

Research paper/project presentation

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Performative methods as a way to reach embodied experiences in in-between spaces

In my presentation I discuss my participatory art-based research project that examined identification negotiations and belongings of second-generation Finnish immigrant youth and also present my on-going project that examines young Muslims resilience by using performative, participatory and visual methods. I concentrate especially to inquire performative approaches and ask if ideas embedded in these methods are embodied in my research projects and outcomes, such as photo and video exhibitions, video documentaries, a radio program, books and articles produced during the research.

Performative approaches that use creative methods create possibilities for virtuality of subjectivity (Schechner 1995, 29). According to Richard Schechner Victor Turner's (1964) notion of betwixt and between support to understand performativity as symbolic form of cultural/artistic expressions that open up the gap between the performer and what or who is being represented (Friedman 2002). He suggests that in postcolonial world where cultures are colliding, interfering with and fertilizing each other, also arts and academic disciplines are most alive when moving on their ever-changing borders where embodied playing and performances happen (Schechner 1995, 21).

Peggy Phelan understands performance in poststructuralist Derridean terms as "representation without reproduction" (Friedman 2002, Phelan 1993, 46-49). For Trinh Minh-ha (2011, 94) "intervals where "knowledge acquired remains suspended in non-knowingness" are important. To understand what happens between individuals, genres and cultures, we may move toward others side of speech and representations where no narrative can describe the opened boundary between different approaches to sense the word (Minh ha 2011).

Dwight Conquergood (2009, 312) considers that the dominant way of knowing in the academy - based on Enlightenment project of modernity - emphasize empirical observation and critical analysis from a distanced perspective: 'knowing that,' and 'knowing about', which is shadowed by 'knowing how,' and 'knowing who,' grounded in active, intimate, hands-on participation and personal connection

and rooted in embodied experience, orality and local contingencies. For Conquergood performance studies can give space to artistry, analysis and activism or put it in another way: creativity, critique and citizenship (civic struggles for social justice) (Conquergood 2009, 318).

Maggie O'Neill reminds that performative, participatory projects are especially useful when dealing with transnational and diasporic experiences, because they allow people to play in the 'potential' in-between spaces (O'Neill, 2008, Winnicott 1971). Because art and media based approaches involve praxis as purposeful knowledge—which tells us, in a relational and phenomenological sense, something about what it is to feel 'at home' and have 'a sense of belonging they enable the participants to 'talk back' and create new, more flexible narrations of belonging, identification and visual images. (Oikarinen-Jabai 2015, O'Neill 2011).

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