

Social Science Definitions of Groove

A groove is *synchronicity*.

A groove is *communicative musicality*.

A groove is *entrainment*.

A groove is *time-with-feeling*.

A groove is *well-timed interplay*.

A groove is *interactional synchrony*.

A groove is *sensitive and precise temporal organization of interaction*.

The mutual co-regulation of interactive behavior is a groove.

A groove is a "*responsive ritual*" of *improvisatory music therapy*.

A groove will *activate the natural spontaneous motives for joint activity and emotional engagement*.

A groove will *engage the emotions and movements and give them coherence*.

A groove is *Coordinated Interpersonal Timing (CIT)*.

A groove is *Intrinsic Motive Pulse (IMP)* enhanced by group activity.

But "imp" might also more accurately describe what jazz and samba musicians (e.g. Eduardo Lis in his MA thesis on samba/jazz) call individual "feel" or "time-feel". Put two or three "imps" or "individual time-feels" together to negotiate or create a groove, as in a jazz rhythm section. Still, "time-feel" and "groove" are used interchangeably in a lot of musician-generated sentences.

All the phrases in italics above are from a few pages in the special issue of *Musicae Scientiae* entitled "Rhythm, Musical Narrative, and Origins of Human Communication" (1999-2000) and published by the European Society for the Cognitive Sciences of Music. Some dedicated groovologist could go through those seven articles and find dozens more definitions of "groove," many of them very accurate and precise. These Europeans know what they are talking about, are forming clear English sentences, they just aren't rushing up hill to acknowledge that African-Americans got to the parsimonious key concept first. Or that those black folks polished this intellectual gem based upon a wealth of experience in generating the most original and influential musical styles of the 20th Century.

These researchers may not say so but I believe they are seeking the causes of autism and PDD ('pervasive development disorders' in their lingo, or 'participatory discrepancy deficits' from a groovological point of view) and ADD ('attention deficit disorder' in their diagnostic world, but the ADD of "adapted to dreary dullness" or "alienated, duped & dumbed-down" is just as big a problem for millions of children who appear "normal").

I also think these social scientists don't use the key term or 'domain name' **groove**, or use a groovology terminology for parsimony, insights, ease of expression, because the cognitive psychology and linguistics experts don't think much about real time or the actual body. Trevarthen's frightening footnote No.1 in the last article of *Musicae Scientiae* describes the absence of real "time" concerns in these fields. The Cartesian worldview is still dominant, the weird western ideas about music being written

and containing narratives still hold sway. The social science disciplines they are immersed and swimming in put them deeper into the Platonic cave and they are happy there, singing “we don’t need no James Brown, mo’ forms!” That’s it, they just don’t dig James Brown or Wild Bill Blake as processes, won’t grasp the total materiality and sweet physical movements of “soul” in time.

I hope you will read what I have come to call "Trevarthen's Footnote Number One" carefully because it leads me to believe that "groovology" and "echology" are relatively exact sciences whereas "psychology," "linguistics" and "cognitive psychology" are – anybody want to make a guess?

(1) The neglect of the sense of time on (sic, means "in"?) contemporary psychology and linguistics is astonishing. For example, in the *MIT Encyclopedia of Cognitive Science* (1999), just published with 473 entries, none – on memory (short term, long term, etc.), prosody, poetic meter, thinking, speech, language, mental representation – have any reference to actual durations in mental activity or brain time. There are no entries for "reaction time", or "rhythm", or "music". The only entry I could find in which the time of intrinsic mental events is explicitly discussed and interpreted is that on "Time in the Mind" by Poppel and Wittman (*loc. cit.*), and infants' acute sensitivity to timing of expressions is mentioned in my entry on "Intersubjectivity" (Trevarthen, 1999). Contemporary cognitive psychology appears to have "mislaid time". The same can be said for linguistics. Thus, David Crystal, in his beautifully illustrated new *Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language* (Crystal, 1997) has deleted the information on the durations of vocalisations from many of his figures, and the timing of prosodic and poetic elements is not given. Rhythm is treated as a formal pattern or structure of sequential events, with the phenomena of time removed.

Maybe that's how these social science disciplines arrive at timeless truths!

Now go back to the baker's dozen definitions at the beginning of this chapter and ask yourself whether or not some precise measuring of micro-timing is needed to make each of these definitions interesting and scientifically meaningful over time.