

Groovology in Poetry and Prose

What is groovology?

The wording of a groove in poetry and prose.

One way to word a groove is with poetry masquerading as prose.

another way to word a groove

is with prose

masquerading as poetry

Poetry. The evocation or similetic equivalents of a groove. The associational, intuitional, approximation in words of what a groove is in music. The entire range of poetry can be thought of as a great groovological treasure, the efforts of everyone to get groove feelings into words; poetry is just what all humans can do that is in between music and prose. But the poetry that is richest in rhythm and rhyme, the poetry that is singable anywhere, anytime, the poetry of Anon. and ages long gone (or is that the poetry of anonymous and the ages longonymous?), the poetry of The Rattle Bag (Seamus Heany & Ted Hughes, eds.) and William Blake and Emily Dickenson and e.e. cummings and Lord Buckley and the ranters, ravers, quakers, shakers, shamans, twisters and shouters, the howls and kaddishes of Ginsberg, the declamations of Vachel Lindsay, anyone who got out there and performed their 'stuff' shamelessly is probably the poetry that will get you into the groove quicker, and into poeticizing the groove shamelessly as well.

Prose. The logos or logic of the groove. The scientific measurement of a groove in order to more fully appreciate its complexity in any particular manifestation. The “reason for the season,” as the pianist in the film “Shine” would say. On this sequencing, rational, logical, scientific side of groovology there are books and articles about grooves and grooving to be read (See Music Grooves website, book, and Vol. 39, No. 1 of Ethnomusicology.). And perhaps the *chronicas* of Clarice Lispector might inspire you as they do me. I single out Clarice from among the many 20th century writers who may be grappling with “the moment” because I haven’t found the others yet (thanks to Bev Diamond for directing me to Cixous who pointed me to Clarice) and because her meticulous observations of herself, others, the world, and the ways our western dichotomies (dream/reality. mind/body, self/other, chicken/egg, etc.) can melt down seem refreshingly free of those western literary obsessions: interpretation and theorizing.

The poetry and prose approaches to groovology give us understanding of two pleasures in participation that need just a bit of discipline to be expressed and experienced in this alienated age.

Pat Campbell:

Poetry is play with words. It is sing-songy, if not completely song-singing. Even more, poetry inspires movement. Carl Orff found poetry to be a critical component of his music and movement pedagogy, and Gunild Keetman wove poetry into the development of the materials known as Orff-Schulwerk. This pedagogy allows a meeting point for music, speech, and movement, much like the ancient Greek ideal of *mousike*, so that a poem can be a gateway for explorations in vocal expression, grooving or rhythmicking (the making of rhythms), movement, and fully musical compositions. It may also be less “consummate” an experience, too,

functioning in a spoken form to counterbalance the full-tilt melody and rhythm of a song. Poetry has an important part to play in school work, and perhaps its renaissance as something everyone does daily is soon at hand.

- The Orff-Schulwerk is deeply connected to poetry as a wellspring of children's expressive selves, and a launch to their music-making efforts. This can be readily seen in Carl Orff and Gunild Keetman's classic work, Music for Children, Volumes I-V (London: Schott).
- Choose a poem (J. R. R. Tolkien's "Goblin Feet", Elinor Wylie's "Velvet Shoes", Alfred Noyes' "The Highwayman", Eugene Field's "Jest Fore Christmas"), and turn it into experiences in music and movement. Guide children towards
 - * Reading it expressively, with loud-softs (forte-piano), long-shorts (legato-staccato), and fast-slows (presto-largo) in mind.
 - * Chanting it while patting the pulse, and putting rhythmic values to the words and syllables that create durational patterns.
 - * Chanting it over an ostinato rhythm performed via body percussion (stamps, pats, claps, snaps).
 - * Enacting the text, becoming the characters in the midst of the events described, in a pantomime arrangement.
 - * Moving it in ways that the text may suggest, freely, with or without pulse. Explore movement possibilities individually, with a partner, or in small groups, creating a dance that shows a choreography based upon words, their tone qualities, rhythms, timbres, and textures.
 - * Singing the song, using just three pitches (for example, do, re, and sol, or a major pentatonic la-sol-me-re-do, or a Dorian scale).
 - * Setting the poem musically, using only non-pitched percussion instruments, or pitched percussion instruments, or keyboards, or guitars, a combination of these and other instruments.
 - * Creating an integrated performance of the poem, using chanting, singing, movement, pantomiming, playing on instruments.