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Scheduling Routine : An Analysis of the Spatio-Temporal Rhythms of Practice in Everyday Life



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Rhuthmos

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Abstract : This thesis is concerned with the relationship between social action and social change in 'everyday' life. I position my argument in contrast to lay and academic re-presentations of action that maintain a distinction between subject and object, between action and change and between being and becoming. I argue for a 'practice-approach' that considers action, or practice, not as performance or entity ; but instead attempts to capture the presencing of social action by concentrating on 'practice as event' and 'practice in the moment of doing'. This serves to locate 'knowledges' and 'subjectivities' firmly within the realm of the material and bodily actions of doing, and thus in the continually changing 'world' of practice. I therefore develop an understanding of change as a fundamental and ongoing property of temporally and spatially situated practice. To support these theoretical claims I employ a rhythm-analytical methodological approach, studying my own experiences of rhythms of practice at five empirical sites, including resistance training, ashtanga yoga, stock car racing, computer gaming and mixed martial arts. Analysis of my own engagement in these rhythms (including immersive participant observations and in depth interviews with fellow participants), from a theoretical-methodological position that recognises practice as change, leads me to argue that the re-production of 'moments' of practice, depends on the scheduling of practice as routine or nonroutine. So understood, I argue that the scheduling of 'moments' of practice as routine requires 'training' to develop sufficient 'embodied-knowledge-in-practice', 'syncopation' within the polyrhythmia of 'everyday' life and the absence of 'arrhythmia' or nonroutine 'moments' of practice, in shaping the rhythms of practice in 'everyday' life. My research contributes to a distinct ontology of practice that re-evaluates the notion of 'change' in a manner that is relevant not only in 'theories of practice' ; but also for wider studies of social action.