

Abstract for Tuning Speculations II, York University, November 2014

The Technics of Aural and Spatial Attunement: Rickert, Derrida, Stiegler and Léroi-Gourhan

In his recent book *Ambient Rhetoric, The Attunements of Rhetorical Being*, Thomas Rickert has made a sustained and novel contribution to recent philosophical and critical work on neomaterialist theories of embodiment, affect and object oriented ontology. A genealogy that tracks back from our current epoch of 'non-linear', hypermediated technological environments, through philosophy's relationship to language and space, to the formative 'spatial *techné*' of the caves of Lascaux, Rickert's book explores how the myriad imbrications of culture and language have historically been and still are 'ambiently attuned' to space.

As a work that seeks inventive critical approaches to the challenges raised in an age of networked non-linearity by way of the history of language and rhetoric's spatialisations, *Ambient Rhetoric* is not without its precursors. The early work of Derrida in the first part of *Of Grammatology* seeks a similar end - to recover the spatial provenance of language and sense in order to 'de-sediment [...] four thousand years of linear writing'. One also finds connections to the work of Bernard Stiegler, in his critique 'orthography' - the linearisation of recorded inscription informing the history of the West. Both Derrida and Stiegler take inspiration from the work of the palaeontologist André Léroi-Gourhan, specifically his concept of the non-linear 'mythogram' - a pluri-dimensional mode of figuration he also traces back to the Lascaux caves.

Taking an impetus from Rickert, Derrida, Stiegler and Léroi-Gourhan, with a mind to further sounding the conceptual and pragmatic potential at work in the critical conjunctures informing the technics of aural and spatial attunement, this presentation proposes to explore how these conjunctures might thus facilitate a more concrete and sustainable critical relationship to what Stiegler has described as our 'analogico-digital' epoch, and the possibility it might still harbour of a renovated 'critical culture of reception'.

Marcel Swiboda teaches and researches in cultural studies at the University of Leeds, UK. His current research is mainly focused on the idiomatic imbrications of philosophy, theory, technology and improvisation.