
SAIA Seminar - WHY ATTACHMENT MATTERS,

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Why Attachment Matters in Sharing Meaning

HUMAN NEEDS & HUMAN SENSE: THE NATURAL SCIENCE OF MEANING

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Children have lively spirits that want affectionate care, joy in play, things and places to explore, a chance to dream, sing and dance about, and difficult tasks that test their will to move and feel. Their bodies need moving, and their minds need discovering – of what is real, imagined and remembered. They want, not 'stimulation', but lively company that loves them and respects their eagerness to learn. Everything they know and do can be shared with affectionate partners. They cannot grow well, make friends or learn if they are tired, hungry, frightened, angry, bored or ashamed. These are constitutional givens of human beings from which all needs and social rights arise.

Margaret Donaldson calls this 'human sense'. She says,

"Human sense is the understanding of how to live in the human and physical worlds that children normally develop in the first few years of life. It is learned spontaneously in the course of the direct encounters with these worlds that arise daily and unavoidably everywhere, transcending cultural differences. ... The learning is continually informed and guided by emotion - that is, by feelings of significance, of value, of what matters. And it is highly stable and enduring, once established. It is the foundation on which all that follows must build." (See Donaldson, 1978)

The philosopher of education Alfred North Whitehead puts it this way:

"Culture is activity of thought, and receptiveness to beauty and humane feeling. Scraps of information have nothing to do with it." (Whitehead, 1929, p. 1)



A Theory of Motives and Emotions For Cultural Learning

A new, positive, psychology of infancy accepts that our minds are born with motives to share interests, intentions and feelings, by moving in sympathy with others. That infants are intelligent, creative, affectionate, and musical persons, seeking to share meaning. A baby shows self-other conscious emotions from birth, as a person to other persons. The most powerful are **pride** in knowing and doing 'cleverly', and **shame** at not being appreciated. The feeling of 'being somebody', leads to confidence in cultural skills, including language.

A lucky infant becomes a member of a family, responding to affectionate care, learning games. Toddlers seek friendships with people of all ages. They play with imaginative 'unreality' that others believe has beauty and practical value and want to show the fun of what they know. Even infants sense **strangers may not share their understanding**, and this worries them. They suffer anxiety of meaninglessness. Such feelings make teaching of ideas and practices a moral task. Infants eager to take part in creating, learning and evaluating meaning, as long as it is part of activity in companionship -- when it is clearly useful, 'making sense'.

Children gain knowledge by 'collaborative learning', helping to create imaginary and meaningful things with teachers who share initiatives generously. Barbara Rogoff (2003) calls this **intent participation learning**. A toddler is ready for friends of all ages and can begin Pre-School, which should be a lively place where meaning grows in companionship, making a community beyond, but with, each family, letting each child's talents and social impulses thrive with different people.

Human Psychobiology: How the Organs of Knowledge Grow

Human brains express mind states in the rhythm of common sense, called *intersubjectivity* by psychologists. This innate intention-sharing by expressive moving support mental health, therapy and all learning and education, from birth. It is not learned at school, but it can be developed there.

We shape our activities in three ways: in the **body**, with **things**, and especially with **persons**. Purposes of the moving SELF are regulated by emotions, and shared in **sympathy**. Our bodies and brains are formed for both **creativity** and **cooperation** by intimate sharing of moving experiences, first with the vitality in the mother's body, *physiologically* by **amphoteronomic regulation**, then *psychologically* with the sympathetic intelligence of her gaze and voice after birth, and soon with the imagination, creativity and emotions of the whole family at home. We call this **synrhythmic regulation**.



A foetus has human organs shaped for making expressions and for seeing and hearing them before the brain is working. Immediately after birth infants communicate states of body and mind which helps growth of knowing, doing and the sharing of meaning. The inside story of vitality goes on when you are asleep, regulating dreams of breathing and heartbeat while imagining and remembering. The slow rhythm of its drama can be shared in intimate vitality, or **physiological synchronicity**, as when baby and mother sleep together.

Human Movements have Innate Expressive Quality

Young infants are visibly active mentally -- thinking and 'talking' with 'mimesis' (Donald, 2001). They make **gestures of the hands** that tell feelings in their bodies, related to orientation of their interest to events in the world, and to the sympathy they have for other persons who may respond to their signs, thinking with them (Trevarthen et al., 2009). At first infants make only **cries or small cooing sounds**, but the body movements and vocalisations of newborns 'talk' without words. Jaws, lips and tongue express emotions of affection, and make movements of 'prespeech', anticipating the learning of talk. They want to join in a dialogue regulated by interest, effort and pleasure. The **rhythms of speech are innate**. Even a premature infant can share a conversation, as shown in a remarkable film by Saskia van Rees (van Rees and de Leeuw, 1993).

The actions of the newborn baby are paced by 'time in the mind' -- by 'neural clocks' that control the energy of muscle activity in steps of time with measures that can be shared with an adult. This is the Intrinsic Motive Pulse (IMP) of the baby's live nature. Though sometimes chaotic with reflex 'corrections', newborns' movements are generally made with precisely controlled rhythm and grace. Their gestures and expressions show different qualities of urgency or peacefulness, ease or tension, pleasure or displeasure. They are controlled by powerfully communicative emotions. Important studies by Emese Nagy in Szeged, Hungary show that a newborn baby who is engaged with sensitively can also repeat an imitation to 'provoke' a response, acting to share a two-way exchange (Nagy and Molnár, 2004).

Sympathy: How Brains Express, and Respond To Interest With Affection

"Sympathy ... may ... , without much impropriety, be made use of to denote our fellow-feeling with any passion whatever." (p. 10, 5). "A smiling face is, to every body that sees it, a cheerful object; as a sorrowful countenance, on the other hand, is a melancholy one." (Adam Smith, 1759, p. 11)

Sympathy, from Greek *sympatheia*, means 'moving and feeling with'. It is not just sensitivity and kindness. It is the essential participation in vitality, which we sense directly. It keeps the mind alive.



[NOTE: It is not what the Greeks named *empathia*, which is one-sided, 'aesthetic' contemplation of an object that inspires emotion. In modern Greek it is the projection onto another of malicious feelings of envy or hate -- the 'evil eye'. It is unfortunate that 'empathy' has become the preferred word in English and in psychology.]

FREE MOVEMENT HAS RHYTHMIC PACE AND FORM GENERATED IN THE BRAIN, LIKE MUSIC, AND IT TELLS STORIES. NARRATIVE MUSICALITY IS INNATE

'**Musicality**' may be defined as **the human way of moving with rhythm and expression**. It creates action of the body, and communicates stories of purpose, thought and feeling. Infants are clever at discriminating musical rhythms and tones of human sounds. They hear and learn musicality of mother's talk and simple tunes before birth. A two-month-old can be a skilled performer in an improvised vocal duet or **protoconversation**, a shared story over tens of seconds. Mother and infant can communicate psychologically, regulating sympathy by expressions of emotion. Telling and acting out stories with emotion, listening to thoughts and imitating actions is how humans learn -- in shared vitality and awareness.

"These interactions were characterized by a sort of delighted, ritualized courtesy and more or less sustained attention and mutual gaze. Many of the vocalizations were of types not described in the acoustic literature on infancy, since they were very brief and faint, and yet were crucial parts of the jointly sustained performances." (Bateson, 1979, p. 65).

The rhythms, expressive qualities and narrative making in movements of dialogues or 'protoconversations' with 2-month-old Laura in Edinburgh led to Stephen Malloch, a violinist and music acoustics expert, to a theory of Communicative Musicality. This explains how time and energy in moving communicates by sensing messages in the expressive vitality, or 'flow' of energy, in human movements. The theory is explored in a book published this year: *Communicative Musicality: Exploring the Basis of Human Companionship*. (Malloch and Trevarthen, 2009).

The sense of 'musicality' comprises: (1) **PULSE**: A rhythmic time sense (syllables, the beat, phrases and longer elements); (2) **QUALITY**: Sensitivity for the temporal variation in intensity, pitch and timbre of voices and of instruments that mimic the human voice; (3) **NARRATIVE**: Perception of the emotional development of the melodic line, which supports anticipation of repeating harmonies, phrases and emotional forms in a vocal or musical performance. "Pulse and Quality are combined in the forms of emotional narrative, which allow two persons to share a sense of purpose in passing time. We examine the musical companionship that is created with her baby as a mother shares a protoconversation or chants a nursery rhyme. We conclude that Communicative Musicality is vital for companionable communication between mother and infant." (Malloch, 1999)



Musical Companionship

The rhythm and expression of music carries a message of human company, the friendly 'Other', giving fresh human purpose to time in the mind. Music teacher and psychologist Katerina Mazokopaki has studied growing rhythmic talents of babies in Crete. (Mazokopaki and Kugiumutzakis, 2008). Babies from 3.5 months happily expressed their appreciation of musical rhythm. First they were surprised and interested; then they looked around, "Who is there?"; then smiled with pleasure, recognising the happy sounds; and finally joined in, celebrating the rhythm with gestures and 'singing'.

AGE-RELATED DEVELOPMENTS IN BODY AND MIND

In the first 18 months after birth advances in communication and self-awareness, learning shared meaning, are related to developments in the body and movement, and also to changes in perception, cognitive abilities and memory. Step by step infants find ways to make memories that can be shared, first in musical 'proto- conversations'. After a few months they help imagination grow by sharing rituals of play in games. Long before they can talk they try to follow meanings with moral emotions -- feeling **pride** in shared meaning, and **shame** if others do not understand what their stories and excitements mean. One-year-olds eagerly cooperate in tasks, with common sense, using tools -- cups, books, 'phones and more -- accepting dolls as persons, and making fun with peers.

The First Rituals of Cultural Art

After 3 months, a baby quickly becomes stronger, more curious, eager to look at surroundings, and to grasp and manipulate things. Infants first become attracted to **Person-Person games**, and show a performer's pretence. Then, as their bodies become stronger, and they start exploring with their hands, they are attracted to **Person-Person-Object games** with 'toys'. There is a growing tension between doing something for oneself, or with others -- and this makes for self-consciousness, teasing and fun, and invention of games. This is why the infant begins to find mirrors interesting -- they tease expectations of communication. Vasudevi Reddy's has studied babies' 'coyness' in front of the mirror. This, and infants' teasing, began her interest in 'other awareness'. (Reddy, 2008).

Research on songs for infants in many languages has taught us how we share story-telling underneath, or beyond, the spoken word -- in the body (Ekerdal and Merker, 2009). Responses to music prove that the organized rhythm and melody catch a baby's attention and move him or her to dancing in time with hands and legs. Songs are quickly learned and remembered. They become favourite messages of friendship, emblems of the infant's identity, or membership of a group. Baby action songs and nursery rhymes are played from about three months in every society. The baby learns the rules of play, joining the expressive movements of a poetic culture that becomes more and more practical. The rhythms and melodies of its



actions and tones will help hearing what sounds of speech mean while making sense of others' gestures and actions, feeling the movements of meaning in all their story-telling forms.

A FAVOURITE ACTION SONG Round and round the gar-den, •'•• Ran a ted-dy bear,

•'•• ---- One step, two step, •••• Tic-kl-y un-der there. •'•• ----

A SCOTTISH CLAPPING STORY Clappa, clappa handies, •'•• Mommy's at the well, •'••----

Daddy's away to Hamilton, •'•••

To buy wee Megan a bell. '•• '•

Cooperating In Acts of Meaning: Secondary Intersubjectivity and Sharing Tasks

At about 9 months there is a change in the infant's motives and interests that starts **cooperative practical learning** beginning the endless game of sharing cultural meanings, tools and jobs to do (Trevarthen and Hubley, 1978). The baby's curiosity about what other people are doing, and the things they use, leads to following directives, trying to make conventional messages and trying to use objects properly -- as tools. This is vital preparation for learning language to name meanings. Language is built in shared action. Parents at home or out and about teach infants while enjoying shared activities. Toddlers enjoy talk and follow narratives and the rules of games with family and peers. School introduces learning by fixed principles, but creative learning -- at home, at school, in play everywhere -- is still the richest experience.

WHEN THE RHYTHM OF VITALITY IS NOT SHARED, JOYFUL INTIMACY BECOMES DISTRESS

Babies detect when the rhythm of dialogue is wrong. Then they express their sadness at loss of 'contingency' -- when 'out of touch' in the dance.

Lynne Murray at Reading University, and Maya Gratier in Paris, have explored how the mother-infant dyad is affected when interpersonal timing is disturbed, experimentally, or by illness. Depressed mothers, or those suffering from bipolar psychosis, lose musicality -- they cannot share motives and feelings with other people, especially with infants and young children. When they talk with their infants, taking part in adventures of action and of thought is more difficult for both. The baby may become depressed, too. The infant's sensitivity to the timing and quality is demonstrated in **Still or Blank Face Test**. In Lynne Murray's **Double Television Replay Test** infant and mother see, and hear, each other on television while in separate rooms. They can establish cheerful communication quickly. Then a happy minute of the mother's expressive activity is replayed. The infant becomes is out of touch, withdrawn and sad when mother is just a recording (Gratier and Apter-Danon, 2009; Marwick and Murray, 2009; Murray and Cooper, 1997).



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