

Feminist Electrifying Art as Challenging People to (Re)think Their Relationship to Electricity

Abstract

The need for decarbonization of energy production and the war in Ukraine has emphasized European's dependency over Russian oil and accelerated attention to the issues of the energy crisis in Europe. In Quebec, as electricity is powered mainly from hydropower, decarbonization has evaded proper considerations forgetting how this invasive energy production comes from and benefit settler colonialism. The pressing needs to address the energy crisis highlights its complexity and ongoing (mis)conceptions of electricity and its system within the general population. Electrical anthropologists have problematized western societies' understanding and conception of electricity as essential to (re)think our energy futures. Through an analysis of two case studies based on works of electrical art created by two women artists, this thesis analyzes how these works of art potentially challenge male dominant STEM practices by attending to the complexities and interconnectedness of electricity, its system, and the environment. The thesis argues that participants/listeners/viewers are challenged in their relationship to electricity (and its system) towards more responsible and response-able approaches. Drawing on feminist theorists within feminist epistemologies and new materialism, the thesis analyzes how the works of art's multisensory assemblages and the artist's artists' apparatus of knowledge production, affective relationship towards more-than-humans and attentiveness to humans and nonhumans entanglements.

Key Words: electricity, energy crisis, situated knowledge, settler colonialism, works of art, entanglements, affect.