



Re-awakening a Thirst for the Journey through Musical Encounters: from Sleeping Beauty to Captain of the Ship

Katie Bycroft

Repeat and return are constants in music and in music therapy. A client may repeat the same music every week; a particular song arrives in one session and returns much later in another; a musical motif repeats seemingly on a loop, holding an important meaning.

Journey of encounter is a beautiful description of the intersubjective relating that takes place between two people in music therapy. The journey, solitary or shared, is always propelled by the co-created pulse of music and silence.

This paper explores links between two journeys: that of my client's re-emergence into a more wakeful life and my own music therapist journey across the seas from England to Malta. Using musical metaphor, parallel processes, intersubjectivity and relational theory, I reflect on commonalities in the separate odysseys of this client-therapist dyad. Themes such as belonging, strangeness, individuality and community have consistently repeated and returned. An unexpected sense of shared experience has provided an opportunity for deeper insight. My client has elements of outsider status even in his close community. His choice to sleep vast swathes of his life away have brought me to reflect on his odyssey in unique terms, as he journeys internally to find his own Ithaca. Our musical encounters offer a powerful way to pursue adventure and eventually a return to self.

My client lives in a care home for adults who have learning disabilities. They live, work and play together. The sense of belonging here is great. A sense of individual journey is harder to perceive. Offering a 'call to adventure' through improvisational music therapy has awakened joyful and accessible ways of adventuring for my client. As his witness, I deeply acknowledge how we journey differently through the life we find ourselves in. Through this musical encounter, I also witness myself.



Biography

Katie Bycroft is a musician and music therapist with a deep interest in using musical encounters to bring about change and awakening in both client and, inevitably, therapist. With over 25 years of clinical experience, her special interests have evolved into three main areas: attitudes around learning disability; the constant evolution of value and meaning within creative arts therapy practice; and therapist motives to enter and stay in the field. Katie works in Malta at a dynamic new centre for music and the arts, contributing to the development of a model of music therapy for this unique island context.

Recent Presentations

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