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Presentation Title: Neurophenomenology of music: Methodological considerations

Abstract:

Based on a neurophenomenological study on empathic musical expressiveness emerging during piano performance, using fNIRS and a micro-phenomenological interview technique, methodological considerations concerning the relationship between first- and third-person data are discussed. An examination of the relationship between first- and third-person perspectives is conceived of as only possible when based on first-person experiences; this requires the development of new first-person methodologies. Developed in France beginning in the mid-1990s, neurophenomenology attempts to incorporate philosophical-phenomenological approaches into neuroscientific research, exploring the possibility of mutual influence between experimental participants' neural activities and the structures of their first-person experiences. The first-person descriptions of one subject collected by a technique of micro-phenomenological interview are compared to those of other subjects, attempting to find the generic (especially temporal) structures of experience, which are then related to—rather than reduced to—the (especially temporal) structures analysed from the third-person data of neural activities. Developing a neuro-phenomenological study to investigate musical experience, however, remains highly challenging, given that temporal structures from neuroimaging data can be analysed most efficiently when using a neuro-dynamic approach, whereas at present structure- and function-oriented neuroscientific approaches are dominant. The current state of phenomenological interview techniques also requires further development to investigate effectively the temporal structures of musical experience.