

EXPRESSING NURSING AS CARING THROUGH MUSIC

Rozzano C. Locsin

ABSTRACT. Music illuminates the profession of nursing which is the lived experience shared between the nurse and the person being nursed. To describe this, two creative and imaginative applications of music are illustrated: as an embodiment and as a complement to the nursing situation. Music both as an artform and as a therapeutic medium is described and illustrated to contrast ways of expressing the experience of caring in nursing.

INTRODUCTION

Nursing as a discipline and profession constantly searches for creative and innovative ways to illuminate the experience of nursing. In this paper, music is explored and explained as one of those ways. Although nursing literature is replete with records of various ways of expressing nursing, particularly about caring in nursing (Gaut, 1984; Watson, 1985; Roach, 1987), the work of the nurse as artist - musician, dancer, facilitator or presenter of music as an integral element of the client's participation in the healing process - has as yet not been described as an expression of caring in nursing.

Nursing as Caring (Boykin and Schoenhofer, 1993) is the framework that grounds the delineation of music as an expression of nursing. As a model for transforming practice, this allows nurses to focus their practice on nurturing a person's wholeness toward well-being. Two ways of portraying music as an expression of caring in nursing are illustrated: as the embodiment or central expression of the nursing situation; and as a complement to the artistic expression of nursing situations like as a dance or the therapeutic touch as a healing modality.

THE POPULAR USES OF MUSIC

Our awareness of the power of music is limited, perhaps because of our constricting regard for music as simply a therapeutic medium and an artform. With little meaning, these views do not allow the realization of the transformational ability of music to create or recreate scenarios into something of personal

significance. The acknowledgement that music is powerful and instrumental to the attainment and/or maintenance of health among human beings, is evidenced by the variety of findings from studies that focus on its healing effects.

Music as a Therapeutic Modality

The use of music as a therapeutic modality has been studied in nursing and other disciplines, usually as an independent variable affecting some physical or psychological variables. These studies show the uses of music in clinical situations as therapeutic modalities: the effects of rhythmic music on premature infants' food consumption and weight gain (Locsin and Locsin, 1994); the physiological and psychological effects of music on muscular energy (Guthiel, 1952); the quality and volume of pulse and blood pressures (Gaston, 1968); and the effects of music on the behavior of psychiatric patients, particularly those with phobic and/or mood alterations which were found to increase purposive physical and verbal activities especially among catatonic patients who were provided with music (Alvin, 1975; Priestley, 1975). In addition, the effects of auditory stimulation and suggestion on the pain of patients showed significant reduction in pain (Melzack, Weisz, and Sprague, 1965) including postoperative pain (Locsin, 1981; Park, 1983). A comparison of effects of jaw relaxation and music on postoperative pain was studied with no significant effects except that the prolonged use of taped interventions was reported helpful for sensation and distress of pain (Good, 1995). With the recognition that various auditory methods can also suppress pain, other sounds - particularly maternal voices heard over loud speakers - were also found to affect the development of premature infants (Katz, 1971).

Music as Artform

The value of music as an artform is a cerebral experience which focuses meaning on the person who hears it, heightening the impact of the individual's perceptions of situations seized from the music and intensifying the particular emotional conditions the individual calls forth in the moment. Various dimensions such as harmony, melody and themes exhibit the value of music as expressive forms, revealing the metaphor of music as a powerful pattern (Gendron, 1988).

In cinematography, the use of music is succinctly illustrated as an artform. Four examples are presented and explained in this paper. The first of these is a scene from the movie, "Somewhere in Time". The scene is Elsie McKenna's room near the "Grand Hotel". She comes home from a play by Richard Collier, who she believes she had met at some earlier time in 1912. As the scene unfolds, a

perceptual void illuminates emptiness, desperation, and the frustration of meaningless interaction experienced without the music. This embodiment of betrayed consequences beyond time and the encapsulated vision of a woman with tears of loneliness and resignation is never fully participated in by the viewer. The powerful, nerve-tingling, goose-flesh-raising, and soul-touching sensation is however felt as this particular scene unfolds again with the music of Rachmaninoff's 18th variation on a theme from Paganini. No longer are the facial and bodily movements devoid of meaning. Instead, the music immortalizes the mosaic of emotional sensations uniting mood, feeling, movement, sound, and thought in a complete pattern that expresses the moment.

Likewise, without John Williams' musical theme, the experience of a sterile universe and of meaningless space in the movie, "Star Wars", is beyond description. With the music however, the listener is energized by the power and mystical qualities of space, and becomes sensitized to involuntarily experience again the magnitude of infinite majesty as the scene is encountered. The listener is also able to relax and actually enjoy a scene from "Jaws" without apprehension and fear when seen **without** the music; but given the haunting, escalating background music of rhythmic, pounding, and eerie sounds, anxiety-provoking and fear-building suspense is experienced as the segment unfolds.

The fourth cinematic example is a scene from the movie "Amadeus", the controversial ballet segment of the opera "The Marriage of Figaro". Ballet was not permitted by the Emperor; thus, the theater director removed the musical score of the ballet portion. The presentation of physical, balletic expression without music is odd and meaningless, but encountered *with* the musical score intact, the grandiose beauty, value, and wholeness of the scene is restored. These descriptions of experiences encountered in music from cinematic scores reveal another value of music as an artform.

CONCEPTUALIZING MUSIC AS AN EXPRESSION OF CARING IN NURSING

Knowing Nursing as Caring

In the theory of Nursing as Caring, Boykin and Schoenhofer (1993) posit that the focus of nursing practice is the nurturing of hopes, dreams, and aspirations of caring persons toward well-being. All nursing takes place in shared nursing situations, the lived experiences in which the caring between the nurse and the nursed

enhances the mutual process of living and growing in caring. Within the intimacy of the nursing situation, calls for nursing are expressed, heard, and addressed through nursing responses of caring. Calls for nursing are conceptualized in the mind of the nurse, as he/she enters the world of the other with the intention of knowing the other as a caring person. These calls arise from the person's unique ways of living caring in the moment and from expressed dreams and aspirations for growing as caring persons. Calls for nursing are declarations from both nurse and the nursed to be known and affirmed as caring persons. Nursing responses are specific forms of caring which are created within the uniqueness of the situation. The process of living grounded in caring is then enhanced in the shared experience of the nursing situation. The caring that is nursing is "the intentional and authentic presence of the nurse with another who is known as a person living caring and growing in caring" (Boykin and Schoenhofer, 1993).

Bringing these shared experiences to consciousness demands expression in creative, imaginative, and visionary ways. Some nursing situations are presented as literary expositions such as poems in publication venues like *Nightingale Songs*, which is described as "a forum for nurses to share their silent moments of reflection on their nursing". Nursing situations are also expressed in stories which show the link between the conceptualization and the practice of nursing. Another mode of expressing nursing situations is through visual exhibitions using drawings, paintings, collages, and sculpture. While these creative, innovative and visionary expressions demonstrate the nursing which has transpired between the nurse and the person being nursed, nurses as artists also seek to consider yet other ways in which nursing can be expressed. One of these ways is the use of music as expression of caring in nursing. Nursing as an art implies that "(it) has a medium, that the nurse has a capacity to create unique forms" (Gendron, 1988) and that there are aesthetic modes of expressing nursing, particularly nursing as caring.

Music as an aesthetic expression of caring in nursing illuminates the lived experience of caring in the nursing situation and can reflect the unfolding dreams and aspirations of growing in caring. Music can communicate the experience of the co-created encounter which is nursing. The framework, Nursing as Caring, facilitates the exposition of music as an aesthetic expression of caring in nursing. From the perspective of this framework, music is recognized not only as a therapeutic medium, but also as an expression of the artform of nursing. Music can be a way in which a nurse responds to a unique call for nursing; or it can serve as the medium employed by the participants to ex-

press the caring between nurse and the nursed, as well as provide an aesthetic representation of a lived situation of caring in nursing.

As an aesthetic expression of caring in nursing, music illuminates the personal engagement of the nurse and the person being nursed, the shared visions and meanings. These illuminations may be a central and symbolic expression or a complement to the expression of caring in nursing. As the central expression, music can be the focal presentation of the nursing situation - the lived experience in which the caring between the nurse and the person being nursed enhances personhood (Boykin and Schoenhofer, 1993). As complement, it is integral to the expression of the unfolding caring moment without which such expression becomes just another display or performance of the particular artform. The following discussion will address each of these contributions which music can make in the world of nursing as caring.

To illustrate its use as a central expression, I shall describe a musical rendition through the perspective of nursing as caring. Music yields the expression of a shared experience that transpires between the nurse and the person being nursed. A musical composition and its rendering is examined here to demonstrate how music exemplifies nursing. Lewicki's (1991) performance of an original musical composition for flute and piano is an explication and appreciation of a nursing situation, and its accomplishment is illustrated by the harmonious coming together of flute and piano through music. Let me describe this nursing situation:

In the beginning, the piano introduces some notes. A few of these notes eventually unravel a distinct melody that reverberates as the thematic essence of the entire flute-piano music. The flute, in perfect rhythm, alternates with the accompanying piano to sustain the tune in harmony. While the accompanying piano music delicately allows the flute to resound its characteristic declaration of the theme, it captures and dispels the distinguishing melody. The flute alternately responds with tonal surety, evoking a sense of "being with," in harmony, with an attachment that transports the listener to a revelation of ephemeral transformation. Corresponding as distinct entities, the flute and piano produce music together in unanimity. This endeavor produces music that recognizes characteristic tones created by each instrument realizing its individual uniqueness, but simultaneously illustrates the commonality of "co-relatedness" in the created music. Momentarily, the listener is captivated and transfixed. The experience of hearing the music conveys a realization of "being with" and cared-for, feelings that are personally meaningful to the extent that without the music, the experience is just another meaningless and insignificant incident.

The instruments are able to provide creative, distinctive, and imaginative music that exemplify alternating rhythmicities: calling, hearing, and responding, like the nurse and the nursed within a nursing situation. The concurrent unity-disunity that is expressed with the created music demonstrates the mutuality of the experienced nursing situation. The flute-piano instrumental music, with each instrument producing distinct sounds, yields a "harmonious discord" that is attained only by the conscious, genuine, and intentional creation of shared music, not just one or the other, but both together. The musical expression alludes to the wholeness of the nurse and the nursed interacting; while the uniqueness of each person is maintained like individual instruments through which the creation of a mutually responding and rewarding nursing situation is experienced. Flute and piano "co-responding" are like the nurse and the person being nursed - simultaneously caring and being cared for, while sharing the experience and beauty of nursing. With Lewicki (1991), the lived experience is better understood when reflected in poetry:

The beginning states difficulty, sadness, and a will to do something about it. Complications arise and alternating rhythms are at a contrast to work through a situation of conflict. Moving towards an empathic understanding, entering the between in a way wherein the well-being is achieved. Only this time the alternating rhythms look back at the past situations, re-exploring feelings with a moral and ethical need to separate, not from the feelings, but from behavior, only to move one ... to a new growth.

As complement to the expression of caring in nursing, music is presented as integral to the performance of an artform. The unity of the dimension of the caring experience through dance using the music from the song "Natural Woman" by Aretha Franklin expresses the beauty of the all-at-once quality of the nursing situation that is established as an aesthetic expression of caring. The music, a distinct entity, and the expressive demonstration of movement through dance, unfolds with the music into one inseparable whole in space and time, communicating the unity of the particular nursing situation. Without music, this demonstration would have only appeared to be an unintelligible illustration of movement for movement's sake. With music as the vital entity integral to the expression of the beauty of the caring moment, the nursing experience is lived anew. The caring moment is best understood while listening to the music, viewing the demonstration (dance), and reading the introductory paragraph of the presentation entitled, "Natural Woman." A descrip-

tion of this experience is offered, serving to further emphasize the use of music as valuable to caring in nursing. Dance is a way to express the full dimension of care in nursing.

The song, "Natural Woman" performed by Aretha Franklin is truly an inspirational piece. . . . As the nurse and patient are better able to know each other as individuals, they become free to relate with each other in honesty and mutual respect. They enter a world, one where they can live truth and honesty. But above all they can be . . . natural (Chase, 1991).

Still another way in which music is used as complement is presented with the feeling and spirit of healing within the experience of nursing. The caring between the nurse and the nursed is represented by a poem, a performance of therapeutic touch, and the music "Ave Maria" by Bach-Gounod. These three - poetry, therapeutic touch, and music - exemplify the unity in a nursing situation, while simultaneously portraying the connectedness of the nurse and the nursed interacting. The nurse authentically and intentionally offers the self to know the other as a caring person. By doing so, she accepts the call for caring and responds with all of who she is; thus, both of them transcend the moment while growing in caring. The expression of the "caring between" is the embodiment of nurturing the person as living out the caring and growing in caring. The intensity of caring and the living of the unfolding oneness depict the nurse's authentic intention and full presence to be with the other and the patient's courage and trust in the nurse to hear his call and respond. This is lived through the strength and value of the musical rendition in the moment, and the personal engagement between the patient and the nurse. An excerpt of the poem is presented:

David, I can see your pain.
 Tell me where you are.
 Tied in bed. Powerless.
 From loved ones you're apart.
 I can't move you from this place.
 To take your pain away.
 But let me lay my hands on you
 And sing to you today."
Ave Maria, gracia plena
Maria, gracia plena
 Ave dominus, dominus tecum
 Benedicta tu in mulieribus

Et benedictus, fructus ventris;
Ventris tui, Jesu.
I sang the song he loved and used
To meditate and flee,
Escape tormenting stimuli
He needed to be freed,
To understand why he must bear
This trial, this hell, this pain,
I sang the tune; I touched with care
To give him peace again (Stobie, 1990).

This exploration of music affirms an appreciation of the ways in which music communicates nursing. The meaning of nursing situations and the use of music as an aesthetic expression of caring in nursing were described so that we may come to know the "nursing" that has transpired. Music illuminates the nursing situation, the lived experience in which the caring between the nurse and the person being nursed enhances well-being. Aesthetic expressions which heighten the experience of caring in nursing have the power to promote deep reflection on the "nursing" in nursing situations - the lived experience of the "caring between," the intimate space which nurtures caring possibilities. These caring moments, expressed as unique experiences between the nurse and the person being nursed, are here depicted as music, an aesthetic expression of caring in nursing.

As you think of all the music that has yet to be heard and of all the nursing that is yet to be encountered, be motivated and stimulated to investigate other ways of expressing nursing. In nursing, it is critical to recognize music as an aesthetic expression of caring. This will allow the practice of nursing to permeate the realm of health care - valuing the nurse as the caring other, nurturing persons as they live their caring and grow in caring. Other explorations and expositions of caring in nursing are sought to focus the understanding of nursing as nurturing dreams and aspirations which enhance well-being. To promote nursing in creative and aesthetic ways facilitates its recognition. The author hopes that this exploration and exposition of the use of music as an aesthetic expression of caring in nursing will launch its use beyond the limited boundaries of artform and therapeutic medium.

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