

LECTURE ABSTRACT

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VOICE IMPROVISATION AS A RESEARCH METHOD

The subject of my study is the relationship between human voice, body and environment. Environment is understood here not only as the physical surroundings but also as an (internalized) affective reality. The starting point is the notion that we don't only live in different kinds of environments, but we are also affected by them. Other peoples voices and movements, social rules, physical and acoustic spaces and sounds of the different environments mould our ways of moving and using our voices.

The main research method of this study is artistic voice improvisation. Voice improvisation contains but is not restricted to the fields of language and music. Improvisations may contain for example speaking, singing, humming, affective human cries, murmurs, mumbling etc. They will be carried out in different environments, with different intentions and with different line-ups (from solo performances to a "sonic sea" of hundred participants). The phenomenological observations will be made. The experiences will be discussed (writings, conversations, interviews).

The theoretical background of the study is in the phenomenology of body (e.g. Sheets-Johnstone 1999), somaesthetics (Shusterman 2008) and artistic research (e.g. Leavy 2008). The concepts of *vitality affect*, *present moment* (Stern 2004) and *body awareness* (Klemola 2005) will be some of the main concepts used.

In my previous study (Tarvainen 2012) I introduced the concept of *emphatic listening*. The main goal of this method is to improve one's own body awareness and the ability to recognize vitality affects. I established alternative ways of writing and drawing ("notation") to capture the essence of a singer's (Björk) expression. What I will do now is to take this method and develop it further to be suitable for examining the experience of one's own voice and expression.

Starting points for discussion:

If the voice improvisation itself is a research method, what would be the suitable ways of reporting the (bodily) knowledge revealed?

How to discuss about the bodily experiences with other people (participants, audiences)? What kind of methods to use (interviews etc.)?

References

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