paramount to the way in which stories are told in the case study at hand, as we will discuss later on in this text.

## Embodiment and Relational Aesthetics

A very important concept from arts-based research that can and should be explored through the case study in Rabinal is embodiment. Chadwick (2016: 54-56) is very clear in stating that embodiment, as a concept, has been present in several discussions since the 1970s. The problem, she says, is the difficulty of applying such a powerful concept to concrete methodologies. Fredriksen, building on Egan, states that learning, especially in children, is a "complex processes in which experiences, feelings, memories, imagination, embodied knowledge and communication with others are all brought into play to make sense of the world (2011: 67). This to me is a very concrete

approach to embodiment. We learn through the whole complexity of our experience, and not only through sight and sound, as is traditionally thought.

In this same line, Parsons explores the relations between art and cognition, and defies the traditional separation between feelings and knowledge (2007: 534). Embodiment, understood as a complete experience that transcends traditional conceptions of knowledge and knowledge-making, can lead to empathy, which is a very important competency in the study of culture, inter-cultural relations, historical memory, etc. Bresler states it best when she says that: "Empathic understanding involves resonance, an embodied state of mind that is cognitive and at the same time, affective and corporeal. I argue that artistic experiences in general, and music in particular, provide and important model for empathic understanding" (2006: 25).

Nicholas Bourriaud defines relational aesthetics as "a set of artistic practices which take as their theoretical and practical point of departure the whole of human relations and their social context, rather than an independent and private space" (Bourriaud, 2009: 113). Vist adds that relational aesthetics allows us to understand art based on the relations that they represent or create (2017), thus giving artwork a whole new meaning.

It is my opinion that these concepts, relational aesthetics, embodiment, storytelling, métissage and ABR as a way to promote social justice, can all help us to better understand community museums in general, and the one in Rabinal, Guatemala, in particular.

## Community Museums

The idea of community museums and ecomuseums has been around at least since the early 70s. In 1972, The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) convened a group of experts in Santiago, Chile, to discuss the

nature and future directions of museums. From this meeting, the Santiago Declaration was drafted, approved and signed. One of the main points made in this declaration was that "museums are institutions at the service of society; they acquire, preserve, communicate and above all, ...present testimonies that are representative of the evolution of nature and man" (UNESCO, 1972). This declaration emphasized the social and community-level importance of museums.

In 1984, the First International Workshop on Ecomuseums and the New Museology convened in Québec, resulting in a declaration that considered a need for new "museologies", especially those that were close to communities and the idea of social progress. The final document produced by this meeting stated that new organizational structures should be created within the International Council of Museums (ICOM) to tend to these topics (Mayrand, 1985: 201).

Since the mid-1980s to date the Community Museum movement has expanded to México and Central America (specifically in the cultural area known as Mesoamerica[2]). In 1994, the National Union for Community Museums and Ecomuseums was founded in México, and it has organized at least 15 formal meetings. In 2000, a continental organization took form, as the Latin American Network of Community Museums, with the participation of 12 Latin American and Caribbean countries. In Central America, at least 8 museums, including the one in Rabinal, are affiliated to this Union (www.museoscomunitarios.org).

Garlandini is clear to emphasize the new challenges that museums have in order to help make sense of a globalized world. In his opinion, museums should promote cultural diversity and interculturality (2017: 17-18). Others, like Morales and Camar-

2 Mesoamerica has been defined as a cultural area that stretches from Southern México to Costa Rica. Several cultural markers have been used to define this area, but the main ones have to do with corn as a staple food, a general pre-colonial cosmogony and of course, a common linguistic origin. See Kirchhoff, 1967.

ena (2017: 366-369) emphasize the potential of community museums for creating a more equal playing field for indigenous communities and allowing for de-colonization. These ideas are compatible with what the global community museum movement is promoting and with what is happening specifically in Rabinal. In order to better understand the true nature of this fascinating case study, however, we must first delve into some general issues of contemporary Guatemalan history.

## Background to the Museum: Civil War and its Effects in Rabinal

From 1960 to 1996 Guatemala endured a Civil War between leftist guerilla groups and the government, dominated by right-wing military dictators (at least until 1985) and with the geopolitical influence of the Cold War (Aguilera Peralta 1997: 135-150; Luján Muñoz, 2006: 329-409)[3]. The conflict was especially brutal in the early 1980s. During those years, the UN-backed Guatemalan Truth Commission (CEH) documented 626 massacres perpetrated mostly by State Armed Forces (either the Army or para-military groups) (CEH, 1999a: 252)[4]. These massacres involved the massive and indiscriminate killing of indigenous, non-combatant populations.

Rabinal, Baja Verapaz, is a predominantly indigenous township that suffered some of the most devastating consequences of Guatemala's Civil War, especially

3 The first of these references comes from the General History of Guatemala, an anthology that brought together archaeologists, historians, ethnohistorians, geographers, anthropologists, sociologists and political scientists to work on a massive, multi-volume work on Guatemalan history, from pre-colonial times to the democratic transition in the 1980s. The second, by Luján Muñoz, is the summarized version of the more contemporary issues presented in the General History, and its author was the general editor of the first reference.

4 Commission for Historical Clarification, or Comisión para el Esclarecimiento Histórico (CEH), in Spanish.

between 1981 and 1983. The most conservative estimates point to at least 5,000 deadly victims (AAAS, 1996:3), which at that time represented a considerable percentage of the population[5]. Most of the victims were women, children and the elderly. Besides the people who died in Rabinal during those years, many others were traumatized through death threats, rape, displacement and forced military service and participation in paramilitary patrols, (EAFG, 1995[6]; CEH, 1999b: 45-72; Álvarez Castañeda, 2003: 19-23).

This community has shown great resiliency and has overcome adversity in many ways. Today, Rabinal is a vibrant township with a very rich cultural agenda including traditional dance and music, handcrafts and activities relating to the ancient religious brotherhoods or "cofradías"[7]. The post-war era has also brought about new opportunities for community mobilization, with at least three distinct types of organizations currently flourishing in the township.

First, a series of groups have organized around the Civil War. They seek reparations for victims and families, justice through the judicial system and the promotion of historical memory in schools and with young people. The second type of organization has to do with indigenous arts and crafts, and include collectives that promote

5 In 2010 Rabinal's population consisted of 35,126 inhabitants (SEGEPLAN, 2011). The population in the 1980s was much smaller.

6 *Equipo de Antropología Forense de Guatemala*, or Guatemala Forensic Anthropology Team. Today they are a well-established foundation, and are at the forefront of locating, unearthing, identifying and returning the remains of the victims to their families.

7 These brotherhoods are well explained by the classic ethnographer Flavio Rojas Lima (1988). They basically consist of a group of older members of the community who are in charge of the image of a catholic saint. The nuclear family that hosts the image changes from one year to another, and the brotherhood is in charge of organizing the annual festivities to honor that saint, including cooking and distributing food, organizing traditional music and dance, etc. Rojas also emphasizes the political importance of these organizations in indigenous communities.

traditional dances, handcraft cooperatives and youth groups. Finally, several groups of Mayan Spiritual Guides, sometimes known as "Mayan Priests", have organized and acquired official status. They seek to promote traditional spirituality, protect the archaeological sites and promote the use of the native language (Maya Achí).

The Association for the Development of the Victims of Violence in the Verapaz Region (ADIVIMA[8]) began as the first type of organization. It was founded by survivors and relatives of the Civil War as a support group. It eventually advised the victims in judicial cases against the perpetrators and led the fight to obtain economic and social reparations from the State. In 1999, as a natural expansion of its work, ADIVIMA founded Rabinal's Community Museum, now called the Community Museum for Historical Memory[9]. The museum has constantly changed since its humble beginnings, and today includes three permanent exhibits, a library and community resource center, a gift shop, an auditorium and temporary exhibits.

## The Rabinal Community Museum for Historical Memory

Today, Rabinal's Community Museum for Historical Memory, in the great tradition of ecomuseums and community museums, is less of a lifeless collection of artifacts and more of a lively, sometimes chaotic, open space for culture, art, historical memory and community-building. I will try to summarize the main activities done by the museum through its main components and relations with different types of actors. The following information comes from my own ethnographic observations and notes taken during the past 20 years.

8 *Asociación para el Desarrollo Integral de las Víctimas de la Violencia en las Verapaces*, in Spanish.

9 For a more extensive history of the museum and its relationship to transitional justice issues, see McKinnon (2014).

## Permanent exhibits

The three main exhibits have been more or less stable since the founding of the museum. The first exhibition consists of the photographs of many of the confirmed victims of the massacres during the Civil War. These photos were rescued from the Municipal Archives and were originally used for the official ID Card that the government issued (called "cédula" in Spanish), a very old-fashioned cardboard document with a black and white picture pasted to it. It was only valid if signed by the mayor of the town. As can be seen in the figure below, it is a very impacting room that confronts the visitor with the victims as real human beings, not only as historical characters. The room is dark, painted in blue and black tones, and the whole room centers on the pictures, with very little text to accompany them, except the full names and communities of origin of the victims. After going to the museum for many years, I have seen many visitors drawn to tears immediately upon entering the room.

*Figure 2: Photographs of Victims of the Civil War, Rabinal Community Museum.*

The second exhibition depicts the process followed by the families of the victims, including videos of their testimonies, pictures of the unearthing of the remains of their loved ones, videos of the traditional Mayan ceremonies done before reburial, and a description of the judicial and political struggles that follow in their search for justice, reparation and non-repetition. This exhibition consists of several videos, posters and texts, as well as a 3D map of Rabinal indicating all the places were the massacres occurred[10]. This room is painted in earthy colors, and the sound of the videos dominates the senses. During one of the clips, you can hear the prayers of the traditional Mayan priests during the reburial ceremonies. This exhibition is a bit more chaotic, in the sense that visitors have sound, video, photographs and plenty of text surrounding them completely. This exhibition also appeals to the more "rational" part of the visitor's psyche, since it explains in detail the scientific procedures done during the unearthing of the remains as well as the DNA testing and the interviews with the survivors, amounting towards irrefutable evidence of the genocide that occurred[11].

The final permanent exhibition is about the continuity and liveliness of Maya Achí culture. It contains handcrafts, costumes for some of the traditional dances, musical instruments, as well as archaeological artifacts. The bright colors and vigor-

10 Rabinal consists of several ecosystems, ranging from dry forests very near sea-level, to coniferous forests in the highlands. Travelling from one community to another by foot can take at least a day. Maps are thus very appreciated, especially this 3D model developed by the museum with styrofoam and other simple materials.

11 There is currently a movement of genocide denial, promoted by a small, but well-funded right-wing movement in Guatemala. They are discrediting the facts by saying that those who were killed were members of guerilla groups (when in fact we know most were non-combatants, especially women and children), or that most of the massacres were perpetrated by the guerilla groups (the Truth Commission has proved that more than 95 % of the atrocities were committed by the army or para-military forces), or that the skeletal remains that have been found correspond to older burial sites (DNA testing has disproved this).

ous nature of this exhibit sharply contrasts with the somber ambiance of the previous two rooms.

Several things should be said about handcrafts and traditional dances in Rabinal. In previous work I have described the ethnographic and historical importance of the "jícaras", a handcraft that involves a very complex process, including the lacquering of the final pieces with a wax that is obtained from a domesticated insect (Llaveia, sp.). It is believed that this handcraft has been done more or less in the same manner for centuries, and probably since pre-colonial times (Álvarez Castañeda, 2003).

Traditional dances are also a vital part of Rabinal's everyday life. They are usually associated to the syncretic cult of catholic saints through the cofradías, and they are danced regularly throughout the year. A recent dissertation established that to date, there are 17 active dances in the township, with the *Rabinal Achí* being the most important one (Dávila, 2020: 105). This dance was formally declared as World Intangible Heritage by UNESCO in 2008, and it also has a very ancient origin. It tells the tales of the Lord of Rabinal and his epic battles against the Lord of the neighboring Kaqchikel people. Several scholars, including Breton (1999) and Van Akkeren

*Figure 3: Attire Used for Traditional Dances of Rabinal on display at the museum.*

(2000 & 2003) have studied this dance from different ethnohistoric, ethnographic, linguistic and artistic perspectives. Both handcrafts and traditional dances are a central to the third permanent exhibition, and in my opinion, are presented to convey a message of survival and cultural vitality, despite the recent history of violence the people from Rabinal have endured.

I do not intend to summarize all the temporary exhibitions that have been curated during the past 19 plus years. I will limit myself to describe a couple of them that have especially caught my attention. One was an exhibition of wooden masks, hand crafted by local school kids, through an after-school program aimed at teaching them about traditional dances. During several afternoons, the children would go to the museum and hear the stories behind traditional dances, and they would learn the process of carving and painting the masks. As shown in figure 4, this exhibition turned into a focal point of the museum, since the kids wanted to revisit the place in order to see their own artisanship on display.


*Figure 4: Temporary Exhibition of Masks Produced by Schoolkids, Rabinal Community Museum.*

Another interesting temporary exhibition had to do with gender issues. It was named "The Jobs that Women Do". It consisted of photographic essays conducted by young people from the community regarding different jobs and occupations by women. Some of the pictures were pretty stereotypical and traditional, and had to do with domestic work. But many others were more nuanced in their nature and depicted professional work and unusual jobs for women (at least in Guatemala) such as car mechanics or community policing or working as a private security guard.

Other exhibitions have dealt with handcrafts, oral tradition, the pre-colonial history of the township, archaeological sites and Mayan Spirituality. These temporary exhibitions usually include an active participation by the local schools as well as volunteering by the elders, who are the experts in traditional culture.

## Library, Community Resources Center and Research Initiatives.

The Community Museum in Rabinal differs from other similar initiatives in the fact that it strongly promotes research. This research is usually done by locals, sometimes even secondary-level school children. This policy has resulted in the editing and publication of several leaflets and formal books containing historical testimonies, rigorous descriptions of traditional dances, descriptions and photographs of the different processes involved in making handcrafts, and detailed maps of archaeological and sacred sites. These books are available for purchase, as well as for local use within a small library / Community Resource Center. This center was one of the first access points to the Internet in the early 2000s in the whole town, and since then is an important asset for local researchers, high-school students and teachers. This outreach work done through participatory methodologies ensures strong ties between the community and the museum, it and requires high level of engagement among the participants.

## Memory, heritage, and celebrating survival.

Drawing from multiple conversations with the museum directives and inferring from the contents of the main exhibitions and other activities, it is clear that the museum has three main objectives. The first one is to account for the genocide that occurred during the late 20th Century. In different conversations they have always emphasized that their aim is justice and non-repetition, never vengeance. Being such a small community, victims and perpetrators have long lived as neighbors, and the reconstruction of the social fabric is something that the museum is keen in promoting. This has led me to propose that community museums can also be conceived as museums for peace (Álvarez Castañeda, 2007).

Heritage, in all its forms, tangible, intangible, pre-colonial, contemporary, etc. is the second aim of the museum. Not only through the exhibit of artifacts and multimedia objects, but also through the extension projects with young people and the community as a whole. Thus, preserving and promoting heritage is obviously an important objective for this museum.

Finally, celebrating survival, which in my opinion encompasses the other two objectives, is what would best define what this museum is doing on an every-day basis. From remembering the past glories of the Achí armies during pre-colonial times to the resistance during invasion to the 500 years of colonial and post-colonial rule to the recent genocide: the main message of the museum is "this is what we have endured. We have survived. We will move on". I am currently working on other papers that will delve deeper into these issues, using Linda Tuhiwai Smith's theoretical framework (1999).

# Discussion: Rabinal's Community Museum as ABR in Practice.

As I clarified in the beginning of this article, I am not an ABR practitioner nor I intend to apply ABR as a methodology to my research in Rabinal, at least not in the short term. However, I believe that the Community Museum in Rabinal is an excellent case study of how many ideas of ABR are compatible with this institution's every-day practice.

First and foremost, I believe it is obvious that the community museum promotes the dissemination and creation of knowledge that involves the arts both as a medium and as a way of transcending the traditional dichotomy between "objective" and "subjective" knowledge, such as Barone (2012) indicates. Furthermore, Barone's (2005) and Finley's (2005) ideas of the political engagement of ABR are in accordance with what the museum practices every day. The main objectives of the museum, promoting historical memory, preservation of cultural heritage and celebrating survival, are all political aims, and arts, crafts and diverse media are used towards this purpose. The idea of arts-based research as *guerilla* warfare (Finley, 2005: 689) is especially relevant to the work done by the Rabinal Community Museum, as it is through their creative, multimedia work that they are countering regressive, denialist postures regarding genocide.

The museum also has many commonalities with Irwin's (2004) proposal of ABR as métissage. The museum is constantly "in the borderlands", between traditional museography and community engagement, between scientific evidence of genocide (DNA testing, for example) and deep, personal accounts of history (quilts prepared by the widows and orphans of genocide, for example) between international tourists and anthropologists, and local high school kids, between art creation and traditional social research. The museum is *métissage* in practice.

The community museum is also a place where stories are told and reframed from the victims' perspective. By telling the victim's account of what happened during the civil war, but also by celebrating survival in the way in which Linda Tuhiwai Smith defined it (1999), the museum is "taking-back" the historical narrative in the country. It is retelling the tale, with the most important message of all: one of non-repetition. The conversations that are produced among visitors during and after their visit to the museum can most definitely be described as "conspirational", as Barone (2007) mentioned in his previous work. We can also understand the importance of diverse media and sensory experiences in the process of telling stories and learning, as Fredrikson proposes (2011).

Finally, there is much to be said about embodiment and relational aesthetics in this case study. The museum in Rabinal is precisely a complete experience that we undergo with our whole bodies. There are exhibitions where we are limited to see and listen, but others where we are obligated to touch, sing, play music, paint and tell stories. We are exposed by different stimuli and are moved by different emotions, and this, in turn, influences the way we learn and research (Fredrikson, 2011). More importantly, through this embodied experience, we are able to empathize which the topics that the museum seeks to promote (Parsons, 2007).

The aesthetics of the museum are relational, *par excellence*. The meaning of all the artifacts and multimedia objects present in the museum evoke a profound, relational experience that transcends individual tastes or preferences of art. In this sense, the ideas of Bourriaud (2009) also resound profoundly with Rabinal's community museum

## Conclusion and Ways Forward.

The museum in Rabinal is a social space that represents a de-colonized vision of history and produces new, constructive and empathic social relations that prompt critical thinking and deep emotions in all of us who have had visited it. The museum, through its engagement with tourists, community elders, scholars, and schoolkids has created an interesting interactive space for creating new meanings of heritage, historical memory, and critical thinking around the past and future of the community. This is especially true of the multimedia presentations used in the museum, as well as the extension programs regarding handcrafts and traditional dances and music. At any given moment in the museum you can touch a handcraft, hear music in the background, interact with locals and tourists, feel a textile, and watch a video of a Maya ceremony.

The museum is in this sense more than multimedia: it is a multisensory space for cultural encounters. These rich and embodied experiences are very similar to what ABR promotes, both in theory and in practice. Through art, and specifically the type of art and crafts present in the museum in Rabinal (a mural depicting the violence during a massacre, or a traditional mask painted by a local teenager), visitors understand the situation both from their cognition and their feelings; from a historical and testimonial perspective, but also from a futuristic, hopeful one; from their own realities and from the realities of others. It is an experience in métissage that forever transforms the visitor.

In previous writings I have expressed the enormous potential of the Community Museum of Rabinal as a Peace Museum or at least as a Museum for Peace (Álvarez Castañeda, 2007). In this article I propose to delve further into other theoretical and methodological perspectives, with ABR holding huge potential for everyone who wishes to engage with these discussions. Looking forward, I would specifically pro-

pose to work with colleagues trained in ABR, and contribute through my applied-anthropology lens a transdisciplinary approach to better understand these issues, especially to engage with the locals who curate the museum and further explore if these new ideas make sense to them or not, or if they have been using them, with other names, for a long time.

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