
Visualizing Bodies and Political Motion: A Critical Review of the Perceptual Rite of Passage

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Abstract

Today's political climate presents profound opportunities to understand how our visualizing practices are associated, implicated even, with our everyday perceptual experiences. This talk will share key phenomenological concepts grounded in what I refer to as the *Perceptual Rite of Passage (PRoP)*. This uniquely transitional period is first witnessed during preadolescence when children begin to recognize the dynamics and affective nature of public/private space. (Simms, 2008; Welsh, 2014). I argue that the PRoP framework and its critical attention to embodied perception - the complex multimodal, multisensory, and fluid entanglement of the subject-body and the world (Merleau-Ponty, 1945; No' e, 2004; Trigg, 2017; van Manen, 2014) has the potential to illuminate how we understand our seeing practices that labor to orient our bodies towards, and away from, the spectacles of institutional powers. This is a key idea of Ahmed (2006) who underscores "the importance of lived experience, the intentionality of consciousness, the significance of nearness, and the role of repeated and habitual actions in shaping bodies and worlds" (p. 2). The *Perceptual Rite of Passage* that occurs during preadolescence can indicate new pedagogical and scholarly possibilities for how equity is lived, understood, and realized during childhood and throughout our adult lives. The talk will conclude with suggestions of a critical visuality that is attentive to how bodies (human and non-human) perform and the political implications for social justice in visual studies education.

Keywords: visuality, embodied perception, perceptual rite of passage, childhood development, social justice

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