

ABSTRACT

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MUSIC AND SPOKEN LANGUAGE IN THE LIGHT OF THE THEORY OF BIRTH

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Music and language have many similarities, so much so that some scholars believe that they developed in human evolution from the same species-specific need for relationship with one's fellow human beings. This need seems to have arisen in correspondence with the appearance of symbolic-imaginative thought, which is also evident in the earliest artistic expressions.

Music and language share this symbolic thought conveyed by the acoustic sound element, fundamental for both. The protolanguage was probably a communication system that possessed characteristics that are still shared today between music and spoken language, which separated into two systems at a certain point in our evolutionary history.

Language and music are united by universality and creativity, properties that fundamentally differentiate them from animal communication. A substantial difference is recognized in the fact that human beings do not communicate exclusively for practical reasons. They use language to express their ideas and thoughts, their feelings. "Man not only has the need to communicate, common to animals, but uses words to create images." (Fagioli, Masini 1993).

Anthropological research aims to trace what determined a radical change in the evolutionary line of Sapiens in the way we relate to the world. About 40,000 years ago, European Sapiens decorated the inner reaches of caves with figurative images, and carved flutes from animal bones, unequivocally demonstrating a natural tendency toward symbolic-imaginative thinking, free from utility and survival.

Symbolic-imaginative thinking, or *thinking through images* according to Massimo Fagioli's theory of birth, is precisely what characterizes a human being as such. According to this theory, in fact, the dynamic that unites all newborns in coming into the world is the creation of a thought that was not there before: the *ability to imagine*. This dynamic creates the first non-conscious thought, which arises from the body's biology. It is a mental image that pushes towards interhuman relationships.

All the sensations and experiences of the newborn will then be integrated and merged into this first image, the nucleus of being and existence. Throughout the first year of life, on every occasion of interhuman relationship and respective separation, internal images will be produced as a memory of the lived experience. "Relationship, separation and transformation are the three essential terms for the human realization of becoming a thinking being." (Fagioli, 2011).

During the first year of life, before the appearance of speech, we know that children react with interest to the human voice and in particular to the musical elements of language. They themselves express themselves through sounds: from the modulations of their crying in the first months, to the subsequent vocalizations, up to the babbling that precedes the first words. "The period of life, called preverbal, is the basis, source, wellspring of verbal thought and spoken language that will appear later." (Fagioli, 2021).

In spoken language, the melodic and rhythmic aspects are defined as "prosody." When the prosody is intense, speech sounds extremely musical, just like in baby-talk. Probably our ancestors' first

communicative interactions were conveyed exclusively by prosody, that is, by melody and rhythm. They were sounds used in the mother-child relationship.

Studies that hypothesize that sound precedes verbal language, both in ontogenetic and phylogenetic terms, seem to confirm Massimo Fagioli's idea that sound refers to meaning, that is, to very deep and unconscious aspects of interhuman relationships.

We can therefore posit that it is sound, from the first days of life, that allows us to grasp the deepest aspects conveyed by the voice of the other. Beyond the meaning of the words, what comes first is the affective content, as if the voice were a hug. In fact, sound is contact, as it is vibration generated by a body that reaches not only the ears but also the skin.

Sound, therefore, represents the expression of the intrinsic creativity in thinking through images, from the ability to imagine starting at birth, passing through the memory-fantasy of lived experiences. It is this species-specific biological property of man, driven by the need for a relationship, that will allow the transformation of crying into spoken language, which will be expressed throughout life in all human beings' images of dreams and creativity.