

*Rhythmanalysis* displays all the characteristics which made Lefebvre one of the most important Marxist thinkers of the twentieth century. In the analysis of rhythms – both biological and social – Lefebvre shows the interrelation of space and time in the understanding of everyday life.

With dazzling skill, Lefebvre moves between discussions of music, the commodity, measurement, the media and the city. In doing so he shows how a non-linear conception of time and history balanced his famous rethinking of the question of space. This volume also includes his earlier essays on *The Rhythmanalytical Project* and *Attempt at the Rhythmanalysis of Mediterranean Towns*.

**Henri Lefebvre** (1901–91) wrote widely on politics, philosophy and sociology. He is best known for his writings on everyday life, cities and the production of space.

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LONDON • NEW YORK  
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# LEFEBVRE

## *Rhythmanalysis*

# Rhythmanalysis

Space, Time and Everyday Life

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The Tower Building,  
11 York Road,  
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New York, NY 10038

[www.continuumbooks.com](http://www.continuumbooks.com)

English translation © Continuum 2004

*Elements of Rhythmanalysis* originally published as  
*Éléments de rythmanalyse* by Éditions Syllepse, Paris, 1992

First published by Continuum 2004  
Reprinted 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007

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### British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN-10: 0-8264-6993-0 (hardback)

0-8264-7299-0 (paperback)

ISBN-13: 978-0-8264-6993-9 (hardback)

978-0-8264-7299-1 (paperback)

Typeset by Kenneth Burnley, Wirral, Cheshire

Printed and bound in Great Britain by Biddles Ltd., King's Lynn, Norfolk

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## Acknowledgements

While all translations here are new, in order to lend a consistency to the volume as a whole, we gratefully acknowledge our debt to previous translators of some of the pieces included here. Chapter Three of *Elements of Rhythmanalysis* and 'Rhythmanalysis of Mediterranean Cities' appeared in *Writings on Cities*, edited and translated by Eleonore Kofman and Elizabeth Lebas, Oxford: Blackwell, 1996, pp. 219–27, 228–40; 'The Rhythmanalytical Project', translated by Imogen Forster, appeared in *Key Writings*, edited by Stuart Elden, Elizabeth Lebas and Eleonore Kofman, London: Continuum, 2003, pp. 190–8.

## Rhythmanalysis: An Introduction

Lost again. Where was I? Where am I? Mud road. Stopped car.  
Time is rhythm: the insect rhythm of a warm humid night, brain  
ripple, breathing, the drum in my temple – these are our faithful  
timekeepers; and reason corrects the feverish beat.

—Vladimir Nabokov, *Ada, or Ardor: A Family Chronicle*<sup>1</sup>

*Elements of Rhythmanalysis* was the last book Lefebvre wrote, although it only appeared after his death, published by his friend and colleague René Lourau.<sup>2</sup> It is a work which shows why Lefebvre was one of the most important Marxist thinkers of the twentieth century, but simultaneously illustrates how his work critiqued and moved beyond that paradigm, incorporating insights from elsewhere in an intoxicating mixture of ideas, illustrations and analyses. In the analysis of rhythms – biological, psychological and social – Lefebvre shows the interrelation of understandings of space and time in the comprehension of everyday life. This issue of space and time is important, for here, perhaps above all, Lefebvre shows how these issues need to be thought together rather than separately. For the English-speaking audience of his works it equally shows how a non-linear conception of time and history balanced his famous rethinking of the question of space.

Lefebvre's study includes a wide range of discussions in order to illustrate these points. Music, the commodity, measurement, the media, political discipline and the city are all deployed to powerful effect. It is at once a book about metaphysical issues and



one concerned with the minutiae of everyday life; a political book and a contribution to cultural studies. Lefebvre had been working on the themes explored in the book for a number of years, in writings on Nietzsche and aesthetics particularly,<sup>3</sup> although it was only in the 1980s that he explicitly dealt with the notion of rhythm – first in the third and final volume of his *Critique of Everyday Life*, published in 1981,<sup>4</sup> and then in two co-written shorter pieces which preceded the book *Elements of Rhythmanalysis*. These essays, ‘The Rhythmanalytical Project’ and ‘Attempt at the Rhythmanalysis of Mediterranean Cities’, co-written with his last wife, Catherine Régulier, are included in this volume, which therefore brings together all of Lefebvre’s writings on this theme.

In general terms, Lefebvre is concerned with taking the concept of rhythm and turning it into ‘a science, a new field of knowledge: the analysis of rhythms; with practical consequences’.<sup>5</sup> Rhythm, for Lefebvre, is something inseparable from understandings of time, in particular repetition. It is found in the workings of our towns and cities, in urban life and movement through space. Equally, in the collision of natural biological and social timescales, the rhythms of our bodies and society, the analysis of rhythms provides a privileged insight into the question of everyday life. Lefebvre takes a number of themes – the thing, the object, life in the urban or rural environment, the role of media, political discipline and the notion of dressage, and music, among others – and rethinks them through the notion of rhythm. The question of the body, and in particular the body under capitalism, is a recurrent and indeed central topic. As he notes, the push–pull exchange between the general and the particular, the abstraction of concepts and the concrete analysis of the mundane, starting with the body, is at play throughout the work, although Lefebvre follows the former, starting with ‘full consciousness of the abstract in order to arrive at the concrete’.<sup>6</sup>

### **Everyday Life, Time and Space**

As Armand Ajzenberg has noted, Lefebvre considered this book on rhythmanalysis to be the de facto fourth volume of his occasional series *Critique of Everyday Life*.<sup>7</sup> The first volume

appeared shortly after the liberation of France, in 1947, and was republished with a lengthy preface in 1958. The second volume appeared in 1961, the third twenty years later.<sup>8</sup> Lefebvre covered a wide range of themes in these volumes, ranging from economic and political analyses to film and literary criticism. This work is no exception, with the range of issues already noted. Lefebvre’s work on rhythms and repetition is useful in gaining insight into the double sense of the notion of the everyday – a dual meaning found in the English and the French. *Le quotidien* means the mundane, the everyday, but also the repetitive, what happens every day. Indeed in the second volume, thirty years in advance, Lefebvre had promised a future work on rhythmanalysis,<sup>9</sup> a promise which was partially delivered in the third volume, and then finally in this, his fullest treatment of the question.

But the writings on rhythmanalysis are more than this. Most explicitly they are a contribution to another of his lifelong projects, the attempt to get us both to think space and time *differently*, and to think them *together*. In the English-speaking world, apart perhaps from *Critique of Everyday Life*, no other book of Lefebvre’s has had as much impact as *The Production of Space*. Here Lefebvre poses questions about the role space plays in our lives, from the conceptualisation of the world to cities and rural environments, and to the homes we live in. Lefebvre’s analysis is both conceptual – the threefold distinction between spatial practices, representations of space and spaces of representation – and historical, with discussion of abstract, absolute, relative and concrete space.<sup>10</sup> The historical dimension is often neglected in contemporary appropriations of Lefebvre’s work, which is seriously to misread him. And as he notes at the end of this book, an analysis of rhythms, a rhythmanalysis, ‘would complete the exposition of the production of space’.<sup>11</sup> Although Lefebvre was concerned with correcting what he saw as Marxism’s over-emphasis of the temporal dimension – and concomitant under-emphasis of the spatial – he was also involved in a lifelong struggle both within and without orthodox Marxism to pluralise its understanding of time and history.

Lefebvre’s very earliest writings in the mid-1920s were written either in collaboration or in close contact with a group of young



philosophy students in Paris. The group included such figures as Norbert Guterman, who went on to become a translator in New York, the philosopher and psychologist Georges Politzer, the novelist Paul Nizan, and the sociologist Georges Friedmann.<sup>12</sup> Together they edited various journals including *Philosophies* and *L'esprit*, before discovering Marx and going on to found *La revue marxiste* in the late 1920s. Lefebvre later recounted that they were concerned with challenging the dominant philosophy of Bergson.<sup>13</sup> Lefebvre claimed that it was at this time that he developed what he called the 'theory of moments'. For Lefebvre, moments are significant times when existing orthodoxies are open to challenge, when things have the potential to be overturned or radically altered, moments of crisis in the original sense of the term. Rather than the Bergsonian notion of *durée*, duration, Lefebvre was privileging the importance of the instant. The moment has a long tradition in Western thought, most recently in the writings of Kierkegaard and Nietzsche. For Lefebvre it is above all Nietzsche's writings that are important. In Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, the moment, the *Augenblick*, the blink of an eye, is a gateway where past and future collide, and the image of the eternal recurrence.<sup>14</sup> In Lefebvre's own life it was his vision of a crucified sun, of the Christian cross imposed over a solar image, seen when he was walking in the Pyrenees, that he thought was a significant turning point. Lefebvre suggested that the sight was one where the elemental forces of his adolescence were held in check by the constraints of the Catholic church.<sup>15</sup> The question of rhythm and tempo is also important to Nietzsche's conception of style: 'to communicate a state, an inward tension of pathos, by means of signs, including the tempo of these signs – that is the meaning of every style'.<sup>16</sup>

Lefebvre's understanding of time was also shaped by his reading of Proust, with the issues of loss and memory, recollection and repetition becoming particularly important.<sup>17</sup> By the time Lefebvre became a Marxist, in the late 1920s, he therefore had a fairly worked-through understanding of questions of temporality. In his analysis of the difference between linear and cyclical time, and the contrast between clock time and lived time, there is a difference between his understanding and that of Marxism. His

understanding of history is not the linear, teleological progression of Hegel or Marx, but closer to a Nietzschean sense of change and cycles. It is also notable that Lefebvre's understanding of time as non-calculable, as resistant to abstracting generalisation and in need of being understood as 'lived', is the same as his more well-known critique of prevalent ways of comprehending space. Just as Cartesian geometry is a reductive way of understanding space, so too is the measure of time, the clock, a reductive comprehension. But what is particularly central is that Lefebvre's work on questions of temporality preceded his analyses of spatiality by some years. His work on moments, although prefigured in writings as early as the 1920s, found its most detailed expression in his 1958 autobiography *La somme et le reste*; his principal work on history is 1970's *La fin de l'histoire*.<sup>18</sup> Neither of these works is available in full English translation, unlike his most important works on space and the urban, although some important excerpts appear in the *Key Writings* collection.<sup>19</sup>

Lefebvre's recurrent inspiration for his work on time was, as for Nietzsche, music. Musical metaphors and discussions are scattered across Lefebvre's extensive writings, and he was a keen amateur musician, playing the piano and numbering Beethoven and Schumann as his favourite composers.<sup>20</sup> He was also interested in the challenges to dominant modes of musical theory in the work of Pierre Boulez and his antecedents Webern and Schönberg. Lefebvre thought it was important to theorise music as a relation of three terms – melody, harmony and rhythm. His suggestion is that the last of these is often neglected in discussions of music, though it is of paramount importance. All of these three depend on an understanding of time – melody being a sequence of notes in temporal succession, harmony relying on notes sounding at the same time, and rhythm being the placement of notes and their relative lengths. The importance of beat, or musical measure – both captured in French by the word *la mesure* – is found throughout Lefebvre's discussion of measure (also *la mesure*). Music gives us an alternative to purely mathematical models of calculation and measure.

Music is discussed throughout Lefebvre's writings on rhythm-analysis, although Chapter 7 represents its most explicit



theorisation. Elsewhere in the discussion it functions as a metaphor and more. As music demonstrates, the question of rhythm raises issues of change and repetition, identity and difference, contrast and continuity. Lefebvre's interest in the comparison of natural, corporeal rhythms and mechanistic, machine rhythms can also be given a musical twist in the age of programmable instrumentation. As noted, Lefebvre uses rhythm as a mode of analysis – a *tool* of analysis rather than just an *object* of it – to examine and re-examine a range of topics. One of these is the question of the urban, the life of cities in France and elsewhere. As Lefebvre notes, a rhythm analyst is 'capable of listening to a house, a street, a town as one listens to a symphony, an opera'.<sup>21</sup> Because of their prior translation in the *Writings on Cities* collection, these sections are the best-known part of the book.<sup>22</sup> Important though they are, there is much else here. The section on dressage and the disciplining and training of the body bears close comparison to Foucault's work on similar topics in *Discipline and Punish* where the model, just as it is for Lefebvre, is the military. Perhaps less obviously, the discussion of how the mechanical repetition of the cycles of capitalist production is imposed over our circadian rhythms should remind us of the discussion of the working day in Marx's *Capital*.

Both of these references show the stress Lefebvre puts on the body. As he notes, 'at no moment has the analysis of rhythms and the rhythm analytical project lost sight of the body'.<sup>23</sup> In the discussion of the body we can see how Lefebvre recognises the coexistence of social and biological rhythms, with the body as the point of contact. Our biological rhythms of sleep, hunger and thirst, excretion and so on are more and more conditioned by the social environment and our working lives. We train ourselves, and are trained, to behave in a number of ways. However, Lefebvre believes that the rhythm analyst does not simply analyse the body as a subject, but uses the body as the first point of analysis, the tool for subsequent investigations. The body serves us as a metronome.<sup>24</sup> This stress on the *mode* of analysis is what is meant by a rhythm analysis rather than an analysis of rhythms.

### Influences and Influence

Aside from Nietzsche, Proust and Marx, already mentioned, there is one other key figure for Lefebvre's work on rhythms. This is Gaston Bachelard. Lefebvre notes how the term rhythm analysis itself is taken from Bachelard, although as is also noted, it originates with the Portuguese writer Lucio Alberto Pinheiro dos Santos.<sup>25</sup> In this lineage we can perhaps see the other meaning of the word 'elements' in the book's title *Éléments de rythmanalyse*. As well as referring to the constituents or the basic principles of rhythm analysis, in French as in English, *élément* also means the primal building blocks of the world, that is fire and water, air and earth. Bachelard is well known for having written on these elements in a range of his works including *The Psychoanalysis of Fire, Water and Dreams, Air and Dreams* and *Earth and Reveries of Will*.<sup>26</sup> Lefebvre was very interested in Bachelard's work, and occasionally referenced his writings.<sup>27</sup> But perhaps more important than these 'elemental' books, or the scientific works of Bachelard's earlier career,<sup>28</sup> are two other books – *The Poetics of Space* and *Dialectic of Duration*.<sup>29</sup> Lefebvre regularly cites the former, particularly in his *The Production of Space*, where Bachelard, along with Nietzsche and Heidegger, is one of those he draws upon for an understanding of space, just as Marx is his mentor for the notion of production.<sup>30</sup> *Dialectic of Duration*, though, is the book where Bachelard discusses rhythms most explicitly. Here Bachelard suggests that the notion of duration, made famous by Bergson, is never as unitary and cohesive as Bergson suggested, but fragmentary and made up of disparate elements. It is the notion of continuity above all that Bachelard wishes to critique.<sup>31</sup> Lefebvre took much from this critique.

Readers may discern other influences at work here. Lefebvre's relations to Gilles Deleuze and Jean Baudrillard (another colleague from Nanterre) for example, are unexplored avenues of research, as is his complicated debt to and critique of Heidegger.<sup>32</sup> But Lefebvre expressly states that the ambition of the book 'is to found a science, a new field of knowledge'.<sup>33</sup> Has he been successful in this aim? It is probably too early to tell, but his ideas on rhythm have certainly found little purchase since their



publication over a decade ago. Some Anglophone geographers have been inspired by his recounting of the rhythms of Parisian streets in Chapter 3, 'Seen from the Window',<sup>34</sup> but the work on temporality more generally and on music have had little attention paid to them. This is the case even in books on Lefebvre. Rémi Hess's *Henri Lefebvre et l'aventure du siècle* was written before *Elements of Rhythmanalysis* was published, though probably not before it was written, and his 'official' status as Lefebvre's biographer makes it surprising that he says almost nothing about rhythm.<sup>35</sup> Similarly Rob Shields's *Lefebvre, Love & Struggle* says little about it, though like Kurt Meyer's *Henri Lefebvre* it does discuss the notion of moments at some length.<sup>36</sup>

Rather than searching for those inspired by Lefebvre, the project of rhythmanalysis may best be served by looking at two other writers – writing around the same time as Lefebvre – who also used rhythm as a tool of analysis. Both come from intellectual orientations similar to Lefebvre's, though with less emphasis on the Marxist side and more on the Nietzschean/Heideggerian one. The first I would like briefly to mention is Henri Meschonnic, whose *Critique du rythme* discusses the rhythmic patterns of language in some interesting and productive ways.<sup>37</sup> Lefebvre himself only briefly mentions language's rhythmic or metrical properties in relation to poetry.<sup>38</sup> But as Meschonnic notes, 'the relation of rhythms and the methods for defining them clearly expose the epistemological challenge [*enjeu*] of the human sciences, a theory of meaning, a challenge which is not only poetic but a politics of literary practices'.<sup>39</sup>

Second, Elizabeth Deeds Ermarth blends literary analysis with social theory in her *Sequel to History*, a remarkable book which takes Cortázar's *Hopscotch*, Nabokov's *Ada* and Robbe-Grillet's *Jealousy* as examples of shifts in our comprehension of time and history.<sup>40</sup> For Ermarth, 'it is musical rhythm that best suggests the nature of postmodern temporality'.<sup>41</sup> To return to Nabokov himself, in a passage partly cited by Ermarth:

Maybe the only thing that hints at a sense of Time is rhythm; not the recurrent beats of the rhythm but the gap between two such beats, the grey gap between black beats: the Tender

Interval. The regular throb itself merely brings back the miserable idea of measurement, but in between, something like true Time lurks.<sup>42</sup>

This translation of Lefebvre's writings on rhythmanalysis will hopefully continue the English-language reappraisal of his work. Of Lefebvre's books explicitly concerned with questions of temporality it is the first to receive a complete English translation. And yet it is a work that says much to those who have found in Lefebvre one of the most productive theorisations of space in the European tradition. It is to be hoped that this work, where questions of space and time come together, allows the thinking of their relation to progress in some important ways. As he notes, 'Everywhere where there is interaction between a place, a time and an expenditure of energy, there is **rhythm**'.<sup>43</sup> In addition, as the *Key Writings* collection attempted to show, Lefebvre's work was always philosophically informed and politically aware. His writings on rhythmanalysis are no exception, and those interested in his philosophical and political outlook will find much of interest here.

Finally, a word on the question of everyday life. Lefebvre himself believed that the introduction and critique of this concept was his most important contribution to Marxism, and in many ways almost all of his writings can be seen as part of that large, multi-faceted and ongoing project. As *Elements of Rhythmanalysis* and the shorter writings which follow here demonstrate, Lefebvre was concerned with the contrast between the capitalist system and the daily lives of individuals to the very end of his own life.

*Elements of Rhythmanalysis:  
An Introduction to the  
Understanding of Rhythms*

Henri Lefebvre

[Originally published as *Éléments de rythmanalyse:  
Introduction à la connaissance des rythmes*,  
Paris: Éditions Syllepse, 1992.]



# Introduction to Rhythmanalysis

This little book does not conceal its ambition. It proposes nothing less than to found a science, a new field of knowledge [*savoir*]: the analysis of rhythms; with practical consequences.

Of course, here, as in all sectors of knowledge [*connaissance*] and action, germs, seeds and elements have existed for centuries. But it is only quite recently that this concept, rhythm, has taken on a developed form, thus entering into knowledge instead of remaining the object of art (and more or less blind practices, from work to thought).

To begin with, a definition. What is rhythm? What do we understand by it, be it in everyday life, or in the established sectors of knowledge and creation?

The critique of the thing and of the process of *thingification* (of *reification*) in modern thought would fill volumes. It has been led in the name of becoming, of movement, of mobility in general. But has it been seen through to the end? Does it not remain to be taken up again, starting from what is most concrete: rhythm?

The study of rhythm (of rhythms) can proceed in two ways, the convergence of which we shall demonstrate. One can study and compare cases: the rhythms of the body, living or not (respirations, pulses, circulations, assimilations – durations and phases of these durations, etc.). This remains close to practice; in confronting the results, the scientific and/or philosophical spirit should arrive at general conclusions.<sup>1</sup> Not without risks: the leap from particular to general is not without the danger of errors, of illusions, in a word, of ideology. The other procedure consists in starting with concepts, definite categories. Instead of going from concrete to abstract, one starts with full consciousness of the abstract in order to arrive at the concrete.

The second method does not exclude the first; they complete one another. *Specialists*, doctors, physiologists, geologists and historians tend to follow the first, without always arriving at ideas and conclusions that are valid for all rhythms. Here, we follow the second, more philosophical method, with its attendant risks: speculation in the place of analysis, the arbitrarily *subjective* in the place of facts. With careful attention and precaution, we advance by clearing the way.

Is there a general **concept** of rhythm? Answers: yes, and everyone possesses it; but nearly all those who use this word believe themselves to master and possess its content, its meaning. Yet the meanings of the term remain obscure. We easily confuse *rhythm* with *movement* [*mouvement*], speed, a sequence of movements [*gestes*] or objects (machines, for example).<sup>2</sup> Following this



we tend to attribute to rhythms a **mechanical** overtone, brushing aside the **organic** aspect of rhythmmed movements. Musicians, who deal directly with rhythms, because they produce them, often reduce them to the counting of beats [*des mesures*]: 'One-two-three-one-two-three'. Historians and economists speak of rhythms: of the rapidity or slowness of periods, of eras, of cycles; they tend only to see the effects of impersonal *laws*, without coherent relations with *actors*, ideas, realities. Those who teach gymnastics see in rhythms only successions of movements [*gestes*] setting in motion certain muscles, certain physiological energies, etc.

Is the origin of the procedure that starts with *generalities* found in abstractions? No! In the field of rhythm, certain very broad concepts nonetheless have specificity: let us immediately cite **repetition**. No rhythm without repetition in time and in space, without *reprises*, without returns, in short without **measure** [*mesure*].<sup>3</sup> But there is no identical absolute repetition, indefinitely. Whence the relation between repetition and difference. When it concerns the everyday, rites, ceremonies, fêtes, rules and laws, there is always something new and unforeseen that introduces itself into the repetitive: difference.

To take a highly remarkable case: the repetition of unity ( $1 + 1 + 1 \dots$ ); not only does it generate the infinity of whole numbers, but also the infinity of **prime numbers** (without divisors) which, we have known since the Greeks, have specific properties. It is necessary to discover the (without doubt diverse) bases of the repetitive and the differential; and to realise that these relations, being contained within the concept, have then to be found and recognised in real rhythms . . .

A glance at the *modern* era (by which we understand the nineteenth century, since the French Revolution) reveals often omitted truths—realities. After the Revolution, against the values of the revolutionaries (and despite the protestations of *reactionaries* wanting a return to the past), a new society was installed: that socio-economic organisation of **our** urban—State—market society. The commodity prevails over everything. (Social) space and (social) time, dominated by exchanges, become the time and space of markets; although not being *things* but including **rhythms**, they enter into **products**.

The everyday establishes itself, creating hourly demands, systems of transport, in short, its repetitive organisation. *Things* matter little; the *thing* is only a metaphor, divulged by discourse, divulging representations that conceal the production of repetitive time and space. The *thing* has no more existence than *pure* identity (which the *thing* symbolises materially). There are only *things* and *people*.

With the reign of the commodity, philosophy changes. In order to expose the social process, we call out to the sum total of activities and products: nature – labour. A double philosophy results from this, the one *reactionary*, the other *revolutionary*. More or less simultaneously: Schopenhauer and Marx. The former fetishises nature, *life*, though not without seeing in it an abyss, a pit from which the ephemeral surges forth. Music evokes the chasm; however this philosophy speaks little of rhythms. By its side, Marx insists on the transformation of brute nature through human work, through technology<sup>4</sup> and inventions, through labour and consciousness. Yet he doesn't discover rhythms . . .

There was, in the heart of the centuries preceding the Revolution, a critique from the *right* and a critique from the *left* of human (social) reality. The present writing engages deliberately in a critique from the **left**.

From the beginning, this theme imposes itself: What is repetition? What is its meaning? How, when and why are there micro and macro restarts, returns to the past, in works and in time? . . .

a) Absolute repetition is only a fiction of logical and mathematical thought, in the symbol of identity:  $A = A$  (the sign reading 'identical' and not 'equal'). It serves as a point of departure for logical thought, with an immediate correction. The second  $A$  differs from the first by the fact that it is second. The repetition of unity, one (1), gives birth to the sequence of numbers.

b) Differences appear immediately in this sequence: odd and even (2, 3, 4, 5, etc.), divisible (4, etc.), indivisible or prime numbers (5, 7, 11, etc.). Not only does repetition not exclude differences, it also gives birth to them; it **produces** them. Sooner or later it encounters the **event** that arrives or rather arises in relation to the sequence or series produced repetitively. In other words: difference.

c) As it currently stands, would not this production of the



different by the identical (repeated) produce a theoretical short-coming? Does it not permit the following, highly significant formulation (affirmation): 'Differences induced or produced by repetitions constitute the thread of time'?

Cyclical repetition and the linear repetitive separate out under analysis, but in *reality* interfere with one another constantly. The cyclical originates in the cosmic, in nature: days, nights, seasons, the waves and tides of the sea, monthly cycles, etc. The linear would come rather from social practice, therefore from human activity: the monotony of actions and of movements, imposed structures. Great cyclical rhythms last for a period and restart: dawn, always new, often superb, inaugurates the return of the everyday. The antagonistic unity of relations between the cyclical and the linear sometimes gives rise to compromises, sometimes to disturbances. The circular course of the hands on (traditional) clock-faces and watches is accompanied by a linear tick-tock. And it is their relation that enables or rather constitutes the measure of time (which is to say, of rhythms).

Time and space, the cyclical and the linear, exert a reciprocal action: they measure themselves against one another; each one makes itself and is made a measuring-measure; everything is cyclical repetition through linear repetitions. A dialectical relation (unity in opposition) thus acquires meaning and import, which is to say generality. One reaches, by this road as by others, the depths of the dialectic.

In this way concepts that are indispensable for defining rhythm come together. One essential is still absent from the definition: **measure**. A further paradox: rhythm seems natural, spontaneous, with no law other than its unfurling.<sup>5</sup> Yet rhythm, always particular, (music, poetry, dance, gymnastics, work, etc.) always implies a measure. Everywhere where there is rhythm, there is *measure*, which is to say law, calculated and expected obligation, a project.

Far from resisting quantity, time (duration) is quantified by *measure*, by melody in music, but also in deed and language. Harmony, which results from a spontaneous ensemble, or from a *work of art*, is simultaneously quantitative and qualitative (in music and elsewhere: language, movements, architecture, works of art and diverse arts, etc.). **Rhythm** reunites **quantitative** aspects

and elements, which mark time and distinguish moments in it – and **qualitative** aspects and elements, which link them together, found the unities and result from them. Rhythm appears as regulated time, governed by rational laws, but in contact with what is least rational in human being: the lived, the carnal, the body. **Rational**, numerical, quantitative and qualitative rhythms superimpose themselves on the multiple **natural** rhythms of the body (respiration, the heart, hunger and thirst, etc.), though not without changing them. The bundle of natural rhythms wraps itself in rhythms of social or mental function. Whence the efficiency of the **analytic** operation that consists in opening and unwrapping the bundle. Disorder and illness, at the worst death, take over the operation. However, the natural and the rational play only a limited role in the analysis of rhythms, which are simultaneously natural **and** rational, and neither one nor the other. Is the rhythm of a Chopin waltz natural or artificial? Are the rhythms of the aphorisms of Nietzsche – of Zarathustra – natural or artificial? They sometimes have the rhythm of a march: that of the body, that of the tempo [*allure*] of the thinker-poet.

Philosophers (including Nietzsche, the philosopher-poet) only presaged the importance of *rhythm*. It is from a Portuguese, dos Santos, that Bachelard, in *The Psychoanalysis of Fire*, borrows the word 'rhythmanalysis', though without developing the meaning any more than did dos Santos.<sup>6</sup> However, the concept of rhythm, hence the rhythmanalytical project, emerges bit by bit from the shadows.

Now for its unfolding, a panoply of methodologically utilised categories (concepts) and oppositions would appear indispensable:

repetition and difference;  
mechanical and organic;  
discovery and creation;  
cyclical and linear;  
continuous and discontinuous;  
quantitative and qualitative . . .



Several of these concepts and oppositions are known: employed, picked out, utilised; some are less so: repetition and difference, for example, or even the cyclical and linear. It will be necessary to employ them with care, in such a way as to fine-tune them through use. They converge in the central concept of **measure**. An apparently enlightened, but in fact obscure, notion. What makes the measurable and the non-measurable? Isn't time, which seems to escape measure on account of its fluidity, that which measures itself: the millionths of seconds in the cycles of galaxies, the hours in the seasons and the month? Why and how? Would the spatialisation of time be a preconditional operation for its measurement? If yes, does this operation generate errors, or does it, on the contrary, stimulate knowledge at the same time as practice?

The majority of analysts of time (or rather of such and such a temporality: physical, social, historical, etc.) have utilised only an often minimal part of the above-listed categories. The **relative** remains suspect, despite the discoveries of the twentieth century; we prefer the *substantial* to it (and we often make time a sort of substance, its structure deriving from a divine transcendence).

Analysis and knowledge presuppose concepts (categories), but also a point of departure (enabling us to compose and enumerate a scale). We know that a rhythm is slow or lively only in relation to other rhythms (often our own: those of our walking, our breathing, our heart). This is the case even though each rhythm has its own and specific measure: speed, frequency, consistency. Spontaneously, each of us has our preferences, references, frequencies; each must appreciate rhythms by referring them to oneself, one's heart or breathing, but also to one's hours of work, of rest, of waking and of sleep. The preferences measure themselves; the **measure** (notion and practice) passes through a **frequency**. Precise techniques enable us to **measure frequencies**.

Our sensations and perceptions, in full and continuous appearances, contain repetitive figures, concealing them. Thus, sounds, lights, colours and *objects*. We *contain* ourselves by concealing the diversity of our rhythms: to ourselves, body and flesh, we are **almost objects**. Not completely, however. But what does a midge perceive, whose body has **almost** nothing in common with ours, and whose wings beat to the rhythm of a thousand times per

second? This insect makes us hear a high-pitched sound, we perceive a threatening, little winged cloud that seeks our blood. In short, rhythms escape logic, and nevertheless contain a logic, a possible calculus of numbers and numerical relations.

One meaning of the research, a philosophical goal, is to be found here: the relation of the logical (logic) and the dialectical (dialectic), which is to say of the identical and the contradictory.<sup>7</sup>

The intellectual procedure characterised by the **duel** [*le duel*] (duality) has its place here: with oppositions grasped in their relations, but also each for itself. It was necessary to set up the list of oppositions and dualities that enter into analysis by rejecting first the old comparison of **dialogue** (two voices) and **dialectic** (three terms). Even from the *Marxist* standpoint there were confusions; much was staked on the two-term opposition *bourgeoisie-proletariat*, at the expense of the third term: the soil, agricultural property and production, peasants, predominantly agricultural colonies.

As a method, dual analysis releases itself slowly from ideological, metaphysical and religious oppositions: the Devil and the good Lord, Good and Evil, Light and Shadows, Immanent and Transcendent. For a long time analysis remained at an inferior level: unilateral, attributing unlimited (philosophical) value to one opposition (subject-object). Similarly, *rise and fall*, *life and death*, *knowledge and play*, *before and after* . . . It is only recently, with Hegel and Marx, that analysis has understood the **triadic** character of the approach, by becoming dialectical in accordance with the scheme: *thesis-antithesis-synthesis*.

Analysis that has become dialectical in this way concerns itself with three terms. That does not mean that it strays in the uses (and abuses) of this sacred number: towards metaphysics and theology, towards the trinity of the image, the three reference points of the universe (hell, the earth and the sky) – towards the trinity of the three periods of time and thought (the camel, the lion and the child, according to Nietzsche, or Law, Faith and Joy according to Joachim de Flore).<sup>8</sup> The immense mythomania surrounding this number shows its importance; the triadic conception has been released from myths since Hegel. Followed by Marx, Hegel *laicised* this sacred number; that is, dialectical analysis observes or constitutes the relations between three terms, which change



according to circumstance: going from conflict to alliance and back again. This in the presence of the **world**, to the extent that it features relations of past–present–future, or of possible–probable–impossible, or even knowledge–information–manipulation, etc. The analysis does not isolate an object, or a subject, or a relation. It seeks to grasp a moving but determinate complexity (determination not entailing determinism).

Let us insist on this point! In these observations, the term *analysis* comes up on several occasions without definition, taken as in the vernacular. Now, the analytic approach becomes complex once it borders on *complex* realities. *Classical* analysis isolates an element or aspect of the object. It is reductive by definition. So-called structural analysis casts light on opposed terms – two by two – in order to study their relations and interactions (thus: time and space, signifier and signified, etc.). With regard to **dialectical** analysis, which was for a long time hesitant even after Marx and Hegel, it separates out **three** terms in interaction: conflicts or alliances. Thus: ‘thesis–antithesis–synthesis’ in Hegel; or in Marx: ‘economic–social–political’. Or more recently: ‘time–space–energy’. Or even: ‘**melody–harmony–rhythm**’. Triadic analysis distinguishes itself from dual analysis just as much as from banal analysis. It doesn’t lead to a *synthesis* in accordance with the Hegelian schema. Thus the triad ‘time–space–energy’ links three terms that it leaves distinct, without fusing them in a *synthesis* (which would be the third term).

We arrive at *laws* that do not yet have names and will perhaps never have them. They are:

1) Pleasure and joy demand a re-commencement. They await it; yet it escapes. Pain returns. It repeats itself, since the repetition of pleasure gives rise to pain(s). However, joy and pleasure have a presence, whereas pain results from an absence (that of a function, an organ, a person, an object, a *being*). Joy and pleasure *are*, they are *being*; not so suffering. Pessimists used to affirm the opposite: only suffering *is*, or *exists*. The propositions that precede ground an optimism, *in spite of everything*.

2) What is the relation of the logical and the dialectical (dialectic)? The law of logic says: ‘No thought or reality without coherence’. The dialectic proclaims: ‘There is neither thought nor

reality without contradictions’. It seems that the second affirmation might eliminate the first: discourses that seek to be *true* declare themselves coherent: they never want to be *illogical*. Can contradictions be articulated in propositions or in formulas without contradiction? An open question.

3) What is it to **demonstrate**? What is it to **think** (thought)?<sup>9</sup>

Does not mathematics, which simultaneously demonstrates and discovers, contain the answer to the questions posed? Or must questions be posed alternatively for mathematics (which has progressed for twenty-five centuries without pretending to ‘speak the truth’ in the manner of philosophers) to respond to them? To extract, to elucidate, to formulate such articulations – an imbroglio, in familiar terms – is the task of philosophy and philosophers. They have occasionally known and said that dialectic does not destroy logic – and that logic (the logical) penetrates dialectic (the dialectical), though without elucidating this *point*.

The spectre of theoretical questioning goes from *pure* abstraction – the logic of identity – to the full complexity of the contradictions of the *real*. An immense questionnaire, the answers to which are given in the heart of the questions, and nevertheless hide *themselves* behind words, in locutions and expressions. It often suffices to chase them out, to bring them into the light of day: to show them.

Lovers of (often fertile) paradoxes can affirm that mathematics is impossible: in order to count up affirmations (1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc.) it is necessary to have numbers at one’s disposal. *Petito principii*?<sup>10</sup> Yes, but mathematics progresses by leaving the initial *paradox* far behind.

The indices and indicators gather themselves together and all point towards the same meaning. Today *man*, humanity, the human species is going through a testing time, where everything is thrown into question: including the existence of space, including the *foundations* of knowledge, of practice and of societies.

In the grip of its own creations, technologies, arms, the species puts itself to the test; it can destroy itself through nuclear power, empty its skies of the indispensable (their blueness), exhaust its soils. In short, the dangers are accumulating. If it survives them, the human race will enter into the silence of **anti**-affirmations,



calling out to demons, to gods, to Laws. It will have **proved** to itself its capacity to live: to organise itself. But during this period, some total risk cannot be avoided. There is destiny – and the end of destiny, the proof of the supreme test. It used to be thought that science and technology would suffice. Yet, necessary and non-sufficient, science and technology pose the problem of all problems. An absolute problem: what can philosophy do? Perceive the situation? Appreciate the risk? Point to a way out?

Delving further into the hypothesis, **rhythm** (linked on one hand to logical categories and mathematical calculations – and on the other to the visceral and vital body) would hold the secrets and the answer to strange questions. Rhythm in and of itself, not music in general, as believed Douglas Hofstadter in *Gödel, Escher, Bach*, in which he gave a good deal of room to melody and harmony – and little to rhythms.<sup>11</sup>

If the American author of this remarkable book assimilates and transforms one part of European culture (from Bach to mathematical logic), he seems to let another part escape him. In the dance of the *Davidsbündler* (Schumann), rhythm predominates over melody and harmony.<sup>12</sup> To the extent that the study of rhythm is inspired by music (and not just by poetry, by walking or running, etc.) it is closer to Schumann than to Bach. This does not explain the tension and the kinship between mathematical thought and musical creation, but it does shift the question.

Music and musical rhythms will not, following this, take on **immeasurable** importance. Social times disclose diverse, contradictory possibilities: delays and early arrivals, reappearances (repetitions) of an (apparently) rich past, and revolutions that brusquely introduce a new *content* and sometimes change the form of society. Historical times slow down or speed up, advance or regress, look forward or backward. According to what criteria? According to representations and political decisions, but also according to the historian who puts them into perspective. Objectively, for there to be *change*, a social group, a class or a caste must intervene by imprinting a **rhythm** on an era, be it through force or in an insinuating manner. In the course of a *crisis*, in a critical situation, a group must designate itself as an *innovator* or *producer of meaning*. And its acts must inscribe themselves on *reality*. The

intervention imposes itself neither militarily, nor politically nor even ideologically. Occasionally, a long time after the action, one sees the emergence of novelty. Perspicacity, attention and above all an opening are required. In practice and in *culture*, exhaustion is visible sooner and more clearly than growth and innovation, more obscure realities and idealities.

This book does not pretend to unveil all the secrets, nor to say how this *modern* society functions, although it is certainly more complex than, and different from, those described (in a critical manner) by Marx and then by Lenin.

Symbolically, (so-called modern) *society* underwent something that recalls the great changes in communications. It saw cylinders, pistons and steam jets on steam engines; it saw the machine start up, pull, work and move. Electric locomotives only present to the eye a big box that contains and conceals the machinery. One sees them start up, pull and move forward, but how? The electrical wire and the pole that runs alongside it say nothing about the energy that they transmit. In order to understand, one must be an engineer, a specialist, and know the vocabulary, the concepts, the calculations . . .

The same goes for our economic-political society. The visible moving parts hide the machinery.

Is there nothing left of the visible, the sensible? Is our time only accessible after patient analyses, which break up the complexity and subsequently endeavour to stick back together the pieces? It is not necessary to go too far: a truth pushed beyond its limits becomes an error. The gaze and the intellect can still grasp directly some aspects of our reality that are rich in meaning: notably the everyday and rhythms.

Everywhere where there is interaction between a place, a time and an expenditure of energy, there is **rhythm**. Therefore:

- a) repetition (of movements, gestures, action, situations, differences);
- b) interferences of linear processes and cyclical processes;
- c) birth, growth, peak, then decline and end.

This supplies the framework for analyses of the *particular*, therefore *real* and *concrete* cases that feature in music, history and the lives of individuals or groups. In each case the analysis should



ride with the movements in whichever work or whichever sequence of actions until their end.

The notion of **rhythm** brings with it or requires some complementary considerations: the implied but different notions of polyrhythmia, eurhythmia and arrhythmia. It elevates them to a theoretical level, starting from the lived. Polyrhythmia? It suffices to consult one's body; thus the everyday reveals itself to be a polyrhythmia from the first listening. Eurhythmia? Rhythms unite with one another in the state of health, in normal (which is to say normed!) everydayness; when they are discordant, there is suffering, a pathological state (of which arrhythmia is generally, at the same time, symptom, cause and effect). The discordance of rhythms brings previously eurhythmic organisations towards fatal disorder. **Polyrhythmia analyses itself.** A fundamental forecast: sooner or later the analysis succeeds in isolating from within the organised whole a particular movement and its rhythm. Often coupled empirically with speculations (see, for example, doctors in the field of auscultation, etc.), the analytic operation simultaneously discovers the multiplicity of rhythms and the uniqueness of particular rhythms (the heart, the kidneys, etc.). The rhythm-analysis here defined as a method and a theory pursues this time-honoured labour in a systematic and theoretical manner, by bringing together very diverse practices and very different types of knowledge: medicine, history, climatology, cosmology, poetry (*the poetic*), etc. Not forgetting, of course, sociology and psychology, which occupy the front line and supply the essentials.

We have hovered around a fundamental, therefore perpetual, question. Will it elude us? No, but to find a (the) answer, it is not enough to pose it explicitly. **What is it to think?** And more precisely, what do you think when you speak of **rhythms**? Do reflections, discourses pertain to *thinking*, or simply to the verbal commentary of concrete rhythms?

The Cartesian tradition has long reigned in philosophy.

It is exhausted, but remains present. The 'Cogito . . .' signifies: to think is to think thought; it is to reflect on *oneself* by accentuating (putting the accent on) the consciousness inherent to the act of thinking. Yet what *we* have thought over the course of the preceding pages implies another conception of *thinking*. It is to think that

which is not thought: the game and the risk, love, art, violence, in a word, the *world*, or more precisely the diverse relations between human being and the universe. Thinking is a part, but does not claim to *be* the totality, as many philosophers thought it. Thought explores, expresses. The exploration can hold in store surprises. Likewise, perhaps, rhythms and their analysis (rhythmanalysis).

Since this introduction announces what follows, let us say from now on that rhythmanalysis could change our **perspective** on surroundings, because it changes our **conception** in relation to the classical philosophy that is still dominant in this field. The **sensible**, this scandal of philosophers from Plato to Hegel, (re)takes primacy, transformed without magic (without metaphysics). Nothing inert in the *world*, **no things**: very diverse rhythms, slow or lively (in relation to *us*).

(This garden that I have before my eyes appears differently to me now from a moment ago. I have understood the **rhythms**: trees, flowers, birds and insects. They form a polyrhythmia with the surroundings: the simultaneity of the **present** (therefore of presence), the apparent immobility that contains one thousand and one movements, etc. . . .)

Perhaps a problematic, or at least an outline, of rhythms would find its place here, beside a primary analysis of the **present** and of **presence**?

Might there be hidden, **secret**, rhythms, hence inaccessible movements and temporalities?

No, because there are **no secrets**. Everything knows itself, but not everything says itself, publicises itself. Do not confuse silence with secrets! That which is forbidden from being said, be it external or intimate, produces an obscure, but not a secret, zone. On the contrary. Not only does everything know itself, but the whole world knows it, and knows that of which one can speak and that which can or should rest in silence. To show evidence for this – that secrets do not exist – it suffices to think of sex, of sexuality. Those who never speak thereof (modesty, prohibition, morality, etc.) let nothing on the subject slip by. Rather, those who speak of it less might know more about it than others.

One can classify rhythms according to these perspectives by crossing the notion of **rhythm** with those of the **secret** and **public**, the external and internal.



a) **Secret rhythms**: First, physiological rhythms, but also psychological ones (recollection and memory, the said and the non-said, etc.).

b) **Public** (therefore social) **rhythms**: Calendars, fêtes, ceremonies and celebrations; or those that one declares and those that one exhibits as *virtuality*, as expression (digestion, tiredness, etc.).

c) **Fictional rhythms**: Eloquence and verbal rhythms, but also elegance, gestures and learning processes. Those which are related to false secrets, or pseudo-dissimulations (short-, medium- and long-term calculations and estimations). The imaginary!

d) **Dominating–dominated rhythms**: Completely made up: everyday or long-lasting, in music or in speech, aiming for an effect that is beyond themselves.

Before giving details of the rhythms and even setting out the methods, let us return to the concrete: the **agent** (the analyst).

A philosopher could ask here: ‘Are you not simply embarking on a description of horizons, phenomenology from your window, from the standpoint of an all-too-conscious ego, a phenomenology stretching up to the ends of the road, as far as the Intelligibles: the Bank, the Forum, the *Hôtel de Ville*, the embankments, Paris, etc.?’

Yes, and yet no! This vaguely existential (a slightly heavy technical term) phenomenology (ditto) of which you speak, and of which you accuse these pages, passes over that which quite rightly connects space, time and the energies that unfold here and there, namely **rhythms**. It would be no more than a more or less well-used tool. In other words, a discourse that ordains these horizons as existence, as *being*.

Now the study of rhythms covers an immense area: from the most *natural* (physiological, biological) to the most sophisticated.

The analysis consists in understanding that which comes to it from *nature* and that which is acquired, conventional, even sophisticated, by trying to isolate particular rhythms. It is a difficult type of analysis, one for which there are possible *ethical*, which is to say practical, implications. In other words, knowledge of the lived would modify, metamorphose, the lived without knowing it. Here we find, approached in a different way, but the same, the thought of metamorphosis.

## 2

## The Rhythmanalyst: A Previsionary Portrait

In general, one does a portrait of someone who exists and who tempts the painter, the novelist or the playwright. Is it possible to do a portrait of someone who does not yet exist, and which would have to help to bring about his existence? Yes, if one finds the traits that inscribe themselves on a face of the future, which will cast aside false resemblances, thus enabling us to foresee the dissimilarities.

The rhythmanalyst will have some points in common with the psychoanalyst, though he differentiates himself from the latter; the differences go further than the analogies.

He will be attentive, but not only to the words or pieces of information, the confessions and confidences of a partner or client. He will listen to the world, and above all to what are disdainfully called noises, which are said without meaning, and to *murmurs* [rumeurs], full of meaning – and finally he will listen to silences.

The psychoanalyst encounters difficulties when he listens out. How is he to orientate his knowledge, forget his past, make himself anew and passive, and not interpret prematurely? The rhythmanalyst will not have these methodological obligations: rendering oneself passive, forgetting one’s knowledge, in order to re-present it in its entirety in the interpretation. He listens – and first to his body; he learns rhythm from it, in order consequently to appreciate external rhythms. His body serves him as a metronome. A difficult task and situation: to perceive distinct rhythms distinctly, without disrupting them, without dislocating



time. This preparatory discipline for the perception of the outside world borders on pathology yet avoids it because it is methodical. All sorts of already known practices, more or less mixed up with ideology, are similar to it and can be of use: the control of breathing and the heart, the uses of muscles and limbs, etc.

The body. Our body. So neglected in philosophy that it ends up speaking its mind and kicking up a fuss.<sup>13</sup> Left to physiology and medicine... The body consists of a bundle of rhythms, different but in tune. It is not only in music that one produces **perfect** harmonies. The body produces a **garland** of rhythms, one could say a bouquet, though these words suggest an aesthetic arrangement, as if the artist nature had foreseen beauty – the harmony of the body (of bodies) – that results from all its history.

What is certain is that harmony sometimes (often) exists: eurhythmia. The eu-rhythmic body, composed of diverse rhythms – each organ, each function, having its own – keeps them in **metastable** equilibrium, which is always understood and often recovered, with the exception of disturbances (arrhythmia) that sooner or later become illness (the pathological state). But the surroundings of bodies, be they in nature or a social setting, are also *bundles, bouquets, garlands* of rhythms, to which it is necessary to listen in order to grasp the natural or produced ensembles.

The rhythm analyst will not be obliged to *jump* from the inside to the outside of observed *bodies*; he should come to listen to them *as a whole* and unify them by taking his own rhythms as a reference: by integrating the outside with the inside and vice versa.

For him, nothing is immobile. He hears the wind, the rain, storms; but if he considers a stone, a wall, a trunk, he understands their slowness, their interminable rhythm. This *object* is not inert; time is not set aside for the *subject*. It is only slow in relation to our time, to our body, the measure of rhythms. An apparently immobile *object*, the forest, moves in multiple ways: the combined movements of the soil, the earth, the sun. Or the movements of the molecules and atoms that compose it (the object, the forest). The object resists a thousand aggressions but breaks up in humidity or conditions of vitality, the profusion of miniscule life. To the attentive ear, it makes a noise like a seashell.

Thus the sensible, the scandal of post-Platonic philosophy, reclaims its dignity in thought, as in practice and common sense. It never disappeared, but has hardly suffered from this transformation that accords it the place of honour in thought and recovers its meaning and richness. The sensible? It is neither the apparent, nor the phenomenal, but the **present**.

The rhythm analyst calls on all his senses. He draws on his breathing, the circulation of his blood, the beatings of his heart and the delivery of his speech as landmarks. Without privileging any one of these sensations, raised by him in the perception of rhythms, to the detriment of any other. He thinks with his body, not in the abstract, but in lived temporality. He does not neglect therefore (though would this not be an issue in excess of the individual, stemming from social circles and the environment?), in particular he does not neglect smell, scents, the impressions that are so strong in the child and other living beings, which society atrophies, neutralises in order to arrive at the colourless, the odourless and the insensible. Yet smells are a part of rhythms, reveal them: odours of the morning and evening, of hours of sunlight or darkness, of rain or fine weather. The rhythm analyst observes and retains smells as traces that mark out rhythms. He garbs himself in this tissue of the lived, of the everyday. But the difficulties never cease for him. Being behind the interactions, the intertwinings of rhythms, the effort to discern and note this one or that one imposes itself perpetually. Normally we only grasp the relations between rhythms, which interfere with them. However, they all have a distinct *existence*. Normally, none of them *classifies* itself; on the contrary, in suffering, in confusion, a particular rhythm surges up and imposes itself: palpitation, breathlessness, pains in the place of satiety. The rhythm analyst has to reach such a rhythm without putting himself in a pathological situation, and without putting that which he observes there either. How? In the street, a cry, a screeching of breaks, an accident makes confused rhythms sensible and breaks them up. Yet the rhythm analyst does not have the right to provoke an accident. He must simultaneously catch a rhythm and perceive it within the whole, in the same way as non-analysts, people, *perceive* it. He must arrive at the **concrete** through experience. In fact and in practice, an already



acquired 'knowledge' [*savoir*] enters onto the scene and delineates the game. (Why the inverted commas around 'knowledge'? Because it is difficult to know whether knowledge goes as far as science – and consequently whether it avoids ideologies, interpretations and speculative constructions; in such a way that the entrance of ideology is doubtless inevitable, as many recent, and certainly exemplary, cases have shown: psychoanalysis, Marxism and even information technology.)

Will the (future) rhythmanalyst have to professionalise himself? Will he have to set up and direct a *lab* where one compares documents: graphs, frequencies and various curves? More precisely, will he agree to look after *clients? patients?* Without doubt, but in a long time. He will first have to educate himself (to break himself in or accept *training*), to work very hard therefore, to modify his perception and conception of the world, of time and of the environment. His emotions will consequently also be modified, in a coherent (in accordance with his concepts) and non-pathological way. Just as he borrows and receives from his **whole** body and all his senses, so he receives *data* [données] from all the sciences: psychology, sociology, ethnology, biology; and even physics and mathematics. He must recognise **representations** by their curves, phases, periods and recurrences. In relation to the instruments with which specialists supply him, he pursues an *interdisciplinary* approach. Without omitting the spatial and places, of course, he makes himself more sensitive to times than to spaces. He will come to 'listen' to a house, a street, a town, as an audience listens to a symphony.

Its name tells as much, but the meanings of words fade over time. The **present** offers itself in all innocence and cruelty: open, evident, here and there. It can wear a smile, or be tinged with melancholy, provoke tears. But this evidence is misleading, fabricated. It is an adulterated product that simulates **presence** as a forgery imitates a fact of nature, fruit, a flower, etc. A kind of (dissimulating) simulator of the present: the image!

If you take it for what it **is** (a paint-daubed or coloured scrap of paper), it falls short of its goal. If you take it for what it seeks to evoke, it accomplishes it. You have to 'have confidence' in the photo, painting, drawing. It has become a sort of social, also

known as aesthetic (not moral), obligation that gives rise to abuse. But if you have the ability to take the flows and streams (T.V., the press, etc.) as **rhythms** among others, you avoid the trap of the **present** that gives itself as presence and seeks the effects of presences. The latter are the *facts* of both nature and culture, at the same time sensible, affective and moral rather than *imaginary*.

Through a kind of **magic, images** change what they reach (and claim to reproduce) into **things**, and presence into simulacra, the **present**, the *this*. Do speech and exorcism exist? Yes. Nothing is more simple: a child could do it. Necessarily, a gesture suffices: to take images for what they are, simulacra, *copies conforming to a standard*, parodies of presence.

The rhythmanalyst will give an account of this relation between the present and presence: between their rhythms. A dialectical relation: neither incompatibility, nor identity – neither exclusion nor inclusion. One calls the other, substitutes itself for this other. The present sometimes imitates (simulates) to the point of mistaking itself for presence: a portrait, a copy, a double, a facsimile, etc., but (a) presence survives and imposes itself by introducing a rhythm (a time). The act of rhythmanalysis [*le geste rythmanalytique*] transforms *everything* into presences, including the *present*, grasped and perceived as such. The act [*geste*] does not imprison itself in the ideology of the *thing*. It perceives the *thing* in the proximity of the *present*, an instance of the present, just as the image is another instance. Thus the thing makes itself **present** but not **presence**. On the contrary, the act of rhythmanalysis integrates these things – this wall, this table, these trees – in a dramatic becoming, in an ensemble full of meaning, transforming them no longer into diverse things, but into presences.

Magic? Yes and no. The power of metamorphosis, but rational and (maybe) even the ground of rationality. This act, this gesture and this perpetual operation are in no way malevolent. They carry a (minor) risk only for those who create for themselves a different *world* out of *things* that are immobile and deprived of meaning. Does the rhythmanalyst thus come close to the **poet**? Yes, to a large extent, more so than he does to the psychoanalyst, and still more so than he does to the statistician, who counts *things* and, quite reasonably, describes them in their immobility.



Like the poet, the rhythm analyst performs a verbal action, which has an *aesthetic* import. The poet concerns himself above all with words, the verbal. Whereas the rhythm analyst concerns himself with temporalities and their relations within wholes.

From any given object, from a simple *thing* (Van Gogh's shoes), a great artist creates a strong presence, and he does so on a canvas, a simple surface. The metamorphosis does not prevent the restitution of the thing *as it is*. Both enigmatic and simple, filling a simple surface, the act [*geste*] of the artist has the power to evoke a time (the wearing away of the pair of shoes), and the presence of a long period of destitution. Therefore a series of *presents*. The **presence** of the scene brings forth all its presents, and is also the presence of Van Gogh, of his life that was poor but dominated by the creative act [*geste*].

Amongst the myriads of texts and quotations on rhythms, one stands out as highly singular: 'When we look at a constellation, we are certain that a rhythm comes from the stars, a rhythm that we suppose because we think that there is 'something' 'up there' that coordinates these elements, and which is more substantial than each star taken separately.'<sup>14</sup> Strange! Because the order of the constellations, which like their names (the Bears, the Chariot) dates from Antiquity, is arbitrary. The constellations result from an act of magic; with neither author nor knowledge, these works of art have reigned and been credited with influence since the Chaldeans. Cortázar's text, extreme in its (intended) naivety, describes an order there where there are only abysses, fabulous distortions and perhaps colossal forces in conflict. Newtonian attraction? Kant even saw in it an image of harmony: 'The starry sky . . . the moral Law'.<sup>15</sup> But today, the starry sky is perceived and conceived as vast and shapeless in a different way (black holes, craters, explosions, circular galaxies and swirls [*tournoiements*]). The movement [*geste*] of humanity once simultaneted<sup>16</sup> the sky, by projecting a human rhythm onto it, appreciating the apparent movements of the celestial objects.

The Heavens! Think what they re-present. Not those of Kant, whose very modern moral rationalism retains traditional traits, but the heavens that spoke, that replied, sent messages without cease, from which the *cherubs* descended, those where the cele-

tial presence lived and to which people ascended; above all the Son of God and the Holy Mother, testifying to the immensity of their absence on Earth. Wise and knowing, theologians and astronomers attempted to grasp and announce to Earth this celestial presence of limitless intensity. The dream of Dante! Some magic words, some signs and rites were necessary to realise this goal and reveal the Presence of god to the world. For believers and the faithful, the gods and the supreme God are everywhere, omnipresent, containing everything, the immense absolute of things that has for its rhythm the descent and ascension (or re-ascension) to Heaven.

But while Presence manifests itself, it was necessary to underline its opposite: the absence that is marked by a malevolent power: the Negative, the Diabolical, the active and personalised Nothingness opposite Being (Beings). In short, the demonical, the author of all disasters and catastrophes. With its rhythms, which are also evoked by certain acts [*gestes*], rites, signs and rhythms, that disturb those of the good. And the master of destructive forces, fire and darkness, storm and tempest, situated on the inverse surface of Heaven, in the infernal shadows. As we cannot seat Satan at the side of God in Heaven, we imagined the Fall, the first sin, before that of Eve, perhaps at the time of an already feminine power (the earlier existence of the enigmatic Lileth). The fallen angel takes his place alongside the malevolent powers. This is the superb cosmology of Dante, more distant for us than the stars of Cortázar.

But the rhythm analyst has nothing in common with a prophet or a sorcerer. Nor with a metaphysician or a theologian. His act, his deed [*geste*], relates to reason. He hopes to deploy it, to lead it further and higher by recovering the sensible. In short, he is not a mystic! Without going so far as to present himself as a positivist, for someone who observes: an empiricist. He changes that which he observes: he sets it in motion, he recognises its power. In this sense, he seems close to the poet, or the man of the theatre. Art, poetry, music and theatre have always brought something (but what?) to the everyday. They haven't *reflected* on it. The creator descended to the streets of the city-state; the portrayed inhabitants lived amongst the citizens. They assumed the city life.



The rhythmanalyst could, in the long term, attempt something analogous: works [*oeuvres*] might return to and intervene in the everyday. Without claiming to *change life*, but by fully reinstating the sensible in consciousnesses and in *thought*, he would accomplish a tiny part of the *revolutionary* transformation of this world and this society in decline. Without any declared political position.

Since the so-called *modern* era, the concept of the **work of art** has become obscure without disappearing; on the contrary; it extends and differentiates itself into substitutes: the **product** and the **thing**. The rhythmanalyst will bring about many works himself by renewing the very concept of the work.

Desire, of which so much has been said (in psychic terms), is both work and the product of work. Yet it has its rhythm; it **is** a rhythm, whose goal (its end) is either placed outside, or remains internal to, its act (operation). Sensual desire enters into the first case, aesthetic desire into the second. Between need and desire there is a well-known difference, but there is no discontinuity. The intervention of speech and memory does not open up an abyss. Need and desire, sleep and wake, work and repose are rhythms in interaction. This view of temporality defines neither the ones nor the others; it enters into the definitions: into the analysis. We have yet to catch unaware (to grasp) need, desire, reflections and passions in *others*.

Several concepts are established in this ambition. Let us recapitulate: difference and repetition – interaction and composition – cyclical and linear – frequency and measure . . . eurhythmia, arrhythmia, polyrhythmia . . .

## 3

## Seen from the Window

(No! this title belongs to Colette. – I write: ‘Seen from my windows, overlooking a junction in Paris, therefore overlooking the road.’)<sup>17</sup>

Noise. Noises. Murmurs. When lives are lived and hence mixed together, they distinguish themselves badly from one another. Noise, chaotic, has no rhythm. However, the attentive ear begins to separate out, to distinguish the sources, to bring them back together by perceiving interactions. If we cease to listen to sounds and noises and instead listen to our bodies (the importance of which cannot be stressed too greatly), we normally grasp (hear, understand) neither the rhythms nor their associations, which nonetheless constitute us. It is only in suffering that a particular rhythm breaks apart, modified by illness. The analysis comes closer to pathology than habitual arrhythmia.

In order to grasp and analyse rhythms, it is necessary to get outside them, but not completely: be it through illness or a technique. A certain exteriority enables the analytic intellect to function. However, to grasp a rhythm it is necessary to have been *grasped* by it; one must *let oneself go*, give oneself over, abandon oneself to its duration. Like in music and the learning of a language (in which one only really understands the meanings and connections when one comes to *produce* them, which is to say, to produce spoken rhythms).

In order to *grasp* this fleeting object, which is not exactly an *object*, it is therefore necessary to situate oneself simultaneously inside and outside. A balcony does the job admirably, in relation



to the street, and it is to this putting into perspective (of the street) that we owe the marvellous invention of balconies, and that of the terrace from which one dominates the road and passers-by. In the absence of which you could content yourself with a window, on the condition that it does not overlook a sombre corner or a gloomy internal courtyard. Or a perennially deserted lawn.

From the window opening onto rue R. facing the famous P. Centre, there is no need to lean much to see into the distance.<sup>18</sup> To the right, the palace-centre P., the Forum, up as far as the (central) Bank of France. To the left up as far as the Archives. Perpendicular to this direction, the *Hôtel de Ville* and, on the other side, the *Arts et Métiers*. The whole of Paris, ancient and modern, traditional and creative, active and lazy.

He who walks down the street, over there, is immersed in the multiplicity of noises, murmurs, rhythms (including those of the body, but does he pay attention, except at the moment of crossing the street, when he has to calculate roughly the number of his steps?). By contrast, from the window, the noises distinguish themselves, the flows separate out, rhythms respond to one another. Towards the right, below, a traffic light. On red, cars at a standstill, the pedestrians cross, feeble murmurings, footsteps, confused voices. One does not chatter while crossing a dangerous junction under the threat of wild cats and elephants ready to charge forward, taxis, buses, lorries, various cars. Hence the relative silence in this crowd. A kind of soft murmuring, sometimes a cry, a call.

Therefore the people produce completely different noises when the cars stop: feet and words. From right to left and back again. And on the pavements along the perpendicular street. At the green light, steps and words stop. A second of silence and then it's the rush, the starting up of tens of cars, the rhythms of the old bangers speeding up as quickly as possible. At some risk: passers-by to the left, buses cutting across, other vehicles. Whereby a slowing down and restart (stage one: starting up – stage two: slowing down for the turn – stage three: brutal restart, foot down, top speed, excluding traffic jams . . .). The harmony between what one sees and what one hears (from the window) is remarkable.

Strict concordance. Perhaps because the other side of the road is taken up by the immense shopping centre, nicknamed Beaubourg after the name that immortalised a president. On this side, people walking back and forth, numerous and in silence, tourists and those from the outskirts, a mix of young and old, alone and in couples, but no cars alongside culture. After the red light, all of a sudden it's the bellowing charge of wild cats, big or small, monstrous lorries turning towards Bastille, the majority of small vehicles hurtling towards the *Hôtel de Ville*. The noise grows, grows in intensity and strength, at its peak becomes unbearable, though quite well borne by the stench of fumes. Then stop. Let's do it again, with more pedestrians. Two-minute intervals. Amidst the fury of the cars, the pedestrians cluster together, a clot here, a lump over there; grey dominates, with multicoloured flecks, and these heaps break apart for the race ahead. Sometimes, the old cars stall in the middle of the road and the pedestrians move around them like waves around a rock, though not without condemning the drivers of the badly placed vehicles with withering looks. Hard rhythms: alternations of silence and outburst, time both broken and accentuated, striking he who takes to listening from his window, which astonishes him more than the disparate movements of the crowds.

Disparate crowds, yes, tourists from faraway countries, Finland, Sweden, Portugal, whose cars but with difficulty find places to park, shoppers come from afar, wholesalers, lovers of art or novelties, people from the outskirts who stream in between the so-called peak hours, in such a way that *everybody*, the *world*, is always there around the huge metallic trinkets; boys and girls often go forth hand in hand, as if to support each other in this test of modernity, in the exploration of these meteorites fallen on old Paris, come from a planet several centuries ahead of our own, and on top of that a complete failure on the market! . . . Many among these young people walk, walk, without a break, do the tour of the sights, of Beaubourg, of the Forum: one sees them again and again, grouped or solitary; they walk indefatigably, chewing on gum or a sandwich. They only stop to stretch themselves out, no doubt exhausted, on the square itself, in the arcades of the Chiraqian Forum, or on the steps of the Fountain of the Innocent,



which now serves only this purpose. The noise that pierces the ear comes not from passers-by, but from the engines pushed to the limit when starting up. No ear, no piece of apparatus could grasp this whole, this flux of metallic and carnal bodies. In order to grasp the rhythms, a bit of time, a sort of meditation on time, the city, people, is required.

Other, less lively, slower rhythms superimpose themselves on this inexorable rhythm, which hardly dies down at night: children leaving for school, some very noisy, even piercing screams of morning recognition. Then towards half past nine it's the arrival of the shoppers, followed shortly by the tourists, in accordance, with exceptions (storms or advertising promotions), with a timetable that is almost always the same; the flows and conglomerations succeed one another: they get fatter or thinner but always agglomerate at the corners in order subsequently to clear a path, tangle and disentangle themselves amongst the cars.

These last rhythms (schoolchildren, shoppers, tourists) would be more **cyclical**, of large and simple intervals, at the heart of livelier, **alternating** rhythms, at brief intervals, cars, regulars, employees, bistro clients. The interaction of diverse, repetitive and different rhythms animates, as one says, the street and the neighbourhood. The linear, which is to say, in short, succession, consists of journeys to and fro: it combines with the cyclical, the movements of long intervals. The cyclical is social organisation manifesting itself. The linear is the daily grind, the routine, therefore the perpetual, made up of chance and encounters.

The night does not interrupt the diurnal rhythms but modifies them, and above all slows them down. However, even at three or four o'clock in the morning, there are always a few cars at the red light. Sometimes one of them, whose driver is coming back from a late night, goes straight through it. Other times, there is no-one at the lights, with their alternating flashes (red, amber, green), and the signal continues to function in the void, a despairing social mechanism marching inexorably through the desert, before the façades that dramatically proclaim their vocation as ruins.

Should a window suddenly light up, or on the contrary go dark, the solitary dreamer might ask himself – in vain – if it concerns a scene of illness or of love, if it is the movement [*geste*] of a child

who gets up too early or of an insomniac. Never does a head, a face appear in the dozens and dozens of windows. Except if there is something going on in the street, an explosion, a fire engine that hurtles without stopping towards a call for help. In short, arrhythmia reigns, except for rare moments and circumstances.

From my window overlooking courtyards and gardens, the view and the supply of space are very different. Overlooking the gardens, the differences between habitual (daily, therefore linked to night and day) rhythms blur; they seem to disappear into a sculptural immobility. Except, of course, the sun and the shadows, the well lit and the gloomy corners, quite cursory contrasts. But look at those trees, those lawns and those groves. To your eyes they situate themselves in a permanence, in a spatial simultaneity, in a coexistence. But look harder and longer. This simultaneity, up to a certain point, is only apparent: a surface, a spectacle. Go deeper, dig beneath the surface, listen attentively instead of simply looking, of reflecting the effects of a mirror. You thus perceive that each plant, each tree, has its rhythm, made up of several: the trees, the flowers, the seeds and fruits, each have their time. The plum tree? The flowers were born in the spring, before the leaves, the tree was white before turning green. But on this cherry tree, on the other hand, there are flowers that opened before the leaves, which will survive the fruits and fall late in the autumn and not all at once. Continue and you will see this garden and the *objects* (which are in no way things) **polyrhythmically**, or if you prefer *symphonically*. In place of a collection of fixed things, you will follow each *being*, each *body*, as having its own time above the whole. Each one therefore having its place, its rhythm, with its recent past, a foreseeable and a distant future.

Are the simultaneous and the immobile deceptive? Are the synchronous, the background and the spectacle abusive? No and yes. No: they constitute, they are, the **present**. Modernity curiously enlarged, deepened and at the same time dilapidated the present. The quasi-suppression of distances and waiting periods (by the media) amplifies the present, but these media give only reflections and shadows. You attend the incessant fêtes or massacres, you see the dead bodies, you contemplate the explosions; missiles are fired before your eyes. You are there! . . . but no, you are not



there; your present is composed of simulacra; the image before you simulates the real, drives it out, is not there, and the simulation of the drama, the moment, has nothing dramatic about it, except in the verbal.

Would it be the *feeling* of the spectacle that appears *spectacular*, that the open window overlooking one of the liveliest streets in Paris shows? To attribute this slightly pejorative character to this *vision* (as the dominant trait) would be unjust and would bypass the *real*, that is to say, its meaning. The characteristic traits are truly temporal and rhythmic, not visual. To release and listen to rhythms demands attention and a certain time. In other words, it serves only as a *glimpse* for entering into the *murmur*, noises, cries.<sup>19</sup> The classic term in philosophy, 'the object', is not appropriate to rhythm. 'Objective'? Yes, but exceeding the narrow framework of objectivity, by bringing to it a multiplicity of (sensorial and significant) **meanings**.<sup>20</sup>

The succession of alternations, of differential repetitions, suggests that there is somewhere in this present an order, which comes from elsewhere. Which reveals itself. Where? In the monuments, the palaces, from the *Archives* to the Bank of France, meteorites fallen from another planet into the popular centre, for so long abandoned, the *Cour des Miracles*, a place of rogues. Therefore, beside the present, a sort of presence-absence, badly localised and strong: the State, which is not seen from the window, but which looms over this present, the omnipresent State.

Just as beyond the horizon, other horizons loom without being present, so beyond the sensible and visible order, which reveals political power, other orders suggest themselves: a logic, a division of labour, *leisure activities* are also **produced** (and productive), although they are proclaimed *free* and even 'free time'. Isn't this freedom also a *product*?

Secret objects also speak, in their own way, sending out a message. The Palace screams, yells, louder than the cars. It screams, 'Down with the past! Long live the modern! Down with history, I've swallowed it, digested it and brought it back up [*restituée*] . . .'. It has as perpetual witness and proof the cop at the junction, Law and Order, and if someone goes too far, he knows he will be arrested, whistled at, trapped, in such a way that the

solitary cop induces the discourse of Order, more and better than the façades of the Square and the junction. Unless he also induces an anarchistic discourse, for he is always there, and of little use; the fear of an accident maintains the order of the junctions more efficiently than the police. Whose presence arouses no protestation anyway, everyone knowing its uselessness in advance.

Could it be that the lessons of the street are exhausted, outdated, and likewise the teachings of the window? Certainly not. They perpetuate themselves by renewing themselves. The window overlooking the street is not a mental place, where the inner gaze follows abstract perspectives: a practical space, private and concrete, the window offers views that are more than spectacles; mentally prolonged spaces. In such a way that the implication in the spectacle entails the explication of this spectacle. Familiarity preserves it; it disappears and is reborn, with the everydayness of both the inside and the outside world. Opacity and horizons, obstacles and perspectives implicate one another because they complicate one another, imbricate one another to the point of allowing the Unknown, the giant city, to be glimpsed or guessed at. With its diverse spaces affected by diverse times: rhythms.

Once the interactions are determined, the analysis continues. Is there a hierarchy in this tangled mess, this scaffolding? A determining rhythm? A primordial and coordinating aspect?

The window suggests several hypotheses, which wandering and the street will confirm or invalidate. Wouldn't the bodies (human, living, plus those of a few dogs) that move about down there, in the car-wrecked swarming whole, impose a law? Which one? An order of grandeur. The windows, doors, streets and façades are measured in proportion to human size. The hands that move about, the limbs, do not amount to signs, even though they throw out multiple messages. But is there a relation between these physical flows of movements and gestures and the culture that shows itself (and yells) in the enormous murmur of the junction? The little bistros on the *rue R.*, the boutiques, are on a human scale, like the passers-by. Opposite, the constructions wanted to *transcend* this scale, to leave known dimensions and also all models past and possible behind; leading to the exhibition of



metal and frozen guts, in the form of solidified piping, and the harshest reflections. And it's a meteorite fallen from another planet, where technocracy reigns untrammelled.

Absurd? Or super-rational? What do these strange contrasts say? What does the proximity between a certain archaism attached to history and the exhibited supra-modernity whisper? Has it a secret – or secrets? Does the State-political order write across this scene, with the signature of the author? Without doubt, but the time and the age that inscribe themselves in the performance of this spectacle, that give it meaning, should not be forgotten. And why the *rue de la Truanderie* and the *passage des Ménestriers*,<sup>21</sup> preserved throughout the upheavals?

The essential? The determining factor? Money. But money no longer renders itself sensible as such, even on the façade of the bank. This centre of Paris bears the imprint of what it hides, but it hides it. Money passes through circulation. Not long ago, this *capital* centre retained something of the provincial, of the mediaeval: historic and crumbling. So many discussions and projects for these predestined or abandoned places! One such amiable and charming project – very 18th century – authored by Ricardo Bofill – was set aside after its adoption.<sup>22</sup> Another such project, which made the centre of Paris the administrative centre (for the ministries) of the country, seduced, it would appear, the Chief; his disappearance entailed that of the project. And a compromise between the powers – the State, money, culture – was attempted. Windows for all products, including intellectual ones, correcting the drabness with images most *belle époque*.

How is it that **people** (as one says, since certain phrases like 'the people' and 'workers' have lost some of their prestige) accept this display? That they come in crowds, in perpetual flows? In such a way that the rhythms of their passing weaken or are reinforced, but link up with and follow on from one another, and never disappear (even at night!).

What is it that attracts them to this extent? Do they come simply *to see*? But what? The big building that was conceived not in order to be seen, but in order *to give sight*? Yet, we come to see it, and we cast a distracted eye over that which it *exposes*. We go around this void [*ce vide*], which fills itself up with things and

people in order to empty itself [*se vider*], and so on. Wouldn't these people come above all to see and meet one another? Would this crowd unconsciously give itself the consciousness of a crowd?

The window replies. First, the spectacle of the junction and the perpendicular streets which, not long ago, formed a neighbourhood of the city, peopled by a sort of native, with many artisans and small shopkeepers. In short, people of the neighbourhood. Those who remain live under the roofs, in the attics, with Chinese or Arabic neighbours. Production has left these places, even those businesses that require storage depots, warehouses, stocks and vast offices. Nothing to say about these most well-known facts other than their consequences. For example: the crowds, the masses on the square at Beaubourg, around mediaeval Saint-Merri, or on the *Place des Innocents*, of which it would be too easy to say that it has lost all its innocence. The squares have re-found their ancient function, for a long time imperilled, of gathering, of setting the scene and staging spontaneous popular theatre.

Here on the square, between Saint-Merri and Modernism erupts a mediaeval-looking festival: fire-eaters, jugglers, snake charmers, but also preachers and sit-in discussions. Openness and adventure next to dogmatic armour-plating. All possible games, material and spiritual. Impossible to classify, to count. Without doubt many deviant wanderers that seek, knowing not what for – themselves! But many who seek only to forget, neither town nor country, but their own corners. And for hours and hours they walk, find themselves back at the junctions, circle the places that are closed and enclosed. They almost never stop, eating some hot-dog or other as they walk (rapid Americanisation). On the square, they occasionally stop walking, staring straight ahead of them; they no longer know what to do. Watching, half-listening to those pitching their wares, then taking up again their unrelenting march.

There on the square, there is something maritime about the rhythms. Currents traverse the masses. Streams break off, which bring or take away new participants. Some of them go towards the jaws of the monster, which gobbles them down in order quite quickly to throw them back up. The tide invades the immense square, then withdraws: flux and reflux. The agitation and the



noise are so great that the residents have complained. The fateful hour: ten o'clock in the evening, noises forbidden: so the crowd becomes silent, calm but more melancholy; oh fatal ten o'clock at night! The spectacle and murmur disappeared, sadness remains.

With these places are we in the everyday or the extra-everyday? Well, the one doesn't prevent the other and the pseudo-fête emerges only apparently from the everyday. The former prolongs the latter by other means, with a perfected organisation that reunites *everything* – advertising, culture, arts, games, propaganda, rules of work, urban life . . . And the police keep vigil, watch over.

Rhythms. Rhythms. They reveal and they hide. Much more diverse than in music, or the so-called civil code of successions, relatively simple texts in relation to the City. Rhythms: the music of the City, a scene that listens to itself, an image in the present of a discontinuous sum. Rhythms perceived from the invisible window, pierced into the wall of the façade . . . But next to the other windows, it is also within a rhythm that escapes it . . .

No camera, no image or series of images can show these rhythms. It requires equally attentive eyes and ears, a head and a memory and a heart. A memory? Yes, in order to grasp this present otherwise than in an instantaneous moment, to restore it in its moments, in the movement of diverse rhythms. The recollection of other moments and of all hours is indispensable, not as a simple point of reference, but in order not to isolate this present and in order to *live* it in all its diversity, made up of *subjects* and *objects*, subjective states and objective figures. Here the old philosophical question (of subject, object and their relations) is found posed in non-speculative terms, close to practice. The observer in the window knows that he takes **his time** as first reference, but that the first impression displaces itself and includes the most diverse rhythms, on the condition that they remain *to scale*. The passage from *subject* to *object* requires neither a leap over an abyss, nor the crossing of a desert. Rhythms always need a reference; the initial moment persists through other perceived givens. The philosophical tradition has raised half-real, half-fictitious, problems that are badly resolved by remaining within speculative ambiguity. Observation [*le regard*] and meditation follow the lines

of force that come from the past, from the present and from the possible, and which rejoin one another in the observer, simultaneously centre and periphery.

Here as elsewhere, opposites re-find each other, recognise one other, in a reality that is at the same time more *real* and more ideal, more complicated than its elements that are already accounted for. This clarifies and actualises the concept of *dialectical thought* that does not cease to fill these pages with so many questions and but a few answers!



## 4

## Dressage

People make gestures [*gestes*]; they gesticulate. Legs twitch. Gestures are sometimes made with arms, hands, fingers, the head: in short the top half of the body; sometimes with hips and legs: the bottom half. Each segment of the body has its rhythm. These rhythms are in accord and discord with one another. What does one mean when one says of a boy or girl that he or she is fully **natural**? That his or her movements and gestures are *expressive* or *gracious*? etc. Whence comes the effect? Where is the cause?

*Nature* can serve as a reference point. But one that is rather hidden. If one could 'know' from outside the beatings of the heart of such and such a person (the speaker), one would learn much about the exact meaning of his words. Respiration is heard, announces itself. Running and emotion modify it. The heart remains hidden, like other *organs*, each of which, we know, has its rhythm.

Gestures cannot be attributed to *nature*. Proof: they change according to societies, eras. Old films show that our way of walking has altered over the course of our century: once jauntier, a rhythm that cannot be explained by the capturing of images. Everybody knows from having seen or appreciated this that familiar gestures and everyday manners are not the same in the West (*chez nous*) as in Japan, or in Arab countries. These gestures, these manners, are acquired, are learned.

The representation of the **natural** falsifies situations. Something passes as *natural* precisely when it conforms perfectly and

without apparent effort to accepted models, to the habits valorised by a tradition (sometimes recent, but in force). The age where it seemed *natural* for *young people* to act modestly, to keep quiet, to behave with discretion, respect, and imitate *superiors*, is not long gone . . .

One can and one must distinguish between education, learning and dressage or training [*le dressage*].<sup>23</sup> Knowing how to live, knowing how to do something and just plain knowing do not coincide.<sup>24</sup> Not that one can separate them. Not to forget that they go together. To enter into a society, group or nationality is to accept values (that are taught), to learn a trade by following the right channels, but also to bend oneself (to be bent) to its ways. Which means to say: dressage. Humans break themselves in [*se dressent*] like animals. They learn to hold themselves. Dressage can go a long way: as far as breathing, movements, sex. It bases itself on **repetition**. One breaks-in another human living being by making them repeat a certain act, a certain gesture or movement. Horses, dogs are broken-in through repetition, though it is necessary to give them rewards. One presents them with the same situation, prepares them to encounter the same state of things and people. Repetition, perhaps mechanical in (simply behavioural) animals, is ritualised in humans. Thus, in us, *presenting ourselves* or *presenting another* entails operations that are not only stereotyped but also consecrated: rites. In the course of which interested parties can imagine themselves elsewhere: as being *absent*, not present in the presentation.

Breeders are able to bring about unity by combining the linear and the cyclical. By alternating innovations and repetitions. A linear series of imperatives and gestures repeats itself cyclically. These are the phases of dressage. The linear series have a beginning (often marked by a signal) and an end: the resumptions of the cycle [*reprises cycliques*] depend less on a sign or a signal than on a general organisation of time. Therefore of society, of *culture*. Here it is still necessary to recognise that the *military model* has been imitated in our so-called western (or rather imperialistic) societies. Even in the so-called modern era and maybe since the mediaeval age, since the end of the city-state. Societies marked by the *military model* preserve and extend this rhythm through all



phases of our temporality: repetition pushed to the point of automatism and the memorisation of gestures – differences, some foreseen and expected, others unexpected – the element of the unforeseen! Wouldn't this be the *secret* of the magic of the periodisations at the heart of the everyday?

Dressage therefore has its rhythms; breeders know them. Learning has its own, which educators know. Training also has its rhythms, which accompany those of dancers and *tamers* [dresseurs].

All different, they unite (or must be united), in the same way as the organs in a body.

The rhythms of dressage seem particularly worthy of analysis. One does not *break-in* a horse like a dog, nor a carthorse like a racehorse, nor a guard dog like a hunting dog. The origin (the lineage, the species or the *race*) enters into account, especially at the beginning. Certain animals refuse dressage. One breaks in elephants but not big cats (except in rare cases!). Can one break-in cats? or only *educate* them?

The sciences of dressage take account of many aspects and elements: duration, harshness, punishments and rewards. Thus rhythms compose themselves.

In the course of their *being broken-in*, animals *work*. Of course, they do not produce an object, be it with a machine, a technique, or with their limbs. Under the imperious direction of the breeder or the trainer, they produce their bodies, which are entered into social, which is to say human, practice. The bodies of *broken-in* animals have a use-value. Their bodies modify themselves, are altered. As in humans, where odours make way for the visual. Dressage puts into place an automatism of repetitions. But the circumstances are never *exactly* and absolutely the same, *identical*. There are changes, be they only by the hour or the season, the climate, light, etc. Dressage fills the place of the unforeseen, of the initiative of living beings. Thus function the ways of breaking-in humans: military knowledge, the rites of politeness, business. Space and time thus laid out make room for humans, for education and initiative: for liberty. A little room. More of an illusion: dressage does not disappear. It **determines the majority of rhythms**. In the street, people can turn right or left, but their walk,

the rhythm of their walking, their movements [*gestes*] do not change for all that.

The time of learning (dressage) divides itself in accordance with a triad:

- a) The internal activity of control. Under direction. Punctuated by pauses (for repose . . .).
- b) Complete stop. Integral repose (sleep, siesta, dead time).
- c) Diversions and distractions. Rewards (a packet of cigarettes, a big prize, a promotion, etc.).

It would be a mistake to note only instantaneous attitudes. Or a series of movements (a film). It's the training that counts: that imposes, that educates, that breaks-in.

This rhythmic model, in use throughout the world, establishes itself over the course of dressage, and subsequently perpetuates itself. Is it not convenient for armies, religious and educational establishments, for offices and monasteries alike? With some variations: *reason* or *unreason* according to the laws of recitation or the wielding of arms? It is through **rhythms** that this model establishes itself. Would it be its (trinity: activity–repose–entertainment) triadic character that confers generality upon it? Perhaps: it would be a paradigm of old rhythms edified on a physiological *basis*, which is to say the human body. Needs and desires produce themselves in the interaction. Which is able to give eurhythmia or even arrhythmia if the rhythms (and needs) are broken.

However, one should not overestimate the importance and the effects of this *military* model instituted by Roman traditions and Latinity. Though not without suffering its influence, the *Protestant* countries have partially overturned it through disputations directed against the Roman Church, against Roman law and against traditional teaching in continental Europe.

Less has been written and discoursed about odour and odours than about sex. A mistake: smells are of great importance. The modern world aspires to be odourless: hygienic. Odours seem not to obey rhythms. The physiological movement of rhythms towards the rhythmized is elucidated in the same way as the influence of dressage on the sensory organs. This model, moreover, reigns absolutely over the female sex. The *dressage* of girls and



women was always harsh, especially in the so-called *privileged* classes. The resistance was equal to the pressure. Why? Without doubt because in femininity the *basic* rhythms have greater force and reach. The figures of this resistance ranged from adored Goddesses to respected matrons, from the lessons of love to the suffragettes. Wouldn't it be through these forces and these conflicts that feminine (called 'feminist') movements have the capacity for renovation in contemporary societies? Have they modified the rhythms impressed by virility and by the military model of dressage? Without doubt . . . but the question exceeds the proposition. In addition, one should believe in neither the immutability, nor the decisive force of sex.

According to this perspective, through rhythms women would have resisted for centuries the virile model, the veritable code of existence promoted and propagated by force, and pressed ideologically; the model that serves dressage was always reinforced by identifications. With whom? With the chief, with the sovereign. The concertant models have great power and great influence. Of course, the femininity upheld by the meanings of vital rhythms, interior and exterior to dressage, did not resist in a single block. It occasionally fainted, in order subsequently to *rebel*.

We can suppose that the western order established since Latinity and the Roman Empire could not easily have broken-in Orientals and Africans. After the efforts that history calls *colonialism*, not without notable effects, the failure of this occidental dressage is today evident on a world scale. It finds ways for those who escape our conjoined models (dressage-identifications-reduced and stereotyped differences).

The *substance* [*matière*] is the crowd (or molecules, corpuscles), it is a *body*.

The crowd is a body, the body is a crowd (of cells, of liquids, of organs).

Societies are composed of crowds, of groups, of bodies, of classes, and constitute peoples. They understand the **rhythms** of which living beings, social bodies, local groups are made up.

The concept passes from vague and confused representations to a grasp of the plurality of rhythmic interactions; to diverse degrees and levels: from corpuscles to galaxies, one more time!

If there is difference and distinction, there is neither separation nor an abyss between so-called material bodies, living bodies, social bodies and representations, ideologies, traditions, projects and utopias. They are all composed of (reciprocally influential) rhythms in interaction. These rhythms are analysed, but the analyses in thought are never brought *to term*. No more so the analysis of precise social facts like *dressage* than the analysis of the theatre, of music, of poetry as rhythms.

An auscultatory examination does not exhaust biophysiological rhythms: it does not grasp them all, does not grasp their interactions. In an analogous way, the analysis of the rhythms of **dressage** does not exhaust the understanding of social rhythms. Even if one inserts training for work, for the repetitive gestures of production, into the process of dressage. Other *sectors* have their own and specific rhythms: those of the town and the urban, for example, or transport. Or those of culture, which is more or less functionalised and linked to market conditions. Liberty is born in a reserved space and time, sometimes wide, sometimes narrow; occasionally reduced by the results of dressage to an unoccupied lacuna. Creative activity, as distinct from productive activity, proceeds from the liberty and individuality that unfurl only in conditions that are external (to them).

Certain terms that have become routine are not without interest: the instinctual, the impulsive, the functional, the directional, even the behavioural; they correspond to research and explorations. Do they reach the level of the *conceptual*? Doubts persist. They seem to be developed in terms of metaphors that signify orientation towards representations. These schemas remain abstract, static: they sometimes take time into account, but scarcely **rhythms**. Yet training, information and communication pass through rhythms: repetitions and differences, linearly or cyclically.

The child, like the young animal, has its biological rhythms, which become *basic* but alter themselves (are altered): hunger, sleep, excretions. The latter in particular are altered by social life: the family, maternity. *Educated* rhythms are human, therefore social, rhythms. Across groups: the family, village or town, institutions, religions, etc., rhythms are continually found, though



sometimes metamorphosed. The consideration of *pure* rhythms could eventually renew the meaning of terms.

The unconscious? This bundle, this parcel (this suitcase) of a word has one meaning, or several. It designates a level of *reality* and a direction of research. With good reason it rejects the Cartesian tradition, so influential in philosophy in our *culture* that identifies being with the conscious; that evacuates being, the true and the *real* from consciousness and thought. But shouldn't the unconscious be that which goes on in the body: in our material and social bodies? Wouldn't the unconscious be seated in the relation between the brain and signs? How does memory function? Beginning with the unconscious, certainly, but is it not for all that a substance hidden behind the scenes, which whispers its lines to the actor? This scenario works no better than the Cartesian scenario. The place of the body, of its exploration and valorisation, which does not return to the oversimplification of psychological materialism: the corporeal subject is *being-in-the-world*.

All becoming irregular [*dérèglement*] (or, if one wants, all *deregulation*, though this word has taken on an official sense) of rhythms produces antagonistic effects. It *throws out of order* and disrupts; it is symptomatic of a disruption that is generally profound, lesional and no longer functional. It can also produce a lacuna, a hole in time, to be filled in by an invention, a creation. That only happens, individually or socially, by passing through a *crisis*. Disruptions and crises always have origins in and effects on rhythms: those of institutions, of growth, of the population, of exchanges, of work, therefore those which make or *express* the complexity of present societies. One could study from this perspective the rhythmic changes that follow revolutions. Between 1789 and 1830 were not bodies themselves touched by the alterations in foods, gestures and costumes, the rhythm of work and of occupations?

One could reach, by a twisty road and paradoxically beginning with bodies, the (concrete) universal that the political and philosophical mainstream targeted but did not reach, let alone realise: if rhythm consolidates its theoretical status, if it reveals itself as a valid concept for thought and as a support in practice, is it not this

concrete universal that philosophical systems have lacked, that political organisations have forgotten, but which is lived, tested, touched in the sensible and the corporeal?



## 5

## The Media Day

What do these words mean? Do they speak of a day occupied by the media? Or of a day such as the media presents it? Both of these, because the one does not exclude the other.

The media occupies days: it makes them; it speaks of them. The term *day* can be deceiving: it excludes night, it would seem. Yet night is a part of the media day. It speaks, it emotes,<sup>25</sup> at night as in the day. Without respite! One catches waves: nocturnal voices, voices that are close to us, but also other voices (or images) that come from afar, from the devil, from sunny or cold and misty places. So many voices! Who can hold back the flows, the currents, the tides (or swamps) that break over the world, pieces of information and disinformation, more or less well-founded analyses (under the sign of coded information), publications, messages – cryptic or otherwise. You can go without sleep, or doze off . . .

The media day never ends, it has neither beginning nor end. Can you imagine this flow that covers the globe, not excluding the oceans and deserts? Is it immobile? It has a meaning: time. A meaning, really? At any given hour, your instrument can fish for a catch, a prey, in this uninterrupted flow of words, in the unfurling of messages. Generally flotsam, with luck a monster: an order, a prayer. Communication? Information? Without doubt, but how can we separate that which has value from that which has none: know it from ideology, the absurd from meaning? But that has not the least importance, except for curious, paradoxical spirits, who stay awake and watch indefinitely. The important: that time

is – or appears – occupied. By empty words, by mute images, by the present without presence.

We must ceaselessly come back to this distinction (opposition) between presence and the present: it takes a long time to prepare the trial (process) [*procès (processus)*]. The already marked difference links back to the philosophical and socio-political critique of the image, of mediation (mediatisation),<sup>26</sup> of time, of all representation. The present simulates presence and introduces simulation (the simulacrum) into social practice. The present (representation) furnishes and occupies time, simulating and dissimulating the living. Imagery has replaced in the modern the sacralisation of time and its occupation by rites and solemnised gestures; it succeeds in fabricating, introducing and making accepted the everyday. A skilfully utilised and technicised form of mythification (simplification), it resembles the real and presence as a photo of photographed people: it resembles but it has neither depth, nor breadth, nor flesh.<sup>27</sup> Yet the image, as the present, takes care of ideology: it contains it and masks it. Presence is *here* (and not up there or over there). With presence there is dialogue, the use of time, speech and action. With the present, which is *there*, there is only exchange and the acceptance of exchange, of the displacement (of the *self* and the *other*) by a **product**, by a simulacrum. The present is a fact and an effect of *commerce*; while presence situates itself in the poetic: value, creation, situation in the world and not only in the relations of exchange.

Continuous and continual, the media day fragments. As a result, at every moment, there is a choice. You can leave the TV or radio on and go about your business, distractedly following the ocular and verbal chatter. Just by having a modern television or radio, you can hear and/or see images and receive messages from afar, by pressing a button or turning a dial. And beyond the mountains and seas. Sometimes, you come across an image in an unknown language; you can abandon yourself to reverie. More often, you happen to tune into local radio and so you learn a whole load of stuff that you already knew: market-day in the neighbouring village, who won the cycling race, etc., therefore an extremely concrete and close universe.

In truth, if one dares say it, the listeners to this form (informa-



tion) would know what one does not want to know: how people live, that of which the everyday consists. One of several contradictions: the form of communication eludes the content that it so badly needs for a social existence; and nonetheless it works!

Tide or swamp [*marée ou marécage*]? The one does not preclude the other when the media is involved. What you have captured is not just a little rhythm (of images and/or words) in the everyday. And here we are in the heart of paradox: the media enter into the everyday; even more: they contribute to producing it. However, they do not speak of it. They content themselves with illusions. Therefore they do not say what there is. They do not discourse on their influence. They mask their action: the effacement of the immediate and of presence – the difference between presence and the present – to the profit of the latter. You want presence? Turn to literature or the church . . .

Ignorance? Intentional misunderstanding? Here again the one does not preclude the other. But how do you want the men of representation to represent to themselves the leap from presence to representation? They accomplish it, but only a few lucid people (who suffer because of it) know what it is necessary to know: how to occupy time – by displacing the vital interest.

Producers of the commodity *information* know empirically how to utilise rhythms. They have cut up time; they have broken it up into *hourly slices*. The output (rhythm) changes according to intention and the hour. Lively, light-hearted, in order to inform you and entertain you when you are preparing yourself for work: the morning. Soft and tender for the return from work, times of relaxation, the evening and Sunday. Without affectation, but with a certain force during off-peak times, for those who do not work or those who no longer work. Thus the media day unfolds, polyrhythmically.

Mediatisation tends not only to efface the **immediate** and its unfolding, therefore beyond the present, **presence**. It tends to efface **dialogue**. It makes the other, the sensible, *present*, while the *subject* remains completely passive. The subject says nothing, has nothing to say. If it objects, if it falls silent; it comes into conflict with itself, with no other result than to contest one of the rhythms of the world and its own existence.

Dialogue is reduced to dispute. Language becomes ‘soliloquy’: that of the speaker who *discourses* alone, for the *masses* whom he does not see, but who see him . . .

With regard to Hölderlin and poetry, Heidegger wrote: ‘the being of man is grounded in language, but this happens as authentic primarily in dialogue [ . . . ]. We are a dialogue [ . . . ]. Dialogue and its unity underlie our *Dasein* . . .’.<sup>28</sup> The philosopher speaks of dialogue, **not of communication**.

This point merits a pause. Communication certainly exists, has become fluent, instantaneous, banal and superficial – not touching the everyday, the kernel of banality become product and commodity, an insipid flow flooding the age. Communication devalues dialogue to the point of its being forgotten. It’s serious. Is that a reason to attribute ontological privilege to dialogue? Dialogues are certainly intense moments of communication: a privileged use of the medium of exchange that is language. Doesn’t language emanate from dialogue? Isn’t that to confuse theory with practice? The genesis of languages is tied to societies, to their histories, and not to dramatised moments of the employment of words. It is only too true that in modernity, the informational stocks up on itself, trades itself, sells itself; that it destroys dialogues; that it has an indirect relation to experiential knowledge [*le connaître*] and a direct relation to a vaguely institutional *theoretical knowledge* [*le savoir*]; in such a way that the critique of the informational, of the media (of mediatised life) constitutes a part of experiential knowledge [*connaissance*]. It does not follow from this that the right to information can be set apart from citizenship: necessary though not sufficient.

Restoring the value of dialogue (dialogue as value) from the everyday to poetry (and to philosophy) does not oblige us to devalue the informational: to deny it social and historical reality. Dialogue does not go beyond two parties. Those dialogues traditionally known under the title of ‘Platonic’ stage and set in motion several characters, protagonists or secondary figures; the intense moments are attributed to Socrates and an interlocutor. In everyday life, it more often happens that there are at least three parties: including the (virtual) child, the cat, the dog, the parent, the friend, the neighbour, etc. One island with two char-



acters? This representation leads us to recall the amusing account of Adam and Eve, rather than the metaphysical interventions of Martin Heidegger, who furthermore rightly takes account of interior dialogue: the I with the Self, the Self with the Other. However, the philosopher attaches himself to a single philosophical tradition. Without breaking with it. This leads him to attribute the ontological privilege (being) to any given dramatic situation, from birth to death.

It is necessary to come to an agreement over the expression: **the mediatised everyday**. More complex than it appears, which is to say more contradictory, it says that the everyday is **simultaneously** the prey of the media, used, misunderstood, simultaneously fashioned and ignored by these *means* that make the *apparatuses*. This enables us to note that everyday time is above all composed of weak times, but also consists of strong times: dialogues (including dialogues with oneself, when one puts oneself in the presence of oneself, and when 'one' asks oneself: 'so, what did you make of this day, of this time, of your life? . . .') Which is not at all repetitive). The repetitive monotony of the everyday, rhythmmed by the (mediatised) media need not bring about the forgetting of the exceptional. Although the worst banality covers itself in this publicity label: 'Here is the exceptional'. Whence malaises and questionings to untangle, each one having its own task each day in the hotchpotch of the *privatised* and the public, the bizarre and the unusual, the media and the immediate (which is to say the *lived* in the everyday).

## 6

The Manipulations  
of Time

What has not been written on time and space, generally defined as given, distinct, separate essences (or substances)? Up until the modern era, space was generously attributed to the human race, and time to the Lord.

This separation is in the process of being filled in, though more than one lacuna remains. The history of time and the time of history hold another mystery. The genesis of social time remains obscure. The history of time and the time of history should include a history of rhythms, which is missing. There are certain benefits, however. Time is at once fleeting, ungraspable (even in the *self* for psychology), and grasped, timed, timed *chronometrically*. A philosophical paradox, but one that goes further than philosophy: time, number and drama concern life. In historical time, what is the role of history in the forms of memory, recollections, narratives? Are there not alternatives to memory and forgetting: periods where the past returns – and periods where the past effaces itself? Perhaps such an alternative would be the rhythm of history . . .

**Capital and life (the living)**

It has often been said: 'Capitalism makes masters and slaves, the rich and the poor, the propertied and the proletariat . . .'. This is not wrong, but it does not suffice for measuring the evil power of *capital*. It constructs and erects itself on a contempt for life and from this foundation: the body, the time of living. Which does not



cease to amaze: that a society, a *civilisation*, a culture is able to construct itself from such disdain. This leads us to remark:

1) that the disdain conceals itself beneath an ethic (in the moral sense);

2) that it makes up for itself with ornaments: refinements in hygiene, the proliferation of sports and sporting ideology;

3) that if this contempt has played a big role in history, in the foundation of this society (in the nineteenth century, still the so-called Victorian period), and if some of it remains, it is fading, exhausting itself. It has transformed itself in a way that is subversive and even *revolutionary* in advancing into the unknown: the exaltation of *life*.

The domination–exploitation of human beings begins with animals, wild beasts and cattle; the humans associated with these inaugurated an experience that would turn back against them: killings, stockbreeding, slaughters, sacrifices and (in order better to submit) castration. All these practices were put to the test and succeeded. The castration of beasts, what power! And what a symbol of anti-nature! *Nature* gave place to representations, to myths and fables. The earth? Those who cultivated it loved it; they treated it as a generous divinity. The living (except those who accepted domestication, such as cats and dogs) provided a raw material, a *primary substance* [*matière première*] that each society treated in its own way.

After which *human beings* separated themselves from each other: on the one hand the masters, men worthy of this name – and on the other, the subhumans, treated like animals, and with the same methods: dominated, exploited, humiliated. Whose fault is this? A bad question. Not that of the animals or their assimilated equivalents. Especially given the progress, the advances that there were through this situation: in knowledge, technology, world exploration and the mastery of the natural. Man made himself *master* and *possessor of nature*, of the sensible, of substance. It was throughout this that he divided himself against himself, in realising himself. Thus did capitalism!

One could, to supplement the concepts with images, depict capital: a chain of bacteria that grabs passing matter, that feeds itself by dividing itself, that multiplies by dividing itself. A false

image: bacteria produces the living by absorbing the inert. Meanwhile capital grows to make the void: it kills around it on a planetary scale. Both in general and in detail. Capital does not construct. It produces. It does not edify; it reproduces itself. It simulates life. Production and re-production tend to coincide in the uniform! Traditionally, we take it out on the *rich*, on the *bourgeois*. Thus the object of action is displaced. We forget that the guilty party is not even *money*, it is the functioning of capital! Which sublimates concepts. Images do not supplant concepts; however, in saying *true* or *real*, concepts simplify reality in their own way. Never has a handful of *property owners* dominated the world. There are always associates; they always have numerous auxiliaries with them. Today the technocracy, the *specialists* for whom communication relays speech and renders dialogue useless. Plus all those who occupy themselves with *cultural* production, who occupy themselves with things and suchlike. Just as the aristocracy had hordes of vassals, of valets and subjected peasants around it. Without which neither it, nor its reign, nor its society (which otherwise had grandeur, charms and splendour) could have lasted.

Capital has something more than maliciousness, malignance and malevolence about it. The wills, the wishes, of the property owners are not there for nothing: they execute. Through them, the death-dealing character of capital is accomplished, without there being either full consciousness or a clear intuition of it. It kills nature. It kills the town, turning itself back against its own bases. It kills artistic creation, creative capacity. It goes as far as threatening the last resource: nature, the fatherland, roots. It delocalises humans. We exhibit technology at the slightest suggestion. Yet technologies do not emerge from the living. Communication? It remains formal, we have seen; content? neglected, lost, wasted away. Technologies kill immediacy (unless the speed of cars, planes or automatic cameras pass for a return to the immediate; but that isn't saying much). The impact of technological conquests does not make the everyday any more *alive*; it nourishes ideology.

Yet another paradox, which is to say an affirmation that is at once truthful and unexpected. Capital kills social richness. It produces *private* riches, just as it pushes the *private* individual to



the fore, despite it being a public monster. It increases political struggle to the extent that states and state-apparatuses bow down to it. With regard to social richness, it dates from an earlier time: gardens and (public) parks, squares and avenues, open monumentality, etc. Investment in this domain, which is sometimes reliant on democratic pressure, grows rarer. What sets itself up is the empty cage, which can receive any commodity whatsoever, a place of transit, of passage, where the crowds contemplate themselves (example: the Beaubourg Centre – the Forum in Paris – the Trade Centre in New York). Architecture and the architect, threatened with disappearance, capitulate before the *property developer*, who spends the money.

Like creative pre-capitalist architecture, so-called *tribal*, which is to say communal, forms of social life, have been ruined on a world scale. Without replacement, except by a gestating *socialism*. Capital! The majority of readers of Marx have read this as ‘The Capitalists’, while the concept designates an entity, a weird being which has a terrible, monstrous, existence, both very concrete and very abstract, very efficient and very effective – but which exists through the heads and hands that incarnate it. One could well say: ‘It’s not their fault . . . it’s fate! Necessity, in short, the ineluctable!’ But this necessity has a name. It is the *real*, the entity that functions and creates through actors and social and moral relations. The *personalisation* of capital, a theoretical error, can lead to practical (political) errors. It would suffice to change the *established* people for society to change. We risk passing over the essential and leaving the functioning of the *thing* to persist. The thing, which is to say the entity that reifies . . . Not the object in its usual, empirical and philosophical sense, but the ‘Thing’ . . .

‘You are exaggerating! You are allowing yourself to be carried away by your metaphors! Who would you have believe that people, the brave people, you and I, move alongside this legendary monster, this dreadful entity that you describe? No, capital does not sow death! It produces, it stimulates invention . . .’

Dear speaker, advocate of capital, it is not directly a question of the people. It is not their fault because there is no fault, there is *something* that functions implacably and produces its effects. The brave people, as you said, not only move alongside the

monster but are inside it; they live off it. So they do not know how it works. The informational reveals only tiny details and results. Would one of your cells, if it put itself to it, understand your body? These people who moreover move everyday alongside infamous events, great abuses and horrors, find themselves neither horrified nor infuriated by them. They are facts. They were taught that these are simple facts among many others and so it’s fine . . . The people of our country let themselves play, through their representatives, a role on the world stage that it is better to abstain from qualifying: they let thousands of other brave and simple people of the Third World die of hunger, while here abundance reigns! But do you finally see what the monstrous efficiency of the monster reveals: the situation of the human race, threatened with disappearance, to a large extent unconscious and marching light-heartedly, in quick time to military music along the road of death?

The rhythm that is proper to capital is the rhythm of producing (everything: things, men, people, etc.) and destroying (through wars, through *progress*, through inventions and brutal interventions, through speculation, etc.). It is often said: ‘Yes, it was like this or that in the old days; then the world changed . . .’. This isn’t wrong, but it does not go beneath the surface; in fact there were, as we have seen, great rhythms of historical time: apology for the body and following that negation of the body – exaltation of love and pleasure then depreciation and apology for frivolity – taste for and then refusal of violence, etc. Capital replaced these alternatives with the conflicting dualities of production and destruction, with increasing priority for the destructive capacity that comes at its peak and is raised to a world scale. Which, on the negative side, therefore plays the determining role in the conception of the world and the worldly.

All this is nothing new; it has been said and re-said. Why repeat it? Because these *truths* or these *ideas* have penetrated badly into consciousness – which consciousness? Social? Philosophical? Political? Let us say immediately, in order to bring the discussion to a close: political. In a way that was unforeseen, over the course of centuries, political consciousness has suffered a decline, though not without leaving its marks. The *social*? *Socialism*? The



*socialisms* have not yet gained in prestige or in clarity. Perhaps ancient truths will come to pass through a language other than that of the modern, and the position in favour of the *social*.

## 7

## Music and Rhythms

Music – it hardly needs to be said – offers to thought a prodigiously rich and complex field, in different respects: the relation between music and technology, music and societies, the history and genesis of musical genres, *styles*, etc. Is there more work on the history and current events of music than on painting or architecture? One could suppose so, when one considers the immense quantity of works dedicated to *musicology*, albeit only in Germany: biographies, analyses of works, studies of periods, etc. The researches reveal the hyper-complexity of this art – and of art in general – as well as the richness of experience, that of the musicians, but also that of memory (be it historical, or that of each individual: from nursery rhymes, refrains and fashionable songs that are played to death, to recollections in the classical style).

It seems that everything has been said about music, musicians (composers, performers) and audiences. Not to neglect external contributions (such as the discovery of harmonics at the beginning of the eighteenth century by a physician). Not to forget theological, religious, profane *inspirations*. However, after careful consideration, missing pieces, lacunae can be discerned. Is there a general – **aesthetic** – according to the accepted terminology – theory of music, apart from for philosophers (Schopenhauer)? Has rhythm been studied?

Research and work on melody, voices and singing has not been found wanting since Antiquity. Harmony has been catching up for two-and-a-half to three centuries. Isn't rhythm an even less explored sector of musical times? A hypothesis that is all the more



acceptable given that so-called modern music is characterised by, amongst others, the massive irruption of exotic rhythms . . .

To get inside its meaning, we shall proceed here according to the conceptual method presented from the beginning of these studies: first, an (inevitably incomplete) table of **oppositions**, terms entering into musical discourse and the verbal discourse on discourse. Following this, a presentation of the evidence of rhythmic structures (dyads, triads, etc.).

a) **Oppositions**, contrasts and contraries in musical discourses (of and on music).

**The low and the high.** Everybody knows what this means, even ignoring frequencies. The importance of intervals in the composition and execution of *pieces* of music is less well known. *Modern* composers have turned tones towards the high-pitched, including *diapason*.

**Vivace–adagios.** These are the extremes of speed, programmed from the beginning of each *movement* of musical time. This time, too, is *relative*. Modern composers accelerated the movements, in such a way that an *allegro* is today the equivalent, it would seem, of a classical *vivace*. It goes without saying that *movement* is a component of rhythm; necessary, it does not suffice to determine it. In effect, the **beat** [*la mesure*] can be taken slowly or rapidly. And it is the measure that specifies the rhythm.

**Verticality–horizontality.** These times, which represent the time of music *spatially*, are only understood as a function of (musical) writing. Notes performed simultaneously superimpose themselves on the staff; vertically, therefore. Notes that succeed one another align themselves on the same staff. These recurrent terms aid our understanding.

**Tied–staccato.** The notes in a melody can be distinguished to the point of separating themselves, but not by a silence. Or a '*ligature*' (a very ancient term) specifies that the executor links them together, as closely as possible, without confusing them. Here, we begin to get inside rhythm.

**Logogenic and pathogenic.** These terms come from German musicology. They parallel the terms **expression–signification**, employed by other experts. The logogenic produces meaning and the pathogenic, emotion. The expressive translates states of the

soul; and the signifying produces various psychic, emotional or mental effects. The expressive translates (or rather, is thought to translate) the subjectivity of the composer through interpretation in order to reach the listener. The significant would reach the latter more directly, in accordance with the intuition and not the emotion of the listener. Rhythm has a role in these very varied effects. Elsewhere concepts, under the apparent clarity of relevant oppositions, remain obscure and difficult to apply in a concrete manner. Bach would be *logogenic* and Beethoven *pathogenic*, likewise Schumann (of course, without *pathological* indication). Ravel would fall under the significant and Mozart, above and beyond these limiting significations. But don't the former and the latter all play in the same registers?

**Sacred–profane.** An ancient and well-founded distinction. Profane music, over the course of history, seems always to have a popular origin in **dances**. Sacred music, linked to rites, gives place to complex codes; ritualisation frequently imposes slow rhythms on it, like magical gestures. A remark: the opposition is born early in history; King David danced before the Ark; in religions in the Orient (Buddhism? Shintoism?), there are sacred dances; the human body retraces the birth and life of the universe as theologians represent them. Is the separation of genres the prerogative of the West? But *our* greatest masters of music (Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, etc.) knew how to compose masses just as well as dances! Certain sonatas, as much those of Mozart as those of Beethoven, retain imprinted fragments of religiosity; the fragments of Bach's *suites* begin with popular dances: *bourrées*, Germanic, etc. Push the separation of genres too far and the relevant opposition would lead to an incomplete or erroneous theory. And yet, tendentiously, differences exist and intervene as much in *meaning* as in rhythms.

These oppositions do not only hold in (verbal or written) discourse with regard to music. They enter into music; but serve only to determine musical reality, which cannot define itself simply as a language or a writing. Certainly, a musical *text* has a meaning, which brings it closer to language. There is a type of musical *writing*, writing (on the staff) set down in the eighteenth century, which has not been without influence on composition: harmony is



written. But music cannot be reduced to these determinations. It gives itself above all else in return for a time: in return for a rhythm. Does musical time coincide with *lived* time? Or with imaginary time (duration)? Metaphorical? Theorists since Schopenhauer (notably Boris von Schloezer) have left the question in the dark, though not without having posed it.<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, the concept of (lived or dreamed) time remains abstract if one leaves the rhythmic aside. But would it be right to treat musical time as *essential* (or existential) outside space? No! Sound occupies a space, and the instruments of *existence*. The *spatialisation* of musical time cannot be deemed a betrayal. Perhaps music presupposes a unity of time and space, an alliance. In and through rhythm?

b) Let us move on to a more complete analysis: dialectic and triadic, including but enlarging the relevant oppositions. In accordance with the proposed method.

Exemplary cases are not found wanting. One of them, full of meaning, comes to initiate the series: 'time-space-energy'. These three terms are necessary for describing and analysing cosmological reality. No single one suffices, nor any single term-to-term opposition. Time and space without energy remain inert in the incomplete concept. Energy animates, reconnects, renders time and space conflictual. Their relation confers **concrete** universality upon these concepts.

It is to be noted that the *elements* of musicality decrypt themselves triadically. Already. Consider **sound**. It implies: first, a place in the range of sounds, which goes from low to high, and which determines the frequency of vibrations; following this, its intensity. Since each sound can be quiet or loud, strengthened or weakened. Lastly a **tone**, determined by the harmonics emitted at the same time as the fundamental sound. A 'G' on the flute or the piano or the violin is the same note, the same pitch, and yet what a difference! These universally known banalities must be emphasised. They serve as the basis for analysis. It is also worth drawing attention to the **triadic** character of concepts and their relations. **Binary** (term-to-term) oppositions given as evidence enable us to determine the object but not to penetrate into it. The triad 'melody-harmony-rhythm' grasps musical life by heart. Concepts

and that which they designate cannot be separated; they are found everywhere; but antagonistically: one of these three **dominates**, tending to efface the other (or the other two). And this in musical time in all its forms: the history of music and its becoming – the history surrounding music (in social *circles*) – the time of each composition. The linking of concepts, throwing light on dialectical relations, allows us to understand the dominant ones: such and such a musical composition emphasising rhythm, effacing melody and harmony. Another deals with alliances of sounds, with marches or harmonic developments. Another is *purely* melodic, consisting of only a voice or voices (for example, Gregorian chant). The – recent – irruption of *pure* rhythm is found in all memories, as it often is when listening.

Historically, the distinction is recognised to the extent that the documents permit: centuries were required for musical time to discern itself from verbal time; which is to say for musicians and music to give themselves proper and specific rhythms, distinct from spoken rhythms, gestures (and the written). At the time of these debates, at least in the West, music was **sung**, with singing originating on the one hand from poetry, on the other from dance. The (Homeric) bard [*aède*] would sing his poem. Rhythm rejoined song in music: long and short (in Latin: dactyls and spondae). It is the **metric** that gives rhythm. The poet holds an instrument: lute, harp, etc. At this stage, musical **measure** does not exist. The metric still renders it useless. We can suppose that musicians detached themselves from the constraint of words, from poetic discourses, and that they improvised in composing. There remain no traces of this. On the contrary, the chants of the church, plainsong, recall the beginnings of music through the *Gregorian*: rhythms express liturgy.

This music, in the grip of the Word, was certainly *logogenic* (if one accepts the difference). It spoke of an order and brought it to life amongst listeners, who did not remain passive, who reacted by singing, by dancing, by speaking out. Anyhow, if one refers back to Greek traditions, the Apollonian lyre had a dominant trait: clarity, shared reason. Pathogenic music founded itself on the flute, the **Dionysiac** instrument of the Bacchanalians and the great orgiastic gods.



Nietzsche's theses on these obscure origins have been contested, condemned and detested.<sup>30</sup> There lives on from them a profound and enlightened idea, however: the birth of the arts, amongst which theatre and tragedy, in a common cradle, with a genesis that is difficult to conceive, where music would struggle with the lyric, the spoken word, but still play the primary role.<sup>31</sup>

The dialectical movement *lyric-song-music* therefore has its forerunners. It went through many episodes: domination (in the beginning) of the word, of the voice, of the metric. Then the slow growth of musicality, which achieved autonomy (*ars nova* in the Middle Ages, then properly musical genres: sonatas, symphonies). With some returns to force of the verbal (chants) but the ascendance of rhythm.

This deep struggle between the word and the musical marks simultaneously every work, the history of musicians and that of music itself: periods, epochs and styles, not unconnected to societies themselves. Without illusions: when the instrumental *concert* predominates, it is because the orchestra plays during a reception or a royal banquet. The listener does not listen religiously. People are speaking, eating, drinking. Singing got in the way of conversations. If the fashionable eunuch comes to sing, one falls silent, one listens. It is only later, when sacred (religious) music no longer has more than a secondary role, that one finds deep meaning in it, that the listener listens in a religious silence to the players, pianists, violinists and orchestras. Beethoven made himself listen in silence; not yet Mozart. Music gains in strength what it loses in listening. We pass from *chamber music* to great public concerts, to the glory of conductors (and not only that of singers or pianists).

In summary, melody detaches itself 'in-itself and for-itself', as Hegel would say, from song and from the word. The metric (language) ceases to dominate and impose rhythm. There were periods in which the melodic line, taken aside, remained floating in relation to measures, chords, rhythms.

Later, harmony took flight, becoming itself an end (more and better than a means). There were periods where it dominated, crushing melody and rhythm under its weight. The work of music was constructed from a chord, through the treatment of harmonies. Then came, over the course of the nineteenth century, the

ascension of rhythm, considered for itself unappreciative and reductive of the other components of the musical act (of the work of art).

Would rhythm therefore be *logogenic* or *pathogenic*? It rather seems that the rise of rhythm tends to overturn this distinction, to reject the difference as outdated . . .

The conquest and unfolding of rhythm – to the point of supremacy – consisted of phases. The **measurement** and **writing** of music were a part of it, but so was the domination of **time**. At the beginning of each work, for example a sonata, and even at the beginning of every stave are found definitions, which up to a certain point henceforth constrain the performer. These constraints go with the writing of music, which we know only takes shape (staves, clefs, etc.) towards the eighteenth century, replacing either the *ad libitum* (to the taste of the performer) or a tradition. Jean-Jacques Rousseau still sought to invent a *system* of representation that was more rational than the *tablatures* that were still common in his time. The writing of music, like the writing of language, has not been without influence, notably on music (on the creation of music, and not only its performance). The representation of notes on staves is not without relation to the **chord**, whose concept Rameau teased out in his treatise on harmony (1733).<sup>32</sup> The visualisation and spatialisation of musical time resulted, up to a certain point, from the writing defined in the new genres (such as symphony).

Measure dates from before writing, though in accordance with the same requirement. Dances were for the most part peasant and popular dances, such as the bourrée or the saraband (which find themselves skilfully treated in Bach). But the aristocracy and town-dwellers did not deprive themselves of dancing. The village musician followed an *oral* tradition. The village musician needs correctly executed patterns and approaches; keeping to the measure [*en mesure*], dance steps and *figures*. Measure and writing correspond to the *practical* needs of music; they needed a long time to impose themselves, and for the (skilful) solution to these quite precise problems to be discovered.

This did not happen without the impoverishment of inspiration. Measure? At the time of classical fashions, there are only



two types of it: binary and ternary. Writing? It obliges *fidelity* and does not favour inspiration or variation, however essential. The shackle of rationality thus weighs heavily on the music of these eras; but in art the constraints **also** thus have a favourable effect: *models*. Like the verbal metric, the rules of musical art did not indicate these paths to creation, writing, measure, the fixing of tempo, affective excitations . . .

But it should not be necessary to see in these innovations (the writing of music, measure, time fixed in advance) only *progress*, creations. This *positive* aspect is not without the so-called negative side: impoverishment, weakening, through the loss of spontaneity, etc.

Much has been spoken and written about **musical time**, especially after Schopenhauer and Bergson, in accordance with their philosophies of temporality. When the narrow relation between musical time and lived time was described – with music offering more to life than an image, therefore a regal gift, obscure life transformed into a work of art – everything was said and nothing was said. Rhythm does not enter or enters badly into account. The relation between musical time and the rhythms of the **body** is required. Musical time resembles them but reassembles them. It makes a bouquet, a garland from a jumble. Through dance, first of all. Musical time does not cease to have a relation with the *physical*. If it begins with verbal rhythms, it is because the latter are a part of the rhythms of the body. If it detaches itself from them, it is not in order to void itself but in order to reach all the so-called *physical* rhythms. Measure has this meaning: a means and not an end, as it happens that one considers it.

Is there an *instinct* of rhythm? A spontaneity? An immediacy? Many reasons for stating as much in the act of music. But then again, the *instinct* of thought? It gives itself in life as rhythm. Rhythm is easily grasped whenever the body makes a sign; but it is conceived with difficulty. Why? It is neither a substance, nor a matter, nor a thing. Nor is it a simple relation between two or more elements, for example subject and object, or the relative and the absolute. Doesn't its concept go beyond these relations: *substantial-relational*? It has these two aspects, but does not reduce itself to them. The concept implies something more. What?

Perhaps **energy**, a highly general concept. An energy is employed, unfolds in a time and a space (a space-time). Isn't all expenditure of energy accomplished in accordance with a rhythm?

A central point makes itself clear: by and through rhythm, music becomes worldly [*se mondialise*]. Europe and the West receive and perceive *exotic*, original and different musics: Japanese and Jamaican. Rhythms unfold, increase [*s'amplifient*] by diversifying themselves: neither melodies nor harmonies had achieved this *world coverage* [*ampleur*], which is universal in the manner of rationality.

Would that be because, with its rhythms (respiration, heart, etc.), the human species (collectively) possesses a fundamental physiological organisation (structure)? Or because the **measure** of time is made in accordance with generalised norms and rules?

The relation between music and society changes with *eras* and societies themselves. It narrowly depends on their relation to the body, to nature, to physiological and psychological life.

This relation oscillates between contempt, exaltation and deliberate organisation. Mediaeval society, especially *mediatised*, is characterised by the contempt of the body, of life. Antique, particularly warlike, societies cultivated the body. The Orient seems to have sought its way in a more *just*, more *balanced*, appreciation of spontaneous life. Sacred music defines rhythms in order to accentuate the contempt for the body. It confers a theological *meaning* on words, exalting the solemn, prophetic, majestic, character of the maledictions of the Word.

In the West societies pass from the sacred to the profane, not without *crises*. But at the same time, the body grew fainter, popular dances were transformed into skilful [*savante*] music (Bach); they became unrecognisable and were no longer danced to.

The body and its rhythms remain no less a resource of music: the site towards which creation returns through strange detours (jazz, etc.).

Is it not thus that music becomes worldly? After peregrinations (measure, writing and the aleatory), modern music finds itself back in the body; rhythm dominates, supplants melody and harmony (without suppressing them).



The triad *melody–harmony–rhythm* therefore envelops **real** contradictions, which translate themselves into the adventures of musical creation. A *speculative* triad? No: changing antagonistic relations, included within a vast becoming. For this reason, the triad does not lack interest. Its analysis is part of a vaster methodology, which it verifies.

Musical rhythm does not only sublimate the aesthetic and a rule of art: it has an **ethical** function. In its relation to the body, to time, to the work, it illustrates *real* (everyday) life. It *purifies* it in the acceptance of **catharsis**. Finally, and above all, it brings compensation for the miseries of everydayness, for its deficiencies and failures. Music integrates the functions, the **values** of Rhythm . . .

## 8

## Conclusions (Résumé)

At no moment have the analysis of rhythms and the rhythmanalytical project lost sight of the **body**. Not the anatomical or functional body, but the body as **polyrhythmic** and **eurhythmic** (in the so-called *normal* state). As such, the living body has (in general) always been present: a constant reference. The theory of rhythms is founded on the experience and knowledge [*connaissance*] of the body; the concepts derive from this consciousness and this knowledge, simultaneously banal and full of surprises – of the unknown and the misunderstood.

Along with arrhythmia, **isorhythmia** (the equality of rhythms) completes this repertoire of fundamental concepts. With one reservation: iso- and eu-rhythmia are mutually exclusive. There are few isorhythmias, rhythmic equalities or equivalences, except of a higher order. On the other hand, eurhythmias abound: every time there is an organism, organisation, life (living bodies).

In this respect, thought could return to the *Leibnizian* principle apparently abandoned by philosophers, logicians and scientific types. Were there *isorhythmia* between two temporalities, they would coincide. Equivalence entails identity (and reciprocally, non-identity implies difference); **polyrhythmia** is composed of diverse rhythms. **Eurhythmia** (that of a living body, normal and *healthy*) presupposes the association of different rhythms. In arrhythmia, rhythms break apart, alter and bypass *synchronisation* (the usual term for designating this phenomenon). A pathological situation – agreed! – depending on the case; interventions are made, or should be made, **through rhythms**, without brutality.



It is, of course, in the body that we have situated the paradigm of rhythmological study. Music (notably symphonic and orchestral) could have provided another example. Under the direction of the conductor's baton (his magic wand), a rhythm falls into place and extends over all the performers, however many they may be. It is therefore a remarkable **isorhythmia**. Whereas the living body presents numerous associated rhythms (and we must insist on this crucial point); hence a **eurhythmia**, when in the state of good health. Pathology, in a word illness, is always accompanied by a disruption of rhythms: arrhythmia that goes as far as morbid and then fatal de-synchronisation.

Rhythmanalysis therefore essentially consists in the forming of these concepts into a work (which can change them, transform them):

isorhythmia –  
eurhythmia –  
arrhythmia.

Intervention through rhythm (which already takes place, though only empirically, for example, in sporting and military training) has a goal, an objective: to strengthen or re-establish eurhythmia. It seems that certain oriental practices come close to these procedures, more so than medical treatments.

Rhythmanalytic therapy would be **preventative** rather than *curative*, announcing, observing and classifying the pathological state.

A clear if not self-evident implication: once one discerns relations of force in social relations and relations of alliance, one perceives their link with rhythm. Alliance supposes harmony between different rhythms; conflict supposes arrhythmia: a divergence in time, in space, in the use of energies. The relationship between forces, which requires the domination of one force and draws on the relations of alliance as means (and not ends), is accompanied by a disassembly of times and spaces: of rhythms.

Political power knows how to utilise and manipulate time, dates, time-tables. It combines the unfurlings [*déploiements*] of those that it employs (individuals, groups, entire societies), and

rhythms them. This is officially called mobilisation. The authorities have to know the polyrhythmia of the social body that they set in motion. It is the extreme case, revealing simultaneously official and empirical – political and military rhythmanalysis.

Empirical analysis starts from the beginnings of social life: from pre-history. At the heart of nature, as in every grouping, attention is focused on separating out the causes and origins of multiple noises, murmurs and clamours. How? By discerning and following rhythms, those of flowers and rain, of childlike or bellicose voices, of secret meetings.

The discriminatory capacity of the auditory and cerebral apparatuses plays the primary role – practical and spontaneous – in the grasping of rhythms. It is not a subjective apprehension, although objective rhythms *translate* themselves into our own rhythms. In the image of non-separate *subjective* or *objective* processes (the noise of the flight of an insect, for example). The theory of rhythms as such has received solid support from the possibilities of reproducing rhythms, studying rhythms by recording them, therefore of grasping them in their diversity: slow or fast, syncopated or continuous, interfering or distinct. Putting an interview or background noises on disc or cassette enables us to *reflect* on rhythms, which no longer vanish whenever they appear. Whence the possibility of concepts, therefore of thought.

Rhythmanalysis thus theorised does not constitute a separate science. Partial studies and a global conceptualisation – though necessary – are not sufficient. No more so than the particular instances of rhythmised experience that everyone possesses. Thought strengthens itself only if it enters into practice: **into use**.



*The Rhythmanalytical Project*

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[Originally published as 'Le projet rythmanalytique',  
*Communications*, 41, 1985, pp. 191-9.]



## 1. Everyday Life and Rhythms

In a forthcoming publication, we will show the relations between everyday life and rhythms, which is to say the concrete modalities of social time. The rhythm-analytical study that we are going to attempt integrates itself into that of everyday life. It even deepens certain aspects of it. Everyday life is modelled on abstract, quantitative time, the time of watches and clocks. This time was introduced bit by bit in the West after the invention of watches, in the course of their entry into social practice. This homogeneous and desacralised time has emerged victorious since it supplied *the measure of the time of work*. Beginning from this historic moment, it became the time of everydayness, subordinating to the organisation of work in space other aspects of the everyday: the hours of sleep and waking, meal-times and the hours of private life, the relations of adults with their children, entertainment and hobbies, relations to the place of dwelling. However, everyday life remains shot through and traversed by great cosmic and vital rhythms: day and night, the months and the seasons, and still more precisely biological rhythms. In the everyday, this results in the perpetual interaction of these rhythms with repetitive processes linked to homogeneous time.

This interaction has certain aspects that we will leave aside, for example the traditional links of social time to religious beliefs and prescriptions. We shall devote ourselves to only the rhythmic aspect of everyday time. The study of everyday life has already demonstrated this banal and yet little-known difference between the cyclical and the linear, between rhythmised times and the times of brutal repetitions. This repetition is tiring, exhausting and tedious, while the return of a cycle has the appearance of an event and an advent. Its beginning, which after all is only a re-commencement, always has the freshness of a discovery and an invention. Dawn always has a miraculous charm, hunger and thirst renew themselves marvellously . . . The everyday is simultaneously the site of, the theatre for, and what is at stake in a conflict between great indestructible rhythms and the processes imposed by the socio-economic organisation of production, consumption, circulation and habitat. The analysis of everyday life



shows how and why social time is itself a social product. Like all products, like space, time divides and splits itself into use and use-value on the one hand, and exchange and exchange-value on the other. On the one hand it is sold and on the other it is lived.

Whence a series of hypotheses that serve as a starting point for *rhythmanalysis*.

First, everyday time is measured in two ways, or rather simultaneously measures and is measured. On the one hand, fundamental rhythms and cycles remain steady and on the other, the quantified time of watches and clocks imposes monotonous repetitions. Cycles invigorate repetition by cutting through it. Is it not because of this double measure that everydayness was able to establish itself in modern times, to become stable and, if we might say so, institutionalised?

Second, there is a bitter and dark struggle around time and the use of time. This struggle has the most surprising repercussions. So-called natural rhythms change for multiple, technological, socio-economic reasons, in a way that requires detailed research. For example, nocturnal activities multiply, overturning circadian rhythms. As if daytime were not enough to carry out repetitive tasks, social practice eats bit by bit into the night. At the end of the week, in place of the traditional weekly day of rest and piety, 'Saturday Night Fever' bursts out.

Third, quantified time subjects itself to a very general law of this society: it becomes both uniform and monotonous whilst also breaking apart and becoming fragmented. Like space, it divides itself into lots and parcels: transport networks, themselves fragmented, various forms of work, entertainment and leisure. There is not time to do everything but every 'doing' has its time. These fragments form a hierarchy, but work remains to a large extent essential (despite a devaluation, resisted by practical re-evaluations in times of unemployment), the reference to which we try to refer everything else back. However, disturbances of rhythm proliferate, as do so-called nervous problems. It is not imprecise to say the nerves and the brain have their own rhythms, likewise the senses and the intellect.

From the *rhythmanalytical* perspective, we can describe daytime and the uses of time in accordance with social categories,

sex and age. It is to be noted that objects are consumers of time, they inscribe themselves in its use with their own demands. A washing machine consumes a fragment of time (functioning and maintenance) likewise it occupies a fragment of space. Meal-times result from convention since they differ according to the country. But, if you eat at midday and at eight o'clock in the evening, you will end up being hungry at these times. Perhaps decades are needed to bend the body to these rhythms and it is not uncommon for children to refuse social rhythms. With regard to intellectual concentration and the activities with which it is bound up (reading, writing, analysis), they also have their own rhythm, created by habit, which is to say by a more or less harmonious compromise between the repetitive, the cyclical and that which supervenes on them. These behaviours that are acquired in accordance with a certain division of time and in accordance with well-defined rhythms nonetheless leave the impression of spontaneity. Automatism or spontaneity? We attribute what results from external constraints to an essential need. He who rises at six in the morning because he is rhythmised in this way by his work is perhaps still sleepy and in need of sleep. Doesn't this interaction of the repetitive and the rhythmic sooner or later give rise to the dispossession of the body? This dispossession has been noted and underlined many a time, though without all the reasons having been grasped.

In everyday life, what is relative to social relations thus appears to every 'subject' as necessary and absolute, as essential and authentic. Were we to introduce a new element into everyday time, this construction might totter and threaten to collapse, so showing that it was neither necessary nor authentic. To become insomniac, love-struck or bulimic is to enter into another everydayness . . .

The rhythmised organisation of everyday time is in one sense what is most personal, most internal. And it is also what is most external (which corresponds to a famous dictum of Hegel). It pertains neither to an ideology, nor to reality. Acquired rhythms are simultaneously internal and social. In one day in the modern world, everybody does more or less the same thing at more or less the same times, but each person is really alone in doing it.



The cyclical and the linear are categories, which is to say notions or concepts. Each one of these two words designates – denotes – an extreme diversity of facts and phenomena. Cyclical processes and movements, undulations, vibrations, returns and rotations are innumerable, from the microscopic to the astronomical, from molecules to galaxies, passing through the beatings of the heart, the blinking of the eyelids and breathing, the alternation of days and nights, months and seasons and so on. As for the linear, it designates any series of identical facts separated by long or short periods of time: the fall of a drop of water, the blows of a hammer, the noise of an engine, etc. The connotation does not disappear into the denotation of these terms. The cyclical is perceived rather favourably: it originates in the cosmos, in the worldly, in nature. We can all picture the waves of the sea – a nice image, full of meaning – or sound waves, or circadian or monthly cycles. The linear, though, is depicted only as monotonous, tiring and even intolerable.

The relations of the cyclical and the linear – interactions, interferences, the domination of one over the other, or the rebellion of one against the other – are not simple: there is between them an antagonistic unity. They penetrate one another, but in an interminable struggle: sometimes compromise, sometimes disruption. However, there is between them an indissoluble unity: the repetitive tick-tock of the clock measures the cycle of hours and days, and vice versa. In industrial practice, where the linear repetitive tends to predominate, the struggle is intense.

If the cyclical and the linear are categories of time and rhythm with general characteristics (including the measure of the one by the other, which makes each one a *measured-measure*), are there no other categories? Other characteristic traits of time and rhythm? Other times?

The time that we shall provisionally name ‘appropriated’ has its own characteristics. Whether normal or exceptional, it is a time that forgets time, during which time no longer counts (and is no longer counted). It arrives or emerges when an activity brings plenitude, whether this activity be banal (an occupation, a piece of work), subtle (meditation, contemplation), spontaneous (a child’s game, or even one for adults) or sophisticated. This activity

is in harmony with itself and with the world. It has several traits of self-creation or of a gift rather than of an obligation or an imposition come from without. It *is* in time: it *is* a time, but does not reflect on it.

To pose the question of rhythms clearly, let us return to everyday life and the description of a day. The use of time fragments it, parcels it out. A certain realism is constituted by the minute description of these parcels; it studies activities related to food, dress, cleaning, transport, etc. It mentions the employed products. Such a description will appear scientific; yet it passes by the object itself, which is not the sequence of lapses of time passed in this way, but their linking together in time, therefore their rhythm. The essential will get lost, to the gain of the accidental, even – especially – if the study of fragments enables us to theorise certain structures of the everyday.

## 2. What is Rhythm?

Everybody thinks they know what this word means. In fact, everybody senses it in a manner that falls a long way short of knowledge: rhythm enters into the lived; though that does not mean it enters into the known. There is a long way to go from an observation to a definition, and even further from the grasping of some rhythm (of an air in music, or of respiration, or of the beatings of the heart) to the conception that grasps the simultaneity and intertwinement of several rhythms, their unity in diversity. And yet each one of us *is* this unity of diverse relations whose aspects are subordinated to action towards the external world, oriented towards the outside, towards the Other and to the World, to such a degree that they escape us. We are only conscious of most of our rhythms when we begin to suffer from some irregularity. It is in the psychological, social, organic unity of the ‘perceiver’ who is oriented towards the perceived, which is to say towards objects, towards surroundings and towards other people, that the rhythms that compose this unity are given. An analysis is therefore necessary in order to discern and compare them. It is a question of hunger and thirst, sleep and waking, sex and intellectual activity, etc.



For there to be rhythm, there must be repetition in a movement, but not just any repetition. The monotonous return of the same, self-identical, noise no more forms a rhythm than does some moving object on its trajectory, for example a falling stone; though our ears and without doubt our brains tend to introduce a rhythm into every repetition, even completely linear ones. For there to be rhythm, strong times and weak times, which return in accordance with a rule or law – long and short times, recurring in a recognisable way, stops, silences, blanks, resumptions and intervals in accordance with regularity, must appear in a movement. Rhythm therefore brings with it a differentiated time, a qualified duration. The same can be said of repetitions, ruptures and resumptions. Therefore a measure, but an *internal measure*, which distinguishes itself strongly though without separating itself from an *external measure*, with time *t* (the time of a clock or a metronome) consisting in only a quantitative and homogeneous parameter. In a reciprocal action, the external measure can and must superimpose itself on the internal measure, but they cannot be conflated. They have neither the same beginning, nor the same end or final cause. This double measure enters into the definition and quality of rhythm, irreducible to a simple determination, implying on the contrary complex (dialectical) relations. As such only a non-mechanical movement can have rhythm: this classes everything that emerges [*relève*] from the purely mechanical in the domain of the quantitative, abstractly detached from quality. However, it is necessary to formulate some reservations with regard to this claim. For example, there is a close relationship between rhythms and the wave movements studied in mathematics and physics. Sounds, these elements of musical movement, with their properties and combinations (pitch, frequency, vibration, placed on the scale of sounds, which is to say along the continuum from low to high, intensities and tones) result from complex vibrations, from wave movements that enter into chords and harmonies. We shall come back to this later, when further exploring the relationship of musicality and rhythm. For the moment, it is enough to note that rhythm presupposes:

a) Temporal elements that are thoroughly marked, accentuated, hence contrasting, even opposed like strong and weak times.

b) An overall movement that takes with it all these elements (for example, the movement of a waltz, be it fast or slow). Through this double aspect, rhythm enters into a general construction of time, of movement and becoming. And consequently into its philosophical problematic: repetition and becoming, the relation of the Same to the Other. It is to be noted at this point that by including a measure, rhythm implies a certain memory. While mechanical repetition works by reproducing the instant that precedes it, rhythm preserves both the measure that initiates the process and the re-commencement of this process with modifications, therefore with its multiplicity and plurality. Without repeating identically 'the same', but by subordinating the same to alterity and even alteration, which is to say, to difference.

To grasp rhythm and polyrhythmias in a sensible, preconceptual but vivid way, it is enough to look carefully at the surface of the sea. Waves come in succession: they take shape in the vicinity of the beach, the cliff, the banks. These waves have a rhythm, which depends on the season, the water and the winds, but also on the sea that carries them, that brings them. Each sea has its rhythm: that of the Mediterranean is not that of the oceans. But look closely at each wave. It changes ceaselessly. As it approaches the shore, it takes the shock of the backwash: it carries numerous wavelets, right down to the tiny quivers that it orientates, but which do not always go in its direction. Waves and waveforms are characterised by frequency, amplitude and displaced energy. Watching waves, you can easily observe what physicists call the superposition of small movements. Powerful waves crash upon one another, creating jets of spray; they disrupt one another noisily. Small undulations traverse each another, absorbing, fading, rather than crashing, into one another. Were there a current or a few solid objects animated by a movement of their own, you could have the intuition of what is a polyrhythmic field and even glimpse the relations between complex processes and trajectories, between bodies and waveforms, etc.

Now, there is not yet a general theory of rhythms. Entrenched ways of thinking, it has already been stressed, separate time from space, despite the contemporary theories in physics that posit a relationship between them. Up until the present, these theories



have failed to give a unitary concept that would also enable us to understand diversities (differences).

And now there is the hypothesis of rhythmanalysis. The body? Your body? It consists in a bundle of rhythms. Why not say: a bouquet? Or a garland? Because these terms connote an aesthetic arrangement, as if nature – an artist – had intentionally arranged and designed the beauty and harmony of bodies. That is perhaps not wrong, but it comes prematurely. The living – polyrhythmic – body is composed of diverse rhythms, each ‘part’, each organ or function having its own, in a perpetual interaction, in a doubtlessly ‘metastable’ equilibrium, always compromised, though usually recovered, except in cases of disruption. How? By a simple mechanism? By homeostasis, as in cybernetics? Or more subtly, through a hierarchical arrangement of centres, with one higher centre giving order to relational activity? This is one of our questions. But the surroundings of the body, the social just as much as the cosmic body, are equally bundles of rhythms (‘bundles’ in the sense that we say, not pejoratively, that a complex chord reuniting diverse notes and tones is a ‘bundle of sounds’). Now look around you at this meadow, this garden, these trees and these houses. They give themselves, they offer themselves to your eyes as in a simultaneity. Now, up to a certain point, this simultaneity is mere appearance, surface, a spectacle. Go deeper. Do not be afraid to disturb this surface, to set its limpidity in motion. Be like the wind that shakes these trees. Let your gaze be penetrating, let it not limit itself to reflecting and mirroring. Let it transgress its limits a little. You at once notice that every plant, every tree has its rhythm. And even several rhythms. Leaves, flowers, fruits and seeds. On this cherry tree, flowers are born in springtime along with leaves that will survive the fruits, and which will fall in the autumn, though not all at once. Henceforth you will grasp every being [*chaque être*], every entity [*étant*] and every body, both living and non-living, ‘symphonically’ or ‘polyrhythmically’. You will grasp it in its space-time, in its place and its approximate becoming: including houses and buildings, towns and landscapes.

Is simultaneity deceptive? Is synchronicity abusive? No and yes. No: the quasi-suppression of distances in time and space by

the present means of communication is certainly not without importance. One need only ‘see’ the interest aroused in television by live news broadcasts. You take part in events as and when they happen. You watch the massacres and the dead bodies and you contemplate the explosions. Missiles and rockets shoot off before your eyes, heading toward their targets. You are there! – But no, you are not there. You have the slight impression of being there. Subjectivity! You are in your armchair in front of the little *screen*, well named insofar as it hides what it shows. Simultaneity does not only dissimulate dramas – and the tragic. It masks time, diachrony. History? Origins? Not only these. Likewise the diversity of places, of rhythms, therefore of countries and peoples. The symmetrical error and correlated deception of artificial simultaneity: the perpetual throw back to history. Because we are dealing with the present!

From these first glimpses, the outcome is that the living body can and must consider itself as an interaction of organs situated inside it, where each organ has its own rhythm but is subject to a spatio-temporal whole [*globalité*]. Furthermore, this human body is the site and place of interaction between the biological, the physiological (nature) and the social (often called the cultural), where each of these levels, each of these dimensions, has its own specificity, therefore its space-time: its rhythm. Whence the inevitable shocks (stresses), disruptions and disturbances in this ensemble whose stability is absolutely never guaranteed.

Whence the importance of scales, proportions and rhythms. To conceive physical reality and its relation to the sensible and physiological reality of human being, modern philosophy proposed two schemas: the Kantian, or neo-Kantian, and the empirical, or positivist. According to the first, phenomena – the flux of sensations – are classified, arranged and organised in accordance with *a priori* categories, which is to say categories interior to the subject and consciousness, including time and space. The in-itself (the noumenal) eludes the grasp of the ‘subject’. According to empiricism and positivism, sensible facts are arranged of their own accord in relations of simultaneity, implication and causal entailment. ‘If A implies B and B implies C, then A implies C.’ No need for categories other than those of logic (the logical), which



are anyhow not so much categories as self-evident experiential data, transcribed in a formal language.

But knowledge, from Newton to Einstein and contemporary physics, has followed another path, equally demarcated by certain philosophies, such as that of Feuerbach. It is correct that we only perceive our relation to objects of nature as we do our relation to objects of production, or in a word, to realities; in such a way that we have to distinguish between appearances – which are themselves a reality – and what is actually inside these things. For example, they seem inert (this wooden table, this pencil, etc.) and nonetheless they move, albeit only within the movements of the earth: they contain movements and energies: they change, etc. The same goes for social relations as for physical reality: this immobile object before me is the product of labour; the whole chain of the commodity conceals itself inside this material and social object. As a consequence, it is necessary to go beyond facts, phenomena and the flux of immediate sensations, but neither the inside nor the beyond of the phenomenon and the sensible fact are determined internally and purely *a priori* as was believed in the Kantian tradition.

Our *scale* determines our location, our place in the space–time of the universe: what we perceive of it and what serves as a point of departure for practice, as for theoretical knowledge. The *micro* as well as the *macro* eludes us, although we can gradually reach them through knowledge and their relationship with the known. Our rhythms insert us into a vast and infinitely complex world, which imposes on us experience and the elements of this experience. Let us consider light, for example. We do not perceive it as a waveform carrying corpuscles but as a wonder that metamorphoses things, as an illumination of objects, as a dance on the surface of all that exists. This subjective aspect nonetheless contains within it an objectivity that has enabled us to arrive, over the long course of centuries of investigations and calculations, at a physical reality beneath the phenomena of light, though without exhaustively defining this reality.

The spectre of wavelike movements (coupled with, or on the contrary unrelated to, trajectories) extends indefinitely, perhaps infinitely, from the micro to the macro, from corpuscular move-

ments to those of metagalaxies. Relativist thought obliges us to reject all definitive and fixed references. A frame of reference can only be provisional or conjunctural; and today we can reproach Einstein for having refuted the absolute of Newtonian space of time, yet nonetheless preserving one absolute, one constant in the universe, the speed of light.

In this immense spectre, we grasp and perceive only what corresponds to our own rhythms, the rhythms of our organs, including, on account of the individual, two variable and uncertain areas: one inside our normal perceptions, and the other beyond them, towards the macro (sound waves and ultrasounds, infrared and ultraviolet, etc.). We can also conceive beings whose field of vision would extend further. Above all, we can make cameras that actually extend this field. It persists nonetheless, with its limits, its bounds, its boundaries.

Man (the species): his physical and physiological being is indeed the measure of the world, as in the ancient dictum of Protagoras.<sup>1</sup> It is not only that our knowledge is relative to our constitution, but rather that the world that offers itself up to us (nature, the earth and what we call the sky, the body and its insertion into social relations) is relative to this constitution. Not to *a priori* categories, but to our senses and the instruments we have at our disposal. More philosophically: another scale would determine another world. The same? Without doubt, but differently grasped.

Without knowing it (which does not mean ‘unconsciously’), the human species draws from the heart of the universe movements that correspond to its own movements. The ear, the eyes and the gaze and the hands are in no way passive instruments that merely register and record. What is fashioned, formed and produced is established on this scale, which, it must also be understood, is in no way accidental or arbitrary. This is the scale of the earth, of accidents on the earth’s surface and the cycles that unfurl there. This does not mean that production is limited to reproducing things and naturally given objects. What is created does not refer back to this scale, it either exceeds or transfigures it.

Paris, March 1983



*Attempt at the Rhythmanalysis of  
Mediterranean Cities*

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[Originally published as 'Essai de rythmanalyse des villes méditerranéennes', *Peuples Méditerranéens*, 37, 1986, reprinted in *Éléments de rythmanalyse: Introduction à la connaissance des rythmes*, Paris: Éditions Syllepse, 1992, pp. 97-109.]



This work is a fragment of a more complete study, or an introduction to this study. Mediterranean towns are striking, amazing, surprising, on account of their specific characteristics. We shall try, despite their differences, to tease out from their diversity some of their general traits. This evidently brings us to the largest cities, all of which are historical, often with a very ancient origin, stretching back as far as Ancient Greece. Like most historical towns in the world, they are destined either to decline or to break up by proliferating into suburbs and peripheries. Nonetheless historical traits seem to us to persist more in the Mediterranean than elsewhere, and with remarkable force. To these persistences, to this maintenance, rhythms – historical, but also everyday, ‘at the heart of the lived [*au plus près du vécu*]’ – are not, in our opinion, strangers. The question at least deserves to be posed.

It is impossible to understand urban rhythms without referring back to a general theory that focuses notably on these rhythms, but not solely on them, a general theory that we call ‘Rhythm-analysis’.<sup>1</sup> This analysis of rhythms in all their magnitude ‘from particles to galaxies’ has a transdisciplinary character. It gives itself the objective, amongst others, of separating as little as possible the scientific from the poetic.

It is thus that we can try and draw the portrait of an enigmatic individual who strolls with his thoughts and his emotions, his impressions and his wonder, through the streets of large Mediterranean towns, and whom we shall call the ‘rhythmanalyst’. More sensitive to times than to spaces, to moods than to images, to the atmosphere than to particular events, he is strictly speaking neither psychologist, nor sociologist, nor anthropologist, nor economist; however he borders on each of these fields in turn and is able to draw on the instruments that the specialists use. He therefore adopts a transdisciplinary approach in relation to these different sciences. He is always ‘listening out’, but he does not only hear words, discourses, noises and sounds; he is capable of listening to a house, a street, a town as one listens to a symphony, an opera. Of course, he seeks to know how this music is composed, who plays it and for whom. He will avoid characterising a town by a simple subjective trait, like some writer



characterises New York by the howling of police sirens or London by the murmur of voices and the screaming of children in the squares. Attentive to time (to tempo) and consequently to repetitions and likewise to differences in time, he separates out through a mental act that which gives itself as linked to a whole: namely rhythms and their associations. He does not only observe human activities, he also hears [*entend*] (in the double sense of the word: noticing and understanding) the temporalities in which these activities unfold. On some occasions he rather resembles the physician (analyst) who examines functional disruptions in terms of malfunctions of rhythm, or of arrhythmia – on others, rather the poet who is able to say:

O people that I know  
It is enough for me to hear the noise of their footsteps  
To be forever able to indicate the direction they have taken<sup>2</sup>

When rhythms are lived, they cannot be analysed. For example, we do not grasp the relations between the rhythms whose association constitutes our body: the heart, respiration, the senses, etc. We do not grasp even a single one of them separately, except when we are suffering. In order to analyse a rhythm, one must get outside it. Externality is necessary; and yet in order to grasp a rhythm one must have been grasped by it, have given or abandoned oneself 'inwardly' to the time that it rhythmised. Is it not like this in music and in dance? Just as, in order to understand a language and its rhythm, it is necessary to admit a principal that seems paradoxical. We only hear the sounds and frequencies that we produce in speaking – and vice versa, we can only produce those that we hear. This is called a circle . . .

If one observes a crowd attentively at peak times, and especially if one listens to its murmur, one will discern in the apparent disorder currents and an order that reveal themselves through rhythms: accidental or determined encounters, hurried carryings or nonchalant meanderings of people who go home in order to withdraw from the external world, or of those who leave their homes in order to make contact with the outside, business people and people of leisure [*gens d'affaires et gens vacants*]; as many

elements that compose a polyrhythmia. The rhythmanalyst thus knows how to listen to a square, a market, an avenue.

In each of social practice, scientific knowledge and philosophical speculation, an ancient tradition separates time and space as two entities or two clearly distinct substances. This despite the contemporary theories that show a relation between time and space, or more exactly say how they are relative to one another. Despite these theories, in the social sciences we continue to divide up time into lived time, measured time, historical time, work time and free time, everyday time, etc., that are most often studied outside their spatial context. Now, concrete times have rhythms, or rather are rhythms – and all rhythms imply the relation of a time to a space, a localised time, or, if one prefers, a temporalised space. Rhythm is always linked to such and such a place, to its place, be that the heart, the fluttering of the eyelids, the movement of a street or the tempo of a waltz. This does not prevent it from being a time, which is to say an aspect of a movement or of a becoming.

Let us insist on the relativity of rhythms. They are not measured as the speed of a moving object on its trajectory is measured, beginning from a well-defined starting point (point zero) with a unit defined once and for all. A rhythm is only slow or fast in relation to other rhythms with which it finds itself associated in a more or less vast unity. For example, a living organism – our own body – or even a town (though, of course, without reducing the definition of the latter to that of a biological organism). This leads us to underline the plurality of rhythms, alongside that of their associations and their interactions or reciprocal actions.

Every more or less animate body and *a fortiori* every gathering of bodies is consequently polyrhythmic, which is to say composed of diverse rhythms, with each part, each organ or function having its own in a perpetual interaction that constitutes a set [*ensemble*] or a whole [*un tout*]. This last word does not signify a closed totality, but on the contrary an open totality. Such sets are always in a 'metastable' equilibrium, which is to say always compromised and most often recovered, except of course in cases of serious disruption or catastrophe.



Another important point: rhythms imply repetitions and can be defined as movements and differences within repetition. However, there are two types of repetition: cyclical repetition – linear repetition. Indissociable even if the analyst has the duty of distinguishing and separating them. It is thus that mathematicians distinguish cleanly between two types of movements, rotations and trajectories, and have different measures for these two types. Cyclical repetition is easily understood if one considers days and nights – hours and months – the seasons and years. And tides! The cyclical is generally of cosmic origin; it is not measured in the same way as the linear. The numbering systems best suited to it are duodecimal, which is to say base twelve: the twelve months of the year, the twelve hours of the clock-face, the 360° of the circumference (a multiple of twelve), the twelve signs of the zodiac and even a dozen eggs or oysters, which means to say that the measure by twelve extends itself to living matter in direct provenance from nature. Cyclical rhythms, each having a determined period or frequency, are also the rhythms of beginning again: of the ‘returning’ which does not oppose itself to the ‘becoming’, we could say, modifying a phrase of René Crevel. The dawn is always new. The linear, by contrast, defines itself through the consecution and reproduction of the same phenomenon, almost identical, if not identical, at roughly similar intervals; for example a series of hammer blows, a repetitive series into which are introduced harder and softer blows, and even silences, though at regular intervals. The metronome also provides an example of linear rhythm. It generally originates from human and social activities, and particularly from the movements [*gestes*] of work. It is the point of departure for all that is mechanical. Attaching themselves to the identity of that which returns, the linear and its rhythms have a tendency to oppose that which becomes. According to Crevel, ‘the returning is opposed to the becoming’.<sup>3</sup> The linear, including lines, trajectories and repetitions in accordance with this schema are measured on the decimal base (the metric system). Therefore if the cyclical and the linear are clearly distinct, the analysis that separated them must join them back together because they enter into perpetual interaction and are even relative to one another, to the extent that one serves as the measure of the other. An example: so many days of work.

These several points being fixed beforehand, what will the rhythmanalyst say about Mediterranean towns? He has the duty of remaining attentive, let us insist again, to the relativity of rhythms. Every study of rhythms is necessarily comparative. We shall therefore begin by indicating briefly certain contrasts between Mediterranean and oceanic towns. These are governed by the cosmic rhythms of tides – lunar rhythms! With regard to Mediterranean towns, they lie alongside a sea with (almost) no tides; so the cyclical time of the sun takes on a predominant importance there. Lunar towns of the oceans? Solar towns of the Mediterranean? Why not?

But the shores of the Mediterranean are not homogeneous. Everyone knows that they differ in terms of people and population, ethnicities, history, specific features of the economy, in culture and in religion. How can we not distinguish between the oriental Mediterranean and the occidental Mediterranean, the Aegean and Adriatic Seas, the North Mediterranean that is part of Europe and that of the South, part of Africa? However, the Mediterranean itself imposes common characteristics on these towns, insofar as it is a relatively small, enclosed and limited sea. Anyone who has sailed, irrespective of how much, knows that the waves of the Mediterranean do not resemble those of oceans; a simple but significant detail, in that these waves have and are rhythms. The climate also seems to impose a certain homogeneity: olive trees, vines, etc., are found all around the Mediterranean. With regard to Mediterranean ports, they are marked by commercial relations that were the beginning of Greek civilisation. The resources available to most of these towns, which they draw from their hinterlands, are limited. Industrialisation was accomplished unevenly and with difficulty: it seems to have profoundly altered neither the traditions of exchange nor habits. On this basis of limited exchanges, power and political authorities that sought to dominate the town through the domination of space, were constituted very early. These powers drew and continue to draw on space as a means of control, as a political instrument.<sup>4</sup>

The shores of the Mediterranean gave rise, almost 2,500 years ago, to the city-state; it dominated a generally small territory but nonetheless protected trade that extended as far as was possible.



In this trade, material exchange was always mixed with an extreme sociability but also, paradoxically, with piracy, pillage, naval wars and rivalries, with conquests and colonisations. Characteristics that are already found in Homer's *Odyssey*. Mediterranean towns are therefore political towns, but not in the same way as towns that border oceans. The state that dominates a city and its territory is both violent and weak. It always oscillates between democracy and tyranny. One could say that it tends toward arrhythmia; through its interventions in the life of the city, it finds itself at the heart of the city, but this heart beats in a manner at once brutal and discontinuous. In the city, public life organises itself around all kinds of exchange: material and non-material, objects and words, signs and products. If on the one hand, exchange and trade can never be reduced to a strictly economic and monetary dimension, on the other hand it seems that the life of the city seldom has a political objective – except in cases of revolt. In this public life, men are not tied together by the ties that made Nordic towns communities, guaranteed as such by oaths, pacts and charters; in such a way that all action there was perpetually civil and political. One can only note the foundational differences between large, independent Mediterranean towns and the free cities of Flanders, Germany, northern France and Europe. The large Mediterranean towns appear to have always lived and still to live in a regime of compromise between all the political powers. Such a 'metastable' state is the fact of the polyrhythmic. We cannot emphasise too much this form of alliance, of compromise, which differs historically from the 'Sworn Alliance'; this difference has had consequences up as far as our own era and influences, in our opinion, the rhythms of the city.

Without claiming to draw from it a complete theory, as a hypothesis we shall attribute a good deal of importance to these relations between towns, and especially ports, with space and (cosmic) time, with the sea and the world: to that which unites these towns with the world through the mediation of the sea. If it is true that Mediterranean towns are solar towns, one can expect from them a more intense urban life than in lunar towns, but also one richer in contrasts at the very heart of the town. While in

Nordic and oceanic towns one can expect to find more regulated times, linked simultaneously to more restrictive, more disembodied and more abstract forms of (contractual rather than ritual) association. On the Atlantic and in the north, members of the urban community, engaged insofar as people in their relations of exchange, abandon a good deal of their availability, hence of their time, to these relations. While on the Mediterranean, state-political power manages space, dominates territories, controls, as we have already said, external relations without being able to prevent the townsfolk-citizens from making use of their time and consequently of the activities that rhythm it. This analysis enables us to understand that in the Mediterranean, the cradle of the city-state, the state, be it internal or external to the city, has always remained brutal and powerless – violent but weak – unificatory, but always shaky, threatened. Whereas in oceanic towns where the state and the political penetrated with fewer difficulties, therefore with fewer incidences of violence and dramas, they interfered profoundly with individual and social activities. The separation between the public and private, therefore between the external and the intimate, takes place everywhere where there is civil and political society, but it always has its own characteristics. The idea and reality of public-private separation are not everywhere identical. More concretely, what one conceals from, what one shows to and what one will see from the outside are not the same things.

If our hypothesis is exact, in the lived everyday, in practice, social relations in Nordic towns are founded on a contractual, therefore juridical, basis, which is to say on reciprocal good faith. Whereas relations in the Mediterranean would tend to be founded either on those tacit or explicit forms of alliance that go as far as the formation of clans (clientelisms, mafias, etc.) or on the contrary on refusals of alliance that can lead as far as open struggle (vendettas, etc.). Explications in terms of ancient history or in terms of the survival of peasant customs appear to us insufficient to explain the persistence and resurgence of these social relations. Codes function durably, more or less tacitly, more or less ritually; they rhythm time as they do relations. They are not strictly speaking rational laws, acceptable to if not accepted by all,



that govern relations. The word 'code' does not here have the meaning that it takes in the north, and anyway it is we who are introducing it in order to designate a set of gestures, of conventions, of ways of being. Coding is complimented by ritual and vice versa.

The relations and refusals of alliance interest the rhythm-analyst to the extent that they intervene in the production of social time. They take place and unfold in the inside of this social time that they contribute to producing (or reproducing) by impressing a rhythm upon it. Our hypothesis is therefore that every social, which is to say, collective, rhythm is determined by the forms of alliances that human groups give themselves. These forms of alliances are more varied and contradictory than is generally supposed, this being particularly, but not only, true of large towns where relations of class, relations of political force intervene.

Does the characteristic ambiguity of Mediterranean towns in relation to the state manifest itself in the rhythms of social life? It could be that the rhythm-analyst should seek the secret of rhythms around the Mediterranean, where ancient codes and strong rites are upheld. In fact, rites have a double relation with rhythms, each ritualisation creates its own time and particular rhythm, that of gestures, solemn words, acts prescribed in a certain sequence; but also rites and ritualisations intervening in everyday time, *punctuating* it. This occurs most frequently in the course of cyclical time, at fixed hours, dates or occasions. Let us note that there are several sorts of rites that punctuate everydayness:

a) Religious rites, their irruptions and also their interventions in everyday life; for example, fasting, prayers, ablutions, the muezzin, the angelus and the ringing of bells, etc.

b) Rites in the broadest sense, simultaneously sacred and profane such as festivals and carnivals that inaugurate a period or bring it to a close, rites of intimate convivialities or external sociability.

c) Finally, political rites, namely ceremonies, commemorations, votes, etc.

In short, we bring under this label everything that enters into the everyday in order to impress upon it an extra-everyday rhythm without interrupting it in so doing. The analysis of these

multiple rhythms would, we claim, enable us to verify that the relation of the townsman to his town (to his neighbourhood) – notably in the Mediterranean – does not only consist in the sociological relation of the individual to the group; it is on the one hand a relation of the human being with his own body, with his tongue and his speech, with his gestures within a certain place, with an ensemble of gestures – and on the other hand, a relation with the largest public space, with the entire society and, beyond this, with the universe.

A hypothesis comes into place and takes shape here. The analysis of discourse discerns two sorts of expression: the one formal, rhetorical, frontal – the other more immediate, spontaneous. Just as the analysis of asocial time can discern two sorts of rhythms. We shall name these by borrowing terms from Robert Jaulin: 'rhythm of the self' and 'rhythm of the other'.<sup>5</sup> Rhythms 'of the other' would be the rhythms of activities turned outward, towards the public. One could also call them 'the rhythms of representation'; more restrained, more formalised, they would correspond to frontal expression in discourse. The rhythms 'of the self', in turn, are linked to more deeply inscribed rites, organising a time turned moreover towards private life, therefore opposing self-presence to representation and, as such, quieter, more intimate, forms of consciousness to the forms of discourse . . .

This polar opposition should not lead us to forget that there are multiple transitions and imbrications between these poles: the bedroom, the apartment, the house, the street, the square and the district, finally the town – even the immediate family, the extended family, the neighbourhood, friendly relations and the city itself. The Self and the Other are not cut off from one another. The study of the space in a Muslim town shows these imbrications, these complex transitions and reciprocities between the public and the private.<sup>6</sup> In and around the body, the distinction between two sorts of rhythm is found as far as in movements [*gestes*], mannerisms and habits: and this from the most everyday (the way one eats and sleeps) to the most extra-everyday (the way one dances, sings, makes music, etc.). The extra-everyday rhythms the everyday and vice versa. No more than the linear and the cyclical can the rhythms 'of the self' and the rhythms 'of the



other', those of presence and those of representation, be separated. Entangled with one another, they penetrate practice and are penetrated by it. This seems to us true of all times and spaces, urban or not. So what is particular about Mediterranean towns? It seems to us that in them, urban, which is to say public, space becomes the site of a vast staging where all these relations with their rhythms show and unfurl themselves. Rites, codes and relations make themselves visible here: they act themselves out here [*s'y miment*]. It is to be noted that a deserted street at four o'clock in the afternoon has as strong a significance as the swarming of a square at market or meeting times. In music, in poetry too, the silences have a meaning.

Isn't Venice the example *par excellence* of this? Is this city not a theatrical city, not to say a theatre-city, where the audience [*le public*] and the actors are the same, but in the multiplicity of their roles and their relations? Thus we imagine the Venice of Casanova, of Visconti's *Senso*, like the Venice of today.<sup>7</sup> Isn't that because a privileged form of civility, of liberty, founded on and in a dialectic of rhythms, gives itself free rein in this space? This liberty does not consist in the fact of being a free citizen within the state – but in being free in the city outside the state. Political power dominates or rather seeks to dominate space; whence the importance of monuments and squares, but if palaces and churches have a political meaning and goal, the townsfolk-citizens divert them from it; they appropriate this space in a non-political manner. Through a certain use of time the citizen resists the state. A struggle for appropriation is therefore unleashed, in which rhythms play a major role. Through them, civil, therefore social, time seeks to and succeeds in withdrawing itself from linear, unirhythmic, measuring/measured state time. Thus public space, the space of representation, becomes 'spontaneously' a place for walks and encounters, intrigues, diplomacy, deals and negotiations – it theatralises itself. Thus the time and the rhythms of the people who occupy this space are linked back to space.

The comparative analysis of urban rhythms only distinguishes between them in order to bring them closer together. In the case that concerns us, this analysis sometimes arrives at contrasts or

strong oppositions, but more often at nuances. The analysis of the Spanish town evidently nuances that of the Islamic town or the Italian town. However, through the nuances and contrasts common aspects come to light. An illustration of this thesis: around the Mediterranean and irrespective of the country, many towns have been constructed on escarpments that dominate the sea. In these towns, a distinction is drawn between the lower town and the upper town: steps play a very important role. Generally, there is right around the Mediterranean a remarkable architecture of the stairway. A link between spaces, the stairway also ensures a link between times: between the time of architecture (the house, the enclosure) and urban time (the street, the open space, the square and the monuments). It links particular houses and dwellings back to their distribution in urban space. Now is the stairway not a localised time *par excellence*? Don't the steps in Venice rhythm the walk through the city, while serving simultaneously as a transition between different rhythms? Let us also evoke the steps of Gare Saint Charles in Marseille. They are for the traveller the obligatory – one could say initiatory – passage for the descent towards the city, towards the sea. More than that of a gate or an avenue, their screaming monumentality imposes on the body and on consciousness the requirement of passing from one rhythm to another, as yet unknown – to be discovered.

We have previously underlined the historical weaknesses of Mediterranean city-states. They were never able to form enduring alliances against common enemies, nor efficiently to oppose the great conquerors and the founders of great empires. The victory of Athens against the Persians remains an exceptional event. Whence the succession of empires that attempted to dominate or encircle the whole Mediterranean from antiquity to the present.<sup>8</sup> All the conquerors conquered the cities, but all the cities resisted. How and why? In our opinion, through time and rhythms. This underlines the consistent and solid character of urban times in the Mediterranean in relation to politically dominated space.

Some words here on tourism, a modern phenomenon that has become essential, and which in a curious way prolongs the historical problematic of conquests. Here too a paradox reveals itself: tourism is added to the traditional and customary use of space



and time, of monumentality and rhythms 'of the other' without making it disappear. Tourism in Venice, for example, does not suppress the theatricality of the city: one would say that it reinforces it, even if it makes dramatic representation pass for something decidedly silly; it does not succeed in altering its profundity, in denying the principle. Whence this surprising fact: the most traditional towns accept modern tourism; they adapt themselves by resisting the loss of identity that these invasions could entail. Wouldn't this be the case, not only for Venice, but also for Syracuse, Barcelona, Palermo, Naples and Marseille, cities delivered over to tourism that fiercely resist homogenisation, linearity and the rhythms 'of the other'? Tourism can distort space without managing to deform lived time by rendering it a stranger to itself. In order to understand this situation, we have seen that it is necessary to appeal to the whole of history. It is necessary to remind oneself that the long predominance of commercial and cultural exchanges has produced a melting pot of diverse populations, migrations and cohabitations. This confirms that form of alliance found in the compromise that characterises the history of rhythm in these towns – and moreover maintains and consolidates clans. In other words, relations as solid and enduring in conflicts as in alliances. Which accentuates another paradox: how could such enduring historic compromises have been founded on such powerful Manicheism? Answer: they were founded on the organisation of time and rhythms, an organisation at once public and private, sacred and profane, apparent and secret.

The state and the political are not alone in seeing themselves refused by the intimate, repressed or even expelled from their space by a strong rhythmicity, which does not prevent them from coming back, equally forcefully, towards that which refused them. All forms of hegemony and homogeneity are refused in the Mediterranean. It is not only the rhythms imposed by the state-political centre that might be resented as rhythms 'of the other'; it is the very idea of centrality that is refused, because each group, each entity, each religion and each culture considers itself as a centre. But what is a centre, if not a producer of rhythms in social time? The polyrhythmia of Mediterranean towns highlights their common character through their differences. Such urban practice

raises a question: how does *each party* (individual–group–family, etc.) manage to insert its own rhythms amongst those of (different) others, including the rhythms imposed by authority? In this insertion of rhythms 'of the self' into rhythms 'of the other', what is the role of radical separation and compromises, of tolerance and violence? A well-known and banal fact, namely that in all large towns around the Mediterranean, everyone hears several languages from their childhood onwards, cannot not have consequences with regard to the 'spontaneous' or 'native' acceptance of diverse rhythms – with regard to the perception of the diversity of rhythms 'of the other'.

The enigma of practical and social life is therefore formulated in the following way: how are rhythms 'of the self' and rhythms 'of the other' determined, orientated and distributed? According to which principles do (civilian) townfolk rule on the refusals and acceptances of alliances? Polyrhythmia always results from a contradiction, but also from resistance to this contradiction – resistance to a relation of force and an eventual conflict. Such a contradictory relation can be defined as the struggle between two tendencies: the tendency towards homogenisation and that towards diversity, the latter being particularly vigorous in the Mediterranean. This can be phrased in yet another way: there is a tendency towards the globalising domination of centres (capital cities, dominant cultures and countries, empires), which attacks the multidimensionality of the peripheries – which in turn perpetually threatens unity. In rhythmanalytic terms, let us say that there is a struggle between measured, imposed, external time and a more endogenous time. If it is true that in Mediterranean towns, diversity always takes its revenge, it does not succeed in defeating the opposite tendency towards political, organisational, cultural unity. Everything happens as if the Mediterranean could not renounce the unitary principle that founded and still founds its identity; however the ideologies of diversity oppose to the point of violence the structures of identity and unity. How can one not think of Beirut here? . . .

When relations of power overcome relations of alliance, when rhythms 'of the other' make rhythms 'of the self' impossible, then total crisis breaks out, with the deregulation of all compromises,



arrhythmia, the implosion–explosion of the town and the country. It seems to us that Beirut – this extreme case – cannot but take symbolic meaning and value. Fifteen or twenty years ago, Beirut was a place of compromise and alliance that today appears miraculous: the place of a polyrhythmia realised in an (apparent) harmony.

This brutal arrhythmia poses a question that concerns every Mediterranean project, every prospect of unity and globality in this region of the world. Does such a project founder before this drama? That is not for the rhythmanalyst to pronounce upon; at best he can maintain that the analysis of rhythms would contribute non-negligible elements to all questionings of this type.

The rhythmanalytical project applied to the urban can seem disparate, because it appeals to, in order to bring together, notions and aspects that analysis too often keeps separate: time and space, the public and the private, the state-political and the intimate; it places itself sometimes in one point of view and in a certain perspective, sometimes in another. Thus it can seem abstract, because it appeals to very general concepts. We could have avoided these reproaches and not left such an impression: either by painstakingly describing a known and privileged place – or by throwing ourselves into the lyricism that arouses the splendour of the cities evoked. But this was not our purpose. We wanted to introduce concepts and a general idea – rhythmanalysis – into the debate. This concept has very diverse origins: the theory of measurement, the history of music, chronobiology and even cosmological theories. In proposing here several hypotheses in the hope that they would be taken up and carried further than before by others, we wanted to verify them as far as possible. We have therefore tried to tease out a paradigm: a table of oppositions constituting a whole; following this we have examined the specifically Mediterranean content of this form, the entry into practice of these oppositions. This has made evident virtual or actual conflicts, relations of force and threats of rupture. The paradigmatic table, when put into relation with practice, is dialecticised. The path marked out by these concepts thus opens itself onto finer analyses. To be undertaken.

## Notes

### Rhythmanalysis: An Introduction

- 1 Vladimir Nabokov, *Ada, or Ardor: A Family Chronicle*, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1969, p. 572.
- 2 In a sense the posthumous reception of Lefebvre begins here. I have discussed this in more detail in 'Politics, Philosophy, Geography: Henri Lefebvre in Anglo-American Scholarship', *Antipode: A Radical Journal of Geography*, Vol. 33 No. 5, November 2001, pp. 809–25; and 'Certains naissent d'une façon posthume: La survie de Henri Lefebvre', *Actuel Marx*, No. 35, 2004. Lourau was a colleague of Lefebvre's at Université de Nanterre, Paris, and the author of several books, including *L'analyse institutionnelle*, Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1970, which Lefebvre discusses in his *De l'État*, Paris: UGE, 1976–8, four volumes, vol. IV, p. 260, and elsewhere.
- 3 See Henri Lefebvre, *Nietzsche*, Paris: Éditions Sociales Internationales, 1939; *Contribution à l'esthétique*, Paris: Anthropos, 2e édition, 2001 [1953].
- 4 Henri Lefebvre, *Critique de la vie quotidienne III: De la modernité au modernisme (Pour une métaphilosophie du quotidien)*, Paris: L'Arche, 1981, pp. 128–35.
- 5 Henri Lefebvre, *Éléments de rythmanalyse: Introduction à la connaissance des rythmes*, Paris: Éditions Syllepse, 1992, p. 11; below, p. 3.
- 6 Lefebvre, *Éléments de rythmanalyse*, p. 13; below, p. 5.
- 7 Armand Ajzenberg, 'A partir d'Henri Lefebvre: Vers un mode de production écologique', *Traces de futures: Henri Lefebvre: Le possible et le quotidienne*, Paris: La Société Française, 1994, pp. 1–5, cited in Eleonore Kofman and Elizabeth Lebas, 'Lost in



- Transposition – Time, Space and the City', in Henri Lefebvre, *Writings on Cities*, translated and edited by Eleonore Kofman and Elizabeth Lebas, Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 3–60, 7. See also the comments made in Henri Lefebvre and Catherine Régulier, 'Le projet rythmanalytique', *Communications*, vol. 41, 1985, pp. 191–9; below, pp. 73–83; and the interview 'Henri Lefebvre philosophe du quotidien', with O. Corpet and T. Paquot, *Le Monde*, 19 décembre 1982.
- 8 Henri Lefebvre, *Critique de la vie quotidienne I: Introduction*. Paris: L'Arche, 2e édition, 1958 [1947]; translated by John Moore as *Critique of Everyday Life Volume I: Introduction*, London: Verso, 1991; *Critique de la vie quotidienne II: Fondements d'une sociologie de la quotidienneté*, Paris: L'Arche, 1961; translated by John Moore as *Critique of Everyday Life Volume II: Foundations for a Sociology of the Everyday*, London: Verso, 2002; *Critique de la vie quotidienne*, vol. III. See also *La vie quotidienne dans le monde moderne*, Paris: Gallimard, 1968; translated by Sacha Rabinovitch as *Everyday Life in the Modern World*, Harmondsworth: Allen Lane, 1971.
  - 9 Lefebvre, *Critique de la vie quotidienne*, vol. II, p. 233; *Critique of Everyday Life*, vol. II, p. 232.
  - 10 Henri Lefebvre, *La production de l'espace*, Paris: Anthropos, 1974; translated by Donald Nicolson-Smith as *The Production of Space*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1991.
  - 11 *La production de l'espace*, p. 465; *The Production of Space*, p. 405. See *De l'État*, vol. IV, p. 283.
  - 12 For the best account of this period, see Bud Burkhard, *French Marxism Between the Wars: Henri Lefebvre and the 'Philosophies'*, Atlantic Highlands: Humanity Books, 2000; and the work of Michel Trebitsch, notably, 'Les mesaventures du groupe Philosophies, 1924–1933', *La revue des revues*, no 3, printemps 1987, pp. 6–9; 'Le groupe 'philosophies', de Max Jacob aux surréalistes 1924–1925', *Le cahiers de l'IHTP*, no. 6, novembre 1987, pp. 29–38.
  - 13 Henri Lefebvre, *La somme et le reste*, Paris: Méridiens Klincksieck, 3e édition, 1989 [1959], pp. 383–4.
  - 14 Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, in *The Portable Nietzsche*, edited and translated by Walter Kaufmann, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1954, pp. 269–72.
  - 15 Henri Lefebvre, 'Le soleil crucifié', *Les temps modernes*, no. 155, janvier 1959, pp. 1016–29; *La somme et le reste*, pp. 251–64.
  - 16 Friedrich Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo: How One Becomes What One*

- Is*, translated by R. J. Hollingdale, Penguin: Harmondsworth, 1979, p. 44. See also his *Beyond Good and Evil*, translated by Walter Kaufmann, New York: Vintage, 1966, §§ 28, 246 and 247.
- 17 Lefebvre, *La somme et le reste*, pp. 381–2.
  - 18 Lefebvre, *La somme et le reste*, pp. 637–55; *La fin de l'histoire*, Paris: Anthropos, 2e édition, 2001 [1970].
  - 19 Henri Lefebvre, *Key Writings*, edited by Stuart Elden, Elizabeth Lebas and Eleonore Kofman, London: Continuum, 2003, pp. 166–87.
  - 20 For Lefebvre's writings on music, see, above all, *Le langage et la société*, Paris: Gallimard, 1966, pp. 275–86; 'Musique et sémiologie', *Musique en jeu*, vol. 4, 1971, pp. 52–62.
  - 21 Lefebvre, *Éléments de rythmanalyse*, p. 98; below, p. 87.
  - 22 Henri Lefebvre, *Writings on Cities*, edited and translated by Eleonore Kofman and Elizabeth Lebas, Oxford: Blackwell, 1996, pp. 219–27, 228–40.
  - 23 Lefebvre, *Éléments de rythmanalyse*, p. 91; below, p. 67.
  - 24 Lefebvre, *Éléments de rythmanalyse*, p. 32; below, p. 19.
  - 25 Lucio Alberto Pinheiro dos Santos, *La rythmanalyse*, Rio de Janeiro: Société de Psychologie et de Philosophie, 1931.
  - 26 Gaston Bachelard, *The Psychoanalysis of Fire*, translated by Alan C. M. Ross, Boston: Beacon, 1964; *Water and Dreams: An Essay on the Imagination of Matter*, translated by Edith Farrell, Dallas, TX: Dallas Institute Publications, 1994; *Air and Dreams: An Essay on the Imagination of Movement*, translated by Edith and Frederick Farrell, Dallas, TX: Dallas Institute Publications, 1988; and *Earth and Reveries of Will*, translated by Kenneth Haltman, Dallas, TX: Dallas Institute Publications, 2000.
  - 27 See, for example, Lefebvre, *Critique de la vie quotidienne*, vol. II, pp. 334–5 n. 1; *Critique of Everyday Life*, vol. II, pp. 369–70 n. 9.
  - 28 See, for example, Gaston Bachelard, *The New Scientific Spirit*, translated by A. Goldhammer, Boston: Beacon, 1986; *The Formation of the Scientific Mind*, translated by Mary McAllester Jones, Manchester: Clinamen Press, 2003.
  - 29 Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, translated by Maria Jolas, Boston: Beacon, 1969; *Dialectic of Duration*, translated by Mary McAllester Jones, Manchester: Clinamen Press, 2000.
  - 30 For references to *The Poetics of Space*, see, for example, Lefebvre, *La production de l'espace*, pp. 143–4; *The Production of Space*, pp. 121–2.
  - 31 See also Gaston Bachelard, *L'intuition de l'instant*, Paris: Stock, 1992 [1931].



- 32 On the latter, and on many other points noted in this introduction, see Stuart Elden, *An Introduction to Henri Lefebvre: Theory and the Possible*, London: Continuum, 2004.
- 33 Lefebvre, *Éléments de rythmanalyse*, p. 11; below, p. 3.
- 34 For example, Derek Gregory, 'Lacan and Geography: The Production of Space Revisited', in Georges Benko and Ulf Strohmeyer (eds.), *Space and Social Theory: Interpreting Modernity and Postmodernity*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1997, pp. 203–31.
- 35 Rémi Hess, *Henri Lefebvre et l'aventure du siècle*, Paris: A.M. Métailié, 1988.
- 36 Rob Shields, *Lefebvre, Love & Struggle: Spatial Dialectics*, London: Routledge, 1999; Kurt Meyer, *Henri Lefebvre: Ein Romantischer Revolutionär*, Wien: Europaverlag, 1973.
- 37 Henri Meschonnic, *Critique du rythme: Anthropologie historique du langage*, Lagrasse: Verdier, 1982. See also the chapter entitled 'Pace', in Umberto Eco, *Reflections on the Name of the Rose*, translated by William Weaver, London, Minerva, 1994, pp. 41–6.
- 38 Henri Lefebvre, *Logique formelle, logique dialectique*, Paris: Anthropos, 2e édition, 1969 [1947], p. 50.
- 39 Meschonnic, *Critique du rythmes*, p. 16.
- 40 Elizabeth Deeds Ermarth, *Sequel to History: Postmodernism and the Crisis of Representational Time*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992. See Julio Cortázar, *Hopscotch*, translated by Gregory Rabassa, New York: Pantheon, 1966; Nabokov, *Ada, or Ardor*; Alain Robbe-Grillet, *Jealousy: A Novel*, translated by Richard Howard, London: J. Calder, 1959.
- 41 Ermarth, *Sequel to History*, p. 45.
- 42 Nabokov, *Ada, or Ardor*, p. 572. Ermarth, *Sequel to History*, p. 45, cites all but the last sentence.
- 43 Lefebvre, *Éléments de rythmanalyse*, p. 26; below, p. 15.

#### Elements of Rhythmanalysis

- 1 Translators' Note: A reference to Bachelard's works on the scientific spirit, noted in the introduction above.
- 2 Translators' Note: The French word *geste* carries the fourfold meaning of 'gest', 'gesture', 'movement' and 'act'. It thus plays a crucial role in Lefebvre's attempt to translate the understanding of intentional human 'gestures' into a series of rhythms. Where it means 'gesture', it also serves to augment the impression of the reflexivity of rhythms (man himself as 'a bundle of rhythms'), and hence the impossibility of stepping outside them, which

- Lefebvre also expresses through the use of the intransitive form of verbs (for example, *les rythmes s'analysent*). To preserve this significance, the word '*geste*' has often been placed in parentheses following its translation.
- 3 Translators' Note: *La mesure* has several connotations, beyond the straightforward 'measure', among which are the musical concepts of beat and counting time (sometimes also referred to as 'measure' in English). The term has been generally translated as 'measure' throughout in line with the privilege accorded to it by Lefebvre; where the English 'beat' has been thought preferable, the original has been marked in parentheses.
  - 4 Translators' Note: *Les techniques* would normally mean 'techniques' or even the 'applied sciences', but Lefebvre is using it here to translate the German *der Technik*, employed by both Marx and Heidegger. Lefebvre was greatly influenced by Kostas Axelos, *Marx penseur de la technique: De l'aliénation de l'homme à la conquête du monde*, Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1961; translated by Ronald Bruzina as *Alienation, Praxis and Techne in the Thought of Karl Marx*, Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1976, which reads Marx in a Heideggerian way.
  - 5 Translators' Note: *Déploiement*, which has been translated as either 'unfurling' or 'unfolding', rather than 'deployment'.
  - 6 Translators' Note: See Lucio Alberto Pinheiro dos Santos, *La Rythmanalyse*, Société de Psychologie et de Philosophie, Rio de Janeiro, 1931; Gaston Bachelard's *La psychanalyse du feu*, Paris: Gallimard, 1949, p. 58 (*The Psychoanalysis of Fire*, translated by Alan C. M. Ross, Boston: Beacon, 1964, p. 28); and the chapter on 'Rhythmanalysis', in *La dialectique de la durée*, 1961, Paris: PUF, pp. 129–50, where he writes most fully on dos Santos (*Dialectic of Duration*, translated by Mary McAllester Jones, Manchester: Clinamen Press, 2000, pp. 136–55).
  - 7 Translators' Note: The French is 'du (de la) logique et du (de la) dialectique', a formula along the lines of the political (*le politique*) and politics (*la politique*).
  - 8 Translators' Note: The camel, lion and child are key figures in Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. Joachim de Flore (c. 1135–1202) was an Italian monk whose mystical prophecies were widely believed in the thirteenth century.
  - 9 Translators' Note: See Lefebvre's book *Qu'est ce que penser?* Paris: Publisad, 1985.
  - 10 Translators' Note: Begging the question – assuming a premise which is being proved.



- 11 Translators' Note: Douglas R. Hofstadter, *Gödel, Escher, Bach: An Eternal Golden Braid*, New York: Basic Books, 1979.
- 12 Translators' Note: Robert Schumann's *Carnaval* concludes with the 'March of the League of David [*Davidsbündler*] against the Philistines'. Equally, in his *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* [*New Journal for Music*], Schumann led a cast of characters called the *Davidsbündler* against the dominant music of Rossini, Liszt and Wagner.
- 13 Translators' Note: The French text is 'que ça finit par se dire et entrainer des protestations'. The rarity of *ça* in formal written French makes it possible that Lefebvre is playing on *le ça*, the French translation of Freud's 'es', the id. This reading is corroborated by the idea of *ça* 'speaking itself', and also by the several other instances where Lefebvre uses the term – which would otherwise look sloppy and haphazard. To translate as 'id' would doubtless be overtranslation, but it is worth bearing the subtext in mind, especially given Lefebvre's critique of psychoanalysis here and elsewhere.
- 14 Julio Cortázar, *Les Gagnants*, [Gallimard: Paris, 1961], p. 54. [Translators' Note: *Los Premios*, Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 1960, p. 43; translated by Elaine Kerrigan as *The Winners*, New York: New York Review of Books, 1999, p. 32. The emphasis on 'something' 'up there' (*algo aquí*) is added by Lefebvre. Our translation follows the French rather than the existing English one, because of Lefebvre's stress].
- 15 Translators' Note: 'Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and reverence, the more often and more steadily one reflects on them: *the starry heavens above me and the moral law within me*'. These are the first lines of the conclusion of Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Practical Reason*, in *Practical Philosophy*, translated and edited by Mary J. Gregor, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, p. 269.
- 16 Translators' Note: *Simultaner* is invented by Lefebvre to express simultaneous simulation, hence the neologism: *simultanete*.
- 17 Translators' Note: See 'De ma fenêtre', *Oeuvres complètes de Colette*, Paris: Éditions de Centenaire/Flammarion, 1933, vol. 10, pp. 11–135.
- 18 Translators' Note: This is the rue Rambuteau, where Lefebvre had an apartment. The P. Centre is of course the Pompidou Centre.
- 19 Translators' Note: The French is '*ça ne sert de coup d'oeil que pour entrer dans la rumeur*'. See note above on *ça*.

- 20 Translators' Note: *Sens* has the dual meaning of 'sense' and 'meaning'.
- 21 Translators' Note: Literally 'Mob Street' and 'Violinists' (or Fiddlers') Way'.
- 22 Translators' Note: Ricardo Bofill (1939–), Spanish architect, founder of the Taller de Arquitectura group.
- 23 Translators' Note: *Le dressage* has the sense of training, breaking-in or taming. It is used by Foucault in a similar way in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, translated by Alan Sheridan, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977. We have, as far as possible, retained the word 'dressage' for the noun, and used 'break-in' for verbal forms.
- 24 Translators' Note: 'Le savoir-vivre, le savoir-faire, le savoir tout court ne coïncident pas'.
- 25 Translators' Note: 'Ça parle, ça émeut' – see note above on *ça*.
- 26 Translators' Note: *Médiatisation* – meaning the proliferation of mass media coverage.
- 27 Translators' Note: 'ça ressemble, mais ça n'a ni profondeurs, ni épaisseur, ni chair...'. See note above. Although not as immediately suggestive as other uses of *ça*, Lefebvre's language here is slightly reminiscent of the critique of psychonanalysis in Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, translated by Robert Hurley, Mark Seem & Helen R. Lane, London: Athlone, 1984.
- 28 Translators' Note: '*Das Sein des Menschen gründet in der Sprache; aber diese geschieht erst eigentlich im Gespräch . . . wir sind ein Gespräch . . . Das Gespräch und seine Einheit trägt unser Dasein*'. Martin Heidegger, 'Hölderlin und das Wesen der Dichtung', in *Erläuterungen zu Hölderlins Dichtung, Gesamtausgabe Band 4*, Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1981, pp. 38–9. There is an English translation as 'Hölderlin and the Essence of Poetry', in *Existence and Being*, edited by Werner Brock, Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1949, p. 301, but the translation here is our own, keeping close to the terminology Lefebvre uses.
- 29 Translators' Note: Boris de Schloezer (1881–1969) was a Russian philosopher and music critic who lived in France. He wrote books on Stravinsky and Bach and *Problèmes de la musique moderne*, Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1959.
- 30 Translators' Note: Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, translated by Walter Kaufmann, New York: Vintage, 1967.
- 31 Translators' Note: *La parole* means both spoken word and song lyric.



- 32 Translators' Note: Jean-Philippe Rameau, *Traité de l'harmonie*, Paris: Meridiens Klincksieck, 1986. The original publication of this was actually in 1722.

### The Rhythmanalytical Project

- 1 Translators' Note: 'Man is the measure of all things', in Plato, *Theaetetus*, translated by Robin A. H. Waterfield, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1987, p. 152a.

### Attempt at the Rhythmanalysis of Mediterranean Cities

- 1 Henri Lefebvre and Catherine Régulier, 'Le projet rythmanalytique', *Communications*, no. 41, 1985 [above pp. 73–83].
- 2 Guillaume Apollinaire, «Cortège», *Alcools*, 1920. [Translators' Note: reprinted in *Oeuvres complètes de Guillaume Apollinaire*, edited by Michel Décaudin, Paris: André Ballard & Jacques Lecat 1966, vol. 3, pp. 84–5. There is an English critical edition, not a translation, in Guillaume Apollinaire, *Alcools*, edited by Garnet Rees, London: The Athlone Press, University of London, 1975, p. 67. One of the notable things about *Alcools* is the complete absence of commas or periods. As Apollinaire wrote to Henry Martineau in 1913, 'as regards the punctuation, I cut it out simply because it seemed to me unnecessary; which in fact it is, for the rhythm itself and the division of the lines are the real punctuation, and nothing else is needed . . .'. The letter is found in *Apollinaire: Selected Poems*, translated by Oliver Bernard, London: Anvil Press Poetry, 1986, p. 6.]
- 3 Translator's Note: 'Le revenant s'oppose au devenant', also 'the ghost, that which returns, is opposed to that which becomes'. René Crevel (1900–35) was a French surrealist novelist and writer. The quote is from 'Individu et société', in *Le roman cassé et derniers écrits*, Paris: Pauvert, 1989, p. 147, although it actually reads 'Au revenant s'oppose le devenant'.
- 4 Fernand Braudel, *La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen au temps de Philippe II* [Translators' Note: Paris: Armand Colin, 2e édition, two volumes, 1967; translated by Siân Reynolds as *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, New York: Harper & Row, two volumes, 1972].
- 5 Robert Jaulin, *Gens du soi, Gens de l'autre*, [Paris:] U.G.E. 10/18, 1973. [Translators' Note: Jaulin (1928–96) was a French ethnographer, the author of *Anthropologie et calcul* and *Géomancie et Islam*.]

- 6 Paul Vielle, 'L'État périphérique et son héritage', *Peuples Méditerranéens*, no. 27–28, avril–septembre 1984.
- 7 Translators' Note: Luchino Visconti (1906–76) was an Italian film and theatre director. *Senso* is set in Venice in the nineteenth century. He also directed the film version of *Death in Venice*.
- 8 Burhan Ghalioun, 'Dialectique de l'un et du multiple', *Peuples Méditerranéens*, no. 19, avril–juin 1982.



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