

Identity formation through music in diaspora

Presenters:

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Abstract

This video essay addresses the role of Nhạc Vàng (Yellow Music) - a form of Vietnamese popular music - in identity formation among Vietnamese women in diaspora. Several important studies have been made of the role of music in Vietnamese immigrants (Cunningham & Nguyen, 1999; Reyes, 1999), but not specifically in Scandinavia. Cunningham & Nguyen (1999), in a study of the role of music and media in the formation of cultural identity among Vietnamese immigrants in Australia note “the felt need to maintain pre-revolutionary Vietnamese heritage and traditions; find a negotiated place within a more mainstreamed culture; or engage in the formation of distinct hybrid identities around the appropriation of dominant Western popular cultural forms” (p. 77).

Building on interviews with Vietnamese women in diaspora in Scandinavia, the essay constitutes initial preliminary results of Nguyen’s postdoctoral project. The project seeks a deeper understanding of the role of music in the negotiation of identity among Vietnamese immigrants. The music in the video essay is composed through remote interaction between members of The Six Tones and other Vietnamese performers. The making of the music and the various constraints that the format of networked performance imposes is also discussed as part of the proposed paper.

Duration 20 mins.

References

- Cunningham, S. & Nguyen, T. (1999). Popular Media of the Vietnamese Diaspora.
Javnost - The Public, 6(1), 71-92.
- Reyes, A. (1999). *Songs of the Caged, Songs of the Free: Music and the Vietnamese Refugee Experience*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.