

What is Rhythm in relation to Photography?

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Source: [Philosophy of Photography](#), Volume 1, Number 2, December 2010, pp. 157-175(19)

Publisher: [Intellect](#)

DOI: https://doi.org/10.1386/pop.1.2.157_1

'Form fascinates when one no longer has the force to understand force from within itself.

That is, to create.' (Derrida 2001: 3)

This article elaborates a theory of rhythm in relation to photography and, in particular, argues for the importance of rhythm in the theorization of photographic temporality. The approach taken breaks with a number of significant strands in contemporary photography theory, namely, Aristotelian-influenced modes of formalist criticism, dualistic formulations of representation and definitions of photographic temporality based on its difference to cinema. Through an interrogation of definitions of rhythm, the article examines, first, a formalist heritage – from Aristotle to Lessing and evident in Greenberg – that assumes a naturalistic definition of rhythm based on linearity, regularity and anthropomorphic essentialism. The second strand is described through Frye's anticipation of a different rhythm, lyricism, that problematically compounds the 'subject' as an entity defined in a dualistic paradigm. Against this background the article elaborates the possibilities inherent in Deleuze's notion of 'crystal time' – a rhythm of energetic intensity not dependent on linear temporality or subjectivism – as a further, more credible, theorization of rhythmic temporality-as-texture.¹

1. This article is taken from an unpublished longer work that includes sections on: 'The Moment in Cartier-Bresson', 'Riegl and Baroque Rhythm' and 'Postmodern (Musical) Rhythmanalysis', hence these aspects are referred to -or implied- but not elaborated upon, in this text.

Gilles Deleuze argues against the subordination of time to movement ‘from the Greeks to Kant’ (Deleuze 1989: 276), which I equate with the subordination of time to meter in formalist notions of rhythm in general. This is significant for any phenomenological, or post-phenomenological reading of photography in which time and temporality are of central concern.

The formalist tradition in photography criticism draws an equivalence between the ‘privileged moment’ and what in the Greek musical tradition is an indivisible mathematically defined unit of time: the *chronos protos*, or ‘primary time unit’, used as a basic element from which multiples can be formed. A definition of the *chronos protos* and the importance of its ‘function’, as opposed to the ‘determinable magnitude’ of rhythm, is best illustrated by a contemporary of Aristotle, Aristoxenus, whose Treatise on Rhythm provided a founding text for theories of rhythm in western classical music at least up until the Middle Ages (Rowell 1979: 72). This provides an example of Deleuze’s argument, in which time has been subordinated, and one that remains a common constraint in our conflation of the meaning of the terms ‘rhythm’ and ‘meter’. Their relationship to one another remains controversial (Norton/Grove *Encyclopedia of Music* 1994: 806). This article therefore argues that the exclusive definition of the term ‘rhythm’ as a linear, successive and moment-by-moment experience, or transparent structure, requires dismantling.

Alexander Streitberger and Hilde Van Gelder (2010), ‘Photo-filmic images in contemporary visual culture’, *Philosophy of Photography* 1: 1, pp. 48–53), writing in the first edition of this journal refer to the traditional opposition between the temporalities of photography and film, as ‘still’ and ‘moving’ image. In the same issue and in a similar vein, Peter Osborne (2010,

‘Infinite exchange: The social ontology of the photographic image’, (*Philosophy of Photography* 1: 1, pp. 59–68) writes of ‘frozen’ photographic and Cartesian images of thought in contrast to the ‘filmic’ character of dialectic thought. Streitberger and Van Gelder do this in order to point out that these distinctions are indeed being superseded and diminished by the force of digital technologies, leaving us in a position to either archive and catalogue these photo-filmic instances or, as Osborne suggests, engage in a project that involves the ‘reimaging of thought’ itself.

I would concur with the premises but not the analyses involved here and say there is as much at stake with digital technologies to re-articulate and re-define our temporal experience outside of all dualisms: material/immaterial, use/value or technological/natural and analogue/digital, to which end we must first revisit *naturalism* as a rhythm in which a binary impulse is encoded, and from this basis establish other modes of non-dualistic rhythmic definition adequate for a contemporary photography theory.

Recent attempts in photography theory to bridge such gaps, such as Johanna Drucker’s Temporal Photography, (Drucker 2010, ‘Temporal Photography’, *Philosophy of Photography* 1: 1, pp. 22–8), go some way towards articulating the ‘myths of temporality specific to photography’ (Drucker 2010: 23). In this article she articulates a *phenomenological imperative* when she proposes that ‘by introducing a temporal axis into the image, its capacity to reify dissolves’ (Drucker 2010: 25). That is, the moment is less like a self-sufficient a priori *chronos protos*. We are left with a ‘temporal image’, which is perhaps both a photograph and a video *or* neither. Rather, it is what she calls a ‘constructed event of knowing’ (Drucker 2010: 28).

Another aspect of the contemporary ‘stopping’ or ‘subordinating’ of photographic ‘time’ is illustrated in a recent Media of Photography symposium plan, which attests that, ‘the existing literature on the ontology of photography is noticeably thin’, and also that this history tends to be led by the notion of an ‘autographic’ link (Costello and Lopes 2010: 2) between photography, painting and printmaking insofar as they are each marked on paper. The authors of these claims also suggest that it may be digital media images that complicate this link. Such images may be more allographic than autographic. These specialized views are based on an attempt to articulate the ‘digital’ per se as enabling a change in the temporal ontology of photography. But nevertheless, a tradition of ontology persists that would ‘naturally’ aver that photography could not by definition be rhythmic, whether autographic or allographic, as there is nothing in a photograph that corresponds to a rhythmic experience in the way that a poetic, musical, dramatic performance, or even cinematic or digital video installation, ‘naturally’ would. By saying this, we may also be perpetuating a bias in the differential status of these art forms, with the so-called ‘temporal’ arts being seen as inherently having more integrity in delineating experiences-through-time, that is, with an assumption of the mimetic function of art media. Drucker wishes to move photography theory away from an ‘ontological foundation to an epistemological one (2010: 22)’, towards a notion of the event. Yet to do this we must examine the experiential basis of our definition of temporality in the arts more closely. Otherwise we may naively apply a naturalistic approach that reduces photographic time to part of the ‘event’ itself. This would be to temporalize space – in a linear fashion – as an aspect of representation. We can experience time in an embodied spatiality, say through film, as Osborne cites Adorno in doing, but this is not time itself. Rhythm, in this case, is wholly co-opted into the service of an analogical ‘imitation’ of duration as in the following: ‘Adorno described Hegel’s dialectics as “films of thought”’ (Adorno 1993: 100, 121 in Osborne 2010: 60). This notion is dependent on certain

assumptions about temporal duration. In the final part of this article I will address this issue more directly through Deleuze's work on cinema and the time-image. Here, first, we need to ask, how exactly is the rhythm of naturalism evident in photographic temporality? What is rhythm when conceived in this way? That is, before we can ask what other rhythms might be possible, outside of the representationalist, necessarily dualistic, paradigm.

Rhythm I: Naturalism

Naturalism is how Aristotle justifies the representational paradigm in his *Poetics*: 'Imitation is natural to man from childhood [...] he is the most imitative creature in the world, and learns at first by imitation. And it is also natural for all to delight in works of imitation' (Aristotle 1991: 4). We might, in a similar way, mistakenly think of rhythm naturalistically as a simple or unmediated reflection of time passing, a neutral marker. A significant amount of the extensive literature on the nature of rhythm relies on the organic origin of musical rhythm as such. These origins include the rhythms of the heartbeat, breathing and walking. Considered alongside more recent research in this field, these point to what one might call internal time keepers that 'include neurological ones such as the phase-lengths of the alpha rhythm in the brain and chemical ones such as the rate of metabolism of body cells' (Norton/Grove *Encyclopedia of Music* 1994: 805). So, what we commonly perceive as either fast or slow is often related to speeds at either end of the spectrum of a normal heart rate, which is between 60 and 80 beats per minute (Norton/Grove *Encyclopedia of Music* 1994: 806). This may appear to be a good starting point for a phenomenological, that is, experiential, account; however, this 'naturalistic attitude' is flawed in two significant ways. First, it assumes a correspondence in the form of the experience – the walk, the music – each of which is

assumed to take place over a distance or length of time that is exactly commensurate with the form of the rhythm itself. Second, it maintains an anthropomorphic perspective in the centrality of the organicity of rhythm. Rhythm is assumed to be ‘naturally occurring’, and a general quality of our experience *by which other things can be, transparently, gauged*. And, in this guise, a naturalistic approach is no doubt also part of the confusion between different modes of experiencing rhythm. We might feel that walking, or patterns of breathing, creates an indissoluble association of the footstep or chant with the metric pulse of song. Indeed, this is how some music theorists came to describe the ‘work song’ or ‘dance song’ with the ‘parallel rhythmic-musical structure’ in ‘physiological activity’ (Norton/Grove *Encyclopedia of Music* 1994: 805). Yet, this is an example of confusion between different ways of experiencing time that, formally, have been taken to be embedded in specific types of art practice: the so-called difference between the temporal and spatial arts.

Here, we encounter a critical tradition that goes back to Lessing’s Laocoon, in which the separation of linear and spatial arts is stated most explicitly and in a way that derives from the championing of the poetic mode over the sculptural in the Laocoon motif (Lessing 1887). Lessing separates the arts of space (painting and ‘the plastic arts’) from the arts of time, or ‘succession’, using poetry as a key. In doing so, he reinforces and makes emphatic a distinction present in Aristotle’s poetics: that of the association, the reductionism we might say, of rhythm to poetic meter. In this context, painting is limited on at least two counts: ‘Since the artist can use but a single moment of ever-changing nature, and the painter must further confine his study of this one moment to a single point of view’ (1887: 16). For poetry, on the contrary:

‘Further, nothing obliges the poet to concentrate his picture into a single

moment. He can take up every action, if he will, from its origin, and carry it through all possible changes to its issue. Every change, which would require from the painter a separate picture, costs him but a single touch' (1887: 21).

This innate, one might say ontological, principle reifies the depicted moment as a fixed state – extracted from the flow of temporality and inscribed by the artist in the artwork – whilst at the same time setting up a hierarchical relationship between form and idea, artistic means and material form. Lessing goes much further. He attributes to the means available to distinct art forms their individual abilities in representing either spatiality or temporality, and he is unequivocal in doing so.

'If it be true that painting employs wholly different signs or means of imitation from poetry – the one using forms and colors in space, the other articulate sounds in time – and if signs must unquestionably stand in convenient relation with the thing signified, then signs arranged side by side can represent only objects existing side by side, or whose parts so exist, while consecutive signs can express only objects which succeed each other, or whose parts succeed each other, in time' (1887: 91).

In an art historical context, the primary case of this suppressive notion of naturalistic rhythm, one that reduces temporality to a form of linearity of repeated 'units', is to be found in Clement Greenberg's treatment of Lessing's theme in his 'Towards a Newer Laocoon' (1988), to the extent that he attempts to reinstate 'purity' in the modernist art of painting,

thereby revealing how ‘purity’ is a notion essential to the substantiation of distinct and unbridgeable categories upon which any theory of genre would need to be based. So it is that Lessing and Greenberg promote a kind of naturalistic formalism that is, ultimately, supportive of a bounded notion of art forms in their spatial or temporal modality. It is to this that we must pay close attention if we are to disentangle rhythm from its binary definition. In this context, reading Lessing in light of Aristotle’s *Poetics* is revealing. That Lessing was influenced by this text in particular is clear. Like Aristotle, he displays his investment in the ultimate value of mimesis whilst also maintaining the privileged position of poetry. He attempts to delimit the role of the arts in the respective content they are most able to imitate through the principles of the ‘signs and means’ and ‘objects’ that any art produces. In Aristotelian terms, the method of describing differences between the arts is as follows: ‘They differ from one another in three ways, either in their means, or in their objects, or in the manner of their imitations’ (Aristotle 1991: 2).

One of the key points at which Lessing most clearly echoes the *Poetics* is in his discussion of the primacy of action, acts or plot over character, qualities or emotion:

‘Consequently bodies with their visible properties are the peculiar subjects of painting. Objects which succeed each other, or whose parts succeed each other in time, are actions. Consequently actions are the peculiar subjects of poetry’. (Lessing 1887: 91) In the way he champions the form and ideals of tragedy and epic poetry Aristotle is similarly clear:

‘Tragedy is essentially an imitation not of persons but of action and life [All human happiness or misery takes the form of action; the end for which we live is a certain kind of activity, not a quality.] The first essential, the life and soul of tragedy is the plot; and that the characters

come second – compare the parallel in painting, where the most beautiful colours laid on without order will not give the same pleasure as a simple black and white sketch of a portrait’ (1991: 6–7).

Aristotle is clearer still that a specificity of means is equivalent to each motif: ‘action and life’ is best expressed through the Iambic meter. In this process of definition, rhythm becomes a slave to metrical time and to imitation. The dominance of this mode of temporality functioning in the linear art of poetic meter became an orthodoxy in a way that goes far beyond Lessing. So, when Hegel upholds this stance in his *Aesthetics* we can see it as a restatement of that aspect of Aristotelian poetics that both reduces rhythm to meter and reduces rhythm to a function of providing contrasts of *stress* or *emphasis*:

‘If we take in the first place the purely temporal aspect of musical sound, we have to discuss (a) the necessity of time’s being in general the dominant thing in music; (b) the bar as the purely mathematically regulated measure of time; (c) rhythm which begins to animate this abstract rule by emphasizing some specific beats and subordinating others’ (1975: 913).

The problem with this lineage of formalism is its strict attention to the object’s primary importance as language in its material state – its means, method and formal structure – whilst simultaneously neglecting any other ‘temporal axis’ that includes other readings. Temporality is given as little texture as is possible; it is transparent in its appearance as function. There is no rhythm outside of time’s formal subservience. From this naturalistic perspective it is ‘a kind of activity not a quality’ (Aristotle 1991: 6–7). Metrical time finds its equivalence in

Aristotle's emphasis on 'plot', which is 'the first essential' in tragedy, the highest of the arts. So we sense that the formal structuring device of *regularity, the recurrence of the same*, becomes the *rhythm of naturalism*. Yes the pulse may vary but it is the bonding of rhythm to meter that defines its ultimately regulated texture: smoothness. To provide a 'reimaging' of this thought (to echo Osborne's phrase) we might turn to the notion of viscosity to figure a naturalism that allows a smooth and continuous – a laminar – flow of time in this rhythm. At its most invisible and unacknowledged in Aristotelian poetics, rhythm becomes a transparent and reductive medium through which the object is recognized as self-identical, as perfectly represented.

To extrapolate from this, one can note that any assessment of the ontology of digital photography that took a pixel, for instance, as a fundamental unit in digital imaging technologies falls into the same difficulty, as the temporal mode of its quality, expression and experience become elements that are subsumed under the functionalities of action, form and object. The digital moment is as easily appropriated by a formalist and reductive attention to its object, making digital photographic rhythm as smooth or monotone in texture by means of its regularity of means and the total convergence of its function. An assumed naturalism can be felt in the very predictability of its, albeit virtual, heartbeat.

Rhythm II: Lyricism

There are two formalists who provide a different schematic for defining rhythm more adequately, whilst also demonstrating continuities, by providing a link, between classical formalism and the objective clarity of Deleuze's factual style, which we will come to in the

next section. First then, Yve-Alain Bois, in an essay entitled ‘Whose Formalism?’ (1996), is unapologetic about his adherence to formalist methodology. He does not argue that any type of formalism has no place in apparently objective description but, rather, that the tradition of formalist criticism has tended to hold a reductive view of subjective experience. He also criticizes a specifically Greenbergian formalism that misreads significant details, which, when allied with an ahistorical perspective of the social conditions that produce work, unnecessarily weakens the reputation of formalism (1996: 9–12).

Second, Northrop Frye provides a major step away from ‘mimesis’ in his foundational approach to an objective criticism in his book *Anatomy of Criticism* of 1957. Here he attempts to establish the methodology of a rigorous literary criticism with Aristotelian sympathies, yet corrects the sequence of misunderstandings of Aristotle via Lessing and Greenberg, when he says: ‘Some principle of recurrence seems to be fundamental to all works of art, and this recurrence is usually spoken of as rhythm when it moves along in time, and as pattern when it is spread out in space. Thus we speak of the rhythm of music and the pattern of painting. But a slight increase of sophistication will soon start us talking about the pattern of music and the rhythm of painting. The inference is that all arts possess both a temporal and a spatial aspect, whichever takes the lead when they are presented. The score of a symphony may be studied all at once, as a spread-out pattern: a painting may be studied as the track of an intricate dance of the eye’ (Frye 1990: 77).

It is the degree to which Frye’s ‘recurrence’ is *regulated* that will become significant. Yve-Alain Bois’ defends his formalist leanings by explaining to possible critics that his position might not necessarily involve either ‘an idealist conception of meaning’ or ‘an idealist conception of form’ (1996: 9–12). Within a formalist method there might be an equidistant

relationship between subjective experience and objective description, signalling the emergence of a different notion of temporality. Frye describes four rhythms in his 'Rhetorical Criticism', three of which are relevant here. The first, indebted to Aristotle, delineates the 'rhythm of recurrence', and is essentially the repetitive and sanctioned form of poetic meter. The second, 'rhythm of continuity', identifies itself as prose. The third common type of rhythm that is relevant here operates otherwise. It is a model Frye calls *lyric*. It is 'discontinuous', apparently in opposition to the rhythm of prose. Not only does this arise when 'the poet, like the ironic writer, turns his back on his audience' (1996: 270), but it is also 'an oracular, meditative, irregular, unpredictable, and essentially discontinuous rhythm' (1996: 271).

The presence of this rhythm appears like the advent of a principle of 'chaos' and reveals itself as somehow closer to the creative impulse, less known or knowable, in contradistinction to the first two types of rhythm, of which Frye writes:

'Neither of these by itself seems quite to get down to what we think of as typically the poetic creation, which is an associative rhetorical process, most of it below the threshold of consciousness, a chaos of paronomasia, sound-links, ambiguous sense-links, and memory-links very like that of the dream. Out of this the distinctively lyrical union of sound and sense emerges' (1996: 272).

The place of this rhythm, used in its correct non-musical manner, is to resolve the difficulty of the distance and the difference between the language-objects of poetry and prose. But it is also meant to bridge the conditional separation of object and subject. The interiority of the

subject is what is brought into play by this rhythm. It is affective, libidinous and charged with the mercurial character of the unconscious. Depending on one's definitions of the unconscious, it is not wholly socially or historically adapted as such. The most valuable bridging function this mode of rhythm performs is outlined as follows: 'If we do not recognize this third rhythm, we shall have no answer for the naive objection that when poetry loses regular meter it becomes prose' (1996: 272). Frye's lyrical rhythm is most valuable because it is not, in fact, the opposite of prose, but militates against any dualistic genre boundaries between poetry and prose, it is an *other* rhythm.

A further contribution Frye makes is to the status of literary language, dismantling the binary form of mimesis, which he conceived as neither reality nor representation. Although he borrows from Aristotle, literature for Frye is not mimetic (Clarke 2004: 4). In overturning the force of Aristotle's imitative role of the arts, Frye's work is part of the initiation of the linguistic turn in the 1950s, but without yet betraying later theory's devotion to the sign's function in replacing 'reality', *pace* Baudrillard. As such, it presents a valuable moment of mediation:

'Both literature and mathematics proceed from postulates, not facts; both can be applied to external reality and yet exist also in a 'pure' or self-contained form. Both, furthermore, drive a wedge between the antithesis of being and non-being that is so important for discursive thought. The symbol neither is nor is not the reality which it manifests' (1996: 351).

This, as we will see, is in sympathy with Deleuze's approach to the difficult distinctions he makes between actual and virtual time. If lyrical rhythm admits the unrepresentable and thereby undoes the self-sufficiency of the object, it also undoes the 'self-sufficiency' of the subject. Drucker is attentive to the fact that objectification in formalism works both ways, both in the direction of the self and the object. Formalism at its most 'Aristotelian' creates two objects: 'Photographic reification constantly imposes an entity-based transcription of lived phenomena onto our perception of these experiences – turning relations and events into people and things' (Drucker 2010: 25).

With regard to the presence of the body as primary site in the communication and sensing of rhythm, Frye's lyricism points to a different body, which is neither that regulated in poetry nor that which remains unregulated in prose. Aristotle's *Poetics* is useful to recall in that it also refers to rhythm not only as 'poetic meter' but as an aspect of the dancer's skill: 'Rhythm alone, without harmony, is the means in the dancer's imitations [...] by the rhythms of his attitudes, may represent men's characters, as well as what they do and suffer' (Aristotle 1991: 2). Attesting to the power of this rhythm in the dramatic sense, Aristotle goes on to diminish it as inessential to the power of tragedy in which actors might overuse gesture and thereby reveal the place of the body as lowest in the hierarchy of means. Nevertheless, he asserts the body itself as the *site* of the *inscription* or *expression* and *quality* of rhythm; a meaning that is thereby completely erased through the sole association of rhythm with either meter or poetic emphasis in the heritage of the literary arts, or in the strict association of rhythm with the temporal arts. It is this aspect of formalist rhythm that we can recoup from the formalist heritage.

We also know then – from Aristoxenus – that the beating of the foot was the means by which ‘we mark the rhythm and make it intelligible to the sense’ (Rowell 1979: 73). Yet there were two marks: the downward step known as *thesis* and the upward step known as *arsis*. We find here the elision required to reduct the upward step (or to silence bodily expression of a dance-like movement) into the notion of a beat, which we most often associate with a rhythmic pulse related to physical contact, the *autographic*, and all its associations of presence, form and inscription given in the rhythm of naturalism. The moment of the meter – made up, more or less, of different combinations of *arsis* and *thesis* – and its rhythm appear in material form only when translated into a written stress pattern, that is, as we see it in musical notation rather than as we *sense* it in a bodily step into the air rather than marked as a beat on the ground. What Frye calls lyric rhythm can be said, therefore, to embrace both movements equally, the movement of temporality both in ‘contact’ and in virtual or ‘dream’ space, both on and off the beat. We do not very often, naturalistically, sense the pauses between our heartbeats, but we sense the rhythm of the pauses between our heartbeats. The lyric mode both internalizes its object and exteriorizes its affect. It may thus be possible to sense the rhythm of a pulsating object, say, of a photograph. But can a photograph, as such, be said to pulsate?

Rhythm III: Crystalline rhythm

A theoretical position that conceives of the still image being as *without rhythm* (neither ‘arrhythmic’ nor ‘unrhythmic’ is adequate) would hold equally across genres and false divides such as between analogue and digital forms, because such dichotomies merely serve the dualism necessary for representationalist definitions of rhythm. What we witness, through

video or the photograph, as the flickering computer screen gives a sense of rhythmic intensities that animate not only the digital pulse but the palpitations of the ‘present’, of the ‘object’ and ‘ourselves’. A more rigorous look at time in a cinematic-photographic sense and at the anthropomorphic assumptions of the meaning of time is thus called for. In this vein, one might turn to Damian Sutton’s recent commentary on such relations: ‘This stringing together of moments is just as much a false perception of experience as cinema is a false illusion of movement: the central thesis of Deleuze’s work on the movement-image’ (Sutton 2009: 70).

It has become an orthodoxy to claim that the appearance and simulation of ‘reality’, evoked through duration, is articulated in the ‘successive appearance of still images’. Indeed, this is one of the founding technological concepts of the early cinema, but only if we equate ‘reality’ with an illusion of ‘movement’ and disavow the temporal aspect of the ‘still’ image, that is, only if we create an artificial opposition between modes of time in photography and film or persist in seeing photographs through the dominance of this particular cinematic lens. As Hughes notes, Deleuze echoes Bergson when addressing this problem:

‘For Bergson, it is impossible to think of time as a succession of separate instants because time is what happens between two instants. To think time and not just snapshots of instants requires a ‘bridge’ between the two instants’ (Hughes 2008: 132).

What Hughes clearly describes here is a similarity between the ‘originary synthes[es]’ that both philosophers require to provide this bridge. Bergson, he says, uses the term ‘impersonal

memory’, which explains the necessarily neither subjective nor objective link, whilst Deleuze sets up a complex order of three therefore *passive* (or *given*) syntheses, those required to provide the conditions of possibility of a present, past and future. Whilst Hughes describes time, after Bergson, as ‘subjective’, it is not a psychological or ego-based subjective: ‘it is [...] passive and transcendental’ (DeLanda cited in Hughes 2008: 176). What interests me here is the recourse Deleuze has to non-dualistic terms:

‘Deleuze repeats this unity of subject and object several times in each of the three formulations of the passive syntheses [firstly]: the mind that contemplates is indistinguishable from what it contemplates: ‘the eye binds light, it is itself a bound light (Deleuze *Difference and Repetition* 1996)’ (2008: 133).

An alternative temporal photographic metaphor is obtained if we consider the fullest image of embodied spectatorship in the early history of the panorama, rather than that of cinematographers and chrono-photographers. In the experience of early panoramas, it was the body’s sensory activation that was the locus of the experience of these contrivances, yet this is a locus in which the image itself may have been fragmentary, made up of discrete albeit synthesized views but working along an uninterrupted plane of continuous appearance.

‘The long canvases, of up to 24,000 sq. ft., which were unrolled on public display, were sometimes set on machinic viewing platform devices to simulate, say, a ship’s prow’ (Lueschser 2009).

This provides one with an equally compelling metaphor for the advent of cinematic visuality, a metaphor in which the body was not pacified and embodied durational experience was foregrounded. Thus, ‘Panoramic depictions and their embrace made it necessary to move not only one’s eyes and head in order to grasp the whole, but also one’s body in order to assimilate its vast, continuous canvas’ (Leuschser 2009: 48).

How early cinema played with Aristotelian notions of the primacy of narrative and tragic action and less with the experience of time is encapsulated in Deleuze’s two-part study of cinema, focusing on the movement-image and the time-image. Here, in a study with classical parameters, he describes early cinema as associated with ‘the sensory-motor situations of the action-image [in the old realism]’, a phrase that describes both the quality and function of the moving (still) image and one that, by exclusion, might associate the still photographic image with non-‘sensory-motor’ stimulus (Deleuze 1989: 2). Notorious perhaps for his rejection of all the major forms of identity concept – ‘God, World and Self’ (Smith 2008)– in favour of notions of radical difference, Deleuze is crucial to the exploration of the transition of cinema from the movement-image to the time-image.

If we continue with the possibility of historicizing the concept of time in photography, as it seems Sutton does in his work on Deleuze (2009), we find the transition between ‘the movement image’ of early cinema and the ‘pure opticality’ of the time-image, in which what Deleuze calls the *opsign* and the *sonsign* (vision and sound) are shown as discrete elements that are not used in the service of movement, narrative or linear tales; rather, they open out onto images of a different mode of perception and thought: a new type of image-cinema in which the actor does not ‘act’ but ‘experiences’, and where ‘the character has become a kind of viewer’ (Deleuze 1989: 2). In other words, Deleuze uses a classical framework to shift

Aristotle's emphasis from 'action' back to 'character' and 'quality'. In his stress on the importance of the montage shot – as differentiated from the sequence shot – he also cites Bazin with reference to Italian neo-realism as 'a new type of image'. Bazin called this the 'fact image' that defined a 'new type of reality'. Our link to photography theory in this part of the discussion is best made by Jonathan Friday in his contribution to the conference and publication *Stillness and Time* (2006). Friday attributes to Cartier Bresson's notion of the 'decisive moment' the function of being a herald to cinematic movement. Cartier Bresson's famous *Gare St Lazare* photograph of 1932, for Friday, perfectly 'illustrat[es] this cinematic conception of stillness' because 'the subject matter is frozen in relation to the picture frame, and the image is highly suggestive of what came before and will inevitably follow' (Friday 2006: 41). In other words, the myth of the moment is dependent on its place within an unbroken linearity of similar narrative continuities, a link in a chain, as some other theorists have also described (Green and Lowry 2006).

However, a transition that resulted from a crisis of the action-image was fated to occur, according to Deleuze, that is, the emergence of the time-image in itself. What is significant here is that this modal shift in the temporality of a cinema that was primarily concerned with action – that could be accounted and identified as 'real' – was replaced by a mode in which the dualistic question of the real and its representation was no longer primary. Neo-realism had an effect that 'replaces tradi- tional drama with a kind of optical drama lived by the character' (Deleuze 1989: 2). He writes:

'As for the distinction between subjective and objective, it also tends to lose its importance, to the extent that the optical situation or visual description replaces the motor action, we run in fact into a principle of

indiscernibility [...] we no longer know what is imaginary or real, physical or mental, in the situation [...]' (Deleuze 1989: 27).

Deleuze goes on to call these polarities (that the *opsign* and *sonsign* move between) 'a system of exchange between the imaginary and the real' (Deleuze 1989: 7). This marks a shift in the meaning of representation through cinema, which displaces traditional notions based on correspondence. Thus, it is that the form of any identity concept that the cornerstone of self, subject and object gives to the rhythm of naturalism together with the crucible of the conscious and unconscious in the lyric rhythm are now, formally, exceeded. And thus it is that we have another fundamental mode of rhythm being articulated.

Deleuze ascribes the 'invention' of these signs to the Japanese director Ozu, and it is not coincidental that this non-western heritage is significant for undermining western temporality. We arrive at the advent of the 'direct time-image', which he places as early as the 1930's in Ozu's work. Once we have this description in place it is easier to see how Ozu's long duration shots serve in their embodying of time, composition and lack of a simple narrative functionality as examples of direct time-images, and how they differ from Friday's proposed example of long-exposure portraits as 'temporal photographs' – a precursor perhaps to Drucker's formulation of the 'temporal image/ event'. To illustrate the idea, Deleuze describes some typical examples:

'A bicycle may also endure; that is, represent the unchanging form of that which moves, so long as it is at rest, motionless, stood against the wall. The bicycle, the vase and the still lives are the pure and direct images of time. Each is time, on each occasion, under various condi-

tions of that which changes in time' (Deleuze 1989: 17).

As we turn to Deleuze's further definitions of the 'crystals of time' and apply these to photography, we should ask: What do direct time-images reveal of the rhythmic substrate in photography? The basis for a mode of rhythm can be found in Deleuze's description of Robert Bresson's work and the outline he gives of the French contribution to the new type of cinematic images described above. He undertakes this using the example of the extraordinary sequence at the Gare de Lyon in the *Pickpocket* (Bresson (dir.): 1959) in which the hands of three pickpocket accomplices unify the filmic space. These are hands that 'connect the parts of space [...] not exactly through their seizing an object, but through brushing it, arresting it in its movement, giving it another direction, passing it on and making it circulate in this space' (Deleuze 1989: 13). These hands function not simply as a double of the surreptitious object, but also to connect the parts of space, and, most importantly, 'it is the whole eye which doubles its optical function by a specifically 'grabbing' [haptique] one' (Deleuze 1989: 13). We have here an excellent illustration of a type of look that embodies, *enfleshes*, what it sees, and thereby has a rhythmic temporality. How did Deleuze substantiate this idea? He refers specifically to the art historian Riegl, who supports the notion of 'a touching which is specific to the gaze' (Deleuze 1989: 13). Deleuze thereby manages to recoup the non-dualistic instinct within the work of Riegl, a 'classical' formalist of both western and non-western fine and applied arts. This enables him to reopen a rhythmic analysis through the centrality of his notion of movement in two-dimensional design as rhythmic.

In Bresson's film, the stolen object passed between the thieves is not so much centrally absent in each frame as it is a cipher of 'the missing (stolen) object' – we might also say of the 'still moment' – that bridges each successive scene. It is reminiscent of both the bridge

required between two moments and the duration of the instant, irreducible to a singular link in a measured or measurable linear chain. So it is that in returning again to the earliest articulations of art history, Deleuze finds in Riegl a distinctly postmodern thread of non-representational understanding, in the tactility of *the relation* to the work of art – a Baroque, or, more properly, a post-Renaissance baroque fascination with experienced structure. With this, we arrive at an explanation of Deleuze’s idea of a pure ‘crystal-image’, or the ‘crystals’ of time, one that is no longer necessarily purely visual but necessarily non-dualistic and immanent:

‘The crystal reveals a direct time-image, and no longer an indirect image of time deriving from movement. It does not abstract time; it does better: it reverses its subordination in relation to movement’ (Deleuze 1989: 98).

A crystalline rhythm comprises stillness and, as such, it is not stilled into suspended animation. The first step is the transition from movement to time. The cinema encapsulates a progressive definition of time described ‘in and of itself’ instead of as an aspect of the dramatizations inherent in the representation of time (things changing, narratives unfolding) in the earlier moving image. This releases time from its subordinate position. Detached from its narrative function, the time-image is free to connect with wider image references. More than this, it is nevertheless in our *relation to* time that the time crystal is revealed; we must maintain a radically non-dualistic frame of mind and not attempt a one-sided description of a ‘time object’ as such, but see the coming together of the dual aspect of the time-image, its actual and virtual faces, of which the crystal is

formed: ‘The crystal is like a ratio cognoscendi of time, while time, conversely, is ratio essendi’ (Deleuze 1989: 98). This is explained well in the translator’s notes. The ‘ratio cognoscendi’ is ‘its being in the mode of being known’, whilst the ‘ratio essendi’ is time’s ‘essence or “formal reason”’ (Tomlinson and Galeta in Deleuze 1989: 297). In other words, one dimension is ‘actual’ and the other remains ‘virtual’. Furthermore, we cannot centre the time-image within a phenomenology, as such, because the ‘I’ also forever forms, fragments and *recollects* and is, itself, subject to these qualities. The time-images’ ‘actual or virtual’ aspects are not oppositional categories. Deleuze might call them ‘mutual images’. When one flips into the other, the indiscernibility of each is what makes this ‘an objective illusion’. As he puts it:

‘The actual is always objective, but the virtual is subjective: it was initially the affect, that we experience in time; then time itself, pure virtuality which divides itself in two as affector and affected, ‘the affection of self by self’ as definition of time’ (Deleuze 1989: 83).

At moments like this Deleuze transcends the phenomenological project: ‘subjectivity is never ours, it is time, that is, the soul or the spirit, the virtual’ (Deleuze 1989: 82–3). This is as clear a basis of the need for a ‘crystal-image’ of time as we can have. We might say this is a metaphor that (trans)forms from the soluble states of relative density (history, experienced time, memory and so on), a transparent, fine or grain-like form in the crystals that are shaped, often repeated but with *endless difference* in the appearance of the common phenomenon of crystalline defects. No two crystals are ever exactly the same. This is a metaphor derived from chemical science, which explains precisely why Deleuze goes on to describe four forms of crystal: ‘perfect’, ‘formation’, ‘cracked’ and ‘decomposing’ crystals. Yet, essentially:

‘What constitutes the crystal-image is the most fundamental operation of time: since the past is constituted not after the present that it was but at the same time, time has to split itself in two at each moment as past and present [...] it splits in two dissymmetrical jets, one of which makes all the present pass on (towards the future), while the other preserves all the past’ (Deleuze 1989: 81).

Should we struggle to imagine these in actual photographic form, a visual example Deleuze gives as one of ‘the most beautiful’ crystal-images is the ‘opaque hyper-sphere’ in Resnais’ film *Je t’aime Je t’aime* of 1968. Conley provides a more detailed description of this concept in photographic terms:

‘The time-image (and its crystals) is often discerned in deep focus photography, the model par excellence for Renoir and Welles, for whom montage is folded into the spatial dynamics given in a single take. Yet it acquires legibility in Godard’s cinema, such as *Pierrot le fou* (1965) in which a ‘depth of surface’ is created by patterns of writing or abstract forms painted on walls against which human players seem flattened’ (Conley 2005: 281).

More work needs to be done on the applicability of ‘Crystal time’ to photography practice [and this is a project I have spent some time exploring in my photographic practices, one example of which outlines the non-visual through energetic or quantum level exposure through radiation. TS], and Conley’s description misses one element of the Deleuzian language. For Deleuze, the time-image’s virtuality, what is irreducible to actuality, is its virtue. He introduces an energetic quality when describing the crystal as ‘the small internal

circuit. This is a crystal image' (Deleuze 1989: 69). And the term 'circuit' is used repeatedly in his text to trace the dynamics of each of the image types and its operations. A crystalline rhythmic *substrate* is thus an apposite description of a mode of rhythm in photography theory. What this word, 'crystal', is so effective in communicating is the finest grain of interconnections in quantum science, that of the pulsating energetic bonds and reactions between *assemblies* of electrons and nuclei and one no longer dependent on the fluid mechanics of regularity or smoothness, as was naturalism.

The background conditionality against which different connections and dissolutions are made possible is, in fact, like Bergson's explication of duration as the continuity principle of temporality, in which *no identity theory* holds sway. Bergson gives the example in a liminal image of the embryo: 'The development of the embryo is a perpetual change of form. Anyone who attempts to note all its successive aspects becomes lost in an infinity, as is inevitable in dealing with a continuum' (Bergson 2002: 181). He also likens this physical example to a psychic state akin to consciousness in which continuity, the preserving of the past within the present, and real duration are also definitions of conscious life, which, ultimately, is a type of 'unceasing creation' (Bergson 2002: 181).

It is this Bergsonian 'unceasing creation' that fulfils a definition of the rhythmic terms with which this essay began: 'Form fascinates when one no longer has the force to understand force from within itself. That is, to create' (Derrida 2001: 3). Crystal formation suggests qualities of duration on an atomic level – or equally in an energetic field – that is no longer conceptualized as linear but divergent, in any given moment. In this vein we can note Stagnoll's definition of Deleuzian duration: 'Duration, as lived experience, brings together both unity and difference in a flow of interconnections' (Stagnoll 2005: 80).

It is this point, finally, that ensures the non-dualistic perspective within which photographic rhythm is necessarily described and which makes rhythm available to be activated, as much as perceived, not strictly scaled to anthropomorphic dimensions, as much divergent as it is convergent, a continuum.

We might ask by way of conclusion whether there is any support for such a perspective on rhythm. This definition evokes the breakthrough in non-perceptual theories of rhythm that occurred in modern classical music in the mid-twentieth century. Our final image then is of Karlheinz Stockhausen, who took rhythm outside of its traditional classical musical framework of being reduced to either meter or pulse.

Through the technological approach of his merging of two parameters, his presentation of the pitch-tempo scale in 1956, we see an analogy to the exceeding of classical formalism in the musical language. This was also an approach to redressing the isolation of rhythm as a subordinate element – to melody and harmony in this case – and as solely concerned with measuring regular time passing, organizing duration. He, like many (post)modernist formalists, wanted to liberate rhythm as a compositional structure:

‘The unifying basis of both parameters is time-length: pitch being a periodic recurrence of a wave-length, duration being a simple time-length. From that point of view, both pitch and (metric) duration are degrees on the same time-length continuum: wave-lengths between 0.00005 and 0.05 seconds (corresponding to 20,000 and 20 Hz) are perceived as pitch, lengths between 0.05 and 8 seconds are perceived as metrical time divisions’ (Coenen 1994: 211).

What Stockhausen's experiment also aimed to do was to elaborate rhythm as a central organizing feature, which allows us to view rhythm as a type of roughly estimable structure, an energy, exceeding conventional notation, and one that is also no longer anthropocentric; it, too, crystallizes time.

This rhythm of temporality-as-texture now makes available such terms as 'timbre', 'granularity' and 'roughness', each of which exemplifies the possibilities of knowing rhythm more widely as an activated spatiality in photography, a dynamization of what was previously static space. Wherever such textures appear we know that time is not being reduced, abstracted or subordinated, but is immanent, non-dualistically, in its temporospatial dimension as a crystal rhythm.

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