

ARTISTIC RESPONSE: MUSIC | PEER REVIEWED

Recounting a Dream about Music, Language and Submitting an Abstract for Voices

Part 1: Antony Gee ^{1,2*}, The disembodied voice of Mike Barrett

Part 2: Antony Gee ^{1,2*}, the reviewer Simon Gilbertson and the co-editors of the special issue Maren Metell, Hiroko Miyake, Andrew Dell'Antonio, Alyssa Hillary Zisk

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Editors: Maren Metell, Hiroko Miyake, Andrew Dell'Antonio, Alyssa Hillary Zisk

Reviewer: Simon Gilbertson

Abstract

Hi Mike I had the idea yesterday to submit some of my music pieces as part of an abstract submission to "Voices: A World Forum for Music Therapy to explore the topic of language and power in music therapy." posted yesterday.

These are the starting lines of the abstract. The entire submission can be found in the PDF which includes the entire abstract-submission and review process. This submission is in two parts. The first part is the original abstract which was considered as a complete submission. Part 1 contains a proactive engagement with *The disembodied voice of Mike Barrett*. The second part is the dialogue between the reviewer, lead author, and editors during the review process.

Keywords: dream; language; music; cultural norms; divergent thinking; self-therapy

Recounting a Dream about Music, Language and Submitting an Abstract for Voices – Part 1

Blue background represents the voice of first author Antony Gee

Black background represents the disembodied voice of Mike Barrett

Hi Mike I had the idea yesterday to submit some of my music pieces as part of an abstract submission to "Voices: A World Forum for Music Therapy to explore the topic of language and power in music therapy. " posted yesterday.

I was pondering on my approach to the abstract and worked up this morning with the idea and then also realised it might also cross with some of your ideas:

Oh good

language and musicstream of consciousness from me follows (untangle later)

First thoughts - a different form of abstract submit a song with nonsensical words in it (like that famous poem) just for the fun of it and say that it is self musical therapy intended as a way for people to make their own interpretation but that the sound of the words themselves then become most important

It's you that must first be convinced?

mp3 of ['Habiblotch Mabchint Groone'](#)

Habiblotch Machint Groone - Gobeldygook/asemantic singing and freedom of expression/interpretation

then thought about the temporal nature of language the slowing down of birdsong and trumpet experiment - slowing down gives far more detail things that are missed at normal speed also traditional linear speech cadence is removed

mp3 of ['Meadowlark Trumpet'](#)

The temporal nature of language - speed and pitch.

A birdsong slowed down 20 times reveals a host of hidden detail and beauty, without any traditional western style musical influence.

then - I thought about the power dynamics in music - eg. stiff religious norms (organ and latin words and thee's and thou shalt's vs. more folk based secular music much more free to express

I'd be tempted to take a questioning approach in your submission, if you sense there that there is a therapeutic aspect to your making of music or in the response to it then there is an exploration of where you take that to be narrated

Stay clear of the temptations to be definitive

then thought about the way I am intimidated sometimes by traditional written music (always maintained that I am musically dislexic) and how that makes you play music in a stiff way and then the realisation that I have developed my own pseudo musical notation / shorthand that is not exact as traditional musical notation but in my context it is sufficient for it to convey enough information needed for me at that time a bit like slang

mp3 of ['And it was good'](#)

'And it was Good'

Formal and monotonous language can give a sense of superiority, power imbalance and is not easily accessible.

then I thout of asmic music rather similar in approach

then I thought of wh at you were doing some time ago with asemic language

You have about 50 submissions in there lol

Enjoy the vastness of the territory before you, don't rush through on a whistle stop tour

Then I thought for the abstract write something about non-linear thinking is encouraged by less prescriptive language and more linear with more formal language this would be the main idea of the abstract ... illustrated with a song, some 'musical slang language'

.... but then I thought I would pass it past you and see if you wanted to join in with the idea and submit and abstract together

there thats when I woke up

thinking now ... yhe equisite corpse is along similar lines

What are the personal transformations

you go through emotionally physically mentally spiritually from a situation you are in to the urge to compose To composing to listening to what you've produced go to sharing it with others to taking on board is a response

I had to write all that down before I forgot it

Could you describe your emotions in relation to that as a journey

frustration/boredom - need for 'flow' - creative need - then getting into flow enjoying all that that brings - loosing myself - then fine tuning - getting input and feedback from others - generating excitement or flow in others, I feel is important part for me during the collab process - seeing others get into flow - like a communal floe stare - but in my case - virtually. The the satsaftion of honing to a finished product and wanting to share it and enjoy it

I think you could make a very good submission on the description of that dream And the emotions it generated and the thoughts it generated on the relationship to your music practice

Notes

Speaking in tongues

Scat in Jazz

<https://www.samwoolfe.com/2021/02/asemic-writing-imaginary-languages-alien-alphabets.html>

[The jabberwocky in American sign language](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AWfDFtyIBjU>

Recounting a Dream about Music, Language and Submitting an Abstract for Voices – Part 2

The following is a reconstructed dialogue between the Author, Editorial board and reviewers over a nine-month period about '**Recounting a Dream about Music, Language and Submitting an Abstract for Voices Part 1**' which was submitted for consideration and peer review in this special issue. The intention of part 2 is to provide some signposts for exploring issues relating to the field of music therapy, language, and power that are spontaneously and authentically expressed in a non-traditional and perhaps playful manner. It is, however, up to you, the reader, to provide your own interpretation of Part 1 as a starting point for further exploration, or alternatively ignore, as is your pleasure.

Power Language Editors

Dear Antony,

Thank you again for your interest in contributing to the special issue! When you work on your full contribution, we would like you to write with clarity about how the unique materials and format relate to the field of music therapy and the themes of language and power.

We look forward to receiving your contribution!

Kind regards,

Hiroko, Maren, Alyssa and Andrew

Dear Hiroko, Maren, Alyssa and Andrew,

I was genuinely very excited to receive the notification that you would like me to submit a full contribution to your special issue. To put this in perspective - I am an established academic in the field of biomedical engineering - so to submit this abstract took some courage on my part.

The language and culture of scientific academic writing is steeped in cultural norms and power dynamics. To submit a neurodiverse response to your call was liberating. However, I am anxious. I am anxious because of the perception of this piece of work from the scientific community of which I am culturally embedded - this is the power paradox. I am expected to write articles in a certain way and in a certain format. I may be ridiculed for publishing this authentic neurodiverse response.

In its form, the submitted work is more like a piece of neurodiverse freeform jazz - rather than a classical piece of music (following cultural norms) - i.e. it strives to break the communication power dynamics that I have been (and many other academics are) constrained to according to neurotypical and scientific cultural norms. However, the act of submitting this piece of work is therapeutic for me. I am used to working in a way where everything is predictable and explainable - otherwise it is often discarded.

The submitted work is part of a renaissance for me in exploring the interface between arts (particularly, but not exclusively music) and science - and how this helps me explore and understand the world. The exploration was prompted by many arts-science discussions with established artist Mike Barrett. We have been exploring the interface between science and arts but also neurodiversity, inclusion, language, and power. We intend to present more of this work in future. However, the submitted work reflects a point on that journey.

In the comments from the editors and reviewers (during the submission process for the original article submitted to this special issue of Voices), I have been requested to analyse my submission - and it feels like a new academic cultural expectation that I am unfamiliar with (analysing my submission as a non-scientific manuscript). Unlike my scientific work - this piece is not intended to be reproduced, measured, calibrated - in doing so it would become something different (in analogy to 'The observer effect' in quantum mechanics and Heisenberg's uncertainty principle: if you measure something - it is changed).

I would like to request that you consider publishing this contribution 'as is' or alternatively, I could append a transcript of this message - to explain the thinking behind this contribution.

I am of course very happy to add some other notes in the acknowledgements, etc.

Best wishes

Tony Gee

Dear Tony,

thank you for your message and apologies for the late reply. Could you clarify if you think about what you sent us as your full submission (rather than just an abstract or initial portion)?

All best,

Maren

Thanks Maren ... yes I view the 'abstract' as the full submission.

Best wishes

Tony

Thank you for letting us know, Tony!

Best wishes,

Maren

[Voices] Editor Decision

Antony Gee:

Thank you for submitting to Voices: A World Forum for Music Therapy for the special issue on language and power in music therapy. We have now received the review for your contribution. You can find the review below.

As communicated to you earlier, we find this a powerful piece and would appreciate stronger links between your contribution and the theme of power and language in music therapy in whatever form it feels meaningful to you.

We hope that you will consider resubmitting by April 29. We believe your contribution has promise and would be a strong contribution to the special issue once it has been revised. However, we cannot guarantee acceptance until we receive a revised version. Please let us know if you plan to resubmit.

Best,

*Maren Metell, Hiroko Miyake, Alyssa Hillary Zisk and Andrew Dell'Antonio
Co-Editors of the Special Issue*

Reviewer A:

It has been a delight to experience the submission which has created many thoughts and has questioned my expectation of a written work (which has its online publication as its imagined future). As a reviewer for a different journal which focusses on artistic research, I was fascinated to see this piece submitted to the Voices Journal and very intrigued in my responses as a reader which I will share here.

The gradually-revealing nature of the piece is clear during its entire duration. The distinction between the two verbally semantic voices is also clear and generates a sense of personhood and distinct identities. The coloration of the two identities clearly contributes to the sense of interactional structure and I find it of interest to think about how this may be realized editorially on the html version of such a manuscript.

I enjoyed the first 'inserted' curated material, 'Gobeldygook' - which created a strong draw away from the written text. I remained with the curated material for its entire duration and had a sense of having to wait for the material to finish before returning to the written material. Although I felt a strong sense of having to wait for the mp3 to come to a conclusion - this also demanded that I experience my impatience, my lack of willingness to simply listen to what was unfolding.

Once in that sense of temporal life, the shift to 'trumpeting birdsong' felt natural and it was refreshing to move to a video format, but I was disappointed with the freeze-frame image on YouTube and would have loved to see a video version - (I realize this was curated material) but maybe an audio version (if that exists) might work better.

Moving from the temporal aspect from the asemantic singing into the next section of revelation I was struck by my reaction to relationship that formed in my mind between the idiosyncratic and phonetic spellings of some words in the text so far, with the phrase "musically dislexic". Once again, as a reader I am offered an opportunity to experience my expectations, conditioning and world of hypothetic perception - a wondering about why the World (and this manuscript as a part of that World) is like it is.

I found my inner voice reading more phonetically in the remainder of the text and I return to repeat reading the previous sections twice more phonetically before completing the reading.

I found the first section of the curated material "And it was Good" very exemplary for the theme mentioned in the manuscript text. Nonetheless, I had a head full of questions once the characters in the audio sketch began talking and wondering about the shifts in senses

of superiority, power imbalance and accessibility.

'And it was Good' - what is the source here? Monty Python? What does the spoken commentary in the sketch actually say to the current piece? Although I can see the point of using the example for the first section of the clip (monotone etc.) I do not quite follow how the main theme of the sketch fits with the context in the written piece. I wondered if the rhythmicity was more formalized and rhythmically monotonous, but this is perhaps an instance of the plurality of readings. The Christian God became very present in the piece in the later part of the audio excerpt - I began wondering if this is purposive - or by chance. The final section, feels, and is temporally much longer than the previous sections of the piece - this generated a sense of weighting - and significance - through the dialogical material a closeness and proximity became available to me - it felt that here the writer chose to move closer to me, in sharing, in explaining, in detailing, in repeating, in creating... and concluding.

Following the notes in the "Notes" subheading, I searched Internet for the phrases "speaking in tongues" and spent a while looking at the results. I then searched for "Scat in Jazz" and spent some additional time reading and listening/viewing some of the results on websites and YouTube.

It took me quite a lot of time to read the entire Sam Woolfe piece that was hyperlinked. There were many, many pages of reading. I enjoyed a great deal viewing the ASL rendition of jabberwocky on the hyperlinked YouTube video.

Some reflections

I wonder how the author considers the piece to contribute to existing conversations about language and power in music therapy. I am not implying any sense of literature review or referencing, but I am thinking about positioning - and this thought is related to my main feedforward reading response - how can the writer support the reader in learning and realizing the undefined potential which lies in their experience of reading the piece? What should they do next? Did you really want the reader to engage with all of the material - like I did, or do you want to leave that completely open (apart from the inserted and hyperlinked material)? Examples- Sam Woolfe and ASL jabberwocky: I wonder if the author has ideas about how should these two pieces be experienced by the reader and if anything could be done to communicate this to the reader in the piece?

The piece has made me think a great deal about the forms of curation AND creation. I wonder about the structural form of this construct - could the reader learn more from the writer about the depths envisaged between the curated and created material? Is further engagement encouraged or wished for, or should the exposition be more closed and focused to the actual piece.

My heart jumped an extra beat whilst reading the piece and its curated elements. A submission, a dream submitted to a peer reviewed journal - how on earth does this fit in? Shouldn't we be reaching for a world forum which fits to its submissions and not the opposite power of formation and convention? Is a special issue on language and power exactly the right place to share dreams, explore and write with the words, spellings, and structures that originate from dreams? From my standpoint, I think, yes.

But the valves on my heart also try to keep up with these ethical reflections with some other thoughts...

I wonder if the piece could include more material on the process of "recounting" and the role of recounting dreams as a form of informing a discourse. I wonder if there might be a way of helping the reader understand how this recounting might inform how to think and act in terms of language and power in music therapy. These are concepts and practices which are relational and it would be of value to learn from the author how the material

relates to these concepts as a part of the submission. I think I have been enticed by the question "what is recounting?" and would like to hear more about how might more reflection about 'recounting' advance music therapy?

I would really like (but wish to be cautious with making any demands or expectations) to learn about the reason why the author decided to share this dream, perhaps as a form of response? or epistemological action? or an ontological agenda? and so on.

I am a fairly curious and engaged reader and my experience has been a rich one and I have immersed myself for quite a long period of time with the piece (in the relatively short created-text and relatively long 'inserted' or hypertexted curated material. I am not sure if all readers will voluntarily choose to invest the same time in the 'inserted' and hypertexted material - which makes me wonder how substantial the piece itself will be experienced if not extended in some ways possibly. I am feeling a sense of concern that readers will not have received enough from the author to know how to experience the submitted material. Maybe the reader should be helped in some way by the author to get more out of the piece. My final very small technical thoughts:

Due to the convention of heavily-edited language use in international journals, I wonder how the Journal and author will prepare the reader (maybe in advance somehow at the outset of the piece) that the language expression is as it is meant to be.

Will the rights for sharing the audio examples be clarified if not already posted in public, legal sites?

How should the reader navigate back to the Voices site after following the links to the curated material?

What would the author like the reader to do in relation to the two Notes, "Speaking in Tongues" and "Scat in Jazz"?"

- Thank you for this opportunity to experience and review the submission and I send my very best wishes for the next steps.

Dear Editors and reviewers,

I am a voice that represents part of the ecosystem that is not stereotypically neurotypical.

I find neurotypicality stifling.

I find words and language awkward

Music is the language that sets me free. Music is my therapy.

This is the intent of the piece.

Submitting this work to Voices - power and language - is an attempt to set my voice free - unconstrained, authentic like free form jazz - an attempt to make my voice heard - in a way that is therapeutic and not shackled to neurotypical norms.

Please see some points of clarification that may help disentangle this offering.

It was good (song)

in some way describes the culturally accepted review process for journal submissions. My neurodivergency makes the 'norms' and requirements for article submission seem unnatural and non-intuitive. As explained previously - I am a 'successful' academic (Professor in Chemistry) and have published many papers despite the challenges of the

language and the power dynamics embedded in this predominantly neurotypical cultural process. However, the offer of submitting an article to Voices seemed to be a way to free myself of these constraints and have my authentic neurodivergent voice (music being my preferred form of communication) heard in a serious academic journal - perhaps for the very first time. This is, in itself, therapeutic and liberating.

The start of the piece could be seen as representing the cultural norms and expectations that academic journals often require of their authors. In an attempt to make the message content more accessible or at least more authentic - an alternative 'non-traditional' musical version is proffered by one of the featured characters. At the end of the piece, the authentic version of the message is rejected ("this will never work next"). The piece highlights the power that language and the gatekeepers of accessible language have power over authors, and how this might cause authentic 'divergent' voices not to be heard. The piece is my original work and composition to which I retain the copyright.

Medowlark trumpet

I understand the difficulties of embedding a video in journal format. I am happy to supply this piece as a stand-alone sound only (mp3) file.

Gobbeldygook

This piece centres around the power of asemic music/language. Being neurodivergent, I find it liberating to 'splurge' seemingly gobbledygook words to express myself. This is liberating. It may be a short cut between the inner subconscious dialogue and the 'outside' world without the constraint of traditional cultural norms – and is totally authentic. Such forms of expression, singing in 'nonsense language', is liberating and therapeutic. Authentic communication. This is also the reason for mentioning 'jazz scat' 'speaking in tongues' etc. However, I should point out that my contribution was an authentic, spontaneous, stream of consciousness. Now you are asking me to interpret it, to measure it. I have partially done that.

In conclusion - I would like to thank you for the opportunity to submit this authentic neurodivergent voice for your consideration. My hope is that you will accept it with minor modification - after all - who would like to correct someone playing a freeform jazz solo?

Best wishes

Tony

P.S. I have also written a song as a musical/non-verbal response to your comments - please see attached

mp3 of ['Persistent Robin'](#)

[Voices] Editor Decision

Antony Gee:

Thank you for resubmitting your contribution. Please find the reviewer's feedback below. We appreciate the format and the challenge your contribution provides to the expectations of readers and we would like to include it in the special issue. We still miss stronger links

to the special issue theme of language and power and wonder if you could imagine to help the reader a bit more how to understand your contribution publishing a note that explains a bit more of the background for sharing the dream – either by publishing the text that you wrote in response to the reviewer's comments or any other form you would be comfortable to share with the readership of Voices?

We hope that you will consider resubmitting your contribution as soon as you can, but not later than August 15. As this is a huge and complex special issue, we aim to move contributions to copy-editing and production as early as possible. (For contributions that need additional work after August 15 this could mean that they cannot be included in the special issue, but could be published in a later regular issue if accepted.)

With kind regards

*Maren Metell, Hiroko Miyake, Alyssa Hillary Zisk and Andrew Dell'Antonio
Co-editors of the special issue on language and power in music therapy*

Reviewer A:

Thank you very much for your responses to the reviewer comments. It is, as you so clearly express in sound and text, important that one can be on one's own terms. This may or may not be challenging to any stereotypical conceptualization of an ecosystem. I guess that depends.

Thank you for your notes and explanations/descriptions in your responses. I have one imagination that feels like it would be insight-generating for the readership to read the comments you have sent as a part of the publication as an appendix perhaps. At the same time, I have another imagination which questions whether the first imagination is a trick of my own conditioned compliancy and I am wary of this dominant verblivity. I can imagine both of these imaginations for the publication- and would recommend that you, the author, might be given the opportunity to decide yourself if either of these imaginings is preferable. With this expressed, I would like to recommend that the submission be considered for publication by the Editors and express my gratitude for the opportunity to be part of this learning-rich process.

Recommendation: Accept Submission

Dear Editors

Thank you!

I would be delighted to use the discussion between us and the reviewers as a way of making the link clearer. To that end, I would also like to offer co-authorship to those involved, should they wish to do so. (In my mind they/you have also been part of the development of this output).

I will send you an update along the lines you describe before the 15th August deadline

Best wishes

Tony

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank the disembodied voice of Mike Barrett (resident ghost at 'No-Gallery Research Space' and 'Un-iversity') as interlocutor. The editorial board and reviewers are also acknowledged for their proactive engagement and willingness to consider submissions in non-traditional, culturally divergent, authentic formats. Guest musicians on 'Habiblotch Mabchint Groone' (Carol Prauss, Minime C., Mike Anderson, Elizabeth Auzan, James Fraser, Nigel Robinson, Thomas Hines, Mrs Beats) are thanked for their talented musical interjections and never-ending sense of fun and community spirit.

About the Authors

Tony Gee is a musician and scientist. As scientist - he smashes atoms to make new radioactive nuclei, tags them onto interesting molecules and follows their adventures in the human body. His music/arts practices encompasses writing and recording music and soundscapes in multi-people collaborations. His music agent is called Redfish.

The disembodied voice of Mike Barrett (DVoMB) is one of the independent agents of the artist researcher Mike Barrett and with a character not unlike the Pooka spirit in the Frank Capra film Harvey. In fact the DVoMB and Prof Tony Gee have a similar relationship* to that of Elmer P Dowd and Harvey, although with less drinking in bars.

The DVoMB has no academic qualifications but is a good listener and even better at noticing what is usually overlooked. This paper will be a debut publication.

*Prof Gee and the artist Mike Barrett also collaborate in research activities that bring together the perspectives and methodologies of art and science.