

Extrait du Rhuthmos

<https://www.rhuthmos.eu/spip.php?article2097>

Rhythm and Race in Modernist Poetry and Science - Phonoscopic Modernism

- Recherches

- Le rythme dans les sciences et les arts contemporains

Date de mise en ligne : mardi 24 octobre 2017



Rhuthmos

<dl class='spip_document_3611 spip_documents spip_documents_left' style='float:left;'>



Introduction

Phonoscopic Modernism

The reason people marvel at works of art and say: How in Christ's name did he do it?—is that they know nothing of the physiology of the nervous system.

—William Carlos Williams, *Spring and All*

The title of my introduction derives from the *phonoscope*, a device invented in France at the turn of the twentieth century to monitor the rhythmic changes in the *metabolism* of a person as he or she speaks. Strapped to the throat of the speaker, who also held a tube in one nostril, the *phonoscope* registered the vibrations of the vocal apparatus, producing a picture of sound—hence *phono/scope*—in the form of a wavy line incised onto a metal drum cylinder (see figure 0.1). This cylinder provided the phonologist with a chart of the sound of a particular language as spoken by a particular person. The thesis of the present study is that these pictures—and more importantly, the body of scientific work that produced them—motivated many of the formal innovations of Modernist poetry.