Textural articulation and rhythm as non-anthropocentric approaches to individuation,

Permalink
https://escholarship.org/uc/item/7j93f1br

Author
Sha, Xin Wei

Publication Date
2018-01-08

Peer reviewed
Textural articulation and rhythm as non-anthropocentric approaches to individuation

Xin Wei Sha

Attending to rhythm can help get a grip on collective experience without resorting to a-priori homunculi selves or anthropocentric objects. Rhythm is not sense data — it is not perceived but apperceived. Rhythm arises from body encountering a variation in matter – movement. Taking the converse, we can generalize beyond fleshy human bodies and physical matter to more extended entities. Then rhythm becomes an instrument for non-anthropocentrically examining enaction, gesture, materiality, retrospection and anticipation.

But how can we understand dynamic, change, rhythm without resorting to abstracting procedures without resorting to “time” and “clocks” as a priori abstractions? Does rhythm, even if irregular, require some notion of repetition and rigorous methods for detecting repetition in situ? What concepts of rhythm can afford insights into complex bio-social phenomena at multiple scales, insights that are rigorous and yet do not reduce the phenomena too much? These raise in turn profound and methodologically significant questions about repetition, difference and identity.

To qualify: (1) Temporality means the sense of dynamic or variation of state. (2) Sense is not attached to a pre-given subject. (3) Articulation means not representation but material-semiotically shaping, a mode of ontogenesis (vs. morphogenesis). (4) time-based media means all kinds of distributions of light, sound, matter that vary in concert with contingent activity as well as design.

I will present installation-performance experiments from 10 years of work that simultaneously constitute non-reductive experiments in temporality and non-anthropocentric, ethico-aesthetic spaces of play. These range from movement studies and time-conditioning installations to studies of vegetal experience in philosophy and dance.